ABCD Merchandise

ABC cloth patches: 3 designs for 81 or 89p each

PAMPHLETS

A DAY MOURNFUL AND OVERCAST - A moving and personal attack on prisons and harrassments in a number of the iron columns - the anarchist ex-prisoners milita in the Spanish revolution/civil war.

ALTERNATIVES - An Anarchist View of Prisons, Crime & Violence. M. Loo. Study of the class nature of imprisonment in the U.K. and suggests some alternatives to caging problem solving, where working class communities can make the decisions about how to deal with antisocial elements.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NEW AFRI

PRISON STRUGGLE - Sundial Atoll - Written by an ex-political prisoner in the world. This is the inspiring story of the unfinished struggle for black liberation in the U.S. It's also a benefit for Sundial's Freedom Campaign.

CHAINS OF HATE - The Prison Poetry of Sammy Balton - Rhymes of resistance from the dead-end of Scotland's penal system, from a framed prisoner who fought the prison system all the way.

DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR AN ABC NETWORK - Lorenzo Kombou Ervin. Black anarchist & former political prisoner's basic outline of the tactics, purpose and aims of the ABC, useful for anyone serious about building an effective prisoner support movement.

FIGHTING TO WIN - Boris Dumont - The exciting story of a Belgian anarchist (ex) prisoner, his youth, his political radicalization, how he ended up doing 10 years in prison and how he tried to escape.

FREEDOMS OF THE PRESS IN BLACK AND WHITE - The story of a comix-book style of radical journalist and co-Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was framed by the cops and has consequently spent the last 15 years awaiting execution on death-row.

FROM ALCATRAZ TO MARION TO - A Chicanos political prisoner's views and experience of crime and imprisonment.

FLORENCE - Documents the spread of 'Control Units' in the U.S. aimed at isolating and controlling political prisoners and prison activists. As relevant to Britain as to the U.S.

HUMAN RIGHTS OR CONTROL UNITS - Marion Russell Shoote - Discusses the effects of control units and why it's so important to fight against their existence. Written by a U.S. political prisoner currently inside one.

IN MEMORIES OF COMRADE GEORGE - Sekou Kambui - A personal letter to George Jackson (Black Panther prison organiser) from a political prisoner who remains true to the cause despite spending the last 22 years in prison. A benefit for Sekou's support campaign.

IN THE STRONG BOX - Robert Mawdsley - An account of life in Parkhurst prison's isolation.

IN THE STRONG BOX - An account of life in Parkhurst prison's isolation, strongbox cells.

IRON CURTAIN - The case of a Belgian political prisoner, his youth, and his trial, imprisonment, and the fight against the system in America.

PRESENTENCE ALLOCUTION - Bill Dunne - Captured with Larry Giddings and sentenced to 90 years after the attempted liberation of a prisoner, this is what Bill had to say to the court.


PRISON SENTENCE ALLOCATION - Harold Thompson - An illustrated collection of the prison writings & poetry from a U.S. anarchist prisoner and journalist lawyer. Also a benefit for Harold's support campaign.


WHY ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN? - Larry Giddings - An interesting account of the activities and political development of an anti-authoritarian, political prisoner in the U.S.

TAKING LIBERTIES - Boris Dumont - An exciting account of the activities and political development of an anti-authoritarian, political prisoner in the U.S.


UNCONTROLLABLE DOSSIER - Articles

MUSIC

INSIDE FOR US - 90 min. tape compilation tape 31 bands, Class War Prisoners Benefit.

NOTHING TO LOSE BUT OUR CHAINS - 90 min. tape, diverse mixture of music, ABC Benefit.

TAKING LIBERTIES - 77 25 Tracks of political punk with lyric & information booklet. ABC Benefit.


ORDERING INFORMATION

All prices include postage to the U.K. For Europe add 10%. For rest of world add 20%. Please make all cheques/postal orders payable to R. Taylor (in U.K. Sterling only). If sending cash hide it well. We also accept payment in unused U.K. postage stamps. All proceeds go towards funding the activities of the ABC unless otherwise stated. Please send all orders/enquiries to: Huddersfield ABC

POSTCARDS / POSTERS

REMEMBER WE'RE STILL HERE - 2 colour ABC poster - 75p

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL BENEFIT POSTCARD - Colour reproduction of a painting by U.S. Anti-Authoritarian political prisoner Larry Giddings (produced by New York ABC). 35p

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MAY '98

SEE INSIDE FOR MORE GREAT ESCAPES...

50p Free to prisoners
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The last issue of TL (summer '97) was the drugs issue. The input from prisoners and the responses we got to that were great and we think the idea of having a theme running through the issue is a good one. So we will be sticking with that and welcome all suggested themes to be covered in the future. At an ABC Network meeting we drew together the following ideas: Education and Recreation in Prison; Anti Social Crime; Criminals; CCC; Appeals etc. Racism and Women in Prison. As we always welcome articles and opinions from prisoners and hope that the next issues will carry a higher percentage of such pieces. Please note that after a bit of a reap in the ABC Network, the Sheffield address is where you send all contributions for future issues. We would like to take this opportunity to thank those in London that have kept Taking Liberties going over the past years and put so much time and energy in.

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...your new editorial group!

All being well the next issue of TL will be coming in as we are at the beginning of autumn, so we need your articles or ideas by July 1st. Our idea for the next one is racism inside and outside race. We're sure you've often read to write about so hope to hear from you soon.

GANDALF 6

Editors of Green Anarchist were sent down for three years for conspiracy i.e. reporting in a positive light acts of resistance. Whatever we think of GA (and we do have more than a slight problem, with the paper and organisation) we are anti-censorship, and believe in fighting laws that prevent publication and distribution of political material. These are on bail pending appeal. The remaining two are going to trial as we speak. More info contact:

GANDALF Defendents Campaign, PO Box 66 Stevenage, SG1 2TR.

On Sunday 29th of March, the 'Great' British Public were in a state of shock, as Coronation Street's Deidre Rachid was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment for mortgage and credit card fraud. Tears were wept in households around the country and Granada Studios switchboards were swamped as the shocked soap character was led off to her fate. As usual the media hyped up the public hysteria, and 'free Deidre' T-shirts were hastily made by those wishing to get in on the act.

Morning TV took up the case, as did Labour MP Fraser Kemp, vowing to launch a 'free the Weatherfield 1 campaign'. To top it all off our glorious leader and man of the people Tony Blair had to have his say, but doesn't he always? Maybe this was tongue in cheek, but what a cheek they've got considering the number of real Deidre's languishing in the prison system, fitted up for crimes they did not commit.

As Coronation street fans ourselves, we can appreciate good drama when we see it. Moved by the portrayal of a crushed woman going slowly mad, feeling powerless, helpless, voiceless as she experiences the inhumanity of the prison system firsthand. Finally to add insult to injury, she is barbarically subjected to the chemical cosh because she does not quietly accept her fate. The reason we feel moved by this is because we know that hundreds of women and men in the prison system today suffer similar kinds of agony every day, but unlike Deidre; a fictional character, nobody knows their plight apart from those friends and family who also go through this living hell. This is our tribute to all the brave women imprisoned for crimes they did not commit, who constantly fight for their voices to be heard, to proclaim their innocence and gain their freedom. Here are some of the real Deidre's. Let's take real action and support them however we can.

Clare Barstow - Jailed for causing.
In 1992 Clare received a life sentence, convicted of the murder of Cathy O'Neill for whom she was a carer. There was no forensic evidence to link her to the crime. It was pinned on her largely due to circumstantial evidence and her post traumatic stress response to finding Cathy stabbed to death by an intruder.

CLARE BARSTOW, INNOCENT.

Annette Hiews - Serving 13 years in a British prison because she was kind enough to give her niece a late night lift, to the garage. A mother of four young children convicted in 1997 of arson with intent to endanger life following a house fire in which a mother and her young children died. This crime is likely to be drugs related and is nothing to do with Annette who even went to the police station to offer information.

ANNETTE HIEWNS, INNOCENT.

Sue May - Jailed for convenience.
In 1993 Sue was convicted of the murder of her elderly aunt Hilda Marchbank. Despite other suspects being available and unidentified palm prints, fingerprints, foot prints, fibres etc Sue was an easy option for the police who fabricated convictions and pinned the crime on Sue on the basis of one handprint of unknown age. She is now serving a life sentence.

SUE MAY, INNOCENT.

Donna Clarke - Convicted alongside Annette Hiewns and sentenced to 20 years. Her only crime was that she had an affair with the victims boyfriend prior to the fire. The main prosecution witness was a 17 year old girl, who during the trial became increasingly confused about the facts and had clearly been pressurised by the police to change her previous statements.

DONNA CLARKE, INNOCENT.

Denise Sullivan - Jailed for four years in 1997 because she changed her statement in relation to Donna Clarke. Denise was convicted of perverting the course of 'justice', otherwise known as 'trying to stop the police from fitting someone up'.

DENISE SULLIVAN, INNOCENT.

Samar Alami - A political activist, framed by the British and Israeli States and convicted of possession of explosive substances and firearms. He was sentenced to 20 years in 1995. He has always spoken out against attacks in Britain and viewed them as dangerous as well as damaging to the cause of Palestinian liberation. Despite this he was fingered for two car bombs aimed at Jewish targets in 1994.

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All being well the next issue of TL will be coming out in a few months so we look forward to hearing your ideas by July 1st.

Our idea for the next one is racism inside and outside the block. We've a survey out which leads us to write about how to hope to hear from you soon

WELCOME TO TAKING LIBERTIES.

LIST OF ABC GROUPS

Birmingham ABC - PO Box 3241, Salley, Birmingham, B3 3DP.
Brighton ABC - PO Box 2971, Brighton.
Ceylon ABC - PO Box 3241, Salley, Birmingham, B3 3DP.
Huddersfield ABC PO Box 381 Huddersfield HD1 3XQ
Leeds ABC - c/o LAG, 145 - 149 Cardigan Rd, Burley, Leeds. LS6 1LJ
London ABC - c/o 121 Rialton Road, London, SE1 6LR
Newcastle ABC - c/o PO Box 17A, Newcastle, NE19 1TA
Reading ABC - Box A, Risc 35-39 London st, Reading, Berks, RG1
Sheffield ABC - PO Box 446, Sheffield, S1 1NY
Somerset ABC PO Box 478 Taunton Somerset TA1 7VR
Wolves ABC - PO Box339, Wolverhampton, WV10 7BZ.

OTHER CONTACTS

Conviction - PO Box 522, Sheffield, S1 3FF
(Supports Freed Prisoners)
Haven Distribution - BM Haven, WCN 3XX (Books Free to Prisoners)

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DIRTY PROTEST AT WHITEMOOR.

As we go to print we have received information that at least three prisoners in the block are on dirty protest due to a variety of repressive acts from the screws. Legal mail being tampered with, racism etc. One of the men is Tony Bush a veteran from Strangeways. All strength to their actions. We welcome any news on developments there.

WOT! NO PRISONERS LETTERS.

We apologise for the lack of letters and other contributions from prisoners in this issue.

This is a temporary hitch caused by the break in production and reorganisation of the Network. Normal service will be resumed as soon as possible, do not adjust your set.
November saw Birmingham as the focal point of Hunger Strike for Justice (HFSJ), a 48 hour hunger strike to publicize cases of miscarriages of justice and to bring attention to the extreme lengths that prisoners are forced to go to gain basic treatment in prison.

Starting noon on the Saturday ending noon on the Saturday, over 100 protesters were involved in 32 different prisons. A core of 24 supporters on the outside, from 15 campaigns, were also on hunger strike. Numbers of protesters were up to 60, on the first day, whilst picketing the CCRC (criminal cases Review Commission) building.

HFSJ was launched with a press call outside the CCRC, followed by leafleting from a mock cell in the city centre. The night was given over to a well attended public meeting of around 70 people chaired by Birmingham ABC (BABC). The main speakers were Anne Whelan (BRIDGEWATER 4), George Silcott (WINSTON SILCOTT), Valerie Davis (M23 5), Sue Caddick (EDDIE GILFOYLE), Nikki Scott (GARY WARD), and speeches by Action Against Injustice and BABC. Other campaigns spoke of their particular histories and hopes for the future.

On Friday morning a picket of Win- son Green took place in support of imprisoned asylum seekers. Then a march to jail that met up with others in the city centre, where everyone then helped to hand out 100's of leaflets, collect a lot of signatures on petitions, talk to the general public and the media. A list of miscarriage cases was handed in to the CCRC and a couple of the commissioners came out to listen to campaigns.

A march on Saturday was attended by around 50 people, with the notable support of the striking Hillingdon Hospital workers and the Liverpool dockers who came to offer their support. The end of the march signalled the end of the hunger strike, and after a vocal appeal for support for all the prisoners who had taken part, everyone went on for a well deserved curry.

The idea of organising a public hunger strike with the CCRC as a focal point, had been raised. For instead of working on two or three small actions, campaigns and prisoners agreed to combine their efforts to make one really effective protest.

BABC originally had the idea for HFSJ to raise public awareness of as many campaigns as possible and the lengths that prisoners go to prevent their innocence. Unfortunately the news coverage was patchy around the country and varied a lot, hitting across a narrower view of the protest, specifically, that the focus was only on the CCRC. This was not down to any lack of enthusiasm on the behalf of the campaigners, who spent weeks planning and preparing over the media. Many of the campaigns present were prepared to take direct action to complement the main protest. Sadly for many reasons this did not happen. All efforts were put into publicity, leafleting, radio and TV interviews etc.

That the focus of HFSJ was moved more towards the miscarriages of justice cases, in the cost of other issues was clearly a mistake. That some prisoners have put ideas up for the next HFSJ is very encouraging, but future action will now focus on Prisoners Justice Day (for details see later in this issue).

The lesson learnt was the power of solidarity, built on consensus, with mutual respect and trust. Many of those who took part, inside and out, came away feeling very positive. It certainly boosted morale for some of the campaigns, and prisoners this really brought them out of a feeling of isolation. There was a lot of support for the idea of linking up as and when possible.

An informal meeting on the Monday evening discussed the idea of a future action under the banner of 'Convoy for Justice'. A march to, or in London, to lobby Jack Straw, was suggested. BABC is more than willing to attend and help with meetings and prison demos, to give the 'convoy' momentum. We are interested in building links between prisoners and helping campaigns, but not lobbying the state.

Vast differences were exposed in the development of campaigns, highlighting the need to exchange skills experience and resources. In response to requests from campaigns and individual BABC will be hosting a day / weekend of workshops on various aspects of campaigning - producing propaganda, building the media, working with legal representatives and the press etc.

It came as no surprise that the prison authorities stopped information about HFSJ getting in. Because of this details were not received until the day, and in some cases not until the evening. So the idea that prisoners would feel more secure in the knowledge that others were fighting back, especially in the same prison. With this in mind it was suggested that a list of prisoners on the ABC's list, with consent, could be circulated.

That the ABC can be of help to people who are wrongfully convicted is part of our fight, but we are not a 'miscarriage' organisation. We are not in the business of lobbying MPs and begging the Legal System for a 'level playing field'. The ABC can see beyond this and act accordingly.

We are struggling against all that suppresses us as a class, and in particular, the Penal / Legal System. We start from the point that all cops are rotten, all the courts corrupt, that their laws are aimed at the working class. We do not want their prisons! We want our freedom!

There are many issues that were raised during HFSJ and are still coming up. TAKING LIBERTIES will try and expand upon these ideas of how greater organisation of determination and mutual aid, can be developed between prisoners and with the wider community.

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ESCAPE FROM SALSATRAZ

Mexican Prisoner Juan Lopez escaped from jail in January 96 after using acidic Salsa sauce from 6 years of jail house dinners to dissolve the bars of his cell window. Imagine what the stuff would have done to his guts if he had eaten it! So, after his final supper he did a runner and as you can imagine the guards were fucked off cus they never did KETCHUP with him.

OVER THE WALL WE GO....

Another tale from Mexico in February 95 prison guards in Calaya got a bollocking after 6 inmates escaped during keep fit sessions in the exercise yard. The convicts apparently bounced over the wall using the trampoline.

GET YOUR FAX RIGHT

Jean Paul Barrett was serving 33 years for forgery and fraud in Tucson Arizona until his somewhat pre-mature release in December 91. Someone faxed a faked release order to the prison and even though the document lacked coding or a phone number the thick border bought it and let him out. It was believed that someone had got hold of a real court document tipped out some of the information, copied it then typed in the false release order.
Zoora Shah is a working class Pakistani woman who's had a crap life that's TB. She found a new place badly she was hospitalised. Zoora was eventually arrested and sent down for her new-born baby and two kids, and so poor that they lived off Weetabix and water from a tered down milk. An Asian neighbour took pity on her and introduced her to Mohammed Azam to help her find somewhere decent to live. Azam was a married rich scumbag and violent bastard. This is her story.

Zoora poisoned him with arsenic to reduce his sex drive and one day gave him a lethal dose. Whether accidental or not, it was good riddance to this scumbag and violent bastard. This is her story.

Zoora Shah is an illiterate woman from Mirpur in Pakistani Kashmir, who was brought to Bradford in the early '70s as a teenage bride to avoid having girls and lose her family's dowry. She was beaten by her husband and treated like a servant by his family. When he was arrested for black marketeering, she was thrown out of this house returned to Azam and was pregnant with their two kids had got raped in the cemetery as punishment and beaten so badly she was hospitalised. He sent Zoora to Bradford for an arranged marriage.

Zoora pleaded not guilty in court, and declined to give evidence, ashamed of her past. Not only was Azam a rapist and murderer, he was also a smack dealer. His family and community were proud of him. Zoora's Appeal was heard in the Royal Courts of Justice at the end of March this year and the jury's still out - probably can't decide whether she's suffered enough. We'll let you know when they've made their minds up.

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フリー・ゾオラ・シャー事件

ドナークמפיイニングを設立する

自由・ゾオラ・シャーキャンペーン、59ノーウッド通り、サザール、ミッドレンズ、UB2 4DW、どちらも要求が必要です。または運送、証拠、暴力、家族の権利、安全保障、侵害、等。

We are looking for nominees to establish a firm set up with independent trustees. We are also looking for interested people to run this organisation, with donations from prisoners, families and interested bodies. At the moment they are in discussion with the legal aspect to be covered, i.e. registering the firm.

For more Information please contact T. Birley at HMP Full Sutton on R. Gilbert HMP Woolwich, USC B Wing, Tintinhull st, Milton Keynes. MK4 4DA. All ideas are welcome so come together and let's commence the fight back.

 Scotlrand qualify for World up. Ladbrokes refuse to take any more bets on Queen Mum being the next royal to die. Princess Margaret close in 2nd place. European Court of Human Rights have ruled that governments are not allowed to stick their fingers in their ears & hum loudly at the jurisdiction. Judges want the right to set tariffs without interference from Home Office.

Nine asylum seekers from West Africa held at Campilfield house detention centre, Oxford are being charged for their part in protests against their detention. All have been charged with Riot and Violent Disorder under the Public Order Act. This is the first time detainees involved with protests inside Campilfield have been charged. The cases of all nine will be heard on 1st June at Oxford Crown Court.

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Zoora Shah is a working-class Pakistani woman who’s had a crap life that’s been fucked up by men who, in her own words, treated her like a matress. One man in particular completely controlled her, used her as a mule for his smack dealing, regularly raped and kicked the shit out of her, hospitalised her, prostituted her to his Muslim friends and then leched after her two young daughters.

Zoora poisoned him with arsenic to reduce his sex drive and one day gave him a lethal dose.

Whether accidental or not, it was good riddance to filthy scum and he got his just deserts. Zoora was an illiterate woman from Mirpuri in Pakistani Kashmir, who was brought to Bradford in the early ‘70’s as a teenage bride. Her family found out and sent her back to Pakistan to return with a husband, but she lived of Weetabix and watered down milk. An Asian neighbour took pity on her and introduced her to Mohammed Azam to help her find somewhere decent to live. Azam was a married rich scumbusinessman and proprietor of cars with a bloke in the community knocking on his door demanding sex.

When Azam was released he threatened to evict her - rent was due and one day gave her out in 1980 when she was 20 years old. Zoora pleaded not guilty in the Leeds Crown Court, and declined to give evidence, ashamed of her sexual history and scared to be branded a whores by the community, raped in the cemetery as return to Azam and was found "friends" all over the country. He sent Zoora to Scotland to work at his relatives for money to pay for abortions.

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PROP (the Preservation Of Prisoners Rights) a prisoners union was formed in response to the shit awful conditions in British prisons and as a means of breaking the Home Office monopoly on what information came out of prisons. At the time there had been about fifty collective prisoner protests between January and May of 72. The Home Office only acknowledged a third of them, officially the book 'The prison crisis'. The media interest concerned when PROP claimed to be in contact with an escalating prison crisis. This was confirmed when a note from a prisoner was smuggled out of Brixton the scene of many protests.

The start of June saw a further 20 protests. The frustration was too much for the screws and they started targeting 'leaders' who got a kicking and then ghosted but in some instances this had the effect of simply spreading the troubles to other prisoners. The screws wanted to create riots, provoke the inmates who up till now had been peaceful in their protests.

PROP wanted to organise two protests outside one in the north and one in the south. But having suffered embarrassingly low turn outs at Arlyam and Brixton decided to focus on Gartree in the midlands. At 8am the PROP press officer arrived to be met by a barrage of press a thicket of cops but no prisoners. The governor came out to say there was no support for the strike and as he spoke a sheet was unrolled from a cell block reading 'Gartree 24hr strike is on.'

During the day the media contacted PROP with names of prisons and estimates of prisoners taking part asking PROP to confirm the figures. Along with calls from visitors etc. this was how PROP got its initial picture of the success. The Home Office screws rejected the policy and wanted stricter punishment for every infringement of regulations. Leading up to this Albany had released details of a Mafia-type organisation made up of long term prisoners - it was clearly implied that these men had taken over the prison and a mass escape was being planned. The screws then said that prisoners were locked down and a search started. The prisoners became hostile and a riot broke out, bedding was flung through the window and fires lit. The fire brigade took two hours to damp the flames.

There's no doubt about it PROP showed how the media could be a potent weapon. PROP claimed to be in contact with every prisoner and the media image hardened barricaded snouts being smashed back and forth whereas the reality was that the media spread the word. On July 21 every national paper, TV and radio carried the date of the strike. By August 4th prisoners in Durham had heard so much about the strike that they thought it had Home Office backing! The whole prison took part.

PROP threatened to call a walk out at open prisons which could force the Home Office to cram everyone into closed prisons which would only heighten the problems and lead to more protests. This was PROP's desire. "I'm a prisoner found the confidence to flex their new found source of strength." The truth was that the screws dragged the search out over three days and when they ripped up photos belonging to one prisoner he smashed up his cell and six others followed suit. A towel and a mattress were set fire to and put out immediately. Hardly a riot!

PROP called August 4th as the date of a national strike in all penal establishments. It was put out to coin a walk out at open prisons which could force the Home Office to cram everyone into closed prisons which would only heighten the problems and lead to more protests. This was PROP's desire. During the days at Brixton prison screws had taken over the running of the prison, if this was to happen across the country some believed that many of PROP's demands would have to be met, but it didn't go that way.

Towards the end of August the POA began a 'Get Tough' policy with few crucial people, PROP was plunged into a self inflicted state of paralysis - no voice could be raised in protest at the savagery of the beatings and discipline being handed out.

The POA's interests lay.

At this crucial time PROP started to deteriorate. They had not been able to actuate any number of people on the outside and so the organisation relied on the efforts of a few crucial people. PROP was plunged into a self inflicted state of paralysis - no voice could be raised in protest at the savagery of the beatings and discipline being handed out.

The beatings were particularly severe at Gartree that had seen a three day sit down followed by work strikes. Things exploded when one November evening a group of about 14 prisoners in the full glare of floodlights and view of screws took clipping office furniture for their own. They were immediately surrounded by so many screws you couldn't count them with dogs and riot sticks. From the dining hall they led the rest of the prison watched the obviously and inevitably failure of this attempt. The

The history of penel reform is filled with futile efforts by liberal middle class who often wouldn't involve or consult with prisoners as to what they wanted. So whilst accepting a role that the liberals can play, full and free membership of PROP was only open to any person who or had been banged up in any one of the various detention centres that HMHG have so gracefully provided for us. For those that hadn't been 'inside' there was associate membership. They would pay subs for themselves and the unpaid subs of a full member with the commitment to estiblish and maintain contact with their full member and help them out within reason. Only full members would be able to take up positions and vote at any meetings.

They issued a Statement of intent which read: to protect, promote, and to extend the rights of prisoners and ex-prisoners to assist in their rehabilitation and reintegration into society, so as to bring about a reduction in crime.

A press conference launched PROP and most nationals carried stories. The Times featured a cover of 'A Union For Old Lags'. But the word was out and most prisoners found out about PROP through the media. The screws didn't want an exposure of the growing unrest was largely ignored by the press. They had an initial list of 26 demands including trade union membership and to negotiate pay and conditions, legal advisers in confidence, access to the press, parole, education and training courses, independent prison inspectors, adn the exercise time and facilities, independent medical advisers, as many letters as you want and more.

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"PROP announced a further escalation in the protest and announced an all day national jail strike on an unspecified date. This was put out to coincide with the POA conference and totally upset the screws. All the papers carried the looming strike and carried PROP's demand for negotiation to start over the 'restoration of basic human rights for prisoners'. Meanwhile Brixton prisoners had been granted concessions which enhanced the use of collective action to get change. PROP's demands for an escalation were therefore met.

Some early problems had been identified being the lack of outside support for the protests and the communication between those on the outside and those inside. Virtually all prisoners were suppressing the PROP material and not letting the cons know. Despite these back PROP continued to gain

None of the less tensions were high and more sit downs and roof top protests flared up, the publicity went world wide. At Dartmoor screws stopped work when they were told that the Home Office press officer would only punish peaceful protesters, 250 men were sitting a stage down. The screws only returned to work when the governor told them that the Home Office would not release them. The Home Office secretary was called back off holiday and immediately met with the POA again refusing to meet PROP. He gave the screws the assurance that no one was being taken out for strikes and some 1700 men were disciplined, some losing over two years remission. Hundreds of men were kept under Rule 43 'removal from association' and Rule 48 which concerns disciplinary charges for anything up to a month. The screws picked out the leaders to get their usual cowardly way handed out some savage beatings. This all guaranteed further conflict which in turn would justify more control and repression that was where...
PROP (the Preservation Of Prisoners' Rights) a prisoners union was formed in response to the shit awful conditions in British prisons and as a means of breaking the Home Office monopoly on what information came out of prisons. At the time there had been about fifty collective prison protests between January and May of 72. The Home Office only acknowledged a third of them, officially the prison riots. Unofficially there were many more. The media interest continued when PROP claimed to be in contact with an escalating prison crisis. This was confirmed when a note from a prisoner was smuggled out of Brixton the scene of many protests.

Over the first two weeks of PROP's existence the prison protests grew and by the end of the month over 2500 prisoners had taken part in mainly sit down protests. At Armley all 996 men took part in a 24hr sit down. PROP rallied support outside the walls and managed to get only 27 people there. For an organisation claiming 500 members it was poor but the media covered it and PROP's image as a big organisation remained intact.

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There's no doubt about it PROP showed how the media could be a potent weapon. PROP claimed to be in contact with every prison and the media image had been hard hit by scurrilous stories being smeared back and forth so that the media spread the word. On July 21 every national paper, TV and radio carried the date of the strike. By August 4th prisoners in Durham had heard so much about the strike that they thought it had Home Office backing! The whole prison took part.

PROP wanted to organise two protests outside one in the north and one in the south. But having suffered embarrassingly low turns at Armley and Brixton decided to focus on Gartree in the midlands. At 8am the PROP press officer arrived to be met by a barrage of press a thicket of cops but no other protesters. The governor came out to say that prisoners were locked down and a mass evacuation was being planned. The firemen had taken over the prison and a mass escape was being planned. The screws wanted to create riots, provoke the inmates up till now had been peaceful in their protests.

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screws closed in, all the prisoners in the dining hall were shouting 'Get Back' Leave Them'. The screws were very furocious using the dogs and hammers taken from the engineering block, the dining hall exploded within a few minutes, all the prisoners were, for a couple of hours, in the darkness. One of them said to me, "Do prisoners want or need to consider the development of any such movement that can provide voice for the opposition to the tide of tightening regulations?"

In mid March complaints were made by 8 prisoners and the Board of Visitors to the prison against the staff beating prisoners up. Solicitors acting on the prisoners behalf asked that the alleged perpetrators were suspended pending enquiries.

As news broke, staff at the prison staged a one day strike demanding answers and about a lack of support from local management. Amid all this, and in no way connected, was the appointment of the new governor of Wormwood Scrubs, who replaced the acting governor Michael Gordon.

Of course the Deputy Director of Prison Service, Tony Pearson, claimed there was 'no evidence' of any beatings.

So despite screws having access to important documentation and witnesses, the prisoners making complaints, nothing was done. The tory was that no named prisoners, were transferred, due to 'security reasons'. The screws, very much aware of the screws retaliation any chance of this summer at least providing a base upon which to build, were lost.

All struggles are an ongoing thing and there is no disputing that the strikes of '72 have paved their part in making some gains that were seen in the '70's and later. But like other gains by workers alike, they are not to be taken for granted and through out our class we are suffering the effects of those gains being taken back off us. In prison access to the media is under threat. Resources for courses are being cut, what little books we can get are constantly being restricted and legal aid is harder and harder to get. By and large the class-back is going unchallenged. Do prisoners want or need to consider the development of any such movement that can provide voice for the opposition to the tide of tightening regulations. One thing is clear - the history of PROP that the desire for any such organisation has got to be from the prisoners.

Lartin Peter Atherton. Well no biased investigating there then! An interim report released that day disclosed that in five of the cases there were, to quote Tony 'I've seen no evidence', Pearson, 'serious questions' which needed answers. Solicitors acting that...now had 20 current and former prisoners who would be talking to the police. The allegations went back as far as 1970 and included racism, beatings and intimidation. One inmate said that he had been assaulted almost every day for a month.

Scoundrels Familiar

The problems, made by David, former wardens, at Wormwood Scrubs, gave an insight into how prisoners are really run. On the outside it's all men in suits, management speak, press access, budget meetings with the minister and flip charts. Whilst inside, prisoners are continuing to run as ever with the same old shit. 'I could never work with an 18 year old who was in charge. It's a joke and remember being excluded from some areas of the prison. Officers barred the door and would not let me in'.

What Now?

So it's business as usual, prisoners complain of mistreatment, screws deny it, the prison service denies it. The POA blew the whistle. They went on about being short staffed and deals are done. The only ones that suffer are the prisoners, ghettoed, beaten up and abused.

So take it no more, prisoners and supporters on the outside should not let the Scrubs fiasco disappear. What we have to do is get the story out and contact your solicitor, write to TL, organise in your prison and organise on the outside - NOW.

Which prison do you want to go to when you grow up little boy?

Screw you!
screws closed in, all the prisoners in the dining hall were shouting 'Ciel Back' Leave Them!'. The screws were using the dogs and hammers taken from the engineering block, the dining hall exploded with noise and ordered 'back to their cells'. Face was raced. From the barricaded C Wing, unable to help, the men could see some of the escapes making their way successfully for up to a couple of hours.

As the troubles at Gatree faded, the publicity of that incident against the general background of a sumn of discontent raised demands from various reform elements including Law Lords who threatened to stop sending people down unless steps were taken to stop the 'moral, mental and physical deprivation in prisons'. A Human Rights Commission recommended a range of reforms - access to prison rules, end of censorship of mail, extended welfare service, merger the prison health service with the NHS and reduce the levels of sentences to cure overcrowding. It also asked for an inquiry into the Board Of Visitors and called for legal representa- tion and media access at internal disciplinary hearings with the right to appeal.

Once more PROP was constrained by their absence from outside Gatree and when prisoners in B Wing took over the phone line they didn't ring PROP but phoned the press directly. PROP through out it's time had claimed a support it that never had. There is no denying the wider support for it's aims but they always played up the actual hands on support they had. PROP may well have had 500 members but they did fuck all. PROP was structured with a small Executive and largely inactive membership. This didn't change as the situation did, there wasn't any effective decentralising of responsibilities or communication. And so through out this period of high profile in the mass action PROP failed to get more than a couple of dozen protesters outside a prison even on August 4th!

Consolidating inside support was even more difficult and PROP failed yet again. Of course the screws were censoring any incoming mail and PROP knew it. They failed to make the visits to pass word in (even at Gatree where they had wide spread support) and left prisoners feeling that they were being ignored by the very organisation that was claiming to represent them. Prisoners were happy with PROP's demands and at first gen- uinely welcomed their part in the struggle. This by the autumn their main contact in Gatree wrote telling them of the disillusionment and concern for the future of PROP as a星星 mining force.

Whilst PROP had the idea for a星星 time of the back-up the PROP was totally unable to defend it's 'members'. On the contrary due to the level of isolation between PROP and the inmates the disillusionment felt by many only added to the attacks by the authori- ties. By the autumn of '72 PROP had become a dirty word amongst prisoners. Their day was over and because of the wild claims of the lead- ership and their mas- querading whilst prison- ers were left with no back-up of the screws retaliation any chance of this summer at least provid- ing a base upon which to build were lost.

All struggles are an on- going thing and there is no disputing that the stripes of '72 have played their part in mak- ing some gains that were seen in the '70's and later. But like other garments workers' strike, they are not to be taken for granted and though- out our class we are suf- fering the effects of those gains being taken back of us. In prison access to the media is under threat. Resources for courses are being cut, writer's workshops can recede and constantly being restricted and legal aid is harder and harder to come by. By and large the claw-back is going unchallenged. Do some prisoners want or need to consider the development of any such movement that can provide voice for the opposition to the tide of tightening regula- tions. One thing is clear from the history of PROP that the desire for any such organisation has got to be from the prisoners.

In mid March complaints were made by 8 prisoners and the Board Of Visi- tors' office of a down beating prisoners up. Solicitors acting on the prisoners behalf asked that the alleged perpetrators were suspended pending inquiries.

As news broke, staff at the prison staged a 'sit down' meeting and about a lack of support from local management. Amid all this, and in no way connected, was the appointment of the new governor. High noon, who replaced the acting governor Michael Gordon!

Of course the Deputy Director of Prison Service, Tony Pearson, claimed there was 'no evidence' of any beatings.

So despite screws having access to important documentations and witnesses the victims making complaints, nothing was done. The only two named prisoners were transferred ( due to Bobbins & patch him up after his beating?) and to another prison. Pearson added "if we get the names of the other prisoners we can sort that out, make sure they deal with quickly". Well we all know what that means, beaten up or screws or transferred to another prison. Some screws can beat you up. Unsurprisingly, four more prisoners decided to drop their complaints for fear of further retribution. A surprised Mark Healy (POA) said, "Many, if not all of these allegations have been investigated in the past, and my members were exor- cized. We are scared and tired of all being tarnished with having committed some sort of crime".

Mark Healy makes several interesting points, namely that prisoners should: 1) Get the shit kicked out of them, 2) do as they are told, 3) do not complain, 4) face further beatings if they do complain, 5) if they persist prison officers will say its not true, rubbishes all the claims of abuse, and then go on to say it is unfair to put prison officers in fear. The fact that someone from the media asking you questions about your guilt makes you reflex!

However, by the 31st of March the prison service had eat it's words, and confirmed a press statement that 8 screws including a senior manager had in fact been opened following the allegations which had now become the subject of criminal investigations by the Met, as- sisted by the former governor of Long

Lartin Peter Atherton. Well no biased investigation there then! An interim re- port released that day disclosed that in five of the cases there were, to quote Tony 'I've seen no evidence' Pearson, "serious questions" which needed an- swers. Solicitors acting on the they...now had 20 current and former prisoners who were to be talking to the police. The alle- gations went back as far as 1966 and included racism, beatings and sexualisation. One inmate said that he had been assaulted almost every day for a month.

"...scouts familiar"

The complaints made by David, former senior governor at Wormwood Scrubs, gave an insight into how prisons are really run. On the outside it's all men in suits, management speak, posh accents, budget meetings with the minister and flip charts. Whilst inside, prisoners are continuing to run as ever with the same old shit. 'I could never work on the internal barber shop and remember being excluded from some areas of the prison. Officers barred the door and would not let me in" what a society we live in. I'm not going to ask how inmates have little chance of redress. If the screws are running prisons, abusing their supposed superiors, imagine what is happening to the prisoners!

Meanwhile back at the Scrubs

April fools day saw nearly 100 screws at Wormwood Scrubs on 'sick leave'. The mass absenteeism was a POA protest against the suspension decisions. The POA and their members all gone to their GPs because of the enormous pressure caused by the massive pressure and poor management. The screws were really sick

What Now?

So it's business as usual, prisoners com- plaints of mistreatment, screws deny it, the prison service denies it. The POA blasts on about being, staff and deals are done. The only ones that suffer are the prisoners, ghosted, beaten up and abused.

Loco take it no more, prisoners and supporters on the outside should not let the Scrubs faceless disappear. What you see is what you get. Contact your solicitor, write to TL, organise in your prison and organise on the outside - NOW!
Since that first protest in 1976 prisoners work-strikes, hunger strikes and other actions have marked August 10th and have spread within the prison community to become an international day of action. As important as the protests are the links which have been created between prisoners and communities. If we are to contribute to the struggles taking place inside and prisoners are to contribute to struggles outside we have to do all we can to further these links.

In Toronto supporters produced radio programmes, with contributions from those inside. They held press conferences and rallies. Demonstrations showed a community angry about state murder of people in prison. Other forms of support have also marked the day. The "Red October" Prisoners' gig in Toronto in '94 attracted over 500 people for a good night up, and raised funds into the bargain.

The ABC News in this country has organised demonstrations at many prisons and cop shops, to show our solidarity, and to remember thousands of working class prisoners who have died. But more than this we need to publicise how and when prisoners kick out at the system. So often we don't get to hear what really happens in nick. The home office and prison authorities will use all kinds of tactics to deny collective resistance, to pit communities against prisoners, to isolate them from each other.

The media adds its own spin with endless items speculating about how soft prison life is, and how prisoners are living in the lap of luxury, while everyone else is working themselves into the ground. Fuelled by an appetite for crime, the media feeds us its cranks fantasies about criminals. It says it is helping to protect us against them. So often we believe that people in prison are nothing more than animals. What we're talking about are most 'crimes' being directed against property, and people, sent down for petty offences as unpunished fines. We're talking about our class whether a father, daughter, neighbour or friend. Most of us know someone who's been murdered or driven to their deaths at the hands of the prison system. This is not to say that the rest of the year we carry on as if nothing, and don't give a shit what happens to working class people inside, but it is a day which marks the death of one particular prisoner at Millhaven Penitentiary, Canada in 1974 that of Eddie Nalon. After a suicide attempt Eddie was left to die when the panic button in his cell 'failed' to work. Prisoners at Millhaven responded with a hunger strike, and their own memorial service.

August 10th is set aside every year to commemorate those who have been murdered or driven to their deaths at the hands of the prison system. This is not to say that the rest of the year we carry on as if nothing, and don't give a shit what happens to working class people inside, but it is a day which marks the death of one particular prisoner at Millhaven Penitentiary, Canada in 1974 that of Eddie Nalon. August 10th is set aside every year to commemorate those who have been murdered or driven to their deaths at the hands of the prison system. This is not to say that the rest of the year we carry on as if nothing, and don't give a shit what happens to working class people inside, but it is a day which marks the death of one particular prisoner at Millhaven Penitentiary, Canada in 1974 that of Eddie Nalon.
Prisoner Justice Day

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Seven screws from Ithikubushen prison, were suspended in march after an inquest jury returned a unanimous verdict of unlawful killing of ALTON MANNING in 1995. One witness described how he was put in a four cell, with one screw on each leg and each arm. He died of asphyxiation as he was held down. This prompted Richard Till's (Director, General of Prison Service) response to write to the Governor from the outside to write to the Governor from the inside that the authorities can 'give in and take away'. There was a mass protest (Durham football mutiny), 1967 when prisoners were refused permission to retrieve their ball from a security area!

The 80's saw a succession of full scale disturbances at many major prisons, from rooftop protests, hunger strikes to full on riots. Just 5 prisoners landed Wormwood Scrubs with a total of £2000 of damage in 1979, it was described as the 'worst nights of violence the English prison system has ever known'. With riots in 22 prisons, and 45 escapes the prison system were starting to get a bit hot under the collar.

Prison riots in the early 90's echoed urban riots in Cardiff. Oxford, Tyneside and Handsworth, downtown areas from which many prisoners tend to be drawn. It's partly for this reason that prisoners should not be isolated in their struggle on the assumption that they are only concerned with life inside and can therefore only make contributions in prison.

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hostage and 3 of the anarchists who tried to defend themselves by shooting back. Two policemen were killed, but the anarchists were arrested and badly beaten leaving one of them (Giorgio Eduardo) disabled. Since then they've been in the most repressive Spanish prisons where they have to suffer cell raids, total isolation and other torture and beatings by guards. One of the four (Michele) recently transferred to a normal category prison. Their trial started on 20 April 98.

Although we welcome changes in the prison system which makes life easier for our comrades inside we know the prison system cannot be reformed out of existence. We don't believe we have the solutions, but we are working class people who have faith in our class to find those solutions. We have many ideas on how this can be done, and are willing to work, discuss and swap ideas with others.

We work with prisoners, their families and supporters on the outside, to educate ourseves and other working class people as to the true reality of prisons. This exchange of information is a crucial part of our work.

We support such prisoners as: Revolutionary, anarchist, political prisoners, and other working class people jailed for resistance to capitalism, e.g. strikers; People framed by the cops for things they haven't done; Prisoners fighting back against the prison system from inside; and the preservation of the rich from the ruling class. Prisons can only be abolished as part of a social and economic revolution that destroys capitalism.

The Anarchist Black Cross is a revolutionary organisation that works towards the abolition of the prison system as part of the class struggle. We recognise that prisons are an integral part of the class system and vital to the maintenance of a system which destroys life and the preservation of the rich from the ruling class. Prisons can only be abolished as part of a social and economic revolution that destroys capitalism.

The courts are now trying to jail him for up to a further 16 years. The Turkish state, which is

The ABC is a national network of local and autonomous groups, meaning that each group is free to carry out work demanded by their local situation. However, each local group is, as a part of the collective, responsible and accountable to the other member groups.

Tilt - prison's too good for him
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We support such prisoners as Revolutionary, anarchist, political prisoners and other working class people jailed for resistance to capitalism, e.g. strikers; People framed by the cops for things they haven't done; Prisoners fighting back against the prison system from inside, e.g. resistance to capital punishment/burial and the prison system. People jailed as a result of having the law to get by; People resisting injustice in their lives, e.g. violent and abusive partners/rapists, people jailed for resisting racist or police attacks.

We will not support any one involved in anti-social and oppressive crime, i.e. rape, child abuse, racist attacks, on that basis alone. Crime that is an integral part of the ruling class, e.g. mugging/burglary of working class people, in short robbing your own. However we recognise the destructive effect that life under capitalism has on our behaviour, and will consider each case individually.

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What you can do to support prisoners.

People inside need letters of support, visits, money and practical help. If you aren't sure how to go about it, ask for our leaflets on writing to prisoners and practical support (see back page).

Distribute information and news. The ABC has leaflets on prisoners cases/prison issues. You can also sell copies of Taking Liberties/ tell your mates in side about us.

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Send us news about prisoners or prisons; if you are inside, drop us a line and let us know about conditions, resistance at your establishment.

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NO COMMENT - Updated defendants guide to arrest

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Tilt - prison's too good for him

...Do the right thing!...
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