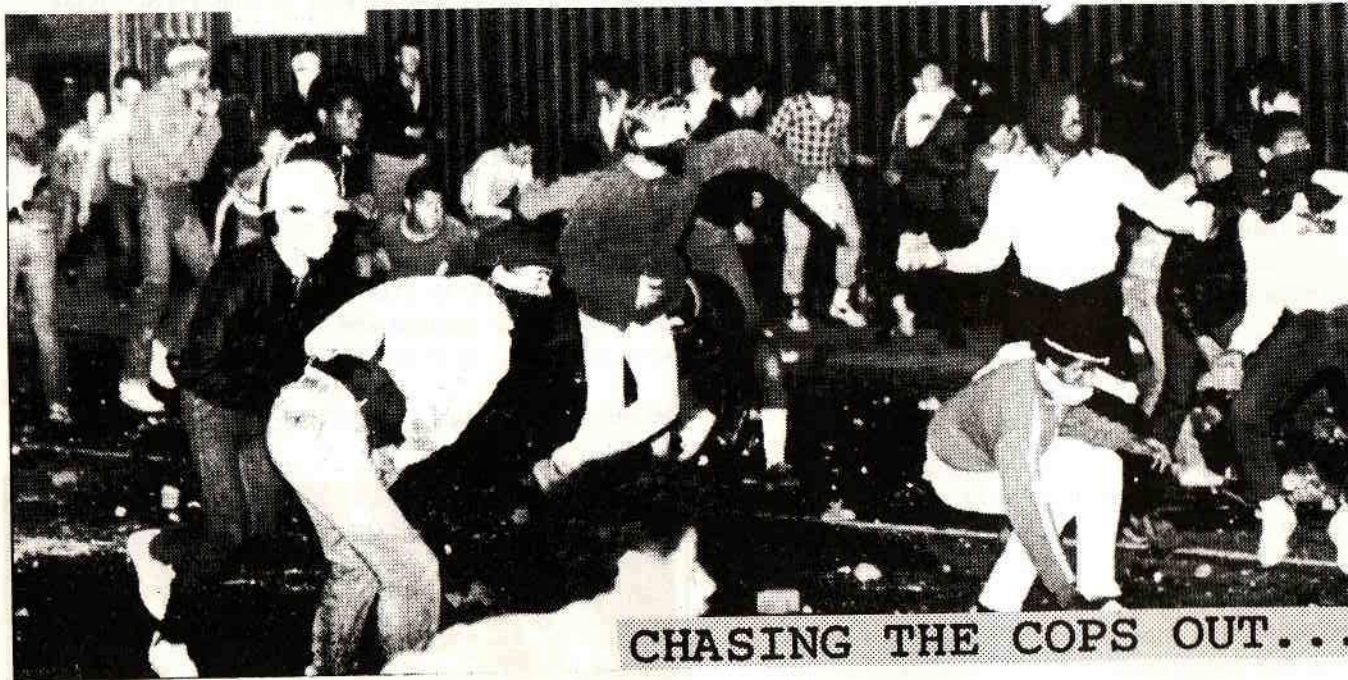


WHAT DO WE DO WHEN THE COPS FUCK OFF?



CHASING THE COPS OUT...

For most of us, the most important political events of the past five years have occurred, not in the smoke-filled rooms of the union barons; not in the stripped-pine rooms of the Habitat socialists; not even in the meat-free living spaces of the anarchist ghetto, but on the streets and estates of the urban working class. From the blazing summer of 1981, through the miners strike, to the siege of Broadwater Farm, literally thousands of working class people have taken on the forces of darkness and the state, physically resisting the filth in a host of struggles, many of them

kicked out of. Well, sod that, for a liberated zone!

WHAT DO WE DO WHEN THE COPS FUCK OFF?

The question of what we're actually going to DO when the cops fuck off, has been almost completely ignored by street revolutionaries, but it's one of the most important problems we face. There is no way that people are going to be grateful to see the back of the filth, if they think that muggers, rapists, smack-dealers

number of incompetant, grassing social workers. And, of course, in a state of insurrection, those who look after our kids, carry messages and weapons, lie for us in court, and give first-aid, are as vital to the struggle as the able-bodied, young, and largely male (though less so every time!) streetfighters.

But it's not just a question of handing out a few tins of beans to the old-folk. If we cannot deliver safe streets and secure homes for EVERYONE, ordinary people will be begging for the return of the law. Obviously informers must be dealt with severely, but the best way to stop them creeping out of the woodwork is to prove that the community can do a better job of preventing anti-social behaviour than the filth.

STREET JUSTICE

Street Justice is an ugly phrase. It carries visions of Clint Eastwood crazed vigilantes shooting black kids for being assertive; the IRA kneecapping kids for smoking dope; the Ayatollah's 'Party of God' beating women for daring to dress the way they want. But, somewhere along the line, as individuals, as communities and as a class, we are going to have to learn how to dispense street justice. Otherwise, people terrified to walk their own streets and estates will continue to fall for all that law 'n' order bullshit.

IT STARTS NOW

When in a host of struggles, many of them suppressed by snivelling hacks. And we've only seen the preliminary skirmishes in a conflict as inevitable as it will be bloody.

URBAN WAR

Whether Kinnock, Thatcher or Owen scratch their way to the top of the parliamentary dungheap matters bugger all. By 1999, the urban war will be a permanent feature of everyday life in every benighted city in this septic isle. There will be guns and deaths on both sides, as the cops mutate into daleks, and a host of scrapheap geniuses become the weaponsmiths of the ghettos. The army will be there, either in an advisory/intelligence role (as they were in Brixton in 1981), or on the streets dressed as cops (as they were in the miners strike), or both. Increasingly, the cost of maintaining civil order, both in casualties and finance, will be more than the state is prepared to pay in the rotting heartlands of our cities.

FANTASY AND REALITY

This all sound fine as apocalyptic fantasy, but what's it going to be like when YOU have no choice about living it...24 hours a day? It's already too close for comfort for some of us. While the police terrorise Broadwater Farm, stealing food and clothing, and menacing people with guns. People living on the Gloucester Grove estate in Peckham, South London, are deprived of post and emergency services due to attacks by anti-social elements. If we're not careful, the 1990's in the cities could be a choice between these two options- occupation by brutal pscho-cops- or terrorisation by criminal scum.

The two rapes in the 1985 Brixton riot underline this point. Writing in the magazine Monochrome, a woman refers to women being treated as 'the spoils of war', and describes how she felt safer fighting the cops than in the areas they'd been

think that muggers, rapists, smack-dealers, wife beaters, and other anti-social bastards are going to have a free hand.

But it needn't be like that. Someone once told me of an incident he witnessed in occupied Ireland. Rioting on the Falls road had carried on 'til early morning, and vehicles were needed for a road-block, when along whirred a milk float. Quick as a flash it was commandeered. However, it was not torched until the crates had been taken off and every local household had been delivered two pints of milk!

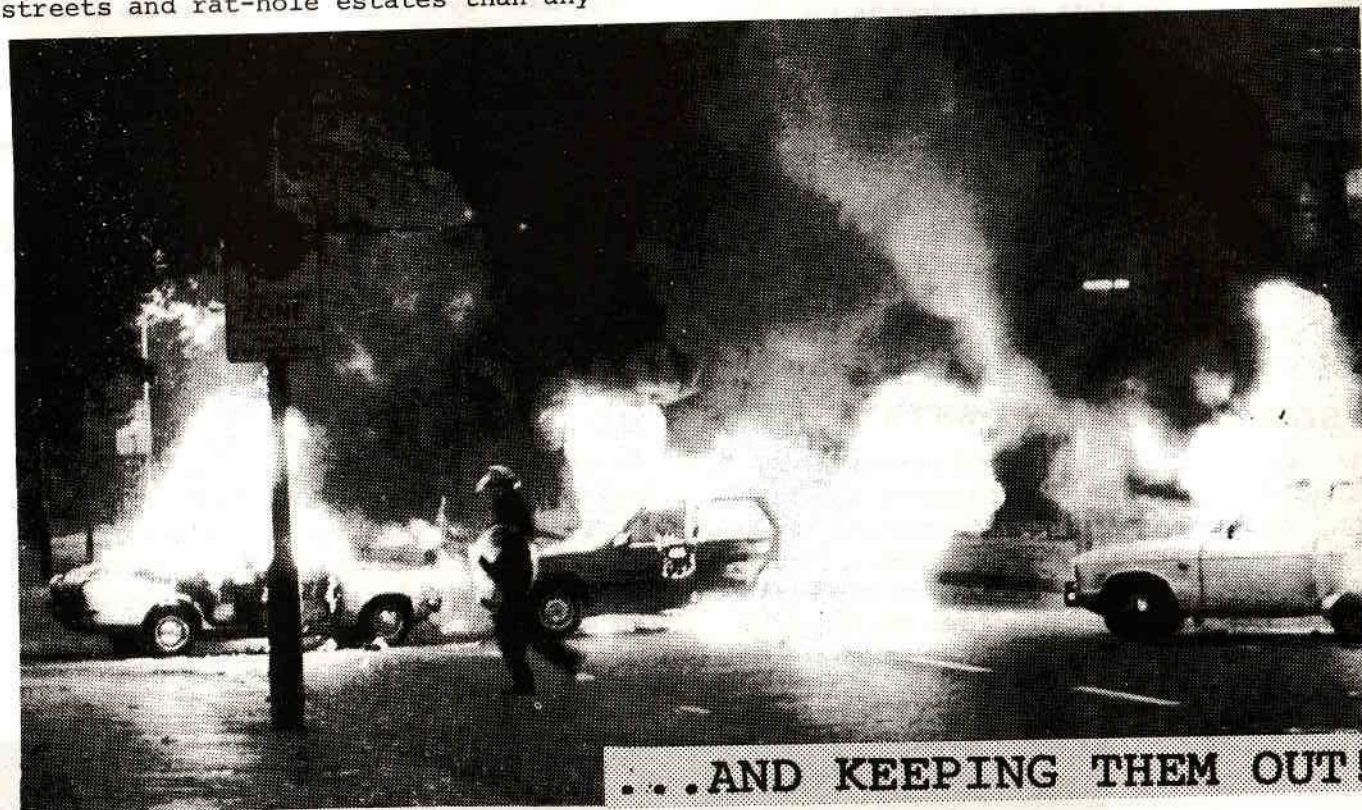
COMMUNITY RESISTANCE

This sort of interaction between street-fighters and the rest of the community is essential. When looting takes place, we must make sure that goods are distributed to those in need, not as an abstract matter of principle, but because we need to show that we care far more about the welfare of our fellow prisoners in the slum streets and rat-hole estates than any

IT STARTS NOW
It starts now. With thinking about what you'd do if you saw next door being broken into. There's got to be a better answer than calling the cops or letting it happen. And we need to find it before every street has a neighbourhood watch snoop snivelling back to the smiling community bobby with his plastic bullets and computer files.

It starts now. With making sure that in this summer's riots, the muggers are challenged, and the rapists eliminated. With making sure that clumsiness or drunken stupidity don't result in proper people getting their homes burnt out.

It starts now. With discussions on the streets and estates about what we are going to do when the cops fuck off. Street justice is justice for ALL, by ALL. Anything else is just a new set of cops. We need the answers quickly, and we haven't begun to ask the right questions.



...AND KEEPING THEM OUT!