

THE SOUTHWEST IS ALIGHT

Over 50,000 people have demonstrated in the Southwest alone within the last two weeks. Demonstrations which stretched from the hardest hit inner city areas to the Tory heartlands included: Plymouth 9,000 ; Taunton 5,000, Bristol 5,000; Swindon 5,000; Gloucester 1500; Stroud 1800 The list goes on. Midsomer Norton/Radstock with a population of 10,000 held a rally of 2,000, four times larger than any demonstration they have had before. Cromhall a small village (population 500) in Avon, and a solidly Tory area held a meeting of 150 unanimously opposed to the poll tax. 70 stayed behind to form an anti poll tax union on a non payment platform.

There are now well over 50 local anti poll tax unions in the Avon area. And over 25 trade unions affiliated to the Avon federation.

The Avon Fed has now opened an office which is staffed 9.00 - 8.00 every weekday as well as three hours on Saturday afternoon. the office is getting over 200 calls a week.

Latest count - Avon expected to send 40 plus coaches to London. Last week one of the local coach companies pulled out on the grounds of 'politics' and 'violence'. When they were rang up and told that there were hundreds of old age pensioners and kids booked on the coaches who were extremely angry, they didn't bat an eye lid. When we told them that we were aware that they had a number of big union contracts which they were extremely likely to lose and they had two hours to think about it. They rang back within an hour and a quarter guaranteeing whatever we wanted. As it turned out they were subcontracting to a load of other companies who offered to run the coaches cheaper to us, so we didn't use them anyway.

Affiliate to the All Britain Anti Poll Tax federation ! Build the Mass Campaign of non Payment

Our organisation would like to apply to the All Britain Anti Poll Tax Federation (£10 per organisation - affiliated groups will also need to reaffiliate before the next conference)

Name of Organisation:

Address:

All cheques payable to The All Britain Anti Poll Tax Federation. P.O. Box 764, London E59 SX

AXE THE TAX

A single is being launched this week to say loud and clear "We're not gonna pay" (the title of the song).

If this song charts it will be a clear message to Thatcher that we don't want her poll tax, as well as inspiration to a much wider audience. The band "Axe the Tax" consist of people in the anti poll tax campaign in Bristol, and all proceeds go to the campaign.

So Please !

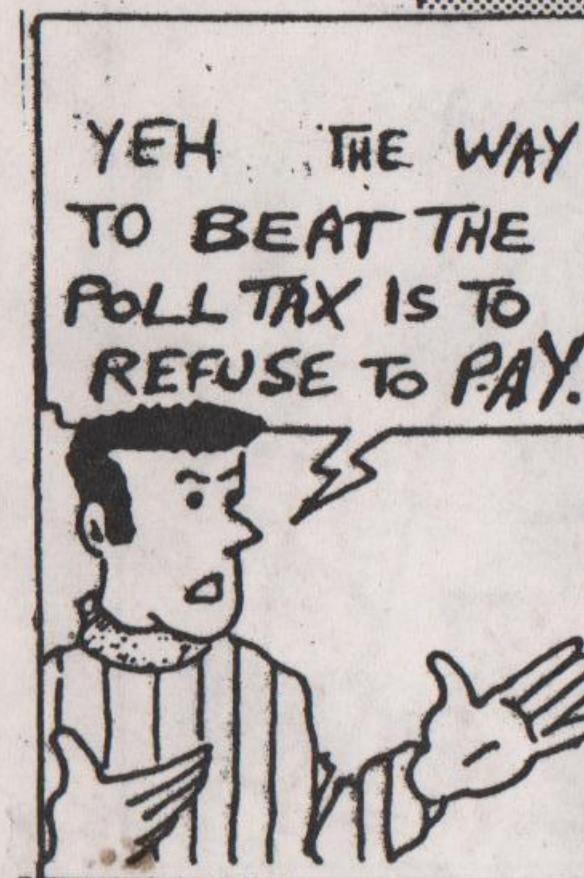
Order it from your local "Gallup" shop (a mainstream shop like Virgin or Our price) within the next 2 weeks

Try to make sure that everyone in your anti poll tax union does the same.

This is a vital fundraiser for the federation !

All Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation,
PO Box 764, London E59 SX.

All Britain Anti - Poll Tax Federation



Bulletin No.2

March 1990

MARCHING TO VICTORY

Across the world people have seen on their televisions and in their newspapers images of a government in it's death throes. Ours. Its fatal move was to introduce a tax straight from the middle ages, as viscious and unfair as it is hopelessly unworkable, in the hope that everyone would take it lying down. Well we haven't. Instead there has been a wave of public protest that is now unstoppable. What has helped is that the Government has introduced the tax with stunning ineptitude. Predictably, metropolitan authorities have been forced into setting such high Poll Tax levels that they know most working people simply will not be able to pay. What is more surprising is that thirty six out of the thirty nine county councils have also had to set Poll Tax rates way above the government's Alice in Wonderland target of £278. A succession of councils in the Tory heartlands, Surrey, Hampshire, Berkshire and

Essex have set the tax at up to £100 more than the Government's guidelines. Tory councillors in Oxford and Beverley have resigned their whips in protest.

OPTIMISM

Some of the biggest and most passionate demonstrations across the land have been in quiet country towns like Stroud, Taunton and Maidenhead. The west country in particular has seen an East European dimension to the demonstrations, both in their scale and the sheer optimism of those taking part. The Tories get trounced in the Mid-Staffordshire by-election. The electorate will be meting out the same treatment in the May local elections. The Labour party is now riding high on a wave of hostility to the Poll Tax which, quite frankly, it has done nothing to encourage or promote. Toytown



revolutionaries, is what Neil Kinnock calls those who advocate non-payment, stealing his line from "The Sun". The same paper, along with the rest of the Tory press, has tried to marginalise our movement as a rag-tag bunch of anarcho-trotskyists bent on violence and destruction. It hasn't worked. Because ours is a grass roots movement. Most of our activists have never been involved in politics before. And the media just can't get their heads round that one. Ordinary people simply have not been put off by the overblown coverage of isolated violent incidents in an overwhelmingly peaceful campaign. The latest public opinion poll shows that over 20% won't be paying the tax, including one third of those under the age of 34 (ICM Poll 23/3/90). That is at least 8 million people, following in the footsteps of the million non-payers in Scotland who have now stood firm for a year. **This will be the iceberg of mass non-payment that will sink the Tories flagship. So let's hear it, WE CAN'T PAY, WE WON'T PAY AND WE'RE GOING TO WIN.**

WELCOME TO LONDON

Mass non payment is on its way. Even the Tory press are now admitting that there will be at least 8 million non payers. We think it will be far more. Our movement has now got Mrs Thatcher and the Government on the run. So much so that Cabinet Ministers like Norman Fowler, Nigel Lawson and Peter Walker are suddenly rediscovering their families. Even Tory councillors have been resigning in solidarity with our campaign. The truth is millions of people can't afford to pay. We are more than confident that 1 million Londoners will refuse to pay. Lets enjoy today and show the government the strength of feeling against their poll tax. So welcome to London, welcome to the Demo, and let's build for victory.



EASTERN BLOCK IN REVOLT

"Come on out we've got you surrounded" was the cry, as 2,000 angry but peaceful demonstrators rallied outside Margaret Thatcher's House in Southend on Sea on 24th March.. Unfortunately, Margaret was not at home. However the crowd was happy to learn that Southend's poll tax administration building was only designed to last for ten years!

Last month Norfolk produced and delivered 75,000 non payment leaflets to which there was an excellent response. They've now turned up all over East Anglia and are being reproduced and distributed in many villages and factories in the area. In North Norfolk one of the groups is helping to set up other groups by visiting villages in a double decker bus. They've had a great response. Here they come - the Double Deckers!

LEEDS

£348. That's not a bill. It's an argument for non payment. It's also what Leeds City council have set as our poll tax. After setting the figure support for our campaign has multiplied with meetings of hundreds and a demonstration of thousands. We expect 100,000 will not be paying in our city. To back them a legal leaflet with local contacts has been planned for distribution for every household in Leeds. One problem. We are utterly broke. So two popular local bands, The Wedding Present and The Green House offered to do a benefit. for us. We're now £3,000 richer and getting on with the crucial twin tasks of spending it and defeating the poll tax.

LOTHIANS

Lothian Regional Council is currently investigating Sheriff's officers misconduct after a series of complaints from non-payers. The local Anti Poll Tax federation are compiling a dossier which will be part of Lothian Regional Council's brief.

On two separate occasions Sheriffs officers have assaulted individuals while attempting to carry out poindings. These have now been taken up as private prosecutions. These two cases have come after a long series of complaints which although unspecified are certainly backed up statements from many people not involved in the campaign. The Regional council have been forced to take this action after the Federation highlighted the situation in a number of press releases which received widespread coverage. These latest allegations come after a series of reports identifying the massive problems the council is having administering the register which is now more than 3 months out of date and 44% inaccurate, linked to the £68m worth of arrears which is equivalent to 174,000 full tax payers.

MANCHESTER

A demonstration held in Manchester on 3rd March was attended by over 5,000 people, all of whom supported a mass campaign of non payment. 60 meetings were held around the area in the build up to the demonstrations and 30 new anti poll tax unions have been formed in the last couple of months.

GETTING IT RIGHT At the first meeting of the national committee following the November conference the following motion was passed. It speaks for itself:

This All Britain Federation of Anti Poll Tax Unions and affiliated bodies recognises the dangerous restrictions imposed on civil liberties imposed by the poll tax and also recognises the direct way in which the poll tax will affect the most oppressed layers of society especially blacks, asians, women, lesbians and gay men along with all oppressed.

We recognise that successful struggle against the poll tax depends on mobilising the broadest possible layers who support mass non payment through anti poll tax unions and Labour movement bodies.

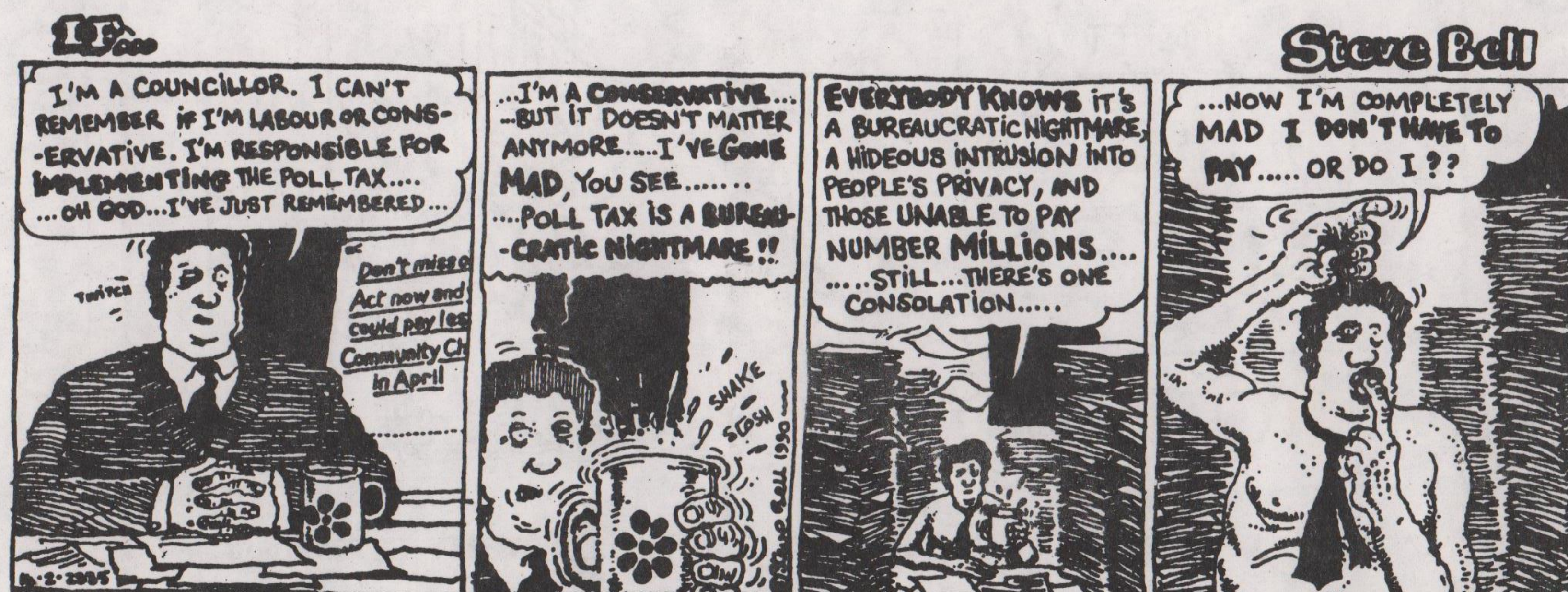
We recognise that this will involve people at different levels of commitment and understanding on other political and social issues.

This national committee therefore calls on all its affiliated organisations to ensure maximum unity in the campaign of mass non payment by breaking down the barriers of racism, sexism, discrimination against lesbians and gay men and prejudiced behaviour.

We believe that such backward ideas must be opposed at all times.

We also believe that any person who raises such ideas must be told that such ideas have no place in a struggle which must ensure maximum unity.

Known membership of any racist or fascist organisation is incompatible with membership of our anti poll tax movement.



THE GUARDIAN 1990

All Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation

