


solidarity



***for workers'
full control***

**Delays at Drax 'A'
TUC v. The Workers
Class Rule at Fawley
In and Outside The FIAT Racket
Borough Market Fiddle
Naughty Nighties of Dungeness
Tuc-in**

No 5



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For your
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Delays at Oak A
TUC v. The Warden
Class Rule at Law
In and Outside the FAT Market
Borough Market Fiddle
Noughty Nightmares of Congress
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No 2 2010

SOLIDARITY (SOUTH LONDON)

STRIKE! P & B WORKERS NEED YOUR HELP

At this moment 42 machine operators are still out on strike at Punfield and Barstow (Mouldings) Ltd., Queensbury, North London.

In February the shop stewards put a list of grievances about mid-Victorian rates of pay and conditions to the management. (See SOLIDARITY NORTH LONDON V.5 No.12: The Punfield and Barstow Strike.) They were ignored. The lads decided to wake them up. On Wednesday 11 June both day and night shifts staged "sit downs" on the factory premises, and were promptly evicted by the police. The following day the vast majority of the machine shop went out on strike.

While the London (North) District Committee A.E.F. endorsed their action immediately, the National Executive farted about until 8 July before recognising the strike and have only just now started to pay out strike money. But the solidarity and determination of the men themselves has kept things going.

In the local press the Managing Director's mouthpieces still scream about outside agitators using the strikers. (See "Harrow Observer", Friday 25 July: "Queensbury strikers hold a protest march.") This much amuses the lads who are altogether touched by this new-found interest of the management in their welfare.

BEAKS PUT THE BOOT IN

The strike is now entering its eighth week and private enterprise scum are still bashing through the picket line encouraged by Chief Buyer and Shit-Stirrer-Extraordinary Vic Harrington. His speciality is involving the police and directing the traffic - this is usually done to a chorus of "Where's yer uniform, Vic?" - spiced with good-natured shoving on both sides.

At Hendon Court on Thursday 31 July the magistrates rolled one of the lads for £25 and then put the boot in with an additional £5 costs, finding him "offensive". Four weeks ago they took £10 off a militant sympathiser from a factory next door for "breaching their peace".

These strikers need your help. Experienced scab-bashers (or those willing to learn) would be much appreciated on the picket line. Crucial times are Mon-Fri, 10.15 a.m. - 2.00 p.m. If you are in this category take a Stanmore tube along the Bakerloo line to Queensbury. Out of the station turn first right, under the bridge, and then first left into Westmoreland Rd. Go down it a hundred yards.

Hard cash would also be welcomed as many personal debts have already accumulated.

Y.B.A. BLACKLEG

PUNFIELD & BARSTOW STRIKE APPEAL FUND

Please send donations to: M. Bashir, 5 Clayton Ave., Wembley,

All donations will be acknowledged.

Middlesex.

DELAYS AT DRAX 'A'

The Drax "A" power station site, at Selby, Yorkshire, is reputed to be a £100 million contract. The power station will be a conventional type with a capacity of 1980 megawatts - said to be enough electricity for the whole West Riding - and the Central Electricity Generating Board (C.E.G.B.) plan to start generating in 1971.

The main contractor is the Arrol Findlay Consortium, and the site has been in continuous dispute since it first started. Arrol Findlay and many other contractors, including the C.E.G.B., planned most of them before the work started.

THE CURRENT DISPUTE

In the current dispute at Drax "A", 120 steel erectors have been on unofficial strike now for over six weeks; they're demanding changes in the bonus system. The men are not asking for anything unusual or abnormal. They are quite simply demanding what the Government and bosses have been advocating for years: a productivity deal, i.e. 1/6d for every ton of steel lifted. But a productivity deal like that would enable the men to control production and earnings themselves; therefore their demands are met with a blank refusal - instead they are expected to participate in a bonus system that is completely controlled by management.

CONSORTING

Way back in 1967, the Engineering Employers' Federation called a meeting of all the principal contractors' executives. At this meeting the matter of applying a new model form of site agreement to Drax "A" was fully discussed and the following points established:

- (1) That a model form of site agreement, possibly including wages clauses, would be desirable on all future C.E.G.B. sites.
- (2) That to apply such an agreement to the Drax "A" site was not practicable because there was insufficient time before mechanical construction commenced and principal contractors were already committed to the terms of their contracts to the C.E.G.B.
- (3) That an attempt should be made by a committee of the principal contractors to negotiate with the trade unions a special site agreement for Drax, covering working conditions applicable to and acceptable to all contractors.

N.B.: All power station sites normally come under a national agreement; i.e., the Steam Generating Plant Agreement. But different contractors

and unions have different ways of interpreting it. The agreement outlines basic rates of pay but bears no relationship to actual earnings or wage expectations.

- (4) That the Drax Contractors Co-ordination Committee should draw up an expanded code of practice embracing all matters not included in the special site agreement and in particular rates and earnings, and seek by mutual consent to establish measures designed to exercise control over earnings and disparities between earnings of work-people having comparable skills.

SPIRIT OF REVOLT

The trade unions concerned declined to sign the new agreement. Most of them had been involved in signing a similar agreement in the gas industry with Woodall Duckham Ltd., and there was a spirit of revolt amongst the rank and file. Nevertheless, a code of practice for the engineering employers was agreed, and a Site Co-ordinating Committee was established, on which the C.E.G.B. is represented by an Assistant Project Group Director as an observer.

Although failure to get the full support of the trade unions was a disappointment to the Engineering Employers' Federation, they considered the discussions a useful step forward and adopted similar arrangements on another power station, Hinkley Point "B". They stated that they hoped the experiments at Drax and Hinkley would be successful and that further progress could be made on all future site agreements.

WHAT'S YOURS IS MINE - AND WHAT'S MINE?

What do they mean when they talk about exercising control over earnings and disparities between earnings of workpeople having comparable skills?

In the construction industry, although the basic rates have been comparable with the rest of the engineering industry, they in no way correspond with the type of work.

The normal custom and practice has been that in areas where men have been prepared to get organised quickly and militantly they have pushed up bonus earnings and established for the industry a wage norm about double that of the basic rate. That is not to say that everyone gets it, but that is the normal expectation. Some workers never reach it, despite long militant struggles, while others do and even go beyond double time.

In recent years, the construction industry has been affected by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Package Deals, where union officials signed agreements for wage increases on basic rates and corresponding decreases on the bonus. So, for many workers in the industry, there has been no real increase in the take home pay for five years or more.

Not satisfied with that, the employers are now trying to inflict a system whereby the workers who can achieve high earnings through militant action don't. Instead, we are supposed to allow the employers to distribute what we would have earned to the lower-paid workers; but of course they never get it.

A POPULAR IDEA

Many Left as well as Right-wing union officials subscribe to this idea; in fact, the Constructional Engineering Union signed the Woodall Duckham Agreement that involved an £8 to £10 per week wage cut in the London area, and varying cuts nationally, on the basis that they could get a national agreement giving a 2/0d per hour increase on the basic. In other words, their concern over the disparity in earnings is not that they intend to give the lower-paid workers increases at the expense of profit, or that they intend to give increases in pay from savings made from doing away with the cause of unofficial strikes. But they are benevolent enough to give the lower-paid workers an increase from deductions made from the bonus earnings gained through militant action.

THE CURRENT DELAY

The steel erectors employed by Arrol Findlay are the men employed in the erection of the heavy steel structure on and around which the whole power station is built. The work is both highly skilled and dangerous. For the best part of the day we are fixing steel at heights of up to three hundred feet, often working on a nine-inch beam with nothing around us but air. Below us, steel projects from all angles; for those of us who fall - and many of us do - there's not much hope that you ever recover sufficiently to work at your trade again. Most of us are travelling men, journeying all over the country wherever the work is. Most of us have wives and families and therefore have to keep two homes going. We couldn't hope to do it on the basic rate, which is £17 12s. 6d. Nor are we prepared to accept bonus schemes that are controlled by management. If there is to be an incentive scheme, the only ceiling on it must be the one we the workers collectively put on it.

THE OPPOSITION, THE UNION

The most amazing thing in this strike is the number of organisations who've lined up against us. They include the boss, Arrol Findlay, the National Coal Board, the C.E.G.B., the D.E.P. and the T.U.C. And, of course, our own union, the C.E.U., who have been giving repeated instructions for us to return to work, without any guarantees in regard to our demands.

Our union does very little for us in relation to getting us our bonuses. Ours is supposed to be a Left-wing union because we have a member of the Communist Party as the General Secretary, and C.P. members on the Executive Council and in other official positions, but if the sort of support we've been getting from our union is Left-wing, god help those workers who have to live with a Right-wing union!

But they're a crafty lot of bastards, these union officials. Every job follows the same pattern. We start on a new site on basic rates or a very low bonus. By our own militancy, either in working to rule, in going slow, or in an outright strike such as this, we force the employer into a position where he's prepared to concede our demands. At this stage, the union official, who gives us no support at all during the struggle, comes in to put his signature to the new bonus agreement we have won and the high earnings in the area become a tribute to his negotiating ability and the militancy of the C.E.U. leadership!

TAKING THE CREDIT

Forgotten is the fact that we the rank and file spent long weeks on strike under attack from the same union official who will later take all the credit for the high earnings this strike will establish.

You might ask "What's the point in belonging to the union?" To be honest, I don't know! Some people say the C.E.U. has the best legal department of any union - and as accidents occur frequently we do need this facility the union provides - and again to be honest, they do a good job there. But we expect so much more from a union than that. We expect above all that our wages and conditions will be protected and progressed at the expense of the Boss Class.

DEFENCE OF TRADE UNIONISM?

Many of our prominent members have been involved in organising token strikes, lobbies of Parliament and the T.U.C., supposedly in defence of Trade Unionism. What is Trade Unionism? Surely what we are doing is the only defence workers have got. What about organising a few token strikes for us?

If Arrol Findlay get away with establishing lower earnings here on Drax and Hinkley they intend, they have already boasted, to do the same on all power station contracts. So if our prominent members who were so interested in defending Trade Unionism are really interested, get your fingers out, Brothers! Start supporting the 120 steel erectors who are really defending what Trade Unionism is supposed to stand for! At the same time, for those of you who still have some faith in the official machinery, please tell the Executive Council to get off of our backs!

"PEACE FORMULA"; AND THE ONLY ANSWER

Meanwhile, the delays at Drax will continue, because Arrol Findlay and the C.E.G.B. intend to make this power station not only the biggest in Europe but also the cheapest - at our expense! We rejected the so-called peace formula offered to us on 21 July by the Engineering Employers' Federation and the Constructional Engineering Union without consultation with the members because it offered us nothing we didn't have before we came out on strike six weeks ago.

When this station is completed in 1971, it's supposed to supply the whole of the West Riding but 1971 is wishful thinking now; it's hard to believe a Government body like the C.E.G.B. could be so irresponsible as to give a contract of this size to an employer like Arrol Findlay but then, they are all part of the conspiracy.

The only answer in the long term is perhaps the one on your front cover: Workers' Full Control.

COCK OF THE NORTH

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- Please send to address above -

DRAX COLOUR SUPPLEMENT

SOLIDARITY decided to investigate the Drax "A" Co-ordinating Committee to see exactly what the employers were co-ordinating apart from disputes.

Snoopy Sid Ramsbottom brought you a scoop with the TUC-IN ! Now our Industrial Reporter, Feather Fingered Fred, at great personal expense and danger to himself, brings you the news from inside the Engineering Employers' Federation (E.E.F.) meeting.

We regret we cannot publish all the material in our hands on this subject. But we are publishing extracts from the employers' own minutes. Readers may draw their own conclusions.

The information is authentic and persons wishing to verify or clarify the facts should ring the E.E.F. at the number given below for further information.

If you are one of the men on strike at Drax or a supporter it's not a bad idea to ring up systematically and let them know what you think of them. Remember, while they're talking to you they're not talking to each other or to their friends at the T.U.C., the D.E.P., and the Economic League. It might do'em a bit of good to listen to some sense for a change.

The employers' minutes read as follows:

ENGINEERING EMPLOYERS' YORKSHIRE & NORTH MIDLANDS SITES GROUP

BROOMGROVE,
59 CLARKHOUSE ROAD,
SHEFFIELD S10 2LE.
Telephone: Sheffield 60047-8-9

Ref.RE/EMR/YSG

PRESENT:- Mr. F. Hepworth (Secretary, in the Chair); Aiton & Co.Ltd. - Mr. D.D.Jobey; Sir Wm. Arrol & Co.Ltd. - Mr.W.H.Arch and Mr R.B.Wood; Babcock & Wilcox (Operations)Ltd. - Mr. K.F.Crosbie; English Electric Co.Ltd. Whetstone - Mr K.G.Lupton; Alexander Findlay & Co.- Mr D.Watson; GEC-AEI Engineering Ltd. - Mr. E.B.Moore; Ingersoll Rand & Co.Ltd.- Mr B. Hendley; International Combustion Ltd. - Mr. E. White; C. A. Parsons & Co.Ltd. - Mr. J.M.Hill; Wm. Press & Son Ltd. - Mr. G.K.Gibbon and Mr. F. Staves; A. Reyrolle & Co.Ltd. - Mr. E. Pattison and Mr. P. Robson; John Thompson (Design & Contracting Division) Ltd. - Mr. G. Wain.

Also Present:- Mr.J.Shepherd, Assistant Project Group Director, Central Electricity Generating Board; Mr J.G.Minns, Executive Officer Sites Industrial Relations, Engineering Employers' Federation; Mr C.N.Taylor, Director, Engineering Employers' Sheffield Association; Mr. R. Edwards, Drax Site Officer.

REPORT ON EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE PRESENT STATE OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AT DRAX: The Chairman referred to the Site Officer's report which had been prepared as a result of a decision taken at the previous meeting of the contractors. (NB. We regret that Fred could not get hold of the report referred to but security at Drax is almost like at Fort Knox. The Co-ordinating Committee don't want anyone outside of it to know what is going on. What Fred did manage to deduce was that the Site Officer's report on the reasons for bad industrial relations on Drax and the figures for time lost were not acceptable to his employers. - Eds.)

Of the four main parts of the report there were no comments made on Part 1:- (Discussion held at the D.E.P. Leeds). Part 2:- (Discussion with the C.E.G.B. and Consultant) and Part 4:- (Discussion with Trade Union Officials).

Mr.W.H.Arch (Sir William Arrol & Co.Ltd.) said that he must refute both the figures quoted and the sense of the report insofar as his Company was concerned. He continued by expressing the view that the report ran contrary to those figures having a bearing on the contract which had been agreed with the Consultants on site, did not follow the mandate given to the Site Officer and contained no constructive proposals. He therefore wished to propose that the report should be withdrawn from the records and circulation. In support of his proposition Mr. Arch compared his figures with those contained in the Site Officer's report and said that Appendix 'A' showing 10.25% lost time due to disputes should read 46% when consideration was given to the proportion of lost time due the extended period of working without enthusiasm and the resultant closing of the contract.

Similarly, in the period following the reopening of the contract in November, 1968, inclement weather accounted for 49.1% of lost time as against 25% stated in the report and lost time due to disputes showed 7% as against 3.4%.

In conclusion, Mr. Arch said that a useful purpose would have been achieved if the report had contained a record of copies of the notes of the numerous meetings which had taken place between the Company and the C.E.U. at domestic, site and national levels, as this would have illustrated the Company's efforts to reach agreeable solutions to the continuous problems which had arisen.

There followed a lengthy discussion on the principle of the report and many views were expressed by those in attendance. Ultimately, the Chairman put to the meeting the proposition that the report be withdrawn and it was carried unanimously.

The meeting called for the collection of all copies of the report and the chairman promised that a letter would be sent to the contractors who had not attended, asking for the return of their copies.

Before concluding this part of the agenda, the Chairman reminded the meeting that the original question of whether or not there was a fundamental problem with the C.E.U. at Drax remained unanswered.

Various suggestions were made by members to consider and appoint from a suitable source a qualified person who would explore the situation and prepare a report for consideration. During a general discussion on the various sources which might be considered to prepare a report, there was a strong measure of support for an approach to the D.E.P. but it was pointed out that if such an approach were made and the D.E.P. accepted the commission, it necessarily followed that in their acceptance they would have decided that a problem existed and would indicate in their report what action should be taken to meet the problem.

(N.B. It is quite clear from the above statement that the Employers were reluctant to ask the Department of Unemployment and Productivity to explore the industrial relations on Drax "A" and prepare a report because they knew that the D.E.P. would have included recommendations to the employers as well as the unions. That is not to say that either the unions - C.E.U. or B.M.S. - or the D.E.P. are in any way sympathetic to the workers on Drax. - Eds.)

It was finally decided that Sir William Arrol and Co. Ltd. would ask the Economic League to enquire into the possibility of subversive elements in the Company's employ and prepare a report. Also, a request would be forwarded to the Central Offices of the D.E.P. through the Federation for an appropriate department to report on the circumstances leading up to the present state of industrial relations at Drax and that both reports when available should be placed before the contractors at a specially convened meeting.

CLAIMS AND DISPUTES:- The Site Officer speaking on behalf of Mr. R.B. Wood (Sir William Arrol & Co. Ltd.) reported that following the Company's resumption of work, a site conference held to discuss outstanding matters with the Constructional Engineering Union, had been satisfactorily concluded.

Mr. W. Greenhill (Yarrow & Co Ltd.) reported on site conferences with the C.E.U. and B.M.S. when fabrication and erection bonuses were discussed along with internal domestic matters. Mr. Greenhill said that whilst both conferences concluded satisfactorily, there appeared to be an air of uncertainty in the enthusiasm of the workmen.

CLAIMS FOR AFTERNOON TEA BREAK:- The Site Officer reported that a sub-committee of contractors had been held to discuss afternoon tea breaks.

Mr. K.C.H. Warren (English Electric) said a number of his company's regular travelling men refused to work at Drax because there was no afternoon tea break concession. He was prepared to direct such men to work at Drax but before doing so he wished to be satisfied that other contractors were maintaining their adherence to this provision of the code.

The Site Officer conveyed the views of members at present resident on site and lengthy discussion ensued on the subject. The sub-committee resolved unanimously to recommend to the main co-ordination committee that in line with other contractors, Babcock & Wilcox (Operations) Ltd.

should be asked to re-arrange the time of their tea break to coincide with the commencement of overtime working and that it should be unpaid.

The Chairman on receiving the report said that there was a danger of the concept of the Drax Code of Practice being eaten into and urged members to give serious consideration to any matter which was likely to hazard the achievement of a co-ordinated labour policy.

Mr. J.F. Towell (Babcock & Wilcox) resisted the request to change his Company's tea break time. He said that all their men worked regularly from 8.0 a.m. to 6.0 p.m. As it was impracticable to have a tea break at 4.30 p.m. and expect an efficient resumption for just over an hour's duration, he favoured a mid-afternoon break which would ensure a reasonable period of maximum effort to follow. Mr. Towell agreed however to refer the matter of the break being a paid one for further consideration, with a view to complying with that part of the code.

Mr. R.P. Townsend (Elliott Automation Services) said that Mr. Towell's view must surely be unacceptable not only to the contractors' committee but to those senior management representatives of Babcock & Wilcox, who had been members of the committee responsible for the inception of the Code of Practice. Mr. Townsend's observations were supported by other contractors who, whilst not unappreciative of the force of Mr. Towell's arguments in support of a mid-afternoon tea break when overtime was being worked, emphasised the necessity for strict adherence to the code if its objective was to be achieved. The Company was asked to have these observations in mind in reviewing its present policy.

RATES, EARNINGS AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF WORKPEOPLE EMPLOYED ON SITE:-

The Site Officer presented copies of a recent summary of information of earnings and proposed changes in future returns which would eliminate outdated estimates and show comparisons over intervals, including details of actual hours worked.

STAFF EMPLOYEES:- Following a suggestion that there should be an exchange of views and information on the levels of allowances made to staff employees engaged on the Drax site, a discussion of a wide and varied nature ensued on subjects of relative responsibility, comparable lodging allowance, various fringe benefits, supervisory grading and trade union membership.

It was ultimately agreed that as the opinions expressed varied widely, it would be appropriate to defer the matter for the time being to await the outcome of the Federation's current enquiry on this subject.

SOLIDARITY'S CONCLUSION Nowhere in these documents or elsewhere could Feather Fingered Fred find any evidence that the Drax "A" Co-ordinating committee was in fact co-ordinating anything other than an all-out attack on the wages and conditions of the workers even at the expense of the Drax "A" project. Also, the C.E.G.B. is up to its neck with this committee, so we must assume the Government too is more involved than they'd like us to believe.

P.S. The telephone numbers of the Economic League are 01-930 2506 and 01-730 0368. Their report is also confidential ?

IT'S OUT OF MY HANDS

The shop was like a sweat box,
The heat was ninety-three.
I had a little grievance,
As anyone could see.

I went to see the foreman
And called to him by name.
I asked him could he open up
That nailed-down window pane?
But my boss said, "It's out of my hands."

I asked to see my steward,
And the boss he did agree.
But for two more days, nor hide nor hair
Of either did I see.

I finally caught my foreman
As he was running by.
He said my message was delivered
To the proper guy.
And now it was out of his hands.

The steward, when I saw him,
Looked both shrewd and wise,
And told me how much more there was
Than seemed to meet the eyes.

He quoted certain clauses,
Interpretations too.
Said that writing up a grievance
Was all that he could do.
Then it was out of his hands.

The Committeeman next came around,
Him I had never met.
The rest is strictly rumour
For I haven't met him yet.

But the story, when I got it,
At third or second hand,
After many weeks of waiting,
I was made to understand—
It was out of his hands.

The next thing that I heard of,
Through the grapevine, tried and true,
It had reached the shop committee,
They'd see what they could do.

The days were getting shorter,
And fall was drawing near,
When their long-delayed decision
I finally got to hear.
It was out of their hands.

I wish I could say
That this ended my ditty
But my case was referred
To the Screening Committee.

I was told I was lucky,
After months had gone by
That my grievance had not
Just been left there to die.
But it was now out of their hands.

The Umpire considered
And pondered and thought.
He was honest and upright
And could not be bought.

Of one hundred grievances
We lost ninety-nine.
But the one that was salvaged
Turned out to be mine.

The window was opened
On a cold wintry day.
I shivered and shook
Till I thought I'd give way.

I went to the foreman
And called him by name,
And asked him to shut
That d---d window pane.
But he said, "It's out of my hands."

MR TOAD

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TUC v. THE WORKERS

THE GENERAL COUNCIL AND STRIFE

After months of to-ing and fro-ing between the Government and the T.U.C. General Council, the two issued a joint statement on 18 June saying the General Council had given a "solemn and binding" undertaking to deal with unconstitutional strikes. In the evening Barbara Castle told millions of TV watchers the Government had promised "that in the lifetime of this Government we will not interfere in this field with penal sanctions."

Many hailed this charade as a great victory for something or other—for the Government, for the T.U.C., for the Labour Movement, for common sense, for something somehow progressive. Only a few cynics were heard to mutter that for a victory there had to be a fight, and that as the unions that control the T.U.C. also hold the Labour Party's purse strings this was unlikely.

The Labour Government and the T.U.C. General Council have both won. The only losers are those who accepted the false alternative of "the State or the T.U.C." as a real choice. Instead of the Government punishing strikers, the General Council will:

- (1) Investigate strikes or threats of strikes with or without the invitation of the union(s) concerned.
- (2) Recommend a settlement, either directly itself, or after the report of a special Disputes Committee, if necessary with spot recommendations for the alteration of existing procedure.
- (3) Inspect the union's attempts to end the dispute.
- (4) Make sure all unions have power under their own rules to discipline, fine or expel members who won't fall into line with the T.U.C. recommendations.
- (5) Finally, to carry out a thorough investigation of the structure of all unions and in particular the position of stewards on the shop floor and their relation with full-time officials.

WHAT THE UNDERTAKERS UNDERTOOK

It is the application of T.U.C. Rule 11, "Industrial Disputes", that the undertaking covers. The Rule has been altered to include unofficial and unconstitutional strikes within the T.U.C.'s sphere of influence. The proposals for the application of Rule 11 were drawn up in a document "Programme for Action" that was put by the General Council to the T.U.C. Special Congress, and rubber stamped ("adopted overwhelmingly") after the usual chin and elbow movements.

The first part of the undertaking states:

"(a) Where a dispute had led or is likely to lead to an unconstitutional stoppage of work which involves directly or indirectly large bodies of workers or which, if protracted, may have serious consequences, the General Council shall ascertain and assess all the facts, having regard to paragraphs 20 to 27 of 'Programme for Action'."

Unions have always been obliged under T.U.C. Rule 11 to keep the General Council informed of big disputes. This has now been extended to unofficial and unconstitutional ones. Of course, it might come to pass that the union concerned would not inform the T.U.C., or not right away. Then, "even before notification the T.U.C. itself might take the initiative to investigate the matter: such an initiative might, for example, result from an approach from a union where members were not in dispute or on strike but had been laid off or otherwise affected as a result of strike action by the members of another union." ("Programme for Action", para. 38.)

So the General Council can get into a dispute even where the union involved is ignoring the T.U.C. In this day and age a strike by members of one union that doesn't in some way affect members of another is unheard of, both because of the number of unions in a single industry and, more important, the vast complexity and interdependence of different sectors of production and distribution.

VIC'S SENSITIVE PARTS

The motor industry and docks are prime examples; and on them the General Council's eyes are set. Says Vic Feather, Acting General Secretary:

"I know we will be expected to deal with every little dispute in every little factory, but eventually people will find out that we're concerned with the most sensitive parts of the economy. We're concerned about the motor-car industry. We're concerned about the docks. We'll be concerned about exports. We won't be concerned about every dispute just because it's a dispute." ("Financial Times", 17.7.69)

Thus, if a union chooses to strike a "militant" pose to its members, or if a local official is running for re-election or for national office and wants a militant reputation, so that a strike receives official recognition and the union tries to keep the T.U.C. out, the T.U.C. has another entry into the dispute, as another union's bound to complain.

BRINGING IN THE BIG GUNS

Having got in on the act, the General Council "shall ascertain and assess all the facts." This may mean a direct decision by the General Council's Inner Clique, the Finance and General Purposes Committee. (The Chairman of this Committee is Bro. Jim Conway, General Secretary of the A.E.F. Bro. Conway got his members about 15/Cd. with strings last pay-rise; they were so grateful they've bought him and Mrs C. a £16,000 home.) Or, if they consider a special disputes committee would be more fitting, not to say discrete, "the General Council have it in mind that, particularly in the case of a localised dispute, the disputes committee might include members drawn from a panel of experienced union officials." (Para. 39.)

These big guns will obviously operate where the dispute isn't localised, i.e. involves workers in a whole industry or at least several industrial establishments. In a local dispute they could deal with "difficult" officials or, more likely, well organised and militant workers who the local officials can't budge.

What will be the approach of the investigators? Paragraphs 20 to 27 of "Programme for Action" deal with two kinds of "unconstitutional" strikes: disputes due to breaches of procedure by management action, and disputes due to breaches of procedure by workers.

TENDER ADVICE

To get the workers back to work, recommendations will then be made to the parties concerned. This stage may take one of two forms; either:

"(b) In cases where they consider it unreasonable to order an unconditional return to work they will tender the organisation or organisations concerned their considered opinion and advice with a view to promoting a settlement."

or, more likely:

"(c) Where, however, they find there should be no stoppage of work before procedure is exhausted, they will place an obligation on the organisation or organisations concerned to take energetic steps to obtain an immediate resumption of work, including actions within their rules if necessary so that negotiations can proceed."

The T.U.C. General Council expects little trouble from the union officials here: "Unions have demonstrated over the years that they do their utmost to implement recommendations by the T.U.C. for the settlement of disputes, and very rarely have the General Council had to exercise their ultimate power of suspending a union and reporting it to Congress. The General Council are confident that, in the case of unofficial and unconstitutional strikes, unions will impress on their members the advantages to be gained from accepting the T.U.C.'s assistance in settling the dispute and will accept responsibility for doing everything in their power to ensure their members accept recommendations by the T.U.C." ("Programme for Action", para. 41.)

VIC-TIMISATION

Of course, the so-called "advantages of acceptance" mean avoiding the disadvantages of not accepting! "The General Council would also require unions to satisfy them that they had done all that they could reasonably be expected to do to secure compliance with a recommendation..., including taking action within their own rules if necessary." In this context, it is hardly necessary to point out, the phrase "action within their own rules" means disciplining the rank and file---fines, suspensions, expulsions.

Mind you, the T.U.C. hasn't forgotten that some completely antiquated unions may actually be prevented from penalising workers for holding out for a few more crumbs from the bosses' table. The General Council "recognise that a few unions may need to revise their own rules to ensure that they are in a position to comply with recommendations or awards by the T.U.C." (Para. 42.)

But if anything goes wrong here, or a union refuses to accept the T.U.C.'s recommendations ("an unlikely event"), the T.U.C. could expel or suspend it:

"(d) Should an affiliated organisation not comply with an obligation placed on it under (c) above, the General Council shall duly report to Congress or deal with the organisation under Clauses (b), (c), (d) and (h) of Rule 13."

BENDING THE RULES TO FIT THE OFFICIALS

To make the whole business go more smoothly, the T.U.C. General Council will draw up a code for admission, discipline and expulsion of individual members of all affiliated unions. This code'll be incorporated into every union rule book, if necessary through a new T.U.C. Rule binding all member unions.

MINDLESS MILITANTS

So now, the T.U.C. General Council intends to come down hard on strikers, if necessary by blacklisting by, or expulsion from, their union, with the consequence of loss of livelihood. If the union won't expel the members concerned, the T.U.C. will expel the union.

What union will risk expulsion? This will outlaw it from the trade union movement, and open season on it will then begin. Other unions, freed from restrictions on poaching, will be after its members, or their jobs, or both. Either way, the full-time officials will lose their source of livelihood - the members' contributions - and their "in" to all their perks of office: places in management and on Government boards; honours; titles; nice trips abroad on T.U.C. tours; safe(?) Labour seats, etc., etc. No wonder it's "unlikely" they'll resist a T.U.C. recommendation, or refuse to punish strikers who refuse to return to work!

Halfway between the rank and file and the full-time official is the lay member of the union executive. He will face a particular problem if in a big strike: vote for his own expulsion from his union - or have the union expelled from the T.U.C. Nice choice - but one that many mindless militants who insist that one can be loyal to both class and union must make soon! But the role of the Left in bringing about the present situation is a whole story in itself....

STERILISING THE STEWARDS

The General Council is also to investigate the role of all office holders in the unions, both stewards and full-time officials.

In particular, it considers, there must be more training for stewards - to make sure they serve union policy rather than that of the workmates who elect them. There must be more full-time officials - to make sure the stewards "remember" their training. There must be more provision for access by the officials - to make sure they can get at the stewards. Multi-union shops are undesirable because shop stewards in them aren't bound so closely to union policy. Powerful joint shop stewards committees must be tamed by being brought into official union wage negotiations, which more and more will take place at company level within a framework laid down by industry-wide guidelines.

Readers who think they've read this before somewhere may well have, in my article "Labour's Blueprint" (Solidarity South London, issue No.2), which discussed the plans of the Triple Alliance of Government, Management and T.U. officialdom, as formulated by Allan Flanders of the Commission for Industrial Relations (C.I.R.), long before the T.U.C. Special Congress in June. And in the light of these plans, the Croydon Congress and the new proposals appear neither as the "revolution" of Feather, nor as the "great betrayal" the so-called Left would have us believe. They mark, rather, a stage in a continuing process that began many, many years ago.

As the July issue of "Labour Research" summarises it: "The major contribution, the General Council conclude, to an improvement in industrial relations, would come from reform of procedures and wage structures; a job which 'can only be done case by case, company by company, and industry by industry' by the managements and unions concerned. But it notes certain other contributions to reform. It repeats its welcome for the C.I.R. and 'the very important job' it will have; it asks for the closest co-operation by trade unions with the D.E.P. in its job of registering procedure agreements of large companies."

OLD VIC PRODUCTION

The whole aim is to abolish strikes without abolishing their cause -- the wage system and the exploitation of man by man. This has been the dream of literally generations of Vic Feathers.

The ideology behind this aim is in keeping with the absurdity of the idea that symptoms can be abolished while their cause is left intact. The ideology was expounded fully by Feather at Croydon. That is, that a higher standard of living for working people depends on a higher level of production, full stop. That more production means more exports and competitiveness. That these depend on more modernisation and investment, which can be brought about in the long run only by more production! Therefore -- "The paramount aim must be to avoid stoppages."

IN PLACE OF FEATHERS

Yet everyday working people the world over are protecting and advancing what little well-being the system allows them precisely by stoppages of work, or threats of stoppages, or withdrawal of their labour in one form or another. It is those who wait for hand-outs, who avoid stoppages, who lag behind while the bosses' wealth piles up at their expense. In short, workers have discarded Feather's philosophy long ago, for it, like Feather himself, serves not them but the employing class.

Unfortunately, we haven't learned to put in its place a coherent alternative to Feather, or the society he represents. The time is drawing nearer when we can delay no longer: Feather and his friends are seeing to that.

MARK HENDY

"I know when we get in this business (incomes policy), if we get init at all, we will be involved in all kinds of shoddy, shabby, dirty compromises." - George Woodcock, T.U.C., Brighton, September 8 1965.

CLASS RULE

AT FAWLEY

Thirteen miles by road from Southampton, at the mouth of the Solent, over 1,500 men are employed in constructing the giant Fawley Power Station. When finished it will be one of the biggest in Europe with an output of 2000 megawatts. The main contractors are Mitchells (doing the civil work), Dorman Long, Thompson, Clarke-Chapman and C.A. Parsons. All of these firms are based in the North of England. The vast majority of their workers are also from the North. The managements no doubt think that they're better able to control the labour force when it's made up mainly of "travelling men" from an area where payrates are generally lower and unemployment higher than in the South.

I want to talk here principally about C.A. Parsons. This firm, which is based at Heaton, Newcastle, and which is part of the A.E.I./English Electric / Elliot Automation combine, has the contract for installing the turbines in the new power station. Parsons employ about 150 men on this site, about 50% of whom are actually engaged in construction work.

There are several other firms sub-contracting to Parsons. One of them, Aitons, is rumoured to have quoted the ridiculously low price of £8,000 for doing the pipework on the turbines - which they have already passed.

When you consider that Parsons' men are the lowest paid on the site, it makes you wonder why this firm have had such a smooth ride during the past $2\frac{1}{2}$ years - only one half-day token stoppage a few weeks ago. Perhaps part of the reason is that they've got some well-paid and expert con-men among their higher management.

TEACHER KNOWS BEST.

This certainly seems to be true of their site Manager. He is a quiet-spoken, placid-looking Welshman called Williams. But this one-time college lecturer sometimes forgets what he learnt and taught about exploiting and manipulating people without using the cane.

Recently, Williams had quite a bit of trouble trying to convince the lads that it was in their own best interest to work a three-shift system.

All his chat about knowing what was best for them didn't seem to be cutting any ice. He made it clear that he had no confidence that the shop steward was doing the job which management now expects of stewards. He wasn't putting Williams' points over clearly enough.

For a while, Williams forgot his teacher training, got the cane out and began flexing it ominously. He threatened to sack any man who refused to carry out his orders. When it was brought to his notice that the men couldn't be forced to work shifts, he dropped the threats tactics. In any case, the lads had voted overwhelmingly for a motion rejecting the shift system - only three voted against.

Williams now decided that a little brainwashing was necessary. No doubt he asked himself how and where this could best be done. A firm like Parsons knows how to pick its managers. So, before you could say arseholes, Williams came up with the right answer: get the workers back into the old classroom. His office, complete with blackboard, was ready made for the job.

So Headmaster Williams hides the cane in the cupboard for the time being and summons the men, six at a time, up to his new little corrective training centre. There the naughty half-dozens had to sit while Williams, with the aid of blackboard and chalk, educated them in the "benefits" of shift working.

Well, he certainly pulled his cap and gown over the eyes of some of them. When the term had ended and the classroom door had closed on the last pupil, another meeting was held in the playground I mean on the site. This time, although a number of the lads were away enjoying their hols, the voting was 27 in favour of accepting shifts and 25 against.

100 LINES !

It was later discovered that one of the men who voted in favour was off to Venezuela for the firm in a couple of weeks; and another three pro-shift voters admitted in the pub afterwards that they'd changed their minds and were now sorry that they'd voted the wrong way. Perhaps there's something in one wag's suggestion that some of the blokes ought to be given 100 lines: " I MUST NOT TRUST THE MANAGEMENT. THEIR INTERESTS ARE TOTALLY OPPOSED TO MINE."

The shift system involves working 21 consecutive days with seven days off. The 21 days consist of one week on day shift, one week "intermediate" (i.e. afternoon/evening), and one week night shift. The seven days off will be spent getting your breath back to start again.

While working this system the men's wages will be £37.10s. per week gross. This means that almost all will receive less than £30 a week. As I said earlier, most here are travelling men, so they've got all the extra expenses (digs, food, etc.) that go with being away from home.

SIX OF THE BEST FOR THE BOSSES ?

Ofcourse, this shift system isn't new. It's now being worked everywhere on power station contracts. But many have finally realized what a poor system it is - about £20 too poor !

Men working for Clarke-Chapman have a well-earned reputation for being the most militant on the site. They've been out of the gate on numerous occasions. It's no accident therefore that, although they have equivalent skills to us on Parsons, they are among the highest paid on the site.

Parsons workers don't have to go back to school to learn the lesson that this fact teaches. It really would be in their own class interests to get a tougher more solid job organization built up. That's the only way to improve conditions. They certainly won't get anywhere if they let themselves become pupils in Williams' class tactics. It's time we got the management to bend down.

OUR KID

(POSTSCRIPT - see page 24)

IN AND OUTSIDE

THE FIAT RACKET

FIAT workers described in our last issue how they have woken up to the way party and union bosses-Communist, Labour and Catholic- are manipulating them.

The officials hold back the workers' constant struggle against speed-up, low wages, more hours, and soaring cost of living, and call only token 24-hours stoppages to attract votes in national elections. So FIAT goes on to record output and profits. But last month FIAT'S wage slaves took the fight into their own hands on the streets of Turin; party and union bosses stayed indoors to play leap-frog in the Government crisis. The report below is based on conversations with an Italian comrade involved in the struggle.

PRODUCTION UP - PRICES UP

FIAT of Italy, Europe's biggest car manufacturer, has reported record levels of production and sales for the first six months of 1969. Production of cars and commercial vehicles totalled 840,000 units as compared to 770,000 units for the first half of 1968. Sales for the January/June period were valued at 785,000m lire (£523m) against 707,000m lire (£476m) for the same period last year. Export sales are also up—52,000m lire (£34m) on last year's totals.

These figures were published just a week after a general strike had hit Turin's rubber, electrical, textile, and, of course, engineering industries. Although, judging by FIAT'S published figures, production and sales are up, the continuous rise of the cost of living in Turin, particularly food prices and exorbitant rents, brought even the comparatively cossetted FIAT worker into the streets. "La Stampa", the FIAT-oriented newspaper, reported an unprecedented 75% stoppage at FIAT - and it was the workers from FIAT who were in the forefront of the half-million who stopped work in and around Turin.

BATONS AND BARRICADES

Inevitably trouble broke out when battalions of police, safely dehumanised behind their shatterproof goggles and plastic shields, tried to disperse strikers gathering for a mammoth street meeting. Police methods of dispersal consisted of the now-familiar baton charges through stinging clouds of their own tear gas. From behind hastily thrown up barricades the strikers gave as good as they got. Stones, bricks and bottles were their answer to gas grenades and repeated baton charges. And the strikers in the streets had more than moral support from the residents in the flats overlooking the fight. Water and missiles rained from the windows as householders momentarily forgot their respect for a uniform and remembered instead the price of meat - and, over all, the weekly revelations of one police scandal after another. So the battle swayed from the streets up the tenement stairs into the flats.

The spontaneous outburst of violence came to a peak when the strikers set fire to a car-transporter loaded with new FIAT cars; since the leaders were later, in court, established to be FIAT workers, this seemed a sort of blind justice.

"La Stampa", and all the other papers, along with the police, blamed the violence on "outside agitators" from Pisa or Trento, Milan or Podena. But the evidence did not bear out this assertion. Of the 60 strikers the police managed to arrest, most were workers at FIAT and only one came from outside the Turin area.

TOGLIATTIGRAD THE RUSSIAN TURIN

A week later, on 11 July, the three main labour unions called another strike in Sicily, in protest against the lack of jobs. A big pool of unemployed in Sicily enables manufacturers like FIAT to pay workers less while production and profits rise. Four hundred and seventy thousand new jobs are needed in Sicily just to bring employment levels up to the Italian national average.

Four hundred and seventy thousand jobs are needed in Sicily. But work continues on the large new FIAT factory far to the east. "Pravda" reports that the plant being built by FIAT in Togliattigrad (named after the late leader of the Italian Communist Party), in the Soviet Union, should be ready for production by 22 April next year - the centenary of Lenin's birth! When fully operational the factory will produce 660,000 cars a year. But the jobless, hopeless Southern Italian worker of Sicily and Calabria can only lean against the church wall and dream about a job at home or follow his dream to a workers' dormitory in Switzerland or Western Germany.

CYNICAL COLLUSION

As FIAT is the largest car manufacturer in Europe so the Italian Communist Party is the largest in the West. Though autonomous to a certain extent the Italian party joins its Russian counterparts in their cynical collusion with capitalists and their acceptance of the mystic standard - profit over all! The cars will roll off the lines at Togliattigrad; Moscow will pocket its profits and FIAT theirs.

Meanwhile, it is widely believed that the Italian Communist Party is to receive a royalty on every Russian FIAT car produced.

LYNETTE TROTTER

BOROUGH MARKET FIDDLE

The Borough is a wholesale fruit and vegetable market, just by London Bridge. Spreading in from the surrounding streets, it dumps itself on the Borough High Street firmly through the gates of the Market-Trust Building. Funny name, since they don't trust us, and we don't trust them.

There was quite a flurry when our issue No.3 got around the Market. It contained an article about the sheer waste that goes on there. The Dan Wuille (Boro') Management, having paid up on the overtime, thought they'd silenced us! They got hold of a copy and held a summit conference in the office. The Office Manager, Den Gray, treated it as a joke. In fact, he thought it was so funny, he filched some more copies off an unsuspecting Ray Wilson. But Bill Morritt, the Branch Manager, was 'very upset' about it - enough to put a ban on private 'phone calls by Chris Warrow, the typist/telephonist.

They were also worried in case it was seen by their masters at Covent Garden H.Q., and 'they wonder what's going on down here'. They may well wonder. Let them. We wonder at what goes on up there!

CONSPIRACY?

Chris, in fact, wanted nothing done about her overtime - in case Den Gray were to say that she was behind it all and take it out on her, claiming there was some sort of 'conspiracy' against him. He just about knows his size when it comes to picking on people!

He wouldn't have been so wrong though, about it being a conspiracy. Except that there's nothing secret about it. We workers are against all managements that are imposed upon us - that are outside our control.

For a while, this management was forced to compromise. Ray Wilson, being expected to do the entire job of cost/stock clerk, (leaving Den Gray to muddle on on his own), was allowed some measure of freedom as to whether to do overtime. Many's the time he would leave the stock-count, just writing out a 'stock per book', and walk out. They also ensured that Chris always got out on time. But.....

EARLY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN!

They've solved the staff-shortage. One of the customers, a 'trusty' by the name of Fletcher, has been given the job of cashier at the Flower-stand, while at the main-stand a 'freshman' has been taken on (as he'll soon find out) as cost/stock clerk.

At the moment, the management seem to have regained the loyalty of some members of staff - having handed out the annual bonus! The size of the bonus depends on how you've behaved yourself through the year. This, and the taste of that old carrot of 'early days (being let out early when business is slack) should keep them quiet for a while. Then, there'll be that Christmas Box to look forward to. It's rumoured that rose-coloured glasses are to be given away with the goodies this year.

Only the porters seem to see through all this and continue the struggle. What good are 'early days' to them? They're paid on the amount of produce going through the market. With less produce to handle, there's less work, but also less wages! This is all part of management's policy of divide and rule. What the office staff benefit from, the porters lose out on.

In any case, 'early days' aren't always early day for them, particularly if some Covent Garden management-goon decides to send in a load at the last minute and they're kept waiting around for it to come in!

TEACH-IN ON THE NAKED MARKET FIDDLERS

Anyone who ventures into Den Gray's office is likely to be treated to the usual story about the market fiddlers and, in particular, his opinions about the leading fiddler of the whole band - Bill (the fiddle) Grimes. Often, he stands there, gazing out the window, down onto Grimes' stand. "I don't know how he keeps going," he may be heard to mutter through the undergrowth of pot-plants that litter his window-ledge. Or, "He's had that stuff for weeks now." And his victim edges toward the door, hoping he's not going to be made late again.

Then he'll burst forth full rein: "Do you know, one time...." And off he goes! One such tale follows. "A load of tomatoes arrived at his stand one day, so wasty, that the lorry was dripping with them. The next day, some tomatoes, which we had been expecting, arrived at our flower-stand. They were one and the same load! That same day, Grimes took in a load of sound tomatoes. These were the ones we were meant to receive! Of course, we've no proof, but...."

There are a thousand and one tales of the Naked Market. This has been one of them.

THE FIDDLER CALLS THE TUNE

Still, the fiddler, Grimes, is only small-fry. The biggest fiddlers are the legal fiddlers, and the fruit-trade is no exception.

Last season's apple crop was poor, because of bad weather. Most of the blossom was blown, and the crop itself showed generally poor colour. A poor year for the growers, you would think? But no. Prices soared in the markets. Many growers, such as Smithers and Penney of Essex, made more than on the previous season's good yield! It seems it pays to have bad crops. Only we lose out every time. It's us mugs who have to pay! Take wheat in America. While millions starve, the U.S. Government burns thousands of tons of it to keep up prices and profits.

If national combines of companies are able to manipulate their profits, just think what international firms like Geest Industries could get up to. Dan Wuille & Co. Ltd. (Boro'), a Geest subsidiary, seems consistently to make a loss on Geest produce sold to them. There's a word going around