

# SOLIDARITY

**for workers' full control**

**Union attacks underground publication**

**GEC: Liverpool take over**

**Glasso's Goons**

**Sheffield Cutlery**

**Brent Dustmen**

**Mini Cabs**

**No 1**

By ALISTAIR MACDONALD

Trotskyites, revolutionaries and students" were accused last night of publishing an underground broadsheet among workers at Viners Ltd, the Sheffield cutlery firm.

Mr Hector Bright, district officer of the cutlery branch of the General and Municipal Workers' Union, made the accusations and today meets the management in an attempt to uncover the source.

The sheet *Sour Grapes* advises workers to contact Mr Bright about union membership "as a first step towards a higher basic rate, a fair bonus system, equal pay for all and better working conditions."

He refused to state what the union membership was at Viners but said there had been "a steady membership over the years" among the firm's 800 employees.

Mr Bright said: "I dissociate myself completely from this despicable rag. We must find out who is responsible and stop it. Any bargaining with management must be done through the proper channels."

*Sour Grapes*, a skit on the company magazine *Grapevine*, is the second to appear within a month and claims it is "printed and published on behalf of a group of Viners workers."

It attacks "the boring, filthy work" and citing the recent case of buffer girl, Mrs Annie Allibone, it says: "For years' hard labour the you; a silver tray pension, a silver when you can a silver

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## Who We Are

As this is the first edition of what we hope will be a regular magazine put out by Solidarity (West London) we thought it worthwhile saying a bit about ourselves.

Living in West London we are a group of people drawn together by a basic similarity in all our jobs; not one of us has any control over the circumstances in which we are forced to work, or any real say as to how our jobs or even our lives could best be run.

## A Question of Control

At work on office or shop floor our attempts to decide things for ourselves are attacked by the management and often by Trade Union officials as well. Workers today are increasingly aware of their union officials attempts to control them instead of represent them. Not for nothing are union officials called union "Bosses".

Employers and union bosses sit on Boards of Management; are Governors together of the Bank of England; and even sleep together in the House of Lords.

In the same way the Labour Government elected to power by working people ignores their wishes altogether. Wilson's whizz kids talk as though 'class struggle' no longer existed. Perhaps not in the bars of Westminster but it still bloody well does in the work situation common to most people in this country.

Harold Wilson joins with big business in pushing the view that all our economic problems would be solved simply by increasing production.

In fact neither our economic problems or any other social problems will be solved until working people control society and run it in their own class interests.

## The Unofficial Strike

The unofficial strike is a symptom of this desire on the part of workers to begin acting on their own behalf - to increase control of their work situations. Not surprisingly it is attacked by Tories, big business, and Barbara Castle; all of them united in their fear... "Here is something they can't control for their own end" that is the efficient running of British Capitalism.

The Labour government lines the pockets of British big business. We are asked to work harder while our wages are 'frozen' in the 'national interest' and profits pile up for a few. Wilson has forgotten that the people who work are the 'nation' and the encouragement of big business isn't in their interest at all.

The unofficial strike far from damaging the workers' interests, is often the surest means of advancing them and extending worker control at the expense of both management and unions.

Often 'left' union leaderships recognise strikes rather than attack them for being 'unofficial'. This is even more dangerous for the worker as it allows the union bureaucracy to take control persuade the men back to work and then sell them out once inside.



Indeed the fact that 97% of all strikes in Britain are unofficial shows that workers are not taken in by the Labour Governments big business propaganda.

### The Solution

Working people are beginning to realise that 'increased production' will only be to their advantage when they themselves take over the running of society.

However this most certainly does not mean a 'working class party' taking power on their behalf.

Instead it would involve the running of society entirely by Workers Councils composed of delegates sent up by works and community committees. These delegates could be immediately sacked if they started to represent themselves at the expense of their constituents.

Only in a system administered by Workers Councils will working people get the benefit of their labour and run their own lives in and outside work.

### Boss Propoganda

Of course bosses, certain Trade unions, and the political parties have vested interests in convincing the worker that he's incapable of running society without their help. They say "You'll always need political and technical specialists to run society".

But is this so? In a socialist society control would be firmly in the hands of the Councils rather than self-styled political specialists. Technical experts would be listened to and would have some influence on decisions but at no time would they be allowed to organise society for their own ends as they do all too easily today. Most of the time experts would advise on how best to put into practice decisions taken by the councils.

### A Question of Confidence

At the moment the majority of working people still lack confidence in their own ability to run society. Our rulers hope things will stay that way.

To this end they use the press, T.V. and radio to attack distort (and when it suits them ignore) all struggles where working people are beginning to act on their own behalf, whether it be G.L.C. tenants refusing to pay rent rises and organising tenant defense; squatter families occupying homes kept empty by local councils or lower paid council employees such as the dustmen staging a countrywide strike.

### Community Propoganda

To combat these attempts to discredit and distort working people's efforts to run their own lives; and to increase people's confidence in their ability to control their own communities, an 'unofficial' socialist press is badly needed: a press run and written by working people, manual and white-collar. Solidarity (West London) will be publishing with this aim in mind, and will pay particular attention to struggles in the West London area.

We welcome information, articles and comment from people in West London, or for that matter anywhere else.



# BRENT DUSTMEN

This article was written by a driver from the Wembley Depot of Brent Council's Highways Dept.

Before I start, I should point out that in terms of wages, I am in the "upper bracket". I get £15-19-0 a week for 5 days, from 7.a.m. - 4.p.m. The dustmen, or as our god fearing Conservative council would prefer to call them loaders get the princely sum of £14-19-0 a week.

Ah, but what about overtime. Well there isn't any worth talking about. Very occasionally we can work an overtime Saturday at time and a half or about 3 bank holidays a year at time and a third.

So how do we augment our subsistence level pay. Well, we have a bonus scheme which is the funniest thing since Bob Hope. Recently the council bought 3 new lorries, costing about £8,000 each. But they didn't want to hire extra labour. So the bonus scheme was born. They split up the rounds (which was increasing in size all the time) and gave us the extra work to be done in the same time by the same amount of men- the incentive to work harder being the bonus. But while the work gets greater, the bonus stays the same. The bonus varies according to your round between £2-16-0 and £5-16-0 per week (you can't choose your round)

Apart from these flaws, if you can't complete your round in a week's work, Monday to Friday, due to bad weather you have to go in on a Saturday to earn your week's flat rate, let alone the bonus. I sometimes think a Brent councillor controls the weather.

200 dustmen work at the Wembley depot. We've got 3 Unions, of which the T.G.W.U. is the biggest. For god knows how many years our local officials have done buggar all. 2 years ago we asked for a £1 rise. The officials negotiated with the council and got 6/-, we were told that the Incomes policy couldn't allow us any more. This year we again asked for £1 and this time the council and the union crossed our palms with 7/6d. Yet just recently Brent Council and the G.L.C. officials received vast pay increases. Is there one Incomes Board for the nobs and one for the workers?

We never even see our Union officials and our 3 shop stewards and 2 committee members might as well have not existed. For 2 years we put up with some of the lowest wages for some of the worst work in the country and while drivers can sometimes get overtime or roadsweepers, etc., the dustmen can't.

Personally I've got a wife and 5 kids. I left a job in a garage to prevent my marriage from breaking up, so I could see my kids properly in the evenings. The best money I ever got on the council was driving a road sweeper from 5.a.m. to 6.p.m. for seven days a week. I kept that up for 6 months. It nearly broke me. I still work 7 days a week, with shorter hours, for £25 a week. I have lived in the same place for 20 years and couldn't get a council house. So the Council lent me £2,700 to buy a



house. I repay at £21-15-0 a month. When I am bringing home £18-£19 a week, we can just about pay our mortgage. Recently for 3 weeks running I was bringing home only £15 a week. We couldn't pay our mortgage and had to borrow money. After H.P. and other basic outlay, we have about 1/6d - 2/- per day per person for food. Have you ever tried living on that? Sometimes I get work in the evening - I'm still young and used to be a mechanic. So we can just get by. Other lads, we have several skilled men proving we are not all thick and fit for nothing else, can also supplement their earnings. But the older workers haven't got the energy to face a second job. Christ knows how they get by.

One of our lads was recently moved to a flat on the Chalkhill estate at £7 a week - over half his wages. Its disgraceful what Brent Council does. We work the Chalkhill round. All the maisonettes there have a "Jag" or a "Rover" in the garage - one man told us that the £10 a week rent made it an ideal and a cheap town home for him. Who subsidises who?.

#### COUNCIL EFFICIENCY DRIVE

Brent also did a time and motion study recently on us. It cost them £100,000. They scrapped the results 2 months later. They have done 2 more since then.

So for 2 years the pressure built up with a stinking council, wasting money and a union that couldn't give a damn. When we recently pressured the union officials into trying to negotiate a change (we wanted a flat rate instead of a bonus scheme) the officials came out from the Council with a second bonus scheme. This was so much for each bin or cardboard box per house over a certain number. We filled in our sheets to claim it every week but on one has ever got a penny from it.

So we came out on strike - one of the first boroughs to come out. We want a guaranteed flat wage of £20 per week.

Our area officials didn't even bother to come down to see us. They just called us naughty boys for being on unofficial strike and told us to go back pending negotiations - Not a chance. This is our fight and we will win it. The union have just made 2 of our shop stewards full time officials but that won't buy anyone off. Whose side do they think they are on?

#### COUNCIL GENEROSITY DRIVE

On Wednesday 15th and Thursday 16th October our strike committee sat for 2 days negotiating with the council. At first they offered us £2-1-0 a week more and an extra bonus, on top of the normal bonus, of 15/- per ton to clear up the backlog of the strike.

They withdrew the normal bonus on the Friday leaving just the 15/- a ton as bonus. This was rejected by nearly 200 votes to 3.

First of all the offer is well below the nationally negotiated figure. Secondly, assuming that each man can clear 10 tons per week he will get a



bonus of £7-10-0. To shift this amount he would have to do a third round (we usually do 2 a day.) He wouldn't be getting his ordinary bonus of about £5 so he would be doing  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times as much work each week for only £2-10-0 extra. But there isn't even this backlog of work - private contractors who escaped our picket lines have seen to that. So they want us to clear up the effect of the strike for next to nothing.

By the way the firm who have been doing most of the contracting are Sheppard & Short. Sheppard is no less a person than Councillor Sheppard, chairman of the Works and Highways Committee of Brent Council who said at his committee meeting on Monday, 13th October that hiring private contractors would inflame the situation (Wembley Observer, Friday October 17th) Playing with fire, Councillor?

Our offer was to clear the bins during normal working hours, and to clear the backlog in sacks and cardboard boxes on overtime (this is because they take up more room in the lorry and thus our bonus falls off). The Council refused. We also said we would clear the emergency dumps (that the private enterprise scum have left) on overtime. The Council refused.

The strike has been magnificent - all the lads have stuck together - our shop stewards, who we elected along with 2 others as the strike committee have done exactly as we told them. We could have stopped every service in the borough if we wanted including hospitals, meals on wheels for the sick, school meals services and buses for the spastics. But why should other people who have it hard have to suffer.

This is now the 3rd week of the strike. Some of us are literally starving, especially the single men who are getting no social security. The lads in the neighbouring borough of Ealing have gone back to £23 a week. That made us a bit angry because we can't get a guaranteed £18 and we hoped they would stand by us.

But it doesn't worry us. On Friday 150 men said they would starve and tear up their cards rather than go back and live like paupers again. Only 3 wanted to go back.

As I said some of us physically are in a bad way. But, by Christ, we feel like men for the first time. We will stick together and we must win. There is only one way to win the right to bring up your kids in dignity - fight and stick together. In 2 weeks, I have learnt a life time of experience. My loyalty is to my mates, my wife and my kids - not to management or union. We don't need them.

A. MUCKRAKER.

Read SOLIDARITY (South London) No.7

Articles on:- War at Aberthaw; Kingsnorth Untouchables; Teaching Machines; Manpower Ltd.; Dustmen.

10d. post free from:- 79 Balfour Street, London S.E.17.



# THE MINICAB RACKET

or HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT HAVING TO TRY

Although in their infancy, the Mini-cab business bosses are certainly adult in relation to the traditional capitalist business aims and methods, i.e. profit and the consequent ruthlessness in furthering that aim.

Let us take a look at the Mini-cab world.

A company may have a very simple and uncomplicated birth, the only requirements after registration being a number of cards proclaiming car service and telephone number; the means of distributing these - usually by schoolchildren or tradesmen- and a telephone with someone to take the calls during the hours of business.

These are the basic requirements and the only further expenditure necessary is in advertising for drivers, e.g. "Drivers urgently required with own 4 door saloon - £60 plus per week can be earned", etc., etc.,

As can be seen, very little financial risk has been taken in starting the company and even at a later date when the firm has expanded enough to use radio-control, the driver is required to cover that cost also.

A prospective driver, taking the advert at its face value and rising to the lure of the advertised high earnings, applies for the details and then learns that the advertiser is an agent, who, for a fee ranging from £10 - £15 per week and payable in advance, will furnish the work as it comes in.

He also learns that he should have special insurance costing from £70 - £100, be responsible for his own repairs and maintenance, also his income-tax and National Insurance Stamp. Self employed in other words. Not quite.

He who pays the piper doesn't necessarily call the tune.

Some companies may vary a little or spend more than others in establishing themselves but irrespective of that they practically all have one thing in common:- Traditional Management Attitudes.

These embrace the right to hire or fire at will or whim, and indeed the right to do anything to protect and further the profit motive without obligation to the welfare of the employee.

In the mini-cab business the driver, having paid his 'fee' in advance without contract or guarantee is more at the mercy of management attitude than many. If his earnings aren't realised as advertised - or indeed if he earns nothing at all due to lack of work, there is nothing he can legally do to get his fee back, and certainly nothing he can do in the trade-union sense because needless to say collective bargaining has never been encouraged in the mobile rat race. (Continued on page 22.)



# GLASSO'S GOONS

General & Industrial Paints, Perivale, Wembley. Employs about 200 men manufacturing paints and varnishes mainly for the car industry. (Fords, B.M.C., Vauxhall etc.) It has a share capital of £250,000 and made an overall profit of £132,457 in the year ending March 1969. The firm is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Ault & Wiborg group which specialises in paints, industrial finishes, chemical compounds and building paints. Ault & Wiborg made an overall profit of £1,000,000. A new man starting in G.I.P. gets the large and princely sum of 8/8d an hour.

## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE FORTY HOUR WEEK?

I work for G.I.P and I see it as a typical example of how management, despite low basic pay, despite bad unhealthy conditions still manage to hold on to enough men and extract high profits from their labour. The carrot is an old one, OVERTIME. Hours and hours of unnecessary overtime on which to waste our lives and creative energies. After long hours in the heat, dust, and fumes about all you are capable of doing is falling asleep in front of the telly.

Of course we don't have to work overtime. They don't stand behind us with a whip. So the management tell us all the time. But just try and live decently on the basic rate. Here is one field in which, thanks to the nature of the business (i.e. Tight delivery dates. Inability to stand an extended strike).

## THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY.

On the question of job control we practically run the place as it is and there is no doubt in my mind we could run it completely if left to ourselves. But still as one of the lads said if it wasn't for the foremen we wouldn't have anybody to laugh at. Lets have a look at a few of them

Ned (It's not my fault.) Kehoe. Head Foreman....It's hard to find anything to write about him because he does fuck all. What really makes his day is if he can catch somebody at the clocking out place a few minutes early. It's like a game of hide and seek between him and us to see who can catch who.

John (Ferret) Brown. Millroom Foreman....He wouldn't be a foreman at all if it wasn't for the workers. Some time ago when he was an underforeman we had a dispute with the management about who should join the union and we said either he joined or else he could go down the road. So the management took pity on him and gave him a brown coat. He now spends most



of his time running around in circles making one glorious cock-up after another. Everybody hopes that someday he'll disappear up his own arsehole. That's if he doesn't disappear up someone else's first.

Ted (Tinplate) Herbert, Solvent Stores Foreman.... So nicknamed because his speciality is covering holes in the floor with tinplates. It's been said that if there was a hole six feet deep Ted would cover it with tinplate. Another of his habits is to make periodic trips through the toilets to flush out the blokes who are having a smoke. He wanders through uttering pathetic cries like "Come along some of you chaps". Nobody pays the slightest bit of attention to him, what his contribution to production is Christ only knows but I do know the production manager is his brother. Perhaps that helps.

(Bodger) Campbell, Engineer....Has the fitters driven up the wall with his carefully planned cockups. Instead of letting them get on with the job he insists on organising all the work down to the last detail, thus ensuring one carefully planned cockup after another. His latest and best is the way he managed to block all access to one mill by installing another one in the way. It must have cost hundreds to set that right. One step forward, two steps back, Cha,cha, cha.

Harry Herbert, Production Manager....Not much is known about this man except that he is Tinplate's brother. It's rumoured that he comes out of his office once a year or so to familiarise himself with the way out in case a fire breaks out. Maybe some day we'll see him in the flesh, or maybe it's all a gigantic fraud and he doesn't exist at all.

#### TOO MANY CHIEFS AND NOT ENOUGH INDIANS.

Well I could go on and on about management, Christ knows that's one thing we are not short of. None of these men are particularly dangerous, they are just nuisances. But what kills me is the way they ponce off our work, our production. It's time we gave all management the only order they understand, the order of the boot. They make such a bad job of it we couldn't help but do better. Ask yourself why you are kept hanging about for so many hours each day, and you know we could do the work in half the time. If it wasn't for the fact that we are doped with overtime we'd have realised long ago we were being coned. Then we might have got together with the other workers (Chemists etc.,) and shown the management they are not the only ones who can manage. However there is no time like the present.

Spiro Agnew.

More next month from our special correspondent when he writes on the overtime problem.

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SOLIDARITY (North London). Vol. 6 No.2.

The K.A.P.D. and the Workers' Councils; Ford Workers  
prepare for struggle; Thoughts on the Thoughts of Mao.

10d post paid from H.Russell, 53A, Westmoreland Rd, Bromley.



# SHEFFIELD CUTLERY INDUSTRY

## VINER'S WAGE SLAVES.

Viners is Sheffield's top prestige cutlery firm the makers of miniature wine coolers, silver tankards, candelabra etc., As the catalogue blurb puts it, "Elegant silver plated tableware, designed and executed by Sheffield Craftsmen".

Written by women workers, this article looks behind the middle class gloss of the advertising handout to the stinking wages and conditions on the shop floor inside Viners.

### THEY DON'T LIKE 'FORKING' OUT

Last year the company made £304,352 profit - £8 per week profit from each of its 800 workers. Five directors took home £52,000 between them in addition to 23½% dividend on their shares.

A high percentage of women are employed and the firm will only take on girls under 21. This is because they are easier to exploit than men. For a 40 hour week girls under 21 are paid £4. 5. 0, and women £8. 5. 0.\* These wage rates are appalling yet the management justify them by pointing to the bonus system which in theory allows us to make our money up.

### THE BONUS SYSTEM

The job rates inside Viners are set by 'time and motion' men to squeeze as much production out of us, for as little money as possible. These people are not neutral! They are very much on the gaffers' side against us, and the sooner we realise that, the sooner we'll stop knocking ourselves silly to increase our output for fear that they'll say we are lazy.

The whole bonus system needs looking at closely.

When fixing a new job rate the 'work study' people take the fastest person in the shop and time them early in the morning when they are still fresh: anyone that can beat that gets a bonus. No allowances are made for tiredness later in the day, or the time it takes to get used to a new job or machine. In fact they treat us as though we were their machines. Women that have been here 40 years can often only just earn their basic. If anyone does begin to earn a bit more they are changed to another machine.

It's quite obvious that as long as we let the work study people set the job rates without consulting us who have to do the work, we are never going to get a fair deal. As someone said, "God knows why they call it "work study" when they study the gaffers and never the workers".

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\* Male wage rates are also extremely low, ranging from £13 to £15 for a 40 hour week.



Not until we fight the management for control over the fixing of job rates, will we be able to work like human beings and still take home a decent wage.

A first step must be for all the shops to elect their own stewards to put our demands to the management. All job rates ought to be re-assessed in the presence of these stewards. We must eventually refuse to work on any job or machine where the rate is not agreed by our representatives. Anyone of us contesting a bad rate must be given the support of the whole of their shop. We are only strong in collective action.

### SOMETHING OUT OF DICKENS

Viners is sweatshop pure and simple. In many of the shops the machines are so packed together that we have to climb over one another to get to them. This in itself is dangerous, while many of them lack proper safety guards. There have been many accidents. In the 'filing' shops women have lost bits of fingers, or whole ones, even eyes and teeth to the machines. Compensation is unheard of - many don't even get sick pay while they are in hospital. The noise in some shops is terrific and it goes on all day without a break except at lunch time. We have no tea breaks, but drink at our machines, so there is little opportunity to talk to one another. The machines are arranged to divide us off from each other. We can't shout above the noise and often we can't even look at the next person. We work in stifling heat and filthy conditions the fans are never cleaned so everywhere is covered in dust which gets in our lungs, and down our throats.

### 'SPOONFED' WITH "GRAPEVINE"

Workers here have been brainwashed into thinking that the gaffers have their interests at heart. A 'house bulletin' called "Grapevine" stuffed full of management propoganda, is handed out free to the workers every month. This magazine patronises the shop floor as if they were children, and Viner the Father. For example, the quotation in Grapevine from a 'star worker' "Punctuality and good time-keeping have been my main object all my working life. I've never been absent or late". Yet you only have to cross the gaffers once, and the 'one big happy family' think wears a bit thin. Speak for yourself, be late a couple of times, and they'll sack you no matter how many faithful years of service you've given. Grapevine is used to keep us quite. While we are looking for our pictures in the social page we aren't thinking about our work conditions and the rotten wages they pay us. Viners is a family concern, but the only family they show concern for is their own.

### SHOP-FLOOR POWER.

As we will get only what we are strong enough to take these grievances will be satisfied only after we have organised on the shop floor.

The trouble is that women in general find organised opposition unthinkable - the manager chats them up a bit and they'll put up with anything. Its always



been their part to obey orders both at home and at work.

In the latest company report Rueban Viner says: "I would like to take this opportunity of thanking my colleagues on the board, the staff, and all the workers for their excellent services and conscientious co-operation and support which have produced the eminently satisfactory results for this year."

What he means is the £300,000 profit made by us for him. It's about time all of us, men and women ('star workers' included) stopped being conned into believing that our interests as working class people are the same as the directors; because they are not. They make the profits from our sweat. This situation can be altered when we are powerful enough and organised enough to force them to grant our demands.

It won't be easy. They have sacked people before now for bad time-keeping, and there's a feeling of fear here and a tradition of giving in.

Still, it's up to us with the help of the men on the shop floor to refuse our "co-operation and support", to stop letting ourselves be pushed around; to stop accepting what they say is a "woman's place", and get ourselves organised to FIGHT BACK! The management are not doing us a favour by allowing us to work here. It's us that are doing them favours. Without the working class men and woken here this industry couldn't run. Without the gaffers it would run a lot better.

We might not realise it, but we are in a position of power. This power should be used.

Since the writing of this article a leaflet 'TO EVERYONE WORKING IN VINERS' has been distributed to all shop floor workers.

Women have already witnessed the management interrogating suspects, while Viners' directors are visisbly worried by the good reception the leaflet got inside the factory.

We hope to keep in touch with further developments, and to this end we appeal to all Viners' workers to send us their comments and opinions. We are aware of the dangers of victimization and can guarantee that names will not be revealed in any circumstance.

We feel that the following hints on shop floor organisation might be of some use:

1. A first step is the election of stewards by the workers in each shop to represent them. (Such stewards should be voted out the minute they start to represent themselves, or fail to report back on proceedings to the people electing them).

2. These stewards would form themselves into Works Committees of stewards uniting all the shops in the factory. This would mean that the whole factory could put pressure on the management whenever they were in dispute with one shop or one person in a shop.

3. Regular shop floor meetings called by the stewards would combat the bosses' attempts to divide workers off from each other, and keep them ignorant of what was happening elsewhere in the



factory. (Such meetings could be held in the lunchbreaks).

4. Union officials not interested in fighting on behalf of the shops should be ignored and by passed.

#### ON CONDITIONS

The conditions described in this article are quite possibly illegal. The Factory Acts, safety regulations, and Public Health requirements should be looked up and the following points checked:

1. The overcrowding of machines and material. (The Factory Acts specify the amount of clear space required between machines)
2. The upper temperature limit specified for comfortable working (Organised work forces usually walk out when the temperature gets too hot. The use of this tactic has been known to get the gaffers to install adequate ventilation systems very quickly.)
3. The noise level in machine shops.
4. The allocation of tea breaks per shift and their length. (We do not regard the drinking of tea at the machine as a break)
5. The safety guard requirements relating to machines. Once these points have been checked the management can be threatened with court action or the Factory Inspectors if they don't toe the line.

#### ON ACCIDENTS

The shop steward should take the names and addresses of workers involved in accidents, documenting the cases carefully with a view to possible legal action against the firm.

Of course these are only suggestions. In the fight for power on the shop floor the workers themselves will develop their own struggle techniques and methods.

We feel that the women in Viners ought to get every encouragement and support from the male workers since the strengthening of any section on the shop floor at the expense of the management ultimately benefits all workers in a factory.

We would be very interested to hear of future developments inside this factory as the information would be of help to other workers in similar situations. - Eds.



# GEC LIVERPOOL

## THE OCCUPATION THAT FAILED.

On the 19th of September 1969 the workers at three GEC-EE plants in Liverpool planned to takeover and run the factories in an effort to fight redundancy. Why did they not take over? To get the whole matter into perspective it's necessary to have a look at the background of the GEC-AEI-EE giant. The Labour government itself has played a large part in the making of this empire at the expense of the workers.

### WHAT HAPPENED AT A.E.I.

In 1967 the Industrial Reorganisation Corporation, a Government sponsored body, pumped £25,000,000 into GEC to enable them to takeover AEI. The ink was hardly dry on the contract before the "rationalisation" axe started swinging. Almost immediately after, it was announced that 300 workers at Harlow were to be sacked and 500 more were to be laid off at AEI headquarters. Then in February 1968 the news came that 5,500 workers at Woolwich were to be axed. The Woolwich people did not accept the sackings quietly. On the contrary they reacted furiously but not furiously enough.

They went through the usual safe channels of contained protest i.e. a mass walk out to a meeting at a local cinema. This was followed by a coffin carrying procession through the streets. They also voted for an overtime ban. This is of course completely ineffective when a factory is being closed down. The most useful thing they did was to black all work transferred to other factories. This eventually led to 300 men being laid off at Woolwich, 1,000 others then came out on strike and a few days later the men were reinstated. At this stage the idea of a workers' takeover was born and received some support but it died an early death. The result of all their actions was to ensure that management, trade union officials and Government worked full time to effect a smooth phasing of the sackings and the gradual closure of the factory, until now only about 1,000 are left.

A lot of the men were forced into lower paid jobs and about 200 are still unemployed. So much for redeployment.

### LESSONS TO BE LEARNT FROM A.E.I. DEFEAT

The reason for writing about Woolwich is to show the futility of the usual protests when faced with redundancies. One would have expected that the Liverpool workers would have learnt this from the Woolwich struggle. Especially as the unemployment level in Liverpool is already twice the national average. Six per cent of Merseyside's apprentices serving with EE now have to look elsewhere. One could well argue that they did in fact see the uselessness of going through the time honoured protests and that it was the incompetence and elitist



attitude of their Joint Action Committee, coupled with the mass media attacks and the management counter organisation that led to the rejection, at least for the moment, of occupation as a method of fighting the sackings.

### HOW IT WAS IN LIVERPOOL

However, lets have a look at the course of events. On Wednesday, 13th August there was a mass meeting of GEC-AEI-EE workers in Liverpool stadium. They demanded an all out fight against the sackings. Other demands were, a ban on overtime, all movement of machine tools elsewhere to be blacked, a national strike throughout the combine and the nationalisation, under workers control, of the whole of Weinstock's empire. They empowered their shopstewards to act as necessary on these demands. It was during this meeting that Frank Johnston, District Secretary of the AEF, suggested in a speech the taking over of the factories. To many peoples' surprise this was endorsed almost unanimously by those present. Unfortunately, out of about 10,000 that came out on strike that day only about 2,000 - 3,000 were present at the stadium.

### THE ROLE OF THE ACTION COMMITTEE

The Action Committee thought that this was sufficient backing and neglected to consult properly with the rest of the workers. By failing to do this they were on a sticky wicket from the start. Nevertheless, Netherton, one of the factories to be completely closed down, was at that time solidly behind the occupation. The reason the Action Committee gave for not consulting with the workers was that the management would have got to hear of their plans. The obvious answer to that is, whatever advantage they would have gained would have been more than wiped out by the workers having full control over what was going on. The obvious time to discuss the takeover would have been at the two sit-ins which took place. A sit-in as such presents no threat to management especially when a factory is due for a complete shutdown, but it is useful insofar as it provides a suitable forum in which to discuss a takeover once the workers are actually inside the factory. Then it can be discussed in practical terms with attention to the detailed running of the factory by the workers e.g. the organisation of raw materials; catering; the formation of security groups; contacting of workers in the service industries, market distribution, etc. The discussions themselves would be the means for breaking down the enforced artificial barriers between the shopfloor and white-collar workers. Proper discussion also ensures COMPLETE INVOLVEMENT of the men with the idea of workers taking over a factory and running it. Even if they did not get any further at that particular time the discussions still would have been worth all the action committees put together.

Yet given these valid criticisms of the Action Committee, there is no doubt they worked hard and were sincere in their efforts to bring about the occupation. They set up sub committees to deal with some of the points mentioned, and also called a meeting of all Merseyside shopstewards which was an unqualified success. There is no doubt that support would have been forthcoming from all over the country.

If the Action Committee had communicated properly with the rank and file and actively involved as many as possible in the research and decision making they could have carried the day. I say this because we talked to many of the men



and it was not the takeover they objected to but the arbitrary decision making of the Action Committee.

### THE PROPAGANDA WAR

A second shortcoming was the lack of propaganda from the workers side. A leaflet a day, distributed in the factories explaining current events would have been invaluable, or even to counter management propaganda. On the 16th September the management issued a particularly insidious statement .....

"This proposal (the occupation) is irresponsible, unconstitutional and, if implemented, could be prejudicial to the employment prospects in those Liverpool businesses which are unaffected by the Company's reorganisation plans..... Employees will qualify for payment in the normal way except in the event of unofficial action occurring which prevents management from carrying out its legitimate functions. In those circumstances the Company could not hold itself responsible for payment to any employees occupying its factories, or any part of its factories, so long as management is not in complete control." This particular statement should have been answered within the hour. It wasn't answered at all. In a leaflet the obvious questions could have been asked .....

Is it responsible to throw 43,000 men out of work? Is redundancy constitutional? What is the constitution they refer to? Presumably the same constitution that allows them to sack thousands of men in an already depressed area. Is mass sacking on Merseyside a standard of responsibility the men should adhere to? The management also made a series of threats not necessarily available to them and these should and could have been answered.

### THE LEGAL ASPECT

The legal aspect is one point on which the Action Committee remained insensitive to the obvious fears of the workers. Before the howls go up from all the hardened revolutionaries, nobody we talked to looked on the occupation as something which could go on forever but as a method of fighting the sack. Nobody would deny the possibilities arising from such an act but the answer to that lies in the future. What a lot of people were worried about was what would happen when it was all over. I.e. what were the legal implications of taking over? Would it, if unsuccessful, affect their redundancy pay, etc. Nobody knew and it looked like nobody cared. The Action Committee was actually offered free legal facilities, with no strings attached, by some sympathisers two weeks before the 19th. The attitude of some members of the Action Committee was that "all was in hand" and they felt that anyway legal niceties ultimately wouldn't matter. They were right but for the wrong reasons. If the workers, as said earlier, had been thoroughly involved and really wanted to occupy, the legal or any other threats wouldn't have mattered. They would have the strength and determination to overcome them by standing together. But in the situation of a totally new form of struggle, the men had obvious fears.

In fact an occupation would have been initially a civil wrong of trespass not a criminal offence. In other words the management could have sued, say, 12,000 workers. Even at a cost of only £20 each this would have cost Weinstock about a quarter of a million pounds. Assuming he won his cases, if he lived long enough, and received the usual nominal damages of a penny or so this is not the kind of profit Weinstock is accustomed to. Also it is extremely unlikely that the redundancy payments would have been affected as this too would have a



cost far more than it was worth. A simple leaflet would have removed these fears. Instead it was left to the management to play on the workers ignorance of the legal situation. The effect of a stream of propaganda would have been to constantly remind everybody involved that this heightened form of struggle, was the only possible action now available, the only possible alternative to complete acceptance of the Management's unilateral decision on the fate of the men. The workers had never been consulted about the sackings. When the board of GEC had come to their decision 4,300 workers were told they would be getting the chop. So why should the workers be obliged to consult Weinstock.

In the Liverpool Daily Echo, September 18th. during an interview Arnold Weinstock said, "Management can only function with the consent of the workpeople to be managed." This is a quote we all would do well to remember.

### THE ROLE OF THE INSTITUTE FOR WORKERS' CONTROL

Although much publicised the IWC played a small part in the proceedings and they displayed a strange sense of priorities throughout. At their initial meeting with members of the Action Committee the first item on the agenda was affiliation fees to the IWC!

The Institute was asked to supply help in the form of research propaganda. As a first instalment the 'Institute' published a pamphlet - "Workers' Takeover". The pamphlet is worth looking at closely since the term 'workers' control' is used in a very misleading sense. The phrase itself is never allowed to stand on its own. We get either "public ownership and workers' control" (as on Page 21) or "social ownership under workers' control" (as on Page 22). Yet if the workers themselves run society (which is what we understand by Workers' Control) what is the pamphlet referring to when it talks of 'public' and 'social ownership' as something entirely separate from workers' control?

The rest of the pamphlet makes it clear. On Page 22 the Institute prints a list of demands which it would like to see taken up, not by the workers themselves but by "the trade unions." The future society according to the IWC would be run not by workers but by self-styled representatives from either so-called Workers' Parties (as in Soviet Russia) or the Trade Union bureaucracy. Under the IWC's scheme Workers' Control would mean nothing more than extended Nationalisation and State ownership; and you only have to ask any worker in today's nationalised industries how much 'control' he has to realise just how meaningless the term 'workers' control' is in that context.

Since the failure of the occupation many of the Liverpool lads have realised that real workers' self-management and full workers' control of society, can be brought about only by workers themselves, and not by parties or unions claiming to represent them.

Incidentally, pamphlet is selling at 2/-. The IWC must have been hoping for enough profit to launch a counterbid against Weinstock.

### THE UNIONS

The national executives of the unions involved, played a classic fence-sitting game which requires probing. Apparently the AEF kindly gave the men



permission to resist the redundancies in any way they chose and I understand the ASTMS Executive sent a telegram to their local officials wishing them the best of luck. Whether or not they would have backed the takeover with material support is another question. Solidarity (West London) hopes to investigate this in future issues together with other aspects of the situation that require a clarification.

### WON'T YOU GO HOME BILL BEWLEY!

The biggest blow to the takeover plans and the Netherton workers especially was the meeting at Eat Lanes Road on Wednesday 17th. This is a classic example of how the management exploited to the full the workers distrust of the Action Committee. It was held outside the factory and the press and TV were out in strength. The meeting had just assembled and was fairly well behaved. There had been some shouts directed against the platform and there was one banner proclaiming "THE CLERICAL & ADMINISTRATIVE WORKERS UNION WANT A VOTE". Anyway a couple of minutes after they were assembled, around the corner from Fusegear came Bill Bewley and his Merry Men. Now this particular factory is not to suffer any cutback in labour; there are even plans for its expansion. They were well armed with banners stating, "Fusegear say no sit in". "ACTION COMMITTEE OUT". "LET THE VOICE OF THE WORKERS COUNT". Which were prepared inside the factory with the help of the management, and at least half of the 300 or so were actually administrative workers. Add this to Bill Bewley's new loudhailer and what do you get? A PUT UP JOB BY MANAGEMENT! The mob pushed their way to the front where they proceeded to break up the meeting. Every time somebody tried to speak they were shouted down. Sadly a lot of the other workers seized on Bewley's mob as a platform to show their distrust of the Action Committee. The result of all this was that Bewley was pushed onto the platform by his mates. He shoved through three resolutions....

1. OCCUPATION OFF.
2. OVERTIME BAN LIFTED.
3. VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE IN THE ACTION COMMITTEE.

I don't honestly think that the majority could hear what he had to say and certainly the majority didn't vote at all. This opinion is strengthened by the fact that when they went back to work there was no question of the overtime ban being lifted and though the Action Committee as such had undoubtedly been rejected by the workers all the stewards received a vote of confidence from their members.

### BILL "BLACKLEG" BEWLEY

A few years ago when there was a dispute about a wage claim for one part of the factory Bill Bewley and some of his friends scabbed on their workmates. I mention this in case anybody gets the idea that he is a bona-fide shop steward doing his best for his members. One consolation is that he is to be disciplined by the District Committee of the AEF for his part in the fiasco. I hope he gets life!

### NETHERTON

By way of contrast, the following morning Netherton had a meeting which was quiet and democratic. The voting was 60% against the occupation, 40% for. It ended with a unanimous vote of confidence in their shop stewards. After the



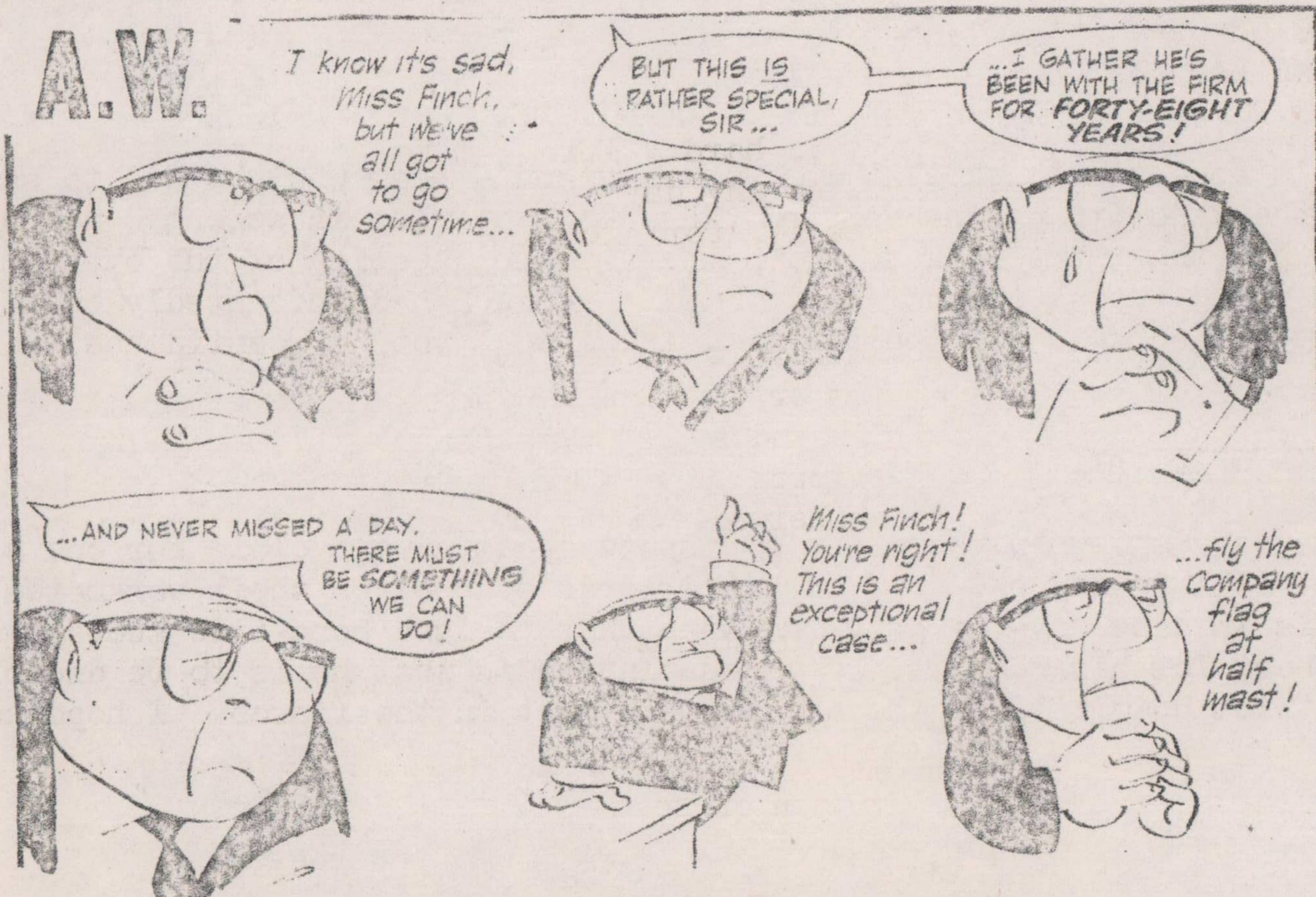
weeks of mass media and management attacks coupled with the disastrous meeting of the day before Netherton deserve some praise for their militancy. It is unfortunate they did not go ahead on their own as a great number of people would have rallied behind them.

CONCLUSIONS

- 1) Occupation is the only sure means of fighting redundancies.
- 2) The Liverpool events show that grass roots contact with the men must be at all times if a takeover is to be a success.
- 3) GEC-EE workers ought now to be preparing for the future by making contacts at shop floor level, with other GEC plants rather than leaving this linking up to the trade union bureaucrats.

According to a statement issued by a two day conference of GEC-EE shopstewards held in Birmingham recently they are resolved to fight any further redundancies within the group. There is one indisputable fact, that is, sooner or later an occupation will take place.

THE SEED HAS BEEN PLANTED. DON'T JUST WATCH IT GROW. HELP IT.





# SABOTING THE BOSS

Sabotage is a word which fills the hearts of every employer of men with fear. But in many cases it fills the hearts of its perpetrators with laughter, for sabotage as it was described in 1913 is the soul of wit. It is the embodiment of human initiative, the essence of real socialism - self management, the attempt of people who are being systematically exploited and destroyed in the productive machine to create a world in which they can live and laugh again.

Ironically, though, the whole capitalist system of management could not exist without massive 'sabotage' in the form of disobedience on the part of the working man. If for just one day every worker obeyed every single instruction he was given the whole structure of capitalism would collapse, as indeed would half the power stations at present being built if the men employed building them didn't use their own initiative but instead built exactly according to the blue print exactly to the book.

If this 'work to rule' form of sabotage was carried out every where not only the power stations would collapse. The economy would collapse and I am sure many others would collapse in hysterics as the complete and utter irrelevance of management was exposed and revealed for just what it is - the industrial police force without a uniform. People who had never let a smile cross their lips would I am sure roar so loud that even the size 16 boots of management's hired clowns would not be able to kick them back to work for their benefit.

## SABOTAGE AND SELF MANAGEMENT

Unfortunately, though, it is hardly likely that a nationwide laugh-in will sweep the country tomorrow or any day within the foreseeable future. Neither is it possible to create it, for sabotage is a form of direct action whether collective or individual relying on the individual courage and initiative of one man or a group of men. It is also useless for those organisations who wish to control workers whether it be the employers for the of scientific management and profit or the traditional left organisations for the purposes of scientific socialism and self-aggrandisement. It cannot be controlled for sabotage is the attempt of people at the point of production to take control themselves for themselves, with workers' control as the eventual aim.

It is also useless for people to claim that even by talking about sabotage you are inciting people to commit it, since sabotage exists on a massive scale everywhere whether they like it or not. Ford Motor Company alone claim that they lose £20,000 a year through it although the real figure is probably ten times higher. As one person has written of sabotage:

"There can be no injunction against it, no policeman's club, no prison bars, it cannot be starved into submission, it cannot be discharged, it cannot be blacklisted, IT IS PRESENT EVERYWHERE. Like the aircraft that soars high above the clouds in the dead of night beyond the reach of the



beyond the reach of the searchlight and the cannon and drops the deadliest bombs into the enemy's encampment".

### STINK BOMBS OR PETROL BOMBS

Like the bombs from an aircraft perhaps, or like the cinema projectionists in Chicago struggling for better conditions who dropped their deadliest bombs, only this time stink bombs into a surprised audience who had broken a well-publicised boycott. Or like the construction worker who dropped a tennis ball into a joint where there should have been a brearing, or like the engineering workers who dropped emery dust into the joints where there should have been oil, or like the Lyons silk workers who fought their employers long ago by droppping oil onto the finished product, or like the steel workers fighting an inhuman speedup by dropping a lump of iron on the foot of the speeder for, as they said, "Something dropped on their feet often affects their heads!" Like the perpetually misplaced spanner which inevitably turns up in the proverbial works. You could go on for ever. There are as many examples and varieties of "deadliest bombs" as there are different industries as there are different jobs, as there are different degrees of job control.

### VARIATION ON A THEME

Whether it is stink bombs or petrol bombs it should be made clear that working class sabotage does not wish nor attempt to take life. This is the capitalist employers' version of the game, only their game is not so funny.

When a wall collapsed in Birmingham not long ago it was found that the builders had skimped on the foundations - for profit; four men were killed. When Ronan Point fell down it was found its builders had built cheaply and unsafely - for profit; hundreds could have been killed. When a pleasure boat sant at Swanage it was found that the owners had been running an old unsafe boat with inadequate liferafts - for profit; over 50 people were drowned. It has recently been reported that old and mouldy bread is being repacktd and resold for profit; literally millions could be involved - you and me. Two world wars have been fought to protect profit; millions of working men have fought and killed each other. Both the battlefield and the factory floor can testify to the horrible existence of capitalist sabotage.

Working class sabotage does not wish to destroy life. It aims to create it by destroying what is destroying us, by eliminating the vicious form of so called democracy which sanctions legal murder. Let no one criticise any attempt to achieve an end to the slaughter which the employing class have directly or indirectly caused. Sabotage is everyman's weapon, it is everyone's chance to not just hit back but to recreate, to be constructive while being destructive of the desire to profit by the exploitation of other men.

### KNOW YOUR FRIENDS.

Sabotage is criticised, though, and not just by those who you might expect, but from people who are supposed to represent the same aims as ourselves. For example one member of what was at the time described as a degenerate workers' organisation (no prizes for guessing) apparently once



commented, "I don't think sabotage has much political significance it can never be properly organised." That was seven years ago; more recently another dead hand organisation stated,

"There is some suggestion that the amount of industrial sabotage which characterises a particular industry is inversely related to the strength of shop-floor organisation. In tactical terms, then, outbreaks of sabotage might indicate the need for organisational assistance - that is, the sort of assistance which IS typically provides to better organised and apparently more 'political' workers." (We are all deviants now' - Laurie Taylor & Ian Taylor IS Autumn 1968).

I think you can get a better idea of what both these statements mean if you change organisation for control. One represents a crude bureaucratic phobia, and the other sees sabotage as some sort of immaturity or disease. Again, though what both of them represent is a denial of the principle of self-management. By opposing sabotage they are opposing the ability of the mass of working people to take their own destinies into their own hands. The centralist organisations along with the trades unions and along with the employers oppose sabotage simply because it cannot be controlled.

#### SABOTAGE - DESTRUCTION OR PROTECTION?

The popular image of sabotage put out by the capitalist press is one of horror, rape, arson, arsenic in the tea and so on. It is one of violence, destruction, murder. And indeed it may be all of these things, depending on who's playing what version of the game. However, sabotage can more realistically be seen as involving more protection than destruction. Protection against unemployment, protection against victimization, protection against physical deterioration.

When the Luddites smashed the new machines brought in to increase productivity they were only protecting themselves from starvation through unemployment. By letting loose not just with their tongues but with their sledge hammers, too, they initiated albeit a rather crude but not to say outdated form of collective bargaining. With little or no job control, no security, NO POWER, there wasn't much else they could do, but by doing what they did they achieved a form of solidarity previously unheard of. In this case the sabotage was violent, it was destructive, it was a form of sabotage relating to the extent of exploitation and oppression which the textile employers held them in.

But there are other ways. Many other ways. Violence may be needed to meet violence; but in situations where there is a degree of control more subtle methods may be employed. Indeed, forms of sabotage may be employed which rather than being destructive are constructive. If instead of putting all the worst commodities into the product you are making put in the best. This more than anything irritates the boss class since they are interested in quantity of output at the lowest possible cost. To them quality of workmanship is just hinderance.

An example was reported in the Times recently of a 'first-class joiner' sacked by the Essex firm of Ron Scrivener Limited, because according to the



director "The unnecessarily high standards that the man maintained meant that the company could not make his work pay". Refuse to build jerry houses, jerry walls. Refuse to work in unsafe conditions. Refuse to sell bad bread. Go out and tell the world about your firm's trade secrets, tell the world about the shoddy products, the racketeering that goes on where you work. You don't necessarily have to use a sledge hammer: just open your mouth!

In this way you are protecting yourself in the long run and attacking the employer's pocket too. Whether constructive or destructive sabotage hits the most treasured spot of every employer, which contrary to what most people think is not between his legs but slightly to the left and right of that spot - his pocket. Destroy profit, destroy exploitation, and out of it will come something worth living for: a society managed by the people who produce and not by some impotent bureaucrat scratching his pockets in Whitehall. You can, of course, wait for the mythical socialist government, or the new Messiah, or you may still have some hope left for the trade unions to create this. Like the end of the world though, to these people its always coming tomorrow. Join them and you will be saved. On the other hand you could just do it for yourself, JUST FOR LAFFS.

#### I. SABOT

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#### 'THE MINICAB RACKET' (Continued from page 6.)

The boss, running his business without any contract or organisation to restrain him invariably takes on an unlimited number of drivers, ( or fees ) even though he has a very limited amount of work to offer them, the attitude being, when confronted by an angry driver, "if you don't like it - get out." (With no return of fee). It is then that the driver, whatever his background, begins to realise that UNORGANISATION EQUALS EXPLOITATION.

Drivers come from all walks of life but that equation needs no academic backing to figure out and eventually drivers either leave or start to think in terms of correcting the situation.

Inevitably this leads to the conviction that the boss is not indispensable and that collectively the employees could work a more humane and fair system for the benefit of all.

R. Menn.

#### AUTONOMOUS 'SOLIDARITY' GROUPS.

ABERDEEN : c/o P.Roy, 138, Walker Road, Aberdeen.  
CLYDESIDE: c/o D.Kane, 43, Valeview Terr., Dumbarton.  
LONDON (North): c/o H.Russell, 53A Westmoreland Rd, Bromley.  
LONDON (South): c/o A.Mann, 79, Balfour Street, London SE 17.  
LONDON (West) : c/o M.Duncan, 15 Taylors Green, London W3.

A North-West Group has just been started and can be contacted at:- 96, Doreleys Road, Salford. M6 8QW



# AS WE SEE IT

1. Throughout the world, the vast majority of people have no control whatsoever over the decisions that most deeply and directly affect their lives. They sell their labour power while others who own or control the means of production, accumulate wealth, make the laws and use the whole machinery of the State to perpetuate and reinforce their privileged positions.

2. During the past century the living standards of working people have improved. But neither these improved living standards nor the nationalization of the means of production, nor the coming to power of parties claiming to represent the working class have basically altered the status of the worker as worker. Nor have they given the bulk of mankind much freedom outside of production. East and West, capitalism remains an inhuman type of society where the vast majority are bossed at work, and manipulated in consumption and leisure. Propaganda and policemen, prisons and schools, traditional values and traditional morality all serve to reinforce the power of the few and to convince or coerce the many into acceptance of a brutal, degrading and irrational system. The 'Communist' world is not communist and the 'Free' world is not free.

3. The trade unions and the traditional parties of the left started in business to change all this. But they have come to terms with the existing patterns of exploitation. In fact they are now essential if exploiting society is to continue working smoothly. The unions act as middlemen in the labour market. The political parties use the struggles and aspirations of the working class for their own ends. The degeneration of working class organizations, itself the result of the failure of the revolutionary movement, has been a major factor in creating working class apathy, which in turn has led to the further degeneration of both parties and unions.

4. The trade unions and political parties cannot be reformed, 'captured', or converted into instruments of working class emancipation. We don't call however for the proclamation of new unions, which in the conditions of today would suffer a similar fate to the old ones. Nor do we call for militants to tear up their union cards. Our aims are simply that the workers themselves should decide on the objectives of their struggles and that the control and organization of these struggles should remain firmly in their own hands. The forms which this self-activity of the working class may take will vary considerably from country to country and from industry to industry. Its basic content will not.

5. Socialism is not just the common ownership and control of the means of production and distribution. It means equality, real freedom, reciprocal recognition and a radical transformation in all human relations. It is 'man's positive self-consciousness'. It is man's understanding of his environment and of himself, his domination over his work and over such social institutions as he may need to create. These are not secondary aspects, which will automatically follow the expropriation of the old ruling class. On the contrary they are essential parts of the whole process of social transformation, for without them no genuine social transformation will have taken place.



6. A socialist society can therefore only be built from below. Decisions concerning production and work will be taken by workers' councils composed of elected and revocable delegates. Decisions in other areas will be taken on the basis of the widest possible discussion and consultation among the people as a whole. This democratisation of society down to its very roots is what we mean by 'workers' power'.

7. Meaningful action, for revolutionaries, is whatever increases the confidence, the autonomy, the initiative, the participation, the solidarity, the equalitarian tendencies and the self-activity of the masses and whatever assists in their demystification. Sterile and harmful action is whatever reinforces the passivity of the masses, their apathy, their cynicism, their differentiation through hierarchy, their alienation, their reliance on others to do things for them and the degree to which they can therefore be manipulated by others - even by those allegedly acting on their behalf.

8. No ruling class in history has ever relinquished its power without a struggle and our present rulers are unlikely to be an exception. Power will only be taken from them through the conscious, autonomous action of the vast majority of the people themselves. The building of socialism will require mass understanding and mass participation. By their rigid hierarchical structure, by their ideas and by their activities, both social-democratic and bolshevik types of organizations discourage this kind of understanding and prevent this kind of participation. The idea that socialism can somehow be achieved by an elite party (however 'revolutionary'), acting 'on behalf of' the working class is both absurd and reactionary.

9. We do not accept the view that by itself the working class can only achieve a trade union consciousness. On the contrary we believe that its conditions of life and its experiences in production constantly drive the working class to adopt priorities and values and to find methods of organization which challenge the established social order and established pattern of thought. These responses are implicitly socialist. On the other hand, the working class is fragmented, dispossessed of the means of communication, and its various sections are at different levels of awareness and consciousness. The task of the revolutionary organization is to help give proletarian consciousness an explicitly socialist content, to give practical assistance to workers in struggle and to help those in different areas to exchange experiences and link up with one another.

10. We do not see ourselves as yet another leadership, but merely as an instrument of working class action. The function of Solidarity is to help all those who are in conflict with the present authoritarian social structure, both in industry and in society at large, to generalize their experience, to make a total critique of their condition and of its causes, and to develop the mass revolutionary consciousness necessary if society is to be totally transformed.