



'WE THE ACCUSED —'

SUPPLEMENT to the
Newsletter

LETS HAVE EQUAL LIVING INCOMES FOR ALL

By "Equal" I mean equal. (Unlike hypocrites who preach equality and defend "differentials" and "incentives!")

By "living" I mean not a working wage, and not, repeat NOT, a parasitical income (profits, shares, or rent.) I also mean LIVING, not just surviving.

By "incomes for all" I mean paid to each individual person, equal for all adults and equal for all children in given categories: of age and maturity (though at different rates?)

PART ONE THE EFFECTS OF SUCH AN IDEA WHEN BROUGHT ABOUT.

PART TWO- BACK TO THE THIRTIES??

PART THREE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR FIGHTING FOR SUCH A DEMAND.

PART ONE

LETS ABOLISH THE WELFARE STATE

The Welfare State has always been contradictory: in part it was what the labour movement has managed to win from the ruling class by struggle; in part it was also a way the ruling class has managed to stay on top and avoid rebellion. Unrest was contained in two ways, by ideas and practically.

(a) by ideas; an elaborate smokescreen of paper rights grew up which reinforces the consensus notion that in Britain we look after Our own (as if "WE" were us.) Moreover when it suits the bosses the working class can be diverted from class struggle and turned against claimants, who can be presented as spoon fed by a kind and much abused Santa Claus, the Welfare State.

Politically it is useful to say we claimants have got it easy.

(b) practically; a certain amount of welfare is useful for keeping theft and class bitterness down on the one hand to maintain domestic spending to keep the economy turning. Yet on the other hand employed workers must have a social awareness of the dangers of being poor- so the poor must be degraded just far enough to act as warnings to workers as to their fate if they don't keep their noses to the grindstone of work, and the Arse of Authority.

The practical reality of the Welfare State is therefore like a see-saw balanced jerkily between two opposing forces: the peoples need (and treated fight) for a certain level of welfare on the one hand; and on the other side the State's need, because of the danger of undermining the idea of work and of pushing wages up, to maintain a given level of poverty but not too much!

My idea for equal living incomes for all (which is only my idea and is in no way the policy of the National Federation of Claimants Unions) upsets the balance completely. The see-saw falls down on the side of the peoples' needs for welfare, which can only be met by the people themselves living in a good society.

The force of peoples' needs can be seen in the benefits that exist on paper: the system's needs can be seen in the actual procedures for claiming these same benefits. For example, a special allowance is as they say-'allowable' for medical diets; in practice many claimants with special diets do not know they are entitled to this allowance. Is this just an accident? That this is no accident can be seen by looking at the forms that visiting officers use on their visits. There is a special place on the form for the visiting officer to write down the answer to the question 'Do you have any savings'. There is no such space for asking about any special diet or heating or laundry problems the claimant might have. The visiting officer would not get into trouble for not asking about diet--whatever the liberal training instructions he may once have received to the effect that he should have regard to all the possible needs of the families he or she would be visiting. If however, he or she forgets to ask about savings and the Dept. discovers too much has been granted by mistake, the visitor would be in real trouble.

The balance of the see-saw can again be seen in the question of long waits at the offices; the system says that benefits x, y, and z are available if only claimants will avail themselves of their rights. The only thing that stops them according to this fairy tale is irrational notions about 'pride' that are a hang-over from the bad old thirties. In practice claimants find the long waits at the offices are still degrading and depressing, what with the gloomy institutional surroundings, the lack of facilities (toilets or drinks machines for example) and then being put through an interview in an icily hostile atmosphere in which one is made to feel like a criminal by the degrading questions and checks. This is a sort of humiliation ceremony that people are dead right to feel as being humiliating. People are too 'proud' to claim, but why? Pride isn't the trouble, the system is.

And yet it would be misleading to ask why the system isn't working. In one way it definitely is working! Payments are being kept down to a minimum very efficiently indeed! If we agree with the liberals that the business of claiming is degrading, we should not follow the liberals into asking why the system isn't working with a view to getting some administrative improvements. Repeat: the system is working it's working perfectly efficiently in terms of the need to have us as object lessons to encourage the system's wage slaves to keep slogging away.

To provide more officers to cut down the waiting time would open a flood gate of claims. Instead of the liberal idea of paper benefits being there to meet fixed demands, the actual supply of these benefits creates demand, as in the supply of health and education. The same general rule applies to the taking of signed statements and checking the details that a claimant gives. Not to do so would lead to huge expense, both from 'genuine' claims (encouraged by the pleasanter atmosphere) and from the so-called fiddlers. These bureaucratic checks are not the result of any lack of 'trust' on the part of the officers as the well meaning liberal might try to suggest. They are there because they are NECESSARY. They have been built up over the years by the ruling class as generation after generation of poor people tried to get their share of society's wealth one way or another, by means defined as 'crook'..

Exactly the same pattern of fiddles keeping one step ahead of checks can be seen in modern industry with its endless 'signing' for everything. Industrial theft 'loses the country' (rhubarb!) about a hundred times more money than social security fiddling, and both are dwarfed by the 'fiddles' of the rich. And none of them are in any way 'immoral' or cheating or against the rules of the game. Grab is the name of the game. It has no rules, at least no agreed rules. For there is a class war going on. To direct too much attention to how often the rules get broken in industry would be dangerous for the system-- because it would tend to suggest the political meaning of the workers own actions to him. But a big commission on fiddling by claimants suits the system fine, because up to now claimants have been on the defensive.

Finally let us gun down one other popular 'explanation' of why take up rates are so low. Poor people, we are told, are too ignorant of their rights unlike the educated middle classes. We are 'ill informed'. If a man stood in the market-place giving out five pound notes, there would be no problems of 'communication', no need for million pound publicity campaigns by television and press. The news would get around the town like a flash by word of mouth. It is precisely because the actual S.S. offices do not give people their money (at least not without a fight), that people don't imagine they'll ever get all these fancy benefits. They've learnt from experience. (the man dishing out fivers in the street is a bad example in some ways. People would have no hesitation in informing their neighbours about the free fivers, but about social security matters there is a certain tact and sense of shame that decreases the speed that people get to hear of social security benefits. But again we must ask WHY do people feel ashamed to admit they are on social security. WHY do people get to hear of such matters relatively slowly, as if it was about the nearest V.D. clinic.)

Low take up rates are a getting problem, not a problem of communication, a System necessity in the present, not a relic of the thirties problem of pride.' Low take up rates are not just a problem of 'efficiency' to be solved by some new arrangements by this or that Minister of Social Security. Nor can they be got rid of by pious exhortations to clerks to be more 'understanding' or to claimants to be 'better informed' as to their rights. Low take up rates are the chink in the curtain which let us see what the Welfare State is all about.

① THE ALTERNATIVE : A WELFARE SOCIETY

The scheme would guarantee everyone the power to buy the necessities of life, to get them to understand themselves and without endless queueing up and form filling and means testing. Each community could pay one giro per fortnight to every citizen. This giro would be paid as of right and even the meanest child torturer could not be deprived of his giro, since every citizen would realise that to allow the community committee arranging giro payments to withhold the giro for ANY REASON AT ALL, even the 'best' would be inviting trouble and totalitarianism in the long run. ... of the giro and what it ... of raw

The size of the giro and what it covered would depend on many factors: the scarcity of raw materials, reports from the factory committees, liason with other communities, and the degree to which many necessities had been taken out of the money economy altogether e.g. water and pavements at present, free buses and trains? free bread and basic groceries? free telephones? free gas and electricity? free housing?? Naturally such decisions would be taken at mass meetings after the fullest debate and the committee in charge of paying the 'community dividend' giro would be purely administrative. (see also a scheme for a National Dividend by Gilbert Rae, 1963, Philip Bros and Weir, Fulham, London.)

The need for a elaborate centralised Bureaucracy would be avoided. It is the inhumanly centralised system which depersonalises the people who work in it, not vice versa. Therefore only this sort of remedy-----and not appeals for nicer or better trained welfare officers-----can really make our system of looking after each human. For Claimants Unions to 'participate' in any way in the present bureaucratic machinery is pointless. On the other hand even if every single person received a generous living income there would still be a need for a certain amount of organised and formal community care, certain welfare functions would still need to be carried out in a conscious way. For example, meals on wheels or street pairing of old people with housewives or househusbands who were cooking a midday meal anyway. Additional payments for the special cases, for the disabled people etc. could be fixed up without the need for bureaucratic checks since local people would know each others circumstances, (provision for secrecy could be made by importing randomly picked outsiders when required.) Claimants Unions should see themselves ultimately dissolved in local mutual-aid patterns and informal care happening naturally in new household and community patterns (including new architectural patterns emphasising community values as opposed to the privatising and isolating effects of present building.)

The reason our present welfare system is always so short of trained people is not just because of low pay, (since they aren't making profits for a boss like car workers for example.) There is another important reason which is often overlooked: the system constantly neglects, squanders or actually destroys the potential welfare resources of the whole community/environment. I think the Social Security aspect of the Welfare State can best be understood in relation to all the other welfare bureaucracies of 'our' Welfare State. Because of this I will stray a little from S.S. to gain the comparisons we need.

(4) EDUCATION

Teachers are 'in short supply' because (apart from compulsory and often boring schools) the whole society with its interesting goings on and its adults who know things is closed off to children. In non-school environments children learn quickly and naturally, for example, learning language in the home, games and rhymes in the playgrounds, watching Daddy fish, learning how to play truant or get into football matches free without getting caught. Education means everyone learning, and this does not necessarily mean special places called schools, or special people called Teachers. In the U.S. nobody hardly is talking about 'progressive' schools any longer.

More and more people are talking about abolishing schooling and making the whole environment more educative and safe for exploring in various ways, e.g. opening up work-places, creating free access to information and arranging link-ups with skilled adults sharing the same interests as you. Why then do schools exist? To make kids think that they can learn only from authority, only get praise from a Boss. To make them into disciplined robots all ready for their narrow ruts in the system-----humourously called the 'big wide world'. The kids are fighting back with riots, 'jailbreaks', sit-ins, truancy insubordination, arsing about and refusals to be punished.

Education is a natural function of a healthy individual and a healthy society. The State Bureaucracy bit, complete with jails(schools) and jailers (teachers), only meets the need of the System. The needs of the people are for learning, which does not necessarily have anything to do with being taught. Again we have the see-saw which is what the Welfare State is all about.

(ii) MEDICINE

Nobody is saying we can abolish disease---but why the constantly increasing demand for various kinds of medical, dental and psychological treatment? Plenty of societies exist even today with rather few diseases, healthy teeth and small mental stresses on people. If you can't talk over your problems with the woman over the garden fence, then of course you need quacks and head-shrinkers to sort you out. If you are constantly in a rush, caught in traffic jams, too tired for love and busy to relax, then of course you'll get a heart complaint. But it's patterns of life we need, not new 'miracle' heart transplants. In our case as claimants, it's warm dry rooms and few worries we need, not doctors to treat us when our shitty environment takes its toll.

If we eat bad adulterated food full of small traces of the poisons from our polluted environment, of course we'll fell off-peak, have headaches and be vulnerable to illness. The Medical Officer of Health for Eastbourne has showed that 50 per cent of children given 100 per cent wholewheat bread and an otherwise reasonable diet remained free from any tooth decay. This result is vastly superior to 'miracle toothpastes' let alone flouride in the water, which causes poisoning of the skeleton (see 'Your Environment No.s 1 and 3'). In other words we don't want more dentists at all, we want fewer by creating a healthy environment, diet, etc.

The same applies to other medical people, especially the orthodox medical people recognised by the State. The same conflict as before can be seen: the needs of the people for more health are at odds with the needs of the medical bureaucracies for more medicine and the industrialists for more crap in our environment, and more stress in our lives. Actual headline: 'Operation a Success----- But Man Dies' .

(iii) TECHNOLOGY

Nor is our unhealthy environment due to 'Technology' , since 'technology' is only a matter of particular technologies put together in particular ways by particular people to get particular results (at present to get profit and preserve the system). Abolish the system and we could create a more advanced technological way of life without any of the disadvantages of what people call 'Technological Society'.

That is to say without stress, pollution, inhuman economic scale, destruction of natural beauty etc. (see Lewis Herber, 'Our Synthetic Environment'). It all depends on whether we see health as produced in special Institutions called hospitals, or whether we see it as inevitably generated or not generated by our whole environment and way of life. Maybe the system wants more hospitals, but we need more health.

MAJORITY

A simpler example of the Welfare State will perhaps be less controversial: IF we have to have dangerous and expensive toys and virility symbols called cars roaring along our streets and knocking down 10,000 little children a year, then obviously we need lollipop men. But why can't streets be places for adults to meet and gossip in, with everyone 'looking out for' each others children as the occasional free bus went by. To measure advances by the number of lollipop men is daft.

MURDER

Similarly to measure improvements in public order by the number of cops 'we' or rather THEY have is stupid. The police have a dual role. One---the needs of the people--- involves helping old ladies across the road and preventing anti-social behaviour. We could all do this naturally if we had decent communities and decent environment Two--- the needs of the system--- involves stopping not anti-social behaviour on the streets, but anti-capitalist behaviour in the factories, such as workers take-overs and occupations. At present the police are being reinforced and given large pay increases, not to meet the needs of the people, but to meet the police's true role, the needs of the State.

SOFT COPS

It is in this way that we should see the 'soft cops' such as social workers, employment exchange officers and the S.S. Nobody is saying that claimants have never been individually helped by social workers. But we've been helped by plenty of other people, including other claimants. The 'social work' bit comes in to persuade us that we are the problem, not the system, to seek individualistic solutions and to depend on people from the middle class. The dole finds people jobs once in a blue moon, but 80 per cent of unemployed people find jobs through their mates or in some other way. The job of the dole is to force people back into shitty jobs, no matter what wages, no matter what conditions. As far as we are concerned as claimants all the interviews about "job preferences" and "vocational guidance" are so much bull-shit.

Likewise the Social Security Officers. They do meet certain needs of the people---under pressure and in the short term and given the system. Whatever welfare functions they do meet could be met by all of us far better in a different sort of society. S.S. officers are mainly 'necessary' to undo a fraction of the harm done by the main engine of the economy, constantly churning out profits at one end and poverty at the other. Abolish the Unwelfare economy and you've no need for a 'welfare' State to try and put things right with its endless welfare bureaucracies.

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Instead you've got a welfare society where the community looks after its own. In claimants unions we should see ourselves ultimately dissolved in the mutual aid systems of the new communities (not necessarily just geographically based). It would be crazy to imagine us centralized and focussed into a 'liason committee' to advise a 'Revolutionary' Government on how to run and staff the 'new' revolutionary MINISTRY of Social Security with well intentioned 'socialist' officers.

To confuse more welfare with more SS payments and more SS officers is to confuse more order with more cops, more health with more hospitals, and more education with more schools. All cops exist mainly to meet the needs of the system, whether 'hard cops' or 'soft cops'. We're at the receiving end of these welfare bureaucracies and what they know they are all crap. All we need is each other. BITE THE HAND THAT FEEDS YOU

SUCH A DEMAND WOULD DEFUSE THE WORK ETHIC

Instead of work being accepted unquestionably as everyone's lot, people would think before getting involved in any communal project: When the equation, WORK EQUALS MONEY EQUALS NECESSITIES is broken people will be free to ask WORK EQUALS WHAT? FOR WHO? WHY? Is the product necessary and to whom? Is it maybe shoddy or even actually harmful? Is the work pleasant to do, can it be made such, if not, could it be automated? Is the work being hampered by its bureaucratic management, with only a few people controlling the information and the pathways to getting things done? Is the work being arranged in the most efficient way, is there instead of a pyramid a complex crisscross many-centred pattern, with every one arranging short cuts with everyone else in the light of a clear plan? Was the plan drawn up by various working groups of workers and submitted to every one for criticism and debate before being agreed upon by a mass-meeting? What do the consumers around think of our work? Would I maybe prefer to stay in bed? How much of what we do is really necessary and worth the effort? What other activities could I engage in if I've got the money anyway? Wouldn't some of these be 'work' in a sense though closer to play?

As long as money equals necessities and work equals money then it is necessary for people to work. Buried beneath all arguments about the duty to contribute to society, this is what work comes down to for most people. You've got to eat haven't you? The harder we fight SS and the dole the better life we can build for ourselves as claimants, the more we contribute to the struggle of those in work and the increasingly militant on-the-job refusal of capitalist work as such, of some of them.

The demand would also hit at the phoney apprenticeship systems, which are nothing more than frauds dreamed up by the unions to protect their in the labour market in the name of a mystique of skills and sacrifice. The bosses know that most apprentices can learn the job in under six months, but they are only too pleased to have cheap labour for two, three, or four years. The net effect of these exclusive skills is divisive, and weakens the fighting solidarity of workers. By allowing the bosses to sink their hierarchic values deep

deep into working class culture, the working class also becomes a prey to middle class professional mystique, e.g. solicitors, teachers, town planners, etc. To divorce money from work done thus fits in with the need to destroy all division of labour which is more than just ad hoc, rational and changeable. In other words to destroy all division of labour which being fixed by an irrational mystique of qualifications begins to make people think of themselves as fixed this or fixed that, and unable to learn new tasks as the need arises as new needs are to be met by the community.

THE DEMAND WOULD DESTROY THE NUCLEAR FAMILY DOMINATED BY THE MALE ADULT

The S.S. system male domination and adult domination of the wider society. Payments are made to the adult male which bolsters his actual and symbolic power inside the family. Any demand ~~xxxx~~ of the unemployed male that he employ himself by doing 50% of all the housework, including the worry/responsibility/planning ahead side of it, can be met by economic sanctions. Likewise with the demand for equal spending money. True, the woman can always 'pack her bags', but this condemns her to a life of economic insecurity and/or loneliness. It only needs the gossip of a sex-starved spinster to reach the S.S., and the bastards will have her order book off her in a flash. Male domination, a nunnery, or prostitution are the choices open to her. For the child ~~xxxx~~ the possibilities of escape are even more restricted. If he or she runs away, the police will return the parents lost property and only very exceptional and well-off families could afford to let him stay with them. An independent order book to cover all the child needs to live would begin to make the freedom of the child a reality.

Paying every individual enough to live well would ensure that every relationship between individuals was the free ~~xxxx~~ choice of both of them. Cohabitation snooping would lose its point. If a relationship between adults becomes exploitative new partners or lovers can be found, or else the exploited person would have the confidence to check the trend in the first place. If a child finds his family oppressive or neglectful, or even if he or she gets a 'crush' on some other parent figure, the child would be able to choose a new set up which met his growing needs. Alongside the old ones, new family systems would emerge—extended families, communes, families of family systems, family clubs, etc. Anything which helps to destroy the rigid and oppressive family structure in which so many people find themselves trapped would play a big part in increasing mental welfare.

THE WORSHIP OF COMMODITIES WOULD DIMINISH, AS WOULD STATUS COMPETITIVENESS.

The demand for a LIVING income is not the same as guaranteed necessities. The whole issue of 'necessities' versus 'luxuries' is misleading because attention stops at the goods as ends in themselves, instead of passing beyond them to how they fit into a good, active, creative, caring pattern of life. With everyone guaranteed the necessities to live well commodities would be seen only as means to an end (real living) and not as substitute pleasures instead of living. The chronic compulsion for private HAVING (as opposed to free using when required) which the system breeds at present, would also be weakened if work were creative and enjoyable, and didn't have to be magically compensated for through worship of commodities.

Those who did want to amass such commodities would be free to go ahead as best they could (e.g. by making them in clubs of fellow collectors, or even buying them from such clubs with a special luxury token). The only rules which the rest of society would be justified in making would be 1) no right of inheritance of these luxury tokens, and 2) a strict separation between good-life-necessities money and the luxury money. This would avoid the danger of the present situation recurring where people can be enslaved to a boss in order to gain the necessities of a good life and where both superluxuries and food/shelter are covered by the same money /profit system.

Perhaps I should say more clearly why it's misleading to talk of commodities. Take the car for example---is it a luxury or a necessity? The question is wrongly put. We should rather ask do we need to be able to get around easily? The answer is clearly yes. If our friends and contacts and places of work and play are close to where we live, then we can walk round the corner, and all we need is legs. But many people would find such a way of life parochial, they like to travel further afield. So let them have unlimited free public transport, free buses, free trains and the use of free communal bicycles whenever needed, plus free or rationed seats in planes for really long distances. The whole question can be discussed on terms of human intentions and life-styles, without ever getting snarled up talking about the motor car as a thing in itself. (A recent survey showed that the average family saloon costs £11 a week to run all told---which means many folk are wasting a third of their working lives paying for a dangerous phallic symbol on wheels spewing out poisonous lead fumes which they then justify in terms of the amount of time it saves them! Another survey estimated the cost of free buses at 35 to 80 pence a week per household, depending on rates---and then bus conductors have the cheek to call us claimants unproductive! Yet another side to the question is the world metals shortage---world equality would mean that the rich exploiting countries would have to cut their metal usage very drastically indeed. Socialists whose propaganda is full of incitements to people to want an ever increasing standard of commodities, are no internationalists whatever they call themselves. Moreover they are swallowing the capitalists' lie that our quality of life depends on a standard of commodities, that we are what we own privately.

Another example would concern laundry facilities. Everybody hates laborious hand washing---does that mean washing machines for all? Yes, if we like worshipping commodities 98% of the time, and using them 2% of the time, yes, if we like working overtime to pay for our private goodies, and yes, if we ~~do~~ **do not** care about monopolising the world's natural resources. No, if we don't mind sharing a washer with other families in the street (or commune of neighbourhood club) while still having access whenever we need. Again we see that the total pattern of life more important for welfare than just commodities on their own.

PART TWO

Return to the Thirties?

Many people are talking about a return to the thirties with a corresponding repeat of the Unemployed Workers Movement. Although some aspects of the U.W.M. are still relevant (preventing scabbing, supporting strikes, attacking phoney 'relief' schemes) I think that it would be disastrous to aim for a repeat of the movement of the thirties. This is the Seventies.

New Factor One The New Level of Technological Potential
The development of automation, computers, standardisation, and other basic technologies means that work as toil is less and less necessary. Muscle effort and mental drudge are now avoidable to a considerable degree, or else should have been eliminated but weren't ten years ago. (See Robert A. Brady, Organisation and Society). Groups of non-workers fighting against repression have a powerful weapon in their hands if they have the anger and courage to use it: the new machinery is so vulnerable to sabotage.

NEW FACTOR TWO: THE DANGER OF FALLING CONSUMER DEMAND IS RECOGNISED

The capitalist economy has two features:

1) the earnings of the workers do not match the full value of what they produce;

2) the making of profit, although based on the production process, is not completed until there have been the necessary sales in the market.

Between these two aspects there is a contradiction: if the workers' earnings do not provide a large enough market to take up all the goods they produce, how can all the profits be realised?

There is a story about the president of General Motors going found his factories with the leader of the Automobile Workers Union, and arguing about a big union pay-claim. The president pointed to the machines and said that, at the new rates demanded he would have to get rid of the workers and introducing more machinery. Then where would the union be? "Quite so," the union manager replied, "But how many cars a year would the machines buy?"

The problem is not a new one for Capitalism, although the new levels of technology since the thirties make the problem worse. What is new is that this problem is now understood even by many of the ruling class. In different countries, more and more top-level Commissions are looking into ways of divorcing work from the right to consume. (National minimum wages, negative income tax, etc.,) The ruling class is saying: 'In order to keep the economy expanding, people must have money in their pockets to buy our commodities with, EVEN IF WE HAVE TO GIVE IT THEM FIRST!' Living incomes as opposed to working wages will be introduced more and more. That this may undermine people's willingness to be exploited in a factory is also understood by the bosses---which is why they try to make it a national minimum wage, and can never bring the level too close to a national average wage. This is where we come in. Even if our military methods cannot raise the level much further towards equality in MONEY terms than the minimum standard of COMMODITIES that the bosses want us to have, our efforts in other ways (not connected with money) can maybe bring us up far higher in standard (QUALITY) of living than the bosses realise they have allowed.

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If claimants can prevent their money incomes falling by sheer militancy and certain unprintable actions, and if we can create a good living for ourselves as far as possible by self-help and mutual aid; THEN it is possible we can upset the very difficult tightrope calculations by they hope to keep consumption high enough to avoid business crises without on the other hand creating labour trouble by competing with working wages, etc. They ~~making~~ haven't got much room to play with: we can make it less still.

The difficulty of the ruling class's balancing feat was not widely understood in the thirties: claimants were still vulnerable to a wholesale dole-cut. Now there was enough Keynesian economists within the ruling class to make this very, very unlikely. The ruling class liberals have have the economic arguments behind them this time.

NEW FACTOR THREE ENORMOUS MALEMPLOYMENT

In the thirties the unemployed were the main mass of socially useless workers- their wives were never unemployed. Apart from a million or so capitalists, the only other category of useless people was relatively small: workers in socially useless jobs. Jobs such as patents clerks and private servants helped only capitalists, not society, and they didn't add to the three million unemployment level. Most workers could claim they were contributing to society's needs. This gave them a sense of moral superiority over unemployed people who society was having to carry.

MALEMPLOYMENT

Now the unemployment problem is dwarfed by a 10 million MALEMPLOYMENT problem (see Appendix to part 2) Many organised workers can no longer claim to be socially useful members of society, however hard they work: they are only capitalistically necessary to the system. Fewer and fewer workers can stand at the bottom of the social pyramid and say, "We feed all". Its socially built machinery which keeps us clothed and fed and housed more than anything now. The workers making a slum clearance house might just as well have been told to build a luxury office block. The worker employed in a torpedo factory will find themselves on the dole when it closes - unless they occupy and use the machinery for some social production as Bessy Alexandria workers on Clydeside are threatening. But if they are thrown on the dole, they'll be no more useless to society as good honest dole-collectors than they were in their old jobs, and than they will be in any new jobs as Securicorps guards or rent collectors or ad-agency window cleaners. All they'll be doing is spending a lot of effort helping capital.

In the late thirties the system stabilized itself by emptying the dole queues and filling the arms factories. Now arms, while still very important, are only one of the ways which Capital uses to stabilise itself;

***Space Race and the creation of big spectacles for the population to be lulled by and made to feel inadequate in comparison with

***Advertising and Consumerism--Encouraging Privatised patterns of spending, constantly pushing more and more goods at people by sophisticated sales techniques.

****Intensification of Waste, Irrationality
 Built in obsolescence and the
 artificial differentiation of
 essentially duplicate commodities,
 irrational distribution patterns.

****Expanding Repression industry-Police
 Army, Securicorps, etc plus general
 increase in supervisory jobs relative
 to productive jobs

****Bureaucratisation of welfare functions
 and simple services.

In other words, while unemployment was the main proof of the irrational waste of capitalism in the 30's, now it is just the tip of an iceberg of MALEMPLOYMENT. In many ways it would be better to have only necessary jobs carried out, and unemployment of 11 million. Or rather a twenty hour week for all with no loss of pay. Or else the right to work or not to work clearly established, without economic pressure to work, which is what the demand for equal living incomes is all about.

Either way to discuss non-work and to neglect the nature of work is stupid. Likewise to discuss work without discussing things like housework and child care is to accept a capitalist and male-chauvinist definition of what counts as 'real' work.

NEW FACTOR FOUR

LOOSENING OF THE WORK ETHIC

An instinctual revolt at meaningless repressive graft is occurring among more and more people; especially young people. Many factors play a part in this growing distaste for employment: less arduous work, slightly more free time, the growth of consumer and leisure industries, easier childhoods, contraception and the still embryonic 'sexual revolution'. Absenteeism figures show a long term rise, sabotage is rife in response to speed up, workers go-slow habitually. Many of these and other phenomena are nothing new: they are traditional responses of the working class. What is new is their scale and social acceptability and above all, the element of play that is breaking through more and more. In the U.S. they call it 'goofing off' on the job, in Britain 'arsing about'-- either way its fun. Elaborate factory rings are the subject of constant jokes. Among housewives and schoolgirls, shoplifting is getting to be a national sport.

The moral Discipline and sexual controls of 19th century industrialism were never very acceptable to the lower orders, but now, with prospects opening up for the abolition of toil altogether, they're fucking Itolerable. The individuals instinctual revolt finds a support from the new technical and economic possibilities which it never could have had in the thirties.

NEW FACTOR FIVE : DOING OUR OWN THING-- THE DIFFUSION OF INTERMEDIATE TECHNOLOGIES DE-INSTITUTIONALISATION OF PEOPLECARE

In the thirties, many unemployed workers hung around the doles, but the nearest they got to work was picking coal. The Unemployed workers movement encouraged hobbies and individual making-do, but not social projects. We've got to see how ordinary people can do their thing (some are already), not just arty "hippies" in arts labs in a trendy part of London. Doing your own thing means unalianated work, work we choose and enjoy, see the point of, control and direct for our own and others benefit, not a boss.

When we talk of 'doing our own thing' we are not talking of any technological primitivism, such as was the only option in the thirties. Since the thirties, electrical power and 'affluence' have brought a diffusion of intermediate technologies, some of them very sophisticated, to ordinary working class communities. Even if they do not own them, (as many claimants do not) the possibility exists of borrowing them from neighbours, relatives, ex-workmates. Knitting and sewing machines, power tools and other do-it-yourself equipment come in this category. Garages can be converted into little workshops, home-brew kits are popular, parts and machinery can be taken from old cars and other gadgets. If they saw their opportunity, trained metallurgists and mechanics could get into advanced scrap Technology, recycling the metal wastes of the consumer society in the name, not of exchange value, but of use-value. Many hobby enthusiasts could begin to see their interest on a new light. Duplicators for local papers or duplicating mutual-aid registers can be got at one way or another, and the spread of litho equipment to small firms ought to create possibilities for wangling the odd free run, in return for some home-brew: The working class is already into illicit communication at an advanced technological level: viz blue film networks shown socially on home cine projectors. Safecracking technologies are another example from the present of non boss work finding the means to get things done.

Even if unemployed people do not see their activity in a social light of 'building the alternative society', but only in a strict monetary sense, such activities have considerable potential. There is no special reason why a woman working a machine in a knitwear factory for a boss, should be more efficient than a woman or a man working a fairly similar machine at home (the factory system of bringing production under one roof was based on a centralised power-supply: water or steam powering along central powershaft to which the individual machine were attached. Electricity is a potentially decentralising source of power. Factory centralisation is now not always for technological reasons, but often economic or social reasons.) Likewise for other possibilities for earning money (e.g. illicit exchange or sale of home brew). Remember I am not talking about work for a boss: Home production such as in the toy trade is horribly mechanical and disgustingly exploited, because of the isolation of the workers. Provided no neighbour 'rats', claimants can bring their ~~pages~~ money up several ~~times-the~~ pounds above the Supplementary rates with relatively little working hours. If they see it not in money terms, but in terms of building the alternative society, so much the better, but even without this mutual aid motivation, it makes work for a boss that much less attractive and contributes to 'labour unrest' under capitalist work conditions.

People care is also becoming de-institutionalised; at least in theory the bankruptcy of the welfare-bureaucratic approach is more and more evident. In medical and social work circles the cry is for community care. In educational circles the cry is for

community education. On the other hand women are more and more refusing sole responsibility for care of children, aged, sick and disabled or handicapped. Community solutions must increasingly be found, not privatised solutions on the one hand, and not State institutional solutions on the other.

The unemployed metal worker making toys in his garage for his neighbours' seven year old daughter, may not realise it, but he is providing 'education' as much as any school, and better if he lets her see him make the toy, beginning with that twisted old bike frame that someone threw over the fence, and ending with a rocker or a pogo-stick. The construction worker and his wife who build an adventure playground with materials and a Sunday bulldozer fiddled through his earlier contacts in work, can get the local kids to help him and a rota drawn up for any supervision that is necessary. Older claimants and the disabled are very often only too pleased to read kids stories or babysit or reminisce about the thirties with a group of 'young uns'. Educative networks for matching skill-learners with voluntary skill-teachers can be set up. People disabled in one way can often help those disabled in another, and vice versa. We don't need welfare bureaucrats and experts, we don't need large amounts of capital, we do need each other and the enormous pool of energy and morale that lies untapped in every ghetto, city district and estate.

A practical consequence of this viewpoint is liable to lead to much conflict with the views of traditional workres and 'revolutionaries'. In the thirties the Unemployed Worker's Movement was very much intent on stopping the unemployed working collective schemes for themselves, e.g. growing potatoes and selling them cheaply or giving them away. This was only throwing agricultural workers out of jobs and encouraging them unemployed to lower their sights concerning the value of their own labour on the national stage. Unemployed workers should never undercut the trades union rate whether working for themselves directly or for a Boss.

Now the time has come to stop Uncle-Tomming to the organised workers in this way. Their work isn't the only true work. Sure we should stop fellow claimants scabbing on workers employed by the system by taking their factory jobs at low rates, but when we work directly for ourselves, and expand unalienated 'work' in all sorts of socially useful directions, then we'll do what we want with our energies, thank you very much! Are we not to organise child-care facilities, just because this might put a nursery nurse out of a job (it wouldn't anyway)? The question is ridiculous. There is something vaguely obscene about the whole idea of people being paid to look after other people. Are we that irksome to each other? Women's Liberation is right to force housework and child care into social acceptance and definition as 'real' work. But does that mean paid work? Not pay for housework and child care, but pay for no work - a living income should be their demand. With men being forced to take ~~new~~ equal responsibility, and new family structures and community patterns emerging, child care would lose its oppressive, all absorbing and irksome aspects. Likewise care of old people is irksome largely because of the privatised/ institutionalised contexts in which it takes place, instead of ~~xxx~~ being a community or communal affair with the old people free to who and what suits them.

One of the major causes of demoralisation and petty unresolved antagonisms and status worries in communities is that people never come together to do things. Big Brother handles our important community function for us. We just dangle as isolated cells on the skeleton of State and Capitalist provision. One of our major priorities is to recover all these function which the State has appropriated. State nurseries for all - Big Brother is only too delighted to condition our kids into zombies after five, without our begging to extend his control further. Similarly with nonsense about raising the school leaving age.

Similarly, with union requests that we stop doing repairs for each other on council estates, just because council maintenance men complain. By all means lets try to explain our position to them. But give way? never! What else does the demand of tenants self-management of council estates mean? for God's sake? If we are against the H. Bomb it does mean that we are in favour of H. Bomb workers being unemployed in the short term. If we are against Council control of estates, it does mean that some council employees might lose their job with the council. Unemployment isn't our fault, its the systems. Likewise with Malemployment. We aren't carrying the can any longer in the name of a spurious 'class unity'. If ~~we~~ those of us who want the privilege of being exploited can't get worksharing through the unions, we'll force it on the union members directly, by organising more and more things amongst ourselves; if INDIRECTLY there is less work and less money for ~~in~~ those in jobs, well that's worksharing, that's equality brother, now join us in a Revolution brother. Organising these things ourselves increases claimant/lumpen confidence in our own capacities, it prevents the demoralisation of mere next-door-ness with no prior occasion for relating by doing things together, and it makes the prospect of dropping out of the organised system less terrifying and hence weakens the bosses' big stick of the sack.

The unemployed workers movement were right for their age when a defensive struggle was needed around the slogan, - a fair's day's pay and a fair day's work - (by which was meant employment). Now an offensive struggle is possible and necessary to separate work from employment under the banner of 'Abolition of the Wage System'. Only instead of preaching about unalienated work, we can begin to develop it among ourselves as all different kinds of claimants, and show our work to those who cannot imagine the difference between work and alienated employment. Our movement must the whole nature of work in our society, not batter on the doors of the system for re-admittance on the treadmill of wage slavery. Increased technological potential in the wider society; the 10 million male employment problem; rejection of alienated work by more and more young workers; the possibility for new kinds of unalienated work in some manufacturing and service sectors; and the beginning of the end of institutionalised people professions: all these factors point in roughly the same direction - not back to the thirties, but on to a revolutionary welfare society.

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APPENDIX TO PART 2 BREAKDOWN OF MALEMPLOYMENT FIGURES.

CARS	1 million
ARMS	1million
GOVERNMENT	1 million
DISTRIBUTION2 million
THE, CITY, LAW, THEIR SERVANTS.1 million
SERVICES, SERVICE TRADES.	375,000
MANUFACTURING(excluding arms and cars).	1,650,000
construction	640,000
TRANSPORT.	600,000
IDLE RICH AND LUMPEN	750,000

total 10, million

Basis for these calculations = Annual Abstract of Statistics

(Central Office of Statistics)

~~XXXX~~ plus the following assumptions and further breakdowns

CARS 1,000,000 useless jobs

480,000 motor-vehicle makers

431,000 car retailers, garage employees

Plus numerous car insurance and licence clerks, traffic wardens, police engaged in traffic affairs, chauffeurs, road builders, multi-storey car parks etc., etc.

The argument is based on the belief that the private car is the most irrational and expensive means of transport known to man short of hopping with both legs tied behind your back -see earlier arguments.

TRANSPORT 600,000 male employment

150,000 (out of 300,000) railwaymen--bureaucratic inefficiency of railways and resistance to the containerisation and automation of the railway system, guards, ticket collectors etc. This is not meant as ammunition for bastards who want to rationalise railmen out of jobs. The right to work takes precedence over our calculations which are based on what we ~~XXXX~~ ~~XXXX~~ as outsiders imagine are the necessary hours of work that would be spent in a rationally organised society based on equal incomes.

100,000 bus conductors, when public transport is made free.

60,000 dockers, out of 136,000, good luck to their fight against rationalisation so long as the alternative of unemployment or work sharing means a cut in wages. But let them not pretend that their jobs are any more socially useful than being on the dole, only more profitable.

40,000 in air transport--out of 64,000.

241,000 in road haulage--replaceable by containerised and computerised freight systems on the railways, extension of branch lines to factories, and distance journeys handled by "goods buses" loading and delivering standardised size units. (See R.S. Brady--Organisation, Automation, and Society).

ARMS

1,000,000 workers, many of whom would agree that that their jobs were harmful in social effects. Only it's 'just a job! Both unemployed and employed should blame capitalism/the State, not each other. But no other basis for claimants

class unity exists for claimants than to ride out the antagonisms that may be aroused when pointing out such details in order to oppose anti-claimant prejudice or begin thinking rationally about a future society.

MANUFACTURING (excluding arms and cars.)

1,650,000 out of a total of nine million.

"By far the greater part of the sales effort is carried out, not by obviously unproductive workers such as salesmen and advertising copy writers, but by seemingly productive workers, tool and die makers, draughtsmen, mechanics, assembly line workers" (from Monopoly Capital by Baran and Sweeny, whose book is basic for an understanding of malemployment.) The sales effort throws the irrationalities of phoney competition back into the productive process. Sales criteria determine production through built in obsolescence, constant model changes, gimmicery, identical products competing, bad quality, and the non-introduction of relevant technologies.

DISTRIBUTION 2 million ~~unemployed~~ mal-employed-competing stores, buying everything in tiny quantities instead of 71lb bags, or 20lb barrels, 4 milk rounds up the same street, stupid packaging, store detectives and cash registers in some articles which could be better socialised, antique methods in warehousing and small quantities handled etc.

GOVERNMENT 1 million

400,000 armed forces
 120,000 Ministry of Defence
 150,000 Industrial defence staff.
 plus hundreds of thousands of officials in local and national government, half of whose functions would be unnecessary in a free society of self-managing communities and industrial groupings.

THE CITY, THE, AND THEIR PRIVATE SERVANTS: 1 million

Insurance, banking financial ~~xxx~~ 675,000
 Accounts 92,000
 Legal services 110,000
 Private domestic services 152,000

Services 375,000
 150,000 half these in laundries and hairdressing
 250,000 half those in other 'services'.

CONSTRUCTION 640,000 out of 1,600,000

320,000 engaged in useless prestige spectacles such as office blocks, and new estates to rehouse people whose communities should never been knocked down in the first place--but not counting previously counted roads.

320,000 non-development of new building ~~xxx~~ techniques and materials and standards, due to irrational structure of industry and profit motive, and fear of dole preventing new techniques.

IDLE RICH 250,000 --parasites. MISCELLANEOUS OTHERS

~~xxx~~ 400,000 many jobs in the following occupations, clerks, caterers, electrical supply, ~~xxxxx~~ students, teachers, parsons, doctors, due especially to bureaucratisation.

JAILS * 100,000 at least.

Notes: These calculations are very rough and better figures are hard to come by, since the bosses collect the figures. A case could be made out for far bigger malemployment if judged by a self-management society beginning some time ago and introducing the technologies of the last 25 years in completely different ways without the restrictive practices which are only necessary to the workers when they are on the defensive in class society. But there may also be some double-counting in the above. Even if I have overestimated by 4 million, that still makes malemployment 6 times bigger than corrent unemployment.

Part Three Fighting for equal incomes for all.

In the first part I considered what would happen if the demand for equal living incomes 'were introduced'; This was false because the state neither would nor could 'introduce' such a demand. The demand could only be realised by us, all of us fighting together, and building the new society of equality and independence as we fight. The welfare society must be partially built now in the ghettos and on the estates. In the second part I began to suggest ways in which we could build it, or at least survive while unemployed far better than the bosses want us to. Claimants cannot smash the system on their own, but we have a unique part to play in defusing the old system and its work habits and structures. It is precisely because we are not so integrated that we can glimpse a different system. The contribution we can make to smashing the old system is by countering the stigma and degradation and of being claimants, coming out front with our 'uselessness' and hurling it in the face of the crappy useless shitty useless USELESS system we live in. We share a common oppression at the hands of the welfare bureaucracies of our Welfare State and this allows us to see what its really all about. We should therefore fight in terms of our specific oppressions, against both welfare-bureaucratic and work ethic definitions of claimants. We should be careful not to tie ourselves in with old struggles on enemy terrain, but wherever new struggles and projects and tactics are emerging, ther will be plenty of scope for us to contribute to other groups and classes, and make alliances which respect our independence, receivong support for our struggles and building in turn.

* * * * *

The Fisher Commis^sion wrote to the National Federation of Claimants Unions asking to send evidence before it. WE replied that we wanted it put on ~~xxxxxxx~~ record that we thought the whole thing was 'bullshit' reppat 'bullshit'.

The system always moves to incorporate, bribe or smother any section which is fighting for itself. Even to 'defend' claimants against the scrounger charge is to leave our fellow claimants behind and be drawn onto the systems terrain. To hell with Joseph and Heath and Fisher and their 'tame sociologists', and the same to Wilson and his lot. To hell with them all.

But what about their dupes in the organised working class? How should we try to relate to them? Which sectors are the most likely for us to be able to make an alliance with?

Some are advocating urging the T.U.C. to "take up its responsibility for us". This suggests we are helpless and part of the working class. We aren't. We don't work. We may have certain cultural similarities with working class people, but we aren't just a representative section of the working class, which just happens not to work. In the sense of not being employed, non-work is here to stay. In the sense of applying our energies we all do it anyway. The old idea that you had to be exploited before you were any use to the revolution is bullshit. It mirrors the capitalists' notion of who's valuable. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy since if people are encouraged to believe being non-employed is like a disease, they will tend to act demoralised. It neglects the vitality and power of the recent movements of oppressed people fighting against their specific oppressions (which nevertheless have a general significance for the whole of society, e.g. Gay Lib. and Womens Lib. are questioning the whole bases of our sexuality, whether we are gay or women or macho building workers). Blacks would never have got off their in the states if they had heeded the Communist Parties' abstract calls for class unity, and only fought on general exploitation issues. As claimants we are oppressed by the welfare bureaucracies and their definition of us as shiftless, thriftless, "Problems e.t.c. We also are oppressed by working class people who start talking about how much taxes they pay in loud voices when we go into a pub for a drink. We've got to come out front like gay people with their homosexuality, and stop being ashamed of ourselves, and fight back in a hundred little incidents against local stigmatization processes. We are excluded from society's main rituals of work and consumption - and we are fucking fed up of being rotten stinking POOR.

Moreover the way to influence the T.U.C. supposedly lies via the Trades Councils, the trade unions and their straight-line keep-to-the-pavement marches -- in the workers own time of course -- our thanks are due to the Chief Constable of Bore-upon-Fart for making it all possible, and the Lord Mayor for the use of his hall. First there is the question of what the trade unions are for. They now function to maintain social 'peace' for the bosses. ALL the unions (even the 'left ones') are bureaucratic in structure, forbidding link-ups through independent inter-branch or inter-union channels. The full time officials have their own ideology and their own interests which -- in so far as they coincide with their own members, represent only the most INTEGRATED STRATUM of the working class, the meeting-goers, the resolution passers, the 'responsible' unionists, the ones in steady jobs, well-paid by working class standards, foremen and skilled, white, middleaged or older, and male. And it is this stratum that some people within the claimants unions are proposing an alliance with ???! Are they serious? With these workers suits and respectability are the rule, tradition directs their 'thinking' for whatever new motions they pass, their life styles are 100% constipated. With them also we find praise of the work-ethic. However in terms of the system appear to be in favour of 'organising the unemployed', they also make noises about 'higher social security benefits'

though they only ever threaten to strike on the plight of our poor dumnanimal pensioners, suppressing with their pity the smouldering ANGER, and avoiding any calls to strike on a straight across the board increase. When debating proposals for general increases they praise the good honest 'genuine' claimants, the more to attack the 'layabouts', the 'scroungers' 'themas wont work', the fiddlers. (Exactly the same measures that the Fisher Commission will use to split 'the vast amount of law-abiding blah-blahs' from the extremists and abusers). In the same way they persecute gypsy camps near their home's, while maintaining stoutly that they've nothing against 'the true Romanies'. In the same way racists in the States praise the good black folk, the better to isolate the 'uppity nigger', the extremist hoodlums.

Well we're the SCUM, Mr Straight-Integrated-Worker, we're the extemists, layabouts and fiddlers, the wreckers, nut-cases, and ex-cons, the drop-outs, kick-outs, and the SCUM, SCUM, SCUM. The Establishment has beaten us in jails called schools, sacked us from factories and colleges, broken our bodies in mines on sites, in factories, threatened us with starvation in the doles, locked us in jails and mental hospitals, scapegoated us in clubs and pubs and lied to us in Social Security. O.k., O.K., we're thescum, but we're not ashamed, WE'RE ANGRY Mr Goodwrker.

Listen to us. You get takehome of £28. YOU're scapegoating us for refmsung jobs at £14 or £15. O.K., well take a cut in wages see how you like it! You don't like shitty wages, either, you extremist malcontent? You've gone on strike? Right on, Mr Straight Worker, that's exactly what we're DOING!. On ~~strike~~ strike, permanent strike! Get that!

You say we are unproductive, Mr. Straightworker. Well why don't you pick a quarrel with someone your own size ?? Like the boss on your back. Or is he productive I suppose, because 'he supplied the machinery'? He never made a machine in his life, another wrpker made the machine you use, the bosses never made a thing in their lives except profits out of you, you unselfish philanthropic fool you. Anyway we are all of us bound up in the irrationality of capitalism, and half the horny handed workers of this country are socially useless because of the work the system makes you do --though if you stayed at home and washed nappies toy would at least be some use.

You say we are fiddlers. O.K. we fiddle S.S. we aren't the 'genuine' claimants, and we arn't going to uncle Tom and pretend we are. So I suppose youv'e never pinched popper in your lives, you've never filled a time sheet in wrong, or got your mate to drop tou off some stuff from his waggon? Right goody-goodies we've got here, almost as honest as the boss class and its expence account fiddlesand its tax rackets, both 'legal' and 'illegal'; which comes to more than Supplementary Benefit pay-out in a year. What? you do pinch stuff when you need it? Right on, Mr. Dishonestwrecker worker, you're ~~xxx~~ our brother. Can tou get us a power drill out for our claimants social club workshop?

Listen here Mr. Straight Worker, you say you favour equality. Well what about your 'differentials' you safeguard so jealously? Why shoudn't a roadsweeper get the same as a tradesman or assembly line worker? And why shouldn't we? How about some real equality, not 'equality of opportunity' - that means to compete for unequal pay, power and prentige. How about EQUAL equality and no 'differentials' in pay, power and prentige.

The very development of late capitalist society in the last twenty five years is leading to a breakdown of its monolithic class structures. Superimposed on the old (still crucial) ownership/non-ownership of the means of production, are a host of new splits: order-givers and order-takers; men and women, blacks and whites; old workers and young workers, parents/teachers and children; straight and unstraight; 'sane and insane'; expert and non-expert; students and non-students; low paid and high paid industries; workers' and 'non-workers'. However true it still is that the mass of white, skilled, middle aged, workers have got to get off their knees and fight the System if we are going to have a revolution and not just revolts, if we're to have a good revolution then all these other struggles can in no way be treated as 'secondary' or peripheral. Anybody who feels oppression and fights against it is in the revolution centrally. We're marginal to exploitation but we're centrally oppressed.

It is in this context that we as claimants (i.e. non-capitalist non-employed) must emerge as a distinct force with our own strategy, and fighting against all oppression as we experience it (not just the fact of low benefits which is certainly bad enough), and constructing aid networks (mutual) to prefigure unalienated forms of life and work in the future society. Nobody is suggesting we can make a revolution all on our own. But we'll make revolutionary alliances on our own terms, not by static alliances which only last, so long as we agree to uncle tom back under the wings of the High Priests of the work ethic, allowing them to tacitly ignore three quarters of us (women, black, disabled, etc.) while they concentrate their energies on reducing unemployment to keep themselves scarce as labour power.

History is on our side if we hold out for the right not to 'work', at the same time as we assert the right of all who want to work to have work of a socially useful kind. Nobody has the right to pollute my environment or patrol our streets, no matter how many jobs it creates. WE must not get cold feet simply because we find workers who have been indoctrinated against us. They've had to repress the truth of their own 'labour discipline! But the round of work 5 days a week, 9 hours a day is becoming increasingly hatefull to them too (else why do they resent us, why are they jealous?) Some day the pressure of their own repressed instincts is going to break through all the responsible union crap about fair days work and right work and traditional trades at present being defended against the tide of history by the traditional left and the unions. The system can contain the traditional labour movement (Luddism in league with the work ethic). What it can't contain is a wave of occupations which contest the uses of technology, which totally challenge the wage system as such, which destroys all internal struggle as it fights, which poses the nature of consumerism on the one hand, and understands its own relationship to the surrounding community on the other. Indeed just as the furthest point in the student movement aims at the abolition of the role of the student as such, so such a movement would destroy the very category of 'the worker' and leave only men and women who are freed of economic coercion, and who are alive, active, caring.

Meanwhile we can co-operate with those in the non capitalist sector who have no stake in the existing order and know it: women, kids, blacks, some students, gays, the unstraight, 'looney' and freak. Co-operate is the wrong word, we ARE MANY in these categories, and ppressed in these specific ways. The priority is to fight hard against any reproduction of the old society's practices and attitudes within our movement. The old are another category who are getting restless at being 'tossed on the scrapheap' X and turned into problems. Their struggle is obviously of concern to us as it unfolds; let us make sure that it doesn't need to be against us, against society's age-chauvinism which we have carried into our movement like a Trojan horse. This is not a pious wish only, but an urgent necessity if we are to release ever, streams of combativity and commitment in our movement which have been blocked and ignored.

We can also co-operate with the least integrated workers and prevent the possibility of scabbing by unemployed where necessary. Young workers, the unskilled, workers fighting the system as such through independent link-ups, not based on the domination of new struggles by boring old men sitting in union offices or party headquarters, these are the sorts of struggles we can support on an equal basis receiving aid in our turn, whether it's wildcat action in general against low benefits or constructive fiddles: a worker mate of mine says that it's amazing what falls off the back of a lorry if you know the right people.

Naturally the constructive 'work', the social arrangements and fiddles that I call 'self help and mutual', non of this takes place divorced from the context of a class society, so in a hundred different ways we'll be coming up against the system all the time, e.g. their planning permission for OUR adventure playground. Claimants do not have much economic power, so we will be forced to use more imaginative methods, symbolic action, disruptive actions, mass direct action and other actions which of their nature cannot with more than a small group. Self help and mutual aid can become an ideology when separated from this essential class combativity against the system. But right now the dangers in other directions are far greater: more militancy and combativity without constructive social initiatives can lead to either :

nihilism and isolation on the one hand,

or: The bureaucratic and centralised solutions of an all powerful 'socialist' state on the other, egged on by the 'revolutionary' parties because people have got so used to demanding things ~~xxxxxxx~~ off the State that they need the State to organise their lives.

or: general long term ineffectiveness, in which the richness of a whole community of individuals fighting for a whole new social world, becomes reduced to a narrow boring series of 'political' meetings, and 'political WORK' which is as alienating and depressing as bloody factory work.

To illustrate that these constructive social aspects of our struggle should not be seen as fancy optional extras alongside the real political fight, let us look at the struggle of council tenants. On the face of it they are in a strong position, being in actual possession of the houses, and political solidarity would seem to be easy to get up. Yet time and time again tenants have sprung up to counter this or that rent increase and after a brief battle fade away again, with the Council getting away with it in the long term.

This lack of revolutionary fighting success is due to neglect of those positive constructive social projects which are usually dubbed 'reformist' in those circles where everything happens because of economics and politics, rather than as a complex social process which can generate solidarity and struggle and constructive 'work. By concentrating simply on short rent increases, and ignoring the idea of tenants self-management of estates, and refusing to pose the whole quality of social life, most tenants are unable to evoke sustained commitment... Solidarity is sabotaged by all the jealousy and lack confidence and petty status hang-ups that constructive work together on self-managed social projects would have sapped at the base, ~~based~~ rather than preached against in the style of most tenants associations committees. Politically top-heavy organisations have abuilt in ceiling on growth, and at the other end they are liable to sudden disappearance.

Claimants unions could develop active claim-groups on the estates, with every claimant on the estate 'coming out front' in meetings and gradually getting used to struggling with the S.S. for everything 'forcible'-as opposed to 'allowable! But claimants are also in the special position of not having to be exhausted every day by nine hours exploitation. We can get up in the morning and consider with our husbands, wives, partners, friends, kids how we are going to spend this days precious energy. We are 'nt brought up in advance. Instead of drifting, the possibility of creative self-direction opens up. Claimants are naturally in a position to help in community activities and in establishing new social priorities.

* * * * *

Fellow claimants, there IS no way back into the system for us. We are second class citizens because of the system, not because of any accident which could be remedied by the system. We've got to stop ourselves feeling ashamed of ourselves, and realise just how angry we all feel underneath it all. What we have to offer can only be accepted and valued in a different system, and what we need to live can only be taken in that different system. The WELFARE STATE offers us precarious survival at the cost of our dignity. This same system satisfies nobody and is provoking many movements like ours to change things. A good society is there for the living in if we have the courage to struggle for it and the imagination and love to make it. CLAIM THE WORLD AND CLAIM IT NOW.

**** * * * * *

Appologies for typing errors but here you see the triumph of grass roots democracy in that of the many comrades who lent a hand this was the first time ~~they~~ put tender finger tip to typewriter. Also it never occurred to us until too late that there was such a substance as correcting fluid. All power to the fingers!

→ SOME HAD