

subversion

MAY
FREE

STUFF THE POLL TAX!

The Poll Tax has now become a reality for every adult in the country. For working class people it is a savage attack on their living standards. It comes when council rents and mortgage repayments are rocketing and inflation is soaring over 10%.

Together they offer us a stark choice - between paying or going without new clothes, food, holidays or entertainment.

MEDIA LIES

This attack is backed up by media propaganda Lies get published saying non-payers are criminals. They say bailiffs will be sent to steal our belongings. They say non-payers will go to prison. Councils, Labour and Conservative, issue dire warnings and threaten us with prosecution. Labour politicians tell us not to break the law.

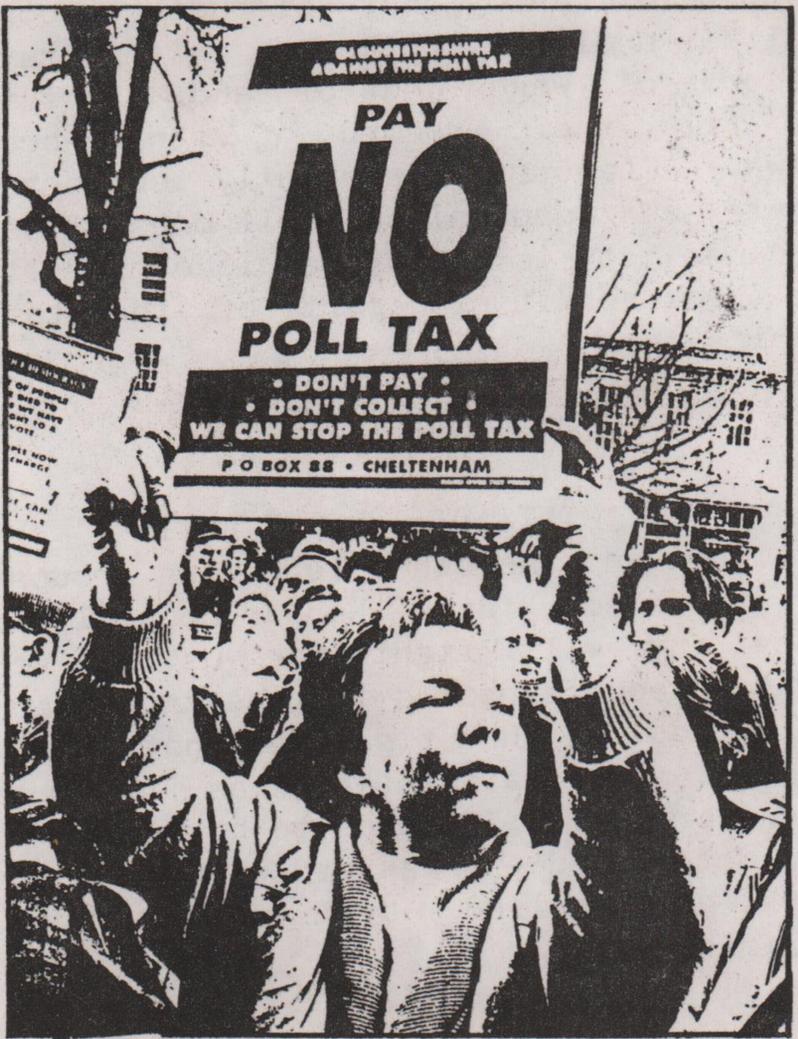
SCOTLAND - ONE YEAR ON

Yet in Scotland the Poll Tax came in over a year ago. Over a million people have either refused to pay or are months in arrears.

The number of successful prosecutions there can be counted on the fingers of one hand - with a few left over to spare. The truth is that the state cannot cope with the number of law-breakers. The Poll Tax is already in its second year there and it would take the courts over 80 years to deal with non-payers. They know the media and state propaganda is just lies.

FIGHT BACK IN ENGLAND

In the rest of Britian hundreds of thousands of people have demonstrated against the tax. Public meetings continue to attract unheard of numbers of working class people Anti-Poll Tax groups are growing around the country.



To beat this tax, workers need to organise together in the areas they live in. ISOLATED INDIVIDUALS CAN EASILY BE PICKED OFF. In Scotland, bailiffs have been driven out of streets and estates. Vulnerable members of our class, like the elderly and the sick, need to be reassured that they will receive the solidarity and support to overcome their fear. We need to organise in our workplaces, too. Employers must be told that their compliance with arrestment of wages orders will lead to strikes. Workers in dole offices have to follow the example of London and Scotland and refuse to deduct tax from benefit. Poll Tax redundancies should be fought by strike action - like the teachers are threatening. ONLY BY FIGHTING IN OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND WORKPLACES CAN WE WIN THIS FIGHT.



LABOUR SUPPORTS THE POLL TAX

The fight against the Poll Tax needs to be completely independent of all the political parties. Kinnock and the Labour Party make great play of their opposition to the Poll Tax. They even say they will get of it - in 4 or 5 years time! In the meantime they tell us not to break the law and to pay the tax!

Meanwhile, Labour councils are busily sending out threatening letters in Scotland. One council, Lothian, even spent £64,000 sending out an additional reminder it wasn't obliged to!

Labour tries to call it a 'Tory Tax'. But Labour councils are queuing up to implement it. Not one council has refused to set a Poll Tax. Nor will they. At stake is their power in the town halls.

LABOUR'S RECORD

Labour's record on the Poll Tax should come as a surprise to nobody. It is totally in line with their record over the years: They've sabotaged every industrial struggle

since Thatcher came in - just like they did before. They condemn strikers, telling them not to break the law. It fits their record of evictions, of using troops and police against strikers. It fits their record of wage control and pay freezes. It fits their record of strike-breaking laws. Labour consistently supports the state and capitalism. It doesn't do this because it is led by bad leaders. It does it because it is part of the state and capitalism.

MILITANT AND THE LEFT

Militant and the other left-wing groups want us to elect 'nice' Labour councillors who they say will fight for us. We've seen what Labour's record is. We know what they will do. The fight against this tax is as much against Labour as it is against the Tories. It needs to be single-minded and determined - organised where we live and work, controlled by participants, not politicians.

EAST MEETS WEST

After the tumultuous events which rocked state capitalist Eastern Europe last year, what lies ahead?

POLAND

The nation furthest along the route mapped out by the rulers of Eastern Europe is Poland. There, Deputy Prime Minister, Waldemar Kuczynski promises 'a purging of the economic system of everything that is inefficient: worthless money, unnecessary labour, state monopolies, unprofitable factories.'

Around 250,000 workers have already lost their jobs and an eventual unemployment total of 1.7 million (14% of the workforce) is forecast. State subsidies on staple goods have been withdrawn - the annual inflation rate last year was 800%. Meanwhile, a freeze on wage rises is being enforced. No wonder the shops are brimming with goods - who can afford to buy them?

DEMOCRACY AND STALINISM

The economic programmes of Gorbachev in Russia and of the 'opposition' groups taking office elsewhere in Eastern Europe are all similar to the Polish model. But they are all too aware that such measures can only be carried out with the acquiescence of the working class.

The velvet glove of democracy has replaced the iron fist of Stalinist dictatorship as the means designed to deliver this. Alongside the usual exhortations to make sacrifices for the sake of 'National Salvation', the working class of Eastern Europe is now encouraged to become an interested participant in civil society, through the creation of independent political parties, free elections, a free press and so on.

EMPTY PROMISES

We know through our own experience in the West how empty are the promises held out by the partisans of free market economics and capitalist democracy. The Eastern European working class will undoubtedly learn this too, as the impact of economic reform begins to exact its toll on their conditions of existence. We should endeavour to turn the lowering of physical barriers between East and West into an opportunity to speed up this learning process, by exchanging our ideas and experiences with our comrades in Eastern Europe.

Meanwhile, the path of independent working class struggle, rejecting the idea that all classes in society have an equal interest in the continued health of the state and the economy, is the only road which offers any prospect of progress for the working class, East and West.

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LABOUR AND THE POLL TAX

FRIDAY 1st JUNE 7.30pm

THE MILLSTONE, THOMAS ST, (off OLDHAM ST)
MANCHESTER CITY CENTRE

all welcome all welcome all welcome all welcome

