

Tory Government Retreats

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Over 12 million people are refusing to pay the unjust poll tax. People power has forced the Tories to announce its future abolition.

Only half of Scotland's 1991-1992 poll tax income had been collected, with one month of the financial year to go.

In England and Wales, 26% on the register have been summonsed—and with chaos in the courts many non-payers have not yet been summonsed.

Now the anti-poll tax movement is fighting to get all the poll tax debts scrapped. How can this be done? Certainly not by appealing to the political parties, all of whom uphold the interests of the rich. An amnesty can only be won by making the poll tax impossible to collect.

Fighting the Law

Court rulings that computer evidence is not admissible in poll tax non-payment cases in England and Wales has thrown collection efforts into further chaos. Though the government was aiming to rush through new legislation by early March, thousands of liability order cases countrywide have meantime been adjourned.

Even when liability orders are granted, the vast majority of non-payers (e.g., 90% in Leeds) are refusing to comply with the order to give the authorities personal information.

The defiance of the law continues at the committals stage, when most non-payers (e.g., around 85% in Haringey) are not turning up. This mass non-cooperation is making the law unenforceable. 75% of police forces are not willing to arrest poll tax defaulters who ignore their final court summons, a senior police spokesman stated on October 31.

By February, about 130 non-payers had been jailed in England and Wales (non-payers cannot be jailed in Scotland), with Labour Councils as repressive as Tory authorities.

The independent anti-poll tax groups are making Freedom for all poll tax prisoners central to the poll tax amnesty campaign. All prisoners need your solidarity and letters of support. Contact The Poll Tax Prisoner Support Network, c/o TSDC PSG, 506 Brixton Rd., London SW9 8EW.

Related

See "A Victory for People Power: British poll tax attacked," this issue (FE #340, Autumn 1992).



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