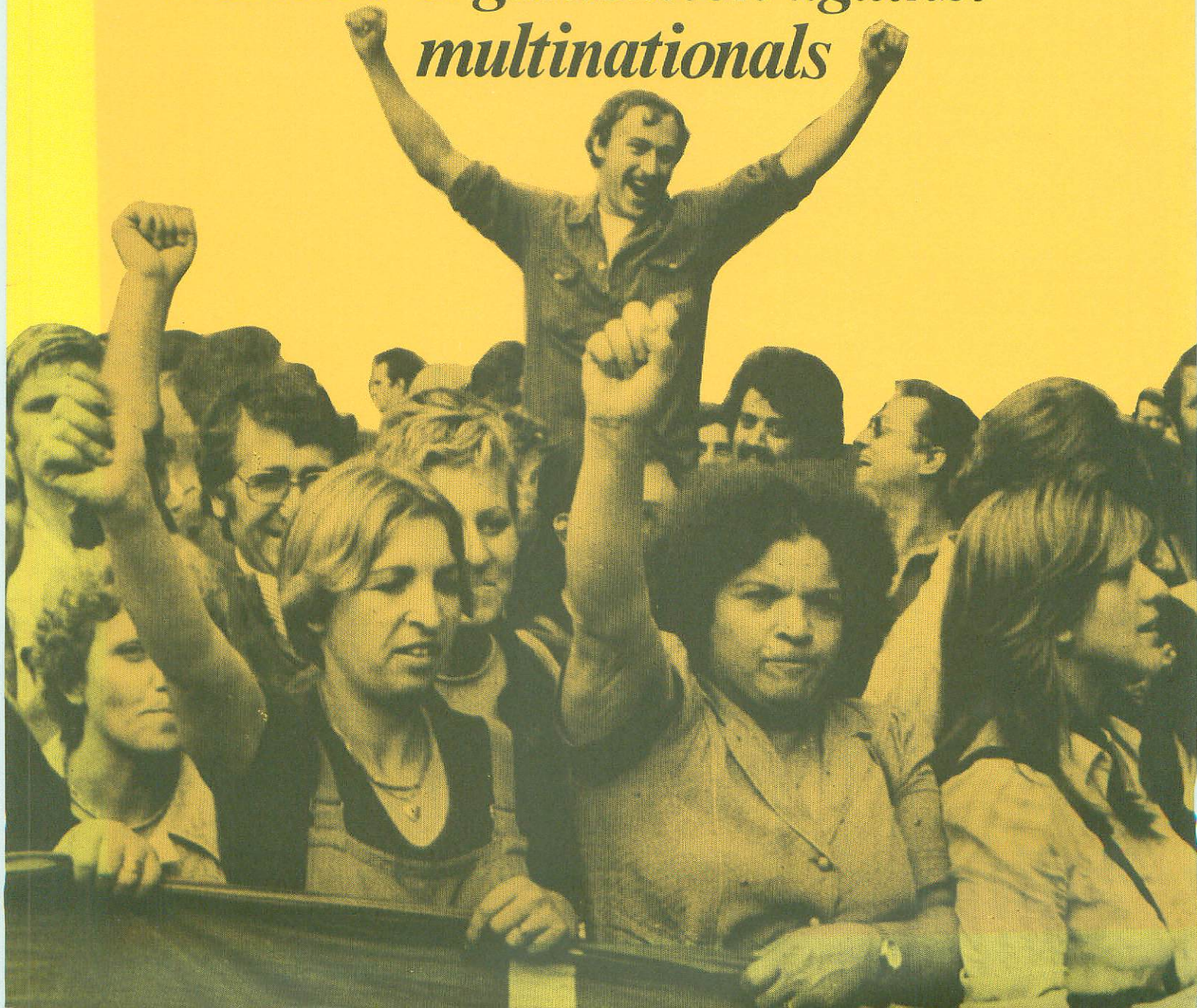


Striking Back^{60p}

*Workers' organisation against
multinationals*



Striking Back

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This handbook was produced for the GLC by Counter Information Services, a collective which reports on the activities of major multinational corporations and social and economic issues. CIS has assisted workers in a number of multinationals, including Ford and Unilever, to build international links.

Thanks to: Duncan Brewer, Barbara Dinham, Rosanna Horsley, Stuart Howard, Bill Ridgers, Don Thomson, and all those trade unionists in multinationals who shared their knowledge and experience with us.

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The growth of multinationals is undermining the effectiveness of traditional trade union organisation. The ease with which multinationals open and close plants, transfer production from one country to another, and introduce new products and technology give them a clear upper hand in their dealings with the workforce. Unions' traditional source of strength, their national base, no longer stands up to this international power.

Trade unionists have responded to multinationals in two ways, both of which aim to form international connections to match those of the international employers. World company councils, formed in the mid-1960s, bring together representatives of national unions for the purpose of coordinating national policies and exchanging information. Another response, which we consider in this education pack, is the creation of international combines made up of multinationals' employees from the shop floor.

These combines are perhaps the most developed of direct links between workers. They bring together people from different countries to meet to discuss common problems and to attempt to assemble a common strategy against their employer. While the combines are few in number, they are a first step in enabling trade unionists to directly link up to tackle multinationals.

The Greater London Council, concerned about job loss in multinationals' plants in London, has supported three such international combines, in Philips, Ford and Kodak. The GLC believes that trade unionists in those plants can help preserve their own jobs, and those of Londoners generally, through international connections. Striking Back at the Empires, produced by the International Broadcasting Trust, and this education pack, are part of the GLC's effort to encourage workers in other multinationals to form similar international links.

The GLC
Multinational companies dominate London's economy. Seventy two of the 75 largest manufacturing companies in London are multinationals.

Today these companies are shedding jobs and closing factories at a frightening pace as they install new technology or transfer production overseas. And when plants close, whole areas face economic collapse.

The Greater London Council has taken up these problems. Its powers of purchasing, its planning controls and its responsibilities as a shareholder in some of the companies through staff pension fund holdings are important. But in most cases, these local authority powers are no match for a multinational.

So, in addition to using these powers, the GLC has been supporting the growing numbers of trade unionists working for London's multinationals who are against competing with foreign

workers and instead favour co-operating with their colleagues abroad to share information about company plans and develop strategies to protect jobs and improve working conditions.

This education pack has been produced as part of the Council's programme of support for these initiatives. It is designed to be used in conjunction with 'Striking Back at the Empires', a film commissioned by the GLC to show how workers at two of London's most important multinationals, Ford and Kodak — aided by the GLC — are building international links to save jobs and to control the power of these corporate empires. The film and the pack are meant to be used primarily in trade union education; we hope they will be of use to a broader audience concerned with corporate power as well.

We hope that you find both the film and the pack stimulating and useful.

Popular Planning Unit
Industry and Employment Branch, GLC

The Multinationals



Some of the many Unilever products.

Forty-five million people around the world work for multinational corporations. Forty million of them are in the main industrialised countries, where they make up a third of both manufacturing and service employment. In Britain, the figure is still higher: one of every two people in manufacturing works for a multinational company. Most multinationals here are UK-based, but an increasing number are foreign-owned.

Multinationals manufacture or provide services in more than one country. This makes them difficult to control politically. At the same time the workers they employ are divided and constrained by national boundaries. With its own organisational machine highly centralised, the multinational has a clear edge over its workforce in any sort of negotiations.

Multinational executives think and plan globally. A company such as Unilever operates in 75 countries and employs a workforce of over 300,000. Its managers' primary concern is that all the pieces of the corporation work together to form one coherent and profitable whole.

The priorities for any given subsidiary will be set with this goal in mind. Executives in head offices in Rotterdam and London decide the

main product lines, technological innovations, investments, and profit targets. Even an important subsidiary such as Birds Eye becomes simply an addition to the global balance sheet, and a plant employing perhaps 5,000 becomes a footnote in the company accounts.

Unilever owns 39 subsidiaries in the UK. These employ around 69,000 people, producing food, plastics, animal feeds and toiletries, and working in the company's packaging and transport businesses. The contribution of individual subsidiaries to the company's financial well-being makes a small mark in the overall picture: the British subsidiaries are included in the report and accounts as part of 'European Community countries'.

Investment auctions

Subject only to national controls, multinationals' global operations are largely unfettered by the law. Holding out the promise of jobs, they can choose the countries in which to site according to the advantages offered — tax concessions in one, a skilled workforce in another, an expanding market in a third. Countries will bid for their investment and, especially in a climate of recession, companies can bargain hard for grants and labour concessions.

When Ford built a new engine plant at Bridgend at least £70million of the

£180million investment was covered by subsidies and grants. The plant was supposed to provide 2,500 jobs, but ended up with only 1,850. In the meantime, Dagenham's engine plant was run down.

Transfer pricing

Multinationals can also employ transfer pricing to manipulate the profits of their subsidiaries to avoid taxes or conceal excess profits. They do this by selling products between subsidiaries in different countries at artificial prices. Products from countries with high taxes can be sold at a low price to subsidiaries in countries with low taxes. The profit in the country of origin is low, and the tax paid on that profit is also low. By the reverse process, components from the low tax country can be sold to the subsidiary in the high tax country at an artificially high price. The net result is that the company has shifted money from the high to the low tax country, making maximum profits and paying minimum tax.

Multinationals' power is political as well as economic. They can threaten national governments with investment strikes (as the City did in 1982 when the Inland Revenue proposed measures to tighten tax regulations); withhold information (as Chrysler did with the Labour government in 1978 when it sold its UK plants to Peugeot despite

massive government bail-out funds); and bring smaller countries to their knees by threatening to pull out (as the aluminium companies did when the Jamaican government introduced strict ownership and price controls). Alternatively, companies can employ a softer approach, splashing out money on intensive lobbying campaigns to woo strategically-placed ministers.

Often the distinctions between governments and companies are blurred: numerous ministers have become part of the 'revolving door' of government and company employment. In September 1984 James Prior, resigning as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, moved straight to the Chairman's job at GEC, doubling his income in the process.

Find at least four ways in which multinational companies can be seen as 'different' from other corporations.

Use a world map to locate your company's headquarters and major plants. Link them up to show-
a. the transfer of products or materials;
b. the flow of decisions by management.

*How does the global structure of a multinational company help to undermine trade union activity?
Has there been an example at your plant?*

To a large extent the multinationals have so far been able to operate without internationally co-ordinated opposition from their workforce. In most countries, even in the Third World, they are willing to negotiate with national trade unions. But nowhere do they accept international bargaining. In Britain, while most multinationals recognise unions, often they do not even have to accept national bargaining. Unilever, for example, deals with a number of unions at divisional — and sometimes even plant — level.

Trends

In contrast with trade union organisation, business is becoming more internationally integrated. Fewer and fewer subsidiaries produce solely for the domestic market, and production is tending to spread across national boundaries. This reflects the constant chase after both growth markets, economies of scale and lower labour costs.

Take the Ford Escort. Its engines come from Bridgend, transmissions from Bordeaux, car bodies from Saarlouis in Germany and Halewood, and components from 11 other

European plants. These parts are shipped back and forth across the continent, and eventually assembled into cars at Valencia (Spain), Saarlouis, and Halewood. At any given time, many weeks' worth of parts will be in transit. In the event of a strike at one plant components can be re-routed and output boosted and redirected from the plants still running — if their workforces allow.

Company flexibility is also increasing. Especially in light industries such as textiles, electronics, and now information processing, work can easily be shifted more easily than ever before. American Airlines and the Bank of America now have a system for remote clerical work. Cartons of

forms with data are shipped to Barbados and Brazil to be keyed into computer terminals, mostly by women. The information is then relayed back to central records offices by satellite. The benefits? \$1.60 an hour for clerical work in Barbados versus \$9.00 in New York, and the work can be shifted if necessary.

It is generally very difficult for workers to discover managements' longer term plans for new capacity or rationalisation of existing plants. The company has all the information; the workforce usually has only the knowledge of its own plant or perhaps national subsidiary. Management makes decisions based on what is profitable for the corporation as a whole, which may make no apparent sense in a purely national context.

Massey Ferguson employees at Kilmarnock learned this lesson when the plant was closed in 1980, with the loss of 1,600 jobs. Although their plant was profitable, the Toronto management's international rationalisation plans to compensate for falling sales and profits dictated that it had to go.

Similarly, Unilever employees in Europe are finding that their jobs are being cut back. The company has determined that North American and

Asian markets offer better prospects, and is rationalising its plants in Europe. A few jobs may be created elsewhere, but the company's mobility means profound disruption for the European workforce.

Even the company structure makes challenging management's decisions difficult. Local management can claim that they are helpless to reverse decisions made in head offices. On the other hand, head offices can argue that local management carries responsibility for decisions. When the International Union of Foodworkers protested to Unilever about its labour practices in South Africa, it was told that all problems were properly dealt with on a local level and that head office had no authority to interfere.

Divide and rule

Multinationals press the advantages offered by their global structure when it suits them. In industrial disputes, they use their mobility and international production lines to weaken national union action. They can do this by:

- * transferring production overseas during strikes;
- * threatening to move permanently to countries where labour costs are lower and industrial relations are more controlled;
- * avoiding negotiations between those who make decisions in multinationals (i.e. head offices) and the workforce;
- * dividing the workforce by giving them selective information designed to set one plant or country against the other.

Ford is past master of this technique. Halewood workers have routinely been told that their counterparts in Saarlouis were more efficient, while the German employees now receive glowing accounts of Ford UK's profitability. When sales of their overpriced cargo truck failed, Ford showed a video implicitly blaming the UK workforce by eulogising Mercedes manufacturing methods. It doesn't always work — in this case the video show ended in uproar.

From the point of view of the manager of a multinational, the lack of international trade union organisation provides many opportunities to be exploited at the expense of the workforce. Their workers are divided along national boundaries and between unions within them, especially in countries such as Britain. The opportunities to encourage sectional, local, national and international divisions are great: it costs employers little to do so, and the benefits to them can be enormous.

Codes & Conduct

In Britain there are few effective controls over multinationals. British companies' heavy stake overseas made governments loathe to curb their freedom in the past. The present government has abolished exchange controls, so encouraging the flight of capital from Britain and has made inward investment by foreign-based companies easier. Britain is now one of the most open of all European countries.

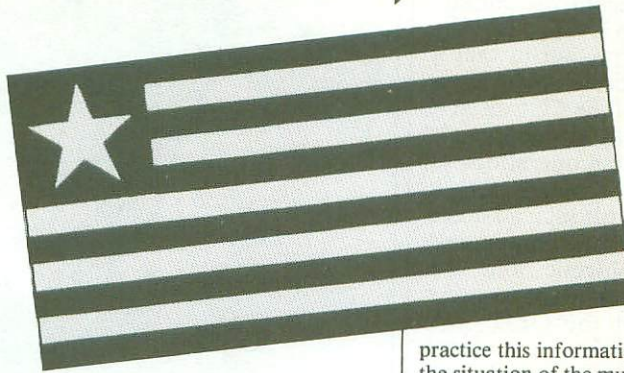
Government policy on foreign investment shows just how few the controls are. The government has the power to protect a few key companies and industries from foreign ownership. But unlike other countries (such as Canada and Sweden) it does not examine carefully the entry of multinationals. There is no investigation of their track record before and after investment decisions are made. Sometimes companies have been asked to give undertakings as to their future behaviour, but there is no systematic monitoring or sanctions if these are broken.

Once a foreign company is established in Britain it is subject to the same provisions that apply to a UK-based company. These are few. The Monopolies and Mergers Commission evaluates the industrial consequences of takeovers and mergers, when told to do so by government. It looks for anti-competitive activity, irrespective of company nationality. But it does not look at the wider issues posed by multinational activities. The Inland Revenue investigates multinationals' finances — it established a special unit to deal with their transfer pricing policies in 1976, which has less than 60 people working for it.

So, despite the fact that the top 100 companies account for more than 50% of manufacturing output, assets and employment, the government has little knowledge of their plans and little desire to exert any influence. It deals with problems only as they arise.

Codes

The government is party to certain international codes of conduct that have been agreed by many countries. These voluntary codes attempt to set standards to be used wherever multinationals operate and to establish a framework for co-operation between governments in dealing with them.



Tebbit made international solidarity action illegal to help the shipowners fight the International Transport Federation.

should show a positive attitude to trade union work.

Information for bargaining: Both require management to provide workers' representatives with the information they need for meaningful negotiations. In accordance with local law and

practice this information should include data on the situation of the multinational as a whole, not just the subsidiary.

Bargaining and the right to strike: Both give workers the right to negotiate with the real decision makers. They specify that the management negotiators must be authorised to take decisions on the matters under negotiation. Management must not try to influence the course of negotiations during a strike or an organising drive by threatening to transfer production to another country or bring in strike breakers from abroad.

Health and safety: ILO states that multinationals should ensure the highest standards and should provide unions with information on standards which they observe in other countries. When new products or processes are introduced, management must inform employees of any special hazards involved.

Closures and sackings: Neither code prevents management from making mass dismissals. But the OECD code says that they should give reasonable notice to employees and co-operate with them to mitigate 'adverse effects'. The ILO code has a special section on security of employment, calling on multinationals to assume a leading role in promoting employment security and the creation of more jobs — especially in developing countries.

Check the main features of the OECD and ILO codes. Has your management infringed any?

What are the implications of these codes being voluntary? Do you know of any other voluntary codes, applicable to management or unions? How effective are they?

The two main codes are the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Guidelines, agreed in 1976, and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Declaration on Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (1977). There is also a United Nations code which is still in draft form.

The main employment features of the OECD and ILO codes are:

Union recognition: Both codes endorse the right of employees to be represented by trade unions. The ILO code condemns victimisation for trade union activities and states that management

There is a gross disparity between the codes and the reality of the way multinationals operate. Being non-binding, they can only be used to put pressure on companies. However, cases have been resolved. For instance, a case in which Hertz Rent-a-Car had imported British and German scabs during a dispute in Denmark was successfully dealt with by an international trade secretariat through the use of the OECD code.

The OECD code is the one that has been used for issues involving

industrialised countries. The more strongly worded ILO code has, up till now, not really been tested.

National unions can take up cases under the OECD code. They go initially to their government 'contact point'. In Britain this is the Department of Industry, but in fact it functions as little more than a letter box. However, in 1984 the TUC used it to protest against both Dunlop's sale of its UK manufacturing operations to Sumitomo and the closure of a Caterpillar plant without advance warning. In both cases the companies' response was unapologetic and the unions involved did not wish to press the case further with the OED. The TUC viewed the process as useful primarily because it generated bad publicity for the companies, and for developing the role of the 'contact point'.

EEC Undermined

EEC controls, in contrast to the codes, carry the weight of law. The EEC has special powers to harmonise legislation and it can formulate 'directives' which have to be introduced as laws in member countries. The EEC does not have a specific policy of controlling multinationals, but some of its policies are particularly relevant to them. Company law is being harmonised and this includes some features on information disclosure, consultation rights and company structure.

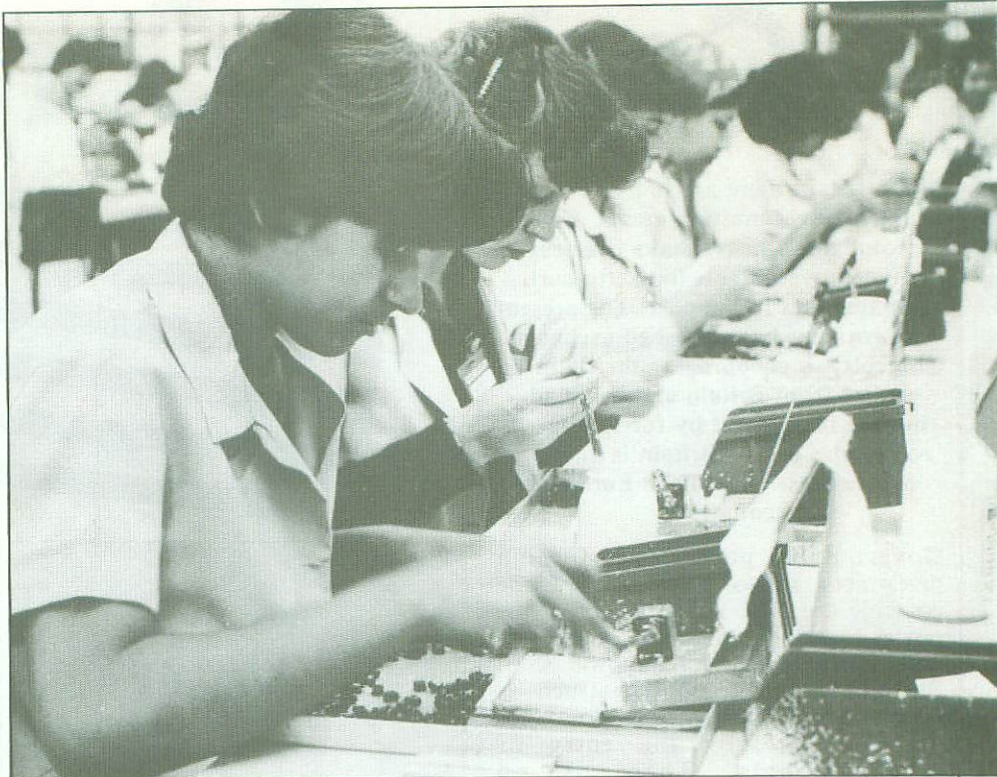
EEC directives currently being applied or proposed which are of particular interest to workers in multinationals include:

The 'Acquired Rights' Directive (1977). This provides for the continuation of employment liabilities, terms and conditions, union recognition rights and collective agreements in mergers or takeovers. Buyers and sellers of companies are supposed to consult or inform unions of the implications of proposed changes. The UK version, the Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) Regulations, was made law in 1981. But it is watered down and is ambiguous in parts.

The controversial **Fifth Directive**, first proposed in 1972, would require the election or appointment of workers' representatives at board level in larger companies, to influence decision-making. Decisions would still be taken only by directors appointed by the shareholders. Despite this, the proposal is being strongly opposed by European employers' organisations.

The proposed **'Vredeling' Directive** would apply to companies with at least 1,000 employees in more than one subsidiary in the EEC. It aims to give the workers information, disclosure and consultation rights which entitle them to: general information on the company as a whole, given annually; and specialised information prior to any action liable to have a serious effect on them, such as closures, sell-offs and major organisational changes, with at least 30 days' notice.

The EEC controls are consistently undermined by the multinationals'

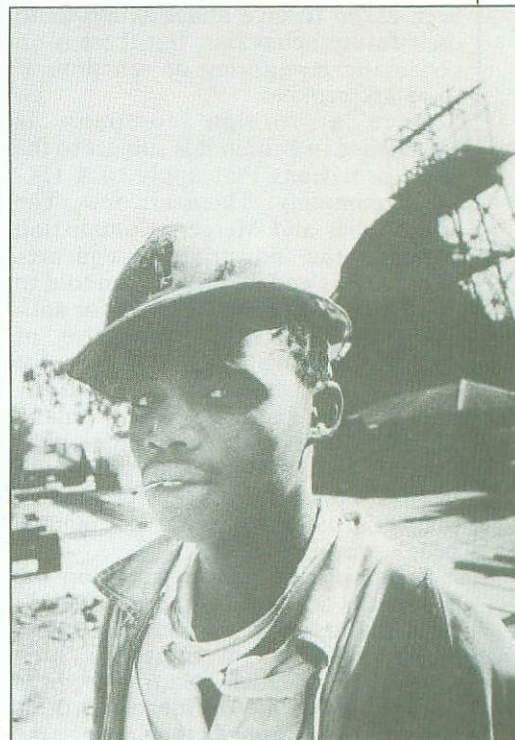


The codes and laws provide no real protection for electronics workers in Brazil (above) or gold miners in South Africa (below).

lobby, which puts heavy pressure on the European Parliament to get them watered down. Aware of the implications of the original Vredeling proposals, the multinationals mounted a massive campaign which succeeded in effecting major changes: company size was increased to 1,000 from 100, thereby excluding the great majority of workers who would have come under the schemes' protection; information supply was made annual rather than twice a year; scope for the retention of 'secret' information was introduced; a clause giving workers direct access to central management was dropped; mandatory consultation with workers prior to decision taking was changed to consultation prior to actual implementation. Even after all this dilution, Vredeling could still be shelved or vetoed by the British government, which was a leading ally of the multinationals in fighting the original proposals.

Standards

The codes and the EEC controls offer no major protection to workers, and are no substitute for strong workers' organisations. Nevertheless, they provide certain minimum standards, and a basis for workers' demands. It is possible to use the EEC commission and its mechanisms to put pressure on companies as Kodak employees have done (see later). Trade unions should certainly continue to press for European-wide legislation to protect the rights of all their members against multinationals' manoeuvrings.



The OECD and ILO codes can also be a useful lever against management, especially as many companies belong to employers' organisations which endorse them. Though that endorsement may be mere lip service, trade unions can use the codes as a focus for public pressure, and can thereby increase the demand for stronger and more binding controls.

Profit Zones

Multinational companies have often sited their operations to take advantage of the low wages and lax controls in Third World countries. Keen to increase Britain's attractiveness as an investment site, the government has provided de-regulated environments in Britain itself in which private business can flourish.

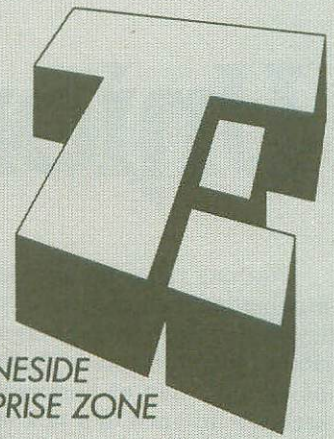
Enterprise zones were the first step in this direction. These areas provide rates and tax exemptions as well as reduced planning controls. Currently they are mainly attracting small domestic firms and industrial developers. However, there is pressure for them to receive further hidden support from government, together with lower statutory health, safety and employment safeguards. This would bring them closer in line with Hong Kong, the original model.

The second experiment is the introduction, in 1984, of six freeports for a five-year trial period. One tenth of all international trade passes through the 400 or so freeports throughout the world, a figure which could rise to 20% by 1990. The UK freeports are clearly an attempt to capture some of that growth. Freeports are usually patrolled enclaves treated as being outside the customs territory of the host country. In the new British freeports goods can be imported, processed, and re-exported without attracting duty payments. Import quotas are suspended, and VAT payments deferred. VAT is however payable on manufacturing and assembly operations. The scheme's most radical proponents have been disappointed by the tameness of the measures, having hoped for even fewer controls. A proposed freeport in the Isle of

Man may come closer to their ideal, as many UK labour and employment protection laws do not apply there, and labour costs are up to 30% lower.

What the enthusiasts were really hoping for was something much closer to the Free Trade Zones (FTZs) that attract multinational companies to developing countries. There are about 100 FTZs in the world, 70% of them in Asia, employing a million workers. Materials are imported into the de-regulated areas, processed, and then re-exported for sale on world markets or for further processing elsewhere. A wide range of incentives are offered to attract foreign capital into these enclaves, physically separated from the surrounding environment by fences, watch-towers and security police. Incentives include customs exemptions, tax holidays, absence of foreign exchange controls, no import quotas, unlimited repatriation of profits, and, crucially, cheap labour and anti-strike laws.

Often multinational companies leave an FTZ once the tax holiday has expired, looking for ever cheaper production bases. The costs to developing countries are enormous, and the benefits are doubtful. The work provided is labour intensive and monotonous, mainly repetitive assembly in electronics and garment factories. Most workers are women between the ages of 15 and 25, receiving low pay for long hours. Overtime is often compulsory. While government propaganda for the zones boasts of their high productivity, many women suffer stress-induced illnesses and eyesight damage, and



TYNESIDE ENTERPRISE ZONE GETS YOU GOING.

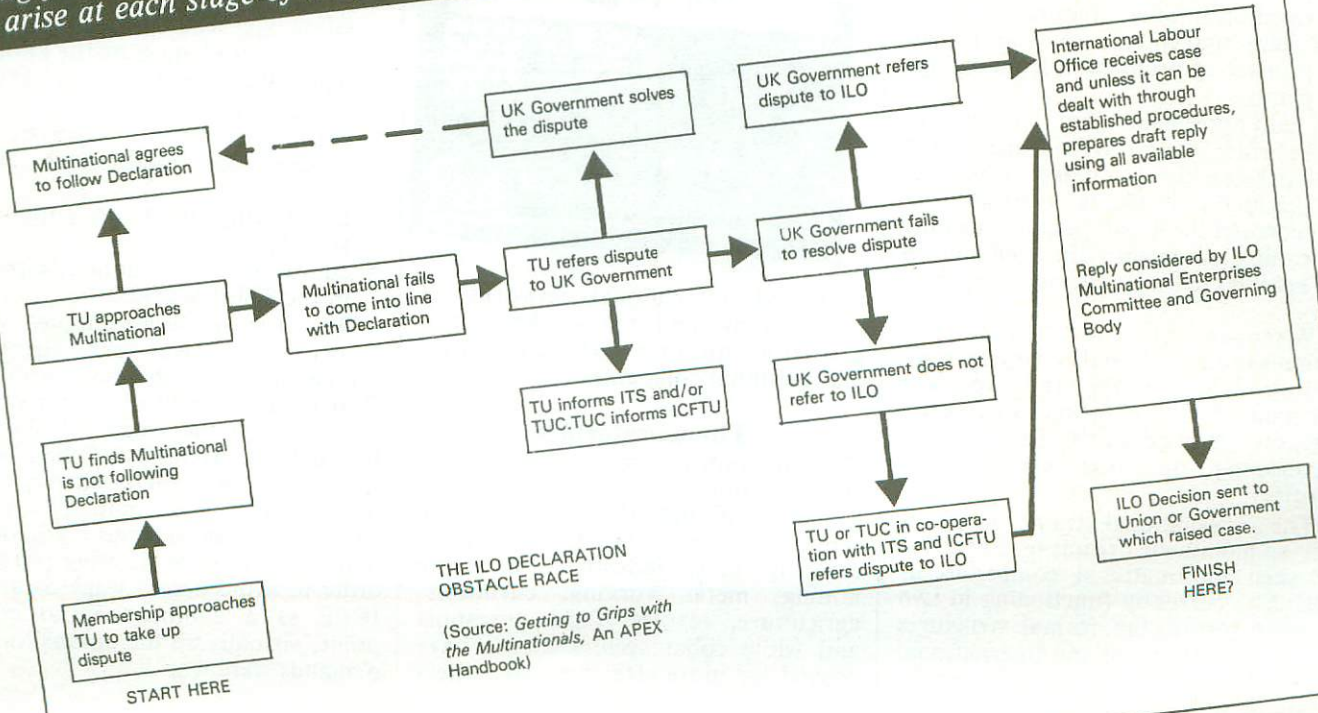
The hard sell for Britain's enterprise zones: the employers want more concessions.

are burnt out by the age of 25.

Security regulations and anti-union legislation make organisation very difficult, yet resistance to this exploitation has been growing. In the Bataan Exporting Zone in the Philippines there were major strikes in 1982 and 1983 protesting poor conditions and lay-offs, despite police repression.

One of the most militant unions organises at the International Garments Manufacturing Company (IGMC), an assembly plant subsidiary of the UK-based Baird Textiles. The jackets and coats assembled in the Philippines are sold in British stores such as Debenhams and C&A. The women at IGMC were in dispute with management in December 1982 over back-pay, working conditions and forced overtime. They were locked out, and set up a 24-hour-a-day picket which forced the company to capitulate after two weeks, meeting most of their demands.

This diagram shows the procedure for taking up an issue through the ILO code of conduct. Imagine taking up an issue involving your management and work out the problems that would arise at each stage of the procedure.



Union Internationals

Nothing raises the hackles of multinational employers so much as the hint of international organisation within their workforces. In the spring of 1973 a group of Eastman Kodak executives listened to a talk on labour relations in the company.

'Today', the speaker announced, 'our biggest fear is the international trade union movement against the multinational corporation . . . The long range objective . . . is to have full collective bargaining with multinational corporations . . .' An ominous development within Kodak Europe was the plan of the Association of Cinematograph Television and Allied Technicians (ACTT) to found an international film workers' union.

The speaker stressed that union strength needed to be checked, but that there was no need for panic, as union leaders faced a number of obstacles to their aims, such as differing laws, wage patterns and customs in different countries. However, union leaders were aware of these problems and would move cautiously towards international bargaining, taking a series of steps:

- 'to establish co-ordinating committees to work with and assist local union leaders;
- 'to gain agreements from local unions to financially support strikes if required in other countries;
- 'to gain agreements to prevent the transfer of production from foreign plants;
- 'to gain agreements from local unions to refuse requests by management to work overtime to make up for lost production in plants on strike;
- 'to conduct information and consumer campaigns against the company in order to enlist worldwide support.'

Warning of the 'threat' of unionisation in Kodak's largely non-union US plants, the speaker proclaimed: 'Unionisation by its nature restricts management's flexibility in developing optimum growth and profit.'

The international trade unionism that so haunts the dreams of executives of such multinational companies as Kodak is currently functioning in two distinct forms: the formal structures and organisations of the International Trade Secretariats (ITS), and the self-



FACKLIG KAMP
-FÖR MÄNSKLIGA FRI- OCH RÄTTIGHETER

BOICOT a COCA-COLA
15 al 30 de MAYO

LA CHISPA DE LA MUERTE

PIEDRO QUINERO
asesinado

MASELLI LOPEZ
asesinado

ISRAEL MARQUEZ
desaparecidos de
asesinatos

PARA QUE LA SANGRE DE LOS
TRABAJADORES DE COCA-COLA EN
GUATEMALA NO SIGA CORRIENDO
COOPERA EN EL BOICOT MUNDIAL
A LOS PRODUCTOS COCA-COLA

La Unión de los Trabajadores de Hostelería - (U.T.H.)
Federación de Alimentación
sitio: 1011

generated international networks set up by rank and file workers in a growing number of individual multinational companies.

The secretariats

ITSs are industry-based international confederations of trade unions mainly founded around the turn of the century. There are 15 of them, covering most industries, including mining, metal working, chemicals, agriculture, textiles, food, transport and white collar sectors. Some have proved far more effective than others

in working to defend trade unionists' interests.

ITSs have no authority to negotiate between employers and employees. They are principally co-ordinating bodies, and their power depends on the national unions affiliated to them. These pay dues to the ITSs, and send delegates to vote on policies at congresses held every three or four years. Between congresses the ITSs are controlled by executive committees made up of representatives from the major affiliated unions. On a day-to-day basis the ITSs are run by small staffs of from 2 to 25 full-time employees, with sometimes a few regional representatives. Most are based in Geneva, with a few in Belgium, Holland, France and Britain.

Their activities include:

- * publishing comparative data on wages and conditions, such as the International Federation of Commercial, Clerical and Technical Employees' (FIET) survey of European banking employees;
- * researching topics of special interest to affiliates, for example, an investigation by the Miners' International (MIF) into the export of coal from South Africa, for the US miners' union;
- * answering questions about trade unions in other countries, which can help put unions in touch with one another;
- * convening industry-wide meetings, such as the hotel workers' conference planned by the Food and Allied Workers' International (IUF) for late 1984;
- * representing affiliates to international bodies such as the ILO;
- * transferring funds in support of strikes;
- * educational programmes, especially in the Third World.

One of the earliest examples of ITS co-ordination was the successful campaign against the mammoth Saint Gobain glass products company co-ordinated by the Chemical Workers' International (ICEF) in 1969. Acting for unions in eight countries, ICEF revealed that the company's profits had been at an all-time high, though Saint Gobain were claiming poverty in order to avoid decent wage rises. With ICEF as a 24-hour central contact point, virtually all the unions' original demands were won.



ITSs have taken part in major campaigns, such as the IUF's support for Coca Cola workers, and the Miners' Federation's support for Peruvian miners.

More recently the IUF (food workers) forced Coca Cola to the negotiating table, in 1980 and again in 1984, to sign a recognition and union rights agreement with a Guatemalan union at the Coca Cola bottling plant in Guatemala City. The second campaign, after the employers had reneged on the first agreement, was very successful, with half of the IUF's affiliates supporting a plant occupation by the Guatemalan workforce in the face of violent government repression. The response from the US business community was one of outrage, with IBM commissioning studies on how to avoid such international bargaining.

In recent years some ITSs have formed 'world company councils' to

service inter-union co-operation within particular multinationals. There are some 60 of these councils, including Unilever, Ciba Geigy, Ford and General Motors.

The councils are made up of delegates from national unions. They generally meet every few years to compare employment conditions and company strategies, and to coordinate policies. Between meetings, the ITS acts as a secretariat, sometimes publishing special studies and newsletters. With delegates from almost every country in which the company operates, these councils represent an important attempt to match the international spread of multinationals.

However, there are a number of obstacles preventing ITSs fully representing workers in campaigns against multinational companies. ITS meetings, including world company councils, are attended by national officers and general secretaries of the affiliated unions, and not by rank and file trade unionists. A few ITSs have made a point of encouraging shop-floor involvement. The Miners' International produces worker educational programmes, and welcomes direct correspondence with ordinary members of affiliated unions, and the IUF (food workers) has asked its affiliates to send shop floor representatives to Unilever meetings.

As a general rule, however, there is little rank and file involvement in ITSs.

**What does an International Trade Secretariat do?
What do you think limits its power?**

**Which ITS is your union affiliated to?
How much do you know about its activities?**

Work out how you could ensure that your shop stewards' committee or union branch receives regular information on the activities of the appropriate International Trade Secretariat.

In addition, union full-timers have not adequately reported ITS developments to their members, so that many unionists are not even aware that their union is affiliated to an ITS. Gaining access to the wealth of information produced by ITSs can also be difficult. Bureaucratic union channels can delay information requests for years, and delegates do not always ask the right questions. As a Kodak worker put it: 'No disrespect, but they (the full-timers) haven't got any actual understanding. They probably cover about 25 factories. They don't work in the plant; they might ask the right financial questions, the political questions, but not the guts of it. The only people that can really do that are the lay people.'

Another major problem with ITSs is that they follow for the most part the general policies of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), in excluding unions 'dominated by outside forces' — ie, affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), which is based in Prague. The ICFTU, which split off from the WFTU in 1949, has as its members Western trade union confederations such as the British TUC. WFTU for its part has become increasingly identified with Eastern Bloc influence. Generally, the ITSs do not recognise WFTU affiliates, which include unions such as the CGT in France and the Comisiones Obreros (CCOO) in Spain. Since these unions are often the major ones in large industrial concerns in their countries, this means that effective international organisation within multinational companies by ITSs is often impossible.

In Spring 1984 the ICEF (chemical workers) and the IUF (food workers), two of the most powerful ITSs, agreed to enter merger discussions. One reason for merger is that there has been a growth of conglomerates embracing a number of industries. Companies such as Unilever, for example, straddle both chemicals and food. Mergers make sense for other reasons also. 'As companies become bigger and bigger, we have to combine forces', explained one secretariat staff member. 'We need stronger organisations all the time.'

Mergers may be one way to increase ITS efficiency, but increased lay involvement is also essential. The Coca Cola and Saint Gobain campaigns make this clear.

'If the structures are not working properly' (on behalf of union members), said one ITS staffer, 'it's up to the members to change the situation. You've got to find out for yourself, start asking questions . . . it's an issue of democracy, really.'

Shopfloor Links

'We've always thought that if we work for a multinational company, we should follow their policy: if they deal across national boundaries, so should we. Our strike brought those concerns about the company being able to play one plant or country off against another more to the forefront. We thought that this was an opportune time to get support and solidarity from people in other countries.'

Workers in multinationals make links with their colleagues overseas out of necessity. They may do so in the midst of a strike, as employees of the US drug company Merck did, or when they suspect that their plant is being run down, or if it appears that production is being transferred overseas. The form in which the links are made are similarly diverse: a telephone call between shop stewards in different plants; a trip abroad to visit colleagues; or ongoing meetings of international combines.

These responses to multinationals are different from those of the international trade secretariats and world company councils. They are parallel and complementary to them, sharing the aim of building international connections. But they differ in that they are based on face to face, direct contact between workers and exchanging information specific to

the plant and company that only those working in the plants can know.

Trade unionists building these links have set themselves the following aims:

- to exchange information
- to use information to help with national bargaining
- to take solidarity action, for example, banning overtime in the event of disputes in other countries
- to build coordinated campaigns on specific issues
- to carry out coordinated regional or company-wide bargaining with management.

These are long term goals, requiring patient building of union organisation. The most developed form of international unionism, the international combines, have yet to meet these aims fully. Since the massive strike waves of the late 1960s and early 1970s, there has been a general weakening of workers' organisation worldwide in the face of recession and enormous job cuts pushed through by employers and governments. In this climate, maintaining trade union organisation at any level is an achievement — let alone extending that organisation.

Yet workers in several multinationals have begun to build international connections. The following examples show how and why they have done so.

Draw up a list of the forms of activity, from bulletins to conferences, used in these case studies to strengthen international trade union links.

Which do you think is the most easily organised of these companies? And which the most difficult? Give some reasons for your choices.

Based on your experience of your company and management draw up a list of the pitfalls to be avoided in building international trade union links.

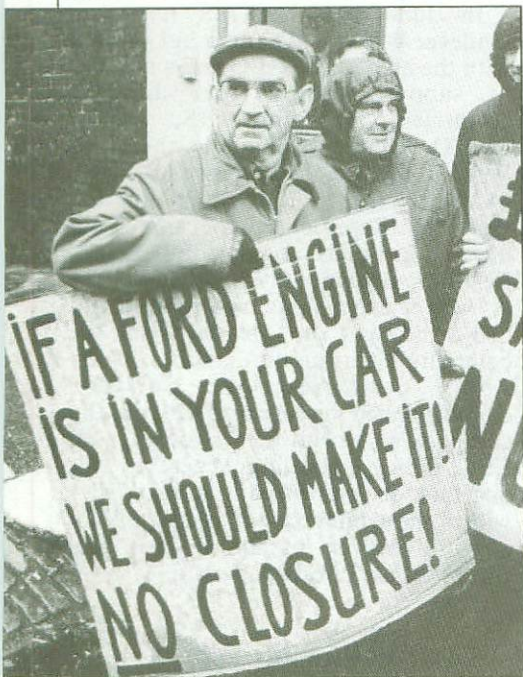
Ford

'To make matters more difficult for us, the company tries to divide and rule us, pitting plant against plant and country against country . . .

Although conferences like this one here take time and effort to organise, it is important that we who work in Ford factories hold them — to get to know each other and develop joint ideas for organising inside Ford.'

(Ford convenor, European Ford Workers Conference, February 1984).

In the early 1970s Ford shop stewards from Britain, Holland, Germany and Denmark made contact with one another. In 1977 Ford workers in Belgium struck for a 35-hour week. Management increased production at Dagenham, and were able to break the Belgian strike. When some months later the British workers realised that



they had been used in this way, they resolved that this should not happen again, and the drive to forge international links began in earnest. The first meeting of the Ford workers' international combine was attended by representatives of plants in Denmark, Spain, Holland, Germany and Britain. Over a period of years the organisation was built up. The emphasis was, and still is, on lay delegates rather than on union full-timers.

It was particularly useful for the Ford international combine in the early



Ford workers from nine countries meet in 1984.

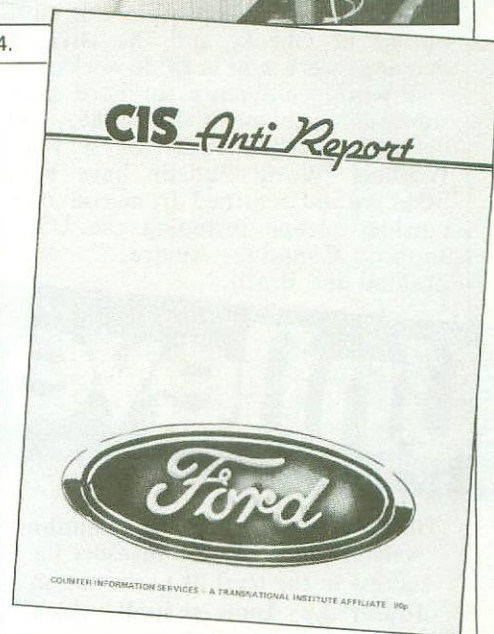
days to be able to call on the services of independent research organisations such as DIAS in Holland and Counter Information Services in Britain to help in the accumulation and analysis of information about the company, and to assist in organising the meetings. Today the combine still uses the services of the Centre for Alternative Industrial and Technological Systems (CAITS) and other European organisations.

The greatest strength of the group is as an information network built upon personal contacts. However, the gaining of support, particularly on an official level within the unions, can be a slow process. It was not until the 1983 meeting of the Ford of Europe Workers' Committee, held in Valencia, Spain, that British convenors attended. In the meantime, the company was able to shut down the Amsterdam truck plant despite the combine's success in getting the main UK truck plant to refuse to accept transferred work. Ford avoided the problem by putting the work out to private contractors.

Wider scope

In the four years since the loss of the Amsterdam plant, acceptance of the combine has increased sufficiently for the 1984 meeting to be hosted by the Ford UK National Convenors' Committee. Financial help for the 1984 meeting came not only from union sources, but also from the Greater London Council and Merseyside County Council, with organisational and research help from CAITS.

The Ford international workers' group operates informally as a trade union organisation — ie although all



the delegates are trade unionists, used to operating within a trade union framework, it is possible for them to meet as Ford workers rather than as members of particular unions. This gives them a far greater flexibility in organising conferences and other meetings.

Because of the informal approach, the Ford workers' conferences have continued to be pragmatic, working affairs. Although centred on Europe, the conferences are increasingly concerned with Ford operations outside Europe, particularly where it is possible, as with Brazil, that Ford could duplicate much European model production. At the 1984 conference Ford workers from Latin America were represented by Alberto Eulalio from Brazil. Other reports came from Ford operations in Ireland, Denmark, Portugal, Spain, France, West Germany, Belgium and the UK.

Apart from the Committee meetings, there are constant contacts between plants, including shop steward visits. Information is distributed by means of reports-back, and by means of bulletins in the appropriate languages. Stewards phone information from plant to plant, and can quickly organise immediate responses where necessary in the form of protests, publicity and financial support.

In 1983, for example, there was a strike at Ghenk for shorter hours and 500 more jobs in response to management's introduction of new technology. The combine had been able to get pledges of solidarity before the strike began, and Dagenham was leafleted on the day the strike started. As a result, the company did not attempt to increase production at Dagenham to compensate for lost output at Ghenk, and the strikers' demands were won in three weeks.

A world conference for Ford shop stewards is planned for 1985, and detailed questionnaires for a Ford Workers' World Bulletin have been filled in and returned from countries outside Europe including the USA, Japan, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Brazil.

Unilever Workers' International Network has pressed to extend contacts as far as possible beyond Europe. DIAS has been able to make contacts with Unilever workers in India and Pakistan, and International Network meetings in 1984 included representatives from these countries.

First steps

Workers in the Unilever meats division set up a European organisation in the late 1970s in the wake of an intensive survey of the company made by two research groups, SOMO in Holland and Counter Information Services in London. This was supported by the Dutch union Voedingsbond FNV, and meetings were held in both Britain and Holland. But maintaining such links proved extremely difficult. In Britain in particular the demoralising effects of the company's rationalisation moves, the small plants, poor wages and conditions and diversity of unions involved meant that momentum was lost after a while and the organisation faded away.



Unilever

The Unilever Workers' Information Network (UWIN) can measure its success in the level of perturbation displayed by Unilever itself, which has demanded that all its managers report back on UWIN work.

Because of the dual nationality structure of the company, which has head offices in both the Netherlands and the UK, the first international worker links were between Dutch and British Unilever employees, and international organisation continues to be centred on these two countries, though the network is now spreading well beyond them. DIAS, a research organisation partly funded by the EEC, works closely with Dutch Unilever workers, providing information and analysis and helping to make contacts and organise meetings.

In the light of Unilever policy since 1980, which has been to put an increasing proportion of investment into the US and into the Third World in the form of the purchase and development of plantations, the



The spread and diversity of the company's operations make organisation difficult. At the international union level, the IUF has a Unilever World Council, with national officer representatives from among full-time union officials. However this, like all ITSS, is limited in its contacts to specific affiliated unions. It produces a newsletter, though this rarely seems to reach the factory floor, and the approach seems generally low key.

Organisation is further complicated by the number of different unions represented. This is particularly true in

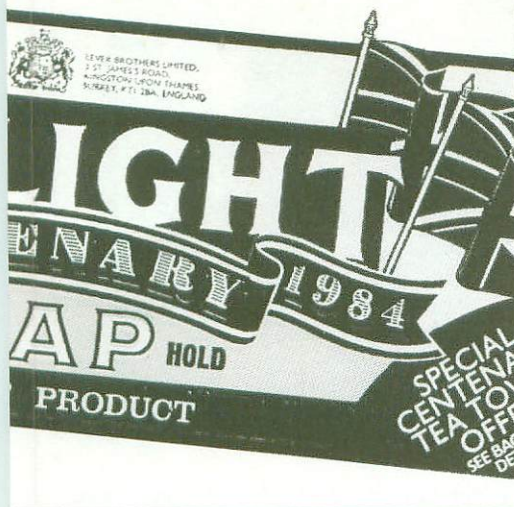
Britain, though there is one union, ASTMS, with company-wide organisation. In Holland, by contrast, the main union in Unilever, the FNV, does have a national representative committee for the company.

In June 1984 ASTMS hosted a Unilever Workers' Seminar in London, with the help of the GLC and a number of support groups from different countries, including CIS, DIAS, SOMO, Kontakt (Denmark), the Third World Centre (Nijmegen), ICAS (Antwerp) and groups from India and Pakistan. Representatives came from oils and fats division plants in Holland, Belgium, Britain, India and Pakistan. As well as exchanging information and being brought up to date on the company's anti-union activities in the Asian countries, the Seminar commissioned research papers on the company's worldwide strategy, on EEC policy regarding vegetable oils and fats, on major trends and statistics within the Unilever conglomerate, and a world survey of major past and future trends in oils and fats.

Follow through

In a follow-up meeting of UWIN in July 1984 in Amsterdam, hosted by DIAS, it was reported that the seminar papers from the previous month, plus the seminar report and information sheets, were being prepared in Dutch and English, with other language versions as required. Distribution networks were also set up. The first version of a video-report of the London meeting was produced, to be shown to Dutch, British, Belgian and Pakistan trade union groups with commentary in the appropriate languages. The aim of the video would

Merck



be to demonstrate the possibilities and necessities of international trade union co-operation within Unilever.

The Unilever experience demonstrates some of the major problems of international worker networks. Language is obviously a major hurdle to be overcome, requiring skilled organisation plus considerable expense when setting up meetings, with interpreters and simultaneous translations, plus follow-up translation services for reports and other information documents.

The level of organisation needed in a company like Unilever, with its 300,000-plus workforce spread throughout the world, is daunting to say the least. Experience so far suggests that it is probably best carried out at divisional level initially with links being established between plants with common problems, product lines, and work processes at a local level, while maintaining a company-wide perspective.

The 1984 Seminar (London) and Work-group (Amsterdam) laid the basis for future meetings and initiatives. With a firm decision to establish an international shop-stewards information network going beyond the European sector, a questionnaire designed to garner basic facts from every country where Unilever operates was drawn up for distribution. This will cover a comprehensive range of information about the company's policies, its organisation and financial and marketing position, levels and types of employment and work conditions, and related questions. It was also decided to produce a regular international newsletter, *Grip on Unilever*, as an information exchange vehicle.

In July 1984, two American trade unionists travelled to Europe to gain support for a dispute in the US with the pharmaceutical giant Merck Sharpe and Dohme. Meeting shop stewards and general secretaries in Britain, Holland, Belgium and Ireland, they asked for support in the first initiative of this kind within the company.

After contract negotiations had failed, Merck had locked out 760 workers at its main plant at Rahway, New Jersey. A month later, the rest of the 4,000 US workforce went on strike in protest against company demands for concessions on medical and pension benefits and the introduction of a two-tier wage structure.

The Americans think that the same rationalisation efforts will be applied in Merck's European plants. With profits of \$543million in 1982/3, Merck can afford to weather strikes and union protests. And, like most other major pharmaceutical companies, Merck has its low-wage tax havens of Puerto Rico and Ireland, to which it can shift production in the event of industrial disputes. In fact, it has increasingly shifted production to these countries, and cut back production in countries like Britain, where it is one of the NHS's largest suppliers and sells around £75million of drugs a year.

CIS spoke to the American trade unionists about their trip, and later, Merck employees in Britain gave their view of their meeting.

What did you hope to gain in terms of your dispute by coming to Europe?

Bargaining leverage. The company's international. They threaten us by shifting products to other plants, other lands. Puerto Rico, for example. If people here are not involved in this kind of struggle with Merck they will be, and we are trying to get all the support we can from them. Plus in the future possibly international bargaining.

What did you ask for?

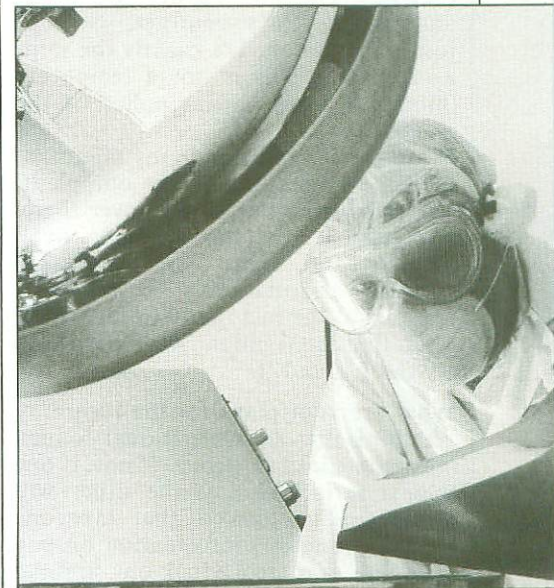
Anything from letters to the chairman of the board to taking action. We asked people to stop work, but we don't think that will happen. We basically need a response to our situation, and for people we meet to make a determination as to how they can best do that.

What was the response?

Generally good. Obviously we came cold. We hadn't any real previous communication except for some of the work of people like yourselves. So there's been a lot of scepticism initially. But these are trade unionists. They basically understand our situation. We've done a lot of work on our situation, a lot of research, documents which we could show people. We told them the chronology of events, and, as we started to move along in time, their affinity towards our situation grew greater and greater.

Do you think it was useful for the people you spoke to to find out about the strike in New Jersey?

Absolutely; we were like islands. No one knows about each other, and just going around we saw names we weren't even aware of. A lot of people didn't have as much information as we do since they're not in dispute. The information we got for them was quite useful. Some of the people were talking about writing letters back and forth and possibly having a newsletter to plants. I think that would be a great idea.



What would you advise people to do to prepare for a trip like yours?

If we were to do this again, what we would try to do is find out where all the facilities are. You could list everyone's name and location beforehand, and then find out who is there, and try to contact people, set up an agenda, and try to meet more people at once.

Rather than travelling around Europe, would it have been easier to have one central meeting?

The initial contact was worthwhile, to see groups on their home territory. You see more of the actual workers. We'd like to have a meeting

afterwards, get together with the other plants that we haven't seen, and have a big organisational meeting where we can get all the workers together and start working from here on out.

Do you think that's possible?

Yes. A lot of work. But it's not just a matter of good ideas . . . it's essential. If it doesn't happen like this we'll be crushed.

Everyone will be brought down. Rahway is the home office; if they bust Rahway, that's their stepping stone. They bust Rahway, the home office, the international headquarters, and from there they'll go one by one.

As UK employees of Merck, what was your response to meeting your American counterparts?

When we looked at the information they gave us, it shook us out of our complacency. We realised that what's happening to them is what's happening to us in England. Merck's offer of voluntary severance — as they call it — redundancies of 68 employees, for example. Lo and behold a year later (1983/4), they started to re-engage. But they re-engaged on a lower rate of pay and on a year's contract. No one joined the union. It's exactly the same as Rahway. This is not a temporary thing, it's a permanent policy of the company.

There's no question in my mind that the hike in production (at our plant) coincided with the dispute over there. We started in January, going at it hammer and tongs (just before US contract negotiations). Unwittingly, and due to the fact that we didn't have a multinational union, we couldn't do anything about it.

What are your plans for the future?

We think that an international council must come into existence. If not, if one (plant) is locked out, the other will produce. The idea is that everyone keeps in touch — information on pay rates, etc. If there's a lock-out, and the company says you produce it now, the Belgians, for example, will say, 'we're not making it'.

. . . I can see two stumbling blocks: Puerto Rico and Ireland. No one in their wildest imagination can imagine how much they'll put in there . . . because they're non-union.

We've asked them (the American unionists) for a format of what an international council would do. I don't think management will pull any of these stunts once they know we're organised. But it's one thing to talk about it, another to get it off the ground.

Talbot

In July 1979, a meeting was organised in Rome by the Transnational Information Exchange network of European research groups, to look at the problems in the European motor industry and the impact on work and workers' organisations. Researchers from labour resource centres and trade union delegates and representatives from several car companies took part. The aim was not just to examine the state of an industry that was undergoing industrial restructuring, but also to foster links between workers which could develop into international co-operation. Workers from the Peugeot-Citroen-Talbot group who attended were keen to build on the contacts made at the conference and an informal European shop stewards' combine was formed as a result.

The aim of this was to develop shop-floor level contacts, not as substitutes for the existing official organisations, but rather as a network that was complementary to them. An advantage of this was that while the meetings organised by the International Metalworkers' Federation excluded certain unions, such as the Spanish CCOO and the French CGT (which were the dominant unions in their plants), these informal links could involve their elected representatives.

An English support group, Coventry Workshop, was to provide background research, and help with organising travel and translation, report-writing and reporting back. But the unions themselves took on the financial responsibility for the meetings.

Restructuring

The previous year Peugeot-Citroen (PSA) had bought Chrysler's European plants in Spain and the UK (later renaming them Talbot). It then began the process of restructuring the entire group. French and Spanish unions had already met to look at the problems facing workers in PSA and wanted to call a meeting of trade union representatives from all the group's plants.

Already PSA had begun to shed jobs, while it was also investing in established plants and setting up new ones. Workers needed to develop an



understanding of PSA's strategy, and in November 1979 the representatives from the main European plants (including Portugal) met in Spain, with the CCOO (Comisiones Obreras) as hosts.

Members of the Joint Shop Steward's Committees from the main UK plants were keen to attend. At the meeting they exchanged information about the different repressive tactics used by management as well as about production, employment, and so on. They proposed that there should be regular exchanges of information in the form of questionnaires. The British



shop stewards arranged to invite their continental counterparts to Coventry in May 1980.

Discussion at this conference revolved around Peugeot's aim of developing an integrated model range, with an increasingly high proportion of common components. It was clear to the workers that jobs in every plant were at risk and that they had to defend employment by achieving new forms of trade union action and international co-operation.

Support

This conference was followed up with visits by a British convenor to Paris and by representatives from France and Spain to Coventry. These contacts became particularly important when PSA announced its plan to close the Talbot plant in Linwood, producer of the Sunbeam, the last uniquely British PSA model. A delegate from Talbot Madrid visited Scotland to lend support to the Linwood workers' struggle, and his presence on the platform at a packed meeting organised by the Linwood Defence Committee made a big impact.

At the request of the Linwood workers a meeting was called in March 1981, in Paris. There the Linwood shop stewards explained their strategy for resisting closure, which included blocking PSA imports by sympathy action of dockers and drivers. The French and Spanish workers expressed



Riot police (below) confront Talbot workers fighting for their jobs at Poissy, 1984.

their understanding of, and support for, such action. In the event, the attempt to save Linwood failed, not because of a lack of international solidarity, but because the Linwood workers rejected their stewards' recommendation to occupy the plant after the company threatened to withdraw redundancy payments.

Since 1981, informal contacts have continued but no full-scale conference has taken place. This has been a particularly tough period in which to maintain an international perspective, especially for Talbot workers.

The company's efforts to push the Talbot marque failed and led to a fall in sales. This led PSA to try and force through further massive cuts in the workforce, skilfully exploiting workers' fears and resulting in violent confrontations between workers and police at Poissy in France in January 1984. It is still possible that, with declining Talbot sales in France, Peugeot will close Poissy down and use the Madrid or British plants to produce Peugeots. Inevitably, after years of short-time working and uncertainty over the future of a plant, it is tempting for workers to believe that a closure elsewhere may mean more work for them.

Tension

There has been some tension between the French and Spanish unions over the question of exports from Spain into France at a time when the French are losing jobs (so as not to forgo a large market, Peugeot has developed production in Spain where it is a legal requirement that a foreign automobile company exports 114 cars for every 100 imported). The French have had their hands full dealing with the conflict and problems of Poissy. Also, with 17,000 jobs lost since 1978, it is hard for the

convenors at Talbot UK to raise any money other than for emergency meetings.

Yet the formal network has maintained a flow of information during this difficult period to combat the divide-and-rule tactics of management, and another full-scale meeting is planned in the near future in Spain. It is hoped that this will set up a committee to publish a regular bulletin based on information gathered from all PSA's European plants.

Kodak

What do you do when you discover that your US-based employer is packing its bags, abandoning all but a mere skeleton of its European operations?

That was the central question facing Kodak workers when they realised that their US parent, Eastman Kodak, was systematically running down plants across Europe. Since the late 1970s, when the photographic products company introduced its rationalisation programme, millions of pounds have been ploughed into the US while old equipment in Europe is left untouched. In 1983, of the £493million spent on research, 90% went to the US. Said one Kodak employee in Britain, 'we saw ourselves becoming merely offshore distribution and marketing centres under orders from Rochester', the US headquarters.

Kodak dominates the industry and is one of the wealthiest companies in the US, with a brand name known



virtually everywhere. Even today, with challenges from Japanese companies and an industry-wide shift to electronic imaging, Kodak still manages to fund its investment internally.

In the last eight years Kodak has axed 4,700 jobs in the UK and over 3,000 in France. In the US, despite high investment levels, thousands of job losses and early retirements have been pushed through with little opposition, as most of the US plants are not unionised.

Contacts

In 1982, Kodak Pathe, the French subsidiary, announced the planned closure of the manufacturing plant at Vincennes, at the expense of 2,300 jobs. Trade unionists at the plant approached their progressive council at Val de Marne, who then contacted the Greater London Council.

With help and support from the councils, the unions convened a meeting at Val de Marne in June 1983. All the UK unions attended, including ACTT, ASTMS, AUEW, EEPTU and TGWU, with the French workforce represented by CFDT, CGT and UGICT-CGT.

The result was the formation of the European Kodak Workers' Conference and the publication of a seven point programme calling for continued investment in manufacturing, research and development in Europe, and a refusal to accept plant closures. Since then, the Conference has met five times, with some UK delegates meeting monthly between general meetings to carry on with the work, including the publication of two newsletters to distribute to their memberships. The Conference has been broadened to include Kodak workers from Belgium, Italy, and Ireland.

The Conference

The principle of the Conference is to bring together Kodak workers from all the European plants, regardless of the unions to which they belong. In this way, it has managed to cut through the usual white/blue collar divisions; ASTMS and the French white collar union, UGICT-CGT have worked closely with their shop floor counterparts.

It has also tried to supercede political divisions. There are two international secretariats which have Kodak world councils, the Western International Federation of Chemical Workers and FISTAV, which crosses East/West divisions. ACTT and CGT belong to FISTAV, while most of the other unions are affiliated to the ICEF. Contacts from the unions involved in

these internationals were also useful in finding delegates in other countries.

'We went with some reservations to the Val de Marne meeting. We had heard that Vincennes was closing and we thought — another call for help! But we are seeing signs of cutbacks here, too. The meeting was excellent. Very well organised; good facilities, translators, overhead projectors, the works. Everyone had to prepare written reports on their sites. It was a fact-finding meeting. We left with a very clear picture of what was happening in Kodak Europe which we hadn't had before.'

Viewfinding

One such finding was that the company's stated reasons for closing the Vincennes plant was misleading. Claiming that the closure was due to unsuccessful research into magnetic tape production, and more generally to Japanese competition, the company signed an agreement a few weeks later with TDK and Matsushita to manufacture video tape and video-camera/recorders under the Kodak label! In general, delegates were better able to understand the company's overall strategy for Europe and to begin to bridge their differences.

'You get parochial', explained a TGWU member. 'Stewards are worried about their own patch. In the small meetings to discuss the different areas of company operations this stopped. People were trying to construct an overall picture of what was happening, say, in processing.'

'We've only got what the company tells us. So at meetings we were saying, "What's the footage on this, what's the speed of that, how fast, what's this, what's that". And we (the UK delegates) found that a lot of the things management were telling us weren't true. So did the others.'

The Conference has two main aims. The first is to force Kodak's European management to discuss its European investment plans. The second, related to this, is to lobby the EEC to investigate Kodak and its European operations. If they succeed, the Conference will have forced a multinational employer to recognise the existence of a European-wide workforce, setting a precedent for European-wide bargaining by trade union bodies.

This is rather more difficult than it appears. Kodak's European Regional Office at High Holborn, London is an extension of the US parent, and so under no formal obligation to speak to trade unionists either in individual

countries or from the European Kodak Workers' Conference. This management structure provides Kodak with the perfect means to evade any potential European-wide bargaining leverage. In any event, when delegates went to lobby at High Holborn in February 1984, they were told that management was away on a course in Switzerland.

The EEC has been more receptive. In January 1984, British and French delegates travelled to Strasbourg to speak to MEPs and to members of the EEC Commission. They asked that the EEC request the company to meet the Standing Conference to explain its investment plans, and that it conduct a public inquiry into the future of the European photographic industry.

Audiences

'We have three audiences', a British delegate explained, 'our membership, the company, and a political one.' Asked how the Conference views its chances for success in reversing Kodak's investment decisions, one responded, 'Governments can do it . . . if governments are willing to impose controls, and if Kodak wants access to the European market, then it can be done. But we must convince the politicians, present the fears, yes the fears. Not the facts, because once we get the facts of the plants closing, it will be too late.'

Cadbury

Between 1980 and 1982 a recognition dispute dragged on at Cadbury's factory on the Eastern Cape. A Trade Union Congress of South Africa (TUSCA) affiliated union with a 'sweetheart' relationship with management, was recognised by the company. But management refused to recognise the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) affiliated independent union, the Eastern Province Sweets, Foods and Allied Workers' Union.

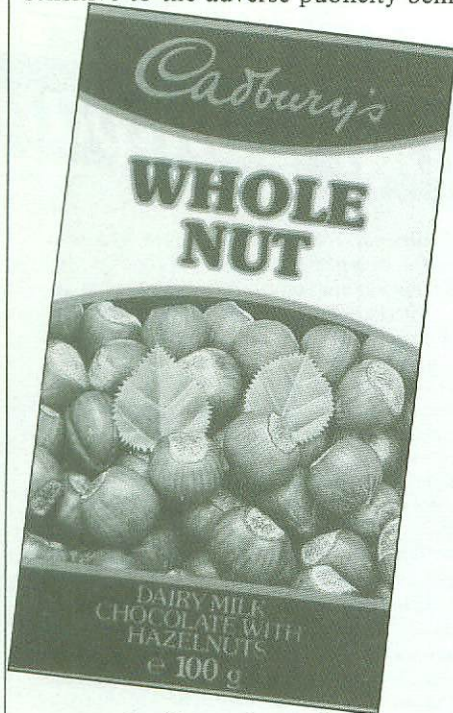
The first international contact happened by chance in 1979, when a British TGWU shop steward from Birmingham, who was visiting a car plant in Port Elizabeth, noticed a picket line of Cadbury women workers and asked then what their dispute was about. Back in the UK the shop steward contacted his union, who also enlisted the help of the IUF. Letters

How to do it

were written by the union to Cadbury's management in the UK, letting them know that the union was aware of the stance of Cadbury's in South Africa, and objected to it. A TGWU national officer became involved, and held discussions with the company at director level in Birmingham. They tried to convince him that 'things are different in South Africa'.

In South Africa the women's campaign for recognition of the FOSATU union held firm despite the long resistance of the management who claimed that they already recognised the TUCSA union, and did not need another one.

A union official from South Africa came to talk to the Birmingham workers at a meeting of interested shop stewards. He also went and addressed shop stewards in Liverpool. Management tried to object, but the company was becoming increasingly sensitive to the adverse publicity being



generated. Examples of grievances were beginning to circulate, such as the complaint that in South Africa workers in the Cadbury plant were not even allowed to leave the line to go to the toilet.

Under pressure from head office to polish up the company image, Cadbury's in South Africa agreed to put the matter to ballot, though the conditions of balloting set by the company favoured the TUCSA sweetheart union. The FOSATU union welcomed the ballot, and stated that whichever union won that would be the only union in the plant. To the company's dismay, the Eastern Province Sweets, Foods and Allied Workers' Union won the day.

Most of this handbook so far has tried to answer the question 'why is international organisation necessary and what is the experience of those who have tried it?' Answering the question, 'how do you go about it?', is the hard part.

Organising in multinationals can take many different forms. It may mean exchanging information with fellow workers at another plant on a regular basis. It may mean meeting with them regularly as well. It may mean building continuous communications with a large number of plants across many countries, and convening periodic conferences with representatives from most of them. It can mean working with an international trade secretariat (ITS), building and supporting their world company council for your company. Which is most suitable depends on your company, the level of trade union organisation within it, its spread of activities and so on. What follows is a series of guidelines based on previous experience, to be adapted as necessary to your own particular needs and circumstances. But remember, the organisation you set up is only as strong as the support your membership will give it.

Rule 1: Start now

Almost everyone who has helped to build international links stresses the same warning: don't leave it until you face a severe threat such as a plant closure. Making firm contacts and establishing efficient information networks takes a long time. So start now — that way information and contacts will be there when they are needed.

Rule 2: Know your company

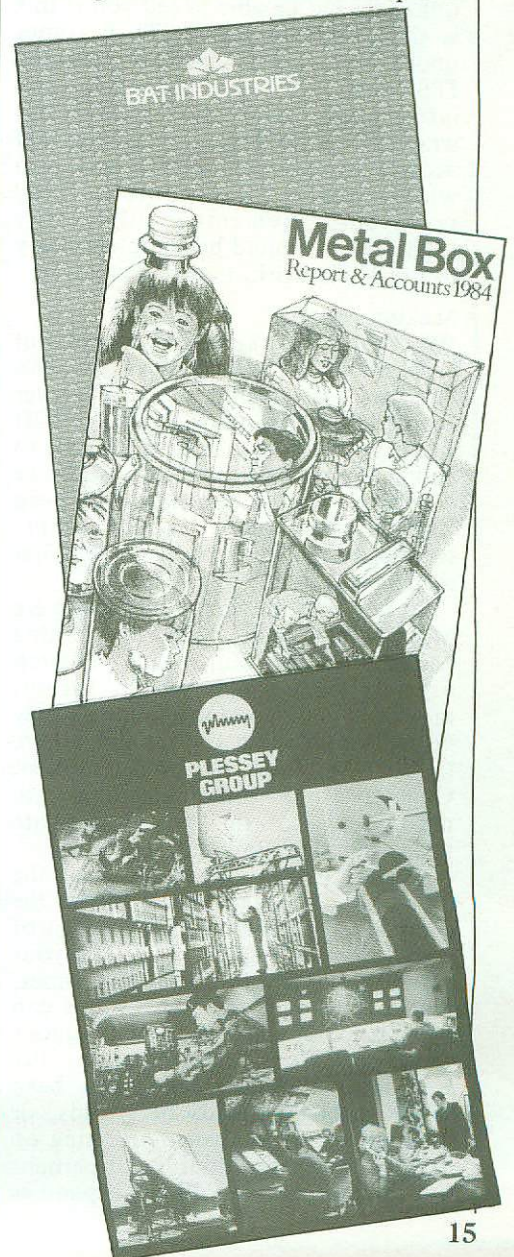
If any rule can be applied generally to resistance to the strategies of a multinational, this is it: know your company. Once the decision to find out about the company has been made by one, five, ten people, then work can begin, with this clear goal.

Where to start? Firstly, make sure you know who the ultimate owners of your plant are and what else they own worldwide. You won't be able to fill in all the details, but these will come as you build links. It may help to start with a blank map, and fill in locations and details of plants as you get them.

There are several sorts of information about the company: its

profitability; what the command structure is and the pay of top executives; how many people work for it and where they are; its international products and markets; and how the company is doing now compared to the recent past. Finding out this sort of information is the first step in piecing together a picture of the company's global strategy.

You can get this information from a number of sources (see box). You may be able to get help from local resource groups. Your union should be able to tell you quite a bit. Branch and district officers should have details of company plants locally, and might have figures for union membership and



shops stewards' and convenors' phone numbers. Wider information on the company may be available from union research departments or from the international officers of the three unions which have them. If an ITS has information on your company, your national officer may be able to obtain this for you.

It helps to keep careful files and build up contacts lists, just to keep it all straight. Often it is important to know why you are looking for information: if it's redundancies, you may look for signs of capital investment; if you are about to go out on strike, you might look for indications that the company has duplication of production in other countries.

Rule 3: Find out about the ITS
There may be a world company council for your company, or some other form of organisation within the ITS. Your union should be able to tell you if this is the case, and which ITS it comes under. You may be able to write to the ITS directly to ask for help and information. You should find out whether they hold regular meetings and accept lay representatives, and also which plants and unions they represent. Remember that any organisation should be complementary to the ITS's work, not duplicating it.

Making contact
'We really just kind of jumped out here, and hoped for the best... We had no real agenda... Wherever Merck has a presence within the OECD countries, we were hoping to talk to people. Some we were able to, some we weren't. Introductions have been limited, so there's been some scepticism from people when we first met them.'

At one level the Merck stewards were lucky: they had help in making contacts from European research organisations, which set up various meetings; and two of the countries they visited were Britain and Ireland, where their own language was spoken. Contacts and communications are perhaps two of the most immediate tasks in making international links.

Getting names and addresses is the first job. Through research on the company, you should have an idea of who organises where. Through your union, you might be able to get names, and independent research groups can often help put you in touch with unions overseas. Some contacts in the international combines have been made through friends of friends, or through sheer accident — meeting on holiday. With an initial list of perhaps five to eight names, you can expand as

122-9100 EASTMAN KODAK CO USA

Investors Digest 24-7-84
See: "McCarthy Information: US/B: Bank Of Nova Scotia. See: Adelaide & York. The Only Thing We Have To Fear is Fear Itself."

Financial Times
23-7-84
KODAK the world's largest photographic products group, said yesterday it has agreed to sell its Eastman Chemicals division to Eastman Chemicals Corp.

141-9300

US/B FORD MOTOR COMPANY

Investors Digest 22.5.84
See: "McCarthy Information: Philip Morris. See: Oil & Gas Stocks Portfolio For 1984."

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Financial Times
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Researching Your Company

It is surprisingly easy to get information about most companies. The basic information you need to know is the name of the ultimate owner of your plant, and details of what they do and own worldwide. The main sources of this information are:

- 1. Who Owns Whom, an annually revised directory which cross references parent companies and subsidiaries, giving the address of the parent.**
- 2. Company Report and Accounts (R&A).** If your company is UK-owned, and quoted on the Stock Exchange (so that anyone can buy and sell the shares), you can get the R&A by ringing or writing to the head office. It is useful to ask for the R&A for the last two or three years. Also ask for any other general profile or information sheets which they may have available. Further information and unquoted company R&As can be procured from Companies House, where the mandatory information disclosed includes details of directors' other directorships, a list of shareholders, and a list of all subsidiaries. You should use your union's research department, or an organisation such as LRD, if you cannot do this yourself.
- 3. Extel cards (01-253-3400)** are available in some libraries, and cover UK quoted, larger UK unquoted, and some overseas quoted companies. They are a useful supplement to the R&A, giving financial figures over a longer period. If your company is large but unquoted it is worth trying to get its Extel card to save going to Companies House.
- 4. McCarthy Information (Warminster 215151)** is a cuttings service which reproduces press articles and items on companies. This comes in microfiche or printed form, covering a similar range of companies to Extel. McCarthy also produces industry sheets. The press cuttings reproduced are from all over the world, and can be invaluable in building a comprehensive picture of the company.
- 5. Press indexes.** There are a number of these, ranging from those of particular newspapers such as the *Financial Times* and the *Times*, to specialist indexes such as the *Business Periodicals Index*. These give article headlines only, though getting hold of the actual article requires further research.
- 6. Directories, market surveys.** There are many different directories and market surveys. The *Kompass Register* and *Dun and Bradstreet's Guide to Key British Enterprises* are two which may help you locate other plants in the UK, and the *Directory of City Connections* helps you find which City financial advisors, merchant banks and stockbrokers your company uses, and who else they are connected to. Similarly there are regular *Financial Times* surveys on many industries and countries. There are also directories and surveys for other countries.

Particular libraries, public and academic, such as the City Business library in London, specialise in business. They may have UK and foreign company reports, as well as Extel, McCarthy, indexes and directories, industry

the group becomes stronger and better organised.

Communication is next. Translators and interpreters have to be arranged so that letters can be sent or 'phone calls made. Union structures and practices are likely to be different from yours, and the way they operate has to be understood. Its also vital to know whether the union you are contacting is independent or management controlled. A few guides, such as that by TIE (see resource guide), give overviews of union structures in various countries. It can also be useful to explain your own union structure before going to an international gathering.

Rule 4: sustain your contacts

Once initial contact has been made, the information can begin to flow. In itself this is valuable, and is also important in sustaining the contact. It does not have to be time consuming. Often regular telephone contact will suffice, backed up by the exchange of basic material such as branch newsheets, management letters and publications, and details of current negotiations and demands.

and market surveys and trade journals. They also have international 'phone directories including Yellow Pages. Try calling a union office close to the plant you want to contact.

It is well worth checking industry and market information, since this provides a wider perspective as well as often giving information on your particular company. When you know where your company operates, you can search for information in files and publications dealing with particular countries. Groups dealing with specific areas — such as IDAF which specialises in Southern Africa — may also be able to help.

The problem with company information is knowing what to look for, apart from hard facts such as where plants are. There are guides to reading company accounts (see bibliography), but it is also important to get a perspective on what management is doing, what is happening to the company, and the implications for the workforce.

Watch out especially for any changes in the company and try to assess the reasons for them. They may well be different from what management says. Have there been any major management changes? Were they cosmetic, is management complacent, running down the company? If real, do they portend a major future shake-up of the company? Have there been long term changes in its profits or finances, either overall or between divisions, and if so why and what is management's likely response? Where is capital being invested now, what new plants and products is it pumping money into, what will the effects on existing plants be? Is there an area where profits are soaring? If so, how has this been achieved, and will the same methods be applied elsewhere?

What sources of information can you turn to, to build up a profile of your company?

Work out what is your main aim in building international trade union links inside your company.

Using the work you have done in the previous exercises draw up a plan of action for your stewards' committee or union branch on international links.

Rule 5: make face-to-face contact

Face-to-face contact is important, and visits of representatives between countries are a first step. A lot can be achieved at low cost at the modest level of inter-plant visits. Meetings take place in pubs, recreation rooms or private houses. Visitors stay with their hosts, get to know their families, and begin to get a feel for the realities of everyday life — the cost of food and rent, the problems of new clothes for the children, the inadequacies of sick pay, family allowance and low pay, as well as the vital sharing of incidences and experiences at work.

The next step is an initial delegate meeting. The need for organisation and funding becomes more acute from this point on. While it is still preferable to hold the meeting near a plant, this may not be possible with the larger number of people involved and the

more complex travel arrangements that must be made. So as well as arranging delegates it is also necessary to organise meeting halls, translation facilities, food, travel and lodgings somewhere convenient to an airport. And provision has to be made for paying for them. In addition, it is well worth organising a set of conference papers (on, for instance, perspectives for the company, particular plants, trade union organisation or specific problems) to be circulated before hand along with details of the meeting and the agenda.

Yet it is important that even the large-scale meetings, taking months to organise and fund, allow contact on a personal level. The annual Ford workers' international conference is important as a social event as well as being a forum for information and trade union co-operation. The lack of strict formality is a necessary element of these conferences. Friendships and mutual trusts develop and contacts are

McCarthy cards.

<p>241-7600 MERCK & CO INC USA</p> <p>the drug produced more of the rare gastrointestinal adverse reactions than others of its type.</p> <p>Epidemiological studies were inconclusive, however, and definitive studies would be large to be practicable.</p> <p>Financial Times 25-1-84</p> <p>MERCK and Co, a leading US pharmaceutical group, yesterday reported higher fourth quarter and full-year net earnings and sales, but highlighted the adverse impact of the strong US dollar on its performance.</p> <p>Merck which has extensive overseas operations has lost its two Japanese pharmaceutical companies as part of a spin into earnings in the fourth quarter of \$104.5m or \$1.42 a share on sales of \$805.5m, compared with \$77.1m on sales of \$762.2m.</p> <p>Forbes 12.3.84</p> <p>See: "Steeze-walker, Dead Money."</p> <p>Financial Times 12-3-84</p> <p>MERCK SHARP AND DOHME has elected Mr Dennis Hagan to the board. He is currently director of the agricultural and veterinary division.</p> <p>New York Times 14.3.84</p> <p>See: Market Place.</p> <p>Cont. Pressures On Drug Issues.</p> <p>Fortune International 2.4.84</p> <p>See: "Portfolio Talk, Where Now For The Dow?"</p> <p>Financial Times 24.4.84</p> <p>Inventor Digest 24.4.84</p> <p>See: "McCarthy Information; US Standard Oil California."</p> <p>See: On The Inside.</p> <p>Time To Come Out Of The Bomb Shelter And Head Back Into The Market Place.</p> <p>Forbes 22.4.84</p> <p>See: Market Trends.</p> <p>The True Dawn Of Stover Growth.</p> <p>In 1983 I Disented From The Forecan Of Weak Growth.</p> <p>Now The Forecast Is For Strong Growth. And I Must Disent Again.</p>		<p>calculates that the market currently pays a multiple of 22 times the S&P 500's expected earnings over the next 12 months. By comparison, he says, a group of what he calls "established growth stocks" is priced at slightly more than 10 times forecasted earnings, a 19% to 10% premium over the market.</p> <p>The last time some of these stocks sold at so low a premium was in the 1960s. Mr. Tenna says. That was before they went on 50% price-earnings ratios to a peak of 26 in 1972; the price-earnings trend has been mostly down since.</p> <p>A portfolio he lists includes:</p> <p>McCarthy cards.</p> <p>6 26</p> <p>25-5-84</p>
<p>070-0500 CADBURY SCHWEPPE'S</p> <p>The Guardian 24-8-84 Notebook</p> <p>Sir Adrian Cadbury had some words of appropriate caution yesterday, which were about to be said at a "Fate and Fate" or who indeed cheering that on in his editors' words, "do well in this."</p> <p>The "Sir" Sir Adrian said, "saw the restructuring of the industry. The reshaping of the industry has now happened and business is agreed that a wide range of food and drink is to be produced and sold. I am optimistic about the advantages and the business. What are the benefits. What are the costs from?"</p> <p>He is right, of course. He was talking in the context of Cadbury making one market (making) a definite one for another company, and working about itself being taken over. He applied more generally.</p> <p>One has only to look at the less-than-glorious performance of Danone after its bought Spillers to see the perils of buying a mature, established business in the food and drink industry. People are not buying more tea. People are not buying more sugar. And if they buy more pet food they do so from the brand leader.</p> <p>There are areas in the traditional food trade which can still show growth. It is</p>		<p>with a touch of irritation, is not cadbury. Airt. It does not have to be, rather the air is "not" in it. So now you know!</p> <p>Whisper is available in the North West, Midlands, Ireland and the South West. In these areas, comprising one-third of the possible market, which has already been selling since October at the rate of 20 million bars a year, I have no doubt that Whisper's success is a result of the fact that it is a product that will sell on its own merits. It will sell on its own merits, and the firm can raise output to meet national demand.</p> <p>and marketing for the shopkeeper and wholesaler outside the shop. As they spread news for the shareholders as they contemplate the Cadbury Schweppes takeover for the Cadbury Schweppes group. A firm that has to such a social conscience of success. A firm that has to such a social conscience of success.</p> <p>on the first half were 238.7m. Profits for the first half were 238.7m. The market was marginally down on the first half, but the 200m bar market was broken. The shares were unchanged at 1200. The firm dividend unchanged at 1500 last year.</p> <p>On balance the case is good. The firm's new share price which has risen from 1000 to 1200, is a particularly good sign for the firm. The firm's new share price which has risen from 1000 to 1200, is a particularly good sign for the firm.</p> <p>On balance the case is good. The firm's new share price which has risen from 1000 to 1200, is a particularly good sign for the firm.</p>
<p>24-8-84</p> <p>The Guardian 24-8-84 Notebook</p> <p>Sir Adrian Cadbury had some words of appropriate caution yesterday, which were about to be said at a "Fate and Fate" or who indeed cheering that on in his editors' words, "do well in this."</p> <p>The "Sir" Sir Adrian said, "saw the restructuring of the industry. The reshaping of the industry has now happened and business is agreed that a wide range of food and drink is to be produced and sold. I am optimistic about the advantages and the business. What are the benefits. What are the costs from?"</p> <p>He is right, of course. He was talking in the context of Cadbury making one market (making) a definite one for another company, and working about itself being taken over. He applied more generally.</p> <p>One has only to look at the less-than-glorious performance of Danone after its bought Spillers to see the perils of buying a mature, established business in the food and drink industry. People are not buying more tea. People are not buying more sugar. And if they buy more pet food they do so from the brand leader.</p> <p>There are areas in the traditional food trade which can still show growth. It is</p>		<p>Wall Street turned sour. Now the directors are launching another "roadshow" to impress on US investors the merits of Cadbury stock. It shows shares are placed the genuine confidence in a healthy 40 p.p. Readers may have noticed that I am not down to a healthy 40 p.p. But those who are not so many un-enthusiastic as the market. But those who are not so many un-enthusiastic as the market. But those who are not so many un-enthusiastic as the market.</p> <p>There is certainly if it sells Schweppe's in the U.S. well—a good, solid, unglamorous air.</p> <p>Birmingham Post 24-8-84</p> <p>Ian Richardson</p> <p>In the 1960s it made some sense for food and drink companies to merge into larger entities. The merger of Cadbury and Schweppes is a particularly good example of this. The merger of Cadbury and Schweppes is a particularly good example of this.</p> <p>of the 1960s companies. It is expected that a lot of the success of a great wave of mergers in the 1960s was due to the fact that the companies were bought up by investors trying to get shares prices up. (I'm not sure if this is true, but it's a possibility.)</p> <p>CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...</p>

kept up on a personal as well as a trade union level.

Rule 6: keep the membership informed

The delegate meeting is invaluable for exchanging experiences and information, analysing the company's international strategies and tactics, and building relationships between plants. But it must also look to building and extending international organisation for the future. This means both widening contacts, planning future meetings, deciding interim organisation and, crucially, ensuring the membership is as fully informed as possible.

The Ford workers have instituted a questionnaire for circulation throughout the world to worker representatives. Questions include: 'how many Ford factories are in your country?', 'how many manual workers are employed in each factory?', 'is production at full capacity?', plus a wide range of questions on pay, production, investment, exports, shiftwork, hours, holidays, breaks, layoffs, sick pay, retirement ages, pensions, disciplinary procedures, job losses, 'Japanisation' schemes, discrimination, safety, unionisation, contracts and economic, social and political problems! Questionnaire results are then reprinted in the bulletin produced by the group and circulated to representatives throughout the company.

Other groups have also produced newsletters and educational papers. These both assist communication between those already involved in the group, and help to widen its reach. The Kodak combine, for instance, finds their newsletter *Viewfinder* invaluable in explaining their work to their colleagues in the plants, whose union dues help support the combine. The use of these bulletins and regular newsheets is essential to international organisation. Without report back, the membership cannot be involved in the organisation, and without that involvement the organisation exists only on paper.

Keeping it going

International links require a lot of administration. Meetings must be minuted and recorded, and copies distributed. Discussion papers, such as those commissioned by Unilever workers, have to be translated, duplicated and sent out. Letters have to be sent and answered, phone calls arranged and made. All this takes time, money and a capacity for sometimes tedious work. But it is necessary to keep such far flung organisations

running and enable them to extend their membership.

Outside bodies can help tremendously in all of these areas. Most of the long-term international worker groups, such as Ford, Philips and Unilever, have used independent resource groups. They have been especially important in helping with the initial organisation and funding, finding early contacts, and assisting with communications and translation. Some of the international worker groups have also received assistance from their unions at district and national officer level, and from local authorities and trades councils.

Sources of money

Organising internationally can be an expensive business, depending on the scale and geographical spread of your company and the language and communications barriers that have to be surmounted. Raising the money for this work is clearly crucial. There are a number of sources:

1. The rank and file. As the Ford stewards found in the early days of their organisation, the rank and file membership will provide support through collections, raffles and so on providing that they understand the importance of the work. This has particularly benefits in that the arguments for international links have to be marshalled at an early stage, and the awareness of the membership is raised in the process.
2. Branch funds. Many union branches have funds which can be used to support such work. Additional benefits here are that more formal support has to be won and a fuller report back is encouraged.
3. Joint Shop Steward Committee funds. If JSSC support can be secured, this ensures wider participation amongs different sections of the workforce.
4. National unions. In certain circumstances it may be possible to get the backing of national unions. This will generally be in the form of the use of facilities or the assistance of particular officers, but it is also worth trying to get financial support.
5. Local authorities. Depending on the complexion of local authorities in the areas where your company is located, it may well be possible to obtain support from them. In some cases it may help to hold meetings or locate secretariats in their areas, in which case both additional financial support and facilities may be available.
6. Other funders. There are various church bodies, such as the World Council of Churches, and charitable trusts which may be prepared to

support international organising in particular circumstances. Resource groups, which themselves depend on external funding, should be able to give you advice and assistance on approaching potential funders.

The pattern, then, is one of gradually building: firstly initial information, then the making of contacts at home and abroad, followed in turn by organisation — visits, meetings and communications. Each step increases the information pool and the network of contacts. The longer the process survives and grows, the more able are the widely scattered groups of multinational employees to support one another.

The benefits

It is vital to realise that the process of survival and expansion is not automatic, requires constant energy, and cannot be left to a few committed individuals only. It is also important to recognise that benefits can start to flow almost from the first step.

As trade unionists working in a company become increasingly knowledgeable about its structures, operations and finances, their negotiating hand is strengthened. As a participant in the Talbot meetings pointed out, 'you are soon better informed about the company than local management'. That information can be used both to strengthen members' resolve and to counter management's disinformation.

As the network grows, the ability to do so increases. At the same time, a more fundamental process is occurring. Trade unionism is built on solidarity. The exchange of information and face-to-face contacts are the bedrock on which that solidarity is built — providing the membership are kept informed.

In the long run, international trade union support is essential to protect the jobs, pay and conditions of workers employed by multinationals. And it is in the long-run that the basis for that support can be built, as the Ford workers are finding out. They already have the promise that the company will not be allowed to switch production between plants during a dispute, and the contacts which should ensure that this holds.

Divide and rule tactics lie at the heart of any company's industrial relations strategy, and nowhere is this truer than in the multinational corporations. Take out the divisions and substitute solidarity, and you begin to undermine the rule as well. International organisation enables trade unionists to confront their multinational employers on a more equal footing.

Where Now?



Organising in multinationals is hard work. A better understanding of colleagues overseas and of company strategies is a major step forward.

But these achievements do not automatically translate into concrete results. Few international combines have been able to coordinate actions, reflecting their relative organisational youthfulness. But without this groundwork, the power of management will not be countered.

'We had reservations about going to the (first international) meeting,' one group of delegates told CIS. 'We had heard what was happening in the company and thought it was another 'help'. But once we got there, and everyone presented the facts, it was good. We left there with a clear picture of what was happening in the company, which up until then we didn't have.'

The information flow was immediate. 'Usually the company tells us what other countries are doing; we only have them saying it. So (at the meeting) we talked laymens' language, we found a lot of things (management) are telling us weren't true. And so did the others. That was a big help. The company doesn't throw that up so much now that they know we're all meeting.'

There's also been a growing sense of common interests and understanding between delegates. 'The bandwagon is really rolling. We are now talking in a relaxed way with our colleagues. The last meeting was really good in that way. I felt for the first time that we were really talking to colleagues.'

One concrete result of the international gatherings has been a strengthening of organisation in the UK. 'It generated regular UK-wide meetings with the different unions, and we all studied what was happening. We had a platform, and welcomed anyone who agreed with it.'

Sharing information, building personal connections, challenging management's 'divide and rule' practices — these are some of the achievements of international combines. These grow mostly out of combine meetings, produces of a union structure which begins to mirror that of the companies themselves, and which begins to respond to international management's thinking.

Is it possible to move beyond exchanging information? Few combines are in a position to negotiate with multinational management, even if they had the authority to do so. A few that we have looked at, however, have taken steps in this direction:

Kodak workers by taking a political route via the EEC to stop divestment from Europe; Ford trade unionists by coordinating some bargaining and information flows, and resolving not to accept work at the expense of others' jobs. International meetings provide the foundation for action; but it is an area of largely uncharted territory as yet.

Moving forward from meetings to action depends, trade unionists say, on the strength of the combine organisation. 'It could turn into an annual junket,' one told CIS. 'It's happened before. But as long as we make sure that we are building something concrete that the members in the plants will eventually be prepared to support with action, we should be alright. If we don't do that, I don't think the members will put up with it.'

'At their best, the meetings give you a great sense of solidarity with the other plants. We've got to make sure that gets through to our members here. We've got to have more meetings between plants, make sure that they are open to members and that they come along, and use our paper to spread it wider. Then we'll be able to get the real solidarity to confront these companies. With these multinationals, it's got to happen.'

Resources

ITSSs

This is not a comprehensive list, by any means. But the following organisations can help you with your research. Also included are some suggestions for further reading.

Organisations

- * Trade Union Resource Centres. Many major cities have these, and each will have a list of the others. e.g: Birmingham TURC, 7, Frederick St., Hockley, Birmingham. (021-236 8323)
 - * CAITS (Centre for Alternative Industrial and Technological Systems), Polytechnic of North London, Holloway Rd., London N7 8DB. (01-607 2789) ext. 2498). Trade union-based research centre, providing assistance in establishing shop stewards' combines.
 - * CIS (Counter Information Services), 9 Poland St., London W1V 3DG. (01-439 3764). Produces reports on multinationals and social and economic issues.
 - * Coventry Workshop, 38 Binley Rd., Coventry CV3 1JA (0203-27772) Research and action organisation; active in developing information exchanges among workers in multinationals.
 - * GLC Industrial Development Unit, Greater London Council, County Hall, London, SE1 7PB (01-633 6067). Has list of trade union resource centres in London and company monitoring service for London firms.
 - * International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 64 Essex Rd., London N1 8LR (01-359 9181).
 - * Labour Research Department, 78 Blackfriars Rd., London SE1 8HF. (01-928 3649).
 - * Sheffield District Council Employment Research and Resources Unit, Palatine Chambers, Pinstone Street, Sheffield S1 2HN (0742-755215) Works with Sheffield workers facing international restructuring.
 - * TUIREG (Trade Union International Research and Education Group), Ruskin College, Walton St., Oxford OX1 2HE (0865-54599/56564).
- ## FOREIGN ORGANISATIONS
- * Data Center, 464 19th St., Oakland California 94612 USA (0101 415 835 4692). Documentation centre with extensive files on corporations; will research companies on request.
 - * DIAS, Singel 137, 1012 VJ Amsterdam, Holland, (010 31 20 273243). Support in establishing international contact in multinationals, particularly Unilever, Ford, Metal Box, Philips, AKZO, Shell.
 - * TIE (Transnationals Information Exchange) c/o Transnational Institute, Paulus Potterstraat 20, 1071 DA Amsterdam, Holland. (010 31 20 766724). Links workers from MNC subsidiaries; operates as network of activist and research groups involved in auto, agribusiness, high tech.
 - * GRESEA, Tweelingstraat 74, 2018 Antwerpen, Belgium (010 323 2352870). Produces sector studies of technology transfer.
 - * Express, Postfach 591, 6050 Offenbach 4, W. Germany. (611) 885 006. Organisation for research and support for unions and shop stewards' combines. Monthly magazine.
 - * ICAS, Tweelingstraat 74, 2018 Antwerpen, Belgium (010 323 2352870). Documentation centre helping workers to obtain and analyse information about their multinational employers.
 - * North American Congress on Latin America, 151 West 19 St., NY NY 11011, (0101 212 989 8890). Research on Latin America.
 - * SOBE, Kruisstraat 82, 5612 CK Eindhoven, Holland (010 3140 447021). Research group helping to cement direct links between Philips workers.
 - * SOMO, Paulus Potterstraat 20, 1071 DA Amsterdam 20 Holland (010 3120 737414). Studies structure and strategies of MNCs and has documentation on 500 largest worldwide.
- ## JOURNALS
- * AMPO, Pacific-Asia Resources Centre, P.O. Box 6260. Tokyo INT, Japan.
 - * Asia Monitor, 464 19th St., Oakland CA 94612 USA.
 - * CIS Report, CIS, 9 Poland St., London W1V 3DG.
 - * Labour Notes, P.O. Box 20001, Detroit, Michigan 48220 USA.
 - * Labour Research, Labour Research Dept., 78 Blackfriars Rd., London SE1 18F.
 - * International Labour Reports, 300 Oxford Rd., Manchester M13 9NS.
 - * Multinational Monitor, P.O. Box 19405, Washington DC 20036.
 - * TIE Bulletin, Transnational Information Exchange, c/o Transnational Institute, Paulus Potterstraat 20, 1071 DA Amsterdam, Holland.
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- International trade secretariats
M: total affiliated membership
A: affiliated unions in UK
- Agriculture
Intl Fed of Plantation, Agricultural and Allied Workers (IFPAAW)
17 Rue Necker, CH-1201, Geneva
Ph: (010 4122) 313105
M: 5 million A: AAW (TGWU)
- Building & Construction
Intl Fed of Building and Woodworkers (IFBWW)
27 Rue de la Coulouvreniere, CH-1204, Geneva
Ph: (010 4122) 211611
M: 3.1 million A: FTATU, TGWU
- Chemicals & Petroleum
Intl Fed of Chemical, Energy and General Workers Unions (ICEF)
58 Rue de Moillebeau, CH-1211 Geneva 19
Ph: (010 4122) 984033
M: 6.2 million A: ASTMS, CATU, GMBTU, SOGAT 82, TGWU, USDAW
- Commercial
Intl Fed of Commercial, Clerical and Technical Employees (FIET)
15 Avenue Balxert, CH-1210 Geneva-Chatelaine
Ph: (010 4122) 962733
M: 7.95 million A: ACTSS, APEX, ASTMS, BIFU, NUIW, USDAW
- Food
Intl Union of Food and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)
Rampe du Pont-Rouge 8, CH-1213 Petit-Lancy, Switzerland
Ph: (010 4122) 932233
M: 2.46 million A: ASTMS, BFAU, GMBTU, NULHM, NUR, TGWU, TWU, URTU, USDAW
- Metalworking
Intl Metalworkers' Fed (IMF)
Route des Acacias 54 bis, Case Postale 563, CH-1227, Geneva
Ph: (010 4122) 436150
M: 14 million A: APMAC, AMU, ASTMS, AUEW, BS, EETPU, GMWU, ISTC, NSMM, NUBF, NULMW, NUSMW, TASS, TGWU
- Mining
Miners' Intl Fed (MIF)
8 Rue Joseph Stevens, 1000 Brussels, Belgium
Ph: (010 322) 511 9645
M: 1 million A: NACODS
- Posts & Telecommunications
Postal, Telegraph and Telephone Intl (PTTI)
36 Avenue de Lignon, CH-1219 Le Lignon, Geneva
Ph: (010 4122) 968311
M: 3.75 million A: CMA, CPSA, POEU, STE, UCW
- Printing
Intl Graphical Fed (IGF)
Montbijoustrasse 73, CH-3007 Berne, Switzerland
Ph: (010 4131) 458920
M: 720,000 A: NGA
- Intl Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Fed (ITGLWF)
8 Rue Joseph Stevens, 1000 Brussels, Belgium
Ph: (010 322) 512 2833
M: 5 million A: ASTMS, ATWU, BFTT, GMBTU, NCTU, NUFLAT, NUHKW, NUTGW, TGWU
- Transport
Intl Transport Workers' Fed (ITF)
133 Great Suffolk Street, London SE1 1PD
Ph: 01-403 2733
M: 4.16 million A: ASLEF, ASTMS, MNAQA, NUR, NUS, REOU, TGWU, TSSA, URTU, USDAW
- Other ITSSs cover public employees, journalism, and other sectors.
- Transnationals Committee of WFTU (World Federation of Trade Unions), 11000 Prague, Opletalova 57, Czechoslovakia. Organises around affiliated unions within some multinationals in Latin America (incl. Nestlé and GM), Africa (incl. BATA) and Europe (incl. Renault).

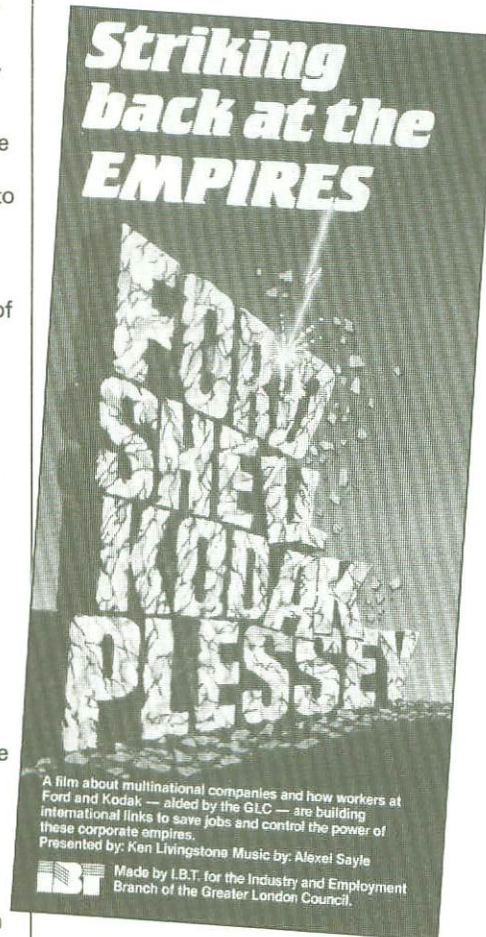
The Film

A contents list for users of the film.

'Striking Back at the Empires' runs for twenty-seven minutes. But there may be times when you only want to use *part* of the film. This contents list will help you to identify the sequence you need. On the left are the approximate running times in minutes and seconds.

- 00.00 Background on London's unemployed and the dominant role of multinational companies.
- 02.45 Ford Motors. Chairman of the Union Convenors at Dagenham, Bernie Passingham, compares the manufacture of the old Cortina with the assembly of the Sierra today.
'Something we've got to do is to make sure that we maintain a manufacturing base.'
- 06.33 The closure of the foundry at Dagenham as the latest victim of the 'world production' strategy. Delegation meets Ford top management and comes away disappointed.
- 09.48 Overcoming divisions between Ford workers in other countries by forging international links at shop floor level. International conference at Eastbourne in 1984. Interviews with Bernie Passingham, Alberto Eulalio (Brazil), and Joe Gordon, (convenor of the assembly plant).
- 16.10 GLC support for international contacts between workers. Mike Ward, Chairperson of the Industry and Employment Committee, explains why local government should help local workers.
- 17.49 The threat to Kodak's European production through the lack of investment by the US parent company. Interviews with shop floor worker Jack Bellamy at Harrow, Hemel Hempstead convenor Brenda Martin, and ASTMS officer, Terry Lilley.
- 20.31 International conference of Kodak workers, supported by the GLC. Speeches from French and Italian delegates. Lobby of the company's European headquarters in Holborn.
- 26.15 Joe Gordon (Ford) calls for closer links by all workers and an end to nationalistic attitudes.

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Produced by: IBT for the GLC Industry and Employment Committee.

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Hire cost: £8 (videocassettes) plus postage. £15 (16mm film) plus Securicor delivery charge.

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The role of Local Government

'For many years central and local government has been helping private capital — giving grants, subsidies, providing infrastructure — on a vast scale and with very little accountability. At a time when multinational companies are costing jobs all over London, it is more than justifiable for the GLC to be supporting the organisation of workers to counteract those activities on the part of the companies.'

Michael Ward, Chair of the GLC Industry and Employment Committee.

The five sets of questions and exercises in this handbook can be used as starting points for group discussion. It would increase their effectiveness if extra material, appropriate to the company, could be provided.

Each set of exercises should be worked on by small groups, who in turn should appoint a member to report back their answers in the general discussion.



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