

LISTINGS.

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- Sat Sept 8th 'Poll Tax & the Unions' conference, Sheffield, see inside.
- Sat Sept 8th 'Hands Off the Middle East' demo, London. (organised by the RCP so go at your peril!) 071 375 1702 for details.
- Sat Sept 8th March for Martin Foran, Birmingham. 021 565 4217 for news.
- Tues Sept 11th Inaugural meeting of Liverpool 'Troops Out Movement' branch. Mutual Aid Centre, 45 Seel St, Liverpool 1 7.30pm. All welcome.
- Sat Sept 15th 3D national activists meeting, Leeds. Details inside.
- Sat Sept 29th Class Struggle Anarchist Network meeting, Huddersfield Poly. P.O. Box 446, Sheffield, S1 1NY for details.
- Every Monday Anarchist Group meeting, Mutual Aid Centre, 45 Seel St.
- Every Thursday Squatting Advice at the M.A.C. - 1-5pm.

INFO

Although the newsletter lists demos, events etc., lack of space prevents us giving many details. Also, some information is out of date by the time the newsletter is printed.

To improve communication about anarchist events, we are offering to send out a more detailed INFO SHEET separately from the newsletter, for the cost of an sae. The INFO SHEET will list events five weeks ahead and can INCLUDE EVENTS NOT LISTED IN THE NEWSLETTER.

If you want a demo, meeting, conference, picket, gig, fair or festival anywhere in the country listed in the INFO SHEET send details to the P.O. Box.

If you want a copy of the INFO SHEET send an sae at any time to:

INFO SHEET
P.O. BOX 110
LIVERPOOL L69 8DP.

LET'S GET ORGANISED



MERSEYSIDE ANARCHIST

newsletter

NUMBER 20

15 PENCE!!

SEPTEMBER 90



CLASS WAR NOT GULF WAR

INTRO.

MERSEYSIDE ANARCHIST NEWSLETTER, P.O. BOX 110, LIVERPOOL, L69 8DP.

Yes its here - issue 20 - and its a whopping 20 page special. We've so much stuff this month that some of it will have to hold over until next issue. Space too prevents us printing both the articles we've recieved on Iraq, so as the two make similar points, we've chosen the shorter one. The views in it, as with all our articles, are not necessarily those of Liverpool Anarchist Group as a whole. Iraq is big news, and you can chose between the two seperate anti-war demos - one called by the SWP, the other, you guessed it, called by the RCP. Another recruiting ground for the Party hacks.

We always welcome ideas, letters, articles, and the like. The deadline for the October issue will be 24th September. So get writing.

Subs are still, for the time being, available for two pounds for ten issues (!!). Cheques payable to "Mutual Aid Centre", sent to the above address.

See you in October.

BASIC ANARCHISM.

Anarchism is revolutionary anti-state socialism. In practical terms, anarchists aim for the destruction of the power of the ruling class and of all relationships based on domination and submission. This means taking over our industries and communities and changing them to meet the needs of all, as well as the ecological needs of the environment. Without this takeover we can struggle within capitalism but never replace it.

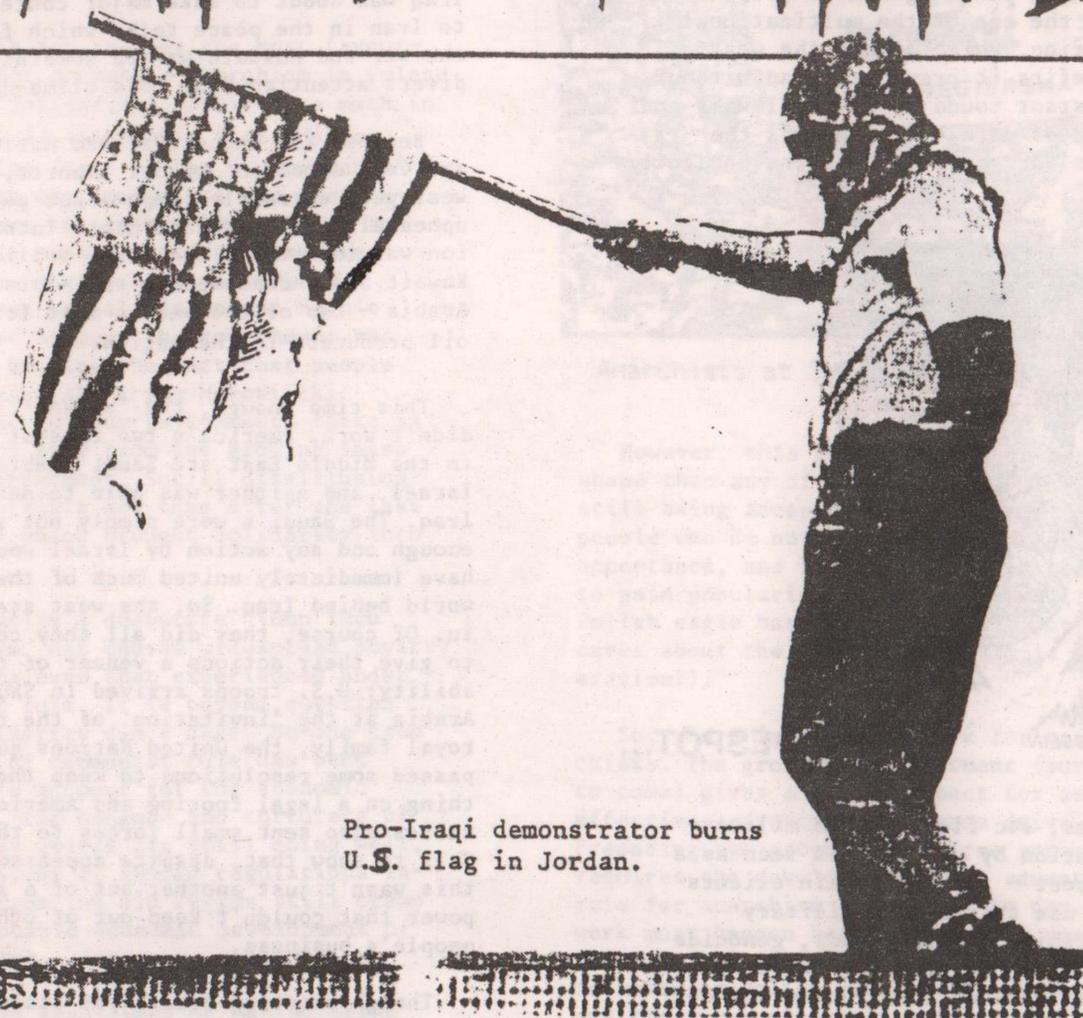
Anarchism will be created by millions of people, not a dictatorial elite (we are not Marxist-Leninists), and all will have their part to play in shaping it. Power will lie with the organisations thrown up by and for the revolution, not with the political parties who will try to dominate and destroy them.

The new society will not be born through abstract ideas, but will come out of the realities of struggle and the need for working class people to unite. Such struggle doesn't just involve resistance to ruling class power (strikes, mass protests and other forms of direct action), but also construction - the building of new, locally based federal organisations (examples of which go from the original Soviets of the Russian Revolution to the Miner's Support Groups of the 1984/85 strike), plus the forging of solidarity and the willingness to go further.

There is no truce in the class war. The answer to ruling class power is continual and widening struggle - for social revolution and anarchism.

LIVERPOOL ANARCHIST GROUP

YANKEE GO HOME!



Pro-Iraqi demonstrator burns U.S. flag in Jordan.

The conflict in the Gulf is dominating the news headlines these days. This article examines the background to it, the actions of Saddam Hussein and the West and looks at what we in Britain can do.

Since the end of world war 2, America has taken over from Britain in the role of 'the world's policeman'. Even the remotest perceived danger to U.S. interests or to the smooth running of international capitalism will provoke their intervention in one form or another.

In the days of the British empire, imperialism most often meant direct rule from London. Whitehall ran the administration of the colonies, and business interests abroad were always backed up by the physical presence of British troops. Then, 'intervention' entailed the sending of 'our boys' to far flung parts of the globe to deal with people who wanted to pack in being a colony, thanks all the same.

By 1945 Britain was broke. WW2 had exhausted the country in every sense of the word and the ability to maintain an empire was gone. While Britain was leaving or being forced out of colony after colony America took over responsibility for facing down threats to capitalism's stability and well-being.

But this process was more than just a change in the 'policeman's' accent. The west still needed to exploit third world resources and cheap labour so the U.S. oversaw the introduction of a new, more subtle version of colonialism. Wherever possible, when colonies were given independence, power was handed to groups willing to do business with the west. In return for favourable trade agree-

ments the U.S. would grant financial aid and loans and arm their 'client' governments to ensure they weren't overthrown.

Gone are the days of direct rule and maintaining standing armies overseas. This is the age of the multinational corporation, which brings the west all the benefits it previously had without the constant round of colonial wars and the risk of defeat. As long as the 'clients' are able to keep the food/oil/



• HUSSEIN

DESPOT...

resources, etc flowing then military intervention by the west is seen as a last resort - and if certain clients have to use things like military dictatorships, death squads, genocide and apartheid to keep the lid on dissent then that's OK by the freedom and democracy loving governments of the west!

When war breaks out in the third world the west always backs the side it thinks will best safeguard its interests. For example, when Iraq invaded Iran in the wake of the 1979 revolution all the major powers (including the USSR) supplied arms to Saddam Hussein in the hope that he would overthrow the fundamentalist regime of Khomeini's Iran. Though this wasn't achieved, the 8 years of war ensured that western military intervention was prevented, that the Iranian economy was ruined and that, for the time being, Iran was unable to export its revolution to other Arab states which, in the eyes of the west, would have dangerously de-stabilised the whole region.

Iraq was too strong a country to be bullied into full client status but for playing the game and fighting Iran, the west ensured that, through their aid, Saddam Hussein was head of what was now a 'regional superpower'.

Last month Iraq used the excuse of a long-running border dispute to invade and annexe Kuwait. Iraq wanted Kuwait's oil industry which would boost its influence in the Arab world and increase its bargaining power with the west. Also, Iraq was about to make major concessions to Iran in the peace talks which followed the war and Hussein wanted something to divert attention from this climb-down.

Because all industrialised nations are very dependent on oil imports, the west gets extremely jumpy about political upheavals in the Middle East. Intervention was inevitable when Iraq swallowed up Kuwait and threatened to roll into Saudi Arabia - two of the west's most friendly oil producers in the region.

This time though, the 'client' system didn't work. America's two closest allies in the Middle East are Saudi Arabia and Israel, and neither was able to deal with Iraq. The Saudi's were simply not strong enough and any action by Israel would have immediately united much of the Arab world behind Iraq. So, the west stepped in. Of course, they did all they could to give their actions a veneer of respectability: U.S. troops arrived in Saudi Arabia at the 'invitation' of the ruling royal family, the United Nations quickly passed some resolutions to keep the whole thing on a legal footing and America's allies also sent small forces to the Gulf to show that, despite appearances, this wasn't just another act of a super-power that couldn't keep out of other people's business.

Though shooting hasn't yet started, the propaganda war is well under way with Saddam Hussein being presented as "a new Hitler". All of a sudden the western media is reporting the unsavoury facts about the military dictatorship in Iraq - facts which were for some reason ignored until a few weeks ago. When Iraq was doing the west's dirty work against Iran, Hussein was armed to the teeth by the west - the tanks and armoured cars now trundling round Kuwait City came directly from the superpowers. Politicians are full of scare stories about Iraq's million strong army, but who gave it the guns? Similarly, Iraq's chemical weapons capability was made possible by western technology. Of course, the papers which are howling about Hussein's possession of 'the poor man's Bomb' are conveniently ignoring the tens of thousands of nuclear warheads held by the west.

The hypocrisy of the west really is staggering. Up until very recently Hussein was seen as a barrier to the spread of Islamic fundamentalism and a stabilising element in Middle East politics but

now Thatcher is calling him "a despot and a tyrant".

The gutter press have been quick to follow the lead of their political masters by whipping up anti-arab racism. A month ago there probably wasn't a Daily Star reader who could tell you where Iraq was, let alone what kind of government it had. Now they're going round parroting that papers call for all Iraqi's in Britain to be interned.



• BUSH

...MURDERER...

So, as revolutionaries based in Britain, what should our attitude be? Some of the more whacko lefty sects have called for support for Saddam Hussein, but notions like that should be knocked on the head straight away. Hussein does head a brutal military dictatorship, he was happy to let 500,000 people die in a futile war with Iran - basically he's a power hungry scumbag unworthy of our support.

Having said that, let's not shed any tears over Kuwait. Western Leaders are full of crap at the moment about 'the rights of small nations', 'national sovereignty' and other hypocritical trash. (they conveniently forget episodes like Panama and Grenada at this point, not to mention the imperial past of Britain and France etc). Kuwait itself was a despotic little statelet run by a medieval royal family bloated on oil wealth who had flirted with limited parliamentary democracy only to scrap it when some MP's began to use it as a platform for the demands of Islamic fundamentalists. Kuwait also imported cheap labour such as the Palestinians to do all the dirty jobs. Whether Kuwait is Kuwait or the 19th province of Iraq makes no difference to many people bar the Kuwaiti royals.

But it's not good enough for us to just say "Iraq, Kuwait, America - I don't support any of them" and do nothing more. Surely we must be involved in anti-war agitation in this country. But we

must make it clear that we oppose western intervention not out of some pacifist desire for peace at all costs, but because we're against the working class of any country dying in their bosses wars.

And if it does come to a shooting war it's in all our interests for the west to lose. The end of the cold war has boosted U.S. confidence and we're going to see more and more weight thrown around unless western adventures start going the same way as in Vietnam. Thatcher too would benefit from a successful military adventure abroad by creating another 'Falklands factor' in the run-up to the next election.

...TYRANT



• THATCHER

Finally, let's not make the same error as some other left headbangers are making. In their efforts to be 'politically correcter than thou' some groups are calling for an "Arab working class" solution to be found. Without getting too bogged down in the complex web of Middle East politics, let's be clear that this is a complete non-starter. First of all you can't apply strict class definitions to all Arab countries - some of them haven't even finished their industrial revolutions yet! Secondly, even if you do manage to sort out who you think the Arab working class actually are, you've then got to take into account the fact that they are divided over the issue anyway. Some have sympathy for their own governments position while others support the stance of foreign governments. Then you've got groups like the Palestinians who aren't even in a position to make decisions about their own future, let alone that of Kuwait!

So lets leave the snappy sloganeering to the chuckleheads of the left - their ridiculous posturing is only slightly less relevant than their parties - and that's to us, never mind the "Arab working class"!

4 DAYS IN BELFAST

Each year the Troops Out Movement organises a large delegation of people from England, Scotland and Wales to spend four days in Belfast. The delegation is hosted by Sinn Fein and delegates stay in the homes of republicans. The aim is to give British people an alternative view of the conflict to that presented here, to show the reality of life under occupation and, hopefully, to inspire those people to campaign for British withdrawal from Ireland when they return home.

Below we have two articles. The first detailing the stay in Belfast, while the second describes a new feature of the delegation - a visit to the border area around Crossmaglen.

This was the eleventh annual Troops Out delegation to Belfast and my second - so I knew a little of what to expect!

Though I recognised a few faces from last year, the majority of people were on their first delegation - though at least one of them had visited 'northern' Ireland before - as a British soldier! Many people go as delegates of trade unions and community or political groups though others are simply individuals wanting to see for themselves what's happening in the Six Counties.



The official side of the delegation consists of workshops and meetings together with visits to places of interest, and the Troops Out contingent attends the annual anti-internment march and rally in West Belfast. However, there's much more to it than that - delegates often report that for them the most illuminating parts come simply from talking with the families they stayed with or to local people at the social events in republican clubs.

This year the Liverpool delegates stayed in the staunchly republican area of Ballymurphy. Our host had herself served a prison sentence for her political activities and the man she's married to is currently doing a long stretch in the H-blocks. Despite the pressures of repeated army and police raids on her house (the damage was evident) and of bringing up kids alone, she had no problems about continued support for the republican movement. This was true of other 'ordinary' (whatever that is!) people we met. It struck me that over there, unlike in Britain, it must be difficult to harbour any illusions about what's happening around you - the stark reality of living in a sectarian statelet propped up

by British troops must almost force political lessons on you.

The other thing which you notice is the strength of the communities. This isn't just shown in the republican wall murals and slogans which cover the place but in the way that everyone knows each other and that they're far more relaxed than British city dwellers. One aspect I found totally weird was the habit people had of going out and leaving their front doors open. In Liverpool you'd only do it once but over there you don't have much 'anti-social' crime in the nationalist areas.

Anyway, back to the 'official' side of the delegation! The workshops were held in the Conway Mill, just off the Falls Road. It's a community and adult education centre run by and for people in West Belfast and it offers loads of different courses and activities. Belfast's loyalist city council recently branded it a "Provo front" (it isn't) and cut off its funding but it continues nevertheless.

I'll try and cover the main points raised in the workshops I was able to attend but, as happened last year, there was such a wealth of information that you'd need a small book to do it justice! (By

the way, I'm not sure whether the people who ran the workshops and put delegates up in their homes would appreciate being named in generally available British publications, so I won't name them! Suffice to say that they were all either Sinn Fein members or republican activists.)

RAIDS AND REPRESSION

In this workshop women from Belfast and County Tyrone spoke of the effects of British raiding and the place it occupies in their overall strategy. In Belfast the army uses the excuse of searching for arms and explosives as a way of inflicting collective punishment on nationalist communities. In the last couple of years house raiding has intensified to the point where whole streets are placed under siege while every house is searched. Raids such as these rarely bring results and most arms finds happen either by chance or through informers.

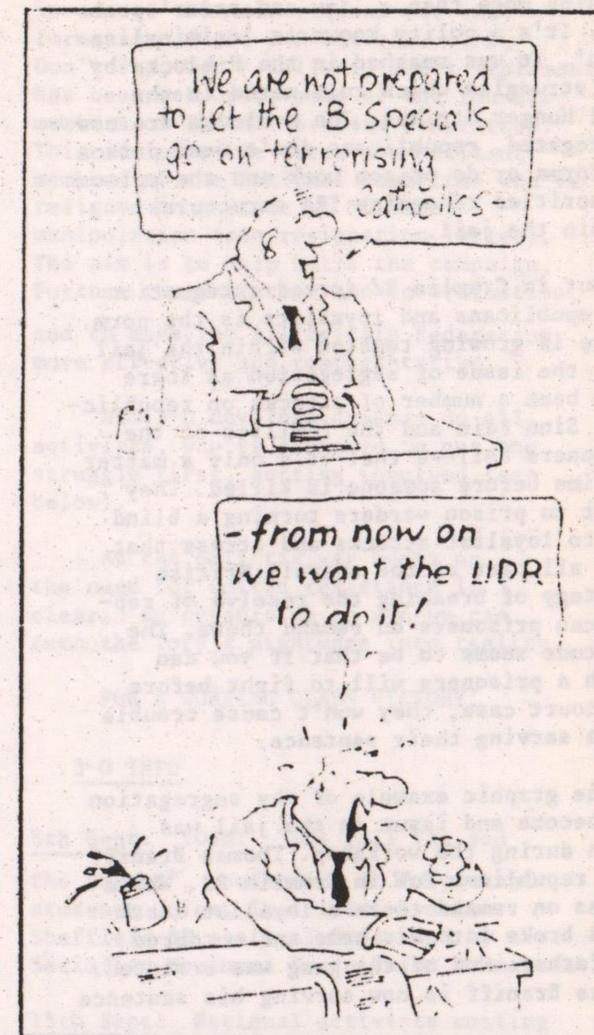
Despite the fact that for obvious reasons, known republicans aren't going to keep weapons in their homes, activists are targeted for particularly heavy harassment and raids. One woman who spoke had her house invaded 18 times in 1989 - nothing was ever found. Similarly the woman from Tyrone had been raided 12 times since May.

Raiding has two main aims; firstly to intimidate people and dissuade them from becoming involved in the republican movement, and secondly as a means of gathering intelligence. Police and soldiers regularly sketch the layout of a house during a raid and note down any security measures. These details often find their way to loyalist death squads who can and do use the information in sectarian murder bids - clear evidence of collusion between the 'crown forces' and groups like the UVF.

PRISONERS OF WAR

There are now over 700 republican prisoners, mostly held in the Six Counties but also in Britain, southern Ireland, Europe and the USA. 176 are serving life sentences. Sinn Fein has a PoW Department and one of its workers who had himself served 12 years in the H-blocks hosted the workshop along with two recently released prisoners, one who'd just done 16 years.

The attitude within the republican movement is that these prisoners are being held as political hostages. Release dates for lifers and those being held "at the Secretary of State's pleasure" (known as SOSP's) are highly flexible and the release system is seen by the British as a way of pressurising the movement to wind



down its struggle - the implication being that a ceasefire will bring early releases. This tactic obviously isn't working but the prisoners remain as hostages all the same.

There are many campaigns going on around the issue of republican prisoners. For example, to get firm release dates for every lifer and SOSP, to end strip searching and to transfer Irish prisoners in English jails so they can serve their sentences near to their families (this is apparently in accordance with Home Office guidelines but rarely happens with republicans, adding to the impression that they are hostages). Along with them you have the ongoing struggle against extradition of republicans arrested in the south of Ireland and who, as history shows, can't hope to get anything like a fair trial in Britain.

The newest campaign is around the demand for the segregation of republican and loyalist prisoners in Belfast's Crumlin Road jail. Since 1976 Britain has tried to treat republicans in jail as 'ordinary criminals' and to ignore their political

status. This goes hand in hand with their attempts to present the war as a whole as nothing more than a 'law and order' problem. It's a policy known as 'criminalisation'. It was smashed in the H-blocks by the struggles which culminated in the 1981 Hunger Strikes. The H-blocks are now segregated, republicans don't wear prison uniforms or do prison work and the prison authorities recognise IRA structures within the jail.

But in Crumlin Rd forced integration of republicans and loyalists is the norm. There is growing tension within the jail over the issue of segregation as there have been a number of attacks on republicans. Sinn Fein and the families of the prisoners believe that it's only a matter of time before someone is killed. They point to prison warders turning a blind eye to loyalist attacks and stress that it's all part of the overall British strategy of breaking the resolve of republican prisoners on remand there. The attitude seems to be that if you can crush a prisoners will to fight before the court case, they won't cause trouble while serving their sentence.

One graphic example of why segregation has become an issue in the jail was given during the workshop. Thomas Braniff is a republican PoW in Crumlin Rd. While he was on remand there a loyalist death squad broke into his home and murdered his father. One of the gang was arrested. Thomas Braniff is now serving his sentence



in Crumlin Rd - and so is the loyalist who murdered his father. By pursuing their policy of forced integration, the British prison authorities are expecting Thomas Braniff to share a wing with that loyalist, to pass him on the landings every day, to go for meals with him and to share an exercise yard with him. In Britain it is vital that issues like these are made public and that we play our part in supporting the demand for segregation in Crumlin Rd jail.

CULTURE

"Culture is a battlefield too". That was the message to come out of this workshop and it's a message that the British state has learnt from its colonial past. Oppressed peoples draw strength from their culture, so to win, an occupying power must either destroy it altogether or sanitize it and make it a part of the status quo. For centuries in Ireland it was illegal to speak Gaelic or use Irish names or even for a time to wear green (!) as the British tried to suppress any trace of 'Irishness'. Even now in the north it's illegal to put up street names in Irish and you can be arrested if you give the Irish version of your name to the RUC.

Part of the struggle currently going on in the Six Counties is around culture. Recent years have seen an upsurge in Gaelic classes, Irish schools and research into real Irish history.

For its part the British state is funding a 'cultural industry' which employs friendly historians and publicists who are trying to 'prove' that there is a "Northern Ireland identity" common to both traditions in the Six Counties. It's an attempt to stabilize the situation by making the state seem acceptable through showing that all the inhabitants have always been different to the rest of the Irish people - honest! Yep, culture is a battlefield too....

THE FALLS TAXI ASSOCIATION

This was a workshop about far more than just taxis, but before going into it let me tell you why the abnormal political situation in the Six Counties affects even public transport.

In Belfast, two decades of using busses as barricades has pretty much done in the



bus service. Also, normal public transport was rendered unworkable by threats from loyalist paramilitaries to shoot Catholic bus drivers and passengers who came into 'their' areas. This made the taxi the natural means of transport. Black cabs in West Belfast only run along specified routes and there's a standard fare (40p). It's also a bit disconcerting at first for visitors to find 'their' taxi stopping before they want to get out and total strangers getting in! After a while though, you get the hang of it and learn to accept Belfast taxis as little black busses!

The Falls Taxi Association acts more or less like the drivers union and one of its functions is to provide some bulk at the front and back of republican funerals. It's not uncommon to see 3 or 4 ranks of taxis preceding a funeral cortege.

During the funerals of the three IRA volunteers shot dead in Gibraltar in 1988, a lone loyalist gunman, Michael Stone, used a pistol and hand grenades to attack the massive crowd of mourners in Milltown Cemetary. Three people died while chasing Stone and one of them turned out to be an IRA man, Colin McBride. At his funeral several days later an unmarked car approached the funeral procession at speed, swerved past the taxis at the front and drove right into the mourners. When people saw an armed man try to get out they surged forward, assuming that this was another loyalist attack on a republican funeral. Both men in the car were disarmed before they were taken by the IRA to nearby Casement Park and shot.

The dead men turned out to be British army corporals with several tours of duty in the Six Counties behind them. Why they arrived at the funeral in such a manner is still a mystery. All British army personnel in Belfast were informed of the route of the funeral that day and the procession must have been visible to the two men long before they drove into it.

The disarming of the two men (but not the shootings) was filmed by a British army helicopter. Since that day over 40 people have been arrested in what have become known as the Casement trials. Non-jury courts have been handing out stiff sentences for even the most minor of trumped up charges based on indistinct video evidence.

The Falls Taxi Association has been prominent in the defence campaign which has sprung up around the accused and is warning that more arrests and collective punishments are inevitable as the state takes revenge for what many see as the foiling by republicans of an undercover military operation.

Aside from the workshops and visits (to the Divis Flats, radical bookshops, an Irish school, the Falls Women's Centre, Crossmaglen and an exhibition of prisoners art and poetry), the delegation also took part in the annual march to mark the anniversary of internment without trial, brought in in 1971. The marchers heard a variety of speakers at the rally afterwards, the best being Martin Galvin of Noraid who's speech was an absolute stormer.

The four days in Belfast go far too quickly but a lot of learning is packed into them and they are enough to present a realistic picture of the conflict there. I want to conclude this article by once again urging anarchists to educate themselves on the war in Ireland, to learn the lessons of that struggle and to help in any way we can to bring it to a successful conclusion.



The border visit was a new addition to the Troops Out delegation and an excellent one. Thirty or so of us departed from Belfast by minicoach to take a closer look at the South Armagh border area at the invitation of the local Sinn Fein councillors. After a brief stop in Newry we departed along the "Chancellor's road" (so called because, we are told, a one-time Irish Chancellor was so fed up of being attacked by republicans that he built it as a bypass to Newry for his travels from the North).

The first thing you notice is the beauty of the countryside, and the burnt out cars that litter it - put there to "draw out the enemy" by the IRA. The conditions may be different to West Belfast but war is the same one. It wasn't long before we were on the approach to the main British checkpoint on the road to Dublin. As we approached the roundabout and the army patrols ahead our guide decided that we needn't bother with all the formalities and turning right and through a few country lanes we were soon, painlessly, through to the South and County Monaghan! This part of Ulster Britain decided it didn't want back in 1921, most of it is beautiful, but poor. farmland.

It has long been the tactic of the IRA to disrupt the major economic links between the North and the South, one such link being the Belfast-Dublin railway, often closed for days on end by IRA actions, the idea being to show Britain that there can be no "normal relations" in a divided land. We passed under the railway where a road runs off alongside the line, ironically the subject of repeated attempts by locals and farmers to keep it open. This particular road was blown up by the British over 15 years ago and had only just been reopened recently when local tractors and earthmovers bulldozed it flat again. These activities are organised by the many "Border Community Associations" who risk confrontation and arrest keeping their border roads open.

We carry on down what could be any country lane anywhere, except down the middle of this one runs the border. As it is single track, half of us find ourselves in the North and half in the South. We joke about seeing each others passports! Such jokes are more serious for Liam Campbell who's home we stop briefly outside. Excluded under the P.T.A. from the North since 1983, he is now unable, legally, to cross the road and so the border outside his own home!

It was as Britain threw itself into the bloodbath of WW1 that Irish Nationalists saw their opportunity to free Ireland from British colonialism and occupation once and for all. Despite the failure of the "Easter Rising" of April 1916, the clampdown and execution of the ringleaders that followed by the British served only to strengthen the resolve of the Irish people. In 1918, the General Election returned 71 per cent Sinn Fein and other nationalists committed to an independent parliament. Britain's answer was to intern the leadership and thousands of their supporters. A war of independence followed and in 1920 the "Government of Ireland" Act was Britain's final attempt to keep what power they had in Ireland. The following year Ireland was partitioned and the Six county statelet was formed.

Before long we are passing Fork Hill, one of the main barracks in South Armagh lies in the dip between the hills and was in the 70's subject to constant bombings, until it occurred to the Brits to build a spy post on the overlooking hill. The post itself is just one of a whole network, each visible to the other, which spoils virtually every hill in the region. They are serviced by helicopter, troops seldom patrol on foot for any length of time around here, and each is equipped with it's own underground living quarters, kitchens and power supply. We encounter our first roadblock.

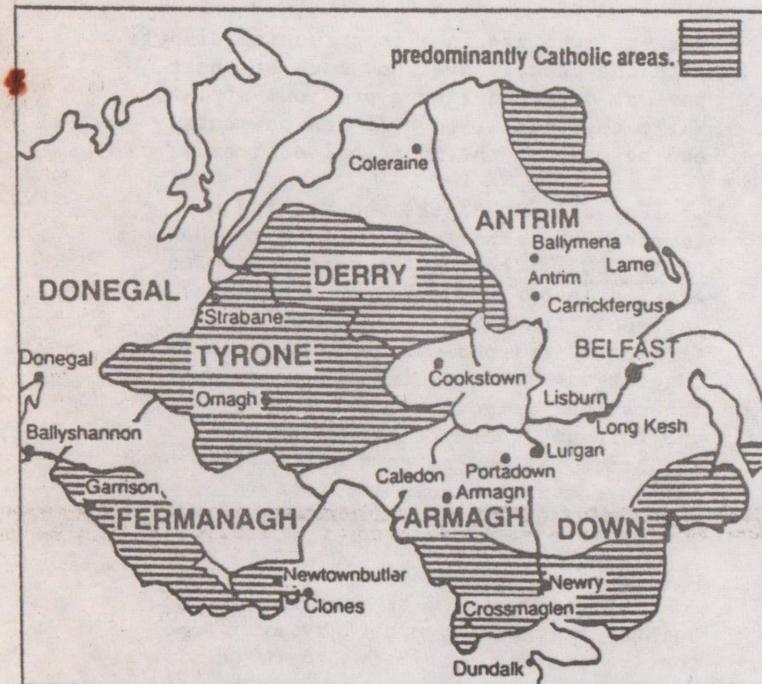
Soon we pass unchallenged from North to South again and back along the main Dundalk to Armagh road. The authorities, we are told, long ago abandoned their customs post on this particular stretch due to IRA activity!

It has never been the way of the British Army to respect the rights and crops of farmers and land is frequently damaged and crops destroyed to build more spy posts. We passed one such post, the first to be built in the area on confiscated land.

Further down the road and another graphic reminder that despite the countryside something isn't quite normal. Cross-border pylons, a proud Dublin-London initiative, half collapsed, cables severed, legs blown away by IRA charges. No fake normality here!

So finally we reach Crossmaglen, a tiny staunchly republican border community which over the years has become such a thorn in the side of the Brits that news reports now prefer not to mention it's name. We arrive in the square at a strange time, for crowds of many hundreds from all over Ireland have turned up to watch what turns out to be a fist-fight for the title of "King of the Gypsies". Such has been the refusal of this community to bow down to British occupation the army has seen fit to build its spy post

not on the nearest hill but right on the main square itself. There cannot be a more closely watched community anywhere and still the post comes under attack from time to time. Bizarre scenes as sections of the huge crowd celebrate victory for their man, directly underneath the watching army post. Behind lies the huge Crossmaglen barracks, bristling with antennae and connected to the spy post by underground passage. Buried in the side of this huge building is a tiny RUC "Police Station" with the same kind of noticeboard you would find anywhere - "There has been a spate of car thefts in this area...Motorists lock your cars!" and a recruitment poster.



Not far out of Crossmaglen and yet another spy post complete with the latest long-range camera and listening technology. Monaghan lies ahead and we are travelling along a "concession road". Drivers from the South are kindly permitted to drive from Monaghan to Monaghan along it's 3 mile stretch as it passes through the

North (such are the twists and turns of the dividing line this is often the quickest route) provided they do not stop or leave their cars.

Do British forces ever cross the border? Well, "map reading errors" do occur! One such error brought eleven British soldiers down by helicopter on August 3rd this year near Cornahoe, South Armagh where they proceeded to search a field before realising their "mistake" and were intercepted by the Irish police (Gardai) who "took down their names". It so happens that the previous evening a prominent republican from the South had waited by the very field while his wife crossed the border to get groceries from a filling station. The soldiers flew out again having found nothing and a local Sinn Fein councillor was forced to comment, "The so-called intervention of the Gardai was nothing but a sham to save face. This was no map reading error, it was a deliberate incursion with or without the connivance of the 26 county authorities..." (AP/RN).

More spy posts and more tattered pylons on the road back to Newry where we leave our guide behind. It's a strange feeling as we pass a freshly dug memorial to the hunger strikers set in the embankment next to country road. The nearby farmhouse sports a sign: "Join the Provos".

It has been an eye-opening experience and one which highlights the intensity of "Security" operations in the area and above all the stupidity and futility of this so called "border". It is a testimony to the courage and determination of the volunteers of the IRA that despite the blanket surveillance that smothers the entire area, they still continue to operate here. It is the Brits that still fly by helicopter, and the Brits who lie frightened in the bushes knowing that every patrol could be their last.

In summing up our guide reiterated what for him was the central issue in the struggle - That the war in Ireland isn't just about poverty, unlike Belfast the farmers of S. Armagh do live comfortably. That the war is not about sectarianism, protestants do still live happily within the Armagh communities. The Central issue is that nobody can draw an artificial line through a country and expect things to carry on as if normal. And things cannot and will not be normal until Britain finally withdraws from Ireland.

UP THE PROVOS!
SMASH THE BORDER!

NOT A PENNY.



Across Britain the gloves are coming off. Councils are now gearing up to take on what has become the largest campaign of civil disobedience in Britain ever. Nationwide, non-payment has been estimated at around 12 million, with 31% of those on the poll tax register in England and Wales not having paid their first two months' bills. In Liverpool, unofficial estimates put the level of non-payment at 40%. Even the "Echo" has admitted that 130 000 summonses may have to be issued, out of 327 000 registered. Other estimates put the level of non-payment at 80% (according to the Merseyside Anti-Poll Tax Federation.)

The first poll tax cases on Merseyside were in Huyton on 30th July. With around 200 people turning up - mostly for the court cases - only 12 cases were heard during the day, with 70 having to be adjourned. Since then, cases have been held in Kirkby, Bootle, Southport and Ellesmere Port. In Liverpool, all the magistrates courts are booked until February, so unless the council puts on special courts we've got at least until then.

As an added headache for Liverpool councillors, NALGO poll tax workers and council switchboard operators have come out on indefinite strike. This is in support of 28 environmental health

workers, who are in a long-running dispute with the council over how much of their pay was docked during a previous strike. While this lasts, no poll tax payments can be made at the municipal offices.

For all non-payers who receive a summons, the important thing is to **TURN UP AT COURT**. Contact the Merseyside Federation (phone 236 1302) or your local anti-poll tax union. Legal advisors/"McKenzie" friends will be available to suggest ways of dragging your case out for as long as possible. The more people who turn up, the more the process of injustice will grind to a halt. It's been estimated that if only 1 person in 37 turns up, the system will be inoperable. (5 000 court cases, at 20 minutes each, will take a year to deal with.) If you don't turn up you'll be rubber-stamped and get a liability order anyway. Once they've got the liability order, they've still got to get you to pay. (For more details of this, contact the Federation or write to us.)

Can't Fight, Won't Fight

Meanwhile, in stark contrast to the level of grassroots opposition, the opposition in the council chambers has been kicked into touch. Every Labour council is now implementing the poll tax. The minority

of Labour councillors (and it was a minority) prepared to make a stand has either backed down or been seen off. In Liverpool, 15 councillors have been suspended by Labour's National Executive Committee, for voting against a poll tax (30 Labour councillors voted for it, 18 against.) Another 14 have now joined them for voting against a £4 a week council rent rise to help balance the budget. With Harry Rimmer now in charge, the idea of a council-led fightback is shown for the dream it always was. As if this wasn't clear enough, Rimmer has now ended the rent-free lease on the Merseyside Federation's Headquarters (which was agreed by the previous Labour administration) The HQ is now under occupation, with the council going for an eviction order.

For anarchists, this is no surprise, we've never had any faith in councillors anyway. Committed as it is to obeying the law - even if it means surrender - the Labour Party has never had the stomach for a real fight. Those socialists who dream of "reclaiming the Labour Party for socialism" are only trying to breathe life into a dead horse. The real fight is where it's always been - in building a mass campaign of working-class people in the work places and in our communities, to oppose registration, collection and payment. The poll tax will not be defeated by "lobbying the council" but by building anti-poll tax groups on every estate and workplace; in building a mass movement prepared to take on, and defeat, the Tories, the councils and the employers.

Building The Resistance

60 anti-poll tax unions are now affiliated to the Merseyside Federation. Though the Federation has done some good work, with legal advisors, leaflets and general publicity, how effective the unions are in organising their own areas is another matter. Based on the Ward level, most unions seem to contain small groups of activists trying to cover thousands of people. Organisation at street level is almost non-existent (compare this to Haringey, London, with 510 street reps and 19 neighbourhood groups.) Communication between members and committees is almost as bad. For instance, if any court hearing was to be a show of strength against the poll tax, it should have been at Huyton - the first cases on Merseyside. Yet hardly any-one from the Federation was there - certainly not the hundreds that might have been expected.

This general lack of communication isn't confined to Liverpool but appears to be common throughout the All-Britain Federation. The urgent need to

consolidate and broaden the campaign is one of the main reasons for the formation of the 3-D network. 3-D, Don't Pay, Don't Collect, Don't Implement has been set up by some of the founder members of the All Britain Federation. This includes the three non-Militant members of the National committee who've resigned in protest at Militant manipulation (see resignation letter). The aim is to help build the campaign, further communication and co-ordination, and to make the All Britain Federation more effective and representative.

How 3-D develops depends on all activists, who're prepared to put the struggle first, getting involved. (see below).

As the poll tax war heats up, the need for united resistance is clear. By organising to win we can turn the Tory's nightmare into reality.

FOR A WORKING CLASS VICTORY!

3-D INFO

8th Sept. 10am: "The Poll Tax and the Unions", conference at Polytechnic students union, Sheffield (opposite Sheffield BR station) Organised by the Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee.

15th Sept: National activists meeting at Leeds. For more info contact 3-D 116 The Avenue, Tottenham, London. Or phone Sham, 081 808 5893, or Jane on 081 801 6041.

The north west contact is Nick c/o Wythenshawe APTU, 20 Troutbeck Road, Gatby, Stockport SK8 4RR.

Copies of the 3-D Bulletin can be obtained from this address.

Labour
Leader
-
Tory
Policeman



Harry Rimmer

POLAND - DARK SIDE OF FREEDOM

In our last issue we carried an article from the Polish Anarchist Federation about the recent changes in Eastern Europe. This month we print a second piece from them telling the story of anarchism in Poland right up to its present re-emergence. If you want a copy of the first article send us a SAE and it's yours.

Both the Second World War and over forty years of communist tyranny in Poland had successfully brought the active anarchist movement to a grinding halt. Lack of native theorists, a dramatic shortage of anarchist literature and the difficulty of making international contacts resulted in a state of considering anarchy as a symptom of extreme deviation.

The main factor making the creation of a self-managed society difficult was the geopolitical situation of the country. After over 100 years of being clawed apart by Russia, Prussia and Austria, then - after a short period of rebirth - Nazi occupation and finally, post-war dependence on the Soviet Union, has shaped a peculiar Polish-style yearning for the restoration of the state. In this way, anarchism was doubly hampered; firstly by the state labeling it as chaos and secondly by the Polish patriotic disease, which eventually put love of country on the highest political pedestal at the expense of all else. Many Poles saw any threat to the state as a threat to themselves. In such circumstances all positive efforts in society were concentrated on the problem of creating (or rather, re-creating) the state.

No wonder then that the idea of limiting and finally pushing the state out of social life wasn't likely to be taken up, and even worse, was seen as the worst treason. In the end the old values of "God, Honour and Fatherland" which were deeply rooted in the average Pole, prevailed - and are still doing well.

These problems may be difficult for comrades abroad to understand, but it must be stressed that the eternal problems connected with spreading libertarian ideas co-exist here with numerous local obstacles. The social reluctance to anarchism doesn't come from the usual fears

of a citizen being faced with lawlessness but derives from the 'subconscious patriotism' which has come from years of struggle for independence.

The growth of revolutionary ideas in Europe at the end of the 19th century didn't bring about the creation of an anarchist movement in Poland though anarchists were active before 1900, albeit in a sporadic way, and their activity was surpassed by other growing socialist trends.

Just before the 1905-7 revolution some better organised groups became visible, most of them coming from the Jewish community which was very numerous at the time. At the beginning their activity was limited to the idea of withdrawing from the state by creating free communities. Further marginalisation of these groups resulted in desperate forms of activity with assassinations, bomb attacks and terror taking priority. These useless attempts didn't work for the popularity and, of course, attracted police attention. This brought brutal and mass repression and most anarchist groups met a sorrowful end. Attempts to create a Polish/Lithuanian anarchist federation did not get off the ground.

Meanwhile, the enthusiasm of the 1905-7 revolution brought opportunities for anarchist propaganda amongst the working masses. Among the first people to promote the demands of labour were anarchists Josef Zielinski, Walentyn Wroblewski and Edward Abramowski, who became famous for his detailed idea of free society based on co-operation and mutual aid, (the so-called "Commonwealth of Co-operatives"). This programme was adopted by 'Solidarity' in its early days but given up later. These people, in producing literature and giving speeches have done a lot for Polish

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 light 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.

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

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.

Many of you will have been involved in the Battle of Trafalgar Square, defending yourselves and your friends against the police and expressing your justifiable class anger at this sick system where profit is more important than human need. But what has the response been of your leaders?

"We condemn it totally...200 to 250 of these individuals intent on causing trouble". (Tommy Sheridan, BBC, 31st March).

"We are going to hold our own internal inquiry which will go public and it necessary name names". (Steve Nally, ITN, 1st April).

"Our Federation is going to be conducting an internal inquiry to try and root out the troublemakers". (Tommy Sheridan, LWT News, 1st April).

These are not "misquoties" or "words taken out of context". They are direct from the horses mouth. They clearly show the basic nature of Militant Tendency: an organisation that is opposed to the working class fighting back. We realise that many people join Militant Tendency thinking that it is a working class organisation. We believe that the events in Trafalgar Square and subsequent statements after it by certain prominent individuals within Militant Tendency show that this is not the case. If anyone has joined Militant Tendency thinking it is a genuine working class organisation, we ask them to think again.

A MESSAGE TO MEMBERS OF MILITANT

anarchism.

After the rebirth of independent Poland in 1918 anarcho-syndicalists started to grow stronger and continued to grow even after the military coup of 1926. A radical faction appeared out of the trade union movement in which anarcho-syndicalists had the majority. It had some 148,000 active members and was just about to join the revolutionary syndicalist International Workers Association when the war broke out. It maintained close relations with foreign anarcho-syndicalist unions, in particular the Norwegian 'Syndikalistisk Verbund' which gave much financial aid to 'Solidarity' in its syndicalist early days. During the Second World War the organisation was active against the Nazis - forming its own partisan groups ("Polska Armia Ludowa"), some of which were heavily involved in the Warsaw Uprising of 1944.

After the war most of the anarchist groups were wiped out by the repressions of the Stalinist era which came down on independent workers movements and any signs of personal freedom. In spite of this, fragmented and marginalised anarchist circles managed to resist till the late 1940's.

During the revolutionary upheavals of 1956, 68 and 70 anarchism was being described as a 'semi-intellectual posture' and even a subculture and organised anarchists were hardly to be seen. That's how it was until the remarkable night of 13th December 1981 when the Soviet style government sent troops to strangle the spirit of revolution.

The revival of anarchism after 1981 is an extraordinary phenomenon. The reason for admiring it is that, despite historic conditions which seemed to exclude any such turn of events, anarchism proved to be more alive than anyone could expect. On the other hand a lack of traditions of fighting the state in an organised manner meant that the new anarchists were mostly young people who's hatred for the communist system was finally transformed into an extreme dislike of any form of authority and of authority as such.

One of the first examples of an organised anarchist movement was the creation of the RSA (the 'Alternative Society Movement') in 1983, which acted for a self-organised society. Soon, RSA spread all over the country. Another active group was "Wolnosc i Pokoj" (WiP - Freedom and Peace), noted for its anti-militarist and ecological activity. These groups

were the first to organise demonstrations against Soviet military presence in Poland, marches for free movement and other numerous protests - both group and individual - against over-developed authority.

In the summer of 1988 an initiative of various anarchist groups (RSA and WiP among them) was launched. It was an information exchange called 'Anarchist Intercity'. The idea caught on and was successful as a platform for communication, networking new local groups, exchange of news, information and the distribution of the anarchist press. The first Anarchist Intercity conference was held in September 1988 and was attended by over 100 delegates from 20 areas covering the whole country. The next conference which took place was in June 1989 and was attended by anarchists from the USSR, Spain, Hungary, East Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands and France. Out of it was formed the Polish Anarchist Federation. This was officially confirmed by delegates at a two day meeting in November 1989. Also, the Declaration of Aims was issued then, and membership of local groups, unions, movements, editorial staffs and individuals was defined.

Most local groups are active in their own areas and produce their own publications and magazines. Anarchist groups also co-operate with a variety of libertarian,



ecological and animal liberation groups and new initiatives are called into being so quickly that it's difficult to list them all.

What is now seen as the most favourable factor promoting anarchism in Poland is that 'Solidarity', admired so much in the past, is inevitably discrediting itself. The farce of the "round table" talks with the communists and the resulting pact, which has resulted in the Solidarity bosses setting themselves apart from the working masses, has proved that social discontent hasn't ended just because the government has changed. Despite the fact that people keep talking about the Mazowiecki government as "our government" there is no getting away from the growing sense of disappointment. Social disillusion is more visible now than after the last elections which brought Solidarity into power.

Solidarity's desperate "jump into capitalism" has caused widespread poverty surpassing even that experienced under communist rule. It is beyond question that Solidarity did a deal. No-one from the days of communist rule has been brought to account for the economic disaster, the hangmen and torturers of the secret police are still doing well, and thousands of absurd regulations inherited from the old regime still cramp any reasonable economic development of the country.

The old traditions of manipulating voters have come back again. We remember how Solidarity was making great efforts to win the votes of soldiers and young people and how they have now been forgotten. 'Solidarity' is now a dying political movement, with its chiefs playing big bosses in the Polish government, and worker's unions in complete stagnation (though there are groups in Solidarity who are in permanent opposition to the government's policies). Lech Walesa is still telling old stories about jumping over the shipyard fence and, at the same time, is skillfully avoiding any responsibility for what's going on - its always been easier to become a god than to remain a human. Solidarity carefully avoid using the word 'capitalism', but that's what is being introduced, while at the same time maintaining some of the relics of the communist system - the price for sharing power. All this can only lead to the further disintegration of society and its division into very rich and very poor.



Anarchists at Solidarnosc demo.

However, this government is in better shape than any of the old ones. It is still being accepted by the majority of people who do not yet see the danger of acceptance, and it is still doing tricks to gain popularity at any expense. (The Polish eagle has its crown back, but who cares about the cost of this simple operation?).

So, there is a lot of work for anarchists. The great disappointment (surely to come) gives a good prospect for an effective anarchist propaganda drive. Preparing the ground for a free society requires the development of an educative role for anarchism - this day to day work must happen before change is possible. It must be remembered that the majority of Polish anarchists are young and the movement itself needs education. Those of us with more experience share our knowledge with the younger comrades to prevent them getting marginalised and drifting into subcultures. The reason why anarchism is generally misunderstood is not the idea itself but the language used while speaking about it. That's why education is a high priority.

Anarchist activities could probably be much more effective if only a better financial and technical possibilities were provided. Many anarchist publications are disregarded due to their poor technical quality and miserable looking image. What seems cheap abroad is very expensive here and despite the best efforts of anarchist printers a lack of money hampers what we do. We therefore rely on our comrades abroad for financial and theoretical help. This can contribute a lot in creating a strong movement here and can turn the new decade into a milestone for Polish anarchism. Poland is, believe us, the only country where revolution can be made for \$1,000!

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REVIEWS.

POLL TAX RIOT
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If you weren't at the battle of Trafalgar Square last March, READ THIS BOOK! It's a collection of accounts written by the rioters themselves which amply tell the tale of that heroic day. Of course, if you were there you should read it too. Those 72 pages reminded me vividly of my humble part in it all.

Each story has its own style; some funny, some serious, but together they take the reader through the events of that day - the carnival atmosphere as the demo assembled in Kennington Park, the march itself, the sit-down at Downing St, the police charges in Whitehall and the major fighting in and around Trafalgar itself.

As well as that you get individuals feelings about being involved - the exhilaration at seeing the police in flight, fear during baton charges, the sense of being in control for once, joy at the looting of posh shops and the burning of the South African embassy, it's all here - right down to the person who gets released from custody in the early hours of the morning and takes a walk through an almost deserted Trafalgar Square. He see's a group of grimy and exhausted riot cops "literally 'plodding' along", their faces devoid of emotion - in sharp contrast to the vitality, energy and resourcefulness of the Square's previous occupants.

The accounts are peppered with people's thoughts about the poll tax, the police, class struggle, capitalism and the state - in short, why they rioted. Proof, if any were needed, that attempts to brand Trafalgar Sqare as 'mindless violence' and the rioters as 'hooligans' are utterly wrong.

Not many peasants left accounts of the 1381 uprising against the poll tax, so in its way, apart from being a bloody good read, this book is a historical document - our history, our struggle.



THE GLOBE: THE NORTH'S GREEN GUIDE.
Red Cabbage Publishings,
P.O. Box 519,
Sheffield
S11 8EQ
£6 per year, £5 unwaged/student,
£10 to organisations.

Printed on the obligatory recycled paper and well laid out, this is a relatively new green magazine, specifically for the north of the country.

It consists mainly of factual articles and short pieces on local, national and international green events and activities, ranging from news of a new car share scheme in Liverpool, to a leaked report on the cost of Sizewell B nuclear power station, to a campaign to preserve the ancient redwood forests in California. However, most of the magazine is devoted to matters of local or regional interest, and it includes a bulletin on the current activities of local green groups around the north, and its "Pages for Change" section gives details of local campaigns.

THE GLOBE contains only one or two really in-depth articles, and it cannot be described as "radical" even in green movement terms. But its full of solid information that will be invaluable to green activists. It's available from radical bookshops in Liverpool, Chester, Manchester, Sheffield and York.

'Poll Tax Riot' should be available in your local radical bookshop, but copies can be had for £1 plus postage from - Acab Press, BM 8884, London WC1N 3XX.