

# solidarity

FOR WORKERS' POWER

## VAUXHALL SPECIAL

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6<sup>D</sup>

# VAUXHALL 1967

Vauxhall workers have for years been the cinderellas of the motor industry. Their wages are far lower than those received elsewhere. At the same time management, with the direct assistance of the local union officials, have been able to enforce a regime within the factory which allows the boss to do exactly as he likes in a way unheard of in decently organized firms. For years there was 'industrial peace' and Vauxhall became known to car workers as the 'cabbage patch'.

But the worms have turned. Spearheaded by the militant Paint Shop (where workers have not only been able to exercise some control over the speed of the line but also to win substantial increases in wages, an unheard of situation at Vauxhall), the rest of the factory has begun to move. In the last year there have been a number of walk-outs and other 'incidents'.

Negotiations have been under way since the beginning of the year for a substantial wage increase. Even if won in full this would still not bring Vauxhall wages in line with those paid nationally. On July 10, hiding behind the government's Incomes Policy, the management issued a number of proposals in relation to what it called 'production and efficiency aspects'. These proposals in our view would be unacceptable at any price.

On September 13, workers at Luton, Dunstable and Ellesmere Port, fed up with the way things were going, initiated a work-to-rule and overtime ban. They have insisted that negotiations on the company's proposals don't drag on and that the wage rises be obtained forthwith, without strings.

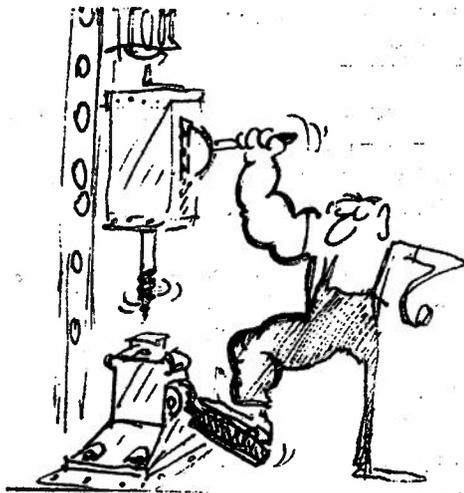
What were these 'strings' (or is it nooses?) proposed to the workers? On page 27 we reprint the proposals in detail: militants everywhere will be familiar with the tune. The firm makes it clear that any pay rise would be conditional on the acceptance of these proposals, which if read carefully mean that overtime would be compulsory, that the number of lower-paid women would be greatly expanded, that there would be speeding-up (through work study) even outside the production areas, and that the workers would lose even such residual control over conditions as they still have. In return, management is offering production workers just about 30 shillings ... 30 pieces of silver.

The whole future of the Vauxhall factories is in the balance. Either Vauxhall workers go back to being the tame creatures of the boss or they go forward and take a hand in their own future, both in terms of a living wage and in terms of the right to be a human being inside the factory, not a pack animal.

The article opposite was written for SOLIDARITY by an AEU militant who works at Vauxhall, Luton. It shows the rising tide of struggle in the British plants of General Motors. These workers are no longer prepared to accept second best.

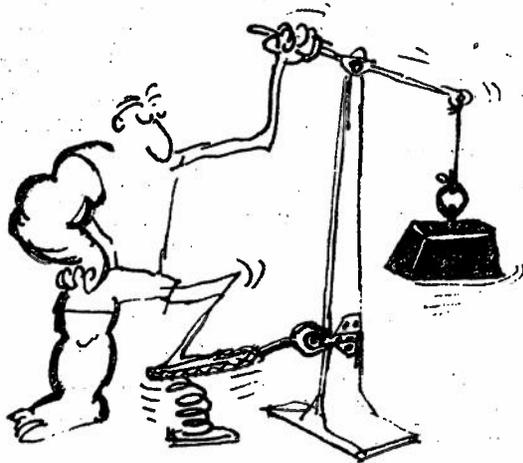
We make no apology for printing another article on Vauxhall immediately after the piece by Peter Ashcroft in our last issue. Events there are moving fast.

We invite Vauxhall workers - and workers in the car industry generally - to send us letters, comments, criticisms or articles so that we can cover this struggle in depth. Unless such events are properly documented, the experience is lost, which is a tragedy. So take up your pencil. Write to us about what's happening on your line or bench. Send us your brickbats and tell us what you feel about the articles, how you see things developing and what programme you think should be adopted. And please help us get our material to where it will do the bosses most damage. (No, we don't mean jamming up the works with it!)



PROLETARIAT  
UNDER  
CAPITALISM

UNEVEN  
DEVELOPMENT  
OF  
THE



# The Vauxhall Struggle

by 'spartacus'

Today militants in Vauxhall have reached the crossroads. Will they embark on a more aggressive role or will they accept the status quo and continue to meander in the wilderness that is nowadays the conventional scene of trade unions. The time is ripe for an alternative leadership to be formed. Our job is to find ways and means of bringing this about.

Can militants themselves produce an alternative leadership in Vauxhall? Can we rid ourselves of the apathy of the shop floor members? What about the Quisling paid officials? Can these be ousted and replaced with safe people? Can we construct a shop floor organization that really means business? Why not a 'Workers Charter' for all Vauxhall plants? The question of controlling the means of production constantly crops up: could this not be answered?

The questions outline some of the problems that we face at Vauxhall Motors, quite apart from the wage bid now being processed. This claim could be decisive as to the way our struggles with the management develop. Whatever the outcome in the next few years we have to make sure we are represented by people we ourselves control and who are free from corrupting influences.

## INSIDE THE FACTORY

Since that most excellent pamphlet 'Truth About Vauxhall' was printed in 1962 the tactics of management at Vauxhall Motors have not basically changed. The American bosses are applying two basic concepts. Briefly these are to use their arbitrary rights in matters affecting all levels of production and the taking of unilateral decisions without consulting the union bodies. Of course we all know that this would not be tolerated elsewhere without a fierce struggle. However this is very much the climate we find ourselves in at Vauxhall.

One of the most complex and most difficult of our problems is the transfer of workers from one department to another and even to different types of work. I personally have worked in nearly every building in the Luton plant. There have been no doubts whatsoever that this has contributed to the gradual and systematic breaking up of the pressure groups within our more militants departments. The result is that former well organized areas have been rendered completely harmless. This was so skillfully done that many men had little idea of the real implications of the movement of labour. I might add that the stewards still have no control of the movement of labour into or out of their own shops. To date thousands of men have been moved in this fashion without the slightest consideration on the firm's part as to the inconvenience caused.

There has never been a closed shop though the Paint Shop has been pretty close to operating one in the spray booths. The officials of both major unions ( AEU and NUVB ) have discussed this at great length without any results. The management have made many attempts to manipulate 'nons' into the militants' strongholds: these have often been resisted. Quite often we see instances of outright 'scabbing'. In particular when a dispute is in progress 'nons' and other men are brought in to keep the conveyor lines operating. The traditional trade union practice of not working in a 'black area' is completely ignored. Unfortunately this is often the fault of individual shop stewards in the shop concerned. No attempt is being made to institute 100 per cent. union membership in Vauxhall Motors.

The speed of the conveyor line, determined by the 'measured day work system', is a disturbing and constantly harrowing problem. The control of shop stewards over track speeds has virtually been taken away. However, there was a recent case when the Paint Shop in Luton won a concession from the management not to operate more than 46 cars per hour with a specified number of men in the booths. The outstanding significance of this was that any extra vehicles required would have to be produced in overtime at premium rates of pay. Overmanning in the spray booths would cause 'over spray': the operators would in fact literally be spraying each other. Frequent attempts by management to speed up the line have been made, though these have been foiled by alert shop stewards who constantly keep a check of the speed. Job evaluation has done much to make the stewards' job harder: much of the data is predetermined long before the man is put on the actual job.

## THE UNIONS

Leadership of the unions is still in the hands of the right-wing paid officials: the two Arthurs, brothers Leary (NUVB) and Sjrogren (AEU). An element of left-wing leadership is emerging though this is not strong enough yet to play a real role in providing an alternative to the present oligarchy. The management at Vauxhall's still make it perfectly clear that they will only extend a 'limited' recognition to union bodies, and this only 'on sufferance'. The emergence of a new rank and file leadership cannot be achieved overnight - it would take at least five years. We at Luton will have to start the transition by weeding out all the 'right wing' stewards. Once this is done one can start on the representative bodies too. One thing seems certain: the two local leaders have lost much prestige in the handling of the wage negotiations leading up to the July events.

## THE MANAGEMENT

Another interesting feature is management's increasing attempts to prevent outside influence from penetrating into the firm. A case recently came to light where two members of the Socialist Labour League were arrested on the factory canteen steps for 'obstruction' (at the time it was pouring with rain!). They were merely distributing literature. It seems that David

Hegland and Co. were really afraid of their workers finding out some facts. On yet another occasion the management ordered some stewards in Luton AC Block to remove a notice that announced a meeting at which some BMC car workers were going to speak. However the notice was put up again in the toilet where it received a lot of attention. Police activity has also been marked in recent cases where loudspeakers have been set up outside our canteen at the Luton factory. That they are worried about all this is very much proof that propaganda can always be used to good effect to put forward a militant position.

At the time of the walk-out before the holiday period, much was said in the national press about the current wage bid. The readers of Solidarity will be acquainted with the sordid details of the wretched document put out by 'Mr. Vauxhall' on July 10 this year. The only thing that we agreed with on this particular scrap of paper was the date. The company went against union advice and tried to force the proposals on the men without even consulting the negotiating bodies. Trouble is what 'Mr. Vauxhall' asked for and trouble is what we gave him, in no uncertain terms.

We have reached a turning point where if we don't show ourselves to be prepared to fight now we must expect to receive virtually nothing for the next six months. The winter will set in with a threat of increased unemployment. Some pessimists are saying that when the Vauxhall workers come off their annual holidays they will probably be flat broke and unable to sustain a straight fight with the Guv'ner.

## A PLAN OF CAMPAIGN

There has been much discussion about our failure to overcome our difficulties. How are we to resolve them? At the three General Motors plants in Britain there is only a small nucleus of 'hard core' militants. This does not mean to say however that we are entirely ineffective. The struggles of the Luton passenger Paint Area are on record for all to see. Something has been achieved. But for the handful of sincere, realistic and tough militants nothing would have been achieved through normal trade union channels. We work under extremely hazardous conditions and are already 'marked' men. A special committee was set up in Luton AC Block to get things moving but this died a sudden death through the efforts of some conniving paid officials.

To build an alternative leadership we have to start from scratch. This is not so formidable as it looks as we have had the experience of seeing a movement disintegrate before our eyes for 11 years. In order to build an alternative at Vauxhall's we have to create the right conditions in the shops. I would therefore put these recommendations to Vauxhall stewards as a sort of blueprint or 'charter'. This could perhaps be used as a basis for future approaches to the management.

1. We must achieve a closed shop. Nothing can be gained until we have a united shop floor.

2. In all General Motors plants we must insist that the Joint Works Committee should have the right to overrule union districts and branches in all matters relating to the daily running of the factory. We must demand that the M.A.C. be dissolved as it has no useful role to play as a representative body.
3. Before anything else can be negotiated both Convenors and the Works Committees must have full control of the internal mobility of labour.
4. We must revert back to a payment by results system. Eleven years of being conned by 'measured day work' and 'job evaluation' should be enough to tell us exactly which method works best. This can be tied up with a new procedure agreement embodying such clauses as 'site' negotiation with local supervision.
5. Shop stewards should have absolute freedom of movement amongst their own members. All times to be agreed before the job is started. Shop stewards to be informed before new jobs are put on the line or a new process is used.
6. We must have a completely revamped dispute or grievance agreement. This should include a provision for stewards in dispute to attend all stages of talks.\*
7. Lastly we must elect shop stewards that can be relied on to put some of these ideas into practice. This means that we must campaign for these ideas particularly at times of the elections of shop stewards.

These are just a few ideas that could be used to create conditions in the three Vauxhall plants which would enable an alternative shop floor leadership to work effectively. Firstly this new leadership must be able to organize. Secondly it must be militant. Thirdly it must be free from management corruption. Fourthly it must direct itself towards all the new concepts of left wing thought, both political and industrial. Fifthly it must have a method of mass communication, perhaps in the form of a weekly broadsheet, to stimulate interest in factory floor matters. Sixthly it must ensure a more effective system of contact between the three convenors and the Joint Works Committees. Seventhly we must develop the ability to adapt to new conditions, just as big business has, for instance, in the transition from 'free market' capitalism to the new 'planned economy' capitalism. Our job must clearly be to train the new leadership into exposing the deception used by top management and union officials to 'con' workers in the car industry.

Vauxhall workers are facing their most crucial period. The current wage issue gives us a tremendous possibility to demonstrate that WE MEAN BUSINESS. For the sake of the whole motor vehicle industry, we can't afford any longer to carry on nailing up our own coffin just because we are told it is 'in the national interest'.

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\* These proposals are normal procedure in well organized factories. (Ed.)

# THE OXFORD FLASCO

On Saturday September 2nd a conference of car workers was held at Oxford Town Hall. It had been convened by the Oxford Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions.

A conference of car workers has been badly needed for a long time. The management of BMC is currently attempting to introduce a system of measured day rate based on job evaluation, a system which has been in operation for many years at Vauxhall where workers have had bitter experience of it. Their experience of the system would be of great value to the potential new victims at BMC. Another example of the need for links is the fact that BMC workers receive more than twice the wages received by Vauxhall employees for comparable work. Methods of slowing down the line have been developed in the past at Fords, Renault and elsewhere which have proved highly effective. It is obvious that there are enormous benefits to be gained from down-to-earth meetings to exchange information of this kind and to develop links for mutual support in struggle.

## BREAD OR CIRCUSES?

But the Oxford conference turned out to be a circus similar to the one hundred and one other 'industrial' conferences stage-managed in the past by the Communist Party or by the Socialist Labour League. These conferences, each of which is labelled 'the most significant meeting of trade unionists for years' have rarely led to anything concrete. The SLL managed to dominate the organization of the Oxford meeting from an early stage. They 'organized' who attended. They 'organized' the agenda. They 'organized' the resolutions to be passed.

Probably less than 25% of the 400 or so people present were motor car workers. Only about 50% were industrial workers of any kind. The content of the circus itself was no better. It consisted in a long dissertation on the general decline of European capitalism and on America's inability to use the dollar for international liquidity, and in a number of very general resolutions calling on the government or the trade unions to do something or other. One particular resolution 'called upon left-wing MPs to put down a motion in the Parliamentary Labour Party for the resignation of Wilson and his Cabinet and their replacement... etc., etc.'. Further resolutions called for 'nationalization' of this or that industry as a solution to the problems facing workers. Well-trained wildcats did most of the talking.

Only one resolution had any contact with the real problems facing car workers. This was from Luton No.5 Branch of the National Union of Vehicle

Builders, which organizes the Paint Shop at Vauxhall Motors. It called for the creation of a national shop stewards' organization for the motor industry and made it clear that the representatives in such an organization would be liable to instant recall by the workers they represented. There was virtually nothing else at the conference of the slightest help to building up a genuine shop floor movement of car workers or to the creation of practical links between workers in different factories.

It is no accident that this resolution was singled out for an attack ('a total lack of socialist theory ... not yet understood the role of revolutionary politics within the trade unions ...') by that well known motor worker G. Healy in the Newsletter (September 9, 1967). Healy's alternative, clearly implied in his massive article, is the building of the Marxist Party (i.e. the SLL) to which the shop stewards movement and the growing mass movement in the factories ('because of its spontaneous nature utterly unprepared to tackle the problem of power ...') must be subordinated.

The charade continued until half-way through the afternoon with Stalinists and Trotskyists arguing heatedly about just how much the 'left MPs' could or should be asked to do. At this point the 40 delegates from Vauxhall Motors (by far the largest factory delegation present) decided they had had enough. They got up and walked out in a body. The meeting ended in uproar.

We are glad that this whole sham was exposed. Solidarity stands for the maximum possible number of meetings between workers (even meetings which say and do things with which we disagree) as it is only by constant exchange of experience and ideas that a real movement will emerge. But we are opposed to frauds like the Oxford conference where the needs of job organization are subordinated to the immediate political interest of the dominating political tendency.

## THE S.L.L. DOES ITS NUT

The Newsletter ('Weekly-Organ-Of-The-Central-Committee-Of-The-Socialist-Labour-League') provides evidence of the identification of the SLL with the Oxford conference. No less than three of the four pages of its issue of September 9 are devoted to the conference fiasco (though they don't put it quite like that!). Their 'report' includes a witch-hunting attack on Luton No.5 Branch NUVB, an attack which can only do damage to job organization at a time when this branch is playing an important role in the present struggle. This is a glaring example of the SLL policy that if you cannot dominate something you must attack it - a policy they share with the Communist Party. To make the matter clearer still the SLL turned up at the Vauxhall factory gate less than 48 hours before the work to rule and overtime ban were due to start. They were selling (and even giving away) this particular issue of the Newsletter. Their intentions are obvious.

The Newsletter's attacks on the Luton branch were pathetic - in fact well up to the standard of transparent dishonesty we have come to expect from this paper. They combine quotations out of context, half-truths,

innuendoes and downright lies. They even use the technique of amalgam, so ably used by Stalin against Trotsky. ('Trotsky was critical of Stalin. So were the capitalists. Therefore Trotsky was a fascist!'). In relation to the Oxford conference the amalgam went like this: 'The Morning Star attacked the conference. The Vauxhall delegation walked out "at the behest of a small handful of anarchists". Therefore Stalinists and anarchists are allies'.

Now it is obvious, even to the most simple-minded that the CP is opposed to everything the SLL does (and vice-versa). It does not follow, however, that all criticism of the SLL is inspired by the Kremlin. If one uses this kind of illogic what should one say about the Newsletter's attack on Luton No.5 Branch NUVB? The management and the trade union leaders were also attacking this branch. Are they therefore in league with the League? It is impossible to discuss at such a childish level.

If the SLL wants to hold conferences, good luck to them. No reasonable person would want to interfere (besides, they're fun for the children at Christmas). But what the Vauxhall delegation and many others present was fraud. The fraud of such a meeting pretending to be a conference by and for car workers when it was nothing of the sort.

The SLL have exposed themselves by the violence of their reaction. They have shown what value they really place on job organization. Their real attitude towards industrial struggle is that it is an easy way to get bloated publicity and to win recruits for their organization. In 1958 these people organized an Industrial Rank and File Conference, a similar sort of circus to the Oxford conference but on a much larger scale. Many active militants from factories, mines and building sites attended and high hopes were raised. But a few months later the 'line' changed. The word went out: 'back into the Labour Party'. The militant industrial programme was quietly ditched. Instead, militants were encouraged to join the Labour Party and campaign for the return of a Labour government 'pledged to socialist policies' !

## WHAT IS NOW NEEDED

The attitude of Stalinist and Trotskyist organizations is not only shown up in the way they manipulate such conferences but also by the way they seek to operate within industry itself. They all agree that the decisions of shop stewards committee - or of other bodies they may control - must be subordinated to the political line of their particular Party. The interests of the workers involved take second place. This sort of thing is the root cause of many industrial defeats, where tactical and strategic decisions relating to a strike are made in King Street and not by the strikers themselves. The 'much-loved SLL has a similar outlook. Fortunately it has always been very weak in industry (even in relation to its small size) although it tries to make up for this by loud shouting and publicity seeking.

What do we propose instead? We are not political simpletons. We do not believe that all the problems facing workers can be solved within the factory, far from it. The major problems of society cannot be solved at

factory level alone. But even less do we believe that these problems will be solved by resolutions (however well phrased and punctuated) or by placing the future control of job organization (in the motor industry or elsewhere) in the hands of political organizations who have their own axes to grind.

Our fundamental disagreement with such organizations is not over whether a political solution to industrial problems is necessary. It is. Our disagreement is rather on how such a solution will be achieved. For us the essential prerequisite for a strong, revolutionary, libertarian socialist movement is a powerful, independent and conscious rank and file movement in industry.

The problem facing industrial workers is not one of leadership, despite what such tendencies as the Communist Party, the SLL, the right wing or other candidates to the job may say. The problem is one of developing a mass consciousness among ordinary workers. There is a surplus of self-styled leaders already. Fortunately the proportion of the working class which is willing to be led by them is minute. The problem facing socialist militants is to contribute towards getting the masses to act and to understand why they are acting. This is a far more difficult task than replacing one lot of leaders with another - but it is also a far more relevant task to the building of a genuinely free society. There is an enormous amount to do and the only way to do it is to start at rock bottom.

What is needed now is a practical conference of car workers, however modest its scale, to discuss new managerial methods of manipulating workers, automation, work study and the despicable role of the trade union machines. Such a conference should also discuss methods of struggle, new techniques of action which are cheap for the men and very, very expensive for management, and forms of resistance within the factory. Another issue is the building of organization within the huge motor components industry (a good place to start would be the massive Lucas group). Another necessity is the development of regular contact and mutual aid, not only between factories in this country but with car workers abroad. (This point is increasingly important with the internationalization of the vehicle industry.)

Lastly but not least, car workers and others must develop a programme of advance dealing not only with wages, hours and fringe benefits, but also dealing with conditions within the factories: control of the speed of the line, internal mobility of labour, manning of machines, hiring and firing and a thousand and one other issues that can make life in the factory livable. It is from this struggle to control and dominate within the place of work that socialist consciousness will come.

The failure of the Oxford conference, on the eve of the great struggle facing the motor car workers, is a tragedy. The taking over of the organization of the conference by the SLL was the kiss of death. Many stayed away and as we have seen, many who came voted with their feet and walked out. Even those who stayed to the bitter end had little to take back to their factories. It is essential that the lessons be learned for the future. The creation of a national shop stewards organization, democratically controlled from below, is not an 'abstract proposal'. It is the number one priority for workers who really want to challenge the anti-working class policies of the Labour government.

KEN WELLER.

# ULYSSES DOWSED BY FIRE BRIGADE

by BOB POTTER

A few weeks ago the 163,000 Brighton ratepayers learned they would not be permitted to view the uncut film version of James Joyce's Ulysses. The film had been refused a certificate by four members of the Fire Brigade Committee. As an enthusiastic admirer of Joyce's work - and as a resident of Brighton - I was intrigued enough to do a little sleuthing. In the process I discovered something about the members of the Brighton Fire Brigade Committee. I also discovered the basis of their right to arbitrate on matters of culture.

## THE WATCH COMMITTEES

Up to the passing of the 1965 Police Act, Brighton was one of 83 County Boroughs (72 of which had Watch Committees) controlling some 125 police forces throughout England and Wales. The Watch Committees consisted of the Mayor and not more than one-third of the County Borough Councillors. In Brighton the Watch Committee consisted of 9 Councillors and 4 Aldermen.\*

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\* The election of Aldermen is one of the many ways in which council bureaucracies perpetuate themselves. Aldermen are elected by the Council for six-year terms. (N.B. Councillors are elected by "the people" for three-year terms.) Technically, Aldermen need not even have been members of the Council.

An interesting case was that of Sir Thomas Stanford, who once owned the famous Preston Manor. "They" wanted him to be Mayor. To obviate the need for his election to the Council, he was first made an Alderman and then "elected" Mayor of Brighton. He reigned for three terms, just prior to World War I.

Brighton has 19 wards, each of which is "represented" by one Alderman and three Councillors. One Councillor is elected each year for a period of three years. Every three years half of the Aldermen are "elected".

The Watch Committee were primarily concerned with police matters. They were responsible for the appointments of constables, the framing of regulations for combatting crime, traffic control, etc. Technically one person in three throughout the country's police forces was appointed, promoted, or dismissed as the case might be by the authority of the Watch Committees. (I say "technically", because in practice the Committees merely endorsed the recommendations of the Chief Constables.)

The Watch Committees were also responsible for the Fire Brigade, and fire safety regulations in public places, for the licencing of street hawkers, for the passing of films and plays as suitable for public exhibition, and for the implementation of Acts as varied as the Hypnotism Act, 1952, the School Crossing Act, 1953, and Pool Beating Act, 1954. For the exercise of many of these responsibilities sub-committees were set up.

#### OVERTIME FOR THE FIREMEN!

The Police Act laid down that two-thirds of the Watch Committee had to be elected members of the Council, and the remaining one-third magistrates. In Brighton this meant the addition of 7 magistrates, to reach a total of 21. The Police Act meant also that the Watch Committee, with considerably reduced powers (the Chief Constable was now responsible for police promotions, etc.) was more confined to Police Matters. Committees were generally shuffled about, their names changed, (although the same faces tended to come up). In Brighton the Fire Brigade Committee had been a sub-committee of the Watch Committee. In May, 1966, it became a main committee.

The changed responsibilities of the Watch Committee meant that some sort of Licencing Committee was needed, to take on the job of vetting the films not passed by the Board of Film Censors. The Town Clerk, Mr W O Dodd came up with an ingenious solution.

As there already existed a Fire Brigade Committee (whose duties included among other things regular visits to the town's cinemas to check the fire precautions, the proper functioning of safety curtains, the width of gangways, and the siting of exits, etc.) why not make the same committee responsible for viewing the "questionable" films. Why not vest in it the right to decide which films were in keeping with Christian morality and which were of a sexually incendiary nature? The Councillors thought it a splendid suggestion. It would save all the rigmarole of nominations, secondings, and votings. Mr Dodd's suggestion became a decision of the Council.

GEORGE BALDWIN - POLICE EXPERT

"No one knows more about the police in Brighton than I do", Alderman George Baldwin told me when I visited him at his home. We sat in his front room, glared at by two coloured photographs of him and his wife in the roles of Mayor and Mayoress of Brighton. The pictures are five years old.

His boast is no idle one. Mr Baldwin had been Chairman of the Watch Committee in 1957/1958 when that body had suspended Chief Constable Charles Ridge and Detective Inspector John Hammersley, C I D. This was followed by their appearance with a licensee and a bookie at the Old Bailey on charges of conspiracy to obtain "rewards" for various services rendered.

Today Alderman Baldwin serves in the Home Secretary's Policy Advisory Board and the Police Council of Great Britain. He has served on the Brighton Council for 17 years.

He described to me the procedure of viewing a film. All members of the Committee receive a copy of a synopsis prepared by the Board of Film Censors. The synopsis relates, briefly, the story of the film. It then lists the reasons why the Board feels unable to grant a Certificate. On average such a synopsis is six pages long. Up to a few years ago the Committee members merely read this document and then pronounced judgement. Then they were "legally advised" that it would be preferable if they actually saw the film - rather irksome at times, but then a quorum consists of a mere three (the Fire Brigade Committee has seven members).

A representative of the police always attends a viewing (in the case of "Ulysses" it was the Chief Constable). So does a representative of the Town Hall staff, who acts as a kind of minute secretary. The Chief Fire Officer attended the "Ulysses" session - he doesn't normally attend, but he presumably wanted to see the film. Anyway, it is the Fire Brigade Committee!

The viewers all sit apart. Then they meet (on this occasion on the pavement, outside). First they ask the representative of the police for his comments. Having established their legal terms of reference, they have a general discussion. It took them less than five minutes to agree unanimously that Ulysses could not be granted a certificate.

Alderman Baldwin assured me that neither he nor the other members of the Committee were "narrow-minded". After all they had passed "nude" films. Last year they had passed a "rape" film. "We saw this fellow chase this woman through the woods", he said, "but he didn't say what he was going to do to her, and she didn't say what he was going to do to her".

"But in this film it's all said. She lies in her bed and talks about what men have in their trousers, and how big it is, and how she had it four times in one night. It would be bad enough if it were a man describing these things, but to have these things being said by a woman . . . !"

"Then you actually see intercourse take place. You see a man get on her. You see her face close up, its reaction to the pain of the first insertion, her growing excitement, the final ecstasy. This might not be so bad in a book, but this film is meant for a mixed audience - men and women sitting alongside each other in the dark."

"What would any normal and decent person do if they saw a dog and a bitch performing in the street, and a bucket of water was nearby? And they are only animals and don't know any better!"

"It was my duty to stop this film", concluded George Baldwin. In an afterthought he added that several scenes were blasphemous.

No! he hadn't read the book. (Neither had any other of the members of the viewing committee.) Nor had he read any other book by James Joyce. He didn't consider himself particularly well-read. This didn't matter much. He was "experienced". After all, he'd been around. He owned a small building business founded by his grandfather. He had heard the language of the workers. He had also been in the cadet corps and in the Boy Scouts, had sung in the choir, had been a soldier in World War I, and a Divisional Officer in the Fire Brigade in World War II (which is how he got to be a member of the Fire Brigade Committee, after only three months on the Watch Committee). And anyway you can't be Mayor of Brighton without knowing what's going on, without frequent contact with churches, welfare bodies, etc.

He thought it a pity that more people didn't read about the exploits of Sir Francis Chichester. So much better for them than all the sex and dirt.

#### THE CHAIRMAN TALKS TO THE PRESS

I didn't actually get to meet Councillor Timothy Barling, the Chairman of the Fire Brigade Committee.

Councillor Barling had recently bought himself a penthouse in "The Priory", a lush block of flats in the Kingsway, the main road running along Hove's sea front. It's one of those places where you press the button and wait for a voice to boom out from the microphone - something that didn't happen on the two occasions I called. There is a flat up for sale on the same floor for a mere £11,750 leasehold (plus £100 p.a. ground rent and £150 p.a. service charge). Any of London's homeless still looking for somewhere to live?

Councillor Barling is well known in Brighton as a successful business man (wholesale fashions) and as a stalwart in the R A F Association. He has been a Councillor for ten years. On his shoulders it fell to be one of the main spokesmen to the press on the "Ulysses" judgement. He describes how it all happened in the Sunday Times (2/7/67):

"We should have gone back to the Town Hall but there was no real reason because after 5 or 6 minutes Councillor Taylor moved that it couldn't be shown without the cuts. We all thoroughly disliked the last 15 or 20 minutes. This woman (Molly Bloom) when she's in bed, you know it as well as I do. A certain amount of it was completely unnecessary. It could have been wrapped up very much nicer.

"We could see no objection to the first half. I personally thought the photography was very good, but frankly we were all bored stiff.

"I don't think it would have helped if any of us had read the book. There's six copies in the library. In a week six people would have read it, whereas 5,000 people would have seen the film.

"What worries me about "Ulysses" is its effect on the 16-17 year olds holding hands in the back row. What's going to happen to them when they leave?"

#### MISS GRUNDY, O.B.E.

Miss Dorothy Stringer, O B E, Chairman of the Watch Committee, and member of the Fire Brigade Committee, lives in Dyke Road en route to the famous Devil's Dyke. There are nice big houses in this road (the one next door to her's was on sale for £7,750). She has lived there for most of her 72 odd years.

Her father had always been deeply involved in local affairs, had been Mayor of Brighton and so on. Dorothy had left school at 18, and with a guaranteed private income there was never any need to go job hunting. Instead she decided to devote herself to social work.

In 1923 her dad got her coopted on to the Education Committee because he thought she might be interested. She's been there ever since, although it wasn't until November, 1933, that she was actually elected to the Council. At the moment she serves on seven council committees. She is the only woman on the Fire Brigade Committee.

She served as Mayor of Brighton in the 1952-53 term. A new secondary school was being built at this time. She laid the foundation stone, in her capacity as Mayor, whereupon it was decided that no name having yet been decided upon, the school should be called the "Dorothy Stringer Secondary School".

In 1960 she was awarded the O.B.E. (she's not sure why, but thinks it must be because of all her years on the Education Committee). She collected it at Buckingham Palace. The place wasn't entirely strange to her, as she had twice been a guest at royal garden parties.

Apparently the only time when the running wasn't quite so smooth was in May, 1958, when there was a move to have her and another female councillor removed from the Watch Committee as being "Mrs Grundys", and not having the right qualifications for censoring films, etc. But the Council voted 37 to 10 to keep the women on.

Miss Stringer didn't see "Ulysses" as she had rather a lot of work to do. But she had read the synopsis and was quite satisfied she wouldn't have approved of the film. I confessed to being very ignorant about the subject and asked her what the film was all about, and why it was so disgusting.

"I only glanced at the synopsis", she said, "but I think there was a divorce in it (I know some people think divorce is O.K. these days) and I think there was a murder or something. Oh! . . . . I don't know!"

She emphatically defended the right of local council committees to judge films that were "questionable".

As I made my departure Miss Stringer mentioned that when she was my age people didn't just visit as I was doing. "They called at four and left their cards", she explained. I felt a little stung - after all I had put on a tie, especially for the visit.

### HORSE SENSE

The motion to ban the film had been put to the Fire Brigade Committee by Councillor Jim Taylor. He has been on the Council for 14 years, and his talents go far beyond the mere judgement of cultural matters.

He started in life dealing with "horse boxes" and to this day is considered quite an authority on racing. Then, with his brother Fred, he started up a small coaching outfit. The 1940's found Britain at war. The Taylors were lucky enough to land a government contract for the transportation of troops. They soon had five coaches in action. The premises were in Rottingdean's famous Marine Drive, just a few blocks away from home (also in Marine Drive!). It was quite a prosperous little business that they finally sold, some 18 months ago.

Mrs Taylor is a moderately successful business woman, and owns one of those rather more superior gift shops (called FINESSE) just around the corner from the coaching premises.

\* \* \*

By now the reader will be in a position to judge for himself exactly how "representative" these members of the Fire Brigade Committee really are, and with what "authority" they decide which films you and I might view.

Could it be that the Chairman, Timothy Barling, had some lingering doubts as to the broadness of his Committee? The Brighton and Hove Gazette (30/6/67) reported that he had made a special point of inviting the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer "so that we would get a cross-section of opinion"!!!

"... my soul  
Is sick of public turmoil - ah! most sick  
Of the vain effort to redeem a race  
Enslav'd because degenerate; lost to hope,  
Because to virtue lost - wrapp'd up in self,  
In sordid avarice, luxurious pomp,  
And profligate intemperance - a race  
Fierce without courage; abject and yet proud;  
And most licentious, tho' most far from free."

A modern Jeremiah? A cynic of the Left? An "individualist" anarchist? No. John Thelwall, poet, propagandist and publisher, a giant of the London Corresponding Society. Twice tried for treason and acquitted; imprisoned in the Tower, and left to rot uncharged in the Death Hole, among the corpses of Newgate. Hounded round England by the Home Secretary - the infamous Duke of Portland, who never omitted to search under his bed for Jacobins - beaten up by paid "loyalists", and finally broken when he sought refuge with Wordsworth and Coleridge. In his youth Coleridge had befriended Thelwall, when he and Wordsworth were planning to form a "pantisocracy" - the anarchist colonies which were the escapist panacea of all eighteenth century dogooders; now the intellectuals had mellowed, embraced a proper sense of responsibility, under the beneficial influence of opium eating - who said that drugs were a new phenomenon?

Coleridge was seized with panic when the starving comrade of his youth appealed for shelter. "At present I can see much evil and little good could result from your shelter here." Thelwall left to tramp the roads, a social outcast, whom all men were afraid to recognise. He broke, and penned the above verse.

Shortly after, he followed the advice of his contemporary Voltaire, he retired for a time to an insecure small holding in Wales. But before he died, he was publishing a rather insignificant broadsheet "Champion", an embryonic forerunner of Chartist literature. We can learn from Thelwall what the Left still refuses to learn today: his "vain effort to redeem a race". The efforts of elites and cadres will be as vain as the messiahs and redeemers; we cannot arise above the workers without also degrading them.

Ichabod.

# THE CULTURE VULTURES

One of the fruits of the Detroit revolt is the money being poured into the city by various foundations. Academics of all kinds are being paid to take surveys, make studies, do interviews, and so on. The hope is that people in authority will then know what's going on and won't again be taken by surprise.

In 1963 the then President of the American Sociological Association, Everett C. Hughes, delivered his presidential address to his fellows. In it he noted that sociologists have studied the Negro community for years. They studied family life. They studied street life. They studied gangs. They studied education. They studied it all. Yet when the Negro revolution broke out they were taken completely by surprise. It is the function of social scientists to know what is happening in society. In the case of the Negro revolt, they were sadly lacking.

In 1967 the academic world, as well as those in authority, were still being taken by surprise. We offer a very modest prediction: the new investigations and studies of the Negro ghetto will line the pockets of some academics. When they are all over, no one will be any the wiser about the causes of the July Days of 1967. Or any more prepared for the next explosion. They ask the wrong questions and so they get the wrong answers. The right answers are not marketable. What foundation or politician worth his salt would pay out good money to be told that they were going to be overthrown?

From the July 1967 issue of 'Speak Out' (Bulletin of the Facing Reality Publishing Committee) 14131 Woodward Ave., Detroit, Mich. 48203.

We have received several exciting accounts of the recent riots in the U.S.A. from American friends, subscribers and witnesses. We hope shortly to publish a pamphlet on the subject. All interested in integrated looting, please note.



JOHNSON'S  
DAYDREAM

The article **SEXUAL THERMIDOR** in our last issue provoked various reactions, some enthusiastic, others critical. Of the latter, some were due to genuine disagreement, others to an obvious failure of communication. We print one letter below. There will be another in the next issue.

I have not read a more juvenile article in any periodical since I stopped buying Tribune, and had hoped never to see anything like this in Solidarity.

Why sneer at monogamous marriage? It is a state most people enter and stay in quite voluntarily and to their mutual happiness, and this goes for most revolutionary socialists also. ( I include marriages of habit and repute, which incidentally have enjoyed full legal rights and status in Scotland since Reformation times; yet in this country we get more morality and respectability pushed down our throats than anywhere in the British Isles.) The ones who have had several extramarital affairs are so few in number that they constitute an item of leftwing gossip when everyone feels like enjoying a little character assassination.

Whether "men being unfaithful to their wives without experiencing pangs of conscience" is an ideological remnant of bourgeois society or not, I challenge any woman to say she is more emancipated or feels nearer socialism if her husband does anything of the sort. More likely she feels like killing him or leaving him, according to temperament, and quite right too. Such conduct is a betrayal of her and of their children. I wouldn't need to spell this out to ordinary working class men and women, but to the dwellers in this sexual cloud cuckoo land it is perhaps necessary to explain that to the extent a husband or wife is unfaithful, to that extent love has died, because one wouldn't indulge oneself outside marriage if this aspect of life together were satisfactory. And if it is not, genuine love seeks to put things right, it does not simply cast him or her aside and look elsewhere.

Anyone who imagines that there can be no more to relations with the opposite sex than the satisfaction of physical needs has simply not grown up. It is the typical statement of "callow youth", except that today's teenagers are a lot more grown up and less likely to make such assertions.

The only aspects of Dr Atarov's views which are discussed at length are those on masturbation and puberty. Agreed his notions are hilarious, but isn't it dishonest to let this stand as condemnation of all he says? This technique has been castigated by Solidarity in other contexts.

Then there's the quoted examples of extramarital relations. As for the first, any girl who makes love with a man about whom she knows not even his name, hasn't got the sense she was born with. The man in question will cynically agree. He doesn't risk abortion or nine months' pregnancy followed by the problems of adoption or rearing a child single-handed. He may deny paternity, thus depriving the child of necessary income, on the grounds that "if she didn't even know my name when she agreed, how can I be sure I'm the father?" Some emancipation!

The second example, in which the writers seem to imagine there can be no harm in V.D. since it doesn't affect studies or relationships with colleagues, is equally puerile. Well, if they ever get it I hope they're just as philosophical. Perhaps they have nothing better to do than attend a discreet clinic for three months or so. Perhaps the risk of producing a mentally defective or malformed child, only averted by blood testing and subsequent treatment early in pregnancy, is a negligible matter compared to living the rich, full life.

One or two points made me laugh out loud. If the writers mean what I mean when they say "sexual relations", then many a mother of ten must wish it was true that "only a few of these acts (out of thousands throughout his life) would be sufficient to ensure procreation".

The reason why Polynesian adolescents do not have hordes of kids is more probably the effect of their extremely poor diet on bodies still needing nourishment for their own growth. I doubt if it has anything to do with the rhythm method of birth control, but don't let the Vatican hear about it, just in case! I can just hear Pope Paul: "To the City and to the World. Wait Brethren, until our investigation team has returned from Polynesia. Throw away your Pills and come back to Church."

Bearing a child and rearing it is not easy. In this society, 14 and 15 year old mothers are not uncommon. If sexual relations were approved of by society at large for those of this age, there can be no doubt that the numbers would be much greater. It seems rather hard lines that a girl so young should find out the hard way when she has become physically mature.

As for contraceptive appliances, it is simply not true that adolescents or anyone else cannot obtain them. The "pill" can be bought by post, no questions asked. Little shops selling Durex do not ask for your birth certificate. Little stands between safety and risk except the adolescent boy's embarrassment at undertaking the transaction - and to save himself a few minutes' discomfort he'll expect a girl to take this appalling risk. No wonder "Do you think I was born yesterday?" is a common female refusal.

One would think that if a boy can overcome the conventions sufficiently to hop into bed with a girl, he might overcome them a little bit further and ensure the girl's safety. Of course this isn't the only reason for unwanted children being born. There are girls who are frightened of taking the pill (and propaganda against it is directly traceable to the rubber goods Industry!) There are the Catholic girls who won't take preventive measures "because it's a sin"! There are men and boys who like the idea of leaving a trail of offspring wherever they go. There are those who act on impulse, who would do well to adopt the Boy Scouts' Motto. There are girls who are so scared of losing their boy they'll risk pregnancy in their efforts to please him. There are girls who deliberately bring it about in an effort to get him to marry them. It is for all these reasons that, if contraceptives were issued free with school meals, unwanted babies would still be born.

Someone has to carry the financial responsibility of such children. No doubt society could solve the financial problem by providing the young parent(s) with the necessary money, but there's more to child rearing than finding the cash for it. If adolescents in our society are raised so as not, in most cases, to be ready for such responsibility, most people feel it is right they should enjoy their youth and lack of responsibilities while it lasts - and younger teenagers are mostly happy that it should be so. Surely no-one is seriously suggesting that we go straight from childhood to all the responsibilities of adulthood? (Incidentally, here in Scotland, one can marry at 16 without parental consent; thus showing that inhibition of young persons' sexual activities is not necessarily consistent with repressive, church-and-state-dominated society.)

Obviously those who act responsibly should have the freedom to do so. But have other people to suffer at the hands of those who do not act responsibly, in the interests of the latter's needs and pursuit of their freedoms? Any society with any pretensions to an ethical system of any kind will feel that the weak must be protected in some way; and plainly something more practical than the threat of hellfire or the posthumous disapproval of Lenin is required. I suggest we put the horse before the cart and see that society is organised to bear up for the weak, before we start acting as if it was. The ruthless, unloving free-for-all advocated by Alain Gerard and Marc Noireau has nothing to do with freedom or socialism, so spare us the ideological justifications.

MARIA FYFE.

## TRUTH ABOUT VAUXHALL

by KEN WELLER

This pamphlet was first published 5 years ago. It soon sold out. We have recently reprinted it with a new introduction.

The pamphlet deals with modern managerial techniques in the motor car industry and is essential reading for anyone who wants to understand what is happening at Vauxhall.

It costs 10d. (post free) and can be had from Heather Russell, 53A Westmoreland Rd., Bromley, Kent.

# take out a sub

## SOLIDARITY

10/- for 12 issues from Heather Russell, 53A Westmoreland Road, Bromley, Kent.

## SOLIDARITY (SCOTLAND)

10/- for 12 issues from George Williamson, 33 Kelvingrove St., Glasgow C.3.

# REVIEWS

THE INCOMPATIBLES: Trade Union militancy and the consensus.  
Penguin, in association with New Left Review. 6/-.

PARTICIPATION OR CONTROL? by Ken Coates and Tony Topham.  
Bertrand Russell Centre for Social Research, 3-4 Shovers Place, Haymarket,  
S W 1. 1/6d.

The Incompatibles, like the previous New Left publication Towards Socialism, is a sandwich book. Wedged between some essays by celebrities whose qualifications to write about trade unions are obscure, is the strong red meat written by contributors to the New Left Review. It would be sectarian to object if this had resulted in a book likely to be read by a public seldom reached by radical literature.

The essays of Michael Frayn and Philip Toynbee are readable if rather lightweight. Most of the other contributors are firm supporters of industrial militancy. They recognise that, in a capitalist society, the workers should try to get the best possible price for their labour power. This, in itself, is hardly revolutionary, but it is a welcome change from the efforts of the soft left, old and new, to devise schemes which will make working class struggle unnecessary.

Perhaps the best of the essays is "Wage Slaves", by Ken Coates. Coates demonstrates that the workers' basic situation remains the same whether his wages are high or low. The workers, "in spite of a vast bog of ballyhoo of cynical devices for 'participation' or 'involvement' feel the continuous pressure of events to cut back, erode, and remove any traces of real rights which they may have been able to grasp at their own immediate level, of the shaping of their own tasks and direction". Coates also shows the impotence of the bureaucratic apparatus when he points out that the N U M cannot persuade the Government to honour its promises to the Union in spite of its 30 M Ps.

Anyone who has any faith in the left bureaucracy should have his illusions dispelled by Paul Foot's article on the seamen's strike. Foot shows how Harry Nicholas of the 'left' T G W U instructed his members to move 'black' ships. What more could a right-wing leader have done to stab the seamen in the back?

A jarring note in the book is struck by a left bureaucrat, Jack Jones, Assistant Executive Secretary of the T G W U. In "Unions Today and Tomorrow" he outlines the part the unions should play in the bureaucratic society of the future. This piece might have been written by an enlightened personnel manager.

One is struck by the inclusion of Jones' essay in this book, committed as it is to militant trade unionism. This ambivalence is explained by Perry Anderson's theoretical conclusion to the book. He maintains that as the trade unions are incapable of going beyond trade union demands, there is a need for a Revolutionary Party which will include the bourgeois intellectuals who are the repository of socialist theory. Anderson's crude Leninism equates the working class itself with specific institutions (i.e. the Trades Unions). If one accepts this thesis the conclusions follow logically enough. The 'left' Trades Union bureaucrat must represent the vanguard of the working class. Just as obviously, a working class which has Jack Jones as its highest expression badly needs an extraneous injection of socialist consciousness - from the theoretical vanguard.

\* \* \* \* \*

Both the authors of Participation or Control are supporters of the journals The Week and Voice of the Unions which devote much of their energy to organising conferences where workers, Labour Party, and Trades Union leaders meet to formulate plans for workers' control of industry. One of the most obnoxious features of these conferences is the participation in them of Trades Union officials who are quite prepared to talk of 'workers' control' as something for the future, not realising that to be a meaningful concept it must start here and now, with workers' control of their own struggles. Such 'left' officials are quite prepared to vote for the most radical resolutions and then, on leaving the Conference Hall, go to some unofficial dispute, informing 'their' members to return to work and leave things to 'their' officials - many of whom are not even elected.

The endeavours of these journals were always inherently suspect. They received some support from Trades Union bureaucrats who realised that it was necessary to draw the workers into some kind of consultation. The work of The Voice Conferences has finally met with some response: the Labour Party study group on the docks now favours a measure of workers' participation! So does the government's plan for steel!

Participation or Control seems to be a cry of alarm at the appearance of the monstrous Frankenstein which its authors have helped to create. Anyone who reads Coates' contribution to The Incompatibles will hardly be surprised that he is unable to accept the confidence trick of the Government proposals. Despite the deeply mystifying nature of their campaign for 'Workers' Control' Coates and Topham do, in fact, differ from the enlightened sections of management who wish to incorporate workers' 'representatives' into the system of exploitation.

But Participation or Control? is a very incomplete retraction. It attacks the Labour Party leadership . . . but at the same time it calls on the Party to implement genuine workers' control. This seems to assume that Governmental proposals are the result of errors, not of conscious efforts to discipline the workers more effectively. Some of the proposals of the Labour Party study group apparently mark a big step forward although they don't go as far as the documents emerging from The Voice conferences. The authors believe that there is a need for a series of blueprints for the operation of workers' control in various industries.

No doubt the formulation of such blueprints can provide hours of harmless amusement to their inventors. But who are these blueprints intended for? The present Labour Party leadership? A future, 'better' leadership? There is a strange silence on this point. The authors defend themselves against the charge of Utopianism by pointing out that their plans are not final, but are subject to revision. This misses the point. Surely the essence of Utopianism is to formulate plans which have no connection with any movement which might implement them.

There has never been a shortage of blueprints in the socialist movement. Sometimes they are necessary, as when they set out, and help to clarify, the aims of a movement. In the absence of this movement the revolutionary draughtsman might as well take up astrology, or consummate his flirtation with the Labour bureaucracy. The authors' attempt to dispense with mass support leads them, inevitably, to elitist politics.

J.S.

TAKING LONDON FOR A RIDE - THE BUSMEN'S CASE.

6d from F. Trott, 19 Grosvenor Road, Brentford, Middlesex.

As a documentation of the run-down of London Transport as an industry and a public service this little pamphlet does a thorough enough job. It oozes facts and figures which combine to tell a grim story of wastage, inefficiency and stupidity. For militants wanting all the statistics at their finger tips, the pamphlet is a must.

It is, in reality, a Platform pamphlet in disguise. The Platform was for a number of years one of the most popular of the "unofficial" rank and file publications - well produced, competently written with a humorous approach to the busmen's problems; it sold like hot cakes in most London garages.

The fact that The Platform became the official organ of the Central Bus Committee probably explains why the pamphlet is published by an anonymous "group of rank and file busmen", for there are some mild whinings about the Union and its full-time officials.

But the union bureaucracy isn't recognised as such, and so there is no attempt to analyse its class basis, no realization that its survival depends on its being part of the apparatus, an instrument of the employer against the employed. Instead, it's all a question of imperfect union organisation and spineless leaders: the Union's too big, of the 36 members of the General Executive Council only 2 or 3 have any personal knowledge of the bus industry, so the busmen tend to be unrepresented: in the long intervals between meetings too much power falls to the full-time officials. Underlying all this is the general grouse that the union leaders are strong in words but weak in action.

The answer isn't seen in terms of the workers themselves taking direct action. Members are asked to do more "through the machinery of the Union to ensure the demands of the membership are felt", to force the leaders "to lead its membership into effective opposition to a management whose policies are disastrous . . .", etc.

These failings are, in fact, the failings of The Platform, namely that the busmen's problem is never really seen as part of the total social problems, and consequently no meaningful solution applicable to the transport industry is offered the reader. This bankruptcy is clearly illustrated in the programme of immediate demands. The first two are:

1. "The London Transport Board should be disbanded and replaced by an elected body." No hint as to who should do the electing.

The real question that should have been posed should surely have been that of workers' management. It is at this point, where the pamphlet ends, that the authors could have really made a contribution by offering some suggestions, however vague, as to how rank and file bodies might develop into future organs of management.

2. "All fare increases and service cuts should be stopped while a plan is drawn up of the service needed to meet the public's transport requirements."

Again it is not stated who is going to draw up the plan! But readers need not search far for the answer. They are urged to ensure that their delegates serve on the local Trades Council and that they are represented on the local Labour Party. "There must be political pressure on the Government, local councils, and political parties to free London's transport from its financial bondage", etc., etc. All this makes it quite clear that, although the proposed new plan may change superficially (possibly through the waiving of the need to show a "profit" in the business sense, perhaps even

through the abolition of fares altogether and the financing of the system directly by the State) fundamentally there would be no change, and the decision taking would still rest with the traditional authorities. As if to drive the point home, the pamphlet emphasises in bold black letters that "Barbara Castle must be forced to a recognition that her talk must give way to action".

Ironically, and without realizing the significance of what they do, the authors conclude by quoting Lord Ashfield, Managing Director of the Underground Electric Railways Company half a century ago. In his view transport was a public service which had to be adequate, efficient and cheap for a "wide and healthy distribution of the immense populations of modern cities" to make them "orderly, prosperous and pleasant places to live in". The authors repeatedly cite the existing social services as the model to be emulated. Their appeal is a liberal one, for a more fairly, more sensibly run industry. Hence their self-identification with the demands of the more intelligent strata of the ruling class itself. They do not see their problems in class terms. The answer to them therefore, never appears as the revolutionary transformation of the relations within the industry. All they can offer is "bringing pressure to bear" on the trade union officials, and of persuading the Minister of Transport to "do something".

But forgive the repetition. For the facts and figures relating to London Transport, the pamphlet is a good tanner's worth.

B. P.

## two poems by george williamson

### THE UNION OFFICIAL

Wee fat full-time union official  
waistcoat bursting with status  
thirty years off the tools  
grovels at the bosses' table  
looking for a handout  
for a dram  
to give him strength  
to climb on the workers' backs.

### PROBLEMS

The silly man  
on the Scilly Isles  
ponders his pipe  
while left-wing sectarians  
in their blindness  
seek solutions  
in the darkness  
of their own arseholes.

# VAUXHALL: THE MANAGEMENT'S PROPOSALS

## 3. Productivity and Efficiency Aspects.

Government policy and the economic circumstances of both the country and the Company make it essential that pay increases are justified by improvement in productivity or efficiency.

So far as Vauxhall is concerned, much can yet be achieved by an unqualified acceptance of conditions agreed when the present Wage Structure was fully consolidated in 1956, namely (in abridged form):

General acceptance of the basic idea that to produce more with the same amount of human effort is a sound economic and social objective.

Performance of a fair day's work, which may be defined as the output of a qualified worker who uses the facilities provided by Management, follows the prescribed method, and stays on the job throughout the specified working period.

Pay packets can only be improved by constant efforts to improve efficiency which must therefore be considered standard practice.

The introduction of modern machines and improved methods must be supported by all recognising that such innovations not only increase output in relation to effort, but progressively reduce fatigue.

Work and time study is essential because it has as its purpose the improvement of methods and determination of costs.

Continuity of employment and flow of production require transfers from time to time.

'Staying on the job throughout the specified working period' implies a good standard of self-discipline at starting and stopping times.

It is this agreement which will be taken into account in assessing individual employees for upgrading from Standard to Special Grade. The situation may be summarised briefly as follows:

- (i) Management has a prime responsibility for the provision of good facilities and the study and improvement of work systems and methods
- (ii) Employees have an equal responsibility to meet the requirements of a fair day's work by good attendance, self-discipline and mutual cooperation within procedure.

In regard to overtime, it is suggested that an employee who fails to turn up without a prior intimation that he will be absent would have his non-attendance regarded in the same way as for normal hours.

Collective understanding is however required in regard to some broader items which have a bearing on productivity and efficiency if the pay increases involved in the Company's proposals are to be justified and officially approved.

Items on which the Company seeks undertakings from Unions and employees collectively as productivity or efficiency requirements are as follows:

- (a) Local 'arrangements', e.g. regarding manning-up practices or other aspects of productivity, to be re-negotiated.
  - (b) Trade Unions are asked to be ready in principle to enter into negotiation for different or non-standard work systems, e.g. 'butt', double day-shift, 3-shift, etc., when circumstances so require.
  - (c) Acceptance in principle of the need for adult training and up-grading programmes for skilled occupations at the appropriate trainee rate.
  - (d) Acceptance in principle of the need for method/time study arrangements in activities outside production areas, to which such programmes are currently restricted.
  - (e) Extension of employment to women over a wider range of occupations.
  - (f) Acceptance of work as assigned, i.e. relaxation of restrictive demarcation, where such exists.
  - (g) Elimination of the 3-minute daily clocking allowance and any relief time during the first hour of each shift.
- Associated with this change, payment would be made to the nearest one-tenth of an hour, i.e. 6 minutes instead of 15 as at present.
- (h) Assurances will also be sought in respect of seniority situations arising when personnel are called upon to return to hourly paid from staff or supervisory positions.

\* \* \* \* \*

## GUNS AND BUTLER

The gunning of the U.S. Embassy required considerable courage. It was a natural consequence of the growing sense of frustration and helplessness felt about the continuing war in Vietnam. We were in no way responsible. This did not prevent the police raiding the homes of 4 of our supporters. Having said this, we must disagree with those on the left who have attacked this action. We keep our attacks for our enemies. As a part of a revolutionary upsurge such methods may be useful. But they cannot be a substitute for mass action. Such activities may well continue and even increase. Let us keep well away from Genocide Square.