



Read the text and fill the gaps with one word.

ASBOs - Criminalise the Symptoms, Ignore the Disease By Tami Peterson

Centuries ago, the solution 1. _____ those such as the mentally ill, elderly, drug addicts, prostitutes and child beggars was to 2. _____ dingy jails with “treatments” of whips and chains. We have not come very far. Hundreds of years later the British government is still jailing and encouraging public humiliation of those in society who most need assistance and positive encouragement.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) 3. _____ as a result of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act and allows the 4. _____ any activity that any individual believes causes them “alarm or distress”. It is precisely because of this broad language and the inability for those faced with the imposition of an ASBO to have a jury trial that the measure has been so incredibly controversial.

Any violation of the ASBO can 5. _____ jail time. Indeed, over 40 per cent of the ASBOs 6. _____ are violated, which can result in sentences of up to five years with 10 people imprisoned every week. Half of all ASBOs are given to young people under the age of 18 with others being handed out to those with mental health issues.

One stark example is an ASBO given to a suicidal woman 7. _____ going near bridges or rivers. If she attempts suicide again, she will get imprisoned. Blaming the individual, instead of the social problem, gives cover to the policy that New Labour has 8. _____ from the Conservatives of slashing social provisions – while using language that 9. _____ to the Thatcher era.

If it is 10. _____ the individual’s fault, there is nothing the government can do but “enforce the law” and assure the public that they are doing the best they can. Media outlets from the BBC to the Daily Mail carry screaming headlines about “ASBO louts”, “thugs” and “yobs” while remaining virtually silent on the criminal behaviour of the British government as it privatises hospitals, eliminates mental health facilities and cuts social programmes for young people.

In the midst of this hysteria, and despite a decrease in real crime, the Home Office has been urging local authorities to participate in more “naming and shaming” by publishing names and photos of the “offenders” and their “crimes” through leaflets 11. _____ the communities. This includes children as young as age 10 and has already 12. _____ acts of vigilantism.

Youths all across the country are getting ASBOs for things such as 13. _____ on a street corner, wearing caps and hoodies, or swearing. Those youth most affected by ASBOs are the poor, the working class and/or those from ethnic minorities.

This is not the first time Britain has used a law specifically to harass young people and young minorities in particular. The “Sus” laws were used to harass black men in the 1970s and had been 14. _____ for years as part of the Vagrancy Act of 1824. This made it “illegal for a suspected person or reputed thief to frequent or 15. _____ a public place with 15. _____ commit an arrestable offence”. This, in effect, gave the police the power to stop and search an individual purely on the basis of “suspicion”.

This was so blatantly abused that some believe it was a major cause of the anger which sparked the Brixton riots of 1981. Eventually, even the Tories scrapped the laws altogether.



There has been documented evidence that those 16. _____ political activity have also been 17. - _____ and received ASBOs. One example from the ASBOwatch is of a 63-year-old peace campaigner who 18. _____ getting her ASBO overturned, but was subsequently 19. _____ wear an electronic ankle bracelet for eight weeks in May, making her the first peace protester in Britain to face electronic tagging. Another example is a man who was threatened with an eviction order and an ASBO for distributing anti-war leaflets on his council estate.

Whether ASBO's represent an attempt to criminalize a whole generation, imprison the mentally ill or victimise political activists, it is clear that, although they effect youth disproportionately, ASBOs are not simply 20. _____ one sector of society.

Instead of privatizing and 21. _____ at social provisions and then shaming, blaming and criminalizing the individuals who most need those provisions, the British government must discontinue its wanton destruction of social services and begin to 22. _____ those it claims to represent.

It is precisely because the mentally ill do not have proper care facilities, precisely because young people do not have adequate social programmes, precisely because there are not enough resources 23. _____ rehabilitation that you have "anti-social" behaviour. True "anti-social" behaviour is merely a 24. _____ a disease that breeds inequality - the disease of capitalism.

For more information see: WWW.ASBOCONCERN.ORG.UK and
WWW.STATEWATCH.ORG/ASBO/ASBOWATCH.HTML
SocialistResistance.net



Check your answers

ASBOs - Criminalise the Symptoms, Ignore the Disease By Tami Peterson

Centuries ago, the solution offered for those such as the mentally ill, elderly, drug addicts, prostitutes and child beggars was to lock them away in dingy jails with “treatments” of whips and chains. We have not come very far. Hundreds of years later the British government is still jailing and encouraging public humiliation of those in society who most need assistance and positive encouragement.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) was brought about as a result of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act and allows the banning of any activity that any individual believes causes them “alarm or distress”. It is precisely because of this broad language and the inability for those faced with the imposition of an ASBO to have a jury trial that the measure has been so incredibly controversial.

Any violation of the ASBO can result in jail time. Indeed, over 40 per cent of the ASBOs handed out are violated, which can result in sentences of up to five years with 10 people imprisoned every week. Half of all ASBOs are given to young people under the age of 18 with others being handed out to those with mental health issues. One stark example is an ASBO given to a suicidal woman banning her from going near bridges or rivers. If she attempts suicide again, she will get imprisoned.

Media outlets from the BBC to the Daily Mail carry screaming headlines about “ASBO louts”, “thugs” and “yobs” while remaining virtually silent on the criminal behaviour of the British government as it privatises hospitals, eliminates mental health facilities and cuts social programmes for young people.

In the midst of this hysteria, and despite a decrease in real crime, the Home Office has been urging local authorities to participate in more “naming and shaming” by publishing names and photos of the “offenders” and their “crimes” through leaflets distributed in the communities. This includes children as young as age 10 and has already led to acts of vigilantism.

Youths all across the country are getting ASBOs for things such as hanging out on a street corner, wearing caps and hoodies, or swearing. Those youth most affected by ASBOs are the poor, the working class and/or those from ethnic minorities.

This is not the first time Britain has used a law specifically to harass young people and young minorities in particular. The “Sus” laws were used to harass black men in the 1970s and had been on the books for years as part of the Vagrancy Act of 1824. This made it “illegal for a suspected person or reputed thief to frequent or loiter in a public place with intent to commit an arrestable offence”. This, in effect, gave the police the power to stop and search an individual purely on the basis of “suspicion”. This was so blatantly abused that some believe it was a major cause of the anger, which sparked the Brixton riots of 1981. Eventually, even the Tories scrapped the laws altogether.

There has been documented evidence that those participating in political activity have also been threatened with and received ASBOs.

One example from the ASBOWatch is of a 63-year-old peace campaigner who succeeded in getting her ASBO overturned, but was subsequently made to wear an electronic ankle bracelet for eight weeks in May, making her the first peace protester in Britain to face electronic tagging. Another



example is a man who was threatened with an eviction order and an ASBO for distributing anti-war leaflets on his council estate.

Whether ASBO's represent an attempt to criminalize a whole generation, imprison the mentally ill or victimise political activists, it is clear that, although they effect youth disproportionately, ASBOs are not simply an attack on one sector of society.

Instead of privatizing and slashing away at social provisions and then shaming, blaming and criminalizing the individuals who most need those provisions, the British government must discontinue its wanton destruction of social services and begin to invest in those it claims to represent.

It is precisely because the mentally ill do not have proper care facilities, precisely because young people do not have adequate social programmes, precisely because there are not enough resources put into rehabilitation that you have "anti-social" behaviour. True "anti-social" behaviour is merely a symptom of a disease that breeds inequality - the disease of capitalism.

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Talking points

What kind of behaviour do you find anti-social?

What punishments do you think are appropriate for this behaviour?

Think about your country: how does the government control behaviour?



Preposition practice: find the answers in the text

1. Aching limbs are a symptom ___ the flu.
2. Goods are offered for sale ___ a certain price.
3. Careful savers invest money ___ banks.
4. You can bring ___ a successful outcome through hard work.
5. Money is handed ___ by the government to people who need it.
6. Casino Royale has been deemed ___ unsuitable for under-12s.
7. He was arrested for drugs possession with an intent ___ supply.
8. Tiger Woods loves participating ___ golf tournaments.
9. The shop closed down after numerous attacks ___ the owner.
10. The government are busy slashing ___ at the education budget.
11. I have been threatened ___ the sack if I don't do overtime.
12. My manager has been made ___ change our working hours.
13. My mum succeeded ___ getting her degree when she was 40.
14. My naughty dog is locked ___ ___ the house during the day.
15. My sister was banned ___ the pub after 2 days of drunkenness.
16. Lots of farmers protested the banning ___ hunting.
17. Teenagers love hanging ___ on street corners, don't they?
18. I think they prefer loitering ___ the town centre.
19. Smoking for years has led ___ his lung cancer.
20. After years of working illegally, I'm finally ___ the books at work.
21. The woman who didn't pay her council tax was put ___ prison.
22. She carried ___ with her studies, despite her horrific injuries.
23. Bibles are distributed ___ almost every country of the world.
24. The new album harkens ___ to the sound of their very first record.
25. Hard work can result ___ high achievements.



Check your answers

1. Aching limbs are a symptom *of* the flu.
2. Goods are offered for sale *at* a certain price.
3. Careful savers invest money *in* banks.
4. You can bring *about* a successful outcome through hard work.
5. Money is handed *out* by the government to people who need it.
6. Casino Royale has been deemed *as* unsuitable for under-12s.
7. He was arrested for drugs possession with an intent *to* supply.
8. Tiger Woods loves participating *in* golf tournaments.
9. The shop closed down after numerous attacks *on* the owner.
10. The government are busy slashing *away* at the education budget.
11. I have been threatened *with* the sack if I don't do overtime.
12. My manager has been made *to* change our working hours.
13. My mum succeeded *in* getting her degree when she was 40.
14. My naughty dog is locked *up in* the house during the day.
15. My sister was banned *from* the pub after 2 days of drunkenness.
16. Lots of farmers protested the banning *of* hunting.
17. Teenagers love hanging *out* on street corners, don't they?
18. I think they prefer loitering *in* the town centre.
19. Smoking for years has led *to* his lung cancer.
20. After years of working illegally, I'm finally *on* the books at work.
21. The woman who didn't pay her council tax was put *in* prison.
22. She carried *on* with her studies, despite her horrific injuries.
23. Bibles are distributed *in* almost every country of the world.
24. The new album harkens *back* to the sound of their very first record.
25. Hard work can result *in* high achievements.