

WILDCAT HOMERS, GAMIFYING WORK, AND WORKPLACE-WHĀNAU IN THE MEAT INDUSTRY: RE-EXAMINING THE SUBVERSIVENESS OF INFORMAL WORKERS' RESISTANCE

Toby Boraman 

Studies of labor struggle often concentrate on overt resistance, such as strikes, and neglect the rich variety of subterranean acts of workplace dissent. The few studies of this informal resistance that exist are largely a-historical and Eurocentric micro-studies that generally argue such dissent lacks radical content. Drawing on two unorthodox Marxist currents, including “autonomist Marxism”, this article presents a historical study of everyday resistance by meatworkers in Aotearoa New Zealand during the 1970s. It is asserted these struggles often hampered profits and production, complemented overt resistance, and were frequently collective rather than individualistic in nature—indeed, in many plants dissent was based on informal work groups of workplace-whānau. These were multiethnic extended family-like informal groupings that were influenced by Māori culture. While capital comprehensively restructured the meat industry in the 1980s and 1990s, it has not meant the “end of resistance” today.

Introduction: The Importance of Informal Resistance Today and during the 1970s

It is commonly contended that capital's disciplining of labor (Duménil and Lévy 2005, 10) since the 1970s has greatly diminished workers' resistance. Given the inherent tensions between capital and labor under capitalism, and especially the recent transnational surge in class conflict since the global financial crisis, this contention is debatable (see e.g., Silver 2016; Silver and Karatasli 2015; Wildcat 2015). Nonetheless, judged by strike statistics, since the 1970s a long-term waning in strike activity has occurred in most high-income countries (van der Velden et al. 2007).

Yet if informal—and often invisible—“on-the-job” conflict is included in the picture, is it really “all quiet on the workplace front?” (Thompson and Ackroyd 1995). Many academics have questioned this “end of resistance” thesis by documenting the seemingly widespread and persistent nature of informal workers' dissent, ranging from open confrontation at work and “misbehavior” [defined as “anything you do at work you are not supposed to do” (Ackroyd and

Thompson 1999, 2)], to more subtle forms such as a cynical disengagement from work (Collinson 1994; Collinson and Ackroyd 2006, 2; Prasad and Prasad 1998). A contrast can also be made between more contemporary forms such as “cyberslacking” (Paulsen 2011) and more traditional forms such as sabotage, theft, “foot dragging,” work avoidance, “time theft,” work-to-rules, absenteeism (including taking “sickies”), playing dumb and job quitting (Barnes and Taksa 2012; Collinson and Ackroyd 2006; Hodson 2001; Watson 2017).

Therefore, today it is crucial to re-examine historical theories and debates about the radical potential of hidden resistance. This need is heightened because it is sometimes claimed when open methods of resistance are difficult to undertake, as under neoliberalism or dictatorial regimes, more subterranean methods become more feasible (see e.g., Kopstein 2001; Scott 1985; Van der Broek and Dundon 2012).

During a period of relatively intense workers’ dissent during the 1970s, unorthodox Marxist theories asserted that wider and more overt forms of workplace insubordination sprang largely from everyday acts. Furthermore, this informal rank-and-file self-organization gave glimpses, in a distorted and limited form, of the possibility of a classless society either based on workers’ self-management, or the abolition of wage-labor. Yet since the 1980s, a general—but not universal—consensus has emerged that on-the-job conflict lacks subversive and “political” content. Instead, it is considered a largely individualistic method of coping with the pressures of work. Price (1986, 2) aptly summarizes this perspective: “these conflicts possessed limited scope, were apolitical, did not contradict the ‘real subordination’ to capitalist domination and, finally, did not signify a uniquely militant property of the rank and file.” I argue such pessimism is misplaced, particularly during the turbulent 1970s.

Viewing informal resistance through a historical lens sheds valuable insights because the literature on the subject generally consists of micro-studies that overlook the broader historical, social, economic, and cultural context in which that resistance occurs (Van der Broek and Dundon 2012). As such, everyday resistance can be presented as if workers engage in it in a continuous, ubiquitous “now” (see e.g., Barnes and Taksa 2012; Collinson and Ackroyd 2006), neglecting the very real historical ebbs and flows of dissent.

This article contains a brief historical study of informal resistance by meatworkers or packinghouse workers in Aotearoa New Zealand largely during the long 1970s—that is, the period from the late 1960s to the early 1980s.¹ Unlike most studies of everyday resistance, this study is not based on an intensive study of one workplace. Such a comprehensive method is highly difficult to undertake for a historical inquiry. Instead, this article is based on historical research from a wide variety of unpublished and published sources, as well as on several interviews with former meatworkers.

Studying Aotearoa New Zealand may seem irrelevant due to its remoteness and smallness. Yet it mirrored, in microcosm, trends experienced in other high-income countries. Meatworkers provide an almost archetypal example of rebellious assembly-line workers during a decade when workers’ recalcitrance often centered on such Fordist workers globally (Silver 2003). Moreover, marked

global parallels can be traced between meatworkers' resistance in Aotearoa New Zealand with that of meatworkers elsewhere, such as in Argentina (see e.g., Lobato 1997) and in the U.S. (see e.g., Horowitz 1997). Like the U.S., the struggles of meatworkers in Aotearoa New Zealand were often based on the intersections of class and race (Halpern and Horowitz 1999), and were influenced by local and global struggles against racism, imperialism, and colonization. Yet Aotearoa New Zealand differed in one important respect: indigenous meatworkers played a pivotal role in labor conflict.

This article proceeds by firstly briefly re-appraising several theories about everyday resistance that were developed in the 1970s. It then outlines the nature and extent of informal resistance in the meat processing industry in Aotearoa New Zealand during the long 1970s, including a synopsis of the considerable levels of informal workers' control and workers' autonomy from work, and the widespread organization of informal work groups in the form of workplace-whānau. It then discusses the effectiveness of this resistance, and capital's counter-attack from the late 1970s to the 1990s in the form of extensive restructuring and downsizing of the industry, and their attempted suppression of quotidian resistance.

Theories about Informal Resistance in the 1970s

During the long 1970s, labor dissent experienced a major global spike (Crouch and Pizzorno 1978; Silver 2003; van der Velden et al. 2007). This revolt was often driven from below by workers themselves (see e.g., Brecher 1972; Brenner, Brenner, and Winslow 2010). A noted feature of this struggle—especially by assembly-line workers of different ethnicities and genders—was its informal, everyday basis (Watson 1971; Zerzan 1975). For example, Bill Watson's (1971) article “counter planning on the shop floor”—which was part of a pioneering series of articles in *Radical America*—outlined how autoworkers disrupted the production plans of management while bypassing labor union channels. Likewise, others such as Stan Weir (1972, 2004), and Guttman (1972) highlighted the role of informal work groups—small groupings of work friends on the shop floor—as the “invisible cells” of strikes, rather than unions. Similarly, in his classic history of strikes in the U.S., Jeremy Brecher (1972, 233–7) argued that strikes were often based on “invisible” work groups at the site of production that informally regulated the speed of work and organized breaks from work during company time. He saw these groups as the cells of larger, more open struggles, such as strikes.

These early studies were influenced by two unorthodox Marxist currents of the post WWII period, namely the “Johnson-Forest tendency” in the U.S. (of which Weir was a member) and the Italian school of *operaismo* or “autonomist Marxism.” Both tendencies undertook extensive grassroots studies of informal resistance. Given the influence of these currents through the writings of, among others, C. L. R. James and Antonio Negri, it is remarkable that the literature on

informal resistance has neglected their theories (with some exceptions such as Brophy 2010, Grzyb 1981; Kolinko 2002).

The Johnson-Forest tendency attempted to base Marxism on workers' everyday work lives (Haider and Mohandesi 2013). They thought radical tendencies amongst workers were revealed when they undertook informal resistance. Martin Glaberman, for example, argued that everyday resistance was a product of the alienating and uncreative nature of work under capital. With Seymour Faber he wrote:

The workers' aim in this [everyday class] war is the humanization of the workplace. In pursuing this end workers press for greater control over their work lives, thereby setting up new social relations at work. Evidence indicates this is constant and ongoing. This struggle may be individual in nature or involve whole sections of the working class. The battle is usually underground and takes the form of guerrilla warfare; but sometimes it breaks out into open conflict that has revolutionary potential (Faber and Glaberman 1998, 38).

This "guerrilla warfare" took many forms, ranging from workers making work more sociable, enjoyable, and playful to open revolt (Faber and Glaberman 1998). As such, it represented a kernel for more visible revolts, and even the possibility of the revolutionary self-management of society via workers' councils as in Hungary in 1956 (Faber and Glaberman 1998, 22). As Haider and Mohandesi (2013) argue, this tendency could assume that workers' experiences and aims were largely homogenous (despite the current emphasizing the autonomous struggles of African-Americans). Moreover, could socialism spontaneously appear simply by workers sharing their experiences of everyday work and resistance? (Haider and Mohandesi 2013).

Initially, Italian autonomists' "workers" inquiries' into shop-floor resistance—by Romano Alquati and Raniero Panzieri among others—discerned a similar tendency toward self-management (Wright 2002, 51). Yet from about the mid-1960s onward, some autonomists observed a different trend: the "refusal of work." While autonomists themselves offered many different interpretations of this refusal (see e.g., Bologna 1978, 1992; Revelli 1982), perhaps the most well-known analyses were expressed by Mario Tronti (1972) and Antonio Negri (1991). They claimed that workers, especially the Fordist "mass worker," were *rejecting work* rather than *seeking control of it*. For example, workers were demanding "more money for less work" and thereby working slowly and shoddily, or not at all—by fleeing from the factory through wildcat strikes, absenteeism and other forms of work refusal. In so doing, they were asserting their own needs and use-values, and their autonomy from wage-work, over and above the demands of capital (Negri 1991, 159–69). Such a refusal was seen as the beginnings of a broader revolutionary struggle whereby the working-class abolished labor (and the wage-system) and itself, ushering in a classless communist society (Tronti 1972; Cleaver 2000, 69–70). Furthermore, this refusal went beyond the factory—it was interlinked with a broader revolt in the community against racism, sexism, and domestic or reproductive labor (Cleaver 2000; Pizzolato 2017; Weeks, 2011).

However, the autonomists own inquiries sometimes revealed a more contradictory picture. While some workers rejected work—for example, some Fiat workers in the late 1960s informed the autonomists that “we work too much and enjoy too little” (quoted in Wright 2002, 119), others sought to control it. The *Assemblea Autonomia dell’ Alfa Romeo*, for instance, argued in 1974 that “we are not against labour, but the capitalist organisation of labour whose end is not social progress but profit” (quoted in Wright 2002, 159; see also Gianni Sbrogio in Wildcat 2007, 49–50).

Somewhat in reaction to these optimistic theories, many subsequent academic investigations have found that on-the-job conflict lacks subversiveness and therefore is largely ineffective. For example, Michael Burawoy’s (1979) study *Manufacturing Consent* asserted that shop floor games, far from subverting work, actually sped up output and reproduced capitalist social relations. Furthermore, no strong concrete connections could be made between everyday resistance and overt resistance. For instance, McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (1996) argued that everyday resistance remained mostly at the level of “individual *ressentiment*.” Post-structuralist influenced authors have added that some earlier studies about informal resistance were “blinded by grand visions” of radical change, essentialized a pure, authentic rebellious worker, and hence overlooked the complexities and contradictions of resistance (Collinson 1994, 54; Nord and Jermier 1994, 401). While the theories expressed by unorthodox Marxists reflected a period of labor revolt, such more pessimistic perspectives reflect the global neoliberal turn since the 1970s and the concomitant defeat of the labor revolt of the 1970s.

Meatworkers’ Everyday Resistance

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the meat industry was decisively the most strike-prone industry in the country during the long 1970s. Despite only making up about three percent of the total workforce, meatworkers during the period 1968–1982 accounted for 53 percent of all working days not worked due to stoppages across all industries, and 59 percent of workers involved in all stoppages from 1971 to 1982.² Informal resistance was also rife in the industry. For example, a government inquiry claimed the meat industry experienced “chronic absenteeism” and an “extremely high turnover” (Commission of Inquiry 1974, 60, 108). Other studies found, relative to other industries, it experienced high rates of sickness, theft, sabotage, “over-utilisation of accident compensation, neglect of quality, indiscipline, passive resistance to supervisors and tardiness at critical times” (Inkson and Cammock 1984, 155; see also Howells and Alexander 1968; Inkson and Simpson 1975; Inkson 1977, 1979, 1980).

Gauging the extent of hidden resistance is difficult. Some indication that it was considerable can be ascertained from some remarkable statistics about unofficial strikes. The Meat Industry Employers’ Association claimed that about 2,500 stoppages of brief duration (often only lasting an hour or two) occurred in the industry during 1970–1972 for a government inquiry. These unrecorded

stoppages involved nearly 470,000 workers. These figures far exceeded the officially recorded national totals of about 1,000 stoppages involving around 300,000 workers across all industries during the same period (Boraman 2016, 66). While these tallies are minute by international standards, they were considerable in the local context given the total nationwide workforce was then just less than 1 million. Another government inquiry claimed that at one slaughterhouse between 1969 and 1974 a total of 362 unauthorized stoppages occurred resulting in 250,000 hours not worked (Committee of Inquiry 1974, 1). Most of these unofficial stoppages were wildcat strikes—nicknamed “homers,” meaning to go home rather than hit a home run—that were often organized informally on the shop floor. Webb (2015, 99) asserts these were the most common form of industrial action at plant level.

The causes of the intense level of meatworkers’ unrest were complex and multifaceted (for an overview see Inkson 1987, 12–3). The broader context of a deep recession from 1973 onward was crucial in triggering many disputes so as living standards could be maintained. Furthermore, greater international competition and stricter hygiene regulations forced companies to speed up and mechanize production, passing the costs of upgrading plants on to workers. Under various awards between employers and unions, workers received at least 250 different rates of pay (Calder and Tyson 1999, 73). Butchers near the front of the “dis-assembly” line received piecework wages, so their pay varied weekly or daily according to the speed they worked. However other workers did not receive performance pay, and yet needed to work as fast as the butchers due to the interdependent nature of dis-assembly line work. Hence many of these hourly paid meatworkers took action throughout the 1970s to gain incentive bonuses (Roger Middlemass, interview October 2, 2013).

Further, meat processing was the key export industry in Aotearoa New Zealand’s agro-business economy, responsible for about 40 percent of export earnings (Turkington 1976a, 31). Indeed, throughout the 1970s that country was by far the largest global exporter of sheepmeat (Blyth 1981). Meatworkers knew they possessed power due to their strategic economic location (Interviews with Ken Findlay January 21, 2014, Middlemass October 2, 2013 and Helen Mulrennan December 18, 2013) and also because they were processing a perishable product.

Yet, as studies have emphasized, there was considerable dissatisfaction with the monotonous, grueling, blood and guts nature of work on the disassembly line. This played a pivotal role in causing dissent (see e.g., Geare 1972a, 1972b; Inkson and Cammock 1984; Turkington 1976a). Ben Matthews (1977) captured well the everyday experience of working under pressure in hazardous, physically demanding working conditions:

one must envisage the scene of men working shoulder-to-shoulder, each handling a knife at speed, blood, steam, hot water, excrement, noise, urine, foremen, meat inspectors...and the chain [assembly-line] constantly moving at eight links per minute past a given point.

Workers had to perform exactly the same task at least eight times a minute in the process of killing and disassembling thousands of sheep and cattle every day. However, with the notable exception of Webb (2015), studies of meatworkers' dissension in Aotearoa New Zealand neglect the role of shop floor informal workers' culture and informal work groups as foundation stones of dissent, and do not examine the theses posed above—did such resistance represent a form of informal workers' control or a work refusal?

Informal Workers' Self-Management or the Refusal of Work?

Webb (2015, 69, 85), drawing on Green (1992), argues that meatworkers attempted to shape the workplace to their own needs, and hence aimed for informal workers' control. Multiple examples of this can be found. For example, Inkson and Cammock (1984, 155) note that small departments often operated as “autonomous work groups” that controlled factors such as employment, the allocation of work and work methods within overall management procedures. It was common practice for workers to secure jobs for others, such as family members, as well to informally teach each other different jobs (Geare 1972a; Webb 2015, 69). Work speed on the disassembly line was also sometimes set by agreements between supervisors and workers, or unions and management. Workers, at times, also established semiautonomous spaces at work. For example, Inkson and Cammock (1984, 155) found that when visiting a department, workers escorted them away. The workers apparently did this to everyone—strangers or management. Similarly, the workers' cafeteria was maintained as a management-free zone (Webb 2015, 69).

Informal workers' self-management extended beyond control of the work process to appropriating the company's product. Theft of meat—particularly small cuts—was widespread in the industry and in the long 1970s management largely tolerated it within limits (Findlay, interview, January 21, 2014). Webb (2015, 69) calls this a “perk culture” that served two functions: it was “a part of the broader struggle for control over the workplace” and it shaped “the workplace to the needs of the home.” One prominent example of everyday theft was “boil ups” in the knife sterilizer:

they had these bowls of hot running water. And you had to dip your knife into it to clean it after each one. Or sometimes after every three sheep. It just depended on the job. But they were great for cooking up kidneys and tongues and things (James Robb, interview, October 10, 2013).

“Sweetbreads” (or glands) were particular favorites for “boil ups.” However, supervisors sometimes noticed the frothing sterilizer and pulled out the plug (Mulrennan cited in Webb 2015, 70).

Yet there is also ample evidence of workers refusing work so as to gain autonomy from it. Wildcat homers and absenteeism were often used to gain leisure and socializing time together during work hours—for example, to play sport

together or to escape to drink in the pub (Webb 2015, 99). For example, Bill Hillman claimed that:

in the height of the season you had four chains going, you had fifty-eight mutton butchers on it and about forty labourers. And the noise. And the heat. And the boys would get frustrated with it and at 2 o'clock, bang, that's it for the day. They wanted a release (quoted in Webb 2015, 99).

These strikes—a form of time appropriation—were often a reaction to the intensification of work that occurred due to piecework. Another meatworker, Helen Mulrennan, said:

the [wildcat] walk-outs were a bit of letting off steam... there wasn't hot water in the showers last night...there should be hot water in the showers, we have a meeting and we walk off. We go home. Sometimes it was just like oh, I feel like a day off.

However, she cautions that while these strikes seemed petty, they were often symptomatic of larger issues—such as the dirty, smelly nature of the job and hence the necessity of hot water (Mulrennan, interview, December 18, 2013). Indeed, overt disputes—at least at a factory level rather than a nationwide level—often arose from everyday protests on the shop floor, thus illustrating how informal acts led to wider, overt confrontations (Geare 1972a; Howell and Alexander 1968; Longburn Sub-Branch New Zealand Meat Workers' Union 1974; Webb 2015). As such strikes could result from “any minor incident” (Geare 1972a, 18).

Such incidents included attempts to repress everyday resistance, such as when workers were fired for alleged theft, sabotage, feigning accidents or when the police searched workplaces and workers' cars for stolen goods. For instance, in 1977, company accusations that one worker pilfered meat caused a three-day wildcat strike in support of the accused. In response, the company locked out all 900 workers of the slaughterhouse for almost two weeks (*Socialist Action* 23 Sep. 1977). In 1979, a strike resulted when the company endeavored to make injured workers perform other jobs, because the company alleged the accidents were self-inflicted (*Socialist Action* February 23, 1979). Indeed, management sometimes contentiously asserted workers purposely cut themselves to gain time off work while receiving government-provided accident compensation payments. However, most disputes resulted from other issues, such as pay and working conditions.

As noted earlier the industry experienced “chronic absenteeism,” which was “particularly acute” on Mondays and Fridays (Commission of Inquiry 1974, 108). A common joke about absenteeism in slaughterhouses was that “a foreman would say ‘Why don't you come in on the fifth day?’...and the answer was... ‘because I can't live on three days' pay’” (Mulrennan, interview, December 18, 2013). At one slaughterhouse in the early 1980s a local agreement allowed mutton butchers to work four days a week for five days' pay in order to reduce severe absenteeism (Angove 1988, 12).

Sabotage was sometimes employed as another method of averting work, although evidence is patchy (Inkson and Cammock 1984, 155; Turkington

1976b, 186). For example, Nancy Angove (1988, 20) alleged that workers sometimes collectively turned the heat in their knife sterilizers to maximum in order to lift the temperature in the plant above the agreed limit, so they could then gain the day off. However, temperatures soared regularly in slaughterhouses during summer due to the lack of ventilation and the steamy atmosphere.

Sometimes the line between informal self-management and the refusal of work was blurred. A good example was that of the widespread process of “doubling up” or “spelling” (taking a spell or break from work) whereby workers would informally organize breaks from work while others covered for them (Geare 1972a, 20; Longburn Sub-Branch New Zealand Meat Workers’ Union 1974, 8; Webb 2015). For example, “hoeing” in the freezers involved a worker from each freezer “gang” or work group being rotated outside the freezer so as to warm up. Employers claimed this unofficial tradition, which they somewhat tolerated, was “abused” as the workers stayed out well beyond their “hoeing hours” (Murray 1974, 7–8). These practices can either be interpreted as an attempt to self-manage and humanize work (Faber and Glberman 1998, 108) or simply to evade work temporarily and ease onerous working conditions.

In general, it appears meatworkers’ labor unions—the two most important being the New Zealand Meat Workers’ Union and the Auckland & Tomoana Freezing Workers’ Union—supported and maintained these traditions of informal workers’ control and to some extent autonomy from work. Indeed, informal control of work was reinforced by robust union control of work. For instance, according to Curtis (1996, 152–3) union delegates exercised more authority than supervisors did over everyday decisions—such as staffing levels, seniority rankings, and work processes—on their particular section of the disassembly line. Additionally, homers were frequently organized through powerful union structures. After one department of workers had ceased work, a plant-wide union meeting would be called. If workers endorsed the strike through a vote, the entire plant would then strike. In other words meatworkers’ unions, with their principle of “one out, all out,” often officially endorsed strikes initiated at a local level (Webb 2015, 101).

According to Turkington (1976a, 127) “many shed [plant] unions are super democracies within which the workers, rather than officials, have the power and exercise control.” However, multiple tensions remained between union bureaucracies and the rank-and-file, and unions often endeavored to discipline workers for everyday recalcitrance. For example, one union official at the militant Westfield slaughterhouse claimed it was lucky that the “union had a hold. Otherwise I think the boys would have liked to go every day” (Bill Hillman quoted in Webb 2015, 101). Delegates also played a disciplinary role in monitoring the line and chastising shoddy work (Curtis 1996, 153–4). Even the more militant union officials often advised against strikes because they wanted workers to undertake plant-wide (and wider) strategic strikes that they could win, rather than walking out over every little daily injustice.

Informal Work Groups and Workplace-Whānau

Inkson and Cammock (1984, 155) claim that everyday resistance was “individual” in nature. While that was mostly the case for practices such as theft, sabotage, and absenteeism, other methods were collective in nature, such as gamifying work, doubling up, and homers. Furthermore, much dissent—both informal and formal—was based on a collective workplace counter-culture. This has been called in Aotearoa New Zealand a “crew culture” (Belich 1996, 428–36) or by Fantasia (1988) “cultures of solidarity.” A strong sense of “us” (workers) and “them” (management) developed in most plants. Indeed, in some departments there was an atmosphere of continual conflict with supervisors, who were nicknamed “red hats.” A noticeable feature of meatworkers was their “impressive solidarity” (Inkson and Cammock, 1984, 155; see also Inkson 1977; Turkington 1976a; Webb 2015). One meatworker, Henare O’Keefe, remarked about the slaughterhouse where he worked: “Best thing about it was the people, of course. . . . The camaraderie was the biggest thing. We worked together, we slept together, we socialised together – and there was 2,000 of us. . . . It was a real family: an absolute, total family” (quoted in Webb 2015a, 56). Another former Māori meatworker said “the comradeship was phenomenal. . . . once they [workers] got into their working area they became one big family” (Anonymous quoted in Keefe-Ormsby 2010, 33).

While this culture was reinforced by, and overlapped with, strong and militant unions in the meat industry, it was developed and maintained on an everyday basis on the killing floor. This was achieved by numerous means: socializing on and off the job, initiation rituals, mutual support, industrial struggle, humor and practical jokes, and sanctions against those who broke the informal rules. Workers often attempted to collectively gamify work, which again can be interpreted as either a struggle to humanize work—and thus exert some degree of control it—or an effort to gain autonomy from work. Water hose fights, throwing fat and meat at each other (and supervisors), and singing and dancing were commonplace on the shop floor (Inkson and Simpson 1975; Robb 2012; Webb 2015). Jean Te Huia recalled “people made it fun. On every chain, there was a couple of jokers who kept the whole chain laughing” (quoted in Webb 2015, 67). One prominent example was gland flicking:

The livers had these little glands attached to them. And if you could pull them off they would make good missiles. You’d just flick them with your thumb, and you could do it without anybody seeing. . . . And they kind of stung if you got one on your ear or something it would really wake you up. But I could never. . . . get the thing to hit the target. If ever I did hit the target I would be so happy I couldn’t keep a poker face about it. So there was an awful lot of that (Robb, interview, October 10, 2013).

This “crew culture” was easier to form in large-scale blue-collar industries where group work was the norm, and the work was dangerous and unpleasant (see Roscigno and Hodson 2004).

While fundamentally working-class, these counter-cultures were also strongly influenced by ethnicity and gender. About 40–50 percent of the meat-processing workforce were Māori, and in some slaughterhouses, the majority were Māori. Melissa Matutina Williams (2015) argues that in workplaces where Māori were a significant proportion of the workplace, they often formed multi-ethnic “workplace-whānau.” Whānau normally means an extended family. Yet, in this case, it exemplifies how whānau were developed outside traditional kin-based extended families. Workplace-whānau denote “a particular kind of connectedness amongst a group of people who work together” (Williams 2015, 181–3). Hence everyone in a work group or worksite was ideally treated like an extended family member, with the strong reciprocal bonds and obligations this entails in Māori society. As Williams (2015, 183, 188) notes, workplace-whānau transgressed the traditional division between home and work, as socializing continued after work. By uniting with fellow workers from other ethnicities, their aim was to transform

often physically demanding, monotonous and impersonal workplaces into bearable, sometimes fun and culturally familiar spaces of community engagement; spaces which operated according to a set of collectively defined norms, values, benefits and obligations (Williams, 2015, 190).

It thus could be interpreted as being created by Māori to self-manage, to a degree, work rhythms according to their cultural norms thus making workplaces less culturally alienating.

Workplace-whānau were prominent in many, but not all, meat plants where there was a high proportion of Māori (Keefe-Ormsby 2010; Webb 2015; Williams 2015). Yet such crew cultures and workplace-whānau could be highly masculine and sexist, as the vast majority of meatworkers were men. Only 4.6 per cent of the workforce was female (Turkington 1976a, 31). A culture of “hard men” and “hard drinking” seemingly predominated in many plants. Women, including Māori women, were confined to small departments that were poorly paid, such as meat-packing and casings. Most male workers initially opposed allowing women to secure jobs in other occupational departments. However, white and Māori women alike began challenging this exclusion from the mid to late 1970s onward. For example, in a collective interview, Nani Ngaronoa, Raewyn Hapi and Hetty Davies—who in 1981 became the first female butchers at the Tomoana meat works—said “we’ve proved that woman can do it. We’ve broken the ice and that makes it easier for women coming after us. It has changed the attitudes of many of the men – now they accept us as being entitled to work beside them” (Quoted in *Socialist Action*, January 23, 1981). Workplace-whānau could also be confined to small cliques, or to single departments—such as the butchers, who were the most strategic and highest paid workers. This caused internal frictions and sometimes disputes between workers (Howell and Alexander 1968). Furthermore, while workplace-whānau tended to be class-based and oppositional to management, in some workplaces (particularly smaller and rural abattoirs) they could include management, who were seen as part of the family.

The Effectiveness of Informal Resistance and Its Attempted Suppression

Given its largely subterranean character, it is difficult to judge the effectiveness of everyday resistance in terms of its radical potential. As outlined above, informal resistance frequently represented an attempt to overcome the monotony and boredom of work. Much of it was harmless and easily accommodated. Yet, it did lead to considerable profit and production being lost, and sometimes to wider confrontations with management. For example, playfully flicking glands at each other seems innocuous. However, if meat inspectors found carcasses without their glands, they would condemn and reject them for export. As such, frivolous gland flicking was unintentional sabotage. And if a worker was fired for such gamification, factory-wide strikes sometimes erupted.

Absenteeism cost capital considerable losses in production and profit. For example, workers taking unofficial long weekends sometimes forced the cancellation of stock movements (Commission of Inquiry 1974, 108), and also commonly shut down half an assembly-line on a Friday afternoon, particularly near the end of a season when workers could live off four days' pay (Robb, interview, October 10, 2013). In 1982, employers estimated that "manpower could be reduced between 15–20 percent if absentism [sic] was reduced to realistic levels" (Burke 1982, 23). Wider evidence (not meat industry specific) suggests that absenteeism was far costlier than strikes—for example, the Department of Labour estimated in 1973 only 0.1 percent of total working time was "lost" due to strikes in all industries, yet 6 percent was "lost" due to absenteeism (Geare and Edgar 2007, 175).

Wildcat strikes and informal self-management also curbed production levels. At one plant, a government inquiry alleged that wildcat strikes and union control over the work process had reduced the sheep and lamb kill by a third—this claim, however, was hotly disputed by local unionists who asserted such disputes were caused by management attitudes, poor working conditions, pay disputes, and the nature of work (Committee of Inquiry 1974, 2; Longburn Sub-Branch New Zealand Meat Workers' Union 1974).

Perhaps the greatest mark of the effectiveness of informal resistance was how, from the late 1970s onward, employers began to clamp-down on "restrictive work practices." This was part of a wider restructuring of the meat industry in response to class struggle, a deep economic recession and the consequences of increased global trade and competition—indeed, it was part of a wider global accumulation crisis for capital in the 1970s. Through struggle, meatworkers had won considerable benefits from the 1950s to the 1970s (see Frank McNulty interviewed in *Socialist Action* August 26, 1983). As wage costs increased, and the impacts of the economic recession began to bite, the meat processing industry experienced a long-term decline in profitability from the early 1970s to the 1990s, despite some fluctuations (Curtis 1996, 101). Simply put, capital needed to reduce informal and formal resistance dramatically in order to restore profitability, cut costs, and increase production. Hence from the late 1970s onward they closed larger outdated plants, and opened smaller,

antiunion, and more productive automated plants. After the industry was deregulated in 1981, 43 new plants were opened and 29 closed (*The Cutting Edge* unnumbered, c.1998, 3). This process of industry restructuring was intensified due to the cessation of generous government subsidies for pastoral farming in the mid-1980s. The workforce was almost halved from about 30,000 in the 1970s to about 18,000 in 1999 yet production rapidly increased (Middlemass interview, October 2, 2013; Calder and Tyson 1999, 277, 290). While sheep numbers declined dramatically from a peak of 70 million in the early 1980s to 39 million in 2002 (Easton 2017) the amount of meat processed increased due to larger sheep breeds and faster meat processing speeds. Additionally, farmers also diversified into industries—such as dairy farming—that reaped higher returns and lacked traditions of workers' militancy. Accordingly, by the early 1990s, the value of meat exports had fallen to 17 percent of export earnings.³

Initial resistance to the restructuring of the meat industry was widespread, and many bitter, lengthy struggles ensued throughout the 1980s. Under the threat of closures and unemployment, large-scale wage cuts were imposed, and unions and workers were forced on to the defensive, often waging struggles over redundancy payments. By about the early 1990s, this resistance had largely dissipated (Locke 2012; Webb 2015).

On the killing floor, the suppression of informal resistance and re-imposition of managerial control began in earnest in about the mid-1980s. According to James Robb, who wrote a novel about his experiences as a meatworker (2012), workers “could get away with very easily” activities like sterilizer “boil-ups” and theft in the late 1970s; yet by the mid to late 1980s, stricter rules, closer monitoring and a general “crack-down” on dissent made it far more difficult to undertake such exploits (Robb, interview, October 10, 2013). Likewise, Bill Bennett claimed that under the new management regime “it became less human to the individual that worked there” and Tracey McIntosh noted that the autonomy workers had gained and enjoyed in the “heyday” of the 1970s evaporated, including the “perk culture” (cited in Webb 2015, 128). Calder and Tyson (1999, 289) claim that after one company adopted “total quality management” practices they reduced absenteeism and accidents substantially.

This disciplinarian turn was taken to greater heights in the late 1980s in the new highly automated plants where “brutal” working conditions existed (Middlemass cited in Calder and Tyson 1999, 290). At one of those slaughterhouses, Oringi—which had been successfully unionized despite fierce management opposition—42 percent of workers were disciplined during 1989–1990 (New Zealand Meat Workers' Union and Auckland & Tomoana Freezing Workers' Union 1991). At another, workers were banned from taking unauthorized toilet breaks, and authorized breaks were monitored (Roth 1990, 15). Work became far more precarious, especially in the minority of slaughterhouses that were de-unionized. For example, at one such plant in the 1990s workers hired by temporary work agencies were only given one day's notice of their starting and finishing times the next day. Not only were workers working much faster, but also far longer hours—with the rise of shift work, the

average shift had stretched to ten hours by the late 1990s (Calder and Tyson 1999, 290).

In many slaughterhouses, the culture of informal and formal control over the work process evaporated under the strain of restructuring and the continual threat of factory shutdowns. Robb remembers working in an abattoir in the late 1980s that was then at the vanguard of the new managerial regime. There “the boss decided how many workers were on each job and you just worked absolutely flat out.” Workplace-whānau and solidarity in general were largely absent amongst the workers; instead an atmosphere of “back-biting” prevailed. For example, a supervisor “would start yelling at somebody, and the others [workers] would yell out ‘Sack him [Fire him]! Sack the bastard!’ . . . This was not a joke—In the past if they sacked somebody unfairly, there would be a strike.” At the union social to mark the closure of the formerly militant Westfield meat works in Auckland in 1989, a mass brawl erupted as workers blamed each other—and not the company—for the closure (Robb, interview, October 10, 2013).

However, solidarity did not suddenly vanish; it decayed over the long-term as the number of factory closures snowballed during the 1980s and 1990s (Middlemass, interview, January 6, 2014). The process of restructuring occurred unevenly, and so relatively good working conditions and pay were retained into the 1990s in some plants. Even today workplace-whānau and a crew culture still exist in some abattoirs, as evident in large-scale and lengthy lockouts in 2012 and 2015–2016. Yet such a culture seems more subdued and fractured than it was in the 1970s, as many workers have crossed picket lines during disputes. Despite a recent campaign against precarious work in the industry (Deans 2015), the level of overt dissent in the industry is minimal compared to that experienced in the 1970s.

Conclusion: A Return to the Jungle?

On the level of appearances, the rich and creative varieties of everyday resistance outlined in this article were a means of coping with the relentless pressure of monotonous, unpleasant tasks, with the general aim of making work more humane, fun and sociable, rather than possessing any explicit radical intent. Inkson calls this “adaption”: meatworkers “adapted” to objectively alienating conditions by subjectively reducing their alienation (Inkson and Cammock 1984; Inkson and Simpson 1975). However, in the process of this coping or “adapting,” more subversive trends can be discerned. First, workers sometimes informally self-managed aspects of the work process. Second, at other times workers refused work—including undertaking unofficial and official strikes—so as they could enjoy other activities, thereby placing workers’ own needs and use-values above the dictates of capital. Consequently, significant profit and production was lost.

While sometimes individualistic, everyday resistance was often an expression of a communal shop floor counter-culture that revolved around informal work groups, including workplace-whānau. Informal bonds of reciprocity and

solidarity overlapped with strong union organization. Both informal and formal subversion were intertwined. For instance, due to the impressive solidarity that existed in meat plants, if one worker was unjustly disciplined, large-scale strikes could ensue. In this way, spaces of autonomy and other unofficial traditions of informal resistance were maintained.

The Marxian perspectives outlined in this article are often criticized for romanticizing dissent and overstating its extent (see e.g., Collinson 1994). To some degree, this is valid; one of the main proponents of autonomist Marxism, Sergio Bologna, admitted “I believe above all that operaismo was an exaltation – sometimes uncritical – of the working class” (quoted in Wright 2008, 114). In this regard, meatworkers’ everyday resistance was not omnipresent—indeed, levels of resistance varied significantly between plants—and without contradictions. For instance, workers’ acceptance and refusal of work is often intermixed (Sandro Studer cited in Wright 2002, 78). This was undoubtedly the case in the meat industry, where a high degree of workers’ pride in their work mingled with resistance to it (see Howell and Alexander 1968; Inkson 1977, 1979). Yet recognizing these unstable and dynamic contradictions, such as the contradiction between the need to work in order to gain a living yet to also secure some autonomy from work, does not infer that informal resistance lacked subversiveness. Indeed Faber and Glaberman (1998, 17–8) recognized that—in response to everyday working conditions—workers could often *act* in contradiction to their beliefs. For example, most rejected the idea of self-management, yet allegedly actually practiced it informally everyday.

While everyday resistance often did not escalate into broader struggles, a major lesson to be learnt is that it is difficult to see successful large-scale overt struggles developing without widespread self-organization on the shop floor. Recognizing this link between micro-resistance and the larger picture of class struggle was a great strength of the Johnson-Forest tendency and autonomist Marxism. Like much of the New Left, of which these currents were a part, they—perhaps naively—thought there was liberatory potential in quotidian struggles, and that broader rebellions sprung from the smallest unbearable aspects of daily life. As Italian student Agnese Gatti said “acting on your immediate problems made you understand better the bigger issues. If it hadn’t been for that, perhaps the latter would have remained alien, you’d have said ‘OK, but what can *I* do?’” (quoted in Fraser 1988, 12, original emphasis). However, this is not to fetishize local and immediate struggles limited to individual factories—indeed, some of the less militant plants suffered from the “shed mentality”⁴ of tending to their own concerns while not supporting the struggles of other plants—but to note how shop floor solidarity was for many a stepping stone in recognizing the need for class-wide solidarity *across* plants and industries.

Soberly debating the potential of informal workers’ resistance is vital today given the long-term decline in overt disputes in most core capitalist countries. Yet it must be recognized that the 1970s was a far different context that cannot be replicated today. The revolt against assembly-line work reached its apogee in

the long 1970s in most high-income countries, as a combination of factors—including near full employment—meant that workers associational power on the shop floor reached a peak. Comprehensive restructuring of the meat industry in the 1980s and 1990s aimed to, among other goals, break up the shop floor bonds on which this resistance was based. This class decomposition has made not only formal resistance harder to undertake, but also seemingly informal resistance as well—as precariously employed meatworkers today can be fired instantaneously if they undertake many of the more subversive acts of everyday resistance, such as wildcat strikes. However, this does not mean that meatworkers have experienced a “return to the ‘Jungle’” as Horowitz (1997) asserts; the alienating and exploitative nature of work on the dis-assembly line has not fundamentally changed—indeed it has intensified. There is still much potential for meatworkers’ unrest, as evident in recent disputes.

Toby Boraman is a Politics lecturer at Massey University, Aotearoa New Zealand, and was the former secretary of the Labour History Project in that country. He has written bottom-up historical studies of strikes, libertarian socialism, unorthodox Marxism, the New Left, and resistance to neoliberalism. Address correspondence to Toby Boraman, School of People, Environment & Planning, Massey University, Private Bag 11 222, Palmerston North, New Zealand. E-mail: tobyboraman@gmail.com

Notes

I would like to thank the three anonymous referees for their comments on this article, as well as everyone whom I interviewed. They are not responsible for any errors contained in this article. The early gestation of this article greatly benefited from a fellowship granted by the International Research Center “Work and Human Lifecycle in Global History” of Humboldt Universität zu Berlin in 2014.

1. The term “meatworkers” is preferred in this article because it is generally accepted as the more international term for working in a slaughterhouse rather than regionally specific terms such as “packinghouse workers” or “meatpackers” in North America. Further, “meatpacking” conveys only one process on the meat “dis-assembly line,” as does the former term for meatworkers in Aotearoa New Zealand, “freezing workers.”
2. However, this excludes figures from 1975 which were not made available. Specific figures for workers involved in stoppages in the meat industry were not made available for 1968–1970. All figures were calculated from various annual issues of the *New Zealand Yearbook* and the Department of Labour’s *Industrial Stoppages Report*.
3. *New Zealand Official 1990 Yearbook*, Wellington: Department of Statistics.
4. A “shed” is a nickname for a slaughterhouse.

References

- Ackroyd, S., and P. Thompson. 1999. *Organizational misbehaviour*. London: Sage.
- Angove, N. 1988. Worker indiscipline in the freezing industry: A Patea case study. B.A. Hons thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North.
- Barnes, A., and L. Taksa. 2012. Introduction—Misbehavior in the Air. In *Rethinking misbehavior and resistance in organizations*, ed. A. Barnes and L. Taksa, ix–xxiii. Bingley: Emerald.
- Belich, J. 1996. *Making peoples: A history of the New Zealanders*. Auckland: Penguin.
- Blyth, N. 1981. *A review of the world sheepmeat market*. Lincoln: Agricultural Economics Research Unit.

- Bologna, S. 1978. An overview. In *Italy 1977-8: Living with an earthquake*, 117–22. London: Red Notes.
- . 1992. The theory and history of the mass worker in Italy (Part II). *Common Sense* 12:52–79.
- Boraman, T. 2016. Merging politics with economics: Non-industrial and political work stoppage statistics in New Zealand during the long 1970s. *New Zealand Journal of Employment Relations* 41 (1):64–82.
- Brecher, J. 1972. *Strike!* San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books.
- Brenner, A., R. Brenner, and C. Winslow, eds. 2010. *Rebel rank and file: Labor militancy and revolt from below during the long 1970s*. London: Verso.
- Brophy, E. 2010. The subterranean stream: Communicative capitalism and call centre labour. *Ephemera* 10 (3/4):470–83.
- Burawoy, M. 1979. *Manufacturing consent: Changes in the labor process under monopoly capitalism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Burke, P. 1982. A shaky start to the second century. *New Zealand Financial Review* 1 (6):21–5.
- Calder, M., and J. Tyson. 1999. *Meat acts: The New Zealand meat industry 1972–1997*. Wellington: Meat New Zealand.
- Cleaver, H. 2000. *Reading capital politically*. San Francisco: Anti/Theses and AK Press.
- Collinson, D. 1994. Strategies of resistance: power, knowledge and subjectivity in the workplace. In *Resistance and power in organizations*, eds. J. Jermier, D. Knights, and W. Nord, 25–68. London: Routledge.
- Collinson, D., and S. Ackroyd. 2006. Resistance, misbehaviour and dissent. In *The Oxford handbook of work and organization*, eds. S. Ackroyd, R. Batt, P. Thompson, and P. Tolbert, 305–26. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Commission of Inquiry into the Meat Industry. 1974. *Meat industry: Report of the commission of inquiry into the meat industry*. Wellington: Government Printer.
- Committee of Inquiry. 1974. Findings of Committee of Inquiry, Industrial Relations at Longburn Freezing Works 30 July 1974. West Coast Trade Union history folder, New Zealand Meatworkers' Union Aotearoa branch files.
- Crouch, C. and A. Pizzorno, eds. 1978. *The resurgence in class conflict in Western Europe since 1968*. New York: Holmes & Meier.
- Curtis, B. 1996. Producers, processors and markets: A study of the export meat industry in New Zealand. PhD thesis, Sociology, University of Canterbury, Christchurch.
- Deans, M. 2015. Meat workers' struggles at Talley's AFFCO. http://www.unite.org.nz/meat_workers_struggles_at_talley_s_affco (accessed January 10, 2017).
- Duménil, G., and D. Lévy. 2005. The neoliberal (counter-)revolution. In *Neoliberalism: A critical reader*, eds. A. Saad-Filho and D. Johnston, 9–19. London: Pluto.
- Easton, B. 2017. Economic history—Early pastoral economy. Te Ara—The encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/interactive/24324/sheep-numbers-1851-2014> (accessed June 5, 2017).
- Faber, S., and M. Glaberman. 1998. *Working for wages: The roots of insurgency*. New York: General Hall.
- Fantasia, R. 1988. *Cultures of solidarity: Consciousness, action and contemporary American workers*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Fraser, R. 1998. *1968: A student generation in revolt*. New York: Pantheon.
- Geare, A. 1972a. The problem of industrial unrest: Theories into the causes of local strikes in a New Zealand meat freezing works. *Journal of Industrial Relations* 14 (1):13–22.
- . 1972b. Seasonal influences on strike intensity in New Zealand. *Journal of Industrial Relations* 14 (3): 323–9.
- Geare, A., and F. Edgar. 2007. *Employment relations in New Zealand and abroad*. Dunedin: University of Otago Press.
- Green, A. 1992. Spelling, go-slows, gliding away and theft: Informal control over work on the New Zealand waterfront 1915–1951. *Labour History* 63:100–14.
- Grzyb, G. 1981. Decollectivisation and recollectivisation in the workplace: The impact of technology on informal work groups and work culture. *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 2:455–82.
- Guttman, M. 1972. Primary work groups. *Radical America* 6 (3):78–93.
- Haider, A., and S. Mohandesi. 2013. Workers' inquiry: A genealogy. *Viewpoint Magazine* 3, <https://viewpoint-mag.com/2013/09/27/workers-inquiry-a-genealogy/> (accessed December 2, 2016).
- Halpern, R., and D. Horowitz. 1999. *Meatpackers: An oral history of black packinghouse workers and their struggle for racial and economic equality*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Hodson, R. 2001. *Dignity at work*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Horowitz, D. 1997. 'Negro and White, Fight and Unite!' *A social history of industrial unionism in meatpacking 1930–1990*. Urbana: University of Chicago Press.

- Howells, J., and R. Alexander. 1968. A strike in the meat freezing industry: Background to industrial discontent in New Zealand. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 28:418–26.
- Inkson, K. 1977. The man on the dis-assembly line: New Zealand Freezing Workers. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology* 13 (1):2–11.
- . 1979. Management practice and industrial conflict: The case of the New Zealand meat freezing industry. *New Zealand Journal of Business* 1:83–104.
- . 1980. New Zealand's troubled meat industry. *Employee Relations* 2 (1):11–6.
- . 1987. Organisational behaviour: A review of the New Zealand research. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology* 16:9–27.
- Inkson, K., and D. Simpson. 1975. The assembly line and alienation: A participant-observer in the meat-freezing industry. *New Zealand Psychologist* 4:44–55.
- Inkson, K., and P. Cammock. 1984. Labour process theory and the chain system in the New Zealand meatworks. *New Zealand Journal of Industrial Relations* 9 (3):149–60.
- Keefe-Ormsby, V. 2010. *Tihei Mauri Ora: The human stories of Whakatu*. Wellington: Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare.
- Kolinko, 2002. *Hotlines: Call centre, inquiry, communism*. Oberhausen: Kolinko.
- Kopstein, J. 2001. Does everyday resistance matter? Lessons from the German dictatorships. In *After the GDR: New Perspectives on the Old GDR and the Young Länder*, eds. L. McFalls and L. Probst, 97–108. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Lobato, M. 1997. Women workers in the 'Cathedrals of Corned Beef': Structure and subjectivity in the Argentine meatpacking industry. In *The gendered worlds of Latin American women workers*, eds. J. French and D. James, 53–71. Durham NC: Duke University Press.
- Locke, C. 2012. *Workers in the margins: Union radicals in post-war New Zealand*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books.
- Longburn Sub-Branch New Zealand Meat Workers' Union. 1974. Submissions to the Inquiry into Industrial Relations at Longburn. Longburn History 1890–1996 folder, New Zealand Meat Workers' Union Aotearoa branch files.
- Matthews, B. 1977. A day in the life of a meatworker unionist. *Socialist Action* 6 May: 12.
- McAdam, D., S. Tarrow, and C. Tilly. 1996. Toward an integrated perspective on social movements and revolution. In *Comparative politics: Rationality, culture, and structure*, ed. J. French and D. James, 102–39. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Murray, J. 1974. Employers submission in the matter of a committee of inquiry into industrial relations at the longburn freezing works. West Coast Trade Union history folder, New Zealand Meat Workers' Union Aotearoa branch files.
- Negri, A. 1991. *Marx beyond Marx: Lessons on the Grundrisse*. New York: Autonomedia.
- New Zealand Meat Workers' Union and Auckland & Tōmoana Freezing Workers' Union. 1991. Richmond Lockout. Public Relations Folder, New Zealand Meat Workers' Union Aotearoa branch files.
- Nord, W., and J. Jermier. 1994. Overcoming resistance to resistance: Insights from a study of the shadows. *Public Administration Quarterly* 17 (4):396–409.
- Paulsen, R. 2011. Layers of dissent: The meaning of time appropriation. *Outlines: Critical Practice Studies* 1:53–81.
- Pizzolato, N. 2017. A new revolutionary practice: operaisti and the 'refusal of work' in 1970s Italy. *Estudos Históricos* 30 (61):449–464.
- Prasad, A., and P. Prasad. 1998. Everyday struggles at the workplace: The nature and implications of routine resistance in contemporary organizations. In *Research in the sociology of organizations*, Vol. 16, ed. P. Bamberger and V. Sonnenstuhl, 225–57. Greenwich CT: JAI Press.
- Price, R. 1986. *Labour in British society: An interpretive history*. Beckenham: Croom Helm.
- Revelli, M. 1982. Defeat at fiat. *Capital & Class* 6 (1):95–109.
- Robb, J. 2012. *The chain*. Wellington: Steele Roberts.
- Roscigno, V., and R. Hodson. 2004. The organizational and social foundations of worker resistance. *American Sociological Review* 69 (1):14–39.
- Roth, B. 1990. Chronicle. *New Zealand Journal of Industrial Relations* 15:287–97.
- Scott, J. 1985. *Weapons of the weak*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Silver, B. 2003. *Forces of labor*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2016. The remaking of the global working class. *Roar* 2 (Summer), <https://roarmag.org/magazine/the-remaking-of-the-global-working-class/> (accessed January 10, 2017).
- Silver, B., and S. Karatasli. 2015. Historical dynamics of capitalism and labor movements. In *Oxford handbook of social movements*, ed. D. Della Porta and M. Diani, 133–45. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Thompson, P., and S. Ackroyd. 1995. All quiet on the workplace front? A critique of recent trends in British industrial sociology. *Sociology* 29 (4):615–33.
- Tronti, M. 1972. The struggle against labor. *Radical America* 6 (3):22–6.
- Turkington, D. 1976a. *Industrial conflict: A study of three New Zealand industries*. Wellington: Methuen.
- . 1976b. Sabotage and industrial conflict. *Journal of Industrial Relations* 18:183–7.
- Van der Broek, D., and T. Dundon. 2012. (Still) up to no good: Reconfiguring worker resistance and misbehaviour in an increasingly unorganized world. *Industrial Relations* 67 (1):97–121.
- Van der Velden, S., H. Dribbusch, D. Lyddon, and K. Vandaele, eds. 2007. *Strikes around the world: Case studies of 15 countries 1968–2005*. Amsterdam: Aksant.
- Watson, B. 1971. Counter-planning on the shop floor. *Radical America* 5 (3):77–85.
- Watson, T. 2017. *Sociology, Work and Organisation*. 7th edition. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.
- Webb, R. 2015. 'Your Livelihood is on the line': Freezing workers in Aotearoa/New Zealand 1973–1994. M. A. thesis, History, University of Auckland, Auckland.
- Weeks, K. 2011. *The problem with work: Feminism, Marxism, antiwork politics and post-work imaginaries*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Weir, S. 1972. Class forces in the 70s. *Radical America* 6 (3):31–77.
- . 2004. *Singlejack solidarity*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press.
- Wildcat. 2007. *Porto Marghera: The last firebrands*. N.P.: Wildcat.
- . 2015. Global working class? Uprising or class struggle? *Wildcat* 98 (Summer), http://www.wildcat-www.de/en/wildcat/98/e_w98_wak.html (accessed December 5, 2016).
- Williams, M. 2015. *Panguru and the city, Kāinga Tabi, Kāinga Rua: An urban migration history*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books.
- Wright, S. 2002. *Storming heaven: Class composition and struggle in Italian autonomist Marxism*. London: Pluto Press.
- . 2008. Mapping pathways within Italian autonomist Marxism: A preliminary survey. *Historical Materialism* 16 (4):111–40.
- Zerzan, J. 1975. Organized labor versus 'the Revolt Against Work'. In *Unions against revolution: Two essays*, 47–62. Detroit and Chicago: Black & Red and New Space.