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GULF WAR ~ NO CLASS WAR ~ YES!

The waiting is over. The war has finally started. Bombs and missiles fall on cities and armies alike. The death toll mounts.

What is this war about? Our rulers tell us it is to destroy a new Hitler. They say it is to punish aggression. They say it is to liberate Kuwait. Saddam tells us Kuwait is part of Iraq. He says the war is about God and the Palestinians.

They are all lying. This war is about control over the Middle East - its oil and its trade routes. Iraq was bankrupt before the war. It invaded Kuwait to rob it, to gain control of another 10% of the world's oil and to get decent access to the Gulf.

Saddam's problem was that the USA had interests there too. They want control over the oil for their own gas-guzzling economy. The USA also needs that control so as to be able to discipline economic rivals like Japan and Germany who are no longer terrified of

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GULF WAR NO! CLASS WAR YES!

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the Russian threat.

WHO PAYS?

Who is going to pay for this war? The answer is simple. We will. Thousands will die. Most of the dead will be working class people and poor peasants. Fighting the war

and poor peasants. Fighting the war is costing a fortune. Before it had even started, Britain had spent £500 million. Estimates say it will run to £2-£3 billion. The US could easily spend £100 billion. Our hospitals are being used for war casualties. Our health comes second to our bosses control of oil.

We are told that the Poll Tax cannot be cut dramatically this year. The money has already been spent on the war!

A PILE OF ASHES

And will Kuwait be liberated? The Emir and his family are some of the richest, most obnoxious, evil slimeballs in the world. They and their friends in the Gulf routinely imprison and torture opponents. No form of 'democracy' exists there - the Emirs own Kuwait. What will they get back? A pile of ashes, littered with unexploded bombs waiting to maim even more innocents in the future. The cure will be worse than the disease.

NO WAR BUT THE CLASS WAR

We say that the working class has no interest whatsoever in this war. We have more in common with other workers in Iraq than we do with our own rulers. The rich and powerful who control Britain and Iraq do so because they exploit us. The only war worth fighting is the class war against these parasites.

What can we do? Clearly demonstrations on their own are not enough. We say this despite the fact that members of SUBVERSION actively supported demonstrations against the war. We must not be moderate, we must not look out for the 'national interest'.

General strike brings Turkish cities to a halt

Seumas Milne

At least one and a half million workers in Turkey stayed at home yesterday in a one-day general strike declared illegal by the government. The strike, for better pay and conditions, paralysed the main cities and followed a month of increasingly politicised industrial action. Sevket Yilmaz, president of the largest union in Turkey, said it has been the

THE cost of the first day of the war topped \$500 million (£250 million), the Congressional Budget Office reported yesterday. The barrage of 104 Tomahawk cruise missiles at \$1.3 million each was the biggest component, followed by the \$30 million cost of the F-18 warplane shot down. At \$11,000 each for the bombs of the B-52s, each sortie is dropping some \$2 million on to Iraq.

Troops stop 50,000 Turkish miners marching on capital

Reuter in Ankara

TURKISH security forces, with water cannon and bulldozers, halted almost 50,000 striking coal miners on a 150-mile march to Ankara yesterday. The Anatolian news agency said troops, gendarmes, and riot police blocked the miners about a mile from Eskicaga village, well short of the main Istanbul-Ankara highway. The miners set out on foot on Friday from Zonguldak on the Black Sea after police stopped their 1,000-bus convoy from leaving for Ankara. They plan to demonstrate at the gates of the palace.

non, an armoured car, and lines of riot police. The leader of the miners' union, Gencl M. Denizler, said the marchers were still on their way to Ankara. The 200 workers at David Brown Vehicle Transmissions in Huddersfield walked out on December 19 after a strike. The Challenger tank at present deployed in the Gulf - are still on strike. The 200 workers at David Brown Vehicle Transmissions in Huddersfield walked out on December 19 after a strike.

A nation divided is less effective at war. We must encourage those reservists who do not want to fight. We must try to persuade others to do the same. Workers involved in supplying the war drive should refuse to do so.

Workers should push forward on all fronts.

Age demands to beat inflation.

Wage demands to beat inflation.

Action against redundancies and worsening conditions.

Smashing the Poll Tax.

Let our reply to the bosses war be Class War.

HOSPITAL IN PATIENTS WAR CASUALTIES FIRST



Turkish strike

As the Turkish state, part of the NATO alliance, on the front line with Iraq offers its backing in the war against Iraq, the real war for OUR class is expressing itself WITHIN the Turkish borders.

Over 1½ million Turkish workers have been taking industrial action to protest against the Turkish governments attack on their living standards. Massive inflation, threats to thousands of jobs and repressive action against militants are part of the everyday experience of Turkish workers.

Miners and steelworkers have spearheaded this action and been followed by textile paper and office workers.

The miners action in particular, involving 48,000 strikers and the whole mining community has involved huge street demonstrations and threatened to spill over into direct confrontations with the state. For the moment this action has been contained by the Unions but the situation is explosive.

Not to be outdone the British state showed its concern when police attacked demonstrators in London showing their solidarity with Turkish strikers.

Turkish workers are beginning to make connections between their struggle against the bosses and their state and opposition to the war in the Gulf. We need to do the same.

want to help?

If you agree broadly with our politics, there are a number of ways you can help **SUBVERSION**.

Take extra copies to distribute in your area.

Write to us. We would welcome short articles (not more than 400 words), or the kind of information we could use to put into articles of our own.

Send some money. Although we distribute **SUBVERSION** free it still costs quite a lot to produce - so all contributions are welcome.

Please make all cheques/postal orders payable to R.Knight.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

BALTIC BLUES

The recent events in the Baltic should come as a surprise to nobody. Despite the heroism of the people of Vilnius, the lesson was once again rammed home that an unarmed demonstration is powerless when confronted with a determined and ruthless military machine.

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

The massacre of civilians on January 13th showed the callous disregard which the Soviet state has for human life. It showed glasnost in its true light - just so much window dressing in the attempt to rescue the Soviet empire from collapse. It showed that faced with collapse, the Soviet state will stop at **nothing** to protect its rule.



Massacring innocent, unarmed civilians is something the Soviet State is not alone in. Israel does it every day. They both follow in the proud tradition of Britain and the United States. Remember **Bloody Sunday** when British paratroopers gunned down unarmed demonstrators? Remember the Kent State massacre? That time the victims were students protesting against US involvement in the Vietnam War.

DIVIDED WE FALL

The Lithuanian tragedy also teaches us another lesson. Once again the poison of nationalism has fatally divided the working class. Living conditions in the Soviet Union are appalling - and getting worse. Instead of uniting to fight their bosses - the state, the working class is allowing itself to be divided into rival nationalist camps. Whilst Soviet tanks were running down Lithuanian workers, their ethnic Russian neighbours were on strike **against** Lithuanian independence. So the Soviet rulers can exploit these divisions and every worker will be the loser.

The answer for workers in Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia isn't "national self-determination". That is a con. The answer is **united working class action** against the rulers of both the Soviet and petty Baltic states.

THE WAR IN IRELAND

During 1990 a further 76 violent deaths in the continuing "Troubles" in Northern Ireland raised the total number killed since 1969 to 2,849. And with 1991 less than a week old, a 26-year-old Catholic man shot dead in a sectarian attack by Protestant gunmen in Co. Armagh became victim number 2,850.

"TROOPS OUT"

As the killings continue year after year with no end in prospect, it's not surprising that opinion polls in mainland Britain frequently show majorities in favour of a British military withdrawal from Northern Ireland.

The reasons why people express such a view are diverse. At one extreme there's the very widespread, war-weary kind of attitude which says: if the Irish want to shoot and bomb the hell out of each other, why should we stand in their way; just get "our lads" out of there and let them get on with it.

At the other end of the spectrum there are the leftists who support "self-determination for the Irish people", and who would regard withdrawal from the "Six Counties" as a victory for the Irish working class over British imperialism.

Hand-in-hand with this idea goes the view that it's not for "us Brits" to tell the Irish people how to organise their own national liberation struggle; if you oppose the British state and what it's doing in Northern Ireland, you must automatically give "unconditional support for republican resistance to sectarian attacks and British terror" (so say the Anarchist Workers Group).. Or as a member of the RCP (The Next Step) once told me: "If you criticise the IRA, you're an apologist for British imperialism."

How do we respond to such views?

WORKING CLASS SELF-DEFENCE

Although we don't agree that the Republican struggle is in itself a working class struggle, there are certain things mixed up in this struggle which we would support. Like, for example, the 'Free Derry' "uprising" of August 1969, when the Catholic Bogsideers organised themselves to repel attacks by Protestant marchers and the police with stones, petrol bombs and burning barricades.

This is no different to the solidarity we give to the working class inhabitants of inner city areas in Britain like Toxteth,



Brixton or Tottenham, when, fed up with daily harassment on the streets and with having their homes smashed up in raids for drugs or stolen property (the like of which is part-and-parcel of daily life for thousands of working class people in Northern Ireland), they erupt onto the streets and temporarily drive out the police with barricades, bricks and petrol bombs.

We support such riots not because we think they are inherently revolutionary but for the basic reason that they show both the spirit of rebellion alive within the working class and its unwillingness to put up with attacks on its conditions and standard of living. The working class is completely justified in fighting back against such attacks - so long as in doing so it does not make racist or sectarian attacks against some other section of the working class.

THE ARMED STRUGGLE

However, the working class self-defence against state oppression and sectarian attacks in Northern Ireland which mainly takes the form of rioting is a separate matter from the Republican armed struggle - and always has been.

In 1969 the inhabitants of Catholic ghettos in Northern Ireland who wanted to arm themselves to defend working class areas against outside attacks did not continue in the spirit of the Derry "uprising" by organising this self-defence themselves - even though they certainly had the means, i.e. guns, to do so. Instead, they joined an organisation which was already in existence: the IRA. The IRA did not develop organically out of the struggles of the Catholic working class in Northern Ireland, any more than the Labour Party or the trade unions are a direct outgrowth of the current struggles of the working class in Britain.

When we point this out, one response we get is that we should still support the armed struggle, even though it is controlled by the IRA, in the same way that we support strikes, even though they are organised by trade unions. Or as a letter in a recent issue of Class War put it: "So what if the IRA defends a Catholic, nationalist community? Would you attack strikers if they supported the Labour Party?".

In fact, such comparisons strengthen our case against supporting the armed struggle in Northern Ireland. The basic motivation of workers who join a trade union or the Labour Party thinking that it will fight for working class interests may be sound but their course of action is not. Yet a strike organised by a trade union and involving workers who support the Labour Party does have the potential to go beyond these initial limitations. This is because strikers are pursuing their material interests as members of the working class. Sooner or later this will bring them into conflict with capitalist organisations such as the trades unions and the Labour Party. If the struggle is to proceed successfully beyond that point, the strikers are forced to transcend the forms and ideas they started out with, by rejecting trades unionism and Labourism.

If you had strikes week after week for 20 years and the working class still never showed any signs of criticising the trades unions or the Labour Party, either in what they said or what they did, you'd be justi-

fied in thinking that perhaps strikes didn't have any revolutionary potential after all.

The fact that after 20 years of the modern-day "Troubles" in Northern Ireland, there is still no sign that the Catholic working class has gone beyond the outlook which dominated it back in 1969, nor any indication of the armed struggle developing wider perspectives than those set by the IRA, speaks volumes about the class nature and potential of the struggle in Northern Ireland.

THE AIMS OF THE IRA/SINN FEIN

We don't shed any tears for the police, soldiers and politicians killed by the IRA; but equally so, we don't automatically share a common cause with anyone and everyone who opposes the British state besides ourselves. We don't judge the class nature of a struggle simply by the targets it attacks. We must also take into account the purposes and intent which motivate such actions.

As communists we oppose the state because it is the instrument the capitalist class uses to enforce and maintain its domination over the working class. In overthrowing capitalism the revolutionary struggle we agitate for will abolish ALL nation states and national boundaries. Clearly, the Irish Republican movement's opposition to the British state is not founded on this basis. It seeks merely to re-arrange the existing national boundaries by establishing a new state with jurisdiction over the whole of the island of Ireland.

The notion that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" (which leads some people to support the IRA) invariably misjudges who or what the real enemy is, and so ends up dragging the working class into taking sides with "nice" factions of the capitalist class in its squabbles with the "nasty" factions of the same class. We see this in anti-fascist fronts where the working class allies itself with "democratic" capitalists against "totalitarian" capitalists, and in anti-imperialist struggles where the working class fights its present "imperialist" bosses in alliance with its future "home-grown" bosses. The real enemy of the working class is not any of these different factions of the ruling class but the capitalist system itself.

What is wrong with taking sides in struggles among capitalists was summed up in September 1937 by the revolutionaries

of the journal International Council Correspondence, who said that it amounted to telling the working class to "co-operate with one enemy in order to crush another, in order later to be crushed by the first".

The outcome of past "national liberation struggles" shows that the working class always ends up being oppressed just as much by its so-called "liberators" as it was by its old imperialist masters. The rulers of any newly "independent" nation-state cannot go it alone or do just as they please in a world-wide economic system dominated by powerful blocs and integrated on a global scale. In order to cling on to power they are forced to compete by the rules which are already in place. The bosses in charge of the system may have been replaced by ones of a different nationality, race or religion - they may be Green, Orange or Red-White-and-Blue - but what never changes is the way in which they must continue to exploit the working class.

It would be stretching this point beyond credibility though if we gave the impression that the supporters of a united Ireland are fine idealists whose best intentions would sadly be frustrated by the economic dictates of world capitalism. Of course Sinn Fein and the IRA say (as every other national liberation movement has said - before coming to power) that the working class would be better off in its "Thirty-Two County Socialist Republic". But whereas for us socialism means the complete abolition of money, wage labour, the market system and the nation state, Sinn Fein's so-called "socialism" amounts to nothing more than a mixture of state-capitalism and self-managed (i.e. self-exploited) agricultural co-ops.

There is no evidence which suggests that a united Ireland would bring any material benefit to the Irish working class (North or South, Catholic or Protestant, Republican or Loyalist), nor that the class struggle would be any easier to wage against a system administered from Dublin rather than from Stormont or Westminster.

"POPULAR JUSTICE"

It's not just the long-term aims the IRA is fighting for which make it an enemy of the working class. There's also the IRA's present-day role in "policing" the Catholic communities.

According to an article which appeared in the Guardian on 22 October 1990, the IRA had so far that year carried out 89 punishment shootings (a bullet in the ankles, knees, wrists or the base of the spine) and

56 beatings (prolonged assaults with iron bars or baseball bats producing multiple injuries). In addition, it had also ordered another 20 or 30 "offenders" to leave the country - or else face the consequences.

There's nothing wrong with working class communities organising themselves to take direct action against anti-social elements such as drug-pushers or burglars who rob from working class people's houses. Some of the "petty criminals" dealt with by the IRA may well fall into this category and deserve some sort of punishment - then again, you could say the same about some of the people punished by the ruling class's legal system. The point is that a lot of them don't deserve it. There's nothing "anti-social" about people who steal from shops - yet they too fall foul of the swift, brutal, self-appointed policing of the IRA.

The IRA carries out punishment shootings and beatings partly because it believes it is "responding to community pressure" (according to Alex Maskey of Sinn Fein) but mainly because it can then as a consequence reinforce its rule over the territory it controls. The IRA's so-called "popular justice" may be an alternative within the Catholic communities to the policing carried out by the RUC but only in the same sense that the Labour Party is an alternative to the Tories: it



is not qualitatively different. All it means is that you report any incident to the local Sinn Fein office instead of sorting it out yourself or dialling 999 - not least because since it could have been IRA volunteers you saw committing a crime, the penalty for doing anything but telling Sinn Fein could be severe.

None of this has anything in common with a self-organised working class movement attacking its enemies within its own ranks in order to strengthen class consciousness and working class solidarity - something we would support.

THE FUTURE

While both the IRA's present actions and the goals it is fighting for mark it out in our eyes as an anti-working class organisation, speculation about what a united Ireland governed by Sinn Fein would be like is largely academic - because it's highly unlikely to come about. Although the British state cannot wipe out the IRA, it is still just about able to sustain the political, social and economic costs of containing the impact of the "Troubles" at a tolerable level. There is no way that any Dublin government could cope in the same way with 900,000 hostile Protestants in the north of a united Ireland. This is the main reason why British troops remain in Northern Ireland - to prevent an escalation of the "Troubles" which would plunge Ireland into chaos, thus threatening NATO's strategic interests and British, U.S. and EEC economic interests.

So, the constitutional set-up in Northern Ireland is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. Nor can we predict any resurgence in the currently very low level of the class struggle there. The two communities - Catholic and Protestant - remain pitted against each other every bit as much as the ruling class wants them to be, since there is every advantage for British capitalists in maintaining the policy of "divide and rule" which keeps workers' living standards in Northern Ireland so much lower than in the rest of Britain.

There are no divisions within the working class which couldn't be overcome in the course of massive class struggle, but in the present circumstances such a struggle is unlikely to originate within Northern Ireland itself. This is a hard truth for genuine revolutionaries to face up to - not least for those in Northern Ireland itself - but all the evidence from the recent history of Northern Ireland suggests

that the only possibility of a working class revolution there is one that spreads from the mainland and the rest of Europe.



Until this happens, no doubt the war in Northern Ireland will drag on. But we should be in no doubts about what sort of war this is. The fact that thousands of Protestant workers have sided with the British state or that thousands of Catholic workers give their support to Sinn Fein and the IRA does not alter the capitalist nature of the conflict. The ruling class - or those who aspire to be the ruling class - have always been able to gull the working class into fighting their battles for them. Our attitude to the situation in Northern Ireland may not find much of an echo among workers there at present, but for genuine revolutionaries there can be no alternative to calling for A UNITED WORKING CLASS STRUGGLE AGAINST BOTH SIDES!

WHAT WE STAND FOR



letter

Dear Friends,

We meet regularly for political discussion and to organise our activities, which include public meetings and the publication of this bulletin and other leaflets. The following is a brief summary of our basic political principles:

- We are against all forms of capitalism; private, state and self-managed.
- We are for communism, which is a classless society in which all goods are distributed according to needs and desires.
- We are actively opposed to all ideologies which divide the working class, such as religion, sexism and racism.
- We are against all expressions of nationalism, including "national liberation" movements such as the IRA.
- The working class (wage labourers, the unemployed, housewives, etc), is the revolutionary class; only its struggle can liberate humanity from scarcity, war and economic crisis.
- Trade unions are part of the capitalist system, selling our labour power to the bosses and sabotaging our struggles. We support independent working class struggle, in all areas of life under capitalism, outside the control of the trade unions and all political parties.
- We totally oppose all capitalist parties, including the Labour Party and other organisations of the capitalist left. We are against participation in fronts with these organisations.
- We are against participation in parliamentary elections; we are for the smashing of the capitalist state by the working class and the establishment of organisations of working class power.
- We are against sectarianism, and support principled co-operation among revolutionaries
- We exist to actively participate in escalating the class war towards communism.

I read with disbelief your article on Arthur Scargill. Your attack on Arthur rings more of jealousy than anything else. After all, the reason some of the left campaigned for him is that he is a genuine hero to much of the working class especially in mining areas and they thought they could recruit people who support him. His politics are not mine or yours but it is rare in politics to find any people who agree exactly the same. Living all my life in a mining village I've had the honour of meeting Arthur and talking a while with him. I've met a few people (M.P.'s and the like) but of them all he was the best. he genuinely wanted to hear my politics and showed great interest in them. I lived through the miners' strike and he was the symbol that gave a hell of a lot of miners inspiration to carry on. They saw the sacrifices he made and they made the same (and more). They knew the lies and bullshit spat out about him were untrue. At the beginning of the witch-hunt you'd meet no-one who had the slightest suspicion of him doing the things the media said.

In Britain we haven't many people to support and better Arthur than Benn or an other middle/upper class leftie.

MARK
Member of Doncaster
Class War.

SUBVERSION Reply:-

It is noticeable that Mark doesn't actually refute anything we said about Scargill in our original article (copies available on request). So 'Arthur' was the best out of a bunch of "M.P.'s and the like". Well that says more about the M.P.'s than Arthur! We did not attack Scargill's sincerity but his objective role as a Union boss and his politics both of which are anti-working class. Mark says in Britain we haven't many people to support -- a strange comment when our fellow workers in struggle at work or in the community are desperate for solidarity and support. We don't have to support these so-called "heroes" and "leaders" of the working class. We need to organise and lead ourselves.

The catalogue of abuses and manipulation by "Militant" officers of the Federation is endless but a few are worthy of mention here.

They have threatened to grass the Trafalgar Square "rioters" to the police. They did all they could to sabotage the October 20th National demo for fear of losing control, as on the previous demo. They have continually undermined and trashed the efforts of the Trafalgar Square Defence Campaign. They deliberately spread disinformation and lies about the "Class War" group who dared to oppose openly the Labour Party hacks and Union bureaucrats which Militant regularly invites to Anti-Poll Tax meetings. They have regularly "forgotten" to inform independent local groups (or groups dominated by other left-wingers) of meetings, and sabotaged activities (like the Grantham demo where the Manchester Federation deliberately restricted access to transport) which they were formally forced to agree to.

THE SWP

Other leftwingers like the SWP who initially dismissed the "community" organisation of the movement, lost out to "Militant". Because of this, they have been more supportive of independent initiatives but their approach is not fundamentally different. They have colluded in the attempt to sabotage the movement beneath a pro-Labour, anti-Tory crusade. Much of their energy has gone into a party-political battle with Militant for control of the Federation. In the case of the SWP, this went as far as standing their own slate for elections to the National Federation in opposition to the efforts of other oppositional groups like "3D".



THE WAY AHEAD

The experience of organised resistance to the state in the form of local government officials and politicians, the courts and the bailiffs, is important, not just in defeating the Poll-Tax, but in preparing for the battles to come as the economic crisis worsens. We know that even if a

Labour government gets in, we can expect more austerity measures, more attacks. If the Anti-Poll Tax struggle is seen simply as part of the party political battle between Labour and the Tories, as a means of getting Labour returned to office (even with a commitment to "Socialist" policies as Militant wants) then we will be disarmed when the next round of attacks is launched.

The Anti-Poll Tax movement needs to develop more consciously as an anti-capitalist and not just an anti-Tory movement. We need to recognise our allies as the council workers fighting both Labour and Tory council cut-backs, the tenants fighting rent rises, the owner-occupiers fighting mortgage re-possession, the workers fighting benefit cuts, all those opposing gas and electricity cut-offs. Our allies are other workers in struggle not the capitalist politicians of left or right who want to run the state locally and nationally.

Independent Anti-Poll Tax groups need to establish direct contact and co-operation with each other and with workers in the councils and the benefit offices etc in order to:

FINISH OFF THE POLL-TAX AND FIGHT THE CUTS.

A MESSAGE TO MEMBERS OF MILITANT

Many of you will have been involved in the Battle of Trafalgar Square, defending yourselves and your friends against the police and expressing your justifiable class anger at this sick system where profit is more important than human need. But what has the response been of your leaders?

"We condemn it totally...200 to 250 of these individuals intent on causing trouble". (Tommy Sheridan, BBC, 31st March).

"We are going to hold our own internal inquiry which will go public and if necessary name names". (Steve Nally, ITN, 1st April).

"Our Federation is going to be conducting an internal inquiry to try and root out the troublemakers". (Tommy Sheridan, LWT News, 1st April).

These are not "misquotes" or "words taken out of context". They are direct from the horses mouth. They clearly show the basic nature of Militant Tendency: an organisation that is opposed to the working class fighting back. We realise that many people join Militant Tendency thinking that it is a working class organisation. We believe that the events in Trafalgar Square and subsequent statements after it by certain prominent individuals within Militant Tendency show that this is not the case. If anyone has joined Militant Tendency thinking it is a genuine working class organisation, we ask them to think again.

PUBLICATIONS

BACK ISSUES - we have a few copies of earlier issues available. Please send an SAE.

NOTES ON THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE USSR. Price 70p (inc postage and packing).

THE STATE AND CAPITAL IN JAPAN. Explains why Japanese capitalism isn't the triumph for free competition that the Tories claim it is. £1.20 (inc p&p).

CLASS WAR ON THE HOME FRONT. Revolutionary opposition to the Second World War. Price £1.50 (inc p&p).

subversion!

po box 145
oldham
ol4 4ww

THE 'LEFT' AND THE POLL TAX

A DOUBLE ATTACK

Every one now agrees that the Poll Tax is bad news. Even the Tories are considering ditching it. But the Poll Tax is just ONE of a series of attacks on working class living standards.

It has directly cut the income of the low paid and those on benefits that are least able to get the money back through collective struggle. It has also increased the pressure on Local Authorities to cut social benefits in the form of working class housing, education and social services.

THE FIGHT BACK

The sheer scale and breadth of this attack has brought forth a massive social movement of resistance. This has been expressed primarily in the huge numbers of people refusing to co-operate with registration and payment. Resistance has been mainly individual and passive, but in some areas it has also been expressed collectively in anti-poll tax groups and periodically in outbursts of anger at the Courts, Town Halls and in demonstrations on the streets.

LOCAL GROUPS

Many of the local anti-poll tax groups have been straightforward attempts to bring collective expression to the existing individual resistance of workers, to provide mutual aid and solidarity and to extend the struggle. But many others have been artificially created FRONT ORGANISATIONS for left wing political groups, seeking to advance their own position at the expense of independent class organisation. Between these two extremes, groups have been established where both approaches sit unhappily side by side. Some of these have managed to survive, others have been split asunder, or sunk under the domination of one or another political group.

NO
POLL TAX

Brave language has declared:
WE WILL NOT PAY.



The successes which the movement HAS scored have been DESPITE the efforts of the political groups in most cases. Much of the potential energy and initiative of the movement has been sapped or sidetracked into charades like the "Peoples' March, support for "rebel" Labour councillors and various publicity stunts concerned more with raising the profile of the political groups than building a strong and independent movement.

MILITANTS V THE "MILITANT"

"Militant" in particular, through its control of the regional and national "Anti-Poll Tax Federations", has consistently suppressed any independent initiatives and sought to draw the movement into a pro-Labour Party and anti-Tory crusade.



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