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AS you start at university or college your expectations of a thriving intellectual and social life, leading to a great future, have been carefully built up by teachers and parents and advertising. Sadly, most students have these ideals shattered and find something is badly wrong with the higher education system.

If you are new are you worried about making friends, finding someone to go to pubs and parties with? Will you find a club to join — or will you fall foul of a rampaging rugger club? Can you manage on your grant — and will your Local Authority pay it on time?

Later more worries appear — finding a place to live and ultimately finding a job. And throughout there is the pressure of exams and of producing work which may seem increasingly irrelevant to your academic ideals.

CHANGING COURSE

The typical course consists of a huge reading list, set-piece lectures, and tutorials which pass from paralysed embarrassment to stultifying boredom.

And do you suspect the syllabus is partly determined by which senior academics want to teach their special subject this year?

Of course there are exceptions; many tutors can be genuinely sympathetic. But the prevailing attitude is that if they know more than you about a particular subject, they are also morally superior and have a duty to guide you into the rat race.

If you get more than vaguely dissatisfied, you may wonder 'am I on the right course? Can I join a discussion group?'

And if students get together and attack the immediately apparent faults, after a lot of hard work minor modifications to courses and alternatives to exams may be won.

RAT RACE

But only the lucky few get a place and a grant for any sort of higher education. Historically university was a finishing school for the children of the rich.

Certain features of this still persist: traditional halls of residence, cleaners for students, sherry parties with lecturers, Union Balls and so on.

With the growth of capitalism, the universities and specialist colleges have developed to satisfy the requirement for an executive class to run the increasingly cumbersome bureaucracy of the state, and industry.

LIBERAL MYTH

This is still the economic role of higher education today, seen from the state's point of view, but the self-styled liberal university is under attack because of the improving returns from the Polytechnics, industrial training, and the ever increasing investment by big business in Business Schools and their own research and development departments, etc..

The *social* role is to reinforce the myth of the meritocracy. The liberal myth is that higher education places are granted through open competitive examination and that qualifications are given as a reward for hard work and deep thought.

ELITES

In reality, class background determines your opportunities. If you are middle class, with educated parents, your chances of getting to university are excellent.

But if you are, by your accent and attitudes as well as the area you come from, identifyably working class, you will often meet unashamed prejudice, both in selection procedures and from other students.

That is, if your family's finances allow you to consider anything other than getting a job as soon as possible after reaching school leaving age.

You have a slightly better chance of getting to a Polytechnic or College of Further Education, but there you get a lower grant for longer terms.

You might one day work with your hands as a skilled technician, or have only teaching as a prospect, and so the universities whose graduates can look forward to more highly paid and powerful jobs adopt a superior position.

For example, in Hull a few years ago, a campaign to open the university library facilities officially to the local Polytechnic and the public (who had unofficially been using them without



Could this be
you in three
year's time ?

you're now as free... contd..

any noticeable harm) petered out in the face of statements by the university such as:-

'To call us an elite is not an insult, we believe in the necessity of an elite'.

ATTITUDES

There are varied attitudes to higher education. On the right are the Black Paper crowd with their rigid competitive examinations and vocational courses.

Floundering in the middle as usual are the liberals with their ideas of a community of scholars dedicated solely to the pursuit of 'knowledge' in the heady atmosphere of academic freedom.

Among some on the left there exists the idea that universities are a combination of an intellectual forcing house and a critical sanctuary.

On your right the applied sciences faculty; in front of you the arts faculty; and on your left the critical faculty.

FRUSTRATION

The frustration that many students come to feel stems from their sense of isolation from the rest of society.

They can see no way out; the only alternatives seem to be to drop out or to reluctantly accept three years of boredom so that they can end up with a degree and the possibility of what they think will be a comfortable niche in the middle class.

WHAT NEXT ?

FOR students, the coming year will mean higher rents, increased food prices, course cutbacks and, in some cases, college closures.

For campus workers and academic staff it will mean less money, harder work and possible redundancies.

In other words, the state's policy of cutbacks in educational expenditure will hit everyone.

THE CRISIS

Both political parties are responsible for implementing this policy. When the Tories were in office they raised the charges for school dinners, abolished free school milk, administered savage cutbacks, and attempted to smash student unions.

Their White Paper, published in 1973, set down guidelines for the finance and structure of British education. It promised expansion — but on the cheap, that is, at reduced unit costs, at the expense of students, parents and college workers.

Since taking office, the Labour Party has continued with this policy. (In 1967 they were responsible for the introduction of loan-financed accommodation — that is, where students are forced to pay massive interest charges to banks and building societies. Almost 50% of rents goes on such loan charges in many cases.)

It is now increasingly difficult for students without wealthy parents to carry on in higher education.

WHY ?

These attacks on our living standards are an attempt to make us help bail out the handful of millionaires and speculators who control the economy. We are being

However, there is a third alternative, which involves breaking down this isolation whilst simultaneously mounting an attack on the bourgeois university.

Any real change in the nature of education can only come about in the context of a social revolution.

We must replace the present system of a competitive education system which introduces the most successful (= the most aggressive) to competitive society by a co-operative, classless society.

RESISTANCE

To try and get out of this spiral of exploitation, and the hierarchy of life-long academic, university student, non-university student and school leaver, leading to a hierarchy in jobs which gives the former more money and prestige but no more satisfaction or security, we propose these basic demands.

They are not fully achievable without abolishing the class nature of society, but are a framework to build on and link the student movement with

working class organisation in a social revolution.

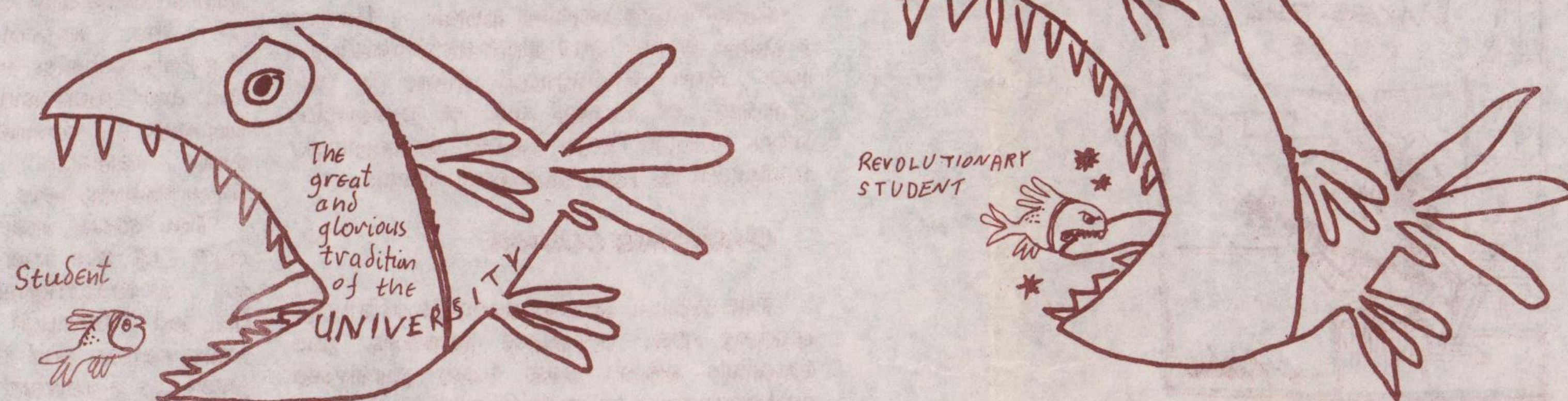
1 Rigid pre-set courses must be broken down and replaced by courses which are directed and designed by those participating in them.

2 All educational and recreational facilities, and accommodation, must be open to working class people who wish to use them, at times and places convenient to them.

Certain aspects of these demands are in operation in some places but activities such as workers' education and community involvement are peripheral to university life, we must make them central.

These demands are useful in that they can raise the questions of power and ultimate control by the working class.

Power must lie in the hands of all those who work in these institutions; the fixed categories of academics, students and administrative and domestic staff and the 'public' must be abolished to give free participation in the running of higher education.



The political parties are not inherently 'nasty' — the survival of capitalism depends on students, trade unionists, housewives, all accepting massive cuts in their living standards and organisation.

THE UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES

Many students are reluctant to take direct action. They argue that the university administrations are not responsible for the cutbacks and therefore should not be treated as enemies. The Communist Party even sees them as potential allies.

BUT — the authorities have happily administered every single attack against us. The Vice-Chancellors are a small privileged elite and, in imposing Government policies have tried to smash student unions around the country — notably at Kent, Lancaster and Warwick.

Students' control of their union funds is often challenged — for example by Thatcher when the Tories were in office and by the current enquiry at the North London Poly.

NUS

Sooner or later election manifestoes from every group from the Broad Left to ANUS will shower upon you, telling you to number your candidates in the correct order and all your problems will be solved.

This NUS is great at providing circuses (cheap travel, insurance, etc.) but not so good with the bread.

NUS delegates from each college attend an annual conference, where they vote on motions forwarded from colleges and elect a sabbatical executive and president.

The NUS cannot be compared with a trade union. It has no comparable local, regional or national structure. It is a federal body, and in theory is governed by the twice-yearly conference.

This produces two problems. Firstly, difficulties arise in mandating delegates, given the lack of involvement which characterises most students unions.

administrative machinery is, once constituted, virtually impossible to control by rank and file students.

The domination of the NUS executive by the Broad Left (Communist Party controlled) has intensified the problems generated by the NUS structure.

Their policies of token action, such as petitions, 'cross binary eat-ins' and partial rent strikes have demoralised the mass of students. Involvement in NUS is at an all-time low.

ISSUES

Some NUS sponsored issues include:-

1 Grants

The NUS calls for an annual demonstration and sometimes other action to demand higher grants and gets a small rise.

But overall education cuts remain, as do less readily obtained and lower grants for college and Polytechnic students despite demands for a fair grant for all students above school leaving age independent of parents' means.

The importance of all education has to be forced on the education authorities, not just by a tiny fraction of students playing follow-my-leader through the streets of London.

All those affected, staff and students, can question the decline of educational facilities, and find the spending on civic banquets and defence, the unequal distribution of wealth and whatever is to blame.

Direct action can then be taken to make a start by forcing the Government to restore the education budget.

2 Rents and the housing shortage.

Rent increases overtake grant increases, and the NUS set up a rent strike fund. National mass action is vital to avoid victimisation, but the causes of the soaring cost of living are hardly mentioned.

Even the threat of a rent strike often persuades colleges to open their accounts, allowing property speculation and prestige spending to be spotted.

revolutionary anarchism, contd..

Members must have equal access to information. We believe that a revolutionary movement can only be built on this basis.

AWA therefore has no leaders, no central committees and no 'superstars'. We are organised to put forward the idea of working class people taking control of their own lives, jobs and society; to fight against centralisation, hierarchy, and the possibility of another ruling class being imposed in a post-revolutionary society; and to emphasise that we need a social and cultural revolution in order for an economic revolution to be a success.

RANK & FILE ORGANISATION

Useful initiatives have already been taken in organising rank and file groupings in many trade unions. Unfortunately, in many instances, these are now fizzling out.

Two reasons for this trend can be identified.

sackings and wage cuts, nor by putting students in family accommodation. Many colleges have the capital to build; the land, the bricks and the labour are there for all.

United fronts through student community housing groups, trade unions and personal contact can force colleges and the Government to attack the housing crisis. This must not be at the expense of the working class community.

3 Sexism

The NUS plays lip service to the fight against sexism — that is the subjugation of women and homosexuals. But when it comes to real action, both local and national bureaucrats are conspicuously absent.

For them, the fight for such facilities as free nurseries and against the discrimination of women and gays in universities and colleges is left to the realm of pretty posters in union offices and the occasional press release.

At a time when women's rights especially are under attack — 1975 is ironically dubbed International Womens Year — by the Lords' ruling on rape, and the attempts to restrict the limited right to abortion women have, the low level of NUS involvement is nothing short of criminal.

But we'd be walking down a blind alley if we were ever to rely on the Clarks (your very own NUS president) of this world to mobilise campaigns for the defence and extension of women's and gay rights.

There are women's and gay liberation movements in existence in which students should get involved — ranging from the general women's liberation groups and the Gay Liberation Front to more specific groups such as the National Abortion Campaign and the Working Womens Charter.

In fact, you'll find your local NUS 'leadership' encouraging the sexual roles you were increasingly trained in during your last years at school.

A freshers disco or ball will have been organised for you — a nice little male chauvinist cattle market especially designed for you to 'pick up a bird'. Or if you're a

Firstly, the Leninist groups have seen them merely as recruiting grounds for their particular outfits, rather than encouraging their autonomous development.

Secondly, as a direct result of their domination by authoritarian groups, they have developed hierarchical structures, which have merely alienated and demoralised their members.

NUT Rank & File is now almost as bureaucratised as the union itself.

It should be stressed again that effective organisation can only be built on the basis of a structure which allows full participation in decision making and in the carrying out of those decisions.

In this way shop-floor organisation can be extended and strengthened both on a national and international level.

STUDENTS AND REVOLUTION

What part do we see students playing in this struggle for a libertarian communist society?

1926 saw masses of students scabbing on the British General Strike. If they are not won over to revolutionary politics, their role will remain a counter-revolutionary one.

LOCAL CONTACT
Neil Stammers: Arts Postgrad
Sue Dennis: G.C.S. p/g
Calum MacIntosh: Soc/Sci p/g

woman, to be the sexual object of 1st year males, eager to 'make it' for the first time, or 2nd and 3rd year 'rams'.

Of course social facilities are necessary, and we're definitely not anti-sex, but where is the fight to break down artificial sexual roles? Certainly not in the Union office! That's how free college/university is — people treated as objects.

Revolutionary anarchists argue that the key problem is to break down the dependence on established leaderships, be they Labour Party or Trotskyists, and to encourage the self-activity and self-confidence of students.

This can only be done by developing the strength of the union meeting, phasing out sabbatical officers, building rank and file links between students in different colleges — NOT by reinforcing and strengthening the NUS bureaucracy.

ACTION

Links with local trade unionists and communities have to be built — make sure, for example that if your union takes direct action, local housing estates are leafleted and canvassed for support.

These links must be used as a basis for a campaign directed towards winning education as a right, not a privilege.

Unlike the rest of the left, we are not going to demand that the NUS executive

May-June 1968, though, saw them helping to spark off a potentially revolutionary situation in France where, hundreds of thousands of students and workers fought together against the Gaullist regime and its allies in the Communist Party controlled union, the CGT, and the social democratic CFDT.

Students, in their struggles to increase grants, to self-manage their own lives, inevitably come up against the strength of the ruling class and its state — like workers.

Their interests lie in fighting together. Isolated, students can only face ultimate defeat as they do not have the strength to overthrow capitalism.

AWA, therefore, works to build up worker-student unity.

read
LIBERTARIAN STRUGGLE
monthly paper of the
ANARCHIST WORKERS ASSOCIATION
send 10p + 6p p&p to:-
AWA, 13 Coltman Street, Hull, Humberside

subversity
is published by students in the Anarchist Workers Association. The AWA also puts out a monthly newspaper, *Libertarian Struggle*. For further copies of *Subversity* or any other information about us, write to:-
Subversity, 13 Coltman Street, Hull — Humberside.

organises action for us. It is however important that militants put forward concrete proposals for rank and file activity over the coming year.

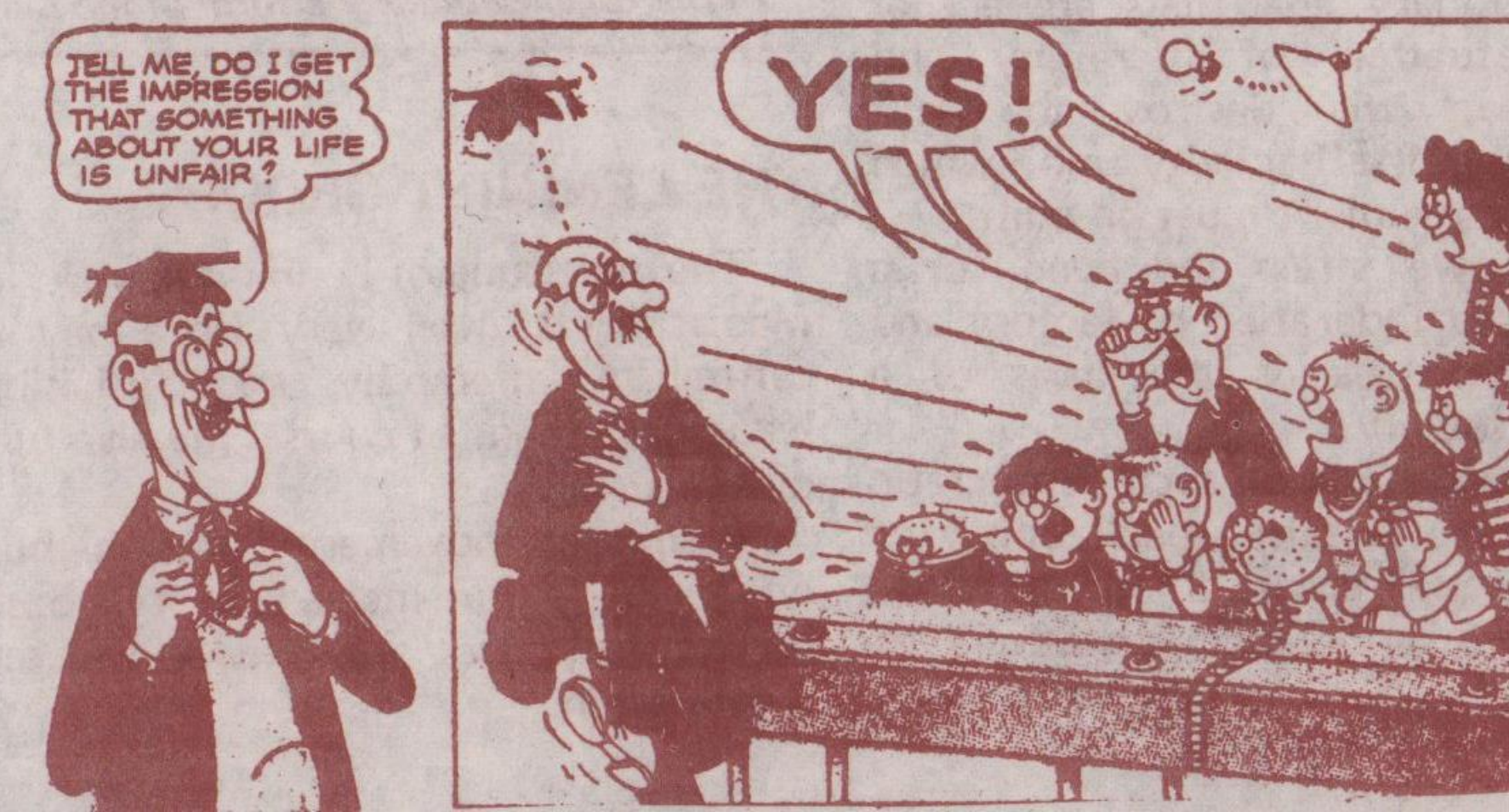
The following steps could usefully be taken:-

*Build Grants and Cuts Action committees, elected by and responsible to union meetings. Make sure they are responsible for implementing union policy — not the union bureaucrats. Elect ad hoc committees on as many issues and aspects of union policy as possible — it will encourage mass involvement, and be a useful starting point in a campaign to abolish sabbatical officers.

*Push for local conferences of all the students in the area — to discuss the cutbacks. Try and broaden them out to discuss the role of education under capitalism.

*Occupations are the only really effective form of direct action — they not only paralyse the university, but generate the self-confidence and solidarity necessary to win student demands. They raise the question of power in education.

*Fight for support groups to be set up in the event of a local strike or occupation. Students have the time and access to facilities — both need to be used.



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REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHISM

2p

worth every penny!

CAPITALISM — EAST & WEST

The 'free' western world is not free, but an exploitative, hierarchical class system, where the vast majority have no real control over their lives. The eastern 'communist' countries are not communist, but corporate state capitalist, where the ruling class is totally integrated with the state.

The media and courts, prisons and colleges/universities, schools and the family — all help to perpetuate the class power of the few over the many.

This takes the form of accepting wage freezes and low pay to the belief in the family and heterosexuality as an exclusive form of sexual behaviour.

Libertarian communism is the implacable enemy of both 'eastern' and 'western' type capitalism.

'We see this whole society rests on workers, and this whole fuckin' society is controlled by this clique who ain't produced nothing in their whole lives — bankers, stockbrokers, insurance men. It's parasitic, vulturistic, cannibalistic and is sucking and destroying the lives of workers everywhere — and we must stop it because it's evil...'
(A Detroit carworker)

THE RULING CLASS

Capitalism in this country is motivated by one thing — the profits made by wealthy parasites, industrialists and financiers. Inevitably they have immense power.

Even if parliament wanted to attack their interests, it would be unable to take effective action (and we, of course, have virtually no control over members of parliament).

Harold Wilson admits this in his memoirs and recalls that the economic power of the ruling class forced him to accept their demands, and cut working class living standards while boosting profits.

In the last resort the armed forces will attempt to intervene and maintain capitalist interests. The coup d'état in Chile is a clear example of this.

LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM

We see ourselves as both socialists and libertarian communists. Libertarian communism is not nationalisation or the installation of a 'progressive' government. It means one thing — working class power.

Yet this is seen in different ways by the various left groups. The basis of Leninism/Trotskyism/Maoism is the creation of a centralised state, which they claim will operate in the interests of the working class.

Revolutionary anarchists argue that the perpetuation of hierarchy and centralisation will destroy the self-confidence and self-activity upon which a workers' movement must be built.

Instead, we stress the need for a de-centralised federation of factory and street committees as the basis of a libertarian society.

We put emphasis on such democratic principles as instant recallability of delegates, equal access to information, and, where possible, rotation of functions.

Inevitably, blueprints for a socialist society can't be drawn up here and now. However the workers' councils which emerged during the Paris Commune, the Spanish revolution of 1936, the 1956 Hungarian rising and on a limited scale in Portugal during 1975 offer examples of a way forward.

REFORMISM

The Labour Party 'left', the Communist Party and the trade union leaders argue that it is possible for 'progressive' governments to gradually reform capitalism in the interests of working people and thereby introduce socialism.

As we have argued, and historical examples have always shown, this is not merely an elitist conception of socialism,

Monolithic groups, over which the rank and file have no control, and which merely hand down the 'correct' slogans to the 'masses' while attempting to dominate and manipulate every aspect of working class action have no place in this struggle.

BRITISH ANARCHISM

British anarchism has however never posed a coherent alternative to the authoritarian left. It has been based on a reformist recipe of liberalism and pacifism in approximately equal proportions.

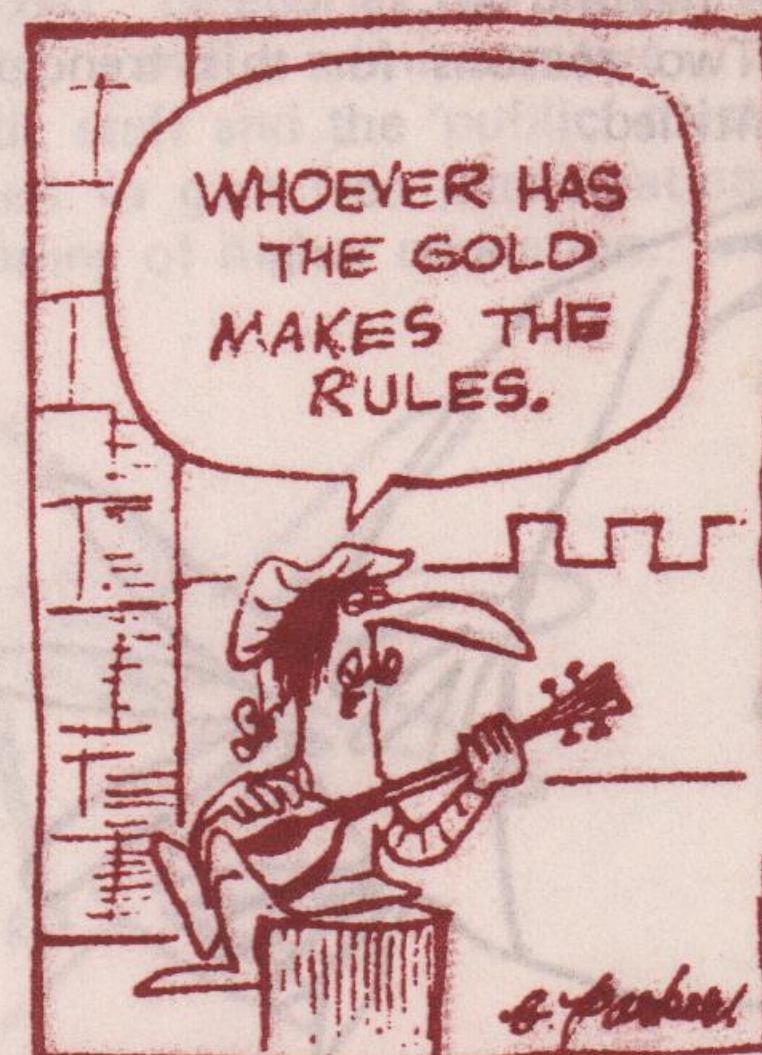
It has never recognised the central role of the working class in changing society. Its emphasis on loose groupings allowed the movement to be dominated by 'stars' who were answerable to no-one.



but it is also a dangerous myth. Yet, despite this, it is widely accepted by many trade unionists.

In practice, reformist parties have always attempted to suppress any autonomous rank and file activity and organisation. The actions of the Allende government in Chile thus opened up the way for the military take-over.

Revolutionary anarchists argue that capitalism will never be changed for us but only by our own activity and organisation, in the factories and on the housing estates.



REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHISM

AWA, together with groupings in Argentina, Denmark, France, Italy and the United States was initially formed as a reaction to this generally chaotic state of affairs.

Our historical inspiration — though we don't treat it as 'gospel truth' — is the Platform of the Libertarian Communists. This was written in 1926 by a group of Russian anarchist exiles who had taken an active part in the revolution of 1917.

It was an attempt to learn from the failures of the anarchist movement during the Russian revolution.

Several key points emerge from this document. The anarchist group must

'Anarchism is generally humanitarian only in the sense that the ideas of the masses tend to improve the lives of all men [and women], and that the fate of today's or tomorrow's humanity is inseparable from that of exploited labour.'

'If the working masses are victorious, all humanity will be reborn; if they are not, violence, exploitation, slavery and oppression will reign as before in the world.'
(The Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists)

THE LENINIST GROUPS

The multitude of Leninist/Trotskyist/Maoist sects offer very little beyond centralism, hierarchy and 'infallible' leadership (and, of course, massive turn-over figures).

A socialist movement cannot be built on this basis, but instead must be based on working class self-activity and self-organisation.

not see itself just as a propaganda group, but must actively work in the working class at grass-roots level, that is through trades unions, tenants associations, claimants unions, and so on.

Most important of all, the anarchist organisation must itself be based on democratic principles and full involvement by its membership.

All those elected to certain posts must be instantly recallable. Jobs, where practicable, should be rotated.