

# PROSTITUTION in Tottenham

Local police have recently begun a campaign against prostitutes and kerb crawlers in the St. Anne's Road area of Tottenham, including extra patrols and video surveillance. Local residents have complained of increasing activity by prostitutes, and especially harassment by kerb-crawlers. The local Labour Party organised a public meeting with police and council spokespeople on this issue.



There is a general belief that "prostitutes spread AIDS", but recent UK research has shown that AIDS is more likely to be spread by clients than by prostitutes. Tottenham police have suggested legalising

prostitution in 'tolerance zones'. But in the US, legalising prostitution has led to state-run sex factories, increased police powers and institutionalised state pimping. Instead, decriminalising prostitution would give prostitutes control over their work, safely.

Prostitution itself is not illegal, but everything connected with it is - soliciting, kerb-crawling, even carrying condoms can be used by the police as evidence for arrest and prosecution. So much for trying to promote safe sex.

Decriminalising prostitution would mean abolishing all these laws which do not apply to other forms of business, and which single out prostitutes and stop them working safely and legally. It would allow them to manage their work as self-employed or independent workers, free of the control of both police and pimps.

Decriminalisation would benefit both the Community and local prostitutes.

## NEW LOCAL WOMEN'S GROUP

We are a newly formed, local women's support group involved in campaigning on issues that affect us. At the moment we're coordinating the Haringey campaign against the Child Support Act. The group is also involved in other local issues, such as publicising the anti-abortion LIFE shop in Langham Road, N15, by holding regular pickets & distributing information on genuinely independent pregnancy advice in the borough. We meet on the first Sunday of every month at Women & Medical Practice, 40 Turnpike Lane, N15 from 1pm to 3pm. Any women interested in getting involved, or just coming along for a chat, are welcome. Lifts can be arranged, and there is full disabled access and a creche. For more information telephone 081-885-3013 or 081-348-8765.



## WHO AND WHAT WE ARE

Tottenham COMMUNITY ACTION is the newsletter of Tottenham Solidarity Group. We are local people involved in the anti-Poll Tax campaign in Tottenham, who also want to fight other attacks on our community. We are not connected to any political group or party. Although the fight against the Poll Tax is still not over (as the Council is still trying to intimidate us with bailiffs and the threat of jail), other issues that affect our lives and environment also need changing - and NOW. The newsletter is one way we hope to inform local people about these issues.

We also hold regular meetings every other Tuesday at 72 West Green Road, N15. The meetings start at 7.30pm and are open to any resident of Tottenham who feels as we do. The next meetings are on Tuesday November 24th and December 8th & 22nd. For details of meeting dates in the new year or for more information call us on 081-802-9804.

If you would like to get involved in Tottenham Solidarity Group, or would like to be kept informed about what we do, then fill in the tear of slip below and send it to TSG, 72 West Green Road, N15. Or telephone 081-802-9804.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

PHONE NUMBER .....

☐ Please keep me informed

☐ I would like to become involved in the group

☐ I can distribute future copies of this newsletter in my street

☐ I can distribute ..... copies of this newsletter in my workplace

Local issues that interest me are: .....

# TOTTENHAM Community Action

72 WEST GREEN ROAD, N15. PHONE 802-9804

WINTER 92/3 ISSUE 1

## Scrap the Child Support Act

From April 1993 onwards the new Child Support Act will be used to try to force single parents (usually women) on grants and benefits to name the absent parent of their children. The Government is setting up a "Child Support Agency" to track down these absent fathers and force them to pay maintenance regardless of their income or their relationship with the mother and children.

DSS Officers will have the power to get information on the absent father's income, taxation and housing, to walk into his workplace and question employers and colleagues, to dock pay, benefits and student loans.

The Treasury will pocket ALL the maintenance paid to mothers on Income Support, and part of what's paid to mothers on Family Credit, Disability Working Allowance or on Student Grant/Loan. The children will get NOTHING. The aim of this Act is to save the state money, whatever the consequences.

If a single mother refuses to name the absent father an amount of £8.49 will be deducted weekly from her benefits. Single mothers face harassment by the Agency to name absent fathers with little regard for possible access/custody disputes, unwanted contact, arguments or the threat of violence.

DSS Officers are already pressing women for information. This is ILLEGAL. Until April 1993, refusing to give the father's name, address, workplace or photo is not supposed to affect your Income Support. Women in Haringey are now being called in by the DSS -DON'T GO!

But do contact Haringey Women's Group or Tottenham Solidarity Group.

If you don't want to claim maintenance, you don't have to. Even after April 1993 a mother need not name the father if she doesn't know him or if naming him would put her or her children at risk of "harm or undue distress".

### You have the right to tell the DSS:-

- ☛ you had more than one partner
- ☛ it was a one-night stand
- ☛ you met him on holiday
- ☛ he's left the country
- ☛ you can't remember his name
- ☛ you don't know where he is
- ☛ you were raped
- ☛ he is violent and would take it out on you or your children
- ☛ the children would be very distressed if he came round...

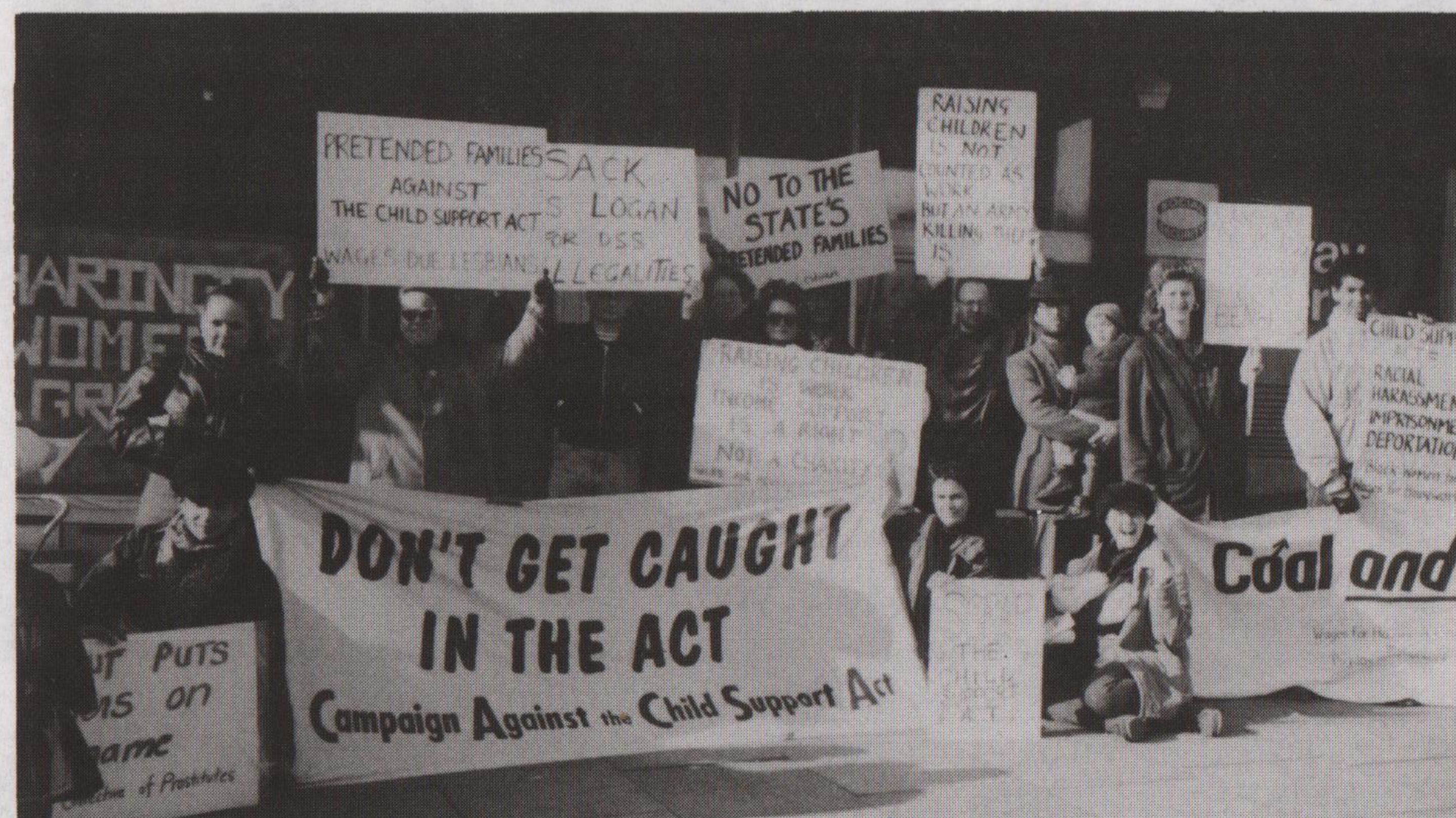
### Don't let the DSS intimidate you:-

- ✓ Always take a reliable friend with you to DSS interviews. Insist on their right to be present and take notes. Notes could be helpful if you want to appeal against any DSS decision. Taping is also useful. Get in touch with us for help.
- ✓ Insist on getting the name of the officer who interviews you.
- ✓ Use the short birth certificate. It doesn't name the father and it's free.
- ✓ Report all threats by DSS Officers to a local Citizen's Advice Bureau, Law Centre or Claimant's Union AND us.
- ✓ Tell family, friends, organisations, the media how the Child Support Act DOESN'T SUPPORT YOU or YOUR CHILDREN.

The Campaign Against the Child Support Act is calling for a national campaign of non-

cooperation with the Act to make it unworkable. Millions of people defied and defeated the Poll Tax. We will do this again against the Child Support Act. This is yet another attack on all our rights - not just the rights of single parents. We have to work together locally and nationally to destroy this Act and similar attacks.

For more advice, & information about how to get involved in the campaign contact either Haringey Women's Group on 081-885-3013 or Tottenham Solidarity Group on 081-802-9804.



## THE COUNCILS RUBBISH

Haringey Council is trying to convince us that by opening a recycling centre in Wood Green, it now cares for the environment. But just like the Government and all big businesses who say they are greener than green, this latest attempt is pathetic.

The site is only open between 8am and 4pm Thursday to Sunday, and then only for a trial period of three months. It will ONLY open on a permanent basis if we recycle enough stuff to make them enough money. This is meant to guilt trip us into recycling. Also if the centre closes after 3 months, the council will say it was our fault. Well stuff you Haringey Council. One site for a trial period of three months is useless. We want loads of these centres around the borough, and on a permanent basis, and open every day. This should have happened years ago. Only then can we make proper use of them.

What about people who want to recycle their waste, but don't have cars, or who are old or disabled. Other councils have had recycling schemes going for years. In Sheffield they realised not all people could get to their site, so they collect the things to be

recycled from people's homes for free.

Loads of paper we recycle is thrown away as big organisations don't use recycled stationery. Other recycled goods cost more as they are produced on a small scale. If Haringey Council (and big businesses and supermarkets) want us to believe they care about recycling, they need to prove it - NOW. They should be using these recycled goods in large quantities, instead of trying to blackmail us into spending more of our wages or dole money on them. If supermarkets really want us to believe that they care for the environment, then they should put their money where their mouths are and make the price of recycled goods cheaper (not more expensive) than other goods.

We should all care for our environment, and recycling nature's scarce resources is important. But we should do it because we want to, not because some multinational company who is polluting our environment far worse than us, or a stuck up politician tells us to.

*Recycling is seen as the easy way to save the planet. But bad water, cars and pollutants from big business are causing just as much damage - and we MUST DEAL WITH ALL OF THESE NOW.*

## Lead found in Playgrounds

High levels of lead have been found in our children's playgrounds. The students of Tottenham Technology College (now The College of North East London), took samples from the playgrounds in the Tottenham area. Samples were also taken from the cleaning equipment in schools. The samples revealed very high concentrations of lead in Stamford Hill School and Earlsmead School both of which are sited on congested roads.

Money from the Department of the Environment's urban renewal fund is to be used to "green up" one of the school's playgrounds. This may go some way to alleviate the problem but the real answer must be in a radical reform of the transport system. Our children's health and development are at stake.

# Traffic ? People first !

In almost every neighbourhood in Tottenham there've been recent campaigns and protests by residents against road traffic. This has been in direct response to lorries, heavy traffic, rat-runs, child deaths, pollution, noise, threats to green spaces, high speeds, danger spots, new road plans, lack of crossings and lately the threat of "red routes".

**For instance:** residents of Dowsett Road area (off Bruce Grove) blocked streets to stop commercial lorries endangering their kids; people in Mount Pleasant Road successfully campaigned for speed restrictions; some local residents put up their own "20MPH ZONE" signs; public meetings held earlier this year in Green Lanes, Broad Lane, and near the Roundway launched opposition to the Red Routes (which in Green Lanes led to 100 adults & kids blocking the road with a "Cycle Routes - not Red Routes" demo); and this winter, parents in Northumberland Park are demanding more local crossings and slower traffic. In September in a Noel Park poll, 98% of those replying called for traffic

calming throughout the estate.

Our streets used to be a safe playspace for our kids and a vibrant community meeting place. But traffic danger has forced people off, with 5000 killed and over 200,000 injured nationally each year. On top of this we are all getting more aware of the serious ill-health caused through lead poisoning, stress, aggravation to asthma sufferers, etc.

Everyone knows this must stop ! But it's clear that the authorities are determined to continue to make matters worse, planning only more cars and roads. The rulers of this country don't give a shit for ordinary people, never did and never will. Others make vague calls for a few more buses ... but no politician is ever to be trusted, and in many cases this is far to little, far to late. It's up to us. **RECLAIM THE STREETS** We back every residents' initiative to improve their immediate neighbourhood - to make it safer for children, the old and infirm, and for everyone to be able to walk, chat, assemble and use their streets freely.

We call on people in EVERY street and estate to get together and set up action groups to achieve the following:  
✓ PEDESTRIANISE AS MANY ROADS AS POSSIBLE (with kids play areas, new benches, trees, etc)  
✓ SPEED BUMPS ON EVERY RESIDENTIAL ROAD  
✓ TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS - speed limits, crossings, chicanes, barriers at the end of streets  
✓ A TOTAL LORRY BAN IN LONDON, starting here  
✓ CYCLE ROUTES CRISS-CROSSING EVERY NEIGHBOURHOOD

These are all common sense, and the situation is urgent. Don't wait for (or expect) leaders, politicians, the Council or greens to come to the rescue. LETS GET OUT & KNOCK ON DOORS, TALK TO OUR NEIGHBOURS, START ACTION GROUPS, BLOCK ROADS, PROTEST (especially every time someone is knocked down) AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER. In so doing we will be improving our lives ourselves and re-establishing community feeling out of the present isolation, noise, fumes and danger.

## BOLLOCKS TO THE POLL TAX

Caring Haringey Council have threatened us with bailiffs; used adverts to try and scare us; telephoned some non-payers at home; and jailed six of us - but over 70,000 people in Haringey are still not paying their poll tax. By the end of September 1992 they have only collected £12 million of the £46 million we owe for this year, and they still have not got millions from the last two years. When will they learn that we can't pay & won't pay this hated tax? We demand the Council writes off all our debts now - its the only way.

IN CASE YOU DO GET HASSLED BY SOMEBODY WITH A WARRANT, REMEMBER;

☞ Haringey police told Haringey Council that they are too busy to arrest non-payers. The Council is therefore having to use its own staff.

☞ The only reason for an arrest warrant is to get you to court. It does not mean you will go to jail.

☞ A warrant can only be served (handed) to the person who the Council are trying to get money from. It must be handed to you and can't just be put through your letter box.

☞ Like bailiffs, nobody can use force to enter your home - so don't let them in. You may be able to sue if they use force. If they do turn up, don't answer the door, or get somebody else to. If you have moved and nobody knows where you have moved to, it's very difficult for them to proceed further against you.

☞ Of the six people (out of 70,000+) jailed by Haringey five paid the money they owed and did not go to jail. The sixth is not in jail and is appealing against the decision so don't panic,

## THE GREAT WATER CON

Water is a basic necessity for everyone's survival, there is no choice - we all need water to drink, and to maintain daily life. During the 1940's public money (TAX) was used to build a national public water system for all. Since then peoples taxes and water rates continued to pay for maintenance, improvements and supplies to homes

Now our water supplies are in the hands of business and private companies. Like all other privatised monopolies, public money was used to build up a service, just to be sold off by this Tory government to greedy, profit driven companies.

They view water not as a vital resource, but as a product (that people have to have) which can and will be exploited for the share holders.

Water prices have risen by an average of 50% & some standing charges are now £370 a year. Inability to pay water bills has risen by 174%. 55000 families have problems paying their bills - and are being threatened with disconnection. 21200 people have already been disconnected. Bills that were £90 a year, are now £93 a quarter. Water meters also mean still higher charges.

As all this is happening, water company bosses salaries have risen massively. This situation is bound to get worse, and mass non co-operation is the only action that can make any significant change, as it did with the axed Poll Tax. We need to start now before it's too late !