

POLL-AXE!

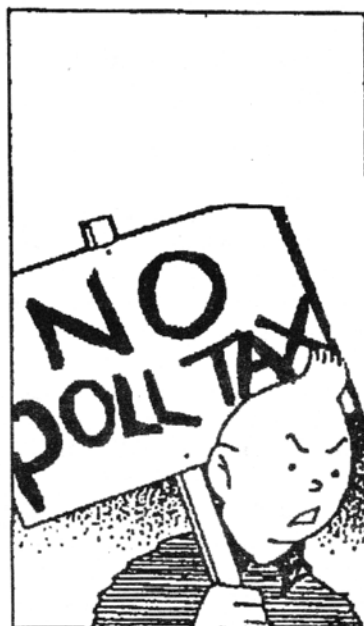
Newsletter of the Forest Fields & Hyson Green
Anti-Poll Tax Campaign

Issue 6 May 1991



56,000 NOTTINGHAM PEOPLE HAVEN'T PAID A PENNY OF THE POLL TAX!

How Much % Poll Tax Paid	How Many Have Paid	Population Percentage
0	56,984	27.1
1 - 10	4,654	2.2
11 - 20	14,515	6.9
21 - 30	9,353	4.4
31 - 40	11,978	5.7
41 - 50	17,121	8.1
51 - 60	22,174	10.5
61 - 70	61,463	29.2
71 - 80	3,865	1.8
81 - 90	1,060	0.5
91 - 100	7,269	3.5



This table (based on figures taken towards the end of the financial year) clearly shows that over a quarter of Nottingham people have not paid a penny of their Poll Tax.

Over half (approx. 100,000 people) have only paid up to half of their bills.

In the old rates system, 85%-90% would have been collected with hardly any court cases. These figures show that only 40% has been collected by the Poll Tax with thousands of courtcases. Most of these people going to court have never been in court before.

NEWSFLASH

On BBC Radio on March 6th 1991, a survey of 160 local authorities has shown that, 14 million people are behind or not paid a penny of the Poll Tax. That's 1 in 3 people on the Poll Tax register.

**BILLIONS OF POUNDS ARE
OWED AND COUNCILS ARE
BORROWING MONEY!**

BAILIFFS

AND HOW TO STOP THEM!

The bills for 1991's Poll Tax will soon be sent out and still almost 60,000 people in Nottingham have not paid a penny of last years Poll Tax. Hundreds of us have been to court and successfully had our cases adjourned. We are now getting our dates for second hearings (some have already been) where we will almost certainly get liability orders. We should not give up here though. In particular, we should not let the threat of bailiffs frighten us into paying.

Bailiffs CANNOT break into our homes or use the police to get into our property. They can enter our property if a door is unlocked or if one of our windows is open. If you live in a property which has an outer door and one or more inner doors you must ensure that the outer door is locked at all times. If this outer door is unlocked the bailiffs can use force to open the second, inner door.

So it's quite easy really, we just **remember to close the doors and windows.**

We might not know the exact date or time that the bailiffs are coming (they are not obliged by law to give out this information) so it's an idea to check who is at the door before opening it. If the bailiffs are at the door it's best not to get into any kind of conversation with them; just ignore them and shut the door. This is if they catch us unawares - if we know they are coming there should be lots of us there to ensure they get nowhere near our property. This has already happened in Beeston, Sherwood and West Bridgford, with bailiffs finding themselves chased by angry non-payers.

With our community (Forest Fields and Hyson Green) being relatively compact we should have little difficulty in rounding up lots of people. In any case there are only 12 bailiffs to deal with almost 60,000 of us, so most of us will never see one.

Bailiffs do have to behave according to a Code of Conduct and, as such, can be taken to court if they act illegally. There are certain goods that, if they do get into your houses, they cannot take:

- Clothes and bedding up to the value of 100 pounds;
- Tools of trade up to the value of 150 pounds
- Household fixtures;
- Goods belonging to other people (they cannot take your children's possessions or any goods 'donated' to others).

However if you have a partner (of the opposite sex) they might try to take their goods.

To actually get this far bailiffs would have to get into our homes.

IF WE DON'T LET THEM IN THEY CAN'T TAKE ANYTHING.

Bailiffs may try and persuade us to let them in by saying they just want to talk and that they don't intend taking anything. We shouldn't be fooled by this - once in they can value our things and then come back another time and legally take them by force. So we have to be on our guard at all times with the best advice being:

DON'T LET THEM IN!

Another thing we could get into the habit of doing is closing our curtains when we go out. This will prevent the bailiffs looking through our windows to value our things.

If the bailiffs come to your house, or if you get a letter saying they are coming then contact any of these numbers:

Daytime -



Evening -



Checklist

- 1, **Never** let them into your house;
- 2, Keep ground floor windows and all doors locked - even when people are inside;
- 3, Close you curtains, put up blinds or net curtains so that the bailiffs can't see in;
- 4, **Don't let them trick you** into talking with them - **THEY ARE NOT TO BE TRUSTED**;
- 5, **Contact us** if you are visited or sent a letter by the bailiffs.

**WE WILL NOT BE INTIMIDATED
- WE STILL AREN'T PAYING!**

Carolyn

IN THE COURTROOM

By now hundreds of people in Nottingham have been to court and successfully clogged up the system. For many of us it was the first time we had entered a courtroom whilst for others the process was familiar but no less daunting. Despite the intimidation and foul play practised within the courts, we all went, said our bit and did what we intended to do - slow the process down.

December of last year was perhaps the most active time for court appearances, particularly for us in the Hyson Green and Forest Fields area. My first appearance was on December 13th and any apprehensions I had soon disappeared on witnessing the mass congregations of people in the court foyer. There were at least two hundred of us, people from all walks of life coming together to voice protest against such an abhorrent tax. It was pleasing to be met with the familiar nods and recognitions from those who had attended our meetings over the previous few weeks. People were inevitably nervous but nonetheless prepared to show their defiance.

Of course the police were in attendance, trying to maintain order and prevent any possible misbehaviour. Thus we were searched as we were led into the courtroom, a practice which proved both degrading and farcical. It fitted the atmosphere of 'criminality'. Of course we never have accepted such definitions; ours is civil disobedience and what we are doing is no crime. Those who brought in and implement this tax are the criminals, not us.

Once inside the courtroom we were heard individually and asked our names, addresses, etc. We were then asked whether we admitted or denied liability - our obvious reply was the latter and so we left with adjournments. Not only did we succeed for ourselves, many of us also managed to get adjournments for friends and neighbours.

Second appearances have not been so predictable. Some of us have kept the court running for over an hour whilst others have been rushed through. Court costs have similarly been as variable, ranging from a maximum of 20 pounds per 15 minutes to 10 pounds regardless of the time involved.

So was it all worth it? Of course it was. The system has proved totally unworkable, so much so that local authorities have tried to get the government to change the law so that they can get this year's poll tax out of us without taking us to court. Councils never imagined that ordinary people like us would stand up to them and appear in court. Typically the law and courtrooms are used to frighten and cajole us into 'behaving ourselves'. But we weren't put off. And still we fight on. The poll tax might be 140 pounds cheaper this year but it is still unfair. Those in their big houses in Mapperley Park will still be paying as much as us in our terraced houses. People will continue to defy this unjust tax. We organised together throughout 1990 and will continue to do so until the poll tax is gone forever.

Carolyn.

As Scotland enters its third year of the poll tax, non-payment is going up, not down.

Over 1 million people - a quarter of all those on the register - still haven't paid their first year's poll tax. Despite issuing hundreds of thousands of summary warrants and carrying out a handful of poindings (valuations) they still haven't managed to carry out even ONE successful warrant sale (a warrant sale is the equivalent of bailiffs, but is different because the sale of the person's goods takes place in their own home). As for the second year's poll tax, this made things WORSE, not better. As the financial year ended, over HALF of Scottish people on the register weren't paying the poll tax.

But in the two major urban areas around Edinburgh & Glasgow non-payment is over 70%. No wonder the government backed down now over the poll tax, they were terrified that the same thing would happen NATIONWIDE.

And the Scottish Anti-Poll Tax Movement is well geared-up to carry on the fight into its third year, to grind the poll tax down into the dirt where it belongs and to keep on defending local people against the sheriff officers.

Independent Anti-Poll Tax Groups now meet every 3 months to co-ordinate anti-poll tax activity on a Scotland wide basis. The campaign stays solid, and will hopefully continue to grow until we have finally wiped out this nasty tax.

SHOULD WE VOTE LABOUR?

With the City Council elections imminent and a General Election within the next 14 months, we have published two articles on the question of voting for Labour written by members of Forest Fields & Hyson Green Anti-Poll Tax Campaign.

It should be remembered that neither of these articles are in any way a statement from the campaign but more a sample of the diversity of opinions within it. Forest Fields & Hyson Green Anti-Poll Tax Campaign as a whole is not necessarily for or against either article.

On May 2nd, and for the weeks leading up to it, we will be entertained by the spectacle of an election: An attempt to fool us, the people, into thinking that we really do have a voice in how the country is run. As if participation and "democracy" amount to nothing more than putting a little cross on a piece of paper some 20 times or so in a lifetime.

But do these little crosses really make so much difference? Certainly not if you put them next to the Tory candidate, but what of the others? The Greens may be tempting: At the moment they're relatively fresh and idealistic, although you only have to look at the Labour Party to see the decay that sets in on any group that pursues the parliamentary road to power.



So desperate are the leaders of the Labour Party to win the next election, that they've stolen all the Tories' best policies, cut out all the radical rhetoric (sadly it was only rhetoric) and kicked out anybody who rocks the boat too much. And, when in Government, what are the Labour Party like? While

the local Labour activists (there still are some) warn of massive Tory cuts, do they remember the '79 "Winter of Discontent"? Do they remember the strikes by nurses, local government workers and others totally sick to the back teeth by Labour cuts to services, welfare and wages? Will it really be any different next time? Or will Labour continue to screw us, the workers, to make the country a more attractive place, a better investment for international rich bastards. Maybe they'll do it by using Trade Union leaders, and "wage restraint", rather than the head-on approach we've grown used to under Thatcher, but they'll screw us, nevertheless. The real power in the land does not lie in local government or Parliament, it lies with capital, the bosses; with the courts and judges; with the armed forces, the police and the intelligence services; with civil servants and other institutions of the state. Elections are just a smokescreen to blind us to the real power at work. Even if the Labour Party was committed to radical change, even if it wasn't full of would-be yuppies, it would be destabilised (as Wilson was by MI5), brought off (by one means or another) or threatened with dire consequences if the dictates of big money aren't obeyed.

Your vote will change non of this. Whoever you vote for, the system will win. Your vote only adds to the illusion that we have some say, and diverts attention away from more meaningful action. We have beaten the Poll Tax not by voting Labour, but by not paying!! This is only a glimpse of what we are capable of once we ditch the politicians and their charade.

Colin.

**DON'T VOTE - ORGANISE
GET TOGETHER AND CHANGE THINGS!**

VOTE LABOUR, JOIN LABOUR KICK THE TORIES OUT!

Why should anyone in their right mind, who has been actively involved in the anti-poll tax campaign, urge others not only to vote Labour but to join it. I will try to set out my reasons below:-

Labour's Role - Blame The Leadership

No one can make excuses, and I certainly won't try to, for Labour's pathetic role in the Poll Tax campaign. Neil Kinnock attacked the non-payment campaign and said the only way to get rid of the poll tax was to wait for a General Election - who was right, us or him? Also, Labour Councils up and down the country, including Nottingham, implemented the Poll Tax, bailiffs and all.

However not everyone in the Labour Party is a Neil Kinnock supporter! 35 M.P.'s refused to pay and spoke at many hundreds of Anti-Poll Tax meetings up and down the country. Closer to home both Forest and Radford branches of the Labour Party (which covers our area) supported the non-payment campaign, both gave money to our campaign and between them put out over 6,000 leaflets urging support for non-payment.

City Council Elections -

Keep Out The Tories

Up until the day Heseltine announced the end of the poll tax, local Tory councillors were still singing its praises! Whilst Labour has been far from perfect, if the Tories had been in control locally then I'm sure we'd have had someone jailed by now for non-payment. In fact it was a private prosecution by two Tory councillors which resulted in the jailing of two local campaigners for the 'Custard Pie' incident last year. And a Tory victory would also mean massive cuts in jobs and services locally.

In the past people died for the 'right to vote'. It is a 'crime', in my opinion, to sit on your hands on

election day - particularly those who are active and fully aware of the effects of the Tories! Anyone who doesn't vote is effectively siding with the Tories.

Voting 'Green' is no alternative either! Their 'Green' councillor on the City Council for the past four years didn't oppose the poll tax either - and given that they are only standing 13 candidates they have no chance of running the council after May. The only effect of voting 'Green' is to split the anti-Tory vote and make a Tory victory easier.

General Election -

Vote Labour And Prepare To Fight

The Tories have to call an election in the next 14 months - it could even be in June this year. We will then have the chance to dump the Party that brought us the Poll Tax in the first place. It will also mean the removal of the threat of 'Son of Poll Tax' - the Tories proposed alternative.

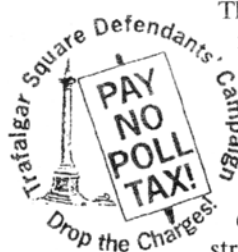
A Labour Government would not be the answer to all our problems - but an influx of even a proportion of the campaigners who in the last 12 months have seen off Thatcher and the Poll Tax would be more of a match for Kinnock and the other 'compromisers' who currently control the party.

Changing the Labour Party from the bottom up is a daunting task - but not more so than the one we have just completed. Already in Clifton many activists from the anti-poll tax campaign have joined the party giving a fright to the old guard councillors there. Clifton Labour Party will not be the same again!

Serious activists should consider joining me and others in that struggle for socialism inside and outside the Labour Party.



Support The Poll Tax Prisoners



The poll tax has mobilised the ordinary people of this country and brought them onto the streets in protest as no other issue since the war. The state and its servants, the police, have responded in the only way they know how - direct attacks on people demonstration their anger and opposition to this insane tax.

As a result large numbers of people are facing charges and possible imprisonment, whilst literally hundreds more have already been convicted or sent to prison by vindictive magistrates and judges. The Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign (TSDC) was founded to help people fight the charges against them from the mass demonstrations on the 31st March 1990 and 20th October 1990. The Prisoners Group is a section of the TSDC set up specifically to look after the welfare of those imprisoned for demonstrating against the poll tax. The TSDC Prisoners Group have produced an up-to-date list of prisoners and addresses of where they are being held.

Practical Support

Prison rules are restrictive, so there are strict limits on how prisoners can be practically supported. There are three main areas of support:

1) **Letters** are a way of showing that people outside are thinking of them and so they are very important to prisoners. Letters must have the name and address of the sender written on them. 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 in a week. So don't necessarily expect a reply as prisoners have to write to their families, loved ones and close friends. If you're not a great letter writer you could always send a card.

2) **Visits** - There is a big difference between remand and convicted prisoners about visits. Convicted prisoners are generally only allowed one visit every four weeks. Usually convicted prisoners will want to spend their rare visits with family and close friends. Remand prisoners however can have about six visits a week so it is possible for many supporters to visit them. However the visits do have to be co-ordinated because only one visit is allowed per day. If you want to visit a remand prisoner please contact the Prisoners Group at the TSDC Office (contact below).

3) **Material support** - Prisoners are only allowed to spend a limited amount (usually ten pounds) of money from 'private funds' (money sent in) in the prison can-

teen each month. The Prisoners Group makes sure that this money is sent in to each prisoner every month so there is little use sending money direct to prisoners as they will not be able to spend it while in prison. The Prisoners Group also pays for prisoners to have a daily paper of their choice sent in by post, the group also arranges for 'one off' items such as radios to be sent in. Be warned that they are a great many obscure restrictions on which radios and walkmans are allowed so its best to discuss this with the Prisoners Group if you or your group wants to buy one for a prisoner you are writing to.

Prisoners List - Convicted Prisoners

RA0711

HMP Wandsworth, Heathfield Road, Wandsworth, London SW18 3HS.

Arrested 31st March in Trafalgar Square. Charged Section 1, Section 2, GBH. Paul is a traveller and his home and all his worldly possessions were in two vans which have since been towed away and destroyed. There is not a fund being set up by a supporter in Aylesbury to collect money for Paul to get a new van/home when he gets out. The address is Box S, 34 Cowley Road, Oxford. Paul received 4 years on 12 March for the S2's and handling stolen goods. The remaining charges were dropped.

EDR Nov 92.

MV2254

HMP Pentonville, Caledonian Road, London N7 8TT.

Alan was arrested at the demo against Hackney council's setting of the poll tax shortly before March 31st 1990. His case came up around September last year when he was sent down. Alan can't read so it would be best to send cards rather than letter. GBH - 2 years.

KT1303

HMP Wandsworth, Heathfield Road, Wandsworth, London SW18 3HS.

Arrested 20th October in Brixton. Got 12 months total for Section 2 & Section 4 POA, and Criminal Damage on 22 February 1991. EDR 20 May 1991. Still awaiting trial in Leicester for ALF beagles raid.

RA0741

HMP High Point, Stadishall, Newmarket, Suffolk.

Arrested on 31st March. 2 years for Section 2 POA. A police van ran over Robert's foot in Trafalgar Square but he was tried for kicking the police van. Appealing. EDR July 1991.

NT0082

HMYOI Huntercome, Huntercome Place, Nuffield, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon RG9 5SB.

Arrested 31st March in Trafalgar Square. 2 years for Section 2 POA. EDR March 1992.



MV3338

HMP Standforth Hill, Eastchurch, Sheerness, Kent ME12 4AA.

Arrested 31st March. Convicted Section 2 POA and GBH on 12 December, remanded in Brixton for reports until January 2nd 1991 and then sentenced to 2 years with one suspended (i.e. serve 1). EDR 2 June 1991.

MV3239

HMP Wandsworth, Heathfield Road, Wandsworth, London SW18 3HS.

Arrested 31st March, charged with Section 2 POA for throwing a missile at a police line after he had been batoned to the ground by them without any provocation. Sentenced to 3 years in Nov 1990. EDR Nov 1992.

MV3973

HMP Pentonville.

Arrested 31st March, convicted of two offences under Section 3 POA. Sentenced to 18 months and 12 months to run concurrently and order to pay 850 costs. EDR Jan 1992.

MW0105

HMP Belmarsh, Weston Way, Woolich SE2.

One of the first 3 people to be tried on Riot charges (Section 1 POA, Max. sentence - 10 years) from 31st March. Accused of shoving scaffolding pole through the window of one of the riot vans charging into people at speed in the Strand. Found not guilty of the Riot charge though sentenced to 3 years for Section 2 POA on 29 Jan 1991. EDR Jan 1993.

RA2183

HMP Wandsworth.

Darren stood trial with Tim Donaghy and was acquitted of Riot. Found guilty of two counts of Section 2 POA and received 2 years and 6 months to run concurrently. EDR Sept 1992.

MW0231

HMP High Point.

Arrested 31st March. Convicted of Section 2 POA on 5th Feb 1991 and sentenced to 16 months. EDR Dec 1991.

RC0627

HMP Worthing, Barnhorn Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex TN39 4QN

Received 9 months on 13th Feb for two counts of arson from Brixton demo on 20th October. Caught setting fire to a police motorbike. EDR June 1991.

PF2678

HMP Wandsworth.

Martin got 15 months for Section 2 & 3 POA on Feb 12th from the March 31st demo. Send letters of support via PSG because otherwise would restrict letter from friends.

MW0834

HMP Wandsworth.

Received 8 months, 5 suspended for two counts of Section 2 for the 31st March. Sentenced on 13th March.

MW0 216

HMP Wandsworth.

Neil got 30 months for Section 2.

MW0962

HMP Wandsworth.

Arrested on 31st March and found guilty of "violent disorder" (Section 2 POA). 18 month sentence. EDR March 1992.

MW1054

HMP Wandsworth

Arrested on 31st March. Charged with Section 2 POA. Matt refused to plea bargain with the state and conducted his defence on the grounds of self-defence. Sentenced to 30 months on 25th March 1991. EDR November 1992.

MW1028

HMP Ford.

Arrested on 31st March, charged with 3 counts of "violent disorder". Found guilty on 3rd April 1991 and received 12 months for each offence to run concurrently. EDR Oct 1991.

MW1182

HMP Brixton, Jebb Avenue, London SW2 5XF.

Arrested during the "Operation Carnaby" raids. Sentenced on 3rd April 1991 for "violent disorder". EDR Oct 1991.

ND1666

HMP The Mount, Molyneux Avenue, Bovingdon, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP3 0NZ.

Charged with Section 2 POA from 31st March and also tried for totally unrelated animal rights offences at the same time. Sentenced to 18 months for the S2 and 30 months for animal rights activities. To run consecutively. EDR Nov 1993.

N.B. Sentences of 12 months or under usually get half remission, i.e. someone sentenced to 3 months will normally only do 6 weeks. Sentences over 12 months, people are eligible for parole after the first third of their sentence and get the last third off on remission. Where we have listed EDR (Earliest Date of Release) above for prisoners sentenced to more than a year, it is the EDR without parole. Finally remission can be lost, two of our prisoners have already lost a month a piece. If in doubt phone the TSDC office.

Trafalgar Square
Defendants' Campaign,
c/o Haldane Society of Lawyers,
205 Panther House, 38 Mount Pleasant,
London WC1X 0AP. Tel: 071 833 8958

RELEASE ALL POLL TAX PRISONERS NOW!

The London Demo Saturday 23rd March 1991

Twelve months have passed since the police assaulted a massive demonstration against the Poll Tax, provoking an astonishing expression of unified anger against the parasitical rich and their protectors. Now we were back to reclaim our 'right to march', against both the police and those "stewards" of the Federation who insulted so many by calling them hooligans and criminals for defending themselves.

Of course the mood was very different this year, and the turn out disappointingly reflected this. The Poll Tax was on its way out, and most of us wanted to celebrate rather than worry about its replacement. On the coach down we were all given a legal briefing in case of trouble. Thanks mainly to John and Jaz, this was the best organised and presented briefing I've known, giving us all a lot of confidence when we reached the Embankment. (By the way, it was the same route as recent Gulf War and Clause 25 demo's I've attended: isn't it about time we chose our own routes?).

We were near the back of the march, with our new banner and the perfect combination of Meg-with-megaphone (*MegAphone?*). I think the power went to her head, but it meant that we had a great time singing and shouting.



And we needed to be in good humour to enjoy the sight of Trafalgar Square, empty, apart from hundreds of police who made a human (sic) chain by grasping the colleague in front by the backside. This prompted many jokes - "Bet they volunteered for that job!", "So that's what they mean by community policing!", and so on.

We got to Hyde Park, accosted on all sides by an amazing number of obscure broadsheets and magazines. Then it was off to the pub. It was a good day. Let's hope the pressure from below doesn't let up until the Poll Tax is well and truly abolished.

Simon.

Nottingham & District Trades Council MAYDAY MARCH & RALLY 'WELFARE NOT WARFARE'

Monday 6th May 1991

Assemble Market Square 10.30am

March leaves 11.00am

Rally at

Queens Walk Community Centre 12.00pm

Speakers include:

Ken Cameron (Gen. Sec. F.B.U.)

Emma Colyer (Gen. Sec. N.U.S)

and others

MAYDAY BENEFIT Friday 3rd May 1991

8pm

Indian Community Centre,
Rawson Street, New Basford

CALL CAT SPIDER
plus disco

Admission: £1.50/£2.50



FOREST FIELDS AND HYSON GREEN ANTI-POLL TAX CAMPAIGN

Meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm in the Indian Community Centre on Rawson Street (at the top of Noel Street, by the baths). These are planning meetings, to organise the work of the campaign. Everybody is welcome - come along and get involved.

**Forest Fields & Hyson Green
Anti-Poll Tax Campaign**

Box 5, Basics, 42 Foxhall Road or

Box 5, Hyson Green Wholefoods, 72 Radford Road or
phone [redacted]