

# Poll tax protests disrupt courts

Martin Wainwright

**P**OLL tax opponents clogged a magistrates' court yesterday when only eight out of 879 scheduled non-payment cases were heard in Goole, Humberside.

Two defendants were acquitted because of administrative errors by Conservative-controlled Boothferry district council, which is hoping to chase nearly 4,000 defaulters on its £313 tax through the courts.

The council's paperwork was described as a shambles by Christopher Hollerbach, unemployed, of Rawcliffe, near Goole, who was acquitted when his solicitor produced documents showing that his tax was not due until June 26.

The magistrates later warned 60 protesters in court not to applaud when points were scored against the council. There was a burst of clapping when defendant appeared in a T-shirt

with the slogan "Bollocks to the Poll Tax."

The clerk to the court asked: "Would you like to go home and take that T-shirt off?" To further applause the man refused but put on a jacket.

Some 200 protesters demonstrated outside the building at the start of the hearings. There was also a demonstration at Northampton magistrates' court where 37 defaulters were served with liability orders. They included a man whose defence that he was a Cornish tin miner and exempt from the tax by ancient statute was rejected.

Northampton council has opted to take action against a list of known opponents of the tax, rather than swamp local courts with all 25,000 people who have failed to pay any part of its £349 charge.

David Pallister adds: Eleven people were arrested in dawn raids yesterday by police investigating the anti-poll tax riot in Trafalgar Square in March.

## ANTI-POLL TAX OPEN FORUM

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- Stopping the Sheriff's Officers
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## LETTERS

Dear all at R. & R., Southampton

A copy of your paper was sent to me by Counter Information - very impressed. Anyway, I'm part of Portsmouth Anti-Poll Tax Union - not affiliated to the Fed. and fucking proud of it - (they denounce us as anarchist sectarians!) and we'd like some copies for our stall which we have outside Safeways every Saturday.

I enclose a fiver for some copies.

I could bore you silly with stories about Militant and the Fed. but life is possible outside it. I've popped in a couple of stamps to help with the postage.

Dave Carr

Box 245,  
St. Albans  
Herts.

Dear People,

Could you please send me a copy of your "Refuse & Resist" paper. I belong to our local A.P.T.U. here in St. Albans, which is not dominated by any political faction. Our meetings are organised along broadly Anarchist lines which has meant a continuing active presence by people who do not normally get involved in such things.

What our group needs is more communication with other groups. There is a Hertfordshire A.P.T. Federation but that is dominated by Militant, which has led to very little activity. Scotland has set the example for all the A.P.T.U.s in England, it would be good to get some hard factual information from you.

Thanking you in advance. Dave

Thanks to Counter Information, Red Action, Black Flag, Workers Press and other News sheets which have publicised R. & R.

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Dear Comrades,

Hull.

Your bulletin was given a plug in Black Flat and I'd appreciate if you could send a few copies down. We'll read them and pass them round so you can be sure they'll be well read.

Love and A

Hullo Refuse & Resist, London

Canning Town A.P.T.U. would be interested in receiving a copy of your paper for non-aligned (politically) A.P.T.U.s. It would also be useful to have contact with other Anti-Poll Tax groups, especially those in Scotland.

We are at the beginning, awaiting the summonses for non-payment to arrive. However, we're fighting back against this unjust, vindictive tax on existence, which makes the rich richer at the expense of everyone else.

Hope to hear from you soon.

In Solidarity,

Barbara, Canning Town A.P.T.U.

Dear R. & R.,

Greetings from Wales. We've just had the second annual conference of the Welsh Federation of Anti-Poll Tax Unions, at Swansea on the 9.6. Enclosed is a copy of the motions submitted and passed, etc.

The committee of the Welsh Fed. is dominated by Militant, and they managed to 'police' the conference quite well - all of the posts for the committee went to 'Milies' unopposed, and all recommendations of the steering committee were accepted. Guest speakers included Steve Nally, the trade unions officer from the Strathclyde Fed. and one from the Youth Rights Campaign. All round the hall were Militant posters, there was a Militant stall and the platform was festooned with Militant posters and papers. Other groups were not encouraged to display their material in a like manner!

Militant speakers are still peddling the Tory lie that the Trafalgar trouble was the result of a police 'over reaction' to groups deliberately starting trouble; in doing so Militant are creating divisions and marginalising those arrested.

In the end the conference was disappointing, not just because it was so obviously Militant dominated but also because attempts to wide the geographical base of the Fed. and make it a Fed. covering the whole of Wales (it's at present restricted to South Wales where Militant is stronger) were defeated on the recommendation of the steering committee.

Eddie (Canton APTG, Cardiff)

# REFUSE AND RESIST.

## NEWS FROM LOCAL ANTI-POLL TAX GROUPS

No. 4 PRICE BY DONATION

June/July '90

## VIOLENCE? WHAT VIOLENCE?

Much has been said and written over the last few months about the events of the anti-Poll Tax demo in London. But the glare of the media boys seems to have missed another major event that took place on March 31st. The event in question is the anti-Poll Tax demo on the streets of Glasgow.

45,000 people from all over Scotland took to the streets to show the Tories, the Councils, and the Sheriff Officers, that the people of Scotland (1.5 million not paid) won't stand for the Poll Tax or the collection procedure that comes with it.

Some people have pointed out that the Glasgow demo was peaceful and, to some extent, this is true. But, while we never had working class people having to defend themselves against the violence of the state, there were a number of incidents which seem to have escaped the notice of Campaign leaders. Maybe they just slipped someone's mind.

1. Before the demo took place the control of the event was handed over to the police, we can, and should, steward our own demos. 2. Before, and as the demo moved off, people were herded out of George Square by both Federation stewards and mounted police. This provoked anger among many demonstrators.

3. When we take to the streets in protest we shouldn't let the police split our ranks, yet the organisers calmly allowed the police to split the demo into three sections. This almost resulted in a mini-riot at the railway bridge in Ballater St., when the Edinburgh groups were split by mounted police. Several demonstrators demanded that stewards use their walkie-talkies to ask the demo leaders to stop until the march was re-united, but the stewards were more concerned with making demonstrators go along with police demands. After a tense period of confrontation, those who were being held back, broke through to re-group and it was only because of their lack of numbers that the police backed down.

4. Threats of violence were aimed at an R & R distributor on the demo by some members of Mil...oops! sorry, Castlemilk APTU. 5. The most disturbing incident of the day was when Jack Harvey (Assistant Secretary of the Strathclyde Fed. AND the chief steward of the march) was slashed at the rally in Queen's Park. Thankfully, Jack was not too badly injured, but we should have been able to ensure the safety of those who were on the demo, including the chief steward.

These incidents should never have happened. We can't allow the police to control, or take part in deciding, what actions we take. After all, they are only workers in uniform (Ho, ho, ho, I don't think).

Threats of violence, and acts of violence at the Glasgow demo, have not been condemned by the Federation leadership. Perhaps the perpetrators of violence were in the wrong organisation (or right one, depending on where you stand) to be condemned. But if violence is to play any part in our campaign, it should be aimed at our enemies, not our friends.

I would ask that double standards don't apply. I can, and will, support those who defend themselves against the violence of the state, before supporting those who intimidate and attack members of their own class.

**FIND OUT WHO YOUR REAL ENEMY IS. STAND UP AND DO THE RIGHT THING.**

(KIDDER)

## 11 held in search for rioters

Eleven people suspected of being involved in the Trafalgar Square anti-poll tax riot were arrested by police during a series of dawn raids on a housing estate in Stamford Hill, north London.

During the raid, doors were broken down and fittings and furniture smashed. Police carried search warrants entitling them to remove clothing and correspondence. Three people were later charged with violent disorder.

The operation in London, in which at least one man was injured, was described by the Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign as an "aggressive fishing expedition".

In one flat, police sprayed a dog with a gas cannister, according to a witness. Another described police in plain clothes moving on to an estate with hatchets slung over their shoulders.

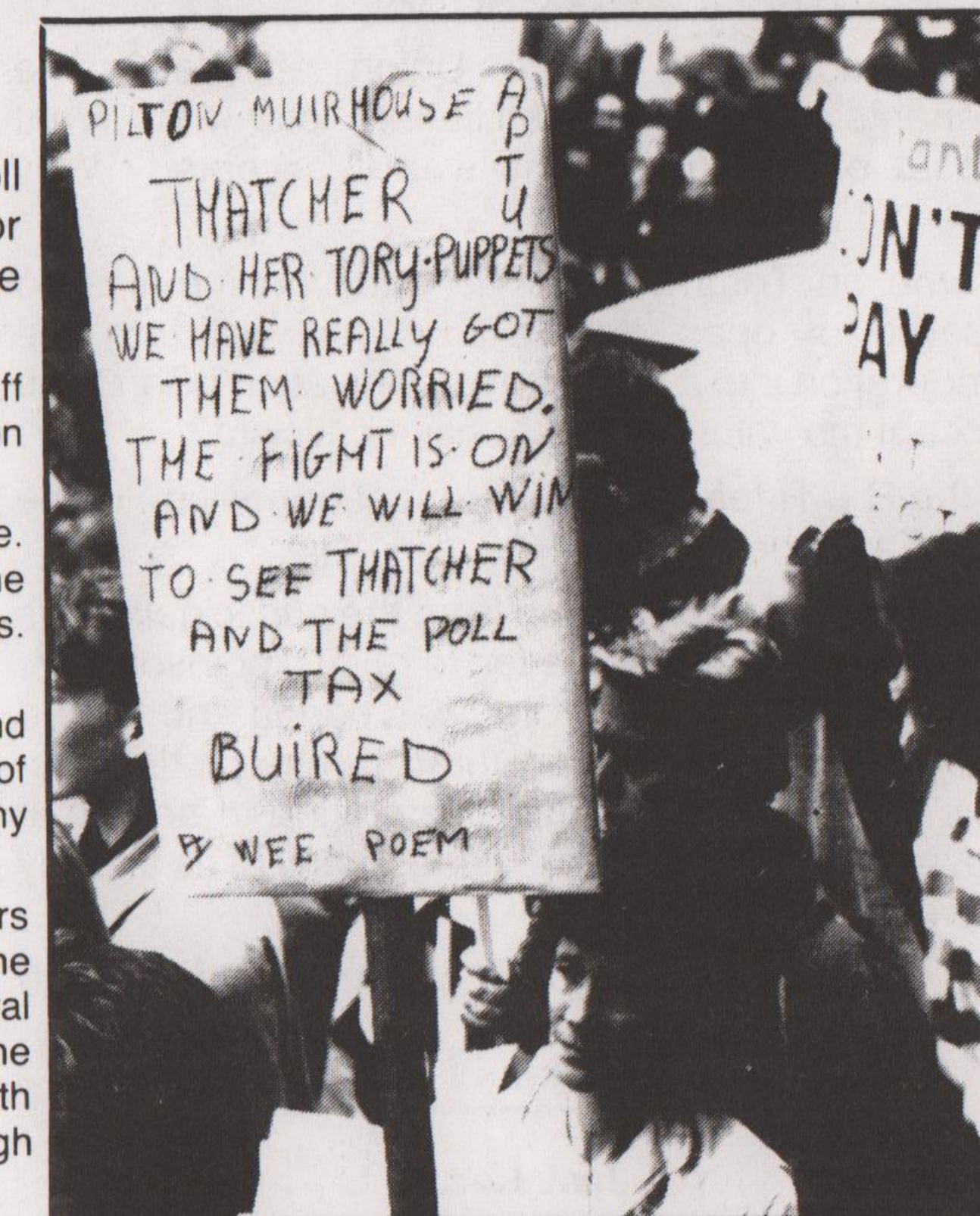
Scotland Yard at first said that those arrested were anarchists and supporters of animal rights groups living in eight squats in Hackney and Stoke

Newington, north London.

Later, a spokesman said six were being questioned about the riot and five about stolen goods.

He was unable to explain the reference to animal rights groups and denied that any of the 11 were suspected of taking part in recent bomb attacks by the Animal Liberation Front.

Five of the premises are on the Holmleigh Road estate in Stamford Hill, north London. Residents denied they were squats, although one block on the estate has been occupied by squatters for about four years.



## HERE WE GO

Resistance to the Poll Tax is winning out. The levels of non-payment and the massive difficulty of collecting unpaid tax for over 15 months is causing major problems for the Tory government and Regional Councils.

The Councils have passed over 1/2 million names to Sheriff Officers. But this has remained largely an empty threat. Unable to massage and disguise the figures any longer, the limited use of Sheriff Officers in Grampian and Lothians have not made much impact on the high levels of defiance.

In Strathclyde we have had false alarms in Foxbar and Dumbarton, and incidents in Barrhead and Lanarkshire, but the dozen or so firms of Sheriff Officers don't seem to know where to start. With occupation of at least 5 firms we have realised that attack is the best form of defence and forced Sheriff Officers to consider sticking to '4 Day Warning Notices' or risk further direct action against them. Maybe they're negotiating 'Danger Money!' In Edinburgh and the Lothians, the first wave of attempted poindings has ground to a halt, with less than 10% success for the Sheriff Officers and the Council changing the amount they pay firms like Love & Co. to performance based results.

GUARDIAN : Friday 22nd June 1990

Cont. p11

## EDITORIAL

When R & R sent two delegates to the recent Scottish Federation Conference, they were denied admission. The first excuse given was that the cheque for our Affiliation and delegation fees had not yet been cleared by the bank (12 days after Craig Beaton accepted it).

When Margaret Murray offered to pay cash, there was some consultation among Federation (Militant) stewards and Executive members who came up with a new reason for barring us from the hall.

**THE REFUSE & RESIST TEAM ARE NOT A BONA FIDE ANTI-POLL TAX GROUP!**

What about the Trade Union affiliates? The Tenants' Association affiliates? etc. etc. What about our cheque? Why was it accepted? Why hasn't it been returned?

Come on Tommy, are you and your cronies so scared of open debate that you will turn the Federation into a sectarian organisation? Can't you accept the value of constructive criticism?

If the R & R team don't represent opposition to the Poll Tax, who does?

We watched and listened from the public gallery as an Edinburgh delegate tried to raise a point of order concerning our plight. She was booed and hissed from the floor, and interrupted by the platform. Is this the 'truly democratic' Federation in action? If so, we might as well go it alone, many of us already have.

We need the Militant notion of democracy as much as we need the Poll Tax.

### Not Just Local!

Forming a support group to resist collection of the Poll Tax doesn't have to be confined to local community based groups.

The West Yorkshire Discussion Group, a Libertarian Socialist circle of writers for 'Here & Now' magazine, have just formed their own. This is in addition to 1 being a member of a hospital APT workplace group and 2 being involved in Armley APT. There is every expectation that the 'Free University of Glasgow' will also form such an interest based support network soon.

Contact F.U., Transmission, 28 King St. G1 5QP

### MESSAGE FROM MANAGUA

## THE GREAT ESCAPE

A number of people had to make a sharp exit from a recent occupation against benefit arrestments at a D.S.S. office. After the initial excitement of rushing in and barricading the place, two Militant full-timers called a meeting to begin negotiations. As time went by they stopped having meetings to decide what to do next and started negotiating with the police and then told everyone else what they had decided! The police were allowed into the occupation to make sure no damage was done. The staff could have done this. Some people were not prepared for the planned length of the occupation and had to leave early. The police, who had now checked all the barricades, and knew the number of people involved, insisted that everyone gave their name, address and date of birth before leaving. However, some people in this world don't see the point in giving these details to the police unless they have to. They left via a window. They may have even thought that the police are not neutral observers in the struggle against the poll tax, as the events in Trafalgar Square have clearly shown, but are there to serve the interests of the ruling class.

We can only hope that from now on Militant stick to their policy of not telling anti-poll tax groups they don't control, about planned occupations.

### The One That Got Away (With a Few Others).

### SHUT YOUR GOB . . . OR LOSE YOUR JOB

This is the message that Hackney Council are conveying to their employees through the political victimisation of Andy Murphy. Although Andy was reinstated (to avoid a damaging 24 hour strike before the May elections) he still has the threat of being sacked for his political beliefs, hanging over him.

On 8th May he was issued with a Notice of Complaint which states, "By acting as a spokesperson for Class War Federation, you have brought the Council into disrepute. The published material directly associates you with, and supports, the aims and principles of that organisation which are incompatible with the responsibilities of the Council and its employees".

The Council is attempting to 'vet' the political views of its employees. This poses a grave threat to every single Council Worker and it must be fought at all costs!

## GO SLOW AND APPEAL

The occupation at Anniesland and numerous pickets and lobbies at D.S.S. offices from Parkhead to Laurieston have taken place. CPSA low-grade D.S.S. and Dept. of Employment staff are being asked to 'go slow' or back up any workers victimised for not doing Income Support Arrestment work.

With the pressure of staff shortages amongst low-grade workers and growing computerisation and the introduction of new systems of payment, the CPSA has generally shown no enthusiasm to take on this extra workload. In Craigton D.S.S. for example, 1,000+ Arrestments for claimants in Penilee, Cardonald, Cokerhill, Govan, Ibrox-Cessnock etc. lie untouched a month after the Region sent them on.

At the same time, some Managers and HEOs are denying that claimants have the Right of Appeal against the arrestment of £1.85 for single people and £2.90 for couples, both in default of their 1989/90 Poll Tax. Although the argument is technical and typically complex, Welfare Rights Workers have confirmed that a Right of Appeal exists linked to 'Overpayment' Regulations, even although the Arrestments will be seen as a type of Direct Payment.

If no Written Decision is issued, there is no time limit to the Right of Appeal. The main point of appealing is to clog up the system with thousands of appeals, and also insist on the reinstatement of any benefit arrested prior to an Appeal being lodged. Welfare Rights offices and a good Information or Advice Centre should be able to advise claimants, but it is likely that a 'Test Case' will emerge which will give a good indication if a particular ground for appeal is likely to delay Direct Payment Arrestments.

On a ranking system, the Poll Tax comes a poor fourth to Rent, other Housing Charges such as 'Heat with Rent' and fuel debts. Claimants with a total of £5.55 being recovered from their Income Support for other arrears cannot have the Poll Tax added on to this and their case would go back to the Region for a 'bad debt' write-off or sent on to the Sheriff Officers with the other 400,000 high mountain.

It appears that only a small fraction of people on Income Support who have failed or refused to pay their Poll Tax have, as yet, been identified by the Region, said to be only 7,000 initially. This means many people, including young people on £28.80 a week are being pursued for the full Poll Tax, because of technicalities about forms being returned between April-June 1989. Many other claimants in the private rented sector are also continually moving around and causing enormous problems of tracing Poll Tax debts.

Local Anti-Poll Tax groups are active in publicising claimants Right of Appeal - opposite Craigton D.S.S. on the 28th June at 12.15 a rally is organised aiming to attract CPSA workers and claimants alike, or, as in Parkhead and Edinburgh developing links between workers and activists in the hope that solidarity can delay or refuse to collect the Poll Tax in this way. People on Income Support need to be persuaded to stay active in the anti-Poll Tax fight and not see their Direct Payment Arrestment as separate and unrelated to those threatened with Poindings and Warrant Sales.

Keith (Ibrox-Cessnock)

## HIGH NOON -for Sherriffs.

The anti poll tax movement defeated 3 attempts by the Sheriff Officers to carry out "mass poindings" in Edinburgh in April.

The Sheriffs men targetted 3 areas. Several non-payers in each neighbourhood received a letter fixing a date for a pointing and threatening that "If no-one is present on said date, the Warrant to enforce entry by breaking open, shut-lockfast places will, if necessary, be implemented".

On 10th April anti poll tax campaigners lay in wait for the Sheriff Officers at homes in the High St. area. The highlight of the day's resistance organised by Southside Against the Poll Tax - came when 200 people defended a non-payer's home by completely filling Paisley Close. Needless to say the Sheriffs didn't show.

The state thugs had put in an appearance earlier, at other homes, but the constant presence of protestors ensured that even when they gained access they were unable to point a single item.

The following day saw Haymarket Tollcross Anti Poll Tax Campaign co-ordinating the defence of non-payers in the Grassmarket area. The Sheriff's "dawn strike" was to no avail - even when the Sheriffs had police backup some non-payers kept their doors locked and bolted in defiance.

At lunchtime the Grassmarket was chock a block with 200 protestors who excitedly charged this way and that at the slightest hint of a suspected Sheriff Officer! It was another total victory for the Sheriffbusters - not one pointing all day.

### Stockbridge Show-Down

The Stockbridge and Comely Bank neighbourhoods were the scene for the next showdown. Over 17th-18th April 150 people were involved in defending 11 non-paying households. Being involved in Stockbridge New Town Anti Poll Tax Group I can describe what happened in some detail.

The successful two days physical defence of those non-payers homes was only possible because of our previous activity in the community. When, earlier this year, the Sheriff Officers had handdelivered threatening letters to local non-payers, our Group countered by flyposting STOP THE SHERIFF flyers, with our Hotline Phone Nos. We visited virtually everyone who rang with leaflets, advice etc.

The delivery of the "pointing" letters saw us repeat the flyposting and personal visits - together with an intensified advertising of our group meetings. Attendance leapt from 6-18 per fortnight to 25-30 weekly.

Around 15 non-payers from 11 households contacted us to say they had received

"pointing date" letters. At our group meetings we had long thorough discussions about what we should do. Eventually it was unanimously agreed we would muster as many people as possible to stand guard at each non-payers home. 3,000 leaflets advertising the resistance were distributed to local homes and the call was put out to other groups in Lothian.

On the 17th we were in position at all 6 homes before 8 a.m. (the earliest (normal) legal times for a pointing). All homes were in 'phone contact, with one acting as a base. There were leaflets for passers-by, plus an information sheet listing the homes being defended, Sheriffs car registration numbers, a lawyer's telephone number, etc.....

### Piled In

The Sheriff Officers made their move around 8.30 a.m. Several teams were involved. With one set seemingly acting as a decoy, 2 Sheriffs gained access to a flat in Cheyne St. But anti poll tax protestors piled in after them, and the Sheriffs were unable to point anything.



By now protestors from the other flats - alerted by phone - were converging on Cheyne St. The Sheriff Officers ignored the other nearby flats due for poindings and made a rapid exit stage left! Frantic chases ensued as the Sheriffs fled with nonpayers in hot pursuit. The state bully boys soon left the area, some with their car aerials resembling a surreal modern sculpture! No more poindings were attempted. That afternoon 100-150 people held an impromptu march round Stockbridge. This was a great success, drawing in passers-by and boosting morale sky-high. Our appetites whetted, we got stuck into the goodies at our "anti poll tax tea party" held outside some of the threatened homes.

Next day we successfully defended 5 homes. Sheriffs were sighted several times but our constant presence

## Pressured To Campaign

17 Anti-Poll Tax protestors face "Breach of the Peace" charges on the 20th/21st and 22nd June at the Sheriff Court in the Lawnmarket.

Pressure by 8 of the accused has forced the Lothian Federation and 'Militant' supporters into joining a campaign to have the charges (during an occupation of Love & Co. Sheriff Officers) dropped.

Stymied by statements, such as "We're too busy" (Andy Clachars Vice-Chairperson, but himself one of the accused), a meeting has been arranged to organise the lobby of the court on the 3 days and involve the independent Anti-Poll Tax groups. Faced with this groundswell from below, Andy Clachars announced that a Federation poster had been commissioned and that all the 17 would join the united campaign to "Defend the 17".

Info. from Edinburgh R. & R. Contacts

### POSSIL FIGHTS BACK

Possil APTU occupied D. Bruce, Sheriff Officers (Glasgow), to demand assurance on notice of pointing and to clear up the position of those on income support. 230 people took over the office until our demands were met.

OCCUPATIONS WORK! Take action into your own hands.  
Paul (Barmulloch College)

maintained right up to 8 p.m. - scared them off. Two days - not one pointing.

### Poindings No More

Since then the Sheriff Officers have, as far as we know, issued no more such letters setting dates for poindings.

The successful organisation of these actions was carried out by the local anti poll tax groups - all 3 are "independent" non-party dominated groups - with significant solidarity from round Lothian. Neither the Lothian Federation Executive nor any political tendency played any organising role. (Perhaps this is why the 'Militant' Federation Secretary omitted all mention of these actions in his "report" of Lothian activity to the Scottish Federation Conference.)

3 lessons that could be drawn from these events:-

- Don't be content to just defend 2 or 3 committed non-payers against poindings. Do extensive publicity to draw in all the others you don't know about.

- Guard every non-payers home from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. The Sheriffs usually strike early.

- Be ready to take action such as a local march round the threatened homes. This helps us go on the offensive. Everyone in the area should know what's going on.

John Ball, Stockbridge New Town Anti Poll Tax Group, Edinburgh

It was entirely predictable given that a precedent had already been set after Wapping, that the police would demand and be given access to all photographic and video film taken by journalists during the Poll Tax riot in Trafalgar square. This 'evidence' was, the police claimed, vital if they were to first identify, then arrest and prosecute the alleged 'ring leaders'. It was also entirely predictable that while some sections of the media would offer the 'evidence' with unconcealed enthusiasm others like the Guardian or Observer would refuse point blank on principle - until ordered to do so in court. This was an entirely proper protest commented the presiding judge approvingly, as the media in 'a free country' could not automatically be expected to become the "eyes and ears of the police" and in any case they had plenty of video and photographic evidence of their own. The owners, editors and journalists of those publications that contested the order in court may indeed feel that honour has been satisfied, or in any case hope that such a token gesture will be sufficient in future to distinguish their journalists from those of the 'police sheets' such as the Star and the Sun that eagerly volunteered the information. If so, they are liable to be quickly disillusioned. For in the real world it will matter little who is subsequently jailed. Whether the photographic evidence supplied to the prosecution came from the impeccably principled Guardian or the propagandists of the Daily star on the rabid right. The end result is the same. Both newspapers have supplied material to be sifted through by the police at their leisure; the police have been granted all the evidence which of course will be used selectively, in the sense that the police will select those photographs that in any subsequent court case **only** and exclusively are of benefit to the prosecution, similar contradictory evidence that might benefit a defendant can be trimmed, withheld or destroyed. What makes matters worse is the fact that what they the reporters witnessed, was not a clash between pro- and anti-Poll Tax demonstrators, with the police there as the impartial neutral representatives of law and order, it was in fact a battle **between** the police and the marchers, following an attack on the marchers by the police. Media hacks may in future seek refuge in the 'conspiracy theory' of their own making, that the riot was planned by groups such as Class War, which is laughable, or the SWP which if possible, is even more incredible. However, from eye-witness accounts, and the number of letters which

## WHEN NO NEWS MAY BE GOOD NEWS!

(Courtesy of RED ACTION)

ironically appeared in their own papers, there is some evidence that suggests such a conspiracy did indeed exist, that the riot was carefully planned and orchestrated by 'the enemies of democracy' not belonging to small and timid groups on the left, but instead to a cynical, powerful organisation on the right - the Metropolitan police.

### THE MET

1. One hour before any trouble, large numbers of plain clothes police were seen to infiltrate the crowd.  
2. The tactics employed outside Downing Street, first splitting the march in two, preventing thousands of people from reaching their destination naturally caused anger and confusion. Those that remonstrated or objected were imply attacked. Curiously, **exactly** the same tactic was used in 1984 during a large march in support of the miners with exactly the same result. Riot! Mass arrests! Media hysteria!  
3. The police refused point blank, to change the route or the rallying point of the march to Hyde Park which would have avoided the potential 'flash points' such as the S. African Embassy in Trafalgar Square, or Downing Street on the route. Despite the 'rumours' of trouble surfacing in the press, the week before they informed the Anti-Poll Tax Federation that such a request would have to be denied as they required 7 days notice in writing! Perhaps it was just coincidence that in these 'flash point areas' where the police video and cameras were located that the worst violence occurred.  
4. It was the police themselves that launched the first violent and unprovoked attack on the up to then completely peaceful crowd in Trafalgar Square. As the Home Secretary admitted in the House of Commons, the entirely legal assembly were not informed by the police that they wished to 'clear the area'. Neither were they at any time ordered or instructed to do so. There was no attempt at any verbal communication at all. So the use of violence or force was **not** used as a last resort; the police chose that method. It was done intentionally.  
5. Despite police claims that the objective was to clear the area, thousands of marchers who had travelled to London from around the country and whose coaches were parked on the Embankment were physically prevented by the police from getting to them, and instead were forced back in the direction of the trouble. All the tube stations in the

immediate area, Picadilly, Charing Cross, Waterloo, Leicester Square and for a radius of a couple of miles around were closed to the public.  
6. Large and conspicuous mounds of bricks and masonry had been dumped for no apparent reason on the pavement in the Haymarket. This was the one and only exit-route from the Square chosen by the police for the demonstrators still coralled outside the National Portrait Gallery at about 6.30. The impromptu march which resulted from the evacuation was unescorted by any police at all, so predictably the whole area echoed to the sound of broken glass. Apologists for the police say that all of this if true was as a result of 'inept policing'. If so, millions of pounds of rate payers money has been wasted in the riot control techniques the Met has been perfecting over the past 10 years. At no time except perhaps for a short period around Trafalgar Square when both the Higgs and Hill offices and the S. African Embassy were on fire did the police 'appear' to have bitten off more than they could comfortably chew - where they were not in complete control of the situation. The repeated charges by mounted and insufficient numbers of riot police were never intended and could not dislodge the 2,000 strong section fighting back. If the intention was not to disperse them, it was only to provoke them. At the very height of the fighting, hundreds of police loitered seemingly unperturbed and unemployed in Whitehall. Everything was obviously under control, everything was evidently going to plan. It is for this reason that the entire media are culpable, because not one paper has to our knowledge sought to answer these questions; the questions themselves have not even been posed. For them to then calmly hand over all visual evidence to the willing participants, if not the instigators of the riot, to help head-hunt those the police had pushed to a fight on the ground the police prepared and selected beforehand is to accept in advance of any inquiry the police version of events; that not only were they entirely blameless but that they 'acted with restraint'. Presumably they also accept that members of their own profession, journalists from the Daily Mail and Time magazine, victims of police aggression, were either rioting at the time, are secret members of Class War, or that

the injuries they suffered were self-inflicted.

Whatever the reason, whether it was due to a natural bias towards the police, self-censorship, or simply a case of collective funk, their response to all police pressure, undoubtedly means that in future, all representatives of the media will be regarded rightly as accomplices or potential accomplices of the police.

Because they are prepared to allow others to go to jail to avoid going to jail themselves (the probable result of defying the court) they have finally forfeited the last vestige of either integrity or independence.

On April 9th the Sun in its editorial, asked "why are some newspapers and TV companies reluctant to hand over Trafalgar Square riot pictures to Scotland yard? It is absurd to argue that photographers are in some way neutral observers. No-one is neutral in the struggle against violence".



AGENT OF THE STATE?

The Sun has admitted that their employees are "the willing agents of the state." We the general public should be grateful for this unusual not to say unique display of honesty. Now we know exactly where they stand, they can expect at some future date to discover exactly where we stand. Where the Sun, Sky TV, the Daily Star etc volunteer, others are conscripted after only the most timid resistance, the end result being in any case the same. During the battle in Trafalgar Square, there were a number of attacks on TV crws which were carried out by lone individuals and appeared quite spontaneous. There is little doubt that in the future these attacks may lose something of their spontaneity. When this happens there will be no point in them screaming about 'freedom of the press', nor will anything be gained by searching police files for the perpetrators, when they need only look in the mirror to see those ultimately responsible.

# STATE VIOLENCE

Trafalgar Square was just another violent episode that echoed many others in our recent history, the Miner's Strike, the Toxteth riot, Wapping, the Student Demo in 88. After each of these assaults on the general public (demonstrators are workers, students, husbands, wives, daughters, sons, in fact, the general public) more resources are made available to ensure that the Police Force are even better prepared for the next attack.

In the next few pages, some of those who witnessed and/or were forced to defend themselves against the violence of the State on March 31st, recount their experiences.

It is not for nothing that the Tories have poured vast sums of public money into "improving" the Police Force. When they increase numbers and produce well-equipped, well-trained, riot squads, they know what they are doing — **and it is not fighting crime.**

The harder the rich stamp on the poor, the more likely the poor are to retaliate. The Tories are as well aware of this as they are aware of the affects that their policies are having on the underpaid and the unemployed. They are waging a war on the majority of the population. A war that is both economic and physical. And they have been doing so for the past eleven years.

'We were given no warning . . . The use of horses was indiscriminate, it was surprising no one was killed'



STUDENT DEMO 1988

## THE AFTERMATH

Cont. p8.

It is total stupidity to say that the Poll Tax could be defeated by bricks and bottles alone. In fact, who would actually say that? The plain answer is no-one. Everyone involved in the struggle against the Poll Tax knows that it will only be defeated by mass non-payment across the country. But for mass non-payment to grow and develop, it must have a collective voice: that was the demonstration. And that's why the TUC and the Labour Party, despite all the pleas from Militant etc, were never going to organise a march against the Poll Tax. Because such a march would help to breakdown the crippling fear and isolation of much of the working class. Thus the demonstration and its development from that into a full-scale riot reflected the mood of many people, even those who did not actively participate in the riot. The mood was angry and defiant - it was not a mood of passivity, it was not a mood that was willing to listen to rhetoric from the platform and then go home happy. It was a mood of "fuck it, we've had enough". This is not a matter of "a tiny handful of anarchists" as both the popular and left papers have tried to portray it - this is a matter of a vast number of working class people. To deny that is to deny truth itself. For all the sickening lies of Militant, the fact is that a lot of their own members were ready to ruck and eagerly seized the opportunity to settle old scores and express their frustrations. The reason for this is that many of their members are ordinary working class people - not removed from reality bureaucrats, academics and other middle class professionals. A lot of people had a lot of anger that day.

The struggle against the Poll Tax, like all working class struggles, faces enormous problems and difficulties. One of the main problems that it faces is the control of all forms of media by the ruling class. This is not an absolute totalitarian control - such a policy would be counter-productive. It is a sophisticated and subtle policy that allows 'World In Action', Paul Foot in the 'Daily Mirror' and so on to give the illusion of freedom...but maintains a tight grip that ensures all media is dominated by bourgeois views, politics and opinions. If there had been no riot at the end of the demonstration, then it would have got no more than a few lines in the papers and a brief mention on the telly. Remember the Glasgow demonstration against the Poll Tax last year? Over 20,000 people were on it, a massive show of opposition that was quietly censored. Militant and their ilk complain about this and demand their right to be heard. We suffer from no such illusions and we do not seek to encourage such illusions within our class. But the media had to cover the riot - partly because they wanted to smear the mass movement, but also because it was so huge. So the demonstration and riot against the Poll Tax were spread across all front pages, on all news bulletins: no-one could now say that they did not know there was enormous and powerful opposition to the Poll Tax. And this, of course, can only help to build mass non-payment. All the isolated, worried, frightened people around the country would have taken great heart that they're not alone in their hatred of the Poll Tax and their desire to smash it into the ground. But Militant mean how the violence will "alienate" people from the struggle.

### 3.00pm

Peaceful sit down protest outside gates to Downing Street, two hours after the march began. Police in full riot gear charge without warning and beat protestors (photo). Demonstrators respond and jostle with police. Still calm in square.

### 3.15pm

Police cordon off Whitehall to divert march via Embankment and Northumberland Avenue to Trafalgar Square.

Heavy handed treatment causes scuffles and confrontation.

### 3.45pm

Police seal off Whitehall and charge trapped demonstrators with mounted police.

### 3.55pm

Demonstrators trapped in Whitehall by police cordons escape through side streets to re-join the diverted march on Embankment and Northumberland Avenue.

### 4.05pm

Crush at Trafalgar Square end of Northumberland Avenue as police attempt to force marchers to enter the square three abreast.

### 4.15pm

Crush so intense that crowd begin to shout 'Hillsborough' to police.

### 4.20pm

As rally ends, angry demonstrators focus on police causing crush at top of Northumberland Avenue and attempt to free demonstrators, many suffering crush injuries.

### 4.25pm

Press photographers climb scaffolding on corner of Northumberland Avenue, followed by demonstrators who throw missiles on police blockade below. Police line breaks and charges away down Northumberland Avenue. Police drive van into crowd at speed supported by 10 officers in riot gear. Forced to retreat by angry crowd.

### 4.35pm

Previously peaceful, but now excited crowd, having freed the crushed demonstrators in Northumberland Avenue, turn attention on Whitehall, which is guarded by a police cordon.

### 4.40pm

Pushing and jostling, ordinary police retreat and riot police advance, batoning indiscriminately, to edge of Trafalgar Square.

### 4.45pm

Police vans on the Strand drive into crowd at speed. One demonstrator caught up by van and dragged 60 yards. Angry crowd then attacks the vans.

### 4.50pm

Mounted riot police charge from Whitehall through Trafalgar Square to St. Martin's Lane, batoning and trampling crowd. Followed by numerous further charges, many injuries. Police forays provide target for missiles.

### 5.00pm

Running battles in Trafalgar Square, as police baton demonstrators who respond by attacking police vehicles. Portakabins on scaffolding on one corner set alight.

### 5.00-6.00pm

Most coaches depart.

### 5.30pm

Police force demonstrators to the north side of Trafalgar Square with ferocious baton charges, and disperse them into the West End where sporadic rioting, fighting and looting continue for several hours.

At 2.55 all thoughts of going home vanished when someone shouted "Look down there". Mounted police could be seen pouring out of a side street half-way down Whitehall and charging into the marchers. The sight of the enemy attacking our demo had a dramatic effect on the crowd in the square and the mood changed from one of 'this is boring' to 'let's fucking get into them'!

In the two minutes it took us to get there, the mounted police had ridden off towards parliament leaving injured marchers behind them. The situation now was that almost all the police were behind crash barriers on the Downing Street side of Whitehall, while we controlled the other half of it. In the street which the cavalry had charged from, people were busy putting half the contents of a skip through the windows of a nearby government ministry while the rest was passed forward to keep the police at bay. A TV camera crew arrived at this point but were pushed away before they could film anyone.

By now, lines of riot police had moved up Whitehall and there was a stand-off. We didn't have enough ammo to drive them back and they didn't have the numbers (yet) to charge so many of us. What happened was that the two groups stood only feet apart and every now and then scuffles would break out and fighting would spread along the line. Police would try and snatch someone, or some brave souls would grab a riot shield and drag the attached copper into the mob. On both sides gruesome 'tug of wars' happened when an unfortunate cop or

rioter would be pulled too and fro by us and them until one side or the other gave up.

Injuries were happening: coppers kicked in or felled by missiles, and rioters hit by batons. Whereas wounded cops went to the rear, most bloodied demonstrators stayed in the crowd - this after all, was not one to be missed!

Gradually, as police numbers grew, they were able to push us back into Trafalgar Square. But as it turned out, this was a mistake. In Whitehall you had a relatively small 'front', but as the police line came into the square, more and more demonstrators were able to get at them. By now, Trafalgar Sq was completely in the hands of the marchers - all police had been withdrawn. This meant that hundreds of people were able to climb up scaffolding on a building opposite the South African embassy, giving them a good view of the fighting. Apparently the march organisers were using their P.A. system to tell everyone to go home - but the square was still totally crowded, so obviously no-one was listening!

At this point the police made their biggest mistake of the day. For some reason the left hand side of their line (as we looked at them) was ordered to charge into the square while those on the right remained motionless. As they went forward they got hit from three sides and the charge slowed in the hail of missiles. They never made contact

## Police violence



mounted officers confront protesters off Whitehall.

but still they didn't move up the other half of their line, and more cops were sent into the 'beach-head' and tried to push further forward. This just meant that yet more people had access to them and it brought them within range of the people on the scaffolding - poles, bolts and fire extinguishers rained down and it was here that most police injuries occurred.

with the crowd, who just opened up and let them in - then let them have it with anything to hand. Instead of retreating, the cops tried to form a shield wall but were getting rapidly thinned out.

I was on the right hand side of the police (near Nelson's Column) and here we had very little to throw. People chucked what they could and the crowd roared when direct hits were scored. Those at the front were running towards the police and having to pick up missiles thrown by other sections of the crowd. Every now and then dazed and unconscious riot cops would be dragged from the fray. All we could do was cheer!

It was then that some bright spark on the scaffolding decided to set some portakabins alight (you must have seen this on the news). Then flames could be seen coming from the South African embassy. More cheers!

By now the action had moved past the embassy and up towards St Martins church. A cordon of 'ordinary' cops had formed in front of us and things were pretty quiet. One incident showed though that people here were still willing to have a go. A punk, who was totally pissed, picked up a rock and walked to within about three feet of the cordon. He threw it straight at a copper and then staggered back into the crowd. Two seconds later 3 plods and a flat-hat ran in after him. The punk started to run but because of his condition, he fell over. The cops pounced on top of him

and one of them got a pair of handcuffs out. People crowded round and someone shouted "Well come on then", and everyone piled in. The cops jumped up, forgetting their would-be prisoner, and I kicked the one with the handcuffs as hard as I could. They got battered and had to physically fight their way back to the cordon minus hats and radio's - you could see the blood on their faces.

Everyone was buzzing after that - this was our bit of the square and we weren't going to have pigs running round nicking people! As for the punk, he stayed on the floor a while, savouring his liberation in a drink and riot induced stupor!

After that I went up past St Martins church. It was 6.30pm by the clock and I was separated from my mates and wondering if/how I was going to get out of London. But there was still rioting to be done! I walked through the furthest line of police and into the narrow streets leading to Covent Garden, an area where no cop had yet ventured. Most shops had been well and truly looted but it was by no means indiscriminate.

For instance a kiosk was still open, selling food to the rioters while two doors down, Barclays Bank had been trashed. Sports cars were forming a burning barricade across the road but 50 yards away motorists were being waved through the crowd. It was wealth that was the target - Stringfellows nightclub, car showrooms, jewellers and West End yuppie shops - these were the victims, not small shopkeepers or passers-by as the gutter press would have you believe. For once it was the rich who got a taste of our anger - we should take it to the West End and Whitehall a lot more often.

I had to leave after that, tired but happy. When I got home and turned on the news, people were still at it. Superb!

From "Merseyside Anarchist"

## When anger turns to violence

IN THE aftermath of Trafalgar Square I see that the media is full of bursting with all the usual people, all falling over themselves to be the most appalled and surprised by the violence. There is a point of view, however, that is important and unrepresented.

I went along to the march to lend support and have a party. I belong to no organisation of any kind or colour. I have never before in my life been involved in violence against anyone and yet on the Saturday afternoon I found myself willingly taking part in the fighting. I would like to explain why this was so.

I have talked, I have written letters and attempted all manner of peaceful communication. I have attended numerous protest meetings and marches, all of them peacefully. The result has been that my voice has been ignored. Worse still, I have been talked down to, made to feel insignificant and inferior, made to apologise for wanting a modicum of justice in a country increasingly more unjust and outrageous. I have been intimidated and derided and on Saturday I was intimidated to the point where I felt unable to do anything more than vent my anger against all the people and places which seemed to stand for all of the above.

When I was driven at by an armoured van, when I was charged time and time again by police in full riot gear, when I was watching people standing around me being bludgeoned to the ground by truncheons, when a line of horses rode at me, when I saw groups of six or

seven officers arresting single people by the hair with the aid of truncheon stabs to the body. I had had enough and I joined the fight against it.

The talk of organised violence is mostly nonsense. Certainly a very small group of kids were there simply to fight, but even the police riot squads, with years of training, preparation, planning and experience, and numbering maybe 1-2,000 were disorganised and confused, so to imply that a group such as Class War, who couldn't organise themselves to go to the pub in the evening, were responsible for organising up to 3,000 people on the spur of the moment is ludicrous. The fact is that most of the crowd who rioted were doing so for the same reasons as I was.

I am not ashamed of my actions. I do not even pretend that I was making a point. I was simply very, very angry at being constantly ignored undermined and brushed aside.

People reading this letter may condemn me and tell me I did the cause a grave disservice, but if they believe that a peaceful, jolly march would have made Mrs Thatcher think again, then I'm afraid they are having serious problems with reality.

Whatever had happened on Saturday would have had no effect, the mass non-payment campaign will do that. The demonstration was simply a registering of feeling, and we must accept that the anger and frustration which became violence and destruction was an equally valid registering of feelings in the circumstances.

Name and address withheld.



An injured demonstrator

**"The police tried to push us from both sides in Whitehall. People were in a panic. There were young children there and old people, but the horses were stepping on anybody. Everyone was terrified. The police looked as though they were enjoying it. It's no surprise that some people started to throw bottles and cans."**

I was one of the thousands of peaceful protesters at the Anti-Poll Tax demonstration in London. Whilst the behaviour of some of the demonstrators was out of order, so too was the behaviour of the police.

The police appeared to be out of control at times and if they did have a strategy, it was a flawed one which contributed towards injury and damage instead of preventing it.

It appears that the trouble started in the Downing Street area. However, instead of containing the violence, the police pushed the violence into Trafalgar Square, where the majority were peacefully listening to the speeches.

The police mounted charges into the crowd on foot, on horseback and in vehicles. This inflamed what was by now, a tense situation and instead of having a few hundred people battling with them, drew in thousands who resented being beaten with truncheons and shields, trampled by horses and driven at by vehicles. If the police had wanted to incite a full scale riot, they could not have done it more effectively.

I saw a police car and van drive at about 30mph into a crowd of peaceful demonstrators, in front of Nelson's column. People had to run. When the vehicles came to a halt, they were attacked and their windows broken. They quickly turned around and drove out again at high speed through the crowd.

The latter part of this scene, the attack and the exit, was shown on ITN news but the beginning of the incident, the dangerous driving by the police, was not. The police car driver looked terrified when he realised the situation he had got himself into. Who ordered him to drive into the crowd?

The police then began to clear Trafalgar Square. The coach pick-up point was on the Embankment, to the South of the square. But the police closed the exits to the South and forced people North, out of the square. This pushed the rioters and ordinary demonstrators into Leicester Square and the West End.

In Trafalgar Square, there was very little for anyone to throw and not many targets to throw it at. In the West End there were piles of bricks and stones right next to streets full of plate glass windows. There were also thousands of puzzled and frightened tourists.

The police seriously mishandled the situation. They allowed what should have been a fairly minor incident, escalate into a full scale riot. Were the police incompetent? Did they for some reason wish to provoke the disturbances?

Alan Francis,  
Milton Keynes.

LETTERS IN THE  
GUARDIAN & GUARDIAN WEEKLY  
APRIL 7th 90

## How it happened

### Flashpoint 1

As demonstrators assembled in Kennington Park the police sought unnecessarily to antagonise those elements most likely to cause trouble. They attempted to take black flags from anarchist demonstrators and a police inspector told his officers: "Anyone with black flags, they've all been warned that they're going to get arrested." (Guardian 2/4/90)

### Flashpoint 2

An entirely peaceful and legitimate sit-down protest outside Downing Street (which is protected by 40ft gates), that was not obstructing the flow of the march, was suddenly, and without warning, charged by police in full riot gear. Demonstrators were batoned with a ferocity which inflamed the atmosphere of the crowd.

### Flashpoint 3

To divert the march from the scene they had created outside Downing Street, the police threw a cordon across Whitehall. Two friends separated by the sudden cordon tried to stay together and were wrestled to the ground and dragged away by seven officers. By roughly man-handling the crowd, this potentially calming measure was turned into a violent scuffle.

### Flashpoint 4

As the diverted march reached Trafalgar Square, the police blocked the road and, for no apparent reason, attempted to force the demonstrators to enter the square three abreast. A frightening crush quickly developed and the pushing led directly to the deployment of riot police who batoned demonstrators and became a target for counter attack. This triggered disturbances in a previously peaceful and relaxed Trafalgar Square.

### Flashpoint 5

Having provoked the crowd, the riot police chose not to contain or defuse the tension, but continued to charge indiscriminately both on foot and on horseback. These charges drew large sections of the crowd into the conflict, causing many injuries to peaceful demonstrators, and ultimately forcing the rioters out into the West End. This only made the situation worse.

The police are supposedly professionals, paid to maintain the peace by containing and defusing such situations. At each opportunity the police actions served only to inflame and incite the crowd. In the event over 400 people were injured, many needing hospital treatment. A more low-key approach by the police would surely have never led to this.

What we saw in Trafalgar Square is not new. Over the last fifteen years we have seen a number of police operations of this kind: at Grunwick, at Orgreave, at Wapping and when police attacked students at Westminster Bridge. During the Thatcher years brutal police tactics have been so regular that they have gained a certain 'legitimacy'.

## STOP PRESS

Mark Brown, 22, a student nurse, of St Albans, Hertfordshire, was jailed for 28 days at Horseferry Road Court, London, after being found guilty of threatening behaviour during the riot in Trafalgar Square.

"The Independent"  
Fri. 22.6.90

## ANTI-POLL TAX CAMPAIGNERS

It's essential that all local organisations, and town and regional federations back this campaign.

As anti-poll tax opposition continues to grow and becomes more effective, the authorities are getting worried. They are therefore looking for ways to frighten and discredit the movement, especially at a time when millions are preparing not to pay their first bills.

Following the mammoth demonstration on March 31st (and the wave of earlier protests at Town Halls around the country), the hysteria and 'outrage' of the police, media and politicians (left & right) was carefully orchestrated. They aim to give the impression that our movement, the largest campaign of mass civil disobedience in Britain this century, in advocating mass non-payment and non-co-operation, is somehow a 'threat to society'. It is, in fact, a threat to the Government's Poll Tax!

And it is backed, in varying degrees, by the majority of the population even if they don't yet feel able to join in. That's why so many people, according to opinion polls, understood what really happened at the national demonstration.

## SHOW TRIALS

By opposing the show trials of Trafalgar Square protestors which are coming up this summer we will undermine the authorities' efforts to divide or discredit the movement. But also we will re-affirm that the legal system of this country is far from the all-powerful monolith it likes to pretend it is.

In Scotland, Sheriff's Officers trying to steal non-payers' furniture face angry door-step crowds. In England and Wales the courts are preparing to force people to pay their bills this winter. BUT THEY WILL BE OVERWHELMED! THE TAX IS UNWORKABLE!

## SUCCESSFUL RESISTANCE

Successful mass defiance of unjust laws, and refusal to be intimidated by oppressive policing and hostile propaganda, is a great part of our traditions, from the original Peasant's Revolt against the 1381 Poll Tax, up till today. That's how workers won the right to organise, women won the right to vote, homeless people forced Councils to build homes in 1945 (by occupying hotels and army camps) and so on.

In all these struggles, it was essential to support those victimised, fined and imprisoned. THIS WE MUST DO NOW - BY SHOWING UNCONDITIONAL AND COMPLETE SOLIDARITY WITH THOSE ARRESTED IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE.

## SUPPORT THE TRAFALGAR SQUARE DEFENDANTS CAMPAIGN!

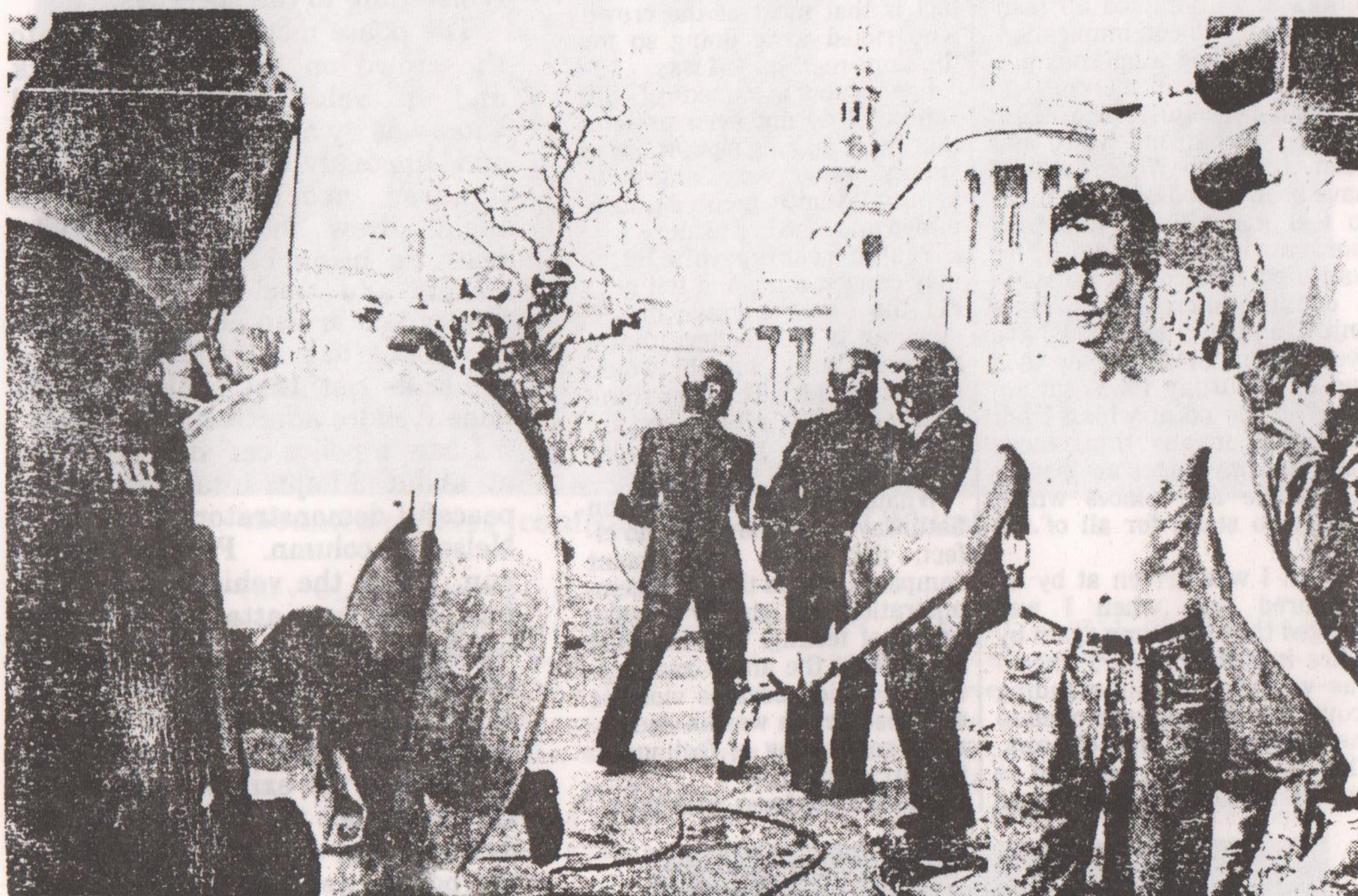


Cont. from p5.

against the Poll Tax. It might alienate a few sympathetic politicians and bureaucrats for whom the Poll Tax is a matter of individual conscience, a question of moralistic opposition...but we need them like we need a knife in the back! The rioting will not alienate all those millions of working class people whose opposition to the Poll Tax is based on class interests: in plain language, less money in the pocket, fewer needed services and the total insult of having to pay the same as someone who might be a millionaire. That opposition is not going to waver because of the rioting - it is going to be encouraged and stimulated even further. This is not mere rhetoric. The day after the demonstration, a local anti-Poll Tax stall had more than normal people coming up and asking questions and wanting to get involved. Only two people mentioned the rioting...and even after the media and politicians' onslaught on the riot which basically condemned everyone on it as a total nutter, both of these people thought that it was good! If the Poll Tax is going to be defeated, it is going to be defeated by class action and class action alone. Bureaucrats, politicians and moralism are the kiss of death. Lets not fool ourselves about this.

## STATEMENT OF AIMS

- (1) Unconditional defence for all those arrested on 31/3/90.
- (2) Campaign to be controlled by and be accountable to the defendants.
- (3) Campaign to be totally independent of any other organisation
- (4) We will seek support from the whole Anti-Poll Tax movement and all other sympathetic organisations.
- (5) The campaign will seek to coordinate the legal defence of all those arrested.
- (6) We will seek to build a coherent picture of events of 31/3/90 from the point of view of those arrested.
- (7) Campaign will publicise the points of view of defendants.
- (8) Raise money for a Bust Fund, controlled by the defendants to cover their legal and welfare costs.
- (9) To ensure that at all future Anti-Poll Tax events there will be proper legal cover and support for anyone arrested. This will include an office and workers to visit places of detention and look after prisoners welfare.



## Join the campaign

The Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign was launched on May 3 by defendants and their supporters, based mainly in the London area. It met again on May 10 and will be meeting weekly from now on.

The first 2 meetings have brought together a large number of people who have rapidly begun to deal with the urgency of the tasks facing us. Essential jobs such as fund raising for defendants welfare costs and monitoring the courts, to ensure all defendants are aware of the campaign, have

begun to be organised, as well as building support for the campaign and general publicity to trace witnesses and inform the A.P.T. movement of the campaign.

The T.S.D.C. is to be run by defendants for defendants, since it is us who are on the line. The whole movement, as well as trade unions, tenants associations, and community groups, etc., must support these victimised from the demo. We must fight back, against the massive witch hunt launched by the police and the government.

So Far the T.S.D.C. has gathered information on over 150 defendants from all over the country. However, we need regional defendants' support groups. Already people from B'ham will be launching a local defendants' campaign.

The March 31 Demo was a national expression of anger against the poll tax, and those arrested were from the whole movement.

Please launch a local Defendants' campaign, in touch with the T.S.D.C.

CONTACT THE T.S.D.C. AT:  
Haldane Society Lawyers,  
Panther House, 38 Mount  
Pleasant, London, W1.  
Ph. 071 833 8958

## NOTTINGHAM UPDATE

The independent groups, immediately after Trafalgar Square, set up a Nottingham Defence Fund to provide support for those arrested. 8 people in Nottingham arrested on that day, and 4 (including myself) arrested after the Council Chamber occupation. We've held two benefit gigs, had collections at others and received donations from two anti-Poll Tax groups; in all over £500 has been raised. We've contacted the Trafalgar Square Defence Campaign in London, and sent a letter to all anti-Poll Tax groups in Nottingham (about 30 now). We're offering unconditional support for all people arrested, and at our last meeting it was encouraging to have people from the Sneinton, Meadows and Beeston groups along as well as St. Anne's, Hyson Green/Forest Fields, Sherwood and Radford. People were actually talking about making independent contact between groups outside of the Federation.



Robin Hood, Robin Hood, riding through the glen...

It looks as if the Council are coming down very heavily on workers involved in anti-Poll Tax activity, and have banned all such meetings on Council property. They've also issued verbal warnings to the Nalgo branch chair and said there could be dismissals. There may well be strike action over the issue. Housing Benefit workers are now working a full 7-day week in order to try and clear the backlog, and rumour hath it that the Council has given up trying to chase and trace non-registrars. There was a lobby on Friday 25th May of the Council at County Hall in West Bridgford and about 80 people and dozens of police were there. I understand that a Council meeting was disrupted for nearly an hour on the same day by hecklers.

The bills were about four weeks late in Nottingham, and many people who have claimed rebates have been sent a full bill and told to pay up until it's sorted out. Gedling Borough Council (on the outskirts of Nottingham), in their breakdown of the bill, have included a levy for non-payers, which is probably liable to have a counter-productive effect from their point of view. As to the scale of nonpayment, your guess is as good as mine. The Council reckon on at least 40,000 (about 15-20%), but I think it could be much higher. There are an awful lot of "waverers", but at least there's a solid

basis of organisation in almost every area of Nottingham. In the working-class areas there's massive support. In Sherwood on paper, we have nearly 1,000 members, but what use is that if they're isolated and not even faintly involved?

On the whole, though, things seem to be going quite well.

Will Scarlett

## NON-PAYMENT FIGURES

A 'Newsnight' survey, 14th June BBC2, reveals that mass non-payment is a reality in the main English cities.

Figures given for non-payment after 10 weeks:-

Brent 75%, Hackney 70%, Haringay 65% (all London); Birmingham 50%, Derby 40%, North Tyneside 38%, Newcastle Upon Tyne 33%, Nottingham 25%.

In the London Borough of Newham, 65,000 'East-Enders' had not paid and another 17,000 had paid once and stopped. Stratford Court was said to be booked up solid from July indefinitely, and if most defaulters insisted on hearings, it would take an eternity to obtain

## HATFIELD ELECTION

The Hatfield Anti-Poll Tax Union, in which a number of Red Action supporters are involved, stood an Anti-Poll Tax Union candidate in the local elections in May. A number of options were proposed and discussed at a members' meeting, the most popular proving to be the standing of a single candidate in a Tory marginal. Most people were sensitive to the prospect of damaging Labour's precarious hold on the district Council which it currently controls by a majority of one. Other people felt that the Labour party's position on the Poll Tax is a disgrace since they not only propose to do the Tories' dirty work for them in collecting the tax, but also to impose legal penalties upon those who cannot or will not pay. Everyone (the decision was literally unanimous) felt that some form of protest needed to be made through the ballot box and so a single candidate was the selected option. We scored a highly respectable 400 votes, beating the Liberal Democrats who increased their own vote into fourth place. It is certainly the case that had the membership chosen to stand a candidate in a more promising (i.e. Labour held) ward, we would have gained two or even three times as many votes, and at least, have beaten the Tory candidate. It is believed that the Hatfield APTU was the only Union in the country (and in Scotland) to stand in the elections. The reason is not far to seek. The

National organisation, the All-British Federation, is dominated by the Militant Tendency. Militant do deserve serious credit for undertaking the organisation of a national anti-poll tax movement when no-one else, notably the SWP, did. However their fatuous conception of revolutionary action, ie entry into the Labour party and transformation of the country through the votes of parliamentary representatives, leads them to protect at all times a Labour party which not only, as they admit, is busy in eliminating all traces of socialism from its programme (let alone its legislation), but which expends huge resources in the effort to eliminate Militant itself. They are like the man in the joke who mends the fault in the guillotine by which he is to be executed. Militant members on the County Federation Committee succeeded in passing a resolution not condemning, but 'refusing to endorse' the Hatfield APTU's move.

The Hatfield APTU decided, through its members, to oblige the candidate to act as a delegate and so be bound to act, in all matters, according to the will of the union members as expressed by votes at union meetings. I cannot think of a single instance in which this procedure has been adopted within the British electoral system. It was not perhaps a giant step that would rock Westminster to its foundations. But it is certainly far more principled and democratic than the sad attempts of Militant to turn lead into gold by making the Labour party a vehicle of socialist revolution. We know where such attempts have lead in the past and where they will always lead in the future - to the betrayal of working people.

(Courtesy of RED ACTION)

'Liability Orders' (compelling people to tell the Council where they are employed or face the threat of a fine and Bailiffs). But as we all know in Scotland, it's easy to threaten but people don't take it seriously when the Poll Tax is grinding to a halt.

Keith (Ibros-Cessnock)

## DEEP END

The Tory Council in Poole, Dorset has obtained a Liability Order against Paul Ford, 33, 1 of 7 out of 85 people summoned who turned up in person. £30 court costs were added to the £325 Annual Charge due. This was the first 'successful' prosecution for the authorities.

'Independent' 15.6.90

## VOTING- with our Feet.

The Scottish Fed. Conference took place recently against the background of the riots which followed the London demonstration. A stormy debate ensued on the issue of the riots. Needless to say, we had all the arguments whilst they had all the votes. Militant's compromise position which condemned 'Troublemakers' was won over resolutions which took a harder and more supportive stance towards those who took part in the 'Battle of Trafalgar'. The Conference did, however, decide to affiliate to the Trafalgar Square defendants campaign which is a step in the right direction.

The delegates from Pollok and Easterhouse who proposed the Militant resolution "condemned all violence" but then went on to threaten anyone who "intended causing trouble" at local demos with "answering to the youth of the area". Talk about hypocrites!

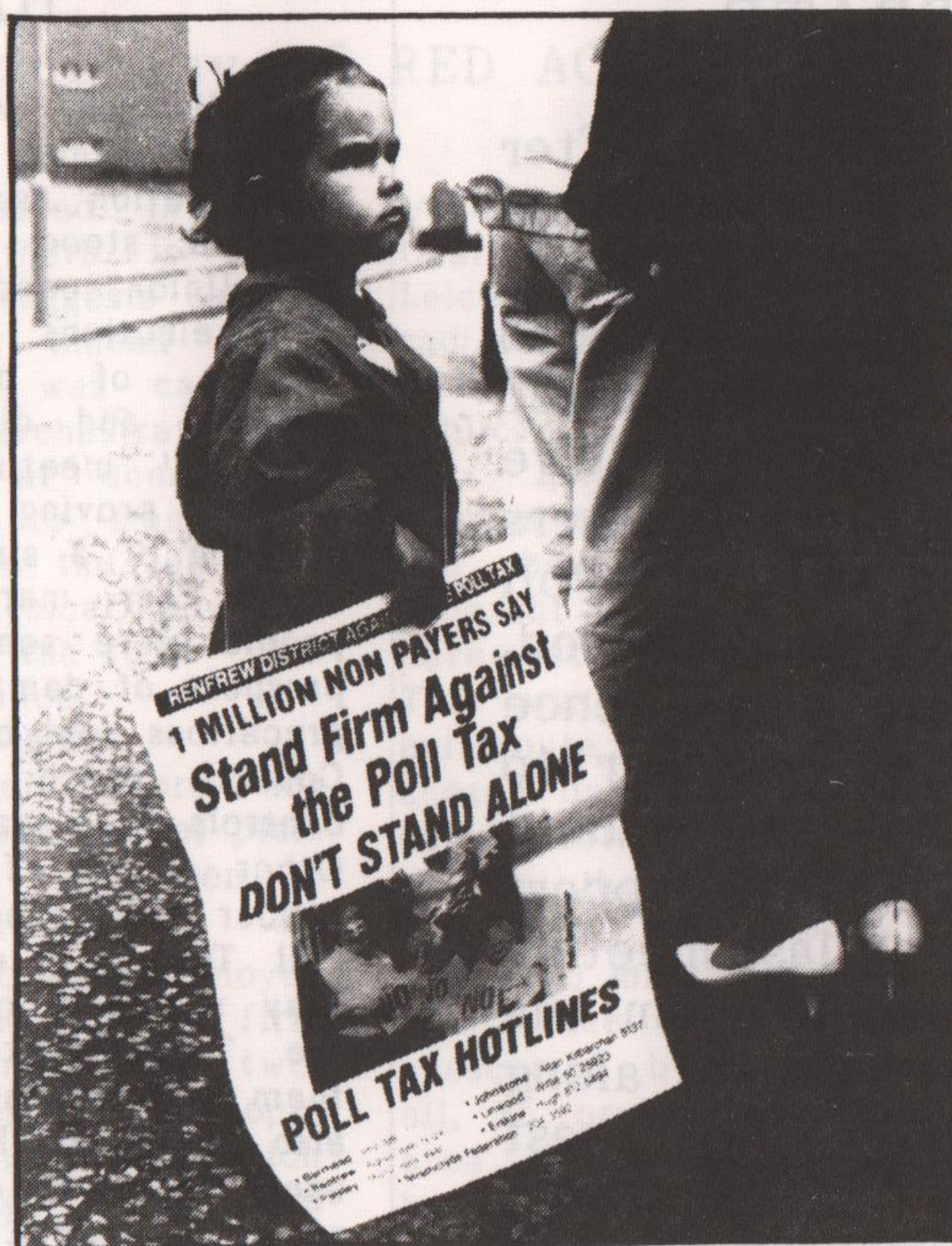
Barrhead A.P.T.U. put forward the SWP inspired resolution which "encouraged workers to add on Poll Tax supplements to their wage demands". Conference felt that this was a defeatist position which could undermine non-payment. A wage demand should be simply that. The link between the workplace and the Anti Poll Tax campaign should be non-payment and non-cooperation. The resolution was defeated.

Some of the more positive aspects of the Conference were the enthusiasm shown by delegates for the forthcoming Trade Union Conference in Liverpool. A workshop based conference will be convened despite the platform's initial 'doubts' as to its feasibility. These 'doubts' were magically transformed into support when Militant Regional Councillor Keith Simpson spoke in favour of the Stockbridge/Newtown resolution.

A resolution on Anti Racism/Anti Fascism was remitted in order that the Federation can discuss the types of action and mobilisations against Fascists and whether to affiliate to Glasgow Anti-Fascists (GAF). There was some hostility to GAF from Militant members whose main grumble seems to be the fact that they don't control GAF.

Overall, the Conference was a dull, disappointing and altogether predictable affair. The only highlight was when Tommy Sheridan referred to an interview given to the Evening Times by members of R. & R. editorial team. This seemed to re-animate many of the delegates who had either fallen asleep or were comatose! 300 delegates and visitors attended - 200 less than last year! Perhaps the biggest disappointment was that the majority of genuinely independent groups didn't bother to turn up, therefore giving Militant a completely 'trouble-free' and perfectly stage-managed conference.

Stevie (Dennistoun A.P.T.U.)



## With friends like these...

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) have had a tendency to yo-yo in and out of the anti-Poll Tax campaign in Scotland. Their approach to our struggle has been riddled with opportunism and sectarianism. Whilst SWP members are only too willing to advise and lecture us on what they see as the inadequacies of the campaign, most will run a mile if asked to do any real work such as leafletting an estate.

The SWP joined the fight against the Poll Tax 6 months after it had begun. This is because they adopted the position that as a community campaign it had no chance of mobilising anything significant against the Tories. After trying unsuccessfully to win over the massed ranks behind the Labour/STUC "Stop It", campaign, the SWP finally reached the conclusion that perhaps the Federation did have something to offer. Since joining the Federation, SWP members have been instructed to engage anti-Poll Tax activists in debate over almost anything but the Poll Tax. This is largely because the SWP are uncomfortable with any campaign which is not led by Trade Union Bureaucrats. Since the end of 1988, the SWP and Militant have been locked in a meaningless debate as to whether the cart comes before the horse, in terms of Trade Union involvement in the fight.

These tactics have altered only slightly since Paul McGarris centre-page article changed the line of Socialist Worker from heaping abuse on community based politics to showering praise on "the wonderful struggle" of the anti-Poll Tax unions. Only a handful of their members in Scotland have recognised the cynical opportunism of their party inside the Federation. Some have attempted to 'redeem' their reputations with at least some consistent work in their local anti Poll-Tax union. Others have simply left the SWP!

'Activity' against the Poll Tax for most SWP members consists of making long winded contributions at public meetings, selling papers outside of the meetings, and at all costs avoiding door to door leafletting.

Their scenario for industrial action against the Poll Tax involves a series of economic demands which avoid the question of the tax altogether, and results in a situation where Poll Tax workers take strike action for higher wages along with other Trade Unionists in order to offset the effects of the tax. (This strategy was proposed by the SWP inspired resolution from Barrhead at the recent Scottish Fed. Conference). Such a strategy rejects the notion that non-payment together with non-implementation can defeat the Poll Tax. Indeed, the whole question of non-payment has never been a comfortable one for the SWP. There has been so much confusion caused by their party's inconsistent line that many SWP members in Scotland have actually paid their Poll Tax. This should come as no surprise when leaders of the SWP such as Chris Bamberg were declaring in June 1989 that "There is nothing left in the Poll Tax for us".

A heated discussion in the Glasgow Central branch in August 1989 led to the majority, who had paid their Poll Tax, being labelled 'Scabs' by other members. Glasgow SWP full timer Alan "The Riddler" Ruddie then intervened with what must go down as the most inept piece of 'Marxist Analysis' in the last 2 years. He stated, "For us, the question of whether or not you pay your Poll Tax is irrelevant to the building of a campaign against it".

Even the best work of individual SW members has been destroyed by the dictates of their idiotic and incompetent leadership. It was noticeable that the only people at the Scottish Fed. Conference who appreciated the sectarian attack made upon R. & R. by Drew McEwan (SWP) were members of his own party, who have been conspicuous by their absence from local campaigns, and members of Militant. Indeed, after 'disassociating' himself from R. & R., McEwan then approached a member of our editorial team to "apologise" and "assure us" that "I'll be with you at the aggregates and when it comes to the bit!" (whatever that means?). Refuse and Resist can assure McEwan and his erstwhile comrades in the SWP that we need their support as much as we need a rope around our necks!

The SWP have an uncanny knack of making friends quickly and then losing them even faster. After their turn towards the A.P.T.U.'s came an even faster retreat during the ambulance dispute which consumed their members for 6 months. During the SWP dubbed "Pay Battle" last Summer, their involvement in A.P.T.U.'s was non-existent. It seems that the SWP, with a few notable exceptions, have taken every opportunity to avoid involvement in the anti-Poll Tax struggle, preferring to turn up at conferences and public meetings to lecture us on "How to beat the Tories". Speculation has been mounting amongst anti-Poll Tax activists that the threatened closure of Ravenscraig will again allow the SWP to get off the hook and jump onto another STUC bandwagon.

Stevie (Dennistoun)

## 'RANT & RAVE'

### Big Day Hue and Cry

Hue and Cry who have popped up on a number of Anti-Poll Tax gigs (well, Pat Kane) gave a new rendition of their song 'I Refuse' on Glasgow's Big Day. They turned the song into an Anti-Poll Tax ditty which went down well with the Glasgow crowd.

Keep up the refusing Pat & Co.

### 'The Red Mole' Writes:

#### Women Beware!

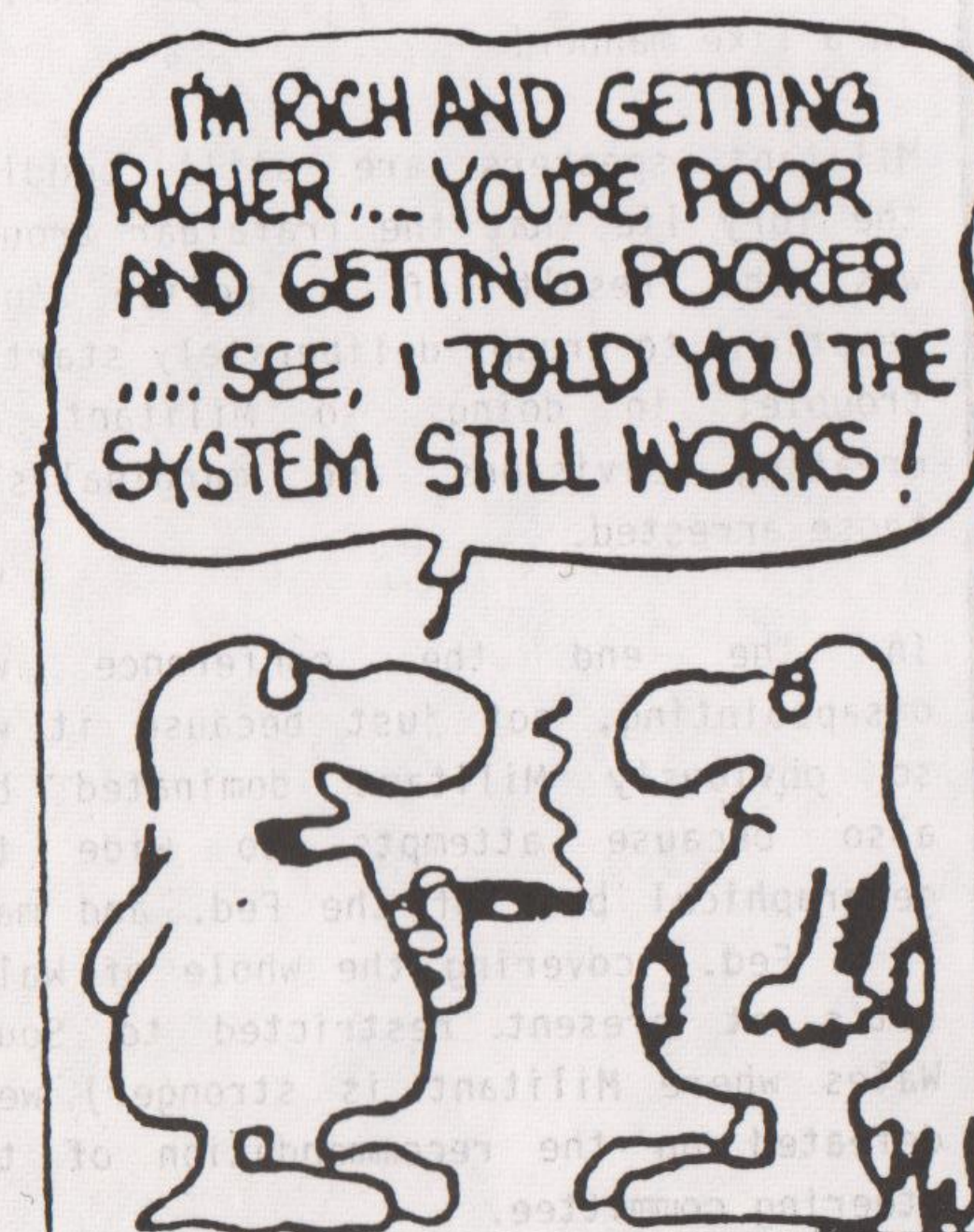
We hear that the Chair of the Cumbernauld Anti-Poll Tax campaign is none other than well known sexual harasser and Militant member, Kevin "I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll kick your door down" McVey. Kevin has been known to turn up at young women's doors at 4 a.m., demanding entry and threatening violence. You have been warned.

#### Doing A Hatton!

Former Militant General Committee member and Secretary of Shawland APTU (remember them?) David "Degsy" Churchley is now the manager of the Great Eastern Hotel, a privately run establishment for the homeless in Glasgow's East End. Our spies inside the hotel inform us that "Degsy" Churchley 'asks' residents to wash his swanky Range Rover car which is regularly parked at the front of the building. Talk about rubbing their noses in it!

#### Making A Bob Or Two!

Another former Militant Central Committee member who is now doing very nicely, thank you - is Bob Wylie. Former strategist for the Poll Tax campaign and Militant's Scottish spokesperson, Bob now writes for such 'revolutionary' journals as the Glasgow Herald, Observer Scotland and Scotland on Sunday. Bob has been able to overcome the grumbings of his former comrades by writing profiles of 'Battling' Labour MPs like Dick "The Miner's Friend" Douglas and of course his now legendary whitewash (sorry, profile) of former protege Tommy Armageddon. Nice work if you can get it!



### Riddles and Puzzles

"For us, the question of whether or not you pay your Poll Tax is irrelevant to building a campaign against it!"

(Alan "The Riddler" Ruddie, Glasgow SWP Full Timer).

"One successful Warrant Sale will finish off the campaign against the Poll Tax".

(Duncan "Donut" Brown, SWP; December 1989)

"The struggle over pay was wonderful. The Ambulance workers struggle was wonderful. And the struggle against the Poll Tax is wonderful."

(Duncan "Donut" Brown, SWP; March 1990)

### Changing Their Tune

"The police were 95% to blame for the riots"

Tommy Armageddon, Scottish Fed. Aggregate, April 1990)

"The police were 100% to blame for the riots"

(Tommy Armageddon, Scottish Fed. Conference, May 1990)

### Militantspeak

"Our stewards were spat upon and threatened"

(Tommy Armageddon, Strathclyde Fed. Aggregate, April 1990)

"Black Stewards and women Stewards were abused with racist and sexist language, and they were physically attacked and beaten up".

(Tommy Armageddon, Scottish Fed. Conference, May 1990;

### Pardon?

"We don't condone the looting and violence. But the police used a water cannon to put out a lighted match and inflamed the situation."

(Steve Wally - All Britain Anti Poll Tax Federation)

### HERE WE GO cont. from p1

Yet, local Anti-Poll Tax groups are not becoming complacent or lulled into a false sense of premature 'Victory'. Task Forces and local action squads are still necessary in every area, drawing up lists of volunteers prepared to be available at short notice, to mobilise outside the home of any threatened poinding.

In Govan, the local Federation has been holding a series of public meetings in every district of the area, to drum up support for their Street Committees. In Ibrox-Cessnock, regular stalls have persuaded around 80 local people to sign up for a Task Force. In this area and others, probably less than 1/3 of those are available during the day, but others have indicated they still want to be contacted at short notice or might 'go sick' if somebody is threatened locally.

### Lookalikes

Dear Rant & Rave,

I have recently noticed the remarkable resemblance, both personally and politically, between Militant NUS full timer and Anti-Poll Tax activist, Dougie Blackstock and Dr. Robert Runcie, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Are they perchance related? I think we should be told.

Yours,

T.T. McKey (Glasgow)



Dougie Blackstock

Dr. Robert Runcie

### April Fool

"We will hold our own enquiry which will go public, and which, if necessary, will name names".

(Steve Wally, A.B.A.P.T.F. Secretary; ITN, 9.45p.m. Sunday 1st April)

### Whose Side Are They On?

"We condemn the Anarchists and Quasi-Marxist sects who are attempting to justify unprovoked attacks on the police and looting. We call for a Labour Movement enquiry to unmask and deal with the disruptors and disorganisers of Saturday's demonstration."

(Militant Editorial Statement - 6th April 1990)

This local resistance, as the experience in Edinburgh and the Lothians prove, is as necessary as any Federation recruited group of 'Scumbusters', since it is always possible poindings could be at the same time and there would be a need to disperse our forces.

The Tory government is happy to exist on a diet of lies and deceit, not realising that in England and Wales the court system will be clogged up by masses of non-payers demanding a hearing. Collaborating Councils in Scotland are making provision for job losses if the 'Bad Debt Provision' (levels of non-payment) exceeds 6%. The official figure is at least 3 times that. The Poll Tax is becoming unworkable due to the effort and determination of local Anti-Poll Tax groups.

Jim McFarlane  
(Ibrox-Cessnock)