

Magazine for Assorted Itinerants



# Act Up

- Exodus - Jah in Luton
- Exclusive - Land Ownership
- Criminal Justice Act-ors
- Illegal Cities of the World

necessity breeds ingenuity

# SQUATT

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## INFORMATION IS YOUR WEAPON

The fundamental agent of change in this society is education. When people become aware of the mechanisms of our present society and its inherent hypocrisy they will be empowered to work towards a better society. Only when people become aware of their own prejudices will they become empowered to effectively demand a prejudice-free world.

To this end, information should be accessible to all and, more than that, should be free from the propaganda inherent in an increasingly corrupt media, driven to distraction by market forces.

Squall is concerned to redress the false stereotypes created and used by the media and Government for the aims of:

- selling units / making money
- consolidating the power base of the establishment
- forcing political agendas for the purposes of a) and b).

Being politically

independent, affiliated to no organisations and having no political backing, we are free to do this.

### No Flag, Badge or Religion.

Squall's priorities lie in the disappearing concepts of justice, tolerance and peace. It stands for the eradication of fear, ignorance and prejudice - ultimately the levers that are used and abused by those who desire control. We are not reactionary nor are we radical: simply common-sense people who live the issues we write about and cannot believe the state that 20th century western-derived politics is in.

The whole structure of society needs a serious overhaul but change must come from community. We need empowerment, and the first steps towards greater responsibility and

autonomy must be made by individuals themselves: no-one will do this for us. We are responsible for our own ignorance; we are all ignorant - it's curable.

Squall's power comes from our awareness of, and active involvement in, the issues (not observers out for a commission) and the respect we obtain from our readers and contributors.

This magazine needs money - it has to be said. Every issue we go into debt and spend the following months begging. If you like what we're doing and can help us - please get in contact. In Peace and Sedition,  
The Eds.

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**Cover Pic:** Operation Snapshot monitoring events at the Mass Trespass on Twyford Down in July of this year. *Photo:*



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### Photography:

All pictures



by Nick Cobbing.

### Mailing List

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If you are one of those who cannot afford to subscribe to the magazine simply send an A4 SAE with about 50p in stamps and you will receive a copy. All cheques and POs payable to:

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# The state it's in

## *Travels in a political Arena*

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**T**he Criminal Justice Bill is about to resume its passage through parliament after a long summer recess. The Home Secretary, Michael Howard, had hoped to walk into the Tory Party conference in early October, trumpeting the imposition of the CJB as law. He was thwarted however, by unexpected amendments to the Bill voted for by the House of Lords before the recess. These amendments to the clauses on penal institutions for young offenders, criminal injuries compensation and the removal of local authority duty to provide caravan sites for gypsies, will be the subject of further Commons' debate commencing on 19/20th of October.

Parliament sits again in October for a four week period in order to finish off last year's legislative programme. This includes the Deregulation Bill and the Scottish Local Government Bill, as well as the amended clauses of the CJB. Besides the specific Lords' amendments, the CJB has been passed by both houses and will not be the subject of further parliamentary debate before becoming an act.

When the Bill goes back to the Commons in October, it is unlikely that the Government will simply accept the amendments to the Bill, particularly the one delaying the repeal of the Caravan Sites Act until 1999. If the Government do not accept the amendments, they will send the Bill back to the Lords. In theory, this yo-yoing could go on indefinitely but, in reality, the

House of Lords is often reluctant to force obstructions to government legislation with excessive vigour; aware that its constitutional power is a weak one. The fact that the Government have booked only four weeks to finish the bill off, is a testament to their confidence that any opposition will be easily overcome. As a result it looks likely that the CJB will become an act before the Houses of Parliament rises again, two weeks before the Queen's speech on November 16th.

Most of the public order sections of the Bill will become law immediately upon the seal of royal assent. These include clauses 56 (trespass), 58 (banning raves), 60 (travelling to raves), 63 (protesters' trespass), 64 (removal of protesters), 65 (trespassory assemblies), 66 (sanctions against attendance of assembly), 72 (sanctions against camping), 73/4 (removal of campers) and 75 (repeal of local authority duty towards gypsies).

The clauses imposing criminal sanctions against squatters require changes to the rules of court, determined and issued by the Lord Chancellor's Department. The nature of these changes is still the subject of the second of two consultation papers and their final draft is not due until next February. This means that Interim Possession Orders and ex parte court procedures cannot be implemented against squatters until at least February. However, the nightmare clauses allowing violent entry against occupants of property do not depend on these court rule changes and will be

implementable shortly after the Bill becomes an act, via a statutory instrument from the Home Secretary.

It is important to remember that the public order sections of the CJB put the onus of enactment on the police. Implementation of the Bill, therefore, is initially likely to be the subject of regional variation. For instance, a Chief Inspector in the Bedfordshire Police force has said that he wants to avoid using the Bill (see 'Exodus, the battles' - page 42 & 'Consultation Exercise' - page 16).

Parliamentary opposition to the Bill has basically consisted of a few principled back-benchers and concerned peers, fighting the cause of civil liberties. The Labour Party executive failed to lend any support to their own MP's over the Bill, with the Lords' amendments proving to be the only fruits of a very weak parliamentary opposition. As such, this period of British political history will go down as a triumph of media-pandering over social concern. The mental and physical welfare of people, particularly those who have not fared well in economic Britain, is an issue that is the subject of much lip-service but seemingly little genuine political interest.

Traditionally, Conservative government has represented the economic face of Britain, whilst Labour have championed social affairs. Whilst it is important to have both sides represented, the balance has tipped alarmingly toward personal, profit-motivated politics. Whilst Tony Blair may describe himself as a christian-

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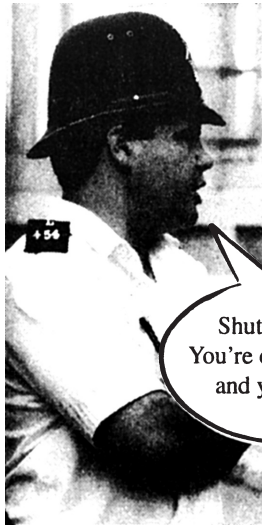
## The State It's in

socialist, both the christian and the socialist part of that definition seem vestigial to his aspirations. The nipple without the milk. It was undoubtedly his decision that led the Labour Party to officially abstain in the vote on the Criminal Justice Bill.

At a press conference held recently in the Houses of Parliament, back-bench MP Peter Hain (Lab. Neath) said that if the Labour Party fails to stand up and fight for civil liberties being eroded by the CJB, then it has no future as a political party. Now that public opposition to the Bill has become media-visible, some members of the Labour Party are attempting to 'bandwagon the outcry', suggesting that the Party did everything possible to stop the Bill becoming law (see 'Actors of Parliament', page 12).

It does have to be said that within the Labour Party there are still those who work away for the

## NEW NINE-WORD 'RIGHT TO SILENCE' CAUTION IN FULL



causes they consider to be integral to their party's position in the political spectrum. Forty three labour back-bench MPs did vote against the Bill, but they did so unsupported by their own front bench, rendering their opposition ineffective. In the quest for the perfect media image, the power in

politics is swinging further away from the reality of need.

The quality of life for the increasing number of people 'forced out' by current politics will depend on how much the voice of British people render the political chess players redundant. Beggars, single mothers, squatters, travellers, homeless people, youth and the unemployed are all pawns nonchalantly sacrificed to the hysterical politics of the media-pander. In the face of such dishonesty, the demands for more integrity must grow.

One thing is sure, any new form of compassionate, caring, socially responsible politics is unlikely to arise in Westminster of its own accord. It must be seriously and forcefully suggested by those, not so embroiled in the compassionless chess match; those who heed, rather than ignore, the need that hammers upon on the door.

SQ

# juxta POSING

*"We should not allow the national debate to be driven by the agendas of a tiny minority. We don't see pressure groups for what they are; one dimensional. Other countries are more alert to the self-seeking nature of lobby group arguments."*  
- MICHAEL PORTILLO (from speech given in Southampton - Jan 1994)

*"I do not believe that Labour's policy should be determined by lobby groups of whatever sort. You never satisfy people. People don't want the half-inch. What they want is the yard and then when you've gone that yard they want five yards as well."*  
- TONY BLAIR (from interview in New Statesman - July 1994)

## The Eight Richest Politicians

Figures shown are in *millions*.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Paul Channon £190      | Margaret Thatcher £75 |
| Mark Lennox-Boyd £145  | Alan Clark £33        |
| Tim Sainsbury £115     | Jeffrey Archer £32.5  |
| Michael Heseltine £108 | Shirley Porter £31    |

All are amongst the top 500 richest people in Britain and *all paid an average of less than 10% income tax last year*, due to monies being held in trusts and overseas investments (Source *BusinessAge* Aug.94).

It would be interesting to know just how much property and acreage those figures represent.

# Oxford Evictions

ON August 1st, a protest against the CJB and the waste of empty properties in Oxford was brutally suppressed by an 'out of control' Thames Valley police.

Local people had occupied a disused cinema and the empty East Avenue House in an attempt to reclaim them for use as a community centre and as housing, and so asserted their right to peaceful occupation. They had only been there for 24 hours when police in riot gear smashed their way in and arrested the 6 people

inside, as well as 3 bystanders outside. A neighbour photographing the raid was also assaulted.

The police claimed they were told there had been a 'break-in', even though they had visited the property the previous night and had been informed of its legal squatted status. The occupiers had also informed the local media of the situation.

Around 50 supporters of those arrested then occupied the lobby of St. Aldgate's police station,

demanding the 9 people be released. Officers then turned a fire extinguisher on them and forced them outside, where they were charged by another 30 cops in riot gear! There was no advance warning issued to the crowd, and people were clubbed to the ground before they could get away. Another eight were arrested.

Due to the fact that a Small World video team were present, pictures of police brutality were beamed to millions of homes via BBC South East, Central and Sky

TV. A public meeting called two days later was well-attended and a fund was set up to help pay for any ensuing fines. A week later a demonstration also attracted 200 people to the town centre. Although the police did all they could to disrupt the demo they were unable to do much with so many Saturday shoppers watching.

For an update and news of future actions in the Oxford area contact Oxford Freedom Network, Box A, 111 Magdalen Rd, Oxford, OX4 1RQ.



Understandable sentiments from the teeth behind this er.... non-violent direct action protester.

## Homeless Cruelty

THE Big Tissue recently carried the story of a homeless man who lost his dog. When he phoned the RSPCA to ask if they had found it he was told that they had not, and even if they had they would not return a dog to a homeless person. Intrigued as to whether this was individual prejudice or RSPCA policy, Squall rang the RSPCA head office in Sussex. Mrs Geard of the Information Department admitted that the association generally finds that homeless people treat their dogs very well.

"The youngsters that have dogs and stand around

in shopping centres treat their dogs well because they get a lot of public sympathy and get money for the dogs. We do keep a close eye on them," she said. She could not be clear about specific policy on returning dogs to homeless owners: "We do a home check. If the home is not suitable then we would not return the dog." She would not say more but repeated the phrase "if the home is not suitable..." several times. Presumably, not having a home at all is 'not suitable'. Would a dog about to be put down in an overcrowded RSPCA kennel see it this way? Probably not eh?

## Empties Filled

BRISTOL City Council has just announced plans to bring back into use the estimated 6,000 empty properties in the city. Owners who have left their buildings empty for more than a year

will be 'persuaded and advised' that they ought to do something with them. 'Practical help' will be offered by the council, who wish to stop the waste of good housing and house the city's homeless. Apparently, compulsory purchase will only be used in exceptional circumstances. Shame!

## Protest Squats on the increase

SQUATTING in areas outside of London appears to be on the increase. Ironically, responsible for this rise in the number of squatted properties is the Criminal Justice Bill, no less, which has provoked protest occupations across the country.

In July, a church hall in Swansea was occupied as a response to the CJB. In Blackburn, one man locked himself into a bank vault following the eviction of squatters on September 5th. When, also in September, a disused courthouse in Brighton was occupied, the CJB was 'put on trial' and found seriously wanting by all the

visitors to the quickly set up community centre and cafe.

The Citizen's Charter definitely wasn't in evidence when the Rugby Civil Rights Defence Network squatted a building belonging to Rugby NHS Trust on August 14th. About 50 people were involved in the occupation of two adjoining Georgian houses, which had not been fully used by the Trust for two years. The houses have at least 20 rooms and parking space for 18 vehicles and the squatters outlined plans to turn the building into a community centre. They repeatedly attempted to negotiate with the NHS Trust but no-one would

speak to them.

Whilst the building was occupied, the squatters used a telephone box outside the building. Someone reported to BT that the call box was "being used as a toilet". BT said it received lots of similar complaints. Although the squatters were not directly accused, they say the implication was clear. These allegations are flatly denied by RCRDN, who made it clear to SQUALL that they know what to use a telephone box for. The phone was padlocked until the squatters were evicted on September 7th. As they were sitting outside the buildings on that day, a BT engineer arrived to remove the lock.

The RCRDN now faces court costs but protesters plan further actions against the bill.

## Hackney Homeless Acquittal

ELOISE Parrack, the young woman whose wrist was broken during her arrest at the incident following the Hackney Homeless Peoples' Festival in May (see Squall 7), has been acquitted. She was charged with affray, accused of throwing a beer bottle and attempting to kick a police officer. Ms Parrack claimed that she merely asked where someone who had been arrested was being taken. The police officer then allegedly grabbed her and threw her against a police van, breaking her wrist. Ms Parrack now intends to sue the police for the injuries she sustained. She and her solicitor, Desmond O'Reilly, were delighted with the outcome and send thanks to those who answered the appeal for witnesses in Squall 7 (see letters, page 54).

Hackney Community Defence Association (HCDA) heard from 30 witnesses following the festival. Of the people they know were arrested, two have been acquitted of assaulting police officers; one acquitted of threatening behaviour and one was bound over for threatening behaviour. Six people, charged with violent disorder, have yet to go to court. One man, who was not arrested, is suing the police for assault. Several of those acquitted also plan to sue the police. HCDA are still keen to hear from anyone with information about this incident, or the arrests outside Hackney Town hall on August 30th.

HCDA can be contacted on 071 249 0193.

## Private Roads Go Ahead

IN August the Government finally gave the go ahead for the construction of 'shadow' toll roads in Britain. Construction companies will pay for and build roads and will then be paid by government according to the number of vehicles using the road.

The first four schemes are the M1-A1 Yorkshire link road bypassing Leeds; the widening of the A1 between Alconbury and Peterborough; bypasses and widening along the A419/A417 trunk road between Swindon and Gloucester; and the A69 Haltwhistle bypass.

John Watts, the transport minister responsible, called the scheme "an important step in creating a private sector road operating industry".

All four ventures are expected to cost £380 million. Andrew Pharaoh of the British Road Federation commented:

"The Government are buying roads on hire purchase."

The Government has also affirmed its commitment to 'straight' motorway tolls within the next four years. Technology currently being investigated to facilitate charging motorists, includes satellite tracking, microwave beacons and smart cards.

Companies grouped into 29 consortia are being considered to install and operate the technology programme and they represent interests from Europe, the Far East and North America. GEC-Marconi, IBM and Texas Instruments are understood to be among the major players.

However, it would appear that the Government will face major opposition from the all-party parliamentary transport select committee, who have dismissed the plans as simply leading to traffic diversions

onto local roads, as drivers attempt to avoid the tolls. The Committee advocate an increase in fuel duty as the most feasible way of financing motorway improvements.

In response to the select committee's fears, transport industry representatives believe that the suggested 1.5p per mile toll (£1.70 for a car to travel from London to Bristol) is not excessive and will prevent the feared diversion of motorists onto smaller, local roads.

In Portugal, at the beginning of September, riot police were sent in to quell angry road-users protesting against increases in road tolls.

Meanwhile, The Lords' Committee on the European Communities is backing a European Commission recommendation to increase the weight of lorries allowed on British roads from the present 38 tonnes on five axles to 44 tonnes on six axles

# Travellers "Too Friendly to Slander"

MORE evidence that the media are not interested in any revelations on the road to Damascus, even if it comes from their own ranks, came recently from The Sun.

Reporter Damien Lazarus was sent to Bath in disguise, with instructions to "expose New Age Travellers". Upon his return, Damien's 2,000 word article proved not to be the "We expose workshy, drug-crazed good-for-nothings" angle his editors were looking for.

"For years, New Age Travellers have been tarnished with a sense of hate

by the general public," he wrote. "They have been seen as young trouble-makers who do nothing but travel around Britain's countryside causing havoc and unrest. I discovered that nothing could be further from the truth."

He goes on to describe travellers as "caring individuals" who "are helping to bring about (their) idealistic dream by looking after Britain... They do everything they can to preserve our green fields and trees". He concludes: "They will continue to live with and protect the earth and will

carry on finding their way in life by following their own instincts and by refusing to conform to society."

Needless to say the planned "exclusive" never made it into the 'newspaper', consigned as it was to deputy editor, Neil Wallis's wastepaper basket (not recycled).

The Sun also sent a reporter to Somerset in order to dig some dirt on Simon Ashdown, son of the Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown. Simon plays in an indie band and is known to hang around with local

travellers including those at Tinkers Bubble. Under the pretence of offering recording facilities, the Sun reporter hung around for a few weeks, looking for anything he could find along the sex, drugs and rock'n'roll line. However, much to the disappointment of The Sun's drooling editorial team, the reporter pulled himself off the job after finding Simon Ashdown and his band "too friendly" to slander.

According to sources, The Sun has decided not to send any one else to Damascus for the time-being.

## Global Profiteers

A new study published on August 31st by the United Nations, has found that the world economy is increasingly becoming dominated by private business concerns.

Trans National Companies (TNCs) now account for one third of global output and this figure is rising.

According to the World Investment Report from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, trade unions and governments are becoming increasingly impotent, or reluctant, to prevent the largest of these

companies from setting their own agendas in terms of jobs, industrial relations and training.

The world's largest 100 multi-nationals held \$3,400 billion in assets by the end of 1992 and controlled approximately one third of all foreign direct investment.

The report added that potential expansion of TNCs had been aided by the signing of the Uruguay Round of Gatt trade talks, the North American Free Trade Agreement and by other regional and bilateral trade treaties.

## Crescent Evicted

PARK Crescent in Stoke Newington, London was finally evicted on August 24th, making over 40 people homeless.

Home to the running of the Hackney Homeless Peoples' Festival, the listed Victorian building contains 37 flats. It has been bought by New Islington and Hackney Housing Association who plan to renovate and build new houses on the site behind it. One ex-resident told SQUALL that NIHHA were not interested in coming to any arrangement with the squatters, despite having no immediate plans to start work on the flats. Michelle, who has a five year old son said: "God knows where we're

going to stay tonight."

The building had been squatted for over 12 years. Most of the squatters left before the eviction but Hackney Council, the police and Scorpion Security were clearly expecting a fight and arrived in large numbers. Injunctions served on the 'Hackney 7' (see 'Hackney'ed Hypocrisy', page 22) banning them from certain buildings in Hackney included the Crescent.

Squatters described the operation as "a complete over-reaction". There is now an eight foot fence surrounding the building with 24 hour security and dogs protecting it. (See Letters, Page 53.)

## Tommorrow's Slums

THE Joseph Rowntree Foundation has revealed that two thirds of Housing Association-built houses are of a poorer standard than they were 30 years ago. One third of new homes recorded in a survey do not have enough room for everyone who lives there to sit down for a meal

together.

Since local authorities stopped building, Housing Associations build virtually all rented housing for people on lower incomes. The prospective occupiers of these homes are homeless people who have no choice in what they accept.

In a recent interview, Professor Valerie Khan, one of the authors of the report, said that the Government now has no minimum standard for quality and housing associations have to compete with each other for low costs in building each unit: the cheaper the building the more likely they are to get a grant.

This is clearly an

attempt to cut costs rather than meet growing needs, as Ms Khan acknowledged: "The Government would say, well we want as many units as we possibly can, but that's precisely the sort of argument that was made in the 1960s when we built a lot of things that we've now had to pull down."

# People on Welfare "Too Comfortable"

WHEN Jonathan Aitkin, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, recently claimed that people drawing benefit were living "too comfortably", announcing his intention to cut housing benefit, the phrase 'seriously out of touch' seemed too mild.

In 1988, the Government introduced a housing act that deregulated rents; removing the official ceiling on the rent chargeable by landlords and sending the greedy private rented sector into exorbitancy. As a result "rents have been rising faster in the UK than in any other European country except Greece," according to John Perry, Policy Director of the Institute of Housing. And yet the Government still insist that the stimulation of the private rented sector is the solution to Britain's housing crisis.

What makes this position difficult for the Government to justify, as it attempts to cut public spending, is the fact that the cost to the country of housing benefit has doubled over the last six years, partly due to increases in homelessness and partly due to the rapid rent rises following the 1988 Act.

Up until now, when a tenant applied for housing

benefit, a local authority rent officer would inspect the property and determine the level of benefit according to how much they consider a particular property should be rented out for. If the rent officer considers that a landlord is charging more than the property is worth, the tenant has to either pay the difference or find somewhere else. But where else?

With dramatic increases in the rent that private landlords are charging, the gap between rent officers' assessments and the actual cost is increasing. According to the Association of London Authorities (ALA), 72% of rents examined by rent officers in Brent were considered too high, 69% in Haringey, 68% in Enfield, and 53% in Waltham Forest. In a quarter of cases in the boroughs of Enfield, Kensington and Chelsea, Redbridge and Westminster, the gap between the landlord's rent and the rent officers assessment, was more than £2,000 a year.

"Either the rent officers are totally out of touch with the realities of the market, or some of them think they are still in the business of setting a fair rent. In fact they are actually determining a

reasonable level of return for the purposes of housing benefit. The huge disparities which are emerging underline the total inability of the private rented sector to meet housing need," said Will Tuckley, an ALA housing officer.

However, the Government, hell bent on allowing the private rented sector free reign, does not agree with his assessment. The reason why rents are rising, according to Jonathan Aitkin, is because landlords charge large amounts knowing that housing benefit will pay for it. "If you look closely, you find that quite a lot of people on housing benefit are living in houses which are too big for them, there is a question of whether landlords are pushing up rents in the private sector particularly, just to meet the level of housing benefit and not to meet the level of real market price."

Translated, Aitkin is saying that 'free' market greed is not responsible for rent rises, but that the payment of housing benefit is. Therefore, according to Aitkin's astounding logic, it's a good idea if he cuts it.

In the light of the reported discrepancies between what local authority

rent officers are agreeing to pay for and what landlords are charging, it is difficult to see how Aitkin can stand by his seriously flawed assessment. However, no one is under the illusion that Aitkin's theorising is anything more than a feebly weaved argument, attempting to smooth the public's reception of more government cuts in welfare spending.

Aitkin's predecessor at the Treasury, Michael Portillo, had already suggested that he might introduce a standard ceiling limit on housing benefit, regardless of the level of market rent. It now looks as if Jonathan Aitkin is to establish benefit capping as a national policy.

As 'free' market greed continues to force up rents, the gap between homeless people and affordable housing will widen dramatically. Aitkin himself has two houses, for him to further suggest that even having a spare room, which most housing benefit claimants have never had in their life, is "too comfortable" needs no further comment.

The phrase 'seriously out-of-touch' is becoming a cliché.



# Traveller Benefit Census

"THE last census in April 1994 showed the number of travellers registered in our offices had fallen to 1,273. This is the lowest number recorded so far and almost 400 less than a similar period in 1993," claims a leaked internal memorandum from the Department of Employment, dated September 7th 1994.

The memorandum, sent to Employment Service business managers round the country, is requesting another census on new travellers claiming benefit, in order to gather further information to be used to put even more pressure on travelling

communities. Previously leaked Benefit Agency documents have clearly requested that local DSS offices single out "New Age Travellers" to be "scrutinised carefully".

The information gathered is being sent to the Department of Employment and is also available to the police. The combination of this information and that gathered by the police under Operation Snapshot, have provided authorities with the opportunity to culturally cleanse this country of travellers, by making it as difficult as possible for them to claim benefit. Information

on the movement and resting places of travellers have also provided police with the target at which to aim harassment and illegal evictions.

The leaked memorandum continues: "This develops the tendency found in the census last April for travellers to settle, more or less permanently, in one area. This may be due to the strategy employed by the police this year or simply a change in travellers' lifestyles. Whatever the case, it does give the Employment Service increased opportunity to make sure that new age travellers meet their

responsibilities and that their compliance is rigorously tested."

An Employment Service spokeswoman said this latest census was the fifth in two years and contains a category description of travellers, aiming to make them recognisable by local DSS offices. The criteria include distinctive clothes, hairstyles, and living conditions (caravans, converted buses and benders).

Not content to wait for the Criminal Justice Bill to come into force, the Government are eradicating travellers quietly and in ways that pass unnoticed even by civil rights campaigners; busy as they are fighting the Bill and all its works.

## Water Waste

PRIVATISATION of Britain's public assets is leading to increasing unaccountability, as foretold by many observers.

Welsh Water, Britain's second most expensive water company, is planning to diversify from its water supply business into Britain's road-building programme. Welsh Water has been heavily criticized after being named as a member of a consortium set up to bid to build privately-financed toll roads.

The consortium includes John Laing and Tarmac construction groups as well as French toll road operator, Transroute. All are bidding under the name 'UK Highways plc' for the first four schemes announced by the DoT early in August. (See Private Roads Go Ahead, page 6)

Ron Davis, the shadow Welsh Secretary, condemned the move: "None

of the company's customers had a say. If the venture fails, no doubt they will be called in to pick up the bill."

Over a million Welsh householders contribute about £100 a year each, just under half their average bill, to the company's £146 million profits. This cash, which one might expect to be invested in maintenance, cleaning up water supplies and bringing costs down, is going to be invested in clearing vast tracks of countryside for roads.

Meanwhile, and as Welsh Water put in its bid, the sewers in Ruthin, North Wales, cracked and filled the river Clywd with raw sewage killing all the trout downstream. In a separate incident the National Rivers Authority has recently announced its intention to prosecute Welsh Water for the heavy pollution of the beach at Saundersfoot.

## Traveller Surveillance

INFORMATION leaking out from the police's Operation Snapshot computer surveillance of travellers, has shown Hampshire to have the highest number of traveller sites in the country, whilst Devon and Cornwall have the highest concentration of travellers' vehicles. Sixty seven per cent of Britain's new travellers are concentrated in the South-west.

The extent of information now being held on a national computer bank is evidence of the alarming lengths to which authorities are now going to target harassment of travelling communities.

The following statistics, collated into a police report, have been seen by SQUALL.

*Avon and Somerset:* 29 sites with 198 vehicles and 87 caravans.

*Hampshire:* 47 sites with 229 vehicles and 121 caravans.

*Dorset:* 8 sites with 27 vehicles and 7 caravans.

*Devon and Cornwall:* 24 sites with 333 vehicles and 89 caravans.

*Gloucestershire:* 23 sites with 104 vehicles and 52 caravans.

*Wiltshire:* 11 sites with 43 vehicles and 9 caravans.

*Thames Valley:* 8 sites with 69 vehicles and 38 caravans.



## Violent Eviction Arsonists Jailed

TWO men have been jailed for their part in an arson attack on M11 protesters living in the chestnut tree on George's Green, Wanstead, on 2nd December last year. Martin Courtney and John Roe were part of a nine-man gang recruited at a club in Southend, Essex, for up to £100 each, to intimidate and remove protesters. As reported in Squall 6, the men crept up on protesters, poured petrol around the base of the tree and a nearby bender before setting fire to it. Courtney and Roe were sentenced to two and half and three and half years respectively. Seven of the 9 man gang escaped. Those who put up the money have not been identified.

Passing sentence at the Old Bailey on September 5th, Judge Kenneth Richardson said: "The reason why no sentence other than prison can be justified lies in the fact that both of you were part of a gang hired to scare away persons involved in lawful protest and scare them away with methods

involving violence." He added: "the only regret is those responsible for hiring you are not before the court."

The identity of those ultimately responsible remains a mystery. Protesters, police and even the owner of the club where the arsonists were hired, have their theories but no-one, it seems, has enough hard evidence to press charges or open an enquiry. Consequently, the paymaster may never be publicly outed.

One protester, who told SQUALL that a number of vehicles' windscreens were smashed shortly before the attack on the tree, said: "We get done for tiny little things - damaging a piece of string and moving a fence post while major assaults get ignored.

"There should be a major enquiry. The little fish are taking the rap. You can't get justice in this country."

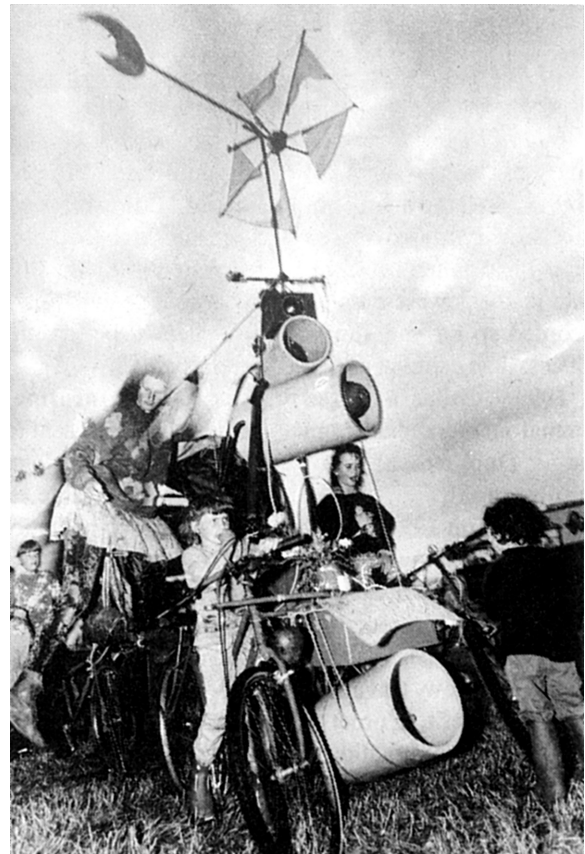
The M11 protesters are continuing to gather evidence in the hope of opening a public inquiry.

## DoE to Sue Big Issue Ed

THE Department of Employment is threatening to sue John Bird, Editor of The Big Issue, for not revealing the names of the 700 people that sell the magazine on the streets of British cities.

For the homeless people that stand on street corners selling the mag, the 35p they make on each issue can obviously be a vital income for keeping body and soul together. However, fraud officers from the

Department's special project team want to check their names against computer records of those signing on, in order to catch out those working over the prescribed number of hours that unemployed people can spend in paid employment, before losing their entitlement to benefit.



There have been few festivals and demonstrations this summer that have not included the cycle-powered miracle of the Rinky Dink sound system. When the PA broke down in Trafalgar Square at the CJB rally on July 24th, a comet of cogs and children swept in and saved the day. In the 'necessity breeds ingenuity' stakes, Rinky Dink are serious goers.

## Beggars in Desperate Need

A recent report published by CRISIS has shown categorically that John Major's attack on the "nuisance" of beggars on the streets, is further evidence of this government's complete lack of compassion.

The report entitled 'We Are Human Too. A Study of People Who Beg' surveyed 145 beggars in central London and found that "the vast majority of beggars are leading a hand to mouth bleak existence". Eighty per cent of those surveyed were homeless, one in three had a history of mental problems, of which 17% had spent some time in a psychiatric hospital. One third had a drink or drugs

problem and three fifths had no educational qualifications. Eighty per cent had been in work at some time during their lives and 20% had formerly been in the armed forces.

The average income for a beggar according to the report, was between £10-£20, although one person in the sample of 145 earned £200 in a week. The tabloid newspapers dealt with the report in the way expected of them, with headlines such as "Outrage over the Beggars making £200 a week" in the Daily Mail 14/9/94. Shock horror-distortion and brownie points from a merciless government that described beggars as "eyesores".

## Velvet Revolution Tour

THE Velvet Revolution is about to start a tour of the country. The tour, "a full technicolour explosion of positive outrage fusing sound systems, live video mixing, interactive imagery, sculpture, theatre, dance, and film" has been put together with backing from Charter 88 to raise awareness of the CJB.

The gigs start with a screening of the *Battle of the Beanfield* film and features DIY, Exodus, Sunnyside, LS Diesel, Circus Irritant, Tofu Love Frogs, Tribal Drift, The Levellers and loads more. Dates so far include:

Manchester Univ. Oct 6; Middlesex Univ. Oct 8; Plymouth Univ. Oct 12; Farnham Institute Oct 13; Sussex Univ. Oct 15; Leicester Univ. Oct 18; Sheffield Hallam Univ. Oct 19; Cardiff Univ. Oct 20; Nottingham Marcus Garvey Centre Oct 21; Warwick Univ. Oct 22; Brixton Academy (Levellers) Oct 27; The Academy, Stoke on Trent Oct 28; Newcastle Univ. Oct 29; Sheffield Univ. Nov 2; Megatripolis Nov 3; Birmingham Q Club Nov 5. For more information contact the VR office on 071 708 4230.

## Taking Liberties

A number of people outraged at the Criminal Justice Bill have come together to produce a special CD to raise funds for campaigning groups and help raise awareness of the effects of the new laws.

Preceded by a new single from Dread Zone 'Fight The Power', released on October 22nd, the CD will feature: Dread Zone; Orbital; Orb; Prodigy; Ultramarine; Trans-Global Underground; Fun Da Mental; Loop Guru; Test

Dept; Drum Club and Tribal Drift.

The album will undoubtedly excite ambient/trance/dub/dance connoisseurs and unconfirmed contributors also include ambient giants, Aphex Twin.

Beneficiaries of the album include Liberty, The Freedom Network, Advance Party and SQUALL. Available from Totem Records, the release date is set at November 14th.

## Anarchy In The UK, Ten Days That Shook The world

LATE Night Cabaret at the Hackney Empire, Friday 28th October.

There's an impressive line up for this late night benefit for Squall at the Hackney Empire, organised as part of the Anarchy in the UK festival.

Heading the list of performers is demonic comedian *Chris Lynam*, notorious for his naked stunts with roman candles, surreal bad behaviour and unique renditions of popular melodies; Chris's new band of eccentric musos *Pop Corn Club* will be helping proceedings along with the show's hosts, the ever-up-for-it *Pee Wee* and the original alternative *Tony Allen*.

There will be virtuoso saxophone from the legendary *Lol Coxhill*; songs of wit, grit, and pure delight from unique singer/songwriter *Sharon Landau*;

grotesque clowning on a slack rope with festival fave *Paka*; some potent words from *Penny Rimbaud* plus *Crass* originals *Rimbaud* and *Ignorant* reuniting for a one-off blast; thrills and danger, yes, that's right 'thrills and danger' with trapeze duo *Skytrapt*; daft songs and stoned humour from that loveable post-hippy comic *Rory Motion*; and last but not least, political barbs from rebel without a mortgage, the very pleasant *Mr Nasty*; PLUS surprise GUESTS, performance art, side shows and an audience full of anarchists having a night off from the barricades (surely important networking seminars? - Ed).

The show runs 11 until 2 in the morning. All tickets are a fiver in advance (or six on the night). SQUALL gets the profits and you have a hoot of a night out.

ANARCHY IN THE UK  
TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD OCT 21st - 30th 1994  
A FESTIVAL OF ANARCHIST ACTION, CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT

LATE NIGHT CABARET at the  
**HACKNEY EMPIRE**  
291 Mare Street LONDON E8

FRIDAY  
28th OCT  
Performance: 11pm-2am  
A laugh, a song,  
a rising tide of infantile disorder  
Featuring...

PAKA  
PEE WEE  
MR NASTY  
SKY TRAPT  
TONY ALLEN  
CHRIS LYNAM  
RORY MOTION  
LOL COXHILL  
SHARON LANDAU  
POP CORN CLUB  
PENNY RIMBAUD  
STEVE IGNORANT  
plus GUESTS walkabouts  
late bar sideshows and YOU!

Tickets: £6 on the Day / FIVE QUID DEAL in advance from...  
Box office: 081 985 2424 / ROUGH TRADE 130 Talbot Road W11

**BENEFIT GIG for SQUALL**  
necessity breeds ingenuity

PROPERTY IS THEFT. PROPERTY IS LIBERTY. PROPERTY IS IMPOSSIBLE.  
ANARCHISTS DO IT IN AUTONOMOUS GROUPS



**T**he Labour Party have finally cottoned on to the fact that many people have become disillusioned with its unwillingness to provide any effective opposition to the Criminal Justice Bill.

Rather than change its tact however, the party has made amusing efforts to persuade us that it has done as much as possible to oppose it. In a recent *New Statesman* article, journalist Tim Malyon described the Labour Party's abstention on the Bill as "sitting on the sidelines making political capital when it should be standing up and defending the rights of those under attack". The article brought a surprising response from the Labour Home Affairs spokesman in the House of Lords, Lord MacIntosh of Haringey, suggesting that the article had "undermined Labour's attempt to improve this deplorable Bill".

As evidence of the Labour Party's work, Lord MacIntosh said in his letter: "Labour supported a whole raft of amendments to protect squatters

from violence, to delay eviction so that squatters would have a week to find somewhere to live rather than 24 hours, and as a basic principle, argued that squatting should not be criminalised". However, SQUALL was present during the entire committee stage debate and was well aware of what measures were taken to present opposition to the Bill.

Whilst it may be true that some labour back-benchers argued vehemently against the clauses in the Bill, most notably Neil Gerrard (Lab MP Walthamstow), the Labour front bench could hardly be described as being in full support. During the debate on the clauses allowing violent entry to a property, Alun Michael (Shadow Minister of Home Affairs and most senior Labour member on the CJB committee stage) disappeared from the room and failed to show up during the vote.

The idea that Labour are opposed to the clauses on squatting "as a basic principle", was further

called into question by Lord MacIntosh's own words during the House of Lords stage of the Bill's passage. "We are not in any sense being soft on squatters," he announced. "If I was to suggest that we were being soft on them, Mr Tony Blair would have me shot at dawn." What is revealed by these words is that the Labour Party's response to the Bill was quintessentially orchestrated by Tony Blair, regardless of the principles held by other members of his party. As a result of his directives, the opposition to the Bill by the Labour party was only conducted by a few principled back-benchers, unsupported by their own executive. Such a position in modern politics is like trying to stop a stampeding herd with a pin.

Even certain back-benchers that had the opportunity to put up more of an argument and failed to do so, are attempting to claim in hindsight that they were against it all along.

Frank Dobson (Lab MP Holburn and St Pancras) was sent a letter by one of his constituents asking him to explain his party's stance on the Bill. Dobson replied: "The Labour Party has taken a firm position on the proposals you mention (Public Order section) and sought every opportunity to amend the Government's proposals. I know that the Home Affairs front bench (at the time led by Tony Blair) have pressed hard on these issues, although the Government seem oblivious to reason."

Of the 43 principled Labour back-benchers that did vote against the Bill, Frank Dobson was not one of them. How both he and the Labour Party executive can even begin to suggest that they did everything possible to stop the Bill, after officially abstaining during the 2nd and 3rd reading division in the House of Commons, is a symptom begging the diagnosis of schizophrenia. Or perhaps they just change the script to suit the audience.

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# Actors of Parliament

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One of the promises made by Michael Howard to mollify opposition to the CJB clauses removing the rights of silence, was a commitment to establish a national organisation responsible for investigating miscarriages of justice. However, while parliament was in its summer recess, Howard announced he was to delay the setting up of such a body until the matter had been "looked into more thoroughly".

Now, if you were to write to Michael Howard, voicing concern over his calculated rethink, you may well receive a reply from his secretary saying that Mr Howard has taken note of your comments. However, one letter voicing concern over a wrongful imprisonment recently received a full reply from Michael Howard himself. And what miscarriage of justice sufficiently moved Howard enough to write such a personalised response? The jailing of a character in the radio soap opera 'The Archers' that's what.

Howard, described as "an avid fan" of The Archers, was contacted by a rather sad spokesperson of 'The National Campaign to Save the Ambridge One'.

"I entirely agree with your view that imprisonment was an entirely inappropriate sentence for Susan," dribbled Howard in his answering letter. "I have even less influence on the fictional judge in The Archers than I have on the real judges who sit in our courts every day, so you will understand that there is no action which I can take in this case. I speak as someone who acted as a part-time judge before I became a government minister and I can assure you that, had her case come before me, I would certainly not have sent her to prison. Although the offence she committed was serious, she pleaded guilty, was of exemplary character and her children are clearly dependent upon her. In my view.....etc."

But whilst Michael Howard may consider he has little influence over the the events in The Archers, it is quite evident that the same is not true of The Archers influence over him. Take his speech to the Tory

Party conference last year introducing the 27 point law and order package that manifested itself as the Criminal Justice Bill.

"There is a tidal wave of concern about crime in this country. I am not going to ignore it, explain it away or just meet it with a string of words. I am going to take action. Tough action. How many times

have I heard people say 'let's bring back the village bobby'. Well that is exactly what I'm going to do. The countryside must be made safer. We have already announced tough proposals to deal with New Age Travellers and Ravers. These people have even made it onto the Archers.

"Well I've got some good news for Ambridge. When our new laws are in place, Eddie Grundy won't need to spray manure on his fields to get rid of them."

As satire becomes reality, politics assumes the status of a soap opera with Howard in position as one its principal actors.

Great delight was taken by Nicholas Hawkins (Con MP Blackpool South), when he showed the CJB committee a copy of a magazine entitled 'Chalice - New Age Networking Wales West'. "Does my Hon. Friend agree that the glossy magazine produced by and on behalf of new age travellers would be entirely beyond the means of our constituents?" he snorted.

"I was fascinated to see the magazine," continued his committee



colleague Jonathan Evans (Con MP Brecon and Radnor). "It is a glossy publication produced by well-organised people with many resources and it encourages the type of activity which, I am glad to say, clause 45 intends to strike down."

Hawkins (three chins and only 35 yrs old!) rarely followed the debate, busy as he was doing his constituency work, reading the Evening Standard (several times) and avidly reading the "glossy" magazine he had ridiculed earlier.

Over his shoulder it was possible for a SQUALL observer to see that the magazine described as being "beyond the means of his constituents", retails at £2.50. A copy of Hansard for just one session of the committee stage debate costs £7.50 and there were three sessions a day. Faced with the prospect of paying £22.50 for a days worth of hot air or paying £2.50 for a magazine on subjects such as aromatherapy, presents a Tory MP with something he can't abide - no competition.

However, good to see an acknowledgement from Evans that he considers new travellers to be "well-organised people with many resources".

# NEWS of the SKEWS

## A look at the news, opinions and skew-whiffs, as presented by the British press.

“Protest mob in siege of Downing Street,” ran the headline in the *Daily Mail* on the day after the CJB demonstration on 24th July.

“Mob”?.... You have to get to paragraph eight (the small print) to find: “Scotland Yard, which dispatched 2,000 officers to

deal with the march said: “The people at Downing Street were a very small minority of the March which in the main passed peacefully and without incident’.” But in this case the Mail wasn’t interested in what the police had to say. Three fifths of the page devoted to the demonstration consisted of three photographs concentrating only on the 15 minute fracas that took place outside Downing St. One fifth

consisted of the headline and one fifth the text. (The last fifth was an advert for mobile phones).

A seven hour forceful, yet predominantly peaceful, demonstration represented in the media by 15 minutes of news-juicy violence. Forget the police’s “in the main passed peacefully” conclusions, the Mail’s leader column talked only of “Facing up to the mob” at “yesterdays ugly demo”.

Now if it was the case that the *Daily Mail* were alone with their gross misrepresentation, we could simply conclude that it was the result of the Mail’s well-known disposition to report only those angles that suit its own underlying agenda, regardless of the event. But they weren’t the only ones. Every national newspaper in Britain proved itself to be a party to a blatant misrepresentation that seriously calls into question the media’s role as instigators of violence. The photographs of the event say it all:

The three in the *Daily Mail*, three in *The Times*, the large black and white on the cover of *The Guardian*, the large colour photo on the front cover of the *Independent*. Four in *The Sun*, three in the *Daily Express* (including front cover) and one in the *Daily Mirror*.

Every single shot was of the 15 minute fracas outside Downing Street and not one single newspaper printed any other picture. Never mind the 50,000 people on the March, never mind the array of speakers in Trafalgar Square, never mind a thousand other photo opportunities - violence sells newspapers.

Take a look at the



captions that accompanied the photos. "Confrontation: Violence breaks out." - *Daily Mail*. "Flashpoint - Ranks of riot police clashed." - *Daily Mirror*. "Faces of Hate: Demonstrators harangue riot police" and "Mob rule: Protesters threaten to break in" - *Daily Express*. "Defiant: A girl protester (with naked midriff) throws a stick" - *The Sun*. "Protesters at the gates: Police drove them off three times." - *Daily Telegraph*. "A demonstrator astride the gates taunt police. Other protesters hurled missiles." - *The Guardian*.

Of the many non-violent direct action stewards that were present on the March, there was scant mention. "Despite some of the crowd shouting 'No violence', fights broke out," reported *The Guardian*.

"As the mob became angry again, stewards shouted 'Keep it peaceful, keep it moving'," mentioned *The Times*, but not before it had titillated its readers with "demonstrators engaged in hand to hand fighting with the police." Ironically, the accompanying photograph of the fracas in *The Times*, shows Bridgette from the Freedom Network laying her hand on the arm of an angry protester, with one of the 20,000 'Non Violence' stickers given out on the day, stuck to her chest.

*The Times*, of course, passed by the opportunity to comment on this however, preferring to scoff at the "clusters of hippies and new age travellers that smoked cannabis openly and shouted abuse at passers-by and police".

Along similar lines came an *LBC* reporter who cornered one of SQUALL's editors for an interview.

*The following verbatim interview was shown in a BBC Panorama programme broadcast on 15/8/94. Nicholas Van Hoogstraten is one of the richest landlords in Britain and owns thousands of properties in the South-east.*

**VAN HOOGSTRATEN:** "I'm not a charitable institution and if I was, I certainly wouldn't be charitable towards tenants. They'd be bottom of the list."

**Interviewer:** *How do you feel about that?*

**VAN HOOGSTRATEN:** "I'm not really bothered, I wouldn't be a tenant. I don't look after tenants - why should I look after tenants. One looks after one's assets. Can't extend it to looking after the tenant 'cause the tenant is spending his money down the betting shop and smoking cigarettes."

**Interviewer:** *You don't seem to have a high opinion of tenants.*

**VAN HOOGSTRATEN:** "I don't have a high opinion of anybody who is born and brought up in this country and doesn't own a stake in it. And the first stake anyone should have in their country is the ownership of the roof over their head. If they haven't got that, they haven't got self-respect and if they don't have self-respect why should I respect them."

*Nicholas Van Hoogstraten received a short prison sentence in the seventies for forcible entry and eviction. The Criminal Justice Bill's clause allowing violent entry will free the likes of Hoogstraten to use forcible entry against occupants at any time.*

"A lot of people seem to be mucking about in the fountains. Do you think they know what the Bill is actually about?" To which he received a full reply. But pursuing his pre-determined angle, he continued: "I've seen a lot of drugs about today. Do you think this detracts from your cause?" To which he was told: "I know a lot of very important questions that a radio-journalist might ask about the Bill and this demo but this isn't one of them."

The completely impartial journalist offered the usual excuse behind which to retreat: "I need to ask these questions for a balanced report". But with breath direct from a brewery, an alcohol vaso-dilated face and a shaky stance reflective of his journalistic angles, he was asked: "We've seen a lot of journalists mucking about today with pre-determined angles. Do you think they know what this Bill is actually about?" He promptly left to pursue his malicious folly elsewhere.

*The Independent's* front cover provided the

'begging metaphor' for the media's role in provoking violence. Above the front page photograph of the fracas, was an article on Northern Ireland; the headline said "Sinn Fein Shuns Peace". Of course the bottom line for all terrorist organisations is that they have resorted to violence because no-one listens to the cause, unless it involves violence. By continually ignoring peaceful demonstrations and rewarding the violently inclined with coverage, despite the fact that they were vastly in the minority, the media become its perpetrators.

Despite this however, the commitment to non-

violent direct action continues. If the Criminal Justice Bill goes through, as it looks certain to do, peaceful demonstrations will actually be outlawed and then where will the people seek expression for their political dis-satisfactions? If there is a consequent upsurge in the amount of violence, it is not just the Bill itself that will be to blame. The headline should have read: "The Entire Media Shuns Peace."

If you were to meet an honest editor he/she would tell you that peace doesn't sell; violence does.

So if it's down to market forces, who then is responsible for the supply on demand?

SQ



# Consultation Exorcise

It's not often that members of the British police force go on the record with their political opinions, so when they do it is worthy of note. The Criminal Justice Bill has provoked such statements, clearly demonstrating their dissatisfaction with the legislation, their role in implementing it and its implications for our society.

## What The Police Say

**CHIEF CONSTABLE DAVID WILMOT (Greater Manchester Police)**, speaking on behalf of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO):

"This legislation is likely to bring police officers into more frequent conflict with this section of the community ultimately resulting, once again, in a further drain on stretched resources.

"Legislation is not the total answer to this problem, as I feel all it may achieve is to pass the problem on more frequently. All it achieves is to virtually criminalise anyone who has a travelling way of life and lives in a caravan.

"I must re-inforce what I have said previously that many of the problems presented by New Age Travellers, Ravers, Hunt Saboteurs, Squatters and such like cannot be solved by legislation alone, nor by police action following the enactment of that legislation. Many of the problems have much deeper roots and wider implications. It is for other agencies to play their part, as society seeks to address the more long term solutions to the social problems which we all face.

"I am concerned that the procedures, as set out [clauses on squatting], do not require the applicant to firstly explore all other avenues of civil action available, such as the use of bailiffs, before they turn up at the police station. I am quite sure that most applicants with the necessary papers confronted by an occupant who says 'no' to a requirement to leave, will make straight for a police station. Whilst I fully appreciate that the

powers are discretionary, there will be considerable pressure on the police to deliver what is in essence a civil law enforcement procedure."

**POLICE REVIEW JOURNAL:**

"The proposals to deal with mass gatherings and countryside 'raves' seem, at best, to be a knee-jerk reaction to the Government's wish to be seen to be doing something about this year's problem. At worst they can be construed as direct discrimination against a minority."

**CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT ALAN MARLOWE (Bedfordshire Police):**

"The police do not want to be in a position where there is a total blanket ban and opposition to raves of all forms, because you could find yourself alienating a lot of people and having illegal events springing up and sooner or later you are going to be forced into a concession.

"I think we have to acknowledge that raves are a fact of youth subculture at the present time.... It's a popularity which has to be managed in some way. And I would urge people to take a realistic view, and suggest to them that perhaps if

there's some way in which there could be a degree of tolerance, that proper people could be licensed for the conduct of raves, then the trade-off might be more positive in the long term than a total ban."

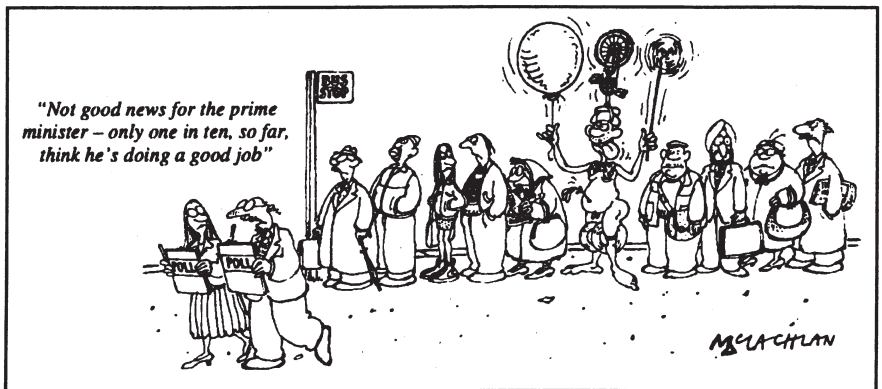
**SGT MIKE BENNET - Chairman of the Metropolitan Police Federation:**

"I can see police involved in the forcible eviction from premises and those premises remaining empty, boarded up and people saying: 'was it necessary?' I can see the problem of making criminals of people who are desperate to get their lives back in balance. someone who has been made redundant, someone who squats in premises - who pays for gas, electricity and water. Along comes a policeman and evicts them. That's not what I joined the police force for and I don't think a lot of people did."

**TONY JUDGE - Spokesman for the Police Federation:**

"We can envisage all kinds of grave problems. The police do not wish to become the lead agency in de-squatting."

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# "THE TROUBLE WITH WORDS IS THAT YOU NEVER KNOW WHOSE MOUTHS THEY'VE BEEN IN." - Dennis Potter

**P**ress release No 184, issued by the Department of the Environment in March 1994, was a stirring rally cry to every citizen of this great and noble nation, to rise up together - to love our land and our planet - to save nature.

We were so moved here at SQUALL to be the recipients of such marvellous sentiments that we thought we'd share them with all our readers, so that you too may be inspired to strive for the future of the life support system that we all have to share:

**Department of the Environment  
Press Release 184 - 17 March 1994**

**WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY: ONE  
EARTH, ONE FAMILY,  
ONE FUTURE**

*World Environment Day is an opportunity for families to join in the battle to save the environment, Environment Secretary John Gummer said today.*

*Giving further details about the United Kingdom's plans to host the United Nations Environment programme (UNEP) World Environment day on 3 June, Mr Gummer said:*

*"Fifty years ago, the political future of the world was being determined by a war being waged by young men and women from all walks of life and virtually every country on Earth.*

*"In June we will be celebrating the Normandy Landings. But also in June the United Kingdom will be hosting World Environment Day, a focus for environmental effort, and a focus that reminds us that the earth has seen countless civilisations rise and fall. The most important battle still faces us: the battle to safeguard the future of the Earth.*

*"We are sponsoring a nation-wide schools competition to encourage children to set out their vision of the future and a Science Museum exhibition - 'City Limits?' - on the future of cities. We will host the laureates ceremony in London to celebrate the excellence of work being done world-wide.*

*But the day is also a day for individual action. I hope that families across the country*

*will agree that to make a difference to their environment, they have to get involved. The best way of getting involved is to join a local environment group, to work with local people and local authorities to 'green' their neighbourhoods. I urge families to join up to make a difference to their environment."*

As a postscript to this marvellous 'rally call to the gallery', SQUALL would like to add a few facts.

In July of this year, The London Air Quality Network warned the Government that the quality of London's air was the worst in 40 years and is deteriorating further. At Whipps Cross Hospital in Walthamstow, London, doctors thought that there had been some kind of industrial chemical emission accident during the summer, after a sudden rise in admissions for asthma. It was then discovered that the dramatic fluctuation in asthma cases was not exclusive to Walthamstow and was connected with high levels of low-level toxic ozone created by the effect of the sun on exhaust fumes. The Government predict that traffic volumes could increase by 142% within 25 years. In

August, the newspapers reported that the predicted level of retail car sales (450,000 instead of 500,000) was a bad indicator of the economy. The sale of cars is one of the major indicators used to measure economic success.

In the light of these facts, SQUALL would like to fill in the missing part of the DoE's press release, that should have given information on who to contact should you wish to heed their "hope that families across the country will agree that to make a difference to their environment, they have to get involved. The best way of getting involved is to join a local environment group." Because there is indeed a "a war being waged by young (and older) men and women from all walks of life." Want to know where? Then contact:

**ROAD ALERT.** PO Box 371, Southampton, Hants SO9 7BS - Tel: 0703 237809 Will inform you of a local anti-road campaign in your area.

**ALARM UK.** 13, Stockwell Road, London SW9 9AU - Tel: 071 737 6641 Network of campaigners involved in non-violent-direct-action road protests.

SQ



⊗ Wheeling themselves into the picture came three young members of the Claremont Road No M11 Campaign. "Wabbit," pointed out three year-old Rosie, a formidable environmental orator. "Hallo," agreed her colleague, Ruby, echoing the principle of openness and community that underpin the nature of the entire campaign. Kes, who even as SQUALL goes to press, is searching for words to express himself, smiled in complete accord - hoping that we'd all get the message.

# Road Wars

A round-up of some of the road and development protests across the country.

## Solsbury Hill

"THE scene was bizarre, and horrific as chainsaw men again attacked the branches of the remaining trees, and bailiffs (called 'safety advisors' ?!) began to forcibly drag protesters from trees." (Attempted fourth eviction of the Whitecroft site, Solsbury Hill, on the outskirts of Bath, 19th July '94)

In Squall 7 we reported how the Bath/Swainswick A46 bypass was in its initial phase of construction amidst a growing campaign of daily peaceful direct action and growing media interest.

Over the Summer, the Solsbury Hill Action Group have faced increasingly violent evictions, particularly from the occupied tree-huts on the Whitecroft (broadleaf woodland) site and from the watermeadows, south of the hill itself, which have now been completely bulldozed. The Whitecroft site was eventually taken by the DoT and Amey construction on July 20th and resulted in 34 arrests.

Worse, however, was to come in August when, and while the protesters were away participating in a local green fair, a mob of farmers attacked the campaigner's camp with pitchforks and scythes. Members of

the Batheaston Freeholders Association, a self-elected body of men who proclaim to represent the parish, set light to protester's belongings after dousing them in diesel. Tents, tarpaulins, blankets, sleeping bags, cameras, ropes, clothing, passports and radios were destroyed in the blaze. Also missing are two pet geese and two small pigs.

"It was manic, vigilante stuff," said one eye-witness. "The protesters gave everything, they have been left with nothing."

The police are investigating the incident and if anyone can help with information phone Road Alert on 0272 246 199.

The protesters remain committed to fighting the bypass with continued actions and other peaceful protests but the August attack has set back the campaign. To offer assistance to Solsbury Hill Action Group and the Save Our Solsbury campaign phone 0225 481995.

## Preston

**WORSENING** security guard hostility and a high police presence now surrounds the campaign against the proposed M65 route at Preston. This Summer has seen eviction after



eviction of protesters from buildings along the route and the eviction of 40 tree-huts and bender camps.

The last tree hut was taken after a 17 day siege and a High Court possession order. The wood, once occupied by the protesters, has now been completely trashed.

Hostility and increasing security guard violence is being documented by protesters who hope, once enough material is collected, to pursue an almighty legal campaign of injunctions, suing and prosecutions for assaults that have occurred.

Media interest is high: the four main TV channels have all taken an active interest with a documentary expected from 'Public Eye' (BBC2) on security guard violence. Contact: 0772 323531.

## Newbury

"IT'S like the DoT have got a map of Britain, put a dot on every Site of Special Scientific Interest, joined up the dots and said 'right, that's where we'll have our trunk roads'." (Jai from Road Alert, August '94.)

The DoT were certainly playing dot to dot when they proposed a route for the Newbury A34 bypass. The road, which is currently out to tender and with predicted construction start date of January '95, will steamroller its way through twelve miles of some of the most beautiful countryside in Berkshire.

Included on its list of destruction are protected areas, ancient woodland, nature reserves, the site of the first battle of Newbury (1643), the River Kennet and the River Lambourne. No adequate

Environmental Impact Assessment has ever been done on the route, despite this being a requirement of European Community law.

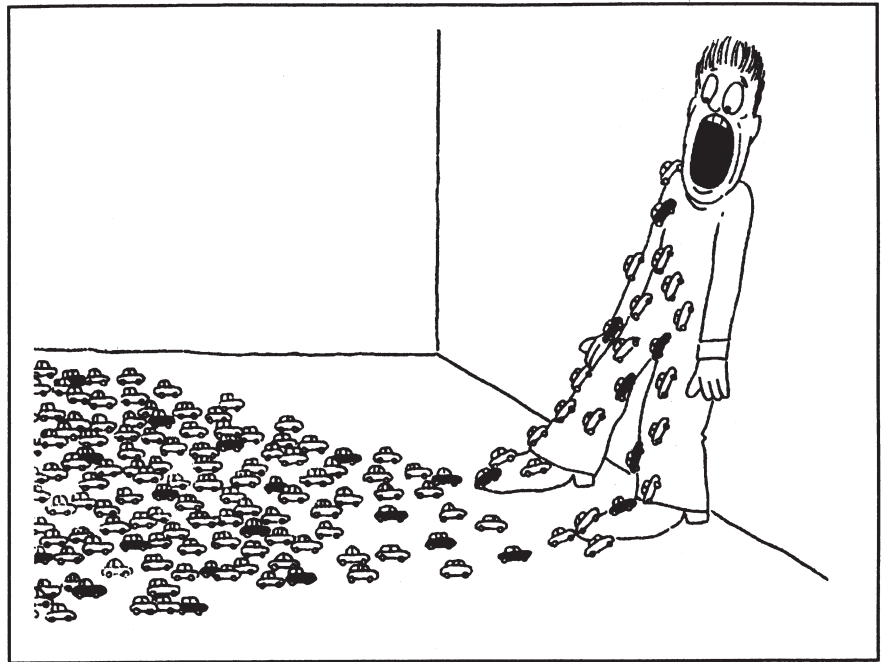
The campaign against the bypass, called the third battle of Newbury 'A Road to Ruin', is currently building support and drawing attention to the environmental destruction.

The route has been severely criticized by many bodies, particularly the Landscape Advisory Committee, commissioned by the DoT to inspect the route: "...this will undoubtedly prove to be one of the most environmentally contentious proposals in recent history."

English Nature, state nature conservation watchdog, confirmed the Rivers Kennett and Lambourne as sites of special scientific interest. The reason for the designation is, they say, in recognition of their richness in wildlife. The inclusion of these rivers as nature reserves would bring the number of SSSI to be destroyed up to four!

The National Rivers Authority has also been vocal in the proposed Newbury bypass lodging a protest with the DoT.

Dr. Norman More, former Nature Conservancy Chief Advisory Officer, described the proposed route as "vandalism of the first order If they (Newbury's protected places) were to be destroyed without an Environmental Impact Assessment being carried out". Contact: 0635 46524



## Pollock

ONE more area of outstanding beauty which the DoT have chosen replace with a road is on the Pollock Estate, Ayr.

The proposed M77 route has, as in the Newbury case, not had an Environmental Impact Assessment carried out on it. Earth First!, who currently have a permanent camp on the estate, say any assessment would definitely condemn the proposals.

The majority of the route is currently out to tender but has had advance work carried out on two of its 11kilometre length.

Eight metre high embankments made from steel and pulverised fuel ash line the beginning of the route. The DoT plan to fell thousands of mature trees, many over 200 years old.

Pollock became famous in conservation legislative terms when, in 1939, Scotland's first conservation agreement was drawn up for the estate.

The National Trust for Scotland (NTS), who do not own the land, were made trustees when the Late Sir John Stirling Maxwell - the original owner, a founder of the NTS and Chairman of the Forestry Commission - put requirements on the Trust to preserve Pollock Estate in perpetuity as an open space, or parkland, for the benefit of the people of Glasgow. The NTS waived this agreement in 1974 by giving the DoT

and planners agreement for the land to be used in the form of a veto on the planned development. Contact: 041 552 8776 or 041 636 1924.

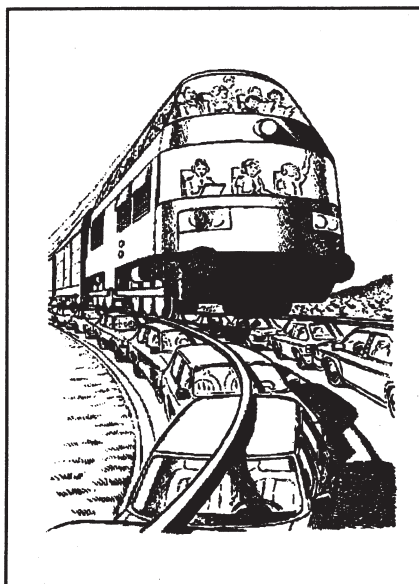
## Cardiff Bay

ANOTHER dot not missed, this time Cardiff Bay where the Government (in the guise of the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation) plan to construct a barrage across the bay and transform the existing salt-water mud flats into a fresh water lagoon. Road Alert describe the development plans as "the first ever TOTAL obliteration of a SSSI by a single development".

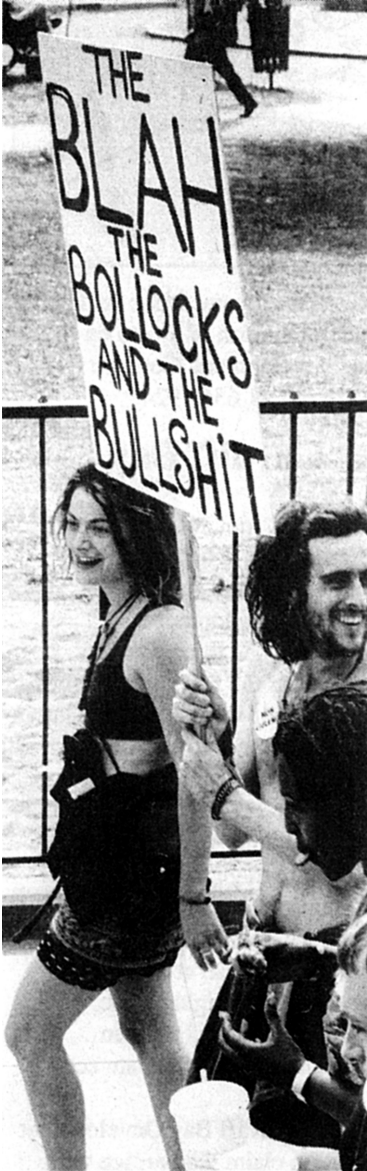
The barrage, currently in its initial stages of construction, will destroy the habitats of thousands of species of birds, fish and insects as well as creating a highly toxic environment in what has been described as a highly delicate ecosystem.

The Cardiff Bay Development Corporation claim the barrage will make the bay more attractive to business and industry and they consider the mud flats to be "unsightly". The area has been proposed a 'Special Protection Area' since 1981. SPAs are the strictest form of environmental protection that exists in Europe.

The Campaign against the Cardiff Bay Barrage run regular demonstrations and actions from their base in Cardif. Contact: 0222 383363 or 0222 237320.



# The Triumph of Love over Pain



In sharp contrast to the riot of national media coverage that followed a recent CJB march, **CJ Stone**, freelance press and radio journalist, steps off the wall to offer a different impression.

If you were on the July 24th march you'd know that it was simply the best political rally ever. It was like taking vast amounts of heart-pumping chemicals but without the toxicity. Or like being in love with 60,000 people all at the same time. It was a manifestation of the Spirit: no less. Like the core-being at the centre of the Universe was beaming rays of love directly into our hearts. A surge of great revolutionary spiritual fervour. The triumph of joy over despair.

If you read the papers the following day you'd think it was a riot. Which it was. A riot of colour. Riotous pleasure. But no: you'd think it was a carnival of hate and violence and careless destruction.

I watched the whole episode at the gates of Downing Street, from the formation of the original gaggle of largely mischievous protesters, through the police charges, to the point where Agent Provocateurs were urging people to kill through loud-hailers. And I can tell you there were barely 50-60 hard-core nutcases involved. Out of a march of 50-60,000, the antics of 50-60 people finds its way into the press. That's 0.1%. What does that tell you about the British Press? What does that tell you about those 50-60 people?

Whose purpose did it serve to see scenes of violence splashed over the newspapers? Want to make sure the Great British Public never attend a march. Want to make sure they stay at home watching Neighbours, and that they never seek to question the values of the government? Then make sure you show violence. Nobody likes violence except the state and its agents (the Estate

Agents). As far as I am concerned a large percentage of those 60 people were paid agents of the State, serving its purposes not ours.

On entering Hyde Park a character from Class War thrust a paper in my direction. "Pacifism is Capitalism," he said. Oh yeah! Right. Why hadn't I seen that before? Like the Gulf War was a Pacifist act. Like Western Governments paid Saddam Hussein to build up his arms for the sake of world peace, then whopped the Iraqi people one for doing what we told them. Like all those riot police were kitted out to dance and sing and have lots of fun. Pacifism is Capitalism. The best slogan of the day.

It's errant nonsense of course. Those that want to incite violence know perfectly well they are playing into the government's hands. That is the sure route to failure. As if a few sticks and stones and plastic bottles chucked at the lines of shielded, helmeted, sometimes armed police is going to overthrow the State. Don't make me laugh.

Here's the truth. Among those policemen and women are a lot of deeply frustrated, emotionally crippled characters. Someone went up to one who was scowling and said: "Smile, it doesn't cost anything." The scowl deepened. I asked the guy what he was thinking. His scowl got darker still. "Same as I'm thinking about you now," he said: "go away." Poor, fucked up, sad little geezer. (For "little" read "diminished".) But what you have to do is look into their eyes. Occasionally you see a sparkle. When it comes down to it, the guy with the sparkle breaks ranks. Deep down he's on your side. Smile at him and he'll

acknowledge you as a human being. He'll think twice or more about hitting you. Attack him and - like any other tribe - he'll dismiss you as his enemy, and take refuge with his mates. What's the definition of a revolution? A turning. The moment of revolution is when the police change sides.

We are the happy people. Happiness comes of peace, inner and outer. We are the party people, the people of rapture. Hate + hate = more hate. Love versus hate is like garlic to a vampire. It withers it away. In the end negativity even has to negate itself. Love must always triumph because love is eternal.

Jesus said "love your enemies". Why? Because if you love them they're your enemy no longer. He said "turn the other cheek". Why? Because deep down we are all part of the same process. We are the universe. The pain you feel is Universal pain. Strike back and there's yet more pain, yet more suffering.

I'm not a Christian. Christianity sucks. The history of Christianity is the history of sexless guilt, joylessness and despair. Christians have caused more suffering, to each other and to the human race as a whole, than any other group in existence. But Jesus wasn't a Christian. That came after. He was a man, a free-thinker and a revolutionary. He mixed with prostitutes and publicans: the low-life. He said: "Consider the lillies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin." He wanted us to be free. Free of the joyless confines of paid labour. Free to love and be loved. Free to experience pleasure. Free to drink deeply of the spirit.

To the 60,000 people who attended the march and rally on the 24th July: we are brothers and sisters of the Spirit all. Don't worry about the SWP. They can't convert us. Let them call their marches. We will convert them.

This is the moment of rapture. Dance and you will be free.

The answer to everything is Yes!!!



Ⓢ This and opposite pic: Protesters at the CJB rally on 24th July.

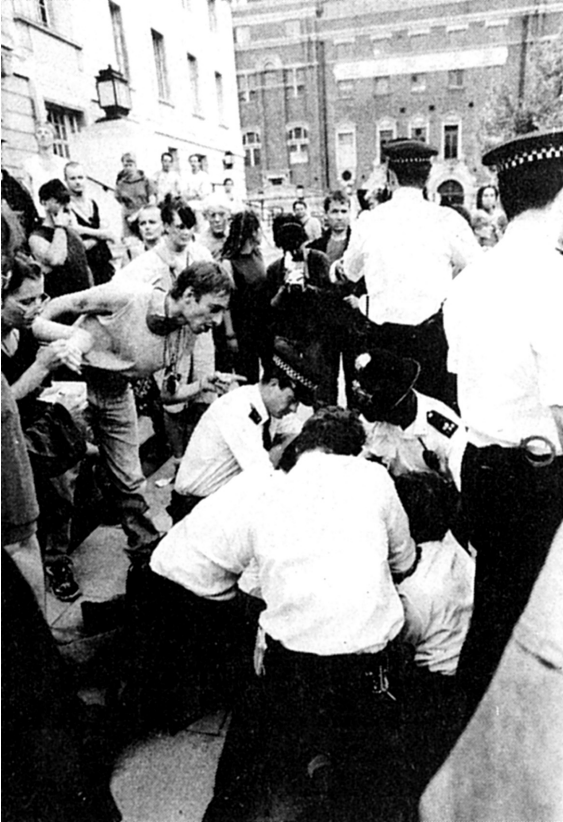
*The State is not something that can be defeated by armed revolution. It is a condition; a certain relationship between people, a form of human behaviour.*

*We overcome it by developing other relationships; by behaving differently.*

# Hackneyed Hypocrisy

## - the saga continues -

Police make an arrest outside Hackney Town Hall. ©



A large demonstration *outside* Hackney Town Hall on July 20th ended up as a brief occupation *inside*. Over 250 squatters and supporters gathered to protest against the council's 'para-municipal' eviction squad, the Tenancy Audit Team (TAT), and the worryingly right-wing (Labour) Chair of Housing, Simon Matthews (see Squalls 5, 6 & 7 for previous bouts).

The occupation and disruption of the first full council meeting since the local elections, was broken up by the police, who violently intervened to eject the occupiers. The seven people, unlucky enough to have been picked on, have been charged with criminal damage (to the town hall doors) and obstruction. Because of the presence of the 'alternative media', wide coverage was passed on to TV and radio, with even BBC South East news using extensive 'alternative media' video coverage. This so incensed John McCafferty, Leader of the Council, that he didn't even try to defend his council's housing policy on TV; all he could do was whinge about how organised the squatters were in getting 'their' coverage shown. The

truth is obviously getting painful...

McCafferty's major problem is that the local squatting community is effectively using all legal means available to expose the corrupt and illegal practices of the Housing Department. A test case for illegal eviction will be heard soon, while all 60 councillors have been formally asked to oppose the CJB in Hackney and to investigate the actions of the TAT.

The Hackney seven, as the arrested protesters have come to be known, have had injunctions taken out against them by the council banning them from any council property or squats in the borough, especially 'The Crescent' (see below). Two of those charged are a teacher

and a social worker who actually work for Hackney. At the moment the council are trying to get them both suspended from their jobs, *before* the charges come to court. In addition to this vindictive scapegoating, those arrested were also the people who suffered most injuries from the police assaults.

In reality, the squatter and co-operative communities are probably the *only* groups in the borough actively campaigning against the ineptitude and corruption of the Housing Dept., mainly because these groups are the ones most affected by it. Private owners and tenants don't have to deal with the council, while council tenants only seem to make a noise when they are directly affected by incompetence (eg repairs).

Meanwhile, housing associations have done very well, thank you, out of the sell-off of empty council properties previously looked after by tenants, squatters and co-ops. No wonder Matthews and the TAT are so vindictive - the squatters keep reminding everyone how corrupt and non-existent Hackney's housing 'policy' is. After all, where there are lots of empty properties,

there are a lot of squatters... get rid of the squatters and you reduce the vocal opposition.

It therefore comes as no surprise that Simon Matthews is the only Labour Chair of Housing who has publicly welcomed the new anti-squatting proposals in the Criminal Justice Bill.

Another example of vindictiveness appeared when a local resident wrote to the Hackney Gazette in August complaining about the TAT evictions and the empties on his estate. Instead of answering his questions, the writer was immediately investigated by Bernard Crofton, Director of Housing, no less.

Crofton wrote to the paper soon after, saying: "There is no tenant or leaseholder by the name of Mark Christian living on the Clissold Estate." Of course, Mr Christian, as a council tenant, wrote in under an alias because he suspected he might be investigated. Just as well really; a further fine example of Stalinist local politics.

A worse example of the rot-infested decades of Labour power in Hackney was the recent final eviction of 'The Crescent' on Stoke Newington Church Street, a well-known squat of about 40 flats in a beautiful listed Victorian crescent next to Clissold Park (see 'Crescent Evicted' page 7 and letters page 53).

Although squatted for many years, the council only began showing an interest in evicting it after it became apparent that the Hackney Homeless Festival was being organised largely from there. The first year of the festival (1993), John McCafferty discovered that the organisers were local squatters and tried to make them promise not to give a festival platform to squatting organisations or speakers, threatening to withdraw the £2,000 council funding of the event!

Sensibly, the organisers ignored his attempts at suppression of free speech and got their funding as well. But the Crescent was now on the council hit list...

These are just a few examples of what is now, thankfully, public knowledge in Hackney. The proverbial tip of the iceberg no doubt ... watch this space.

# The Jewel in the Mud Award

SQUALL has done some lateral thinking in order to come up with this issue's 'Jewel in the Mud' award. The article chosen may not mention squatters, travellers, dancers, protesters, the CJB or land rights; as has been the case with previous winners of this prestigious SQUALL accolade. What it does address however is the ways in which we think and the ways in which we are told, manoeuvred, cajoled and conditioned to do that thinking.

Entitled "When is a box not a box? When it's a straitjacket", the article appeared in The Guardian 3/9/94 and was written by the modern day celeb of thinking practices, Edward de Bono.

"The great problems of our time can be dealt with if we unshackle ourselves from ancient modes of thinking."

ran the sub-heading, followed up with the corking first sentence .....

"Western thinking is failing because its complacent arrogance prevents it from seeing the extent of its failure."

Why? .... Edward goes on to explain.

"Analysis breaks things down so they can be more easily fitted into boxes. Argument disputes whether or not something fits into the suggested box. Once something is judged into a box then we 'read the label' to determine the appropriate action..... So we are trapped in a thinking system based on 'truth' and 'boxes'... The boxes are derived from the past. There is the assumption that a cluster of attributes that have occurred together in the past will always occur together in the future. This is like assuming that the tuberculosis bacillus will always be susceptible to streptomycin because it was susceptible in the past; it is not. The future is not like the past..... Many things are not there to be discovered. They only exist if we design them into being. You build a house,

you do not discover a house."

And so our role in all this?.....

"Critical destruction of a hypothesis has never produced a better one. THERE IS A NEED for someone to come along and design a better hypothesis. Where the cause cannot be removed problems have to be solved by 'designing' a way forward... While we may be excellent at analysis we are extremely bad at design because design needs creativity and lateral thinking, and education has never paid any attention to these very important matters. Universities entrap the best brains and feed them a diet of scholarship, analysis, judgement and critical thinking. This is totally insufficient in a changing world.....Design needs new perceptions and new concepts."

Go on Edward...

"Why then do we not take creativity seriously and allocate serious resources to it? In the future creativity is going to be the most important part of human thinking because all else will be done much better by computers and models..... We believe that nothing can be done about creativity and that it is just a matter of chance or inborn talent. This is old-fashioned nonsense. Creative thinking is a skill that can be learned like any other skill....Then we seek to design a way forward using creativity to suggest new concepts."

And why isn't this happening already?

"Because we are trapped in the complacency of a thinking system which will become increasingly inadequate at everything except defending its adequacy."

Ah yes Edward ..... here's yer award.

# DIY in the Sticks

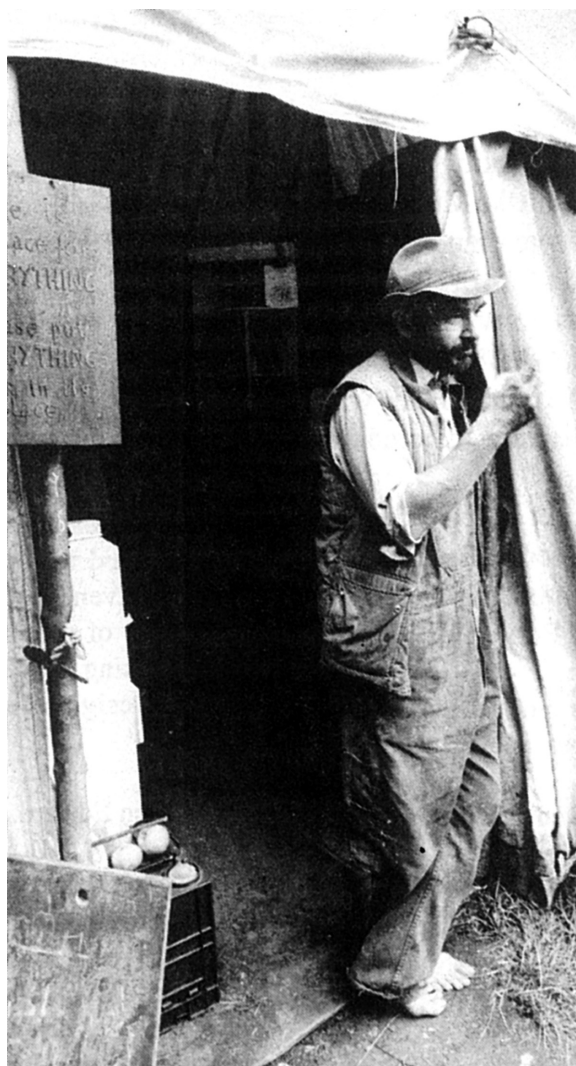
The council planner - bureaucratic jobs worth or potential reformer of society? **Simon Fairlie**, assistant editor of *The Ecologist* and resident of Tinkers Bubble, urges a fresh approach to the weary restrictions of planning law.

**D**own here in Somerset we're suddenly hearing a lot about "DIY culture" coming from our brother and sisters up in the smoke. Well, in the countryside Do-It-Yourself culture has long been practised, and still is by the majority of the world's people - peasants who grow their own crops, and their own seeds, collect their own firewood, build their own houses and make their own manure and their own music.

But not in Britain, unfortunately. Here the peasants got forced off the land long ago, in favour of a select line of wealthy landowners who now do it according to the dictates of the Ministry of Agriculture and who have progressively replaced 90 per cent of the people working on the land with tractors and chemicals. Any prospective peasant, anyone who wants to do it themselves on a bit of land, is actively discouraged in a number of ways - and the main way nowadays is through planning law.

Planning law in rural Britain works like this: a small quantity of the available land (called the development area), is designated for human habitation; the rest is designated for agriculture, or else "heritage" (country parks etc). Consequently building land is ridiculously expensive - about 40 times as much as ordinary land - and anyone buying or renting a house is paying a whack of money to the building society, developer or whoever it is who profits from this massive artificial increase in value.

The development restrictions mean that if you can afford to buy a bit of purely agricultural land, you can work it, but you are not allowed to live on it - not



© The author at home.

in a house, not in a shack, not in a caravan, not in a tent, not in a tree, not in an abandoned fox-hole, not even in a sleeping bag under the stars. You have to rent or buy a house within the development area. But this is so absurdly expensive, no one could afford it on the meagre amount that can be earned off a smallholding, when industrial farmers with 1,000 acres or more are churning out subsidized produce for next to nothing - not to mention getting paid £150 per acre for leaving a proportion of their land

untilled.

In other words, unless you've got stacks of money, if you want to do it yourself in the country, you're bugged. The best option for many seems to be to wander around from place to place in caravans, trucks and buses. And now even this is being criminalised by the CJB.

Tinkers Bubble is a deliberate attempt to challenge this state of affairs. Last year a group of us were offered a decent bit of land - 40 acres, south-facing with a spring, orchards and woodland - and amazingly between us we found the money to buy it (at about the same price as a two bedroom house in the neighbouring village). We've stuck up benders there and signalled our intention to live there in a modest but exuberant harmony with nature.

South Somerset planners say we can't do this; we might conceivably be allowed to do it if we were "viable" - but viable in their terms means grossing about a quarter of a million quid a year to pay for all the machinery and chemicals that they consider necessary for working the land - and having enough land to justify that amount of machinery..

We say that, as far as we're concerned, we can be viable. Most of us are used to living off the £45 or so per week dole. With the subsistence opportunities offered by the land - water, firewood, fruit and vegetables, dairy products, and solar and wind energy - together with the money we can earn from timber cultivation, woodwork and agriculture, we reckon that after a number of years of trial and error, we should be able to live pretty comfortably, without



sponging off the surplus the British state acquires through playing financial markets and exploiting Third World peasants.

We also tell them that if we are forced to go and live in a rented house in the neighbouring town, then the expense of rent, council tax, water bills, fuel bills, and transport to get us back and forth between land and home will make us non-viable. We'll have to keep signing on, "looking for work", filling in those silly green forms - we won't legally be allowed to work more than 20 hours per week on our holding and most of the income we get from it will be deducted from our dole so it will become pointless. State-supported housing, we tell them, is a poverty trap - if they want us to get off the dole, then they should allow us the land and the planning flexibility to do it ourselves - because we don't want their over-mechanised, chemically-intensive, planet-gobbling jobs.

We are not the only group in Somerset trying in some degree to do it ourselves. A bender site in East Pannard, a travellers site at Dommett's Wood and another at Slough Green near Taunton have all applied for planning permission to get a stable living place together within the limitations of the land they have at their disposal.

All four of these planning applications have been turned down, though sometimes by very small margins - we at Tinkers Bubble, lost ours by six votes to seven. All four have been given between six months to a year's grace, before being moved off. And all four are planning to appeal.

Yet, encouragingly, councillors and planners are beginning to take what we're saying seriously. South Somerset District Council recently adopted a new draft structure plan which says that

"favourable consideration will be given to the development of derelict or unused sites in the countryside" to provide "short term transit sites .... long term residential sites", and sites for "low-impact dwellings in conjunction with agriculture/permaculture proposals".

This is really sensible, in fact almost visionary, policy. Unfortunately, so far, Somerset councils are going about implementing it in completely the wrong way. At a village called Middlezoy, the county council forced through planning permission for a traveller site in a place where there weren't any travellers. The irate villagers mounted a bitter campaign against this threat to their rural tranquillity and even, perversely, squatted the site themselves. All that the well-meaning council achieved by this exercise was to ignite the latent local prejudice against travellers, with the additional threat of interference by an outside authority. And yet when we try to do it ourselves on "derelict and unused land", and to take on the responsibility ourselves for demonstrating to understandably suspicious local residents that we're in fact not nearly as bad as the gutter press makes out, the councils regularly turn our applications down.

However we are optimistic. There are some well-intentioned thoughtful people on local councils (a hell of a lot more than there are in the present government) but, operating as they do within a cumbersome hierarchy, it takes them a bit of time to get anything sensible together, even when they have a mind to.

We are also aware that all around the country there are initiatives like ours in

Somerset to gain a bit of space. When the CJB clamps down on squatting and customary stopping rights for travellers, then more and more people will be putting in planning applications, either on their own land or on derelict land owned by the council or some other body.

In fact, if you don't consciously want to be nomadic, putting in a planning application has a number of advantages over squatting or shifting from site to site. It buys time - often a lot of time. It gives you a respectable soapbox from which to put your case across to the authorities, the press and local people. It makes you stop and think out more thoroughly what it is you are actually trying to do. And it encourages a more constructive "lets get our shit together and show them" approach, rather than the nihilistic fatalism that has done so much harm to the travellers and squatters movement over the last decade.

Gradually, as the CJB comes nearer to being a reality, an as yet unformalised network is emerging, focused on planning issues and access to land for those of us who don't buy TV culture but want to do it ourselves. If you have anything constructive to contribute towards the growth of such a network, please write to the author care of SQUALL.

a message to the planners



from a panel of experts

# Get On Your Land!

## Land ownership in Britain and a new way forward

**L**and ownership is notoriously unequal in this country and this fact is quietly lurking behind some of the present legislation in the Criminal Justice Bill. At present it is estimated that between 50 and 75% of all land in the UK is owned by 1% of the population. Scotland is rumoured to have the most unequal land ownership in the entire world. Due to the unavailability of information and lack of openness in Government departments, nobody actually knows for certain who owns what. In 1981, Mrs. Thatcher conveniently wound up the Royal Commission on Income and Wealth, a body that was investigating land holdings.

What is well-documented is that over hundreds of years previously common land, under the jurisdiction of local communities, has slowly become more concentrated. Ever-larger estates are accumulating vast wealth at the expense of the poorer majority of people. The processes of industrialisation, land enclosure and clearances conveniently concentrated the labouring classes in towns, while colonialism allowed the removal of the historic dependence between people and land through imports of staple foodstuffs and luxuries. Today, labour-intensive industrialism is dead, 5.2 million people claim income support and housing and agriculture is in crisis. However, there are a few tentative but living examples of real change now up and running. It is time to raise the flag of land reform in the UK. There must be a new way forward for the next millenium.



day, many large estates have been in existence for hundreds of years. Primogeniture (the passing of the estate to the eldest son) insured many large properties remained intact, while the aristocracy have also successfully absorbed new blood and new wealth, so surviving to today (unlike in France). Land has always been the ultimate bank account for the aristocracy and the 'new' rich.

Since the last proper land census, way back in 1875, not much has changed. Four of the top ten landowners in the table over were present in the 1875 top ten. Not bad, considering

### 1066 and all that

When William the Conqueror divided the country up among his English and French supporters, he was only continuing what the Anglo-Saxon nobles had already established: semi-independent earldoms or shires maintained through strength. Two thousand English Chiefs welcomed William as their new king, hoping for spoils of the defeated Harold's estates. Over the following years, the aristocracy gradually became Anglo-Norman, as estates were handed out in return for support for the king, especially in times of war. Land and titles became a strategic form of protection for the monarchy and the quarrelsome barons.

Although few of the original landed aristocratic families have survived to the present

### TOP 10 INSTITUTIONAL LANDOWNERS 1994

	Acres
1 Forestry Commission	2,100,000
2 Ministry of Defence	601,000
3 National Trust	565,000
4 Utilities (water, electricity, etc.)	550,000
5 Pension funds/Insurance Companies (est.)	500,000
6 County Farms (owned by Local Authorities)	350,000
7 Crown Estate	300,000
8 Oxbridge colleges	250,000
9 Church of England/individual churches	200,000
10 Co-Operative Wholesale Soc. Agriculture Ltd.	175,000

(estimates based on various sources where no annual reports or public statements found; The Guardian 13-8-94)

the changes the 20th century brought; the welfare state, technology, universal suffrage, death duties etc. The Second Domesday Survey of 1875 also found that only 20% of England and Wales was owned by commoners, 970,000 of them in all, meaning most of them had tiny plots. Meanwhile, a quarter of England and Wales was owned by 710 individuals. It has been estimated that more than half the families in the 1875 survey still own all or part of the land they did then.

However, all this information is over 100 years old. Today we are only half as informed as the Victorians were. What has made this situation doubly worse is the introduction of set-aside payments of the Common Agricultural Policy. Large landowners can now claim an average of £253 per hectare of taxpayers money, for doing virtually nothing. The Maffia (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food) estimates this to amount to £1.1 billion per year, but will not say who this is for or how much each person gets. Seven particular farmers will receive £500,000 between them this year, and 33,000 will benefit in all.

Combined with the 'Peace Dividend', brought by the end of the Cold War, this all means that there is a large amount of 'excess' land in this country. All over Europe too, land is being taken out of production. If the former Eastern Bloc countries also get their immense agricultural potential going, then there could be even greater pressure to reduce over-production.

So the time is ripe for people who wish to 'get back to the land', or get out of the crumbling inner cities, or escape unemployment, to make their voices heard. There are surely many who would long for the chance to own a smallholding and contribute to the local and national economy through sustainable food production and associated job creation. The Government *should* also be interested in schemes which could take people off benefit and regenerate rural areas.

Of course, this won't be easy. Simon Fairlie of Tinker's Bubble (see page 24) talks of the problems of planning law which need to be overcome. But groups like the Bubble and Exodus (page 40) are living proof of the possibilities open to us.

There has never been a better

### TOP 10 INDIVIDUAL LANDOWNERS 1994

	Acres
1 Duke of Buccleuch/Buccleuch Estates Co.	277,000
2 Duke of Westminster/Grosvenor Estates	190,000
3 Earl of Seafield	185,000
4 Prince of Wales/Duchy of Cornwall	141,000
5 Duke of Atholl	130,000
6 Countess of Sutherland	126,000
7 Captain AA Farquharson	119,000
8 Earl of Stair	110,000
9 Sir Donald Cameron of Lochiel	98,000
10 Duke of Northumberland	95,000

(NB Individual ownership is almost always held in some form of trust or corporation; The Guardian 13-8-94)

time to assert our natural rights to the land taken from our forefathers by those with more power, privilege and money. It is time for those in power to start giving back what was ours in the first place. Ordinary people can make much more *productive* use of land than large landowners, employing and housing more people, and producing better food and products in the process. It is just a matter of overcoming the perceived 'radical' nature of the ethos of land reform; it's not radical, it's simply social justice.

The author of this article, **Glyn Walters**, proposes the setting up of a Land Reform Society to encourage the redistribution of some of the large areas of land currently going to waste in this country.

A national forum is foreseen, bringing together Government departments, landowners, farmers, planners, housing groups, would-be small-holders and individuals.

Its main aims would be to house people in decent affordable housing and to produce locally grown organic food on a moderate scale. These two aims would in turn deal with a number of social and environmental problems:

**Homelessness.** There simply aren't enough decent homes in this country. Many options are available: new, affordable houses; low impact dwellings; renovation of empty properties; reforming the planning laws; splitting up of large estates and farms;

converting office space; increasing travellers sites etc.

**Crime, Poverty and Unemployment.** By creating new sustainable communities based on smallholdings, the poverty trap of unemployment would be alleviated. Giving people the opportunity to work and live on the land would lessen their dependence on the State, creating produce and thousands of jobs. Crime would be reduced through stable communities and productive, rewarding work.

**Intensive Agriculture and Set-Aside.** The last 50 years have seen an almost complete destruction of traditional farming methods through subsidy and mechanization. Thousands of workers are still being pushed off the land every year through chemical over-production. Farmers are now also being paid millions to leave their land idle. This preposterous situation must change. The answer lies in organic smallholdings producing healthy, cheap produce.

**War Games and The Peace Dividend.** Large amounts of the Ministry of Defence's huge land-holdings are no longer needed, much of this land was originally common land anyway. These should be redistributed to new small communities not the highest bidder. A national asset is being sold off to line the pockets of Government and middlemen.

If you wish to get involved write to Glyn Walters, c/o SQUALL magazine.



# You've Been QUANGO'D

There are now more people working for quangos than there are in local government. Freelance housing journalist, **Patrick Nother**, takes a look at the disappearing accountability, as exemplified by the rise of the faceless housing quango.

Once upon a time, in the 50s and 60s, nearly every BBC news broadcast seemed to end with the plummy, dinner jacketed newscaster reading announcements from the Government or Opposition about council dwellings completed or new numbers promised. Both Labour and the Conservatives loudly boasted their commitment to an ever-expanding programme of new build, as slums were cleared and system-built estates went up in their place.

Much of the development has

long since been regretted, as 'streets in the sky' turned out to be so much 'pie in the sky' and faith in steel and concrete crumbled. But the level of output was phenomenal, with the municipal housing boom peaking in 1967 when over 200,000 homes were built. By 1979 the local councils of Great Britain owned a grand total of more than 6.5 million homes.

But no longer. Since the early '80s almost a quarter of the stock has been lost through 'right to buy' and large scale transfers to housing

associations (HAs) and housing action trusts, while development of new social housing has become the almost exclusive preserve of HAs. Last year local authorities built only 1,200 homes.

No one can claim that the Government has anything that even resembles a coherent housing policy, but it does have a number of dogmas and treasury-led constraints which will continue to transform the provision of social housing.

One initiative is the promotion of HAs as managing agents of the 864,000 mostly privately owned empty properties around the country (the HAMA Initiative), while new developments are cut back. Private landlords and letting agents are getting in on the act, but things are moving very slowly and are of little comfort to the tens of thousands of squatters threatened with imminent



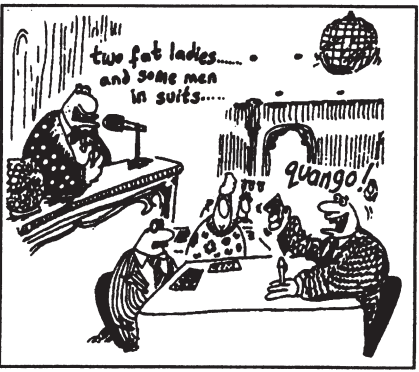
now own 65% of total association stock, that in no time they break away from the movement and turn themselves into private limited companies (plcs). Such pressure already bears on them.

Since the 1988 Housing Act introduced a regime of mixed funding for HAs, with increasingly smaller grant (HAG) rates requiring closer and closer relationships with private lenders, successful associations have become very familiar with the ways of The City.

The recently announced Housing Association Grant (HAG) rate for 1995/96 of 58% (down from 62% this year) will mean even fiercer competition for private loans, and plc status could provide an association with opportunities for creatively utilising the equity locked in its properties, ensuring future private funding at even lower HAG rates. The Government is already considering offering HAG to private developers in competition with HAs.

Or it might just go the whole hog and curtail bricks and mortar subsidy altogether, allowing social rents to rise to a market level with problems of affordability being addressed through the personal subsidy of housing benefit payments. But then there are also plans to cut housing benefit! Either or both moves would further marginalise workers already condemned to low incomes in Mr Major's much trumpeted "low wage economy".

Government policy has quangoed social housing, with housing quangos effectively removing new housing provision out of the control of democratically accountable local councils. It now seems quite capable, in one way or another, of privatising it all.



eviction by the Criminal Justice Bill. But the big political issue of the last few years has been that of the overall quangoisation of new housing provision through HAs as well as their funder and regulator, the Housing Corporation (HC). But be forewarned, in the future this may appear relatively benign.

Quangos (quasi autonomous non-governmental organisations) are bodies which do the work of government without being democratically elected or accountable. A recent report by Charter 88 (Ego Trip - Extra Governmental Organisations in the UK and their Accountability) identified more than 5,500 executive bodies from all walks of public life lacking the "scrutiny, openness and accountability which are essential in a democracy".

With about 70,000 appointees on their boards (these individuals have become known as "the New Magistracy"), in 1992/93 they spent almost a third of all public expenditure. More, that is, than all of local government.

The second largest individual quango is the Housing Corporation, with a budget of nearly £2.4 billion in that year (though now beginning to fall). The Corporation's committee and chief executive are government appointments and while it claims a consultative role with its real boss, the minister of housing, for all intents and purposes it just carries out his policy.

Charter 88's quango count

includes more than 2,000 HAs, although associations are voluntary or charitable bodies. But they operate "at the local level under appointed or self-appointing committees", which is how Charter 88 defines the New Magistracy. And they also spend the HC's money for it. In line with Citizen Major's replacement of democratic rights with consumer rights, HAs' "customers" have a Tenants Charter and an Ombudsman.

Before it became the Government's chosen vehicle (or "poodle", as some have called it) for providing new social housing, the voluntary housing movement complemented council housing, meeting a broad range of specialist needs. Over the last half decade, however, the movement has expanded rapidly and now manages about a million dwellings.

This has created a serious identity crisis, and the movement's self-doubts and internal contradictions are currently being addressed by a Governance Inquiry, set up by the National Federation of Housing Associations (NFHA). This is looking at such questions as should the present voluntary committee members be paid, and what exactly should be the relationship of the committee to the chief executive and senior officers?

Just about anything could result from the Inquiry, but one very possible scenario has the introduction of optional payments to directors so inculcating the culture of commercialism into the 90-odd "premier league" associations who

# WESTMALADMINISTER CITY COUNCIL - A NATIONAL EMBARRASSMENT

When an independent investigator publicly concludes that a local authority has acted in a “disgraceful, improper and unlawful” manner, you can be sure there are bags of dirt under the carpet. The independent investigator is John Magill, a top city accountant and district auditor for Westminster. The local authority is of course, Westminster City Council. The implications are national. **Jim Carey** sweeps the dirt back out into the open.

John Magill's 700 page provisional report published last January (the full report is yet to come), left no doubt that Westminster City Council under Dame Shirley Porter's leadership, had selectively sold off council houses with the intention of attracting Conservative voters into the marginally held wards of the Borough.

The documents pertaining to the investigation contained unequivocal evidence of the Council's intention to remove homeless people from the Borough as “they are not our natural supporters” and to selectively sell council houses to Conservative voters in order to “increase our support” in “key wards”. As a personal friend of Margaret Thatcher, Porter felt safe that the scheme would never backfire on her and as a result, the council's real intentions were both documented and candid.

The implications that turn this incidence of local authority corruption into a matter of national significance, are that the sale of council houses as a national policy, was always designed to please potential Tory voters. The only difference between the national policy and that adopted by the accused members of Westminster City Council, is that the real intentions were never documented as such by national Government. The promised land of freely available mortgages and council house sales was an attempt to sign people up for the very life the Conservative Party were always thought to defend -

namely one with business interests.

Once an occupier buys the house in which they live, their interest in that property becomes economic, they would then be more likely to vote for the political party that had enabled them to join the home owner's club, and the party that was best known for protecting the interests of club members. Unfortunately, the essence of the business ethic lies in competition and, of course, in competition there are at least as many, if not more, losers than there are winners. Hundreds of thousands of people whose homes were subsequently repossessed as the mortgage dream collapsed, and thousands of council house buyers stuck in properties with negative equity, are the symptoms of the promised land turned golden calf.

The connection between Westminster Council's “social engineering” and national Government policy was made even more obvious by the announcement in July that the Government's review of homelessness procedures, based in part on Westminster's example, is to be implemented nationally despite a consultation process that provoked somewhere in the region of 10,000 negative responses. (See SQUALL 7 ‘Consultation Exorcise’.)

Taken in part from a confidential document put together by Westminster City Council and entitled “Homelessness; a Shopping List for Change”, the new national policy aims to remove the

statutory right of ‘priority need’ homeless people to permanent accommodation, place even more emphasis on the private rented sector (rather than public housing) - as a solution to homelessness and to allow councils to ‘export’ homeless people outside their borough.

It is for these reasons that the public exposure of Westminster City Council's clearly stated ulterior motives are of such acute embarrassment to the Government. Sir Edward Heath said that, if the accusations levelled in Magill's report were true, it was “the heaviest blow the Conservative Party has had to take in living memory”. To fully appreciate the background to Heath's statement, it is vital to appreciate that both Westminster City Council and fellow Tory council Wandsworth have been held up on numerous occasions as shining examples of Conservative local government. Hence David Hunt, ex-employment secretary, claimed, at a local government conference in 1990, Westminster to be one of the Tories' “stunning successes..... a source of cheer for every Conservative”.

The cheers are silenced now and look set to become an embarrassingly inappropriate applause for a council that will be further publicly exposed when the full public hearing, chaired by John Magill, commences in October. However, because of the major political ramifications of the scandal, it is unlikely that the investigations and exposures will be easily concluded.

In April of this year, one week before local council elections, the BBC had planned to broadcast a Panorama programme explicitly detailing the political manipulations at Westminster City Hall. It would have been a programme scheduling catastrophic to Conservative candidates running for re-election in Westminster. Then, without any convincing explanation, the BBC pulled the programme, deciding instead to run it a few weeks after the elections. No-one

## OUR LOCAL COUNCIL'S BALANCED ITS BUDGET



was in any doubt that this re-scheduling was a diplomatic move by the BBC, concerned with the impending government review of its charter to broadcast. Instead, Michael Portillo appeared with the prospective Tory candidates in pre-election media shoots saying: "There is nothing wrong with Westminster. It really is outrageous that people are casting aspersions on Westminster when all that has happened is that a report has been published to which a defence can be mounted."

As a consequence, the Conservatives were once again elected to run the Borough; sheer force of manipulation ensuring against what would have been a major local government disaster. The present leader of the Council, Miles Young, even had the audacity to claim that the suspension of Westminster Council's political methods as a result of Magill's report was "a disappointment to the residents of Westminster's housing estates". It was therefore no surprise when, in August of this year, his name and the names of four others were added to the original list of ten named council officials implicated in the gerrymandering scandal and due to be further investigated.

One of the original ten, Dr Michael Dutt, was found dead in his flat two weeks after the publication of Magill's provisional report. Lying next to him were the shotgun he had used to kill himself and several pages of the report. The Westminster Tories made an effort to capitalise on Dutt's death by suggesting that it was the overt and accusative language used in Magill's report that led to his despair rather than the ramifications of what he had been involved in.

Wandsworth Borough Council, the other Tory flag-ship local authority and pioneer of council-house sales, are also under investigation after selling a record 19,000 council houses whilst still having a waiting list of 6,000 homeless people. Recent investigations have also shown that half of the homeless families housed by Wandsworth Borough Council under its present statutory duties, have been farmed out to private rented accommodation in other Boroughs.

Both Westminster and Wandsworth have pioneered some of the proposals recently put forward in the Government's homelessness review, which makes into national policy some of the tactics deemed to be "disgraceful" and "improper" in John Magill's report. For these reasons it will be extremely important to the Conservative Party, and this Government in particular, that the political implications of "the heaviest

blow the Conservative Party has had to take in living memory" are cotton-wooled, muddled and re-explained more abstractly. Their difficulty will lie in the fact that the documentary evidence clearly exposing the ulterior motives behind council house sales is already in the public domain.

Both the 14 implicated officials still alive, and the Government, will be hoping that time and prevarication will shroud the scandal in a cloak of public forgetfulness, allowing the techniques to continue, masked in less candid ways. The district auditor's investigation has taken four years and has longer to run. The confiscation of further files and documents from Westminster City Hall over the summer fueled speculation of the further exposures to come.

It is still unknown when the final and full report will be published. However, with the weight of evidence mounting up against Shirley Porter and other Westminster Tories, it looks likely that it will be even more damning than the provisional report released last January. The 13 'objectors' who filed the original complaint to the auditor, will still have to find the resources to take the accused Tories through the High Court. There is little doubt that Porter et al will employ expensive lawyers and more, in an effort to avoid legal responsibility for what they now seem unarguably to be guilty of.

Having trumpeted Westminster City Council as such a shining example of local government, and having partly based its national review of homelessness policy on Westminster's example, the Government are unlikely to allow Magill's exposure to go unhindered by further political interference. - Watch this space.

*In order to provide more inmates for the construction of camps set up to do various SS projects, "Himmler widened the list of anti-socials to be arrested arbitrarily; tramps and vagabonds, beggars even those with a fixed address - gypsies and people who travelled from place to place like gypsies if they showed no will to work regularly". These and others "who do not want to adapt themselves to the orderly Volk community" were all cited in a special Nazi decree on December 14th 1937. A month later this list of arrestable undesirables was extended to include the "work-shy"*

EXTRACT FROM Peter Padfield's biography of Heinrich Himmler, Head of SS Gestapo - "Himmler. Reichsfuhrer SS".

# A Scandal Unfolds

The documents quoted in this chronology are a compilation of passages contained in the 12,000 documents that district auditor John Magill read during the course of his investigation. They were never designed for public perusal and as a consequence, offer a remarkably candid exposure of Westminster City Council's intentions.

**1986** - Dame Shirley Porter, Tesco heiress and once named as the 20th wealthiest woman in Europe, is elected as leader of Westminster City Council. The Conservative majority on the council is just four wards, with many of the wards held by only a handful of votes.

One of Porter's first acts is to ask Patricia Kirwan, chair of housing, for an investigative paper "covering the possibilities of balancing the social mix in Westminster" and to examine the costs of "homeless/down and outs who are not our natural supporters."

**1986** - John Magill, senior partner in top accountant firm Touche Ross, is appointed as district auditor for Westminster with responsibility for investigating maladministration. This follows the filing of a complaint by 13 'objectors', all of whom are residents of the Borough.

**24th June 1986** - A Westminster Tory councillor meeting is told by Shirley Porter, David Weeks and Barry Legg (now a Tory MP) that "the majority party intend to win the next election and that that would be the focus of their attention". The minutes of the meeting also refer to "social engineering-housing". Six days later another meeting is convened by Porter to discuss the "economic justification for gerrymander on housing" and the "gentrification" of the Borough.

**1986** - A seminar for Westminster Tories takes place. A paper is

presented explaining: "What is gentrification? In short it is ensuring that the right people live in the right areas. The areas are relatively easy to define: target wards identified on the basis of electoral trends and results."

**September 1986** - Shirley Porter sends a paper to senior Westminster Tories advising that the Council should "test the law to its limits" and move homeless people to "property outside Westminster". She also adds: "When you've read these documents....it would be helpful if you swallow them in good spy fashion otherwise they might self-destruct!!"

**1987** - Shirley Porter promotes Dr Michael Dutt as a housing committee vice-chairman, despite the fact that he has no previous knowledge or experience of housing matters. The following year he is further promoted to joint chairman of the housing committee.

**1987** - Westminster City Council launches the "Building Stable Communities" project (BSC). The word "battlezone" is used to describe wards marginally held by Conservatives and documents refer to "increasing our support" and "more electors" in the said "battlezones".

Another document identifies that "the problem can be simply stated. If it is accepted that owner-occupiers are more inclined to vote Conservative, then we approach the city council elections in 1990 with an

enormous handicap. The short term objective must be to target the marginal wards and as a matter of utmost urgency redress the imbalance by encouraging a pattern of [housing] tenure which is more likely to translate into Conservative votes."

The BSC action plan identifies the fact that 28% of Westminster residents own their own homes, compared to a national average of 62%. A BSC action plan is drawn up to "maximise the number of right-to-buy sales, particularly in key wards" via "a major sales drive". The action plan also attempts to "ensure that all grants paid to housing associations are for schemes which complement the BSC".

**1987** - Westminster City Council sells three Westminster cemeteries for five pence each, in order to extricate itself from the responsibilities of maintenance. After a public and media outcry and an ombudsman ruling declaring the sale as "maladministration causing injustice", Porter is forced to make a rare public apology and purchase back the cemeteries for nearly £5 million. Dame Shirley Porter survives a mute Audit Commission investigation into the maladministration surrounding the cemeteries affair.

**May 1988** - An extraneous weekend "strategy conference" organised by Shirley Porter, takes place at Camberley in Hampshire. Unbelievably, the title of one of the conference sessions is "Winning the election. Dirty tricks", with a minute found on one of the documents that reads: "PK to lead dirt squad". 'PK' is thought to refer to Patricia Kirwin, a Tory councillor and housing committee chairwoman who made an unsuccessful bid to challenge Porter for the leadership in 1987, and consequently resigned over the gerrymandering affair.

Evidence of 'high string pulling' was also revealed by the

minutes taken at the meeting referring to several individuals high up in Thatcher's Government: "Ask Secretary of State for help", "Approach Brian Griffith for help" and "Speak to T. Bell about identifying a suitable secondee from marketing industry". The Secretary of State in question was probably the late Nicholas Ridley at the DoE, a friend of Shirley Porter and resident of Westminster. Brian Griffith was head of Thatcher's policy group and Tim Bell was Thatcher's PR man.

**1988** - Ambrosden Hostel sheltering 96 homeless people is closed down by Westminster City Council, despite protestations from Cardinal Basil Hume who lives over the road in the Cathedral. The building is subsequently sold to developers who convert them into flats for sale.

**1989** - Patricia Kirwin tells BBC Panorama that the Council's plan was to "increase the number of upwardly mobile Conservative-type voters in specific key areas to ensure the vote went up".

**1990** - Bill Phillips, managing director of the Council, shreds potentially revealing documents. "My enquiries have not been assisted by the contemporaneous shredding of documents," reports Magill. "I have been unable to ascertain whether any documents relevant to the subject matter of the objection were shredded by Mr Phillips."

Magill then noted that he had obtained from other sources, documents pertaining to council activities that were absent without explanation from Bill Phillip's files.

**1990** - Margaret Thatcher, friend of Shirley Porter, is removed as prime minister, leaving Porter without her strongest political ally.

**1990** - Patricia Kirwin begins spilling the full story about the Council's plotting to the Audit Commission. Meanwhile Shirley Porter approaches Michael Heseltine, Secretary of State for the Environment at the time, asking that he should consider sacking Howard Davies, head of the Audit Commission. Michael Heseltine refuses to even see Shirley Porter and Department of Environment officials remind her that the audit commission is an independent body and that, even as Audit Commission controller, Howard Davies cannot control the operations of the district auditor, John Magill.

Despite this however, several "top level" leaks are sent to the Evening Standard suggesting that the members of the Audit Commission wanted Howard Davies to resign. The Evening Standard contacts members of the Commission and finds that they all still have full confidence in Howard Davies. Consequently the Standard doesn't publish the obviously false 'leaks'.

**1991** - One of Shirley Porter's employees hands over documents to The Observer, revealing the existence of a "slush fund" used to support Porter's campaign to abolish the GLC. The fund is hidden under the name 'Foundation for Business Responsibility' and, as a registered charity, qualified its donors for tax relief.

The charity is also used to raise funds for a company called Marketforce, which campaigned on behalf of the Conservatives in the local elections of 1990. The chairman of the charity, Sir Nigel Mobbs, is also chairman of a company called Slough Estates, which have made extensive contributions to Tory Party funds over the years.

**13th January 1994** - John Magill, after a four year investigation, announces his provisional report into the scandal. The present deputy leader of the Westminster Council, Simon Milton, says: "We have to question a system of local government inspection which can allow the production of the most damaging report in the most lurid language that can

allow loyal hard working public servants to live with the threat of being professionally and financially ruined."

The Evening Standard's front page headlines for the day read: "Verdict on Dame Shirley in 'Homes for Votes' Scandal - U N L A W F U L , DISGRACEFUL, IMPROPER". Dame Shirley Porter is unavailable for comment, having left the country for her holiday home in Palm Springs, California.

**26th January 1994** - Dr Michael Dutt, one of ten named officials responsible for the 'designated sales' gerrymandering scam, is found dead in his St Albans flat. Dr Dutt, who faced a £2 million surcharge for his part in the scandal, is found with a shotgun, a suicide note and pages from Magill's report strewn around the room.

Several Westminster Tories attempt to make mileage out of his suicide by suggesting that it was the manner of Magill's investigation and the outrageous conclusions that he came to, that

lead Dutt to take his own life.

**18th February 1994** - Squatting activists occupy Artillery Mansions, a large building containing 411 empty flats just 100 yards from Westminster City Hall. During the course of the occupation it is discovered that the building has been empty for 18 years and that efforts by various agencies to bring the property into use as short term housing for the homeless have been thwarted by Council insistence that only "professional" people should be housed there.

**March 1994** - John Magill investigates Westminster City Hall and impounds files relating to the Council's 'Building Stable Communities' project (BSC) A second enquiry based on the BSC population manipulation is to begin in 1995. Magill considers it "prudent" to keep the impounded files under lock and key until the enquiry commences.

**Early July 1994** - Dame Shirley Porter fails in her High Court attempt to have John Magill

dismissed as district auditor.

**Late July 1994** - The 'objectors' who filed the original complaint of council misconduct to the district auditor, submit further allegations to John Magill following the discovery of "fresh evidence", implicating five more council officials in the scandal. These include Miles Young - present leader of Westminster City Council, Alex Segal - chairman of social services, Mathew Ives - City solicitor, Sid Sporle - director of planning and Ken Hackney - a senior housing officer.

Miles Young responds by denying everything: "I intend to treat this further complaint in the same way I have all the other political attacks on this matter - with a lot of cynicism about motives, and complete confidence that they are absolutely baseless."

**October 1994** - A public hearing begins into the 'designated sales' schemes, conducted by John Magill.

## Magill's Report

published in January 1994 after a four year investigation.

"My provisional view is that the council was engaged in gerrymandering. That is what was discussed at the meeting attended among others by the leader (Shirley Porter), Councillor Peter Hartley (later chairman of housing); and Mr Graham England (housing director) on 30 June 1986 - a policy to achieve electoral advantage of the Conservative Party in eight marginal wards was devised by leading members, particularly Lady Porter, Weeks and Legg, with co-operation from officers including the managing director (Bill Phillips) and the director of housing.

"Smokescreens were erected to mask the purpose of that policy; part of that policy was the adoption of a programme of increased designated sales in marginal wards; that policy and a programme of increased designated sales in marginal wards were implemented by the council and were the subject of monitoring against electoral targets in those marginal wards."

"[the £21.2 million was used] not merely for an improper purpose but also one which was disgraceful, and this would render unlawful any decision taken for this purpose.

"She [Shirley Porter] was concerned to secure an increase in the number of home owners and a reduction in the number of homeless households accommodated in marginal wards by 1990, in order to increase the number of likely Conservative voters in those wards in the 1990 local government elections.

"Lady Porter knew it was wrong for the council to exercise its powers to secure an electoral advantage for any political party or to gerrymander or, in pursuit of such advantage for her party, she was at least recklessly indifferent as to whether it was right or wrong. In my provisional view, any loss or deficiency resulting from those decisions was caused by her wilful misconduct."

# *International Squatters*

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The specific housing problems leading to squatting vary enormously around the world but underlying them all is the usual corruption around land and property which is found everywhere from Ankara to Zaria. **Sam Beale** writes... (additional Spanish material by **Emma Eastwood**.)

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## **Illegal Cities**

The United Nations Secretariat has estimated that, on average, squatter settlements outside Third World cities are growing at 15% a year; up to four times faster than overall city growth rate.

It is now common for 30-60% of a Third World city's population to live in settlements which have developed illegally. Squatters account for 46% of Mexico City's population, 80% of Doula's, 90% of Addis Ababa's. In many Third World cities 70-90% of new housing is built illegally.

The reasons for the development of squatter settlements are highly complex. Large numbers of people, frequently young, leave their rural homes and migrate to cities. They move because they are dispossessed; because their families cannot be supported on meagre rural incomes or they cannot find work; because they live in a war zone; because they want to improve their lives and their children's chances. Once they get there they find, if they did not already know, that jobs are scarce and rents are high. They then have to find somewhere to live.

As soon as an area has public services such as water and surfaced roads, land prices, and thus rents, increase by as much as four times. In other words as soon as an area is habitable the poor can no longer afford to live there. Speculators battle with hotels, multinationals, banks etc., who all want the land closest to the centre of the city. As a result the poor are further and further marginalised and have less chance of finding work.

Governments, it seems, fail to connect their own lack of investment in rural areas and the lack of affordable housing in cities with the emergence of squatter settlements. Neither do they recognise the importance of their migrant squatter population as spontaneous 'city-builders'. Usually these people are refused recognition as citizens at all. They provide the cities with much of their cheap labour and are vulnerable to serious exploitation yet their governments feel little compulsion to house them, often treating them, at best, as an undesirable eyesore. So they house themselves.

Despite appalling government neglect, these people are not helpless victims. When faced with a housing crisis they respond practically and rationally; they squat.

They acquire land in a variety of ways: gradually, through one or two families moving onto a piece of

land; through the illegal sub-division of existing plots as is common in Mexico; or through a group of households planning an occupation (which often taken place during high profile official visits etc when violent repression is unwise). Occupations have traditionally been the commonest method of land acquisition in cities such as Lima, Caracas, Ankara, and Rio de Janeiro.

In some places, semi-legal settlements develop on land with no planning permission such as Bogota where 'pirate urbanisation' occurs. In parts of Africa and Melanesia the poor often get permission from local officials or tribal chiefs to live on communal land so they only have to face the problems of constructing their homes.

Squatters are viewed differently in every country and their treatment within countries changes with each government. Attitudes depend on whether the settlement is on public or private land; whether the government's best interests are served by their existence for cheap labour; how much pressure from the rich there is to remove them; and whether the government can actually do anything about them at all.

In some instances squatters have been offered alternative, less commercially viable sites and there are a few examples of positive

**.. SLUMS . . . SHANTIES . . . BUSTEES . . . BARRIOS .**

changes in government policy such as the Mexican Government's creation of a National Fund for Popular Housing and the Million Houses Programme which upgraded squatter settlements in Sri Lanka. But these are merely drops of sanity in a bureaucratic ocean of official neglect and expediency. Harassment and heavy-handed evictions are much more commonplace. The forcible removal of squatters and violent bulldozing of their settlements has invariably little to do with 'health hazards' as the authorities would have them believe. Evictions are more often connected to, for example, the proximity of the settlement to a possible commercial business centre. In South Africa, under apartheid, spontaneous settlements were permitted in some rural areas but violent evictions of squatter camps in urban areas were frequent; the settlement of black peoples next to white areas were seen as too much of a threat.

When planning low-cost housing schemes to house the very poor, governments around the world seem unable to grasp the fact that the designs and building materials used by squatters are by far the most appropriate to local needs and resources. Official projects are usually based on planners' assumptions about good housing and wholly inappropriate Western models which often take no account of local climate, building materials or the real needs of the people. They are built to excessively high Western standards and so are usually limited in number and way beyond the wage packet of the average squatter, benefiting only middle income families. The poorest households and those headed by women have often been ineligible for rehousing applications. Even where the poorest squatters are rehoused there are frequent examples of them becoming worse off because of the cost of rents, utilities, and transport to work.

Commentators are quite clear that in those cities where squatters are not threatened with eviction they are quite capable of improving their housing conditions. Governments

have much to learn from squatters' committees and self-governing communities such as Villa El Salvador in Lima where, over 20 years, the squatters have made improvements and created a vibrant community. Spontaneous houses are gradually improved as squatters make them more solid and build extensions. Houses are built to be flexible, they grow as families grow and settlements expand as more people move to the city and build near families and friends.



However, this consolidation of housing isn't an option without security of tenure for settlements, incomes for the squatters, and the availability of services which are often dependent on the attitudes of local politicians, some of who may pressurize local authorities. In several Latin American cities the provision of utilities have been directly linked to the promise of support for a political group or personality.

In African, Asian, and Latin American cities the vast majority of the urban population are too poor to

consolidate their housing because they can't afford land, rent or even building materials. These people, hundreds of millions of them worldwide, will continue to squat land and scrape a living in whatever way they can. Indifference, neglect nor bulldozers will make them disappear. Governments have, at the very least, a responsibility not to harass and repress them when they are trying to meet their own needs. Clearly there is lunacy in any law which makes the basics of daily existence illegal for so many people. As in Western cities, criminalising squatters is not an answer. Instead, existing settlements could be provided with basic services cheaply and improved with the help and local knowledge of the most important builders and planners in the Third World; the squatters themselves. However, this is not enough to improve the lives of the people who daily flood to the world's cities; a trend which shows no signs of reversing. Ultimately much resisted, changes in the distribution of land and urban resources, and restraints on speculative interests are the only real solution.

## SPAIN

### The Battle for Euskal Jai

The IGA, a group campaigning for a Gaztetxe (youth-house) have squatted Euskal Jai, a massive building in the old part of Pamplona, the Basque, which had been empty for 17 years. The squatters cleaned up the building and began using it as a community/arts centre.

Since the occupation in May there have been two eviction attempts by police. Both were strongly resisted and violent clashes with police took place over two days in June when 2,000 people gathered to protest against the attempts to evict the

squatters and demolish the building. A 16 year old boy lost his eye as police fired rubber bullets and tear gas into the crowds. Local residents responded with outrage and joined the campaigners in demanding police withdrawal from the area. Residents also opened their doors to people escaping police, spent an entire night banging pots and pans on their balconies to annoy the police, and dropped household objects on them when they charged protesters. One 70 year old man later received a police visit after casually dropping a pressure cooker off his balcony.

Ultimately the locals put pressure on the authorities which led to the police withdrawal. There followed a massive street party between residents, shopkeepers and squatters. Euskal Jai remains squatted and is open for gigs, workshops, exhibitions and meetings.

## La Barcelona La Vaqueria

**S**quatting in Spain is illegal and like most other European countries is seen as a political and social statement rather than a solution to housing problems. Squatters (in Spanish 'okupas') tend to occupy large derelict buildings and convert them into autonomous community and cultural centres. In many cases only a few people will actually live there.

La Barcelona La Vaqueria, a rustic old building originally used as a cow shed, provides housing for about five people who organise ceramics and sculpture workshops, talks, films and benefit gigs for various movements including anti-fascism and Central American solidarity groups. All this takes place in an assortment of barns and stables in the back yard. The squatting movement in Barcelona is tightly knit, ask anybody within the community and they will all know about La Vaqueria.

Most of the squats in Madrid are concentrated in the central area of Vallecas, Embajadores and Lavapiés. La

Minuesa in Ronda De Toledo had been functioning as an alternative community centre in an old printing factory for six years until it was evicted by a huge and brutal police operation in May this year. Over the years, La Minuesa had hosted many events including workshops in Martial Arts, painting, dance and languages for immigrant communities. It was also used as a meeting place for various radical collectives against racism, sexism, militarism, and forced national service. These activities, which filled a gap seen by the

squatters in their community, were financed with money raised from gigs and a daily vegetarian cafe.

On the day of the eviction over 120 squatters barricaded themselves into the building and resisted police armed with rubber bullets, tear gas and metre-long wooden truncheons. Simultaneously, in the surrounding streets, over 500 people demonstrated and tried to distract the attention of the maderos (Spanish slang for the police). After two and a half hours the eviction was over resulting in 22 arrests and seven people wounded. Demonstrations of solidarity continued both in Madrid and other Spanish cities throughout the day and into the next as supporters gathered outside courthouses where those arrested were to be put on trial. National press coverage of the event was extensive and surprisingly positive.

Squatting spirits refused to be quashed by the heavy-handed police action and the struggle continues. The squatters have now gone on to occupy a number of other large buildings in the centre of Madrid with similar aims. Leaflets explaining who the squatters are, their aims and plans for the building and an invitation to the local communities to get involved and support the initiative have gone out across the neighbourhood. This not only brings support and improves relations within the community but also helps keep the local authorities off their backs.

Respect to Spanish Squatters for having managed to convey their message of self determination and improvement of the community in a grass roots style!

UN  
DESALOJO  
OTRA  
OKUPACION



Spanish police fire rubber bullets at squatters occupying Ronda de Toledo.

... MISERIAS ... BIDONVILLES ... SQUATTER CAMPS ...

## PARIS

### Bank of France Squatted

**O**n 24th May, a building belonging to the Bank of France in Paris was squatted by 37 people, including 18 children. The building had been empty for five years, and those who moved in were either homeless or badly housed. Droit au Logement (DaL), Right to Housing, an organisation campaigning for the rights of the homeless, along with Greens and a radical anti-unemployment group, helped squat and guard the building. Since the occupation of another large building last year the squatters have organised themselves. They had van loads of mattresses and were ready with banners for the front of the bank, calling for the requisition of all empty buildings for use by the homeless.

The Bank of France was highly embarrassed by the incident because it is notorious for leaving Parisian buildings empty. A few days after the squatters moved in the Bank announced that it was 'obliged' to take action but changed its mind due to the high profile of the occupation and the active support of a number of French personalities, particularly l'Abbe Pierre, a formidable priest who moved in with the squatters and said the Bank would have to evict him as well (for some reason the Bank seemed reluctant to stir his wrath).

In an unprecedented move the Bank came up with a temporary rehousing suggestion in another building which had also been empty for five years. The squatters moved at the beginning of June and have the place, for a small rent, for two years.

Canard Enchaîné (a French satire mag) recently printed a Bank of France internal memo from the beginning of the year in which Bank staff were requested to be 'extra vigilant' because of the re-emergence of squatting in Paris. Canard Enchaîné noted that in the past the Bank has preferred to block toilets, board up its empty buildings and pay vigilantes to look after them.

DaL squatted another large building in July and have called on all large property owners to allow empty buildings to be used by the homeless. There are between 10,000 and 15,000 street sleepers in Paris alone, as many as 400,000 throughout France, as well as 2.6 million living 'sans logis', in hostels etc. DaL estimate that as many as 110,000 people were evicted without a court case in 1993. The country has an estimated 1.9 million empty buildings (1990 figures).

## NICARAGUA

### Violent Evictions in Managua

**F**ive hundred families were violently evicted from a squatter settlement, Villa Reconciliacion in Managua, Nicaragua, in the early hours of Monday, 2nd May. "This was nothing more than brutal repression, exactly like it used to be under Somoza," said one of those evicted. At 5am 300 troops and members of the Nicaragua National Police arrived at Villa Reconciliacion, armed with rifles and tear gas and allegedly in possession of a legal eviction order. This did not actually exist.

The first home to be pulled down was that of 17 year old Carlos Javier Muniz Hernandez, who was badly beaten when he protested. Women, children and journalists were also beaten during the operation. By morning the police had destroyed every home on the settlement. Dr Bayardo Izaba Solis of the Nicaragua Centre for Human Rights (CENIDH) condemned the police action: "Instead of meeting its obligation to protect these people, the state uses the power of the police and the judiciary against them." CENIDH, together with the Nicaragua Communal Movement, is currently engaged in efforts to procure plots of land for the resettlement of the evicted families.

The number of squatter settlements in Managua has mushroomed in recent years, a result of steadily increasing migration stimulated by both the violence and general lawlessness in parts of the north of the country and the lack of support for subsistence agriculture. As conflict over land ownership has become steadily more acute, evictions of squatter settlements have increased; these are frequently resisted. A recent attempt to remove squatters from Barrio Santo Domingo in Managua was met with the mobilisation of residents to stop them. One neighbour told the Central American Report: "It's pitiful, I don't know where they

expect these people to go. All they want is to be able to work and feed their children, but instead they get pushed from pillar to post by the authorities and no-one seems to care what happens to them. When the police came, the whole neighbourhood came out onto the streets, we refused to let them carry out the eviction."

Local human rights organisations say that the levels of violence used against squatters is increasing. The low wages of police officers encourages corruption. A recent CENIDH investigation revealed that traders in the Eastern Market of Managua have been paying police to beat up street children as a deterrent to petty crime.





# INTERNET

Even this summer's Big Green Gathering Festival near Swindon was connected to Internet, the fastest growing information dispersal system in the world. Anyone with a computer can write on it, anyone with a computer can read it - anywhere in the world. There are no libel laws, in fact there are no laws at all. Ben Schneider - a professional Information Manager - kicks off a series of articles on the Net and its importance for campaigning groups.

This article is intended to be the first in a series looking at what the Internet is, its relevance to campaigning organisations and information dispersal (networking) groups and what could lie ahead. Because of the Net's rapid expansion, it seems appropriate to have regular updates which cover not only new developments, but also how campaigning groups are using this technology and with what success.

The amount of jargon, hype and blah attached to computers that talk to each other down telephone lines, has overwhelmed the media in the last year. The prestige of being able to

recommend that there is a killer 'ap'\* on the 'EPA Gopher'\*\*, or to check out the latest interesting ideas on the 'alt.sex.bestiality' newsgroup, may instil respect among one's Net peer group but, back in the real world, Jo Punter is probably wondering where you are coming from.

But despite all the blah, InterNet is an exceptionally powerful communication tool. As more and more people discover its value and capabilities, those involved in campaigning on issues such as the CJB will probably get turned onto it too.

Initially developed from the communications systems of the Pentagon, its ability to send secret messages to other parts of the country/globe was of military interest. As more people became aware of its value as a general communication tool and of its vast potential for commercial use, its coverage spread to education and then to business. The beauty of the Net, is that it is basically unregulated. Regulation exists only by the unwritten code adopted by its users: no censorship, no editorial influence. The Net is the nearest you can get to technological anarchy.

The three major facilities on the Net are electronic mail (e-mail as opposed to "snail mail" - post service!), the ability to login to another computer system somewhere else in the world (telnet) and the ability to send and receive files of any sort from or to any other machine connected to the Net (file transfer or ftp).

Related to e-mail are news groups. This provides the opportunity to read articles on a specific topic in an ongoing Net discussion group and

allow other people to reply, adding their own comments and ideas. This area can be of great value to pressure groups. Why?

1. The connectivity of such a growing network of users, gives IMMEDIATE access to other people protesting on the same or similar issues.
2. The speed of data transfer (a matter of seconds for an e-mail message), allows frequent communication, for less than the price of a fax. (I will go into costs next issue.)  
It is another method of interacting with related groups and allows rapid transfer of actions, meeting or developments in the legislative process.
3. Many campaigning groups send reams of faxes to a variety of groups. E-mail avoids much of this waste of paper and allows people the choice of printing out the message in order to distribute it to people who will really appreciate or use it.
4. The information made available can be at grassroots level. There is no editorial control. You can write whatever you want. So often in the media the power to relate a situation or event, is taken away from an initiator by the journo; it is a rare occurrence to read a story "as it happened" in the press without the usual sensationalist/truth-mutilation overdrive.

Instead of having to wade through a three-page feature on Claremont Road in the Independent on Sunday and finding only one relevant or meaningful paragraph, you can expect to find more concise, relevant and informative literature on the subject you are interested in. This is

because conferences cover an enormous range of topics. There are over 9,000 topics on the Net ranging from Green Party press releases to a cookery conference describing the way to prepare pesto pasta! Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and WWF, all put their press releases on the Net.

At the moment, the number of information dispersal groups connected to the Net is still small but is growing fast. The last available statistic counted in July of this year showed that over 3 million computers now have access to the Net globally. Multiply this figure by the number of individuals with access to these computers and the extent of the usage becomes apparent. The UK is the fastest growing market of subscribers in the world, with around 20,000 new subscribers a month. According to Kevin Doye of the campaign group Road Alert, this growth is reflected in the increasing usage of the Net by campaigning groups.

"The number of campaign groups putting and receiving information from the Net is going up as people become aware of how important it is as a rapid information distribution system."

Indeed Road Alert place information about road-rottest campaigns onto the environmental network - Green Net, that operates within InterNet. It is also possible to print off entire issues of 'Roadbreaker' - the No M11 Campaign's newsletter, likewise placed on the Net and available to all without the costs of printing and the problems of distribution.

The intelligent application of this increasingly inter-communicative technology may prove to be a vital tool in the battle to take on the hallowed and unaccountable rooms of Whitehall.

As to the costs of getting onto the Net, its specific usefulness and where to look for clues, these are questions for the next issue. Please feel free to write to Squall with questions or expressing opinion, or e-mail me at [bensch@gn.apc.org](mailto:bensch@gn.apc.org)

"Comments are free but facts are sacred"  
C P Scott.

\* 'ap' - a computer application such as a word processing package.

\*\* 'gopher' - otherwise known as the "furry little rodent that tunnels through cyberspace".

'EPA' - Environmental Protection Agency

## Log in, pHreak Out

pHreak is on-line. It's a magazine, shop, soap box, e-mail system, and brings you the best of the Internet.

You can connect from any computer with a modem. Beautiful graphics and sound from Mac or Windows. Command line purity from anything else.

pHreak is a new, independent network that aspires to service British culture. You get: e-mail, the best of the Net, graphics, sounds, movies, underground culture, music samples, DJ and club info, environment and political news (including SQUALL), on line mail order and forums for any subject that fits.

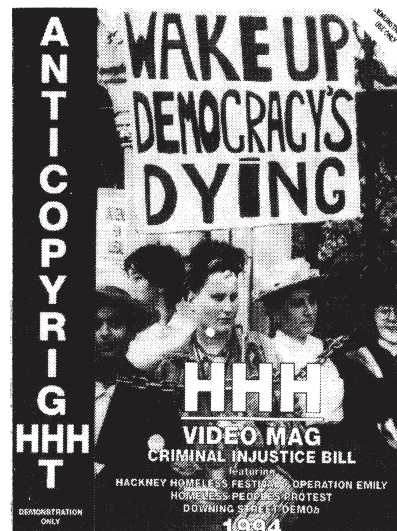
Full access to pHreak is by subscription of £5 per month and includes access to Internet and e-mail. There is also limited free access (20 minutes per day, no down loading) to those who wish to test or sample this new network.

Based in Soho, London, pHreak is a bus, a potential hot bed of information and ideas; get on it before you miss it.



## HHH Video Mag

The people who made the controversial film 'It's A Bit Rough, Ain't It?' which was banned by City Challenge have re-emerged with a brand new video magazine. 'HHH Video mag' is no less disquieting than its predecessor, but far more colourful and exciting. It's a visual statement against the proposed Criminal Justice Bill and a plea for diversity and social justice. HHH Video Mag consists of four small films: Hackney Homeless Festival; Operation Emily; Homeless People's Protest and Downing Street Demob. Costing £5, the video is available by post from: HHH Video Mag, Box 888, 10 Martello Street, Hackney E8 3PE.



# *Introducing Exodus*

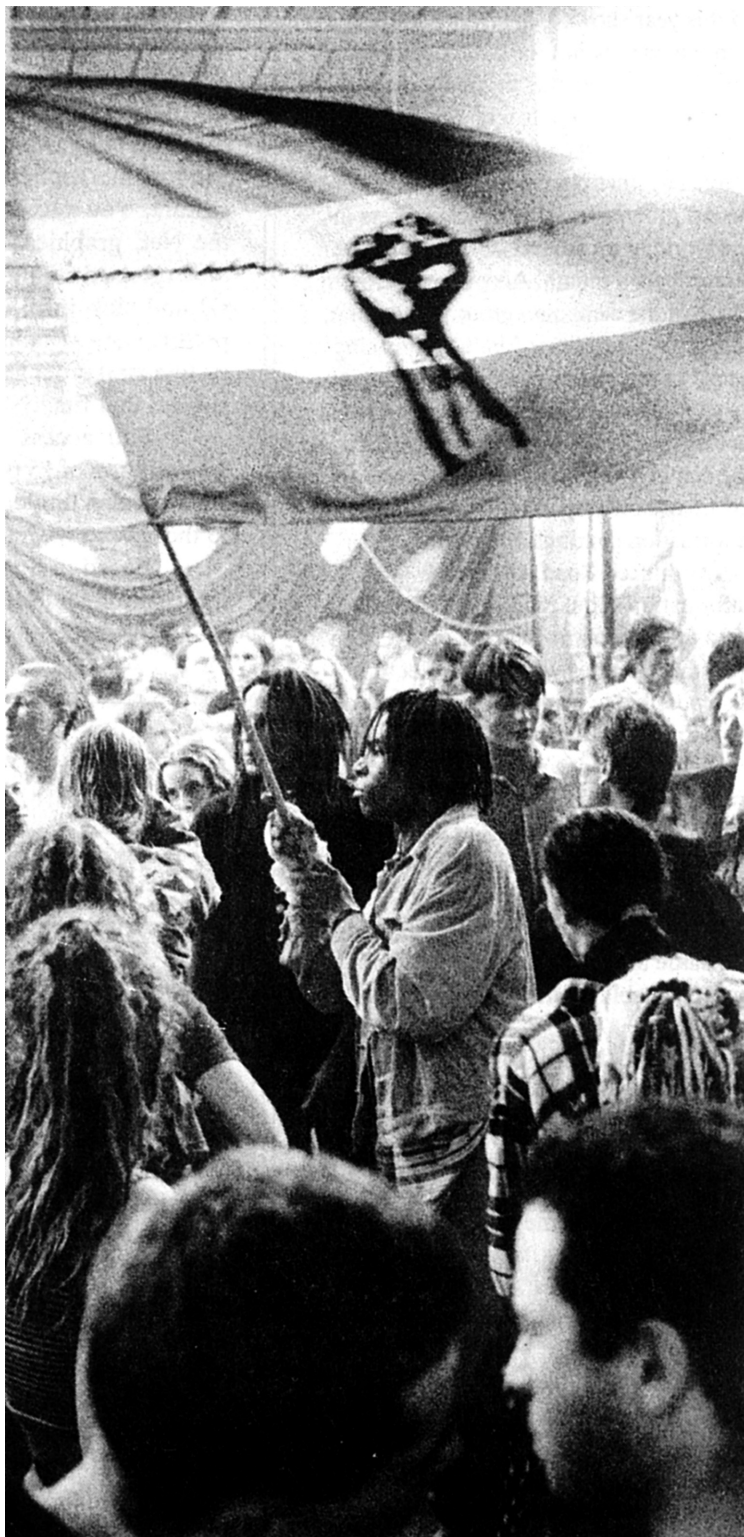
## A Now New Testament

**CHAPTER I - GENESIS:** In the beginning there was three boxes

**CHAPTER II - EXODUS:** And some that lived in the land of Luton did take those three boxes and did imagine with them. And told by Jahovah to take these imaginings and see them manifest, they set off across the wilderness of Bovis homes and Arndale Centres, in search of a place where they might stack these boxes and invite the disaffected to dance before their emissions, so unto relieve their disaffections. But the journey was not untouched by the thwarting intentions of those who loathed to see such assembly and such flagrant disregard for the official formula. And these pharisees and masons did hurl abuse upon the Collective. But when they did abuse, their abuse was met with a force that drew, not blood, but a line beyond which the Collective would not retreat. And there they laid their boxes. And their boxes did multiply. And their boxes did help the multitudes to gather together in the name of community and adventure. And from these gatherings they did receive offerings in a bucket. And with these offerings they did put graft into derelicts, giving hearth and home to they that had none.

And Jahovah did say inside of them: "This is important for all the people in the land. For without righteous activity, my face is distorted and I cannot shine upon the ideas that lie dormant in your soil. Mold my face with righteousness and the glow from my visage will pour so much power into that dormant seed, that no concrete crust or fabrication of evidence will smother its advances. And I will whisper in the ears of scribes that they might record these examples for all people so to witness."

The pharisees and masons, pretending that it was time to pray, withdrew from the table; shutting their doors and plotting amongst themselves to shut others also. And Bob saw this in his time and recorded it in lyric, and to this day the Collective do admire that lyric and cry: "Most respect going out to Bob". And in sooth they did name themselves Exodus after that lyric.



# Introducing Exodus

- a movement of Jah people ..... in Luton

[words by jim carey, photos by nick cobbing]



“To me, the only way to cope with the pressure is to actively resist it. To us every lick of paint, every word spoken, every dance put on, builds the positive. It’s the only way forward. The defence against the negative attacks is to build the positive and it works, we’ve proved it,” says Glenn Jenkins, a spokesperson for the Exodus Collective.

To get up to the Cavern Hills just outside Luton, you have to walk up a bridle way that crosses a golf course. Having dodged the flailing golf balls you reach the top, an overseeing position allowing you to survey the urban landscape and its environs. Acres of Bovis Homes stretch away, their formularised architecture punctuated by the high rise blocks of the Marsh Farm council estate. And going down into the

middle of town you find the Arndale Centre, a roofed over mall with a Tesco’s, a McDonalds and a Marks and Spencers etc. Some of Luton’s youth hang around talking on the plastic moulded benches placed around the centre. There’s muzak and plastic climbing frames for the kids, one big insidious package designed to make you think “I can do all my shopping here and then have an expensive cup of tea at the Arndale’s plastic cafe” - the all in one commercial utopia. Why then do the youth choose to hang out in such a numbing temple to formula shopping, best symbolised by the plastic benches on which they loiter with no intent? It is a desperately dull sight but then for Luton’s youth there is very little choice. They don’t want to play golf, even if they had the excessive green fees, and they don’t particularly get excited by the latest production of Cinderella, advertised on the Arndale Centre’s community arts’ notice board. Unemployment and homelessness are high and opportunities to escape the stagnancy, low.

But by turning your head slightly at the top of the Cavern Hills, there is

another sight that stands out proud and anomalous to Luton’s nylon carpet landscape. It is HAZ Manor, formerly a derelict old people’s home and now a thriving community and housing co-op. Going down into the Manor is a different way of approaching Luton. For under construction are a gym, a community room, forty bedrooms, a massive kitchen, an allotment and a repair/storage room for the prize possessions - the speakers that pump up the dance. What’s more, there is an atmosphere of positivity that defies the bland and emasculating stagnancy of the surrounding area. It is the Exodus Collective at work.

The Exodus began over two years ago after the discovery, in a Luton garage, of three unused speaker boxes. These boxes were fixed up, taken to a nearby forest and set up to create the first Exodus party, drawing a couple of hundred people. Three years down the line and the Exodus Collective hold regular FREE dances, attracting around 6,000 people from the area. The last party of the summer was held in a warehouse owned, but not used, by Marks and Spencer. Certainly beats the Arndale Centre for community usage!

Exodus have also reconstructed a derelict farm into a city farm open to the public and an atrophying town into a place where you can dream and see those dreams realised.

Nothing has been made easy for them though. The telling of the Exodus story is an exposure of what can be achieved with positive community aspirations and also of the barrage of opposition and malicious plotting from the authorities, designed to steal the momentum of that aspiration at every stage of its development. Telling the story of Exodus is a testament to perseverance and a testament to the power of necessity breeding ingenuity. It is a new testament to “the only way forward”.

# Riding The Blows

## EXODUS - A Chronology

### JUNE '92

First Exodus free party takes place in a forest near Luton attended by 150 people. There are then 21 consecutive free parties, one each week.

### JULY '92

Exodus collective squat a disused warehouse/office in Craddock Road

### AUGUST '92

Exodus are evicted from Craddock road and on the same day squat Long Meadow Farm, a property compulsorily purchased by the DoT for a road building programme that was delayed until the end of the decade.

### JUNE - NOVEMBER '92

Five raids are carried out by the police on the farm, with two claimed drug finds. No charges were brought. Three attempts are made by police to confiscate sound equipment on the road and two attempts made to remove sound equipment from the farm. At one such visit the police came with a furniture lorry saying they were looking for drugs! In another visit to the farm, the police pull the place apart and leave a warrant in the middle of the floor, suggesting they were once again looking for drugs. All the warrants issued for the raids were done so under the pretext of looking for drugs except one which claimed that Exodus were under suspicion of printing counterfeit money. Upon being asked why there was continuing harassment of Exodus, a policeman conducting one of the raids, DC Farrel, says that "the bosses have got it in for them". Glenn Jenkins says to Farrel: "You tell the faceless people that we're not going away but we're willing to talk". Farrel replies that he considers it unlikely that the police chiefs will talk because they "consider Exodus to be made up of criminals."

### NOVEMBER '92

The Exodus Collective approach the local police in order to initiate some dialogue. Talks start with Chief Inspector Mike Brown of Dunstable Police.

### NOVEMBER '92 - JAN '93

Talks with Chief Inspector Brown prove co-operative and an application is made for a licensed venue. The Department of Transport grant a licence to Long Meadow Farm saying they have no plans to use the land until at least 1998. On December 31st, a party at Woodside Estate attracts a peak

"They try and kill our momentum. They tried to starve us with injunctions, to stop our income coming in, by stopping us playing Bedfordshire. They brought all these charges against us for more than a year - that slowed us down. They were thinking 'Nobody's gonna come back to Exodus'. But they didn't understand that these free parties were more than that. It's not just a party, get a crowd then they disappear. It's more, much more than that. We knew that we were making a stand, making a challenge - we knew the law was coming and they came." - dread Bigs, member of Exodus.

The police raids carried out against the Exodus Collective read like a shambled military campaign. Operation Anagram followed by Operation Ashanti and Operation Anatomy, and then Operation Anchovy which was a repeat of Operation Anatomy. After the Exodus Collective discovered these codenames, they twigged to the fact that their alphabetical consistency had much to say about the co-ordinated and intentional campaign against them. An embarrassed Bedfordshire Police had always made out that there was no designed anti-Exodus campaign but chose neither to comment on the names given to the known operations, or on the names given to the first two operations against the Collective that are still unknown. Perhaps Artichoke, Arsenal or Attitude Problem?

"That's one of the key things. If we're gonna be massive and passive, then we've gotta take that shit. Let them launch their operations and we'll take it and not make one police complaint," remembers Bigs, a long time Exodus member.

For a while Exodus allowed the scheming to go on - absorbing it, dancing round it, recording it. "The year of the smear" is how Glenn Jenkins, an Exodus spokesman, describes it. Involving the local papers, the police, freemasons and local



politicians including John “banish all gypsies into the wilderness” Carlisle (Con MP Luton North). Encouraged to be more blatant by their underestimation of Exodus’ staying power, the Bedfordshire police have a long and now court-documented history of unlawful harassment against the Collective.

“They thought they could do anything to us,” recalls Bigs. “It was a local force - they bullied us about and ‘cause we made no complaint, they thought they could write shit on us. They thought: ‘whose gonna believe them even if they do complain’. And that’s what happened but then we came back.”

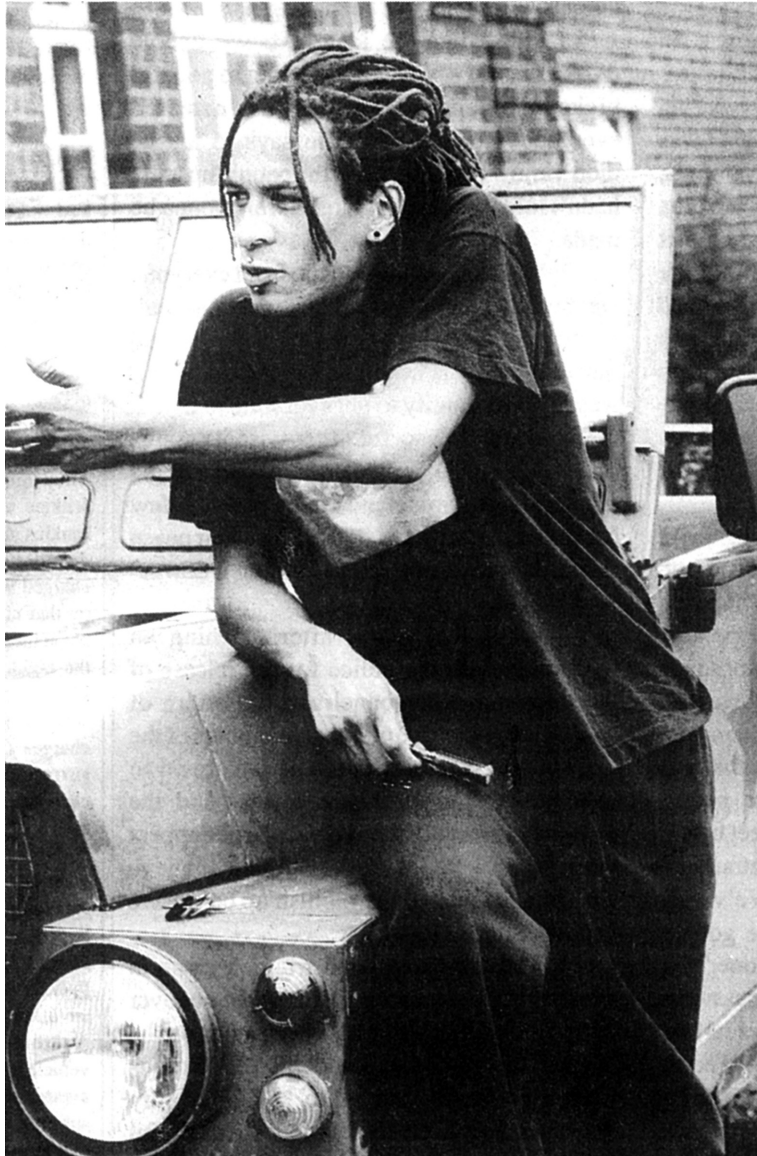
The ‘come-back’ was facilitated in two ways. Firstly, despite the continuing and extreme attention they were receiving from the police, the Exodus Collective carried on working. Repairing derelict buildings for housing projects, turning a squatted farm into a working city farm open to the public, and organising well-attended raves at which no-one got hurt but about which everyone talked.

In persistent pursuit of ‘community regeneration’, their stated goal, Exodus won over large amounts of local support and enough members of the local council to start swinging licence agreements their way. Even certain members of the local police force, particularly Chief Inspector Mick Brown and Inspector Kimble, began to speak out publicly in favour of Exodus and of the positive initiatives they were operating in the locality. Both Brown and Kimble were transferred away from the area accordingly

and even now Exodus are negotiating for their re-instatement as “policemen we can talk to”. This groundswell of local support gave Exodus an even stronger back at a time of maximum attack.

Secondly, no matter what was thrown at them, Exodus stood up to it - “massive and passive”.

“They blocked the A1(M) on us one time and tried to nick Glenn,” remembers Bigs. “Twenty one police cars come off the junctions and pulled him over on the hard



shoulder saying they wanted to do a drugs search. Then a copper grabs his arm. We had a convoy and I don’t know if they knew that we did because on the motorway you can’t always tell. But they blocked the motorway and we blocked the motorway. They got their dogs out and we got our dogs out. Then an inspector comes over and says: ‘Sorry, it was a mistake’. Blocked the motorway for 20 minutes and then says: ‘Go through’. It was a stand off and they were outnumbered.”

What makes these showdowns so

## Exodus - a chronology

number of 10,000 dancers. In order to take some of the pressure off while negotiations are entered into with the authorities the parties are now switched to one every two weeks.

*3rd JANUARY '93*

The police go public in local newspapers saying that they are now undergoing talks with the Collective.

*4th JANUARY '93*

Exodus Collective squat Oakmore Hotel owned by a development company but left empty for years. The collective proceed to replace broken windows and repair the rooms.

*15th JANUARY '93*

Riot police pile into Oakmore Hotel, break windows from the inside out and rubbish the rooms. Four members of the Collective are arrested resulting in two charges of violent disorder. Captain, previously a building contractor and now one of the collective, is hit with a sledgehammer by the police for which he suffers a suspected crushed femur nerve. When Captain asks DC Farrel, again present at the raid, why the police are evicting people who are repairing a derelict property, Farrel actually bursts into tears. The cases of violent disorder are dropped after the police fail to produce the notebooks of officers involved in the raid.

*16th JANUARY '93*

Police block the entrance to a party’s car park causing a mass disorder for which Bigs, Glenn Jenkins and Richard Jenkins are charged. The charges are dropped.

*31st JANUARY '93*

Police Operation Anagram storms Long Meadow Farm at 8.30 on the evening of a planned dance and leave with all the sound equipment. Thirty six members of the Collective are arrested and taken into custody. Four thousand protesters surround Luton Police Station and stage a non-violent demonstration at the arrests. Police agree to release the imprisoned members and to return the sound equipment the next day, which they do.

*6th FEBRUARY '93*

Four thousand people gather for another Exodus dance. Due to the sighting of a large number of police vans, another raid is suspected. The Collective then deliver a statement to the assembled crowd that for safety reasons there will be no rave tonight. A written statement of the intention to avoid violence but to remain persistent is distributed.

debilitating for the police is that the Exodus Collective do not give the hangman even an inch of rope. Despite hundreds of charges levelled at members of the Collective, the conviction list amounts to a couple of small bits of hash possession and a farcically-engineered public nuisance rap put on Glenn Jenkins. Also, despite very evident police attempts to provoke the kind of confrontation that might provide the hanging rope, the Collective have always "held it down massive but passive". Bigs recounted a story.

"One time at a warehouse in Letchworth, there were a thousand ravers from one convoy hanging about waiting for the other convoy and the sounds. I was out on the street keeping an eye on things, stopping people driving too fast. Then blue lights are coming fast....coming fast. What they were going to do was drive into the warehouse and scatter everyone. I reckoned I had to block it, so I drove at them and spun the jeep round. Didn't even have enough time to take the keys out and their car doors were open. Out run four of them, scattered and coming for me. I ran back to the warehouse.

"Then the line was drawn, about one thousand police and two thousand ravers. There was a few people throwing things because we couldn't be everywhere, but we held it down. Going up to riot squad - trying to speak to them but they weren't speaking. It was tense man. Glenn told them that if it goes off, it was them that was gonna get hurt 'cause there are people who've been beaten up on the street by old bill and been busted - there is that anger - but it's controlling that anger. We've got that control. It was tense but we got the loudspeaker and dispersed everyone."

"Hold it down became the password for the party, now everyone knows its best to hold it down," continues Glenn. "People have got that respect for what we're doing and in all physical confrontations we are the ones that would be accused if it kicked off big time, not the old bill."

Undoubtedly the most formidable example came on the night 52 members of the collective were arrested at around 8pm on the night of a dance. Four thousand people, previously planning to attend the dance, surrounded the police station in Luton demanding their immediate release.

In the national papers the following day came the descriptions of "a mob of 4,000 youths who turned a town into a pitched battle" (Daily Express 1/2/94) but

in reality it was one of the largest instant demonstrations of "massive but passive" force yet seen in modern Britain. Captain, a long time member of the Exodus collective, remembers the occasion well:

"I went in round the back of the police station to get my kid out - he was only 15 years old at the time. There were about 150 coppers in that station and 4,000 people outside, they were cacking it, ringing for more riot police even calling the army. In the foyer of the police station, Inspector Brown says: 'Please help us.' He'd always been alright to us but I said I didn't like the idea of being double crossed. I said - 'you got it coming to you if it kicks off because you've just arrested everybody for nothing'. He says to me he didn't know about it 'cause the people upstairs hadn't told him that the arrests were gonna be made.

"When I walked out the front everyone went wild going 'Yes Captain, Yes Captain'. I could see the faces of the riot police behind me, thinking - 'is he gonna say Attack'. So it was my opportunity to get everyone to hold it down - keep it peaceful other wise its gonna kick - go to the other side of the road and get the car stereos going and start a party. A few bottles flew over me to start with but our peace stewards were going round holding it down." And it held.

Later that night, after reaching an agreement with the police for the release of the imprisoned personnel and the return of confiscated sound equipment, members of the Collective asked all but ten of the crowd to disperse. The respect was instant and the demonstration duly stood down. "The coppers the next day were saying they couldn't believe we had even picked the rubbish up before we had left," adds Glenn.

The crowning legal triumph came in an almighty court battle that dragged out over the period of more than a year. In court on the day of the major showdown, the Exodus Collective finally proved to judge and jury that they had been the subject of unlawful attacks by the police, involving the fabrication of written evidence and the planting of illegal substances.

"I was arrested at a petrol station on the night of a do at Letchworth and taken to the station," recalls Chuppa, who was driving an Exodus jeep containing the water for the dance. "When I got there they asked me my name and I said you know my name, and the copper wrote down Paul Taylor. When I tell them that I'm not Paul Taylor, I'm Kevin Brown, she gets all agitated and walks out. Then when she comes back, she doesn't ask me anymore

## Exodus - a chronology

### 13th FEBRUARY '93

Exodus Collective and assembled convoy head off towards a venue for a dance. Police threaten Exodus with an injunction, issued after several meetings of the Association of Chief Police Officers. Police initiate Operation Anatomy, an attempt to sever the convoy by isolating the first ten vehicles in the convoy in order to arrest these few and then dissipate the rest. The drivers of the first ten vehicles realise they have been sectioned off before reaching the road block where they were due to be arrested. They backtrack and rejoin the convoy. Leaflets are found that have been distributed by the police to local residents asking whether they had been frightened or inconvenienced in any way by the convoy. The majority respond by saying "leave the Exodus collective alone".

Bigs, a member of the collective is arrested under a charge of being the possessor of drugs that the police say they found at the farm during the raid thirteen days before! They also charge Bigs, Glenn Jenkins and his brother Richard Jenkins (DJ Hazad) with public disorder offences. Bigs is also charged with six driving offences on that night even though he was not at the wheel at any point during the night. This glut of charges is known as 'swamping' the charge sheet, a process where the main charges (in this case drugs) are surrounded with other minor charges to make the defendant look bad, enabling the conviction to be snowballed. With no proof whatsoever the driving charges are eventually dropped.

### 20th FEBRUARY '93

Police initiate Operation Anchovy, an attempt to repeat Operation Anatomy severing the front vehicles. This time Exodus are fully aware of the tactic and avoid splitting the convoy up. This time the convoy takes to its feet. Once again due to the presence of large numbers of riot police, the Collective disperses the crowd and distributes a leaflet explaining and promising persistence.

### 1st MARCH '93

The Oakmore Hotel is evicted with Operation Ashanti (by now the Exodus Collective have sussed on to the fact that all the police operations directed against them begin with A), with 36 riot police, 12 bailiffs and manned roadblocks. The occupants of the squatted Hotel

questions not even my date of birth, just sticks me in a cell.”

Undoubtedly mistaking dread Chuppa (Kevin Brown) for dread Bigs (Paul Taylor), the police had picked out the wrong man in an attempt to foil the party. “They think if they take out one of us then the party won't happen but it aint like that with Exodus,” says Chuppa.

The man that the police had been trying to ‘take out’ was Bigs, whom they had identified as driving Exodus’s red starred jeeps at the head of convoys in the past. But instead of going into hiding, Bigs came looking to see that Chuppa and another arrested member of the Collective were alright. After being chased by 1,000 riot police drawn from five different forces (previously described), Glenn Jenkins, Richard Jenkins and Bigs drove another Exodus jeep straight into the hornet’s nest.

“The streets around the police station were crammed with riot vans parked either side on the pavements. And there we were in the red starred jeep, the one they’d been chasing all night, driving down the middle of the road between them. You should have seen the faces of them coppers as they were taking their riot trousers off,” recalls Glenn.

The three of them walked into the police station and demanded to see that Chuppa and his colleague had not been injured. Whilst they waited, a policeman asked Bigs to step aside for a moment. The next thing that Glenn and Richard Jenkins were told, was that Bigs had been arrested and charged with possession and intent to supply ecstasy that the police claimed to have found during a raid on the farm a week previous.

“Chief Superintendent Alan Marlowe, the divisional commander, hung his head low when he came down the stairs and told me,” recalls Glenn. “He knew it was a lie, he knew it was a fit up. I told him they were slimy bastards and that we would not let them get away with it.”

Just how exactly the police thought they would get away with it is a mystery. The only plausible answer is that the complacency bred from getting away with it for so long, induced a carelessness that proved in the end to be their downfall.

Over the course of the following year and with weveral court cases hanging over them, the Collective pieced together the story of how, within two minutes of entering a blacked-out farmhouse (the operation start time and the discovery was logged in various police accounts), a

policeman had found two stashes of drugs in two separte places.

“It’s too easy- first they desanitised the house (police terminology for making sure there are no occupants left inside). The officer who said he found them (the drugs) was outside the bungalow in a car waiting. I don’t know how innocent he was but DC Clements had already planted them and then came out and called him in. It was dark because the electrics were cut and Clements says in his statement that he was holding the torch. Clements pointed this big dragon torch to the places cause he was the only one holding a torch. It’s so sly - how many times do they get away with it. It’s a classic - two minutes in two different locations. One with my passport, dole card and a couple of mug shots, and one in a coffee tin which, if you were to walk into my bedroom, you can’t help but notice.”

Over the course of this year, Bigs had a drugs rap hanging over his head. During most of this time he was curfewed as a bail condition; an obvious attempt to prevent him from attending the dances. On the night of the parties, the police would invariably call round to check that he was staying at home, but at a late hour the party crowd would go mad when a certain dread, rapped in a sheik’s head scarf, would appear on the mic.

On the night before the trial, Bigs, having seen a police list of the small bits of hashish found on the farm in the past, realised their next chess move and decided he would not stand to give evidence in his own defence in court.

“We saw in the case papers that they had it listed and we thought ‘how come they got it all listed - a bit of vegetable matter here and a bit of vegetable matter there. That was their last card. I wasn’t aware until the night before that they were gonna pull this. I didn’t want to be stuck there ‘umming and arring’ about some hash they found once.”

When Bigs told James Wood, his barrister, that he did not want to give evidence, Wood couldn’t believe it. He even got Bigs to sign a piece of paper saying it was his own decision not to appear. Wood had spent the entire weekend previous to the trial writing up his notes and preparing a case that included Bigs appearing in his own defence. Much to his adaptable credit however, James Wood’s one and a half hour summing up at the end of the trial, ripped shreds in the evidence presented by the police. The prosecutor, whose face dropped red when he realised that Bigs with his seven facial piercings was not going to appear before the jury, spoke for just five minutes.

## Exodus - a chronology

are given half an hour’s notice to leave. Bigs, Glenn Jenkins and Richard Jenkins are charged with Public Order Section 5 - harassment, alarm and distress to the riot police. The case reaches court and is thrown out by the judge due to inconsistencies in the stories of the police present. It transpires under cross examination that the policemen involved were given a blackboard lecture on what to say in their notebooks. The police’s evidence is ruled as inadmissible. However, in a later court case, Glenn Jenkins is convicted of public nuisance after two ‘Scene of the Crime’ Officers make identical statements four months after the event!

### MARCH - JULY '93

Exodus Collective squat a derelict hospice owned by Luton Borough Council. They proceed to rebuild the property and are granted a licence. They are also granted a licence to hold a rave. Both licences are won because their activities in housing homeless people and giving Luton people a sense of purpose has attracted the support of local councillors.

### JULY - DEC '93

All Exodus Court battles are won. Much to the surprise of the local press which had consistently smeared the Collective, the judge once again ruled that there were inconsistencies in the police account of the drugs charges against Bigs. The court orders the police to forward all the policemen’s notebooks for the day. The police say that they have lost them. The policeman who found the alleged bags of ecstasy can’t explain why in the pitch black (the electricity had been cut off) he managed to find two stashes of drugs in two places, only a couple of minutes after the logged time for the commencement of the operation. At the last minute Exodus decide to offer no defence, leaving the jury to decide the case on the evidence given to the court by the police. The jury takes five minutes to return a verdict of ‘not guilty’.

### JAN - JULY '94

Work continues in further reconstruction the farm and the Manor.

### JUNE '94

Despite opposition from the police, Exodus are granted a licence to hold community festivals in Luton by the local council. These ‘family

## Exodus - a chronology

Exodus had simply let the police present their evidence and be cross examined, offering no witnesses for their own defence. After taking only five minutes to reach a decision, the jury returned a verdict of not guilty, based solely on listening to the police tie contradictory knots around their own fabrications; strangling their own story before the judges. "As me mum used to say - 'Give them enough rope and they'll hang themselves'," observes Bigs wryly.

The local papers couldn't believe it, having previously reported the charges in full, they printed the result of the trial in a tiny little column. Both The Herald and the Luton on Sunday rely quite heavily on brewery advertisements for their revenue and there is a major Whitbread brewery in Luton. Sometimes, entire issues are wrapped in a colour advertisement for Whitbread. The connection between the breweries and Exodus is clearly given away in articles in Whitbread News about how the pubs of Luton empty when Exodus hold a dance. In what Glenn Jenkins refers to as the "year of the smear", these newspapers had actively published stories slandering the Collective, preparing for the day they all thought that Bigs would go down. When Jenkins approached the editor of the Herald after the trial, accusing him of complicity in a slander campaign and of being a freemason, he went red in the face. Three weeks later he resigned his position and the newspaper has remained devoid of any mention of the Exodus Collective since. The divisional commander for Bedfordshire Police, Chief Superintendent Alan Marlow, also took 'early retirement'. He was quoted in a recent magazine article: "I now know a little bit more about Exodus than I probably did at the time. So if we were starting again from scratch I might not necessarily make the same sort of objections."

His replacement, Chief Superintendent Andy Nash, has recently replied to a letter sent by Exodus to a number of official bodies, calling for a round table discussion on the Criminal Justice Bill. In the letter Nash says he is willing to meet and talk and was further quoted in the local newspaper as being in favour of "urgent" round table discussions, stating: "I do not want to be in a position where we are forced to use the powers given by the new Bill."

Recently, the police have ceased raiding Exodus's property and dances, even calling off an operation sent to stop a rave, when they discovered that it was Exodus that was organising it. It is with caution that

talks began but the latest news is that the round table discussions on the Bill with the Bill, will go ahead in mid-October (at the same time as the Bill goes back to the Commons).

"My family have been through a lot with the old bill," says Bigs. "So it was the first time to trust them. It was a major step - it was like now or never. If it was down to me at the time, I would have said 'no' because of my personal experience. But it's not just about me, it's about forwardness and that forwardness outweighs what I've got to think. The forwardness at that time was to work with the old bill no matter what they've done to my family. I'm not pretending that they're not fucked up but now I think the sooner we go to the table the better."

Reminding themselves that 'there is no such thing as an honest copper' Exodus have been talking to the police and finding a few bonus exceptions to the rule. It's been a long road to this point though, establishing the right to regenerate their local community, despite vicious and underhand attacks directed against the Collective by those 'upstairs' at the police station, and those who whisper in the ears of those upstairs. A full enquiry into the operations levelled against the Collective,

by both the police and local newspapers, is next on the cards.

The local council have recently given the go ahead for a £150,000 public enquiry to be chaired by Michael Mansfield QC. All looks set for a full public exposure of the vitriol and negative obstruction laid in the path of the Exodus. As Glenn Jenkins rightly points out - "We're too good an idea to fuck with. The Red Sea parted."

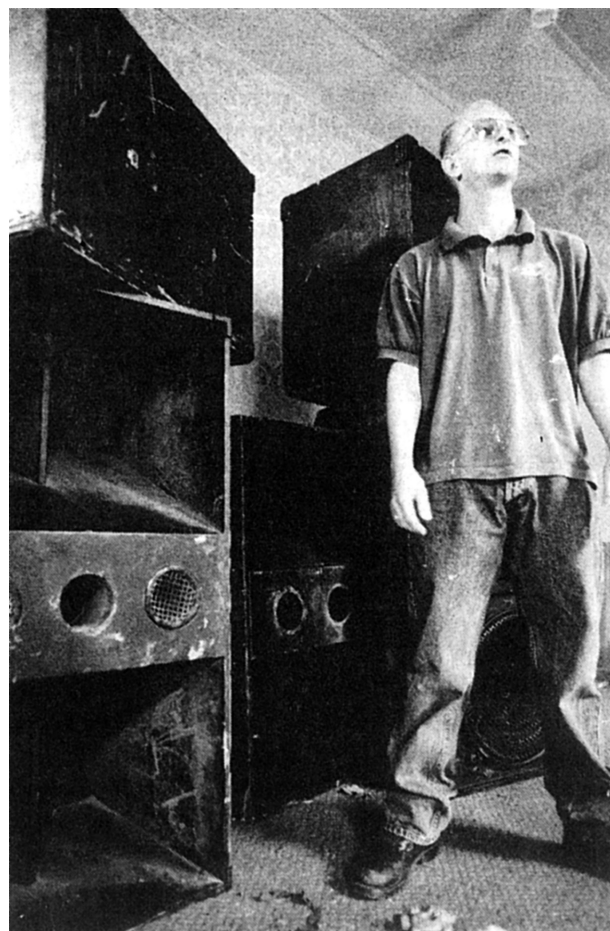
fundays' are often organised in association with local residents' associations and involve bringing the Long Meadow farm animals into Luton to meet the children.

### JULY '94

After a few months break, Exodus start up the parties again every two weeks - with no further police action and a peak of 7,000 people coming to the dances. Exodus send letters out to the police, councillors and politicians, in order to establish a round table discussion. Chief Inspector Andy Nash, operations officer with South Beds Police Division replies saying that the police are "prepared to meet with the Collective and others in a round table discussion with a view to taking the matter further." Talks are arranged for Oct 13th and Oct 20th.

### SEPTEMBER '94

Local Council Policy and Resource Committee give the go ahead for £150,000 public enquiry into the numerous police operations targeted at Exodus and in to the involvement of local politicians including John Carlisle (Con MP Luton North) and Nicholas Lyall (Con MP Mid Beds and Attorney General).



# ExoDust it off and give it life

The Oakmore Hotel lies empty again. One and a half years after Kelly Construction told the court they required immediate possession and one and a half years since the riot police smashed their way in.

Despite having restored the derelict property as housing, the occupants - all members of the Exodus Collective - were evicted into the winter snow of 1992. It is derelict once more and kids have smashed the windows once again.

“Sixteen people put £10 from their dole money into the kitty and we matched it, sometimes doubling it, from the money received in the donations bucket at the dances.” explains Exodus’s Glenn Jenkins. “So there was £20-£30 spent on each person’s room. We also supplied a communal area with carpet, and the kitchen with units.

So the place was up and going within five days. Next thing - 66 old bill come through the door and smash the lot.”

Not dissuaded by the heavy hand, Exodus found a disused old people’s home on the edge of Luton, squatted the property and renamed it HAZ (Housing Action Zone) Manor.

“It was a principle: We don’t stop regenerating derelicts because we’ve been evicted,” affirms Glenn. The difference between the heavy handed reception inflicted on them at the Oakmore Hotel and that received at HAZ Manor, was in the respect for the Collective that had grown amongst the local community. This respect served to pave certain paths in the chambers of the local council. Their initiative in refurbishing the Oakmore Hotel had not gone unnoticed in the area and although officials would not stick their necks out and publicly criticise the violent police eviction, there were some that were now prepared to work behind the scenes to ensure that Exodus’s housing initiatives achieved the security of licence status.

Sam, who had previously been employed as an estate agent,

found herself best able to deal with the paperwork and licencing agreements for the properties occupied by the Collective. “Who the cap fits let them wear it,” she concluded, thus becoming the HAZ manager. From ex-estate agent to Exodus’s estate agent:

“Squatting was our fight to get the right to do what we’re doing now. We didn’t have a big thing about being able to live here free and all that just because the building is not being used. What we were saying was - ‘Let us live here and make it our home and we’ll pay the rent for it’. But nobody was interested. And it’s their loss at the end of the day because now we’re in a council property and we only pay a peppercorn rent.”

The peppercorn rent they pay to the local authority amounts to £1 a year, as they are now an official housing co-op, registered with a friendly society and recipients of a Housing Corporation mini-HAG grant negotiated, on their behalf by CATCH (Co-operative and Tenant Controlled Housing). Mini HAG’s are small scale grants given to refurbish empty properties, the amount of which depends on the number of bed spaces operational as a result of that refurbishment. But as with most of their meetings with the ‘official way of doing things’, Exodus found a complacency inconsistent with their own forward thinking.

CATCH as well as taking some of the grant money for themselves in management costs, also provided the co-op with shoddy workmen to carry out the necessary refurbishment, despite the fact that they themselves had both the experience and willingness to do the work themselves.

“They wouldn’t let us do the work,” says Captain, who lives at the Manor with his 17 year old son





Randy and was a building contractor for 17 years previous to his involvement with the Exodus. "We pushed and pushed but CATCH kept saying that our quality of workmanship was unknown.

Jeff Ruffles, the project manager, said he would employ a firm which he had used in the past. And it turns out they were a right bunch of Billy Boddgers - getting quite a lot of money but I would say they were about DIY/labourer standard. We turned round to him and said - 'If that's the quality of workmanship required, we could do that with our eyes shut', but he took no notice."

Captain helped with the refurbishment of the Oakmore Hotel and continues to work on HAZ Manor despite a spinal injury caused by a police sledgehammer during the eviction of the Oakmore. In the room he occupies at the Manor, Captain has built a mezzanine floor, as well as constructing a large communal fireplace in the Manor and a crazy paving patio outside. His expertise is obvious to any observer.

When CATCH suddenly said that maybe the whole project was going to cost too much money and that perhaps they would keep the grant money themselves and forget the Manor, he set to work fixing the roof and teaching Exodus members to cut and place glass windows.

"That's the thing," says Nobby, another Exodus member and habitee at the Manor: "There are the people here willing to teach and there are the people here willing to learn.

Captain knows how to do this stuff but CATCH said - 'we don't want you to do anything to the place'. In the end Captain taught me how to cut glass and I helped replace the windows."

The replacement of the windows was no small job. When Exodus moved in, nearly every window was smashed. The building contains about 50 frames, each containing around twenty small 12" by 8" squares requiring a separate pane of glass. Along with repairs to the roof, the Collective ended up saving around £6,000 in contractors' fees by doing it themselves. This didn't prevent the work, carried out by the contractors brought in by CATCH, from using up £46,000 of grant money. The contractors also ended up charging another £16,000 in extras, which CATCH tried unsuccessfully to claim back from the Collective. The contractors installed hot water, electricity and gas and the built three small kitchens. The rest of the building still requires complete refurbishment, which the Collective

will now carry out using the money from the small rents they charge, matched with money from the general Exodus fund. The fact that the outside contractors left the large communal kitchen unfinished, has meant that the local council will only pay half the housing benefits for the unemployed tenants. The Collective are now working on the building after nearly a year of stalled and inadequate refurbishment.

"The contractors did the front bit now we're gonna do up the back because there's a lot of space back there that could be utilised into bed spaces," says Sam. "We've decided - they've done what they've done and now we'll use the income we get to do our own job and then we'll compare the two." Her most recent work as co-ordinator of the housing co-op side of Exodus, involves negotiations on the legal future of the Manor and particularly the lease that expires in May 1996.

"When we moved in and squatted the old Hospice - the district council wanted to evict us, but because Luton Borough Council were backing us and negotiating on our behalf with the county council, they didn't have much choice in the matter but to let us stay there. So they went for the shortest possible lease. Give us a chance to prove ourselves and then re-negotiate. We're looking to re-negotiate now."

Sam is also attempting to secure co-operative status for Exodus's other ongoing regeneration project, Long Meadow Farm in nearby Cholton. This farm lay derelict for years on a piece of land purchased by the Department of Transport, who originally planned to use it for a road construction associated with the M1. The works were never carried out and the farm deteriorated. If you walk around the farm today however, you'll see new barns re-built from old pallets - housing goats, sheep, chickens, geese and two generations of Vietnamese pot belly pigs.

"There's a local factory that gets plastic brought in on pallets, so we go down there, pick the pallets up and recycle them into farm buildings," explains Stuart another devoted Exodus worker: "I helped

build some of them barns - that's something that I've been able to do - never before had the opportunity. When we come into these derelict places we see what it could be. We've got vision. Nothing is beyond us. I didn't think I could build a barn and now I've helped build a farm."

Jaqui, a mother of two, assists Sam at the manor and is secretary of the farm, sorting out matters such as calling in vets and paying their bills. She had been employed for six years as an office worker in a local Marks and Spencer warehouse before being made redundant.

"I was roboted up in that job," she remembers. "Getting up at 6.30 am to put the kids in the nursery and then getting to work by eight and working 'til five - coming home and then doing the housework." The combination of leaving that job and helping to form Exodus was, according to Jaqui, like "taking off robot clothes and becoming more herself". She has no doubt about the positive benefits of her change of focus. "Makes being a mum so much

easier. I can't afford to take them anywhere but now, with the whole of Exodus, they're helping out on the farm instead of hanging round the streets damaging bus shelters! I enjoy the dances but they are a small part of it. I work when I want to and I believe in the cause that I'm working for, so I actually enjoy working." It was no small pleasure to Jaqui when she found herself distributing water to dancers, from the very warehouse where she had once worked for Marks and Spencer's, now unused except for Exodus dances!

Jaqui's work also helps to ensure that other local children can benefit from the experience of the farm, just as her children do. Long Meadow World Community Free

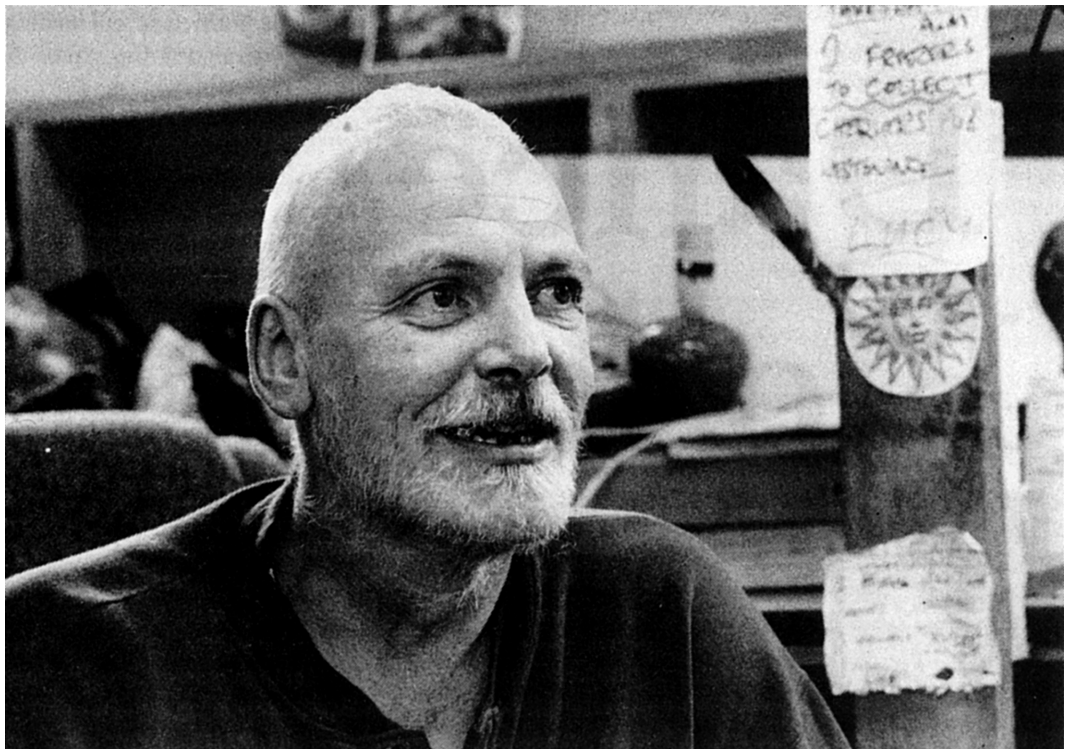
Farm is open to parties from local schools and the farm animals are sometimes taken to a Luton park to participate in a funday for children, organised by Exodus in conjunction with a local council estate resident's association.

Although owned by the DoT, the property is managed by Circle 33 housing association, the parent association of CATCH, before CATCH recently closed down.

"Circle 33 effectively got us the grant on the Manor, although CATCH was what they operated through to get it," explains Sam: "So

In the world of squatting, this is a luxurious position but it's a position Exodus have earned through sheer persistence and through the cultivation of local support rarely achievable by many squatters who are constantly moved from area to area. "Chances are you would have to squat 'cause local councils wouldn't normally give over a place like the Manor," adds Steve, another Exodus member involved in rebuilding the farm. "What we're setting here is a precedent."

Although the local



we want to take over the management of the farm in the same way, under the HAZ umbrella. Then obviously the next step is to find another building that we can do up."

Exodus's sights are set again and this time their gaze is directed on a derelict community centre inside Luton itself. This time however, they find themselves in a position to try asking first. With two up and running examples of what they can do 'given half a chance', it will be a lot harder for local officials to find objections to their proposals.

"We wouldn't necessarily need to squat now to make our point," says Sam: "We can go to them first and say - Look this is what needs to be done and we've proved that it works."

authorities have turned down their first draft plan for the community centre, Exodus are optimistic that a more developed proposal for the derelict community centre, recently re-submitted to the district council, will produce a more positive response. Whether or not permission is forthcoming, the Collective intend to continue with their regenerations.

"If they say no, then we'll either look for somewhere else or decide whether to move in any way," says Sam, firmly. No derelict shells are safe from Exodus's cobweb brush including, it seems, the dusty and decaying procedures of local bureaucracy.

# Who Spiked The Dance Floor ?

When the British public reads about another dancer dying on the dance floor, the whole rave scene is summoned back to the dock. But with the media as presenters of the court case, the real facts suggest that the jury is once again being blatantly mis-informed.

It could be validly argued that rave culture is rarely out of the dock but the recent death of 20 year old Andrew Stoddart at the Hanger 13 Club in Ayr, Scotland, sparked off a renewed volley of cross-examination. Once again the politicians and media-sociologists pronounced drugs to be the explanation for all ills; so closing the file marked 'lessons to be learned' before anyone really had a chance to properly study the case. However, upon serious investigation, the facts of the case have far more to say than the easy explanations offered in the public arena so far.

Following another licenced rave in Grangetown, Cardiff, this August, the national press reported "the police have issued a fresh warning over the illegal drug Ecstasy", after a raver had collapsed into a coma. In September, another fatality in a club at Saltcoat in Ayrshire



pushed the number of rave deaths in Strathclyde well into double figures.

"I've got my reservations about E's 'cause it ain't all MDMA, but if people died by taking E's then you'd have thousands of people dropping dead - corpses everywhere," says Glenn Jenkins from the dance (and more) posse, the Exodus Collective.

Fact one in the re-opened file is the drug itself, still called Ecstasy, but with a contents that have radically altered over the last six years as a direct consequence of government attempts to come down hard on it.

"In 88 when the rave scene was busting up from the underground, they came down on it. They knew about the gatherings and MDMA and they knew how to get to it and fuck it up," explains Bigs, a member of Exodus. "They clamped right down on it and it disappeared. There wasn't any MDMA for 15 to 18 months. Then MDA came back in abundance."

Recent scientific studies have backed up such observations. Gay Times recently sent 17 so-called 'ecstasy' tablets to the Manchester based drug agency Lifeline, in order to have their content examined. It was discovered that only one of the tablets had any MDMA in it and this was only a trace amount. The rest of the tablets contained mostly MDA, which has a neurotoxicity twice that of MDMA, its parent drug, from which it is refined. One of the tablets was found to contain 177mg of MDA, over twice the active dose.

"With MDMA you don't get muggings and stabbings but with MDA sometimes you do. With MDMA, even if you're a racist, you drop one and it fucks it right off out the window if you meet the right people. With MDMA you drop your defences and it helps community. They knew that, that's why they come down heavy on it," observes Bigs.

Whether or not the Government's intention was to smash the collective power of rave culture (the clauses in the Criminal Justice Bill limiting the right to assembly, do further indicate this to be an intention), the result of the

clamp down on MDMA has led to the increased prevalence of the more physiologically harmful MDA. The main reason for this is that MDMA, being a time-consuming distillation of MDA, is far more expensive to produce. Once the Government had clamped down on MDMA, the drug was effectively handed over to black-market profiteers who knew they could make far more for far less, by using MDA. Put simply, the clamp down served to stamp Ecstasy's future with the corrupting power of purely commercial motivation.

Earlier this year, the Government's Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs sent a report to the Home Office saying that raves should be encouraged and licences easier to obtain. The report's reasoning was that by keeping raves financially exclusive and by forcing the drug's distribution into the hands of the solely profit-motivated, the conditions were being created in which people are ingesting chemicals, the content of which they do not know, and then dancing in conditions that were inviting life-threatening physiological trauma. The report entitled 'Police, Drug Misusers and the Community' is still awaiting publication by the Home Office but with clauses in the Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill which go directly against its recommendations, Michael Howard is not keen to have it see the light of day.

Fact two in the re-opened case book, is the quality of the environment in which ravers are dancing. This too has altered over the last six years, not least in the manner in which licences are granted and the manner in which unlicensed raves have been the target of political and media pressure. Going into the nineties, the establishment view of raves was of a growing and officially uncontrollable cultural phenomenon.

The media-fuelled hysteria was not enough to persuade those who came across rave culture from ignoring the positive community experience of participation. Not only did millions of people discover this accessible form of dance music and the missing sense of community it instilled, they also discovered that

the way most politicians and media described the phenomenon was in direct contradiction to their own experience; respect for the authorities was thus further eroded. As a result, a crackdown came with the formation of Police rave units, briefed to bust the flourishing unlicensed rave scene.

Consequently, rave organisers were forced to consider trying to obtain official licences costing considerable amounts of money.

These licenced raves were of course more acceptable to the government, providing as they did a pull-the-plug control for local authorities, as well as siphoning back to the authorities some of the considerable amounts of cash generated at raves.

But in the same way as government clamp downs on Ecstasy served to hand the contents of the tablet over to the profiteers, so too did the clamp down on unlicensed festivals and raves push the scene in the commercial direction. The official insistence on obtaining licences rendered the organisation of raves an exclusive activity for those who had the money. This put off those that didn't have any, and further attracted those that did and who wanted to make more. This stamped rave culture with an unhealthy over-emphasis on commercial development, leading to a further corruption of the dance environment.

The death of Andrew Stoddart at the Hanger 13 club in Ayr, Scotland in August was the third fatality at that venue this year. Hanger 13 is a licenced venue and a review of recent rave deaths and collapses, show that by far the majority occur in licenced venues.

So what's the coup? Glenn Jenkins is in no doubt.

"It's laughable what the Independent is saying about 'If you close down these clubs (where the deaths have occurred) then you'll drive people to these dangerous unlicensed raves'. Well people don't die at our unlicensed raves, people don't even get hurt, and in case they do, we have first aid on site and loads of people around caring."

In fact, witnesses present on

the dance floor of Hanger 13, the night Andrew Stoddart collapsed and died, say that when he was taken ill, the people around him advised him to "dance it off". Undoubtedly, all night dancing does put some stress on the stamina of the body (as well as helping to relieve it!), with dehydration being the most common ailment. On the packed dance floor of Hanger 13, well known for being a hard-core full on rave club, fresh air and water were not freely available to the dancers. Exodus on the other hand operate free raves at different venues in and around Luton and nearly all 54 of the dances they've organised have been unlicensed. In that time they have not had a single collapse or fatality and present at all their dances is Anna in a first aid van. With plans afoot to purchase their own ambulance and fire fighting vehicle, Exodus's Glenn Jenkins is in no doubt what is killing the dancers:

"It's the conditions into which they're squeezed. Rather than allow them to happen unlicensed and giving people the right to gather, they try and drive them into this club situation and of course the commercial heads are exploiting it to the max. Where at these other parties you drop to the floor and start vomiting or something, then you're bad for business. It's out the door mate. And it's the commercial concern that makes these clubs turn off the water so you buy it from them at £3 a bottle."

Although illegal, turning off the water taps and upping the heating is not an uncommon occurrence in many commercial rave clubs. It is undoubtedly a major factor in the deaths of those that are packed onto oven temperature dance floors, perhaps having swallowed a pill of dubious content.

In sharp contrast to the Exodus dance experience, is the club Sanctuary in nearby Milton Keynes. Sanctuary charge £15 admission to their rave nights and according to local dancers, regularly turn off the cold water taps and pack the dance floors. In

August of this year according to local ravers, three people collapsed of heat exhaustion on the Sanctuary dance floor.

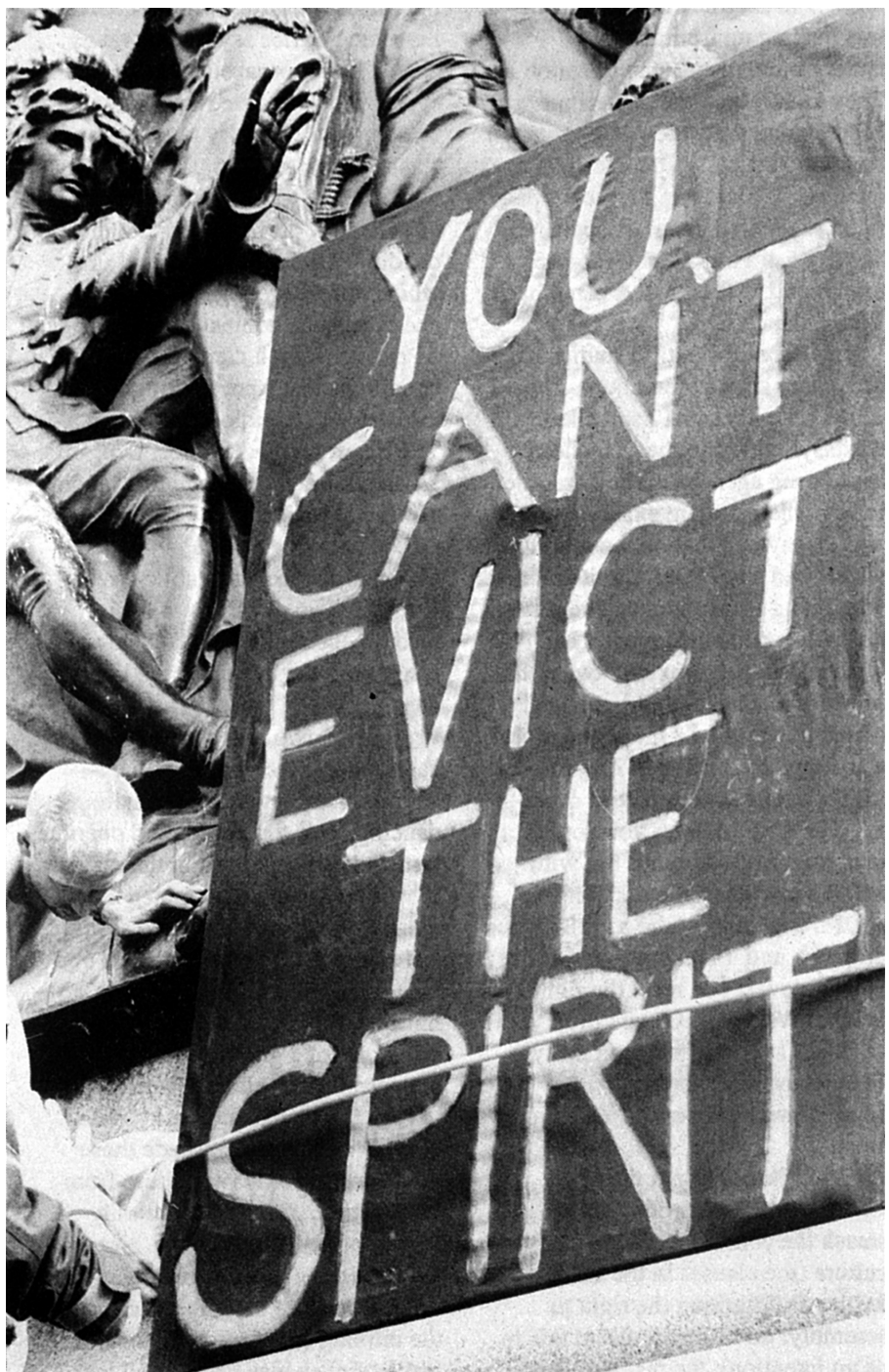
It was small surprise to Glenn when another dancer died on the dance floor of the Hangar 13 club: "Have you seen the pictures of the dances there? - crammed tight. That's the real argument. What's killing the kids - profit or raves?"

It is of a seemingly relentless irony that the Government's continued attempts to stamp on any culture it finds economically unacceptable, simply turns out to increase crime and ill health, and yet

is billed as being designed to achieve the opposite.

"We're the victims - the people going to the dances," says Glenn: "That's one of the reasons we started doing our raves. To get away from that 'drug-dealing, water turned off' atmosphere. Money, money, money and pitbulls, because that's what's killing people."

The unconsidered facts are the missing element that render any remedy harmful. At its most ignorant, misdiagnosis is man slaughter; at its most intentional - it is murder. All facts considered, the Government stands accused.





# The Post Bag

## - letters to SQUALL

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### Cambridge Capers

Dear Squall,

*I went to Cambridge to do my shopping and ended up on an anti-Criminal Justice Bill demonstration. It was like pantomime, wandering round the Guildhall trying to rally discreetly (all three of us) and not attract the attention of the copper with the photocopied piece of paper. However, within ten minutes of official 'kick-off' a surprisingly large crowd had gathered (as if by magic) and (equally magical) contained a broad cross section of society. I had hoped the Morris Dancers were there to be our vanguard but, alas, they were only there for the tourists. And so, in a sense, were we as we marched around town. (American tourist: "Gee it's just like being in Washington!") Some of the final speeches showed a shade too much pity for the police being forced into enforcing repressive laws (the poor darlings). For some reason "KILL THE BILL" was the most popular chant on the march. I'm not sure if "kill the Act" will be quite so effective. The rally ended with a final piece of political theatre - the burning of a copy of the Bill.... Just how far will those flames spread? Our rights are not lost through a piece of legislation. Our rights are lost when we give up fighting for them. The campaign against the Poll Tax showed that the law is nothing but*

*an expensive pantomime when it is unenforced. This Act should be made unenforcable by mass trespassing, squatting, a determination to keep silent in custody, whatever. We should also be prepared to move from protesting to resiting ALL of the shit in this society, however 'established' or justified in law.*

'Fen Tiger'

### Obituary for a Crescent

Dear Squall

*It was a bright, Wednesday morning for a funeral. All local government departments were represented at the entombment of Park Crescent, Church Street, London N16.*

*The first to arrive were the travellers for the ceremonial removal of the last trailer on site. This was conducted with due respect, as far as the on-looking crowd of constables were concerned.*

*Then the residents were awoken, as is usual in these rituals, by the appointed Sheriff and two merry constables. This particular ceremony had the additional honour of two handmaidens bearing cages, fire extinguishers and other tokens to honour the raging pitbull.*

*By 11.30 most of the congregation had arrived, some still busy*

*disembering the corpse.*

*The ritual sacrifice to the council's destruction order was intervened by a traveller who pleaded for the life of an old Worsley and succeeded in reducing its sentence to indefinite time in a police compound.*

*There were also several groups of bystanders eager to be seen at such a momentous occasion. There were the high-ranking representatives of the LMP force with their servants. There were the three round council workers doing their best to look happy in such miserable circumstances, but failing to cheer the mourning residents, grief stricken at the death of such a hallowed place. Then there were the other councillors, dressed in hippy camouflage, trying to be concerned, whilst their camera-flashing attendants recorded the twisted history of a Hackney'ed council.*

*Then finally, the plastic-hatted undertakers set to work on the incarceration of the gutted remains. This was the noisiest point of the ceremony, as earth-eating dragons had to be used to install the plywood walls and iron gates. This Particular entombment included an ancient Egyptian superstition of including*

*'scorpions' as security (men) to keep out the tomb robbers.*

*The scale of the event was costly and extravagant, but nevertheless, all due respects were paid by all to the death of yet another creative community.*

Michelle.



## - The Post Bag

### Reformist's Revolution

Dear Squall,

Lots of people I know seem to have diaries full of direct actions for the next few months. Some comrades have even pencilled in a revolution for early November. I can't see it myself. I don't want to be seen as a wet blanket or anything but for yer actual revolution the police and the army have to be 'on side' and we're not quite sorted on that one yet are we? But there are other possible scenarios. My favourite has Home Secretary Michael Slime resigning in tears as news of anti-CJB actions - mass squats, protests and non-stop dancing in the streets, continues to pour in from all over the country. Oh yes, I can see the headlines now.

**HOWARD DOWN THE PAN!  
MASS SQUATTING ON B DAY!**

That, followed by some wacky stunts for the media, a week of copycating and more celebratory mayhem and then into the demands:  
What do we want? **DITCH THE BILL** for a start; and a few hundred thousand people and almost as many projects could find homes in **ALL THE EMPTY HOMES AND PROPERTY!** and while we're about it **LAND FOR RELATIVE PEACE!** I think so. There's plenty of budding homesteaders out there aching to do a bit of radical gardening on all that vacant Set-A-Side land. And while we're on the subject: **FREE THE WEED!** They'll probably offer that as a concession anyway. Just to shut us up. And that's it. All signed sealed and wrapped up by Xmas.

Okay, it's modest! But at least it's realistic. I mean we have to know our own limitations. Of course there's always the odd chance that something quite monumental could occur and if it happens then so be it... But let's have no compromise on the bottom line. And let's try and play down all this

idle talk of revolution. It may inspire the stropier disaffected youth but it only alienates the average viewer. Meanwhile let's enjoy the party. Peace, Love and Anarchy,

Tony Allen,  
Ladbroke Grove Mahknovista  
(Reformist tendency)

### Hackney Acquittal

Dear Squall,

I write to you on behalf of Eloise Parrack to thank you for the help and support which you afforded during her case.

I am delighted to be able to inform you that Eloise was acquitted of a charge of affray on the 8th August and she is currently considering whether she should pursue civil remedies against the police. Very many people contacted me as a result of your appeal for witnesses which appeared in Squall 7, I was impressed by the fact that they took the trouble to telephone me to eliminate themselves from the enquiries and to offer their best wishes.

I would be obliged if you would thank all those who responded in the next issue of Squall.

With best wishes,

Desmond O'Reilly  
McCormack's Solicitors.

### Slovenian Invitation

Dear Squall,

We are sending you information on Metalkova, which has been squatted for nine months now after an attempt to demolish the complex.

We are in the process of this development plan working now to organize a self-determining structure to rebuild Metalkova and turn it into a centre of cultural and social creativity. We want to hear from people to learn how to become organized and run our community. We want to set up a network and any information sent to us will be collected in a resource centre. We also put out an invitation for people to come and visit.

Our address is:  
Buisa Vojsavnica na Metelkovi St 4,  
61000 Ljubljana,  
Slovenia.  
Thanking you,

Natasa Serec, Kevin Kaufman,  
Metalkova.

### Compulsive Conversation

Dear Squall,

I read a lot. No, I read compulsively; cereal packets, road signs, books, magazines etc. The most stimulating literature I've read in years has been the Summer edition of SQUALL. It has caused me to start conversations and write to my MP (encouraging but slightly fob-offish response from Ms Emma Nicholson - Torridge).

I wish it weren't necessary to publish such a shocking magazine, but it definitely is.

I work as an occupational therapist in an acute psychiatry unit in rural Devon and we deal with the effects of homelessness and social deprivation but are unable to put pressure on those who manufacture its causes. I'm rather angry and have an urge to run away and join friends in Portugal, Spain and France but have decided to stay and try and help. Enclosed is a small donation, hope it helps,  
Yours sincerely,

Huw Jenkins,  
Torrington,  
Devon.

# CONTACTS

Most of the groups listed below are run by volunteers on non-existent budgets. If you want information or any of the publications mentioned make sure you send the required money plus as much extra as you can afford in the way of a donation: Give More - Get more.

**Save the Children** - "Working for a better world for children." Do lots of behind the scenes work for traveller's rights. Liaise with large numbers of local traveller support/action groups across the country. Can put you in contact. *Save the Children Fund, 17 Grove Lane, London SE5 8RD.* Tel: 071 703 5400.

**Advisory Service for Squatters (ASS)** - Gurus of the Squatting world. Open for advice, practical and legal, at *2 St Paul's Rd, London N1 2QN* from 2-6pm. Tel: 071 359 8814.

**SQUASH**, Squatters Action for Secure Homes - Voluntary group set up to oppose legislation against squatting. Action, lobbying & meetings. *SQUASH, 2 St Paul's Rd, London N1 2QN.* Tel: 071 226 8938.

**Liberty** - "National Council for Civil Liberties." Campaigning against Criminal Justice Bill, will be taking HM Govt to Euro. court if Bill passes. Mainly media, lobbying & parliamentary (esp. European). *Liberty, 21 Tabard St, London SE1 4LA.* Tel: 071 403 3888.

**Freedom Network** - Networking opposition to the Criminal Justice Bill. Currently co-ordinating over 50 local, anti-CJB groups nationwide. Contact for one near you. *The Freedom Network, c/o The Green Office, The Old Dolehouse, 372 Coldharbour Lane, Brixton, London SW9.* Tel: 071 738 6721.

**Exodus Collective** - 'A movement of Jah people'. Seriously active collective creating housing, parties, community and bringing life back to Luton. See article page 40. *Long Meadow Community Farm, Chalton Cross, Sundon Road, Luton, Beds.* Tel: 0582 508 936

**Advance Party** - "The Right to Party?" Representing ravers, party-goers, festies & organisers. Campaigning against Criminal Justice Bill, information, action, 'rights cards', meetings. *Advance Party, PO Box 3290, London NW2 3UJ.* Tel: 081 659 9439 or 071 700 0878.

**Homeless Information Project** - HIP Southwark's advisory service for squatters. Practical & legal advice, CJB info, meetings. Mon - Fri 4 - 7pm at *612 Old Kent Rd, London SE15* Tel: 071 277 7639.

**Tottenham Squatters** - Ground support for Harringey and based at the *Unwaged Centre, 72 West Green Rd, London N15.* Tel: 081 802 9804.

**Bristol Housing Action Movement** - 'Homeless? Don't be - Squatting is still legal!' - A collective of squatters and

friends who advise and assist wherever possible. Still operating from a box no. until they find new premises. *PO Box 56, Green leaf Bookshop, Colston Street, Bristol, Avon.*

**Hackney Squatters Advice Service** - Open sessions between 6.30 & 8.30 on the first and third Tuesday of every month at *The Colin Roach Centre, 10a Bradbury St, Dalston, London N16.*

**Squatters Estate Agency (Oxford)** - Support for squatters in Oxford, keeping track of the media and the police. *Box A, 111 Magdalen Rd, Oxford OX4 1RQ.*

**M-11 Link Road Campaign** - NVDA against the M11 extension now moving on Leytonstone. Massive resistance now at Claremont Rd. Successful, very active group. *211 The Arches, off Grove Green Rd, London E11 4AJ.* Tel: 081 558 2638.

**Road Alert** - Coordinating anti road protests across the country. Direct action arm of Alarm UK. Opposition to Criminal Justice Bill. Information, latest news, actions, networking. *Road Alert, PO Box 371, Southampton, Hants. SO9 7BS.* Tel: 0703 237809.

**Alarm UK** - Set up following Alarm's London success in defeating road proposals. Network of groups and activists opposing damaging road schemes & the CJB. Co-ordinating 200 community groups nationwide. *Alarm UK, 13 Stockwell Rd, London SW9 9AU.* Tel: 071 737 6641.

**Friends, Families and Traveller's Support Group** - "All citizens of a free society should have the right to travel and the right to stop without fear of persecution because of their lifestyle." Setting up monitoring groups for post CJB abuses. SAE for information: *Steve Staines, 33 Bryanston St, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 7AZ.* Tel: 0258 453 695.

**Labour Campaign for Traveller's Rights** - Well-respected group fighting for traveller's rights and concentrating on 1968 Caravan Sites Act demanding full implementation, wider definitions to include 'new' travellers, grants and release of unused Govt. land for sites. *84 Bankside Street, Leeds LS8 5AD.*

**Hunt Saboteurs Association** - National umbrella for local groups. Increasingly active in opposing CJB. Along with Road protesters, represent the most painful NVDA thorn in the establishment's side. Days of action - all year. Autumn sees the start of the fox-hunting season - get involved. For information on local groups: *HSA, PO Box 1, Carlton PDO, Nottingham.* Tel: 0602 590357.

**121 Centre** - Cafe, bookshop, meeting place, advice centre for those interested in squatting, women's issues, unemployment and the state of the nation. Run by squatters at, *121 Railton Rd, Brixton, London SE24.* Tel: 071 274 6655.

**The 56a Info Shop** - News, action & meeting place, books, teashop, records, comics. Squatting, counter-culture & lots of small press stuff. Open Mon, Thurs, Fri 3-7pm. *56 Crampton St, London SE17.*

**Cool Tan Arts** - A collection of artistically active squatters who run regular cafes, lots of workshops, informative cinema & video, events & music. Cool Tan face eviction and are currently looking for new premises. Contributions, ideas & help welcome. For more information contact *Cool Tan Arts, The Old Dolehouse, 372 Coldharbour Lane, Brixton, London.* Tel: 071 737 2745/0100.

**Rainbow Centre** - Networking point for tribal issues, squatting, travelling, festivals, dongas, anti-roads, eco & Criminal Justice. Arts space, workshops, meetings Information. Currently under threat of eviction - support essential. Agenda 21 features highly in future plans - want to find out more? *Rainbow Centre, The Olde Church, 23 Highgate Rd, Kentish Town NW5.* Tel: 0831 195 223.

**Monolith News** - Magazine for travellers of the New Age and all interested. No. 17, news, reviews, legalise stonehenge - whose heritage?, festivals, operation snapshot, earth mysteries. 50p & A5 SAE + 50p for each back issue. *Monolith publications, PO Box 4, Syston, Leicestershire LE7 4RD.*

**Tribal Messenger** - Magazine for travellers. News, interviews, festival guide, Gypsies, photos, New Age, history, criminalisation, press cuttings, letters, comment. £1 + 80p P&P from; *Tribal Messenger, Box 21, 118 Grovener Rd, St Paul's, Bristol, BS2.*

**Festival Eye** - "Criminal Justice Issue." A4 format for travellers et al featuring Stonehenge Campaign, free festivals, magick, networking, news, what the papers say, festival listings, photos, cartoons. £1.50 + 60p P&P from; *Festival Eye, BCM, Box 2002, London WC1N 3XX.*

**Stonehenge Campaign** - Stonehenge belongs to you and me. Regular newsheets, information, listings & meetings. SAE + donation to; *Stonehenge Campaign, 99 Torriano Av, London NW5 2RX.*

**Small World** - "Just Do It." A non-profit making organisation committed to supporting campaign groups working on environmental and social justice issues. Produce 'Undercurrents', a quarterly alternative video magazine. Features Criminal Justice Bill, direct action, M11 and anti-roads campaigns, topical environmental issues. Videos available from; *Small World Media Ltd, 1A Waterlow Rd, London N19 5NJ.* Tel: 071 281 7320.

**POD** - "Counter culture '90's style." Recommended, quality Zine, issue 5 now out. CJB, Dongas, DIY, Wanstead, permaculture, Exodus, lets, Dragon. £2.50 gets you on the mailing list: *POD HQ, PO Box 23, London SE4 1SW.*

**Contraflow** - Part of the European Counter Network. Radical mag with occasional articles on squatting and travellers. Available from the 56a Info Shop (Address above).

**ByPass** - "Cross currents in under-the-counter culture". Mag review and listing over 100 small press zines, pamphlets, books & whatever. Excellent production from Oxford activists connecting you to "a whole chunk of the independent, alternative and dissident underground". £1 + A4 SAE to: *ByPass, c/o 21 Cave St, Oxford, OX4 1BA.*

**FIN** (Free Information Network) - Newsheets published as and when containing up to date information, festival news, events etc. SAE to your local branch.

**Aberdeen FIN** - 36 Buchan Rd, Torry, Aberdeen AB1 3SW

**EFFIN** - c/o York, The Coffee Bar Grassroots, 58 Charles St, Cardiff

**GuilFIN** - PO Box 217, Guildford, Surrey.

**Isis Brum FIN** - c/o 29 Silvertown, Cresc, Moseley, Birmingham B13 9ND

**London FIN** - c/o 99 Torriano Av, London NW5 2RX

**Mersey FIN** - PO Box 110, Liverpool L69 6AU.

**Moor FIN** - 3 Church St, Calstock, Cornwall.

**Never Never FIN** - 8 Campbell Rd, Southsea, Hants.

**Nott FIN** - c/o The Rainbow Centre, 180 Mansfield Rd, Nottingham.

**Oxford** - Box A, 111 Magdalen Rd, Oxford.

**Sheff FIN** - The Ecology Co, 199 Crookes Valley Rd, Sheffield.

**TV FIN** - c/o Rising Sun, 30 Silver St, Reading.

**Mother Clan** - 29 Silvertown Crescent, Moseley, Birmingham B13 9NH.



**SQUALL - 'Cracking it Open'**