



POLL-AXE!

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

Special Issue, April 1991

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES!

There are lots of lies about the poll tax going around. Here are some of them:

- * **THE POLL TAX IS GONE**
- * **THE ANTI-POLL TAX CAMPAIGN IS OVER**
- * **£140 OFF MAKES IT FAIR AND WE SHOULD START PAYING NOW**
- * **PEOPLE WHO STILL REFUSE TO PAY ARE ONLY HARMING LOCAL SERVICES**

We're sick of those lies. Here are the facts:

LIE 1: The poll tax is gone...

No it isn't! We're still being hounded for last years poll tax, and the new poll tax bills for 1991/92 will be out soon. Remember, the government haven't scrapped the poll tax, they've only *promised* to scrap it - and we all know that a politicians promise isn't worth the hot air its made of. That's especially true when (like now) there are elections in the background. Besides, even if they do keep their promise, they've said it will take them two years to do it. Including this year, that's ANOTHER THREE YEARS of the poll tax. Can you afford to pay it? Do you *want* to? And even if you can say yes to both those questions, what about the millions of people who still *can't* afford to pay it? The Labour Party also promise to scrap the poll tax if they're elected, saying they could get rid of it within a year. But even that's at least TWO MORE YEARS of this viciously unfair tax. And we know from experience that, no matter what party they belong to, politicians only keep their promises when we force them to.

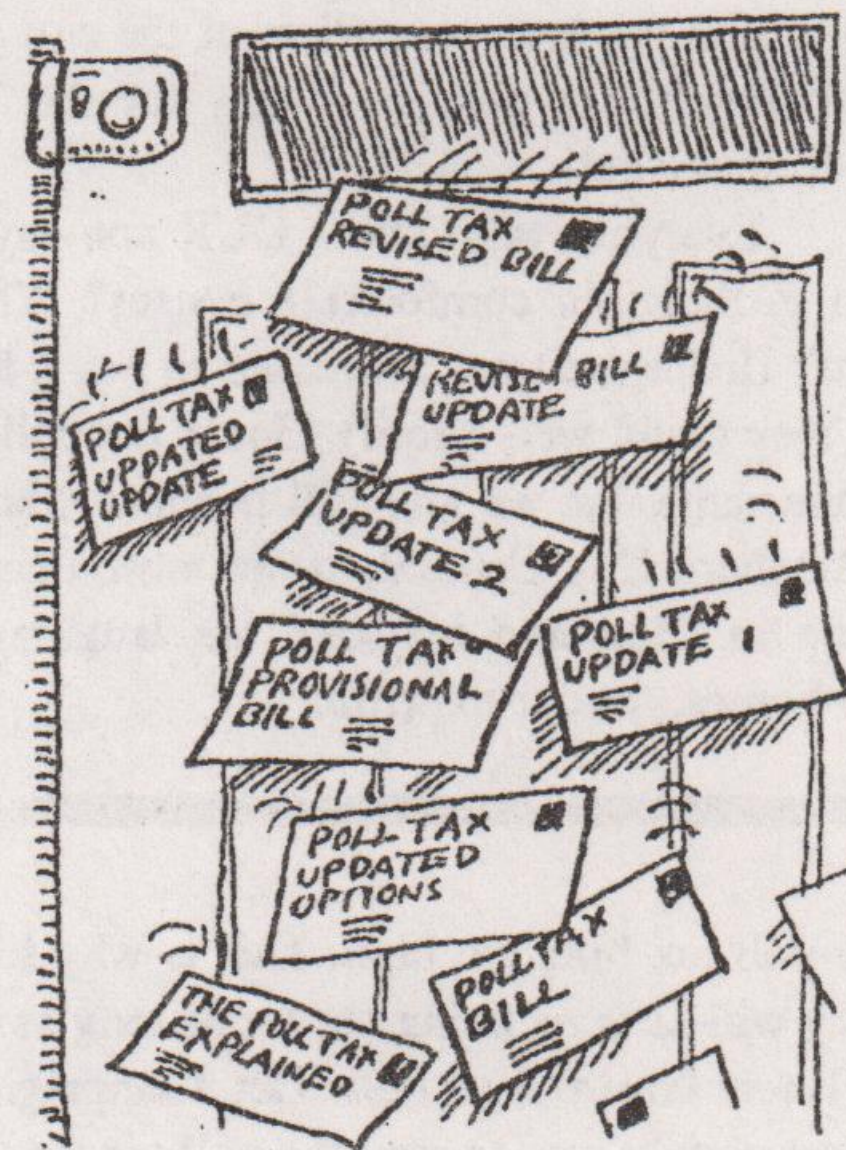
So, at best we've got the poll tax for another two years. At worst, the Tories get re-elected and bring in their "Heseltine Hybrid" tax that combines a poll tax and a property tax on the same bill. Either way, the poll tax is still here for at least the next few years - and so are we

LIE 2: The anti-poll tax campaign is over...

No it isn't! The campaign will only end when we have won, and we haven't won - not yet. The way we see it, its one-nil to us at the end of the first half, but with *everything* still to play for. Mind, we've had a brilliant game so far! Over ten million people in England and Wales refused to pay at least part of their first year's poll tax. In Scotland, where the tax is now entering its third year, more than half those on the register are refusing to pay. And Sid Stares, Treasurer of Nottingham City Council, admitted early in March that OVER HALF of those on the register in Nottingham were well behind with their poll tax. Brilliant! But like we said, its all still to play for in the second half. And

if you think about it, with non-payment as high as that, how could the campaign just end overnight? Hyson Green & Forest Fields Anti-Poll Tax Campaign believes that there are three things that must happen before we will stop fighting:

- 1 **THE POLL TAX MUST BE TOTALLY SCRAPPED**
- 2 **THERE MUST BE AN AMNESTY FOR ALL NON-PAYERS**
- 3 **ALL POLL TAX PRISONERS MUST BE RELEASED**
(we're talking about the people in prison for criminal offences following the London demonstrations last year - the longest sentence so far given out is four years)



The government, the council and their helpers in the press have all tried to give the impression that the anti-poll tax campaign is over so as to frighten us all into paying. Don't be fooled!

LIE 3: £140 off makes it fair, and we should start paying now...

Says who? If you've got two adults in your house, the poll tax is still £600, even with the £140 each off. On the flat where I live, thats TWICE what we used to pay in rates. Should we be grateful, now that

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**IF YOU DIDN'T PAY LAST YEAR -
DON'T PAY THIS YEAR!
IF YOU DID PAY LAST YEAR -
DON'T MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE AGAIN!**

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its only twice as much? LIKE HELL!

In fact, at £295 each, our poll tax bills for this year will still be as high as the government's first estimate eighteen months ago - when we all said that we wouldn't pay it anyway!

The poll tax is unfair because its a flat rate tax that takes the same from the rich as from the poor. Giving everyone £140 off doesn't change the basic unfairness of the poll tax one little bit.

Besides, they've funded this reduction of £140 by increasing VAT - another flat rate tax which, just like the poll tax, hits the poorest people hardest. The government say that VAT is only charged on luxuries, but since when were things like soap, tampons, clothing and shoes luxuries? And the same budget that brought in these changes reduced VAT for big businesses...

The £140 off is simply a bribe, to make you vote Tory at the next election. It isn't likely to work, and it shouldn't persuade you to start paying the poll tax either.

LIE 4: People who still refuse to pay are only harming local services...

Again, says who? Our council of course, along with the leaders of the Labour Party. But all over the country, local services have been slashed in the last few months. Notts County Council (who spend most of the poll tax collected here in Hyson Green & Forest Fields) are closing old people's homes and cutting grants to community groups. The government haven't forced them to do this, they've done it VOLUNTARILY to try and reduce the poll tax bills because there are elections coming up in May. That's what we call harming local services. Yet poll tax bills are still high, and services are poor too. Here are some of the REAL reasons why:

* For years now, the government have been cutting their grants to local councils. Every time they pay less, we pay more. The poll tax is their latest scheme to make cuts like this

* The poll tax costs twice as much to collect as the rates did, but the government didn't give councils extra money to cover this

* The poll tax was ALWAYS meant to make councils cut services, because some people would vote for the party that promised the lowest poll tax bills regardless of the cuts needed. The poll tax is meant to buy those people's votes for the Tories, who are more willing to make cuts.

* Everyone talks about OUR non-payment - but what about the rich in their big comfortable houses? What about THEIR non-payment? Under the rates they used to pay a hefty amount each year (which they could well afford). Under the poll tax they're only asked to pay the same that we are. Bill Bradbury, leader of the Tory group on Nottingham City Council, saved more than £1,500 when the poll tax came in. Him and his kind are laughing all the way to their holiday homes.. at our expense.

This is why poll tax bills are high. This is why local services have been cut, and why they will keep on being cut for as long as the poll tax survives. Forest Fields & Hyson Green Anti-Poll Tax Campaign has always said that the quickest, most certain way to stop the poll tax was by mass non-payment. The events of the last few weeks show that we were right. By forcing the government to say they'll scrap the poll tax, we've scored a great victory - but we haven't won yet. The non-payment campaign *must* continue. Far from damaging local services, refusing to pay the poll tax is the only way to keep the little we've already got!

DON'T BLAME US - JOIN US!



PHONE [redacted] Or WRITE to Box 5,
Hyson Green Wholefoods, 72 Radford Road, Nottingham

BAILIFFS

and how to beat them!

The FIRST thing to remember about bailiffs is that they aren't likely to visit you. There are only a handful of them, and 60,000 of us - so the chances of them coming to your door are pretty slim.

The SECOND thing to remember is that if you follow these simple rules, they can't touch you:

- 1 Never let them into your house**
- 2 Keep ground floor doors and windows locked**
- 3 Phone us as soon as you hear from them**

Bailiffs are just like vampires: invite them in once and they can come back at any time, using force if they have to. But if you never let them get past your front door, they can't ever touch you!

The council are also using RECOVERY OFFICERS to try and get us to pay the poll tax. These do the same job as bailiffs, but don't have the same powers. If someone comes to your door, its more likely to be a Recovery Officer than a bailiff - but you can only find out by talking to them, which isn't a good idea because they try and trick people. The best thing to do is *politely* tell them that you're busy and CLOSE THE DOOR IN THEIR FACE. Then phone us as soon as you can.

If you have a room in a shared house, make sure that other people living there know to keep the front door locked. If the bailiffs get past the front door, they are allowed to smash down other doors to help them carry out their dirty work. Put a notice on the inside of the front door, to remind the other people you share with.

Sometimes, they push a letter through your door threatening to come back in a week or so and steal your things. Its almost always just a bluff, and they go away and annoy someone else instead. But sometimes they leave a date and time that they'll be coming back. IF YOU GET A LETTER LIKE THIS, LET US KNOW. Tell us when they're coming, and we'll arrange a street party to welcome them. They'll be sorry they ever showed their faces..

If bailiffs or recovery officers visit you, or if you just want to know more about what to do to be safe from them, phone one of these numbers:

Hyson Green & Forest Fields Anti-Poll Tax Campaign

We meet every Tuesday at 8PM, at the Indian Community Centre - at the top of Noel St., near the baths. If you've got any questions, or would like to get involved - COME ALONG!

DISCO

Friday April 12th, 8 till late
at the Indian Community Centre
£2 waged, £1 unwaged
ALL WELCOME!