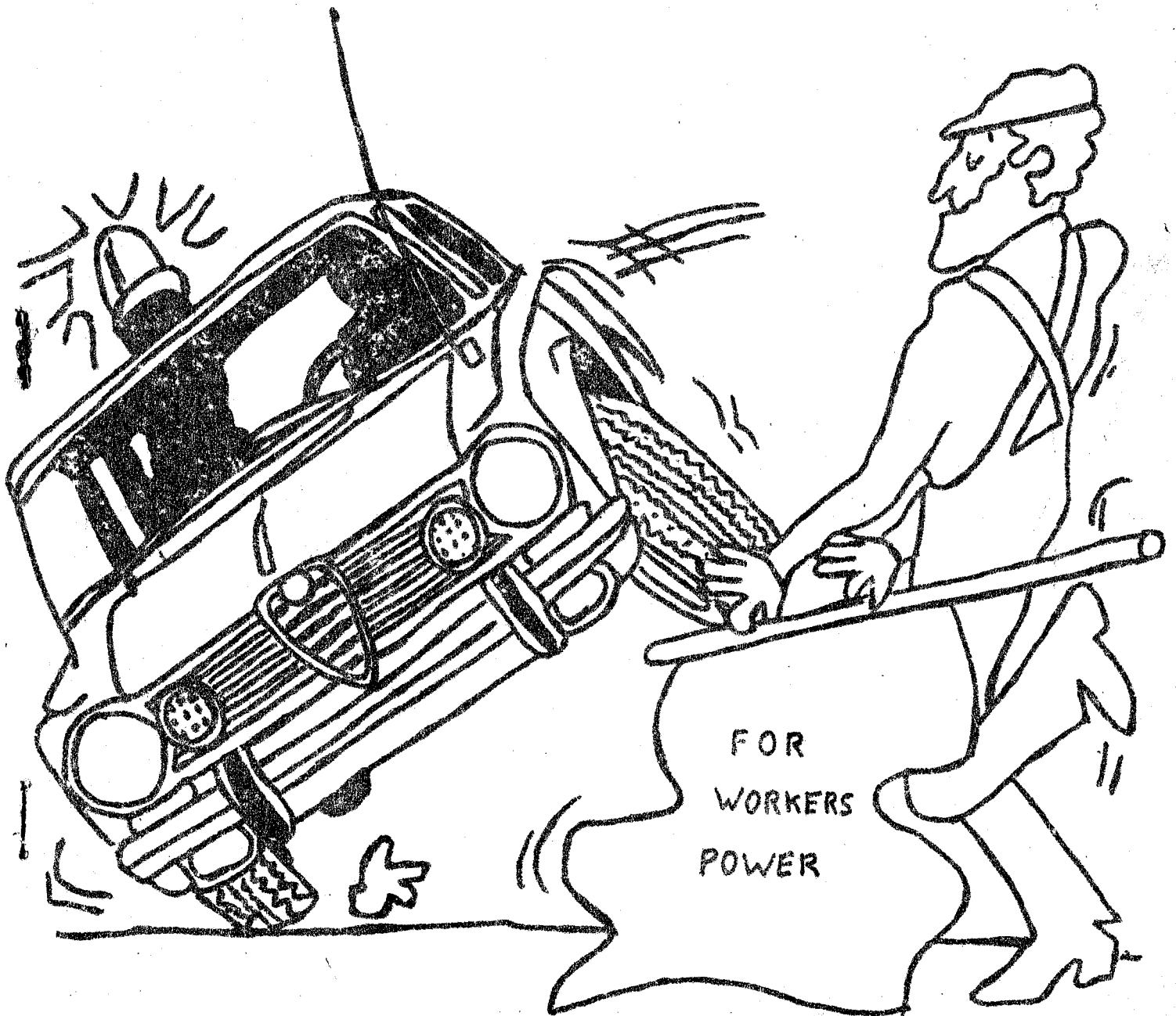


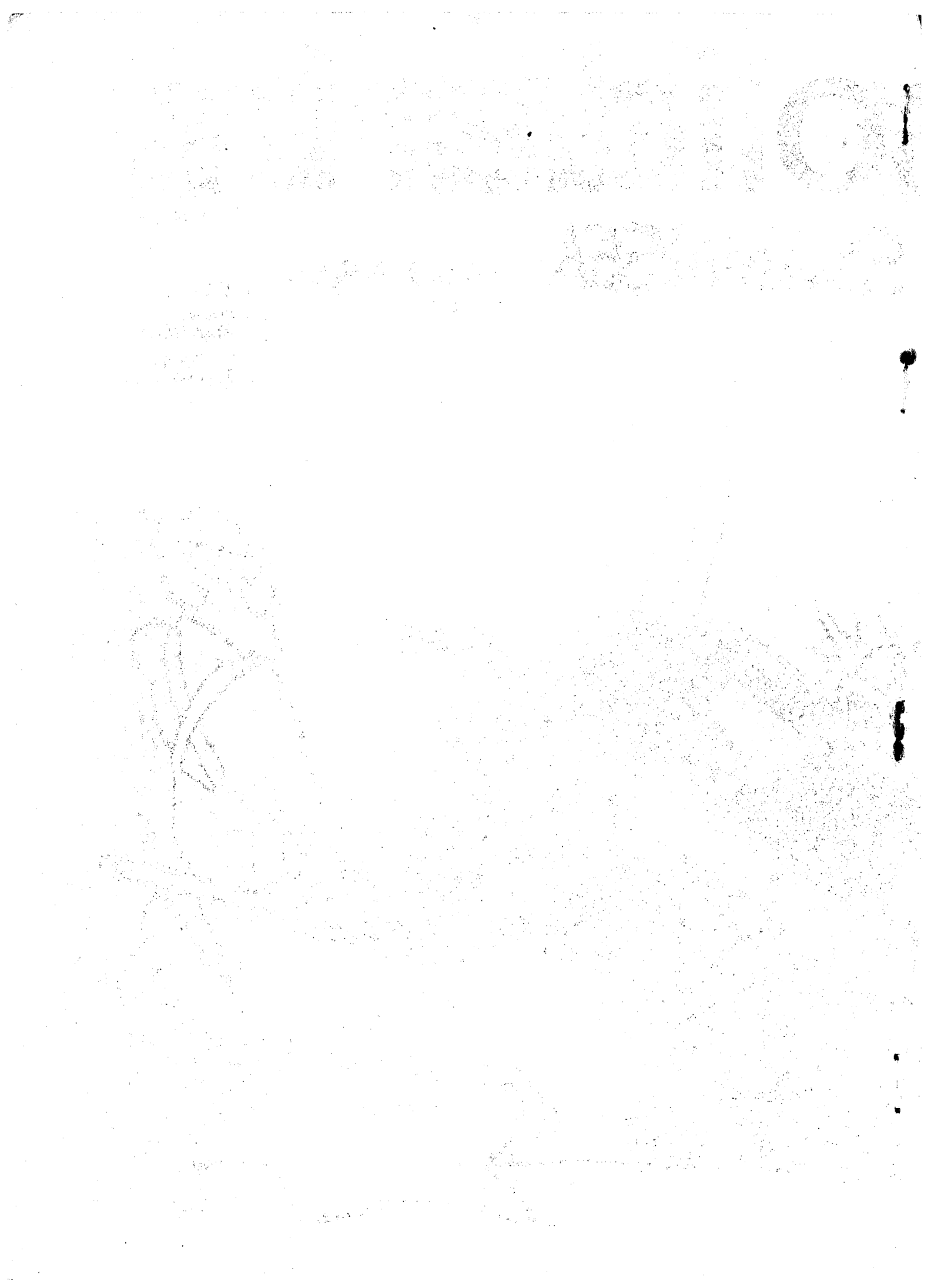
# solidarity

SWANSEA.

VOL 3. 5p.  
NO 1.

- THE LUMP.
- WOMEN.
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# THE LUMP

## THE LUMP AND THE 24.

The trial of the Shrewsbury 24 is another classic indictment of how British justice is administered in the bosses courts. The 208 charges are a threat to militants everywhere, for they are aimed at the practice of picketing, without which strike action is ineffective. Their case, their victory, is of the utmost importance to workers everywhere.

Whilst most of the traditional left have correctly urged support for the 24 they have incorrectly seen this as one and the same battle as the fight against the "Lump system" in the building trade. (See Socialist Worker, May 1973.) On this view there is one issue: Victory to the 24 and smash the Lump. But this is to confuse two vitally different forms of struggle. With regard to the 24 there should be no arguments against supporting them. But with regard to the anti-lump bill, which ex-IS member, Eric Heffer, has recently tried to persuade Parliament to accept, there is plenty of room for disagreement. Moreover, Heffer and the Labour Party are not prepared to openly declare their support for the 24. Neither are union officials of UCATT. By a smart trick of the law the 24 are on trial for so called 'Criminal offences' and UCATT are not prepared to dirty their hands defending criminals, even if the law which tries them is a crooked law. If nothing else is clear we should be careful about jumping on to Heffer's anti-lump band-wagon.

It is therefore important to distinguish between the reasons for supporting the anti-lump campaign and the reasons for supporting the 24. We support the 24 and deplore the cowardly actions of UCATT. Indeed we support anyone who fights scabs be they lump men or any other sort. But the anti-lump campaign is not a campaign directed primarily at scab labour. This is evinced by the fact that many lump sites have as good a record for militancy as non lump sites, and are often much more aggressive towards their employers than traditional union organised workers. We must therefore examine the nature of the anti-lump campaign, and also examine what sort of system is being criticised.

The "Lump" is the construction industries term for the system by which gangs of self-employed men hire themselves out to building contractors for a lump sum. The question is, is it a system of employing scabs to defeat trade union militancy, or are there signs that the lump itself can be used as a weapon against the very bosses who have introduced it?

## THE BUILDING WORKERS STRIKE 1972.

In the summer of 1972 almost every site in Wales was shut down. There were fears, amongst militants, that many lump sites in North Wales would scab. But this fear of scabbing was not simply because they were lump men; the building trade in North Wales was notorious for its lack of militancy long before the introduction of the lump. If anything the lump has been the means by which workers have actively participated in wage negotiations as they had normally accept-

ed whatever conditions the union had negotiated on their behalf. Moreover, there is no record of any level Trade Union organised militancy in North Wales since the war. So the introduction of the lump cannot be seen as an erosion of trade union militancy: it was never there to begin with. So the problem concerning the North Wales sites was not so much whether the lump sites would scab, but one of creating an atmosphere of solidarity amongst those who have had no experience of militant action. As it happened most of the North Wales sites came out with little trouble.

But there was trouble at Telford where scabs resisted flying pickets. And it is true that MacAlpines were operating the lump system on that site. But whether it was a scab site because it was a lump site is debateable. MacAlpines have a long and iniquitous record of employing scabs, a tradition which antedates the lump. At Telford scabs and pickets clashed. MacAlpines brought in the police. A tripartite investigation was set up with West Mercia and the Gwynedd police-forces assisting the National Federation of Employers with their enquiries.

These three guardians of law and order exchanged files and records of militant workers. Between them they produced a fabrication of lies concerning the 24, and with a promise from Head Office (the Government) that they could make tougher use of anti-picket laws, they laid into them with a total of 208 trumped-up charges, including the now familiar "conspiring to intimidate people to abstain from work."

The significance of these charges is that because the I.R.B. is mainly inoperative, the government is forced to resort to using criminal charges to defeat picketing. And this smart move initially enabled UCATT to wash their hands of the affair -- as unions do not provide assistance to those facing criminal charges. So the 24, unless supported by rank and file action up and down the country, must face the Government's anti-working-class measures alone.

#### THE ANTI-LUMP CAMPAIGN

One stage of the Shrewsbury trial coincided with the climax of ex-trot Heffer's anti-lump campaign. On Friday 18th May, Heffer introduced a bill to abolish the lump - before a House of Commons packed with no less than 8 Tory MPs and 6 Labour MPs. It was talked out. In the world outside the Commons opponents of the Lump range, from left to right, from Laurie Flynn of "Protz's Weekly" to Mrs. Elaine Kellet-Bowman Tory MP. Consider the arguments:

1. It has led to gerrybuilding on a wide scale. (Socialist Worker).

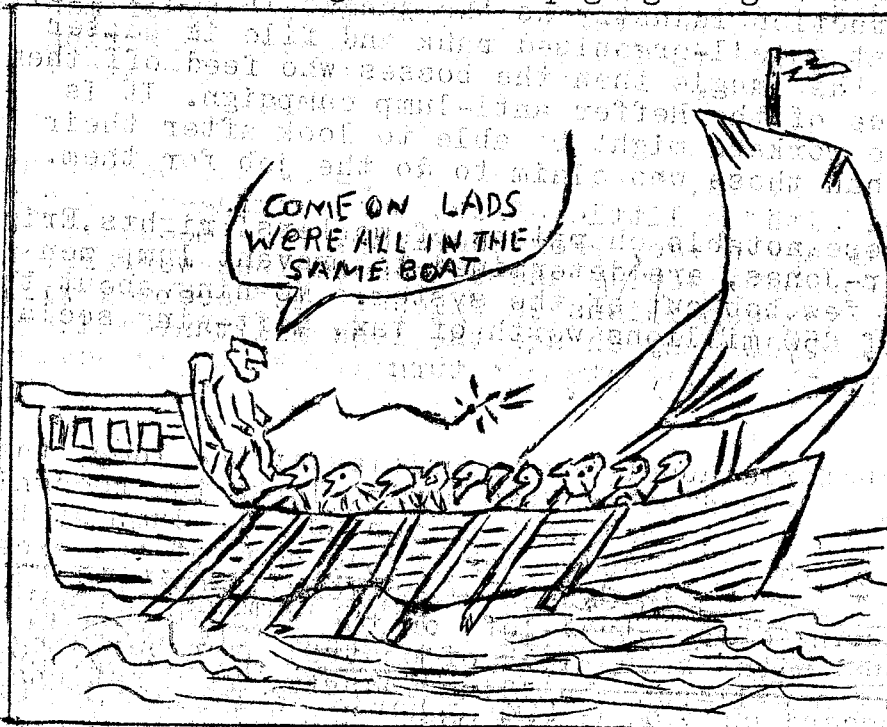
Now Gerrybuilding will be an essential feature of the building trade for as long as houses are built for profit and not for those who live in them. It is an unwritten law amongst building contractors, for instance, that "holes for the proles" (council flats) shall be built with the cheapest materials for the lowest prices. (Hence Ronan Point). This practice is not something that has occurred with the arrival of lump but is a necessary consequence of the profit system.

2. It has led to a higher level of accidents with no compensation for the victims.

It is true that employers have used the lump as a means of avoiding expenditure on accident prevention and as an easy way of dodging compensation claims. But building contractors have a long and notor-

ious record regarding accidents and compensation. Accidents, through employer negligence, have always been an essential feature of capitalist building methods. Listening to the rhetoric, one might be misled into the belief that the building trade was a happy accident-free paradise before the Lump. But not so: employer negligence, blatant ignorance of what meagre safety laws exist, has always characterised the building industry. It is to the discredit of the building trade unions that they have largely ignored this aspect, merely pushing occasionally for a few more pennies on the rate, in order to preserve industrial peace. The abolition of the lump, by itself, will not reduce accidents. Only a well organised rank and file accident campaign can exact sufficient safety precautions out of the Contractors.

3. It has led to the virtual destruction of the building trade unions. It would be more correct to say that the unions have destroyed themselves. The lump has flourished only because workers have lost confidence in the unions' ability to secure a better deal. And here is the germ of the revolutionary implications of lump-style agreements. Well-organised lump gangs negotiating on their own behalf



can secure a much better deal, at site level than the cap-in-hand approach characteristic of national negotiating machinery. In many cases lump-workers not bound by decisions and agreements reached by full-time union officials, have taken more militant and aggressive positions. The potentiality of such rank and file militancy have not passed unnoticed by the ruling class. Tory MP Elaine Kellet-Bowman, recently warned the Commons against those "fly by night gangs who owe no loyalty to anyone and descend on a site like a horde of locusts, begin a job, and if more money is offered elsewhere, they flit overnight, leaving the main contractor with a half-finished job and the prospect of heavy penalties for late completion."

alty to anyone and descend on a site like a horde of locusts, begin a job, and if more money is offered elsewhere, they flit overnight, leaving the main contractor with a half-finished job and the prospect of heavy penalties for late completion."

In other words, these "fly by night" gangs have rejected the gentlemanly agreements characteristic of normal union procedure, and have treated the construction industry as the jungle it really is. The only trouble is that a well-organised rank and file is better equipped to survive in the jungle than the bosses who feed off them. Here lie the real source of the Heffer anti-lump campaign. It is just possible that the workers might be able to look after their own interests better than those who claim to do the job for them.

For this reason those notable champions of workers' rights, Eric Heffer and Lewis Carter-Jones, are determined to prevent lump men from screwing an extra few bob out of the system. Moaning about the loss to the Treasury of £50 millions worth of tax, left-wing social-

ist, Carter-Jones, said "This is a dreadful indictment of the system." "Lump workers," he added, "could get tax-exemption certificates." (Guardian 18th May) And Labour MP Tom Urwin complained that "lump workers can blackmail employers by refusing to work under nationally negotiated agreements for the simple reason that they can enjoy better wage packets by non-observance of the rules of the building industry." And on the tax-evasion issue he added that "the building industry had become one of the biggest fiddles and swindles of all time." He was referring of course to that £50 million and not to the activities of his fellow party member T. Dan Smith.

It is indeed significant that Heffer and Carter-Jones should whine about income tax evasion. Like their Tory friends, they are quick to howl if workers can fiddle a few bob out of the Inland Revenue, whilst the Lornho sharks are praised for their initiative. Of course they ignore the fact that for the majority of the ruling class tax evasion has become institutionalised. Thus when it was brought to the attention of the respectable Tory 'directors' in the Commons, that a group of lump workers had dared to form a limited company to avoid paying tax, the housing minister agreed that legislation should be passed to deal with "that body of men in the industry who are prepared to try out such methods, referring to lump workers as the least respectable, law-abiding elements in the industry." (May 18th).

The lesson to be learnt is, that whatever system the bosses and the government impose, with a little effort the working-class can always turn it to their advantage. For the lump, as a method of organisation, can fall upon both docile and self-conscious workers. When it falls on the former the conditions in which it is accepted will reveal their docility. Under any change the less militant will get the rawest deal, whilst the militants can turn it to their advantage.

Behind all the rhetoric about the iniquities of the lump, the accidents and the low standard of craftsmanship, lurks the recognition of the fact that well-organised workers can use the lump system to their own advantage; they can dodge tax, evade some of the excesses of the IRB and secure wages in excess of nationally-determined rates. But what so many of the trad-left on the anti-lump bandwagon are really concerned with is the lack of control over building workers. Their idea of a well-run building industry is a nationalised one. But for libertarians and indeed for most lump workers in the industry this is a sick joke. It means the end of site level negotiations. Nationalization means nothing more than state control, with state deals (remember the hospital workers) and state discipline, where a handful of bureaucrats can hold the whole industry to ransom, with the big stick of massive lay-offs. Anyone who thinks nationalisation is the answer might cast an eye on the future plans for the steel industry and Marsh's plans for the railways.

It is clear that the working class in the building trade are rejecting traditional forms of organisation. We should not be trying to shore up those obsolete and ineffective unions by asking the government to condemn the lump. We should instead look at the advantages that a resolute and bloody-minded rank and file can gain from this method of work. There are indications that this is going to be the trend of building site organisation. Revolutionaries should accept this, not as an indication of an abandonment of the class struggle,

but should see the nature of the class struggle in its new context. The days of national agreements are over. So too are the days when the union official can end a strike with the old "back to work lads while I negotiate." There are tendencies in the lump system which render redundant both the old-style building employer and the old-style "bowler-hatted" union official. A well organised lump site is not a self-contradiction. Here is the potentiality of collective self-management, and a direct conflict between those who sell labour power and those who buy it, marked by the absence of those who arrange the sale of labour power to others. Admittedly the trade is in a shambles at present but there is emerging a new type of building worker who is capable of uniting with his brothers on the site and resolutely outlining for themselves, the conditions of their labour. It is to the creation of such a working class that revolutionaries should be working towards.

That lump men have scabbed in the past need not be an indictment of the system. There were scabs before the lump; there have been scabs in the unions and there are plenty of scab unions. All is not well on lump sites, it is true. Many accusations do hold. But for those of us who adhere to the principle of collective self-management, the potentialities of a militant working class superseding an ineffective and restraining mode of collective bargaining, are too great to ignore. As usual, though, the working class are by their actions revealing the sterility of the traditional left.. But an outmoded dogma and a mythology of nationalization should not blinker our eyes to the real aspects of the class struggle.

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# SHOTTON STEEL CLOSURES.

Shotton Steelworks is facing virtual extinction, and with it the future prosperity of Deeside. Since the nationalisation of steel in 1967 the BSC has pumped £36 million into the Shotton Steelworks, much of it now on the verge of fruition. Long-standing production records have been broken both by the blast furnaces and in the melting shop. One of the twelve open hearth furnaces has been completely rebuilt in a record three months against the previous record of five months. The hot roll mill will be the best in the country for the next decade. Moreover coke is not imported, but manufactured on the site.

Yet in the beginning of June 1973, the last nail was hammered into the steel-workers coffin, when Bob Scholey, the strip mills division chief, presented the long-awaited brochure stating why steel production at the Shotton Plant should cease. But how can the workers interpret the conclusions contained in it when it is compiled by the Steel Corporation's own experts? Who is going to believe that it was not tailored to conform to the corporation's strategy, and therefore, to present the most telling case against long-term production at Shotton. The document is designed to show why Shotton is not the place for major investment in steel production. The inherent flaw is that its authors, whatever they may claim, cannot be impartial. They are employed by the Corporation and are bound to see things the Corporation's way. They are probably the same men who prepared the original steel strategy.

The document is a thorough job, giving no reasons for optimism amongst the steel workers whose jobs are threatened. It makes great play of the fact that Shotton is not located near a deep water harbour, and that it is profitless to transport ore by road and rail. Perhaps those whose job it is to scrutinise this document might ask how it equates the apparent commonsense of that argument with its proposals to transport the estimated 32,000 tonnes of steel per week, for finishing at Shotton, by road and rail.

The promise to develop Shotton as a finishing plant is simply the sugar with which to take the medicine of enormous redundancies. That there are going to be massive redundancies is an accepted fact by most of the official leaders of the Deeside community. The Flintshire County Council have estimated that some 20,000 jobs will be required by 1981, and have begun a programme designed to "attract" investment to the area, and in doing so have conceded the battle without a fight.

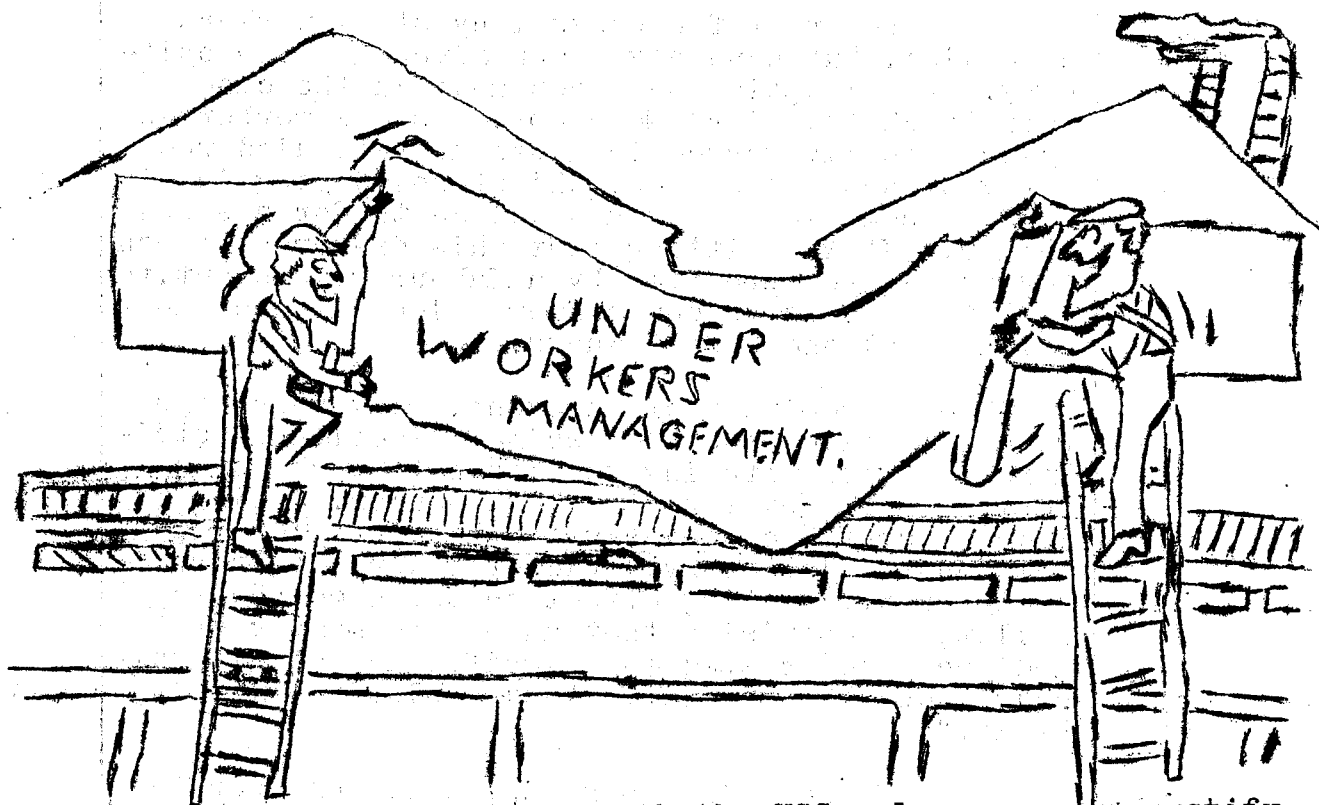
To allay fears of redundancy the Steel Corporation have appointed a new Director-in-charge, John Powell, whose task it will be to maintain morale, whilst presiding over the butchery of both the industry and the community. But Powell is not finding this task easy. Commenting on his job he said recently, "I find it almost impossible to direct the works when the men doubt everything the management says". In fact the 13,000 strong workforce have steadily lost all their illusions with the management. Paradoxically although BSC speaks of heavy redundancies; management and supervision have increased three-fold since nationalisation. "At present Shotton is in a state of



Parkinsons law run riot." said one steelworker.

It is possible that there will be a work-in -- A mass meeting is to be held at which the Action Committee will present plans for a "Workers Takeover". The form which this takes will be important for revolutionaries. Many lessons can now be learnt from previous take-overs and occupations. At present plans are at the embryonic stage. However, it seems that the action committee is considering a Work-In along the lines of the UCS. A sub-committee has submitted a comprehensive breakdown of all the materials and products needed to operate the works, and details of how they could be brought in if the works are taken over. Comrade Reid (the well known supporter of the 'Fair' Rent Act) will shortly address a meeting of steel workers.

It must be stressed that a mere work-in might suit the Tories best, for they would have the benefit of maintaining their supply of steel until such time as it is no longer required. If the work-in is to have any revolutionary significance it must involve a complete and physical occupation of the plant with management denied access. Moreover unless workers are directly involved in decision-making it will be of no benefit exchanging one set of bureaucrats for another. The Action Committee will become, like the UCS action committee, "directors" of a new enterprise set up to exploit double the number of their comrades and ready to hand over the plant to a new set of bosses.



This kind of struggle, as with the UCS, only serves to mystify people even further and the real question of who shall own and manage the means of production are never raised. At the UCS the work-in was controlled by the shop-stewards, who were intent on maintaining good relations with the management and the police. There was no

takeover of the yards; the management came and went as they pleased, and the men went home at the weekends.

### Conclusion

The lessons to be learned from previous UCS-style occupations is that unless the workers themselves take a real hand in determining the objectives of the struggle we may yet again hear the old verdict "we've been sold out." Simply waiting for the action committee to decide what to do, and then meeting to approve it is a sure path to compliance. For if the actual management of the struggle is not in the hands of the workers when the "sell-out" comes it will be too late to formulate alternative forms of action. Not only must the objectives be decided by the workers themselves, but also the strategy and tactics. To continue complaining about being "sold out" and not to do anything about it is to avoid one's own responsibility.

## OBITUARY

### DEATH OF A STEELWORKER

Over the past few weeks many steel workers have died, but none have been given a press obituary. An exception has been made in the case of Lord Melchett, a Lord Melchett, a steel worker who never actually worked in a steelworks, died recently of natural causes, whilst holidaying in his Majorca home -- a very unusual death for a steel worker. It was fitting that this ex-merchant banker should be appointed by a Labour government, to head the BSC as he comes from a long line of notorious coal and steel owners.

One is reminded of an event, many years ago when Ben Tillet was addressing a meeting of strikers who were refusing to return to work on the terms set out by Lord Melchett senior. Tillet's mode of speech caused him to place greater emphasis on the latter syllable of a word, thus producing an hyphenating effect on the name "Mel-chet. Tillet, recognising that an astute member of the audience had grasped the significance of this, quickly added the comment, "and a bloody big shit he is!"

Like father, like son, the smell of excreta hangs over the steel industry, bringing no good to the working class. Neither will any form of nationalisation or public ownership designed to preserve and maintain the interests of the few. Donations and messages of commiseration should be sent to the Committee for the Preservation of Redundant Bureaucrats.

# "CARDANALYSIS"

Speaking in South Wales, Paul Cardan, ex-editor of Socialisme ou Barbarisme and frequent contributor to 'Solidarity' discussed the problems of applying traditional revolutionary politics in the 1970s and the way forward for revolutionaries.

Cardan criticised the trad left approach which bases itself on a 'scientific' analysis of society -- a view which rejects the establishment of a revolutionary society in terms of moral ideals. He argued that on the traditionalistic view the objective basis for a revolutionary perspective is seen in the internal contradictions of the capitalist system, which will eventually prevent it from functioning and allow the intervention of the revolutionaries. Such a perspective envisages the working-class becoming more and more exploited, and the profit rate falling with the result that capital accumulation would slow down. This would be accompanied by a growing impoverishment and a rise in class consciousness. Moreover, it envisages a more intensive exploitation of colonies leading to revolts and struggles for national independence. These events, of course, would not happen unless the masses under the leadership of the working-class proletariat served in the struggle and took it over, leading to some sort of socialist revolution. This would adversely affect imperialist nations who rely on these markets and raw materials and provoke a deep crisis in those countries concerned. Life, under such conditions, would create within the working-class a socialist consciousness, new attitudes, that would be the basis of revolutionary activity. Fundamental to this view, Cardan continued, is the idea that capitalism is characterised by periodic economic crises and governed by inexorable economic laws. But once capitalism is eliminated and the economy organised on a new basis, with the nationalisation of the means of production, the main task of the revolution would be to develop the production that capitalism is less and less capable of developing. Such is the traditionalistic account.

But, as Cardan pointed out, it is false to assume that capitalism is incapable of developing production. There is no ever-deepening crisis; and the industrial reserve army, although continually fluctuating, does not significantly grow. Moreover, the industrial proletariat is declining as a proportion of the total population. In America it now totals about twenty percent. So, if the revolution were to be made by industrial manual workers it would still be a small minority -- not that one does not have more sympathy with them than the present 20 percent. Furthermore, since the Second World War the capitalist economy has been at its strongest period of expansion. Capitalism cannot be conceived of just in terms of more capital, more machines, but it is accompanied by a sociological process to which Marx had devoted little attention, namely bureaucratisation. This has given rise to a society with a hierarchical structure, with the layers of the pyramid having no say in what happens, even if they are shareholders. Instead of a small group of rich capitalists, we now have an inter-locking pyramid with a multitude of different positions. There is no split between the owners and the owned but at the two extremes of the pyramid, between those who direct work and those who execute it. However there are plenty of people in the intermediate stage. Because of this process we cannot establish the dividing-line of society on a purely objective basis but we need to look at how

people actually behave. In the final analysis, the division is between those who accept the system and those who reject it, even though they are forced to work for it.

Therefore, says Cardan, the socialist revolution cannot be seen in terms of simply doing away with capitalism or the top executives of the system, because in this form of bureaucratic capitalism, conflict is essentially conflict with management, over the direction of work, between order-givers and order-takers, whether they are industrial managers or trade union bosses. The most significant area of conflict for revolutionaries is that of workers demanding the right to manage their own affairs, the one thing the system cannot tolerate. For the system to function, activities have to be directed from outside according to the objectives of that system. This raises problems for any revolutionary organisation and sets limits to and defines its activity.

The function of any revolutionary organisation cannot be to substitute itself for the activity of the masses in all places. But it is possible to help through means consistent with the ends pursued that can help to bring about those ends. So it is pointless for an external organisation to instruct workers on what to do and how to organise. The role of any revolutionary organisation is to help by providing material means or creating opportunities for activities such as discussion, the exchange of ideas and collective self-management. Collective self-management here does not just mean people managing their own lives: it involves a different conception of the life that is to be managed. It implies a different type of person. Such a person will be capable of taking on the job of self-management, cooperating with others, having certain attitudes towards other people. This means that at the same time society is transformed, the creative capabilities of the individual are unleashed and that whatever inhibits this capacity in him is eliminated. Such individuals can create the revolutionary institutions necessary for these new forms of life.

One hopeful step in this direction is that recently values have become less and less internalised. Many traditional moral obligations have become utilitarian questions which has never been enough to maintain any society. One example is loyalty to the firm. Very few people today think this is a virtue. For the majority it is purely a means to an end. At the same time the roles individuals occupy are becoming less and less clearly defined. No one today, women's liberationists included, can define the role of a woman. This is because without explicit demands, women have transformed and changed their positions in various spheres. More importantly, 'authority' no longer goes unchallenged. Twenty or thirty years ago, authority, whether ascribed or achieved, was accepted unquestionably by most people as a positive value. But today it is more likely to be questioned from below -- to the extent that those who give commands are even prone to apologise for it! These changes in values are crucial, claims Cardan, because a system can only survive when such values are clear-cut and internalised. But how is it such changes have come about? Certainly not through inexorable economic laws. But through changes in the behaviour of the people concerned.

We need to free ourselves from this idea of an objective mechanism in capitalism, Cardan emphasised. Of course the system contains deep irrationalities, of course there are periodic crisis but none of these are fundamentally destructive. Instead of concentrating on objective laws we should remember that when we speak of the radical transformation of society, this includes the radical transformation of the individual personality as well.

AVAILABLE CARDAN TRANSLATIONS.

History and Class Consciousness  
From Bolshevism to the Bureaucracy  
The Meaning of Socialism  
Modern Capitalism and Revolution

From Solidarity c/o 123, Latham Road, London, E6.

STOKE NEWINGTON FIVE

A solidarity committee has been formed by two of those acquitted at the recent angry brigade trial, together with the remains of the various defence committees which have been trying to help all the accused in the case over the past two years.

The committee has issued a brief pamphlet called 'Release the Five' (2p) summarising the facts of the episode, suggesting that the five now serving sentences of ten or fifteen years should be considered as political prisoners and calling for a campaign for their release or, failing that, for their welfare (a separate welfare committee has been formed to look after the practical details). The solidarity committee proposes to raise money, publish literature, hold meetings and demonstrations, and co-ordinate efforts on behalf of the five. The committee's address is 54, Harcombe Road, London, N16.

LEXICON OF THE LEFT

For those who would like to participate in the political activities of the trad left, but find the language and slogans too esoteric, we have prepared the following guide:

Cadre -- Residue left after a faction fight.

Class enemy - Yesterday's comrade

Class struggle - Squabble over assets

Contact -- Bloke prepared to listen

Close Contact -- bloke prepared to listen and repeat.

Entrist Tactic -- convincing disillusioned Labour party members to remain in the party.

Deep Entrist Tactic -- convincing disillusioned Labour party members to remain in the party so that they can vote for the expulsion of fellow trots at a later date.

Jackals, Hyenas -- Stalinist designation of trot and other left-wing critics.

Line -- longest distance between two points owing to party zig-zags.

Opportunist - one who believes that what the masses do is more important than what the party does.

Centralist -- one who believes that what the party does is more important than what the masses do.

Ultra-leftism - whatever the party has not thought of.

# REVIEW.

"TAKE OVER THE CITY". From Rising Free, 197 Kings Cross Road, W1.

Very little information regarding the class struggle in Italy finds its way into the British media. This pamphlet is therefore an important introduction to the way in which the Italian working-class is combatting the repressive tactics of the bosses state. Since the autumn of '69 the class struggle in Italy has spread from the factories to every area of people's lives. "The ruling class have developed two tactics for dealing with the militancy of the workers --- concessions and reforms, on the one hand, and open repression on the other. The continuation of the struggle inside the factories and its extension into the communities meant that the ruling class increasingly chose the second option. In the factories militants were sacked or moved onto other jobs, fascists were planted to spy on militant workers, and many small firms closed down." At the same time unemployment rose and huge price rises took place.

This attack has not stopped the workers from carrying on the struggle. In industry they have refused to accept the demands for increased productivity. In their communities they have responded with mass rent strikes, occupations, struggles against fares and rising prices. They have begun to create within their communities a new way of life, outside the control of the bosses.

In education there have been strikes and occupations of primary and secondary schools and universities in every major city. "Since Autumn '69, when worker-student assemblies were formed, there have been many occasions when workers and students have fought together. In the schools kids have fought for free books, free transport, an end to exams, and an end to the class bias in education.

On the housing issue people have occupied property and organised rent strikes, some lasting for years. To combat price increases housewives have picketed supermarkets, and in Pisa, have even organised a "red market", selling goods at half the normal price. Prisoners too have been fighting against their conditions; they have gone on to roof tops to demonstrate, and in Milan and Naples have set fire to their cells.

In industry, the pamphlet tells us, workers have gone far beyond the control of the unions, taking over factories instead of being called out on strike. Factory newspapers have sprung up everywhere. Wage demands have given way to demands for the abolition of the system of grading, with equal pay for all. Throughout Italy worker-student assemblies have discussed, and put into practice, various alternative tactics for continuing the struggle inside the factories. There have been mass meetings on the job, rotating strikes in different sections of the factory, causing damage to plant, and direct physical confrontations with the management.

Apart from an indispensable documentation of the events of the past four years the authors of 'Take Over The City' have

included some excellent eye witness accounts of some of the actual confrontations between workers and the bosses state. But what is now required is an adequate analysis of these events, and an explanation of their significance for the revolutionary movement in Europe today. One thing is clear; the traditional leave-it-to-the-union type of struggle has been superseded by the more class conscious activities of the rank and file.



The pamphlet concludes with some good stuff concerning the spread of revolutionary ideas and tactics by those Italian emigrants who have settled in other parts of Europe. This touches on what might be the most promising aspect of the whole Common Market issue. The increased mobility of labour, which the bosses have envisaged as a means of creating profits, can well lead to an increase in the spread of revolutionary consciousness.

(For further information contact the Lotta Continua group, who publish a daily newspaper and a special paper for Southern Italy. Their London address is 36a. Queensgate Terrace. SW7.  
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## ABOUT OURSELVES

Solidarity Swansea is an autonomous group linked with other Solidarity groups throughout the country.

We believe that the task of revolutionary organisations is to give working class consciousness an explicitly socialist content, to give practical assistance to those involved in the struggle with authority, to exchange experiences, and from an examination of these experiences arrive at a socialist critique of the whole of society. Solidarity seeks to strengthen the confidence of working people in their abilities to manage their own lives.

Solidarity therefore welcomes and invites comment, criticism etc., on the articles in this issue, and on the magazine as a whole. Articles from readers on any aspect of the struggle against the bosses and their government are also welcome.

For further information and details of literature published by either the Swansea group, or other groups, please contact;

D. Lamb. C/O 16 Uplands Crescent. Swansea.



# THE MYTH OF STRUCTURELESSNESS

In "The Tyranny of Structurelessness" Jo Freeman\* seeks the causes of the practical impotence (forgive the masculine jargon) of Womens Lib in their mode of organisation. Her conclusions have considerable implications for libertarian groups and are worth considering here in view of the current discussion concerning organisation in Solidarity and other libertarian groups. Within womens groups structurelessness has been the main form of organisation and is a natural reaction to an over-structured society and the elitism of the left. But this idea of structurelessness has moved from being a healthy counter to these tendencies to a Goddess in its own right. While this lack of organisation has been helpful in 'raising consciousness' it has not encouraged women to go beyond this. Parallels can be found here with many women's and libertarian groups in Britain. One of the reasons why this has happened, says the pamphlet, is because the idea of structurelessness is itself an illusion. There is no such thing as a structureless group. Any group will inevitably structure itself in some fashion and will be formed regardless of the abilities or intentions of the people concerned. "To strive for a structureless group is as useful and as deceptive, as to aim at an 'objective news story', 'value-free social science' or a 'free economy.' A laissez-faire group is about as realistic as a laissez faire society. The idea becomes a smoke screen for the strong or the lucky to establish unquestioned hegemony over others." (p.2) This is because structurelessness does not prevent the formation of informal structures but only formal ones. And informal structures are not sufficient to get people to operate effectively. To function well the groups usually have to pare themselves down to the informal group of friends who were running things in the first place, thus excluding others. For everyone to be involved in a group, the structure must be explicit and not implicit. The rules of decision-making must be open and available to everyone but this can happen only if they are formalised. This does not mean that formalisation of a group structure will destroy the informal structure. But it does hinder it from having predominant control and makes available some means of attacking it. Hence, structurelessness is organisationally impossible. We cannot decide whether to have a structured or structureless group, only whether or not to have a formally structured one. A structured group always has an informal structure and may also have an informal one. An unstructured group always has an informal one. It's this informal structure, particularly in unstructured groups, which forms the basis for elites. These elites will probably be nothing more than a group of friends who also happen to participate in the same political activities. "They would probably maintain their friendship whether or not they maintained their political activities. They would probably be involved in political activities whether or not they maintained their friendships. It's the coincidence of these two phenomena which creates elites in any group and makes them so difficult to break." (p.4). As long as friendship groups are the main means of organisational activity, elitism becomes institutionalised. These friendship groups function as networks of communi-

\*Berkely Journal of Sociology 1970. Available from Leeds Womens ORA 29 Cardigan Road, Leeds.

cation outside any regular channels for such communication that may be set up by the group. If no channels are set up they function as the only networks of communication. However in a structured group a variety of informal groups may compete for formal power which may be the healthiest situation. Once the revolutionary movement no longer clings tenaciously to the idea of structurelessness, it will be free to develop those forms of organisation best suited to its politics and efficient functioning. But we must be wary of going to the other extreme, imitating traditional forms of organisation but neither should we blindly reject them all. This pamphlet outlines certain principles essential to democratic structuring and political effectiveness which are worth discussing in relation to libertarian politics and libertarian womens groups. They are as follows:-

1. Delegation of specific authority to specific individuals for specific tasks by democratic procedures.
2. Require all those to whom authority has been delegated to be responsible to those who selected them, so that the group has control of those in positions of authority.
3. Distribution of authority among as many people as possible to prevent a monopoly of power.
4. Rotation of tasks.
5. Allocation of tasks along rational criteria i.e. not giving unpopular individuals the worst jobs. Individuals should be given opportunities to learn skills they do not have, preferably through an apprenticeship rather than a 'sink or swim' method.
6. Diffusion of information to everyone as frequently as possible. Information is power and access to information enhances one's power.
7. Equal access to resources such as duplicators etc. Skills and info are also resources. Members skills can be equally available only when members are able to teach others what they learn.

These principles sound obvious but they are often overlooked and to ignore them can be disastrous. The pamphlet claims that if these principles are applied, they ensure that ultimate decisions will be made by the group at large who will have power to determine who shall exercise authority within it.

One defect of this pamphlet is that it does not discuss the integration of a group's organisation to its wider political theory and practice. Neither factor can be examined in isolation. One of the main problems of the Swansea group has not been its lack of commitment to Solidarity's ideas nor to revolutionary action, but that a commitment to both coincided in very few members of the group. It has even been argued that Solidarity's ideas are incompatible with action. But what is needed is collective action by a group whose members agree on a clear theoretical position. In such a group the priority is not action but the development of a theoretical basis which could lead to the emergence of a group clear about its role and its practice. Some would argue that discussion without involvement in activity is a waste of time. But it is impossible to act as a revolutionary without some ideas about society, without some strategy for revolutionary change. At the very least there should be discussion to make these ideas explicit. Action must be bound up with a coherent view of the world arrived at through intra- and inter-group discussion, with reference to the immediate realities of the situation. The structure of the group cannot be separated from its theoretical position and its practical activities. Defects, confusions, conflict in any of these spheres will inevitably be reflected in these other areas. An efficient and democratic form of org-

anisation can facilitate theoretical discussion and clear meaningful action just as a sloppy, elitist form of organisation can kill both theory, practice and eventually the very organisation itself. Perhaps if these seven principles are taken into consideration, at least one set of the problems facing libertarian groups may be overcome. Moreover, an elitist unstructured organisation is self-destructive. By burdening itself with the work, allowing no room for fresh ideas, by deterring potential contributors, it eventually turns inwards on itself and destroys itself, unable to discuss or act. With a healthy organisational structure personality clashes can be suppressed while engaging in practical activities.

There are of course dangers in going too far in the other direction, by emulating the hierarchical forms of organisation of the Leninist parties. Yet within libertarian groups the emphasis on democratic participation etc can result in the worst forms of bureaucracy, which can be just as harmful to the group as elitism. The keeping of files, circulation of correspondence etc, can become an end in itself with 'business' occupying the major amount of time and attention of the group, taking precedence over more important issues.

This problem depends very much on the size of the group as does the tyranny of structurelessness. Beyond a certain point a formalised structure is inevitable, if not necessary, just to co-ordinate activities, thus paving the way for bureaucracy. Equally, the size of the group can inhibit discussion with the more articulate members obligingly speaking on behalf of everyone else and 'doing all the work.' Given these inherent tendencies the only practical solution is a fragmentation into smaller groups working closely together. But this does not necessarily preclude their being part of a national organisation.

The formal structure, as the pamphlet shows, won't inhibit informal groups who will presumably strive for powerful positions within the formal structure and attempt to define how the formal structure should be arranged. Ultimately the desire for elite positions comes down to the fact that they retain traditional bourgeois values, assuming that we need leaders for everything (preferably themselves). This is especially noticeable within the women's movement, noted for its middle-class composition and outlook. Indeed the formal structure could be worse than the informal one, where the power is derived from the position. But at least group members know where the power lies and where to attack.

(Comments, discussion welcome).

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# WHITHER WOMENS LIB?

The Women's Liberation movement arose partly as a critique of the gap between theory and practice in most left-wing organisations. The movement has recognised one of the main problems facing women—namely that if their struggle is constantly subordinated to other struggles such as those in Industry, then following the revolution the position of women will be little different from at present. In short, if women are powerless both prior to and during the revolution then what power will they have afterwards?

Within left groups autonomy (in theory) has been recognised as essential to women's progression and development as individuals and revolutionaries. In practice as usual they have been given the shit work to do. However the fact that women have at best been relegated to secondary roles (selling papers, doing the secretarial work etc.) in political activity and indeed have often remained outside such activity, can be turned into an advantage within the movement. At least the movement is starting from real situations of understanding and explaining oppression.

Another tendency of left groups is that if there is a period when little is happening on the industrial front then concern with women's struggle is justified. But when there are developments in industrial struggles problems of women are ignored. Because women in the trad-left groups are so oppressed and their role in the struggle so small it is likely that the revolution will be a revolution by men which can only lead to a society that reflects the sexism of capitalism. (Our society is both sexist and capitalist and must be seen as such by the women's movement.)

What has generally been overlooked is that the first to be dispossessed of land, their product and labour were women. As Engels and many others have pointed out, women were the first proletarians yet they are not seen as potential revolutionaries because they are not considered as participants in the key points of production. Because of this they are not identified as workers.

The reformist demands made by trad left groups do not challenge the relationships between men and women which are crucial to the functioning of capitalist society. However this is not to advocate that women refrain from all participation in these groups. Indeed the present crisis in the movement stems in some measure from its isolation. Many groups have taken widely divergent paths. The views of women in these groups range from those interested in having women as directors at ICI to those adhering to the principles enunciated in Valerie Skolas' SCUM (society for cutting up men) Manifesto.

The National Conference 1972, although a tribute to the organisational skill of women hitherto insistently denied,--as Leeds ORA Women's Group point out: "achieved nothing for national organisation and analysis; groups are still as isolated and ineffective as they ever were. Now we have nothing not even slogans to unite us." The only action undertaken by women's liberation groups is 'inevitably concerned with reformist demands: e.g. Contraception, Equal Pay etc.

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Associated with this isolation is the emphasis on small groups. They are the basic unit of the movement all over the country. As the movement grows more groups are formed. One of the advantages of this is that nobody can wait for anyone else to think for them, everyone takes part. Another value lies in the fact that a national movement is being established from the level of the groups upwards, rather than from the ideas of a few national leaders downwards. The movement is trying to establish a national organisation without leaders which does not look to one place (London) as a centre. But at the same time many groups are disintegrating and disappearing.

#### WHY THE DISINTEGRATION?

One of the reasons must surely be the lack of a coherent strategy for action. Also contributing to the demise of the movement is the actual organisation of such groups, that has given rise to 'the star system.' Leaders of the movement have grown up overnight. The press have chosen to select such women as Germaine Greer, Juliet Mitchell as spokeswomen. Mitchell was given half an hour of valuable media time to use exactly as she pleased. It was her decision to give working-class women two minutes of the programme, and even then she defined the terms of reference. At the same time she highlighted at great length the problems of articulate middle-class women, inviting such well known women's lib sympathisers as Peregrine Worsthorne and Ronald Bell on to the programme. The result, needless to say, was an ultra-respectable extremely boring half hour with as much relevance to the movement as the programme 'Money at work' has to the average Trade Union member.

The problems of the small groups are of course not even realised until action is considered. Much is discussed but the discussion rarely reaches fruition. The typical small group that exists consists of middle-class women usually friends and inevitably women who do not fit into the friendship networks are discriminated against. The fetish in the movement for trying to diffuse power has led to the movements ineffectiveness. This problem is crucial at the present time--formerly the main task was to educate and in this respect the movement undoubtedly succeeded. But to move from education to action is the central task of the movement today. To do this effectively it is imperative that it articulate its goals and coordinates action. It is impossible to do this without national organisation. What is needed first is a total critique of the movement - only when its failures have been analysed in depth can the movement progress.

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#### SOUTH WALES--BRISTOL AREA INFORMATION BULLETIN.

A monthly bulletin providing information and discussions on anarchist and Libertarian ideas, distributed in the South Wales and Bristol areas. Next issue should be out by late July. Any information sent for inclusion should be in by about July 20--which will discuss the Welsh Nationalist Movement.

Free to those on Social Security. Others 30p for 6 months. Available from Eve and Jock Spence, 22, Cwmdonkin Terrace, Swansea.

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# THE DAY THE GREAT WHITE ELEPHANT CAME TO TOWN

It was in the middle sixties that the Labour Government, embarrassed by increasing unemployment adopted a policy of support for "depressed" regions and Swansea certainly earned that title following the decline of the traditional industries of the area. It was to Swansea that the white elephant was to come.

The system of driving and vehicle licencing through local authorities throughout Britain was gradually breaking down due to the vast increase of cars on the road. When vehicles were sold records had to be passed from one authority to the other. Also it was easy for a person disqualified from driving to apply for a licence in the area of a different authority. Pressure was being brought to bear by the police, who were not getting the information they wanted quickly enough, to reform the system. The idea of centralised licencing was hatched, but a centralised office was required: 1. Space and 2. Manpower - Swansea, so the experts said, had both.

1. Location - the site had to be a big one to house the necessary machinery. You would have thought that with the old industrial land available around Swansea somewhere in the valley away from housing could have been found - but no, the experts chose farmland adjacent to a council housing estate and that is how the poor residents of Clase came to have a view of towering concrete skyscrapers, to say nothing of the noise, dust etc. suffered during its erection, to say nothing of the hundreds of cars that hurtle through the estate morning, noon and night.

2. Manpower - of course we all knew that the worst unemployment in Swansea was amongst manual workers. 5,000 jobs for Swansea. But doing what? Jobs that are as boring as hell, opening letters, punching cards, cleaning machines, pressing stop and start buttons. The pay less than £20 per week, hardly enough for one to live on, never mind a family. So who were they going to get to do the work - women of course! The assumption being that women are prepared to work for pin-money, after all the man is the bread winner, and also a lot of other sexist nonsense about women being more suited to routine jobs.

And so £40,000,000 later.....

1. The buildings are almost complete, landscaping of the site is underway (how the residents of Clase must love that!)

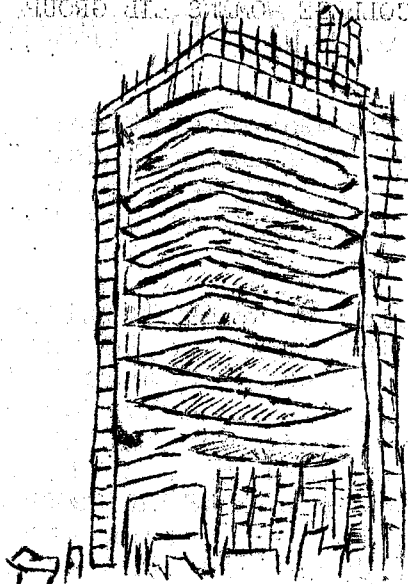
2. Licences are being produced - complaints about the delay - slower than the old system - questions by MP's (well the experts can't always be right, perhaps what we need is local offices throughout the country)

3. Vast numbers of staff have been recruited - mostly women who have left "slave labour" jobs for a pittance in shops.

4. The Civil Service Trade Union Bureaucracy (the C.P.S.A. even organised a strike), the Welfare Branch, the Civil Service subsidised Sports and Social Club are all there to keep the staff happy but ..... EVERYONE IS BORED TO TEARS - ABSENTEEISM IS HIGH - THE TURN-OVER IN STAFF IS HIGH - THEFT OF OFFICIAL PROPERTY IS COMMONPLACE - SABOTAGE IS NOT UNKNOWN - PEOPLE WILL DO ANYTHING TO RELIEVE THE MONOTONY.



And so we can sit back and wonder if it was all worthwhile. All that effort - to do what? More forms, more police invasion of peoples lives. £40,000,000 while people go home less, while people starve. The white elephant has come to Swansea, thanks to Police Pressure, thanks to the government, thanks to the Local Councillors, thanks to the planners. Yes we have a lot to be thankful for - after all the experts know best!



## LETTERS

### CLAIMANTS UNION: A CASE STUDY.

For fear of victimisation we cannot print the name of the person referred to in the following case study. Nevertheless we feel that the brutality of the 'Welfare State' should not go unreported.

The saga of Mrs X goes on and on. After 15 weeks of being underpaid £7.50 a week her appeal finally came up on Tuesday 14th June. The so called independent Appeals tribunal was really biased in favour of the Social Security. For the past 15 weeks Mrs X has had 4 children living with her, the SS have insisted that three of them are legally in her husband's custody and therefore they would not pay for them. However, no custody order had been made by the judge, who at the last court hearing had said that he would only make out a custody order when the divorce was finalised.

At the appeal we produced a solicitors letter which stated that Mrs X had in her care, custody and protection, four children, the letter was dated June 11th, the SS officer produced a piece of paper dated November from the court, which stated that at that time Mr X had in his custody the children, ---at that time Mrs X was homeless and had nowhere to take them, so that they had to stay with him---when she found a house she took them to live with her.

The Tribunal told us that the solicitors letter was not worth the paper it was printed on and added that Mrs X could not be paid the Social Benefit for the children. In fact, they had decided that of two bits of paper, that presented by the SS, although it was 8 months old, was more legal!

All this, of course, does not mean that Mrs X will not receive more money in future, under section 13 of the SS. Act the SS can pay her more money as she is in dire need, and it seems likely that the tribunal will do this. THIS IS NOT ENOUGH, Mrs X is owed £92.50 arrears from the SS, and it is unlikely that she will see any of it now.

The Claimants Union went to see Mrs X's solicitor who is doing all he can. The fight is not over, we shall appeal again and again and again until we get somewhere with this claim. Mrs X has been harassed, frightened and starved by the SS and we will continue the fight until we get everything she is entitled to.

*from a claimant*