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**Jaguar closure:
Livelihoods
destroyed
in the interests
of profit**

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Two years after the closure of Ford Dagenham with the loss of 1,900 jobs at Ford and over 13,000 among its suppliers in Croydon, Enfield, Leamington, Swansea and elsewhere, we are now facing closure of the Ford Jaguar plant in Coventry.

Jaguar is a name synonymous with Coventry, where car manufacture was first set up in 1896, and where as early as 1911 there were 7,000 car workers. This number, already down to 1,150 is now to be reduced to nothing, while no less than £50m will be lost to Coventry's economy, which has already lost Massey Ferguson and most of Marconi and seen a reduction of shift at Peugeot in the last two years.

Rover production at Longbridge vanished in 2000, with 4,000-5,000 job losses and devastation for the economy of Birmingham. Britain is becoming a nation of burger flippers.

Yet Ford makes massive profits. It was announced in April 2004 that profits had more than doubled during the first three months of 2004 to £1.1bn, as compared to £505m during the same period last year.

Where it can no longer make profits, however, its European operations have retreated to the luxury car market, having been forced out of the family car market by competition from the far east, where massive expenditure on sophisticated machinery has made car workers vastly more productive than they are here.

With the profits generated from wiping the floor in the area of family cars, the Japanese have now moved into the luxury car market, again with the ability, as a result of lower production costs, to drive the competition to perdition.

Whereas Jaguar had been hoping to sell 200,000 cars in the USA this year, they have actually been able to sell only 125,000, and, that being the case, it makes economic sense to close one of its three plants when two would be more than adequate to meet the demand for its products.

While the blame is being laid on the slide in the exchange rate of the dollar, which makes Jaguar more expensive for the American buyer, this is clearly not the main problem. For while Ford's market share in the US had in the 12 months to June this year dropped by 4.1 percent, Toyota's was up 10.5 percent and Nissan had streaked ahead by 24.7 percent.

To maintain and increase the return to its shareholders, then, Ford is being forced to downsize in the area of luxury cars, whilst hoping to hold on to the profitable areas of its business, such as manufacture of pick-ups in the US, where the Japanese are not yet competing.

Otherwise, Ford's money comes from car finance, from which it makes profits that in most years exceed the profits from car manufacture. Nothing more graphically illustrates the truth that capitalism is not about producing goods, but about generating profits. Thousands of livelihoods are destroyed on a regular basis in the interests of preserving profit.

Workers at Jaguar made huge sacrifices in the interests of maintaining profitability, to the extent that they are now the most productive Ford workers in Europe. They made these sacrifices, with union encouragement, against the written undertaking by Ford that their plant would not be closed down.

Moreover, the government has given Jaguar some £90m in subsidies. But it has all been in vain. Jaguar is to go, and in all probability Land Rover at Solihull will soon follow, having no doubt been saved from closure in spite of problems with poor quality by the fact that Ford simply don't want to close two factories at once.

What can we do?

In the face of economic forces that are out of anybody's control, do we just accept the inevitable, even if they condemn us and our children to a degrading life of poverty?

Clearly not! But how can we fight? The first step must be for Ford workers everywhere to down tools in support of the demand that profits should be used to save jobs rather than handed to a class of people who do absolutely nothing to earn this money.

The CPGB-ML supports the call of the TGWU for all-out war on Ford, with a campaign of industrial action designed to bring the firm's entire European car production to a standstill, along with parts of North America.

Only one thing can wring concessions from Ford and that would be for workers in profitable areas to come out in support of the workers in non-profitable areas: this would actually require the American workers to be prepared to come out and stay out if an effective economic struggle were to be waged.

It could have saved Dagenham if the then profitable luxury car side of Ford UK had been mobilised for that purpose. Without the unity of workers, they can expect death by a thousand cuts.

Without such unity, workers are left only with the choice of accepting the redundancy money and sitting back to watch car manufacture disappear from this country entirely, along with coal, steel, shipbuilding and the other industries that were once the backbone of our economy.

By throwing our industrial workers, including those at Jaguar, onto the scrap heap, capitalism declares its own bankruptcy. It is unable to provide secure employment and the rising prosperity that should go hand in hand with rising productivity.

Instead, "society is suffocated beneath the weight of its own productive forces and products, which it cannot use, and stands helpless, face to face with the absurd contradiction that the producers have nothing to consume, because the consumers are wanting. The expansive force of the means of production bursts the bonds that the capitalist mode of production has imposed upon them. Their deliverance from these bonds is the one precondition for an unbroken, constantly accelerated development of the productive forces, and therefore for a practically unlimited increase of production itself". (Engels)

We have become inured to the 'logic' of capitalism. But how do Jaguar and other Ford workers who lose their jobs and as a result are unable to keep up repayments on their car, which is repossessed, explain to their families why they have no car? Why? Because we have produced too many cars. The market is glutted. "The producers have nothing to consume because the consumers are wanting."

By this absurdity, capitalism is sending a clear message that for society to be rescued from the horror imposed upon it by capitalism, it must take the means of production into its own hands and use them in a planned and conscious way for the benefit of the population.

Pending such a revolutionary transformation, Ford workers, and others threatened with job losses and downgrading, must demand that the state take over these enterprises and run them in such a way as to preserve workers' jobs and livelihoods if private capitalists are unable to do so.