

Due to lack of space we haven't been able to run a round-up of local reports as promised at the 3rd September meeting. However, we want to make the "round-up" column a regular feature of 3 D, so please send any local reports or advance notice for events to the address on p.4. If you have access to a computer articles can be sent to us on floppy disk (either Amstrad or 51/4") which we will return to you.



All Britain

Anti-Poll Tax

organising conference

- ☆ mass non-payment
- ☆ mass non-implementation
- ☆ mass non-collection

25th November 1989

at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, from 11am to 5pm

Organising Secretary
Tommy Sheridan

PO Box 764, London E5 9SX

Conference Enquiries: 01 533 5551

Apologies to Brian Slocock as we were unable to include his article on local government strategy due to lack of space. We hope to carry a regular feature called **Debate** in future issues of 3D. We welcome articles debating strategy for the movement.

We hope you've enjoyed 3D and found it useful in building the movement. We want to continue to produce an open, independant newsletter which can reflect both the strength, diversity and commitment of the non-payment movement. But commitment alone is not enough to produce a newsletter — we need money! As the Tories seem to be having a few financial problems of their own it seems unlikely that they're going to contribute to our coffers, and Murdoch/Maxwell may well feel threatened by the competition. So if you want to see more of 3 D we need your support.

You can ensure that the next five issues of 3 D hit the streets through individual supporting sponsorship, through a subscription, or through your anti-poll tax group taking out a bulk order. For this launch issue we are also asking for donations to pay for printing and distribution.

Name

Organisation

Address

Phone number

Yes, I want to sponsor 3 D £5 ☐ £10 ☐ £15 ☐ £20 ☐

Yes, I would like a subscription to the next 5 issues ☐ at a cost of £2.00

Yes, our anti-poll tax group would like a bulk order ☐ of (no.) copies

Yes, I would like to write for 3 D/help with its production ☐

Please return this slip to the address below and make cheques/postal orders payable to TAPT.

This launch issue of 3 D was produced by members of the steering committee elected at the 3rd September national meeting of anti-poll tax groups.

The steering committee can be contacted via Jane Connor (01-801 6041) or by writing to "3rd Sept Steering Committee", c/o 11, Springfield Road, London N15 4AY.

Photo credits: Gordon Smith and Nick Hazelwood

3D

on't pay!
on't collect!
on't implement!

Issue #1 of the open,
independant newsletter
produced by the "3rd
September Steering
Committee"

We're going to win!



This is exciting. To be part of a movement where everyone involved has a gut feeling that we're on the road to victory. It's new to me. The strength of feeling against the poll tax goes without saying. For the first time the Tories have picked on the entire working class and we're not going to let them forget it.

The Scottish Anti-Poll Tax Federation is leading the way. After several months of silence, the media has finally had to admit that non-payment IS happening and on a vast scale. The latest figures have come from Strathclyde, home of one in every two Scots. 360,000 have not paid a penny. Hundreds of thousands are in arrears, and the official figures do not include all those awaiting rebates or missing from the register. Scotland-wide the true figure for non-payment exceeds a million.

Faced with this level of non-payment, the Local Authorities have put back the date when they can begin to take action against non-payers again and again. Only the Central Region has sent out 14 day warnings, threatening court-action. When other Local Authorities eventually catch up, the hundreds of anti-poll tax organisations can make sure that the administrative machinery to seize the poll tax from people's wages, savings and benefits grinds to a halt.

Of course, non-payment is not generally an action packed battle, full of photo-opportunities. Not going to the Post Office and paying your monthly installment is all it involves. But the million people who have resisted the temptation of courting personal financial bankruptcy by paying their poll tax have done so in the

knowledge that they have a massive nationwide movement backing them. The message is coming south, loud and clear. We're winning. And that's official.

In England and Wales we are already well on the way to building the same level of resistance and organisation. Literally millions of people have helped snarl up the registration process. With just over a month to go before the 1st December deadline, most metropolitan authorities simply will not be able to complete their registers. In some inner city boroughs of London, 40% of households still haven't registered. Dozens of new Anti-Poll Tax Unions and groups spring up every week. Their strength and influence will be greatly enhanced on a day that will go down in history. November 25th 1989. The founding day of the All Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation.

If ever I have any doubts about our chances of winning they are dispelled when I go out canvassing. Over and over again the message on the doorstep is the same; "We're not paying". After ten years under the Tories we have got used to losing. Well now we have got to get used to winning!

**WE CAN'T PAY, WE WON'T PAY AND
WE'RE GOING TO WIN!**

Ian Greaves
Leeds Campaign Against the Poll Tax

EDITORIAL

The setting up of a national steering committee has been an immensely complex process characterised by numerous misunderstandings and political differences. To a large extent the initial communication problems have been resolved, with the agreement of all groups to work towards a single national conference on 25th November.

However, we are still left with a legacy of mistrust which resulted from two national meetings (on 1st and 3rd September), both of which were regarded by each other as unrepresentative.

The meeting of 1st September had delegates from 20 area and regional federations, claiming to represent around 450 local groups. The meeting of 3rd September had delegates from 70 regional, area and local groups, claiming to represent around 360 local groups. Delegates to the 1st September meeting were concerned about the delegation status of 3rd September. Delegates to the 3rd September meeting were angry that the organisers of the 1st September meeting were refusing to work with any other parts of the movement and feared that a single political current — supporters of *Militant* — were dominating.

It is the view of this editorial collective that the two meetings represented different parts of the movement (both equally valid) and that, collectively, they more or less represented those forces rallied around non-payment and non-implementation.

In any event, the 3rd September meeting, in the interests of unity, agreed to work with the 1st September steering committee and attempt to make it as accountable and representative as possible. That process has proved to be a productive one. The 1st September follow up meetings have been conducted in an efficient and democratic way. The conference procedures have been broadly agreeable to all regional and area delegates.

The major item of concern which needs to be resolved relates to the political base of the four person organising committee. The fact that *all* of them are supporters of one particular current is not conducive to building a broad based campaign and will not command the confidence of the whole movement.

It is important that this situation is remedied in the elections to the national committee. A broad base is needed which can command the political support of the whole of the labour movement.

In our view, this means electing people on their merits.

AIMS

WHAT WE ARE COMMITTED TO

Politically

The complete abolition of the poll tax and its replacement with a progressive system based on "ability to pay".

Strategically

Pursuing the three strategies of:

- mass non-payment
- non-collection
- non-implementation

building them together in such a way that they reinforce each other.

Organisationally

Creating a democratic union of all anti-poll tax groups throughout England, Scotland and Wales, built on a federal structure.

Creating national structures which reflect the different political perspectives within the movement and which can unite the movement around non-payment, non-implementation and non-collection.

THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION

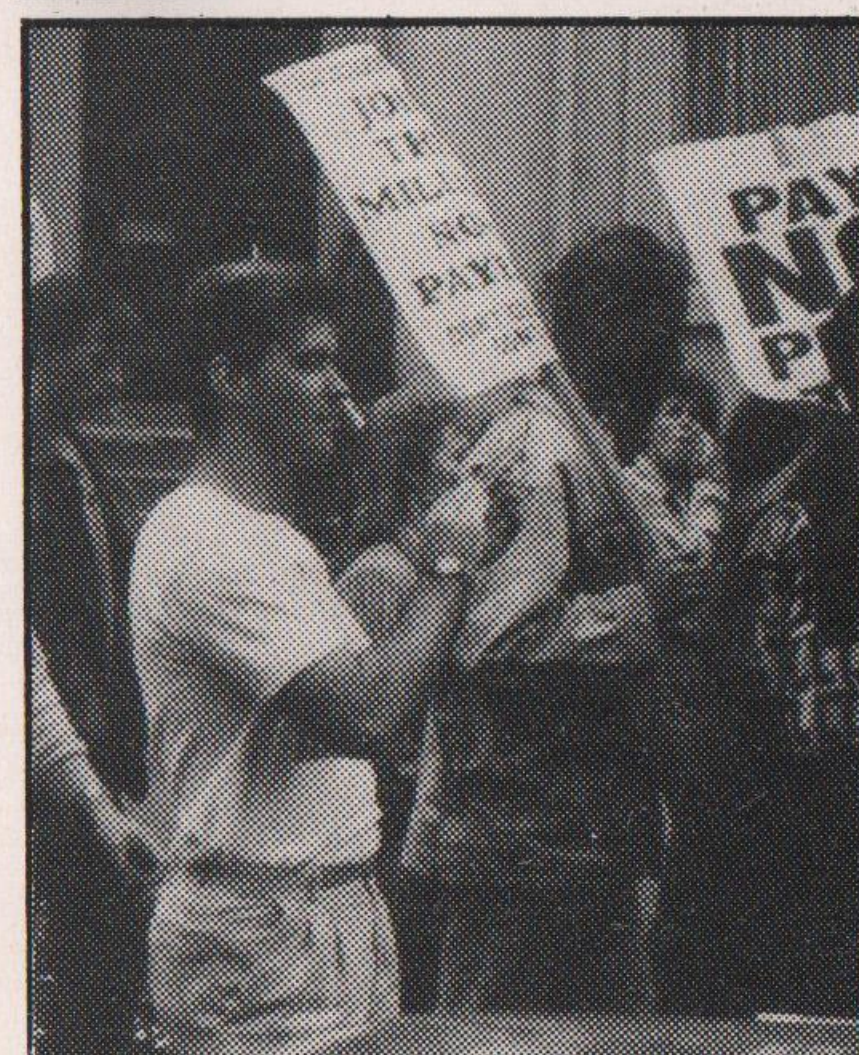
We believe that the all Britain Federation should have four main functions:

1. Co-ordinator of national campaigns and demonstrations.
2. Co-ordinator of resources and information exchange.
3. A body to work with and put pressure on the national labour movement.
4. A vehicle for national press and publicity.

We do not see the national federation as a policy making body which has any binding powers on affiliated unions.

SLATE

In the elections for national officers the 3rd September Steering Committee is calling for a vote for the following people:



TOMMY SHERIDAN is one of the most charismatic figures in the movement. He is an outstanding speaker and as chair of both the Scottish Federation and the conference organising committee, he is the natural choice for Chair of the All Britain Federation.

FEDERATIONS

Bristol and Avon — the story so far

In late 1988, campaigns started to get off the ground in Bristol. By March 1989 there were around 12 local groups and a federation was formed to coordinate them. In October we have over 50 affiliated groups. We have had a heartening response from local trade union branches and are starting to involve a whole range of Bristol wide voluntary organisations. Most activists in Bristol are now convinced that it will be impossible for them to implement the tax here.

In June the community charge registration officer for Bristol informed us that they normally take 10,000 people to court each year for non payment of the rates. Their own estimates based on ability to pay suggest that even without a non payment campaign they will have to take 60,000 people to court. With such a campaign it is likely to be over 100,000. Our interpretation of the English law shows that every one of these cases will have to go to a civil court for a liability order, and every one can be challenged in court. This will not be remotely possible for them to implement.

But are we going to achieve these levels of non payment? We are convinced because the initial returns of our canvass (which we hope by the end of November will have gone door to door to every household in Bristol) show that 95% of the population are opposed to the tax. The vast majority have indicated that they will either be unable to pay the tax or it will cause them severe financial difficulty and in some areas up to 70 % have said they will refuse to pay as long as they are part of a mass non payment campaign.

These results have been reflected in the level of activity on the ground. In Easton (my local anti poll tax union) in a single ward over 300 households have actively joined the union (50p per household), when we have finished the canvass we expect the figure to be nearer five hundred. This is over 25% of the local population and is nearly ten times the membership of the local ward Labour Party.



DANNY BURNS is one of the major figures to emerge from the fight against the poll tax. Hardworking and dedicated, Danny's easy-going personality can win over the most hostile of opponents. He has played a crucial role in arguing for unity between the two National meetings, and is on both Steering Committees.

Danny has been pivotal in building the Avon Federation from 10 to over 50 groups within just a few months, in his capacity as Secretary of that Federation.

Danny's commitment to a united, broad based campaign will be vital in building a mass campaign, involving all those who share our ideals.

How has this been achieved at a local level? A small core initially called a public meeting, leafletting all 2000 households. This meeting formed the embryo of an anti poll tax union. Following this a "no poll tax here" poster was produced, which was distributed to all households. The anti poll tax union then identified all the houses who had put the posters up in their windows and talked to them directly (about 100).

The vast majority joined the anti poll tax union, and by this stage we felt strong enough to break down into 12 neighbourhoods. Leafletting for further local and regional meetings and rallies was organised from this base until September with the onset of the Avon-wide canvass.

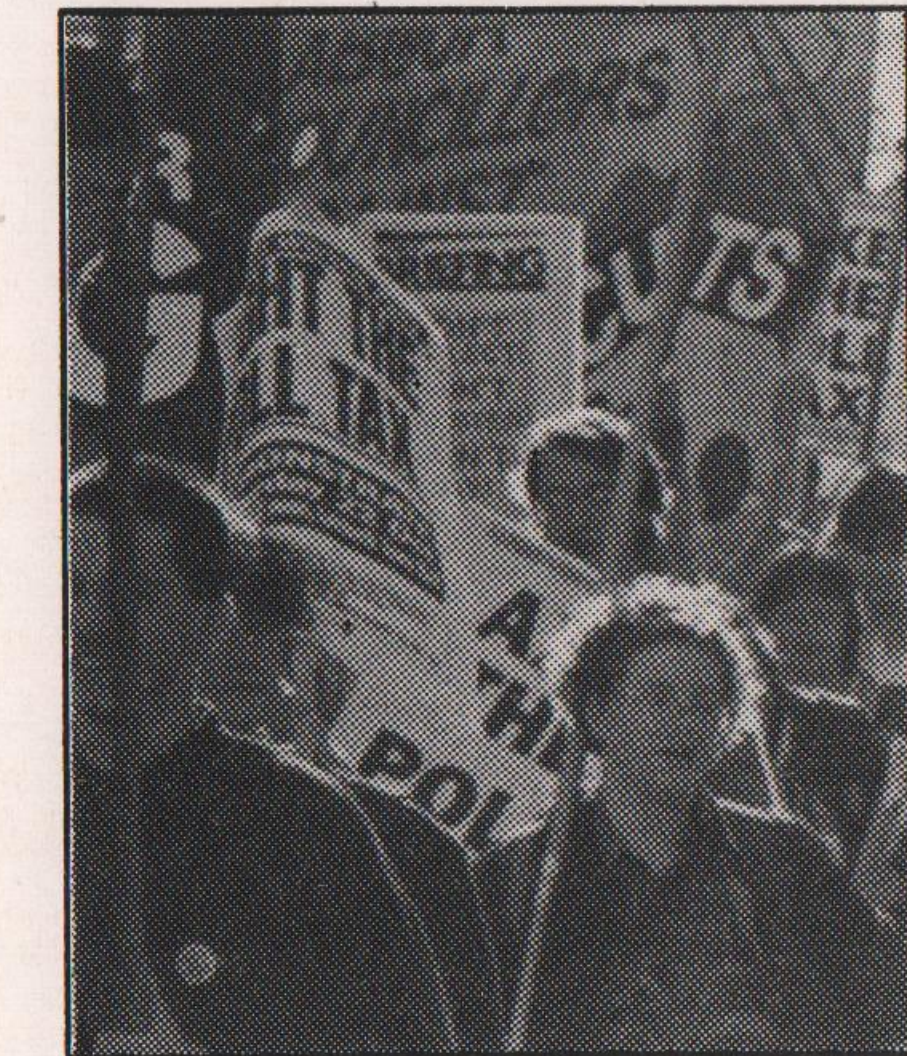
At this stage we identified street representatives for the whole area. Ultimately these will be the key to creating the local support and communication which is necessary to keep people from feeling isolated in their struggle.

Back to the Avon Federation! How are we organised? All anti poll tax unions and affiliated organisations have a right to two voting delegates at the federation. We hold federation meetings on a three weekly basis. We usually get between 50 and 60 people to each of these delegate meetings. We have recently set up an action group which is working on setting up new groups in every area where there are no groups.

There is a regular petition in the Centre of Bristol which collects names and addresses from the whole of the city. These are later divided into areas and form the basis of the new groups. These areas are then leafletted; a public meeting is advertised and then local people are left to get on with it (obviously with the support of the federation).

These approaches have proved very effective and it is likely that by April we will have around 80 affiliated groups. Many of us expected a lull in activity from the middle of this year, building up again in April. But it didn't happen, we just keep on growing, and our confidence is now unshakeable. We are convinced of victory.

Danny Burns
Avon Federation



JANE CONNOR was central to the setting up and building of Tottenham Against the Poll Tax, and is a major contributor to the success of the London Federation.

She chaired the national meeting of anti-poll tax groups on 3rd September, and undertook a substantial amount of the planning

for that meeting. Jane is committed to working in councils and trade unions to fight for non-implementation and non-collection. She has extensive experience in accounting and book-keeping, which, in addition to her considerable experience in the movement, make her the ideal candidate for the post of Treasurer.