

5. Union Organisation at Dagenham - 1937

Ford

TEXT

During the latter half of 1937, the question of trade union recruitment in the Dagenham area was resurrected. Wage rates at this period in Dagenham were higher than those in alternative employment in the area, which meant the Company was able to meet its labour requirements without any great difficulty, despite bad conditions, harsh discipline, and refusal to recognise the trade unions.

At a General Council Meeting of the Trade Union Congress on Wednesday, 8th December 1937, a copy of an anonymous letter was read, as follows:

“DEAR SIR, every week outside the Briggs and Ford factories, leaflets are being distributed to the workers, using your officials' and other trade union leaders' speeches as propaganda, in order to further their subtle Fascist reaction to the workers' unity.

Don't you officials think it is time something was done to counter-act it, or are the unthinking men and women and children to be led into a trap in order to break up all unions, including your own, like they were misled in other countries?

We, of the Briggs Body Corp., are the victims of low wages and high speed production. The work is such that we are becoming mere appendages to the machines, the machine setting the speed. Everyone in these works is panicky and nervous, accidents occur by the dozen. The First Aid is, by the nature of things, also working at top speed. One poor fellow was crushed to death last night owing to the anarchy prevailing in methods of work. Men and women are so afraid of losing their bread and butter that they dash about here and there, without any regard for the safety of themselves or any other. This was how the man was killed. He was crushed by an overhead crane. The crane-man has to hustle so fast that he had no time to look out for anyone who might be in his way.

We are crying out for organisation, and the only thing we are offered is this crafty red bogey pamphlet, in order to use when "Der Tag" arrives, for some Fascist leader to declare all unions illegal. Will you help us to set the feet of these workers on the path of real unionism, or must some of us come to the Communistic conclusion that nobody gives a hang, and the only way out for us is "Bloody Revolution"?

The normal day's work here is from seven (morning) until seven-thirty (night), at straight time. No overtime money is allowed. The wages average about one shilling and fourpence per hour. Some children are paid fourpence-halfpenny. We work 50 to 60 hours per week. It is a terrible strain. As workers we plead that you use your power in order to make these conditions public property; as we have to be very careful owing to the well-oiled espionage system in force here, we are approaching your organisation first.

If this plea fails, desperation will make us look around for others who may make us bring our grievances to the fore. For reasons that are obvious, we are very sorry, but we can only sign ourselves as,

"TWELVE BRIGGS WORKERS"

[It was agreed by the TUC, after the letter was read, that a National Conference of Trade Unions be convened, with the intention of organising workers in the Dagenham area.]

Reprinted from a Ford Dagenham Shop Stewards' pamphlet.

"There are periodic layoffs, and hundreds of workers are laid off with hardly any notice. When Ford begins to take on workers again, it's hard to say who will be coming back into the factory. There's no doubt that hundreds of Union members are managing to get themselves signed on at these plants by not admitting the fact that they're Union members....Discipline is very strict in the factory, and there is an extensive Company spy system. The factory is infested with informers, whose job is to spy on any show of militancy and refer it to the relevant department. Workers who are pointed out in this way are put on the list for the next round of layoffs." 173

The Drive for Unionisation

The Communists were putting very strong pressure on the AEU to concentrate its unionising efforts in the sections where there were large numbers of skilled workers. This is explained by the fact that these sections were the only ones that were immune from high labour turnover (in fact Ford had considerable difficulty recruiting skilled men in the period 1935-37) [Note 48].

Up until 1936, the process of unionising Ford was due almost entirely to the efforts of the AEU. The other unions and the TUC played little part in it. The TUC had a policy of banning Communists from holding office in it - but the Communists were so successful in pushing the AEU recruiting campaign that the TUC was finally forced to reconsider its official position (which was to "leave Ford alone") and to start a recruiting campaign for the bigger unions, in Essex (1936-37). The campaign was led by the AEU, and was boycotted in vain by the TUC officials at Ford. This campaign was not only an attempt to strengthen internal organisation inside Fords: it was also an attempt to mobilise a factory struggle which, if it produced some victories, could reduce the very high mobility of the labour force at Dagenham. This would be done by improving conditions at Dagenham, and would force up wage levels in South East Essex as a whole (taking advantage of a boom period), as well as reducing still further the likelihood of tensions between the employed and the unemployed.

This was now a period of boom production. The factory saw an influx of the last intake of agricultural labour and small farmers who had been driven from the British countryside by the crisis in agriculture, and this coincided with a strengthening of the Unions in the factory. The number of workers at Dagenham virtually doubled between 1935 and 1937, and after the temporary lull of 1938-1940, increased again by nearly a quarter in the second phase of the War effort, 1941-1942.

After the unionisation campaign of 1936-1937 (with the other Unions now competing with the AEU for membership), a semi-clandestine network of shop stewards began to show its organisational strength with a number of stoppages and sectional strikes against the employers and against the TUC. Both the employers and the TUC refused to recognise this "unofficial" organisation - precisely because the rigid way that Ford organised their production process left no room for the traditional form of representation through shop stewards, which existed in factories based on piecework. In this period 46-48 hours a week were still the norm. 174

In general, the worker's standard of living at Dagenham before the start of the War was not as poor as in other European countries. There were no direct taxes on workers' wages; transportation costs to the factory were still low, because the factory and the housing where Ford workers lived were still quite close together (unlike the postwar period,

6. The Unionisation of Ford America - 1941

In 1941 Henry Ford took a major step forward in American industrialism, and signed a closed shop agreement with the UAW at the River Rouge and Lincoln plants. The Union's demands were extensive: 1] wage increases to make Ford the highest paid in the motor industry; 2] abolition of Ford's goon squads; 3] a shop steward system; 4] time-and-a-half for all overtime over 8 hours and double time for Sundays; 5] limited layoff pay; 6] last in first out; 7] reinstatement of thousands of workers fired for being union members. Ford granted this - and stated "From now on, Ford and the Union are in business together". In fact this seeming surrender was forced on the Company, since under the New Deal the State was boycotting buying Ford cars because Ford was a non-Union company. Unionisation meant coming off the boycott list, increased sales, and a guarantee of Union control inside the factories.



TEXT

when the refusal to work at Ford took on massive proportions, and the fact that Ford workers came from further afield led to a big increase in travelling time to and from Dagenham [Note 49]. Out of an average wage of 103/- for a 44-hour week, benefit contributions etc accounted for about 21%, rent for 15%, and food 32%. It's not easy to calculate the real standard of living of a British Ford worker in 1938, but we can say that, even though there was the ever-present danger of layoffs, there was more leeway for the individual worker to decide what he wanted to do with his wage-packet (compared with the postwar period, when direct taxation - PAYE - and State deductions took a greater portion of the worker's wage packet.)

Workers' Struggles and the War

At the moment when the War began, the initiative seemed to have passed completely into the hands of the employer. Speed-up was rife, and the official working week was increased first to 44 hours (1941) and later to 48 hours. The conversion to war-production meant that the production of big internal combustion engines took precedence over the production of motor cars (more than 262,000 V8 engines were produced in the war years, compared with a normal 16,000 per year before the War). This period also saw an integration between State capital and Ford capital which, until the War, had been unknown at Ford.

The shop stewards at Ford Dagenham remained closely linked with the unionised rank and file workers, and were not drawn into collaboration with the TUC. In fact the TUC, for the whole duration of the War, was battling to stop the spread of the shop stewards' network, while at the same time imposing its "anti-strike" line on the existing shop stewards, by threatening to leave them at the mercy of State repression if they extended their demands to challenge the general working conditions that were prevalent in War-industry.

But as far as the working class at Ford was concerned, at the moment when the War began, Ford workers had won a certain level of autonomy, and no appeal to "national unity" would bring them to knuckle under to the interests of capital. Sectional strikes and stoppages, against speed-up and for a reduction in hours, continued, regardless of the ups and downs of the War - although they intensified when victory against the Axis powers was certain. The workers' struggles during this period had two decisive results: the split between shop stewards and unionised rank and file workers on the one hand, and the TUC and Labour Party on the other, became far deeper; and the campaign for the shorter working week developed, slowly and steadily, to come to a head in 1948.

Briggs Recognises the Stewards

At Briggs, the first all-out strike happened when Britain stood alone against the Axis powers. The response from the management and the Government was uncertain at first. Briggs said that they were prepared to negotiate with shop stewards, but not with the Unions [Note 50]; then they changed their minds, against negotiations with stewards - a position which they kept up till 1944, although they didn't seem to appreciate the dangers of negotiating directly with stewards rather than with Union officials. Finally, in 1944, "following a period of agitation and strikes" [Note 51], and prior to the Normandy landings, an agreement was reached which recognised the shop stewards as a negotiating body, and spread the shop stewards' organisation throughout the plant - although still not recognising the Unions. [Note 52]. This put the shop stewards

down again. This went on about five times. They let me lie there for a while. . . . Every once in a while someone would grind his heel into me. They pulled my legs apart and kicked me in the scrotum. . . . By this time they had me driven to the steps. . . . I was bounced on each step. As I went down four or five steps I came to the landing. There were four or five more men who proceeded to administer the blows from that place. This continued until they had me on the cinders by the street car tracks. . . . It was the worst licking I've ever taken.

The few Dearborn police in the neighborhood did not interfere. When newshawks picked him up a few minutes later, Frankenstein was a bloody pulp. The men with him got off little easier. Other organizers who had appeared at other gates were driven off; and women organizers who tried to get off street cars were promptly bundled back aboard, some of them claiming to have been kicked.

Personnel director of Ford Motor Co., as well as head of its company police (known as "service men") is Henry H. Bennett. This master of tough men occupies a special place in the esteem of mild Henry Ford, perhaps because he has for years been responsible for protecting the Ford grandchildren from kidnapping, of which the senior Ford is mortally afraid. One of Mr. Bennett's privileges is that he, almost alone of Ford lieutenants, can speak to the press in his own name. Last week Mr. Bennett declared:

The affair was deliberately provoked by union officials. . . . They simply wanted to trump up a charge of Ford brutality. . . . I know definitely no Ford service man or plant police were involved in any way in the fight. . . . The union men were beaten by regular Ford employees who were on their way to work. The union men called them scabs and cursed and taunted them. A Negro who works in the foundry was goaded and cursed so viciously by one organizer that he turned and struck him. That was the first blow struck. . . .

Unfortunately for Mr. Bennett's account as far as it concerned the beating of Organizer Frankenstein, there were too many witnesses. Newshawks reported recognizing Ford "service men" as the attackers, reported that these men had asked which were Frankenstein and Reuther. Also the Ford men were not quick enough to seize the plates of photographers. One group of cameramen were chased in a car at 60 m.p.h. and took refuge in the Melvindale police station where they were followed by three men who identified themselves as Ford service men. The pictures showed that Frankenstein & friends were given no amateur beating but a standard job of manning including well known gorilla tricks. One of the pictures disclosed a pair of handcuffs in the pocket of an attacker. . . . and from the photographs it seemed likely that the Ford men would be identified. It looked very much as if that brutal beating might hurt Henry Ford as much, as it hurt Richard Frankenstein. Last week in Massachusetts the Ford Motor Co. filed its balance sheet as required by State law, providing the annual glimpse which the public gets of Ford finances. It did not show, of course, what dividends had been paid but it showed an increase of \$19,689,000 in profit & loss account, of \$6,737,000 in reserves indicating that the company has salted away \$26,427,000 during 1936, over seven times as much as in 1935. With a total surplus of \$600,000,000 Ford Motor Co. is well prepared for a costly strike now or later.

FROM "Strokes of the Week," Time (June 7, 1937), pp. 13-14. Courtesy Time; Time Inc., 1937.

Initial Battles and Final Victory at Ford

a] THE BATTLE OF THE OVERPASS

FIVE months ago began the onslaught of insurgent Labor upon Motors and Steel. Corporation by corporation John L. Lewis' organizing drive captured positions in these two great open-shop industries. By last week it had gained about two-thirds of Motors, better than half of Steel. Last week the United Automobile Workers were storming at the gates of Motors' inner citadel, Ford Motor Co. The Steel Workers Organizing Committee, having captured biggest U.S. Steel and most of the small fry, was pounding at the defense of three big steel independents: Republic, Youngstown, Inland. On both fronts there was blood and brutality. On one there was death.

On the Overpass

MEN with queasy stomachs had no place one afternoon last week on the overpass-across the street to streetcar tracks-at the No. 4 gate of Henry Ford's great River Rouge plant. The union had opened its Ford campaign by hiring two vacant bank buildings near the plant, as headquarters. Next step was to print handbills calling for "Unionism not Fordism," demanding a basic \$8 six-hour day for workers, better not only than Ford's present \$6 eight-hour day, but better than the terms obtained from any other motor company. Third step was to distribute the handbills to the 9,000 River Rouge workmen.

By announcing the event to the press an ample attendance of newshawks and cameramen as well as a batch of clergymen and investigators of Senator La Follette's civil liberties committee was insured. At the appointed time Organizer Richard Truman Frankenstein, head of the U.A.W. Ford drive accompanied by his lieutenant, Walter Reuther and Organizers Robert Kanter and J. J. Kennedy, appeared. Leader Frankenstein, a husky 30 and a onetime football player (University of Dayton) led his friends up a long flight of stairs to the overpass to supervise the handbills' issuance. He was smiling for photographers as a group of Ford men approached. Someone shouted, "You're on Ford property. Get the hell off here!" Frankenstein started to obey, was struck from behind, turned around to fight. Four or five men closed in on him. He was knocked down and his coat pulled over his head. He got to his feet and grabbed one of his attackers by the ear. Others slugged him fore & aft. Cameramen snapped these early stages of the battle, then fled before their plates were seized.

Organizer Frankenstein's own account of the battle, as given in detail to the Communist Daily Worker substantially agreed with the accounts of newshawks and clergymen. Excerpts:

They knocked me down again, turned me over on my side and began to kick me in the stomach. When I would protect my side they would kick my head. One of the attackers would say, "That is enough, let him go." Then they would pick me up and stand me on my feet, but I was no sooner on my feet than they would knock me

7. Shop Stewards Against the War - 1941

A conference of engineering industry shop stewards was held in Birmingham on April 6-7th, 1940. It was attended by 283 delegates from 107 factories, representing 217,492 workers. The conference set up a provisional committee to coordinate the shop stewards' movement throughout the country. A resolution was passed, calling for increased wages, 100% trade unionism and resistance to all forms of compulsory savings as proposed by Mr Keynes. A resolute sense of working class resistance.

SHOP-STEWARDS AGAINST GOVERNMENT AND WAR

RESOLUTIONS PASSED
At the National Shop-Stewards' Conference held in Birmingham, April 6th and 7th, 1940.
Main Resolution:

This conference of shop-stewards and workshop representatives elected to represent a total of 217,492 workers employed in 107 works in aircraft, shipbuilding, ship repair, motors, radio, electrical equipment, arms manufacture, and other sections of the key industry today, the engineering and allied trades, affirms its determination to extend and build that solidarity which is essential in the fight to defend and improve our wages and working conditions built up through long years of trade union effort and the sacrifice of millions of trade unionists in the struggle against the employers.

The unity of all sections of the engineering and allied trades, irrespective of the trade unions to which they belong, is more than ever necessary today.

The engineering employers, both Federated and non-Federated, taking full advantage of the war, and the National Government propaganda for sacrifice, are intensifying their normal peacetime attacks upon our conditions and standards.

KEYNES AND WAGES

Established customs and practices, through the plans of the Government and employers, stand in danger of being swept away. These conditions can only be maintained by vigilant shop organization.

The purchasing power of our wages lessens as the cost of living rises. The Keynes Plan of 'Deferred Payments' or Compulsory Savings (which we condemn as wage cuts) further threatens our earnings. The Keynes Plan 'Family Allowance' proposals, strikes at the roots of trade unionism and the trade union method of establishing wage-rates on work performed, and puts our earnings on to a 'means test'. We deprecate the voluntary savings scheme in the factory as detrimental to future wage demands.

ORGANIZE THE 'NON'S'

Dilution plans of the Government of a scale never before known, are being discussed in secret. It is obvious from what has been published

that large numbers of women and youths are to be forced into the industry at low rates of pay. The wage-rates and working conditions of the organized factories are presented with the dangers of rates being undercut by the putting out of work to unorganized sub-contract factories.

Trade unionists everywhere should do all in their power to organize our fellow-workers in these factories, to assist and bring within the orbit of organization, our womenfolk and youth in the factories. The utmost vigilance should also be exercised in the operation of all such schemes, in order to safeguard the status of all workers in the industry, so as to avoid, as far as possible, a repetition of what took place after the last war.

IN WAR AS IN PEACE

These problems brought to the forefront by the present war make essential a united stand by all engineering workers. The experience of the French workers has shown how rapidly the gains of previous struggles and elementary rights of organization have been destroyed by the wartime offensive of the French Government and employers.

The Chamberlain Government and the employers of this country can be equally as ruthless as the French Government and employers. Its recent armed attack upon Indian and Rhodesian strikers and its close friendship and collaboration with the French Government must be a warning to us.

Taking our stand on the basis of working-class solidarity, in wartime no less than in peacetime, we proclaim our determination to resist all such attacks and to fight unreservedly for the interests of the working class in every field.

WORKERS ARE FIGHTING

There is increasing evidence that the worker in the shops is continually fighting by strikes and other actions to defend trade union standards and trade union principles, to protect their shop-stewards and active trade unionists against victimization by employers who are greatly profiting by the war.

In most cases, these efforts of the trade unionists are not supported by the Executives, whose policy of support for this war has caused them to abandon the defence and advancement of the members' interests. Their policy endangers the very existence of our trade unions. It is therefore the men, women and youths in the shops, who must take up the struggles to preserve our trade unions, to greatly strengthen their trade union

organization, to elect shop-stewards in every department and section of the works, so that we may get our trade unions serving the purpose for which they have been built, for which we pay our contributions, and to which end - the defence and advancement of the members' interests - policy must be directed.

WHAT WE WANT

This conference therefore resolves to do all in its power to:

1. Establish 100 per cent trade unionism of male and female workers of all ages.
2. Secure the election of shop-stewards in every section in engineering works throughout the country.
3. To fully maintain the individual rights of all members of the trade unions, to preserve and extend the democratic practices inside the trade unions.
4. Campaign in the respective unions for an increase of £1 per week on our wages, preferably on the basic rate, and fight for wage increases and a shorter working week in the shops.
5. Get a minimum rate of wages which shall be not less than 90 per cent of the skilled male workers' rates, for all adult male and female workers not engaged in skilled work. That all substitute labour, semi or unskilled, male or female, to be paid the rate for the job irrespective of ability on the principle of 'Equal Pay for Equal Work.'
6. Resist every attempt to introduce compulsory savings under any guise.
7. Establish, through our trade unions, a better control of overtime.
8. Secure the observance of trade union agreements where such are in the workers' interests.
9. Gain adequate ventilation, lighting, heating, A.R.P. (including real bombproof shelters), canteens, tea-making facilities, adequate transport facilities and other improved working conditions.
10. To co-operate the activity of all shop-stewards through a national shop-stewards' movement.
11. To fight for higher dependants' allowances and rates of pay for members of the armed forces.
12. To press for the rigid control of the prices of essential commodities.
13. For the rigid adherence to the Factory Acts.
14. The existing procedure of the York Memorandum has proved itself to be detrimental to the interests of the members and we demand the settlement of grievances on the job.

These things will only be accomplished on the basis of how we build and strengthen our trade union organization in the factories.

Fraud

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in a position to promote a period of wage-drive which became increasingly disruptive of the Company's plans, even though in terms of strike action the Company appeared calm right up to 1952 [Note 53].

Ford and the Unions

At Ford itself, the TUC leadership stepped in and prevented the strike spreading "in view of the impending invasion of France". Union officials came into the factory to convince the workers to postpone the strike till the War was over. They noted the tension in the plant, and reported back that, in their opinion, the plant meetings would immediately have turned into strike meetings if they had made it clear that the TUC was prepared to isolate and smash the strike. 176

After their success in getting the strike postponed, Ford and the TUC signed an agreement in April 1944 which set up the Ford Joint Negotiating Committee, going right over the heads of the shop stewards at Dagenham. This was a blow to the aspirations of the Trade Union left, who had hoped that they would have been able to force the coalition Government and Ford to recognise the Union locally at Dagenham in this period of boom production. In this way, by instituting the FJNC and ignoring the pressure from the shop floor, Ford was able to take a leading role in eliminating the wage leap-frogging usually associated with situations of shop-floor bargaining: this was a fact that the labour movement had to contend with as from 1947 - although Ford's example was not immediately followed by the other motor manufacturers.

Liberalisation necessarily took place after, and not during the War, when Ford reconverted to peacetime production and made plans to launch the motor car as a mass consumer object (one of Ford's models was called the "Popular" - a parallel with the German Volkswagen established under Hitler). At Ford the shop stewards were excluded from the negotiating table, and this was the framework within which the Unions participated in negotiations. From 1946 Ford negotiated the whole of the wage packet, denying any role to shop floor negotiation (although in the other motor manufacturers - with the exception of Vauxhall - sectional bargaining would continue to be the pattern for another 25 years).

In March 1946, Ford-USA had already gone ahead with its counter-attack on the Union stewards of the USA. At Dagenham the management decided on a policy of mass sackings, which would enable them to eliminate the most militant groups of workers in the guise of carrying through their factory reconversion after the War.

At this point 95 shop stewards were elected - and the Labour Party (now in Government) managed to defuse the situation - but only after Ford had set up a lockout. This was also the point when trade unionism was recognised at Ford Dagenham, thereby providing some guarantees of a continuation of the wage increases that had become possible with the favourable postwar balance of class forces (increases that were written into the 1948 Agreement).

Post-War Restructuring

After the War, Ford expanded its production. The expansion followed the American lines of a rapid conversion to peace-time production, with an increased mechanisation of production, taking advantage of the fact that, while most other countries' motor industries had been bombed flat, the car factories in the UK and USA were not so hard hit. Dagenham continued to act as the centre for Ford's exports to the Commonwealth. The new investment associated with reconversion increased the amount of

8. The Productivity Push - Shop Stewards - 1941

● In the space of 1½ years the atmosphere of total resistance economy - but more important was the fact that Russia had now entered the War, and increased productivity was a way of supporting the Soviet peoples (as this report shows).

factories in all parts of the country and representing over half a million workers, were present at the great shop-stewards' conference called by the Engineering and Allied Trades Shop-Stewards' National Council on Sunday. In the chair was Joe Goss, a London Shop-Stewards' Convener and Chairman of the National Council.

FOR MAXIMUM PRODUCTION

● Report of a Conference called by the Engineering and Allied Trades Shop-Stewards' National Council.

SHOP-STEWARDS' NATIONAL CONFERENCE

On October 19 a National Conference of Shop-Stewards was held in London. Here is a summary of the opening statements by Mr Walter Swanson, Convener of Shop Stewards at an important aircraft factory:

This conference met in one of the most serious and desperately urgent situations that the British people have ever had to face.

The glorious and heroic resistance of our ally, the Soviet people, calls for a tribute from us which can only mean that, in labour or in armed struggle, we shall not fail them, but shall strive to emulate their example in face of the enemy.

We have now reached a position where every one of us has to approach the best results from our conference, and we believe we will get the best results from our conference, not merely by discussing the waste, mismanagement and inefficiency of present methods of control, and direction of production, but what we can and will do to increase production from our side, and in doing so help to effect changes which will go right through industry even to the top.

We cannot over-emphasize that once the political conviction of the workers has been won, they will display an initiative, drive and energy to increase production never witnessed in this country before.

Let every worker set the highest example in the quality, quantity, and rapidity with which they turn out the job. Let the shop-stewards and trade unions secure agreements that there should not be cuts in piecework prices or bonus rates, however high the output is, backed by Government action against employers who break such agreements.

The most effective training of all unskilled men and women, and removal of barriers to trade progress, with exchange of trade union membership according to the work engaged in.

Shop-stewards of every trade to secure agreement of the workers and the trade unions for preventing demarcation rules from being a tremendous restrictive factor in impeding output when we are fighting for our very lives against Fascism....

Conference Discussion: Report by Douglas Hyde.

One thousand, two hundred and thirty-seven delegates, from 300

factories in all parts of the country and representing over half a million workers, were present at the great shop-stewards' conference called by the Engineering and Allied Trades Shop-Stewards' National Council on Sunday. In the chair was Joe Goss, a London Shop-Stewards' Convener and Chairman of the National Council.

During five and a half hours' discussion following on Walter Swanson's opening speech, many valuable contributions were made and much useful material provided for the Council's Memorandum which is to be submitted to the Select Committee on National Expenditure. The keynote of the conference was how to get maximum production for the fight against Fascism, and from this flowed suggestions on transport, canteens, shopping hours and a dozen other things which retard or accelerate production. Over and above everything was the need for co-operation through production committees by means of which, the discussion went to show, considerable progress has already been made.

A steward from a great Sheffield factory, for example, told how there the directors are prepared to consider their suggestions, to hear any complaints and, more important, to rectify them. They have, in fact, intimated that should the management show themselves unwilling to do anything about such complaints, then the directors will take them up with the management themselves. That result is thus obtained is borne out, he said, by the fact in the gun department of this works production has already been raised by 10 per cent.

A Glasgow delegate told of two hundred parts now being made in the time previously taken to make eighty-five. A telegram, he said, was recently received by his firm saying that ten of a certain part were urgently required for the Soviet Union. Normally it would take a week to produce that number, but the management approached the shop-stewards who in turn pointed out the urgency to the workers, and the job was completed in two days!

That the majority of workers are anxious to assist in every way was illustrated by a John Brown's shipyard steward, who told of workers with insufficient to do coming to the yard committee and asking to be shifted to other ships. This same delegate said that production could in many cases be increased by as much as 30 per cent if certain unskilled labour was done by labourers, thus leaving the skilled men free to devote all their time to the more highly skilled work. A steward from a vast North London works told of a jig maker who, by his initiative, developed, made and put into use without the management's knowledge, a jig which did away with twenty-two other jigs. Perhaps one of the most far-

reaching suggestions came from a delegate representing 700 electricians at the Port of London, who called for the suspension of trade union demarcation rules for the duration of the war.

A Letchworth delegate representing 2,500 women asserted that they do not feel they are getting a square deal. She said the majority in the factory leave on a Friday with only 38s. in their pay packets. Many work twelve hours night shifts and there are neither canteen nor cooking facilities. A similar point was made by a Coventry delegate who said that women are all too often used by the employers as cheap labour. She urged the need for time for shopping to enable them to obtain their rations. A woman from a Manchester factory employing 3,000 of her sex, said women can be trained to become good trade unionists. It is up to the men to give them assistance. 'In the Soviet Union women are fighting alongside the men with guns. All we ask is for you to help us to make the tools.'

Not all workers even now see the need for a great production drive, as was pointed out by a delegate from Merseyside, who declared 'there are many in our own ranks who seem to forget there is a war on. If we're going to indict the management then we've got to put our own house in order.' He went on to say, 'If a man doesn't pull his weight in war production then, whether he is a labourer or engineer, he should be put in the army, and the applause which greeted this remark reflected the mood of the conference. That there is still resistance on the part of many employers was brought out by a number of delegates.

A certain amount of confusion on the role of production committees and a tendency to think that workers' control should be raised as an issue now was effectively dealt with, and the conference was particularly useful in clearing this matter up. Mr Len Powell, the Secretary declared, 'The Red Army are not demanding that we expatriate our war industries,' and Walter Swanson in his summing up, said, 'Our chance of having Socialism in this country is bound up with defence of the Soviet Union. That is the great job of the moment.'

Resolutions enthusiastically adopted at the end of the Conference pledge increased production, demanded the opening of a front in the west, and called for the raising of the ban on the *Daily Worker*.

What must now be done, as Walter Swanson said in conclusion, is to make the policy of this conference that of every trade union and Labour Party and all political parties, and the Government, so that the people of the world can see what the British working class can do when they really get going.

Fraud

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fixed capital per worker by almost a third, and production-per-man-hour increased accordingly. This increased productivity was brought about by the installation of new machinery rather than any intensification of workloads. 177

The introduction of this new machinery meant, as far as labour relations were concerned, that social democracy won for itself a moment of stability in the plant. This was embodied in the 1948 Agreement, which was won after strike action. An important aspect of this Agreement was that it reduced the large differentials that had existed between different grades of workers before the War. This was the first sign that the skilled workers - the workers who had been a leading presence in the first 15 years of Dagenham's history - were losing the initiative. The initiative began to pass to the lineworkers. By now the pay packet of a production worker was only one-fifth lower than that of the skilled worker. But in the meantime another gulf was opening - the differential between men and women: the wages of the lowest Grade (comprising only women) were only a half of the skilled male worker's rate.

Ford acquires Kelsey Hayes & Briggs

The Briggs factory, which had again become the Body section of Ford Dagenham, following the reconversion to peacetime production, was a strong force in the workers' struggles at Dagenham. A group of shop stewards had grown up out of the the new influx of workers who entered Briggs after the War. These stewards were able, in the postwar period, to make their presence felt in plant bargaining at Briggs, on wages and on conditions of employment. At the same time, they made sure that Union officials fell in line with what they wanted, and they were able to avoid any meddling by the TUC.

But management thinking at Ford became less and less tolerant of this wage-drive in its biggest supplier company. But at the same time, Ford's thinking led them to take up quite different conclusions from the motor manufacturers in the Engineering Employers' Federation (who were still far from worrying about the long-term consequences of local plant-bargaining). Ford began to coordinate an offensive over the question of local bargaining - but before this, they took a major step towards co-ordinating the class policies of the UK motor manufacturers: on Ford's invitation, the personnel managers of the biggest motor manufacturers started in 1950 to hold regular meetings among themselves [Note 54].

The contradiction between the highly centralised system of collective bargaining at Ford, and the "local autonomy" that existed at Briggs was clear. Thus, when Ford took over Briggs Bodies (after having taken over Kelsey Hayes in 1947) they were acting to defend their own interests, and at the same time (as usual) they were setting an example for the whole motor industry. When Ford took over Briggs in 1953, they were acting in a situation where the struggle had already been transmitted from Briggs to Ford-Dagenham, and where the Briggs wage drive seemed likely to follow it. Ford's action was designed to prevent this.

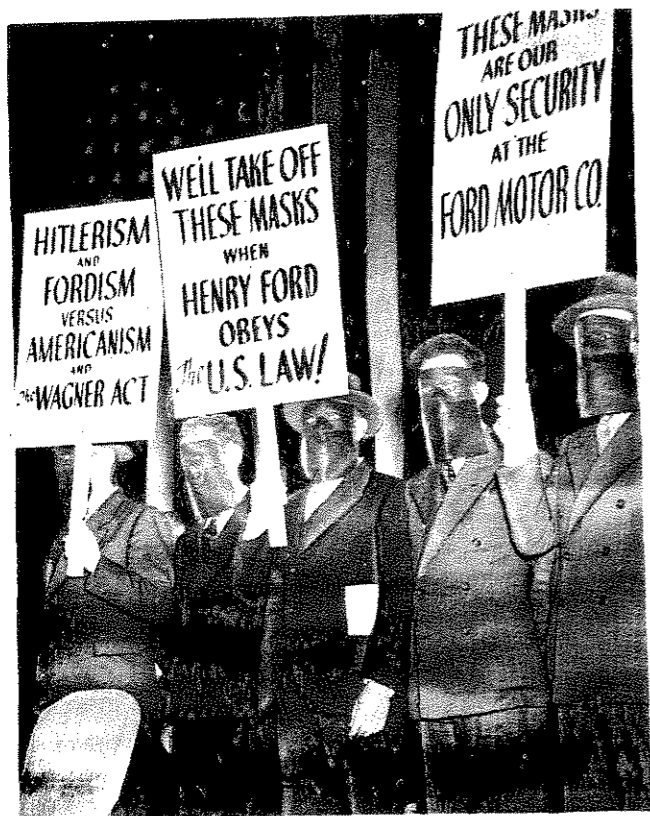
In fact, Ford's acquisition of Briggs in 1953 was preceded by a strike which started at Briggs in July 1952, over redundancies and the Government's opposition to further wage rises, and this strike had spread to Ford, when 600 workers were laid off. It lasted for about a month, and 247,000 days were "lost". Ford's takeover of Briggs was thus preceded by strike action there, and was intended to stop the Briggs wage drive spreading to Ford. 178

The action decided by the shop stewards at Briggs immediately threatened the whole of Ford's production, despite the TUC's attempts

From "Workers' Control", ed Coates & Topham

9. The Post-War Years

For this page we wanted to include notes on the working class history of the 1950s - but this is a terrible gap in the history books. In future pamphlets maybe we'll be able to cover it - but for the time being, here are images of Ford-USA in the 1940s-50s: a demonstration of Ford workers demanding unionisation ("In the Ford Empire few feel free"); violence erupting on a Ford picket line in 1941; and verses from Woodie Guthrie's "Talking Union Blues".



*Suppose they're working you so hard it's just outrageous
And they're paying you all starvation wages,
You go to the boss and the boss will yell
Before I raise your pay I'd see you all in hell!
Well, he's puffing a big cigar, feeling mighty slick
'Cause he thinks he's got your union licked,
Well, he looks out the window and what does he see
But a thousand pickets, and they all agree —*

*He's a bastard... unfair... slavedriver...
Bet he beats his wife...*

*Now boys, you've come to the hardest time,
The boss will try to bust your picket line
He'll call out the police, the national guard,
They'll tell you it's a crime to have a union card,
They'll raid your meetings, they'll hit you on the head,
They'll call everyone of you a red —*

*Unpatriotic... Japanese spies... sabotaging
national defense...*

*But out at Ford, here's what they found,
And out at Vultee, here's what they found,
And out at Allis-Chalmers, here's what they found
And down at Bethlehem, here's what they found,
That if you don't let red-baiting break you up,
And if you don't let stoolpigeons break you up,
And if you don't let vigilantes break you up,
And if you don't let race hatred break you up —*

You'll win... what I mean, take it easy, but take it...



Fraud

TEXT

to intervene, and despite the fact that the NUGMW refused to make the strike official. The strikers' reactions to the layoff were swift: they accused the Company of lock-out and reprisal. But they also put 2 important demands before the Company: they demanded either layoff pay for workers who were laid off, or some way of regulating the production cycle so as to smoothe out the effects of booms and slumps on the worker's wage packet.

In 1946 the fight over the question of layoffs had been smothered by the intervention of the Labour Government. Then, in 1948, the Union leadership had managed to sew up the strike in an Agreement. But by 1952 a struggle was effectively being fought for wages for not working, and the obvious strength of the workers' organisation convinced the Ford Negotiating Committee that counter-measures would have to be taken.

Ford and the Unions against the Stewards

"After the 1952 strike, the FJNC considered creating an agreement aimed at entrusting a major controlling-power to the national officials of the Unions. It was difficult to obtain ratification of this plan by the individual Unions, and it became clear to the Company that the delay in getting it signed was due to the resistance put up by the shop stewards." [Note 55].

Ford's takeover of Briggs was decided in Detroit, following joint pressure by both Ford and the US Government. It came at a time when Ford was already taking steps to isolate and discipline workers at Dagenham, with the aim of breaking the strength reached with the 1952 strike, and bringing the shop stewards' organisation under the control of the national leaderships of the various Unions.

Ford had to regain control: this was a necessary precondition for the 1955 Procedure Agreement at Fords, which for the first time gave the employer the possibility of making use of the network of shop stewards who existed, and who at that time were elected on "a craft, departmental or geographical basis" [Note 56]. However, since there were no ground rules about which Union a steward should belong to, this made it hard to establish Union control over stewards that belonged to a different Union to that of the men he represented.

However, the 1955 Agreement did not recognise the existence of the Shop Stewards' Committee at Dagenham. There were two reasons for this. First, to limit the power of the shop stewards so that they were no more than middle-men between the shop floor and the foremen (and always confined to the single section, or the single problem). And second, in order to put an end to the wage-drive, which had arisen at Briggs precisely because of the system of direct negotiation between stewards and management.

As a rule, as organic composition (the amount of capital, machinery etc per worker) increases, shop stewards become less and less responsible for bargaining over wages and piecework rates. [However, this role of the shop steward continued, in the Midlands motor factories, right up to the early 1970s, because the Midlands plants have had a far lower level of organic composition - Note 57].

At Briggs, however, there had traditionally been a gulf between rank and file workers, and the Unions. This was not due so much to the interference of Union officials in the struggle, as it was at Ford, but rather to the fact that the indirect part of the wage was increasingly being taken out of the control of the stewards, with the compliance of the

10. Ford Methods of Control

Fraud

TEXT

- Ford has many methods of imposing control inside the factory - ranging from gangsterism to psycho-drama, as the quotations, below, show:-

In the 1930's "In 1935-37 the Union was being formed in the American car factories. The auto companies were engaged in espionage to ferret out Union sympathisers and to block Union organisation. In 1934-37 General Motors spent nearly 1 million dollars to spy on workers suspected of Union sympathies. The notorious Ford Service Dept. were more expensive and a far greater barrier to organisation. Made up of ex-cops, ex-athletes, thugs and racketeers, in the mid-1930s the Service Dept. numbered more than 3,000 men, perhaps the largest private police force ever assembled. On the night-shift these Servicemen often shocked Ford workers by leaping in front of them, flashing a light in their eyes, and demanding "Where did you get that Ford badge?"...and "Who's your boss?". Note that in 1932, tool and die makers who were considering joining the Union had their tools smashed. Men were fired for no reason, with no means of appeal. Workers could not smoke on Ford property. And for years workers were barred from speaking at lunch - a taboo that led the workers to talk out of the sides of their mouths, like convicts, a practice known as the "Ford Whisper". [From 'The Company and the Union']

In the 1970's "Germany 1973: The crisis is being used by the employers to expand the machinery of repression inside the factories. The German employers are setting up regional 'associations', which coordinate files and information on individual workers. There have been scandals about this...but meanwhile, Ford has been building up its inquisition files quite legally. As a result, Ford-Cologne now has the best employer's espionage-filing system of any employer in Europe.

When a worker starts working for Ford, all his or her personal details are recorded on an IBM 2314 computer, based in Cologne (where all Ford-Germany personnel departments were centralised in 1969). The information includes matters like work record; disciplinary action; changes in name, address, neighbours etc; medical data including pregnancies; army record; record of skills and education; loans; deductions from wages; buses taken to work (!) and, of course, political activity. The "political surveillance" section of the computer-file provides Ford not just with details of membership of groups etc, but also comprehensive personal details - work conduct, friends etc. Plus information that's passed on by the Union. Officials of the DGB Union (to which 80% of Ford foremen belong) are known to have passed on information to the German Special Branch as well (something that Ford does as well...)." 18c

In the 1970's And a cosy little story from Holland, in 1972: "The scene is Noordwyk, a fashionable Dutch seaside resort. Under the leadership of the Ford Psychologist (!) Dr Sanders, members of the Workers' Participation Committee of Ford-Holland are going through a four-day training course, entitled "Fair Play Between Workers and Capital"! In Holland every big company is legally bound to appoint a Workers' Participation Committee - part of the Dutch Government's plan to help the bosses "keep the dialogue open between capital and workers". Hence this psycho-drama. While some members of the group acted out various "conference situations", others acted as "observers", giving their comments when the psychologist asked for them. In the evening, such "wider" issues such as "the development of mankind" were discussed. page left on 181 +

The chairmanship of this Committee is, by Dutch law, firmly in the hands of the Managing Director - R.P. Peddemors. Peddemors was recorded as saying: "Nowadays the Directors and the Workers' Committee share the same interests. Thus responsibility for the running of the Company should be shared out too. We are building the future with a clear place for the men in our concern..." [From Amsterdams Weekblad, Nov. 1972] 182

Unions. This led to a situation where the stewards were brought closer to rank and file workers, and fought together with them to defend working conditions. The employer had to break what the Court of Enquiry called: "the union within the Union". At the ex-Briggs plant, in the period between 1955 and 1957, there were more than 500 strikes and stoppages, and Ford decided to make a move.

"In 1956 the Company decided that, with all the appreciation due to the good offices of the Union at all levels, the Company itself had to take measures that would be adequate to the need to restore order." [Note 58]

New Investments and Decentralisation

It took Ford another 2 years to defeat the forces that were defending their existing conditions of work. This came after the "bell-ringer" strike of 1957, with the Standardisation Agreement of August 1958. This agreement brought Briggs' "conditions of employment" into line with those at Dagenham, and gave management power to operate whatever internal mobility they thought necessary. Ford were only able to win this battle through the intervention of the State - through the Cameron Court of Enquiry, which had managed to defuse strike action at Briggs [Note 50].

The political stability resulting from the steep increase in fixed capital between 1954 and 1959 was fairly precarious and short-lived [Note 59]. The motor industry was expanding, and production of popular cars for the domestic market was slowly rising (thereby reversing the situation from 1946-1954, when export production was higher than production for the home market) - although exports were still growing by 57% in the period 1951-1955 compared with the previous 5 years [Note 60]. Ford-UK's function within Ford's overall multinational operations was redefined: it lost its function of controlling investments in Europe, it had no role as an international coordinator, and it was relegated to a simple exporter of cars [Note 61].

Already, by the early 1960s, exports as a % of the total sales of Ford-UK, were far higher than the other big UK motor companies: Ford was 6th in terms of turnover, but first in the number of cars they exported - a position they maintained for a number of years. Ford's situation, therefore was different from other multinational companies based in Britain - but this was a result of the decision by the management of Ford-America that Ford-UK should function specifically as an exporter of goods. page left on 181 +

The next phase of investment was in 1959-64, as part of Ford's strategy to knock out the possibility of workers defending their interests merely at shop-floor level [Note 62]. A crucial element in this new phase was Ford's policy of increasing and decentralising production [Note 63]. The new plant at Halewood, with its 15,000 workers, was built on Merseyside, which was at that time a "development area", with a large pool of unemployed labour, which represented a certain political threat to the State. The State paid the costs of laying the infrastructures for the twin development of Ford at Halewood and BMC at Speke. Sub-assembly and engineering work previously done at the Dagenham plant was farmed out to other factories around Dagenham, some of them new, and some wholly reorganised. Langley was doubled in size, and was developed from being a parts factory (after having produced war-planes up till 1946) into a centre for assembly of all Ford trucks, coordinating with the ex-Briggs Bodies plant which Ford had taken over in Southampton in 1953. Decentralisation and expansion prepared the ground for the moment when Ford-America moved from being the majority share-holder in Ford-UK, to take complete control of the British 182

11. Layoff Struggles at Dagenham-1973

Fraud

TEXT

" In the words of a PTA Convenor: "Since January the men in the PTA have been laid off 35 times!" Very large numbers of workers have left Fords, in disgust at the loss of earnings due to frequent layoffs - but among those who remain, the anger is building up. At the moment there is an official strike call in the PTA plant to get a new layoff agreement. The demand has come up in the factory for 40 HOURS PAY, WORK OR NO WORK. The demand has come directly from workers. The Union is worried by the way the fight for the 40-hours pay has developed...the way it has gone completely out of their control for a period, as is clear from the following examples:

March in the Body Plant, Night Shift: August 30th

On Thursday night, the Body Plant was working normally. At ten minutes to midnight the management came round and said that the Upstairs Body was laid off, and they could "all go home". Some people accepted, and went home. But Ford's action was clearly provocative, and since many workers had no chance of getting home at that time of night, they decided to show the Company what they thought of it.

About 300 men marched up to the Supervisors' Office. They blocked the door so that management couldn't get out. The stewards went in, but didn't win any guarantees of a full night's pay. So there was a lock-in. In the words of one man:

"We had murders up there. You could hear the shouting from the street outside. People were trying to kick the doors in, and a lot of windows got smashed."

Fire extinguishers were set off and fire alarms rang. There was broken glass everywhere. The police were called in, and after the management had been locked in for a full hour, they agreed that the men would be guaranteed a full night's pay.

"We ended up doing nothing all night. Just sitting around, sleeping, playing cards and messing about...AND getting paid for it!"

The lessons of this action have not been lost. The stewards got nowhere by negotiating. Direct action by workers paid results. The men refused to go home, and decided to stay in the plant. They got together as a body, and went and negotiated directly and violently. When the Body Plant manager was asked why he had allowed them the full night's pay, he answered simply: "Because they threatened me."

"Riots and Pickets": Body Plant and PTA: Day Shift: September 19th

3 weeks later, Ford again tried mass layoffs. On Friday Sept. 14th a West Indian welder from the Body Plant was sacked for allegedly hitting a foreman with an iron chairleg. The next Tuesday, his whole section (140 men) struck in his support, and Ford told the next day's Day Shift that they were laid off until further notice. The events that followed were described in the 'Dagenham Advertiser':

"A strike over a sacked worker erupted into violence as thousands of Ford workers ran riot through the Dagenham factory. Production of Cortinas and Granadas was halted as workers swarmed over electrical equipment. A huge procession of men, estimated to be 2,000 strong, marched to the management offices to demand work, and the police were rushed into the factory. Employees from the Body Plant and PTA started a 'work-in'. When it became clear that production was stopped, they started wrecking vehicles and shouting anti-management slogans. Workers declared that they would occupy the paint plant until the night shift, which was working normally, arrived."

During this period of layoff struggles extra police were on permanent stand-by at the local police station, in case of an 'uprising' at the factory."

company (1960).

Ford's intention was to put the American company in complete control of the operations of Ford-UK [Note 64]. And, ironically, at this very moment Ford was organising conferences for shop stewards, in which they were explaining that Britain's imminent entry into the Common Market was going to require maximum "cooperation" from everybody concerned!

Meanwhile, as Ford workers had expected, the take-over by Ford's American management meant Detroit-style policies in the plant. Management set about demolishing what remained of the old "custom and practice". They began flying most of Dagenham's higher supervision off to Detroit and Cologne so as to show them how Dagenham workers could be made to keep up the workloads and linespeeds common in Germany and the USA [Note 65]. Here we see American capital intervening at a point where a section of the British working class was relatively strong; we see Ford's international control-centre intervening in order to bring the UK level of struggles down to the international average level for that period.

The Attack on the PTA

The first testing ground for the new policies imposed by Ford-America was the PTA plant at Dagenham (Paint Trim and Assembly), where, for the first time in the history of Dagenham all the operations of painting, trim and final assembly of cars had been organised into a single, continuous assembly line. Management in the PTA had been strengthened by an injection of American personnel. And workers in the PTA found that they were increasingly bearing the brunt of the mechanisation of operations further back up the line.

Resistance and organisation against the increased line-speeds began in earnest in the PTA in 1959, with small groups of workers organising stoppages on the line. At this time (1960), the average number of strikes in other Ford-UK plants was $\frac{1}{2}$ hour per man; at Dagenham, excluding the PTA, it was 15 hours; and in the PTA it was 78 hours per worker - a total of 100,000 in 1960. In 1961 this figure rose to 184,000, and in 1962 it stood at 454,000; 69 strikes and 114 overtime bans [Note 66].

"After lengthy negotiations the stewards had sometimes made the offer of a slight improvement, and Supervision, in desperation at the continuous struggle, unwisely compromised and, in accepting only a small proportion of the effort which they were entitled to expect, were left with even more determined resistance to overcome in order to achieve a normal day's work."

"The Company maintained that in most areas of the Assembly Plant there had been a complete and organised effort to restrict output, and any attempt to achieve an improvement had brought the threat of an overtime ban or a stoppage of work." [Note 67].

Ford's policy at this point was to create differences of workload within the Dagenham plant, and then to play on these differences. They chose to attack at a point where the workload was relatively light. And the attack was able to use the fact that struggles of individual sections were isolated from each other. Ford profited from the fact that there was no generalised workers' offensive against the overall organisation of work throughout the plant: this meant that the Union leadership was able to

12. Italian Immigrants at Ford Genk-1971

Fraud

TEXT

Ford's exploitation has always been built either on labour in underdeveloped areas (where unemployment acts as the whip to work), or on labour from underdeveloped areas (immigrants, contract workers, with few rights and little organisation). However, in the past 10 years the immigrant carworkers who were drafted into the world's car factories after the defeat of the white, Communist vanguards of the 1940s-50s, have emerged as a major political force. In Ford itself we saw the explosive mass-strike of Italian and Turkish workers at Ford-Genk (1970). The strike of Turkish workers at Ford-Cologne (1973) was a major breakthrough in the German class struggle. In Britain the union organisation of Asian workers at Ford-Leamington and the consolidation of the new Asian, African and West Indian workforce at Ford-Dagenham have provided class reference points in 1974-76. It is these immigrant workers who have been at the base of the autonomous struggles that have developed in the motor industry in the past decade - but in very few places has their political force emerged as a lasting power in its own right, breaking through the old crusts of Labour Party/Communist Party (mainly white) leadership. This is an organisational task for the coming period.

What follows is an interview with Italian immigrant workers from the Ford plant in Genk, Belgium.

Q. Now, in this part of Belgium there are a lot of Italian workers who come up here looking for work. Where do most of them come from?

A. Well, most of them come from the underdeveloped part of Italy - from Bari in the South, or from Sardinia. But there's one thing that should be said: that many of them don't stay. For instance, over the past few months there have been two batches of Italians arrived here - 72 in all. And out of those there are now only two left. And they have only stayed because they're forced to stay for family reasons. They have to carry on working here because they have to send money home.



When they come here to Limburg they have only two choices - if you can call it choice! It's either Ford or the mines. The mines are lousy work - they slave you and it's filthy. And Ford... well... they say that you can get used to it! But it's shit, and the only reason anyone would stay there is because he has to if he's going to live. A sort of resignation sets in after a while.

It's no life for a young man here. With the money they pay you, you've got just enough for a bed, food for a week, cigarettes, and if you're lucky a drink on Saturday night. And that's the lot! Most of the lads here start the week with just enough money to pay their week's bus fares out to Genk everyday, or out to Winterslag [the local coal mine]. The working week is a sort of Calvary, a terrible experience for them - they end up virtually on their knees at the end of it, asking round for loans to be able to pay their meals until they get their next wage packet.

Recruiting Slaves

Q. How do Ford actually manage to get these workers to come up here from Italy?

A. Well, they go down to Italy, where they have a sort of recruiting office. They arrive with a contract in their hands, which to the lads down there really looks like Heaven. So they come up to Belgium, and when they get here they find that they're presented with another contract that they're expected to sign here - and this contract is not quite so nice!

Now, what happens when they arrive at the Genk plant - which is usually the next day after they arrive in Belgium - is that they're all sat down in a hall as if they were back at school. First of all they're shown films, telling them about safety in the factory. Which is fair enough. But then one of the Ford officials gets up and talks to them. And what he says is as follows (and if you don't believe it, you can ask any of the lads here): 'Right lads. Now we don't want you to be under any illusions. The reason that you're here is to work, and you're going to work! The company expects you to show willing, and if there's anyone who doesn't like the idea, he might as well pack his bags and leave.'

There was one lad who came here to work at Ford, and he went to one of these meetings. When he heard what they were saying, he couldn't restrain himself. He was so disgusted that he jumped up and shouted at this foreman, or whatever he was: 'You people here are pigs! Rotten exploiters! I'm leaving here and now!' And he just walked out, even though he didn't have a penny to his name, had no possibility of ever getting home, and had no prospect of finding another job in the area here.

I tell you, the way that Ford treat

their foreign workers here is like a sort of... slavery. In Italy, if you have a job, they never stand over you with whips. But they do at Ford Genk! If you're working and you turn out less pieces in the day than you're supposed to, then they give you a black mark, and if you get too many of them, then you're out on your neck.

Mind you, it's beginning to get to the point where the lads aren't going to take much more of this sort of treatment. They all know what shit it is. They all understand how they're blackmailed to work here. And things got to the point a few months ago when there was big trouble in Genk, and Ford called in first the Italian consul (to make suitable threatening noises), then the police, and finally the unions. But none of them could do much to calm the anger the lads felt.



The things that Ford do here are wicked. For instance, say you work on the Presses. You might be a man or a woman, because here they don't make any distinction of sex on the job - you might find a woman who works on the Presses and a man who works on sewing... anyway, if you injure yourself on the job, they stitch you up and put you back to work immediately. This happens all the time here. There are people here who've virtually lost a finger or a thumb on the presses, and instead of giving you time off to recover, they just stitch it up and put you back on the job. The same goes for the mines. Their attitude is that if you want your money, you're going to have to work for it.

It's filthy, it really is. If a worker comes up here to work, then he ought to be treated like a worker, and not a bloody

support the Company's policy without being challenged, and it meant that other sections of workers who were laid off by the strikes in the PTA remained largely indifferent to the struggle there.

Early in 1962 the PTA Shop Stewards' Committee tried to even out the workloads in the PTA - taking the most militant sections as the 'norm' by which other work standards would be judged. The stewards' resolution went a long way in applying the old model of workers' sectional control of line-speeds to the new reality of an assembly line that is increasingly rigidly controlled from above:-

"This Committee is opposed to speeding up our members, and recommends the following policy:

- 1] Don't agree to timings (see below). They are not acceptable.
- 2] Operate on the basis of a fair day's work with a decent standard of quality, with the following alternatives: a) don't do the number if there isn't adequate labour; b) go down the line to prove the job isn't workable.
- 3] Collective approach - ie the ratio of jobs to the number of men is to be held.
- 4] If the Company threatens workers, insist on the operation of the status quo (see below), either a) on the original basis of jobs and men, or b) on men going down the line. This to operate while the problem goes through procedure.

This policy could operate. But if there is any victimisation of any member, we will recommend members to go into dispute because the Company would not operate procedure to the full before taking action.

[Note: Timings, that is the use of the stopwatch on jobs; Status quo, that is the situation to remain as it was before the dispute started.]

The Unions did not support the PTA stewards' policy - and this policy remained limited to the PTA. [Note 68]

In July 1962 Ford attacked - at another point. They informed the steward and Convenor that they intended to reorganise the Garage Department - and promptly took 45 of the 179 workers off the lines. When the Garage walked out in dispute, the rest of the plant was locked out. The 179 were isolated from the rest of the plant - with the traditional accusation of having a "cushy number". They were defeated, and the Company started on a general speed-up throughout the rest of the plant.

Then, in October, Ford management attacked again. This time they were consciously and deliberately in breach of agreement: they chopped and changed positions [Note 69], while workers on the line were organising stoppages, ignoring grievance procedure. And Ford, instead of taking disciplinary action against the section, decided to sack their steward instead (Bill Francis). A strike was called - but the feeling of the Unions was that the aims of the strike could not and should not be spread to involve other workers - and the Dagenham section of the Communist Party fell in line with this approach [Note 70].

The strike was defeated, and when the workers returned to work, they were lined up in their sections so that the foremen could choose who they were willing to keep on their old jobs, and who they wanted transferred. Ford wanted to sack 600 men - but in the end the Unions were allowed a few crumbs of comfort: through a series of long negotiations, the

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CONT.

animal. In Italy even animals get better treatment than we do here. If they get sick we make sure that they're looked after until they get better. But you can't say even that much for Ford.

Unions

Q. But what about the unions here? Don't they do anything for the immigrant workers?

A. The unions? You must be joking! They're pigs! There was one lad here who was working in the mines. He was out in front of the mine one Saturday afternoon, and a car ran into him. He was really cut up, so he was taken to the hospital. Now, seeing it was the end of the week, he had no money. So we went to the union and asked if they could oblige with a bit of cash. But they said that they would not do a thing, because he should have been more careful crossing the road, and anyway he must have been drunk in the first



place! Drunk, when he didn't even have the money to buy food! And not only that, but when he went in to the mine to start work finally, he found that he'd been sacked in his absence. And once again the union wouldn't do a thing for him. That's how much the unions care for us!

Divide and Rule

Q. Do Ford try to split up the immigrant workers they employ here?

A. Well, you must have heard what happened at Citroen in Brussels. There was a big strike because they tried to split up two Italian workers who were working next to each other on the lines. What they prefer is that you have an Italian, then a Turk, then a Moroccan, then a Yugoslav, all working on the lines in such a way that nobody can talk to the person next to him because he doesn't understand the language. Because they know that if people can get together and talk about the shit they find themselves in, then there's going to be trouble.

But they can't do that at Ford Genk, because they've signed on so many Italians over the years that it's impossible to keep them apart any more. Mind you, although they've been getting Italians to work here ever since the plant was opened in 1964, you'll find very, very few who've been here since the start. Most of them leave after a very short time, because they can't stand it. The ones who do stick it out are more like machines than men... they come home at night, and the only thing they have time to think about is how they'll be working on the ma-

chines again tomorrow. There's not many of the lads willing to lead a life like that! Even if they have very little choice in the matter.



The way they treat you at Ford is to humiliate you, make you feel nothing. There's the foreman standing over you, and if you fall behind even slightly, he'll come up and tell you to step on it, because if you don't he'll give you a black mark. You feel like a little school-boy. Fully grown men, with wives and kids, who are made to feel frightened of the foreman - some jumped up little nothing who has the power to give orders. And the reason that they're frightened is that they know that if they lose their job at Ford, there's unemployment around these parts that they might never get a job.

Spitting at Ford

Q. I was told that a group of workers was brought up here from Sardinia to work either at Ford or the mines, and that after a few weeks, out of 400, almost all of them had left. Is that true?

A. Not almost all of them. All of them! Even if they know they'll not find other work, most of them would rather hoe fields in Italy than do a favour for the 'signori' of Ford or the 'signori' of the mines. I tell you, there are some of the lads here who've worked at Ford, and it sickens them to even hear the name Ford. I've seen people standing by the roadside, and when a Ford transporter passes, they spit at it, because of their hatred for what Ford has done to them. They say that they'd never buy a Ford car for the rest of their lives, even if it meant going everywhere on foot.



Tradition of Resistance

Q. From what you say it sounds as if Ford and the mine employers have immigrant workers here completely at their mercy.

A. No. I wouldn't say that. Because, as I say, the lads here know the situation they're in, and before long they're going to be in a position to really do something about it.

The employers here think that they're pretty clever. When they go to Italy looking for workers, they don't go to the North, because there's industry in the North of Italy, and the workers there have got themselves organised to get their rights. Over the last couple of years there's been great upheavals in the North - around Turin, Venice and so on. No, what they do is go down to the South,

where there's no industry, and where workers aren't organised in the same way. But that's not going to last long either, because you must have read what's been happening in the South - Battipaglia, Reggio Calabria... all the rioting. You know, we Italians take a long time to get moving, but when things start, then you have to look out, because there's going to be trouble. We want our rights, and if we don't get them, then we're willing to wreck until we do. I think there's a lot of the Italians here are beginning to get the sense of what's happening back home, and are starting to wonder what they can do themselves.

The lads who arrive here to work at Ford come up from Italy on the train. They've been travelling for days, and when they get here, they're not given any sort of time to get used to the place, to look around the town and see what it's like. No, they're put to work almost straight away. They're given a little money by Ford before they come, for travelling expenses and so on. But by the time they get here it's more or less all gone, and they have no choice but to work. They get here in the afternoon, and they're expected to be up by 4 the next morning for the morning shift at Genk. They are brought here just to work... nothing else. In fact I would say they're imported, because Ford sees them not as workers, not as humans, but as so much raw material for the production lines. **END.**



TEXT

600 was reduced to 17 - all of them stewards, and all of them sacked.

It is not easy to calculate the increase in relative exploitation which followed the defeat. However, workers' accounts tally with Ford's own estimates - that the Company's average productivity rose by around 18% from 1962-63, while at Dagenham the figure was nearer 20-30%, without any significant increase in capital investment (organic composition) [Note 71].

The speed-up resulted in a high level of labour turnover, with older workers being sacked if they could not stand the new workloads, and younger workers being brought in [Note 72]. This saved Ford considerable amounts of money in overall labour costs, since it relieved them of paying 'merit money' (a discriminatory payment, based on loyalty and seniority), and it meant that the younger new starters could be made the basis of the new productivity drive [Note 73]. The PTA from that moment on, had difficulty finding candidates to stand for the annual stewards' elections. However, Ford did manage to bring about an unexpected increase of insubordination in the plant, when, overestimating the victory they had won, they sent a hundred or so chargehands to work on the lines, and workers responded angrily. 185

West Indian Workers

The defeat also had repercussions in other Ford plants. At Langley the young West Indians - who were the majority of new starters at the factory in this period - came into Ford in an atmosphere of defeat. However, the low number of strikes was in inverse proportion to the number of "individual actions" against the slavedrivers. In these conditions, the experience of the young West Indians who were coming into the factory had little time for the defensive aspects of the workers' struggle at Ford:

"These people hate us. Workers and leaders alike are racists. They would do anything to keep us down, because they are afraid of us. The Company wants to make us do jobs which, as they know, the whites don't want... At Ford every year more whites leave, and more whites arrive to take their place." [Note 74]

[Note that the Press photos of the mass meetings of the Dagenham PTA prior to 1962 showed all white faces. By 1976 - 14 years later - the plant is now majority black immigrants - Asians, West Indians and Africans]

Ford's New Factories

If we want to understand the changing balance of class forces at Ford in the period since 1962-63, we have to take account of the level of workers' struggles internationally in the 1960s - both inside and outside Ford's international cycle of production. We also have to understand Ford's new thrust in Europe as a whole.

The keystone of Ford's expansion plans at the end of the 1950s - both in Britain and in Europe - was the injection of a young labour force onto the assembly lines: this became a coordinated company policy. The new plants of the period were Halewood on Merseyside, and Genk in Limburg, Belgium. Both of these were 'development areas', where Ford received State aid worth £11m and 10bn Belgian francs respectively, for setting up their factories. Both were high unemployment areas, with large labour reserves, so that Ford could reasonably expect easily planned wage

13. Ford Workers against the State-1969

Fraud

TEXT

"The Economist has pointed out the implications of Incomes Policy strongly:

"The price of securing an incomes policy in Britain will be a willingness to stand up to strikes...Another weapon against unofficial strikes is that, quite bluntly, blacklegging must become respectable again" [Economist, 5th June and 4th September 1965].

And one economist recommended a vote for the Labour Party in the 1964 General Election, because...

"Paradoxically, one of the strongest arguments for a Labour Government is that, beneath layers of velvet, it might be more prepared to face a showdown in dealing with the Unions." [S.Brittan, 1965]

The same point was made by Sir Patrick Hennessy, Ford's chief, stating:

"It is my conviction, following the latest moves - the cooperative action between the industry, the Trade Unions, and the Labour Government - that we may soon see action to prevent unofficial stoppages."

Harold Wilson did not disappoint Sir Patrick Hennessy. One of the first acts of the Labour Government was the appointment of the Donovan Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations.

The main target of Donovan was clear:

"The central defect in British industrial relations is the disorder in factory and workshop relations and pay structures, promoted by the conflict between the formal and the informal systems. To remedy this, effective and orderly collective bargaining is needed..."

The aim of the Donovan Report was the integration of the shop stewards into a streamlined union machine, into a plant consensus. The process of integration could be helped by greater legal and managerial discipline. Order had also to be brought into the workings of the Unions. [June 1968]

The bugbear of the Donovan Commission was the unofficial strikes. The Commission recommended that the definition of Trade Unions should be altered to exclude "temporary combinations" of workers, and that only registered Trade Unions should come under the protection of laws like the 1906 Trade Disputes Act, which protects workers on strike against civil action for damages. The effect of this would be to place all workers on unofficial strikes at the mercy of the litigating employers. To soften the blow and the contradictions of such a policy, the Commission recommended that no legal sanctions be introduced against unofficial strikes as such. They argued against the wisdom of penal sanctions.

Seven months after Donovan, the Labour Minister Barbara Castle came out with her own variation on the same theme - In Place of Strife. This proposed the establishment of a register of Trade Unions in order to establish control; the setting-up of industrial courts; powers for the State to impose a 28-day cooling-off period for unofficial strikes and to impose a strike ballot. Workers could be fined for ignoring these procedures.

Simultaneously the Ford Motor Company was preparing its own penal sanctions: in the 1969 wage negotiations they tried to include a Penalty Clause, whereby: "For lay-off benefit Ford would pay 4/- per employee per week into a fund, but if there was an unconstitutional action in any plant all the workers would lose all the payment for 6 months".

In a prolonged strike action, Ford tried taking the Unions to Court - but as a result of a very militant and massive strike, Ford management's penalty clauses were smashed to pieces...And the same went for Labour's proposed Incomes Policy. They were voted out of office the year after."

From "The Employers' Offensive" by Tony Cliff, Pluto Press, 1970

costs for many years ahead. And both were located in regions of declining industries - apparently promising a degree of medium-term political stability.

However, their hopes proved ill-founded, because workers at both the new factories maintained a continuity of struggles with the old "declining" sectors - engineering on Merseyside, and coal-mining in Limburg [Note 75]. At Halewood, the building and starting-up of the new factory was accompanied by strikes and overtime bans from 1960 to 1962 - and this culminated in 1962 with the breakdown of the agreement between the Union (GMWU and AEU) and Ford. (In 1960 the Unions had accepted longer hours and lower wages than Dagenham in return for preferential unionisation agreements) [Note 76]. With the struggles of 1962 we see the start of Halewood's unification with the rest of Ford-UK.

The unification of Ford-Genk with Ford-Antwerp took longer. Ford-Genk began production in 1964, with a young labour force that was mainly of Southern European origin - some of them came to Ford after a spell in the Limburg coalmines, where about 60% of the workforce in the 1950s and 1960s was imported migrant labour, and some of whom came in a fresh influx of immigrant labour from Southern Europe and North Africa (many Turks and Italians among them). This meant that by 1965 the average age of the Ford worker at Genk was not much over 27 years. This exploitation of young people's muscle power on the assembly lines opened the way for a speed-up of such intensity that it created a unity between old and young workers - united in their refusal to work at Fords: of the 500 ex-Zwartberg miners who entered Ford-Genk when it opened, only 200 were left by 1968. Between 1964 and 1968, 9,000 workers had left Ford-Genk in protest against the 45-hour working week, the high line-speeds, and the fact that Ford-Genk paid 12 francs an hour less than Ford-Antwerp [see facing page].

The 8,000 workers at Ford-Genk had their first trial of strength with Ford's international management, in the strike that lasted from October to November 1968; the demands of the strikers were similar to the sorts of demands being made by Halewood workers in relation to Dagenham: wage-parity with Ford-Antwerp; rank and file control of the struggle; and the need to establish coordination with other Ford plants in Europe. The Union ended this struggle with an agreement that was supposed to run for 5 years of "labour truce" - but this truce was broken in January-February 1970, when Genk workers re-opened the struggle, and joined up with the striking miners of the surrounding Limburg mines.

When Ford chose to site the plant at Genk - almost mid-way along the 120-miles of motorway that link the Cologne and Antwerp plants - this signalled that the centre of gravity of Ford's European operations was being shifted from Britain to the Belgian/German axis, and that overall European control was passing from Ford-UK to Ford of Germany. Ford's interests were clearly that they had a more favourable labour situation in Germany, and a level of labour discipline that they hoped to be able to impose on the British plants. The fact that Ford had created an international cooperation between the Belgian, German and British plants could have laid the basis for shop stewards to make real contacts with their overseas counterparts, and develop common forms of struggle around this unified production process. However, this was scotched: the Unions' response to this capitalist initiative was to take away from the stewards more and more of their channels of communication at the national level,

14. The Parity Drive - Ford Strike 1971



● This article - from the Financial Times, March 11th 1971 - was published during the 9-week Ford Strike of that year. It describes the central focus around which both the working class and the employers in the motor industry organised their strategy - the question of parity. It also stresses the importance of the Coventry Toolroom Agreement which came under attack in that year.

practical and sensible parity...
 The significance of this unique toolroom arrangement would be so great if it applied to some other important city. But Coventry is the centre of the engineering industry and has in general not modernised its piece-work payments systems in line with its modern production techniques. Its car workers are also...
 However, some employers like Ford and at Vauxhall (who are expecting an "answer" to their imprecise claim to claim a 10% increase next Monday) watch these figures which Chrysler has started to pay to buy out the union work. The answer to the union demands have been put most explicitly in characteristic style by Mr. Rob Ramsey, Ford's industrial relations director, who has said: "The parity slogan is practice means perpetuating the wages jungle in British Leyland's Midlands plants and in the Coventry area generally, and in pitchworking Ford where, for example, Chrysler has been unable to shift 250 workers at its Stoke Newington factory on to the measured day-work systems of its other plants. Prices and incomes Board to carry out a detailed investigation of its workings and effects, and Department of Employment officials are now starting to arrive in Coventry...
 The 50,000 employees involved are showing no collective signs of wanting to end their six-week-old strike, and their union negotiators have refused to acknowledge that they want anything less than the £12 to £16 per week which their demand for parity with Midlands car workers amounts to—even though it is generally assumed that £5 to £6 would be a more realistic figure for them to aim at.
 This imprecise negotiating stance has infuriated Ford management but in fact it is no more confused than the basis of the pay claim. The very idea of parity is an imprecise demand and only demonstrates the chaotic system of wage determination in the motor industry.
 For instance, while the Ford union leaders refer to Chrysler's rate at Ryton, near Coventry, of 95p they do not at the same time acknowledge the fact that general engineering rates in Coventry ranged (in June last) from 62p to £1.21 with the majority between 75p and £1.10.
 Unnoticed
 While national attention has been concentrated in the last few years on high flat rates negotiated at Ryton and elsewhere, an equally important and potentially inflationary agreement has existed largely unnoticed in Coventry, the hub of the British engineering industry employing some 100,000 workers.
 This is the Coventry Toolroom Agreement which was introduced like a broader national agreement in 1941 at the behest of Ernest Bevin, then Minister of Labour, to "apply during the wartime emergency." Its object was to stabilise the method of setting wages for toolroom workers in the Coventry area who otherwise might have left general engineering factories for higher-paid aircraft and other armaments establishments.
 More than 30 years later, the agreement still exists, which means that each month the "toolroom rate" for Coventry is set after the wages of some 8,000 workers.
 This rate is posted monthly on notice boards of engineering factories and therefore each month provides a well-publicised barometer which leads to a spin-off throughout Coventry's and then engineering workers and then elsewhere through the Midlands till its effects are eventually felt in national negotiations.
 Surprisingly, the increases in this rate have been very similar over the years to rises in national average earnings. Last year the rate rose from 80p to 95p—about 11 per cent—and this rose in February, reflecting piecework sampling carried out three months earlier when wages were rising fast, to 97p. During the six-month wage "freeze" of 1966 the rate rose by 6 to 7 per cent, but levelled off slightly a few months later.
 This wage "barometer" is now coming under Government scrutiny. The last administrative thought at the last year's Board to carry out a detailed investigation of its workings and effects, and Department of Employment officials are now starting to arrive in Coventry...
 The Midlands situation arises from outdated arrangements which are like productivity and cost-of-living rises. Soon it seems likely that some unions—at least those in Coventry—will start to demand more than the "parity" rate.
 In a way the strike is significant more because it highlights the chaotic state of the engineering industry's wage negotiations "because of any real deterioration in Ford's own labour relations."
 Although individual struggles remained isolated, they had a common factor - the drive for increased wages. We can say that the refusal of work at Ford (and the associated labour mobility) was an important factor in the wage drive at Fords in the 1960s - but we should also note that this was a generalised phenomenon at the worldwide level, particularly in the motor industry. From this we can see the most obvious common factor of the wage drive: the cost of labour mobility, which presents itself as a direct demand for higher real wages, and refuses to accept that wage rises should be linked to increased productivity (in the shape of the various sorts of productivity and incentive schemes). This has always been the pattern of things at Ford: the workers' demand for increased social wealth grows hand in hand with the increasing refusal to work at Ford, of the mobility that this brings about, and the social costs that result from this refusal. This is a characteristic that unites the different struggles that emerged in the 1960s; and it also raises the possibility of developing this characteristic at an international level - something which will prove an important testing point for the new working class forces that are emerging now. Furthermore, the fact that capital is now using stagnation as a political weapon, as well as underdevelopment (as previously in the case of the West Indies, even more than Southern Europe) means that the problem of the overall relationship between driving sectors of the economy and the non-wage areas becomes a problem not only for the masses of workers coming out of the underdeveloped areas - but for the whole of the working class.
 Ford-UK is an important focus-point of class forces - and it was here that Ford management undertook a trial of strength that led to the workers' defeat of 1962. Ford's initiative was the first spark of a new wave of employers' resistance to increases in money wages - a resistance which took shape in the Budgets of 1961 and 1962, during the brief period when Selwyn Lloyd was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and which became Government policy from July 1961 to March 1962 ("pay pause"). This experiment was a taste of the "wage freeze" which was being proposed by the Tory Right-wing (although this Right-wing suffered a demise as a result of the Government's inability to confront the wave of strikes in Spring 1962 - and did not resume control of the economy until the 1970 Election).
 The fact that this wage freeze experiment was held in reserve while Labour was coming to power (the 1964 Election) did not imply that a new phase of social democracy was on the way. Rather it was a period of uncertainty for British capital, in the face of increased wage pressures. It was a period in which the employers were preparing an offensive against working class struggles, through the attempt to involve trade unionists and shop stewards in a much tighter cooperation in company planning and national economic planning. 1962 had seen the formation of the National Economic Development Council and the National Incomes Commission. But it was to be Robert Carr's Industrial Relations Act which would take this attempted co-optation furthest: in this Act the 'collective capitalist' tried to detach workers' factory representatives from their shop floor base and tried to direct them upwards into the Union

the highest paid in the country. While the agreement may therefore help to maintain comfortable labour relations and control wage movements for some employers in the city, it is generally thought to have an undesirable inflationary effect elsewhere.
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	Total number of manual workers	Average weekly earnings of all staff in 1969*	Approximate total earnings for all-companiest
FORD	50,000	£32.22†	£33
CHRYSLER UK	18,700	£27.48	£40 at Ryton
BRITISH LEYLAND	135,000	£26.01	£45 on Oxford assembly flat rate
VAUXHALL	30,000	£25.95†	£32

* Not an ideal measure because all employees, from the chairman downwards, are included.
 † Based on a basic week plus overtime, shift allowances, lay-off pay, etc., but not a precise guide because of variations in work patterns.

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and to keep tight Union control of any direct communication with representatives from Ford plants abroad.

Wages, not Productivity

Although individual struggles remained isolated, they had a common factor - the drive for increased wages. We can say that the refusal of work at Ford (and the associated labour mobility) was an important factor in the wage drive at Fords in the 1960s - but we should also note that this was a generalised phenomenon at the worldwide level, particularly in the motor industry. From this we can see the most obvious common factor of the wage drive: the cost of labour mobility, which presents itself as a direct demand for higher real wages, and refuses to accept that wage rises should be linked to increased productivity (in the shape of the various sorts of productivity and incentive schemes). This has always been the pattern of things at Ford: the workers' demand for increased social wealth grows hand in hand with the increasing refusal to work at Ford, of the mobility that this brings about, and the social costs that result from this refusal. This is a characteristic that unites the different struggles that emerged in the 1960s; and it also raises the possibility of developing this characteristic at an international level - something which will prove an important testing point for the new working class forces that are emerging now. Furthermore, the fact that capital is now using stagnation as a political weapon, as well as underdevelopment (as previously in the case of the West Indies, even more than Southern Europe) means that the problem of the overall relationship between driving sectors of the economy and the non-wage areas becomes a problem not only for the masses of workers coming out of the underdeveloped areas - but for the whole of the working class.

Ford-UK is an important focus-point of class forces - and it was here that Ford management undertook a trial of strength that led to the workers' defeat of 1962. Ford's initiative was the first spark of a new wave of employers' resistance to increases in money wages - a resistance which took shape in the Budgets of 1961 and 1962, during the brief period when Selwyn Lloyd was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and which became Government policy from July 1961 to March 1962 ("pay pause"). This experiment was a taste of the "wage freeze" which was being proposed by the Tory Right-wing (although this Right-wing suffered a demise as a result of the Government's inability to confront the wave of strikes in Spring 1962 - and did not resume control of the economy until the 1970 Election).
 The fact that this wage freeze experiment was held in reserve while Labour was coming to power (the 1964 Election) did not imply that a new phase of social democracy was on the way. Rather it was a period of uncertainty for British capital, in the face of increased wage pressures. It was a period in which the employers were preparing an offensive against working class struggles, through the attempt to involve trade unionists and shop stewards in a much tighter cooperation in company planning and national economic planning. 1962 had seen the formation of the National Economic Development Council and the National Incomes Commission. But it was to be Robert Carr's Industrial Relations Act which would take this attempted co-optation furthest: in this Act the 'collective capitalist' tried to detach workers' factory representatives from their shop floor base and tried to direct them upwards into the Union

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15. Is there Life after Fords? 1974



TEXT

- Ford, in 1912, set out to control the lives and desires of his workers. He later also introduced night shift working - the effects of which are described (below) by the wife of a Dagenham Ford worker. But the sharp homosexual division of labour also leaves its mark inside the factory:

"The first thing that hits you when you walk into the plant - after the racial composition of the workers - are the Playboy-type nudes in every available space. It's like being wrapped up in the Sun. The naked woman becomes the symbol, however distorted and distorting, of "real" life outside the factory. And any woman who happens to pass is seen in this extremist way. What a life!" [1974]

"If John is working on nights, he'll just want to get up on Saturday afternoon and turn the box on. Ford has mucked up our whole weekend. There is just about time to do some of the shopping. I get all irritable because I haven't seen him all week. Things get really tense when he's on nights. You've got to get used to living on your own. I sometimes get my sister over when he's on nights. In the olden days it wouldn't have been so bad, because there would have been other people around. Now we are all cooped up in a small flat, staring at the box.

"It gets really hard on the kids. You have to tell them to shut up all the time because Dad is trying to get some sleep. You get tense all the time, because you think they are going to wake him up. Some blokes find it really tough to sleep during the day. You can't blame them when they get all ratty, but it's tough on the kids.

"Sometimes you don't want to go to bed in the afternoon. Sex is hard if you've got kids to look after. You don't always feel like it. You just can't do it. It makes it all cold-blooded and mechanical. It makes me feel bad, and I just can't enjoy it. I'm sure many women must feel the same.

"You can't make love, just because you've got 5 minutes to spare. So you don't go near each other. You get used to doing without sex. You aren't bothered. This just shows you the state that people get in. It's no surprise that blokes are frustrated most of the time. Things get worse if you're doing a job yourself, because you hardly see him. He comes back from work all tense and tired, and you have to go to work soon after. What a life this is! It's hard to keep putting a good face on it all...Fords controls not only the money we get, but our whole life as well. They don't think about what is happening to the blokes that are doing all the work and making all the cars. And when they get old or have an accident, they're just thrown onto the scrapheap.

"It's alright for the blokes sitting on their arses in the offices giving the orders. They never have to spend the whole night working. It seems as if the Union officials don't, also, 'cos they never do anything about it. People should be paid at least double rates for working nights. And I don't think they should do it at all. It isn't human. If people mattered in this society, we wouldn't have things organised in this way.

"You can't afford to buy the bloody cars anyway - so who are we making them for? We do all the bloody work - the working class. Fords are killing people every day - they are just doing it slowly, so they get away with it. Of course, they are "ever so nice" when things go wrong.

"But if a kid gets ill, you're left alone in the flat. Does Fords pay blokes to stay at home to look after the kids when they're ill? Why not? You can't manage on one wage these days. Women have been forced out to work. It used to be to get a little money for extras - now it is for the bare essentials. Why should wives have to pay for a nursery when the profits that we make for Ford could pay for it? The nursery shouldn't have to come out of our pocket, along with everything else. Ford has even knocked the Xmas party for the kids on the head. We do all the work, so we should have some say in how the money's spent."

bureaucracies [Note 77]. This kind of policy opened up new possibilities of controlling incomes - especially when coupled with increasing wage differentials, and with the coordinated flight of capital abroad (overseas investments) that were taking place in that period. The working class forces that emerged in the 1960s have not yet proved themselves capable of taking their own class initiatives, quite separate from their formal factory representatives - initiatives which would make it possible to break through these new instruments of income control. However, there has been a growing tendency for strikes to break with the Unions' control of wage agreements; for workers to carry the factory struggle out into the society; and for some Unions to be side-stepped by their memberships [Notes 78, 79, 80].

Job Evaluation & Labour Hierarchy

From the mid-1960s onwards, political recomposition of the working class at Ford was blocked by the failure to create links between line-workers and those white collar workers engaged on tertiary and auxiliary work [Note 81], a sector which Ford was strengthening during that period, placing them under the management of Ford-Europe (the body now responsible for coordinating all Ford's European operations). This new centralisation, and the accompanying managerial reorganisation, corresponded with the example of the American chemical and petrochemical multinationals, in their coordination of European operations (eg Esso and Monsanto, firms with a far higher organic composition).

Alongside this centralisation of Ford's European activities came a new phase in the relation of wages to productivity within Ford-UK. In 1967, Esso, with the Fawley Agreement [Note 82], was the first company in Britain to lay down an agreement which made wage increases conditional on increased flexibility of the labour force (which was already higher at Esso than the British average). Ford followed Esso, in September 1967, with the Job Evaluation Agreement, which attempted (rather shakily) to translate the Esso experiment into a sector of lower organic composition. This Agreement was part of a long-term plan for a coordinated stratification and separation of assembly-line work and auxiliary/tertiary functions [Note 81], and was a move in the direction of Europe-wide planning of Ford's overall wage costs. It was negotiated job by job with the Unions and shop stewards, in the face of general passivity on the part of the workers. But as from the middle of 1968 it began to come under attack, with strikes by lineworkers, and in particular the strike of sewing machinists at Dagenham and Halewood, which put forward a general platform of egalitarian demands against the hierarchy of labour at Fords, as well as taking up certain issues related to that moment of the struggle. Note that the "second wage packet" earned by married women workers had been seen as an "extra" in the period of relative stability of real wages - but it became increasingly a "necessity" as inflation began to grow through the 1960s [Note 83].

By now more and more people were becoming aware that they had to stick in their jobs, even to defend their present level of family income - and in a sense this awareness contributed to the strength of the Ford workers' campaign for Parity with the Midlands car workers. We can say that at the start of the 1970s there were the beginnings of an egalitarian working class attack on the factory wage hierarchy. We can also say that this laid the basis for British Ford workers to develop a wider process of class recomposition at the international level, going beyond the individual factory and beyond the sectional interests of individual sectors of development or underdevelopment.

A Pakistani worker is arrested during picketing outside Ford-Dagenham, May 1974.



The next 17 pages of our pamphlet consist of

- Notes to sections 1 & 2 of the pamphlet.
- Appendix 1, which explains some of the terms used in the pamphlet.
- Appendix 2, which explains a few things about the capitalist crisis, as we see it.
- A suggested Reading List about the Ford Motor Co.

READING LIST (Continued from inside Back Cover)

Ford Motor Company, 1957 (HMSO, Cmnd 131); of the Jack Court of Inquiry into the 1962 Ford Dagenham dispute (HMSO, Cmnd 1999).

And finally, the old bastard himself: (i) "My Life and Work" by Henry Ford, pub. Garden City 1922; (ii) "Today and Tomorrow", H.Ford, Garden City, 1926; (iii) "Moving Forward", H.Ford, Garden City, 1931.

E] And, to conclude, some necessary GENERAL READING: (i) the article "Americanism and Fordism" by A.Gramsci, in "Prison Notebooks", L&W, 1971, p.279; (ii) the book "Operai e Stato", ed. Bologna & Negri, pub. Feltrinelli 1972 - the book from which this pamphlet is taken; (iii) "Ford Facts" - a folder of relevant information published regularly by the Ford Motor Co.; (iv) There are, of course, many other pamphlets, leaflets etc that have been published by political groups over the years of Ford's existence, both in Britain and in the other countries where they operate. The trouble is that a lot of them are not in English - and even those which are, are very hard to get hold of.

● Contained in this pamphlet you will find reference to the main sources and documents for the history of Ford. If anybody is interested in working on a more complete documentation (or a bibliography) of working class struggle in the Ford Motor Company, we would be glad to cooperate, both by making material available, and by providing possible further leads.

NOTES

- For the relationship between supplier firms and the larger motor manufacturers in Britain, see the article in Economist Intelligence Unit - "Motor Business", No.55, 1968.
- See A.Silberston's article 'The Motor Industry', in D.L.Burn 'The Structure of British Industry - a Symposium', published by Cambridge University Press 1958, Vlll II, pages 1-44.
- From the Times 19th March 1969, Rubber Special Report, page 1.
- From the Times article (see Note 3 above), page 4.
- 'Ford Facts' - Plastics in the Motor Industry, 1968.
- It's exceptional for motor firms to self-supply 50% of gear units. Ford's other 50% come from 11 supplier firms. For more information, see Economic Intelligence Unit - "Motor Business", No.55, 1968.
- Primary lines and auxiliary lines - ie the main assembly lines and the feeder lines.

According to the RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF METAL-WORKING PRODUCTION, McGRAW HILL, Census of Machine Tools in Britain, Metal-working production, July 27th 1966, published by McGraw Hill, London, 1966. the percentage of foreign manufactured machine tools within the UK total was as follows:

AGE OF MACHINE TOOL	% MANUF. ABROAD [All sectors]	% MANUF. ABROAD [Vehicle Sector]
LESS THAN 10 YRS OLD	11.4%	16.9%
BETWEEN 10 & 20 YRS OLD	10.6%	17.7%
MORE THAN 20 YRS OLD	10.3%	21.5%

As the census-compilers point out, these percentages are in terms of numbers, and not of value. It's usually the machines that are most expensive and hard to find in the UK that are imported, and this means that a percentage based on value rather than on numbers would show a larger number of foreign machines. These considerations are more true for the vehicles industry than for industry as a whole, as the percentages show. They are also more true for Vauxhall and Ford than for the vehicles industry as a whole, because it's relatively easy for them to transfer technological innovations from General Motors and Ford-US. There is also a considerable production in Britain of machinery under licence from these 2 American companies.

- See Economic Intelligence Unit - "Motor Business" No.43, 1965, pages 14 and 23 for details of the Ford Group operating outside America.
- See Labour Research No.45, December 1966, which shows that the relationship between capital investment at Ford-UK and BLMC has remained almost unchanged since 1957. See also Economic Intelligence Unit - "Motor Business" No.18, 1958, Table XIII.
- This period runs from that start of the motor industry in the UK, through to the end of the 1960s, when the switch-over from piece-rates was introduced at BLMC - the company that emerged from the merger of British Motor Holdings with Leyland.
- See Labour Research No.45. In 1965 BMC were producing 8.86 cars per worker, Ford 10.87, and Vauxhall 10.1.
- Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations (Donovan)

[Notes 1.

Minutes of Evidence - Motor Industry Employers, HMSO London 1966, para 56.

13] Royal Commission (as in Note 12), paras 56-58.

14] "Net Value added per employee" is a useful way of measuring relative exploitation. Moss Evans in the TGWU's 'Ford Wage Claim' for 1971, page 17, reports Ford's statement to the NJNC in November 1969, that £2,764 net value added per employee represented a "favourable comparison in the UK". But, using Ford's 1968 accounts in 'Ford Facts', Evans claims that the real figure is nearer £3,500 per employee...which "compares even more favourably with other British producers."

15] Again, see the TGWU wage claim for 1971, which gives the best figures for the national and international differences in Ford's wages. Pages 39-46 give figures for comparative wage costs in the UK and in the Common Market, while pages 33-35 give comparative wage rates within the UK motor industry.

16] Department of Employment and Productivity, 'In Place of Strife', London, HMSO, 1969.

17] An 'unconstitutional strike' is one that ignores the negotiating procedure laid down in the Company agreement. See Socialist Worker, January 29th 1969, page 4.

18] See F.Silberman's article, 'The 1969 Ford Strike', in the 1970 Trade Union Register, pages 213-228, and especially page 227, note 17.

19] Department of Employment and Productivity, Industrial Relations Bill Consultative Document, HMSO, London, 1970.

20] See, for example, the article in the Sunday Times, March 19th 1969, page 12 - "Why Ford is Worth a Fight": "With new wage increases, the pressure of wage demands not linked to productivity - consuming what we have not yet created - would grow immediately. This is why the Ford strike is of such prime importance for British policies."

21] One of the tightest groups at Dagenham, the process workers in the Foundry, were a typical example of this when they waged a struggle through 1968-69 - ie at the time Ford was introducing the new hierarchies developed by the 'job evaluation' study.

There were a few stewards who wanted to bring notions of 'workers' control' into the struggle over job evaluation, but this didn't go very far. Among the most ideological stewards on the British Left, the idea of workers' control reigns supreme, and they apply it not only to the control of production, but also the defence of skills. Their idea was that workers and stewards should be the ones to decide skill ratings, without challenging the whole notion of "skills" at Ford. For an example of this attitude, see Socialist Worker, 29th March 1969, page 2: "The control of job evaluation and comparisons of differences in pay must be in the hands of the shop floor. The workers will accept the decisions of other workers - the representatives that they have elected."

22] In June 1968 Ford laid off large numbers of workers at the time of the women sewing machinists' strike, and again in September-October, following a strike in one of their suppliers.

23] On the British Left people are often as frightened to admit that from the capitalist point of view immigration has been an anti-worker exercise as they find difficulty in admitting that it was also an anti-proletarian operation in the ex-colonies, and that the struggles of immigrant workers lead the movement that is going to break this operation,

Notes 2.]

by attacking the links that bind "development" and "underdevelopment". If, as the Economist writes, strike-breaking must once again become respectable, then the breaking of class cohesion will be brought about by the attempt to defeat sections of workers who, perhaps, are less "settled" in Britain, but who are certainly more determined in their attack on a factory system which they see as the basis of discrimination.

24] This was the case in the sewing machinists' strike at Dagenham in June 1968. In the decisive meeting between the workers' representatives and the Minister of Labour, the women were refused a higher grading, but were offered wage increases that would leave them 8% behind the average man's wage packet. The action of the women to get themselves upgraded was translated by the State into a demand for 'Equal Pay for Equal Work'.

25] Royal Commission, paras. 61-62. A confidential report, put out by the Ministry of Labour, with the aid of industrialists and trade unionists, was published in Socialist Worker on December 21st 1968: "With the continual introduction of expensive new machinery and equipment, shift working will no doubt continue to increase so as to maximise the economic return from the capital investment involved, and indeed before committing capital to the purchase of such machinery, employers want to be assured that shift working will be possible so as to ensure an adequate return."

The Report discussed Section 68 of the Factory Act, which says that women and workers under 18 should take their rest periods at the same time. This, the Report complains, "denies the employers the flexibility so essential in present-day conditions". The employers would rather see rest times dictated by the needs of production - staggered breaks etc.

This tendency is confirmed in J.Blackman's article in the 1970 Trade Union Register (pages 109-115), especially pages 109-110:-

"Progress towards equal pay without legislation has been made in some sectors of industry during 1969...At the end of 1969 a step forward towards treating men and women alike for pay was made by Fords, on condition that the restrictions on women working night shifts were lifted. At the beginning of this year (1970), Vauxhall established the principle of "Equal Pay for Equal Work" also, by an agreement whereby women received the full men's rate for the same work, including night shifts... this was regarded in the Press as a useful step which may be significant for other car plants and engineering in general."

26] Black Ram, published in London, March 1969, No.1, pages 6-9.

Notes for Section Two

[The writing of the second part of this pamphlet was made possible by the help of Robert Lovell - AEU official at Dagenham from 1943-55 - who provided documents and information that would otherwise have been unobtainable. The notes that follow have been slightly expanded from the original Italian text.]

27] The Ford plant at Trafford Park was a converted coach-building establishment. Ford started production there in 1911, with the formal setting-up of the Ford Motor Company (England). In 1912 they acquired their first body-making plant.

28] This political movement included the Russian Revolution, the development of the revolutionary Workers' Councils in Germany and Italy (to be crushed by Social Democracy and Fascism respectively), the Seattle

[Notes 3.]

General Strike and the Steel and Railroad strikes in the USA, and the Triple Alliance in Britain.

29] General Motors took over Vauxhall in 1925 and Opel in 1929. The European market was divided up in the 1930s between the two big US manufacturers. In fact, General Motors had the edge over Ford. The turnover of Ford-Werke AG was a quarter that of Opel, while Vauxhall's turnover was half that of Ford-UK.

30] Ford's penetration into Commonwealth markets was not in fact organised by Ford-UK, but by Ford-USA, through Ford of Canada, where they controlled 78% of the company from America.

31] JG O'Leary's "The Book of Dagenham", 3rd edition, published by the Borough of Dagenham, 1963, pages 41-42:

"When housebuilding started late in 1921, the situation was getting acute (because of lack of funds)...eventually unemployment helped the situation. Unemployment then being very serious (all over the country), an Unemployment Grants Committee was set up with means at its disposal. That provided 65% of the cost (of the infrastructures)." [See the text facing page 16 for the restructuring of British industry in the 1930s out of the traditional working class strongholds.]

32] In this period 78% of the houses were built, while the figure for 1921-24 were 18%, and 8% in 1929-30. According to the Census figures the population rose from 9,127 in 1921 to 89,362 in 1931.

For the first years of Dagenham as a New Town, see O'Leary's book [Note 31], and also T.Young's book "Becontree and Dagenham; Report made for the Pilgrim Trust", London 1934.

33] According to the figures from the Dagenham Employment Exchange, apart from Ford, Briggs and Kelsey Hayes, there were 5 other industrial employers, employing about 1,134 workers in 1935.

34] According to an internal AEU document at the time, the number of AEU members at Dagenham in 1930 - the year before Ford opened - was 24. Up until 1935 the AEU had only one branch at Dagenham.

35] For the Briggs strike, read S.Romer "The Detroit Strike", in 'The Nation', No.136, 15th February 1933, pages 167-68. Romer emphasises:

"The remarkable unity, not only between the strikers and workers at other plants, but also between the employed and unemployed... the picket lines included not only strikers, but also many unemployed."

36] For the beginnings of the Sit-Down strike movement in the USA, see the illustration facing page 18. See also the "Solidarity" pamphlet, "The Great G.M. Flint Sit Down Strike", and the excellent book by Jeremy Brecher, "Strike", pub. Straight Arrow Books, USA, 1972

37] In the midst of the Depression, Roosevelt, newly elected President of the USA, began a programme of "Relief, Recovery and Reform". The National Recovery Act was designed to raise workers' wages, to set up work relief projects, and to guarantee unionisation. It opened the way to a wave of strikes in 1934, and to the signing of the 1935 Social Security Act. Roosevelt made his point: "I laid down the simple proposition that nobody is going to starve in this country. It seems to me equally plain that no business which depends for its existence on paying less than a living wage to its workers has any right to continue in this country..."

38] For the history of the organisation of the unemployed, and the role of the Communists in that organisation, read Wal Hannington's book

Notes 4]

"Unemployed Struggles" 1919-1936, published by Lawrence and Wishart, London 1936, and reprinted by EP publishing house, 1973. [See also the text facing page 17].

39] For the importance of this strike at Dagenham, see the duplicated paper put out by the organisers of the struggle - the "Ford Worker", No. 12, March 1934. at Dagenham: "The strike was a lesson to Detroit, Sweden, Cologne, Briggs, Firestone, Hopes and all workers". Also the unpublished "Years of Struggle against Injustice" pamphlet, prepared by the Ford Dagenham TU panel:

"The strike at Briggs Bodies had revealed conditions under which no human being should be expected to work. It was a revolt of the unorganised against tyranny and oppression. Accidents were numerous and occurred almost hourly in an atmosphere of sweated conditions. There appeared to be little unity and liaison with the trade union movement in the Dagenham area at this stage..."

40] At this point, reference to Keynes is unavoidable. In December 1930 Keynes had warned against attempts by individual employers to introduce wage cuts - see "The Great Slump of 1930", Collected Works, Vol.IX, p.128:-

"In this quandary individual producers base illusory hopes on courses of action which would benefit an individual producer or class of producers as long as they were alone in pursuing them, but which benefit no one if everyone pursues them."

Keynes was implicitly posing the necessity of an international policy towards the crisis, built on a basic coordination of policy between the 'democratic' capitalist countries - in particular Britain and America - acting against maverick solutions to the crisis. Such a coordination would mean a common wages policy - or rather a homogeneous policy was a necessary precondition for making the decision on whether to have wages low or high.

41] See "Ford Worker" [Note 39, above], page 5.

42] See "Ford Worker" [Note 39 above]: "The firm are experiencing difficulty in getting the 'right men', as men in jobs won't pack them up to come to our place, while hundreds are leaving this concentration camp at the first opportunity".

43] According to the Daily Herald, 30th March 1933, several hundred workers were clocking up 12 hours a day on the 2-shift system.

44] In a handwritten Report by a Briggs worker, sent to the AEU in about 1934, it says: "If any overtime is worked, any man on the job who is paid a little higher rate than the others, is sent home, so as to save money..."

45] See the Report [Note 44, above].

46] See "A survey and Report on the Ford, Briggs Bodies and Kelsey Hayes Groupings: 23.11.1936" - a handwritten report on the conditions of work and the possibilities for organising, sent to the Dagenham district committee of the AEU.

47] See the Report [Note 46, above], page 3. There is also an appeal for local trade union unity, from the Communist members at Fords: "Quite obviously the existence of these establishments at the present moment are a menace to trade union conditions in unionised factories."

48] See the Report [Note 46, above], page 4: "The situation for the Unions

[Note 5.

at this moment is hopeful because of the difficulties the Company is having in obtaining suitable classes of skilled workers".

49] The general conditions of work, and in particular the fluctuations in production, were the main reasons for the refusal of work at Ford. By 1951, the number of people travelling in to Dagenham was immense, many of them coming from London. This broke one of the lynch-pins of Ford's 'New Deal' at Dagenham - the closeness of workers' homes to the factory, all under the control of local councils. This closeness had been very convenient, since it avoided the pressures of travelling expenses on the wage packet. For the 1951 Census figures, see the Book of Dagenham [Note 31, above].

50] "Report by a Court of Inquiry in the matter of a Trade Dispute apprehended at Briggs Motor Bodies Ltd, Dagenham, HMSO 1941 (Cmnd 6248) page 6:

"The management of this company in fact take notice of, and have dealings with, certain of their own engineering employees whom they know to be members of the AEU, and shop stewards chosen by members of that Union. They have, however, no dealings with the officials of that Union unless they are also employed by them."

51] "Report of a Court of Inquiry into the causes and circumstances of a dispute at Briggs Motor Bodies Ltd, Dagenham (under Lord Cameron)", (Cmnd 131) HMSO 1957, page A5.

52] For the unionisation of Ford-America see the text facing page 21.

53] The Cameron Report [Note 51, above], page A5:-

"The 1941 arrangements applied originally only to the Engineering Division, but, after a period of agitation and strikes, an agreement was reached in 1944, in virtually the same terms as the 1941 Agreement, covering the whole of the Briggs plant. Thereafter the trouble appears to have become manageable for a time."

54] This coordination was formalised when the Motor Industry Industrial Relations Panel was set up in 1961 (MIIRP), after Ford-America had taken over full control of Ford-UK.

55] See the Cameron Report [Note 51, above], page A5.

56] "Report of a Court of Inquiry into the causes and circumstances of a dispute between the Ford Motor Company Ltd., Dagenham, and Members of the Trade Unions (under DT Jack)" (Cmnd 1999), HMSO 1963, para.19.

57] For the employers' attack on the bastions of the piecework system in the Midlands motor industry, see the article on the Coventry Toolroom Agreement in Factfolder No.1, 1971, available from Red Notes.

58] See the Jack Inquiry [Note 56, above] and the Cameron Report [Note 51, above], para 19 and para 78 respectively.

60] In terms of vehicles, the numbers of Ford's annual production that were exported were the following (in %):-

1938...12.3%	1955...47.5%
1946...39.0%	1960...43.7%
1950...75.1%	1965...45.5%

61] In 1950 Ford-America took over from Ford-UK the control that they had held since the 1930s over the coordination of Ford's European operations. The coordination of investments in the Commonwealth was still left with Ford of Canada, which was still controlled by Ford-USA.

Note 6]

62] On the question of Ford's counter-attack, I have relied heavily on the pamphlet "What Happened at Fords", by E.Stanton and K.Weller, published in 1967 by "Solidarity".

63] This phase of Ford's policies in the United Kingdom was part of a new period of Ford's intercontinental investment, with a shift from simple assembly of imported parts, to the local production of complete vehicles. This happened in Brazil in 1959, in Argentina in 1961, and then in Mexico and South Africa.

64] Henry Ford's statement, reported in the Times, 21st November 1960, page 10.

65] "What Happened at Fords" [Note 62, above], page 13.

66] The Jack Inquiry [Note 56, above], para.29.

67] The Jack Inquiry [Note 56, above], Appendix II (ii)

68] "What Happened at Fords" [Note 62, above], page 14.

69] "What Happened at Fords" [Note 62, above], page 14.

70] According to the authors of "What Happened at Fords" [Note 62, above], page 15, the Communist Party had 110 members at Ford Dagenham, 50 of whom were stewards or convenors. They had 2,000 members in South-East Essex, of whom about 1,500 were workers.

71] For the turnover and the level of fixed capital investment, see Ford's annual published reports.

72] In some sections of the PTA, the lines were speeded up by as much as 30%, with some increases even of 37% in the months following the strike. See the article "After the Ford Defeat" in Solidarity Vol.4, No.2, pages 9-11, and "Murder at Ford", in Solidarity Vol.4, No.4, pages 15-16.

73] See the article "Too Old at Fifty" in Solidarity Vol.4, No.3, August 1966, pages 20-22.

74] See Black Ram Vol.1, No.4, 15th March 1969, page 6.

75] For conditions at Ford-Genk, Belgium, see the text facing pages 28 and 29.

75] Solidarity Vol.2, No.9 and No.10.

76] It seems that this is the common element of both the Labour and Tory legislative measures - an element that is anti-worker but not anti-Union. This can be traced from the Donovan Commission, through Barbara Castle's Bill, to the Industrial Relations Act.

77] The passivity of most workers in Ford's main factories when 1,500 workers at Ford-Swansea struck in February 1970 over Parity with the Midlands, was seen by the Left as a sign that Union activists and shop stewards had failed to raise the class consciousness of the rank and file. The bourgeois press saw the message of the gulf between the high wages that were being demanded and the low level of organisation that was offered by the shop stewards to the rank and file - and the resulting refusal by the mass of workers to enter into a struggle at that particular moment, unfavourable as it was. The Guardian (16th Feb.1970) wrote:

"Incidentally, this is a test case for last year's Downing Street agreement, under which the TUC promised to deal with unofficial strikers, especially those minority groups who jeopardise the interests of both their fellow workers and the nation by selfish stoppages."

[Notes 7.

APPENDIX 1.

We're adding a post-script to this article, since some of the terms used in it are not as familiar in the UK as they would be in Italy. Many of the terms stem from a new method of analysing the present-day class struggle, developed by Italian Marxists from the early 1960s - especially in the review Quaderni Rossi (Red Notebooks: 1961-64) and Classe Operaia (Working Class: 1964-67). It was no accident that this 'new Marxism' should develop inside the Italian working class movement, given the changes rapidly taking place inside the composition of the Italian workforce, and the resulting crisis of the traditional working class movement - both the Unions and the Communist Party of Italy (CPI).

The years 1961-65 saw a revival of class struggle after a period of Cold War and 'social peace'. The economic and political situation was marked by 3 things:- monopoly corporations were consolidating themselves, bringing about a new organisation of production, and thereby a new composition of the working class; there was an ever-increasing tendency towards capitalist planning of the economy, with increasing State intervention; and the policy of the traditional working class organisations was to take the 'Italian road to socialism', by participating in and, eventually (they hope) taking over State planning.

In 1965 a series of essays was published - "Workers and Capital" - by Mario Tronti, one of the central people in this new Marxist current. By this time it was already clear that the old socialism of the official labour movement was outdated as far as workers were concerned. Workers were no longer fighting for planning, State ownership, and control of production, but rather for wages. And not wages "linked to productivity", but wages based on the workers' need to live. In other words, fighting against productivity, against work under capitalism. This was shown, for instance, in the demands that were to develop later in the fight at FIAT in 1969-70. This fight expressed the specific material needs of workers, of their own autonomy as a class, against the 'general interest' of capitalist (or socialist) society, and against planning and all its agencies, from the State down to the Unions.

The new approach, based on this new class situation, meant returning to Marx. In other words, a re-reading of Marx (especially the Grundrisse) in order to rediscover a scientific approach to the class struggle, behind the distortions of socialist orthodoxies over the past 50 years.

The new Marxism in Italy countered these distortions by returning to the basic antagonism between capital and labour within production, and developed this as the basis for a movement with communism and the abolition of wage labour as its aim. Their understanding has been confirmed by the development of the struggle since 1968 in the advanced capitalist countries - the collapse of incomes policies and Keynesian planning.

In this Appendix No.1 we have tried to give a brief definition of some of the terms used in this article, and the way these concepts are used as a means of analysing the class struggle. Some of these terms, such as 'vertical integration' and 'production cycle' are simple technical terms in general use by capitalists; others are specifically Marxist, and are developed in Marx's study of Capital.

[PTO

Appendix 1(a)

78] The suggestion of making links between the struggle in the factory and the working class community in Dagenham was raised by groups of workers, following the poorly-supported strikes at Dagenham in February 1970. But these links are hard to make - especially with the capitalists' ability to turn "consumer opinion" against workers in time of strike action. Some of the Left groups, though, saw this as an unwillingness by workers to spread the struggle from the factory to the community.

79] Some Unions were more unwilling to mediate between "unconstitutional strikes" and Ford's factory plan (eg GMWU, the Boilermakers, and the Plumbing Trade Union). But their freedom of action was increasingly restricted as the TGWU and AUEW were increasingly stepping in during the unofficial strikes of the late 1960s.

80] The definition that I have used here of "auxiliary work" in the engineering and metal-working industries (meaning work that feeds and connects the main production lines) and "tertiary work" (meaning the application of scientific research) comes from R.Alquati in "Capital and the Working Class at FIAT: a Mid-Point in the International Cycle", reprinted in "Sulla Fiat, e altri scritti", Feltrinelli, Milan, 1975.

81] See A.Flanders' book "The Fawley Productivity Agreements", published by Faber & Faber, London, 1964. And Report No.36 of the National Board for Prices and Incomes: "Productivity Agreements", HMSO, London, 1967 (Cmd 2211).

82] According to a Union circular in February 1969, the buying power of the average Ford worker's wage for a 44-hour week was 12.4% lower than in 1938. Taxes, which did not apply in 1938, accounted for almost all (12.1%) of this gap. (!)

End of the Notes

Turkish workers at Ford-Cologne shook the whole of Germany with their hard-fought strike of August 1973.



Notes 8]

1 Class Composition, Deskillling, Recomposition

The use of these terms implies a way of seeing the basic confrontation between the working class and capital as the meeting point of two antithetical forces, two drives, which counterpose each other, and which develop along with capital accumulation.

FIRST, the organisation of workers by capital. By CLASS COMPOSITION we mean the structure of the working class as constituted in a given historical period around a given structure of the organisation of production. Thus, the question: how is the working class composed at any given moment. From capital's point of view, this means things like capitalist use of the labour market; the directing of labour migration; the control of education and job-training; the division ('hierarchy', 'articulation' of the labour force) of the workforce into skills, sex, ages, nationality etc. In other words, the way in which capital both uses and constructs the divisions of the class in order to maintain control.

Workers within a given composition of the working class organise to overcome those divisions, and become strong in their work situation. Within this permanent and ongoing situation, capital creates new machinery, new branches of production, to create and exploit new types of workers, new older, militant sections become redundant, promoted, or marginalised. Or, often, physically destroyed. This is what we would call CLASS DECOMPOSITION. A typical case would be the liquidation of the skilled "Bolshevik" vanguard in the 1920s by the introduction of assembly-line production, starting in the USA with Ford. [Note: the class is also "composed" by capital outside the workplace - in the community and in the home: here decomposition takes the form of urbanism and town planning, architecture and the organisation of social capital, psycho/sexual control, the creation of consumer needs etc].

SECOND, and conversely, the working class tends always to recreate its unity, tends to recompose itself in struggle, overcoming all the above divisions: each phase of decomposition leads to a higher and more generalised RECOMPOSITION OF THE CLASS AGAINST CAPITAL. [By 'higher and more generalised' we mean, for instance, the growth of the proletariat from minority status (the 1910s) to majority status within capitalist society]. Furthermore, the more class unity and confidence in the struggle builds up, the more workers lose their identification with work. From being wage labour, they become working class against capital. The struggle, instead of being confined within the terms of work, now takes on a more radical form - against work itself. The goal of this movement is no longer socialism, but communism, and this is not a distant future dream, but is inherent in the day-to-day struggles of the working class.

The further stage is POLITICAL RECOMPOSITION OF THE CLASS, the stage where this process of redefining the contents and goals of the struggle takes on an organised, political form.

The struggle outlined above is a constant condition of relations between capital and the working class. In periods of capitalist crisis and global class reunification, it becomes explicit, public and violent.

2 Organic Composition, Fixed and Circulating Capital

"Organic composition" of capital (see Marx, Capital Vol.1) refers to the relation between the separate parts of capital: ie the proportion of constant capital (constant in value) as against variable capital (ie living labour which produces surplus value). Constant capital includes both fixed capital (machinery, plant etc), and the objects of production (raw materials, fuel etc) which are called circulating capital. According to Marx, the tendency of capitalist development is that

the proportion of 'dead labour' (that is, past labour which is embodied in machinery, plant etc) increases in relation to living labour, as workers are replaced by machinery and the average productivity of the workers rises as a result. You have the same number of workers setting in motion a larger mass of constant capital, which means that the relative exploitation of those workers increases (ie, the proportion of their work-time during which they produce surplus value and hence profit for the boss). We can't hope to describe this better than Marx. Capital, Volume 1, Chapter 15.

3 Means of Production is a general term, covering both raw materials and instruments of labour (tools, machinery) in the production process. Cycle of Production is the process from raw materials through production itself, to the finished product. In vehicles it includes the manufacture of components, rubber, tyres, glass etc, as well as the final assembly, and would include other spheres of employment dependent on the car, like road-building, garage-servicing etc. The scale of the cycle of car-production throughout Europe points to the massive importance of the car in the European economy.

Vertical integration means bringing under the control of a single capitalist concern (or the State) the whole cycle of one branch of production, ie from raw materials, mining, planting etc, to distribution of the final product. Examples - Ford's rubber plantations in Brazil in the 1920s, of BLMC's newly-developed Leycare servicing network.

4 Insubordination, Struggle against Work, Autonomy

These terms refer to the content of the new phase of workers' struggles in the 1960s-1970s. The increasing development of flow-line production, increased mechanisation and fragmentation of jobs, the introduction of MDW - all these lead to work that is repetitive, alien, boring, and lacking in incentive. There is no longer even the semblance of pleasure or creativity in the work process - and workers' struggles become a continuous struggle against productivity, against the worker's relative exploitation. At this point, the capitalists' whole effort is being devoted to involving the worker in work (participation, workers' control, notions of 'skill' etc), at a time when workers are expressing their independent interests (autonomy) as the working class, against the 'general interests' of society at large (incomes policy, planning etc) under present capitalist conditions. Against the bosses and Unions, who negotiate and organise the reform of working conditions, incentives to work etc, the working class has produced a crisis of the whole system since 1968 in all Western countries, by sapping that system at its very root - the productivity of labour. Insubordination means just what it says.

5 Concentration

An example of more recent pressure towards concentration was 1968-1970. A wave of strikes in the components industries (Dunlop, GKN, Pilkington) caused wide-spread layoffs in the Assembly firms, and demands for better layoff pay (Ford, with the 1968 Girling strike; BLMC with the 1970 Dunlop, GKN strikes). Rather than face continuing struggles in components, so as to avoid paying the cost of them (layoff pay etc), the big motor firms pushed towards greater integration of these firms.

6 Piecework Discipline and Shop Stewards

Where wages have been paid to workers according to output, as in British engineering up to the 1960s, these wage systems have been a means of buying the workers' cooperation in production. This means that many management functions were handled indirectly by shop stewards or gang-leaders - regulation of output, maintenance of quality, organisation of the labour process etc. This unofficial "workers' control" was permitted under the wartime and postwar Coventry "gang system"

and was widespread in the Midlands engineering industry. Piecework discipline means voluntary self-organisation of discipline through stewards rather than directly by management and staff. However, piecework and this kind of "discipline" began to be used by workers to control their output, so that wage increases soon began to outstrip productivity increases (wage drift) during the 1960s. Managements were increasingly forced to impose direct controls over the work process and introduce standard measured day rates. This went together with increasing mechanisation, so that it now became the speed of the machine and not the money incentive, which drove the worker to work, and discipline was now imposed by a vastly increased army of supervisors and foremen, instead of by shop stewards and by workers themselves as under the old wage systems. However, in some sectors (eg the docks and the coalmines), the removal of the self-policing aspect of piecework and incentives, has led to such a dramatic drop in output under MDW that the employers have been pressing for the re-instatement of the incentive principle.

APPENDIX 2.

The year of 1975-76 has brought us to a worldwide crisis of capitalism. Within that crisis, the motor industry (which for 40 years has been one of the crucial vanguard sectors of the worldwide capitalist economy) has been affected in the most dramatic way. The motor industry has grown, and within it the power of the motor industry working class has grown. We believe that there is a close link between the growth of that power, in that section of the working class, and the growth of crisis in the political and government forms of the capitalist economy.

The following notes are an attempt to define, first, some of the key elements in the development of capitalist strategy over the past 40 years (Fordism, Keynesianism, Social Democracy, the Mass Worker). Then we use those terms as the basis to outline some Notes on the Present Crisis. This Appendix 2 is necessarily sketchy, but it outlines the areas that we hope to look at in later Red Notes pamphlets.

Definitions:

a) Fordism This is the technique of factory organisation developed by Ford, and later taken up by other capitalists. It is a tool of the capitalist class, to organise and exploit the working class. It was a necessary accompaniment to mass production. It centres on the assembly line, in which the whole process of production becomes a continuous flow. The intention of Ford was as follows:-

The assembly line would be directed and controlled by management. The worker would be given a specific task or operation, with a specified machine, which should be done within a given time determined by the speed of the assembly line. The worker's job would usually be extremely simplified so that it could be performed repeatedly, continuously, and fast, as one product after another moved along the assembly line. The advantages of this system, for capital, are obvious: in theory management controls the speed of the whole production process (control being taken out of the hands of the worker), as well as controlling planning of the operation; the perfection of the division of labour and the deskilling of workers which accompanied Fordism would deprive individual workers of control over their job; the organisation and integration of the labour process as a whole with the automatic and exactly-timed movement of the product from

one stage of the production process to the next, and the refined division of labour (both embodied in the principle of the assembly-line) allowed for a rapid increase in productivity. Fordist technique would make the mass production of goods not only possible, but from capital's point of view, necessary as well.

b) Keynesianism This was developed as the overall economic and political strategy to accompany Fordism after the Second World War. Economic policy and State intervention were meant to provide a means to resolve two essential capitalist contradictions: a) it would make mass production a possibility in the society as well as in the factory. It would generate the necessary demand, so that goods could not only be produced at a mass level, but also could be consumed at a mass level. Politically, the strategy of Keynesianism was the result of the crisis of the 1930s. The State, by controlling demand, was supposed to prevent future crises of overproduction. b) it would integrate the working class. The worker would be granted a higher and increasing level of wages, in return for increasing productivity. This, at the same time, would guarantee a high consumer demand. As Ford realised, you pay a worker not only to work, but also to buy.

Keynesianism was thus the strategy that enabled the mass-consumption industries to expand (and their demand for investment goods would, in turn, allow for growth in the capital goods sector). The strategy was based on full employment, in order to rule out the class struggle around the unemployment of the 20's and 30's. And Keynesianism attempted a further step towards integration of the working class, by the State taking over the organisation of some of the most fundamental needs in working class life - ie education, health, housing, security against poverty and unemployment, and care of the old and very young: in short, the Welfare State.

Fordism organised the worker as worker, on the shop floor. Keynesianism organised the worker as consumer, in society at large. The two aspects worked in parallel, to become the dynamic force of capitalist development, driven forward by the struggles of the working class. In this context the motor industry was central: on the one hand it developed Fordism to its highest extent and provided a model of productivity for other sectors; and on the other hand, its product, the motor car, became the mass consumption good of the period.

c) Social Democracy This has been the post-War form of political organisation of the capitalist State, under which Fordism and Keynesianism functioned. This form created the ideology and mass mystification of 'reformism' - putting forward a step-by-step 'approach' towards socialism. It also proposed the integration of the working class organisations, like the unions and the Party, into the context of "social partnership". Social democracy is always a politics of cooperation between Capital and Labour, within which the working class is forced to accept the capitalist attack. This has been true through history, and is especially true in this moment (1976).

d) the Mass Worker Fordism and Keynesianism developed a new kind of worker. Machinery was meant to break the strength of an earlier working class. Machinery, centralisation of company planning, and plain gangsterism in the factory were the means to deskill the working class, and remove workers' earlier control over production. Fordism, in its mass production, brought together a mass of workers, all under the condition of doing simple repetitious work, of being rapidly exhausted by it, of having little interest in the job and little incentive

Notes on the Crisis (iii)

to work apart from the need for a daily wage. Keynesianism, with the State intervening in 'demand management', and with the ideology of "welfare", aimed to control the working class outside the factory, by creating the "mass consumer".

But this increasing unification of the conditions of work and life was tending to reduce the divisions and differences between workers, was tending to create new aspects of unity within the working class. The working class, as "mass workers", responded to the unification of conditions under Keynesianism and Fordism: these advanced forms of capitalist organisation and control led to advanced struggles by this working class. It is in this context that we have to analyse the present crisis. We see this crisis not just as a "market crisis", but as a clash of class forces in struggle.

e) the Crisis The present crisis of the capitalist economies is by far the most serious of the past 40 years. Because of its scale it is clear that it is not just a 'cyclical aberration': rather, it is a structural crisis, a crisis of the system as a whole. Within the British Left everyone agrees that the crisis exists, but there is widespread lack of understanding of the underlying reasons for and historical development of that crisis - as follows:

Can we say that this crisis is just a market crisis, and that Britain is specially hard-hit because of the "forces of 'international competition'"? This does not explain the international and worldwide character of the crisis, and also why Keynesianism, as the management of demand, could not prevent its outbreak. Then, is it enough to say that the crisis is a "necessary consequence of the laws of the capitalist mode of production, as outlined by Marx"? Stating the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. of the "classical" character of over-production crises, of "disproportionalities within capitalism" etc will not suffice. Such an analysis is far too abstract - even ahistorical. It does not explain the crisis in concrete and material terms: the class struggle and its impact within capitalist development gets reduced to an abstraction. Finally, is it appropriate to claim that this crisis is nothing but a capitalist "conspiracy" to smash the power of the working class? We think that it's correct to say that the crisis is now used by capital in order to destroy that power - but we also have to point out how it was that power which lay at the roots of the development of the crisis in the first place. In short, the "mass worker" who has developed over the past 40 years has built up a certain power in society; the struggles of this working class have brought about the crisis through a blockage of accumulation; the capitalist class now uses the crisis in order to reconstruct its control and its command over labour; the capitalist intention is to destroy the growing autonomy of the working class.

Some Notes on the Present Crisis

We have reprinted this article by F. Gambino because of its importance as a concrete and historical analysis of class struggle in the British motor industry - the industry which, under the operating conditions of Keynesianism and Fordism, became the vanguard industry of post-War capitalism. The production of cars saw the highest development of Fordism, and became a model of productivity for other sectors...and the car as a commodity represents the "mass consumer society" in its highest form. Within this industry, capital as a social relation found its most advanced level.

■ Car firms, in terms of the capitalist organisation of production, have been the most advanced of all the broad-based capitalist sectors in

the post-War period (only now being overtaken by electronics, petrochemicals etc). This can be seen, for example, in the multinational nature of car firms; in their use of the international division of labour (operating the labour-intensive stages of production in cheap labour countries and the capital-intensive stages in the 'advanced' countries); in the forms of competition, mergers and takeovers; in their control over raw materials and other supplies; and in their ability to control individual nation states.

■ But the nature of capitalist organisation of production in the car firms has also produced the highly unified and homogeneous political force of the "mass worker". The forms of struggle developed by this new working class have been as advanced as the advanced techniques of their employers (reaching their highest level in a place like Lordstown Ohio, where Fordism seems to have reached its peak - see p.13), and our pamphlet shows the levels that this has reached within one individual firm. But, in addition, when we analyse the struggle in the motor industry, we see that car workers have been a continuing vanguard within the working class as a whole, both in the UK and internationally. In developing the most advanced levels of struggle in the epoch of Keynesianism and Fordism, they have provided a certain reference point for other sections of the working class. The vanguard character of car workers on an international scale has meant that their struggles were generalised throughout the class as a whole.

■ Examples of this would be the role of Renault workers in France in May '68; the role of FIAT workers in the Italian 'Hot Autumn' of 1969; German car workers in the wildcat strike waves of 1969, 1971 and 1973 (in particular VW, and the immigrants at Ford-Cologne); the vanguard role of Argentinian car workers in the present crisis of Peronism; and, at the time of writing, the ability of BLMC workers in the UK to provoke a direct crisis in State strategy and planning.

■ However, with the breakdown of the control mechanisms of Fordism and Keynesianism, the working class has been developing its power, as a class, through struggles both inside and outside the workplace. In response to this power, capital is forever seeking new strategies, new means of control. But many of the weapons of the capitalist class have either been taken and used by workers (social wage; payment systems; labour mobility etc) or have been destroyed (Industrial Relations Act, Incomes policy etc). Furthermore, in this period ("Welfare State", and "High-Wage-High-Productivity" economy), the expectations of the working class have increased, creating a system of needs and expectations. We can now speak of a downward rigidity, both of the wage and of the social wage. Increasingly this network of needs (general conditions of life and work) is transformed into a network of struggles - no longer just over the wage, but over all social conditions. This is part of what we mean by "working class autonomy" - the way that the working class has been developing struggles, organisation and demands, which are independent of, and less controllable by capital. In other words, the working class fights for its own needs against the interests of capitalism and the State.

■ The build-up of struggles, both inside and outside the workplace, in recent years has increasingly blocked the capitalists' profit possibilities. The victories of the struggle through the 1960s-70s, at an international level, are the reasons for the present 'stagflation' crisis [lie stagnation as a result of reduced profits and blocked expansion, and inflation as the only way for managements to compensate increasing costs and to regulate the class struggle from above]. But the 'stagflation' has not been enough to break that working class power: on the contrary, it has increased class resistance, thus intensifying the world-wide crisis.

Inasmuch as the crisis has been a direct result of working class power, capital will have to destroy this power in order to regain its strength (which is always based on command over labour). The present period is therefore one of class war, and thus a period of fundamental historical importance.

The present crisis means a capitalist attack, and the end of integration: therefore the end of Keynesianism. The ideology of full employment is replaced by a conscious policy of unemployment, intended to discipline workers, increase productivity through an intensification of work, and break up class organisation. At the same time, real wages are cut and the 'Welfare State' is to be destroyed [see the recent White Paper on public spending cuts]. And in order to lubricate this process, capital increasingly tends to integrate the Unions - as the 'middle-men' who will impose the discipline. The working class increasingly loses control of the Union as a way to organise the struggle. Therefore the question of developing working class autonomy and the question of working class organisation are central problems facing us all.

■ Also, sectors in which the working class has developed a high degree of class power are either run down (eg motor industry, mechanical engineering, shipbuilding) or undergo a capital intensification (docks, steel, mine), or both, generally coupled with mass redundancies (printers, railways). The sectors which are now being developed as the new sectors of accumulation and growth are highly automated and very capital-intensive (eg. oil, petrochemicals, food, agriculture). This is an attack on the working class's power in society.

■ In this period of capitalist transition and restructuring, the role of the State changes dramatically. It becomes obvious that the State operates entirely in the interests of the capitalist class as a whole, as the institutionalisation of capital as a class. New capitalist tactics are formulated at State level (eg Healey's "unprecedented" conditional Budget of April 1976). Thus, in order to restore capital's command over labour in the production process, State aid is only given to near-bankrupt firms on condition that the management reduces manning levels, increases productivity, eliminates unofficial strikes etc. On the one hand this gives individual managements the backing of the State's authority...and on the other hand it means that, behind their employers, workers are directly fighting the State. Now, for instance, half Britain's car workers are entering a new era - as half-State employees.

■ Finally, as individual Governments show themselves unable to restore class control, the reins of control are taken up by centralised money-lending bodies (eg International Monetary Fund), acting in the general class interests of the major imperialist power. IMF loans are given only on condition that individual Governments (Britain, Italy, Portugal... and of course Chile) cut public spending, maintain incomes policy, restore 'law and order', keep Communists out of Government etc. This control by money-as-capital spreads through every level of society, from the IMF threatening to make Italy bankrupt, to local councils' dependence on favourable terms from finance houses. At both international and national level control of money-lending is thus increasingly used to carry out and enforce the capitalist attack.

● We believe that all these are crucial areas of study, if we are to deepen our understanding of the present phase of the revolutionary crisis. They will have to be developed further, in discussions with comrades and in analysis of other areas of the class struggle. We see this as the work of the Red Notes collective in the coming year. We welcome all discussion and criticism in this direction.

● Many questions are raised in the course of this pamphlet. If you study them further, we suggest that you look at the following books lets. These are the sources and documents that we have used, ourselves

A] For THE PROCESS OF PRODUCTION IN THE MOTOR INDUSTRY there is (i) the Jackdaw Folder on the Motor Industry; (ii) "The Future of the British Car Industry" (Think-Tank Report), HMSO, London, 1975, pp11-17; (iii) "Carworker" by Cox & Golden, Kestrel, London, 1975 (good pictures); (iv) various studies published in Italy, including "FIAT, Punto Medio nel Ciclo Internazionale" by R. Alquati (reprinted Feltrinelli, Milano, 1975) and "La FIAT Com'è", ed. Deaglio, Feltrinelli, 1975; (v) The Ladybird Book on Making Cars (children's book)

B] For THE STRUCTURE OF THE BRITISH MOTOR INDUSTRY, one book is a 'must' - (i) "Labour Relations in the Motor Industry", by Turner, Clack and Roberts, pub. Allen & Unwin, London, 1967; also (ii) "The Structure of British Industry" ed. Burn, Cambridge, NIESR, 1961; (iii) the Think-Tank Report (see A(ii) above); (iv) "The Car Makers", by Graham Turner, hack; (v) "The Strategy & Structure of British Enterprise", D.F. Channon, Macmillan, 1973; (vi) The Ryder Report (BLMC, HMSO, London, 1975).

C] For WORKING CLASS HISTORY of the past 40 years, there is disgustingly little to recommend, as far as the motor industry is concerned. For America in the '30s there is "Strike", J. Brecher, Straight Arrow USA, 1974. And for Britain we have used: (i) "Workers' Control", ed. Coates & Topham, which gives documentation of the working class movement from the 'control' angle; (ii) "Britain in the 1930s", Branson & Heinemann, pub. Panther, 1973, a fine and invaluable documentation of restructuring and struggles in the 1930s; (iii) "Unemployed Struggles" by Wal Hannington, L&W 1936, reprinted 1973, a good account of those struggles; (iv) "The People's War", Angus Calder, Panther, 1969, covering the War years 1939-45; then (v) a big gap through the 1940s-60s, which would perhaps best be filled by reading the Submissions to the Donovan Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations (if you can find them!), in which a lot of the history of the class movement was documented; (vi) talk to car workers!

(Undoubtedly the best accounts of working class struggle in the post-War period are to be found in the Reports of Government Courts of Inquiry into Labour Disputes (see below). This is a terrible indictment of the Left.)

D] For the HISTORY OF THE FORD MOTOR COMPANY, there are a number of sources that are worth looking at:

a) First, the political groups: (i) "Dossier of Fear for Ford", a collection of interviews, chronologies, articles etc on recent Ford-UK history (available from Red Notes); (ii) all the back-numbers of Solidarity dealing with the Ford struggle, in particular "What Happened at Ford", by Stanton and Weller, 1965 (out of print); (iii) the leaflets and bulletins of the Big Flame groups operating round Ford Dagenham, Halewood and Langley - available from Liverpool or West London Big Flame; (iv) "Five Months of Struggle at Halewood", pamphlet, 1973, available from Big Flame; (v) back numbers of the "Carworker", possibly available from the IS Bookshop; (vi) back numbers of "The Ford Worker", only available from older Ford militants.

b) Next, the sociologists: "Working for Ford", Huw Beynon, Penguin, 1973; an account of the Ford shop stewards at Halewood; (ii) "Ford Strike 1971", by John Matthews, paperback, giving structure and history of the UK motor industry; (iii) "Giant Enterprises" by G. Chandler, Harcourt World Brace Inc, giving early history of Ford-USA; (iv) International Labour Relations in the Motor Industry", D. Kujawa, pub. Praeger, 1971.

c) Next, the State: The Reports of the Doughty Court of Inquiry into Briggs Bodies, 1941 (HMSO Cmnd 6284); of the Cameron Court of Inquiry into the