

TYNESIDE ANARCHIST

Newsheet of the Tyneside Anarchist Group

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Issue 3

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSHEET ARE THOSE OF INDIVIDUALS AND NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF T.A.G.

THE BIG ISSUE

THE homeless appear to be one of a number of 'problems' politicians have decided to wage war against. Not by tackling the root causes of the problem, but rather by aiming to remove them from sight. As John Major stated in 1994, the homeless are an eyesore which could drive away tourists and shoppers. With a straight face he even bleated "It is not acceptable to be out on the street. There is no justification for it these days". We quite agree, however we're expressing anger at our class being forced onto the street, rather than merely complaining about having to step over them on the way to the opera. One year on and the message from the men in suits is still the same. Jack Straw rallies the troops with a call to reclaim the streets from "addicts and wino's". The political parties may differ, but the message is the same: we don't care what the homeless suffer, as long as they suffer out of sight. If it needs to be stated more clearly, Labour and the Tories find it upsetting that the homeless have the audacity of existing. The fact that they are still breathing seems to provoke a hateful knee-jerk reaction from those in power (or those that hope to be).

Of course there's an answer to this! In America (where Britain gets a lot of inspiration), a recent case has sparked a fair amount of concern. Joseph Gould, who kept himself alive by selling a paper similar to *The Big Issue* and washing car windows chanced upon the wrong person. Apparently it's not only the British establishment who find the situation of the homeless a threat to anything and everything. Mr Gould approached a car and offered to clean the window, at which point an argument began with the driver. Gregory Becker, the driver, went to his car boot, produced a gun and shot Gould in the head at point blank range! To say the official response to this crime has been watered down is an understatement. Becker turned out to be an off-duty cop who, disgusted by the black homeless man in front of him, shot Gould dead. Murder? Manslaughter? NO, Becker stands trial accused of discharging his weapon without informing his superior officer, and, most sickeningly, leaving a citizen in distress i.e. DEAD!!!

Recent developments in Britain have seen police 'cleaning-up' areas, showing that whatever the country or political party the response is the same: Ignore the problems that leave people



homeless and concentrate on moving them back to the areas where the middle and upper classes never venture.

As Anarchists, in the short term we want the homeless housed, preferably in the many empty buildings which would more than accommodate the nations homeless (818,000 empty buildings according to DoE statistics 1992). In the long term however, our demand is nothing less than a social revolution and an end to this 'dog-eat-dog' system that runs for profit, not human welfare, inevitably leaving the unlucky or unsuccessful with at best, uninhabitable housing or at worst, homelessness.

The Big Issue is sold by homeless and ex-homeless people, who get 40p of the cover price. The North-East office is at 52-58 Blenheim Street, Newcastle, NE1 4BQ.

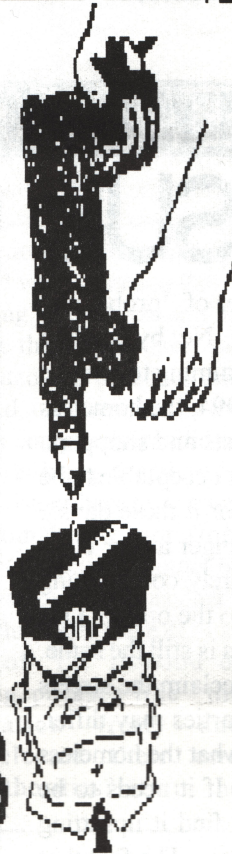
SQUALL is magazine for the squatter homeless and can be reached at SQUALL c/o 2 St Paul's Road, London, N1 2QN.

SHOWDOWN AT FULL SUTTON

AS we go to print we are getting reports of disturbances in Full Sutton Prison, near York. Unlike the popular myth fed to us by the media, of prisons resembling holiday camps and prisoners living it up in a 'champagne lifestyle', Full Sutton has a notorious reputation for it's brutal and oppressive regime; even among long term prisoners who, lets face it, will have had much experience of institutionalised violence already. As a relatively new prison, Full Sutton has been purpose built to bring new ways of isolating and controlling prisoners. Over the past 2 years there have been innumerable complaints, allegations of gross misconduct against prison officers ranging from destruction of private property to serious assaults resulting in serious injuries. Many prisoners have attempted suicide, one of whom, James Walker, succeeded. Control and Restraint (C&R) Squads (or riot cops to you and me) are used frequently and with frightening regularity, in many instances for the most minor of offences, such as the case of a prisoner in June last year, who was subject to assault by 'C&R' for passing two cigarette papers to another prisoner. His punishment was to spend the next two days in a strip cell, later being transferred to a segregation unit in Liverpool for 14 days. Other prisoners, such as Satpal Ram, have been singled out for special treatment and victimisation by openly racist screws. Satpal has been frequently subject to assaults, both verbal and physical, for standing up against such abuse and not accepting this bullying. With a regime as rigid and violent as this, it is unsurprising that prisoners decided to take matters into their own hands with the introduction of yet further restrictions on their conduct. On Wednesday 15 November, over 250 prisoners showed solidarity with each other over their treatment by going on strike, refusing new work schedules which would penalise prisoners even more by refusal of privileges if, it was decided, their behaviour was deemed unsatisfactory. The abuses that this system offers these social inadequates, or prison officers as

RECOMMENDED

**DRILL
FOR
ALL
SCREWS**



they're more commonly known, is obvious.

The response from the authorities was to send in 200 prison officers and cops fully 'tooled up' to restore order - a sign of the seriousness of how the situation was viewed. As more and more attacks are made on societies scapegoats by the Tories, of which prisoners are one element, it is becoming clear that people will be pushed only so far, before they react to defend themselves and organise resistance. With the incentive scheme being used nationwide throughout the prison establishment, there may yet be more strikes and confrontation to come. Until we can organise genuine movements for resistance against such attacks, the government (and all governments) will continue to deprive prisoners of the already limited privileges afforded them. Continuation of these attacks may yet prove their own undoing. LET'S HOPE SO!!!

"National" Disgrace

Fashion following fascists who are looking for the latest group to latch onto seem to be going for the National Alliance (sounds like a fucking bank!). Founded by the American Nazi William Pierce, NA concerns itself with the promotion of anti-Semitism and white superiority (how original!).

In the UK, NA is led by John Cato of Lincolnshire and Paul Jeffries of Leeds. Cato is a big fan of Pierce and often rips off his 'style' when writing his own comic The Oak and the C-18 colouring in book Putsch.

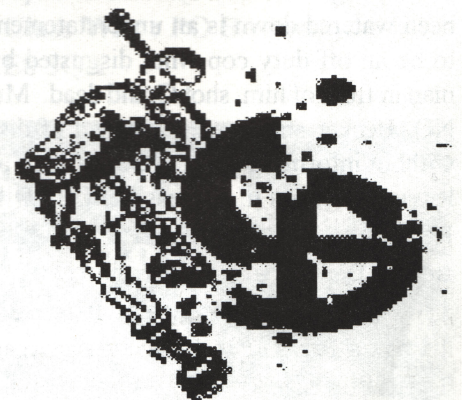
so far in the North East, NA have proved to be a threat only to unsuspecting bus shelters and lamp posts that have been regularly stickered.

A few days before the International Air show at Sunderland, a hand drawn sign left by NA declared they would be recruiting over that weekend. Whether this was a wind up is not clear at this point but anti-fascists who were in the area over the weekend didn't see anything!

Any information on who these sticker crazy dickheads are would be appreciated.

The following article was sent into the PO Box by an anonymous person to whom we are grateful. Most people reading this will have seen the National Alliance little green and yellow stickers on various bus stops etc. and it is obvious that the National Alliance have chosen the North East in the hope of recruiting people to their 'movement'. Like all Fascists, the National Alliance are a threat to our communities, workplaces, families and most of all, our class; and for this reason they need to be stopped.

The National Alliance need to be eradicated before they set rot into our communities, and by force if necessary. We would urge anybody reading this who has any information on members of NA, be it names and addresses, sightings, descriptions of people distributing their shit, to send details to the PO Box. All information will be treated in strictest confidence.





AT LAST!

There are many ways in which anarchists have tried to organise, but none so effective as through syndicalism. Anarcho-Syndicalism is a form of revolutionary unionism seeking to overthrow capitalism and the state, using the strike as its main weapon, and set up a society controlled by all workers. Unlike trade unionists, anarcho-syndicalists organise industry-wide, rather than by trade and craft. Instead of having one union for plumbers, another for welders and so on, in an industry such as ship-building, anarcho-syndicalists would have one big ship-building union. From cleaner to designer, if you're in the same industry, then you'd share the same union with equal status. Anarcho-syndicalism is about fighting for every day needs, such as better pay and conditions (as well as living conditions) and building stronger ties with other workers in other industries. We're working towards a day when workers can take over the running of their workplaces for themselves without bosses creaming it in.

It is a common misconception among some anarchists than anarcho-syndicalists are only interested in workplace issues, we organise in the community as well as industry and believe that community and industry shouldn't be seperated. Community struggles can be taken into the workplace and vice-versa. It's fighting the here and now struggles that people learn and experience organisng for themselves. And as solidarity and confidencne grows, so does the effectiveness of the organisation. It isn't enough to just call yourself an anarchist, we believe in the overthrow of capitalism and should be serious enough to be building organisations that can one day achieve this, or at the very least, improve our lifestyles. If you're an anarchist, you probably know what's wrong with the way the country's run and also know how you'd like to live your life. If the bit in between is a bit hazy, maybe syndicalism can offer a means to an end.

Support the Welling 8



Most people will remember the anti-fascist/anti-racist march in Welling, south east London in October 93 against the British National Party (BNP) headquarters which ended up in a riot between marchers and the police. Top copper (and erect penis) Paul Condon went on telly two days before the march saying that he had received reports that there was going to be trouble. This is code with the police - "We're going to crack heads and blame it on outside agitators". Thousands of people marched into a carefully laid police trap; marchers were boxed into narrow streets by hundreds of riot police who, as per usual, had only one thing on their minds - a ruck!

Violent confrontations started with marchers fighting back against police attack, and rightly so - a lot of people were either nicked on the spot or picked up at a later date, with the willing help of the Tabloids, who splashed people's faces across their front pages, even offering rewards to readers for grassing people up! Predictably the police made a huge effort to track down the "rioters" while ignoring, or half-heartedly fucking up investigations into racist murders like that of Stephen Lawrence, (the inadequacies of their investigation were shown as Stephen's family found substantial new evidence, and have had to go to the point of taking out a private prosecution to achieve justice for their son). No big shock there, given the priorities of the police and their political bosses.

Now, two years on (Sept 95), 14 people were found guilty of riot, 9 of them receiving jail sentences - **THESE PEOPLE NEED OUR SUPPORT!**

It is always important to support those that are imprisoned for their part in the class struggle,

and the case of the Welling Eight is no different. Cards and letters of support are a total breath of fresh air to prisoners and can make the difference between a good and bad day - after all, prison life is a lonely one and keeping the prisoner in contact with the outside world can make them better able to cope with "doing their time" in prison.

PLEASE SUPPORT THESE PEOPLE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN.

Karl Anacoura, RNO599 (3 years)

Sanjiv Karla, RNO598 (2 years)

Paul Gay, RNO593 (2 years, 8 months)

Mark Gay, RNO594 (3 years)

Russell Wild, RNO597 (3 years)

The above are being held at HMP Elmley, Church Rd, Eastchurch, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 4AY.

Stephen Kelly, RNO318 (16 months)

Charlie Ryder, RNO595 (16 months)

Write to these two at HMP Aldington, Ashford, Kent, TN25 7BQ

John McFeely, RNO596 (2 years)

John can be contacted at HMP Lindholme, Bawtry Rd, Hatfield Woodhouse, Doncaster, DN7 6EE

If you have not written to a prisoner before and think it may be a bit daunting, then please don't hesitate to contact us and we'll send you our leaflets which give advice on writing to prisoners and practical support for prisoners:

NEWCASTLE ABC, PO BOX 11A, NEWCASTLE NE99 1TA.

Or contact Stephen Lawrence Family Campaign, PO Box 3433, London SE18 3SS.

Edinburgh Trials Update

On Saturday 3rd June, a group of TAG members joined Edinburgh AFA and Glasgow Red Action to steward the Republican James Connelly march. On the way to the march they were attacked by a group coming out of a pub known to be used by the far-right. After defending themselves the anti-fascists tried to leave the area, but 10 were caught by the police. The attackers were actually plain clothes cops, and the anti-fascists were charged with Breach of the Peace, Resisting Arrest, Police Assault and rescuing someone from arrest.

After spending 50 hours in custody they were bailed. At the trial in November the 3 anti-fascists who were charged only with Breach had the charges dropped. Two others had assault charges dropped in return for pleading guilty for resisting arrest. The two remaining anti-fascists (3 others did not appear) faced the most serious of the charges. After one police witness it became clear that the police had used the months well to concoct their 'story'. After advice from their solicitor the two activists pleaded guilty to assault and one to rescuing the other from arrest. The police dropped the breach and resisting arrest charges.

The 4 who pleaded guilty return to Edinburgh for sentencing on December 6. All four face large fines and at least one could still be jailed. Donations to the bust fund are needed more than ever and can be sent to the P.O. Box.

The Zapatistas - are they Anarchists?

The reaction of anarchists to the emergence of the Zapatistas (EZLN) has been a very confused and confusing affair. Some embraced them from the outset as the embodiment of armed anarchist struggle. Others, such as the Mexican anarcho-syndicalist 'Casa del Obrero Mundial' actually supported war against the EZLN! British anarchists have generally regarded the EZLN with some suspicion and have only tentatively welcomed its arrival. Along with this equivocal welcome several ill-founded criticisms have been made. These criticisms take 3 basic forms.

Firstly, that the EZLN is an army and is therefore, by its nature, authoritarian. This was rather feebly argued on the internet and barely requires an answer. Any army, to be effective, needs some kind of command structure. Militias in Spain at the time of the revolution, 1936-38 (and this included anarchist militias) proved that a command structure does not necessarily equate to oppression. Orwell, in *Homage to Catalonia* describes this effectively. It was understood that orders had to be obeyed, but it was also understood that when you gave an order it was as comrade to comrade and not as superior to inferior.

The second criticism links with the first in that it is claimed that the EZLN committee

is an elite group with the power of information over the peasant army. This too, is based on ignorance of fundamental organising principles of the Zapatistas. The EZLN emerged from the fusion of two almost diametrically opposed traditions; the Marxist-Leninist, hierarchically structured form of a Guevarist politico-military organisation and the traditional forms of indigenous participatory collective decision making. This democratic form came to dominate decision making in the EZLN. As Marcos describes: "It is something understood by both parties: they understood that we wouldn't do anything without consulting them and we understood that if we did do something without consulting them we would lose them...ultimately the theoretical confronted the practical and something happened - the result was the EZLN". Marcos is completely candid in his advocacy of power being exercised by all: "...important decisions have to be made democratically from below, not from above...in the EZLN a decision cannot be made until every *companero* is consulted". Finally, some anarchists cite the EZLN as being prisoners of "the illusion of democracy" citing phrases like "the liberated population freely and democratically elected their own administrative authorities" (from the

Declaration of the the Forest of Lacandona) as evidence of this. This criticism represents that of an essentially western version of what 'democracy' entails i.e. oppression, farce, capitalism *ad nauseum*. This blinkered view fails to appreciate that *true* democracy is none of these things and that when the Zapatistas speak of democracy, they mean local organisation, mutual cooperation and a system based on that which the indigenous peoples have developed. In other words, a form of direct democracy in which all have a say in the decision making process. In other words: anarchism.

Anarchist criticisms of the EZLN are based on ignorance both of the organisation itself and of what it signifies for the development of armed revolutionary struggle. Marcos is quite correct when he claims: "This (the emergence of the EZLN) will radically change the concept of revolution, of who the revolutionary class is, of what a revolutionary organisation is." The Zapatistas, with their fundamentally undogmatic, non-sectarian, open and pragmatic approach have demonstrated themselves to be more anarchists than many Anarchists. We can only hope that these "anarchists" rethink their often narrow, sectional dogmas and learn the lessons that the Zapatistas have to teach them.

Letter from...

Dear Comrades

Just a comment on your piece on the Clegg release, you say of the first soldier "jailed" for murder in Ireland "Private Ian Thayne, having shot a man in the back served just two years then re-joined his regiment." Let me tell you

something. Thayne came from the village I am living in, two weeks after he was jailed for murder, I was in the local pub The Abbey, when three young guys came in. My mate, an ex-soldier, asked if I knew who the one in the middle was, I didn't. It was Thayne. He was allowed to go home every weekend, went to discos, pubs, the lot and returned home to "house arrest" at a barracks for the rest of the time, all of the while his expenses home and pocket money were paid from a special army welfare

fund, while his wages from the whole two years went into his bank account. Fact! This is the justice we expect from the British state, what is amazing is that this most open of secrets round this neck of the woods was never exposed, until we pestered M.P.s and Irish organisations over it, who frankly just wouldn't believe what we were telling them.

David Douglass

We welcome articles and letters - or for more information about anarchism and ABC prisoners contact the P.O. Box.

OTHER CONTACTS:

Solidarity Federation : PO BOX 384, Preston, Lancs, PR1 6PQ.

London ABC : c/o 121 Bookshop, Railton Rd, London SE24.

Anarchist Communist Federation
c/o 84b Whitechapel High St,
London E1 7QX.

Class War : PO Box 467, London,
E8 3QX.

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