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# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

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Threepence

## THE INSANE SOCIETY

THE London Anarchist Group's Summer School this year discussed around the theme "Blueprints for Sanity". The title could only have been chosen for one reason: that the world in the middle of the 20th century presents the appearance of a lunatic asylum, an insane society.

The analogy is good but for one thing: that in a lunatic asylum it is the general population who are mad and the guardians who are sane. In the world at large, the reverse seems nearer the truth—it is the guardians, the leaders, the governing bodies who are going round the bend and the mental deficiency of the populations expresses itself mainly in their dull apathetic acquiescence in the organised lunacy of their governments.

### Weapons For & Against

Unfortunately this acquiescence leads the governed into the same forms of insanity as the governors. In fact, in every authoritarian form of society it is always the governed, the led, who have to carry out the policies and programmes of the psychopaths in power. And the fact that they do so to their own detriment—often to their own destruction—points to the extent to which madness grips our world.

It is not difficult to expose the pathological nature of those who arrive at positions of supreme power

### A Bounder Hits the Headlines

LORD ALTRINCHAM'S attack on the Queen and her lackeys has been a boon to the newspaper world, and we suspect that hopes for increased circulation of the *National Review* lies behind this outspoken commentary on the monarchy. In Europe and America the attack made front page news, and the verbal reaction from the gentry is reminiscent of *Boy's Own Paper*; examples from the Earl of Strathmore and the Duke of Argyll: The Duke of Argyll (Master of the Queen's Household in Scotland. Motto: Forget Not): "This article was disgraceful and inexcusable. I would like to see that man hanged, drawn and quartered."

The Earl of Strathmore (Cousin of the Queen. Motto: In Thee, O Lord, I Put My Trust): "Young Altrincham is a bounder. He should be shot. I would even do the job myself, but he's not worth it."

We feel that Lord Altrincham is a secret reader of FREEDOM and is not going to be outdone by Tony Gibson's original article on The Monarchy & Bad Taste. We suspect too that the angry defence of the Queen's virtues has as much to do with the attack on the courtiers as on herself:

Lord Altrincham has branded some courtiers as "unimaginative". He had declared: "They aren't capable of pressing a point against the wishes of their employer, the Queen. I think they are rather a second-rate lot—simply lacking in gumption."

And of the Queen he says: "... the personality conveyed by utterances which are put into her mouth is that of a priggish school-girl, captain of the hockey team, a prefect, and a recent candidate for Confirmation."

We could not have put it any better ourselves.

in national life. The development of psychology—one of the newest of the social sciences and still in its infancy—has certainly placed in the hands of governments most powerful weapons for the control of their populations. But it has also placed in the hands of all those with eyes to see the means by which they too can analyse the behaviour of their leaders—not perhaps to control them, since the leaders do the controlling—but to wise themselves up to the dangers of following leaders.

In this field the anarchists can pat themselves on the back for being among the first to recognise its value. In Britain we were foremost in bringing the work of the early Wilhelm Reich (with books like 'The Mass Psychology of Fascism') before the public and have introduced writing by Dr. Alex Comfort (the Freedom Press pamphlet 'Delinquency') to popularise these ideas in circles where they might not otherwise have penetrated.

In doing this we have faced much criticism from revolutionaries who are convinced that the social revolution is a matter of economic patterns, historical processes and political conquest. Although they have seen workers rise to dizzy heights in the hierarchies of states, only to be corrupted by power, and although a planned capitalism has eliminated most of the worse anomalies of its chaotic 19th century parent, still they have to cling rigidly to modes of thought dogmatized a hundred years ago to explain and fight a stage in social development which no longer exists.

As the managerial society replaces 19th century catch-as-catch-can in-

dividualism, many of the arguments against the latter fall to the ground. In fact it is precisely the actions of its opponents which are replacing individualistic capitalism with State capitalism—only to create deeper human problems than the ones they tried to solve.

### Creating More Problems

The Marxists have analysed capitalism to its last lunatic gimmick, and its more faithful adherents stubbornly assert that it is not until every worker understands capitalism in terms of grasping the difference between labour and labour power, value, price and profit and the ramifications of dialectical materialism, that the enlightened industrial proletariat will be able to make the social revolution.

The Marxists have brilliantly analyzed economic systems only to overlook completely that which makes them tick—people. And as capitalism moves towards State socialism and the socialists move towards capitalism, they meet in the middle in the managerial society which reduces man to a nonentity, a commodity—a 'means to somebody else's ends.'

This depersonalisation cannot produce happy human beings. Instead it fills the mental hospitals and the prisons. Over half the hospital beds in Britain are filled with mental patients. As material wealth increases, mental health suffers.

Must this be so? We don't think so. What we will maintain is that you cannot expand man's freedom in any one sphere of his existence and at the same time restrict him more than ever in other spheres

without creating conflicts that can only find expression in mental degeneration.

### Conflicting Demands

Both the physical sciences and the social sciences are extending man's horizons in terms of his control of his environment and his understanding of himself and his needs. But the demands of authority (the nature and the menace of which have been overlooked by Marxists, themselves authoritarians), create barriers against the full enjoyment and utilization of our accumulating knowledge.

Science in the service of humanity is providing us with the means of abundance and a longer life in which to enjoy it. But government organises the destruction of abundance and science in the service of government is providing the means to destroy the world. Science is providing us with the means to achieve sexual satisfaction without fear. But the population demands of power-hungry states and the shibboleths of religion seek to withhold the knowledge and maintain that fear. Our ability to organise society falls behind our knowledge of the organisation of the atom.

If this is not insanity on the grand scale the word has lost its meaning. The division between what is possible, and desirable and what is real is too much for human reason to rationalise away. The conflicts between the demands of the modern State and the human personality cannot be reconciled.

If mental sickness is on the increase it points inescapably to the sickness in our environment. We are indeed living in an insane society.

## THE SUMMER SCHOOL

### Blueprints for Sanity

LAST week-end the London Anarchist Group organised the twelfth annual Summer School for the anarchists of this country. The tenuous and often temporary nature of anarchist groups makes the achievement of a run of twelve successive annual functions such as this quite an achievement. Not that every Summer School has been an unqualified success, of course. This writer can remember some of which the less said the better.

Some years the lectures have been only moderately good, but the 'get-together' particularly enjoyable. This year the lectures were all of a very high quality, but the London Group felt the lack of any large or vocal contingent from the rest of the country. In the early post-war years, of course, the lively Glasgow group would turn up in force and invigorate the gathering with their heretical ideas. We live in hopes that such a group may emerge once again in Auld Reekie before very long.

Nevertheless the social function of the Summer School was fulfilled, and the London comrades were glad to welcome visitors from Bath, Cambridge, Gosport, Hoddesdon, Leicester and Letchworth.

### The Lectures

The theme chosen for the Summer School lecture-discussions was "Blueprint for Sanity", and the three lecturers tackled the subjects of health, wage system and the social sciences and related them to the anarchist conception of a sane society, or at least to the anarchist attitude.

All three lectures will be published more or less in full in FREEDOM, for the benefit of those unable to hear them, and we hope the discussion which may be stimulated in print will be at least as valuable as that at the Summer School.

The first lecture was that given by Morris Simon on 'Health in a Sane Society'. He dealt with the two parts of man, the mind and the body (the 'psyche' and the 'soma') but showed the interaction and interdependence of these parts to make the whole man, and how he was affected by his social environments and the degree to which his physical and psychological needs were satisfied.

Morris Simon demonstrated how authorities welcome the means of creating servile subjects, and how these means include interference with the satisfaction of man's basic needs. Capitalist and older forms of exploitation have practiced crude interference with food supplies, and have used violence or threats of it, and practiced repressive sexual codes. More modern authoritarian régimes have developed deprivation on sexual and psychological levels (through their control of mass media of communication) and thought control.

The speaker quoted an impressive array of statistics to show the prevalence of physical ill health in society to-day (where preventive medicine is practiced) and traced the bulk of it to malnutrition. In this country, however, this was tending to decline in the post-war period—only to be replaced by mental illness! Over half the hospital beds in Britain are now occupied by mental patients. In other words, as standards of living rise, the control of the population by physical deprivations have begun to give way to control by psychological pressures to conform. If we accept the concept that

authoritarian society needs deprivations of one kind or another, then reforms must fail. In a sane order promotive medicine, aimed at promoting good health not merely preventing bad, would be only supported by preventive medicine.

The speaker's basic hypothesis was that everybody has a right to the satisfaction of his basic needs, physical and mental, and none has the right to deprive others of that. A sane society would provide good social planning where the free development of man's natural appetites and needs was assured.

### The Wage System

The second lecture was a discussion of the wages system and the proposal that the collective contract could be used by workers as a means of undermining their subjugation to wages.

Geoffrey Ostergaard showed how the industrial revolution may have increased standards of living, but in destroying existing modes of production—the individual ownership of craft tools—had created the industrial proletariat, destroyed collective village and town activities and undermined craftsmansmanship through the division of labour.

The introduction of the wages system had corrupted work from a vocational, creative part of life into a bartered commodity, and wage slavery differed from chattel slavery in that the employer bought a worker's labour without buying him and paid wages only when profitable (and got rid of the worker when not). Through wages the worker surrenders control over production and all claim on the product.

In fact, however, it is absurd to abstract labour power from the labourer—he became himself a commodity, a thing.

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"The three great causes of human immorality are inequality, whether political, economic or social, ignorance, its natural result, and slavery, its inevitable consequence."

—BAKUNIN.

## IN BRIEF LEARNING FAST

DR. KWAME NKRUMAH, Prime Minister of Ghana, has learned quickly the ways of those in power, and has demonstrated his contempt for freedom of expression by deporting Mr. Bankole Timothy, of Accra, who dared to criticise some aspects of the government.

Mr. Timothy, who is correspondent in Ghana of the *News Chronicle* and the *Observer*, wrote the first biography of Dr. Nkrumah. He has been told by the Minister of Justice that his presence "is not conducive to the public good".

The statement, which is a copy of the reply the Minister sent to the Commonwealth Press Union, added that the Government of Ghana would not tolerate subversive activities by anyone, no matter what his profession. The Minister linked the deportation of Mr. Bankole Timothy to that of Archbishop Makarios from Cyprus, and asked, "Would anyone be right to say that the deportation of the Archbishop was the suppression of religious freedom?"

This is yet another example to show that wherever white domination is replaced by black rule this merely constitutes a change in the colour of the faces and not of the principles which govern all those in a position of power.

### ARMS BEFORE PENSIONS

THE meagre sum dished out by the Government to old age pensioners is totally inadequate to provide the basic essentials of life. But a demand by the Opposition to increase the sum to £3 a week was defeated in the House of Commons by a majority of 56.

Mr. Tom Brown said the Government had no difficulty in finding the money for "redundant officers", and also pointed out that money had been found for the increase in M.P.'s pay.

John Boyd-Carpenter, Minister of pensions, replied that increases in benefits when they were made would have to be at a serious cost to the present working population. He said he was not in a position to announce the Government's proposals but, when they appear "they will be in accord with our long record of sound and humane social legislation." How meaningless can words become?

We might ask why it is necessary for the working population to make further contributions to old age pensions when £1,500,000,000 per year which could be put to the social services is being absorbed in the production of armaments.

The truth is that governments put power before people, and consider cannon fodder more valuable than a number of old age pensioners who are not a very strong voting force

### THE HYPOCRITICAL ARCHBISHOP

THE World Council of Churches have made a sufficiently vague and compromising statement about H-bomb tests to suit the Archbishop of Canterbury, who only a few months ago, opposed the Bishop of Chichester's resolution to condemn outright the development of atomic weapons. His observations on the conclusions of The World Council of Churches are characteristically hypocritical, after the Council pass-

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## More Seasonable Reflections IN PRAISE OF LEISURE

HOWEVER disinclined most people are in principle to thinking about the realities of the 50 weeks of the year as they seek to concentrate sun-bathing, sight-seeing, relaxation, gastronomy . . . and atmosphere in the remaining two, how many, in fact, as they roast and relax by the sea, can prevent the intrusion of even only vague thoughts on the futility of their jobs, the illusory advantages of wage-increases, and the fatuous way they spend or throw away those precious leisure hours, that oasis in a desert of unconsciousness and routine which makes life an end in itself rather than the instrument, the delicate antennae which man uses in the unending voyage of discovery of himself as well as of those near and dear to him?

To those who feel inclined to protest against our choice of adjectives we would suggest they first subject themselves to a test. Those who at the end of two weeks' holiday-making have succeeded in shutting out the fifty weeks of the year, their jobs, their neighbours and their semi-detached brick boxes; whose dreams are centred on Messrs. Littlewood, Vernon and . . . (we cannot think of a third football philanthropist . . . ah yes, Mr. Cope) to prolong indefinitely this Riviera, or Costa Brava idyll: for them our objectives surely, are not misplaced. Those who, on the contrary, at the end of the two weeks feel an impatience to return to the fray, to their jobs, their friends, their converted brick boxes, (converted in the sense that instead of attempting to make them one better than the Jones', are workshops of life and leisure) to them to offer no apologies since they will not recognise themselves in our first paragraph and will therefore feel neither indignant nor itching to protest!

We hope that regular readers of FREEDOM are of the latter. For these reflections of ours are intended for those who chance on us as they would a message in an empty bottle washed up by the tide at their feet, momentarily liberated from the tortures of mass-produced shoes and the promiscuity of crowded buses and underground trains!

WHAT is it that makes a job of work interesting or dull? Is it the physical or psychological, financial or functional, or a combination of these which determine whether one loves or hates one's job?

We would maintain that no man, however interesting his job, positively enjoys working for a boss for the following reasons: (a) because however much one is conditioned into believing that bosses are necessary one feels (especially if one is a professional man) that given the same privileged position one could do better than one's boss who is always an "old muddler" and (b) that one's boss is enjoying a higher standard of living than oneself because he employs the services of others (oneself included). Hence the dissatisfaction which is born from the desire to be one's own boss (a desire which is often astutely stifled in the professional classes, by co-opting these dissatisfied employees into the board of directors, with or without capital).

Thus, however interesting and socially important a job may be, the positive satisfaction to be derived by the holder can be easily vitiated by rivalries over status and economic considerations. And in the case of workers in factories the monotony of their jobs is not compensated for by leisure hours which are as free and exciting as their working hours are circumscribed and dreary.

We may be uttering a heresy, even for some anarchists, when we declare that to our minds no job is *per se* interesting for more than a limited time unless it lends itself to variety and development or occupies but a small part of one's active life (assuming that one has "ideas" as to what one wants to do with one's "free" time\*). For these same reasons all jobs have interest in so far as they serve some useful social purpose and do not sap the physical strength and mental versatility of the individual. The hack writer is as much a slave to the pen (or typewriter) as the factory worker is to the lathe; the craftsman who through pressure of "demand" spends his working hours producing a chair, albeit beautiful, is as much a potential victim to boredom as the gifted painter who, carried away by "public" demand, works factory hours producing "pot boilers".

IN our society the purpose of automation is not to relieve mankind of boredom and hard labour but to increase industrial efficiency. Automation is industry's snub to human effort (as well as a tribute to modern Man's inventive genius). Man could use this "snub" for his own ends if only he could learn to desire leisure rather than fear it.

Leisure, as we understand it, is not escape from dreary toil, which is the dream of millions of our fellow beings at this very moment as they sun themselves on the beaches of Europe. Leisure is the freedom to pursue those activities and bents which give us satisfaction and purpose to our lives. Physically and mentally it may be more exhausting than any routine job; indeed, leisure is not synonymous with idleness though for some of us it may well be considered a happy state! It is significant that the leisure society is desired more by the "activists" among us—those for whom the day is too short to do all the things they would wish to do—than by the so-called shirkers who are as bored with their idleness as they are resistant to their jobs!

There is no infallible blue-print to leisure for all who seek it. Each individual has commitments and responsibilities in existing society which he may not easily be able to brush aside without causing hardship and problems for others. But each one of us can win his leisure society within limitations so long as he can place the material side of life—and this includes careers and social status just as much as daily bread—in its proper perspective.

The "simple life" is not as some imagine, hand-made sandals and raw carrots. It is "simple" only because it has discarded the artificial and dispensed with the organisation of leisure. It is complex, exciting, disturbing and not without tension or insecurity, because it is life of our own fashioning. And unlike the Hollywood utopias dreamed up on the sun-drenched beaches it can be achieved, or approximated, here and now, by those who want it enough. And, like love-making, once you have sampled it you will never want to look back!

\*An important consideration, "Fear of leisure" is as much a *maladie du siècle* as "fear of freedom". Some people's obsession for work as an end in itself is less a positive attitude to life than an escape from the social loneliness and intellectual boredom that they anticipate from leisure.

## PEOPLE AND IDEAS BIGNESS IN INDUSTRY

A RECENT article in FREEDOM on Geoffrey Ostergaard's survey of member participation in Co-operative Co-partnerships brings to the fore one of the questions which advocates of an anarchist social organisation have to face: the question of size and scale. "For anarchists," writes the author, "who have long insisted on the importance of small scale organisation, one further point of interest emerges . . . Member interest is inversely related to size; the smaller the society, the higher the member participation . . . One of the lessons to be learned from these worker co-operatives may be just this: those who wish to democratise the work process may well have to forego the advantages—and the disadvantages—of large-scale organisation."

From this deduction the next step that critics of anarchist ideas reach, is the opinion that George Orwell expressed about anarchism:

"If one considers the probabilities one is driven to the conclusion that anarchism implies a low standard of living. It need not imply a hungry or uncomfortable world, but it rules out the kind of air-conditioned, chromium-plated, gadget-ridden existence which is now considered desirable and enlightened. The processes involved in making, say, an aeroplane are so complex as to be only possible in a planned, centralised society, with all the repressive apparatus that that implies. Unless there is some unpredictable change in human nature, liberty and efficiency must pull in opposite directions."

And the final conclusion often reached is that since there is no example in history of the deliberate rejection by a majority, or of a complex social organisation in favour of a simpler one; the possibility of an anarchist society is in fact receding; and since 'not even the gods fight against necessity', those who preach the desirability of anarchy are cherishing an illusion and are cutting themselves off from the reality of our day and age.

There is a great deal of evidence to support Ostergaard's argument, Orwell's is open to question; it is the third conclusion which seems to be totally misconceived. In the first place, what are anarchists after? A solution first, surely, to the question "How shall I live?". Nobody is obliged to cast aside his personal answer to this question because it hasn't a universal application, and on the personal level any argument about the social impossibility of anarchism has no validity. But most anarchists do want to change the society in which they live, and again on the social level the impossibility of an anarchist society no more invalidates anarchism than the impossibility of eradicating disease invalidates medicine.

BUT the really interesting thing about this kind of objection to anarchism is that it does not question its desirability, it merely observes that the size and scale of modern industry makes anarchism technically and organisationally impossible. Anarchists tend to react to this point of view in two ways. They may agree with it, but point out that mankind, once it has absorbed the technological revolution, may grow out of the frenzy for what David Riesman terms "conspicuous production", just as the rich, when they cease to be *nouveau riche* grow out of the stage of Veblen's 'conspicuous consumption'. In other

words, when industrialised society is no longer a novelty, it is reasonable to assume that instead of swallowing it all open-mouthed people will start critically picking and choosing which of its attributes they wish to retain. Others may take the view that the very technical and productive advances which some people affect to fear or despise are, by making possible an end to the bondage of poverty and toil, the necessary precondition of human freedom, the very thing that makes anarchy possible. What really matters, they will say, is who controls the means of production. And then along comes the Labour Correspondent of *The Times* (29/4/57) to point out that while workers' control in the form of co-operative co-partnerships may "provide a means of harmonious self-government in a small concern" there is no evidence that it provides "any solution to the problems of establishing democracy in large-scale modern industry".

The vital point which is so often overlooked in all these discussions is that the scale and size of modern industry is more a reflection of the social and economic ideas current in society than of actual technical complexity. The cult of bigness which makes oversize cars, oversize ships, and oversize aircraft (remember the Brabazon—whole villages were swept away to make a runway for it, and now it rusts in its million pound hangar), this cult of bigness pervades industry as much as any other field of life and it has nothing to do with complex processes. It also makes us exaggerate the actual extent of bigness in industry as Kropotkin found years ago in compiling the material for his *Fields, Factories and Workshops*, when he discovered that the economist's picture of industry had little to do with the reality.

AT a conference held a few years ago by the British Institute of Management, and the Institute of Industrial Administration, Mr. S. R. Dennison of Cambridge University declared that "the belief that modern industry inevitably tends towards larger units of production was a Marxian fallacy. It was not justified by developments in either this country or the United States".

"Over a wide range of industry the productive efficiency of small units was at least equal to, and in many cases surpassed, that of the industrial giants. About 92 per cent. of the businesses in the United Kingdom employed fewer than 250 people and were responsible for by far the greater part of the total national production. The position in the United States was about the same." (*Sunday Times* 15/2/53).

Again, those who think of industry as one great assembly line may be surprised to learn that "in spite of nationalisation and the growth of large private firms, the proportion of the total working population employed by large organisations (i.e. concerns with over 1,000 employees) is still comparatively small; such people constitute only 36 per cent. of the working population of some 8,300,000 men and women, and are far outnumbered by those who hold jobs as members of comparatively small organisations where direct personal contact throughout the group is a practical everyday possibility". (Mark Abrams: *Bigness in Industry*).

It is also revealing to study the nature of the industrial giants and to reflect on

how few of them owe their size to the actual technical complexity and scale of their industrial operations. In a recent broadcast under the title *Have Large Firms an Advantage in Industry*, Mr. H. P. Barker referred to two essentially different types of motive, the industrial and non-industrial. By the industrial motive, he meant

"the normal commercial development of a product or a service which the public wants; for instance, the motor-car industry or the chain store. There is also the vertical type of growth in which a seller expands downwards towards his raw materials, or a primary producer expands upwards towards the end products of his primary material. The soap and oil industries are such cases. Then there is the kind of expansion in which a successful firm seeks to diversify its business and its opportunity and to carry its financial eggs in several baskets . . . And, lastly, there is the type of expansion by which whole industries are aggregated under a single control because they cannot effectively be operated in any other way. Electricity and railways are examples".

One may well have reservations about the truth of Mr. Barker's last two sentences, and it is interesting that his other reasons relate to the financial structure of competitive industry, rather than its actual technical demands. When he turns to what he calls the non-industrial and less healthy types of growth, we are in familiar territory:

"Among these there is the type which starts and ends in the Stock Exchange and where the sole reason is the prospect of making a profitable flotation. Then there is a type of adiposity which often occurs when a successful company becomes possessed of large resources from past profits. The directors then look round for ways of investing the surplus fat merely because they have it . . . Then there is the type of large business born only out of doctrinaire or political considerations. Last of all, there is the industrial giant created primarily to satisfy the megalomania of one man".

THOSE industries where the size of the units is dictated by the technical complexity of production does seem to demand large-scale operations, for example steel rolling mills or motor car assembly are the very ones where automation is likely to reduce the number of people employed. Automation is seen by some people as yet another factor making for greater industrial centralisation, but this is only another expression of our centralist mentality. Mr. Landon Goodman in his new Penguin book *Man and Automation* puts the matter in a very interesting (almost Kropotkinian) light:

"Automation can be a force either for concentration or dispersion. There is a tendency to-day for automation to develop along with larger and larger production units but this may only be a phase through which the present technological advance is passing. The comparatively large sums of money which are needed to develop automation techniques, together with the amount of technological knowledge and unique quality of management, are possibly found more in the larger units than in the smaller ones. Thus, the larger units will proceed more quickly towards automation. When this knowledge is dispersed more widely and the smaller units take up automation the pattern may be quite different. Automation being a large employer of plant and a relatively small employer of labour, allows plants to be taken away from the large centres of population and built in relatively small centres of population. Thus one aspect of the British scene may change. Rural factories, clean, small, concentrated units will be dotted about the countryside. The effects of this may be far-reaching. The Industrial Revolution caused a separation of large numbers of people from the land, and concentrated them in towns . . . The result has been a certain standardisation of personality, ignorance of nature, and lack of imaginative power . . . Now we may soon see some factory workers moving back into the country and becoming part of a rural community . . ."

But the most remarkable evidence in favour of reducing the scale of industrial organisation comes from the experiments conducted by industrial psychologists, sociologists and so on, who, in the interests of morale, increased productivity, or health, have sought to break down large units into small groups. The famous experiment of Elton Mayo at the Hawthorne Works of the Western Electric Company, or the experiences of the Glacier Metal Company, or J. J. Gillespie's idea about 'free expression in industry', or the Group Production methods adopted by a Swedish firm, are all examples of this tendency. Their aim is by no means workers' control, they simply want to increase production or to reduce industrial neuroses, but they do indicate that the preconditions for workers' control of industry are there. All that is lacking is the demand for it!

C.W.

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