

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION AGAINST THE POLL TAX



March 23rd,
Central London

DEMO Glasgow March 9th



3D

3D—Don't pay, Don't collect, Don't implement—is a paper and network for anti-poll tax activists, both in or out of the All Britain Federation. It provides an independent voice in the anti-poll tax movement, information, reports and a critical viewpoint on events happening around the country.

For more info contact:

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LET'S MAKE THIS A
MASSIVE SHOW OF OUR
SOLIDARITY AND
DETERMINATION TO
FIGHT ON TILL THE
GOVERNMENT'S POLL
TAX IS ABOLISHED, AND
AN AMNESTY IS
DECLARED FOR ALL
NON-PAYERS AND ALL
ARRESTED AND
IMPRISONED ANTI-POLL
TAX DEFENDANTS.

TRAFALGAR SQUARE
DEFENDANTS' CAMPAIGN
PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE
POLICING OF THE ANTI-POLL
TAX DEMONSTRATION OF
OCTOBER 20TH
ROOM 205, PANTHER HOUSE,
38, MOUNT PLEASANT
LONDON WC1X 0AP.

☐ Donations appreciated - for the legal and political defence, and welfare, of all those arrested on March 31st and October 20th.

NATIONAL SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE AGAINST POLICE ATTACKS

Saturday February 9th, 11 am — 5 pm
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1

AGENDA

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 11.00 | Registration, Videos, Refreshment |
| 11.30 | Open Platform |
| 12.00 | Introduction and speeches |
| 1.00 | Fighting Back — Our experiences |
| | Workshops: |
| | Black struggles - self-organisation & self-defence |
| | Labour movement — defending strikes & picketing |
| | Irish solidarity movement — across the water & here |
| | Anti-Poll Tax campaign — mass civil disobedience |
| | Lesbian & Gay Community & police harassment |
| 2.00 | Break |
| 2.30 | Fighting Back — Organising to defend ourselves |
| | Workshops: |
| | Organising Defence Campaigns - Short and long term objectives |
| | Legal Back-up & monitoring protests and the police |
| | Organising protests — tactics |
| | Supporting prisoners |
| 4.00 | Plenary session |
| | Report-backs from workshops and conclusions |
| | Preparing for the March 23rd national anti-poll tax demonstration |
| | Pledge of solidarity and determination to fight on despite police harassment and attacks |

CONTACTS

All articles, letters and donations to:-

P.O.Box 239 Glasgow G3 6RA.

STOP PRESS: For last minute information or details of events requiring coverage by the editorial team call - 041

REFUSE AND RESIST.

NEWS FROM LOCAL ANTI-POLL TAX GROUPS

ISSUE No.6

PRICE: BY DONATION

FIRST QUARTER 1991

IT'S WAR

Defeat The Poll Tax



March will see two of the largest demos so far against the Poll Tax. These demos mark the continuing success of our declared war on the Tories and their Poll Tax.

Thousands will march in Glasgow, whilst tens of thousands will take to the streets of London. The message of the ordinary people at these demos will be that the real war is at home - against Capitalism!

As thousands line up in the Gulf to be used as the cannon fodder of imperialism - hundreds of thousands more will be waging war on the streets against Major, Heseltine, Hurd and the boss class that they represent.

Despite some lulls in the Poll Tax campaign, non payment continues to grow. In areas of Glasgow non-payers are firmly in the majority. Areas of London report 50% non payment figures. North and south, working class people have recognised that the real war is the class war. Bailiffs have been busted in England, and in Scotland the sheriffs are shagged

out by the level of harassment they receive from the local communities they have targetted. We must ensure that their lack of success is sustained. Where the official Fed. leadership fail to mobilise - then we have to be prepared to take up the challenge.

Last year's London demonstration led to battles on the streets and the political frame up of hundreds of anti-poll tax activists by the police. At times, the official rantings of the Fed. leadership only helped the police.

Whatever happens this year at the demos..... let's ensure that there is maximum unity about who is to blame for the level of anger that exists towards the Poll Tax.

It is the same people who are gleefully looking forward to an all out war in the Gulf that have been waging an all out war upon us - it is the Tories who were responsible for last years riots; it is they who continue their violence against the working class - whether it be in the shape of the poll tax or war in the Gulf.

Kidder (Dennistoun)

"Smash The Tories"

"No Poll Tax Here"

"No War But The Class War"

Council Gets Red Card

For the 3rd year running, the Lothian Council meeting on 28th January to set the new Poll Tax was disrupted by independent anti-poll tax activists.

In a restricted gallery, the Council reluctantly agreed to 4 deputations against the poll tax. The Federation speaker Andy Clachars spoke and then exited stage left with his henchmen. Two speakers from Prestonfield and Sciennes-Marchmont each gave rousing calls for the abolition of the tax, an amnesty for non-payers, and for a Labour Council to stop using the threat of Warrant Sales against working class people.

The last speaker, from Stockbridge, then opened up:- "We're here to blow the whistle on you and give your Council the red card". At this signal all 15 got up vigorously using whistles and brandishing red cards. After conferring with Labour Leader Eric Milligan, the Chief Inspector sent in a police 'snatch squad' to apprehend the last speaker. The gallery was cleared and 4 arrested by officials in blue serge who get truncheon vouchers from the council.

The crowd then descended on the Polis station with instantly made up banners:- "Free the 4". Two hours later Gary from Prestonfield, Colin from Sciennes/Marchmont, and Oliver and Mike from Stockbridge were released after being charged with "Breach of the Peace". S.T.V. covered the action. The 1991/2 Poll Tax was set at £584 for Edinburgh - even with £20 million cuts!

Tiny Wharton

NO BLOOD FOR OIL

Anti poll tax activists were to the fore in the first anti Gulf War protests in Edinburgh. The day after bombs started falling on Iraq the Lothian Anti Poll Tax Hotline was activated and groups such as Stockbridge New Town and Prestonfield Community Resistance set off their telephone trees to muster support for the demonstration at the U.S. Consulate.

18 hours after the start of war 500-600 were gathered in resistance at the American Consulate. The protest was carried into the city centre as an unauthorised demo brushed aside the leaden-footed polis and marched along the road for the entire length of Princes St.. Many anti poll tax campaigners were involved, with groups like Broughton Inverleith and Stockbridge New Town having 8 or so of their members present.

To take the message into the community Stockbridge New Town APTG have agreed to distribute anti war material from their street stall, an initiative that will hopefully be duplicated by other groups.

John Ball (Stockbridge New Town APTG)

STOP PRESS

No to the Gulf War:

Saturday 12th January — over 100,000 marched to Trafalgar Square against massacres and devastation in the middle east over control of the gulf oil fields. Anger and oppositions is also growing to government pawns to seize hospital beds, ban some strikes and demos, force people into the army and round up "subversives". We have to pledge to continue our basic struggles against the poll tax and all other oppressive unfair and unjust laws and practices.

PHONY WAR

The Labour Council say they are pursuing Non-Payment with the full force of the law but does this stand up to the credibility test? How many of the 1.2 million have had any action or threats against them? Most people that have encountered trouble made the mistake of contacting the Sheriff Officers and making arrangements. Far better to ignore the Bastards. There are a few tales of Wage & Bank Arrestments with Home Helps in Kilmarnock and Clerical Staff at The Region H.Q. singled out by a 'Leak' of information. Otherwise they are individual cases of being 'GRASSED'. A few isolated pointings have taken place, including 1 in Priesthill, but most visits by Sheriffs have been isolated, "Pay up" visits with the other Sheriff Officer keeping the car running at the foot of the close. It is not impossible that the Gulf War & the difficulty of getting other news covered will offer a 'Smokescreen' sufficient to allow them to restart pointing action in Glasgow itself. It is therefore important to keep phone trees & task forces on the alert, even after such a protracted phony war.

KEITH (Ibros-Cessnock APT)

INDEPENDENT FORUM

Pollokshields Against The Poll Tax and Refuse & Resist, are hosting the Scottish Forum of Independent Anti - Poll Tax Groups on Saturday 2nd February in Pollokshields.

The Glasgow Forum is the third Forum to be held since last June. At these events people have gathered from all over Scotland to discuss the Campaign and related issues, such as the cuts in services and jobs.

Via workshops, plenary discussions and informal contact, many opinions have been aired and ideas acted upon. It is seven months since the first Forum in Stirling, where a national communication network and administrative system were set up. By the time the second Forum took place in Edinburgh in Sept. the benefits of the network were made clear. High attendance, positive participation and a sense of having been involved in something worthwhile, were the hallmarks that distinguished this event from the dull conferences of the Federation.

Within the past nine months the Forum Network has injected a tired Campaign with new enthusiasm. While organising and coordinating protest & information nationwide, we aim to involve as many people as possible in the Campaign.

Despite the high level of non-payment in Scotland, many people are put off from joining local groups as a result of the political posturing and empty rhetoric of individuals who attempt to hijack the Campaign for the benefit of a particular party. The Forum Network contains a broad spectrum of political opinions and follows no party line. We aim to keep the Forum free from such domination, and give everyone a chance to have their say.

The Glasgow Forum will have a very interesting programme of workshops covering; Direct Action and Demos, Trafalgar Square Defence Committee (also a video of the London demos) Cuts in Jobs & Services, Theatre & The Poll Tax, and much more.

A Banner Making Workshop will make a Scottish Forum banner that will lead the independent groups at the Glasgow and London demos in March.

COME ALONG: SATURDAY 2ND FEBRUARY!

INDEPENDENT FORUM

POLLOKSHIELDS BURGH HALLS

(Maxwell Park)

STOP PRESS

THE GUARDIAN, 28-1-91, reports that one council has received 700 completed forms out of 16,000 issued after Liability Orders have been granted. This is despite the fact that failure to divulge information on where you work is technically a criminal offence.

Meanwhile, John Major's "War Cabinet" on the poor is planning to bypass Court hearings for poll tax non-payment. Instead non-payers will have the right of Appeal to Magistrates' Courts and the onus will be shifted on the individual to deny liability.

The experience of Southwark and other disruptive mass summonses have forced the change, to a similar process as operated in Scotland with Summary Warrants. Boroughs such as Lambeth were 'unable' to provide any figures.

SCIENNES SHOCKS THE SHERIFFS

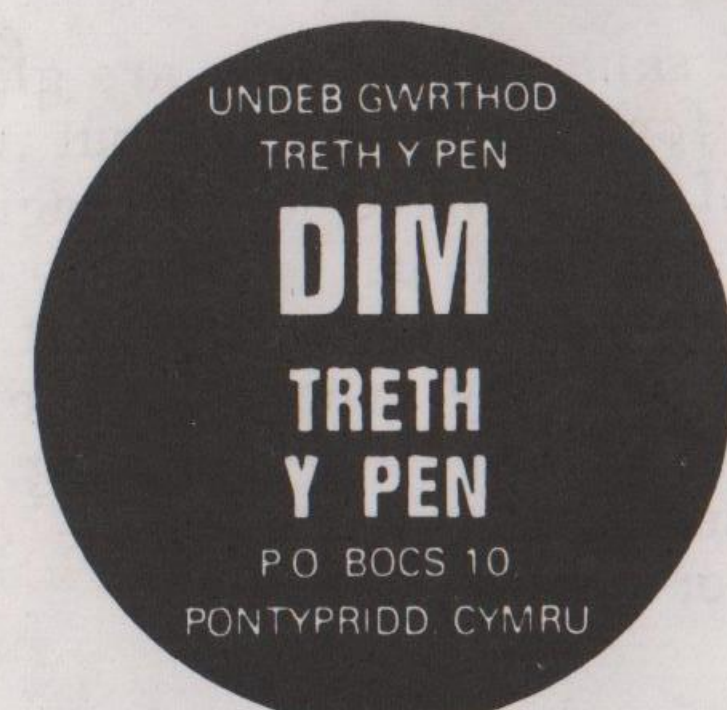
Members of Sciennes Marchmont Anti Poll Tax Group in Edinburgh describe their group's instant and effective response to the intrusion of sheriff officers into their area:

Thursday 10 January saw the first call to the Sciennes Marchmont Anti Poll Tax Group from several worried members. Sheriff Officers (or some of their clerks) were visiting non-payers in the area, asking questions and delivering payment advice letters which contained a paragraph threatening pointing action. Several group members met that day. A full group meeting was arranged and posters were prepared telling people not to let the sheriff officers in, and carrying the group contact tel. nos..

At the full group meeting we decided to hold a public meeting the following week and to have our street stall every day. 100 posters were put up around the area. The phone tree was activated and all group members were warned about the sheriff officers and reassured about what to do.

The public meeting was attended by about 30 people and included a lawyer who gave legal advice and a talk on the latest anti poll tax activity. Many calls were received and the group visited, leafleted or advised worried callers. So far we are not aware of anyone being pursued any further by the sheriff officers.

Sciennes Marchmont Anti Poll Tax Group Hotline 031 229 9552.



BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR GOES ON

The row over the defence of those arrested in Trafalgar Square last March was still blazing at the second All-Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation conference on 25 November. And it was fuelled by more dispute over events at the 20 October demonstration in London.

The conference opened controversially when chair Tommy Sheridan refused to give the floor to a speaker from the Trafalgar Square Defence Campaign. This was despite a previous assurance from national secretary Steve Nally that this would form a specific item on the agenda. The delegate was allowed only to take part in the general discussion much later.

From then on the proceedings were tightly controlled by Sheridan, who called a disproportionate number of speakers from 'Militant' or who supported the national executive line. Every motion on the agenda was accompanied by a prominent 'recommendation' on how to vote - a practice unheard-of in even the most bureaucratically-run trade union conference.

A slate of candidates organised by the 3D group in an attempt to break 'Militant's stranglehold on the executive was undermined by the SWP's decision to put up their own nominees. And much discussion on the key question of Trafalgar Square was side-tracked by SWP speakers in a diversionary argument for a national demo on December 8.

Supporters of the executive essentially turned truth on its head when they spoke about the October 20 picket of Brixton prison. Many blamed the TSDC for incurring police violence by organising a 'breakaway' action. But, as the TSDC pointed out in a letter to the executive (printed in the conference agenda) 'The London federation committee unfortunately refused to give

any practical or political support ... given that they refused to take part, the accusation that our level of preparation was irresponsible is inexplicable and insulting.'

In fact, it was noticeable on the London march that 'Militant' posters had actually been pasted over those advertising the Brixton picket.

Both in the published exchange of letters with the TDSC and in conference motions, the executive and groups supporting them made accusations about the young people who fought back against the police and who expressed their opposition to those 'leaders' who denounced them for doing so. An executive letter of November 12 calls them 'either unconscious or conscious agents of the state' and a motion from North Pollok and Dormanside APTUs insinuates that they are 'agents provocateurs'.

Such terms, as one conference delegate pointed out, 'come from the arsenal of Stalinism'. It's appropriate that executive members Nally, Sheridan and Maureen Reynolds acknowledge this, when they write in a letter of October 25 to the TDSC: 'We find ourselves in agreement with The Morning Star which said ... "the labour movement should take care to distance itself from anarchist groups ... that so often provide the excuse for the police to wade in."'

Hilary Horrocks
Sciennes/Marchmont APT
Edinburgh



Street clash: riot police pin a demonstrator down during last night's poll tax protest in Brixton, south London. Running fights between police and marchers lasted for three hours, during which four officers were injured by missiles and five other people — three men and two women — were taken to hospital with minor injuries.

NO WARRANT SALES

The last few months have seen a rise in Sheriff Officer activity in Strathclyde. After being forced off the streets in Lothian the Sheriff Officers must have been uneasy about chancing their luck in Glasgow. The fact that they finally crawled out of their holes a year after they should have shows the strength of the poll tax movement.

The sheriffs success rate has been low. The anti-poll tax unions have stopped every pointing they have been notified about. However, the media has ignored the successes and instead concentrates on "failures". One such case was the events in Inverclyde in January.

Three homes in the Inverclyde region of Strathclyde had goods taken from them. The Evening Times gave these events the front page coverage, announcing a "mad rush" to pay in the area. What it didn't mention was that none of the families affected contacted the Strathclyde Federation or the local A.P.T.U. How can people stop pointings they don't know about? The paper's "mad rush" amounted to 6 people, something it also didn't mention. On the following Sunday, it was discovered, buried in the Sunday Times, that the Sheriff Officers admitted that there was "no discernible increase" in payment figures in Strathclyde. This little fact, and the occupation of the Sheriff Officers premises, by-passed the popular Scottish newspapers.

The media doesn't report successes. On the 16th of November Sheriff Officers tried to point goods in Possilpark, Drumchapel and Knightswood. Then the people contacted the anti-poll tax movement and their neighbours and between 100 - 200 people watched each home from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. The Sheriff Officers only appeared in Drumchapel and didn't stay long. No Pointing occurred.

The week after the events in Inverclyde, the Sheriff Officers of Stirling Park & Co. said they would definitely be carrying out their "work" in the Bellshill area. The Federation organised and over one hundred people waited for them. Again they didn't come. Again media silence.

The lessons of this are clear. Working class people need to organise and show solidarity where it counts - on the streets. The influence of the anti-poll tax movement must be spread further so that no one will be isolated. The events of Inverclyde will not be repeated as long as communities and individuals contact each other, organise and show solidarity. This has happened across Scotland and Britain as a whole. We must build and strengthen our anti-poll tax group's influence in our communities and workplaces in order to make an injury to one an injury to all an established fact in every city, town and village in Britain.

Iain (Pollokshields)



"Through opposing the poll tax hundreds of people in Stockbridge are getting to know each other. We can use this experience in organising ourselves to take action for other positive changes. Stopping other debt enforcement including evictions and gas/electricity cut-offs, combatting racist harassment and fighting for better services and a good quality of life are all possible. If we can chase the sheriff officers away when they come for the poll tax, why should we let them into our community at all?" From leaflet by Stockbridge New Town Anti Poll Tax Group, Edinburgh.



Revolting Students

In November last year, Strathclyde Regional Council tried to get students' unpaid poll tax money from their tuition fees. That would have meant that students who had their fees arrested could not graduate or go into the next year since their fees had not been paid in full. It would also have meant that other people, such as landlords, could be in a similar position to arrest students' tuition fees for unpaid bills.

When it was announced, the West of Scotland N.U.S. organised a rally in the T.G.W.U. halls in Bath St. which attracted over 200 students. After the rally, some 50 people picketed S.R.C. headquarters and occupied its lobby. After about 30 minutes, the demonstrators left vowing to be back the next Wednesday when a march had been organised.

On the day of the march, Strathclyde Regional Council announced, after seeing the Secretary of State for Scotland, that it was withdrawing its plans with regard to tuition fees. The thousands of student marchers quite rightly saw this as a major victory. Direct action and demonstrations stopped an attack by the Labour council. The ironic thing about all this is that a Tory Secretary of State had to tell a Labour Regional authority that its method of collecting the poll tax was of suspect legality! So much for it being a "Tory tax".

According to a N.U.S. (Scotland) survey 54% of students have not paid instalments for 1989/90s poll tax, and only 15.4% have paid some. This year over 65% have failed to pay! When it comes to the poll tax students are revolting!

Iain (Pollokshields)

Ho Ho Ho, Santa says No.
Demo on Princes Street,
Edinburgh, Saturday 15
December 1990. A great
show and a great boost
for the local campaign.

Spreading To Redding

Things are going well for the anti-poll tax movement in Grangemouth and surrounding areas.

Grangemouth Anti Poll Tax Action (G.A.P.T.A.) helped organise a public meeting in Bo'ness along with the recently formed anti poll tax group in Bo'ness.

G.A.P.T.A. supplied speakers for a very successful public meeting in Redding where a lively crowd of over 40 set about preparing for the non-payment campaign. Redding Anti-Poll Tax group is now off the ground.

There are also plans for G.A.P.T.A. and the Bo'ness group to hold another public meeting in Bo'ness.

A public meeting is planned for Westquarter - to spread the word!

Central Federation have affiliated to the T.S.D.C. - following the example set by Grangemouth!

Berny

DEATH TO THE POLL TAX

On 30th October 1990 Lothian Anti Poll Tax Groups held a "Death to the Poll Tax" demonstration outside the headquarters of Lothian Regional Council. A funeral cortege preceded the demonstrators, poll-bearers carrying a coffin containing the remains of the Poll Tax marched round Parliament Square to the beat of a drum. A crowd of over 100 gathered and listened to speeches and songs from members of various community and workplace Anti Poll Tax groups. The demonstration ended with the presentation of a wreath bearing the words "RIP - Long Lost Labour Principles" to Labour Councillor Keith Geddes.

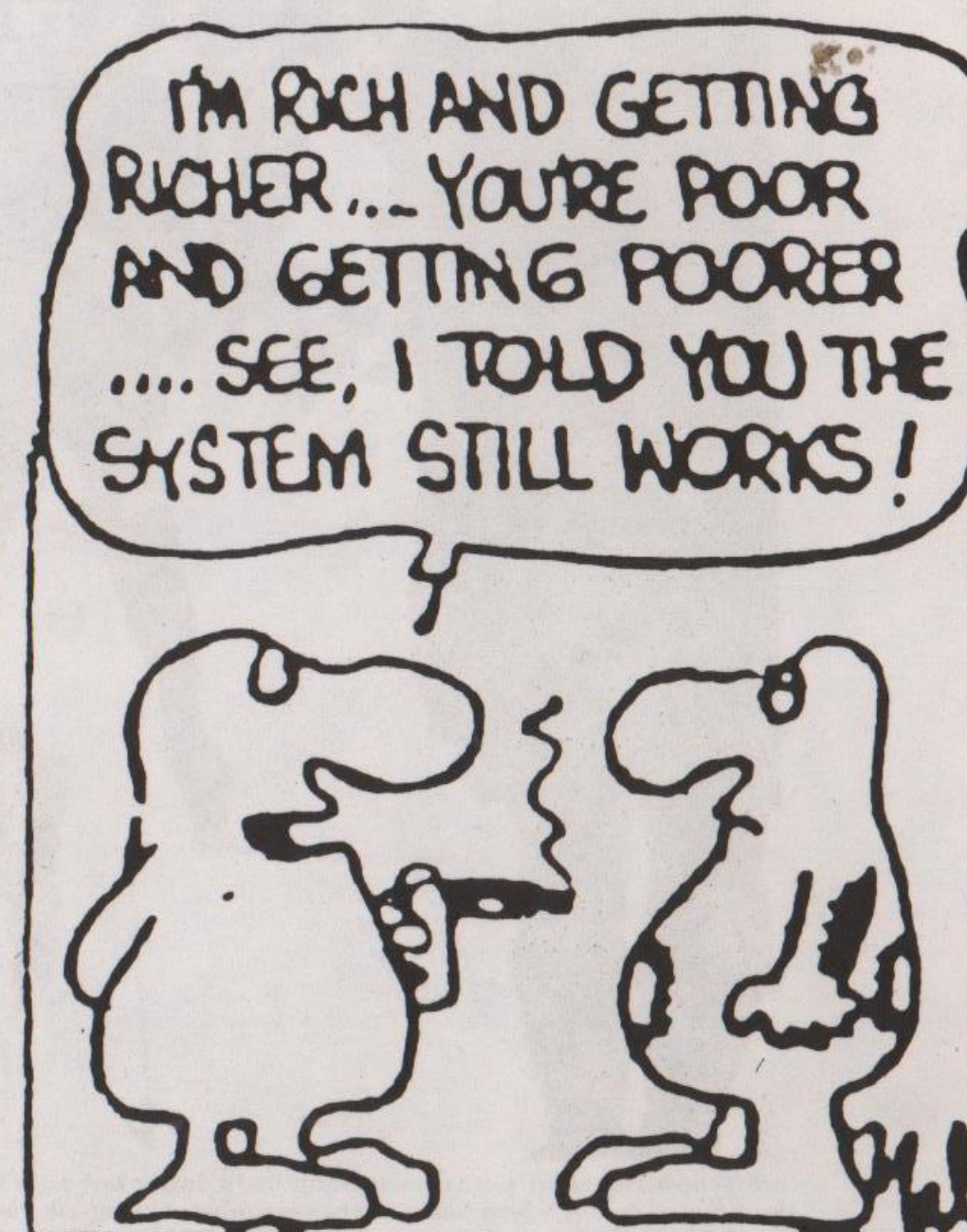
The demonstration was organised by two independent Anti Poll Tax groups - Sciennes/ Marchmont and Muirhouse. At a meeting of Lothian Anti Poll Tax Federation, the demonstration received official backing but, on the day itself, members of Militant Tendency were conspicuous by their absence. There were probably two reasons for this. Firstly, the demo was not controlled by them - they didn't choose the speakers or appoint the stewards. Secondly, the demo exposed the role of the Labour Council in giving the go-ahead for warrant sales.

"Death to the Poll Tax" was one of the most successful demonstrations organised in Edinburgh last year. It was good fun demonstrators were not bored or patronised by a half-hour speech from an "important" person. Instead, as many people as possible were encouraged to come forward and speak for a couple of minutes. As a result we heard heartfelt speeches from people who are actively involved in fighting the Poll Tax. Usually at rallies people come and listen for a few minutes and then drift away but, at "Death" the vast majority of the crowd remained for the whole hour. The element of theatricality also meant that we received good press coverage - photos and stories in both the Scotsman and Glasgow Herald.

On a day which had been nominated as a "National Day of Action" by the Scottish Federation, ours was the only event to be reported. Like all successes these days our demo sparked off a series of sequels - "Death II", a public meeting at Edinburgh University, and "Death III", a local demo called by Broughton/Inverleith Anti Poll Tax Group.

We learned many lessons about how (and how not) to organise in the course of planning "Death to the Poll Tax" but most importantly we learned that you don't need to wait for anyone else to organise a demonstration for you - DIY demos can mean a lot of work and worry but they can also be much more effective and are usually a lot more fun.

KAREN
SCIENNES/MARCHMONT APT



Public Service Cuts

Heretical Notes

The Government introduced the poll tax with the intent of curtailing local councils spending.

The high levels of non-payment of the poll tax are being used to justify local service cuts, when in fact it's the Government which is to blame. The local councils, both Labour and Tory, up and down the country are implementing cuts due to the shortfall in the Government's Standard Spending Assessment. It is the Government's grants that make up the bulk of councils income.

Through the cuts that the councils are implementing it is our schools and hospitals that are under threat, as are council workers jobs. And what have the local government unions "NUPE, GMB" done? Nothing. While "NALGO" wants to reduce the issue to one of no compulsory redundancies, rather than fight the cuts.

Up to now Haringey council have served compulsory redundancies on 14 staff, they are members of NALGO. Also Haringey council have announced that 19 manual workers are to be made redundant (could be as high as 500 redundancies).

In Southwark the education department are facing cuts of up to £3 million. Proposed cuts include £1,500,000 off repairs and maintenance, (already cut twice), etc.

In Wandsworth the council is considering withdrawing the fundings of 35 voluntary organisations. The list includes law centres and community centres which provide after school care and senior citizens clubs. Also under threat are social services: under review are a alcohol abuse group, a counselling and support group for the bereaved, and two day nurseries.

In Wiltshire the county council are to cut the budget by £8.9 million which includes £1 million from the education budget. The education committee are to decide where the savings are to be made. One school is under threat of closure.

In Sheffield Education is to be cut by £4 million, family and community is to lose £1 million, and cleansing and leisure is to lose £1 million and 1,000 jobs are to go. One library has already closed Sheffield city council is facing cuts of between £17 to £54 million.

In Rotherham 100 jobs are to go

So through the lack of involvement of the main unions it is going to be up to the local anti poll tax groups to lead the way in this fight.

The best way of going about this is to arrange public meetings so that we can get more of the community involved.

We will have to make contact with the rank and file members of the unions to join us in the fight seeing that it is their jobs that are under threat. We must get them to join us.

We must also make links with the main unions and tell them that we will support them in any action that they take in opposing the cuts and to save their jobs.

We must bombard the media with information regarding what we are doing and why, the more attention we receive the more we will be able to put the councils under attack

We must be seen outside the gates with our banners, do impromptu marches and rallies.

We must be prepared to organise occupations for how ever long it takes to get the closures stopped.

Lobby our local councillor about the cuts and closures.

Do petitions to hand into councillor's.

And if possible organize a public debate with a councillor.

We must send letters to the houses of Parliament.

We must be prepared to force the issue on the cuts so that our children can have a decent education and health treatment.

It is vital that all anti poll tax groups in Britain come into this fight.

We must start to build up the campaign now. Greg Kerr (Swindon Unemployed Workers)

No. 1 Some A.P.T. protesters say once people get used to not paying, they'll never pay! But why should local government be the target for such long term refusal? If the Poll Tax became a local Income Tax or 'Fair Rates' system wouldn't it be very difficult to justify continued non-payment, especially if jobs and services would suffer? There are many other regressive taxes and charges, which levy a flat rate irrespective of the ability to pay, mostly consumer and fuel charges. Of course, there is no certainty the Poll Tax will be substantially reformed and it will be dragged out with no amnesty for non-payers. One further argument might be that payment of a 'fair' local government tax might be linked to 'writing off' debts for those who have won the struggle against the Poll Tax.

No. 2 Why is the 'Independent' scene so weak in Strathclyde, relative to Lothian, Aberdeen etc. Of course 'Militant' are to blame for blocking the circulation of the Federation list. But this also reflects, in self-criticism, the inertia and lack of determination by the 'Independent' scene. It's also a reflection of the lack of interest in such long-term organising with many bored or having moved so often, opposition has become individual. There are people, not just from Indep. groups like Pollokshields, who can turn up at Poining action and occupations, but they essentially don't exert any collective presence or alternative group. Attempts to hold forum monthly meetings in Glasgow or daytime action squads have either been badly organised or been given less attention by people attached to small grouplets both Marxist and Anarchist. It is in this climate that the 'Professional' cadres of Militant, and less so the S.W.P. dominate and in so doing constrict the potential realised elsewhere in Scotland.

Jim McFarlane

NO POLL TAX HERE

WHAT WILL THE TORIES DO WITH THE POLL TAX NOW?

A NEW POLITICAL FORCE IN THE LAND

Less than a year ago the Town Hall Rebellions publically signalled the beginning of the demise of Thatcher. The Tories' poll tax flag ship threatened to become their "Titanic". For up to this point all Tory calculations had been based on nearly a decade's experience of official Labour 'opposition' - from the Republican Hunger Strike, the inner city riots, the Falkland War to the Miners' Strike. Just before the hidden iceberg of unofficial resistance ripped open their complacency, their plotted course seemed correct. The spokesman for Labour's official 'Stop It' campaign, MP Brian Wilson had been reduced to a special appeal for the relief of second home owners in Rothesay!

The Town Hall Rebellions panicked the ruling class. But they were to receive an even bigger shock, when 200,000 marched on the streets of London, and another 40,000 on the streets of Glasgow. This was achieved in the teeth of official Labour, TUC and STUC opposition. The unofficial movement had outstripped the official. Worse still for 'our rulers', the demonstrators were not to be coerced by a vicious attack by Thatcher's favourite 'boys in blue' - 'The Met'. There was obviously a new political force in the land, beyond the safe control of the official 'opposition'.

THE RULING CLASS APPLY THE LESSONS OF NORTHERN IRELAND

The ruling class quickly devised a strategy to deal with this. They drew from their experience of handling the most recent example of mass civil disobedience in the UK - the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland.

They had learned that their primary task was to split the mass unofficial campaign with a more compliant Right and then marginalise and isolate the Left. This is done through a combination of carrot and stick. The minimum concessions are offered which allow this split to be achieved. Then a campaign of political witch-hunting and criminalisation is attempted.

In Northern Ireland it took the abolition of Stormont and the release of interned prisoners to split a very powerful movement that had created 'No Go' areas for the state. This split the movement into a constitutionalist nationalist Right and a republican Left. The full force of criminalisation was then brought to bear on the republicans, after 'Operation Motorman' broke up the 'No Go' areas of West Belfast and Derry. A new Labour Government sanctioned the use of the Payment of Debts Order to hound rent strikers for a further 14 years! Poll tax non-payers watch out!

PAYING YOUR POLL TAX - FOR QUEEN AND COUNTRY!

It wasn't some misty-eyed Irish attachment to long dead martyrs that led the Left towards republicanism. People found they were facing the Royal Ulster Constabulary, the loyalist B Specials, all backed by Her Majesty's own regiments.

When the democratic facade begins to fall, the Crown gives legal backing to whatever law and order measures are required. Already several poll tax protestors have been detained at Her Majesty's pleasure. There are plans to 'ennoble' the sheriff officers, so that any resistance to their activities, will be met by charges of 'Deforcement of the Queen's Messengers'. This is a far more serious offence than breach of the peace, obstruction or even criminal damage.

WHAT WILL THE TORIES CONCEDE?

What concessions then are likely? During the Tories' 'palace coup' which toppled Thatcher - Heseltine, Major and Hurd fell over themselves to say, "The Poll Tax - It Wasn't Me". Hence new PM Major's authorisation for Heseltine to conduct "a fundamental review".

The possible concessions range from the abolition of a layer of local government; removal of costly education spending from local authorities; more central funding; new poll tax exemptions; 'broad banding'; to the phasing out of the poll tax. What the ruling class want is to preserve as many of their gains from the poll tax as possible - the cutting of local authority spending and the large cash rewards for the rich. However, this is secondary to breaking the mass unofficial and independent campaign of civil disobedience, which is bringing their state into disrepute.

THE LABOUR PARTY - DISORGANISERS OF THE WORKING CLASS

In attempting this task Major can count on the continued support of Kinnock, Dewar and Co. Labour had a unique opportunity created by the downfall of Thatcher. But they quickly stepped in to cover over the divisions amongst the ruling class. Lothian Labour's Milligan and Begg rushed ahead with the first attempted warrant sales. Now Strathclyde Labour's Gray and Mullen have gone further, with the break-in of a non-payers house in Greenock. This quite clearly shows Labour's real role - disorganising the working class.

Kinnock's Labour Party is only useful to the ruling class in so far as it intimidates and polices the working class. It is Labour that is most threatened by unofficial independent organisation. That is why their first attacks have come in council schemes and tenements, not on the much vaunted "Porsche driving yuppie non-payers"!

"OFFICIAL LINKAGE" - THE GULF WAR AND THE POLL TAX

At the moment the levels of non-payment are higher in Scotland than this time last year. The level of non-payment, particularly in the metropolitan areas of England, is massive. The government faces a deep economic recession, so they have less financial room for manoeuvre. Although in practice Labour collaborate with the Tories over these 'problems', they publicly mouth opposition for electoral purposes. Something else is needed to re-establish a full Major-Kinnock consensus. That something is the Gulf War.

lish a full Major-Kinnock consensus. That something is the Gulf War.

Major hopes to repeat 'The Falklands Factor'. Kinnock and Kaufman have leapfrogged Healy and Heath in their craven subservience to the Bush/Major War Drive. Labour has "gone that extra mile" to show their desire to please 'our rulers'. There may be no "official linkage" between the Gulf War and Palestine, but Heseltine made it quite clear that he is limited in the cash relief he can give poll tax payers by the rising cost of the war. After the success of the Town Hall rebellions last year in forcing the Tories to announce a £3-4 billion extra revenue support grant, they are hoping concern for the poll tax will be diverted to concern for "our boys". Then the concessions can be far fewer.

RULING CLASS TRY TO SPLIT OUR MOVEMENT

This is the political challenge the anti-poll tax movement has to face. All attempts to subordinate the independent campaign to Labour, either by the official 'Left' or the internal and external factions - Militant and the SWP, will split our movement. Jesus had an easier job with Lazarus, than trying to force "Kinnock and Dewar - Up, off your knees"!

Since Steve Nally's disgusting statement on the night of the Trafalgar Square Riots, it has become clear to far wider numbers, that there is indeed a basis for the ruling class to split the movement. Only massive pressure and the setting up of the **Trafalgar Square Defendants Campaign** on a principled, independent basis prevented the retreat of the Federation into the willing accomplices of the state.

The signs were again evident at the 2nd All-Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation Conference on November 29th. Militant poured scorn on a call for a mass demonstration before Christmas to take advantage of Thatcher's downfall and further unnerve the ruling class. The reason for this became quite clear, when you read the banner headlines in their paper - "General Election Now"! In effect the whole Conference was a policing operation on behalf of Kinnock's Labour Party.

Undoubtedly, the other side have closely observed these developments. They know that the New Realism of Kin-

nock and Co. has no chance of directly breaking the mass movement against the poll tax. It is therefore left to the 'New Tokenists' of the official 'Left' to try, where they have failed before. Hence Campbell Christie's call for an STUC anti-poll tax demonstration in Scotland on March 23rd - no accidental date that! That is the day of the Federation's march to defend the right to demonstrate in London, one year after Trafalgar Square. How tempting it must be for Militant to fall into line, at least in Scotland. There still remains the awkward matter of the Scottish Federation's own Glasgow demonstration on March 9th - the other target of the STUC initiative. Can Militant ignore the siren calls of Labour Movement Unity! Unity with all those trade union officials and Labour councillors who now shout "Defend Services - Pay the Tories' Poll Tax". This is on a par with "Fight Crime - Pay the Mafia's Protection Money"!

DEFEND THE UNOFFICIAL, INDEPENDENT MASS MOVEMENT

As the Gulf War goes on and the recession deepens it is now quite clear that the Tories will not use their "fundamental review" to get rid of the poll tax. Even that job will require the continued resistance of the mass movement. However, neither Tory nor Labour will amnesty the non-payers or the poll tax prisoners. And they will step up their witch-hunt on those committed to building and extending this new political movement, beyond the clutches of the official Labour disorganisers.

Those who continue in their attempts to prop up, reform or capture the Labour Party are in the same position as the Lib-Labs at the end of the last century. Those socialists still in the Labour Party are trapped in a permanent 'Popular Front', where workers must continuously subordinate their interests to the new career hungry middle classes. They are now the targets of a ruling class backed official Labour attempt to tame and break the most successful mass movement since the Civil Rights Movement. The continued existence of this new force is incompatible with the Kinnock-Major United Front, whoever is heading the government in the future. The future of the poll tax is as much in our hands as those of the Tories.

ALLAN ARMSTRONG.
MERCHISTON / MORNINGSIDE APTU 18.1.91



Drop The Charges!

March 18th 10 a.m. - Start of week long picket of Glasgow Sheriff Court. 27 anti-fascists are on trial after being arrested at the anti-B.N.P. demo on December 8th. As usual the police protected the fascists.

March 25th - Joint picket with anti-poll tax protesters who are on trial after being arrested during the occupation of Stirling Park & Co. Sheriff Officers office. We must continue to resist the Government's attempts to criminalise the anti-poll tax movement.

Donations towards legal costs and fines are needed:-
To:- Anti-Fascist Defence Fund,
c/o West of Scotland N.U.S.,
90 John St.,
GLASGOW.



2nd Scottish Forum

Prestonfield A.P.T. hosted the 2nd forum on 28.10.90 which was a great success, attended by over 80 participants. 10 workshops, a video showing, plenary sessions and a social took place. For a full report, including the T.S.D.C. participation, write to CR, c/o 11 Forth St., Edinburgh EH1 with a large S.A.E. if possible.

Taxing Work

The pressures of collecting the poll tax has resulted in high levels of stress and sickness in the hard-pressed staff. This is according to Council and union leaders across Scotland who point to high staff turnover rates. In Lothian and Borders Region the poll tax section has a turnover of 11%, in Highland region it's 50%. Finance Director James Bremner said "This is considerably higher than any other departments".

Iain (Pollokshields)

TOWARDS COMMUNITY RESISTANCE

The National Claimants Federation, a national network of grass-roots unwaged/unemployed groups, are distributing an **OPEN LETTER TO EVERYONE IN ANTI POLL TAX ORGANISATIONS**, urging that the anti poll tax movement try and generalise the resistance to the poll tax into a wider community resistance. Here we reprint a major extract from their **OPEN LETTER**.

"Taking It Further - For discussion in your anti poll tax group"

The anti poll tax movement can help to re-establish solidarity and a fighting spirit in our communities for the benefit of us all. The anti poll tax movement :

- 1) should have minimum demands : All poll tax debts must be written off. Any alternative proposals must - have a 100% rebate for those on low incomes - be linked to ability to pay, with the rich paying substantially more - be acceptable to people - be based on local decision-making and accountability.
- 2) should seek to make the problems faced by million of us such as gas and electric bills and debts, rent arrears, mortgage arrears, and many other debts into **collective not individual** issues. We should spread the **CAN'T PAY WON'T PAY** principle. Through our networks of local groups and street co-ordinators we can spread resistance to debt enforcement against working class people. We can stop evictions and gas/electricity cut-offs. Bailiffs and sheriff officers should be driven out of all our communities. (This generalisation is already starting to happen, eg in Edinburgh anti poll tax activists have resisted sheriff officer pointings for debts other than the poll tax, and a north London house re-possession by bailiffs was prevented by a mass mobilisation through the local anti poll tax street network.) Basic needs such as food, housing, clothing, public transport, etc. should be freely available to all, and we should build up our strength to enforce this right through a collective refusal to pay.
- 3) should actively participate in resistance to cuts in services. Community-based anti poll tax unions are in a good position to mobilise opposition to cuts including supporting strikes and occupations. Also, by doing this, the danger of the working class splitting into poll tax payers and poll tax non-payers - each blaming the other for Tory crimes - is lessened.
- 4) should participate in and initiate resistance to attacks on any particular section of our communities - this includes resistance to racist attacks, to violence against women, to anti-gay assaults, etc..
- 5) should support workers in their struggles for better wages and conditions, for more control over their work, against victimisation, redundancies and other employers' attacks.
- 6) should encourage workers to question the nature of their jobs, and to challenge and boycott intrinsically oppressive work. We could extend our call to boycott all poll tax work to areas such as the implementation of service cuts, cutting off people's gas and electricity, processing and carrying out evictions, spying on, harrasing and stopping benefits to claimants, and other socially non-useful work.

We Call For:

1) The anti poll tax groups to develop and generalise community organisation and solidarity and, through the already existing networks of local groups and street co-ordinators, defend residents facing evictions, fuel cut-offs, harrassment from bailiffs/sheriff officers, etc..

2) Claimants and unwaged people in the anti poll tax movement to consider joining or setting up Claimants Unions/Unwaged groups, to build a strong movement in a situation where all benefits are threatened, where unemployment is increasing, and where the dole queues are used to undermine workers' collective organisation and power."

Anti Poll Tax Information For Claimants

Leaflets on Claimants and the Poll Tax - the legal situation and how not to pay - from Lothian Claimants Union (leaflet covering Scottish law) and from Swindon Unemployed Movement (covering English law).

Hassle

Hassle, the monthly news-sheet of the National Claimants Federation, covers news of claimants fight back against all the government attacks. Available from Swindon Unemployed Movement (please send donation).

National Claimants Federation

South West - Plymouth Claimants Union, PO Box 21, Plymouth, Devon.
South Coast - Brighton Unemployed Union, Prior House, Tilbury Place, Carlton Hill, Brighton. Tel. 0273 671213.
London and South East - Barnsbury Claimants Union, 11 Barnsbury Rd., London N1. Tel. 071 837 8078.
East - Norwich Claimants Union, St. Ann Cottage, St. Ann Lane, Kings St., Norwich. Tel. 0603 661241.
North - Leeds Claimants Union, Hyde Park Priory, 158 Hyde Park Rd., Leeds. Tel. 0532 753160.
Scotland - Lothian Claimants Union, c/o EUWC, 103 Broughton St., Edinburgh. Tel. 031 557 0718.
Publications co-ordinators : Swindon Unemployed Movement, 37a Regent St., Swindon. Tel. 0793 615773.
National contact address : c/o Plymouth, as above.

London Calling

There has been quite a bit of action here recently, especially on the anti-poll tax front. The council are still taking people to court but virtually everyone who turns up to challenge the summons are having their cases adjourned to some unspecified date in the future (probably January or February). So clogging the courts is having some impact but the problem is that the resources of the state are quite considerable. To back up their liability orders, the council (glorious 'socialists' of course!) has started to use the bailiffs (but only giving out invoices at the moment). To date, there has been at least one documented attack on the bailiffs, with a brick through the window screen and dented bodywork and a bailiff has also been booted in the balls! On Friday 16th November (the first day of socialist bailiffs), there was an excellent picket of the council leader's house at 9.30 p.m. with up to 50 people plus a megaphone that sounded as though it had a 400 watt capacity. Needless to say, our council leader refused to open his door and discuss council policy with us - he did certainly have a shock though and since then he has started receiving "venomous phone calls" (his words in the local paper). There was also a pathetic lobby of the council meeting with only 100 people, 80 of whom were trying to sell papers to each other - this was on Wednesday 21st November.

One funny story is that the council was using three offices for people to pay their poll tax in until recently. The Hoxton office has been closed down after a succession of bricked windows, graffiti, abuse and the final straw were two armed robberies, the last one netting a mere £129 (shows how much local people are paying!). The council are now talking about getting Securicor trucks to tour the area. One lesson that we learnt from the anti-bailiff operations down here is that basically it is like looking for a needle in a haystack and so the tactic of developing hardened 'bailiff-buster' squads will not work - the emphasis has to be on local activity, solidarity and confidence as only they will be able to react to the bailiffs in time.

Since the resignation of Thatcher, there has unfortunately been little discussion down here about the impact of the planned poll tax reforms - obviously the demand for an amnesty should be given priority but are we going to see the movement split and the further development of the 'outlaw culture'? I would have thought that the later is most likely as the Tories are clearly very keen to reform the poll tax as it is such a proven vote-loser and such a focus for popular discontent.

Graham (Stamford Hill)

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 an 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

More London News

The big event this year was the action at Camberwell Court in the Borough of Southwark. For some reason the court summonsed 5,000 to appear on Monday 14th January and over 1,000 turned up plus anti-poll tax protesters. Parts of the court were invaded and court officials exited sharpish as police battled to restore order. No cases were heard. Elsewhere much smaller numbers are receiving summons to appear, but the general rule in Haringay, Hackney, Greenwich, Lambeth, Islington, Camden, Lewisham etc. has been turn up and get your case adjourned. In England and Wales there is a real incentive to be active in your opposition. The level of non-payment continues at high levels from 35% in Birmingham and Manchester to 50% in Liverpool, Southwark and Lambeth.

FROM ORGANISE!

Resistance

Obviously, where bailiff resistance looks set to be strong, there is room for 'hit squads' to go further on their own. In the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, a gang of anonymous 'outlaws' called at the home of the leader of the local council (run by the Moderate Labour Party) in November to warn him that there would be "tit-for-tat raids" on the homes of councillors if bailiffs visited any non-payers in the Forest. Shaken council leader Mr Cooper told The Independent "I don't know who they are, but they are obviously prepared to use violence and threaten property".

South Yorkshire police stunned local councillors in early November when they announced that they are planning to refuse to arrest poll tax defaulters, even when instructed to do so by the courts. Local police chiefs say they fear that the task "may become physically impossible for the police because of the large numbers of defaulters".

ISSUE 21.

THE CHALLENGE

Scarborough has so far seen the most vigorous activity from the bailiffs and the local campaign has readily met the challenge. Information leaflets have ensured that people know the law and have had the confidence to deny bailiffs access to their homes. The bailiffs have been constantly followed by anti-Poll Tax activists. So far the bailiffs have not claimed to have carried out one successful distraint. Lets follow the Scarborough campaign's lead throughout the region. Ian Greaves, Woodhouse.

Poll Tax non-payers

The table tries to give an idea of progress in collecting poll tax in 20 roughly representative local authorities. The column headed "non-payers" is the proportion of people on the register who have so far paid nothing at all, alongside the figure for October 31 last year. The following column shows the proportion who now have collected. The final column shows the number of liability orders obtained from the courts, which often prompt people to pay but can lead to attachment of earnings or seizure and sale of possessions by bailiffs, the number of summonses, which often produce a payment before the case comes to court, is far greater in most areas than the figure in this column. The order of listing is determined by the third column, showing the percentage collected of the sum due. (N.B. Because councils use different bases and patterns of payment vary, figures are not always strictly comparable.)

Council	Tax	% non-payers		% received of sum due	Liability orders	
		now	31 Oct		now	31 Oct
Liverpool (Lab)	£449	34	42	50	111	none
Hackney (Lab)	£499	37	44	60	32 600	4 061
Barnet (C)	£338	n/a	n/a	69	19 104	n/a
Nottingham (Lab)	£390	24	30	70	38 225	500
Cambridge (Lab)	£428	8.4	17	77	6 913	2 590
Bath (NOC)	£347	16	22	79	770	none
Birmingham (Lab)	£406	n/a	22	79*	n/a	3 500
Cardiff (Lab)	£253	6.0	7	82	14 000	12 000
Warrington (Lab)	£394	3.5	6	84	9 333	6 000
Trafford (C)	£298	6.2	8	85	9 600	n/a
Windsor & M.Hd (C)	£449	7.0	9	86	3 500	2 302
Calderdale (Lab)	£296	7.7	19	87	1 000	none
S Tyne-side (Lab)	£309	5.0	5	87	21 520	15 000
Poole (C)	£325	5.6	7	89	6 000	3 730
Plymouth (C)	£350	n/a	20	90	n/a	8 041
Medina low (C)	£321	2.7	4*	91.5	1 527	1 179
Wandsworth (Con)	£148	n/a	8	92	6 300	1 177
Lambeth (Lab)	£521	n/a	40	n/a	none	none

HALIFAX

Despite having to travel to Todmorden Magistrates, 50 people turned up to defend their cases. There was also a good turn-out of anti-poll tax protesters. As had happened previously at Brighouse Magistrates Court the Magistrates had drawn up a list of four legal defences. Any other defence was said to be irrelevant by the Court Clerk.

The Magistrates became quite irate when their political preferences were questioned and when people began to heckle them and asked them to admit

or to deny the fact that they were Tories and therefore in breach of Natural Justice, several people were evicted and one was threatened with a charge of Contempt.

Marie -

GRANTHAM SOLIDARITY

The first jailing of a non-payer (for 21 days) in December led to frenetic activity and co-operation by the TSDC, the ABAPTF and above all the local APTU (Grantham) who called a national demonstration for 15th December in the town. With 4 days notice, TSDC provided full, effective, legal back-up and monitoring for the 800 marchers and the later 100-strong prison picket. We also mobilised for the event, produced a special TSDC Grantham Bulletin, and provided speakers at rallies before and after.



Non-Payers showing their "Contempt of Court"

POLL TAX PRISONERS LIST

23rd January 1991

REMAND PRISONERS

Marcus B Roskilly - KT1294
HMP Brixton, Jebb Avenue, London SW2 5XF.
Arrested 20th October in Brixton.
Charged section 3 POA.

Daniel Atwood - KT1303
HMP Brixton,
Arrested on 20th October in Brixton.
Charged section 2 and 4 POA and criminal damage.

Paul Jacob - RA0711
HMP Brixton,
Arrested 31st March in Trafalgar Square.
Charged section 1, section 2 and GBH.
Paul is a traveller and his home and all his possessions were in two vans which have since been towed away and destroyed. There is now a fund, set up by a supporter to collect money for Paul to get a new home/van when he gets out. The address is Box S,34 Cowley Rd. Oxford.

CONVICTED PRISONERS

Alan Clarke - MV2254,
HMP Pentonville, Caledonian road, London N7 8TT.
Sentenced to 2 years in July '90. Alan cant read so it would be best to send cards rather than letters.

Wayne Calder - NT0082
HMYOI Huntercombe, Huntercombe Place, Nuffield, Henly-on-Thames, Oxon RG9 5SB
Arrested on 31st March in Trafalgar Square. Sentenced to 2 years.

Robert Robinson aka Simon O'Reilly
Prison no. - RA0741
HMP Camp Hill, Clissold Road, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5PB.
Arrested on 31st March. Convicted Section 2 POA. Sentenced to 2 years. A police van ran over Roberts foot in Trafalgar Square but he was tried kicking it.

Niel Armour - MV3338
HMP Wandsworth, Heathfield Road, Wandsworth, London SW18 3HS.
Sentenced to 2 years with 1 year suspended for Section 2 and unlawful wounding for throwing a missile.

NB. Sentences of 12 months or under usually get half remission, ie. someone sentenced to 3 months will normally only do 6 weeks. Sentences over 12 months people are eligible for parole after the first third of their sentence and get the last third off on remission. However, remission can be lost. If in doubt, phone the TSDC office.

If you wish to provide support for any of the Poll Tax prisoners, please contact the Prisoners Support Group at the telephone number below to ensure the information is still accurate.

Poll Tax Prisoners Group c/o Room 205, Panther House, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X. Tel: 071-833 8958

It's as busy as ever in Nottingham, but we're winning in the war of attrition between the campaign and the Council. Non-payment in Nottingham is officially at about 45% (including people in arrears), and that includes 27% who haven't paid anything. Taking those who aren't even on the register it must be over 50%. As far as I'm aware, the bailiffs haven't been successful once yet, and most people think they're less of a danger now than wage-arrestment and prison.

You've probably heard about Bryan Wright, a self-employed electrician from Grantham. He's the first person to be jailed for non-payment, and has got 21 days in Lincoln jail. There's been loads of support for him (both inside and out), and so far he's refused all offers to pay his poll tax that have come in. I suppose it's obvious, but the poll tax in its current form is dead. What we have to worry about is when the lefties start advocating a "fairer" alternative leading up to General Election, and the services that have already been lost. Ideas on this would be gratefully received!

The "Nottingham 4" (custard pie outlaws) had our trial on 26th - 28th November. Needless to say it was a total stitchup, and we were all found guilty. We presented our own cases, and did a pretty good job of it, but the verdict was never in doubt. Two got conditional discharges, but Guy and I face a possible spell inside when we're sentenced on January 8th. Wish us luck. Keith.

CUSTARD PIES LEAD TO JAIL

In Nottingham last March (1990) there were anti-Poll Tax protests inside the council chamber. Two people, dressed up as Robin Hood were arrested for throwing custard pies at councillors setting the Poll Tax rate.

Keith Duncombe (JH2569) and Guy Waddingham (JH2568) were sentenced to one month jail each on 8th January 1991. ...HMP Lincoln, Greetwell Road, Lincoln.

Lancaster APTU

Dear R & R,
you are welcome to list our group in R & R or anywhere else. We are publishing a book about the local court cases called **THE COURT HAD NO DISCRETION!**. It took the Council FIVE weeks to take one in ten of the adult population in Lancaster to court. The book consists of transcripts of 50 or so representative cases. ISBN: 0-9516761-0-5 @ £2.50.
We don't know what will happen next - one thing in the pipeline is the formation of an information group. We affiliated to 3D. Keep going with the mag.
Yours, Stephen Booth.

BM CAT
London, WC1N3XX

Dear Refuseniks,
Thanks for the R & R's, each issue is better than the last. We support your call for an Independent Network, we would advocate disaffiliation from the Fed - as it is run by scabs.
Re the letter from Paul Anderson in issue no. 5: it is obvious, given all the facts re trying to stop demos, grassing people, etc., it is clear that these Militants in the Fed are the enemy!
It's not as simple as "comrades" making "political mistakes" as your correspondent says. Denouncing people to the cops and threatening to beat up anarchists are not mistakes! We hope you continue to take a clear stand on these issues, and continue to discredit our opponents.
fraternally yours, WILDCAT.

BOX A, October Books
4 Onslow Rd
Southampton
HANTS

Dear R & R,
Greetings from Southampton Refuseniks! I enclose a cheque from Newtown APTU towards a year's supply of your excellent magazine. Re the latest court cases in Soton, the Council are setting aside 1 day per week of court time to deal with non-payers. They propose summoning thousands of non-payers each day even though, at present, they can barely deal with 40 cases per day. Looks like we could be having some fun at the Council's expense.
The 3 main independent Unions in the city are all doing pretty good at the moment. Anyone wishing to contact Newtown APTU can write to me or tel: 0703 220642. Southampton Anti-Poll Tax Campaign can be reached by writing to 78 Clovelly Rd. Newtown, Southampton.
Here's to victory in 1991!
Strength in everyday struggle, Martin.
(Treasurer, N.A.P.T.U.)

Dear R & R,
As a result of attending the 20th October March in London, I had the pleasure of stumbling upon someone distributing copies of R & R.
I enclose a donation and stamps and would like, if possible, back issues of R & R, plus 20 copies of future issues.
Yours faithfully, John Vickers

CLWD Anti-Poll Tax Fed.
Annwyl Gymrodyr, Comrades,
Firstly, re Militant, of the 12 groups in the Clwyd Fed. there is not one Militant member, supporter. North Wales is free of Militant though I know South Wales has suffered badly from the Millies.
We decided early on that it would be wrong to "turn to London" and we organise in the locality with a tour of 8 towns & villages last March 31st. We plan a major North Wales march in Wrexham on March 30th 1991. Our work so far:
a) propaganda & publicity, meetings etc.
b) courts/demos, Mackenzie Friends & the general hassling of court officials re the people's rights (and lack of them).
c) councils/disrupting meetings, challenging official duplicity. We plan to stand for council elections in May.
We were particularly glad to see R & R quashing the idea that the campaign is to blame for council cuts. It is difficult to look beyond the immediate issues of court cases, but we must widen our scope of activity and look at the Poll Tax in the context of an attack on the working class. We try not to forget the serious civil rights implications of the registration process as well. **BOYCOTT IT!** Send us about 10 copies of each issue of R & R. We hope we can strengthen the links between our two nations and our anti-Poll Tax Campaigns.
Yn frawdol, Marc Jones (Co-ordinator, Clwyd Anti-Poll Tax Federation)

'RANT & RAVE'

"Bunfight at the Old Scotia Bar"

Recently, a member of Refuse & Resist's editorial team along with a comrade of his from Red Action and another from the IRSP went for a quiet Sunday evening drink in the Scotia Bar. Unfortunately, a couple of Militant full-timers, Gerry 'Frankenstein' Maguire and 'Davie "Mr. Personality" Archibald, decided to take exception to the last issue of R & R.

On the way out of the pub, Maguire (dubbed the "Leader of the People's March" by the Independent) and Archibald, decided to provoke a "discussion". The "People's Crawl" article in the last issue had obviously upset these two knuckleheads to the point of violence. Maguire was pointing fingers in chests and faces and declaring that it was time us "bastards" were "sorted out" whilst offering "square goes" to us.

Archibald, in the meantime, was explaining Militant's bizarre definition of class. It seems, according to "Mr. Personality" that Refuse & Resist's support comes from 2 middle class areas in Glasgow (which will come as a shock to the working class people who form the backbone of Dennistoun and East Pollokshields A.P.T.U.s) and that you're only working class if you live in a scheme! So says Davie from Govan 'Scheme', formerly of the Clydebank 'Scheme'!

It seems that Militant's definition of the working class is based upon the presumption that if they don't have any members in an area, it must be middle class!

By that same criteria, Bearsden, Eastwood, Hillhead and Hyndland (all areas where there are Militants) must be hotbeds of working class revolt!

Militants will never let the facts stand in the way of a good argument! The truth is that they cannot come to terms with the fact that in both these areas, A.P.T.U. members have rejected their bullshit politics and careerism.

They are also aware that this would happen in other areas of the city, were it not for their hate campaign against R & R. and the individuals who support it.

If R & R. is so "irrelevant" why is it that 2 Militant full-timers wasted time trying to intimidate our supporters outside the Scotia. The end result of these attempts was a physical confrontation which ended in Militant's 'hard men' taking 2nd prize.

Since then, pride dented, Gerry Maguire has been making threats against the 3 individuals concerned. Considering that Gerry required extensive dental treatment after the Scotia incident, he would be well advised (by Militant's leaders?) to keep his mouth shut.

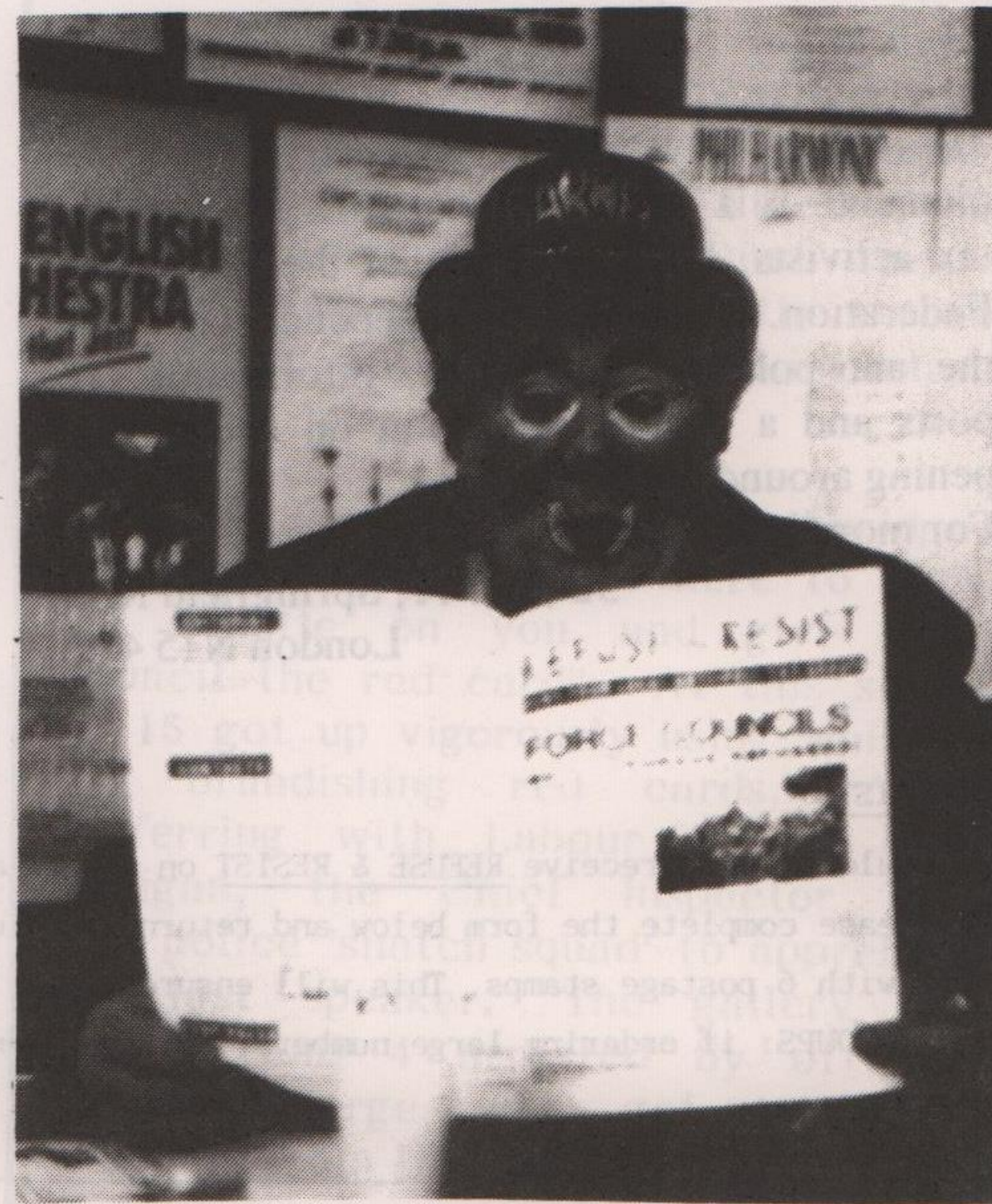
We understand that Maguire learned to fight and terrorise people on the streets of Belfast and Derry whilst a British soldier. We can assure 'Frankenstein' and others with similar intentions, that like the people of Belfast and Derry, we don't back down in the face of intimidation - we fight back!

'The Poison Dwarf'

JIM PLL FIX IT

Jim Cameron, fresh from his success in the Nalگو Election, confirmed that the M word for Militant is not Marx but Machiavelli. At the Dec. 90 aggregate he joked that Sheriff Officers were devious, manipulative bastards. Jim's good news is that the Strathclyde Exec. were even more skilled at being devious.....

"The people trying to make the system work are tearing their hair out". (Jean McFadden, chair of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities).



Press duped: Somebody in Tory H.Q. keeps on getting letters denouncing non-payers published in the 'Evening Times' in Strathclyde. They have been 'concerned' and anonymous, but the latest from a "John Moore" adopts the name of an out of favour Thatcherite Minister who has 'bit the dust'. The arguments dwell on withdrawing council services from non-payers (avoiding the problems of Income Tax revenue etc. going to pay for the 2/3 from the Rate Support Grant), and represent a last ditch stand to deflect attention from the need to abolish it once and for all.