

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

Issue #4 of the open,  
independant newsletter  
produced by  
the 3D network

## Go for it!

### The first figures of non-payment have come out. And they are beautiful.

A herculean job was done by the Independent on Sunday in prising information out of severely reluctant councils. Results showed 31% of people nationally had paid nothing.

In Birmingham, England's biggest authority, a cool 350,000 haven't paid a penny. Further north in Manchester, the city council has had to contend with a strike, so they have only collected a feeble 25%.

Other areas can hold up inspiring non-payment rates. Rotherham 40%, Brighton 50% and Bristol over 60%. As a northerner, I've got to swallow my pride and admit the highest levels of non-payment are in London.

By the beginning of June Hackney has collected less than a quarter of its £4 million first instalment, while Islington has taken in less than £1 million from an expected £62 million for the year.

We are also pretty chuffed about the result of the first court cases that have come out. Medina council, on the Isle of Wight, was the first to make themselves look immensely foolish for not investing in a decent stock of first class stamps.

So the magistrate ruled that insufficient notice of the summons had been given — the cases collapsed amid street parties.

South Tyneside and Wandsworth took fright and shelved their plans to issue summonses immediately. All this gives us more time to organise against court cases. If we get only 1 in 37 people down to the courts the system will become inoperable. And that's only the start.

"But they can take it off our wages" some folks say. Not if we fight back! Which is why we are so hopeful about the large numbers of workplace anti-poll tax groups that are being set up and the support being given by local trade unions to both them and the regional and national federations.

Last year in England and Wales we were claiming that we could build a mass movement. We had our fingers crossed. Now we are a mass movement and any doubts dissolved in the wave of support that has engulfed us. Let's go for it!

By Ian Greaves  
National Committee member  
of the All Britain Federation



*Bill burning in Hackney*

### Around the country

There has been an enormous amount of activity against the poll tax across the country. Marches, meetings, book burnings, strikes, pickets, leafleting — you name it, it's happened.

Below are just a few examples of what's been going on:

- ★ Over 1000 people marched against the poll tax in Hackney, north London in May
- ★ Over 130,000 leaflets distributed throughout Leeds in April
- ★ Hundreds of people stop the bailiffs in Edinburgh and elsewhere in Scotland during April, May and June
- ★ Sherriffs office in Glasgow occupied for 28 hours in April
- ★ In Sheffield 400 council workers strike for three days in April because housing workers were being forced to do poll tax work
- ★ Due to determined opposition, 3,800 summonses for non-payment thrown out of court on the Isle of Wight in May
- ★ In Greenwich 160 council workers strike against the poll tax and working conditions in June
- ★ Nearly 70 activists attended a Yorkshire anti-poll tax forum in Huddersfield on 9th June to discuss the way forward
- ★ Millions not paying a penny

This is but a fraction of all that has happened over the last three months. In the next issue of 3D there will be a much more extensive round-up of local news (it is short this time due to severe lack of space). Send all reports of what's going on in your area to 3D c/o 116 The Avenue, Tottenham, London N17.



## Let's sink the Tory flagship

It is clear from the news around the country that the mass movement against the poll tax is not a mere flash in the pan. The Scots have already shown the way with more than a year of hard and determined struggle and people south of the border are now picking up the fight against this hated tax.

Even the national press have had to admit that there will be a non-payment rate of at least 10% in England and Wales. The initial figures for non-payment in England and Wales have been amazing: in some areas, up to 80% haven't paid a penny.

But we must not let these marvellous figures blind us to reality. The fact is that many people will be intimidated into paying the poll tax by threats of court action, seizure of goods, and so on. But this does show how hated the poll tax is by millions of ordinary people across the country.

The real question is whether this massive opposition can become more collective, rather than individual and isolated. It is all too easy to intimidate isolated individuals. If people pay the poll tax, it won't be because they don't want to break the law — it will be because they are frightened of the consequences of breaking the law.

Millions of people agree with the slogan "break the law, not the poor", but that attitude has got to be backed up with practical and strong solidarity if the mass non-payment struggle is to be effective in smashing the poll tax.

That's why we think it's crucial that anti-poll tax unions are built and strengthened in every area throughout the country. And that's why we think these unions have got to be open, democratic and active organisations based firmly in the grassroots, not mere paper institutions purely set up to gain delegates to federations and political prestige.

Where there are organised APTU's, people will feel far less intimidated and therefore far more prepared not to pay a penny. This is how we can go forward and successfully smash this ruthless robbery by the government. And the poll tax can be smashed — that's the lesson from Scotland, the town hall lobbies in March, the enormous demonstrations on 31st March, the number of strikes by workers affected by the poll tax, and the massive levels of non-payment.

The 3D network believes in building the anti-poll tax movement from the ground up. That's why we are producing this newsletter — to encourage and strengthen the movement through the spreading of news and practical advice. We urge all people committed to defeating the poll tax to join us in this struggle by building APTU's in the community and workplace, and by making the All Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation an effective and representative body.

## Poll tax and the workplace

The poll tax movement seems to be shifting into a position of noticing the importance of the workplace and the trade unions in defeating the tax.

We are moving from just seeking affiliations from branches and workplaces to actually organising against the poll tax in the workplace. It is not enough to be satisfied by branches passing paper policies then not building on them.

Workplace activity against the poll tax has occurred from the DSS strikes to Greenwich council workers, which should be applauded. But as a movement we should seriously look at our success in the workplace and trade union movement and realise that much more work needs to be done.

If we look into the strikes by council workers we will see a common element which has, and will be, used by the trade union leadership. They argue that these are purely economic disputes, and this is why the NALGO conference backed the Greenwich strike. (Greenwich council workers have been on strike over conditions in the poll tax section.)

I don't want to put down the workers at Greenwich or anywhere else — we should give them full support. The workers themselves may believe, and probably do, that they are taking action against the poll tax. But how has this dispute been argued by their representatives to management and the national union?

I understand the tactics, but what will happen if management do give in and accept the demands — which is possible. The NALGO pay settlement could be seen as a way to buy off council workers. People in the community campaigns may start to believe that it was just a case of the workers demanding higher wages and more staff to collect the poll tax. I hope not.

In respect of council workers we need to look at how the poll tax affects them, and how it affects jobs and services. We are seeing massive cuts being made, some of which happened before capping, and there are more to come. In Haringey, 1,000 compulsory redundancies are being threatened by the council, along with the closure of most non-statutory services.

We need to both realise and argue that cuts are an inherent part of the poll tax. To be successful in fighting cuts in jobs and services, we need to launch an organised attack against the poll tax, not only from a non-payment perspective, but from one of non-collection, non-implementation, and against the cuts.

We saw at NALGO conference a strong minority voting in favour of non-prosecution of non-payers. This needs to be built on, not only in the sense of pushing the leadership of the union, but also to create solidarity between council workers and the

community against the cuts and against the poll tax — to their mutual advantage.

The non-payment campaign in England and Wales is now a reality — the battle has started. Non-payment alone will not defeat the poll tax; we need to organise in the workplace with or without trade union backing. We have to realise that we will be faced with wage arrestments, and that the only way to oppose these is to organise in the workplace. It is clear that workplace groups need to be set up.

The trade union conference organised by the ABAPTF on June 23rd can be nothing more than a rally of the faithful, rather than the much needed opportunity to discuss these vital issues, due to its organisers' failure to involve broader forces and the speed with which the event was called.

Hopefully the conference being organised by the Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee on September in Sheffield will provide more of a forum for discussion and debate on the way forward. We hope that the SMTUC will agree to jointly organise the event with 3D, because we feel that there should be input from the anti-poll tax movement for this to be a successful and viable conference.

**Sham Singh ex-trade union liaison officer on the ABAPTF National Committee**

## Councillors Against the Poll Tax

On 9th June councillors from London and Liverpool met in Lambeth Town Hall to discuss developing co-ordination between anti-poll tax councillors across Britain. This is an important way to break down the isolation many councillors face and support them in taking a stand.

The meeting agreed a statement which is being circulated to all APTU's which should be used to involve councillors in the anti-poll tax movement and encourage local councillors to come out in support of mass non-payment.

A second, national meeting has been called for Saturday 30th June in Leicester. If you are in contact with any anti-poll tax councillors you should encourage them to attend this meeting and get in touch with Councillors Against the Cuts.

Copies of the statement can be obtained from: CAPT, 15 Heathwood Gardens, London SE7 8ES.

**National CAPT meeting**  
Saturday 30th June, 1990  
11am-4pm

Castle Community Rooms, 2 Tower Street, Leicester. (Next to Leicester Prison).

For more details contact Paul Gosling on 0533 740964

**Jane Connor**  
**Co-Chair All London Federation**



## Solidarity with all defendants

On March 31st over 200,000 people took part in the national demonstration in Central London. There is now ample evidence, including the videos in the hands of the Crown Prosecution Service, that the police deliberately provoked a confrontation by attacking a sit down protest at Downing Street and driving police vans into the crowd.

On the day, 409 people were arrested and charged, and over 70 more have since been picked up, with a wide range of offences, a number which carry the threat of a life sentence.

Most defendants had none, or very poor, legal advice to start with. A number received banning orders as a condition of bail or imprisonment on remand. The first cases have been bulldozed through magistrates' courts. For those found "guilty" there have been heavy fines and at least 30 prison sentences.

The Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign was launched on 3rd May as a national defence campaign run by and for all defendants to organise unconditional support, co-ordinated legal defence, raise money, and expose what really happened. The TSDC now has the support of the whole anti-poll tax movement. We now need to force the prosecution, police and media onto the defensive, to halt the wave of arrests since the demonstration, and to get the charges dropped.

The TSDC has been very active, including organising a picket of Mirror Group newspapers to protest at their collusion in the police witch hunt. A protest at Pentonville Jail is planned for July 1st to show solidarity with poll tax prisoners.

The TSDC's national solidarity conference and defendants' meeting on 16th and 17th June has enabled a clear and comprehensive legal and political strategy to emerge. The campaign's response to the attempted criminalisation of the whole anti-poll tax movement not only tests our abilities and maturity as a movement, but can lay the groundwork for resisting future measures from the state to undermine the non-payment movement.

Everyone has the right to self defence. Wherever there is oppression, there is resistance. Considering the strength of the movement, and the increasing unpopularity of the police and the government, the TSDC has the potential to be the largest and most effective defence campaign ever, and will contribute to the authorities' complete humiliation over the poll tax.

Our right to protest, our right to demonstrate, our right to resist is at stake. All anti-poll tax activists need to actively support and build the TSDC as the best way of defending our movement. Every group and federation should: affiliate to the



**Lothian Sheriff officers get deflated**

campaign; raise money; support and pay fares of local defendants; immediately send signed photographs and witness statements helpful to the defence to the campaign; organise local publicity to reach out to defendants in your area.

- ★ Solidarity with all defendants!
- ★ No cover up — expose police brutality!
- ★ Self defence is no offence!
- ★ Fight for the right to demonstrate!

Contact the TSDC c/o Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers, Panther House, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1. Telephone 071 833 8958 (ansaphone)

**Dave Morris**  
**T.S.D.C.**

## 3D Conference report

On Saturday 2nd June, over 50 people met in Sheffield for the first national 3D conference.

Virtually every area in the country was represented — there were people from London, Leeds, Norwich, Stirling, Edinburgh, Redditch, Sheffield, Nottingham, Bristol, Bradford, Middlesbrough, Manchester, Swindon, Cambridge, Mansfield and more. In fact, there were over 30 groups represented.

The meeting started with a brief explanation of the structure and purpose of 3D and then moved on to reports from all the areas represented. The news from around the country was very encouraging — it was obvious that thousands and thousands of people were involved in the struggle against the poll tax.

But the reports were realistic as well, acknowledging the problems and difficulties with the struggle such as opposition from the Labour Party, and widespread fear of bailiffs.

This was followed by a wide-ranging and open debate on strategy to defeat the poll tax. Many people felt that we had to go on

the offensive against the tax, but it was also emphasised that this was going to be a long and hard struggle.

The fact that non-payment could lead to a collapse in local services, and several people argued that it was necessary for communities to start thinking about what should be done if this did happen.

Later in the day the subject of workplace organisation became the main topic. It was generally agreed that this was crucial and there was an encouraging report from Cambridge, where student nurses have started to organise against the poll tax.

It was pointed out that workers lived in communities, and also that affiliations to APTU's were not enough. Workplace APTU's had to be built from the bottom up.

The final part of the agenda was dominated by discussion about the All Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation (ABAPTF) and the future direction of 3D.

Many people emphasised that the anti-poll tax movement was a grassroots movement, that had grown and developed from the ground. But it was felt that this was not reflected in the national federation and there needed to be, for example, better communication and better co-ordination.

It was argued that this was the task of the 3D network: to improve communication within the movement and make the ABAPTF more representative of the movement.

The meeting ended with the decision to elect an editorial board for the 3D newsletter, to organise regional 3D conferences, and to have a national 3D conference in Leeds on Saturday 15th September.

Virtually everyone at the meeting thought that it had been a worthwhile and interesting conference that was an important step forward in building the mass struggle against the poll tax.

**Norman Blair**  
**Holmleigh Road Area APTU**



## Aims and principles

At the recent 3D national conference it was agreed that the editorial board would prepare an outline of aims and principles for 3D that could then be discussed further within the movement. Below are our ideas.

The 3D network has been set up to foster open communication and democracy within the anti-poll tax movement.

It does not set itself up in opposition to the All Britain Federation. Rather, in recognising that an all Britain federation has an important role, 3D hopes to be a positive force towards democratising that organisation and enabling it to represent the needs of the thousands of groups on the ground in a way which we believe it has failed to do to date.

We believe that there is a need to learn from the events of the past year, and as a result outline the following principles as being necessary for the movement to acknowledge.

1. The strength of the anti-poll tax movement is its diversity. This must be encouraged. Attempts by any groups, factions, parties to control the movement should be resisted.

2. The initiatives of the movement should come from the bottom up. The role of the national federation should primarily be: provision of information co-ordination of national events national press work.

3. The movement should be united and concentrate its energy on actively pursuing a range of strategies against the tax. It should not get caught up in minor disputes about emphasis. We believe that non-payment and non-collection are mutually interdependent. Both must be actively pursued. We should also continue to put pressure on councils and call for non-implementation.

4. The movement must defend all those intimidated by the police and assertively expose the violence and brutality of the state whenever it moves to strike against us.

5. The movement should clearly state its bottom line and make clear that it will continue to fight until these bottom line conditions are met.

★ A system based on ability to pay

★ A system which protects jobs and services

★ A system which gives local people/councillors the right to determine their own level of service provision and

★ An immediate amnesty for all non-payers of the poll tax.

## Affiliate to the All Britain Federation now!

Currently the All Britain Federation is dominated by one political tendency, 13 members out of the 16 on the national

committee being supporters of *Militant*. Considering the amount of work that *Militant* supporters have put in on the ground it would be perverse if they were not represented on the national committee. But their dominance of the national committee is not a fair reflection of the true diverse nature of our campaign. It constitutes a political imbalance which does not bode well for the unity of our campaign.

The resignation of their portfolios by the three independent members of the national committee comes against a background of the Federation's unwillingness to work with other political groupings.

Predictably the work of the Federation has fallen on very few shoulders. A mass movement cannot be serviced by a handful of activists. Almost all our shortcomings to date can be blamed on this situation.

In conclusion, our only chance of broadening the national Federation will come about if there is a mass affiliation to the ABAPTF of every APTU in the country. Then, as delegates at the next national conference we can all vote to support those candidates who represent the broad and grassroots nature of our movement. We can then draw on the strength of our diversity to secure victory.

**Danny Burns Avon Federation  
and Ian Greaves Leeds CAPT**

## 3D Regional Contacts

**London:** Sham c/o Tottenham APT, 72 West Green Rd, London N17

**South West:** Danny c/o Avon Federation, 34 Belle Vue Rd, Easton, Bristol

**Eastern:** Nick c/o Cambridge APT, 34 Devonshire Rd, Cambridge  
Katya c/o Norwich APT, 72 Connaught Rd, Norwich

**West Midlands:** J. Brown c/o Redditch APTU, 33 Leysters Close, Wingates, Redditch

**East Midlands:** Alex and Tess c/o Hyson Green APTU, 47 Foxhall Rd, Forest Fields, Nottingham  
Allison c/o Warsop APTU, 30 Fenwick St, Warsop, Mansfield

**Yorkshire:** Ian c/o Leeds CAPT, Trades Council, Saville Mount, Leeds 7

**Northern:** Linda c/o Middlesborough APT, 45 Athol St, Middlesborough

**North West:** Nick c/o Wythenshawe APTU, 20 Troutbeck Rd, Gatby, Stockport SK8 4RR

**Scotland:** c/o Refuse and Resist, 2/3 182 Ark Lane, Glasgow G31 2JS

## THE POLL TAX AND THE UNIONS

Defend rights, jobs, services  
and democracy

Saturday September 8th  
1990

Polytechnic Students Union,  
Sheffield (opposite Sheffield  
BR station)

Registration from 10.00am

Organised by the Socialist Movement  
Trade Union Committee

Contact Carolyn Sikorski, 53a Geere  
Rd, London E15 for more details and  
registration forms

## Support 3D

This is the fourth issue of 3D and comes at a crucial time for the anti-poll tax movement. In order to win we have to continue building a movement that is capable of winning. We feel that 3D has an essential role to play in this.

The next national activists meeting organised by 3D will be held on Saturday 15th September in Leeds — for details of the time and place contact 3D. In the meantime there will be regional activists meetings organised, a network of workplace APTU's will be developed and the next issue of 3D will come out on 25th August.

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. Make cheques payable to 3D.

Money, articles, local reports, and orders should be sent to: 3D, 116 The Avenue, Tottenham, London, N17 6DG. For further details phone Sham on 081 808 5893 or Jane on 081 801 6041.



# 3 NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS RESIGN

Danny Burns (Vice Chair)  
Ian Greaves (Assistant Secretary)  
Sham Singh (Trade Union Officer)

We have resigned our positions as from 17 June (the last meeting of the national committee). We will, however, continue to work on the committee in a constructive way, representing our regions and developing initiatives where it is possible for us to make a positive input. However, we feel unable to retain our posts because we have been systematically prevented from carrying them out.

When we agreed to take positions on the national committee we recognised that it was dominated by supporters of the Militant tendency. We had great reservations about this because the committee did not reflect the diversity of the movement on the ground. Nevertheless, we were prepared to work with Militant supporters in a constructive way in the interest of the wider movement. We hoped that Militant would embrace the diversity of the movement and engage a wide variety of groups and individuals in the huge array of tasks which needed to be undertaken. Unfortunately, this was not to be the case. Militant has sought to operate as a tight cadre and this has had an extremely damaging effect. We can cite some examples:

The national committee agreed, after some pressure, to hold a trade union conference. We assumed that this would be co-ordinated by the Trade Union Officer. However, he has consistently been by-passed in a way which would not be possible in any other democratic organisation.

It is our belief that the national bulletin is of critical importance. One of the key roles of a national federation must be communication. Ian Greaves and Danny Burns took responsibility for producing the newsletter. The first one was produced after three days work and delivered to the secretary and thereafter never saw the light of day. The second one was produced and 25,000 copies were printed. They were delivered on time for the national demonstration but were never distributed. The third one was produced unilaterally by Steve Nally, once again totally by-passing the officers responsible. Furthermore, national committee members consistently failed to provide regional reports for the bulletin. This was not because they did not have the time; they produced regular reports for the Militant newspaper. The fact that Militant has been unable to delegate tasks to people outside of their organisation has, in our view, had other negative effects on the campaign.

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For example, the National Federation is over £12,000 in debt. It had a demonstration of 250,000 people. Even if we had only collected 10p from each person, we could have raised £25,000. But there were no financial stewards. The reason for this is that there was no delegation. If the Avon Federation or Leeds had been asked to help, we would have gladly done so. We did point out that the demonstration was likely to have 200,000 people on it; we were not listened to and the demonstration was therefore planned for 25,000.

We feel that the movement has made great strides and is on the way to a historic victory. However, this has been entirely down to the dedication of activists in the local groups and federations. We need a national organisation which can give them effective support. For this reason, we think it is important not to abandon the national organisation as a lost cause. We must encourage it to develop a positive role as:

1. A provider of information (legal reports, regional briefings, etc.)
2. A co-ordinator of national events
3. A focus for the national media (but one which is responsive to the wishes of the movement)

We stand for a movement which:

values diversity - and encourages the involvement of all groups, factions and parties in the campaign, and individuals who have never been politically involved before.

stresses equally non-payment, non-prosecution and non-collection and avoids factional in-fighting over the emphasis of any one of these.

is grass roots - reflecting the movement on the ground. We believe the movement should be organised on a delegate basis, where delegates are accountable to their regions and are recallable.

defends those who are the victims of attack by the state; in particular, those arrested on the anti-poll tax demonstrations. We regret the statement by Steve Nally about "naming names". We do not feel this is the appropriate role of our movement. We should rather be putting the police on the defensive for their brutality.

We would strongly encourage you to affiliate to the All Britain Federation and exercise your rights at the November conference to make it a democratic organisation which actually represents the movement.

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We would like to affiliate to the All Britain Federation of Anti-Poll Tax Unions £10.00 per group.

Organisation:  
Address:

Return to: P O Box 764, London E5 9SX