

Secrets leak: Ford threaten union man

A SENIOR MEMBER of Ford's white collar union A.C.T.S. has received two threats of dismissal over the release of confidential information.

Security has now tightened up and Ford's management are demanding the return of documents still in the hands of the staff and convenors on the shop floor.

These threats of dismissal to an individual spokesman exercising his right as a union official can carry little weight. For as Ford themselves must be aware, the information obtained by ACTS members affects thousands of workers who will not stand by and allow individuals to be victimised.

The evidence compiled by the clerical workers (and first published in Free Press No 9) shows that:

1. The export of parts from Halewood for assembly abroad has dwindled to next to nothing.
2. Production at the Halewood press shop is being slackened off.
3. Capri production has slumped.
4. Another thirty British firms are being replaced by German firms as suppliers of Capri parts to Halewood.
5. Important pilot work and blue-print co-ordination are being taken over by Ford of Germany.

A warning in a company news sheet recently circulated says: "It's obvious that leakages of information are extremely harmful

in an industry as competitive as ours."

Fords do not know exactly how much information the staff have obtained. And it is for this reason they are demanding the return of the documents.

While Ford spokesmen continue to deny that the company are running down work in Britain, shop floor workers are realising the significance of the loss of work in their own departments.

A one-day token strike by 2,000 men from Halewood's transmission plant was held in protest against this loss of work.

During the last two years 600 jobs have been lost through natural

wastage in this department, and transmission units previously exported from Halewood are now produced in Cologne.

Report

Three local Labour MPs, James Dunn, Eric Heffer and Gordon Oakes, are to present a report being compiled by convenors at Halewood to Christopher Chataway, Minister for Industrial Development.

Meanwhile convenors of all Ford's plants are meeting to discuss the problem, which can only be successfully resisted by the continued alliance of the shop floor workers and the clerical staff.

Corporation grabs community centre

WHEN RESIDENTS of Kensington Fields applied for a grant to build a £35,000 community centre they expected the government money would come to them. But when the Home Office approved the grant, Liverpool Corporation stepped in and said: "It's ours!"

Kensington Fields Community Council applied for an Urban Aid grant in August last year. Three months later they read in the local press that the grant had been approved, but did not hear this officially for another four months.

Meanwhile, the community council were making plans to engage an architect, builders, and staff to run the centre in Hall Lane. And the corporation and Neighbourhood Organisations Committee (which advises local groups) stood by and watched.

Then the shock came. The corporation dictated its conditions -

and said that if the community council didn't accept them there would be no building.

THE CONDITIONS

1. The corporation will keep the grant, own the building and the land.
2. The community council can use it rent free for five years (possibly more).
3. The corporation will pay rates, heating, lighting, caretaking, cleaning, outside repairs and structural repairs indoors.
4. The community council will pay for replacing equipment, materials, maintenance indoors and painting.
5. The corporation will pay for a full or part-time warden.
6. The centre's management committee will be responsible to the community council.
7. Two city councillors, nominated by Liverpool Education Committee, will serve on the management committee.

There had been no chance for negotiations and reluctantly the community council agreed to the terms in principle. The most worrying points were the first two, which meant that the corporation would take over financial control of the centre, and the future would be uncertain after the first five years.

The corporation could get away with these conditions because the central government provides only three-quarters of the total value of Urban Aid grants - the other quarter, in this case £8,500 - comes from the local authority.

Mr Russ Hamilton, one of the Kensington Fields residents commented: "For only £8,500 and maintenance costs the local authority gains

control of the community centre that should really be in the hands of the local group who applied for it".

However, some residents feel this could be an advantage - it would relieve the community council of financial worries and free them to concentrate on organising activities at the centre. But there are other conditions people are unhappy about.

First, there is the warden. The corporation will pay his salary, but who will actually employ him? Will the community council appoint him and give him instructions, or will the corporation want to do this?

Then there is the question of councillors on the management committee. Liverpool Education Committee want to nominate them. But some residents would prefer to choose them themselves - preferably councillors from their own ward.

The latest shock for the community council came when the corporation tried to cut down the size of the building because rising costs had brought the price up from £35,000 to £43,294 - and the government's share of the grant could not be increased. They wanted to chop 400 to 800 square feet off the proposed area of 3,700 square feet. The community council replied that this would make the building useless, since eighteen different activities are planned for the centre. They argued that if the corporation had acted quickly it could have been built at the original cost.

The corporation agreed to pay the extra £8,000.



Transport that's going places fast

Last year Scotland Road Community Trust operated a box van and ambulance. This summer, under the name Liverpool Community Transport, ten vehicles, including two double-decker buses and two coaches have transported some 15,000 children on holidays and day trips - a rate of progress befitting the most ambitious commercial transport firm.

Registered as a charity, Community Transport finances itself from donations. All jobs are done free, users give donations if they can afford it, but drivers do not handle any money as this constitutes 'hire or reward' requiring a Public Service Vehicle licence.

The corporation have allowed them to use a garage close to the city centre rent free. It is big enough

to keep all their vehicles under cover and carry out repairs and maintenance.

A lot of the community transport work involves day trips and outings for the poorer sections of the community, the sort of business that is of no interest to a commercial firm.

But at the same time it is not a do-gooding service that simply provides cheap transport for hard-up families.

It is an attempt to involve people in community action, by offering services which they can see are useful to them, and offering these services in a way they can understand and take an active part in developing further.

Some workers began by simply shifting furniture and then became involved enough to work full-time on a camp site for a couple of months.

This personalised style of work has enabled whole family groups to work together in a completely different environment on holiday sites, supplementing the work of social workers.

For the future, a decentralised transport system is proposed, with local communities controlling their own vehicles, co-operatively responsible for maintenance and resources.

More immediately, plans are being prepared for an open autumn camp at Coniston and a skiing holiday in Scotland for unemployed teenagers.

Keeping fit in jackboots

FLABBY, 56-year-old Ted Heath took time off from being Prime Minister the other week to give Sunday Mirror readers a lesson in keeping fit. After pointing out that the Mirror is selling dinghies that cost 'hardly anything' (£79 actually) he cheerfully harked back to the days of Hitler:

"The Germans spent a lot of money on sports facilities in the Thirties and they have benefited ever since."

Zo! Ve haf vays of keeping you fit...

Be prepared

Vocational training... The Schools Council is starting a scheme at selected schools to prepare school leavers for unemployment. Children from 13 and upwards will be taught how to cope with getting the sack, and how to keep active by weaving baskets when on the dole.

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'Police arrest claimants

POLICE ARESTED a building worker and his wife, both claimants, at Linacre House Social Security Office in Bootle.

Two members of the Claimants' Union, who were representing the couple were also arrested.

The manager called the police when the man and his wife, supported by the Claimants' Union and the Big Flame group, refused to leave until they were shown their assessment forms.

The police threw out everybody concerned in the sit-in, the four arrested were later charged with assault or obstruction.

This incident was one of many confrontations building workers and the claimants' union have had

with the Social Security during the recent strike.

Officials at the Everton Brow office paid out to single strikers paying rent, after a group of workers and supporters persuaded the manager to see them all together.

There he admitted that the desk clerks had been wrong to refuse strikers' claim forms. But he said that under direction from head office he could only pay the £4 a week hardship money to single strikers who were rent payers or householders.

One building worker living with his parents, both old age pensioners, asked how they were supposed to support him. Back came the predicatable answer - "Sorry, I'm only carrying out instructions from head office."