

Tenants begin to organise on fair rents bill

TENANTS' ASSOCIATIONS on Merseyside are taking up their positions on the 'Fair Rents' front. Two distinct lines of action are being taken in opposition to the Bill, which becomes law in October. One is of total disobedience via rent strikes and demonstrations. The other is to make the Bill unworkable after it becomes law. Members of ATACC, CHECK, NCCL, NOC and various community groups have formed the Anti Fair Rents Association (A'F'RA).

Their opinion is that the Bill will be implemented by the government, if not by the local authorities. (Liverpool Labour Party are pledged to a policy of non-implementation).

A'F'RA intends to demonstrate that the bill is unworkable by ensuring that every tenant in the city is informed of its provisions and its weaknesses, so overloading the administration by mass applications for rebates.

Seventeen members of Kirkby Council were made to sign a petition against the Bill when members of the Tower Hill Tenants' Association stormed into the council offices. The petition was also handed round the estate and signed by 1,500 tenants.

Kirkby fight

A CAMPAIGN to encourage mass defiance of the Government's 'Fair Rents' plan is to be started in Kirkby and Huyton.

The Kirkby and Huyton Trades Council are setting up an action committee of shop stewards, tenants and representatives of working-class organisations to fight rent increases.

A spokesman for the Trades Council said they would have no truck with people who tried to evade the Bill by searching for legal loopholes.

"The fight against the Industrial Relations Act has shown that compliance only plays into the hands of the Tories, and does nothing to help the working class."

Union support

Kirkby Trades Council have given their support and paid expenses for one of three tenants who travelled to London to lobby Members of Parliament.

Liverpool Trades Council are organising a series of meetings with tenants' groups. Trade union support so far has come from AUEW, UCAP, NALGO and the Confederation of Shipbuilders and Engineering Unions.

Dingle Action Committee are meeting to discuss tactics and will hold a public meeting shortly.

The cost to you

WHAT FAIR RENTS WILL MEAN
1 Council House rents will double and, in some cases, treble. Some people will get rebates; the vast majority will pay more. Rents will rise by 50p - 75p from October 1972 for three years, until a 'fair' rent is reached.

2 By 1980 the Government will make £300 million out of council housing.

3 Each working single child living at home will be asked to pay £1.50 per week. This will hit those saving up to get married.

4 You will be charged an extra £1 for every aged parent living with you.
5 Ghettoes of poverty could be created. Private tenants living in houses bigger than they need won't get full rebates. Council tenants may be moved into, or rehoused from slums, into the worst areas of cities where 'fair' rents are lower, so saving rebates.

6 For every extra £1 a council tenant earns he will have to pay another 17p rent, as his rebate is lowered. Add this to the extra income tax paid and you will only get about 48p back for each £1 you earn on overtime.
7 Private tenants living in areas with controlled rents face huge increases - for all rents are to be decontrolled and replaced with a 'fair' rent.

Council tenants will subsidise:
a) Poor council tenants who are the responsibility of all taxpayers.
b) The private tenants' rent allowance scheme, through the rates.
c) The owner-occupier with a mortgage, who gets tax relief.
d) The private landlord.
e) The Government, who will get £300 million to spend as a result of the new high rents.
f) Much of the cost at present borne by the Supplementary Benefits Commission.

ADDRESSES

AFRA, 2 Nile Street, Liverpool 1
Tel: 709 4811, 4812 and 4874

Tower Hill Tenants Association (Maurice Lee) M1 Ravenscroft, Kirkby. Tel: 548 1515.

ATACC Amalgamated Tenants Associations Co-ordinating Committee, 29 Harsbourne Heights, Liverpool 25. (Marge Gallimore) Tel: 722 5965

Dingle Tenants Association, 313 Grafton Street, Liverpool 8 Tel: 709 1809.

Neighbourhood Organisations Committee (Robin Little) 14 Castle Street, Liverpool. Tel: 236 7728

Only one thing matters says president

"ONLY ONE thing matters," said the President of Ford International, Robert Stevenson, in 1970 - "the level of productivity."

Productivity equals profit. And last year Ford International amassed a cool £280,000,000 (after tax!). They increased world-wide profits to £106 millions in the first three months this year - 49% up on last year.

Robert Stevenson elaborated on Ford's policy: "Political, social or monetary economic systems elected by different countries, all this will hardly count."

"Whether they are socialist, communist or capitalist, the countries remaining in the race will be those capable of producing efficiently."

Stevenson had perfectly stated the philosophy of the giant multi-national corporations - only one thing matters. And in the pursuit of that single goal Ford

move into every car market, and scatter their plants across the world.

They manipulate labour market against labour market. Investment is used as a big stick. The British press will bemoan the withdrawal of labour by Ford workers, but when Henry Ford talked about withholding further investment no-one castigated him for threatening his own form of strike action. That action is used against workers throughout the Ford empire.

Ford is above national law because it is international. It blackmails workers into submission. Ford prefer to build in depressed areas - Saarouis in Germany, Genk in Belgium, Halewood in Britain.

By building there they reckon to get hefty investment grants and men so hungry for work they will submit to anything. Before going into Genk, Ford stipulated that there must be a 'No strike for five

years' agreement. The Genk workers showed how to deal with Ford two years later - by striking for better conditions.

Sixty per cent of all world trade is between the subsidiaries of multinational companies. Ford of Britain buys from Ford of America, and vice versa. That allows them to indulge in transfer price fixing. If tax laws in one country are favourable, Ford move their profits there by exporting their products from that country to Ford subsidiaries in other countries at high prices, and therefore move their profits across borders and evade tough tax laws.

In the world money market, Ford play the game as dirty as any other multi-national company. Payment from one country to another is done in accordance with exchange rates. Money is borrowed where it is cheap, and lent where it is dear.

From the devaluation of foreign currencies last year, Ford of Britain alone made £2 million profit, without lifting a finger.

Only one thing matters... and that is so dominant Ford don't care where they go as long as the countries aren't too likely to confiscate their investments.

In April 1970 Henry Ford was on the verge of building a lorry plant on the Kama River, in Russia, 600 miles from Moscow - until it was vetoed by the Nixon government. Undaunted, Ford switched to Rumania and by 1971 they were negotiating to build a truck plant.

Now the Ford dream is of Asia. Cheap labour by the millions. Vast untapped markets yet to be introduced to the simpler mass-produced vehicle and then weaned onto the status-symbol and planned obsolescence.

Ford ship the work abroad

"Strictly confidential: Capri facelift 1973" - that's just one of the documents discovered by Ford clerical workers which show in detail the company's plans to transfer work out of Britain.

The evidence collected by the clerical workers proves 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 30 British firms are being replaced by German firms as suppliers of Capri parts to Halewood.
5. Important pilot work and blueprint co-ordination are being taken over by Ford of Germany.

Shipment blacked

The Capri facelift called for unfinished bodies to be shipped from Halewood to Cologne - for the purpose of pilot project work which Ford-of-Europe has decided must be done exclusively in Germany.
Pilot project work gives enormous control over how subsequent work is parcelled out among subsidiaries in various countries.

The shipment date was set for April 10 this year. But once the information was released by ACTS members, concerted action was taken by Halewood workers. The bodies were blacked, and management were forced to concede the work should be done on Merseyside.

British firms lose contracts

The Capri facelift document also gives details of the modifications planned for the new version due to be produced after the summer holidays in August: grilles, lamps, mouldings will be changed; the rear axle assembly will be modified, the engine will be re-aligned, and the suspension will be changed.

From August, Plessey will no longer provide the radio assemblies for the Capri. This contract is to be taken over by Blaupunkt of Germany.

Thirty British firms will also lose all or part of their contracts for Capri parts (see list).

When it was first introduced in 1969 the Halewood Capri only had ten German parts. By next January according to Capri facelift documents there will be 272 Capri parts imported into Halewood from Germany.

Germany isn't just making more Capri, it is making far more of the

Halewood Capri.

Halewood will not be allowed to use existing capacity in the Transaxle mission plant to make the 2000cc gearboxes. Those gearboxes will be imported from Germany. And since 1300 and 1600 gearboxes have been well stocked, jobs could be threatened.
Estimates by Ford's Halewood management for this year show that the number of vehicles which will be shipped abroad for assembly elsewhere has slumped to 500 from the 13,500 level of 1969.

In 1969 Halewood turned out 350 Capris a day, with Cologne making 220. The positions are completely reversed now. Halewood turn out barely 200 a day.

In 1969 Halewood Capris totalled 66,700. In 1970 - 53,200; in 1971 - 36,000. Even taking strikes into account, the figures are falling fast.

Dagenham has become a glorified assembly plant for Ford of Germany. In the new 'European style' Granada, Consul model, 600 parts are brought into Dagenham from Germany.

Hidden redundancies

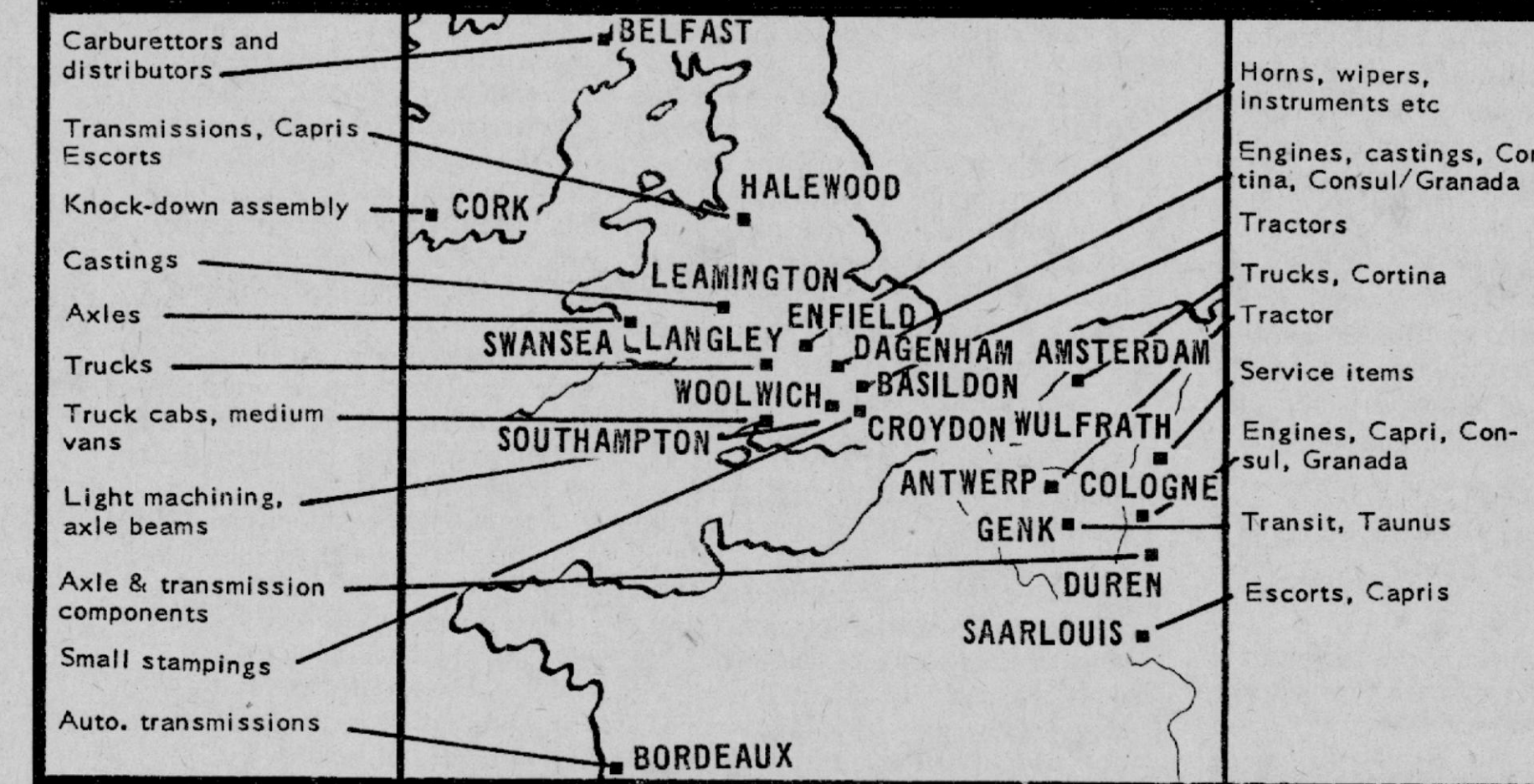
In the Halewood press shop there are 80 fewer operators than there were a few months ago. These operators have gone elsewhere in the plant to fill gaps left by natural wastage, and Ford have successfully achieved 'hidden' redundancies. Eighty jobs have been closed down.

It is the same with the clerical workers themselves. Ford have determined plans to reduce the white collar staff, and they do that by offering foremen's jobs to office workers. When the foremen's jobs are closed down. Hidden redundancies again.

Ford's new £13 million automatic gearbox plant at Bordeaux, France, has a target of 445,000 transmission units for 1973 - far outstripping the largest gearbox plant in Europe, run by General Motors at Strasbourg.

Ford are planning to make the European car market follow the United States pattern - 80% of

YOUR GUIDE TO FORD OF EUROPE



Using the migrant workers

FORD'S TRANSFER of work to Germany and the continent is for three reasons:

- To take advantage of the more docile labour forces and plentiful migrant workers.
- To shuffle international production into line with their European marketing plans.
- And in response to the power-hold on the Ford-of-Europe organisation by Ford's German executives.

The Capri was Ford's first multinational model. It is produced simultaneously at Halewood, and at Saarlouis and Cologne in Germany so that each factory can be used as a strike-breaker against the other.

A similar policy is followed for every component - wherever possible there are two separate sources. At any hint of a dispute production is switched and often the dies are moved out before the dispute begins.

It isn't surprising Ford have picked Germany as the best alternative source of component production. During the 1971 Ford strike in this country the management quoted the recent German strike record in their plants:

1968 - One strike of 50 paint sprayers lasted 15 minutes.
1969 - One strike lasting less than one day, of engineering workers.
1970 - One 24-hour stoppage by engineers.

Seven thousand of the Cologne men are migrant labour from Turkey. Ford's European profitability owes a lot to migrant labour. Besides Turks in Cologne, they have used Moroccans in Holland, Alger-



ians in France, north Italians in Belgium, and southern Italians in northern Italy.

In Germany the metal industry employs 300,000 foreign workers. They come from Italy, Greece, Spain and Turkey - and in those four countries Germany has special labour recruitment offices.

Few are in unions, and all live on the day-to-day insecurity of the work permit and instant unemployment. In 1966 and 1967 a recession in the German economy saw many foreign workers dismissed or on short time working. Large numbers returned to their home country.

Wages are higher in Germany than elsewhere in Europe because of the desperate shortage of labour - but once recruited, migrant labour gives little opposition to Ford.

Even if recruited into unions the migrant labour force would present little opposition. Ford moved into Germany in the "good old days" of 1937 - four years after Adolf Hitler had broken up the unions, and a year before the Nazis "direction of labour" laws.

The revival of German trade unionism after 1945 took place under the watchful eye of the American and the British governments who ensured that the unions remained tame, under the pretext of guarding against "undemocratic elements".

German law still ties the unions and their membership down. Strikes are only legal if there is a

And now we have the three door freak

THERE'S ONE new Ford model which won't be marketed next year. - and that's the three-door Escort. On one side there is one door, on the other - two doors.

The three-door freak is a sign that the scheduling system has broken down. The system ensures that the thousand-and-one parts in a vehicle arrive at the right place on the assembly line at the right time.

One of the documents discovered by Ford Clerical workers is a study of the manning levels on this scheduling system. The study's aim was to show how the manning could be reduced, and it is based on the 1968 Anglia, since superseded by the Escort.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Manpower requirements for the Anglia scheduling system are given in the document as 15 per shift, 30 altogether. By introducing special equipment - a Siemens Selex system - the report suggested eight hourly-rated operators could be got rid of, at a saving of £9,650 a year.

But the clerical workers at Fords have found that neither of the two manning levels given in the study are actually operated at the Halewood plant.

The manning level on the Escort scheduling system is only ten men per shift, twenty altogether.

The report goes on: "Return on investment - including capital investment grant of 45% - equals 90.6%."

UNDERMANNING

So Ford could spend £20,000 on equipment and get a 45% grant to help them put eight men on the dole!

Because of their deliberate undermanning, Ford management find themselves producing the three-door freak - and then blame it on the workers.

The ACTS members presented a report on the study to the company and suggested the situation should be rectified. Bob Ramsay, Ford's director of industrial relations was contemptuous. "He ran Ford, not the unions," was his answer on June 16, and he refused to accept the report.

Chairman on the make - labour on the streets

FORD of Britain profits in 1971 dropped a few million pounds, but Sir Leonard Crossland, chairman, wasn't unduly worried. He kept himself cheered up by awarding himself a £6,156 pay rise. His wage slip now reads £35,956 a year.

Faced with an embarrassing increase in profits - due to a 25% increase in line speeds - Ford's American executives solved the problem by awarding themselves 27% pay increases.

At the same time they decided wages for American labour were scandalously high, so work was exported to cheap labour countries, putting 9,000 workers on the streets.

So in the near future it is a transfer of work to the continent, ultimately it is a transfer of work to the other side of the world.