

Standing Firm!

This is just a brief note after the national demonstration in London on March 23rd. We are glad to report only 2 arrests, one witnessed. It was a lively event, with a celebratory feeling, although the low turnout (20-25,000) was an indication that the Govt's bribes and propaganda have temporarily given the impression that there's no need to demonstrate at the moment. Fear of police attack may have put some people off, with saturation policing along the route. However it was clear that police were under orders not to provoke a major incident this time.

We are very proud of all those who volunteered for legal liaison, who did a superb job all day. This monitoring operation was one of the main factors in inhibiting a state attack. From the extensive debriefing notes we will be compiling a detailed REPORT of all aspects of the demonstration, the policing, the stewarding, the TSDC operation, background, conclusions, etc.

Trials and prisoners.

State repression against those who defended last year's demos continues unabated. Lorraine Vivian got 1 year in jail. Paul Jacobs, 4 years. Steve Lynn 18 months. And this week Matt Lee the chair of the Birmingham APT Fed got 2 1/2 years. We are getting some successful 'not guilty' verdicts, but these are in the teeth of serious charges and prosecution efforts to convict in front of Crown Court juries. See the Poll Tax Prisoners Group bulletin for fuller details.

Naturally for the TSDC our work may change after the summer when almost all of the trials may be over. Solidarity with the prisoners will continue until all are out. We will probably produce a pamphlet about the TSDC, as an example of a Defence Campaign - explaining and evaluating all aspects of our work so that others may benefit from our experience.

Money

We are completely broke following the

demonstration, which cost us over three thousand quid. Apart from the £250 collected on the demo by the Avon APT Federation for the TSDC, we had no time to do our own collection and appeal to the whole movement to send donations so that our defence work can continue effectively.

We now have excellent postcards (set of 8), laminated posters, badges etc. Write to us for details, and also if you'd be able to take out a Standing Order.

So that's just about the picture at the moment. We send our solidarity to all the local campaigners. TOTAL victory will be ours!!

Dave Morris for the TSDC.

Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign, room 205, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1.

TEL 071-833 8958.

Yorkshire 3D

on't pay!
on't collect!
on't implement!

Issue #3 of the open,
independant newsletter
produced by the Yorkshire
3D Network

Sing When You're Winning!

The Poll Tax Rebellion : (A Ballad).
(to the tune of "Botany Bay")

When Maggie invented the poll tax
Her lackies all raised up a cheer
"We'll give to the rich, what we take from
the poor.
Oh joy! What a spiffing idea!"

Chorus:

So here's to the Poll Tax Rebellion
And here's to that glorious day
When Maggie the clown, was robbed of
her crown
By the people who said "We won't pay!"

They tried the new tax out in Scotland
They said "We can make you obey
We'll call in the law and we'll break down
your door"
We still said "Sod off, we won't pay!"

Chorus

The rebellion soon spread down to
England
And people stood up on their feet
After ten bitter years, we forgot all our
tears
And built the campaign on our street.

Chorus

Though Labour stood by on the sidelines
To see which way the the wind would
blow
And Union power, didn't rise to the hour
We marched into town and said "No!"

Chorus

They sent in their forces to crush us
As we marched into Trafalgar Square
But they had to run, and our battle is
won
And we'll build our monument there.

Chorus

Though the Poll Tax lies dead and
defeated
They still throw our folk into jail
So we raise up a shout "Let our prisoners
out
Let freedom and justice prevail!"

Chorus

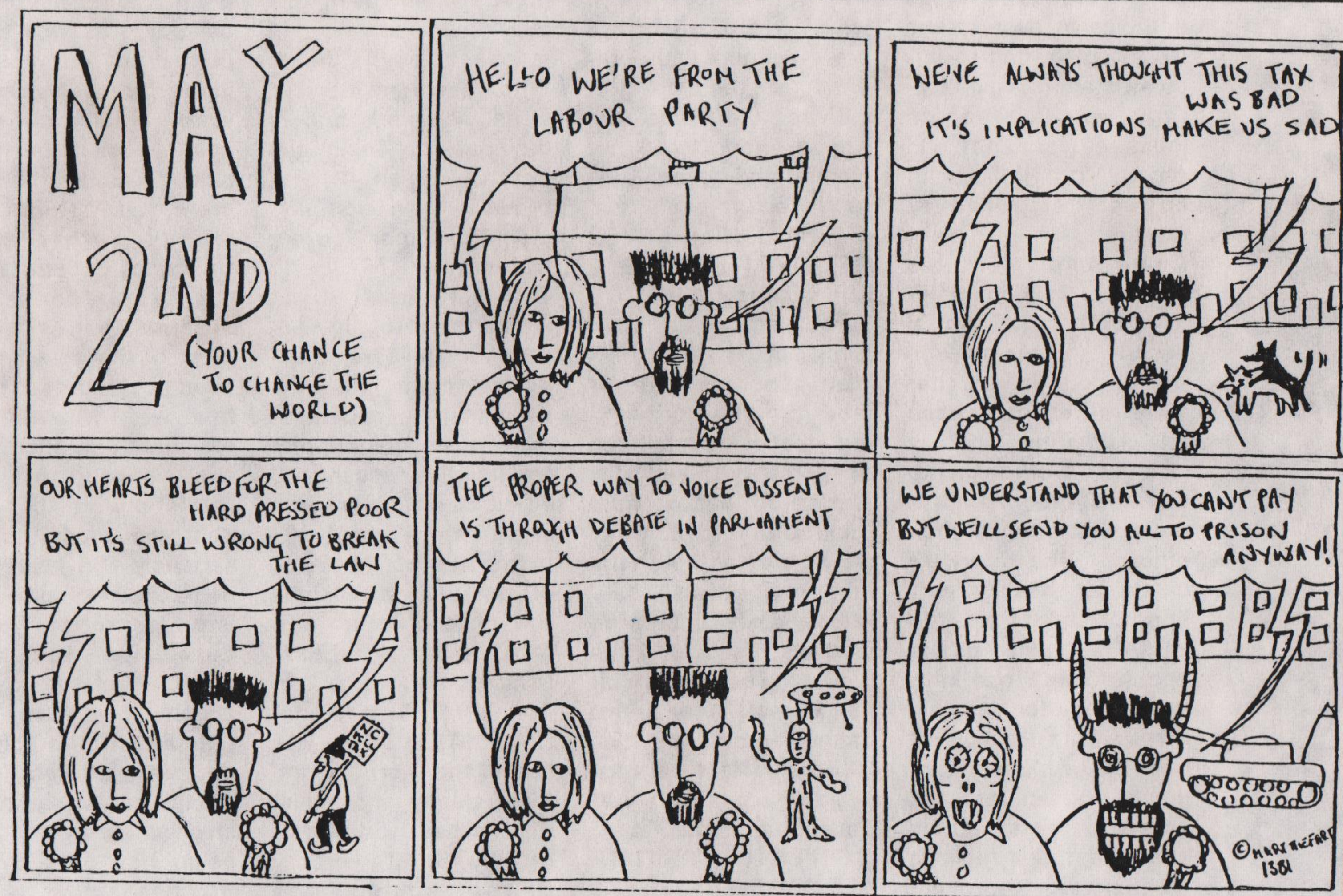
So hear this you brave politicians
In your castles throughout all the land
Heed us when we say, you could go the
same way
For the people have learned how to
stand.

Chorus

Long live the Revolution *
Long live far-reaching democratic reform*
Long live beer*

(*delete as appropriate)

Martin Corey, Hyde Park APTU.



Build the Network

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ire 3D.

Keeping it up!

Welcome to issue number 3 of the Yorkshire 3D bulletin. The tory Poll Tax is to be abolished. We have sunk Thatcher's flagship. We should celebrate, yes! but lets not quit now.

We have won the 'major' victory but not yet the whole campaign. Poll tax bills will continue to be sent out for the next two years, and millions will still be pursued for non-payment. We think it is essential to continue the non-payment and anti-bailiff campaigns, until there is an amnesty for all non-payers and a fairer system is introduced.

We must accept that the numbers actively involved in the campaign are much lower now and we must decide how we can most effectively organise. As the National Federation becomes increasingly irrelevant,

the importance of independent communication and co-ordination grows. Gone are the days of mass demonstrations but organising against committals and the bailiffs must be a priority. We see the 3D bulletin as an important part of this work, by maintaining a dialogue between activists working in different parts of the region. We also see a need for groups to pool resources and work together on co-ordinated projects. As part of this we encourage people to attend the Yorkshire Forum, on Sunday 28th April in York. Details from Ian of the York Federation on 0904 634952. We would like to discuss at the forum the future of this bulletin and what should go in it. Hope to see you there. April 1991

NEWS FROM YORK

in April.

Over the last few weeks we've heard of Enforcement Officers (newly appointed council officials, acting as bailiffs) visiting folk, but no news of anyones property being 'stolen'. York City Council have decided to use a 'code of conduct' on the use of bailiffs. This means that bailiffs will not be used on the unemployed, single parents, pensioners and anyone with 'serious' health problems. Though, these folk can still be summonsed back to court for the council to prove 'wilful neglect'. At the present time we are trying to raise funds to pay for the coach used on the National Demo. Our plans include a benefit gig and a sponsored pub crawl. Hope to see you all at the-Yorkshire forum!

**Claire, York
Against The Poll
Tax**

On 7th March we lobbied the council as they set the Poll Tax rate for 91/92. We hurled abuse, aeroplanes etc. at the councillors 'til the 'friendly' police threw us out. The rate was set at £324, though now has been reduced to £184. -What a shame that employees of York City Council, after rushing round like headless chickens, managed to get all 88,000 bills ready a couple of weeks ago; only to have to shred them all. And our sources tell us that the amended bills wont be ready till June! (Ha,Ha). Thousands of people have yet to recieve a summons for court; we believe these will be going out anytime now as we've heard rumour that cases will be heard

Stepping Up The Fight In Sheffield

Sheffield Against The Poll Tax has decided to step up the fight against the poll tax following the government's announcement to abolish it in its present form in two years time. A fly poster campaign is planned to get the message across that "We're still not paying!", a public meeting is also planned to make it clear that the campaign is standing in solidarity with those who cannot pay and that we want the poll tax scrapped now! With over a dozen separate anti-cuts campaigns springing up in the city to oppose the closures of swimming pools, schools, libraries and bus services, SAPT has decided to get involved in them where possible and spread that the cuts are a result of the Labour Council

implementing the poll tax rather than fighting the Tories. A leaflet is being produced to get this message into the anti-cuts campaign and hopefully as a result re-invigorate the anti-poll tax movement. The council are soon to start committal proceedings against poll tax non-payers, so far only rates and poll tax non-payers have been picked on. SAPT is aiming to harass the Labour Leadership with the aim of forcing them to back down and stop the committals.

**Chris Croome,
Sheffield Against
The Poll Tax**

Not Going Down!

The first committal hearings in Leeds were due to take place on February 14th. Fifty people were summonsed in total. Due to political pressure from the Anti-Poll Tax campaign these hearings were withdrawn, not in the least because Leeds City Council had failed at that stage to formulate any policy on committals. To give an idea on how chaotic things had got, the adjournment letters were hand delivered by van between 12.00pm and 8.00am on the morning of the 14th! The adjourned cases were spread out over four separate dates in March and April.

WARRANTS

Five people were due to appear on Wednesday 27th. One turned up. Warrants with bail were issued for the non-attenders. Their cases were adjourned to the 2nd May. The person who did turn up was a young man from Morley called Gary Watson. Mike Love, a solicitor from Craig & Co was representing him. However he was delayed by a previous appointment, in the meantime the magistrates agreed to wait. Gary filled out a means form. The court clerk explained their interpretation of the law regarding McKenzie friends, for future reference. McKenzies are generally allowed in Leeds for the Liability Order hearings. Though they will be more necessary than ever for the committal hearings, the court is going to limit their use as much as possible. Individuals requiring McKenzies will have to specifically ask for one. They will also need to convince the magistrates that without the McKenzies' advice they would be unable to argue their case properly. They must also be able to convince the magistrates that they have a case to argue. If the hearing is only going to be a means enquiry a McKenzie probably would not be allowed.

ROUND ONE

As soon as Mike arrived the case started. It was now 11.20am. The Council argued their case first of all. Gary had been issued with a liability order in his absence on 10th October. Following this the council visited him and left a letter. On the 7th of November they visited a second time and left a "details of income" form. Gary replied to this, stating that he had no steady income, and survived doing odd jobs for up to £50 a week. He made an offer to pay the council £150 within 14 days. They advised him to recontact them before 12th December. They claimed he had failed to do so and no

payment was made. On the 24th January the bailiffs called round when nobody was in. They left their distress form claiming to have found "insufficient goods".

THE MEANS TEST

Mike decided not to pursue the fact that regulation 41(1) had not been satisfied as the bailiffs had no means of knowing whether or not in fact there were insufficient goods. Instead he concentrated on Gary's means to prove that neither culpable neglect nor wilful non-refusal applied. Gary had very irregular employment. Since leaving school with no qualifications he had never had a regular full time job. He did not pay National Insurance contributions, and did not claim benefit as this would have meant he wouldn't be able to take on many of his jobs. Mike emphasised that this showed self reliance. Gary did odd jobs for his father as well, to clear off a loan. However he had recently contacted the DSS and made an appointment to see them to sort out a claim for Income Support. He had been billed for the full amount but had difficulty in proving that he was on a low income without wage slips. He had phoned up the council but had been informed that he should turn up at court to argue his case there.

THE VOLVO

The offer of £150 was based on the fact that Gary intended auctioning off a 1974 Volvo 264. He wrote this off in November after hitting a tree. It fetched £20 as scrap. The court clerk argued that this was a realisable asset during the period in question (From the issue of the bill until the granting of a liability order). This did not seem to be taken up by the magistrates!

TRAP

In summing up Mike stated that Gary fell into the trap of being on low income but was unable to claim benefit. So wilful refusal did not apply. Culpable neglect also did not apply as Gary had returned the details of income form and had made telephone contact with the council. Hence he hadn't simply neglected the issue. Under the regulations the bill could be remitted in whole or in part. Also if a claim for Income Support was successful then direct deductions could be made to that. The court clerk backed this point up by quoting the criminal justice act of '82. Since Gary was 19 years old other methods of enforcement should be

considered before committal.

Gary Watson won his case. The magistrates decided that neither wilful refusal nor culpable neglect applied. They refused to remit any of the tax, but will not take any further action unless his circumstances change.

STOP PRESS

The next committal date was Wednesday 10th April. This time the magistrates gave a 49 year old printer from Morley a thirty day sentence, suspended pending an arrangement to pay of £7 a week. Firm evidence that the bailiffs had not acted within the law was ignored. We presented the magistrates with a document from the bailiffs claiming to have actually seized his goods. The Council showed the magistrates another certificate claiming that insufficient goods could be found. The Magistrates decided the first certificate was irrelevant! The Council officials in their turn refused an offer to go ahead with an earnings attachment order, making nonsense of their claim that committals are only to be used as a last resort. Our man was relieved that he did not get imprisoned there and then, and accepted the arrangement to pay. However the threat of imprisonment will be hanging over him for over a year.

On Wednesday 10th April a further 10 committal cases, (10 more of those adjourned from February 14th), were due to be heard. Only two turned up to court. Of the other 8; one had paid, one had moved and couldn't be found, one had begun claiming income support. These 3 were withdrawn. Five people had warrants issued with a bail of £50, forcing them to attend on May 23rd.

The first actual case was a 21 year old man from Farnley. Although working and taking home £100 per week, he said he could not pay up to now because he was paying court fines from earlier criminal cases. The magistrates found him guilty of culpable neglect anyway and gave him a suspended sentence of 30 days unless he pays £15 a week. In January the council had given him a demand of 'pay £37 per week or else! The second case was a 20 year old woman who has just begun claiming income support. This case was adjourned till May 23rd.

The first mass committals in Leeds will take place on May 2nd at the domestic courts behind Leeds Town Hall. From 10.00am onwards we will be holding a support demonstration. Come along and support us!

**Ian Greaves, Woodhouse
APTG.**

Debate

What Happened to Non-Implementation and Non-Collection?

The basis of the anti-poll tax campaign and the initiative this bulletin sprang from is the slogan - "Don't Pay! Don't Collect! Don't Implement!". The first part "Don't Pay!" has been acted on successfully but the last parts mostly at best empty mouthed, at worst ignored and attacked as irrelevant. The reasons behind the slogans were that the poll tax was unfair and by putting the burden of local government on an individual tax would mean that many people would be unable to afford it. But that was not the end of it - The slogan called upon Labour councils and Trades Unions to take action against it.

The poll tax was a tax that would also mean local councils losing the autonomy of raising its finances, an autonomy that it had already lost in carrying out the local services it saw fit through rate capping thereby lessening local democracy not increasing it, so councils were called upon to not implement the tax. The cuts that would follow would also mean the loss of many jobs and the trades unions were called on to not collect the new tax.

"Don't Pay! Don't Collect! Don't Implement!" thus formed the basis on a campaign that would unite working class communities with the labour movement in both its economic and

political spheres and thus strengthen its fightback against the Tory Poll Tax and the other attacks against the working class with the anti-union laws and the many other attacks on civil liberties. What happened to those elements in the struggle?

When the Tories first decided on the poll tax, some Labour councils in Scotland said that they would refuse to co-operate with the proposals. Their refusal quickly collapsed. Since then every single Labour council in the country has been cooperating with the Tories and have implemented the tax. A number of them have even taken Labour councillors and MP's to court for non-payment.

Lambeth council in south London briefly promised defiance; then the council leader retreated to a stance where she would cooperate with collection but not pay the tax herself. Earlier this year she paid up, apparently after being threatened by the Labour Party with expulsion if she didn't.

The argument of the Labour leaders, nationally and in local government, has been that you mustn't break the law, or at any rate it would be suicidal to try. Now the "law breakers" have defeated the Tories; and the Tories themselves admit that in almost so many words that the poll tax is unjust and uncollectible.

What are Labour Councils doing? Still collecting the tax and pursuing non-payers! They should be made to turn around, to stop collecting and to help force the Tories to scrap the Tax now rather than in two years time and accept an amnesty for the non-payers.

But how can that be achieved? We can continue to mouth the slogans but without taking those slogans seriously and putting them forward in those arenas they apply to we could be accused of being mindless zombies. The anti-poll tax movement can continue to criticise the actions of the Labour movement but without a serious orientation to that movement there is no way that we can achieve those aims.

This issue of 3D carries some articles and cartoons that do just that - it is right to criticise Labour councils and members who are doing the Tories dirty work but we have to actually challenge them to remove them as a block to the movement.

The poll tax movement and primarily its Militant Leadership has failed at every hurdle to take the struggle into the Labour movement and we have paid for that failure with no influence on what the poll tax's successor is and the effects that will have. We are now paying our poll tax with the extra 2.5% on VAT in our purchases.

Our education system is being removed from any remnant of local accountability it once had. The successor to the poll tax will be as the Tory or Labour leadership say not as we, the anti-poll tax movement say.

It is not too late to take the struggle on. The arguments are even more in our favour - the tax is about to be abolished, it costs councils millions every year to implement - refuse to continue to implement or collect it - replace the poll tax now! Workers in local government continue to lose their jobs - refuse to cooperate with collection, strike against the cuts and sackings - replace the poll tax now!

In order to win the struggle against the poll tax fully it is absolutely necessary to take all the three slogans seriously. Only by taking on the right in the Labour movement where they are can we successfully win the battle against the poll tax and all its consequences! Don't Pay! Don't Collect! Don't Implement! Join the Labour Party and fight!

**Ron Strong,
Burley
Anti-Poll Tax
Group**

An Anarchist Viewpoint!

This article has been written to counterpoise the arguments used by Ron in his article 'What happened to non-implementation and non-collection'. In it he gives a Marxist perspective on the supposed political direction and aim of the 3D network. He states that the slogans 'Don't collect, Don't implement', '...called upon Labour councils and Trade Unions to take action against it (the poll tax)'

As an anarchist I put my faith in mass working class action, not in town hall or trade union bureaucrats. The three slogans that form the title 3D also fit our political outlook. We have always argued for mass defiance at every stage from registration to implementation. Our strategy was based on mass refusal to pay and refusal of workers to collect or recover arrears.

An example of this approach to non-implementation, the social security workers who walked out in October 1989 rather than snoop on claimants. That is giving lists of claimants and their addresses to the poll tax registration offices. The workers came out despite getting no help from the CPSA leadership or the oppositional Broad Left. In Hackney for example there was a joint picket line of workers, claimants and anti-poll tax activists. This surely shows a more realistic way forward to prevent wage and benefit arrestment than to ask the Labour councillors not to implement them.

LABOUR PARTY, BOSSES PARTY. Throughout the campaign the Labour Party has shown its true colours as a bosses organisation. Labour has continually insisted that the law must be

obeyed. In response to crippling poll tax demands, Labour says 'Pay the poll tax'. In response to the declamation of services every single Labour council has complied with implementation. Despite this, the left have continued to channel working class anger into the foolish and disastrous avenue of persuading Labour councils to fight. We say that the local authorities are not neutral 'bastions of democracy' but merely appendages of the capitalist state machine. Councillors are required by law to raise revenue for services and if they fail to do so they will be surcharged and removed from office. Those who wield ultimate power within local authorities are the chief executives and treasurers who are appointed not elected and accountable to Whitehall.

THE TUC WILL NEVER GET OFF ITS KNEES.

The strategy of the TUC bureaucrats has been 'Don't break the law - wait for a Labour Government'. But working class people can neither afford to wait for Labour nor can we trust them one inch if they were elected. As the miners, printers, seafarers and ambulance workers discovered the TUC will never get off its knees! And if we cannot force the union leaders to fight we must organise unofficial action ourselves.

CONTINUING THE STRUGGLE.

The poll tax has been beaten. Thatcher has gone down with the sinking ship. This is a victory for the millions of working class people who stood up and defied the tax. The first major victory after a decade of defeats. This is an excellent morale boost and a confidence builder for us all - a small

taste of the changes we can achieve through mass political action. However we have only won a battle - not the war. We still have two more years of poll tax bills landing on our doormats, we will still be summonsed to court, still have to battle with bailiffs.

The movement that defeated the poll tax was a mass community based defiance of the law that refused to pay. This wasn't just outside the official Labour movement, it was achieved in the teeth of Labour and TUC opposition. The fact that millions of working class people were refusing to pay, takes the idea of non-payment being an individualist stance and stands it on its head. When everyone on your street, at work and in the pub is doing the same, openly and proudly; then non-payment becomes collective refusal.

This movement wasn't led as the arrogant sectarians 'militant tendency' claim but was essentially a spontaneous uprising of popular feeling that focused 10 years of discontent into rejection of the poll tax. In fact at most only 20% of anti-poll tax unions ever bothered to affiliate to the 'militant' controlled All Britain Anti Poll Tax Federation. The Town Hall Rebellions of Spring 1990 clearly show this; the mass demonstrations in the Tory Shires couldn't be organised by any left group because no left group has a mass base there. The greatest expression of this mass movement was the 250,000 non-payers marching on the streets of London and another 40,000 on the streets of Glasgow on March 31st that year.

The ruling class stra-

tegy to split the movement was simple. Attack it. Political witch-hunting and criminalisation of those who fought back against the police at Trafalgar Square was to be used. Raids and jail sentences to intimidate and isolate the left. The wedge of 'law and order' to split the movement: ordinary citizens against violent extremists. Despite disgusting statements from Steve Nally and Tommy Sheriden; the anti-poll tax movement did not split. Millions of people in England and Wales followed the example of one million non-payers in Scotland and refused to pay. The 3D network has always existed to report on the actuality of the campaign as well as to put across our political ideas for the way forward. That we have spent most of our time talking about non-payment and the community rather than workplace based side of the resistance, is because that is where most of the activity has been located. To think that we, or even the national Federation, can easily change that reality is pie in the sky. That we must debate seriously the issues of non-collection and non-implementation is a necessity but the chances of workplace action to defeat the remnants of the poll tax do seem remote. With the tax beaten the mass involvement in the campaign has gone. What we need now is an honest political debate within the shrinking number of committed activists, otherwise we'll just become an unpaid, overworked, overstretched welfare service for the thousands facing bailiffs and ultimately jail.

Kevin, Burley APT Group

Debate