

International Socialists - the Green Man  
IS bookstall at South Birmingham Poly-  
technic; recently has been involved in the  
Self Help campaign as well as the World

No. 141

# BLACK FLAG



30p

THE ANARCHIST

FORTNIGHTLY

7-10-'85

## WHY NOT RIOT ? Part 2





Community versus police in Brixton September 28th 1985

Photo: Johnny IGIZ

When Mrs Cherry Groce was shot and nearly killed at home in an early morning raid by armed police thugs in Normandy Road, Brixton, everyone's minds turned to revenge and the possibility of more anti-police riots in Brixton. Ever since the riots in 1981, hatred for the racist police murderers has been justifiably high. The near-murder of Cherry Groce by police Inspector Douglas Lovelock finally demonstrated once and for all that the police in Brixton, despite their so-called 'community policing' image, are nothing but a gang of trained assassins.

Things started to move fast after the shooting, on Saturday September 28th. By 1pm, a large group of angry people had gathered outside the injured woman's home. At about 5pm at least 200 people marched up Brixton Road to the Police Station, in the centre of Brixton. The crowd jeered and taunted the few policemen arrogant enough to still be on the streets. The jeering and abuse directed against the police soon turned into bottles, bricks and petrol bombs directed at the police station!

As the crowd cheered every missile, every policewoman and policeman left

the streets and entered the station. When some of them came out onto the roof, they had to make a hasty retreat under a hail of rocks and petrol bombs.

After about an hour's bombardment of the station, police in full riot gear (helmets, shields and truncheons) finally emerged and started lashing out indiscriminately at the crowd. The crowd scattered and the riot began.

Looting was widespread, firstly around the police station then in all other areas of Brixton. Brixton High Street was heavily looted and many shop windows were smashed, including Barclays Bank. Dunnes menswear shop was completely gutted by fire, as was a furniture shop and a sub-post office in Tulse Hill. The police failed miserably to control the situation. The police helicopter, usually ever-present, was absent. The police dispersed crowds but couldn't stop them re-grouping.

For a while, people had control of the streets around the centre of Brixton, and were re-directing traffic. Barricades were made from cars that had been overturned and set on fire. At least one coach was used to block the police entry. Any police vehicles on the road were stoned.

The West Yorkshire Assistant Chief Constable John Domaille who has been

appointed to 'investigate' the case had to retreat, seeing police vehicles under fire. He returned later and was told by friends and relatives of Cherry Groce that he should have tried 'investigating' early on Saturday morning.

Police on the streets were stoned and petrol-bombed. Some people were hurling bricks at police from the roofs of housing estates. Fires in several places were left to burn. In Railton Rd, a few barricades were quickly built only to be cleared quickly away by riot cops in vans and on foot. Police attempts to set up road blocks were not totally successful, and ordinary cars would drive into the area by accident, adding to the confusion.

On the negative side, muggings and two rapes were reported. On the positive side, black, white and Asian youths, and older people, were all getting involved. Women were active throughout. Anyone with a camera was suspected of being a cop or a reporter, and was chased off. 121 Bookshop was untouched.

By 11pm most people had gathered outside Brixton Town Hall, while police were guarding most shops along the High Street. People jeered at each police vehicle as it sped by, until it was around 11.30pm then the stoning of vans began again. In response, the police went crazy,

attacking the crowd, wielding truncheons wildly and beating anyone who was on the street. Running battles continued until the early hours of Sunday morning.

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### GREEK HUNGER STRIKER CLOSE TO DEATH

As we reported in *Black Flag* No. 139, Greek anarchist Victor Armanious went on hunger strike in prison on August 20th in protest against his arrest.

On June 1st a bank was fire-bombed in Athens and molotov-cocktails were thrown at two policemen in a car nearby. Victor was arrested a few days later and police claim he was involved but have little evidence to back this up. He is demanding to be released on bail but the Greek Council of Judges seem to be deliberately avoiding making a decision over Victor's demands, putting his life further at risk.

As we go to press Victor Armanious is already close to death. By the time you read this he may well be dead.

Letters of protest and phone-calls to the Greek embassy in London were made in solidarity but the embassy refused to comment on the case and left the letters unanswered.

In Thessalonika, a bank was fire-bombed in solidarity with Victor Armanious and there have been demonstrations on his behalf in Athens.

# BEHIND THE NEWS

## PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS CASE STUDY 3;— MILAN

The pseudo-gang phenomenon is by no means recent or confined to large scale military operations. But perhaps the two most famous cases involving terrorists groups undertaking actions ascribed to revolutionary groups were the December 1969 Milan (and Rome) bombing — the Milan massacre claimed 16 lives and many injured — which resulted in the round up of over 150 Anarchists, culminating in the 'accidental death of' (ie. murder) the Anarchist railway worker and Black Cross Secretary, Guiseppe Pinelli. Pinelli, who during the Second World War had helped in the Resistance and who was more recently active in prisoner support work, was murdered by his police interrogators who then threw his lifeless body out of an 8th storey window.

The bombing had in fact, been carried out by members of the delle Chiaie fascist network. Delle Chiaie and his confederates (specifically a Mario Merlino) were also responsible for bombings in Rome. Merlino had infiltrated the Anarchist movement and 'founded' the 22 March anarchist group along with the genuine Anarchist Pietro Valpreda. When Merlino was arrested he implicated five other members of the group. Two and a half years later the Anarchist's trial was aborted after overwhelming evidence was found against the fascists. . . three associates of delle Chiaie and seven others were arrested and charged with bombing the Milan Agricultural Bank at a peak afternoon period and murdering 16 people. They were also charged with the Rome bombing as well as acts of indiscriminate violence carried out during 1969; some of those arrested later fled the country while out on bail.

More recently bombings aimed at US Army service personnel stationed in West Germany were at first ascribed to the left guerrilla network, the Revolutionary Cells (RZ) but again were later discovered to have been perpetrated by a fascist group who had undertaken the actions partly in an attempt to discredit the RZ,

## POLICE AIDED BY RACISTS

**A White racist vigilante group is operating in the Handsworth area — the scene of rioting only three weeks back. The group announced itself only days before the rioting began.**

Our enquiries have revealed that there is a strong possibility that this group was either set up or is infiltrated by known fascists and that furthermore it was directly responsible for the firebombing of the Villa Rd 'bingo hall' (a drugs dealing and blues centre), one of the alleged 'flash-points' in the lead up to the riots. The rioting itself, needless to say, was an explosion of anger against the worsening of local conditions, as much as a reaction against increased policing.

According to the *New Statesman*, the area involving the Villa Rd pub and the disused bingo-hall opposite: '*has recently been in the news because of complaints from a 'residents association' (sic) about drug dealing outside the pub. A public meeting ended in uproar last Thursday when a Black leader was threatened by White residents.*' The Thursday meeting mentioned took place only four days before the riots; the complaints also related to the bingo hall and a lot of aggravation about the hall and the activities going on inside had been drummed up in the local press in the weeks preceding the riot. After the riots the national press made no mention of the controversies surrounding the bingo hall, although there was a brief reference made in the *Guardian* which stated that: '*according to the Defence Committee for those arrested in the riot, a white vigilante group promised to burn down a bingo hall at Villa Rd in Handsworth if the council allowed it to become a 'drugs den*.'

In due course *Black Flag* made its own direct contact with the mainly Afro-Caribbean dominated Birmingham Community Relations Council. Indeed

up around 6 months back in certain parts of London, notably Tower Hamlets, Clapham and Stockwell Park, the latter district being on the fringe of Brixton's 'front line' another known centre for dealing and blues clubs. These 'tenants associations' (some going under the name of an organisation calling itself 'Fairplay') were later connected to the National Front. Their tactics were to use the local press to stir up racial hatred against Blacks and also to work with the police, via the 'community policing' aka 'neighbourhood watch' schemes, to stimulate pressure for increased policing. The Stockwell Park group for example, used a Labour-controlled Police Liaison Committee meeting to voice racial abuse and to call for the re-introduction of the Special Patrol Group into the area. On this same estate recently two White youths terrorised an Asian family of squatters, robbing and beating them, finally setting fire to the flat with the family inside. Luckily the squatters survived and because of the fire the cops finally turned up. . .

More recently the NF have openly proclaimed a campaign of exploiting anti-drug sentiments by threatening to use 'direct action' against pushers, etc. In practice this campaign has amounted to little more than a crude exercise in racist propaganda; the only 'direct action' in recent weeks targetted against the ethnic communities has mainly involved the ever-increasing violence and murder (often by arson) of Asians in East London and elsewhere such as Luton. In Handsworth it can be safely assumed that the fascist activists and 'sleepers' are involved in some of the tenants groups and in groups working with the police. We do know, for example, that exactly six days after the Handsworth riot, a secret meeting of the *British National Party* took place in Handsworth itself to formulate future tactics.

elevate this aspect more than any other in its post-riot analyses, to the extent that existing tensions between the Afro-Caribbean and Asian communities were further strained and the Asian community representatives have subsequently left the CRC to form another ginger grouping.

The other side of the story was hardly touched upon by Fleet Street. The fact for example, that there were nearly as many young Asians rioting as there were Afro-Caribbeans. The fact that the soft-drugs scene includes Asians too, not just Afro-Caribbeans. The fact that it was an Asian, not an Afro-Caribbean, who was stopped in his car and assaulted by cops and who was then rescued by Rastafarians — this incident being one of the two alleged flashpoints in the lead-up to the riot. Also, incidents, such as that of the Asian shopkeeper whose off-license was protected during the riot by a group of local Afro-Caribbeans when outsiders threatened to burn down the premises where his four children were hiding in fear. All these aspects were ignored.

According to local sources many of the looters were indeed from outside the area; some drove up in cars and were by no means a case of the 'deserving poor expropriating that which was rightly theirs'. The press also made the assumption that it was Afro-Caribbeans who burnt down the post office in Lozells Rd, where two Asians, Kasamali and Armirali Moledina, were killed after the building had been arsoned. (A white youth from a housing estate a quarter of a mile away was later arrested). Had the location been elsewhere — say, Newham in East London, where there has been a spate of arson attacks on Asian families — both the press and the police would have denied that the arson attack was racist; in the Handsworth case, however, they were quick to suggest otherwise, only this

to have perpetrated by a fascist group who had undertaken the actions partly in an attempt to discredit the RZ, who had been recently involved in a sabotage campaign aimed at military property.

An ongoing case as we publish this is that of Joaquin Gambin who like Merlino in Italy, infiltrated the anarcho-syndicalist movement in Spain and carried out a fire-bomb attack on the Scala nightclub shortly after a CNT-AIT demonstration. While Gambin escaped under another identity, several CNT militants were arrested and charged with the fire-bombing. Despite their innocence and the publicity about Gambin's provocateur role they remain in jail. A campaign to get them released and the fascists responsible caught is underway in Spain today.

#### CASE STUDY 4:— WOODSTOCK ANARCHIST PARTY.

The Woodstock Anarchist (sic) Party was set up as a pacifist/hippy movement and gained quite a following. It came as quite a shock therefore when their leader (and we mean Leader literally), Red Warthan, turned out to be a Ku Klux Klan member.

Warthan was instructed to penetrate the Anarchist movement by the Nazis. Since his youth he had been a member of the Klan. When he was 13 he murdered a 10 year old, but at his trial managed to get an acquittal by 'reason of insanity'.

With this background Warthan knew he would be unable to infiltrate effectively the Anarchists, so he tried the next best thing: he set up his own group. His mistake though was to believe that he should denounce the State propaganda about Anarchists (ie. they're all terrorists) and instead set himself up as a 'pacifist-anarchist' who was interested in the drug scene. Unfortunately Warthan only succeeded in attracting the attention of the Manson clan. Manson thought that Warthan's Woodstock Anarchist Party sounded like something he would like to penetrate, not realising that the set-up was phoney. When Manson eventually won Warthan's confidence and found out that he was a Klan agent, he managed to persuade Warthan to switch allegiance and feed back to him (Manson) information on KKK operations. On Manson's instructions Warthan publicly came out with his Nazi past and renounced the 'anarchist' connection. Finally Warthan ended up in jail as a result of killing a 17 year old.

direct contact with the mainly Afro-Caribbean dominated Birmingham Community Relations Council. Indeed The CRC confirmed the allegations made by the Handsworth Defence Group and stated that, to their knowledge, local Black opinion in Handsworth asserts that the bingo hall fire was *not* started by Blacks but by Whites from outside the area. The CRC also explained that at the Residents Committee meeting (referred to above), members of the committee issued racist abuse to local Black representatives and threatened that if the police did not forcibly close down the bingo hall for good, then they would themselves form a vigilante group and take 'direct action'. We ask could the bingo hall have been arsoned in reaction to the successful multi-racial carnival staged only one day before?(only a few years back an alleged expose revealed that fascists were intending to use the Notting Hill Carnival in London as the setting for a blood-bath).

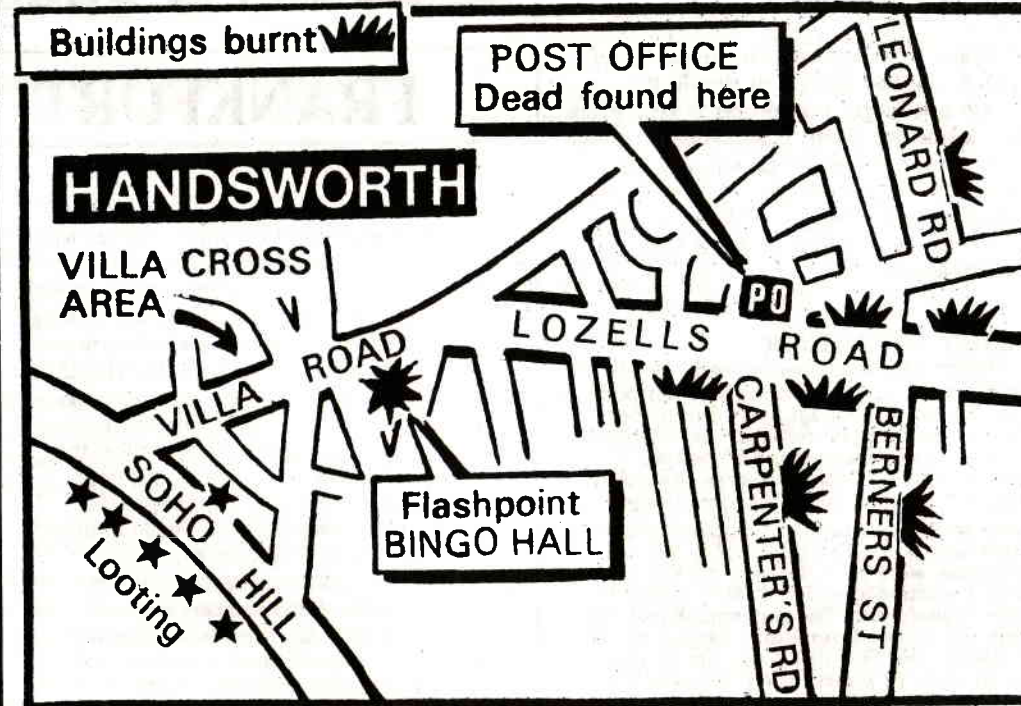
NB. *Black Flag* readers will remember that White 'tenants associations' were set

the British National Party took place in Handsworth itself to formulate future tactics.

Our contact with the CRC also mentioned that during the actual rioting '*skinheads were seen in the vicinity of the Asian shops*'. Without reading too much into this, it isn't hard to speculate that some of those skinheads may not necessarily have been there to assist their 'Black brothers'. The CRC contact, however, did emphasise that most of the White kids who took part in the rioting, did so not for any perceived racist reasons. In the aftermath of the riots one interesting CRC statistic came to light, namely that the 'majority' of the 291 arrested were not Afro-Caribbean, nor Asian, but allegedly White. The press virtually ignored this information, preferring instead to concentrate on the inter-tribal (sic) tensions between the Asian and Afro-Caribbean communities. Although it is without doubt that in any poorer, unemployed ghetto, the less poorer self-employed can become the target of resentment and a victim of 'petty crime', the national press chose to

that the arson attack was racist; in the Handsworth case, however, they were quick to suggest otherwise, only this time apportioning blame on the Afro-Caribbean community. The fact is that most (how much will never be known) of the burning was carried out in conjunction with the looting, which in itself brought forth an avalanche of reasoned justifications across the whole political spectrum, from the police and the press at one end, to sociologists and trendy lefties on the other. They all agreed that small-time shopkeepers were fair game in the 'class struggle'. Had they been White, however, or running a trendy cop, well. . . . Again, if the disturbances had taken place in sumptuous Bournemouth, for example, the police would have organised themselves quicker than you could utter the words 'mutual aid'. On this latter point, the Handsworth riot clearly exposed the achilles heel of mutual aid policing, in that it can fail under the right circumstances, namely incidents involving mass rioting and guerrilla attacks, preferably simultaneous in different areas. In the future the police will no doubt be reassessing their resources and their intelligence-gathering capabilities. The revival of community policing after the rioting got off to a sad start with the agreement from some Rastafarians to calm things down — although that offer may well have been a tactical move to guarantee a breathing space in advance of any projected 'Swamp '85'. In the long-term the police will be relying on the eyes and ears of their racist friends in the tenants groups and elsewhere to supply the information on a regular basis. Would, we ask, the collaboration stop at information-gathering, and did it ever?

The fascist presence in central Birmingham is by no means insignificant. Many hardliners still live in the areas surrounding Handsworth. Long-time thugs such as the following. *Richard A. Barnes* (attacked Digbeth SWP bookshop in 1981, also implicated in a murder); *Jimmy Carlyle* (contacts with KKK, set up an organisation known as 'White resistance', member of the NF); *John Davis* (Handsworth based NF'er and security guard); *Ray Davison* (known firebomber, member of NF, ex-British Movement); *John*



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