

COUNTER INFORMATION

JUNE/JULY/AUGUST 1990



Sheriff officers operating in Dalkeith, Lothian in early February return from lunch to find their car tyres mysteriously deflated!

DO THE RIGHT THING! (Resist)

Working class and community Resistance to the poll tax is on a scale never seen in this country for decades. More than a year after the introduction of the tax in Scotland over one million people haven't paid a penny or are at least four months in arrears, that represents almost 30% of the adult population. In some areas like the Western Isles this figure is nearer 50%. In the city of Glasgow it's 42%.

The introduction of the tax in England and Wales on 1st April sparked a huge wave of protest: We have reports of demonstrations and disrupted meetings in over 30 towns and cities. In some cases up to 3000 took part, in Hackney they rioted for hours! Especially significant was the large numbers of people involved, their refusal to be herded and pacified by state officials and the Labour Party. The protests were widespread, small towns were just as angry as inner cities.

On 31 March 200,000 people marched in London, 40,000 in Glasgow, smaller towns like Arbroath and Cheltenham also had No Poll Tax demos. The message from them all was simple and clear: **Don't Pay, Don't collect.** The riot in London was a legitimate expression of anger and rage not only at the poll tax but at the many other injustices in this society. It was caused by mounted cops attacking 300 people who sat down outside Downing St. People then fought back to defend themselves, in the end up to 10,000 people were involved. People were very selective in their actions, popular targets included posh shops, banks, luxury cars, and the South African embassy. In many cases looted goodies were shared or given away.

Many demonstrators were injured by indiscriminate baton charges. A total of 341 people were arrested at the time, plus others in the following week. A huge special

monitoring/surveillance unit has been set up to look at film and photograph obtained through court orders and special branch raids. These will be used to identify people involved in the riot. It will give the police tens of thousands of pictures of people who in their eyes are 'criminals and subversives' just because they were on a demonstration.

It is important that workers involved in administering and collecting the poll tax do everything in their power to stop it. This could include losing files, sabotage, and strikes. In Edinburgh workers have already taken action. On April 3rd. the Lothian Region branch of NALGO took a half day strike. 200 people joined the rally outside the council chambers.

- * In Sheffield 400 housing department staff went on strike for three days because of staffing shortages. They are now on a work to rule, refusing to carry out any extra work.

- * In Hackney a housing worker, Andy Murphy, was suspended for his involvement in "Class War", who supported peoples actions in the Trafalgar Square riot. On 6 April 50 fellow workers including some janitors walked out in his support.

- * Student nurses in London occupied the admin. office of Charing Cross Hospital, the health authority backed down completely over their plans to deduct the Poll Tax directly from their wages!

Elsewhere workers have forced statements from their bosses that no-one will be sacked for non-payment. This has been done by workers organising amongst themselves. Local Poll Tax groups can provide help producing leaflets etc..

Shotgun Justice

Gray & Scott Sheriff officers are having a difficult time in Edinburgh. If its not their offices being paint-bombed or invaded by angry non-payers, then they're being chased out of streets all over the city:

- * 300 people filled Jeffery Street on 7 March to stop a pointing (valuation of debtors goods, leading to a warrant sale).

- * 300 stopped the sheriffs in the High Street on 10 April.

- * 200 people were involved guarding 4 flats in the Grassmarket area from 8 am to 8pm on 11 April.

- * Two anti-Poll Tax street parties, an impromptu march and chasing the Sheriffs out of the area were some of the highlights when 150 people defended 11 flats in Stockbridge and Comely Bank from 8am to 8pm on 17 and 18 April.

- * In the Pilton scheme the Sheriffs were physically chased away, one of them in pain after encountering some enthusiastic community spirit.

- * Seafield in W. Lothian has less than 1200 houses, 100 people turned up to stop a threatened pointing!

- * In the East coast town of Dunbar the Sheriffs were escorted out of a house at gunpoint!

In all these attempts the Sheriffs failed to point anything! We have reliable reports that two of the six Sheriffs employed by Adamsons in Falkirk have already quit following spirited opposition in West Lothian.

In Strathclyde there have been at least four occupations of Sheriff Officers offices. On 18 April the offices of George Walker (Sheriff officers) were occupied by 40 people FOR OVER 28 HOURS. In the following week three other Sheriff officers were occupied, including one by Pollok Against The Poll Tax on 23 April. On 11 May 40 people occupied an Easterhouse DSS office for 10 hours to protest at Poll Tax deductions from claimants benefits. In Dumfries the Local Anti-Poll Tax group invaded the offices of Grey & Scott Sheriff officers in mid-March to carry out a mock pointing.

Non-payers in Scotland are encouraged at the level of resistance from England. Many are asking why are we so meek in our physical opposition to the Poll Tax when so many of us are not paying? Perhaps in the beginning we listened to too many 'experts', 'leaders' and political parties telling us not to worry, that they would defeat the tax for us. The last thing they wanted was for people to get a sense of their own power, to realise that they alone had the real power to defeat the tax.. Thankfully not everyone placed all their hope in the courts, or ballot boxes doing it for them, people are now learning to do it for themselves as the sheer scale of community resistance has shown.

The Poll Tax will be won or lost depending on how we organise ourselves. It is not enough to be morally opposed to

Continued on back page

STRANGE RUMOURS

THROUGHOUT the Strangeways siege the media gave a large variety of reports. There were all the stories of suspected dead, up to 30 at one point, including Dennis Davis, alive and well and serving 7 years in Armley, Leeds. *Today* described kangaroo court scenes. The story came from the police who weren't allowed in the jail at the time. Everything that could have been said about Rule 43 prisoners was said. They were attacked, and Derek White on remand charged with sex offences, later died in hospital after being beaten by other prisoners. But as Philip Randall, Senior Consultant at North Manchester General Hospital said, 'There was nothing to support rumours that some of the prisoners had been mutilated.'

EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE

Somewhere in amongst all this a few articles slipped in about conditions in prison. An ex-inmate watching two of his old friends on the roof at Strangeways was 'a bit upset that it has taken all these years for the public to find out what it is like in there.' Prison exists to defend the power and property of the ruling class. 62% of crime is against property, inevitable when 7% of the population owns 84% of the wealth. Of course there is anti-social crime, but no questions were asked about new ways of dealing with this.

With over 1,000 inmates rioting at Strangeways and disturbances spreading to almost every prison it's more obvious than ever that the penal system is fundamentally flawed and simply doesn't work. Among the many disturbances 450 prisoners took control of three wings for 24 hours at Dartmoor. At Horfield Prison, Bristol inmates took control of two wings for 12 hours. A rooftop banner read 'Dartmoor Boys on Tour'. At Pucklechurch Remand Centre near Bristol 100 inmates, all under 21, were involved in an 18 hour rooftop protest. However David Mellor thought that 'experiences in recent weeks have proved how efficient and effective our system is.'

BORN EVIL

The tabloids were content with convincing us that the men involved were, like all prisoners, born evil. The more liberal qualities tried to give explanations about why the riot started, overcrowding etc. 18,000 inmates, 10,000 on remand, 2 or 3 to a cell in 28 local and remand prisons. They were then amazed to find that trouble was breaking out in modern prisons where there

was no overcrowding. The repressive regime in prisons doesn't disappear with a few extra toilets.

WE ARE HUMAN

Walter Scott, the prison officer who died, was not involved in dealing with the riot, having fallen ill earlier. Another fact that seemed to have been forgotten by the media. In response, the prisoners on the roof at Strangeways put out a banner saying they were sorry for the Scott family, adding 'We Are Human'. Throughout the protest the authorities failed to stop them getting that basic point across. Police car sirens were used so that family and friends outside couldn't hear them. At one point a banner was produced by the crowd: 'No Reprisals for HM Prisoners'. Many prisoners transferred from Strangeways have already made official complaints that they were becoming the victims of reprisals by prison officers.

At the end many spectators were shouting for those on the roof to carry on. Searchlights, water hoses and strobe lights were all used on the prisoners at night as well as recordings of machine-gun fire and mortars. The police helicopter blaring out pop and classical music, a tactic learned from the U.S. Marines trying to flush out Noriega in Panama, had them waltzing and chucking more slates in defiance. The use of water hoses brought out one inmate with his towel and toothbrush.

After 25 days they could still dictate their own terms of surrender. Events in London on March 31st seem to have provided some inspiration as a No Poll Tax banner appeared on the first day. All ten wings on the prison were destroyed and the cost of rebuilding will be around £200 million.

The government's solution is to spend £1.2 billion on building more prisons with an extra 10,000 places bringing the total to 55,000 by the mid-1990s. They plan to introduce a prison mutiny law, make conditions better for the screws, employ 200 new ones and spend another £75,000 on riot equipment. David Waddington summed up the government's understanding of the situation when he said, 'It is unthinkable that a city the size of Manchester should be without its own local prison.'

Despite already having the largest prison population in Western Europe, a government White Paper proposes to increase the prison population by 3,000 by abolishing remission and cutting parole. In the long term, as in every other walk of life, they want the profit motive and competition introduced, so they advocate privatisation. Ask John Perotti about the success of prisons run as private companies in the U.S.A. where the industry needs crime to exist.

DEATH STRIKE U.S.A.

The hunger strike to the death, organised by three inmates of the control unit at Southern Ohio Correctional Facility (SOCF) in Lucasville, went ahead on Feb.14th.

The strike was to oppose the oppressive prison conditions. Because of its postponement from January, the prisoncrats got wind of the impending action, and on Feb.2nd John Perotti, one of the organisers, was attacked in his cell by ten goons in riot gear. His nose and teeth were broken, his eyes blackened. He was CS gassed continuously for 30 minutes.

When almost dead, he was beaten into a shower, gassed again, then chained and cuffed, dragged face down to a van, beaten all the way to state hospital - receiving NO treatment - then thrown back into isolation at SOCF. On Feb.9th he was transferred to Lebanon Correctional Institute, Ohio, where he was thrown into the 'hole'.

John was jailed 15 years ago for the non-violent theft of \$7. His original sentence has been repeatedly added to because of his activism in prison. John is a delegate of the revolutionary union the Industrial Workers of the World.

Feb.14th : Death strike starts. At SOCF 700 prisoners (one third of the population) join the first day in solidarity. Eric Swafford (one of the Lucasville 3) is transferred, to Chillicothe Correctional Institution, Ohio. Around the U.S.A. other prisoners join in; Orient Prison, Wisconsin, 10 joined for one week; at Stelton Control Unit and at Gigi Harbor women's prison; also at Marion Fed. prison. There was much local grass-roots support.

As part of a Day of Action, demos were held at U.S. embassies in Edinburgh and London, and U.S. business interests were picketed in Manchester. The flood of protest letters from all round the world had a real impact on the authorities.

On Feb.25th the Governor of Ohio ordered an enquiry into the strikers' demands. The strike was called off, but John remained on hunger strike for some time longer.

John is fighting not only for himself but for the dignity of all prisoners, not only in Ohio, but ultimately the whole world over. Prisons are not for "correction". They're for humiliation, degradation and oppressing the working class.

For exposing the brutality of such stinking cess-pits we must support John Perotti, and his fellow prisoners. John writes: "The international support was the major factor in the strike's limited success."

SUPPORT : John Perotti, Lebanon Correctional Institution, no.167712, PO Box 56, Lebanon, Ohio, 45036, U.S.A..

PROTEST : Governor R.Celeste, State House, Columbus, OH 43215. Warden William Dallman, Lebanon Correctional Institution, tel. 0101 (if outside U.S.A.) 513932 1211.

INFO /COPIES PROTEST LETTERS : Linda Leisure, 1561 Valley Drive, Reynoldsburg OH 43068. Tel. (0101) 614 864 2684.

LATE NEWS: Despite rumours, John is not dead. However his condition, physically and mentally, is very low. He needs those protest letters to Governor Celeste, or he'll be left to rot in isolation.

FRENCH REVOLT

28th April 500 prisoners rioted against overcrowding and guard brutality in Louse prison, outside Lille, wrecking part of the prison. Paramilitaries were sent in, but 50 prisoners remained on the roof until next morning.

In another White Paper, the government plan to involve private companies in supervising offenders in the community. Will they be consulting the consumers in this new marketplace, such as the ex-inmate of Strangeways who thought that the 'prison should have been burned down years ago.'

RAVE ON

Hats off to the person who requested 'Walls Come Tumbling Down' by The Style Council on Radio One for the ex-Strangeways boys. The Style Council also have a song called 'Long Hot Summer'!

MARTIN FORAN

ON 24th February, supporters of Martin in Dublin and Belfast had a day of action, covered by the media, which collected 1,500 signatures. On March 6th Martin broke his leg while attempting a rooftop protest. In desperation he went on another hunger strike, but has since come off it. West Yorkshire Police investigating the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad have uncovered photocopies which discredit evidence concerning his time of arrival at the police station when he was originally arrested.

For more info: Conviction, PO Box 522, Sheffield S1 3FF; PO Box 2794, Dublin, Eire.

Monthly newsletter: Martin Foran Defence Campaign, c/o Box 7, 190 Alum Rock Road, Saltley, Birmingham.

Letters of support: Martin Foran CS1746, HMP Frankland, POB 40, Finchale Ave., Brasside, Durham.



300 anti-poll tax protestors filled Jeffrey St., Edinburgh on 7 March, and successfully stopped a poiding.

AFRICA

TYRANTS and corrupt leaders can no longer expect to be propped up by the World Bank and IMF, who have decided that their investments will be safer with democratic regimes.

In Benin (West Africa) President Kerekou conceded in December 1989, a multiparty system and an end to Marxist-Leninist ideology on the eve of a General Strike and mass demonstrations. In Ivory Coast, Congo and Gabon (Central Africa) there have been similar waves of demonstrations and riots. Even Ethiopia's President Mengistu has announced the end of Marxism-Leninism, as his regime collapses to the Eritrean and Tigrayan rebels.

In Zambia, the press recently exposed that President Kuanda has \$4bn in foreign bank accounts and that two aides had absconded to Australia with \$28m. In Zimbabwe, on May 1st, workers' banners denounced the move of Mugabe to set up a one-Party State. The aspirations of African workers are inseparable from international opposition to capitalism and an alternative to State Capitalist tyrannies which abuse human rights.

RESISTING

YOUNG Asians in London's East End are working together to defend their communities against increasing racist attacks. No longer accepting the passive role encouraged by community 'leaders', the East End Youth Organisation started self-defence patrols to prevent the expected violence against black people following a B.N.P. 'Rights for Whites' march in the area, Tower Hamlets. The march itself attracted only 200 supporters, being outnumbered by the counter demonstration of 300 anti-facists.

THE PANTHER ROARS

The 'black panther' has struck fear into the hearts of the Italian education authorities.

The big cat is the symbol of a massive students movement fighting against the privatisation of the Universities and other social services. Since late last year students have occupied Universities and schools from Palermo to Turin.

The opposition to the 'Ruberti' law has gone far beyond the immediate issue. The movement has contested the hierarchical, business-orientated nature of education and stressed the importance of self-organised direct action.

The tens of thousands on the students' march in Naples on 17th March included homeless and unemployed groups, factory workers, and immigrant groups fighting racism.

RIOT TO WORK

Throughout March and April mass protests by unemployed groups have swept Naples. Demonstrators occupied the Mayor's office for a week. 2-3,000 protestors besieged the Town Hall on 22nd March and 5th April. There were unauthorised marches, street blockades and buses set on fire on 5th and 20th April. The organising groups - which include a co-operative of ex-prisoners - are demanding paid work (there is no 'income support' system as in Britain).

SAVE GERMINAL

The Italian anarchist movement is fighting to re-occupy its centre in Carrara, evicted by 200 police on 23rd March.

The 'Germinal' Centre - captured from the fascists in 1945 by armed anarchist partisans - is now in the clutches of property developers. On 25th March 400 protestors attempted to re-occupy Germinal, and erected barricades in the street when attacked by the police.

Info: G.A.R., C.P. 14, 54033 Carrara, Italy. Tel. 0585 75143.

UPRISING GORBY RULES ?

THE storming of the Hyundai shipyards in Ulsan near Seoul on April 28th by 13,000 riot police provoked widespread workers and student unrest. By 5th May, street battles had spread from Seoul to southern industrial cities. On 31st April 400 protestors were arrested after occupying the Korean Broadcasting Headquarters. As union leaders continued a sit-in for a fifth day on a giant crane, street battles raged with workers using steel pipes.

WE ALL MUST BE FREE!

THE brutality of the police continues to go unchecked with the massacre of 17 protestors in Sebokeng on 26th March, followed by 4 dead in Rammulotsi on 19th April, caused the A.N.C. leadership to back-pedal talks with De Klerk's ruling National Party, worried at a loss of authority in the townships and amongst young people unhappy at Mandela's call for a return to the classroom and an acceptance of gradual, two-staged reform.

Although Cosatu, the Union federation, supports the 'Freedom Charter' and its 'mixed economy' capitalism, a significant minority advocates a 'Workers Charter'.

When Mandela was released on 12th February, amid scenes of great jubilation, he was driven away and stayed at the home of Maponye, the richest black businessman in South Africa and a supporter of 'Free Enterprise' and a settlement with the 'Liberal' capitalist firms such as Anglo American.

NAZI SCUM

On Feb. 18th, a Nazi party, the NPD, wanted to demonstrate in Frankfurt for the re-unification of Germany. 1500 people, including more than 1000 school students had a counter demonstration. The police attacked the anti-Nazis with 5 water cannons and riot cops. When 60 nazi skinheads also attacked, the demo fought back, seriously injuring a number of them. In the end the Nazis demo was cancelled.

OFF OUR STREETS

Dundee, 12 May. 700 Anti Nazis stopped the Nazi BNP holding their national march. When a van load of Nazis were spotted people responded quickly via 2-way radios, and the van was attacked. Later a large crowd marched through the streets to the police station to successfully demand the release of the people arrested. 80 Nazis ended up, having a very short meeting on the outskirts of the city. Their bus left with several smashed windows. 14 Anti-Nazis were arrested for Breach of the peace.

THE unprecedented jeering of the Politburo in Red Square on May 1st, by Nationalists, anarcho-syndicalists and pro-democracy forces has demonstrated the vulnerability of Gorbachov's rule.

Disclosures of military manoeuvres after the mass demonstration in Moscow on February 4th the threat of a 'Georgia solution' to secessionist attempts in the Baltic are slowing the pace of reform. Overturning calls to push forward the 'regulated market' on the 9th of April by liberal economists, a Presidential spokesperson said 2 weeks later: 'There will be no shock treatment for the economy, no leap into the unknown.'

The threat of autonomous workers' power, from oil and gas workers in Tyumen, Western Siberia, threatening to strike and success for 'Power to the Soviets' candidates in the Donetsk coalfields is the greatest challenge to the conservative forces. Gorbachov's 'balancing act' may become unstuck and social upheaval intensify throughout the Soviet Union.

• The splintering of the Communist Party has led to the formation of the Russian Communist Party, combining neo-Stalinism with Russian chauvinism. A self-management Marxist faction is also breaking away, and aligning with radical workers' groups in Siberia, the Ukraine and the anarcho-syndicalists of KAS.

BALLOONS

IT TOOK them months to get rid of the rats. April 12th saw the arrival of the real parasites, local Labour politicians and invited rich scum for the official launch of the Glasgow's Glasgow exhibition. Glasgow's history cleaned up for the yuppies, part of the City of Culture crap. The younger people on the picket outside carried balloons with Pat Lally written on them, simply because Pat Lally, leader of Glasgow's Council, is a balloon.

Resistance to Culture City is growing as 200 people marched from Glasgow Green into the Calton, the first weekday 1st of May demonstration in Glasgow since the 1920s. To counter the official May Day celebrations a free speech platform was re-established on Glasgow Green. Local people spoke out against the Poll Tax and privatisation being imposed by Glasgow's Labour council.



300 anti-poll tax protestors filled Jeffrey St., Edinburgh on 7 March, and successfully stopped a poinding.

AFRICA

TYRANTS and corrupt leaders can no longer expect to be propped up by the World Bank and IMF, who have decided that their investments will be safer with democratic regimes.

In Benin (West Africa) President Kerekou conceded in December 1989, a multiparty system and an end to Marxist-Leninist ideology on the eve of a General Strike and mass demonstrations. In Ivory Coast, Congo and Gabon (Central Africa) there have been similar waves of demonstrations and riots. Even Ethiopia's President Mengistu has announced the end of Marxism-Leninism, as his regime collapses to the Eritrean and Tigrayan rebels.

In Zambia, the press recently exposed that President Kuanda has \$4bn in foreign bank accounts and that two aides had absconded to Australia with \$28m. In Zimbabwe, on May 1st, workers' banners denounced the move of Mugabe to set up a one-Party State. The aspirations of African workers are inseparable from international opposition to capitalism and an alternative to State Capitalist tyrannies which abuse human rights.

RESISTING

YOUNG Asians in London's East End are working together to defend their communities against increasing racist attacks. No longer accepting the passive role encouraged by community 'leaders', the East End Youth Organisation started self-defence patrols to prevent the expected violence against black people following a B.N.P. 'Rights for Whites' march in the area. Tower Hamlets. The march itself attracted only 200 supporters, being outnumbered by the counter demonstration of 300 anti-facists.

THE PANTHER ROARS

The "black panther" has struck fear into the hearts of the Italian education authorities.

The big cat is the symbol of a massive students movement fighting against the privatisation of the Universities and other social services. Since late last year students have occupied Universities and schools from Palermo to Turin.

The opposition to the 'Ruberti' law has gone far beyond the immediate issue. The movement has contested the hierarchical, business-orientated nature of education and stressed the importance of self-organised direct action.

The tens of thousands on the students' march in Naples on 17th March included homeless and unemployed groups, factory workers, and immigrant groups fighting racism.

RIOT TO WORK

Throughout March and April mass protests by unemployed groups have swept Naples.

Demonstrators occupied the Mayor's office for a week. 2-3,000 protestors besieged the Town Hall on 22nd March and 5th April. There were unauthorised marches, street blockades and buses set on fire on 5th and 20th April.

The organising groups - which include a co-operative of ex-prisoners - are demanding paid work (there is no 'income support' system as in Britain).

SAVE GERMINAL

The Italian anarchist movement is fighting to re-occupy its centre in Carrara, evicted by 200 police on 23rd March.

The 'Germinal' Centre - captured from the fascists in 1945 by armed anarchist partisans - is now in the clutches of property developers. On 25th March 400 protestors attempted to re-occupy Germinal, and erected barricades in the street when attacked by the police.

Info: G.A.R., C.P. 14, 54033 Carrara, Italy. Tel. 0585 75143.

UPRISING GORBY RULES ?

THE storming of the Hyundai shipyards in Ulsan near Seoul on April 28th by 13,000 riot police provoked widespread workers and student unrest. By 5th May, street battles had spread from Seoul to southern industrial cities. On 31st April 400 protestors were arrested after occupying the Korean Broadcasting Headquarters. As union leaders continued a sit-in for a fifth day on a giant crane, street battles raged with workers using steel pipes.

WE ALL MUST BE FREE!

THE brutality of the police continues to go unchecked with the massacre of 17 protestors in Sebokeng on 26th March, followed by 4 dead in Rammulotsi on 19th April, caused the A.N.C. leadership to back-pedal talks with De Klerk's ruling National Party, worried at a loss of authority in the townships and amongst young people unhappy at Mandela's call for a return to the classroom and an acceptance of gradual, two-staged reform.

Although Cosatu, the Union federation, supports the 'Freedom Charter' and its 'mixed economy' capitalism, a significant minority advocates a 'Workers Charter'.

When Mandela was released on 12th February, amid scenes of great jubilation, he was driven away and stayed at the home of Maponye, the richest black businessman in South Africa and a supporter of 'Free Enterprise' and a settlement with the 'Liberal' capitalist firms such as Anglo American.

NAZI SCUM

On Feb. 18th, a Nazi party, the NPD, wanted to demonstrate in Frankfurt for the re-unification of Germany. 1500 people, including more than 1000 school students had a counter demonstration. The police attacked the anti-Nazis with 5 water cannons and riot cops. When 60 nazi skinheads also attacked, the demo fought back, seriously injuring a number of them. In the end the Nazis demo was cancelled.

OFF OUR STREETS

Dundee. 12 May. 700 Anti Nazis stopped the Nazi BNP holding their national march. When a van load of Nazis were spotted people responded quickly via 2-way radios, and the van was attacked. Later a large crowd marched through the streets to the police station to successfully demand the release of the people arrested. 80 Nazis ended up having a very short meeting on the outskirts of the city. Their bus left with several smashed windows. 14 Anti-Nazis were arrested for Breach of the peace.

THE unprecedented jeering of the Politburo in Red Square on May 1st, by Nationalists, anarcho-syndicalists and pro-democracy forces has demonstrated the vulnerability of Gorbachov's rule.

Disclosures of military manoeuvres after the mass demonstration in Moscow on February 4th the threat of a 'Georgia solution' to secessionist attempts in the Baltic are slowing the pace of reform. Overturning calls to push forward the 'regulated market' on the 9th of April by liberal economists, a Presidential spokesperson said 2 weeks later: 'There will be no shock treatment for the economy, no leap into the unknown.'

The threat of autonomous workers' power, from oil and gas workers in Tyumen, Western Siberia, threatening to strike and success for 'Power to the Soviets' candidates in the Donetsk coalfields is the greatest challenge to the conservative forces. Gorbachov's 'balancing act' may become unstuck and social upheaval intensify throughout the Soviet Union.

• The splintering of the Communist Party has led to the formation of the Russian Communist Party, combining neo-Stalinism with Russian chauvinism. A self-management Marxist faction is also breaking away, and aligning with radical workers' groups in Siberia, the Ukraine and the anarcho-syndicalists of KAS.

BALLOONS

IT TOOK them months to get rid of the rats. April 12th saw the arrival of the real parasites, local Labour politicians and invited rich scum for the official launch of the Glasgow's Glasgow exhibition. Glasgow's history cleaned up for the yuppies, part of the City of Culture crap. The younger people on the picket outside carried balloons with Pat Lally written on them, simply because Pat Lally, leader of Glasgow's Council, is a balloon.

Resistance to Culture City is growing as 200 people marched from Glasgow Green into the Calton, the first weekday 1st of May demonstration in Glasgow since the 1920s. To counter the official May Day celebrations a free speech platform was re-established on Glasgow Green. Local people spoke out against the Poll Tax and privatisation being imposed by Glasgow's Labour council.

RAISING OUR VOICES

SCOTLAND: Saturday 21st April saw a series of protests by women against John Menzies, the high street newsagents.

The actions were planned by Scottish Women Against Pornography (S.W.A.P.) and were staged at Menzies shops around Scotland in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Stirling, St Andrews and Aberdeen.

The women took the pornographic magazines from the shelves and confronted the store managers saying that they found them offensive and that they encouraged sexual crimes against women and children.

S.W.A.P. has set up a campaign against John Menzies as the main distributors in Scotland. Their aim is to challenge the sale and display of 'top shelf' magazines which make pornography acceptable.

Leaflets explaining the action were handed out on the day and a great many women aired their support and shouted encouragement. In Edinburgh for instance women passing by and hearing of the action joined in and took the magazines from the shelves with the rest of the protesters!

S.W.A.P. is part of an international feminist campaign which sees pornography in terms of power - the power men have over women. Pornography perpetuates inequality. The strength and dignity of every woman is undermined by its images.

The pornographic industry is bigger than the music and film industries combined. From page 3 to 'snuff' movies where women are actually murdered on screen it is all part of the same thing. They all carry the message that women are available to men as sex objects; that we enjoy being humiliated or having violence inflicted upon us.

But we will not be silenced. Women are raising our voices now, because a campaign of terror is being waged against us. The ideology that justifies our degradation is a fascist ideology - the ideology of biological inferiority.

Fascist propaganda celebrating sexual violence against women is sweeping this land. Pornography is the propaganda of sexual fascism. Images of women bound, bruised and

Info: Edinburgh Women Against Pornography, c/o 43 Broughton St., Edinburgh

maimed in every newsagents, in cinema after cinema, video after video are death threats to a female population in rebellion.

When a group deemed inferior is targeted for violence in propaganda, that propaganda is invariably hostile. When men target women for sexual violence in pornography the material is considered sexy.

Chains are sexy when women wear them. Prisons are sexy when women are in them. Pain is sexy when women hurt.

Proclaiming free speech, men use images of rape and torture to terrorise women into silence. Proclaiming freedom men make and sell images of women bound and shackled.

Our actions against pornography must blanket the country so that no pornographer can hide from the outrage of women who will not submit to terror.

We can take as our example the attacks on 'sex' shops by Angry Women in the early 80s:

- Leeds in August '82, for instance, a stolen car was driven up outside the 'Private Shop' in Chapeltown and set on fire, severely damaging the front of the shop.

- Two days later Angry Women attacked once more and damage was estimated at between £5-10,000. No-one was hurt during the attack and A.W. always directed their anger against property, not life.

There is no reason to distinguish between hard and soft pornography. Most would agree that pornography showing murder, rape, dismemberment of women and child pornography is unacceptable.

But so is soft porn, which is part of our everyday lives. Women's naked bodies are used to sell men anything from newspapers to cars.

The message reads that women are constantly available to be used and abused by men.

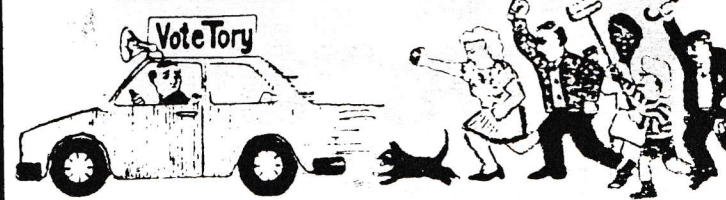
We are not looking for censorship. In Ireland, for example, they banned a breast self-examination leaflet! We must confront the fascist propaganda that celebrates atrocity against us head on - expose it for what it is, expose those who make it, those who show it, those who defend it and those who enjoy it.

DO THE RIGHT THING! (Cont.)

the tax. A mass campaign of non payment is the beginning of the real fight. The real strength of the campaign lies in the communities, these are the people who have been chasing sheriff officers, producing posters and leaflets, organizing 'phone trees and public meetings. In Haringey, London, they already have 510 street reps. and 19 neighbourhood groups!

The resistance in the High Street, Grassmarket and Stockbridge was organised by the local independent Anti-Poll Tax group, with solidarity from similar groups around Lothian. Neither would be political leaders or the Lothian Anti-Poll Tax federation executive played any organising role.

THE COMMUNITY CHARGE



"It is never too late to set up a new group....
....Or get involved in an existing one!"

The Poll Tax need not be a single issue campaign. We do not live in a vacuum. Anti-Poll Tax groups whether in the workplace or in a community are in a position to begin to deal with other issues which effect our lives, for example poor housing, racism, violence against women, low wages, and attacks on claimants. People are beginning to challenge the whole notion of debt enforcement. If we can organize against the Poll Tax then we can also organize against other forms of debt including rent and mortgages.

Despite appearances we are not all on the same side. The actions of the Militant Tendency in condemning people fighting back at Trafalgar Square prove this. Similarly the Militant dominated All British Federation will pass names to the police one way or another if they think it will help them control and manipulate the Anti Poll Tax movement. And the Labour Party? In Scotland, Labour controlled Local Authorities have been vigorously pursuing non-payers. To maintain a strong movement it is important to develop and increase the activities of local groups, we need to improve communications between active and independent groups, both locally and nationally. Accept no substitute. No half measures to defeat the Poll Tax!

A support group has been formed for those arrested at Trafalgar Square, and is now holding weekly public meetings. They aim to:

- * Give unconditional support to all those arrested.
- * Provide legal support.
- * Counter State and media hysteria about the riot.
- * Be run by and accountable to those arrested.

Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign, c/o Haldane Society Lawyers, Rm 205, Panther House, 38 Mt. Pleasant, London WC1, tel. 071 833 8958.

*The 'paper for independent Anti-Poll Tax groups: Refuse and Resist, 31 Leven St., Glasgow, G41 2JD

*Anti-Poll Tax info. packs for those in or wishing to start Anti-Poll Tax groups: Pigeonhole C.R., 111 Forth St., Edinburgh, EH1 (send v.large S.A.E.)

FED UP OF BEING ORDERED ABOUT AND EXPLOITED? Sick of living in poverty while the profit system benefits a powerful few? Angry about men oppressing women? Disgusted at the many other injustices in today's society?

You're not alone. Lots of people round the globe are not only fed up, they're fighting back. In Counter Info we report this often-censored resistance, to encourage more such activity.

We stress the importance of people directly controlling their struggles, outside the control of political parties, trade unions or any leaders. Replacing one set of rulers with another - as has happened in the 'Communist' Party-ruled regimes, and as left-wing parties and national liberation movements want - is no solution. We encourage today's resistance to aim for the complete overthrow of all relationships whereby some people oppress others. The world's resources should be owned and controlled by all, and used to satisfy human needs.

The Counter Information collective invites people to - send us articles and information - take bundles of the news-sheet to distribute - make a much needed donation towards our printing and postage costs - write for info on our Readers Meetings, and Inside Information - contact us if they'd like to join the CI collective. We wish to co-operate with all who share our aims.

APPEAL FOR FUNDS To print and distribute 15,000 copies of each issue of Counter Information costs around £500. As we went to press we were £150 short of this amount. We can only continue if you, our readers, give donations. Please make cheques/postal orders out to Counter Information, and write for details on supporting Counter Information through a standing order. Thanks!

COUNTER INFORMATION, PIGEONHOLE CI, C/O 11 FORTH ST, EDINBURGH, UK. For info on local CI distribution and other local activities write: For the north of England - Red and Black, c/o Grassroots Books, 1 Newton St., Manchester M1. West of Scotland - Glasgow Anarchists, PO Box 239, Glasgow G5 0LW

This issue went to press on 14 May 1990.