

# DIRECT ACTION

SYNDICALIST WORKERS FEDERATION no. 6

5p

British Section of the International Workers Association

## FEWER HANDS MAKE MORE MONEY

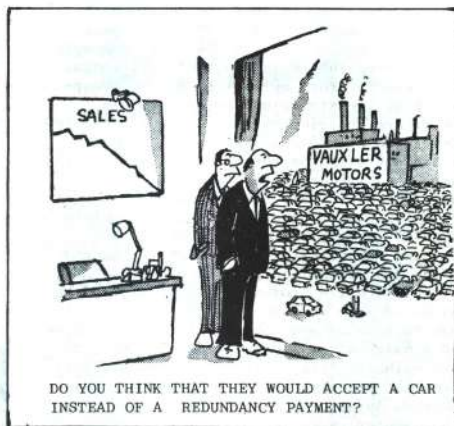
History shows us that every time there's a 'slump' (the in word today is recession) that the 'Employing Class' does two things. One; It takes its profits and invests them in any part of the World except their own country wherein those profits will make more money. Two: It uses this period of economic 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 repressive anti-working class legislation, Incomes Policies etc. but fight like hell against any attempt to cut back distribution of profits and dividends. At one and the same time Employers will invite Government Loans, and try to cut the work-force. 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 as 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 curbing 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 organisation 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

KIRKBY  
MERIDEN

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 Meriden Motorcycle Co-operative has had their Export Credit Guarantee held up while the Treasury obtain an up to date viability report. If the go ahead is not given soon the present agreement between Villiers, the Unions concerned and the motorcycle workers might well fall 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 these self-styled leaders any real support from the people of their respective communities? At this late stage it seems very unlikely. What the 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 practised 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 would 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 economic 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 organisations have thrived on the death and destruction they have caused.

What the catholics needed was not 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 meted 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 form-

ulas than with improving the social and 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 scoundrels scrambling to power. That will be an imposed solution under which the exploitation of the working class will continue.

P.T.



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 1973. 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 cut in purchasing power. Workers wages now barely cover food and rent.

Unemployment has rocketed, emigration has soared. It is estimated that up to 500,000 have left during the last few years. Many of these are the skilled workers and technicians.

All this has taken place in a country where 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 muttering of the privileged, and the usual right-wing talk of the unions ruining 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



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## freedom

The Anarchist Weekly Paper.  
Published by Freedom Press,  
84b. Whitechapel High Street,  
London. E.1.  
Subscription Rates 1 year £4.00  
6 months £2.00.

At a meeting held at Jubilee Hall, Dukinfield on the 4th. Feb. 250 workers from the refuse departments of the newly created Tameside Metropolitan Borough Nr. Manchester turned down a works study scheme.

The scheme was incorporated into a plan to merge the old municipal departments and create a common wage structure.

The meeting was at first rigged to intimidate workers, anyone wishing to question the management, after they have put their case, had first to quote their name and dept. This was later dropped after protest.

It was then the turn of the local officials of the G.M.W.U. and as they usually work hand in glove with the local Labour councillors, they seemed if anything, more in favour of the scheme than the management. They first tried to bludgeon workers into accepting the scheme by threatening the dire consequences.

As the meeting progressed and the officials sensed the mood of the meeting was against them they tried to stall on the vote but the workers were adamant and the vote was carried 249 for and 1 against.

The reason for work study is to increase efficiency so as to cut costs.

But the main cost in emptying bins is manpower and, as refuse workers can't increase production i.e. there is only a fixed amount of bins to empty, that leaves only one alternative, redundancy.

Everyone knows binmen knock off early if they really rush through their round. The task of work study is to keep them rushing through their rounds but no knocking off early, sack the surplus labour and bribe the rest off with a bit of extra bonus. The bonus would probably be lost to inflation in a year or so, but the Friday afternoon off, gone forever.

Now if we look in the gutter press we sometimes read of a tory hacks writing 'its time we put these unemployed louts to work cleaning up the city'.

As someone once said, "you can fool some of the people some of the time".....

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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.

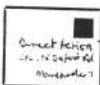
The report also suggests that there should be more breaks during shifts, and that there should be rotation of jobs between the workers.

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 profits. The productivity rates are lowered when new workers must be trained often, and a whole hierarchy of supervisors are required to check and recheck the quality of the products. However, managements have 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 hand in glove 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 shares 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 unions 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.

# letter



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Dear, Comrades,

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

First my credentials I came to the pit at the late age of 17 (I tried longer but with no more success to get a job outside the mines than most lads in a pit village). To Wardley Colliery, Co. Durham were my father and grand father had toiled the bulk of their lives. For one and a half years I crossed and recrossed Wardleys ancient faces and gates (tunnels to you) in my efforts as a face lineslad. Working with the surveyors 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 Moscow in the 20's and 30's along with the more Westerway Chopwell 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 "Red Pit" of Thorne (with coal reserves to the Humber).

With the exception of six months on the murdering pit bottom of Hatfield and about 17 months at the soul destroying Ruskin College, Oxford I have been a coal face worker of one type or another for about 9 years. In answer to the questions.

There are NO TOILETS of any description down the pit which means that say 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 (waggon) going out of the mine, they piss into the 'sump' (or where the water gathers underneath the resting place of the cage at the bottom of the 'hole' or shaft).

The Material lads; blokes who cart waggons full of wooden & iron props, girders & supports 'inbye' 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 tubs, (if they can wait that long) after they have unloaded the waggons.

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 gate are forced to shit in the roadways were they must walk each day. To sit down 'anywhere' in the tail gate is to tempt fate and cover yourself with someone elses (or your own) shit. To the excretia might also be added your own vomit in response to the former.

The tail gate 'rippers' toil at one of the ends of the coal face, advancing the tunnels or gates. These men, again shit in the roadways through which they must pass for the length of life of that face (often years). Some other tail gate rippers 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 or chain when it is broken (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 fling it on the chain.

In the Loader or Main gate, the rippers advancing the main or belt tunnel shit on paper (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 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, germs are transmitted by the water back to the skins of the men kneeling or lying in water. This gives rise to a horrible illness called 'MINERS WORM'. It is the penetration of germs 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 Douglass  
Hatfield Main Branch N.U.M.

## PAMPHLETS

Syndicalists in the Russian revolution  
by G.P. Maximoff

How the Labour Governed 1945-1951.

Lenin and Workers Control 2½p.

Hungarian workers revolution 5p.

Workers Control 10p.

Anarchism & Anarcho-Syndicalism 20p.

by Rudolph Rocker.

France's Prisoners

by M. Garcia. £2.25.

The Social General Strike  
Tom Brown is being reprinted  
orders from Direct Action.

## PRESS FUND

We Have recently acquired a new Typewriter which has cost us £100 we still owe £30 we would be most grateful if a few more people could send us some money to pay this off. Because now we have had the offer of a printing press and the sooner we pay this off the quicker we can buy the press. This is going to be the only way that we can expand as a group and get our message across to as many people as we can.

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# 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, some to stand trial before the War Crimes Commission.

However while one curtain was being rung 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, among 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 600,000 chemicals in daily use, and many have harmful (and sometimes little known) side effects".  
 "About 100,000 workers lose their lives every year and another 1.5m 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 drabness 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 polythene 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 should 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

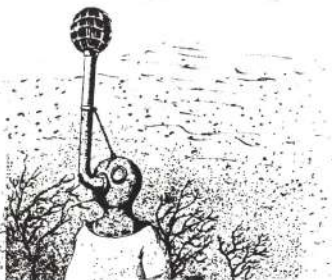


## GREEN FIGHT

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 trowels, 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. Most of these houses are in the South-East and price wise range from £14,000 to £24,000.

Crosland 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 Britains 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 to 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 phlegmatic 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 managements dismay all incentives do not yield the desired results, whether its pension plans, special gifts, piped music or painting the walls in attractive colours.

Nowadays, they have to try a different approach because of changes in the composition of the work-force. It is increasingly affluent and has not known hardships, it's younger and much better educated than its parents. Consequently, the bosses have to try different methods 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. Gyllenhammer, president of the Volvo group of companies, "We want to bring back the concept of professional and proud craftsmanship working in small workshops, even in our auto factories". In the Gaines dog food plant in Topeka Kansas, 70 workers are divided into 6 teams, two teams a shift. A processing team unloads and then makes the product. The other team packs and despatches. Within the work group the group 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 Wedgewood-Benn's workers directors etc.

Removal of the various outward signs of status, to give the workers a feeling of equality, the symbols 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 overheads 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 "every worker a manager".

This feeling of job control has resulted in falling off in union membership in some American plants. It appears the 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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