

Letter from Freedom

Charles Crute

1994

Dear Comrades,

In the course of a review of our publication *What is Anarchism?* edited by Donald Room, in your winter 1993 issue (No. 40), your correspondent Andrew Blackmore affects a familiarity with ourselves which he does not in fact possess. No one here has knowingly met him.

He writes "In fighting the Poll Tax differences between groups were clear. Freedom held a number of discussion meetings and in the end could not decide whether or not the Poll Tax was bad." This is not true.

Neither Freedom nor its publisher Freedom Press held or holds meetings about the Poll Tax or anything else. Blackmore has not consulted files of the paper. The first article we published, 'Poll Tax Voted In', (January 1988) was mainly factual but plainly hostile. Nothing further appeared until in March 1989, a year before the tax was introduced, Peter Neville contributed 'Questions on the Poll Tax', which questioned anarchist opposition, which was (obviously) a personal point of view, and which appeared juxtaposed with a puff for the pamphlet 'The Poll Tax and How to Fight It', published by the Anarchist Communist Federation. Two letters, both hostile to Neville were printed in April, and a long report of an anti-Poll tax demonstration in Glasgow in June together with three more letters critical of Neville's position. In November 1989 under the heading 'Poll Tax Resistance' were reports from Johnny Yen and Olive Markham.

From March 1990 through to 30 November 1991, out of 43 consecutive fortnightly issues of Freedom, 38 carried reporting and comment, often at great length, and including front page features — for example, 'Poll Tax Protest' (7th April 1990) written anonymously but in fact by Donald Room. In all about 50,000 words were published, more than any other group, and every one of which opposed the Poll Tax and supported those who protested against it.

In addition our premises in Angel Alley, Whitechapel were the base for the Poll Tax Rioters Support Group, set up in April 1990 by comrades known to us, "The only group aiming to support people arrested in the demonstration.

Yours fraternally,
Charles Crute
on behalf of Freedom Press

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