

Trotskyist Approach Needed

1990 has witnessed the biggest (and most violent) demonstration in Britain since the days of Chartism; the biggest prison picket in 20 years and the biggest court picket since the war.

The level of police militarisation, echoing the miners' strike and the Wapping print strike, has been there for all to see, whether first hand on the demo, or as we all saw, on Channel 4's 'Battle of Trafalgar'.

The Tories have clearly made the decision to use all the necessary state forces at their disposal in order to impose this class inspired tax upon workers and the poor in Britain.

This is why a simplistic 'Don't Pay!' strategy is clearly idealistic, and bound for defeat.

The Tories are now forced to rely more and more on the militarised side of the state and they will go further if needed. The ruling class will use the full forces at their disposal. Therefore it is quite simple: we have to prepare the mobilisation of the forces we need to win this fight. This means mobilising the real power of the working class. It means we cannot by-pass Militants' control of the APTU movement. We have to wrest leadership from them. Those opposed to the right wing Militant need an alternative fighting programme of action. To assist this debate we present the following:

- 1) Build the APTU's in the tenants groups, estates, streets, workers groups and unions, etc.
- 2) Make the links and prepare for workers striking against the poll tax - especially council workers and other public sector workers.
- 3) Rank and file workers must take the lead!
- 4) Organise defence groups on the estates, the unions, on the streets, amongst youth; against the bailiffs and to defend our demonstrations.
- 5) APTU's need to become Councils of Action if we're going to win!

Steve Masterson

Workers Power - Peckham and East Dulwich Against the Poll Tax

DEFEND NON PAYERS

Southwark: 10.30am Monday November 26th
Camberwell Magistrates Court,
15 D'Eynesford Road, Camberwell Green.

Lewisham: 9.30am Tuesday December 4th
Greenwich Magistrates Court,
Blackheath Road (off Deptford Broadway).
Greenwich: Monday December 10th - details later.

PICKET THE COURTS NOW!

LEWISHAM APTU MEETINGS

7.30pm Thursday, November 29th
Legal workshop for McKenzies and defendants.

8pm Monday, December 3rd
Public meeting for non payers.

Both at the Labour Club, Limes Grove, Lewisham

Anarchist Approach Needed

Let's face it, at the national, regional and local level, too much of the anti poll tax movement has been hijacked by a bunch of self-seeking bastards whose only aim is to climb to power on the backs of the working class. It might be mainly Militant playing this sick game at the moment, but let us be under no illusion any state left group would do the same given half a chance. We can't trust any of them.

What we need to do is to devise a truly anarchist programme of action to both prevent/stop the hijacking of our movement and to defeat the poll tax. To this end we need to look towards **networking**.

This means that truly democratic local APT groups and autonomous groups operating in state left run areas should start working together on a local/regional level to undertake actions and to share information. This means by-passing the bureaucratic nightmare of the Militant controlled federations.

It is important that it is local groups that start working together and not just a collection of individuals.

We must, however, not forget the political battle to democratise the anti poll tax movement. But we should not spend so much time in smoke filled rooms as to forget about action - something which has happened all too often.

For it is action that will defeat the poll tax. We must act to stop the bailiffs entering our homes - and that means not just action on our estates and streets but taking the battle to them.

I'm sure that many can expand and improve on the ideas above, do so please.

From John, New Cross APTU (in a personal capacity)

Emergency Meeting

All London

Fight the Poll Tax!

7.30pm - Sunday, 2nd December

Duke of York pub

York Way, Kings Cross

open to those who basically agree
with the politics of this newsletter

Lewisham APTU Yuletide Bask

22ND DECEMBER 5pm to 12 midnight
Lots of bands, stalls, food and booze.
Labour Club, Limes Grove, Lewisham.

£2.50/£3.50

As they say be there, or be square.

SOUTH LONDON

November 1990

Fight the Poll Tax!

Issue 1

MOBILISE NOW!

Wandsworth Council, with Beresford at the helm, has long been considered the Tories flagship council. Wandsworth was at the head of the Tories initiative to privatise local service provision, and long ago proved itself adept, with the outright collusion of the local trade union bureaucracy, at breaking working class resistance, section by section.

With the Poll Tax, Beresford decided to go even further. Wandsworth set its poll tax at £148, with a £52 million cuts package to follow. This, in a borough where social service provision is so poor that one child, Stephanie Fox has already died.

Activists in Tooting Anti-Poll Tax Union were determined to link up with the anger in the borough and stop Beresford in his tracks.

We did not have long to wait. With non-payment in the borough at 30,000 and rising, the Council decided to play the vanguard role once more, being the first in London to prosecute non-payers. TAPTU scored an early victory, when the council issued 4,800 summonses but was forced to withdraw them under threat of a mass demonstration. As it was, over 100 people gathered to jeer as Beresford's cronies turned up at court.

Since then, Wandsworth have continued to try and set the pace by using bailiffs immediately to try brake the back of resistance on the estates. A 250 strong mobilisation outside one threatened non-payers house and a mass picket outside the bailiffs Madagans' Croydon office forced further retreat. Now Wands-

Ding Dong the Wicked Witch is Dead

For many of us, the crashing of Thatcher is the cause of jubilation and no doubt much drunken revelry. But let us take stock. With Thatcher out of the way, the Tories and their moronic supporters will take fresh hope and attempt the greatest con job of recent years.

They will try to show a more caring, sincere and understanding Party. They will squirm, turn and promise the stars. Whatever shade of blue, they all work for the bosses. That the Tory cabinet announces the doubling of troops in the Gulf on the day Thatcher resigns is proof pudding of their nature.

Therefore we must strengthen our resolve and go forward, stepping up all forms of active protest until the Tories and their despicable tax are vanquished forever. The wicked witch is dead but beware her trained lapdogs still bite.

Louis Borzoni - East Dulwich Anti-Poll Tax Union

South London Fight the Poll Tax represents a number of Anti-Poll Tax Unions and activists throughout South London who have come together to produce this newsletter which we now intend to produce regularly. From the outset this newsletter is aimed at organising the anti-Poll Tax fight in South London in a militant, fighting manner. We are therefore opposed to the leadership of the All-Britain Federation of Anti-Poll Tax Unions. The simplistic programme of 'Don't Pay' is totally inadequate as is the existing leadership's history of struggle. We aim to fight within and without the Federation to help build an alternative fighting programme that can win.

worth have brought in Gaults, who've been backed up by the police in forcing entry into workers homes. So much for the "peaceful civil disobedience will win" scenario of the Federation!

We've been busy making links with Fightback '90, the local anti-cuts campaign, and arguing for a campaign of all-out strike action and occupations of schools, libraries, etc; threatened with closure. This has put us in a stronger position to argue for strikes against wage arrestment and ultimately against the tax itself - this is necessary if we are to win.

Through all of this, the local Labour Party has remained on the sidelines. In the May elections, it proudly announced that it would raise the poll tax, and has been nowhere to be seen since. Labour hatchet-men like David Blunkett have refused to share anti-cuts platforms with TAPTU speakers!

TAPTU successes have been based around two things:

1) democracy - we work with members of Workers Power, RCG, SWP and the Leninist, as well as many independent trade union militants and class fighters. Every position is fully debated and voted on. We know that political censorship is the death of any fighting united front.

2) We've never harboured illusions in the Federations "peaceful civil disobedience" campaigns. Our aim has always been to mobilise working class people to defend their interests by whatever means necessary! Bailiffs have retreated not because we've kept our heads down - but through fear of class justice. When 3,000 people turned out to demonstrate against cuts, we knew we'd paved the way for such mobilisations by proving it was possible to take on Beresford and his thugs, and win!

Our inspiration has been drawn from the history of working class resistance which stretches from Red Clydeside to Orgreave, and, in 1990, Trafalgar Square. The way to win is to pit the full force of our class against the weight of their class. As the Tories' heads roll, one by one, we know we're getting there.

Nick Moss - Tooting Anti-Poll Tax Union - 3D slate.

Second All-Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation National Conference

Apollo Theatre, Manchester
Sunday 25th November, 12 noon
Vote for the 3D slate

Danny Burns - Jane Connor
Ian Greaves - Nick Moss

BAILIFFS OCCUPIED

Crieghtons, the bailiffs, of St. Mary Cray, Kent was successfully occupied on the afternoon of Monday 12 November.

The occupation staged by Camden Against The Poll Tax, with support from Lewisham, Southwark, Haringey and Northampton anti-poll tax activists, was in protest against Labour-run Camden Council's decision to employ Crieghtons.

The occupation, which received good coverage on the local BBC TV news, lasted for one and a half hours before being brutally broken up by the police.

During the occupation, in a astounding piece of doublethink, Mrs. Crieghton said that they could do no wrong as they were a Christian firm!

There was one unprovoked arrest, after the protestors were 'escorted' out of the building, for alleged threatening behaviour (section 4 Public Order Act). This person was also fitted up at Orpington nick on a drugs charge. A four and a half hour vigil was held at the nick until the person was released.

Let this occupation be a warning to the thieving bastards - this is only the start. We are ready for you - enter our estates and streets at your peril.

from New Cross Anti-Poll Tax Union

WHOSE VIOLENCE? POLICE VIOLENCE!

Bob Phelan, a 57 year old activist, died after being dragged from Coventry Little Park Street magistrates court by police. The police were told by his wife that Bob had a heart condition. Bob collapsed on the pavement outside the court - the police did not call an ambulance and anti-poll tax activists were refused access to court phones and had to use a call box.

Bob died in hospital a few hours later. None of this has been reported in the national press.

Coventry Labour MP Dave Nellist is writing to the Home Secretary demanding an inquiry to be held into Bob's death.

LEWISHAM COUNCIL GOES TO COURT

In a desperate attempt to intimidate the 50% of Lewisham residents who are not paying their poll tax, Lewisham Council is due to begin court proceedings against 75,000 people.

Beginning with 204 summonses for December 4th, the council has booked a day at Greenwich magistrates court every fortnight. 500 cases are scheduled for December 18 rising to 1,000 in January and 2,000 in February.

Leader of the Council, Steve Bullock has made his position clear. In the current edition of Lewisham Outlook, he threatens non-payers with arrestment of wages, seizure of goods by the bailiffs and even prison.

Lewisham APTU, the borough federation, is organising a demo at Greenwich magistrates court (off Deptford Broadway) at 9.30am on December 4th.

Resolution to the Conference from LEWISHAM ANTI-POLL TAX UNION

This AGM unconditionally defends the more than 530 Anti Poll Tax protestors arrested following the police provocation in and around Trafalgar Square on 31st March. We condemn this deliberate action by the police to discredit the Anti Poll Tax movement and to attack the right to demonstrate.

We condemn the statement made by the chair and secretary of the All Britain Anti Poll Tax Federation blaming demonstrators and political groups for the violence instigated by the police, and offering to "name names".

We disassociate ourselves from the ABAPTF's cowardly refusal to organise further mass demonstrations as shown by its hostility to call for a mass demonstration in London on Oct. 20th.

BRIXTON SPEAKS

Many people will have gone on the massive demonstration through the backstreets of Camberwell to Brockwell Park on October 20th but how many people know of the struggle to get a demo?

Again and again activists called on Militant (ALAPTF) to organise a single united demonstration in solidarity, not only with non-payers, but also with defendants from the March 31 demo.

The ALAPTF officers were set against holding any demonstration in London - it was only after much discussion that the floor forced the Federation to organise a march. They, however, refused point blank to consider a march through central London - which is one of the reasons why the Trafalgar Square Defendants Campaign organised the feeder march from Horseferry Road Magistrates Court.

We in the Brixton Hill Anti-Poll Tax Union moved a resolution in the Lambeth Federation to support the TSDC march and picket and to help in its organisation.

Our resolution was opposed by the same person (from Clapham Park Estate APTU) who later condemned the TSDC for not stewarding the Brixton Prison picket in both cases using typically bureaucratic methods.

These same tactics have been used when the call is made to broaden the anti-poll tax struggle to fight against cuts in services and to defend the Trafalgar Square defendants. We must organise to unite these struggles in South London and nationally.

by Ed Baker of Brixton Hill APTU

BUILD THE ACTION!

The Tories are in a mess, with splits in the leadership and the economy foundering. Now is the time to put the boot in over the poll tax.

The people implementing the Tories' poll tax are trade union members and workers. So if we want to smash the tax we need to build links with them.

We should encourage them to become involved in their local anti poll tax groups and build anti poll tax groups in their workplaces. The most effective action for council workers is to refuse to do poll tax work. Payroll workers should not deduct money from wages for wage arrestment. If civil servants required to deduct poll tax money from benefits refuse to do so, it could have a devastating effect.

In the meantime we need mass pickets outside the courts and bailiffs offices. We must ensure a large crowd turns up whenever bailiffs attempt to visit non-payers. **Local telephone trees are vital in this.**

Everyone summonsed should turn up at the court, so as to make the proceedings take as long as possible and try to put our point of view. Southwark council has summonsed 100 people for non-payment of the poll tax.

by Mary Phillips from the Socialist Workers Party and East Dulwich Anti-Poll Tax Union

Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign

Defend the
Right to Demonstrate
RALLY

7.30pm, Wednesday, November 28th
Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq,
London WC1

MOTION FOR THE ALL-BRITAIN ANTI-POLL TAX FEDERATION CONFERENCE

from the Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign

To amend the National Committee General Statement as follows Points 19) and 20): Delete all, and add -

a) We note and applaud the huge turnout on the October 20th London demonstrations to greet the People's Marchers and to support anti-poll tax defendants and prisoners - this is despite the efforts of the police to beat our movement off the streets at Trafalgar Square on March 31st.

b) We note that the police once again used violence to break up a peaceful demonstration in order to discredit our movement.

Support the Poll Tax Prisoners!

<i>Brixton - October 20th Remands</i>		
Peter Robinson	PM2745	Scrubbs
Daniel Attwood	KT1303	Feltham
Marcus Roskilly	KT1294	Feltham
Antonio Rossi	KT1295	Feltham
<i>Trafalgar Square - March 31st Remands</i>		
Paul Jacobs	RA0711	Brixton
<i>Hackney Town Hall Convicts</i>		
Neil Harding	MV1333	Brixton
Alan Clarke	MV2254	Pentonville
<i>Trafalgar Square Convicts</i>		
Robert Robinson (aka Simon O'Reilly)	RA0741	Camp Hill
Wayne Calder	NT0082	Huntercome
Debbie Harper	TT0105	Holloway
Gordon Allum	PM3160	Scrubbs
<i>Brixton Convicts</i>		
Ray Caldwell	PF2271	Wandsworth

Addresses:

HMP Brixton, Jebb Ave, London SW2 5XF
HMP Camp Hill, Clissold Road, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5PB
HMYOI & Remand Centre, Belford Rd, Feltham, Middx, TW13 4ND
HMYOI Huntercome, Huntercome Pl, Nuffield, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon, RG9 5SE
HMP Pentonville, Caledonian Road, London N7 8TT
HMP Wormwood Scrubs, PO Box 757, Du Cane Road, London W12 0AE
HMP Holloway, Parkhurst Road, London N7 0NU
HMP Wandsworth, Heathfield Road, Wandsworth, London SW18 3HE

The Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign

We set up in the wake of March 31st events. We are run by and for anti-poll tax defendants, and we're backed by the whole anti-poll tax movement.

We provide unconditional legal, political and financial support for those arrested as a result of March 31 (over 520) and October (135 people).

We have traced witnesses and succeeded in getting charges dropped or reduced and trials postponed. We monitor all the court cases - more court monitors welcome.

If you are a defendant and aren't in touch with us - get in touch now. Likewise, if you witnessed any arrests on March 31st, or October 20th, get in touch now!

We have organised regular solidarity pickets outside police stations, courts and prisons.

On October 20th, we organised the biggest court picket since the war, outside Horseferry Road Magistrates Court, before marching to join the All-London Anti Poll Tax Federation March. After that, over 3,500 marched to picket Brixton Prison in support of the four anti-poll tax prisoners there. This, the largest prison picket for nearly 20 years, was attacked by the police after only 30 minutes.

We encourage affiliation: £5 local, £10 district, £25 regional and TU's.

We meet every Wednesday at 7pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1

TSDC, Room 205, Panther House, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X 0AP. Tel: 071-833 8958

c) We note that over 130 protestors were arrested and scores were injured during indiscriminate charges by baton wielding police, many in full riot gear.

d) We commend the protestors who showed immense courage and restraint in the face of this intimidation.

e) We note that, in the aftermath, the police and some Tory politicians have called for future anti-poll tax demonstrations to be banned.

f) We note that the October 20th defendants are likely to receive, as the March 31st defendants are, political show-trials with excessively high conviction rates and heavy sentences.

We resolve:

i) To give full support to those arrested on October 20th and to demand their charges be dropped.

ii) To pledge our solidarity with the March 31st defendants, especially in the run up to the Old Bailey trials of defendants on 'riot' charges (carrying up to a 15 year sentence) in the New Year, and to demand all charges be dropped.

iii) To utterly condemn the police for their violent and lawless behaviour on March 31st and October 20th.

iv) To affiliate to the Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign - which is run by and for the March 31st and October 20th defendants and is open to all APT organisation - and to continue to circulate their literature and support their initiatives.

v) To urge all APTs who haven't yet affiliated to do so, and to recommend that local/regional Federations fund raise to provide financial backing (including travel costs) to defendants from their area.

vi) To protest Against the Poll Tax and to defend the right to demonstrate, by calling a national March through Central London (including Trafalgar Square) in March 1991, and to pledge to go ahead with this whatever the response of the police, government and media. Publicity to start straightaway. The TSDC is invited to send voting delegates to planning meetings/committees for the demonstration, and to co-ordinate the legal back-up system for the day.

vii) The date should be March 30th 1991.

Motion to Conference from NEW CROSS ANTI-POLL TAX UNION

We are concerned that motions for debate are not being accepted for this conference. Last year there was a lot of talk about maximising participation from groups and people who are not politically experienced. There is no effective input now and many local groups haven't even received a copy of the constitution, or any papers for this conference. In a national organisation of the strength of the All-Britain Federation this lack of efficient co-ordination is patently undemocratic.

The Federation Committee is now totally dominated by Militant supporters since the resignation of the three non-Militant members from their positions. Militant supporters have undoubtedly put in a lot of good work, but have sometimes given the impression that they are only interested so long as they can control the movement.

We believe that this attitude has brought about the current situation, where the diversity of the movement on the ground is denied a voice, which can only be divisive. If this leads to a split it is because of Militants' manipulative tactics, not because of any provocation by dissenters. **We therefore propose that this conference is reconvened in two months time**, with motions and amendments sent out to all affiliated groups well in advance and a whole day (five hours) set aside for debates on the motions. Without this opportunity for constructive discussion and practical planning the Federation will not be able to represent the diversity of the movement and will be completely ineffective as a co-ordinating body.