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# CLYDESIDE

# ANARCHIST

*Meaningful action*, for revolutionaries, is whatever increases the confidence, the autonomy, the initiative, the participation, the solidarity, the equalitarian tendencies and the self-activity of the masses and whatever assists in their demystification. *Sterile and harmful action* is whatever reinforces the passivity of the masses, their apathy, their cynicism, their differentiation through hierarchy, their alienation, their reliance on others to do things for them and the degree to which they can therefore be manipulated by others — even by those allegedly acting on their behalf.

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INSIDE :-35 Hour Week# Dying of consumption#  
Anarchist Organisation, For/Against, in practice#  
Computing struggles# Playing the Game!



## Introduction

WELCOME TO THE SECOND ISSUE OF THE CLYDESIDE ANARCHIST. THE CONTRIBUTORS ARE REVOLUTIONARIES INVOLVED IN THE "CLYDESIDE ANARCHISTS" OR THOSE WITH PAST CONNECTIONS.

THE JOURNAL WILL COME OUT QUARTERLY & IS INTENDED AS A FORUM FOR DISCUSSING IDEAS AND STRATEGIES FOR ANARCHIST INTERVENTION. ON A LOCAL LEVEL, THIS ACTIVITY IS LINKED TO THE REGULAR APPEARANCE OF PRACTICAL ANARCHY, WHICH USUALLY APPEARS AS A FREE NEWSHEET OR AS A 4PAGE "TABLOID" NEWSPAPER (10p + postage). OVER THE PAST 2 YEARS, OVER 90,000 HAVE BEEN FREELY DISTRIBUTED IN FACTORIES, OTHER WORKPLACES, BROOS, DEMONSTRATIONS & OTHER EVENTS.

LETTERS OR ARTICLES ARE POSITIVELY REQUESTED - ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT GUARANTEE PUBLICATION. WE WILL REPLY TO ANY QUESTIONS AND CRITICISMS YOU MAY WISH TO RAISE.

INDIVIDUALS ASSOCIATED WITH THE "CLYDESIDE ANARCHISTS" HAVE PRODUCED A NUMBER OF PAMPHLETS OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS & THERE ARE STILL A FEW LEFT OF:-

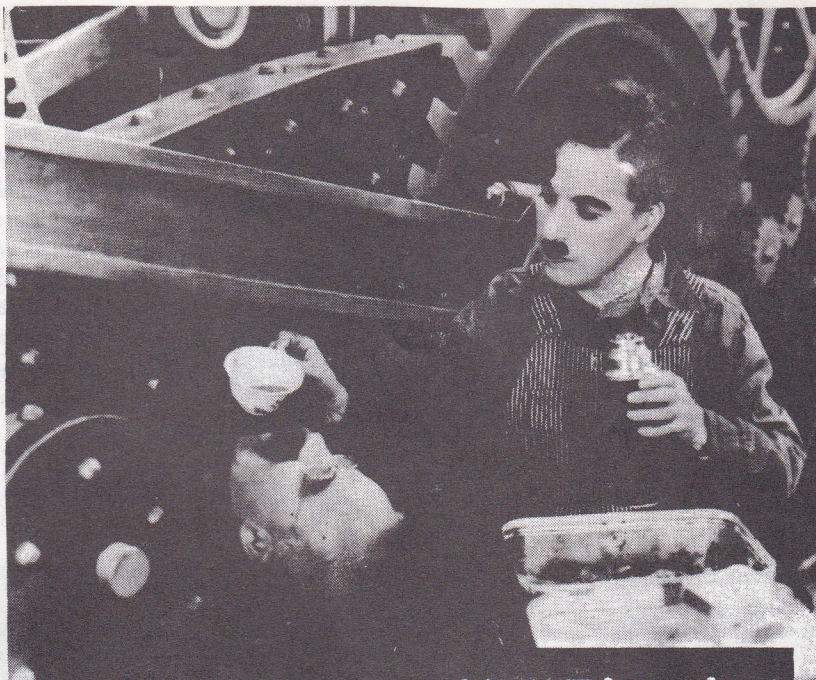
ART & ANARCHISM by Farquhar McLay.  
THE END OF MUSIC; both 30p+POSTAGE.

INDEPENDENT LOCAL NEWSHEETS ARE DISTRIBUTED IN VARIOUS AREAS:-  
BLACK BAIRN IN FALKIRK;  
LITTLE BY LITTLE - EDINBURGH;

REFUSE, from EAST KILBRIDE,  
SPRINGBURN FOLLIES, from Glasgow,

TOEJAM IN KILMARNOCK,  
and WEST END CRIMES in Glasgow.  
THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN IN THE RECENT PAST PUBLICATIONS IN PAISLEY(GUTTERPRESS), ABERDEEN(SUBVERSIVE GRAPHITI), GLASGOW ART SCHOOL & BY OUR COMRADES IN CASTLEMILK.

WE HAVE CONTACT WITH A NUMBER OF NATIONALLY & INTERNATIONALLY ORGANISED NETWORKS INCLUDING:-  
INTERCOM, PUBLISHES A DISCUSSION JOURNAL & HOLDS CONFERENCES;  
DIRECT ACTION MOVEMENT, ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST GROUP LINKED TO THE I.W.A. FEDERATION OF UNIONS/GROUPS. & THE ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS, FOR REVOLUTIONARY PRISONERS; STOP THE CITY, anti-militarist action in CITIES & ANARCHO-FEMINIST NETWORK.



## 35 Hours No Thanks!

No doubt the argument for a 35 hour week will raise its head again after the present miners dispute has finished (eh?). I have no doubt that the '35 hours' will get a lot of support and this is why I am writing down my opposition to it - before it's too late!

On the surface a 35 hour week seems a rosy proposition, but looking a bit deeper we see that it is the workers who are asking the bosses for more leniency.

By bargaining with the bosses we're accepting their control over production. It will not bring into question the wrongs of the wage system. In fact it's

re-inforcing the theory that workers accept that capitalists have every right to exclusive ownership of the factories.

The 35 hour week has all the promise of a cut in working hours without a loss in wages. So far, so good! But there is no chance of the bosses accepting a loss in production. We're just going to have to log our guts out to produce the same as before, in a shorter time for the same amount of money.

As workers, we must look past the narrow vision of going 'can in hand' asking the bosses for more concessions. As workers we should we should try, at any lengths, to gain 'control' of the factories/workplaces. Once production is in the hands of the producers (ie the workers) the need for excessive, useless toiling will be no more !!

In this instance there will be no need for the wage system, there will be no need for such a thing as the '35 hour week'.

All this may sound, dare I say it, utopian - the reason for this is, because to most people it is a dream - & only when people take their dreams for reality will this whole cess-pit of a system change !

Gally.

OUR ACTIVITY HAS BEEN STEPPED UP WITH THE PRESENT MINERS STRIKE & RECENTLY A MUTUAL AID SUPPORT GROUP HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED TO FUNDRAISE FOR MINING COMMUNITIES.

IN THE FUTURE WE HOPE TO OPEN OUR OWN ANARCHIST CENTRE, BASE FOR ACTIVITY, PRINTING & LITERATURE. WE WILL ALSO BE PUBLISHING:-  
ANARCHISM - THE CLYDESIDE ANARCHISTS POCKET GUIDE, 30p + POSTAGE.

ARTICLES IN THE JOURNAL REFLECT THE VIEWPOINT OF THE AUTHOR & ARE NOT NECESSARILY THE COLLECTIVE VIEWPOINT OF THE CLYDESIDE ANARCHISTS.

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# TO EACH ACCORDING TO THEIR FALSE NEEDS!

Only someone with the corrupt illusions of a politician could deny that society is rotting, and that all social relationships and traditional consciousness are collapsing all around us. Everyone knows this. As we stand frozen between the technological era and the information age, the TV set would appear to be the social glue that holds the decaying fabric of this society together.

Our present era is characterised by the possibility of material satisfaction for all. Marx' 'society of production' has been surpassed by the society of consumption. Increased speed of life means increased speed of consumption. Consumerism has heralded it's entry, like the New Messiah, into the modern city, and millions upon millions of contenders for happiness are camped at it's gates.

With the promise of material prosperity, people were impatient to satisfy their needs, and the search for novelty has become the all-encompassing brand X of post WW 2 psychology. However, the setback in all this material gluttony has been 'the masses' inability to adapt their psychology, thought and reflexes to the era of advanced technology. Overwhelmed with new gadgets to play with and new things to consume, the modern person has become a trained consumer, ever ready to fetch the stick at the beck-and-call of the ruling class(admen, politicians, management, scientists, and technocrats).

As the system of production and consumption is becoming technically and intellectu-

ally more and more complex, it only continues to function with the active(passive?) and willing assistance of those very people whose personalities are being eradicated.

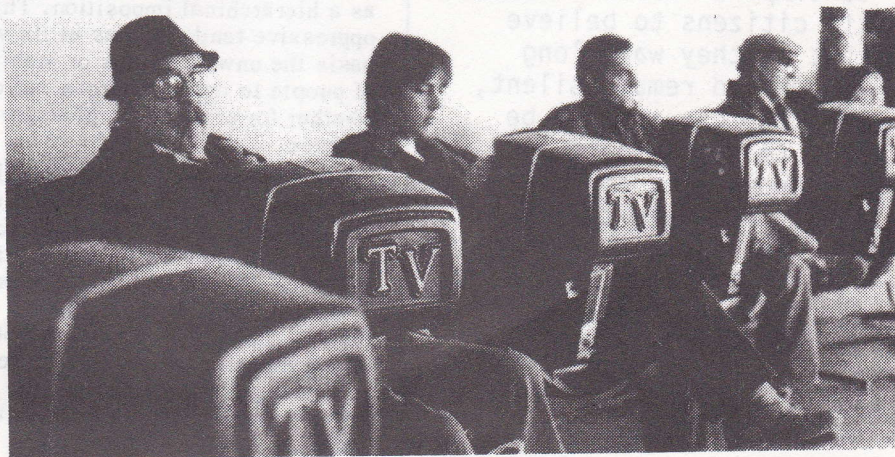
Since 'those very people' are the ones with no control over the space-time that dominates their daily lives - the proletariat, shall we say - then perhaps one of the functions of the anarchist today is that of de-mystification agent; to expose the people, institutions, processes of thought and behaviour that maintain a veil over what is 'real', and to make it clear to others that we would be all the more wiser and happier without such moribund values. It is not enough just to take away people's basic securities and leave them with the unbearable misery of thinking about their own impoverishment, but to act for a recognition of anarchist ideas, ideas that are lying dormant in the heart of humanity's subconscious. Unseen and most of the time unheard, such ideas are in harmony with the anarchists desire to transform the world. It is a task also of exposing and overcoming the alienations which all too often the individual will bury him/herself in, and

the more conformist he or she will become, and the more difficult it becomes to be coherently critical of the garbage that clutters up our daily lives. It is a task of illustrating through our own organisations the ability, confidence and the gains of confronting the things that, as Reich would put it, "the individual has had to repress within themselves to put up with their own brutalisation".

Today, despite the over-production of goods, the quality of life remains untouched. Technology, as it is today, reduces people's creativity, turns us into isolated consumers, where communication is nothing more than the glimpse of a reflection in the TV screen. In the bombardment of advertisements that persuade us that we can be really happy with a Walnut Whip or a Barratt home, real life is cruelly absent. Where people have become consumers of hollow dreams, subordinated to the commodity, communication is difficult, but not impossible in a time when an ever-increasing number of people are becoming dissatisfied with what the system hands out as existence.



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# ☆ FOR ORGANISATION



We have to reject the commodity, from looting to sabotage, every little act that undermines consumerism and replaces false needs with human superiority over commodities should be encouraged. Only by kicking back until it breaks, does the system's bankruptcy become evident. Once the question 'why pay' is asked, the system lies open to criticism and alteration. It is time to start taking political decisions instead of economic purchases.

In the mass consumer society, the price you pay for survival means subordination to commodity values where everything becomes an object. The society of consumption would like all its citizens to believe that if they wait long enough and remain silent, then one day we will be able to participate in the prosperity and happiness of modern civilisation. But alas, the system is a drug without kicks; the more you take the further you are from real experience.

Malcolm D.

THERE has always been a diversity of views and perhaps some ambivalence by anarchists to the question of organisation. Much contemporary discussion has been based on rather facile premises which has as its embodying principle ignorance and anti-intellectualism, within some sectors of anarchism eulogised as a virtue.

Revolutionary Anarchists have found it difficult therefore to refute the notion that anarchism implies disorder and disunity. Our poverty however is not one of philosophy but one of practise.

Organisation is the practice of co-operation and of solidarity with other people. I do not imply a monolithic static form of organisation but one in constant change as desires and aspirations change — a fluid and voluntary network of organisation, an association for a specific purpose which is a necessary aspect of social life — not as an end in itself.

If we do not organise laterally with other people there is an over-riding tendency that people will organise anyway, not as a voluntary act but as a hierarchical imposition. This oppressive tendency has at its very basis the unwillingness or inability of people to agree on organisation whether for production, pleasure or defence.

In practise, the irony is that there has been a tendency for anarchist anti-organisationists to organise with those whom they are in agreement! Isolation always implies impotence of change through a sterility of ideas (capitalism is quite adept at managing 'alternative' life styles — in fact it positively encourages them — reinforcing the democratic myth).

Anarchists do not follow or organise around men or women or central committees. We organise around ideas and rebel against the notion that a principle can be eulogised by any leader, expert, cadre...

Anarchists must realise that the State gains its legitimacy through disorganisation. Community and State are distinct polarities. For the State to be strong the community must be divided and isolated. The State has taken over from both the individual and the community the communal responsibilities that give life an extended dimension, an essence of fellowship and community both locally and internationally.

We are being slowly strangled by paternalistic authority in the guise of the Welfare State, the reality being that as the State cumulatively centralises all social and political functions, in the process it detaches the individual from their whole life process.

If anarchists can gain an understanding of the state, its dynamics, machinations and indeed very subtle forms of working the need for organisation is more imperative.

What takes away liberty and makes any initiative impossible is the isolation which renders one powerless — as community is eroded the State gains its historical validity and necessity.

The answer does not lie in the abolition of organisation but in the growing consciousness and responsibility of each individual member.

The origin and justification for authority lies in social disorganisation — a tyranny of structurelessness. Anarchists have been accused that their view of a society organised in a decentralised basis would lead to a fragmentation of society.

Indeed decentralisation will mean the fragmentation of the State leading to a strengthening of society and the social bonds among people. But social fragmentation is based on isolation and disorganisation. If we are to start resisting the social atomisation of modern communities into isolated individuals reliant and prostrate to authority personified by policeman or social worker we must recognise that organisation is the antidote for authority with each individual taking a more active and conscious part in collective work.



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# AGAINST ORGANISATION ★

THE vast majority of people involved in left wing politics, and I include some anarchists amongst those, express the opinion that the revolution will destroy capitalism and create communism, they also say that we need to organise for this to happen — whether it be by a centralist party, vanguard or union.

These are the attitudes of militants but not necessarily revolutionaries.

A militant attitude is where the problems within society are pinpointed and where ideas are expressed in how things can be changed. Putting it bluntly this is counter-revolutionary because individual needs and desires cannot be separated from social ones. The attitude of a militant is to support external

action based on ideology and to reject the revolutionary feelings that makes a particular person become a 'revolutionary' in the first place. Instead it is by applying our own feelings and passions into a social movement that revolution will come from — by developing communistic attitudes within ourselves and not by trying to bring about the conditions of communism.

Capitalism now dominates our lives so much that the vast majority of us ARE revolutionaries in the sense that we cannot stand the relationships we have been forced to adopt with work, our 'communities' and other people, through capital they have become divorced from

reality and are essentially meaningless. Therefore the potential for change already exists within the social nature of people — in the need for enjoyable, self fulfilling work, leisure and personal relationships which can only come about when the existence of commodity is destroyed.

There is a genuine desire within people to rebuild a human community where all these things can exist.

The problem though is that most people do not realise that it is capitalism that stops them from doing so.

Capitalism — the accumulation of value, by turning everything into a commodity and separating the work-

Freedom is not and never can be an abstract right — it is the possibility of acting, of organising. The miners strike epitomises this. A real sense of community and of human solidarity develops through a harmony of interests. This is the real essence of unity and of mutuality — where diversification as an intrinsic factor for creativity and human growth — which the authoritarian would regard as a dividing, weakening act, if not recalcitrant — can flourish on the basis of understanding and tolerance.

But this will not be realised and consolidated through disorganisation any more than it would be by dictatorship or the withering away of the State...

If we are to guard against the replacement of the will and intelligence of all by that of one or a few — an imposition of universal truths, values, and norms we must replace the will to power with the will to mutuality.

There only remains free organisation from below upwards, the simple to the complex, through free agreement and the federation of associations and organisation of production and consumption.

That is anarchy.

BLACK GUARD.

new address, write as follows to:-  
autonomy press, top floor, 64 queen  
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to early evening. mon/sat. drop-in.  
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er from the means of production, diverts the desire to communicate and to live in a society where we exist in isolation, where we become spectators. It does this by making everything seen through the 'logic' of exchange, rather than the fulfillment of needs.

This is where the failure of political organisations become apparent as they divert the real problem — one of social relationships existing through capital into one of power, by telling us we need to alter the decision making process via democracy, dictatorship of the proletariat, direct control of production by the workers, etc.

The traditional anarchist case for organisation is that a human community (communism) cannot be created while the State exists.

This is true in the sense that our relationships within society are controlled by the State to ensure that capitalist production survives, but fighting to get rid of the State alone, namely by organising against power will alter nothing. The reason for this is because capitalism can cope and adapt to anything that does not subvert its accumulation of value. The way then to do this is not through creating organisations but communistic attitudes — namely attitudes that reject the idea of exchange in place of need. So as then to destroy the apparatus of the State by revolution.

The reason why political organisation fails is because it seeks to mediate between people and their aims of a free society and because of the nature of capitalism and the historic development of the 'labour movement' this would mean becoming separated from the proletariat — thus working in a vacuum and diverting potential revolution so that it can be safely diffused by this society.

The enemy of a free communist society is not just capital but anything that willingly or not allows capitalism to continue.

This can perhaps be shown by looking at the demise of the revolutionary labour movement that existed after the 1st World War.

Basically it was destroyed or became no longer effective with the advent of the 2nd World War. The

reason for this was that the war was essentially an imperialist war. But the left supported it as they saw it as a fight against fascism. They thought victory would alleviate the poverty of the workers by increasing democratic control over society, automation and a reorganisation in society.

The fact was that this was true but not to the benefit of the proletariat but to capitalism. The labour movement (or most of it) supported a war that was in the end to strengthen capitalism.



Since then capitalist production could develop no more and it had an ever growing proletariat in existence. However there has been no revolution yet and capitalism continues to exist. This is because the proletariat has been controlled by capital through the workers movement — through organisation such as parties, unions, etc..

The idea of workers organisation should be left where it belongs in its chapter of history.

The way now for revolution still lies with the proletariat and still must come from destroying capitalist production. But it must be made clear that communism is not just the aim but also the method. The proletariat has to become anti-political by developing social relationships where labour is not the only reason for living but a part of it.

The activities of revolutionaries then should not be to enlist people into an organisation (which may give the impression of strength but in reality diverts revolution from its natural course) because this means in reality separation from the people you are trying to organise — the militant attitude.

This organisation in order to take control of the means of capitalist production so as to destroy it will

develop as a product of mutual aid and aim. What is needed is direct communication with others so that they can understand the causes of poverty and misery.

This could be done by turning capitalist values on their head (as well as maybe some of their supporters!) as they are one's alienation and isolation, so the opposite must be communistic.

Instead the function of revolutionaries must be one of a class conscious member of the proletariat where one's own response (individually or in autonomous groups) to the misery of the world is expressed so as to undermine it.

Proletarian Revolution doesn't need to be organised in order for it to come about — organisation comes from class consciousness which in turn developed from anti-political communist attitudes and action.

'The suppressed subjectivity cries out it's unfulfilled desires with criminal passion'.

Only by fighting against wage slavery by building a consciousness against it through sabotage, self-reduction in the time spent working and by a general hatred of work, by using anti-capitalist measures in all areas where our lives are sold back to us as commodities — whether it be things we are forced or induced to buy, the anti-communities we live in and our relationships with other people shall we create communism. What is needed is the desire to communicate and this can be achieved through a playful and generally disruptive attitude. It is only then when a communist mass movement has come about that we should start thinking of organisation so as to take control of the means of production directly and in order to subvert it and turn it into a communist means of production. From then we will have the desire to change society totally and will have developed the organisation to destroy the State and its armies.

Real communism, some call it anarchy, is not about being organised in order to be free but is both a type of production and the realisation and development of a human community. It is both the means and the ends to freedom.

IAN OAKES.



# ORGANISATION:

## It's Pre-Revolutionary Role.

There is a continuing debate within the anarchist movement about how practical agitational activity should be organised. Some people associate the need for organising activity with calls to form an actual organisation, whereas in my view it is easily possible to become organised without creating bureaucratic structures.

I believe it is also necessary, however, to clarify the role of anarchist organisation before & after a revolution. Anarchists always stress that any organisational we do adopt will be fluid in structure, and be designed to adapt to changing circumstances. Well, there can hardly be a greater change in circumstances than a successful anarchist revolution. Therefore pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary organisation must necessarily be different.

So, what should be the role of anarchist organisation? Firstly, it is necessary to state what it should not be, and that is solely designed to organise the revolution! The revolution itself will almost certainly be a spontaneous occurrence, at least initially.

The primary role of pre-revolutionary organisation is the propagation of anarchist ideas, with the aim of changing peoples natural, 'unconscious' anarchism into conscious anarchism. This is done through papers, leaflets & pamphlets, public meetings and direct action activities. It is also vital that the idea of fluid structures - allowing ammendment and

improvement - is firmly built in to any organisation. For, example the concept of temporary organisation for a specific temporary purpose should be developed.

It is also necessary to work out the basic framework for the organisation of production and distribution of goods, and food. This does not have to be a finalised blueprint but at the very least a basic theory must exist in advance of the revolution, ready to



be put into practice immediately after the period of upheaval.

When it is judged that the propoganda effort has had a major effect, and that there is a sufficient level of support, then groups should move on to a more continual active opposition to the State.

All of the above begs the question: just how should this activity be organised? I believe the basic element should be the local autonomous group. But groups have to be careful in exercising this autonomy - groups acting in isolation will be

self-defeating. It is essential to create a vibrant and practical-oriented mutual aid network, with groups taking part in joint(though not necessarily collective) activities. Groups in the network should establish efficient lines of communication and give physical and material support to each other. It has to be understood that groups that are only interested in pushing their own line, and in divisive politicking, are destructive to revolutionary efforts. A true and determined spirit of co-operation is required from participating groups. After a successful revolution this whole support network would almost certainly dissolve.

The stress I have laid on fluidity, does not mean that pre-revolutionary organisation is in any way structureless. To succeed it must be highly efficient and severely practical, making full use of often meagre resources. I firmly believe that dis-organisation like divisive politicking, is a betrayal of the revolution.

Propoganda should not be churned out for the sake of it. If it is poorly done then it is liable to be counter-productive and damaging to the movement. Groups must decide upon





short-term and long-term goals, and then organise to achieve these goals. Drifting along, week to week, without any clear idea where you are going is pointless. Before any goals are decided upon it is obviously necessary for groups to have already clarified their ideas through local & national discussion.

Group activities should be designed to achieve the maximum possible involvement of all group members. Individuals willing to carry out certain tasks should be mandated by the group to do their work, and as far as possible the principle of rotation of tasks among everyone in the group should be used. For this rotation to succeed group members must have a clear sense of their personal responsibilities to the group. There is of course, a difference between short-term and long-term work. Individuals and groups of individuals can be mandated to carry-out short-term projects, such as organising a public meeting, or writing a new leaflet. But there is also a need for more permanent posts, such as secretary or treasurer, which individuals will hold for, say a year, before someone else takes over. Obviously, all work must be carried out with the full knowledge and consent of the group and the emergence of bureaucratic hierarchies and informal elites must always be fought against. The development of clear lines of communication within the group allowing as near instantaneous reaction to events as possible, is also critical.

There is, however, a great need for newer, more imaginative and more effective means of putting our message across. This is a problem which affects all groups, and it is in this area

that a large amount of local and national discussion should be concentrated. For instance, should attempts be made to radicalise certain communities within cities? How should anarchists respond to the growing numbers of pissed-off 'unemployed' people? How can the destruction of human relationships through involvement in the commodity cycle be clearly explained?

Finally, it is also clearly necessary for the anarchist movement to clarify our ideas on how things should be organised initially in the post-revolutionary period. There have been many fragmented suggestions on the problem of organising production, distribution, services, housing etc., but a clearly defined anarchist economic theory has yet to be developed.

I personally find the lack of an economic theory disturbing. To be able to state the general outline of post-revolutionary economics is an essential part of pre-revolutionary propaganda.

At the moment, the image of the anarchist movement is one of confused disorganisation. This has to change; it would be a betrayal of our own efforts if it does not change. But it is not just a movement from disorganisation to organisation that is required. It is more a case of a change of attitudes. Revolutionary anarchists must WANT to be effective; we must have an HONEST DETERMINATION to co-operate with other individuals and groups; and we must couple a burning desire to succeed in creating an anarchist society with the knowledge that certain forms of organisation are a FUNDAMENTAL PART of this process. This is what we need.

John Alexander.

Times are 'bad', the mood's dull, defeated, hopeless. Protest is in fashion (in a small way). 'Revolutionaries' are accepting this mood and nothing seems possible.

Projects abound - but they are generally projects defined by the State, defined by the Coal Board, the arms dealers, the DHSS; in short by the tentacles of the State and capitalist bureaucracy. They are NEGA-PROJECTS: while necessary, they have to be backed up by positive thought and action and this has to show on a personal & public level.

Negative action is also negative communication. A critique on its own is of little interest to people. The combination of response to the surrounding world and autonomous creative thought & action communicates better and shows that the action is NOT defined by the State but by the activist. The confidence to live like this is rare and requires unusual freedom and breadth of thought. An activist life is made easier by real support from others.

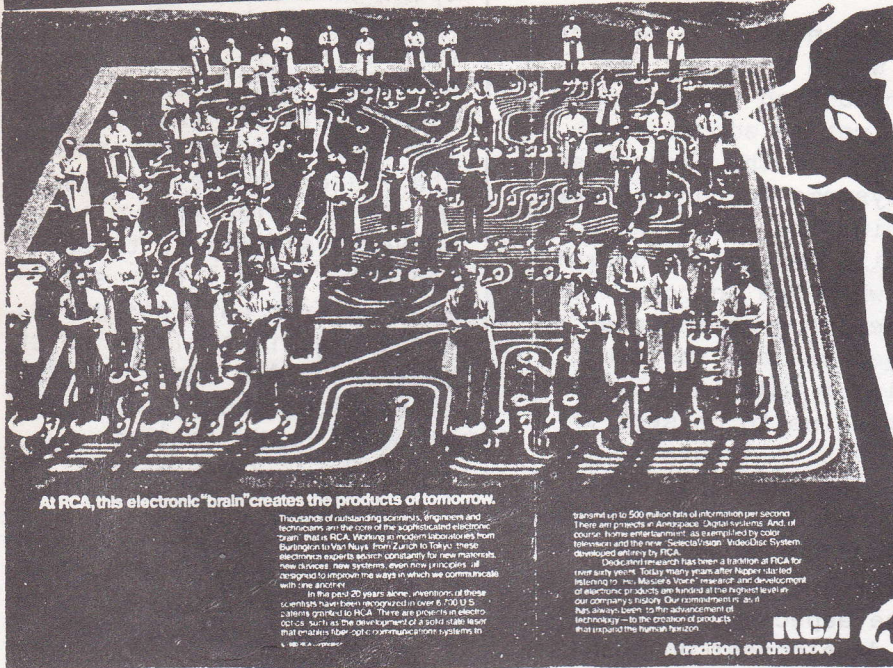
There is little advantage in talking about or criticising racism or sexism if the speakers are not clearly acting against their own isms; there is equally no real gain in supporting the miners if at the same time a new world of imaginative and ambitious possibilities is not communicated and if the reality of the practicality of just going out and seizing some of these possibilities is not clearly conveyed.

Those who speak from the perspective of at least attempting to define their own lives, who have had the impatience to take those opportunities which will enrich their own and others lives & which will threaten the status quo will surely communicate with the greatest clarity and results.

Ian, Hillhead, Glasgow.



# MICROTECHNOLOGY: A PROCESSED WORLD



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THOSE GOVERNING US AT THE MOMENT HAVE ADVOCATED THE REPLACEMENT OF THE 'OLD' MODEL OF SOCIETY AS BEING THE INTERMINABLE CONFLICT BETWEEN CAPITAL AND LABOUR WITH ONE ALSO BASED ON THE RECOGNITION OF CONFLICT, BUT THIS TIME ONE BETWEEN THE OLD HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND THE 'SUNRISE' INDUSTRIES BASED ON MICROELECTRONICS, WITH THE ADDITIONAL IMPLICATION THAT THE ONLY FORWARD-LOOKING AND PROGRESSIVE PERSPECTIVE IS ONE OF CHEER-LEADING THESE NEW INDUSTRIES. IT IS A SOCIETY WHICH PROMOTES A MAKER OF TVs WITH 2-INCH SCREENS AS A MAJOR PHILOSOPHER.

JUST AS HAS OCCURRED AT TIMES OF PREVIOUS RESTRUCTURINGS OF CAPITAL, THERE IS THE VISION OF A BRAVE NEW TOMORROW (FOR THOSE WHO ARE FLEXIBLE AND ADAPT) FLOATING JUST OUT OF REACH, THE VISION OF A SOCIETY OF MASTERS WITHOUT SLAVES. IT IS THE INTENTION OF THIS ARTICLE TO MAKE A SHORT EXAMINATION OF THE PRESENT REALITIES OF THESE NEW DEVELOPMENTS, DRIVEN BY THE SUSPICION THAT, AS ON PAST OCCASIONS WHEN SUCH A VISION HAS BEEN PROMOTED, THE ONLY RESULT WILL BE AN EXTENSION OF THE POWER OF CAPITAL.

Throughout the history of its development, Capital has replaced quality by quantity in whatever process or relation it has come to inhabit, subjecting all human life to the process of economy, and destroying all non-economic meaning. It is perhaps a measure of the success of this project that some radicals can even propose fevered visions of a computer democracy, with the voting principle exaggerated to some nth degree. This would in fact be the complete and utter destruction of the remaining vestiges of human community, debased to the flow of binary on and off impulses through some bottom-up network. The sole content to participation in such a system would be the acceptance of the system's mediation and of its very rationality, Instrumental Reason. The reality of an idealised leisure-based, obsessively-voting society would therefore be that it would be the society of Slaves without Masters.

¶ To a large extent, the

New microtechnology is just an extension of the computer technology which developed after the invention of the transistor, through the 50s and 60s, and just an expression of the tendency throughout that period of processor power to drop in price. To a smaller extent, the path of development is accidental (for example, the origins of the home computer fad riding on the back of the arcade game). But we must also take the time at which the path into smaller independent units was chosen over that of, for example,

simply increasing the sizes of large central machines. Whether the choice was conscious or not, the time at which such a development became 'rational' was the same time when a new wave of contestation was threatening the functionings of Western Societies, both within and without the Enterprise. For one of the main effects of the new technology was not so much the eradication of labour as its relocation away from the factories and offices of the Western societies and into the chip assembly plants of the semi-militarised South-East Asian societies, where a docile labour force could be assured. This process is now entering a new phase with the return of such plants (although with somewhat lesser conditions of exploitation) to countries like Scotland, where the intention is to recruit a largely female, non-unionised labour-force.

¶ While the micro have brought many smaller firms into the "computer age", its role in many larger firms has been somewhat different







and perhaps more interesting. By the late 70s, Data Processing Departments have become entrenched around the computer in many firms, developing their own mystique and hierarchy. In many ways these departments had run out of dynamism, with the result that when anyone asked for a system to be developed, they were likely to be quoted an extremely long timescale before the system would be ready (and even then this was unlikely to be adhered to). It was the people who had been frustrated in their requests for new systems who stepped outside this frustrating system and began to buy the new micros, teach themselves the rudiments of BASIC programming, and write their own systems. Finding their positions threatened by a profusion of such systems, the DP hierarchies fought back by increasing the productivity of their own departments. In practice this meant the introduction of new programming aids and languages and of new measures to control the time spent by programmers on their work.

This conflict, with the DP departments trying to supplant the independently developed systems with their own new systems, is likely to end up with overall control back with the DP Departments, but with greater autonomy for individual system users, through the use of micros as intelligent terminals.

# It is ironic that futurologists are proclaiming that computer programmers are a 'new aristocracy' and advocating that everyone must learn the skill of programming at the very time when the struggle within the enterprise is

reducing programming to just another clerical job, subject to extremely close controls.

# The tendency to reification which provoked the introduction of the micro will return sooner or later when the sheer mass of systems introduced reach a point where they need significant redevelopment, and when the introduction of new programming aids no longer renders the same scale of immediate benefits. It remains to be seen what measures will have to be taken at that time to maintain the power balance within the enterprise.

In all the above, and in all those aspects of technological development untouched upon here (for example, the reduction of clerical jobs towards data entry with the introduction of interactive systems), it is difficult to find any liberatory perspectives. On one side it is certain that no position based on the belief/hope that technical fixes can in some way save us, can be upheld. Nor can we consider that some demystification of programming skills brought about by the profusion of home micros (which are probably just a fad like skateboards anyway) has any content other than to teach people how to think like a von Neumann machine. On the other side, it would appear that all we can say is that it is necessary to recognise the linkages between the conflicts caused by the introduction of New Technology and between those which cause it.



A. Winchester

## IS THERE LIFE

Sport is crucial to the survival of the modern capitalist system. It is no longer sufficient to simply talk of 'taking over' the factories, or disarming the State, and hey presto, we are all liberated. To be subversive today is to be conscious of all that separates us from our real needs, and engage in activity which undermines ALL ideology, ALL alienation, and ALL exploitation of human activity by the State and the market.

### THE RACE IS ON

Modern sport owes much to Adolf Hitler. It was the Nazi creation of a mythology around the 'Aryan' race, and the promotion of National rivalries in the 1936 Olympics that elevated this event beyond the 'amateur' ethics of its beginnings. The fact that Jesse Owen whipped his Nazi competitors is actually less important than the development of sport as spectacle.

The quaint origins of most sport is largely forgotten. The system requires a cultural 'amnesia', whereby the way sport & every other separate activity instituted by capitalism, just happens to exist. Today sport is no longer simply a question of class. The

workers have lost any control they once had over their football teams, the rulers no longer confine themselves to polo and rowing. Strict separation into what was Upper, middle or working class sport has been undermined by the necessity of the system to create new markets of consumption & participation.

Television thrives in sporting coverage. We consume the culture that capitalism has manufactured for us.



## AFTER SPORT?

Events from all over the world are transmitted by satellite so that in the comfort of our own armchairs we can participate as spectators. Sport is big business with millions invested in the construction of stadiums, perfecting an architecture borrowed from the arenas of the Roman Empire.

The landscape is redrawn to make way for golf courses, motor racing tracks, ski slopes and so on. Through television and other mediums, the advertising of products is bound up with sporting prowess & performance. A formula 1 racing car resembles a cigarette packet travelling at 180mph; hundreds of photographers snap a goal-mouth incident with a camera advertised on the chest of the attacker.

### A STAR IS BORN

Tennis and golf are cases in point. The top professionals jethop around the globe from Bhoputoswana to Brighton, with an entourage of television crews, journalists and advertising executives. This didn't take-off overnight! Public interest had to be carefully cultivated. Personalities had to be projected, and attention diverted from the rackets and clubs of those in power, to the power of those employed to wield their rackets & clubs in competition.

The Company Boss and shop-floor worker, while unlikely to be members of the same club, nevertheless both seek solace in holing out on the course & drinking in the bar. Class can act as a barrier to the exploitation of a particular sport, hence the decline in football attendance & its relegation in importance to just another

other sport among many.

Sport has become an important source of everyday conversation. It has become essential to sit through hours of fabricated excitement from Wentworth to Wimbledon to be able to say: 'Did you see the pressure on McEnroe at the tie-break' and so on. Then, especially turn to the sports page to judge the opinion of the pundits over tea-breaks, in bus queues, & in the pub a common denominator is to discuss performances of professionals past and present.

Recently, the exploitation of darts & snooker has

reached new levels, with, instead of a large viewing area as in a rugby pitch or horse racing track, a fixed frame of a green table or circular board.



Thousands of individuals break the 'pain barrier' and train with the utmost dedication to take part in

Marathons. A sense of achievement, a sense of having left the inert masses behind, and a sense of community among participants are the compensation sought by the suburban street jogger turned athlete.

Sport, while profitable for business, is also useful to the Nation-State. Individual performance is fine, as long as it can be channelled - at the 'highest' level - towards the health of the State. The Olympics and World Championships in athletics and swimming are the most obvious examples. Individuals are reduced to representatives of their countries, with quotas of performers restricted to a

Sport is a release from the drudgery of everyday life. Participants achieve this, not by blotting out reality or distorting it, as with drink or drugs, but by intensifying concentration and commitment. The framework of games, where rules have been refined to the extent of creating their own vocabulary, offers an ordered activity away from the uncertainties and pressures of life in the organisational pyramid. Pastimes such as cricket represent the illusion of teamwork on an equal basis where voluntary effort has replaced the competitive self-interest in production targets & selling pitches.

### THE COMPETITIVE EDGE

Recently the cult of concentration on the self characterised by some commentators as NARCISSISM has led to a greater participation in certain sports, as the media preaches the message of fitness & self-control. maximum number of entries per country. The prestige





of winning, the legitimacy it confers on the State, and its capacity to be manipulated by the rulers largely goes unchecked.

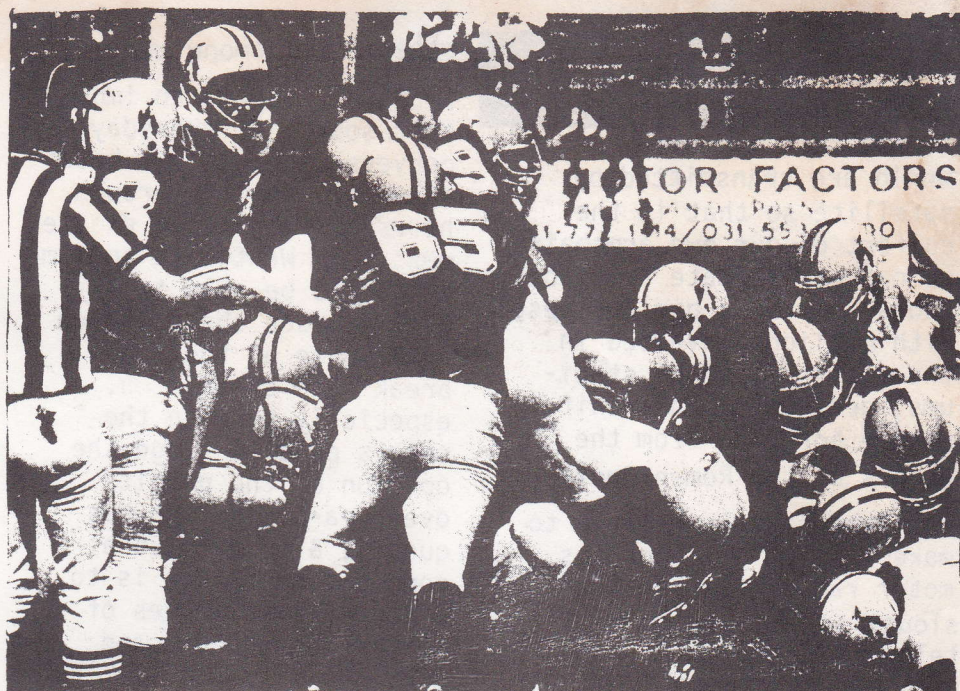
Occasionally the regulated conflict of sport is penetrated by wider social conflicts that can't be contained by appealing to 'non-political' patriotism. The Black Power demonstrators of the early 70s; tensions that erupt over equality for women; the Czechoslovakia/USSR ice hockey match of 1968 where a virtual battle took place in the wake of the 'Warsaw Pact' invasion.

Class antagonism, especially at school level can surface in physical games like rugby or football when one side gets 'stuck in' to the toffs down the road. Sectarian rivalries are also institutionalised through sport as with Celtic vs Rangers as false loyalties & prejudices are simultaneously reinforced & diffused.

Sport, like television or music, acts as a SOCIAL GLUE: a sense of what is 'normal' is punctuated by the regular diary of the Grand National, Boat Race, Open, Wimbeldon, Cup Finals, and every 4 years the World Cup or Olympics.

#### ACHILLES HEEL

The use of sport to the State is strongest in the 'Communist' countries where excellence is pursued at all costs. Successful athletes and sports stars are feted just as in the 'West' and the status and financial security/privileges acts as a deferred gratification incentive.



East Germany has become a modern-day Sparta, where attention is diverted from the misery of State capitalism, policed and regimented like its Nazi predecessor.

Although the anti-hero was much in evidence in the 70s sport can offer a 'hero' packaged to suit every taste. Media coverage can elevate individuals like Pele, Muhammed Ali, & Lasse Viren on a pedestal above 'lesser' mortals. Unlike the Gods of the ancient world, however, the same forces creating the myth in today's world can also destroy, with revealing 'truths' or over-exposure unmasking stars. This makes way for new stars to emerge & the cycle begins again.

#### PHYSICALLY DEMANDING

The traditional left cannot go along with the subversion of sport. As their motivation is to replace the capitalist State with a socialist facade, sport has simply to be de-Americanised and its use as promoting

commodities replaced by serving the 'fatherland'. In this light these enemies of human liberation talk of a 'socialist' Olympics, a purists paradise with razamatazz replaced by regimentation.

Through communicating our ideas in imaginative ways, we can turn the spectacle on its head, and assist in the active subversion of capitalist colonisation of our lives. Sport is 'fair game' for interventions that destroy illusions & the credibility of sporting rules. To avoid the charge of 'spoilsports', we have to go beyond an 'intellectual' critique that betrays a distrust of physical activity into gatecrashing the oasis of sport & establishing a regular means of intervening. The system thrives on separation, isolating what is 'politics' into a predetermined narrow sphere, and rejection of capitalist values necessitates taking the play to our opponents & rewriting the 'rules of the game' in the process.

Jim McFarlane.

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