DIRECT ACTION
SYNDICALIST WORKERS FEDERATION
British Section of the International Workers Association

FEWER HANDS
MAKE MORE MONEY

History shows us that every time there's a "dip" (the word today is "recession") that the "Employing Class" does two things. One: It takes its profits and invests them in any part of the world except their own country wherein those profits will make more money. Two: It uses this period of economic stagnation to weaken the strength of the organised "Working Class". It is a case of no holds barred for the Capitalist at times like these.

Through Parliamentary pressure groups (both Labour and Conservative) they try to bring in regressive anti-working class legislation, Income Policies etc. In an effort to cut back distribution of profits and dividends. At one end of the same period Employers will invite Government Loans, and try to cut the workforce. The 'fortunate' workers who are still left in employment are of course expected to bring out the same production if not more.

This policy of using the strength of the Establishment against the entire working class is reinforced at shop floor level by an all out attack on militant sections or individual militants of the work force.

Both these forms of action can be seen to be operating at the moment. Heath's Government had no difficulty in finding a Judge to send the 'Shrewsbury Two' down to a stiff and undeserved sentence. The right wing of the Labour Party just an easily squashed an attempt by left Labour members to have the unjust conviction debated in Parliament.

The Trades Union leadership has both eyes firmly fixed on the Company Directorships which it expects to be theirs in the near future as their reward for carrying the rank and file union membership. Under the proposed Worker participation Bill, Workers Directors would be drawn from the ranks of Union officials. One more boss whose main task would be to discipline the workers for the Employers. They will have a vested interest in maintaining a docile membership. Some unions are already restructuring their organisations to this end. One method is to make an agreement with the Employers to deduct union contributions from wages which if the practice becomes universal will mean that branch attendance will fall away to the extent where they can be abolished and thus remove what little control the rank and file has over the paid officials.

sabotage

Top officials at the Treasury are doing their utmost to sabotage the Worker Co-operative movement. Whilst British Leyland has no difficulty in obtaining the money granted to them, the Weardon Motorcycle Co-operative has had their Export Credit Guarantee held up while the Treasury obtain an up to date viability report. If this go ahead is not given soon the present agreement between Villiers, the Leyland concern and the motorcycle workers might well fail through.

At the Kirkby Co-operative the Government cash is paid in quarterly instalments subject to Government vetting. Pressure is already being put on the Workers Management to create another hundred redundancies. The workforce has already dropped from the original 1,200 to 850 employed at present.
ULSTER

For Syndicalists Ulster has become a tragedy. It is a tragedy in the political, economic, social sense but most of all, in the loss of human lives. The bombings and shootings of the sectarian divide are really only a power game of those who pose as the defenders and champions of the religious communities. But have there self-styled leaders any real support from the people of their respective communities? At this late stage it seems very unlikely. What mass of people really crave for is an end to the killings.

We are informed by most left wing groupings that the struggles taking place in Ulster are anti-imperialist. That the "Brits" have to be kicked out and the six counties become one with the rest of Eire. While this maybe the nationalist dream of many in the past, the political, the economic and even the religious changes that have taken place make this assumption a very doubtful one.

What the Catholics of Ulster want is an end to the discrimination practiced against them by the successive Protestant administrations. Catholics were second class citizens when it came to housing and jobs. While some may have had a nationalist and religious yearning to join catholic Eire, really it was the discrimination practiced against them that they abhorred. Anyway, why anyone in their right senses, want to join a nation state which had itself failed to solve its own economic problems and who's main export had been for years its labour force. Even catholics are reluctant to leave behind the economical benefits of Ulster rather than have the lack of discrimination but the possible poverty of the Papal state of Eire.

The same applies to the protestant members of the community. Why should they have to become a part of Eire? But the violence of the I.R.A. and the U.V.F. has driven a wedge between the two communities. Both of these organizations have thrived on the death and destruction they have caused.

The Catholics need a different death and destruction, but civil rights. It was the starting of this campaign which really had a good chance of success. It did not divide the communities but tried, with some success to bring together all who were discriminated against, the working class of Ulster. For the protestant worker his only consolation was that he was marginally better off than his catholic counterpart. But while this might have been so, Ulster has for years suffered under the discrimination sorted out by governments at Westminster. Ulster has always been one of the worst areas of the United Kingdom for unemployment. So while the working class of Ulster were religiously divided, the employers and the politicians had it all their own way. The violence of the bigots were concerned with outdated political forms.

One can not help but feel that the economic position of the people of Ulster. Whether the struggle will return to the grass roots, with people taking an active part remains to be seen. But the bullet and bomb battle will not give power to the people.

It will mean yet another solution of leaders with both the religious and political acronyms scrambling for power. That will be an imposed solution under which the exploitation of the working class will continue.

P.T.

INFLATION

We are always hearing in the Tory press and on the television that workers wage demands are responsible for inflation. Sometimes one would think that Britain is the only country in the world to suffer from this economic disease.

Let's look at one country abroad which has suffered massive inflation, Uruguay. The military took power 18 months ago. Last year was disastrous for the Uruguayan economy. The prospects for this year look no better. The trade deficit was 120 million dollars, an increase of 80% over 1975. Inflation was running at 100% last year, while wages rose by 40%. The commercial activity of the country is at a very low level, due to the out in purchasing power. Workers wages and salaries having been washed away. Unemployment has rocketed, emigration has soared. It is estimated that up to 500,000 have left during the last few years. Many of those are the skilled workers and technicians.

All this has taken place in a country were the Labour Movement has been smashed. There are over 4,000 political prisoners in the jails. The army can crush the left, but can't stop inflation.

The lessons we can draw from this situation are obvious. Unions and wage demands do not cause inflation. In fact, wage demands are an effect of inflation.

This is something we should remember when we hear the talking of the privileged, and the usual right-wing talk of the unions ruin- ing the economy. The army may be able to make the railways run on time but they can't beat inflation, even if they forcibly suppress the unions and make thousands unemployed.
WORK STUDY

freedom
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OFF OUR BACK

A call for assembly line production to be ended has been made in a report recently submitted to an international trade union conference on working conditions in the motor industry.

The report was drawn up by trade unions from Britain, Finland and Czechoslovakia. It states that unions should fight for the eventual abolition of assembly line production.

The report also suggests that there should be more breaks during shifts, and that there should be rotation of jobs between line workers.

The boss class wants a contented working class, job alienation with its symptoms—absenteeism and the high turnover in labour have a negative effect on profit. The productivity rates are lowered when new workers must be trained, and a whole hierarchy of supervisors is required to check and re-check the quality of the products. However, management here always been concerned about conditions that hamper productivity, why is management acting on these problems now, and why in this way?

The union bureaucracies work in gloves with the bosses, the officials want a quiet life just as much as the captains of industry. Alienation leads to wildcat strikes, just as it does to absenteeism. The full-time negotiators share the outlook in many ways to those of the employers.

The managers' interest in profitability, in these days of increased foreign competition and inflation, fits in quite well with the union's leadership interest in a strike-free life. In response to this crisis, management must look for ways to cut costs in production, because after a certain point it becomes more difficult to pass on increased costs to the consumer.
Dear Comrades,

As a reader (and seller) of D/A, I was interested in your article about the miners and shit. Very good, now let’s answer some questions for you.

First, my credentials. I was at the pit at the age of 17 (I tried longer but was more successful to get a job outside the mines than most lads in a pit village). To Wardley Colliery, it was my father’s and my grandfather’s coal mines that they called their lives. For one, and a half years I crossed and recrossed Wardley’s ancient faces and gales (funnels to you) in my efforts as a face lineslad. Working with the surfayers I discovered on my own that the pit was being deliberately 'run out', i.e. worked away from new and old coal reserves which would extend the life of our colliery.

When it was officially announced that Wardley (known as Little Westwood in the 20's and 30's along with the more Westernway Coppool Colliery) was closing I took advantage of the N.C.B.'s transfer scheme and was shipped off to Yorkshire to Hatfield colliery; next to the closed "Bed Pit" of debian (with coal reserves to the Norden).

With the exception of six months on the murdering pit bottom of Hatfield and about 17 months at the soul destroying Rookin College, Oxford I have been a coal face worker of one type or another for about 8 years. In answer to the questions.

There are no toilets of any description down the pit which means that any 1700 men shit and piss down the mine, in and around were they work. On the surface, which is rather like a very bad factory, chemical toilets exist for which very ill and sickly and old miners get paid the princely extra payment of 8p. per day for emptying them.

At the bottom of the shaft (the hole to you) the pit bottom lads shit on a sheet of newspaper, then wrap it up and dump it into a tub. Wagons going out of the mine, they pass into the 'sump' (where the water gathers underneath the resting place of the caged at the bottom of the 'hole') or shaft.

The Material lads: broken or cart wagons full of wooden and iron props, guards: supports 'injays' to the face have to shit in the gates, i.e. tunnels through which they will travel everyday. A modification is to shit like the pit bottom workers and throw it into the empty tube, (if they can wait that long) after they have unloaded the wagons.

The material gate through which all men travel who are taking in supplies, tools etc., is the worst environment in terms of shit. About half the men who work on the face travel through the material (or tail) gate. Workers who are laying new road or 'back ripping' i.e. repairing the damage to the tail gates when they have not been forced to shit in the roadways where their mail must wait each day. To sit down anywhere in the tail gate is to contaminate yourself with someone else's own shit. To the excreta might also be added your own vomit in response to the former.

The tail gate 'ridders' will at one of the ends of the coal face, advancing the tunnel or gates. Those men, again shit in the roadways through which they must pass for the length of their life in that face (often years). Some other tail gate workers can shit on a sheet of paper and throw it on the face conveyor (the moving chain or belt which takes the coal away) This is wicked for the fitters who have to repair the belt (if it is broken (or the shit gets spread all over the chain or belt) and have to handle the pieces of equipment covered in shit.

Along the possible 200 or more yards of the face the workers shit were they are or again filing it on the chain.

In the Loader or Main gate, the ridders advancing the face or belt tunnel shit on paper (or if they have any if not on a shovel) and throw it on the belt carrying the coal, again the shit gets spread all over the belt and in the machinery of that conveyor.

That is general but if there is no paper or conveyor with in which to dump your shit then you shit where you are where you work.

By the way, if there is water which their often is and a man shits in a corner, gowns are transmitted by the water back to the skins of the men kneeling on or lying in water. This gives rise to a horrible illness called 'MINERS WORM'. It is the penetration of worms into the flesh and muscle of the man by creatures carried in the water. It has a medical name but I can't remember it. I do know that this ailment is found only in two places coal mines and the African bush.

All the best Dave Douglas
Hatfield Main Branch N.U.M.
FINE FUMES

Some thirty years ago the charnel houses of Nazi Germany were coming to an end. The world was sickened by the news of their existence. The monsters who had created these places were soon to be dispersed, soon to stand trial before the War Crimes Commission. However while one curtain was being run down another was being raised. This revealed a new monster who was certainly not a Nazi, but kind to children and animals. You'll find him in all walks of life, amongst scientists, managing directors, technicians.

"At the close of the second World war the number of chemicals blamed for recorded occupational diseases was about 50. Today there are estimated to be some 400,000 chemicals in daily use, and many have harmful (and sometimes little known) side effects. "About 300,000 workers lose their lives every year and another 1.2m throughout the world are permanently disabled as a result of accidents at work or occupational diseases." - FINANCIAL TIMES 28/1/75.

The Plastics and Petro-Chemical industries are a case in point. After the war they rushed in to satisfy the consumers insatiable demand for cheap but handsome looking furnishings. The draughts of life had to be relieved with a few luxuries.

Plastics surround us in the home, they're under our feet, above our heads. We sit on them, dine off them, and go to bed on them.

Let us quote an expert on Fire Prevention: "The surface spread of flame on polystyrene material is alarming. It is so rapid that a building becomes a blazing inferno before the occupants can escape."

"One night in June last year a stream running through the heart of Kirkby (Liverpool) burst into flames 30ft high."

The River Alt was found by an analyst to contain arsenic, cyanide, manganese, mercury and cadmium. He said, "It is imperative that these waters be banned to all animals and man."

KIRKBY BULLETIN, No.1.

Recently a whole family was suffocated in their own home in the Salford area when the sofa caught fire. So home is where you can be gassed in luxury or fried in fancy furnishings as luck would have it. The Petrochemical industry have produced napalm and incendiary bombs, but in our ignorance we are making our homes into comfortable incinerators.

The precautions that are taken to prevent ignition during manufacture are not taken to protect the lives of the workers, but to protect the product. Once the profits have been made, you the consumer can go to hell and burn in your own home.

Bernie Tupp

GREEN

The Governments much heralded Housing "package deal" has turned out to be a bribe to the Builders and Building Societies. It takes the form of a guarantee of funds for new house mortgages, which the Government hopes will set the trawlers, hammers and saws working away building the houses which the people of Britain so desperately need. The House Builders Federation, which represents the majority of home builders in the country states that until the unsold 40,000 luxury houses are off their hands, it is no deal that if these houses are in the South-East and price wise range from £14,000 to £24,000.

Greenland has back pedalled on nearly all his radical promises of 1974. Land Nationalisation is to be introduced very slowly by local authorities and is to be based on future and not on present needs. This gives firms like Northern Builders the green light to cash in on their huge land holdings.

Meanwhile the big builders, Laings, Wimpey, Taylor Woodrow etc, can't be expected to take a cut in profits. So what is Britain's loss is the oil-rich countries gain. All the big builders are falling over themselves to win huge housing contracts from Iran, Saudi Arabia etc.
For years management has tried to get workers to do their job for them and get the workers to discipline themselves. Personnel management is dedicated to search for ways to keep workers highly motivated and productive.

"One of the very first requirements for a man who is fit to handle pig iron as a regular occupation is that he shall be so stupid and palaeolithic that he must more nearly resemble an ox than any other type of animal."
Frederick W. Taylor: the originator of the assembly line system.

F.W. Taylor, through his now famous time-motion studies, fostered the development of the assembly line, as we all know the production process is broken down into its smallest units, thereby forcing workers to move as quickly as possible. Taylor assumed that work-people were stupid and psychologically suited to dull repetitive work. However, boredom is not conducive to a high quality of workmanship.

Much to management's dismay, all incentives do not yield the desired results, whether it be pension plans, special gifts, printed matter, or painting the walls in attractive colours.

Phrases, they have to try a different approach because of changes in the composition of the workforce, that is increasingly affluent and has not known hardships, it's younger and much better educated than its parents. Consequently, the bosses have to try to change incentives to achieve a steady growth in productivity.

These methods involve a systematic reorganisation of the work process, a number of the features are as follows that of autonomous work groups as in the Volvo plant in Sweden, to quote Mr. Gylenhammar, president of the Volvo group of companies, 'We want to bring back the concept of professionalism and proud craftsmanship working in small workshops, even in our auto factories'. In the Gainsborough food plant in Topeka Kansas, 70 workers are divided into 5 teams, 2 teams a shift. Processing team unloads and then makes the product. The other teams pack and dispatch. Within the work group the hierarchy is broken down, supervisory levels are done away with, except for a foreman who does the task of the rest.

Self-government, team members decide work hours and work quotas, and the team give each other information on the quality of the work.

Under this heading, on an ideological level, we can put co-partnership, industrial democracy in the style of Wedge and Beam's workers directors etc.

Removal of the various outward signs of status, to give the workers a feeling of equality, the symbol of inferiority, such as separate canteens, lavatories and parking areas.

After only a period of 18 months of operation, the Topeka plant mentioned above had achieved that were 33% lower than plants in the same line of business. The absentee rate was 9% below the average.

According to reports in Trade Journals the spirit of the place is described as "very worker oriented". This feeling of job control has resulted in falling off in union membership in some American plants. It appears that the abandonment of the assembly line has more than one advantage for the bosses.

No doubt, this new turn in management thinking will eventually find its way to Britain. Perhaps Tolstoy has the best description of this mentality when he says, "I sit on a man's back, choking him and making him carry me and yet assure myself and others that I am sorry for him and wish to lighten his load by all possible means - except by getting off his back."

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