

Summer '94

Magazine for Assorted Itinerants

No. 7

Donation



getting our priorities right

- Road Wars
- Actors of Parliament
- Rest In Peace?
- The Real Criminals

SOJOURN
necessity breeds ingenuity

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getting our priorities right

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Front Cover Photo:

15,000 people attended the May 1st Rally in protest against the Criminal Justice Bill. Along the route, the company premises the police rushed to protect was MacDonaldis on Haymarket. They seemed to think the fast food "MacGarbage" chain may have become the object of a sideline protest!

Photo taken by Nick Cobbing.

INFORMATION IS YOUR WEAPON

It's Still Serious;

SQUALL - an ongoing experiment in information dispersal. Yes **WE STILL NEED MONEY**. Last issue (6) we had a print run of 1500, this cost a grand to produce (for research, mail outs, production and printing - not a lot, all-considered). A massive thanks to all those who did benefits for us and all those who sent cheques. This is the way we want it to work - the mag remains free to those who can't afford it. So, if you are in a position to give us some money **DO IT NOW**; delay no more. **SQUALL** is written and produced by people who live the issues, not observers

looking for a commission.

We now operate a mailing list, it works like this;

You send us as much money as you can and we send you future editions - it's easy. The larger the donation the more editions you will receive. Anyone on the mailing list whose donation has been used up gets a reminder to **SEND US SOME MORE MONEY**.

This magazine not only goes to MPs, the media (underground and mainstream), traveller's groups, squatter's groups, environmental agencies,

housing advice centres and human rights organisations to name but a few of the obvious ones. We believe **SQUALL** has an important role to play in information dispersal; if you agree you can help us.

Want to do a benefit and/or become a distributor for **SQUALL**? That's easy too. Drop us a line at the address below, include your telephone number, and we'll talk.

In Peace & Sedition,
The Eds.

Cheques & POs etc payable to **SQUALL**

Much respect & without whom:

Camden Head Performers Group, NeverNeverFIN, Chris McTofu, Tony, SQUASH, Julian & Mamaloucos, Cat, ASS, Andy Drysdale, Nick, Debs, Juno & Anon.

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The state it's in

Travels in a political Arena

As SQUALL goes to press, the Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill wears its final way through the House of Lords and is likely to be finished there by early July. The Bill then returns briefly to the Commons for final adjustments before going to the Queen for the autograph that seals royal assent. This process is likely to have been completed before the end of July. The Bill will then be an Act and a new law will crouch on the statute books ready to be used.

The only Part 5 (Public Order) clauses not immediately usable are those associated with interim possession orders against squatters. In order for these to be effective, the Lord Chancellors' department has to change the rules of court. At the moment these court rule changes are the subject of yet another consultation paper and are unlikely to be formally issued until a month or more after the Bill becomes an Act.

However, the clauses on violent entry, on aggravated trespass, on unlawful camping, unlawful festivals and caravan site repeal, will all be immediately applicable.

In the last edition of SQUALL we reported the disquiet amongst certain Labour backbenchers that their own party might abstain at the House of Commons report stage of the Bill, as they had done, so limply at the second reading. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, their fears became a reality when the 'soft on crime' ogre once again overwhelmed any official Labour stance on the issue. A meagre 44 MPs had enough personal integrity to vote against the Bill. The other members of the 'opposition' (an increasing misnomer) abstained. Tony Blair, Shadow Home Secretary and likely to be the new leader of the Labour Party,

even suggested to interested backbenchers that he would table further amendments, including ones attacking the new clauses on violent entry. He didn't.

The five stages of a bill in the House of Lords are similar to those for its passage through the House of Commons, described in the last issue of SQUALL. There is a first reading (a formality), a second reading (almost a formality), a committee stage (potentially the meaty bit), the report stage (the last opportunity to table any amendments) and the third reading (a formality). Unlike the process in the Commons, the Lords' committee stage consists of all members of the house.

As SQUALL goes to press, the committee stage in the Lords has drawn to a close. The two areas of the Bill forecast to receive the most opposition were the clauses removing of the rights of silence and those setting up penal institutions for young offenders. The extent of that opposition however, was less than expected.

Lord Runciman, an independent peer and Chairman of the Royal Commission on Criminal Justice, and Lord Alexander of Weedon, a Tory peer and Chairman of the cross-party law reform group Justice, joined with other peers from various parties to give the Government a few flutters over the clauses on the removal of the rights of silence. The Government were keen not to lose any of the votes in the Lords, particularly after the roasting the Police and Magistrates Bill had recently received in the upper house and its consequent adverse media coverage.

In the end however, opposition was diffused when Michael Howard gave assurances that he would investigate measures decreasing the chance of miscarriages of justice (rest assured? - I think we cannot). The clauses introducing penal institutions for young offenders were the subject of some vocal opposition but were eventually voted through unamended.

Part 5 of the Bill was never looking to be a battle any party was prepared to pour much intention into. Lord MacIntosh of Haringey (Labour's Home Affairs spokesman in the Lords) and Baroness Mallilieu spoke of how the clauses on aggravated trespass would seriously undermine the British citizens' right to conduct peaceful and effective protests. Lord Avebury (original author of the Caravan Sites Act 1968 - to be repealed by the Bill) spoke up for provisions that should be made for travellers and for the disappearing right to protest. Lord Desai tabled amendments prepared by the campaign group SQUASH concerning the clauses on squatting.

No-one was under the illusion that this opposition would have the affect of altering Part 5 of the Bill. The Lord's committee stage debates (May 23/24th and June 7th) were very poorly attended. The few Lords who did speak in opposition to these clauses did so articulately enough but their words were neither effective in amending the Bill nor were they subject of any media attention.

All that remains of the bill's passage is a brief House of Lords report stage, then back to the Commons for final Government adjustments, to the Queen for a signature and thenLAW.

- The removal of the rights to silence, a five-fold increase in the maximum fines for the possession of marijuana, new stop and search powers for the police, the lowering of the age of consent for homosexuals from 21 to 18 but not to 16, as well as all the Part 5 public order clauses against travellers, squatters and ethical protesters-

Of course, regarding the clauses in Part 5 of the Bill, there is always the question of how far the police will want to be nationally responsible for its application. All of a sudden, the Bill will place an onus on the police to be the national instruments of multi-evictions and multi-arrests, a responsibility the Police Federation have already said they do not want. Never the less the fact that

the Law will be sitting there as ammunition, means there is destined to be 'much grief to much folk' whose lives do not need any more of it.

What now?

The Friends, Families and Travellers Support Group and the Labour Campaign for Travellers Rights are now looking at ways of encouraging local authorities to allow travellers to establish their own sites, something that has been made difficult in the past by obstructions in planning permission. It is undoubtedly the case that, although much campaigning around the issue has not softened the tone of the Criminal Justice Bill, it has alerted many people to the fact that we have a varied population of travellers in this country, all facing huge amounts of racial hostility but unlikely to just disappear in the face of the new Bill. It is already the case that illegal evictions of traveller sites have been conducted under the eyes of the police in Avon, Somerset and

and disinterested ears.

Travelling will still exist and the best hope lies in transit and long stay sites existing on land owned by travellers themselves or by sympathetic landowners. If this option is thwarted by further obstructions in planning procedures there will be boiling over points around the country, as travelling families can stand the evictions and harassment no longer. These boiling points will serve only to fuel the already festering relationships between sedentary conservative localities and nomadic visitors.

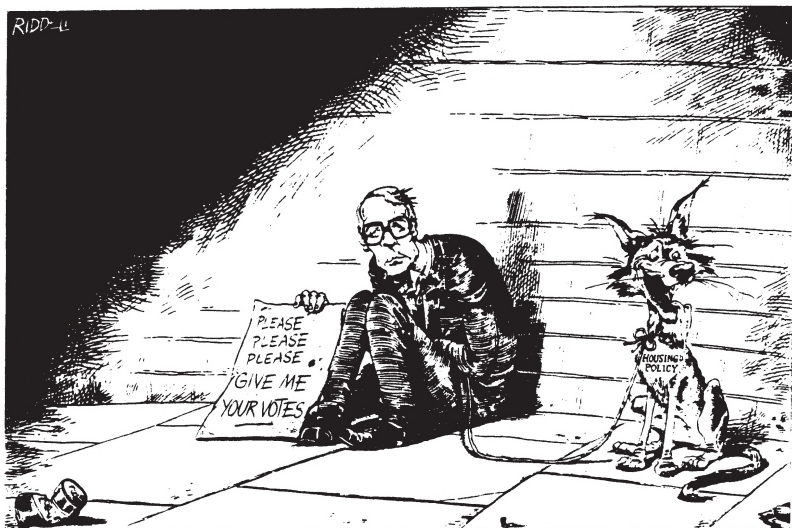
SQUASH (Squatters' Action for Secure Homes) are researching the possibility of a judicial review of the court rule changes associated with the interim possession order clauses of the Criminal Justice Bill. The use of ex-parte (private) court procedures to grant possession are, according to a number of legal organisations, both 'an offence against natural justice' and a contravention of the European Commission of Human Rights' declaration that everyone is "entitled to

an option only for the hardened and more organised. Much less will it be the safety net for the varieties of homeless people that it is at present.

Despite the clauses on aggravated trespass, it is undoubtedly the case that people will still become involved in moral, ethical and environmental protest that, for their very effectiveness, depend on peaceful yet disruptive and intimidatory acts. However, it will be more likely that charges against them will result in more fines and prison sentences than are already available to the courts under existing public order legislation.

The removal of the rights to conduct peaceful yet disruptive protests is something that very few people realise the consequences of. The faith of a whole generation of British people in this country's current form of democracy and public voice, has been destroyed. People seeking respect for alternative points of view to the prevailing political homogeneity no longer consider the parliamentary process to be either honest, earnest or indeed saveable. Certainly very few people consider it representative and, as a consequence, the requirement to register protest in ways other than deaf conference tables or fruitless lobbying, is ever more necessary. This has manifested itself in an increase in direct action protest in recent years. It is not possible to legislate a lid for the steam cooker and not expect the steam to explode in other directions.

The removal of the ability to participate in festivals and raves and the creation of penal institutions for young offenders make bizarrely ironic clause companions. Festivals and wild dancing have for centuries been the necessary expressions of human life forces. These forces are of course scientifically unquantifiable and presently receive almost no political respect whatsoever. However, they do not go away. Legislate against them and, like the need to protest, they will find expression in some other way. Surely joy riding, the modern youth crime phenomenon, is just one expression of the necessity of some kind of adventure. It is probably joy riding more than anything else that has fuelled the hysterical calls for child prisons. If the parties and wild dances are legislated against, what do you expect young people to do - read history books in the prison library and dream?



Gloucestershire in recent months. Certain local authorities have been acting as if the Bill is an act already, but recourse to the law for travellers, as ever, is severely limited by both finances and familiarity with the legal process. The efforts to establish sites that cannot be evicted is a positive initiative towards the creation of oases for travellers in Britain.

Undoubtedly the Criminal Justice Bill will be making life harder for whole communities of people, and that certain members of those communities are likely to be extremely angry and frustrated, having witnessed the campaigns on their behalf for more compassion and tolerance fall on deaf

a fair hearing".

It is still unclear what court rule changes the Lord Chancellor's Department is likely to make, particularly in the light of the fact that the Law Society has spoken out against the use of court proceedings where a defendant faces eviction and possible criminal sanctions and yet is not allowed to represent him/herself in court. However, it is unlikely that the Lord Chancellor's Department will undermine the Government's intention for the clauses by decreeing innocuous rules that give the Bill no teeth.

Squatting will still exist, it has to, but as in other European countries where it is already illegal, it will become



It is undoubtedly the case that new clause 67 on violent entry, added to the Criminal Justice Bill on Feb 9th, is worse than what was already in the Bill. When two lobbyists from SQUASH (Squatter's Action for Secure Homes) noticed that these clauses had been included in the new clause sheets, they informed the labour benches who were themselves unaware of their existence. After all, any law that sanctions violence and allows someone to break down the door of an occupied property with no authorisation from the courts is, let face it, a seriously draconian addition to the Bill. It surely provided the greatest opportunity for a political challenge by the Labour Party. But not so. A few Labour backbenchers tried to make an outcry against it but there was no official stance from the Labour front benches and when unsupported by your own leadership, backbench stances amount to little.

SQUALL was informed by a Labour backbench MP that Tony Blair (Shadow Home Secretary) was intending to table some amendments opposing the 'violent entry' clauses and that he would introduce them at the report stage of the Bill. However when the report stage was heard in the House of Commons, Tony Blair recinded on his intention and played the safe ball, tabling no amendments on the issue. Labour front bench political opposition once again cotton woolled to avoid the 'soft on crime' tag.

Tony Blair may have said: "We are not going to win through the politics of caution; we are going to win through the politics of change." but few people, least of all his own party, seem to believe he is the man of principle he makes out. Take Lord MacIntosh of Haringey, Labour Home Affairs spokesman in the Lords, for example. Speaking in the Lords' committee stage debate, in support of amendments to the clauses on squatting, Lord MacIntosh felt compelled to tell the House: "We are not in any sense being soft on squatters. If I was to suggest that we were being soft on them, Mr Tony Blair would have me shot at dawn."

Actors of Parliament

In the last copy of SQUALL we reported that some labour MPs were fearing their own party would abstain on the third reading of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill. Since then their fears have been realised. Only 44 MPs voted against the Bill and one of them was a Tory MP!

The following 43 MPs were the only ones to stick their vote and reputations where their ideologies lay.

Diane Abbott, John Austin-Walker, Barry Barnes, Tony Benn, Richard Burden, Malcolm Chisholm, Michael Clapham, Eric Clarke, David Clelland, Michael Connarty, Jeremy Corbyn, Jean Corston, Jim Cunningham, Denzil Davies, Jimmy Dunnachie, Mildred Gordon, Thomas Graham, Bernie Grant, John Gunnell, John Heppell, John Home Robertson, Jimmy Hood, Kevin Hughes, Robert Hughes, Glenda Jackson, Helen Jackson, Lynne Jones, Jane Kennedy, Terry Lewis, Ken Livingstone, Eddie Loyden, John McAllion, Calum MacDonald, Max Madden, Alice Mahon, Jim Marshall, Bill Michie, Colin Pickthall, Brian Sedgemore, Alan Simpson, Denis Skinner, John Watts, Audrey Wise, Jimmy Wrae.

Neil Gerrard and Andrew Bennett counted the no votes which also means they too were in the no lobby.

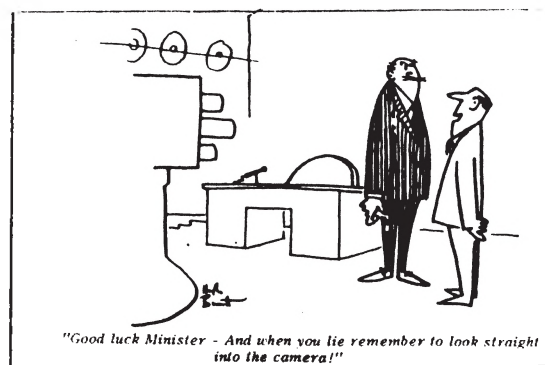
When a SQUALL bod met up with Bernie Grant (Labour MP Tottenham) at a fundraising do for the local Labour Party recently, it was an opportunity to ask him what position he took on the proposals contained within the Criminal Justice Bill with regard travellers and squatters.

"I think they're ridiculous - just looking for something to grab a few votes."

When the SQUALL bod mentioned that Tony Blair (Shadow Home Secretary) had refused to condemn the measures, even taking the time to slag off squatters too, Bernie had this to say:

"Tony Blair's an arsehole!"

Unfortunately for Bernie, Tony Blair now looks set to be leader of the Labour Party. Talk about leading from the behind.



An indication of the kind of direction the land laws are heading in, was given by Peter Butler (Con MP - Milton Keynes NE) during the Second Reading of the Criminal Justice Bill in the House of Commons. "I welcome what I hope will prove in retrospect to have been the first tentative steps towards a law of criminal trespass," drooled Butler expectantly. "It should be an offence to knowingly to enter or remain on land or building belonging to another person without consent."

The standing committee selected for the Commons' committee stage of the Bill is often chosen on the basis of how the MPs spoke during the second reading debate. Needless to say the Government selectors considered Peter Butler's property-is-God sentiments to be a useful asset, consequently placing him as one of the 16 Tories who sat on the standing committee pushing the Bill through.

InJustice Translate

A summary of Part V of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill; relating to aggravated trespass, squatting, travelling, land protests and festival/parties.

(NB. legal terminology uses the masculine pronouns - he, his and him)

Clauses 56 and 57. Criminal Sanctions on Simple Trespass.

1) If 2 or more persons are trespassing on land and are present there with the common purpose of residing there for any period, and that reasonable steps have been taken by or on behalf of the owner to ask them to leave and

a) that any of these persons have caused damage to the land or used threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour towards the owner or his agent, or

b) those persons have six or more vehicles with them.

They can be instructed to leave. If they fail to do so as soon as possible or come back on the land within 3 months, they commit a criminal offence punishable with 3 months imprisonment and/or a level 4 fine (£2,500). They may be arrested without warrant. This law counts for owners and local authorities but not land owned jointly by both eg. some village greens.

"Damage" includes the deposit of any substance capable of polluting land.

Clauses 58, 59, 60 & 61. Criminal Sanctions on Raves.

This section applies to a gathering on land in the open air of 100 or more persons at which amplified music is played at night.

If a police officer believes 10 or more people are present on land

- a) making preparation for such a gathering
- b) waiting for such a gathering
- c) attending such a gathering

He may order them to leave with their vehicles and other property. Failure to do so as soon as possible or return to the land within 7 days is a criminal offence punishable by 3 months imprisonment and/or a level 4 fine (£2,500).

The only exempt persons are the owner of the land, any member of his family, any of his agents or anyone whose home is on the land. A police constable may enter the land to ascertain whether a gathering is about to happen, without a warrant.

Any person within a mile radius, believed to be on their way to such a gathering can be stopped and directed not to proceed.

If a person fails to leave the land as soon as possible the court may make an order for forfeiture of any sound equipment. The property will be taken into the possession of the police. Anyone who can prove they own the equipment but was neither present at the gathering or had knowledge that the equipment was to be used there, have 6 months to satisfy the police, after which the equipment may be destroyed.

Clause 62. Retention and Charges for Seized Property.

Any vehicles seized from trespassers or rave gatherings may be retained until the conclusion of proceedings against the owners. The Secretary of State may regulate the retention, safe keeping, disposal or destruction of such vehicles and prescribe charges for so doing. If the equipment owner does not pay the charges for the confiscation and storage of his equipment, the authorities may retain it. "Music" includes sounds wholly or predominantly characterised by the emission of a succession of repetitive beats.

Clause 63 & 64. Aggravated Trespass (removal of rights to protest).

A person commits the offence of aggravated trespass if he goes on to land to

- a) intimidate persons engaging in a 'lawful' activity
- b) obstruct that activity
- c) disrupt that activity

A person guilty of this offence is liable to 3 months imprisonment and/or a level 4 fine (£2,500).

A police officer may order persons to leave land if it is believed that the persons are, have, or intend to commit aggravated trespass. Failure to leave as soon as possible or return within 7 days, is a criminal offence punishable with 3 months imprisonment and/or a level 4 fine.

Clause 65. Criminal Sanctions Against Assemblies. Changes to the Public Order Act 1986.

If a chief officer of the police reasonably believes that an assembly is intended to be held on land that may cause serious disruption to the community or on land of historical, architectural, archaeological or scientific importance, he may apply to the courts for an injunction on that assembly. This applies to the metropolitan and City of London as well as the rest of the country.

"Assembly" means 20 persons or more.

A person who organises an assembly despite the prohibition order, is guilty of a criminal offence with a punishment of 3 months imprisonment and/or a level 4 fine (£2,500) A person who attends such an event is guilty of a criminal offence punishable by a level 3 fine (£1000)

If a constable believes that someone is on their way to such an assembly, they can stop that person and order them not to proceed.

Clause 67. Violent Entry

Any DRO, PIO or anyone acting on their behalf is entitled to use violence to force entry to a property regardless of whether that property is occupied at the time.

Clauses 68 & 69. Changes to the Criminal Law Act 1977 that widen the definition of protected intended occupiers and leasehold interest.

A person is a protected intended occupier if:

1) he has a freehold interest of not less than 2 years still to run (it was previously at least 21 years) and requires the premises for his own occupation and is excluded from entry. He, or anyone acting on his behalf, must have a written statement expressing such interest in the property, that is signed in front of a justice of the peace or a commissioner of oaths. Anyone can act on his behalf as long as they have the same required paperwork.

2) he has a tenancy of those premises or a licence to occupy those premises granted by a person who fulfills the criteria mentioned in 1) above. And that he requires the premises for his own occupation as a residence and holds a written statement signed by both owner and tenant in front of a justice of the peace or commissioner of oaths. Anyone can act on his behalf as long as they have the same required paperwork.

3) he has a tenancy granted by a public authority and has a statement to that effect issued by that authority, and is excluded from taking up residence by unlawful occupants.

It is an offence for freehold owners or private tenants to make a false statement concerning the above criteria, punishable by a term not exceeding 6 months or not exceeding a £5000 fine.

It is also an offence for an occupier not to leave when presented documentation required to fulfill the recognition of a Protected Intended Occupier (PIO), a displaced residential occupier (DRO).

Clauses 70 & 71. Criminal Sanctions Against Squatting.

If an interim possession order has been granted against occupiers, it is a criminal offence to be in that property 24 hours after the serving of the notice. It is also a criminal offence to return to that property within one year. These offences are punishable by 6 months imprisonment and/or a level 5 fine (£5000).

Any person found in the property within one month of the service of the order will be assumed to have been there at the time of the order and will therefore be guilty of an offence with the same punishment. A constable may arrest, without a warrant, anyone he reasonably suspects as being guilty of these offences.

If a person obtaining an interim possession order makes a statement that is

- a) knowingly or
- b) recklessly misleading

then he commits a criminal offence punishable by 2 years imprisonment and/or an unspecified fine.

The clauses in this Bill simply provide the 'jaw-bone' for the bite at squatters. The teeth are the ex-parte (private court) procedures that will be established by the Lord Chancellor via what is called 'delegated legislation' or 'statutory instrument'. These rulings are simply handed down to the courts and are not normally debated in parliament. The Lord Chancellor's Department has said that these rulings are yet to be written but will be the subject of a public consultation when they are.

Clauses 72,73 & 74. Criminal Sanctions for Unauthorised Campers.

If it appears to a local authority that persons are residing in a vehicle

- a) on any land forming part of a highway
- b) on any other unoccupied land or
- c) on any occupied land without the consent of the owner,

they may direct those persons to leave. Failure to do so with any vehicles they have as soon as possible, or any return to the site within 3 months, is a criminal offence punishable by a level 3 fine (£1000). It is a defence for the accused to show that his failure to leave or to remove the vehicles or other property as soon as practicable, was due to illness, mechanical breakdown or other immediate emergency. "Vehicle" includes:

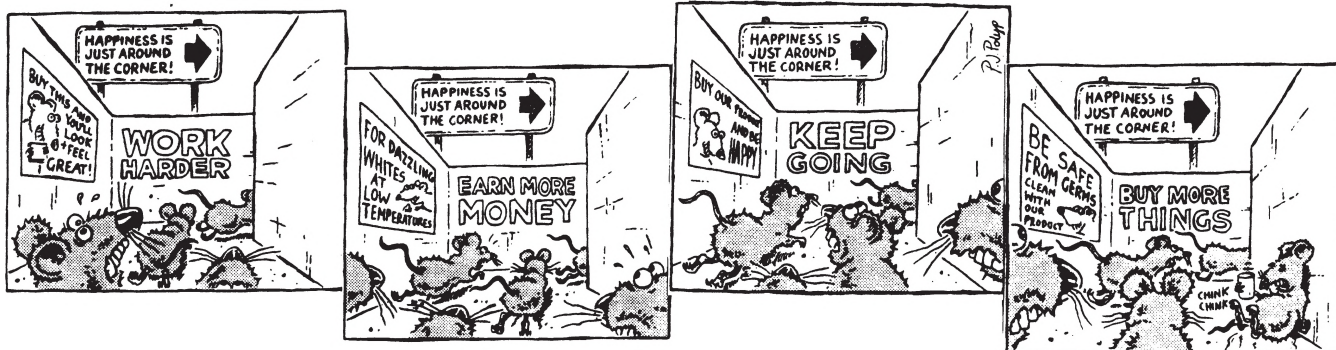
- a) any vehicle, whether or not it is in a fit state for use on roads and includes any body, with or without wheels, appearing to have formed part of such a vehicle, and any load carried by, and anything attached to such a vehicle.
- b) caravan.

Clause 75. Repeal of the Caravan Sites Act 1968. Withdrawal of the provision made for Gypsies.

Repeal of that part of the Caravan Sites Act 1968 that placed a duty on local authorities to provide sites for Gypsies.

Withdrawal of grants to local authorities for provision for Gypsies. All future applications to provide sites for Gypsies will be subject to the restrictions of the Planning and Compensation Act 1991.

"Gypsy" is defined as persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race and origin but does not include an organised group of travelling showmen or persons engaged in travelling circuses, travelling together as such.



Dirty Dramas "Gypsy Women Turned Mad" by Bill

"The BBC are looking for a squat in London with large rooms, in order to shoot a scene for a forthcoming drama on BBC1. Could you put us in touch with some squatters please?" said a message left on the Squatter's Action for Secure Homes' answer-machine. And so SQUASH duly obliged and put them in contact with several squatters living in London. Patrick Karam, the location manager responsible for finding a suitable film set, arrived at a Kings Cross address after already viewing six other squats. "We're looking for a large room that's pretty dark and dingy," he said snap-happy with the camera. The squatter took him around his house but everything proved to be "far too clean".

"You see, I'm afraid the bit in the drama which takes place in the squat requires a stereotypical, dirty and dingy mattress-slung-on-the-floor type squat," explained Karam, incidentally on his first location job for the BBC. So the squatter took him down to the basement of the house, the room that had received the least renovation. Although the squatters had removed the debris from the room and shored up the roof, it was the dampest, dirtiest room in the crumbling house and Karam enthusiastically shot off a load more photos. Karam then left the squat saying that they would be in touch soon. The squatter then informed SQUASH of the visit.

The next and last thing they heard from Patrick Karam was a message saying:

"Patrick Karam, location manager here. Er, thanks for your previous help.

I've visited eight squats in London and we still can't find one that's dirty enough to film this sequence in. Can you recommend any more?"

The message was replied to by a member of SQUASH, well-aware that one minute's stereotypical impression on a BBC1 drama could undo a year's worth of campaigning for a more informed debate. Although the text of the reply is unavailable, it is understood that the said SQUASH representative offered to pay a visit to Patrick Karam's house and home, in order to suitably prepare it for the location shot he was looking for.

The low profile of Romany and Gypsy groups in campaigning against the Criminal Justice Bill is about to be turned around by the formation of a new group, the National Association of Gypsy Women (NAGW). Sylvia Dunn, the 65 year-old gypsy who has founded the group said:

"Women are phoning me all the time for details (about the Bill). They're fed up because the men haven't been doing enough. As long as they've got a cup of tea and can go to the pub they're happy. We're stronger than them, and although it's too late to stop the Bill we are going to do all we can to make

it difficult for the police to implement it."

With a political determination the whole nation could do with heeding, Sylvia Dunn continued:

"We are the ones left behind looking after the children and the trailers when the police turn up. We are used to confronting authority.

Most women are on a temporary list of a GP for six months, but if they don't know where they are going to be from one day to the next who can they register with? It will be hard on pregnant women. Eighty percent of adults can't read or write but 80% of the children can. If the families are being moved on all the time we will have another illiterate generation.

(The Government) think that getting us into houses will be the end of us. They had better think again. We are not going into houses. Why break up families by putting our men into prison, and our children into care? We are being criminalised for being gypsies. It's ethnic cleansing. It will turn women mad."

Six Year Wait For Damages

Peter Stephenson, who was arrested and assaulted whilst police were evicting squatters from the Stamford Hill Estate, Stoke Newington in February 1988 has finally won his plea for damages. He has been awarded £24,000 by courts after being punched,

kicked and then assaulted in a police van. Mr Stephenson was helping a friend who was being evicted move her belongings. He was initially accused of attempting to strike a police officer with a plank of wood embedded with nails but was acquitted.

CoolTan Arts Centre To Close

After months of trying to raise enough money to purchase the Old Dolehouse in Brixton, the squatters who occupied the building in 1992 have failed with their bid to secure the property for further community use. Cool Tan Arts has built up an exuberant reputation in the Brixton area and beyond, as a place where musical events, vegetarian cafes, a multitude of workshops and community activities thrived. The Old

Dolehouse provided shelter, a cosmopolitan exchange of ideas and cultures that grew up and outwards of the energy and vision of the squatters. The local council planning department had originally expressed a wish that the building remain in community use after it was sold by its owners, the Department of Social Security. However, despite a well structured business plan, swelling Cool Tan's bid to £160 000, the

open market preferred by the DSS proved no protector of community usage. Both the London Arts Board and City Challenge had approved Cool Tan's intentions for the building but the DSS accepted a bid of £200 000 from a local commercial newspaper The Voice, who plan to convert the building into offices. The squatters are now in negotiation with The Voice to find out how long they have left before eviction.

MoD Cons

"Care and conservation of the natural environment and our national heritage is the responsibility of us all, whatever our businesses may be. The quality of our lives depends on the quality of our environment and we must, by the care and thoughtfulness of our actions, help to improve and protect it." So says a nature video called "Green Forces" available at the moment from your nearest video store. On the front cover of "Green Forces" are photographs of a cute little fox and some rolling green meadows. And the authors of the video? The Ministry of Defence!

"The Ministry of Defence and the services maintain active programmes to both sustain and conserve the environment and are proud of what is being achieved," it continues. "This video covers some of the challenges facing Britain's Defence Forces and explains how they are being tackled."

In fact, environmental groups and national countryside preservation organisations such as English Nature, are well aware of how the environment is "being tackled" by the MoD - with 45 ton AS90 guns.

The MoD, which owns 20 per cent of Northumberland National Park, is planning to bring artillery back from Germany where there is a general withdrawal of allied troops stationed there since the war. The moors, billed by the Council for the Protection of Rural England as one of the "most tranquil" places in the country, is to become a large firing range, bombarded by the guns brought back from

Germany. There are also plans to build large accommodation units for the infantry and 30 miles of service roads in a development plan described by the national parks officer, Graham Taylor, as "the largest development proposed for any national park in recent time" and "the greatest threat to the park in 10 years".

English Heritage (owners themselves of the tarmac tourist car park at Stonehenge) are at present undertaking checks on Salisbury Plain, another area of prime archaeological and environmental importance, severely scarred by bombardments and military exercises. An estimated one third of the 1,800 archaeological sites in the area have been damaged by tanks and AR90 shells.

"Further environmental information is available from the Assistant Chief of Public Relations at the MoD," concludes the video. We ought to know better of course than to believe a public relations consultant whose sole job is to keep the face looking clean even if everything else is dirty.

Squatters and Locals Rally Against Sandwiches

A group of squatters in London Fields, Hackney, have joined with local residents and businesses to protest against the construction of a car park and sandwich making factory adjacent to London Fields Park and right on top of a road of squatted houses. The alliance, calling itself The London Fields Renewal Partnership, is proposing a mixed usage zone for the area, better suited to the local community than the officially touted industrial plan. Their

proposals, published in a document called "The Art of Hackney", state that a factory producing sandwiches for the consumption of office workers in the City, does not significantly serve the community. It argues that the creation of a community centre and workshop space for artists, as well as some housing provision, would better suit an area where the sense of community is, unlike other areas of the capital, not a phenomenon of the past, but a living reality.

Government Dept Claims Squatters Rights

Irony of ironies as the Criminal Justice Bill winds through the parliamentary houses. Section 6 notices, used by squatters and road protesters, are now being used by none other than a Government department and a road construction company. After bringing a tea wagon and portaloos on to the site where 100 trees were to be felled for the construction of a motorway link between the M65, the M61 and M6, the

Government and Tarmac Construction company claimed squatters rights to the land in order to thwart road protesters in the area. The section 6 notices they hung on the surrounding trees read: "TAKE NOTICE THAT we live in these premises and the adjoining land and it is our home and we intend to stay here....signed The Occupiers. The Department of Transport and Tarmac Construction." Unbelievable but true!

Police Tied Up

"(The Criminal Justice Bill) contains a very considerable extension of police powers which can be used to make criminals out of demonstrators, squatters, travellers and protesters of all kinds," warned David Faulkner, until recently the Head of Home Office

criminal justice policy, in a lecture to the Goethe Institute in early June. In the lecture, Faulkner spoke of the obvious concern that the police would be politically pressured to use the Bill, tying up staff and involving them in work that would bring them into disrepute with the

general public. Professionals and academics who have criticised the Government's political outlook have been intimidated he said, warning, as others have done, that the Bill would be difficult to use consistently, because it demanded so much of Police time.

Travellers Friends and Families

The Friends, Families and Travellers Support Group (FFT) needs you. With the implementation of proposals contained in the Criminal Justice Bill, travellers face a hazardous future.

Steve Staines, of FFT gives a brief history of the organisation and makes an urgent appeal for all those concerned to GET INVOLVED before it's too late.



The Friends, Families and Travellers Support Group grew from the personal experiences of its founder member who has a son and grand daughter on the road. In June 1993, after realising that the Criminal Justice Bill will effectively eradicate the travelling way of life, flyers began to appear asking people who had friends and families on the road to get in contact.

At a General Meeting held in Bristol, a steering committee was born and has met regularly ever since.

The problems which face travellers, and which will intensify should the CJB become law, centre around prejudice and site provision. The prejudice against both new and traditional travellers is enormous. It has been this way for all of the six hundred years or so that traditional travellers have been in Britain. The fear (prejudice is always based on fear) of new travellers intensified in the mid-eighties when the number of people taking to the road increased dramatically. Instead of being perceived of as 'happy hippies', as they were in the seventies,

new travellers are now seen as "marauding bands of medieval brigands".

Police and vigilante action against travellers has been, at times, beyond belief. Increasingly, the traditional stopping places around Britain are being gated, blocked up and ditched off. Coupled with an escalating number of injunctions, there are now very few places left to go. Travellers are caught in a catch 22 situation; with fewer places to go and mounting pressure to leave a life on the road for non-existent housing, they become more visible to the sedentary rural population. This situation is exacerbated when travellers are forced to travel in large numbers because of their own fear of intimidation and violence. When constructive proposals are brought before councils for site provision, applications for planning permission are consistently refused. The NIMBY (not in my back yard) phenomenon is in full force at planning meetings where traveller sites are discussed.

Friends, Families and Travellers Support Group (FFT) have been actively campaigning to increase awareness of travellers needs and the effects that the CJB will have on this way of life. FFT activities include: Involvement in a film screened on regional TV that was followed by a phone in; Regular newsletters, including political developments and traveller news; Lobbying MPs and Lords; Writing hundreds of letters; Obtaining local and national media coverage; Working on alternative proposals with other traveller organisations and briefing preparation.

An information pack has been developed providing guides on planning, site access, social services, education and health and magazine has now been produced (Nomad).

What FFT hopes to achieve includes setting up, or working with other groups to set up, an emergency crisis line which can offer real help to Travellers. What is required are small teams of observers, one of whom should preferably be legally qualified, to observe evictions and ensure they are legal. Where children are involved, there is particular concern that evictions do not affect their health or well-being. In addition there is a need to

monitor and record what is happening on the ground and be able to chart the ways in which any new Act is being used to ensure no violation of human rights.

Funding for FFT is currently achieved through a growing membership base. However, it still does not yet provide

"Two weeks ago this (pointing to wrecked vehicle) was somebody's home and I was sitting there while he made croissants and listened to music or watched TV. It was dragged sideways through a gateway.

We came here because it's an established site. We moved when asked to by the farmer but all the roads had been ditched so when we leave the site we can only go one way. So it will be easy for the police to split us into small groups again. The last time I was in a small group farmers came down and dragged me backwards through a gateway and I lost my back window. I've had dogs shot, I've had all the panels ripped off my bus. It's easy for the police to bring down large numbers and intimidate you. They blocked the main Chepstow to Gloucester road last year and searched ME for a shotgun! They stopped us going over the Severn Bridge. That's in a group of five people. You can't have the same community spirit in a group of five people and who's going to help you with your children? You move a lot more and it's much more dangerous. In a big group we can all help each other."

Excerpt from "Bev's Story" published in Nomad News, the magazine of FFT.

sufficient funds for all the projects that are felt to be vital to the future of not only FFT but the whole of the travelling community. Membership needs to be expanded, local groups need to be organised and begin campaigning.

In the long term, FFT see a need for a Traveller Advice Unit, staffed by

Cont. —>

professionals and travellers, which would be able to offer help and advice on matters such as access to planning, health services, education and a range of other services which house-dwellers take for granted.

The range of issues involving travellers run right across the social spectrum. Learning how to be effective is difficult and time-consuming. At the heart of all the issues is the one of sites and having somewhere secure to live. Without this most basic of human needs, efforts in other areas of social policy will be ineffective. In particular, the planning system itself is prejudiced against

"The Winter has been very hard this year, especially for the children and women. I tried to have my child in school this year but because I've been evicted so many times, she's had to stop going to school. If the Bill becomes law, I don't know what I'll do, I'll probably be put into jail, my daughter will be put into care, my home will be put in the pound. That's the worst scenario I can think of not just for me but for thousands of us. All they see is us in dirty vehicles and they haven't realised why it's like that. We're just scapegoats for everybody else."

Excerpt from "Bev's Story" published in Nomad News, the magazine of FFT.

travellers (and all people on low or negligible incomes) since easy access to development land is bought and is not a right.

The 1947 Planning Act introduced a controlled market in development land which means that, unless there is state or public authority intervention, travellers stand little chance of gaining access to land for sites. FFT sees challenging this and working with councils to get fair access to the planning system as being central to its work. This is beginning to happen in some areas where local politicians and officials are recognising that a policy of continual eviction is expensive, ultimately pointless and that what is needed is a network of sites which travellers can use.

FFT, 33 Bryanston St, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 7AZ. Tel: 0258 453695

Some-where-set in Somerset

From our Wessex Correspondent

SOMERSET has been the scene of much traveller activity recently.

Traditionally a non-conformist county, it has become a major focus of confrontation between traveller/gypsy communities and property-owning locals and outsiders; a fertile seed bed of new traveller initiatives on the one hand, and old-fashioned bigotry on the other.

After many years of Tory rule, the Liberal-Democrats now control most of the area. Here is a brief summary of some recent key events from the 'Land of Summer'.

The long campaign to have the **Middlezoy Transit Site** made permanent (after many years at a disused airfield on the Levels) has finally been won by the County Council, who wished to make provision for gypsies and travellers before the Caravan Sites Act is abolished. Vociferous villagers, who had set up a 24hr roadside protest

camp (flying the Union Jack on high!) were evicted amid accusations that they had contributed far more trouble and mess to the area than any travellers could. Their spokespeople were conspicuous, if only because they were the ones with the strongest Laa-ndon accents; a very good campaign ploy as it turned out, as the site is now established.

Meanwhile, the debate within Somerset's County and District councils shows a high level of understanding of the implications of the Criminal Justice Bill, unlike at a national political level. After the hate campaign against travellers at **Dommet Wood, Buckland St. Mary** (see pic), South Somerset District Council (SSDC) have only allowed the travellers to stay until 31st March 1995, despite the fact that it has been a Gypsy camp for over 120 years.

County councillor Dave Gordon said, "It's a pity there have been nasty rumours spread about these people which, in my experience, are totally untrue".

SSDC council leader John Miller said it was important that people



Some-where-Set in Somerset

begin to realise the severity of the Bill going through Parliament: "You cannot have people shoved around the countryside indefinitely. We need to establish a network of sites for them, and I don't think it is in anyone's remit to criticise other people's lifestyles".

The Children's Society was also instrumental in persuading councillors to take "a positive and brave decision" while Yeovil MP Paddy Ashdown also backed their application. But if traditional sites like Dommet Wood are lost, as looks likely, what hope is there of establishing new ones?

**SOMETHING
SMELLS ABOUT
FOLLY LANE...**

**ARE ASHDOWN
AND HIS LIB-DEM
MAFIA ABOUT
TO SELL OUT
B.S.M. TO THE
UNWASHED
HORDES?**

Come along and find out:
S.S.D.C. Planning Meeting
Wednesday May 18th. 6.30 pm
Crowshute House, CHARD.

This question has been sorely tested in other parts of the county recently. Another SSDC councillor, Annie Murdoch, has also been publicly supporting the rights of travellers at the **Somerton Moor** site and at **Tinker's Bubble** in Paddy Ashdown's home village of **Norton-sub-Hamdon**. At Somerton, 40 farmers, supported by the National Farmers Union (NFU) and a reluctant County Council, went to Yeovil's courts in early May to evict the estimated 300 travellers. Due to the eviction of a site in Avon at the end of April, the Somerton camp had swelled in numbers, causing panic at the NFU and pressure at the site itself. With widespread rumours of drug dealing, begging, blocking rights of way and even sheep-worrying, (all attributable to Tory councillor Pat Mountain), as well as the court case, the travellers had to move on. For posterity's sake Mr. Mountain also supplied the following gems to the local press: "Our hard-earned taxes are being used to finance this aberrant and abhorrent lifestyle" and "Only the supremely naive would

not connect the increase in theft with their presence". Fortunately, few voters in Somerset endorse such flog-em-and-whip-em views.

Meanwhile, at **Tinker's Bubble** a group of "Settlers" are following the advice of the Government in order to survive the proposed anti-traveller legislation. They have bought 40 acres of land for £50,000 and joined the NFU. Although Paddy Ashdown has supported their application for 10 tents and traditional farming methods, fellow SSDC Lib-Dems think the new community will scare off local wildlife and tourists because of the proximity of Ham Hill Country Park. Anonymous 'Wanted' notices have appeared in the village, warning locals that it might become a re-run of the Middlezoy saga, while the local pub landlord has called the settlers 'pigs' and banned them. Others say they don't want tent people's children at the local school. As of the end of May 1994, planners may ask John Gummer, Environment Secretary, to issue an Article 4 directive, removing their right to camp on their own land for 28 days a year.

As can be seen from these cases, even if a site has the backing of prominent politicians and is owned by a sympathetic council or the people concerned (see also 'Landowner Battles for "Underdog" Travellers', SQUALL 5), it can be enormously difficult to overcome the prejudices of local people and more

especially, outsiders who have spent a small fortune moving to a 'nice' area. Even where the sites have been established for many years, local prejudice can be overpowering.

Having said that, there are a number of 'quiet' sites in Somerset where, it seems, people are left in peace to get on with their lives.

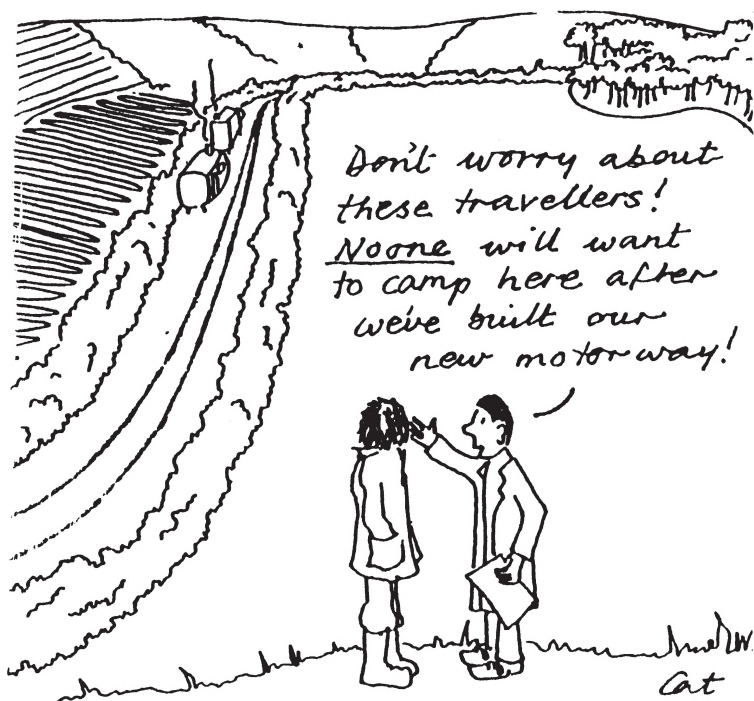
However, if the bigotry we see is happening in a 'liberal' county like Somerset, what is going on in the more 'all-they-need-is-a-good-cultural-cleanse' parts of the country? After the abolition of the Caravan Sites Act will some counties become no-go areas for travellers, while the more sympathetic ones attract an unfair share of the national traveller population?

If you have direct experience of recent travellers' tales please send them to SQUALL, c/o Wessex Correspondent.

ON THE 28TH MAY 1994 New Travellers failed to win Gypsy status in a ruling by the High Court. This means that local authorities do NOT have to find them accommodation in the same way they have to for Gypsies. Lord Justices Neill, Leggatt and Millet ruled against 3 groups of evicted travellers, 2 from Gloucestershire and 1 from Devon.

Of course the impact of the decision will be lessened when statutory local authority provision for gypsies is ended by the Criminal Justice Bill.

SQ



NOSTALGIA? THE CHOICE

“You’re just in time,” said the museum curator. “The fella that looks after the gypsy caravan has just opened it up.”

The museum in question was Kenwood House, a victorian mansion perched on a hill on Hampstead Heath and home to a gaudy collection of 17th century paintings and ornamentation.

English heritage, guardians of the building, plan to fell somewhere in the region of 150 trees in order to return the view from the mansion windows to the one viewed at the time when the land was originally tamed. And so, very keen to discover how exactly English Heritage, guardians also of Stonehenge, would present a gypsy caravan to the general public, yer SQUALL reporter ambled across the lawn to find out.

It was beautiful, the rich ornately sculptured wood carriage sat shining green and red in a small garage. Before stepping inside the gleaming wagon, you pass a number of presentation boards hanging on the walls of the garage. Six display boards informing the public that the wheels of the wagon were made of elm and were 4' in diameter, and that through an ingenious construction of sliding slats, a double bed could be pulled from a three foot platform. However, there was extremely scant mention of the race of people that

had travelled, slept, made love and raised large families in the 8' by 5' space.

When the English Heritage officer had finished polishing the already spotless cut-glass windows and brass fittings I asked him:

Would you like to live in this yourself?”

“Yes I would,” he said. “But it hasn’t been lived in since 1925 so I don’t suppose it would last long on the road.”

“But if you could live in one that would stand it, would you like to?”

“Yes I would,” he said.

“You know you’d be moved on pretty quickly these days.”

And his reply?

“And a damn good job too with all the mess they create.”

“That who creates?” I asked incredulous.

“The gypsies” he spat.

“Do you think all gypsies create mess?”

“Well I’ve seen a few messes in my time. And they sell scrap metal from the side of the road as well as other things,” he scowled before turning his back to curtail the conversation. As I left to find some fresh air and respite from the contradictions, the English Heritage officer began polishing the display boards.

Nostalgia before nature?

taxidermy before evolution?

Sad but prevalent.

SQ



HACKNEY SPECIAL

The Festival, The Council

The Hackney Homeless People's Festival was organised by local squatters, homeless people, travellers, and others who gave months of their time so that an estimated 25,000 people could spend a lazy Sunday afternoon soaking up the sun, the music and the festive vibe in the middle of London.

This year the organisers recognised the importance of the event as a forum for discussion about the Criminal Justice Bill, as well as a celebration of a sub-culture which is up against it this summer. The festival incorporated an Alternative Ideal Homes Exhibition, bringing together advice, information and action groups (see Squal page 17). Speakers on all stages reiterated warnings and advice about the Bill throughout the day.

During the planning of the event the festival committee liaised closely with Hackney Council. Some departments offered advice and funding and were open and encouraging. A precious few individuals recognised the festival as the most vibrant and positive event in the borough for years. Others were less than supportive and steered up all available bureaucratic doors.

Two weeks before the festival Pat Tooey, Head of Licensing Administration, reclassified the event, completely arbitrarily, as a pop concert rather than a community

event. She then made it clear that issuing a licence for a pop concert was out of the question at such short notice (a community event only requires two weeks notice).

After days of serious-league stress, conspiracy theories flying and

phonecalls of protest to the right ears, with loads still to do and morale teetering on the edge, it was announced that there had been a misunderstanding and the festival was a community event after all.

On the morning of the festival the council arrived an hour late for their health and safety checks and demanded a bizarre all-systems-shutdown for the issuing of a licence. They brought only two Noise Boys to check the electrics on all 10 stages and failed to provide three promised sound limiters for the stages likely to be the loudest.

You could taste the tension hanging in the air of an unnaturally quiet festival site, where thousands of people with the Criminal Justice Bill on their minds waited nearly two hours for music stages, a circus, children's area, and cabaret to kick off. The stressed-out voices of stage managers pleading for the go-ahead could be heard over walkie-talkies. At one point everyone was waiting for a problem with one circuit breaker on one stage to be resolved. The phrase 'set-up' sprang to several minds.

Finally, two hours late, the second Hackney Homeless Peoples' Festival began. The sun shone, bands played, and people came. The day passed as all the best festival days do. It was peaceful, celebratory and over too soon. Inspector Baff of Stoke Newington



Dusk over Clissold Park and a trapeze rig - Photo: Nick Cobbing

HACKNEY SPECIAL

and The Scapegoats

Police (Liaison Officer for the festival) said that the festival was "very well held and very well stewarded..... The organisers were very helpful and listened to police advice". By 8.30 people were leaving to contemplate the Forest Fayre in a few weeks time.



"Anything I say will be taken down and used in evidence against you..."

Less than an hour later an 'incident' occurred on Green Lanes. It began at about 9.30pm outside the Robinson Crusoe pub, where festival-goers were drinking in the garden, and ended at 10.30 with 30 arrests and several people hospitalised.

Inspector Baff described a "hard core" who "threw bottles at police vehicles. They were very much the worse for drink and all I can say is that they didn't like seeing a police van drive past". He noted that seven police were injured and "a number of officers" were "off work for a number of days". He added, "it is pleasing to note that there have been no complaints brought against the police. Some questions have been raised but there were no complaints".

Some questions have indeed been raised. Hackney Community Defence Association (HCDA) witnesses say trouble started when a police van

stopped on Green Lanes because they saw a man wearing a traffic cone on his head. Words were exchanged, traffic cones were thrown and finally the man was arrested. Apparently his friends were also arrested when they became involved. Another witness, John, told

us that he arrived on the scene after the traffic cone incident, when a police cordon had just been set up to block the road and is clear that "nothing was happening within the cordoned area. We were there for at least 15-20 minutes". During this time people

leaving the park were not allowed through the cordon. John told us, "we were told that 'there was a disturbance'...but there was no disturbance."

The incident did not, therefore, escalate immediately after the traffic cone incident. There was a period of 20 minutes when people trying to go home were gathering within the cordoned area and asking what the problem was. Then, says John, "riot police just piled into people in the pub garden and began pushing them back".

Moira, another by-stander, told us that she was prevented from passing through the cordon to get home by a line of "ordinary" police who would not explain why. She could not see any disturbance but noticed that the line of police had been replaced by members of the TSG. "They ran straight towards us and hit me in the stomach with a truncheon".

It is uncertain when the first bottle was thrown or why the area was cordoned off but all witnesses speak of an unprovoked attack by police. HCDA is quite clear that the police were not attacked until after people had been arrested.

The incident left three people hospitalised. One man had his head split open. Witnesses say another, in a wheelchair, was dragged out of it and assaulted by police.

20 people are being charged with offences under the Public Order Act ranging from violent disorder (which carries three years imprisonment) to obstructing police on the highway. At least one person is still in custody.

We have also been informed that senior officers are not at all happy with the way police on the ground dealt with the situation. Chas of HCDA described what happened as "a classic example of the wrong-headed thinking behind police public order tactics".

When it was all over festival organisers and stewards, who had helped

Appeal for Witnesses

Eloise Parrack was assaulted and then arrested for affray outside the Robinson Crusoe pub at about 9.45pm. Her wrist was broken, allegedly by Police Sergeant John Prescott (175/174) who claims she used abusive language and threw bottles at him. Her solicitor would like to speak to anyone who witnessed the arrest. Eloise is 17, with fair hair. Contact Desmond O'Reilly at MacCormacks on 071 790 4339.

HACKNEY SPECIAL

The Festival, The Council and the Scapoegoats (cont.)

diffuse the situation, went home and waited for the misinformation machine to spark up.

And it did. On Monday morning while hacks from the Hackneyed Gazette and the Sun took photographs of rubbish on the park (before litter-pickers had got to work), readers of the Daily Mail learned of a riot in Stoke Newington: "Hippies pelt police at homeless festival" declared the headline. The following day the Sun screamed: "A family park was turned into a rubbish tip by 25,000 revellers" and "cops were injured when 150 cider-fuelled thugs hurled bricks and bottles at them". Not surprisingly there was no mention of the festival itself and a positive press release written on behalf of the festival was completely ignored.

It gets worse. Thousands of



pounds worth of equipment was stolen during and after the festival and, to cap it all, Chris Meakin is now awaiting prosecution for exceeding the council's noise limits. Maximum penalty: £20,000 or three months in prison.

When Squall enquired about the extent of noise pollution (we know of only 5 complaints from the public) the council's Environmental Pollution Department were friendly but not keen to answer questions and insisted we contact the press office instead. The following conversation took place with Peter Coltelli at the press office and concerns the prosecution for noise pollution.

Coltelli: It's not about noise as such. It's more about the errm...there was a bit of err...

Squall: An incident?

Coltelli: Yes. I think that's what it's about.

Squall: How can the festival organisers be prosecuted for an incident which occurred outside a pub after the festival?

Coltelli: (silence) I'll get in touch with the relevant departments and get back to you.

Later that afternoon Mr Coltelli seemed less keen to discuss the incident on Green Lanes. He said the council's legal department were looking into the case and "nothing has been decided yet". He added, "if there is a prosecution

it would be about noise wouldn't it, not what happened afterwards?"

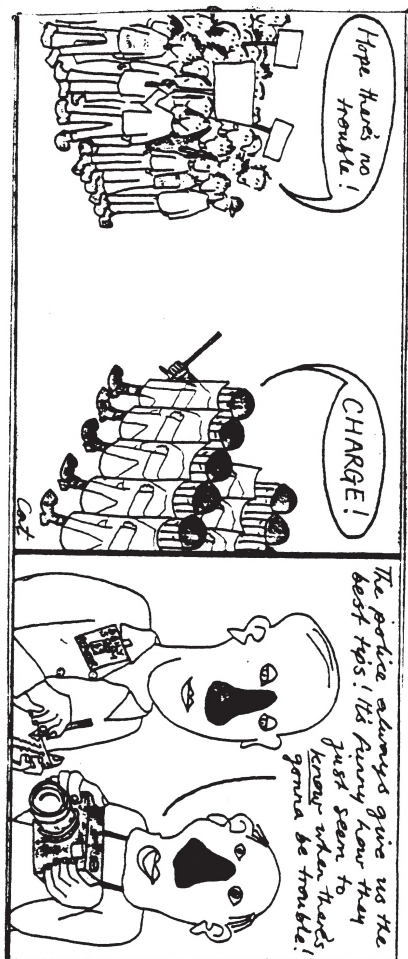
Don't know Peter. You tell us.

Mr Coltelli had checked our queries about noise and informed us that "there are no limits as such". Apparently councils merely follow GLC guidelines on noise abatement. He explained that all noise pollution cases are relative to location. And, it would seem, whether or not there is a riot in the borough following the event.

Despite rave reviews from punters and participants, official congratulations have been seriously lacking and the case against Chris Meakin, if it gets to court, is nothing more than small-minded and vindictive scape-goating.

Please send donations and letters of support to strengthen the festival's case to: **Hackney Homeless Peoples' Festival, Unit 1, Mellowmix Studio, Foulden Road, London N16.**

HCDA is keen to contact anyone who witnessed the 'incident'. They advise people who were assaulted not to bring official complaints against the police but to sue them (very costly for the police). Hence Inspector Baff's cheerful comment that there have been no complaints. Contact Hackney Community Defence Association for information on: 071 249 0193



HACKNEY SPECIAL

The Alternative Ideal Homes Exhibition Clissold Park, 8th May 1994

As we stood under the old weeping willow and watched the rain chuck it down on the day before the big day, I thought why cry? - there's enough water here already. I wondered if I had wisely spent so many free hours contacting, hassling and generally worrying about hosting so many housing and campaigning groups in a park for a day, for what we had rather grandly called The Alternative Ideal Homes Exhibition. The lake was looking very full and the ducks were unusually quiet....perhaps we ought to call those houseboat people after all...

Nearby, Gilbert and the builders of the nomadic 'Village' area were looking dejected and the 2-storey recycled house was still a rumour. The double-decker house-bus needed repainting and we couldn't put up the charity stalls until the rain stopped. The Berlin squatters group had arrived, but where could we put their excellent photo display? Okay, so Hal's 4-pod Mongolian yurt was there, but would these be the only alternative housing ideas we could offer the long-suffering bricks-and-mortar dwellers of North London?

By the next morning the sun was shining and my fears had gone - it was going to be a hot and busy summers



An Ideal Home? - Photo; Nick Cobbing.

day after all! We had all the stalls up by noon, the teepees and domes in the Village looked beautiful and Steve had built his giant snail short-life exhibition. The recycled house was impressive and the huge painted facade entrance to the Exhibition looked brilliant. Voices became people as I finally met everyone we had coerced and begged into

coming.

Finally, the information and pressure groups started arriving, from Liberty to Homeless Owners for Pets, from Shelter and SQUASH to the Romani Rights Association. London-based co-op's, hostels and homelessness advice groups rubbed shoulders with

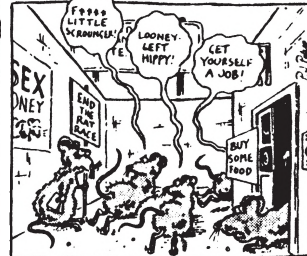
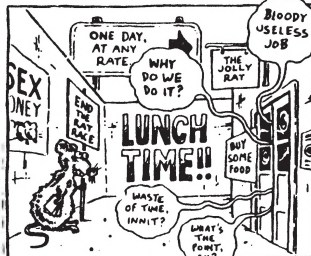
squatters, travellers and green groups. All in all, about 40 diverse organisations showed the 25,000 visitors that there are in fact many alternatives to the depressing picture of Tory housing 'policy', lack of affordable housing and restrictions on access to land. Many people commented on the innovative combination of music festival, housing information and exhibits.

On May the 8th, I got a real feeling of a coming together of different groups of people, a sense that we really can change this ridiculous situation. Why can't the British embrace the politics of housing in the same way they've embraced other environmental issues? With the highest incidence of empty properties and homelessness ever, as well as the symptom-crushing of the Criminal Injustice Bill, there has never been a better time to act.

The message of the day was definitely 'Pack up your teepees, return to your squats and prepare for a housing policy!' I hope the Alternative Ideal Homes Exhibition becomes a regular event so that many other people can see the obvious potential and practice of these ideas. Thanks to all these who helped out, especially Hackney Drugs Prevention Team, Hackney & City MIND and all the volunteers on the day-you know who you are!

If you want to get involved in any future Alternative Ideal Homes Exhibition please get in touch with me c/o SQUALL.

Glyn and Friends.



HACKNEY SPECIAL

Hasty Hackney and The Criminal Justice Bill

Anyone wanting to see at first hand how squatters will be treated when the Criminal Justice Bill becomes law need look no further than 'left-wing' Hackney Council. Since the creation of the Tenancy Audit Team (TAT) squatters have borne the brunt of the council's ineffectiveness in creating an efficient and honest housing allocation system.

The heavy-handed actions of TAT have been causing a lot of grief on the Borough's estates recently. Squatters (and that is a word with a very wide interpretation here) are not forewarned, have their doors broken down and are ejected while their homes are grilled up. Widespread accusations of intimidation against families, tenants and, indeed, anyone thought to be squatting are rife. Court cases are being prepared against the council and many council staff themselves are raising questions about the activities of TAT.

Typically, the council has just announced the hiring of 2 'Tenancy

Relations Officers' to help the 200 private tenants who report harassment and illegal eviction every month across the borough. The Council has apparently 'declared war on bad housing and dodgy landlords'!!

Unlike his predecessor, Hackney's present Chair of Housing Simon Matthews has made very clear that he supports Michael Howard's new proposals without reservation. There was little surprise then when a triumph of double-speak (press release) appeared on SQUALL's doormat on the 29th April trumpeting the Council's reduction of squats in the borough: "Over 60% in the past year. From 1,184 in April last year to 460 now." Apparently, it is "the largest ever fall recorded by a London borough" and probably the largest recent cause of homelessness in London too.

Entitled "Squatting Squeezed in Hackney", Director of Housing Bernard Crofton gushed proudly: "1,350 properties have been repossessed as a result of the council working closely with the electricity, gas and water boards (sic) to disconnect supplies." (Apparently he and his cronies are unaware of what was going on in the 1980's i.e. that the utilities are now in fact private companies). And, in language fit for any would-be Michael Howard or bailiff for that matter, he concluded: "We will not tolerate squatters. Squatting adds to the rent of every rent payer in the borough."

As seasoned Hackney watchers will know, the Council's housing department has an unbeatable record of 'adding to the rent of every rent payer in the borough' itself. A fine example, in June 1991, was the 'Keys-for-Cash' scandal, which had netted an estimated £20 million for corrupt housing officials involved. More than a thousand

properties were illegally let and eventually 4 officials were sacked and 12 suspended. The Fraud Squad were called in to investigate the whole department, while Bernard Crofton defended it saying: "From time to time staff succumbed to temptation" (Independent 6-6-91).

Much of the final investigation was eventually left to the council itself, who then set up TAT to investigate the corruption involving fake tenancies. Instead, squatters have been scapegoated and viciously evicted, and tenants are next in the firing line.

Amazingly, Crofton hung on to his job and now, in 1994, is in a position to say: "By stamping out squatting the Council hopes to reduce the use of temporary accommodation for the priority homeless - accommodation which is costing £20 million (!) a year". Any coincidence between this and the cash sum previously mentioned is purely coincidental. Meanwhile the Evening Standard has reported that TAT has compiled a secret report showing that no less than 75% of Hackney's tenants are in arrears or sub-tenanting from somebody else.

A quick SQUALL tour of the borough revealed that many, if not most, of the 'repossessed' flats are, you guessed, still empty.

How many more boarded-up empties is the new Bill going to create? It would be no surprise if the figure hit a million very soon, especially if people like Crofton and Matthews are anything to go by.

What we at SQUALL would like to know is if this is how people are being treated by a Labour council how on earth will they be dealt with by private heavies and bailiffs after the Criminal Justice Bill is implemented?



Bin The Bill !

SQ



Climbing up on Solsbury Hill, I could see the city lights. I could also see scars in the surrounding countryside belonging to a road scheme that has become a centre of controversy matching those at Twyford Down and the M11.

The Batheaston/Swainswick bypass has been long awaited. Road traffic is currently turning these villages into no-go areas for children. There are few people who would dispute the need to reduce the volume of traffic but the bypass has been implemented without due consideration for the local environment and with a veil of bureaucracy and misinformation that is earning the DoT an unenviable reputation.

The bypass threatens to slice through Little Solsbury Hill - the same hill celebrated by Peter Gabriel - on the outskirts of Bath. It is an area of outstanding natural beauty and the Iron Age hill fort at its summit is a scheduled ancient monument. Added to this is an abundance of wildlife, badgers, hawks, flora and fauna that live, not only on the hill but also in the threatened watermeadows.

Amey Construction are the DoT contractors for the operation. They began work on March 14th and by June 10th, had completed a site compound and begun earth-moving in the surrounding watermeadows. Excavation has now also begun on the slopes of the hill itself but there is determined opposition to the road building programme; land and trees are being squatted and machinery is being occupied in efforts to thwart and delay the road scheme.

The Save Our Solsbury (SOS) campaign, also

Having publically announced a reduction in the road-building programme, the DoT have attempted to persuade the general public that it is aware of environmental issues but, when the bulldozers come to your town, who will be there to stop them?

Solsbury Hill looks set to become the Twyford Down of 1994 and, given the Government's record of lies and misinformation, who believes the DoT anyway?

working as the Solsbury Hill Action Group (SHAG) have been working against the road scheme for four months. Growing media interest and local support for the campaign has raised the profile of this issue to a national level. Dongas and other veteran anti-roads campaigners have joined SOS at the site, as have squatting campaigners from nearby Bristol. These groups, combined with growing numbers of local residents willing to become involved in non-violent direct action (NVDA), have been squatting houses due for demolition, sitting in trees, locking themselves on to machinery and holding marches through Bath.

Tania de St Croix, one of the founder members of SOS, puts support at anything up to 150 people for direct actions and, on Sunday 7th June, 1,500 people turned out for a day of protest walks over the hill and through the construction site. Robert Key, minister responsible for the operation, has been quoted describing protesters as "rent-a-mob", his ill-informed utterances have only served to anger residents of Britain's only World Heritage City.

"It's a very empowering experience for people to come and get involved," said Tania. "When local voters get involved in protests of this nature it becomes very hard for the Government to ignore. It's one of the few things they have to listen to. The Criminal Justice Bill may well change all that."

On May 3rd, after a very successful and enjoyable Beltane gathering held on the hill, the DoT evicted all of the squatted properties and most of the occupied land. Tree sitters were smoked out with toxic fumes from blazing tyres and, after a day that saw 42 arrests, the DoT managed to reclaim, gravel and destroy a substantial part of the watermeadows. More land at the northern end of the roadworks has been squatted and a caravan now serves as the SOS site office. A collection of benders, tents and a tepee provide living space for those permanently on site. Further up the hill another bender camp-site is surrounded by tree-houses awaiting the day when they will be occupied against the onslaught of bulldozers, cherry-pickers and security guards.

Cont. →

Road Wars

In November 1993, a leaked DoT/DoE document cited the bypass as part of the Southampton/South Wales "strategic route" and, after an expose of previously undisclosed material, it is now widely accepted as likely to form a part of the Dijon to Belfast Euroroute - one of a number of highly controversial euroroute road schemes.

Four years ago, a public inquiry into the Batheaston bypass ruled in favour of DoT plans but, in the light of the hidden euroroute agenda and prompted by a public meeting organised by SOS that attracted 500 people, Avon County Council have called for work on the road to be stopped pending a review of roads in the area.

Four years ago Jonathon Dimbleby, national broadcaster and local environmentalist, was one of those who voted in favour of the new road. Today, however, he has a different view. In an article written for the local newspaper, Bath News, Mr Dimbleby invites local residents to go and see the destruction for themselves:

"You will see the beginnings of what would be a mega-junction that Los Angeles would envy. That's where each



dual carriageway becomes a six lane monster. Yes, that's 12 lanes in all. Twelve lanes of progress."

Officially known as TERN (Trans European Road Network), the euroroutes intend to link the whole of Britain to the channel tunnel. Freight transport by rail and sea will become financially redundant through a series of motorways, dual carriageways and "upgradings" that, opponents say, will themselves be upgraded in the near future. At Solsbury Hill, what is now a



Security Guards pull a protestor off a drilling rig -
Photo; SQUALL

'bypass' will, in all likelihood, become a fully-fledged national motorway within a decade.

Road Alert, the direct action arm of ALARM UK (the national alliance of anti-road groups), allege that no adequate 'non-technical summary' of the Solsbury Hill scheme has been produced. A 'non-technical summary' is a report, written in layman's terms, of environmental and sociological impact that can be easily understood by non-specialists. One such survey has been published but this was at the back of an obscure DoT report that costs £75 - hardly accessible, highly inadequate and allegedly in contravention of European Law. An official complaint has been lodged but, by the time the European Courts investigate the matter, it may well be too late to save Solsbury Hill.

Earth First! have also been active in campaigning against the destruction of Solsbury Hill. On 29th March the Oxford branch of Earth First! occupied the head office of Amey Construction. In an action that lasted several hours, Earth First!ers sat in on board meetings, disrupted proceedings and generally

created as much non-violent havoc as they could. After similar actions at Leeds and Frome, Oxford Earth First! say they have a list of Amey offices around the country and are planning more actions.

The two mile stretch of dual carriageway at Bath will cost the taxpayer £75 million and the DoT estimate a 25% increase in juggernaut traffic. In Bath itself, pollution levels are already in excess of European directives and the DoT estimates an extra 600 vehicles a day in the area once the 'bypass' is completed. History has shown that DoT estimates for projected road usage are ridiculously conservative. A second London orbital, proposed to relieve the overcrowded M25, is one such example. Projected usage for most of Britain's motorways was so inaccurate that massive amounts of money have been needed for repairs and upgradings long before expected.

One dreadlocked activist, who preferred to remain anonymous summed up the situation in a nutshell:

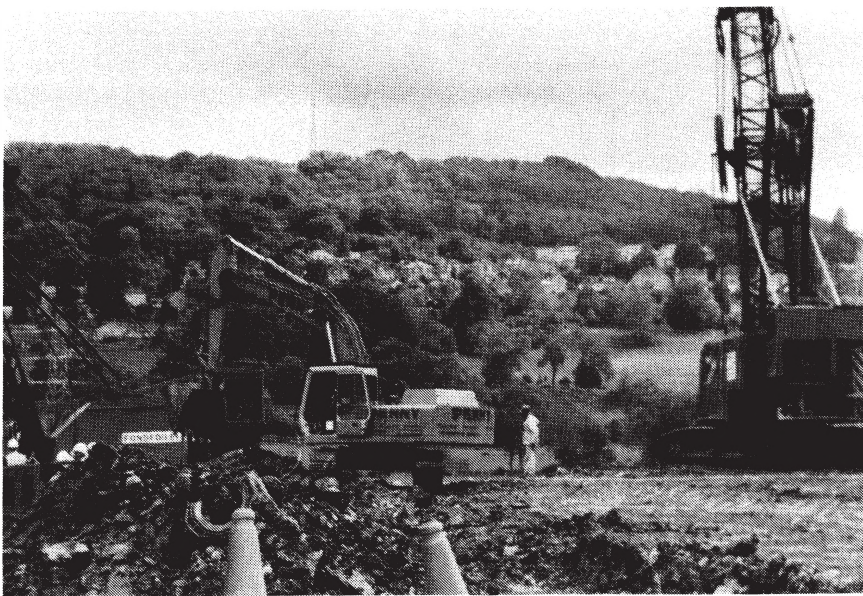
"Everyone knows that the level of traffic around here is intolerable but Bath has one of the worst public transport systems I've ever seen. If the bypass is really just a local issue, why not invest in public transport rather than a new road?"

The DoT seem to be intent on completing work as quickly as possible, regardless of costs, before opposition to the scheme can become a national issue.

HEALTH WARNING



The Department of
Transport can seriously
damage your house.



The lower reaches of Solsbury Hill - photo, SQUALL

Twyford Down was in danger of entering the national consciousness just before it was secured for the DoT. More recently, the M11 in Wanstead has courted more media and public support than the Government can comfortably deal with. This, many would argue, is one of the main reasons for the introduction of clauses dealing with aggravated trespass in the Criminal Justice Bill.

In the CJB, actions which seek to disrupt 'lawful activities' (fox-hunting, road-building, nuclear weapons operations etc.) will become a crime. Local residents of Bath could become criminals for protesting on DoT compulsory-purchased land.

If all of this sounds as though the battle is lost, think again. Much of the clearance work has not started and most of the construction work has yet to begin. A proposed bridge across the Avon has not yet received planning permission (from Avon County Council). Amey and the DoT are not in possession of all the land they intend to destroy; some is still held by locals who refuse to accept compulsory purchase orders. There are still many fights to be fought and the protesters claim they have, so far, delayed the scheme by one month (it has only been operational for three). While large scale actions generally take place on Saturdays (when local residents have time to join in), nearly every day sees an action or two; a dozen activists clambering onto diggers and bulldozers, two or three climbing on to drilling rigs. Whenever actions happen, work stops. Security guards are called for and it can

take anything from 30 minutes to several hours to remove the protesters and restart that particular operation. As far as the campaigners are concerned, it is a battle against time and every minute delayed is an extra minute for the issue to be raised and word to be spread.

As for the Criminal Justice Bill, Tania is adamant that it will not stop activists from highlighting the activities of the DoT:

"It (the CJB) won't stop me.

When people have decided that enough is enough they will do what their conscience dictates, despite the consequences. It may put a lot of local citizens off but the level of support is now such that we even have people who live high up on the opposite side of the valley ringing us up each morning to tell us where the Amey construction teams are.

"Local people who came to see what was going on for themselves and who have become involved have started to see things in a new light. Previously held conceptions that natural justice will prevail are tending to

get lost and people are beginning to see our system of democracy for what it is."

The future of Solsbury Hill is in the balance but Tania is optimistic:

"This campaign represents the best NVDA opportunity yet to stop these roads. We've had so much local support and now there are some strong anti-roads groups around Bath. It's more than a local issue, it's a national concern."

Tania then made an appeal for more people to come down on main action days and get involved. She doesn't expect people to hurl themselves at machinery or lie in front of bulldozers, just to come down and see what's happening for themselves.

Jonathon Dimbleby, in his article in Bath News concludes:

"If you care about the nation that your children and your grandchildren will one day inherit, then why not come and see for yourself? As the man said, Seeing is Believing."

SQ

For details of actions & what you can do to help tel: 0225 481995 or write to:

Solsbury Hill Action Group,
39 Bailbrook Lane,
Bath, Avon.

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Action is the antidote for despair

the

Jewel in the Mud

AWARD

This issue's Jewel in the Mud Award goes out to a visiting fellow of Green College, Oxford, an anthropologist and cultural analyst for his respect.

George Monbiot was indeed a runner up for the Jewel in the Mud Award in the last issue of SQUALL for an earlier feature he had published in a newspaper. In this issue however, he takes the crown of laurel leaves for his article: "Lament for the Common People" published in an environmental supplement of The Guardian (2/6/94). The article was subtitled: "Before the Norman conquest, most of Britain belonged to communities. Today 75 per cent of the land is owned by one percent of the population. George Monbiot explains why the dispossession of commoners has been disastrous for the environment and looks at how some of us are fighting back."

AND RAN....

"The progression from sitting around a fire to sitting in front of the

television is best described as enclosure. Resources in which we all had a stake have been annexed or enclosed by a much smaller group of people. The rest of us - those who are not the programme makers or millionaires - are kept out.....

Today 75 per cent of the land in Britain is owned by one per cent of the population..... With this change in ownership comes the loss of accountability to the community.....

The dispossessed commoners end up in the cities where they lose both their understanding of the land and their self-sufficiency. In Britain where 92 per cent of people now live in towns - the dispossessed become dependent for their raw materials on colonisation and international trade, exerting massive environmental effects of the decision they make.

Political enclosure is re-inforced by the enclosure of tastes and interests..... Television re-focuses our interests..... Thus speculation over a political party's leadership or the relative merits of two brands of coca-cola can come to seem more important than the quality of air we breathe.....

It is often hard to see what is happening, let alone fight it, as we are of course, all participants in our own enclosure. But ever since enclosure began, there have been attempts to usurp it. The various peasants' revolts, the Diggers and Levellers movements, were

all responses to the enclosure not only of land but also of power and culture..... Having held on to power for so long, leaving further enclosed power by reducing the scope of local authorities, the Government has so successfully alienated ordinary

people from the political process that it has finally alienated itself from ordinary people..... While many have simply thrown up their hands and turned their back on the political initiative. Significantly, the protests have so far crystallised around the road building programme. This is classical enclosure: new roads take up communal space and drive people out of the surrounding spaces, as noise pollution make them unbearable..... Among them (the protesters) of course are the scruffy looking so reviled by the government..... Their movement is attractive because, as well as fighting enclosure, they are simultaneously trying to release themselves from it. Instead of getting their stories or their music out of boxes - the TV or the cassette case - they sit around the fire creating their own..... Perhaps most significantly, they have broken out of the enclosure of the psyche. In their camps you can dance, skip, howl like an animal or cry like a baby, and no one will recommend you for psychotherapy.....

The government appreciates the importance of this movement. It has drafted new laws prohibiting its chosen forms of dissent. The Criminal Justice Bill is strikingly similar in intent to the old Riot Act, drafted to control the angry people resisting earlier enclosures."

AND FOR A FINALE.....

"We, the social incasts living under the lock and key of enclosure, are looking to the social outcasts to lead us from our prisons. The first is out of the box. It will take more than the Criminal Justice Bill to force it back in."

LURVELY - WE'LL TAKE THAT
or rather he's right -
WE WONT TAKE IT.



FREENET



Modern-day Suffragettes, including 80 year-old Barabara Kirkwood - Photo; Nick Cobbing

The Freedom Network, one of a number of activist groups of activists who occupied Artillery Mansions back in February (see Squall 6), are continuing their imaginative and successful protests against the Criminal Justice Bill.

On May 15th people were invited to 'Bill's Picnic', in Hyde Park, to object to those provisions in the CJB that seek to outlaw such gatherings. Up to 400 people met to play drums, dance, talk, share food and enjoy the rain in an otherwise empty park. Later in the afternoon, speakers from several organisations campaigning against the CJB held a captive audience and addressed the crowd on topics such as the right to party, the need for squatting as a self-

help option for the homeless and the proposed criminalisation of protest.

Towards the end of the afternoon, and as if to illustrate that no new provisions are needed, the police moved in to disperse the crowd, threatening to confiscate musical instruments if people did not leave. A stand off ensued where police officers, with dogs, faced a crowd refusing to comply with the directive. The police eventually backed down, retiring to a safe distance until the picnic dispersed of its own accord.

SQ

Now Age Suffragettes.

On June 8th, members of the Network ("women and honorary women") chained themselves to the railings outside the Houses of Parliament as a protest against the erosion of human rights enshrined in the Bill. Many were dressed as suffragettes, in period costumes.

Camilla, one of those D-locked, by the neck, to the railings told Squall: "If the suffragettes reversed the law for the sake of sanity and democracy, so can we. It might take a long time but there's a new generation that's got the energy and the commitment and is absolutely set on change".

Ten of the 1990s style suffragettes were D-locked or hand-cuffed to the railings for three hours while the police wondered what on earth they should do about the situation. Up to 25 more protesters were

'symbolically' locked with plastic chains around their wrists. Many others stood by in solidarity, waving banners and encouraging support from passers-by.

United under the umbrella of the Freedom Network, activists present came from the Freedom Network itself, the M11 campaign, Rainbow Tribe, Earth First, Zero Gravity, Chill Out and Dragon. One protester was 80 year-old Barbara Kirkwood, also in suffragette-style, who had come from Leytonstone, the current battle ground against the M11 road link, in North East London.

The police and assorted onlookers appeared impressed by this eco-active demonstration which one officer described as "great..... really well-behaved". Apparently, there was only one complaint: from the owners of the railings, Her Majesty's Government.

SQ



'Bill's Picnic', Hyde Park, May 15th - Photo; Nick Cobbing

ADVANCE FOR A FREE FUTURE

On May 1st there was a march and rally, organised by The Advance Party, to demonstrate opposition to the Criminal Justice Bill. The march was attended by about 15,000 people but was largely ignored by the media.

Debbie Staunton, stalwart campaigner of The Advance Party, writes of her impressions of the day.

For those of you who perhaps do not know anything about The Advance Party, I should explain that we are a collective of all sorts of people, from all backgrounds and of all ages, who have one thing in common: We enjoy attending free festivals and gatherings. We came together to provide an information and support service because we felt our rights

were being abused; and having endured a summer of what we considered to be persecution at the hands of the authorities, felt that enuff was enuff.

Now, I must say that campaigning against the CJB on behalf of mere party-goers may seem to be rather a frivolous cause when compared to the more serious issues such as the right to silence, the right to a home, the right to travel freely and the right to protest. But, in attacking the freedom to gather, the Government have shown just how malicious, mean-spirited and, quite frankly, insane they really are. Humans are sociable creatures, and festivals in Britain are a part of our cultural heritage, in that they date back to Neolithic times.

From the moment I arrived in Hyde Park, I knew that this would be a momentous event. You could feel it in the air - we all could. Weeks of hard work had gone into this day and now it had arrived. The happy throng burgeoned, chatting, laughing, dancing to drums, a bicycle-powered sound system, and the Desert Storm posse's camouflaged Transit which carries a full rig with drop down sides and speakers on the roof. A celebratory mood engulfed the marchers which was surprising, considering the nature of the threat we face but, such is the festival atmosphere.

The march itself was, for me, the best part of the whole day. You see, It became its own entity, the march was an expression of feeling, from joyous celebration to complete outrage at the Government slaughtering our freedom and making criminals of the victims - us! We danced, shouted, screamed, whistled, drummed, waved and walked. The public, the people the Tories want to protect from the like of us, clapped and cheered from the buses and cars in support, we were even toasted by the well-to-do from a hotel window on Park Lane. The feeling of unity was tremendous, and we moved as one body, one soul, one heart and mind.

As we neared Trafalgar Square, the emotion was overwhelming; we packed ourselves in and the sight of so many wonderful people, from every walk of life, was breathtaking.

Needless to say, the rally and speakers were inspiring. Liberty, Charter 88, SQUASH, Alarm UK, The Green Party, CND, ANL and others. All spoke of the struggle we face and that, if the CJB becomes law, it will be the beginning not the end of our fight.

If we learn anything from the march, it is this: That we have a voice; that others support us; that we are right to do what we do. All of us together; a powerful vision of how things could be in the future. We have respect, we have hope and we have each other. We are not alone.



CJB rally in Trafalgar Square - Photo; Nick Cobbing

THE REAL

One of the many groups singled out for victimisation by the Criminal Justice Bill are the people whose only crime is to try and save the lives of hunted animals. In this article, Paul Davis, Hunt Saboteurs Association Campaigns Officer, examines the truth behind the claims made about hunt saboteurs and looks at where legislation is really needed.

groups where it can. Most groups are out saving lives at least once a week, although some will be out more often than that.

Why Use Direct Action?

Quite simply, to save animals from a horrifyingly cruel death. In the long term, the only real answer to hunting is its abolition by legislation. There has been an overwhelming case against hunting for many years and opinion polls have shown time and again the massive public support for a ban on hunting, but still parliament has not responded. While we wait for parliament to recognise its responsibilities, many thousands of animals will suffer and die unnecessarily in the name of sport. Hunt saboteurs plug this gap by intervening to save hundreds of animals every season. The possibility of a ban in five or ten years time is not much comfort to a fox that will be torn apart this Saturday - a saboteur running off with the hounds to let it escape definitely is.

What Do Hunt Saboteurs Do?

Saboteurs use non-violent tactics to intervene at hunts in an attempt to save the hunted quarry. A successful hunt depends on communication between the huntsman and his hounds by voice and horn calls, as well as the hounds' ability to follow the scent of the hunted animal. We use these factors, on which hunters depend, to take the hounds away from the hunted animal, so providing it with a little extra time or, more often, enabling it to get away completely. The most important tactic is the imitation of the huntsman's voice and horn to call the hounds off the scent of the hunted animal and take them in the opposite direction. Another popular tactic is the use of scent dullers to mask the scent and so frustrate the hunt's attempts to find or follow it. Obviously, it's not as simple as all that - the permutations arising from scenting conditions, wind direction, access to the area and pure chance are many and various and all have to be taken into account to effectively save an animal's life. A good saboteur will often know as much about hunting as many hunt followers and considerably more than a lot of them! (All these various factors have to be taken into account - please don't go out with a horn and just try it out without the guidance of experienced sabs, as you may do more harm than good through not knowing how a hunt works.)

In the short term, these tactics have saved the lives of hundreds of animals every season; and in the longer term

Cont. →

Who Are The Hunt Saboteurs?

To read some of the rubbish printed about hunt saboteurs it would be easy to believe we are a cross between the IRA and a particularly vicious gang of joyriders. In fact, we are people from all across the social spectrum who have two things in common - the belief that killing animals for fun is wrong and the commitment to try and stop it.

Saboteurs come from all walks of life - one group even boasts a 66-year old church minister among its ranks. A survey of HSA members in 1993 found that, contrary to popular opinion, only 15% were unemployed. The survey also reflected a broad spread of political opinions, with supporters of all three major political parties, a good few Greens and those who, for some reason, expressed the view that they didn't trust any politicians. The Hunt Saboteurs Association, founded in 1963, serves as an umbrella for some 150 active local groups nationwide. Each of the local groups is autonomous in both policy and funding, although we share a common set of principles and the HSA will help out local

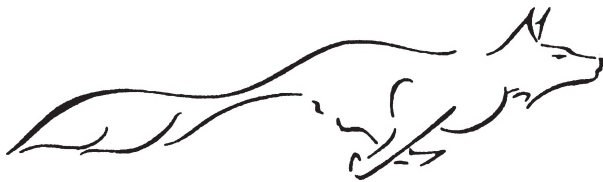
CRIMINALS

The Real Criminals

consistent sabotage can ruin a hunt's ability to hunt and kill effectively, so saving lives even when sabs aren't present!

As well as the various hunts using hounds (Fox, Hare, Deer and Mink hunts), sabs are also active against other bloodsports such as shooting where the kill rate can be horrific - successfully sabbing a single day's shooting can save hundreds of animals in one go. The so-called 'Glorious 12th' (August 12th, the start of the grouse-shooting season) has been all but abandoned in many areas of the country thanks to consistent and successful sabotage.

Over the years, sabs have saved innumerable animals, have helped expose the cruelty of hunting and even closed down some hunts! This is the real reason why we are under attack - it has nothing to do with "law and order" and an awful lot to do with the fact that we are just too successful for the bloodsports lobby to cope with.



"Thugs, Wreckers and Bullies..."

These were the words Michael Howard used to describe sabs when announcing he was "blowing the whistle on the antics" of "the hooligans who disrupt country sports". He then went on to recount various tales of sab misdemeanours to back up his colourful language. Further investigation revealed that none of the horror stories Howard was relying on actually happened - he had just been told about them by the BFSS (British Field Sports Society) and so obviously believed them! In fact, David Maclean, Howard's deputy in the Home Office admitted in parliament that the Home Office knew nothing about violence at hunts, other than what they had been told by the BFSS, Masters of Foxhounds Association and "various fieldsports organisations". Anyone smell a stitch-up?

When we looked at the anti-saboteur propaganda put out by the BFSS (a campaign lasting at least three years and believed to have cost nearly a million), we found that nearly all the incidents of violence or assaults attributed to sabs, were either made up or so completely distorted as to be virtually unrecognisable. The Home Office had not only based legislation on lies and smears but knew they had and weren't bothered!

Who Are the Hooligans?

On the same day Michael Howard was making his barnstorming speech about sab violence, hunts all over the country were getting on with the business of beating the crap out of sabs. At the Vale of Lune Harriers, three saboteurs were treated at Lancaster Infirmary for head injuries after a sustained attack by mounted and foot supporters with staves, riding crops and whips. Meanwhile, in Hertfordshire, sabs had to run for their lives after a supporter of the Vale of Aylesbury Foxhunt tried to impale them and their van on a 6-foot baling spike attached to his tractor. At the Hampshire Hunt, saboteurs were whipped by hunt members as they saved a fox from the assembled 'sportsmen'. And about 10 miles away from where

Michael Howard was giving his speech, the author of this article was attacked by the Master of the Old Berkshire Foxhunt who rode his horse over the sab.

These are by no means isolated incidents. Contrary to

"What fun it is, even if it is only for a few fields."

Ulrica Murray-Smith, former Master of the Quorn Foxhunt, talks of the delight of chasing foxcubs. (Horse & Hound 13/9/90)

the impression given by some sections of the media and Government, the overwhelming majority of violent incidents at hunts are committed by hunt members against saboteurs, or indeed anyone else who gets in their way, as John Weavers found out in 1990. Mr Weavers is a member of the public who was quietly sitting at home one Saturday afternoon when the Cury Foxhunt rampaged through his property. When he asked them to leave and complained at the damage caused he was headbutted by Geoffrey Thomas, Master of the hunt, who then shunted one of Mr Weavers' cars into another.

Members of the hunting community frequently commit serious crimes of violence against protesters for which they are infrequently prosecuted. In the first 3 months of 1993 alone, some 75 saboteurs were victims of violent attacks by hunts, 13 of them requiring hospital attention as a result. The most common forms of attack include beating with staves, spades and other weapons, whipping and beating with riding crops, and riding horses at and over saboteurs. There has also been an alarming rise in the use of vehicles as weapons, in recent years two saboteurs have died under the wheels of hunt vehicles.



The Real Criminals

January 1991. South Dorset Foxhunt terriermen Kenneth Nobbs and Nicholas Stevens convicted of criminal damage after a 20-strong gang turned a car full of saboteurs over onto its roof in March 1990 at Bockhampton, Dorset. One of the saboteurs told police she honestly thought she was going to die.

May 1991. Isle of Wight Foxhunt Huntsman Stephen Clifton and Essex & Suffolk Foxhunt terrierman James Butcher convicted of badger digging after being caught in the act by an RSPCA undercover unit. Initially, the IOW Foxhunt backed Mr Clifton, even supporting his proposed appeal (which was quickly dropped) and he continued to be welcome at hunt events until he left to take a job as Huntsman in Canada, which he still holds.

July 1991. New Forest Foxhounds supporters Adrian Bungey and Keith Colbert plead guilty to assaulting two hunt saboteurs after punching and kicking them. One of the saboteurs was held down in a river while he was being attacked on March 9th, near Fritham, Hampshire.

August 1991. Surrey Union Joint Master and

However, some cubs will be brave enough (or sufficiently terrified of the hounds) to ignore the noise made by the hunt supporters and flee through the hold up line. These resourceful cubs are allowed to escape and any hounds that attempt to chase them are quickly scolded and sent back in.... The reasoning is that any fox which displays such "spirit" will likely provide excellent chases, and hence good sport, come the full season.

HSA information pamphlet 'Cub Hunting'.

Huntsman John Funnell received two-year suspended prison sentence after riding his horse repeatedly over a saboteur lying on the ground at Farley Heath, Surrey. The saboteur sustained wounds to his head, back and legs.

December 1991. Old Surrey & Burstow Foxhunt Whipper-in Mark Bycroft and supporters Nigel Trevithick-Wood (husband of one of the Joint Masters) and Kenneth Banks found guilty of ABH and affray after attacking two saboteurs at a cubhunting meet in August. They had chased, beaten and whipped one saboteur and Banks had kicked a second in the groin. All three received suspended sentences; this did not prevent the hunt from appointing Bycroft huntsman.

January 1992. Albrighton Foxhunt supporter Gary Whelband found guilty of ABH after punching a saboteur to the ground and kicking him in the head as he lay on the floor. The saboteur sustained head injuries, a perforated ear drum and a broken jaw in the attack at Burnell Green, Staffs. in October 1991.

March 1992. West Norfolk Foxhunt supporter Mark Fuller found guilty of affray and three counts of criminal damage. The 6ft 6in farmer attacked a TV journalist and a female hunt saboteur, smashed two video cameras and damaged a van causing damage totalling £1,463 at North Runcton, Norfolk.

June 1992. Bicester with Whaddon Chase Foxhunt supporters Richard and Thomas Cheshire convicted of ABH and affray at Buckingham Magistrates' Court after attacking anti-hunt protesters present at 1991 Boxing Day meet as observers. They and others blocked in the protesters' car, smashed the windows with baseball bats and a sledgehammer, dragged the occupants out through the smashed windscreen while repeatedly punching them and then turned the car over down an embankment. (see also May 1993.)

August 1992. Enfield Chase Foxhunt Terrierman Paul Cheeseman convicted of damaging a badger sett the previous November.

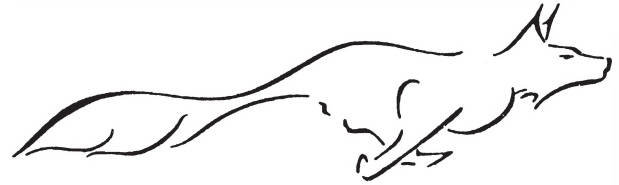
August 1992. New Forest Buckhounds Huntsman John Stride convicted of assault and criminal damage after attacking saboteur with his whip in November 1991 near Burley, Hampshire.

May 1993. Bicester with Whaddon Chase Foxhunt steward Richard Cheshire and terrierman Michael Smith plead guilty to Actual Bodily Harm and are jailed for two months after Cheshire pushed a saboteur in front of a vehicle driven by Smith. Smith swerved to ensure he would hit the saboteur who received months of physiotherapy for injuries to his back and hip. Cheshire has a long track record of thuggery and a previous conviction for ABH (see June 1992).

November 1993. Essex Farmers' and Union Foxhunt terriermen Bryn Chittenden and Roger Wakefield convicted of affray and violent disorder after a sustained attack on saboteurs also involving mounted members of the hunt in

April 1992. Wakefield also pleaded guilty to criminal damage for smashing the van windows with the fence post used in the attack.

February 1994. Bramham Moor Foxhunt supporter Raymond Walker pleaded guilty to affray and criminal damage after attacking saboteurs with a scythe and smashing van windows in January 1993. Two other hunt supporters, Mr & Mrs Winstanley, pleaded guilty to affray for their part in the "psychotic" attack after which two saboteurs required hospital treatment for head wounds.



A Sensible Suggestion

So what should the government be doing? There is very obviously a problem with violence at hunts, albeit not from the quarters they are trying to blame. Roger Gale, Tory MP for a rural Kent constituency, resigned from a government position over this issue and his words explaining his resignation have a lot to say on the matter:

"Despite assurances from the Home Secretary and the Minister of State, I am still convinced that we have created one law - a criminal law - to protect hunters, while leaving the inadequate civil law of trespass as the only serious refuge for

"Pain and suffering is inflicted on animals in the course of sport. Nobody who has seen a beaten fox dragging his stiff limbs into the ditch in which he knows he is going to die can doubt this proposition."

Lord Paget in his book "In Praise of Hunting".
- Taken from the HSA information pamphlet 'Foxhunting'.

those householders, smallholders and farmers who, for whatever reason, do not want the hunt on their land. As a declared opponent of foxhunting I find that inequitable and I believe that we may well, in this instance, have created a legal minefield."

The simple fact of the matter is that there is a very real problem of violence at hunts and it needs to be tackled firmly. It is a problem of hunt thugs attacking saboteurs and all it needs to tackle it is the enforcement of existing legislation so that the real criminals cannot continue to get away with serious violence just because they kill animals for fun and their victims think that is wrong.



HUNT SABOTEURS ASSOCIATION

PO BOX 1 NOTTINGHAM NG4 2JY

Forked Tongues and Tongue Ties

After 15 years in power, this Government have become increasingly tentacular in its ways of shutting up potential sources of public criticism and 'nuisance' campaigners.

In the last few issues of SQUALL, a number of alarming scenarios have been reported involving the closing down or, more accurately, the shutting up of charities involved in work critical of the Government's way of thinking. In Issue 5 of SQUALL, it was reported that the Traveller Information Service operated by the Bristol Branch of SHELTER had its activities curtailed after political pressures were exerted by a number of discontents, including the DoE who part-fund the charity. The official reason given at the time was that Jenny Smith, the prime mover operating the service, had finished the book she was originally commissioned to write on the subject of travellers in Britain and so had to return to her housing duties. The truth of the matter however, was that she had finished the book many months before but, because of the extensive network of contacts she had built up and the fruitful work she was involved in, she had been allowed to continue her advice and campaigning work with travellers. That was until she became 'too politically incorrect' in a pressured climate and was sidelined as a consequence.

SQUALL 5 also reported that the Traveller Information Unit at the Save the Children, operated by Ann Bagehot and Liz

Kwast, was also under political pressure to curtail its work with travellers. In fact, Save the Children conducts an incredibly useful resource-collating service, dealing with information about travellers from all over Europe. SQUALL is just one of many groups that have benefited considerably from its regular newsletters, parliamentary abstracts and



EXHIBIT A, circa 1994:
A typical scrounger chooses
the easy way of life

European media coverage. However, SQUALL has since learned that the Save the Children Traveller Information Unit is to cease operation in October of this year.

In SQUALL Issue 6, we also ran a report on how SHELTER had been so careful to remain politically correct with their response to the Government's appalling Homelessness Review, that Sir George Young, actually stated publicly that SHELTER were in favour of it. Of course, in common with the other 9,000 organisations that replied to the consultation paper on the Review, they were not the least bit in favour of it and what's more, were extremely miffed that Sir George Young to whom they had always been very publicly respectful, had claimed that they were.

As a result, SHELTER came out of campaigning closet to a degree rarely seen from them since Sheila MacKechnie took over the steering wheel. MacKechnie is well known in the housing world for wiley political manoeuvring and cultivated media-consciousness.

Publicly and unequivocally, SHELTER slated the Government's intentions to remove the right of permanent housing for priority need homeless people, even running public adverts condemning the proposals for the callous reality they would enforce.

And the result?

Charles Hendry, Conservative MP and co-chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Homelessness, actually reported SHELTER to the Charity Commission for "hysterical and exaggerated" political commentaries inconsistent with charity status. Hendry even went as far as to say: "No organisation has done more to damage sensible discussion than the charity SHELTER". Such a statement from the co-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Homelessness ought to send shivers of alarm down the spine of any observer. And there was more...

"We need a strong voluntary sector," claimed Hendry. "But one which sets itself on a collision course with the government is on a road to nowhere." Dictatorial words indeed...

"Sheila MacKechnie needs to decide if she is accusing ministers of lying, or simply that their words don't tally with the content of the document. If it is the latter, isn't it better to sort our concerns around a conference table, rather than conducting a campaign in every school, council chamber and living room around the country?" he wrote.

But isn't this the same Charles Hendry who Chaired a SHELTER fringe meeting at the Conservative Party Conference, and had no complaints then of SHELTER's credibility. And isn't this also the very same man who co-chaired the All Party Parliamentary Group on Homelessness meeting on Travellers in March of this year? The meeting, designed to brief its 220 member MPs and Lords on the plight of travellers, was attended by a number of children's charities and heard speakers from Save the Children and the Children's Society. A meagre 5 politicians turned up to "sort out concerns around a conference table" and 2 of them left early. Hendry, as co-chair of the group had to stay, so becoming the only Conservative MP present at which remonstrations could be directed.

Cont. —>

One member of the social-concern organisations present, asked Hendry:

"Why has the repeal of the Caravan Sites Act, which made a statutory requirement for local authority traveller sites - a subject previously the brief of the Department of Environment - been tagged onto a Criminal Law Bill under the sole auspices of the Home Office?"

Although Hendry's fellow Chairperson, Lyn Golding (a Labour MP) was keen to avoid discussing such a politically awkward question, Hendry insisted on defending his Government's motivation:

"It's in a criminal law bill because it is designed to prohibit the unannounced arrival of large numbers of unwanted travellers, who create a mess, a noise and a disruption to the local community," gushed Hendry from the text book.

"But the Caravan Sites Act was responsible for the establishment of official traveller sites with toilets, showers and skips for rubbish," replied the questioner. "The travellers on those sites paid a small rent for the park up spots, which helped them to maintain the services on site. Hardly the deluge of unannounced mess and noise mongers that you say."

There were 1...2...3...4...5 seconds of stunned silence before co-chair, Lyn Golding rescued Hendry from a fate worse than dishonesty (having to answer for it) by concluding:

"Well I guess that's just the way it is. Are there any more questions?"

Yes SQUALL has one. What use are conference tables if some people sit round them telling lies, whilst other people, who have had far more experience of the harsh social realities resulting from these lies, are forced to shut up...Charles? SQ

REST IN PEACE ?

I think we cannot

On May 29th, SQUALL was involved in organising a march in memorial to the homeless people that have died as result of sleeping rough. The charity CRISIS had examined mortuary and coroners' records to discover that 617 homeless people died in 1992 alone. At the same time, the Government announced its intention to stop charities from delivering soup to homeless people in the London's West End, saying it was encouraging those people to live on the streets.

In association with the Residents Action Group (residents of homeless hostels due to close) and CHAR (Housing Campaign for Single People), a march from the Imperial War Museum to Trafalgar Square, with a funeral service from a vicar, the release of 617 black balloons, some speeches and the setting up of a large soup kitchen in Trafalgar Square.

The Rev Derek White, Chaplain of the Homeless for the Bishop of London read out the names of all the now deceased rough sleepers he had known personally. Then he reminded the crowd that "Jesus' mother had squatted in a barn to give birth and that "Jesus had been buried in a tomb belonging to someone else". He then reminded the assembled crowd of a passage in the New Testament: "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but a Son of God has no place to rest his head."

There were speakers from the Residents Action Group, SQUALL Magazine, John Battle (Shadow Housing Spokesman) and CHAR. Talking of John Major's criticism of beggars and rough sleepers, hostels that are due to close, criminal sanctions against squatters and travellers, about the effects of recent government proposals to remove statutory permanent housing for 'priority need' homeless families, about Government plans to end charity soup runs and about how homelessness and bad health are unarguably intertwined. Two long time homeless people also held the ears with sharp poems of their experience.

Because the Memorial March synchronously came two days after John Major's comments on beggars, and also because it was a slower news bank holiday on the day after the event, but mainly because the intuitive timing was perfect, the memorial day made the front pages of *The Times*, *The Telegraph* and *The Independent* (with large photos in all) and a half page in *The Guardian*. Embarrassment is a political weapon and such weapons are required in order to ensure that the number of homeless people suffering the physical and mental trauma of sleeping on the streets, the number who are dying, is not just another increasing statistic, noted by not enough. SQ



Marchers crossing Waterloo Bridge - Photo, Nick Cobbing

The Last Press Release

On Friday April 22nd, bailiffs and police finally came to evict the 10 or so remaining occupants of Artillery Mansions in Westminster, so putting a lid on a project of both protest and positive housing initiative that had run for six weeks.

On April 12th, 1994 at 11am in courtroom 14 of the High Court on the Strand, Great Bear NV will seek possession of Artillery Mansions, 75 Victoria Street, SW1 from the present occupants. Their plan for the building is to build 36 luxury flats in the listed part of the front block and to leave the other 375 flats until the property market for office development improves, at which time they will demolish the building to construct offices.

All efforts to negotiate a use for these flats for short-term housing for the homeless by both the Empty Homes Agency and on behalf of the present occupants by SQUASH (Squatters Action for Secure Homes), has produced no constructive response from Great Bear NV.

Great Bear are a £multi-million company registered in the Dutch Antilles. All efforts to speak with them directly, by parties including the present occupants and by sections of the media, have progressed no further than a 'no comment' from their legal representatives.

New DoE figures on the number of empty homes in Britain were released at a press conference by the Empty Homes Agency today, Monday, April 11th. There are 864,000 empty homes in Britain, 411 of them are at Artillery Mansions.

Most of the flats at the Mansions have been empty for 18 years. On February 18th, the building was occupied by 50 squatters for two main reasons.

Firstly as a protest against part five of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill which places criminal sanctions on squatters, travellers, some tenants, festivals and land protests.

Secondly to establish an Alternative Rough Sleepers Initiative in order to provide a shelter for street sleepers during the remaining months of winter.

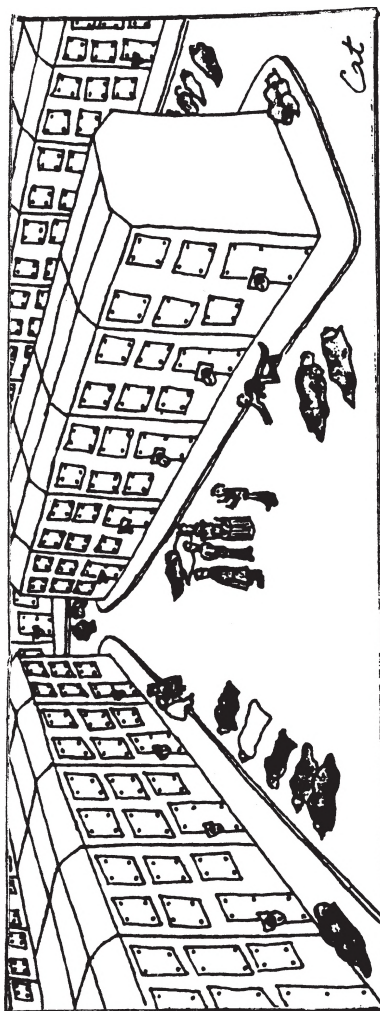
At the height of its operation there were over 100 rough sleepers sheltering in the building, some of whom had been on the streets for as long as 18 years.

During this time the occupiers of the Mansions have enjoyed a cordial relationship with the Artillery Mansions Tenants Association, comprised of the five sitting pensioner tenants still living in the back block and still waiting to be rehoused by Great Bear NV, after 11 years of promises. The Chairperson of the Tenants Association, Patricia Koenraads, has both sworn an affidavit and made a statement on BBC2 television to this effect.

A petition on the door of Artillery Mansions has attracted over 4,000 signatures of support from locals and passers by, including three local policemen and many workers from the Departments of Environment and of Transport (just around the corner in Marsham St.) and Westminster City Hall (100 yards down Victoria St.).

Two parliamentary questions have been tabled to the Secretary of State for the Environment about the occupation at Artillery Mansions (Hansard Written Questions 4/3/94 Cols 887-888).

After conversations with the London Fire Brigade Fire and Safety Team, and after failing to attract any material resource backup for necessary fire precautions, the current occupants have decided to vacate the building without contesting the rights of possession. The occupants will, however, speak in court to answer the false aspersions made by Great Bear NV's solicitors and Agents, that the current occupants have disturbed the neighbourhood, created a mess in the locality, frightened the tenants and are involved in criminal activity.



Every month sees the publication of another batch of Government consultation papers. The official purpose of such exercises are for the democratic sounding of groups relevant to the specific Government proposals. It is billed as a chance for groups working in relevant areas to help the politicians stay in touch. But does the Government take any notice of the opinions it receives, or do these consultation processes simply inform them of the arguments to be defeated in order to get the proposals through with the least public outcry?

In the last edition of SQUALL we quoted some of the strong opposition voiced as a result of the Government consultation paper on squatting; opposition from SHELTER, the AMA, the Metropolitan Police Federation, the Institute of Housing and the Law Society amongst others. What difference did it make to the legislation resulting from the consultation process? None

In this issue, we publish some of the responses to the recent Government consultation paper on removing the statutory right of 'priority need' homeless families to permanent accommodation.

CONSULTATION EXORCISE

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

The proposals "will completely fail to meet the Government's professed aim of making the system fairer. Changing the definition of homelessness will not make the problem go away."

LONDON HOUSING UNIT

"Pregnant women and poor families are being forced to chose between paying their rents to avoid harassment or eviction, or buying food, fuel or clothes. The numbers caught in the vice could increase if proposals from the Government go ahead."

BARNARDOS

"We have grave fears that the proposals contained in the consultation paper would worsen the position for many vulnerable families and young people, by removing the statutory guarantee of a secure affordable time."

THE CHURCHES NATIONAL HOUSING COALITION (CHNC)

The proposals are "a deliberate distortion of homeless people's experience" and "hopelessly out of touch". We are

"disturbed by a document which appears to ignore the realities of homelessness". The proposals have "damaging implications for homeless families and vulnerable single people".

ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY COUNCILS

"We regret that the consultation paper, dealing as it does with a major concern of public and social policy, is so weak in its objectivity and scientific analysis. There are not 'vast hordes of homeless people abusing the system'. There is no examination in the consultation paper of the human consequences of homelessness such as physical and mental ill health, suicide and family breakdown. The likely consequences of the Government's proposals include a significant increase in street homelessness, an acceleration of the physical and mental health problems of homeless people and an increase in the number of children and young people looked after by local authority social services departments. The long term cost to local government, the health service, the taxpayer and to society are potentially enormous."

THE ARCHBISHOP OF LIVERPOOL - RIGHT REV DEREK WARLOCK

"We are dismayed that the Government should have chosen the International Year of the Family in which to put forward proposals which, if implemented, would clearly marginalise still further the members of those families. The consultation paper inflames populist prejudices against the homeless, misrepresenting people who are subject to acute physical and mental strain".

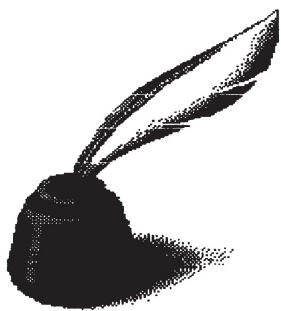
ASSOCIATION OF LONDON AUTHORITIES

"The proposals, if implemented, would leave many of the most vulnerable people in desperate situations. We believe that the most appropriate solution for homeless families is the provision of social housing and that homelessness is the most immediate manifestation of a nationwide housing shortage that can only be addressed by increasing the supply of good quality affordable, secure housing."

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED SURVEYORS

"The removal of the right of homeless people in priority need to be offered permanent and secure accommodation would have unacceptable detrimental consequences for those affected. We doubt whether these heavy handed proposals will 'ensure fairer access to all parts of the rented housing sector' (as the consultation paper claims). To make social housing equally available to all who genuinely need it, much more weight should be given to increasing the supply of available rented housing, particularly in areas of acute housing shortage."





The Post Bag

- letters to SQUALL

Lords of Creation

Dear Squall,

Many thanks for excellent Spring '94 issue of Squall.

It is a hard struggle to fight for freedom and justice - like trying to plug the gaping holes in the dyke of democracy with one's fingers!

As a member of the Labour Campaign for Travellers' Rights and Liberty, it is sad to read of Labour opting for the soft option of abstentions. They must be challenged to stand up and be counted to vote against the Criminal Justice and PO Bill at Report Stage. They claim to base their politics on values and social justice.

I was inspired by your quotes ie. Alice, Gerrard Winstanley; but not John Major quoting George Orwell out of context.

Here is one of my favourite quotes of Digger Winstanley re freedom of land to all:

"None ought to be lord over another but the earth be free for everyone to live on."

Yours working for peace and justice in creation.

David Penney (Rev).

Agenda Amenda

Dear Squall,

As yet I am still trying on the amendment front but not with much success. On squatting, the Government have decided it is a Home Office matter and takes it out of my area. I don't agree and I want to get the debate focussed onto homelessness, lack of affordable housing and effectively change the agenda to what causes squatting.

The Caravan Sites aspect is my responsibility except it is being dealt with in a bill out of my area. I am still trying to get amendments onto the

agenda.

You will appreciate this bill is a rag bag of a bill and everyone is trying to get items on to the "Agenda". That is the first hurdle - to get them selected for debate, the next is then to get a vote on a key point.

If I don't succeed I will look at other ways of trying to have a realistic and objective debate on the issues involved. With regard to Artillery Mansions, I visited it several times. In my view the squat focussed attention very much on the real issues involved and they received a fair measure of public support.

On reading the magazine it is quite clear that you fully understand the situation.

Best Wishes,
Peter Pike MP
House of Commons
London SW1

D-Day / CJB-Day

Dear Squall,

According to Bill Clinton, "the longest day is not yet over" - in other words, many of the ideals the Allies fought for have yet to be won. The democracy that was defended in 1944 is now being eroded by the same people who are representing our veterans in Normandy.

The Criminal Justice Bill proposed by John Major's Government seeks to outlaw the right of legitimate protest and dissent, as was the case in Nazi Germany.

The Gypsy Council consider the bill racist, as their community and other travellers will be persecuted, as was the case in Nazi Germany. Likewise, the Bill restricts the enjoyment of music, and guess who else tried to do that in the past?

In 1945, when the 'homes fit for heroes' promised to troops returning

from the war never materialised, ex-soldiers began to requisition empty property. Many would argue that this was the beginning of today's squatting movement. Why then is the Government seeking to outlaw squatting when it proved to be such an important social safety net for returning D-Day veterans? If the police wouldn't evict hardened war veterans then, why should they have to evict innocent homeless people now? War veterans and squatters have requisitioned empty properties under civil law for centuries. Any new Act of Parliament is unnecessary.

The Criminal (In)Justice Bill should be opposed by all defenders of democracy.

Glyn Walters and Andy Drysdale,
London N16.

Jewel Reply

Dear Squall,

Many thanks for the 'Jewel in the Mud Award' - do I get a jewel? or just the mud?

Perhaps you could put me on your subscription list. Enclosed is a cheque.

Best wishes
Duncan Campbell
The Guardian.

Anarcho, Lefties ?

Dear Squall,

Please find enclosed a small donation. I read lots of left/anarchist/alternative mags but Squall No. 6 is the best I've read in a long time - content, style, humour - just right. I can't believe I got it for free - and that's great. Hope you get lots of feedback and support.

Best wishes
Graham Hobbs
London SE5.

Bristol Squatters

Dear Squall,

Just thought I'd keep you informed of the latest developments in the West Country.

We are no longer residing at 2 Sussex Place but a community centre may let us use some of their space. I'll write to you as and when this happens. We have become involved in a major campaign against a so-called "bypass" in Batheaston, on the outskirts of Bath. The DoT are trying to plough a dual carriageway right next to Solsbury Hill under the pretence that it is a bypass. However, it's been revealed that it is actually set to be widened shortly after construction and linked up to another bypass as part of a secret "euro-route" accross England. All the Twyford/Wanstonia type people are there and we're networking with them in order to help each other. We have already opened up three squats in the area, and a fourth is on the way. Should be a great Summer! In case you didn't know, the Government has a load more anti-homeless legislation on the cards to coincide with the CJB. Basically they want to abolish the rights of homeless people to be permanantly housed. It seems to me that they are trying to block up the valve on a boiling pressure cooker....maybe they want to put us all in Nazi-style camps after they abolish all our rights! If you have any news pass it on.

Andy Trickett (Secretary)
Bristol Housing Action Movement



**BIN THE BILL
NO CULTURAL CLEANSING**

Quiet Life and Trojan Horses

Dear Squall,

A friend showed me the latest issue of Squall, I was very impressed - increasingly professional and a damning indictment, in so many ways, of the staus quo. You're one of the few conduits currently in operation for dissent against the Criminal Justice Bill and therefore, in my view, invaluable for mounting anything like a concerted opposition to this terrifying piece of legislation. It's not enough just to flee to France, Spain or wherever for the easier pleasures of a quiet life. Perhaps what needs emphasizing is the way in which these changes don't just affect marginal groups (squatters, travellers, radical greens etc) but are used as a trojan horse to spring sweeping changes on an unknowing public. These affect everybody, a part of "creeping fascism" (disguised by J Major's vision of "long shadows on village cricket grounds" etc) and this point needs to be rammed home. This is why I feel your work to be vitaly important, and in the light of your appeal for funds, please find enclosed a contribution.

Yours sincerely,
Dominic Franklin
Brighton

Empty Homes Agency

Dear Squall,

Thank you for the enclosures and the bumper edition of Squall (6). I was interested to read your piece about our Regional Associate Howard Goodie. He is doing some quite amazing (and original) work with empty homes in Manchester and has already signed up owners of 250 empty houses. We have got 8 Regional Associates now in various parts of the country. They are mainly property people and they use their local knowledge and contacts to put together local Empty Property Initiatives.

The development of the network of Regional Associates is quite

important to our work as we are simply unable to appraise buildings and carry out negotiations on a national basis. Even in London, we rely on 2 Associates who have worked very well. I believe that one Associate is about to conclude a 60 room hostel lease in North London.

Bob Lawrence
Empty Homes Agency
London SW1

Formidable Army

Dear Squall,

Thanks very much for the latest issue of Squall which is a very formidable magazine.

I am glad my letter got in because if this legislation goes through, it is going to be impossible for people to be other than ordered about as if they were in the army and even in the army they always found you accommodation!

All the best,
Tony Benn
House of Commons
London SW1

Ex-Squatting Statesman

Dear Squall,

Thanks for the latest copy of the magazine. It's a very interesting and well produced publication. Do let me know if there's anything I can do to help. As you probably know, I was very active in the squatting movement throughout the 1970s and early 80s and co-authored the book, "Squatting: The Real Story" in 1979. You have all my support in what you are doing in the much more difficult circumstances of the 1990s. I will be sending a personal donation towards the campaign, in the meantime I have placed Squall on the complimentary subscribers list and so you should be receiving a free copy from now on. I hope you find it interesting.

All the best,
Steve Platt (Editor)
New Statesman & Society
London

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 (donation) as you can afford. Give more - Get more.

Advisory Service for Squatters (ASS) - Veterans of the Squatting world. Open for advice and assistance 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 the criminalisation of 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.

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.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT (NOTTINGHAM GROUP)
c/o 180 - 182 MANSFIELD RD
NOTTINGHAM

monolith
PO BOX 4
SYSTON
LEICESTERSHIRE
LE7 4RD
Publications



Freedom Network - Coordinating opposition to the Criminal Justice Bill. Meetings, networking, information, actions. *The Freedom Network, c/o The Green Office, The Old Dolehouse, 372 Coldharbour Lane, Brixton, London SW9*. Tel: 071 738 6721.

Citizens Against the CJB - Cardiff-based opposition to the Bill. Send SAE for information. *CACJB, Buxton House, 6 Woodville Road, Cathays, Cardiff CF2 4EA*.

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: 081 959 7525.

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. Currently operating from a box no. until they find new premises. *PO Box 56, Greenleaf 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. Successful, very active group. NEW OFFICE: *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." SAE for information: *Steve Staines, 33 Bryanston St, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 7AZ*. Tel: 0258 453 695.

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 Crompton St, London SE17*.

Cool Tan Arts - A collection of artistically active squatters who run regular cafes, lots of workshops, informative cinema & video, events & music. 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. *Rainbow Centre, c/o The Olde Church, 23 Highgate Rd, Kentish Town NW5.* Tel: 0831 195 223.

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

AberdeenFIN 36 Buchan Rd, Torry, Aberdeen AB1 3SW

DoleFIN** c/o 32 Hill Rd, Pinner, Middx HA5 1JZ

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

GuilFIN PO Box 217, Guildford, Surrey.

IsisBrumFIN c/o 29 Silvertown, Cresc, Moseley, Birmingham B13 9ND

LondonFIN c/o 99 Torriano Av, London NW5 2RX

MerseyFIN** PO Box 110, Liverpool L69 6AU.

MoorFIN 3 Church St, Calstock, Cornwall.

NeverNeverFIN 8 Campbell Rd, Southsea, Hants.

NotFIN c/o The Rainbow Centre, 180 Mansfield Rd, Nottingham.

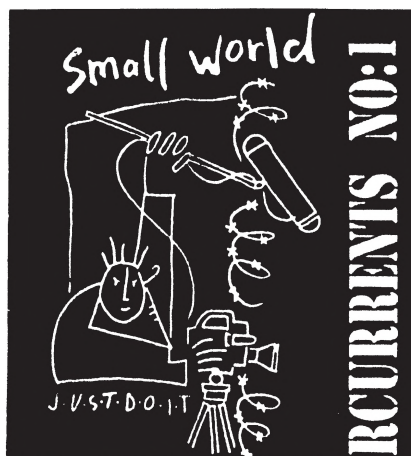
Oxfend Box A, 111 Magdalen Rd, Oxford.

ShelfFIN The Ecology Co, 199 Crookes Valley Rd, Sheffield.

TVFIN c/o Rising Sun, 30 Silver St, Reading.

WalsallFIN** c/o 17 Newball House, Newball St, Caldmere, Walsall WS1 3DY.

HIFIN Box 15, 138 Kingsland High St, London E8 2NS.



Monolith - Magazine for travellers of the New Age and all interested. News, reviews, Stonehenge campaign, festivals, environment. 50p & A5 SAE + 50p for each back issue. *Monolith productions, PO Box 4, Syston, Leicestershire LE7 4RD.*

Tribal Messenger - Magazine for travellers. Massive, A4. News, interviews, festival guide, Gypsies, photos, New Age, history, criminalisation, press cuttings, letters, comment. £1 + 80p P&P from; *Tribal Messenger, Box 21, 118 Grovenor Rd, St Paul's, Bristol, BS2.*

Festival Eye - "Criminal Justice Issue." A4 format for travellers featuring Stonehenge Campaign, free festivals, magic, 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. Latest vid Features Criminal Justice Bill, direct action, M11 campaign, topical environmental issues. Videos £8.00 + £1.50 P&P (less for unwaged etc.) available from; *Small World Media Ltd, 1A Waterlow Rd, London N19 5NJ.* Tel: 071 281 7320.

Green Wing - "The Information and Networking Magazine for Greater London." Monthly mag with news, dates,

contacts and green features. Articles on squatting & travelling. 50p + A5 SAE to: *Green Wing, The Green Office, 200 Cambridge Heath Rd, Bethnal Green, London E2 9PA.*

Greenleaf - Mag published by Robin's Greenwood Gang. Emphasis on lack of access to land, pagan, travellers, Stonehenge, camps and festivals. 60p + SAE to: *Greenleaf, 96 Church Rd, Redfield, Bristol 5.*

POD- "Counter culture '90's style." Underground mag. documenting DIY culture; Dongas, travellers, squatters, clubs, networks, sound systems, news & "Fluffy love protests". £2 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 56 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.*

Mother Clan - "The re-emergence of the Goddess." Part of the FIN network. Travellers, festivals, healing, 'toons, news clippings, articles, eco-activists, poetry and contacts. Free (donation), SAE to: *Mother Clan, 29 Silvertown Crescent, Moseley, Birmingham B13 9NH..*

London Psychogeographical Association - Newsletter documenting Masons, Dongas, Eco-activists, festivals, travellers, astrological influences, ley & power lines. Send SAE to: *LPA (ELS), Box 15, 138 Kingsland High St, London E8 2NS.*

BOO!

To the Criminal Justice Bill

SQUALL 7

necessity breeds ingenuity

...STOP PRESS...

...STOP PRESS...

...STOP PRESS...

....START PRESSING....

July/August 1994

THE STATE ITS IN

Criminal Justice Bill delayed by amendments in House of Lords.

The Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill will not now become an act until at least October this year. Prior to the House of Lords' report stage beginning on July 5th, it was thought that parliamentary opposition to the Bill had been exhausted. However, the Lords' Report Stage, representing the last opportunity for any meaningful changes to be made, proved to be the most significant stage of the Criminal Justice Bill so far.

Amendments to the clauses on criminal injury compensation, on penal institutions for young offenders, on the removal of the rights of silence and, most surprisingly, on the repeal of the Caravan Sites Act, have pushed the Bill's possible completion into October.

The first of the major amendments came to the clauses on penal institutions for 12-14 year olds and were backed by former Conservative home secretary, Lord Carr. Much to the Government's chagrin, the Lords demanded that the courts should have discretion whether they send young offenders to existing local authority secure accommodation or to the new child prisons proposed by the Government. The Government was defeated by 170 votes to 139. The cross party opposition to child prisons also secured an amendment saying that young offenders could be re-referred to secure local authority accommodation if it was considered that the new child penal institutions were considered unbeneficial to the re-habilitation of a particular young offender. The Government was defeated on this issue by 147 to 128.

In order to prevent a similar defeat over the clauses in the Bill which remove the rights of silence, Michael Howard himself tabled last minute amendments in an attempt to satisfy the House of Lords that these clauses are not too draconian. His amendment now means that a police officer will have to caution a suspect that their silence might be used to infer guilt. Effective opposition in the Lords was indeed mollified by Howard's tabled amendments. As a consequence the clauses on the removal of the rights of silences were voted through by 143 votes to 91.

However by far the most unexpected Government defeat was still yet to come. For when the Lords came to consider the clauses on the repeal of the Caravan Sites Act, a rebellion against the Government supported by Conservative peer Lord Stanley of Alderley demanded that the repeal of the Act be delayed for five years and that the 100% grants enabling local authorities to make provision for gypsies, be continued.

It is unlikely that the Government will allow these amendments to change the Bill without a further fight, but the oppositional stance taken by the House of Lords on the final furlong of the Bill (which is certainly more than it received in the Commons) has ensured that there will not be enough time left in this session of parliament for the Bill to become an Act.

"Royal assent before the summer recess has never been an absolute requirement" said Michael Howard licking his wounds. These words however, mask Howard's disappointment that he will not now be able to walk into the Tory Party conference in September, trumpeting the implementation of

the 27 point law and order package he announced at last years conference.

The rabid Olga Maitland (ConMP Sutton and Cheam) was less guarded about her frustration: *"This is a major disappointment. The Commons should sit longer now to deal with this rather than wait until October. People are having a hideous time in some areas and the public has a right to expect proper action to be taken now."* Fortunately, bitter though it is, Olga Maitland's tongue cannot hurry the Bill. The next session of parliament will begin with further debates in both Houses.

Unfortunately, due to a High Court ruling earlier this year deciding that local authority duty to gypsies should not include new travellers, the delay on the repeal of the Caravan Sites Act does not represent any light at the end of a dark discriminative tunnel for many travellers. Indeed it is some measure of the way new travellers have been demonised, that the Lords only voted for the amendment after the House had been reminded that the high court ruling meant new travellers would not benefit from the reprieve. Both Save the children and the Children's Society have been instrumental in campaigning against the repeal of the Caravan Sites Act and both charities say that new travellers deserve similar political respect as traditional gypsies and that this respect should be extended further than it is at present. Despite this however, the clauses on unauthorised camping in the Bill remain unaltered and will continue to be used against all travellers. Only traditional gypsies parked up on official sites have received any relief from the report stage decisions. It is also undoubtedly the case that the Government will not accept the amendments asked for by the Lords but it comes to debate them in the next session. It is likely that the Government may introduce some moliifying amendments of its own, similar to those tabled by Michael Howard over the rights of silence

The delay in the Bill however, does provide an extra summer for the mounting opposition to gather further momentum. An extra summer with which to spread round the dire consequences of the Government's attempt to crush what they consider to be easy law and order scapegoats. For if the full implications of the Criminal Justice Bill were known, the carefully media cultivated cheers would turn into the jeers the Bill undoubtedly deserves.

Sq

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SQUALL

Magazine

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DISAPPEARING RIGHTS No 3

****The Right to register your protest if you consider an activity unethical or environmentally harmful****

What do Hampstead Heath and the Peak District have in common?

They both still exist in an unspoilt state because there was a right to protest against plans to develop property and roads upon them.

This right is due to disappear when the Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill places criminal sanctions on 'disrupting a lawful activity on land'. This 'lawful activity' may be the construction of a nuclear waste dump, the destruction of heathland to build a motorway, the destruction of forest for development, a demonstration outside an embassy against human rights abuses, as well as a multitude of other activities. The new law of trespass kills our basic right to stand on a piece of land and register our protest against any activity which although legal, may still be morally, ethically or environmentally harmful.

IN OUR SO CALLED CITIZENS CHARTER DEMOCRACY OF ACCOUNTABILITY WE ARE HAVING OUR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO OBJECT LEGISLATED AWAY UNDER FALSE PRETENCES - DON'T LET THE WOOL BE PULLED OVER YOUR EYES

DISAPPEARING RIGHTS No 2

****The Right of Homeless people to house themselves in decaying, idle and empty property****

In South Africa there are 8 million homeless people, 3 million of these live in squats. In Great Britain there are 2 million homeless people, 50,000 these live in squats. This year in South Africa there are democratic elections. This year in Great Britain a law is being passed that places criminal sanctions on squatters and allows property owners to gain 'violent entry' against occupants.

**SQUATTERS SQUAT BECAUSE THEY ARE OTHERWISE HOMELESS
- DON'T LET THE WOOL BE PULLED OVER YOUR EYES**

DISAPPEARING RIGHTS No 1

****The Right to Travel and Camp in your own country****

In 1650, 13 people were executed at Bury St Edmunds for the crime of being a Gypsy. In 1822 the English Vagrancy Act declared that all persons lodging in tents, carts or wagons were deemed to be rogues and vagabonds with a penalty of 6 months in prison. By 1852, Gypsies were still being sold as slaves in Europe. Between 1939-45 the Nazis exterminated over one million Gypsies. In recent years there has been a dramatic increase in racially motivated violence against Gypsies in Europe. In 1992 the British Government announced plans to legislate against Gypsies. John Carlisle (Con MP - Luton North) said: "The time has come to banish gypsies into the wilderness." Bowen Wells (Con MP - Hertford and Stortford) published a leaflet entitled "Conservatives against Gypsies" and yet David MacLean, Home Office Minister claims: "The Government has no quarrel with the nomadic way of life". In 1994, The Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill will outlaw unauthorised camping and repeal the Caravan Sites Act 1968 - the only official provision for Gypsies in this country.

VENEERED LEGISLATION - DON'T LET THE WOOL BE PULLED OVER YOUR EYES