

STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM, LOGICAL POSITIVISM AND FOOTY

The early and mid 60s in Liverpool had seen the emergence of poets and painters and actors, the creation of the Everyman Theatre and some musicians you may have heard of. The word then was 'groups' never 'bands'. At least that was the perspective from the Politics Department at the University. Students from that department provided a lot of the writing and editing for Guild Gazette, the student newspaper. Perhaps the nearest we got to being revolutionary was a strapline across the bottom of the front page: **BRITAIN'S ONLY CENSORED NEWSPAPER**. This was because of a rule that not a copy could be sold unless it was approved by the President of Guild. And the president of the time was Mike Thomas who had clear political ambitions. Mike became an MP and, later, he was the fifth member of the Gang of Four that set up the SDP. I think he was the only organiser that they had. I edited the politics page and always gave Mike a few column inches to write about economics. So we were never censored! Well, I was a student of politics.

By 1968, after I left, things were different. People called 'activists' appeared. One was a law student called Jon Snow. His book is called SHOOTING HISTORY. The audio version is best because he sings and does accents. As an activist taking part in and organising demonstrations Snow was encouraged by a young lecturer in the Politics Department, name of Robert Kilroy-Silk. The star of Channel Four News has never forgotten nor, I believe, forgiven Kilroy's ability to disappear when things turned serious. Snow did not get his degree. Kilroy did not intervene to support him when he was disciplined.

In many parts of the world 1968 was a memorable year for activists. Later, Fred Ridley, head of the Politics Department, told me that students would actually shout at academics during lectures. Unlike in my day that must at least have meant that they were awake. He said that he was actually accused of being a **STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALIST**. Wow! Fred dealt with the interruption by asking what the term meant. I don't think many activists had total mastery of Emile Durkheim and Herbert Spencer. He got through the lecture unscathed.

But something else of huge significance took place that year. The one and only Ken Loach gave us **THE GOLDEN VISION** to watch on the telly. The title referred to Alex Young, Everton's centre forward, and was almost entirely set in that part of Liverpool depicting the everyday lives of fans. They were very different 'activists'. My mother used to say, "I am not from Liverpool. I am from Everton." Remember when balls and boots used to be made of concrete? Remember when we had centre forwards who only kicked at goal and wing halves that always took the throw-ins? Remember when full-backs never ventured over the half-way line? Those were the days my friend but now they have ended.

Watch a match on the telly and afterwards what seems to be a group of PhD students will analyse the game to the Nth degree. Everyone of them has complete mastery of structural functionalism. The same applies to managers. I am totally sure that Jurgen Klopp, without a single note, could deliver a forty minute lecture on how

a team must function as a living organism whose structure must adapt to the conditions in which it finds itself. Durkheim and Spencer would have been nodding their approval.

Today's political activism? The only reason for going to university today seems to be to get a job sufficiently well paid for you to repay your student loan. To me that does not seem to demonstrate **LOGICAL POSITIVISM**. You put yourself in debt in order to get a job that helps you pay off the debt. Not very logical. Not very positive. It is, however, what politicians believe should be the case. Such politicians, by the way, received grants when they went to university. Andrew Adonis, Blair's favourite 'intellectual' has doubts about the current system. Whose idea was it? Er, his!

Replace the Cabinet with Accrington Stanley and we might get a half-way efficient government.

Cliff Jones, 8th. May 2020

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