

3D *on't pay!
on't collect!
on't implement!*

Issue #3 of the open,
independant newsletter
produced by the "3rd
September Steering
Committee"

Poll Tax: an issue for all trade unionists

Trade unionists want to fight the poll tax! That's the message that came from the rank and file at the conferences of the National Union of Teachers and the National Union of Journalists recently.

With poll tax bills now going out across Scotland, England and Wales, resistance and resentment is spreading. Not only teachers and journalists are prepared to take strike action against the implementation of the poll tax: already NALGO workers throughout the country are taking guerilla action over the introduction of the tax.

Recently Sheffield housing workers went on strike in protest at being forced to collect the poll tax. And earlier this year, DSS workers in South London walked out rather than hand over claimants' details to poll tax registration officers.

Many employers are fearful of the consequences of deducting poll tax payments from workers' wages. The Engineering Employers Federation has complained to the Tories over this.

In civil service and local government offices, workplace anti-poll tax unions are springing up — and we must support and extend this.

We should be fighting for union branches in all industries to follow the lead of the NUT and the NUJ, and adopt non-payment and non-implementation policies.

While workers in benefit offices and in local government poll tax offices are in the frontline of fighting the poll tax, it is an issue that faces *all* workers. Every worker who doesn't — or can't — pay the poll tax will face having it deducted from their wages.

Other local authority workers, including teachers, will face redundancies, pay cuts, and worsening conditions as a result of councils making cuts to keep poll tax levels down.

Trade union action against the poll tax is looking ever more likely. As we go to print, council workers in Newham are on strike against job losses that are a direct result of the level of poll tax.

Encouraged by the scale of non-payment in Scotland and the likely scale of the revolt in England and Wales, workers are gaining the confidence to take industrial action against the Tory tax.

We must build support throughout the labour movement

to organise solidarity with any workers who refuse to co-operate with the poll tax, and anti-poll tax unions should be prepared to actively support picketing organised by striking workers.

It was hoped that the All Britain Federation would call a conference for trade unionist in conjunction with the Socialist Movement and other campaigning trade union bodies. However, at a time when the maximum unity is necessary, and the broadest, most representative conference possible, the All Britain Federation decided to go it alone, not prepared to organise a conference with broader forces than itself.

The Socialist Movement, who in conjunction with the Federation's trade union officer, had proposed the trade union conference to the All Britain Federation in the first place, had attracted a wide range of sponsors — Tony Benn MP, Joe Marino (General Secretary of the Bakers' Union), the CPSA Broad Left, members of the NUT and NUJ executives, and over thirty individual NALGO, CPSA, NUJ, NUT, NUR and AEU union branches.

The implications of the All Britain Federation's action will need to be discussed at the next 3D activists meeting on Saturday 2nd June in Sheffield.

Whatever the outcome of the All Britain Federation trade union conference on 23rd June the task of building workplace resistance to the poll tax, and the forging of real, organised links between trade unions and the anti-poll tax movement is the biggest task facing us all.

Sham Singh
Trade Union Liaison Office
All Britain Federation (personal capacity)

3D National Activists Meeting

Saturday 2nd June
Sheffield Co-ordinating Centre for the Unemployed
73, West Street, Sheffield
12.00 noon - 4.00pm
* **Current situation in the movement**
* **Building workplace action**
* **Producing 3D**

For more details contact Sham on 081 808 5893

EDITORIAL

Build non-payment and non-implementation

It is clear from the lobbies, meetings, and tremendous demonstration on 31st March that the anti-poll tax campaign is becoming a genuinely mass movement. The levels of non-payment continue to increase in Scotland and the local election results in England and Wales show the mass opposition to the tax.

However, the weak link in the movement is in its relationship to the organised labour movement. 3D has promoted a combined strategy of non-payment, non-collection and non-implementation. For us this is not simply hollow propaganda, but flows from an understanding that the tax can only be defeated if on the basis of mass non-payment workers take action against the tax.

Because of this, the decision of the All Britain Federation to "go it alone" in organising a trade union conference is all the more regrettable, but par for the course coming from a body that is overwhelmingly dominated by one political current. Anti-poll tax activists need to work with the broadest possible range of trade unionist to defeat the tax.

Police riot!

For the hundreds of thousands of people who mobilised for the national demo on 31st March it was a brilliant day — until the police, completely unprovoked, attacked the tail end of the march after a peaceful sit down outside Downing Street.

The police attack was vicious enough, but the comments that followed from the Federation's "leaders", fingering "anarchists" and those who "deliberately set out to seek confrontation with the police" were completely out of order.

3D has no hesitation in blaming the police, and their paymasters in the Tory government for what happened.

We will defend anyone involved in the fight against the poll tax whether they be demonstrators, non-payers, or workers taking industrial action. And we will resist any attempts to exclude people, other than organised racists, fascists and homophobes, from the anti-poll tax movement.

These recent events make it more important than ever to organise a strong network of activists, not dominated by any one political grouping, committed to non-payment, and non-implementation. Make sure that your anti-poll tax group is represented at the next 3D national meeting.

COUNCILS

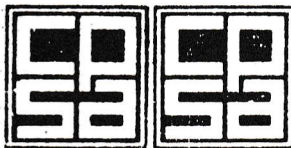
Fighting the Poll Tax in Manchester

In the May elections for Manchester City Council, eight wards have Labour candidates that are campaigning openly against the policies pursued by the Council's Labour administration of implementation of the Poll Tax and cuts involving thousands of lost jobs.

The Labour campaigns in these wards are supporting non-payment and linking up with community anti-Poll Tax Unions as well as campaigns of council workers and service users opposing the cuts.

Co-ordinating such a campaign was one of decisions taken by *Labour Against the Cuts and Poll Tax* (LACPT), a group formed by 'rebel' Labour councillors and Labour Party activists to defend the City Labour Party's 1984 manifesto pledge to defend jobs and improve services.

The group brings together the Trades Council, City Labour Party, and the eleven Labour Councillors who were prepared to vote against implementing the Poll Tax in a unified campaign which links the fight against the Council's cuts to the fight against the Poll Tax.



The first conference called by LACPT attracted over 100 delegates representing 46 different organisations: trade unions, tenants associations, APTU's, Labour Party wards, and student, pensioner and black organisations.

The second conference held on March 17th concentrated on forging the links to put into practice opposition to the cuts and rent increases made by the City Council to help keep the Poll Tax down. Council tenants and housing workers sat down together to discuss the possibility of organising a rent strike. Council workers expected to be involved in collecting Poll Tax met with APTU activists to discuss how they could link together.

This second conference also agreed the call for using the May elections as a platform for the anti-cuts anti-Poll Tax fight where the Labour candidates were opposed to implementation of the Poll Tax. Because of this campaign the Labour vote is expected to be significantly higher in areas with non-payment candidates, and in many areas people are joining the Labour Party in support of the fight against

the council's cuts.

The 'official' Labour campaign has been based on the lowest forms of outright dishonesty. The sending of Poll Tax bills has been delayed until after the May elections, and an increase in council rents has been disguised by making it in two halves: £2 a week before the elections and then a second increase of twice that amount after the elections!

LACPT's imaginative use of the May elections will leave the anti-Poll Tax fight in Manchester stronger than before. A third LACPT conference — expected to be several times the size of the previous ones — is to take place on June 9th.

LACPT can be contacted on 061 227 9004

Dave Barter
Manchester LACPT

TRADE UNIONS

Sheffield workers fight the Poll Tax

On Friday 6th April 36 housing staff in Sheffield walked out indefinitely after having been threatened with disciplinary action for not attending training on Poll Tax that is outside of current job descriptions and union agreement.

On Tuesday 10th April housing staff all over Sheffield walked out following the threat of disciplinary action against area managers who refused to tell staff to attend Poll Tax training events.

The strike was the latest development in a long dispute over the introduction of Poll Tax work into the housing department. The major issues are over regrading staff for massive extra burdens in workload, staffing levels, accommodation in area offices, confidentiality of claimants' details, rejection of 'flexible working practices' and opposition to attempts to introduce 'mixed tenure management' through the back door.

Sheffield City Council behaved scandalously throughout this dispute, actively seeking to smash NALGO. Shop stewards were not allowed to organise meetings in work time on the poll tax, effectively gagging discussion on the dispute.

On the 11th April, a motion calling for a return to work was put by a group of area managers, and narrowly passed — by 180 to 153 votes. The argument was that we could not win a fight over conditions of Poll Tax introduction, so we should instead save our strength for a fight over 'mixed tenure management'.

So why, when a month earlier, over 75% of Nalgo workers had voted to strike, did it collapse? In part it was due to the Labour council sending out individual letters to all

the strikers, asking them to return to work. They sought to bypass established negotiating rights and enforce individual deals, which has serious implications for future strike action.

Also, the Council, senior management and NUPE shop stewards conducted witch-hunts against the left in Nalgo.

It's vital that we learn the lessons of this strike over the Poll Tax — a strike that could have been won — so that next time, and the battles over the Poll Tax are far from over, we win!

Sheffield housing worker

NUJ votes to oppose Poll Tax

The National Union of Journalists annual delegate meeting (ADM) has committed the union to a policy of outright opposition to the Poll Tax through mass non-payment and industrial action. The meeting passed the following motion by a large majority:

"This ADM re-affirms its opposition to the Poll Tax. The government continues to push the tax and local authorities across the country are co-operating with its implementation.

ADM believes that the tax could be defeated if the labour movement mobilised the very widespread opposition to the Poll Tax through a mass non-payment campaign.

This ADM calls for:

1. Mass non-payment of the Poll Tax. The Executive should urge NUJ members not to pay.
2. Full support for anti-Poll Tax unions. NUJ branches should be encouraged to affiliate to and participate in their local anti-Poll Tax group.
3. Industrial action across the trade union movement against the Poll Tax.
4. Full support for workers disciplined for non-implementation of the tax.
5. The Executive to write to the Association of Metropolitan Authorities and the Association of District Councils calling on them to ask their members not to implement the Poll Tax.
6. Local authorities to refuse to use warrant sales to collect debts arising out of Poll Tax non-payment.

It is essential now that branches and chapels use this decision as a basis for action, both locally and nationally. As well as giving support to anti-poll tax groups around the country they should call on the NUJ executive to commit the union nationally to support and help build national initiatives against the tax.

NUJ member

Health workers take on the Poll Tax

NUPE members across the country are joining local anti-Poll Tax groups in their communities and workplaces. The many resolutions on the NUPE Conference agenda calling for mass non-payment and demanding that Local Authorities, especially Labour controlled Councils, do not prosecute non-payers reflect major action on the ground.

Examples from just the health service membership show very clearly:

•100 student nurses at the Florence Nightingale Nurses Home of Edinburgh's Royal Infirmary are fighting back against the summary warrants out against them.

The Flo' Home Against the Poll Tax Campaign has co-ordinated the closing of their bank accounts — no handbag snatchers here, thanks Maggie!

The campaign is threatening to mount a picket and refuse to let anyone into the home who tries to sell off their possessions to recover the £398 Lothian Council is demanding from them!

•A cross-London committee has been set up to organise student nurses throughout the capital (details from the Charing Cross NUPE office c. 081-846-1234).

Student nurses on traditional courses "earn" £85 and "must" pay 100% Poll Tax, whilst those on Project 2000 get £88 and "must" pay (only) 20%.

Some student nurses at Kings College Hospital living in the grotty home in Lambeth are expected to shell out an extra £150 more than colleagues living in the new, nicer Southwark home!

•Even the nursing establishment knows they can't afford to ignore the strength of feeling. The *Nursing Times* (hotbed of radical lefties!) has quoted a letter to COHSE from the UKCC's Assistant Registrar (for professional conduct).

This states the excellent news that non-payers who are subsequently fined are "extremely unlikely to be the subject of a hearing before the Professional Conduct Committee".

The NUPE leadership will try to argue that we need to concentrate on getting a Labour government elected and not get involved in the mass campaign.

Anyone with any sense, however, knows that the Tories are crumbling precisely because of the mass opposition to this latest attack on working people.

NUPE ought to be leading the campaign on non-payment non-implementation and non-collection.

Nottingham City NUPE member

Students fight back!

STUDENTS

When students in the FE colleges in Manchester threatened by the City Council's cuts in education (being made to keep the poll tax down) heard that two colleges were due to be closed down, they didn't just write to their local MPs about it.

They organised occupations in two colleges the night before a local demonstration called by Manchester Area NUS (MANUS).

Since then, hundreds of FE students have been involved in marches, lobbies or the council and the Education Committee, and meeting to plan joint action with lecturers, canteen staff and caretakers in the colleges.

Occupations have been organised on four different college sites in the city.

What has taken place in Manchester, where millions of pounds are being cut from FE provision, colleges closing down and students being left unable to continue their studies shows what is likely to happen in other parts of the country, particularly areas affected by Poll Tax capping.

It also shows the potential that exists for organising a united fight back against these Poll Tax-inspired cuts, of students and workers in education.

That potential has been increased massively by the decision of the National Union of Teachers' conference to take strike action against Poll Tax job losses in schools.

A united fight of local authority funded education against Labour council's Tory cuts is a real possibility and an important part of the fight against the Poll Tax.

Unfortunately, students are in the same position as NUT members, with the leadership of the National Union of Students refusing to act on NUS policy of organising mass non-payment of the Poll Tax and supporting campaigns of non-implementation and against cuts.

So it will be up to rank and file students in their colleges and Area NUS organisations to make up for what the NUS national executive isn't prepared to do.

The Poll Tax is going to be the biggest issue in all sectors of education over the next year. Whilst schools and FE colleges face cuts, non-payment is going to be a mass issue in every FE, polytechnic and university.

A mass movement of college student unions organising non-payment can be built, and like the teachers, we won't be stopped by a national executive that refuses conference mandates.

Steve Mitchell
North Manchester College

Trafalgar Square Defence Campaign

The local election results and the on-going Tory crisis may have pushed the events of March 31st out of people's minds. But the state has certainly not forgotten.

A special unit has been set up by the Crown Prosecution Service, the first of its kind, resourced by over one hundred police officers, to bring to trial alleged participants in the "Battle of Trafalgar".

Not even the events on Broadwater Farm in 1985 elicited such a response! This unit has already amassed over 90 hours of film and video, 30,000 photographs, and is hoping to prosecute a further 100 people on top of the 341 already facing charges. The offenses alleged against those people already charged include attempted murder, affray, threatening behaviour, assault and numerous other public order offenses.

One of the biggest problems facing any defence campaign is the sheer number of defendants coupled with the fact that many of them until now had no links to the organised anti-Poll Tax movement. The initial response from the All-Britain Federation leadership which sought to blame demonstrators, rather than the police, hasn't helped matters either.

Although the Steve Nally and Tommy Sheridan have subsequently explained that they were misrepresented by the media, a number of defendants have been worried about coming forward to the Federation. Because the Federation leadership were on the defensive after Trafalgar Square they were slow off the mark in organising proper, co-ordinated defence for those people charged. Despite claims to the contrary, not all the initial hearings were covered by Federation representatives, and many defendants were unable to even contact the Federation office.

Under pressure from solicitors handling the cases, from defendants, and from a realisation of the scale of the state's operation, officers of the Federation have now called a meeting for defendants,

witnesses and anti-Poll Tax activists. The aim is to launch a national defence campaign which would primarily highlight the political and civil liberties at stake and also support the defence of people not in touch or organised by the local defence campaigns that have been set up. This initiative should be supported and not counterposed to local defence campaigns under the control of defendants.

The national campaign will have to convince people of its political neutrality if it is to win the confidence of both defendants and many activists in the anti-Poll Tax movement who want to support defence activities.

However, prior to the initiative taken by the Federation officers a meeting was called by a number of anti-Poll Tax groups, with the support of the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign, to set up a defence campaign. On May 3rd the Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign was launched at a meeting at Conway Hall in London, attended by defendants, solicitors and anti-Poll tax activists.

Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign

Meeting for all defendants
Thursday 17th May
7.30pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion
Square, WC1
(near Holborn tube, Picadilly Line)

It was agreed that the campaign would:

- unconditionally support all those arrested
- be run by and accountable to those arrested
- be independent of all other organisations
- demand the support of the whole anti-Poll Tax movement and other sympathetic organisations.

The meeting also agreed to seek out and contact all defendants, co-ordinate legal defence, publicise what happened at the demonstration from the point of view of those arrested, and call for donations and fund-raising for a bust fund for legal and welfare costs.

The campaign is producing a newsletter and is organising weekly meetings in

London. Any defendants and witnesses are urged to contact the campaign immediately.

It is important that the needs of defendants are put first and not pushed aside because of the differences within the anti-Poll Tax movement.

Hopefully both the Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign (TSDC) and any campaign launched from May 12th can co-operate. It is also important that local campaigns, along the lines of the TSDC are organised outside London.

The TSDC can be contacted c/o Haldane Society of Lawyers, Room 205, Panther House, London WC1. Telephone messages to 071 833 8958. Cheques should be made payable to TSDC.

Recommended solicitors

Bindmans & Partners (071 278 8131)
Siefert Sedley Williams (071 831 3030)
Kapil Juj & Birnberg (071 403 3166)
Trevor Hamlyn & Co (071 821 1199)
Civil Rights UK (071 274 0100)

Jane Connor
Tottenham Against the Poll Tax

Support Refuse and Resist

Refuse and Resist is a newsletter produced by independent anti-poll tax activists in Scotland.

It is distributed free to anti-poll tax groups in Scotland, and some copies are sent to groups in England and Wales.

Refuse and Resist needs financial support if it is to be able to continue to provide an independent voice from the movement in Scotland and provide invaluable information to activists.

Donations should be sent to:

Refuse and Resist, c/o 2/3 182
Ark Lane, Glasgow G31 2JS or
telephone 041 423 8679.

3D hits the streets again...

Firstly thanks to everyone who took copies of the first issue of *3D*, sent us a donation, took out a subscription, or ordered bulk copies. If you have any money from sales, please forward it a.s.a.p.

Apologies about the delay in getting issues #2 and #3 out. Members of the steering committee have been as busy as everyone else building the movement. Hopefully new people will come forward at the next national meeting on the 2nd June in Sheffield to help make *3D* a more regular and representative publication.

3D has no secret funds to call upon, nor the backing of any one political organisation. It can only continue if it is supported by anti-poll tax activists and groups. Please encourage your APTU or Federation to sponsor *3D*: £5 individuals/£10 small groups/£20 large groups or Federations (or whatever you can afford!) A list of sponsors will be printed in the next issue.

Money, articles, local reports, and orders should be sent to: "*3D*", c/o 11, Springfield Road, London N15 4AY. Cheques made payable to TAPT.

This issue of *3D* was hurriedly produced by London *3D* supporters.

For further details of the national activists meeting contact Sham on 081-808 5893 or Jane on 081-801 6041.