


# FIGHT BACK!



FIGHTBACK IS THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. ANN'S ANTI-POLL TAX UNION

ISSUE TWO

30p.

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# PAY **NO** POLL TAX



THERE'S

A LOT

GLASGOWING

ON IN

1990.

CULTURAL CAPITAL OF  
EUROPE.

# Poll Tax in Scotland

The official figures showing the level of non-payment in Scotland make grim reading for the Tories and their Labour allies collecting the Poll Tax. The authorities have been "surprised by the high number of people failing to pay". Five months after the bills went out throughout Scotland 680,000 have not paid a penny of their Poll Tax (the so called community charge). In Glasgow one in three haven't paid and non-payment is growing not falling as the Tories hoped. Because the figures above don't include the hundreds of thousands who have paid a few installments but then stopped, because they can't afford to keep up the payments. Nor do they include the hundreds of thousands of people missed from the register altogether.

In November the authorities will be taking steps to recover the Tax from non-payers. However the local councils (mostly Labour run) will be even more 'surprised' at the level of resistance from the Scottish working class if, as expected, they send in the bailiffs. Before now the Sheriffs Officers (bailiffs), harassing and intimidating non-payers, have been met by angry residents in the communities who these scumbags on their way! In Scotland the Poll Tax is proving to be what it promised to be - a costly, unfair Tax. Hopefully the Poll Tax in England and Wales will meet a similar fate as in Scotland. A successful campaign must unite non-payers in Scotland, England and Wales will ensure that it does.

## CITY IMAGE

Glasgow is to become "The City of Culture" with the slogan "There's a Whole Lot Glasgowing On". Tourists will flock to the City completely rejuvenating it with their cash. Locals who miss out on the gravy train will at least be able to forget about unemployment, poor housing and poverty as they take in the "culture". At last Glasgow will have a nice new "image". Saatchi & Saatchi - the Tories old P.R. firm - have been brought in by Glasgows Labour leaders to do the publicity.

The idea that tourism can replace Glasgow's manufacturing base is a variation on the Tory theme that new Asda's and McDonalds can compensate for the decimation of the North of England's traditional industries. And ultimately just as nonsensical.

Interviews of Glasgow's working class broadcast on B.B.C. 2. indicate that they do not much relish the idea of becoming a "sight" for trendy tourists like monkeys in a Zoo. Neither are they impressed by the patronising offer of a few cheap seats for the unwaged to attend the cultural "events". Pretty obviously too no one was conned by the promise of an economically transformed city.

None of this should surprise us. Glasgow workers have a long and proud history of class struggle to draw upon. Radio 4 - which has no interest in boosting the figures reports that over a third - yes a third! of Glaswegians eligible to pay the Poll Tax have paid nothing! This does not include those who started paying and then stopped when they realised that they were the odd ones out on their street. The Anti-Poll Tax struggle continues with whole streets turning out en masse to repulse Snoopers and Bailiffs.

This reality of Glasgow life co-exists uneasily with the new "image". The reality is better!



## WESTERN HYPOCRISY

Observations made during the course of Anti-Poll Tax campaigning in St. Ann's have confirmed what we already knew. A significant minority of people in the area are not to put too fine a point on it - poor. And by poor I do not mean being unable to afford an electric dishwasher but being unable to pay fuel bills or buy decent food. It was amusing then to see the middle class East German "refugees" driving over the border in Skodas and Mercedes wearing designer tracksuits.

Now the United Nations defines "refugees" as those fleeing from imminent danger of political persecution. In fact the British government has been busy sending back Tamil refugees as it considers they are not seeking asylum from political repression but from a low standard of living. (Two Tamils recently set fire to themselves so fearful were they of deportation. One is dead the other seriously injured.) Calling the East Germans deserters "refugees" then is totally inaccurate even if it makes good propaganda.

Ironically enough the goodies which the "refugees" thought would be available to them in the West may be little more than an illusion for some. East Germany has refused to let back some of its ex-citizens unemployed in West Germany. The West German Employers Association has warned "that labour market resources are not inexhaustible". This is a nice way of saying "stay at home because we do not have any jobs for you anyway"! It will be interesting then to see what happens now the East German government has decided to allow unrestricted travel!

Meanwhile I figure there must be a few decent jobs going in the German Democratic Republic for refugees from St. Ann's

## WATER PRIVATISATION - £7 BILLION XMAS PRESENT FOR CITY SHARKS

In FIGHTBACK 1. we mentioned the 5.5 Billion handout the Tory Government was dishing out to the City speculators to make the privatisation of the water industry "attractive". Since then it appears that due to the stock exchange down turn that the shares issue will drop another Billion.

In total then water privatisation is going to mean a near 7 Billion Xmas present to the already bloated City Sharks. Plus they end up owning the water supply - with thousands of acres of prime land. Plus the continuing profits they can extract from the captive consumers.

Then they want us to pay a Poll Tax so that the rich can pay next to no rates! There's only two answers to that. The first cannot be printed here - the second is Pay No Poll Tax!

# **POLL TAX RESISTANCE**



## BEWARE SNOOPERS

Poll Tax snoopers have been calling at homes in many parts of the city over the last few weeks. So far 20% of people in Nottingham have failed to return their poll tax forms. If you haven't sent back your registration form yet; here's what to do if the snoopers call.

- \* Don't open the door: pretend your not in!
- \* If you have to speak to them: ask them for identification.
- \* Don't be intimidated. Remember, they can't force you to fill in a form there and then.
- \* Don't tell them anything about previous Poll Tax forms, or other people sharing your home.

You have to take a registration form from them, or you might be fined. They'll probably try to arrange a time to collect it : Pick a time when you know that nobody will be at home.

- \* Then tell your friends and neighbours that snoopers are in the area.
- \* Follow them around - this will worry them, and might stop them harassing people on their own doorsteps.
- \* Remember that the snoopers are nervous because they know that they are unpopular.

These are not the only options. We have a leaflet setting out other ways of delaying registration- contact us. Most important of all don't sit at home worrying about it. If you're worried about it - fill the form in and send it back. Frustration of the registration process is only a small part of our protest. The main thing will be to refuse payment when the first bills arrive next April.

## BREAK THE CHAINS!



**PAY NO POLL TAX!**

## **M. A. JULIOUS & CO CERTIFICATED BAILIFFS**

We are a leading firm of private bailiffs based in Nottingham, servicing an area of 60 miles radius

**SCUMBAGS WANTED FOR**

**NEW GROWTH INDUSTRY**

... have good communication skills and a clean driving record. Experience not essential as full training will be given.

For further information: replies in writing please, enclosing CV to:

**Mr. L. V. Alcock, M. A. Julious & Co.,  
140 Hucknall Road  
Nottingham NG5 1FA**

## AUTHORITIES EXPECT WIDESPREAD RESISTANCE

EVENING POST

- (d) Whether existing bailiffs can handle the anticipated increase in workload. It may be necessary in some authorities to employ more than one firm of bailiffs.
- (e) If outside bailiffs are employed the need to issue guidelines on their mode of operation, bearing in mind the new category of person who will be subject to recovery proceedings for the first time.

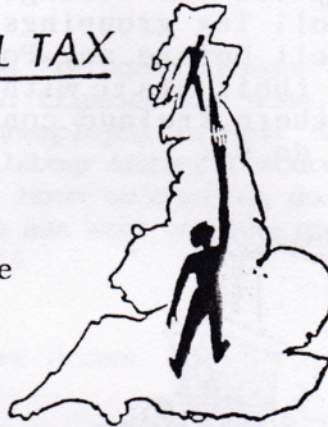
The above is taken from a document in the possession of the Local Authority detailing measures to be taken against non-payers of the Poll Tax (i.e. us). They are obviously expecting widespread resistance - we have to make sure we don't disappoint them!



One Sunday afternoon SAAPTU members took the stall down to Kendale court and Kingsthorpe close flats. With the aid of a megaphone the people in the flats were addressed as they stood bemused at their windows to find out what was going off. This was a slightly unorthodox way of campaigning but nevertheless effective. We distributed leaflets and posters, signed up new members and contacts with whom we will be working closely with as the campaign against the Tory tax grows in the months ahead. After the Kendale flats meeting members took the stall to the Cauntton Avenue flats area of St. Anns where we got a good response from residents and also signed up new members who want to help in the fight against the Poll Tax. It is important that the links made so far are further built upon to ensure a successful fight is waged in the crucial battles next April.

## TWINNED AGAINST THE POLL TAX

St. Anns Anti-Poll Tax Union will be "twinning" with a group in Scotland shortly. Campaigners in Scotland have a wealth of experience and we need to learn from them as much as possible.



## S.A.A.P.T.U. - YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED

St. Anns Anti Poll Tax Union is just one of hundreds of anti Poll Tax groups across the country campaigning for non-payment. So far in Nottingham there are 8 Anti Poll Tax groups across the city. Groups in Sherwood and Sneinton have recently been set up after holding successful public meetings. Regular campaigning by SAAPTU members over the last few months has seen us grow to over 150 members. However the Poll Tax is only six months away! We can't afford to waste any time - we need to win as many as possible to non-payment and build a mass campaign. To do this we need members active involvement in the campaign: by attending organising meetings; canvassing/leafletting your own street; helping out on the stall. If you can help please contact us, because many hands make light work!

### JOIN YOUR LOCAL ANTI-POLL TAX UNION.

ASPLEY: [REDACTED]  
FOREST FIELDS/HYSON GREEN: [REDACTED]  
NOTTM EAST: [REDACTED]  
SHERWOOD: [REDACTED]  
WEST BRIDGFORD: [REDACTED]  
BULWELL: [REDACTED]  
MEADOWS: [REDACTED]  
RADFORD: [REDACTED]  
ST.ANNS: [REDACTED]



BREAKERS! GET  
THAT COPY OUT:  
PAY NO POLL TAX!

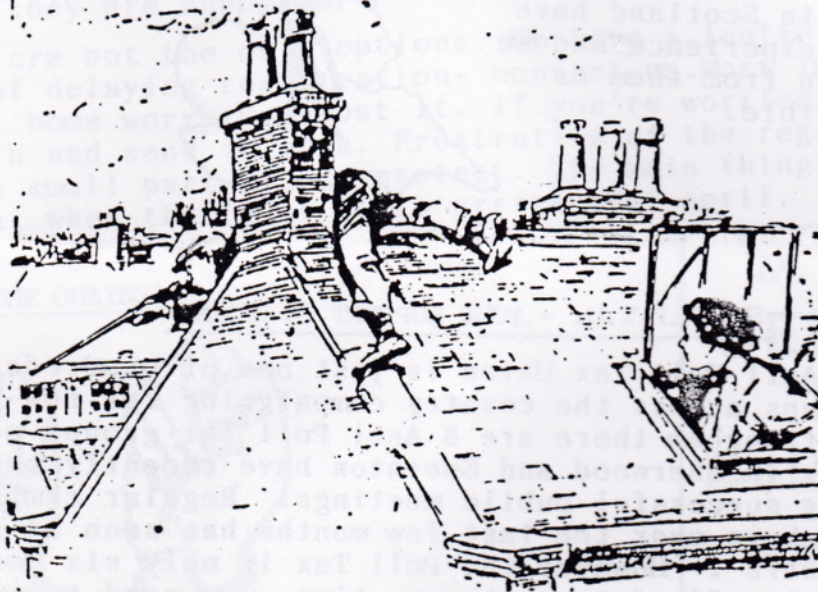
# **JOIN YOUR LOCAL ANTI-POLL TAX UNION**



## NORTHERN IRELAND - WHAT NO POLL TAX!

Despite the constant assurances that the North of Ireland is "British" there are no plans - at least in the short term - to introduce the Poll Tax there. Why is this?

The Government does not want to fight on too many fronts at the same time. The simple rule of "divide and conquer" has worked well for it with the trade unions, for example. Scotland was the obvious place to introduce the Poll Tax because hostility to Tory policies is already so great they have only a tiny minority of M.P's. There was no need to worry about losing votes in Scotland because of the Poll Tax. By implementing it a year before England and Wales the Conservatives hoped to have the Scottish working class defeated on the Poll Tax issue before its introduction here. This strategy has failed badly. Between  $\frac{3}{4}$  and 1 million Scots have paid no Poll Tax 6 months after all reminders and final demands had run out. People who started paying have stopped when they saw the strength of the resistance campaign! Recruitment to Anti-Poll Tax groupings in England and Wales is growing steadily but surely well before any Poll Tax bills are issued. The Tories have enough on their plate without attempting to introduce the Poll Tax into the Northern Ireland conflict. From their point of view they were wise not to do so.



"OK one more Snooper then come to bed"

The Poll Tax would be extremely difficult to collect in Northern Ireland. Already the war situation means that many Nationalists (Catholics mainly) are refusing to pay a T.V. licence in protest at the British governments interference in Irish affairs. Electricity workers who have tried to cut off supplies have been shot as have D.S.S. snoopers. To try to bring in the Poll Tax to Northern Ireland would create problems for the government it can well do without at this moment. Which does not mean that they will not try and introduce it at a later date if they can defeat the Poll Tax defiance in Britain.

The last thing the Government wants is unity between the Irish working class. The Poll Tax issue is one which could have promoted some unity between Catholic and Protestant workers on a class basis. True, this unity would have been extremely fragile and narrow yet always risky for the oppressor.



On October 9th 1989 the new Social Security Act was introduced. What does it mean for people on the dole?

1. From now on you have to be "actively seeking work" even when there is none. Write to employers even when you are well aware there are no jobs on offer. Keep the replies as proof of your "activity".

2. After October 9th anyone who has been unemployed for at least 26 weeks can do "employment on trial". If you work for more than 6 weeks and less than 12 weeks at a new job you can jack in without being denied dole for 26 weeks. Each week must total 16 hours or more.

Remember ... everyone else who leaves a rubbish job "of their own accord" still loses 26 weeks dole.

On the face of it this new rule appears to benefit the claimant. However in practice it will simply make it easier for the dole office to force people into jobs which they are totally unsuited for.

3. For up to 13 weeks you can limit your search for a new job to whatever you have done in the past or are skilled in. This is called the "permitted period". After this maximum 13 weeks the unemployment office can re-classify you as suitable for other jobs. You will be expected to take any job whatever the conditions or pay or risk losing benefit.

This move gives employers the green light to lower, already absurdly low, wages. If you see a job that says "wages by negotiation" then leave it well alone!

4. The dole office dregs who run Re-start/Claimant Adviser Service etc., have decided to call themselves "counsellors"! They are there to "help" you! One way they can "help" you is by offering you a rubbish job with rubbish wages and rubbish conditions. The type of job they would not consider themselves. If you turn down such work the friendly counsellor can turn nasty and call this, "refusal of employment". To refuse employment means you can lose benefit for 26 weeks. The rate of pay offered is not accepted as a good cause for refusing employment except within the permitted period. X Beware "Jobstart", a scheme which gives you £20 weekly "top up" if your wages are less than £90. But ... only if you have been unemployed for a year and then only for the first 6 months at work!

So, the Tories are certainly tightening the screw on the unemployed. Those on the dole are blamed for being out of work - its nothing to do with the economic depression. Oh goodness me no! - and called scroungers. Remember the rich who fiddle the stock exchange and sit in London bars, restaurants and clubs all day are respectable "business people" not scroungers.

Sadly lacking is a National Unemployed Workers Movement such as was built in the "hungry 30s" with a membership of many tens of thousands. We are miles away from such a Movement today. However, every journey starts with a single step. All unemployed workers should make a special effort to get involved in Anti-Poll Tax work.

But - make that the start - not the end.

Let's start asking the big questions, like how come its champagne for the few and crab paste for the unemployed!

Unemployment, poverty's pain enough! We don't need persecution!



# SAAPTU

## ACTION NOT WORDS

Without the co-operation of Labour councils up and down the country the introduction of the Poll Tax would be impossible. The Labour Party, both right and "left" argue that "the Poll Tax is terrible, we oppose it, but we have to implement and collect it because we can't break the law etc".

This tired old argument has been used to stop any effective action against Tory attacks for the last decade - and has positively encouraged the Thatcher government to ride roughshod over the people. The Tories are not stupid - they made laws so as to make it impossible to take effective action without going outside the law. For example, the trade union laws.

Laws serve to weaken the working class and strengthen the bosses at factory and governmental level. They are class laws and it is our duty to oppose all attacks on the working class - regardless of whether its "legal" or not.

We should have no illusions that the Labour Party will take any effective measures to stop the Poll Tax - or resist any other attacks from this government. Labour councillors and M.P.s say they oppose the Poll Tax - if so these "windbags" should act not give us fine speeches.

Non-payers demand that Labour councillors fight.

- \* Stop implementation of the Poll Tax now!
- \* Don't victimise any worker who refuse to assist in implementing the Poll Tax.
- \* No prosecutions for non-registration.
- \* Don't use bailiffs against non-payers.
- \* No more cuts in jobs and services (except C.R.O.!!)
- \* Labour should get off the fence - build mass non-payment.

In practice the Labour Party cannot meet these elementary demands because when in power the Labour Party will be forced to use bosses laws against the working class.

FIGHT BACK JOIN