

# PUNK DIES IN DARLO CELL

Tharunka 23/5/83

On the evening of April 16, 1983, a young punk was arrested in the streets of Darlinghurst and taken to the local cells. Some four hours later he was dead, just another name on the seemingly endless list of inner city victims.

The official cause of death has been filed as a mixture of drugs and alcohol. The police claim that 'Macca' was arrested for his own protection. An inner city undesirable, who due to his own 'bad habits' might have proven dangerous to himself or the public and had to be removed from the streets.

A witness (another detainee of the Darlinghurst squad) claims that Macca was unconscious (or may have been) at the time he was taken to the cells. Under police standing orders, persons in need of medical attention are to be taken to the nearest hospital or have a medical officer brought to them in the cells. Macca never received the attention he needed.

The police have yet to provide an adequate explanation of why he didn't receive adequate medical attention; it's not clear whether the oversight was purely one of negligence or whether it was intended!

In the past year there has been a concerted drive against the punks in Darlinghurst, who constitute approximately 80% of Sydney's punk population. The police claim that the clean-up operation is justified because of the stabbing of a taxi driver in the Moore Park area. The 'victim' described his attackers as punks, but the description in detail, could not really be taken to fit any local punk resident. In fact, those who roam inner city streets or dwell there know only too well that punks rarely generate violence. The perpetrators are usually skinheads, with their right wing Fascist over-tones. Most punks are anti-violence and anti-war as well as anti-establishment.

The continued harassment of punks in the inner city stems not from their criminal activities or fear of violence. The police act rather on an instinctual, or rather habitual, feeling of dislike for people who stand in contempt of

accepted social values. The 'punks' like bikies and hippies before them, are unacceptable cause they break social rules rather than the law. Their clothes, hairstyle and habits ree of contempt for the clean cut standards of society, of contempt for law enforcement officials.

The death of one punk in the Darlinghurst cells may seem relatively unimportant a one figure on a list of police statistics. But Macca's death has stirred up the in city.

Contrary to most of the popular myths about punks, many groups including the Gay community have pledged their support to any campaign we might wish to start over this death.

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