Squatters admit to intimidation

BY PAUL WILLIAMS

An organisation of squatters has claimed responsibility for a campaign of intimidation against Conservative and SDP councillors in Lambeth who have had their windows and walls daubed with graffiti and had their cars stolen and in one case destroyed.

The organisation claims responsibility for the attacks in a newsletter called The Crowbar, published by Brixton Squatters Aid, based at 121 Railton Road, Brixton, which has attacked the homes and businesses of councillors backing eviction policies.

The Crowbar, which is aimed at keeping squatters and councillors in touch, has published a series of articles and editorials discussing the effects of the government's new policies on squatters and the council.

Lambeth has a thriving squatting population and the campaign is centred on stopping evictions. The organisation has been increasing its membership and popularity.

The Crowbar is produced by members of Brixton Squatters Aid, but it is entirely independent editorially. If The Crowbar reports an event, sympathetically or otherwise, this cannot be taken as meaning the event was due to any action out of context, a set of prejudices polished up with a nose for sensation and produced a story to gladden the heart of any fascist editor, and the Daily Torygraph is full of them. First he states that an organisation of squatters has claimed responsibility for a campaign of intimidation of councillors in Lambeth. What is the truth of this? We all know that some squatters have attacked the homes and property of Tory/SDP/Liberal councillors. And quite right too. Anyone who has faith in the 'proper channels' to influence them is either stupid or naive. Naturally The Crowbar has reported this, and expressed a degree of sympathy with these actions. That is NOT the same as claiming responsibility! The Crowbar is produced by members of Brixton Squatters Aid, but it is entirely independent editorially. If The Crowbar reports an event, sympathetically or otherwise, this cannot be taken as meaning the event was due to any action...
CROWBAR EDITORIAL

Perhaps we should take this opportunity to clear up any misconceptions assorted reporters, cops etc., might have about us. THE CROWBAR is an independent paper written, printed and published by some Lambeth squatters. Its opinion is its own and should not be construed as being the official policy of any other organisation, group, individual or owt else. The address given is just a postal address. It is not the Crowbar office. Crowbar is willing to publish statements and documents from groups working in Lambeth and all South London on matters relating to the housing struggle. We wish to provide a lively, informative and welcome articles, grafix, money, bribes, booze, etc., Just enclose item with a used fiver and send to; THE CROWBAR BOX HRG, c/o 121, RAILTON ROAD, LONDON, S.E.24.

LOUGHBORO' BLUES

After waiting for over an hour in the freezing corridor of the Area Housing Office you enter the little office and spend ten minutes complaining and get ten minutes complaints back. Shouting and screaming makes me feel better but it doesn't get my repairs done. Bureaucracy to blame as always. It's not the fault of any single individual, its the system at fault. For a worker A to do job B needs a dozen bits of paper in triplicate, and the photocopier is broken and .... Oh forget it!! But, you see, I can't forget it. The flat is freezing, in need of dozens of repairs. So I get to thinking, does it always need to be like this? Of course not. If the tenants take over none of this would happen. I'll explain. I live on the Loughborough Estate. If the tenants on my block takeover then you don't pay rent to the council. You pay money into a central fund for repairs. Well, we've all got a little bit of skill, the tenants carry out the repairs, using money from the fund. The flats can be kept clean by teams of tenants (give us all a chance to get to know each other). We can scrub out horrible graffiti and do our own murals. All our block problems can be sorted out at meetings of all the tenants. Empty flats can be given to friends or relatives or turned into clubs. And when all the blocks are run by tenants you could have the elected delegates from each block attend meetings to sort out problems for the whole estate. These delegates could be accountable to us all and not just politicians elected for 4 years. Vandalism, muggings? When the tenants police their own estate crime will drop. Who'd smash something that belonged to them? The system of federations would spread. The delegates from each block make up the Loughborough Estate Tenants Federation who elect delegates to a South London Federation. And on it goes. No leaders, no bosses, no politicians, just tenants directly responsible to fellow tenants. Pie in the sky? I know that it sounds far fetched but it's the only alternative to the present bureaucracy. Anarchy? Sure thing, you know it makes sense. A Pissed Off Tenant, Loughboro Estate.

CROWBAR, 9/o Box HRG, 121, Ralton Rd, S.E.24
A few weeks ago we reported that 28 new police had been drafted into the Raillon area of Brixton in aid of final destroying any 'Front Line' resistance there. This week dozens of people have been drafted into the Railton area on the front side of the door, questioning and harassing people, and raiding many other houses in the street. The breaking point came last Monday night when someone (presumably the police) put a heavy dead bolt on the outside of the door, turning it from a fortress into a prison. When the police were also spotted out the back of the building the squatters decided to abandon the place and managed to escape outside the door, questioning and harassing people, and raiding many other houses in the street. The breaking point came last Monday night when someone (presumably the police) put a heavy dead lock on the outside of the door, turning it from a fortress into a prison. When the police were also spotted out the back of the building the squatters decided to abandon the place and managed to escape.

In 1979 a terrace of Victorian houses in Argyle St. Norwich was squatted by a group of young homeless people. It had been empty for two years. The buildings had been earmarked for the University of East Anglia but they did not want them. Following the usual deaf ear from the local council the group formed a Co-op. Because the council could not afford to do up the houses themselves they eventually agreed to a four year licence if the co-op would modernise the houses. In 1981 the co-op was allocated a £215,000 grant. The Housing Corp. promised a further £1,000,000 spread over the 4 year licence period. However, the co-op eventually discovered thru the local press that the Dept. of Environment was refusing the Norwich Council permission to licence the houses. The council then refused to appeal against the decision and is now planning to evict the street! So, the Labour council is preventing the co-op from doing up the houses. The council then refused to appeal against the decision and is now planning to evict the street! So, the Labour council is preventing the co-op from doing up the houses.

In another squat the police staged "barricaded squats" of people (presumably the police) put a heavy dead bolt on the outside of the door, turning it from a fortress into a prison. When the police were also spotted out the back of the building the squatters decided to abandon the place and managed to escape. The house had been attacked before by police who failed to get in and turned of the water in the street. The breaking point came last Monday night when someone (presumably the police) put a heavy dead bolt on the outside of the door, turning it from a fortress into a prison. When the police were also spotted out the back of the building the squatters decided to abandon the place and managed to escape.

The council hired thugs. Ironically, when the streets were first squatted, years ago, it began when locals objected to clearance and wreacking by the Council. The Squatters Resist!!!

This week a small group of the Gipsy Hill squatters have prevented the Wreckers destroying the house used as a Community Centre. Volunteers are urgently needed to help prevent more Wrecking, re-squats and to canvass local support. Helpers and would-be squatters can contact the active Gipsy Hill squatters via Brixton Squatters Aid.***

The Crowbar congratulates the Council and all Political Factions for their Brilliant NEW Housing Policy...To destroy 71 sound houses and to replace them with fewer and inferior new ones. (And, of course, get rid of Dirty Squatters!) And for their good luck in getting the building contract for their friends, and lots of lovely Bribees! This should start off the new year just right. Jolly Good Show Boys.............
BELGIUM

In Antwerp in Belgium there has been a huge counter demonstration when the VMF Fascist group held a march under the banner "No Voting Rights for Foreigners!"

BERLIN

Bad news from Berlin. There has been a raid on the homes and offices of the people who work on the squatters' fortnightly paper there. The paper is called RADICAL. Several people are under arrest charged with "promoting a terrorist organisation". The police are hot on the trail of the "Revolutionary Cells" which are autonomous groups of people who carry out actions against evictions and repression. They then go back to their daily lives in the open, not underground as the RAF did. We send our best wishes to our fellow squatters who have been arrested and hope that RADICAL is soon back on the streets.

HOLLAND

In Amsterdam there have been six or seven evictions in the past few weeks by police pressing home their attack after the eviction of the Lucky Luke. However, new squats are still being occupied and the squatters are in good heart.

A SQUATTER DIES

"DRUGS DEN"..."Blazing Opium Den Squat", ran the sickening headlines in the 5th London Line (Dec. 14th). John McCaig (28) died alone in a bare, freezing, candle-lit flat in Wooly Hall in the Loughborough Estate. The pathologist said he died from inhaling fire fumes and had only valium and paracetamol (both prescribed drugs) in his body. The candle burnt down, the mattress caught fire and a young squatter was dead. But for the reporter Rob Smith and the Press it was just a chance to make money with sensational lies. The entire "Opium Den" story was made up from the fact that John had previous drug convictions. The coroner, Sir Montague Levine, expressed horror at a fact that only a few squatters were dead. Perhaps all they asked him was the state of his bank balance.

ATS RAID

Last Thursday 6 of Wakefield's finest with several of the lads from the ATS descended upon the Freedom Bookshop in Aldgate in search of the communiqué sent by the Angry Brigade Resistance Movement. The fortnightly paper which is produced at that address, FREEDOM, published the note several weeks ago. Sadly the original was not available for the 'tecs to examine so they promptly removed all the accounts books and several bundles of correspondence instead. How the somewhat ragged finances of FREEDOM are going to help these poor right-wing fools we don't know but it does explain why it took them so long to catch the Yorkshire Ripper. I've interviewed him twice and still let him carry on. Perhaps all they asked him was the state of his bank balance.

EGGS

Great news from the bloke who was fined £70 for throwing an egg at Thatcher. He has already received donations of £150 to cover the fine! What a racket! We could all do it - and boost the egg industry as well. So, throw an egg for Great Britain! Save the Economy! GET THATCHEEEE!!!!
HOW TO LIE...

of B.S.A. Paul Williams seems to think otherwise. If we follow his logic then this is the result: the Torygraph reports sympathetically that a bunch of NF have been up an Asian shopkeeper. Therefore the Board of Directors of the paper have claimed responsibility for the action!

No.10 column inches of inaccuracy, supposition, in fact blatant untruth. And of course, if its in the papers people believe it, even if a paper admits their 'mistake' the retraction is printed months later, in a corner somewhere. Yes everyone believes it, and that dismal rag the South London Dross got in on the muck raking.

Scenting a story 2 of their Ace reporters descended on the 121 Bookshop to buy some Crowbars. Incredible. The Crowbar has been out for the last 6 months and they've finally noticed us. What are their brainless Aces paid for...they simply rewrite the Torygraph story, adding an unconfirmed report of police interest. Like so many 'scoops' when the Dross has reported 'police investigations' which are never heard of again. Still, it sells papers and that's all that counts.

So the truth, Sad reality. So the readers, just flog the paper and make a nice profit for owners and shareholders.

We don't expect a sympathetic hearing from the Press, so we've only one thing to say to them. "F*ck Off You Shits, the time is coming soon when you'll pay for your lies, your manipulation, your mutilation of truth!"

CHE CROWBARRA....

SHIT OF THE WEEK

The winner of THE CROWBAR Shit of the week award is the Viscount de l'Isle. Famous for his comment "It's vulgar to talk about money" he owns an estate in Kent to match his wife's in Wales. He manages to mix being chairman of the giant Phoenix Assurance company with caring for his many horses and priceless art collection. Yes, the old bludger has certainly got enough of that. "Vulgar stuff" to not have to talk about it but just in case he has become chairman of the right wing National Association for Freedom to help protect it. Truly an excellent candidate for putting up against the wall come the glorious day, if not before!

VOODOO?

Tory councillor Bob Parker received a voodoo-style present this week, a headless chicken in his back garden! Councillor Parker views the grisly gift as just another attempt by "anarchists" to frighten Lambeth councillors. "I suppose they chose to do this because my wife is Asian," he said. "I was a bit worried at first what she would think, but she's a tough little lady and more in the same vein."

Apart altogether from the sexiest attitude of these remarks and the wild accusations the reporter deliberately confuses anarchists with fascists. In fact more anarchists have been murdered by fascists than has hot sherry's (and that's a lot) and this precisely because of their committed opposition to racism, patriarchy, nationalism and war.

LETTER: THE POLICE

Dear CROWBAR,

Just a couple of points on the relentless war against crime being waged by the thin blue line that stands between society and anarchy. Firstly, no one seems to have noticed that some police radio transmissions are now being scrambled. As these are the loudest signals in the Brixton area it would seem that this is due to "local conditions". Secondly, there is an increasing amount of what the more paranoid among us might see as "strategic planning". This is the process by which the urban environment is shaped to allow the maximum advantage to the law and order agencies. In the last couple of weeks the scenery opposite the White Horse has been altered by the removal of the walkways between the estate flats, (a priceless part of Brixton's heritage lost to the nation!)

After the 81 riots many estates were sectionalised by new walls or the closing of walkways. Ostensibly this was to prevent "mugging" but given the role of flat blocks in the recent disturbances in Stockwell and Hounslow..... In the Stockwell Park Estate traffic flow patterns have been altered to allow movement of vehicles to be more easily controlled. These are only the tip of the iceberg, and I'm sure that CROWBAR readers will know of many more examples. It proves, to my mind, that these developments are controlled by the council they are hand in glove with the police in preparing for future riots. So if you're running away and you find that your exits are blocked...don't say you weren't warned !!!!!

Keep up the good work.... KEN BARLOW
WHOSE BENEFIT?

CHANGES IN THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM.

VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION Starting in October, newly-unemployed people will no longer have to register at a Job Centre before claiming benefits from the DHSS or DoE. This is part of the moves to sell off or close Job Centres. Instead, there will be a new system of voluntary registration starting in October. When you first sign on you will be asked "Would you take any full time job which you can do?". If you say "no", you will be asked to fill in an Availability Form. You should answer the questions on this about acceptable wages, hours and travelling distance, in general a way as possible - your answers may be used to stop benefit. Special attention will be given to single parents and women with children, who will have to prove that they have already made arrangements for someone to look after the kids should they be offered a job. While you are filling in this form, the clerk will be looking over as part of a programme of

AVAILABILITY TESTING. The burden will now be on you to prove to the dole office, firstly that you are 'genuinely' available for work, and secondly that you are 'genuinely' looking for a job. This will give them much more power. When you first sign on you will be asked "Would you take any full time job which you can do?". If you say "no", you will be asked to fill in an Availability Form. You should answer the questions on this about acceptable wages, hours and travelling distance, in general a way as possible - your answers may be used to stop benefit. Special attention will be given to single parents and women with children, who will have to prove that they have already made arrangements for someone to look after the kids should they be offered a job. While you are filling in this form, the clerk will be looking over as part of a programme of

ETHNIC MONITORING. This is a race check. You will either be handed a card asking your place of origin, or else visually assessed and colour-coded by the counter-clerk. This is similar to the checks being made from now on in hospitals, where you may be required to produce proof of your nationality, such as a passport. There are five categories - West Indian/African, Asian, White, Other or Refusal. You can insist you are put down as 'Refusal' if you wish.

POSTAL CLAIMS. You will no longer get an interview at the DHSS. Instead, the dole office will give you another, even longer, form (a B1PC) to fill in and send off to your local SS office. This may sound great - no waiting or queuing. But the form is 8 pages long with 109 questions. If you fill it in wrongly, it will be sent back for you to do again. You won't get any money until it is right. In a recent tryout, only 1 person in 20 did it correctly. You will be asked about your relationship to other people in your household. Beware - for example, if you say your landlord is a relative, or that a person of the opposite sex who isn't a dependent lives in the household, it can lead to even longer delays and reductions in benefit. (Still it's not all bad - 1000 of the bastards will lose their jobs as a result of this change).

COMPUTERISATION. Over the next few years, the DHSS system is to be computerised. Until this change is finished, there will be utter bureaucratic chaos. It's already next to impossible to get a straight answer to any question at the DHSS. Doing everything by post will make it hard to get any answers at all. Once the system is complete, your record will be instantly available, anywhere in the country, to the DHSS, other government departments and the police. Naturally, no safeguards have been announced for correcting mistakes in your record. Perhaps the most important change is the one even DHSS officials haven't been given adequate details about. They call it unified housing benefit.

UNIFIED HOUSING BENEFIT. From November 22nd, council tenants will no longer receive money for rent and rates from the DHSS. Instead, it will be paid direct to the council. It is estimated that 2 million households will be worse off as a result. For example, those who claim rate rebates from the council rather than supplementary allowance to cover the rates. It will be actual money out of everyone's pockets (people won't be able to pay heating bills in the winter using rent money.) For many council tenants the only way they have of forcing councils to carry out essential repairs and services has been to withhold rent. This and rent strikes will now be impossible.

From next April the scheme will be extended to claimants in private rented accommodation and homeowners. Unlike council tenants money will still be paid to them not their landlords. But it will be paid out by the council not the DHSS. From December the DHSS will be handing over to councils details of people claiming rent or rates in their area. Claimants will have to fill out a form for the council detailing what rent and rates they pay. As the councils integrate the DHSS records into their own, we will see 1) complete chaos to start with and many people accidentally cut off while its all sorted out 2) a spate of prosecutions as many people are caught out either claiming more rent and rates from the DHSS than they're actually paying (using forged rent books), or more rate rebate than they're entitled to. Be warned - the scheme replaces all rent and rate rebate schemes as well as Supplementary Benefit payments.

TAXATION OF BENEFITS. This has already started - the only difference it makes is that you cannot claim a tax rebate as soon as you become unemployed. Most people's benefits are too low to be liable for tax. However in future if the lower tax level isn't raised, benefits will creep over it as they slowly rise, and claimants will have to repay tax due when they finally get a job.
SICKNESS CLAIMS. The system of 'self-certification' which was introduced earlier this year is the 'soft' edge of a new policy for dealing with sickness claims. This is aimed at drastically reducing the number of days 'lost' through people going off sick. The hard edge is that from next April, you will have to convince your employer that you are genuinely sick. They will be responsible for paying the first 6 weeks benefit, so will have every incentive to scrutinise your claim to be sick very closely—and keep records of how often and why you're sick. And of course small companies will often treat their obligation to pay as much as they treat minimum wage requirements, equal pay requirements, Health and Safety standards etc. This is part of the purpose of these changes.

SPECIAL CLAIMS CONTROL UNITS. The government has steadily increased the number of unemployment benefit review officers, fraud officers, liable relative officers (chasms—defaulting husbands or wives for maintenance) and special investigators attached to the local office or group of offices. But these have been completely snowed under by the volume of claims to be chased. The latest innovation is the Special Claims Control Unit. These are teams of special investigators (often policemen) who move from office to office to 'blitz' claims. The idea is that they systematically investigate every 20 claims, looking particularly at women, long-term claimants, people with skills who might be fiddling etc. Houses are watched, neighbours are questioned and so forth. If they have any grounds for suspicion, however feeble or unjustified, you will be called for interview. (They may try to prevent you taking a friend with you.) There, if they haven't proof of wrongdoing, they will try to intimidate you into making a statement or withdrawing your claim. Often they will try to persuade you that you are in the wrong when you are not, and that to 'regularise' your position you should sign off and make a new claim. This is a trick—if you do, it will be taken as an admission that you were fiddling. The purpose of groups like these is to force long-term claimants off the register to join the 17% of people already not bothering to sign on.

Some advice

1. Don't be too worried. The new regulations will make things harder but making us afraid is just what they want.

   Carry on claiming for what you need.

2. Find out what is happening. Make contact with others who are claiming. Pass this information around and discuss it. How have others overcome problems? Try to publicise the answers.

   Find out when and what your local DHSS is clamping down on (read the local papers). How are they conducting the investigations and interviews?

3. Keep covered. If possible try to work together. Take a friend to any interview. Say as little as possible. (Don't answer questions if you have no change of circumstances to report.)

   If you live with others who are claiming, make sure you've got all your facts and stories straight. Many people are pressured into withdrawing valid claims by the DHSS twisting what you have said and making you think you are in the wrong.

   Tell others if you see people snooping around, and refuse to answer 'innocent' questions from strangers about your friends, e.g. where they are.

4. Other implications. In the winter some people use their rent allowance to pay the heating bills. As this now becomes impossible, cut-offs and harassment will rise. Again, get together with people to oppose this, and argue directly with the LEB and Gas Board workers who carry out the cut-offs. If this doesn't work, do all you can to stop them.

5. Be careful. If you fiddle, be more cautious. Some fiddles don't work any more, such as those involving rent.

   If you do odd jobs, be careful about using your real name. Watch out for suspicious questions from would-be customers.

6. Don't be conned.

   Being unemployed is a fact of the present and the future. Don't be fooled into thinking that a vote at the next election will make things better. No political party or campaign can guarantee you a job. You must start fighting for more money and less hassles for yourself as an unemployed or unwaged person—not just as someone who is forced to accept the next offer of a job.
CHOPPER

The last riot in Brixton was notable, amongst other things, for the absence of the Met's super duper multi dinero helicopter. We have just received a report from one of our many moles inside the cesspits of power that may explain why. Apparently the Flying Pig was on its way over to have a quick film and recce in our fair borough when an object, either a yacht flare or a rocket exploded close by. Now it seems that choppers are a bit sensitive to burning matter hitting them in flight and the flash would also have destroyed 'the pilots night vision, not a good thing for a low flying vehicle in a built up area! Alas, our mole tells us the flash wouldn't do the over so sensitive night cameras any good either. Ah well, all that clever scientific anti crime machinery rendered useless for the cost of a firework. Makes you think, don't it?

CRASS & CO

Last week, Crass a friends Squatted The Rainbow to hold gigs a Xmas fun in the disused Hospital. But the pigs done an illegal eviction and attempt to box-squatting fail. So instead the disused Ziggy club, on Harrow Rd was taken for a brilliant gig with Poison Eats a manybonds last Sat. The ZigZag is still being held, come 2 help. Tel: 881 20 33 for details. SO SQUAT THE WORLD

OUR RADIO BUSTED

Wed 15th Dec 4.30pm 'Our Radio' the open access pirate was busted by Home Office, police and plain clothes men in a carefully planned raid on the top of a tower block in Kilburn. Despite the large number of cops the broadcasting team escaped, after a dramatic chase through the 17 story block and surrounding streets. But one person, who just happened to be there, was lifted and faces a fine of up to £250. Unfortunately all the radio equipment, over £200 worth, was 'stolen' by the Home Office and police. Benefit gigs and a bust fund are being organised. Any help please to Our Radio, Box 103.8 FM, London WC1N3XX.

BACK ON AIR!!!!!!!!!!

On Friday 17th Our Radio comes back on air, with the Dread Broadcasting Corporation evening, and a full schedule is planned for Wed 22nd...8.00pm Radio Solidarity...6.00pm Gaywaves...8.00 Women on the waves...9.00pm The Message (including our Squatters News)...10.00pm Utopia...11.00 till late 'The Reg'!

SQUAT THE WORLD

OUR RADIO (Utopia) BENEFIT

This is to warn you that the DHSS strike will be spreading to London, probably in January. This will mean you get just £15 per week, and NO rent heating or other allowances, as is already the case in Birmingham.

Your only bet is to take advantage of the confusion and sign on NOW in a wrong name, or you could be stuck on £15 a week for a long long time!

BRIXTON DHSS STAFF COMM.

APPEAL TO DHSS STAFF (From The Crowbar)

Why go on a stupid strike that will cost the State nothing... In fact they'll make millions in interest on cash not paid out. Of course they want list you to you. Of course they'll just let you ROT! Don't listen to your Union Bosses.

Why not do a work-in, give us all the MAXIMUM benefit and allowances to ALL who apply. That way they'll give in in two seconds flat! And we won't hate you for once!

WARNING!

The Drug Squad are out and about again. There have been several raids, usually following stop-searches, on houses in the Brixton area, the

Police have announced over 75 arrests in just one week. So if you have anything around either hide it well or use it up because the courts are coming down pretty heavy on users.