

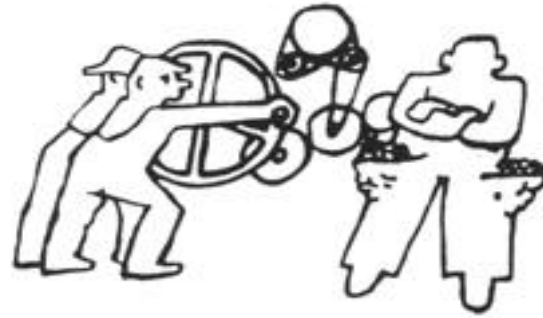
A brief history of worker self-management

- *Syndicalism in Italy*- The Federation of the Italian Bottle-Blowers was organized in 1901. It opened its first co-operative glass factory in the end of 1902 in Milan, using money was raised by the workers themselves, to provide work for 150 striking workers. The co-operative bought or built factories in Livorno, Imola and Sesto-Calendo, and Asti and leased another near Naples. By 1906 it employed 2,000 workers, its factories were worth 750,000 Lira and it earned 300,000 Lira more than it spent. Syndicalism in Italy was weakened when workers were sent to fight WWI and later destroyed by the Fascist dictatorship.

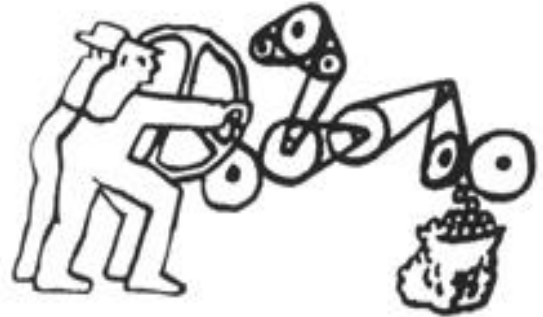
- *Anarchist Communes in the Ukraine*- When the Bolsheviks withdrew Russia from WWI, they agreed to give the Ukraine to the Germans and Austrians. By 1921, Anarchist partisans organized by Nestor Makhno expelled the occupying armies, defeated a Polish and Ukrainian nationalist counterrevolution and freed a region north of the Crimea. Large estates in this region which were taken over and operated by former peasants under Anarchist influence prospered, while areas where estates were looted because there was no Anarchist presence fell on hard times and looked to the Anarchist communal farming villages as a model of prosperity. Anarchist partisans fought a guerilla war against the Red Army after the Bolsheviks began to force all Unions and collectives under the control of the Bolshevik dictatorship. The Bolsheviks later returned many large estates to their former owners.

- *Anarchist Syndicalism in Spain*- In 1936 a right wing coup attempt in Spain was foiled when Union members mobilized popular militias to resist them. When war broke out, factory and land owners fled the country leaving the workers to run them for themselves. In areas controlled by the Anarchist CNT (National Worker's Confederation), 5,692,202 Hectares of large estates were communalized by their former peasant tenants into 1,750 agrarian collectives in Aragon, Levant and Castille. 1,850 factories and businesses were collectivized by 800,000 workers. Nearly all industry in Catalonia and 70% in Levant was collectivized. The CNT collectives ran the economy cooperatively and cooperated with businesses and industries collectivized by other Unions until Stalinist military forces began to imprison or kill all those in Spain who would not join a Russian-style dictatorship. Stalinists later returned the collectivized agriculture, business and industry to their former Capitalist owners.

## THE BOSS NEEDS US



## WE DON'T NEED THE BOSS



## COMMON SENSE REASONS FOR WORKER SELF-MANAGEMENT

### HOW BOSSES GET RICH AND POWERFUL AT OUR EXPENSE

#### What do bosses do?

- *Scheduling*-Deciding when work needs to be done. Setting deadlines. This could just as easily be done by the workers themselves.
- *Coordinating*-Making sure that activities which depend on each other don't hold each other up. Making sure resources are distributed to those who need them. Often, the centralized control of resources is more of a bottleneck that keeps people from getting what they need to do their jobs. Much of this is actually done *informally* by the workers themselves.
- *Accounting*-This is a clerical job, counting the money *you* make for them.
- *Budgeting*-The actual work is done by those who do the work and only compiled by the manager. The manager then sets priorities.
- *Staffing*-Hiring, firing and assigning people to tasks.
- The less work a boss does, the more they are paid! This is because they are not paid for doing actual work. They are paid for how well they get others to do the most work for the least compensation. It also occurs because bosses tend to use their power to make themselves richer.

#### What do stockholders (Capitalists) do? Nothing!

- Capitalists buy part of a company ("stock" is a measure of ownership) and receive a portion of the value of what its workers produce (profit taken from workers called a "stock dividend") or rent their money to a company by buying bonds and are paid "interest." They do no work for this money outside of the kind of brain work a thief would use in choosing an easy victim.

#### Where do profits come from? You!

- The cost of running a business is the money spent for labor, machinery and tools, materials, rent, utilities, interest on loans, maintenance, and other services. The value of labor is the difference between the income of the business and it's non-labor expenses. Profit is the difference between the labor value and the money the boss actually pays the workers in salary and benefits.
- A bosses performance is usually measured by how much profit they can squeeze out of you. Many are paid

in stock or profit-sharing to make them more greedy.

#### Having a boss is a dictatorship.

- Modern Bureaucracy was invented in Nazi Germany by a guy named Max Weber who patterned it after a military chain-of-command. Failure to follow orders results in discipline or being fired!
- Modern production was invented by Henry Ford who wanted to reduce the actions of the workers to the repetitive motions of machine and Frederick Taylor who wanted to minimize the number of motions to maximize the "productivity" of each worker. Bosses design work tasks to dehumanize workers.
- Many workplaces require you to work overtime. Many workers are paid a fixed salary (instead of by the hour) so they can be worked as much as the boss likes without paying them for overtime.
- Most workplaces discourage dissent, worker organizing or even asking questions of management outside of how to follow their orders.
- Many workplaces pretend to involve workers in decision making to get them to spy on each other.
- Many workplaces spy on their workers using time clocks, computer programs, hidden cameras, informers, and even private detectives. Some workplaces even limit the number of times and amount of time workers may spend going to the bathroom!
- Many workplaces now require workers to wear uniforms.

#### Bosses are inefficient!

- Many managers create unnecessary work or make you redo work "their way" just to justify their job or to make you think you have to go through them to get your work done.
- Many managers create "empires" of things under their centralized control so you can't get resources or information you need to do your day-to-day work. Without a boss, access to these crucial resources would be decentralized and made available based on need.

#### Bosses can get you killed!

- Work is one of the leading causes of death from accidents and health problems.
- Accidents occur when your boss tries to speed-up the work to increase their profit.
- Bosses try to cut costs by cutting safety measures and practices on the job.

- Jobs can be stressful due to overwork, harassment, competition, scheming, manipulation, *etc.* by bosses and co-workers who think they can kiss their ass to get ahead. stress will hurt your health, weaken your body and ultimately shorten your life
- “Accidents” at work kill people, but bad working conditions are no accident.

### **But workers need to be told what to do? Why?**

- Workers get together on the job informally all the time to talk about how to do a job or solve a problem on the job. They don’t ask the boss because he/she doesn’t know how to do the work.
- Workers regularly get together with friends or family members to make decisions without the need for a boss. They go out to have a good time together. They plan vacations and road trips. They make “management” decisions all the time about their home and personal life.

### **But bosses go to school to learn how to be managers...**

- Actually, most of them don’t have degreed in business administration or public administration (MBA, MPA). Master’s Degree programs in these fields teach accounting and Capitalist economics, but you won’t learn anything about people or problem-solving which you don’t already know from experience. What you learn is management and motivational *theory*: How to exploit people through psychology. Most managers (bosses) just have business degrees, at best, which is a degree in Capitalism: Banking, Accounting, Profiteering, *etc.*

### **But bosses create jobs... No!**

- The boss only hires and fires you. Jobs are created because the boss sees a chance to get richer, but the amount of work involved is greater than what those who currently work for the boss can do alone. Bosses will do anything possible to avoid hiring new workers including assigning more tasks to each worker (“work speed-ups”), buying machines to take workers jobs and paying overtime. Overtime costs a boss less than hiring a new worker, but the workers who works overtime actually gets paid less than that additional work after they pay income tax (it may even increase their tax rate).

### **But my boss is “nice”... Don’t trust them!**

- A boss is a boss is a boss is a boss... ...!
- The boss knows that their job depends on being able to exploit you. You can depend on them only to tell you what you want to hear. The boss you think you know and “trust” is a facade.
- If you work *hard*, they will work you *harder*.
- If you do a good job at work, they will criticize the quality of your work then take credit for it in from of *their* boss. They will use *your* work to get *themselves* a promotion.
- If there is a problem at work, they will tell *their* boss it’s *your* fault.
- If you know more than your boss, they will try to get you fired or harass you so you will quit or make mistakes they can use against you to get you fired. They will tell you things like “I want to help you” or “you are overqualified”. When you hear this, you will know the end is near.

### **But what if the boss is the owner?**

- First of all, most small businesses are usually owned by the bank (through a mortgage or small business loan) and a landlord (most are in rented commercial property) who collect money from you through your boss for doing nothing.
- It is arguable that many small business “owners”/operators work harder than if they were working for someone else, but the chances are, even if they do, they still don’t pay their workers for the full value of the work their workers do. The best evidence of this is that while you have to ride the bus to work, the boss owns a car. While you have to rent or share an apartment, the boss has a house. Obviously, you can’t afford to live like your boss and even the hardest working boss doesn’t *do that much* more than you do, to be equal to the difference in the money each of you get out of the business.

### **But, if I work hard and do what I’m told, I can be rich and successful...**

- People who work hard and are smart at what they do are usually viewed as a *threat* by their boss because they probably know as much or more about the work than those in charge.
- Working for a boss isn’t competitive. Chances are, if your boss want’s to hire or promote someone, they will chose someone they think is like them or a friend,

regardless of their qualifications.

- Take a look around you. How many rich people do you see? There aren’t a lot compared to the rest of us. Now common sense tells us that if you subtract the majority of rich people who merely inherited their money, there are only a handful left and they all got their money from owning stock or property and not from honest work. At best, hard work can make you comfortable. At worst, it will make you sick and your boss rich! The best way to insure that you are working for yourself is to have no boss at all!

### **HOW WOULD WE WORK WITHOUT BOSSES?**

#### **How are decisions made?**

- Workers are organized into working groups based on what they do (their tasks). Decisions are made democratically by those who do the work.
- Each group sends a representative to all coordinating meetings for their section of the workplace. Each section coordinating committee sends a representative to the coordination committee for the workplace.
- Representatives can be changed at any time by the group who chooses them. They have no authority over those groups.
- Conflicts are resolved through mediation and arbitration by someone neutral and impartial.

#### **How is work organized?**

- Working groups plan the work and divide up the tasks. Without a boss you don’t have to wait for the boss to OK something, you just agree with your co-workers what needs to be done. Workers decide for themselves which jobs they wish to learn.
- Coordinating committees coordinate scheduling and the allocation of group resources to projects. It is also how working groups share information and find out what’s going on at the workplace.
- The workplace coordinating committee coordinates budgeting and major functions like accounting, purchasing and sales so that production is based on demand for the products or services of the workplace.
- New workers are brought into a workplace when the current workers agree more people are needed.

#### **How are workers paid?**

- The workers decide how much of the income

earned by their work goes to keep the business going and how much goes to them as compensation for their labor.

- Without “make work” from bosses, every job becomes equally necessary: both physical work and brain work. The workers may choose to each take an equal share or to pay everyone based on how many hours they work.
- Without stockholders and overpaid bosses, more money goes to those who actually do the work.

#### **What about benefits?**

- Without bosses, workers are no longer considered “expendable.” Medical Care, Dental Care, Child Care, Disability, Vacation Time, Sick Time and Retirement are considered part of the cost of maintaining the workplace and are paid for out of the earnings of the workplace.
- The workplace also covers the cost of your tools, safety equipment and training.

#### **What about promotions?**

- Tasks are assigned based on your skills and abilities: what you know and can do. There is no “kissing ass” because no one tells anyone else what to do and people are paid based on their work and not their position.
- You learn on-the-job how to do more and more complex tasks. Self-managed workplaces have apprenticeship/internship procedures for new workers.
- The only “promotion” is in the area of responsibility. Since no one is *in-charge*, The working group gives the most responsibility to those they trust. The reward is personal satisfaction and respect.

#### **What about shirkers?**

- By doing away with the real parasites in the workplace (bosses), you have a lot more people to do the work and you can reduce the amount of work everyone has to do to be productive. This means that the workday can be shorter and more flexible and that work won’t be as strenuous. People can also choose to work part time.
- Without a boss, the stress at work would be lower.
- Shirking is usually a subconscious response to being exploited. Without exploitation, there will be less incentive to shirk off work.
- Those who still want to stand by and let their co-workers do the work while they do nothing, will be stealing from them. It is up to the workers to decide if and when someone’s lazyness is *unfair* to the rest of them. Workers who try to live off the work of others while doing nothing will be kicked out of the job at the discretion of their co-workers.