

Ayn Rand's Fantasy

BY LINDA GILLINGWATER

EDITOR'S NOTE--This is the first in a weekly series of analyses by Linda Gillingwater of recently published books and the philosophies that lie behind them. This week she looks at Ayn Rand's, *The Virtue of Selfishness*; next week she will discuss *THE UNIVERSITY GAME*, the new book on Canadian Universities.

Six months ago Ayn Rand was a fad in Montreal. Now she's hit Halifax. And she's dangerous. In a mere 144 pages she has been able, I'm sure, to convince any man who has an I.Q. over 40 that women shouldn't be allowed to open their mouths. Ayn Rand is a fool. She never offers proofs for her arguments; she consistently draws false conclusions from valid premises, and invariably ribes every horror and injustice that exists today to the evils of socialism.

Capitalism itself, she feels, is wrong. In our "free" society man's success is dependent upon only one factor--his own effort. Capitalism, by its nature, is best suited to motion and progress. It operates, her book further claims, to the benefit of all those who choose to be active in the productive process.

We'll grant capitalism motion; progress is a little more difficult to justify. Even the most politically naive person could not support her claim that a better and more skillful performance will be both noticed and appreciated. She asks us to consult any office manager to confirm her hypothesis. I have. Facts prove her wrong. Versa Foods pays its employees the minimum wage. Irrespective of the efficiency of the cashier in the Cal Canteen she continues to receive the lowest possible pay scale that the law allows the company to pay.

Cousins Dry Cleaners pays its clerks \$.85 an hour. The counter girls can provide better service to a customer; they can be as prompt and efficient as the strictest boss could demand. Their wages stay the same.

Rand's glorification of liberty in the capital system is a peculiar one. It is a strange freedom indeed that sports wage slavery. The so-called free play that could develop if her laissez-faire policies were implemented is a lie. How free is a man who has a wife and children to support to tell his company that he doesn't want to work a twelve hour shift? He isn't. He is placed at the mercy and the whims of his boss; surely this cannot pass for freedom. It is the jungle law of capitalist competition.

The contradiction between true freedom and laissez faire politics is an obvious one. To divert our attention from this self-evident split she shifts her position. She transforms the struggle from its true ground (capitalism v.s. socialism to a false one (democracy v.s. dictatorship) No one can advocate dictatorship so she tries to equate socialism with a totalitarian oppressive state. She fails in her attempt to glorify capitalism as the only content of life worthy of humanity. She

claims that socialism has brought economic paralysis and collapse to every country that has tried it. In China, Cuba, and Russia she suggests that socialism has reduced the people to unspeakable poverty. It is obviously unspeakable because it is not true. It is absurd to suggest that they are all "literally starving." Even the most superficial of glances at the facts prove her wrong.

The problems of evolution in a new democracy which is not formal but actual and socialist make it easier for her to claim that the struggle is invalid. Her second argument is equally spurious. Apparently, in the name of humanity, the socialists have slaughtered countless millions, including, she tragically notes, the bullet-ridden bodies of fleeing children. We are further bathed in the supposed sea of blood that the socialists (brutes that they are) have made in their elimination of people. She asks us to consider the global devastation perpetrated by socialism. Fair enough. May we pause for a brief moment to look at our own present course of genocide of an entire race (the Vietnamese) in the name of democracy?

Finally she draws a clever parallel between the ancient Egyptian slave and today's slum dwellers in the affluent west. Are they not better off, she asks, than that eastern slave of long ago. What if they are? No one with even an iota of intelligence would consider her analogy relevant. I believe in man's rights. I cannot concur with her conclusion that capitalism is the only system that can uphold and protect them. Nor do I believe that the only advocates of man's rights are these who are committed to laissez faire politics. She is insane if she actually believes that every agreement in capitalism is dependent upon a mutual trade to mutual benefit. The exact opposite is the case.

Ayn Rand effectively questions many of the socialist "dreamers." Being such a clear-sighted thinker she doesn't allow herself to be confused by facts. Lest she fall into the area of moral grayness, a state in which man refuses to judge, she immediately launches into an emotional unsupported generalization that bears no relation to reality. Medicare, she states, would lead to the destruction of medical science, the regimentation of all medical practice, and the sacrifice of professional integrity (hang on - the plea progressively pounds its way home from here in a frenzy never before equalled in the history of rant and raving) the freedom, the careers, the happiness and (pause for a quick roll of drums and flurry of italics which are, I might add, hers not mine) the LIVES of the doctors. Lest you be so foolhardy as to raise a possible objection to her "argument" I beg you to quell any nagging doubts you may have. Be very careful. As she notes, every civilized man, with the exception of the criminal, believes that this is the case. Do you want to be considered civilized? Worse, are you a criminal? In fact she suggests that the private hoodlum has a slight edge of moral superiority to the advocate of medicare.

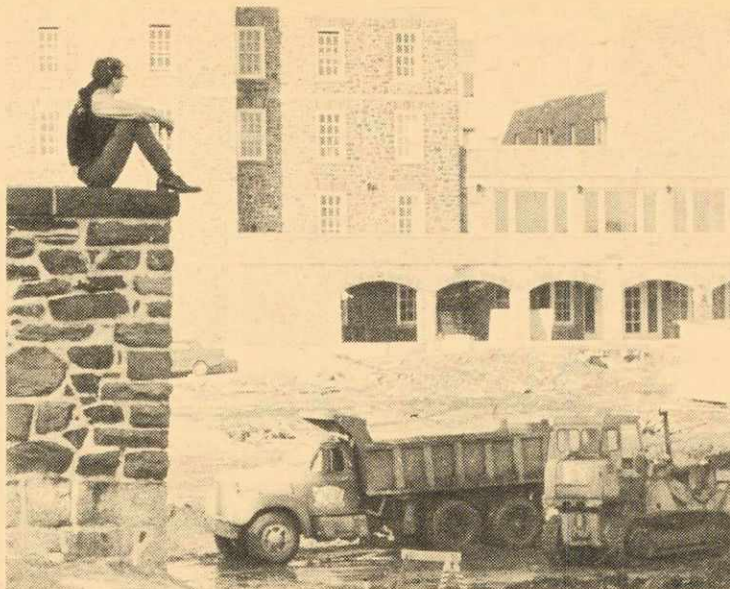
Don't consider any other pie-in-the-sky project either. If we can't obtain everyone's participation voluntarily for a particular scheme that will benefit our fellows then, our goals she says, "jolly well better remain unachieved." Jolly right, wouldn't

you agree? After all would you advocate cutting out a living man's eye and give it to a blind man so as to equalize them? Of course not. Then don't struggle any more with questions about public projects in a free society. A nagging doubt about the accuracy of her parable? Mirage be so foolish. It's only a mirage if you think that perhaps the bosses have only one pair of healthy eyes but have stolen all the eyes of the worker's and have established a monopoly on the sale of all glasses. Sheer fantasy on your part. Surely you realize by now that capitalism solves all problems.

She even has a special word for all you black power advocates. Of course you negroes have had a bad bit but that is only because our naughty government has placed artificial controls on capitalism. But don't you get mad and penalize a white laborer now for what his grandfather did. That would be mean, mean, mean. After all, as she perceptively notes, (showing again the incisive mind of a true intellectual) maybe his grandfather did not practice racism.

In her chapter on rational life in an irrational society Ayn Rand says that the judge not, lest you be judged precept is an abdication of a moral responsibility; it is a moral blank check.

Ayn Rand, I'm writing on that check. You are judged, and found wanting.



Overnight, a new scar appeared on the face of the campus. The hole currently obstructing traffic in the north-east part of the campus will soon have \$6 million poured into it as the five-storey Killam Memorial Library takes shape.

"War" Coming

By R.M. Underwood

Oh, Oh, Oh, It's a Lovely War. What are you all waiting for? COME - see it. Dirty politics, graft - you name it. "OH WHAT A LOVELY WAR" has everything for the licentious young college student. We'll tickle your fancy...

The show provides everything for everyone. Want to learn a little about life? It's happening at Queen Elizabeth High School Auditorium on Thursday, Friday and Saturday night at 8:30.

OH WHAT A LOVELY WAR is not just one story, but many. In episodic fashion it surveys the course of World War I from the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, to the last days of the

fighting. Running throughout the play, and linking together the various scenes are the songs and the jingles. They won't replace the dialogue in the manner of an ordinary musical production but they do contribute to the development of the play. They provide the atmosphere, and the thematic framework into which the various scenes fit like a sequence of snapshots.

With an experienced cast of fourteen, and a hard-working production and technical crew, authentic costumes, and brilliant technical innovations the show is sure to be a great success.

For only one dollar and sixty-five cents, you can have the experience of your life. DON'T MISS IT.

Notices: short and sweet

LIBRARY NOTICE

The Dalhousie University Library has announced that Identification Cards without photographs will no longer be considered valid for university library borrowing privileges after March 4, 1968. Students needing photographs may obtain them and have them sealed to their present Identification Cards at the university's Business Office.

SCIENCE SOCIETY

ELECTIONS:

Elections for the executive of the Science Society will be held at a general meeting of the Society Tuesday, February 26. Nominations for President must be submitted by the previous Friday (February 22) to Dave Hefler or any other member of the

present Executive.

Nominations for Secretary, Treasurer, sports representatives, and publicity chairman may be presented at the meeting.

Details will be announced later concerning the time and place of the meeting, and an additional attraction which will be presented.

STUDENT HEALTH IS MOVING

Student Health is moving. Dr. W.B. Kingston, director of Student Health, has announced that the Student Health Service will be moved to the North-east wing of Dal Men's Residence Monday, 19 February. The name will also be changed, to Dalhousie University Health Services.

All services previously rendered by the clinic will continue to be offered. 24-hour emergency service has been added for emergencies and minor illnesses. Except in cases of emergency, patients will continue to be seen on an appointment basis, and the old telephone numbers will continue to be in effect, namely 429-1420, (locals 367, 567, 261, and 262.) At night, and on holidays and weekends, the number is 423-6816.

The Student Health service has been located in the Clinical Sciences Research Building on University Avenue.

KEEP YOUR STUDENT CARD FOR NEXT YEAR

Cards issued at registration are to be retained for revalidation each year when fees are paid.

Retain your card for next year. Save time and money.

Power and Decision

By LINDA BAYERS

Canada is socially and mentally sick. This is the message David MacDonald gave the EN-COUNTER audience February 8. MacDonald, a PEI Member of Parliament and a United Church minister, added "We live in a society that can't get much better but can get much worse. Man in society is in and out of control. He is cynical about our institutions and social structures. Because he is not part of the decision-making machines, he is frustrated and isolated."

Decision-making, he said, lies not in the hands of society as a whole but with members of parliament who are "over-worked and under-informed." "So often, politicians in general and civil servants in particular want to spend time on irrelevant questions so that good, competent people are not used in the parliamentary system, and quit."

How does the real politician fare compared with the stereotype politician? "The stereotype politician is reliable, conscientious, trustworthy. The real politician or member of parliament has no minimum qualifications. When he is exposed to decision, he defends the status quo and thus he works to the dis-

advantage of the whole system."

The politician's decisions are not always his own, said MacDonald. Because of the implications of a non-confidence motion and the question of cabinet solidarity, he may have to vote to keep his party in office. The complexity of issues usually overwhelms him. He is besieged by people in his constituency who want a special favor or a problem solved.

Despite all this, "power does not corrupt--politicians are more honest than most people." Then he added, "They have to keep skeletons out of their closets."

To overcome social cynicism, MacDonald suggested, "we should recover our sense of the future, a realistic and practical belief for tomorrow. We must find out where we are and what's going on."

MacDonald said he wants more people to take part in the decision-making machine. "With this participation, with knowledge, there is no limit to what we can do. We are limited only by our imagination."

He added that mass-media communication should be used to inform people and also to help them participate in decision-making.