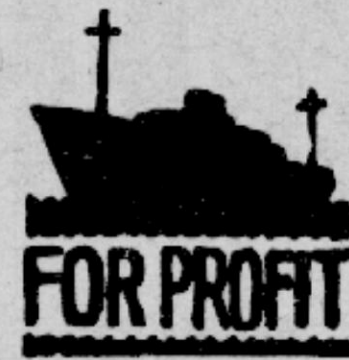


PAK-O-LIES

Free copies of Pak-o-Lies are obtainable from Liverpool Free Communications Group, c/o 32 Aigburth Drive, Liverpool 17.



Pak-o-Lies is an occasional pamphlet dedicated to exposing unsavoury goings-on at the Daily Post and Echo.

We feel the articles in it deserve wider circulation, so here are a few items from the latest edition of Pak-o-Lies, plus some new material which has not been published before.

We would like to thank the Pak-o-Lies people for supplying background information about the Post and Echo which we have used in other parts of this paper.



The picture the Echo didn't print

AJAXED!

MERSEYSIDE CONSUMERS, always given a raw deal by their local morning and evening newspapers, have been sold short again by the Liverpool Echo.

The Consumer Council was about to be axed when Echo feature writers John Perkins and Moya Jones noticed some anomalies in supermarket special offers.

They found, for example, that five similar tins of Ajax cleanser were fetching ludicrously different prices at shops within a few hundred yards of each other. Further investigations revealed that many more 'bargains'—on goods ranging from tea to toothpaste—were phoney.

With the demise of the Consumer Council just around the corner, they thought this would be an apt time to probe the price fiddles on behalf of the many thousands of shoppers who dutifully buy the Echo every day.

An admirable plan, indeed. But the would-be-watchdogs failed to appreciate that the Echo loves shops... and hates shoppers. Given the choice between the stores and the consumer, the Echo will always plump for the stores.

The reason? Simply that the stores buy plenty of advertising space in the Echo—the five biggest spend upwards of £70,000 a year each. The fact that the shoppers are also the readers who fork out over £10,000 a day for their copies of the Echo just doesn't count.

John Perkins and Moya Jones spent some considerable time searching for examples of special offers that weren't. They found plenty.

Misleading Offers

Tins of Ajax which weighed exactly the same—1lb 2oz—cost different prices in different shops. Identical tins marked at 2d off cost 1s 1d and 1s 5d. Tins each costing 1s 1d were marked at 2d off and 3d off. And a tin marked '1/2lb free' in fact contained no more powder than the other tins and cost 1s 5d.

The writers unearthed more misleading offers on Vim, Fairy Snow, Persil, Omo, various unnamed brands of soap and toothpaste and Typhoo and PG Tips tea.

When they wrote up their copy, they took the line any conscientious journalist would have taken. They said the shopper was faced with a deliberate prices jungle, which she could never hope to hack her own way through.

They attacked manufacturers and stores for not displaying the recommended retail prices on which the so-called bargains were allegedly based. And they made a strong case for a simplification of the special offer system.

When they'd finished, their copy was a fair and accurate indictment of the

way stores fleece the innocent housewife. They needn't have bothered. They should have known how Echo editorial executives and management would take it.

The story had to be rewritten to pander to the advertisers. After a long struggle with a reluctant Moya Jones and John Perkins, the introduction was re-angled in such a way as to take the heat off the stores.

The re-styled intro, as it appeared in the Echo, read: 'Everywhere the housewife turns today she is faced with bargains and special offers. For the woman who has the time to shop around, the bargain offers can ease the strain on the family budget.'

'But one of the big difficulties for the shopper these days is deciding which, precisely, are the better bargains when faced with a situation where manufacturers are pushing hard for her business...'

And so the intro dragged on—equivocal, spineless, boring. The original graphic pictures of the five fiddled Ajax tins was dropped.

Good Buys?

Of all the ridiculous headings to choose, the final version picked on was an enormous GOOD BUYS, followed by a second heading reading: 'But how can you tell the best?'

The features editor, acting on orders of the Echo editor, with management pulling the strings, had succeeded in taking all the guts out of the story.

Once more, the Echo had cheated the shopper and the advertiser had triumphed.

Make the money go

Suspiciously soon after the Ajax expose by Pak-o-Lies the Echo began a weekly 'Home Page' purporting to help consumers 'make the money go further'. Make the readers' money go, certainly—but into the coffers of the big stores, the Echo's best advertisers. To save you spending 3p on the Echo here are some examples of things the Home Page does to make readers waste their money:

1 Each week certain items are selected as 'bargain buys'. The list is obtained by ringing up a wholesaler and asking him what he recommends. Or to put it another way, finding out what he wants to get rid of.

In fact this kind of 'bargain' picking is of no use whatever to a housewife who wants to give her family as much nourishment as possible for as little money as possible. Among the bargains one week, for example, were small avocados at 12p each. Which may be cheap for avocados, but it's still ridiculously expensive as a way to feed a family.

2 There's another section called 'Give yourself a treat'. This lists things the shops wish you had the

STOP THE PRESSES!

STOP PRESS
Spring is here

Spring came to Behington this morning, according to bird lover Miss Carol Bibby, aged 20, who heard her first cuckoo of the year shortly after 6.30 a.m.

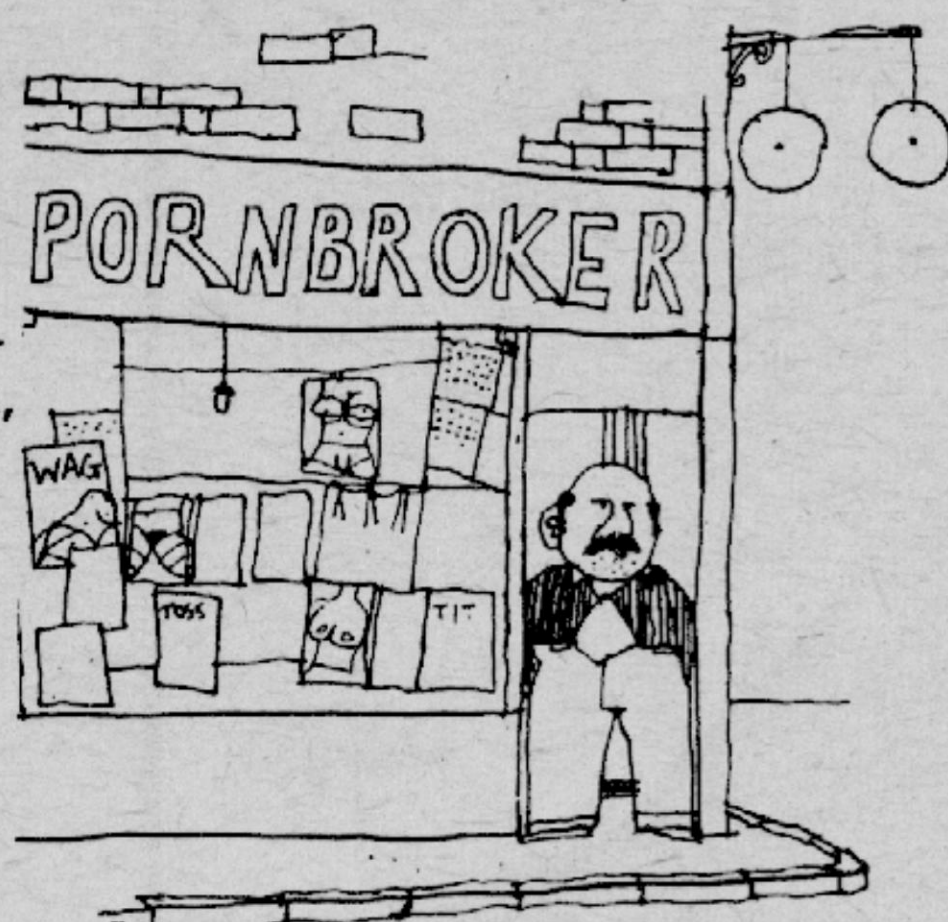
LEAD STORY

Verbose and fulsome tributes to little-known friends of Post and Echo directors are something readers have had to put up with for years. But on Saturday, May 1, the

Echo went a step further. It took up seven sentimental column inches to publish the obituary of - you've guessed - a reporter's dog.

3 There are paragraphs in praise of useless gadgets—like a device for squeezing toothpaste out of a tube. This costs £1.05 and the Echo believes it could help prevent family squabbles in the bathroom. The mind boggles!

Talking of bathrooms, one recent section in the Home Page was about gold-plated bath taps selling at £45.



FORD DRIVES ON... AND ON

Fords have been the most expert prohibitors of anti-trade unionism, flow-line production and measured day-work.

They held out until 1944 against any form of trade-union recognition faithfully following its founder's philosophy: (pay the highest wages, sack anyone who is a trade-unionist, or an atheist, or who does not obey every order).

In fact, shop stewards have a longer tradition within Ford than the unions and have retained an identity separate from them.

After 1952, when Fords moved into Britain in a big way, they tightened up their control. At certain times, they take a hard line, sacking leaders and attempting to smash the shop-floor organisation.

This happened in 1956, and again with the dismissal of seventeen shop-stewards in 1962. Now we have seen it in 1971 (though this time they were surprised by the mobilisation on the shop floor in defence of a steward). For forty-five years, then Fords have consistently and successfully pushed a coherent strategy of

alienating the shop stewards from their unions, workers from their shop stewards and militant officials from the constitutional machinery.

As a direct result, the Ford motor company ended 1968 as the lowest paying, most profitable, most productive enterprise in the U.K. motor industry.

Then came the 1969 National month long strike over a pay claim. By now, Halewood had taken over from Dagenham as centre of militancy. All the big unions indicated a shift towards shop stewards power in the major Ford unions.

Recent strikes have confirmed the increased importance and power of shop stewards, who have gained representation on the National Ford Joining Negotiating Committee alongside the official union officers.

This explains Ford's continual attempts to weaken or destroy the power of shop-stewards, thinking that the militant leaders of the workers will be powerless and confused, and will accept any work schedule and job organisation that is thrust upon them.

SHOP FLOOR CLEAR-OUT

When Ford sacked shop steward John Dillon recently, they touched off a powder keg that had been building up in the Halewood factory since the parity strike earlier this year.

When it exploded, nobody was surprised - except Ford itself, which was taken aback by the size of the explosion. For within days of the sacking, the whole factory of 12,000 men - Ford's second largest in the Country-had come to a standstill.

The sacking of John Dillon was only one in a long series of provocative acts by Halewood management. Since the return to work in April, men have been moved and ordered around, disciplined, denied access to their stewards and suspended for such offences as going to the toilet without permission, spending twenty minutes collecting for a widow, sitting down and speaking back.

Management have been looking for trouble and trouble they got. When the men walked out for John Dillon they were not only demanding the reinstatement of a steward—they were showing they would take no more from this high-handed management.

John Dillon worked in the paint shop of the assembly plant. In this section, as in others throughout Halewood, management have re-allocated work and changed manning.

Nasty

On one area, the landing deck, trouble started when manning was reduced from eight to five. The work is particularly nasty. The cars have just passed through a paint spray and drying process and the men have to disconnect them from their cradles, and pass them on to the next stage.

The atmosphere is hot and full of paint fumes. The car bodies are also

hot and still sticky. It is considered one of the worst jobs in the factory.

When trouble first broke out over the reduction of man-power there was a brief sit-in in the plant superintendent's office. Then in June a fourth man was removed from the job.

The four remaining men couldn't handle the work and, after being threatened with the sack, stopped work.

They were not allowed to see their steward, John Dillon so they stayed in the plant and caught him as he left.

The men were angry and wanted to go to the superintendent's office for an explanation. Dillon suggested they meet outside instead, but accompanied the men to the office when they insisted on going;

For this the company accused Dillon of organising an unofficial meeting and leading a demonstration. And although a company investigation found no case against Dillon, three days later they sacked him.

What did Ford hope to gain from this unnecessarily provocative action?

Crunch

Firstly, they hadn't chosen Dillon by accident. His dismissal came after a high level management conference in the Adelphi. They believed that by choosing Dillon they would split the shop steward organisation.

They considered that he didn't command the support of the entire steward committee in his plans, and they hoped to see internal squabbles over whether to support him.

Certainly they expected a fight. But they believed it would be a half-hearted affair—a strike they could easily win. And this is the crunch.

Ford hoped to provoke a strike by

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