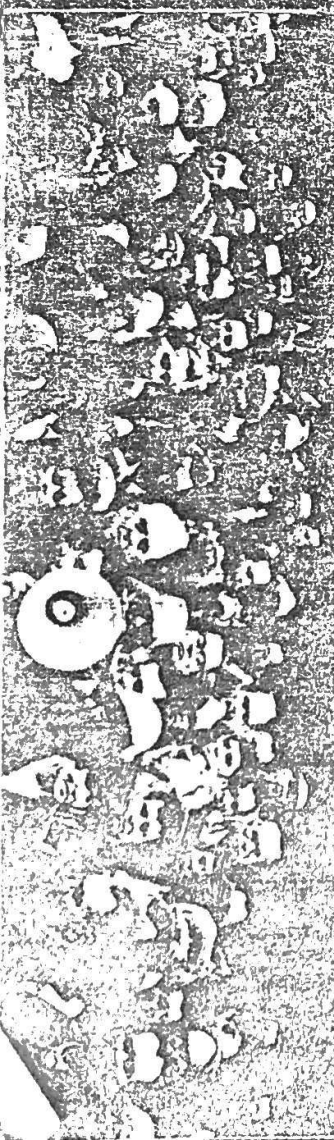


Democracy versus the Circumlocution Office

by the Lucas Aerospace Combine
Shop Stewards' Committee

IWC Pamphlet No. 65

Price 35p



CHAPTER X

CONTAINING THE WHOLE SCIENCE OF GOVERNMENT

The Circumlocution Office was (as everybody knows without being told) the most important Department under Government. No public business of any kind could possibly be done at any time, without the acquiescence of the Circumlocution Office. Its finger was in the largest public pie, and in the smallest public tart. It was equally impossible to do the plainest right and to undo the plainest wrong, without the express authority of the Circumlocution Office. If another Gunpowder Plot had been discovered half an hour before the lighting of the match, nobody would have been justified in saving the parliament until there had been half a score of boards, half a bushel of minutes, several sacks of official memoranda, and a family-vault full of ungrammatical correspondence, on the part of the Circumlocution Office.

This glorious establishment had been early in the field, when the one sublime principle involving the difficult art of governing a country, was first distinctly revealed to statesmen. It had been foremost to study that bright revelation, and to carry its shining influence through the whole of the official proceedings. Whatever was required to be done, the Circumlocution Office was beforehand with all the public departments in the art of perceiving—HOW NOT TO DO IT.

Through this delicate perception, through the tact with which it invariably seized it, and through the genius with which it always acted on it, the Circumlocution Office had risen to over-top all the public departments; and the public condition had risen to be—what it was.

Little Dorrit, Charles Dickens

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INTRODUCTION

What is the Establishment?

Who does it consist of?

Can the Rank and File Movement work with it/overcome it?

Questions such as these are graphically illustrated in the following pages; the case of the Lucas Aerospace workers' campaign to create viable and useful employment in the face of mass redundancies has many lessons for the Labour movement.

In 1974 the Lucas Aerospace workers started to develop a constructive response to the mass layoffs perpetrated by Lucas over the previous five years. The Lucas Aerospace Combine Shop Stewards Committee, representing the then 14,000 members, in 13 unions, at 17 sites, canvassed the workforce for alternative production plans for products which could be made with existing plant and skills, and which would contain a large element of what has come to be known as 'social usefulness'. The products, 150 in six product areas, are contained in the Combine's Corporate Plan; the Plan is a detailed set of technically-backed production proposals which could be brought forward in redundancy situations*.

The idea of socially useful production, and the enormous creative energy unleashed in this rank and file initiative has attracted attention all round the world. Similar initiatives are now underway in many industries, such as machine tools, car, power engineering and aerospace. Shop stewards are gathering together to prepare *their* corporate plans for *their* companies and industries.

The Lucas Aerospace Combine Committee have been nominated for the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize, for showing the way to convert military production into peaceful uses — but they have received no prizes from the official trade union movement (with a few notable exceptions) or from this Labour Government.

*An account of the Lucas Aerospace Combine Shop Steward Committee's Corporate Plan proposals is contained in an IWC publication: 'Lucas, an alternative plan', available from the IWC, price 30p plus 10p post.

Also available is a Fabian pamphlet: 'The Lucas Aerospace Workers' Campaign', 50p from the Fabian Society.

The Centre for Alternative Industrial and Technological Systems (CAITS), set up by the Lucas Aerospace Combine has a bibliography, plus a number of article reprints and handouts, contact: CAITS, NELP, Longbridge Road, Dagenham, Essex.

We make no apologies for this detailed account of the Combine's struggle to obtain support in this country, we feel it is important for the Labour Movement to fully recognise the nature of political leadership in Britain

If you thought that a Labour-controlled Department of Industry, or Employment is in 'business' to assist employment-creating proposals put forward by the Labour Movement, think again. If you think that trade union leaderships are all in favour of powerful union organisations, think again. There are no punches pulled in the following pages, but nor are there any misrepresentations or distortions, here in a condensed form are the processes by which sections of the leadership of the Labour Movement have systematically tried to stifle a progressive rank and file initiative.

As one of the Burnley shop stewards of Lucas Aerospace put it:

"With the Czars in the Trade Union Movement, the Government, and the Company combining to viciously attack us, we simply must be on the right lines!"

Mike George

Democracy versus the Circumlocution Office

by the Lucas Aerospace Combine Shop Stewards' Committee

Lucas Aerospace Management, The Government and the Trade Unions

... An account of the role of these bodies in the Combine Committee's struggle to implement the Plan's proposals for socially useful work in place of redundancy.

The Corporate Plan is over 2½ years old, the struggle has been going on since March 1976 to implement its proposals. During this time a great deal of support has been gained for the Combine Committee's proposals. But much of that support has proved to be ephemeral, and, at times downright damaging. In this pamphlet we outline the major events in this 2½ year saga in the hope that those persons and organisations involved might be persuaded to provide some real support.

HOW IT BEGAN

November 1974

Combine Committee meets with Tony Benn (the Industry Minister), idea of Corporate Plan launched.

BEFORE THE PLAN

October 1975

Threat to Marston Green electronics factory, stewards developed Mini-Corporate Plan, successfully overcame redundancy threat.

June 1975

480 redundancies threatened at Lucas plant in Hemel Hempstead. Stewards produced Mini-Corporate Plan for industrial ball screw production, the decision was reversed and redundancies avoided. Lord Beswick (Minister of State, Department of Industry) described the stewards' report: "... the most impressive piece of work from trade unionists I have seen".

JANUARY 1976 – CORPORATE PLAN LAUNCHED

"The Plan is one of the most advanced yet prepared in the UK by a group of shop

... One of the most radical alternative plans ever drawn up by workers
their company"

— *Financial Times*

"A twentieth century version of the industrial revolution."

— *The Engineer*

"The Lucas thinking and experience should stimulate similar experiences elsewhere."

— *The Guardian*

"What has happened at Lucas is likely to be a forerunner of a development which will ultimately affect the whole of British industry."

— *Industrial Management*

"A scheme which could ultimately change the face of British Industry."

— *Manpower*

THE REPLY AND THE EARLY DAYS . . .

24th April 1976

Company replied to Corporate Plan with blank refusal to consider *any* of its proposals. But proposed discussion of alternative products (not necessarily those in the Plan) within 'local consultative machinery'.

SO THE SAGA BEGINS . . .

After the rejection of the Plan by the company (apart from the so-called consultative machinery') the Combine approached the Department of Industry and the TUC for assistance, they also attempted to get official trade union backing.

TASS

They got the latter — in *June 1976* TASS national officers, negotiating on behalf of the 4,000 TASS members in Lucas, introduced elements of the Plan into the 1976 round of wage bargaining — unsuccessfully.

... and on *2nd September 1976* the Combine received the following message of support from TASS:

"I can also advise you that the ultimate decision of the Executive Committee was to accept the general concept of the Plan. This is valuable to me, in the sense that I can now feel free to utilise the initiative shown by the Shop Stewards when I am representing TASS."

— *From Deputy General Secretary, TASS*

LABOUR PARTY

The Labour Party too expressed support, in Labour's Programme 1976, the Combine received a clear mention in the section on 'Creating Alternative Employment' (p.116).

BACK AT LUCAS AEROSPACE

... The company refused continually to consider the Plan, and on *14th October* the Combine wrote again to the TUC and the DOI stating that the company refused to discuss the Plan — except occasionally on a 'site by site' basis — a normal 'divide and rule' tactic. The Combine asked the TUC and DOI for advice about the next steps "to force the company to honour the tripartite agreement between the TUC, the CBI and the Government." (Remember the Social Contract?)

— No reply was received from either, so the Combine wrote yet again on *29th October*.

This time they got replies:

TUC

"The TUC fully share your concern and consequently the matter was raised by the TUC representatives at a recent meeting of the Industrial Strategy Staff Group. *Government* and employer representatives took the view that Lucas Aerospace did not fall within any of the 39 sectors identified in the industrial strategy, and that therefore the issue could not appropriately be pursued in that forum . . . We suggest that you again approach the company on this matter . . . and should you encounter further difficulties, please do not hesitate to contact us again."

DEPT. OF INDUSTRY

From Gerald Kaufman, DOI:

"You will recall that in our previous discussions I have been firmly of the view that the proper place for the examination of your ideas must be, at least initially, within Lucas Aerospace. I understand that appropriate discussions are taking place within the normal machinery."

The DOI Reply was clearly unsatisfactory and the Combine wrote back on *6th December* to Gerald Kaufman:

"Thank you for your letter of November 17th. I note in your letter you say, 'I understand that appropriate discussions are taking place within the normal machinery'. I regret to have to inform you that this is absolutely untrue . . . I am somewhat surprised you are not aware of this as we did send copies of the correspondence to Eric Varley."

An uncharacteristically prompt reply came from Kaufman on *24th December*:

"Let me repeat our understanding; this is that for some time the company and its employees have been examining a number of the suggestions in your plan within the normal consultative machinery."

was feeding Kaufman this information?

Does he know the difference between consultation and negotiation?
Did he know that the company was trying to undermine the combine,
in this way?

1977

1977 heralded redundancies — in February Lucas Aerospace announced that it had a 'labour surplus' of 1,100. An overtime ban and selected blacking of movement of parts was enforced. The Combine threatened further industrial action if the redundancies were implemented.

— Considerable disquiet was expressed by MPs whose constituencies included redundancies and a special meeting was called in the House of Commons on *1st March*. Over 70 Lucas Aerospace shop stewards met with MPs and junior ministers. Jeff Rooker MP, one of those attending, invited senior executives from Lucas to visit the House of Commons to discuss the company's future; the meeting, on *17th March* was attended by 11 MPs and 3 senior managers; Audrey Wise, MP, one of those attending told the *Guardian*:

"the company representatives assured us that they were anxious to diversify and that they didn't need the Combine Committee to tell them, but when we tried to pin them down to what new products they were thinking of, they became extremely vague."

— *Guardian*, 21.3.77

DOI AGAIN . . .

The DOI continued to assert that discussions were taking place in L.A. over the Plan, in a letter dated *4th April*, Les Huckfield told Chris Price MP:

"My understanding is that the more promising ideas put forward in the 'Corporate Plan' are in fact already being discussed within the Works Council structure that has been set up in the various Lucas Aerospace Divisions."

In a letter to Les Huckfield (*27th April*) the Combine pointed out that 'Works Councils' are contrary to TUC policy on Industrial Democracy and that of the AUEW — the major union in L.A.; they of course pointed out that these so-called 'discussions' *were still not happening*.

On *23rd May* Jeff Rooker MP endorsed this when he wrote to Eric Varley:

"I do not intend to repeat what you have already been told but I only write to inform you, so that it is on the record for the future, that the company has refused continually to discuss the Corporate Plan with the authors."

TRANSPORT AND GENERAL WORKERS' UNION

Further Union Support was forthcoming this time from the TGWU; a document entitled 'Military Spending, Defence Cuts and Alternative Employment', produced by the General Executive Council, was put to the TGWU's 1977 Delegate Conference. The document argues that:

"the choice usually presented to workers in the arms industry — between the dole or continued military production is a false one . . . In the private sector of the defence industry (for example, Lucas Aerospace) planning agreements are a matter of urgency. The Government should use its bargaining position as buyer of defence equipment to insist on planning agreements. These agreements would lay down alternative products for development by these companies."

— *Tribune* 23.9.77

THE MAN FROM MARS . . .

But back at Lucas Aerospace things got worse. The company appointed a new General Manager, James Blyth, whose 'track record' was based on his ability to carry out the '3 Rs' — reorganisation, rationalisation and redundancy — Blyth quickly became known as 'The Man from Mars' (his previous company).

During the Autumn of 1977 Blyth visited most L.A. sites:

"and at each location his general message has been that we have too many people and too many factories."

— *Open Letter*, 6.12.77 to all L.A. sites, from Combine

*This Open Letter included a questionnaire for each site's stewards to send to the management — It asked for information about future site manpower requirements, under the Employment Protection Act provisions.

December 1977 — Fabian Pamphlet published: 'The Lucas Aerospace Workers' Campaign'

THE NEW TUNE . . . ENTER C.S.E.U.

Meanwhile, at the DOI, Huckfield had 'changed his tune' under pressure from the Combine and MPs — no longer did he maintain that the Plan was being discussed in the company — now he asserted that the Combine should proceed via the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.

The Combine Committee ever anxious to please Les Huckfield, duly wrote to the CSEU — on *17th June 1977*, *6th October* and *30th December* — no reply, or even acknowledgement was received — in the last letter to the CSEU the Combine pointed out the gravity of the situation

"At the Hemel Hempstead factory he (Blyth) actually said that there are one third too many aerospace employees throughout the United Kingdom . . . It is

assessment that the company will engage on a further round of sackings within the next three or four months."

**See below for the accuracy of that forecast made in December.*

In a letter also dated 30th December the Combine wrote to Huckfield in similar vein, pointing out that:

"It is our considered view that the inactivity of your department, the Government in general, and the CSEU, is now being interpreted by the company as a tacit understanding that they can go ahead with further sackings."

1978

TWO NEW DEVELOPMENTS STARTED 1978

"Sir Leslie Murphy, chairman of the National Enterprise Board, has persuaded Lucas to release temporarily one of its senior executives, John Williams, to lead the NEB's British Leyland support staff. Williams, who is 53, is being seconded for two years from his present post of deputy chairman of Lucas Aerospace Holdings to be Sir Leslie's right-hand man in monitoring the troublesome car empire . . . Leyland employees might care to ask Williams what view he takes of a 1976 Lucas decision to reject proposals from employees for the company to make new products."

— *Times* 3.2.78

***Leyland workers must by now know how interested Williams is in employment creation and maintenance . . .**

THE SECOND DEVELOPMENT

"Shop stewards from Lucas Aerospace who have set up a centre for alternative technology with the help of a London polytechnic in an attempt to save jobs, said yesterday that the company wants to cut its workforce by 4,000."

— *Guardian* 8.2.78

The new centre, the Centre for Alternative Industrial and Technological Systems (CAITS) provides a support function, technically, economically and politically.

DOI AGAIN (AND AGAIN)

— Whilst this new initiative was being launched by the Combine, Huckfield was moved to reply to a critical article in *New Statesman*, with a re-run of his well-worn statement:

"We have made it abundantly clear in innumerable letters to MPs and other interested parties that we very much welcome the idea of workers getting together to put forward positive proposals for the future of their company."

— *New Statesman* 3.2.78

But what does that welcome mean? Precisely nothing for the Lucas Combine.

REDUNDANCY . . .

Then, as forecasted by the Combine, Lucas Aerospace announced 2,000 redundancies on *16th March 1978*; with factory closures in Liverpool, Bradford and Coventry.

BLYTH

— At a Press Conference on *22nd March* Blyth made it clear that the Government and the CSEU had been consulted before the announcement of the redundancies. In reply to a number of questions Blyth said:

"The plans we're discussing here are plans that have been discussed with the Department of Industry, that have been discussed with the CSEU."

"We made them (the CSEU) exactly the same presentation we have just made to you."

"If I try to do what you're suggesting (meet with the Combine) let me tell you I might be popular with the authors of that Combine Plan but the national officials of the trade unions would rap me very firmly over the knuckles."

"I will have a problem if I recognise the Combine as being something separate and discrete within our organisation. If there's a problem it's a problem for the trade union movement not a problem for Lucas."

"Look, they understand (the DOI) the logic of what we're talking about because that's the business they're in."

The Government and the CSEU knew about the redundancies — the workforce had to read about it in the papers.

Blyth sets up the Combine against the CSEU and the Official Trade Union Movement.

The DOI understands businessmen but not workers.

The only trade union communication the Combine got at this difficult time was from Ken Gill, General Secretary of TASS:

"Contrary to statements widely circulated the 'Corporate Plan' is not the official policy of TASS." !!!

"I can also advise you that the ultimate decision of the Executive Committee was to accept the general concept of the Plan. This is valuable to me, in the sense that I can now feel free to utilise the initiative shown by the Shop Stewards when I am representing Tass."

— *TASS, Deputy Secretary, 2.9.76*

PUBLIC MONEY — PRIVATE GREED

... after the closure announced, MPs with constituencies in which the closures were to be, met with 3 senior L.A. executives, on **6th April**. The Combine analysed the transcript of that meeting and made the following points (only a few are detailed):

- A. Blyth asserted that the Combine was unrepresentative — the Combine cite a meeting they had with Albert Booth on **4th April** — 72 Shop Stewards attended, from every L.A. site and every L.A. union . . .
- B. Despite TGWU and AUEW (Engineering Section) support for the Plan, the CSEU did not think fit to contact any L.A. employees; and despite DOI statements about 'welcoming the initiative', no help was forthcoming.
- C. The company was certainly in contact with the DOI over these redundancies, for on **12th June** an £8 million package of aid was announced for L.A. — to 'maintain' 500 jobs — **not one new job created**.

MPs MEET

— The 12th June announcement comprised £6 million to build a specialised factory in Huyton, plus 5 years rent, and £2 million to build a new factory in Bradford, with a 2 year rent-free period . . .

On **6th April**, at the meeting with MPs Blyth made it quite clear that the company wanted a small factory in the Liverpool area:

"Of the direct operatives at Victor Works (Liverpool), we need about 250, perhaps 300 people out of 1400 people. If we could supervise them effectively from 100 miles away and run the factory as a machine shop, it would be smashing." (If you add indirect staff, see Blyth's statement, you end up with 500 people.)

The Government paid £2 million for a new Bradford factory that L.A. wanted.

The Government paid £2million for a new Bradford factory that L.A. originally said they would build.

Lucas received £56million in deferred tax last year, now they pick up another £8 million of public money — to destroy 1500 jobs — and no mention of the plan . . .

The Combine did receive some official union support in April however when the TGWU put in a claim for its Government workers. Included

in that claim ('A Better Deal for Government Workers') was a demand for alternative production in ordnance factories and naval dockyards . . .

THE CSEU

WHERE WAS THE CSEU?

It organised a conference for L.A. workers on **25th April** — the result? — brave words, no action.

— Yet the CSEU had been trying to meet the L.A. management since **August 1976** without success — the CSEU was whistled up by the company at a few days' notice to receive both the redundancy notice and the £8 million scheme . . .

Despite this inaction a resolution was unanimously passed at the 25th April Conference:

1. This delegate conference declares its total opposition to any further rundown of Lucas Aerospace in the United Kingdom.
2. It declares its full support for those sites now being attacked and this immediate support will be:
 - a. No movement of equipment or know-how from one plant to another and no acceptance of transferred labour, either staff or manual workers from one plant to another.
 - b. No sub-contract work to be allowed outside which could reasonably be done in Aerospace.
3. We demand a Parliamentary enquiry into the role of the Department of Industry in this matter and the Company's use of the £56 million deferred tax — coupled with an enquiry into the whole nature of Lucas's European activities.
4. We expect the CSEU to support these measures. We also call on the CSEU to intercede with the French Trade Unions to prevent any further work leaving the UK and to return the work that has already gone.

It was also unanimously agreed to take part in a tri-partite meeting between the Trade Unions, the Company and the Government.

CSEU AGAIN

A further CSEU/LA conference was held on 29th June, this was followed by a meeting with Blyth — the following points were agreed:

1. That at some future date a tri-partite meeting would take place between the Trade Unions, the Company and the Government, to discuss (these) problems.

The company would provide all the facilities necessary for the Trade Unions to compile their own alternative proposals for the future of the sites in question (those threatened with closure). To this end Mr Blyth also offered additional company facilities such as Marketing, if these were requested.

3. In the meantime the company undertakes to maintain a 'status quo' and will take no steps whatsoever to implement their proposed rationalisation programme while the debate on the future structuring of the company takes place.
4. It was agreed by both parties that two planning groups would be established to examine the problems of the Liverpool and Bradford/Shipley sites within the context of Lucas Aerospace as a whole. To facilitate the work of these two groups they may co-opt additional expertise where necessary. Set out below (not included) are the composition of the two groups, and the initial additional experts attached to each group will be Phil Asquith to the Bradford Group and Mike Cooley to the Liverpool Group.

GREAT BUT . . .

A SMALL VICTORY?

On 5th July the company put renewed pressure on a leading Combine member, this pressure had a long history. Mike Cooley was reprimanded for spending unpaid time on the Plan; the Combine fought off this pressure. But in July the company wrote to TASS complaining about Cooley's activities:

"I am writing to inform you of a situation which has been developing at our Willesden plant concerning Mr M.J. Cooley . . . I should be pleased if this matter could be referred to the National Executive as a formal protest in the hope that Mr Cooley can be advised . . . if he should persist . . . the company will have to take whatever appropriate action is necessary."

— Letter to J. Rowan, National Industrial Officer, TASS.

Then, on 12th July the company objected to the inclusion of Cooley and Asquith on the two planning groups:

"We have a specific problem regarding the inclusion of two more lay delegates on the working parties (i.e. M. Cooley and P. Asquith both TASS members and both connected with the unofficial 'Combine')."

BUT, BUT . . .

So, the Company was again on the offensive — what was the reaction of TASS and the CSEU??

Cooley has not yet received TASS support — he is 'waiting' for TASS to make up its mind about supporting a union member in face of the sack!

— Furthermore, in an article in *The Engineer* it was made clear that the company intended to press ahead with redundancies — despite the so-called agreement with the CSEU:

"a Lucas spokesman told *The Engineer* that nothing dramatic was expected (from the Planning groups). He claimed that Lucas plans to close the factories had not been affected and the whole working party just represented the next step in the negotiating procedure . . . This was confirmed by the Department of Industry." (!)

IN THE HOUSE

In May a Parliamentary campaign was launched by the Combine, with numerous Questions in the House of Commons, below is a selection of replies from the Department of Industry:

22.5.78 — Kaufman

"Yes, I would welcome a planning agreement with Lucas Aerospace."

"If either CSEU or management asks for DOI intervention I shall be glad to give assistance."

"I accept that these matters have not proceeded as satisfactorily as they might."

"I am unable to set aside CSEU procedures and talk directly with the Lucas Aerospace Combine."

"the proposals put forward by the Combine Committee are very constructive."
(Replying to a Conservative MP)

12.6.78 — Kaufman

"Ministers have consistently welcomed the initiative of the Lucas Aerospace stewards in preparing constructive proposals for the future of their company."

12.6.78 — Huckfield

"I would welcome a planning agreement with Lucas Aerospace, but there are at present no such plans for such an agreement."

On 20th July, 40 MPs signed a letter to Varley urging him to:

"... use all possible influence and pressure to persuade the Lucas management to abandon action against the steward which will otherwise lead to damaging confrontation."

MPs are campaigning on behalf of Cooley — why is nothing heard from his own union or the CSEU?

On 28th July the Combine wrote to the CSEU objecting to its acquiescence in regard to the composition of the two planning groups and

... a commitment to the unanimous 25th April decision to
by the Government and the official Trades Unions - with that sort of
welcome the combine feels no-one needs to say goodbye - they've
already left the combine high and dry ...
Department of Industry".

It is now two years 8 months since the corporate plan was 'welcomed'
by the Government and the official Trades Unions - with that sort of
welcome the combine feels no-one needs to say goodbye - they've
already left the combine high and dry ...

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"... use all possible influence and pressure to persuade the Lucas management
to abandon action against the steward which will otherwise lead to damaging
confrontation."

MPs are campaigning on behalf of Cooley - why is nothing heard from
his own union or the CSEU?

On 28th July the Combine Secretary Ernie Scarbrow wrote to the
CSEU objecting to its acquiescence in regard to the composition of the
two planning groups:

"I was amazed at the content of Roy Grantham's letter to A. Whitney, Personnel Director of Lucas Aerospace, dated 19 July 1978. In this letter Roy Grantham completely reverses a significant part of his letter sent to Mr Blyth on 6 July. This reversal is apparently due to an objection by Mr Whitney to the inclusion of M. Cooley and P. Asquith ... Have we now reached a stage where the Company can decide whom the unions will have to represent them on working parties of this kind; or is the CSEU going to demand parity and have a say on who Mr Blyth appoints to his working parties?"

"The two people in question are not just TASS members as Mr Whitney implies. Phil Asquith is the Confed. Secretary for Lucas Aerospace in the Burnley area (29a D.C.). He is also a graduate engineer ... he is also a member of the TASS National Negotiating Committee for the whole of Lucas Industries, including Lucas Aerospace."

"Mike Cooley is likewise a member of the National Negotiating Committee ... and he is a Past President of AUEW-TASS ... He is an internationally recognised authority on Computerisation and Automation and a UK delegate to the International Federation of Automatic Control."

"... not only is the Company dictating to the CSEU who will be on the Union working parties, it is also trying to sack one of the people involved, it is making a mockery of the Eastbourne agreement (see 'CSEU Again'), and is treating the CSEU as a joke."

"You will know that for the past five years the Lucas workers have succeeded in preventing this management from carrying out one single direct sacking. It

would be a sad reflection if, now that the CSEU is involved, it is going to undermine that position ..."

Yet again - Labour Party endorses plan

At the 1978 Annual Conference of the Labour Party in Blackpool there was unanimous support for a resolution supporting the Lucas workers and calling for the implementation of a Planning Agreement procedure on the basis of the Corporate Plan.

THE END?

It's a long and complicated story, and there's much we've had to leave out for the sake of brevity, but just to remind you, here are a few basic questions the Combine want answered:

If the DOI has always welcomed the Plan why have they helped to undermine it?

If the DOI supports the initiative why is it that the only thing they've done in 2½ years is give Lucas £8 million to scrap 1500 jobs?

If the CSEU really supports the Plan why did they never contact the Combine throughout 1976 and 1977 - why did they wait until the Combine 'forced' a conference after the redundancy announcement?

What sort of union will let management tell them who should be on union committees?

What sort of union would stand by and let a member and steward be sacked for work which creates jobs for members?

Whatever happened to the TUC?

What is the point of a tripartite meeting to consider alternatives to factory closures when the Government and Company already say that such a meeting cannot affect these closures?

Plus many, many more ...

FOR MORE DETAILS

Ernie Scarbrow
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