

Jails

# CALM Community Against Legalized Militarism

P.O. Box 498  
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In late July of 1975, Santa Cruz County Sheriff Al Noren requested permission of the Santa Cruz County Board Of Supervisors to trade two 40 year-old Thompson Sub-Machine guns for three M-16s. The item was placed on the consent portion of the Board of Supervisors agenda, meaning that there was to be no discussion of the matter. Three people went to the Board meeting with the intention of informing the Board about the absolutely lethal characteristics of the M-16 fully-automatic rifle. It was at that meeting that Sheriff Noren revealed that he had already ordered three M-16s. The members of the Board of Supervisors were not aware of the fact that he had done so and expressed great shock that they had not been informed. Because of the way that the matter was handled, and the discussion that took place at that meeting, the three people who had come to talk about M-16s and SWAT (Special Weapons And Tactics) Teams, two of whom are Vietnam Veterans, decided to form CALM, Community Against Legalized Militarism. It was felt that Sheriff Noren's attitude toward Public disclosure and his disregard for the Board of Supervisors was something which had to be publicised, and that the facts concerning his secret ordering of three M-16s and his secret formation of the two SWAT Teams had be given to the Public. CALM has sought over the months since July to do just that. CALM has collected almost 9,000 signatures on its petition about the M-16s. CALM is committed to seeing the following happen in Santa Cruz County:

- 1) A total ban on the acquisition and or use of any automatic weapon by the Sheriff's Department, or any weapon which uses the .223 caliber (5.56 mm) cartridge;
- 2) The disbanding of the two SWAT Teams, which were formed secretly by Sheriff Noren, without the knowlege or consent of either the Board of Supervisors or the Public;
- 3) The formation of a Citizens Review Board, which would be empowered to review and evaluate all law enforcement programs and problems in the County.

What is happening in Santa Cruz County, with the formation of the SWAT units and the acquisition of M-16s, is not unique to just this County. The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, LEAA, and the FBI have both been active in trying to get local law enforcement agencies all across the Country to form SWAT units and get M-16s. This fact alone presents some real concerns about the possibility of a National Police, something which would gravely threaten our civil liberties and constitutional guarantees.

THE FOLLOWING ARE THREE PRESS RELEASES WHICH CALM HAS ISSUED REGARDING THE M-16/SWAT TEAM CONTROVERSY:

STATEMENT TO THE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
BY CALM, Community Against Legalized Militarism, 7 October 1975

We see one central issue constantly recurring again and again involving the Santa Cruz County Sheriff and the Public. That issue is accountability. To what group or person is the Sheriff responsible? To himself? To the Board of Supervisors? To the Public? To no one?

One of the constant difficulties in trying to have a full and open discussion between the Sheriff and the Public has been the Sheriff's constant and continuing refusal to respond directly and fully to questions concerning his Department. The Sheriff has been slow to acknowledge any connection between his request for M-16s and his secretly formed SWAT Teams. It is now clear that the Sheriff intends the M-16s for his SWAT Teams. What is unclear is why the Sheriff formed the SWAT Teams in the first place, and why he feels M-16s and SWAT Teams are necessary in a County like Santa Cruz. Over 90% of the "crime" in Santa Cruz County is crime against property, such as larceny and burglary. The Sheriff has done very little to deal with larceny and burglary, but he has felt it necessary to form two SWAT Teams and arm them with M-16s!

## WEAPONS POLICY AND "SHOOT TO KILL"

The Sheriff has refused to answer a letter from CALM requesting his Department's policy on discharge of firearms and his stated "SHOOT TO KILL" philosophy. Instead the Sheriff sent a copy of his policy to the Watsonville Register Pajaronian, where it was printed in a shortened and abridged version. If that policy is truly the firearms policy of the Sheriff Department, then we wonder what happens when that policy is violated. On 27 April 1975, after Al Noren had become Sheriff, Deputies stopped Richard Alden Lee on Larkin Valley Road by shooting out his truck's tires, an action which violated the Sheriff Department's own stated policy. Were the Deputies involved disciplined or was the incident investigated? Is there any investigation by the Sheriff when his Deputies fire their weapons? Or are the incidents conveniently forgotten or ignored? Do the Deputies themselves determine Departmental policy?

The Sheriff has stated that privately owned weapons have been used in the line of duty by his Deputies. What is the Department's policy, if any, regarding the use of privately owned weapons by on-duty Deputies. Can a Sheriff's Deputy use a privately owned machine-gun for example? Are there any policies or guidelines relating to the use of non-issue ammunition, or can a Deputy use hollow-point bullets? The Sheriff Department has never stated that policies covering these matters even exist, indeed it seems clear that they do not.

## INTELLIGENCE FILES

Our Sheriff Department maintains "Intelligence Files" on "organized crime, revolutionary groups, and radicals" in Santa Cruz County. As of last year, the Sheriff Department had no policies or guidelines whatsoever covering the control and security of those "Intelligence Files". There are none today, to the best of our knowledge. We have seen time and time again how "Intelligence Files" have been used for political purposes, and have constituted invasions of privacy on massive scales. We have no assurances whatsoever that the "Intelligence Files" maintained in the Sheriff Department are not being misused. The Sheriff of Santa Cruz County sits on the Board of Directors of the "Tri-County Organized Crime Information Unit", a body which exchanges information between law enforcement departments in Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Monterey Counties. This organization passes information on "organized crime, revolutionary groups and radicals" between its members. This provides yet another opportunity for the misuse and abuse of "Intelligence". What is the Sheriff Department's definition of "organized crime, revolutionary groups, and radicals"? Is the Grey Bears a "revolutionary organization"? Is CALM? Is the Young Women's Christian Association? We have no way of telling what the Sheriff considers to be "organized crime, revolutionary groups, and radicals", since he has failed to state what his Department's policies, guidelines and definitions are.

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## STATEMENT TO THE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS BY CALM, 12 November 1975:

It has been nearly 1/3 of a year since the matter of the M-16s and the SWAT Teams was first discussed in this Chamber, 113 days to be exact. The issues remain the same, very little of substance has been forthcoming from the Sheriff, and the central issue still has yet to be addressed by either your Board or the County Sheriff. As we stated on 7 October, that central issue is accountability. We ask again as we asked on 7 October, to what group or person is the Sheriff accountable? To himself? To the Board of Supervisors? To the Public? To no one? Our question about the Sheriff's accountability went unanswered, and remains unanswered to this day.

As we pointed out at the 7 October meeting, the Sheriff has refused to respond directly and fully to questions about the Sheriff Department. The Sheriff continued that refusal when he presented his letter at the last portion of the Study Session. He failed to mention either his secret ordering of three M-16s, or his secret formation of the SWAT Teams. Your Board failed to mention and discuss in-depth either item also. These were glaring omissions on both your parts.

Since there have been no public answers to any of our questions, we repeat them yet again:

- 1) What were your reasons, Sheriff Noren, for ordering three fully-automatic M-16s without fully informing either the Public or the Board of Supervisors beforehand?
- 2) What were your reasons, Sheriff Noren, for forming the SWAT Teams without fully informing either the Public or the Board of Supervisors beforehand?
- 3) What is the Sheriff Department's weapons policy? Is that policy enforced? What are the procedures when that policy is violated?

- 4) Are Sheriff's Deputies allowed to use privately owned weapons on duty, as the Sheriff has stated? What is the Departmental policy regarding the use of such privately owned weapons?
- 5) What are the policies and guidelines relating to the collection, control and use of the Sheriff Department's "Intelligence Files"? What are the safeguards against the abuse or misuse of such "Intelligence"? Since these files contain information on "organized crime, revolutionary groups, and radicals", just what are the definitions of "organized crime, revolutionary groups, and radicals"?
- 6) What were the written results of the Sheriff's ballistics tests of the M-16 and why weren't these tests done in Public?
- 7) What are the guidelines and policies relating to the use of the SWAT Teams?

These questions can go unanswered only so long. CALM has collected nearly 9,000 signatures on its petition concerning the M-16s. The County Government has failed to respond to this call. The County Sheriff has failed even to acknowledge the legitimate questions which we have raised as an organization. Instead, the Sheriff has seen fit to dismiss us as "That Bunch", and has even attempted to impugn the characters of members of CALM, by making false and slanderous statements to the Public about people's personal lives. Sheriff Noren has attempted to discredit us and ignore us. Make no mistake about it, Sheriff Noren, we will not be intimidated into being silent, and neither will the Public just go away. As an elected officer of this County you are subject to the recall of the voters. There are nearly 9,000 people in this County who have serious doubts about at least one aspect of your performance as Sheriff. No, Sheriff Noren, these people are not all people whom you can discount and dismiss as merely being malcontents; among these signatures are those of labor leaders in the County, former members of the Board of Supervisors, respected Republican attorneys, members of the Democratic Central Committee, members of the business community... NO, Sheriff Noren, you might discount each of us individually, you might dismiss CALM, but you'd best not continue to discount the Public if you intend to serve out your full term of office. You might ignore CALM, but you can't ignore the questions which we have raised. We have waited for nearly four months, and there is an end to patience.

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At the 12 November 1975 Board of Supervisors meeting, the following dialogue was overheard. The conversation took place between Sheriff Al Noren and his Chief Deputy Plageman at approximately 10:00. The Sheriff and his Chief Deputy were sitting in the audience, waiting for the item to come up for which they were present:

NOREN: "How many of them do you think there are? Do you think we should call more security?" ("Them" clearly means CALM people.)

PLAGEMAN: "It's hard to tell now with the other traffic." ("Other traffic" presumably means the other people who were present for the item then being discussed.)

NOREN: "I'm going to go call them."

At that point Sheriff Noren left the Board Chamber. Shortly after his return two people appeared who looked to be plain-clothes deputies entered the Board of Supervisors Chamber and took seats. One of them was clearly armed, as a shoulder holster was visible under his jacket. CALM people have been subjected to harassing phone calls at 3:00 and 4:00 in the morning, Deputies have made intimidating gestures during Public Board of Supervisors meetings, and now we know that Sheriff Noren has had armed undercover deputies, toting concealed weapons, present at Board meeting, for "security"! Is this the way to treat the Public, with suspicion and fear and weapons? Do we want someone who reacts to Public criticism and questions in this way to be our County Sheriff?

CALM can use your help, send your name and phone number to us at P.O. Box 498, Soquel, Ca. 95073. You can help circulate petitions, or help us spread the facts.



**LAPD SWAT in action  
tomorrow SANTA CRUZ?**