

HALEWOOD CARRIES ON THE FIGHT

In the face of vicious press smears against Halewood workers, the Parity fight goes on. The press don't know what they're talking about - they just carry out the wishes of Henry Ford. As for Tim Fortescue, he's just a Tory fat head doing what comes naturally.

If Halewood stays solid, and no matter what other Ford workers do, we've got them over a barrel. Fords can't sell cars without gear-boxes, and we're not making them, are we? We are in a very strong position. We can decide what to do from that position of strength.

WHY JONES & SCANLON DID THE DIRTY

The way some people go on you'd think this was the first sell-out in history rather than the thousandth. Some surprise is understandable in this case. Agreed. Jones and Scanlon WERE the great Left hope - the so-called leaders of the fight against the Bill.

But left or right, there's one thing you can be fairly sure of - give a union leader the chance to lead a strike and he'll sell it short. THAT'S THE RULE RATHER THAN THE EXCEPTION. It happens so often that people who still go on saying:

Well, Scanlon's gone bad now, but put a more reliable left winger in his place and we'll be OK. are just deluding themselves.

What we say is, it's not the individual, it's the whole set-up that goes wrong.

Why is this?

Since the last war, shop floor organisation has grown stronger because when there's high employment workers' strength is that much greater. BUT THE POWER OF THE RANK AND FILE HAS INCREASED AT THE COST OF THE BOSSES AND THE TRADE UNION OFFICIALS. So, to a degree, employers and officials have been drawn together by a common aim - to put the shop floor back in its place.

Few trade union leaders see things in class terms. Often they have more in common with the employers they negotiate with than with their members. He may have risen from the shop floor but what does that mean when he's forgotten what it is to work nights in a factory and when he lives in a middle class suburb far from the average worker. So his ideas move closer to those of the people he's most in contact with, the bosses and the politicians.

When have you ever heard an official say

Whenever something goes wrong the working class bears the brunt. We're the only ones who have to tighten our belts. Without the freedom to withdraw his labour a man is a slave who depends on his employer's charity.

Never - and it's no coincidence. They don't see things that way.

WHAT CAN BE DONE

This strike and the sell-out has shown that Ford workers have got to fight their own battles. They have to take on the Bill and the Tories. The TUC has given up the fight and Jones and Scanlon want to bring in the Bill before Heath does (secret ballots, going over the heads of stewards etc). Unemployment and the Bill directly affect you. Nobody else can be relied on to fight your fight. The only Union that counts now is the one on the shop floor - the one that is controlled by the rank and file. Not the one in London handing out 'instructions'.

If you can face the hard truth that the only genuine leaders will come out of the factories and offices, there are two things that you can do now:

- 1 begin plant or section bulletins. They'll print the truth about Fords and about this society and put the view of the working class. They'll also be a way of bringing together the militants who think like you.
- 2 Make contacts with militants throughout the Ford combine, on Merseyside, and elsewhere.

We'll help with both if asked.

ABOUT BIG FLAME

Some Ford workers have asked us why we keep handing out these leaflets and why we have given our help, however limited it may be.

We are a group of revolutionary socialists who support the interests of all workers, as against those of the employers. We support the fight for better wages and conditions, for better housing and social services; we oppose rising prices and unemployment. We believe that all the problems that workers face are due to the workings of capitalist society, in which a small group of bosses and politicians control everything in their own interests and against the interests of the vast majority. So, we are not just fighting for an improvement of certain things, but for complete workers' control of society.

Our main aim is for workers to organise THEMSELVES and not to be controlled or manipulated from the outside by union bureaucrats or professional politicians. WE DON'T CLAIM TO BE YET ANOTHER POLITICAL LEADERSHIP BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THAT THE WORKING CLASS CAN AND MUST PROVIDE ITS OWN LEADERSHIP INSIDE THE FACTORIES AND THE COMMUNITY. WE HAVE IDEAS AND SKILLS. That's our contribution.

Many of our leaflets have been written together with Ford workers and we would like this to go on. We want to work increasingly closely with you, producing broadsheets and leaflets, factory bulletins and newspapers - especially on the question of unemployment, rising prices and the Bill.

We'd like to know what you think about bringing out again BIG FLAME, the fortnightly rank and file paper for Merseyside.

If you're generally in agreement with what we're doing, and saying, contact us at 639 5448.