

# COUNTER INFORMATION

FEB./MARCH/APRIL 1990

## A YEAR OF NON PAYMENT !

As the first year of the Poll Tax ends the level of non-payment in Scotland is holding steady at over one million people. 30% of the population have either avoided the register altogether, paid nothing or are seriously in arrears.

By February, Strathclyde Regional Council had sent out 353,000 Summary Warrants representing 20% of those registered who are at least three months in arrears. Before Christmas, Lothian Region sent out 76,000 Summary Warrants. In Lothian there are over 200,000 in arrears. Now the, (mainly Labour), councils have unleashed their dogs - the Sheriff Officers (Bailiffs).

There are legal limits on the number of Sheriff Officers, allowed in each Lothian has only 45 so it could take them 15 years to get round to every non-payer.

### ROBBING HOODS

In Fife the Sheriff's Officers A.A. Hutton have been using illegal procedures when attempting pointings (the listing of household luxuries for later auction). Another Company H.M. Love have been sending "non-statutory" letters telling non-payers that on their next visit they could break into their homes.

Despite all this intimidation there have been no successful warrant sales in Scotland for non-registration or non-payment of the Poll Tax.

In late November, Carole Hosey from Muirhouse, Edinburgh who had had her stereo pointed for non-registration, challenged the Sheriff Officers to attempt a warrant sale. Friends and neighbours, supported by anti-poll tax activists stood ready to stop them. Support was deep and wide. Oil rig workers who heard about it had a whip round and sent her the money. At the last minute the Labour Council backed off.

In the Borders village of Oxton Sheriff Officers marched through an open front door, frightening children and began pointing goods. They ran off when they thought neighbours were about to arrive.

On February 6th, Sheriff Officers attempted pointings, without warning in Musselburgh and smaller towns in East and Mid Lothian. Over the next few days anti-poll tax activists in cars chased off the Sheriff Officers and using loudspeakers warned people not to open their doors. Leaflets with a hotline phone number were handed out. Widely publicising such numbers is vital.

The Officers car tyres were let down on several occasions and vaseline rubbed over their windscreens so they couldn't see. Two were caught in a pub, verbally abused and photographed.

### LOVE 17

H. M. Love and Co., Sheriff Officers (19, Heriot Row, Edinburgh, tel.557 - 0100) received a visit



Pensioners condemn the poll tax at Lothian Regional Council on 23rd January.

themselves on 17th November when over 40 anti-poll tax protesters, some children and a dog occupied their offices. A mock pointing was carried out and banners hung out of the windows. Mr. Love phoned the police claiming that furniture was being destroyed and staff were being assaulted. However, even the police agreed that it was a peaceful protest.

The Procurator Fiscal (chief prosecutor) saw the occupation on telly and demanded that as many as possible of the protesters be charged. Now 17 non-payers will appear at 10 a.m., June 20th at Sheriff Court House, Lawnmarket, (High St.) Edinburgh. This clearly an attempt to intimidate us. If there are sufficient protests the authorities will back off. It is vitally important that people turn up to show their support. Send letters of protest to the Procurator Fiscal, 3, Queensferry St. Edinburgh EH 2

### ONE PARTY STATE

...Every local authority whether Labour, Tory, Nationalist or Coalition is vigorously pursuing non-payers. Only the degree of hypocrisy separates them.

On January 23rd this year, non-payers twice stopped a meeting of Lothian Regional Council. This was an attempt to stop them voting on a budget that included the Poll Tax rate for 1990-91. Protesters waved posters in front of the tellers, shouted out numbers to confuse them and stood on the Conveners desk. Labour and Tories both collaborated in pretending that they had taken a vote and that it had been in favour of the budget.

### UNDEMOCRATIC

Stopping the meeting would have been easier if prominent members of the Militant Tendency hadn't encouraged about half the protesters to leave before the vote was attempted. This was despite the fact that a full meeting of Lothian

## NO TO POLICE MURDER!

In Athens, Greece on 17th October 1985 a Greek youth was shot dead by an armed policeman without provocation or warning. More than 4 years later the police officer's trial came to an end on Friday 26th January 1990, with him being acquitted of all charges and walking free.

The response in Athens was immediate fury. That evening the polytechnic was occupied by 2,000 protestors and riots involving 5,000 raged against the police all night. By Saturday night the Poly was still occupied and again 5,000 rioters clashed fiercely with the police. 10 rioters were arrested but were almost immediately released when large crowds surrounding the police station and demanding their release frightened the police into backing down. That night the police attempted to evict the Poly occupation, firing CS gas into the building. The occupiers replied with determined resistance and the attempt was repulsed.

The news on 2nd February, a week after the release of the policeman which sparked the affair off, is as follows: The Poly remains occupied and 3 Centres for Philosophic Studies have also been occupied. The rioting continues as before, 20,000 people took part in a march on 1st February and the same number are expected again for a demo organised for 3rd February by the anarchist movement.

Protestors have also broken into and occupied a government ministry and are reported to be holding a government Minister hostage. As we go to press the struggle continues.....

## STEPPING UP

After 5 months of struggle ambulance crews all over Britain have been stepping up their action. While the unions urge them to rely on public opinion and private lobbying of Tory backbench MPs, ambulance workers have organized wildcat strikes and occupations.

Crews in London, Manchester, Essex, Hampshire, West Sussex and Edinburgh are amongst those who have taken unofficial all out strike action. They are determined to bring the dispute to a head rather than face a long slow road to defeat like the miners or the printworkers at Wapping. As one Manchester ambulance worker put it: "we're just getting no support at all from the union as far as I'm concerned. That's why we're taking action ourselves."

Ambulance workers have also organised a range of other actions. In December up to 150 ambulances were used to disrupt traffic around Westminster - it took 6 hours to clear traffic jams. In January crews occupied the central ambulance control office in London, while at Hillingdon and elsewhere crews locked their bosses out of ambulance stations.

The government isn't going to be moved by action from the ambulance workers alone however. If necessary they will just stand back and leave people to die. That is why the mass support that exists for the crews has to translate into action.

The unions have tried to stop such action by keeping ambulance workers isolated from other people. The TUC tried to ban all but ambulance workers and firefighters from the demonstration in London on January 13th. Fortunately many people, such as 'Liverpool lesbians and gays support the ambulance workers' ignored this and went on the march.

The TUC called a 15 minute national protest on January 30th to try and gain control of any movement towards solidarity action. Hundreds of thousands of people took part, and many went well beyond the TUC approved action. Instead of asking their bosses' permission for 15 minutes off, some took strike action for longer periods. In London for instance 1 in 3 buses returned to their garages, disrupting services for a couple of hours. In some places roads were blocked; by council workers standing on road crossings as happened in Brixton or with council vehicles as in Islington.

The potential shown on January 30th will only be realised when we take control of the action away from the unions and into our own hands.

Thanks to Red Menace

...We need to be bold and experiment with new ways of organising that helps defeat the tax and anything or anybody else that blocks the forward movement of mass working class struggles.

Groups in England and Wales wishing to twin with Scottish Groups contact "Twinned against the Poll Tax" (English Section), Box 5, Hiziki, 15, Goosegate, Hockley, Nottingham

A new paper for independent anti-poll tax groups in Strathclyde Refuse and Resist, 2/3 182 Ark Lane, Glasgow G31 2J5.

Federation of Anti-Poll Tax Groups had decided a fortnight before to disrupt the meeting to such an extent that they would be unable to set a poll tax rate. On top of this the vice chair (a Militant) for the second time slagged off anti-poll tax protesters to the press.

...Militant seem determined to undermine any anti-poll tax resistance that they cannot control especially if such resistance criticises the Labour party in practice as well as in words. The usual tactic is to set up groups and then discourage people from participating. This has happened in Wavertree (Liverpool), Niddrie - Craigmillar (Edinburgh), Gresham - Southfield (Teesside) and Nottingham East. They do very little but always manage to get delegates to city wide meetings to elect themselves on to executives etc.

### COMING SOON

...In England and Wales thousands have refused to register, up to 40% in some London boroughs. Groups in Sheffield, Nottingham, London and elsewhere are organising street committees, workplace reps. phone trees etc.

...In Sheffield N.A.L.G.O members are refusing to hand housing benefit files to the Registration Officer and striking D.S.S. workers have pledged to boycott any work connected with the poll tax.

### LESSONS LEARNED

Faced with the biggest post war mass movement it is sheer arrogance to pretend that anybody has all the answers. Our experience has shown that - none of the parliamentary parties support the real anti-poll tax campaign (despite real contributions from some individual members) - that active democratic participation in the anti-poll tax movement by the many passive non-payers needs to be promoted. - that any campaign that refuses to break the law will not receive public support and will fail.

# BACK TO THE FUTURE

The post-war division of East & West in Europe is breaking up. A new era has been brought in at electrifying pace, by a combination of 'people power' & stark economic reality.

In attempting to restructure the stagnant economy in the USSR, Gorbachov removed the threat of Soviet military might to sustain the collapsing dictatorships in Central and Eastern Europe.

Each 'revolution', a period of dramatic political change, has depended on mass demonstrations and popular will from 'below'. In East Germany, Honecker was narrowly prevented from using tanks in Leipzig and Dresden on 8th November.

## The Vital Spark

The example and success in breaking the power of the East German Communist Party, encouraged protests in Czechoslovakia but it needed the spark of repression on the 17th November to mobilise discontent: just as decisive was the increasing involvement of workplace delegations such as the CKD Locomotive plant in Prague and petro-chemical workers in Bratislava from the 23rd November.

"No one trusts you anymore" stated the banner of 8,000 in Treplice, a brown coal inferno, as workers demanded pollution and safety controls. Throughout Czechoslovakia and East Germany such sentiment and indignation was released and the Party was powerless to direct events. In Rumania, peaceful transition was never possible and Timisoara revolted after the arrest of Laszlo Tokes, the priest, on 22nd December. Although brutally suppressed, discord spread in the Army, and workers occupied local factories, threatening to blow them up. Unlike China, only the Securitate were left to resist the insurrection, and in Bucharest and throughout Rumania the Army and interim rulers (the National Salvation Front) legitimated themselves by executing Ceausescu and disarming his elite defenders.

Only in Bulgaria, a spark was missing and allowed a measured retreat, with a 'new guard' replacing the hated Zhikov but forced under mounting pressure to also allow elections and the end to the leading role of the Communist Party. The temporary diversion of anger into opposing the restoration of Turkish minority rights, has given way since later January to strikes in 250 large enterprises, amongst Teachers, Printers, Miners, Doctors, etc. They were inspired by successful strikes by Bus Drivers and Chemical Workers to 'leapfrog' their pay categories and win pay and privileges previously confined to Party and State Bosses.

## UNDERMINING LEADERS

In the USSR, workers self-organisation from below in the Kuzbass and Artic coal regions has presented an alternative to the Communist Party and Union structure displaced by a federation of workers committees. In Novokutnetsk and other West Siberian towns this has led to the workers policing and governing themselves. Within this situation of dual power, Managers are trying to direct demands to self-financing plants with production incentives, while workers are demanding the end to the leading role of the Communist Party, and end to corruption etc. and have defied the anti-Strike decree, threatening another strike on the 15th February if last July's concessions aren't implemented.

Gorbachov has taken the combination of political and economic demands seriously meeting with a delegation on the 2nd February, and using the mass demonstration on 4th February in Moscow of 250,000 to confront the 'conservatives' (neo-Stalinists such as the United Workers Front and Russian Chauvinists) in the Party. The workers, however, believe that "Gorbachov is the last authoritarian figure ... people are becoming more radical now" (Ravil Vakhitov, president of the Novokuznetsk workers committee).

Such developments, combined with escalating mobilisation against corruption in Volgograd, Vladivostock and Chernigov (Ukraine) and elsewhere and the pressure of nationalist self-determination struggles in the Baltic and Transcaucasus are intensifying the sense of crisis brought about by the gradual marketisation. Democracy and openness alone does not compensate for higher prices, productivity drives, diminished job security, increased inequality and the same shoddy goods. The Social Market plan for the 90s entails the closure of loss making industries and collective farms and a 3 stage removal of price controls. Already unemployment is 16% in Central Asia and 27% in Azerbaijan; contrasting with the Baltic Republics.

## CLEANING UP

The model of reform, I.M.F. dictated austerity, a "shock therapy" with 25% price rises monthly in Poland, and even the official trade unions leading protests in Hungary and Poland, is seen as the trend for the early 90s. 50% of Czech Steel Plants are expected to close, and massive I.M.F. and other loans are necessary to upgrade the infrastructure such as telecommunications for integration into Western Europe and Multinational investment. Although the I.M.F. and other State and Prive Western aid packages will tie in environmental clean ups, the scale of devastation is colossal, with £72bn needed for cleaner energy in East Germany alone and it will be used to sweeten the 'pill' of austerity and job losses.

Factories will become wholly or part owned by West European and Japanese Multinationals. In Hungary, Suzuki are opening and £88 million Plant for 1992, while in the Soviet Union, Fiat-Saab-Lancia plan to open a £1bn plant, seeing a 'new Korea' of cheap, displaced, educated labour. Volkswagen are moving into the GDR to clean up the 'Trabi' car market and vying with Fiat to corner the market in Poland. With closer access to the post-1992 integrated Europe and low labour costs, Multinational investment will be switched away from Third World and peripheral West European centres and the new elected social democratic coalition Governments will be hostage to Loans enforcing austerity and ending basic subsidies.

## OUTTA CONTROL

In East Germany, citizens committees and generalised 'people power' have caused concern to Rulers both sides of the dismantled Wall. A crowd of 20,000 including police officers and Public Prosecutors, engaged in direct action against the Stasi Headquarters of the Secret Police and stormed bunkers and holiday homes of party leaders. Also on the 16th January, workers strikes in Jena, Zwickau and Gera demanded the abolition of the Stasi and crackdown on privileges and corruption. The disintegrating remnants of the Communist Party have brought forward elections and involved all the responsible rival Parties in an interim Coalition to 'restore public order!' Fascists such as the Republican Party have been trying to capitalise on the anti-Pole, anti-Semite and 'greater Germany' hysteria, but in Leipzig a founding Branch meeting on 1st February was disrupted by an angry stone-throwing crowd.

Although re-unification calls are now to the fore, there exists a powerful aversion to features of capitalist society such as individualism and amoral codes, in East Germany in particular. In such a political climate of instability and the difficulty of assimilating millions of Germans with differing values, the West German State is relying on economic ties and political collapse of the East German State apparatus rather than immediate massive investment. Cross-border joint ventures between local Governments in Hesse and Thuringia for example, are staving off economic collapse. Workers and West German trade unions such as IG Metall have been alarmed at the effect of 2,000 a day continuing influx in forcing wage rates down.



Miners strike, Siberia

## A STATE OF EMERGENCY

The breakdown of the Yugoslav Federation has gathered momentum, with a virtual Intifada in the Kososvo province, and an escalating wave of mass strikes.

The strike wave, on the eve of a January 1st Decree freezing wages, while allowing most prices to rise, was in defiance of Trade Union pleas. Linking pay demands to the Deutschmark, miners, dockers, industrial workers, teachers and civil servants in 30 towns struck for 100 - 200 % increases.

At the car plant in Kragujevac, 3,000 workers raised a loaf of bread halfmast on the pole where the national flag is usually flown. At the military industries factory at Trstenik, 13,000 workers demanded a doubling of their wages and sacked all the management. Parliament was besieged after Christmas by thousands of workers chanting "give us bread". The immiseration of the workers follows I.M.F. loan conditions imposed and monthly inflation at over 60%.

Unlike the more prosperous and liberal republics of Slovenia and Croatia in the north, the Serbian Communists have tried to deflect such class anger into narrow nationalism. An 'intifada' in response to a State of Emergency in Kosovo amongst the 90% ethnic Albanian population left 23 dead by 1st February. Mines were sealed off by Riot Police to prevent a repeat of militant occupation in February 1989. Youthful mobs blocked main roads and engaged in pitched battles with Riot Police, later reinforced by tank divisions.

The Serbian leader, Milosovic, is trying to use the Kosovo crisis to reassert Serbian dominance in the Federation and impose military crackdown on demands for autonomy and democracy. An anti-militarist youth group of 160,000 members is contesting the Slovenian March elections on a platform of demilitarised zones with alternatives to military service.

## CLASSWARSAW

The Solidarnosc-led Government is imposing the removal of price subsidies leading to 193% inflation in January alone.

The IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) are trying to "fully liberalise all the major prices...to encourage foreign investment and improve tax collection".

In mid January 1990 200 members of the Anarchist Inter City held a demonstration against growing poverty and unemployment. At the rally in Warsaw anarchists and people from the street called for "self-government at factories, schools, and in local communities".

Our Warsaw correspondent continues "After the rally people marched to Parliament and attacked the building. Inside there was a meeting of the senate." (forcing senators to suspend the debates). "Next people marched to the Communist Party HQ and that was also attacked. Next was HQ of Solidarnosc which was also attacked" (windows smashed) "and all the portraits of Lech Walesa were destroyed."

In the absence of the police it was also reported that a petrol bomb was thrown into the Communist Party HQ and that a luxury hotel was occupied. 3,000 posters were flyposted and the Warsaw anarchists appeal for funds to help future actions.

We will forward any donations for the appeal.

**Military training is still compulsory in Poland, and now a few groups are organising against this. Now that the propaganda of the Cold War is history, what need to prop up NATO and Warsaw Pact fantasies?**

12th - 29th Sept '89 - A picket is set up by the WiP (Freedom and Peace Movement) in front of the parliament. Demands include improvement of conditions of "substitute service" for objectors and shorter military service.

29th Sept - March in solidarity with those on the picket

2nd Oct - Anti-militarist demonstration organised by RSA (Anarchist).

RSA were demanding abolition of obligatory military service and abolition of military training at all schools.

26th Nov - Anti-militarist march organised by the Anarchist Inter-City demanding same as 12 and 19th Oct. demos.

Right: cover of Polish anarchist magazine



## UPRISING

The new interim coalition Governments are faced with popular demands for the withdrawal of Soviet troops, and demilitarisation rallies have also been held in the Baltic Republics and Moldavia. In the Transcaucasus, however, troops have been used in Georgia, Armenia and on the 22nd January used to suppress the Popular Front secessionists uprising in Baku and the Nakichevan area of Azerbaijan. The intervention occurred after the pogrom against Armenians in Baku, when dispossessed Azeris were incited to attack remaining Armenian settlements, and after the border clashes around the disputed territory of Nagorny-Karabakh. Troops were rushed in when spectre of Islamic fundamentalism and Azeri nationalism removed a 70 year old sealed border with Iran, and there was a potential loss of control over oil installations in the Caspian Sea area.

Capitalising on the struggles to overthrow Stalinism, the Western Governments have triumphantly announced the death of 'communism'. Free Market ideologues have sworn into Warsaw, Prague and Budapest to advise on 'liberalising' price controls and hastening harsh austerity measures. In doing so, a vacuum will appear, as now becoming apparent in Poland and Hungary, with workers sceptical of former Official Unions leading protests, but disillusioned with the capitulation of Solidarnosc and social democratic parties to the IMF and becoming a low wage sector attached to the European Community. We need to step up our links with libertarian socialist, anarchist and autonomist elements engaged in resistance and spreading ideas. We can also help dispel illusions in Democracy and Western notions of freedom and civil liberties. COUNTER INFORMATION is prepared to directly assist, where practically possible, and ensure that resistance is publicised.

# THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

The "Embryo Bill", which just went through the House of Lords, is being used as a Trojan Horse by anti-choice politicians. The bill itself seeks to do experiments on human embryos after 14 days. The Embryo Bill should remain separate from abortion legislation, but amendments have been added which, if passed, would cut the current 28-week limit on abortion to 14 weeks. This is an attack on women's freedom to choose what to do with their bodies. For the anti-choice lobby this is one step closer to outlawing abortions.

Although the 24-week limit would hurt a small number of women, it affects those who have had abortions most:

- Many young women unaware of their condition and too frightened to ask for help.
- Older women mistaking their pregnancy for menopause.
- Late detection of fetal abnormalities.
- A woman caught in National Health Service delays caused by lack of facilities or obstructive attitudes.

Because of the problems with NHS, a group of women set up the Leeds Abortion Fund, financed entirely by donations. It provides money for safe, quick and free abortions for women who cannot afford to pay for a private abortion. They deal with referrals from all over the North of England and from Ireland. In Southern Ireland it is illegal to give advice where to get an abortion. In the North, there is no legal right to an abortion because of the 1967 Abortion Act only applied to the British mainland.

## PICKETS

An attack on women's rights is not limited to parliament. The old "right to life" groups have been joined by a new, nastier and more militant group called Operation Rescue, founded three years ago by born again, right wing nutter Randall Terry.

## SOLIDARITY FOREVER

We go to press (5 February) the Miners' Union office in Castlewood Virginia informs us, that picketing is continuing at the mines of the Pittston local community.

The strike began in April 1989 as a result of Pittston's decision to cut wages and medical benefits, to reduce anti-social shifts and to use contract labour.

The Company and the UMWA (United Mine Workers of America) negotiators have reached a tentative settlement to the strike. Part of the agreement is to scrap the \$1 million fine imposed on the union for disobedience. This proposal is now being considered by the courts and if they are scrapped a settlement may be reached.

The company used private security forces, U.S. Marshalls and reportedly former mercenaries equipped with rifles and gas munitions to ensure that the scab miners could get the coal out. However, 1,900 strikers with the full backing of the local community set up a picket line.

**MP SOLIDARITY** the focus of the picket. The miners used direct action tactics to prevent coal from leaving the plant, blocking roads with tyres and coaches, burning trucks, sabotaging power supplies as the struggle intensified with exchange of gunshots with scabs.

News of the strike spread, 1,000s of people visited the camp to show their support. Mass demonstrations were held throughout the States. Eastern Airlines, telephone workers and miners throughout the Eastern Coalfields struck in solidarity.

The effect of this strike has been to show militancy among the working class in their fight against the union bashing policies of the government.



## FRENCH STRIKES

The most effective rail strike in ten years in France on 31st January. The railway workers were protesting against a 4,500 job cuts but the strike was part of a new wave of general strikes in state owned industries. The national interior airline was also hit.

**Chicagopolis USA:** 200 activists stormed the offices of a US Senator to protest US support for the Death Squad ARENA government in El Salvador. The next day on 21 Nov protesters fought a pitched battle leaving one cop unconscious and several injured.

## NUKE PLANT ABANDONED

The West German government has abandoned plans to build a nuclear reprocessing plant at Wackersdorf. This is a direct result of the resistance to its building by protestors. The plan was met with all forms of resistance, from 1981 onwards. Pylons were sawn down, stopping power reaching the plant. At mass demonstrations by locals and by people from all over Germany, heavy fighting broke out. Many locals of all classes began to understand the nature of the state and business behind the plant. The enormous resistance has won. Wackersdorf is now a site that makes solar panels etc. (alternative power), giving the people who were involved in the resistance a chance to turn their energies to other struggles.

## TIMBER WARS

On Pacific coasts of Northern U.S.A. and Canada a major battle is raging between logging corporations and ecological activists. Caught in between are the workers in the industry. The corporations are determined to clear-cut as much of the ancient temperate rain-forests as they possibly can to extract maximum profit.

The radical group Earth First! is determined to stop them destroying forever these fragile environments. They have employed a wide range of tactics to achieve this:- blockading logging roads; sitting in trees to prevent them being cut; spiking standing trees to prevent them being sold in the first place. Millions of dollars of equipment has been destroyed.

Recently they have been joined in this fight by the revolutionary union, the I.W.W. They hope to build better links between workers in the industry and activists.

*I.W.W. - Earth First! has issued a call for help to activists around the U.S. and Canada. Anyone interested in getting involved should contact: Judi Bari, 106 W. Standley St., Ukia, C.A. 95482 (707) 468-1660.*

*The Call warns - "Please take care to avoid using your real identity, home address or exact plans. Remember, this is no game."*

SOURCE: INDUSTRIAL WORKER.

## RESISTANCE

**Toronto. On Oct. 26, Sophia Cook, a young black woman was shot and paralysed from the waist down. Her attacker, constable Cameron Durham, shot her while she was strapped into the front seat of a car, unarmed. She is the third black person shot by Toronto area police in 15 months and the only one to survive.**

After a five week investigation Durham has been charged with "careless use of a firearm", which is the same charge a 16 year old would receive if they shot a pellet gun out of a window and no one was hurt.

In this climate, the Black community is fighting back and an organised community response is mounting. The Black Women's Collective put a call out to the broader Women's movement to stand in solidarity with the Black community in a more organised and permanent way.

A demonstration was called for Nov 15th outside the police headquarters demanding among other things the immediate suspension of constable Durham and that he be charged with attempted murder. *Ecomedia Toronto*

In North America, Rescue members have physically and mentally harassed women at abortion clinics. But their intimidations failed to stop people from organising against them.

In Seattle, Washington, Rescue members were prohibited from picketing a clinic by pro-choice activists who blockaded them inside a church. A women's group also followed Rescue members after a meeting to prevent any "surprise" pickets.

In Vancouver, British Columbia, Rescue attempted to close one clinic through large pickets. They failed because people organised their own counter pickets and volunteers escorted women entering and leaving the clinic. Recently the frequency and size of the Rescue pickets have plummeted as a result of the pro-choice counter tactics, which include pledging donations to the clinic for every picket Rescue sends along.

## RESCUE IN BRITAIN

Last summer 24 full-time Rescue organisers arrived from North America. So far Rescue has been most active in Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds. Typically their pickets comprise a disproportionate number of young men and late, middle-aged couples. Hardly a wide spectrum of society!

Rescue picketing is not widespread in Britain, but one South Manchester clinic has been singled out for Rescue for picketing. Rescue's efforts have been minimalised by clearly-identified counter pickets and volunteer escorts for women.

The premise of the anti-choice lobby is that women have no right to control their own bodies, their fertility and their lives. The decision to terminate a pregnancy is up to the woman, not the courts, the churches or the medical establishment.

**The mobilisation of people to defend abortion rights shows that women will continue to fight to win the right to choose.**

Scottish Abortion Campaign  
P.O. Box 105  
Glasgow  
G1 1DU

Belfast Abortion Fund  
c/o P.O. Box 148  
Belfast  
BT1

Leeds Abortion Fund  
c/o Box 32  
52 Call Lane  
Leeds LS1 6PT



## TOTAL REFUSAL

**Spain:** In recent months the struggle against compulsory military service has escalated, with hundreds of young men declaring themselves Total Refusers, not going to the army service and also refusing the new alternative military service which the 'Socialist State' has brought in to try and solve the 'problem'.

**12 Nov -** The lottery to decide where this year's batch of 215,589 conscripts will do their service was held in Seville.

The police charged the crowds watching the results on a huge computer screen, beating up protestors and spectators.

There were demos all over Spain. In Madrid over 2,000 marched and held a 2 min. silence for the over 500 conscripts killed during the last six years in accidents, suicides, 'manhood' rituals and murders.

**16 Nov -** In Barcelona the court martial begins of over 300 Total Refusers of conscription. The first two are Carlos Hinojosa and Joseph Moragriega and it is feared that the army court will give up to 2 year sentences to try and quell the flood of refusals.

More than 500 people surrounded the military court building as Josep and Carlos were tried. The night before over 1,000 demonstrated through Barcelona.

The army court gave the two refusers 13 months prison sentences which sparked off a wave of demonstrations.



**Despite being bulldozed by the authorities last August, the Leoncavallo Social Centre in Milan continues its activities.**

3,000 protested right after the eviction, 8,000 marched on 24th September, and on 20th October students took strike action in solidarity with the country-wide network of independent social centres. This strike was also to oppose the repressive new "Craxi-Jervolino" "anti drugs" law.

The new "anti-drugs" legislation - linked to the American "War Against Drugs" - imposes harsher penalties on the users of both soft and hard drugs and provides a cover for a crackdown on rebellious youth. Meanwhile public service cut-backs worsen conditions of deprivation in which the big heroin pushers profit. The self-managed centres, throughout Italy are actively opposing the new law under the slogan "Neither Heroin Nor Police Nor Repression - Instead Social Centres and Self-determination".

## POLICE STONED AGAIN

For weeks police harassment of youths in and around the mainly black Granby St. area of Toxteth has led to a great deal of tension. All strangers are confronted by locals to check if they are plainclothes police. Searches are made for radios or police ID - but nothing is nicked.

This heightened tension resulted in a minor explosion of violence on the night of 5th February. Police vehicles going into Granby St. to investigate 5 stolen cars were bricked and rammed. 6 fully loaded carriers and 1 patrol car went in to deal with local youths. The police car was rammed by a stolen car and had its window smashed.

Around 200 youths, black and white, stoned the police and the fire brigade, who had come to put out burning cars. The police helicopter, with its powerful spotlight, hovered overhead for one and a half hours. The police eventually moved off. *This is only the first round of a contest that is likely to lead to a long hot summer.*

## FIGHTING BACK

**In November 1989, Edinburgh Women against Pornography, organised a week of events against male sexual violence.**

We believe that pornography is violence against women and that women must take action against it. The week of action which was a tremendous success, culminated on 11th November when women in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen held local "Reclaim the Night" marches to protest against the continual threat of male violence on our streets, in our homes, everywhere! The marches all went well with women in defiant mood. In Glasgow 1,000 women took to the streets!

We plan to make this an annual event and we demand the right to walk alone at night without fear.

*Further info: Edinburgh Women Against Pornography, c/o 43 Broughton St., Edinburgh.*

## SOUTHALL DEFIES RACISM

On 11 November, Kuldip Singh Sekhon was murdered in Southall, London by a known fascist. Kuldip was stabbed 54 times while on duty as a taxi driver. He is one of the latest known victims of racist murder in a society where racist violence and harassment is an everyday reality. It is estimated that 30,000 people every year are the victim of racist attacks in the UK.

The Sekhon Family Support Group was formed in December to fight back against racism. Members spoke at a meeting in Edinburgh on 16 January -- the first anniversary of the racist murder in Edinburgh of Ahmed Sheikh. Members from Kuldip's family, Lothian Black Forum and the Southall Monitoring Group (a group formed to monitor police and racist attacks) spoke movingly and harrowingly about racism in this society.

### COPS TURN BLIND EYE

The 250 people present heard that black people are victimized because society is not prepared to challenge racism; that the police and the authorities are very reluctant to acknowledge the extent of racism; that police would rather harass a black that investigate racism. The murderer of Ahmed Sheikh was treated very sympathetically by the courts while three blacks were charged with the murder of PC Blakelock under the "common purpose" rule.

### SOUTHALL SHUTDOWN

At the funeral of Kuldip Singh Sekhon in Southall, London, on 31 January the community showed its anger at the indifference of a racist society and its defiance of racist intimidation.

The day of the funeral every shop in Southall except for two closed for at least part of the day. Even the banks and petrol stations closed! All of the West London mini-cab drivers stopped for the day, as did some members of trade unions despite official union opposition. Many school children walked out of their classes, too. Their action was self-organised without teachers, political parties or adult control.

The funeral march was several thousand strong, and many more stood by the side of the road outside their homes. Busses had come from as far as Edinburgh and Birmingham to give their support. Asian women formed a large and vocal part of the march.

At the end of the march, speakers condemned the continuance of racist murders and attacks. Some commented on the absence of support from the official community leaders and the hostility of the local council. A call was made for mobilisation of black communities to defend themselves from racist violence and harassment.

Donations and letters of support to:  
Sekhon Family Support Group, Edinburgh, c/o CRO, 43 Broughton St., Edinburgh EH1 3TU  
Sekhon Family Support Group, c/o Southall Monitoring Group, 1st Floor, 52 King Street, Middlesex. Tel.: 01-843-2333

### NO BOOKS FOR BONEHEADS!

The British National Party have recently opened up a bookstore in Welling (South London). There has been campaigning against this fascist bookshop with a march of about 400 on Saturday 25th November.

One problem with the struggle against it is that the more moderate elements are simply calling for the Labour controlled Council to ban the bookshop under the planning regulations! At least the march was an open and strong display of anger and opposition to the fascists.

Anti - poll tax info. packs for those in or wishing to start anti - poll tax groups from Pigeonhole C.R. 11, Forth St. Edinburgh EH1. Send large S.A.E.

## COMMUNITY OF RESISTANCE

Just before 5pm on Friday 29th September police carried out a massive so-called 'drugs-raid' on the Broadwater Farm estate in Tottenham, North London.

Over 400 cops were swiftly deployed in and around the estate after turning up in a convoy of unmarked furniture vans. Many of them were in full riot-gear, and were armed with pickhandles, sledgehammers, crowbars, axes and in some cases guns. The officers were under orders to detain and search anyone aged between 15 and 30 years of age.

The Farm itself became a no-go area, with police under orders to stop, search and take the name and address of anyone entering or leaving, whether on foot or by car.

38 people were arrested, although many more were detained briefly, subjected to strip searches in the above mentioned furniture vans and then released. It appears that the total amount of cannabis seized is less than 2lbs, and that the raid recovered *no evidence whatsoever* of hard drug dealing on the estate.

This type of tactic mirrors the authorities phoney 'drugs-war' in the States where night time curfews and the widening of police powers are meaning further daily repression in predominately black working-class neighbourhoods.

A week after the police raid on B.W.F. estate, around 350 people held an angry demo outside Tottenham Police Station. Traffic came to a halt as people spilled onto the roads. Various BWF residents voiced the general feeling that the so-called 'community leaders' of the estate were nothing more than opportunistic dogooders friendly with the police and always eager to 'calm' any sign of resistance to provocative racist harassment by the authorities.

The struggle will continue everywhere, until the cops are out of our communities and off our streets! *info Echomedia London*

## MASTER RACE CHASED

Saturday 9th December. Several hundred demonstrators (about 150 from Glasgow) broke away from a three thousand strong demonstration to confront the fascist British National Party (BNP) who were meeting at Haymarket train station in Edinburgh, to hold a rally. At the station entrance there was only 4 or 5 fascists, amongst them their leader John Tyndall who were quickly bundled into the station by the police when the Anti-fascists charged. The police closed in and one woman was arrested and charged. The angry crowd hung about for a while but to no avail. Although the "Master Race" got off the hook at Haymarket, the poor turnout could be due to the fact that fascists arriving a Queen St. station in Glasgow didn't make it to Edinburgh as they were sent home with something to think about by the Glasgow Anti-fascists who were waiting for them. Wise up boys!

### REMEMBRANCE DAY ACTIONS

**YORK:** So as not to be turned away, activists aiming to stop the fascist BNP meeting entered the town by car (rather than coaches which police sent home last year).

About 500 anti-fascists turned up at the BNP's meeting place but no fascists could be seen. Rumour had it that some fascists were at the cenotaph and that others had been sent away by the cops. Some anti-fascists went over to the cenotaph, but again no fascists to be seen! By the end of the day no fascists had been spotted so the demo dispersed. A success!

**LONDON:** 600 plus anti fascists met to stop the National Front from holding their annual march to the cenotaph. A pub where the NF were to meet was occupied from 11am and the only fascist to turn up was "dealt with".

About 300 NF marched at about 2.30pm with a large police escort, after which they dispersed quietly. Many more people were needed to physically stop the march rather than just heckle it as happened.

# INSIDE INFO

## DEATH STRIKE

Postponed from January 22, on February 14 prisoners in American prisons will commence a Death Strike - a refusal of food and liquids - until their list of demands is dealt with. These demands deal primarily with the physical and psychological torture of prisoners, and routine brutality and murder by guards, many of whom, in the prison where the strike originated which has a 65% Black population, are in the KKK.

This prison, Southern Ohio Correctional Facility (SOCF), holds in its inhuman Control Unit the 3 originators who are becoming known as the Lucasville 3; Michael Day, Eric 'Sudan' Swafford, and John Perotti, whose epic struggle Counter Info has followed closely. (For new readers, John is an organiser with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and a self-taught, qualified lawyer. Originally goaled 15 years ago for a petty theft, John has continually had more time added to his sentence for fighting for basic Human Rights, and for the right to collective bargaining against the multi-million \$ Ohio Prison Industries who use the prisoners as slave-labour. He recently, after being outrageously framed for a prison stabbing to which another prisoner confessed in court, had another 12-15 years added to his sentence.)

## MARTIN FORAN

Prisoners in Britain fare no better. Martin lost over 20lbs on a 3-week hungerstrike before Xmas, to protest the 3 year denial of adequate medical treatment. Martin writes; 'They know I am innocent ... each day I wake up soiled like a baby, because the colostomy is not working. It is degrading. If I can't live with dignity, I will die with dignity'.

Supporters want an independent inquiry into Martin's case. Originally framed by the viciously corrupt West Midlands Serious Crime Squad (now disbanded). Martin's allegations against this squad are being 'independently' investigated by West Yorkshire Police - yes, the same force which is famed for following people home from demos, benefits, etc. Supporters claim that the WYP are covering up incriminating evidence. Surprise, surprise.

*This disgraceful torture must be stopped. Get involved. CONTACT. Conviction. PO Box 522. Sheffield S1 3FF*

*NB. This address REPLACES the previous BM. London address, which was found to be unsafe.*

### STOP PRESS : DEATH STRIKE

Early in February John Perotti was badly beaten up by a group of prison wardens. Support is now needed more than ever.

The latest from SOCF is that 15 prisoners are prepared to take part so far; also some in other prisons, including the notorious Marion Federal Penitentiary in Illinois.

Following hard on the recent riot at Camp Hill Prison in Pennsylvania, where prisoners revolted against brutality and overcrowding by burning down 12 of the prison's 31 buildings, this spreading Death Strike will, we hope, bring the disgusting state of America's prisons to the attention of many, in and outside the US. Amnesty please note.

This Strike needs a broad base of outside support or the strikers will just be allowed to die. An International Day of Protest has been called for February 12 (any action after that will, of course, still be extremely helpful), urging supporters to picket or blockade US embassies or businesses, and write/phone protests to the addresses below. Already in Edinburgh, on January 25, 16 protesters picketed the US embassy, despite atrocious weather. 2 delegates were allowed into the embassy to explain the situation to the Vice-Consul.

John Perotti writes; 'Death would be preferable to this lingering hell. Please do not let us die in vain'.

THE LUCASVILLE 3 CAMPAIGN, PO Box 47, Bolton, Lancashire, England. Please inform the Campaign of any actions.

PROTEST, Terry Morris, Warden, Southern Ohio Correctional Facility (SOCF), PO Box 45699, Lucasville, Ohio 45699-0001. Ph. (614) 259-5544

George Wilson, Dept. Rehabilitation and Correction, 1050 Freeway Dr., Columbus, Ohio 43229. Ph. (614) 466-6190.



### PRISONER MURDERED

Germain Alexander, a 58 year old black man was beaten to death by the Mufti (prison officers dressed in riot gear) in December 1989. This was witnessed by Sarah Cunningham. The pathologists report states that death was caused by acute cardiac failure accompanied by severe bruising and two teeth knocked out.

Leaflets were handed out in protest on February 1st connecting this murder with other deaths in police custody. The coroners inquest has been postponed until April 2nd. There is widespread anger in the black community over this killing (Brixton correspondent)

### BLOODY SUNDAY MARCH

On 27th January there was the annual Bloody Sunday march in London, to remember the 1972 massacre of Irish civilians in Derry by British troops. There were about 5,000 people on it despite the terrible weather.

The turnout from the fascists was very low, no more than 15 plus Union Jacks! Leading fascist Nicky Crane was severely assaulted in Kilburn, where the march ended, and hospitalised.

FED UP OF BEING ORDERED ABOUT AND EXPLOITED? Sick of living in poverty while the profit system benefits a powerful few? Angry about men oppressing women? Disgusted at the many other injustices in today's society?

You're not alone. Lots of people round the globe are not only fed up, they're fighting back. In Counter Information we report this often-censored resistance, to encourage more such activity. We stress the importance of people directly controlling their struggles, outside the control of political parties, trade unions or any leaders. Replacing one set of rulers with another - as has happened in the 'Communist' Party-ruled regimes, and as left-wing parties and national liberation movements want - is no solution. We encourage today's resistance to aim for the complete overthrow of all relationships whereby some people oppress others. The world's resources should be owned and controlled by all, and used to satisfy human needs.

The Counter Information collective invites people to - send us articles and information - take bundles of the news-sheet to distribute - make a much needed donation towards our printing and postage costs - write for info on our Readers Meetings, Inside Information and the CI Supplement - contact us if they'd like to join the CI collective. We wish to co-operate with all who share our aims. COUNTER INFORMATION, PIGEONHOLE CI, C/O 11 FORTH ST, EDINBURGH, UK. For information on local CI distribution and other local activities write: For the north of England - Counter Information, c/o Grassroots Books, 1 Newton St., Manchester M1. For the west of Scotland - Glasgow Anarchists, PO Box 239, Glasgow G5 0LW