

Live Bait & Ammo #22: Strike Back

To live outside the law you must be honest. - B. Dylan

When times get tough the only class that is protected is the bossing class. Workers bear the burden of every slump in the economy while the chumps in ties shift their capital to a more lucrative enterprise. If all else fails, they'll pack us off to war and profit hand over fist on every pound of patriotic flesh. Unemployed workers are stockpiled like sandbags to dam the rising tide of inflation.

Meanwhile, cuts in social programs provide negative incentives for lazy mothers to get off their asses and find gainful employment in temp agencies where social commitment has no more currency than a peso in Decatur. As the old mine worker John L. Lewis once said, Labor and management may be partners in theory but they are enemies in fact.

The fact is workers take the hit and the bossing class takes a shit on our dignity. Teamwork, partnership, and people are our most valuable asset is all crap. Battenberg doesn't blink an eye when he severs the economic ties of thousands of families. No damn CEO in the nation will tighten his own belt. He'll tighten the harness on our necks instead. It's a recession, they say. Let's open the contract and make concessions. Work harder, faster, longer, leaner.

For all the high tech machinery and CNC, productivity increases still rely on whipping the horses in assembly and sweating the donkeys of supply. Forget the contract. Can the time study. Stick the gentleman's agreement up your competitive behind and press your nose to the grindstone. You're in for the Big Squeeze, baby.

At the Bargaining Convention in '99 Yokich said we needed to find ways to restrict overtime. He claimed, A forty hour restriction would create 86,000 jobs in assembly alone. Of course, that was all hot air. The Yokel's words have no more meaningful content than a balloon. We all know what happens in an economic down turn. One shift is laid off and the other works overtime.

If our job security agreement barred overtime in the event of a lay off, there wouldn't be any layoffs. There would be 86,000 jobs available in assembly alone.

But that would require real solidarity. That would require real union principles. That would require a leader with balls bigger than tylenol gel caps.

We can't rely on Yokich and his Backdown & Rollover Caucus to take a stand. Hell, they're laid up in Vegas trying to finagle a way to extract more dues now that profit sharing has taken a dive. How much you want to bet the infamous Rollover Caucus will press a resolution through the Constitutional Convention in 2002 to increase dues to 3 hours per month? I'm not reading the stars. It's in the cards. We're about to be dealt a marked hand. It's as easy as raising co-pays and playing 52 pickup with your National Placement selection.

We will have to rely on ourselves and our union brothers and sisters. When the economy slows down workers need to keep pace with demand. It's the natural law of economics. The common man's sense of balance and equality. A working stiff's morality. When our brothers and sisters are laid off we should refuse as much overtime as possible.

No more favors. No more rush jobs. Workers will rule when they work to rule. Never forget how many times you were laid off, sold off, cut off, spun off. Never forget how many times you had to relocate your family. Never forget all the set backs you endured at the hands of the bossing class. Strike back.

Auto analysts predict sales of 15 million vehicles this year. Down from last year's record of 17 mil, but hardly a depressed market. By spring the wheels will be spinning again but the bossing class will devise a reason to make the temporary layoffs permanent and whip the horses harder.

Where is it written the owners must never sacrifice? Where does it say only the rich may pursue happiness? Why do we let the dumb ass boss decide how to divvy the workload and slice the pie? Why isn't full employment a workable reality? Who says democracy doesn't belong in the workplace? Why must the poor, the elderly, the disadvantaged pay for the excesses of the wealthy?

Who calls this system Christian blasphemes. Who calls our country free and our government fair is blind to economic inequality and the barriers to social justice that courts call injunctions. Workers are outlaws in America. It's no damn wonder they don't want us to own guns.

Strike back.

Strike back because your brothers and sisters are laid off.

Strike back because you hate the bastards.

Strike back to redeem your dignity.

Strike back for full employment.

Strike back to abolish inequality.

Strike back because your job is a bore and your boss is an ass.

Strike back for freedom.

Strike back to restore the balance of power.

Strike back because you are human and care about life.

Strike back to break the corporate choke hold.

Strike back to get the leeches off our backs.

Strike back for more democracy.

Strike back because they never listen to you.

Strike back to control the means of production.

Strike back because Medicare doesn't cover prescriptions for your mother.

Strike back because politicians retire in splendor.

Strike back because injunctions are only against unions and never against management.

Strike back because judges are the lackeys of industry.

Strike back because no one believes in the system.

Strike back to show we can strike back.

Strike back.

SOS, Gregg Shotwell