

THE SHEFFIELD ANARCHIST

[VOL. I. NO. II.]

JULY, 1975

PAY WHAT YOU LIKE



"WHEREVER YOU FIND INJUSTICE, THE PROPER FORM OF
POLITENESS IS ATTACK" (T-BONE SLIM)



THE SHEFFIELD

VOL 1 NO 11
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APOLOGY EXPLANATION

The Sheffield Anarchist Group would like to apologise for the late appearance of No.11, Vol.1 of 'The Sheffield Anarchist'. The paper was originally intended to be published at fortnightly intervals, but pressures, (The law, police, authority in general), conspired to temporarily halt production after the publication of No.10, Vol.1 (dated November 1891). However, despite this long period of absence, we hope to continue the good work started by our comrade John Creagh and others, some 84 years ago.

Our anarchist aspirations remain the same, and we intend to continue the previous 'editorial policy' as far as modern printing techniques, layout, and method of presentation allow. As an aid to a sense of contact with the efforts of our long departed comrades, we intend to re-publish in each consequent issue at least one relevant article from the first ten issues. In addition we would greatly appreciate contributions (of a libertarian nature) from readers and sympathisers.

The paper has no arbitrarily fixed price, a continuation of previous policy which ensures that want of a few pence shall not prevent the sharing of our ideas. Presumably some will give more, so that others may give less. If, by some miracle, we do get an excess of money from sales, we shall use it to print more copies next time round. Let's aim for that.



THE SHEFFIELD ANARCHIST GROUP

Sheffield has possessed for well over a hundred years a tradition of libertarian individualism which has frequently found its public expression in some form or other of anarchism. Unfortunately, we do not have the space in this issue to give even a brief account of our antecedents, and indeed more research is needed. Perhaps in a future issue we could get it together. Anyway..... suffice it to say that we still have an active group in Sheffield.

We are a disparate conglomeration of groupings and individuals of various 'classes', 'sexes', and 'occupations', believing in common simply that a more free and just society is both desirable and attainable. Our very diversity acts as a guarantee that in our quest for Utopia the individual, with all her/his opinions, needs and desires, plays a vital role. Unlike our Marxist sisters and brothers we believe that the means used to attain our new society (our acceptance or rejection of authoritarian, rigid methods of organisation, for

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instance) will necessarily influence the eventual form of that society. The 'Social Revolution' that much abused term, has not yet occurred. We have, indeed, in our ignorance, installed persons from the working classes in positions of authority over us, and, in our wisdom, proven that economic systems may be altered radically within a relatively brief period of time, but this is not the Social Revolution that our forebears toiled and died for. We have, at this point in time, a Czar in Russia, An Emperor in China, and a Dictator in Cuba. The effective power structures have remained unaltered, and if anything are more stable than before. So much for the theory that the workers government will of itself wither away.

In Western 'developed' society the vast majority of humans lead a life of deprivation and frustration, reacting, dog-like, to the whims and commands of their masters. We are well-fed, even, simply because two-thirds of our sisters and brothers are underfed in the world today. The Masters take all, and give nothing in return, whether they rule by Divine Right, Electoral Process, or Pure Ruthlessness. What we must do is to undermine this blind faith in an Outdated system of domination of man by man, and replace by a social order relying instead upon free cooperation between individuals and communities. No man is good enough to be another man's master.

Therefore, we reject the concept of a 'worker's dictatorship', which is a dictatorship nonetheless. Similarly, we reject the concept of 'democracy', wherein theoretically, the majority rules the minority (though often the reverse is true). Similarly, we reject the concept of 'free enterprise', which merely confers upon the minority the freedom to exploit the majority.

As anarchists we believe that it is necessary to move as directly as possible towards our goals. Any deviation from this basic principle is, at best diversionary, and probably doomed to failure. Nonetheless, the variations in method of approach are endless, from pacifism to violence, and from

collectivism to individualism. Our anarchism is still in the process of formation, still malleable, adaptable and responsive, still tolerant and understanding. We cannot offer to the 'interested reader' a brief formalised account of anarchism, nor would we wish to do so. Half the fun is finding out, and in Sheffield, especially, personal commitment is usually reached through conversation, conviviality, and much thought. It has been said that anarchists are not made, but born. Look inside yourself, comrade, you might well be surprised at what you find there.

HOW TO BE...



How to be a good Capitalist:
Invent a product the public can be conned into thinking they need - raise some capital for the labour and machines - get into production - sell the product at the highest price people can stomach - reduce competition by buying into competitors - exploit market for maximum profits - legitimize your position by manipulating the law makers, police and judges.

How to be a good Socialist:
Show the workers how they are being conned by the capitalist - get the workers angry with their poverty of wealth and power - organise the trade unions to your ideas - take direct political action to break control of the moneyed classes - strengthen your position by centralising power in a proletarian dictatorship - write first 5 year plan - legitimize monopoly of power by warnings of counter-revolutionary action - become the lawmakers, police and judges.

(Who says the state withers away?)

(CONTD. ON NEXT PAGE)

HOW TO BE... CONTD.

How to be a good Anarchist:

Don't pull a confidence trick on anyone. Deny the powerful the right to deny you your rights - Get rid of the lawmakers, police and judges.

But that leaves a lot of questions

Every exchange between people, a casual conversation, a teacher with his pupils, a command from the police etc. involves some element of influence or persuasion or force. It may be willing or may be unwilling. New energies may be released, new satisfactions gained, but always there is the danger that someone may be hurt, someones freedoms may be checked: for instance - trying to get children to stop annoying the hell out of you; falling in line with the rules of the factory floor; voting your rights away to a politician.

- The capitalist understands this: he accepts that the powerful will fight the weak for their own ends. He declares his own freedom: the freedom to exploit.

- The socialist understands this: he puts the needs of the community first and curbs the will of the individual. As a result, the role

of the individual is uncertain, even in Marx. The right of the individual who disagrees with the will of the group and wishes to go his own way, is not clear. He is the traitor.

- The Anarchist understands and acts upon his understanding to make one simple declaration: no one has the right to take away his freedoms; only the individual has the right to give them away, if he wishes, without force.

An anarchist only accepts the authority of a leader when he trusts his judgement. If that leader, teacher, politician, whoever it may be, betrays him, he insists on the right to withdraw his support.

If someone says: "The democratic decision is against you...." - ignore them, go your own way.

If someone says: "It can't be done that way, the rules of the institution don't allow it....." - then the institution and its rules must be changed to fit the individual.

If someone says: "It'll hurt but it's good for you....." - he knows nothing, laugh in his face.

To be governed is to be watched over, inspected, spied upon, directed, legislated at, regulated, docketed, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, assessed, weighed, censored, ordered about, by men who have neither the right, nor the knowledge, nor the virtue. To be governed means to be, at each operation, at each transaction, at each movement, noted, registered, controlled, taxed, stamped, measured, valued, assessed, patented, licensed, authorised, endorsed, admonished, hampered, reformed, rebuked, arrested.

It is to be, on the pretext of the general interest, taxed, drilled, held to ransom, exploited, monopolised, extorted, squeezed, hoaxed, robbed; then, at the least resistance, at the first word of complaint, to be repressed, fined, abused, annoyed, followed, bullied, beaten, disarmed, garroted, imprisoned, machine-gunned, judged, condemned, deported, flogged, sold, betrayed, and finally, mocked, ridiculed, insulted, dishonoured. Such is government, such is justice, such is morality.
(Pierre-Joseph Proudhon - 1851)



A DREAM IN THE DESERT

I thought I stood on the border of a great desert, and the sand blew about everywhere, and I thought I saw two great figures, like beasts of burden of the desert. One lay on the sand with its neck stretched out and the other stood beside it. The one which lay down had, I saw, a vast burden on its back and the sand of centuries was piled around its body. I was curious and asked the person who stood beside me to explain this strange sight. He told me this story:

"The figure lying in the sand is woman. For centuries she has lain there without moving a muscle and the sand has piled around her. Once, she wandered free with the man who stands beside her, as you will learn if you read about the Ancient Customs. Years ago the age of Superiority of Physical Strength found her and burdened her with the load of Inevitable Necessity, binding her to her role of bearing and rearing children. Then she looked up at the sky and down at the ground and realised that there was no hope for her so she lay down, in the sand with her burden which she could not loosen. Through the ages she has lain there but the band of Inevitable Necessity has not been cut. She has borne her burden patiently but not without a lot of pain and suffering. She has sometimes tried to move but she is wise and knows she cannot do so with the burden on her back. The

man who stands beside her also cannot move because he is bound to her by a broad band. While she lies there, he must stand and gaze at the sand but he does not know why he cannot move."

As I watched, I saw the burden crack and fall to the ground, and I asked the person "What is happening?" And he said, "The Knife of Mechanical Invention has cut the band which bound the burden to her back. The Inevitable Necessity is no more, she might rise now!" A light shone from within the woman's eyes as she realised she might rise. She strained with effort, her veins stood out, but her body only quivered and she fell back to the ground. She had lain so long that her legs had become weak. The man did not help her, I asked my

I AM YOUR PERFECT FANTASY - SOFT, WILLING AND TOTALLY YOURS TO COMMAND - YOU'VE SEEN ME IN ADVERTISEMENTS, IN SKIN MAGS, AND IN FILMS - YOU'VE WANTED ME, AND YOU LOOK FOR ME WHEREVER YOU GO, IN PUBS, CLUBS, DISCOS, ON THE STREET... WELL, I'VE GOT BAD NEWS FOR YOU - I'M A FAKE, I DON'T EXIST!! THE REAL THING IS DIFFERENT AND SOMEWHERE ELSE...



friend why.

"He cannot help her, she must help herself. Let her struggle until she is strong. See, the man hinders her by moving further away from her and, drawing the band tighter, he drags her down. That is because he does not yet understand what she is trying to do. Let her once stagger to her knees and he will stand close by her and they will look into each other's eyes with sympathy"

"Will she ever really move?" I asked.

As we watched, a light came from her eyes. she stretched her neck and drops of sweat fell from her body. Slowly the creature staggered onto its knees.

(ADAPTED FROM 'DREAMS' BY OLIVE SCHREINER)



BEHIND THIS MASK THERE IS A PERSON STRUGGLING TO BE FREE - IT IS YOUR WIFE, YOUR GIRL, FRIEND, YOUR SISTER, YOUR MOTHER...

'The anarchists conceive a society in which all the mutual relations of its members are regulated, not by laws, not by authorities, whether self-imposed or elected, but by mutual agreements between the members of that society, and by a sum of social customs and habits - not petrified by law, routine, or superstition, but continually developing and continually readjusted in accordance with the ever growing requirements of afree life, stimulated by the progress of science, invention and the steady growth of higher ideals. No ruling authorities, then. No government of man by man; no crystallization and immobility, but a continual evolution - such as we see in Nature.'

(Peter Kropotkin)



Anarchy implies a situation in which free cooperation and participation between people and groups of people has replaced coercion and extortion of the many by the few. This situation need not be chaotic or disorganised, as ignorant people would infer, but on the contrary might well involve organization of a most intricate, though libertarian, nature.

Anarchy implies freedom, but with the necessary qualification that the freedom of others be respected. Indeed, without this qualification, the concept of freedom rlapses into one of manipulation and opprression by the ablest and strongest. Therefore each anarchist must possess, above all, concern and responsibility, both for himself and for others.



The next time you go into your anarchist meeting place, make a point of sitting quietly, listen, and observe.

Is there anyone there (it might be you) who is in someway afraid to take part in the discussion?

It might be because they'll be laughed at or hammered down by jargonese - but if that element of fear exists you, comrade, are not at an anarchist meeting.

(Anarchism Lancastrium No.3 May '75).

The Garden of Love

I went to the garden of Love
 And saw what I never had seen:
 A chapel was built in the midst,
 Where I used to play on the green,
 And the gates of the chapel were shut,
 And 'Thou shalt not' writ over the door,
 So I turned to the Garden of Love
 That so many sweet flowers bore,
 And I saw it was filled with graves,
 And tombstones where flowers should be,
 And priests in black gowns were walking
 their rounds,
 And binding with briars my joys and
 desires.

(William Blake)

SCENES FROM FLATLAND: 1

(IN FLATLAND THE STATE RELIGION IS EITHERORISM, IN WHICH ONE SIDE OF A FALSE SPLIT HAS TO BE THE SOURCE OF ABSOLUTE GOOD, AND THE OTHER SIDE THE SOURCE OF ABSOLUTE EVIL)



Windsor Free Festival

The Windsor Free Festival will be taking place in Windsor Great Park this year, starting August 23rd. 1975.

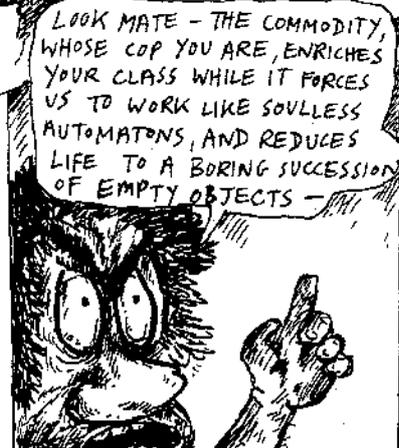
We are publishing this information as an act of solidarity with our comrades Bill Dwyer and Sid Rawle, who are now languishing in prison for the blood-curdling crime of allegedly 'organising or promoting' the festival.

Incidentally, their 'servants or agents thereof' are also liable to be incarcerated for passing on the info. Now, whilst I consider myself the servant or agent of no man, least of all my good friends Bill and Sid, it

might just be that the Law, in its wisdom, or lack of it, deems me so to be. Well just to save some other poor anarchist the hassle of being 'done' (the powers that be are never too particular who they get), the writers name is Tikka. Now isn't that a fair clue, you misery-guts?

Anyway, get yourselves down there if you fancy a few days away from the drabness of normality.

"We are not in the least afraid of ruins. We are going to inherit the earth - there is not the slightest doubt about that. The bourgeoisie may blast and ruin its own world before it leaves the stage of history. We carry a new world here in our hearts - THAT WORLD IS GROWING EVERY MINUTE" (Buenaventura Durruti - 1936)

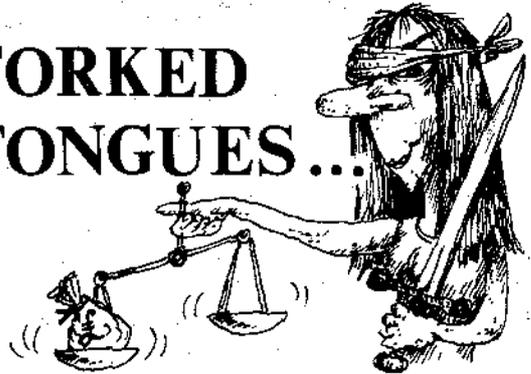


Vandalism is on the increase in schools, not just petty incidents, but full-scale attacks, designed for maximum destruction. All the old reasons are trotted out - it's the influence of television, it's the evil in human nature, it's the result of broken homes, poor housing, boredom etc.. There's obviously something in this last point; a kid I knew who set fire to his secondary school was from a broken home, always a loner, scruffy and insecure. But what's never pointed out is what is obvious, a public secret, - that kids are more or less resilient, and will rebel against the forced labour of compulsory schooling. It's always a battle in the classroom, ask any teacher. The minority of young people who are less cowed and conditioned than most by adult authority will take their revenge further. That's all.

But how are the courts dealing with this? Three recent cases deserve comment. On May 13th, three youths of 16 to 18 who got drunk, broke into a comprehensive school in Hants, and caused £10,000 worth of damage in an 'orgy of vandalism', received a three year prison sentence and two spells in Borstal between them. Two seventeen year olds who set fire to a school in Durham, causing £18,000 worth of damage recently got four years each in jail. Passing these 'resounding sentences', Judge Stanley Gill declared that, 'School arson has to be stamped out'.

The third case was far more serious: another 18 year old school arsonist, but this time a cool £92,000 worth of damage. One would have expected an even stiffer sentence, but not a bit of it. Why not? Could the fact that the culprit was Simon Rhodes, grandson of the sixteenth Baron Elphinstone, and second cousin and former page boy of her Gracious Majesty the Queen, and the school in question, Harrow, have just a little to do with it? Rarely has a judge come over so considerate and liberal; 'It was an identity crisis of adolescence', said the defence, 'Severe behavioural disturbance... somewhat tiddly... temporary confusion and disorientation'. Mr. Justice MacKenna agreed: 'Not criminal in any

FORKED TONGUES...



ordinary way... tortured by feelings and a sense of guilt... temporarily disturbed... to send you to prison or to Borstal would serve no purpose'. (Guardian, May 20th) Pro rata, that works out at eleven years' porridge for our Simon, at a conservative estimate. What did he get? A conditional discharge, and not even a penny fine.

It's not that we like the idea of people going to jail, it's not that we object to Simon putting a match to Harrow, that august and privileged pile, where the sons of the wealthy are bullied into accepting that their future social role is to keep people like us in our places, - a pity he didn't manage to reduce the whole place to a pile of stinking rubble. It's just that now we're 'all equal' and supposedly classless, it's still plain that there's one law for the poor and one for the rich. If the treasurer of a Working Men's Club had skipped to Australia with debts and frauds equal to those attributed to Mr. John Stonehouse, (still drawing his M.P.'s salary and expenses, and bemoaning his 'personality problems') would he have enjoyed the same run for his money?

British 'justice' is impartial when it suits it to be impartial. A word in the judge's ear from the right places and the rules can start bending until they touch their toes backwards. An unjust legal system is a symptom of an unjust society, and wherever you find injustice, the proper form of politeness is attack. Come the day when the ordinary people of this country learn to run their own lives in co-operation and community, the very idea of a system of law will be as dead as the members of that privileged minority whose interests it once served to bolster up.

A PARABLE OF MISFITS

A certain barbarian came up once to the country which is called "The Land of Civilisation", to see its sights and be instructed by its superiorities. His shoes were worn out on the journey, and being footsore, he resolved first of all to obtain more. Presently he perceived a large sign: "THE WORLD OF SHOES - 'It is not good for a man to go barefoot'". and, being greatly pleased, he entered the door above which it swung. He found himself in a splendid pavilion full of all delights, perfume, music and beautiful and bewildering sights, paintings, mirrors, statues and flowers. There were great multitudes of customers, who seemed to be in a great excitement of conflicting emotions, and the Barbarian, who at least understood well the language of the human face, perceived feverish expectation, dread, hope, joy, sorrow and the most furious hate and poignant anguish. It all seemed very strange to him, for so far he had had a very pleasant experience with shoes. The storekeeper too, astonished his simple mind, for he appeared to be a man of great authority and importance, and marched around in ceremonial robes, and sometimes he called the crowd to order and he gave them dogmatic discourses. The poor Barbarian, who had almost forgotten his errand, finally looked about for shoes. He saw none, but instead the shelves were lined with glass boxes, semi-transparent and richly and tastefully ornamented. When the shopkeeper at last approached, the Barbarian stated his needs. "You are free to choose," was the reply, with a pompous condescension, and a wave of the arm towards the well-filled shelves.

"But where are the shoes?"

"There, in those boxes."

So the Barbarian reached down a box and was about to open it, when, with a horrified and indignant mein, the Storekeeper interposed:

"What are you about to do?"

"Why, to open the box and look at the shoes."

"To open the box and look at the shoes! Why, you shameless creature, this is vile, immodest, indecent!"

"Pardon me!" said the puzzled Barbarian, "I mean no harm - I did not know - but I want to to try on the shoes to see if they fit."

"To try on the shoes? Why, that's fornication!"

"Do you not then try on shoes in this country?"

"Yes, of course, but not till after marriage. To try them on before is fornication and a sin."

"I do not know what fornication is," faltered the Barbarian, "but I cannot see the shoes through this box, and unless I see them, and try them on, how can I know whether or not they will fit?"

"The fitting is not your affair," was the rebuking answer, "God will attend to that; shoefits are made in heaven!"

"God, who is God?"

"Why, you heathen, you ignorant savage God is the King of this country; he has all the factories, and he made all the shoes, and he made you too, and all of us!"

The poor Barbarian was dreadfully bewildered now, but he stuck to the business in hand.

"And if I choose as carefully as possible among these boxes, will God see to it that the shoes I select will be a good fit?"

"Certainly!"



"AND DO YOU, GLADYS PHIPPS, SOLEMNLY DECLARE THAT THIS IS THE BEST YOU CAN DO?"

Then the Barbarian deemed his troubles over, and rejoiced and chose a box that was very beautiful and had appeared to reveal through its semi-transparency a dainty pair of shoes, adorned with silver buckles, and studded with precious stones. They charmed his child-like fancy and he trembled with delight.

"And what must I do before I am permitted to wear these lovely, these charming shoes?" he asked the Storekeeper.

"You must be married".

"What is that?"

"It is the ceremony by which God, through me, fits you to the shoes that you have chosen."

"Marry me then, O good Storekeeper, as soon as possible."

So the Storekeeper made him stand up and hold the box in his hand and promise to wear them, to polish, and to cherish the shoes he had chosen until they should be worn out, which the Barbarian, now being very much addled in his wits, and beside himself with the imagined delights of his beautiful shoes, readily did. Then the Storekeeper stretched out his hands and said with a loud voice:

"I now pronounce you Man and Boots! What God has joined, let no man put asunder! Amen."

Then in an undertone he admonished the Barbarian to go off privately and open his box; it would not be decent, he said, to do it in public. So the happy Barbarian went to a private room, and trembling with eagerness opened the box. And lo! the box had deceived him. The shoes were indeed well enough made and of good material, but they were clumsily shaped, hard and coarse without silver or jewels, and when he tried them on they were too short and too narrow and tortured him cruelly. And no God appeared to fit them.

He went back to the Storekeeper and complained bitterly but to no consolation.

"It is your cross," said the Storekeeper; "and you must bear it. It is the will of God, and we must not murmur. You chose these shoes and you must abide by your promise. It is wicked to quarrel with your shoes, or to complain against the footwear which God, in his mercy has bestowed upon you."

"But you said God would fit them for me."

"And so he has by the sacred mystery of marriage."

"He made a wretched bad job of it then Your marriage business is a failure. I could fit myself better without it."

"Wretch, be careful what you say! The law will take notice of you if you talk against marriage. You will not be permitted to corrupt the public morals with impunity. And God will boil you in brimstone if you blaspheme him or his Holy Storekeepers."

And he went away frowning.

And the poor Barbarian, terrified and troubled, sat down and looked at his shoes. He understood now why the world of shoes was so full of emotion.

He was afraid to say so, but it did seem to him that, if there were no Storekeepers there would be little or no trouble. God, he concluded, was a bugaboo the storekeepers used to frighten people with. He regretted keenly the fat fee the Storekeeper had made him pay for the job of marrying him.

Presently, another man, who thought himself unobserved, slipped stealthily up and took the shoes, and went to the private room with them. He watched and saw the man reappear with a radiant face. The shoes fitted him excellently.

The Barbarian went up to him. "See here my friend, I saw you take those shoes. You need not have stolen them, I cannot wear them. You are welcome."

The man, who had turned pale when he commenced to speak, quickly changed to an expression of insolent contempt, and when the Barbarian had finished, instead of thanking him, he sneered openly, and swaggered on. And when the Barbarian returned, all who had witnessed what had passed looked upon him with astonishment and loathing, and he heard them whispering 'cuckold', 'coward', 'mean-spirited villain', 'he must have been bought over', etc.

But this man's success gave the Barbarian an idea. Next to him sat a man with his face buried in his hands, and inflamed and blistered feet. He was cursing his shoes with every expression of hatred. They were beautiful, soft, shapely shoes, and the barbarian thought they were just his size; so he tried them on,

for no-one was looking. They were the most delightful shoes he had ever known, and he was elated. But suddenly the owner sprang upon him like a tiger.

"I am outraged, dishonoured!" he shouted. My shoes are false to me; - you are a seducer, an adulterer!" and he stabbed the Barbarian with a knife, and slit the shoes to pieces, and left him weltering in his blood.

And the crowd followed the assassin and arrested him, but apologetically, and, as it were, with respect; and when the trial came up, he was quickly acquitted, for it was universally admitted that he had been 'dishonoured', and that 'a man has a right to avenge his honour'. It was indeed shown that his shoes tortured him, that he hated them, and that they were a perfect fit for his victim, but this made no difference. What had that to do with a question of honour?

But his victim did not die. He finally recovered and wandered around disconsolate and barefoot. He longed for shoes very much, but was afraid to even look at them. One night a man met him on the street.

"I know what is the matter with you", he said. "I'm in the same fix. I have a pair of shoes indeed, but I get no comfort with them. I've left them behind tonight. Come with me. There's a place down the street here, where there's lots of shoes; some of them are pretty, and they are most all easy fits, and, if you choose to pay a little, you can take your pick, wear them as long as your money holds out and your liking lasts, throw them away or change them when you get tired, and no fault found and no questions asked. Most of us come here in the night and wear 'em, for we are ashamed to wear them home."

So the Barbarian went with him, but doubtfully. He did not appreciate the foot habits of the 'Land of Civilisation' very highly. And when they arrived at the place he was not reassured. He did not like its atmosphere, which seemed redolent of unclean feet. There were shoes in abundance, indeed, most of them very fine. But they had been much and carelessly worn, by feet of all shapes and sizes and odours, feet unclean and feet diseased. He was disgusted, and would have none of it. "I cannot endure it", he said; "I will return to my own country, where all feet are happy and well shod."

"But how do you do in your country?" asked his friend, who was really his friend, and who really knew in all Civilisation no better relief for mis-shod feet than this House of the Easy Old Shoes, as he called it.

"Why, in my country," said the Barbarian, happy to talk about home, "there are no storekeepers to interfere between shoes and feet. You open as many boxes as you like, and try on as many pairs as you please till you get a fit. There is no talk about God and marriage, or fornication, or adultery, or dishonour. You wear shoes as long as you like, and stop when you get ready. You have on a pair, or a dozen, or change off with your neighbours, or go barefoot, just as you like. It's nobody's business and nobody cares. And everyone is happy and well shod."

"But that sort of thing," said the other, "seems to me shocking. Why, it is impure, immoral!"

"I do not know," said the Barbarian. "I have never heard those words before. I fear you civilised men are great slaves to Storekeepers and words. Barbarians think only about utility and comfort and peace and health and happiness. And we are all happy and well-shod."

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The above article is filched from 'The Sheffield Anarchist' Vol.1, No.7, dated Sept, 20th., 1891. It was written by J.Wm.Lloyd and originally appeared in 'Liberty', so it's certainly done the rounds, as all good stuff should.

A note of dissent - one among us has pointed out that the 'Parable' is based on a rather unfortunate analogy, in that it would appear that even in the land of the Barbarian, women are objects, and have no say in what might happen to them. The only real freedom of choice is for the man. Women are still mute and consent to being unwrapped and worn willy-nilly. If such an inference is intentional, it is to be despised. A woman has just as much right to a free choice of 'footwear'. As declared the 'Sheffield Anarchist' of July 19, 1891, 'Free and independent women! You are more respectable in our eyes than they are who submit themselves to the odious cohabitations imposed by the law, and prostitute themselves to a being whom they do not love. In revolting against all the iniquities of this vile society, you will do more for the emancipation of your sex than all the women lawyers, the women councillors, and the women members of parliament.'

NATIONALISATION; myth and con trick

Over the past ten years there has much talk about nationalisation and workers' control - Wedgewood Benn most recently, with his plans for 'participation in industry' has been seen by some workers as some kind of Messiah of socialism ushering in a new dawn of freedom and justice. But what does it all mean for the workers? Will they find themselves in some kind of New Jerusalem in England's red rusty yards? Are the dockers by hand and by hook at last to get the full fruits of their labours?

Back in reality, the answer is a resounding NO! Mr. J.Graham Day, managing director of Cammel Lairds, cleared away any daydreams and leftwing myths about Nationalisation with the statement that 'Nationalisation would make no difference'. (Birkenhead News, Aug. '74) Nor will Benn's plans make any difference to the system of wage-slavery that traps and crushes us all. It's clear what class Benn sees as his own when he said- 'If businessmen would look beyond their political noses they would find that a process of reinvestment and reconstruction in the public sector is going on which will create enormous demand for their products'. (Labour Weekly, Aug. '74)

NATIONALISATION AGAINST WORKERS

Here are three examples of the wonders that nationalisation has already worked:

MINES : When Labour nationalised the coalfields in 1945 most workers saw it as a dream come true - the industry that had broken generations of miners was theirs at last! 30 years on what have we got? Not much different from the days of the old private owners.

* Over the past ten years 400,000 miners have been forced out of the industry.

* Productivity swindles, such as the 1966 agreement, aimed at improving control over wages - the N.C.B. reported in 1967

that 'with a standard shift (payment) wages can be more effectively controlled.' This meant a real cut in wages for over 20% of workers in the industry.

* The Wilberforce enquiry was forced to admit that in every single area there had been a decline in real wages for miners.

STEEL : Renationalised in 1967. Employment in the industry dropped by 6% between 1969-70, involving 30,000 workers. We shall probably see a further 60,000 'down the road' by the end of this year. Average earnings, like miners, have slipped in relation to manufacturing industries since the 1950's.

DOCKS : Labour's 'Regeneration of British Industry' plans call for 'bringing commercial ports and cargo handling under public ownership'. The State has already played a big role in the Docks with the Dock Labour Scheme and the Devlin Plan; result - 25,000 workforce this year as opposed to approx. 50,000 in 1970. This great reform also reduced manning scales, brought in shift working, increased discipline, and, most importantly, introduced shop stewards, a device to take initiative out of the hands of the 'unofficial element' The Donovan Commission said of shop stewards - 'stewards can assist greatly in controlling the actions of the more militant members - stewards are indispensable to the lubrication of industry; without their presence, industry's wheels would not run.' The role of Unions is hardly different from that of management in this respect - witness a letter from Jackson, boss of the Postal workers' Union, to the Times: 'It is our policy to seek a gradual reduction in the number of staff employed.' Much the same applies not only in the Post Office, but also in the railways, power industry, local government, etc. Nationalisation means the increased intervention of the state, hence anti-strike laws, wage-freezes, etc. The relationship of the worker to production



in the nationalised sector is the same as that in the private sector: wage-slave. - and all that goes with it, - boredom, hard graft, increased exploitation, speed-ups, constant threat of the dole queue, and so on.

WORKERS 'CONTROL' AND 'PARTICIPATION' - 57 VARIETIES, ONE CON...

There is a strong myth in left-wing circles that workers in big blocks of State-owned industries are somehow unified and strengthened to fight the bosses. This view is held by many brands of Leftists, from Trotskyists to Maoists, and is nothing more than an attempt to pull the wool over our eyes, while masking their own ambitions - leadership of the Unions and the Labour Party. They want to establish State capitalism, and themselves in power, taking control and initiative away from the ordinary people who do the work. Exactly as in Russia, Cuba and China, and who wants to live in places like that, whatever Arthur Scargill might think. These people say the Labour Party is pliable, can be used for worthwhile ends. What a load of cobblers! In fact the Labour Party is the most irreconcilable, most cunning, most vicious opponent of the workers - we have only to look at them in power to see this. All the 'package-deal Left' and their hopes of Nationalisation will do is reinforce our position as wage-slaves, and keep us on the wages merry-go-round.

As the crisis deepens, the State is faced with the need to 'integrate' the workers into the administration of industry. All this will mean is that for the sake of the 'national interest' (funny how it only becomes our nation when they've ballsed it up and we have to take the responsibility!) the working class can be convinced that it should accept 'voluntary' regulation of wages, supposing that prices can be kept in line (some hope!) and that in return 'representatives' of the workers will be on the boards of directors. What an opportunity for all the little bureaucrats, egotists and sell-out merchants among the shop stewards for their own self-advancement! For this to succeed, the unions must guarantee that their members can be kept in line. If they hesitate to do this at the moment, it is only because they recognise the enormity of the task. They will do it, because their very existence depends on the continuation of capitalism, and the continuation of capitalism demands that they do it.

All this is very similar to what happened in Eastern Europe after 1945 when these economies were integrated into the Russian economy (minus the tanks - for the time being...). Here, as in Russia, China, and Cuba, the Unions are an arm of the State. The workers there face the unholy trinity of State, Party and Unions in any direct confrontation. When the workers of Gdansk, Gdania, Sopot and Szczecin, in Northern Poland, revolted in Dec, 1970 against rising prices, they began by fighting the police, then burning down the Communist Party H.Q., and finally the Union offices. This State Capitalism is capitalism without the private capitalist. Nothing has really changed - the form of society and the misery of real everyday life stays just the same. Under this 'worker's control', who is to be controlled? The management, presumably. Yet who actually appoints these managers? Certainly not the working class. The managers will be sent in by the State. This presumes that the workers themselves are incapable of running industry, transport etc. themselves, despite the fact that they have already done so in Russia in the early days of the revolution, in Spain in 1936, and in Portugal today, although the Portugese Communist Party is planning to put a stop to that! When leftists, in or out of parliament, talk about a 'Workers' State', they mean that there must be a layer in society that is controlling, disciplining and using the working people for its own ends, a State bureaucracy that lives off the labour of ordinary workers, who will have to work more time and pay more taxes to provide the money to finance this bureaucracy.

Finally, even if the workers did have real control over production, what good would this be without control over Distribution? Under the plans of the leftists, it is their parties and the State which would decide how the resources of society are to be used - in other words, how we are to be used. Is there an alternative? We think there is, which is why we term ourselves 'anarchists'.

ANARCHISM

oesn't matter whether you call it 'anarchism' or not. We think that an

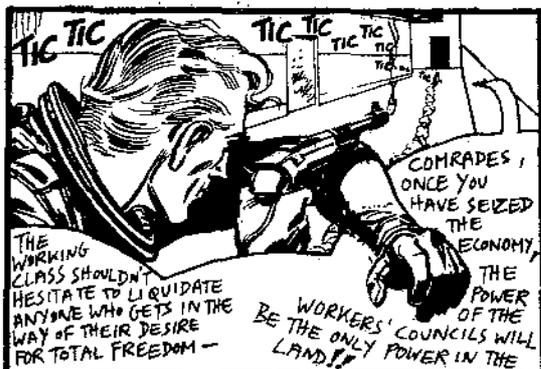
'anarchist' society is the only sane solution. Nor do we think anarchism is some crackpot impracticable idea. We think virtually everyone would agree with our ideas, if they thought they were feasible. The usual response is 'Yes, I think that's fine, but unfortunately it can't be done.' We think it can be done. But it's no simple matter. An anarchist society can only be achieved by a revolution. The whole complicated fabric of capitalism must be dissolved, and then, automatically, the means of production will fall into the hands of the workers as a whole. Production must then be run to meet needs, not profit. Divisions in the means of production must go - no more different companies, combines or transport systems. No more difference between the producer and the consumer. (In this process 'workers' control' and 'participation' would be a big obstacle.)

Certain industries and services would have to be abolished, like the arms industry, advertising, insurance, State administration, and everything that helped to prop up the old system. People involved in these will have to turn their hands to more useful things. In addition, so that people outside the productive processes will be able to have a say (the young, the old, the disabled), the limitations of the factories themselves will have to be broken down, on the initiative of those who work in those factories. Any worker will have to be able to have a say in the running of all branches of production that affect him/her, besides just the one he/she chooses to work in. Jobs in particular places of work will have to be rotated, in order to avoid anyone being stuck all the time with a necessary but unpleasant task, and to generally relieve monotony and routine. Ways will have to be found to reduce the unpleasant boring side of work to the absolute minimum possible, to make it as much like play as possible. After all, the aim of the whole exercise is to reduce suffering and boredom, and introduce as much pleasure and fulfillment as we can. What other reason is there for overthrowing capitalism?

And who will carry all this out? To prevent the emergence of new authorities and bureaucrats, it will have to be done by general mass-meetings of ordinary people. Each street, each area, each town, each work-place will have to run its affairs in cooperation with all the rest, in order to open up all aspects of production, distribution, sport and 'leisure' to everyone. Decisions made by assemblies would have to be made by majority vote, though ways would have to be found to avoid trampling on minorities who didn't agree. If things were going to everyone's satisfaction, there would be no real cause for disagreement, apart from sheer bloodymindedness, which would hardly be in anyone's self-interest. Representatives or delegates appointed by mass meetings to carry out certain tasks would have to do strictly what the meeting wanted them to, without making decisions off their own bat, or keeping any separate powers for themselves. Assemblies would be able to recall and replace delegates whenever they wanted.

All goods and services would be run for the benefit of the community, so that eventually prices would become unnecessary and the old wages system would fade out as everyone had access to everything that they might need. Each assembly would be responsible for its own communications and self-defense. When the workers are disarmed after a revolution, as in Portugal today, it means that some Party or other is planning to take power. All these changes will be necessary before we can stop just existing and really start living !

It sounds very glib just put like that. The changes we're talking about are enormous, and difficult to visualise in practice. Of course there will be mistakes, disasters and great risks. But such changes would alter human nature. You can't change either people or society separately. The two go hand in hand. Look at the world around you - the state it's in, the way it's going - is there any real alternative to what we propose, however far-fetched it may seem at first sight? The road to further evolution leads through revolution. We have decided to go, to take the gamble for ourselves. We cannot do it alone. What will you do? You decide.



SMALL ADS.

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