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WORKING CLASS CULTURE:  
THE WORK-IN AT UPPER CLYDE SHIPBUILDERS

2 Volumes

Charles Alexander Woolfson B.A.

Thesis submitted for  
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Sociology  
May 1982



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"The materialist sociologist, taking the definite social relations of people as the object of his inquiry by that very fact also studies the real individuals from whose actions these relations are formed."

V.I. Lenin.

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James Milne and Douglas Harrison of the STUC, Gerry Ross and Finlay Hart of the CPGB and John Foster, all provided help and encouragement. William Syme of the Scottish Record Office, Michael Moss of the University of Glasgow Archives and Campbell McMurray of the National Maritime Museum assisted in collecting and archiving material. Ken Heritage of BBC Scotland and Marie Jordan and the staff of the Glasgow Herald press library made the invaluable resources of their organisations available. Margaret Pitt-Watson assisted in the work of transcription which was typed by Anne-Marie Baran, while Kathleen Clark typed the final manuscript. Bridget Fowler supervised this thesis from its original conception and remained a loyal and generous critic through all its many by-ways. Finally to the shipbuilding workers of the Clyde to whom this work is dedicated, it is hoped that by recording this segment of their history not only will old memories be rekindled but also a few pointers to the future may be seen.

## SUMMARY

The thesis investigates the formation of a unified class identity among a highly sectionalised labour force, the shipbuilding workers of Clydeside. One episode is examined in detail, the work-in at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders during 1971-72, which was a protracted campaign for the 'right to work' by a workforce whose jobs were jeopardised by the sudden bankruptcy of the company.

The successive phases of the work-in are reconstructed through documents and records of the time including transcribed tape-recordings of the workers' discussions and meetings. An attempt is made to show the detailed unfolding of the workers' strategy and tactics in response to the internal and external pressures upon them to abandon or modify their objective of preserving both their own employment and the shipyards as functioning entities. It is suggested that the success of the workers in securing their objectives was contingent upon the ability of the shop stewards leading the campaign to forge and maintain a cohesive solidarity among the workforce, despite divisive sectional undercurrents. The work-in itself, although largely symbolic in nature, is shown to be the focus for national and international working-class solidarity and, in addition, to command the support of other sections of the population not normally identified with workers' struggles. It is argued furthermore, that in posing certain fundamental questions about the future direction of the Scottish economy, this campaign for the right to work provided the initial focus for a broader anti-monopoly alliance to begin to take shape as well as the context for demands for Scottish devolution. It is maintained that as a result the Conservative Government reversed their decision to reduce the scale of shipbuilding on the Upper Clyde and embarked upon a fundamental change in industrial policy which became known as the U-turn of the Heath administration.

The UCS campaign is pinpointed within a period of rising working class militancy in the early 1970's and it is suggested that it itself made a significant contribution to generating organised worker resistance elsewhere, not only to redundancy threats, but to the broader social and industrial policies of the government. The wider implications of the UCS campaign are examined therefore in terms of what is identified as a watershed phase in the development of post-war British capitalism. These and subsequent developments have raised several fundamental questions about the contribution of trade union struggles to political change and strategies for Socialism in contemporary Britain. The final part of the thesis examines these issues on the basis of the UCS study. It is argued that trade union struggle can be seen as the site of regeneration for a working class culture preserving within it historical memories of class experiences of resistance to exploitation. A Leninist redefinition of working class culture is offered which identifies its core in an ideology of democracy and socialism deriving from the application of principles of solidarity, collectivism and struggle. Working class culture while based on trade union struggles is not necessarily therefore limited to purely wage militancy. Rather, it is a collective class inheritance based on resistance to exploitation which is capable of providing an essential springboard to more revolutionary challenges. As such the thesis attempts to reinstate the central importance of the struggles of the organised working-class as the leading force in the general movement for social change.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- AES -- Alternative Economic Strategy.
- ASB -- Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers, Shipwrights, Blacksmiths and Structural Workers.
- AUEW -- Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers.
- CBI -- Confederation of British Industry.
- CDA -- Clydeside Development Authority.
- CIR -- Commission on Industrial Relations.
- CPGB -- Communist Party of Great Britain.
- CPSA -- Civil and Public Servants Association.
- CSEU -- Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.
- DATA -- Draughtsmens and Technicians Association now TASS, Technical, Administration and Supervisory Section of the AUEW.
- DTI -- Department of Trade and Industry.
- EETPU -- Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunication and Plumbing Union.
- GMWU -- General and Municipal Workers' Union.
- GU Archives -- Glasgow University Archives.
- LCDFU -- Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trades Unions.
- NALGO -- National Association of Local Government Officers.
- NUM -- National Union of Mineworkers.
- NUPE -- National Union of Public Employees.
- NUR -- National Union of Railwaymen.
- ROWP -- Relaxation of Working Practices.
- SCPS -- Society of Civil and Public Servants.
- SIB -- Shipbuilding Industry Board.
- SRO -- Scottish Record Office.
- STUC -- Scottish Trades Union Congress.
- TGWU -- Transport and General Workers' Union.
- TUC -- Trades Union Congress.
- UCATT -- Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians.
- UCS -- Upper Clyde Shipbuilders.
- USDAW -- Union of Shop, Distribution and Allied Workers.

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Jimmy Airlie

Convener of the UCS joint shop stewards committee, member of the AUEW, convener of AUEW Govan.

Ken Alexander

Director of Fairfields and UCS.

Alex Annan

Convener of shop stewards at Yarrow's Scotstoun yard.

Ken Arkwright

Director of Breaksea corporation.

Sam Barr

Convener of shop stewards UCS Scotstoun. Member of the ASB.

Chris Bauer

Industrial correspondent of the Scotsman.

Johnny Beattie

Scottish entertainer.

Tony Benn MP

Former Minister of Technology during Wilson administration of 1964-70. Opposition spokesman on Trade and Industry, 1971-74.

Benny Biggins

Clydebank shop steward.

Alec Bill

UCS shop steward.

Joe Black

Chairman of the Clyde district of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, Clyde district organiser of the Electrical

David Bolton

Vice-chairman of Scottish area NUM.

Rev. Stuart Borthwick

West Parish Church Clydebank, delegate to UCS joint shop stewards committee, industrial chaplain at Singers.

Frank Briggs

President of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.

Joe Brown

Organiser of UCATT, Scotland.

Ron Brown

Councillor on Lothian district council.

Jock Bruce-Gardyne MP

Conservative member for South Angus.

Alistair Buchan

Journalist and author.

Janey Buchan

Glasgow City Labour Party, married to Norman Buchan MP.

Norman Buchan, MP

Labour member for West Renfrewshire.

Richard Buchanan, MP

Labour member for Springburn, Secretary of Scottish parliamentary Labour group.

Pat Burns

UCS shop steward.

Gordon Campbell MP

Secretary of State for Scotland.

Barbara Castle MP

Former Minister and author of 'In Places of Strife'.

Christopher Chataway

Minister for Industrial Development, 1972-74.

Alex Clark

Scottish secretary, Equity.

Jim Cloughey

UCS shop steward, publicity sub-committee.

Willie Clydesdale

UCS shop steward.

Charles Connell

Director of UCS Scotstoun division.

Bob Cook

Convener of cranemen at UCS Govan.

Davie Cooper

UCS shop steward.

Robert Courtney-Smith

Provisional and then official liquidator of UCS Ltd.

Frank Cousins

Assessor of STUC Committee of Inquiry, former general secretary  
of T&GWU.

A.F. Crawford

Financial director of UCS.



Dick Crawson

UCS shop steward.

John Davies MP

Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, 1970-72.

Robert Dickie

Chairman of shop stewards UCS Clydebank. Member of UCATT.

Arthur Dooley

Sculptor.

Tom Dougan

Convener at Caterpillar Tractors.

Ken Douglas

Managing director of UCS.

Archie Duncan

Scottish entertainer.

Richard Dynes

Leader of Labour group, Corporation of Glasgow, successor to

John Mains.

Sir John Eden MP

Deputy Minister for Trade and Industry.

George Evans

Officer of National Union of Vehicle Builders.

Vic Feather

General Secretary of the British TUC.

Ronnie Ferns

UCS shop steward.

Alex Ferry

Glasgow district secretary of the AUEW, former convener at Singers Clydebank.

Robert Fleming

Provost of Clydebank.

Mel Friedman

Director of Breaksea Corporation.

Tommy Friel

UCS shop steward.

Willie Gallacher

Leader of the Clyde Workers' Committee during the First World War and later Communist MP.

Archie Gilchrist

Managing Director of Govan Shipbuilders Ltd.

Sam Gilmore

Convener of the ENU, Govan.

Sir Alexander Glen

One of the 'Wise Men'.

Father Thomas Glen

Chairman of Clydebank and District Christian Action Group.

John Gollan

General Secretary of the Communist Party.

Hamish Grant

Senior official of Scottish CBI.

George Gray

UCS shop steward.

Perry Greer

Chairman of the Irish Shipping Company.

Angus Grossart

Managing Director of Merchant Bank.

Wayne Harbin

President of Marathon Manufacturing Coy, Texas.

Finlay Hart

Formerly leading Communist shop steward in the Boilermakers'

Society and Clydebank town councillor.

William Hannen MP

Labour member for Maryhill, Chairman of Scottish parliamentary

Labour group.

Edward Heath MP

Prime Minister 1970-74.

Arnold Henderson.

Former convener at Clydebank. Clydebank Communist Burgh Councillor.

Anthony Hepper

Chairman of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, former member of SIB  
working party on the Upper Clyde.

Con Higgins

UCS shop steward.

Willie Holt

UCS shop steward.

Russel Hunter

Scottish actor.

Willie Hutchinson

Chairman of the trade union side of the UCS joint council, Scottish  
regional office of the AUEW, member of STUC General Council.

Raymond Illsley

Chairman of STUC Committee of Inquiry, professor of Sociology,  
University of Aberdeen.

Ian Imrie

Industrial correspondent of the Glasgow Herald.

James Jack

General Secretary of the Scottish TUC.

Keith Joseph

Spokesman for Conservative 'neo-liberalism'.

Archie Kelly

Chairman of the Ardrossan Dockyard Company.

Eddie Kelly

Shop steward, Yarrows.

Jim Kenny

UCS shop steward.

John Kerr

Scottish correspondent of The Guardian.

Jimmy Kirkpatrick

Secretary of the Govan division of the UCS joint shop stewards committee. Member of draughtsman's union, organiser of travel committee.

Alex Kitson

Treasurer of the STUC and Scottish officer of T&GWU.

Gavin Laird

Ex-convener, Singers, Clydebank, full-time official of boilermakers.

Rev. Alex Lawson

Kilbowie Parish Church, Clydebank.

Nigel Lawson

Journalist, Sunday Times.

John Lennon and Yoko Ono

Supporters of the UCS Fighting Fund.

Provost Liddle

Provost of Glasgow Corporation.

Ronald Lyon

Chairman of Lyon, industrial developers.

Joe McCafferty

Official of the Scottish T&GWU.

Bob McCann

UCS shop steward.

Hugh McCartney MP

Member for East Dunbartonshire.

John McCartney

Convener of Hall Russell's, Aberdeen.

A.G. MacCrae

Chairman of Clyde Port Authority.

Jimmy McCrindle

Govan caulkers' shop steward.

Alexander McDonald

One of the 'Wise Men' of the Government's Advisory Group on the Upper Clyde.

David Macdonald

One of the 'Wise Men'.

Ray Macdonald

Chairman of the STUC.

Frank McIlhone MP

Member for Gorbals, parliamentary private secretary to Tony Benn.

Dan McGarvey

President of the ASB, chairman of the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.

John McGonnagall

UCS shop steward, GMWU convener UCS Clydebank.

Frank McGowan

UCS shop steward.

Willie McInnes

Convener of shop stewards, UCS Linthouse.

John McIntosh

UCS shop steward.

Calum MacKay

Paisley district secretary of the AUEW.

Ian McKee

Dunbartonshire district organiser of AUEW.

Alexander Mackenzie

Accountant representing the Government on the UCS board.

Roddy McKenzie

Treasurer of UCS Fighting Fund, Clydebank welder.

Eddie McLafferty

Convener at Plessey's Argyle works, Alexandria.

John MacLean

Clydeside Marxist educator during the First World War.

Lord McLeod of Fuinary

Progressive minister and former Moderator of the Church of Scotland.

Robin MacLellan

President of Glasgow Chamber of Commerce.

Harry McLevy

Convener of Robb Caledon, Dundee, and Dundee AUEW branch president.

Jasper Macmichael

Chairman of P-A Management Consultants, member of SIB working party on Upper Clyde.

John McMillan

UCS shop steward.

Stan McNee

UCS shop steward.

Tommy McTurk

Organiser of UCATT.

Dickson Mabon MP

Labour member for Greenock and Port Glasgow.

John Mains

Leader of majority Labour Group on Glasgow Corporation.

Karl A. Mally

Chairman of Breaksea Corporation.

Dougie Malone

Industrial Correspondent of the Daily Record.

Bruce Millan MP

Front-bench spokesman on Scottish industry for the Labour Opposition.



Arthur Milligan

Scottish correspondent, Morning Star.

James Milne

Assistant general secretary of the STUC.

Joe Moriarty

UCS shop steward.

Jimmy Morrel

Scottish organiser of GMWU.

Tommy Murdoch

UCS shop steward.

Alex Murray

Scottish Secretary of the Communist Party.

James Murray

Scottish executive officer of the Amalgamated Society of  
Boilermakers.

Dan O'Donnell

UCS shop steward, finance sub-committee.

Con O'Neill

Secretary of the UCS joint shop stewards committee.

George Perry

Assessor of STUC Committee of Inquiry, managing director of General  
Motors (Scotland) Ltd.

Jimmy Ramsay

Clyde district organiser of the Amalgamated Society of  
Boilermakers.

Jimmy Rankine

UCS shop steward.

Bob Reid

UCS shop steward.

Jimmy Reid

Spokesman for UCS joint shop stewards committee, convener of  
AUEW, UCS Clydebank. Member of Clydebank Burgh Council.

David Reid

UCS shop steward.

Willie Reid

Organiser of the Coppersmiths union.

Nicholas Ridley MP

Under Secretary of State, Department of Trade and Industry,  
former Opposition front-bench spokesman on shipbuilding.

Lord Robens

One of the 'Wise Men'.

Willie Robertson

UCS shop steward, finance sub-committee.

Gerry Ross

Convener of ASB Clydebank.

William Ross MP

Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland.

Hugh Scanlon

General Secretary of AUEW.

Jack Service

General Secretary of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and  
Engineering Unions.

Archibald Sharp

Financial adviser to Archie Kelly.

Jim Sillars MP

Former Labour member for South Ayrshire and founder of  
Scottish Labour Party.

David Skinner

Leader of Clay Cross district council.

Jock Smith

Clydebank Communist Burgh Councillor.

Bobby Starret

Painter at Yarrow's, cartoonist.

Hugh Stenhouse

First Chairman of Govan Shipbuilders Ltd.

Alex Stewart

UCS shop steward.

Iain Stewart

Chairman of Fairfields, briefly a member of the UCS board.

Tommy Stewart

UCS shop steward.

Lord Strathalmond (William Fraser)

Successor chairman of Govan Shipbuilders Ltd.

Sir William Swallow

Chairman of the Shipbuilding Industry Board.

Edward Taylor MP

Leading Scottish Conservative MP for Cathcart, Glasgow.

Donald Tonner

Secretary of the Clyde district of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.

Bill Towill

Scottish tenants' leader.

Leneord Turpie

Conservative Councillor, Glasgow Corporation.

Ernest Webster

Convener of shop stewards, BSC River Don.

Lord Weir

Chairman of Weir Engineering.

Harold Wilson MP

Leader of the Opposition.

Bishop Thomas Winning -

Auxiliary Bishop of Glasgow.

Baillie Walter Wober

Leader of Conservative councillors on Glasgow Corporation.

William Wolfe

Chairman of the Scottish National Party.

Matthew Wylie

President of CBI Scotland.

Sir Eric Yarrow

Chairman of Yarrow (Shipbuilders) Ltd., director of UCS 1967  
resigned 1970.

CHRONOLOGY

1971

- 12 June Rumours and press report of impending liquidation of UCS. Shop Stewards discuss tactic of work-in.
- 14 June Parliamentary announcement by John Davies that no further government financial assistance to be given to UCS. STUC and Tony Benn declare support for work-in.
- 15 June Adjournment debate in Commons on UCS lasts seven hours. Mass lobby of UCS workers leaves by special train for London. Benn cites 'Ridley letters' as evidence of a 'plot against UCS'. John Davies announces appointment of group of 'Wise Men' to produce reconstruction plan for the Upper Clyde.
- 21 June Mass mobilisation meeting of shop stewards at the Rosevale.
- 23 June First large public demonstration on UCS in Glasgow.
- 29 July Report of 'Wise Men' published recommending closure of Clydebank and Scotstoun and reduction of labour force from 8,500 to 2,500.
- 30 July Work-in begins at Clydebank yard.
- 2 August Second UCS parliamentary debate.
- 3 August Davies and Gordon Campbell visit Clydeside to discuss the crisis.
- 4 August Harold Wilson visits the yards and appears to pledge support for the workers.

- 10 August Second mass mobilisation meeting of shop stewards at the Rosevale, this time on an all-Scottish basis and supported by trade union officials.
- 16 August STUC Special Congress on unemployment. Vic Feather and Dan McGarvey come to Clydeside to give backing of official labour movement.
- 18 August Second large public demonstration on UCS in Glasgow. Shop stewards begin to travel throughout the country seeking support from other workers.
- 19 August Archie Kelly decides to bid for the UCS consortium.
- 26 August Government reaffirms its plan to proceed with Govan-Linthouse complex.
- 31 August Feather, McGarvey and Jack Service meet with Davies and initiate a 'dialogue'.
- 1 September STUC Committee of Inquiry into proposed run-down of UCS begins to take evidence.
- 6 September UCS shop stewards modify their demand for the preservation of UCS intact to willingness to consider cumulative proposals concerning the four yards.
- 10 September Heath visits Glasgow but says nothing publically on UCS. Behind the scenes discussions held with Stenhouse on the formation of an embryo board for Govan and Linthouse.

- 17 September SIB report written prior to liquidation, forecasting that UCS should shortly become profitable.
- 21 September Composition of the new board of Govan Shipbuilders leaked to press.
- 22 September Connells demand that Scotstoun be included in any future reconstruction of the yards. Stenhouse and Gilchrist met at the gates of Linthouse by UCS shop stewards and told to conduct their business elsewhere in future.
- 28 September UCS shop stewards make token occupation of boardroom.
- 29 September UCS stewards meet McGarvey and Stenhouse in Glasgow hotel for exploratory discussions. Stenhouse agrees to consider Scotstoun but not Clydebank for the new consortium.
- 30 September Stenhouse now agrees to consider all four yards.
- 5 October Davies tells McGarvey and Service that he will not provide finance for Clydebank's inclusion and announces to the press that time is running out.
- 6 October Shipowners with suspended orders at UCS deny putting pressure on the government. UCS workers accuse Davies of 'blackmail'.
- 10 October McGarvey declares a 'compromise' over Clydebank after discussions between the trade unions and the Irish Shipping Coy, over the placing of orders and threatens to call on the boilermakers membership to endorse his position.



- 11 October UCS shop stewards repudiate McGarvey's statement publically and demand the release of new orders as a precondition to talks with government.
- 12 October 'Victoria Street' document signed between government and CSEU finally initiating discussions on Govan Shipbuilders, promising a feasibility study for Scotstoun.
- 26 October UCS shop stewards concerned about the falling off in labour movement support publish explanation of the 'Victoria Street' document in the Morning Star.
- 28 October First potential cracks in the unity of the campaign appear with Scotstoun senior management, Govan caulkers and plumbers beginning to create problems.
- 1 November Mobilisation Scottish shop stewards meeting on UCS at the Rosevale shows significant decline in numbers. Public campaign loses some momentum.
- 3 November Stewards issue 'ultimatum' to government backed by threat to withhold launch and delivery of vessels in each of the yards if resolution of the UCS crisis not quickly forthcoming.
- 16 November UCS shop stewards at a meeting with McGarvey, Service, the Irish Shipping Company and the liquidator agree to 'guarantee' the delivery of the Irish orders and accept that none of these vessels be built in the Clydebank yard in return for a promise from the liquidator to place a resuscitated order there. Recriminations from Clydebank workers over this.

28 December      Davies meets stewards in Glasgow and warns them that formal discussions must begin with Govan Shipbuilders. The stewards reiterate the position of no negotiation without a solution for Scotstoun and Clydebank. Feasibility study for Scotstoun increasingly unlikely to appear before new year. US interest in Clydebank also uncertain. Death of Stenhouse leaves Govan Shipbuilders without a chairman. The year ends on an inconclusive note.

1972

4 January          Work-in resumes after holidays. Lord Strathalmond appointed new chairman of Govan Shipbuilders.

7 January          McGarvey and Service leave for a week in the US to explore possibility of Breaksea taking over Clydebank. Talks with Breaksea prove inconclusive but Marathon expresses interest in the yard.

20 January        McGarvey comes to Glasgow for a 'showdown' with the UCS stewards regarding immediate recognition of Govan Shipbuilders but all sections of the shop stewards remain united including the boilermakers.

21 January        Six week 'holding position' of no redundancies agreed to until further discussions held on Clydebank and Scotstoun.

- 24 January Shop stewards divide on the issue of whether to proceed to immediate confrontation by withholding vessels at Govan, Scotstoun and Clydebank.
- 27 January Stewards decide to allow launch of the New Westminster City in order to avoid crisis atmosphere during the Marathon negotiations. Marathon promises an early start to its operation. Problems among the women and lower paid workers in support for the 50p levy.
- 31 January Mass meeting endorses stewards' decision but workers raise fears of a 'no-strike' agreement with Marathon and cessation of sectional bargaining.
- 14 February Shop stewards receive assurances on Clydebank and Scotstoun and agree to begin normal talks with Govan Shipbuilders. Scottish Assembly convenes in Edinburgh.
- 28 February Government accepts the Hill Samuel Report and announces £35 million to be made available to the new Govan Shipbuilders which will include Scotstoun with a total labour force of 4,300. Marathon begins to attempt to extract maximum favourable terms before further committing themselves to Clydebank.
- March Liquidator goes to US to try to speed up negotiations with Marathon.
- 5 April Shop stewards suspend participation in talks with Govan Shipbuilders until government reaches firm agreement with Marathon. Marathon resubmits its bid to take advantage of new budgetary measures.

- 7 April Reid appeals to workers to retain unity during the last phases of the campaign and warns against 'snatching defeat from the jaws of victory'.
- 10 April Clyde Confederation officials sign Govan Shipbuilders employment charter.
- 17 April Government confirms new orders for Scotstoun.
- 1 May Financial terms finally agreed between government and Marathon. Marathon promises to provide over 2,000 jobs at Clydebank.
- 1 June Clydebank workers given prospect of redundancy money. Work-in to receive holiday pay after some internal disagreement. Workers in each yard begin to back their own narrower interests.
- 30 June Government agrees to place interim orders at Govan in anticipation of Govan Shipbuilders starting to trade in early September.
- 10 July 50p levy suspended until after holiday period and Govan workers told that there will be no redundancy pay for them.
- 4 August All unions sign the Marathon agreement except the boiler-makers whose traditional differential is threatened.
- 7 August McGarvey holds discussions with boilermakers in Glasgow and is persuaded that the Marathon deal must be accepted. Agreement signed within minutes of deadline.

- 16 August Recriminations and divisions open up over Clydebank workers' agreement to accept 10p bonus to complete vessels for the liquidator. This is construed as 'run-down' money by Govan workers who also fear they will be asked to accept retrained Clydebank men.
- 17 August Govan boilermakers demand re-employment of their work-in members and retrospective payment before signing the Govan Shipbuilders agreement. Shop stewards attempt to ensure entire work-in re-employed.
- 24 August Other unions postpone signing the Govan agreement to preserve unity.
- 29 August Govan Shipbuilders offer to re-employ all boilermakers.
- 31 August Boilermakers go against advice of stewards and local officials and reject Govan agreement by 20 votes.
- 1 September Boilermakers again reject agreement, this time by 200 votes. The other unions go ahead with signing the agreement. Strathalmond gives boilermakers until 5 September to sign otherwise will postpone operation. Boilermakers refuse to allow sheet-iron workers to be retrained as caulkers.
- 3 September Co-ordinating Committee denounces boilermakers for their sectionalism.
- 5 September Govan Shipbuilders postpone starting date for a week. Boilermakers national official James Murray arrives in Glasgow for talks with Strathalmond and argues for separate negotiating rights for his members.

- 6 September Murray claims to have won an immediate £2 interim award for all skilled grades so boilermakers vote to accept Govan agreement. Strathalmond immediately denies the offer.
- 16 September Joint union pay claim submitted at Govan Shipbuilders ends sectional negotiations.
- 21 September Majority of Govan Shipbuilders boilermakers boycott Clydebank meeting to discuss re-imposing the 50p levy to assist redundant Clydebank workers during the transition to Marathon. Leading shop stewards resign.
- 2 October Confederation officials call a joint meeting of Govan Shipbuilders finishing trades to reverse the decision on the levy for Clydebank. Airlie and other leading stewards reinstated.
- 4 October Marathon and liquidator agree to minimise redundancies during changeover.
- 10 October Work-in ends after final mass meeting proclaims victory.

## Introduction

On July 8th 1971, Norman A. Sloan, the director of the employers' federation in the shipbuilding industry, the Shipbuilders and Repairers National Association, drafted a letter headed 'Personal and Private' to the minister responsible for that industry, Sir John Davies. The letter begins 'My dear John' and is clearly a communication between two members of the establishment on familiar terms between whom confidences may be exchanged. The date, early July 1971, is significant for it was a mere three weeks since the government, by refusing to provide further financial aid to the company, had allowed the great shipbuilding consortium on the Upper Reaches of the River Clyde, Upper Clyde Shipbuilders Ltd., to go into liquidation with the threatened loss of thousands of shipyard workers' jobs. It was also exactly three weeks prior to the workforce of that company after massive demonstration, lobbies and protest, embarking upon a new and historic form of resistance in defence of their 'right to work', what was to become known as the UCS 'work-in'. The text of this letter, coming mid-way in this crucial six week span, makes interesting reading. Here Norman Sloan speaks on behalf of his fellow shipbuilders regarding any moves to rescue UCS.

"Since the appointment of a provisional liquidator my members have sensed in their yards a realisation by their employees that Government will not continuously underwrite failure and that everybody must be prepared to earn their living. Shipbuilders consider that this is a very healthy sign and feel you should be advised of it.

We realise that you are presently being subjected to extreme militant pressure to preserve UCS in its entirety. I have been asked to express to you the view that this pressure is largely confined to the Glasgow area and does not represent widespread public opinion in the country. I have also been asked to express the hope that the Government will not alter its original basic position as a result of militant pressure." (1)

Over the course of this six week period the Government had indeed been subjected to 'militant pressure'. However, no doubt bearing in mind the more discreet pressure from Norman Sloan and his members, it had decided, after due consideration, not to 'alter its original basic position'. UCS was to be allowed to go down all hands on board. In other circumstances the shipbuilding employers had stridently demanded and received huge government subventions to help prop up ailing parts of the industry. It was not, however, the behind-the-scenes influence that could be exerted by one group of employers which was the decisive factor in shaping the decision of the then Conservative administration of Edward Heath to remain undeflected from its chosen course. Rather it was a deeper declared ideological commitment to allow the inexorable logic of the 'laws of the market' to work out regardless of the social and human consequences for the lives of thousands of workers and their families. This was the issue which the collapse of UCS posed so starkly - people or profits - the placing of economic priorities before social ones.

Yet, within a matter of a few months these priorities had been massively, if temporarily, rearranged by the action of the Clydeside workers and the response which their struggle evoked in the entire British working-class movement and beyond, as the Conservative government gracefully executed its historic 'U-turn'. The 'militant pressure' of which Norman Sloan had written by no means remained 'confined to the Glasgow area' but became generalised across the whole country supported by an increasing 'widespread public opinion'. UCS became the first successful point in a conflagration that was eventually to engulf the Heath government as the working class moved into action to resist government policies across an entire range of industrial and



social issues. At the historical level this thesis sets out to record a key episode, the UCS work-in, during a period of rising class conflict, a period moreover that has been of major significance in shaping the current contours of the relations between capital and labour in the 1980's.

The core of the thesis is therefore an historical narrative which portrays the changing tempo and developing phases of the protracted struggle of the workers on the Clyde over a period of some sixteen months, from the summer of 1971 to the autumn of the following year, around the issue of the right to work. There are in fact remarkably few accounts in contemporary industrial sociology which actually examine the detailed unfolding of the strategy and tactics of the class war as it is fought out in open confrontation. (2)

In attempting to reconstruct the workers' struggle, recordings made during these months of major mass meetings and of the deliberations of the UCS shop stewards themselves, have provided an invaluable resource supplemented by the more usual documentary and interview-based data. They have in a certain sense enabled the writer to act as a kind of retrospective participant observer with privileged access to an inner chamber of the class. The changing sequence of events is viewed through the eyes of the workers at UCS and is spoken through their voices. In this respect this thesis should be seen as standing in the tradition of and essentially complementary to those sociological and political studies which have sought to recreate the experiential immediacy and complexity of working-class life under capitalism. (3)

In saying this it should be made clear that what is at stake is not simply a convenient or fortuitous stylistic device. The need for a close-grained historical reconstitution of the central moments of the workers' struggle has a compelling theoretical priority which addresses itself to a more general disturbing lack of concrete specification in contemporary theory-making. As Nichols and Beynon have appositely remarked,

"so much of what passes for 'theory' (even Marxist theory) fails to connect with the lives that people lead, whereas most descriptive social surveys too often fail to grasp the structure of social relations and the sense which people make of them. It is almost as if another way of writing has to be developed; something which 'tells it like it is' even though in any simple sense this is not possible; something which is theoretically informed yet free from theoretical pretentiousness, and which destroys the gap between the abstract and the concrete." (4)

The discipline of connectiveness, the demand that analytic categories do not assume pre-eminent refinement for their own sake, or at least for the sake of a presumed and complicit audience, is not, however, an excuse for a 'retreat into naturalism'. Theorisation and not merely reportage of social and historical 'realities' remains the primary responsibility of progressive social science and the most valuable recent studies have attempted to fulfill that obligation. However, all unnecessary barriers to accessibility by those who are in a fundamental sense the makers of history must be removed by those who seek to rescue and return that history to the class, a task which has both a political and an intellectual dimension. (5)

What is presented in this thesis then is not a 'neutral' account nor indeed, are its central theoretical preoccupations 'impartial' with respect to the outcomes or uses to which this work may be put. It is an intervention in a wider debate about the nature of working-class

consciousness and the varied social responses to the structural inequalities of capitalism, a debate which too often has lacked any substantial empirical basis in the lives of ordinary people and their struggles. (6)

The problem may be phrased in historical terms. Marx predicted that with the development of capitalism there would be a greater homogenisation of the working class, the levelling out of differences in the forms of conditions of wage labour, as workers become increasingly mere appendages to the machine. Whatever the longer-term tendencies working through the capitalist mode of production, it is evident that there are a number of 'intervening' factors which complicate this picture. Among the more cogent critics of Braverman's 'de-skilling' thesis, for example, have been those such as Elger who have commented upon "the specific, differentiated forms assumed by socialised labour today." (7) Stuart Hall has likewise noted that capital produces,

"both the massification and the 'simplification' of labour, as one of its tendencies; but also, equally 'necessarily', the internal divisions between skilled and the unskilled, the distribution of skills into different branches of production, as 'Modern Industry' seizes on them and transforms them unevenly. (8)

The problem in short, as Hall observes is,

"how the production of two, opposite tendencies in capital's contradictory development decisively intervenes between any simple notion of the 'inevitable cohesion of the proletariat' and its actual realisation under the new conditions of capital's historic organisation." (9)

Of particular relevance here, especially in view of the subject matter of the present study, are the detailed investigations carried out by Brown, Brannen, Cousins and Samphier among shipyard workers in

the North-East during the late 1960's. In a series of articles the Durham group of sociologists have challenged the characterisation by David Lockwood among others of shipyard workers (along with miners and dockers) as archetypal 'traditional proletarians' imbued with class consciousness and inhabiting a solidaristic socially homogeneous geographical community. (10) Rather, the Durham group point to multiple sources of division among the labour force which preclude the automatic ascription of any cohesive working class consciousness to such workers. In particular, it is argued, occupational divisions have produced a sectionally highly differentiated pattern of group affiliations only partially 'modified' by any ties of friendship, kinship or residence. (11) It should be clear that Lockwood's stereotype of shipyard workers with their 'dichotomous or two-value power model' or 'image' of society has to be seen as counterpointing the stereotyped 'privatised' workers of the 'new working class' motivated in the main by a strictly 'instrumental' or 'pecuniary model' of society. (12) In this respect the work of the Durham group is a useful corrective to rather vulgar oversimplifications which until recently had threatened to assume the stature of standard sociological orthodoxy. What these writers have done is to raise the general question of the contradictory dynamics of class solidarity and sectional fragmentation in the working class which this thesis examines through an historical case study.

The interplay and opposition of unifying and distancing forces within the working class is an issue which lies at the centre of any analysis of working class culture and its articulation with and against the dominant cultural formation. It is raised in a visible and dramatic way by the unfolding events on the Upper Clyde. Thus while there have been several published accounts of these events,

at least two of which have purportedly told 'the workers' story', none with the exception of the preliminary work of Hay and McLauchlan have done more than provide a gloss on the retarding influence of sectional identities on the development and maintenance of class consciousness among the workers. (13) Yet unless this retarding influence is understood then the full significance of just what was achieved at UCS in terms of a unified class solidarity cannot be properly comprehended. It is also otherwise impossible to specify the particular contribution of the work-in to the development of wider working class culture.

Bearing in mind the earlier strictures concerning the need to concretise theory, chapter one begins therefore by attempting to uncover the historical roots of both sectionalism and solidarity among the labour force in the Clydeside shipbuilding industry. The following chapters, two through to eleven, detail the successive phases of the work-in campaign and in particular, elaborate the internal and external pressures which the workers' leadership faced in attempting to preserve unity in the course of a lengthy and difficult campaign. Chapter twelve then draws together some of the wider implications of this struggle in terms of the significance of UCS for the fight against redundancies in the early 70's by workers elsewhere. The role of the Communist Party in the events at UCS and as a complement to this the subsequent political and union career of one of the leading workers' spokesmen is then examined. The impact of UCS on the question of national self-determination in Scottish politics is also discussed along with the more general question of the Conservative government's U-turn on regional and industrial policy. Finally some comments and observations are offered on the developments since UCS at the

Clydebank yard and at the nationalised Govan Shipbuilders yard. Chapter thirteen attempts to return to the question of sectionalism and solidarity, in terms of the broader debate which has been opened up around the work of Eric Hobsbawm on the obstacles facing the further progress of the British working class towards any realisable goal of a socialist society. This work is of seminal importance since it has provoked many commentators to speculate upon the political lessons which may be drawn from the militant struggles of the early 1970's. The UCS work-in was of course central to those struggles and in many pertinent ways the present challenges and possibilities facing the working class spring directly from this watershed period of development. With few exceptions, however, most have drawn rather pessimistic conclusions about the limitations of the achievements of this period of militancy and indeed, of trade union militancy in general. By contrast, it is argued here that on the basis of a closer analysis of the UCS struggle and its surrounding circumstances there are reasonable grounds for at least a cautious optimism; that UCS revealed real possibilities for more radical change initiated by the organised working class in alliance with other groups and social strata.

Finally, to return to the central underlying theme of this thesis, it is argued that the notion of working class culture as the expression of an historical class experience of struggle and resistance to social inequality should be delimited and distinguished from the rather eclectic uses to which the term is currently put. An attempt is made to relocate the notion of working class culture within a more classical Leninist purview. This emphasises its

embryonic character developing through class struggle into a coherent social identity based upon an oppositional ideology of socialism and democracy which can at critical moments displace even deeply rooted sectional attitudes and perspectives.

## Introduction

- 1 Norman A. Sloan, Director of the Shipbuilders and Repairers National Association. Letter to John Davies, 8th July 1971, National Maritime Museum, SRNA collection, File S42/11, Shipbuilding - British UCS (1969-75).
- 2 See studies by T. Lane and K. Roberts, Strike at Pilkingtons, Glasgow, Fontana, 1971 and J. Mathews, Ford Strike, London, Panther, 1972 for contemporaneous British works.
- 3 In this tradition which reaches back to the 19th Century must stand as foremost F. Engels', The Condition of the Working-Class in England in 1844, London, Allen and Unwin, 1968. More recent studies include, H. Beynon, Working for Ford, London, Allen Lane, 1973; T. Nichols and P. Armstrong, Workers Divided, Glasgow, Fontana, 1976, and T. Nichols and H. Beynon, Living with Capitalism, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977.
- 4 Nichols and Beynon, op. cit., p. viii.
- 5 See E.P. Thompson, The Poverty of Theory, London, Merlin Press, 1978.
- 6 Examples in print might be the influential studies by F. Parkin, Class Inequality and Political Order, London, Paladin, 1972 and M. Mann, Consciousness and Action among the Western Working Class, London, Macmillan, 1973.
- 7 T. Elger and B. Schwarz, 'Monopoly Capitalism and the Impact of Taylorism': Notes on Lenin, Gramsci and Sohn-Rethel, in T. Nichols, (ed.), Capital and Labour, Glasgow, Fontana, 1980, p. 367. See also A.L. Friedman, Industry and Labour, London, Macmillan, 1977 pp. 47-48 and the seminal H. Braverman, Labor and Monopoly Capital, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1974. As Elger points out



Braverman's work fails to address the manner in which class struggle is integral to the course of development of the capitalist labour process, in particular the effectiveness of workers' resistance to changes in the labour process, examples of which are discussed in chapter one. See T. Elger, 'Valorisation and "Deskilling": A Critique of Braverman', Capital and Class, Vol. 7, Spring, 1979, pp. 58-99.

- 8 S. Hall, 'The "political" and the "economic" in Marx's Theory of Classes', in A. Hunt, (ed.), Class and Class Structure, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1977, p. 32.
- 9 *ibid.*
- 10 See D. Lockwood, 'Sources of Variation in Working-Class Images of Society', in M. Bulmer, (ed.), Working-Class Images of Society, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, pp. 16-31. For the work of the Durham group see note 11 below.
- 11 See J. Cousins and R. Brown, 'Patterns of Paradox: Shipbuilding Workers' Images of Society' in Bulmer, (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 55-82; R. Brown and P. Brannen, 'Social relations and social perspectives amongst shipbuilding workers - a preliminary statement', Sociology, Vol. 4, 1970, Parts 1 and 2, pp. 71-84 and pp. 197-211; R.K. Brown, P. Brannen, J.H. Cousins and M.L. Samphier, 'The Contours of Solidarity: Social Stratification and Industrial Relations in Shipbuilding', British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 10, No. 1, 1972, pp. 12-41; R. Brown, P. Brannen, J. Cousins and M. Samphier, 'Leisure in Work: the "occupational culture" of shipbuilding workers', in M.A. Smith, S. Parker and C.S. Smith, (eds.), Leisure and Society in Britain, Harmondsworth, Allen Lane, 1973, pp. 97-110; R.K. Brown, P. Brannen, J.H. Cousins and

M.L. Samphier, Final Report to the Social Science Research Council, 12 July 1971, University of Durham, Department of Sociology and Social Administration.

- 12 Lockwood, op. cit., pp. 17-21.
- 13 See R. Hay and J. McLauchlan, 'The Oral History of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders -- A Preliminary Report', Oral History, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1973, pp. 45-58. For previous accounts of the work-in see A. Buchan, The Right to Work, London, Calder & Boyers, 1972; W. Thomson and F. Hart, The UCS Work-in, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1972; J. McGill, Crisis on the Clyde, London, Davis-Poynter, 1973.

## Chapter One

## THE ROOTS OF SECTIONALISM AND SOLIDARITY.

## (i) The Evolution of the Shipbuilding Labour Force.

Several writers have commented upon the 'craft-like' nature of much of the labour force in the shipbuilding industry. (1) How it came to assume this craft character is of some importance and is worthwhile recapitulating here briefly. (2) The early craft societies were mutual benefit and insurance bodies with links going back to the medieval handicraft guilds. Until the nineteenth century the building of sailing vessels of wood and sail had been the work of a handful of handicraft artisans such as shipwrights, riggers, joiners and carpenters assisted by unskilled labourers. Of these it was the shipwrights who were known as the primary trade of 'shipbuilders'. However, in the nineteenth century the division of labour changed with a rapid proliferation of new trades required by the introduction of metal and steel hulls and steam engines and with increases in the size and complexity of the vessels themselves. This division of labour, however, did not come about initially through the subdivision of the traditional shipbuilding trade. Indeed, for a long time the shipwrights whose traditional tools were the adze and the mallet refused to work with the new materials coming into the industry. (3) The result was that the employers began to recruit labour from elsewhere to fulfill the new needs which had arisen. By the time the shipwrights realised that their position might be threatened by these developments their position of dominance was irretrievably lost and the new metal trades had established a permanent position for themselves with their own forms of craft protection and apprenticeship organisation, an important factor in shaping the future pattern

of trade unionism in the industry. Pollard and Robertson comment regarding the impact of the technological changes on the shipwrights which eroded their central role.

"They were restricted to drawing the lines of hulls, shaping the frames, and launching the vessels as well as performing heavy timber work on board. They also supplied molds for the components, plates, and bars, which iron workers then shaped and assembled." (4)

Eventually the work of the shipwrights and the related trades that subsequently evolved from them, accounted for less than a tenth of the work on iron and steel vessels. This narrowness in outlook, is one peculiarity of the craft mentality which can be dangerously disabling for the group of workers concerned and features in a variety of manifestations throughout this account.

For the early builders of the new types of vessel it meant that the skills they required needed to be borrowed from other industries. Since each vessel was 'custom-built' and the industry was not susceptible to mass production techniques this meant that there was an influx of new labour into the industry comprising tradesmen who "could retain their identities as skilled workers even though they were employed as wage labourers in large concerns." (5) Where there were not already in existence the skilled groups required for the new methods of construction they were, according to Pollard and Robertson, created by the promotion of semi-skilled or unskilled labourers.

"The iron workers, frequently promoted from unskilled labourers, developed into such separate trades as platers, angle-iron smiths, riveters, drillers and their necessary holders-up and assistants; the engineering trades developed independently, yet on a parallel line, into fitters, turners and drillers; other metal trades, including foundrymen, brass and copper workers, and finishers found employment in the yards; in the

larger centers the shipwrights split early into riggers, mast and block makers, and caulkers; and finally improved construction and amenities brought painters, cabinet-makers electricians, and plumbers into the shipyards." (6)

The proliferation of trades in shipbuilding therefore proceeded by a process of "accretion". As a result of the complex assembly nature of the industry requiring the input of a whole range of skills in the construction of hulls and the subsequent fitting out of vessels, the industry assumed the character which it has retained to this day of a high ratio of skilled workers compared to other branches of engineering and mass production, with perhaps as many as two-thirds of the workforce being classified as skilled craft workers. (7)

If the original shipbuilding craftsmen were unable to retain control over the materials with which they worked they were at least able to attempt to secure control over the one vital feature in the preservation of craft status, the supply of competitive labour.

Boraston, Clegg and Rimmer observe,

"A craft relies upon control over entry into a trade through apprenticeship, and upon reserving certain jobs for apprenticed craftsmen. Thus their pay and conditions of work are protected and improved through control over the supply of labour for certain jobs." (8)

This control was by the system of seven year apprenticeship in which not merely the skills of the trade were transmitted, often albeit in a rather haphazard manner, but also a profound sense of occupational identity. Eldridge has remarked upon the sociological implications of this pattern of recruitment to the craft group in shipbuilding,

"It is traditionally the very nature of a craft to demand entry to the trade through apprenticeship. In this way the mystery of the craft is passed on from generation to generation. Tricks of the trade, standards of workmanship, pride in one's work, are the

marks of such a sociological inheritance involved in the transmission of skills. This mode of recruitment makes for a clear social definition of group membership and a homogeneous group composition."(9)

Among some craft groups such as the boilermakers elaborate admission rituals symbolically underlined the special and closed nature of the group. (10) Nevertheless the boilermakers and indeed the shipwrights took the additional precaution, should socialisation techniques prove to be inadequate, of signing up apprentices as half members until they qualified as journeymen, in order to prevent them being used as strike breakers.(11)

Exclusivity in terms of competence to perform certain tasks has been a primary element in the formation of craft identities. Traditions play an important part in preserving the knowledge and patterns of behaviour which comprise this special competence. However, as Flanders points out, such traditions are not simply accepted because they have been sanctified by the passage of time. Their role as "sheet anchor of the group's goals and values" derives from the fact that "they embody for the group the lessons of its corporate social experience" to be transmitted, often by word of mouth, from generation to generation. (12) What might be described as the cultural legacy of the craft is identified by Eldridge as a feature in ensuring the persistence of a socially cohesive group identity which contains an important 'moral' dimension. (13) Such a moral or ideological underpinning to the particular 'personality' of a group or trade is revealed in the advancement of exclusive claims to certain types of work as their particular 'birthright' to be preserved at all costs. This sense of a moral element is clearly shown in the Webbs' discussion of nineteenth century shipbuilding workers demands to preserve their 'right to a trade'. (14)

"'We are fighting this battle', declared the United Pattern-makers' Association in 1889, 'on the principle that every trade shall have the right to earn its bread without the interference of outsiders; a principle jealously guarded by every skilled trade...and one which we are fully determined shall likewise apply to us'. 'It is our duty', declared the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, 'to exercise the same care and watchfulness over that in which we have a vested interest as the physician who holds a diploma or the author who is protected by a copyright'. 'The machine', says their Tyne District Delegate in 1897 'no doubt is part of the employer's invested capital, but so is the journeyman's skilled labor'. The associated Shipwrights' Society expressly stated in 1893, with reference to a new dispute on the Clyde, that 'while we do not object to any firms dividing their works into departments, or sub-letting portions of the vessels they are building still we do most respectfully and emphatically contend that no employers should, in suiting their convenience, give away another man's means of living, any more than that no workman would be allowed or justified to go into an employer's office and take his money from his safe and give it to another'. 'The sacredness of property', writes the Liverpool delegate of the Engineers in 1897, 'is surely applicable to labor, which is as much our property as the lathes are the property of the employer'." (15)

The historical tenacity with which demarcation disputes between rival trades have been fought in the industry derives in part from this ideological overlay to craft social identities resulting in a highly sectional mentality. It should be understood however, that sectionalism as a factor governing inter-trade relations has its real basis in the general conditions of insecurity which have historically marked the shipyard workers' lives. While it became possible to attempt to exert control over the recruitment and training of labour in the craft, it was less possible to control the impact of technological change in the industry.

Each trade could distinguish itself from the other by the types of materials and, although increasingly less so, the character of the tools with which it worked. So long as technical improvements fell within the province of a particular trade there were few problems. Difficulties arose when it became arguable that certain kinds of

work were the legitimate property of more than one trade or a certain kind of tool could enable more than one trade to claim that work as their own. An example, the roots of which go back to the days of changeover from wood and sail, is the continuing demarcation problems between the shipwrights and the platers which were only really tackled when the two trades came together in the Boilermakers' Society in the early 1960's. (16) Earlier demarcation problems about who should work with what materials under which circumstances were in fact compounded by the introduction of prefabrication and welding into the industry.

Welding has probably been the most significant technical development in shipbuilding in the twentieth century. (17) Its first application was outside shipbuilding and it came into the industry originally in ship repairing. The first all-welded vessel of any size was built by Cammell Laird in 1920 but not until the 1930's did it become more widely adopted. Parkinson in his discussion of welding comments on the employers' initial reluctance to introduce the new technique.

"In the main the reason for the slow acceptance of welded ships was of a technical nature. The early welds tended to be brittle, and shipowners doubted (and with considerable justification) whether welded connections could stand up to the full strains they would be subjected to in large ships." (18)

Lloyd's Register also doubted the reliability of welded ships which only really became acceptable with the introduction of the coated electrode making possible a more reliable weld. It was the conditions of wartime production, specifically the desire to save weight in the construction of warships which led to a wider introduction of welding, particularly in the United States, in the construction of Liberty and



Victory ships.<sup>(19)</sup> Riveting still remained but its role was quickly reduced in the construction of new vessels to that of 'crack-arrestors'.<sup>(20)</sup> A line of rivets would be placed on the hull so if the welded structure cracked due to faulty construction stresses, the cracks would run to the rivet holes and allow the strain to be relieved there. Special steels less susceptible to brittle fracture began to be utilized in parts of the vessel most liable to strain and it is possible that without such improvements there may have been a tendency to revert to riveted ships in the post-war period. Be that as it may, Parkinson suggests that with weight reduction and resistance reduction due to the smooth hull of a welded ship costs of construction could be reduced by ten per cent or more. (21)

Welding brought important changes in other shipyard production methods. In particular, it facilitated indoor working and the consequent prefabrication of units under cover rather than their assembly on the berth. The actual process of welding is more easily carried out under shelter and it became possible to turn large sections in welding bays with the use of cranes to ensure that difficult welds could be performed in a downhand position. This also made for greater accuracy of welds and facilitated constant checks on the quality of the work done. Building under cover, in turn, gave rise to a complete change in the layout of the berths, cranes, building and storage areas needed as well as in managerial organisation and working practices, although in the generally cramped physical location of the British shipyards, limitations were imposed upon the reorganisation process which meant that ship-builders were not able to take as much advantage of these changes

as in certain other countries. (22) So far as the platers and the shipwrights were concerned, bitter disputes arose between them as to who should be responsible for 'fairing' the pre-assembled units on the vessel. As it happened both trades felt severely threatened by the new developments.

Finlay Hart, then a leading wartime Clydeside steward vividly described some of the changes in working practices which the rapid expansion of welding at this time led to.

"All trades are affected by the extension of the welding process. Some gain, others lose. For example, blacksmiths who did all their welding on the fire, are now finding much of their work being done by electric welding. That means a loss of work to them. On the other hand the ship plumbers who substituted welded flanges on pipes for rivetted flanges before the last war are now making up all kinds of fittings such as chests and valves etc., which were previously made of cast iron, thereby taking work away from the moulders. That in turn affects patternmakers, so we can see how large scale introduction of welding brings about many changes in the industry.

The most apparent changes, however, are seen in the way welding and the new profile burning machines affect platers, riveters, caulkers and drillers. Both processes permit a much simpler construction and thereby eliminate a great deal of the work of these trades. There are many examples of where with the introduction of welding and prefabrication it has meant a displacement of platers. This situation has been causing a certain amount of alarm among platers, while riveters and caulkers, too are concerned about their future." (23)

When welding was first introduced by the employers in the mid-thirties they proposed to create a new class of workers to be known as 'ship welders' which was strongly opposed by the trade unions who felt that the new machines should be operated by the members of the union whose work was displaced. Fearing that the employers' proposal was a way of undercutting wages the boilermakers thereafter organised the welders as a result of an agreement between the unions in 1934. (24) Welders became a trade within the Boilermakers' Society and there

was an agreement on interchangeability between them and platers, caulkers, riveters etc., when redundancy occurred in one trade and there was a shortage of labour in another. However, the increase in the amount of welding and a growing tendency to redundancy in other sections led to welding becoming largely 'diluted'. 'Time-served' welders became increasingly craft-conscious as they saw their conditions being threatened, especially by the large numbers of welders who had been trained during the war. (25)

"They look on themselves as the orphans who will have to make room for other members in the Society without a possibility of the position ever being reversed." (26)

It can be seen from this that sectional attitudes within a union also have their roots in conditions of insecurity. In fact, the welders quickly supplanted the platers as the highest wage earners in the yards being paid on a piece-work basis. Once at the top of the earnings league they did everything in their power to retain that position. Platers engaged on the assembly of large sections were prevented from making simple tack-welds which hold steel members in position before they are finally welded together even though they had the required skills to do so. Demarcation rules were enforced to retain the welders' monopoly because as Parkinson pointed out,

"if ever tack welding becomes a generally accepted accomplishment of other trades, the essentially semi-skilled nature of most welding operations would be exposed and the carefully guarded monopoly of the welders broken down." (27)

To some extent, it will be shown, this in fact eventually occurred on the Upper Clyde. Alexander and Jenkins similarly point out the basically simple nature of tack welding in particular, a job quite

within the competence of other steel trades but often resulting in delays while workers waited for a service welder to appear. The authors note,

"However, the shop stewards were always anxious to protect any encroachment on 'their' trades and did the utmost to preserve the mystique of the craft from interlopers." (28)

It should be remembered, however, that while many aspects of welding are not of a highly specialised nature there are certain forms of welding that are highly skilled. Indeed, high technical standards are enforced by such bodies as Lloyds and the Admiralty who provide classification trade tests of welders' skills. According to information given by Alexander and Jenkins, only twenty per cent of welders in Fairfields were able to achieve Admiralty standards first time. (29) By implication then, although they may be loathe to admit it to other trades in the yards, clearly there are welders and 'welders', although open disputes between members of the same trade are rare. Doubtless also the same is true of the variability in the skills of other trades. Although therefore, the ideological component of sectional identity may be important in bolstering their claims to continuing superiority over other trades, it is important to recognise that these claims are based on a certain reality. A welder may continually have to 'prove' his skills by submitting to tests each time he goes for a job and more than a few mistakes subsequently will result in his dismissal.

Nevertheless the fact remains that most demarcation boundaries between trades are fixed not by some objective impartial standard but by custom and practice which varies from yard to yard. It is the "artificiality" in many instances of these boundaries which makes changes in working practices consequent upon technical developments so contentious. (30) The fact that the workers themselves

know that these boundaries are to a degree 'conventional' in no way lessens their significance. Indeed, precisely because they are liable to be contested they may be defended all the more fiercely. Most commonly disputes have occurred within groups of trades where there is some overlap in skills, that is, among the workers concerned with the construction of the hull or among the fitting out and finishing trades, the main exceptions being disputes between boilermakers and fitters. (31) Thus Roberts observes,

"The most extensive overlaps occur between metal shipwrights and platers, over erecting and fairing plates and sections; between wood shipwrights and joiners, over wooden outfit work; and between plumbers and fitters over pipework." (32)

This may be described as horizontal inter-trade sectionalism.

However, although demarcation disputes have been seen by the employers as a major cause of the industry's problems, in reality, although they have at times been a cause of production delays their harmfulness has been much exaggerated. Roberts, for example, calculates that demarcation has increased wage costs between five and twenty per cent, probably adding only about two per cent to the total cost of a ship, still well below the competition price edge of foreign producers. (33) It was not so much the threat of 'deskilling' and the substitution of semi-skilled workers for 'craftsmen', which has been the main result of technical change, although more recently there have been tendencies in this direction, as the frequent reallocations of work between established trades. This has created one important basis of sectionalism and it has conditioned the attitudes of the workforce right up to the period with which we are mainly concerned. (34)

A further source of sectionalism among shipbuilding workforces has been the general insecurity of employment caused by the nature

of the production cycle, resulting in an uneven pattern of demand for the skills of different trades. Here a broad division, which is reflected in how the workers see themselves, can be drawn between the metal trades and the finishing trades. In the early phases of construction there is a high demand for the services of the steel working trades in the construction of the hull, arduous and sometimes dangerous work that is very often carried out under inclement conditions in the open air. Following the completion of the hull and the launch of the vessel the finishing trades fit out the vessel with the necessary cabin accommodation and electrical work. Often also the engines and steering gear are only installed at this stage, work that involves the engineering trades. Thus while some groups of workers find themselves being paid off others are being taken on. (35)

Even with several ships being built by a firm the managerial problems in ensuring continuity of demand for all groups of the workforce by synchronising the construction stages are considerable. The normal practice was for workers to be dismissed when their services were no longer required, a dismissal which could be carried out at one hour's notice. Contractual guarantees of employment were regarded as unthinkable to the yard owners until the mid-1960's when the Confederation and the Shipbuilding Employers' Federation signed an agreement in 1965 guaranteeing a full week's employment to workers with 4 weeks or more service, or payment of its hourly equivalent. This was hardly job security but it was an improvement on the previous situation in the industry.

The reputation of shipbuilding as an industry of 'feast and famine' comes precisely from the need felt by workers to secure as

much work as possible including overtime, when demand for their services is greatest in order to boost wages. Indeed, higher levels of overtime have been worked in shipbuilding than is general throughout the rest of industry. As regards overall earnings levels, it has been the metal trades who have traditionally 'led the wages fight' in the industry. The readiness of the boilermakers 'to do battle' on this question, with the welders very often leading the fray, derives from the dominant position they first assumed in the heyday of piecework when they established a lead over other groups. Since then they have fought to maintain that lead over the rest of the workforce, at least up until the events at UCS, even in the face of changes in technique and in payment systems. (36)

The reluctance of the boilermakers to embark on joint negotiations along with other groups of skilled trades derives from their conviction that their relative position would thereby deteriorate, a belief not without some foundation. This has led to the classic 'leap-frog' pattern of wage claims where one group by disturbing relativities with a successful claim, triggers off defensive action in the form of a counter-claim by another group in order to maintain pre-existing differentials. Action by the whole workforce of a yard in concert is an extremely uncommon event with sectionalism again determining the pattern of wage bargaining, in addition to determining demarcation conflicts. (37) Nearly two-thirds of the stoppages were on wages issues and the majority of these were unofficial, although generally of short duration, being more in the nature of a display of strength to impress on management their felt sense of grievance according to the CIR report. (38)

Perhaps, not surprisingly a feeling of separateness has grown up between broad groups of trades with the boilermakers remaining

generally aloof in terms of agreements and wage bargaining. The metal trades who generally comprise over a third of the workforce in fact tend to regard their work in the construction of hulls as more 'basic' and therefore of greater worth to the industry than the contribution of other groups, justifying their higher earnings. Here the 'moral' or ideological aspect of sectional identities can be seen once again. In terms of the division of labour, strictly speaking, all the trades are more or less equally interdependent, however, the numerical dominance of the metal trades and the claim to possess the most important skills has reinforced the individual sectionalism of the particular trades, setting them apart as a group from the other groups of trades.

In part there has been an historical foundation for this attitude of exclusiveness in terms of the different labour market opportunities for the metal working trades as against say the outfit trades. Many of the boilermakers' skills are in fact highly specialised to the shipbuilding industry making it hard, and in the case of the shipwrights virtually impossible, to find alternative employment outside the industry. This is particularly so where shipbuilding dominates the local labour markets as the major employer of labour. Workers in the outfit trades, on the other hand, such as painters, joiners, electricians and plumbers have alternative employment opportunities in the construction industry and traditionally there has been a great deal of movement between these industries. Although therefore the metal working trades may have certain opportunities in engineering and elsewhere, these are by no means comparable to the finishing trades as studies of labour markets on both the Upper Clyde and the North-East have shown. (39) Thus the boilermakers regard themselves as 'committed' to the industry in a way quite unlike the other trades.



If anything, the series of amalgamations among the metal trades in the early 1960's which was to produce the Amalgamated Society reinforced a broader sectional cohesion. In 1961 the United Society of Boilermakers, Shipbuilders and Structural Workers joined with the Associated Blacksmith, Forge and Smithy Workers and in 1963 they were joined by the Ship Constructors, and Shipwrights Association. Together these formed the Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers, Shipwrights, Blacksmiths and Structural Workers covering virtually all the metal workers in shipbuilding. (40) Paradoxically, the purpose of these amalgamations was to minimise sectional disputes which were most numerous among the metal trades, especially between the platers and shipwrights. (41) On the other hand it should be noted that major trade groups such as the platers and welders still retain advisory committees at Clyde district level to deal with particular problems facing their trade. While it is true that the amalgamations laid the basis for reducing, although not eliminating, demarcation disputes between the metal trades it is arguable that in creating the basis for common action on behalf of the metal trades as a group, they heightened the boilermakers' sense of separateness. Now nearly all the metal workers were organised in the one union which easily dominated the others in the industry.

Parallel amalgamations among the finishing trades were also taking place which brought together the plumbers and electricians to form the EETPU in 1968, and the painters and woodworkers to form UCATT in early 1970. (42) It is interesting to note that one factor to emerge with growing importance, was the increasing unwillingness of the finishing trades to accept the boilermakers' self-proclaimed superiority at least so far as wages issues were concerned. In this regard the developments at Fairfields and subsequently at UCS, assumed considerable significance as will be shown below. It can be argued that the boilermaker

sectionalism has to some extent provoked a counter-sectionalism among the finishing trades, who in coming together in broader groupings of trades as a result of amalgamations, also began to feel their own strength in a new way by challenging the boilermakers' right to claim a differential. This kind of sectionalism may be described as horizontal inter-union sectionalism to distinguish it from the inter-trade sectionalism described previously. Increasingly the former has begun to supplant the latter as the amalgamation process between trades has moved from the formal level as in the case of the Boilermakers Society in 1963 towards integration in terms of day-to-day union organisation at the workplace and local district level by 1969. Indicative of this is the steady fall in the number of demarcation disputes during the 1960's to around 7 per cent of total stoppages during 1969-70 compared with 3 per cent for the rest of industry. (43)

While the majority of workers are organised in craft groups, there is still one third of the manual workforce who are semi or unskilled workers. The lines of union organisation are less well defined here than among the skilled trades with the Transport and General Workers Union or, as is usually the case on Clydeside, the General and Municipal Workers Union organising these workers. This is yet another line of sectional division in the labour force in which the semi-skilled men such as tradesmen's helpers and those in ancillary jobs such as cranemen, drivers, staggers and redleaders, are excluded from the craft unions. The boundary between the skilled and the semi-skilled men is particularly closely guarded. Only under the most exceptional circumstances does a semi-skilled or unskilled man have the opportunity to cross the frontier of craft control. More commonly as in the case of the boilermakers, with the exception of the blacksmith's strikers, very few non-tradesmen are recruited to the craft unions, although in 1968 the boilermakers' rules were amended to make provision for this. (44) However, at branch level there is resistance to recruiting helpers. As such,

unlike the ancillary workers groups such as cranemen who possess a certain bargaining power and potential autonomy as a result of their 'strategic' position in the organisation of production, the craftsmen's helpers or mates are, in the words of the CIR Report, "in an overtly subordinate position." (45)

In the nineteenth century the subordinate position of the non-timeserved men was ensured by the squad or gang system of contract work whereby the skilled workers on piece-rates hired their unskilled workers to whom they paid day wages. Parkinson suggests the ways in which the squad craftsmen could exercise their authority over their helpers.

"One of the oldest systems of piece-work adopted in the industry was simply to subcontract a particular part of the construction of a ship to a squad leader. Part of the shell painting, framing or riveting, in typical examples, were put out at a price agreed by the management with the squad leader as a result of hard bargaining. Both sides to the agreement was knowledgeable as to what was a reasonable price in the circumstances. At the end of each week the squad leader would draw to account and he would pay his helpers, generally in the local pub, what he considered to be due to them for their efforts of the preceding week. In this way the earnings of the squad reflected its efficiency and the payments to workers, if they were fortunate in their leader, something of their merits." (46)

In these circumstances the helpers means of recourse where they felt an injustice had been perpetrated by the squad men would have been fairly circumscribed placing the helpers as a group in a somewhat invidious position.

During the first World War the spread of 'lieu rates' in place of piece-work began to undermine the importance of the squad. Lieu rates were introduced to boost the earnings of the skilled men who were placed in a supervisory role over the dilutees. With their earnings in danger of being overtaken by the high piece-work earnings

of the dilutees the Government conceded a wage supplement to the tradesmen. Indeed, during this period faced with the common threat to their status as craftsmen by the introduction of dilutee labour in the shipbuilding and munitions industries on the Clyde, the so-called 'vigilance committees' of shop stewards agreed to bury their sectional differences in a common fight against encroachment by dilutee unskilled workers. The fear that concessions made to the employers on demarcation issues in wartime would not be restored post-war underlay at least some struggles on Clydeside although the Clyde Workers' Committee fought hard to inject a wider class perspective into these struggles as is argued below. The fact that with a few weeks training the dilutees were able to perform many of the skilled men's tasks must have been dangerously disruptive to their claims for differential rewards by revealing the 'notional' rather than 'real' gap between much of the work of the skilled and the unskilled men. (47)

Under these circumstances demarcation practices become crucial for they are in the words of Flanders, "more like a sea wall which stands between the inhabitants of the island and total flood." (48)

After the second world war, particularly with the rapid decline of riveting, the squad system of piece-work tended to become increasingly rare although it lingered on among the metal trades especially among the platers. Robertson in his 1954 study of a Clyde yard notes that platers' earnings, even when not organised on a squad basis, still had a deduction for their helpers, the rest of whose wages were made up by the company. This deduction was recognised by the Inland Revenue for tax purposes. (49) Some indications of the generally improving position of the tradesmen's helpers can be gained from the tendency of the wages of the unskilled to increase relatively

to the skilled from around 50 per cent at the beginning of the century to about 80 per cent in 1950. (50) However, by and large, the "sea wall" between the skilled and the less skilled has remained unbreached. This division has produced what may best be described as vertical inter-union sectionalism.

The sources of the three main kinds of sectionalism which have been examined, horizontal inter-trade, horizontal inter-union and vertical inter-union sectionalism all have a long historical tradition in the industry and play an important part in shaping the workforce's current motives and attitudes. It is part of their historical legacy, as Geddes points out, a legacy which included overall rates of unemployment of between 30 and 40 per cent among shipbuilding workers in the inter-war period.

"The past is very much alive in the minds of the workers in the industry and coupled with general lack of confidence in the future of the industry it has bred a deep feeling of insecurity which is at the root of most of the demarcation disputes which are commonly known as 'restrictive' but which the workers regard and describe as 'protective'." (51)

The ability of the workforce to sustain 'protective' practices was due in no small measure to a factor which has ensured a remarkably high degree of autonomy for the skilled work groups in shipbuilding. This is the ability of these work groups to retain substantial control over the pace and organisation of actual work tasks. Some indication of this has already been suggested in the previous discussion of the pattern of strikes and counter-strikes in defence of demarcation lines and relativities, actions often by small groups independent of their fellow union members and by the independent bargaining tradition which

existed in the old squad system. Although the latter no longer exists and the former is much diminished, the actual nature of the production process, involving numerous small groups involved in specific tasks of work, perhaps scattered over a wide area in a complex assembly process, often enables sufficient insulation from direct managerial and supervisory control for the continuance of this tradition of independence at work group level.

"Many of the tasks performed in the construction of a ship give the work group a high degree of discretion over the manner in which they are carried out. The craftsmen and their helpers or mates, sometimes working in gangs, have sufficient knowledge and discretion to be able to allocate to a considerable extent the work among themselves and to control the speed of work and the co-ordinating with those who precede and follow them. Because the work lends itself to self-supervision the traditions of the industry protect the autonomy of the work group." (52)

This autonomy has had its most extreme manifestation among the welders who in the past have collectively determined their own weekly wages' ceiling in relation to their production output. (53) By contrast there have been few independent groups of semi-skilled operatives except the redleaders who paint the ship with red lead to prevent rust and the stagers who provide access scaffolding. (54) Those working on the berths in hull construction or in the cabins and engine rooms are often more able to escape the kind of closer supervision of their activity which workers in the assembly shops must accept. Independence in terms of control over the pace of work is thus facilitated by the level of visibility of the different occupations, with those less under the direct eye of the management or foremen having greater autonomy.

The Durham group suggest that one consequence of the difficulty of close managerial control of work has been the proliferation of social contacts between workers resulting in "sociable groupings that

retain identities over time and become an important work satisfaction in their own right." (55) The immediate work group as a social group is important especially in view of the long hours of overtime which have been worked but also groups of younger apprentices and tradesmen would form 'card schools' or discussion groups during tea-breaks or hold-ups in the production process. While it is perhaps somewhat exaggerated to describe this as a "work-based culture of play" it is probably the case that the selective freedom of workers to make and sustain social contacts with each other was felt to be in part an assertion of their independence. This independence has had a certain 'stylistic' element, a blend of verbal provocation and daring which derives in part from the ever-present risks that much of the work involves. The Durham group characterises a "style of conduct" which has its Clydeside equivalent.(56)

"The possession of a wide range of knowledge and the ability to handle well the style of conversation with its emphasis on quick wit, quick verbal reactions and rapid changes of tack, carry a social reward. To be regarded as a 'character' or a 'patter merchant' with a witty, caustic and self-mocking style and a wide variety of interests and stories is to have a welcome, and an acknowledgement, in all parts of the yard and often outside it as well." (57)

Another traditional source of division among shipyard labour forces which historically often served to reinforce sectionalism is religious sectarianism and Freemasonry. Melling notes for the late nineteenth and early twentieth century,

"In areas such as Clydeside, the sectional consciousness of the craftsmen was interwoven with the sectarian attitudes of the Freemasons as foremen assumed important responsibilities in Orange Halls and Masonic Lodges." (58)

The important role of foremen in reinforcing the sectarian mentality of their squads derived from their position in the hiring and firing of labour, a position which no longer pertained in the post-1945 period but which did result in the boilermakers, at least, having

"Certain departments obtained the reputation for employing or favouring men with a particular attribute; one workshop became known as 'Vatican City' because of the number of Catholics working there." (59)

It is claimed that Freemasonry in particular emerged as a factor in hiring and firing during their period of participant observation in the yard. (60) While, if anything sectarian attitudes run much deeper on Clydeside, it is difficult to be precise about the influence of such factors. McShane writing of the period before the first World War notes concerning Clydeside,

"There was a strong Orange group in the shipyard areas. Many of the skilled boilermakers of the shipyards had originally come from Belfast in the 1860's; not only the platers and riveters were Orangemen but often their labourers, and there were twenty-three shipyards on the Lower Clyde alone. The Glasgow shipyards had strong links with the Belfast ones - in Harland and Wolff's in Glasgow no Catholic was ever employed." (61)

According to McShane Freemasonry was more of an influence among the skilled engineers. (62) Both Orangeism and Freemasonry with their 'loyalist' convictions were fertile sources of Toryism among the working class. However, by the early 1960's with younger men coming into the yards untinged by the vicious sectarian gang feuding of the days of high pre-war unemployment on Clydeside, attitudes had begun to mellow to some extent. Certainly the recruitment of apprentices, crucial in retaining the sectarian hue of particular trades, was by the 1950's no longer on the basis of 'which school you went to', Glasgow's school system still being divided along religious lines. What was more important was that the person who 'spoke for' the apprenticeship applicant had the reputation of being a good tradesman. Moreover, the big expansion in demand for labour in early post-war years itself broke down the major barriers in the pattern of sectarian recruitment of apprentices.



At the high point of the UCS struggle any such lingering tendencies were submerged by wider working-class unity and indeed the Co-ordinating Committee leadership even used the troubles in Northern Ireland as an example to the workers of the dreadful consequences of disunity in their ranks. To have done this, the shop stewards must have been fairly confident that there was no real danger of the UCS workers splitting along sectarian lines. The fact, however, that Reid was a Communist and a 'Catholic' would not have escaped the notice of the more 'bitter' Orangemen, although their ability to use this to damaging effect was largely circumscribed.

The final divisive influence on the labour force which should be mentioned has been that based on the geographical location of the yards. While studies of labour turnover have shown that long-term employment with a particular firm was very much the exception, workers would often return to the same yard several times in the course of a working life-time. (63) There was little evidence that they did so because they identified very strongly with a particular firm. Rather it appeared that once locked into circulation within a particular local labour market based on a group of geographically close yards they would often tend to remain there moving from one yard to the other as work became available or, as more attractive rates were offered. On Clydeside there have in fact been two such local labour markets so far as shipbuilding is concerned. One is on the Upper Reaches based on the yards in Glasgow and Clydebank and the other is at 'the tail of the bank' based on the Greenock and Port Glasgow firms of Scotts and Lithgows. Historically there has been little interchange of workers between the two as the travelling time involved has been prohibitive. More importantly with wide

alternative employment opportunities for skilled labour on the Upper Clyde the workers there have tended to be the wage leaders for the whole river. This has meant a diffuse but nevertheless tangible rivalry between the two areas. On the part of the owners of Scotts and Lithgows this rivalry became outright hostility when first Fairfields was rescued from bankruptcy and later when the Upper Clyde yards were merged under the Geddes proposals and in their turn had to be rescued from total financial collapse. Paradoxically the strongest manifestation of geographical divisions appeared within the Upper Clyde itself during the UCS campaign rather than between areas, although in the backwash of the Upper Clyde struggle unfortunate differences were to appear between workers on the Upper Clyde and workers in the North-east over the 'Polish orders' situation which is further discussed in chapter 12.

In terms of the formation of social identities directly based on the labour process itself, religious and geographical divisions, are not strictly speaking forms of sectionalism, although there may have been an element of trade specific religious sectarianism in the past. Moreover, the general insecurity facing the workingclass is a common feature underlying all forms of internal division and differentiation within the labour force. What is of concern here is the specific forms of its expression within one particular labour force, the workers in the shipbuilding industry who have, for the reasons outlined, experienced that insecurity in a particularly sharp and protracted way.

An understanding of the development of sectionalism requires an examination of the position of workers within the relations of production and their responses to the experience of exploitation. Sectionalism can be defined as an attempt by a section of the labour force, whether at the level of the work group or trade union, to erect

around itself a protective barrier based upon the defence of existing working practices and/or the attempt to maintain differential wage rates. This 'protective barrier' is often ideologically buttressed with specific 'moral' claims to certain relative positions within the hierarchy of status, particularly although not necessarily, where such claims can be based upon a legacy of skills, real or notional, and a degree of control over apprenticeship. Such relative positions may be defended by workers both from the attacks of employers and from the encroachments of other groups of workers. The objective bases of sectionalism, therefore, lie in the conditions created by the uneven impact of technical change on the differentiated pattern of occupational skills, in the lack of sustained employment opportunities arising from the uneven tempo of the production cycle with its selective demands for various categories of labour, and in the post-war period as a whole, in the experience of continuous and long-term structural decline producing a substantial overall shrinkage of the labour force which echoes the historical memories of the inter-war years. These conditions have tended to undercut the emergence of more unified forms of struggle among shipyard workers.

Sectionalism may be viewed as the mediation of these overlaid contingent threats, real or perceived, to occupational status and security which have produced typically fragmented responses, especially at work group level where there is a strong sense of 'autonomy' among certain occupational groups. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that in shipbuilding the trade union structure has corresponded to trade boundaries thus reinforcing tendencies to sectionalism at the work group level and replicating these at the level of the official trade union movement, while, as has been

pointed out, the impact of trade union amalgamations has been equivocal. Thus, although the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, both nationally and through its district committees, attempts to provide a forum for discussion and negotiation on matters of pay and conditions common to the industry as a whole, it too is circumscribed by the legacy of sectionalism and cannot trespass on any of the prerogatives of individual unions. Hyman provides a useful summary statement of the problems which sectionalism presents in terms of building unity in the working class.

"While class opposition forms the basis of work relations in capitalist society, this is overlaid and often concealed by the immense variety of specific work contexts and distinctive group interests. Hence men and women normally identify themselves first and foremost as members of a specific occupational group, employees of a given firm, or workers in a particular industry. It is within such limited milieux that spontaneous collective organisation typically develops. And just as individuals are often most conscious of the narrow area of interests and loyalties lying closest to hand (and hence commonly of what divides them from other workers rather than of what unites them), so the policies and priorities of unions often reflect narrow sectional concerns rather than broader class solidarity." (64).

As such, in surmounting sectionalism, one of the major barriers to the development of broader collective action is removed permitting a new kind of class conscious social identity to emerge. The core of this identity is the defence of the common collective interests, not just of a particular group or union, but of the class as a whole united in its opposition to capitalism. A further discussion of this question is presented in the concluding chapter. In the following section historical examples of the breakdown of sectionalism among the Clydeside working class are discussed, before examining the significance of the UCS work-in.

## (ii) The Clyde Shop Stewards Movement.

Thus far the forces of division and their complex historical roots have been discussed. Here the forces making for unity and their historical derivation are examined. Of first importance in the UCS struggle was the leading role of the shipyard shop stewards in mobilising the workforce and in initiating the wider campaign of solidarity and mass action. For the workers of UCS there was an historical precedent and a magnificent one at that. This was in the struggles on the Clyde more than fifty years before which had given birth to the shop stewards movement in its modern form.

At the outbreak of war in 1914 there existed a body which, under the name of the Allied Trades Committee, brought together the trade union officials on the Clyde. William Gallacher, who was a member of this committee before assuming a leading role in creating the unofficial movement, recalls the sectional attitude of the Allied Trades Committee to non-craft representatives such as John McKenzie of the General Labourers Union,

"Despite the fact that he was one of the oldest trade union officials in Glasgow, his position on the Committee was anything but happy. He was a labourer representing labourers, and craft prejudice was still very much alive amongst the others. This brought me close association with him. He was like a Jew on a committee of half-concealed anti-Semites, with a revolutionary as his natural ally." (65)

The trade union officials were to become increasingly isolated from their membership as they showed themselves more and more conciliatory towards Government attempts to impose harsh dilution measures in the munitions industries. Until then the shop stewards, where they existed had been mainly 'pence-card' collectors of dues for union membership. They now began to assume the role of defenders of basic trade union rights. During 1915-16 battles developed over the right

of stewards to gain access to dilutees, to unionise them, to resist speed-up of work processes.<sup>(66)</sup> The mere skeleton of a workshop movement which had existed before the war now had flesh and blood put on it by the attacks on workers' standards made by the big employers such as Weirs of Cathcart, Barr and Strouds, Browns, Fairfields, Albion and Meechams aided and abetted by the Dilution Commissioners.

The February 1915 strike provoked by Kirkwoods' dismissal from Beardmore's Parkhead Forge resulted in the Labour-Withholding Committee, a body representing most of the major workshops on the Clyde which eventually became the famous Clyde Workers' Committee with Gallacher as chairman and J.M. Messer as secretary. The subsequent failure of the officials to ensure action to secure the release of three imprisoned Fairfields shipwrights resulted in the discrediting of the Allied Trades Committee, and their failure to take an anti-war position shifted the centre of gravity of the organised workers to the shop stewards' organisation. With John MacLean ceaselessly agitating against the war and educating hundreds of working class agitators in basic Marxism, a movement of militant class conscious resistance to the government came into being based on a shop floor power which has been well described by Gallacher and others. (67) With MacLean, in the words of Gallacher, "like a tornado sweeping along the Clyde", sectional identities began to collapse. As Gallacher says,

"in all the principal factories, workshop committees representing all departments and all workers were now functioning." (68)

Nan Milton quotes MacDougall who was MacLean's right hand man writing in the Vanguard of October 1915 as claiming that the real leadership now existed in the factories with the shop stewards, and

"that the exceptional circumstances at present existing are producing something very like the beginning of a real industrial movement. The need for solidarity is breaking down the old craft jealousies, the spread of socialism is showing to workers their essential unity as a class, in spite of all differences of occupation." (69)

This movement towards working class unity received a clear expression in the Manifesto of the Clyde Workers' Committee,

"Fellow workers, the Trade Unions as such catering for sectional trades only and thus dividing the workers, are hopelessly inadequate to deal with the thoroughly organized employing class which blocks the way towards the workers' emancipation. Only by organizing as a class regardless of Craft, Creed, or Sex, can we as workers ever hope to successfully combat and overcome the Employing Class.

We must therefore change the tactics we have clung to so closely in the past, and organize now at the point of production right inside the Workshop, Mine, and Factory, on a class basis, simply because we are workers out to emancipate ourselves - and not as formerly, because we are engineers, joiners, and shipwrights, etc., out to defend our craft against members of our own class, even though they were forced to encroach in order to make a living.

We must throw out the craft spirit, and accept the true spirit of brotherhood, stand shoulder to shoulder with our fellow workers, knowing that 'United As Workers We Stand, Divided As Craftsmen We Fall'." (70)

Despite imprisonment, deportation of its leaders and the persecution of MacLean, the Clyde Workers' Committee survived and indeed won major victories in preventing dilution being imposed wholly on the employers' terms and in preventing wholesale military conscription, as well as assisting in the defeat of the landlords and factors' attempted extortion of higher rents from the workers, the latter fight being organised by Mrs Barbour and the women of Govan and Partick. (71) As the support of the Clyde Workers' Committee for the rent struggles suggests they were far from being narrowly 'economistic' but had widened out their perspective to embrace a

general defense of working class living standards, a defense which itself could only be successfully mounted on the basis of a political opposition to the war conducted by a Government and employing class who had attempted to characterise the workers as a hostile and unpatriotic force. The fact that the Clyde Workers' Committee was able to lead the workers into action at all, in the face of such a sustained propaganda barrage, indicates the degree to which they had been successful in educating the workforce as to the real causes of their problems. As Damer has suggested,

"the rent strike was located in a mass movement which transcended, albeit briefly, the typical splits of skill, sex and religion in the working class." (72)

Although certain advances were made during this period, at least in terms of workshop organisation, it was not until the second world war that the shop stewards committees finally found their place in the structure of the labour movement. As in the first war there was some development in the work of shop stewards and shop stewards committees sprung up covering whole yards but not as yet officially recognised by the Confederation. From April 1941 official 'Whitley' type yard committees involving shop stewards and management had been set up under the Essential Works Order to discuss absenteeism, discipline and welfare. However, from 1942 onwards the shop stewards began to assert their own independent power as they became increasingly involved in production questions resulting from the problems raised by prefabrication and demarcation. These unofficial committees dealt with the problems of pay and conditions arising from the technical changes, especially in the boilermaker trades, as welders replaced riveters. Also a fight was made for a fall-back wage instead



of piecework and for retraining facilities for displaced craftsmen. (73)

By 1943, with a large number of demarcation strikes taking place the unofficial movement decided to appoint its own full-time secretary to deal with these, financed by membership subscription. (74)

This initiative was part of the general drive for production which unlike 1914-18, the organised shop stewards movement, now committed to the anti-fascist struggle, supported wholeheartedly.

Indeed by the summer of 1943 the Confederation, recognising the valuable role of the shop stewards in 'filling a gap' in the structure of the official movement, signed a deal with the employers giving the Joint Production Committees the power to advise on production questions. (75) The shop stewards on the Joint Production Committees had argued from 1941 for the relaxation of demarcation "so that the whole shop is working like a collective team". (76)

However, despite agreement on widening the scope of the Joint Production Committees it was clear that there was considerable employer resistance to extending their deliberations to cover production questions. While the shop stewards called for a drive "to secure the utmost production for victory" employers like Fairfields held out against the committees fearing them turning into "little Soviets". (77) In September 1943 at a meeting of the Clyde Yard Committee conveners it was reported that in only 12 out of the 22 yards represented was co-operation by the management satisfactory and among those mentioned where it was lacking, in addition to Fairfields, were John Browns and Stephens. (78) Given the attempted hamstringing of the Joint Production Committees, the worker-appointed shop stewards committees therefore had a particularly important role to play throughout the war and in 1947 as a result of this 'second

shop stewards' movement', the Confederation officially recognised the shop stewards committees overcoming its previous suspicion of such unofficial committees.

Recently there has been some questioning of just how 'red' the Clydeside shop stewards movement has been. The movement during the first war certainly appears to have exceeded the later struggles in the extent and depth of radicalism. It is perhaps significant that the Government was careful from early on in 1941 to create structures that would provide an arena of involvement for shop floor representatives rather than attempting, as previously, to exclude the shop stewards as a dangerous and subversive element. Moreover, the Beveridge proposals for post-war reconstruction promising 'full employment in a free society' did much to head off the resurgence of a more all-embracing attack on the institutions of capitalism which had so manifestly failed during the years of the Depression. It would be a mistake, however, to underestimate the level of political understanding which did exist. In the major munitions factories, the production of arms for the Soviet Union and the campaign for the opening of the Second Front, represented an expression of the kind of vigorous internationalism which had characterised the shop stewards movement during the first world war. The difference was, that instead of expressing this feeling through a policy of 'ca canny' or extended go-slow, with the survival of the Soviet ally now at stake the workers fought to maximise production levels. In both instances a shop stewards movement came into being which albeit temporarily, could surmount the inheritance of sectionalism and provide the workers with a unified class-conscious leadership. The next time this was to occur was when the very

survival of the industry on the Upper Clyde seemed threatened. Before discussing this, however, the more recent development of the labour force and the shop stewards organisation on the Clyde must be outlined.

(iii) The Fairfields Experiment.

From the 1950's onwards, once the early boom in replacement vessels had subsided, there began the steady erosion of jobs and closure of Clydeside yards, as British shipbuilding lost more and more of its market to foreign competitors. (79) Then in 1965 the Fairfield shipbuilding company at Govan went bankrupt calling in a receiver. Two and a half thousand jobs were at risk. For the Labour Government still fairly new to office, only having been elected the previous year, and with a series of interventionist plans to accelerate economic performance, the Fairfields crisis occurred at a time at which their faith in technocratic solutions to Britain's economic problems was at its greatest. Doubtless also the overwhelmingly Labour-voting character of the political constituency of Clydeside was a factor which influenced the decision to rescue the yard. Certainly the working class had great expectations for the new government after the previous long period of Tory rule. The Labour Government had already appointed a commission of inquiry into the shipbuilding industry under Sir Reay Geddes charged with presenting proposals for restructuring the industry in a more economically efficient manner. (80) The Fairfields crisis thus occurred at a particularly politically awkward moment as regards the future of the industry on Clydeside. It was nevertheless seen by certain of the more enthusiastic reformists, at the newly-created Department of Economic Affairs under George Brown, as offering an unparalleled opportunity to try out their theories of bringing together

capital and labour in a new harmonious relationship. A revised Fairfield's operation was to become a test-bed for such ideas, whereby formerly 'backward' industries could be made to become internationally competitive through the application of advanced management techniques, industrial relations personnel and economic planning on a large scale.

George Brown in his memoirs describes the thinking which lay behind the 'Fairfields experiment' as it became known,

"It was an experiment in a new form of capitalism, part-unions, part-employers, part-Government, part-private shareholders. It was, of course hated by all the other shipyards, who saw the prospect of Fairfields earnings going up to their detriment as cherished traditional practices were changed. But we saw it as a wonderful proving ground for new industrial relations in shipbuilding."(81)

It is this latter aspect of industrial relations which is the current concern. The wider evaluation of what was achieved by the Fairfield's experiment and the details of its history have been adequately provided by Alexander and Jenkins upon which the following also draws heavily. (82)

Briefly, under the crusading leadership of Iain Stewart who was appointed chairman of the revived Fairfields after the bankruptcy of the previous company an attempt was made to introduce,

"a 'new look' industrial relations based upon security of earnings and a considerable extension of retraining facilities." (83)

In other words, in exchange for a much greater degree of job security and a general upgrading of working conditions it was hoped that the unions would make major concessions on demarcation questions including a 'no-strike' pledge. In the immediate circumstances of the

threatened closure of Fairfields, with so many jobs at risk, it was felt that this was an ideal opportunity to make changes in working practices which would have industry-wide ramifications. It was also the opportunity for enlightened management to conduct a more 'humane' approach to the welfare of their workers. So strong was the opposition of the other Clyde shipbuilders, however, that Fairfields remained outside the local and national employers' association which was to characterise the Fairfields experiment as,

"based on a utopian philosophy which paid no direct regard to the prevailing labour practices in our Industry." (84)

The primitiveness of working conditions under the old owners was certainly a feature which had soured relations between management and workers. Basic changing facilities and sanitary conditions were deplorable. A very interesting participant observation study of a Clydeside yard in the late 1940's describes some of the rigours with which the workers were faced in addition to the naturally demanding conditions of work, many of which must have seemed petty and spiteful. (85) If a worker was even a minute late for the 7.30am start he would be 'locked out' and lose pay till 1pm. There were no breaks until lunch. The time office for checking in and out was fifteen minutes from the gate and this was not taken into account in determining hours worked. Any dispute over pay, which was handed out in a bundle of notes wrapped around the coins, had to be taken up with the wages office which was twelve miles away on the other side of the river. The description of toilet facilities is worth quoting.

"Lavatories consist of drainage pipes of wide diameter with holes cut in the top at regular intervals, reminiscent of what the troops experienced in India during the war. They are not private. Partitions are provided on one side consisting of sacking suspended from ropes. Instead of improving the facilities, industrial relations are so bad that the management contents itself with employing a paid 'lavatory policeman'. His sole duty is to clock employees on and off as they enter and leave and to make sure that they do not delay unduly!" (86)

A favourite prank related by one old shipyard worker was to 'float' a bundle of burning newspapers into the next compartment. If the attitude of the old owners to their workers was anything to go by it was no wonder that the whole concept of the Fairfields experiment was anathema to them.

Nevertheless the important thing about Fairfields was not such concessions as putting up coat-hooks for workers' jackets welcome as these no doubt were, but the degree of involvement of the unions and the workforce in the affairs of the company. Most dramatic was the series of mass meetings with the workforce addressed by Iain Stewart in the Lyceum cinema in Govan held at 7.50am at which the workers pledged to support the new venture. Leading right-wing trade unionists such as William Carron of the engineers and Sir Jack Scamp of the giant Courtaulds were also appointed directors of Fairfields. They were seen as having a special expertise to offer in discussions on working practices, redundancies and wage differentials. (87)

These two unions together with the electricians, the clerical workers union and the woodworkers union also provided finance for the company either in the form of direct investment, or as in the case of the electricians, a long-term loan. The significant exception was the boilermakers whose role in the history of Fairfields was critical, since if fundamental changes were to be introduced it would have to be with their assent and co-operation.

Not only were trade unionists involved on the board but the shop stewards conveners were present during the meetings of the executive committee of the management. The conveners, among whom Jimmy Airlie was the engineers representative, could participate in discussions but were not allowed to vote. Moreover, through the concept of 'briefing group' an attempt was made to ensure that communications were sustained with all levels of the company. However, it was in the question of the procedure agreement that Fairfields represented a significant departure. Since the company was outside the local employers association and its national equivalent it had to negotiate a separate agreement with the unions. The machinery for consultation and arbitration was known as the Central Joint Council and the Scottish Conference, the operation of which has been described by Alexander and Jenkins. (88) Significantly in June 1966 the boilermakers signed this procedure agreement along with the other unions abandoning their 'lone-wolf' approach. However, within six months they had become disenchanted with it and thereafter never allowed a claim to reach Scottish Conference level. Early in 1967 they relinquished secretaryship of the Joint Council and their attendance became increasingly sporadic. One of the major achievements of the Joint Council was, however, to solve a strike by boilermaker apprentices which did so much to dent the no-strike image of the company. It was perhaps characteristic of Stewart's idealist approach that such store was placed in the 'no-strike' pledge. The problem lay not so much with the mechanics of the procedure agreement itself as with the difficulties raised in trying to tackle the thorny question of working practices, specifically the introduction of flexibility and interchangeability agreements. This issue went to the very core of shipyard sectionalism.

The slogan of Fairfield's management was 'nothing for nothing', that is, effectively a wages moratorium with any increases being obtained solely on the basis of increases in productivity. Such increases were of course dependent upon changes in working practices the prime target for which were the boilermakers, the industrial wage leaders. From the employers' point of view it would be highly advantageous if the workforce could be persuaded to loosen demarcation boundaries and accept interchangeability for workers who would be trained in a broader range of skills. (89) The CIR report describes flexibility and interchangeability as follows;

"flexibility means, in the narrowest sense, carrying out work outside the normal work boundaries of the trade in order to further the job, using such necessary tools as the individual is capable of using, and in the broadest sense it means carrying out work across a wider spectrum of skills than has traditionally been the case, as for example would be involved in a member of the ASB carrying out work normally the preserve of another trade within the same union. Interchangeability involves a man changing to another trade, on either a long term or short term basis, as opposed to exercising other skills for short periods as involved in flexibility." (90)

It should not be thought that the trade union movement was entirely hostile to changes in working practices. The Confederation had decided to take part in such agreements from 1962 while the boilermakers were increasingly favourable towards some form of productivity bargaining during this period. Indeed the Confederation had been conducting negotiations at yard and district level on relaxation of working practices, what became known as ROWP, since 1964. Moreover as a result of amalgamation with the shipwrights they were in a strong position vis-a-vis job control. Eldridge has suggested this as a key factor making it possible for the union to respond to pressures for labour flexibility and interchangeability at yard and river level of negotiations. (91) In 1965 Lithgows' and



Scotts' agreements had already been accepted for interchangeability among welders, platers, caulkers, burners and riveters while tack-welders became superfluous and were retrained in the metal trades.(92) Moves in a similar direction also were afoot on the Upper Reaches but had failed to materialise when the old Fairfields company collapsed in 1965 and negotiations were suspended.

In this respect what was finally agreed at Fairfields between the boilermakers and the management was virtually unprecedented, at least on paper, in terms of the metal working trades in an area of traditionally strongly enforced demarcation practices. The agreement of June 1966 with the boilermakers permitted flexibility for the first time among trades covered by the union on the Upper Clyde. The Fairfields agreement was subsequently quickly adopted, with minor amendments by the Clyde Shipbuilders Association and the ASB throughout the Upper Reaches. (93) Roberts describes the broad outline of the agreement,

"The Upper Reaches' Agreement is the most comprehensive and extensive in coverage of any of the agreements yet signed: so far as the metal trades are concerned it meets most, if not all of the traditional criticisms. Platers and shipwrights are to be integrated on work both in the shops and on the berth; caulkers and burners are to be integrated into one trade of caulker/burners; all trades will carry out the service operations needed to progress their own jobs such as tack welding, burning, cutting or tapping, drilling, lining off, fairing, making brackets, etc; all trades will be interchangeable - in times of redundancy men will revert to their own trades and the customary ratio of shipwrights to platers will be maintained in each yard; and appropriate arrangements are to be made for any retraining required and for adjusting the rates of pay of transferred men." (94)

The main emphasis of the agreement was the need for adjacent trades to be able to 'progress own work'. (95) To allay fears of redundancy the boilermakers were guaranteed eighteen months employment.

They were also offered an increase of over 12d in return for agreeing to work study and promises of productivity increases, which management reckoned to be worth about 12.5 per cent. (96) This became known as 'buying the book', that is, a payment to secure the abandonment of existing practices. It cost the Fairfields management approximately £30 per head to do this, £25,000 in total. The metal trades received an average of 10 per cent on their wage rates, a fact which quickly provoked a hostile reaction from other sections of the workforce.

The first aspect of the agreement to cause annoyance was that it was paid retrospectively from the date of the commencement of negotiations. Besides increasing the differential between the boilermakers and the rest of the workforce, insult was added to injury by the information that some men who had since left the yards would also receive retrospective payments. Moreover, the GMWU which represented the lower paid workers and had, unlike the boilermakers, invested a sum in the yard remarkably close to that now being given to the boilermakers, felt that their money was now being used "to line the pockets of the ASB". (97) The failure of the management to 'stand up' to the boilermakers, a feeling on the part of other workers that management were "favouring the opinion of, or succumbing to the threats of the ASB", resulted in a walk out by the cranemen who spearheaded a GMWU counter-claim and in all, about sixteen claims for wage increases were made on the grounds of 'preservation of differentials' or 'parity' within days of the agreement being signed. Alexander and Jenkins claim that the "ASB negotiations provided a stimulant for productivity bargaining in the company" among other trades. (98) Certainly this did occur in the form of an ROWP agreement among the finishing

trades although its economic significance was less than the fact that it sealed the undying hostility of the finishing trades towards the boilermakers and their utter determination to topple them from their position at the first opportunity. The precondition for this was unity among the finishing trades themselves which was achieved during Fairfields. The chance finally to tame the boilermakers came in the wake of the UCS collapse and its reconstruction in Govan Shipbuilders and Marathon when the boilermakers were forced to accept parity despite attempted rearguard action.

While no attempt can be made here to evaluate the success or otherwise of the Fairfields experiment which also involved an attempt to rationalise the wages structure, aptly described by Stewart as a 'dog's dinner', together with certain long overdue reforms in apprentice training and reduction in its length from 5 to 4 years, nevertheless, it is clear that the results of ROWP were somewhat less than hoped for. The agreement related mainly to the more efficient utilization of labour through flexibility and did not cover other important areas such as overtime working, production standards or manning arrangements. (99) Another important area where the Fairfields experiment signally failed to change working practices was in the unsuccessful attempt to introduce double-shift working. This was rejected by the men as likely to cause a serious disruption of their established pattern of social life.

In their joint paper on Fairfields industrial relations Alexander and Jenkins comment, with regard to the ROWP agreement,

"The weakness of the Agreement with the Amalgamated Society was its very specific nature, that is, what could be done was very tightly defined. Limitations by restriction tend to breed further restrictions. The ubiquitous phrase that was the linch-pin of this Agreement 'to progress own work' was to cause particular problems of implementation. For a man of one craft to 'progress his own work' it was necessary that no specialist service trade be readily available. Therefore foremen were soon complaining, for example, 'that the welders were refusing to allow other trades to weld for any length of time'." (100)

Elsewhere on the Clyde the introduction of ROWP was also not without its problems. At Connell's Scotstoun yard the welders led by Sam Barr, later to be one of the UCS leadership struck, fearing that the employers would exploit the agreement because of what were seen as 'loop holes' in it and indeed stayed out in defiance of their national officials. In particular the welders felt that the employers would attack their wages by using other sections to tack weld their own jobs at a lower rate than previously paid to welders and that their members would become 'surplus to requirements'. (101)

The Fairfields management had to form special service squads of welders. Thus whatever may have been agreed at union-company level, clearly at work group level, there was continuing resistance to flexible working arrangements, despite the fact that senior stewards had been included in the negotiations with management and in explaining the measures to the workforce.

A further factor which diminished the expected benefits of the ROWP agreement in addition to workgroup resistance was what Alexander and Jenkins describe as the 'demoralisation' of the foremen at Fairfields. The majority of the foremen were recruited within the industry from the ranks of skilled craftsmen. Few had received any kind of formal training for the position and once promoted to

the rank of foremen such men had tended to remain with the firm. The changes which the new Fairfield's management were introducing sharply revealed the social marginality of the foremen's position in the yard. To begin with, with the management devoting a major part of their efforts to arriving at an agreement with the shop stewards from the metal trades, the foremen felt both neglected and their position of authority, based on their ties to the management, somewhat undermined. Communications between management and men of a direct nature without the intercession of the foremen were now taking place extensively. Moreover, given their recruitment to their present position, often based simply on favouritism, many had neither the inclination nor the expertise to handle the new and specific technical demands made by the introduction of work study techniques and job evaluation, despite a limited training period of one week which they were given. For men whose ultimate weapons were those of intimidation through dismissal threats and whose relations with their former workmates were never easy to now relate to the workforce through the paraphernalia of job cards and stop watches, was asking for a much greater readjustment than management realised. As a result the lack of enthusiasm of work groups to ROWP was mirrored for rather different reasons by the foremen and was a serious handicap, undermining the effectiveness of the agreement. (102)

One important result of the innovations introduced by Stewart then, arising from the problems with the ROWP agreement, was the enhanced role of the shop stewards and in particular of the conveners in the affairs of the shipyard. Indeed, the shop stewards also were given a weeks training at the electrician's trade union college at Esher to familiarise them with work study techniques. In order to

secure the smoothest possible introduction of the changes entailed in yard practice the convener of the shop stewards was to become employed to explain and assist the implementation of the new measures on a full-time basis. The yard convener was not, however, a particularly powerful figure in the shipbuilding industry. In Fairfields such a position did not in fact exist and it is symptomatic of the ill-feeling that the boilermakers had created that when a convener was to be appointed, a bitter row broke out over this question. The boilermakers did not want a yard convener but if one was to be elected it would have to be a boilermaker. The ASB had under 30 per cent of the shop stewards' votes at the meeting to decide this issue although their membership was well over a third of the labour force. They refused to accept the majority decision causing the meeting to be abandoned. The shop stewards committee was also dissolved for a period as the other stewards felt that they could not allow ASB representation in these circumstances. Eventually the non-ASB stewards formed their own yard committee with a convener who, like the boilermakers' convener, became full-time. Although it created horizontal inter-union sectionalism these events and Stewart's whole philosophy of involvement did result in a more developed shop stewards organisation even if it was somewhat sectionally fractured. Alexander and Jenkins, in the circumstances, give a fairly moderate appraisal of the boilermakers' role,

"The ASB jealously guarded their prerogatives and allowed their fear of losing a long established and predominant position in the yard to cloud the realities of the situation." (103)

In terms of what was achieved in changes in working practices then the boilermakers conceded 'narrow' rather than 'broad' flexibility. That is, following the CIR Report's distinction, it was conceded that work could be carried out beyond normal work boundaries in order to further the job but not to the extent that the preserves of particular trades within the union were normally open to other trades on any more continuing basis. It was to be over a decade later before this latter was conceded. What happened at Fairfields provides the essential background for many of the issues that were later to emerge during the history of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders.

When the Geddes Committee reported it recommended the principle of a regrouping of yards on a geographical basis in order to produce larger, integrated and more efficient economic units. On the Clyde this eventually resulted, after lengthy discussions, in a merger of the lower Clyde Yards of Scott and Lithgow into one unit and on the upper reaches the creation of a new consortium bringing together Yarrows, the naval shipbuilders, and the only yard currently profitable, John Browns of Clydebank, Stephens yard at Linthouse, Connells of Scotstoun and Fairfields at Govan. The merger of the latter group into Upper Clyde Shipbuilders took place in 1967 under the watchful eye of a working party of the newly created Shipbuilding Industry Board led by Anthony Hepper who was subsequently appointed the chairman of the new company. The stormy history of the company between 1968 and 1971 and its successive financial crises have been documented elsewhere. (104) The question of who was to blame for the eventual failure of the consortium is a matter still firmly embedded in political controversy and is not of immediate concern here. More important to note in terms of what was eventually

to transpire, is that many of the underlying defensive sectional responses which had manifested themselves during the Fairfields period continued with the formation of the new company. In particular the division between the boilermakers and the rest of the workforce carried over into UCS.

(iv) Upper Clyde Shipbuilders and the Problem of Redundancy.

Perhaps the most striking example of divisive sectionalism can be seen in the question of the UCS procedure agreement. Since 1926 a national procedure agreement for the industry had existed which neither the boilermakers nor the engineers had signed although they did follow it on many occasions. Then in 1967 the Boilermakers' Society signed a national procedure agreement for the first time. When the new company was formed it wished to negotiate outside the national agreements jointly with all the unions. The Boilermakers' Society which had only recently adopted an industry agreement refused to accept this proposal. As a result a two-tier system existed at UCS. (105) The CIR report commented on the inevitable consequences of this arrangement.

"While it is possible to over-emphasise the differences between the UCS procedure agreements and the industry agreement it is nevertheless the case that the ASB's insistence on entirely separate negotiations drew the company and the unions into the creation of two systems which have inevitably played upon each other." (106)

On the other hand, when the company was faced with a second major financial crisis in the summer of 1969 the boilermakers offered to accept a reduction in bonuses and postpone an imminent wage demand. Any attempt to characterise the Boilermakers' Society as the 'villains of the piece' or indeed as responsible for the ultimate collapse of UCS would be grossly unfair. Indeed, if there is any



truth in the charge that the trade unions at UCS used the company's desire to standardise wage rates between workers of the same occupation throughout the group, as an excuse for 'jacking-up' wages, then all sections were implicated. However, in the case of the boilermakers this was done to preserve their differential while for the finishing trades it was seen as part of the process of eliminating that traditional differential. The full-time officer of the sheet-metal workers, one of the finishing trades unions, is on record in discussions on wage standardisation with the UCS management, as having,

"stressed the view that serious conflict would arise if more favourable terms than had been offered to the fitting-out trades were conceded to the steelworkers." (107)

Other senior trade union officials including influential members of the Clyde district of the Confederation argued in a similar vein. (108) Clearly the memory of Fairfieldsrankled deep.

On the other hand, when the company, facing a series of financial crises, was on the verge of liquidation, all sections of the shop stewards accepted the inevitability of the sacrifices demanded by the government if the firm was to receive yet further aid. Of the 12,000 workers employed in the consortium, 3,500 were made redundant between 1969 and 1971. (109) It is interesting to note, that in contrast to later responses to redundancy, the Fairfields crisis and later the UCS labour force rundown produced a fairly low key resistance from the shop stewards. Indeed, throughout Clydeside during the late 1960's the reaction to the creeping acceleration of redundancies in engineering and shipbuilding was still fairly muted. However, beneath the surface real resentment

and bitterness was also beginning to build up, particularly among those parts of the labour movement whose adherence and loyalty to the increasingly right-wing policies of the Labour Government was less than slavish. (110)

As far as Clydeside was concerned, the issue of redundancies was becoming an increasingly urgent one. In the Clydebank area, for example, where the burgh council had set up a special committee on unemployment since 1967, there had been redundancies first at Babcock and Wilcox at Dalmuir and at John Brown Foster Wheeler both major engineering establishments. Tony Benn as Minister of Technology received several anxious delegations comprising shop stewards, local trade union officials and representatives of the local trades council as well as Clydebank and Renfrew councils concerning these firms. (111) The Babcock and Wilcox closure was particularly resented as the workforce had already made substantial concessions towards productivity bargaining and abandoning restrictive practices. There were also redundancies at UCS Clydebank, at Manlove Tullis engineering works and at Singers. In all of these, with the exception of Singers where Gavin Laird was convener, Communist shop stewards began to develop wider campaigns involving the trades council, local full-time officials, the town councils and local authorities, members of parliament and even representatives of the local clergy. In the attempt to broaden out the base of these campaigns to involve the local communities within which the threatened enterprises were located, they provided direct forerunners of the later events on the Upper Clyde.

In the Glasgow area in general, there was a similar pattern of contractions and closures in heavy engineering and shipbuilding. Among these the more prominent engineering concerns involved were Tollcross Foundry, Davy Ashmore, North British Locomotive Company, Nobel-ICI, Pilkington Fibreglass and in shipbuilding there were closures at Barclay Curle at Whiteinch, the Harland and Wolff yards at Govan and Partick and at Hendersons yard. Between 1961 and 1971 net employment in Glasgow fell by 78,000 of which 61,000 jobs were in manufacturing. Over half of these job losses were in engineering and shipbuilding as table 2 shows. (112) Throughout the 1960's male unemployment rose from  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent to nearly 8 per cent. (113) Growing frustration over rising unemployment in this period was the key to later developments. Then in August 1970 an important engineering establishment in Glasgow, Sterne & Co. formerly the Crown Iron Works shut down with 450 redundancies. The closure was a shock to the workforce and just a few days before the company, part of Prestcold had received the Queens Award to Industry for exports. When the closure was announced there was an immediate stoppage of work and a demonstration. The Sterne's stewards proposed that the engineering workers' District Committee organise a token stoppage against closures and unemployment in Glasgow and endorse the call for a Clydeside shop stewards meeting on the issue. On September 18th the Sterne's workers gave notice of strike action, endorsed by the engineers' Executive Council, the first time such a decision had been taken regarding action against a closure in Scotland. A special shop stewards meeting convened in early October recommended a day token stoppage throughout the whole of Glasgow's engineering industry and in response to this the engineers' Glasgow

District Committee agreed on November 11th as the date for the stoppage. The Clyde Confederation in turn decided to support the day of action throughout the west of Scotland and subsequently between 40,000 and 50,000 workers supported the stoppage despite a powerful press campaign in opposition and employer pressure. The Sterne workers' own campaign, however, collapsed after a three day strike. Then in March 1971 there was a strike in the Scott-McQuay factory in Hillington, owned by the Sterne Group. It was once again a strike against closure and the transfer of work to England but was also unsuccessful however. From these experiences a number of lessons were learnt. One local Communist shop steward observed just two months before UCS collapsed,

"The next issue in this particular struggle, whichever factory or shipyard concerned, may sustain longer action, win consolidated action, especially in a 'combine', drawing on the strength of the whole labour and trade union movement, and succeed in defeating the monopolist boardroom decisions." (114)

Although the Sterne workers' own action was not successful they had broken new ground in involving the official movement in concerted activity against the problem of closures and unemployment in endorsing the action proposed by the workers. This was in contrast to what had come to be regarded as the normal role of the official trade unions, namely, negotiating the best possible deal with the management for those made redundant without challenging the policies which created these redundancies. This had come to be called 'accepting blood money' or 'selling jobs'. There was a discernable hardening of attitudes on this question and a realisation that previous forms of action, in particular strikes, were not necessarily the most effective means of resisting redundancies. Thus in the period

leading up to the final UCS crisis there was a growing awareness on the shop floor and to some extent also at the official levels of the labour movement that some new form of tactic or struggle would need to be devised. When in June 1971 UCS went into liquidation with the threatened loss of many thousands of jobs on the Upper Reaches, it was clear that the time had arrived when a stand had to be made. It appeared that there would be no Fairfields-type rescue by the new Conservative Government. The only options open to the workers were to resist or succumb to the destruction of their livelihoods and the latter option was simply no longer acceptable.

## Chapter 1 The Roots of Sectionalism and Solidarity

- 1 See for example HMSO Shipbuilding Inquiry Committee, 1965-1966, Report, CMND 2937, 1966. (Geddes Report). See also Table 1, Shipbuilding Manual Labour Force by Occupation.
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- 5 *ibid.*, p. 165.
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- 7 An interesting discussion of the evolution of the Clydeside labour force is A. Reid, 'The Division of Labour in the British Shipbuilding Industry 1880-1920 - with special reference to Clydeside', PhD thesis, (unpublished), Cambridge, 1980.
- 8 I. Boraston, H. Clegg and M. Rimmer, Workplace and Union, London, Heinemann, 1975, p. 94.
- 9 J.E.T. Eldridge, Industrial Disputes, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968, p. 93.
- 10 See J.E. Mortimer, History of the Boilermakers' Society, London, Allen & Unwin, 1973. For an account of the evolution and structure of the Boilermakers' Society see J. McGoldrick, 'A profile of the Boilermakers' Union', in J. Kuuse and A. Slaven,

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- 18 J.R. Parkinson, The Economics of Shipbuilding in the United  
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- 21 ibid., pp. 116-117.
- 22 ibid., pp. 120-122.
- 23 F. Hart, Prefabrication, Demarcation and the Shipyard Trades,  
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- 24 ibid., p. 9. For a detailed analysis of employer and union

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25 *ibid.*, Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

26, *ibid.*

27 Parkinson, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

28 K.J.W. Alexander and C.L. Jenkins, Fairfields: A Study in Industrial Change, London, Allen Lane, 1971, p. 184.

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30 See G. Roberts, Demarcation Rules in Shipbuilding and Ship-repairing, University of Cambridge, Department of Economics, Occasional Paper No. 14, 1967, p. 11. See also Geddes, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

31 Roberts, *op. cit.*

32 *ibid.*

33 *ibid.*, p. 12.

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- 40 CIR, op. cit., p. 45.
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- 42 CIR, op. cit., p. 45.
- 43 *ibid.*, p. 100.
- 44 *ibid.*, p. 38. The CIR Report mentions that the AUEW organises some fitters helpers and to a lesser extent the ~~EEETFU~~ organises its helpers. In the nineteenth century only the semi-skilled caulkers and holders-on were admitted to the Boilermakers' Society in order to consolidate their control over the craft in the face of the overall decline in the skill content of boilermaking which accompanied the replacement of heated metal by cold steel as the main material of hull construction. See McClelland and Reid, op. cit.
- 45 CIR, op. cit., p. 109.
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- 56 See Appendix 13, UCS Shop Stewards Bulletins, Nos. 9-12. Cartoons by Bobby Starret as an example of shipyard humour.
- 57 Brown, et. al., op. cit., p. 107. The Durham group note that the sociable relations of the workplace, apart from some of the younger men and the boilermakers tended not to carry over into the non-work situation and that entertainment was more often sought within the family group, a feature perhaps more true in the North-East with its wider network of social clubs than on Clydeside with its pattern of male-dominated public houses. *ibid.*, p. 98 and p. 102.
- 58 J. Melling, '"Non-commissioned Officers": British employers and their supervisory workers, 1880-1920', Social History, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1980, p. 192.
- 59 R. Brown, P. Brannen, J. Cousins and M. Samphier, 'The Contours of Solidarity: Social stratification and industrial relations in shipbuilding', British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 10, No. 1, 1972, p. 21.

- 60 *ibid.*, p. 21, note 24 and p. 23, note 29.
- 61 H. McShane and J. Smith, Harry McShane: No Mean Fighter, London, Pluto Press, 1978, p. 56.
- 62 *ibid.*
- 63 See note 40 above.
- 64 R. Hyman, 'Trade unions, control and resistance', in G. Esland and G. Salaman, (eds.), The Politics of Work and Occupations, Milton Keynes, Open University Press, 1980, p. 310.
- 65 W. Gallacher, Revolt on the Clyde, London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1978, p. 186.
- 66 See appendix 1, Draft Scheme of Control in the Engineering and Shipbuilding Industry, by William Gallacher, 1916, reprinted in W.R. Scott and J. Cunnison, The Industries of the Clyde Valley During the War, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1924, pp. 211-212. For a broader discussion of the emergence of a militant shop stewards movement on the Clyde and elsewhere see J. Hinton, The First Shop Stewards' Movement, London, Allen & Unwin, 1973 and also B. Pribicevic, The Shop Stewards' Movement and Workers' Control, Oxford, Blackwell, 1959.
- 67 See for example H. McShane and J. Smith, *op. cit.*, McShane and Smith, pp. 76-77, p. 81 and Milton below, p. 109 attack the Clyde Workers' Committee, however, for concentrating on 'trade union' issues to the exclusion of 'political' issues like the war and conscription. A reading of The Worker-Organ of the Clyde Workers' Committee does not support this view.
- 68 W. Gallacher, Last Memoirs, London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1966, p. 51. See also Scott and Cunnison, *op. cit.*, p. 148.
- 69 N. Milton, John MacLean, London, Pluto Press, 1973, p. 94.
- 70 See Manifesto of the Clyde Workers' Committee, reprinted in Scott and Cunnison, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-215.

- 71 See S. Damer, 'State, Class and Housing: Glasgow 1885-1919', in J. Melling, (ed.), Housing, Social Policy and the State, London, Croom Helm, 1980, pp. 73-112.
- 72 *ibid.*, p. 75. For a view of this struggle which suggests a far less important role for the Clyde Workers' Committee see J. McHugh, 'The Clyde Rent Strike, 1915', Journal of the Scottish Labour History Society, Vol. 12, Feb., 1978, pp. 56-61. McHugh while making the point about the CWC's lack of formal links with the rent strike organisation fails to concede that it was nevertheless capable of strategic intervention in support of the campaign.
- 73 R.T. Buchanan, 'The shop steward movement, 1935-47', Journal of the Scottish Labour History Society, No. 12, February, 1978, pp. 42-43.
- 74 *ibid.*, p. 38.
- 75 See The Future of Shipbuilding, Communist Party Pamphlet, 1944, p. 16.
- 76 Arms and the Men: Full Report of the Conference of the Engineering and Allied Trades, Shop Stewards National Council and New Promellor, London, October 19th, 1941, p. 5.
- 77 Shop Stewards Next Step, Policy Statement Issued by the Engineering and Shipbuilding Shop Stewards' Committee for Scotland, Secretary Arnold Henderson, 1943, p. 6.
- 78 Buchanan, *op. cit.*
- 79 See on this Geddes, *op. cit.*
- 80 *ibid.*
- 81 G. Brown, In My Way, London, Gollancz, 1971, p. 123. See

also G. Brown, Hansard, Vol. 722, Col. 2103, 22 Dec., 1965. Brown was an enthusiastic champion of Fairfields and played a considerable role in ensuring Government financial support for the venture against considerable opposition from his Cabinet colleagues.

- 82 In addition to Alexander and Jenkins, op. cit., see also K.J. Alexander and C.L. Jenkins, 'Industrial Relations at Fairfields', Transactions of the Institute of Engineers and Shipbuilders in Scotland. Paper 1330, Vol. 111, 1967-68, pp. 163-197. A more journalistic account is provided by B. Hawkins and S. Paulden, Whatever Happened at Fairfields? London, Gower Press, 1969. See also the more partisan account given by O. Blanford, The Fairfield Experiment, Industrial Society, 1969.
- 83 Alexander and Jenkins, Fairfields: A Study of Industrial Change, op. cit., p. 15.
- 84 See Draft of letter from N.A. Sloan, secretary of the SRNA to Mr. John Davies, (n.d.), National Maritime Museum, SRNA collection, File S42/11, Shipbuilding - British UCS (1969-75).
- 85 R.S. Stokes, 'A shipyard from within', The Manchester School of Economics and Social Studies, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, 1949, pp. 88-96.
- 86 *ibid.*, p. 93.
- 87 Alexander and Jenkins, Fairfields: A Study of Industrial Change, op. cit., p. 85.
- 88 *ibid.*
- 89 See for example article by the President of the Shipbuilding

- Employers' Federation on this question. G. Hilton, 'The importance of labour flexibility', The Glasgow Herald Trade Review, January 1966, p. 145.
- 90 CLR, op. cit., p. 70.
- 91 Ildridge, op. cit., p. 123.
- 92 ibid.
- 93 See Appendix 2, The Fairfields Agreements. From the shipbuilding employers point of view, Fairfields in pioneering ROWP also became the 'wages pace setter' of the industry. See Draft of letter from N.A. Sloan to Mr. John Davies, op. cit., There is evidence that the Fairfields management by agreeing to a settlement with the ASB undermined the previous offer of the Clyde Shipbuilders Association which was only 9d for ROWP. See letter from N.A. Sloan to Board of Trade, 6 June 1966, National Maritime Museum, SRNA collection, File 5083/5B, September 1964-June 1966. Fairfields agreement, however, included work-study.
- 94 Roberts, op. cit., p. 38.
- 95 Alexander and Jenkins, Fairfields: A Study of Industrial Change, op. cit., p. 129.
- 96 ibid.
- 97 Alexander and Jenkins, Fairfields: A Study of Industrial Change, op. cit., p. 130.
- 98 ibid., p. 132.
- 99 See Appendix 2, op. cit.
- 100 Alexander and Jenkins, 'Industrial relations at Fairfields', op. cit., p. 182.

- 101 See various minutes of ROWP Committee and Management, Charles Connell & Co., (Shipbuilders) Ltd., August-December 1966, January-February 1967. Records of Charles Connell, UCS Scotstoun Division, Scotstoun Marine Shop Stewards Committee, 1966 File, 1967 File, GU Archives.
- 102 Alexander and Jenkins, Fairfields: A Study of Industrial Change, op. cit., pp. 65-67 discuss the foremen in detail and see also Appendix 2, Foremanship Survey, pp. 236-272. Further reasons for the failure of the ASB agreement to realise its potential are given, p. 128, and for the outfit trades ROWP, p. 146.
- 103 *ibid.*, p. 123.
- 104 See A. Buchan, The Right to Work, London, Calder and Boyers, 1972; W. Thompson and F. Hart, The UCS Work-in, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1972; J. McGill, Crisis on the Clyde, London, Davis-Poynter, 1973.
- 105 See Appendix 3, The UCS Agreements. The tenacity with which the boilermakers' defended what were effectively separate negotiation rights can be seen in, Record of Meeting between Upper Clyde Shipbuilders and the Steelworking trades, Rationalisation of Wages Structure, 26 September 1968, National Maritime Museum, SRNA collection, File 5/73/B1, 1968, comments by D. McGarvey.
- 106 CIR Report, op. cit., p. 115.
- 107 Record of meeting between Upper Clyde Shipbuilders and the Fitting-out Trades, Rationalisation of Wages Structure, 20 September 1968, National Maritime Museum, SRNA collection, File 5173/B1, 1968, comments by W. Reid.

- 108 Record of meeting between Upper Clyde Shipbuilders and the Fitting-out Trades, Rationalisation of Wages Structure, 11 November 1978, National Maritime Museum, SRNA collection, File 5173/B1, 1968, comments by J. Black that "under no circumstances would the fitting-out trades accept less favourable terms than were agreed for the steelworkers."
- 109 See F. Herron, Labour Market in Crisis, London, Macmillan, 1975, for a further discussion of these redundancies.
- 110 The general shift towards shop floor power and plant-bargaining by shop stewards' committees in the 1960's and the campaign against industrial relations legislation is discussed further in the final chapter of this thesis.
- 111 See Clydebank Town Council Minutes, Special Committee on Employment Report of meeting of delegation party to meet with Minister of Technology regarding Employment Situation held on 26 February 1968, and Records of Babcock and Wilcox Shop Stewards Committee, GU Archives.
- 112 See Table 2. Total Employment in Glasgow: Changes 1961-1971. See also G.C. Cameron, 'Economic analysis for a declining urban economy', Scottish Journal of Political Economy, Vol. 18, 1971, pp. 315-345
- 113 *ibid.*
- 114 J. Hamilton, 'A fight for work in Glasgow', Comment CPGB, Vol. 9, No. 11, 10 April 1977, pp. 173-174.



## Chapter Two

## THE LIQUIDATION CRISIS

When John Davies, the Minister of Trade and Industry stood up at question time in the House of Commons on the afternoon of Monday 14th of June, to announce the Government's intention not to save the Upper Clyde yards from bankruptcy, he could hardly have guessed that his words would generate a tidal wave of class anger unprecedented in scale since the 1926 General Strike.

"The Government have decided, therefore, that nobody's interest will be served by making the injection of funds into the company as it now stands." (1)

Such was the furore from the Labour benches which greeted Davies' words that he was forced to repeat himself three times before being allowed to complete his statement.

The twelve shop stewards who sat in the Visitors Gallery of the Commons listening grimly to their livelihoods being pronounced upon, must have cast a caustic eye on the scene of near jubilation with which Davies' words were received in the Tory back-benches.

That morning, prior to the Commons statement, four of their number had met Sir John Eden, one of the Minister's deputies. With the senior representatives of the STUC led by its chairman, Ray Macdonald they had flown to London in a last-ditch attempt to gain a stay of execution. But the axe had fallen nonetheless and with it the jobs of thousands were at risk. The blade had been honed several months previously when John Davies had informed Parliament in March that no more public

money would be made available to UCS in line with the Government's clearly enunciated policy towards 'lame ducks'. What the stewards were witnessing now was a simple coup de gr<sup>â</sup>ce. It might well have been the pathetic denouement of yet another fruitless trade union delegation to London with yet another series of redundancies confirmed despite all pleas for mercy. But the row that was brewing in Parliament was nothing to what was shaping up outside.

On Clydeside, even as John Davies spoke a new element was emerging. Feelings of shock and anger were hardening in a new mood of resistance. There was a growing conviction that a stand must be made here, that if they could do this to the Clydeside workers what could they not do to the rest of the British working class.

The news of the impending liquidation of UCS had been made public almost by accident the previous Saturday morning. For several days rumours had been circulating that UCS was in difficulty. Indeed on Friday, Anthony Hepper, the chairman, had told the trade unions that he had asked the Government for between £5 and £6 million to meet the cash crisis which the company faced. In the event of Government assistance not being forthcoming over the weekend he would have no alternative but to advise the Board of UCS to petition for a provisional liquidator on the following Monday. Hepper in fact had warned Davies on the previous Wednesday that he could delay informing the unions no later than Thursday so serious was the situation and would have to petition for the appointment of a provisional liquidator that same week. Davies, however, had asked the UCS management to ~~stay~~ their hand

for a few days to give the Government 'time to consider the position' and had assured Hepper that the Government would cover the wages bills at least for that week. (2) In consequence, early on Friday evening an anxious UCS Board sat at the UCS headquarters in Linthouse assessing the situation. The same evening at 5 o'clock, Ian Imrie, the industrial correspondent of the Glasgow Herald phoned UCS to check whether information which had reached his ears regarding the request for £6 million aid was correct. At the other end of the line, much to Imrie's surprise was none other than Hepper in the midst of high level conversations by telephone with Government ministers in London. Hepper confirmed that the company was indeed in desperate straits. Saturday morning's edition of the Glasgow Herald spelled out the full implications of the impending collapse, both in terms of job losses of workers in UCS and in related businesses and shops who were suppliers of the firm. In words that would have been prophetic were it not for their obviousness the leader writer warned the Government,

"The economic and social cost - never mind the political cost - of allowing UCS to go to the wall could be vastly greater than £6 million."(3)

For the government of the day it was a political horoscope they would have done well to heed.

Later on that day Hepper contacted Davies again to say that unless the £6 million was immediately forthcoming even the following week's wages could not be paid. The next day, Sunday, the two men met in Davies' Cheshire constituency in Knutsford at the local Conservative Party offices for a final discussion. It was clear from what Hepper had said that time was rapidly running

out for UCS and the Government would have to make up its mind one way or the other whether or not it would render immediate assistance to UCS. Davies went to Chequers on Sunday evening to confer with Prime Minister Heath who now called a full cabinet meeting for the following morning. By then it was certain UCS would have to go.

While the Government laid its plans that weekend, on Clydeside, the workers laid theirs. The same Saturday morning as the story broke, leading stewards from each yard met in the AUEW hall in West Regent Street and issued the call for a full meeting of all UCS shop stewards at the Trade Union Centre in Carlton Place for the following day. In the event over 200 stewards, mostly contacted by word of mouth, met on Sunday afternoon. The stewards had already begun to lay plans for the conduct of a mass campaign of resistance, the central demands of which were crystallised in the slogans put forward that day, and practically every day thereafter, at every mass meeting, press conference and demonstration for the next sixteen months. 'Not a man down the road - the right to work - not a yard will close'.

By all accounts it was an exceptionally stormy meeting but a crucial one in determining the future direction of the campaign that was to be mounted, for it was at this meeting that the novel idea of a 'work-in' was first put forward to the UCS shop stewards. None of the senior shop stewards who were later to assume prominent positions in the leadership of the struggle would claim the sole authorship of the tactic of working-in. It emerged as the result of collective discussions precisely because it corresponded to

the actual needs of the moment. Its rationale was simple. The problem was one of how to prevent the redundancies and closures taking place. Obviously a strike would hardly be an appropriate way of ensuring the yards stayed open as going concerns. A sit-in was perhaps a more feasible alternative but here again there would be problems of finance in maintaining large numbers of workers over any length of time. Moreover, an occupation was clearly illegal and there was no guarantee that the mass of UCS workers would support this form of action, far less the general public who might otherwise be expected to sympathise with their plight. A work-in on the other hand would present the workers' case in a visibly dramatised way for all the world to see. Here were men it could be argued who had been made unemployed as a direct result of Government action but who refused to surrender their jobs. They would continue to turn up for work as they had previously done, thereby demonstrating their willingness and availability for work even though officially they were no longer employed. It was a neat reversal of the stereotype portrayed in the media of strike-happy workers. Instead of ceasing production to make their case the UCS workers were intending to continue producing. The onus for any production loss in this instance therefore, lay not with the workers. How far this was a clever piece of public relations or a genuine vehicle for the expression of heightened class consciousness is a question that can only be answered by examining not just the inception but the whole subsequent course of events concerning the work-in. As such theorising on this question will be suspended until the final chapters after the reconstruction of the complete history of this struggle.

At the meeting in the Trade Union Centre, Sam Barr acted as the spokesman for the Co-ordinating Committee of UCS shop stewards and outlined the details of the proposal to "occupy the yards" to the workforce. They would control all movements of men and materials into and out of the yards. Redundant workers were to report to their conveners and then return to their usual jobs and continue working normally. The workers would set up their own time-keepers, and their own clerical administration to pay

members of the work-in. The yards would be occupied on a twenty-four hour basis and if necessary, food would be brought to the yard by the men's relatives. A treasurer would be appointed to handle finance sent in from appeals and donations and shop stewards would be sent all over the country to ask for aid. A special committee would be set up to prepare publicity materials to project the workers' cause including also a press liason officer. The four yard conveners would henceforth be subordinate to a Co-ordinating Committee and would carry out its decisions. The decisions of the Co-ordinating Committee would themselves be presented to mass meetings of shop stewards for endorsement followed by mass meetings of the entire workforce. All workers would be levied 50p per head every week to finance shop stewards delegations to other industrial centres and to provide 'hardship money' for those on the work-in. (4)

When Barr sat down there was consternation among the stewards equal to the incredulous exclamations with which they had punctuated his speech. (5)

The concept of 'working-in' although not the actual term was however not wholly without precedent in the trade union movement. (6) This however was to be the first time that the practicalities of the idea were to be tested out. As Barr had indicated the organisational mechanics of the work-in had already been formulated in some detail. (7) The next step was to convince the mass of UCS workers that this was a credible tactic of struggle, and indeed at mass meetings in the four yards the following day the plan of the stewards was given overwhelming

support by the workforce. Nevertheless, the sheer novelty of the proposals for most of them should not be underestimated as one of the senior stewards, Gerry Ross, the Clydebank boilermakers' convener emphasised,

"Many of the stewards could not grasp the significance of the work-in, including even we among the leadership, knowing we were making a decision of this nature, and we'd no position in the past where we could draw comparisons with such a situation. We did not understand...maybe Reid and Airlie did, what the actual decision really meant, what complications we'd be confronted with, and how gigantic a step was necessary to make a success come out of it." (8)

It was to be several weeks before the ideas which had been tentatively formulated that weekend were first put to the test. But a certain political and tactical estimation had been arrived at, which was to determine the overall lines of what was to be a unique form of struggle. The job now for the UCS shop stewards was to educate the broad labour and trade union movement to see the importance of this fight and also to mobilise the wider practical and political support which would be necessary if it was to be successful. The STUC representatives had been present at the shop stewards' initial meeting in the TU Centre and had already pledged their support. At that Sunday meeting arrangements were made for shop stewards to accompany an STUC delegation to London the following day which was to meet Sir John Eden, prior to hearing Davies' Commons announcement. A meeting of all Upper Clyde workers was to be held in Clydebank Town Hall later in the evening by which time the Government's decision would be known and the workers' representatives could return from London to give a first hand account of the day's events and the Government's decision on UCS.

At lunchtime on Monday Hepper had received the final message from John Davies that his request for assistance for UCS had been

refused. The news of the liquidation of UCS was embargoed until 3.30 pm by which time Davies had completed his brief announcement to the Commons. (9) With the cheers of the back-bench Tory M P's still ringing in their ears the UCS delegation duly departed by 'plane for Glasgow to attend a mass meeting with the workers in the Clydebank Town Hall that evening. They were accompanied by several members of the Scottish Labour Group of MP's and by Tony Benn, the Shadow Minister for Trade and Industry. After Willie Hutchison, a senior Scottish AUEW official, who as Chairman of the trade union side of the UCS Joint Council was part of the General Council's delegation, had given his sombre account of the day's events, Benn stood up to speak. He had come to identify himself wholeheartedly with what the Clyde workers were proposing to do.

"Your decision not to evacuate the yards is absolutely justified in the circumstances." (10)

Thus a major political figure in the Labour Party gave his support to the stand that was being made. This, in itself was a tremendous boost for the morale of the workers. Few had doubts about the sincerity of Benn's motives for being there. He was welcome, doubly so, since it was clear that Benn was prepared to associate himself with militant leadership and direct action in defence of threatened jobs. The implications of this political declaration however did not escape certain of his shadow cabinet colleagues who ensured that he was 'roasted' for what he had done. It should be remembered that as Minister of Technology under the previous Labour Government, Benn had been responsible for shipbuilding. Indeed, as he himself admitted publically to the UCS workers, in part, the problems of the UCS were due to the failure of the



administration under which he had served to nationalise the shipbuilding yards in 1966 when instead the Geddes plan had been adopted. (11)

Now the Provost of Clydebank Bob Fleming spoke, exactly capturing the feelings of the local people whose survival as a community was now at risk. In a memorable phrase he commented bitterly that,

"the Government were trying to do to Clydebank what the Germans had failed to do during the Second World War." (12)

With John Brown's as the major employer of labour in the town it was obvious what the consequences of the closure would be. Clydebank Town Council therefore would stand by the UCS workers and as an immediate gesture had agreed to underwrite from the Common Good Fund the £1,250 cost of hiring a special train to take hundreds of workers to lobby the Prime Minister in London the following day. (13) But it was Jimmy Reid speaking as a local councillor as well as a Clydebank Yard shop steward, who perhaps best summed up the mood of the moment when he said with what was to become characteristic eloquence,

"The Upper Clyde is being sacrificed on the altar of sheer political dogma. We refuse to accept that somebody sitting in Whitehall is going to kill our industry." (14)

And if necessary they would all go down to Whitehall and tell them so to their faces.

From the official trade union movement too came immediate public support for the stand of the UCS workers. The General

Council of the STUC convened a special meeting on the morning following the liquidation announcement to discuss its implications. After hearing the first hand report of what Eden and Davies had said they issued a major press statement roundly condemning the Government decision as being,

"motivated by, firstly, the unreasonable hatred of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, and, secondly the out-dated and totally irrelevant philosophy expressed in Mr. John Davies' lame duck speech." (15)

The statement went on to argue that the economic repercussions of this decision on the level of unemployment, which was already in excess of 9 per cent of the male population in the Glasgow area, were unacceptable. The Upper Clyde should be nationalised declared the STUC. Moreover, so far as the work-in itself was concerned,

"The General Council expresses support for the decisions taken by the Upper Clyde shipyard workers to occupy the yards to ensure that the yards remain open and in production. They also support the other measures taken by the Upper Clyde workers to draw public attention to their case for continuation of the Group's operation and the consequences which follow from that decision for the working people of the Upper Clyde area. The Upper Clyde workers have undoubtedly shown far more responsibility in this matter than our present Government." (16)

James Milne, the Assistant General Secretary of the STUC quoted after the meeting, summed up the STUC's view.

"The chips are down. Unless a determined stand is made now we are going to have the unemployed in Scotland of the same kind we had in the 1930's." (17)

Willie Hutchinson claimed that the ground was laid by Government for the liquidation of UCS with the separation of Yarrow from

the rest of the consortium in February. The plot to kill off UCS it was said had been hatched many months previously, a charge that was to be echoed in Parliament by Tony Benn, Bruce Millan and others during several heated debates on UCS.

By late Tuesday evening with the lobby of UCS workers to London about to depart, something of an impromptu mass rally had gathered on the platform at Central Station where the UCS special night train to London was standing. Bob Fleming was there to see them off along with members of the STUC General Council. Aboard, besides several hundred UCS workers from all four yards, were workers from the Yarrow's Yard and from BSC, from such key factories as Rolls Royce, Babcock and Wilcox and Singers. They knew that what happened to UCS workers today could equally well happen to them tomorrow and they had all shared the bitterness of previous redundancies. In the case of the steelworkers from BSC Clydebridge works the liquidation had already resulted in a cut-back in shifts worked by one third.

Throughout that day following the liquidation announcement the clamour of outrage had grown from all sections of the Scottish community. Any doubts that Edward Heath had that the 459 Clydesiders travelling to London were merely a local protest group must have been dispelled by the time the train drew out. Rarely can the message reaching a politician's ears have been so clear and unequivocal. A group of leading churchmen, including the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Cardinal had sent a telegram to Heath warning that the dissolution of the UCS,

"without the existence of alternative industry, would be so damaging to the economy of Scotland, and in an area of already severe unemployment, would have such social and human consequences as to be totally unacceptable in a responsible society." (18)

As Jimmy Airlie who was to become one of the leadership of the UCS struggle along with Sammy Barr and Jimmy Reid, recalled,

"We were asking Heath to meet a delegation. The word we got back just prior to boarding the train, this would have been nearly eleven o'clock at Central Station, was that Heath was not going to meet us - we could see some...I think it was the Secretary of State for Scotland, Campbell, And I can always remember the television crews there, and the interviewer says to me, 'Mr. Airlie, the word is that the Prime Minister's not going to meet you, what's your reaction to that?' And that was at the time of the Ford dispute, when Henry Ford came over to meet the Prime Minister. Well I said 'Surely if the Prime Minister of this country can meet an American millionaire, he can meet representatives of the Scottish working people.'" (19)

As the train finally drew away from Glasgow, at Westminster weary Tory MP's were filing through the division lobbies at the end of the adjournment debate on UCS which had lasted nearly seven hours. Perhaps it was the knowledge that hundreds of Clydeside workers, the human factors in the equation of profit and loss, were physically about to 'invade' the City of London, which had given the cut and thrust of parliamentary discussion a more than usually sharp edge. It was the first and possibly the most important of several Commons debates on UCS. While it is true that it was outside parliament that the decisive actions were being taken, it was precisely because of UCS that the whole economic strategy of the Conservatives was being vigorously challenged by the Opposition in a way that for the

first time severely shook the Government's confidence. The collapse of the Vehicle and General, the Rolls Royce affair, all these were parliamentary storms which they had been able to ride out with ease. Now John Davies and his colleagues were subjected to a sustained battering by Labour MP's which left them politically very bruised indeed. (20)

With Benn leading the attack, the Conservatives were accused of deliberately engineering a liquidity crisis in UCS by the withholding of Treasury shipbuilding credit guarantees to the banks who financed the shipowners' orders, from October 1970 until February 1971, thereby severely undermining business confidence in the firm. This decision was taken on the recommendation of the Shipbuilding Industry Board's appointee on the UCS board A.I. Mackenzie, based on an assessment as to the likelihood of the company being able to complete its 'contractual obligations'. The implications were clear to all. What added weight to the charge of conspiracy was that the UCS management were not themselves informed that the credit guarantees had been suspended, a fact which had only subsequently come to light as a result of telephone inquiries to the Department of Trade and Industry, after first having been alerted by their customers that all was not well.

In fact, as Benn argued citing the UCS management's figures, the company had been making substantial strides forward despite its initial difficulties. There had been an 87 per cent increase in productivity in steel throughput in the previous twelve months, while the current order book was worth £90 million with a possible further £100 million worth of orders for 20 standard bulk carriers in the pipeline. This increase in productivity had been achieved

with a 16 per cent reduction in the steelwork labour force and a 25 per cent reduction in the labour force overall in the previous fifteen months. The deliveries of ships had increased from 3 in 1968, 7 in 1969 to 12 in 1970 with a programme for 1971 of 18 deliveries. (21)

The charge was laid that it was for political rather than purely economic reasons that UCS was being killed off, as part of a pre-conceived strategy worked out while the Tories were in opposition, clearly spelled out in what became known as the notorious 'Ridley letters'. These letters typed on House of Commons notepaper were authored by Nicholas Ridley the then Undersecretary at the Department of Trade and Industry with responsibility for shipbuilding. They had been sent as unofficial briefs to Sir Keith Joseph, then Shadow spokesman on Trade and Industry and later to become Minister of Social Security in the Heath Government, to Gordon Campbell Heath's advisor on Scottish affairs and to the extreme right-wing Conservative MP for East Renfrewshire, Miss Betty Harvie Anderson. The letters were written in December, 1969 before the Conservatives had come into office and had first come to light in an article in The Guardian in May 1970. They were Ridley's summary of conclusions he had drawn as a result of a visit to UCS and discussions with Sir Eric Yarrow of Yarrow Shipbuilders as well as members of the Scott Lithgow group on the lower Clyde. From these Benn read out the most damning quote which was thereafter to be thrown in the Government's face as conclusive evidence of a squalid plot against UCS.

"We could put in a Government 'butcher' to cut up UCS and to sell (cheaply) to the lower Clyde, and others the assets of UCS to minimise upheaval and dislocation. I am having further views on the practicability of such an operation, which I will report.

(d) After liquidation or reconstruction as above, we should sell the Government holding in UCS even for a pittance." (22)

Whether or not subsequent Government policy had been directly based on Ridley's ideas for shipbuilding on the Clyde as it seemed to many at the time, is arguable. Clearly, however, the kite that Ridley had flown was now finding a generally favourable wind.

Benn also attempted to rebut the charge which had been levelled at him by Davies in the Commons the previous day, that in December 1969 as Minister of Technology, Benn had himself stated his refusal to provide UCS with any further public funds. Davies had quoted Benn as saying in 1969,

"After giving the most careful consideration to these proposals, the Government have regretfully concluded that, having regard to the need to contain Government expenditure, there is not sufficient priority to justify the investment of further public funds in the enterprise in the face of the many competing demands on national resources." (23)

In the light of this Davies had accused Benn of hypocrisy in urging aid to UCS now, but he had obviously not checked his quotes personally. One of his advisers had made an appalling gaffe, for what Benn had said in December 1969 referred not to UCS, but to the Beagle Aircraft Company. Davies was forced to make a humiliating apology. (24)

By comparison with Benn's onslaught, Davies and his fellow Conservatives seemed as lame as the ducks of their ill-starred metaphor. It was argued that the UCS consortium had already soaked up over £20 million of public money but despite repeated claims by the management that they were on the verge of profitability UCS had been unable to give firm assurances as to when this profitability would be reached, even if the Government acceded to

their request for £6 million aid. Davies furthermore denied all prior knowledge that the company was in such dire financial straights that even the following week's wages could not be paid until Hepper had so informed him the previous week, a mere forty-eight hours before the time when wages were due. There was nothing in the company's financial forecasts up to that point said Davies, to indicate the seriousness of the position UCS was in. These and the Opposition's arguments were to be raked over again and again by both sides. Was the company in fact now clear of the old loss-making orders taken on at fixed prices? Had trade union demarcation disputes and higher labour costs irretrievably undermined the profits of the firm? Had it been the real intention of the Government to kill off UCS the previous February, after hiving off Yarrows from the original consortium, only to be foiled at the last moment by the sudden collapse of Rolls Royce that month? There was enough ammunition here to keep MP's blasting away at each other for as long as their endurance would permit.

The one piece of substantive information to emerge out of the fracas was the announcement by Davies of the names of three of the persons to serve on an appointed 'committee of experts' which Davies had intimated would be set up to examine the affairs of the company over the following two months and to draw up recommendations for the Government 'to help in the orderly re-organisation and reconstruction' of the company. (25) These 'experts' were Alexander McDonald, Chairman of Distillers Company Limited and of the National and Commercial Banking Group, Sir Alexander Glen, of Shipping Industrial Holdings Limited, the Lenox Steamship Company



and Clarkson, the main shipbrokers for Scott Lithgow on the lower Clyde, and David Macdonald of Hill Samuel, the merchant bankers. On Clydeside they were to become known as the 'three plastic Macs'. Later a fourth name was to be added, that of Lord 'Alf' Robens, the former chairman of the National Coal Board who was later to make a celebrated public defection from the Labour Party. Collectively, they were dubbed 'the Four Wise Men', and were to achieve a notoriety among Clydesiders, equal to that which Robens already had acquired for himself among miners as the Government's hatchet-man in the rundown of the British coalfields.

At 6am on Wednesday morning the UCS train drew into Euston Station, They had come south through the night and, in the early hours of dawn when the train stopped briefly at Carlisle, a deputation from the local trades council was waiting at the station to wish them luck. At the other end of their journey, Tony Benn greeted their arrival at Euston. Their venue that morning was the Methodist Central Hall near the House of Commons where the demonstrators held a mass rally and were briefed on the day's plan. They were warned, although it was hardly necessary, that they were ambassadors for their country and as such should behave accordingly. The demonstration joined by 40 Labour MP's then marched off to Downing Street, or rather 'ambled', as demonstrators were not permitted to march within a mile of Westminster when Parliament was sitting. Led by a pipe band playing a little predictably perhaps, "Scotland the Brave" they were accompanied by 6'7" Sergeant Howard Booth of the Metropolitan Police Force. At Downing Street Provost Fleming, along with shop stewards Reid, Airlie, Barr, Dickie, Cook and McInnes spent an hour inside No. 10

with Heath and a further half hour with Gordon Campbell at the Scottish Office.

By all accounts, their reception by Heath was cordial if slightly uncomprehending. After all, it was a rare thing for a Conservative Prime Minister to come face to face with a shop stewards' delegation. As Jimmy Reid recalled, Edward Heath, a connoisseur of fine malt whiskies had offered the men a drink from a heavily laden sideboard. The men refused, they settled instead for a cup of tea. It was a small but symbolically significant act which perhaps seemed petulant to Heath, but was in fact an assertion by the men that they were in deadly earnest. Equally petulant, must have seemed the continual sarcastic references by his political enemies to his hobby, sailing, which Heath was subsequently to endure. To many it seemed that the Prime Minister, who was captain of the British team in the Admiral's Cup yacht races, was more preoccupied that summer with beating the Americans than with the problems of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders. The meeting that day, however, was not without its humorous moments. Willie McInnes, the Linthouse Convener, reknown for his quips, said to Heath as they were leaving, 'Can I go home and tell Martha and the weans they'll get their Fair Holidays?' Someone translated for Heath and he got the joke. (26)

It epitomised the huge void in understanding between a Tory Prime Minister and an ordinary worker. For the stewards it was clear that the outcome of the meeting had left Heath unmoved and equally so, those Scottish Tory MP's like Tam Galbraith, who the workers later tried unsuccessfully to lobby at the Commons. For the moment at least the Tories' face was set firmly against UCS. As Reid remarked of Heath and Campbell to the waiting media men.

"How can a Government in the 1970's try and take economic discussions in the abstract? Its pre-Keynes, as I said to your colleagues there. Its prehistoric. And it belongs to the 19th century and I think despite their suavity, how suave and well mannered and how well modulated their voice, I think we're dealing with a bunch of political cavemen." (27)

But it was Gerry Ross who that day coined the expression which exactly captured the fierce mood of resistance among the workers.

"They will have to get the troops out of Bogside and into Clydeside to get us out of the yard." (28)

The stewards were going home to mobilise a campaign of political and industrial support the like of which had not been seen before. For the time being, as far as UCS shop stewards were concerned, the delegation and pleadings to Government Ministers and MP's were over. It was time to get back to Clydeside and arrange a show of strength, not just from the shipyards but from the whole working class of Scotland. Within seven days they managed to do just that and on a wholly unprecedented scale. The battle for Upper Clyde was gathering momentum.

## Chapter 2 The Liquidation Crisis

- 1 Hansard, vol. 819, 1970-71, 14 June 1971, col. 32.
- 2 *ibid.*
- 3 Glasgow Herald, 12 June 1971.
- 4 Appendix 4, Notes of Sammy Barr's speech at the TU Centre, Glasgow, 13 June 1971.
- 5 *ibid.* See also interview with Sammy Barr, 11 July 1979, University of Glasgow Archives, (GU Archives.)
- 6 This question is discussed in further detail in chapter 12.
- 7 See appendix 5, 'Blueprint for the work-in'.
- 8 Interview with Gerry Ross, 2 May 1979, GU Archives.
- 9 See appendix 6. Upper Clyde Shipbuilders Ltd. Liquidation Press Releases, June 1971.
- 10 The Scotsman, 15 June 1971.
- 11 Report of Proceedings of the Thirty-sixth Annual Meeting of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, Torquay, 22-25 June 1971, Address by Mr. Anthony Wedgewood Benn, MP, pp. 168-169.
- 12 Glasgow Herald, 15 June 1971.
- 13 Clydebank Town Council Minutes, 14 June 1971. Minute of Special Committee on Employment, pp. 820-821 and pp. 830-831. GU Archives.
- 14 Glasgow Herald, 15 June 1971.
- 15 STUC 75th Annual Report, Dunoon 18-21 April 1972, p. 29. Middleton House.
- 16 *ibid.*, p. 30.
- 17 Glasgow Herald, 16 June 1971.
- 18 *ibid.*
- 19 Interview with Jimmy Airlie, 13 July 1979, GU Archives, Morning Star, 29 June 1981.
- 20 Hansard, vol. 819, *op. cit.*, cols. 233-366.
- 21 *ibid.*, cols. 246-247

- 22 *ibid.*, col. 248.
- 23 *ibid.*
- 24 *ibid.*, col. 255.
- 25 *ibid.*, col. 241.
- 26 Interview with Jimmy Reid, GU Archives.
- 27 BBC TV, 'The fight for Clydeside', documentary transcript, 21  
September 1971, GU Archives.
- 28 *ibid.*

## Chapter Three

## 'WE DON'T ONLY BUILD BOATS....WE BUILD MEN'

For those in Government the degree of cohesion and organisation in the working class movement, appearing almost overnight as it seemed, must have been somewhat baffling and disconcerting. It was clear that there was a failure to perceive the potential strength of the feelings which the liquidation announcement had generated. A vigorous surge of anger was taking place at the shop floor level. From their headquarters in Upper Clyde the stewards issued a call for a mass meeting of all Clydeside shop stewards for the following Monday with the intention of gaining support for a large demonstration in Glasgow on the following Wednesday afternoon.

On the six o'clock news on Thursday evening, Alistair Campbell from the BBC interviewed Airlie,

Campbell "Do you think the stoppage will achieve anything?"

Airlie "This will be the first stage of the unleashing of forces that will either change this Government's mind or bring this Government down."

Campbell "Do you think all workers will stop on Wednesday afternoon then?"

Airlie "We are putting this to all shop stewards in the west of Scotland initially, and if the shop stewards endorse it, then we are confident we will have total stoppage in the west of Scotland. Incidentally, we are also asking shop keepers to close for two hours also on that day." (1)

That day and the next were ones of ferment in and around Glasgow. Literally scores of workers' meetings endorsed the sending of their delegates to the coming Monday's meeting of west of Scotland stewards. Clydebank clergymen agreed to hold special services of prayer in their churches that weekend and

ran off protest petitions to distribute among their congregations. Local shopkeepers in Clydebanks whose prosperity depended upon a population employed in an industry that was thriving began placing collecting cans and stickers declaring support for UCS in their shops. It was not just a trade union struggle but embraced the whole community as well. In Glasgow, the Tory Lord Provost Donald Liddle chaired a ninety minute crisis meeting of the various local authority representatives, local MP's and members of the STUC. They were unanimous in demanding that shipbuilding on Upper Clyde must be maintained. In the UCS yards the workers held mass meetings to hear their shop stewards' reports. By Friday it was clear that all Clydeside was rallying behind the campaign to save UCS.

On Glasgow's busy Dumbarton Road, in the west end of the city, a mile down the road from the Scotstoun yard, stands Partick's famous bingo hall, the Rosevale. It was in the auditorium of this somewhat incongruous building, with its backdrop of giant illuminated bingo cards, that plans were laid for an industrial stoppage and demonstration on the following Wednesday that was to be the first stage in the campaign of public protest. Those who were there that day still vividly recall the electrifying atmosphere as trade union officials, workers' representatives and shop stewards representing tens of thousands of Clydeside men and women poured into the hall. One after the other the leading shop stewards from major enterprises came to the microphone and pledged their support for UCS: George MacCormack from Rolls Royce, John Carty from Chrysler, Duncan Waddell from Scott Lithgow's, Alex Annan from Yarrow's. Shop stewards had come from Burrough's, from Weir's of Cathcart,

from John Brown Engineering Company, from Goodyear, from BR work-shops, from Will's Tobacco factory, from Olivetti, from Anderson Mavor, from Babcock and Wilcox and from a hundred other key factories in and around the west of Scotland. (2) In all, over eight hundred stewards had responded to the UCS call. The first of the Co-ordinating Committee publicity sub-committee's leaflets which was distributed among the delegates hammered out the message.

"The position of the UCS workers is clear - WE ARE GOING TO FIGHT. But then it is not just our fight alone.

One in nine males are already unemployed in the west of Scotland, and as shipbuilding is so interwoven with the economy of Scotland, the loss of this Industry on Clydeside would have repercussions that would be wide-spread and shattering.

We believe that this is the crunch in the fight against unemployment, redundancies and closures.

To lose this, and this is unthinkable, we are heading for the circumstances of the "30's".

To win, would be to reverse the trend for all the workers and the community as a whole.

We ask for, and confidently expect, the support of ALL Scots, men and women.

We appeal to all our Brothers and Sisters in the Trade Union movement for HELP.

We appeal to all business people and Shopkeepers for HELP.

We appeal to all the Clergy of all denominations for HELP.

We appeal to everyone for HELP.

HELPING us is HELPING yourself.

Let the voice of the Scottish people be heard.

No more closures - no more redundancies - no more unemployed. DEMAND THE RIGHT TO WORK!" (3)



The speech that day which brought the normally hard-bitten Clydeside shop stewards to their feet cheering as they had never done before was delivered by Jimmy Reid, acting as spokesman for the Co-ordinating Committee. It was an example of working class oratory the like of which had not been heard since the days of Willie Gallagher and John MacLean and established in the minds of those present that here was a shop steward leader of outstanding capabilities. It was this speech in which Reid made what was to become a classic and concise formulation of working-class pride in their identity and resistance to injustice,

"We don't only build boats on the Clyde, we build men who have guts and intelligence and who will take some moving." (4)

The applause was thunderous, the mood euphoric. These were words which captured the imagination and moved men's emotions. Jimmy Airlie, not by nature a demonstrative man, gripped Jimmy Reid's arm with excitement, saying "By God Jimmy, I think we're going to win this one." (5) What was more if it ever came to resisting a forcible ejection from the yards the UCS men knew they could count on the physical support of thousands of others. The immediate need however was going to be financial help. The shop stewards had launched a fighting fund in order to build up reserves for the time, in the very near future, when the provisional liquidator would start to lay off men and the Co-ordinating Committee would have to assume the responsibility for their maintenance. Would those present follow the head of the Yarrow's work-force who had already pledged themselves to a 30p weekly levy from each of their 2,000 members? The UCS workers need not have worried, for by the end of that week the

UCS fighting fund had received over £6,000.<sup>(6)</sup> It was a truly fantastic response and yet this was just the first trickle in what was to become a flood of contributions in the weeks and months that lay ahead.

While the unofficial movement gathered its strength, the official movement was equally busy although its role at this stage was somewhat different. The General Council of the STUC continued to put their views to the Government, only now with added force. While the shop stewards were meeting in the Rosevale, the STUC had again gone to London for talks with Heath, Davies and Campbell at Downing Street to impress upon them the arguments for keeping the yards in operation. They stressed both the high level of male unemployment in Glasgow which exceeded that in most other areas, the improvements that had been made in increasing output at UCS with a reduced labour force and the ability of Upper Clyde to attract profitable orders for their specialised range of standardised vessels. But it had all been said before. The meeting lasted two hours but the delegation received very little by way of encouragement. (7)

It was becoming clear that some entirely new kind of initiative would be necessary. At the meeting to report back on these discussions next day in Congress House at which the leading UCS shop stewards were also present, it was agreed that the STUC should convene a Special Congress in August specifically to discuss the whole question of unemployment in Scotland. This was to be the first recall Congress in the history of the STUC and was itself to be an important stage in the launching of a general public campaign on UCS in the context of the deteriorating employment situation in Scotland as a whole. (8) The role that the STUC was to adopt therefore, was that of broadening the UCS issue into a general attack on Government policy.

For the moment, however, the main site of action had shifted to the streets of Glasgow. The sun was actually warm that Wednesday afternoon of June 23rd, a rare thing in Glasgow, even rarer for it to shine on the day of a workers' demonstration. There was an atmosphere of tremendous excitement in George Square as the marchers assembled. So packed with people and banners was the square that in addition to the assembly point in North Frederick Street, the police had to close off Cochrane Street on the other side of the square as well. And still the people kept pouring in. Three special train loads came from Clydebank and another from the Rolls Royce factory in Hillington. The entire Clydebank Town Council was there and in Clydebank itself the town was almost deserted. The shutters on the shops in the Main Street were down and posted on them were notices under the Maltese Cross symbol of UCS which read,

"This shop is closed in sympathy with Upper Clyde Shipbuilders fight to stay alive." (9)

As the columns of marchers spilled out of George Square heading down Renfield Street towards Glasgow Green the hand painted posters and placards formed a kind of moving telegraphic back-cloth flashing messages, sometimes indignant, sometimes ironic and always politically barbed.

'Give them an inch and they will take a UCS Yard' -

'UCS today U tomorrow' - 'QM, QE1, QE2, and now dole Q' -

'If we are lame ducks, the Tories are dead ducks' -

'Hands off UCS' - Don't Sell Us Down the Clyde' -

'Ships not Yachts Heath' - 'Jobs not dole' -

'Turn the heat on Heath' - 'No return to the Hungry Thirties' -

'Unemployment Corrodes Scotland' - 'Tell Capt. Heath  
there's a force 10 coming from the Clyde' - 'Nationalise  
not paralyse' - 'We shall not be Moved'. (10)

Female workers from Singers in Clydebank and from the Beatties  
biscuit factory were there in their working overalls. Even the  
usually non-militant Glasgow dockers had turned out for the  
occasion.

It is estimated that something in excess of 150,000  
stopped work that afternoon and anything up to a third of that  
number turned out for the demonstration. (11) Certainly it was  
the biggest demonstration since the war and even the 'old-timers'  
said they had seen nothing like it before. The onlookers who  
were standing ten deep on the pavements burst into applause as  
the march passed and, in turn, were applauded by the demonstrators.  
Led by Tony Benn, his arms linked to the shop stewards on either  
side, the demonstrators marched twelve abreast and at one stage  
spanned the entire width of Union Street bringing much of the  
city centre to a halt. The police estimated it took an hour for  
the demonstration to pass and by the time the head of the march  
had reached Glasgow Green they were still leaving George Square.  
Nine buses taking 400 retired UCS boilermakers on their annual  
outing to Largs that day had cut short their trip and returned to  
Glasgow Green just in time to hear the speeches. It was an  
occasion nobody wanted to miss. (12)

At Glasgow Green, Benn read out from the wording of the  
Bill he had presented to the Commons the previous day for the  
nationalisation of UCS, with the concept of workers' control

written into its terms. It was a Private Member's Bill with little chance of success but it represented a pledge to the labour movement that the next Labour Government would nationalise the industry. (13)

The Bill entitled Upper Clyde Shipbuilders (Public Ownership) was supported by the nucleus of the Scottish Labour MP's who had entered the lists in the previous week's UCS debate, namely Willie Ross, Dickson Mabon, Willie Hannan, Bruce Millan, Hugh McCartney, Willie Small, John Rankin, Dick Buchanan, Frank McElhone, John Robertson and Dick Douglas.

The speeches at Glasgow Green and the metaphors were fiery with indignation, Reid expressing once again the gut feelings of the workers.

"We are not going to be led like lambs to the slaughter...This is the breaking point for Scottish workers - all the pent up anger and frustration of creeping paralysis of small redundancies which add up to mass unemployment...We are witnessing an eruption here today...An eruption not of lava... but of labour. Unless Heath takes heed, this eruption will engulf him and sweep him into political oblivion." (14)

They heard Airlie say that the workers in the shipbuilding industry would not stand for any contraction in the existing labour force or closures. They heard Jimmy Murray, Scottish executive officer of the powerful boilermakers' union plead with the men to trust in the officials of the movement. For his trouble Murray got a heckling from the crowd, not because they were against the officials as such but because it was obvious to all, that if no redundancies were to be negotiated this time, then the struggle would need to be fought in a different way.

Danny McGarvey, the leader of the boilermakers' union and the national trade union leader who was later to figure most prominently in the UCS events was at the annual conference of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions at Torquay that day. For the time being, at least, McGarvey had chosen to stand back from direct identification with the UCS workers' action. In a relationship that was never easy, the tensions between the full time national officials and the local stewards were to become a continuing feature which added new complexities as the saga unfolded. For the moment, however, the central dynamism of organisation and activity remained with the UCS workers themselves and the massive turnout at the demonstration was proof, if proof were needed, that they were a formidable force.

For the shop stewards the problem confronting them was how to follow their public demonstration with new forms of action that would keep up the pressure on the Government and keep the issue alive in people's minds, particularly during the approaching holiday period when the yards would be closed for several weeks. To maintain their fighting spirit the stewards agreed themselves to take to the streets with petition forms which their publicity sub-committee had circulated to every major factory in Britain. The petition, pledging support for the main resolution passed at the Glasgow Green demonstration demanded,

"that the Government make available the resources necessary to retain all units of UCS with no redundancy or contraction." (15)

In Paisley, Renfrew, Greenock, Clydebank and Glasgow alone on two successive Saturdays, nearly a hundred thousand signatures were collected. (16)

In Glasgow's George Square where the stewards went ahead and set up petition stalls despite an initial but quickly rescinded ban by the Parks Department, seven thousand people signed in the space of a few hours, including a number who had been taking part in the Orange Walk. (17) A point that was to be proved over and over again even from the very outset, was that the scope of this struggle transcended the legacy of sectarianism in the west of Scotland. Indeed, the only sour note struck that day was when Provost Liddle, approached to sign by a group of stewards as he was crossing George Square from the City Chambers, refused to place his name on the form. For a Tory Lord Provost this was perhaps going a little too far. The petition was eventually handed over by a deputation of Clydebank Town Councillors to Gordon Campbell in Edinburgh at the Scottish Office. It was presented by shop stewards Ian Mackay and John McKee who had been deputised by Clydebank and District Trades Council and was, as the saying goes, "duly acknowledged". (18)

It remained to be seen what impact, if any, Wednesday's huge demonstration would have on the Government. Certainly the widespread anxiety concerning the future of the industry was underlined once again by a deputation from Glasgow Corporation led by Provost Liddle, John Mains and Walter Wober respectively which met Heath, Campbell and Davies in London the same afternoon as the demonstrators had marched to Glasgow Green. It was a

'bi-partisan' approach in which Mains represented the Labour group with a clear remit from a prior meeting of the local authorities concerned to impress on the Government that the jobs and the yards should be maintained. Like so many others before him, however, Liddle left London 'disappointed'. (19) The Government were not prepared to budge until they had received the Report and recommendations of their committee of experts, the Four Wise Men.

Through the latter part of June and the month of July the Advisory Group of experts had pursued their investigations. A few days after the June demonstration they paid a visit to Glasgow to meet leaders of the local authorities, union officials and the shop stewards. As Airlie commented acidly,

"Robens and the others are here to pursue their art of surgery. We intend to see that they are struck off the practitioners list. If the Government wants to have a go then we are prepared to provide the opposition. Wednesday's great demonstration was only the first round and the workers are fresh and ready for the rest of the fight." (20)

In view of this perhaps Robens felt it would be more tactful to absent himself from the committee on this occasion. On July 16th they returned briefly to Glasgow to meet Willie Ross, Bruce Millan, the STUC economic committee and the liquidator at Linthouse. Jimmy Jack, general secretary of the STUC told the TV news reporters after meeting the committee,

"I think that they have very much in mind the social consequences of the closure of UCS Limited." (21)

Willie Ross, shadow Secretary of State for Scotland also felt satisfied that the committee wanted,

"to be able to maximise employment on the Clyde, and that whatever they recommend to the Government will have that in mind." (22)



Bruce Millan another leading Scottish Labour MP felt that,

"they have an understanding of the human and social consequences for Clydeside." (23)

Indeed, the committee seemed anxious to reassure and consult with everyone, except surprisingly, Tony Benn, who had been the Minister responsible for overseeing UCS in the first place.

The STUC had been told by the Advisory Group that its recommendations to the Government would be ready within a week. John Davies had, however, been kept well informed of their progress throughout and indeed, only the day before, two of the Committee Glen and McDonald, had given the Government an interim report. (24) During this period of awaiting the Committee's final report, while hoping for the best, plans were nevertheless laid to prepare for the worst. At the STUC members of the General Council, Willie Hannan and Norman Buchan from the Scottish Labour group of MP's, full-time Confederation officials and the shop stewards met to try and assess the situation and ensure unity among all the parties in the campaign. Any suggestion that the resolve of the workers or their representatives might have been slackening was effectively countered by the reaffirmation by the STUC of its earlier decision to back any action by the UCS workers with all necessary practical support. At the same time, in Clydebank the shop stewards announced that they had drawn up plans to maintain vital supplies to the yards in order to continue with production if necessary during the work-in. (25)

At the beginning of July, two weeks earlier than the traditional Glasgow Holidays, the Clydebank yard had shut down

for the annual Clydebank holiday. The Co-ordinating Committee which had prepared contingency plans for the holiday period, detailed twenty stewards to remain behind in the yards in readiness for any eventuality, especially should the Government attempt to close one or two of the yards and sack the men while they were still on holiday, thus forestalling any workers' action. In mid-July, the same day that the STUC economic committee had met the Advisory Group, the Govan and Scotstoun Yards shut for the Glasgow Fair Fortnight leaving all four yards virtually empty for the following ten days. In retrospect it is possible to argue that had the Government published the Advisory Group's Report on the expected date which in fact would have fallen within this period, it would have provided an obvious propaganda gift to the workers who would argue that this was further proof of Government duplicity. It may have been this rather than as suggested by one commentator, that the Cabinet estimated the local police forces in the area to be unable to maintain public order without the help of the army, at that time heavily occupied in Northern Ireland, which accounted for the further week's delay in publishing the report. (26)

By Monday July 26th the Clydebank workers had returned from their holidays. The Co-ordinating Committee requested all shop stewards to report to the yards on Thursday. More than a hundred shop stewards from all the yards held an emergency meeting at Clydebank and it was agreed that a telegram be dispatched to Heath demanding a meeting with the Government before the Advisory Group's Report was finally issued. The stewards had been promised further consultations with the Committee before they completed their

deliberations. With publication of the Report now imminent they were furious when this meeting had failed to materialise after a day of fruitless efforts trying to contact the Advisory Group. Meanwhile the STUC economic committee had again been in London pleading with Davies and Campbell. On Wednesday the Report was considered at a two-hour Cabinet meeting. Rumours in the press that it recommended the closure of the former John Brown's Yard at Clydebank were growing. (27)

Once again half a dozen stewards flew to London. On Tuesday evening they sat in on the debate on Scottish unemployment which naturally enough was overwhelmingly concerned with the employment implications of the UCS crisis. They must have seethed with anger as they heard Jock Bruce-Gardyne, the Parliamentary Private Secretary to Gordon Campbell intervene with the ugly accusation that while other yards were 'crying out' for labour, there were elements among the trade unions on the Upper Clyde who had warned UCS men thinking of applying for jobs with Yarrows or with Lower Clyde that they did so 'at risk to their families'. (28) It was a dirty little smear, described by Bern As "filthy tittle tattle" designed somehow to weaken the fight for the jobs. (29) If this was the level to which responsible Conservative politicians were prepared to sink, as Norman Buchan commented later in the debate, the Government "have made the class struggle respectable". (30) As Buchan's son, journalist Alistair Buchan, points out in his book on UCS, it was a debate that few Scottish Tory MP's had even bothered to turn up to attend. (31)

On Wednesday the stewards met Davies at the Commons and were warned that they would be wrong to think that the total UCS

workforce could be re-employed in any reorganisation of shipbuilding on the Clyde. What proportion of that total the Government felt could be re-employed was revealed on Thursday July 29th when Davies announced to the Commons at Question Time the principal findings of the Advisory Group published in a White Paper. Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, Davies said, echoing the main findings of the Report, was doomed from the start as the result of the faulty concept of structure, the inherited losses of the company and its inadequate management. Moreover for the size of the company, the existing order book was held to be "dangerously thin." (32) Davies went on to outline four conditions for the reorganisation of the company. First, that the order book be concentrated at Govan and Linthouse, second, that ship production be standardised, third, that the management be "radically reformed" and fourth, that "much more productive and realistic working agreements" be negotiated. (33) On this last point the Advisory Group had attacked the UCS management because it had "not exercised sufficient control of costs, particularly wages" and recommended as an essential contribution to increasing productivity that the unions, "accept certain changes in working practices including in due course a change to a 2-shift daily working." (34) On this basis said Davies, provided these conditions were met, new capital should be forthcoming, for a reorganised two-yard operation "particularly from Scottish sources" but the Government would also be willing to provide some of the initial capital. (35) It was not made clear from whom or how much Scottish capital would be forthcoming or for that matter, what kind of financial commitment the Government were prepared to make. What was clear, however, was that the

Government accepted the Report's recommendations that in effect Clydebank and Scotstoun be sold off by the liquidator and production to be concentrated at the Govan-Linthouse complex. Moreover, no matter how Davies tried to dress it up, the fact was that whether or not 1,000 men could find work elsewhere on the Clyde at Yarrow's or Scott Lithgow as the Advisory Group suggested, the future labour force envisaged for the reconstructed company was a mere 2,500 as against the 8,500 workers currently employed with the men being paid off by the liquidator as the work in hand was completed. (36)

By any standards it was a savage blow, two yards to shut and 6,000 jobs gone in shipbuilding with a possible further 15,000 jobs in related industries. Davies had not been kidding when he had warned the shop stewards the day before about possible redundancies. The uproar which this created in Parliament has been compared to that at the Suez debate in 1956. (37) It was a good dress rehearsal for yet another full scale debate on UCS fixed for the following Monday afternoon at which the Opposition conducted a further onslaught on Government policy and the whole sorry affair was gone over once again. (38)

The television news that night showed Reid and Airlie standing outside the House of Commons in the pouring rain surrounded by reporters.

Interviewer: "Are you going to take over the shipyards?"

Reid: "Look, we are going back tomorrow for meetings of the shop stewards and there will be meetings of the workers. And this bunch of political hatchetmen that are masquerading as a Government they can take anti-human and uncivilised decisions of this nature, are going to be confronted with a

fight that, quite frankly, I don't think any amateur yachtsman has got the imagination to conceive of. He is going to have that fight. Its slaughter for the Clydeside."

- Interviewer "Are you prepared to negotiate at all?"
- Reid "Ah, what terms? There are only one terms. We are passed it/..."
- Airlie "/We are passed negotiations."
- Interviewer "Are you going to recommend a strike or a takeover when you get back?"
- Airlie "We are going to recommend the implementation of our previous decision. If there's any contraction or redundancies in this industry we will work-in, not occupy the yard because that's the word the press has been using. We are not a foreign power, we were born in that area and we will work-in. The right to work, its our birthright and we won't give it up for any hatchetmen as my colleague has said".
- Interviewer "If they try to get you out?"
- Airlie "They can try and get us out, but as my colleague has said, we not only build ships we build men." (39)

Back at Clydebank where Gerry Ross was waiting, he gave vent to his feelings when the news was 'phoned through that Clydebank was to close down,

"Over our dead bodies, this is our first reaction, To accept a situation like that would be better to take us to the slaughter house, each and every one of us, because there is nowhere else for us to go." (40)

Sam Gilmore, the ~~EEFPU~~ convener at Govan backed Ross up,

"No they're not on. No, we took the decision that, the workers took a decision that we would fight any contractions and there's 5,000. Well all they've done is give us more backbone. They're not on. That's my initial reaction." (41)

Local minister, Rev. Lawson with his arm round Gilmore added,

"all sections of this community, irrespective of political or religious background will be unified in saying that the Government has made a tremendous error in seeking to close the John Browns." (42)

The local reaction among Clydebank people was both one of anger and of deep shock. The Glasgow Herald described Clydebank

"like a town in mourning....Groups discussed the decision in hushed tones, creating the atmosphere normally found at the scene of a disaster." (43)

If there was an historical parallel, it was in the closure of Palmer's Shipyard at Jarrow more than thirty years before. Ellen Wilkinson in her book, The Town that was Murdered described this in words that were entirely apposite to Clydebank and the closure of John Brown's yard.

"Class antagonism cuts as deeply to the roots of capitalist society as ever it did. Men are regarded as mere instruments of production, their labour a commodity to be brought and sold. In capitalist society vast changes can be made which sweep away the livelihood of a whole town overnight, in the interest of some powerful group, who need take no account of the social consequence of their decisions. These are the facts at the base of the modern labour movement." (44)

Like the town of Jarrow, industry and community were closely wedded together in Clydebank and like the working people of Jarrow, the people of Clydebank and indeed of Govan, Scotstoun and the rest of Glasgow were going to make their anger felt.

Chapter 3 'We don't only build boats....we build men'.

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Morning Star, 22 June 1971.
- 3 Appendix 7. No Unconditional Surrender at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders,  
UCS Co-ordinating Committee leaflet, 21 June 1971.
- 4 Morning Star, 22 June 1971.
- 5 Interview with Jimmy Reid, 29 May 1979, GU Archives.
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- 7 STUC 75th Annual Report, Dunoon 18-21 April 1972, pp. 30-31.
- 8 STUC Minutes, Minutes of meeting of Economic Committee held on  
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- 9 The Times, 24 June 1971.
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- 11 For estimates of numbers in the press see LRD Fact Service,  
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- 18 Clydebank Town Council Minutes, 1971. Minute of a special meeting  
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- 19 BBC TV News, G71/117, 24 June 1971, GU Archives.
- 20 Morning Star, 26 June 1971.
- 21 BBC TV News, G71/967, 16 July 1971, GU Archives.
- 22 BBC TV News, 16 July 1971, GU Archives. See also Hansard, vol. 822, 1970-71, 27 July 1971, col. 381.
- 23 *ibid.*, col. 329.
- 24 Glasgow Herald, 16 July 1971.
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- 29 *ibid.*
- 30 *ibid.*, col. 360.
- 31 Buchan, op. cit.
- 32 Hansard, vol. 822, op. cit., col. 791.
- 33 *ibid.*
- 34 Appendix 9. HMSO, Report of the Advisory Group on Shipbuilding on the Upper Clyde, House of Commons 544, 29 July 1971, pp. 2-3.
- 35 Hansard, vol. 822, op. cit., col. 79.
- 36 *ibid.*, col. 792.
- 37 Buchan, op. cit., pp. 72-76.
- 38 Hansard, vol. 822, op. cit., cols. 1084-1156.
- 39 BBC TV News, 29 July 1971, GU Archives.
- 40 BBC TV News, G71/137-8, 29 July 1971, GU Archives.
- 41 *ibid.*
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- 43 Glasgow Herald, 30 July 1971.
- 44 E. Wilkinson, The Town that was Murdered, London, Gollancz, 1939, p.7.

## Chapter Four

## 'UPPER CLYDE SHIPYARD WORKERS UNLIMITED'

If there were any among whom there was a mood of despair induced by the Government's plans Reid's defiant announcement to the nation's press next morning at Clydebank should have given them new heart.

"As far as the workers here are concerned, you can now call it 'Upper Clyde Shipbuilding Workers' Unlimited'." (1)

The shop stewards had requested the liquidator to allow the entry of the press and the television crews who had been waiting outside the gate to cover a forthcoming mass meeting to decide on action in the light of the Advisory Group's Report and the visit due that day of Tony Benn. The liquidator had refused his permission and when this was reported back to the Co-ordinating Committee, Gerry Ross along with the GMWU convener John McGonnagall were dispatched to inform the gateman Alex Stewart, that the shop stewards were taking over his responsibilities and were now in charge. The barrier went up and the newsmen walked in. It was not a particularly dramatic moment. There was no violence, nor even the threat of it. The police who had been warned that the 'takeover' would happen sometime that day had promised not to interfere. To the assembled workers Reid announced that the work-in would now begin.

"The world is witnessing the first of a new tactic on behalf of workers. We're not going on strike. We're not even having a sit-in strike. We're taking over the yards because we refuse to accept that faceless men, or any group of men in Whitehall or anyone else can take decisions that devastate our livelihoods with impunity. They're not on....

The joint shop stewards are utterly unanimous and we're gonnae fight this, and we're gonnae fight with a determination that Britain hasn't seen from any section of the working class in this century, let alone since 1945 and we'll do it!.... The press are here and we want to tell them that we were

serious, we weren't bluffing, and we're taking the first step today. The shop stewards representing the workers are in control of this yard. Nobody and nothing will come in and nothing will go out without our permission.

The security officers have been told that and they accept it. The gateman is there. We'll take the decisions with your endorsement, that determines what comes in or out of this yard. And in addition to that, we have as you know, the co-operation of all sections of the workforce.

And we want to make this public announcement here today. There's been talk in the press of redundancies at Connells. This liquidator can do what he wants, but we are not accepting redundancies, and the Connells workers or anybody else involved, will be reporting to work as they should have been, that is, a week next Monday. And if necessary, we'll line up in South Street and we'll identify ourselves with them and we will march into this yard, because brothers, I want to make this point.

Everybody talks about rights.

There's a basic elementary right involved here - that's our right to work. We're not strikers. We are responsible people and we will conduct ourselves within the dignity and discipline that we have all the time expressed over the last few weeks. And there will be no hooliganism. There will be no vandalism. There will be no bevying, because the world is watching us, and it's our responsibility to conduct ourselves responsibly and with dignity and with maturity... " (2)

Not to be outdone, Benn also underscored the historic character of the hour.

"When the history of the labour movement is recorded, this moment will be seen as significant. The power of the workers that was negative has become positive. The power is not going to be snuffed out. This is the birth pangs of a new concept of industry." (3)

For Benn, this new concept was of course that of workers' control which had been at the centre of his bill for the nationalisation of UCS the previous week. Perhaps Benn was reading something into the situation which did not exist. If so, his was a relatively modest piece of wishful thinking when compared to that of the various 'ultra left' groupings who saw in UCS the possibility of instantly

rekindling the spark of revolution on Clydeside. As

Alistair Buchan commented wryly,

"After the takeover, a larger selection of Socialist and Marxist newspapers were sold at the gates each lunchtime than W.H. Smith has ever refused to distribute." (4)

For the workers at UCS, whatever longer-term implications their action might prove to have, the immediate problems facing them were of a far more mundane character than a direct assault on capitalist state power particularly not, as will be argued, through the tactic of workers' control, either in its Bennite or more overtly Trotskyite garbs.

The work-in commenced at Clydebank, appropriate as it may have been, primarily because the workers from the other yards had not yet returned from their annual holidays. It was equally fortuitous that the liquidator's refusal to allow in the press and TV crews presented the opportunity to directly countermand his instructions thereby enabling the workers to demonstrate that they were 'taking charge'. It was, however, largely a symbolic gesture inasmuch as until the first worker was made redundant the actual process of working-in could not commence. Moreover, although surveillance of the gates by the shop stewards was necessary to keep out unauthorised personnel and to prevent any attempt to remove plant and machinery, the real assets of UCS lay on the berths. If it ever came to the crunch they could if necessary stop the boats being launched. The Clyde tugmen had been approached and had given their assurance that no vessel would be removed from any of the UCS yards other than at the say so of the Co-ordinating Committee. Control, in the sense of the ability to halt delivery

of the product to its owners certainly did exist in theory at least and indeed was to prove a potential bargaining counter during subsequent stages of the campaign. It was however a weapon of last resort. The immediate requirement was to find intermediate weapons that would stem the inevitable flow of redundancies as the existing orders in the yards neared completion and the liquidator began to lay off more and more men. Every batch of redundant workers would place further strains on the shop stewards' organisational and financial resources. The real significance of the work-in would be in coping with these problems.

As if to highlight this very issue, in his first announcement now as the official, no longer provisional liquidator, Courtney-Smith indicated that he expected to lay off 400 men in August and 1,400 in total by the end of September. Scotstoun, he said would close at the end of the year and Clydebank, the following March. Angry stewards informed him that if he entered the yard he did so 'at his peril' and that henceforth he should conduct his affair elsewhere. (5) As Jimmy Reid had said in his speech, Scotstoun workers whose yard was almost without work would require support **virtually immediately.**

So far as any notion of workers' control which involved the workforce taking day-to-day decisions about the operations of management was concerned, there was no question of the UCS workers seeking to extend their say over the organisation and planning of production in any continuing way. It was argued from the very first day of the work-in, that the authority of the managerial staff would be respected by the workforce although as Reid had

pointed out, this was essentially conditional on such authority not undermining the chief aims of the work-in.

"The existing managerial people who are with us will continue to function in this capacity and their instructions, decisions will be adhered to as long as they are consistent with the general strategy, and work out with the total labour force in terms of our continuing work-in." (6)

Middle and even senior levels of management already had declared themselves sympathetic to the aims of the work-in. After all, if the yards closed their jobs went too. One of the first group of employees who would be declared redundant was precisely on the staff side, in the marketing and forward planning departments. This provoked the stewards to claim that if necessary, they would send their own marketing people abroad to secure new orders.

In fact, the closest the workers ever came to contemplating organising day-to-day production, though in the event the situation never materialised, was in the tentative contingency plans which were made to ensure continuity of work and also the necessary supplies of material and power. Across at Linthouse in the steel prefabrication sheds, work was underway on the units for the keel of a new ship, the 121, which had originally been intended to be laid at Scotstoun, but was now to be redirected by the liquidator to Govan. The stewards consulted the tug-men and it was agreed that if the liquidator did not reconsider his position then, if necessary, they would have the units floated over on barges to Scotstoun where the workers would lay the keel themselves. At one stage they even conducted preparatory work at Scotstoun in anticipation of this.<sup>(7)</sup> The press speculated on a 'hijacking' while

the stewards naturally enough remained silent.(8) In the event the liquidator was finally to accede to the workers' demands. There were, at that time, enough materials in the yard to maintain production for at least another month, however, the stewards suggested that if these supplies ran out, then they might even consider asking the workers in other firms to send in materials to the yards. (9) They had already received definite assurances from electricity workers and GPO workers that power and telephone communications would not be cut off. While there were rumours that the telephones to the Convener's offices might be disconnected, there was never really any question of the Government attempting to shut the yards overnight which might have brought about the situation where the workers had to decide whether or not to continue the total production process on their own behalf. Only under these conditions would it have made any real sense for the workers themselves to assume permanent responsibility for all the functions within the enterprise.

The workers for their part realised the managerial staff were essential to any continuation of shipbuilding in the future.(10) If anything it was not so much that the workers began to see themselves as managers, but rather that the managers began to see themselves as workers. As one UCS manager put it,

"From the management, down to the foreman, down to the chargehand, we are workers. A lot of men who are on tools seem to think we are in a grade above them which we are not. We're still employees. Anybody who is getting a wage is still an employee." (11)

One of the first major acts of the Co-ordinating Committee after the commencement of the work-in was to incorporate

representatives of middle and senior management onto the Co-ordinating Committee thus ensuring their continuing co-operation and assistance. Despite press comment about the emergence of 'workers' soviets' the situation as far as management were concerned was not even a question of divided loyalties. (12)

"We will still carry on our job as normal. If we see anybody hanky-panky about, we will still chase them up. That's our job. As long as we are getting wages we'll work. And if it comes to a fight we'll fight along with the rest of them." (13)

In itself, the scale of the shift in attitudes which had occurred should not be underestimated. The hierarchical division between management and workforce was perhaps more rigid in the harsh environment of shipbuilding than anywhere else in British industry. Certainly memories of bowler-hatted foremen barking orders at the workers were not so distant as to leave uncoloured present-day relations between management and men. Thus for management representatives to sit down at a workers' Co-ordinating Committee to discuss the workers' struggle on a day-by-day basis and give finance and information to assist the campaign was one of the more unique features of the work-in. Needless to say in the yard itself, the attitudes and the manner of approach of management to men altered correspondingly as the stature of the shop stewards' leadership grew. This is not to say that problems did not arise, but where they did, they were solved on the basis that any minor problem would be resolved by consultation with the stewards. If necessary, Ken Douglas the managing director of UCS as the most senior member of management would intervene to resolve any difficulties created by managerial staff. Unquestionably Douglas' own relatively sympathetic attitude to the workforce also influenced those beneath



him to regard the workers' actions in a positive light. Douglas himself who was the son of a shipyard worker, was early to go on record as praising the "discipline" of the workers and the work-in as "an acceptable and understandable expression of their legitimate grievances." (14)

Morale among the workers themselves was so high that the steel trades in Clydebank actually achieved record bonuses during the first week of the work-in. There was an improvement in time-keeping, rates of absenteeism were halved and general morale improved as the workers' conviction in what they were doing grew. (15)

It was in the sense, that somehow they had become the proprietors and custodians of the future of their industry in the face of desertion and betrayal by the powers that be, that the notion of control had any relevance for the mass of the UCS workers. In Connolly's Bar across the road from Clydebank yard where the barman set up the pints of 'heavy' beer in rows along the bar counter in plenty of time for the lunch hour rush coming in the door, there was none of the usual lingering after the publican had rung the warning bell a few minutes before the men were due back at work. The bar cleared itself as the workers hurried back to the yard. (16)

It could be argued that UCS provided a fleeting glimpse of that kind of voluntary self-discipline that workers impose on themselves in socialist society when they are aware that the outcome of events is in their own hands. It was an immediate reflection of the fact that the workers began to feel that in some respects the yards were 'theirs' in a way that they had never been before.

A further issue that had to be confronted immediately the work-in began was of course the political character of its leadership, specifically the fact that Reid, Airlie and Barr and several others were members of the Communist Party. This issue raised itself in a number of ways. To begin with, it could be said that the Communist Party commanded a fair degree of influence among the industrial workers of the west of Scotland and to be known as a Communist did not necessary carry with it the automatic stigma which it might have in certain other areas. <sup>(17)</sup> Indeed, if anything the reverse was the case, in that Communist Party shop stewards and trade union officials were widely regarded by the workers as the most able and consistent fighters for the workers' cause. Nevertheless the public character of the UCS campaign and the need to gain the widest possible support could raise certain difficulties for the leadership. Undoubtedly the support of senior and middle management added a certain 'respectability' to the work-in. Further 'respectability' was provided by the clergy of both denominations who were affiliated to a Christian Action Group in support of UCS and had a standing invitation to attend the Co-ordinating Committee. So far as gaining the support of the official movement for Co-ordinating Committee activities was concerned, the prominence of Communists was not in itself a major problem at least at a Scottish level, although at a national level, as will be related, things were perhaps slightly different. In any event, the STUC had been further to the left than the British TUC for well over a decade and included among its number an assistant general secretary who was a Party member as well as several Communists who were General Council

members. Among the local Clyde district officials of the Confederation of Shipbuilding Engineering Unions, which brought together the key figures in the largest unions in the west of Scotland, sympathy with the workers' fight was also strong and in no way inhibited by the Communist Party links of the leading shop stewards. In fact several of the leading figures in the Confederation either were currently or had previously been Communist Party members. While the sheer breadth and scope of activity that the Co-ordinating Committee was starting to undertake in terms of calling for stoppages, solidarity and so on did to some extent trespass on the sovereignty of individual union executives this did not create the major difficulties it might have. It was necessary, however, to make sure that the range of political opinion on the Co-ordinating Committee was nevertheless sufficiently broad, including Labour Party supporters, Scottish Nationalists and those of no party that it would not be possible for the smear of a 'Communist plot' to have any credibility. In the absence of any Tory Party shop stewards, a rare species on Clydeside but one which would not necessary have been unwelcome, the only other points of view which were not represented on the Co-ordinating Committee were those of the various far left and Trotskyite fringe organisations. The 'ultra-left' were not welcome under any circumstances. There were perhaps four or five workers with any ultra-left affiliations in the yards and with twice as many different groupings clustering outside the yard gates handing out their broadsheets. But although small in number their potential for disruptive activity was by no means negligible, a question which is taken up again in a later chapter.

The most important problem of all which immediately presented itself was that of finance for the work-in. The very real prospect existed that if the liquidator went ahead with his planned redundancies then the fighting fund would require a considerable amount of money to support the men working-in. On behalf of the Co-ordinating Committee Airlie issued the following appeal through the media,

"The only way we can be beaten is we can be starved into submission. We're saying its the responsibility of the labour movement to see that this does not happen because its not only our fight, its the fight of every man and woman in this country - the fight for theright to work."(18)

The response to the call for support was as dramatic as Airlie's appeal. In the course of the first ten days of the work-in messages of support and cash flowed in from all over the British Isles and from workers in Canada, Holland, France, Australia and New Zealand.(19) Indeed, by the time the second big UCS demonstration was held in August there was so much money coming into the fund that the shop stewards had to employ a firm of accountants to do the bookkeeping and in the end the Burgh Chamberlain of Clydebank Town Council was called upon.

A selection of reported donations and messages of support from the press for early August gives some idea of the scope of solidarity which the UCS received. The National Union of Mine-workers was the first major union to contribute to the fighting fund with a donation of £1,000 while the print union NATSOPA promised £500.(20) Arnold Wesker promised the proceeds of one of the two hand-corrected drafts of his play 'The Old Ones'. Portsmouth district committee of the AUEW sent an immediate £30. (21)

Peter Hall and Lindsay Anderson from the world of the theatre and cinema sent messages of support while from John Lennon and Yoko Ono came a bunch of red roses and good luck wishes to be followed by a cheque for £1,000. (22) In Glasgow a meeting of Communist Party industrial workers collected £71 for UCS. Manchester district committee of the AUEW called on its executive for a one-day national strike. Tower Hamlets branch of NALGO gave £100. Trades Councils in Basildon and Ealing sent messages of support. So also did Chelmsford and Croydon AUEW district committees. (23) ASTMS sent £100 from its Scottish district and £200 from central funds. BOC at Harlow, Essex sent £30. (24) At Cammel Laird's in Birkenhead the shipbuilding workers agreed to pay a weekly levy as did those at Hall Russell's in Aberdeen. (25) At the invitation of Dutch shipyard workers who formed their own solidarity committee with UCS, a shop steward was sent over to Amsterdam to address the workers and returned with £600. (26) From the shipyard workers of the Soviet Union came £2,700 and eventually over £7,000. A public collection in East Kilbride raised £128, while Pressed Steel toolroom workers in Birmingham sent £50 and London Overseas telephonists sent an initial £20. (27) The Yorkshire area council of the NUM voted to send £100 while Park Royal Vehicles in London sent £60. Southall district committee of the AUEW and Universal Tools, Hounslow sent £10. The works committee at Austin sent £20. (28) On August 6th, the total that had been received since the 23rd June when the fund opened was £13,000 of which campaign expenses including mass delegations to London had so far cost £5,000. By the end of August the total income had leapt to £46,353, an increase of £33,000 in three weeks. (29) Roddy McKenzie, the

fighting fund treasurer, who along with fellow stewards Willie Robertson and Dan O'Donnell made up the membership of the finance sub-committee, recalled some of the contributions from housewives, pensioners and even young children with genuine tears of gratitude.(30) Nationally the AUEW decided to pay its members strike pay if they were made redundant and opted to join the work-in, a lead that was later to be followed by some of the other major UCS unions. This was an important decision as it would help to alleviate some of the burden of finance which the Co-ordinating Committee would be faced with.

In the yards themselves where the Govan, Linthouse and Scotstoun divisions had now returned from their holidays, mass meetings of workers called in all four divisions voted unanimously to proceed with the work-in and to make a voluntary levy of 50p per worker for the duration of the struggle. (31) In what would be described as 'fighting speech' to the men at Govan Airlie attacked the Report of the 'Four Wise Men'. He put the issue on the line for them.

"...the decision now rests with you and (there's) only one decision where you can maintain your self-respect. We are not going to grovel to any Tory butcher. We are going to fight, we have no alternative, the key and basic fight - the Right to Work." (32)

While the wholehearted enthusiasm of the men themselves was a vital factor in terms of the requirements for unity it was clear that the bulk of the finance would need to continue to come from the labour movement as a whole. In this respect, the meeting which the Co-ordinating Committee had called of all Scottish shop stewards for August 10th assumed crucial importance.

Political and financial support now on a wholly new scale was required. The liquidator had made it clear that the first lay-offs would not be long in coming.

Perhaps the central political paradox of the whole UCS struggle was the continuing failure of the Government and its Whitehall advisors to take seriously the enormous scale of the mass response which their plans for the Upper Clyde had provoked. The Prime Minister busy with his yachting pursuits, had not even been present in the Commons when John Davies made the announcement that the recommendations of the Advisory Group were to be adopted. The Conservatives had had ample warning of likely reaction yet either through stubbornness complacency or a peculiar failure of political intelligence they seemed to be prepared to press on regardless. The August 2nd debate which followed the publication of the White Paper on July 30th, while it did not stop the Government in its tracks, revealed that the Conservatives had a new concern for their image. It appeared that the intensity of the public outcry over their plans for UCS had caught the Government by surprise. Davies emphasised this time how 'distressed' he was to think that anyone should imagine that he lacked sympathy with the plight of the workers. (33) It was a significant change of tone. 'Humanity' and 'concern', if not quite remorse, were the order of the day, although as always, the sting in the tail remained.

"I understand the emotions of dismay and shock which have obviously taken place - I am sure that they are making a fatal mistake." (34)

This last comment was a reference to the work-in but it became clear as the debate unfolded as if the real mistake had been that of the Government. The best the Government could do was to try and place, as before, as much of the blame as they could on Benn. They had tried that during the first UCS debate in June without notable success and they did not do much better this time. In defence of the Report, described as "an objective and practical assessment of the situation", Davies assured its critics that the background material which justified its severe recommendations although not published, nevertheless existed "in extensio". (35) The demands to publish this material, or to appoint a Select Committee, were renewed by the Opposition. Yet perhaps the most politically embarrassing speech came not from the Labour benches but from within the Government's own ranks. Teddy Taylor (Cathcart), who with Tam Galbraith (Hillhead), was the only other Tory MP in the Glasgow area, had newly resigned from the front benches in opposition to the Government's Common Market policy. In his constituency there were several hundred shipyard workers living mainly in the large working-class peripheral housing estate of Castlemilk. Taylor's support, much of it working-class, as well as his own experience as an industrial relations officer in the shipyards tempered his otherwise right-wing views with a degree of realism. It was unfair, he said, to blame Benn entirely for the failure of Upper Clyde as some of his colleagues were attempting to do. Nor was it fair to blame the situation on the workers.

"I have seen the men who work there, and the report we have received proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that even if every man in the Upper Clyde was an industrial angel...the yards, in their present situation could not have paid." (36)



The figures provided in the Report of the Advisory Group showed that the burden of losses inherited from its constituent companies amounted to about £12 million, in addition to which a further £9 million loss ensued from orders taken on in the early days of the new UCS group back in 1968. Moreover, as regards the unions, said Taylor, many of the old demarcation problems had been overcome. In fact, so far as trade union organisation was concerned old divisions between platers, caulkers, welders, drillers and shipwrights no longer resulted in strikes. (37)

It could not be described as anything other than a conciliatory speech by one Tory MP whose ear was closer to the ground than most. Taylor was clearly uneasy about what the Government were doing although his espousal of the UCS cause was not so vigorous as to inhibit a plea for naval orders for Yarrow's, "from whichever country they might come", meaning presumably frigates for the South African Navy. (38)

Davies' announcement during the debate that he and Campbell were going to visit Glasgow the next day, came as no surprise. The previous night they had been with Heath at Chequers. The Opposition had already made capital out of the fact that no senior Government minister had been to Clydeside. Just how few friends the Government had on Clydeside became immediately apparent to Davies and Campbell on their arrival. Armed bodyguards accompanied Davies and tight security surrounded the visit. However, it was politically, rather than physically that Davies must have felt most threatened by what awaited him in Glasgow. The rather meagre protest group which had been there to greet his airport arrival belied what was to come. Provost Liddle who hosted this visit in the City Chambers had assembled

a broad cross-section of the Scottish community to meet the Ministers. There was Hamish Grant of the CBI in Scotland, Robin MacLellan of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, UCS creditors, local authority representatives from Clydebank and Glasgow, as well as James Jack and Ray MacDonald of the STUC, Joe Black and Jimmy Ramsay from the Confederation, and Dickie and Barr from the condemned yards, plus Reid who was attending as a Clydebank councillor. But it was not the presence of trade unionists which Davies must have found so disconcerting as the fact that even the Government's usual allies seemed in a state of disarray.

The previous day Provost Liddle had presided over an emergency meeting of the Corporation in which the Conservatives, who in Glasgow, at that time dignified themselves with the title of 'Progressives', had split among themselves during the debate. The Labour group had moved a resolution demanding that the four yards be kept open with the full labour force retained, and called for a public enquiry into the circumstances of the liquidation, and nationalisation of UK shipyards. Bailie Wober, a right-winger had moved an amendment which laid the blame for the problem at the door of the Labour Government and Tony Benn and called for an early start to the construction of a steel and deep sea complex on the Clyde Coast, implying by this that the Government's policy for Upper Clyde's rundown was correct. A section of the more moderate Tories including Provost Liddle supported an amendment which called for the retention of the maximum employment in UCS and called for a public enquiry into these circumstances surrounding UCS but left out the Labour group's proposal to

nationalise the industry. 57 voted for the motion and twelve each for the two amendments.(39) If Davies was looking for support he would not find it from this quarter.

Davies and Campbell had come to listen to what people had to say but they could not have much enjoyed what they heard. They heard Jasper Macmichael of the P-A Management Consultants who with Hepper was a member of the SIB working party which set up UCS in 1967, put forward the idea of a separate company for Scotstoun and Clydebank which with Government backing would enable a phased rundown of the workforce, at the rate of 600 men every six months over a 5 year period, during which time the men could be retrained. They heard Reid and Joe Black argue the productivity record of the yards and the potential orders for multipurpose bulk carriers built on the Clyde. They heard the Lord Provost express his surprise that the proposed cut-backs were so serious and drastic. According to Joe Black in a letter to Frank Chapple, of the electricians union,

"At this meeting, Davies had nothing to add to his statement made in Parliament and was subjected to a barrage of criticisms from all sections of the audience, in fact his only supporter was Gordon Campbell." (40)

Just before four o'clock when it was obvious that the discussions were drawing to an end and would produce little that was concrete, Joe Black stood up and led a walkout of the trade union side. It was a dramatic thing to do but it certainly was not 'staged' as some observers had suggested. (41) From the workers' point of view the whole day's talks had been little more than an attempt at a public relations exercise on behalf of the Government

or, as Reid succinctly put it, "waffle" .(42) Davies and Campbell did give some slight indication that they were prepared to 'reconsider the position'. Each side held a press conference to put forward its point of view.(43) As the two sides moved through the corridors of the City Chambers Davies and Reid again came face to face. Alistair Buchan described what happened next.

"As Davies walked past he pushed out a hand to Jimmy Reid. As Reid explained to the stewards meeting the next day, when someone comes towards you with his hand out your instinctive reaction is to put yours out. The steward caught himself in time and placed his hand on the Minister's shoulder instead, and said 'I cannot shake hands with you, I cannot possibly shake hands with you'. Davies said something about shaking hands as friends, but Reid persisted: 'You are no friend of mine, I cannot possibly shake hands with you'.

By now everyone was watching and listening and flashlights were sparking off all around. Davies, trying to recoup the situation, said: 'I would like to shake hands with you not as a friend, but as one fighting for a common cause'. An annoyed Reid snapped back: 'Don't you know that shipbuilding on the Upper Reaches of the Clyde is the best in the world? Let's try to keep it that way'.

Davies had one final try. 'I have found interest in what you have been saying today. We must work in a concerted effort to see the future clearly'. But as they moved away, Davies said: 'I just don't understand you' and Reid left with the same words, 'and I don't understand you'".(44)

As before with Heath and Willie McInnes the void between the UCS workers and the Government was symbolically captured and personalised in this brief exchange. Davies left Glasgow a shaken man.

While Davies had been in the City Chambers, down at Clydebank the workers were hosting visitors of a vastly different

political complexion who had come to identify themselves with the workers' action. From the Scottish National Party there was its chairman, Billy Wolfe and from the Communist Party of Great Britain, Alex Murray and John Gollan, Scottish Secretary and General Secretary of the party, respectively. The next day it was the turn of Harold Wilson, leader of the Opposition to do the grand tour. His last visit to Clydebank had been in the 1950's accompanying Bevin in an election campaign rally. It was a complete reversal of Wilson's earlier suspicious attitude towards the work-in. In the course of a few hours in Glasgow, Wilson met the stewards, had a meeting with the STUC, talked to Ken Douglas, Bob Fleming and Liddle. On his arrival at the yard flanked by two police outriders, Wilson's car was halted by the shop steward at the gate. As the car window was wound down a slightly bewildered head poked out. Jack McClement the steward who stepped forward said, "Can I see your credentials please? I know who you are but I still have to see your credentials pal". The car was allowed through but the police outriders were turned back by Reid and Airlie who told them that Mr. Wilson "doesn't need any protection in here". As the outriders turned around Wilson cast a nervous glance over his shoulder. (45) After a brief tour of the Clydebank yard escorted by the stewards and cheered by the workers he was taken to the packed canteen and given a mug of tea. There standing on a bench he made his personal declaration.

"On behalf of the British Labour movement I am here to assert the right of the shipbuilding workers of Upper Clyde of their right to work." (46)

As Opposition spokesman, Wilson naturally had a plan to save the yards upon which he later elaborated. Effectively it meant the Government would nationalise the yards for a limited period

and place 'spec' orders with the yards to take up slack and ease cash flow problems. It was not the sort of thing which would recommend itself to a Tory Government bent on eliminating lame ducks. As regards the actual work-in Wilson made plan that he supported any action the workers took to maintain their right to work provided it was 'within the law'. (47) As Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, there was hardly anything else he could have said and the fact that he had come to Clydeside at all was a boost to the workers' morale and implied that the struggle conducted by the stewards had both legitimacy and the backing of the Labour Party.

The key thing now was to destroy the arguments that had been put forward by the Four Wise Men and create the political conditions for a major re-think in Government policy. To some extent it would be mass action which would most effectively alter the climate of discussion but it was necessary also to dislodge the barriers the Government had put up to reconsidering the arguments of the Advisory Group Report. The previous parliamentary debate on August 2nd had laid the groundwork for this. Within a couple of days of Davies' visit to Glasgow the stewards effectively undermined the Report's claim that the UCS order book was 'thin'. Through members of the management the stewards had been given access to information about orders which it was claimed were on the point of being lodged with UCS for product carriers and 'Clyde' class ships. With the liquidation these orders, worth about £120 million had been lost. Furthermore, again the stewards charged that the Government had made up its mind to dismember the UCS even before it came to power, referring to the 'Ridley Report' which the stewards said they would publish in full at the appropriate time. Even more damning was the charge that the chief cause of the collapse was the cash-flow crisis exacerbated by the withholding of credits for the period between October 1970

and February 1971 which resulted in £64 million of overdue debts which the company could not meet. (48)

At the same time a number of articles began to appear in the press which further undermined the credibility of the Advisory Group's Report. Jasper MacMichael in a long article in the Glasgow Herald explaining the proposals he had put to Davies and Campbell during their City Chambers Conference, commented that the Report was 'disappointing in its lack of vision'. The working capital requirements of UCS had not been realistically assessed when the group was formed and the extent of losses on inherited contracts was not foreseen. As a result the expected investment to improve production facilities did not take place. MacMichael argued that by implication it now made little sense to spend the £50 million which would be required simply to keep men on the dole. (49)

That week, The Guardian carried a long article entitled 'UCS was bled to death' by one of the paper's correspondents, Mark Arnold-Foster. Referring to the withholding of credits which had deprived the company of 80 per cent of its revenues, he said, "the possibility that Mr. Davies' Department did not know what would happen is remote." (50) The paper listed six meetings between Davies and Mackenzie, the SIB representative between October and February. In fact UCS had been forced to find between £5 and £6 million from other sources to keep going. By the time the Government finally released the credits, UCS had been 'bled to death'. The demands for the Government to publish the extensive background material on which the Advisory Group's Report was supposedly based were now being made not just by the Opposition but from quarters

which were usually firm Government supporters. It is a moot point however, even with the general outcry, whether or not at this stage the Government were prepared to reconsider their approach.

These and related issues were raised by Reid, Barr, Cook and McInnes at a meeting with Eden in London at the Department of Trade and Industry on August 9th. The stewards wanted to know whether the Government would examine Harold Wilson's proposals for UCS; whether they would delay the issue of redundancy notices to allow these and other proposals to be examined; whether the Government would lift its ban on further orders for ships and allow the UCS marketing department to seek new orders; how much private capital was pledged to keep Govan going and how much the Government were prepared to put up; whether John Davies' pledge after his visit to Glasgow to 'think again' was being fulfilled and, of course, whether the Government would publish the working papers of the Advisory Group. (51) During the ensuing discussion Reid put forward the shop stewards' own proposals for a new company, wholly or partially publically owned, to be based on the present units for a four or five year period which the workers would guarantee to make a success. Eden however, did not think this proposal sufficiently interesting to accede to the stewards' request that he 'phone Heath aboard his yacht Morning Cloud and put their offer directly to him. The outcome was as inconclusive as the City Chambers Conference a few days before. The virtues of negotiation were clearly wearing rather thin for the stewards. As Reid commented, parodying Gordon Campbell's Churchillian rhetoric at their City Chambers meeting,



"Having jaw-jawed, we're going to fight fight. Our powder is still dry." (52)

The following day the 'troops' assembled.

## Chapter 4 Upper Clyde Shipyard Workers Unlimited

- 1 Morning Star, 31 July 1971.
- 2 BBC TV News, G71/100/101, 30 July 1971; BBC TV, 'The fight for Clydeside', documentary transcript, 21 September 1971, GU Archives.
- 3 The Times, 31 July 1971. This was a theme which Benn was to pursue at the Labour Party Conference later that year declaring that "the workers in UCS have done more in ten weeks to advance the cause of industrial democracy than all the blueprints we have worked on over the last ten years." See Report of the Seventieth Annual Conference of the Labour Party, Brighton, 6 October 1971, p. 250.
- 4 A. Buchan, The Right to Work, London, Calder & Boyars, 1972, p. 79.
- 5 BBC TV News, G71/100/101, 30 July 1971, GU Archives.
- 6 BBC TV News, G71/977, 30 July 1971, GU Archives
- 7 Interview with Sammy Barr, 11 July 1979, GU Archives.
- 8 The Times, 3 August 1971.
- 9 The Scotsman, 30 July 1971; BBC TV News, G71/143, 2 August 1971, GU Archives.
- 10 Glasgow Herald, 2 August 1971.
- 11 BBC TV News, G71/143, 2 August 1971, GU Archives.
- 12 The Scotsman, 3 August 1971.
- 13 BBC TV News, G71/143, 2 August 1971, GU Archives.
- 14 The Scotsman, 5 August 1971.
- 15 Hansard, vol. 822, 1970-71, 2 August 1971, col. 1093.
- 16 Morning Star, feature article by A. Milligan, 28 August 1971.
- 17 See P. Hunt, 'The Development of Class Consciousness in Situations of Industrial Conflict', M.Phil. thesis, (unpublished), Edinburgh, 1974, pp. 112-113 for UCS workers comments as to the unimportance of Reid and Airlie's Communist political affiliations.
- 18 BBC TV News, G71/981, 2 August 1971, GU Archives
- 19 BBC TV News, G71/157-8, 9 August 1971, GU Archives; The Times, 10 August 1971.

- 21 Morning Star, 4 August 1971.
- 22 The Guardian, 7 August 1971.
- 23 Morning Star, 5 August 1971.
- 24 Morning Star, 7 August 1971.
- 25 Morning Star, 9 August 1971.
- 26 Morning Star, 5 August 1971.
- 27 Morning Star, 9 August 1971.
- 28 Morning Star, 10 August 1971.
- 29 Appendix 10, UCS Shop Stewards' Fund. Period 23 June 1971-27 August 1971.
- 30 Interview with Roddy McKenzie, 5 May 1979, GU Archives.
- 31 Appendix 11, Authorisation for 50p weekly deduction from wages for work-in levy.
- 32 BBC TV News, G71/157-8, 9 August 1971, GU Archives.
- 33 Hansard, vol. 822, op. cit., col. 1095.
- 34 *ibid.*, col. 1101.
- 35 *ibid.*, col. 1097.
- 36 *ibid.*, cols. 1110-1111.
- 37 *ibid.*, col. 1111.
- 38 *ibid.*
- 39 Corporation of Glasgow, Minutes, 2 August 1971, Print no. 8, pp. 560-561.
- 40 Joe Black, letter to F.J. Chapple, 12 August 1971, GU Archives.
- 41 J. McGill, Crisis on the Clyde, London, Davis -Poynter, 1972, p. 105.
- 42 BBC TV News, 3 August 1971, GU Archives.
- 43 BBC TV News, G71/149, G71/995, 3 August 1971, GU Archives.
- 44 Buchan, op. cit., pp. 86-87.
- 45 BBC TV News, G71/993/994, 4 August 1971, GU Archives.
- 46 BBC TV News, G71/933/4, 4 August 1971, GU Archives.
- 47 Morning Star, 5 August 1971; Glasgow Herald, 5 August 1971.
- 48 The Guardian, 6 August 1971.

- 49 Glasgow Herald, 5 August 1971 .
- 50 The Guardian, 7 August 1971.
- 51 Appendix 12, UCS visit to the Department of Trade and Industry.  
Possible questions for Sir John Eden, 9 August 1971.
- 52 Morning Star, 10 August 1971.

## Chapter Five

## LEFT UNITY AND THE BROAD ALLIANCE

If the first Rosevale meeting of shop stewards in June was indicative of the fighting potential among Clydesiders, the second meeting on August 10th had representatives from almost every section of the whole Scottish working class and some from the North of England too. There were as many as twelve hundred shop stewards present to pledge the support of the workers they represented for Airlie's appeal for a weekly levy for financial assistance. Among the speakers representatives of the official labour and trade union movement were as numerous as shop stewards. Jimmy Morrell, organiser of the General and Municipal Workers, Jimmy Ramsay of the Clyde boiler-makers, Joe Black, Chairman of the Clyde district of the Confederation, Gavin Laird, convener of Singers, Janey Buchan of the Glasgow Labour Party, Dave Bolton, Scottish Vice-Chairman of the NUM, Joe McCafferty, the Scottish Officer of the transport workers, Harry McLevy, Convener from the Dundee shipyards of Robb Caledon, John McCartney from Hall Russell's yard of Aberdeen.

The enthusiasm which Reid's speech that day generated was another tribute to his outstanding ability as a speaker. It rivalled and indeed surpassed in eloquence his speech on the previous similar occasion in the Rosevale. The applause was deafening as Reid was given a standing ovation. Here was a man who could put into words what workers were feeling and thinking. Yet it was the issues to which the workers were responding not simply the oratory, impressive though this was. Reid issued the call,

"...On the part of the working people of Britain to put an end to policies and practices whereby decisions can be taken by a group of men either in Government or in a

board room that can decimate communities and cast thousands of workers on to the dole queue and blight the future of the younger generation and force social upheaval and people leaving their communities in search of a future.

Now for too long we have tolerated such policies and such practices, for too long they've been getting away with it and at last a section of the workers have rejected and repudiated such social, economic and political theories and have been reasserted the dignity of workingmen to establish that they've got rights, and they've got commitments and privileges and principles and they are going to utilise their ability and capacity to resist these measures to fight and to unite around them their brothers and sisters. So that in winning this victory and that's what we should be speaking about today, it is not a narrow victory for the UCS workers, but a victory for the British working people that can reverse the whole trend that's been so obvious in our country for the last years and indeed, create a situation where no more can such decisions be taken. Because I want to say this: The policies of the Government in relation to the UCS indicate a mentality towards shipbuilding which means that shipbuilding is expendable in the whole of Britain and we're an island and a maritime nation. But so also does this mentality apply to other industries and it raises the question of there being people in this Government who represent financial interests, whose sole concern is maximising their profits and if this can be done by investments abroad or by chewing gum plantations in Timbuctoo they're not interested in the devastation that their policies will wrought in terms of the economic structure of Britain and the social malaise and desert that these policies will create." (applause). (1)

Referring now to the Report of the 'Four Wise Men' which Reid derisively held up before his audience.

"In the first instance its a broadsheet; that's not a White Paper! This is supposed to be the result of a most exhaustive examination by experts of the situation of shipbuilding on the Upper Reaches of the Clyde. I can tell you, my twelve year old daughter could have bettered it, as a result of three or four visits to the Yards on the Upper Reaches. There's no analysis, there's no substantiation, there's contentions. And it seems to us that in point of fact this is not a White Paper its a dollop of whitewash that was constructed in order to justify the preconceived position of this Government relative to the UCS because it takes a summation of statistics by and large from the inception of the UCS. They met for five weeks - five weeks, and incidentally they were not in constant session they probably had about a dozen meetings. A dozen meetings to examine a situation of such complexity. They brought on

Lord Robens in the last week. We never saw Lord Robens! He was brought on for a bit of window dressing as an ex-Labour minister that might give an aura of labour movement respectability to the findings of this committee. We've said before of course, Lord Robens is finished in the labour movement as a result of his associations with this committee, because it was a hatchet job." (applause) (2)

Now Reid poured scorn on the supposed impartiality of the Advisory Group of which Davies had previously tried to persuade them.

"He has told us in Glasgow that he didn't want shipbuilding experts on the committee because they would have to be, almost by definition, competitors of the UCS who had a vested interest in ending in the UCS. But he says, 'I can assure you they had access to shipbuilding experts', who presumably were competitors of the UCS, who had a vested interest in destroying the UCS. (laughter and applause)... If they were giving evidence I would rather they had've been on the...on the front line in public glare rather than surrepticiously giving evidence through the back door. Competitors they may be with an interest as I've said in the destruction of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders. What does it amount to? Nobody will argue that if you take the statistics of the UCS from its inception, that these statistics aren't damning. They are damning. But there is no trade unionist will defend the record of the UCS of about 1968 to halfway through 1969 for reasons which Joe touched upon, the money was squandered, compensation given to previous owners, too many of them, too many of these previous owners who had brought shipbuilding and the Upper Reaches of the Clyde to the sorry state they were in, as a result of their neglect, were represented on that Board and I'm saying this to you quite bluntly. The record of the shipbuilding families of the Clyde, that's the owners, is such, as they shouldn't be allowed to manage a bingo hall, let alone an industry fighting for its community..." (Cheers and applause).

"We are continuing with this fight, and you have an opportunity of registering an historical, monumental victory in this fight. And do you know why you've got that opportunity? Because you've got a workforce, that, I'm telling you this, that I'm absolutely proud and privileged to be a member of in the Upper Reaches of this river. We are going to fight, and we can win this one, but we're realists, we know we cannot win it without your support. We cannot win it unless its understood and recognised that this is the crunch fight for Scotland and for the trade union movement in Britain in the fight against deadly economic policies that treat us basically as rubbish."

"We are asking here today at this conference, - help us. Now this is not the begging bowl. We are reasonable and rational men but I think we've proven in the last few weeks, we've got guts. This is not the begging bowl. In asking for your help we're asking you to help yourselves, and in asking for your solidarity we're asking you to reverse the trend in British society, whereby workers will assert their basic inalienable right, the right to work. We are asking that you respond to our call not only for financial assistance, but at some stage in the relative near future, to demonstrate beyond all shadow of doubt where you stand, you and your workers stand and you and your organisations stand, by giving the most visible, physical demonstration that on this issue, the workers of Britain recognise its a trial, its a test case, that if its won can galvanise the whole progressive working class movement in Britain that contains men of goodwill and, can take this country on a new course, where the people matter, where the people come first, where elementary rights and decencies take a higher priority than the economic dogma and greed of a tiny section of the community." (3) (Applause and cheers).

The shop stewards left the Rosevale meeting determined to go back to their workplaces and fight for the largest possible turnout at the public demonstration which the meeting had called for the following week.

At the official level also the STUC was marshalling the support of the organised trade union movement on the wider basis that the UCS situation epitomised the general crisis of unemployment facing the Scottish economy as a whole. In mid-August a Special Congress of the STUC was held in the Partick Burgh Halls in Glasgow and was attended by over four hundred delegates. James Jack in his opening statement pointed out that a recall Congress had not taken place before, even during the long and hungry 'thirties' when unemployment had never fallen below 18 per cent. (4) The figure of 134,512 unemployed for July 1971 could be compared to the summer of 1960 when the total was a mere 55,000. Factories which had either closed or were cutting back involved important plants in chemicals, engineering, and electronics like ICI, Babcock and Wilcox, Plessey,



BSC, Mavor & Coulson, Davy & United, Satchwell Controls and AEI not to mention closures in the paper and textile industries which in the previous two or three years alone had lost 19,000 jobs. It was clear moreover that unemployment was no longer confined simply to the contraction of traditional industries. Unemployment said Jack, in language somewhat more forthright than usual,

"was a persistent, painful reminder of the built-in economic and social injustices and conflicts of this country." (5)

Naturally in this context UCS was very much to the fore in the speakers' remarks that day. The mood of the trade union leadership in Scotland was as angry and determined as that of the rank and file representatives.

In a break with protocol Jimmy Reid was allowed to address the Special Congress on behalf of the UCS Shop Stewards Co-ordinating Committee even though strictly speaking he was representing an 'unofficial' body. According to one observer Reid was again "cheered to the rafters" in a speech which raised the theme of what was he called a 'working-class Charter of Rights'.

"at the heart of which was the right to work...if the Government couldn't guarantee that right, or the social order could not give that right, then, change the Government or modify the order." (6)

The Special Congress adopted proposals based on the General Council's eight point plan to ease the high level of unemployment.(7) Among the measures proposed were an expansion of the economy through public spending, strengthening of regional incentives and employment premiums and the establishment of a special economic planning authority for the West Central Scotland area modelled along the lines of the Highlands and Islands Development Board.

Specific projects which the STUC had been campaigning for included the building of a new major petro-chemical development and the construction of a deep sea terminal and steel complex at Hunterston. An immediate Government commitment to proceed with the RB211 engine for Rolls Royce which would secure jobs at the Hillington plant and of course, a reversal of the Government's decision on UCS was also called for.

Present at the Special Congress were leading national officials of the Confederation, including Frank Briggs its president, Jack Service its general secretary and Danny McGarvey as chairman of the Confederation's powerful Shipbuilding Negotiation Committee. They were in Glasgow not only for the Congress but also to attend a key meeting the following day of the BTUC's Economic Committee being held for the first time in its history in Scotland. In addition they all wanted to be present for the second UCS mass demonstration on the day after that. Leading the BTUC Economic Committee delegation was Vic Feather, the TUC General Secretary, who had come to Clydeside to put forward the idea of a planning agency, the Clydeside Development Authority (CDA) to the Special Congress thus establishing his authorship of a major trade union initiative to solve the long-term problems of the West of Scotland.

Neither Feather nor McGarvey had been to the Clyde since the UCS crisis broke but it was clear that the time had come for the trade union national leadership to identify themselves publically with the UCS cause and, more importantly, to be seen to have something worthwhile to say on the matter. Previously McGarvey and Feather's involvement had been somewhat peripheral to the events. Clearly what was now happening was too big for leaders of their

stature to allow themselves to be relegated to the sidelines. So far as McGarvey's public role was concerned he had done nothing since moving the resolution on UCS at the Confederation Annual Conference in June although he had presented the CDA scheme, presumably with Feather's blessing, to the Confederation at York a few days before and was closely identified with Feather's approach to UCS. As Feather said to the Special Congress, in suitably measured tones, UCS was not only a problem for Clydeside, Scotland and shipbuilding, but "a matter of concern" for the whole of Britain. (8)

"We have kept in touch with the situation during the whole period. Now the combined weight of the movement must be exerted, trying practical, positive and honest proposals to save the jobs of men, the livelihoods of families and the future of shipbuilding." (9)

As regards the actual work-in Feather's position was somewhat more equivocal supporting it mainly as "a means of drawing attention" to the crisis. (10)

In fact, the idea of a Clydeside Development Authority paralleled the STUC's own call for a special economic planning agency for West Central Scotland. The remit of the CDA in which trade union participation was seen as 'essential to achieve the confidence of workpeople' would be to prepare a development plan for the whole area. The finance for the CDA would come from interest free loans from the Exchequer but the authority would also be able to raise private loan capital on the market. The CDA would "take over all the assets and liabilities" of UCS and seek new orders to stabilise employment levels. If after examining the situation it was thought appropriate that some of the labour force be redeployed then the CDA would ensure that there was sufficient public and

private investment to provide "alternative employment and facilities for such retraining as necessary." (11)

Certainly the CDA proposal could be seen as an attempt by Feather to perform a great public act of 'industrial statesmanship' which would also assert to authority of the TUC to a degree, over the STUC, perhaps also over the political intervention of Tony Benn in the campaign and certainly to establish the leading position of the TUC vis a vis the shop stewards. As it was, elements of the CDA plan could be construed as at variance with the stewards' demand that there be no contraction or redundancies, since it envisaged the possibility at least, of a reduction in the ship-building labour force which perhaps explains its rather lukewarm reception by the shop stewards. (12) On the positive side, however, the meeting of the Economic Committee secured official TUC backing for the UCS campaign in the immediate sense, by issuing a call to the national executive level of the trade unions to assist the UCS workers in their fight. This resulted in more unions agreeing to pay their members at UCS strike benefit as well as several large lump sum donations to the fighting fund. More generally, from the point of view of breadth of support for the campaign, the identification of the TUC with UCS as a cause meant that the left and right within the trade unions and again, within the labour movement were now united to an unprecedented extent. This was clearly manifested on the UCS demonstration next day where marching together arms linked were Feather and McGarvey, alongside Hugh Scanlon, the general secretary of the engineering union and from the Labour Party, Willie Ross in the same lineup as Tony Benn.

If the degree of unity was remarkable the scale of the demonstration was equally so. Once again the sun shone, but this time up to 80,000 workers took to the streets, and as many as

200,000 stopped work in sympathy. (13) The atmosphere was almost like that of a carnival with George Square a mass of movement, sparkle and gaiety, as the brightly coloured union banners of each contingent were unfurled in a sea of placards and posters. Everyone wanted to carry a message for the Tories. The women workers sang the 'protest songs' of Clydeside; 'If you hate Edward Heath clap your hands' and 'John Brown's shipyard is Rising from the Grave'. They altered the words of 'Daddy's taking us to the zoo tomorrow', a children's song popularised by folk singer Julie Felix to 'Teddy's takin' us to the Buroo tomorrow'. The chant went up "What do we want?" Back came the roar "Heath out!", over and over again. If they could have, they would have blasted the Tories out of office by the power of their lungs alone. Somehow the marshalls organised the hundreds of different groups of workers and the head of the march set off while the thousands crowding George Square burst out in spontaneous applause. Arthur Milligan of the Morning Star captured that occasion, probably Scotland's largest ever industrial and political demonstration.

"Nothing like it has been seen before. Here were miners, engineers, draughtsmen, postal workers, clerical workers, kids from the Socialist Fellowship, tobacco workers, transport workers, boilermakers, railwaymen and students -- all marching as one." (14)

In a certain respect Vic Feather had been correct when he said at the Special STUC Congress that UCS was not simply a Clyde-side or a purely Scottish issue. The demonstration proved that beyond a shadow of a doubt. They had come not just from all over Scotland but from south of the border too. There were workers with their banners from London airport and Gatwick, from Wolverhampton, Derby, Blackpool, Barrow, Solihull, Tyneside, Dagenham, Coventry, Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool.

Alex Murray speaking as Scottish District Secretary of the Communist Party at Glasgow Green paid tribute to the UCS workers.

"By your fight, you have forged a new unity of the working class to a degree and at a level never before known in any previous struggle. And also because your unity and courage and the quality of your leadership have brought a great new sense of pride to our movement, pride in the fact that you are members of our movement, of our class.

The British working class stands just a little bit taller, a little bit straighter today, the product of your struggle and your leadership and I know you'll understand when I say that we are especially proud of the part that members of our Party are playing alongside their fellow shop stewards in that leadership, and in the service they are giving to the UCS workers and to the Scottish people. This struggle of the UCS workers has many lessons for the working class, including that the fight against unemployment cannot be conducted in the abstract, or by words alone, however reasoned. It is the action of the UCS workers that has been the catalyst, that has galvanised millions of people to united action in their support. Their action, their struggle, has become the focal point of the common struggle of millions of workers throughout Britain." (15)

It was, as many agreed, one of the best speeches that day in a list of speakers that included William Wolfe of the Scottish National Party, Jimmy Airlie, Vic Feather, Danny McGarvey, Tony Benn, Willie Ross, Hugh Scanlon, James Jack and of course, Jimmy Reid. The wider implications of the struggle were taken up by Reid in a fierce assertion of the central role of working class leadership in the struggle for a better society.

"The workers in Britain are getting off their knees, getting on their feet and asserting their dignity, asserting their abilities, asserting in a determined and disciplined way that they will have a say in the decision making of this country....

No-one has the right to destroy the aspiration of the young men or the security of the old men, no-one has the right to demand what people leave their countries if they want work. We started off fighting for our jobs and in a matter of days we knew we were fighting for Scotland and for the British working class movement.

The real power of this country has been forged today

in Clydeside and will be forged now in the pits, the factories, the shipyards, and the offices. Once that force is given proper leadership, is disciplined and determined, there is no force in Britain, or indeed in this world, that can stand against it." (16)

The only dark patch in that otherwise cloudless day, if the press reports of Provost Liddle bemoaning the loss of production caused by the stoppage are ignored, was the announcement by the liquidator that 174 workers were to be declared redundant on Friday. The following Monday morning therefore, would be the first real test of the workers solidarity because for all the speeches and demonstrations and for all the plans that had been laid, unless the redundant workers themselves were convinced that the cause was sufficiently worthwhile actually to participate in the work-in, then it would quickly come to nothing.

Of the first batch of redundancies about two thirds were manual workers and one third were staff. Out of all these only 8 workers were "volunteers", that is, they accepted redundancy money from the liquidator and left. The rest were compulsorily redundant and joined the work-in. They were to receive their average after-tax weekly earnings based on forty hours work which amounted to somewhere between £20 and £25 plus their national insurance stamps contribution. Each worker's card was stamped as 'self-employed'. The money came from the fighting fund and was paid out each week by clerks who had themselves been made redundant and joined the work-in. By the end of August, 399 had been declared redundant of whom 277 were working-in. Of the total redundancies that month 215 were hourly paid of whom 135 returned to join the work-in and 184 staff, of whom 142 returned. (17) Thus overall, the initial turnout for the work-in was somewhere near seventy per cent

indicating a fairly high level of support among the yard workers. About 62 per cent of the manual workers and about 77 per cent of the staff who had been made redundant returned. One possible explanation of the relative imbalance of the proportions between the staff and manual categories is that manual workers **perhaps** felt they had less to lose than staff in that the experience of redundancy and job change would be relatively more frequent among this group. This would be particularly true of finishing trade workers who frequently moved back and forth between shipbuilding and construction work. Even the metal-working trades however, though less mobile than the finishing trades would be resigned to periods of unemployment or job change due to the cyclical nature of employment in the industry. (18) Staff on the other hand would stand to lose a number of fringe benefits, pension rights and so on, even presuming that they could find employment outwith shipbuilding in which their 'skills' would be of some use.

Be that as it may, in the day-to-day organisational terms the handling of the work-in employees was no simple matter. The original plan had been for the men to report to their foremen and assume their old jobs. The problem was however that if the work-in continued for any substantial length of time and those on the work-in continued to produce as before, then every day that passed would provide the liquidator with a vessel that was more nearly completed. The objective of the work-in was to focus on the willingness of the workers to work in the yards and forestall layoffs rather than assist in creating the conditions for even more of their number to be sacked. In order therefore, not to provide the liquidator with free labour financed, as it were, by the workers' fighting fund this meant that work-in members could only assist at the most in maintaining normal output levels by sharing



work with their mates still in employment. In addition, there was the problem that in the event of any industrial injury, and many of the jobs in shipbuilding involve some element of risk, then questions would arise as to compensation liability. Redundant workers therefore had to be put on jobs which did not carry any serious degree of risk thus excluding virtually all the work-in from work aboard the actual vessels. In the purely practical sense then the work-in as an effective concept was circumscribed in its application by these objective difficulties. (19) Despite such limitations, in terms of its role as a rallying point for the workers there is no doubt that it was a powerful unifying force for all those in the yards. For all workers still employed in the yards by the liquidator it involved a regular weekly contribution towards maintaining their unemployed comrades for about a year and a continuing ban on overtime working. For those who were members of the work-in and had to turn up daily at the yards, it involved foregoing the chance of a job elsewhere for the period they were on the work-in. It was a continuing test of the workers' voluntary self-discipline which on the whole they passed with credit. At every stage it provided a guage of the solidarity of the workforce. The workers were united to the extent that members of the work-in continued to turn up and their fellow workers continued to support them financially and morally.

Even if the men actually on the work-in could not be physically linked with the rest of the UCS workforce in terms of the day-to-day jobs, the Co-ordinating Committee ensured through its publicity sub-committee that the future of the work-in was continually linked at least in the workers' minds with their own fate. From September through to April, periodic bulletins were issued by the Co-ordinating

Committee which gave the entire workforce an up-to-date picture of the overall position of the campaign in the form of reports, articles and the incisive cartoons of Bobby Starret from Yarrows. In all, a dozen such bulletins were produced and distributed among the workforce. (20) In this way the views of the leadership of the workers were transmitted through an additional and 'authoritative' channel besides simple word-of-mouth statements from the platform at mass meetings and departmental meetings and discussions. Although it is difficult to gauge with accuracy the relative importance of all the different ways in which attempts were made to sustain internal unity within the yards it was probably due in no small measure to such initiatives from the Co-ordinating Committee that they were as successful as they were. Certainly the keen realisation of the need to combat possible distortions from the mass media throughout the campaign prompted the Co-ordinating Committee to seek every channel and every possible opportunity to communicate with the workers.

As a demonstration of the UCS workers' determination to resist Government policy the political significance of the work-in had massive reverberations in terms of the ability of the Clyde workers to mobilise support up and down the country. Throughout the August and into September, the stewards had gradually intensified their public campaign. UCS stewards addressed the workforces in factories and installations the entire length of the country during this period. In England and Wales they visited London, Barrow, Nottingham, Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds, Coventry, Cardiff, Swansea, Merthyr, Dagenham, Slough, Oxford, Carlisle and many other places besides.

A list of speakers was issued by the Co-ordinating Committee of those who were prepared to accept invitations to address any meeting of workers. Among those who travelled around the country were

Davie Cooper, James Kirkpatrick, Bob Reid, Gerry Ross, Sam Gilmore, Bob McCann, Willie Holt, Dick McLean, Alex Bill, Jim Cloughley, Dick McCrossan, Willie Clydesdale, Hugh Shaw, Ian Kenny, Tommy Friel, Frank McGowan, Stan McNee, John McIntosh, Tommy Murdoch, Jimmy Reid, John McMillan, Jimmy Airlie and Sam Barr. They comprised what was within a remarkably short space of time, a developing "team of mass orators" prepared to go any where at a moments notice. (21) The job of organising what became practically a professional travel agency was given to the sub-committee led by Jimmy Kirkpatrick, a draughtsman's representative on the Co-ordinating Committee. Up to fifty requests for speakers were dealt with every week and at the height of the campaign as many as seventy a week. Usually the stewards were sent in groups of two to four so that the less experienced could learn from the more experienced speakers, each supplied with speakers notes and a list of local contacts among the conveners of the work forces in the key local factories. (22) Their job was to explain the demands of the UCS workers to the general public and the labour movement and **to win financial support.**

In this, as reports of donations promised and received were to show, they were remarkably successful. UCS had become a national issue, even inspiration, for the active organised British working class and the visits by shop stewards to the major industrial centres of the country were probably instrumental in helping to raise the whole combatative spirit of the class, not only in resisting redundancies and factory closures, but also in the subsequent series of battles over Tory Government policy on a number of fronts. Early in August the steel workers from the River Don works faced with savage redundancies came north to consult the UCS stewards as to how they had organised the work-in. (23) They were the first of many

groups of workers to whom the UCS workers gave moral and financial support in their struggles for the right to work. Some measure of the degree to which UCS had become a symbol of the fight against the Heath Government can also be gauged by the fact that in different areas of the country local action committees uniting left militants in the unions, the Co-operative Societies, the Labour and Communist parties sprang up, in places as far apart as Ayrshire, South Wales, Doncaster, Wellingborough and Hammersmith. These action committees were specifically intended to mobilise support for UCS while campaigning on the general issue of unemployment and encapsulated the developing left-unity which was emerging on a nation-wide scale at the base of the labour movement.

In Ayrshire at an initial meeting called to discuss UCS at the Glacier Metal Social Club in Kirlmarnock over 400 shop stewards turned up, a response which a local steward described as 'staggering'. It was decided to set up the Ayrshire Workers Co-ordinating Committee which was a county solidarity committee consisting blue collar and white collar workers and spanning the boundaries of several local trades council areas. Meetings were organised to discuss the events on the Clyde and to raise levies in such major plants as Glacier Metal, Massey Fergusson, the Ailsa Shipbuilding Company, Irvine dockyard, Glenfield and Kennedy and Skefko. Often these meetings were held in company time. In the case of Skefko the workers took over the works canteen on one occasion for this purpose. When the management threatened to call the police, the stewards threatened to call the men out on strike. The damaging prospect of 'enlightened' Swedish management using the civil authorities to evict their workforce from the premises was, however, sufficient inducement for the Skefko management to permit the meeting to continue unhindered. (24) In South Wales thirteen district authorities and local trades councils came

together to form the Cwmbran District Action Group. (25) The leaflet issued by the Doncaster and District Trades Council on 'Unemployment and UCS' also provides an example of the way in which local groups attempted to mobilise support around the question of UCS.

"Workers of the UPPER CLYDE SHIPBUILDERS are the first British workers to reject redundancy.

Instead of the platitudes spoken by many politicians over the years on the subject of unemployment, these workers claim We are going to work - when the bosses say There is No work for us.

This cuts directly across statements made by Davies and Carr, with their accusations of the lazyness of workers being responsible for our economic problems, lazy workers do not demand the RIGHT TO WORK." (26)

The leaflet concluded with an appeal to workers in the area to organise weekly levy to support the work-in to be forwarded to the trades council treasurer. It was distributed both in the town centre and in the mines and factories throughout the area. (27)

It was not possible, however, to send a speaker to each of the thousands of factories who were by now giving financial contribution. To meet this need for communication the stewards issued a four page tabloid-style paper titled "The Butchering of UCS' in mid-September. (28) Printed on the presses of the Co-operative Press in Manchester and laid out by members of the Glasgow branch of the National Union of Journalists in their own time, one hundred thousand copies were prepared for distribution throughout the country. It contained an interview

with Ken Douglas, together with extracts from the Ridley letters and lively presentation of the main outline of the UCS workers' case, posing the question for workers elsewhere to ponder.

'What other industries have had the benefit of the Ridleys of the Tory Party' "WHO IS NEXT?" (29)

In the interview Douglas reiterated the details of the increase in the company's productivity in terms of steel throughput, the level of anticipated profits for 1972 and the improvement in management and labour relations. UCS had been building ships so fast said Douglas,

"the problem became where to park them. Our fitting out basins are full." (30)

As to the UCS order book being 'thin' as the Report had claimed, this was part of a deliberate policy first adopted by Douglas at Austin and Pickersgill which ensured that contracts were taken on at profitable prices and early delivery dates could be offered when there was a suitable market. The company had been short of working capital from the outset, drained by inherited losses from yards some of which would have gone bankrupt in their own right. In fact, said Douglas, given the required assistance "we could have broken through into profitability". It was the cash flow situation which brought the company down, not the question of future profitability, for UCS had been in line to win £100 million worth of new orders which were lost as soon as liquidation took place. Describing the Ridley papers

as "a very biased and prejudiced report" Douglas pointed out that Ridley had reached his conclusions with regard to UCS on the basis of "little more than one hours' discussion with him in January 1970". While the Four Wise Men were criticised for coming to a conclusion in a relatively short space of time "at least they took five weeks", said Douglas. (31)

The shop stewards published an appeal to the British working class:

"Brothers and Sisters - no group of workers has ever had a better case than we in the UCS.

We have proof and evidence that if there was any decent or appropriate legal system in this country, Ridley would be in the process of being prosecuted for anti-social activity.

We believe that the more we make our case known throughout this country, and given the support of ordinary decent people, and the whole British labour movement, such is the strength of our case that we can shake not only this Government but bring into action all decent minded people.

No-one likes to see an injustice being done and this is an injustice that is happening right now to the UCS workers.

All this is being perpetrated by a Government who have not the slightest conception of what it means to stand in a dole queue - and who, for that matter, don't care.

WE ARE DEMANDING THE RIGHT TO WORK." (32)

In all, the professionalism of the UCS tabloid was a substantial propaganda coup for the UCS cause and was an interesting attempt to use a popular media form to get across a highly political message although some of the NUJ members who assisted the publicity sub-committee were none too happy about the sharpness of the politics. (33) Indeed, so adept were the Co-ordinating Committee at handling the mass media that certain writers have since attempted to characterise the whole workers' campaign as an example of media 'myth-making'. (34)

Arguments about who if anybody was manipulating whom are rather beside the point. The really key development, of which the coverage of the workers' case by the mass media was merely a particular example, was that for the first time a group of shop stewards became the authoritative spokesmen on the whole future of their industry. Thus as a result of the fact that they were successfully challenging Government policy, the UCS workers became the voice for all British shipyard workers.

One of the most important solidarity meetings of the whole sixteen months of the campaign was manifested in the gathering of representatives from the shipbuilding and shiprepairing shop stewards from all over Britian. They met in the Clydebank yard on September 29th. It had been some time in the history of the industry since a meeting of this nature had taken place. It was a measure of the unity which had been generated by the campaign and the recognition of what was at stake that made this event possible. The numerous visits by UCS stewards throughout the UK explaining first-hand the situation on Clydeside to other groups of workers had of course, laid the groundwork of contacts, particularly in other shipbuilding areas. Traditionally yards on the Tyne, on Merseyside and on the Clyde had competed against each other for orders. The Geddes restructuring unfortunately had not affected these historical attitudes of suspicion. What brought them together was the prospect of a massive contraction of the industry as a whole.

It had become clear that the UCS crisis was only one manifestation of the Tory Government's general attitude to the industry and speaker after speaker from yards all over the country underlined the point that were UCS to go down they themselves might easily be next in line.



As Harry McLevy from the Robb Caledon yard in Dundee put it, summing up the mood of the delegates;

"this conference today gives us the long overdue opportunity of beginning to create an organisation which could co-ordinate and develop a strategy of all the shipbuilding workers in this country." (35)

The conference considered and unanimously endorsed a resolution which in its final amended form listed the shop stewards' demands for the industry, first among which was full retention of shipbuilding and the labour force on the Upper Clyde. Secondly, the resolution called for a halt to redundancies throughout the UK shipbuilding industry as a whole and to this end, the retention of the Shipbuilding Industry Board with an expansion of the industry as its primary objective. Thirdly the resolution called for public ownership of the entire shipbuilding and shiprepairing industry in line with an emergency resolution to be moved at the Labour Party Conference the following week by the boilermakers' union. Thus for the first time in the history of the industry the shop stewards spoke with a united voice on the major issues affecting their industry.

To give weight to the resolution it was suggested that there might be a delegation of stewards sent to the forthcoming annual Labour Party Conference to support the passage of the boilermakers' emergency resolution and that a lobby of Downing Street could also be held at which all areas of the industry would be represented. The lobby in turn might be backed by a stoppage in every yard for the duration of any talks with Heath. It was agreed that whatever happened, if an attempt was made to reallocate any one of the fourteen suspended UCS orders to another yard it would be blacked by the workers there.

Given that there were twelve districts represented at the conference embracing twenty-two yards it was unlikely therefore, that if they were not to be built at UCS that these ships would be built anywhere else in Britain.

From all sides support was flowing in for the fighting fund. Large sums were now coming in from major unions. £2,000 each from the NUM and NUR, £1,000 from USDAW and NUPE and from DATA a further £1,000. From the shop floor workers at Ford and Chrysler, came large donations. Outwith industry there was further support from the world of entertainment. Everything from folk and pop concerts to performances of classical music were held to raise money for the campaign. Alex Clark, the Scottish Secretary of the actors' union Equity handed over £500 to the Fighting Fund at a UCS mass meeting. The money was the proceeds of a remarkable benefit concert held on the 19th of September in the King's Theatre in Glasgow which starred a number of well-known local entertainers, four of whom, Glen Daly, Russell Hunter, Archie Duncan and Johnny Beattie had started life in the shipyards and gave their services free of charge. The fee for the rent of the theatre which came to £300 was reimbursed by Glasgow Corporation to the Fighting Fund. Arthur Dooley, the sculptor who organised an exhibition in Glasgow of works by the Merseyside Workers Artists Association gifted one of his works, a figure of Christ rising beside a shipyard crane for which Clydebank Town Council gave £1,250 which also went to the Fighting Fund. Even Clydebank's dust carts were mobilised in the campaign and carried posters urging support for UCS. (36)

A number of local authorities voted to give sums of money directly to the Fighting Fund including Fife and Dumbarton County Councils,

Troon, Saltcoats, Whitburn, Kilsyth Town Councils. It was only an intervention by the Secretary of State for Scotland who refused to allow local authorities to give money for this purpose which finally prevented fifteen other local authorities contributing. (37) In Aberdeen, door to door collections for UCS were authorised while in Dundee and Glasgow flag days were held during September. The flag days, organised by the Trades Council in the Glasgow area, provided a welcome opportunity for the wives and families of the UCS workers to become directly involved in the campaign to keep the yards open. (38) The Vale of Leven District Council in whose area the threatened Plessey factory was situated organised a postal protest of 1,000 letters to John Davies signed by members of the public on unemployment at UCS and Plessey.

In August, the Clydebank Council convened a joint meeting of local authorities to discuss resistance to the Government proposals. Thirty-nine local authorities were represented and considered a draft resolution which proposed, among other things, an inquiry into the current crisis, the retention of UCS as an entity, preservation of present UCS labour force and requested that the Government meet a delegation from the meeting which it was agreed would be comprised of representation of fifteen local authorities. (39) The motion which was submitted to a meeting of Glasgow Corporation in September once again caused divisions among the Tories which led to bitter exchanges between Provost Liddle and Councillor Turpie. The latter had proposed an amendment on the same lines as in early August, seconded by Wober, implying full support for the Government's policy towards UCS. This time it was ruled out of order. A furious Turpie accused the Provost of attempting to "muzzle positive alternatives" and then moved an amendment to remit the Clydebank motion which was

duly defeated by 55 votes to 34. It was left to Councillor Mains of the Labour group to come to Provost Liddle's defence and demand that Turpie withdraw his remarks about the Lord Provost. (40)

Since the crisis had first broken in June, the local clergy of Clydebank of all denominations had been in open identification with the shop stewards' campaign. They too had seen their community wasted by the steady redundancies of the past years and perhaps more than any other section of the populace, excepting the workers themselves, were aware of the misery and spiritual ruin which so often accompanied unemployment. This issue was one on which the churches could not now remain silent and still retain any credibility among their congregation. The Sunday following the announcement of liquidation, special prayers had been conducted in all churches in Clydebank for the town and its industry. Several ministers had travelled with the men on the train to London to lobby the Prime Minister and MP's . In London the demonstration to Downing Street was joined by Lord McLeod of Fuinary, a former Moderator of the Church of Scotland who had seen for himself the social consequences of unemployment during the Depression, among Clydeside shipbuilding workers in the Govan Parish. The following week the Clydebank and District Ministers' Fraternal called a meeting in the Town Hall at which over twenty local churches were represented. The meeting was addressed by Provost Fleming who welcomed this initiative and latterly also by Jimmy Reid, despite a certain reluctance on the part of a few of the clergy. Reid stressed the argument that the object of the shop stewards was not however, to bring down the Government but simply to safeguard the jobs of men. Several proposals for expressing the churches concern were discussed including a 'quiet' letter to the Prime Minister, an immediate telegram and a petition to be

circulated among local congregations. A motion to support the first UCS demonstration was agreed in principle by 22 votes to 5 but it was left to individuals to associate themselves with it or not. At this meeting the group was formed "to take united Christian action for the well-being of the community". It was known thereafter as the Clydebank and District Christian Action Group (CDAG) and its meetings were attended by two shop stewards from UCS. (41)

The Group's Chairman, Father Thomas Glen recalled that the first meeting had been a somewhat 'stormy affair' but surprisingly constructive.

"The will to help in every possible way was there. At the risk of being thought to interfere in politics the views of the meeting had to be brought to the attention of the Government; and the views of the meeting were quite clear; people are more important than policies: policies, no matter how sound in themselves, ought not to be implemented in such a way as to destroy their community: the UCS is not just an industry, it is the life blood of Clydeside." (42)

Father Glen's position with regard to the work-in was also fairly positive:

"It is difficult to blame the mens' action in seeking to keep the yard doors open. Once closed they may never open again" (43)

The more progressive members of the clergy were associated with all the public demonstrations of the UCS workers as well as the delegations and one of their number, Stuart Borthwick, attended UCS shop stewards' meetings on occasion.

At one meeting however, that of the August 10th Scottish shop stewards conference held in the Rosevale at which about a dozen clergy were present, the intervention of a more right-wing minister produced an angry uproar among the workers. Alex Lawson, Minister of Kilbowie

Parish Church, Clydebank went to the microphone to argue that the proposal for a half-day stoppage on Wednesday 18th August would be 'disastrously harmful' despite the prior agreement that no minister would speak. Borthwick, industrial chaplain at Singers, had to rush forward to disclaim the remark and save a rather tricky situation which the worthy gentlemen had created. (44) In fact, Lawson achieved a minor notoriety during the UCS campaign for his outspoken anti-communism.

At the September meeting of the CDCAG when it was becoming clear that the Government were intent upon pushing ahead with the White Paper proposals which would have excluded the Clydebank Yard, Borthwick proposed that a letter be sent to the Prime Minister in the following terms.

"Clydebank and District Christian Action Group

We, the Clydebank and District Christian Action Group, representative of all Christian denominations in Clydebank, deploring the indignity to which our craftsmen are being subjected by the decision to butcher the UCS as outlined in the Ridley Report, call upon Her Majesty's Government to take cognizance of the continued mental suffering among the people of Clydebank. We condemn the lack of immediate constructive alternative plans by the Ministry of Trade and Industry to allay the fears and despairs of our people and call upon Her Majesty's Government to declare the Upper Clydeside a distress area and to take immediate and positive steps to give the necessary financial aid to make the UCS a viable shipbuilding structure." (45)

Interestingly the language used was not so different in style and content from that of the shop stewards in their pronouncements.

The prestigious Church and Nation Committee of the Church of Scotland declared for its part that it was "greatly disturbed" not only by the severe affect which the closure of much of UCS would have on communities already suffering from unemployment, but also by the

Government's failure to appreciate "the special difficulties and opportunities of Scotland" and continued,

"It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Government have acted so inconsistently, unwisely and without sufficient regard for the social and human consequences of their action that the effect is punitive." (46)

One of the more sociologically predictable results of the churches' open identification with the UCS cause was that the ecumenical movement in Clydebank received a considerable boost, culminating in late November in a united church service, the 'Industrial Sunday', at which members of the different churches in the town gathered to pray for the future of its industry. In the period since UCS, indeed the churches have continued their involvement in campaigns against factory closures in Clydebank by lending considerable moral weight to local committees against unemployment.

The wide character of this opposition to the government was expressed in the numerous attacks from all sides on the White Paper. Here the STUC performed a unique role that went far beyond giving its official blessing to the shop stewards' action. It was able to channel the groundswell of anti-Tory feeling that had emerged in various sections of the population even outwith the normal boundaries of the trade union movement. This it had achieved first by agreeing to the Special Congress and then sponsoring a 'Committee of Inquiry' into the consequences of the rundown of UCS. The STUC Inquiry as it was known became the initial focus for an emerging broad popular alliance of anti-Tory forces which sought to challenge the 'lame duck' assumptions upon which government policy appeared to be based. It became a kind of alternative 'Select Committee' appointed not by Parliament but by the labour movement which called for 'papers, and

persons'. Indeed, the idea of such a committee had first been mooted by Benn who had repeatedly and unsuccessfully called for a full-scale Parliamentary inquiry into UCS.(47) Now, for the first time, the labour movement decided to sponsor an inquiry of its own into the implications of the UCS liquidation which became a model for many subsequent battles against redundancy.

The remit of the inquiry covered "the wider social and economic consequences of the decision to run-down Upper Clyde Shipbuilders Ltd."(48) By concentrating on the likely consequences of the Government's proposed action rather than simply the causes it was hoped that the Inquiry would not become a political arena in which one party apportioned the blame to another. Not only in its remit but also in the appointment of the three assessors to head the Inquiry every effort was made to preserve its 'objectivity' in order that its findings could not be written off as mere propaganda. The Inquiry was chaired by Raymond Illsley, Professor of Sociology at the University of Aberdeen, assisted by Frank Cousins, the former General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union and by George H. Perry, the Chairman and Managing Director of General Motors in Scotland. While perhaps the attempt at 'objectivity' was a little naive and while certainly the attempt to restrict evidence solely to the consequences, to the exclusion of consideration of the causes, proved not to be feasible in practice, nevertheless the Inquiry, meeting in public over nine days in Glasgow City Chambers and Clydebank Town Hall, received a mass of pertinent oral and written testimony which it examined in scrupulous detail.

Over forty witnesses submitted evidence including senior management and workers' representatives from UCS and other yards on



the Clyde, academics from several Scottish Universities and from south of the border, a range of local authority representatives, administrators, planners and social workers, industrial and commercial spokesmen, MP's and even the liquidator himself. The refusal by the Government to take part did not materially damage the stature of the Inquiry given the diversity of groups who were willing to submit to the scrutiny of this body. It was a considerable success in terms enhancing the authority of the STUC to speak not just on the problems of shipbuilding but on all major issues of importance in Scottish economic and social affairs since the Inquiry had examined the wide ramifications of the proposed closure. This role of providing a national forum for Scottish opinions was to be further developed in the Scottish Assembly which the STUC was subsequently to organise and is discussed further in a later chapter.

In terms of immediate political impact, however, perhaps the most useful evidence gathered by the Inquiry was the first full text of the Ridley letters from which hitherto only excerpts had been published.<sup>(49)</sup> These were submitted to the Inquiry on behalf of the UCS Co-ordinating Committee and were published in full in the following day's Daily Record under the banner headline 'Bloody Butchering'<sup>(50)</sup>.

In late September when it became clear that the Government still intended to implement the recommendations of the Four Wise Men it was decided that the White Paper needed to be challenged at once by issuing an Interim Report of the Inquiry's findings.<sup>(51)</sup> The economic consequences of proceeding on the basis of the White Paper proposals were conservatively estimated as resulting in a net job loss of 16,000 plus redundancy payments of £3 million and Social Security payments of over £6 million. The cost of creating new jobs to cater for 5,000 redundant workers was estimated at a further £24

to £32 million, not to mention the costs of repairing the damage . to the regional economy resulting from the liquidation. Presumably the Government had also made their calculations and judged the price sufficiently worthwhile for their purposes. What the Inquiry produced that was new, was an estimate of the social as well as economic costs entailed. This was a kind of social 'cost-benefit analysis' described thereafter as the "social audit". (52) It attempted to highlight the damaging effects on the individual, the family and the community of the consequences of unemployment. Such aspects as the loss of personal dignity and self-respect, increasing boredom and domestic tension, loss of savings, the progressive lowering of living standards, of nutrition and health were the subject of moving testimony by those who had suffered their effects, by academic investigators as well as by bodies such as the Child Poverty Action Group. The bleak outlook in terms of future labour relations on Clydeside not to mention the prospects for more vulnerable groups such as older workers, the handicapped and school leavers were carefully recorded. The final report based on a more comprehensive review of the evidence and running to ninety pages of detailed argument further served to underline these conclusions against the background of long-term regional economic decline in heavy industry. (53)

The range of support for the UCS workers and the deep antagonism to Government policy across the whole range of the social spectrum was given an important focus by the STUC inquiry. The outlines of a broad democratic alliance of anti-Tory forces had become visible in which those who normally saw their interests aligned with the status quo openly began to ally themselves with the workers, an altogether unprecedented political development. It was the prospect

of these cracks in the edifice of capitalism opening up still further which prompted the first signs of a rethink by the Conservative Government.

## Chapter 5 Left Unity and the Broad Alliance

- 1 BBC TV News, G71/109(2), 10 August 1971; BBC TV News, G71/1020, 10 August 1971.
- 2 *ibid.*
- 3 *ibid.*
- 4 STUC Report of the Special Congress, 16 August 1971, p. 10.  
STUC Middleton House, Glasgow. GU Archives.
- 5 *ibid.*, p. 14; BBC TV News, G71/1044A, 16 August 1971, GU Archives.
- 6 *ibid.*, p. 45.
- 7 STUC 75th Annual Report, Dunoon, 18-21 April 1972, pp. 35-36.
- 8 *ibid.*, p. 34.
- 9 BBC TV News, G71/164, 16 August 1971.
- 10 STUC Report of the Special Congress, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
- 11 *ibid.*, p. 35; TUC Economic Committee Minutes, 11 August 1971, paras. 18-19, p. 5, GU Archives.
- 12 BBC TV News, 17 August 1971, GU Archives.
- 13 Newspaper estimate for 18 August 1971 are as follows: The Scotsman, 45,000; The Guardian, 50,000; Glasgow Herald, 50,000; The Times, 75,000; Morning Star, 80,000. Police estimates for the UCS demonstrations are unobtainable.
- 14 Morning Star, 19 August 1971.
- 15 Alex Murray, 'All out support for UCS work-in', Speech at August 18th UCS demonstration, Comment, CPGB, vol. 9, no. 22, 11 September 1971, p. 238.
- 16 The Scotsman, 19 August 1971; W. Thompson and F. Hart, The UCS work-in, London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1972, p. 55.
- 17 The Scotsman, 1 September 1971. The figures of those involved in the work-in over the duration of the action are analysed in chapter 12.

- 18 See below chapter 1, note 35.
- 19 Due to these and other difficulties it was the clerical and administrative staff who carried on the concept of the work-in as an effective idea for the longest period. The manual workers on the work-in were mainly utilised as additional gatemen. See letter from Robert C. Smith, Upper Clyde Shipbuilders Limited, (In Liquidation), 20 March 1981, GU Archives; Upper Clyde Shipbuilders Limited, (In Liquidation) Report of the Official Liquidator to the Creditors of the Company for the year ended 14th June 1972, p. 11, GU Archives.
- 20 Appendix 13, UCS Shop Stewards' Bulletins, Nos. 1-12, No. 1, 1 September 1971; No. 2, 3 September 1971; No. 3, 17 September 1971; No. 4, 1 October 1971; No. 5, 11 October 1971; No. 6, 22 October 1971; No. 7, 29 October 1971; No. 8, 10 November 1971; No. 9, 15 November 1971; No. 10, 25 November 1971; No. 11, 23 December 1971; No. 12, 7 February 1972.
- 21 Thompson and Hart, op. cit., p. 75.
- 22 Appendix 14, UCS Shop Stewards, speakers notes and itinery.
- 23 The role of UCS in inspiring other work-ins and sit-ins is discussed further in chapter 12.
- 24 Morning Star, 20 August 1971.
- 25 Interview with John Rowan, formerly Ayrshire shop steward, February 1981.
- 26 See below. Doncaster and District Trades Council, 'Unemployment and UCS', leaflet, appendix 30, UCS leaflets miscellaneous.
- 27 Interview with Robert Hansen, Doncaster District Trades Council, February 1981. See also Doncaster District Trades Council Minutes, E.C. Meetings 23 September 1971, 29 September 1971, GU Archives.

- 28 Appendix 15, UCS Shop Stewards, 'The Butchering of UCS', n.d.
- 29 *ibid.*, p. 2.
- 30 *ibid.*, p. 4.
- 31 *ibid.*
- 32 *ibid.*
- 33 Interview with Jimmy Cloughley, UCS shop stewards publicity convener, October 1980.
- 34 This issue is discussed further in chapter 12.
- 35 UCS Shop Stewards, First Conference of Shipbuilding and Shiprepair stewards, Clydebank, 29 September 1971, p. 23, SRO UCS transcripts, vol. 1.
- 36 Clydebank Town Council, Minutes, 1971. Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, Meeting of Town Council, 12 August 1971, p. 1093, GU Archives.
- 37 Hansard, vol. 829, 1971-72, 19 January 1972, cols. 187-188.
- 38 Appendix 16, UCS Shop Stewards, Flag day material.
- 39 Clydebank Town Council, Minutes, 1971. Appendix 1. Note of Proceedings at Joint Meeting among Local Authorities in the Central/West Scotland area as to crisis involving Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, Wednesday 11 August 1971, pp. 1249-1269. GU Archives.
- 40 Glasgow Corporation, Minutes, 16 September 1971, Print no. 11, p. 1318.
- 41 The Churches and UCS Situation. Summary of Minutes of Meeting on Monday 21st June 1971 in the Lesser Town Hall. See also, Preamble to Clydebank and District Christian Action Group Constitution, 1971, GU Archives.
- 42 'The Christian and the UCS Crisis', Boquhanran Parish Church Review, discussion between CDCAG chairman, Rev. Fr. Thomas Glen and secretary, Rev. David Goldie, December 1971, GU Archives
- 43 *ibid.*

- 44 Interview with Rev. Stuart Borthwick , 8 May, 1979, GU Archives.  
See also Clydebank Press, 24 December 1971.
- 45 Minute of Meeting of Clydebank and District Christian Action  
Group held at St. Columba's, Clydebank, 13 September 1971,  
p. 2. GU Archives.
- 46 Thompson and Hart, op. cit., p. 78.
- 47 STUC Minutes, Report of the Special General Council Meeting  
held on Friday July 30th 1971 at 4pm, 1 September 1971, p. 00182.  
Middleton House, Glasgow.
- 48 STUC 75th Annual Report, op. cit., p. 38.
- 49 Appendix 17. The Ridley Letters.
- 50 Daily Record, 2 September 1971.
- 51 STUC 75th Annual Report, op. cit.; pp. 40-44. Committee of  
Inquiry into the Proposed Run-Down of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders,  
Interim Report to the STUC, 28 September 1971. See also  
appendix 18.
- 52 Institute of Workers Control, 'UCS: The Social Audit',  
Pamphlet number 26, 1971, GU Archives.
- 53 STUC Committee of Inquiry Final Report, 1972, GU Archives.

## Chapter Six

## THE MONKEY NOT THE ORGAN GRINDER.

If the UCS demonstration of June was greeted with a sullen silence by the Government, the August demonstration generated a flurry of activity.

The morning following the demonstration, Ray Macdonald received a message from Sir John Eden indicating he would be in Glasgow at three o'clock that day. That same morning in London, Eden had met Vic Feather who presented his CDA plan and recounted what had taken place the day before in Glasgow. Eden was coming north to meet members of the STUC Economic Committee, the Confederation and two members of the Co-ordinating Committee, which duly elected Reid and Airlie to represent them. The meeting was held at the Department of Trade and Industry Offices in Glasgow and produced the first indication that the Government was prepared to try and lower the political temperature.

What had happened to produce this trip north only became apparent to Reid and Airlie when a messenger from the liquidator entered the room at the DTI Office during the meeting. The peculiar manner and timing of this interruption were not unconnected with a brief discussion which Eden had had with the liquidator immediately on his arrival at Glasgow Airport a short while before the meeting commenced. A document was duly passed over to the stewards to read. It was headed "Comment by Mr. Robert C. Smith, Official Liquidator on the Statement issued by Mr. Archibald D. Kelly last night." Its contents were considerably more dramatic than its dry title might have suggested.(1)

Archibald Kelly, or as he was variously known on Clydeside, 'scrap-iron Kelly' or 'cash-down Kelly' was a self-made local



entrepreneur whose speciality lay in acquiring companies who were in serious financial straits at rock bottom prices. He had acquired the Ardrossan dockyard some years previously and sold off its contents for scrap. Mr. Kelly also had a reputed fondness for paying out huge sums of cash on the nail for these deals. Hence the nicknames. Within a couple of weeks of the June announcement of liquidation, Kelly had expressed an interest in acquiring the Clydebank yard. Early in July he had met the liquidator in Clydebank to discuss his £1 million bid for the yard. When the stewards learned that he had actually visited the Clydebank yard to look it over, they were furious and demanded that the liquidator in future only allow him in on official business. (2) Since then they had refused to meet Kelly or hold discussions with him. The stewards had made their position plain. They were fighting for the survival of UCS as an intact unit and were not interested in buyers for individual parts. Nevertheless, Kelly with a good eye for a likely bid, had continued meetings with Government to see what public funds might be available to him to assist in the purchase of Clydebank, should his bid become feasible.

Although at that stage the Government, in line with the Report of the Four Wise Men, had no interest in making a further financial commitment to Clydebank, Kelly's interest as a private buyer might eventually provide some convenient means of disentanglement as far as the Clydebank yard was concerned. He was at any rate, the only prospective buyer on the horizon.

At his latest meeting with Eden in London two days before, Kelly had gained the impression that the Government might even be prepared to consider a bid from him for all four units. Kelly was apparently convinced that he might be considered a candidate for

assistance to buy the consortium. In good faith he had issued a statement to that effect, declaring his interest. The 'comment' delivered from the liquidator which Reid and Airlie now read from, seemed to confirm this interpretation of events.

"Mr. Kelly's interest appears to offer the prospect of a significant retention of shipyard jobs which, in the absence of a shipbuilding purchaser, would be in jeopardy I hope that the Trade Unions will bear this in mind in view of Mr. Kelly's expanding interest.

In continuation of the discussions which have taken place over the past few weeks, and following Mr. Kelly's meeting with Sir John Eden, I expect Mr. Kelly to visit all four divisions of the company in the next ten days and I shall provide him with all the information he may require...." Given the confidence of owners in the Clyde - and that is an inescapable essential - I see no need to talk of the closures of any of the yards. I never have."(3)

Although the liquidator's wording seemed to suggest that Kelly's bid now for the four units was a realistic prospect, Eden still maintained that he had come to Glasgow to discuss the details for re-organisation of the Govan-Linthouse complex as proposed by the Report and perhaps a private investor for the other two units. The stewards now seized upon the liquidator's own statement: "I see no need to talk of the closure of the yards - I never have." They pointed out that if Govan and Linthouse were viable and if, according to the liquidator, Scotstoun and Clydebank were also viable, then there was surely an economic argument for retaining them as a group and avoiding unnecessary duplication of marketing and design departments and so on. They asked if Eden was prepared to halt the impending redundancies while Kelly's proposals were examined. The stewards for their part intimated that they were willing to go anywhere for discussions and if the redundancies were suspended they would postpone the following day's mass meetings to allow Eden to visit Clydebank. At that point the meeting broke up to allow each side time to consult and consider their position. The

question now was whether or not the Government were seriously prepared to move from their commitment to the White Paper. Reid and Airlie reported back to the UCS shop stewards. (4)

When the meeting reconvened at 11pm that night in Eden's hotel, hopes of an immediate solution were quickly dashed. The Government had obviously decided not to budge and Eden declared unequivocally that there was no future for a "UCS Mark II". Furthermore, when the talks had concluded, at his 1am news conference Eden announced that unless there was a speedy solution to the crisis, even the Govan and Linthouse units would be danger. Nor would he agree to the stewards' demands to halt the first batch of redundancies due later that day. Indeed, he said, the further 1,000 redundancies which were due next month were inevitable. Just in case there was anyone who missed the point, the liquidator in a separate announcement, also declared that these redundancies were inevitable.

The situation was one of stalemate with the pressure now on the stewards to find an early solution both to halt immediate redundancies and, if even larger lay-offs were to be avoided, to find a way of persuading the Government to begin work on 14 contracts which were suspended on liquidation. If the Government saw Kelly as bait with which to lead the stewards to the negotiating table, the stewards saw Kelly as providing them with vital room for manoeuvre while not conceding any of their major demands. That weekend, Reid, Airlie and Barr flew in a 'plane specially chartered by the Scottish Daily Express to Islay to talk terms with Kelly at his holiday home. The fact that a capitalist newspaper had hired the 'plane for Communist shop stewards was used by the 'ultra-left' to paint a picture of 'Stalinist sellout'.<sup>(5)</sup> Once again the stewards indicated that they were prepared to withdraw their presence at the Clydebank gates as a gesture of goodwill should Kelly

wish to visit the yard for talks with Smith, a rather different attitude to Kelly than previously taken. Meanwhile Kelly's financial adviser, a certain Mr. Sharp, did his sums and the liquidator named his price for the whole consortium.

In actual fact Kelly's proposals for the four yards were by no means wholly acceptable to the stewards. They involved closing the east yard at Clydebank and redeveloping it as a dry-dock complex. Plans for the other yards were somewhat more vague but included the possible future phasing out of Scotstoun. Nevertheless, the key thing was that it was a bid for the four yards as Airlie pointed out to the shop stewards meeting which met to assess the situation.

"Some people may criticise us even talking to Kelly but I think we've got to face up to the facts of life. In my opinion, and I hope there's nae press here, is there? Personal opinion, ah, he's a scrap merchant, but it smokes this Government out if we can get a bid for all four units. Because one of the points that Eden was making, that no-one yet was interested in bidding eh, for the four units intact." (6)

In their discussions the stewards agreed that the Wilson plan for the Upper Clyde was not likely to be adopted by the Government, nor for that matter were Kelly's proposals, if only because Kelly lacked the expertise to handle a complex of that size. The stewards issued a statement endorsed by mass meetings of the workers, that they would, however, support Kelly's bid, guaranteeing the full co-operation of the workforce, provided the necessary Government financial assistance was forthcoming. It was as Airlie said privately to the stewards, 'a propaganda exercise' important in further undermining the economic logic of the Advisory Group's recommendations. (7)

A few days later, as expected, the Government described Kelly's scheme as 'not credible' and Kelly understandably was somewhat piqued

at being 'led on', although not sufficiently so, to prevent him from re-submitting his original proposal for Clydebank alone.

If the Government was giving Kelly the brush-off they were by comparison almost enthusiastic about Vic Feather's proposed Clyde-side Development Authority. The TUC Economic Committee with Feather and McGarvey, the STUC and the stewards met Davies in London at the Department of Trade and Industry on Friday August 27th. The day before Eden had told Kelly that the Government intended to proceed with their plan for Govan and Linthouse. This together with the announcement by the liquidator of a further 224 redundancies meant that Reid and Airlie were very worried men when they arrived in London to meet Davies. Any hope of an early solution to the UCS crisis was rapidly evaporating. Moreover, Davies had rejected the suggestion by Feather that he intervene with the liquidator to halt further redundancies while consideration was given to the CDA proposals. On the other hand, Davies expressed the view that the CDA scheme did "merit considerable thought" and indeed the Government wished to consider it more deeply. (8) Feather was asked to give further details of his proposals and return the following week, significantly, with McGarvey and Service to discuss the matter again.

With preparations now being laid behind the scenes to establish an 'embryo board' to run the Govan and Linthouse yards the Government obviously felt that the time had now arrived for a serious discussion to begin and in that sense Feather, Service and McGarvey were obviously the kind of 'responsible' trade union leaders with whom the Government preferred to negotiate. Indeed, now that Feather had decided to assert the authority of the national TUC leadership, it was in the interests of the Government to do everything possible to bolster that authority.

As far back as July the Executive Council of the Confederation had agreed that its Shipyard Negotiating Committee chaired by

McGarvey would conduct any negotiations on UCS "in consultation with the local representatives of the union and other appropriate local interests." (9)

Now, for the first time, neither local Confederation officials nor the shop stewards were present when McGarvey, Service and Feather met Davies the following Tuesday, August 31st. A perfect cabal was in the process of formation which would possibly lead to the eventual exclusion of the militant shop steward leadership from the ensuing negotiations.

The main item on the agenda for the Davies meeting was purportedly the CDA proposals on which Feather tabled a six page document both giving more information on his scheme and asking a number of questions concerning the financial position of UCS, the structure of the proposed Govan-Linthouse Company, the exact status of Kelly's bid, the truth about the rumours regarding a reported bid by the Connell family to buy back Scotstoun and the current order position of UCS. The key phrase in the TUC document as far as the campaign to save the yards was concerned was as follows:

"Some flexibility in regard to the preservation of a single entity might be forthcoming from the unions if it was clear that the Government really intended ship-building to continue on a large scale on the upper reaches." (10)

With 'flexibility' being offered by Feather, it is a fair guess that McGarvey would also have been anxious to impress on Davies the Confederation's desire to be 'constructive'. The subsequent official DTI reply to Feather's questions in a letter from John Davies' private secretary, contained little that was not already public knowledge. However, it did promise substantial financial assistance to a commercially sound buyer for Clydebank or Scotstoun while it reiterated Government's intention to press forward with the Govan-Linthouse complex. It also, however, contained

a statement that was the nearest the Government came to repudiating the Advisory Committee Report. While referring to the Report's recommendations for Govan and Linthouse as the best hope for retaining a viable shipbuilding industry on the Upper Clyde it commented,

"This is what the Advisory Group said, based admittedly, on a rapid survey. I can tell you in confidence that the Department has commissioned a much more thorough review by consultants of the technical and financial aspects of setting up such a company to give it the best possible chance of commercial success." (11)

Not being party to Feather and McGarvey's discussions with Davies on August 31st the stewards naturally were more than a little disturbed by press comment the following morning that besides discussing the CDA proposals, a broader 'dialogue' had been initiated in which McGarvey had offered, without consultation with the workers, a two-shift or even three-shift working as an attraction to new buyers in return for assurances that the yards would be kept open for five years. The press interpreted this as meaning also that McGarvey henceforth, on behalf of the National Confederation would handle all negotiations with Government.(12) McGarvey, immediately contacted by the stewards, claimed that he had been misquoted and invited four shop stewards to meet the Executive of the Confederation at Blackpool the following Sunday morning, where they would be prior to the TUC Congress, to hear a full report of the meeting with Davies at first hand.

As it turned out, when the stewards arrived in Blackpool they found the meeting had been postponed until the afternoon. Furthermore, it was not an Executive meeting at all, but a simple report from McGarvey and Service to the stewards. Indeed, the local

Confederation officials Joe Black and Donald Tonner who had not even been invited, had to ask specially to be represented at the meeting to find out what was being said to the stewards. (13)

Once again McGarvey assured the UCS stewards that he had not made any offer as regards shift working. However, McGarvey did argue that the Government were prepared to move their position to some extent as regards providing assistance for private buyers for Scotstoun and Clydebank and that accordingly the unions should now make some 'concessions' in order to meet the Government 'half-way', that is, abandon their demand that the four yards be retained as a unit intact. The stewards' attitude was that there was little point in making concessions before discussions had really begun. The 'dialogue' as Airlie pointed out in a report-back to the UCS stewards, should not be seen as something which was a substitute for developing the wide movement of solidarity. It was this active solidarity which, up to a point, had caused the Government to move and would always be the best safeguard for achieving their demands. Reid therefore warned against any attempt to pose the 'dialogue' against the need to sustain the mass movement of solidarity.

"We shouldnae get diverted on these lines. We press right ahead with the meetings, the campaign, the demonstrations, and alongside that OK we can have the 'dialogue'. But we've made it clear to the Confederation, and its absolutely agreed that there will be no commitment on our part or their part if it doesn't come back in the final analysis to this committee and to the workers of the UCS." (14)

If the stewards privately had serious reservations about what McGarvey was up to, their public position was one of complete unity. In that sense, their objective was to retain the widest possible support as a public breach with the Confederation at this stage would have been as disastrous as a premature confrontation with the Government or the liquidator. While they were in Blackpool the



stewards took the opportunity to present their case to the delegates and mobilise wider support at the official trade union level. From the Confederation they also got assurances that the appeal for finance for the fighting fund and pledge of support first passed in an emergency motion at the Confederation's Annual Meeting in June would be reiterated.(15)

Major unions would now be asked to step up financial support and indeed, the electricians' trade union gave a thousand pounds. At the Sunday night eve of Congress Tribune rally, chaired by Hugh Scanlon who himself made a strong plea for assistance to the UCS campaign, Reid spoke to the delegates of the Left in the Labour Party. They also succeeded in getting the TUC to have circulated to every delegate as part of the official Congress Papers, a five page memorandum from the Co-ordinating Committee outlining the history of UCS and attaching photostat copies of the Ridley papers. (16) Later in the week, a special coach took UCS workers down to Blackpool to listen to the debate on Clyde shipbuilding on Wednesday. The motion, again moved by McGarvey and seconded by John Boyd of the AUEW, called for the nationalisation of the industry and would in any event have been passed unanimously. McGarvey, however, called for a card vote to show the Tories the strength of the trade union feeling on this issue and in his remarks to the delegates went out of his way to stress the "identity of interest" between the Confederation and the stewards, a sure sign of real tension underlying their relations.(17) Whether or not this "identity of interest" would be sustained as the 'dialogue' gained momentum was a matter of speculation.

For McGarvey at least, the time had come for compromise to nudge aside militancy. His eagerness to pursue the dialogue with

Davies was restrained only by the knowledge that the character of any compromise would be conditioned by the public commitment that the labour and trade union movement, and the Confederation in particular, had made to saving the Upper Clyde yards. Thus for the UCS shop stewards, while they had been given assurances at Blackpool that any future discussions between the Confederation and the Government would still be on the basis of proposals covering all four yards, it had become clear that they could no longer rely on the Confederation continuing to support the original demand of the campaign that the yards be retained as an intact unit. Given this and the Government's rebuff of Kelly's proposed bid for the four yards, with the increasing unlikelihood of a bid of similar scope being made by anyone else, the stewards were forced to make a major tactical reappraisal.

Confirming earlier press speculation about a shift of line, the stewards now stated publically that although they refused to consider any yard in isolation, if 'cumulative proposals', that is, proposals covering all the four yards but not necessarily retaining them as a single unit, were put forward, they would be seriously discussed by the Co-ordinating Committee and the UCS workers.(18) While the argument was repeated that if the yards were viable singly then there was a better case for the consortium as a whole being viable, it was now accepted that 'retaining the yards intact' did not necessarily imply under the one single ownership.

It could be argued with hindsight that this tactical shift was simply a realistic response to the fact that the original demand of the campaign to preserve the Upper Clyde yards as a single unit was simply unwinnable. Short of immediate Government nationalisation, not a very likely occurrence under the current administration, there seemed little chance of any other source of necessary finance to

purchase and run the industry along its former lines. Private enterprise had already failed and was unlikely to accept a solution on the shop stewards' terms in the foreseeable future, even if the Government were to have offered 'bribes' to a potential purchaser of the group in the shape of further massive subsidies, something which it had been disinclined to do for the old UCS set-up. The problem for the shop stewards and the workforce was in the short term, given these conditions, to ensure that while the four yards might not necessarily be preserved together as a unit, they would nevertheless remain subject to a comprehensive solution that safeguarded the future of all the yards and the entire workforce. Ultimately it would have to be a Labour Government which would guarantee the future of the entire industry by taking it into public ownership. Probably the most politically responsible course of action would be that which ensured that such a government would have something there to nationalise when it came into office.

Nevertheless, to concede even that certain of the yards might be retained as separate entities, presumably under private ownership, inevitably created the danger of future inter-yard rivalries as the solution for particular yards appeared safer or more satisfactory than for others. This would inevitably undermine the unity and resolve of the workers to fight for their common guaranteed survival. It was perhaps the awareness on the part of the shop stewards' leadership of the sensitive character of this issue which made them at first rather less than forthright about this shift in position. While it could be argued that such a change was in no way a 'sell-out', as arguably there was little alternative to abandoning their original slogan, failure in the first instance although not subsequently, to argue through its implications with the mass of the UCS workforce squandered a valuable chance to educate them in the full complexities

of the struggle they faced. If the demand was henceforth to be for a solution covering all the yards although not necessarily under one organisational umbrella, it had to be made clear to the workers from the start that this in no way implied unconditional acceptance of the Government's plans for Govan and Linthouse, or abandoning Clydebank and Scotstoun to their separate respective fates. This certainly was a contributory although not the sole or even the main cause of the difficulties that were later to beset the UCS campaign. In fact, as events were to show, the stewards held steadfastly to their demand for a comprehensive solution concerning the future of all four yards and its workers as a precondition to any eventual agreement with the Government, even in the end, at the sacrifice of their own position as a leadership. The problem was, that in the long protracted discussions and manoeuvres to achieve a satisfactory solution, other less conscious groups within the various yards were able to sow the seeds of doubt and division, a fact which the Government and the mass media were well aware of and exploited to their advantage with almost disastrous consequences. What was remarkable, in retrospect, was for just how long and with what assiduous skill the unity of the workers was retained, despite the continued surges of divisive undercurrents. Here the shop stewards' leadership can take full credit for the manner in which they consistently opposed every manifestation of sectionalism throughout the campaign either on a yard or an individual trade or departmental basis.

The immediate question facing the UCS workers now was how far they could ensure that their voice would be listened to in the ensuing discussions and negotiations between the Government and the official trade union movement. Would "in consultation with the local representative" mean that while McGarvey and Service did the talking to Davies, the local Confederation officials and shop stewards would sit waiting patiently

outside the room to be 'consulted' only when the bargain had already been struck. Further talks with Davies were due to take place the following Monday September 13th and a full shop stewards meeting agreed that this time Reid and Airlie would be present. As regards the question of their being consulted Jimmy Reid assured them,

"If there are two members of the shop stewards Co-ordinating Committee going down to participate in this dialogue they will either be in that room or in my opinion, we tell them to get the first train back to Clydeside and they're going home." (19)

In the event they were not invited to participate directly in the discussions but neither did they take the first train home. To have done so would have been to spurn completely any real future say in discussions between the Confederation and the Government and to run the risk of being permanently relegated to the sidelines as the official movement took over the leadership and direction of the fight. C.P. Snow's first rule of politics was very pertinent: "Never be too proud to be present", even if in this case it was largely in a consultative role.(20)

In fact, it was at McGarvey's insistence as much as anything that the 'normal procedure' of the Confederation was maintained, of not allowing local stewards to participate directly alongside national officials in major negotiations. What was not said but clearly understood by all, was that without the physical presence of the shop stewards in the same room McGarvey's scope for manoeuvre with Davies would be much greater. John Davies certainly did not want them there either. In any event a precedent had already been set by the very fact that the 'dialogue' had been initiated between Davies and McGarvey alone. Only continuous pressure by the shop

stewards therefore would ensure that the voice of the UCS workers themselves would continue to be heard and moreover listened to in any future discussions.

The next major event expected to produce some announcement of the Government's position on the UCS crisis was Edward Heath's visit to Glasgow on Friday September 10th. The visit had been planned several months before and its purpose was to allow Heath to speak to the party faithful in Scotland on the Common Market. When he arrived at the Central Hotel he was met by angry shouts of 'Heath out' from carefully fenced-in UCS demonstrators who were joined by unemployed Plessey's men. Heath was also to speak on Scottish industry at a luncheon for leading figures in the west of Scotland and was expected to touch on UCS at least. In the event he said practically nothing on the subject of UCS. When the lunch was over Alex Kitson of the STUC, went up to Heath's suite with two redundant UCS stewards, David Reid and Sam Gilmore. An unholy row developed in the corridor outside Heath's third floor room when it was indicated that only the two UCS stewards would be allowed in, whereas Kitson, who had come back specially from the TUC Congress at Blackpool and was representing the STUC, was not to be allowed in. When Dickson Mabon, a former Minister of State for Scotland together with three other Labour MP's arrived to talk to Heath about the CDA proposals and were likewise told that Heath would not see them, Mabon's language, while not quite as 'unparliamentary' as the by now four-lettered, fuming and tieless Kitson's, indicated that his sense of dignity had been offended by the PM's "extreme discourtesy".

"after all, we are his colleagues, he seems to forget that, we are his parliamentary colleagues not his inferiors." (21)

If the occasion of Heath's visit to Glasgow produced no new public initiative from the Government on UCS it was nevertheless important for behind-the-scenes discussions which Heath had held with Scots insurance tycoon and treasurer of the Scottish Conservative Party, Hugh Stenhouse, concerning the proposed Govan/Linthouse company, while outside Kitson and Mabon had been storming up and down. Stenhouse it will be recalled, had been on the board of the previous rescue attempt at Govan, the Fairfields company.

The announcement of the 'embryo' board for Govan and Linthouse which would provide the nucleus of key management figures for the proposed new company was already several weeks overdue. It was becoming a matter of comment that the Government was having considerable difficulty in persuading leading businessmen to take an interest in the proposed new company while the shop stewards' attitude was adamant that any board based on the Government's proposals would be meeting in 'glorious isolation'. There would be no co-operation from the workforce. The day before Heath's visit to Glasgow, John Davies confirmed rumours that his flying visit to Prestwick Airport the previous Monday had been for discussions with Lord Weir, Chairman of the Weir Engineering group about joining the board. Weir had turned the offer down. Whoever could be persuaded to direct the new company would have to be a man not afraid of unpopular causes. As the Government searched around for suitable candidates, the clamour continued to grow to publish the 'background papers' upon which the recommendations of the Advisory Committee were purportedly based.

As if to add to the Government's increasing embarrassment the report of the Shipbuilding Industry Board written prior to liquidation was published in mid-September, together with an accompanying letter from its chairman, Sir William Swallow dated May 17th 1971.

Referring to UCS the SIB report said that the company at long last "should make the long awaited turn to profitability."

The Report noted that,

"Old troublesome contracts had been completed, the labour force had been brought into line with future requirements, settlements had been reached with the unions, and the company's order book was such that new orders for early delivery could be taken on satisfactory terms." (22)

The stewards claimed that this effectively repudiated the Government's whole position while Scottish MP's renewed demands for a Select Committee of Inquiry into the UCS liquidation. DTI officials countered that the report was merely further evidence of the fact that Government was not kept informed of the real situation by the UCS management, for within a few weeks of its submission, the UCS management had come to the Government to request more aid.

The same day as the SIB report was published the stewards released the full transcript of the edited interview with Ken Douglas, previously published in abridged form in the four page tabloid 'The Butchery of UCS' which must have added to the Government's discomforture.(23)

The complete transcript contained a savage attack on the Conservative Party's approach to the shipbuilding industry which according to Douglas even under the previous Tory administration had shown "no inclination to support shipbuilding".(24) On the question of the current proposals for the new post-UCS set up, Douglas commented harking back to Geddes, "I thought the whole was greater than the parts, is it not?"(25) Douglas was a man bitterly frustrated at being halted so very nearly within reach of his original goal. He had joined the UCS board in August 1969 and said then that he needed two years to make the company a success but the two years were not up when UCS was forced into liquidation. From the shop stewards point of view it was also an important morale booster because Douglas



publically stated his own attitude to the work-in as,

"an orderly demonstration of the mens' wish to express their right to work." (26)

As if their problems in finding a new board, the SIB report, and Douglas' interview were not enough, the day before the Government was at last due to announce the shape of the new company for Govan and Linthouse, the Connell family demanded that the Scotstoun yard be included in any new plan for the Upper Clyde yards.

Charles Connell who was the son of the former owner, Sir Charles, and still the yard's divisional manager, had been prodding Government to consider the saving of Scotstoun for some weeks, and this had given rise to the rumours that the family were trying to buy it back. At a meeting with the shop stewards in the first part of August the younger Connell had promised that the management would fight to save the yard and not 'throw in the sponge'. (27) Having found the Government "about as unpenetrable as a stone wall" with regard to their proposals for Scotstoun, the Connells now called a press conference to make public the arguments they had formulated previously. (28)

The inclusion of the Scotstoun yard would, they said, provide a flexibility which the proposals for the reconstructed yards lacked. The Govan yard was restricted to ships with a 90' beam with an upper limit of 50,000 tons. Scotstoun's big berth on the other hand could handle "Panamax" ships with a beam of 102' and could readily be adapted to handle dry cargo ships in excess of 100,000 tons without substantial capital expenditure. This was the area the market was moving into it was claimed.

In the lifetime of UCS the yard had lost £9000,000 as against £24 million for the Group as a whole. Moreover, the productivity

record of the yard was somewhat better than the others while it had the advantage of valuable contacts with ship owners, for future orders.

The die had however already been cast, albeit with some difficulty, three days beforehand at a secret meeting in a Troon hotel between John Davies and the men who were eventually to comprise the new board for Govan and Linthouse. Gordon Campbell who had flown in from Inverness was also there. Among the leading industrialists at that meeting were George Perry of General Motors in Scotland, Robin MacLennan of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, Ronald Lyon, chairman of an industrial development company later to figure in the Plessey saga, Angus Grossart, joint managing director of an Edinburgh merchant bankers, Lord Clydesmuir, chairman of the Scottish Council (Development and Industry), Matthew Wylie, the CBI Scottish Chairman, A.G. MacCrae, chairman of the Clyde Port Authority and the liquidator, Courtney-Smith.

The new board whose composition was prematurely leaked in the Scottish press had as its chairman, Hugh Stenhouse and as managing director, Archibald Gilchrist, a former engineering manager at Barclay Curle and currently managing director of an Edinburgh firm, manufacturing ships steering gear and stabilisers. (29) Grossart, Lyon and MacLennan were also made directors. Ken Douglas who was on holiday in Spain at the time was not initially to be included in the new board. Perhaps he had blotted his copybook by the comments made in the published interview released by the shop stewards. Possibly he too would need some persuasion to serve on the new board in a new capacity.

It is suggested that to get Stenhouse to take the job on required strong appeals to his Tory Party loyalties to help the

Government out of its difficulties.(30) No doubt Edward Heath had made similar points to Stenhouse in previous discussions with him during his Glasgow visit. When the new appointments were announced Stenhouse resigned as treasurer of the Tory Party in Scotland commenting, "I feel that politics do not mix with business." (31)

The official announcement of the new board took place at a press conference in Glasgow's City Chambers held by John Davies, Eden and Campbell. The new company had been promised £1 million of private capital at the outset and it was intended that it would come into full operation at the end of the year. Davies, however, suggested that if the stewards maintained their hostile attitude to the new company and insisted on the demand for a solution covering the four yards, then "however reasonable and understandable it was at the first crunch of this dreadful situation with UCS", such a reaction now could be a matter of "grave peril for the whole future of shipbuilding on the Upper Clyde."(32) Hugh Stenhouse was even more blunt on the matter,

"Well of course, if people won't co-operate there is very little you can do, but I cannot believe that people wish to live on charity, because that is the alternative. I cannot believe that, wives and children, and after all, there could be 150,000 people in the west of Scotland affected by this, I cannot believe that people will not want to co-operate with us who want to do something for the west of Scotland.(33)

When the new management, namely Stenhouse and Gilchrist went to Linthouse to see the liquidator later on that same day, Airlie and a group of stewards were waiting for them on the other side of the wire-mesh gates. Stenhouse had borrowed a small car for the occasion belonging to his secretary which no doubt he regarded as more appropriate than a chauffeur-driven limousine. As they arrived at Linthouse and parked their car outside, the gates were

opened slightly and Airlie stepped forward to confront them. For once, Stenhouse lacked his characteristic bluster and asked meekly if they might be allowed in. They were told by Airlie that while they would be allowed in that day it was on the understanding that it would be as private individuals and not as directors of the new board. They would not be allowed to look round the yards but in future they should make alternative arrangements to meet the liquidator. Gilchrist, probably somewhat intimidated by the situation managed to say to Airlie that he had served his time at Linthouse. If it was an attempt to ingratiate himself he failed. He received the crushing reply from Airlie, that he would "never be the managing director" there.(34)

Speaking to the Commons the following day at the start of a special recall session of Parliament, Davies reiterated the Government's belief that "the proposals of the Advisory Group offer the best prospect of an enduring and viable shipbuilding undertaking".(35) Nothing had happened he said to alter the Government's view since he last made a statement at the end of July. Moreover, Davies announced that the Government did not consider as acceptable the proposal of the Connell family for the inclusion of Scotstoun yard.(36) So far as the Clydebank yard was concerned, Archibald Kelly had contacted the DTI that very day to announce that he was withdrawing his bid for Clydebank. (37) Kelly's estimate that to have taken over the yard and its existing contracts would have cost him £5 million in potential losses did not bode well as regards future likely purchasers for Clydebank.

Among the conditions of Government for the new company the "most critical one" was the **co-operation** of the workers. In this regard said Davies, referring to the events at Linthouse, "the

reaction of the men yesterday was not helpful and in my view not in their best interests." (38) Government support he warned would only be forthcoming "if acceptable agreements can be reached with the unions about working practices and wage rates." (39)

The battle lines were now being drawn with increasing sharpness as the response of the workforce to the announcement of the embryo board made plain. The men were seething. The previous day's confrontation between Airlie and Stenhouse had merely been the first skirmish in what could easily become an all out political and industrial war. The solidarity was there, the unity was there and if it came to a real fight the UCS workers knew they would not be left to stand alone. Certainly John Davies' warnings were unlikely to shake their determination very much. They had already come through over three long embattled months. If a real showdown was to be avoided now some very nimble footwork would be required. It was here that Danny McGarvey and Hugh Stenhouse were really to come into their own.

Chapter 6 The Monkey not the Organ Grinder.

- 1 Appendix 19 Upper Clyde Shipbuilders Limited (In Liquidation),  
"Comment by Mr. Robert C. Smith, Official Liquidator on the  
Statement issued by Mr. Archibald D. Kelly last night."
- 2 Glasgow Herald, 14 July 1971.
- 3 Appendix 19, op. cit. (Emphasis underlined by shop stewards).
- 4 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting 19 August 1971, SRO UCS transcripts,  
Vol. 1.
- 5 See assorted issues of Socialist Worker, Red Mole, Struggle,  
GU Archives.
- 6 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting 19 August 1971, op. cit., p. 2.
- 7 *ibid.*
- 8 Glasgow Herald, 28 August 1971.
- 9 Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, circular  
to all affiliated unions and DC's for information. Upper Clyde  
Shipbuilders Ltd., 30 July 1971, Ref. 71/121, GU Archives.
- 10 TUC Upper Clyde Shipbuilders and Clydeside Development Authority,  
31 August 1971, p. 3, GU Archives.
- 11 Letter from E. Wright, Department of Trade and Industry to  
Vic Feather, 4 September 1971, GU Archives.
- 12 Glasgow Herald, 1 September 1971; The Scotsman, 1 September 1971.
- 13 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting 6 September 1971, p. 1, SRO, UCS  
transcripts, Vol. 1.
- 14 *ibid.*, p. 5.
- 15 See Report of Proceedings of the Thirty-sixth Annual Meeting of  
the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, 22-25  
June 1971, Proceedings, Upper Clyde Shipbuilders Ltd., 22 June  
1971, p. 138.
- 16 Appendix 20, Memorandum from UCS Shop Stewards Co-ordinating  
Committee.

- 17 TUC Report of 103rd Annual Trades Union Congress, Blackpool, 6-10 September 1971.
- 18 Glasgow Herald, 8 August 1971; Glasgow Herald, 6 September 1971.
- 19 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting, 6 September 1971, op. cit., p. 7.
- 20 C.P. Snow, The Masters, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972.
- 21 BBC TV News, G71/1162, G71/1165, 10 September 1971, UCS coll.
- 22 Shipbuilding Industry Board, Annual Report, 17 September 1971.
- 23 UCS Shop Stewards, interview with Ken Douglas, 9 September 1971, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 1.
- 24 *ibid.*, p. 18.
- 25 *ibid.*, p. 9.
- 26 *ibid.*, p. 12.
- 27 Minute of meeting with UCS shop stewards on 11 August 1971, UCS Scotstoun Division, 16 August 1971, GU Archives.
- 28 The Scotsman, 22 September 1971.
- 29 Glasgow Herald, 21 September 1971.
- 30 A. Buchan, The Right to Work, London, Calder & Boyers, 1972, p. 118; J. McGill, Crisis on the Clyde, London, Davis - Poynter, 1972, pp. 113-114.
- 31 Morning Star, 23 September 1971.
- 32 BBC TV News, G71/1209, 22 September 1971, GU Archives.
- 33 *ibid.*
- 34 W. Thompson and F. Hart, The UCS work-in, London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1972, pp. 82-83.
- 35 Hansard, vol. 823, 1970-71, 23 September 1971, col. 176.
- 36 *ibid.*, col. 182.
- 37 *ibid.*
- 38 *ibid.*, col. 177.
- 39 *ibid.*

## Chapter Seven

## FROM CONFRONTATION TO NEGOTIATION

The announcement of the composition of the board based on Govan and Linthouse brought for the shop stewards a time of reckoning. They were faced with two potentially major problems concerning the future conduct of their campaign.

The first problem was that external pressure on the workforce to 'see sense' and abandon their 'intransigence' could now be expected to come from all sides. In particular, therefore, the need to ensure that the Confederation did not attempt to make a compromise over the heads of the UCS workers would be paramount. The previous few weeks had already shown that such an outcome was by no means a remote possibility at least so far as McGarvey and Service were concerned. If anything, it would now be harder to prevent the Confederation from accepting terms for a solution, possibly even to the eventual exclusion of Scotstoun and Clydebank. The announcement of the embryo board for Govan and Linthouse had added a reality to the Government's proposals which they had hitherto lacked.

The second problem that faced the leadership was quite simply that of maintaining the unity within the ranks of the UCS workforce which would enable the stewards to continue to campaign for a solution that covered all four yards and the labour force. Among the UCS workers themselves the prospect of at least some jobs being saved, particularly of those workers in the yards whose future now seemed more certain, could create an 'I'm alright Jack' type of attitude. Predictably, in a period of increasing likelihood of confrontation there would be attempts to undermine the authority of the shop stewards in the eyes of the workforce by 'opportunist'



elements on the one hand, and on the other, by 'ultra-leftists' seeking to pose wholly unrealisable demands of a more revolutionary-sounding nature.

When the shop stewards from the four divisions met on the morning following the announcement of the new board in the Clyde-bank canteen, future tactics were of critical importance. Airlie put the plan of the Co-ordinating Committee to them for discussion. By proceeding with their proposals the Government had sharpened the confrontation. So far as their physical presence in the yards and access for Hugh Stenhouse's board was concerned, said Airlie,

"The gates will need to be manned as they've never been manned before, right? They don't get in and if they're gonnie get in, and this is the recommendations, they'll need to bring a team with them to trample over the top of us, because that's the only way they'll be allowed in these gates." (1)

The Co-ordinating Committee had outlined several options. Firstly, not only would the new board not be allowed in the yard, but if any of the existing management co-operated with the board they also would be excluded. There would be no co-operation with or recognition of the new board. Indeed, to underline this point the Co-ordinating Committee declared that it would itself be meeting in the Linthouse boardroom in future, not that they had any real intention of taking over the running of the yards on a day-to-day basis.

Secondly, if any shipowner paid installments to the new board their vessels could be 'impounded' by the workers and thirdly, they were putting the proposal to the shop stewards for an early mass meeting of the entire workforce from the four yards as a public display of their unity. To any wavering elements among them it would be pointed out that no-one at this stage was 'fireproof'.

The majority of jobs were still potentially at risk. There would be no negotiations except on the basis of their demand for a solution covering all four divisions without contraction of the labour force. (2)

Now, from an 'ultra-left' shop steward, Joe Moriarty came the suggestion that the tactics be changed from a work-in to a sit-in. It was the first time that such a proposal would seem to have had a superficial credibility in terms of the new situation which now demanded 'militant' solutions. Reid handled the suggestion by arguing that as far as the work-in went,

"...to abandon this tactic would be to lose and undermine the support throughout the country." (3)

It was still early days and Reid's approach to Moriarty's proposal was firm but low key. Among the workforce, however, there appeared to be little if any sympathy for the idea of a sit-in at the mass meeting.

That morning the Daily Record headline pleaded to 'Brother Dan' to come to Clydeside and help restore the situation since it was now 'time to speak out'. (4) Sam Barr had warned the stewards to be wary of inviting in the Confederation because it would be seen as a sign of weakness on the part of the shop stewards' leadership. Thus while the stewards' public position was one of total unity with the national Confederation, privately they had reservations. Airlie underlined the point referring to the traditional role of the Confederation, by pointing out that,

"History has shown us that you don't negotiate redundancies, you oppose them because once you negotiate them you're accepting them, its the format it'll take, so therefore there'll be nae negotiation and only resistance." (5)

At a press conference immediately following the shop stewards' meeting, Airlie and Reid announced the stewards' reaction to the new board, debunking the suggestion in certain sections of the press that the Government had in any sense taken a new initiative by pointing out that they were precisely the proposals of the Advisory Group for the butchery of the industry of two months previously. Their position as UCS workers was also the position of the National Confederation it was emphasised, that is, no discussions except on the basis of proposals that covered the four yards and the entire labour force. In a voice dripping with contempt Reid commented on the composition of the board,

"It's abundantly clear that all self-respecting industrialists in Scotland have refused to touch this board with a barge-pole. They've scraped the bottom of the barrel and they've come up with proposals for the composition of the board which in our opinion is more reminiscent of Monty Python's Flying Circus (laughter) than a serious proposal eh for the shipbuilding industry. We understand there's a rubber goods manufacturer, (laughter) a merchant banker, eh someone else. Cumulatively they know nothing about shipbuilding, with the exception of Gilchrist and his knowledge is very limited. And it would seem to me that the diff....the Government has had the utmost difficulty in finding self-respecting Scots to serve on this board and no wonder, because these men that are serving on this board are virtually quislings to the Scottish people and the Scottish community." (6)

It was a stinging attack on the psuedo-patriotism of Hugh Stenhouse and Scottish big business. Reid pointed out that only a few months before, Stenhouse had publically argued that shipbuilding on the Upper Clyde should have been closed years ago. In fact Stenhouse had made these remarks in a speech advocating the development of Hunterston as a deep sea terminal and oil complex at a ceremony bestowing an honorary degree from Strathclyde University upon him. Stenhouse had actually formed a company to explore the possibilities of such a project development at Hunterston. It was

a telling blow which did more to damage his credibility in the eyes of the workforce than the fact that he was the ex-Treasurer of the Conservative Party in Scotland.

The purpose of the all UCS mass meeting was to demonstrate the determination and unity of the workforce to themselves and the outside world. To the eight thousand workers gathered at Govan, both Airlie and Reid as the principal speakers outlined the dire consequences of any lack of unity. Perhaps as many as six thousand workers would go 'down the road' and those that were left would have to accept lower wages and the introduction of double-shift working. Airlie read out the lead story in that morning's Glasgow Herald headlined "Government Demand Pledge from Govan Workers" which suggested that John Davies' Commons statement, that Government support would only be forthcoming if there was a satisfactory agreement between the unions and the new company, implied precisely this kind of erosion of wage levels and working conditions. (7) It was vital to point out to the workers the inconsistency in the press which eight weeks previously had used terms like 'carve-up', 'disgraceful' and 'unacceptable' in demanding that the Government rethink its proposals for UCS and yet were now calling the workers 'intransigent' and 'inflexible' when substantially the same proposals were being put into operation. The early sympathy in certain sections of the press for the workers' plight now evaporated as an attempt was made to suggest to the workers that Clydebank and Scotstoun should be abandoned to their fate.

The unreasonableness and inflexibility lay not with the workers, claimed Reid, but with the Government who despite the exposure of their White Paper to massive condemnation had pushed through their policy for a drastic reduction in the industry on the Upper Clyde. The message to the workforce was clear. UCS had

become a symbol of the struggle against Government policies which had resulted in a million people facing unemployment. The ranks must now close otherwise they would be letting themselves and their fellow workers down. As Reid put it,

"Our proposals spring from a sense of responsibility to ourselves and families and our community and in the last resort to the British working class. It's impossible for us to accept this." (8)

When Airlie called for questions to be put on the report a member of the UCS Clydebank Planning Department, a certain McKenzie, came to the platform to put his point of view,

"Now at the outset I must congratulate, must congratulate the Co-ordinating Committee and the shop stewards of UCS for the fight they've fought. But lets get to the reality brothers, that if, and its happening, that UCS is closed, there is no UCS now, that two and a half thousand of you people are gonnie be employed, it means that ten thousand..." (9)

He was interrupted by an explosion of anger, shouts of 'get him off', 'If he's on the work-in get rid of him' and other less restrained comments could be heard. It was precisely the kind of defeatist attitude which the calling of the mass meeting had been intended to guard against. It was a dangerous moment not least of all for McKenzie, but the men were solidly behind the stewards. They had passed the first public test of their unity in the new situation that faced them and were not to be seduced by the promise that some would save their skins by going along with the Government proposals.

While at Govan as the assembled workers roared 'aye' as a unified and defiant mass in support of the shop stewards recommendations, in Newcastle that same morning, Danny McGarvey indicated that he and Service would meet Stenhouse and Gilchrist the following week for discussions. Stenhouse, taken by surprise, immediately postponed a business trip to Australia. McGarvey was quoted as saying that the Confederation were not going to discuss any one division

individually, but he added somewhat ominously, that "members elect union leaders to lead, not to follow." (10) The problem immediately facing the stewards was therefore whether or not to join in the proposed talks between McGarvey and Stenhouse which had all the flavour of a 'sell-out'. Either way they were in a difficult situation, and they knew it. Predictably the press that weekend played the 'red' card. Nigel Lawson of The Sunday Times in a hostile review of a pamphlet by Communist Party Scottish Secretary Alex Murray on UCS, described the 'work-in' as "a colossal sham." The fact that Reid, Airlie and Barr were identified in the pamphlet as active members of the Party's Scottish Committee, and their names appeared without their union initials, alongside those of Dickie, Cook and Gilmore described as 'Left militants', who did however have their union initials bracketed beside them, was used by Lawson to suggest that Airlie, Reid and Barr were Communists first and trade unionists very much second. Lawson further suggested that behind the declared aim of the 'work-in' was an attempt,

"to provoke the Government into some rash countermeasure or confrontation - ideally, say, sending in the mounted police." (11)

Henceforth, Lawson became persona non grata so far as the UCS workers were concerned.

For its part, the Government also stepped up the pressure on the workers. In a speech to the Hallam Conservative Luncheon Society, John Eden warned the workers that their continued intransigence could put at risk the chance of a fresh start. The press release of Eden's speech contained a little prod for McGarvey to get on with it, not that he needed much prodding at this juncture. The Daily Record had already seen to that. Sir John was a little more eloquent however.

"Honourable men with a deep faith in Clydeside have come forward... It is encouraging to know that experienced union leaders are turning to them, for these men will understand that the new company represents thousands of jobs and security for countless families." (12)

The next day the Co-ordinating Committee carried out their threat to meet in the boardroom of UCS at Linthouse.

Comfortable as their physical surroundings may have been in comparison to the Clydebank apprentices' classroom in which they usually met, the same could not be said, however, of their overall tactical situation. They had occupied the boardroom to show that they were the force to be reckoned with. The press and TV cameras had been allowed to record the scene for posterity and then, were ushered out the door. The stewards had some very tough talking to do, aware that their room for manoeuvre was gradually shrinking. They had received a summons to meet McGarvey the following morning prior to the commencement of the proposed discussions with Stenhouse.

The problem was that McGarvey's initiative was clearly an attempt to assert the leading role of the Confederation and had inherent in it all the dangers that Sammy Barr had warned against. When they finally emerged from the boardroom, Airlie announced they had indeed agreed to meet the Confederation. Although he did not say so at the time, it was obvious that to have refused would have been to risk complete isolation, but as regards any invitation to meet for discussions with Stenhouse in the afternoon Airlie said, with an implicit warning to McGarvey.

"We will only meet Mr. Stenhouse on the basis of discussion of the four yards cumulatively, with all the labour force. We will not meet him on the basis of what appears to us to be putting into practice the Government's commitment, based on the White Paper, the commitment on the complex based on Govan and Linthouse." (13)

The following morning Dan McGarvey and Jack Service together with Joe Black and the local officials met with eleven leading members of the Co-ordinating Committee in the North British Hotel in Glasgow to prepare for the talks with Stenhouse. McGarvey assured the stewards that the Confederation's position regarding UCS remained unchanged and that the basis of any discussion would be the four yards and the labour force. Stenhouse on his part, had already indicated that he was prepared to listen to proposals even although they went beyond those of the White Paper. At a hastily convened shop stewards' meeting that lunchtime, the stewards finally agreed to proceed with an exploratory meeting to see whether Stenhouse could be persuaded 'to extend his position to cover the four Yards'. (14) The public position of the trade union side was one of complete unity when they reconvened that afternoon in the North British Hotel, this time with Stenhouse, Gilchrist and Ken Douglas present.

The latter who had returned from holiday earlier in the week had accepted a position on the new board on a temporary basis as Deputy Chairman of Govan Shipbuilders. It was a move which the stewards angrily interpreted as an attempt by Douglas to 'save his own skin'. Their anger was fuelled by the discovery that despite Douglas' recent claim to be able to run the Scotstoun yard profitably as a unit on its own, given the necessary re-equipping, he himself had previously formulated plans for the rundown of Scotstoun and Clydebank in 1972 had UCS stayed in business. There were bitter comments about Douglas, even to the extent of suggesting barring him from the yard along with Stenhouse and Gilchrist if necessary. All this however, was very much secondary to the main business of the talks with Stenhouse.



Airlie reported back to the Co-ordinating Committee at seven o'clock that evening. (15) They had failed to persuade Stenhouse to take Clydebank into consideration in his plans, but Stenhouse had recognised that there was little chance of his gaining the co-operation of the workforce if Scotstoun and Clydebank were as he put it, 'running sores'. Stenhouse had announced that he was prepared to consider Scotstoun on the basis of a feasibility study of its viability. Clydebank however, was a different matter and while he could not consider it himself he would put the point to Davies before he left for his trip to Australia, that a solution would need to be found for the yard. During a recess in the meeting Service, obviously encouraged by the discussions, 'phoned Davies to arrange a meeting for the following week to discuss Government aid to resolve the problem of Clydebank being made available. Stenhouse also asked the stewards to consider making a 'gesture of goodwill', basically allowing himself and Gilchrist to tour the three yards, Govan, Linthouse and Scotstoun, so that he would be able to argue with Davies and with shipowners worried about their orders that the situation was more hopeful. It was eventually agreed by both sides to reconvene the following morning.

The decision as to whether to offer a 'gesture of goodwill' was the subject of considerable controversy among the Co-ordinating Committee that evening with Reid, who had been absent from the crucial afternoon meeting with Stenhouse, arguing vehemently that there should be no visits to the yards unless Stenhouse also visited Clydebank thereby illustrating his 'maximum interest'. (16) To Reid, with the reaction of the Clydebank workers to consider, it appeared perhaps that Airlie and the Confederation had been somewhat too accommodating towards the other side. To allow the new board to visit the yards

without some commitment to examine all four yards would create a dangerous situation in which divisions between the workforce in different yards could have been opened up. On television later that night Stenhouse was almost expansive about the progress they had made in the day's talks.

"You know we're talking, we're talking sensibly, we're talking reasonably, eh and we're talking the same language. We all want to keep as many people in employment as possible. I must say I was encouraged. To everybody I would say, please don't run away and say we've solved the thing, we haven't, but there is hope that there will be jobs for a considerable number of people still, in Govan and Linthouse, and possibly, as far as I'm concerned, at Scotstoun." (17)

Danny McGarvey was equally soothing,

"We're no longer shouting at one another. The war of words is over and both sides agree that eh, we had to get round the table and find out what was in each other's minds, because the man was entitled to this. They're entitled to know factually what their prospective employer, future employer has got in mind and eh, how far we're prepared to go with him and talk with him." (18)

For McGarvey it should be noted, Stenhouse was already a 'prospective' and 'future employer', but for the moment the stewards remained silent.

It was true that by talking about Scotstoun, Stenhouse had moved from the White Paper proposals but there were too many imponderables in the situation, above all concerning the future of Clydebank. It was not clear what eventual Government backing Stenhouse would be able to call upon to get his new company off the ground should discussions ever reach that stage. The question of the inclusion of Clydebank therefore, in a future scheme was financially and politically the key to any further 'progress' in the resumed dialogue, for unless there was some indication that the Government was seriously concerned about the future of all yards there would be little point in pursuing the talks with Stenhouse from the Co-ordinating Committee's point of view.

Early the next morning these developments were reported to a full meeting of UCS shop stewards to get further endorsement before representatives of the Co-ordinating Committee met Stenhouse once again that day to put it to him directly, that unless he was prepared to include Clydebank in his interests then there would be no 'goodwill gesture', and neither he nor any other member of the board would be allowed in the yards. After a careful weighing of pros and cons as to the advisability of this further meeting, it was agreed as the correct manner in which to proceed. One thing was certain, that with the morning press hailing the previous day's discussions as a 'breakthrough', especially for the future of Scotstoun, a mass meeting of all UCS workers the following day, would be required to explain the real position to the workforce. While there was despondency among Clydebank workers, there were already elements in Govan that were feeling rather pleased about their future prospects of employment. (19)

In fact, when the stewards, accompanied this time by Joe Black representing the Confederation in the absence of McGarvey, met Stenhouse that Thursday morning and reiterated their position, they had expected that if Stenhouse's reply was to the negative, discussions would cease in the traditional manner, at least for a time. Instead, Stenhouse indicated that provided he got Government backing he was prepared to consider Clydebank seriously as well. Stenhouse perhaps felt that the talks must be kept going at any cost. It was however, a major tactical victory for the stewards despite the qualifications attached to Stenhouse's offer, because the onus once again was put upon the Government to justify the break up of the consortium. Stenhouse had apparently capitulated and in raising the prospect of a revived UCS set-up, placed the ball firmly back in the Government's court. It must have been a very angry John Davies who watched the television news that evening which showed Reid and Airlie taking

Stenhouse on a tour round the yards beginning with the Clydebank yard as Reid had insisted previously. An exuberant Stenhouse thumped Reid somewhat vigorously on the shoulder as he announced to the cameras,

"I couldn't have had better conversations than I've been having these last two days. I'm not promising at this moment that I can do anything for Clydebank, that's up to unions and Government. But I've said this morning, if I'm asked to help by the Government and by the unions, right? With all the financial backing I'll need and all the help I'll need from you, right?..." (20)

A somewhat crumpled Reid quipped from beneath Stenhouse's hearty hand,

"Yes, don't shake too much or I won't be any help."

Stenhouse continued unabashed,

"Then please, I will take it on but only if the two sides can agree on some plan." (21)

But Stenhouse warned, it was to be "jackets off, none of this bloody nonsense" so far as the co-operation of the workforce was concerned if he was to consider Clydebank as well. (22)

On Friday morning Reid gave that assurance of co-operation publically on behalf of all UCS workers who were assembled for another four-yard mass meeting, this time at Clydebank to hear the report of the Co-ordinating Committee of the past few days events and endorse the pledge "to work for the future of the industry" provided all the yards including Clydebank were saved. In a statement that to many people must have seemed a remarkable one coming from the mouth of a Communist shop steward, Reid promised,

"We will co-operate. We will co-operate by unleashing the creative ability, and in some instances, it could be genius, of the entire labour force. That is the co-operation we are talking about." (23)

It was a theme that was to be reiterated many times over. The key thing now however, would be what Davies said to them in London on Tuesday October 5th at their next meeting with him.

When Jack Service and Danny McGarvey met Davies in London, it was made clear from the outset that the Government was not prepared to provide the backing for Stenhouse to include Clydebank. McGarvey indicated however, that he was in contact with a group of 'public-spirited' Scottish businessmen who would be prepared to bid for Clydebank if sufficient funds were forthcoming from Government. It was a potential 'compromise' that neither the stewards nor the Government seemed to give much credence to. Davies suggested that the individuals concerned would need to bring their bid forward before consideration could be given as to the amount of any possible assistance. Davies emphasised that the order position in Govan was becoming serious, a fact that the stewards were only too well aware of even though there were fourteen orders on the books which had been suspended at liquidation. McGarvey and Service decided there and then, they would come to Glasgow for discussions on Sunday with the liquidator, Gilchrist and the Irish Shipping Company who had four of the suspended ships on order with UCS to clarify the position regarding these orders and hopefully ease the immediate problems of employment in the yards. McGarvey was ready to offer 'guarantees' of co-operation from the trade unions should they be released. Once again, the stewards had been excluded from the actual meeting with Davies but when it broke up it appeared from McGarvey's report to them that little more than an agreement to meet again the following Tuesday had come out of it. In a television interview afterwards McGarvey modestly claimed he was "quietly confident" that they would solve the serious situation which had arisen. (24)

It is a fair guess that despite what McGarvey told the stewards, he and Service had given private assurances to Davies that they would bring the UCS workers to heel if only Davies would be a little more forthcoming. Hence his proposals concerning the Scottish businessmen and for weekend talks with the Irish Shipping Company. Unfortunately for McGarvey's strategy, Davies made it all too clear that so far as the Government's patience was concerned, time was running out.

That evening Davies made his own statement to the media on the talks with the Confederation. He warned the unions that the shipowners were "at the end of their tether." that unless "meaningful discussions" begun with the new company Govan Shipbuilders at once, no new orders could be placed in the interim and the Govan yard would have its labour force reduced drastically in the near future. While he had agreed to meet McGarvey and Service the following week Davies now declared that even Tuesday next might be "too late." (25)

"We....we have to try and get customers who are apparently losing confidence in the future of their ships to reinstate their orders, and to go through with them, and unless we do, then in fact the truth is that within so short a time we should not have work to be done, in particular, in the yard which is looked upon as being the most promising in the future." (26)

The Irish Shipping Company, the main shipowners concerned, immediately denied they were 'holding a gun' at the head of anyone. The company was prepared to be flexible on delivery dates and their assistant manager O'Neill expressed surprise at the strength of Davies' statement. (27) The next day representatives of a further four companies with six ships on the suspended order list also denied they had presented the Government with any 'ultimatum'. It was pointed out in fact as shipowners they had collectively approached Nicholas Ridley

on August 27th regarding the exact status of their order, and since then they had received no communications from the Government. (28)

The shop stewards who met to hear the reportback from Reid and Barr of the London meeting considered their next move in response to Davies' statement. On behalf of the Co-ordinating Committee Reid gave an assessment of the situation.

"What's clearly happening is that they are trying to divide the ranks, and note the tactics: the yard that is supposedly in dispute as to its future (Clydebank), has got a works programme over the next period. Govan, that's supposed to have some elements of survival, will have the redundancies, and they get, or they think they'll get, a division, you know, in the ranks, as a result of this divide and rule eh tactic. It's the opinion of the Co-ordinating Committee, that we've got to go from this meeting today, make a most sharp indictment of Davies - it's blackmail." (29)

At the press conference following this meeting Reid denounced Davies' statement once again as,

"a despicable attempt to blackmail and intimidate not only our workers and the people of Scotland but the entire trade union movement." (30)

Holding up a list of the fourteen ships held in abeyance since liquidation, Reid charged that their release could be secured immediately by Davies "lifting the 'phone". This would provide the necessary continuation of work for Govan.

It was indeed difficult to put any interpretation on Davies' statement other than a crude piece of intimidation. Publication of letters which the DTI officials had received from the Irish Shipping Company purportedly justifying the Government's statement that the shipowners were losing confidence did little to salvage Davies' reputation since they too were followed by further vehement denials of 'pressure' by the Irish Shipping Company. However, if Davies had

hoped to provoke a split in the ranks of the UCS workforce his attempt failed. Once again, the stewards turned the tables on him in the most effective way possible; by taking the issues to a mass meeting.

Airlie in one of his finest fighting speeches exposed the implications of the Government manoeuvres and roared out the message of unity to the workforce once again.

"That was the statement by Davies, Unless we co-operate in our own butchery, then there will be no shipbuilding industry in the Upper Reaches of the Clyde. But we are saying that there are forces outwith 10 Downing Street, there is forces outside Parliament, and that's the British trade union and labour movement, and we are saying that if we're a symbol, then its this movement's responsibility to see that we are not defeated and the only way we'll be defeated; if they starve us into submission. We are confident...that this movement recognises what's at stake, its the Right to Work. And we're confident that we shall not fail. But even in a final analysis if we're to be defeated, a personal opinion, I would rather be defeated on my feet, than grovelling intae the yards accepting wage cuts." (applause and cheering). (31)

If Davies' spies were doing their work properly he would have been in no doubt that the workers remained solid despite yet more forlorn calls for a sit-in from the 'ultra-left'. The shop stewards' grip on the situation had not slackened nor were they about to lose their nerve. If Davies wished to precipitate a confrontation, it would be met by a united working class response. Once again the situation had reached a flashpoint.

It remained to be seen what if anything, the forthcoming meeting on Sunday in Glasgow between McGarvey, the liquidator and representatives of the Irish Shipping Company regarding their future orders, would produce. The stewards agreed to attend the meeting but they had already made their position plain time without number that there would need to be a package deal covering all the four yards and the entire labour force before the UCS situation could be resolved. The news that because of the crisis Stenhouse had cut short his



business trip and was returning hurriedly from Australia to be at the Sunday meeting was received with a distinct lack of enthusiasm by the shop stewards. (32) Attitudes had hardened again considerably, the prospects for the Sunday meeting were poor to say the least.

The only value of the meeting from the shop stewards' point of view would be to secure a consensus among all parties to the discussion that the Government should be pressurised to release immediately the four orders for the Irish Shipping Company to the liquidator. Had they been released, however, to Govan Shipbuilders it might have been thought to constitute de facto recognition of the new company without any guarantees as to the labour force, wage rates and the future of the other divisions. This was the line agreed between McGarvey and the shop stewards prior to the commencement of the meeting. In any event Govan Shipbuilders Ltd., were not yet in a legal position to accept orders as a trading company. At the meeting, at which the Irish Shipping Company, Stenhouse, Gilchrist, McGarvey and the stewards were present, the liquidator indicated that he had deferred repudiation of the Irish orders so that they would continue to qualify for an investment grant. For his part he was willing to continue with these vessels in order to keep the yards as going concerns with the proviso that he be protected from any further losses to the creditors for whom he was acting as liquidator. The liquidator, in fact, had previously expressed his willingness to proceed with the orders to the Department of Trade and Industry and would buy in materials for new work if he was provided with the necessary financial backup, but like the Irish Shipping Company he too had heard nothing from the Government. From the stewards point of view the discussions up to this juncture looked quite promising.

Reid in recounting the progress of the meeting to the UCS shop stewards the next day then described McGarvey's intervention which changed the situation dramatically. McGarvey had asked the liquidator why he had not sought 'assurances' from the unions and then, contrary to what had been agreed beforehand, he turned to Stenhouse and asked him if he, Stenhouse, would be prepared to accept these orders. When Gilchrist indicated they could not accept the orders on behalf of Govan Shipbuilders for another three months, McGarvey then turned to the representatives of the Irish Shipping Company and asked them why they as the shipowners had not requested 'guarantees' from the trade union movement.(33) McGarvey was obviously prepared to go to any lengths to effect some kind of compromise however limited. Perhaps he really was frightened by John Davies' **bellicose** statements. What was certain was the fury of the shop stewards at what they saw as a betrayal of their stated position by McGarvey. But McGarvey's real 'betrayal' of the stewards came during his press conference when the meeting finally broke up four and a half hours later. It had been agreed that a trade union statement be issued at the end of the meeting reiterating the united position of the trade union side regarding the need for an overall solution for the four yards and holding out the prospect of 'meaningful discussions', only if the Government released the suspended orders to the liquidator. However, on television that night McGarvey sang a very different tune.

"And I think, while the unions have moved, they've not moved in the sense that we are departing from our major principle because, I will convey this to Mr. Davies on Tuesday night, the problem is, that if you continue to argue about the four yards in a situation which is developing to your advantage, then no-one will thank you for being negative." (34)

In reply to the interviewer's question on whether there had been a compromise, true to his instincts as a trade union official of the right-wing variety, McGarvey said,

"I would say that there's a compromise in a sense, that we realise the need to get the workforce in Govan, Linthouse, Scotstoun firmly established in the hope that the Minister once seeing this gesture coming from us, that he himself, will see that the fog is lifting as he said the last time and bear with us in relation to Clydebank." (35)

When the stewards heard later of this 'compromise' they were no longer prepared to 'bear with' McGarvey. As Reid said to the shop stewards, the need for a break with McGarvey had been apparent for some weeks but whereas it would have been premature up till then, the real responsibility for abandoning their publically committed position, if this was indeed the intention, would now be seen to lie with McGarvey with all the consequences that this entailed. Reid warned bitterly,

"And I'm making this point. If any national trade union leader, wants to stick the knife into this movement, they will not be allowed to do it under the cloak of darkness or with stealth, or in their plimsoles. They'll be forced to do it in the full light of day, in front of the mass media and with the millions of the British working class watching them." (36)

Moreover, McGarvey had further infuriated the stewards by privately suggesting that unless they were prepared to accept 'discipline' of officials of the trade unions he would call a separate meeting of members of the Boilermakers Society if necessary to ensure that his own position was adopted. As Sammy Barr, himself a boilermaker, commented regarding McGarvey's threat to use his influence in an overtly sectional manner to force the stewards into line,

"....if we have a split on this issue brothers, it wouldn't be a betrayal to the boilermakers, it would be a betrayal to every worker whose working in the UCS and also a betrayal to the labour and mass movement and trade union movement of this country." (37)

The recommendation of the meeting was that all those stewards who were present at the Stenhouse talks when the tenor of the trade union press statement had been decided, should once again reiterate to the press what had been the previous day's agreed statement. Further, that the whole Co-ordinating Committee including particularly the boilermakers' conveners meet at York on Wednesday to lobby the delegates to the Confederation's quarterly meeting in order to get a reiteration of support for their cause. Finally, that an urgent appeal be issued to the labour and trade union movement to come forward with the kind of financial support which they had promised to UCS to help them in this crucial period.(38) Meanwhile, the stewards were urged to go back to their departments and explain to the men that there would be no question of a 'sell-out' of Clydebank. The UCS workers were prepared if necessary to disown McGarvey publically. Airlie warned them to be on their guard against the 'fainthearts'. (39)

Outside the Clydebank canteen with the leading stewards, gathered round him, Reid indicated to the assembled press that the statement he was to read out was what had been originally agreed with McGarvey the previous day.

"That the Government must release the orders of the Irish Shipping Company through the liquidator immediately. This is necessary in order that the yards continue as going concerns which also meets the needs and interests of the liquidator who is representing the creditors. That such an attitude and decision on the part of the Government would create a climate of opinion within which discussions will take place as to the future of the four yards or four divisions of the UCS. That these discussions will involve all interested parties including the Govan Shipbuilding Company but these discussions either with one party or more than one party would have to be discussions along parallel lines, ensuring the retention of the four divisions and the labour force." (40)

Reid then asked each steward in turn for confirmation that he had given a correct statement of what was agreed and then with biting sarcasm added,

"It's possible, that one person might get the wrong end of the stick. It's possible. It's possible that two might get, I'm talking about the ten, two might get the wrong end of the stick. It's possible that three, but then it's stretching possibility and probability very far. But I want, I would suggest to you that it's a psychiatric phenomenon unknown in medical history that ten people at the one meeting, aye plus two union officials could eh simultaneously eh have either a lapse of memory or eh eh simultaneously make the wrong interpretation." (41)

The stewards had set the record straight. They had made clear to McGarvey and everyone else that the issue of Clydebank would remain an integral part of their demands. Indeed, by suggesting that only the release of the Irish orders would create a more conducive 'climate of opinion' for discussions to begin, they attempted to reverse Davies' ultimatum of the previous week that before there could be any release of guarantees for shipowners, 'meaningful discussions' with Govan Shipbuilders would have to take place. Securing more work was the immediate tactical aim and to achieve this the stewards had at least to concede the possibility of talks with the new board. Any such talks, however, could only take place 'along parallel lines', that is in the context of a four yard package, whatever McGarvey may have said.

To this end, ten members of the Co-ordinating Committee travelled to London to be present while Davies and McGarvey held the discussions arranged the previous week. Once again, the trade union side met beforehand. This time tempers ran high as bitter recriminations were exchanged over responsibility for the past two days public breach between the stewards and the Confederation. The shop stewards accused McGarvey of having been in collusion with Stenhouse the preceding Sunday while McGarvey in turn accused the stewards of a 'stab in the back' and vigorously denied an attempted 'sell-out' of Clydebank. It cannot have been a pleasant

experience for a national trade union official of McGarvey's stature to be publically reprimanded in the media by a group of shop stewards and it took all the diplomacy of the local Confederation officials to pour oil on the troubled waters. (42)

The outcome of nearly five hours of discussions at the Department of Trade and Industry Offices in Victoria Street was almost a foregone conclusion. The Confederation promised to enter discussions on working practices and wage rates with Govan Shipbuilders on the understanding that the Government provided the required guarantees to enable new orders to proceed. What was not a foregone conclusion by any means and required McGarvey to consult several times with the waiting shop stewards was the form of words which any statement issued by the parties to the discussion would take. The Government had sugared the pill slightly by agreeing that a feasibility study be carried out as to whether the Scotstoun yard might be included in the final Govan Shipbuilders set-up. This was by no means a cast-iron guarantee to save Scotstoun but at least provided some hope for the yard where before there was none. The key area of contention had been and remained Clydebank.

In the agreed minute of the meeting which was signed by John Davies, John Eden, Danny McGarvey and Jack Service, the shop stewards with Clydebank very much in mind, had insisted that the Confederation place at the top of the page as their principal objective "to seek means of preserving employment in all four yards of the UCS" (43) In what was a rather peculiar but in the end prophetic formulation, both the Confederation as well as the Government, undertook to "make every effort to encourage a purchaser for Clydebank Yard." (44) Furthermore the minute stated that any such purchaser would be "eligible for substantial

financial assistance" under the Local Employment Acts. (45) In fact, Davies had already publically made this offer in the Commons several weeks before. (46) Given the scale of aid necessary however, it could hardly be considered an enticing offer for a prospective shipbuilding buyer, especially since Govan Shipbuilders would probably eventually require assistance on a much more generous scale. The Government had not made any real commitment to Clydebank nor had the CSEU stipulated that such a buyer should necessarily be a shipbuilding concern as a precondition to any eventual agreement.

The 'Victoria Street document' was therefore more of a conditional truce than anything else. There would be a temporary cessation of hostilities and in that sense it marked a step backwards from direct confrontation and a step towards an eventual negotiated settlement. Major areas of ambiguity and uncertainty would need to be resolved however and, as far as they went, the talks were only the first staging post in what was still to be a long journey.

From London the shop stewards travelled to York the following day to ensure that the Confederation understood the position of the UCS workforce with regard to the scope of any eventual solution. From Glasgow, the rest of their colleagues on the Co-ordinating Committee travelled to York to meet up with them. The Confederation for its part endorsed the document as "an interim step to resolve the problem." (47)

Reporting back to the UCS shop stewards Airlie gave the Co-ordinating Committee's interpretation of the Victoria Street document in an optimistic resume designed to quieten the workers' fears that the Confederation had made a major concession.

"We made our position quite clear to Danny McGarvey. We're saying in effect that this is the key paragraph, unless there is a definite commitment to Clydebank and Scotstoun and with guarantees for all the labour force, because you can secure the four yards but you've still got to discuss the labour force, then no meaningful discussions can take place. That would be our position and as regards the wage rates and the working practices our position on that is this: That trade unions always discuss working practices and wage rates, but never to my knowledge do they discuss it to take a wage cut or worsen your working conditions." (48)

Essentially Airlie argued that their position had not moved but as Reid pointed out, whereas the previous Monday, McGarvey's attempted 'betrayal' in the discussions with Stenhouse and the Irish Shipping Company had led them to believe they were in danger of being totally isolated, they had managed to bring McGarvey back into line on Tuesday, prior to his meeting with Davies. In turn, this had prepared the way for the Confederation's vote on Thursday reiterating the unified trade union demand for the four yards to be kept open. Furthermore, by endorsing the Victoria Street document as an 'interim solution' Reid was able to argue that they had achieved a victory since the Confederation was now not only committed to the preservation of the four yards but also of all the jobs within the yards. This was an even firmer commitment than previously, and was no doubt in part a result of the fact that the entire Co-ordinating Committee had been at York to lobby the delegates. Moreover, up to a thousand expected redundancies would now be halted as an immediate result of the discussions in London. What had guaranteed the overall success of their lobby of the Confederation, however, was possibly the influential role of other key trade union leaders such as Hugh Scanlon in bringing pressure to bear on McGarvey behind the scenes and McGarvey's own knowledge of the likely odium that would be heaped on the perpetrator of any 'sell-out'. Both Reid and Airlie, being engineers themselves, had of course, been able to establish good



links with Scanlon which proved to be of great value throughout the whole campaign.

The work-in would continue, however, including the manning of the gates until all their demands were won. They would 'keep their guard up' because as Airlie warned, any sign of weakness or division would be seized upon by the Government.

"Our vigilance carries on because, Jimmy made the point yesterday, it's important, we're in the woods, we're still in the woods, we've no won nothing, there is a chink of light, but when you're in the woods the wolves are ready to devour you...and we've also got to appeal to the mass eh movement outside to still keep their powder dry, that support at this period is even more crucial because, we're in the crucial point. Tommy Freil made the point, his experiences in this movement, that that just when you're on the point of victory it's snatched from you and that's what we've got to guard against." (49)

To make precisely this point to the mass movement the publicity committee issued a leaflet to the movement which explained that despite press claims to the contrary, the shop stewards demands had remained unchanged. (50) Needless to say the press had had a field day in reporting the outcome of the Victoria Street discussions and were suggesting that the workers had now abandoned Clydebank. Back in the yards the press reports of the talks had created some confusion among the workers. Moreover, the absence of the leadership of the Co-ordinating Committee from the yards for the greater part of that week had given the 'ultra-leftists' the opportunity to move a vote of no confidence in the shop stewards leadership and accuse them of betraying the workers. The spokesmen for the 'ultra-left' on this occasion was Conn Higgins who after having clashed with Reid during the preceding Co-ordinating Committee's reportback to the shop stewards now came to the platform during a mass meeting of all UCS workers at Linthouse that Friday morning to attack the

leadership once again. Higgins denounced the Co-ordinating Committee for moving away from the original demands and argued that all they had brought back was,

"More vague woolly phrases. What it means, we're letting Clydebank go to the wall and if you vote on this resolution as an acceptance of it as in the Minute of this meeting with McGarvey and Davies, you are immediately letting your fellow workers in Clydebank fight this fight on their own....Brothers, I make a motion that we reaffirm, the four yards and the labour force intact but under the one economic unit. That is not what is contained in this Minute, nor is it what the Confederation are looking for. If you vote for this you're voting for a 'sell-out'." (51)

Higgins' best argument was not, however, that the four yards remain intact as a unit, since this would be to gamble all plausible chances of success on what had now become a point of purist principle, but the fear that Clydebank would simply be abandoned to its fate. It was therefore quite disturbing when he was able to read out a report in The Guardian of the previous day's Confederation meeting in York which quoted Jack Service as saying that if it was "75 per cent or nothing" then the Confederation executive would have to be "very responsible in its attitudes. (52)

When Reid came forward to reply to this challenge the gloves were off

"I have said at a mass meeting, so has Airlie, and I'm saying it again. So far as I'm personally concerned and I know this is the position of the Co-ordinating Committee, there will be no blood money, there will be no selling of bodies, and that's our fellow workers. As far as we're concerned, and if there's to be jobs to be lost, and I say this in no self-sacrificial way because my integrity's involved, I'll make sure I'm among them, because we're not being party to any 'sell-out' of a struggle and a movement that has lifted the working class struggle of this country to a new level and to a new dimension." (53).

Reid reiterated that there would be no recognition of Govan Shipbuilders, nor would they be allowed to impose a managerial structure until an acceptable solution for all the yards and labour force had been reached.

As for maintaining the four divisions as an economically intact unit,

"Your Co-ordinating Committee has said to you and they've said it to others, that if there are cumulative proposals that in the short term guaranteed every job and the continuation of work in the four divisions, if we rejected it, we would be crucified as rigid dogmatists." (54)

With regard to Service's alleged statement this would be raised at the Co-ordinating Committee immediately after the mass meeting and they would demand that either the Confederation confirm Service was misquoted or if he was not, reprimand him for talking in terms outwith the decision of the York meeting. Reid continued,

"Now look lads, I'll say this. It's bad enough when you're getting hammered from some papers from the right, but part of our problems throughout these last few weeks has been the criticisms that have come from positions so far to the left, that as I've said before, by Einstein's theory of relativity, they're so far to the left, they're ending up rubbing shoulders with the right and to all intents and purposes the net result of their action is the same as that that's desired by our enemies on the right, which would be to seek the disunity within our ranks. I'm on the left, I'm a militant, I'll fight, but when you fight you've also got to be guided not only by the heart but by the brain and the mind, and I would argue here that the proposals put to you, is an insult to characterise them as a sell-out." (55)

At the end of the meeting there were five votes against the recommendation. The workforce had remained loyal once again.

For over six hundred UCS workers their final public demonstration was a trip to Brighton to lobby Edward Heath at the Tory Party Annual Conference. For the delegates seated in the conference hall, the massed sound of hundreds of irate Clydeside workers jeering and shouting outside, must have been an awesome noise, perhaps even the ghastly shape of things to come, only foreshadowed in the very worst nightmares of loyal Tory party constituency workers. In any event, Heath refused to meet the UCS workers, preferring instead to

let one of his advisors see a deputation led by Gerry Ross.

It was to be the last major mass public demonstration by UCS workers. Had it not been already decided upon as a spontaneous response to Davies' initial 'blackmail' threat, it is doubtful in the light of the outcome of the subsequent talks at the DTI, whether or not it would have taken place at all. The real political centre of gravity of the UCS campaign was shifting from demonstrations in the streets to discussions behind closed doors.

In Parliament, John Davies also put an optimistic gloss on his account to the Commons of the substance of the Victoria Street talks. Announcing an advance of a further £1½ million working capital to the liquidator and the intention of the Government, in the light of the discussions, to release further financial guarantees to enable the Irish orders plus an order for the Brazilian Government to proceed, Davies remarked,

"It is already abundantly evident that the ship orders being worked on by the liquidator are likely to realise a heavy loss, as will the new work needed to maintain employment at Govan and Linthouse....This refutes the assertions that UCS was on the verge of turning the corner into profitability." (56)

The fact was, however, that the £1½ million plus the previous sum of £4 million already advanced to the liquidator constituted a figure sufficiently close to that originally requested to be a matter of some embarrassment to the Government and provoked some scathing questions from Benn.

When the following day A.F. Crawford, the ex-financial director of UCS and now with Yarrows, attacked Davies' statement as "blatantly misleading" for comparing the company in liquidation with what its performance might have been under normal operation, once again the Government's image was somewhat tarnished. (57) The statement was made to a session of the STUC inquiry to which Crawford was giving evidence that

In the Commons Davies revealed how far the Government had moved from the original Advisory Group proposals but in a way that would allow him to maintain the support of the Government's own rank and file supporters, the Tory back-benchers, who cannot have been entirely pleased by the concessions the Government now appeared to be making and needed some assurance.

"The prospect for future employment, I suggest, has to be seen in a range which at the low end, starts at the 2,500 figure put forward by the group of experts, but it has been, I think, confidently hoped that the figure might be materially improved, and improved not only by adding the numbers employed in the new project as a result, perhaps, of the inclusion of Scotstoun and perhaps double-shift working, or better still at the Govan-Linthouse yard, but additionally by other employment being offered to the workers at UCS and either on the lower Clyde or at Yarrows." (58)

So there it was; 'perhaps' the inclusion of Scotstoun but also 'perhaps', and here again the sting-in-the-tail of 'double-shift working' at Govan. In any event the numbers would include jobs at Yarrows which would benefit by new defence orders and at the yards on the Lower Clyde, where Bruce-Gardyne once again trumpeted the supposed vacancies for 1,000 UCS workers lying open at Scott-Lithgow's yard. (59)

With the final resolution of the UCS crisis still undecided both sides still had everything to play for. If the Government could achieve a compliant workforce at Govan Shipbuilders prepared to accept double-shifts decimated by redundancies and prepared to take the kind of lower wages offered at Scott-Lithgows, this would have massive repercussions throughout the industry as a whole. If the trade unions could get a four yard solution that safeguarded the workers' jobs then they could claim an historic victory which would have demonstrated the power of the organised workers to reverse

Tory Government policy. Either way each side would now face new and even more subtle trials of strength in the coming period.

## Chapter 7 From Confrontation to Negotiation

- 1 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting Clydebank, 23 September 1971, p. 4, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 1.
- 2 *ibid.*, pp. 1-2.
- 3 *ibid.*, p. 5.
- 4 Daily Record, 23 September 1971.
- 5 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting Clydebank, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
- 6 UCS Shop Stewards, press statement, 23 September 1971, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 1.
- 7 Glasgow Herald, 24 September 1971.
- 8 UCS Shop Stewards, first all UCS workers mass meeting, 24 September 1971, p.5, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 1.
- 9 *ibid.*
- 10 Glasgow Herald, 25 September 1971.
- 11 The Sunday Times, 26 September 1971.
- 12 The Scotsman 28 September 1971.
- 13 BBC TV News, NP82354, G71/219, 28 September 1971, GU Archives.
- 14 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting 29 September 1971, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 1.
- 15 UCS Shop Stewards, Stenhouse/Confederation Co-ordinating Committee report, 29 September 1971, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol.1.
- 16 *ibid.*, p. 14.
- 17 BBC TV News, G71/22, 29 September 1971, GU Archives.
- 18 *ibid.*
- 19 UCS Shop Stewards, full shop stewards meeting to report on the Stenhouse/Confederation meeting, 30 September 1971, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 1.
- 20 BBC TV News, G71/244, 30 September 1971, GU Archives.
- 21 *ibid.*
- 22 *ibid.*

- 23 UCS Shop Stewards, mass meeting Clydebank , 1 October 1971, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 1.
- 24 BBC TV News, NP2069, 5 October 1971, GU Archives.
- 25 Glasgow Herald, 6 October 1971.
- 26 BBC TV News, NP2064, 5 October 1971, GU Archives.
- 27 The Scotsman, 6 October 1971.
- 28 The Guardian, 7 October 1971.
- 29 UCS Shop Stewards, reportback of Davies meeting to the full shop stewards committee, 6 October 1971, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 1.
- 30 Glasgow Herald, 7 October 1971.
- 31 UCS Shop Stewards, mass meeting Linthouse, 8 October 1971, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 1.
- 32 BBC TV News, G71/25066, 8 October 1971, GU Archives.
- 33 UCS Shop Stewards, reportback of North British Hotel meeting to full shop stewards committee, 11 October 1971, pp. 4-5, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 1.
- 34 BBC TV News, 10 October 1971, GU Archives.
- 35 *ibid.*
- 36 UCS Shop Stewards, reportback of North British Hotel meeting, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
- 37 *ibid.*, p. 2 (continuation).
- 38 *ibid.*, pp. 7-8.
- 39 *ibid.*
- 40 UCS Shop Stewards, press conference, 11 October 1971, p. 1, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 1 ; BBC TV News, NP82-464, 11 October, 1971; BBC TV News, G71/ 256, 11 October, 1971, GU Archives.
- 41 *ibid.*, pp. 2-3.
- 42 Interview with Joe Black, 12 February 1979 GU Archives.



- 43 Appendix 21, Record of a meeting between Mr. John Davies and Sir John Eden and Mr. McGarvey and Mr. Service, 12 October, 1971; Hansard, vol. 823, 1970-1971, 20 October 1971, cols. 734-735.
- 44 Hansard, vol.823,op. cit.
- 45 *ibid.*
- 46 Hansard, vol. 823, op. cit., 23 September 1971, col. 176.
- 47 Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, Quarterly Report of the General Council held in York, Thursday 14 October 1971, circular no. 106, reprinted in Report of Proceedings of Thirty-seventh Annual Meeting, Llandudno, 20-23 June 1972, p. 228.
- 48 UCS Shop Stewards, report on National Confederation, 15 October 1971, p. 2, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 1.
- 49 *ibid.*, p. 5.
- 50 Appendix 22, UCS Shop Stewards, leaflet 'The Four Yards must continue - No Loss of Jobs, October 1971.
- 51 UCS Shop Stewards, report on National Confederation, op. cit., pp. 11-12.
- 52 The Guardian, 15 October 1971.
- 53 UCS Shop Stewards, report on National Confederation, op. cit., p. 13.
- 54 *ibid.*, p. 14.
- 55 *ibid.*, pp. 15-16.
- 56 Hansard, vol. 823, op. cit., 20 October 1971, col. 276.
- 57 The Scotsman, 21 October 1971.
- 58 Hansard, vol. 823, op. cit., col. 729.
- 59 *ibid.*, col. 731.

## Chapter Eight

## THE WAITING GAME

By the end of October the UCS campaign had been going for over four months, far longer than anyone had anticipated. Always a factor was the effect on the morale of the workforce of a drawn out struggle such as it was turning out to be. They were in a period of marking time while they awaited the result of the promised feasibility studies for Scotstoun and a search for a suitable buyer for Clydebank was conducted. Until these issues were settled the Victoria Street document would remain a most uncertain pledge so far as the shop stewards were concerned. However, from the Government the pressure on the stewards to enter into negotiations on wage rates and working practices with Govan Shipbuilders was relentless.

The position of the local officials of the Confederation for the first time did not fully accord with that of the UCS stewards. Whether due to instructions from their national officials or otherwise the Clyde District officials had begun what were described as "exploratory talks" with Govan Shipbuilders Ltd., at the end of October. Certainly the Government's announced intention to confirm the Irish orders and the Brazilian Government's dredger, placed the Confederation under an obligation to at least be seen to be ready to have such discussions although in the end any agreement would need to be accepted by the UCS workers. What worried the shop stewards apart from the fact that they were not represented in these "talks about talks" was that they were taking place in the absence, as yet, of any guarantees which would secure the future of the Clydebank yard and could possibly therefore, result in a split among workers.

Informally the stewards admitted to James Jack that they were concerned about the decline in outside support for their cause and

that they had therefore decided to convene another all Scottish shop stewards conference. (1) Clearly their communication with the labour movement as to the exact position of the campaign needed to be improved. As it was, the tailing off in the level of contributions to the fighting fund with key establishments such as Scott Lithgows and Thermotank ceasing to pay weekly levies altogether, forced the shop stewards to seek assistance from the Confederation fund for UCS on two successive weeks to cover the £6,000 per week needed to meet the wages of the work-in. In some cases it was the authorities who placed objective difficulties in the way of the solidarity campaign. The NCB, for example, refused to allow the continuing use of its computer for the miners to make deductions for their weekly levy to UCS. The decision to publish in the Morning Star the special leaflet explaining the terms of the Victoria Street document which the Co-ordinating Committee had issued previously for mass distribution was further evidence of their growing concern about the level of support in and the need to communicate with the wider labour movement. (2)

It was in these circumstances that Airlie gave his estimate of the tactical position to a full meeting of UCS shop stewards in the Clydebank canteen which was to discuss the proposals to be put to the Scottish shop stewards conference the following week.

"It's becoming quite clear that the campaign is at a relatively low ebb and there is a certain complacency creeping in, particularly in the broad movement but also within our own ranks, and we've got to guard against any complacency because, we're still in the woods, we're still surrounded by the wolves." (3)

This last phrase taken from the leaflet published in the Morning Star exactly captured the mounting fears of the leadership as they surveyed the problems confronting them. Certain of the problems not surprisingly, were of a domestic character. The degree of uncertainty which had crept into the ranks was accompanied by the growth of rumours, in itself a sure indication that the role of the shop stewards Co-ordinating Committee as the authoritative spokesman was being undermined. Extremely damaging were those rumours which suggested that not only were there large numbers of workers now volunteering for redundancy but also that they were receiving immediate redundancy payments. Both rumours were untrue but were given widespread currency. They undermined the unity of the workforce to the extent that every 'volunteer', real or imagined, was effectively a man who was publically prepared to opt out of the struggle by refusing to join the work-in. As it was nineteen men altogether had volunteered that particular week, far fewer than the figures that were circulating in the yards and overall very few of the 'volunteers' were from the ranks of the work-in itself. One steward complained during discussions that even when he had addressed meetings in England for the solidarity campaign the workers down there had raised this as a question.(4) Airlie's position on the 'volunteers' was quite simply, that they should be allowed to go.

"It would be wrong for us to try and stop them because they would only be a festering weakness within our own ranks."(5)

Moreover if a settlement was arrived at that preserved the entire labour force, those who had previously applied to the liquidator for redundancy would still have to go; a simple assertion of working-class justice.

There were other problems though that threatened the unity of the workforce. At Scotstoun it was reported that Charles Connell and his managerial staff had decided that they would 'throw in the towel' after all, by refusing to pay the 50 pence levy. Sam Barr commented bitterly,

"We made our feelings quite clear to Connell, Miller, Orr and other members of the monthly staff, that this was a struggle that involved everyone and the ultimate aim was to save ship-building, the four yards and everyone's job concerned in it on this river, and if they think that the workers are the only people who is gonnie sacrifice, then they've got another thought coming." (6)

As if this were not bad enough, over in Govan, the caulkers began, not for the firsttime, to throw their weight about: unless an up-to-date financial report was issued they had threatened they would withhold their weekly levy. (7)

From Linthouse convener Willie McInnes came a rare explosion of anger caused by the discovery that the overtime ban which had come into operation as soon as the jobs were threatened had been broken by Govan plumbers working in the Linthouse yard unbeknown to the stewards there. It transpired that the plumbers who were involved in maintenance work had taken the opportunity to work substantial overtime using as their excuse the essential nature of the maintenance jobs. It had been the rule that any overtime requests should have been cleared with the Co-ordinating Committee since there would be an argument for reinstating men on the work-in rather than allowing overtime working to be done. As Willie McInnes observed dryly,

"Aye, two nights and a Sunday - working class support!" (8)

The only cheering news that day was the announcement by Benny Biggins, the painters' shop steward at Clydebank, that the liquidator had decided to reinstate six of the painters on the work-in.

The main task before the shop stewards meeting, however, was not so much the internal difficulties which though troublesome, were still well within the capabilities of the leadership to contain. The key to resolving these difficulties and the wider uncertainties lay in elevating the campaign again in order to regain former levels of political and financial support. The main business of the day was, therefore, the proposals to be put to the forthcoming all-Scottish shop stewards conference on unemployment.

To keep their fight in the public eye the stewards had already agreed to send delegations to all local demonstrations against unemployment sponsored by the STUC in major Scottish cities during the coming period. The main proposal which would be put to the Scottish shop stewards conference was that the national lobby of Parliament on unemployment called by the TUC for November 24th should be supported by a Scottish delegation, possibly to be coupled with a stoppage of work, and that the UCS shop stewards would take the opportunity to address a meeting of national shop stewards at a rally in London on that day. A second proposal to elevate the campaign was that a call should be made to the STUC to convene a Convention of the Scottish People--what was to become the Scottish Assembly--to discuss unemployment as a national issue. Finally, and most importantly, it had to be made clear to the movement in Scotland and indeed nationally, that despite the complex and difficult stage which the struggle had reached, the involvement in discussions or 'dialogue' with the Government did not mean that

the UCS situation was about to be settled or, indeed, that the workers had in any way modified their demands to save all the yards and the labour force. The UCS workers still had a card up their sleeve which they could play if the Government did not treat their demands with the necessary urgency, and Reid spelled it out.

"You'll remember some months ago the question was raised here about what do we do about the boats. And it was me that was arguing that its premature, the time will come and when the circumstances are right, and I'm convinced between now and the end of this year, unless they come forward with proposals that the time will have arrived, it will be right, it will be opportune, and we've got to then say, these boats are no' leaving these yards." (9)

Indeed, if it was the Government's intention to prolong the negotiations in the hope that the workers' resolve would crumble they had greatly underestimated the determination of the UCS workers to see the struggle through to the end. They would not baulk at delivering such an ultimatum to the Government in the next three or four weeks if there appeared to be no prospect of progress in the interim period. Confrontation, yet again, was on the cards.

These points, endorsed by the UCS stewards, were put to the Scottish shop stewards at the Rosevale meeting the following Monday. It was however a sorry affair in comparison to the tremendous enthusiasm of the meeting in August. With no more than 600 stewards present, about half the previous number, it was clear that the public campaign had lost much of its momentum. The outstanding contribution that day came not from Reid or Airlie but from Ian McKee, the AUEW district official for Dunbartonshire who was the adviser and spokesman for the equally determined but less publicised struggle against unemployment being conducted in the Vale of Leven by the Plessey workers, who were entering the ninth week of sit-in. Hitherto,

Plessey workers had recognised the 'vanguard' role of the UCS but now were in need of financial support themselves. To the credit of the UCS stewards they had no hesitation at putting the Plessey case to the fore as part of their common fight against unemployment.

From the major factories in the West Central area however, there was a singular absence of speakers coming forward to pledge their continuing solidarity. Only Alex Annan, the Yarrows convener, staunch as ever to the UCS cause, and from the official movement Joe Black and Calum MacKay, made any serious attempt to lift the enthusiasm of those present. It was left to 'wee Roddy' the fighting fund treasurer making a rare public appearance, to put the message across regarding financial support.

"Only last week, just before we went to Brighton, just to give you an example, a retired woman, that's now retired and working in an office cleaners job, sent us her full weeks' wages, which amounted to five pounds odds, along with her payslip, showing she was behind the solidarity movement, and expressed her appreciation for what the shop stewards in the movement has done up here regarding unemployment and to try and get better conditions and full employment. When we get support like that from an individual we know how the rest of the country feels." (11)

As regards the day-to-day management of the fighting fund McKenzie assured the delegates,

"I can tell you its run like a bank. Your money's well founded. There's not a penny goes anywhere it shouldn't and in the final stages, every quarter its audited by the Burgh Chamberlain of Clydebank who is an official CA. Now you know yourself nobody can put their signature unless it's official, and done legal. So there is no worry about where the money goes, or where it is. All we're not going to tell you is how much is in the bank left, because we find, or we envisage that if Davies knew how much we had got in the bank left, and I may say we're looking for it to be added to every week, Davies will then escalate the pay offs and put us out of the game." (12)

Even Airlie, however, lacked something of his characteristic self-assurance that day. It was clear that such mass meetings by themselves,



were no longer a guarantee of the automatic enthusiasm which UCS workers had become accustomed to receiving from the grass roots of the labour movement.

Undoubtedly the fact that the whole affair had continued for so long partly accounted for the diminished level of support from outside the ranks of shipbuilding. Even with a shop stewards movement, which in the west of Scotland at least, contained many politically conscious left-wing individuals besides numerous Communist shop stewards who in any event could be expected to maintain a firm commitment to the UCS cause, there was still difficulty in sustaining wider trade unionist support over a long period.

Whereas for a considerable time UCS was regarded as being in the forefront, other issues like Plessey's sit-in arose in the course of events which also demanded attention and material support. The first conference of shop stewards during the previous summer had provided an outlet for the spontaneous explosion of anger generated as a result of the initial liquidation announcement. With the Confederation now engaged in discussions with Govan Shipbuilders and the Government the situation was rather different. Doubtless the intervention of the Confederation meant that the Coordinating Committee was no longer looked to as the sole authoritative spokesman for the UCS workers and in that sense the 'dialogue' between McGarvey and Davies and the Victoria Street document probably had created the impression that somehow the whole affair was less urgent than before. Certainly this was the view which the mass media appeared to project. Moreover, given that the UCS workers were themselves marking time to some extent, the best that such a conference could have hoped to achieve was to give the most active elements in the

trade union movement a first-hand account of the real situation. Unfortunately that situation lacked any immediate forward perspective other than maintaining solidarity where possible. The question for the UCS workers was whether they should take independent action to speed up the tempo of events or continue to allow the Confederation to exercise its growing influence.

When the Co-ordinating Committee met the next day to review the situation it was obvious that if they were to emerge from the dangerous hiatus into which the campaign was slipping a new attempt to regain the initiative with the Government was required. Reid had talked about issuing an ultimatum with respect to future vessels being launched. Three ships were due to be launched with the next ten days; the Glenpark from Scotstoun, the Samjohn Pioneer from Clydebank and the Norse Marshall from Govan. The tactical problem facing the Co-ordinating Committee was if they issued such an ultimatum now, would they be able to retain, at the same time, the full support of the official movement, of the Confederation and the unity of the UCS workforce. Reporting the substance of their discussion to a full meeting of UCS shop stewards from the four yards, Airlie gave the Co-ordinating Committee's estimate of the correct tactic to be adopted.

"It was considered a short, sharp ultimatum you know, within a matter of days unless the position was resolved, that no ships would leave. I think we'll have to come to that. But the position in our opinion will be, once we make that, naturally the shipowners will get worried, they will halt payments. The liquidator in turn will possibly then stop wages, so that it's a matter of short sharp conflict, a matter of weeks so to speak. Now we might need to face up to that but what we're saying here in effect is this. That even if the three ships go, it doesnae really weaken our bargaining position, but the ultimatum's going in, in the sense that we're not allowing, and the wording, that we're not allowing a position to develop without proposals, that our assets are going to go. In other words, not another ship will leave. That gives the ultimatum to the Government; it lets the Confederation know the position and it gives our allies so to speak, in the Confederation, time to work in order to get support. The problem is that if you take a sharp decision, within a matter

of days, you could have a problem at the mass meeting because you're suddenly springing it on the lads out of the blue so to speak." (13)

Certainly an immediate refusal to allow the launch of the ships currently nearing completion could be construed as a panic reaction and could have certain dangers of isolating the shop stewards from the Confederation, allowing McGarvey to get 'off the hook' by claiming that his efforts to reach a reasonable outcome were being 'sabotaged' by the wild antics of the shop stewards.

The agreed proposal therefore to be put to the mass meeting of all UCS workers the following day, the first meeting for several weeks, was for 'confrontation', if not immediately, early in the new year, in the continuing absence of new proposals covering all the yards. In the short term, however, there was the problem of ensuring that the TUC campaign against unemployment received the fullest possible support from the UCS workers themselves if they were to be able to continue to seek assistance from the movement on the grounds of their leading role in the fight. The realities of the situation however, were that there was likely to be insufficient support among the UCS workers for a full or half-day stoppage of work on November 24th. With the approach of Christmas and the lack of overtime working and the 50p weekly deduction eating into wages, the maximum stoppage that the Co-ordinating Committee felt able to recommend to the shop stewards was for two hours only. In the event, however, the November 24th TUC lobby was not even mentioned at the next day's mass meeting which concentrated solely on the issue of the question of the ultimatum concerning future launches and agreed in principle to halt future launches if necessary. (14)

Over the following seven days the stewards grappled with one further issue which was to add new complexities to the struggle, the order for four ships for the Irish Shipping Company. The patience of the Irish Shipping Company had been rewarded by the Government's promise of favourable credit terms amounting possibly to some £15 million. The news that the workers had issued an ultimatum that no future orders would be delivered had alarmed the company somewhat, added to which they were under some domestic pressure to withdraw their orders from the Clyde and place them in Ireland. Accordingly the company had approached Danny McGarvey at the Confederation's meeting in York on November 10th, seeking clarification of the position. McGarvey agreed at once to set up a meeting of all parties concerned including Stenhouse, the liquidator and Irish Shipping Company. Two days later he and Service travelled north for a second round of discussions on the Irish orders with the local Confederation officials and the leading shop stewards whom he once again summoned to a meeting. This time the UCS stewards had no hesitation about attending such a meeting for they knew what was at stake. In any case since the 'reaffirmation' at York in October the stated position of both the 'Confederation and the shop stewards was that a solution had to encompass the four yards and the entire labour force. There was no question of any discussion eroding this position. It was agreed, therefore, that McGarvey would put forward the argument on behalf of the trade union side that the four orders for the Irish Shipping Company be distributed throughout the group on the basis of two to be built in Govan, one in Scotstoun and one at least in Clydebank. While it would have been a disaster were the Irish Shipping Company finally to withdraw, nevertheless, the trade union side had also to argue for an equitable distribution of the orders from the point of view of their public campaign and to secure continuity of employment in all the yards.

They were clearly in an awkward situation so far as insisting on the latter point was concerned with not only the Government and Stenhouse putting pressure on them but in this instance, the ship-owners as well.

The only hopeful development and it was still a very long shot indeed, was emergence of a new potential interest in the Clydebank yard. This was apart from Kelly, who had yet again indicated he would like to renew his bid, a proposal which no one seems to have taken seriously. This new interest came in the form of a US consortium called Breaksea Tankships Inc., who the previous week had identified themselves through their solicitors to the liquidator as a concern primarily hoping to build liquid gas carriers. As far back as September there had been speculation that a US consortium might be considering buying Clydebank but it was not till the end of that month that they had been named. (15) Although the contact with Breaksea was still very tentative since no one knew exactly who they were or what was the full nature of their proposition, it was a straw that seemed well worth clutching at in the circumstances. When the trade union side and Stenhouse, Courtney-Smith and Greer of the Irish Shipping Company finally got down to discussions on the orders, McGarvey pressed the liquidator for further details on Breaksea with the intention of asking Davies to encourage the consortium's interest and examine whether it had some substance to it. Indeed, the only step that the Government had taken so far in respect of Clydebank, which went any way towards fulfilling the terms of the Victoria Street document was to appoint PA Management Consultants to identify possible purchasers for the yard including potential uses other than shipbuilding. As for the immediate question of the Irish orders, McGarvey reiterated to Stenhouse and the others

the trade union position that any real progress would depend upon resolving the Clydebank situation and that one of the orders ought to be placed there to ensure continuity of work, for example, for the duration of any future discussions with an emergent purchaser such as Breaksea.

Stenhouse was quite adamant however that none of the Irish order ships would be built in Clydebank although he did not rule out the possibility of one being placed in Scotstoun even though at this stage the feasibility studies for the yard were not available. McGarvey's response was that unless one of the ships went into Clydebank, Govan Shipbuilders Ltd. would have problems in getting off the ground. His performance on this occasion was in Sammy Barr's words, "splendid". The impasse was finally overcome by a suggestion from the liquidator, who in any case was the person who had legally to accept the orders on a caretaker basis for Govan Shipbuilders, that both he and also the Government might view sympathetically the resuscitation of one of the old suspended orders for the Clydebank yard as an interim measure. This could be construed as in the interests of the creditors since it held together the skilled workforce at Clydebank and of course, the workforce could be regarded as one of the main assets of the company to be protected on financial if not on social grounds. In return the shop stewards agreed to recommend to the workers that the Irish Shipping Company be given a 'guarantee' that the four ships would be delivered on time irrespective of whether or not a satisfactory solution had in the meantime been found for Clydebank.(16)

From the shop steward's viewpoint they had really no alternative anyway and indeed, if a resuscitated order could be placed in Clydebank, that in itself would be a partial victory since it could provide

a much needed breathing space to allow a suitable purchaser to be found. The question was immediately raised though as to the exact status of the 'guarantees' to the Irish Shipping Company since they could hardly be of a binding legal character. Perry Greer seemed pleased enough, however,

"I am perfectly happy, absolutely happy. These men have given us their word and I know jolly well as a wee boy who lived in Glasgow, that when these men give you their word, you can take it absolutely, and that's what we are doing." (17)

Certainly the stewards had conceded that as far as the Irish orders were concerned they were prepared to treat Clydebank as a separate issue, although the issue of the future of Scotstoun remained also to be resolved. The press the following morning acclaimed this in jubilant terms as another 'unprecedented initiative' of the unions and a victory for 'common sense' industrial relations representing a major shift away from their previous 'hard line'. (18) Exactly one month before they had hailed the Victoria Street document in much the same terms.

Undoubtedly the shop stewards had been forced to adopt a tactical position which again created considerable confusion among the workforce. Even some of the more politically aware elements felt that this move could be a potential betrayal of the Clydebank workers and a de facto recognition of Govan Shipbuilders. There were bitter discussions in the ensuing days on this issue. As Gerry Ross recalled,

"The Irish order to us in Clydebank looked as if we were creating a situation that Govan was going to be a reality, going to be a viable project, and there was nothing on the horizon, nothing on the horizon for Clydebank." (19)

In the event it took the combined weight of Airlie, Reid and McGarvey to persuade Ross to accept the position on the Irish orders.

Now for the first time there was talk of a serious threat of a 'split' among the workforce. A certain disarray even penetrated the Co-ordinating Committee resulting in petty squabbling which came close to getting out of hand. It was obvious that a mass meeting urgently needed to be called the following week to try and stabilise the situation. According to the rotation of venues the meeting should have been held in Govan. With the situation as it was, there were advantages in holding it in Clydebank, if only to reassure the workers there of their continuing importance in the struggle. Regretably, the Co-ordinating Committee divided on the issue of where the meeting should be held. It was eventually resolved by the casting vote of the chairman who in the absence of Airlie happened to be Bob Dickie. Certain Govan shop stewards rather mischievously reported back to their departments that it was the Clydebank Convener who had decided the issue and already some Govan workers were considering boycotting the meeting. (20) Although the issue was a trivial one the fact that it could be used to stir up trouble in this way was an indication that certain of the more 'backward' elements in Govan were beginning to get the ear of their fellow workers. The hiatus had indeed produced a degree of complacency in the ranks and among some in Govan, an indifference to the fate of Clydebank. The sorry fact was that even at the previous mass meeting in Clydebank, of the forty or so buses required to transport the Govan and Linthouse men over the river to Clydebank, sixteen had to be sent away because several hundred Govan workers had slipped off rather than attend the mass meeting. (21) This time there was no actual boycott by Govan workers but the mass meeting was held in private with no members of the media allowed in, which was perhaps just as well, for as Airlie stood up to deliver the



report on the previous week's discussions the atmosphere was none too friendly. In the report, delivered in an utterly matter of fact and low key tone, Airlie put forward the substance of the meeting with McGarvey and the Irish Shipping Company, Carefully, Airlie attempted to rebut the argument that the 'guarantees' amounted to a de facto recognition of Govan Shipbuilders.

"That is not the position, but what is the alternative of not giving these guarantees; would be that the Irish Shipping Line would probably cancel it. What is the reality?

One, that the Government are guaranteeing fifteen million pounds to the Irish Shipping Company to cover these ships. We're saying eh, that if the keel is laid, wherein, in effect we have trapped the Government into an outlay of fifteen million pounds, if these ships are not built. Secondly the first ship will be delivered at the end of 1972. We're saying in effect if we're still here in 1972, the end of 1972, it would be a good problem.

And thirdly, it would be a public position, but the reality in absence of proposals that cumulatively covered all yards would be a confrontation in saying not a ship is leaving here. So therefore, if there's no wage bill we would be going out the door so to speak. There'd be no work on any ship, in other words, we'd still be kept, we couldn't work on the Irish ships because the liquidator refused to pay the wages. So, in effect there is no substance in the guarantee, it is a guarantee in words only." (22)

In the face of attacks by several disgruntled workers Airlie thundered out the campaign slogan and placed his personal integrity on the line, echoing the words of Jimmy Reid,

"It's been said from the platform, there'll be no blood money. All the yards all the labour force, and if there's any jobs going down the road, my job'll be the first. There'll be no sell-out and let me assure the brothers of that." (23)

In this context Sam Barr who was the next main speaker had the rather 'dicey' task of trying to stir up enthusiasm for the November 24th TUC lobby on unemployment which had to be put to this mass meeting if the UCS workers were to decide that they were going to support it.

As it was, by the time Bob Dickie had finished a couple of brief announcements and Barr had come to the microphone large numbers of workers were already to be seen drifting away from the meeting and had to be called back.

The local Confederation had agreed to support the call for a stoppage from the previous Scottish shop stewards meeting in the Rosevale but had only felt able to recommend a one hour token stoppage. In criticising the feeble response of the local Confederation Barr warned that UCS workers had a special responsibility in the unemployment fight.

"Now our shop stewards, taking into consideration that having been up and down the country, it is obvious, that for us to take an hour's stoppage would be a disgrace. It would be a situation where we would be letting down the workers all over this country who have been contributing into our fighting fund. And what our recommendation is, whether it's accepted or not, our recommendation is from the shop stewards committee that there be a two o'clock stoppage on Wednesday the 24th of the UCS workers." (24)

Immediately having moved the recommendation, sensing a possible defeat, Barr promptly proposed an amendment that was totally contradictory to his own motion and argued, that they should instead go along with the local Confederation's resolution after all. It was Alec Bill, another and well-respected member of the Co-ordinating Committee who saved the day by appealing to the workers.

"If it went about the country that the UCS workers were only prepared to take one hour's stoppage, then we would be a bloody laughing stock." (25)

The amendment was dropped and the motion was promptly carried but by any account it had been a most uncomfortable mass meeting.

The shop stewards had singularly failed to give new impetus to the struggle through recreating some of the enthusiasm of the early months of the campaign. Perhaps with hindsight it was unrealistic to expect that the mere issue of an ultimatum that the vessels would be held would itself regenerate the campaign, far less intimidate the Tory Government who by this time must have been well aware of the flagging morale of the workforce. In any event, the difficult tactical question of the 'guarantees' for the Irish orders had taken something of the bite out of the ultimatum although it still pertained to the future launches of ten other vessels currently at various stages of construction in the yards. It would only be after the new year, however, that the ultimatum would be put to the test, and one thing that issuing it had visibly not done, was to stimulate the Government into any kind of activity regarding a solution to Clydebank's future, while on the issuing of the feasibility reports for Scotstoun, it began to look as if the Government was being deliberately dilatory.

And then by malign chance a new uncertainty intruded.

Hugh Stenhouse was killed in a road accident leaving the embryonic Govan Shipbuilders temporarily without a chairman. From the Government's point of view, Stenhouse's death deprived them of a major prop which gave any sense of reality to the future company and posed once again the thorny problem of finding someone suitable and willing to undertake the job. If anything, the sudden removal of Stenhouse from the scene added to the growing sense of limbo which pervaded the whole UCS affair with the coming onset of the Christmas holidays.

Although it is difficult to prove it seems likely that the Government deliberately played the waiting game. Parliament actually went into recess without any new statement on UCS from Davies despite being repeatedly questioned on this by Teddy Taylor. (26) It was becoming increasingly obvious that feasibility reports which Stenhouse had originally indicated to the stewards would be ready by mid-December would not now appear until after the new year while in the absence of these, no serious direct negotiations between the stewards and Govan Shipbuilders could begin, irrespective of whatever the Confederation may have said. A full month had passed since the mass meeting in November to discuss the guarantees for the Irish orders, with almost no movement on either side and in the words of Bob Dickie,

"With the present uncertainty we feel like condemned men in the yards, not knowing whether we will get a reprieve or otherwise." (27)

The final inconclusive act of the UCS saga for 1971 was the arrival in Glasgow of John Davies a few days before Christmas. Predictably, the talks between Davies and the stewards ended in deadlock with neither side making any concessions. Davies warned the men that he intended that Govan Shipbuilders should begin operating officially as a company in January but that financial backing and the securing of new orders for the company depended upon the stewards agreeing to a formula covering wage rates and working practices. The stewards in turn demanded assurances on Scotstoun's future and on the future of Clydebank as a precondition to any negotiations. By early February the unemployment position in both Clydebank and Scotstoun would be fairly serious and in this regard the stewards' time left for manoeuvre was quickly

running out. By then they would see the possibility once again of a head-on clash with the Government, as Airlie made clear in his resumé to the full shop stewards committee of the abortive discussions with Davies.

"We envisage that after the new year then we have a meeting of the stewards. We adopt a strategy that will differ, will have to differ, from our previous strategy because the crunch is coming and quite frankly after the new year, ( ) we've had six months and naebody really has shed any blood, and we've had a lot of, if I may say so, eh statements for action.

Well the people who've been shouting for action in the last six months are gonnie get their wish like, I hope they're around when that action comes." (28)

The question was however whether they could rely on the necessary solidarity from the labour movement should there be a 'sharpening' of the struggle, for as an isolated group of workers, the time that they would be able to sustain a confrontation would be limited. If the last Scottish shop stewards meeting was anything to go by there might well be problems. In addition the attitude of the Confederation was becoming increasingly openly conciliatory, particularly at the local level. Significantly, Davies had claimed to reporters after the December talks had broken up that while the stewards had rejected discussions with Govan Shipbuilders as 'premature' this at least was not the position of the Confederation's Chairman, Dan McGarvey.<sup>(29)</sup> Presumably, Davies had been given good grounds for holding this belief.

As the year drew to a close the prospect facing the shop stewards was the rather sombre one of an early confrontation in the new year as vessels became due for launching. Once more they were under pressure from all sides to abandon the work-in and let Clydebank seek its own salvation. Not surprisingly, among the

leadership the enormous strains of the past six months were beginning to take their toll with Reid hospitalised suffering from over-exhaustion. Even Breaksea, the only real glimmer of hope, was proving to be reticent about the character of its proposals for Clydebank and had managed to elude even the best efforts of the British Ambassador in Washington to ascertain its real status and purposes.

With the start of 1972 the pace of events dramatically accelerated. On January 4th the work-in resumed with the shop stewards once again manning the gates. The same day Government announced the name of the new Chairman of Govan Shipbuilders, Lord Strathalmond. If Hugh Stenhouse had had all the prickly hustle of a local entrepreneur who thrust his way to the top of the business world, Lord Strathalmond had all the polish and control that one would expect to find in someone groomed from birth to serve in the higher echelons of monopoly capitalism. Known as Billy Fraser in the oil industry, he had been a managing director of British Petroleum since 1962, son of the first Baron Strathalmond, himself a former chairman of BP, and grandson of William Fraser one of the founders of the shale oil industry in Scotland. Educated at Cambridge he had practised as a barrister after the war, eventually becoming managing director of the Kuwait Oil Company from 1959 to 1962 and had served as the key 'trouble-shooter' for the oil companies in the crucial Teheran negotiations with the oil-producing nations. He was also a personal friend of John Davies who himself was a former managing director of Shell Mex and BP. (30) Within a matter of days Strathalmond had met McGarvey, local officials, the liquidator, the local authorities and even arranged a meeting with twenty-

four Scottish MP's at the City Chambers and had visited the yards impressing one and all with his good intentions. Indeed, Strathalmond's initial meeting with the shop stewards at the yards was almost friendly in comparison to the reception which Stenhouse had received, as the TV cameras recorded,

Strathalmond: "Mr. Airlie, I have seen you on television so often, and Mr. Reid too."

Airlie: "Oh you'll get on television oftener than me, its part of the game."

Strathalmond: "You were having a bash at me yesterday."

Airlie: "You know our position."

Strathalmond: "Yes, I've got it absolutely."

Airlie: "Well, your appointment is successor to the late Sir Hugh Stenhouse, but we must reiterate our position, that we wish there can be a solution to the problem but you understand without a solution that will cover the four yards, that will make meaningful discussions impossible as far as we are concerned."

Strathalmond: "I've got your position absolutely clear." (31)

As Airlie commented later, Strathalmond seemed "a very nice and reasonable lad." (32)

The appointment of Strathalmond signalled a new element of flexibility in terms of a willingness to consider Clydebank and the men's jobs as the heart of the problem. Moreover, Strathalmond admitted that though some of the capital for Govan Shipbuilders might come from private sources the bulk of it would need to depend on the Government. The question would be just how much the Government were prepared to put up, on which Strathalmond quipped referring to Davies, "John and I are going to have one of our usual rows." (33)

The second development and one which was to dominate events thereafter, was the attempt by McGarvey to break the deadlock over Clydebank by going to the United States along with Service, to seek out Breaksea for himself in Houston. It was an extraordinarily bold gamble but if it came off it would give McGarvey a chance of decisively outflanking the shop stewards and would make his reputation ever after as the saviour of UCS. McGarvey had hoped to pressure Davies into a joint approach to Breaksea with the DTT, in order to be able to give the widest possible 'assurances' to the company and when that did not materialise he even offered to take along the liquidator to the US. Courtney-Smith had also declined so it was almost completely a solo initiative with quite a lot at stake. Indeed McGarvey had hinted that if his visit did not pay off then the Confederation and the workforce would have to "face up to the realities of life relative to the Govan position". (34) If Breaksea did not turn up trumps then, McGarvey would argue that the York 'reaffirmation' would need to be overturned and immediate recognition given to Govan Shipbuilders.

If the Government had not managed to find out much about Breaksea, The Sunday Times had and it carried a profile of the men behind the consortium, the weekend of McGarvey and Service's departure. They were first, Karl A. Malley, the chairman, aged thirty-one and a property dealer, second, Mel Friedman, aged twenty-nine, an attorney specialising in murder and obscenity cases and third, Ken Arkwright aged fifty four years from South Wales who had served in the RAF from 1939-52 and was a consultant to the US Government on the design of military vessels. Collectively their connection with shipbuilding was remote, being basically a



'front company' set up in April of 1971 to do a feasibility study on the possibility of building liquid nitrogen gas carriers. Based in Houston, Texas, Breaksea was characterised as a company "living off the fringes of the oil industry" and its directors were described with savage accuracy, as "the archetype wheeler-dealer group served with every hamburger in this oil rich city". (35) On the television news, McGarvey's crumpled face was a strangely incongruous sight as he posed for photographers against the background of Houston's skyscrapers, with an equally diminutive Jack Service standing beside him looking distinctly nervous about it all. Somehow the UCS story had become associated with shots of welders at work, pictures of huge demonstrations, of hands going up at mass meetings, and of Reid and Airlie dominating press conferences. Indeed, the fact was that none of the leading shop stewards were invited to accompany McGarvey and Service to the States.

The meeting with Breaksea, however, proved inconclusive as Karl Maley and his co-directors flew off to various parts of the US after a brief discussion with McGarvey to see whether their 'backers' would speed up their decision on the Clydebank bid. It had emerged moreover, that this was only one of five sites being considered in feasibility studies by Breaksea. The presence of Service and McGarvey had however, created considerable local interest in Houston.

Over the next few days several other concerns expressed possible interest in Clydebank and had discussions with McGarvey of whom the Marathon Manufacturing Corporation, an oil-rig building concern, emerged as the most likely prospect. There has been much speculation as to how McGarvey made contact with Marathon whether through John Davies, a prior tip from anonymous businessmen or

purely by chance. <sup>(36)</sup> Marathon was especially attractive as they claimed that they would not need to modernise the yard and could be in operation within three months. On this optimistic note McGarvey had reported to Davies on his return and on January 20th, five days later, he came to Glasgow for talks with the stewards at UCS. In the interim he had also reported to the Shipbuilding Committee of the Confederation which had decided to recognise Govan Shipbuilders immediately, a decision endorsed a couple of days later by the emergency committee of the Clyde district of the Confederation. This move, foreshadowed prior to McGarvey's departure for the States, not surprisingly enraged the shop stewards.

The entire UCS shop stewards committee of two hundred or so gathered in Clydebank Town Hall for a meeting that became a 'showdown' between McGarvey and the stewards. It lasted four hours and produced angry confrontation between McGarvey and the stewards. McGarvey had intended to bludgeon the stewards into immediate recognition of Govan Shipbuilders in return for a 'holding position' whereby the liquidator would guarantee that there would be no redundancies until the interest of the American companies in Clydebank had become clear, a proposal which if accepted, would ease immediate pressure with respect to jobs in Scotstoun and Clydebank. Without agreement from the shop stewards, however, the Confederation's recognition of Govan Shipbuilders was meaningless. The problem was that, in reality, McGarvey had not returned with anything more concrete for Clydebank than a few expressions of interest by the Americans. To recognise Govan Shipbuilders under these conditions would be a tacit acceptance of the position that the workers had suspected McGarvey of secretly adhering to all along, namely that 'half a loaf is always better than none'.

As Airlie recalled, the "gloves were off" at that meeting. At one stage things became so heated that the meeting adjourned while McGarvey took the Co-ordinating Committee aside for a separate discussion in another room. Words like 'Judas' and 'traitor' were some of the more polite terms flung about as McGarvey threatened once again to call on his own members in the Boilermakers Union on a sectional basis to recognise Govan Shipbuilders, that is, to appeal to the workforce over the heads of the Co-ordinating Committee. None of the boilermakers' stewards however, would support him and McGarvey realised he was totally isolated, he was 'not on'. He left the meeting a 'changed man', having suffered a humiliating defeat in the face of the stewards unshakeable resolve to maintain the four yard position. (37)

The following day at a meeting with Smith, Strathalmond and Douglas, McGarvey secured broad agreement that a 'holding position' of no mandatory redundancies would apply for the next six weeks. This temporarily solved the immediate problem of redundancies. In the yards a mass meeting at Linthouse backed the stewards position once again of no recognition for Govan Shipbuilders without firm proposals for Scotstoun and Clydebank. A new problem faced the stewards however. In November they had taken a decision that no more ships would leave the yards and within a week or so, with three ships now ready to be launched or delivered, they would have to decide whether circumstances had altered sufficiently for them to abandon that position or whether the time had come at last to force the Government's hand. The waiting game was over.

## Chapter 8 The Waiting Game

- 1 STUC Minutes, 1971, Minutes of meeting of Economic Committee held on Tuesday 26 October 1971, p. 000600. Middleton House, Glasgow.
- 2 Morning Star, 26 October 1971.
- 3 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting Clydebank canteen, 28 October 1971, p. 1, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol.1.
- 4 *ibid.*, p. 11.
- 5 *ibid.*, p. 12.
- 6 *ibid.*, p. 7.
- 7 *ibid.*, p. 13.
- 8 *ibid.*, p. 22.
- 9 *ibid.*, p. 17.
- 10 The Plessey sit-in is discussed further in chapter 12.
- 11 UCS Shop Stewards, Second Conference of Scottish shop stewards on unemployment, Rosevale, 1 November 1971, p. 25, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol.3.
- 12 *ibid.*, p. 26.
- 13 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting Clydebank canteen, 3 November 1971, p. 8, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol.1.
- 14 UCS Shop Stewards, mass meeting Clydebank, 4 November 1971, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol.1.
- 15 Glasgow Herald, 28 September 1971.
- 16 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting 16 November 1971, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol.2.
- 17 BBC TV News, 12 November 1971, GU Archives.
- 18 Glasgow Herald, 13 November 1971; Daily Record, 13 November 1971.
- 19 Interview with Gerry Ross, 2 May 1979, GU Archives.

- 20 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting 16 November 1971, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 2.
- 21 *ibid.*
- 22 UCS Shop Stewards, mass meeting Clydebank, 17 November 1971, p. 4, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 2.
- 23 *ibid.*, pp. 8-9.
- 24 *ibid.*, p. 13.
- 25 *ibid.*, p. 15.
- 26 Hansard, vol. 827, 1970-71, 29 November 1971, written answer, col. 214; Hansard, vol. 828, 1970-71, 20 December 1971, written answer, col. 272.
- 27 Glasgow Herald, 18 December 1971.
- 28 UCS Shop Stewards, reportback on Davies, Clydebank canteen, 23 December 1971, p. 8, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 2.
- 29 Glasgow Herald, 23 December 1971.
- 30 Glasgow Herald, 4 January 1972.
- 31 BBC TV News, G72/15, 5 January 1972, GU Archives.
- 32 *ibid.*
- 33 Glasgow Herald, 6 January 1972.
- 34 The Times, 8 January 1972.
- 35 The Sunday Times, 9 January 1972.
- 36 The former is suggested by D. Booth 'Rebuild a shipyard and construct a bright future', The Engineer, 27 September 1973, p. 53.
- 37 Interview with Jimmy Airlie, 13 July 1979, UCS coll; Interview with Bobby Dickie, Willie Robertson and Con O'Neill, 22 May 1979, GU Archives.

## Chapter Nine

## THE PHOENIX ARISES

The agreement by the shop stewards to accept a 'holding position' for six weeks had served to avert immediate redundancies at Scotstoun although until another ship order was placed both there and in Clydebank, the situation would remain precarious. The logic of accepting this position was, however, that the status quo would prevail all around. This meant that the UCS workers were under pressure not to upset the applecart. The problem was that the mass meeting decision of November, that no more ships would be allowed to go in the new year unless a solution had been found for Scotstoun and Clydebank, now implied a rather different course of action. Within a matter of days the New Westminster City was due to be delivered from Govan and shortly thereafter, Clydebank and Scotstoun were each to launch a ship. If ever there was a good time for confrontation, this was surely it, particularly if it was a question of ensuring unity of the workforce by involving each of the yards in withholding vessels at the same moment in time. The question was, however, not quite so simple as that.

First at the Co-ordinating Committee and then at a full shop stewards meeting the argument flew back and forth. It was undoubtedly the most difficult tactical decision with which the UCS workers had been faced in seven long months of struggle. The temptation to have a short sharp confrontation, after all the promises of action, was certainly strong. As Sam Barr said to his fellow stewards in the first public disagreement among the leadership of the UCS campaign:

"all over the country and even in the, the UCS itself, you know when you're talking to lads in the yards they're saying 'When are we gonnie have a go? We are getting sick of the situation. It seems to be that we're looking as if we're on the retreat all the time. Let's have a go'. I'm getting that, I don't know about the rest of the shop stewards but I'm getting that point of view from them, and the other thing is that even the movement itself is thinking its a big kid-on. The papers are having a go about the work-in numbers and what have you. Everybody thinks its a kid-on the whole situation in the Upper Clyde." (1)

Certainly press reports earlier in the month had been suggesting that the numbers on the work-in had been grossly exaggerated by the shop stewards and that more workers were volunteering to accept redundancy. (2) There was also a degree of demoralisation in Barr's own yard as a natural consequence of the seemingly endless delay in producing the feasibility report for Scotstoun and the insecurity caused by the absence of any new orders to begin work on. Barr's impatience was thus understandable. If the situation was allowed to drag on a further six weeks with nothing resolved, then the chances of mounting a successful confrontation would be poor indeed. It was also true that with the miners now on strike and also the car workers, both of them major contributors to the fighting fund, the overall financial position was not as healthy as it might be and would be even less so if events continued to move at such a slow pace. Moreover, down the road at Yarrow the boilermakers, another major contributor to the fund were also out on strike.

From Willie Clydesdale came other, more cautious counsel,

"And I'd say at this time, it isnae the best time for us to have confrontation because who are we gonnie confront? We're gonnie confront the Government and ask them to get a buyer for Clydebank and here's big Dan McGarvey came in on Friday with these prospective buyers and if we have a confrontation at the present time, none of these buyers are gonnie even look at Clydebank." (3)

Clydesdale's argument was reinforced by the obvious point that in a confrontation McGarvey would go to the Confederation and argue that the stewards were behaving irresponsibly. It was an argument which had been used before but certainly carried a degree of force, and it was echoed by Gerry Ross,

"Eh first I would like to say that I disagree entirely with Sammy's sentiments because its a day to day struggle and Sam knows it as well as I do. And at the start of this campaign we agreed on the philosophy and the politics, the four yards and the entire labour force together. And during the period of the campaign, we were forced by circumstances to change that policy. Today we're in the position of having a situation, where there is a possibility of three of the yards being in the one consortium and another yard under another owner. And therefore on that basis, we get an education and a strategy to fight as the struggle develops." (4)

On the other hand, respected figures like Sammy Gilmore, Jimmy Rankine, Stan McNee, Tommy Freil and Davy Cooper were quick to argue against this view. Prior to the shop stewards meeting, the Co-ordinating Committee had thrashed out the issues for an hour and a half and had finally arrived at a recommendation to allow the launch and delivery of the vessels to proceed by twenty-nine votes to fourteen, a two-to-one majority, but hardly a unanimous recommendation. Alec Bill articulated well the very mixed feelings among the Co-ordinating Committee members.

"Now I was at the Co-ordinating Committee this morning and as eh Jim Airlie pointed out, there was a really good discussion this morning, because I found myself, that depending on who was speaking I was changing my mind backwards and forwards to what was the necessary thing to do, eh Willie Robertson had the honesty to get up on his feet and actually state that, but as various speakers spoke you found yourself going backwards and forwards regarding what the proper decision eh that should be taken." (5)

Jimmy Airlie in replying to the meeting was likewise utterly frank about his own doubts. It was a decision which either way held dangers



and what was at stake was too important for petty dissembling.

Airlie was clearly thinking aloud as he warned the stewards,

"Let me say that the stewards from the start of this struggle are engaged in possibly the most difficult struggle a working-class leadership can be involved in. Because you can battle on wages and conditions, if you make a tactical mistake it means you go back into your work, and you get nothing, but you're there, you learn from your mistakes, and you're there to fight another day. But part of the problems we face as stewards, as the leadership, and you're never certain in your tactics because there's always arguments for and against, but make a serious tactical error and you'll no' live to fight another day, so we've all got to bear than in mind when you arrive at a conclusion, and that's no' me putting it in a dogmatic manner, I think that's the reality of the situation." (6)

The actual vote at the shop stewards meeting after further lengthy discussions resulted in an almost even number of stewards for and against the recommendation, obviously an unsatisfactory and inconclusive position whatever future action was contemplated. It would require a further meeting to resolve the issue and when the discussion was eventually resumed three days later, the Co-ordinating Committee this time had made a firm recommendation that the vessel in question, the New Westminster City, be released in order to avoid creating an atmosphere of crisis during the negotiations with Marathon. Indeed, representatives of Marathon were touring the yard that very day and the situation looked somewhat more hopeful than it had done previously. The Co-ordinating Committee, said Reid, had in the meantime informed McGarvey that they intended to make this recommendation to a mass meeting on the understanding that if by the end of February a solution had not been reached to the problem of Clydebank and Scotstoun then this was positively the last ship to go, a stance which McGarvey had said would receive his support in the Confederation. (7)

This time despite real doubts about McGarvey's position voiced by several stewards including Sam Barr, it was agreed by a decisive

majority that a recommendation be put to a mass meeting of the workers the following Monday to release the vessel, with Barr, McNee, Cooper and the others now voting in favour.

At the shop stewards meeting it had also transpired that the problems of maintaining the unity of the workforce were not simply confined to Scotstoun. For a number of months the members of the crane department in Govan, a key section of the yard workforce had been refusing to contribute their 50 pence per week to the fighting fund despite the intervention of officials of the GMWU both at national and local level. This in turn had led to other sections particularly among the lower paid workers, such as tank cleaners, women cleaners, platers helpers and red leaders also refusing to pay the levy. Relatively, of course, the 50 pence was more burdensome on the lower paid workers although there were provisions for payment of a reduced contribution to be made. On a previous occasion the stewards had taken the cranimen off the cranes and replaced them with cranimen from Scotstoun who were on the work-in. This time the alternatives open to the stewards were either to physically prevent them from coming into the yard and risk stopping production which would create very damaging publicity, or as Airlie recommended, to take the cranimen's stewards who also happened to be the Govan stewards' convener and sub-convener, Cook and McNally, off the Co-ordinating Committee and joint shop stewards committee. As Airlie commented echoing the feelings of the other shop stewards, the cranimen were a 'bunch of slags' but they would be dealt with when the time came. A confrontation with them now would be a diversion. (8)

Meanwhile other more pressing concerns had come to the fore.

Later that day the shop stewards were to meet the representatives of Marathon led by Wayne Harbin, their smooth-talking president. Marathon had already held discussions with Davies at the DTI in London to ascertain what Government assistance they would receive should they

come to Clydebank. Now they had come north to see the yard for themselves and judge its potential. Their opinion of Clydebank's equipment which they related to the shop stewards was that it was, to say the least, old and delapidated, a view which noone would contest. Indeed, they marvelled at the quality of the products that the workforce had produced with such antiquated machinery. As such, the main asset which they said they were interested in was the workforce itself, with its skills.(9) At this stage, the main problem seemed to be technical, whether the river could accomodate the size of oil rigs and support vessels they intended to build. Accordingly, given that this could be resolved, Marathon expected to announce their decision on Clydebank within two to three weeks and start production within thirty days of that, since much of the basic design work for their product had already been done. The shop stewards had reassured Marathon as regards their worries of 'labour unrest', that they need have no fears. The workers would give their full co-operation and honour any procedural agreements. For their part, Marathon indicated that they were interested in negotiating a wage agreement lasting three to four years which would have a 'built-in escalation clause' to cover cost of living increases and moreover, in general, they would pay above the normal rates. There was even vague talk of a future expansion of the labour force.(10) It looked almost too good to be true and indeed, before very long it was to turn out to be such.

The shop stewards had agreed that given that the delivery from Govan was due to take place the following Tuesday, it was necessary to hold a mass meeting of the workforce on Monday 31st January in order to inform them of the discussions with Marathon and secure their agreement that in view of these developments the delivery should be

allowed to proceed. If these negotiations were unsuccessful then within four weeks they could stage a confrontation with the Government, hopefully backed by the Confederation and the labour movement. These points were put by Reid and Airlie to the workforce assembled on Monday at Linthouse. Sam Barr's estimate of the problems at Scotstoun in terms of morale had not been mistaken for from one of the Scotstoun workers came a sharp attack on the Co-ordinating Committee for having,

"ceased to be a representative body. They're now their own body. They've fallen into the trap of so many militants in the past, that once they've got authority, they forget about us...they've become an establishment."(11)

Predictably, the argument being put was for immediate confrontation unless a new order was placed in Scotstoun at once to prevent future layoffs. Before Sammy Barr could be given the chance to reply another worker had come to the microphone demanding to know whether Marathon had stipulated a 'no strike clause' in any labour agreement and whether all the unions were 'to come under the one umbrella', that is, negotiate as a common trade union side rather than as traditionally, section by section, with the boilermakers as 'kings of the river' receiving the highest differential payment. Press comment several days before had suggested that Harbin and McGarvey had discussed such an agreement at a meeting in London's Hilton Hotel prior to Harbin's visit to Clydebank.(12) In his previous report to the shop stewards of the discussions with Marathon, Airlie had not mentioned either of these two factors, both of which could now be exceptionally awkward in securing the immediate agreement of the workers to allow the release of the New Westminster City never mind any longer term more enduring settlement of the UCS issue. This time Airlie's reply was low key, even a trifle defensive.

"On the point the brothers' raising, fellow workers, first of all we entered into no deep discussion with the Marathon Company. But as regards the 'no strike' clause, what we undertook, provided that a mutually acceptable procedural agreement was drawn up, we would honour it, from our part. But mutually, that's the word. They've got to honour their part of it, and there's no question of no strikes. Provided they honour their part, we'll honour our part. We're not slaves, we wouldn't be selling our birthrights." (13)

Without further substantial discussion the motion from the Co-ordinating Committee was put by Airlie and was carried. Once again, a confrontation was avoided but the question of a 'no strike clause' and of abandoning traditional sectional wage bargaining was left hanging in the air. They were to reappear, needless to say, at a later date.

If Clydebank was one side of the UCS affair upon which there seemed to be some progress, the same could not be said of Govan Shipbuilders which remained the paper company it had been since the Government had first announced the embryo board. Formal negotiations between the management and the workforce on wage rates and working practices, of the kind that Davies had demanded still had not taken place although the local Confederation had prepared a lot of the ground should the conditions for such discussions arise. These were unlikely to emerge until the issue of Scotstoun was resolved and the overall future of the company was secured by the Government providing sufficient initial capital for Govan Shipbuilders. That such capital would be forthcoming, and it would need to be substantially in excess of anything that the Four Wise Men had conceived of, was by no means a foregone conclusion. Indeed persistent rumours were circulating in early February of certain elements in the Tory party conducting a powerful rearguard action which, if successful, could leave the new company under-capitalised just as the old UCS had been. With the publication of the Scotstoun feasibility report now imminent it was

clear that the Government was faced with the choice of either accepting that Scotstoun would be part of the new group, primarily on what the Government saw as non-economic grounds, or rejecting it, which could well precipitate a final confrontation with the workforce. The former option would be expensive, but the latter, given that they already had their hands full with the miners' strike was hardly a more desirable option.

Behind the scenes informal discussions took place between Douglas and the Co-ordinating Committee concerning the rumours about the future finance for Govan Shipbuilders. Indeed, Douglas had made it known to the stewards that if insufficient finance was offered by the Government, the Board would resign. (14) Meanwhile Strathalmond had gone to London to put personal pressure on Davies to supply the necessary finance. With the 'holding position' ceasing to be operative at the end of the month a decision from the Government was now also a matter of urgency. It had been hoped that the shop stewards could arrange a meeting with Davies at the end of the first week in February to add their voice to the demand for sufficient finance but the meeting was postponed to the middle of the month to allow further consideration of the feasibility report by the Government and also of the Marathon interest. The stewards agreed to go to London that week anyway in order to discuss the overall position with McGarvey and the Confederation. As Barr said of McGarvey,

"we know the sort of things that's happening within the UCS. He's divorced from the situation and also, that we cannae' have a situation where we have argued from the very beginning that the, that the official movement, I'm talking about the Confederation officially, will have the opportunity of taking the struggle from the shop stewards..." (15)

When the stewards along with McGarvey and the Confederation officials finally met Davies on February 14th they were sufficiently reassured

both on the question of the extent of aid which the Government was prepared to give to Marathon and on the future of Govan Shipbuilders, with the inclusion of Scotstoun, for them to agree at last to an early start to formal negotiations with Govan Shipbuilders on wages and working practices. Marathon under the Local Employment Acts it appeared would receive import duty relief on tools and equipment, a contribution of 30 per cent towards their wages and salary bill over the first three years of operation and would also qualify for grants to modernise and re-equip the yard. The only problem seemed to be Marathon itself who despite their promise of a decision on Clydebank by the middle of the month had suddenly become remarkably reticent, so much so that Eden even offered to send over DTI officials to Houston to iron out any difficulties the company had over the extent of assistance that would be made available. It was clear however that these technical problems if indeed that is what they were, were not going to be overcome before the moratorium on redundancies ran out at the end of February.

For this reason, somewhat earlier than he would have preferred, Davies was constrained to announce the general terms of Government assistance to Govan Shipbuilders which included the Scotstoun yard, during a debate on unemployment on February 28th. The level of Government assistance exceeded the hopes of even the most optimistic, amounting to £35 million in all, of which £17 million was to cover losses on orders during the first three years of the company's operations and £18 million was for investment in the yards and working capital with a total labour force of 4,300, equivalent to the numbers currently employed.(16) The 'lame duck' policy of non-intervention had been well and truly torpedoed. It was a dramatic shift from the

scheme of the Four Wise Men for 2,500 employed at a cost of £10 millions. Singled out for special praise by Davies, was Dan McGarvey as the 'one man who has played a consistently constructive and helpful role in trying to make this phoenix rise again.' (17)

The anger and resentment felt by Tory MP's at this massive U-turn in Government policy was articulated by Jock Bruce-Gardyne who rose to interrupt Davies during his speech and reminded him of Davies' own question when Benn had been Minister of Technology and the Conservatives were in Opposition, as to whether or not "an open-ended subsidy" to one yard would "undermine the viability of the other shipyards including shipyards on the Clyde?" (18) Perhaps the publication by the Aims of Industry of a pamphlet a few days before entitled 'Power on the Shopfloor: Co-operation, Control or Chaos?' which described the work-in as "a quite substantial step along the road to anarchy" had fuelled his anger. (19) Of course, it was not just shipyards that Gardyne was worried about. As MP for South Angus this was hardly a major constituency problem. Rather it was the clear implication that the Government had been forced to recognise that any future economic decision on the basis of profitability could no longer be taken in a political and social vacuum if it involved large-scale redundancies. The social costs which the STUC inquiry had attempted to measure had now entered the equations of Government policy options and with unemployment at one million the Heath government felt it had no alternative but to abandon its 'non-interventionist' stance towards regional industrial problems. The 'lame duck' strategy had become a dead duck, killed by the UCS workers.



In a letter dated February 7th from Strathalmond to Davies which outlined the Govan Shipbuilders estimate of the Hill Samuel feasibility study of the company's future, Strathalmond observed,

"we feel the problem of shipbuilding on the Upper Clyde must be treated at the outset as a social one, or one in the national interest, or both." (20)

This letter which Davies had referred to in the Commons debate and had placed in the Commons library for early consultation by members prior to publication of the main report itself, was in accord with the Government's recognition of the new realities it faced. Hence also its republication as Annex to the report a few days later. (21)

The Hill Samuel report itself was less than optimistic about the future prospects for early commercial success at least until its fourth year of operation, by which time it could be making a small profit by producing ships at the rate of fourteen 26,000 dwt bulk carriers per annum. The report recommended, in contrast to that of the Four Wise Men, that since it was "unlikely that Govan Shipbuilders can attract any private capital except perhaps a small amount on a purely emotional basis and anyway in terms of the company's overall requirements such finance was "virtually meaningless", that the company be wholly owned by the Government, at least for the first four or five years.(22) . Furthermore the presence of private capital would involve "greater pressure on Govan Shipbuilders to disclose its results in detail" which it was argued could be damaging to the morale of the workforce and the company and those it dealt with. (23) It was hardly an unrestrained shout of enthusiasm, but all things considered, it was not a bad outcome from the point of view of the UCS workforce. Undoubtedly without their campaign the report might

have been very different in nature as Hill Samuel themselves seemed to imply in their final paragraph.

"In our view, there can be no question of the establishment of Govan Shipbuilders, in accordance with this Report, being a proposition which would attract commercial support. The decision whether or not to establish it must, therefore, be judged on other considerations." (24)

It only remained for John Davies to attempt to present the report to the media as yet further justification of the correctness of the Government's initial policy towards UCS.

"Well I think that the £35 million is a result of a really deep study made of what is necessary to keep shipbuilding going on the Upper Clyde....points out just how ridiculous it was to suggest that with a handout of £6 million last summer you would have seen it survive." (25)

The fact was however, that the 'other' considerations signalled a decisive shift in the strategy of the Conservative government. (26)

There remained from the point of view of the UCS campaign the question of Clydebank and the Marathon proposals. With the announcement of the Government assistance to establish Govan Shipbuilders, Marathon, from having already lost their initial urgency suddenly became downright indifferent towards their involvement in Clydebank. In reply to Eden's offer to send over DTI officials to discuss details of the assistance that would be made available to the company, itself a highly unusual step, Marathon now said there would be little point in such a visit taking place unless the Government was prepared to give them financial support on a scale comparable with that received by Govan Shipbuilders. Marathon saw themselves as entering a buyers' market and were determined to extract the maximum advantage from this. Moreover they knew that if Clydebank was not taken over the whole Govan Shipbuilders package would be threatened leaving the Government

in a very awkward position. With no other serious contender in the field except possibly Breaksea Tankships who still showed no signs of being in a position to make a bid for Clydebank, Marathon could afford to stand pat. Arguments from the DTI that assistance to Marathon should be confined to the Local Employment Acts since there was no comparison between supporting an ailing shipbuilding industry and being asked to support oil-rig builders in a period of high demand failed to take cognizance of the fact that Marathon knew they had the Government over a barrel. (27)

After a further flurry of telex messages between London and Houston it was finally agreed that the liquidator together with DTI officials and members of the Local Employment Acts Finance Advisory Committee, the committee which advised the government, would fly to Texas as a seven man team in early March. After several days of discussions in the United States the liquidator duly returned and announced that he was confident that Marathon's bid would shortly be forthcoming and the company envisaged a starting date of May 1st. (28) The relevant papers concerning Marathon's bid were not, however, sent over from Houston for a further week and it was on March 20th that they were received by the Finance Advisory Committee. By the end of the first week in April, still no definite decision had been reached, while as an additional complication Marathon had decided to resubmit their original bid in order to take advantage of new regional incentives offered in the Tory budget thus hopefully getting the best of all possible worlds. As it was, private meetings of backbench Tory MP's had already given Davies a rough ride over the extent of the aid to Govan Shipbuilders. The government's defeat over the miners' strike had rankled deep and MP's now wanted assurances that Marathon would not

also be treated as a 'special case'. The involvement of Communists in both the leadership of the UCS and the mineworkers was too much to bear for the more apoplectic backwoodsmen and had led to Gordon Campbell launching a bitter attack on the harm being done to the country's image "especially by Communist shop stewards." (29) The workers, he said, were being misled by "wild men, be they Communists, anarchists or whatever." (30) However, it was not only from within the ranks of the Tory Party that the Government was under pressure. From the shipbuilding employers came opposing pressure in the shape of renewed demands for increased assistance for the industry which would allow them to compete on favourable terms with Govan Shipbuilders. (31) Hence the importance of the budget incentives and assistance to the industry. It was clear that the Government was now prepared to take the problem of regional unemployment very seriously indeed. In a cabinet reshuffle in early April the new post of Minister of Industrial Development was created with Christopher Chataway specifically responsible for dealing with regional problems such as shipbuilding. As far as the Upper Clyde was concerned, it marked the ministerial demise of John Davies and the entry of a new face in the final chapters of this episode.

At the beginning of March the workers had been assured by Strathalmond that a suspended bulk carrier order would be placed in Scotstoun to tide things over until the new company was launched. In return the stewards had agreed to release a vessel due for delivery from Scotstoun thereby averting the possibility of three hundred redundancies. Now a month later further redundancies were imminent. Together with the delay over Marathon, the workers' mood was one of exasperation. They had expected an announcement on Marathon before the Easter parliamentary recess and had even contacted Benn to see if he could raise the question with Davies but they had received no

satisfactory answer from the Government. Yet again they were faced with the problem of deciding whether to allow movement of ships, this time the Tacoma City from Govan and the Samjohn Governor from Clydebank, the former due to be delivered to the owners and the latter due to go into the Govan drydock. The arguments were much the same as before on the shop stewards committee. (32) If the two ships were held the Government could well have an excuse to slip "off the hook". (33) Moreover although progress towards settling Clydebank had not been as fast as they would have wished they had received informal news from Strathalmond that the Government intended to confirm not one but two orders for bulk carriers for Scotstoun the following week and indeed the liquidator had already ordered 500 tons of steel in anticipation. Any confrontation now might well jeopardise this and the possibility of a favourable announcement on the Marathon deal.

Airlie conveyed the Co-ordinating Committee recommendation however that even though the vessels would be allowed to move, the talks on working practices with Govan Shipbuilders which were now nearing completion and due to be signed the following Monday, should be suspended until the Government reach firm agreement with Marathon. (34) Against Airlie's advice it was agreed however, to put the whole issue to a mass meeting of the workforce the coming Friday, since many of the stewards felt that the shop stewards could not take a decision to release vessels yet again without consulting the 'bears'. The Co-ordinating Committee had left open the question of whether or not a mass meeting should be held on this question. The decision to release a Scotstoun vessel the previous month had been taken without consulting the workforce at a mass meeting, on the grounds that some movement towards a solution was apparent. Now, the problem was, as Airlie pointed out, that with a new revolt over the 50p levy, this

time among the boilermakers' foremen in Scotstoun, there was a danger of "washing dirty linen in public". (35)

In fact, the mass meeting held at Clydebank on Friday 7th April was the first one to be held since the end of January. Willie Clydesdale had suggested at the previous shop stewards meeting that Jimmy Reid give the main report as the most persuasive speaker. Now Reid delivered a long and emotional speech, one of his best in the UCS campaign, reviewing the developments in relation to Govan and Clydebank, the solidarity they had received, the change they had brought about in the Government's approach and finally, the dangers at this stage of too hasty action or of divisions in the ranks of the workers to their final objective of a favourable Government decision with respect to Marathon. As Reid made clear however, if it became necessary, they would still fight,

"But if on the other hand, and we must be reaching the end of this struggle, and we're not talking in weeks...If on the other hand these authorities who've told us with absolute confidence that the decision is in the pipeline, and that decision does not materialise, then they stand accused. Not only accused, but found guilty of playing with the lives and livelihoods of working class families. The eruption of anger from ourselves and the rest of the Scottish working class will more than compensate for the departure of one or even two vessels from this river. And last, but by no means least, if we get a duck egg, and nobody's telling us that we've any likelihood of getting one, the tight control, or the control we have in these yards can be tightened absolutely, which means that everything in these yards is in the control of the working class, and the workers, and the working class movement of this country. I want here to make this last plea to you. There are difficulties. There's always dangers. There are always risks. The shop stewards may have made mistakes in this nine months. Well I want to say here and now that whatever mistakes we've made, they've been infinitesimal as compared to the generally correct leadership and proposals we've put to you as a workforce. And above all today, we don't mind discussions, but we want unity, and I'm asking and appealing for the maximum unity along the lines of the proposals contained in the report on behalf of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee. And let us ensure that no precipitant action will create the situation where we are accused of snatching defeat from the jaws of victory. That, brothers and sisters, is the report of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee." (36)

Not surprisingly this time it was two Clydebank workers who came forward to argue against the recommendation. The first was Tommy Stewart, an ETU steward, who cited Plessey's and the Fisher-Bendix struggles as examples of where an uncompromising stance had secured victory for the workforce. The second worker was another Clydebank steward, Joe Moriarty, a supporter of the Trotskyite Socialist Labour League. Moriarty reminded Reid of his statement at the November mass meeting that unless there were guarantees for the four yards and the labour force by the new year there would be action by the workers, Moriarty continued,

"I'm beginning to wonder just which new year. Because since then we've had a meeting on the 31st January as you know, we took another decision to give more boats away. And now we're being asked to do the same thing again. And I'll be the first to concede, we can't be accused of allowing our negotiating position to be whittled away when we're giving our position away by boat load." (37)

In his reply to the discussion Reid confronted Moriarty,

"Joe came to make his point here, and quite frankly, whilst I'm prepared to accept Tommy Stewart and the other Sammy, I don't know his second name, from Govan, I want to make a point here about brother Moriarty. Our campaign, there's never been one instance on which he agreed with the Co-ordinating Committee in the shop stewards committee. We've been wrong, we've been wrong. Joe told us at a mass meeting I think in September here in Clydebank. 'I disagree with brother Reid. We've not, should be fighting for the four yards but for the overthrow of the Tory Government'. The sort of bloke where if you formulate a wage demand for ten pence an hour, and the shop stewards go up the stairs and come back with thirty-five pence an hour, he's saying 'Reject it. Settle for nothing other than the overthrow of the system'." (Moriarty shouting) "Wait a minute. Hey, Joe, I'm telling you something. I'm telling you something here and now. That if we accepted your leadership months ago, we would have all been on the labour exchange and maybe fifteen to twenty workers that would have been daft enough would have been left wi' Joe." (Applause and more shouting). "Wait a minute, the fifteen or twenty of them, storming up Whitehall, trying to batter the Tory Government intae submission wi' wrapped up copies of the Workers' Press." (38)

The recommendation to allow the vessels to go as a 'measure of good faith' was 'carried overwhelmingly' but in the meantime there would be no further formal discussions on working practices with Govan Shipbuilders as far as the shop stewards were concerned.

In fact, the final agreement on the employment charter on working conditions was signed by Govan Shipbuilders and the Clyde Confederation three days later without the stewards being present, somewhat to the annoyance of the Clyde District officials. By their absence this was the very least the shop stewards could do to demonstrate that they were still determined to ensure a resolution of the Marathon issue before any agreement with Govan Shipbuilders would be endorsed by the workforce. The fact that the Govan agreement itself was eventually, however, to become a matter of bitter contention among the workforce was not something that could have easily been foretold at this juncture.

Chataway at Question Time on April 17th reported that this agreement was now being studied by the Government. He also announced that a further £1 million was being made available to the liquidator for working capital, pending the takeover by Govan Shipbuilders Ltd. in addition to the loan of £1.5 million announced at the end of November.(39) Now at last came the long awaited confirmation of the orders for Scotstoun. These were for two 26,000 ton deadweight bulk carriers for J.C. Harrison Ltd. They were to be built at the original contract price prior to liquidation and would involve Govan Shipbuilders in a loss of £2 million which was to come out of the total of £17 million allowed for this purpose in the Hill Samuel report.(40) The Government had agreed to find the initial costs of construction and had undertaken that in the event of delivery date not being met they would refund payments to the owners.(41) This



provoked some sharp questioning on "unjustifiable restrictive practices" from Sir Tufton Beamish and some more probing by Bruce-Gardyne on the 'monitoring' of the unprecedented financial assistance under the local Employment Acts being talked about for Marathon. (42) By contrast Teddy Taylor intimated that "the news of the two new orders will be greatly welcomed on Clydeside".(43)

Questions concerning the progress of the Marathon negotiations did not however, receive the same kind of detailed answer. Harbin's reformulated application for assistance had clearly driven a hard bargain and the Government had invited him to London for further discussions. After some hesitation involving what seemed to be a threat to call the whole deal off, Harbin finally agreed to come to London to meet Chataway and hold discussions with the DTI during the last week in April. After two days of discussions it was announced that only £1 million separated the two sides and a further couple of days thereafter a verbal agreement was finally reached with the Government after some hard bargaining. By any account the protracted negotiations with the Government paid off handsomely. Although Chataway had gone to considerable lengths to emphasise that Marathon would receive no special provisions other than the Local Employment Acts they also benefited from the incentives outlined in the White Paper on 'Industry and Regional Development'. (44) This included 22 per cent of the cost of investment in plant, machinery and building, 100 per cent depreciation and a 40 per cent tax allowance on new industrial building. Under the Government's special assistance to the shipbuilding industry announced in the budget they would also receive 10 per cent of contract values for 1972, 4 per cent in 1973 and 3 per cent in 1974. Under the Local Employment Acts they would

also get grants of 30 per cent of the wages bill for the first three years and loans at favourable rates. Thus Marathon benefited under the pre-budget system of incentives and also under the new regional aid system designed to replace this. Not surprisingly Chataway was somewhat vague about precisely how much all this would amount to characterising it in a Commons Written Answer as a "matter of Commercial Confidence." (45) Despite all this however, Marathon had made it clear that the final package would only be signed and sealed when they were satisfied that the trade unions would accept certain conditions which the company intended to impose.

The future of all four yards as such looked more promising. The question now would be what sort of arrangement would Marathon come to with the unions. In the event, this was to provide the most difficult problem of all if the original demand for 'all the yards and all the labour force' was to be fully met. Even before the ink had dried on the agreement between Marathon and Chataway rumours were already circulating in the yards that there would be considerable redundancies among the finishing trades at Clydebank. In addition, it was also widely believed that Marathon might attempt to force their pet scheme of a legally enforceable 'no-strike' deal upon the workforce. Moreover, although Marathon had set July 24th, the end of the Clydebank holidays, as their new official starting date, it was by no means clear how many men they would be taking on during the initial work of reconstructing the yard. On the question of the future labour force when the company finally became fully operational the Marathon spokesman was more optimistic on the television news that night.

Interviewer: "Do you think you are going to be able to keep on the whole of the labour force currently there which is around two thousand six hundred men?"

Marathon: "Well I don't know specifically the numbers and the mix of the various crafts that are there. We haven't gone into that detail but once we are in operation we expect to employ upwards of two thousand people."

Interviewer: "How confident are you of being able to make a profit on Clydeside, something which other people have found rather hard to do?"

Marathon: "Well, if we didn't feel that we would be making a profit at Clydebank with the modern shipyard that we plan to put in, specialised for the construction of oil platforms we wouldn't be coming here." (46)

Whether or not "upwards of two thousand" jobs would appear remained to be seen. On the question of making a profit at Clydebank, with up to £6 million in loans and the same amount again in grants, Marathon were in a more than favourable financial position. Perhaps the biggest uncertainty however, was whether this marriage of American style 'free-enterprise' capitalism and a labour force that was strongly unionised could be made to work.

## Chapter 9 The Phoenix Arises.

- 1 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting Clydebank, 24 January 1972, p. 5, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 2.
- 2 UCS Shop Stewards, press statement, 12 January 1972, GU Archives.
- 3 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting Clydebank, 24 January 1972, op. cit., p. 7.
- 4 *ibid.*, p. 11.
- 5 *ibid.*, p. 20.
- 6 *ibid.*, p. 26.
- 7 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting Clydebank, 27 January 1972, p. 3, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 2.
- 8 *ibid.*, p. 25.
- 9 Appendix 23, Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, report of meeting held in Clydebank on 27 January 1972 at 5.30pm with representatives of USA Marathon Manufacturing Coy.
- 10 *ibid.*; UCS Shop Stewards, meeting Clydebank, 28 January 1972, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 2.
- 11 UCS Shop Stewards, mass meeting Linthouse, 31 January 1972, p. 9, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 2.
- 12 The Scotsman, 28 January 1972.
- 13 UCS Shop Stewards, mass meeting Linthouse, 31 January 1972, op. cit., p. 12.
- 14 Appendix 24, Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, report of meeting held in Linthouse on 3 February 1972.
- 15 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting Clydebank, 4 February 1972, p. 13, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 2.
- 16 Hansard, 1971-72, vol. 832, 28 February 1972, col. 51.
- 17 *ibid.*, col. 53.

- 18 *ibid.*, col. 52.
- 19 F. Broadway, Power on the Shopfloor: Co-operation, Control or Chaos? Aims of Industry pamphlet, 1972, p. 15, GU Archives.
- 20 Appendix 25, HMSO, Shipbuilding on the Upper Clyde: Report of Hill Samuel & Co. Limited, CMND 4918, March 1972, Annex, p. 22.
- 21 *ibid.*
- 22 *ibid.*, p. 11.
- 23 *ibid.*
- 24 *ibid.*, p. 15.
- 25 BBC TV News, N127, 3 March 1972, GU Archives.
- 26 The full scope of the Heath Government's U-turn is analysed in chapter 12.
- 27 Departmental and Scottish Office papers which may pertain to this question are unobtainable.
- 28 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting Clydebank, 13 March 1972, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 2.
- 29 Glasgow Herald, 13 March 1972.
- 30 *ibid.*
- 31 Glasgow Herald, 30 March 1972.
- 32 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting 5 April 1972, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 2.
- 33 *ibid.*, p. 14.
- 34 *ibid.*
- 35 *ibid.*, p. 33.
- 36 UCS Shop Stewards, mass meeting Clydebank, 7 April 1972, pp. 7-8, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 2.
- 37 *ibid.*, p. 11.
- 38 *ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

- 39 Hansard, vol. 835, 1971-72, 17 April 1972, cols. 33-34.
- 40 *ibid.*
- 41 *ibid.*
- 42 *ibid.*
- 43 *ibid.*, col. 35.
- 44 See chapter 12.
- 45 Hansard, vol. 836, 1971-72, 1 May 1972, col. 18.
- 46 BBC TV News, 28 April 1972, GU Archives.

## Chapter Ten

## THE MARATHON AGREEMENT

The day that Harbin and Chataway concluded their agreement in London, Jimmy Reid alone among the UCS shop stewards leadership had not been present. He was being installed as the student-elected rector of the University of Glasgow. His election was a magnificent tribute by the students to the fight of the UCS workers. (1)

In the high vaulted neo-Gothic chamber of the University's Bute Hall, Reid's powerful baritone Scots voice echoed almost incongruously as he delivered his inaugural address to an audience which contained many figures from Scottish public life and letters. Reid denounced what he described as the contemporary social malaise of 'alienation' defined as when 'ordinary people feel they are in the grip of forces they can neither understand nor control'. It was a version of Marxism, if indeed such it could be called, which resonated with the Christianity of which Reid was a professed admirer, making a broad ethical and humanistic appeal to human goodness coupled with an impassioned plea to reject the self-seeking mentality of the rat-race. Indeed, it was perhaps this lay preacher air of moral conviction which produced remarkable scenes of fervour among his listeners, even be it said, among that least excitable breed of person, the pallid and cloistered inhabitants of academia. In any event, the University took the unusual step of printing his speech in full in pamphlet form and for a while it assumed the significance of a minor classic. (2) For Reid, it was a great personal triumph to be fêted by the dons. It remained to be seen whether or not this newly legitimised public persona would also mark out Reid's eventual accommodation to the status quo like so many previous militants.

While the Rectorial celebrations were proceeding however, vital discussions were being held elsewhere. At Clydebank, the shop stewards met to hear the outcome of the meeting that had taken place in London between McGarvey plus the full time officials and Harbin. Co-ordinating Committee representatives had been present during part of the two and a half hour discussions with Marathon when a number of contentious issues had been raised. Each side was surveying the terrain now that the Government had accepted Marathon's bid, before the serious contest over the future labour agreement with Marathon began.

From the UCS workers' point of view the problems of transitional employment during the reconstruction of Clydebank Yard were crucial. The proposal had been put that Marathon agree to allow two or three ships from the liquidator's suspended list to be constructed in the yard although the liquidator would be responsible for the men's wages. The east yard of Clydebank was to be rased to the ground and the argument was also made that some of the sections such as joiners who would be surplus to Marathon's future requirements should be employed in the sub-contracting work of reconstruction and eventually be offered the opportunity to retrain as steel workers. For their part Marathon were interested, not surprisingly, in securing maximum flexibility in terms of demarcation procedures which McGarvey had conceded could be possible, provided the Clydebank workers reached a 'domestic agreement', so that any major concessions would not be taken as an automatic precedent throughout shipbuilding. Harbin also had in mind a further innovation in the shape of a common bonus scheme which would be paid to company employees on a yearly basis. While McGarvey rejected a yearly bonus scheme outright he did accept



that a six month common bonus might be agreeable although there was no question of the unions acquiescing to Harbin's other demand, namely a legally-binding 'no-strike clause' as part of a long term labour agreement. Marathon also wanted to reserve for themselves alone the right to call in an arbiter in the event of any dispute. Obviously such questions would need to be thrashed out at length. Finally, there was the question of the possibility of redundancy money for ex-UCS employees who were to be taken on by Marathon. By the terms of the Redundancy Payment Act, Marathon was technically classified as a new industry and therefore the terms of the act were deemed to apply to the Clydebank workers.

The way in which the Co-ordinating Committee had presented the redundancy money issue to the shop stewards however, was that Marathon's eventual labour requirements might necessitate some of those who had previously volunteered and had accepted redundancy payments through the liquidator being re-employed. The fact that they had deserted the struggle and would be financially better off as a result was suggested as a possible source of contention and bitterness. What was not said however, was that despite their determination to secure priority for all work-in members, allowing volunteers to re-enter the yard at any future date would be in clear contradiction with the previously stated policy of the Co-ordinating Committee towards volunteers. Moreover, it was realised even at this early stage that to accept redundancy payments for Clydebank workers while those at Govan Shipbuilders got nothing could totally undermine the unity of the workforce in any future battles. The plan therefore was to explore the possibility of redundancy money for all ex-UCS workers and not just those at Clydebank. One clear difference emerging between McGarvey and the stewards on this issue

was that McGarvey favoured accepting any redundancy payments that were offered as a 'cushion' until all the ex-UCS men were eventually re-employed by Marathon. This of course, implied that not every one would be immediately re-employed. Indeed, it was McGarvey who had first raised the issue of redundancy money. If however, the stewards went along with this, it would be tantamount to conceding redundancies with no guarantee as to when, if ever, the workers would get back into the yard. If they did accept redundancy money it would have to be on the basis of reasonable guarantees of early re-employment by Marathon or temporarily working for the Liquidator in the interim. (3)

One further and awkward complication which began to loom larger throughout the month of May was that once again the Govan yard was running out of work. There would clearly be further lay-offs unless new orders could be found, a situation which could only compound the already complicated problems facing the UCS leadership.

In this atmosphere of uncertainty rumours were once more rife inside the yards. On the shop stewards committee new dissensions emerged which were symptomatic of the increasingly narrow and self-centred attitudes being adopted by certain sections of the workers, in particular, the growing feeling that some groups of workers were being more favourably treated than others. The seeds of potential division had been first planted when the shop stewards conceded that, the demand for the four yards 'intact' be modified to the four yards 'cumulatively'. The fate of the Clydebank yard and Govan Shipbuilders became no longer as inextricably bound up together as they had been twelve months ago. The near certainty that Marathon would proceed to take over the Clydebank yard signalled the beginning of a major shift in outlook among workers who had formerly possessed the unified

identity of UCS workers but now became ex-UCS workers. They were increasingly becoming prospective Govan Shipbuilders workers or prospective Marathon workers. The problem was that the shop stewards' leadership had to find ways of preserving the elements of inter-yard and inter-departmental solidarity that had carried them through the early phases of the struggle when the immediate threat of mass redundancies, was easily and clearly identified. For many workers it was no longer the Tory Government which worried them but rather, how to secure the best possible deal for their particular group or section with their future employer.

The erosion of attitudes of solidarity even extended towards those two hundred or so workers who were still left on the work-in, who of all the ex-UCS workers were objectively the least well placed regarding guarantees of future employment in either Marathon or Govan Shipbuilders. Indeed, from being the heroes of the UCS campaign, the work-in was rapidly becoming the scapegoat for all the anxieties of the workforce, a most ironic situation. Specifically, the growing hostility towards the work-in was reflected in the arguments which took place on the shop stewards committee around the question of whether or not the work-in members should be given holiday pay out of the fighting fund. Given that they had already received such pay the previous Christmas and Easter it was revealing that the holiday pay for the Fair had now become a controversial issue. The climate of opinion in the yards had changed.

The recommendations of the Co-ordinating Committee, although eight stewards had voted against, was that the work-in personnel should receive holiday pay which would amount to about £80 per man. The Co-ordinating Committee had further recommended that for the

holiday period of three weeks, the 50p levy would no longer be taken from the rest of the workforce, in an attempt to make the recommendation more palatable. In retrospect, to concede that the levy should be discontinued, even if temporarily, while the work-in was still an objective necessity, was to prove to be a very unwise move. It was a sop to the resentment towards the work-in on the part of a number of the 'bears'.

Among the immediate objections raised by certain shop stewards to giving holiday pay was firstly that the fight was still not over and that the funds should therefore be conserved. Given that the exact amount left in the fighting fund was still a closely guarded secret this point was not entirely implausible. Second, the more devious argument was put that the money was collected for the right to work, not to hand out as holiday pay. But as Willie Clydesdale pointed out,

"....Anywhere we went, that's what we asked for, it was money for blokes on the work-in, because that's what we needed the money for. And if we'd nae people in the work-in there would be nae UCS, Govan Shipbuilders or anything else, the thing would have fell flat. And I don't see that at this stage when we started up at the beginning, saying that we would support anybody on this work-in, and so that they wouldnae lose, for anybody at this stage to say that they're no' due this holiday money, when everyone of us is going oot wi' holiday money, I think its bloody ridiculous." (4)

Some stewards, however, warned that there was such an 'undercurrent' of feeling in the yards against the work-in that if holiday pay was given certain workers were threatening to stop paying the 50 pence levy. Others argued that the work-in members would also be claiming sick benefit as well as receiving holiday pay. As Airlie commented rather acidly, however,

"The position is that in the work-in, we've got responsibility, and if we're gonnie investigate the work-in, who're claiming sick money, then if you're getting into that Bobby, there might be a lot of other workers who are in the same position." (5)

Finally, the argument was put that the issue be taken to a mass meeting of all the workers. Airlie pointed out however, that it would be impossible, even if it was desirable, to hold a meeting on this one issue alone. Questions were bound to be asked arising from the negotiations over labour agreements with Marathon and Govan Shipbuilders that were still at this stage the subject of detailed discussions. Roddy McKenzie raised the further objection to a mass meeting, that the difficult question of misbehaviour and breaches of discipline by members of the work-in was bound to be brought up and could also result in the stewards coming under severe criticism because of their failure to impose the necessary discipline on the work-in. This was a commonly cited reason for bad feeling towards the work-in members although it should be remembered, that since the great majority of those on the work-in could not actually work at their previous jobs, the stewards were faced with a tricky problem in enforcing discipline. As McKenzie pointed out,

"They're going out when they shouldnae go out, they're ignoring the stewards in the yards. The other men are looking over their shoulders and they're saying, 'I'm paying him, what are youse doing?'....they'll need to be told - 'one misdemeanour and you're down the road'." (6)

The problem of absenteeism and of members of the work-in 'jumping the wall' was particularly a cause of concern in Govan and indeed, Airlie reported that they had had a meeting with the Govan work-in that very morning. The Govan stewards he promised would be taking a very firm approach to any future misconduct.

"We laid it on the line to them that if they stay up in the hut they've got, they call it Stalag 17, (laughter) and from time to time the stewards will make periodic checks, particularly in the afternoon. Now anyone that is missing will be pumped on the spot. Now it may be that a lad is legitimately going somewhere in the yards to see somebody, but if that's the case he'll report it to another lad, eh one at the work-in, and then, incidentally we've detailed a bloke who'll take the job weekly of collating where everybody is at a given time. And if he says so and so's away there, then their respective steward'll investigate it, if he's no' there he's getting the pump. We're stopping the kidding because there is talk about the work-in. But I would put to anybody, if they want to have a reason for no' supporting the struggle or no' paying the 50p come out and say it. Don't use the question of the work-in's eh holiday pay." (7)

The decision was finally taken that there should be no mass meeting on this issue but not before all the arguments for and against had been gone over yet again. Tactically it would have left the floor open for a public airing of grievances real and supposed against the work-in and the shop stewards' leadership, as well as numerous other more serious issues, at a time when maximum unity was required to conduct the difficult and protracted negotiations with Govan Shipbuilders and Marathon. Nevertheless, the pressure to hold a mass meeting soon was once again building up and could not be ignored indefinitely since the arguments about holiday pay were really only the surface ripples caused by much deeper currents of internal division.

Within seven days the issue of holiday pay for the work-in was brought to a head by the refusal of the Scotstoun joiners to pay the 50p levy if the work-in received holiday pay. Indeed, the joiners had gone so far as to instruct the liquidator to cancel the form for automatic wage deductions to the fighting fund. The

question of a mass meeting therefore became urgent. Open revolt or defection by a major section of the workforce was a serious matter, in that other sections were also threatening to follow suit. As Airlie had pointed out to the shop stewards, widespread refusal to pay the 50p effectively would mean that the struggle was over. The workers would also need to be given an immediate report on the over-all situation including the thorny issue of whether there would be any redundancy money for Govan Shipbuilders workers. (8)

Airlie informed a hastily called mass meeting the following morning that Govan Shipbuilders lawyers were investigating the position in order to see whether a legal loophole could be discovered whereby they could also get redundancy pay. On the question of holiday pay for the work-in Airlie spelled out the arguments of the joint shop stewards committee.

"There is no doubt that if it had not been for the work-in, we would not have secured the four yards. The finance is available and the bulk of that finance came from the broad movement. And the argument that the work-in has had tax rebates and redundancy pay....But we've got to look at the other side of the coin. In the event of us being unsuccessful to get every work-in member re-engaged, he goes on that street, and he would get no earnings-related benefit because in effect, if he's been in this work-in for ten months, in effect, he has not earned nothing.

You can make any criticisms you like about how some of the work-in have been acting, that may be a criticism of the way the joint shop stewards operated the work-in. You're entitled to do that, but what I say you're not entitled to do is to go back on your decision." (9)

From the Govan caulking department, one of the sections that was eventually to do the most damage in terms of the unity of the struggle, a worker came forward to argue against the shop stewards recommendation.

"Blantyre, caulker, Govan. I would like to move that I'm against the recommendation to pay the work-in holiday pay for the holiday period. The reason I wanted to make this motion is that they've already had a good sum of money wi', as already stated, wi' the rebate plus their redundancy. A lot more, twice as much as I'll get for my holiday pay. They should put that rebate money by if they're wanting money for a holiday. The second point is, I'd like tae eh, like Jimmy to explain why eh UCS workers of Clydebank are going tae get a redundancy and that other divisions in the UCS aren't, 'cos they're just UCS workers, same as us." (10)

On the last point the worker made, Airlie merely repeated that the problem lay in the wording of the Redundancy Payment Act. The first criticism, however, which Airlie had tried to preempt by admitting that the work-in members had received certain financial benefits, he now answered scornfully.

"We can argue that they should have saved by for a rainy day. Most of us are ( ), are one week's pay away from the breadline. That's the position we live in. And I, quite frankly, would expect a Tory or someone who has no understanding of how ordinary workers live, to make that point, but I don't think it should emanate from our ranks." (11)

It was a good point which drew forth spontaneous applause. Once again the platform carried the day. A few days later however, the caulkers got their revenge when a departmental meeting in Govan passed a motion which proclaimed that they would not accept 'outsiders' into their trade who had undergone retraining. This was a clear pointer to future trouble when it came to reabsorbing surplus personnel from the work-in, particularly those who had been members of the finishing trades and had learned new skills as metal workers. As a result of this decision a mass meeting of all boilermakers in Govan, Linthouse and Scotstoun had to be called which was addressed by the Glasgow District delegate Jimmy Ramsay and the stewards' conveners. At this meeting it was agreed to accept work-in members into the Boilermakers Society. It had been argued, for example, by



way of justification for what was obviously naked sectionalism, that unemployed members of the Society on the union's register should receive priority. By a fairly narrow majority of 685 to 586 votes the meeting agreed that the principle of the work-in be adhered to. (12) However, not content with this the Govan caulkers wrote to the district committee appealing against the decision of the mass meeting. (13)

The only mitigating circumstance as far as the Govan metal workers' position was concerned, was that the dearth of orders for Govan Shipbuilders as a new trading company still remained, a tangible factor which fuelled resentments. The shop stewards had hitherto agreed with the board of Govan Shipbuilders not to raise the issue of new orders publically while Strathalmond applied pressure behind the scenes on the Government. By the end of June, however, with still nothing certain in sight the situation was becoming critical. Then on the last day of June, Davies announced the good news in a written parliamentary reply to Teddy Taylor.

"The company has received a number of firm enquiries for ships and, to avoid any disruption in employment, it is embarking shortly on the building of two vessels in anticipation of orders being confirmed. The company will find the costs from the working capital made available by the Government." (14)

In addition to agreeing to the building of two ships 'on spec' on behalf of the Government, Davies also announced a further loan to the liquidator of additional working capital of £800,000 as well as an official starting date for the new company for early September. (15) A relieved Airlie congratulated the Government on their 'statesmanlike decision'. (16) Although Govan Shipbuilders was not scheduled to begin trading until September 8th, two weeks later, Strathalmond and

Gilchrist signed contracts worth £15 million for four ships for the Kuwait Shipping Company, a further boost to the optimistic prospects of the company at least as regards its future labour requirements. Despite the vote of the mass meeting on holiday pay however, and the announcement of new orders for Govan, the incipient fracturing of internal unity among the workers gathered pace throughout June and July. And then the bombshell dropped. It was now certain that in spite of a strenuous search by Govan Shipbuilders' lawyers for a legal loophole there would definitely be no redundancy money for Govan Shipbuilders employees. The workers would have to be told the bad news at a mass meeting.

No doubt anticipating a back-lash from workers the Co-ordinating Committee had recommended that the 50p levy be suspended forthwith and that the situation be 'reviewed again' after the Glasgow holidays, that is, that the levy be indefinitely suspended, not just for a few weeks. This was tantamount to accepting that such was the strength of feeling among the Govan workers that it was no longer possible to guarantee mass support for the work-in which increasingly began to be seen as a 'Clydebank problem', despite Airlie's reiteration that the struggle would continue for all the jobs in all the yards. One embarrassing feature of this decision was that it was taken in the absence of the Clydebank shop stewards who were by then on holiday and subsequently was put to a mass meeting only of Govan Shipbuilders workers for the same reason. Airlie's argument that the key issue was the preservation of jobs and not the redundancy money carried precious little weight for the Govan workforce among whom expectations of a cash bonanza for the Glasgow Fair Holidays had been building up. Although such expectations may be said to have been unrealistic it should also be remembered that the entire workforce had had no overtime working for

a year and effectively had suffered a wages standstill in addition to that. The frustrations felt by the workers were therefore considerable and among the sections who had been used to retaining a differential, resentments were particularly strong. To a considerable extent the hostility towards the work-in and the arguments over the 50p levy derived from this. The announcement on redundancy money served to open still further the cracks which had developed in the solidarity of the workforce. (17)

The decision to suspend the levy was sharply criticised however, at the mass meeting. One worker came forward to argue against the recommendation.

"I'm very perturbed at the idea of the Co-ordinating Committee or the shop stewards deciding to stop the 50p, particularly when we didn't get a very full background to the situation. Now the situation as it stands, at present we used to have, up till about six weeks ago somewhere in the region of about 400 people, to the best of my knowledge, that didn't pay. A couple of weeks ago, the figure increased to somewhere about 550 approximately. These are only approximate figures because it's difficult as you know to get full information on this nature.

Well I think myself that eh first and foremost, that eh we are the only people, at a mass meeting, who can either keep it going or take off the 50p and it should have been a mass meeting that takes it off. Also I think this is a sign of weakness, which can't help us when we're negotiating with the management, the fact that we've stopped this 50p." (18)

A counter motion was put forward by this worker to continue the 50p levy 'if on voluntarily basis' rather than wait until September when it might become necessary to attempt to reimpose it in order to alleviate the expected transitional problem of employment at Clydebank. In a sense it did not require great powers of prophecy to envisage the likelihood of such a situation arising. Indeed, Marathon themselves, now that their deal with the Government was signed and sealed,

were beginning to talk openly about 'inevitable redundancies'. (19)  
 Unfortunately as Airlie regretfully admitted the 'realities' of the situation made the continuation of the levy in Govan Shipbuilders at least, an impossibility, with votes by the Govan caulkers and now the plumbers at Scotstoun, to refuse to pay. Airlie sympathetically conceded the worker's point,

"Now I agree that the political significance of continuing the 50p levy, but the 50p is not the most important aspect. The joint shop stewards has to look at the situation, that the situation was running away with us. Because quite frankly, any department that took the decision to stop paying the 50p, they were expelled from the joint shop stewards committee, practically. And I recognise the point you're making, brother, that it is only a minority that were refusing to pay the 50p. But rather than have what was becoming an increasing minority, was to suspend it, review the situation after the holidays. Because before we finally win all demands, then it'll require more than 50p and then the craws that have sabotaged this fight from the start will not get off scot-free because when we've won the labour force, and got in on wages and conditions, their cab's off the rank." (20)

It was a humiliating admission for Airlie to have to make publically but the unity of the workforce was to suffer much greater shocks in the weeks to come.

Marathon's original starting date of July 24th had had to be postponed because the Industry Bill under the terms of which they received aid from the Government had not yet become law. Nevertheless in early August the labour agreement which the company and unions had been discussing for some time was to all intents and purposes ready for signing, with the date for signing fixed for Friday August 4th. It was to be a four-year agreement which would give tradesmen a basic rate of £2,000 a year, at that time the highest on the Clyde. The contentious issue of who should have the right to call in an arbiter in the event of a dispute would now rest

on mutual agreement by both sides. This meant that the deal did not contain a 'no-strike clause' in the sense that if both sides could not agree that the issue was one for arbitration, then the dispute would become one of direct confrontation. As such the agreement had been unanimously accepted at a mass meeting of all Clydebank workers on the Thursday of that week. The same day however, it transpired that only the boilermakers' local official Jimmy Ramsay would not be signing the agreement along with the other officials of the other eight unions involved in the Marathon negotiations.

One observer at the time suggested that Jimmy Ramsay had already been responsible for delaying the deal by contesting minute details in the agreement and so cluttering up the final draft that the whole thing had to be retyped. (21) Now it appeared that unlike his fellow officials he had not been given sufficient authority to sign the document and that the boilermakers' national executive would need to examine the redrafted document. Ramsay, to be fair, was playing it strictly according to the rule book. Incredibly however, McGarvey was on holiday in Ireland and could not be contacted. It seemed unlikely therefore that the boilermakers could sign the agreement at least before the beginning of the following week. Meanwhile on Friday, the other unions went ahead with the signing as planned. On television that evening Reid defended the agreement as one which both the workers and officials agreed was good and would be honoured. The television interviewer probed,

"you don't deny that it is a pretty tough agreement in trade union circles?"

Reid replied,

"Oh I I do deny that its tough from any side, that is, from the two sides. Its not tough, its co-operative, its positive and there's nothing in the agreement that violates any of the positions or policies of the British trade union movement."(22)

This last phrase was perhaps directed as much at the boilermakers as it was at those who were arguing, incorrectly, that the unions had conceded a no-strike agreement. It was becoming clear that the real reason for the boilermakers' union open reluctance to endorse the agreement was nothing to do with the details of the arbitration procedure which had anyway been settled, but lay elsewhere. In the meantime an angry Harbin issued an ultimatum to the boilermakers to sign by Monday or the whole Clydebank deal would be off because Marathon were pulling out of Clydebank.

It was a threat which was sufficient to bring McGarvey rushing back from Ireland to a meeting at the boilermakers' headquarters in Newcastle which considered the redrafted document on Monday morning. In fact a copy of the original Marathon agreement had sat at the boilermakers' headquarters for six weeks prior to this but had not been discussed by the executive in the ensuing period. Now McGarvey wanted to discuss the redrafted agreement which Ramsay had posted to him on Friday night with everybody he could and immediately drove north for discussions with the local union officials and boilermakers' shop stewards.

What lay behind the prevarications of the boilermakers' union was quite simply that the Marathon agreement would effectively result in the disappearance of the boilermakers' traditional bonus differential, in other words, the end of the historical dominance of the 'black squad' with all that this implied for the maintenance of sectional identities. The four-year agreement was to apply across

the board to all trades and remove at a stroke the pattern of sectional wage bargaining which had dominated the Clyde for so long with the welders leading the rest of the yard workers as 'kings of the river'. It was for this reason that McGarvey was now involved in a dangerous exercise of brinkmanship. With only a matter of hours before the midnight deadline for signing was reached Harbin reiterated his company's position.

"We feel its unfair to pay the boilermakers a higher percentage of bonus than the other workers in the yard because to us, putting a platform together requires the assistance of everyone, and not just the boilermakers."(23)

Meanwhile McGarvey was telling reporters on his way into the Glasgow offices of the boilermakers' union in Lansdowne Crescent that the officials and stewards would have to have "a free frank talk among ourselves" on the whole issue. Pressed to say what precisely the issue was McGarvey was somewhat reticent although he was prepared to admit "it may be the bonus question one way or another".<sup>(24)</sup> Asked whether it was just that 'the boilermakers still wanted to be that bit ahead of the rest' of the other workers in the yard, McGarvey gave the classic reply.

"No we don't want to be ahead of anyone. We only want to be paid for our work." (25)

As the discussions with the District Committee were about to commence McGarvey informed the newsmen that there was little chance that the agreement would be signed that night. Two hours later a car rushed Jimmy Ramsay and the two boilermakers' stewards, Gerry Ross and Roddy McKenzie, to the Excelsior Hotel at Glasgow Airport where Jim Fox of Marathon was waiting and the agreement was duly signed with an hour to go to Harbin's midnight deadline. (26)

After the meeting at Lansdowne Crescent a chagrined McGarvey was quoted as saying,

"I want to make it clear that in normal circumstances there are certain parts of this agreement which the Boilermakers' Society would have fought to a standstill." (27)

However, the circumstances were far from normal as McGarvey himself had quickly come to realise when it became abundantly clear to him that the local boilermakers' stewards from Clydebank were behind the deal, despite McGarvey's warning that they were "waiving their individual rights to negotiate" and "in general the agreement was not in their interest". (28) A concession to the boilermakers alone on the issue of bonus would have spelled ultimate disorder for the Co-ordinating Committee which as Airlie has suggested might not have entirely escaped McGarvey's notice.

"What Danny really was after, that's my opinion, he wanted to, and I've got to say this, he wanted to fracture the unity of the shop stewards. He wanted to demean the Co-ordinating Committee and the best way to do that was to get us all at each others throats on the question of sectionalism. It didnae work. Didnae work for a number of reasons. The Yanks werenae wanting it in any case. They werenae wanting a dogs'dinner. (29)

If the Clydebank stewards did much to preserve the remaining unity of the Co-ordinating Committee on the issue of the Marathon deal they did more to undermine it in practically the same week on a question of bonus payments, not on the issue of the boilermakers' differential but on an issue that unfortunately was to drive a deep wedge between the whole of the Clydebank labour force and the rest of the workers in the other yards.



It appeared that the Clydebank shop stewards had negotiated a bonus of 10p per hour with the liquidator who was anxious that those ships for which he was responsible in the Clydebank yard be completed as soon as possible to make way for the entry of Marathon. The payment of the bonus was to be made 'behind the book', that is as a lump sum at a future date provided certain production targets were fulfilled. This was immediately construed in the other yards as the Clydebank men having accepted 'run-down money', that is, an incentive bonus in a redundancy situation to finish the work. Strictly speaking this was not the case although it could well appear to be such and insofar as it did so, it became a bitterly divisive issue. It made it easy to argue that the Clydebank men were only interested in themselves and what they could get, despite the sacrifices that others had made on their behalf. What made it worse was that the 10p was also in advance of the then prevailing rate in Govan and had been agreed to by the Clydebank stewards while the Govan, Linthouse and Scotstoun men were away on holiday.

The Co-ordinating Committee had met and discussed the issue in an attempt to defuse the situation. They decided to claim for a 10p bonus across the board and abandon the claim for money 'behind the book'. The liquidator had however, rejected this and instead proposed a bonus of 5p per hour for skilled trades in Govan, Linthouse and Scotstoun for the completion of the three ships in these yards that he was responsible for. The bonus would be paid out on the basis of 88.5 per cent for semi-skilled workers and 59 per cent for the unskilled and would be calculated on the levels of productivity achieved in the month of June. This would still mean the Clydebank workers had won double the bonus rate of the rest.

In fact, since liquidation the Clydebank workers had been on average 6p per hour below the workers in Govan and with the additional 10p they would now only achieve approximate parity. Nevertheless after lengthy discussions in which the Co-ordinating Committee eventually agreed to accept the liquidator's offer of 5p and let the Clydebank bonus stand, they recommended to the shop stewards that the Clydebank workers only be allowed to lift their bonus provided there were proposals governing the re-employment of the total labour force, otherwise they could take the bonus money but they would need to 'go down the road', that is, accept their redundancy. (30)

From Jimmy McCrindle of the Govan caulkers came an enraged attack on Clydebank.

"Thank you. Well brothers, I think I've something to say. I must have something to say. Naturally I don't see any Clydebank stewards coming up here this morning. Where's all the Clydebank stewards now we're talking about. During the periods, during the struggle when they were below Govan Shipbuilders as far as bonus earnings was concerned, there was not one cheep, not one cheep from any of them, during this fourteen month struggle while they were in below Govan as far as bonus was concerned. Because this bonus was taken out through the average of the eight weeks' earnings prior to liquidation. But now, all of a sudden things have changed. They've got this wee bag of gold, as we pointed out, this bag of gold they got. And all of a sudden things have changed. They're asking us to come up to their level. Now be honest about this - they're asking us. We 'allow' you to come up to our level. We will 'allow' you with this six pence, or five pence that's been promised by the liquidator to come up to our level, not talking about the two bob behind the book. This is facts I'm telling you, facts. All of a sudden things have changed. Where do we go from here? Where do we go from here in Govan?" (31)

It was blistering stuff which forced Airlie to appeal for an end to recriminations. From the Clydebank painters' shop steward, Benny Biggins, however, came an equally bitter counter-blast.

"...talking about Clydebank shop stewards no' coming up here - we in Clydebank have bent over backwards since this fight started no' to rock the boat, 'don't rock the boat', Govan'll no' do this, Govan'll no' do that, Connell's'll no' do this, Connell's'll no' do that'. But personally I'm a wee bit sick o' it. The gun's been cocked on wur heid all the time..." (32)

The Co-ordinating Committee's proposals were eventually carried however, as other stewards came forward to argue the more conciliatory approach, that the bonus was a side issue which should be forgotten about as the real issue facing them was that of securing all the jobs in Govan Shipbuilders and in Marathon, including the work-in. With Govan Shipbuilders now due to go into operation on September 11th at which date the work-in was to cease, and with a labour agreement due to be signed with the company on August 24th, it was imperative that the total labour requirements of both Marathon and Govan Shipbuilders as well as of the liquidator, be sorted out as quickly as possible in round-table discussions within the next fourteen days. Jimmy Reid reported to the stewards on the moves being made to secure the backing of the Confederation for the demand for a full retention of jobs. Marathon would also need to be pressurised to speed up the construction of rigs and telescope their proposed eighteen-month reconstruction period. (33)

As Jimmy Kenny, the Clydebank coppersmith's steward, pointed out, Marathon had promised an initial labour force of 1,000 and in fact they had only taken on 170 men so far. Kenny articulated the impatience of the Clydebank workers who had found that in trying to thrash out these problems, the Marathon management had proved to be a somewhat elusive force, while round-table discussions had proved even more difficult to arrange.

"But the point again is this, brothers. We're fed up of hearing its always tomorrow, tomorrow we're gonnae meet with Marathon and Govan, and the liquidator, its always tomorrow. But lets make it tomorrow, brothers, its all I'm asking Jimmy, is let's make it tomorrow. Thank you, brothers." (34)

Once again however, it was McCrindle who raised the difficult question by demanding to know whether or not part of the solution to the labour problems would be the transfer of Clydebank men to Govan, since as he pointed out to groans of disapproval from the other stewards, they were going to enjoy this two bob behind the book and receive redundancy money as well. (35) In fact the fear of an 'influx' of Clydebank workers had already been used to stir up feeling against Clydebank on the part of some elements of the Govan workforce. McCrindle, it transpired, was one such element. Reid's reply was categoric,

"...as far as we're concerned, the computation is not on divisions or anything else. It's there are X number of workers in the four divisions of the UCS, and a successful outcome to this fight is the retention of the four divisions, and in one way or another, all the workers that are on the books as of this moment, no matter where they come from, what they are, who they are, who they might be. That's the principle Jimmy. And I can assure you nobody can say who's moving the next place.

I'll make this point - wherever the adjustments are made, if there are difficulties about absorbtion in A, and it can be accommodated by absorbtions in B, or C and D, and its reciprocal, it could be within trades. That's got to be the attitude we must adopt and take up." (36)

This was a clear warning to McCrindle that any sectional attitude would be severely frowned upon. Whether it was a warning that would be heeded was another question. Certainly the mass meeting which was called to report on the Clydebank and Govan bonus question two days later raised the predictable complaint from a 'Govan Shipbuilder worker'.

"Seems to me that we're trailing at the heels of Clydebank. And I think the only way we can get unity is for everybody to be exactly the same. In other words, no tae negotiate, or allow anybody to negotiate for one section of the people under the liquidator, and the only way to negotiate is to negotiate for the lot. In other words the lot should go back in the melting pot." (37)

As Airlie pointed out, however, it would be unrealistic to ask Clydebank workers having accepted the proposals to go back on them. A mistake had been made at Clydebank which would not have occurred had the stewards there taken the bonus issue to the joint shop stewards committee for discussion. (38) It was to cost the unity of the workforce dearly before too long.

## Chapter 10 The Marathon Agreement

- 1 Reid received 1,458 votes, Teddy Taylor 891, and former Labour MP Peggy Herbison, 810.
- 2 J. Reid, 'Alienation', Rectorial address, 28 April 1972, University of Glasgow Publications 1972, GU Archives; Glasgow Herald, 29 April 1972 also carried the full text.
- 3 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting Clydebank, 1 May 1972, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 2.
- 4 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting Clydebank, 1 June 1972, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 2.
- 5 *ibid.*, p. 6.
- 6 *ibid.*, p. 22.
- 7 *ibid.*, p. 23.
- 8 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting Clydebank, 8 June 1972, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 2.
- 9 UCS Shop Stewards, mass meeting Linthouse, 9 June 1972, p. 4, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 2.
- 10 *ibid.*, p. 5.
- 11 *ibid.*, p. 8.
- 12 Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers, Glasgow District Minutes, 1972, Report of mass meeting of Society members employed in UCS held in the Rosevale Bingo Hall, 14 June 1972, Lansdowne Crescent, Glasgow.
- 13 Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers, Glasgow District Minutes, 1972, D.C. Minute no. 18/1972, 29 June 1972, Lansdowne Crescent, Glasgow.
- 14 Hansard, vol. 839, 1971-72, 30 June 1972, written answers, col. 445.
- 15 *ibid.*, col. 446.

- 16 Glasgow Herald, 1 July 1972.
- 17 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting Linthouse, 10 July 1972, pp. 9-13, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol.2.
- 18 *ibid.*, pp. 5-6.
- 19 Glasgow Herald, 13 June 1972.
- 20 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting Linthouse, 10 July 1972, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
- 21 J. McGill, Crisis on the Clyde, London, Davis-Poynter, 1972, p. 132.
- 22 BBC TV News, G72/840, 4 August 1972, GU Archives.
- 23 BBC TV News, D2207208M, 7 August 1972, GU Archives.
- 24 BBC TV News, G72/845, 7 August 1972, GU Archives.
- 25 *ibid.*
- 26 Appendix 26, The Marathon Agreement.
- 27 The Scotsman, 8 August 1972.
- 28 Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers, Glasgow District Committee Minutes 1972, D.C. Minute no. 19/72, 7 August 1972, Lansdowne Crescent, Glasgow.
- 29 Interview with Jimmy Airlie, 13 July 1979, GU Archives.
- 30 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting, 16 August 1972, pp. 1-5, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 3.
- 31 *ibid.*, p. 7.
- 32 *ibid.*, p. 8.
- 33 *ibid.*, pp. 13-16.
- 34 *ibid.*, pp. 17-18.
- 35 *ibid.*, p. 20.
- 36 *ibid.*, pp. 20-21.
- 37 UCS Shop Stewards, mass meeting Linthouse, 18 August 1972, pp. 6-7, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 3.
- 38 *ibid.*, p. 7.

## Chapter Eleven

## THE GOVAN SHIPBUILDERS AGREEMENT

With the Marathon deal duly signed the way was now open for the unions and Govan Shipbuilders to finalise the details of the labour agreement which had existed in final draft form since May of 1972. (1) The first clause of the agreement had stipulated that "the current 'work-in' will cease when Govan Shipbuilders Limited start to trade." (2) With round-table discussions between Marathon, the liquidator, Govan Shipbuilders and the unions due to take place the following day, a mass meeting was called of the other three yards workers to endorse the stewards recommendation that the procedural agreement with Govan Shipbuilders only be signed provided there were guarantees to cover the work-in, otherwise as Airlie put it, "we will have seemed to have sold out in the basic key symbol." (3) Clearly the stewards wanted the Govan Shipbuilders management to have the impression that their resolve on the question of the work-in remained unshaken.

Reporting back to the joint shop stewards' committee on the outcome of these discussions Reid recounted the pressure which they had mounted on Marathon, the real focus of the round-table discussions, to increase the numbers they would take on at Clydebank before the end of the year from 700 to 1,300 by speeding up their work programme. Marathon were given a week to consider their position. In theory at least, there should be no question of the Govan agreement being signed until the question of overall labour requirements including those at Clydebank were fully resolved. In fact, however, other considerations had begun to intrude which introduced new complicating factors.

Although the joint shop stewards committee had considered in detail the various terms of the draft procedure agreement with Govan



Shipbuilders. each constituent union's national executive had first to endorse its acceptance. Once again, it appeared that the Boilermakers' Society were intent on pursuing their own concerns first and foremost. On August 17th, McGarvey's deputy Jim Murray had met the boilermakers' district committee in Glasgow and the Govan Shipbuilders' boilermaker stewards, and had held a mass meeting with the 1,400 boilermakers from the Govan, Linthouse and Scotstoun yards. In a statement presented to Gilchrist the following afternoon, Murray and the district delegates put forward the boilermakers' conditions for their participation in the signing of the Govan agreement. These were, first, that all 77 members of the Boilermakers' Society at present on the work-in be immediately re-engaged and second, that any new wage structure agreed would contain retrospective payments from the date at which negotiations with the company over a new pay deal commenced. (4) In effect, this meant that the boilermakers wanted a new wage agreement to apply from September 4th, one week before the company had begun to start trading officially.

A three hour meeting with Gilchrist had, however, not surprisingly, failed to resolve these issues, and a few days later Govan Shipbuilders told the boilermakers that their demands could not be accepted. Meanwhile, the Govan Shipbuilders boilermakers called a mass meeting to consider their next moves at precisely the time fixed for the signing of the procedure agreement with all the unions on August 24th.

The dilemma facing the Co-ordinating Committee, and Reid and Airlie in particular, was acute. In order to preserve the unity of the joint shop stewards committee and the workforce at this delicate

stage of final negotiations on the question of future overall manpower requirements, especially at Clydebank, and to resolve the outstanding problems in the Govan Shipbuilders procedural agreement, it was necessary not to allow the boilermakers to be seen to be 'out on their own' as regards the rest of the workforce. Some semblance of a united front needed to be maintained at all costs in order to cross this final hurdle. Nevertheless there were more than boilermakers on the work-in and obviously some formulation covering the future of all the work-in would need to be concocted. Airlie reported to the stewards that while they could not get a commitment to re-employ the work-in actually written into the Govan agreement, they had obtained from Govan Shipbuilders an unofficial assurance that they would require some 200 extra workers by the end of the year, a figure well in excess of the number on the Govan work-in which currently amounted to 144 persons. The company had also offered to retrain where necessary those workers who were on the work-in but did not possess the required labour skills thus ensuring that the majority of the workers would quickly come off the work-in in one way or another, and onto Govan Shipbuilders pay-roll. Airlie's position, given Govan Shipbuilders' concessions, was that while the boilermakers' stance on their own work-in members could be construed as in line with the demands of the rest of the workforce, nevertheless, the boilermakers' hard line was creating certain difficulties, or as Airlie put it in his own inimitable way,

"We're of the opinion that we cannae always shove the employer's nose in it." (5)

As for the boilermakers' demand that the agreement on any new wages structure be retrospective, this had been rejected outright by

Govan Shipbuilders, although they were willing to make retrospective payments a matter of negotiation once the agreement had been signed. What they were not prepared to do was commit themselves to retrospective payments even before negotiations had begun. The main point from the Co-ordinating Committee's view was to get the agreement actually signed so that Strathalmond could go to his board and recommend that the company start trading as planned on September 11th. The question of retrospective payments could be settled later on. (6)

It was under these difficult conditions that the shop stewards and Joe Black had met Strathalmond on the 24th of August, without the boilermakers, who were at their own meeting to consider Govan Shipbuilders reply to them. To prevent a breach in the ranks, the other unions had not signed the agreement that day but Strathalmond had made it clear that unless it was signed quickly, the funds from the Government could not be forthcoming and therefore the planned starting date for the company would need to be delayed.

The following week the boilermakers' stewards and local officials met the Govan Shipbuilders management again. It appeared that 89 and not 77 of their members as had been previously thought, were on the work-in. It was agreed that by September 11th, 40 of these would have begun retraining in the company's training centre and by the beginning of October the rest would be employed in Govan or Scotstoun. This immediately resolved one major outstanding issue. (7)

On the question of retrospective wages agreement, the most that Govan Shipbuilders could reasonably concede was the possibility of an interim award between the end of the current agreement and the start of any new one, should the negotiations prove to be protracted.

On this basis a mass meeting of the boilermakers was called for the last day of August at which it was confidently expected by Jimmy Ramsay and the stewards who had conducted these negotiations, that the recommendation from the joint shop stewards committee and from the Boilermakers' society to accept the procedure agreement with Govan Shipbuilders would be carried.

In this they could not have been more wrong. At a two hour meeting of the Boilermakers' Society in the Lyceum Cinema in Govan, the workers split practically down the middle and rejected the procedure agreement by a majority of exactly twenty votes. Once again the boilermakers seemed determined to go it alone. Meanwhile mass meetings of all other groups of workers had endorsed the agreement and were now ready to sign. However, it appeared that a sizeable proportion of the rank and file boilermakers were prepared to disregard the advice both of their local official and even of some of their own stewards. It was a situation of unprecedented volatility therefore.

At Linthouse a hurriedly convened meeting of the joint shop stewards committee met to review the situation and hear first-hand reports from Sam Barr, Willie Holt and other leading boilermakers' stewards who were at the Lyceum meeting. On the chief bone of contention, the question of retrospective payments, it appeared that some workers had argued that the Clydebank stewards had settled rates of pay and agreed bonus system before Marathon went into operation and that Govan Shipbuilders should be prepared to offer likewise. With hindsight, it had clearly been a mistake to allow sectional meetings rather than a mass meeting to take place to consider the Govan Shipbuilders' procedure agreement. However,

as Barr pointed out, the boilermakers now appeared to be set on placing not only their own future but that of all their fellow workers in jeopardy. (8) Referring to the boilermakers' stubborn refusal to listen to reason despite the stewards' fight for the recommendations, at the Lyceum meeting, Barr commented sadly,

"It wouldn't have mattered if Jesus was there this morning." (9)

Now from Reid came an emotional statement warning of the consequences of failure to sign the agreement in terms of Govan Shipbuilders' future.

"...if I was Davies, if I was Davies, I'd be sitting wringing my hands tonight, because the swines that had crucified him have now put their bloody head in a noose, and all he's got to do is pull it, pull it. Get in with the boot.

'You have sabotaged every reasonable attempt...'  
I could write his speech for him! The laughing stock -  
I tell you, its as serious as this, and therefore the the  
issue, and this is why its so serious and so important,

OK, there shouldnae have been sectional meetings. We know that. We can't ask for water under the bridge. But I'm appealing, appealing that the boilermakers, and the, they will respond, at least I know a whole number who will respond, that have responded. Twenty-four hours. Twenty-four hours. That's the schedule. That's the time scale. Because if you go beyond that, you might get to Monday, but Davies might come in with the boot before then and the whole thing is up in the air." (10)

This time however, Reid's rhetoric did not produce unanimous approval from his audience. Indeed, so far had cynicism crept in that one steward from Govan went up to the microphone and suggested that Reid 'tone it down a bit' since a lot of the ammunition that the boiler-makers' members had used at the Lyceum meeting concerned what had previously happened at Clydebank, as regards the signing of the Clydebank agreement and the acceptance of the 10p finishing bonus from the liquidator,

"...where we had the situation where other negotiations took place during the holiday. So there were sectionalised meetings going on at that particular time." (11)

Even Willie Holt, a staunch supporter of the Co-ordinating Committee had to concede that,

"...maybe that's what happened in the past, that's caused all the trouble here at the present moment.

May I say this, there was certain discussions, and I've got to say it, inside our shop stewards' movement whether to fight for the decision. I fought for the decision and other stewards didnae fight for the decision, and if they had fought as hard as I've fought there was nae need for this meeting the day. We got beat by 20 votes, and if the shop stewards have convinced me that they've tried, and we got beat by 20 votes, then I'm no' for having it. There was a deliberate move made by a certain section to destroy the bloody unity, and they succeeded unfortunately, and if Jimmy Reid wants to come into the meeting, Jimmy, you'll be destroyed." (12)

Everyone had a good idea of which section Willie Holt was talking about although nobody named it outright. It was no surprise then when Jimmy McCrindle came forward to the microphone to have his say. Most of the gruff assertiveness had gone out of his voice. His tone was rather more of a whine, almost abject.

"Anyway, this morning at this meeting, this morning, as you all know, the caulking department is one of the departments which have always been against interchangeability, what have you. But this morning, looking at the situation, I as caulker's shop steward of Govan accepted the position that the work-in men should be re-engaged. I want to make that quite clear. But the whole argument here today, in my opinion is trivial.

I mean, all the boilermakers are asking, as I'm talking from the floor mind you, not as a boilermaker steward, they were only asking for this retrospective payment. Now this fella Gilchrist as far as they tell us, is an awful hard man. Well surely if they lifted the phone to Gilchrist and asked him that wan question, this is the whole, the whole crux of the matter, that if there 're any wage agreement agreed Jimmy, and if he is quite willing to start negotiations on Monday, which he stated, on a wage structure, surely then he can make it as quick as possible, even next week, to come to an agreement with the wages

structure, and there'll be nae retrospective payments. Its as simple as that. And we're shouting and bawling here about this and that, and its only a wee, a wee definitely a wee oddity and I...I mean you must be fair on this. This is what, it is because, there's no doubt in my mind, if if the boilermakers went into a meeting tomorrow and told them that they would be payed retrospective on the wage agreement, the argument would be finished. That's all I've got to say." (13)

Airlie's reply was derisory. He could hardly get the words out for disgust.

"Well look. Look, look eh well I want to make a point. The brother's living in cloud cuckoo land. And let me make this point quite clear - you say you heard Gilchrist is a hard man, I don't know if he's a hard man or no' - but Jimmy, if you or anybody else wants to take Gilchrist on, let him get his thirty-five million, then take him on. But I want to see you in particular taking him on when the time comes.

You're fighting about something that's no' an issue. They're no' an operational company, they've not got the money, and the odd points you've made is nonsense, is nonsense. And if that's the help Willie Holt and the other stewards got this morning, then it's nae wonder the decision went against them. (Applause). (14)

Faced with this chaotic situation the Co-ordinating Committee had to cancel a mass meeting due the following day at which the proposal was to be put for a one-day stoppage on September 5th in support of the fight against the Government's Industrial Relations Act. The Govan welders had already decided at a departmental meeting that they would not attend the mass meeting anyway, which was tantamount to refusing to support the stoppage. Given the other circumstances which now prevailed, clearly domestic affairs had become an all-consuming preoccupation and the main priority was anyway to secure an early reversal of the boilermakers rejection of the Govan procedure agreement.

The following morning the Govan Shipbuilders' boilermakers reconvened in the Lyceum. Once again the recommendation was overturned,

this time by a massively increased majority of two hundred. Press reports spoke of the men leaving the meeting in a 'jubilant' mood.(15) It appeared, not for the first time, as if the boilermakers had a 'death-wish'. Meanwhile, later that day the other nine unions including the CSEU local officials and the Co-ordinating Committee finally signed the agreement with Gilchrist and Strathalmond. Strathalmond publically announced that the boilermakers had until Tuesday September 5th to sign otherwise he would not recommend to his board that the company start operations on September 11th. At Brighton that weekend Donald Tonner was engaged in frantic behind the scenes attempts to get together the CSEU shipbuilding section officials who were gathering for the TUC annual conference in order to sort out the problems of Upper Clyde. In Glasgow however, the situation was moving from bad to worse.

On Friday afternoon Jimmy Ramsay had telephoned Donnelly, the personnel officer in Govan and requested that twelve sheet-iron workers, members of the Boilermakers' Society, due to start re-training as part of the agreement for absorbing the work-in, be stopped. They were told by Ramsay not to report to the training centre in the yard the following Monday morning. On Sunday afternoon a hastily convened meeting of the Co-ordinating Committee issued the following statement with the three boilermakers conveners present to endorse it,

"We have fought for fourteen months for the principle of the right to work and have argued that no-one has the right to deny us this principle. This applies to Government and employers, and it applies to any section of the working class. It is now clear in our opinion that for some sections the issue is not retrospective payment. The issue is now out in the open. It is a question of people wanting to put so-called sectional interests before the broad mass of their fellow workers." (16)



It had been pressure from one section within the Boilermakers' Society in the yard which had forced Ramsay to intervene with the management to prevent the sheet-iron workers from being re-trained, yet again specifically, from the caulking department at Govan. The caulkers objected to the absorption of retrained sheet-iron workers quite simply because they feared 'dilution'. The issue was therefore one that was specific to the boilermakers and seemed to concern the refusal to allow absorption of members of the union by other sections of the same union. In fact, however, it was not so much inter-trade sectionalism that lay behind the boilermakers' problems but the implications which retraining had for the boilermakers' overall position since what they really feared was being asked to accept retrained workers from other unions outwith the Society. In other words, it was really a matter of horizontal inter-union sectionalism. It was this and not the question of retrospective payments which had led to the rejection of the Govan procedure agreement on both occasions. Retrospective payments had merely been a smoke-screen as to some extent was the issue of the sheet-iron workers. In a report to a full shop stewards committee on Monday morning Airlie outlined the steps taken by the Co-ordinating Committee in response to this new situation.

"We took the decision that as far as we were concerned, that these twelve sheet-iron workers were starting at the training centre, and if they weren't started, then they weren't in the work-in, and it wasn't the management that were sacking them, it was their fellow workers, and I want to make that point clear." (17)

The boilermakers were now completely out on their own as the wording of the press statement had made apparent, and indeed on the instructions of the Co-ordinating Committee the twelve sheet-iron workers had, in fact, reported for the commencement of their retraining. The Co-ordinating Committee condemnation of the boilermakers as totally unprincipled, naturally provoked a sharp reaction from among the mass of boilermakers' members when they read the press reports that Monday morning. Inside the yards the atmosphere was explosive with, in

particular those boilermakers' stewards who were in favour of signing the agreement now receiving the full force of the boilermakers anger. One boilermakers' steward complained to the shop stewards committee,

"As it is the noo, I think it'll even be worse. When I went into that meeting on Friday you could feel the hatred when every time anybody got up there to support signing this agreement. And this morning in the, in the yard there, its even worse. The, the people who were actually supporting, noo they're on for a bash against the other sections. And we've hardened the whole situation, and its gonnie be harder to retrieve the situation." (18)

Willie Holt however, gave a heart-felt reply.

"Can I just say something on that Jim. If anybody sitting here thinks that we issued that statement yesterday, no realising the consequences, well they shouldnae be in this room at all.

Of course we knew it was bound to make the situation harder, of course we knew, of course we knew. Of course we knew that some of wur heids will bloody well roll. That's no' the issue, its no whether I'm gonnae be shop steward at the end of next week or no', that's no' the issue, or whether its Archie here, or John here, or...

Let me ask that we have principles. I've got principles anyway. And I don't want to be shop steward, I don't want to be convener if that's the attitude of the boilermakers towards their own fellow members. Noo that's got to be said, that's the root behind all the trouble we're having the noo. Its no' the money, its no' money, money's secondary. The whole thing was roon' about the interchangeability wi' the, wi' the sheet iron workers. Noo that is the issue, and any shop steward that says it isnae the issue are hiding." (19)

As the sheet-iron workers' steward wryly observed of the general feeling among the members of his trade,

"he's sitting like a 'wally dug', waiting on somebody throwing him a scrap of meat." (20)

However, the issue went beyond the internal problems of the boiler-makers since from whatever trade the work-in members came from, the right to be re-engaged, would still need to apply. It was in that

sense that the boilermakers had, as Airlie put it, 'besmirched' the whole campaign. As Sam Barr put it with more than a hint of exasperation in his voice,

"Listen, it doesnae matter if its boilermakers, electricians or engineers, or bloody DATA members that was coming into that school this morning. They'd have still have had to come in. 'Cause that's our principled stand as shop stewards, that the lads have gottae come in off the work-in. They were doing nobody harm. We werenae paying them, the management was paying them. So why are they stopped? What's the point about? Why did you do it? Did you do it within your own, because of your own sectional interests so as you would no' have any problem?" (21)

This time McCrindle was totally exposed but by then the damage had been done, sectionalism both within and between the boilermakers and the rest of the workforce was spreading like a contagious infection.

With Strathalmond's deadline for the boilermakers signing fast running out, McGarvey once again sent up James Murray as his 'trouble-shooter' from the TUC Annual Conference for talks with Govan Shipbuilders and with the Govan boilermakers themselves. It was the Marathon story all over again with the boilermakers attempting to win concessions for themselves by the technique of brinkmanship, a mentality devastatingly revealed by McGarvey's reply to a TV reporter at the TUC, when asked whether he thought Strathalmond's deadline was the last chance for the boilermakers.

"Good God man, your last chance is up to your last second." (22)

The following day, Tuesday, Govan Shipbuilders officially announced that they would have to delay their starting date by a week. (23) That evening Murray and Strathalmond got down to brass tacks, with Murray arguing, contrary to the terms of the procedure agreement,

for separate negotiating rights for his members, rather than adhering to the agreed system of a joint all-union set of wage negotiations. It was indeed the Marathon story yet again.

The next morning Murray addressed the boilermakers at a mass meeting and informed them that there would be an immediate interim wage agreement of not less than £2 per week for all skilled tradesmen. The meeting voted to accept the Govan agreement by 900 to 300 votes and on this still rather precarious basis the agreement was hastily signed. The 'bribe' that Murray was offering had obviously not mollified a sizeable minority of the boilermakers. Nevertheless their face had been saved to some extent because the boilermakers could now turn to other unions and claim that they also had secured for them a £2 a week rise, that they were not merely out for themselves. Almost immediately, however, Strathalmond issued a flat denial on behalf of Govan Shipbuilders that any figure had been agreed upon. (24) Indeed, the only person to mention the £2 increase had been Jim Murray himself. The Govan Shipbuilders' position remained unchanged, namely, that while they were not against retrospective payments, these could only be given after discussions on a new wage agreement had been concluded. For the boilermakers this was the ultimate humiliation. Far from being able to boast that they had won an increase for all skilled trades, they now had to accept taunts by other workers of being 'sold down the river' by their own executive. Indeed, had Strathalmond conceded the £2 to Murray and therefore the boilermakers attempt to lead wage bargaining it would have permanently recreated the historical divisions between the different trades in the industry and shattered any hope for a more enduring future unity among the workforce. It would have provided the continuing basis for the kinds of sectionalism which had proved to be so rife among the boilermakers in the past month and whose roots as has been suggested extended far back into the history of the industry.

As it was, despite the temporary disarray among the boilermakers' rank and file, within a few days a formal pay claim for all Govan Shipbuilders' employees was submitted by a joint union negotiating team representing all the unions in the yards with three representatives each from the boilermakers, the finishing trades and general workers led by Airlie. (25)

In a mass meeting the following week, to report on the offer made by Govan Shipbuilders, it became clear just how bitterly the welders in particular resented the elimination of their wage superiority over other workers. The unions had claimed a £6 per week increase across the board but had been made a final offer of precisely half that figure, a minimum of £3. In view of the circumstances which the new company was in, with pressure on Govan Shipbuilders from the government not to mention Yarrow's and the Lower Clyde, the Co-ordinating Committee felt that this offer was the best they could hope for and recommended acceptance. The alternative was strike action and with the company just beginning to trade and as yet with few orders on the books, the prospects for any strike were far from good. In any event with a rate of 94.6 pence per hour for skilled men the offer placed the Govan Shipbuilders' workers among the most highly paid, if not the best paid in the industry.

The opposition to the recommendation, not surprisingly, came from the boilermakers' stewards. From the Govan welders' steward John McMillan came a clear statement of their felt grievance showing that the old attitudes were by no means dead yet.

"It concerns parity. Now this is something that everybody else has been fighting for, with the exception of the division, or section, I represent. If this agreement's accepted it means that as from today our differential will disappear." (26)

Here it was then, the 'kings of the river' in wage terms, the welders, were about to be deposed and were bellowing like reactionary monarchs faced with a Republican constitution. Theirs was merely a more concentrated expression of the diffused discontent which had been simmering among the boilermakers in general for some time. In reply, on behalf of the negotiating committee, Airlie made it clear that while allowances for working in obnoxious or dangerous conditions could still be negotiated for on a departmental basis, what McMillan had referred to as payment for 'skill and craft' would no longer pertain. (27)

"First of all, if this new wage structure is accepted, let us be quite clear, it eliminates differentials for all tradesmen. All tradesmen, regardless of their category, will be on the same rate. All semi-skilled workers will be on the same rate, and all unskilled workers." (28)

The threat by McMillan, that in view of this, the Govan welders would need to 'review the situation' along with the welders in Linthouse and Scotstoun, was decisively rebuffed by Airlie to the applause and cheers of the other workers who had long resented the welders self-proclaimed superiority.

"Yeh, well look, John's making the point from a welder, but I'm making the point as the chairman of the negotiating committee, that the position is this. That all unions, including the boilermakers, have accepted the position of joint negotiations. If this meeting endorses the recommendation of the joint shop stewards' committee, that will be the rates paid throughout the group, and there will be no sectional negotiations, John, I've got to make that position quite clear." (29)

The acceptance of Govan Shipbuilders' wage offer by the majority of the mass meeting was effectively the public laying out of the corpse of sectionalism. The exorcism of its spirit however, was not achieved until the very last chapter of the UCS saga had been concluded and even then it lingered on as a feature of the post-UCS situation.

The immediate struggle would not be over until the problems of the employment of the workforce at Clydebank during the transitional phase of Marathon's take-over had been solved. This was the final issue.

By mid-September there were still 1900 workers employed by the liquidator on finishing off four ships at Clydebank. With Marathon only planning to take on 700 workers by Christmas this meant the possibility of 1000 men being declared redundant by the end of the year as the work for UCS was phased out. In terms of the fight to preserve employment this was unacceptable to the Co-ordinating Committee who had taken the decision to continue the work-in at Clydebank on the basis of support from the workers in all four yards. It was to be the final test of a unity that had already been severely battered. With all that had gone before, it was perhaps over-optimistic of the Co-ordinating Committee to expect that at this late stage the workers in Govan Shipbuilders would willingly come to the assistance of their colleagues in Clydebank. On the other hand, if the principle of the right to work was to be maintained, it would need to be maintained until the very last no matter how difficult the circumstances. In that sense the shop stewards leadership had no alternative but to honour their public commitment to fight for the jobs of every worker.

With a mass meeting of all workers due to be held in Govan the Co-ordinating Committee suddenly announced the cancellation of the meeting. After hours of crisis discussions it was decided instead that it would be held the following morning at Clydebank where the main item on the agenda would be the reimposition of the 50p levy suspended in July at the start of the holidays. The worker at the July mass meeting who had opposed the suspension on the basis of the prediction of future problems at Clydebank was now sadly proved correct.

The mass meeting at Clydebank was a truly sorry affair. Apart from the Clydebank men, no workers at all from Govan were present except the stewards, from Linthouse only the welders of the boilermaker trades, and the Linthouse engineers and outfitting workers were present, and from Scotstoun only the general workers and the outfitters.<sup>(30)</sup> With between three and four hundred redundancies due at Clydebank the following Friday, Reid put forward the view of the Co-ordinating Committee.

"Its our opinion in the Co-ordinating Committee yesterday that there's only one attitude can be taken, and that is that there will be nobody going down the road next Friday. If it was good enough, 6 months ago, to say they're not going down the road, they're in the work-in, and if pressures are on Marathon or on anybody else, if that was a privilege that existed, to workers, 6 or 8 or 9 months ago, in Govan, Linthouse, in Scotstoun, its a privilege that must apply to these people in Clydebank next Friday night. Otherwise it's a betrayal, a betrayal, not only of our fellow workers, but of the movement that sustained us over 15 months.

Now the situation has developed in the recent weeks, sectional differences have emerged within the workforce of the UCS, and there's no good anyone trying to sweep these under the carpet. In my opinion and it's always been my opinion, sectional differences within the working class, no matter what it's based on, is always eventually self-destruction for the working class. And that goes for colour, for creed, for religion, or for caste. And as workers, we've got to stand together, and look upon each other as brothers, and only recognise one label, and that is 'fellow worker'. And if we'd done that consistently over 50 years, in my opinion we would be living in an immeasurably better Britain today.

But differences have emerged, and its got to be recorded. There was to be a mass meeting yesterday, a mass meeting with the quite clear, decisive purpose of a total reaffirmation of the labour force in the four divisions, that we were still in it together in the fight for every job. That decision has never been rescinded from our previous mass meetings, and we gave the promise that it would never be rescinded or never ended, unless it was by the decision of a mass meeting of the workers of the four divisions. But yesterday we were faced with the position, where the boilermakers in Govan had decided they were not attending the mass meeting because they wanted to opt out of the fight for the jobs. Because the mass meeting was not about filling up your pool for next Friday - the mass meeting



was to reaffirm our determined stand that we were all in it together. And therefore, by taking the decision not to attend the mass meeting, they were opting out of the fight. That was also the decision of the boilermakers in Scotstoun, at a mass meeting.

The Co-ordinating Committee met yesterday and took the decision that those sections who had opted out of the fight, had abandoned their fellow workers, were no longer members of the Co-ordinating Committee, were not involved in the work-in. And if they've got workers in the work-in or members in the work-in, they can be responsible for their members. Because the money that was given to us was given to men that were on public record as saying, 'Give us your support, and we will not let you down. Give us your support, and we'll fight as honourable, decent, principled men for all our fellow workers, and in recording there a victory and achievement, will be doing a service to the whole working class movement'." (31)

It was an emotional meeting at which each group of workers present from the other yards to support their Clydebank colleagues was named from the platform and received a separate ovation. It was a time to stand and be counted. It was almost a parody of a revivalist meeting with Willie McInnes acting as chairman. Airlie was called to address the meeting by McInnes,

"Well I see Jim Airlie standing there, and I never seen a bloke so so di..di..disgusted in all my life. I think we should hear what Jim's got to tell us."

Airlie came forward,

"Brother chairman, brothers -- Jimmy's right, I shouldn't even be here. There's not a worker attending this meeting fae Govan, and let me say there is no justification for that position of the Govan workers. The yard's in turmoil, I'm not excusing it. There was a decision at the Co-ordinating Committee, the workers in Govan never carried it out.

But I want to put my personal position here. Whatever decision that this mass meeting takes, I'm going back to the engineers to fight for it, and if they don't accept it, then they carry on without me as a shop steward, because I'm making my position clear." (32)

Now, one after the other, stewards from Govan and Linthouse came forward and pledged to do their utmost to regain the support of their departments for the reintroduction of the 50p levy, otherwise they too would resign their position as stewards. The principle, preserving all the jobs, would be fought for to the last no matter what the cost to the shop stewards.

Over the next few days a vigorous attempt was made to regain the ground that had been lost in terms of unity. The Clyde District Committee of the boilermakers took the unprecedented step of circulating a letter to their shop stewards in Scotstoun, Linthouse and Govan appealing to them to reconsider their decision of no further support for the work-in and urging that they 'put the good name of our Society once more in the forefront of the struggle for the right to work'.(33) As the letter made clear, of the 400 expected redundancies 248 were members of the boilermakers but even this appeal was to be of no avail. At all three yards the workers led by the boilermakers again rejected the levy. Only the draughtsmen and electricians at Govan and the welders at Linthouse had backed the proposal at their departmental meetings. Airlie and twenty of the leading shop stewards on the Co-ordinating Committee had no alternative but to resign. The only prominent exception was Sam Barr of Scotstoun. In Scotstoun finishing trade workers had voted for the levy while the 300 boilermakers there had voted against. The fact that Barr did not resign with the others, however, created no small amount of bad feeling between some of the shop stewards. In the midst of this debacle the only piece of good news was that the expected redundancies at Clydebank were postponed for three weeks because of an engine being placed for fitting out in the yard rather than elsewhere. In the meantime Willie McInnes was elected 'pro-tem'

chairman of a reconstituted Co-ordinating Committee. Clearly it was hoped that the situation could eventually be retrieved and the shop stewards who had resigned, reinstated.

Over the next few days the officials of the Clyde Confederation attempted to persuade the stewards to reconsider their position. Airlie had taken up his tools again and returned to his department as an ordinary working engineer much to the embarrassment of his fellow workers. Meanwhile the caulkers at Linthouse had decided to reverse their decision on the levy and in an attempt to restore unity the new Co-ordinating Committee rescinded the previous decision not to give work-in payments to men whose departments were refusing to pay the levy. As a way of creating the conditions for the reinstatement of Airlie and the other stewards the Confederation now intervened to call a mass meeting of the whole of the finishing trade workers from Govan, Linthouse and Scotstoun with the intention that together with the Linthouse caulkers and welders and a few other departments it would perhaps be possible to create at least a numerical majority in favour of the work-in, even without the support of the majority of the boilermakers.

At the Lyceum meeting all the Confederation officials from the finishing trades were there; Willie Reid of the Coppermiths, Tommy McTurk of UCATT, Joe Brown of the plumbers, Donald Tonner of the engineers and Joe Black of the electricians who as chairman of the Confederation now addressed the meeting. The theme of Black's speech was unity. He began by reminding them that the roots of the fight to preserve shipbuilding on the Upper Clyde went back to the time of Fairfields when the workers at Govan had first won a victory against redundancy, and went on to recall how the finishing trades had only enhanced their position vis a vis the boilermakers through achieving unity among themselves.

"And if there's anyone who thinks that this fight has only started in the last 12 to 18 months, then the people in Govan know this isn't true. The whole background to this position was the constant internecine warfare between the finishing trades and the boilermakers, and this is regrettable. And it's regrettable because I myself personally have made it clear to all and sundry where I stand on this particular fight. I've made it perfectly clear on every meeting, whether the boilermakers are there or not, that under no circumstances was I prepared to see people get paid more than the finishing trade workers. And the workers and the stewards, who have attended meeting after meeting on this particular subject, know where we stand on this issue. Now this doesn't mean that I'm anti-boilermaker. My best friend's a boilermaker. But it does mean I'm pro-finishing trade.

Arising out of the fight on Fairfield's when the ten pence was received for flexib for flexibility money, and once we had achieved it, it had spread to Connells', Yarrows' and John Brown's. We were then faced with redundancy, the closure of the yards, and the birth of UCS. Our problem at that time was to unite the finishing trade workers, and go forward as one body. We went forward as one negotiating body; the terrific fight we had for the painters, to bring the painters up to the level of the other trades, the levelling out of the wages, the increases which have been achieved in the last four years, practically 100% increases, was only achieved because of the basis of unity that was established - and it wasn't easy, brothers.

All the idiosyncracies of each individual union, the peculiarities of the electricians, the differences of the joiners, the position of the painters and engineers, were all thrown to the one side in the fight for unity. And we made it perfectly clear to the boilermakers and the employers, the days when the finishing trades were second class workers was finished. And this was all on the basis of basis of unity." (34)

Black went on to warn of the rising unemployment and the problems of the industry. As for the criticism that the Clydebank workers should not have signed the Marathon agreement unless their jobs were secure, Black pointed out that as Chairman of the Confederation he had been involved in all the discussions and that the understanding with Marathon was that 1000 were to have been started immediately. On the question of the 'finishing bonus' Black argued that they would never have accepted 10 pence per hour at Clydebank if that had really been what it was, but rather would have claimed something nearer £1 an hour, rather than the meagre figure agreed upon.

"Surely we're not going to allow ourselves to be sidetracked, the one or two issues which have been raised, on which, people may think, there was legitimate criticism. The main aim is to ensure that the original pledge on which we set out for is adhered to. And there's not a union, not a shop steward, or not a worker but which time after time has reiterated this pledge. And I feel sure you're not prepared to go back on it now. Now there can be much carp and criticism. We could point out that people who've received thousands of pounds out of the work-in have refused to pay the 50 pence. But surely, brothers and sisters, surely the whole movement doesnae legislate for the 5 per cent odd balls who for some reason or other always want to upset everybody. We legislate for the majority, taking heed of the minority's point of view. We legislate for the future of the industry. We legislate for your jobs. And we legislate to endeavour to retain the magnificent unity.

Now it's true this unity was established because of the very difficult times that we underwent - it's true we werenae easy bedfellows with the boilermakers, nobody has every disguised this - it is true, in the main, the leadership has been thrown up from the finishing trades - it's true that certain sections of the boilermakers, even at this day are prepared to rock the boat, because they think that their sectional interests aren't being safe-guarded.

If the Upper Clyde is gonnae be brought down then it'll never be brought down by the finishing trade unions. But also let me make it clear, the finishing trade unions are not prepared to be blackmailed, either by workers or by other trade unionists. Now that may sound a peculiar statement for a man who's advocating unity. When we talk about unity, we don't talk about subjugation, and we're saying that only because of this unity have we been able to establish the fight that has taken place. Only because of this unity have we been able to substantially improve your wages, out of all recognition. And only because of unity is the industry still surviving in the Upper Clyde at the present time.

Now having said this, and I know I'm speaking, in the main, to the converted, because most of you here have been in the fight from the beginning, but I'm confident that the decision you've reached was reached on the basis of misunderstanding, was reached on the basis that the full facts weren't put to the stewards and the workers, and was reached on the basis of legitimate grievances which hadn't been attended to. And I'll give you the assurance on behalf of the Confederation, and of my fellow officials and shop stewards - if this decision is reversed that these grievances will be examined with a view to rectification where they're found and proved correct. We'll give you the assurance that the shop stewards 'Ponderosa' will be cleaned out, it was becoming more like the 'Costa Clyde' rather than the conveners meeting place.

"And we'll give you these assurances, fellow workers. I'm asking you sincerely, and in your own interests, and the interest of the industry on the upper reaches, that this decision be reversed, that shop stewards be reinstated, shop stewards be re-elected in, or appointed, re-appointed, because the decision'll be yours who the shop stewards'll be. Shop stewards'll be re-appointed in every department where there's vacancies at the present time. But first and foremost, the contributions to the work-in should be continued. We're talking about 50 pence, that's eh what it would appear, and by God, the enemies of the working class are highly delighted, because at last they thought they'd seen a rift in the working class movement. Well, let us give them their answers, let us make it clear that there's no rift in this unity. (35)

It should be noted that the basis of Black's appeal for unity was itself more than slightly tinged with a sectional approach. But the officials were not to have it all their own way that morning. From the Govan joiners one worker launched a vigorous attack on the shop stewards.

"Noo I think this meeting has been called purely and simply to allow the tail to wag the dog. (mild applause). In my opinion, fellow workers, I, like every other trade unionist in this hall, desire unity with our fellow workers. And I don't identify myself with just any fellow worker. The ones that I feel obligated to, first and foremost, are them within the Govan division, whether they be boilermakers, or outfit trade, it doesn't matter to me.

Now what really upsets me is this - that all along the line we've had these magnificent mass meetings, and we've always been told that you would decide these matters, rightly so, so we did. We've given support all along, and for this support the stewards have been very thankful for. But surely the time comes, that when we can come to a decision of our own which we consider reasonable, that the stewards must, by the same yardstick, accept this decision.

Now when a mass meeting was called in this eh and failed to conclude itself because of the absence of the boilermakers, the stewards then, through the various departments, called meetings. Now these meetings were called primarily for one reason only - in my opinion not to get the true reflection of the individual members, but to bring back to the shop stewards' joint committee one particular answer, and that answer only, with the threat that if we didn't see things along their way, they were going to resign.

Now to me this is not democratic, and this is the main point that I'm in dispute with, not the 50p, this is purely symbolic. But I don't want ever to be dictated to by shop stewards. I want shop stewards to realise that their very purpose is to carry out the wishes of their fellow members,

whether these wishes seek, eh whether these wishes fit in with the ideas of the stewards or not is not important. And this is the proof of the pudding, the stewards are there to serve the members." (36)

Then to a massive applause and cheers Airlie stood up to speak.

Today's underdog was obviously more popular than yesterday's hero.

"Eh brother chairman, fellow workers, chairman, I want to make eh one or two points. First of all, on the points of criticism relative to the agreement - I think Joe adequately covered the point about the signing of the Marathon agreement, and that was part of the criticism. But quite frankly, the reality of life, unless there's an employer in there, there's nobody that you can pressurise in order to ( ) eh maximise the jobs, and there nobody can argue that that was not necessary.

Now other point of the run down money, or what, the target achievement scheme. Now frankly, we were critical of that agreement being made on Clydebank, and we made the point there. And the main point of criticism was not entering into a separate bonus. But there was an argument in Clydebank, because consistently we had considerably lower bonus than applied at Govan. But our main criticisms that we made to the Clydebank stewards ( ) was this, with the concluding of the recent wage negotiations, you'd have had a situation if that bonus hadn't been there, whereas the Clydebank workers employed by the liquidator would have been earning 76 pence an hour against 94. Is there anybody gonnae argue that their people with the liquidator didn't have a right?

Let me eh touch upon another point, Joe touched upon it eh eh adequately. Quite frankly, the problems emanated eh relative to the boilermakers' sectional meeting, and the boilermakers quite frankly, and I want to make this in a fraternal manner, are rowing their own canoe in this, because they're convinced that it is in their interests to split the unity in order to pursue sectional claims. At this very moment, the boilermakers are talking about going in for a shilling an hour, ROWP money. Quite frankly, they'll not be on because that's inclusive in the wage agreement. But the main point is this, and Joe touched on it - the unity of the outfit trades established the parity of wages. And the point you're gonnae reach here is this. You'll either fragment yourselves, you'll hang separately or decide to stay together united. And don't be under any illusion, if the employers want to pick you off one at a time, and there're people here can remember the position in the shipbuilding industry not long ago, the plumbers and electricians were in - the engineers went in separately, and the employer picked them off one by one.

I remember when I started in this industry six eh years ago, the stewards used to go up with their caps off twiddling their thumbs, begging, not united. If you want that situation, then you'll get that situation - the only way you'll avoid that is unity. And let me make this final point - with all the criticisms and the mistakes that's been made, it's seen in the movement that you're 'on the bus' and you're 'fireproof'. And quite frankly it's left a bad taste in the movement's mouth. And let me touch finally on the point brother Connelly made about the democratic decision - I am certainly for the democratic decision, the decision of the engineers for instance, I'm gonnae deal with the engineers, was not to support their brothers in Clydebank. I accept that position, but what I'm not prepared to accept is carry out that decision as a shop steward. Because quite frankly brothers, if you push that line to its logical conclusion, you could take a decision that no Ugandans get in, no Catholics get in, and that would be against my principle, and I'm not gonnae carry out an unprincipled position. That's my position brothers." (Applause, whistles, and cheers.) (37)

It looked very much as if the meeting was going to resolve itself in favour of the platform. Then Donald Tonner took the mike to address the workers and addressed the workers as 'comrades' which at once brought prolonged heckling from his audience such that both Sammy Gilmore who was chairing the meeting and Joe Black tried to intervene to save him.

"Well comrades, I'm not here this morning as the assistant of... (shouts of disapproval from workers). That is, that is the traditional greeting of the British working class movement and I'm still proud of it. Unfortunately, the ethics of that particular address has long since been lost. We're now to the stage we don't call each other brothers now, we address each other now as 'Dear colleagues'. Fair enough, I haven't got any wine stained glasses on this morning." (38)

It was a peculiar term to have begun to address a trade union meeting with the word 'comrades', traditionally reserved for political meetings. Perhaps Tonner was using this word to underscore the need for unity of purpose. The hostile reaction showed in a sense the real resistance which now existed to any attempt by the leadership to impose any kind of discipline and authority that



the workers were not prepared to accept. This did not mean, as Airlie's contribution demonstrated, that the wider ramifications of the principle of working class unity could not be raised. It was, however, a question of the manner being appropriate to the circumstances. These were, above all, circumstances in which the leadership was on the defensive and had to be seen to be willing to freely accept criticism. Indeed, Joe Black and Donald Tonner both had stressed the need for legitimate grievances to be given an airing and had promised to investigate any complaints raised. While heading off criticism directed at Clydebank it had been necessary to concede that the hostile feelings towards the stewards might be justified to some extent. In playing the role of mediators the full time officials had thus left the stewards dangerously exposed given that there was still the problem of reinstating all those who had resigned. It was significant that Black had been noticeably hesitant about suggesting that the workers should necessarily vote in again the same people as stewards. In this respect the intervention of Joe Brown of the plumbers union was of key significance in re-establishing the basis of the stewards leadership and authority.

"Well brothers, the main criticism that has come from those people who've spoken in opposition, appears to be that they consider that the tail is wagging the dog. Now let me make it perfectly clear why we are here. It's not a question that we don't accept the democratic decisions of departments or mass meetings. But why we are here is, because we think the decision was wrong. And we, like anybody else, have the right and the authority to consider that a wrong decision should be reversed, on the basis of discussion on a working class level. And that's the purpose of this meeting this morning.

Joe Black has outlined the overall situation regarding the development of the outfit and trades development. And the question has been raised that the reasons, one of the reasons why the decisions weren't being made was that the boilermakers

had already indicated that they had opted out of the situation, and this is an influence on the position within the departments. Let me remind you, that we had to go to mass meetings of all the UCS workers at one stage, in order to develop the struggle. And while we were addressing the outfit trades, the boilermakers stayed at their work. But we were convinced at that stage, that we were taking the right decision, and because of that, we carried on regardless of what they had decided at that particular stage. And therefore, its in that atmosphere that we're asking the outfit trades, who have taken democratic decision, not to pay or continue paying the 50p, to reconsider that situation, because it's fairly clear that the continuation of the 50p is in itself an act of financial sacrifice, but its more than that. It's the symbolic unity that has, completely united the working class, not only in the Clyde, but throughout the country. It's the basis, the financial basis, that allowed the work-in to be organised to be self-supporting, and therefore, because of that, successful. And we were able to go to other people throughout the country, not on the basis, as we've often had to do, on strikes and appeals, where we're saying to them 'Give us money in order to keep us on the street'. We were able to go to them, and say to them, 'Give us money to keep us at work'. And that's the basis of, the 50 pence, that's the symbolic unity that's now being destroyed by the decision not to continue. And it's in that particular background that we're making this appeal this morning.

And let me say this to you, that once again, this situation's got to be made, this decision's got to be made, as it were, in the goldfish bowl. Because the eyes of the press, and the eyes of the world are watching you, as they've watched us as officials, as shop stewards, television and all the rest of it, for the last four and five years. But the differences this morning is this. It's not Joe Black, Jimmy Airlie, or Jimmy Reid who's in the spotlight. It's everyone of you, individually, who're sitting in this meeting, on which the spotlight's turned on. And it's on your decision that the whole development of this new concept of working class action will finally be determined. And it's on that basis that we're making the appeal to you, as individuals, to consider the future action that can finally hinge on the successful outcome of this position. Because let me say this to you. It may be considered that the 50p is a donation to Clydebank. Is there anybody in this room considers that you may not need the 50p yourself in the future? Is there anybody who considers that Govan Shipbuilders are so far out of the wood, that there's not a necessity of a similar situation developing for you in the future? Because as an official, being through all the discussions, I'm not convinced, and if you are, you can maybe have the luxury of taking that decision. But as far as we're concerned, the issue as far as the 50p is concerned, is fundamental. And it is one that every single individual sitting in this hall has got to make the decision, and I consider that if you make the correct decision, you will be applauded - not by the press, because that's not important, but by the workers of this country, who've seen your struggle develop, and wish it success to finality. Thank you." (39)

Joe Brown's contribution had made all the necessary points in the right way. He had reminded them of the symbolic importance of their action and the fact that it was they who would determine the final outcome of the struggle. The meeting consequently voted in favour of reimposition of the levy with only about two dozen members opposed. Now with the support of the numerical majority of the workforce, Airlie and the other stewards were duly reinstated.

The following day Harbin arrived at Heathrow. On learning from reporters that the work-in was to continue he immediately denounced the whole affair as "political" and "communist-inspired" and threatened in disgust to pull Marathon out of Clydebank altogether. (40) Reid and Airlie who with a dozen other stewards were about to depart for the Labour Party Conference at Blackpool to discuss the Marathon situation with McGarvey, expressed suitable bewilderment to the press. Later on Harbin attempted to qualify his remarks concerning the communist plot but denied that he had promised to employ 1,000 workers at the outset.

The stewards and McGarvey, with Chataway standing by to act as a mediator if necessary, finally met with Harbin who came especially to Blackpool for discussions. The outcome of these was that Marathon agreed to accelerate their production programme thus immediately increasing the numbers employed while the liquidator for his part agreed to delay 300 redundancies due that week. It finally appeared, almost unbelievably as if the whole battle over UCS was coming to its conclusion and on terms which would allow the workforce to claim a significant victory for their action. It only remained to report the details of the settlement to the last mass meeting of the UCS campaign for endorsement by the workforce.

Marathon had agreed to take on workers who were surplus to the liquidator's requirements, if not immediately, then within a period of four weeks. Two ships being fitted out for the liquidator at Clydebank would be allowed to remain there in order to delay further redundancies while Marathon were to place an order for an oil-rig in the yard at once. In addition Marathon had offered to take workers to the United States for a period of retraining of between three and six months as a 'flying squad' for emergency rig repairs. Marathon were now talking about eventual labour requirements in the region of 3,000. Govan Shipbuilders would also be requiring additional workers and had agreed to recruit from any short-term excess labour at Clydebank. With only 17 left on the work-in at Clydebank the stewards were now recommending that the work-in as such, be terminated. (41)

The mass meeting had been in private and at a press conference immediately afterwards the shop stewards, with Rev. Borthwick beside them, as at the inception of the campaign, drew down the final curtain. It was appropriate that the last words should go to Reid and Airlie. It was, said Reid, a victory not just for the workers but the 'whole Scottish community'.

"In addition, could I say that this is a very moving occasion for us. We will have problems and difficulties, but the main obstacle has been overcome. And on behalf of the workers of UCS we want to thank everyone who helped us in this period; the Scottish community, the political parties, the churches, people in the theatre and the art world, the trade unions from all over Britain and from different parts of the world. We intimated some time ago that we would not let them down given their support. I think we've honoured that statement." (42)

## Chapter 11 The Govan Shipbuilders Agreement

- 1 Appendix 27. Agreement between Govan Shipbuilders Limited and the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.
- 2 *ibid.*
- 3 UCS Shop Stewards, mass meeting Govan Shipbuilders, 22 August 1972, p. 3, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 3.
- 4 Record of statement presented by Bros. J. Nimmo, W. Dougan and J. Ramsay, District Delegates and the shop stewards, Bro. J.G. Murray, Executive Council member to Mr. Gilchrist, Linthouse Friday 18 August 1972 at 2pm, GU Archives.
- 5 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting, 24 August 1972, p. 12, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 3.
- 6 *ibid.*, p. 13.
- 7 Govan Shipbuilders Limited, record of agreement between representatives of the Boilermakers' Society and Govan Shipbuilders arising from discussions held on Tuesday 29 August 1972, GU Archives.
- 8 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting Linthouse, 31 August 1972, p. 6, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 3.
- 9 *ibid.*, p. 9.
- 10 *ibid.*, pp. 13-14.
- 11 *ibid.*, p. 15.
- 12 *ibid.*, p. 16.
- 13 *ibid.*, pp. 17-18.
- 14 *ibid.*, p. 18.
- 15 Glasgow Herald, 2 September 1972.
- 16 Glasgow Herald, 4 September 1972.
- 17 UCS Shop Stewards, meeting 4 September 1972, p. 1, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 3.

- 18 *ibid.*, p. 9.
- 19 *ibid.*, p. 11.
- 20 *ibid.*, p. 19. A 'wally dug' is an ornamental china dog.
- 21 *ibid.*, p. 14.
- 22 BBC TV News, D248 7202M, 8 September 1972, GU Archives.
- 23 Appendix 28, Statement from Govan Shipbuilders Limited,  
5 September 1972.
- 24 Glasgow Herald, 7 September 1972.
- 25 UCS Shop Stewards, Linthouse reportback on wage negotiation,  
16 September 1972, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 3.
- 26 UCS Shop Stewards, mass meeting Govan Shipbuilders,  
18 September 1972, pp. 6-7, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 3.
- 27 *ibid.*, p. 7.
- 28 *ibid.*, p. 7.
- 29 *ibid.*, p. 12.
- 30 The Linthouse welders were a relatively small section and not  
as liable to sectional influence as in Govan. They were also  
led by Willie McInnes who provided a good political leadership  
to this group.
- 31 UCS Shop Stewards, mass meeting Clydebank, 21 September 1972,  
SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 3.
- 32 *ibid.*, p. 12.
- 33 Appendix 29. The Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers, Shipwrights,  
Blacksmiths and Structural Workers, Clyde District Committee,  
26 September 1972.
- 34 UCS Shop Stewards, finishing trades meeting, Lyceum, 2 October  
1972, pp. 3-4, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 3.
- 35 *ibid.*, pp. 6-8.
- 36 *ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

- 37 *ibid.*, pp. 14-15.
- 38 *ibid.*, p. 16.
- 39 *ibid.*, pp. 19-20.
- 40 BBC TV News, D277209/7, 3 October 1972, GU Archives Glasgow Herald,  
4 October 1972.
- 41 UCS Shop Stewards, mass meeting Marathon, 9 October 1972,  
pp. 3-5, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 3.
- 42 UCS Shop Stewards, press conference 10 October 1972, SRO, UCS  
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## Chapter Twelve

## THE WIDER IMPLICATIONS OF THE WORK-IN

## (i) Work-ins and Sit-ins.

If the work-in had made history it was above all history made by working people. The purpose of this study has been to record that history in the making. Yet, it is important to observe that there are those who are prepared to attempt to rewrite history in the service of the ruling class in order to pretend that such actions by the workers are of little significance. The events at Upper Clyde are no exception in this respect. Professor Sykes of Strathclyde University provides one such example of history re-written in a foreword to a study of UCS written for Mrs. Thatcher and Sir Keith Joseph's 'think-tank', the Centre for Policy Studies. (1) In this study, prefaced approvingly by Sir Keith himself, Sykes claims,

"That the 'work-in' asserted the right to work is nonsense; the shipbuilding workers, the owners and management and, above all, the taxpayers are all worse off than if it had never happened. Nevertheless the myth of a successful work-in has been used to support other work, or sit-ins and demands for Government aid in cases ranging from Triumph Meridan to Chrysler; from Fisher Bendix to Imperial Typewriters and the Scottish Daily News. And, in every case, there is nothing to show for it, the only winner is the extreme left with its aim of industrial disruption." (2)

The impact of the UCS work-in in terms of inspiring other actions against redundancies is at least conceded by Sykes if only as a myth manufactured by the mass media. (3) More debatable is the contention that neither the UCS action nor any of its imitators were successful in asserting the Right to Work. That the aim of the "extreme left", at least if the Communist Party is meant here, is merely that of "industrial disruption" is a gross caricature. Clearly, however, the intention of such an appraisal is to downplay the leadership role of the organised working class of which UCS



provides an outstanding example and specifically, within that, to denigrate the part of Communists in the struggles of the class. These and other issues then are discussed in this chapter which examines the wider implications of the UCS campaign. It is interesting to note, however, that on the basis of such 'history' as that just cited prominent Tory politicians now feel sufficiently safe to claim, in the words of Alex Fletcher, Minister for Industry for Scotland, at the 1981 Scottish Conservative Party Conference, that the UCS work-in was "nothing more than a grand hoax" out of which "only its leaders seem to have benefited." (4)

Equally dangerous, however, is the tendency by those sympathetic to the aims of the work-in to overestimate what was in fact achieved. Certain observers quite close to the events of the time have argued that the work-in demonstrated "the latent managerial capacity of the working class" and that the workers "most certainly can run industry." (5) The truth or otherwise of these statements is not at issue, only that in the context of UCS the question of 'who manages?' was not at stake as has previously been argued. Even less were there any lingering strands of more 'revolutionary' syndicalist aspirations emanating from either Scotstoun or Clydebank, both areas where in the early years of the century, at the Albion works and at Singers respectively, such ideas had some currency. (6)

Again, the real level of support for the work-in should not be exaggerated. The problems of involving the redundant workers in the production process and the difficulties in maintaining discipline among the work-in as well as continuing financial support for it, even from within certain sections of their fellow

shipyard workers, have already been discussed. The proportion of those made redundant who joined the work-in was never more than 69 per cent. As the events dragged on, twelve months later that proportion had declined to 14 per cent. (7) Nevertheless, for at least the early months of the campaign, the figures suggest a high level of support for what after all was an entirely uncharted field of action for all those workers involved. The work-in was to all intents and purposes an untried tactic in the field of industrial conflict and for cautious, not to say sceptical, shipyard workers to be persuaded to embark on such a novel project indicates a high level of confidence in their leadership and in themselves.

Such working-class confidence is by no means automatic. It indicates the appearance of a new kind of identity in which workers begin to see themselves in terms of their common interests rather than from a sectional or sectarian standpoint. One of the most significant features of the work-in despite the problems which arose in the latter phases of the struggle was that by and large the workforce retained that overall confidence in what they were doing. The fact that the shop stewards were eventually prepared to resign on a point of principle was not simply a set-back for the struggle, it also indicated that the leadership for its part, retained its basic confidence in the ability of the workers to see beyond their more narrow preoccupations even after over a year of complex manoeuvres, albeit that some prompting, cajolery and occasionally threats were required in order to retain the unity. The UCS workers were not angels. They were ordinary workers with all the usual human faults and weaknesses. The fact was, however, that they were prepared to do battle if they felt the cause was just and on the whole, in terms of their right to work campaign, they did so courageously. Without their struggle it is likely that two of the yards would have been lost and the workforce

decimated. More importantly in terms of the confidence of the working class for which they had become a symbol, the will to resist redundancies by workers elsewhere would have been severely undermined.

It is interesting therefore, in discussing the wider implications of the work-in, to attempt to provide some brief account of those actions that were stimulated and inspired by the UCS example and to assess their impact on British trade unionism. In this regard the sit-in at Plessey's electronics firm just a few miles down the road from the Clydebank yard at the Vale of Leven in Alexandria can certainly be seen as directly inspired by the UCS events. There has indeed been a tendency in some quarters to attempt to counterpose the struggle at Plessey, where the workforce actually occupied the factory on a permanent basis, to UCS and to present Plessey as representing if not more a 'revolutionary' approach, at least on a 'higher political level'. (8) Certainly this was the line of some 'ultra-left' groups at the time. They argued that from September 1971 onwards, when the Plessey occupation began, the tactic of the work-in had failed, the Government was not worried by it and that it had not halted redundancies at UCS. (9) It can be asked therefore whether the Plessey tactic of occupation was more successful than the work-in at UCS, not only in raising the political consciousness of those involved, but also in resisting redundancies.

The Vale of Leven like Clydebank had a long labour tradition, famous in the 19th century for its militant weavers, and dye and silk workers. In the 1920's the area became known as one of the 'little Moscows'. (10) Plessey which was originally the home of the Argyll car works became Britain's only torpedo factory in 1937.

After the war it was retained as the Royal Naval Torpedo Factory (RNTF). Plessey took over the RNTF in March 1970 after the failure of the Mark 24 torpedo, which was finally tested in 1969 following 10 years research by Navy scientists. The Labour Government handed the torpedo project over to private industry, to GEC - Marconi to revamp the design, and to Plessey to manufacture it. But for the workers in Alexandria, which had been geared to make the Mark 24, the news of 1200 possible redundancies was a major shock in an area of already high unemployment at around 10 per cent. The reprieve in the form of Plessey's takeover, purchasing the RNTF which some estimated to be worth several millions for £650,000 from the Ministry of Defence, proved to be short lived. Plessey made it clear that they would build the torpedo in Ilford and intended to use the Alexandria factory to produce numerically controlled machine tools which it was claimed would raise the workforce to 2000 in four years. (11)

In January 1971, 500 were employed and this built up to over 700 in May when the company announced 400 sackings on the 18th of that month, blaming a substantial fall-off in demand for machine tools. At this juncture the workers were not ready to fight according to the local AUEW official who helped organise the occupation subsequently, and between May and September 500 workers were made redundant. (12) With the final closure date of September 3rd the remaining 250 workers led by the Convener, Eddie McClafferty decided to make a stand with the backing of the local AUEW, took over the key from the security officers and began to occupy the plant in shifts of 20 men. A loud-speaker van toured the town urging

support for the workers and local shopkeepers began to hand in food and blankets at the gate across which a banner was slung, 'Under New Management'.

The initial purpose of the action which, as at UCS had the full support of the men's families and the local community, was to stop the management removing valuable machinery which had begun to be placed in crates for shipment to one of Plessey's four Ilford factories. The shop stewards claimed that workers in Ilford informed them that space was being cleared to receive the Alexandria machines prior to the closure. Like UCS, the workers at Plessey strongly suspected a preconceived 'plot'. One special dust-free unit was reportedly worth over £1.5 million alone. (13) Indeed, so suspicious were the workers of Plessey's intentions that they refused to accede to management demands that they allow in outside maintenance workers to service the machines. Instead, the workers themselves maintained the machines, in defiance of management prohibitions. (14)

In mid-September 6000 marched through Alexandria to protest against the closure, led by the local MP. Workers from the Ilford plants and from UCS had joined the demonstration. A month later shop stewards from all Plessey factories in Britain formed a combine committee with official support of the AUEW and endorsed the sit-in, offering to 'black' any of the machinery from Alexandria. Plessey's were accused of attempting to strip the plant bare, even the fluorescent lighting being marked for carting away.

The occupation proved to be peaceful and the senior management did not attempt to enter the plant. Two low level managers were, however, allowed to use an office but conducted no work in the plant other than liaising between the occupation and Plessey in London.

The only difficult moment in the occupation came during a bomb scare which it was thought was a management trick to get them out of the factory. A hundred other workers from Burroughs, General Time and the British Silk Dyeing Ltd. turned up at the gates to support the workers who made sure that the gates were not closed while they were outside by chaining them to stanchions sunk into the concrete gateway. (15) As at UCS, however, relations with the local police were good. Other features of note were the presence of the ultra-left at the gates and a flying visit from Barbara Castle who declared her support for the sit-in to be followed by Bruce Millan and a group of Scottish Labour MP's. Benn had already given his general support when he and Willie Ross led a demonstration back in June to protest against the redundancies in the Vale of Leven. (16) To some extent the events at Plessey's were overshadowed by UCS, certainly in the initial phases of the occupation. Some criticism was voiced by the workers leadership of what was felt to be the initially poor coverage given to their action by the Morning Star. This, however, was quickly rectified by a number of feature articles from the paper's Scottish correspondent, Arthur Milligan. (17) Moreover, the visits of various Labour politicians ensured that the Plessey issue received adequate parliamentary attention as well.

In November Plessey directors in co-operation with the Lyon Group of property developers offered to redevelop the site if the workers called off the occupation guaranteeing 26 permanent jobs. Plessey offered to sell the factory and the equipment to the new company in which the Lyon Group had a 70 per cent interest and Plessey had 30 per cent for the same price of £650,000 as they had originally paid for it. The workers refused and decided to stay put spending Christmas inside the factory where they had a turkey dinner. (18)

By the end of January with only 70 left out of the original 250 who had begun the occupation five months previously, the workers ended the sit-in, and accepted Plessey's offer to redevelop the site and provide permanent jobs for the remaining workers.

As with UCS, the Plessey sit-in was only a partial success from a purely tactical point of view. The level of support from the workers in the case of Plessey was not significantly greater in terms of the proportion of workers still involved in the action after five months. In both UCS and Plessey only about one quarter of the initial number still remained. The tactic of occupation was not, in itself, likely to sustain greater militancy or commitment even with, as in both UCS and Plessey, the support of the local community for the action and a substantial measure of official trade union and workplace support and solidarity. Nor was there any noticeable difference in the extent to which the Plessey workers were prepared to consider themselves as performing a specifically revolutionary role as say compared to UCS. Even discussion of the issue of workers control, for which it might be argued a sit-in rather than a work-in might provide more congenial conditions, does not seem to have been an important part of the occupation. Indeed, Ken Coates himself concedes that the fight at Plessey's and the subsequent episodes discussed below were not about questions of self-management but rather,

"about the conditions under which employment could be maintained. In this sense, the sit-in, although it was a different tactic, had the same fundamental limits as the work-in at UCS." (19)

If, therefore, in some sense the actions on the Clyde could be regarded as a 'watershed' it is initially in respect of the growing fight against redundancies. While it is true that neither tactic, work-in or sit-in, was entirely novel to British trade unionism, the fact was that until 1971 they had remained relatively untried. The possibility of a work-in had been actively canvassed by shop stewards in 1969 at the Liverpool GEC-English Electric factory but in the event resistance collapsed.<sup>(20)</sup> As regards sit-ins, there had been several 'stay-down' strikes in the mines as part of the battle to establish the Miners Federation. Railway workers and car workers at Austin Longbridge are also reported to have been involved in brief occupations. (21) In general, however, it was UCS and Plessey which were the two struggles which provided the immediate reference point for the actions of the early 1970's some of which are now briefly examined.

Of the two work-ins to immediately follow UCS, one was at the River Don Steelworks at Sheffield whose stewards led by Ernest Webster came to Clydeside to consult the UCS workers on how to fight their redundancies. The redundancy proposals were occasioned by the 'hiving off' of part of BSC to a private firm, the Firth Brown Company, as part of a deal to enable BSC to gain a monopoly in domestic stainless steel production. (22) The River Don action was only partially successful when, after several weeks, the British Steel Corporation agreed to phase redundancies of 405 workers over 3 years, allowing the majority to be accounted for by natural wastage and voluntary redundancies. (23)

At about the same time in late October 1971 the workers at the BSA motorcycle factory in Small Heath, Birmingham decided on a



work-in with the full backing of all local officials. The company was in financial difficulties and planned 3,000 redundancies which the shop stewards with the backing of the workforce decided to resist. (24) Eight days later the stewards and officials abandoned the idea of implementing a work-in and called instead for an indefinite strike. Subsequently the redundancies were unopposed by the workforce. George Evans, an official of the National Union of Vehicle Builders explained the change of tactic as follows:

"It has become increasingly evident that conditions in motor cycle production and shipbuilding are completely different. Cycle production, with its rapid flow production, and dependence on a mass of small components from supplier firms, is not necessarily able to conduct that style of work-in. As shop stewards and officials have become aware of this there has been a growing feeling among a number of workers that a BSA work-in might in fact more quickly work them out of a job." (25)

Thereafter, as part of the Norton Villiers Triumph combine which succeeded the eventual collapse of the BSA company, the workers at Triumph's Meriden factory when faced with redundancies a few years later, formed themselves into one of the first of three major producer co-operatives which Tony Benn at the Department of Trade and Industry was to set up during the February to October 1974 Wilson Labour Government. (26)

Other work-ins were to occur, most notably at the Briant Colour Printing works in London and in a leather goods factory at Fakenham in Norfolk, both of which received widespread solidarity. As the BSA fiasco showed, however, without the suitable conditions for such a struggle major difficulties could arise. Although the Briant workers to some extent overcame the problem of small batch production by receiving orders for posters and pamphlets from the trade union movement, including it should be noted from UCS for

whom they published a commemorative newspaper, they were eventually defeated when the company sold out and the new owners suddenly closed the works down and placed the premises under a strong security guard. This time the workers did not resist. (27) More successful was the work-in in leather goods factory in Fakenham, Norfolk, an area that was hardly a strong-hold of trade unionism. Here the workers threatened with redundancies eventually began to market what they produced, again with the assistance of the trade union movement, and eventually formed themselves into a small producer co-operative. (28) This apart, however, the work-in as a tactic was neither necessarily particularly successful nor particularly easy to apply for other groups of workers.

Jimmy Airlie outlined the minimum necessary conditions for a successful work-in towards the end of the UCS struggle. First, a long production cycle operation is desirable. Second, the support of the community in general and the workers in particular is needed. Third, a breathing space is necessary so that industrial and political pressure can be mounted on the Government. Fourth, the workers should be able to control the component being built. (29) A further condition is of course that there is work in hand in the enterprise concerned or at least the possibility of work. The great trump card of the UCS workers was not only that there were ships on the stocks but that they could also point to a substantial list of suspended orders.

Whether or not it was due to these factors, subsequently it was the sit-in which was to become the more popular form of action. At least three sit-ins quickly followed on the Plessey example. The first was in the Sheffield area at the Thomas Snow Engineering works.

Here the workers occupied the plant for two days after which they started going home at night. A week later, inevitably, they turned up at the factory to find themselves locked out. The second occupation was at the US-owned firm of Allis-Chalmers, an agricultural machinery plant in Mold, Flintshire. As in the case of the River Don the shop stewards at Allis-Chalmers had been in contact with the Plessey occupation and UCS and had received advice, finance and encouragement from the Clydeside workers. In early January the 120 engineers at Allis-Chalmers began a fifteen day sit-in against four weeks notice of redundancy. After a takeover of the company its new owners had intended to move production to Staffordshire but as a result of the sit-in the workers won a temporary reprieve of three months and eventually secured the jobs of the workforce.(30)

Then two days after the Allis-Chalmers sit-in began 800 workers at Fisher-Bendix, at Kirkby in Liverpool began their occupation, once more with the support and advice of the workers at UCS and at Plessey.

This was the first big occupation in the north west. (31)

The plant was owned by Thorn electrical company who had already been forced to shelve 500 redundancies the previous June as a result of a nine-week strike. As at Plessey and Allis-Chalmers the workers suspected the management of preparing to switch production elsewhere by dismantling the plant, in this case in order to use cheap labour in Spain. The workers had the backing of the Thorn Combine Shop Stewards Committee, the AUEW, T&GWU, the Merseyside labour and trade union movement including the local MP's. They conducted a highly effective publicity campaign calling for all the Thorn company's goods to be blacked, a call which was backed by the Liverpool dockworkers. (32)

The Fisher-Bendix occupation was well organised and indeed was only subsequently terminated after Harold Wilson mediated between the workers and the management. (33) The workers secured a guarantee that the factory would continue to produce radiators and storage heaters until 1973 although one half of the plant was to be let to an other engineering firm who would employ the workforce. (34) Subsequently the Fisher-Bendix plant became the Kirkby Manufacturing & Engineering Company, another of the early worker co-operatives. (35) It is interesting to note that the crisis at Kirkby in 1972 was tackled by seeking wide support in the local labour movement. By contrast the later financial crisis in 1974 was resolved by direct approach to Benn without raising support in a public campaign of solidarity on comparable scale. This can be cited as one of the reasons for the eventual failure of the worker co-operative experiments. (36) In the case of the third major co-operative, the Scottish Daily News, while there was a public campaign mounted, in the form of an appeal for subscriptions and shareholders, the print unions at national level were unenthusiastic about the venture while it transpired that the workers themselves were less concerned about issues of workers' control than in preserving their jobs. (37) It may be that Wilson's reluctant agreement to these worker co-operatives in the face of reportedly fierce Treasury opposition, had more to do with creating the climate for securing trade union agreement to a social contract than anything else.

So far as the immediate post-Plessey sit-ins are concerned the interesting feature was that only a few of them were actually initiated as part of redundancy struggles. The tactic was beginning to widen in scope. In mid-January 1972, building workers in Birmingham sat-in for ten days to secure 100% trade unionism at

Bryant's Woodegate Valley site. (38) Then in February print workers in the East Midlands began an occupation after a twelve week strike over pay and conditions. (39) The really dramatic wave of sit-ins came from mid-March 1972 until May 1972 in the Manchester area following a decision by the AUEW to abandon its national wage claim in favour of plant bargaining. The district federation of the AUEW put in a claim for wage increases of between £4 and £8 per week, a 35 hour week and an extra week's holiday to 500 local firms. At the height of the sit-ins, the local engineering employers' association estimated that out of 150,000 employed by members of the association, 20,000 workers in 23 factories were affected and in total as many as between 40 and 50 factories were involved. (40)

The Manchester sit-ins had the backing of the local Confederation and came about mainly in response to management attempts to impose suspensions and lockouts. A lockout can give the employer the initiative because the men often have to approach the employer to end the dispute. An occupation, being a kind of 'internal picket' gives the workers the initiative and is often felt by management to be a particularly embarrassing and even threatening form of industrial action. (41) Any attempt to evict workers from a factory by force, however, might have run the risk of provoking wider disorder. In the event most sit-ins passed off peacefully without resort by the companies either to legal action or attempted eviction. Moreover, in most firms the management was still allowed access to the plant. Whether or not, however, sit-ins produced more favourable settlements than those who went on strike is open to some question since many of the firms placed non-publicity clauses in their agreements. (42) It is perhaps significant, however, that no attempt was ever made to adopt the tactic on a similar scale in any future wage negotiations.

There was possibly an overestimation of the effectiveness of 'direct action' tactics in the light of the UCS and Plessey examples. While the actions against redundancy threats did received wide publicity which assisted in building campaigns of solidarity this could not be said of the wage claim sit-ins. In terms of general public opinion the response would obviously be less sympathetic to wage claim sit-ins. Nor indeed does there appear to have been any attempt for example to take the engineering workers' campaign on wages into the local area even in terms of co-ordinating the various shop stewards committees from the occupied plants. In this regard the sit-in as a tactic in wage negotiations had a rather limited application to the building of wider unity in the working-class movement. A useful barometer of the changing estimate of the potential impact of sit-ins is provided by the International Socialist (Socialist Workers' Party) commentator R. Rosewell. In the spring of 1972 it was triumphantly proclaimed that "the era of occupations has begun" and extensive reference was made to the turbulent occupation of General Motors plants in Flint, Cleveland in 1936 by members of the United Automobile Workers Union. (43) By the autumn of 1972 a much more cautious estimate was offered suggesting that "the general impact of sit-downs in Britain has been less than expected." (44) What is apparent is that the insurrectionary aspirations of the 'ultra-left' had not been fulfilled, either by work-ins or more disappointingly, by sit-ins. What is perhaps more significant was the view of some trade union officials that the effectiveness of such tactics ought not to be 'devalued' by indiscriminate use in wage bargaining situations. (45) On the other hand, there could also be the underlying fear among certain officials that such a tactic might place too much influence in the hands of the shop stewards on the

outcome of a dispute. In fact, however, in the period from July 1971 until December 1975 one estimate suggests that nearly 150,000 workers took part in over 200 occupations. (46) In 1971 about 16,000 workers were involved and in 1972 53,000. In 1973 over 22,000 workers were involved in about 31 occupations and roughly the same number in 24 occupations in 1974. In 1975 there were at least 44 occupations with over 21,000 workers taking part. (47) Moreover, the tactic of occupation eventually received official TUC recognition. (48) If the 30,000 workers involved in the engineering pay sit-in of 1972 are deducted from the total for that year it will be seen that from 1972 to 1975 the average number of workers involved annually in occupations was upwards of 20,000. However, as a proportion of the number of workers involved in more traditional forms of industrial action, the numbers were relatively insignificant. (49)

Although it is not possible to give any definitive estimate of the overall effectiveness of embarking on such forms of collective working-class pressure, work-ins and sit-ins have most certainly come to be regarded as legitimate and relevant tactical options by workers faced with the need to counter a whole variety of contingencies. In that sense the action of 1971 heralded the acquisition of new weapons in the armoury of class conflict. The absence of a really extensive study of the experiences of the use of such weapons, however, is itself an indication that the working-class movement still lacks a coherent appraisal of the significance of these actions. While this thesis attempts to describe and draw the lessons from perhaps the most important episode of all, at UCS, a preliminary review of a few following actions suggests that the record of successes is probably somewhat more uneven. In the situation of industrial

warfare, however, it is to be expected that not every battle will be a victory. What is important is that a single defeat when suffered does not lead to demoralisation of the entire army. As the UCS work-in revealed, the readiness to fight in itself could regenerate the whole combatative mood of the class even before the final outcome was decided.

(ii) The Role of the Communist Party.

Although the Clydeside workers often provided direct help and encouragement to other groups of workers organising similar actions those who attempt to reveal a recognisable pattern which points towards an 'orchestrated conspiracy' of industrial disruption will be sadly disappointed. This point is important as there is some misunderstanding of the role of the Communist Party in particular, both in UCS and in the events that followed. It is to this question that we now turn. In their book on the work-in, Thompson and Hart, both members of the Communist Party, are somewhat reticent about the Party's role in UCS, confining themselves to the broad statement,

"From the beginning of the struggle the Party spared no efforts in mobilising its members to take up the question of UCS and its fighting fund in all organisations to which they belong, and has never ceased to expose the role of Toryism and capitalism in relation to the shipbuilding crisis and the general economic and political disasters of the present days." (50)

Now, ten years after the event, it is perhaps possible to give a fuller account of this quite complex issue.

It has already been pointed out that the well-known Communist affiliations of Reid, Airlie and Barr were not seen as particularly objectionable characteristics by the UCS workforce, even though these three individuals were prominent among the leading shop stewards in the campaign. With their fellow workers on the Co-ordinating Committee and in the larger shop stewards committee, where a further



half a dozen or so were also Communists, it was clear to all that no attempt was being made to push a 'line' in any concerted manner by the Party members. Decisions were arrived at as the result of collective discussions among all concerned. Indeed, as the controversy over the launching of vessels and the eventual brief resignation of Reid and Airlie but not of Barr suggests there was by no means an automatic accord even between those who were Party members. On a day to day basis it was the UCS workers themselves who formulated decisions about the conduct of the campaign.

Nevertheless the fact that three prominent shop stewards were all experienced Party members was undoubtably of considerable importance at a number of different levels. Both Reid and Barr were members of the Party's Scottish Committee. Reid, having formerly worked full-time both for the Party and the Young Communist League which he had joined at the age of sixteen, had also been a member of the Party's Political Committee and National Executive Committee. He remained a member of the latter during the UCS crisis. (51) All three men were individuals of considerable experience in both trade union and political affairs. While history is made by masses and not individual personalities, it is worth commenting, however, that as workers' leaders they each had their own strengths and weaknesses.

Reid, as spokesman for the joint shop stewards committee was undoubtably a gifted speaker, able to choose a striking metaphor and combine a fine sense of humour with moral outrage in a fiery mixture of political rhetoric. He possessed a rare talent of being able to address several audiences at once. A carefully inserted phrase at a mass meeting to show that he spoke the language of the 'punters', and in almost the same breath an appeal to liberal sentiments that

even a Surrey vicar would have found hard to disagree with. And he had on occasion, as at the Rosevale shop stewards meeting, a rare ability to voice the best aspirations of the organised working class movement. In the yards themselves, he was respectfully and affectionately known as 'the big yin'.

If the UCS struggle became identified with the measured intensity and authoritative conviction of Jimmy Reid, which has been appropriately compared as akin to that of a Scottish dominie or kirk minister, this was itself a product of the way in which the whole campaign was consciously fought out in terms of winning public opinion to the side of the workers. Thus the mass media played a key role in providing a platform for Reid and, in a sense, in actively shaping his style of presentation towards the largest possible audience. One immediate criticism of such media-oriented campaigns is of course that the real politics of the situation can easily become lost in the desire to appear 'responsible and reasonable' in front of mass audiences. Another criticism might be that inevitably, as the mass media tend to focus on personalities rather than issues, there is the particular danger of a working-class leadership losing its connections with the ordinary workers and, in turn, beginning to overestimate their own importance as individuals.

By contrast to the colourful and, at times, somewhat overpowering fluency of Reid, Jimmy Airlie's style of operation was considerably more low-key. His constituency, was first and foremost in the yards themselves and it remained there. Like Reid, Airlie was also an engineer and therefore, in terms of the Govan labour force where the seat of industrial power lay with the boilermakers, he too had to have a fairly strong degree of personal and political self-confidence to survive the rough and tumble of shop floor politics. Airlie's

strength lay in his overall organisational ability and in the fact that, whatever they might have thought of his politics, here was a man that workers instinctively knew could not be bought over by the bosses. If Reid was a 'high-flier', Airlie symbolised a solid, disciplined and down-to-earth approach. In contrast to Reid's almost cerebral and occasionally mannered tone, Airlie spoke from the gut. He may not have been the object of adulation by his fellow workers but when he spoke, they believed what he said.

The third member of the group, Sammy Barr, was perhaps inevitably, because of his location in the smaller yard of Scotstoun, a figure who tended to stay in the background. 'Wee Sammy' as he was known was a much more diffident character than the other two and as a public speaker prone to the occasional hesitancy. Nevertheless, in terms of the industrial politics of the yards Barr's role in leading the Scotstoun boilermakers was a crucial one. It meant that for the boilermakers as a whole there was at least one prominent convener who was politically progressive and able to use his influence among his fellow stewards to head off the wilder excesses of sectionalism to which the boilermakers membership had shown itself prone to. In that sense, Barr provided the role of 'anchorman' on the Boilermakers' District Committee, in enabling the boilermakers and indeed McGarvey himself, to come to terms with the new situation which the UCS had created, in particular, in terms of the Govan and Marathon agreements. Like Reid and Airlie, Barr also was a man of acute perception who understood the way workers thought even though at times, especially towards the end of the struggle, it must have filled him with despair.

If the Communist Party did not direct the struggle at UCS in any day-to-day manner it would be incorrect to imagine that there were not continuing consultations with senior Party Officials and reports to the Scottish Committee of the Party. The links between Jimmy Reid and Scottish Secretary Alex Murray were, for example, particularly close and from the very earliest hint of the crisis at UCS Murray had been involved in discussions with the shop stewards. (52) In this regard the estimate of Ken Alexander may not be too far off the mark that,

"As it was a Communist steward who proposed the work-in at the formal meeting of all stewards it seems reasonable to credit the Communist Party and its shop stewards with the initiatives." (53)

The really important point, however, is not so much the background discussions which took place as the fact that the Communist Party performed what is its essential role in the labour movement, of helping workers to formulate their previous experiences of class struggle, in this instance of battles over redundancies, and to draw the lessons from them. In other words, what matters is not whether the tactic of the work-in was first discussed among a few Communists at the Glasgow Party offices. Rather, that on the basis of having some of the most class conscious and experienced members of the working class in its ranks, the Party could offer guidance to the workers through its members in UCS in the form of a tactical innovation which precisely met the requirements of the challenge they faced. It was the job of Reid, Airlie, Barr and the others to convince their fellow workers that the action they proposed had some realistic chance of success. If the workers themselves had not been ready to fight no amount of persuasion could have moved them into action. The Party can initiate and guide but it cannot

direct workers to take up a militant posture. They had to arrive at this themselves out of their own experience.

So far as the numerous other occupations which followed in the wake of UCS are concerned it is interesting to observe, that while Communists were involved in some of these actions, nowhere did they provide the solid core of leadership as at UCS. In the majority of cases, while there may have been one or two Communists on shop stewards committees it seems to have been more often the Labour Party and those of no party who provided the bulk of the activists. (54) Those who were seeking 'reds under the beds' were sadly disappointed. It is true, that in the engineering union, which was involved in many of the actions there was a fair Communist presence among the shop stewards and that in the Manchester area the full-time official who was involved in the wage-claim sit-ins was a Party member. However, the idea of the Party instructing its members to place themselves in the forefront of actions elsewhere far less instigate them at the drop of a hat, simply does not hold water. (55) If the work-in could not have been 'imposed' by the Party on the UCS workers, nor could it have been imposed on workers elsewhere. It is worth noting that there was no attempt by the Party to mechanically recommend the adoption of the tactic of work-in to groups of workers in other parts of the country. Indeed, even by the middle of September 1971 when UCS was seen by the Communist Party's National Executive Committee to be "at the centre of anti-Tory struggle" it was felt that the tactic was "not necessarily the model for what can or should be attempted everywhere." (56)

Ken Coates provides a useful summary comment;

"While Communists played an obvious and effective part in the leadership of the UCS work-in itself, the rush of answering responses around the Clyde was certainly spontaneous and those trade union officials who were most actively enthused about repeating the experiment were not notably linked with any particular left-wing current."(57)

The fact that the UCS work-in was led by Communists, however, obviously had a considerable impact on those workers within the yards who were sympathetic to the Party. In fact, Party membership of the shipbuilding branch doubled to over 100 during the UCS campaign. However, while the branch conducted a continuing series of classes in Marxist education and the normal discussions of workplace issues took place, the actual involvement of the ordinary branch members in deciding the tactics of the struggle was peripheral. (58) They were given no prior information or instructions about what to argue with their fellow workers. Indeed, specifically Communist branch activity in the yards as a whole, in terms of producing political bulletins, selling the Morning Star or even attempts at involving the new recruits in the life of the Party branch seems to have been at a fairly low level. In time, many of the recruits that were won, perhaps inevitably, drifted away from the Party. The idea that Reid, Airlie and Barr regularly reported to a disciplined collective of their fellow comrades does not match the reality of the situation. If they were active in regular Party work at all during this period, for Reid and Airlie in particular, it was primarily as 'star' speakers at the numerous rallies in support of UCS which the Party organised up and down the country. There was an understandable tendency to project the Party through the persona of Reid, especially since he was

the figure who people had come to identify with UCS through the mass media. At such rallies target figures as high as two hundred new recruits were actively contemplated by the Party leadership. There was a sense in which it was felt that Reid could do no wrong given his role in UCS, despite the fact that a number of other areas of his all-round work as a Communist, particularly in his responsibilities as a Clydebank town councillor were clearly not receiving the proper attention.

Reid had first been elected Communist councillor for the 7th Ward of Faifley in Clydebank in 1968. Two other Communists, both redoubtable figures in terms of their long involvement in local politics and in the industrial struggle of the area, Jock Smith and Finlay Hart, also represented the Faifley ward. Another Communist on the Town Council, representing the 4th Ward, was Arnold Henderson, a popular and much respected local personality who had first been elected in 1945 and had retained unbroken membership on the Town Council with the exception of 1957 when he was ousted for a year. A former convener at John Brown's a leading figure on the local Trades Council and the 'father' of the Town Council as its longest serving member, Arnold was active in the struggles of the workplace and the locality. He provided a model of how a Communist councillor should conduct himself. His deep roots in the local industry and in the community enabled him to take up the problems and grievances of those, and there were very many, who came to his door for advice and assistance. A personal humility combined with crackling energy, and a dash of acid working-class wit made him an individual who spontaneously inspired affection and respect. It was for this reason that local organisations, the Communist Party and the Scottish peace movement, in which he was also a leading figure, always called on Arnold to conduct the appeal for funds at the end of a meeting or rally, a difficult job which far

from regarding as being beneath him, he always conducted with immense style and humour and, it should be said, effectiveness.

Together with Arnold Henderson, Reid, Smith and Hart comprised what was a formidable group on Clydebank Town Council, working closely with the progressive Labour councillors on a whole range of campaigns, but particularly on housing, a burning issue given Clydebank's awful legacy of destruction following its wartime blitz by the Germans. The German bombers had been seeking to destroy the yards, but they had missed. Instead, the town was devastated. Provost Flemming's bitter comment about the Tories attempting to do to Clydebank yard what the Germans had failed to do thus reverberated with never-to-be-forgotten memories of the townsfolk.

Reid had been returned as a councillor in May 1971, after three years as a sitting councillor, although out of the 3,000 votes cast, his new majority of 500 was much reduced. At that time he made the claim that 'certain factions' in the Labour Party were trying to oust him. (59) His record of work on the Council, however, thereafter declined as the events of UCS claimed his attention. Indeed, even the normally sympathetic Provost Fleming described Reid's attendance of Council meetings as 'sparse'. (60) While some allowance could have been made in terms of the immediate demands of the struggle, there were other lapses which should not have been allowed to pass, although in fairness it should be pointed out that Reid was at that time under enormous pressure which resulted in several periods of illness.

In fact, Reid's main contribution to the work of the Council came when the UCS struggle was over. This was in the Clydebank campaign against the Conservative's housing finance legislation.



The provisions of the 1972 Act on housing finance differed in certain respects in Scotland from that applying to the rest of the country, but in essence the purpose of both Acts was to compel local authorities to bring municipal rents more into line with market forces under the heading of the 'standard rent' in Scotland and elsewhere, the so-called 'fair rent', which was also eventually to operate north of the border as well. What this meant was a doubling of rents by the financial year 1975-76 and also the ending of controlled rents in the private sector. If ever there was an issue and a time when it seemed possible that shop floor militancy could be linked up with mass resistance in the localities and for the first time, drawing together public and private tenants, then this appeared to be it. Early in 1972 many local authorities such as Clydebank, where left Labour, Communist and SNP councillors were united in their opposition to the Act, voted for non-implementation, often, again as in Clydebank, with the declared support of local trade unions and trades councils. With the legislation due to come into operation in October 1972, the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party recommended all Labour councils not to impose the rent increases which amounted to 50p per week in the first instance. Its support, however, was less than wholehearted since it left the decision on what course of action to pursue very much up to individual councils.

By the summer of 1972, twenty-seven local authorities in England and Wales including major cities such as Liverpool and Birmingham had voted for non-implementation. In Scotland, besides Clydebank, other areas with large numbers of council houses were Glasgow with 140,000 council houses, Dundee with 33,000 and major industrial areas in

Lanarkshire and Fife. These had also joined the campaign. (61) However, within six months, it had become increasingly obvious that among many Labour councils the opposition was purely token. Faced with the threat of Government sanctions, twenty-two authorities south of the border and in Scotland, Dundee and Glasgow corporations eventually voted for implementation. (62) In Glasgow, thirty-three Labour councillors united with the Conservatives in a free vote to produce a 58-41 majority reversing their previous stand, after a Government appointed Recorder had conducted a public inquiry. (63) In the mutual recriminations which followed, Dick Dynes, the right-wing leader of the Labour Group on the Corporation and the tenants' and trade union organisations each blamed the other. One thing was certain, that with Glasgow, the largest Scottish municipal housing authority, now out of the struggle, the possibility of developing a wider movement on rents would prove immeasurably more difficult. It was a major set-back from which the campaign never fully recovered.

The truth was, however, that national support for rent strikes against the increases was not at a high level, while despite valiant efforts from the tenants' movement led in Scotland by Finlay Hart and Bill Towill, the turnout on mass demonstrations had been disappointing. Part of the difficulty was undoubtedly the sheer scale of organisation which would have been required to conduct successful rent strikes, and in Scotland in particular, the long-standing fear of falling into rent arrears with the consequent threat of eviction, undoubtedly played a role in inhibiting the development of a genuine mass movement. (64) The leadership of the labour movement in particular the Clyde Confederation led by Alex Ferrie and the shop stewards in the major enterprises supported militant action but with one or two possible exceptions the necessary

mood of resistance among the workers themselves on the factory floor, failed to crystallise. Unlike the situation which emerged during 1915-16, the workers in Fairfields, for example, no longer immediately identified with their housing problems on the doorstep of the yard in Govan. They were now scattered more widely over the city. Moreover, the visible class enemy in the shape of 'the Factor's man' calling to collect increased rents every Friday night was no longer present as an immediate focus of opposition. The "Factor" now was a Labour-controlled local authority. Furthermore, the Government legislation, especially in Scotland, meant that the increases were in the main, introduced piecemeal fashion, rather than the kind of sudden increases which might have provoked widespread opposition. (65)

Eventually, only Clay Cross in Derbyshire with a population of 8,400 and Clydebank were left to stand alone. In Clay Cross, a Labour council led by David Skinner continued to defy the Government which sent in Housing Commissioners to implement the Act. The Government surcharged the eleven members of the council a sum of £356 each while disqualifying them from office for 5 years. Six of the councillors were declared bankrupt as a result of proceedings arising from their campaign and attempts to indemnify them by the next Labour Government resulted in fierce parliamentary battles in which, as in the case of the savage sentences passed on the Shrewsbury pickets, the right-wing Labour leaders clearly reneged on their moral obligation to correct what the trade union movement saw as blatant class judgements by the courts. (66) As Harold Wilson said of the Clay Cross rebels,

"I have always made it clear that the law of the land, however unfair, however divisive, must be obeyed until it is repealed." (67)

Although the Clay Cross rebels had the Derbyshire miners as a potential base of industrial support, this was not enough to sustain them. Clydebank had a much wider industrial base to draw upon and in the early stages of the campaign it looked very much as if a powerful movement was building up. As in Glasgow and elsewhere, a public inquiry was held into the non-implementation of the Act in the last week of December 1972. Three hundred local shop stewards marched into the Town Hall and dominated the whole proceedings. The Reporter for the Government was forced to adjourn the proceedings requesting that a large banner at the back of the hall reading "UCS WORKERS DEMAND NO RENT INCREASES" to be taken down and that no 'political' speeches be given in evidence. During the adjournment, however, the local conveners took the opportunity to make a number of 'political' statements while despite pleas from the Lord Provost and union officials, the UCS banner remained unfurled, and indeed, the Singer's workers hoisted theirs as well. When the Reporter finally resumed the inquiry, the banners stayed. (68)

Then in February 1973 the councillors were taken to the Court of Session and fined £5,000 for contempt. Those councillors in favour of continued defiance outnumbered those against by 13 to 8, and in this instance a £4,000 contribution towards the fine was made from the UCS Fighting Fund. (69) By December of that year, the Council was fined a further £20,000 and a special meeting of the Council showed that they were now almost evenly split on whether to fight on or surrender. (70) With the threat of surcharge and possibly imprisonment now looming, a public appeal was launched by the trade union movement to help pay the fine. However, with two weeks in which to pay and only a trickle of money coming into the

fund, the inevitable was finally confronted and the fine paid at the last moment from the burgh rates. With only the two SNP councillors against, a gesture resented as rather cheap opportunism, the Council voted to end the campaign. (71) Scottish Secretary, Gordon Campbell was actively considering whether to surcharge the councillors for improper use of public funds when the Government lost the election a few weeks later. By any standards, however, it was a bitter defeat.

For Reid too it was a defeat and not just in the public identification of the Communist councillors with the campaign. It was, in the latter stages at least, a fight which while clearly not winnable, Reid had been persuaded to continue with against his own personal inclination. Enormous pressure from the highest levels inside the Communist Party had been put on him and on leading members of the Scottish Party to continue the battle when it was already obvious that mass support, if it was ever there, had substantially evaporated as the trade union movement turned its attention to the economic crisis of the three-day week and the miners' strike. It was to be one of the episodes which perhaps sowed the seeds of Reid's eventual disaffection with the Communist Party.

(iii) Reid's Parliamentary and AUEW Elections.

To his credit, Reid was not a man to run away to lick his wounds in private. Lack of political courage was not one of his failings and when within a matter of days of the rents débacle, a General Election was announced, he agreed, as he had previously done in 1970, to stand as a candidate in the Central Dunbartonshire constituency. The February 1974 election campaign was remarkable in

many respects, not least because the ex-secretary of the local Labour Party and several of his constituency members played a leading role in campaigning for Reid. Besides those who had come over from the Labour Party, Reid's election committee comprised individuals from a number of different backgrounds including professional journalists, and public relations experts who gave their services free of charge. Reid was clearly seen by these people as 'the man of the hour' representing a new force in Scottish politics with considerable charismatic appeal. From all over the country too, young Communist Party members came to Clydebank to work for Reid's election and for older comrades there were memories of the campaigns in Fife in the 1950's for Willie Gallagher, the last Communist MP.

To walk with the candidate down Clydebank's Kilbowie Road was an amazing experience. From all sides, young and old greeted him or waved and shouted support. His popularity seemed to be overwhelming. Even hardened Communist Party electoral workers for whom a few hundred votes for a candidate in an election was seen as a good result, began to believe that perhaps here at last they were on the point of a political breakthrough. The Daily Record some of whose journalists were involved in the campaign, had given Reid some sympathetic publicity as had the local press. It seemed as if the Reid bandwagon was unstoppable. Perhaps it was the infectious excitement of the whole campaign which persuaded those who were a little uneasy about the 'razamataz' surrounding the candidate to quell their doubts. For one thing, Reid was being projected as 'the labour movement candidate'. No mention was made in any of his election material of the word 'Communist'. The

publicity, handouts and posters read 'THE WORKERS' CANDIDATE', 'THE WORKER THAT WORKERS CAN TRUST' while button badges and car-stickers simply said 'I'M FOR REID'. (72) While it could be argued that everyone knew that Reid spoke as a Communist, the conscious downplaying of this crucial aspect of the candidate's identity, perhaps under the influence of the journalists and public relations experts, could be construed as a rather pathetic if not somewhat dishonest attempt to package the candidate in a politically innocuous wrapper. This seemed to be confirmed when it was discovered that on Reid's nomination papers, the candidate was simply described as an 'Engineering Worker'. When the newspapers got onto this, it required a last minute dash to the council offices to make the necessary correction. (73)

As the campaign developed, it became increasingly vicious with ugly rumours about Reid's alleged luxury suburban villa and foreign holidays ostensibly paid for from the UCS Fighting Fund. The Labour candidate, Hugh McCartney, not known either for his charisma or his record of speeches on the floor of the Commons, was described by Reid's supporters as the 'invisible man'. The kind of bad feeling which emerged was typified when Reid and his supporters turned up at the gates of Marathon to address the workers and found none other than Danny McGarvey already there, speaking on behalf of McCartney. Something of a 'slanging match' developed as the Reid camp moved off to hold their meeting fifty yards away, leaving McGarvey with one hundred of an audience to Reid's four hundred.

And then a wholly new element intruded upon the campaign. An address prepared by twenty Roman Catholic clergymen in the Clydebank area, including Bishop Thomas Winning, auxiliary Bishop

of Glasgow, was read out in the chapels of Faifley, Duntocher and Clydebank, the Sunday before the election. While not mentioning Reid by name, it said however,

"The church has always condemned Communism because Communism, by its nature, no matter how it may be disguised, rejects God and religion and destroys human freedom." (75)

Catholics were urged to vote according to their 'Christian conscience'. The fact that Reid was a self-proclaimed 'Christian Marxist' and indeed had himself been seen recently at chapels in the Clydebank area, was not it seems, enough to save him. Bishop Winning in a lengthy interview in the following day's Daily Record described Reid as 'an enemy of the Church...trying to present the acceptable face of Communism'. (76) It was it seemed, a case of the devil citing scripture so far as the Church regarded Reid's Christianity. (77) No similar advice was given in the 14 other seats where Communists were standing. It was an intervention which many regarded as misconceived, particularly when as the election result showed, although Winning's address may have been a factor in this, that Reid was not even a serious challenge to McCartney's vote. While Reid had more than trebled his vote to 5,928, McCartney was re-elected with a clear majority of 6,664 votes over the Conservative candidate. In fact Reid only just managed to beat the SNP candidate by 22 votes. (78) This defeat appeared to rankle with Reid who attacked the 'gutter-type tactics used in the last days of the election' to try and discredit him. (79) It was a charge he repeated when with a much reduced vote of 3,417 in a somewhat lower-key campaign in the October 1974 election, he attacked the local Labour Party in an angry outburst as 'Falangists', something for



which they later found it very hard to forgive him. (80) Indeed, when in the succeeding six months he failed to attend a single council meeting and neglected to request leave of absence, moves were made to remove him from the council altogether. (81)

Not only was Reid's poor attendance at Council meetings a matter of criticism but so also was his record at the Marathon yard where he held the position of convener of the engineering workers. This may well have been an important factor in the outcome of AUEW elections for which Reid stood as a candidate. If the label 'Communist' proved to be an electoral millstone for Reid, there was always the hope that in trade union politics where Communists were more readily accepted, his undoubted talents would be rewarded with the kind of support which the voters had been reluctant to give him in parliamentary elections. Reid decided to stand for a place on the national executive of the engineering union against Gavin Laird, ex-convener of Singers and the union's Scottish and North of England regional secretary. (82) Laird was a 'moderate' who possessed all the fervent hatred of an unfrocked priest for the Communist Party which he had left at the time of the Hungarian uprising. The election of Reid would be crucial in shifting the balance of forces to the left in the union and strengthen the growing opposition in the labour movement to the Social Contract. Indeed, no less a person than Scanlon backed his candidature at a meeting of Engineering Voice, the broad left forum within the union. (83) Reid lost, however, in a postal ballot, a form of election which the left of the union argued gave the media unprecedented opportunities to interfere in the affairs of the union by influencing its members outside the union's normal democratic structures. (84) When Laird's

job fell vacant, Reid decided to stand again for the position of regional organiser this time against Tom Dougan of the Labour Party, also a 'moderate' convener at Caterpillar Tractors in Lanarkshire, and against a left-winger, Ron Brown, at that time a Lothian councillor. (85) Then, ten days into the campaign in February 1976 the bombshell dropped. Reid wrote a letter of resignation to the Communist Party, catching both the national and Scottish leadership totally by surprise. (86) The letter was subsequently printed in the Morning Star and contained a number of severe criticisms of the Party. (87) Reid later reiterated these in a two-part article in Tribune which provoked a continuing correspondence. (88) Whether the timing of the resignation had anything to do with Reid's campaign for union office is a matter of conjecture. Certainly there were long standing unresolved differences between him and the Party.

In any event, the fact that the 'millstone' was now removed from his neck was not enough to give him the outright majority he needed. In the first ballot in March Reid polled 13,389 votes, Dougan 9,662 and Brown 5,704 on a 20 per cent vote out of a possible 140,000 members. (89) In the second ballot in November 1976 between Dougan and Reid, Reid again lost, this time by a mere 81 votes. (90) Reid threatened legal action while Sunday Mail journalists uncovered startling anomalies in the conduct of the election. Hundreds of members in such strongholds of the left as the Timex Milton factory in Dundee and indeed, even the Dundee AUEW branch president Harry McLevy, did not receive ballot papers, while ex-members of the union who had left over three years ago had received them, much

to their surprise. (91) The executive, however, refused to allow a new ballot and the result stood while Reid eventually dropped his action. (92)

A couple of months prior to this, Reid had himself taken the next logical step. After offers from the SNP and from the pro-devolution breakaway Scottish Labour Party, led by Jim Sillars MP, Reid formally applied to join the Labour Party. The day after he lost the union election, his application to join was, however, turned down by the Dalmeir branch who still remembered his past attacks on McCartney. After a two week wait while his appeal was heard at national level, he was finally accepted. Within nine months he was adopted Labour candidate for Dundee East, an unprecedented occurrence since Labour Party rules required a membership of two years as a prerequisite for a parliamentary candidate. Even now his troubles were not over since his candidature although subsequently ratified, was opposed by the right-wing Manifesto group of MP's. (93) The following year, Reid quit the yards altogether to launch himself on a career that anyway had increasingly absorbed his time since he first achieved public prominence, that of a broadcaster, quiz panellist and free-lance journalist. Reid had been made the 'darling of the media' and it was to the media that he turned for succour when his base, first in the yards, then in the union and finally in the Communist Party either slipped or was kicked away from him. There had been many loyal hard-working comrades who Reid derisively referred to as the sellers of 'sweep tickets' who 'spoke deferentially to party officials', who had been concerned that the wooing of Reid by the media would lead to his eventual seduction. (94) The danger was that with the limelight focused on an individual, the individual concerned would come to see

himself as entirely above the collective influence of the Party. Unfortunately the warnings of this offered by older experienced comrades were ignored by the leadership. (95) In part, the shock and disappointment felt by so many when Reid finally decided to resign from the Party was precisely because ordinary Party members had also been allowed to regard Reid as a hero-figure. None of this is to detract from the outstanding contribution which Reid made during the UCS campaign itself but rather to point to certain weaknesses within the Party, which was perhaps overawed by the success of the publicity which surrounded the UCS struggle and Reid in particular, and the discovery that here was a figure who could at last give them a certain credibility in terms of a wide and sympathetic public opinion.

If there were weaknesses in the Party's style of work there were also great strengths which the UCS campaign illustrated. Not only could the Party assist in formulating the objective of the UCS struggle but it was capable of mobilising solidarity among industrial workers in an unrivalled manner. Obviously the role of the Morning Star in informing workers elsewhere about UCS was of key importance. The question remains, however, as to whether or not the Party developed the full potential which the UCS struggle might have offered of mobilising a broader and more sustained challenge not just to the policies of the Conservative Government but to the whole system of production for private profit. It is also a question of the contribution of trade union struggles to the development of revolutionary strategies and the raising of class consciousness and is an issue to which a return is made in the conclusion of this thesis.

(iv) The Scottish Assembly.

Certainly, the Party was also responsible for helping to formulate some of the wider political initiatives which grew out of the UCS campaign. It would be incorrect to say that the Party conceived of UCS as a purely industrial struggle. Although UCS was a 'Right to Work' campaign and was not regarded as in itself likely to bring the Conservative Government down, it did provide the possibility of creating a platform for wider political demands to be raised, particularly on the question of unemployment in Scotland. The call for a Scottish Assembly on unemployment initially made by the UCS stewards to the STUC, can be seen as part of the Party's attempt to broaden out the campaign and win new allies in the fight against the Government. (96) Reid himself was a long-standing advocate of a Scottish Parliament. The STUC appeared the obvious vehicle to take up this call because it itself embodied the left unity character of the Scottish labour movement and was therefore capable of consolidating a broader alliance for change in Scotland, which had already revealed itself as a real potentiality in the massive solidarity which the UCS workers had received from wide sections of the Scottish community.

With 154,000 people out of work in Scotland, the Assembly was an attempt to project unemployment as a national question for the Scottish people not in terms of a narrow chauvinism but as first and foremost, an issue around which it was clearly in the interests of other sections of the population to unite with the trade union movement. While the UCS struggle had to some degree helped to heighten national consciousness, in that it had an obvious Scottish dimension, it was the role of the STUC to attempt to ensure that the context within which the national consciousness expressed itself

politically, was one informed by the perspective of basically Socialist solutions to the nation's problems rather than simple separatism. The Assembly was intended to unite together class and nation in a way that drew an extremely broad range of public opinion onto a platform provided by the organised working class. Whether providing a platform was the same thing as providing political leadership and direction to the very disparate interests which were represented in the Assembly was another question. It remained to be seen whether the Assembly would crystallise a more enduring popular alliance. Certainly the STUC's own internal discussions as to the purpose of the Assembly identified the need to create what it called,

"A 'Scottish United Front' pressing in upon and compelling the Government to take the essential, urgent, political and economic decisions to obtain full employment." (97)

This conception of a broad united front was linked with the idea that so far as the question of political devolution was concerned the Assembly should constitute a kind of provisional Scottish parliament. (98)

Just how wide was the field of interests represented among the fifteen hundred delegates to the Assembly, can be seen from the list of those who attended. There were representatives of local authorities, the new town development corporations, Scottish MP's, the political parties ranging from the Conservative to Communist Party, the universities and technical colleges, trades unions and trades councils, the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and the General Council itself, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the Highlands and Islands Development

Development Board, The Scottish Council (Development and Industry), Chambers of Commerce, employers federations, Port Authorities, nationalised industries and all major religious organisations.

The Charter of Proposals presented to the Assembly contained a host of suggestions as to how the Government could assist the regeneration of the Scottish economy, covering investment policy, retraining, public sector expansion and planning machinery including the suggestion that the Clydeside Development Authority proposed by the TUC might be replaced by an all-Scotland development authority, that is, the forerunner of the Scottish Development Agency (SDA). (99) In that none of the measures proposed were in themselves particularly radical they secured a wide measure of acceptance by the Assembly. Even the Chairman of the Conservative Party in Scotland, Sir William McEwan Younger felt moved to attack the over-reliance on US investment capital in Scotland which was threatening to turn it into a "subsidiary economy." (100) Indeed Chris Bauer, one of Scotland's most acute political commentators, noted at the time that,

"Any conference which can produce that degree of unanimity across the political spectrum has clearly fathered a unique child." (101)

What the Assembly achieved in the first instance was a bringing together of all sections of Scottish life and a public airing of felt national grievances. It discussed a series of essentially interim demands designed to win the widest possible support from those present. As Jimmy Jack noted, however, in his reply to the debate on the Scottish economy at the 1972 STUC annual Conference in April, the sheer breadth of representation produced its own problems for the Assembly.

"Its weakness was in the fact that some of these organisations were involved to stop the Assembly going too far and this meant perhaps their arguments would be pitched at a lower level than they would be if the case was being presented by the Scottish TUC exclusively." (102)

To pursue its demands the Assembly set up a Standing Commission charged with the responsibility of bringing the agreed programme before the Government. (103) Like the Assembly itself the Commission was comprised of a wide range of interests although in retrospect it was fatally flawed in its composition. To begin with only two of the seventeen members (later eighteen members) of the Commission, James Jack and Ray MacDonald, represented the General Council of the STUC. Thus the trade unions, given their role in Scottish life, were heavily under-represented. In addition, presumably to enhance the 'impartiality' of the Commission, no representatives of the major political parties were included on it. This was a crucial omission if the intention was to make the Assembly the first step on the road to a Scottish parliament. The political parties were thus at the outset deprived of a direct stake in the development of the work of the Assembly and its authority was accordingly diminished. (104) Moreover, and more importantly in terms of the future character of the Assembly, the organised labour and trade union movement was badly under-represented. There was no question therefore of the Standing Commission being able to prepare the ground for the forging of the kind of principled alliance of democratic forces which would press home a programme of demands that challenged the real role of monopoly capitalism in producing the kind of regional crisis of which UCS was entirely symptomatic. It was an error which had to be paid for with a vengeance when the recalled Assembly met in Edinburgh a year later. The SNP had held



a special 'pre-Assembly' conference in Stirling the day before and their supporters attempted to reduce the proceedings to a virtual shambles by loudly heckling all the speakers who did not place the blame for all of Scotland's ills on the Westminster Government. The SNP were accused by Ray MacDonald who was the chairman, of 'packing' the Assembly. (105) Indeed, of the 953 delegates present, 148 were from the SNP. (106) The sad fact was that the Assembly itself was unable to contain the gross opportunism of the SNP's intervention. Significantly, at the second Scottish Assembly the question of oil discoveries in the North Sea now figured as prominently as unemployment which in the previous twelve months had been somewhat reduced. (107)

In many ways the subsequent rise of the SNP in the 1970's can be seen as part of the political backwash from initiatives taken although latterly lost, in the first instance arising directly out of the UCS crisis. William Wolfe, then chairman of the SNP was later to observe,

"I believe that the lead and example given by the men of the UCS, and the women of the UCS was an important element in the rise of support for the Scottish National Party." (108)

In part also this peculiarly Scottish flavour was of course something which the UCS stewards themselves encouraged. In particular, Reid's references to the lack of sympathy or understanding for their problems in Whitehall and Westminster and the continued claim that the UCS were fighting on behalf of the whole Scottish people should be noted. The fostering of nationalist sentiment, as against the struggle for Scottish nationhood within the context of a general assault on capitalist exploitation, is a subtle distinction which was lost in the minds of many in the excitement of mass meetings

and demonstrations. Perhaps more should have been done to ensure that only the progressive content of the struggle for national identity would be preserved. This also in a sense was the failure of the STUC's Scottish Assembly.

The SNP were able to seize the political initiative under the slogan 'Its Scotland's Oil'. (109) It was during this period that the first major oil concessions in the North Sea were handed out to the multinationals on somewhat generous terms by Lord Polwarth on behalf of the Conservative Government. The SNP increased their MP's from 1 in 1970 to 7 in the February 1974 election and 11 in the October election of that year. With 30 per cent of the vote they replaced the Tories as the second largest party in Scotland in terms of votes and succeeded in coming second in 42 Scottish constituencies of which 36 were Labour held. This was the factor which was probably responsible more than anything else in persuading the Labour Party, with some misgivings, to commit itself to an elected legislative Assembly for Scotland if it achieved a majority in October 1974. (110) However, the entire campaign for a Scottish Assembly was throughout hindered by the less than united and wholehearted support of the Labour Party in Scotland.

Although the Assembly was subsequently abandoned by the STUC with the question of Scottish devolution later to be taken up by the succeeding Labour Government, the Standing Commission appointed by the first Assembly in 1972 had held three discussion meetings. In March it also met Heath, Davies and Campbell at Downing Street to present its basic proposals. The Government was, however, able to claim that most of what was put forward in the Assembly's Charter was contained in their recent budget measures and their White Paper

on 'Industrial and Regional Development' published on Thursday March 23rd, just a few days previously. (111) The Commission which had not yet been able to study the White Paper therefore, had the wind taken out of its sails to some extent. At the prompting of the STUC, the Standing Commission met again in the summer of 1972 to consider how it could lend its weight to the campaign to resist threatened redundancies in the steel industry caused by BSC's closure of a number of open hearth furnaces in Scotland and to take up the Charter's demand for an integrated iron and steel complex at Hunterston. Thereafter, however, the work of the Commission was severely circumscribed by the refusal of the Prime Minister on three separate occasions to have any further meeting with its members. In late October the Commission met for the last time and agreed to reconvene the Scottish Assembly in January 1973 but by then much of the original promise and impetus for the whole campaign had been lost. (112) Indeed, characteristic of the failure of the organised working class to give leadership and direction to the work of the Standing Commission was the fact that it was this body rather than the STUC which was allowed to convene the second Assembly.

It was therefore, almost inevitable that the Scottish Assembly should eventually founder. Even the Heath Government's increasing concern with regional problems probably had as much to do with preparing the way for Britain's entry into the EEC as with any pressure exerted by the Standing Commission, although as is argued below, the UCS crisis brought the regional issue dramatically into focus. To have become the really authoritative spokesman for the Scottish people the Assembly needed to find an organisational form which, far from just meeting every few months and addressing itself

purely to Government ministers, could do what the UCS campaign had shown to be at least a possibility, namely involve the broadest masses of the people themselves in some form of continuous activity and mass struggle. It was a considerable achievement of the STUC to have attempted to develop the feelings of anger and frustration which had arisen out of the UCS collapse in such a way to raise the issue of a wider unity in defence of Scotland's interests. (113) The tragedy was that it did not succeed in pushing forward the drive to Scottish nationhood on the crest of the mounting waves of class anger which were building up in Scotland not just on the question of unemployment, but around the Industrial Relations Act, and miners' strike, which were the twin hammer blows that were eventually to break the Heath Government. (114)

(v) The U-turn.

In one very important respect the UCS struggle did produce a major shift in Government policy. With unemployment reaching one million and frightened by the possibility of a number of potential UCS-type situations occurring elsewhere the Heath Government did an about-face. The famous U-turn was in fact a direct response to the political pressures UCS had generated with regard to the question of unemployment and the 'Right to Work'. The massive aid to Govan Shipbuilders and the assistance to Marathon were the first major concessions to a new more interventionist style of economic management. In terms of the wider political arena the scale of this shift in the Conservative Government's overall economic strategy only later became fully apparent with the publication of the White Paper on 'Industrial and Regional Development' at the end of March 1972 and Chancellor of the Exchequer,

Anthony Barber's reflationary budget package of the same month which contained tax reduction amounting to £1,200 million and finally, with the Industry Act of 1972 which was based on the earlier White Paper.

It should be remembered that the Conservative Government's initial attitude to intervention in the 'free play of market forces' had been clearly enunciated by John Davies at the 1970 Conservative Party Conference.

"I will not bolster up or bale out companies where I can see no end to the process of propping them up." (115)

Whereas previous interventions such as the nationalisation of Rolls Royce could be regarded as 'exceptional cases' it was difficult to construe the new measures as anything other than a reversal of policy, a reversal bitterly resented by many Conservative MP's which was to sow the seeds of fundamental inner-Party dissent and provoke sharp criticism from the CBI. (116)

A brief examination of the terms of the White Paper and the subsequent Industry Act indicates as one writer has put it, "not just a revolution in regional policy. What was really revolutionary was the change in Government philosophy." (117) Dealing first with regional policy it can be noted that when the Conservatives took office in 1970 they were determined to replace the system of direct grants to firms by broader tax incentives, a policy which favoured the more commercially successful. (118) Investment grants on plant and machinery were abolished and whole apparatus of the Industrial Development Corporation set up by the Labour Government was discontinued and the 1968 Industrial Expansion Act repealed. The new system was based on tax incentives. (119) The problem was

that to be truly effective such an approach required an expanding economy and a high level of investment which had failed to materialise.

With the publication of the White Paper a complete reversal of regional policy was effected. It was one of the most interventionist proposals of any administration, Labour or Conservative, since the war. As The Economist commented rather dourly at the time,

"The lengths to which the Government was prepared to eat its words in the interests of getting the economy moving were not really clear until Mr. John Davies published the detailed schemes of regional incentives on Wednesday. There had been rumours in and out of Whitehall during the past three months that the Government was thinking both of restoring investment grants and resurrecting the Industrial Reorganisation Corporation, not much more than a year after they had both been abolished. They seemed too improbable to gain much credence. But this week the rumours came close to being true." (120)

As the White Paper indicated,

"New measures to stimulate industrial growth and create fresh confidence are needed. They must be as clear, simple and certain in their impact as possible." (121)

The measures proposed included not only restoring investment grants in plant and machinery which had previously only been available in the development areas but extending these to the whole country as was the tax allowance on new industrial building. The actual estimated cost of these grants was to be £365 million in 1973-74 rising to £700 million in 1975-76. Moreover, the new grants were not to be limited simply to projects creating new employment but available to help with improvements and modernisation. The Economist calculated that £100 investment in Glasgow, would now have a net cost in the first year of only £38 compared with £60 in the south-east. (122) Not only did the Conservatives restore differentials previously abandoned but they now exceeded anything which had been

available under the Labour Government. (123) In addition, a new junior minister at the DTI Christopher Chataway who was to figure in the Marathon negotiations was appointed. An Industrial Development Executive with considerable greater powers of regional discretion than had existed under the IDC was established with staff drawn from the city and industry as well as the civil service.

It was in Part 11 of the Industry Act itself that the logic of the U-turn was clearly spelled out under clauses 7 and 8 dealing with what was termed 'selective assistance'. Clause 7 was confined to the so-called assisted areas including the whole of Scotland, the North of England as far down as Yorkshire, and Wales and the South-West. The Government was empowered to provide financial assistance where this is "likely to provide, maintain or safeguard employment in any part of the assisted areas", for the following purposes:

- "(a) to promote the development or modernisation of an industry,
- (b) to promote the efficiency of an industry,
- (c) to create, expand or sustain productive capacity in an industry, or in undertakings in an industry,
- (d) to promote the reconstruction, reorganisation or conversion of an industry or of undertakings in an industry,
- (e) to encourage the growth of, or the proper distribution of, undertakings in an industry,
- (f) to encourage arrangements for ensuring that any contraction of an industry proceeds in an orderly way." (124)

The wording was in places almost identical to the Labour Government's Act. Clause 8, which applied to the whole country, allowed the Government to intervene directly for all the purposes outlined in Clause 7 wherever such aid was "likely to benefit the economy of

the United Kingdom, or any part or area of the United Kingdom" and is "in the national interest" and could not be provided from any other source. (125)

Thus the Government now had unlimited powers to intervene in the economy and moreover there was added provision made for ship-building amounting to £50 million of special production grants over a three year period. (126) As Bruce-Gardyne complained during the Second Reading of the Industry Bill, the Upper Clyde was its real 'raison d'être'. (127) It was Benn, however, who really rubbed John Davies' nose in it during the debate.

"It is no secret that at present the reason why the Treasury Bench is so empty is that the Cabinet are rethinking Selsdon in the security of Chequers. Their rethinking of Selsdon arises because they have discovered that the policies devised at Selsdon, which commanded great support from them in the past, including support from the hon. member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley), have created a political situation which they cannot sustain." (128)

The philosophy of Selsdon was dead. What killed it was the totally unanticipated level of class militancy generated by the UCS right to work campaign, against the background of rising unemployment and the manifest failure of the Conservatives to stimulate economic expansion. As Labour Research put it, the causes of the reversal of policy were firstly,

"the victory of the UCS workers and other work-ins and sit-ins, demonstrating the tremendous strength that the labour movement can acquire through united struggle against redundancy in conditions of high unemployment; and the chronic inefficiency and underinvestment in much of British industry which cannot be remedied by market forces alone." (129)

John Davies was later to echo closely this analysis,



"I think that the thing that really developed alongside the problems of militancy...was the fact that we had unemployment rising rather rapidly at this time....and, of course, that added fuel to the flames of militancy very much, and understandably in some ways. And one had to face the problem that this was not an issue which could be considered on its own industrial merits, that it, in fact, affected more and more the whole attitude of mind of West Central Scotland with its growing problem of unemployment." (130)

Again, a recent economic analysis by Keegan and Pennant-Rea describes what they call,

"no more and no less than wholesale panic in the ranks of the Government as unemployment mounted during the winter of 1971-72 to nearly 1 million - at that stage an unprecedented post-war figure. The panic was such that the Government resorted to every reflationary device in practice." (131)

That the Barber boom was to be shortlived and the whole Government strategy was to end up in tatters under the combined effects of a balance of payments crisis with the economic impact of a sharp rise in oil prices and the miners' smashing of Phase III of the Heath Government's incomes policy, is a matter of record. Those Conservatives who had urged caution in 1972 watched the Government collapse in the chaos of the three-day week, and the February 1974 election. The lessons were drawn and as Deacon has commented on this period, "the star of the 'sound money' men rose accordingly." (132) In the election post-mortem the past 'mistakes' of the Heath Government were scrutinised and for some, this heralded a period of 'reappraisal' of the entire previous strategy of social and economic management. (133) Keith Joseph places April 1974, twenty years after joining the Conservatives, as the time when he personally became "converted to Conservatism." (134) For the Conservative Party UCS had led them from Selsdon to Preston where in September 5th 1974 Keith Joseph made his famous speech expounding the monetarist doctrine.

"To us as to all post-war Governments, sound money may have seemed out of date; we were dominated by the fear of unemployment. It was this which made us turn back against our own better judgement and try and spend our way out of unemployment, while relying on incomes policy to damp down the inflationary effects. It is perhaps easy to understand; our post-war boom began under the shadow of the 1930's. We were haunted by the fear of long-term mass unemployment, the grim hopeless dole queues and towns which died. So we talked ourselves into believing that these gaunt, tight-lipped men in caps and mufflers were round the corner and tailored our policy to match these imaginary conditions." (135)

It was the doctrine of monetarism which was to provide the ideological cutting edge of the next Conservative administration under Margaret Thatcher and the dissident 'neo-liberals' of 1972-74, an issue further discussed in the concluding chapter.

#### (vi) Shipbuilding Nationalisation

So far as the shipbuilding was concerned the U-turn not only resulted in the immediate rescue of the Upper Clyde yards and the injection of substantial new funds into the industry but it also meant that the next Labour administration would find it perilous to provide support on any lesser scale. It can be argued, in fact, that the movement generated around the UCS struggle placed shipbuilding nationalisation squarely on the agenda for the incoming Labour Government. At the Confederation, the TUC and the Labour Party Annual Conferences in 1971 resolutions were passed calling for nationalisation of the industry. At the Labour Party Conference a motion moved by Danny McGarvey demanded

"that a future Labour Government should bring the shipbuilding and shiprepairing industries under public ownership; this to be a high priority of the next Labour Government." (136)

The adoption of the resolution was the first step towards fulfilling a long-standing demand of the workers in the industry, which in the case of the Boilermakers' Society had been official union policy since 1945. (137) Thereafter, an unprecedented series of discussions took place which involved the Confederation and the TUC along with the Labour Party in formulating the details of the Nationalisation proposals. (138) This resulted in a joint consultative document

which was adopted by Labour's NEC as the basis of future policy. (139)

As Tony Benn commented, recalling his days at the Department of Industry,

"I think there's no doubt that UCS forced the Labour Party, the Confederation and the TUC to embody within its official policy the public ownership of the shipyards. And I was able to take with me into the Department, a policy document that had been through the Confederation Conference, the Congress and the Labour Party Conference, and I put it on the table and said, 'do it'. And that would never have been possible without UCS. There was no question about that in my mind."(140)

It remained to be seen, however, whether after its stormy legislative passage, the newly nationalised industry which finally emerged under the direction of British Shipbuilders in July 1977 would differ substantially from previous nationalisations or whether, as in the case of so many other industries, public ownership was merely a prelude to further rationalisation in which managerial attitudes remained unchanged and the workers were excluded from any meaningful control over the industry. (141)

In the last part of this chapter subsequent developments at Marathon and Govan Shipbuilders are briefly examined. It should be noted that at no point during their period at Clydebank did Marathon fulfill their initial promise of employing over two thousand men. Indeed, between 1972 and 1980 when they withdrew from the yard there was a continuous problem over orders which the company used to extract greater and greater concessions from the workforce while whittling down their numbers. Certainly the workers had been guaranteed cost-of-living increases but the equalisation of bonus, although it began to lead to parity in other yards, was something to which the boilermakers did not adjust easily. Once again they began to put pressure on the local officials to have Marathon take on men from their register rather than retrained finishing trade workers who were being paid off by the UCS liquidator. Within six months the situation was sufficiently serious for McGarvey to have to come back to Clydebank and address a meeting of 800 boilermakers urging them to stick to the pledge given during

the UCS campaign. (142) The finishing trade workers were being retrained as welders and although the welders' shop stewards were in favour of accepting the retrained men, the welders themselves were threatening to boycott the meeting with McGarvey. In the event they did not do so but the retraining scheme was only approved by a narrow majority of 31 votes despite McGarvey's emphasis on their 'moral obligation' to carry out their previous promises. After the meeting in Clydebank Town Hall McGarvey was quoted as saying, however, as regards the retrained finishing trade workers,

"These men obviously do not have to depend on the shipyards as our men do." (143)

Obviously this dimension of boilermakers' sectionalism was still not by any means dead. Indeed, although the finishing trade workers were eventually accepted as boilermakers they were labelled 'dilutees' by the established welders. Thereafter at departmental meetings of the welders a notice was stuck on the door 'pukkah welders only'. (144) In various other ways too they were given to understand that their presence in the Boilermakers' Society was not welcomed and many subsequently left the yard, tired of petty harassment by their fellow workers. (145)

In fact, however, the Marathon agreement was largely adhered to and the boilermakers did not succeed in re-establishing a differential. The major industrial walk-out which took place in May 1974 resulting in a 6-day strike, although led by the boilermakers who were demanding payment of the half-yearly bonus before the Glasgow summer holidays, was not simply a sectional dispute. It had more to do with the fact that as a result of production losses during the 'three-day week' the boilermakers had been refused the bonus which they had previously received three times. The workers expected £100 but the management only offered £70 later increased to £80 with the remaining amount being subject to arbitration. A change in the company's industrial relations personnel and general

dissatisfaction over continuing wage restraint were also contributing factors to the dispute. (146) Apart from this labour relations were generally peaceful not least because the workers were forced to adopt a policy of work-sharing and at one stage suspension and eventually voluntary redundancy which gradually whittled the labour force down to only 740 by the time Marathon finally pulled out and the French firm, Union Industrielle d'Enterprise (UIE) took over the yard in the late spring of 1980. In the interim, in 1976 and again in 1978 Marathon had been on the point of shutting down their operation when, largely as a result of pressure from the shop stewards and the STUC on the Labour Government, it was agreed that orders would be placed in the yard for the British North Sea Oil Corporation for jack-up rigs. As part of the extended haggling over the price for the later rig, the workers offered a flexibility deal to the company which included all trades in wider flexibility. (147) By the time UIE began to take an interest in the yard the workers were ready to concede staggered holidays and the use of outside contractors to boost the labour force during busy periods as well as a higher degree of interchangeability.

For many on Clydeside, the fact that the Marathon Corporation had received 17 rig orders in the year before it withdrew, not one of which had come to Clydebank, confirmed the suspicion that the company had only really intended to stay so long as the generous government assistance it had initially received made it worthwhile. The fact that they had also managed to avoid nationalisation, although only just as it turned out, was perhaps further evidence in the eyes of many workers that they had secured a licence to freeboot with the industry and workforce of Clydeside. (148)

At Govan Shipbuilders also there were initial problems with the welders who came out on strike over a demand for special payment for operating a special welding machine which had been introduced in the

yards for some years but for which payment had never been agreed. Once again the Boilermakers' Society advised the men to return to work which they did after holding out for a week but not before extending the strike to welders in all three yards. (149) Then in the spring of 1973 and again in the summer of 1975 the welders were in dispute and latterly conducted a go-slow in support of a claim for a differential over other boilermaker trades. (150) In the autumn of that year there was a 'walk-out' when a payment for operating a new type of welding rod was also granted to platers and shipwrights. The welders had refused to continue to use the new equipment and management then stopped paying them. The welders claimed that their payment ought to be treated as a 'skill allowance' specific to their group but received no support from welders in other yards or from other boilermaker trades or officials. (151) These actions were not successful therefore and the joint shop stewards committee continued to negotiate common rates for the various grades of workers. (152)

By 1976 it had become apparent to the workforce, however, that the market for ships was in a very serious position and the fear of redundancies altered the whole climate of labour relations in the yards as the last orders were nearing completion at Govan. (153) Securing work became an urgent priority for the management and men and had resulted in joint approaches to the Government by the company and the CSEU to find orders. (154) It was under these conditions that the boilermakers voted to introduce flexibility to all sections of the workforce following the example of the outfit trades the previous year in eliminating the lines of demarcation between the various sections. (155) The agreement was estimated to be worth 20 per cent in terms of productivity but because of the crisis facing the industry the workers agreed to this without demanding extra wages. All trades within the union now became interchangeable in theory. The boilermakers officials led the negotiations

with the Government seeking 'spec' orders to avoid massive redundancies. Furthermore because of the situation in the industry the Govan workers, who had lodged a 26 per cent pay claim to offset the effects of continuing wage restraint agreed 'reluctantly' to settle for 10 per cent being the first group of workers within the industry to do so. (156) One further factor which influenced this decision was the hope that the newly-nationalised Govan Shipbuilders would share in the prospective orders of 22 cargo vessels and 2 crane ships for the Polish Government and thus avoid redundancies.

The issue of the Polish orders had become so contentious that it is worth briefly sketching in some further background here. The shop stewards were asked by British Shipbuilders to guarantee delivery of two vessels per month, plus further flexibility and the guaranteed maintenance of performance levels. It was hoped that Govan Shipbuilders would get about ten of the orders while the workers in turn guaranteed delivery dates at a mass meeting and numerous changes in working practices which amounted to broader flexibility between trades. (157) The total order was worth about £115 million to the industry and would secure much needed work not just on the Clyde but in other hard-pressed areas such as the north east.

Then, as negotiations with the Polish Government to confirm the orders reached a critical stage in the last few weeks of 1977, a new and unforeseen complication emerged which threatened the whole deal. At Swan Hunter's Tyneside yard 1,700 outfitting workers refused to end an overtime ban in support of pay parity with the boilermakers in spite of the intervention of the Tyne Confederation officials who pointed out that the claim for parity could be pursued after the orders were won. Only a handful of workers, however, supported the officials who urged the men to give British Shipbuilders the required

guarantee of trouble-free production. On Clydeside the local Glasgow evening newspaper urged the workers through its editorial column to take full advantage of the situation,

"Now, just because their colleagues in the north-east have made a kamikaze decision, there is no reason why the Clyde shipyard workers should cut off their noses to spite their face.

It would be misplaced brotherhood for the Clydeside workers to refuse to build the ships. (158)

The probability was that if the dispute at Swan Hunters could not be satisfactorily resolved then at least some of the orders intended for there would be reallocated to the Clyde. It was a potentially embarrassing situation for the Clyde workers especially, since they had been the recipients of such magnificent solidarity during the UCS campaign. To lay themselves open to the charge of 'taking bread out of the mouths of their fellow workers' would not only shatter the unity built among shipbuilding workers on a national level by the UCS work-in but would also destroy the credibility of the Clyde workers throughout the British trade union movement. Paradoxically it was precisely the kind of horizontal inter-union sectional dispute which the workers on the Upper Clyde no longer embarked upon following the Marathon and Govan agreements but which was still rife in certain other areas of the industry. In part also sectional feelings had been exacerbated by the continuing period of wage restraint imposed by the Labour Government which was producing considerable frustration in industry. It was therefore not without a degree of sympathy as well as exasperation that Airlie commented,

"It is our view the problem is on the Tyne and should be resolved on the Tyne. It is also our view all concerned should get round the negotiating table to resolve the problems in the long-term best interests of the shipbuilding industry." (159)



The view of the Confederation as expressed by its general secretary, Jack Service, was also that the first priority was to secure the building of these orders in Britain. (160) With British Shipbuilders executives due to fly to Poland within a matter of days it was essential that the issue be resolved otherwise it was feared that the whole order might yet go to Japan. From Swan Hunter, however, an appeal was launched for the Clyde workers to 'black' the Tyne orders for four ships which had been offered to Govan. The workers at Austin and Pickersgill had refused to accept any reallocated order but the men at Smiths Dock Company on Teeside had voted to accept two of the ships after taking part in a sympathy strike only a few days before. It was an issue which was creating maximum confusion not helped by British Shipbuilders readiness to tout orders around the other British yards and their rather hard-line approach in demanding detailed concessions on flexibility before allocating the orders. (161)

In the event after some hesitation and with real misgivings the Govan workers agreed to accept the reallocated orders at a mass meeting of 3,000 workers with only 4 voting against. Whether or not they were correct to have done so it followed that this decision effectively undercut the attempt by the Tyne finishing trade workers to use the prospect of the Polish orders as a bargaining lever against British Shipbuilders. The Govan decision was also, however, supported by the Robb Caledon stewards. Indeed, in an attempt to answer the charge of 'betrayal' Airlie even offered to travel to the Tyne and hold discussions with the workers there. However, hopes that the Tyne problem could eventually be resolved and the orders placed there once again were completely dashed when the sectional dispute spiralled still further a few weeks later.

The outfitters agreed to end their overtime ban after receiving £5.40 as a 'fair wages' award whereupon the Tyne boilermakers immediately ended job flexibility and reverted to 'one-man-one-job' because pay differentials with the outfitters had been eroded. What angered the Swan Hunter boilermakers was the fact that the award had been made without requiring any changes in working practices or increases in productivity from the outfit trades. British Shipbuilders had thus only served to shift the focus of the trouble in the yard.

The Govan shop stewards were manifestly uneasy about their previous decision to accept reallocated orders but were now coming under pressure from the Govan Shipbuilders management who accused them of 'sitting on a fence'. (162) Airlie, somewhat defensively argued,

"What I object to is Govan Shipbuilders being used as a dustbin for every problem in the shipbuilding industry." (163)

There seemed to be a growing conviction that the orders should not be accepted which was reflected in renewed efforts by the Confederation to resolve the dispute. The Govan workers were asked by the Confederation for more time to sort out the Tyne problem before committing themselves any further and in the face of another offer from British Shipbuilders the stewards asked for the vessels to be built on the Tyne or if not, for the matter to be decided by the Confederation at national level. For nearly two weeks the Govan workers stalled British Shipbuilders but with the failure of the Confederation to successfully resolve the Tyne difficulties, this time after receiving 'formal instruction' from the Confederation, the Govan workers finally accepted the reallocated Polish orders early in February 1978.(164)

It could be argued that in accepting the reallocated orders the Govan workers had breached a fundamental trade union principle of solidarity. On the other hand a more generous view would allow that not only was this an unjustified criticism, one to which they were extremely sensitive, but also that in the longer term interests of security of employment for shipbuilding workers, and not just those at Govan, it was vital to secure the conditions for the orders to be confirmed for the British yards. In that sense it could be held their decision to accept British Shipbuilders offer of further orders was an extremely difficult but responsible one and that in jeopardising the whole Polish order deal the Tyne workers were being not only sectionally narrow, but ultimately acting against the best interests of their fellow workers elsewhere. It was somewhat ironic, however, that precisely because the UCS experience had produced a united joint shop stewards organisation the Clyde workers found it far easier to comply with British Shipbuilders demands for flexibility and guaranteed delivery dates than their compatriots elsewhere for whom sectionalism was still the determining factor in shaping their identities. (165)

It should be said that the Govan workers subsequently fulfilled their pledge to British Shipbuilders in its entirety. Indeed, when some of the foremen and assistant managers took industrial action, the workers decided that they would not be laid-off by the dispute. The ghost of the work-in was revived as the men agreed to 'work-on' without managerial supervision, technically in breach of health and safety regulations, in order to attempt to complete the vessels on schedule. It was, however, mainly a token attempt by the workers to redress the rather bad publicity which the Govan workforce had

received due to problems in meeting delivery dates, which although by no means entirely the fault of the Govan yard, did mean that the Polish authorities were in a position to invoke fairly severe financial penalties. Then in May 1979, when the finishing trades who had already consented to transfer certain work to other yards, were again overloaded with work, they agreed to allow the steel trades to do some of their work, a previously unheard of breach of demarcation lines. With the Polish orders running out and the prospects of new orders very poor indeed, 500 men volunteered to work during the traditional Fair Holiday, a further inconceivable concession a few years previously. (166) The announcement by British Shipbuilders that there were to be 4,000 jobs lost in the industry in Scotland and 10,000 nationally by the end of 1980 produced an immediate walk-out on the Clyde and the threat by the Govan workers to 'impound' the Polish orders plus a three-week overtime ban. (167) However, the general absence of new orders removed any possibility of reviving the work-in as a tactic, particularly as many men took the seemingly attractive option of enhanced redundancy payments.

Under the Shipbuilding Redundancy Payments Scheme introduced in August 1978 the total average payment amounted to £2,500 per worker while although considerably less than settlements given to British Steel workers for example, still constituted a major obstacle in launching a campaign to resist the redundancies. In fact, only one worker received the maximum of £4,000 in the first two years of the scheme and for those workers nearing retiral age the actual amounts received in cash terms were anything but generous. (168) The chief reason why there was no resistance, however, was simply that the Confederation's Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee and

British Shipbuilders had reached a joint understanding in the so-called Blackpool Agreement which entailed a system of voluntary rather than compulsory redundancies. The Blackpool Agreement of 4th September 1979 envisaged 6,000 redundancies to be achieved through paying off the long-term sick and natural wastage in the first place, together with the inter-yard transfer of surplus labour and a ban on adult recruitment. (169) Within a month of this agreement, however, Govan Shipbuilders with over 700 workers surplus, was attempting to 'open the books' to all employers who wished to volunteer. (170) This was not the shop stewards understanding of the 'spirit' of the agreement and resulted in their registering a 'failure to agree' with the company and the convening of a further meeting between all parties including the National Confederation in order to resolve the problems which had been raised by the Clyde workers. The pill had been suitably sugared, however, and with the concession that employees over 55 could accept voluntary redundancy, the 'rationalisation' of the labour force was begun. (171) In return British Shipbuilders had promised Govan a further contract for two bulk carriers to ensure continuity of work there.

The Scotstoun yard on which £12 million had been spent on development since the UCS crisis was put on a 'care and maintenance' basis. However, with the removal of certain machinery and its transfer to the Govan yard there is little likelihood of shipbuilding being resumed there on its former scale. The Govan yard itself escaped the worst consequences of the new Conservative Government's industry policy under Keith Joseph, being designated as a 'core merchant facility', although with a considerable reduction of the labour force from around 5,500 to 3,200, that is, by about 40 per cent. (172) The decision not

to shut Govan which it had been rumoured might be axed, while other yards in areas with equally severe unemployment problems such as Robb Caledon in Dundee were eventually closed, was perhaps influenced by the possible echoes of the militancy of the UCS work-in. Unfortunately, while this may have partially shielded Govan it did not manage to protect the rest of the shipbuilding industry. From a labour force of 88,000 in July 1977 when shipbuilding was nationalised, by 1981 20,000 workers had left the industry and on the Clyde over the same period, the labour force was reduced from 24,000 to 18,000. Although the Govan shop stewards committee has held a powerful position as the leading force in creating a national combine committee for all British shipbuilding workers, the implementation of the Blackpool Agreement, the recession in world trade and the EEC policies for reducing capacity have made the job of preserving employment and unity on a national scale extremely difficult. (173) Once again the fruits of nationalisation have left a bitter after-taste in the mouths of the workers as the government played off the 'efficiency' of one yard against another. It was a sad sequel to the unity and hopes which had been born in the work-in at Upper Clyde.

## Chapter 12 The Wider Implications of the Work-in

- 1 F. Broadway, Upper Clyde Shipbuilders: A Study of Government Intervention in Industry, London, Centre for Policy Studies, 1976; See Labour Research Department, 'Centre for Policy Studies', Labour Research, Vol. 65, No. 1, January, 1976, pp. 22-23.
- 2 Broadway, op. cit., p. xiii.
- 3 ibid.
- 4 Alex Fletcher, Scottish Conservative Party Conference, 9 May 1981, Perth, Extract from speech, GU Archives.
- 5 W. Thompson and F. Hart, The UCS Work-in, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1972, pp. 91-92. It should be noted that attempts by the Institute of Workers' Control to persuade the UCS workers to take on board the issue of workers control fell on deaf ears. See for example B. Nicholson, UCS: An Open Letter, Institute of Workers' Control, Pamphlet No. 27, 1971, GU Archives.
- 6 A. Thomson, 'UCS and Workers' Control', Glasgow News, No. 1, 11 October 1971, p. 9, GU Archives.
- 7 Figures which give a breakdown of those on the work-in by trade, age, no. of years employment in the yards, length of participation in the work-in and numbers eventually volunteering are unobtainable with the single exception of figures from December 1971. See Table 3. Aggregate monthly and quarterly totals for workers in each yard, and separate aggregate monthly and quarterly totals of staff and manual workers for all yards together are available in the liquidator's report for 1972. See Table 4 and Table 5, cited in Upper Clyde Shipbuilders Limited (In Liquidation), Report of the Official Liquidator to the creditors of the Company for the year ended 14 June 1972, p. 18, GU Archives.

- 8 The Red Mole, no. 28, 15 September 1971, article by P. Jordan, 'The Plessey Occupation', p. 4, GU Archives.
- 9 Socialist Worker Clydeside Bulletin, 2 September 1971, 6 September 1971, 12 October 1971, GU Archives.
- 10 S. McIntyre, Little Moscows, London, Croom Helm, 1980, pp. 79-111.
- 11 Morning Star, 20 October 1971.
- 12 Speech by Ian McKee, Dumbarton and Greenock AUEW District Secretary at 2nd Conference of West of Scotland Shop Stewards on Unemployment, 1 November 1971, SRO, UCS transcripts, vol. 3.
- 13 Morning Star, 29 October 1971.
- 14 The Lennox Herald, 29 October 1971.
- 15 The Lennox Herald, 17 September 1971.
- 16 County Reporter, 23 June 1971.
- 17 Morning Star, op. cit., 29 October 1971. It was previously pointed out that the UCS stewards provided a platform for the Plessey workers and also supported their cause financially.
- 18 Morning Star, 24 December 1971.
- 19 K. Coates, Work-ins, Sit-ins and Industrial Democracy, Nottingham, Spokesman, 1981, p. 69.
- 20 See GEC-EE Workers' Takeover, Institute of Workers' Control, pamphlet no. 17, 1969; An account of these events which apparently had a profound influence on Benn is contained in Coates, op. cit., pp. 27-29.
- 21 North East Trade Union Studies Information Unit, Worker Occupations and the North-East Experience, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1976, p.
- 22 A fuller account of this may be obtained in Coates, op. cit., pp. 76-81.
- 23 Morning Star, 9 December 1971.



- 24 Morning Star, 22 October 1971.
- 25 Morning Star, 28 October 1971.
- 26 See K. Fleet, 'Triumph Meriden', in K. Coates, (ed.), The New Worker Co-operatives, Nottingham, Spokesman, 1976, pp. 88-108.  
The other co-operatives were at Fisher-Bendix plant in Liverpool and at the Scottish Daily News in Glasgow.
- 27 See Coates, Work-ins, Sit-ins and Industrial Democracy, op. cit., pp. 107-109; see also A. Milligan, 'Briant's workers have will to win', Morning Star, 7 August 1972; B. Freeman, 'Briant workers fight for jobs - 100 days work-in', Morning Star, 29 September 1972; see also tabloid newspaper, Upper Clyde Special - we won with your support, 1972, GU Archives.
- 28 Coates, *ibid.*, p. 115.
- 29 Glasgow Herald, 28 September 1972.
- 30 For a fuller account of the Allis-Chalmers sit-in see Coates, Work-ins, Sit-ins and Industrial Democracy, op. cit., pp. 56-60; Morning Star, 19 January 1972.
- 31 The Fisher-Bendix occupation is discussed in Coates, *ibid.*, pp. 60-71.
- 32 *ibid.*
- 33 Morning Star, 29 January 1972.
- 34 See also T. Clarke, Sit-in at Fisher-Bendix, Institute of Workers' Control, 1974.
- 35 The setting up of the KME co-operative is examined by T. Eccles, 'Kirkby Manufacturing and Engineering' in Coates, The New Worker Co-operatives, op. cit., pp. 141-169.
- 36 See on this J. Greenwood, Worker sit-ins and job protection, Farnborough, Gower Press 1977; Eccles in Coates, *ibid.*, p. 155 notes the "lack of any deep groundswell of unified political commitment" in establishing the co-operative at KME, which is a clearly related factor.

- 37 See A. Mackie, 'The Scottish Daily News' in Coates, *ibid.*, pp. 109-140; K. Bradley, 'Worker Control as a State Managerial Device: A Study of the Scottish Daily News Worker Co-operative', PhD thesis, Essex, 1978; B. Barr and R. Mackay, The Scottish Daily News, Edinburgh, Cannongate, 1976. The SDN workers received £1,000 from UCS
- 38 Morning Star, 19 January 1972.
- 39 Morning Star, 25 February 1972.
- 40 J. Gretton, 'To sit or not to sit?' New Society, Vol. 20, No. 507 15 June 1972, pp. 564-566; G. Chadwick, 'The Manchester Engineering Sit-ins'. in M. Barrat-Brown and K. Coates, (eds.), The Trade Union Register, 3, Nottingham, Spokesman, 1973, p. 113.
- 41 See Metra Consulting Group Limited, An analysis of sit-ins, Oxford, September 1972, p. 24.
- 42 Gretton, *op. cit.*, p. 565.
- 43 R. Rosewell, 'Work-ins, Sit-ins and Redundancy', International Socialism, No. 50, January-March 1972, p. 20, GU Archives.
- 44 R. Rosewell, 'Sit-ins: The Experience', International Socialism, No. 53, October-December 1972, p. 9, GU Archives.
- 45 Metra Consulting Group, *op. cit.*
- 46 Worker Occupations and the North-East Experience, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
- 47 *ibid.*
- 48 Coates, Work-ins, Sit-ins and Industrial Democracy, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-132.
- 49 Department of Employment figures do not provide detailed figures of workers involved in work-ins and sit-ins but only of 'stoppages' for various reasons. See British Labour Statistics Year Book 1975, Department of Employment, HMSO, 1977, p. 307.

- 50 Thompson and Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
- 51 See J. Reid, 'Autobiographical sketch', in Reflections of a Clyde-Built Man, London, Souvenir Press, 1976, pp. 1-45.
- 52 Interview with Alex Murray, 2 August 1979.
- 53 K.J.W. Alexander, 'Shipbuilding', in C. Balfour, (ed.), Participation in Industry, London, Croom Helm, 1973, p. 117.
- 54 See Workers Occupations and the North-East Experience, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-42, p. 99, note 4.
- 55 See A.J. Mills, 'Factory Work-ins', New Society, Vol. 29, No. 620, 22 August 1979, p. 489 for discussion of the role of the AUEW in spreading the tactic of occupation. Mills exaggerates the strength of the Communist Party among the AUEW stewards which he puts as high as one in 30.
- 56 Report to the Communist Party Executive Committee Meeting, September 11/12th by George Matthews, Comment, CPGB, Vol. 9, No. 23, 25 September 1971, pp. 353-354.
- 57 Coates, Work-ins, Sit-ins and Industrial Democracy, *op. cit.*, p. 113.
- 58 Jimmy Airlie interview with Doug Bain, Marxism Today, Vol. 23, No. 10, October 1979, pp. 16-20.
- 59 Clydebank Press, 19 May 1971.
- 60 Clydebank Press, 25 February 1971.
- 61 'Housing - A Survey', Comment, CPGB, Vol. 10, No. 14, July 1972, pp. 213-219. See also F. Hart, 'Scitland's Housing Battle', Comment, CPGB, Vol. 10, No. 24, 18 November 1972, pp. 376-378.
- 62 'Rents - What Now?', Comment, CPGB, Vol. 10, No. 26, 16 December 1972, p. 405. The collapse of resistance in England and Wales is described by L. Sklair, 'The Struggle against the Housing Finance Act', in J. Saville and R. Miliband, (eds.), Socialist

Register, 1975, pp. 250-292.

- 63 F. Hart, 'Scottish Notes', Comment, CPGB, Vol. 10, No. 26, op. cit., p. 408; Glasgow Herald, 22 December 1972.
- 64 Press reports speak of turnouts of around 2,000 in the Glasgow demonstrations. See Glasgow Herald, 18 September 1972 and 20 November 1972; Hart, 'Scotland's Housing Battle', op. cit., p. 377.
- 65 See Table 6 Place of Residence of Employers of Govan Shipbuilders.
- 66 See Des Warren, Shrewsbury: Whose Conspiracy? The need for an inquiry, pamphlet, Glasgow, (1976).
- 67 Hansard, 5th Series, Vol. 871, Session 1974, 25 March -- 5 April 1974, 4 April 1974, col. 1445.
- 68 Clydebank Press, 29 December 1972, p. 7; Recording of meeting of Scottish Council of Tenants Associations, AUEW Halls, Glasgow, January 1973, Report by Bill Towill of Clydebank and Glasgow public inquiries, Side 1A, GU Archives.
- 69 Daily Record, 29 March 1973.
- 70 Clydebank Town Council, Minutes 1973, Special Meeting of the Town Council 27 December 1973, pp. 2376-2380. Voting was 11 to 10 for refusal to pay the fine.
- 71 Daily Record, 8 January 1974; Clydebank Press, 11 January 1974.
- 72 See John Kerr's description of the campaign in The Guardian, 9 February 1974. The writer's own experience of this campaign verifies Kerr's description.
- 73 Daily Record, 20 February 1974.
- 74 Clydebank Press, 22 February 1974.
- 75 Daily Record, 25 February 1974.
- 76 Daily Record, 26 February 1974.
- 77 For Reid's own statement of his Christian conviction based on a socialist interpretation of the 'Sermon on the Mount', see 'Christianity and Marxism', Clyde-Built Man, op. cit., pp. 125-130.

- 78 See Table 7 Election Results, Central Dunbartonshire Constituency, February and October 1974.
- 79 Scottish Daily Express, 27 February 1974; Clydebank Press, 8 March 1974.
- 80 Although the election campaign was of a different character being no longer simply anti-Tory and was less media-oriented, Reid's election material was of a relatively high quality. See 'Man for the Job', election leaflet for Jimmy Reid, October 1974, appendix 31.
- 81 Glasgow Herald, 15 April 1975.
- 82 'The Power Game', Daily Record, 24 September 1975.
- 83 Bulletin. A Monthly News Sheet for Engineering Workers, No. 2, 1975, appendix 32; Daily Record, 8 September 1975; Engineering Voice, Special Issue, September 1975, appendix 33.
- 84 Bulletin, A Monthly News Sheet for Engineering Workers, No. 1, July 1975 and No. 3, August 1975, appendix 32.
- 85 See 'To Have! And Have Not!', Engineering Special, pamphlet, February, 1976, appendix 33.
- 86 Glasgow Herald, 12 February 1976.
- 87 Morning Star, 17 February 1976.
- 88 Tribune, Vol. 41, No. 16, 22 April 1977, p. 5 and Vol. 41, No. 17, 29 April 1977, p. 13; See correspondence following including reply by R. Falber, Assistant Secretary CPGW, *ibid.*, Vol. 41, No. 20, 20 May 1977.
- 89 Daily Record, 28 April 1976.
- 90 Scottish Daily Express, 4 November 1976; See also Engineering Voice, Meeting at Prestcold Factory, Jimmy Reid, leaflet, 6 October 1976, appendix 33.

- 91 Sunday Mail, 7 November 1976.
- 92 J. Reid, 'Why I have ended my AUEW Action', letter, Tribune, Vol. 41, No. 2, 14 January 1977.
- 93 Glasgow Herald, 25 July 1978.
- 94 Reid, 'Reflections, 1976', Clyde-Built Man, op. cit., p. 165.
- 95 Interview with Arnold Henderson, 13 August 1980, GU Archives.
- 96 The call for an Assembly was made at the third session of the STUC inquiry 29 October 1971 and it was originally envisaged that it would be held on St. Andrew's Day.
- 97 STUC Minutes, 1971, 22 April to 11 November 1971, p. 000676. Middleton House, Glasgow.
- 98 *ibid.*
- 99 Report to the Second Scottish Assembly, Usher Hall, Edinburgh, appendix of 'Charter of Proposals for the Scottish Assembly', Monday 15 January 1973, pp. 4-9, GU Archives.
- 100 The Scotsman, 15 February 1972.
- 101 *ibid.*
- 102 STUC 75th Annual Report, Dunoon 18-21 April 1972, p. 285, Middleton House, Glasgow.
- 103 Report to the Second Scottish Assembly, op. cit., pp. 8-9, 'Proposals for Commission'.
- 104 STUC 75th Annual Report, op.cit., p. 217. Comments by Peter Allison, Secretary of the Scottish Council of the Labour Party to 1972 STUC Congress as fraternal delegate.
- 105 The Scotsman, 16 January 1973.
- 106 Report of Proceedings of the Second Scottish Assembly, Usher Hall Edinburgh, Monday 15 January 1973. List of delegates. GU Archives. See also STUC 76th Annual Report, Aberdeen, 17-20 April 1973, pp. 285-286 for trade unionists complaints about the SNP's role.

- 107 Report of Proceedings of the Second Scottish Assembly, op. cit., pp. 40-41, Speech by William Wolfe.
- 108 W. Wolfe, recording of speech at the UCS 10th Anniversary Commemorative rally, Rosevale, Glasgow, 29 June 1981, GU Archives.
- 109 See W. Wolfe, Scotland Lives, Edinburgh, Reprographia, 1973, pp. 157-159 for reference to the increased tempo of the campaign on oil during 1971-72 and its relation to self-government.
- 110 H. Drucker and G. Brown, The Politics of Nationalism and Devolution, London, Longman, 1980.
- 111 For discussion of the White Paper see below.
- 112 Report to the Second Scottish Assembly, op. cit., pp. 10-16, 'The Work of the Standing Commission'.
- 113 Interestingly the major direct intervention by the SNP in the UCS crisis was an attempt to capitalise on the anger and frustration of the small businessmen and suppliers of the firm who as unsecured creditors stood to suffer badly. A 'revolt' of creditors demanding a delay of liquidation proceedings in the hope of a more favourable settlement of their claims was led by J.S. Thomson, a Greenock industrialist and supporter who supplied cranes to UCS. See Glasgow Herald, 8 July 1971.
- 114 These issues are examined in further detail in the Conclusion.

- 115 Cited in P. Norton, Conservative Dissidents, London, Temple Smith, 1978.
- 116 *ibid.*, pp. 91-98. Norton discusses the wide opposition to the new industry policy among backbench Conservative MP's, the CBI and certain Cabinet members such as Margaret Thatcher.
- 117 T. Nuttall, 'The Industry Act and Regional Policy', National Westminster Bank Quarterly Review, November 1973, p. 58.
- 118 *ibid.*, p. 56.
- 119 *ibid.*, p. 55.
- 120 The Economist, Vol. 242, 25 March 1972, p. 72.
- 121 HMSO, Industrial and Regional Development, CMND 4942, 23 March 1972.
- 122 Nuttall, *op. cit.*, p. 58. See table of 'Comparison of incentives to invest under different systems', p. 59.
- 123 The Economist, Vol. 242, 25 March 1972, p. 72.
- 124 Industry Act, 1972, Part II, Clause 7, pp. 8-9. The CBI described the provision of Clause 7 as 'pernicious' and the director-general of the CBI had a sixty-minute meeting with Chataway to express the CBI's objections while the Bill was still being debated. Norton, *op. cit.*, p. 94.
- 125 *ibid.*, Clause 8, p. 10.
- 126 *ibid.*, Part III, pp. 11-15. See Financial Times, 18 May 1972 for breakdown of figures of total aid to shipbuilding.



- 127 Hansard, Vol. 837, Session 1971-72, 15-26 May 1972, Industry Bill Second Reading, 22 May 1972, Col. 1088. The Bill had its Second Reading moved to cheers from the Labour benches but 'almost total silence' from the Conservatives. Norton, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-94.
- 128 *ibid.*, Col. 1029.
- 129 Labour Research Department, 'Private Enterprise on the Dole', Labour Research, Vol. 61, No. 7, July 1972, p. 147.
- 130 John Davies, interviewed in Open University Programme; Decision-making in Britain Course: Government and Industry Block: Upper Clyde Shipbuilders: BBC Television 11 July 1976, *cit.*, B.G. Hogwood, Government and Shipbuilding, Farnborough, Saxon House, 1979, p. 162.
- 131 W. Keegan and R. Pennant-Rea, Who Runs the Economy?, London, Temple Smith, 1979, pp. 199-200.
- 132 A. Deacon, 'Unemployment in Britain since 1945', in B. Showler and A. Sinfield, (eds.), The Workless State, Oxford, Martin Robertson, 1981, p. 76.
- 133 K. Joseph, Reversing the Trend - a critical re-appraisal of Conservative economic and social policies, Circencester, Barry Rose Ltd., 1975, p. 4.
- 134 *ibid.*, p. 4.
- 135 *ibid.*, p. 21.
- 136 Report of the Seventieth Annual Conference of the Labour Party Brighton, 6 October 1971, p. 237.
- 137 See Nationalisation of Shipbuilding, The United Society of Boilermakers and Iron and Steel Shipbuilders, pamphlet, 1945.

- 138 See Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, Report of the Thirty-eighth Annual Meeting, Eastbourne, 26-29 June 1973, p. 105.
- 139 See Nationalisation of the Shipbuilding, Shiprepair and Marine Engineering Industry, Labour Party document, 1973, GU Archives.
- 140 Interview with Tomny Benn, 12 August 1979, GU Archives.
- 141 The legislative history of the nationalisation bill is described by Hogwood, op. cit., pp. 178-208. For the two years during which the Conservatives fought the nationalisation proposals tooth and claw the industry received virtually no new investment. Moreover, the eventual exclusion of ship-repair was to prove a pyrrhic victory.
- 142 Scottish Daily Express, 10 April 1972 and 28 April 1973; Glasgow Herald, 28 May 1973.
- 143 Glasgow Herald, 29 May 1973.
- 144 Interview with J. Blackwood, Welders Convener, Marathon, 27 April 1980, GU Archives.
- 145 ibid.
- 146 The Observer, 2 June 1974.
- 147 The Guardian, 1 March 1979.
- 148 See Hogwood, op. cit.
- 149 Glasgow Herald, 30 January 1973; See also Notes of Discussion with Sam Barr, Scotstoun Convener, 10 May 1973 on resurgence of sectionalism, GU Archives.

- 150 Scottish Daily Express, 27 April 1973; Glasgow Herald, 3 June 1975.
- 151 Govan Shipbuilders Ltd. Notes of Meeting between Company Representatives and Shop Stewards Representatives, 23 October 1975. Records of Charles Connell, UCS Scotstoun Division, Scotstoun Marine Shop Stewards Committee, Govan Shipbuilders File, 1972-79, GU Archives.
- 152 Govan Shipbuilders Ltd. Agreement between Govan Shipbuilders Ltd., and the Negotiating Committee of Joint Shop Stewards, 12 August 1974, *ibid.*
- 153 Govan Shipbuilders Ltd. Notes of Meeting between the Board of Directors, Company Representatives, the Negotiating Committee of Joint Shop Stewards, and the Joint Negotiating Committee representing Draughtsmen, Allied Technical, Clerical and Other Staff, 7 April 1976, *ibid.*
- 154 Govan Shipbuilders Ltd. and CSEU joint approach to Government to seek assistance to obtain work, 19 January 1976, *ibid.*
- 155 The Scotsman, 8 January 1977. See Agreement between Govan Shipbuilders Ltd. and the Shop Stewards representing the Outfit Trades, October 1975 and Agreement between Govan Shipbuilders Ltd. and the Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers, 10 January 1977, Govan Shipbuilders File, 1972-79, *op. cit.*
- 156 Shipbuilding News, No. 3, November 1977, File GU Archives.
- 157 Govan Shipbuilders Ltd. Notes of Meeting held on 22 November 1977 between British Shipbuilders, Govan Shipbuilders, Confederation Shipbuilding Committee, Clyde Confederation, Negotiating Committee of Joint Shop Stewards and Joint Negotiating Committee representing Draughtsmen, Allied Technical, Clerical and Other Staff, Govan Shipbuilders File, 1972-79, *op. cit.*

- 158 Evening Times, 30 November 1977.
- 159 *ibid.* See also appendix 34, Press Statement, Govan Shipbuilders Joint Shop Stewards Committee, 5 December 1977.
- 160 Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, circular to affiliated unions and district committees, Swan Hunters Ltd., and associated matters, Ref. 77/123, 9 December 1977, appendix 34.
- 161 See for example the detailed schedules which British Shipbuilders executives attempted to press on the Govan labour force in the Draft Agreement between Govan Shipbuilders Limited and the Negotiating Committee of Joint Shop Stewards Govan Shipbuilders File, 1972-79, *op. cit.*, The refusal of Austin and Pickersgill workers to accept reallocated Polish orders was also influenced by this factor. See Shipbuilding News, No. 5, January 1978, p. 3, *ibid.*
- 162 Govan Shipbuilders Ltd., Notes of Meeting between Managing Director, Company Representatives, Negotiating Committee of Joint Shop Stewards and Joint Negotiating Committee representing Draughtsmen, Allied Technical, Clerical and Other Staff, 23 January 1978, *ibid.*
- 163 Shipbuilding News, No. 5, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3; The Scotsman, 21 January 1978.
- 164 Glasgow Herald, 3 February 1978.

- 165 Shipbuilding News, No. 8, April 1978, p. 3; As a result of the chaos at Swan Hunters the Confederation called for the establishment of united joint shop stewards committees throughout the industry with domestic yard agreements negotiated from a common date. Circular Ref. 77/123, op. cit.
- 166 Shipbuilding News, No. 24, August 1979, p. 5, op. cit.
- 167 Morning Star, 18 August 1979.
- 168 See Benefits payable under the Shipbuilding Redundancy Payments Scheme, Second Edition, August 1979, GU Archives.
- 169 See Appendix 35, The Blackpool Agreement.
- 170 Govan Shipbuilders Ltd., Rationalisation, October, 1979. Govan Shipbuilders File 1972-79, op. cit.
- 171 Govan Shipbuilders Ltd., Notes of Meeting between Company Representatives and Representatives of Joint Shop Stewards Committee, 5 October 1979 and 15 October 1979, ibid.
- 172 Govan Shipbuilders Ltd., Notes of Meeting between Representatives of British Shipbuilders, Company Representatives and Joint Shop Stewards Committee 17 October 1979; Govan Shipbuilders Ltd. Summary of main points agreed at a meeting of British Shipbuilders, Govan Shipbuilders Ltd., and the Joint Shop Stewards Committee, 18 October 1979, ibid.
- 173 See Govan Shipbuilders Scotstoun Marine Joint Shop Stewards Proposals for the Industry, 1979, ibid. These contained demands for a 'scrap and build policy' for British ships. Before he was appointed assistant AUEW divisional organiser for Glasgow, Airlie led the National Combine Committee which was constituted to consider resistance to the threat of job losses following nationalisation. The first meeting of the combine committee was attended by nearly 350 delegates. See Minute of National

Shipbuilding Conference of Shop Stewards, 4 September 1976.  
Records of Charles Connell, UCS Scotstoun Division, Scotstoun  
Marine Shop Stewards Committee, Shipbuilding Nationalisation  
File, GU Archives; See also recording of proceedings of  
National Shipbuilding Conference of Shop Stewards, 4 September  
1976, GU Archives.

## Chapter Thirteen

## WORKING CLASS CULTURE IN THE 1970'S

The implications of the UCS work-in, to be fully appreciated, need to be examined against the whole context of the class battles between 1970 and 1974. Indeed, what occurred during this period, arguably, had long-term and lasting ramifications upon the whole character of British social and economic life. Yet, viewed from the perspective of the 1980's, the undoubted achievements of the working class during the early 1970's seem to some, not to have fulfilled their promise, at least so far as advancing towards the ultimate goal of a socialist Britain is concerned. The disappointment that labour's 'forward march' has apparently been temporarily diverted into the blind alley of 'economism', if not permanently 'halted' has led to a reappraisal of strategy and a search for the means of political renewal. The lessons to be drawn from the struggles of 1970-74 are therefore now a matter of fierce controversy and indeed, of strategic importance, since the issues which were fought out during these years have mapped the terrain for the current challenges facing the labour movement.

About one thing most commentators are in agreement. The return of the Heath government in 1970 marked the initiation of a new phase in the political development of post-war Britain. It signified a tangible departure from the hitherto predominantly consensual style of political management towards a more abrasive confrontational approach, that had had its launching salvo in the 'law and order' declaration of Seltsdon Park but whose true conception lay in the contest between the labour movement and the Labour governments of 1964-1970 over the question of the role of the trade unions in society. In the words of Stuart Hall and his colleagues, 1970 was

the year which marked the commencement of "the make-or-break showdown between the Heath course and the organised working class." (1)

The shift to a more manifestly coercive intervention in the class struggle by capital can be depicted as the necessary outcome of the failure of the Labour Party in power to solve the deepening crisis of the social system on the basis of a continuing 'voluntarism'.

The Beveridge promise of 'full employment in a free society' effectively represented the right of the post-war trade union movement to freely negotiate increased living standards for its members within the voluntarist framework of 'pluralistic democracy' in which unions and employers could conduct their mutual affairs unfettered by legislative interference. The essence of a 'free society' could be counterposed on the one hand, to the totalitarian controls of fascism upon the trade union movement and on the other, as the cold war grew in intensity, to the presumed position of working people in existing Socialist societies.<sup>(2)</sup> The whole foundation of post-war stabilisation therefore rested upon the endorsement by organised labour of a consensus based on full employment, unhindered collective bargaining and the welfarism of the Beveridge Plan, underpinned by Keynesian economic management and the development of indicative planning.

By the early 1960's, with a weakening in Britain's international competitive position it was becoming increasingly clear that the years of full employment had enabled the trade union movement to acquire expectations which the deepening crisis for capital could no longer sustain. In particular the growth of plant-level collective bargaining led by shop stewards posed a considerable problem in terms of ensuring the requisite compliance of labour to wage restraint. Such compliance



was seen as essential to restoring profitability to an otherwise sagging economy. For the Conservative Party now poised for office in 1970 "the repertoire of voluntary constraints" which had sustained the consensus of the 50's and 60's was now finally "exhausted." (3)

A new strategy was called for and the core of that strategy was a frontal assault on labour, particularly at the level of the workplace, directed against the activities of 'unofficial' shop stewards committees. It is in this sense that the advent of the Heath administration marked "a watershed, a breaking point" in which "all the contradictions began to intersect." (4) To understand how this critical conjuncture was arrived at, something of the failure of the attempts by the Wilson government of the 60's to resolve the crisis on voluntaristic terms must be examined.

Of key importance in this respect was the eventual and stubborn implementation of statutory incomes policies by the Labour government. By 1968 not only had incomes policies begun to introduce severe strains in the relationship between the Labour Party and the trade union movement, but also had threatened to undermine perhaps the central plank within the post-war consensus, of 'free collective bargaining'. As a result, the position of the TUC and the predominantly right-wing leadership of the trade unions in supporting incomes policies had become increasingly uncomfortable. As Crouch has noted,

"Unions could no longer bury themselves in industrial activity and ignore overall political economy. At the same time they were coming under increasing pressure from the opposite direction: from rank and file members impatient with restraint and seeking higher incomes." (5)

The final years of the Wilson administration were marked by successive upswings in the level of unofficial strikes led by shop-floor militants

seeking redress for pent-up grievances resulting from incomes policy. In addition, in two major unions, the transport workers and the engineers, the election of Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon, leaders who were more responsive to shop-floor pressure, signified the final demise of united official trade union support for incomes policies. It was at this time, in 1968, that a Royal Commission set up to look at the whole question of trade unions (and additionally employers associations), reported after three years of researches and deliberations. (6)

What became known as the Donovan Commission had itself originally been provoked by the need of British capitalism to come to a satisfactory resolution of the problem of the growth of shop stewards influence in industry. Donovan's proposed remedy, however, was far more subtle and oblique than simply outlawing unofficial strikes. Reporting against a background coloured by the assumptions of incomes policies, the Donovan Commission endorsed reformed local productivity agreements as a cure for the 'wage-drift' resulting from payment by results schemes, bonus systems and overtime payments negotiated at the level of the workshop or the local factory. These had made the national agreements between unions and employers no more than a base line for plant-based negotiation. As Nightingale has argued,

"Whichever form wage-drift took, it represented a failure by management to control labour costs and more directly, the social force which determined these costs, namely the bargaining strength of workers on the shop floor. It was the recognition of this, and of the implications for profitability, that led managers... to consider the relevance of productivity bargaining. For the real significance of productivity bargaining in this period lay in the attempt to increase profits by restructuring the relationship between earnings and productivity. Workers had developed informal practices to push up their earnings. By means of a 'jointly-regulated' collective bargaining process, management hoped to re-establish its initiative where it was weakest - on the shop floor. In this way it hoped to secure the introduction of important new working methods." (7)

By regularising the procedures of productivity agreements the status and authority of the shop stewards would become limited since their ability to bargain on a day-to-day basis on traditional trade union grounds such as the redistribution of income, cost of living rises and wage comparability would be circumscribed. Instead, the grounds for wage increases would be shifted to questions of productivity, that is, increased output per unit of labour, or put another way, reduction of labour costs per unit of output. The door was thus opened for rationalisation of the labour force, 'objective' work measurement and intensification of labour through elimination of 'time-wasting' procedures and 'out-dated' working practices and their replacement instead by greater 'flexibility' in the workforce.(8) Since the early 1960's employers had turned to productivity agreements with increasing enthusiasm for precisely these reasons.

The move towards institutionalising the new reality of plant-based industrial relations could also be neatly dove-tailed with incomes policy since it offered workers a government-sanctioned 'back door' to wage increases, during a protracted period of restraint although only on the employers' terms. (9) George Brown had been quite correct to describe the 'Fairfields experiment' as a 'proving ground' since if a 'modern' productivity deal with shop stewards involvement, based on work measurement and more flexible working practices together with a 'no-strike' agreement could be secured in the traditionalist heartland of British industry, then the government would have been given a major boost to its incomes policies. In fact, as happened with many of the productivity agreements of the period, certain paper concessions were made but as the Fairfields experiment demonstrated, the problems were considerably more intractable, so much so, that productivity agreements eventually became the 'Achilles heel' of wage restraint policy. (10)

The significant feature of the Donovan Report was that the principle of voluntarism in the regulation of trade union affairs was preserved, albeit that there were some notable dissenters among the members of the Commission. (11) As a result the long-awaited Report received only a lukewarm reception from the Labour government which might otherwise have been able to appear as a 'moderating' influence, had more stringent measures to deal with shop floor power been recommended, such as for example, direct legal sanctions against unofficial industrial action. (12) As it was, with incomes policy now no longer acceptable to the unions and voluntary wage-vetting by the TUC itself less than vigorous the government was forced to spell out an option which it had been hoped Donovan would have provided the arguments for.

A White Paper with the revealing title In Place of Strife, was published in the spring of 1969 authored by Barbara Castle, Minister of Employment and with the strong personal backing of Harold Wilson. (13) It was a document which was, however, less than enthusiastically endorsed by other members of the cabinet, the NEC of the Labour Party and a sizeable group of Labour MP's. Moreover, despite the support of the TUC's then general secretary George Woodcock, it also found little favour in trade union circles. (14) Whereas the Donovan Commission was more concerned with intervention in workshop bargaining in order to bring local wage negotiations more under central control, In Place of Strife was a perceptible move in the direction of legal restriction on strikes. It was a qualitative departure from voluntarism, a departure made more necessary by the fact that official trade union involvement with incomes policy had only served to reinforce the shift in the centre of gravity of union

power towards the shop floor leadership. Not surprisingly, it was from here that the most vociferous reaction was to come.

Among the aspects of the White Paper which were found to be most deeply objectionable were the proposed introduction of compulsory 28 day conciliation pauses backed by financial penalties, ballots on proposed strikes and intervention in inter-union recognition disputes, together with powers to compel unions to exercise stricter controls over union rules including, of course, shop stewards activities. (15) The major proposal for a 'cooling-off' period, modelled on American lines, did not in fact deny the right to strike completely. Rather Mrs. Castle, in the words of Panitch,

"required workers to accept a state imposed delay during which the cause of the dispute could be investigated. The fact that this also allowed for a period of employer, government and media pressure to be brought upon the strikers, and the fact that it removed the element of surprise which was the main tactical advantage of the sudden unofficial strike, she apparently did not regard as an important infringement of free collective bargaining." (16)

This was not, however, the view of the shop floor. The significant aspect of the opposition to In Place of Strife and indeed, what led to its final defeat, was not the fact that the government eventually conceded that it had little chance of securing a parliamentary majority for its Industrial Relations Bill based on the White Paper. Rather, it was the mobilisation of the shop floor on an entirely unprecedented scale by the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, a mainly 'unofficial' body led by the left in the labour movement with Communist Party members in prominent positions. (17) It was a uniquely important channel for the articulation of factory floor and shop stewards opinions and in a sense, represented the kind of national shop stewards organisation which left militants had tried to

create during the two World Wars. In the front ranks of the Liaison Committee were, once again, the engineering shop stewards, in particular those in the great Midlands car factories and engineering shops. (18) In November 1968 a conference called by the Liaison Committee which had to twice alter its venue to find a hall big enough to accommodate the 1,800 delegates whose credentials were pouring in, was later described as "the largest (unofficial) gathering in the history of the British trade union movement." (19) Its call for a day of industrial action on December 8th produced a response which

"surpassed all expectations; over a million workers downed tools and no national newspapers appeared that day. This was followed by further industrial action the following month in some of those cities which had not responded on December 8th. These were the first large-scale strikes, not for wages, but against government legislation, demanding the withdrawal of a Bill already being debated in Parliament. They were strikes with profound political repercussions." (20)

Further actions took place throughout the following spring culminating in a massive May Day protest by which time not only had official trade union resistance stiffened at national level, although the position of the TUC leadership was still somewhat equivocal, but also even more significantly, at district level local union officials were now involved in organising committees along with shop stewards under the auspices of the Liaison Committee. (21) By any account, it was a remarkable display of the movement's ability to mobilise itself at 'the grass roots'. On June 18th the government finally backed down and abandoned its legislative measures, accepting as a face-saving device the 'solemn and binding undertaking' of the TUC contained in its Programme for Action. However, this compromise was not reached before a series of brinkmanship negotiations with the TUC during which the government attempted to persuade it to act as 'policeman' over the shop floor, only to be rebuffed by the

General Council who warned that in terms of retaining any future credibility and authority in the labour movement, the mass mobilisation which had taken place now made such an option out of the question. (22) Thus as a result of the successful battle over In Place of Strife, "many trade unions were more deeply political than ever before." a process that was to intensify sharply over the next period. (23)

Predictably, in the last months of 1969 and the first half of 1970 there was a "wages explosion" with actions by workers, particularly among lower paid in the public sector and nationalised industry not previously noted for their militancy. (24) Incomes policy had proved particularly frustrating for these workers since the very nature of their work in many cases made it difficult to use productivity agreements as a lever in wage negotiations. (25) It was under these conditions, with the highest level of strikes since the 1920's, many of which were unofficial, but with many traditional Labour supporters alienated by the experience of the Wilson government, that the Conservatives were returned to office in the summer of 1970. With the question of trade union legislation high on their list of priorities, Robert Carr, the new Minister for Employment set to work to implement his proposals for statutory intervention in free collective bargaining.

The Conservative Industrial Relations Bill shared many of the assumptions of In Place of Strife and was essentially intended to achieve the same purpose, the disciplining of shop-floor power through legislative means. Indeed, this had been clear as far back as 1968 since the publication by the Conservatives of their own policy document Fair Deal at Work at the time of the Donovan Commission, which directly

presaged the proposals for a much more coercive approach. (26) The Conservatives could argue with some justification that they were properly following the logic of In Place of Strife in proposing the registration of trade unions, compulsory and secret ballots, sixty-day cooling-off periods, an attack on the closed shop, an industrial relations court with full powers to penalise 'unfair industrial practices' and the introduction of legally enforceable collective agreements. (27) However, as Panitch has observed, the target was again the shop floor,

"The primary aim of the Act was not to destroy trade unions, as was often alleged in the course of the labour movement's struggle against it, but rather to define, codify and back by state sanctions the obligations of the unions to employers and the state, including primarily the obligation to discipline unofficial strikes." (28)

Once more the Liaison Committee launched a massive movement of 'opposition from below'. This time, however, faced with a Conservative rather than a Labour government, the TUC itself played a more vigorous role in opposing the legislation through an extensive programme of mass education, protest meetings and marches. Throughout the latter part of 1970 and in the spring of 1971 demonstrations took place involving up to three million workers in a campaign against the Conservatives' parliamentary Bill. By the time the Act became law in the summer of 1971 the stage was set for a full-scale confrontation between the trade unions and the government. It was at precisely this moment, with the trade union movement highly mobilised and more politically conscious than it had been for many years, that the crisis broke in the Upper Clyde yards. The struggle at UCS presented the working-class as a whole with a unique opportunity to demonstrate through their solidarity, their support for the resolute and implacable stand against the Tories which was being made on the Clyde. The work-in gave a significant boost to the political confidence of the labour



movement at a historically critical phase in its development. After all, despite the widespread nature of the opposition to the legislation, the movement had not succeeded in preventing the passage of the Industrial Relations Bill through parliament. With the Act already on the statute book, it would now require a boldness and determination of a different order to defeat it. It would require actions of defiance regardless of the legal consequences. Moreover, as events were later to show, it was the representatives of the rank and file who were to prove the most resolute in the face of legal threats; those very shop stewards whom the Act was designed to force the trade union leaderships to discipline. The UCS work-in as a dramatic act of working-class defiance emanating and led from the shop floor, initiated this new phase in the struggle against the Heath government. The workers on the Clyde had embarked on a new form of class struggle regardless of the legal consequences and the significance of their action was not lost upon the rest of the labour movement. The era of confrontation had finally arrived.

The story of the eventual rendering of the Industrial Relations Act inoperable has been told elsewhere. (29) The release of the jailed dockers' stewards as mounting waves of industrial action quickly escalated towards a general strike marked the beginning of a full-scale retreat by the Conservatives on the question of legal means to resolve issues of labour discipline. As with UCS there was a clear failure on the part of the government to understand the latent reserves of resistance in the working class. In this respect also, the miners' strike over pay in early 1972 is of immense significance for here were a group of workers demoralised by years of pit closures, in an industry which even the workers themselves had come to regard as declining and largely expendable. Like the UCS workers, however, once

they had embarked on action, they quickly discovered a new self-confidence. It was the first national official strike among the miners since 1926 and very quickly it became clear that organisation at the pit-head provided the real backbone and impetus for the strike. (30) What occurred outside the gates of the Saltley Coke Depot, as thousands of Birmingham car workers and engineers provided physical mass support for the picketing mineworkers, eventually forcing the gates to be closed and thereby ensuring the success of the strike, provided a vivid indication of the scope of this new self-confidence in the working class. (31) These were actions of inter-union solidarity on an unprecedented scale in post-war Britain.

The recommendations of the Wilberforce Inquiry which was convened to arbitrate on the question of the miners' pay award effectively spelled the end of the Heath government's voluntarist N-1 incomes strategy. While the UCS workers had forced a U-turn on industrial strategy so the miners did likewise on the question of 'non-compulsory' incomes policies. The second miners' strike in 1974 which broke the back of Stage III of Heath's statutory incomes policy differed from the 1972 strike in the much more active role played by the official union leadership in organising the day-to-day conduct of the strike. (32) In certain respects the conciliationist right-wing elements in the trade union and in the labour movement were as appalled by the Heath government at the forces which had been unleashed during its term of office. (33) The fact that Heath called a snap election over the miners' strike around the issue of 'trade union power' and 'Who Governs?' was as much an embarrassment to the mineworkers' leadership who saw themselves as pursuing a basically trade union demand rather than presenting a direct political challenge to the government, as it was to those Tories for whom the writing had

been on the wall for Heath's future leadership of their party.

Within the Tory Party there were those who were bitterly critical of what was seen as the massive failure of nerve by the Heath government in its inability to grasp the nettle of working class militancy. In the debacle of 1974 it did not take very profound heart-searching to persuade Conservatives that during their next spell in office they would require leadership of a rather different stamp. The stage was set for the curtain to be raised upon what Stuart Hall has described as 'The Great Moving Right Show', a new and virulent petty-bourgeois ideological radicalism providing the credo for a steely commitment to take whatever steps might be necessary to deal with the power of the shop floor. The Heath years in retrospect, were merely a half-hearted and latterly, apologetic dress rehearsal for this rightward shift. (34) What seems surprising, however, given the tenacity with which the trade union movement fought previous encroachments upon its rights, is the fact that the Conservative government of Mrs. Thatcher could not only openly abandon the Keynesian economic strategy which had underpinned the post-war social democratic consensus, but was also able to sever the connected integrity of 'full employment' in the 'free society' without, initially at least, provoking widespread social upheaval. Gamble has commented in his analysis of monetarism,

"The social market doctrine seeks to dispose of unemployment as a matter for political concern or government intervention, by putting the blame for unemployment on the failure of individuals and institutions to adapt themselves to the requirements of the market, whatever the cost in low wages and poverty, demoralization and uprooted communities, lost skills and lost purposes. As Keith Joseph recently told workers on Clydeside faced with redundancy - 100,000 workers change jobs in Britain every week, and you may have to do the same. With more than 15 million unemployed in the major capitalist states this doctrine serves to reconcile governments and electorates to permanent high levels of unemployment." (35)

The monetarist project therefore would appear to have succeeded in recalibrating the socially acceptable level of unemployment and indeed, to have largely extinguished the potency of the demand for the 'Right to Work'.

These new conditions have sapped much of the combatitive spirit of even those sections of the labour movement whose militancy was formerly a by-word. The concept of a 'free society' has for its part become the catchphrase of a new "authoritarian populism" which not only resonates with many of the traditional individualistic themes of popular conservatism, but unlike the Beveridge commitment of all previous post-war governments, is also deeply and assertively inimical to the existing hard-won rights of the organised trade union movement. (36) If the Heath government marked a temporary rupture in the social democratic consensus the Thatcher government has signalled its strident redefinition. What is new in the Conservative attack on the working class in the early 1980's and distinguishes it from the onslaught of the previous decade is not simply the lending of greater weight to state power as a coercive blunt instrument, but rather, that in addition to whatever legal bludgeons may be employed, a hitherto unsuspected repertoire of ideologically coercive supports to the efficient exercise of class domination has been revealed. Rather than seek an early direct confrontation with organised labour the Thatcher government has chosen to adopt an approach which would 'outflank' the movement ideologically first of all.

Put simply, the significant feature of the struggles of the early 1970's was the rapidity with which, following UCS, the Heath government lost the ideological initiative to the working class. The 1972 miners' strike, for example, drew to the surface of political

discourse arguments unheard of for decades concerning the dignity of ordinary labour conducted under harsh and dangerous conditions. The 'exceptionalism' of the Wilberforce recommendations was in part an explicit recognition and attempted accommodation of this. The whole rhetorical weight of the UCS campaign rested upon a similar assertion of basic human rights such as the right to work. The campaign against the Industrial Relations Act similarly addressed itself to the basic right to organise in trade unions and, if necessary, to withdraw labour to defend that right. The Thatcher government is not therefore merely a further tilting of the 'balance between consent and coercion'. Rather it has presented a radically new set of rules for the political game. It indeed has been, from the first, a government committed above all to regaining the ideological initiative by a vigorously coercive 'moralistic' redefinition of the central issues of political economy, a redefinition which has sought to decisively exclude precisely those rights which had been hitherto so tenaciously defended by working class actions. (37)

The seeming rapidity of this reversal throws into sharp relief the general problem of the limitations and possibilities of trade union action in a capitalist society. This question has recently been raised through the wide-ranging debate initiated by Eric Hobsbawm whose central argument appears to be that the difficulties facing the labour movement are of a protracted nature and indeed, have their roots in a growing resurgence of sectionalism in the post-war period. (38) After a decline during the first half of the twentieth century, sectionalism among the British working class, says Hobsbawm, is now on the increase and poses a real threat to the development of a more deeply socialist class consciousness. Older systems of internal

stratification within the working class, particularly hierarchies based upon skill have been undermined by technological changes and the introduction of new systems of wage payment, all of which tended to erode former differentials and the sectional identities based upon them. (39) However, rather than the class becoming more 'homogeneous' as a result of these changes,

"we now see a growing division of workers with sections and groups each pursuing its own economic interest irrespective of the rest." (40)

Groups of workers thus create 'potential friction' both with other groups and with 'the public' at large who are mainly comprised of other workers. Class consciousness and class solidarity and "the hold of the labour movement as a whole" is thereby being weakened. (41)

Yet within Hobsbawm's historical account there is a surprising absence, namely a failure to analyse the growth of shop floor power precisely over the period during which the new sectionalism is seen to have become most manifest. This omission is crucial since, particularly from the late 1960's onwards, as the preceding account has suggested, the shop stewards movement began to assume a much wider political role as British capitalism sought to introduce more coercive measures to deal with the power of the shop floor. The intensification of these developments, particularly during the early 1970's receives only brief and essentially dismissive reference by Hobsbawm. Actions such as the miners' strikes and the fight against the Industrial Relations Act while they did evoke "material and moral solidarity", says Hobsbawm, had the character of exceptional episodes within an otherwise spiralling 'economism'. (42)

"And yet this was, with the exception of the great struggles of 1970-74, an almost entirely economistic militancy; and a movement is not necessarily less economist and narrow-minded because it is militant, or even led by the left. The periods of maximum strike activity since 1960-1970-72 and 1974- have been the ones where the percentage of pure wage strikes have been highest." (43)

At best, even those proportionately few struggles that were not simply about wages were notable only for a "renovated trade union consciousness", a kind of historical hangover of previous class solidarity. Hobsbawm concedes these struggles as ensuring,

"the survival of the strong traditional kind of working-class consciousness (limited though this was and is) in spite of the decline of the old nineteenth century industries which provided its main base and the numerical decline of the old (male) skilled worker who played such a crucial role in it; and in spite of the great improvement in standards of living which middle class observers in the 1950's expected to lead to 'bourgeoisification.'" (44)

In one respect Hobsbawm is of course correct. The industrial corps of the struggles of the early 1970's were largely provided from the ranks of the 'traditional' working class, from among the miners, the dockers, the engineers and shipyard workers. Moreover, the fact that these struggles were 'politicised' by confrontations between the working class and the government and evoked widespread solidarity does not in itself mean that the level of class consciousness superceded the limits of economism. Hobsbawm is therefore right to warn against "the great illusion of the 1970's, that militant unionism is enough." (45) A struggle is not necessarily less economist in nature even though it embraces certain political objectives and has generated a 'strong traditional working class consciousness'. However, in seeing such consciousness as essentially

anachronistic Hobsbawm is inevitably drawn towards a pessimistic view of the prospects for the resumption of labour's forward march, the more so if the overwhelming tendency of the struggles of workers is also seen as 'sectional' in nature.

There is, however, a basic confusion in Hobsbawm's argument which results from his tendency to equate economism with sectionalism. What was new about the miners' strikes and the fight against the Industrial Relations Act and previous to that, against In Place of Strife, was the unity of the shop floor which actively broke down sectionalist consciousness between shop floor departments and their unions, first at the base of the movement, and then under pressure from below, between trade union leaderships. A broader class cohesion undoubtedly began to emerge during these years which if anything represented an objective decline in sectionalism. The problem was and is, that such cohesion while accompanying working class mobilisation on a wide scale does not necessarily pass through the barriers of economism. "Trade unionist struggle" is "economist" in Lenin's terms, not because it lacks a political dimension and is confined to 'pure wage' issues which patently the great class battles of the 1970's were not, but because it is struggle which merely "embraces specifically working-class politics." (46) The struggles of the trade union movement, while they may raise the overall level of class consciousness do not automatically form a bridgehead for that wider series of demands which at their highest development pose the fundamental issue of general societal transformation. (47)

The real problem of economism lies not in sectional demands since economic demands will inevitably have some sectional character under capitalism. Rather it lies in an acceptance of a reformist



ideology which suggests the resolution of the problems of the working class can be obtained within the existing framework of capitalist social relations. Thus the class cohesion which is developed through struggle while it may produce limited concessions from capital, can thereby also easily be dissipated in the achievement of immediate gains without posing the question of long-term class objectives. Lacking the understanding that its own problems can only be finally resolved by revolutionary means, the class also lacks the comprehensive awareness of the ramifications of the social crisis of capitalism among other sections of the population. It is therefore unable to develop the forms of leadership which will win over other oppositional elements whose active support as allies is required for a revolutionary change to occur. A weak, sectionally debilitated working class, is incapable of infusing the necessary clarity and cohesion into such a revolutionary alliance. Thus unity within the working class, overcoming the limits of sectionalism is a precondition for overcoming the limits of economism, although in itself the development of revolutionary consciousness is by no means the necessary outcome of this process. Trade unionist struggle is important, therefore, in that it regenerates the corporate identity of the class on a wider basis than simple sectionalism. It preserves an irreducible core of resistance to exploitation in the form of continuing cultural reserves of solidarity, organisation, discipline and collectivism, acting as a countervailing force to sectional degeneration.

This above all was the significance of the class battles of the early 1970's. They revealed the presence of a working class culture whose survival had been called into question by the years of 'affluence'. It is a culture which is 'traditional', however, not so much in the sense of the particular groups within the working class who are its

carriers but rather in the broader sense that its roots extend back to the very origins of capitalism as an antagonistic social formation. As Hall has pointed out,

"The dominance of one class over another does not mean that the latter disappears into the former. Subordinate class cultures maintain their autonomy, by struggle and by establishing their own defensive culture." (48)

Struggle can provide new content and definition to the culture of the working class in the form of experiences which reveal the wider possibilities of collective action. The innovative action of the work-in was a rich expression of that culture and a significant contribution to its revival among other groups of workers. The fact that this culture is not always identical with the immediately visible 'culture of the popular masses' should not be allowed to obscure its significance as an important reservoir of class feeling and class consciousness. We are dealing here with a phenomenon that by definition is ideologically oppositional but still politically subordinate and therefore usually 'disadvantaged' within the unequal relations of capitalism. As Lenin has said,

"The elements of a democratic and socialist culture are present, if only in rudimentary form, in every national culture, since in every nation there are toiling and exploited masses, whose conditions of life inevitably give rise to the ideology of democracy and socialism. But every nation also possesses a bourgeois culture (and most nations a reactionary and clerical culture as well) in the form not of 'elements', but of the dominant culture." (49)

Working class culture, then, is generated in the dynamic process of struggle whereby the working class begins to develop new oppositional social perspectives and demands which can challenge the coherence of the dominant culture and its assumptions. It is the process by which the class reveals its identity as a class. This concept of working class culture is therefore not one of narrow frozen postures of defensiveness which character

the forms of sectionalism. Nor is it the historical residual of solidaristic ways of life of occupational communities. Rather, it refers to the dynamic dissolution of both sectionalism and localism through the activity of the class. The concept of working class culture presented here then locates the chief site of cultural production as one of struggle and opposition rather than accommodation to the inequalities of capitalism. That is, at its highest level of development it is the coherent expression of class interests which seeks the active transformation of the structures of subordination. On the other hand, this does not imply that only the most advanced workers in the class are of theoretical concern as the examination of the tension between sectionalism and class consciousness makes clear. (50)

The analysis of the events at UCS reveals the real complexities of the formation of class consciousness and the problems in achieving clarity and direction within it. Arguably, this analysis also permits the concrete study of the emergence of those 'elements' of an embryonic 'democratic and socialist culture' which reach beyond sectional and parochial boundaries. In view of this, it is difficult to accept the assertion by Richard Johnson that,

"Lenin's legacy had a tendency to relieve Marxism from the concrete study of working-class culture, and to narrow the range of what was considered relevant to political practice." (51)

Lenin's legacy is not so easily disposed of, and indeed, has a continuing relevance, not simply in the investigation of cultural formation in the working class but in the objective assessment of the ramifications of this formation among other parts of the population. If there is a single contribution of Lenin to contemporary revolutionary practice of central relevance today it is in his raising the question of the relations between the working class and its allies in the battle for socialism. (52)

Indeed, it is clear from Lenin's writings that the overcoming of economism is contingent upon, not only the internal unity of the class but the development of alliances with those other social elements which can potentially be detached from the side of the monopolies and defense of the status quo. The formation of alliances has a powerful educational role for the working class itself.

"Working class consciousness cannot be genuine political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to all cases of tyranny, oppression, violence and abuse, no matter what class is affected...The consciousness of the working masses cannot be genuine class consciousness unless the workers learn, from concrete, and above all from topical political facts and events to observe every other social class in all the manifestations of its intellectual, ethical and political life." (53)

Thus Lenin spoke of "systematically acquiring and extending contact with other classes of society" as a principal task of the working class, providing the means through which its understanding of the functioning of the entire social system of exploitation could be developed. (54)

"When we do that (and we must and can do it), the most backward worker will understand, or will feel, that the students and religious sects, the peasants and the others are being abused and outraged by those same dark forces that are oppressing and crushing him at every step of his life." (55)

It was in this sense also that Lenin emphasised the obligation "to be ahead of all in raising, accentuating, and solving every democratic question" thereby defining the "vanguard" role of the working class within the alliance. (56) This is far from the narrow and elitist approach that Lenin's detractors sometimes accuse him of expounding. Even less is it an attempt to unilaterally impose the leadership of the working class within the alliance even though other social strata or groups, by virtue of their class position or social composition, tend to vacillate between capital and labour. The role of the "vanguard" rather is to generalise the separate and partial experiences of exploitation within immediate 'programmes for action' but in such a way that the working class and

its allies eventually come to recognise the necessary issue of state power.

On the question of alliances and their formation hinges the central issue of whether a 'broad' or a 'narrow' definition of the working class is adopted. The issue has been subject to intensive debate in the British and international workers' movement. (57) The problem is more than simply a definitional one and involves the concrete analysis of particular historical realities. The attempt, for example, by Mouffe to pose Gramsci against Lenin by arguing that the former's concept of working class 'hegemony' goes beyond the Leninist conception of 'simple class alliance' to include a 'new dimension' of 'intellectual and moral leadership', not only caricatures Lenin but also Gramsci, both of whom wrestled with the real historical complexity which the successful constitution of alliances pose. (58) Thus Mouffe has dismissed the Leninist conception of alliance as,

"a purely instrumental alliance between classes through which the class demands of the allied classes are articulated to those of the fundamental class, with each group maintaining its own individuality within the alliance as well as its own ideology." (59)

The UCS struggle, as has been indicated, certainly showed the working class to be capable of 'intellectual and moral leadership'. Mouffe, however, has obscured the point that the Leninist conception is not simple expediency but a principled alliance of classes and social groups. It involves an active redefinition of social identities, wherein these allies themselves begin to reorientate their existing 'ideology' and, voluntarily subordinate their 'individuality' in the process of realigning their interests to correspond with those of the leading class, the workers. They are impelled to do so to the degree that they come to recognise that their own 'vital interests' can only be secured politically in alliance with the working class, as the class which alone is capable of consistently putting forward the general demands for radical social change which will also satisfy their own aspirations.

This study has suggested that in forging unity in their own ranks, the workers at Upper Clyde also became a magnetic pole of attraction for a much wider alignment of forces deeply opposed to the threat presented by the policies of the Heath government. Insofar as other groups and strata within the population began to be drawn in alongside the workers and indeed, began to dovetail certain of their own demands stemming from the particular regional and national crisis facing Scotland, with those of the working class, there emerged the 'spectre' of an anti-monopoly alliance. There was, for a brief period during the UCS campaign just such a critical redefinition of loyalties and sympathies which placed representatives of the organised working-class at the head of a wider movement, that was eventually to succeed in producing a major turnabout on the question of the social implications of economic policy. Capital was forced to attempt to restabilise its social base as the demand for the 'right to work' grew from its narrow interpretation as the defense of sectional boundaries from encroachment, to a more direct challenge to the social legitimacy of the system, throwing into sharp relief the consensual heart of social democracy. The unique feature of the UCS campaign then, was that it was arguably the one major struggle that began to surpass purely economic demands and exclusively working-class political objectives. It could be argued therefore that under certain conditions, 'traditional working-class consciousness' and the forms of culture in which it is preserved has an important role as a springboard in the development of a more all-embracing movement for change.

That capital was able to restabilise its social base among those temporarily disaffected elements was not an historic inevitability however. Rather it was the mark of the failure of that alliance to

crystallise under a revolutionary political leadership. It is clear that the Communist Party, despite its considerable contribution to the success of the struggle in many other ways, was either unable or unwilling to perform its essential role as a revolutionary organising force. Too much importance was attached by the Party to the winning of positions for 'left' candidates in the official trade union movement while the basic day-to-day work of consolidating the political awareness which had emerged by developing new cadres at the level of factory-floor industrial branches, was insufficiently emphasised. Moreover, the official labour movement even in Scotland, was not an appropriate substitute vehicle for a vanguard party, in spite of its efforts to provide a national forum to ensure a more enduring structure for this alliance. Furthermore, the UCS workers, despite the fact that their action, spontaneously aroused such a wide array of forces were not by themselves capable of moving beyond the limits of economism, even if it was the struggle they had mounted which had presented this at least as a real possibility. The failure to resolve the problem of leadership politically therefore meant that whatever potential for broader social change had been opened up could not be properly grasped.

As a result, neither the workers in the yards themselves nor even the shop stewards committee were able decisively to break with reformist objectives and in this sense they remained politically and ideologically subordinate. As a 'right to work' campaign the immediate and ultimate responsibility of the workers' representatives was seen as being to secure the jobs of their members. After the initial upsurge of the struggle, lasting perhaps three months, it even became increasingly difficult to persuade the workers themselves that assertions of sectional interests as a way of attempting to secure their future would be counter-productive and ultimately disastrous.

Only the very earliest pronouncements from the shop stewards contained any hint of the more fundamental challenge, that if the system of society could not provide jobs, then the workers themselves might have to consider 'changing the system'. The major demand, however, was phrased in terms of the necessity of government to provide the finance to save 'all the yards and all the jobs.' Indeed, in order to emphasise the 'realistic' nature of their approach the shop stewards expressly denied that it was their sole responsibility as against that of the broad labour movement, to bring about a change of government, never mind a change of the entire social system. As negotiations proceeded even the major demand for employment and the yards to be secured was redefined, perhaps inevitably, in a more limited way as the various parties concerned groped towards a settlement that was acceptable to all. The complex and protracted nature of these negotiations and manoeuvres inevitably helped to create the conditions in which sectional interests could attempt to undermine the former unity. Thus even the UCS campaign itself, irrespective of the unprecedented possibilities which it presented for building a broader alliance under working-class leadership, was in the end forced to remain within the confines of economism.

In the absence of a revolutionary direction to the most prominent class struggles of the early 1970's the way was open for a Labour government to be returned which defused the militancy that had been built up by diverting it into still deeper channels of reformism. Labour came to power in 1974 promising to reconstitute the social consensus which Heath had dangerously mishandled. Paradoxically, it was able to do so more easily precisely because of the atmosphere of unity at all levels of the labour movement created by the unified opposition to Heath's policies. The industrial and political arms



of the trade union and labour movement were united in a new accord which effectively offered to suspend the class war, namely the Social Contract.

It should be remembered that Heath had tried to involve the trade unions in helping to 'manage the economy' and indeed, an important indication of the U-turn was the series of discussions known as the 'Downing Street talks' between the TUC and the government from the spring of 1972 until the late autumn of that year. It was the failure of these talks which finally induced Heath to introduce a compulsory wages freeze followed by statutory incomes policy. (60) While there had been significant opposition to TUC involvement in talks on pay restraint with the Conservative government, now with the return of Labour, there was considerably more sympathy for co-operating with the Government on the part of the mass of the trade union membership. It was argued moreover, that agreement to the Social Contract, negotiated in the TUC-Labour Party Liaison Committee, set up in early 1972, would enable the minority Labour government of February 1974 to go to the country again, as it did in October of that year, with the promise that they had something important to offer the voters in terms of securing industrial peace. (61) The fact that it was Jack Jones, a former champion of free collective bargaining, who was the 'author' of the Social Contract, did much to secure its acceptability among trade unionists who would have vigorously rejected it under other circumstances.

The insidious confusion in the ranks of organised labour which was created by the Social Contract may be seen to lie in its ideological linch-pin of 'fair shares for all'. This was an appeal to precisely those reformist and economic aspirations which

resonated with hopes held for an end to the previous confrontation style of politics. 'Fair shares' meant that the old, the sick, women, the lower paid would no longer be trampled underfoot in the 'stampede of the big battalions' to break through statutory wage controls. Instead, the entire trade union movement was offered the prospect of guaranteed real earnings, supplemented by government spending on direct services known as the 'social wage' which would protect the existing living standards of every section of the population in exchange for which the unions voluntarily abandoned free collective bargaining. Not only did the Labour government repeal the Industrial Relations Act and the Housing Finance Act but as part of the Social Contract, it initiated new legislation on equal pay, health and safety at work and industrial democracy, all on the advice of or in close consultation with the trade union movement.

The problem was, that implicit in the argument for the Social Contract was acceptance that wage bargaining was a major cause of inflation which therefore could only be cured either by some form of wage restraint or by mass unemployment. (62) Once the trade unions had accepted this proposition they were effectively immobilised not only ideologically but also economically. What resulted in practice was not the redistribution between social classes envisaged in the Labour Party Manifesto promise of a 'fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth' but, if anything, a redistribution within the class. (63) The consequence of the Social Contract was that trade union leaderships came to sacrifice both full employment and free collective bargaining on the altar of 'loyalty' to the Labour government and to more nebulous appeals to the 'national interest'. As David Coates has commented,

"the majority of union leaders came to play a very important subordinate supporting role to this Labour Government, acting for as long as they could as allies in the development of policies that involved the control of incomes and the toleration of rising unemployment, and eroded the living standards and job security of trade union members. It is this process, and its resulting tensions rather than any excess of trade union power which has to be documented and explained." (64)

In addition to the important dimension of reformism, Hyman has noted certain structural changes within the trade union movement itself which it is argued made it conducive to compliance and unable to mobilise effective opposition to the Social Contract on the shop floor. (65) In particular, the enmeshing of work-place representatives within official trade unions is seen by Hyman as undermining the independence and combatitiveness of the working class. The status and authority of conveners and shop stewards has been enhanced by their involvement in the new framework of state-sponsored participatory reforms and by the greater formalisation of the role of shop stewards in the extensive spread of procedural agreements at workplace level during the period from 1974 onwards. This new integration between shop stewards and trade unions has ostensibly produced what Hyman describes as "the bureaucratisation of the rank and file." (66)

It is suggested that,

"A key mediating role is now performed by a stratum of shop steward leaders who have become integrated into the external union hierarchies and have at the same time acquired the power, status and influence to contain and control disaffected sections and sectional stewards. This fact is crucial in explaining the effect of the TUC/government wage curbs since 1975. The very limited opposition and resistance on the shop floor during the first two (or even three years) of pay controls cannot be explained simply in terms of the level of unemployment, or political commitment to a Labour government, but owe much to the new ability of national union leaders to win the backing of major conveners, and of these in turn to deliver the acquiescence of their own workplace organisations." (67)

As a gloss on certain important developments in the character of shop floor representation and bargaining, Hyman's description has an initial appeal. Certainly, as Brown has noted in a recent survey of changes in the pattern of bargaining,

"Shop stewards are no longer divorced from formal negotiating arrangements in the way that the Donovan Commission had criticised. The formal arrangements have in the main been adapted to include them and the concomitant rise of single-employer bargaining has increasingly made stewards into the principal negotiators and guarantors of clear-cut factory agreements and procedures." (68)

Moreover, the number of full-time shop stewards and conveners appears to have increased dramatically, by a factor of four over the decade between 1968 and 1978. Often, this has taken place as in the operation of check-off arrangements for dues, the implementation of the closed shop and even in certain areas where they are lacking, encouragement to develop shop stewards organisations, with considerable support from managements seeking smooth industrial relations. All this would tend to suggest that the independence of shop-floor representatives to represent their members interests is in danger of being compromised. What is described as "a complex system of linkages" is invoked to explain how national union leaderships "contain, control and manipulate" the ordinary membership through establishing "loyalties, understandings or trade-offs with groups at different levels of this elaborate hierarchy." (69) Hyman, however, has presented an essentially Machievellian picture which although suggesting a sociological sophistication not only remains unspecified, but obscures the very important process of informal collective discipline which work groups can exercise over those representatives who appear unable or unwilling to articulate their views. This is not to say that opinions of workers and their representatives whether

'lay' or union officials are always in harmonious coincidence. The UCS study has shown that this is far from being so. However, to suggest that there is a necessary 'tendency' for a 'semi-bureaucracy' to emerge separated from the workers is to oversimplify grossly the character of those relations. (70)

The salient fact about the Social Contract was that, containing as it did many progressive features which had themselves been demands raised by the trade unions during the previous phase of industrial struggle, it therefore had a genuine political attractiveness for many workers irrespective of any 'mediatory' role performed by senior shop stewards. Securing trade union acquiescence at shop floor level was not all that difficult although it must also be noted that responses by shop stewards, for example, to industrial democracy proposals and joint consultation with management, were not entirely free of ambiguity. In particular, this was due to the recognition of the dangers of the very process Hyman posits, precisely the fear of divorce from the membership. (71)

Hyman's argument may be viewed as an attempt to provide detail at the level of the workplace of the more extensive analysis of the role of trade unions in contemporary capitalist society put forward by Marxist exponents of theories of 'corporatism'. (72) Corporatism is seen as a term with which to pinpoint the growing involvement of the official trade unions with the capitalist state and the employers. It is an attempt to identify an important trend within the trade union movement, that of union leaderships to act as 'instruments of containment' of workers' demands. (73) This particular emphasis is placed upon the role of trade unions as agencies of

'social control' over their membership. Corporatism is, in the words of Panitch,

"a political structure within advanced capitalism which integrates organized socio-economic producer groups through a system of representation and co-operative mutual interaction at the leadership level and mobilization and social control at the mass level." (74)

The attempted involvement of trade unions in the policy-making apparatus, particularly in incomes policies, is construed as a means of dampening wage pressure in the absence of a reserve army of unemployed to regulate wage levels. (75) So far as it goes, this is a more or less adequate description of a less directly coercive response of capitalism to shop floor power although not of the effectiveness or timing of such response. Whether therefore the notion of corporatism makes possible a genuine historical analysis is somewhat more debateable. The nearest Panitch approaches this is to suggest that there are inevitable limits to and instabilities in corporatism created by shop floor resistance to falling real wages. (76) What Panitch fails to observe, however, is that on each occasion that capitalism attempts to integrate the trade union movement in incomes policies in order to solve its crisis, new and more damaging contradictions are thereby accumulated. The real limits to corporatism are fully historical, not simply in the sense that there is an inevitable working-class resistance to wage restraint, but also that the lessons of class collaboration become clearer with each experience of betrayal to ever greater numbers in the labour and trade union movement.

Thus despite certain initial gains, the Social Contract proved to be yet another variant of wage restraint which was eventually to produce "the most severe cut in real wages in twenty years." (77)

latterly it was coupled with a rise in unemployment to 1.5 million and savage cuts in public expenditure and the 'social wage', as the Labour government first fought to protect sterling and then capitulated to the deflationary demands of the International Monetary Fund bankers. (78) By 1977 the movement of prices had increased more than eight per cent over real earnings. In relative terms also, established differentials between skilled and unskilled workers were upset, particularly by flat rate increases. (79) After three years during which free collective bargaining had been effectively suspended, an accumulated backlog of grievances had begun to express itself in increasing rank and file restiveness reflected also at the official leadership level. It culminated in the 'Winter of Discontent', the supposed 'enfant terrible' of the Social Contract, as low paid public sector workers who had suffered the greatest decline in wages took vigorous action to protect their standard of living.

Many of these workers were entering into struggle practically for the first time and indeed, it could be argued that in terms of the effects of the Social Contract it was these groups who felt most justifiably aggrieved with the Labour government's failure to meet its promises. However, it would be incorrect to see these struggles as somehow more sectional simply because there were short-term disruptions of certain public services, no matter how inconvenient. As Bernard Dix, assistant general secretary of NUPE has pointed out, these actions were also protests against the effects of cuts on public services, hospital closures and the like, as well as about pay. (80) Indeed, in his analysis of the development of trade union opposition to the cuts Fryer has noted,

"the campaign appeared to challenge traditional sectionalism, both between and within trade unions. Relations between unions, such as the NALGO/NUPE and CPSA/SCPS links, and in the National and Regional Steering Committees, represented an extension of inter-union solidarity that was impressive

Returning to Hobsbawm's argument therefore it is difficult to accept the interpretation of increasing sectionalism in the working class, even in the more limited context of the latter years of the 1974-79 Labour government. A more positive interpretation of these events would allow that in reasserting free collective bargaining these workers were shown to be capable of defending their own interests outside a framework of class collaboration and in so doing they also campaigned for wider community and collective interests embodied in the concept of the 'social wage', including the protection of employment opportunities. The lamentable record of those union leaderships who attempted to defend and preserve the Social Contract will not be easily expunged.

Given that much wider groups of workers have now been drawn into bitter actions against incomes policies its utility as a future strategy for capital must now be considerably reduced. Moreover the failure of the Social Contract and the electoral price which had to be paid for this has accelerated the realignment of those forces in the Labour Party opposed to any future 'resuscitation' of such an option. Indeed, the fear that a future Labour government might not be able to deliver trade union compliance, particularly as the Labour Party itself becomes more democratically responsive to its membership, while the Conservatives appear to have abandoned consensus politics altogether, is leading to the search for new options in the 'centre ground' of the electoral arena. (82) Whatever the outcome of these developments, and this is by no means clear, for an increasingly important part of the labour and trade union movement the experience of the reformist policies of the previous Labour government has been salutary. In the immediate sense it has meant that a weakened working class movement has been less able to withstand the attacks upon it of the Thatcher government.



There is some evidence, for example, that for the Conservatives the lessons of the Industrial Relations Act have also been salutary. Their approach to the issue of legislative restriction on trade unions has been on a 'step-by-step' basis rather than risk an early head-on confrontation, despite strident Conservative back-bench demands for the issues of picketing, dramatised by the Grunwick's dispute, and the closed shop, to be resolved by draconian legislation.(83) The 1980 Employment Act began the first phase of a more subtle attack on these issues but differed from the 1971 legislation in placing individual employers rather than a state-sponsored judicial apparatus of industrial relations courts on the front line of the battle to curb the shop floor. Thus workers would not recognise quite so clearly the class-biased nature of adverse judicial decisions. However, as Lewis and Simpson have argued in their examination of the 1980 Employment Act, "in substance the intention to restrict the ability of the unions to engage in industrial action is not dissimilar" to the previous Conservative legislation. (84) Despite this, trade union reaction has been relatively muted. On the other hand with the introduction of the second phase of the Conservative's trade union legislation, the 'Tebbit Bill', the trade union movement has shown signs that it intends to mobilise itself to resist any further attacks. (85) Both at shop floor level the influence of the LCDTU has revived, while at the official level in marked contrast to 1971-72, the TUC itself has sponsored preparatory conferences of union executives to establish agreed lines of collective action. The potential for unified opposition in the movement is therefore greater in some ways than in 1971.

Furthermore, a new unity is being generated by the growing recognition that there must now be a decisive break with the limitations

of the previous economism and reformism. What has become known as the Alternative Economic Strategy, itself growing out of the trade union campaign against the cuts and the Social Contract, represents a positive attempt to overcome these previous limitations by helping to create the conditions within which the sphere of challenge to capitalism can be significantly widened to embrace new allies for change. (86) The Alternative Economic Strategy constitutes a developing programme for left advance capable of opening up the way to a Labour government committed to initiating a non-reformist response to the current crisis of capitalism. The conditions whereby such an adopted programme could become a rallying point and a realisable challenge leading towards a radical transformation of capitalism are now a vital area for analysis and debate in the labour and trade union movement. (87) What the experience of the struggle at UCS suggests is that given the necessary leadership, mass involvement and mobilisation then the working class is capable of exercising the kind of determination which such a process of radical transformation will require and, moreover, that it is capable of uniting around itself a broader alliance of forces for whom fundamental change now also becomes a matter of compelling urgency. In that sense, while it is possible to accept the spirit if not the substance of the argument that 'militancy is not enough', it may well be that labour's forward march is only just beginning.

## Chapter 13 Working Class Culture in the 1970's.

- 1 S. Hall, C. Clarke, C. Critcher, T. Jefferson and B. Roberts,  
Policing the Crisis, London, Macmillan, 1978, pp. 292-3.
- 2 B.C. Roberts, Trade Unions in a Free Society, London, Institute  
of Economic Affairs, 1959.
- 3 Hall, op. cit., p. 264.
- 4 ibid., p. 260.
- 5 C. Crouch, Class Conflict and the Industrial Relations Crisis,  
London, Humanities Press, 1977, p. 64.
- 6 HMSO, Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers Associations,  
1965-8, Report, CMND 3623, June 1968.
- 7 M. Nightingale, 'UK productivity dealing in the 1960's', in  
T. Nichols, (ed.), Capital and Labour, Glasgow, Fontana, 1980,  
p. 322.
- 8 B. Ramelson, Productivity Agreements, Communist Party Pamphlet,  
N.D.
- 9 Crouch, op. cit., pp. 60-61.
- 10 J. Gollan, 'From "Consensus" to Confrontation (1961-74)', in  
A. Hutt, British Trade Unionism, London, Lawrence and Wishart,  
1975, pp. 223-4.
- 11 CMND 3623, op. cit. See A. Schonfield, Note of Reservation,  
pp. 288-302.
- 12 Crouch, op. cit., pp. 68-9.
- 13 HMSO, In Place of Strife: A Policy for Industrial Relations,  
CMND 3888, January 1969.
- 14 The position and nature of the various protagonists in the  
controversy over the White Paper and the resulting Industrial  
Relations Bill among members of the Labour Party and the TUC  
are analysed by The Guardian, industrial correspondent,

Peter Jenkins in The Battle of Downing Street, London, Knight 1970. An important and thoughtful analysis of the entire period between 1945 and 1974 is contained in L. Panitch, Social Democracy and Industrial Militancy, Cambridge University Press, 1976.

- 15 For an analysis of the White Paper see O.H. Parsons, Strikes and Trade Unions, Labour Research Department Publications, n.d.
- 16 The wide range of political support for the LCDTU from the left of the movement, including Labour Party trade union activists, is noted by Morran who rejects the simple characterisation of it as a 'Communist front' made by Vic Feather. See M. Morran, The Politics of Industrial Relations. London, Macmillan, 1977, p. 114.
- 17 Panitch, op. cit., p. 171.
- 18 *ibid.*, p. 179.
- 19 Gollan, op. cit., pp. 229-30.
- 20 *ibid.*, p. 230. Morran notes that despite official TUC coolness even on government estimates 350,000 workers were involved in stoppages on December 8th. Morran, op. cit., p. 115.
- 21 Panitch, op. cit., p. 181.
- 22 *ibid.*, pp. 200-201. The reluctance of the government to face up to the realities of its position was reinforced by the Ford Strike which was felt to be a politically inspired attack on their strategy of trade union reform.
- 23 Gollan, op. cit., p. 231.
- 24 Panitch, op. cit., pp. 213-4. Among the groups of workers who took industrial action during this period were dustmen, teachers, firemen, nurses and mineworkers led by the Yorkshire Area NUM in an unofficial strike for a 40 hour week.

- 25 *ibid.*, p. 215.
- 26 A.W.J. Thomson and S.R. Engleman, The Industrial Relations Act, London, Martin Robertson, 1975, p. 19.
- 27 The legislative shape of the act is discussed by Thomson and Engleman who also show its similarities with American labor legislation, *ibid.*
- 28 Panitch, *op. cit.*, p. 222.
- 29 See Gollan, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-42.
- 30 See V.L. Allen, The Militancy of the British Miners, Shipley, The Moor Press, 1981.
- 31 For a graphic description of these events see F. Watters, 'Victory at Saltley', Comment, CPGB, Vol. 10, No. 7, 25 March 1972, p. 109 and F. Watters, 'The battle for Saltley gates', Morning Star, 10 February 1982.
- 32 Allen, *ibid.*, p. 247.
- 33 Joe Gormley's attempt to achieve a last minute reconciliation with Heath in a secret meeting was a typical manifestation of this.
- 34 See S. Hall, 'The Great Moving Right Show', Marxism Today, Vol. 21, No. 1, January 1977, pp. 14-20. Hall elaborates the dominant themes of the 'new' Conservatism whose roots extend back to the Powellism of the late 1960's.
- 35 A. Gamble, 'The Free Economy and the Strong State: The rise of the social market economy', in J. Saviile and R. Miliband, (eds.), Socialist Register 1979, London, Merlin Press, p. 17. It is interesting to note that the unrest which may be attributed to high unemployment has not been expressed collectively through the labour movement but among the disadvantaged young in essentially disorganised and individualistic protest on the streets.

- 36 Hall, op. cit., p. 17.
- 37 S. Hall, 'Thatcherism - A new stage?', Marxism Today, Vol. 24, No. 2, Feb. 1980, pp. 26-28. It can be observed that the Thatcherite 'ideological offensive' has had a more muted impact in Scotland perhaps primarily because of the 'moral' force of the UCS campaign in providing a strong identity to the working class.
- 38 E. Hobsbawm, The Forward March of Labour Halted?, London, Verso, 1981.
- 39 *ibid.*, p. 13.
- 40 *ibid.*, p. 14.
- 41 *ibid.*
- 42 *ibid.*
- 43 *ibid.*
- 44 *ibid.*, p. 67.
- 45 *ibid.*, p. 170.
- 46 See V.I. Lenin, 'A talk with defenders of Economism', Collected Works, Vol. 5, 1961, pp. 319-320 and V.I. Lenin, What is to be done? Moscow, Progress, 1973, p. 31.
- 47 See P. Anderson, 'The limits and possibilities of trade union action', in R. Blackburn and A. Cockburn, (eds.), The Incompatibles, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1967, pp. 241-62 and R. Hyman, Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism, London, Pluto Press, 1971 for extensive discussion of this issue. A useful earlier contribution is A. Lozovsky, Marx and the Trade Unions, London, Martin Lawrence, 1935. The seminal discussion of this issue is Lenin, What is to be done?, op. cit., pp. 78-80. Lenin in attacking Martynov for his economism criticises him for posing Robert Knight, then leader of the boilermakers against the revolutionary Wilhelm Liebknecht.
- 48 Hall, et. al., Policing the Crisis, p. 154.
- 49 V.I. Lenin, 'Critical Remarks on the National Question', Collected Works, Vol. 20, 1964, p. 24.

50 An analysis of working class culture which identifies its 'central domain' in the cultural practices of workers at the point of production is provided by Paul Willis. Here, working class culture is located in creative social responses developed by workers at shop floor level. These are not simply 'reactive' defeatist responses to exploitation. Willis points in particular to the dimension of masculine self-esteem which attaches to physically arduous or skillful labour as a central component of working class cultural identity. The key issue for Willis therefore, seems to be that of sexism rather than the more general issue of sectionalism which admittedly may at times be expressed, for example, in the attempt to reserve areas of work on a gender basis. This was an element, although by no means the dominant one, in the early phases of the struggle against dilution on Clydeside during the first world war previously discussed. However, for Willis the development of forms of collective solidarity and cultural resistance expressed in trade unions is seen as somehow exterior to the shop floor culture although drawing upon its ethos of male assertiveness. Trade union struggle is therefore held by Willis to be limited by this very immediate 'combatitive' character in the scope of challenge which it presents to capital. Whether this metaphoric 'masculine' explanation of the limitations of trade unionism identifies the central problems is debateable, however. See P. Willis, 'Shop floor culture, masculinity and the wage form', in J. Clarke, C. Crichton and R. Johnson, (eds.), Working-Class Culture, London Hutchinson, 1979, pp. 185-198.

51 See R. Johnson, 'Three problematics: elements of a theory of working-class culture', in Clarke, Crichton and Johnson, op. cit., p. 209.

- 52 L.S. Moskvina, The Working Class and its Allies, Moscow, Progress, 1980. An important recent contemporary statement of the Leninist perspective by a leading British Communist is given in M. Costello, 'The Working Class and the Broad Democratic Alliance', Marxism Today, Vol. 23, No. 6, June 1979, pp. 172-180. See also J. Woddis, '"A Single Gigantic Flood": Reflections on the Democratic Alliance', Marxism Today, Vol. 21, No. 9, September 1977, pp. 260-269. The 'Euro-communist' interpretation of the broad democratic alliance is given by D. Cook, 'The British Road to Socialism and the Communist Party', Marxism Today, Vol. 22, No. 12, 1978, pp. 370-379.
- 53 Lenin, What is to be done?, op. cit., p. 69.
- 54 *ibid.*, p. 79.
- 55 *ibid.*, p. 70.
- 56 *ibid.*, p. 82.
- 57 See A. Hunt, 'Theory and politics in the identification of the working class', in A. Hunt, (ed.), Class and Class Structure, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1977, pp. 81-111 for a broader definition. By contrast a definition which limits the notion of working class to productive manual workers is N. Poulantzas, Classes in Contemporary Capitalism, London, Verso, 1978. Poulantzas is criticised in E.O. Wright, 'Class Boundaries in Advanced Capitalist Societies', New Left Review, No. 98, July-Aug. 1976, pp. 3-41. A Soviet study of this question which attacks both over-extended and unduly narrow concepts is T. Timofeyev and A. Chernyaev, 'Some Aspects of the Study of the Modern Proletariat', Marxism Today, Vol. 17, No. 11, November 1973, pp. 329-336.
- 58 C. Mouffe, 'Hegemony and ideology in Gramsci', in C. Mouffe, (ed.), Gramsci and Marxist Theory, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981, p. 179.



- 59 *ibid.*, p. 184. Mouffe's description of the Leninist view of alliance is really more appropriate for the 'Euro-communist' interpretation of Gramsci which stresses the necessity for the constituent social forces in the alliance to preserve their 'autonomous' nature. Among the "new social forces" generally cited are women, peace groups, ethnic minorities, tenants groups and gays.
- 60 See Panitch, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-5 and Crouch, *op. cit.*, pp. 242-4.
- 61 Crouch, *op. cit.*, pp. 250-1.
- 62 *ibid.*, p. 253. The sudden spurt in inflation during the first year of the Labour government was sufficient to convince many trade unionists of this argument.
- 63 The arguments against the Social Contract were put forward by B. Ramelson, The Social Contract: Cure-all or Con-trick? Communist Party Pamphlet, n.d. and T. Cliff, The Crisis: Social Contract or Socialism, London, Pluto Press, 1975.
- 64 D. Coates, Labour in Power?, London, Longman, 1980, p. 57.
- 65 R. Hyman, 'The Politics of Workplace Trade Unionism, Recent Tendencies and Some Problems for Theory', Capital and Class, Vol. 8, Summer 1979, pp. 57-64.
- 66 *ibid.*, p. 58.
- 67 *ibid.*
- 68 W. Brown, (ed.), The Changing Contours of British Industrial Relations, Oxford, Blackwell, 1981, p. 79.
- 69 Hyman, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
- 70 Thus, for example, Hyman's assertion that Communist trade union activities "rarely differ from their non-CP counterparts in respect of the tendencies I discuss" is at least largely questionable given that on his own admission he lacks "systematic

- and widely based information." *ibid.*, p. 66, note 24. In fact, Hyman's analysis closely parallels that of the Socialist Workers' Party. See, for example, A. Hatchett, 'British labour movement: Towards a definition of problems', International Socialism, No. 100, July 1977, pp. 36-41 and D. Lydden, 'British Leyland: the shop stewards and participation', International Socialism, No. 102, October 1977, pp. 20-26. See also J. Bloomfield 'Interview with Derek Robinson', Marxism Today, Vol. 24, No. 3, March 1980, pp. 6-7.
- 71 See B. Passingham and D. Connor, Ford: Shop Stewards on Industrial Democracy, Nottingham, Institute of Workers' Control, 1977, pp. 10-12.
- 72 See Panitch, *op. cit.*, p. 246. A useful critique of various 'left' reformist versions of corporatism in L. Panitch, 'Trade unions and the capitalist state', New Left Review, No. 125, Jan-Feb 1981, pp. 21-43. In particular Panitch points to the dangers of the view that class struggle can be conducted within the apparatus of the state thereby attempting to 'win' areas of control for the working class.
- 73 *ibid.*, p. 22.
- 74 *ibid.*, p. 24.
- 75 *ibid.*, p. 30.
- 76 *ibid.*, p. 31.
- 77 D. Barnes and E. Reid, Governments and Trade Unions, London, Heinemann, 1982, p. 210.
- 78 See K. Coates, (ed.), What Went Wrong? Nottingham, Spokesman, 1979.
- 79 Labour Research Department, 'What's happening to differentials?' Labour Research, Vol. 66, No. 6, June 1977, pp. 132-4. See also

D. Coates, op. cit., p. 74. Of key importance were strikes among skilled engineering workers at British Leyland toolrooms and at Heathrow Airport among the maintenance engineers. With the union leadership trying to defend the Social Contract it was a fairly simple matter for these strikes to be depicted as purely sectional in nature opening up divisions in the workforce which could be exploited by the media.

- 80 Hobsbawm, op. cit., p. 120.
- 81 R.H. Fryer, 'British trade unions and the cuts', Capital and Class, Vol. 8, Summer 1979, p. 103. (emphasis added).
- 82 See A. Gamble, 'The rise and rise of the SDP', Marxism Today, Vol. 26, No. 3, March 1982, pp. 6-12. The victory for Jenkins in the Hillhead by-election of 1982 would seem to confirm Gamble's analysis of the future potential of the SDP. However, Hillhead has several peculiarities which make it a poor indicator of whether the SDP can make any substantial inroads on the Labour vote in Scotland which also remained reasonably firm during the 1979 election.
- 83 See J. Dromey and G. Taylor, Grunwick: The Workers' Story, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1978.
- 84 R. Lewis and B. Simpson, Striking a Balance? Employment Law after the 1980 Act, Oxford, Martin Robertson, 1981, p. 22.
- 85 See K. Miller, 'Tebbit's "Reforms"', Scottish Trade Union Review, No. 15, Nov 1981 - Jan 1982, pp. 2-5 for an analysis of the proposals.
- 86 See S. Aaranovitch, The Road from Thatcherism, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1981, for the view of the Communist Party on the AES. Also relevant is Labour Research Department, 'The Social

Contract and Economic Strategy', Labour Research, Vol. 65, No. 11, November 1976, pp. 232-3 and A. Ham, 'An alternative economic strategy', Labour Research, Vol. 65, No. 9, September 1976, pp. 193-4 which provide formulations of the AES from the trade union movement. Influential renderings of the AES by left academics are the London CSE Group, 'Crisis, the Labour Movement and the Alternative Economic Strategy', Capital and Class, Vol. 8, Summer 1979, pp. 68-92 and The Cambridge Political Economy Group, Britain's Economic Crisis, Nottingham, Bertrand Russel Peace Foundation, 1974. The two major statements from the Labour Party are G. Hodgson, Socialist Economic Strategy, Leeds Independent Labour Party, Square One Publications, 1979 and S. Holland, The Socialist Challenge, London, Quartet, 1975.

- 87 Amongst the critics of the AES are D. Swartz, 'The Eclipse of Politics: The Alternative Economic Strategy as a Socialist Strategy', Capital and Class, Vol. 13, Summer 1981, pp. 102-13. See also D. Coates, op. cit., and A. Glyn and J. Harrison, The British Economic Disaster, London, Pluto, 1980.

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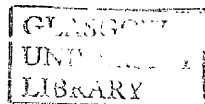
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WORKING CLASS CULTURE:  
THE WORK-IN AT UPPER CLYDE SHIPBUILDERS

2 Volumes

Charles Alexander Woolfson B.A.

*Vol II*

Thesis submitted for  
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WORKING CLASS CULTURE:  
THE WORK-IN AT UPPER CLYDE SHIPBUILDERS

Volume 2

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL



## Volume 2

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Table 1

Manual Labour Force by Occupation

Occupational Group	Shipbuilding Total Manual Labour Force
Steel Trades	
Platers/shipwrights	14.1
Welders	11.3
Caulker/burner/driller/riveter	6.1
Others	3.6
Total Steel Trades	35.1
Other Craft Occupations	
Fitters/turners and machinists	8.7
Plumbers/coppersmiths	6.3
Electricians	5.8
Joiners	5.1
Painters	2.4
Woodworking shipwrights	0.9
Others	3.6
Total Craft Workers	67.9
Non-craft manual workers	19.7
Other employees	12.4
Total All Employees	100.0

Source: Commission on Industrial Relations, Report No. 22, p. 153.  
 Figures for Great Britain as at 16 May 1970.

Table 2 Total Employment in Glasgow: Changes 1961-1971

	<u>1961</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>Change</u>
Metal Manufacture	13,152	6,994	- 6,158
Engineering and Electrical Goods	46,955	37,788	- 14,167
Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering	20,013	14,261	- 11,752
Vehicles	19,326	11,814	- 7,512
All Manufacturing	215,656	154,778	- 60,878
Distributive Trades	85,128	67,952	- 17,176
Professional and Scientific Services	60,406	68,571	+ 8,165
Public Administration and Defence	12,542	17,171	+ 4,629
All Services	300,832	283,746	- 17,086

Note: Only firms over 5 employees.

Source: Glasgow Development Plan Review Employment Report, 1972.

Table 3

WORK-IN PERSONNEL 10 DECEMBER 1971

	<u>CLYDEBANK</u>	<u>GOVAN</u>	<u>LINTHOUSE</u>	<u>SCOTSTOUN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Staff	19	34	20	4	77
Electricians	4	23	Nil	Nil	27
El. Storemen	Nil	2	Nil	Nil	2
El. Helpers	Nil	2	Nil	Nil	2
T. El.	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	1
Joiners	26	Nil	Nil	6	32
Sheet Iron Workers	Nil	24	Nil	Nil	24
Sheet Iron Workers Helpers	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	1
Platers	Nil	9	11	25	45
Platers Helpers	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	1
Welders	Nil	10	Nil	25	35
Welders Helpers	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	1
Caulkers	Nil	4	Nil	Nil	4
Shot Blast Operators	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	1
Shipwrights	Nil	13	Nil	15	28
Cranemen	Nil	Nil	Nil	3	3
<hr/>					
Total					284
<hr/>					



Table 4

## APPROXIMATE NUMBERS INVOLVED IN 'WORK IN'

	Work In' numbers expressed as a percentage of						
	Number retained in employment		Number made Redundant*		Total		
	Clydebank	Govan	Scotstoun	Linthouse	of which Staff Paid	Hourly	
1971							
Aug. 23	5	45	21	50	38	83	121
Sept. 6	69	156	91	61	98	279	377
Oct. 5	90	155	90	55	108	282	390
Nov. 2	71	134	94	44	85	258	343
Dec. 7	58	110	68	27	73	190	263
1972							
Jan. 6	52	117	67	29	69	196	265
Feb. 1	52	104	61	29	69	177	246
Mar. 7	48	94	65	30	61	176	237
Apr. 4	45	85	65	25	55	165	220
May 2	38	76	53	24	49	142	191
June 6	34	67	54	22	40	137	177

\* Number made redundant *excludes* normal retirements, those leaving of their own accord, dismissals for misconduct, and deaths.

Table 5

## STATEMENT OF NUMBERS EMPLOYED

	Group	Headquarters	Govan	Linthouse	Training Centre	Sub-total	Scotstoun	Sub-total	Clydebank	Total
<i>At 15th June, 1971</i>										
	Staff	336	611	36	47	156	489	1675	489	1675
	Hourly-paid	—	2321	374	—	980	2468	6143	2468	6143
	Apprentices	—	132	12	308	56	123	631	123	631
		336	3064	422	355	4177	1192	5369	3080	8449
<i>At 30th September, 1971</i>										
	Staff	223	525	34	38	135	422	1377	422	1377
	Hourly-paid	—	2145	284	—	792	2208	5429	2208	5429
	Apprentices	—	147	24	230	70	150	621	150	621
		223	2817	342	268	3650	997	4647	2780	7427
<i>At 31st December, 1971</i>										
	Staff	202	516	34	41	131	403	1327	403	1327
	Hourly-paid	—	2116	272	—	755	2090	5233	2090	5233
	Apprentices	—	134	28	227	65	135	589	135	589
		202	2766	334	268	3570	951	4521	2628	7149
<i>At 31st March, 1972</i>										
	Staff	193	511	34	41	127	393	1299	393	1299
	Hourly-paid	—	2083	264	—	673	2028	5048	2028	5048
	Apprentices	—	132	23	238	56	118	567	118	567
		193	2726	321	279	3519	856	4375	2539	6914
<i>At 14th June, 1972</i>										
	Staff	197	512	34	40	126	376	1285	376	1285
	Hourly-paid	—	2091	276	—	649	2036	5052	2036	5052
	Apprentices	—	135	19	235	48	108	545	108	545
		197	2738	329	275	3539	823	4362	2520	6882
Percentage reduction in										
numbers employed since										
date of liquidation										
		41.4%	10.6%	22.0%	22.5%	15.3%	31.0%	18.8%	18.2%	18.5%

Table 6 Place of Residence of Employees of Govan Shipbuilders

	Govan	Scotstoun Marine
	%	%
Glasgow South and West	52.3	17.8
Glasgow North West & Clydebank	14.9	52.0
Glasgow North & East	10.4	10.6
Paisley/Renfrew	7.3	3.0
Dumbarton	-	2.5
Other areas	15.1	14.1
	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>

## Notes:

## Definition of areas:

Glasgow south and west: Govan, Kinning Park, Hillington, South Side at Barrhead Employment exchange areas (EEA's)

Glasgow north west and Clydebank: Partick, Maryhill and Clydebank EEA's.

Glasgow north and east: Springburn, Parkhead and Easterhouse EEA's.

Paisley/Renfrew: Paisley and Renfrew EEA's.

Dumbarton: Dumbarton EEA.

Other areas: May include areas above but information does not allow specific allocation.

Source: Govan Shipbuilders Ltd.; Scottish Council Engineering Manpower Study: Distribution of Steelworkers Houses, 1974.

Table 7 General Election Results Central Dunbartonshire 1974

	February		October		
Labour	H. McCartney	16,439	Labour	H. McCartney	15,837
Conservative	M. Hirst	9,775	SNP	J. Aitken	11,452
Communist	J. Reid	5,928	Conservative	M. Hirst	6,792
SNP	A. Walsh	5,906	Communist	J. Reid	3,417
Liberal	C. Harvey	2,583	Liberal	J. Cameron	1,895
Rev. Worker	S. Hammond	52			
	Majority	<u>6,664</u>		Majority	<u>4,385</u>

Source: Daily Record, 2 March 1974, 11 October 1974.

## Appendix 1

Draft Scheme of Control in the Engineering and Shipbuilding  
Industry, by William Gallacher, of the Clyde Workers'  
Committee 1916.

Draft Scheme of Control in the Engineering and Shipbuilding Industry  
(by Wm. Gallacher, of the Clyde Workers' Committee, 1916?).

In order that the Engineering and Shipbuilding Industry may be more efficiently carried on, and in order that the workers may be given more control of the conditions obtaining in the workshops, it is proposed to establish a system of Workshop Committees. The purpose of these Committees, elected by and from the Trade Unionists in the shop, would be to control and regulate, both generally and particularly, the conditions of labour in the interests of the workers.

The Committees shall be empowered:

- (1) To see that all Trade Union standards and agreements are strictly observed.
- (2) Generally to supervise and enforce agreements relating to the dilution of labour, and particularly to secure the strict observance of any shop or works agreement dealing with this matter.
- (3) To be taken into consultation by the management in all cases where it is proposed to transfer labour from one department to another, from craft to craft, or in any way to change the existing practice.
- (4) To keep a record of all changes in shop custom or practice. All such records to be forwarded to and systematically filed by the Allied Trades Committee mentioned in Clause VI.
- (5) To act as representatives of the men in any negotiations with the management.

- (6) The Shop Committee shall be invested with complete responsibility for production in the shop, and shall be the sole medium for contract between employers and workmen, having full bargaining powers in the matters of time allowance where premium bonus obtains and of rates under a piece-work system, that is to say all individual contracting between employer and workmen will be eliminated.

The immediate procedure suggested would be somewhat as follows:

- (a) The convener of the Works Committee would be furnished by the employer with a complete list of existing piece-work prices or estimated time allowances for particular operations.

Similarly, departmental sub-committees shall be furnished with a list of prices and time allowances relating to their respective departments.

- (b) When a job is to be put in hand the sub-committees of the section concerned shall consider the time allowance or piece-work rate offered by the employer. Should it be deemed inadequate, representations will be made to the departmental management. Failing agreement, the matter will be submitted to the Works Committee at the first meeting. Should the view of the sub-committee be upheld by the Works Committee negotiations will be entered upon with Works Management. In the event of a deadlock, the time allowance or piece-work rate proposed by the Shop Committee shall be adopted pending the decision on an appeal from the employers to the impartial tribunal to be set up by the Shipyards Labour Committee.

The Committee shall be elected by and from the Trade Unionists in the shop with due regard to the interests of the various sections

of workers. For each department or section of departments numbering fifty workers or part thereof, there shall be one representative on the Committee, and an additional representative for any succeeding fifty or part thereof.

Each department shall elect sub-committees to act under the advice and direction of the main committees, and composed of the delegate or delegates to the main committee together with two other Trade Unionists in the department.

In each district an Allied Trades Committee composed of the district officials of the Engineering and Shipbuilding Unions, skilled or unskilled, shall be formed. To this Committee the various shop committees shall report and it shall be the business of this Committee to unify the methods adopted by the shop committees, and to act as intermediary between the shop committees and the Unions concerned.

In addition, this Committee shall be empowered to deal with questions affecting the district as a whole, but only after consultation with the shop committees. The District Committee shall act as sole intermediary between the shop committees in the area and the Shipyard Labour Committee.

Each Shop Committee shall draw up a schedule stating name, occupation and union of the men in the shop.

It shall be the business of the Shop Committee to receive reports from the representatives of the departments and to act thereon.



Appendix 2

The Fairfield Agreements.

BETWEEN

FAIRFIELDS (GLASGOW) LIMITED

and

AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF BOILERMAKERS', SHIPWRIGHTS, BLACKSMITHS  
AND STRUCTURAL WORKERS.(1) GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

- (a) Interchangeability to apply amongst all trades coming within membership of the Amalgamated Society. Where Management requires interchangeability they will have the fullest prior consultation with the Shop Stewards concerned.
- (b) Where redundancy arises within a trade to which men of another trade have been transferred on the basis of interchangeability, the transferred men will revert back to their own trade before any of the regular tradesmen in the department are declared redundant.
- (c) When a man is transferred from one grade to another grade, and no retraining is involved, he will retain his own personal rate or take the rate for the new grade, whichever is the higher. In the case of the man's personal rate being higher than the grade rate of his new job, his rate will be reviewed after 12 weeks. Normally the man will drop to the grade rate of his new job when either he would be redundant if he returned to his old job or his transfer is for largely personal reasons, otherwise he will retain his personal rate for a further 12 weeks and be reviewed again. In the event of retraining being involved, the man's rate will be reviewed after 4 weeks and he will receive part or all of the difference between his own rate and the new grade rate according to his progress towards working with no more than normal supervision.

(2) APPLICATION.

- (a) Fabrication and assembly work in the Fab. shop and also erection and fairing on the berths will be shared by platers and shipwrights on the basis of integration - i.e. platers to undertake shipwrights work and vice versa as required.
- (b) The ratio between the overall numbers of platers and shipwrights (including woodwork shipwrights) which has been customary in the Yard will be maintained, subject to mutual agreement on fluctuation related to the availability of labour.
- (c) Caulkers and Burners will be integrated into a common trade of Caulker/burner.

Continued...

(d) All the trades coming within membership of the Amalgamated Society will as required undertake service operations which are incidental to the progress of their main job, e.g.

- (i) Tack Welding or Stud Welding.
- (ii) Burning, cutting or tapping.
- (iii) Drilling.
- (iv) Caulking and riveting.
- (v) Lining-off.
- (vi) Fairing.
- (vii) Making and/or fitting of items such as brackets, lugs, toggles etc., which are a minor part of the job.

N.B. Bearing in mind the Statutory Regulations and in the interest of all aspects of safety, both sides accept that certain operations will require to be carried out by a qualified tradesman.

The general intention of this Clause is to widen the scope of the duties which each trade may undertake in progressing the normal work of their craft, while at the same time recognising the identity of each trade.

(e) Boilermakers who have been absorbed into the Yard as a consequence of the closure of Fairfield/Rowans will continue to apply their traditional skills and will be integrated where appropriate with platers, welders, caulkers and burners.

(3) SECURITY OF EMPLOYMENT.

The Company will afford to all members of the Amalgamated Society covered by this Agreement a period of security of employment dependent upon the state of the Company's order book and the Company continuing in business. A period of EIGHTEEN months is contemplated initially, and the period of a further extension will be the subject of a review between the parties to this Agreement within twelve months of its acceptance.

continued.....

(4) WORK STUDY.

As a further step in increasing Productivity we jointly agree to participate in any new scheme provided present level of earnings are not reduced as a consequence.

The introduction of a Measured Day Work Scheme will be based on these techniques and will involve operatives in the use of job cards for recording achievements and non-productive time.

(5) REMUNERATION.

In consideration of acceptance of this Agreement, the Company will reward all the trades covered by this Agreement with a Special Allowance of 1/1d per hour which shall be computed separately and paid additionally to the prevailing rates.

23rd May, 1966.

1. PLATERS AND SHIPWRIGHTS.

Platers assembling and fabricating material prior to erection -

- Relaxations -
- a. Accept shipwrights to share fabrication and assembly work in Fab. Shop on basis of integration but not to exclusion of platers.
  - b. Accept sheet iron workers to share fabrication and assembly work in Fab. Shop on basis of integration.
  - c. Undertake own service burning.
  - d. Undertake own tack welding of jobs and of fairing lugs and toggles.
  - e. Undertake sundry minor items of blacksmiths' work as required.
  - f. Accept fairing by welders of butts and seams.
  - g. Accept fitting by welders of sundry items of jobbing plating work.
  - h. Accept employment of caulkers and burners on sundry items of jobbing plating work.
  - j. Accept employment of blacksmiths on sundry items of jobbing plating work.
  - k. Accept manufacture and fitting by blacksmiths of sundry items of plating work.

2. PLATERS WORKING ON SHIP.

- Relaxations -
- a. Accept shipwrights to share fairing and closing work on 50/50 basis of integration.
  - b. Undertake own service burning.
  - c. Undertake own tack welding of jobs and of fairing lugs and toggles in progressing own work.
  - d. Erect and bolt sheet iron trunking as required.

continued.....

- e. Undertake sundry minor items of blacksmiths' work as required.
- f. Accept fairing by welders of butts and seams.
- g. Accept fitting by welders of sundry items of jobbing plating work.
- h. Accept employment of caulkers and burners on sundry items of jobbing plating work.
- j. Accept employment of blacksmiths on sundry items of jobbing plating work.

3. SHIPWRIGHTS AND PLATERS.

Shipwrights on steelwork.

Relaxations "

- a. Accept platers to share erection and main fairing on basis of integration but not to exclusion of Shipwrights' welder to assist erection squad.
- b. Undertake sharing of fabrication and assembly work with platers in Fab. Shop on basis of integration.
- c. Undertake own tack welding of jobs and of fairing lugs and toggles in progressing own work.
- d. Undertake own service burning.
- e. Blacksmith to undertake sundry items of Shipwright work.
- f. Undertake sundry items of Blacksmith work.

4. SHIPWRIGHTS ON WOODWORK.(Including launchways) and installing equipment.

Continue as at present.

5. WELDERS.

Production Welders (Shop and Ship)

Relaxations "

- a. Agree to platers undertaking tack welding of jobs and of fairing lugs and toggles in progressing own work.
- b. Agree to shipwrights undertaking tack welding of jobs and of fairing lugs and toggles in progressing own work.
- c. Agree to blacksmiths welding their

- d. Agree to blacksmiths welding their own work on board ship.
- e. Agree to sheet iron workers tack welding their own work.
- f. Undertake fairing of butts and seams.
- g. Undertake fitting of sundry items of jobbing plating work.
- h. Undertake sundry minor items of blacksmiths' work as required.

CAULKERS & BURNERS

## Hand and M/c Caulkers

## Relaxations -

- a. Accept interchangeability with burners as a common trade of Caulker/Burners.
- b. Agree to drillers undertaking own tapping as required in progressing own work.
- c. Undertake sundry items of jobbing plating work as required.
- d. Undertake sundry minor items of blacksmiths' work as required.

## Hand and M/c Burners

## Relaxations -

- a. Accept interchangeability with Caulkers as a common trade of Caulker/Burners.
- b. Agree to platers and shipwrights undertaking own service burning in progressing their work.
- c. Agree to blacksmiths undertaking own service burning in progressing their work.
- d. Undertake sundry items of jobbing plating work as required.

DRILLERS.

## Relaxations -

- a. Agree to other ironworking trades undertaking drilling of holes incidental to their own job.
- b. Agree to undertake tapping of holes as required.

N.B. Bearing in mind the present level of driller labour force, consideration to be given to the retraining of a number of drillers into other trades.

SHEET IRON WORKERS.

Relaxations "

- a. Agree to platers erecting and bolting sheet iron trunking as required.
- b. Undertake sundry items of jobbing plating work as required.
- c. Undertake tack welding of own work.
- d. Welder to undertake progressing of own work, e.g. E/L Lugs, Trays etc.

BLACKSMITHS.

Relaxations "

- a. Agree to platers, shipwrights, caulkers and welders undertaking sundry minor items of blacksmiths' work as required.
- b. Undertake manufacture and fitting of sundry items of plating work as required in progressing own work.
- c. Undertake sundry items of jobbing plating work on ship as required in progressing own work.
- d. Undertake welding of own work in shop and on ship as required in progressing own work.
- e. Undertake own service burning.
- f. Undertake sundry items of Shipwright work in progressing own work.

BOILERMAKERS.

Boilermakers formerly employed by Fairfield/Rowan referred to in the Agreement will undertake their appropriate plating, welding, caulking or burning as required.



between

FAIRFIELDS (GLASGOW) LIMITED

and

AMALGAMATED ENGINEERING UNION  
 AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF PAINTERS & DECORATORS  
 ELECTRICAL TRADES UNION  
 PLUMBING TRADES UNION  
 NATIONAL UNION OF SHEET METAL WORKERS & COPPERSMITHS  
 UNITED PAINTERMAKERS' ASSOCIATION

Employed in the

MAINTENANCE AND OUTFIT DEPARTMENTS

on

FLEXIBILITY AND INTERCHANGEABILITY

dated

31ST AUGUST 1967

The following are mutually agreed between the Company and the participating Trades Unions:

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES:

- (a) This Agreement affects recognized Journeymen members of their respective Trades Unions only.
- (b) This Agreement replaces or cancels any agreement or arrangement, official or otherwise, concerning flexibility and interchangeability between the trades involved, but all existing flexible and interchangeable practices will continue.
- (c) The relaxation of working practices by Outfit and Maintenance Journeymen will increase efficiency and improve productivity.
- (d) This Agreement is made between Fairfields (Glasgow) Limited and the participating Unions and affects employees of the Company only. In the implementation of this Agreement, no account will be taken of the prevailing employment conditions, nationally or locally.
- (e) Work carried out under the interchangeability clause of this Agreement will be under the Company's Measured Daywork Scheme.
- (f) This Agreement will be subject to ratification 132 calendar days after its signing. If the conditions of the Agreement are not being met during the interval between signature and ratification, the Agreement may be cancelled on either party giving 28 calendar days' notice to the other.

RESTRICTIVE PRACTICES:

The restrictive practices concerned with overtime working and job manning will be abandoned. Overtime, when worked, will be equitably distributed.

3

FLEXIBILITY:

Each trade will retain its own identity, but any journeyman may perform work previously confined to another trade, where such work is incidental to the particular job being done.

4

INTERCHANGEABILITY:

To assist stability of employment and to meet priorities and emergencies, where practicable, journeymen of one craft may be temporarily transferred to work in any other craft in the Outfit and Maintenance group. It is the responsibility of Management to ensure that the work thus carried out is completed satisfactorily.

5

SUPERVISION:

Journeymen will be supervised by the Foreman responsible for the job.

6

PAYMENT:

As from 3rd July 1967, all journeymen employees of the participating Unions will receive an increase of payment on the hourly rate of 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d. As from 4th September 1967, a further increase of 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d. will be paid on the hourly rate, making a total of 9d. per hour.

AGREEMENT

OR

FIXIBILITY AND INTERCHANGEABILITY

made between

FAIRFIELDS (GLASGOW) LIMITED

and

AMALGAMATED ENGINEERING UNION  
AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF PAINTERS & DECORATORS  
ELECTRICAL TRADES UNION  
PLUMBING TRADES UNION  
NATIONAL UNION OF SHEET METAL WORKERS & COPPERSMITHS  
UNITED PATENTMAKERS' ASSOCIATION

Employed in the

MAINTENANCE AND OUTFIT DEPARTMENTS

dated

31ST AUGUST 1967

For the Company:

- ..... Director
- ..... Personnel Services Manager
- ..... Executive Manager - Outfitting
- ..... Executive Manager - MID
- ..... Executive Manager - Pipework
- ..... Executive Manager - Plant

For the Amalgamated Engineering Union:

- ..... Full-time Official
- ..... Shop Steward
- ..... Shop Steward

For the Amalgamated Society of Painters & Decorators:

- ..... Full-time Official
- ..... Shop Steward
- ..... Shop Steward

For the Electrical Trades Union:

- ..... Full-time Official
- ..... Shop Steward
- ..... Shop Steward

For the Plumbing Trades Union:

- ..... Full-time Official
- ..... Shop Steward
- ..... Shop Steward

For the National Union of Sheet Metal Workers & Coppersmiths:

- ..... Full-time Official
- ..... Shop Steward
- ..... Shop Steward

For the United Patternmakers' Association:

- ..... Full-time Official
- ..... Shop Steward

Appendix 3

The UCS Agreements

UPPER CLYDE SHIPBUILDERS LIMITEDEMPLOYMENT CHARTER

(Note: When the Charter is printed in booklet form a list of the Trade Unions signatory to the Charter will be included.)

FOREWORD

This Charter describes the Conditions which govern Upper Clyde Shipbuilders Limited and its subsidiaries (hereafter called the Company) and its employees in providing secure, safe and satisfying employment to its workpeople and a fair return to its shareholders.

The Charter provides a practical step towards implementation of the Geddes recommendations and towards greater continuity of employment.

The Charter covers the acceptance of modern management conceptions and practices, in particular those practices which lead to the maximum use being made of all resources of equipment, material and labour, leading to minimum costs allied to increased productivity and higher wages.

The Company recognises the part it and the Unions must play to ensure the prosperity of the Company and of its employees.

(Note: "Employees" means all employees of each of the member companies, and each employee's length of service will be calculated as from the date on which his present employment with the member company commenced.)

November 1967.

- 3 -

EMPLOYMENT CHARTER1. NEGOTIATING PROCEDURES AND TRADE UNION RECOGNITION.

(a) As regards the Yards of Brown's, Connell's, Stephen's and Yarrow's the Company will continue meantime to observe the negotiating procedure as prescribed in the National Agreement of 14th August, 1967, between the Shipbuilders and Repairers National Association and the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.

(b) As regards the Fairfield Yard the Company will continue meantime to observe the negotiating procedure as prescribed in the Fairfield Booklet dated 2nd June and 2nd September, 1966.

(c) It is the Company's intention to agree common procedural arrangements for all five Yards, and they expect to complete such arrangements within a period of six months of the Merger.

(d) In the case of demarcation issues the Company will observe in all Yards the procedure which is set forth in the Demarcation Procedure Agreement attached.

(e) The Company recognises the right and responsibility of the Trade Unions to exercise authority over their members and to carry out their functions under the Procedure Agreements and also under the provisions of this Charter.

(f) Appointment and functions of Shop Stewards/Trade Union Representatives.

Shop Stewards/Trade Union representatives appointed in accordance with the provisions of the National Procedure Agreement will be given full recognition by the Company and will be granted the facilities and accommodation required to enable them to carry out their functions. Shop Stewards/Trade Union representatives in the Company's employment will not be dismissed because of any act done by them in good faith in the proper performance of their duties. They will, however, conform to the same working conditions and be subject to the same Agreements and Rules, present and future, as their fellow employees.

2. EXISTING AGREEMENTS

(a) The Company will observe the existing Agreements, national, local or Yard, in regard to wages and working conditions.

(b) Any question involving the modification of existing Agreements affecting wages rates and/or allowances for special working conditions at the Yards of Brown's, Connell's, Stephen's and Yarrow's will be dealt with in the normal way under the National Procedure Agreement. On such questions it will be open to the parties concerned to agree that the matter should (i) be referred to Local Conference without the necessity of a Yard Conference, or (ii) should be referred to Central Conference direct from Yard Conference.

- 3 -

### 3. THE JOINT COUNCIL

(a) A Joint Council will be established to co-operate in the development of the Objectives set out in the Foreward to this Charter, to deal as expeditiously as possible with matter of mutual concern to the Company and its employees (other than wages questions and allowances) and to promote maximum efficiency and the avoidance of disputes.

(b) The Joint Council shall consist of Trade Union Officials with Executive Authority (up to three members from the Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers, Shipwrights, Blacksmiths and Structural Workers and one member from each of the other signatory Trade Unions) and not fewer than five members of the management nominated by the Company. The Chief Executive of the Company shall be Chairman of the Joint Council. The Council shall have Joint Secretaries, one appointed by the Trade Unions and the other by the Company.

(c) Meetings of the Joint Council shall take place monthly, but where an issue of special urgency arises either side may call for an earlier meeting. The Agendas shall be agreed between the Joint Secretaries and issued as far in advance of meetings as is possible, and not less than seven days before the meeting.

(d) The Joint Council shall have power to appoint from their number Sub-Committees (with powers to co-opt).

(e) Minutes of meetings of the Joint Council and of any of its Sub-Committees will be agreed between the Joint Secretaries and circulated.

### 4. MEETINGS OF EMPLOYEES

Meetings of employees may be held within the Company's premises with the permission of the Company. As far as practicable such meetings shall be held outside normal working hours.

### 5. COMPANY RULES

The Company will provide Company Rules which will be applicable throughout the Company and which will prescribe the general Conditions of Employment.

### 6. SHIFT WORK

(a) In order to utilise the combined facilities to their fullest extent it is agreed that shift working will operate in accordance with the provisions of the existing National Agreements.

(b) The Company will initiate negotiations to establish a Double Dayshift system of working.



- 4 -

## 7. OVERTIME WORKING

- (a) Employees may be expected to work overtime provided adequate warning is given in accordance with current practices.
- (b) The practice of "one in - all in" will not apply and the Company on their part undertake to spread overtime as equitably as possible, if necessary on a rota basis, but taking into account special skills and records of absence.

## 8. INTERCHANGEABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY

- (a) Interchangeability is the transfer of a journeyman of one craft to operate as a journeyman of another craft.
- (b) Flexibility is the carrying out of operations by one class of the work of another class in order to progress the job.
- (c) Training will be provided for men to achieve the proficiency required for interchangeability and flexibility.
- (d) Interchangeability and flexibility have already been agreed to (1) within the Steel Trades Group, and (2) within the Semi-skilled and Unskilled Workers Group. Interchangeability and flexibility within the Finishing Trades Group will be a matter for agreement between the Company and the Trade Unions concerned.

## 9. MOBILITY

- (a) When a rationalised pay structure (as contemplated in section 11 below) has been agreed for two or more of the Company's Yards the employees will be completely mobile as amongst these Yards. Pending such agreement any transfers of employees between Yards whose wage payments have not been rationalised will be a matter for agreement amongst the parties concerned.
- (b) Where any such transfer is for a period of not more than five working days, then for each working day the employee shall be paid one return fare based on the distance between the two Yards concerned.
- (c) Employees sent to outworking jobs (as distinct from employees transferred between the Company's Yards) shall be paid in accordance with the Clyde District Outworking Allowances Agreement.

## 10. TECHNIQUES AND METHODS OF WORKING

(a) The wages structure will not be disturbed by the introduction of new methods, equipment or working practices but the resulting increases in productivity may be the subject of a review of overall wage scales. The Company may, by consultation and agreement, introduce:-

- (1) Work Study by methods investigation, work measurement, and job evaluation to produce the information necessary for Production Control, Labour Utilisation and an equitable wages structure.
- (2) New tools, materials and techniques.

- 5 -

(b) It will be the responsibility of the Company to continuously review working methods and job manning as the technology of ship-building changes. The Company in consultation and agreement with the Unions will determine methods and labour leading appropriate to the work involved and their findings will be implemented.

#### 11. REMUNERATION

(a) This Charter will be supplemented by an agreement on rates to be payable throughout the Company from a date to be agreed. Overtime, nightshift and holiday payments will continue to be paid on the existing basis.

(b) The Company undertake to examine:-

(1) Incentive payments, and

(2) Allowances existing within the various trades with a view to reaching agreement with the Trade Unions on a comprehensive nationalised pay structure.

(c) Agreements on remuneration cannot be concluded unless the conditions of this Charter and the Government Regulations for Productivity Deals are fully satisfied.

#### 12. RECRUITMENT AND REDUNDANCY

(a) Recruitment

The Company will encourage its employees to be members of the appropriate Trade Union.

(b) Redundancy

One of the major objectives is to eliminate the possibility of redundancy. Nevertheless, as and when redundancy becomes unavoidable, the Company policy will take account of the Contracts of Employment Act, 1963, and the Redundancy Payments Act, 1965, and be within the normal consultative framework.

#### 13. APPRAISAL OF WORK PERFORMANCES

The Company will institute regular appraisals of performance to assess employees for promotion and to help provide appropriate training. Appraisals will generally be by reports, either informal or formal.

#### 14. TRAINING

(a) The Company will organise appropriate internal training schemes and take full advantage of suitable external facilities to fit all employees of all grades to perform their duties effectively and to be ready to take advantage of promotion opportunities as they come.

(b) Maximum use will be made of the facilities and grants provided by the appropriate Industry Training Boards in conformity with their policies.

- 6 -

(c) The company will maintain facilities for the training of apprentices in accordance with the agreed Training Board syllabuses.

(d) The Company will give employees as wide a field of experience as practicable and will provide, where possible, retraining facilities for redundant trades into areas of shortage.

#### 15. SERVICES AND AMENITIES

The Company recognises that promotion of good morale makes for effective work and economical operation and leads to good industrial relations.

##### Safety Regulations.

Safety is the joint responsibility of the Company and the employees but they will be advised by properly constituted Committees, with representation from the Company and employees.

##### Medical Services.

In addition to the statutory Medical Services a Company Doctor will be retained on a full-time basis.

##### Recreational Facilities.

The Company will encourage the full use of the facilities for recreation.

#### 16. COMMUNICATIONS.

The Company undertakes to keep the men well informed about the Company, its prospects, trading conditions and policies. Management will be responsible for communicating such information together with information about the intentions and proposals of management to Shop Stewards/Trade Union representatives and to the men under their control. The Company undertakes that any negotiations resulting from this information will follow procedure laid down for the appropriate negotiation.

#### 17. RETIREMENT BENEFITS

The Company will propose a new scheme common to all manual employees in the Company.

#### 18. DATE OF COMMENCEMENT

The Charter will take effect from the date of the Merger.

## Appendix 4

Notes of Sammy Barr's speech at the TU Centre, Glasgow,  
13 June 1971.

Note of Sammy Barr's speech at the TU Centre, Glasgow,

13 June 1971.

Address to UCS Joint Shop Stewards

Fellow shop stewards,

You will have read in the press the management's statement regarding the collapse of the UCS and the company going into liquidation, also along with the announcement, the management have said that redundancies will take place immediately and the four yards in the Consortium will be phased out and eventually closed. The Co-ordinating Committee met yesterday to discuss the whole situation and have drawn up certain plans and lines of action which we hope will be overwhelmingly endorsed by this meeting thereafter to be put to a mass meeting of workers for their approval and support. I will now present the Co-ordinating Committee's proposals.

That we will resist any attempt by the Government to close any of the yards. When the first redundancy notice is issued to any of our workers, we will immediately occupy the four yards. The shop stewards will be detailed to take up positions at all entrances into the yards. No person will be able to leave or enter the yards without permission from the shop stewards. Under no circumstances will any machinery or materials be allowed to leave the yards. All forms of transport shall be checked by the shop stewards before entry. Workers who are served with their redundancy notice will report to their yard conveners and hand them their cards, the workers will then return to their normal

job and continue working as normal. All workers who are in the work-in will just continue their duties as if nothing has changed. In each of the four yards we will set up a committee to look after time-keeping. We will set up a committee to look after all monies and its duty will be to pay out work-in members. The yards will be occupied round the clock and this could involve wives and relatives bringing food down to the yards.

( This was the point when there was a bit of eruption at the meeting. The things that were said was something like this:  
'The man's mad - he must be drunk - for Christ's sake sit on your arse Sammy you're going aff your heid - it will never work, there's no chance'. The chairman, Jimmy Airlie intervened and calmed the meeting down so that I could carry on with the proposals. )

I restated that it was necessary to occupy the yards, food will have to come from somewhere and if it means wives and relatives, then that will be.

It will be the responsibility of the Co-ordinating Committee to elect a central treasurer with a sub committee of two others, their responsibility will be to handle all monies sent in from appeals and to make sure that the donations are entered into a ledger and that receipts are sent out immediately.

It will be the responsibility of the Co-ordinating Committee to elect shop stewards to travel the country to appeal for finance.

It will be the responsibility of the Co-ordinating Committee to elect a committee to deal with publicity and propaganda materials explaining our case, also to see that collecting cans are put into every shop and bars throughout the West of Scotland.

It will be the responsibility of the Co-ordinating Committee to appoint a press relation officer.

It will be the responsibility of the Co-ordinating Committee to elect a committee to look after entertainment.

It will be the responsibility of the four yards conveners to carry out all decisions of the Co-ordinating Committee.

All Co-ordinating Committee decisions will be presented to a mass meeting of shop stewards for their endorsement, to be followed by a mass meeting of all workers for their agreement and support.

All workers will be levied 50p per head every week which will go into the central fund to be used to provide finance for delegations of shop stewards whose job it will be to travel round the big industrial towns addressing mass meetings of workers and appeal for finance. It will also provide finance for the conveners who will address a mass meeting of MPs in the House of Commons, it will help pay out hardship cases in the work-in.

I know that these proposals may sound unrealistic or even far-fetched, but they can work and be carried through as long as they are explained in detail.

These proposals are something new, they have never been tried before in a fight against redundancies and closures and no doubt we will make certain mistakes, but the Co-ordinating Committee feels that this strategy will be successful. We have nothing to lose in trying them out and everything to gain if successful. After all, if you go into history you will find workers who went on strike against redundancies and closures, have been defeated,

so let us try something new. The Co-ordinating Committee felt that these proposals will catch the imagination of the people of the country and will receive mass support.

Our slogans will be simple:

'Not a man will go down the road - a worker by his inheritance has the right to work - not a yard will close. These principles in themselves are worth fighting for'.

The Co-ordinating Committee fully understand that we are taking on the Government and the systems which we are living under and know that the road will not be smooth, but we are confident that we will win as long as we stand united; there will be no room for weaklings; a victory for us will bring and give a new weapon to workers involved in industrial struggle.

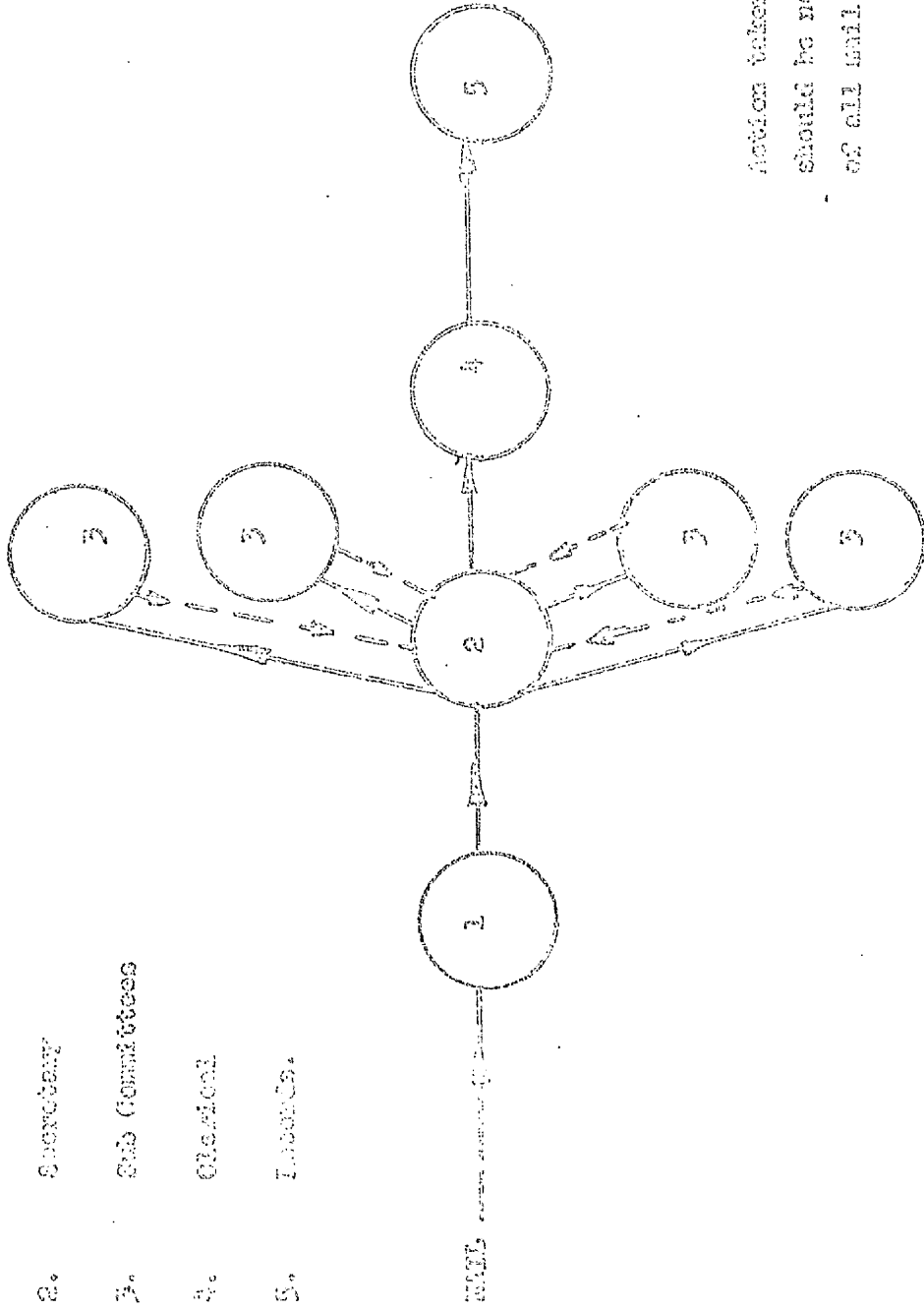
We must win - we will win! We owe a victory not only to ourselves, but to give a lead to the workers who are in similar disputes, that with the correct leadership and organisation, advances can be made in the interest of the working people of this country.



Appendix 5

'Blueprint for the work-in'.

- 1. Procedure
- 2. Secretary
- 3. Sub Committees
- 4. Clerical
- 5. Instructors



Action taken by Sub-Committee should be noted on the back of all mail.

CAMPAIGN COMMITTEECo-Ordinating Committee

2

Shot Stewards Committee

4

This Committee should have the responsibility for organising the following:-

1. Finding ways and means of broadening the Campaign, so ensuring the maximum support, both morally and financially on our behalf.
2. Our involvement in Demonstrations and Lobbies etc.
3. The distribution of all propaganda material internally and externally. e.g. Broadsheet, Newsletters etc.
4. The distribution, collection and tabulating of petition forms.
5. Compiling a speaker's pack, consisting of speakers notes, Broadsheets, Newsletters etc.
6. Clerical facilities should be provided by Govan Division.

FURTHERCo-ordinating Committee

2

Shop Stewards Committee

4

This Committee should have the responsibility of:-

1. Designing, writing and printing of all propaganda. e.g. Brochures, Newsletters and Hand Bills etc.
2. Design, design and printing of all posters, including those for entertainment, but only on a remit from the appropriate Committee.
3. Inserting of all Ads. in Newspapers & magazines, but only on a remit from the appropriate Committee.
4. Purchasing and control of all stationery for internal use.
5. Clerical facilities should be provided by Govan & Linthouse Division.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIONCo-Ordinating Committee

3

Shop Stewards Committee

4

This Committee should have the responsibility for organising the following:-

1. Requests for speakers and delegations should have the right to recommendations.
2. Be responsible for all travel arrangements of speakers and delegations.
3. Ensuring that financial arrangements have been made for speakers and delegations.
4. Be responsible for all visiting party's to the yards.
5. Dealing with all legal aspects.
6. Clerical facilities should be provided by Clydebank.

FINANCECo-Ordinating Committee

2

Shop Stewards Committee

4

This Committee should have the responsibility to:-

1. Follow up all pledges of financial support.
2. Find ways and means of raising cash.
3. Make arrangements for the collection of cash that has to be collected personally from factories, shops and pubs etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That new positions of Assistant Treasurer & Secretary be made. Thus ensuring continuity being maintained in the event of any enforced absence of the two Main Office Bearers.
  
2. That all telephone messages that require some sort of action be put on to cards as well as being entered into a book, with the card being passed to the Secretary for action.
  
3. That all committees should have the right to co-opt other members of the Co-ordinating Committee to carry out some special task.
  
4. That all committees should make a financial statement every week, so helping to make this Committee cash conscious.

## Appendix 6

Upper Clyde Shipbuilders Ltd. Liquidation Press Releases,  
June 1971.



Monday, 14th June, 1971

12.30 p. m. Message received by A. E. Hepper from the Secretary of State

The Secretary of State said that H. M. Government had now reached the firm conclusion that they cannot put in large sums of money to save U.C.S. but that they were seeking to enlist the co-operation of the Provisional Liquidator so that they could explore what parts of the Company might be saved and that they will be prepared to give him funds to that end.

It was agreed that a statement will be issued but not before 3.30 p. m.

EMBARGOED UNTIL 3.30 p. m.  
ON 14th JUNE, 1971

The Directors of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders Limited profoundly regret to announce that in view of the present financial position of the Company as disclosed in the most recent review of its affairs, they have been obliged to instruct an application to be made to the Court for the appointment of a Provisional Liquidator.

The Company was formed as a consequence of the policy outlined in the Geddes Report and began operating in February 1968. Throughout the three years to the end of 1970, production was mainly devoted to completion of a variety of complex and unprofitable ships, many of which were inherited from the predecessor companies. During that period, substantial losses were inevitably incurred, which were largely financed by loans and grants from public funds.

By the end of 1970 the initial order book had been superseded by a programme of standard bulk carriers and "Clyde" ships which, backed by the necessary working capital, would have become profitable.

However, the continuing acute shortage of working capital disrupted supplies and thus seriously retarded the shipbuilding programme with the result that the Company has continued to incur substantial losses for longer than had been forecast. Strenuous efforts have been made to obtain further working capital from various sources but without success.

Despite these difficulties, the throughput of steel today, measured in gross tons, is over 1300 tons per week, compared with the average in 1970 of 867 tons per week. This has been achieved by a steelwork labour force 16% less in numbers than in 1970. The overall reduction in the labour force in the past 15 months is 25%.

The /

The number of ships delivered from the Yards now controlled by the Company is as follows:

Annual average deliveries over 5 years prior to 1968	8
1968	3
1969	7
1970	12

It is tragic that this record of achievement, which can be attributed to the support of our customers and suppliers, and to the performance of our management and men, and which is now forecast to produce a profit in 1972, should be finally frustrated by the current shortage of working capital.

The Directors will give the Provisional Liquidator every possible assistance in his efforts to minimise the loss and hardship which will occur. All employees should continue normal working pending further instructions from the Provisional Liquidator.

14th June, 1971

## Appendix 7

No Unconditional Surrender at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, UCS  
Co-ordinating Committee leaflet, 21 June 1971.

# NO UN CONDITIONAL SURRENDER AT UPPER GLYDE SHIPBUILDERS

The crisis in U.C.S. that has led to the appointment of a provisional Liquidator has been deliberately manufactured by the Government. We intend to fight this and we will fight on our record.

**F A C T:** Output of steel in 1970 averaged 867 tons per week. This year it is already averaging 1,300 tons per week and ironically on the week before Liquidation actually reached 1,450 tons.

This is by a steel work force of 16% less than in 1970.

Here are the numbers of ships delivered from the yards since the inception of the U.C.S. :

1968	3 Ships
1969	7 Ships
1970	12 Ships

This year, 1971, it would certainly have been 15 ships. Again it should be noted that this production was achieved by a labour force of some 25% less.

The Trade Unions and the Management entered into agreements. These agreements have been honoured by both sides.

*It is now abundantly clear that certain members of the present Government had earmarked the U.C.S. as a political victim to satisfy the bloodlust of the Political backwoodsmen in the Tory Party.*

The Government refused guarantees to Ship Owners in spite of the fact that the U.C.S. Bankers felt that the Company was moving towards viability.

The Government withheld monies due to the U.C.S. from the Shipbuilding Industry Board.

These actions created a crisis of confidence, obstructed the flow of materials from suppliers and of cash from owners. This is the background to the present situation — a situation created by the present Government.

The position of the U.C.S. workers is clear — **WE ARE GOING TO FIGHT.** But then it is not just our fight alone.

*One in nine males are already unemployed in the West of Scotland, and as shipbuilding is so interwoven with the economy of Scotland, the loss of this Industry on Clydeside would have repercussions that would be widespread and shattering.*

We believe that this is the crunch in the fight against unemployment, redundancies and closures.

To lose this, and this is unthinkable, we are heading for the circumstances of the "30's".

To win, would be to reverse the trend for all the workers and the community as a whole.

We ask for, and confidently expect, the support of ALL Scots, men and women.

We appeal to all our Brothers and Sisters in the Trade Union movement for HELP.

We appeal to all business people and Shopkeepers for HELP.

We appeal to all the Clergy of all denominations for HELP.

We appeal to everyone for HELP.

HELPING us is HELPING yourself.

Let the voice of the Scottish people be heard.

No more closures — no more redundancies — no more unemployed. **DEMAND THE RIGHT TO WORK!**

Appendix 8

Save Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, UCS Co-ordinating Committee  
petition.

Appendix 10

UCS Shop Stewards' Fund, Period 23 June 1971--27 August 1972.

## Appendix 11

Authorisation for 50p weekly deduction from wages for  
work-in levy.



Appendix 12

UCS visit to the Department of Trade and Industry. Possible questions for Sir John Eden, 9 August 1971.

UCS visit to Department of Trade & Industry - August 5th, 1971.

Possible Questions for Sir John Eden

1. What plans have the Government made to examine Mr. Wilson's proposals for Government orders for Clyde class, super-Clyde and ore carriers from U.C.S.?
2. Will the Government agree to delay the issue of redundancy notices by providing further money for the liquidator to allow these and other proposals to be examined?
3. Will the Government lift its ban on further ordering for ships to be built by UCS and allow the marketing department to seek such orders?
4. What progress has the Government made with its own proposals for Govan; and in particular how much private capital is now firmly pledged to keep Govan going?
5. How much money is the Government prepared to put in to such a venture; and in particular is it prepared to pay the full costs of capitalisation in the first instance?
6. Will the Government make available the same sum as they are prepared to put into the Govan scheme to UCS as working capital to allow it to continue while a study is made of the Wilson or other schemes?
7. Will the Government now publish all the working papers prepared for, and by, the Advisory Group to allow the workers and managers at UCS to study them in their search for a solution that will save jobs in a viable group?
8. Will the Government allow Ministers and officials to give evidence at the public enquiry into UCS to be held soon by the Scottish T.U.C.?
9. What action is the Government taking in response to Mr. John Davies's pledge - after his visit to Glasgow - to "think again"?
10. Will the Prime Minister be visiting UCS next month during his visit to Scotland; and will the Government agree to halt all redundancies until he has had a chance of seeing the position for himself?

A.M.B.  
9.3.71.

Appendix 17

The Ridley Letters.

## Appendix 18

STUC Committee of Inquiry into the Proposed Rundown of Upper  
Clyde Shipbuilders, Interim Report, 28 September 1971.

COMMITTEE OF ENQUIRY INTO THE PROPOSED RUN-DOWN  
OF UPPER CLYDE SHIPBUILDERS

Interim Report to STUC

1. Terms of Reference

The Scottish Trades Union Congress established this Committee "to consider and report upon the wider social and economic consequences of the decision to run down Upper Clyde Shipbuilders Ltd." We recognise, therefore, as historical facts, the liquidation of UCS and the Government's acceptance of the recommendations of its Advisory Group. These recommendations were that, subject to certain conditions, a successor company be established at Govan/Linthouse, that the shipbuilding programme be concentrated on the Govan yard and that the liquidator be asked to dispose of the yards at Scotstoun and Clydebank. The Advisory Group envisaged that this arrangement "would probably give stable employment, in the first stage, for 2,000 men and 500 staff." Given that in June this year UCS had a work-force of approximately 8,100 men, the arrangement involved redundancy for approximately 5,600 employees.

The Advisory Group concentrated its attention upon the profit and loss account and the potential financial viability of UCS Ltd. The company, however, employed a large work-force concentrated in communities constantly subject to under-employment. The run down occurs at a time when unemployment rates nationally and locally have reached crisis levels. In these circumstances company accounts alone may be inadequate criteria for economic and social decisions. It is arguable that the total economic and social costs of redundancy to the community may substantially outweigh the trading losses associated with continuance. Our inquiry is concerned with these wider costs and with a comprehensive community balance-sheet.

2. Form of the Enquiry

With these objectives the Committee invited evidence, oral and written, public and private, from a wide range of individuals and organisations associated with national and local government and with the shipbuilding industry and its suppliers, from employers and workers and from specialists in economics, industrial relations, planning and the social services. After five days of public hearings

and the study of a great volume of written and private evidence, our Enquiry is still incomplete.

The problem is urgent and decisions must be taken quickly. The Committee therefore wishes to issue an interim report based on the evidence already received in the hope that its findings may influence such decisions. We would stress the fact that these are preliminary conclusions from incomplete information but we find the evidence to date so compelling that, whilst they may be modified by further data, we see little possibility that our conclusions can be radically different.

### 3. West Central Scotland: an Economic Problem Area

Unemployed men can usually be absorbed if the region is prosperous and the national economy buoyant. The UCS problem occurs in a region which, in most years of the last decade, has had unemployment at twice the national level. Unemployment rates have been, and are, especially high for men - and almost the whole UCS work-force is male. When the economy declines nationally the decline is magnified in this vulnerable region. In August this year the male unemployment rate was 10.6% for Glasgow compared with 5.0% for Great Britain. The rates for Clydebank and Govan are probably substantially higher than the Glasgow level. Of these 40% had been unemployed for more than six months. The figures for unemployed men in each trade compared with vacancies notified to labour exchanges make particularly depressing reading. There were roughly 20 unemployed men for each vacancy in Glasgow. Finishing trades might expect to get jobs in the construction industry but in August there were 62 unemployed men for every vacancy notified to the employment exchange in the four trades most directly affected (joiners, plumbers, electricians and fitters). Relevant shipbuilding trades (platers and sheet iron workers) had a ratio of 38 to one. The usually safe professional/technical/executive category is also affected (5:1) but worst of all are the unskilled workers (413:1). We are aware that not all vacancies are notified to the exchanges but nevertheless the figures give no cause for optimism.

Men out of work are therefore likely to remain out for a considerable period. Out of a sample of ex-UCS workers laid off in

the earlier UCS run-down and interviewed during June this year, all of whom had left UCS for at least nine months, 31% were still unemployed. The experience of older workers was particularly disheartening; among men aged 50-59 from the same sample the rate was 42%.

Fact and opinion, lay and professional, have convinced the Committee that any potential solution must take account of the long-term structural problems of the region, the current employment crisis and the Clydebank/Partick/Govan communities so dependent on this industry. West Central Scotland needs jobs at all times, but especially now.

#### 4. Economic Consequences of Large-Scale Redundancy

We have employed various methods to calculate the anticipated economic effects of run-down. Each attempts to review costs from a different angle. We have postulated 5,000 redundancies at UCS following liquidation; this is lower than the figure of 5,600 calculated earlier. We use the lower figure partly because some workers may be absorbed in other yards and partly because, throughout this report we prefer to understate rather than exaggerate the consequences.

Our first measure attempts to estimate the loss of jobs and the fall in personal incomes consequent upon 5,000 redundancies at UCS. We accept as broadly correct, (though subject to our own later estimates), the calculations of Professor D. Mackay that, through their effects on supplying firms and on demand for other goods and services the chain reaction might result in a total loss of income in Great Britain amounting to £300,000 per week and job losses of 16,000 (including UCS). Losses in South West Scotland, within these figures would be of the order of £225,000 and 11,000 jobs. These estimates allow for the softening effect of redundancy and social security payments. Some of the persons thrown out of work will get other jobs, but, given the great pool of the unemployed, this will be because existing unemployed do not get these jobs. The loss of 16,000 jobs is therefore a net loss. It hits particularly sharply a region already noted for its relative poverty and economic stagnation and for its outdated stock of social capital (particularly housing and educational facilities).

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Our second measure concerns direct losses to national and local government. Redundancy payments to 5,000 UCS workers, using a conservative average estimate of £300 per worker, amount to £1.5m. To this must be added at least an equivalent amount (£1.5m) for workers made redundant through the chain reaction. One careful estimate of social security payments puts the cost for UCS workers alone at £3.14m. This estimate allows for the effect of working wives and assumes that 70% will get jobs within six months. This argument, however, ignores the fact that if 3,500 of the 5,000 redundant UCS workers (30%) get jobs within six months this will be at the expense of other unemployed men. The real cost of social security payments must therefore be calculated for all 5,000 UCS workers until the point at which regional unemployment falls back to its customary levels. Present indications are that this will be a long period in West Central Scotland so that the figure of £3.14m. may be a severe underestimate. To this must be added at least an equivalent figure (£3.14m.) for the extra 11,000 workers affected by the chain reaction. Additionally central government will be affected by the loss of personal and corporation taxes and by the extra support needed by local authorities for the loss of revenue from rates. Further evidence suggests that local authorities are already incurring increased expenditure through rent rebate and the stepping-up of welfare services. Relief payments in Clydebank Burgh this year, even before the UCS collapse, were at double last years level. Taking all these items together the total loss to central and local governments consequent upon UCS redundancies cannot be less than £10m. (£3m. for redundancy payments, £6.28m. for social security and an estimate for relief payments and loss of rates and taxes). We have not taken into account the recent increase in social security rates, we have underestimated at various points and made relatively optimistic estimates about the up-turn in employment. The true figure could therefore well exceed £15m. This takes no special account of the further effect on business confidence in the region and its repercussions upon regional employment policies.

A third measure of economic consequences is based on the known past investment cost of creating new jobs. Experience in 1963 suggested that it cost Government £1,000-£1,500 to create a new job



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through incentives and support schemes. Inflation may have raised this figure to £1,500-£2,000. To trigger private investment resulting in 16,000 new jobs would therefore cost the Government something in the region of £24-£32m.

These are the likely economic consequences of 5,000 UCS redundancies. They are not necessarily cumulative. Given the present economic situation the danger exists that it would be necessary to incur redundancy payments and social security benefits for a longish period followed later by the costs of job creation. They might therefore become cumulative.

#### 5. Social Consequences

We have long accepted that unemployment is a social evil, a contravention of the fundamental values of our society. In general terms we know from past experience its damaging effects on the individual, the family and the community. Our witnesses have reminded us in terms which were often dramatic, but none the less real, of the loss of personal dignity it involves, of the progressive disappearance of self-respect, the lowering of living standards, nutrition and health, the accumulation of debt, the increase in domestic tension and the deepening of existing social problems.

We wish to select for special attention several problems emphasised repeatedly by our witnesses. Most important are the repercussions on disadvantaged groups and particularly older workers, young people and handicapped persons. With 20 to 50 applicants per vacancy older workers find great difficulty in getting new work; in this area with its persistent problems it seems likely that many workers aged 50 or more, once unemployed, may never return to stable employment for the rest of their working life - and this, at a time when most workers need to husband their resources against retirement. Young people, on the other hand, are leaving school with the justifiable expectation of being wanted and valued; for them rejection may mean sharp disillusion and the breeding of resentment against employers and authority. Indeed, professional social workers stressed unemployment as one link in the chain of events leading to crime and violence. They also raised the special problems of handicapped groups of all kinds for whom work is the best

aid to rehabilitation and to re-integration in society. Clydeside's resources are already over-stretched in meeting the existing load of social problems.

Finally we draw attention to the grave long-term consequences of deteriorating labour relations. Disputes and demarcation are traditional responses to insecurity, they are exacerbated by redundancy, closure, and an unpredictable future. Signs exist that the prospect of security and an increased trust in management was leading to the lowering or removal of barriers. UCS reduced its work-force by over 2,000 men between 1969 and 1971 without major industrial disputes. We fear that the present crisis, unless well resolved, will embitter future relations on both the Upper and the Lower Reaches of the Clyde.

#### 6. Possible Solution

The problems of UCS have now been diagnosed, in many different ways, by different observers. None deny the financial failure of the former company. Disagreement rests on other questions. Was the Geddes principle of grouping unsound or incorrectly applied? Was a sound structure undermined by inefficient management? by unco-operative workers? by the burden of prior debt? by starvation of working and investment capital during a too-short transitional period? Was the falling demand for its products temporary or permanent? Was UCS moving into profitability? Were previous negotiations now beginning to produce higher productivity? etc., etc. No single or simple answer can be given to these involved and related questions.

On the other hand, the social and economic consequences of large-scale redundancy at this time are clear, inevitably and extremely grave. When doubt exists about diagnosis and about the relative future viability of alternative solutions, the greater, in our opinion, is the weight to be attached to known and series consequences.

The Government has accepted the Govan/Linthouse proposal with its emphasis on a smaller company under new management. Two alternative schemes have appealed to the Committee. First, Professor Alexander's suggestion "to create a new Upper Clyde grouping and allow 18 months

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to 2 years in which to judge the success being made of it by the new management and by the work people. If the conclusion then reached was that viability was beyond the Company, it would have a further fixed life of 2-3 years during which Government and local authorities could plan alternative employment". Secondly, an earlier suggestion by J. Macmichael (Glasgow Herald, 5th August, 1971) that, alongside the Govan/Linthouse group, the Government should establish in Clydebank/Scotstoun a further company which would share certain costly Linthouse services (eg. estimating, design and marketing), take on sub-contracts from Govan as well as its own orders. All or part of this separate Company might be re-absorbed if needed by Govan/Linthouse, but otherwise it would act as a run-down company and thus soften the blow of redundancy.

Both suggestions have merit in that they:

- (1) avoid aggravating the already serious economic state of West Central Scotland;
- (2) act as immediate and available pump-primers for the economy;
- (3) give more time for considering the long-term future of shipbuilding on the Upper Clyde;
- (4) allow relevant authorities time to create alternative employment if a planned run-down becomes inevitable;
- (5) give hope for labour relations on the Clyde.

The Government has accepted the Govan/Linthouse proposal with all that this entails in providing public money for working and investment capital. The extra cost of maintaining Clydebank/Scotstoun for a further period must be compared with the social and economic costs of 5,000 UCS redundancies. We consider these latter costs to be the greater. The gradual and gentler solution is therefore justified, not only for its humanity, but for its probable economic advantage.

We therefore recommend:

1. that the newly-formed company be encouraged to fulfill the old UCS order book and that it be assisted by Government purchases of ships (for stock if necessary) so that it can start its life with the existing labour force in the four yards. If delays occur in setting up

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the Company, the Liquidator should be empowered to begin work on ships ordered but not yet started thus avoiding a damaging interim loss of orders and confidence.

It is further essential that the new Company be guaranteed adequate working and investment capital.

2. that any reduction in the work-force be gradual and phased to coincide with improvements in employment opportunities throughout the region.
3. that the full arsenal of existing Government measures, supplemented by new schemes for promoting regional growth, be brought to bear on the provision of new employment for the communities affected. We shall put forward in our final report specific proposals for encouraging regional economic growth.
4. that similar procedures be adopted whenever or wherever large-scale redundancies from a single employer threaten to affect so seriously communities disproportionately dependent on that employer.

R. ILLSLEY (CHAIRMAN)

F. COUSINS

G.M. PERRY

28th September, 1971.

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List of Individuals and Organisations which submitted  
evidence to the Committee before 28th September, 1971

<u>Name and Position</u>	<u>Oral</u>	<u>Written</u>
	<u>Evidence</u>	
Professor K. Alexander, Professor of Economics, University of Strathclyde and ex-Director of UCS Ltd.	0	W
M. Barrat Brown, Senior Lecturer in Economics, Department of Extra-Mural Studies, University of Sheffield.	0	W
The Rt. Hon. A. Wedgwood Benn, Member of Parliament.	0	W
J. Black, Chairman, Clyde District Committee, Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.	0	
J. Boyd, President, Clydebank and District Trades Council.	0	
J.M. Brown, Depute Town Clerk, Clydebank Burgh Council.	0	
Martin I.A. Bulmer, Lecturer, Department of Sociology and Social Administration, University of Durham.		W
W. Campbell Balfour, Senior Lecturer in Industrial Relations, University College, Cardiff.		W
Professor G. Cameron, Department of Social and Economic Research, University of Glasgow.	0	W
W. Challoner, British Association of Social Workers (Glasgow North) and Tutor in Social Work, Jordanhill College.	0	W
A. Ferry, District Secretary, Glasgow Area, Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers.	0	W
K. Fleet, Institute of Workers' Control.		W
Robert Fleming, Provost of Clydebank.	0	W
Jean Forbes, Lecturer, Department of Town and Regional Planning, University of Glasgow.		W
G. Gavin, Depute Director of Planning, Corporation of Glasgow.	0	W
F. Herron, Lecturer, Department of Social and Economic Research, University of Glasgow.	0	W
J. Hughes, Vice-Principal, Ruskin College, Oxford.		W
C. Kirk, Director of Social Work, Clydebank Burgh Council.	0	W

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<u>Name and Position</u>	<u>Oral</u>	<u>Written</u>
	<u>Evidence</u>	
E. McDonald, Social Worker, Clydebank Burgh Council.	O	W
Professor D. MacKay, Professor of Political Economy, University of Aberdeen.	O	W
R. McLellan, President, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce.	O	W
J. McLaughlin, Depute Director, Social Work Department, Greenock and Port Glasgow and British Association of Social Workers.	O	W
R.A. Nixon, Town Clerk, Clydebank Burgh Council.	O	W
J. Ramsay, District Delegate, Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers, Glasgow.	O	
J. Reid, Co-ordinating Committee of UCS Shop Stewards.	O	W
J. Reidford, Secretary, Glasgow District Trades Council.	O	
The Rt. Hon. W. Ross, Member of Parliament. Sir Iain Stewart, ex-Chairman, Fairfields Ltd.	O	W
W. Syme, Assistant Director of Social Work, Corporation of Glasgow.	O	
E. Taylor, Member of Parliament.	O	W
A. Thorpe, Health Visitor, Aberdeen City.		W
E. Thorpe, Lecturer, Department of Sociology, University of Aberdeen.		W
M. Turner, Chairman, Planning Committee, Clydebank Burgh Council.	O	W
B. Wallace, Joint Secretary of the Joint Council, UCS Ltd.	O	

A number of individuals also gave evidence in private.

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## Appendix 19

Upper Clyde Shipbuilders Limited, (In Liquidation),

'Comment by Mr. Robert C. Smith, Official Liquidator on the  
Statement issued by Mr. Archibald D. Kelly last night'.

Appendix 20

Memorandum from UCS Shop Stewards Co-ordinating Committee.



UPPER CLYDE SHIPBUILDERSMEMORANDUM FROM UCS SHOP STEWARDS CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

Upper Clyde Shipbuilders was formed on 7th February, 1968, by the merger of the shipbuilding interests of five yards on the upper reaches of the Clyde - John Brown & Co., (Clydebank) Ltd., Charles Connell and Co. Ltd., Fairfield's (Glasgow) Ltd., Alexander Stephens & Sons Ltd., and Yarrow and Co. Ltd.

All the yards were in varying degrees of obsolescence due to decades of neglect by the previous owners. During the boom period of shipbuilding in the Clyde every pound was extracted and hardly a penny re-invested in the industry. At the time of the formation of the consortium all these companies were near to bankruptcy.

The establishment of the UCS has also to be seen against the background of the British Shipbuilding Industry, in 1966 when the Geddes Committee reported. This report represented the result of a year's very detailed study.

The conclusion of the report that are most relevant were that:-

- (1) The world market for merchant ships had grown, was likely to go on doing so and was open to a competitive British Shipbuilding Industry.
- (2) The average size of the tankers and bulk carriers was likely to increase but nearly all ships were likely to be within the building capability of existing British yards.
- (3) There were no real natural or geographical obstacles to a competitive British shipbuilding industry.
- (4) Contrary to common belief there was no large surplus capacity in world shipbuilding.

- (5) Probably because of this widespread but mistaken belief (coupled with strong, protected and subsidised Japanese competition) shipbuilding had produced little profit anywhere in the world despite full order books.

It is important here to note that Geddes underestimated the growth of world shipbuilding demands. The study done for Geddes forecast an increase from 11,000,000 GRT in 1965 to 15,000,000 GRT in 1972. In the event the orders actually rose to 14,000,000 GRT in 1966, 15,000,000 by 1976 and 17,000,000 by 1968. Thus shipbuilding has not been a declining industry.

Market research clearly shows that despite short-lived cyclical fluctuation world shipbuilding demand we expand at an accelerated pace.

Further it should be noted that the anticipated increase in the world population of 1,000 million by the 1980's centred mainly in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Australasia creates the human objective imperative of increased trade and shipping.

The conclusion is inescapable ie. Shipbuilding in world terms is a foremost growth industry.

It was in this context that Geddes recommended the lines on which British shipbuilding needed to be restructured. By and large, said Geddes, British shipyards are not specialised enough to be competitive, nor are they grouped in large enough companies to be able to afford the necessary skilled personnel in management, marketing, development, design, purchasing, accountancy, organisation and so forth. Geddes therefore proposed that grouping should be positively encouraged with government assistance and that the ideal group should

consist of a headquarters which would house most of the specialists needed and about 5 specialised yards. Each group should employ 8,000 to 10,000 workers with an output of up to 400,000 to 500,000 gross tons a year; groups should be concentrated geographically for ease of communication and the preservation of local pride and loyalty.

The concept of the UCS consortium corresponded almost ideally to this criteria. However, serious errors were made at the inception. The traditional shipyard owning families of the Clyde retained too great a say on the board and the management of the yards. They should have been swept away, along with their near feudal attitude to the work-force, as relics of the past.

The new company also was burdened with losses on pre-existing contracts of £12m. The former owner of the individual yards having been paid for anticipated profits on these contracts. In addition new contracts were taken on at ridiculous prices and were responsible for further losses of £9.8m.

The official liquidator on the 31st of August, told creditors that, of the total incurred deficit of £28.1 million, three quarters were incurred in the first 19 months of the company's existence.

It must be stated that if the old board had deliberately set out to sabotage the UCS they couldn't have done a better job.

The original concept of the consortium was only belatedly realised by the autumn of 1969.

This was coincidental with the changes in Management and the introduction of Mr. Ken Douglas as Managing Director. Only then

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were the circumstances created that allowed meaningful discussion to take place between Management and the trade unions.

The ensuring results were not merely encouraging but astounding as the following facts demonstrate:

Delivery of Vessels

1968 - 3 vessels

1969 - 7 vessels

1970 - 12 vessels

1971 - 15 vessels

(This programme was being achieved)

Group Launches

1968 - 7 (whole year)

1969 - 8 (whole year)

1970 - 9 (whole year)

1971 - 8 (six months only)

Group Steel Production

Gross Tons (Average) per week  
1969 - 854 tons

Average Gross Tons per week for the 8 week period prior to 15th June, 1971 (date of liquidation) was 1,352 tons.

Total Hourly Paid Labour

13/2/70 - 8,567

28/8/70 - 6,832

15/1/71 - 6,277

When then liquidation? The answer is simple. The present crisis was deliberately created and was part of a pre-determined plot by the Minister in charge of shipbuilding Mr. Nicholas Ridley, MP. We enclose for your information a photostat copy of the Ridley letters now publicaly admitted as genuine.

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We would particularly draw your attention to page 3 and the section headed Conclusion. Quote "I believe that we should do the following on assuming office:- a) Give no more public money to UCS. b) Let Yarrow leave the UCS if they still want to, and facilitate their joining Lower Clyde if they still wish to do so, c) This would lead to the bankruptcy of UCS." Then further "We could put in a Government "Butcher" to cut up UCS and to sell (cheaply) to Lower Clyde, and others, the assets of UCS", and still further on "After liquidation or reconstruction as above, we should sell the government holding in UCS, even for a pittance."

All the main details of this plot have been put into operation. Yarrows were allowed to detach themselves from the consortium taking with them a £1.25 million covered berth constructed by UCS and was given a £4½ million loan interest-free by the Government. When the realities of the situation didn't match Ridley's plan there was intervention to alter the circumstances. For example by the end of October, 1970, the projected cash flow of the company showed in total a deficit of £165,000; this in a firm with an annual turnover of tens of millions of pounds.

This was a clear indication that despite all the inherited burdens, based on the productivity of the labour force, the company was moving towards viability. The government in November withheld credit guarantees which reduced by almost 80% the flow of cash into the firm. The lack of confidence thus created resulted in a creditors push with in certain instances the demand for payment before the delivery of materials. As a result by February, 1971, the cash deficit was £6.4 million. Thus having created a financial crisis, the Ministry then used it as a justification for proceeding with the next stage of the Ridley Plan.

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A similar position relates to the order book. The argument has been advanced by the Ministry that the order book was thin. The facts are that at the time of the enforced liquidation the order book stood at £90m. But no later than May of this year the UCS had reached agreement on an order for 10 product carriers. These and other negotiations were proceeding largely on the basis that the much improved production programme enabled the company to give the best delivery prospects in Europe. These negotiations had to be terminated due to the liquidity crisis created by the government.

In total, the facts amount to a massive indictment of Mr. Nicholas Ridley, the government Minister in charge of shipbuilding. The social consequences of the "butchery" of this industry to communities where the male unemployment is already one in nine would be devastating. The intention is to sack 6,000 workers but with the chain reaction in ancillary industries it would mean 15,000 to 18,000 redundancies.

The workers in the UCS conscious of all the facts and of their social and class responsibilities refuse to accept this position.

We appeal to our fellow trade unionists for support. We demand that in light of all the known facts that Nicholas Ridley should be removed from his ministerial responsibility and that his "butchery" policy be totally abandoned by the government.

Appendix 21

Record of a Meeting Between Mr. John Davies and Sir John Eden  
and Mr. McGarvey and Mr. Service on 12 October 1971

AND MR MCGARVEY AND MR SERVICE ON 12 OCTOBER 1971

1. The representatives of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions made the following points:-

- (a) Their principal objective was to seek means of preserving employment in all four yards of the UCS.
- (b) In relation to the orders immediately needed at Govan to facilitate the establishment of Govan Shipbuilders Limited, the C S E U were prepared to give assurances as to the contribution of the work force to the timely and efficient delivery of the ships, providing the Government was prepared to give the requisite guarantees to the ship owners in question, and providing the Liquidator was prepared to set in hand work on those orders.
- (c) As soon as the arrangements envisaged in (b) above had been made they were prepared immediately to enter meaningful negotiations regarding working practices, wage rates etc., with Govan Shipbuilders Limited. These negotiations would cover the operation of the Govan and Linthouse yards and would be extended to cover Suttston as well, providing the feasibility study showed the inclusion of the last named yard to be in the economic interest of the whole project.

2. Mr Davies agreed in view of the undertakings given by the representatives of the C S E U to seek urgently to finalise negotiations with the ship owners in question with a view to reaching agreement upon the guarantees required to secure the confirmation of the orders above referred to. He welcomed Mr McGarvey's assurance that in these circumstances talks would quickly begin to secure the establishment of Govan Shipbuilders Limited.

3. It was furthermore accepted that the Government and the C S E U would make every effort to encourage a purchaser for Clydebank Yard and that such purchaser would be eligible for substantial financial assistance under the Local Employment Acts. The C S E U considered that this would create a proper climate for the meaningful discussions with Govan Shipbuilders Ltd. Signed.

JOHN DAVIES

DANIEL MCGARVEY



## Appendix 22

UCS Shop Stewards, leaflet, 'The Four Yards must continue -- No  
Loss of Jobs', October 1971.

## UPPER CLYDE SHIPBUILDERS

The aim of the U.C.S. "work-in" is exactly the same as it has always been . . .

**THE FOUR YARDS MUST CONTINUE**

**—NO LOSS OF JOBS!**

The Press has distorted statements by our Shop Stewards and Trade Union leaders and misinterpreted the results of discussions. Their aim and the aim of Government spokesmen is to divide the workers of U.C.S. and to separate us from the workers throughout Britain who support us.

The recent record of the meeting between C.S.E.U. spokesmen and John Davies is an example. Newspaper, radio and television reported that Statement as if the Shop Stewards had agreed to abandon the fight for the four yards. In fact that meeting recorded the views of the C.S.E.U. which re-affirmed its "principle objective" of "preserving employment in all four yards of the U.C.S."

Although it was stated that there would be "meaningful discussions regarding working practices, wage rates, etc." providing the Government were prepared to give the requisite guarantees to the ship owners "thus allowing work on new ships to commence", there is an even more important condition. This is embodied in paragraph 3 of the agreed minute which states:

"It was further more accepted that the Government and the C.S.E.U. would make every effort to encourage the purchasers for Clydebank Yard, and that such purchasers would be eligible to substantial financial assistance under the Local Employment Act. The C.S.E.U. considered that this would create a proper climate for meaningful discussions with Govan Shipbuilders Limited."

This means that without guarantees for all four yards and the retention of the whole labour force, there will be no meaningful discussions. U.C.S. workers will discuss the future of the yards with anyone at any time providing the results are those which have always been our aim, i.e.

**the 4 yards must continue, no loss of jobs**

The fight goes on—your support is even more necessary—we are right in the middle of the woods and the wolves are ready to pounce. We need as much money as possible. The treasurer is still:

R. G. McKenzie,  
c/o Convenor's Office,  
U.C.S., Clydebank

## Appendix 23

Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, report of meeting held in Clydebank  
on 27 January 1972 at 5.30pm with representatives of USA  
Marathon Manufacturing Coy.

REPORT OF MEETING HELD IN CLYDEBANK ON 27TH JANUARY, 1972  
at 5.30 P.M. WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF U.S.A. MARATHON  
SHIPPING MANUFACTURING COMPANY.

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DISCUSSION

This Company were very interested in the Clydebank Yard  
and the labour force.

Workers badly in need of modern hand tool equipment.

Company interested in Procedure Agreement and assurance  
from the Shop Stewards and Confederation, in that, full  
co-operation will be given by work force.

They were interested in buying the whole Yard.

Their Programme: Oil Rigs, Supply Ships and Barges.

Had meeting at the Ministry of Trade and Industry and  
they were quite happy about financial arrangements.

Interested in long term Agreements with Unions on Wages  
which would include an inbuilt Clause relating to Cost  
of Living Index.

Clydebank ideal for the market which they were involved  
in, i.e. North Sea Oil.

Representatives would report to Marathon Board.

Shop Stewards and Unions would receive information around  
the 18th February, 1972 if they are prepared to take on  
Clydebank.

Appendix 24

Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, report of meeting held in Linthouse  
on 3 February 1972.

REPORT OF MEETING HELD IN LINTHOUSE ON 3RD FEBRUARY, 1972

PRESENT:- Mr. K. Douglas with Shop Stewards.

DISCUSSION

The up to date situation.

The new position of Mr. Douglas in the Govan Linthouse set up is non-executive; in charge of marketing and buying.

Feasibility report to be handed to Davies on Monday.

The position of the Board is - if insufficient finance is offered by the Government, the Board will resign.

Scotstoun should be included in new set up.

Certain political pressure is being brought to bear on Davies regarding the amount of money to be made available for Govan Linthouse.

Appendix 25

HMSO, Shipbuilding on the Upper Clyde: Report of Hill Samuel &  
Co. Limited, CMD 4918, March 1972, Annex.

## ANNEX

LORD STRATHALMOND

GOVAN SHIPBUILDERS,  
c/o Liquidator,  
Upper Clyde Shipbuilders,  
Linthouse Yard,  
Govan.

7th February, 1972.

My dear Secretary of State,

The Board of Govan Shipbuilders have now seen the Report of Hill Samuel on the Govan-Linthouse-Scotstoun position, together with the Marketing, Organisation and Technical Reports of Maynards. We have also been given ample opportunity to discuss these reports with the Consultants and find we are in a great measure of agreement with them. There are still some technical matters to be resolved but we do not believe that these will really change things to any great extent.

We therefore feel the time has now come for us to report to you on how we see the position, particularly in regard to the future viability of the Yards and the situation regarding the work force.

#### Viability

The Report shows that despite the injection of very considerable capital, the cushioning of the effect of initial losses in the first few years and the virtual doubling of production with the present labour force, it is not until the fourth year that the operation is projected to become viable. Even then, as the Report states, the small profit 'falls far short of what would be acceptable from a commercial point of view'.

Regretfully, therefore, we must say that for some years ahead we cannot see the operation as commercially viable. Even after these initial years the position must be doubtful as the Report assumes that all the ships, planned by the Report for construction, will be sold and also that cost inflation and ship price inflation will go hand in hand. These are vital assumptions as liable to be wrong as right.

Those of us who are new to shipbuilding find it hard to understand the reason for this, particularly as the Consultants assure us that within a few years, if we follow their plans, the Yards will be as modern as an average European Yard with which the Company will have to compete. Possibly it stems from the fact that as the Yards have not been expanding over many years, they have been withering particularly from the point of view of incentive to produce profitably. Industry never just stands still. More probably it is that shipbuilding in much of the world has become more of a competition between Governments on the help to be given, in one way or another, to shipbuilders than true competition between these shipbuilders.

Despite these thoughts we feel the problem of shipbuilding on the Upper Clyde must be treated at the outset as a social one, or one in the national interest, or both, with the hope that there is the possibility of such shipbuilding eventually becoming economic on its own account.



It follows from this, if we are to go ahead, that:

- (a) Scotstoun should be included within the group, probably as a wholly-owned subsidiary of Govan Shipbuilders but operating much more independently than it has in the past under UCS to avoid building-up a large co-ordinating staff, and
- (b) we entirely agree with the reasons given in the Report that in the initial stages the promises of private money should not be taken up but rather held in suspense (if feasible) until some future date. If, however, despite our views and those of the Consultants, it is felt by the Government that the 'token' private money already promised must be involved at the outset we would also hope that we can give the opportunity to all those employed to voluntarily contribute a 'token' amount. The Government, private capital and, we hope, many employees will then all have a stake—albeit in very different degrees—in the future of the Company.

#### **Union discussions**

Due to the well-known local situation it was only last week that we had discussions with Union officials of the Confederation. These were in very general terms and we encountered no immediate difficulties—all present agreed they were 'meaningful' and, at their request, we are now preparing proposals to be put to them within the next week. We believe that if we can demonstrate that there will be stability of work in the future, satisfactory relations with the work force should not be one of our major difficulties.

#### **Future orders**

This, as we see it, is our major problem. Work is already running out at Scotstoun and by the summer further work is needed for Govan/Linthouse. The market is bleak today and as Maynards state in their Marketing Report, our image 'among potential customers is very alarming' because of 'risks of strikes, un-modern equipment and production methods, late deliveries, financial instability, high prices and poor service'. We indeed have much to overcome.

Although the Report makes an allowance financially for uneconomic contracts in the first few years, we have still to test the market. Some of us feel that owners value deliveries on time much more than cheap prices with the chance of late deliveries. We shall be pursuing this matter over the next few weeks as there is little point in commencing a business with no ships to build and no money that we can make available to start building ships on the speculation of selling them when completed.

#### **Conclusions**

Whilst, therefore, the Government is considering its position in the light of the Reports and of this letter over the next few weeks we shall:

- (a) investigate future orders, including the orders now held in suspense by the UCS Liquidator, and
- (b) continue our discussions with the Confederation to see whether the belief expressed above is correct should we be able to offer stability of work, and

- (c) decide on the Staff required and whether there are the people of the right calibre available from those left in UCS to measure up to this challenging task.

The whole situation is a daunting one, but our objective as we stated above will be to try and eventually reach a situation where the Company can stand on its own feet with much more than 'token' private investment.

Time, however, is now very much of the heart of the problem and a decision must be reached if there are not to be further redundancies, particularly at Scotstoun by, at the latest, the end of this month.

If you wish to publish this letter, please feel free to do so.

I am,

*(Signed)* STRATHALMOND.

The Rt. Hon. John Davies, MBE, MP,  
Secretary of State for Trade and Industry,  
1 Victoria Street,  
London, SW1.

Appendix 26

The Marathon Agreement.

between

THE MARATHON SHIPBUILDING COMPANY (U. K. ) LIMITED,  
hereinafter called MARATHON, and ALL TRADE UNIONS, hereinafter  
called the UNIONS, with members thereof to be employed by Marathon  
in accordance with the other provisions hereof, at the facility formerly  
known as the Clydebank Division of the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders Limited,  
make this agreement covering the wages and other conditions of  
employment of the labour force of Marathon at said shipyard as follows:

### I DECLARATION OF COMMON INTENTION

Representatives of Marathon and the Unions hereby declare their common  
intention to be the continuity and stability of employment of the labor  
force at the former Clydebank Division of U. C. S. It is the mutual  
intent of and both parties pledge maximum co-operation in realizing this  
common objective and in establishing a modern and flourishing yard.

### II TERM OF THE AGREEMENT

The term of this agreement shall be for a period of four (4) years  
commencing on July 24, 1972, or at such date as Marathon shall take  
over the facilities, and commence construction of its new facilities and  
the production of its product, which ever is later.

### III HOLIDAYS /

### III HOLIDAYS

Holidays will be observed as they are in effect in the Shipbuilding Industry on the Upper Clyde River i. e., three (3) weeks of Summer Holidays and six (6) statutory holidays plus three (3) days to be observed in consecutive years commencing with one (1) day in 1972, two (2) days in 1973 and three (3) days in 1974 and thence after.

### IV PENSION

Arrangements will be made to maintain the present pension if possible and if not possible such similar pension as may be under the law.

### V WAGES

A. Marathon agrees to pay wages to the skilled trades a base rate as follows:

90 pence per hour for straight time pay as base pay.

B. The wages of all other classifications thereof whose members are represented by the Unions will be increased pro rata as the skilled trades were increased as stated in A. above.

### VI/

VI  
COST OF LIVING INCREASE

167.

As the cost of living increases or decreases based upon the standard cost of living index for Great Britain, Marathon agrees to increase or decrease the income of the employees covered by this agreement as a cost of living increase proportionately to the change in the cost of living index as it appears on the effective date of this agreement.

At the end of each six and twelve month period during the term of this agreement the cost of living index will be reviewed for the purpose of revising the increase, if necessary.

VII  
ANNUAL WAGE REVIEW

At each anniversary date of this agreement Marathon and the Unions agree to review the wages of the employees working in the shipyards on the Upper Clyde River and to adjust the wages in the various crafts of the employees of Marathon based upon a comparison of the wages.

The effect to be achieved by the examination of the other wages is to bring about a comparability of the wages of the employees of Marathon and other employees working in similar trades on the Upper Clyde River. Upon agreement by the parties hereto of the average wages the wages of the employees of Marathon will be revised accordingly and nothing hereto referred will need to be brought to Arbitration.

VIII  
PRODUCTION BONUS

Marathon agrees to pay the employees represented by the Unions subject to this agreement a Production Bonus based on the following terms and conditions:

A. The bonus shall be ten (10) percent of the straight time base rate as stated in Article V of this agreement as that article fixes the base rate for each craft and classification thereunder.

B. To be eligible to receive the production bonus an employee must have worked nine (900) hundred hours in the six (6) month period proceeding the date of the computation of the bonus.

1. If, due to inclement weather or lack of material when employees in any craft or classification are unable to work, that time so lost shall not be counted in determining their eligibility to receive the bonus.
2. An employee shall not be disqualified from receiving the bonus if he suffers a job connected injury or an illness certified by his Physician and if he performs such work as he is certified to do by his physician upon such work being offered to him by Marathon.
3. Time off due to leaves of absence approved in writing by the personnel manager shall not be counted against the eligibility requirements to receive the production bonus.

C. The bonus will be computed for the six (6) month period ending at the commencement of the Summer holidays and the six (6) month period ending at the commencement of the Christmas holidays.

D. /

D. The bonus will be paid to all production employees as distinguished from any craft, class or department so as to encourage all employees to meet production schedules.

E. In order to be eligible to receive the production bonus the employees of Marathon must meet the production schedules at the end of each six (6) month period as determined by Marathons obligations to its customers. Production schedules will be posted in prominent places in each department at the time of the commencement of each job.

#### IX OVERTIME PAY

For all hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours in a week, employees shall be paid one and one half ( $1\frac{1}{2}$ ) times the regular base rate.

Double time or two (2) times the regular base rate will be paid for work on Sunday and holidays.

#### X LEGAL ENFORCEABILITY

This agreement is not intended to be legally enforceable in accordance with the provisions of Part III Sec. 34 of the Industrial Relations Act of 1971.

#### XI ARBITRATION PROCEDURE

The parties agree that in order to avoid all industrial action by the Unions, individually or collectively, or by their members or any or all of them that they shall be bound to the resolution thereof by the following method:/



ARBITRATION PROCEDURE (contd.)

A. If an employee wishes to raise any question in which he is directly and personally concerned, he shall first discuss it with his foreman. If he so wishes he may be accompanied by his shop steward. Failing satisfaction the shop steward shall have the right to pursue the question with the management.

B. Where a question to be raised affects a group of employees, the shop stewards, who may be accompanied by a member of the group concerned, shall discuss it with the foreman of the trade concerned. Failing satisfaction the shop stewards shall have the right to pursue the question with the management.

C. In the event of the management wishing to discuss a question affecting a group of employees, the question shall be raised in the first place with the shop stewards of the union whose members are involved.

D. Where any question has not been settled in two (2) working days under any of the preceeding paragraphs, it shall be the subject of a conference where the Company shall be represented by the Managing Director or such other person as he shall delegate to act in his behalf. The Union or employee involved shall be represented by itself or himself or any other person or official of the Union selected to do so.

The representatives so selected shall meet and endeavour to settle the matter between them. Failing to do so after a period of ten (10) days the Union may at its sole election call its National Officials or their representatives for a conference within twenty (20) working days which persons shall then endeavour to resolve the dispute.

E. After the procedures referred to above have been exhausted and the dispute has not been resolved, both the Unions or Marathon may request the Department of Employment at Glasgow to furnish a list of suitable arbitrators to resolve the dispute.

The parties after casting lot as to who shall strike first shall alternately strike from the list of arbitrators until the last remaining arbitrator shall be selected to determine the issue or dispute.

Thereafter and at the earliest possible convenience the arbitrator shall hear the evidence of all parties concerning the dispute and shall make an award and decision in writing resolving said dispute by which award and decision the parties hereto agree to be firmly bound and by which they agree to abide without resort to strike, work stoppage, lockout or other industrial remedy.

Both parties agree that their members and employees, Managers, officers and officials shall be required by them to abide by such decision as well.

XII  
DEMARCATION SETTLEMENTS

In case of disputes over the allocation of work there will be no stoppage of work or other industrial interruption or action. The Unions will settle all Demarcations among themselves in accordance with the National Demarcation Procedure Agreement 1969 between the Shipbuilders and Repairers Association and the Trade Unions affiliated to the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions with which both parties are familiar and which shall be made a part hereof by reference thereto as if/

if the same had been copied at length herein for all purposes. Marathon shall be advised of the outcome of such settlement and Marathon will abide by the Unions decision thereon.

The Unions agree that they and their members and officers will abide by the settlements made as stated above.

XIII  
INTENT TO ABIDE BY THE AGREEMENT

The Parties have freely entered into this agreement by negotiation and it is intended to be binding and the parties accordingly commit themselves to take all such steps as reasonably necessary and practicable to prevent any persons covered by it from acting in breach of its provisions.

XIV  
WORK RULES COVERING CONDUCT OF EMPLOYEES AND PENALTIES

The published Yard Rules issued under date of April 18, 1969, which are in effect at the time when Marathon takes over the yard are adopted as if the same had been copied herein at length for all purposes.

XV  
CONDITION ALLOWANCE

Marathon agrees to follow practices on the Upper Clyde as regards the payment of condition allowance for certain work such as, but not limited to, "dirty work".

The shop stewards have furnished a list of all such allowances which shall control these provisions unless changed in accordance with the terms of Article VII of this agreement.

The parties have set out their entire agreement herein and will not be required to bargain about wages, hours or other conditions of employment except as otherwise provided herein.

Witness our hands in behalf of the parties each of us represent at GLASGOW, SCOTLAND, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of May, 1972

MARATHON SHIPBUILDING COMPANY (U.K.) LIMITED

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ By \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary President

FOR THE UNIONS

Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers  
Shipwrights, Blacksmiths & Structural Workers By \_\_\_\_\_

Electrical, Electronic & Telecommunication  
Union/Plumbing Trades Union By \_\_\_\_\_

National Union of Sheet Metal Workers,  
Coppersmiths, Heating & Domestic  
Engineers & Ventilators By \_\_\_\_\_

National Union of Furniture Operatives By \_\_\_\_\_

Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers By \_\_\_\_\_

Union of Construction, Allied Trades &  
Technicians By \_\_\_\_\_

Amalgamated Society of Woodcutting Machinists

By \_\_\_\_\_

General & Municipal Workers Union

By \_\_\_\_\_

Transport & General Workers Union

By \_\_\_\_\_

THE SHOP STEWARDS

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## Appendix 27

Agreement between Govan Shipbuilders Limited and the Confederation  
of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.

AGREEMENT

between

GOVAN SHIPBUILDERS LIMITED

and

THE CONFEDERATION OF SHIPBUILDING AND ENGINEERING UNIONS

dated

The Unions, having already declared publicly that they will guarantee their complete co-operation to ensure delivery on time of the four ships currently being built for the Irish Shipping Co. Limited, have now extended their guarantee in similar terms to cover the timely completion of the ships which have recently been placed in the Scotstoun Yard.

The Unions affirm their desire to co-operate fully with Govan Shipbuilders Limited and recognise, against the background of a depressed world market, that both management and men will require to make a joint and determined effort to achieve substantial improvement in productivity.

It is now agreed, between Govan Shipbuilders Limited and The Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, that:

The current 'work-in' will cease when Govan Shipbuilders Limited start to trade.

The U. C. S. Employment Charter will be revised, and updated, to ensure no impediment to the efficient utilisation of manpower, methods and equipment, so that any practices incompatible with this/

/this objective would rapidly be eliminated. It is accepted that arrangements for shift working will be in accordance with the provisions of the relevant National Agreements. The arrangements for interchangeability, flexibility and mobility as agreed in the U. C. S. Employment Charter will continue and the Unions re-affirm the importance of the Relaxation of Working Practices Agreements in ensuring effective working.

There shall in each Yard be a Joint Consultative Committee which will meet regularly for the interchange of information. The Committee will comprise representatives of Management and the work force and should be regarded as supplementary to the normal day to day channels of communication.

The National Procedure Agreement between the Shipbuilders and Repairers National Association and The Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions will apply to all three groups of hourly paid workers in the Yards - Steelworkers, Outfitting Trades and General Workers, and to all staff who are members of appropriate Unions.

It is further agreed, in the interest of time saving and the prevention of leap-frogging claims, that pay and productivity negotiations will take place jointly with all manual worker Unions except where the negotiations concern such matters as bonus schemes or allowances, relevant to one Union alone. The agreed intention is that, except where clearly inappropriate, claims should be jointly formulated and jointly negotiated.



- (a) Having agreed to work within the various National Agreements, the Company will honour any National Wage Awards.
- (b) The existing wages agreements and bonus schemes will continue on an interim basis.
- (c) The Company will wish to negotiate a new wage structure and while these negotiations are in progress, it may be necessary to impose a ceiling on earnings. It is expected that discussions will start around August/September 1972, and every effort will be made to conclude agreements as early as possible thereafter, but not later than January 1973.
- (d) The present salary agreements concluded with D.A.T.A. and the C.A.W.U. and other Unions on behalf of staff will continue until January 1973.
- (e) It is hoped that by the time agreement is reached on a new wage structure that Govan Shipbuilders Limited will have obtained stable expansion of production for at least two years ahead in which event the Company would wish the new agreement to run for, say, two years.

The Unions, acting on behalf of their members, recognise the importance of avoiding any unconstitutional action of any kind while the National Procedure is being invoked, and re-affirm their intent to work within the various National Agreements, noting in particular Clause 1.19 of the Procedure Agreement and Clause 16 of the Demarcation Agreement.

7. This Agreement, although not legally enforceable, has been entered into freely by the parties to it and is intended to be binding, and the parties accordingly pledge themselves to take all such steps as are reasonably practicable to prevent any persons covered by it from acting in breach of its provisions.

Signed on behalf of  
GOVAN SHIPBUILDERS LIMITED

Signed on behalf of  
THE CONFEDERATION OF SHIPBUILDING  
AND ENGINEERING UNIONS

.....

.....

Appendix 28

Statement from Govan Shipbuilders Ltd., 5 September 1972.

STATEMENT FROMGOVAN SHIPBUILDERS LIMITED5th September 1972

As one Union has not yet signed the Procedure Agreement it was decided at the Board this morning that we must now tell the Liquidator that for practical reasons we will not be able to operate the Yards from 11th September.

Full consideration was given to a suggestion put to us yesterday by representatives of the Boilermakers Society regarding an interim wage award and subsequently discussed with Confederation officials. The Board found this suggestion, which involved a wage negotiation, unacceptable at the moment for two reasons -

- i) we cannot enter such negotiations with any union that has not signed the Procedure Agreement; until all Unions have signed, the Company cannot operate;
- ii) the type of proposal put to us yesterday could then be negotiated with all signatories to the Agreement jointly.

The Board's view on wage negotiations is -

- i) in accordance with the Procedure Agreement, joint negotiations can start whenever it has been signed by all Unions;
- ii) the date of application of any settlement reached within the Company will be determined during and as part of these negotiations;
- iii) any date agreed in such a settlement may involve retrospective payment as the Company is not, in principle, opposed in all circumstances to retrospection; there can also be an interim arrangement;
- iv) it does rule out, however, agreeing a date for application or an interim arrangement before negotiations have begun.

## Appendix 29

The Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers, Shipwrights, Blacksmiths  
and Structural Welders, Clyde District Committee, 26 September 1972,  
to shop stewards in Scotstoun, Linthouse and Govan.

BOILERMAKERS, SHIPWRIGHTS, BLACKSMITHS & STRUCTURAL WORKERS

CLYDE DISTRICT COMMITTEE

District Delegates

J. NIBBO  
W. DOUGAN  
J. RAMSAY

6 Lansdowne Crescent,  
GLASGOW, G20 6NQ.

26th September, 1972.

TO SHOP STEWARDS IN SCOTSTOUN  
LINTHOUSE AND GOVAN

Worthy Brother,  
Dear Friend,

It is with grave disturbance that your District Committee have learned of the turmoil at present among our members at Govan, Linthouse and Scotstoun in relation to decisions of no further support for the 'work-in' and the campaign for the right to work at Clydebank.

This week there will be notices sent out to 400 workers, 248 being members of our Society. Our Society as one of the major Unions in the U.C.S. struggle, played an outstanding part in saving the four yards. Our President, Bro. D. McGarvey and prominent Trade Union Leaders along with the people of this country, have fought hard against the Government decision to close the Scotstoun and Clydebank Yards and the loss of 6,000 jobs.

Your District Committee are appealing to you to reconsider your decision and put the good name of our Society once more in the forefront of the struggle for the right to work. We are asking you to stand by your previous decision to support financially and morally the workers and 'work-in' at Govan, Linthouse, Scotstoun and Clydebank.

The District Committee would request the Shop Stewards to put this appeal to their Departmental Meeting and 'phone the result to the District Office.

Yours fraternally,

S. BARR

District Secretary

Appendix 30

UCS Leaflets: Miscellaneous.

Dear Colleagues,

U.C.S. and You

On 23rd June, Glasgow saw a demonstration the likes of which it has never seen before. Thousands of people marched and many more thousands throughout the country stopped work and all with a common demand - "The right to work". The action was sparked off by the U.C.S. crisis but of course the problem is much deeper, the U.C.S. was just the last straw.

Integrated as it is into the entire range of Scottish industries, the repercussions of closure on the Clyde would be catastrophic. It is our belief that the economy, if allowed to continue in its present course, will run into depression.

The U.C.S. shop stewards are now prepared to take the whole question to the country and provide speakers for District Committees, Trade Council and indeed any group who wish to hear the case.

In the meantime support is required and we appeal for that support, both moral and financial, in the knowledge that the community realises that this is not just the U.C.S. workers' fight but EVERYONES' fight.

Send donations to:

R. McKenzie,  
c/o Convener's Office,  
U.C.S. Clydebank Division,  
Clydebank,  
SCOTLAND.

U.C.S. Joint Shop Stewards' Committee



# *Butchery!*

## *WHO SAID IT FIRST?*

"WE COULD PUT IN A GOVERNMENT BUTCHER TO CUT UP UCS AND TO SELL (CHEAPLY) TO LOWER CLYDE AND OTHERS, ASSETS OF THE UCS TO MINIMISE UPHEAVAL AND DISLOCATION"

— Mr. Nicholas Ridley, M.P. in a secret report presented to Mr. Heath before the last election

## *THE RIDLEY PLAN*

- ONE:—** Let Yarrows leave the consortium. The Tories allowed this in February 1971.
- TWO:—** Cease any Government aid to UCS. Despite £90m. of orders the Government refused working capital of £6m. on June 12 this year.
- THREE:—** Call in the "butcher". Mr. Heath did that last Thursday when Mr John Davies rose in the House of Commons

And so a yard with an **87 per cent rise in production, with a 25% fall in manpower**, was to be sacrificed to brutal political dogma.

In grateful thanks for providing the plan for butchery, Mr. Heath gave Mr. Ridley, Tory M.P. for Cirencester and Tewkesbury, the job of Under Secretary to Mr. John Davies —— **WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SHIPBUILDING !!**

Butcher Davies has his cleaver poised to:—

Send 6000 UCS workers and thousands more in ancillary trades to the end of the dole queue.

End a proud tradition of shipbuilding on the upper Clyde.

Send Scotland back to the Thirties.

**THIS MUST NOT HAPPEN**

**THE BUTCHERY MUST STOP**

**THE YARDS WILL NOT CLOSE**

**OUR FIGHT IS YOUR FIGHT**

**SAVE UCS —— THIS FIGHT IS FOR THE RIGHT TO WORK**

## UPPER CLYDE SHIPBUILDERS

### **Why sink Upper Clyde?**

"Labour relations have never been of a higher order and production is running at levels comparable with any British shipyard at this time." — *Ken Douglas, Managing Director, U.C.S., in a letter to The Times.*

In 1968 U.C.S. built three ships.

In 1971—It was building a ship every three and a half weeks.

In 1970 steel was produced at the rate of 867 tons per week.

In 1971—It was at an all time high of 1450 tons per week.

*"... I see no need to talk of the closure of any of the Yards ..."*

—Mr. Robert C. Smith, Liquidator

### **HE SAID IT, WE MEAN IT!**

We have exposed the butcher Ridley. We have challenged a Government who seek to deny us THE RIGHT TO WORK. This challenge has now been taken up by the entire Labour and Trade Union Movement.

U.C.S. is still afloat. The workers have taken control and the yards are working normally.

Redundancies have been declared but the "work-in" continues.

### We are demanding the Right to Work

### **We need cash to sustain our struggle — URGENTLY !!!**

**Your continued solidarity can make victory certain.**

**Send donations to:** R. G. McKenzie,  
c/o Convenor's Office,  
U.C.S. (Clydebank Division),  
CLYDEBANK

A NEW YEAR MESSAGE FROM U.C.S. WORKERS.

As we enter 1972 we want to thank all those whose magnificent solidarity sustained us in 1971. We also renew our pledge to you that we will settle for nothing less than our initial and consistent demands —

**ALL FOUR YARDS — THE ENTIRE LABOUR FORCE**

**We are as united as ever**

**We are as determined as ever**

Everything that has happened in recent weeks has further confirmed us in our unity and determination.

Anthony Hepper in evidence to House of Commons committee, commenting on the report of the "Four Wise Men" said:—

*"I think it is one of the worst reports I have ever read. The first part is, to my mind, superficial and biased. It consists of a series of assertions unsupported by factual evidence and interlaced with statements that are wholly untrue."*

After an extensive study by the Observer (19.12.71) their reporter, Arthur Goodman, reached some startling conclusions on productivity levels at U.C.S.:—

*"If we make a more conservative comparison by using the whole of the first half of 1971 . . . the tonnage produced shows a 20% improvement while the tons per man rises to 17.1, a 52% increase. This is a remarkable rate of improvement in any industry and it is important to remember that it is not based on fluke figures for a few weeks here or there. It arose from a steady and accelerating progression over two years."*

The Tory Government is still stalling, but we are not prepared to sit and wait for their hatchet to fall. We are still building ships, but no ship will leave these yards in the absence of proposals covering the four yards and the labour force.

**So the struggle will sharpen in the next few weeks**

**Your support is more necessary than ever**

**Make 1972 the year when we win . . .**

**THE RIGHT TO WORK.**

*Donations to:—*

R.G. McKenzie, % Convenor's Office, U.C.S. Clydebank.

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# DONCASTER AND DISTRICT TRADES COUNCIL

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## Unemployment and U.C.S.

### THE RIGHT TO WORK

Workers of the UPPER CLYDE SHIPBUILDERS are the first British workers to reject redundancy.

Instead of the platitudes spoken by many politicians over the years on the subject of unemployment, these workers claim We are going to work—when the bosses say There is No work for us.

This cuts directly across statements made by Davies and Carr, with their accusations of the laziness of workers being responsible for our economic problems, lazy workers do not demand the RIGHT TO WORK.

Engaged in this courageous struggle, U.C.S. shop stewards have undertaken the task to pay wages to Redundant workers who take part in the — Work In.

Work out yourselves the cost of paying wages to these thousands of workers.

U.C.S. workers in their struggle against unemployment appeal to their fellow trade unionists for financial support, we appeal to you for weekly donations at your workplace which will be undertaken by your Trade Union representatives.

Show the U.C.S. workers your Respect for their Courage. and understanding, of their Financial Need.

All donations and collections should be forwarded to the TRADES COUNCILS U.C.S FIGHTING FUND.

TREASURER  
Mr. G. ALLAN,  
7 POPULAR TERRACE,  
BENTLEY  
DONCASTER.

# CONCERT-RALLY

IN THE

City Hall, Canilonriggs, Glasgow

on Sunday, 17th October

at 2 p.m.

**Speakers:**

**GORDON McLENNAN**

National Organiser, Communist Party

**JIMMY REID**

U.C.S. Shop Steward and Communist Councillor

**Chairman:**

**ALEX. MURRAY**

Scottish Secretary, Communist Party

*Hall open from 1 p.m.*

*Buffet open from 1 p.m.*

**Come early and see the Photographic Exhibition,  
including pictures of the U.C.S. demonstrations  
and a display of "Morning Star" Bazaar Goods.**

Donation Ticket: 15p

O.A.P.s: 5p.

Join the Communist Party/Young Communist League

Name.....

Address.....

Return to Scottish Committee, Communist Party,  
William Gallacher House, 69 Albert Road, Glasgow, S.2

# UNITE FOR THE RIGHT TO WORK. Against the Common Market

## *Throw the Tories out!*

**The Right to Work** is an inalienable human right that belongs to every man and woman. The Tories have taken away that right from almost a million people, 135,000 of them here in Scotland.

Thousands more are threatened with each week that passes, at UCS, Plesseys, Massey Ferguson, Glacier Metals and many others.

They are ruining our country, destroying our economy and subjecting our people to the inhumanity of unemployment.

They have to be stopped. They can be stopped.

The working class is fighting back. The example of the U.C.S. workers has inspired millions. It has given a glimpse of the power of the working class. The power to change the policies, the Government and the system that produces unemployment. And to replace them with new policies, a new Government of the Left and begin to change the system to one that puts men and women, and human dignity, before the greed and profits of a mere handful of society.

**The Right to Govern our own Country.** The Tories, the big monopolies—and some right wing Labour leaders—whose policies were and are responsible for mass unemployment and other attacks on the working class, are the same people who are trying to force Britain into the Common Market.

Why? Because the Common Market is designed to further the interests and profit of big business, whatever the consequences for our people.

They are prepared to sell our sovereignty as a nation. They are prepared to place the huge new burdens on our balance of payments—that means on us.

They are prepared to see prices rocket—which we will have to pay. Again they must be stopped—and can be. The movement of opposition is greater than them, if it is mobilised and expressed.

**The right thing to do.** These two issues are focal points of the many issues the working class is fighting on, and will increasingly fight on.

The Communist Party is indispensable in these struggles. We are proud of the part we play in them. In the UCS struggle, and in many others. Of the fact that we were the first, and are the only political party to oppose entry into the Common Market on any terms.

Our part and that of the "Morning Star" in the fight against the Industrial Relations Act is also well known.

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A bigger and stronger Communist Party will make the struggles of the working class much stronger and more effective.

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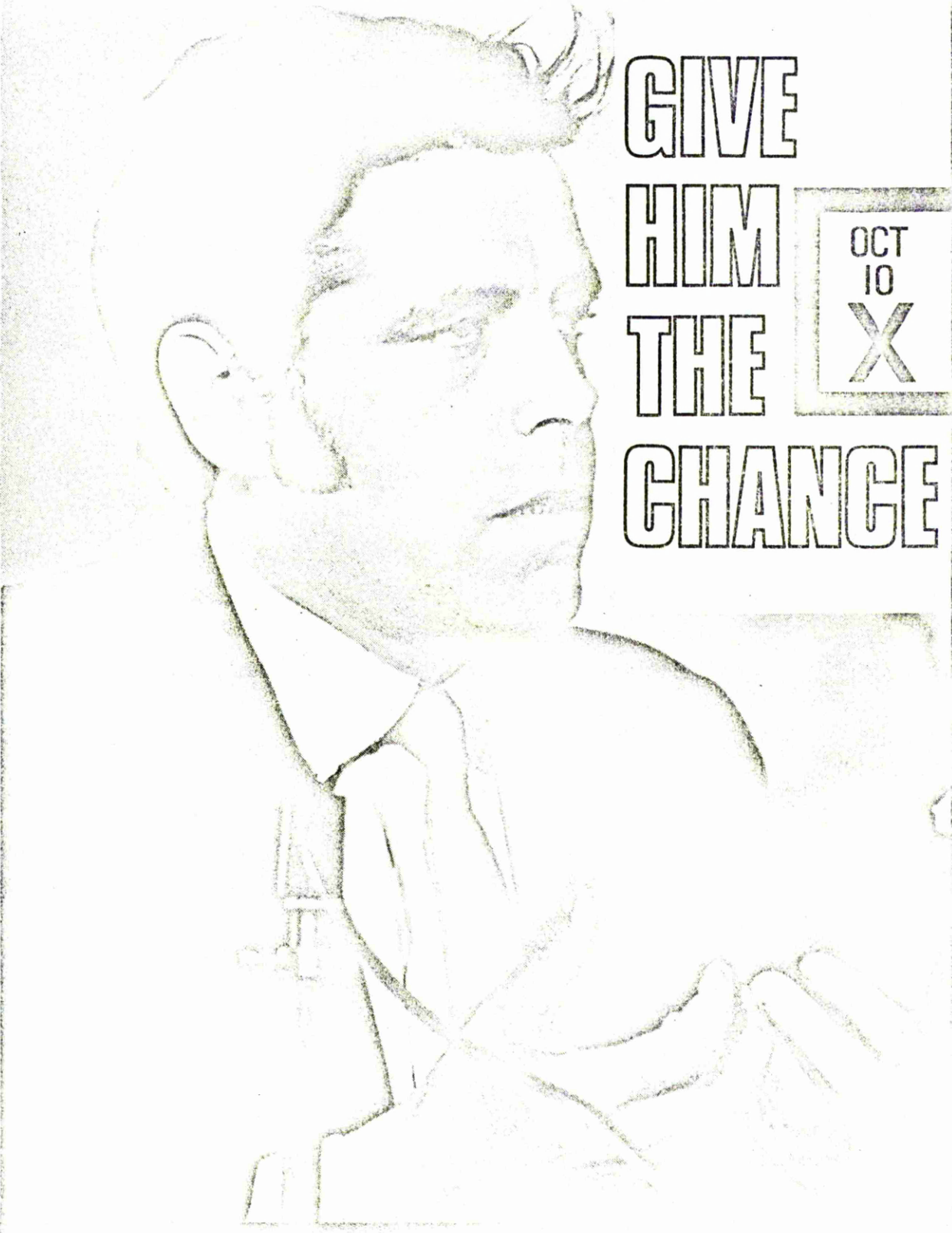
**Join our Party or Young Communist League  
Help to smash the Tory attacks. Help to build a better  
future for Scotland and for Britain.**

Come along to our Rally in the City Hall on 17th October, at 2 p.m.  
(Details overleaf)

Appendix 31

'Man for the Job', election leaflet for Jimmy Reid, October 1974.

# MAN FOR THE JOB



GIVE  
HIM  
THE  
CHANGE

OCT  
10  
X

Vote for Jimmy Reid  
Your Communist Candidate



# HOW TO BEAT THE GLOOM AND DOOM

I was reading in the press the other day that Lord Stokes, Chairman of British Leyland, has a salary of £48,650 a year – he gets more in one week than two old age pensioners get in a year.

Yet Lord Stokes and other tycoons, as well as their political representatives, Tory and right wing Labour politicians, tell us that we have got to sacrifice to solve Britain's crisis.

In order to get us to agree to this we have got daily doses of gloom and doom. "We're on the brink of disaster" – "the worst slump since the 30's" and so on.

### DEMAND

I will have none of this. True the economy is in deep crisis.

True it can mean slashing attacks on the living standards of your family and mass unemployment.

It is also true that this will depend on the fight inside and outside Parliament.

We need, as never before, an MP who will refuse to accept that

the ordinary people bear the brunt, whose voice will be heard in Parliament and listened to, not only in the constituency but in other towns and cities and in factories, offices and shops throughout the country.

### LOYALTY

An MP who, along with all the best Labour MPs, will demand new policies that strike at the root cause of our economic difficulties, i.e. the stranglehold on our economy by big business, bankers and financiers.

By JIMMY REID

This is why I ask you to vote for me. As an MP I would support, in the House of Commons, policies that are in the interests of the people.

But I can never be driven into any lobby to vote against the people by any party whip.

If you want an MP who will not be silenced, intimidated or bought and whose total loyalty is to working men and women and their families then I ask for your vote.

Join Jimmy at a mass rally

The highlight of the campaign will come on Sunday, October 6th at 3 p.m.

There will be a mass rally in Clydebank Town Hall. It will be addressed by Jimmy Reid.

Everybody is welcome to come along and hear the real socialist candidate.

But this is far from being your only chance to hear Jimmy.

### AREA

On the Monday there is a meeting at Linnvale School, starting at 7.30 p.m.

On Tuesday it's the turn of Duntocher Hall and Edinbarnet School, both at 7.30 p.m.

The eve-of-poll rally will be at Clydebank High School on Wednesday at 7.30 p.m.

There will also be other meetings up and down the constituency during the campaign.

Wherever possible, times and places will be announced in the local press or leaflets will be delivered in the area concerned.

THE PLACE  
Central Dunbartonshire

THE DATE  
October 10th, 1974

THE MAN:

REID, JAMES

X

Communist

## Appendix 32

Bulletin, A Monthly News Sheet for Engineering Workers,

AUEW Voice

No. 1 July 1975

No. 2 August 1975

No. 3 September 1975.

# BULLETIN

July 1975

Price 1p

A Monthly News Sheet for Engineering Workers

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## CRUCIAL ELECTIONS ARE COMING UP IN THE AUEW (ENGINEERING SECT)

Personalities aside - why not look at some of the main issues involved. Which questions are uppermost in the minds of engineering workers at this time?

### W A G E S

A record 25% increase in prices over the last twelve months makes the workers pay packet top priority in order to at least keep up with the cost of living; yet we have actually suffered a fall in real earnings.

Over the past year, average take-home pay, (and this is what matters when it comes to paying the bills), of a married man with two children of school age with average tax deductions, has only risen by 20.8% - 4.2% below the rise in prices. Now the Government wants us to accept even more cuts in our living standards. Wages are to be held down to 10% but no action is proposed about prices. The Labour Government seems to have forgotten the lessons of the past - that wage freeze is totally unacceptable to working people.

Press and T.V. experts deliberately mislead us by blaming wages for the Nation's inflationary ailments. They fail to point to the real causes which are soaring profits - low investments and unequal distribution of the Nation's wealth.

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Trade Unionists are absolutely right to fight against wages being eroded along with resultant cuts in living standards. The AUEW can be proud of its stand in fighting against wage control and in defence of free collective bargaining. Members should therefore, when casting their vote, look for and support those candidates who have argued for this stand.

A S K - where do the so-called 'moderates' stand?

### J O B S

All workers desire job security but the current trend does not help this desire. With the number of unemployed workers now approaching the million mark and still rising, firm policies are needed. The Common Market Commissioners have just announced a plan for 'COLLECTIVE REDUNDANCIES'. Surely what is needed is a plan for 'COLLECTIVE FULL EMPLOYMENT'! Any redundancy plans will affect engineering workers, unless of course, they are resisted by carrying out the AUEW policy for the 'RIGHT TO WORK'.

Pleasant words and resolutions will not keep engineers from the dole queues. It's ACTION not words that will count in showing those in power that workers are not to be cast aside like some old piece of employer's rubbish fit only for the dustbin.

Q U E S T I O N ? - where do the so-called 'moderates' stand on this issue? ACCEPT OR CHALLENGE?

### H O U R S

Increased prices can devour wage increases, but reductions in hours of work are a permanent gain. Too long have there been delays in the fight for a 35-hour week in Engineering!

Engineers are becoming more aware of the importance of shorter hours, and rightly so! Again, where do the so-called 'moderates' stand on this policy? If they have one at all!

### DEMOCRACY

Always a vital issue with the Engineering Union and a proud history to prove it, and without interference from outside forces! The Engineering Union stands four-square on elections and re-election for all officers, together with a rank and file policy making body and final appeal court. The engineers have always resisted outside interference in their internal affairs (Heath found this to his peril), but our enemies never give up and must be taught.

In recent elections for Union officers members were subjected to an unprecedented Press campaign aimed at influencing them in how to cast their vote. National daily newspapers such as the SUN, DAILY EXPRESS, DAILY MAIL etc. and their writers sought to tell members who to vote for. What have they in common with ordinary working class people and why should they take such interest in our affairs? These same newspapers are responsible for misrepresenting our cases when we are involved in strikes in support of jobs or living standards.

The present Postal Ballot system can give enormous power to the Tory press which daily pours out lies and half-truths about the Unions. EXAMINE THE CANDIDATES THAT THEY PROPOGATE AND LIKEWISE THOSE THAT THEY OPPOSE.

The other source of interference in the Engineering Union's affairs is that of the Courts. The AUEW is being dragged through the Courts by members who are not prepared to use and abide by the Union's normal democratic procedures. Was the Union

subjected to such action when the late Lord Carron used his President's casting vote? NO, the democrats accepted the decision of the Union's Final Appeal Court.

THE LAW AND ITS COURTS NEVER ACT IN THE INTEREST OF TRADE UNION DEMOCRACY AND RIGHTS!

Let there be a strong and independant Union, the key to which is active participation by the rank and file members throughout the country. Together with those members in the factories and Branches let us have those Officials democratically elected by the members and who will carry out the Union's policies and rules. Let there be no 'going my own way' attitudes such as have been experienced in the past.

UNITY IS STRENGTH - UNITY IS STRENGTH - UNITY IS STRENGTH  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
NEWS AND EVENTS

POSTAL BALLOT ELECTORAL ROLL -- if you are not on your Branch Roll you will not be able to vote! Make sure you register by no later than 19th August, you should then receive a postal ballot paper in the October elections.

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23 Kelvin Hill, Basingstoke, Hants.

# BULLETIN

No 2 1975

A Monthly News Sheet for Engineering Workers

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## OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE

During the past month we have once more seen outside interference in the affairs of the AUEW. In the case concerning Divisional Organiser 21, Brother Brown has shown himself quite unwilling to accept the democratically decided rules of the AUEW and its Final Appeal Court decisions, and after taking the issue to the Courts, has obtained the judgement he was seeking.

It has not mattered to him that under the AUEW rules Final Appeal Court alone has the responsibility for the interpretation of rule, and not the Courts, who are notorious for ruling against the Trade Unions.

The judgement made upholds the disgracefully conducted October 1972 ballot and declares invalid the further ballot in March 1973 which Brother Ron Halverson won by a substantial majority and which has not been the subject of any complaint.

Moreover, it overturns decisions of the Final Appeal Court, who after seeing correspondence not made available to them previously, declared that Brother Halverson should be reinstated to his position as Divisional Organiser 21

## SO - WHO ARE THE DEMOCRATS ?

When a worker joins the AUEW (Engineering Section) he or she has to complete a proposition form, a requirement of the form is that the applicant agrees to abide by the rules of the Union, yet in recent months we have seen numerous cases where members have deliberately flouted the rules and broght the Courts into the affairs of the Union.

What do Brother Brown and his friends say to this ? Do they stand by the Rule Book or not ? It seems that they are democrats of convenience - democrats only when decisions suit them, and clearly contemptuous of the wishes of the members !

## NOT ONLY THE COURTS

Of course Brother Brown has not been on his own in this. He had the support we have come to expect from certain newspapers,

papers and journalists. Like Bernard Levin of "The Times", who is well known as a 'friend' of the trade union movement. Have you noticed that it is the journalists, like Levin, who are most hostile to the trade unions who then give their support to people like Brother Brown and his friends. Incidentally, Brother Ron Halverson is still waiting patiently for 'The Times' to publish a letter refuting the false allegations made by Levin (now published 7.8.75 - 2 weeks late !)

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THE COMMON MARKET - What they now say

\*'Daily Mirror' - 30th July, 1975

'When Britain joined the Common Market our car chiefs claimed that a new era was dawning for British cars ..... a market of 250 million would be opening for us ..... It sounded great but it has not worked out like that. Imports into Britain are now running at 30% but our share of imports into the EEC is derisory".

Funny that the Mirror should be saying that now! THE TRADE UNIONS WERE SAYING IT BEFORE THE REFERENDUM

\*British Steel Corporation now say that because of falling demand the workforce in the industry will have to be cut by 40,000. But the demand for British Steel is there - only Common Market regulations insist that we take steel in from other EEC countries. Steel imports have risen from 2,781 thousand tonnes in 1972, to 3,807 in 1974 and an estimated 4,576 for 1975. Whilst our steel workers are thrown on the dole, we are forced by the Brussels bureaucrats to import steel from other EEC countries.

MORE ON STEEL

Brother Boyd newly elected General Secretary of the AUEW (Eng. Section), was recently reported as saying that he welcomed the investment by British Steel in South Africa. It seems that he chooses to ignore the fact that this is contrary to his Union's policy and also against the Labour Manifesto. Perhaps he is thinking of borrowing a few ideas from the South Africans for the running of the General Office at Parkham Road.



UNEMPLOYMENT - Union Policy the answer

Already unemployment has reached the 1 million mark and most predictions are that it will be  $1\frac{1}{4}$  million in the near future. Are the dole queues of the Thirties to become familiar sights onee more?

NOT IF WE FIGHT BACK, as did the lads at UCS and elsewhere! THIS IS YET ANOTHER REASON WHY IT IS IMPORTANT WHO WE VOTE FOR IN THE FORTHCOMING AUEW ELECTIONS ! Is it to be those who are prepared to organise ACTION against redundancies, or those who just mouth slogans and do nothing?

The Employers and the Government obviously see unemployment as a means of controlling the Trade Unions, in addition the Government (contrary to their election promises) has introduced wage control, limiting wage increases to £6.00 a week.

CONTINUING TO BLAME WORKERS FOR INFLATION WON'T WASH ! It is Government policy that has led to rises in VAT, electricity, gas, fares, postal charges and many other price increases. The AUEW is opposed to wage restraint despite what Brother Boyd says in the monthly journal.

UNION POLICY DEMANDS HIGHER INVESTMENT AND LOWER EXPORT OF BRITISH CAPITAL, TOGETHER WITH HIGHER WAGES FOR BRITAIN'S WORKERS!

THIS IS A FURTHER REASON TO VOTE FOR THOSE CANDIDATES WHO STAND BY THE UNION'S POLICIES.

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ARE YOU REGISTERED ON THE AUEW  
ELECTORAL ROLL? THE LAST DATE FOR  
REGISTRATION IS 19TH AUGUST

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UNION (M A L ) ADMINISTRATION

The new AUEW General Secretary and other so-called 'moderates' are now making a song and dance about the bad administration and low finance of the Union. It is therefore timely to remind members that the previous General Secretary was also a 'moderate' and indeed the AUEW Executive Council has a long record of having a 'moderate' majority. The results of 'moderate' decision making over the years

has in many instances resulted in the wasteful use of the membership's money, such as the purchase of the General Office computer (replacing cheaper and quicker manual methods), white elephant buildings (not to mention book matches and ball pens) and the excessively costly monthly Journal (£111,037 in 1974) which leaves much to be desired as a means of communication with the membership.

THE DEMOCRACY AND UNITY OF THE AUEW AS A FIGHTING BODY  
CAMPAIGNING IN THE INTERESTS OF ALL MEMBERS IS NOW IN THE  
MELTING POT.

The 'moderates' are using the capitalist press and anti-Trade Union journals, together with the Courts, to undermine the AUEW democracy.

THIS IS YET ANOTHER REASON WHY YOU SHOULD VOTE FOR CANDIDATES  
WHO MAINTAIN THAT THE RANK AND FILE MEMBERS ARE THE ONLY  
PEOPLE WITH THE RIGHT TO DECIDE HOW THEIR UNION SHOULD BE RUN !

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USE YOUR VOTE IN THE OCTOBER POSTAL BALLOT.!!!!!!!

Vote for the progressive candidates :-

Assistant General Secretary	.....	BROTHER KEN BRETT
National Organiser	.....	BROTHER PHIL HIGGS
Executive Council		
Division No 1	.....	BROTHER JIMMY REID
Assistant Divisional		
Organiser No 4	.....	BROTHER HARRY SHEPHERD

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WAGES POLICY

Hear HUGH SCANLON and JIMMY REID

Come to a meeting in CITY HALLS, CANDLERIGGS, near Glasgow Cross,

SATURDAY, 6th SEPTEMBER, 1975

Doors open 9-45 a.m.

Meeting commences 10-15 a.m.

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23 Kelvin Hill, Basingstoke, Hants

Work-gate meeting of Alliance  
with Jimmy Reid. Date?

# BULLETIN

No. 3 1975

March - June 1975 - 12-55

A Monthly News Sheet for Engineering Workers *Palmer St.*

## TUC 1975

All the decisions have now been made and once again the AUEW maintained its principled stand on policy determined by the rank and file National Committees for Free Collective Bargaining and the Right to Work. The official view of the AUEW is that there is nothing new in the 'anti-inflation' measures which are now being applied. Will history repeat itself? Especially as the authors of the policy appear to have little faith in the so-called anti-inflation measures providing any real or lasting solution.

TIME WILL TELL ! WE ALL KNOW THE ANSWER—DON'T WE !

## UNEMPLOYMENT AND YOUTH

The serious matter of unemployed school-leavers was voiced by Hugh Scanlon with his potent comment "I do not think that this generation will tolerate the indignities and privations that my generation had to".

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## PANORAMA DEMOCRACY ?

Again the Establishment machinery and its news media are slipping into well-oiled gear ! The BBC PANORAMA programme on Monday, 1st September (first day of TUC week) showed a hypocritical film on democracy in the AUEW (Engineering Section). Far from being balanced, as claimed, it was dominated throughout by prominent right-wing members (moderates !) from the Midlands area who were allowed to air their views without challenge. The only opposing view was that afforded to the Union President, Hugh Scanlon, toward the end of the programme, but he was harangued by interviewer Dimbleby who was apparently displeased with Scanlon's comments. (Incidentally—was democrat Dimbleby elected or did Dad influence his appointment ?)

The Branch meeting shown contained a handful of members with appropriate remarks from the commentator. One wonders why they did not

film the same Branch in February this year when it returned some 600 votes for the right-wing (moderate) candidate in the election for District President. Many Branches would dearly like to know the formula for achieving such an attendance and vote at a Branch meeting !

The PANORAMA programme had three objectives—to attack and try to ridicule the AUEW's democracy and decision-making, especially in view of the Union's opposition to wage restraint; to criticise Scanlon's position as elected President and Union spokesman; and to question the manner in which rank and file members are elected as AUEW Delegates to the TUC.

Only the merest passing reference was made to those Unions that do not elect at all, or elect for life, and no reference whatsoever was made about the undemocratic structure of business organisations where small groups of shareholders can and DO take decisions which play havoc with industry, the jobs and lives of thousands of people.

#### SPECIAL TREATMENT FOR THE AUEW

Is it not strange that the AUEW is always singled out for such treatment? Would this have been so if the late Lord Carron had still been President and applying Carron's 'Law' ?

When the Establishment and its mouthpieces show such continued interest in the Union it is clearly time for all members to look deeply at the real cause of their concern !

FURTHER IMPORTANT BALLOTS IN THE AUEW TAKE PLACE IN OCTOBER—IS THIS THE REAL OBJECT OF THEIR ATTENTION—AS IN MARCH THIS YEAR ????????

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#### STRANGE BEDFELLOWS !

Past experience shows to what extremes the so-called 'moderates' will go in using the free resources of the media in order to achieve their objectives, even though this means the undermining of Union democracy.

The traditional alleged friends of the Trade Unions are again advising the members of the AUEW how to vote in the October postal ballot.

When certain highly paid TV pundits and newspaper columnists say their piece in support of 'moderate candidates' ask the questions: What do they stand for ? Who are their friends and why do they get such free publicity ? Bear in mind the cost, when a 20-second TV commercial costs several hundred pounds and comparable publicity in a national daily newspaper is similarly priced !

IS THIS A CASE OF HE WHO PAYS THE PIPER WILL CALL THE TUNE ?

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OCTOBER ELECTIONS    OCTOBER ELECTIONS    OCTOBER  
ELECTIONS    OCTOBER

Make sure you read the election addresses of the candidates which are available at your Branch. Last but NOT LEAST--  
USE YOUR VOTE !

VOTE FOR THE PROGRESSIVE CANDIDATES LISTED IN THIS BULLETIN.

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AUEW OCTOBER POSTAL BALLOTS

**ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY – KEN BRETT**

37 years' continuous membership. Branch Officer from 1944 including Branch Secretary 1953 to 1968. 13 years' membership of the Manchester District Committee. Shop Steward and Convener. AEU Delegate to TUC 1963 to 1967. Elected as Assistant General Secretary in January 1968.

**NATIONAL ORGANISER – PHIL HIGGS**

25 years' membership. Shop Steward and Convener for 13 years. Chairman of TUC Regional Education Advisory Committee. Vice-Chairman of the Governors of the Coventry Technical College. Member of the Coventry Employment Committee. Currently Convener of Rolls-Royce Ltd., Coventry.

USE YOUR VOTE

**EXECUTIVE COUNCILMAN, DIVISION ONE—JIMMY REID**

Joined the AEU at 16 years of age and has 27 years membership.  
 Was Secretary of Glasgow Junior Workers Committee of the AEU  
 and was a leader in the Clydeside Apprentice Strike in 1952.  
 AEU National Youth Conference Delegate.  
 Convener and Shop Steward at Polar Engines.  
 Glasgow District Committee Delegate.  
 Divisional and National Committee Delegate. TUC Delegate.  
 Convener and Shop Steward at Marathon UCS.  
 Quality of leadership proven during the UCS WORK IN.

**ASSISTANT DIVISIONAL ORGANISER, DIVISION FOUR—  
H. SHERRIFF**

Continuous membership from the age of 16. Involved in Apprentice  
 Strike in 1937. Shop Stewards' Convener. District Committee Delegate.  
 Branch Secretary (25 years). Elected ADO Division Four in 1972, the  
 office he now occupies.

**STOP PRESS—BBC CENSORSHIP**

We now learn that the BBC "Panorama" film unit engaged in a lengthy  
 interview (one hour !) with John Tocher, AUEW Divisional Organiser  
 for Greater Manchester, but none of this interview was broadcast. Had  
 it been broadcast it would have been in conflict with the entire tone of  
 the programme. Viewers were denied the opportunity of hearing opinions  
 which conflicted with the image of our Union which the BBC was pre-  
 senting.

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23 Kelvin Hill, Basingstoke, Hants.

Appendix 35

The Blackpool Agreement.

THE CONFEDERATION OF SHIPBUILDING AND ENGINEERING UNIONS  
CONFERENCE OF SHIPBUILDING DELEGATES  
(BRITISH SHIPBUILDERS)

ON

Tuesday, 4th September, 1979

Commencing 2.00 p.m.

at the

NORBRECK CASTLE HOTEL, BLACKPOOL



## REPORT

British Shipbuilders, in negotiations with union officials, advised of the measures it would take to mitigate the impact of its restructuring programme.

Details were given during negotiations between the Corporation and the National Officials of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee and local Shop Stewards at meetings held in Blackpool.

The Board Chairman, Admiral Sir Anthony Griffin, after a very full and detailed presentation on the state of the industry, said he believed merchant shipbuilding was at crisis point and thousands of jobs were under threat. There was a desperate need to show customers that the industry was united and that promised delivery dates would be honoured.

During the talks, British Shipbuilders officials repeated their previous statement that the 6,000 job losses throughout the industry could be met by natural wastage, inter-yard transfers, a sensible ban on recruitment and voluntary redundancy. The objective would be to maintain employment as far as possible and avoid adding to the social problems of the Shipbuilding Regions.

Following the negotiations with the trade union representatives, who had made it clear that capacity must be retained for the future, it was agreed as follows:-

1. Until all alternative avenues had been exhausted, there would be no compulsory redundancies declared and then not without further consultations with the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee.
2. Scotstoun yard, part of Govan, will be put on a care and maintenance basis and transferred at the end of the present programme to Yarrow Shipbuilders, who will possibly utilise the facilities for the purpose of warship-building. Should, however, the merchant shipbuilding market recover to the point at which Scotstoun yard can be utilised in the production of merchant ships, then any employees transferred from Scotstoun to Yarrow or elsewhere within British Shipbuilders will have first refusal of jobs back at Scotstoun.
3. A number of vacancies at Yarrow and Barclay Curle will immediately be offered to redundant men and women from other yards.
4. Adult recruitment to all Clyde yards will cease. First refusal of consequential vacancies will be offered to men and women affected by restructuring proposals for the Clyde.
5. In consultation with the Shop Stewards in the various yards, volunteers for redundancy will be called for at the yards on the Clyde affected by the proposals.

6. At Scott's of Bowling, the labour force will be reduced as work runs out. The yard will then cease shipbuilding operations and will be put on a care and maintenance basis pending the outcome of a tender submitted for Ministry of Defence work.
7. At Cartdyke, shipbuilding operations will also cease but berths will be retained against possible future workload.
8. Engineering work on the lower Clyde will be concentrated at Kincaid's. In the short term, however, some work will continue at Scott's Engineering on refit contracts. For the longer term, should British Shipbuilders decide to stop all activity in engineering at Scott's further consultations will take place with the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee.
9. Although the Robb Caledon yard at Dundee will have no further shipbuilding workload at the end of its present programme, following representations from the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee, British Shipbuilders retain the yard with the potential to re-open it for the construction of merchant ships in the event that the market place, availability of capital and adequate working agreement permit a successful operation. Meanwhile a drive to find alternative viable employment for the Dundee yard will be launched.

To this end, a joint working party, comprising British Shipbuilders Headquarters staff, representatives of the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee and lay representatives, will be formed immediately. It will have as its remit the responsibility of examining the possible introduction of shiprepair and offshore oil related work, before the end of the present programme of work.

10. The Corporation are decided that the future of Cammell Laird lies mainly in warshipbuilding and refitting. Additionally, the Corporation will maintain and intensify its efforts, in conjunction with the Company, to obtain additional offshore fabrication work. In the short term, it is intended that other work may be generated from other sources. e.g.:-

- An additional merchant shipbuilding order;
- Subcontracting from other sources, e.g. specialist warshipbuilders.

However, it is clear that numbers employed at Cammell Laird will have to be considerably reduced. British Shipbuilders propose that this be secured by:-

- An immediate embargo on all adult recruitment;
- By calling, in consultation with the Shop Stewards, for voluntary redundancies;
- By negotiating at once arrangements to encourage Cammell Laird employees to transfer (under the terms of the Transfer Agreement finally concluded between British Shipbuilders and the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee) to other specialist warshipbuilding yards - in particular, Vickers and Vosper Thornycroft. These employees shall have the first option to return in the event of vacancies occurring at Cammell Lairds.

3.

- As a consequence of potential overload in certain departments, emerging by about late 1980, by investigating, together with trade union representatives, the need for retraining within Cammell Laird's to meet their forecast needs and to retain the traditional skills within the industry.

It is intended that the measures described above will yield the reduction in jobs required by British Shipbuilders restructuring programme.

11. Adult recruitment on the Tyne and Wear will cease forthwith. First refusal of consequential vacancies will be offered to men and women affected by restructuring proposals at Sunderland Shipbuilders.

In consultation with Shop Stewards in Sunderland Shipbuilders, volunteers for redundancy will be called for.

Alongside the retention of the outfitting facilities at North Sands yard, the large building berth will be placed on a care and maintenance basis in order that it can be utilised in the event of an upturn in the appropriate market.

12. At Smith's Dock South Bank yard, the planned reduction in jobs will be secured by placing an embargo on adult recruitment and allowing natural wastage to take place. If necessary, although it is thought unlikely, volunteers for redundancy may be called for. At Haverton Hill, further discussions will be held with the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee.
13. At Doxford's Engine Works, the local management and trade union representatives are in the process of resolving their problems through the acceptance of voluntary redundancies and work sharing.
14. Detailed consultations on the implementation of the restructuring programme will begin immediately in each yard affected.
15. British Shipbuilders promised to join with the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee in an approach to the Government, in an attempt to amend the shipbuilding redundancy payments scheme in such a way that the reduction in benefits incorporated in the present scheme from the age of 62 onwards is deleted.
16. The Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee asked British Shipbuilders if they supported the 22 points incorporated in the resolution passed at their delegate conference. The Chairman of British Shipbuilders responded by saying that the majority of the points had the full support of British Shipbuilders - indeed it had been pursuing many of them for months - and a joint approach to the Government on certain of the agreed points would be sensible. British Shipbuilders will give all of the 22 points their consideration and, as a matter of urgency, will reply in writing to the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee.

The Corporation were continuing to pursue urgently with the European Economic Community - as were the trade unions - what financial aid should be available to assist the restructuring programme.

British Shipbuilders tabled proposals setting out the terms of a transfer scheme to apply to men and women prepared to move to other yards beyond their daily travelling distance.

British Shipbuilders trust that the measures outlined above to deal with the proposed restructuring of the industry will lead to an immediate return to normal working which will create the conditions in which customer confidence will be restored on the basis of united action and a united sense of purpose between management and workforce.

#### RESOLUTION

This conference, having received a full and detailed report of the results of the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee's representation to British Shipbuilders, accepts that the spirit of the resolution passed at the delegate conference held on Thursday 23rd August at Newcastle has been vigorously pursued.

Further, this conference accepts that the main elements of the resolution regarding retention of capacity and the avoidance of the need for unwarranted compulsory redundancies has, to a great extent, been achieved.

The Conference, therefore, endorses the report of the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee and, in consequence, agrees to the removal of the overtime ban and other sanctions applied arising from the British Shipbuilders statement on restructuring made on Thursday, 16th August.

The Conference now calls upon the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee to vigorously pursue the 22 point plan on the future of the industry as detailed in the resolution passed on the 23rd August.

Finally, the conference congratulates those members who responded to the proposals of British Shipbuilders in such a way which assisted the Shipbuilding Negotiations Committee in achieving an acceptable and orderly transitional plan to deal with the immediate problems of the industry.

## Appendix 36

Note on and index to Scottish Record Office and University of  
Glasgow Archives, UCS Transcripts, Vol. 1-3.

Note on Scottish Record Office and University of Glasgow Archives, UCS transcripts, Vols. 1-3.

The set of tapes from which these transcripts were produced were made available to the writer from James Reid who is custodian of these on behalf of the UCS co-ordinating committee. Copies of the original cassettes on which the recordings were made were taken independently by the Scottish Record Office and the writer who agreed to provide both the SRO and the University of Glasgow with a set of transcripts which are now available for public access. The work of producing the transcripts was carried out over two and a half years. Latterly the writer was assisted by a grant over twelve months from the Manpower Services Commission which enabled Margaret Pitt-Watson to be employed on a full-time basis and participate in the work of preparing the transcripts.

The tape recordings were originally made by the publicity committee of the co-ordinating committee and were intended to provide the basis for reports for the Shop Stewards Bulletins. It was realised by the UCS Shop Stewards, however, that the recordings would have a wider social historical interest. The material is comprised as follows:-

- a) Mass meetings of UCS workers
- b) Shop Stewards meetings
- c) Press interviews, television and radio programmes on UCS.

Most of the important mass meetings were recorded and many crucial shop stewards meetings. The radio and television programmes which projected the spokesmen of UCS workers onto a national arena may be seen as supplemented by transcripts and sound recordings of documentaries on UCS in the volume of BBC TV news transcripts. Items a) and b)

2.

above which provide a record of the 'internal' discussions among the UCS workers amount to about 45 hours of recordings. Item c) together with the BBC TV news recordings discussed in the following appendix amounts to approximately 20 hours and provides a record of the public statements by all the major participants in the UCS affair. The major absence is comprehensive recordings from the daily meetings of the co-ordinating committee which was the inner core of the UCS shop stewards organisation.

Nevertheless, despite this gap the whole body of recordings provides a unique source of primary data from which it was possible to attempt to reconstruct the complex day-to-day unfolding of events as seen through the eyes of workers in struggle. Therefore it comprises an important documentary record the value of which is perhaps enhanced by the fact that it was the workers themselves who made the recordings rather than an outsider. The full and frank nature of the discussions which are recorded and indeed, the urgency of the conditions with which such discussions took place gives the UCS tapes the character of a highly authentic reflection of the views of the active participants in the struggle.

Some comment on the problems encountered in transcribing the tapes is necessary as in parts there are gaps where the recording was inaudible for one reason or another. The actual recordings were made on a cassette recorder under far from ideal sound recording conditions. Often participants would be speaking from the back of a room or shouting from the body of a mass meeting. Sometimes the cassette recorder was incorrectly adjusted resulting in distorting levels of volume. For this reason two tapes were not transcribable.

As a result each hour of tape transcript took many hours to produce. The editing process was one of preserving rather than excluding as much of the contents as possible. The transcripts were not rendered in standard English form except insofar as the speakers grammatical construction followed this. Some attempt to render the Clydeside accent in a recognisable manner was also made although this was perhaps less than wholly satisfactory. However, a close familiarity with the nuances of the Glaswegian accent was a help in transcription, a factor which defeated an earlier attempt to do the work of transcription by the SRO. More important in ensuring accuracy was an extensive background knowledge of the people, events and places which provided the context for Upper Clyde Shipbuilders.

So far as the individual speakers identities were concerned, often these had to be identified by their voice alone. While this did not present a problem so far as identifying the leading shop stewards was concerned, departmental stewards, who might or might not be continuing representatives of their section, were a problem. Individual workers except when they were either well-known or referred to and identified by either themselves or other speakers were impossible to identify. It was felt that accurate naming of speakers from the co-ordinating committee, that is about 40 persons in all, was important. A former member of the committee, Gerry Ross, assisted the writer over a period of two months in the final revision of the transcripts in order to tackle this problem. Ideally, however, it would have been desirable to be able to pinpoint each speaker, his political background, industrial experience, departmental affiliation and so on.



Finally many of the original cassettes, like the BBC TV material discussed, were undated. It was necessary to cross-reference the content of the tapes with press reports throughout the period of the work-in in order to be able to pinpoint precise dates. In a few instances there were real difficulties in ensuring accuracy. It is hoped, however, that the UCS transcripts have been rendered in a form which will be suitable for research in other areas in the future, in particular, a more extensive socio-linguistic investigation into language and class conflict. It was with this possibility in mind that effort was made to render this unique body of material in a form which eventually would be useful beyond the immediate confines of the present study.

INDEX

UCS TAPES

<u>DATE</u>	<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>VOLUME</u>	<u>TAPE NO.</u>	<u>ORIGINAL CASSETT</u>
12.8.71	Shop Stewards Meeting		1A	1A
24.8.71	Shop Stewards Meeting		1A	1B
24.8.71	Shop Stewards Meeting contd.		1B	1B
9.9.71	Interview with Ken Douglas		2B	23B
2.9.71	Shop Stewards Meeting		2A	23A
6.9.71	Full Shop Stewards Meeting, Reid reportback		2A + B	23A
23.9.71	Full Shop Stewards Meeting		3A	23B
23.9.71	Press Statement		3A	6
24.9.71	Mass Meeting		3A	6
29.9.71	Joint Shop Stewards Committee Meeting, Clydebank		3B	6
29.9.71	First Conference of Shipbuilding and Repair Stewards, Clydebank Canteen		4A + B	2
29.9.71	Stenhouse/Confed. Meeting, Co-ordinating Committee Report		5A	2
30.9.71	Report to Full Shop Stewards Committee on Stenhouse		6A	21
30.9.71	Co-ordinating Committee Meeting		6B	21
1.10.71	Mass Meeting, Clydebank		6B	21 and 26

DATE                      CONTENTS                      TAPE NO.                      ORIGINAL CASSETTE

6.10.71	Full Shop Stewards Meeting, Reportback of Davies	7A	26
8.10.71	Mass Meeting, Linthouse	7B	26
11.10.71	Joint Shop Stewards Co-ordinating Committee Reportback, North British Hotel	8A	7A and B
11.10.71	Joint Shop Stewards Co-ordinating Committee Press Conference	8A	7B
15.10.71	Full Shop Stewards Meeting, Report on National Confed.	8A + B	7B
15.10.71	Mass Meeting, Linthouse	8B	7B
3.11.71	Shop Stewards Meeting, Clydebank Canteen	9A	19A
4.11.71	Mass Meeting Reportback, Clydebank	9A + B	19A and B

28.10.71	Shop Stewards Meeting, Clydebank Canteen	19A	7 and 20A
16.11.71	Shop Stewards Meeting	10B	25A
16.11.71	Shop Stewards Meeting	10B	25A
17.11.71	Mass Meeting, Clydebank	10B	25B
23.12.71	Full Shop Stewards' Reportback on Davies, Clydebank Canteen	11A	20B
24.1.72	Shop Stewards Meeting, Clydebank	11A	9A and B
27.1.72	Shop Stewards Meeting, Clydebank	11B	9B and 8A and B
28.1.72	Shop Stewards Meeting, Clydebank	12A	10A
31.1.72	Mass Meeting, Linthouse	12B	10B
4.2.72	Shop Stewards Meeting, Clydebank Canteen	12B	10A
13.3.72	Shop Stewards Meeting, Clydebank	13A	11A
5.4.72	Full Joint Shop Stewards Meeting	13A + B	11A and B
7.4.72	Mass Meeting, Clydebank	14A	24A
1.5.72	Shop Stewards Meeting, Clydebank	14B	24B
1.6.72	Shop Stewards Meeting, Clydebank	15A	12A
8.6.72	Shop Stewards Meeting, Clydebank	15A + B	12A and B
9.6.72	Mass Meeting, Linthouse	16A	13A
10.7.72	Shop Stewards Meeting, Linthouse	16A	13B
10.7.72	Mass Meeting	16A	13B

DATECONTENTS VOLUME 3TAPE NO.ORIGINAL CASSETT

16.8.72	Clydebank bonus and report on Govan agreement	16B + 17A	14B
18.8.72	Mass Meeting, Linthouse	17A	15A
22.8.72	Govan Shipbuilders Mass Meeting	17A	15A
24.8.72	Full Shop Stewards Meeting	17B	15A
31.8.72	Shop Stewards Meeting, Linthouse	18A	15B
4.9.72	Shop Stewards - Govan Shipbuilders	18A	5A
15.9.72	Wages Negotiations, Clydebank Canteen	18A + 18B	5A and B (N
16.9.72	Shop Stewards Meeting - Govan Agreement	19A	16A
16.9.72	Linthouse Reportback on Wages Negotiations	19A	5B
18.9.72	Mass Meeting	24A	16A
21.9.72	Mass Meeting	24B	16B
2.10.72	Finishing Trades Meeting, Lyceum	19A + B	22A and B
9.10.72	Mass Meeting, Marathon	20A	17
9.10.72	Press Conference	20A	17
16.11.72	UCS Victory Celebration	20A + B	18 (NT)
July '72	Reid and Roy Grantham TV discussion with Magnus Magnusson	21A	14A
Sept '72	TV discussion Douglas, Alexander, Eden, Robens with Ludovic Kennedy 'What happens now?'	21A	23
3.12.72	BBC 'Its your line' with Jimmy Reid and Robin Day	21B	4A and B

<u>DATE</u>	<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>TAPE NO.</u>	<u>ORIGINAL CASSETTE</u>
May '72	Meeting on Industrial Relations Act in Rosevale called by LGDTU	22A	3A and B
1972	Roy Hay Glasgow News, interview with Jimmy Reid	23A	-
14.9.72	Shop Stewards Meeting, Govan Agreement	24A	16A
18.9.72	Mass Meeting	24A	16A
21.9.72	Mass Meeting	24B	16B
1.11.71	2nd Conference for West of Scotland Stewards on Unemployment, Rosevale.	25A	27

(NF): Not transcribed.

Tape Nos. refer to University of Glasgow set of UCS tapes.

Original Cassette refers to the Scottish Record Office set of UCS tapes.

## Appendix 37

Note on and index to BBC TV News, UCS compilation.

Notes on BBC TV News, UCS compilation

The transcripts provided of BBC TV News items concerning UCS were prepared from recordings made by the writer, assisted by John Foster and Lee Brown at the headquarters of BBC Scotland in Glasgow. The recording work was carried out over a two month period and transcription was conducted in the following twelve months. This material provides a record of the public events and pronouncements by major political and industrial spokesmen concerning UCS over the period of June 1971 to October 1972.

The material was located in the BBC archive and consists of the recordings made by outside broadcast crews for insertion in Scottish and nationwide news broadcasts. It therefore comprises mainly of short interviews and comments of 173 minutes duration. These are kept by the BBC for 'flashback' purposes should another major news story break on a related theme. They are not therefore a comprehensive collection of all the material made by BBC outside broadcast units on UCS, nor are the longer unedited original recordings available with only one important fortuitous exception of the Rosevale shop stewards meeting in August 1971. Furthermore, transcripts of the news presenters 'contextualising' statements are not available and nor is there any record of the placing of the UCS items in relation to other news items. Again, it is not always certain which material was sent out over national as against purely Scottish news networks although where there is clear evidence that this occurred it is indicated in the index. Attempts were made to obtain similar material from Scottish Television Limited (STV) but the management proved unhelpful. It was subsequently discovered that all their current affairs material covering this period has been destroyed by



the company. Thus the hope that a more extensive analysis of the role of the television media in the UCS crisis might be conducted proved not to be possible for the above reasons. Nevertheless, in terms of the present study the Volume of BBC transcripts which was produced is an important documentary supplement to the transcripts of the UCS tapes.

BBC TV NEWS INDEX, UCS

<u>Reel No.</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Serial No.</u>	<u>Date</u>
Reel 1	Current Account UCS Special		18.6.71
Reel 2	Tuesday Documentary - 'The Fight for Clydeside' (BBC Transcript)		21.9.71
Reel 3			
<u>BBC Scotland</u>	<u>BBC National</u>		
	N.1.1. Ken Douglas, Steward		14.6.71
	N.1.2. Davies		14.6.71
	No1.3. Joe Black		14.6.71
	N.1.4. McGarvey		N.D.
	N.1.5. Joe Black		21.6.71
N.1.10.	N.1.6. Dickie, Airlie	G71/104 S3 cw	17.6.71
	N.1.7. Liddle	G71/117 S5 cw	24.6.71
N.1.9.	N.1.8. Liquidator	G71/101 S4 (c)	15.6.71
	N.1.9. Liquidator, Steward		15.6.71
	N.1.10. Reid, Airlie		29.7.71
	N.1.11. Reid		29.7.71
N.1.36.	N.1.12 Dickie, Davies		3.8.71
N.1.37.	N.1.13 Airlie	G71/157-8 S9 (c)	9.8.71
N.1.35.	N.1.14. Gilmore, Wilson	G71/99 3/994 S2 (c)	4.8.71
	N.1.15 Kelly		9.8.71
	N.1.16 Reid		15.6.71
	N.1.17 Kelly +18		17.8.71
N.1.42.	N.1.19 Liquidator, Creditor, R. McQuattie		
		G71/190/1 S5 & 8	31.8.71
N.1.57.	N.1.20. STUC Inquiry Opening	G71/194(c) S5	1.9.71
	N.1.21. Heath visit		10.9.71
N.1.58.	N.1.22. Heath, Kitson	G71/1162	10.9.71

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<u>Reel 3</u>	<u>News Item</u>	<u>Serial No.</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>BBC Scotland</u>	<u>BBC National</u>		
	N.1.23. Greer, McGarvey	(UC) S7	12.11.71
N.1.15	N.1.24. UCS Demo. Reid, Benn.	G71/114-5(c) S2	23.6.71
N.1.98.	N.1.25. Strathalmond	G72/9	5.1.72
N.1.101.	N.1.26. Airlie, Strathalmond	G72/15	(5).1.72
<u>Reel 4.</u>			
	N.1.27. Davies		3.3.72
	N.1.28. C-Smith		11.3.72
	N.1.29. Chataway		28.4.72
	N.1.30 Chataway		28.4.72
	N.1.31. Airlie, McGarvey		17.5.72
	N.1.32. Reid		28.4.72
N.1.91.	N.1.33. Reid, Marathon	G72/534(c) S10	17.5.72
	N.1.34. Harbin, Reid Agreement		4.8.72
N.1.96.	N.1.35. Harbin on Boilermakers	G72/840(c) S10	4.8.72
	24 Hours Interview Reid, Michelmore	K037220	26.10.72
<u>Reel 5.</u>			
	N.1.36. Davies	NP. 82064	5.10.71
	N.1.37. McGarvey	NP. 02069	5.10.71
	N.1.38. McGarvey	NP. 82188	12.10.71
	N.1.39. Reid	NP. 82189	12.10.71
	N.1.40. Reid	NP. 82191	12.10.71
N.1.68.	N.1.41. Airlie	NP. 82354 G71/219(c) S7	28.9.71
	N.1.42. Reid, Airlie	NP. 82464	11.10.71
	N.1.43. Airlie	NP. 82585	7.10.71
	N.1.44. Harbin	D. 2207208 M	7.8.72
	N.1.45. McGarvey	D. 2487202 M	8.9.72
	N.1.46 Harbin	D. 2777209 M	3.10.72

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<u>Reel 5 (contd)</u>	<u>News Item</u>	<u>Serial No.</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>BBC Scotland</u>	<u>BBC National</u>		
N.1.95.	N.1.47. Marathon	D. 2797212	5.10.72
	N.1.48. Harbin, Reid	D. 2827208 M	8.10.72
N.1.86	N.1.49. Reid	D. 3307172 M G71/1425	26.11.72
<u>Reel 6</u>			
<u>BBC National</u>	<u>BBC Scotland</u>		
	N.1.1. Douglas	G692314 A(c) S4	1969
	N.1.2. Hepper	-	1969-70
	N.1.3. Hepper, Douglas	G691145(c) S4	19.6.69
	N.1.4. Steward - Jarvis Bay	G70/430	10.4.70
		G70/673 S2 (UC)	(1.6.70)
	N.1.5. Hugh Birch - worker	G71 99X	14.6.70
	N.1.6. Douglas	G71/760(c) S4	14.6.71
	N.1.7. Demo and lobby	G71/97-99(UC) S2	14.6.71
			(21.7.71)
	N.1.8. Commentary	G71/96-98	14.6.71
N.1.8.	N.1.9. Liquidator	G71/101 (c) S4	15.6.71
N.1.6.	N.1.10. Dickie, Airlie	G71/103-104(c) S3	17.6.71
	N.1.10A Liquidator	G71/108(c) S4	18.6.71
	N.1.11. Ross, Benn	G71/109(c) S2	18.6.71
	N.1.12. Reid	G71-109(2)	10.8.71
	N.1.13. Airlie	G71/111'B'(c) S3	21.6.71
	N.1.14. Reid, Creditor, J.S. Thomson	G71/111-2(c) S5	21.6.71
<u>Reel 7.</u>			
N.1.24.	N.1.15 UCS Demo.	G71/114-5(c) S2	23.6.71
	N.1.16. Demo. Film - no sound	G71/797	23.6.71

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<u>Reel 7 (contd)</u>	<u>News Item</u>	<u>Serial No.</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>BBC National</u>	<u>BBC Scotland</u>		
	N.1.17. Davies at Glasgow Airport - no sound	G71/118	23.6.71
	N.1.18. Liddle and Tory Councillors	G71/120(c) S2	28.6.71
	N.1.19. W. Ross	-	16.7.71
	N.1.20. Morran, Gilmore, G. Ross, Lawson.	G71/137-8	29.7.71
	N.1.21. Stenhouse, 'Reid in Yard - no sound	G71/1244A	30.9.71
	N.1.22. Reid on 'Takeover'.	G71/977	30.7.71
	N.1.23 Repeat of Gilmore	G71/977	30.7.71
	N.1.24. James Jack	G71/907	16.7.71
	N.1.25 Repeat of Gerry Ross	G71/974	30.7.71
	N.1.26. Included in 27.	G71/142	30.7.71
	N.1.27 Steward at Yard	G71/973	30.7.71
	N.1.28 Men at Govan - no sound	G71/977	30.7.71
	N.1.29. Benn	G71/980(c) S4	30.7.71
	N.1.30. Liquidator Repeat	G71/139-142	30.7.71
	N.1.31. Reid, Douglas, Ramsay	G71/100-101(c) S5	30.7.71
	N.1.32. Dickie, Manager, Gilmore, Reid.	G71/143	2.8.71
	N.1.33. Airlie - Repeat N.1.75.	G71/981	2.8.71
<u>Reel 8.</u>	N.1.33A Demo as Davies arrives	G71/988(c) S2	3.8.71
	N.1.34. Dickie, Jack, Campbell	G71/149	3.8.71
	N.1.35 Wilson	G71/993/4(c) S2	4.8.71
	N.1.36 Reid, Gilmore	G71/995(c) S2	4.8.71
N.1.13.	N.1.37. Airlie	G71/157-8(c) S9	9.8.71
	N.1.38. Reid, repeat N.1.12.	G71/1020(c) S9	10.8.71
	N.1.39. Airlie	G71/161(c) S9	10.8.71

<u>Reel 8 (contd)</u>	<u>News Item</u>	<u>Serial No.</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>BBC National</u>	<u>BBC Scotland</u>		
	N.1.40. Davies, Campbell	G71/988(c) S2	3.8.71
	N.1.41. James Jack STUC Inquiry	G71/1107(c) S5	31.8.71
N.1.19	N.1.42. Liquidator, Creditor	G71/190/1	21.8.71
	N.1.43. STUC Inquiry, Reid	G71/1115	31.8.71
	N.1.44. Liquidator	G71/191	31.8.71
	N.1.45. Repeat 42. Creditor	G71/1108	21.8.71
	N.1.46. Harbin, repeat 95	G72/840(c) S10	4.8.72
<u>Reel 9.</u>			
	N.1.47. Feather	G71/1048	16.8.71
	N.1.48. Jack	G71/1044A	16.8.71
	N.1.49. Feather	G71/164	16.8.71
	N.1.50. Airlie	G71/167	17.8.71
	N.1.51. UCS March, Jack	G71/1057(c) S6	18.8.71
	N.1.52. Eden on Kelly	G71/1067	19.8.71
N.1.109.	N.1.53. Conn O'Neill	G71/187A(c) S9	20.8.71
	N.1.54. Reid, Ramsay, Airlie at Rosevale		10.8.71
	N.1.55. Ramsay, Gilmore	G71/100/101	30.7.71
<u>Reel 10.</u>			
	N.1.56 Mabon	G71/1165	10.9.71
	N.1.57. STUC Inquiry Report	G71/194	1.9.71
	N.1.58. Heath	G71/1162	10.9.71
	N.1.59. Eden	G71/1177	15.9.71
	N.1.60. Stenhouse	G71/1209(c) S9	22.9.71
	N.1.61. Airlie	G71/1213(c) S9	22.9.71
	N.1.62. Stenhouse-cut from 60	G71/212	22.9.71
	N.1.63. Davies	G71/1209	22.9.71
	N.1.64 Gilchrist	G71/1214	22.9.71
	N.1.65 Airlie	G71/122(7)3(c) S8	24.9.71

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<u>Reel 10 (contd)</u>	<u>News Item</u>	<u>Serial No.</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>BBC National</u>	<u>BBC Scotland</u>		
	N.1.66. Reid	G71/216(c) S7	24.9.71
	N.1.67. Stenhouse	G71/1288(c) S8	24.9.71
N.1.41.	N.1.68. Airlie - repeat	G71/219(c) S7	28.9.71
	N.1.69 Stenhouse, Airlie Reid	G71/244(c) S7	30.9.71
	N.1.70 Stenhouse	G71/1244(c) S6	30.9.71
	N.1.71. Stenhouse, Reid	G71/244(c) S7	30.9.71
	N.1.72. Stenhouse, McGarvey	G71/22	29.9.71
	N.1.73. McGarvey, Stenhouse	G71/1239(c) S7	29.9.71
	N.1.74. Reid	G71/1239	29.9.71
<u>Reel 11.</u>			
	N.1.75. Airlie	G71/981(c) S2	2.8.71
	N.1.76. Reid	G71/231	1.10.71
	N.1.77. Airlie, Reid, Davies	G71/238c1(c) S5	6.10.71
	N.1.78. Airlie, Dickie	G71/250c1(c) S5	8.10.71
	N.1.79. Airlie	G71/249(c) S5	6.10.71
	N.1.80. Stenhouse	G71/256c1(c) S5	9.10.71
	N.1.81 Reid, Airlie	G71/256c1	11.10.71
	N.1.82. Barr	G71/225(c) S6	1.10.71
	N.1.83. Lithgow	G70/275(c) S6	1.10.71 (13.10.70)
	N.1.84. Douglas	G71/1276	18.10.71
	N.1.85. Reid, SS Conference	G71/218	1.11.71
N.1.49.	N.1.86. Reid	G71/1425	26.11.71
	N.1.87. Feather, Scanlon, UCS Demo.	G71/169/172	18.8.71
<u>Reel 12</u>			
	N.1.88. McGarvey	G72/845	7.8.72
	N.1.89 Reid, Harbin	G72/466(c) S10	28.4.72

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<u>Reel 12 (contd)</u>	<u>News Item</u>	<u>Serial No.</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>BBC National</u>	<u>BBC Scotland</u>		
	N.1.90. Harbin, Reid	G72/840(c) S10	4.8.72
N.1.33.	N.1.91. Reid, Harbin	G72/534(c) S10	17.5.72
	N.1.92. Black, Airlie, Strathalmond	G72/922A(c) S10	24.8.72
	N.1.93 Airlie	G72/618	17.4.72
	N.1.94 Harbin	G72/100(c) S5	21.1.72
* N.1.47.	N.1.95 Harbin (Not Transcribed)	G72/1086(c) S6	5.10.72
N.1.35.	N.1.96. Harbin	G72/840(c) S10	4.8.72
	N.1.97 Chataway	G72/471	(30.4.72)
N.1.25.	N.1.98. Strathalmond	G72/9	5.1.72
	N.1.99. UCS Ballad	G72/514(c) S10	11.5.72
	N.1.100 Reid	G72/1093	(7.10.72)
N.1.26.	N.1.101 Airlie, Strathalmond	G72/15	(5).1.72
	N.1.102 Reid	G72/1093	(7.10.72)
	N.1.103 Reid as Rector - no sound	G71/309	-
	N.1.104 Chataway	G72/912	21.24.8.72
<u>Reel 13.</u>			
	N.1.105 Reid, Black, Provost Davies, Campbell	--	3.8.71
	N.1.106 Benn, Kilpatrick, Hepper	G69/2689A	27.8.69
<u>Reel 14.</u>			
	N.1.107 McGarvey	--	10.10.71
	N.1.108 Harbin	--	.72
	N.1.109 O'Neill, repeat N.1.53	--	20.8.71
	N.1.110 Reid, Davies	--	14.10.71



## Appendix 38

Note on GU Archive Collection of UCS Ephemera.

This material is lodged alongside the collection of company records of the constituent UCS firms which comprised the consortium. The business records themselves, following the UCS liquidation, passed to the Strathclyde Regional Archive and are held in part at the central repository and Glasgow University providing an almost unparalleled source of material concerning the industrial history of the West of Scotland.

The collection of ephemera is also one of the most extensive and comprehensive records of any industrial struggle in post-war Scotland. It was originally established in 1973 by J.R. Hay and J. McLauchlan of the Department of Economic History of the University of Glasgow and an interim catalogue was published in the Journal of the Scottish Labour History Society, No. 8, June 1974, pp. 21-30. Since then the writer has considerably augmented this collection with the material recovered in the course of his own research and has reorganised the entire collection. The main categories and sources of evidence from which this thesis has cited are as follows:

1. Material produced by the UCS Co-ordinating Committee comprising bulletins, leaflets, pamphlets, cartoons, posters and records of discussion with various bodies concerning the future of the yards.
2. Press releases and statements of the major political parties.
3. Publications of various Marxist and socialist groups then active on Clydeside.
4. Local authority minutes of Clydebank Town Council.
5. Publications of religious organisations concerned with UCS.

6. Official government publications and reports relating to the UCS liquidation.
7. The STUC committee of inquiry interim and final reports, together with the full transcripts of the inquiry proceedings and the STUC annual reports.
8. The transcripts of the Co-ordinating Committee tapes and BBC TV News recordings discussed in appendices 36 and 37.
9. Summaries of press reports from local and national newspapers.
10. Personal files on UCS of leading trade union figures.
11. The complete records of the Scotstoun yard shop stewards committee from the mid-1950's to 1980 recovered by the writer when the yard finally closed.
12. Taped interviews with participants in the UCS struggle listed in appendix 39 together with some earlier recordings made by Hay and McLauchlan.

Appendix 39

Note on and index to UCS taped interviews.

The number of formal interviews conducted was relatively small. In the main they were confined either to leading UCS shop stewards or members of the official trade union and labour movement. Numerous other discussions of a less formal nature were held with many trade unionists and political figures who were active in this period and involved in the events at UCS. However, as nearly ten years had elapsed since the work-in the main value of interviews lay in drawing a picture of the general political atmosphere of the period rather than in pursuing specific points of detail. Hogwood's important transcript of the Open University interview with John Davies provides some insight into government ministerial reaction to UCS. Danny McGarvey who, like Davies is now deceased was regrettably never interviewed in depth during the UCS crisis.

It is unfortunate that apart from the small group interviewed by Pauline Hunt for her Edinburgh thesis no wider investigation, especially of rank and file attitudes was undertaken by locally-based social scientists. The nearest approach to an attempt to reflect the attitudes of the 'ordinary worker', is contained in some of the sequences of the documentary film of the UCS work-in produced by Cinema Action Ltd., with financial assistance from the UCS Co-ordinating Committee.

In addition to the following list of interviews, Hay and McLauchlin conducted interviews in 1973-74 with Kit Carson, Ian Smith, Joe Moriarty, Benny Biggins and Gerry Ross, all of whom worked at UCS and these tapes are also lodged in the GU Archives.

## List of taped interviews

Jimmy Airlie, Govan, 13 July 1979.

Sammy Barr, Scotstoun, 11 July 1979.

Tony Benn, MP, 6 September 1979.

Joe Black, Clyde Confederation, 12 February 1980.

Jimmy Blackwood, Clydebank, 27 October 1980.

Stuart Borthwick, Clydebank Christian Action Group, 8 May 1979.

Willie Clydesdale, Clydebank, 15 May 1979.

Bobbie Dickie, Willie Robertson, Con O'Neill, Clydebank, 22 May 1979.

Arnold Henderson, Clydebank Town Council, 13 August 1980.

John Kerr, ex-Guardian correspondent, 5 February 1980.

Jimmy Kirkpatrick, Govan, 11 May 1979.

Willie McClafferty, Clydebank and District Trades Council, 27 January 1980.

Roddy McKenzie, Clydebank, 5 May 1979.

Alan McKinlay, ex-Superintendent of police, Clydebank, 5 June 1979.

Alex Murray, Scottish Secretary CPGB, 2 August 1979, 6 November 1981.

Jimmy Reid, Clydebank, 29 May 1979.

Jerry Ross, Clydebank, 2 May 1979, 6 June 1979, 13 June 1979.

Donald Tonner, Clydebank Confederation, 19 February 1980.

Appendix 40

UCS Jokes

## UCS Jokes

1. 'Do you know what Airlie's new kid is called?

No what?

Govan!

Why's that?

Because its a late delivery.'

2. 'Mrs. Reid, they've taken your man to hospital but he's alright.

The ambulance men had a terrible job getting the straight-jacket on him though. It took them about three hours to do it!' 'That's nothing,' says Reid's wife, 'its taken me three years to get a working jacket on him.' (Reference to Reid's legendary 'prowess' as a tradesman).

3. Policeman walking along South Street, just outside Connell's yard apprehends worker carrying a large colour TV set.

'Where did you get that?

In the yard!

Don't give us it, they don't sell TV's in there.

No, I won it in the shop stewards' draw.

Is that the first prize? Christ that's great'.

No. that was the second prize, the first prize was a week with the Co-ordinating Committee.' (Reference to all the trips made by shop stewards around the country and abroad).

4. Reid and Airlie in a taxi in London, driver receives call sign over his radio. Airlie to Reid, 'Christ Jimmy that's the only thing you've never been on!'. (Reference to Reid's exposure on the mass media).



# FUN WI THE WELDERS! IS IT?



GET THE QUICK STOP DOMINOS OUT AS A MEETING!

HI ITS A MEETING!

"WHISPER QUICK BEHMER WHERE DID HE GO? - LOOK UP FOR I?"

"THREE DOTS IN THIS ROOM"

"GELNIN AMAZEMENT"

PULLED UP! WHAT! WHO! WHERE IS IT?

RIGHT ALEC. YIKOW THE RULES. AS SOON AS YOU PULL A WELDER UP ITS A MEETING!

WAT FOR ME.

WELDER! WELDER! WELDER! WELDER!

TO ASK ME ABOUT MY LISTEN FOR MY CAR? "GUP"

...

HEY! DOWN TOWNS

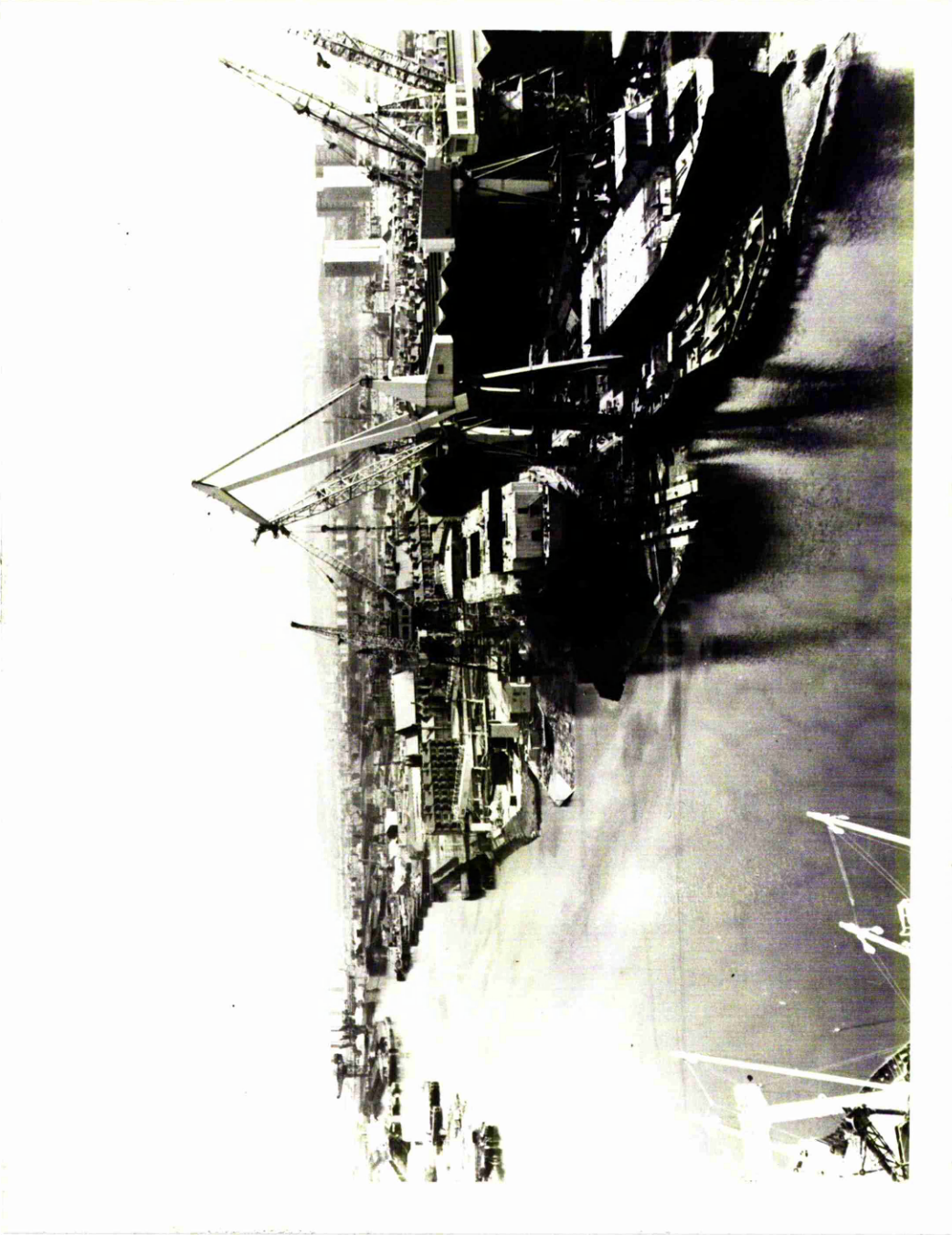
IT'S A MEETING!

MEETING WELDER?

Appendix 41

UCS Photographs



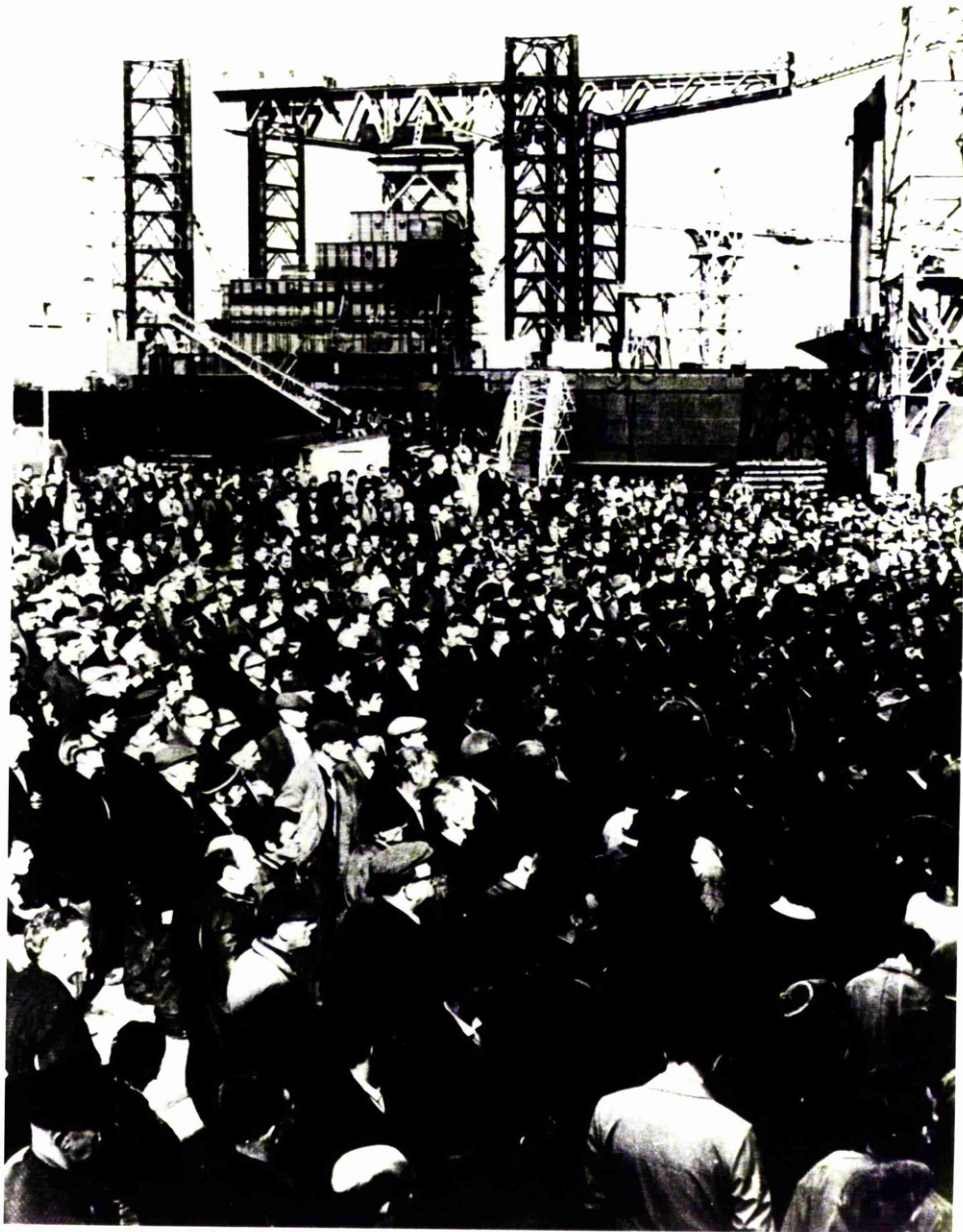


GOVAN YARD



UCS CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE CLYDEBANK

Front Row Right to Left: Ronnie Ferns, Sam Barr, Conn O'Neill, Jimmy Airlie, Bobbie Dickie, Jimmy Reid, Sam Gilmore, Alex Bill. Back Row Right to Left: (3) Willie McInnes (4) Bob Cook (7) Willie Robertson (10) Gerry Ross.



THE WORKERS AT CLYDEBANK 15 JUNE 1971





MASS MEETING AT CLYDEBANK TO DECIDE ON WORK-IN  
15 JUNE 1971



WEST OF SCOTLAND SHOP STEWARDS MEETING BACKS THE UCS CALL  
FOR SUPPORT 21 ST JUNE 1971





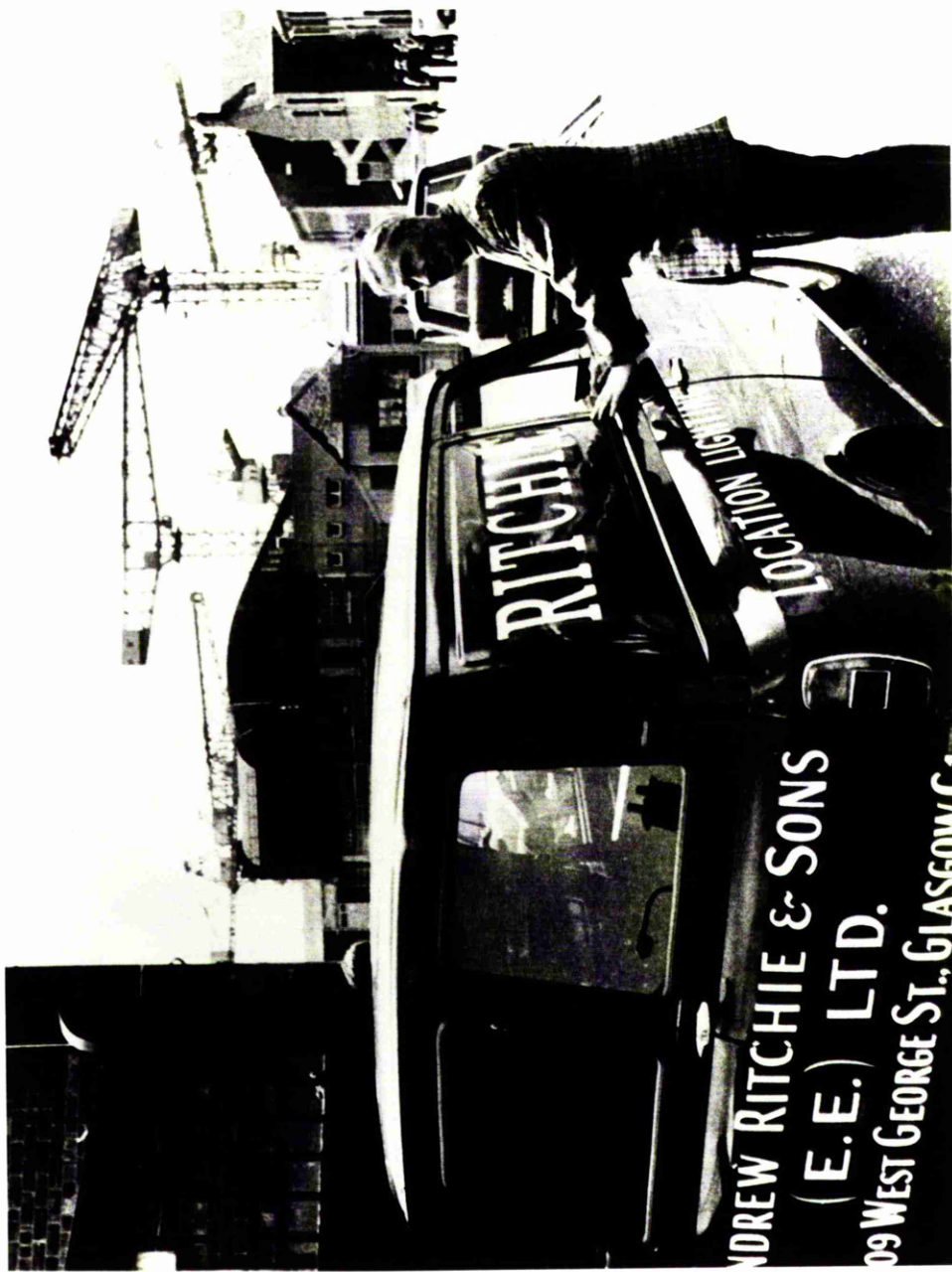


UCS SHOP STEWARDS AND TONY BENN LEAD THE 23RD JUNE DEMONSTRATION.

Right to Left: Willie McInnes, Bobbie Dickie, Sam Barr, Tony Benn, Jimmy Reid, Jimmy Airlie, Bob Cook, Jimmy Kirkpatrick.



GERRY ROSS, SUB-CONVENER AT CLYDEBANK TELLS THE GATEMAN THAT THE WORKERS ARE IN CHARGE 30TH JULY 1971



JOHN MCGUNNIGLE, CONVENER OF GMW WORKERS CHECKS VEHICLE ENTERING THE YARD  
30TH JULY 1971



BENN COMES TO CLYDEBANK TO SUPPORT THE WORK-IN.





SECOND UCS DEMONSTRATION IN GLASGOW ON 18TH AUGUST 1971

Right to Left: Bobbie Dickie, Sam Barr, Willie Ross, Jimmy Reid, Tony Benn, Jimmy Airlie, Hugh Scanlon, Dan McGarvey, Vic Feather, Willie McInnes, Bob Cook, Alex Murray, Roddy McKenzie.



THE WORKERS GREET EDWARD HEATH OUTSIDE THE CENTRAL HOTEL,  
GLASGOW 10TH SEPTEMBER 1971



SHOP STEWARDS IN THE UCS BOARDROOM, 28TH SEPTEMBER 1971

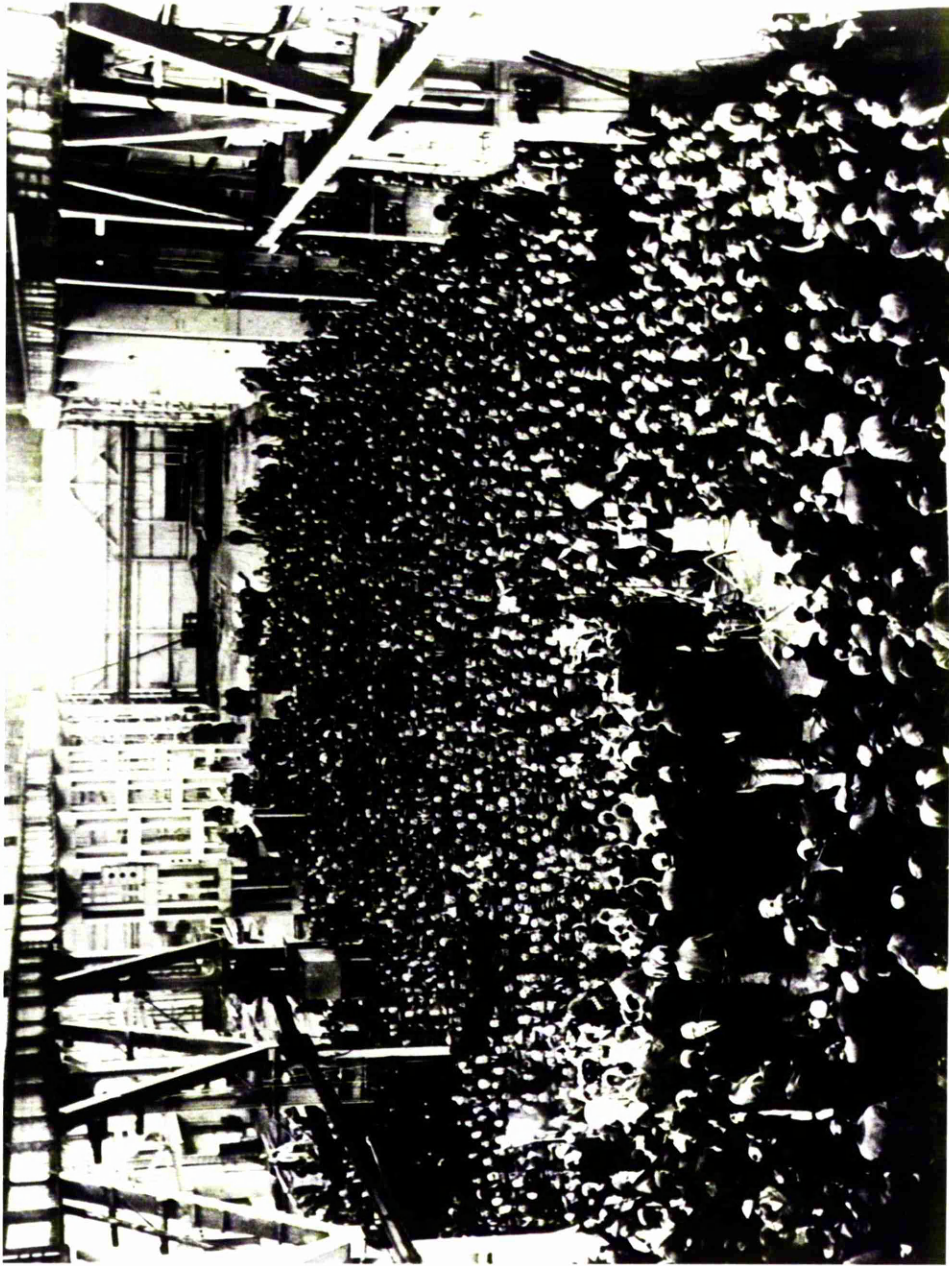


STENHOUSE, MCGARVEY AND SHOP STEWARDS MEET AT NORTH BRITISH HOTEL, 29TH SEPTEMBER 1971  
Right to Left: (1) Gilchrist (2) Stenhouse (7) Airlie (8) Service (10) McGarvey  
(12) Joe Black.





MASS MEETING CLYDEBANK 1ST OCTOBER 1971



UCS MEETING OF WORKERS 8TH OCTOBER 1971



MASS MEETING CLYDEBANK 25TH OCTOBER 1971

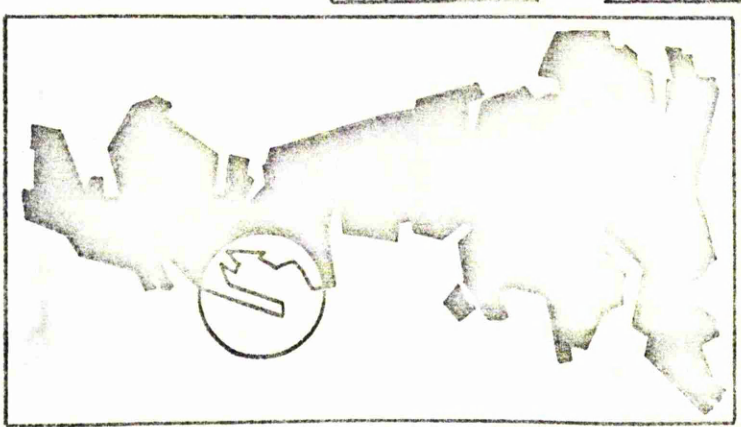




PLESSEY WORKERS CARRY A COFFIN

Appendix 42

Diagram of Consortium

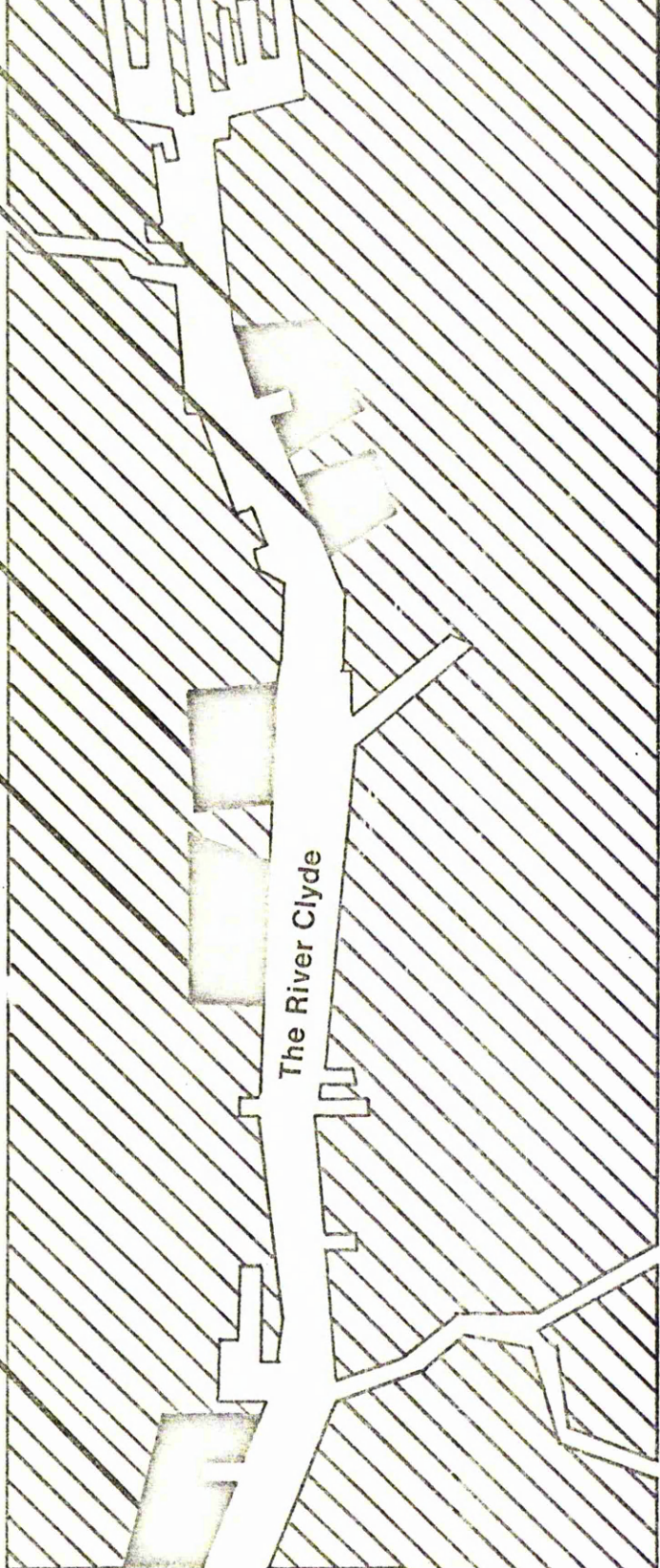


JOHN BROWN

CHARLES CONNELL  
SCOTSTOUN DIVISION  
YARROW

FAIRFIELD  
GOVAN DIVISION  
ALEX. STEPHEN  
LINTHOUSE DIVISION

The River Clyde



Appendix 43

## Cassette Contents

1. Jimmy Reid at Clydebank 30 July 1971 addressing workers. BBC TV News G71/100/101, 30 July 1971; BBC TV documentary 'The fight for Clydeside' 21 September 1971, Reel 2.
2. Jimmy Airlie repudiates Davies's 'blackmail' attempt, 8 October 1971, Mass meeting at Linthouse, SRO, UCS Transcripts, Vol. 1, Tape 7B.
3. Reid addresses Rosevale shop stewards meeting, 10 August 1971 BBC TV News transcripts, n.1.54, Reel 9.
4. Conn Higgins and Reid on the 'Victoria Street' document, UCS shop stewards, report on National Confederation, 15 October 1971, SRO, UCS Transcripts, Vol. 1, Tape 8A and B.
5. Sam Barr, Tommy Stewart, Willie Clydesdale, John O'Neill and Gerry Ross discuss withholding the vessels, UCS Shop Stewards, meeting Clydebank 24 January 1972, SRO, UCS Transcripts, Vol. 2, Tape 11A.
6. Jimmy McCrindle, Airlie, Benny Biggins, John Donnelly and Reid on the Clydebank bonus controversy, UCS Shop Stewards, meeting Clydebank, 16 August 1972, SRO, UCS Transcript, Vol. 3, Tapes 16B and 17A.
7. Airlie, Sam Barr, Reid, Willie Holt and McCrindle on the boilermakers' rejection of the Govan Agreement, UCS Shop Stewards, meeting, Linthouse, 31 August 1972, SRO, UCS Transcripts, Vol. 3, Tape 18A.
8. Joe Black, Williams, John Connolly, Airlie and Joe Brown, Lyceum finishing trades meeting on re-imposing 50p levy, UCS Shop Stewards finishing trades meeting, Lyceum, 2 October 1972, SRO, UCS Transcripts, Vol. 3, Tapes 19A and B.