

DEMOCRACY OR FREEDOM?

Eric D. Barton (University Anarchist Group)

"Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains" - so said a philosopher in the mid-eighteenth century. Perhaps everyone would agree that at the time this statement was certainly true, but many people would reject this if it were applied to England now. However, one does not have to look far to see that the chains still exist even though they are not so apparent. It is not widely known that since 1950 poverty has been increasing in England. The Donovan Report has recommended that the powers of Trades Unions be cut down and the Government is at the moment pursuing policies which help Industrial Concerns to the detriment of the producer - i.e., the working man. Psychologists in the advertising industry seek new ways of duping people to buy products they don't want. But after all, is this not what the people want? We do live in a democracy, so we are told.

At election times we are presented with candidates whom we are told are fine upstanding men. Then they disappear to London only to reappear in four years' time to tell us that it was all in our interest anyway. But no matter how fine a democracy existed, the individual would have substantially as little control over events as he has now. Government by representative is just as bad as dictatorship in the final analysis because in both cases the individual is overruled "in the general interest" which, in a country of many people, is often far from the interest of a great many people.

The only way for people to be truly free is through a libertarian organisation of society in which decisions are taken locally by the people affected. A system of autonomous local groups in which everyone can express his opinion and take part in decisions and which in turn are federated to neighbouring groups is the alternative to the present ordering of society in which so much injustice is apparent, and in which power lies in the hands of the wealthy industrial and financial kings. This alternative is feasible only if individuals do something about it themselves. We must demand our rights and take them, because they will not be given to us on a plate. In the past nothing has ever been given to the oppressed that they haven't struggled for.

MERSEYSIDE ANARCHIST MEETINGS

118 High Park Street Liverpool 8
Every Tuesday at Eight O'Clock

170^A Lodge Lane Liverpool L8 0QW
Every Friday Nine to Midnight

DIRECT-ACTION PLAYGROUND PROJECT

Shovels, Wheelbarrows & People Needed

Contact: Ken MacGowan, Bill Hooper.
152 Princes Road L'pool 8. LAR 1449

Responsibility Without Power

ON WEDNESDAY EVENING AT 7.30 p.m., in room 2 of the University Catholic Chaplaincy, the Anarchist Group is having its General Meeting.... Why?

Before one can appreciate the need for a gathering of all the University anarchists, it helps to understand the difference between any anarchist group and all the other societies in Guild. The way other societies operate is by the committee method; an inner group of status-seeking individuals accepts the responsibility for the society's activities in return for limited gratification of their power drives. This clique then engages in the activities of recruiting members and holding their interest and planning the society's programme, largely independently of the society at large. This is a satisfactory method, but surely it is far preferable to run an anarchist group on anarchist lines. This means.... the acceptance by every member of the terrifying fact that whether the Group organises any more public meetings or continues to sell literature or continues to produce its own literature or engages in other, more direct, action rests squarely on his (or her) shoulders! It means, in short, the acceptance of responsibility without power.

I look forward to seeing you on Wednesday (and to relinquishing my rôle as acting Treasurer).

John B. Cowan

(University Anarchist Group)