

POLL-AXE !

NEWSLETTER OF THE FOREST FIELDS & HYSON GREEN ANTI-POLL TAX CAMPAIGN

ISSUE 2

SEPT/OCT 1989

FOREST FIELDS / HYSON GREEN



ANTI-POLL TAX CAMPAIGN

£335 EACH ?!!

The ruling Labour group on Nottinghamshire County Council are planning their spending for the next few years. To maintain the services they already provide and make small improvements, they will have to charge a poll tax of at least £335 for each person.

This is £60 more than the latest "official" estimate. Paddy Tipping, of the Finance Committee, told the Evening Post that to keep the poll tax at £275, council spending would have to be cut by £36 million.

But Paddy Tipping didn't tell the Post that this is only the start. Inflation is already at 8%. The way government grants are worked out, the poll tax would have to go up by much more than 8% to cover this. The Child Poverty Action Group say that a spending increase of only 5% would mean a poll tax increase of at least 15%.

And it doesn't stop there.

Because of all the administration, the poll tax costs much more to collect than the rates. We don't know yet how much this will add to our bills in Nottingham, but in Glasgow this year the cost was £79 each. This would take our poll tax bills to over £400...

The poll tax was always meant to work like this. For a long time, the government have said that local councils have too much power. By making us pay more for council services the government hope we will vote, democratically, for the party that promises the lowest poll tax bills. But the only way to reduce poll tax bills is to cut spending. Result: we suffer, and local councils shrivel up. Council services will be farmed out to big businesses, who will make a fat profit but be accountable to nobody.

So we've got a message for Paddy Tipping, and all the other Labour councillors:

If you really want to maintain services, there's only one thing you can do: join the fight against the poll tax. Refuse to compile a register, refuse to set a rate, refuse to send out bills. Don't fine people for not registering, and don't harass people for not paying.. WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

BENEFIT !!

FRIDAY OCTOBER 13TH
BANDS, MUSIC, BEER

THE YORKER PUB,
MANSFIELD ROAD

BE THERE !!

THE POVERTY OF STUDENT LIFE

Nottingham has over 10 000 students, many of them living in this area. All of them are affected by the poll tax.

All students will pay 20% of the standard poll tax rate - about £70, using latest estimates for Nottingham. This may not sound like much, but it must be put into the context of all the other Tory attacks against students. Half of the students in this country finish their course with an overdraft - some end up as much as £1 500 in debt. Add to this the following:

- poll tax at £70 a year - £210 over a three year course
- an increase in student grants this year of 5.5%, when inflation is already at 8%
- next year grants will be frozen, forcing students to take out bank loans to finance their studies: estimates say the average loan will be £400 per year - £1 200 for a three year course
- most students live in rented accommodation, and are likely to have rent increases forced upon them as a result of the poll tax and the new Housing Bill

So, students are likely to end their courses with enormous overdrafts. Many people from poorer families will be frightened away from studying, in case they are unable to repay such a debt. Others will limit themselves to courses that allow them to pay back the money.

HOW TO FIGHT BACK?

Under poll tax legislation, students are to be registered for the poll tax by their educational institution. But its worth using your student union to put pressure on the college administration, to try and persuade them not to do this.

Most importantly, join your local anti-poll tax campaign. In Scotland over 1 million people are still refusing to pay the poll tax, six months after the bills went out. The poll tax can be beaten - but we need you, and you need us!

REGISTRATION: WHAT TO DO NEXT?

If you haven't sent back your registration form yet, you will have had a letter from the council threatening you with a £50 fine. So what should you do now? We advise you to ignore it. They

you got their letters. They can only prove this:

- if they were hand delivered to you personally, or
- if they were sent by recorded delivery, or
- if you tell them.

They will probably send a poll tax snoopers to your house. **DON'T TELL THE SNOOPER - OR ANYONE ELSE FROM THE COUNCIL - THAT YOU HAVE HAD POLL TAX FORMS.** You **MUST NOT** admit that you've had anything from them about the poll tax, or they can fine you £50.

When the snoopers call, its best to pretend there's nobody in. If this isn't possible, get rid of them quickly. They'll try to get you to fill in a form on the doorstep. **TRY NOT TO DO THIS.** Tell them you're about to go out, have a bath, feed the baby - any excuse will do. But you **MUST** take a form from them. Once you've done this you must reply **WITHIN 21 DAYS.**

This isn't the only option. We have a leaflet setting out other ways to delay registration - get one from our stall every Saturday at Hyson Green crossroads.

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.

Delaying registration is only a small part of our protest. The main thing will be to refuse payment when the first bills arrive next April.

If you need any advice, contact us.

POLL TAX BRINGS HIDDEN RENT RISES

Many people in this area live in rented homes. If the poll tax succeeds, many of them will suffer a massive rent rise at the same time.

This is because rates are often paid in with rent bills. Under the poll tax, people who've paid their rates this way in the past will get their own, separate poll tax bill. But unless their rent is cut by the amount of the old rates bill for their home, then the owner of the property gets a hefty rent rise.

Last time rates were changed, in 1957, it was illegal for property owners to profit in this way. This time, the government say that tenants and property owners have to make their own arrangements to discuss the matter.

But the new Housing Bill, and changes in the way that housing benefit is paid, have already made most tenancies far less secure. You can't negotiate on equal terms when you can easily be made homeless if the property owner doesn't like what you say.

We should start thinking, now, about what we can do if local property owners try to make money out of us in this underhand way...

NOTTINGHAM ANTI-POLL TAX FEDERATION MEETING - 2ND SEPT.

Delegates from the Forest Fields & Hyson Green Anti-Poll Tax attended the second meeting of Nottingham Anti-Poll Tax Federation September 2nd. Delegates were present from St. Anns, Bulwell, Nottingham East, and from several unions including NALGO and CPSA. The bulk of the meeting was taken up with elections for posts on the Federation executive committee. Apart from that, little else happened.

NATIONAL ANTI-POLL TAX CONFERENCE - 3RD SEPT.

Members of our group attended a national conference in London on 3rd September, organised by the London Federation of Anti-Poll Tax Groups. There were more than 100 other groups from this country, some Scottish groups, and a Special Branch spy with a hand-held tape recorder!

The day was dominated by heated discussion of the attempts by Militant to gain control of the anti-poll tax movement by getting their own members voted into all the key positions of anti-poll tax federations - as they have here in Nottingham.

Arguments flew back and forth, and tempers rose. Tommy Sheridan, a figurehead of the Scottish anti-poll tax campaign, led the vocal Militant grouplet in angry denials of any sectarianism or exclusive organising.

Eventually, it was agreed to elect four people from the conference to approach the Militant-dominated "All British Anti-Poll Tax Steering Committee", and work with them to organise a national rally in Manchester next month. As we go to press, we still await Militant's reaction to this proposal - watch this space!

LOBBY OF LABOUR COUNCILLORS - 8TH SEPT.

Over sixty people turned out to lobby the combined meeting of the Nottingham & District Labour Party and the councillors, at which they were due to discuss setting a poll tax rate of about £350.

The response from passers-by was excellent, with many cars and buses sounding their horns. Councillors and others entering the meeting were asked to break the law and not set a poll tax rate, and not victimise those who refused to register or pay.

At the meeting, following a motion opposing the poll tax put forward by anti-poll tax campaigners, it was decided to delay any further discussion of the poll tax rate to a future meeting.

We need to ensure that we produce an even bigger lobby next time, to keep up the pressure on the councillors.

BENEFIT - 16TH SEPT.

A large, wet and soggy crowd attended the first social event and fundraiser organised by our group.

The large hall of Hyson Green Boys Club echoed to the sound of dancing feet, driven by the pounding beats of local bands Hophazard, The Scarehunters and Wholesome Fish. Between the bands, Danza Continua provided a raunchy world music disco.

The bad weather did nothing to deter the committed anti-poll campaigners of Nottingham, and we made over £200 profit for group funds.

Well done the Social Committee, and thanks to all the bands and everyone else who gave their time/equipment/ideas - especially the many who weren't paid for it!

ASIANS FIGHT BACK !!

The poll tax will be especially hard on many Asians, who keep up the tradition of the extended family and often have four or more adults living at the same address.

The Indian Community Centre on Rawson Street has organised a public meeting for SUNDAY OCTOBER 1ST at 7.00 PM. Members of our group have already helped give out leaflets to advertise the meeting.

A speaker from Scotland will talk about the Scottish fight against the poll tax, and a member of the Forest Fields & Hyson Green group will talk about the local campaign.

STALL

For several months now, we have been running a stall every Saturday between 11.30 and 12.30 at the crossroads of Gregory Boulevard and Radford Road.

It has proved to be very successful in that we are able to talk to people who don't want to pay the poll tax, give out information about the campaign,

and also collect names and addresses of people who are interested in getting more actively involved in the fight against the poll tax. More help is always needed - contact us if you've got the time to spare.

WHATS ON ?

1. Forest Fields and Hyson Green Anti-Poll Tax Campaign meets every other Tuesday between 8.00 and 9.45pm, at the GREEN COMMUNITY CENTRE (corner of Noel Street and Gregory Boulevard). Everybody is welcome, and creche facilities are always available. The next two meetings are: TUESDAY 3RD OCTOBER, and TUESDAY 17TH OCTOBER.

2. National rally/conference to set up an All British Anti-Poll Tax Steering Federation (*sounds a bit imperialist to me - ED.*) in Manchester Free Trade Hall on 25TH NOVEMBER. Delegates from this group will be attending - contact us for more information.

3. **SOCIAL EVENT** The next benefit gig for the Forest Fields & Hyson Green Anti-Poll Tax Campaign is at the YORKER PUB on Mansfield Road (just up from the Victoria Centre clock) on FRIDAY OCTOBER 13TH at 8pm. Its rumoured that bands playing will include the Flaps and the The Strolling Bones (*though I could be entirely mistaken about this - Ed.*)

4. **BARBECUE** Forest Fields & Hyson Green Anti-Poll Tax Campaign are having a barbecue at 42 NOEL STREET on SUNDAY 1ST OCTOBER, starting at 5pm. We'll provide the fire and garden. Bring your own food and drink - and all your spare poll tax registration forms, just in case we can't get the fire started...

TWINS AGAINST THE TAX!

At our last meeting, we decided to "twin" our group with the Prestonfields & District Anti-Poll Tax Group in Edinburgh.

Bob Goupillot, who talked at our public meeting about Scotland and the poll tax, is a member of the Prestonfields group. They have helped us a lot already, and following this decision we will keep up regular contact with them.

The newspaper clipping describes an occupation of council offices by poll tax campaigners in Edinburgh, including members of the Prestonfields group.

EDINBURGH EVENING NEWS 7 JUNE 1989

Poll tax counter attack

A GROUP of anti-poll tax campaigners today occupied a public building in Leith.

About 40 of them crammed into the sheriff officers premises in Constitution Street, locked the doors and singing anti-poll tax songs and staging a mock auction of equipment and furnishings.

Staff fled from the public counter.

Police surrounded the building shortly after the 9.30am takeover but protestors - who had marched from the foot of Leith Walk - refused to let them in.

by LINDSAY REID

The demonstration ended peacefully about 15 minutes later just as a number of police officers got into the building from the rear.

One of the organisers, Bob Goupillot (33) of Dalkeith Road, Edinburgh, said the aim was to show people they need not be intimidated into paying the poll tax.

"If sheriff officers think they can threaten people by saying they are going to sell off their

belongings, they will find we can retaliate by harassing them in a similar way," he added.

Among the placard and banner-carrying demonstrators was university lecturer John Holloway (41) of Viewforth Square, Edinburgh, who said sheriff officers told him they were going to sell off his property after he refused to register for poll tax.

Warrant

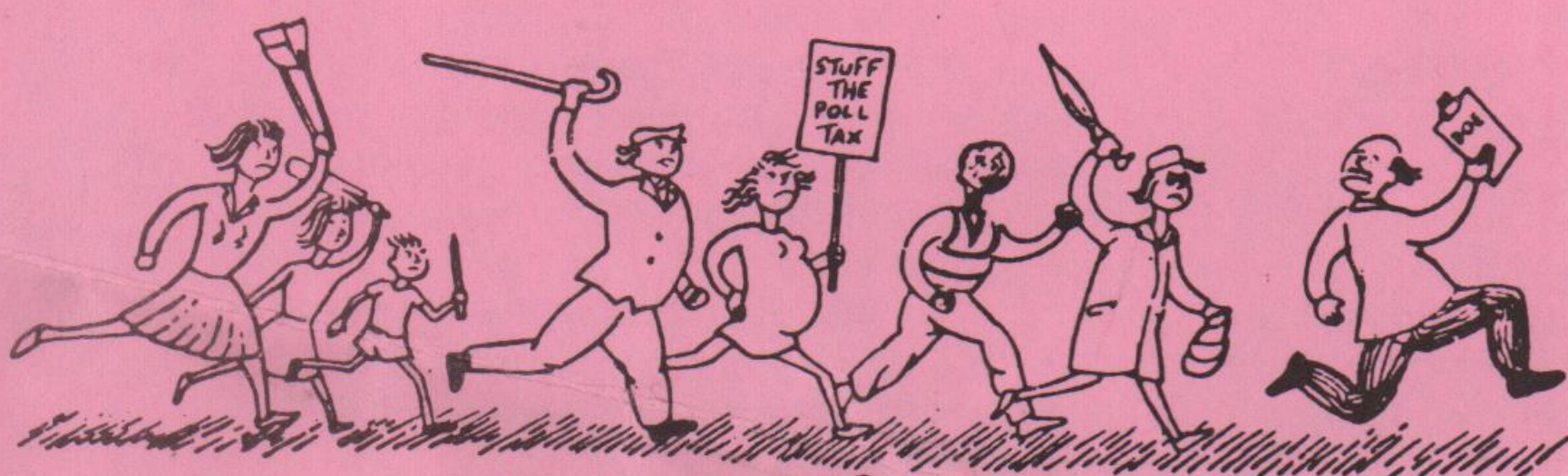
"They came to my door about eight weeks ago and carried out a pounding on my stereo," he added. "I went to my local anti-poll

tax group and together with the Lothian Federation of Anti-Poll Tax Groups we warned them there would be massive resistance if they tried to carry out a warrant sale. I have heard nothing since.

"It is important we let the public know they should not be intimidated into paying this unjust tax, which redistributes money from the poor to the rich."

Chief Inspector Alex Stewart, of Leith Police Station, who led the police team at the scene, said afterwards that police had no contact with the protestors and he was happy that the demonstration had been "peaceful."

AXE THE TAX !



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printed & published by Forest Fields & Hyson Green Anti-Poll Tax Campaign, Box 5 Basics, Berridge Rd & Box 5 Hyson Green Wholefoods, Radford Rd.