

Housmans bomb

A parcel bomb exploded in Housmans, the Peace News bookshop, at lunchtime on Tuesday July 4. Stewart Porte, the Housmans worker who was opening it, was burnt on the hands, chest and face and is still in hospital: his condition is "satisfactory". No one else was hurt, and damage to the premises was slight.

After the second post was delivered to the shop, items addressed to the London *PN* office and other organisations with offices upstairs were sorted and put out for them. But one parcel, about 10in by 4 by 2, was addressed simply to 5 Caledonian Road. It exploded in a small room at the back of the shop where Stewart had taken it to open with the shop's post. There was a sheet of flame and a lot of smoke, but not a very large explosion; it was an incendiary device rather than high explosive. Stewart was taken to University College Hospital casualty department for treatment but has now been transferred to **Ward 3, St Pancras Hospital, St Pancras Way, London NW1** to await a decision on possible skin grafts on his hands.

Nearly three months ago, a threatening letter was pushed in the door at 5 Caledonian Rd one night. It had fascist symbols on it and the message was on the lines of "Watch out you're next". Although threats to the various organisations in the building aren't uncommon, this one had the figure "88" on it (equals HH equals Heil Hitler), and this was the time when a group called "Coloumn 88" had claimed responsibility for attacks on left-wing premises. Housmans passed this threat onto the police at the time, but they didn't start investigating it until after the actual bomb last week. Theories as to who is responsible for the attack include the idea that it isn't one of the main right-wing organisations as such, rather that it's individuals "showing off" as part of a leadership struggle on the Right.

Press coverage of the *PN* bombing just about managed to steer clear of suggesting that it was natural that right-wing bombers

should attack a *PN* building since *PN* was part of "the Left" — which is by the press definition out to use such methods against the Right. *PN* was mostly described by such epithets as "ultra-Left", and there was no mention of the irony that both *PN* and Housmans, if they stand for anything, stand for opposition to all violence.

However, the presence of some of the Anti Terrorist Squad (formerly known as the Bomb Squad) at Caledonian Road didn't keep them away for long from their current pre-occupation with raiding and harrassing anarchists on the "conspiracy to cause explosions" pretext. (And that includes anarchists whose principled objection to violence is as strong as *PN*'s — see last issue.)

Many more people have been raided and that same Tuesday evening two more people were picked up and one was charged the following day. The Anti-Terrorist Squad seems largely concerned with chasing the sorts of people who are the *victims* of the only "terrorist" type activities going on in Britain at the moment.

Persons Unknown, the support group for those arrested, is demanding as a first priority that something be done about Iris Mills, the only woman amongst those held. She is kept in Brixton, a men's prison, and hence is in virtual solitary confinement. During visits she is separated from her visitor by a table and two guards listen to every word — and she is strip-searched before and after every visit. Persons Unknown ask that as many people as possible protest about her treatment. Their address is: **Box 123, 182 Upper Street, London N1.**

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Many people, including some from outside Britain, have called at, phoned or written to 5 Caledonian Road asking how Stewart is and generally expressing support for everyone there. The people living and/or working in the building would like to use *PN* to thank them all for their concern.