

LISTINGS.

SEPTEMBER*SEPTEMBER*SEPTEMBER*SEPTEMBER*SEPTEMBER*SEPTEMBER

Sat. 7th Organising meeting for National Poll tax Prisoners Conference. Open to all. For details phone Prisoners Support Group, TSDC, on 071 738 7586.

Sun. 8th Unity Carnival organised by Cable Street Beat and Anti-Fascist Action. Hackney Downs, London E5. 2pm - 7pm.
Planning meeting for "Finishing Off the Poll Tax" Conference - at Manchester 12 - 3pm. (Contact NWAPT Forum PO Box 9, Eccles SO, Eccles, Salford, M30 7FX)

23rd - 28th Class War International Conference, London (IC, London CW, PO Box 467, London E8 3QX).

OCTOBER*OCTOBER*OCTOBER*OCTOBER*OCTOBER*OCTOBER*OCTOBER*OCTOBER

TUE. 15th First day of 3-day IMF/World Bank Congress. Day of Action and Protests against banks (071 387 7557 for details).

Wed 16th World Anti-MacDonald's day. Protests in solidarity with London Greenpeace activists fighting libel case (Phone as above)

SAT 19th National "Free All APT Prisoners - Scrap the Poll Tax Now" demo. London - provisionally Brixton to Trafalgar Square (Phone TSDC 071 738 7586 for details).

SAT 26th National APT Conference "Finishing Off the Poll Tax" - Manchester Town Hall 10am-6pm (Contact NWAPT Forum PO Box 9 Eccles SO, Eccles, Salford, M30 7FX).

NOVEMBER*DECEMBER*NOVEMBER*DECEMBER*NOVEMBER*DECEMBER*N

NOV. 9TH National demo against MacDonald's. Central London. Starts 12 noon. (071 387 7557 for details).

DECEMBER National Claimants Federation, Conference for unwaged solidarity and resistance. London (Phone 081 802 9804 for details)

Liverpool Anarchists meet the first and third Mondays of every month, 7.45pm.

OK, SO WE ALL MAKE MISTAKES!



MERSEYSIDE
ANARCHIST
NEWSLETTER 20P

SEPTEMBER 91

NUMBER 30

PLANNERS' DREAMS



TENANTS' NIGHTMARES

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

Hello there,
Welcome to issue 31 of M.A. Unfortunately history doesn't work to our deadlines and so there's no article on the Soviet coup or its aftermath in this issue. However, next month we'll be bringing you the full anarchist analysis of events in the USSR, the death of the Communist Party, etc., etc..
Deadline for the October issue is Sept. 23rd. Odd pieces to the P.O. Box by then please.

WARNING: From next month the newsletter will cost 25p and subs will go up to £3.50 for 10 issues. So subscribe now before its too late!

POLL TAX
TOGETHER WE'LL CRACK IT

SUBSCRIBE £3.00 for 10 issues
Payable to:
"Mutual Aid Centre"
at the address above.

DEADLINE SEPTEMBER
23RD.....

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 1984/5 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 ever-widening struggle - for social revolution and anarchism.

LIVERPOOL ANARCHIST GROUP.

ROAD TO NOWHERE

MILITANT AND THE WALTON BY-ELECTION

To read the 12th July edition of 'Militant' as it picked the bones out of their candidates derisory showing in the Walton by-election, you would think that the Walton 'Real Labour' grouping had presided over some kind of a massive victory. At the bottom of the page it said "Lessons of Walton" followed by various page numbers. What was to be found inside was an exercise in self-congratulation - the triumph of hype over substance.

'Militant' wouldn't be 'Militant' without some judicious juggling of the figures to back up their arguments. And sure enough there it was in the centre-page spread, "Lesley Mahmood's share of the Combined Real Labour and official Labour vote amounted to 11%. In this sense, Real Labour did very well."

No matter how much you fiddle figures Lesley Mahmood's share of the vote amounted to 6% of the total polled - no amount of hype can cover that up.

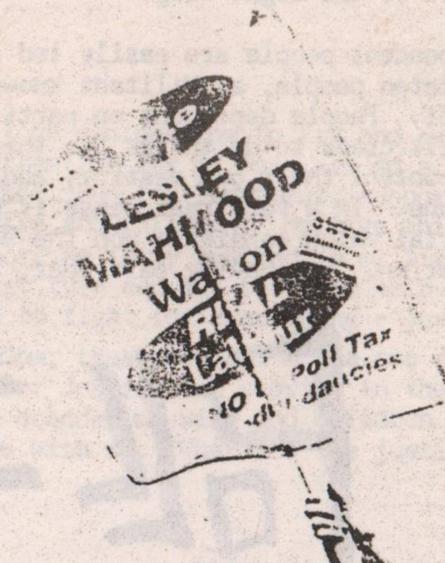
In a desperate attempt to cover up their near loss of a deposit, the article in 'Militant' dealt at length on instances of people joining Militant or Real Labour as a result of the campaign, and people putting up posters in support of the Real Labour candidate. There was even an instance of an old age pensioner who gave one of the campaigners £10 for a copy of 'Militant'. (Why do they always insist on stretching our credulity!)

WALTON BY-ELECTION		Votes	%
PETER KILFOYLE Official Labour	21,317	53.1	
PAUL CLARK Liberal Democrat	14,457	36.0	
LESLEY MAHMOOD Real Labour	2,613	6.6	
BERKELEY GREENWOOD Conservative	1,155	2.9	
LORD DAVID SUTCH Monster Raving Loony Party	542	1.3	
EDWARD GEORGE LEE DELISLE George Lee Delisle Party	63	0.2	

Not to be outdone in hype, the Youth Rights campaign - the youth wing of Militant - in its analysis of the campaign:

said that Lesley Mahmood had her finger on the pulse of the working-class voters in the constituency in a way that Kilfoyle, the official candidate, didn't. Whether or not that was true, it does beg the question, why didn't she pull more votes than she actually did?

The nearest that the article came to answering that question was to blame the mass media campaign of hatred and the "witch-hunting" atmosphere played on by Labour's leadership. Has it occurred to anyone in 'Militant' that if they had the honesty, the decency and the bollocks to campaign under their own banner, rather than to parasitise the Labour Party, then they wouldn't have to indulge in their marathon ritual whinge about witch-hunts in the Labour Party?



According to those involved in the campaigning many voters felt that getting a Labour government elected in Westminster was more important than voting for a candidate whose success was doubtful.

This is a depressing commentary on how dependent most people feel themselves to be on others to do things for them. The Labour Party has been, and always will be, an irrelevance as far as the improvement of the working-class's condition is concerned, whether under the leadership of the left of the right wing.

Dependent people are easily led and manipulated people, as Militant knows only too well. People dependent on parties and politicians to do things for them will never control their own destiny, and never have done. In a very real sense it was immaterial which candidate won the Walton by-election. But having said that, any

organisation which attempts to disguise defeat as victory, and indulges itself in its own hype in blythe disregard of what is actually happening, has to be questioned by working-class people as to its fitness to lead anybody anywhere.



POLL-TAX NEWS

600 treasury staff at Liverpool City Council have been on indefinite strike since late July over compulsory redundancies. Poll Tax collection, chasing up of arrears, as well as the ability of the Council to monitor spending etc., have all been frozen as a result. To top this, it appears that Liverpool Council is having serious problems with its computer system...

Anyone who turned up at court and was refused a McKenzie Friend (lay legal advisor) can now appeal to get their case reviewed. Last December the High Court ruled that magistrates could deny the right to a McKenzie Friend (as so many Poll Tax non-payers were using this to slow down the courts). This ruling has now been reversed by the Appeal Court.

According to the Guardian and Independent (5.8.91), by March 31st this year, at least £1 billion - 10% of the total due in England and Wales, remained unpaid (25% of adults have failed to make the first Poll Tax payment in the current financial year). £500 million may have to

be written off (for a comparison, £6.2 billion of British Coal debts were written off last year under the Coal Industry Act). Collection costs are expected to rise by 11% to £500 million in 1991/92. Over 4.5 million summonses have been issued (ie 10% of Poll Tax 'payers') and 3 million more are expected to be issued by the end of the year. Attachment of earnings orders are proving "virtually useless" and have only been successfully used in a few dozen cases. Only 58,000 deductions from Social Security benefits had occurred by the end of May, and "dozens" have been to prison.

In Scotland, unpaid tax rose from 13.7% in the first year, to 25.7% in the second. Only £11.50 per head had been collected (of an average Poll tax of £230) 3 months into the 3rd year...

In Liverpool its very much the calm before the storm. When (if?) the Council ever gets its act together we need to be ready.

IF YOU DON'T KICK IT IT WON'T FALL

MARTIN FORAN

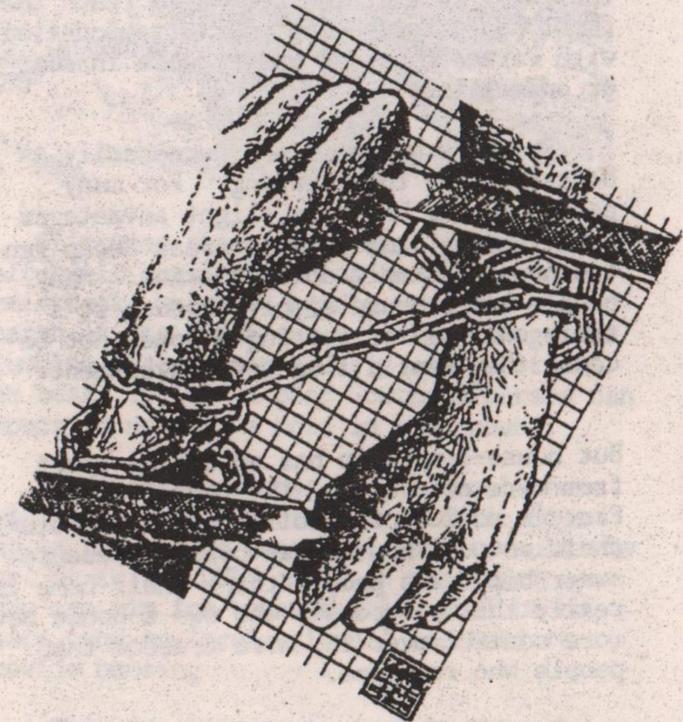
In last months' M.A. we featured an article about Martin Foran, his campaign for justice after having been framed, and his decision to go on the run. This is the first of a series of press releases which Martin will put out through his supporters in Britain and Ireland. Photographs of Martin and his family and a taped interview will soon be released. Further information can be obtained by contacting: John Craig, BM Hurricane, London WC1N 3XX.

A STATEMENT FROM MARTIN

"I'd like to explain to every-one why I've started this run for justice. I was released from prison, on my own, with no police, no prison officers, to go to hospital in London. I honoured my word and turned up at the hospital, just with my wife and children, but was shocked to discover that the police were waiting for me at the hospital. This shocked me and frightened me because I had kept my word, not done any protesting nor in any way done anything wrong. It was disheartening and depressing to find the police waiting for me even while in a hospital bed. I'd have the police standing over me even after the Home Office had guaranteed there would be no police. But it seems that the police are a law to themselves.

When I went to the hospital my wife parked the car in the spot for ambulances because we were late for the appointment. All I wanted to do was run in and tell the hospital I had arrived. But they tried to stop me going back to tell my wife to move the car. I then started to panic because I never even got to kiss my wife and my kids good-bye. When I saw two police not knowing what they were doing there I was frightened of another frame-up and ran to my wife and kids and drove off in my wife's car. As we drove off, the kids were so pleased one said: 'Good, keep running and stay with us, dad.' And that's when the run for justice started to form in my head.

I've decided now to try and get public attention for my case, to do a Run for Justice, Run for Treatment, supported by my wife and children. My five children support me in my run and in my fight. Now I must turn and ask for your help. We have to fight for everything - justice, freedom, treatment. I'm the one doing the Run for Justice but stories in the press have branded my wife and children as fugitives with me. Where is the justice in that?"



HOUSING

Shelter is one of the essential requirements for life, next to food and water. This has always been a simple fact, but it was probably simpler to get adequate shelter in the Stone Age than it is now. Ever since the British State decided to have a role in the building of houses, no government has ever tried, or ever wanted, to house all of its people adequately. Housing has been created as a limited resource, to be given only to those the State considers worthy, or only available to those who can pay for it.

Like most things under capitalism, housing has been turned into a commodity from which the few can make profits without having to earn them. Whether you're renting a studio flat in Yuppieville or a tatty bedsit in Rachmanland, the principle is the same: the landlord wants to get more money back in rent than s/he pays on maintaining the property. Of course yuppies, being somewhat richer than most, are able to exercise some choice over where they live. If you're on a meagre wage or no wage at all you have to take what you can get. Which can mean anything from having to jump over the holes in the floorboards to reach the front door, to sharing your accommodation with various types of undesirable insect or animal life.

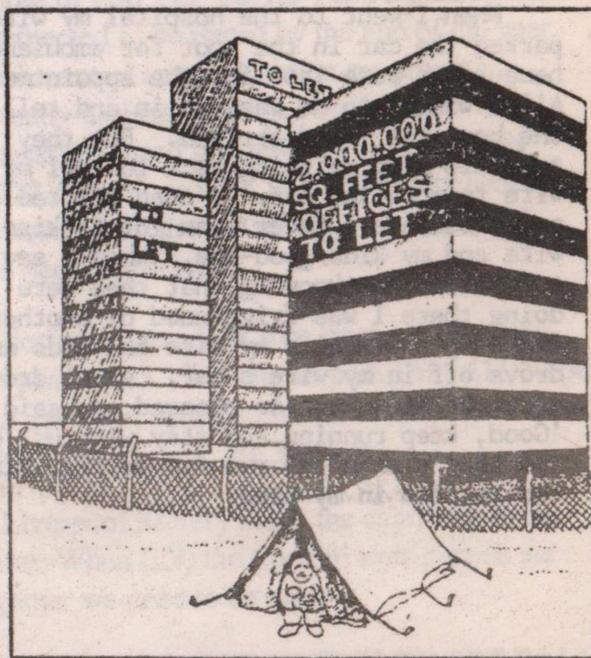
Buying a house is not necessarily a better option than renting. For many people buying has only slight advantages over renting, and in some areas cheap rented housing simply doesn't exist. Many people buy a house simply because it's their only way of getting a home, not because they want a long-term investment.

But house-ownership has an appeal apart from mere necessity. The Conservative Party's policy of enabling people to buy their council houses was popular because ownership makes people think their home is really theirs - people who own a house have more control over it, more freedom than people who rent one.

But house-ownership does not give the owner complete control. They are limited by planning regulations if they decide to alter the house, and they cannot make alterations that would reduce the value of the house while they're still paying the mortgage off. Also, house-ownership is expensive. Many people who try to achieve

the Great Ideal of owning their house find themselves struggling, and they can expect no mercy from the building society if they default on payments. Even those who are rich enough to choose any house on the market without any financial strain will find that somebody somewhere is leeching off them. Solicitors, estate agents, architects and building societies all want their cut from the sale of a house, either in the form of payment for their 'expertise' or interest on money they've loaned. The idea is never considered that people just might have the intelligence to design, build and manage their homes themselves.

Council housing isn't built for profit. But there is an army of 'professionals' who make a nice living out of running it. The whole system of public housing is designed to give tenants no personal control over their housing conditions. Public housing is planned to be limited in supply with bureaucrats deciding who gets what.



As with most of the concessions wrung out of the State by the working-class, the State provides just enough housing to keep working people quiescent. Lloyd George originally promised 'Homes Fit For Heroes' in 1919, to pacify working-class conscripts who, after four years of warfare, wanted to come back to something better. But few of the heroes got their homes. The building programme never kept pace with the demand for houses, and throughout the 1920s and 1930s there was no consistent house-building policy. The provisions for house-building changed with each successive government (and as might be expected the resources given to house-building were less under Conservative governments.)

Then after the Second World War, when so many houses were bombed beyond repair, there was again an acute housing shortage. Yet again the house-building programme did not keep up with need. This led to nationwide mass direct action when thousands of people squatted in disused military camps.

The building of council houses was at its height during the 1950s and 60s. Yet by the early 1970s there were still many families living in squalor. Homeless families were forced to live in hostels with rules no less draconian than those of a nineteenth-century workhouse. (Des Wilson's 'Minority Report' describes the conditions homeless and inadequately housed families were living in.)

There is still a housing shortage. 'Shortage' does not mean only that there are not enough houses for every person or family that wants one. A shortage also exists when these people don't have the means to pay for what they need. The system of providing housing is unfair and inefficient - but it was never meant to be anything else.

Control of the availability of housing is just one of the methods the State uses to keep control of the working-class. Making itself the provider of housing discourages working-class people from providing for themselves. The State prefers the working-class to be dependent, to believe they never can provide for themselves.

Little has been written about housing from an anarchist point of view. The main book on the subject is Colin Ward's 'Housing: an Anarchist Approach'. This isn't a comprehensive plan for anarchist housing but is a series of articles from a libertar-

ian viewpoint which the author has written for different magazines over the years. But the articles all have a similar theme: houses should be controlled by the people who live in them.

One example of this ideal of 'dweller-control' is Ward's article about poor people in Peru who build their own houses from scratch using whatever materials they can scrounge or afford to buy, without a shred of assistance from the State - but also without State interference. It might take a family ten years to complete their house depending on how long it takes them to get hold of materials and as they increase the size of the house as they have more children. But what they build is completely theirs.



Of course there are flaws: this kind of self-built housing may not be more than a semi-shack, which is hardly good for the health of its inhabitants. Also sewage and plumbing systems are usually non-existent. The best 'toilet' a poor Southern person can expect is usually a hole in the ground.

But this ideal that people should have complete personal control over their housing is the one an anarchist society must aim for. It is the ONLY ideal an anarchist society can aim for because there will be no State (and no 'professional' leeches) to provide housing.

This ideal is no impossible fantasy. Methods of organising housing democratically, already exist, and could be easily adapted to an anarchist society.

There is a small self-build movement in Britain (somewhat more sophisticated than that of Peru! as it has to conform to northern* standards). A few organisations, such

as Gyroscope in Hull, teach people the necessary skills to build their own houses. The self-build movement has never been big, and isn't likely to grow under capitalism. The high degree of control people have when they build their own houses is too 'dangerous' to be tolerated. Under an anarchist society it might become the main way of getting a home.

The only people to challenge the present system of housing are squatters. They come closest to having perfect control of their housing. Squatters live completely outside the system and so are completely thrown on their own resources. Many people have an image of squats as squalid, dirty and short-lived. But properly organised, they can be empowering for the people who live in them.

"Squatting: the real story" (Bay Leaf Books 1980) gives a good idea of the potential of squatting for the people involved. Since they have to do their own house repairs squatters learn to be self-reliant and resourceful. (House maintenance is one of many 'specialist' skills which in fact are not at all difficult once you've learned something about them.) Since squatters are not subject to planning regulations and don't have to consider property values, they can adapt their living space to suit themselves. This can mean anything from knocking down (or rebuilding) internal walls to alter the shape and size of rooms; removing garden walls along a row of terraced houses to create a communal allotment; adapting the cellar to be used for all-night band rehearsals; making a 'greenhouse' under the skylight in the roof-space; to more eccentric adaptations, such as the squatter who painted the walls and ceiling of his room sky-blue with white clouds and pitched his tent in it.



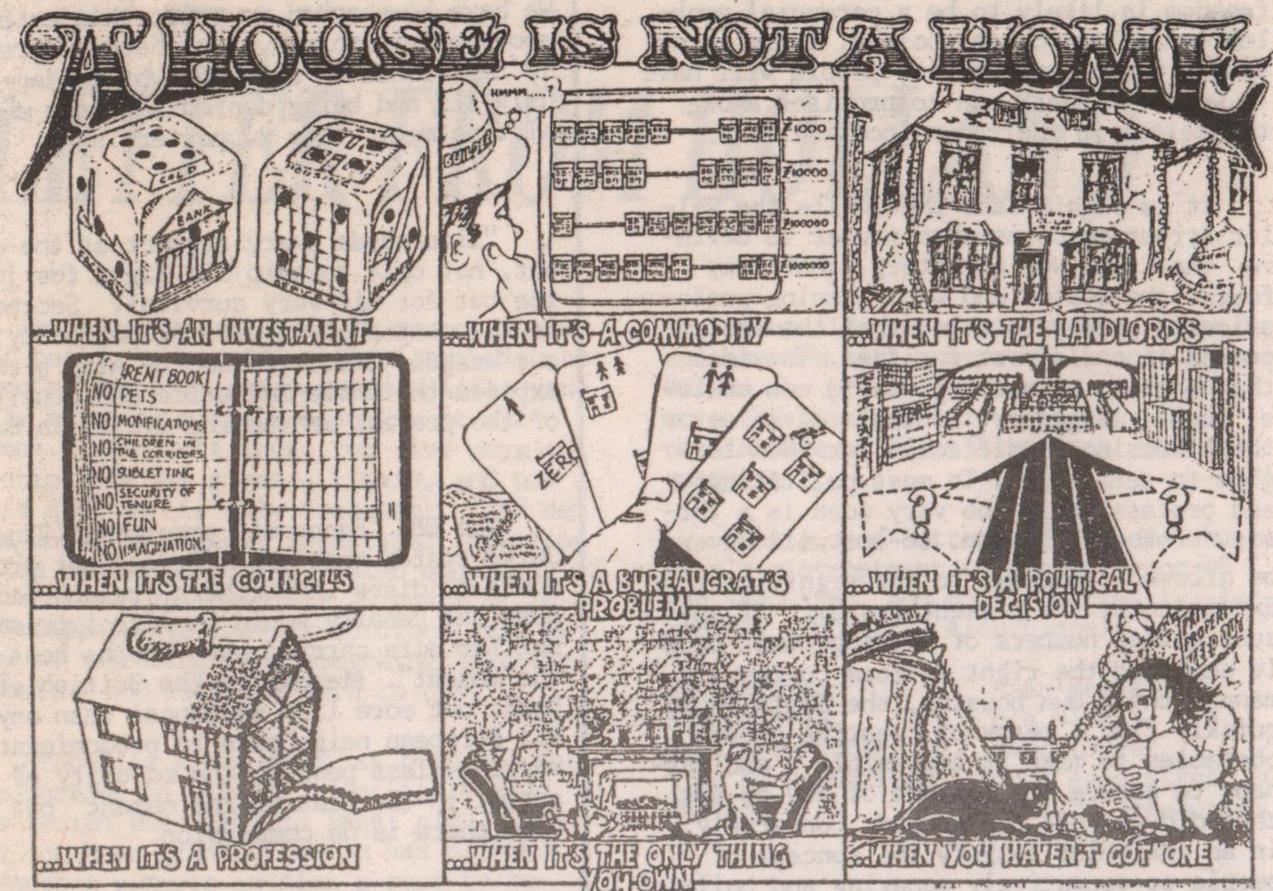
Some women have welcomed the make-shift conditions of squatting because it frees them from the pressures of housework and being expected to maintain an ideally clean-and-tidy home. Squatters have been able to experiment with communal and semi-communal lifestyles, which the design of conventional housing prevents.

It is quite feasible that in the aftermath of an anarchist revolution there would be an epidemic of squatting, as with the old system of property ownership destroyed the people could appropriate all the empty and neglected buildings left empty by speculators and local authorities - not forgetting the 'extra homes' owned by the rich. But in the long term housing would have to be organised on a better basis than a general free-for-all. Left with a legacy of decades of capitalist neglect, no anarchist society could instantly provide ideal homes for all. Given all the other problems of reconstruction and reorganisation of production involved in a revolution, it would take some time to even provide adequate homes. For a time, people might be able to scrounge and reuse old building materials as squatters do now, but this could not be an indefinite solution. A libertarian-communist society would aim to produce much less waste and make much better use of resources than a capitalist society, so 'spare' materials would eventually become scarce.

All this implies that there might need to be some system of allocation for what housing was available. But the difference would be that it would be democratically managed and organised, with the people themselves sharing out housing on a strictly egalitarian basis. There would be no politicians, no Higher Authority to 'give' housing or to play power games with the people who want it.

For anarchists, the idea that working-class people can control major aspects of their lives - such as their housing conditions - is natural and unsurprising. Of course, under capitalism working-class people almost never have power and control over their housing. But there is one model which could be adopted on a big scale under anarchism, namely co-ops.

Co-ops are not a new idea, though under capitalism their potential has been severely limited. Various financial and legal obstacles have been used to restrict the growth of co-ops. It's made far more



difficult than it need be to start a housing co-op. The idea that working-class people can manage and even build their own housing is a dangerously subversive one under capitalism. For obvious reasons, it's not an idea the powers that be want to catch on too much. But co-ops prove, for any-one who wants to see it, that working-class people are well capable of running their own lives.

It's well worth reading the story of the Weller Streets co-op in Liverpool, as this shows the potential of co-ops and the limits put on them. This was a new-build co-op in Liverpool 8, which was initiated by local people who wanted to be rehoused from their 'slum' terraced houses but were tired of waiting on council promises.

The obstacles were so great that they probably would not have achieved it without their great sense of community solidarity and some degree of anger at the poor conditions they and their families had to tolerate.

The co-op was first registered in 1977. It took until 1982 for the last of its members to move into their completed houses. Along the way they faced obstacles, from politicians: the city council took 18 months to agree to sell

them a site to build the houses on; from architects and builders: they considered working-class people having such a high degree of control over their housing to be 'bizarre' and as a result the co-op found it difficult to find some-one who would design and build the houses in the way they wanted. Also there were difficulties working with some of the housing professionals, who were used to getting a greater degree of awe and respect for their 'expertise' than co-op members were prepared to give them. Professionals who talked over people's heads at meetings were given short shrift.

They were also constrained by the 'standards' imposed funding available to them. Some were disappointed to find that the space allowed for each house would give them living-rooms almost as small and cramped as their old houses.

Also there were internal problems. While some members wanted the houses built along strictly egalitarian lines, others wanted a greater degree of individual choice (over apparently small things, such as whether people should be able to choose the colour of their bathroom fittings) and one or two people left the co-op. This conflict between equality and collective responsibility and individual

freedom is likely to be a perennial problem in any anarchist society. There is no single way to resolve it, people will have to work out their own compromises among themselves in their own locality.

It is significant that while the Weller Street co-op members prefer to believe that they won a victory, that they fought the system and won, housing professionals prefer to think that the system proved it could work for them. The idea that a group of working people can control such a large part of their lives as their housing is difficult for them to come to terms with. To most politicians and professionals the very idea is a threat. For this reason, co-ops will never be allowed to spread to any significant extent under the present system. If any substantial numbers of working-class people demanded the right to form co-ops and manage their own housing, the State would quickly find a means of creating enough obstacles to make it impossible - and perhaps to ensure the failure of any co-ops that did get off the ground. Conversely, in an anarchist society the concept of people co-operatively managing and building their own houses would be natural and inevitable.



READING:

- DesWilson's "Minority Report" (1973, Quartet) **
- "The Weller Way" - Alan MacDonald (Weller Publishing 1986)
- "Housing: An Anarchist Approach" - Colin Ward (Freedom Press 1983)
- "Squatting: the Real Story" - various writers (Bay Leaf Books 1980)**

** book out of print, try libraries.

* The terms 'Northern' and 'Southern' are used in this article instead of 'First World' and 'Third World' because they are more meaningful: wealth-wise, the planet is distinctly divided into a rich northern and poor southern hemisphere.

We have been asked to print this article about a British man, Alan Reeve, currently imprisoned in Holland, who is dangerously ill and being denied adequate medical treatment. His supporters say:

"Alan needs every support at the moment, not only to help his fight for justice but for his very survival. Secrecy is the weapon of injustice, publicity is our weapon. Issues raised by Alan's case exposes the whole injustice and cruelty of the present sentencing system in Britain.

The BBC 'Panorama' programme (22nd July) stated that the DPP does not prosecute soldiers in Northern Ireland because the penalty would be life imprisonment for acts carried out "in the heat of the moment". Meanwhile the British state hands out more life sentences than any of its European neighbours to predominantly working-class people, the majority of whom acted "in the heat of the moment" but for whom there is no compassion."

Alan Reeve is nearing the end of his sentence in a dutch prison. His time served, Alan remains unbroken, but now he is threatened again by a conspiracy between the dutch state and the british state. On 23rd April this year the dutch public prosecutor was going to start a case against Alan, aiming to show he is a danger to public order and/or mentally incompetent. The hearing was postponed as soon as it was announced. Previously the case failed, so they are now required to produce new evidence. This evidence does not exist; the delay is to allow time for evidence to be fabricated.

Tremendous pressure is being put on Alan. They aim to break him. In May Alan collapsed in agony. His circulation had ceased to function. He was rushed to an outside hospital (the AMC Assen) The hospital was informed by prison health staff that they suspected a perforated stomach ulcer and an operating theatre should be prepared for immediate surgery. Instead Alan was left waiting two hours on a stretcher in a hospital corridor. A young male nurse from the prison made a forceful intervention for Alan and a doctor was obliged to begin examination. Alan's blood pressure was almost non-existent and his blood was without trace elements or minerals. After they ascertained it was not an ulcer, he was taken to a prison hospit-

LETTER FROM HOLLAND

al still connected to drips and monitors and put in a downstairs dormitory with no special security arrangements (Alan usually attracts maximum security at all times.) and left there for five days on a drip. He was given a liquid, and now a soft diet as his only treatment. The new diagnosis is a heavy intestinal infection which caused poisoning. Alan and those of us who have followed his 29 years of imprisonment have grave suspicions that he may be suffering from something life-threatening and is being left to die.

Meanwhile a new date has been set for the hearing in October. Initially Alan was denied the right to legal aid. This has now been granted, which has allowed important reports in Alan's case to be translated for Alan's English barrister. These reports are all favourable to Alan.

Legally things look good for him. His barrister believes the worst scenario would be for him to be deported back to Broadmoor for only three months before his mental competence could be proved beyond a shadow of a doubt, under the 1983 mental health act.

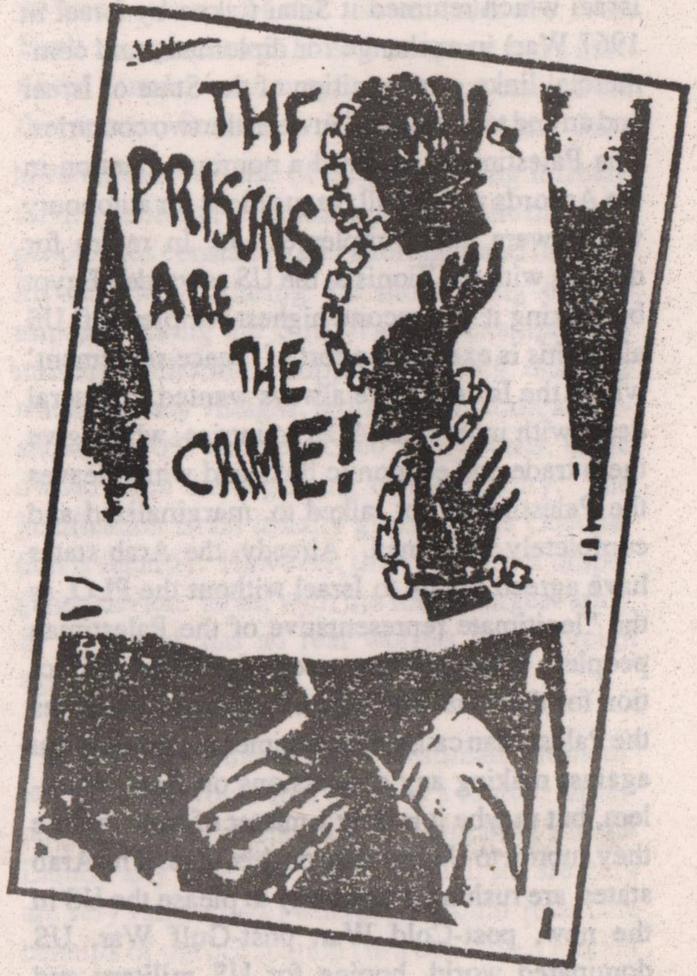
But this is a nightmare for Alan, to be sent for even three months to the hate factory he was thrown into when he was a fifteen-year-old boy. Alan should never go back to that hell-hole. He was dumped there in 1964 for manslaughter and received nothing but pain and humiliation at the hands of its staff. In the dutch prisons that continues. Screws have tried to get him on false disciplinary charges.

The dutch state is trying to macho up its image for its EEC partners. For example the extradition of two young Irish people and the threat still over a third, for IRA activities, when it has already been proved in a dutch court that they are not IRA members, shows the disregard for justice in Europe. In Britain the system is so discredited after the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four releases and the continued imprisonment of so many oth-

ers given life sentences with no date for release and little hope of licensed parole. Unless the present system is reformed (a move the Home Secretary rejects) it is unthinkable to force Alan back into that quagmire.

Please send letters of protest about Alan's mistreatment to the governor of Van Vanhuizen and most importantly, letters of support to Alan himself.

The Governor Norgerhaven Oude Asserstraat 20 9341 BC Veenhuizen Holland	Alan Reeve p/a MI-2 Norgerhaven Oude Asserstraat 20 9341 BC Veenhuizen Holland
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Middle East 'Peace' Conference Peace For Who?

With the ending of the Cold War, the US has been turning its attentions to 'solving' the various regional conflicts within the Third World which have the result of hindering trade and capitalist operations: Namibia, Nicaragua and Central America etc. It now seems to be the turn of the Middle East. Having demonstrated its military supremacy against Iraq, the US is in a dominant position to force 'peace' on the Palestine/Israel conflict and is pushing for a conference.

The proposed participants would be Israel, various Arab governments, the US, and a non-PLO, Palestinian delegation. The time seems to be a crucial one for the Palestinians. The signs point to them being sidelined while others sign away their rights and lands. There are precedents for this; in 1977, Egypt signed the Camp David Accords with Israel which returned it Sinai (taken by Israel in 1967 War) in exchange for diplomatic and commercial links, a recognition of the State of Israel and an end to hostilities between the two countries. The Palestinians received a nominal mention in the Accords with small, vague plans for autonomy which were never implemented. In return for dealing with the Zionists, the US rewarded Egypt by making it the second highest recipient of US aid. This is exactly the sort of 'peace settlement' which the Israelis have always wanted - bilateral deals with individual Arab countries which give them trade and economic links and which leaves the Palestinians not talked to, marginalized and completely weakened. Already, the Arab states have agreed to talk to Israel without the PLO, as the "legitimate representative of the Palestinian people", being present, a completely new direction for them and one which dangerously isolates the Palestinian cause. The regimes are holding out against making any concessions on East Jerusalem, but maybe it is only a matter of time before they submit to US pressure on this, also. The Arab states are rushing desperately to please the US in the new, post-Cold War, post-Gulf War, US dominated world, hoping for US military and

economic aid. It should go without saying that the two central players in this conflict are Israel and the Palestinians and the PLO should be central to any negotiation, if Palestinians are to get a just settlement.

It seems very strange that the US is masquerading as the 'honest broker' in these proposed negotiations, when they are actually Israel's most ardent supporter in the world and are very hostile to the Palestinian cause. Israel is given the biggest share of US aid (in 1982, this was 48% of all military aid and 38% of economic aid) which is furthermore, unmonitored and with no conditions attached as to what can be bought - a unique aid package indeed. This works out at an American subsidy of \$1000 per person, every year and, in effect, it is the US who funds the Occupation and Israel's other expansionist policies, for example its invasion of the Lebanon in 1982 and subsequent occupation of the south of the country. The US also regularly gives diplomatic support to Israel in the UN, vetoing relevant security council resolutions and standing, often alone, with Israel in General Council votes



against it. In return, Israel has been its client state, a loyal, military ally in the Middle East (where Middle Eastern oil is strategically important to the US) and a state willing to do the US's dirty work around the globe, selling/giving arms and military training to those regimes and groups which the US does not want to be seen to be helping or on which Congressional human rights restrictions operate, for example, Haille Salassie's Ethiopia, Idi Amin's Uganda and Nicaragua under Samozza in the 1970's, and more recently South Africa, UNITA, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Zaire and Indonesia.

Israel does not want a 'peace conference', certainly not one where it would have to deal with the PLO, whose presence it has vetoed, and it is adamantly opposed to giving up its occupation of the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and the Golan Heights under any circumstances. Apart from the ideological Zionist commitment to a Greater Israel covering all of the Biblical lands, there are many, more material benefits of the Occupation. There are the receipts from taxes and tourism on the West Bank. By destroying the local economy after the 1967 invasion, the Israelis turned the Occupied Territories not only into a captive market for Israeli goods (estimated at \$600 billion per year in 1982), but also a pool of cheap labour for Israeli factories, restaurants, farms and construction sites to exploit. Having little other alternative employment, Palestinians are forced to work for very low wages and in bad conditions. Early every morning, Israeli bosses come to the various "slave markets" (a Palestinian term) in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Rishon le Zion and other towns, where dozens of desperate men wait, hoping to be chosen to work for that day. In one Israeli town the men are actually put into a cage to await the bosses' choice. Children as young as 6 and 7 are also trucked in by labour contractors to work on Israeli farms. Not being allowed to stay overnight in Israel, workers have to either travel home each night (a 3 am to 8 PM day from Gaza) or stay illegally, locked in factories or in factory detention camps under armed guard.

Israel has also gained land and natural resources through the Occupation. It has annexed the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem and confiscated more than half of the West bank and a third of the Gaza



Strip (an area already extremely densely populated) for Zionist settlements. After the 1967 invasion, control of the water under the West Bank was given to an Israeli company and a third of the State's water supply has since come from this source. Settlers in the West Bank and Gaza have unrestricted use of its water, using it freely for irrigation and swimming pools, while the local people face constant water shortages and refusals for new wells: during the month-long curfew imposed during the Gulf War, for example, the military authorities stopped pumping drinking water to many villages, reduced irrigation allowances by 60% and destroyed many wells, some owned since the beginning of the century. The justification Israel usually gives for the Occupation is security. However, this is merely a propaganda device. Israel with the fourth largest army in the world, has no real worries from foreign aggression.

The sort of settlement to the Palestinian 'problem' which Israel would like to see is a limited autonomy plan (the Labour Party's Allon Plan and the Likud Party's desire to extend Israeli sovereignty are very similar here) whereby it would retain the benefits of the occupation (ie a controlled market and cheap labour) while the Palestinians would be concentrated in ghetto-like areas, having Jorda-

14 nian nationality or being stateless (if the areas were annexed, there would be a 'demographic' problem for the Zionists of having large numbers of new Arabs in their 'Jewish' state.).

It is possible that the US would like a settlement involving the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as the most stable option for capitalist investment and that they could force Israel to accept this by using their massive aid programme as a lever. This would be a radical change in US policy where previously it had supported Israel down the line and would be due to the fact that many other countries in the region are queuing up to be in the US camp; Israel is potentially not so vital to them as it once was. The settlement would be on their terms, still favourable to Israel (although less so than having the Occupied Territories under its direct control), with military concessions to it and the new state still economically dependent on its neighbour. After forty years of exile and twenty years of occupation (1967 territories), most Palestinians are ready to accept a mini-state. It has been PLO policy since the mid 70's and the organisation has made increasingly disparate concessions to try to get Israel to negotiate, for example, recognition of Israel, giving up its rights to the 1948 territories and renouncing 'terrorism'. Israel, however, has constantly rejected any proposal to negotiate. It prefers instead to waste time on proposals before they finally peter out or are rejected, or to sabotage them militarily, while in the meantime, creating facts on the ground which further increase the difficulties of negotiation.

The present time is a particularly critical one in this respect and many Palestinians feel that they will either get their state soon or never. This is because of the vast numbers of immigrants coming to Israel from the Soviet Union who are being used by the Zionists to build their state and to make it almost impossible for a Palestinian state to ever come into being.

This is the usual way for the Israelis to use immigrants. Although Zionism purports to save Jews from anti-Semitism by bringing them to the Jewish state, the way in which immigrants, especially non-European/US immigrants, have been treated in Israel has often been very cruel and cynical.

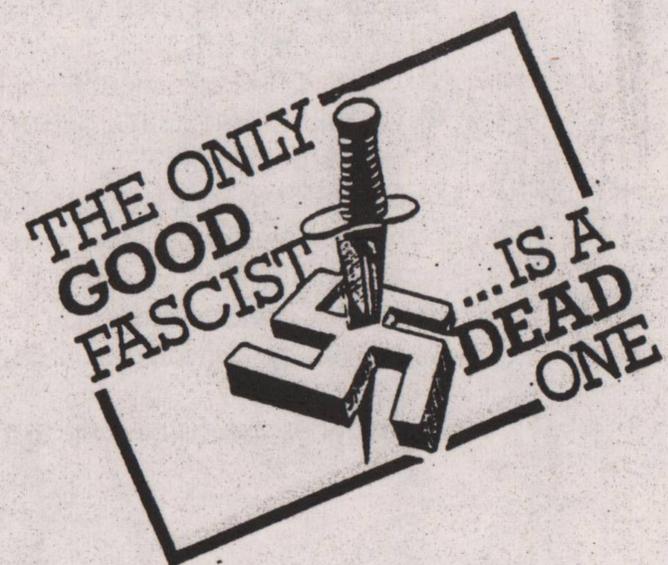
After the Second World War, the Zionists persuaded the US to ban the immigration of Jewish refugees fleeing Europe and the horrors of Nazism and most were channelled into Israel, even though they would have preferred to go to America. In the 40's and 50's, thousands of Jews came to settle from Arab countries. While some came voluntarily, others were persuaded by propaganda or force (the notorious example of this is the Iraqi Jews who had been living there for 3000 years and who eventually left their country in fear and panic after Israeli agents secretly planted bombs in Jewish areas). Whatever their reasons for coming, they did not find the egalitarian state they had been promised. They met racism from the European/US Jewish establishment (many being sprayed with insecticide on their arrival) and were used as cheap labour, despite, for example, many of them being highly educated. The second class citizenship given to them has continued for their children with worse jobs, education and housing and their culture despised and destroyed. The Falashas, Black Jews from Ethiopia have faced even worse racism from the Israeli establishment and were even checked for circumcision on their arrival to make sure they were 'real' Jews.



The immigrants from the Soviet Union have not faced such prejudice (being European, they are seen as 'real' Jews even though, according to the Absorption minister, Rabbi Yitshak Peretz, a third of them are not even Jewish), but they are being used by the state to build up the nation, without much sympathy for the human cost to the immigrants, themselves. For example, there has been no provision for jobs or housing for the newcomers, professional qualifications have not been recognised and many are sleeping rough and have resorted to begging or prostitution. There is a high suicide rate. According to leaked reports from the Aliya (Immigration) and Absorption Committee, most didn't actually want to come to Israel and left the Soviet Union because of economic instability and lack of security and not because of anti-semitism. However, they have been forced to come to Israel, because of secret agreements with the USSR and US and, once in Israel, it has been extremely difficult for them to leave as new immigrants are not given passports. Two million Soviets are expected to migrate into a population of four and a half million. By their actual numbers they help to boost the Zionist State by ensuring a majority Jewish Population for the foreseeable future. They are also being used as an excuse by the Israelis for increased confiscation of Palestinian lands (on 1967 and 1948 land), settlement building, water confiscation and aid requests from the US. Ariel Sharon, the Housing and Construction Minister, is currently planning a series of new settlements down the Green Line (ie the border between 1948 and 1967 land) for 200,000 settlers, on land taken from Palestinian citizens of Israel. This has the aim of weakening Palestinians inside the state of Israel, making them a minority in the areas where they were previously a majority and splitting them up from their West Bank co-patriots. The new settlements would also link up with and strengthen existing settlements in the West Bank, in effect destroying the Green Line and making it even more difficult for future governments to negotiate away the West Bank.

For Palestinians, the attitude of the West and especially the US is completely hypocritical. It talks of democracy and human rights while supporting an expansionist, racist state like Israel.

15 The invasion of Kuwait was met with horror, outrage, sanctions and war, while Palestine has been partitioned, invaded, occupied and annexed, with US paying the bill for at least the last twenty years. The Palestinians have conceded more than half of their historic lands to the Zionists and have still been met with mistrust. The people of the West Bank and Gaza have been engaged for three and a half years in a predominantly non-violent, heroic struggle against the enormous military weight of the Israeli army and the PLO outside has renounced 'terrorism' and still they are regarded as insane and murderous. The ordinary people of the Middle East, unlike their rulers, know that Palestine is at the heart of the problems in the Middle East and to deal with them, it must first be dealt with. Unfortunately, interests are more important than human rights or historical justice and the future does not look hopeful for the Palestinians.



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