

Industrial Warfare

There isn't a workplace in capitalist society where workers aren't doing some kind of sabotage. This industrial warfare is part of the overall resistance of the working class.

Strikes are the most open form of this warfare, but off the picket line struggle continues, including everything from harassing supervisors and managers, posting "illegal" leaflets and newsletters, to outright sabotage. While industrial sabotage is probably the most dangerous type of action, it is also the most common. Sabotage has the longest history in the working class movement, dating back to the 1700's in England. FROM MACHINE SMASHING TO PARTISAN RESISTANCE

Forced from their farms by acts of Parliament, English working people were forced into wage-slavery in the growing industrial centers of Manchester and Liverpool. Many lived near starvation with entire families working together in the same factory. As technology advanced, new machinery was introduced which threw people out of work or forced them to work faster. Their reaction to this was to smash the new machinery and, if possible, to punish the inventor and managers responsible for it.

As workers became better organized and unions were formed, machine-smashing ended and was replaced by other forms of struggle. Yet, the spirit of machine-smashing forms the basis for all industrial sabotage, except now workers understand that the enemy is not the machine, but rather the people who own the factories and the means of production.

The purpose of industrial sabotage is to strike a blow at the capitalist class by keeping profits out of its pockets; causing inconvenience and chaos in industry; forcing the purchase of new machinery or the introduction of safer working conditions.

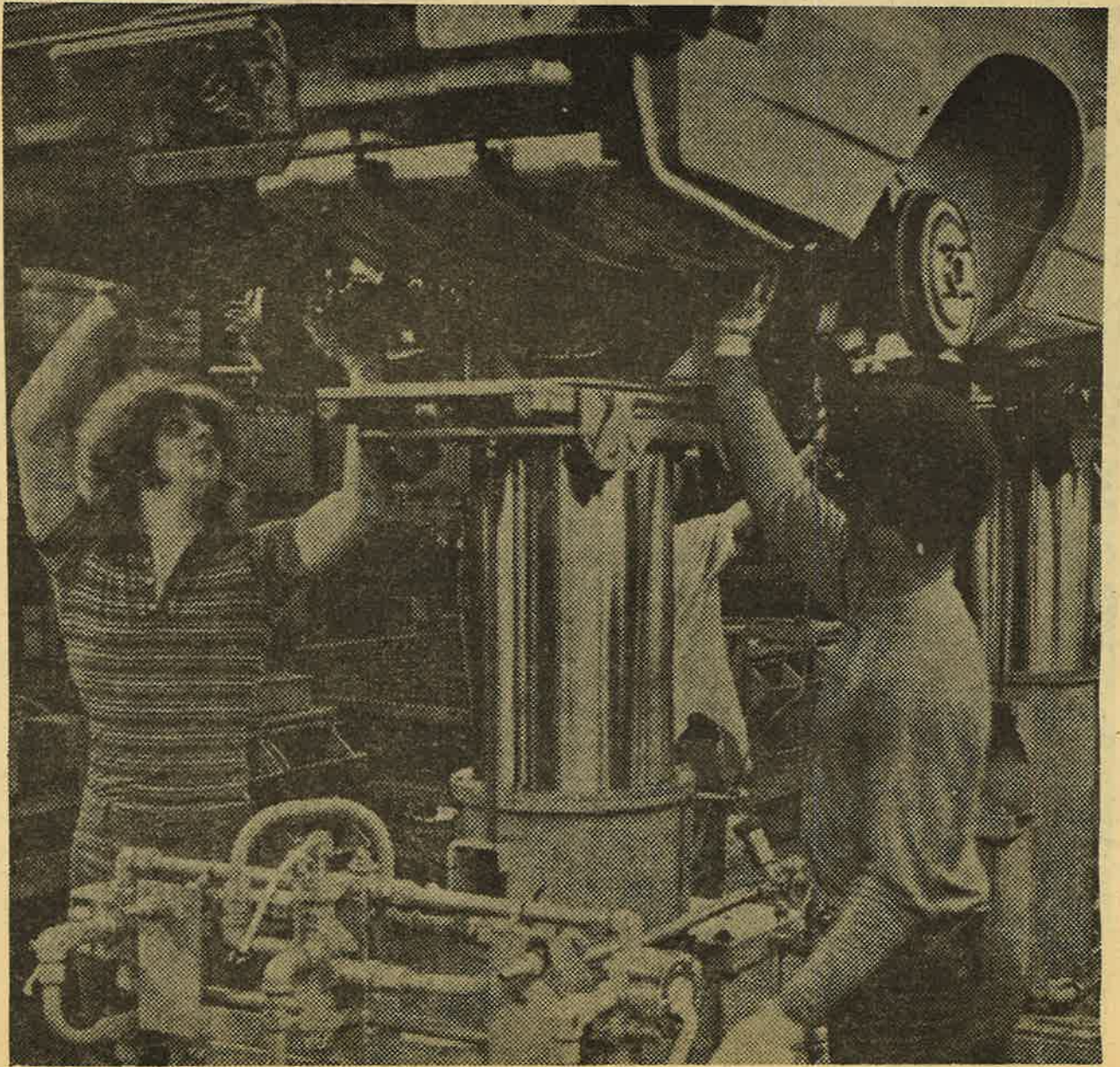
Working people in this country have a long history of industrial sabotage. Black slaves constantly found ways of destroying tools and farming equipment used on plantations. Chinese and Irish workers brought here to build railroads under extremely harsh conditions were responsible for numerous derailings and the destruction of tracks and equipment. Miners found dynamite a friend, using it to close unsafe tunnels and for other purposes. These actions weren't a game; getting caught brought death at the hands of an overseer, a hired gunman or a sheriff.

Workers around the world have used industrial sabotage, particularly as a tactic in peoples' war. During World War II, European and Asian workers and peasants turned their struggle against German and Japanese imperialists and their agents. Perhaps the best known form of resistance is "scorched earth." This involves the destruction of agricultural crops, farm equipment, railroads, telephone lines, and just about everything else useful to an invader. "Scorched earth" was widely used by the people of the Soviet Union to keep food and communication lines out of German hands, and the same was done in China.

When the German fascists overran Europe, they forced Czech, Belgian, French, Italian, Yugoslavian and workers in other countries to work in factories producing guns and ammunition. These workers retaliated by manufacturing guns that exploded when fired and ammunition that didn't work.

The French and Italian railway workers were the best known for sabotage. They served as anti-fascist guerrillas in their work. This anti-fascist people's war was largely led by the Communist Parties of France and Italy.

Throughout the war, hundreds of German trains were derailed or sent in the wrong direction, with their supplies



often ending up in the hands of the partisan army.

CRISIS AND CLASS WAR

Industrial warfare is sharpest during times when capitalism and imperialism have problems such as depressions, wars or defeats at the hands of people's movements. During these times the ruling class tries to keep profits coming in and everything running smoothly by forcing working and poor people to bear the burden of the crisis. In most industries (this means lay-offs, speed-ups, ignoring safety conditions, busting existing unions, and preventing workers from forming new unions.

Industrial sabotage is used as a form of resistance, of self-defense. When production lines get speeded-up,

or lay-offs are coming, things begin to happen. And, of course, sabotage is used in most strikes, either before they start or right after a strike which has been long and where the workers have suffered a great deal while getting few demands met.

It is not surprising that the defeat of U. S. imperialism in Indochina is giving rise to increased industrial warfare. American workers, particularly those who are Black, Brown, Asian and young and hold unskilled jobs in mass production industries, are being forced to work harder, faster and longer to make up for what's lost in Asia. Quite righteously, working people are hitting back through strikes, walkouts, slow-downs, and sabotage.

Machine shops and metal fabrication plants are suffering from a wave of broken equipment caused by wrenches or screwdrivers or small pieces of metal slipped into working parts. In the garment industry, where women are forced to work at slave wages under slave conditions, it's not unusual for workers to switch patterns and cut thousands of pieces that are the wrong size or design. Many clothing stores for the rich are finding their orders switched with

"cheap" goods that would have been sent to the department stores which rip-off working and poor people.

The postal workers, whose militant strike in the spring of 1970 inspired millions of others, have a lot of tactical experience: bags of junk mail are sent to cities that don't exist; jackets of pig supervisors find their way to Vietnam; while mail sorters are constantly being broken by throwing in objects that are too large.

Among workers in food processing, there is resistance to bad conditions, as well as protection for other working people who purchase poisoned or rotten food. Often bad batches end up mixed with soap suds and have to be thrown away before packaging. Burned or tasteless packaged food is destroyed by putting the heavier items on the cakes, gravies, and rotten vegetables. The same kind of serve-the-people approach is found among phone workers, who often provide people with extra phones and attachments

at the corporation's expense, while at the same time short-circuiting equipment by putting pins in the wires, or metal chips and filings in sensitive electronic equipment.

Workers in the auto industry can talk for hours about the hundreds of actions they take: cars improperly welded and falling apart as they come off the line; slow-downs on the belt causing traffic jams in the plant.

In other words, industrial warfare is widespread, and the use of sabotage is a standard weapon in the working class arsenal against exploitation. When it is said, "The power of the people is greater than the technology of the Man!" this goes for factories, plants and shops across the U.S., as well as the struggle of the heroic Vietnamese people.

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!
ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!