

TRAFALGAR SQUARE DEFENDANTS' CAMPAIGN

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NEWSLETTER

NO. 2

THE FIGHT BACK ACCELERATES

On March 31st, 200,000 took part in the tremendous national demonstration in Central London against the Government's hated Poll Tax. Police provoked a battle and hundreds were arrested.

Despite media hysteria against protestors, the anti-poll tax movement has continued to grow, and **millions are now not paying!**

The Trafalgar Sq Defendants' Campaign was launched on May 3rd to ensure support for all defendants. On June 16th, a National Defendants & Witnesses Meeting enabled the establishment of a comprehensive legal and welfare strategy. The following day, people packed into a hall in Central London for a National Solidarity Conference and pledged to build a major campaign throughout the country.

The immediate priority is to **EXPOSE THE TRUTH** of the police violence against the demonstration, and the following **COVER UP** by the Crown Prosecution Service, police and media. This way we'll put the authorities onto the defensive, and ensure that magistrates and judges will be unable to continue to bulldoze cases through and to dish out heavy sentences.

In the long term we must re-affirm our determination to not be intimidated, and to continue to demonstrate wherever, whenever and however we decide is appropriate in our struggles for justice.

NEW WAVE OF ARRESTS.

In addition to the 396 arrested on the day collusion between the police and the media has led to the subsequent detention of 72 people. Some purely on the basis of tip offs from antagonistic neighbors. Police are scouring 150 hrs of video evidence and 30,000 still photographs, responding to suspected identifications with raids on houses. In one instance confiscating the entire contents of one victim's wardrobe.

**SOLIDARITY WITH ALL DEFENDANTS. DROP ALL CHARGES NOW.
FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO DEMONSTRATE. PAY NO POLL TAX.**

LEGAL ROUND UP

POLICE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Defendants thinking of lodging a formal complaint against the police should not do so without considering the situation carefully. If you are charged with an offence and the police actions you want to complain about arise from the same incident, any complaint you may lodge before your case is finished in the courts will be regarded by police as 'sub-justice' and won't be investigated till your case is finished in the courts. If you are acquitted in court always seek full legal advice from your solicitor, or one whom the campaign is in touch with. You may have a better chance of pursuing a claim against the police through legal action rather than by using the police complaints system. The police complaints system should only be used by ex-defendants with no chance of winning a legal action.

The later point holds for anyone considering action against the police by way of complaint. If you were a bystander on 31st of March, not charged with anything, but who be a useful witness to another person, or who may simply be someone who considers they out to make a complaint out of principle about the police actions then still don't make any complaint without seeking legal advice in case you have grounds for legal action outside the police complaints system. ANY INFORMATION GIVEN TO THE POLICE IS NOT BOUND BY CONFIDENTIALITY ON THEIR PART. THE COURTS HAVE RULED THAT POLICE ARE ALLOWED TO BREACH CONFIDENTIALITY IN THIS WAY.

DEFENDANTS' CASES

To witness the workings of the British justice system at first hand is not a pleasant experience. In ordinary circumstances it is not something I would choose to do, but then these are not ordinary circumstances and these are not normal times.

As a court monitor for the *Trafalgar Square Defendants Campaign* I was in Bow Street magistrates court to trace defendants the campaign has not heard from, take details from them and listen to their cases. It is important to remember that that if we as a campaign do have a philosophy it is that of "self help" and "mutual support of defendants, by defendants.

At this stage in the process the courts have dealt with only a few relatively minor cases, however already a picture of heavy fines and sentences has emerged. Many of the more stringent bail conditions have now been dropped, but the process is still incredibly arbitrary and dependant on the whims of individual magistrates. As usual travellers and the homeless are dealt with especially severely in the courts and many are still in custody. Another feature of the last fortnight has been the incompetency of the Crown prosecution service. It seems that not even all the police on duty at the demonstration have seen the video evidence and in many cases it is the prosecutors who are asking the magistrates for adjournments.

Back in court no.1 the arteries of the administration of justice were beginning to clog up. A young man held in custody on robbery charges questioned his last two convictions on the grounds that he was in pentonville at the time. After proving this he was sentenced on the current robbery charge and went to prison secure in the knowledge that had he not committed this crime he would never known that he had been convicted in his absence for two further offences.

TRAFALGAR SQUARE DEFENSE SOLICITORS GROUP.

Is a group of solicitors who have banded together to help form a common defence between defendants.

The group includes:

Bindmans & Partners 071 278 8131

Kapil Juj & Birnberg 071 403 3166

Trevor Hamlyn & Co. 071 821 1199

SUPPORT THE PRISONERS

Please write to and support:

Karl Hernen c/o TSDC

David King - RA 0711

Wormwood Scrubs, Du Cane Rd. W12

Robert Keltie c/o 4 Crestfield St. London N1.

Stephen Davies c/o 'Stonleigh', Temple St.,

Powys, Wales.

Please let us know of any other prisoners.

DROP ALL OF

HOW MANY POLICE HAVE BEEN CHARGED?

Police claim to have pinpointed 500 serious assaults on police officers. How many police assaults have they made on the public?

CASES CONT.

The next case up was the one I had been waiting for, a man charged with section 4 of the public order act., threatening behavior. As he took his place in the dock one of the special public prosecutioners in charge of the Trafalgar Square cases entered the court, bowed to the magistrate and opened his briefcase. The prosecution case was a shambles. Of two police witnesses only one bothered to turn up and his allegation seemed to rest on the fact that the man was standing above him on some steps shouting abuse at him. According to the defendant this was simply made up but even if it wasn't the case tells us something of the insecurity of a police force that engages itself in political action against the people.

In the end the charges were thrown out by the magistrates ruling that threatening behavior had not been proved and he left for Norwich carrying campaign literature and smiling happily.

I decided to take the bus home, and left the court with mixed feelings. True we had a success, but it had largely been based on our opponents ineptitude and was based in a legal framework that had been shown to be cruelly arbitrary in its judgements that day. Although we welcome it, we cannot rely on luck, justice cannot be decided on the throw of a dice.

APPEAL FOR WITNESSES

THE COURT CASES ARE UPON US AND MANY DEFENDANTS HAVE NOT YET TRACED WITNESSES. IF YOU SAW AN ARREST PLEASE SEND A STATEMENT TO THE TSDC.

PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

Photographers Statement:

"I noticed during my time near Richmond Terrace that vehicles being used for transporting police were not bearing Identification Code Numbers...the point being that on public order duties police vehicles are supposed to have their ID no.s clearly displayed."

3.30-4.00 Whitehall:

"Many people were sat down, there were family groups with young children and dogs, they appeared to be picnicking, I did not form an impression that there was a grand concerted conspiracy afoot...It appeared to me that nothing dramatic was going on so I decided to walk towards Parliament Square.. I took a picture of some dogs, as I took that picture and turned to continue, out from between the ministry buildings came 150 or so uniformed police officers. Almost immediately, as part of the same operation, mounted police also filed out through the same archway. First came 12 of them who positioned themselves in the roadway immediately in front of the crowd... All the uniformed officers who had filed out then stood behind the mounted police (many deep). Once these 12 mounted police were in position one of them looked backwards and gave a hand signal. Then came 12 more mounted police who immediately entered Richmond terrace and flanked the MOD 'green' itself"...

"People were obviously upset and intimidated by these police deployments... there were a number of people trying to depart the MOD green. At the same time a number of police officers took away metal barriers to allow the mounted police more easily to push forward onto people. No request of any kind was given verbally to people to move away by the mounted police before they went forward over the green. People here did not attack the police. On Whitehall itself, the first ranks of protesters had sat down. The horses went forward and simultaneously the people were picked off and arrested. They did not fight with police but clenched their hands together in passive resistance."...

Trafalgar Square:

"The police charges were really ferocious, into groups who were merely observing".

"It was terrifying. A row of mounted police charged us and I had to pick up the kids and run".

THE CHARGES

UNVEILING THE MASK OF ANARCHY

The people came from miles around
By coach and foot and underground
To voice their anger to the state,
That implemented the Poll Tax rate.

There marched in groups and under flags,
With family picnics in their bags
Towards the Central London rally
Arranged by Militant's, Sheridan & Nally.

A restful spot was finally found
By the MOD 'green', upon the ground.
As the people were tiered, it seemed quite fitting
To continue their protest, by patiently sitting.

Unaware were they that the final deduction
Deduced that they were committing obstruction,
Or that the police would instigate
Such shocking destruction towards the state.

Riot police squads came mounted to greet
This countries citizens resting their feet
With truncheons and charges abound,
Trampling protestors into the ground.

Up rose the people, crying their call
Echoing off the facade of Whitehall.
A woman was stripped in front of all
By police in blue suits, so "honoured and tall".

This gross infliction of humiliation
Resulted in crowd agitation
Then a man, beaten, whilst in his wheel chair,
Distracted attention from the disbelieving stare,

Police tactics, devoid of care
Forced the marchers to Trafalgar Square
As groups of people were surrounded,
A response of self-defence abounded

Missiles began to fill the air,
Sticks and stones and even a chair!
But the people had nowhere to hide,
And the police had the government on their side.

The battle spread and tempers rose,
A policeman winced at his broken nose,
A woman was trampled by her majesties horses,
So it seemed fit to bring in more forces.

The battle became a media hype
With politicians slander in black & white
"Her boys in blue can do no wrong,
It's scruffy people who sing the 'Maggie' song!"

They printed photos of angry protesters
And woe faced city investors
"Anarchists, punks and masked hoodlums!"
"Shop your children, dads and mums"

Along came the 'witch-hunts' and more arrests
Of all the people Maggie detests.
Guised as justice and democracy
And ugly cries of "vote for me".

People who want the right to exist
On anything but a community charge list,
Or if your charges invoke disdain...
then
Join the Trafalgar Square Defendants Campaign!

(sorry Shelley...)

FREE PRESS ?

Or Commander Roy Ramm's Lambs.....

One of the most startling sights this summer has been that presented to us by the well known socialist, Bob Maxwell as the mirror has turned it's lead away from Super-gun export efforts in transit to the Middle East and sparked off a plethora of fuzzy mug-shots of "Poll Tax Mobsters" throughout the campaigning pages of his various mouthpieces. The hand of the Mirror's Chief Political Correspondent, Alastair Campbell, also one of the leaders of The Opposition's political advisors was for some of us, distinctly resonant in Neil Kinnock's condemnation of the Poll Tax protesters as "Enemies of Freedom". Just what happened as leader of a party which hopes to ride to power on the popular tide against the Poll Tax is hard to describe...

The national media's focus on the demonstration became apparent with repeated stories based on the recollections of dazed and bruised police officers who graduated from it to star in a Scotland Yard Press Office roll call. With back-drop footage showing public reaction to an assault on a peaceful gathering comprising what Commander Meynal described as 'kindred souls'; the press went into full cry against anyone who openly questioned police actions. They ignored the fact that over 90 hours of film and video and 30,000 photographs were seized under court orders to stop the people of the UK knowing the truth about the realities of public protest in the 1990's.

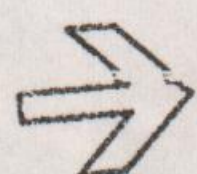


WE CALL ON ALL ORGANISATIONS TO

Here are a few of the raids and harrassment operations the police have carried out on anti-poll tax activists in the wake of Trafalgar Square:

Steve Cook, Chair of Islington Against the Poll Tax, was visited by 4 CID officers at 6.30 am 2/4/90. They claimed he resembled someone in a newspaper photograph, a rioter, and that they were looking for clothing, and "any correspondence that may relate to the organising of violent disorder." (Denis Campbell, Time Out).

Rahul Patel, Housing Officer for Greenwich Council and on strike since May 1st over the suspension of cashiers refusing to collect the Poll Tax. On 19th May in Woolwich Precinct he stopped collecting money for the strikers from the public and moved his stall on orders from police, but he was allowed to continue taking petition signatures. When packing up to leave at 1pm the police arrested him, and others from two adjacent stalls (Greenwich against the Poll Tax & the SWP), amounting to 15 people, for obstruction. At the police station one officer made notes specifically of all phone no.s Patel had on him relating to the striker and the Poll Tax. On being asked why he was doing this, the officer replied that it was for "intelligence". They were held for two hours and released without charges for the present after intervention by a local councillor.
ectcetera ectcetera ectcetera.....



One 'Sunday Mirror' reporter told a defendant that she now feared being attacked at demonstrations as a police informer, "It's going to be difficult for me from now on." she confided. "Why?", "People will be attacking me if I try to report or take photos". From every tabloid and 'respectable' paper which carried top-heavy police accounts of the 31st there was almost no serious questioning of the violence meted out by the police. Editors have been unable to find ringleaders or prove any premeditated violence by the crowd. But they have all used the 'Nelson Touch' when viewing the growing volume of eyewitness statements on high-tech violence organised in painstaking detail by the Chiefs of Police Officers manual (extensively quoted in 'Shooting in the Dark' by Gerry Northam, Faber & Faber 1989).

What of the commanders who handled the 200,000 strong protest? They were highly organised, exercising control over their employees through a complex web of radio communication equipment backed up with centralised computer, helicopters, plainclothes, vicious dogs, mounted police and all the paraphernalia normally associated with paramilitary operations around the globe. Their detached control center was able to reek considerable fear and violence to a degree unparalleled in Central London for many years. Why didn't the press report on these vicious gang attacks on thousands of citizens? The NUJ must awaken the membership to the fact that their publishers are in cahoots with the police as they tamper with journalists ethics, as well as the right to demonstrate.

"I witnessed a man being beaten by police in the van which was taking me to be charged with threatening behavior." "I was arrested in Trafalgar Square quite brutally, and a guy was taking photos, but whilst in the process he was arrested and attacked by police, his film and camera were badly damaged."

MICKY YOUNG is still missing from the 31st March. He is Liverpudlian, tubby, with a pock-marked face. Please contact the TSDC with any information.

MIRROR PICKET

The TSDC staged a successful picket at the Mirror Group HQ. Accompanied by banners declaring "IF YOU KNOW 'EM-SHOP 'EM" only this time the photographs were of police officers committing unfriendly acts on Poll Tax protesters. The picket was considered to be rather unwelcome by the people in the mirror, but then it's hardly a tea party working for Bob & Maggie & Imbert too...

BACK THE CAMPAIGN !

KEEPING ORDER

160 years of police repression

Britain is often said to be a sleepy sort of place where mass demonstrations hardly ever happen and confrontation with the forces of law & order is practically unthinkable. Yet the question of public order has been a major source of controversy for at least a century and a half. More recently the Thatcher era has seen a tightening up of public order legislation and the militarisation of the police. The Metropolitan Police were originally formed in 1829 to deal with 'the mob' living in the East End of London. Political agitation kept them going throughout the 1860's 70's and 80's. In 1887, demonstrators responded to the jeers of the London 'toffs' and more than 200 were arrested in what became known as Bloody Sunday. This period also saw the formation of the Special (Irish) Branch, set up to harass Irish people objecting to British Colonial rule. A wave of industrial militancy swept through the first two decades of this century, culminating in the crisis years of 1919-1921, when troops and armed police were a regular sight on the streets of major cities. In the early thirties police regularly attacked unemployed Hunger Marchers. In 1936 the first Public Order Act was passed, ostensibly as a measure to prevent fascist marches. Within days of being passed, the act was first used against striking miners in Nottinghamshire. Revised in 1986, it became a public order offence to shout 'pig' or 'scab' in a threatening manner. During the 1984-5 miners strike, Yorkshire villages were invaded by a rampaging blue army. In 1986, locked out print workers got the same treatment outside Rupert Murdoch's Fortress Wapping. Black communities in Britain have always been under pressure from the authorities: When SUS laws were repealed in the 1986 Public Order Act took place as their legal justification for picking up a black youth at whim. But police attacks on black people reached a new level with paramilitary occupation of Broadwater Farm following the killing of PC Keith Blakelock. The Tottenham three are still paying the price for this example of 'British Justice'. Thatcher's police have been tooled up with new laws, high tech weapons and new surveillance equipment. Deep entry surveillance of alleged football hooligans is just one illustration of how 'Big Brother and Sister' are alive and kicking in Britain.

The recently published annual report by Metropolitan Police Commissioner Peter Imbert showed that public order is his top priority. Speaking to an invited audience in the City of London a few weeks ago, he answered criticisms that his officers had lost control of the west end on the 31st of March, saying "It is said of generals that they do not fight the next war with the last war's strategy. So it is with us when it comes to policing potentially violent demonstrations." So be prepared.

THE MOB

The Media have blamed a black flag waving unemployed underclass from London for the poll tax 'riot'. Yet over half those arrested on 31 March were from outside the capital. About a third were unemployed. The rest listed occupations ranging from despatch rider, law student, computer operator, charity worker, chef, marine engineer, housewife, company director. A top lawyer described his Trafalgar Square clients; "They are nearly all in full time employment, including a couple of civil servants...not the sort of people you've been led to expect...what you could call 'extremely respectable'". The defendants are a mixed bunch of mainly young working class people, everyone of whom should be defended against the law and order of the riot squad.

MASS NON-PAYMENT

PAY NO POLL TAX

SOLIDARITY WITH ALL DEFENDANTS

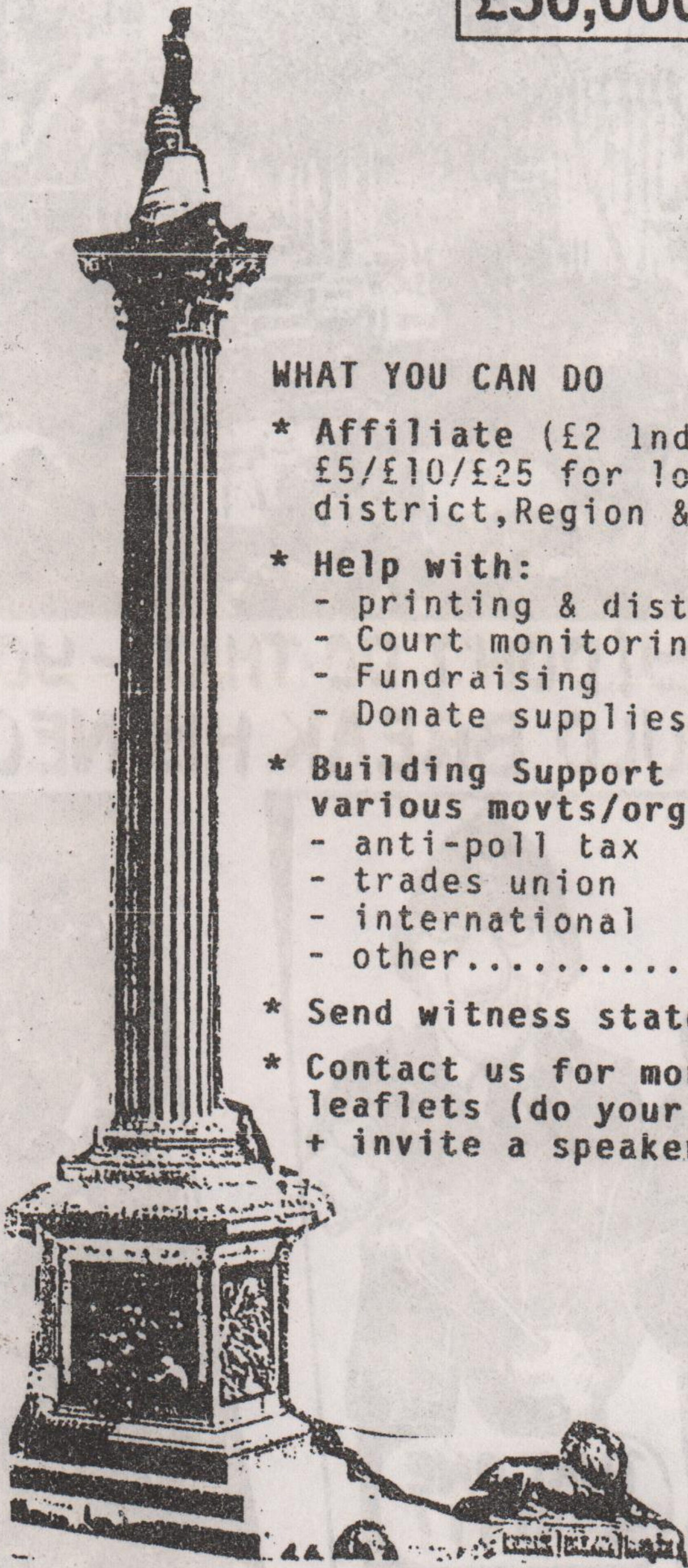
FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO DEMONSTRATE



FINANCIAL APPEAL

The Campaign estimates that it will need £50,000 to meet initial costs. We can only raise this money with your help. We need donations, affiliations and fundraising initiatives from every Anti-Poll Tax Campaign, as well as from labour movement, student and community organisations. No matter how little or how much you can raise, your contribution is vital.

£50,000



WHAT YOU CAN DO

- * Affiliate (£2 indiv £5/£10/£25 for local district, Region & TU)
- * Help with:
 - printing & distrib.
 - Court monitoring
 - Fundraising
 - Donate supplies..
- * Building Support in various movts/orgs..
 - anti-poll tax
 - trades union
 - international
 - other.....
- * Send witness statem.
- * Contact us for more leaflets (do your own) + invite a speaker

A MESSAGE TO ALL CAMPAIGNERS

dear friends,

the response to the launch of the Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign on May 3rd has been highly encouraging. An average of 40-50 people (mostly defendants) have attended the weekly meetings, and wide range of vital and complex legal, welfare and publicity tasks are being undertaken to effectively defend all those arrested and to counter media and police hysteria.

Affiliations from many diverse bodies, including a no. of Trade Councils, unemployed organisations, Green Party branches, political and community groups have been received. The Anti-Poll Tax movement has begun to rally magnificently behind the campaign - with affiliations and offers of help flooding in from Bridgewater to Edinburgh, and from regional organisations such as the Scottish and London Federations.

THE TSDC NEEDS YOU!

We are collecting defendant and witness statements, if you haven't yet sent one in then please do. We want to hear from all people who witnessed arrests on the 31st March on the Anti-Poll Tax demonstration. Many people have been charged with inflated and fabricated offences and may need you to save them from heavy fines and sentences. Please write about the content and context of your observations.

We need funds. arrange benefits in your own area or join the campaign and help organise events. Collect donations from your pub / work / neighborhood... Not all defendants can come to London, we need meetings and legal workshops around the country. You may be able to help.

Write to newspapers, and ring up chat shows and tell people about what really happened on 31/3/1990. We now have office space at the Haldane Society, volunteers are always welcome.

NO COVER UP!

This will become more and more likely as we reveal the truth about the brutal and systematic police attacks against the protestors, and the MASSIVE COVER UP BY THE CROWN PROSECUTION SERVICE OF THIS WELL DOCUMENTED OUTRAGE.

TSDC meeting are held on Wednesdays at 7.30 PM at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. On Mondays, Working meetings are at the Haldane Society, 7PM.

STOP PRESS....Warsaw, Poland..... April 1st
20 young libertarians picketed the British Embassy in support of the Trafalgar Square defendants, and to protest against the Poll Tax