

APPEAL FOR WITNESSES

On 31st March 1990, the anti Poll Tax march to Trafalgar Square was subject to brutal attacks by the Metropolitan Police. These attacks continued into the evening, and many members of the public not involved in the demonstration were also assaulted.

However the police have made no effort to discipline the officers responsible. Instead have mounted a campaign against those demonstrators and other members of the public who defended themselves, or were merely unlucky enough to have been captured by the police at the time.

The Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign has been set up to defend over 500 people arrested as regards these events and expose what really happened that day. The campaign is independent of all political organisations and is run by and accountable to those arrested.

We are issuing an appeal to all those present to step forward with their account of the events of the day. We have been drawing up a chronology of events and even if you are unable to give an account of specific cases of police brutality, what you saw may be important in establishing the chain of events. However, if some particular event struck you and you are prepared to be a witness in court this would be particularly important.

We see that it is essential that mass resistance continues when individuals are victimised, fined and imprisoned. We face a hostile media and a malicious police force involved in a cover-up. Failure to properly defend those arrested weakens our ability to take to the streets when we need to. Please support this campaign. We desperately need donations and support if we are to prevent a police cover up and persecution of the Anti-Poll Tax movement.

Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign

The National Defence Campaign for all those arrested as a result of the
200,000 strong Anti-Poll Tax Demonstration on March 31st
c/o Haldane Society of Lawyers, 205 Panther House, 38 Mount Pleasant,
London WC1X 0AP Tel: 071-833-8958

STAND FIRM

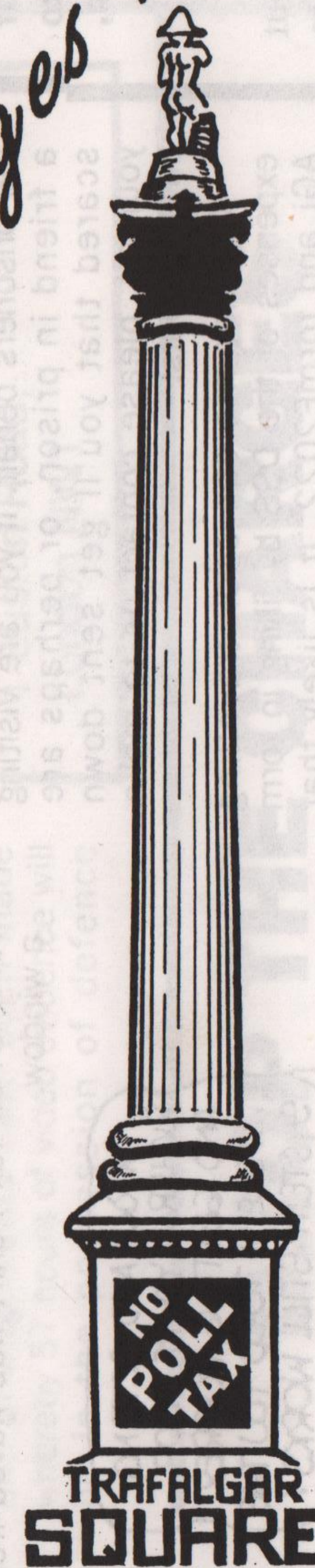
Newsletter of the Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign

No. 3 August 1990

ANTI-POLL TAX MARCH OCTOBER 20TH

**- We won't be beaten
off the streets!**

Drop the charges NOW



The London Federation of Anti-Poll Tax Unions has stood behind the TSDC in calling for a protest and festival on the 20th October. We are grateful that the Fed has thrown its resources into the fight as the TSDC is using all its efforts to defend the 500 plus arrested on March 31st.

We will be taking part in the events of the 20th...organising the legal monitoring and backup emergency lines.

Many defendants are still banned from entering Central London as well as new conditions imposed by magistrates recently that they do not attend ANY anti-Poll Tax protest. The TSDC asks friends of those affected by these draconian curfews to ensure they are still represented by taking along placards with their names and case details.

It's hoped that the march will be led by some of the people who will have completed an exhausting hike from Glasgow, Liverpool and Swansea to London in the People's March Against the Poll Tax. Others from the TSDC who have served terms in Britain's gruesome prisons either remanded or convicted since the 31st March are expected to form up in a group to protest at their treatment.

As the exact starting time for the demonstration has yet to be finalised, let alone the place of departure, maybe you

would like to tell us which way the demo should proceed. We have plenty

of suggestions already but we want as many people as possible consulted on this issue before the route is finalised. The more input we have the better the event can be planned.

Some of the more 'off the cuff' suggestions so far have included;

Hyde Park to Brockwell Park (where the festival takes place)

City of London to Brockwell Park

Embankment to ditto

River Thames Demo (a 'floating Anti-Poll Tax Carnival') outside the Houses of

Parliament with everything from rowing boats to gin palaces, barges to yachts, ferries to flotillas. Sounds bigger than the Daily Express Boat Show at Earl's Court!! (But get your tides tables right on this one! Ed)

Torchlit march FROM the festival to Trafalgar Square.

Can you do better than these — like organise an armada of Dutch, German and Swiss salvage tugs? Or get the striking North Sea oil and Gas field workers to send a floating delegation bearing down on the Thames Estuary?? Let the TSDC know ASAP. We like the idea of autonomous demonstrations occurring before, during and after the main one on Oct 20th but please remember that we are strongest when we stick together and STAND FIRM.

NO VICTIMISATION
DEFEND THE RIGHT TO DEMONSTRATE
NO POLL TAX

Sussex Poll Tax Resisters Fund

What we are about.

The Sussex Poll Tax Resisters' Support Fund was established by members of four local anti-Poll Tax groups immediately after March 31st to defend activists from Sussex being picked up in the police crackdown. Initially the local federation leaders (i.e. *Militant*) tried to set up a campaign which would only help with legal fees, not fines, and would not offer unconditional support to all defendants. We rejected this. Unconditional support is essential if we are to defend our movement against victimisation.

We have organised several benefits, raised money at other people's gigs, had some fairly successful "Pub crawls" where we take a bucket round selected local taverns, and held a stall at a pop festival and in the shopping centre, selling T shirts records etc. We have distributed two issues of a newsletter, which among other things gives the prison addresses of imprisoned defendants and asks people to write to them. We send delegates to TSDC meetings and urge defendants in other parts of the country to set up similar local groups, to publicise what really happened on the 31st March and defend all those arrested since on any Anti-Poll Tax activity.

SPTRF c/o 6 Tilbury Place, Brighton, Sussex

Glasgow March

A report in *Refuse and Resist*, a Scottish anti-Poll Tax newsletter mentions some incidents on the Glasgow anti-Poll Tax demo. As 45,000 people took to the streets, the police were ready with mounted police. They split the march into three sections — which was not acceptable to many demonstrators. At Ballater Street, the Edinburgh groups were split up, but eventually broke through the police to re-group. It was tense period of confrontation, and the police only backed down because of lack of numbers.

(*Refuse & Resist* is available from 2/3,182 Ark Lane, Glasgow G31 2JS)

National Demo Against Racist Attacks & Police Brutality Dewsbury 82 are Innocent Sat 1st September, Leeds Assemble: 1 pm Leeds Trades & Labour Club, Chappletown Road, Leeds 7

SELF DEFENCE IS NO OFFENCE

On Saturday 24th of June 1989, the Black community of Dewsbury was savagely attacked by both the police and the fascists of the British National Party (BNP). People from the asian community together with white anti-racists responded to defend themselves and the black community.

Over 750 police, some in battle dress, charged peaceful demonstrators that were opposing the presence of fascists in Dewsbury. The police wanted confrontation and mass arrest. On the day itself they arrested 59 people, mostly asian youth. Since that day, fishing raids have netted a further 22 from Leeds, Batley, Dewsbury and Sheffield. The courts have continued the criminalisation process begun by the police, with stringent bail conditions — passports seized, curfews imposed

and political activity (public meetings) to prove their innocence have been restricted for many of these defendants.

By now many of the defendants have received the conveyor belt injustice of the magistrates court (as we are undergoing now). Unfortunately the vast majority have received heavy fines. With 25 defendants face more serious charges, the police have decided to stage a **political show trial** starting on the 3rd September in Leeds.

The Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign sees the same sinister forces at work here as at the Anti-Poll Tax march, and urges everyone to attend this rally.

The Dewsbury 82 Defence Campaign can be contacted via the Kirklees Black Workers Group, c/o S.K. C.R.C., 24 Westgate, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire.

Haringey 12 9:30 am 17 September Highgate Magistrates Court, Bishops Road, London N6

Haringey 12

These are 12 defendants charged following the police (mainly TSG) attack on demonstrators outside Haringey Civic Centre in Wood Green on 5th March. This demonstration which passed off

largely peacefully was a protest against the setting of the Poll Tax. Charges are mainly under section 4 of the Public Order Act, but also assault and obstructing Police Officers. A picket is planned for the opening of these court cases.

Man about Town!

A series about men, professional men who don't ever hesitate or use fancy words when one or two expletives will suffice. This month's Man of the moment ...

TRAFALGAR SQUARE DEFENDANTS' CAMPAIGN

This campaign was launched on May 3rd involving defendants, solicitors and anti-poll tax activists and supporters.

It was agreed that the campaign would:

- *Unconditionally support all those arrested.

- * Be run by and be accountable to those arrested.

- * Be independent of all other organisations.

- * Demand the support of the whole Anti-Poll Tax movement and other sympathetic organisations.

We set ourselves the goal of raising £50,000 to meet initial costs. We have raised £3,000 but are still well short of finding this amount, and once again call for donations. Why not organise a benefit in your area?

We must remind you that the police are throwing enormous resources into their cover-up. Our response must match theirs. Their aim is to scare us off the streets. We must **STAND FIRM!**

They are still mounting fresh raids, and recently they photographed people living at the same address as the target of their fishing trip. This might mean a new departure in their frame-up techniques — if you can't frame the people you want, frame the people you've got!

We would like to thank the Haldane Society for their fantastic support in allowing us the use of their office. We would also remind everyone that the TSDC is quite separate from the Haldane Society, who bear no responsibility for what we publish.

Trafalgar Square
Defendants' Campaign
c/o Haldane Society, Room 205
Panther House, 38 Mount Pleasant,
London WC1X 0AP
Tel:071-833-8958

Commander Roy Ramm of Scotland Yard

Roy is an extremely busy kind of guy these days. So it took real perseverance to land any sort of interview with the commander. The only way we could get him to speak was if his heavily built chums could rip our office apart while Roy relaxed and shared his forthright views on crimebusting with us over a cup of herb tea or two. It came as some surprise to us all in the TSDC that our elegant features were splashed all over the Daily Mirror the following day under the strapline "Evil Monsters Must be Incarcerated"! So we have retaliated by refusing to print anything more than a cursory thumbnail sketch of the scumbag.

Butting In

Ramm is, as we all know, the present head of Operation Carnaby which is a sort of thinly disguised training scheme for police who haven't yet mastered the art of the frame-up and the subtle technique of D-I-Y (Destroy Itinerant Yobhos). Previous to his appointment he was floundering about South London chasing non-existent gangsters in a campaign to blame Black people for the new deadly menace of crack.

Drug Mountain Stashes of Yardie Nasties

Operation Yardie was initiated in the Brixton/Peckham area of London with Ramm in charge. The aim was two fold: one - to arrest Black people and, two - to get maximum exposure in the national and local press for some rather faded mugshots of 'Evil Black Mobsters' that the Press Office got cheap from the distributor of 'Shaft'. For months these twin aims were achieved. But then someone in the Brixton Police Monitoring Group collated Roy's tally of arrests with the number of raids he and the boys went on. Over sixty

flats were turned over in the campaign. ONE arrest was made for a tiny amount of Crack, plus the standard harassment over harmless sacramental herbs. Truly, the 'Crack Menace' had been staunch and Roy was free to move on to greater things.

Ramm Scam

Roy's next challenge came after the events of 31st March when he was called in to haul in some likely looking types to prosecute over the 'riot'. He started in typical fashion by slapping court orders on a mostly compliant media to seize film and photos of the massive Anti-Poll Tax Demo. Next, he took the photos he'd grabbed BACK to the same papers and asked them to run 'Rogues Galleries' under headlines screaming about the demonstrator's heinous crimes.

Scotland Yardies

Roy then used the media's hysteria over the mugshot's to start the same sort of brutal raids that had been his hallmark during the Yardie Operation. Dozens of raids have been mounted — in one case tear gas was sprayed merrily about despite a new born baby living there! Again the number of arrests made on these visits bears no relation to the numbers appearing in court.

Rammgate???

But Ramm's fishing expeditions will be measured against the eventual discovery in the many videos, both Police and independent, which will form the basis for public prosecution for officers for extreme acts of brutality like the attempted genocide of sections of the crowd by driving vans into them at speed; The services of someone with a record of obstructive sliminess may well be called for; Step forward, Richard Millhouse Nixon!

CROWN BACKS DOWN



Attempts to prevent defendants and their lawyers getting access to video evidence have been thwarted. The police have been boasting about the quantity of video tapes and still photo's they have ever since they added to their own by seizing material from the media. When defendants and their lawyers have requested to view the material all sorts of obstacles have been created.

Firstly, the viewing was turned into an evidence gathering operation by the police. Defendants were cautioned and scrutinised whilst watching the video. Hardly a proper way for us to examine evidence. Police took notes of conversations with solicitors

But also, police have simply mucked us around. One lawyer arranged to spend two days studying the material, but in the end they were only able to view two minutes of video "because the room had been double booked"!

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is the organisation which handles the legal side of prosecutions. At first they refused to make copies of the videos available. Then they offered to sell the videos at £30. (Are they going to be privatised???) Fortunately solicitors representing defendants have organised themselves into a group and have put pressure onto the CPS and the police. A delegation went to demand a complete copy of all video evidence.

Eventually, the CPS backed down, and arrangements have been made whereby 57 hours of video evidence will be in the possession of defence

lawyers (But always under police escort, while copies are made).

They have also contacted the Legal Aid Board to finance the copying, analysing and distribution of video evidence. £2000 has been granted. Solicitors are still working on getting copies of all photographic evidence.

It is hoped that proper viewing in a friendly environment can be organised by the middle of September at Powell and Spencers, the solicitors' firm.

Of course defendants should have had access to this material from the outset. But what has become clear is that we are dealing with a major cover-up of police incompetence/brutality. To have forced this climb down as a significant little victory

We feel this underlines the importance for all defendants to be involved in the campaign and to make sure that their solicitors are in touch with the solicitors group. Collective action is a powerful tool against bureaucratic manoeuvres.

The TSDC works closely with the *Solicitors Group* who are co-ordinating the legal aspects of defendants' cases. They can be contacted at:

Trafalgar Square Solicitors Group, c/o Joe Cooper, Bindman & Partners, 1 Euston Road, London NW1

DROP THE CHARGES RELEASE THE PRISONERS SMASH THE POLL TAX

So far only the more minor cases have been going through the courts. There has been a 30% acquittal rate despite the fact that defendants have been denied access to all the evidence.

In the one case that has gone to Crown Court, the defendant will be appealing, using evidence which only now the CPS and cops are willing to part with. It is a disgrace that a person can be slammed in prison, while the prosecution withholds evidence.

At the same time, local anti-Poll Tax groups are having to organise resistance to liability orders and the bailiffs. Following an occupation of a bailiff's office in Glasgow, 9 people have been charged with malicious damage. Meanwhile in Wandsworth, the anti-Poll Tax movement is being tested by Madigans — the bailiffs brought in to enforce the first seizure of goods.

The TSDC is quite clear that the attack on the anti-Poll Tax march was not simply an attack on our right to demonstrate — it was meant to intimidate us from any form of resistance.

While we are concentrating on the Trafalgar Square cases, we know that the fight against the Poll Tax is much broader. But this broader struggle will involve all sorts of people being criminalised. *This must be resisted!*

We say that the successful defense of the Trafalgar Square Defendants makes future attacks on all anti-Poll Tax activists harder. The Poll Tax has become a polarising issue in British society. We shall not defeat it easily — but we *shall* defeat it one way or another.

We send our solidarity to all those who are refusing to pay, collect or implement the Poll Tax, to the Greenwich strikers for their inspired stand in refusing to collect, the Poll Tax groups who are out there day in day out on the streets, the council estates, picketing the courts, organising McKenzie defences for those in the forefront of resisting Liability orders.

The authorities don't quite realise what they have taken on! The Poll Tax is a Pandora's Box of trouble for them!

Don't Squirm — Stand Firm



Q. I was on the Anti-Poll tax demonstration on March 31st. I would like to support your campaign, but there are one or two things I'm a bit worried about. Why do you give unconditional support to all those arrested?

A. The campaign doesn't want to sit in judgement over anyone. The situation is quite clear — the police launched an attack on the march and are now trying to blame not merely demonstrators but even passers by for what took place. We will support all those arrested. I would remind you that not one police officer has been disciplined, despite a mass of evidence indicating law breaking by a large number of police officers.

Q. Well, I appreciate that the police were responsible for starting the trouble, but how can that excuse the behaviour of the louts who just turned up to have a fight with the police?

A. I think you have been influenced to much by the newspapers. Let's get a few points clear from the start. As the Poll tax is a tax which effects everybody, then all sorts of people are going to get involved in the fight back — and they are going to bring the wealth of all their experience. For many it will be the first political campaign they have ever been involved in. For others, fighting the poll tax will be to continue a struggle they have been a part of for maybe years. Over the last ten years in particular, various groups of people have been thrown into conflict with the police — the Black community, striking miners and printers, travellers, hip-hoppers, football fans. You cannot expect people who have been subjected to the routine racism of the police, who have been brutalised on the picket lines, who have had their homes destroyed, their liberty curtailed, who have witnessed the slaughter of Hillsborough — you cannot expect such people to be neutral about the police. The fact of the matter is that the police misbehaviour at Trafalgar Square was not something new, but a continuation of a policy of going in hard against selected targets. More and more people who have been subjected to these attacks have reached the conclusion that self-defence is the best response. This is the consequence of experience, not some sort of innate "loutishness" dreamt up by the press. If you want to create a

WE UNCOND SUPP

"lout", give some one a blue uniform, riot gear and immunity from prosecution and let them loose in the West End.

Q. O.K., I know there has been trouble with the police before, and I recognise the importance of learning from experience. But really that's not enough to justify the attacks on buildings and cars. Some of the behaviour in the West End was disgusting!

A. I still remains unclear why the police drove the angry crowd into the West End — was a deliberate policy or simply incompetence? But let's look closely at just what happened. There have been no reports of demonstrators or "rioters" attacking members of the public. (Although plenty of accounts of police attacking members of the public). The newspapers chose to publicise lurid accounts put out by theatre managers and such like, about how they protected their clientele and their fears of fire bombs. But these prejudicial stories merely serve the interests of the big property owners of the West End. As soon as we move away from slur an innuendo, we discover that there were no fire bombs thrown that evening, that the fears boosted by the press and theatre proprietors were misplaced.

The stores which were attacked were generally the property of big business — precisely the people who benefit from the introduction of the poll tax. Some people obviously felt rather than simply retaliate against the vicious but stupid police officers, that effective self-defence meant attacking their paymasters as well. Often this was done with tact and care, inviting the staff and patrons to move out of the way before destroying a restaurant window. Demonstrators were involved in warning other members of the



HY DITIONAL PORT?

public that the police were running loose, and in particular making sure that those with small children could get to a place of safety. On one occasion when some fascists proposed making a racist attack on some Asians running a tobacconists, the crowd dealt with the matter immediately, with the fascists joining the evenings casualty list. In fact, aside from police action, there was nothing that occurred that anyone should feel ashamed off. That is why we stand for unconditional support for all those arrested.

Q. Come off it! There was all sorts of vandalism and looting going on. Surely you don't condone that. Surely you don't expect the mass of responsible people involved in opposing the poll tax to put up with this behaviour by a minority criminal element.

A. The press has been churning out the old idea of an under-class again. The right wing version of this says that the underclass is a natural part of society — some people are always going to be unable to cope/feckless/loutish/poor/criminal. The liberal version says society is rather unfair and unfortunately some people are driven by desperate poverty and deprivation to become criminals. The trouble with both these views is that they both say: These people are criminals even if it is sad that they are, and this doesn't encourage "criminals" to fight for their rights. Back in 1981, the underclass idea was used against Black youth in Britain — this time it is broader sections of youth, squatters etc. These people have been suffered constant attacks on all their rights and living standards and have learnt that the only way to respond to direct attacks including by the police is to

fight back — whether by defending themselves against the police or by smashing symbols of conspicuous consumption such as expensive cars and department stores.

If this "mass of responsible people" you talk about is serious, they will see through this pack of lies. The state has imposed a series of attacks affecting the young unemployed. They cannot stay in one place and sign-on and often they are forced into homelessness. Those of us living in London have seen the growth in begging over the past five years. No doubt this is cropping up in other cities. We have witnessed the imposition of grinding poverty reminiscent of the thirties on a section of the working class. If they choose to steal and loot to survive, who are we to criticise? If they use the opportunity of the poll tax demonstration, can other demonstrators complain? No, because these people are also affected by the poll tax. And when the "mass of responsible demonstrators" returns to their homes after the demonstration, the homeless have no homes to go to.

Q. But I'm not merely talking about those sorts of people. There seems to be sort of evidence that political extremists moved in on the march in order to turn it into a riot. In the end they carried out precisely what the police wanted to achieve through their provocations.

The press, the police, and even some left-wing groups have speculated on this, though they never quite agree who to blame. This is just a way of passing the buck. If there had been a premeditated attempt to cause a riot, there would have been much more damage, we would have seen petrol bombs and prepared weapons. This was not the case. Films show sticks of balsa wood being thrown at police — hardly an obvious choice of weapon. Now there has been debate by various shades of opinion as to what is the best way of defeating the poll tax. It is not the rôle of the Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign to decide what are the proper tactics to be used in the Anti-Poll Tax movement. These broader issues will develop along with the Anti-Poll Tax Movement itself. Our rôle is to co-ordinate the support for all those arrested as a result of March 31st demonstration.

Prisoner Solidarity

Write Now!

There are over thirty people in jail following the Battle of Trafalgar Square and the subsequent arrests. Whether they are on remand or serving a sentence, hearing from the outside is a great morale boost. We have been having difficulty finding out prisoners numbers, but these are the ones to write to till we get the rest.

Peter Chester, 0025, HMP Pentonville, Caledonian Road, London N7 8TT

David King, RA0711, HMP Wormwood Scrubs, Du Cann Road, London W12

Robert Robinson, RA0741, HMP Brixton, Jebb Avenue, London SW2

To underline how harsh the sentences given to Trafalgar Square defendants, compare Robert Robinson getting two years for kicking a police van (with no previous convictions) to that of a guy a week later who banged on the window of a police car after getting upset when a friend was arrested — 12 months conditional discharge.

Prisoners Welfare

The campaign has decided to make payments to prisoners of £10 per month. Of course there are problems in getting the money in to prisoners, particularly when they are only serving 28 days. We are relying on the prisoners friends to help with the arrangements, and if appropriate spending the money to buy things on the prisoners behalf. If you are visiting a friend in prison, or perhaps are scared that you'll get sent down yourself, please contact us to make arrangements.

Claimants can seek travelling expenses of the DSS by filling in form AGi and form F2022. It is likely that you'll run into some heavy bureaucracy here, but we will do everything we can to help.

We are only too aware how little this is to support prisoners. We would like to increase the amount, but this is dependant on how much money YOU help us raise!

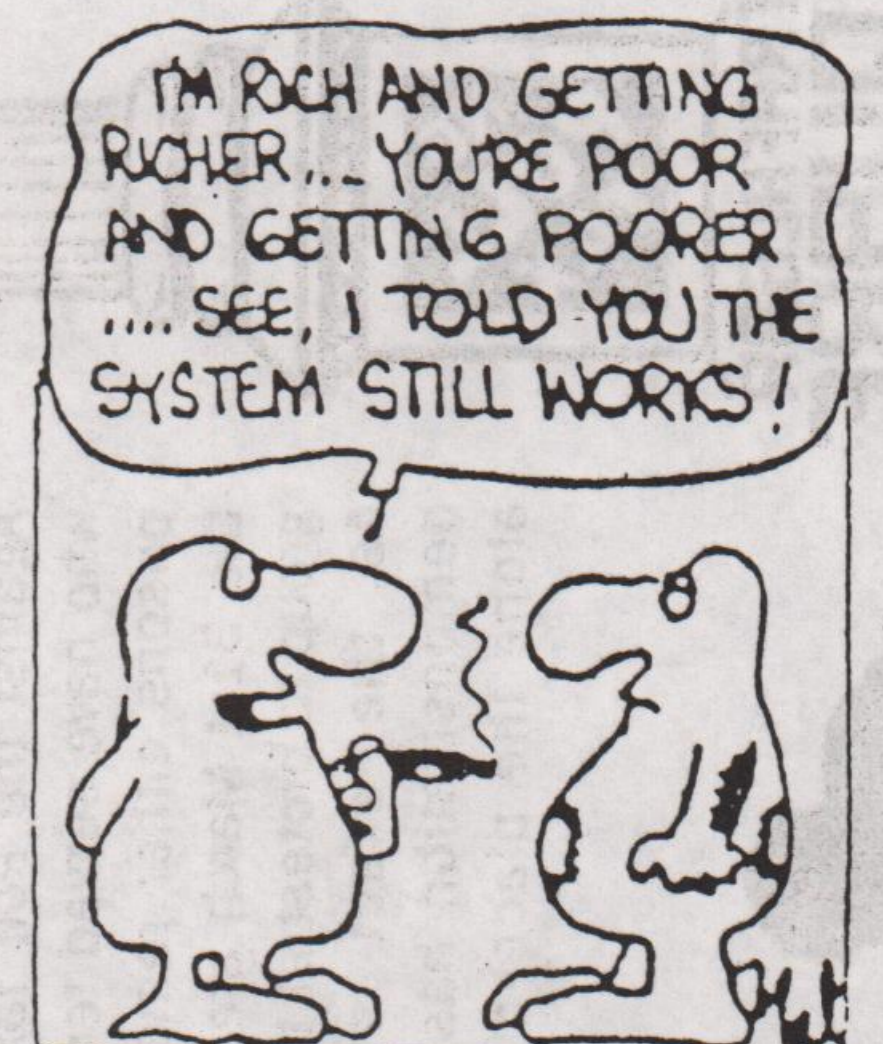
Prison Pickets

We held a successful picket of Pentonville prison on July 1st to support those jailed after the Battle of Trafalgar Square.

Among 100 or so TSDC supporters present were Anti-Poll Tax campaigners from Tottenham, Hackney, Southwark, Tooting and from local groups. Plenty of noise was made with various anti poll tax slogans and calls for solidarity with the defendants being chanted. Prisoners names were shouted through a megaphone to tell those on the inside that the picket was outside. Passing motorists tooted their support and many passers by were sympathetic and friendly.

A few banners were moved to the opposite side of the highway to face the cells and after further chanting and a hearty rendition of 'The Warriors' Song' by a spontaneous TSDC choir, the picket exchanged cheers and waves to some of the prisoners. A loud cheer accompanied the appearance of a 'NO POLL TAX' banner which was draped out of a cell window. Hopefully these solidarity actions can raise the morale of those incarcerated by the courts and remind them that we are thinking of them.

Another picket was held outside Brixton prison on Sunday 22nd July. About 30 of us went round the back of the prison to a spot where we could be seen and heard by at least some of the prisoners. We chanted slogans and used a megaphone to talk to the prisoners. They were certainly pleased that we had come to break the monotony of a Sunday afternoon inside. An anti-Poll Tax T-shirt was waved from a window.



Support those imprisoned — see you on the next prison picket!

Please send me more details about the Trafalgar Square Defendant's Campaign. I enclose a donation of £.....

Name

Address.....

TSDC, Room 205, Panther House, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X 0AP