

# PRISONERS LIST

## TRAFALGAR SQUARE PRISONERS

• **Brian Tavares** MV3239 EPD Nov '91 EDR Nov '92 HMP Camp Hill, Clissold Rd, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5PB.

*Arrested 31 March, charged Section 2 Public Order Act (POA) for throwing a missile at a police line after he had been batoned to the ground by them without any provocation. Brian was sentenced to 3 years in November 1990.*

• **Timothy Donaghy** MW0105 EDR Feb'93 HMP Downview, Sutton Lane, Sutton, Surrey, SM2 5PD Tim was sentenced to 3 years on a Section 2 POA charge at the end of his trial on 29 January 1991. Tim has recently been refused parole, and may not get another parole date for quite a while. He is the first poll tax prisoner to be knocked back in this way.

• **Simon Russell** ND1666 EPD May '92 EDR 6 June '93 HMP The Mount, Molyneux Ave, Bovingdon, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP3 ONZ Simon was sentenced to 18 months for Section 2 POA (31st March) and 30 months on two counts relating to ALF activities.

• **Mark Hutchings** MW2737 EPD 24/4/92. EDR 22/1/93. (Please send all mail via the TSDC-PSG until further notice...)

*Mark was sent down on 22 July 1991 for Two years 3 months. He was convicted on Section 2 POA, Crim. Damage, & Theft. Also on unrelated Charge of Possession.*

## IMPRISONED NON-PAYERS

• **Sylvie Matthews** TT2182 EDR 14/2/92 HMP Holloway, Parkhurst Rd, London N7 ONU.

• **Frank Matthews** NV0938 EDR 14/2/92 HMP Pentonville, Caledonian Road, London N7 8TT Frank and Sylvie Matthews were both sentenced to 90 days on the 14th November.

• **Terry Deanes** JJ2005 EDR 2/2/92 (approx) HMP Lincoln, Greetwell Rd, Lincoln, LN2 4BD Sent down in December for 56 days; Terry comes from Rushcliffe, Nottingham.

\* STOP PRESS \*

\* ANNE URSELL RELEASED ON APPEAL \*

*Anne was sent down on Jan 15; she is 65 years old, from Sittingbourne in Kent.*

Recently released prisoners: Marc Kristiansen (Poll Tax paid Xmas Eve), Lesley Shaw, Damian Finnegan, Iris

Robbins, George McNeillage. Matt Lee is due to be released on January 24th.

NOTE: EPD means Earliest Parole Date. EDR means Earliest Date of Release (Remission Date). Sentences of a year or less: EDR is automatically half of sentence. Non-payer convicts cannot get remission.

More PRISONERS LISTS ON Page 11

## POLL TAX PRISONER SUPPORT NETWORK

On October 12 in Birmingham, a conference was held to discuss how we could more effectively support poll tax prisoners. The meeting identified key areas in which support could be improved and formed a national network through which information can be coordinated and distributed.

The network consists of regional prisoner support groups, communicating between themselves as and when prisoners are sent down, and distributing information in their area. It is hoped to produce prisoner lists fortnightly, and a newsletter every other month. It was agreed that newsletters would be produced in rotation, each Prisoners Support Group producing two newsletters, with resources such as printing etc being pooled.

If you wish to receive or pass on any news/info please contact the PSG nearest your area. We need to hear from you if you know of anyone being sent down because of the poll tax; and whether or not they want publicity and support. The national contact number for the network is : (071) 738 7586 (for news of latest jailings). Alternatively contact the nearest local group:

PLEASE PHOTOCOPY AND DISTRIBUTE

# POLL TAX PRISONERS NEWS

JAN-FEB 1992 (FREE OR DONATION)

## Poll Tax Prisoners Support Network



contents: prisoners' letters, solidarity news, prisoners list, poll tax pensioner report, non-payment update.



# Support Poll Tax Prisoners!

The state has tried to use jailings to crush resistance to the poll tax. Over 100 people were jailed after the poll tax demonstrations in Trafalgar Square and Brixton in 1990, and some remain in prison. Already by the end of 1991, 156 people had been jailed for non-payment and millions more are facing the threat of similar action. Others face imprisonment for resisting bailiffs.

Support for people facing the police, the courts and the prisons has been one of the most encouraging aspects of the anti-poll tax movement. There have been many pickets of prisons in this country, and there have also been protests in support of poll tax prisoners all around the world, including in Russia, Poland, France and Canada. Still it is important that this level of support is maintained, and indeed stepped up. This support is the responsibility of the poll tax movement as a whole. We have to show our rulers that we will not allow them to use hostages to intimidate non-payers and scare people away from demonstrating. Support for prisoners includes:

i) **Letters:** Letters are a way of showing prisoners that people on the outside are thinking of them; letters help break down isolation from the outside world, and so they are very important to prisoners. Letters must have a name and address written on them (PO boxes may not be accepted), otherwise the prisoner may not receive it. Also, letters must not contain anything that could get the prisoner or yourself into trouble with the law (use your common sense). Both remand and convicted prisoners are restricted as to how many letters they can send out a week. So don't necessarily expect a reply as prisoners have to write to their families, loved ones and close friends.

Avon Defendants Campaign have devised an A5 Solidarity card. At the front is a picture - such as the HOLIDAY BARGAIN on the front of this newsletter by ex Trafalgar Square PTP Richard A. Inside is the name and address of the P.T.P. so that people know who they're sending greetings to.

ii) **Visits:** There is a big difference between convicted, remand and civil prisoners about visits. Prisoners convicted of criminal offences are generally only allowed one visit every four weeks. Usually convicted prisoners will want to spend their rare visits with family and close friends. Remanded prisoners (those awaiting trial), however, can usually have about six visits a week. Similarly civil prisoners (including jailed non-payers) are usually allowed daily visits. If you are on Income Support, or a low income (eg. Pensions, Family Credit, DSS Certificate), you can get assistance for visits. But, like most 'benefits', there are loads of restrictions. Eg. Only immediate relatives can claim. (Note: Lesbian or Gay partners are excluded). Also the prisoner must be serving a 3 month+ sentence or have been on remand for 4 weeks+. Get info form 2022A & fill out form 2022 (from local DSS), or write to The Assisted Prison Visits Unit, 11th floor, Calthorpe House, Hagley Rd, Birmingham, B16 8QR. Otherwise, call the Prisoner Support Network for help with visits.

iii) **Material support:** In some prisons, prisoners are allowed to spend a limited amount (£10) of money from "private funds" (money sent in) in the prison canteen each month. In other prisons the rules are different. Never send cash; as this may go missing. Postal orders are acceptable, payable to the prisoner.

Books can be sent in by post. Many prisons allow second-hand books. Political materials may be censored, but prisoners can sometimes hassle the authorities to allow them in. For instance Beccy Palmer successfully fought to be allowed 'Socialist Worker'.

Pre-recorded tapes can also be sent in. Sometimes they have to come sealed direct from a record shop with an accompanying letter on the shops note-paper. Items such as radios and walkmans can be sent in. Short wave radios are not allowed; also, there should be no mains adapter on the machine. Alkaline (ie Duracell) batteries are not allowed.

Be warned there are a great many obscure restrictions on what can or cannot be sent into prisons so its best to check with the individual prison.

iii) **Financial support for prisoners' dependents:** Supporters of jailed non-payer Paul Chamberlin raised over £1000 through collections on demos, in workplaces, Bristol East Labour Party, etc.

iv) **Prison pickets:** These can be good for prisoners' morale but always remember to ask prisoners whether they want a picket: you can do this by writing, or getting in touch with the people regularly visiting. Some prisoners have said they don't want pickets, and we must respect their wishes.

v) **distributing information about prisoners:** This newsletter was produced by Avon Defendants Campaign with help from the TSDC PSG. If you have any information for the next newsletter, send it to the Bristol address on the back page.

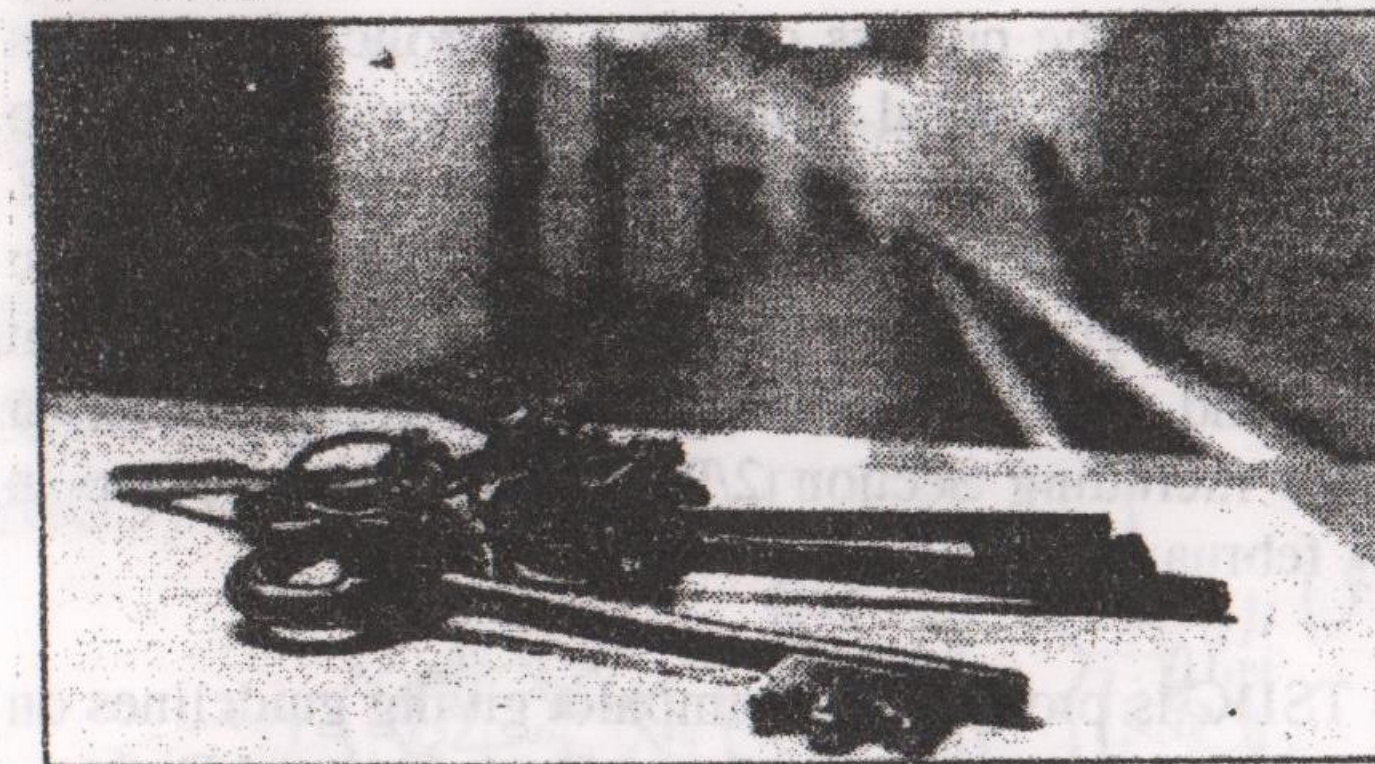
# SOLIDARITY NEWS

## POLL TAX AMNESTY DEMONSTRATION

Despite the cold, the rain, the poverty and, in some cases, the disillusionment of anti-poll tax activists, over 2000 people attended the Poll Tax Amnesty demonstration in London on October 19th. The march was noisy, cheerful, colourful and playful as groups continually charged through central London to a rally in Trafalgar Square.

Before the demonstration there was a women's picket of Holloway prison in solidarity with all women jailed for resisting the poll tax, domestic violence and police violence. We had our usual problems with the authorities, such as the gates to Caledonian Park being locked, thereby excluding the van with the P.A. from the park. This was despite previous arrangements being made. The Department of Environment turned off the power supply in Trafalgar Square only minutes before the march arrived in the Square. It seems that they waited until the sound checks were completed in order to avoid us being able to find an alternative power source in time for the rally. The speakers, many of whom were recently released from prison, had to make do with megaphones.

Speakers included Non-Payer and Trafalgar Square ex-Prisoners Norman Laws, Steve Murray, and Soroosh Ayendeh and Anti Poll Tax activists from Birmingham, Bristol, Scotland with guest speakers including speakers from Anti-Fascist Action and the Free Dessie Ellis Campaign amongst others. The TSDC-PSG thanks everyone who put in so much time and bloody hard work to organise the demo, especially the London APT activists and Prisoner Support Groups without whom the work of supporting prisoners struggles and fighting criminalisation could not take place. Especially, a big thanks to all the Legal and Communications Volunteers who turned up on the day.



## INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

**Canada:** When Prince Charles and Lady Di visited Kingston, Ontario, recently local anarchists organised a

demo. 80 people split into 2 groups and one group held a demo in solidarity with APT prisoners/APT movement in Britain. A banner and placards saying AMNESTY FOR POLL TAX PRISONERS got a good response. Despite 800 (!) police the demo was peaceful, apart from the two Police cars crashing into each other near the march!!!

**France:** On October 19th 100 people demonstrated outside the British embassy in Paris, calling for the release of all poll tax prisoners and the cancelling of poll tax debts. Riot police forced the demonstration back from the Embassy building but a delegation went in to hand in a letter of protest. The demonstration was supported by a number of socialist and anarchist groups. There was a lot of chanting (in particular, there was a lot of support from socialists chanting 'Free Matt Lee!!').

In Sweden, a concert in Goteberg in support of the Poll Tax Amnesty Campaign in Goteborg raised £89. An anarchist newsletter in Freiburg, Germany, regularly reports the anti-poll tax campaign. It has translated articles by Tim Donaghy and Beccy Palmer.

## COLCHESTER 16 RIOT TRIALS

200 people picketed the beginning of the Colchester 16 showtrial on 18th November 1991. One of the defendants, Sean Dale has had his charges dropped; Sean said: "My only crime was to be an active TGWU trade unionist and get people from my workplace to the demonstration".

This trial is a political show trial, similar to those faced by Trafalgar Square defendants. New charges have been added to the Riot charges (Section 1 Public Order Act), and the 2 Incitement charges; charges of Violent Disorder have been added. Bearing in mind that no Riot charges have been successfully prosecuted, the defendants face the possibility of being tried for Violent Disorder. The State has split the defendants into two groups; it is the first group of 7 defendants who are presently on trial. The outcome of this trial is the crucial factor determining the position of the remaining 8 defendants. However the police evidence is looking increasingly shaky. A prosecution witness explained how the police had charged the crowd without warning, knocking over a woman bystander, and any missiles thrown as a result, were not thrown at police but at the Poll Tax office. The campaign needs support both political and financial. The campaign is asking for donations (to help with the Defendants living and travel costs), for Affiliations and to join the regular pickets of the court - EVERY MONDAY - 9.30 am, NORWICH CROWN COURT, BISHOPSGATE



(Near the Cathedral), NORWICH. (Contact the Campaign c/o Terry Peach, APTU Sec, AEU Halls, Barrack Street, Colchester, Essex or Norwich APTU (0603-618931) for further details. (Info from Campaign Bulletins; available from Campaign).

### NEWS FROM BRISTOL

DAVID BRITTON was arrested at his home in Hartcliffe on October 4th by Roach & Co, a private bailiff firm. His rebate form had been misfiled but was later found by Council staff. He was released from prison a week later, his committal being quashed and the debt wiped out. Dave says he won't be paying this year either!

According to certain Hartcliffe councillors, the Labour leaders of the Council were shitting themselves for fear that they'd be sued for wrongful imprisonment! Since then the council officials in the court have been asking for cases to be adjourned so they can grant back-dated rebates to those claiming income support for the year 1990/91. Anti-Poll Tax activists have been pressurising the council to sort out rebate problems for the last year and this has eventually paid off.

Thanks to continued protest against the jailings by activists, petitioning, picketing the prison and the council plus organising demonstrations, Bristol magistrates courts are now dishing out 30 day suspended sentences to some people as an alternative to giving 60 days to everyone - a small victory but a step in the right direction.

### AROUND THE COUNTRY

- There were two demonstrations against jailings in **Burnley** during October. Burnley Labour Council - having jailed 20 people (the highest in England & Wales) - have promised not to send anyone else to prison until the result of a Judicial Review on bailiff procedure has been made.

- Demonstrations against jailings have taken place in Hull, Ealing, Birmingham and the Greater Manchester area.

- 80 year old poll tax prisoner Tom Hopkins was welcomed on release from prison by the press and a motorcade. The Labour Council had hoped to make an example of him - the anti-poll tax movement made an example of them!!

- Paul Chamberlin was sentenced in Bristol, to Bridgewater Police Station, where he was welcomed by a local APT picket. Three days later he was taken to Crownhill Police Stn, Plymouth to the welcome of 25 demonstrators outside with their Federation banner - at only 2 Hours notice! Plymouth A.P.T.U. organised daily visits until Paul was taken to Bristol Prison. Letters, Cards and resolutions from Bristol N.U.J. (Journalists

Union), NAFTHE(NNCFE), and 3/236 Bristol University Transport and General Workers Union were sent to him.

The police intimidated the MARCH TO FREE PAUL CHAMBERLIN from visiting leading Cllr George Micklewright's home in Southville. However some APTU activists braved the police riot van and demonstrated outside his house with banners. Members from Knowle West APTU took the opportunity to drop a note through the councillor's door asking him to hold surgeries for his constituents: they would like police protection from bailiffs!

- When non-payer **Beccy Palmer** was released from prison on October 24th she was met by supporters and widespread local press and TV coverage. Embarrassed by the support for Beccy (her friends even produced 'Free Beccy Palmer' t-shirts), Gateshead Labour Council has since conducted a campaign of smear and victimisation against Beccy and council workers who supported her (Including Beccy's mum). For a fact sheet on the victimisations contact: Mary Black, 67 Abbot Court, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NES 3JY (091 477 7781).

### BENEFITS

A number of benefits have been held recently to raise money for prisoner support including benefits in Aylesbury, Brixton, Hackney, Oxford and Sweden. A special thanks to the folks at Nabate in Belgium, and everyone who got all those memorable gigs together!!

There are regular benefits for Tim Donaghy at 121 Cafe' on the last Friday of each month at: 121 Railton Road, London SE24, 8pm-11pm.

### TRAFALGAR SQUARE DEFENDANTS CAMPAIGN

Trials and Appeals are still awaiting court time following the events of March 31st 1991. There are still 40 warrants out for arrests from Trafalgar Square, with people being charged as recently as this summer. Many people are in the process of suing the police for injuries sustained and wrongful arrest etc. We expect the cases to go on for a long time to come. Some people still haven't been able to locate witnesses to their injuries, so if you witnessed anything and haven't yet made a statement please send one in now. A defendant is going to trial on charges including Section 2/POA, due to take place in early february.

The TSDC is producing a pamphlet giving guidelines on organising demonstrations/ Legal Back-Up/ and Defence Campaigns. Contributions are **welcome!** (Please send to the TSDC Office, 506 Brixton Rd, London SW9). Meetings are now held monthly on the **second saturday** of each month. All APT activists are welcome.

## Tim Donaghy

### POLL TAX - THE FIGHT IS NOT OVER

Since the passage of time and the waning of letters of support, I have been reflecting on issues and events stemming from 'The Battle of Trafalgar'. The question which causes most concern - which I've racked my brain for an answer to - is what has been achieved, (if anything) from our actions on 31/3/90?

The poll tax is STILL in effect. The majority of the population STILL pays. The government STILL insists on outrageous legislation against the underclass (the latest atrocity being legislation to make squatting illegal). The police - not to mention the courts - STILL consider themselves exempt from the law. There are STILL large numbers of people being jailed for non-payment despite prisons being so overcrowded that even police stations are screaming for their cells back. So, what has been learned? What is the next step?

It seems to me - but how much can I know being excluded from society for so long? - that people who are adamant non payers have accepted the struggle as routine and likewise have accepted the government undertaking that by 1994 the tax will be history. To be frank, I think that's bollocks! That type of attitude merely nullifies any reasons that anybody (demonstrators and non payers alike) is in jail because of the tax.

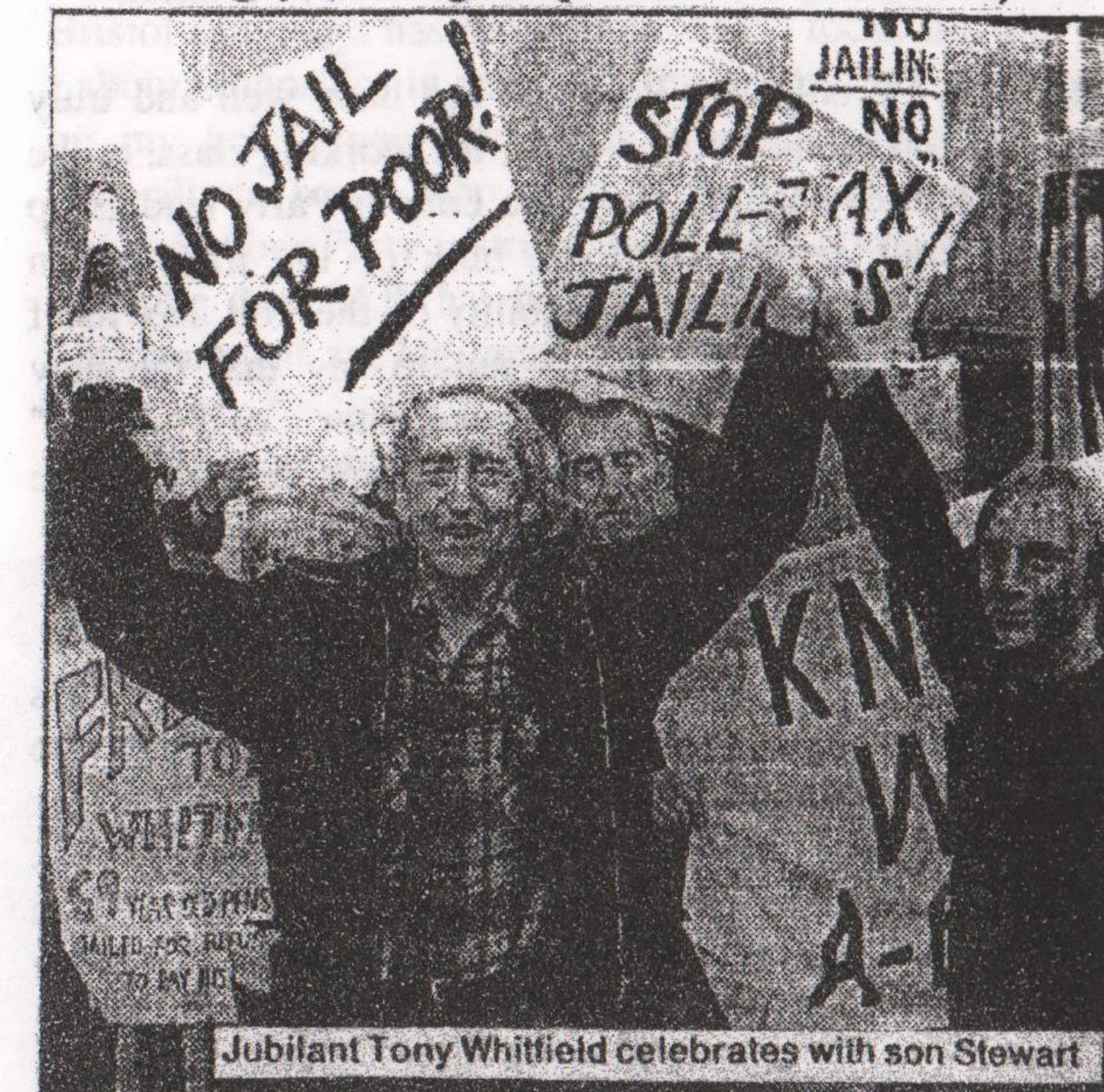
Personally, I feel vindicated to an extent that my actions were primarily for my own sake, rather than blind heroism but I still wonder if the police responsible for certain events on that fateful day will ever share my present predicament. I doubt it. And now the outrage has subsided and in the face of a general election the government bickers over red herrings, (there's a joke in there somewhere!) neglecting what has happened in the wake of government policy circa 89/90 (not even to be challenged by the opposition) and leaving a bunch of convicted criminals no different to the other thousands and equally a bunch of debt defaulters. So who won what?

I think its blatantly obvious that the government has won. Fair enough the tax has cost them a lot of money but they've worked out ways to get it back - ie by raising other taxes. Also, they make sure that the people who don't pay feel the effects by cuts in vital services like education and rubbish collection, for instance. I call this blackmail.

What annoys me most is that from the comfort of our own homes (or prison TV rooms) we can watch our brothers and sisters risk life and limb in Eastern Europe fighting for rights, while the majority of people of this

grey unpleasant land don't even have the nerve to risk a few weeks in jail standing up in the name of 'democracy'. THINK ABOUT IT! P.E.A.C.E.

Tim Donaghy (Trafalgar Square Poll Tax Prisoner)



## Matt Lee

### LESSONS OF MARCH 31st - LEARNING FROM THE VICTORY

It's crucially important, as the Anti-Poll Tax movement enters its final phase, for all of those who've been involved to draw a balance sheet of our activities. We must all, particularly those who class themselves as "revolutionaries" - be they socialists, Marxists or Anarchists - learn some lessons from our struggle. For me personally there is also a great need to seek out any real gains from the struggle.

I've spent over 7 months in jail - and have another 3 or so to go. It's not 10 years, but even 10 months is a bloody long time in jail. As a Marxist, as a revolutionary I'm prepared to put my money where my mouth is and stand to the front when the crunch comes. But merely because I'm politically willing, doesn't mean it isn't personally difficult. So have we, as a movement, gained from the sacrifices and the struggle we waged? Have we "won" or was it all a waste of time - was all the struggle for nothing, all the sacrifice in vain?

To take the view that we "failed" is to lose touch with reality, to get buried in an idealism of 'perfect' victories (no such thing) or wholly 'successful' struggles (again, no such thing). The Anti-Poll Tax movement DID succeed, it did score a victory. But it's also had it's losses, it's failures. Any struggle combines a large quota of cock-ups and disasters healthily mixed with glowing



successes, wonderfully liberating victories. In relative terms - in other words, compared to most of our struggles during the '80s - the Anti-Poll Tax movement was a resounding victory. That is quite plainly obvious to all but the most disillusioned or idealistically sectarian.

But why? Firstly, the Poll Tax has been well and truly fucked and by the actions of us, the working class, in the teeth of utter hostility from the Labour Party leadership and overall apathy from the bulk of the trade union movement. There is no possibility of the Poll Tax itself surviving as it was. That is not to say that the new 'Council Tax' isn't a "son - or daughter - of Poll Tax" and that the ruling class won't attempt to achieve the aims of the Poll Tax via other routes. Obviously it will. But we got round one.

Secondly, the militancy of our working class communities, which exploded from Bristol to Birmingham, from Lambeth to Leeds, was a major factor in dethroning Thatcher. Her eventual demise was something of major importance. It was also, in the eyes of many working class youth of our generation, who have grown up knowing nothing but Thatcher and defeat, caused by our resistance in the main. It was our action that finally strung her up on the gallows - it merely remained for her own 'colleagues' to pull the lever dropping her to political oblivion. They had to hang her to save their own skins. A tactical retreat by the ruling class - and it was us who forced that retreat.

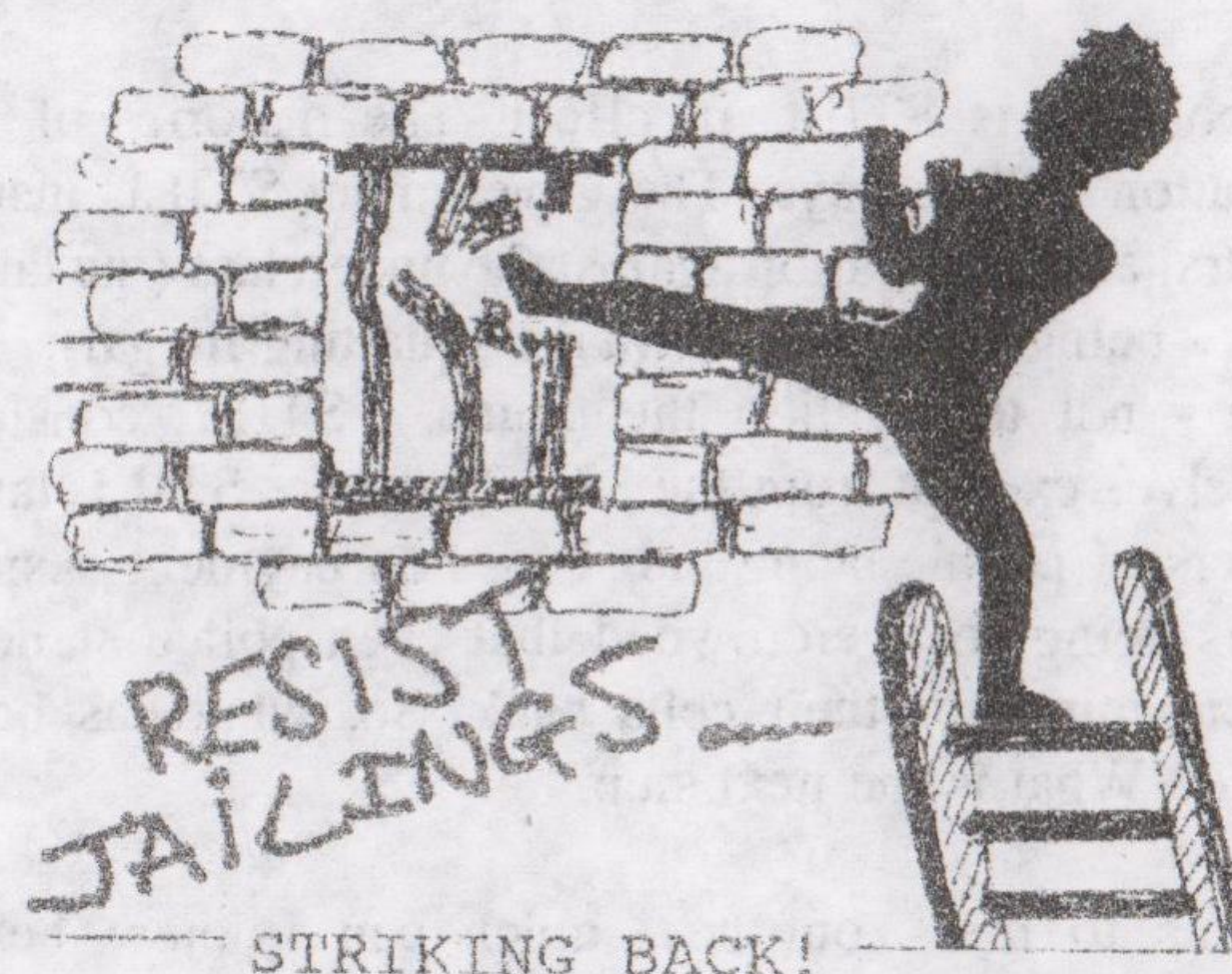
Thirdly, as an overall result of the first two points, we have the victory of confidence. For over 12 years a generation of workers - my generation - grew up watching, to paraphrase George Orwell, "a jack boot stamp on our face" every day of our lives. Even as a revolutionary with a faith in history and a belief in my class, it was at times crushing to see defeat after defeat after defeat. So many people put the idea of "winning" out of their minds. Not the idea of resistance, merely the belief in our power. The Poll Tax fight gave us a brief but illuminating glimpse of our power and our class and, in my view, is the first flash of awakening in a new phase of struggle.

It was a liberating struggle in many ways. The feeling of "going somewhere" as I fought alongside my friends and comrades to establish an Anti-poll Tax Union in my local community was fantastic. The feeling reached a peak on the day of the 'Battle of Trafalgar' as we fought back against that very same jack boot that had daily attempted to crush us up till then. We really did feel our own power as, for a few brief moments, the machinery of the State ground to a halt, then started to go backwards under the weight of our numbers and from the fury of our anger.

The role of March 31st however is more symbolic than practical. For a generation of workers it measures

alongside Orgreave and Wapping, giving a taste of a possible future. To riot is to rebel, it is not to revolt. It is a defensive action, not an offensive one. It is a result of our class fighting for its life, not of destroying its foes. For that longer struggle we must be better organised, better able to fight and think and know the way forward. Better able to make our own agenda the centre of attention, our own liberation the reason for our own struggle.

Matt Lee (Trafalgar Square Poll Tax Prisoner)



## Tom Hopkins

Caerphilly, Wales.

1/11/91

Dear Comrades,

the T.V, the radio and the press have given a great deal of attention to the tremendous increase of crime in Britain. Someone said it was on a par with American crime. I agree. Since the Second World War Britain has become completely controlled by the United States. 11 years of Mrs Thatcher as P.M. completed the job. Both in Amerika, Britain and the rest of the capitalist world crime is increasing. All the jails are overcrowded.

After a great deal of study I have come to the conclusion that it is the Capitalist system itself which is criminal. The laws of capitalist governments are the real cause of crime ALL OVER THE WORLD. Most of the capitalist laws which exploit and rob the working class are hidden laws. The main one is the appropriation of the surplus value created by the labour power of the working class. This is purchased by the capitalist and put to work 8 hours a day making commodities etc. Four of those hours are sufficient to cover the wages for the day. The other four are what Karl Marx calls SURPLUS VALUE. This is what the capitalist appropriates which eventually makes the capitalist a millionaire. This private appropriation creates anarchy in production, chronic crisis, mass unemployment, misery, bankruptcies, suicides and wars.

The crisis of capitalism has reached the stage of authoritarian fascist policies because it can only be sustained by force. This is why governments hang on to nuclear weapons.

I would like to write a few words about those bourgeois socialists who write to the press mostly against those working class who have the GUTS to fight against capitalist exploitation. These "socialists" are lackeys who throw dust in the eyes of the people. They want the advantages of modern social conditions without the struggles and the dangers. How many would be prepared to go to jail to fight against the unjust poll tax? Especially at the age of 80, they desire the existing capitalist society, minus the revolutionary and disintegrating elements. This is why the world is suffering from the greatest economic crisis in history. Capitalist production creates its own destruction.

Finally, I would like to thank all those wonderful and appreciative people who sent me letters and newspaper cuttings from all over Britain when I was doing my 14 days in prison for failing to pay this vicious poll tax.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Hopkins (80 year-old retired miner).

## Paul Chamberlin

POLL TAX PRISONERS : FOCAL POINT OF ANTI POLL TAX CAMPAIGN

As one of the other contributors asks: what have the jailings and Amnesty Campaign achieved? During my first weekend in prison, Amnesty International held a march in Bristol. I wondered if we were on their list? My heart goes out to the Irish people imprisoned on falsified evidence. My heart goes out to the victims of Trafalgar Square whose sentences make my 60 day stint look petty. And my heart goes out to fellow prisoners in Bristol, who have given unfailing support and sympathy, even though most have longer sentences to endure than mine. Anti Poll Tax to a man.

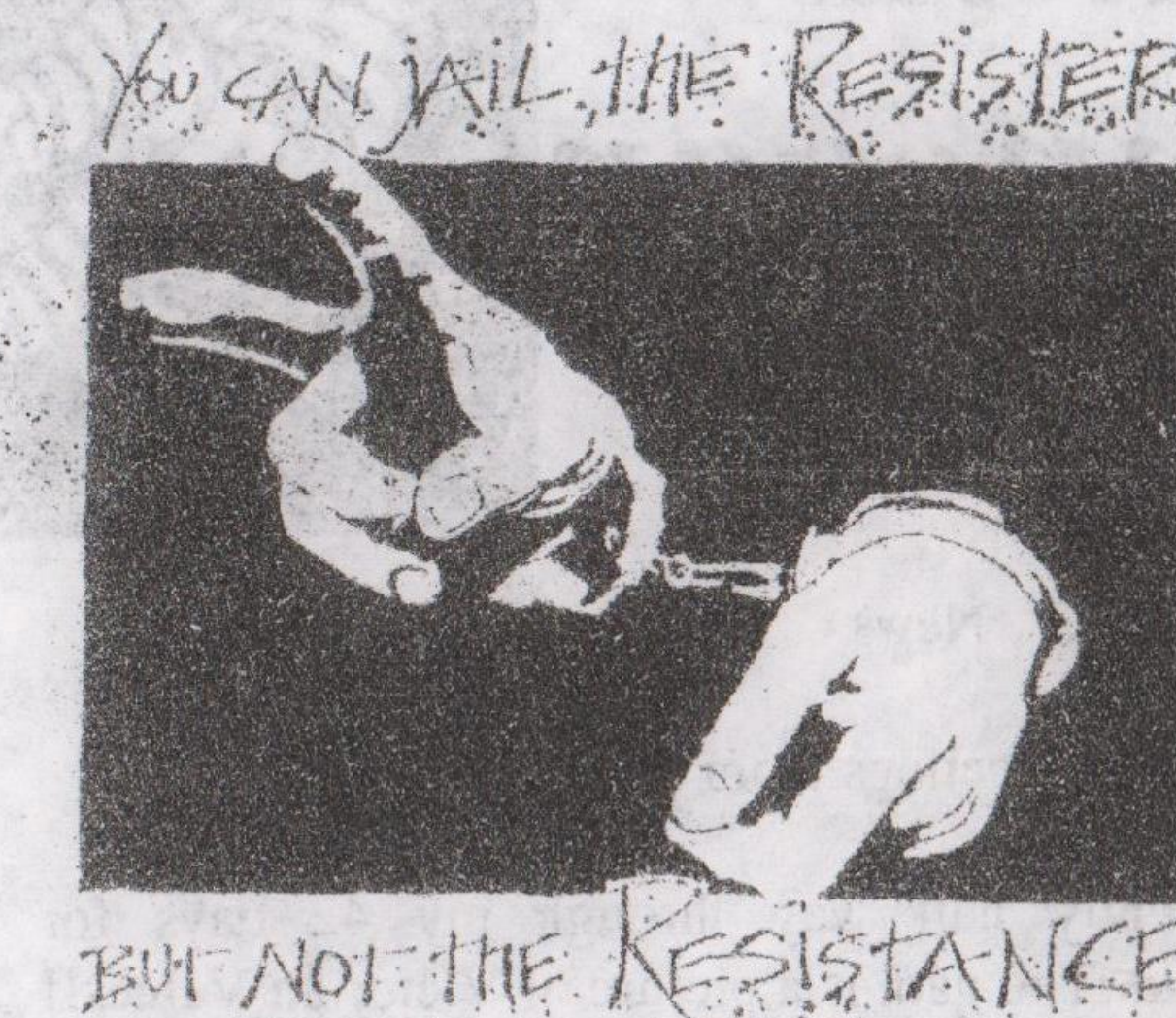
Trafalgar Square was the beginning of the end of this hated tax. Even though the government has thrown billions of pounds at the dying scheme, the campaign of mass non-payment continues to grow. Of the huge majority opposed to the tax, most will push their protest as far as they feel able. Some obstinate few will go all the way. We must not forget those who have suspended sentences hanging over them, coupled with harsh repayment terms.

In Bristol the jailing of Tony Whitfield, Dave Britton, and me has provided a focus for the campaign. I do not expect the campaign to reduce my sentence, but it will help to create a climate in the future where repressive legislation like the poll tax will be impossible. The Bristol campaign has thrown into sharp focus the role of Labour authorities in enforcing this wicked tax. A march on my behalf was prevented from passing a leading councillor's house who cried 'intimidation' and Bristol South Labour Party instructed members not to take part. Happily, their M.P. has been to visit! So, bailiffs and imprisonment are legitimate intimidation?

As messages of support still continue to pour into the gaol, four weeks into the sentence, I know we're right to keep on kicking until those who claim to represent us start acting in our interest, and show some courage too.

Finally may I express my gratitude to my family, comrades and friends outside who have supported me so selflessly.

Paul Chamberlin (Non Payer Poll Tax Prisoner)



## Frank Matthews

NV0938 MATTHEWS FRANK, HMP PENTONVILLE  
9/12/91 DAY 26 (And still going strong)

Dear Friends, At last, an organisation that seems to be interested in the poll tax issue to the exclusion of everything else, good. Thank you for your note and greetings card. I started the letter as above for the following reasons:- I do not agree with ALL the comments and articles in Socialist Worker or Militant newspaper. There seems to be a 'knock' the government angle in both these organisations which blunts the poll tax issue.



The poll tax was wrong, is wrong and will continue to be wrong and should be treated in isolation. Otherwise the powers that be will put blame on non-payers (which they obviously have). From what I can gather there was a 10%+ to counter the 10%- who will refuse to pay. How longer can the public support a system which says a worker can manage on £10,000 a year and a boss on £10,000 a week?

When my wife and I took our opinions to court we neither expected or wanted the attention we have received. Ours was a opinion which was in isolation and which expressed as individuals. It appears we are not alone.

Yours in prison - but not isolated.

Frank.

## Damian Finnegan

Damian Finnegan 2/12/91  
HP0762 Winson Green

Dear ADC/P.T.P. News,

Revolutionary Greetings from the Green!

I am currently half way through my 42 days for non-payment. The gaol is a picture of Victorian Values!! Only joking!! They've moved on from putting one person in a 12 by 6 foot cell and now put 3 in; we are banged up 23 hours day, but in keeping with the tradition of the days when the parasite of Buck House used to bath once a year, we have no toilet!! My fellow prisoners are well sound, and can't believe how far the State has gone to try and smash us.

My copy of Class War has gone down really well and I have loads of people saying what a good read it is, some have asked me to send in copies in when I get out!!

I thought it was really interesting that the government isn't going to prosecute the bosses over Sunday opening, saying we know its a bad law and we are looking to change it!

Regarding the debate around who won the 'poll tax battle'- I think it was definitely us! Pure working class Solidarity, and the snubbing of the "we can build a bigger party/sell more papers than you" idiots, is what

won through. Most people realise how that the State, when kicked where it hurts, Can be beaten. When we all kick together it can be beaten! If thats not a victory I don't know what is!!

Keep up the good work; greetings to poll tax prisoner Matt Lee - A true friend, and a true comrade - And to all other poll tax prisoners!

Love and Solidarity, Damian.

### TRAITORS

*Profits up - wages down  
the Labour Party doesn't make a sound:  
too busy making friends in the city  
to worry about those who can't pay their bills.*

*Onto the street the anger spills  
people scream and sirens sound  
as another demonstrator is smashed to the ground.*

*"The police were just doing their jobs:  
DEMONSTRATORS JUST A BUNCH OF  
YOBS  
Exemplary sentences is what we need  
The Tory press we need to feed".*

*The general election comes around  
to the hustings they're all bound!*

*"You know it makes sense - vote for us  
The working class we won't discuss"*

*The young child pulls at her mother's coat  
See that man who wants your vote?  
Didn't he help to send Daddy down -  
Send the poll tax bailiffs to our town."*

*The mother's tear fall to the floor  
As the party canvasser is shown the door.  
Stand up you gutless traitors,  
Join with the wealth creators.  
Come and join us in our fight  
We'll show you what is wrong and what is right.*

DAMIAN FINNEGAN

IN WANDSWORTH, which set the lowest Poll Tax in the country last year (with a little help from central government) more people have now been summoned for non-payment than voted for the Tories at the last council elections.



### REVOLUTION THE ONLY SOLUTION

*FROM THE BIRMINGHAM SIX TO THE  
TOTTENHAM 3*

*How long before you come for me?  
Or anyone else who's not the same  
As the people who play in your power game?*

*If you're Black or Irish or working class  
Better watch out mate or we'll kick your ass  
But watch out 'cos we can kick you too  
and when we get organised we'll be gunning  
for you.*

DAMIAN FINNEGAN (jailed non-payer)

Bristol Magistrates Court

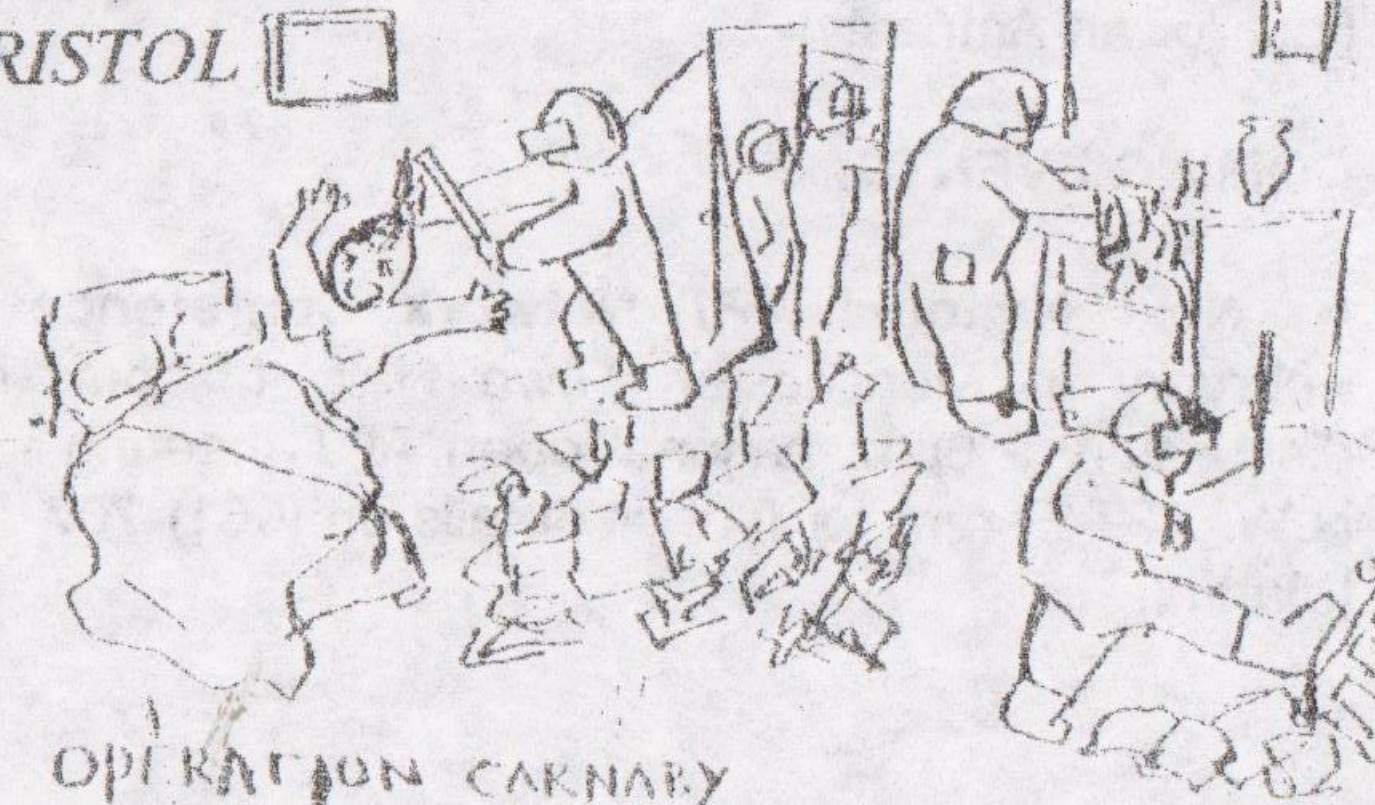
*Alone in front of three  
Pitied, or worse disbelieved:  
Insufficient income  
For Poll Tax simple greed.*

*No excuses needed  
Liable no matter what,  
A tax to rob the poor  
OF THE LITTLE THEY HAVE GOT.*

*To help the rich get wealthy  
And demoralise the rest,  
The THREE who sit in JUDGE-MENT  
Believe THEY know what's best.*

*Again the moral issue  
To do what I believe is right:  
To pay, or not to pay,  
And so help another's plight.*

DEBBIE SMITH  
KNOWLE WEST ANTI POLL TAX UNION,  
BRISTOL



## POLL TAX PENSIONER REPORT

by Norman Laws (ex-P.T.P.)

•79 year old ex-miner Tom Hopkins jailed for 14 days. Moved to Gloucester prison with 61 year old Labour councillor Ray Davies.

•69 year old Tony Whitfield jailed for 60 days. Bristol Anti Poll Tax Unions marched, demonstrated and picketed the prison every Saturday. After his release he spoke at the Federation meeting.

•80 year old Harry Cunliffe sentenced to 30 days. This is part of a letter he wrote before being transferred to hospital:

"Who is the biggest criminal? Myself for not paying an unfair tax or the Guinness millionaire crooks who swindled people out of two million? Money talks doesn't it? One of the Guinness twisters was not sent to jail BECAUSE HE WAS TOO OLD - old and ill. He wasn't too old to stash a few million quid in his back pocket. I am 73. Am I not ill with heart trouble and arthritis? Is it not an example of one law for the rich and another for the poor" (Militant 21/6/91)

•77 year old Walter West- threatened by Bury council after liability and bailiff action.

•71 year old Victor Carr jailed for 3 months, charged with wilful refusal.

•77 year old Dora Coull was threatened with 14 days sentence. She had no electricity, gas or other services. Dora was annoyed that the Daily Mirror paid her tax but agreed because her disabled 82 year old husband was worried.

•70 year old Ronald Cassidy (former sergeant in the Royal Engineers) was sentenced to 3 months by Alnwick Magistrates Court in Northumberland. His public landlady paid his £94.38 saying: 'He is an old devil, but I couldn't bear to think of him inside. Anyway we need him in the Ambles Schooner Inn Dominoes team'.

•71 year old Norman Laws (Burma campaign jungle wallah) sentenced to 60 days by South Tyneside Magistrates court and put in Durham top security prison. He has made an official complaint to the Home Secretary demanding a full public enquiry regarding the deliberate withholding of emergency medication while in prison.

"The local Pensioners Rights Campaign was active at the time of my imprisonment with demos outside - even inside - the Magistrates court and town hall, also two large demos outside Durham prison which unfortunately I couldn't see or hear from my cell. These demos were supported by Pensioners Rights Campaign, the local APTU and polytechnic students working in unison."



## INSIDE-KEEPING YOUR HEAD DOWN!

It seems a bit stupid to try and give advice on how to survive inside. It's basically common sense and how you are as an individual. If you just want to keep your head down and do your time then simply stay clear of trouble. If you want to have a more pleasant time and want to use your experience then here's what I learnt (or have learnt from others):-

- Always stick by your mates and cell mates, even if they are shits, it's always useful to know people (you can get something out of them).

- If you can get hold of things that have some value then do. Certain things have more value, as you'll quickly learn, so the more you get to know the better. Don't get caught. Apart from the obvious you can also sell other things e.g. vegan goodies, newspapers, painting skills etc.

- If you get work, try and benefit from it as much as possible. You'll quickly learn ways to make more.

- If you want something from the screws then politely hassle them at every opportunity. Learn your rights and use the knowledge. If you don't get what you want then you are usually fucked unless someone outside takes up your case.

- Don't be too trusting and stay clear of the creeps.

- The more people you can be friends with the better. It will always come in useful if you need things. It's quite hard to do some things without appearing like a little Thatcherite shit.

- Whatever happens make sure you don't end up 'owing' people things. It leads to problems.

- Learn to amuse yourself quietly and after lights out. An Open Prison is obviously much different. Just do what you feel is right. A Prisoners Support Group is very useful.

Letters are invaluable. KEEP STRONG.

(The work of two brothers imprisoned as a result of Trafalgar Square and the Brixton prison picket).

**ANTI-POLL TAX**

## NON-PAYMENT UPDATE

It's hard to get hold of accurate, up-to-date figures on Non-payment; but this gives a rough idea of what's happening. Here are some Home Office figures reported by Dave Nellist during a commons debate (10th Dec '91):

**SCOTLAND** - After 3 years 64% of the population hasn't paid, and in Strathclyde 84% haven't paid. Out of 3.7M adults, 2.5M have received Sheriffs warrants [Sheriff: equivalent to bailiff].

**ENGLAND & WALES** - Over the last 15 months in England & Wales more than 25,000 hours of court time has been spent trying(!) to enforce the tax.

In the 18 months from 1 April '90 to 30 Sept '91 8 million people were summonsed to court; 196,000 turned up. Committal warrants were issued for 2815 people. On jailings; 55 local authorities have attempted to jail 156 people - 115 have been to prison. Of these people, 30 were unemployed, 15 were pensioners and 3 were on Invalidity benefit.

According to NACRO (Nat. Assoc. for Care & Resettlement of Offenders) it costs £47 per day to keep a prisoner; for those in Police or Court cells it costs on average £220 a day [The Ritz costs £190 a night!!].

A survey in January across Britain showed that council's had collected just 60% of total poll tax in the financial year April '91 - April '92 (just two months left out of this financial year). At the end of October a survey carried by The Guardian newspaper of 18 local authorities (arbitrarily selected) showed that on average, Non-Payment had increased this year by about 7%.

Remember, though, that these figures come from the government and can easily be twisted. For example, a person on benefit should get an 80% rebate: the government counts the rebate as poll tax paid in the figures (paid to local govt.). Also, those who have paid some poll tax are counted as payers!

All in all, non-payment is rising and will continue to do so until the tax is scrapped: now we have to step up the fight for an Amnesty!

### COMING EVENTS:

- **Next National APT Network Conference:** 9th February in Manchester Town Hall. 11-1pm: local discussion/ 2-6pm: national open APT meeting - Call N.W. APT Forum for further details on (061) 707 1584 [Martin].

This important conference will be discussing the forthcoming national Amnesty Demo which is marching for: \* An immediate Repeal of the Tax \* Amnesty for Non-Payer and ALL Poll tax prisoners \* No Cuts in our local services \*

The demonstration is provisionally booked for 28th March in Manchester (TSDC-PSG has agreed to support the Demo). Also being discussed will be the lobby of the Labour party NEC. (Taking place on the last Wednesday of February, at Walworth Rd 12 - 2pm.)

Both events were agreed democratically at the APT Conference in Manchester on October 26th '91.

- Dayschool on Committals in Liverpool (Takes place in February): Contact Liverpool APT

### POLL TAX LEGAL NETWORK

A Legal Network has been set up to fight the test-cases currently in progress [See Below]. In 1968 legislation was passed to allow computer evidence to be submitted as Admissible Evidence in court. This legislation DOES NOT APPLY TO MAGISTRATES COURTS where poll tax cases are heard. As a result, the Councils have used INADMISSIBLE evidence in court against non-payers, where computer evidence has been used. If the State uses legislation to extend admissibility to Magistrates Courts (probably using what is called a Statutory Instrument), nearly all cases (5 Million liability orders), and prison sentences given to Non-Payers would be illegally constituted and thus subject to appeal. Decisions to halt court cases so far have been taken in Bury St Edmunds (Dec), Gravesend in Kent, and Liverpool.

### What anti-poll tax groups can do:

#### LEGAL NETWORK [Only for the Testcase].

- \* Step 1: Identify a person willing to fight the test-case.
- \* Step 2: The person MUST be eligible for Civil Legal Aid [Very Important].
- \* Step 3: Once a person has been identified, find out the Time, Date & Place of the court-case.
- \* Step 4: Get in touch with DEBBIE on (071) 435 2901 (CAMDEN), or VANESSA on (0533) 553 781 (LEICESTER RIGHTS CENTRE) A.s.a.p. Free LEGAL REPRESENTATION will be given. All the barristers have been briefed with the same legal info.
- \* Please give as much notice as possible, once details are passed on.

### BAILIFF BUSTERS

Soroosh Ayendeh and Ray Hogg were recently arrested in Nottingham for resisting bailiffs. They are due in court on the 19th of February on Section 4, Public Order Act charges.

### FIRST ARREST IN WALES

On January 8th, charges were dropped at Wrexham Magistrates Court against 60-year old Myra Hughes, the first person to be arrested for resisting the poll tax in Wales. Myra was nicked while trying to stop bailiffs (helped by the police) from stealing a car from the home of non-payer Doris Evans. The car belonged to Doris's son, who had paid his poll tax. Doris, 60, lives with her disabled husband on an unmade road two miles from the nearest village - Rhiwabon in Clwyd. Myra now plans to sue for wrongful arrest.



\* STOP PRESS \* STOP PRESS \*  
\* NEW PRISONERS \* NEW PRISONERS \*

GEORGE HAY DG3618 ARMLEY  
30 DAYS ON 24 JAN  
EDR IS 26 FEB. George is unemployed, but not on benefit and received a suspended sentence before Xmas, and has "made a firm commitment not to pay..."!!

DOROTHY BIRD FR1686 LOW NEWTON

DINO OSMAN TOSSUM MV1694 PENTONVILLE  
3 MONTHS ON 21 JANUARY.  
EDR IS 19 APRIL. Dino was sent down by Ealing council, who recently sent down Frank & Sylvie Matthews. This vicious bunch of bureaucrats have started sending out press cuttings of Sylvie & Franks jailing with each poll tax bill (in these times of recession they make good fire lighters !!). Let's bin these council parasites along with their bills and the rent arrears....!

MICHAEL O'CONNELL MV1694 PENTONVILLE  
Got 60 DAYS EDR March '92.

\* LETTER by BECCY PALMER \* Released after a three month sentence...

"...I feel more determined than ever to fight the poll tax. Being inside was tough, but definitely worth it. The support I had from ordinary people was tremendous. I had around a 1,000 messages of support.

Now the most important thing is to keep building opposition to the tax and the jailings. We need to involve trade unions and communities in fighting back. I'm disgusted at the way the Labour council has behaved. The enthusiasm they've shown for implementing the Tory law is a real disgrace. Now Gateshead council is attacking me and my mother..."