

# NOTTINGHAM DEFENCE FUND

NEWSLETTER NO. 2 July 1990

## THE POLL TAX

The Nottingham Defence Fund( NDF )was formed to assist financially those anti-poll tax activists who were arrested in the aftermath of the March 5th 'Robin Hood' occupation of the Nottingham Council Chamber and the police riot of March 31st at Trafalgar Square, London. Many are facing serious charges, perhaps prison terms, plus hefty fines and the cost of travelling to London to attend court. Therefore, financial aid is needed to alleviate their plight.

We support unconditionally everyone charged and needing help. To critics who ask why we are helping "looters" we would stress that we don't see it as our place to judge people on what they are charged with, only to support people fighting the poverty of the Poll Tax. The police habitually add on as many charges as possible, hoping some of them will stick. Also many of those arrested committed no offence and a fit up by the police is the only evidence against them.

Many of those facing charges following Trafalgar Square come under the Public Order Act of 1986. These include Riot(maximum sentence 10 years/unlimited fine); Violent Disorder(max 5 years/unlimited fine); Affray(max 3 years/fine). One person from Bristol has already pleaded guilty to obstruction because he could not afford to travel to London for court appearances. The use of video and still photo evidence by police/prosecution in their campaign against the Trafalgar Square people is ominous. So is the attitude of a compliant press, who, with one or two notable exceptions, did not contest the ruling at the Old Bailey ordering the handing over of material recorded on March 31. Over 30,000 photos and 90 hours of video tape have been sifted through. This degree of co-ordination by the prosecution should be matched by the defendants and their supporters, - by demanding the same access to such "evidence" so that an effective defence can be established.

A university student, Neil Fernandez of Surrey, has been remanded on stringent bail conditions of £20,000, ordered to surrender his passport and ordered to stay indoors between 10.30 pm and 6 am as well as reporting daily to his local police station. He is accused of setting fire to a porsche and a jaguar and assaulting a PC. Murderers are treated better.

In addition to co-ordinating genuine support for people arrested the NDF hopes to organise a defence strategy for future occasions. Apart from sending £25 to the London-based Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign, we intend using all our funds to help people from the Nottingham area.

Please let us have the following information about anyone you know who has been arrested.

1. Name & address.
2. Offence & whether charged officially or not.
3. Date, time & place of court appearance.
4. How do they intend to plead?
5. Are they entitled to legal aid?
6. Their solicitors. Gregsons of 84 Derby Road are helping us(tel; 411999).

If you want to write to the NDF our address is:  
Nottingham Defence Fund, Box DF, 72 Radford Road, Nottingham NG7 5FT.



The NDF consists of one or more contacts from supportive and sympathetic anti-poll tax groups, and, of course, we welcome as much involvement as possible from people facing charges so that the NDF is run by, and is directly accountable to them too. The NDF does not insist that those we help are obliged to attend NDF meetings although, obviously, we would prefer they did.

What we are asking from you:

Send us the name of anyone, now or in the future who gets arrested for opposing the poll tax and we will offer financial, legal and moral aid. Please invite a speaker from the NDF to your meeting so that we can tell you more about what we are doing.

Copy this newsletter and circulate it among your group.

People from various APT groups attend NDF meetings. Currently we get individuals from Beeston, Hyson Green/Forest Fields, Lenton, Radford, Sherwood, Sneinton, St. Anns, West Bridgford. If your group is not represented why not rectify that by sending a friendly face to the next NDF meeting?

Help raise funds by running a benefit gig. It could be combined with raising funds for your own campaign. Or take up a NDF collection at meetings, stalls, gigs etc. Please make any cheques you send us payable to "NDF". Our account is with the Yorkshire Bank, Smithy Row, Nottingham. A/C No. 29549147, sort code 05-06-41. You can pay money directly into that account.

NDF members have recently spoken to anti-poll tax groups in Beeston, Bilborough, West Bridgford.

IT IS not disbelief that is dangerous in our society: it is belief. The moment it strikes you (as it may any day) that Christ is not the lifeless harmless image he has hitherto been to you, but a rallying centre for revolutionary influences which all established States and Churches fight, you must look to yourselves; for you have brought the image to life: and the mob may not be able to bear that horror.

*George Bernard Shaw*

Come to a strategy meeting at the Yorker, **CONTACT NDF FOR DATE.**

Items for discussion to include co-ordinating a defence for those arrested fighting the poll tax; participation in benefit gigs to fund the anti-poll tax campaign; the Sheffield Poly poll tax trade union conference; discussion on the direction which the Notts fed should take over the coming months. This meeting is organised by the NDF and people from various APTUs.

Tues. July 17. Old Angel, Stoney St. 8pm. Meeting to plan poll tax gigs up to Xmas.

Wed. July 25. 8pm. Big meeting at the Boat & Horses, Trent Road, Beeston.

All anti-poll tax activists welcome.

Fri. July 27, The Yorker, Mansfield Road. NDF benefit gig with Rikki & the Ravers. £2; £1.50; £1.

Sat. July 28. 10.15am at the ICC, Mansfield Road. Notts Anti-Poll Tax Federation meeting. All welcome.

Sat. Sep 8 at Sheffield Poly. National conference to discuss how trade unionists can oppose poll tax.

At the June 30 monthly meeting of Notts APT Fed. the secretary said that Sep 8 would be the date for the Notts Fed agm and election of officers. As Sep 8 is also the date of the anti-poll tax trade union conference at Sheffield Poly there is a clash of dates. Therefore, all anti-poll tax groups should inform the fed that an alternative date be found. Cynics might suggest that the clash was deliberate. Can the fed prove otherwise?