



VOICE

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Wrekin Anarchist
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Libertarians

We apologise that this issue of VOICE is
late, H s - as far as we know, the
only Wellington-supplier of duplicator-
stencils - ran out of these.

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cost (& maybe some saving) the social impact can be minimised
& turned to greater benefit. The combination of circum-
stances which has made New Towns into an object of fear are
not necessary, & with more socialist insight & political
commitment New Towns could live up to their ideals.

P.S. by L.O.

"While any man is in shackles & enslaved, I am in chains
While any man is in prison, I am behind bars."

Eugene Debs

"He who harms another, depreciates me"

Dunne

President Nixon has recommenced the bombing of North Vietnam
on the grounds that the intervention of North Vietnamese
forces in the South constitutes a new aggression.

When the bombing was done before it was alleged that this
was reprisal because it was known that the North Vietnam
forces were intervening then. (The difference in scale
of the present attack suggests that earlier claim was
groundless.)

If North Vietnam was previously neutral why the earlier
bombing, why the invasion of Cambodia & Laos?

Editorial

Whenever people come together to fight for their own interests against the interests of the government, that fight is always described by the authorities as seeking to create a state of anarchy. By this it is implied that any condition not subject to official interference & control must lead to disorder, chaos and complete breakdown of the only system capable of regulating our lives to the benefit of all of us.

That the present system benefits the few at the expense of the many (and within the seeming order of the outward form creates hardship & chaos for most of us as we try to balance its demands on our time, money & loyalties with our deeper needs) is forgotten about.

The government assumes more and more that it stands for the whole people against the sectional interests of say the miners or railwaymen or power workers; whereas their fight is really that of the whole people, & the government is concerned only with defending its own authority, & bamboozling other groups in the society into believing it is defending them as well.

Anarchy, not communism, is becoming the word to throw horror into the masses. Communism, having established itself as capable of government & of being as authoritarian as any other control system, may still be a useful bogey to brandish on the international scene, - as a reason for Vietnam, or for building up our own sea-power in the Indian Ocean, - but at home it is better to flourish such phrases as "politically motivated groups" (which of course neither Conservative nor Labour Governments are) or go straight in with 'anarchist tendencies', bringing up out of the most dire nightmares of innocent peace-loving people the image of sinister cloaked figures who move nowhere without their smoking bombs.

Authority can only use the word 'anarchy' with such venom, though, because it fears the growing anarchism of ordinary people, most of whom would still shrink from acknowledging that they have been touched by such a virus. People everywhere know that authority has become a joke, a hoax, a sickness.

They want more of a say in their own lives, they are growing increasingly concerned over the inefficiency (in human terms), pollution, petty-mindedness, greed & the denial of rights, that both central & local authorities cannot help breeding.

At the same time they know that whatever succeeding governments do, presumably to improve the system, their own

Mike Harbour - who until this year only saw the Aldermaston March on the goggle box, but who this year - in CND's declining days - marched for the first time, gives a 'beginner's' feelings after the experience.

The London-Aldermaston March has a grandiose ring with memories of an army of peace laying siege to the bastion of the warmongers; - akin to an hippy-type Joan of Arc, demanding the same safety for the average bloke as the regional dictators would enjoy in their H. Bomb shelters. Safety which could only be gained, by, at the onset, declaring Britain an unilaterally disarmed state.

Instead of which the bones of CND must have been buried in those symbolic coffins. Perhaps it is not fair for me to comment as this may not always have been so; but as with any other left-wing movement with the exception of the Communist Party the march consisted of middle class intellectuals with a smattering of industrial & service workers.

This is not a condemnation of them - more so the working bloke, who is more interested in his pint & a game of darts (after all we have all learned to live with the Bomb) but when you say that, you realise that the highbrows have failed, & the measure of that failure is that you & the mass of other workers were not there; failed because the issue was torn out of context, it has not been made clear that the bomb protects the bosses - yours & mine - whether you live in Telford, Texas or Moscow; against the worker, the average worker, average Chinese ('yellow peril'), Russian ('Red threat') or Englishman ('capitalist lackey' or 'enslaved worker' depending on the party line at the time.)

Do you want to kill a Russian? If you live in Telford you have probably worked with at least one. So why the Bomb? To protect you from the relations of the bloke you work with? To protect them from you? No!

If CND rises from its coffins will you, - you production hand, you fitter, or you wagon driver, - will you march with it? If you think the Common Market is dangerous to your way of life; (& the nation has let the state know what it thinks of this,) why not let them know what you think of being fried to a crisp, by an hundred megaton bomb? That is a damn sight worse. Unemployment is nasty, your death - everyone's death is unthinkable.

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the libertarian case

The 'free' world is not free; the 'communist' world is not communist. We reject both: one is becoming totalitarian, the other is already so.

Pollution, nuclear & other wars of mass destruction put a question mark over the survival of the world & mankind, as a product of their power struggle & disregard of human values.

We charge that both systems engender servitude. Pseudo-freedom based on economic slavery is no better than pseudo-freedom based on political slavery.

The monopoly of power which is the state must be eliminated. Government itself, as well as its underlying institutions, perpetuates war, oppression, corruption, exploitation & misery.

We advocate a world-wide society of communities & councils based on cooperation & free agreement from the bottom (federalism) instead of coercion & domination from the top (centralism). Regimentation of people must be replaced by regulation of things.

Freedom without socialism is chaotic, but socialism without freedom is despotic. Libertarianism is free socialism.

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productivity deal

R. G. Gregory

" the economic fact is brother
if you don't work harder
i won't get rich
and this great country of ours
that i'm sure we both want to see greater
will go under
and all the other bastard nations
that wouldn't have been allowed
to mix their breath with ours
in better days
will laugh at us like thunder

" now brother i'm your boss
and we've had hard words together
i've begrudged you a penny here or there
and you've more or less told me to fuck off
in better days
but not any more

i'm getting tougher
and you'll have to pull in the old belt
more notches than you want to
between us we've got to beat the rest
of the world

get our hands on their markets
because in this grim world it's them
or us now

we can't afford the battleline
cutting us off from each other
whether you like it or not
we're in it together

i
not the worker overseas am your true brother

on a factory production line, but it is as bad - if not worse - on the education production line, where the products are human beings, suitably moulded and certificated (i.e. bored and branded.)

Day release students can be forgiven for thinking that their lecturers enjoy bawling them out, reporting them to the bosses, & maybe getting them the push. In the staff room many young lecturers can be forgiven for thinking the same of their elder colleagues. But only the real cretins & the really corrupted are like that. It is more likely that the bullying is caused by fear - fear of the students en masse, fear of the principal & heads, fear of appearing weak in front of their colleagues. With some it doesn't show - but it's still there.

When a teacher stands in the classroom he is only as strong as the houses behind him, as strong as the fear of getting the sack. When he faces the principal he is as strong as the students and other teachers who stand behind him. On his own he is a cripple; whichever side he turns to he loses one crutch. Teacher is piggy in the middle

Yet when we get down to it the interests of teachers & students are basically the same. The teacher really only wants to teach the things that he is confident of - not what his boss tells him to. He would far rather get on with the students he meets every day than with the bosses he sees, if at all, only at Prize-Giving Day. He only wants to teach those who want to learn, he doesn't want to force you into the classroom. He wants to improve in his skills as a teacher & knows in his heart that only the interested students are capable of giving him the sound criticism he needs. But he has a mortgage, a wife & family; he has a job to hold down, even more so if he has, like most engineering teachers, changed his job fairly late in life to come into teaching. Not for nothing is nervous disease & mental breakdown an occupational hazard of teaching. To be a teacher you must develop & learn to live with a split mind.

Alright, so what do you do? Well something is already being done, every day. Lead-swinging, skiving, you know what I mean. Teachers & students alike have devised a means of preventing the worst of the damage from the system by paying lip-service to rules & constantly breaking them; creating isolated pockets of freedom here & there, & saving their sanity.

Most college authorities & bosses don't care enough to supervise very carefully so this kind of activity is very effective. So let's keep that up for a start. But let us admit that that changes nothing, & for the teacher it is a great strain, - he has to do it for life.

There is only one set of people who can bring about any serious change in the education system - the students, - and particularly those on apprenticeship courses. So here are a few suggestions as to what can be done to get the grind & the boredom out of the Techs., & to get those

~~who don't want to go to Tech. out as well without losing them their jobs or their prospects.~~

- 1 How do you get round those reluctant teachers to make them stop battenning on the students & start fighting the bosses?

First understand his position, his basic fear: but don't let him off the hook for that. Start by constructively criticising his lessons - what he teaches, how he teaches, the methods he uses, whether he gives you enough time to follow up on a subject, to do some learning on your own without him always stood in front of the blackboard.

Start with the Liberal Studies teacher - he is the weakest link, as you might well already realise. Find out what he would like to see changed - & push him to do something about it.

Don't accept excuses, but ask him what he is doing to improve matters. Make him feel you sympathize & are prepared to stand with him to get something done; don't make life hell for him until he's already jumped to the bosses' side.

- 2 Now what can you do yourselves? There is one bloke that the teachers don't get at - the bosses at work. Only the apprentices can manage that one, & to do it they had better be organized.

He is not the kind of bloke to be impressed by some apprentice sticking his neck out. So get your mates together, at work, in the college, anywhere you can find support.

See if you can get the support of the unions & the Trades Council. Don't let anybody get isolated as 'ringleaders' - share the responsibilities so that if one's up to his neck everybody is.

- 3 Not all students will be prepared to support your activities. Motor mechanics, for instance, work for small firms, with two blokes outside ready to step into their jobs. Don't expect them to stick their necks out.

They can help in other ways, like raising money for leaflets & for anyone who gets victimised. Every apprentice will know his own chances, so don't bully anyone into giving support.

FIRST ASK, THEN DEMAND, THEN TAKE

WHY DO ALL THIS?

I've deliberately left 'till last the kind of changes you might push for. There are changes I would like to see, but these might not be yours. But I at least would hope that you don't want to see your bosses controlling & influencing the situation you want. Whatever you seek to achieve, however, the advice still applies. Myself I see two vital questions in Further Education.

- i. to put an end to compulsory attendance. You should attend Tech. - if at all - because you want to, because you think it's useful, because there is something you want to learn. Not because the boss is looking forward to his Industrial Training Board Grant.
- ii. To win the absolute right to whatever type of further or higher education you want, - free of charge, - whether or not it is useful to the boss, with no entry qualification restrictions.

That is if you aren't interested at all you shouldn't be forced; but if later on - even just before retirement - you want to get some learning under your belt, for whatever purpose, in whatever subject, you should have the right to it on Full Pay.

Only a complete April Fool will not see the benefits of such a system both to workers & teachers. Teachers can teach what they want, & their students will be there because they want to be. Nobody will lose financially except the bosses.

But there will be April Fools - & it will be one of the most valuable lessons of your life to find out exactly who - & why, - & how they act. Among them will be teachers, parents, other workers, union officials, other students.

You have a right to ask - what do we anarchists get out of all this? We get satisfaction & pride. We get the pleasure of seeing people say "We are free, we can be our own bosses, we will not be pushed around." We get pride from seeing people take control of their own lives, & working together for that right.

You can't vote for us, we don't stand for election. There is no money in being an anarchist, more likely the odd lost job, or jail sentence.

We don't even ask you to be an anarchist yourself, we certainly don't ask you to let us 'lead' you. If you want to know more about anarchism, however, we are ever ready to talk about it, & we'll have a damn good try to convert you.

.....

 Martin Bashforth, who teaches at Bilston Tech., is expanding this article as a pamphlet.

behind the mean man
 is a child who saw
 kindness in no eyes
 the cynic once loved
 with all his heart
 and had it spat on
 brutes are the result
 of being brutalized
 all bellies are soft
 to begin with and
 imaginations tender
 the boy who steals
 has been stolen from
 the girl selling love
 has been sold for it
 hate is a song crying
 for love and murder
 a plea for fresh birth
 the avenues we walk
 are those left clear
 by our makers but all
 life we finger the paths
 in us others have blocked
 we shake in the night
 even now with the pain
 of those deepening bruises

A Critique of New Towns

'Planner'

'Planner' - who does not wish to
 disclose his name - is not an
 anarchist, but a Trotskyist;
 therefore he does not necessarily
 endorse views expressed elsewhere
 in VOICE & we do not necessarily
 endorse this; but he speaks with
 first hand experience of a New
 Town Planning department.

The idea of New Towns has been around for a very long time -
 both as the toys of philanthropists & the hopes of social-
 istic idealists. The idea is to provide an alternative
 to existing towns - to start afresh & build a better en-
 vironment. This concept the writer believes has its place
 both in a long-term socialist perspective & in short-term
 demands of socialists in the present situation. At the
 moment I shall be concerned only to offer a short-term
 critique, where the concept of New Towns is accepted, but
 the reality is found wanting.

The first question is something of an aside here - though
 basic to a deeper study - & that is to ask whether New
 Towns should in fact be "better" than existing towns?

Should we be simply concerned with providing mass housing &
 jobs at similar standards to elsewhere? It is legitimate
 to argue that the inhabitants of New Towns should suffer
 equally with the rest of the population, & demands for im-

provements should apply equally to all. Still, for the sake of argument, the writer will assume that the concept of New Towns implies the creation of a better environment.

This critique of New Towns' practise stems from two main interrelated points:

- (i) the demands of profitability & lack of adequate financing,
- and (ii) the lack of commitment.

(A third point might cover the lack of sufficient jobs, but especially at a time with over a million unemployed it would be wrong to demand special favours for New Towns above the development areas.)

These problems are to some extent the result of confusion, & inconsistency, in official policies; but they are also the result of deliberate subversion of the original ideals of New Towns.

Far from being in the vanguard of social and physical advance, official policy has constrained New Towns and made them into capitalistic property speculations. The aim is to produce an 'adequate return' on money invested for the central government; i.e. a profit.

The only difference between private developers & Development Corporations is that the latter can take a slightly longer term view & can accept a few unprofitable gestures so long as the overall measure of profitability is maintained.

The most important factor here is that all the money for capital projects & most other things is handed out by & controlled by the central government. In many ways the Corporations are purely agents under orders, but it is in an important matter of detail & in influencing priorities & strategies that these Corporations could make independent, beneficial initiatives.

In almost all New Town master plans there is mention of "choice", "responsiveness", "flexibility" & so on; but too often New Town development has become a single-track machine, where the demand to house a given population overrides all other considerations.

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The financing of New Town development projects is very complicated, but suffice it to say that except for housing, (which is financed in the same way as local authorities - but without rate support,) developments are expected to contribute towards the overall profitability of the town.

Sometimes a longer view is allowed, but particularly with commercial & industrial projects, an immediate return on costs of 10 - 11% per annum is demanded. If such a return is not expected the development does not go ahead.

Admittedly the government borrows the money at around 8%, but this must surely be a reflection on the system as a whole. It seems most unfortunate that New Towns as an aspect of social policy should be put at this disadvantage

- a level of profitability that would gladden the heart of many a capitalist.

A convenient method of passing the buck is to say that it is the responsibility of the local authorities to provide all forms of social amenities - as it is in the rest of the country. Unfortunately - & particularly in the case of Telford - the local authorities -(Dawley UDC, Oakengates UDC, Wellington UDC & RDC) - are poor to start with & are incapable of rising to the expectations laid down in the master plans.

Eventually rateable values will provide an adequate source of local finance, but in the meantime the local authorities do not benefit overmuch from the arrival of the New Town & cannot fill the gap for the newcomers. The County Council is in an invidious position, in that to provide necessary services for the New Town - especially schools - it sometimes has to cut back in other parts of the county.

New Town Corporations are given the paltry sum of £4 per head of the immigrant population for 'minor amenities', but this in no sense can fill the gap.

About the question of social commitment, I shall leave aside the points about democratic control of Development Corporations, except to point out the relative failure & small-scale nature of town expansion schemes which are controlled by the elected local authorities. (Perhaps control by an elected regional body?)

The specific critique here concerns the way Corporations are preoccupied, sometimes forcibly, sometimes through their own inbuilt inertia, with building new projects rather than with catering for the entire needs of the community, both local & newcomer.

An example of this is the building of roads: because the cost of these can to a large extent be off-loaded onto other bodies, the Corporation can build a large, obvious, & impressive monument at minimum cost to itself. Further examples are found in the pushing ahead of grandiose schemes which reflect harmfully on existing local endeavours - the new Town Centre while necessary in a few years time, will probably deprive other areas of shopping facilities.

Other schemes which do not have this type of impact receive much lower priority, like subsidised public transport, housing improvement, industrial development off major estates, landscape improvement, & so on. The emphasis is always on the big new ventures which may "improve" the image of the Corporation to a mythical national audience, but which inflict unnecessary costs & disruption on the population.

I accept that New Towns would be an expensive way of satisfying demands for housing in the short term, but the end product should be something of benefit to the whole community - & with long term savings. Furthermore such expenditure is necessary in order to make any kind of progress in bettering the environment. This programme will obviously affect some people harmfully, but for little

i admire beetroot
it leaves its mark

even when eaten
after the terrible

things it's been through
in the human prison

at the other end
the red is still there

Greg. with his wife & daughter
recently had an exhibition of
poems, paintings and posters at
Market Drayton; anyone wishing
to buy poster-poems from him
will find his address at the
beginning of this VOICE.

.....
Unemployed

.....
Cyril Plant

There are many of us who are lucky enough to have a job to go to, & there are over one million in this country who will not know what future lies ahead for them, & then we have the minority who could not be interested and that's the government. They have reached the figure of a million & put the unemployment problem where it stands now. So what do we do?

Let's look around Telford alone. There you will see new housing estates going up, new factory centres, motorways, - fine, there's plenty of work & one has to think: "Why all the unemployment in Telford?" Your answer to this is that 95% of the house-building, factory-building & motorway construction in Telford relies on a labour force brought from Birmingham, Wolverhampton & the Black Country; only the remaining 5% uses Telford people. So one has to go into the details.

If you go to a firm in Shropshire looking for a job, the wages are very low. Why? The answer to this is friends, that you are in an agriculturally classed area. Yet in Shropshire - though maybe it is an agricultural area - but we are all paying city prices for whatever product we buy, - no matter what.

So one has to think is this labour force, coming from all over the Midlands being paid an agricultural wage? No they are being paid to travel over here to work in Telford. Perhaps the government would like some suggestions put to them to help ease the unemployment in Telford; I say that to cut expenditure costs it would be far better

to employ Telford citizens to build Telford. Better to do away with the outside labour-force. For me, therefore, this would cut the cost of paying them just to travel; and better still what if agricultural wages were offered to all the labour force coming into Telford. Would they accept it - certainly not.

There are many other problems that need investigating, regarding unemployment in the country as an whole. But the first and major problem is to find and provide work for one million unemployed & the reward a good living wage.

.....

.....

Cyril would not call himself an anarchist, would not agree with some of the rest of VOICE, & there are many points in this article with which revolutionary anarchists & socialists would disagree. We aim for a society which abolishes the money system, the wage system, not just for a fair day's work for a fair day's wage. Readers may on the other hand hear of the excellent work is doing for the various ratepayers' associations.

.....

Unfair Comment

Thought afore Malice

The late George Orwell said that when people who normally express themselves clearly suddenly produce a verbal fog, then the reader may assume that consciously or no they hiding the fact that they know what they say is untrue or unjustifiable.

Lord Widgery has a reputation that his judgements are a model of clarity. The Widgery report is confused & self-contradictory. So much so that one Q.C. has doubted that the Lord Chief Justice himself wrote it.

It has been suggested that someone else did. Orwell's explanation seems more likely.

....

It is not normal for courts in Britain to sit on Sundays. It is almost unheard of that a hearing before the Appeal Court can come up within six months of an appeal being lodged.

The day after the railway unions appealed - a Sunday - the Appeal Court sat. Noone has ever attempted to do justice at that speed. Men wrongly convicted and imprisoned, for crimes which have been traced to others have still had to wait long months to have the appeal court rectify the situation.

Mark that well, any & all who belong to trade unions, as

any who have asked for redress of injustice and had to wait; & if Widgery has left you in any doubt as to the nature of British justice this shouldn't.

...

It is apparently illegal to obey the rules the boss lays down. This is a breach apparently of a contract of employment; the courts are empowered to say one shall not do it.

Why do they have such laws, laws that it is illegal to keep, then? The boss lays these down to cover himself when there's an accident.

In 1957, in St John's Lewisham, a train crashed, several people were killed. The driver had been made by his superiors to drive eleven hours a day, every day, he hadn't had his rest day off for over a month.

They held an inquiry. Who was blamed? The driver. Though he'd had orders he'd disobeyed the rule book.

...

Unions can be threatened with the seizure of all their funds if they do not expel shop stewards who carry on "blacking" (refusing to handle) work that is done by people who have already succeeded in putting many union members out of work & will stop more.

A shop steward is the one union official elected by a face to face vote of the men; the one official who is really answerable to the people he represents.

Presumably the action will continue. Presumably the union will be forced to expel other members. For years anarcho-syndicalists have argued that union control should remain at the shop floor, that all officials should be like shop stewards men who work at the job, or if this is impossible officials should be paid the average of the men they represent.

We have argued that workers in all trades, all industries, all areas, of all creeds, & all races have fundamentally the same interests. That therefore a single union movement federating workers in all industries, and everywhere organized by uniting all the workers in an industry, meeting at their places of work is essential; if we are to change society.

.....

Not just to change society. The Industrial Relations' Court bids fair to make all other trade union organizations useless. If an union must expel whoever the judge pleases, and the judge is so obviously merely the voice of the state & bosses; it, the union, can be gelded if & when the boss pleases.

But if power lies with the union rank & file, if there are no central funds to "sequestre" (this is a long word for the judge stealing) if all national secretaries are obviously answerable to delegates from stronger trades' councils, themselves delegated by shop stewards' committees, themselves obviously answerable to the members, the position would be very different.

Institute of Worker's Control that "This movement is not going to lead to revolution." The sooner the Joneses & Scanlons start acting as policemen of these disputes, recognizing some as "official", & sabotaging others as "irresponsible", the better the employers will be pleased.

As anarchists, we expect this sort of thing from the self-styled leaders of the workers. In exposing it, we also want to advance the cause of workers' self-management. One way this can be done is by the increasing use of workins & sitins, according to local circumstances. This is helpful in two ways: firstly, it has been shown that after conventional methods (marches, lobbying MPs, strikes) have failed, occupation of the place of work can save jobs. Were it not for such action, there would now be no work at the Fisher-Bendix, Plessey, & other factories. The second advantage is that the persons concerned stay in charge of their own struggle. This, we hope, will give them confidence so that at some point in the future they will find that we, the working class, do not need the bosses, nor the biggest boss of all, the State. We are working for that day.

Join us.

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Sit-in score

The Workers	2	The Employers	1
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(Other matches still playing in extra time)

The above was the title of an article in the "Sunday Times Business News" of 23 January 1972, which we reproduce inside. Since then, "The sitins at the Fisher-Bendix factory near Liverpool & at Plessey electronics factory near Glasgow have both ended in substantial successes for the men." (Observer 30/1/72).

It is clear that business interests are apprehensive about the increasing use of this form of industrial action by British workers. This syndicalist tactic, which historians of both left & right have been dismissing as something of the past, made a dramatic re-appearance in France & Czechoslovakia in 1968.

The "Observer" article was not written to celebrate any workers' victories, but to reassure those same profiteers that the workins & sitins are not a fundamental threat to their economic & social order. They need the reassurances of Constable Hughes & of the so-called

THE LITTLE TOWN of Mold (pop. 8,000), slumped among the North Wales hills, is the last place you would pick as a backcloth for a revolutionary drama. So little happens there that nobody seems to have noticed that Christmas decorations are still dangling unhappily over the drab main street. But last week something remarkable, and quite out of character, hit Mold: some 120 workers at the town's solitary factory, which was threatened with closure, won their two-week-old sit-in.

What was even more extraordinary was that this illegal action was led by a special constable from a local police station, Hugh Hughes, 39, who is also the factory's union convener. This, in itself, makes the sit-in different because no one could call Hughes an agitator or sinister Left-wing figure. But what is, perhaps, more important is that the growing fashion of "occupying" factories should have penetrated the depths of the Welsh hills—hardly a hot-bed of industrial militancy.

So now is the moment to assess the significance of the sit-in, work-in, or whatever you choose to call it. What sort of breakaway is it from conventional industrial bargaining? How seriously must industry take it? And is this just the start of something bigger, especially with unemployment topping 1 million, and likely to stay very high?

Over the past six months I have visited all six occupations, or threatened occupations. It all started, of course, at Upper Clyde, and went on through Plessey's at Alexandria, near Glasgow; BSA at Birmingham; the River Don steelworks at Sheffield; and, within the past fortnight, Allis-Chalmers' agricultural machinery plant at Mold, and the Fisher-Bendix works at Kirkby, Liverpool. In football parlance the score so far is: The Workers 2 (Mold and River Don), The Employers 1 (BSA). The other matches have gone into extra time. All six are different, and it is necessary to put them in the category of either work-in or sit-in.

But first, how did the occupations start? High unemployment has certainly created the right atmosphere: even in the previously prosperous Midlands, the BSA men faced the prospect of a hard fight for another job. In all the other areas the outlook was even grimmer.

The notion of occupations is not new. It was first floated back in 1969 during the abortive efforts of GEC shop stewards at Liverpool to block Sir (then plain

Mr) Arnold Weinstock's plans for rationalisation. They failed because their grandiose idea of a workers' Soviet, run and managed by them, did not seem realistic to their workmates some of whom, anyway, had already been told their jobs were safe. The lesson—that factory occupations need the positive enthusiasm of the workers rather than the apathetic agreement often found in strikes—seems to have been learnt.

So was born the idea of the work-in, as practised with great competence and imagination at Upper Clyde where, despite Communist leadership, there is no talk of a Soviet. The unions have simply cashed in on their unique advantage of a long order book for the ships they produce, which is still being worked off some six months after their work-in started. The liquidator and the men have a common interest in keeping working.

Meanwhile, the unions have mobilised maximum publicity, backed by powerful political lobbying of the Government. Their occupation (despite putting workers out to "guard" the gates) is theoretical rather than real. This is not to say, of course, that a full take-over will not happen if the Government fails to find a solution.

This, too, was the case at the River Don, where British Steel was planning to close the works, along with its unique heavy forge. The threat of a work-in was sufficient to delay the closure, and during this time two of BSC's major customers came together with the promise of further orders and BSC relented. In the cases of the Upper Clyde and

River Don, the strength of the workers has laid in the possibility that a relatively harmless work-in might turn into the much more dangerous sit-in.

It is important to draw a distinction between threatened and real occupations—sit-ins. The latter have happened at Plessey's, Mold and Fisher-Bendix, where the workers have physically taken over their factory.

The BSA work-in, incidentally, was only threatened. It collapsed before it could start because, as with GEC in 1969, the shop stewards were unable to carry the workers with them.

In the past, workers faced with redundancy have protested conventionally by marching, lobbying MPs and, occasionally, going on strike. What they have not done before is to take something belonging to the company, that is the buildings and machinery, to use as a bargaining counter. As one union man puts it: "In the past the last resort was to strike; that's all we could do. Now we have withdrawn our labour, but we are inside the factory not outside."

No company has yet had the courage to throw the occupiers out: the thought of a bad Press has apparently been enough to frighten them off. So, by exploiting this weakness, the unions have in effect extended the accepted bargaining process by holding on to valuable assets (the Fisher-Bendix plant, part of the Thorn electrical group, is said to be worth more than £1 million) while expounding their case through the media. The 900 Fisher-Bendix workers have also got their local MP, one Harold Wilson, as a powerful ally.

Another reason for reticence by the companies concerned is that they fear a backlash in other plants. It is significant that Plessey and Thorn have a number of plants scattered about the country and considerable damage could be caused if just a few opted for a sympathy strike.

(This was, incidentally, not the case at Mold, where the workers are much more enthusiastic about Bamfords of Uttoxeter, which has agreed to take the plant over, than the American-owned Allis-Chalmers).

If, therefore, employers want to stop this wave they have to prevent occupations before they start. In the case of all except BSA and River Don, this should have been possible: in each, the workers believed that something underhand was going on ranging from UCS being butchered through political dogma to Fisher-Bendix allegedly transferring its business to Spain.

For once a sit-in starts it is difficult to control: Plessey has found a prospective buyer for Alexandria but he is unacceptable to the sitters-in who are, in fact, no longer Plessey employees. The only consolation for Plessey, as at Mold and Kirkby, is that the men optimistically keep all the machinery polished and oiled ready for immediate use.

Workers, nevertheless, have to be cautious about reading too much into occupations. Ken Coates, of the Institute for Workers Control, sees them as "an extension of trades unionism" but cautions: "If people think this is a revolution they are going to be disappointed."

The occupations have all originated from the shop floor: none were inspired by national leaders, who have tended to remain aloof. They may simply be demonstrating gut fears of long spells of unemployment. If so, they could fade when better times return. If, however, the permanent level of unemployment remains higher, there may be wider attempts to usurp management authority. But there will not be a revolution. As Hugh Hughes says: "I don't want workers' control. I've got enough bloody problems already."

John Fryer