

Roger Noel Released

Fifth Estate Collective

1983

Roger Noel, a Belgian anarchist imprisoned in Warsaw since July 5, was set free on November 26th by the Polish authorities after paying a fine of 900,000 Zlotys (\$900 U.S. currency). He was accused of smuggling radio material into Poland and was sentenced to three years in jail or the fine which was paid through the intermediary of the Belgian Embassy in Warsaw, after having been raised in Belgium by the "Free Roger Noel Committee."

As a result of having sent telegrams of protest concerning Noel's imprisonment to the Polish and Belgian Embassies, the *Fifth Estate* received a telegram in return from the Belgian Embassy notifying us of Noel's release.

Noel came to international attention after being arrested July 5 by the Warsaw militia and charged with assisting Radio Solidarnosc to make illegal broadcasts. He was transmitting at the time of his seizure by police. Noel was confined in a cell in Rakowieck Prison in Warsaw, and faced a sentence of between 3 and 10 years, depending on the precise nature of the charges that were to be brought against him. Only the Belgian Ambassador in Warsaw was allowed to visit him and it was known that Noel had been undergoing repeated interrogations and harassments by the Polish dictatorship.

The *Fifth Estate's* attempt to have a telegram of support delivered to Noel in prison was rebuffed by the prison authorities (who stated they needed Roger's number before it could be delivered) making it clear the Polish government was attempting to keep him isolated.

On the night of his arrest, Noel was seized along with two Radio Solidarnosc workers while they were broadcasting "illegally" to the Polish people. Though other members making broadcasts were able to escape and continue Radio Solidarnosc, this second "pirate" radio station was seized by the Polish police on August 31st.

Six years ago, disappointed with the inertia of the traditional Belgian Anarchist movement, Noel, along with a number of others, pooled their resources and skills and began the self-managed ASBL 22 March printery in Brussels. Among other things, the collective produces a monthly anti-authoritarian newspaper and has managed to involve itself in a variety of struggles in Belgium. Roger Noel and the collective were involved in printing material for Solidarity which was smuggled into Poland. Having traveled clandestinely into Poland on several food convoys, Noel was able to make contact with various anarcho-syndicalists and brought out valuable information about the situation there. As a moving spirit of the Association for the Freedom of the Air Waves, Noel was a great asset to the Solidarity underground and had delivered a transmitter clandestinely to Radio Solidarnosc hidden in medical equipment.

A "Free Roger Noel" Committee was established in Brussels to coordinate efforts to put pressure on the Polish authorities to release him. Noel's comrades at the 22 March printing works called for an international campaign of solidarity to secure his release, asking that it be set within a framework of demands for the end of repression in Poland, and the release of all Solidarnosc prisoners.

Roger Noel is free! Now free all Polish political prisoners.

fifth Estate

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