

NALGO



In 1381
medieval peasants revolted against it!

But in 1990
YOU will be faced with it . . .

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE
POLL TAX

THE GOVERNMENT'S POLL TAX

It promises to be the harshest tax ever imposed on this country – 22 million people will be worse off.

Whether you live in a mansion or a bedsit the charge will be the same.

The last time there was a tax like this in Britain was over 600 years ago. The Peasants' Revolt forced King Richard II to back down and replace it with fairer taxes.

'The poll tax is fair only in the sense that the Black Death was fair; it is indiscriminate, striking at young and old, rich and poor, employed and unemployed alike.'

THE TORY REFORM GROUP

'It is destined to become the most unpopular tax of all and the government which imposed it will reap a whirlwind of electoral hostility.'


**JOHN DALY, GENERAL
SECRETARY NALGO**






THE POLL TAX WILL HIT ALL OF US . . .

- From next April the poll tax will replace the domestic rates that councils in England and Wales collect to pay for local services. All councils are being made to change and enforce this new tax. In Scotland the changes were imposed from 1 April this year.
- If you are low paid or a millionaire you will pay the same. The poll tax does not take into account your ability to pay.
- If you are claiming benefits you will have to pay a fifth of the poll tax from your income support. If you fall into arrears then poll tax will be taken from your benefit.
- If you live with a partner you will be responsible for his/her bill (unless you live in a lesbian or gay relationship). If you split up you may remain responsible for your ex-partner's arrears.
- There is little chance that you are exempt. The short list of those not having to pay includes monks and nuns, the immediate royal family, members of visiting forces and prisoners (except those imprisoned for non-payment of poll tax, or of any fine).
- The tax discriminates against people with physical disabilities. You **WILL** have to pay the poll tax, unless you live in a hospital or residential care home. People with a 'severe mental impairment' (the government's terminology) will not have to pay.



The implications for carers and those being cared for are immense. Cuts in council funding have already had a major impact on provision for people with disabilities. The choice for people with physical disabilities or for elderly relatives being looked after is stark . . . pay the poll tax or go into a care home.






THE POLL TAX WILL HIT LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKERS . . .

Council workers will bear the brunt of the new tax's savage effects. If you work in local government not only will you have to pay the poll tax, but you will suffer its effects on your workplace . . .

- The poll tax is designed to force councils to cut their levels of service provision. This will mean fewer jobs and opportunities.
- If you are a council worker you could be forced to hand over personal information on local residents to help poll tax officers compile their payment register.
- If you work in the finance department you may have to work on the poll tax. If you do, you could be expected to carry out the wide-ranging and draconian new powers that go with the job. These include the power to:
 - send in bailiffs to seize the goods of those unable to pay;
 - order employers to take poll tax arrears from wage packets;
 - recommend imprisonment for defaulters.

These new powers will endanger the vital relationship between local authority workers and the general public. Suspicion and fear will enter all contacts at the point of service delivery, with service users becoming wary of divulging important and necessary information.

If you work in local government your job will become more difficult and more dangerous.





THE POLL TAX THREATENS ALL OUR CIVIL LIBERTIES . . .

Poll tax officers will need information on everybody over 18 living in their area. To get this many sources will be used.


- Many people unable to pay will be frightened to put their names on the electoral register – and so lose their fundamental right to vote. This is already happening in Scotland.
- Computer records and membership lists will be used. These include social service and social security lists, library and school membership rolls, housing lists and even police records.
- You may even be forced to answer up to 50 highly personal questions to help the poll tax officers complete their forms. These include questions on your state of mind, your children and your religion.
- If you move house you will have to tell the poll tax officers. In case you don't British Telecom is offering a service to councils to inform on your whereabouts!

NALGO believes the poll tax is UNFAIR, UNDEMOCRATIC and WASTEFUL.

The poll tax is the latest – and worst – in a chain of measures created to stop local councils providing the services we all need.

The cost of collection will be astronomical – and in some cases, such as claimants, the cost of administering the tax will be higher than the actual payment received.

Accountants Price Waterhouse have put the start-up costs for the tax at £244 – £287 million for 1989/90, four times what the government had anticipated. Running costs are expected to be as high as £495 million each year, compared with £200 million for collecting the domestic rates.



An enormous new bureaucracy will have to be created to enable registration, collection and enforcement. The Post Office estimates that because of the poll tax it will distribute 150 million local government letters a year – three times the current level.

Yet, despite this, evasion will soar. Policing the collection process will be a nightmare. It is estimated that avoidance could be as high as 20% in some areas.

WOULDN'T THE EXTRA MONEY BEING SPENT TO IMPLEMENT THIS TAX BE BETTER SPENT ON THE SERVICES WE ALL NEED, SERVICES WHICH ARE ALREADY STARVED OF THE NECESSARY CASH AND RESOURCES?

NALGO is not alone in its opposition . . . opinion polls show that over 60% of voters are against it, with less than a third in favour.

Most people recognise the injustice of a tax which hits most savagely those sections of the community already suffering hardship and discrimination . . . in particular the low paid, Black and Asian people, women and young people.

NALGO SAYS FIGHT THIS UNJUST POLL TAX

Every NALGO member is affected by the poll tax, either as a worker or as a citizen. And it is because our members are so widely affected that NALGO recognises that it has an important responsibility to play a leading role in broad-based campaigns of opposition to this tax. Where these campaigns do not already exist NALGO branches should help start them.

The poll tax hits each and every one of us, so the support of members in all services is vital to making those campaigns a success.

Together we can show this government that their poll tax is truly . . .

UNFAIR, UNDEMOCRATIC, WASTEFUL

NALGO SAYS 'NO POLL TAX'

Published by NALGO, 1 Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9AJ. Printed by The JASON PRESS Ltd., 6/8 Dicker Mill, Hertford, Herts SG13 7AA PD/89/1686/411