

FORD

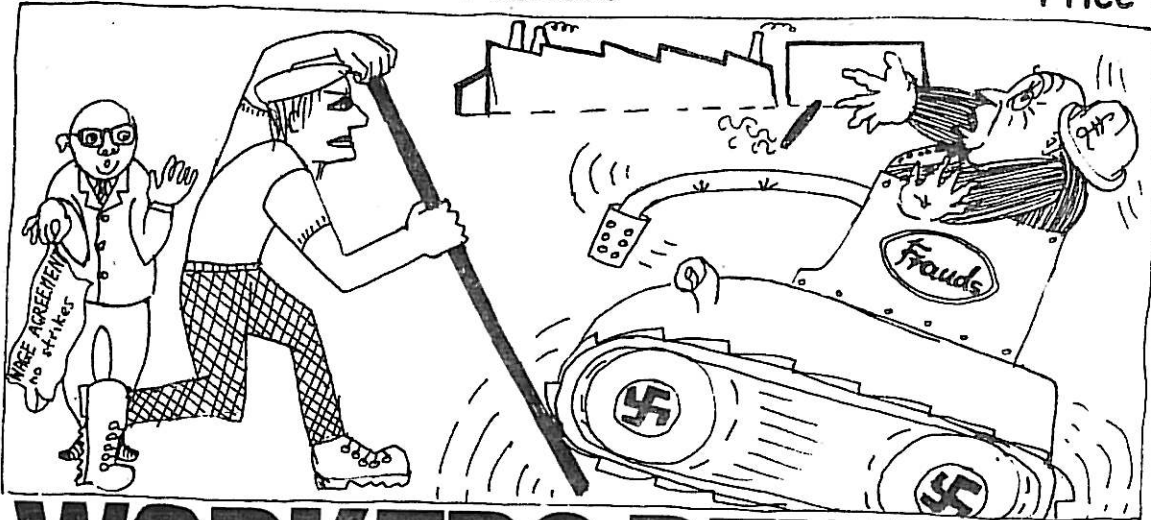
a Big Flame newspaper
produced in London
and Liverpool, with and
for Ford workers.

SPECIAL

No.1

Feb.1973

Price 1p



WORKERS BEWARE!

The battle over the '73 Fords contract has begun, but this time it is obvious that the workers are not just fighting Fords - we are taking on the government wage freeze as well.

What is the freeze and what does it mean for Ford workers ?

THE FREEZE - FORD LEADS THE WAY

We know the freeze only too well - unlike most British workers we've had our own Ford freeze for the past two years. It was forced on us by the Union-Company deal, signed over our heads, which brought the 9-week strike of '71 to its untimely end.

Fords in fact invented the Tory freeze, by their American-style contract agreements with the unions in '69 and '71, backed by penal sanctions, secret ballots, and no-strike clauses for the 2-year period. All this was agreed upon by our Union representatives. While the Unions opposed the Industrial Relations Bill by political "protests", "Non-cooperation" etc, they seem to have been willing to have it enforced on Ford workers, including a company ballot.

Where Fords showed the way, the Tories

have followed. When we look at the policies for Phase 2 and Phase 3 we see all these methods applied at the national level, backed by the Industrial Relations Act. Fords has become the chief testing-ground for Tory "wage restraint" just as it was for Labour's "incomes policy" in '69. The company has been able to dictate to us when we can make a clam - now the state has extended this to the national level, dictating to us how much we can claim as well.

In other words, the Ford freeze has now been forced on the whole of the working class - all increases are to be reduced to 4% : workers must work harder while the buying power of their wages falls. We are all to tighten our belts

THE PRICE THAT WE'LL PAY...

in the 'national interest', until 'later' - ie indefinitely. In the meantime our standard of living is to be cut, to divert capital and goods from home markets to export markets. It is vital for the State to attack working class wages now, to safeguard Ford's and British exporters trading profits with the EEC.

CONT. ON P2 →

● THE CONTRACT IS A FREEZE!

CONT. FROM P.1

What this means for the working class can be shown by our experience at Fords. After 2 years and three so-called pay rises we are now no better off than we were in Feb. '71 while Fords profits and export figures have soared. The cost of living has gone up by more than 20% since then, entrance to the Common Market will bump up food prices even more, as will VAT, while rents, mortgages and rates are all scheduled to have big rises. All this means that we need at least £10 extra basic now, just to keep standing still - and still at the bottom of the carworkers' league.

Freeze means Speed-up

But its not just a question of forcing down the standard of living - rising prices are more of us to work on the assembly lines - with extensive overtime and gruelling shift work to pay off our rents and debts to the credit and mortgage companies. The freeze says nothing about line speeds - there is no freeze on us being forced to work harder. In fact the Tories have gone further - firms now have to justify price increases by showing they have increased productivity on the backs of the workers. For the working class this means longer hours and harder work for a lower standard of living: that is why we are fighting for a 35 hr week paid 40 - more money for less work.

HOW TO BEAT IT

The Ford workers defeated the Labour incomes policy in '69 - we can defeat the Tory freeze in '73.

How? We cannot fight this struggle by leaving it to the trade-union leadership and gentlemanly sparring around the negotiating table. The freeze has reduced union wage-bargaining to a farce - a set-piece confrontation where the result is decided in advance by the state. What can the unions do? They are so scared of a battle with the state that the official Ford claim doesn't even mention the freeze. The unions can only hope for an agreement with the company pretending that the government freeze isn't there!

Against the State

Yet Fords will not give in and break the Freeze without a battle royal. After all, Ford are committed to the Freeze. Not only did they invent, THEY HAVE ALSO INVESTED £132m IN IT, as a vote of confidence in the power of the British State to hold 'their' workers down - forcing productivity increases up and wage increases down for the foreseeable future.

Any move we make against Fords is a move against the state. The bosses and the state will stand united when it comes to teaching the workers a lesson, because the political stakes are too high.

Let there be no mistake - Fords and Heath will be hand in glove and any move we make against Fords is a move against the state. The Tories and Fleet Street have prepared the ground with a campaign of lies about the 'selfishness' of 'highly-paid' workers who hold the country to ransom. They have also cleverly left a loop-hole in the freeze for the lower-paid, a hypocritical gesture to show how 'socially responsible' they are, to divide the workers, and to allow the unions at least some semblance of bargaining power to keep them in business.

THE WAY TO WIN

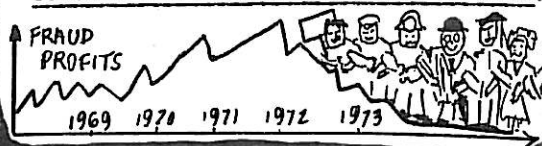
It is clear that this battle cannot be fought by the old methods and the old leadership.

● The Union-style stay-at-home strike on the 1971 model is out. It is just not adequate to the situation. Besides, the company will not simply 'cave in' - 1971 Fords world profits were at a record height even after the 65-day UK strike.

● We cannot fight Fords alone. We must learn from the Miners, who broke the norm last year, the railwaymen who broke the secret ballot, and the Dockers, who smashed the Act. We must spread the struggle by direct action to link up with the gasworkers' action against the freeze, the health-workers' action, the miners' action, and the low-paid civil servants, besides bringing out the Vauxhall workers whose present claim depends on the outcome of the Ford struggle. Last but not least, we must close Fords and all its outlets 100%.

We are not alone!

● Above all our struggle does not begin and end with the '73 contract. The contract is a freeze, a way of timing our struggle according to the bosses interest. The Unions not only accept this stage-managed timing, they are part and parcel of the deal, and make it binding. We can only break Fords and win our demands in the longer run by continuous struggle to impose our own timing on the bosses. This means, now and in the future, the organisation of our own action at rank & file level, linking our struggle against the organisation of work at Fords with that of other workers and with the struggles in the estates and communities where we live.



HALEWOOD

We ask all Ford workers to read the account printed here about recent events at Halewood. We have written this letter so that workers in other parts of the Ford combine know exactly what has been happening here.

The Convener and the senior stewards pretend they never heard the suggestions.

The Body Plant works on, but management is forced to offer a line-speed of 35 in place of the normal 67:

THURSDAY 4th JANUARY - B Shift

The Convener of the PTA only informs the stewards of what's been going on at midday, and no recommendation for any action is discussed. In the Body Plant, the Engine Compartment roundabout is working to rule because management moved 1 man.

THURSDAY 4th JANUARY - A Shift

Nobody from the PTA turns up to work. At 10.15 pm, the Body Plant walks out in solidarity with the Engine Compartment B Shift, despite the fact that the management had offered a line speed of 19.

FRIDAY 5th JANUARY

Mass meeting at Liverpool Stadium of both Shifts of the PTA plant. The Body Plant doesn't attend the meeting, but nobody turns up to work. The platform moves a recommendation that the men go back to work on unchanged conditions. The meeting is conducted by the Convener with the sole purpose of settling at any cost, by playing one Shift against the other.

Maguire, the PTA Convener, later said at a Union branch meeting that in his opinion the lines were overmanned anyway, and the Company should have had the right to move men 12 months ago!

Anyway, at the mass meeting a lot of people heckle and boo all the way through. In the end the motion is carried by a slight majority of 60%-40%. Most militants are disgusted. They call it a sellout. Everybody agrees that the action will start again the following Monday.

MONDAY 8th JANUARY - Night Shift

The Trim lines decide not to work one car out of every 4. Another section starts to work to rule. The Engine Compartment start doing a speed of 19.

Tuesd

TUESDAY 9th JANUARY - Night Shift

The women on the Soft Trim walk out. The issue is not clear, because it's very difficult to get inside that section.

WEDNESDAY 10th JANUARY

In the Body Plant one bloke is harassed by the Foreman. He puts the Foreman on the floor and thumps him in the face. The GF comes around, but runs away when he's offered the same treatment. By now, management are so worried that they only give the man 2 days suspension for this act!

In the Engine Compartment, the Deputy Convener asks the men to go back to the normal speed (67 instead of 19) and is told politely to Fuck Off out of the Section. The story does not end here. We could go on and on.....

Cont.
regulation; sacking of militants. The Shopfloor, trying to resist, often showing its strength, sometimes going onto the offensive, and, like at the beginning of January, showing more and more how the struggle on the shop floor is directly political, and how the inter-



ests of bosses and those of the workers are directly opposed. The Stewards' Organisation, usually trailing behind the men for a while, waiting for the right moment to sell them out, to reach an agreement, to make sure that PRODUCTION KEEPS GOING AT ALL COSTS.

POLICE?

We must not be misunderstood here: we are not saying that all stewards are bent. In Halewood there are some militant stewards, some socialist ones, even some revolutionaries. But we are saying that the structure and the organisation of the stewards do not represent the interests of the workers; that they act as Policemen over the rank and file; and that the few good ones have no room for manoeuvre at all inside the Committees.

We are saying that the structure of Negotiations and Procedure ties the steward to the point where his function becomes almost exclusive-ly to CHANNEL THE STRUGGLES

OF THE SHOP FLOOR TOWARDS MEETING THE PRODUCTION NEEDS OF THE BOSS.

When workers on the Trim Line have a stoppage against speed-up, or against safety hazards, or for any other reason, it usually means that they can't keep up with the pace...that they are fed up...that they reject the organisation of work. But what do we see then?

THE WET BLANKET

The steward goes down the line which has stopped, and says: "What's the problem lads? I'll settle this one", and then goes up to the office to negotiate with management (under the condition that the men start working again!). He puts himself as a go-between..and takes the real pressure - ie the workers' anger - off the boss's back. His function is to prevent stoppages and keep the line moving at all costs. And while he's NEGOTIATING, the workers carry on SWEATING as before!

This is true even if the steward has the best intentions in the world, if he is a good trade unionist, or even a revolutionary.

Remember this.....?

AS FORD'S Halewood workers straggled back to work on Merseyside last week, Mr Tim Fortescue, Conservative M.P. for Garston, captured newspaper headlines with charges of "regular and organised drunkenness at work, and theft and resale of company property." Are the charges true?

Idleness: Mr Fortescue has suggested that Halewood is so slackly run that the men can take time off to play football. It is true they sometimes kick a football around the plant grounds and if you pass the main gate at 10.30 am you are likely to see this. But that is the time when the morning shift takes its break; and who doesn't play football on Merseyside when he gets half-a-minute free?

Anything more than that would be virtually impossible. Under Ford's measured day-work system, every man's job is timed so he knows exactly how much he must do each hour—say the number of wheels he has to bolt into place. The men are closely supervised and their work is interdependent. If one man idles the next man down the line soon complains.

It was also claimed that time-clocks had been deliberately damaged. (Ford says it is difficult to tell whether these clocks have broken down, worn out or been smashed on purpose.) Mr Fortescue was worried, too, that some shop stewards do not have to work at their trades. (It is normal Ford practice to allow conveners—Halewood has three—to devote themselves full-time to union activities.) Ha Ha!!

APRIL 11th 1971

WE HAVE DESCRIBED THE ACTIONS TAKEN BY WORKERS AT HALEWOOD OVER FORD'S ATTEMPTS TO RE-ALLOCATE MEN. WE HAVE WON BACK FOR OURSELVES THE STRENGTH THAT WE LOST IN 1971. NOW WE'VE GOT 2 CHOICES - EITHER WE CONFRONT FORD & THE FREEZE, OR WE ACCEPT A REAL WAGE-CUT. AND EITHER WE TRAIL ALONG BEHIND THE UNIONS OR WE TAKE OUR OWN FIGHT INTO OUR OWN HANDS!!



Since the 1971 strike all the increases we have won have been eroded by inflation and the increased cost of living. It has been impossible for even the most organised sections of workers to keep pace with the price of food, transport, rent, rates and mortgages. The bosses have organised, with the help of the State, an attack on two fronts: in the factories where we work and in the communities where we live. **INFLATION IS ORGANISED TO EAT UP EVERY WAGE INCREASE WE WIN IN THE FACTORIES.**

● OUR FIGHT IS ON 2 FRONTS: FACTORY AND COMMUNITY

All council rents are increased by a £1 initially. This will be followed by 3 yearly increases of £1 to bring these rents up to what the government and property speculators regard as a "fair" rent. Attached to this is a rebate scheme. This means that the 'lower paid' (people with an income lower than £20) can collect rebates on the new increased rent. This has meant that the 'higher' paid are split from the 'lower' paid, because the State is trying to make 'higher' paid workers - who don't receive rebates; - subsidise the cost of housing of lower paid workers - who do get the rebates. We'd be naive to think that the Tories aren't well aware that this is a way of dividing the working class. Let alone the drastic effect this has in reducing the value of our wages. The response has been partial or total rent strikes throughout the country, particularly in traditional working class areas like Manchester, Merseyside, Clydebank, S. Wales and parts of London.

Unfortunately it is now apparent that rent strikes are collapsing except in the most militant areas. But it is a great step when we start organising in our communities. This means that we are fighting the total way in which the bosses and the state try to control our material needs, the spending of our wage packets in the communities and the earning of them in the factories. The failure of many rent strikes occurs when the link up between struggles in the factory and the community, between the work that we put in and the spending of our wages, hasn't been made forcibly enough. Successful rent strikes have always been backed by action in the factories. The 1915 rent strike organised by the women of Clydeside was backed by a threat of a general strike in the munitions factories. The government caved in immediately and reduced the rents.

Halewood Walkout

On Monday 6 October 1972 31 men walked out of the PTA plant at Ford Halewood to join a demonstration of Liverpool families against the "Fair Rents Act". Fords were scared of this kind of action. The men got the sack on Monday afternoon and were scattered over

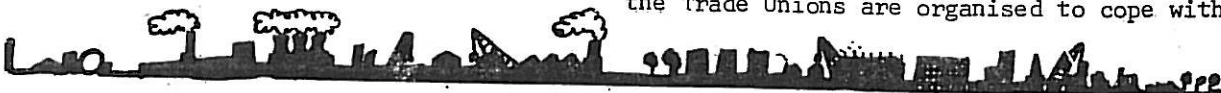
the plant when they were re-employed on Tuesday. Ford prevented many other workers from joining the march by threatening wholesale sackings at the PTA mass meeting. Fords wants people to think that the question of rents is a quite separate 'political' issue that has nothing to do with workers lives in the factory. Fords realises that actions that take the workers struggle into the community present a direct political threat. They are scared of these connections being made by us.

Halewood and Rents

The 31 were isolated because they turned work-time into support against rent rises. They understand where their interests are, but other Ford workers didn't. The women on the estate organised the rent strike at Halewood, because it's they who have to cope with the struggle to get enough. They understand the meaning of inflation. They know what is happening to the prices of food in the shops. The men often said: "Oh pay it, here's another pound", but what's the use of fighting for wage increases if you don't fight the hands that pluck them back. Into one pocket and out of another! The workers who walked out to join the march understood that the rent struggle IS A DIFFERENT FRONT OF THE WAGE STRUGGLE. RENTS ARE AN ATTACK ON OUR WAGE! Rents, mortgages and rates are all different ways of making us pay for the same commodity. Even if you don't face the Rent Act you are tied to the assembly line, and gruelling hours of overtime to pay off interest to the bosses in HP and other forms of credit.

END THE DIVISIONS!

THE ONLY FAIR RENT IS NO RENT! The battle over rising rents is a never ending one. A trap that we've got to break out of. Accepting we only have a right to what we earn will prevent us having what we produce. This will weaken our fight because it will split the working class into producers and consumers, separating the women in the communities from the men in the factories AND KEEPING US WORKING AND PAYING FOR WHAT WE SHOULD HAVE FREE. But this already moves the struggle far beyond what the Trade Unions are organised to cope with.



KILL YOUR WORK RECORD - get a job with Henry Ford

FORDS DAGENHAM - a big recruitment drive is going on, in the press and on TV. They have been recruiting outside football grounds, with Labour exchanges all over the South-East, and even as far away as Liverpool - wherever factory closures have filled the double queues.

Why? Fords' assembly-lines are a violent place to work. Fords need robots who can be used and then kicked aside - most workers would avoid working there if they could do better. No wonder Fords are desperate.

BLACKS FIGHT BACK

Henry Ford was a pioneer in the techniques of using black labour in Detroit - But 'Motown' blacks are today fucking up Fords, GM and the rest. At Dagenham, as line speeds increased so

immigrants were sucked in - Fords expected a docile, passive black work force which would say "Yes, Boss!" But today we are showing the whitey boss-pigs.

We are showing the bosses that we intend to get a good wage - if he wants to make bread off our backs. Formerly, in the days of slavery, Whitey used the whip, ganja and opium to drive us tamely to work. Today the wage is the whip, not only at Fords but everywhere where Black men work. The wage is backed by the whip of the police, local councils, and the state with its immigration controls. They are trying to turn us into boss-men all the fucking time.

NO DIVIDE AND RULE

Ford policy of divide and rule is breaking down everywhere. Dividing West Indians from Indian and Pakistanis has proved a dead loss. Indian workers showed what they felt in October when they walked out of the Engine Plant at Dagenham - they showed that when we want something, we don't go through procedures - and they won their 20 minutes relief time.

Now the immigration flow has been stopped Fords are trying to recruit workers displaced from closed factories. They are trying to profit from unemployment. They want sheep - with a "good work record". But what they are going to get, given the mind-bending conditions of work

Work for it!

Whatever you want—it takes money. But if you really want it—it's worth working for. Ford men work hard. And play hard. But every week they take home the sort of pay packet that brings a smile to the toughest face.

£35.93 is the average earnings to start—that includes shift premium. Overtime and service rate increases make it worth more. There are other benefits too!

You should preferably have experience of a paced moving assembly line. Plus a first class

work record to prove your staying power. Over 18, really fit and willing to work shifts. If you live within easy travelling distance of Dagenham, come and talk it over and see whether you have the makings of a Ford man.

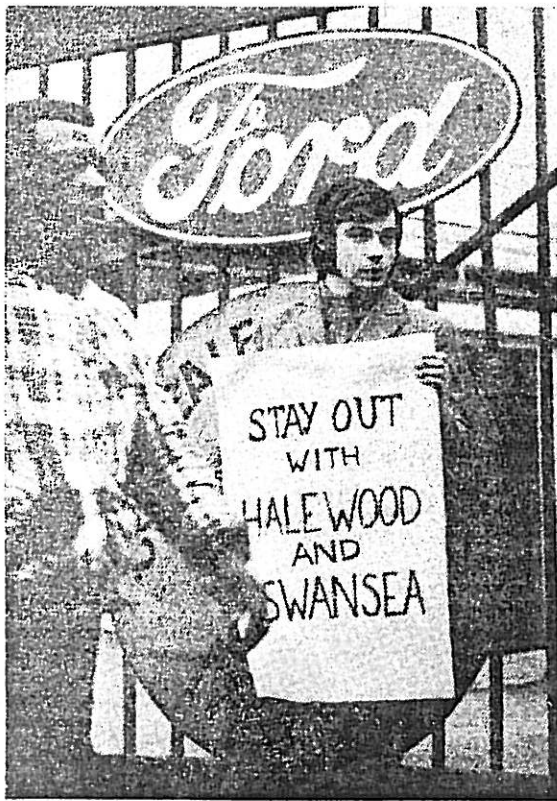
Apply now to your nearest Employment Exchange or in writing to the Employment Centre, Room 6/1205, Ford Motor Co. Ltd., Dagenham.



they force on us - is wolves up their asses. A good work record means nothing on the line. No wonder that many raw recruits take their cards and clear off. Because the violence that we experience in our ghetto-like neighbourhoods plus the violence of Fords is more than we can take

A Black Worker

A LETTER FROM FORDS



Our strength vs. Ford & the Unions

The events of the past month at Halewood reflect exactly what's been happening here since the end of the 9 week strike in 1971. And at the same time they help to clarify the position of management, the shop floor and the stewards' organisation during this period.

HALEWOOD - Henry's Headache

In recent years the Halewood plant has been the one which has created the biggest problems for Ford Europe. By the end of the big strike it was clear to Fords that they had to deal somehow with the situation at the 3 Merseyside plants. Their purpose was to smash completely the shop floor organisation, as they had succeeded in doing at Dagenham in 1962, when they sacked 17 stewards. So, for 6 weeks after the return to work, management kept on provoking dispute after dispute in order to test the strength of the shop floor - to see if the workers could be crushed without having to resort to open War. But for 6 weeks the response of the Halewood workers was fantastic determination and militancy... they resisted Ford and said: "We shall not be provoked." This period is generally known as the "Aftermath". Then, when this policy failed, management had to turn to open confrontation.

JOHN DILLON

John Dillon, a militant socialist shop steward in the Paint Shop, was sacked. If Halewood workers had sat back and let this happen, Dagenham '62 would have been repeated all over again: there were rumours that Ford had a list of another 7 men to be victimised.

But again, between the 9th and 22nd of June '71 the shop floor displayed an immense strength. And at this point Ford management realised that the best way to deal with the situation was to try and have

TUESDAY 2nd JANUARY - A Shift - 10.30pm

The Escort Trim lines sit in, in response to management's decision to take 4 men off the lines. The same night, the White Lines in the Body Plant stage a march thro' the Press Shop, chanting: "Out! Out!" The Press Shop joins in the action, out of solidarity.

The issue is mobility of labour - ie the Management's right to move men around and split up sections. The response, the tactics and the feeling of the men are unprecedented: "A lot of anger and determination," says a militant from the Capri Trim lines... "I've never seen anything like this since the John Dillon strike," says another from the White Lines.

The events of the 2 following weeks confirm what both men say. The militancy and rebellion of workers at Halewood has shown itself in many ways, but the message is single and clear: the Rank and File at Halewood is ready to start a new phase of the struggle against Ford: - the fight for at least a £10 increase; the 35-hour week; and full lay-off pay, against the Freeze and against the Government.

WEDNESDAY 3rd JANUARY - A Shift - 9.45pm

The PTA holds a meeting at the start of the Shift. The men are clear: no return to work until everybody is reinstated. The Convener doesn't want to put any vote to the floor, but also he doesn't dare recommend a return to work. The men want to bring out the Transmission Plant, and want to organise a picket of the B Shift for the following morning.

the stewards on their side - as well as the Trade Union bureaucracies, who they've already got!

TGWU - Tricky Tactics!

There was one new factor that helped them immensely in this new policy - THE FACT THAT JACK JONES WAS STARTING TO PUT A LOT OF PRESSURE ON STEWARDS TO CARRY OUT THE DECISIONS EVEN IF THEY WERE AGAINST THE WISHES OF THE MEN.

The TGWU was in fact starting to operate a policy of discipline and control over their members, which was to become clear in the scab way they handled the dockers' strike in the summer of '72.

The negotiations for the reinstatement of John Dillon gave Ford management a chance to use their new policy of softening up the stewards. They wanted cooperation. And finally John Dillon was reinstated... but not in his old section, and his credentials as steward were taken away from him.

Since that time, Management have sacked many militants (but no stewards!), and have always had the backing of the Convener and most stewards in this policy.

THE ROLE OF STEWARDS

From then on, History has repeated itself continuously at Halewood: -

Management, trying to make up the lost production at any cost; impossible line speeds; safety hazards; the tightest supervision; a Company policy of continued moving of men without a thought for any



Social Security & Strikers

By now most workers know that when we're on strike, we are entitled to claim SOCIAL SECURITY money. Your steward should have informed you of the full details of the full amount that you're entitled to claim, and how to go about getting it. HOWEVER, IN RECENT STRIKES IT'S A KNOWN FACT THAT FORD WORKERS HAVE NEVER WON THE FULL AMOUNT THEY'RE ENTITLED TO!

Union Strike Pay

One reason for this is that many workers still see the Union strike fund as the only source of money during a strike. This was the case as recently as 1966, when strikers only claimed a few £ thousands off the SS .. But since 1971 the situation has changed a lot, because in 1971 the Government brought in a new law - the Social Security Act - WHICH DEDUCTS ALL UNION STRIKE PAY AND TAX REBATES ABOVE £1 FROM OUR SOCIAL SECURITY. From that time, whenever a Union pays out strike pay, it's been knocked off our SS money .. so we end up paying the State! The clear answer to this is that the Unions should never pay out strike pay, except in cases of hardship.



For instance, in the 1972 Miners Strike, the Mineworkers' Union paid no strike pay. Instead they used the strike fund to pay the expenses of pickets, and to make payments to strikers in hardship. The building workers did the same ... but during the Dock strike, last summer, the TGWU said that by its rules it was forced to pay out strike pay - to the Government. But Liverpool dockers had a better idea. They demanded that no strike pay be paid until after the strike, and this enabled them to claim SS money. THIS IS WHAT FORD WORKERS SHOULD DEMAND OFF THE TGWU. This way

ANSWER: An SS manager faced with 200 angry Ford workers determined to get their money

it can't be deduced from Social Security money. Union strike funds are not unlimited, and should only be paid to those who can't get social security.

Claimants Unions..

At the same time as strikers have been hitting back at the Government's strike-breaking rules, other sections of people claiming Social Security - unemployed people, OAPs, sick people, single parents and all those who depend on State benefits to live - have been organising themselves into CLAIMANTS UNIONS all over the country, getting together to fight for their rights, and demanding a decent GUARANTEED MINIMUM INCOME for all people whether working or not. THE IDEA OF ORGANISING IN ORDER TO FIGHT THE SS HAS SPREAD AND IN MANY PLACES WORKERS ON STRIKE HAVE ORGANISED THEIR OWN STRIKE CLAIMANTS UNIONS.

...and Strike CU's

The lesson is that if we want to get our money off the SS when we strike, we've got to ORGANISE. If we don't it means that we go down to the SS offices one by one, to be confused by the Bureaucrats and fobbed off with pennies. The answer is that we've got to act together. We've got to learn what we're entitled to claim, and go down with our workmates in strength, to support each other and make sure that we get it.

We haven't got space here to deal with everything that can be claimed off the SS by strikers. However this week people from the London Claimants Unions have been giving out leaflets at the gates, explaining what Ford workers are entitled to.

There's also a book called CLAIMANTS HANDBOOK FOR STRIKERS which is a clear straightforward account of the Social Security and how to organise to get it. It will be on sale at the gates, or can be obtained from East London Claimants Union at Dame Colet House, Ben Johnson St. E.1. TEL. 790-3887

We know how Ford management try to divide workers up - section against section, shift against shift. The Social Security likes to treat strikers in the same way - insisting that they only deal with claims individually. They know that on our own we are weak. No striker should ever be interviewed on their own. NEVER MEET THE SS ALONE. Everyone is entitled to be represented at the SS OFFICE - so take a mate along .. or even better, a lot of mates.



Mass Tactics!

This is the old story. Ford and the SS are the same - when they're forced to face a mass of angry workers, they're scared shitless and quite often they will give in. The way they prefer it is to have individual stewards NEGOTIATING for individual workers. If Ford and the Government set up special strike claiming centres near the Plant, for this strike, there's a danger that the Union Bureaucrats will step in and try to negotiate everything by SWEET REASON. BUT SWEET REASON DOESN'T WORK WITH THE SS!! This happened in recent strikes - the SS management tries to pick out a couple of people and deals with them, negotiating over the heads of the other strikers - the same way that Ford does. They con them with sweet talking, and the strikers fail to get what they want. MASS TACTICS ARE THE ONLY WAY!

THE 1973 FORD WAGE CLAIM

what's in it for Ford workers?

All are agreed, from Jack Jones down, that the Trade Unions have not always acted "in the best interests of the workers" - the secret ballot that ended the Ford '71 strike was just rather an extreme case! From this point of view, it's worth taking a closer look at some of the points in the Union 1973 Ford Wage Claim...whose side are they really on?

● They welcome Ford investment in the UK - but every worker knows that new investment INCREASES THE INTENSITY OF WORK, with machinery that forces more effort and output per worker.

● What investment has meant for Dagenham in recent years can be seen in the Engine Plant, with line speeds of one engine every 28 seconds.

● They guarantee "high levels of plant utilisation" thro' shift work, putting the production needs of Ford before our need for a social life.

● They would like to make line-work "more creative", by bringing the "human factor" into management techniques, COOPERATING with the Company on work-study, quality control, reducing absenteeism and labour turnover....Ignoring the fact that Fords didn't even ought to exist!

● They call for "mutuality". What this means in practice is shown by recent Ford moves to form a Committee with the Unions on line speeds. As one General Foreman said:

"Once we get mutuality of line-speeds agreed, people will have to do work stands. Ford likes mutuality, and the GF from Woolwich said it!

● It's all very well for the Unions to claim that the Co. can "afford" to pay the wage increases we want without going bust. Of course they can...and many times over! Anyway, who cares about Ford's profits - that's THEIR concern!

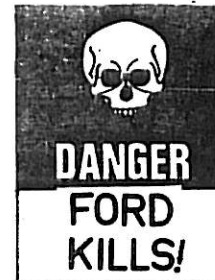
● They accept that Ford is entitled to a "fair" profit - provided Ford workers are given some "reward" for effort. Never a word about a multi-million, multi-national Ford that ought to be hit for every penny it has! But when all's said and done, the main thing wrong with the TUs' Claim is that THEY'RE NOT ANGRY..AND WE ARE!

WHAT IS BIG FLAME?

Big Flame is a group of revolutionary workers and students, independent of traditional socialist Left organisations. We publish a paper and we are active in several Merseyside factories. We are actively involved in rent strikes and in womens' action groups in the communities.

We believe that the rank and file has to initiate and organise its own actions, creating direct links between factory and community struggles. The needs of the struggle today mean that it cannot be left to Trade Unions and their shop-floor representatives, however "democratic". We believe that

contacts between rank and file workers in Ford plants is essential. As a part of this development we have produced this newspaper.



For the immediate future, we plan to do 2 things : 1) meetings will be arranged between people from Halewood, Dagenham and other Ford plants. 2) We hope that a regular paper will be produced from Halewood with contributions from other plants.

Contact us if you want to be kept informed of meetings or wish to help with the paper, provide information or want further copies. If you want to make sure of receiving this information etc, write to us, or speak to the people distributing this paper.

London: c/o 79c, Anerley Rd.
S.E. 20.

Liverpool: 22 Woburn Hill
051-220-5223.



A FULL ANALYSIS OF FORD AND THE UNIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM US IN THE NEAR FUTURE. A COPY WILL BE SENT FREE TO ANYONE WHO WANTS IT.