

Poll Tax will be a major source of Local Authority income — if an authority wishes to raise its spending, it must raise the Tax, and thereby penalise those it is trying to help.

Needless to say, the areas which will most need to spend more are the inner cities — and they do not vote Conservative.

Nicholas Ridley, in his speech to the Tory Conference this year, spoke of the "deeper political reason" for the Poll Tax — to reduce Council spending and to finish off the "ailing independent socialist republics in an otherwise successful Thatcherite kingdom."

We all know where Liverpool fits into his picture . . .

Poll Tax and Freedom

The implications of an efficient Poll Tax system on civil liberties are enormous. The state will be given greater power over the individual once the tax is in operation.

The National Council for Civil Liberties, in a recent report, suggested there could be "irreconcilable conflict" between the collection of the tax and personal privacy. The report states that the Government will track down suspected Poll Tax evaders by searching the personal files of housing bodies, bus pass and library ticket applications and even solicitors' files, to see who has recently bought a house.

Everyone will be entitled to see their entry in the Poll Tax register — but cannot correct mistakes. A separate secret file will also be held.

Jeff Rooker, Labour spokesman for local government, claims 10,000 investigators will be recruited to make sure no one evades the Tax. He has expressed particular concern over the plight of political refugees and dissidents living in this country.

They presently pay taxes and rates but their names are not on the electoral roll because they have no right to vote here. The Poll Tax register, he claims could be made public, allowing overseas embassies to see them and act on the information.

Mr Rooker points out "Those who have come to Britain from oppressive regimes could be in danger and will not take kindly to being publicly identified." The Government have given no assurances that this will not happen.

The Poll Tax is not a popular tax. It will have wide-reaching effects on all members of the community.

Remember: you will probably no longer be in full-time education by the time the Tax is introduced. You might just be starting work with an overdraft to pay off and a low initial salary. There will be no financial incentive to share accommodation — and there will be an annual bill of £200-£300 to pay: the Poll Tax in full.

If some attendance is compulsory in this 'year off', how can the student get a job? He can hardly tell his would-be employer "By the way, I have to have time off to attend x hours of lectures . . ."

So they realise a job is out of the question, and advise instead that a student could perhaps make good use of this 'year-off' by reading next year's books. Surely if you are capable of reading this material then you are quite capable of actually entering the second year and pursuing the course now.

BUREAUCRATIC

It would therefore seem that there are some very noticeable and worrying discrepancies in the APC system. Some cases this year have shown a great deal of injustice in the APC's final decisions. Although these students may take their grievances to a higher appeal in Senate House, they are also expressing a concern for future students who may find themselves caught up in the same bureaucratic nonsense, which can cause such unnecessary complications and upheaval.

Why should some students get an obviously raw deal, simply because of traditional faculty policies? Changes need to be made NOW!

It's your liberation



Not Such a Gay Life

by John Cahill

I must confess that when I first clapped disbelieving eyes on the 'Gay and Lesbian' stall in the students union during Freshers' Week, I recoiled in absolute horror. Not only were these people openly gay — they were proud of it!

SEXUAL

I have to admit that I suffer from a mild form of prejudice towards gays. The mere thought of their sexual deviancy is enough to make me vomit.

The 'out of the closet' approach by at least a couple of 'gays' was very thought provoking and forced me to re-analyse my fears and prejudices. I began to realise that these people meant me no harm, in fact they just want to live their lives happily in the manner most comfortable to them.

This then began to make me feel a little guilty concerning the "Closet Queens" — people who do not feel confident enough to expose themselves in their natural light.

GAYS

How many gays, I wonder, live a lie, pretending to be heterosexual so as not to appear in any way abnormal. These so called gays must in fact be pretty miserable — miserable because they cannot accept themselves for what they are and others, like myself, only accept them as "puffs" and "queers".

I am not advocating that all gays should come out of the closet and start singing Tom Robinson songs, instead I would like to try and purge my soul.

MISERY

I still do not feel happy with all this trendy gay lib. stuff, but I do feel a certain amount of guilt concerning my prejudices, which are based on the principle that "difference is deficit". It is this kind of principle which can account for much of the misery experienced by such minorities, gays, blacks, Jews and hippies.

I find myself forced to admit that gays are *different* and not *inferior* to heterosexuals. I congratulate those who openly stood up to be counted and in doing so helped so many miserable gays. They must have seen some light at the end of the tunnel when their sexual compatriots were able to openly admit their gaiety without any fear of having a Dr Marten thrust down their throat.

We're
out!
Join us!

NUS

Photos by Jane Longworth