

## QUOTE:

MEASURES WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED AS EXTREME ONLY A SHORT TIME AGO - SUCH AS FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT - ARE BECOMING SOCIALLY AND POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVES TO BE SERIOUSLY STUDIED.

-Liverpool transport report



# Free transport may get moving soon

IF FREE TRANSPORT is introduced on Merseyside, only a quarter of the cost may be paid by ratepayers - government grants could provide the rest. This is the view of Liverpool's planning officer, Mr Francis Amos.

The planning department were asked by the council to report on the possibility of free public transport, or a system with low flat-rate fares.

**MAIN PURPOSES**

Mr Amos sees two main purposes for such a system:

1. "To give equal opportunity for travel to all sections of society, and in particular to give free or cheap transport to the less prosperous members of the community."
2. "To attract more users to the public transport system and, in so doing, reduce the need for major highway construction, hence providing financial, environmental and social benefits."

"There are, of course, other secondary objectives such as the reduction of loading time on one-man buses," he adds.

In Free Press No 11 we said there was a strong case for government grants towards running free transport. Mr Amos' report considers this possible:

"At present central government grants for transportation - apart from very minor exceptions - are paid on capital schemes only. For example the Terminal Rail Loop scheme - similar to principal road schemes - attracts about 75% grant."

### SIMILAR GRANTS

"Current discussions between the local authorities and the Department of the Environment seem to indicate that there is a very strong likelihood that after local government re-organisation (i.e. after April 1974) running costs may also become eligible for similar grants."

"In other words subsidy to operation of free or low one-unit fare public transport could qualify for grants from central government."

(It was estimated last year that free transport for Merseyside would cost the equivalent of 34p on the rates. If this is correct, government

grants could cut the actual cost to 8½p in the pound.

The report shows how the cost of travel has jumped in the last ten years. Average bus fares on Merseyside have risen to 2.6 times their 1962 level. For motorists, the price of petrol last year was 1.44 times what it cost in 1962; insurance was 1.83 times, and road tax 1.67 times as expensive as in 1962. In the same period the retail price index rose by 1.59 times.

"Whilst all increases in cost of movement - whether by car or public transport - are undesirable socially and economically, the sharp increase in public transport fares is particularly disturbing when the dependence on public transport by the larger portion of society and by the least prosperous members of the community in this area is considered," says the report.

### FEW CARS

(It is not generally realised how few people in Liverpool own cars. The 1966 census showed that 73% of households in the city have NO car. In some areas - like the Dingle - 90% of households have no car. And in many of those that do, not everyone in the family can use the car).

Allowing cars to choke up the roads is becoming expensive, not just for motorists, but for everybody. The report notes that if the programme of the Merseyside Area Land Use and Transportation (MALT) study is to be carried out, more than £20m a year would have to be spent on major road schemes in the area. Between 1966 and 1972 we were spending £8½m a year.

### NEW ROADS

"These costs do not include additional costs for reducing environmental impact and for compensation which are inherent in the government's recently produced White Paper: 'Putting People First'." It is estimated this could add 15-20% on to the cost of new roads.

"Due to these increasing costs - and a variety of other problems now

emerging - there seems to be a definite trend to expect the authorities responsible to reconsider their transportation policies.

"Measures which might have been considered as extreme only a short time ago - such as free public transport - are becoming socially and politically acceptable alternatives to be seriously studied."

### RADICAL POLICIES

"For example, radical policies - mainly directed towards the encouragement of public transport - are urged by a recent report published by the House of Commons Expenditure Committee on Urban Transport Planning. Similarly, the Department of the Environment Circular 5/73 urges local authorities to reconsider their public transport policies."

The basis of all Merseyside's transport policies at present is the MALT study, which was carried out between 1966 and 1969 when the 'choice' system was fashionable among planners. This meant that people like planners would have the 'choice' to use their cars as much as they fancied, while people who couldn't afford cars would have no choice but to help pay for new roads and even move home to make way for them.

### EXPERIMENT

As a result, there is no policy to encourage public transport and discourage cars. It may now be necessary, Mr Amos suggests, to "update and revise" the MALT study.

Free or low-fare public transport will probably be only part - but an important part - of a new transport policy. The report hints that there may also be "measures directed towards the restraint of the use of cars for certain purposes in certain areas."

Finally, the report suggests a series of experiments in free transport. Two of these might be:

1. Free buses to the new District Centres from their catchment areas.
2. Free buses from outlying estates to major areas of employment.

THE DIRECTORS and shareholders of Lucas must be celebrating their good fortune... last year profits shot up by £6 million (from £16m to £22m) and they are expected to climb to £28m this year.

And in two years Lucas have, with considerable audacity, managed to sack 2,000 men on Merseyside - supposedly a militant area.

In 1971 they got rid of 900 men from their Victor works at Broadgreen, and now they have defeated the 17-week sit-in at the CAV factory at Fazakerley, so closing down 1,000 jobs.

What's more, their production has not been hit by sympathetic strikes. So no wonder they recently dished out one free share for every two held by shareholders.

The ease with which they shut down CAV must have shaken even the Lucas directors. An article in the Sunday Times Business News pointed out that the motor industry is heavily dependent on supplies from Lucas.

"There is a danger of motor components being affected if the Girling brake-lining plant at Bromborough, a few miles from Fazakerley, comes out on token sympathy strike," it said.

Lucas had nothing to fear. There was precious

little unity amongst Lucas workers in other factories, even those on Merseyside. Virtually everyone had an excuse for not taking direct action to help CAV workers (although some gave financial help).

Some said the handling of the sit-in by the stewards was 'heavy-handed'. Some were reluctant to help because the Trotskyist Socialist Labour League (SLL) were supposed to be influential. Some even quoted the Industrial Relations Act.

Others pointed out that they should first get the support of their own unions, and of other Lucas workers.

And so the sit-in collapsed, under the threats and bribes from directors, who even said they would close down Lucas Industrial Equipment (LIE) which was on the same site as CAV.

Workers from other Lucas factories pointed out that their own jobs weren't secure. Their factories might be closed. They are right. Their jobs are in danger. But being 'good boys' won't help. Lucas are a powerful multi-national combine with a turnover of £320 million. And they are savagely cutting back manning levels in this country.

This is for two reasons. Firstly motor manufacturers everywhere have begun a policy of dual sourcing (i.e. they buy parts from more than one firm). Lucas realise this will hit their production in Britain. But they are confident of making this up by gains overseas. They have subsidiaries such as Ducellier in France, and Carelloni in Italy to supply European carmakers.

Secondly Lucas believe there are bigger profits to be made abroad, especially in South America. Recently they bought a 45% stake in Brazil's leading battery company (Accumuladores Vulcania) and their subsidiary Girlings bought 30% of the largest Brazilian brake company.

This is because in areas like South America there are huge potential markets and a vast supply of cheap, often non-union labour.

Lucas know that if they need to supply British firms with more parts during boom times, they can always import them from their subsidiaries. Lucas admit they already import 6% of the Fazakerley-type pumps from Spain.

Here Franny Martin, a CAV convenor, and Bill Wilde, a rank-and-file member, say why they believe the longest sit-in on Merseyside failed.



## ANOTHER VIEW: BILL WILDE

A HELL OF A LOT of people over this past fortnight have been really and truly despondent and sick of everything. We've come in, we've done duties and we've gone home knowing full well that the support we've been getting from outlying factories has been last.

Take the BICC at Prescott. We went down there. Bucket collection. £4. One of our chaps went to Transport House. All donations get sent there. He went down Wednesday. He opens up the letters and ends up with 50p. So he went down on the Thursday. There was two letters there and nothing in again - just "Stick it out, lads! You're doing a great job!" and all this. But this is no good to us. We can't live on fair words and promises. You've got to have finance if you're going to fight.

The amount of people involved is of no consequence. Whether it be 500 or 50 you've got to have money to keep them together. And once they're held together they're like a brick wall - there's no stopping them. But once you start cutting their money down, this is it! They're going to start looking elsewhere. And once they start drifting it's like sand running away.

### YOU COULDN'T WIN THIS FIGHT JUST WITH FINANCE. COULD YOU?

No, not just with finance, but the finance would have held us together. The whole object of a sit-in is that it is far easier to fight as a group for jobs than it is to go on the dole and fight as an individual for a job.

We started off very well. We had about 1,000 people and then it dwindled down and we had 500 over the Christmas holiday period. Now we thought that if we could get over Christmas and the New Year, then that's it - the hard core is there. But the stresses and strains of life at home with these different people, they'd come to the end of their holiday savings if you like, what little bits of money they had put by. They've been utilising this to supplement what they've been getting, to make a wage up. And then they'd come to the end of it.

WHAT ABOUT OTHER PLACES LIKE STANDARD'S AND FORD'S, WHERE YOUR PARTS WERE GOING TO?

We've had minor problems with some of the stewards who are more politically motivated than others, but we have always been able to work together as a team.

I think people outside consider we have been influenced by one particular party, but we have not. The shop stewards in the occupation committee have been in control of it, and we have been able to work purely - as far as we can see - on trade union principles.

### WHAT LESSONS DO YOU THINK LUCAS HAS GIVEN TO OTHER SIT-INS?

I think the lesson to be learnt is that you must find out the support around you and build up from it and hope that the trade union leadership give a more direct policy than they have given in this dispute.

Yes, but we considered that this would have been the weapon that would have won this dispute. We are convinced that we're just victims now of a system which is geared for profit rather than for people. We believe the only way an employer will be affected is if his profits are hit. Then he may reconsider any decision he makes.

### WHAT PRESSURE HAS THERE BEEN FROM THE COMPANY TO MAKE PEOPLE ACCEPT REDUNDANCY?

These are the lessons that have got to be learnt. If the trade unions are going to be serious and protect their members they've got to give a direct lead.

IN CONCLUSION, we'd like to thank the trade unionists, the lads from Clothursts (ex-Fisher Bendix), the Vauxhall car workers, workers on the teaching hospital site, and many other trade unionists who have given us active support... and thank all those people who tried to help us win the dispute.

I thought: Well, what might come out at best is not a job with Joseph Lucas again - because a lot of people don't a job with them again - but what they were envisaging and hoping for was that we might put pressure to bear on certain government departments that might again put pressure to bear on the right quarters to get a firm to come up here and take over.

### THE WORKERS THAT LEFT - HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THEM?

The people right at the beginning, the stewards included, that left - I feel they were rats leaving a sinking ship. But those that left after a period of time were under a different strain. They'd had a go and found that commitments at home had been too great for them. All right, that's fair enough, we'll accept that.

### HOW WELL DO YOU THINK THE STEWARDS HAVE CONDUCTED THE SIT-IN?

The remaining stewards, I think they have done a good job. Our two convenors, they've done very well... right up to yesterday at the meeting\*. And I for one was very, very disgusted to say the least, with the attitudes of our senior stewards.

All right, even stewards and convenors can come to the end of their tether. We don't know what their commitments are like. I'm not decrying them in that sense. But I for one felt I had been let down, sold down the river by my convenors.

Dave Martin\*\* (he was the chairman of the meeting) put forth his opinion from the chair, which in my opinion was wrong.

The original motion was that we would carry on as we had voted to at the last meeting. In other words, just let things stand as they were. But an amendment came up that we should instruct the convenors to negotiate with management for better terms, meaning money and jobs (if any).

Well obviously after the convenor had outlined his opinion and said he was in favour of the amendment - and let's face it, he's our leader, people look to him for guidance... When he said that! Well, the jig was up, wasn't it? They all knew what to vote for. The vote went 96 for and 56 against. But a lot of those that voted for it, whether they've had second thoughts, I don't know, but there seems to be a hell of a lot more than 56 people complaining.

I think mainly the vote was carried by a number of people who haven't actually participated in this sit-in. They've been sitting it out at home and just coming of a Thursday for their money. That's my opinion. I've seen a lot of people in the meeting that I hadn't seen for weeks.

### WHAT WOULD YOUR REDUNDANCY PAY BE?

My redundancy pay is £894 and I've been ten years with this firm. It's not a great handshake. I doubt whether it would last me twelve months.

I feel bitter to think that I've given ten years of my life to this company and this is how they treat me - throw

you on the scrap-heap just when they feel like it. There again, I'm only speaking personally.

But when we start talking about jobs on Merseyside, then it's a different kettle of fish. When we started off, this was what was in everybody's minds: Not just our jobs, but 1,200 jobs. And people have lost sight of that fact now.

You see they were more concerned with 400 L.I.E. people rather than the 1,200 here. And what I would have liked to have seen was when that firm over there, L.I.E., got laid off. I would have liked them to have said: 'To hell with this' and took the bull by the horns and sat in with us. This would have given us a greater number of people fighting for 1,600 jobs, which I think would have been better.

It would have looked better in the news. It would have sounded better when you were going down meeting bloody Heffer and bloody Heath and all that bloody shower - I've got no time for them at all myself - but nevertheless they're the people in power

### IT'S A PRETTY DISMAL PROSPECT FOR OTHER FACTORIES ON MERSEYSIDE IF YOU DON'T GET SUPPORT. ISN'T IT?

This is it. If we fail in this long and bitter struggle (and obviously it seems that way - I'm not a defeatist but I'm being logical about it) other people that's going to get the chop, they're going to say 'Well, what's the use of us sitting in? CAV couldn't do it and there was more of them than us.'

I think our downfall was that we couldn't even get the support of our own company, Lucases. We never got the support that we wanted. If we had have done we'd have got untold support from other factories. Because our own company wasn't supporting us, the likes of Fords and all them turned round and said: 'Why should we support you if your own company can't?'

### IS THERE A COMBINED SHOP STEWARDS' COMMITTEE FOR ALL THE LUCAS FACTORIES?

Yes there was, and they promised faithfully that they would give us financial support and any other support that we required. They thought that the action on the management's part was diabolical and blah, blah, blah... And we swallowed it hook line and sinker!

But when it came to putting their hands in their pockets and when it came to the fact that they had to do something constructive, it didn't come about. They backed down. So it left us out on a limb.

We have been getting some monetary awards in, but not a lot really - just enough to give us a small handout every week.

These blokes here, they've got no chance at all. Some of them have got about five or six years to go, you know. And who's going to take them on for that length of time? Nobody. Especially now. There are 62,000 on the dole on Merseyside, so where are they going to get fixed up?

\* The interview was done the day after they decided to negotiate on redundancy.

\*\* The other convenor. No relation to Franny Martin.

# VICTIMS OF A SYSTEM GEARED FOR PROFIT

Says convenor Franny Martin

### WHY HAS THE SIT-IN FAILED NOW? WHAT PROBLEMS HAVE YOU FACED FROM THE SET-UP HERE, WITH TWO FACTORIES, C.A.V. AND L.I.E. ON THE SAME SITE?

into Merseyside. We also got support from our own people here on the site, from the T & G drivers. We never had a dissension from them.

We picketed this factory. And when we laid the drivers off, we were firmly convinced - with the support from Birmingham - that it would have a big effect on the car plants on Merseyside and also Victor Works, Broadgreen.

And we picketed the three factories for a number of months. But they allowed alternative transport to do the job normally done by the drivers from this site.

But I suppose there's got to be lessons. They were protecting their own jobs. I think a stronger lead was needed by trade union officials locally and a better direction by our executive council for the AEU and the T & G. If they are going to be genuinely sincere that they don't want management to close factories down, they've got to make a concerted effort

### HAVE YOU HAD ANY PROBLEM AS A RESULT OF SOME OF YOUR SHOP STEWARDS BEING IN THE S.L.L., COMMUNIST OR OTHER PARTIES?

There are 450 workers and management. They opened up about the same time as us, about eleven years ago. We've had pretty good relationships all along. We used to have a joint committee, but we decided to split because we were discussing problems which, although similar in nature, got us bogged down with their piece-work and they got bogged down with ours.

So we isolated the two committees, but there's been a common bond on the site. There have been disagreements over various policies, tactics, but there has never been a gulf

### YOU PICKETED THE L.I.E. FACTORY. DID THEY AGREE TO STAY OUT?

They had a vote, and they accepted all the conditions by the occupation that we don't allow transport on and off the site. But they couldn't really participate in it because it would have meant taking strike action. And we wanted them laid off, so there would be a dual pressure, both from the Social Security and from the loss of production.

### WHAT DO YOU THINK SHOULD HAVE HAPPENED FROM THE UNION SIDE?

I would like to have seen a directive that no work normally done on this site is allowed to be produced in any Lucas factory in Great Britain or abroad. And no products that were normally made here could have been handled by any other people.

We had an agreement with factory convenors down in the south-east that they wouldn't accept any of our work before April, when this factory was due to close.

### WHAT SUPPORT DID YOU RECEIVE ELSEWHERE, SUCH AS THE DOCKS?

We went to the dockers on a few occasions, and they did agree at a meeting that they would be prepared to black all fuel injection equipment and Lucas products - provided they had an agreement with the engineering unions that any action taken against them would be supported. And they couldn't get this agreement, so they wouldn't carry out the blacking.

We asked for blacking of all Lucas products. We have now learnt that this was a bit adventurous. It would have meant about five to six million people being directly involved.

We did get some support. We got support from the Birmingham area, who refused to transport Lucas products

# Only the poor lose...

## THE PLAN

1. The scheme would apply to everyone who works for an employer and people receiving unemployment or sickness benefits, pensions, maternity allowances or invalidity pensions. Everyone would be taxed at the standard rate, which the government suggests should be 30p in the pound.
2. Everyone would be entitled to a 'tax credit' which would be set off against tax due. The suggested amounts are £4 for a single person, £6 for a married or single person with children to support, and £2 for each child in a family.
3. People would receive their credits along with wages or state benefits.
4. Family allowances, family income supplement, income tax rebates and national insurance benefits would go. The present PAYE system would also go. Unemployment, sickness and invalidity benefits would be

WOMEN'S groups on Merseyside have launched a massive campaign against the government's plan to abolish family allowances. The local women's liberation group already have hundreds of signatures on a petition. But this is only part of the government's proposed 'tax credits' system - from which the poor would benefit least.

taxed, but supplementary benefits would not.

## WHAT IT MEANS

- Pensioners and single parent families would be better off, but generally, the poorest people would gain nothing. The scheme is for the top 90% of the population, and ignores those on supplementary benefits and the self employed (who are often among the poorest).
- More than 60% of the total paid out would go to those earning more than £1,500 a year.
- Credits would be paid through the employer. Workers off sick would have to arrange for their credits to be collected.

There are fears that if the child credits are paid to fathers, many mothers will get nothing to replace the family allowance. This could lead to a serious drop in the standard of living because most mothers spend the allowance on food.

