

GREAT BRITAIN

Sanctions, strikes, scandal shake state

By Mervyn Jones

LONDON

THE GOVERNMENT'S PAY POLICY, with its rigid ceiling of 5 percent for wage rises within the year, has taken a heavy knock following the settlement in Ford's British plants. This settlement represents almost total victory for the unions at the end of their nine-week strike. The terms are complicated, but amount in effect to a 17 percent rise for the average worker. An assembly-line man who works the normal four hours' overtime will now have a pay-packet of 100 pounds (average industrial earnings are 70 pounds) (1 pound = \$1.90).

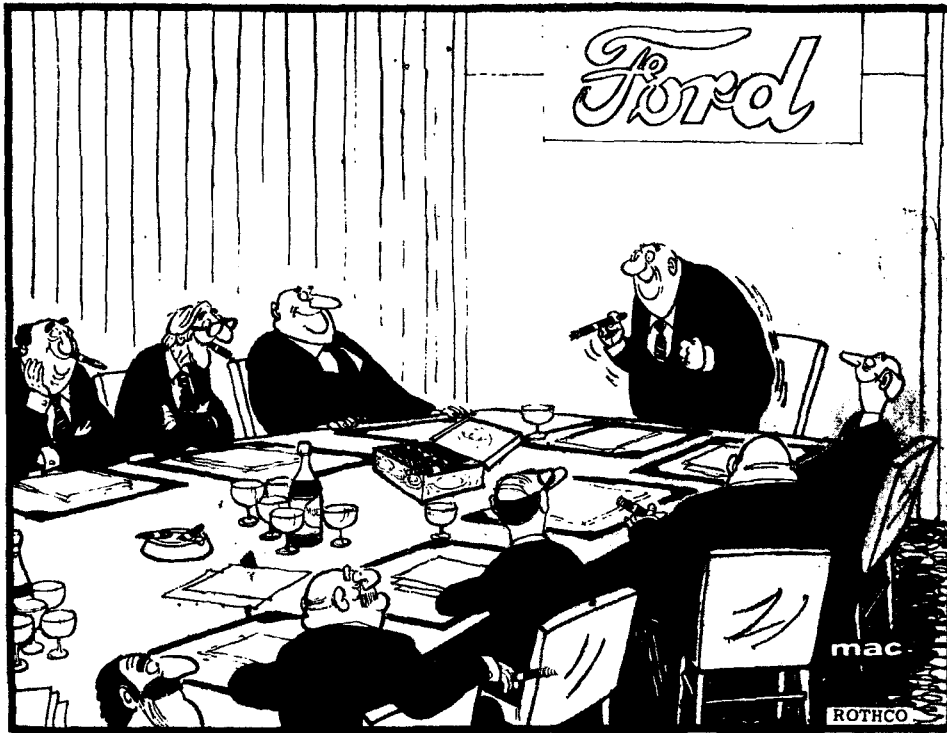
The Ford management invited the strike by saying flatly that it would concede only the officially approved 5 percent. It's probable that the company never intended this to be its last word; the intention was to be able at a later stage to tell the government that the company had honestly tried to keep to its ruling but had found this impossible—and that, of course, is what chairman Sir Terence Beckett is now saying. On the other hand, the company didn't intend to give 17 percent.

The crucial factor as the strike developed was international working-class action. Though Ford of Britain is by law a British company, the European operations of the multi-national giant are closely coordinated; a plant in Belgium, for instance, makes right-hand-drive cars for British roads. The company therefore planned to beat the strike by stepping up production in European countries. By luck, however, a continent-wide meeting of unions was being held just as the strike began, and the British unions secured pledges of support. Ford workers in European plants refused to work overtime, defeating the company's strategy.

Sanctions won't hurt.

The government has announced that it will "punish" Ford by applying what are known as sanctions, something it has done several times over the past three years when companies have made wage settlements in excess of official policy. The procedure is of dubious legality, since the ceiling has no legal force. Employers naturally find it outrageous—they get punished and the workers don't. However, in this case the company isn't likely to suffer at all seriously.

The sanctions consist, in the first place, of the withdrawal of certain forms of subsidy, such as a kind of reverse poll-tax that is given when an employer keeps men on the payroll who would normally be



"If we break the pay limit the government has threatened to impose the most stringent sanctions—like they did in Rhodesia. Isn't that great?"

Will Labour punish Ford? Will the *Times* come back? And will a dead dog kill the Liberals?

fired because of technical improvements. These subsidies are a very minor item in the Ford budget. Much more important is the development grant for the construction of a new Ford plant in Wales, agreed on last year with much fanfare after summit talks between Henry Ford himself and James Callaghan (himself, too). There is no talk of withdrawing this grant, for that would mean the breach of an agreement. The government, therefore, is punishing and subsidizing Ford at the same time.

Government departments, and nationalized bodies such as the railways, will cease to buy Ford cars and trucks. This won't cause the company many sleepless nights, for it's in a good sales position; it's well known that Fords are about the only cars made in this country that actually work. It's reckoned that the purchases concerned amount to three percent of total Ford sales. In any case, the sanctions operate only until the end of the current phase of the pay policy, which lasts until August 1979.

The whole sanctions business, indeed, is little more than a gesture. It was politically essential, however, for Callaghan

to show that he is determined to hold to his policy. As I've reported, other wage battles loom ahead. From Dec. 4, all regional newspapers are on strike, with journalists demanding wage rises of around 20 percent. This is not such a grave matter in Britain as it would be in the U.S. because most people read national papers, which are unaffected. But advertisers will suffer and there may be a knock-on effect on the economy.

Times locks out employees.

Meanwhile, to the consternation of people devoted to hallowed British traditions, *The Times* has suspended publication. This is in effect a lockout. The printers have refused to agree to management plans for the construction of computer technology, the sacrifice of many jobs, and a "continuous production" pledge that would rob unions of the weapon of lightning strikes. The management, most people in Fleet Street feel, has behaved with an extraordinary combination of arrogance and fumbling. An editorial on the penultimate day of publication declared bravely: "It is quite certain that *The Times* will return." But why the

printers should submit to the company terms in the course of the lockout, no one has explained. Nor is it certain that, if *The Times* does return, all the readers will return to it. There are other good newspapers in London, after all.

Right now, however, the foremost topic of conversation is neither the Ford settlement, the demise of *The Times*, the riots in Tehran, nor the deadlock over Namibia. Whether in a working-class pub or at a select dinner-table, nobody is talking about anything but the Jeremy Thorpe case. The trial of a leading politician for conspiracy to murder is, one can't deny, a fairly remarkable event. Even Nixon, visiting Britain this month, could be seen as a relative innocent, with nothing charged against him beyond the cover-up of a break-in.

Thorpe case may hurt Liberals.

The preliminary hearing of the Thorpe case in the magistrate's court, under British rules, has given us only the prosecution case. The defense has yet to be heard, and we're all virtuously reminding ourselves that a man is innocent until he's proved guilty. What's certain is that the full-scale trial, with Thorpe in the witness box, will monopolize attention even more solidly than the current hearing. And the date of the trial, still unscheduled, is a matter of some interest. What if it happens immediately before the general election?

Sexual scandals—and the Thorpe case is in effect a sexual scandal—have less political effect than one might imagine. The Profumo case of 1963, when a Tory minister was the center of a sensational sexual imbroglio, had little or no effect on the fortunes of the Tory Party, which did better than expected in the 1964 election. Still, one can scarcely believe that a guilty verdict in the Thorpe trial would do the Liberal party no harm at all—given that, outside a smallish hard core, Liberal voters are a volatile bunch anyway.

For practical reasons unrelated to the Thorpe scandal, the Liberals are already at a low ebb. In all 1978 by-elections, their showing at the polls has been disastrous. What the people who gave the party its peak six-million vote in 1974 are doing, preponderantly, is returning to an earlier Tory allegiance. This factor could be decisive in giving the Tories victory in the general election which must be held some time in 1979.

Is the government of this country going to change because, one night on a lonely moor, a hit man aimed a gun at a male model and shot a dog? Stranger things have happened, perhaps. No, I doubt if they have.

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Seal of Jean II (top), count and "Dauphin" of Viennois in 13th century. U.S. Navy experimentation with dolphin sonar. By comparison man's sonar looks crude.

DOLPHIN

BY
DAVID HELVARG

DOLPHINS, THOSE INNOCENT folk of the sea, may be the latest tools in the government's attempts to find surreptitious assassination methods. San Diego's Naval Ocean Systems Center at Point Loma and its predecessors, the Naval Underseas Center (NUC) and the Naval Underseas Warfare Center (NUWC), have been identified as being at the heart of a series of programs that used dolphins as spies, saboteurs, and assassins.

For 15 years the Navy has been both cooperating and competing with the Central Intelligence Agency in the development of military systems incorporating dolphins, whales and sea lions.

The dolphin experiments at San Diego's Point Loma Marine Sciences Lab involving physiology, hydrodynamics, and sonar are said to have been used as a public relations cover for more classified work being carried out under NUWC direction by the Navy on San Clemente Island and at the Kaneohe Bay Research Center in Hawaii.

These programs are reported to have led to the use of dolphins in a "Swimmer Nullification" program in Vietnam that resulted in the death of 30 to 60 divers including two Americans. A similar CIA program may have had, as its ultimate aim, the assassination of Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro.

The NUC in San Diego built a flotation craft to house its dolphins in Vietnam. It also built a CO₂ cartridge device which it calls an anti-shark weapon but which others have identified as the murder device used by the dolphins in Vietnam.

Public affairs officer for the Naval Ocean Systems Center, Joel Merriweather, denied that the Navy had an "operational" dolphin system in Vietnam, but admitted that dolphins had been installed there for "evaluation." He claimed that the object was only to identify and locate people, not to kill them. His statement was an advance from previous Navy claims that it had "no knowledge" of a dolphin system in Vietnam. When asked about reports that dolphins are being used in anti-submarine warfare activity Merriweather said, "No comment."

Michael Greenwood, a scientist who worked for Naval Intelligence as director of the Ocean Floor program of Sea Lab III, was the first person to go public with the story of the Navy's dolphin hit teams when he testified before Sen. Frank Church's Committee on Intelligence in



Photos/U.S. Navy

"Dolphins have no Pidgeon. "Human dolphins and not