glaspaper

critical writings on architecture and space

08

SPACES OF LABOUR EDITORIAL

The destruction of large sections of the British manufacturing base in the later half of the Twentieth Century has left many towns and cities struggling to define their economic function. Cities like Liverpool and Glasgow are described as post-industrial; their citizens encouraged to consider their home towns which were once significant strategic centres for the expansion of British colonialism and economic orthodoxy as new cultural and service sector hubs. While both Glasgow and Liverpool have seen considerable population loss during this period, and can therefore be described as shrinking cities, a broader historical perspective reveals that their populations were never particularly stable. Making sense of the socially disruptive changes of the past 30 years is more straightforward when they are understood as part of a continuous reorganisation of the labour process. This process which saw Eighteenth and Nineteenth century European agricultural workers set to work in the mills and factories of the cities and towns now drives farmers and peasants from their land in Latin America, Africa and Asia to assemble the cars, computers and machinery which satisfy the New Economy needs of the West.

Describing cities like Liverpool and Glasgow as post-industrial and understanding their recent population losses in these terms alone is misleading. Our contemporary world is still made by human labour. Indeed the number of commodities produced continues to expand. It would be a mistake to think that some new economic rationale was at work where we all worked within a different frame of reference. (Remember the dot.com speculative bubble?) Capitalism continues to develop ingenious ways of exploiting labour and the natural environment for profit motives. Our best chance of changing this is to understand where we stand within this economic system at this moment in time.

For these reasons this special issue of GLASPAPER is devoted to the changing nature of the workplace. It provides a historical snapshot of how the shifting character of capitalist production has been reflected in the formal and spatial organization of the labour process. In brief it charts the journey from the workshop to the mill. And from the Nineteenth Century factory to the Twentieth Century call centre and office. It focuses on Liverpool and Glasgow and features a selection of historical and contemporary case studies and analytical essays.

GLAS spent time in both Liverpool and Glasgow documenting the buildings which describe this process – mills, factories, docks, office buildings and call centres. GLAS selected buildings that are generic in two senses. In the first instance because they are iconic examples of a building type. The textile mills at Leven, the steel megalopolis at Ravenscraig, motor manufacturing at Linwood and commodity refining at Speke and Love Lane in Liverpool. In the second instance because of their historic importance within labour history. Either as the loci for the implementation of new techniques of labour organisation such as at New Lanark, or as sites of resistance. The point at which the dockyard or the factory are transformed into battle grounds in the struggle for Trade Union and workers' rights.

Part of the international research and exhibition project, Shrinking Cities, this edition of glaspaper aims to say something of a general nature which goes beyond the specific contexts of Liverpool and Glasgow. Understanding our buildings and cities, our workplaces and homes as things that are made by human labour and not predetermined by greater powers or economic inevitabilities is the first step to re-imagining these places. If the capitalist mode of production has delivered such continual social and spatial upheaval and inflicted great physical and mental suffering upon the many thousands who have experienced the closures, cuts, pay struggles and environmental destruction of the past two centuries maybe the time is more apt than ever to consider alternative ways of organizing production.

All of the case studies selected have their own stories to tell. GLAS would as always be grateful for any additional narratives or memories from anyone who has an association with any of the workplaces featured. We can be contacted at the address below. GLAS would also like to thank the many individuals who assisted the production of this edition. The Glasgow cases studies were meticulously researched by the following Post Graduate students form the University of Strathclyde: (…). In Liverpool the assistance and generosity of all those whom we met and discussed the project with was invaluable and greatly appreciated. Similarly the essay contributions of Thomas Markus and Phil Taylor provide valuable contextual frameworks which help to explain more about the processes exposed by the case studies.

Our next issue will be produced in winter 2004 and will focus on the ten new member states of the European Union. If you would like to receive this issue please contact GLAS using the email address info@glascollective.com.

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GLAS *produces multi-media critical works and design ideas that promote a radical social and political rethinking of how we make and experience buildings and cities*

GLAS *is engaged in a critique of the capitalist production and use of the built environment*

GLAS *is committed to the dissemination of it's ideas to as wide an audience as possible, exploring a broad range of communication techniques*

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ORTE DER ARBEIT EDITORIAL

Die Zerstörung großer Teile der britischen verarbeitenden Industrie in der zweiten Hälfte des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts hat es für viele Städte und Gemeinden schwierig gemacht eine neue ökonomische Grundlage zu definieren. Städte wie Liverpool oder Glasgow werden heute als post-industriell beschrieben; ihre Einwohner werden ermuntert ihre Heimatstädte - einst entscheidende strategische Zentren für die Ausbreitung des britischen Kolonialismus und wirtschaftlicher Orthodoxie – als neue Orte für Kultur und Dienstleistung zu betrachten. Obwohl sowohl Liverpool wie auch Glasgow in diesen Jahrzehnten entscheidende Bevölkerungsrückgänge verzeichneten und in dieser Hinsicht als Schrumpfende Städte bezeichnet werden können, so offenbart eine größere geschichtliche Sicht, daß die jeweiligen Bevölkerungszahlen nie besonders stabil gewesen sind. Die gesellschaftlichen Konflikte der letzten dreißig Jahre sind eher zu verstehen, wenn man sie als Teil einer kontinuierlichen Umwandlung des Arbeistprozesses begreift. Der gleiche Prozess, der die verarmten europäischen Landarbeiter des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts mit ihrer Arbeitskraft in die Weberein und Manufakturen der Städte brachte, lässt heute Bauern und Landarbeiter in Lateinamerika, Afrika und Asien ihre Felder verlassen um in den Städten Autos, Computer und Maschinen zu bauen mit denen die Bedürfnisse der New Economy des Westens befriedigt werden können.

Städte wie Liverpool und Glasgow demnach als post-industriell zu beschreiben und ihren jüngsten Bevölkerungsschwund nur in diesem Zusammenhang zu verstehen ist deshalb irreführend. Unsere heutige Welt entsteht immer noch durch menschliche Arbeitskraft, und die Anzahl der produzierten Güter steigt kontinuierlich. Es ist daher ein Trugschluss anzunehmen, daß eine grundlegend neue wirtschalftliche Motivation am Werke sei und wir alle innerhalb eines neuen Bezugssystems arbeiteten. (Man denke nur an die spekulative DotCom Bubble). Dabei entwickelt das kapitalistische Wirtschaftssystem ununterbrochen neue geschickte Mittel und Wege Arbeit und natürliche Resourcen auszubeuten um daraus Gewinn zu ziehen. Unsere beste Chance diesen Zustand zu verändern liegt darin, unsere Position innerhalb dieses wirtschaftlichen Systems und zu diesem gegebenen Zeitpunkt zu verstehen.

Aus diesem Grund widmet sich diese Ausgabe von GLASPAPER dezidiert dem sich veränderenden Wesen des Arbeitsplatzes. Sie bietet einen geschichtlichen Schnappschuß des sich wandelnden Charakters der kapitalistischen Produktion in der formalen und räumlichen Organisation des Arbeitsprozesses. Die Entwicklung von der Werkstatt zur Textilmanufaktur und von der Fabrik des 19. Jahrhunderts bis hin zum Call Center des späten zwanzigsten Jahrhundert wird nachgezeichtnet. Spaces of Labour – Orte der Arbeit fokusiert dabei auf die Städte Liverpool und Glasgow und deren nähere Umgebung die anhand von geschichtlichen und zeitgenössischen Fallstudien sowie begleitenden analytischen Essays beschrieben werden.

GLAS hat dafür Gebäude ausgewählt die im doppelten Sinne exemplarisch sind. Zum einen stellen sie ikonische Beispiele eines bestimmten Gebäudetypus dar. So zum Beispiel die Stoffmanufakturen in Vale of Leven, das Stahlwerk von Ravenscraig, die Autofabrik in Linwood oder die Zuckerraffinerie in Liverpools Love Lane. Zum anderen sind sie bedeutend für die Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung, entweder als Orte in denen neue Arbeitsorganisationen eingeführt wurden, wie z.B. in New Lanark, oder als Orte des Widerstandes, wenn z.B. Schiffswerft oder Fabrik in Kampfplätze für die Anerkennung von Gewerkschaften und die Rechte der Arbeiter transformiert wurden.

Als Teil des internationalen Forschungs- und Austellungsprojektes Schrinking Cities / Schrumpfende Städte versucht diese Ausgabe von GLASPAPER über den konkreten Kontext von Liverpool und Glasgow hinaus zu blicken. Unsere Gebäude und Städte, unsere Arbeitsplätze und Wohnstätten nun als etwas zu begreifen das durch menschliche Arbeit entstanden ist und nicht vorherbestimmt ist durch übermächtige Kräfte und ökonomische Unausweichlichkeiten, ist ein erster Schritt diese Orte neu zu begreifen. Wenn die kapitalistische Form der Produktion der letzen zwei Jahrhunderte verantwortlich ist für die kontinuierlichen gesellschaftlichen und räumlichen Umwälzungen die dabei solch großes physisches und psychisches Leiden bei jenen Tausenden hervorgerufen hat die von Schließungen, Entlassungen, Lohnkürzungen, und Umweltzerstörung betroffen wurden, dann ist ~~es~~ vielleicht heute nach wie vor der richtige Zeitpunkt alternative Organsiationsformen der Produktionformen zu erwägen.

Alle Fallstudien erzählen ihre eigenen Geschichten. GLAS ist wie immer dankbar für alle zusätzlichen Informationen, Geschichten und Erinnerungen von Lesern die eine Beziehung zu einem der aufgeführten Arbeitsplätze haben. GLAS möchte auch all jenen danken die bei der Erarbeitung dieser Ausgabe geholfen haben. Die Glasgower Fallstudien wurden im Rahmen eines Workshops engagiert und sorgfältig von Diplomstudenten der University of Strathclyde rechechiert. Wir danken .....
In Liverpool war die Unterstützung durch Paul ?? von Static und anderen ausgesprochen wertvoll. Ebenso möchten wir uns für die Essaybeiträge von Tom Markus sowie Phil Taylor und Gordon Bain bedanken, die den kontextuellen Rahmen fuer die in den Fallstudien aufgedeckten Prozesse liefert.

Die nächste Ausgabe von glaspaper wird im Herbst 2004 produziert und Geschichten unsere Reise durch die zehn neuen EU Staat zum Thema haben. Wenn Sie diese Ausgabe erhalten möchten setzen Sie sich bitte mit uns in Verbindung unter info@glas-collective.com

Eingeladen, einen Beitrag für den Liverpool/Manchester Teil des Forschungs- und Ausstellungsprojektes Shrinking Cities/Schrumpfende Städte zu liefern hat sich GLAS entschlossen Liverpool als auch unsere Heimatstat Glasgow als Ausgangspunkt zu nehmen. Oberflächlich betrachtet kann man beide Städte als post-industriell bezeichnen. Jedoch sind ihre jeweiligen unterschiedlichen Erfahrungen gleichermaßen aufschlußreich. Ihre respektiven Rollen im Rahmen der britischen Industrialisierung lassen sie heute nach einer neudefinierten wirtschaftlichen Bedeutung suchen.

THEORY

ON INDUSTRIALISATION

1. *Industrialisation* refers to the historical and geographical transformation of the labour process at the heart of which lie changes in the character of technology, labour and work. It transforms the medieval serf into a wage labourer, and a craftsperson into a machine operator. It takes us on a journey from the hand made house, to the manufactured housing estate and onwards to the pre-fabricated concrete block. In so doing the process of industrialisation changes both the social form of labour and that of the built object.

2. As a virtual synonym of urbanisation and the nineteenth century industrial city, *the process of industrialisation* quickly outstrips the capabilities of earlier historical building types to support social development and the expansion of capital. Old building typologies are adapted and new ones introduced. A different built environment emerges organised around two activities; the production, exchange and consumption of commodities; and the enlightenment, discipline and social reproduction of the individual. In other words the *spaces of labour* (the mill, factory, or office) develop as part of an archipelago of building types that are instrumental to the reproduction of society - economically, politically and ideologically.

3. It follows that from its very outset *industrialisation* begins to reorganise the geography of social and economic activity and to restructure the patterns of daily life captured emblematically in the harmony of factory siren and church bell. Industrialisation re-calibrates and re-orders time and space. It accelerates the pace of every day life at home and at work and fundamentally alters how we perceive and engage with the built and natural environment. Here, industrialisation assumes a far broader significance than the social and spatial organisation of labour in the workplace. It invokes a whole regime of being where every aspect of social life is connected in one way or another with the mass production and consumption of commodities.

4. *Industrialisation* is underpinned by an idea of historical progress in which scientific and technological knowledge is fused with industrial production. One of the goals of this process is to produce things at ever increasing speeds, in ever-greater quantities and with diminishing costs. Viewed simply as the practical application of reason and rational calculation to the tasks of building, such a process has the potential to free individuals from basic need and poverty. In such an ideal world there is no particular reason why the pre-fabrication of buildings by highly mechanised and eventually automated methods couldn't liberate workers from performing tedious, arduous and dangerous tasks at the same time as ensuring that all the building requirements for continued social reproduction are freely available in abundance.

5. But capitalist *industrialisation* distorts such objectives. The labour process is not driven by the desire to liberate building form, but by the economic competition between capitalists who through technological innovation and changes in working methods rationalise and speed-up production so as to maintain or boost the rate of profit. Concepts of social need, usefulness, and individual desire are all contingent on this primary goal. Here the expression, 'the subordination of the use-value to the exchange value of a commodity' is not a simple sleight of hand from the jargon of political economy. It describes the very real process by which the concept of *need* and *use*, not just in terms of a building's mechanical function but also in its potential as dream or desire, becomes secondary to the economic function it must play in the efficient accumulation of capital.

6. Under such circumstances it is not so much reason or social justice that directs the historical development of technology, building form and space, as an economic rationalism that before anything else must calculate, describe, and catalogue all things and processes as the prelude to the realisation of their money-making potential. At it's crudest and most elemental, this specifically *capitalist* rationale tends to homogenise the social world. It flattens and straightens it, and raises the spectre of the universally deskilled worker inhabiting a city that has been wholly pre-fabricated from standardised catalogues of commodities. A virtually treeless metropolis in which nature is reduced to a pay per view spectacle.

– – – – – BUILDING TYPOLOGIES ▶

Robert Owen's Industrial Utopia, New Lanark

"(we call)) for the active and scientific acquistion of all the achievements of world wide technology in the field of the latest materials, structures, mechanisation and standardisation of building production"
First OSA Conference, Moscow, 1928
[Union of Contemporary Architects]

Hilbersheimer's imaginary 'industrialised' dystopia, duplicated in commercial offfice space

Hand-made house - Sao Andre Brasil, 2004

Manufactured terrace, London, 1800

Industrialised concrete block housing, Sao Paulo, 1980s

Pre-fabricated housing, St Petersburg, 1980s

STAGES IN THE INDUSTRIALISATION OF HOUSE BUILDING

7. The *history of capitalist industrialisation* in the built environment is of course more complex than this, but it is nevertheless propelled by the combined forces of this economic imperative to commodify building production with the political compulsion to represent power through building form and spatial organisation. On the one hand this has given us an extraordinary tale of invention and economic progress authored by dynamic bankers and adventurer engineers, tearing the world apart and reassembling it in epic manner. But it is also a history that is riddled and punctuated by conflict. By the struggles that have occurred in the workplace between contractors and construction labour over wages, working conditions and political representation. By the historic battles that have taken place against powerful property owners over the ownership and use of land and buildings. By the search for non-capitalist ways of organising production and space. And by the struggles by women and colonised peoples against institutional and spatial discrimination. This is the other history of industrialisation.

ON *post*-INDUSTRIAL(isation)

8. As the industrialisation of weapons and house building production reached it's peak in the 1970s a mood of social and urban disintegration had already begun to grip parts of Europe and the United States. Whether the reasons for the malaise lay in the fear of Armageddon, a general crisis of profitability, in the perceived failure of state planning, or in 'bad design', the scalpels and razors were sharpened. Cracks appeared in the social fabric of the mass -produced city of tarmac, concrete, and steel. Industry and the modern industrial city had to be removed, and dynamite, privatisation and neo-liberal economic reform were to be the tools.

9. For philosophers and economists it became a political necessity and desire to declare the industrial era of state regulated mass production and consumption to be at an end. New slogans entered the vocabulary saturated by a utopian belief in 'free unregulated markets'. Now that modernism (and by implication socialism) was visibly crumbling, society it was felt was entering into a post-modern and post-industrial age. For some optimists, the changes taking place were even more profound. Not only were we on the verge of a post-historical, but post-capitalist era. Political regimes tumbled; the slab blocks were ceremoniously blown up across Britain, direct labour departments closed down, and council house building programmes halted. "Flexible just-in-time production", customer choice and diversity became the new organisational mantras of management. A new type of architectural practice was to emerge, organised through the market place, and no longer restrained by the pre-fabricated replication of built form or social ownership.

10. In the new plan, housing and virtually all other sectors of the building economy were destined to become the responsibility of private and speculative builders. Employment and working conditions were to be 'liberalised' in a labour market in which the individual was now imagined as multi-skilled rather than de-skilled, mobile and motivated only by self-interest. All traces of former industrialisation had to be obliterated - socially, physically and symbolically, as cities and whole regions raced to re-brand and market themselves. But the hoped for resurrection of local economies and the flooding of the market place with real choice and diversity has proved to be at best pregnant with irony and at worst mythological.

11. For all the undoubted changes that saw the medieval journeyman become an assembly line worker, the social character of labour, namely *wage* labour has remained intact. Working life for the migrant construction worker of twenty first century Europe, queuing at the motorway underpass for the site bus, shares much in common with the hundreds of thousands of early wage labourers and craftsmen looking for work on the construction sites of the industrial revolution. In conditions that have persisted for nearly two centuries, many building workers are still obliged to work in an industry that is poorly regulated, and notorious for job insecurity and the casualisation of labour. It is an industry dominated by anti-trade union employers organised around a labour market in which any 'flexibility' belongs more to the movement of capital rather than the mobility of workers.

Idealising Industrialisation
"Soviets and eclectrification are the foundation of the new world" Propaganda Poster, USSR, 1920s

America comes to Moscow, 1996

Derelict Palace of the Republic, Berlin, 2003

INDUSTRIALISING SPACE


Manufactured landscape, Gorbals, late 19th century


Fordist urban landscapes, Bruce Plan, Glasgow, 1946


Plan for 'Mikrorayon, Krilatskoye, Moscow 1980s


Industrialised Concrete Metropolis, Sao Paulo


Car City, Brasilia


Fordist urban landscapes, Los Angeles

selling an ideal


putting together the kit


the finished commodity


reproduction

STAGES IN THE INDUSTRIALISATION OF MODERN SPECULATIVE HOUSEBUILDING

THEORY

12. In a similar manner, despite its 'newness', there is something very familiar about the working life of a call centre worker processing words and information. For with a blink of the eye the call centre can be mistaken for an earlier twentieth century secretarial or insurance office. With a squint its spatial organisation can even resemble a factory. A wide-open space with workers attached to keyboards neatly arranged in rows and columns, engaged not in the mass production of bricks or steel, but information. Workers that are subject to a regime of observation and discipline that if more covert than an overseer's whip possesses the same objective, which is to maintain and improve productivity in what is a highly monitored capitalist labour process. Meanwhile, outside of the workplace individuals far from having evaded the economic and ideological imperative to participate in the cycle of commodity production and consumption, have become ever more entangled in what has become an organised and completely commodified world of retail and leisure culture in which real choice and diversity is expensive and remains the preserve of the affluent.

13. The majority of individuals are left to carve out little heterotopias in the face of a dominant culture, in which the much-criticised formal and social homogenisation that distinguished industrialised systems building has been ably reproduced in the 'post-modern' world of building production. For despite the romantic allusions to the hand-made house of yesteryear, the 'small' batch production of the modern speculative housing estate is in fact an example of a highly mechanised form of construction. Although there are limits to the mechanisation and automation of building production, which from a global perspective is still dominated by hand-made and manufactured buildings, the speed and accuracy with which such kits can be assembled, represents a new phase in the industrialisation and capitalisation of building production in which the illusion of difference is provided by the variety of skins and facades that can be attached to load bearing frames and structures.

14. Similarly, the supermarket shed, 'flat pack' McDonalds, and the kit-architecture of the retail, office and leisure sectors, are all designed and fabricated to be erected in the minimum amount of time with the minimum amount of traditional on site labour. Time is money and there is not time for social idealism. This is design and planning driven by the quest to maximise the financial return on each square metre of 'abstract' space, the result of which is an homogenous architecture of predictability. In this sense the mass production of reinforced concrete panels and the 'heavy' images of trucks armed with concrete and steel frames, does not represent the end of industrialisation but rather it's pre-history.

ON *de*-INDUSTRIALISATION

15. We should be similarly cautious in how we term the changes that have taken place in the overall organisation of space. Superficially at least the consequences of de-industrialisation in a city like Glasgow are striking and are clearly evident in the changing landscape of the city. As you stumble through the remains of Glasgow's industrial heart around the Clyde, the term post-industrial city seems at first glance an appropriate enough way of describing the demolition and transformation of the built landscape of the industrial revolution. The city still possesses something of its nineteenth century heritage in the remains of the grid plan, the institutional buildings of state and capital and many of its tenement blocks and 19th century mansions. But industry, the shipyards, docks, mines, and factories have long gone. Transformed into heritage sites, offices, and flats, or simply demolished. The Vale of Leven, The Clyde Shipyards, Ravenscraig, Linwood, the Singer Factory, the Lanarkshire Mines, giants of Scottish Industry and the organised labour movement are now remembered as a street name or a forgotten football team. Their removal from the urban landscape economically and symbolically seemed to signal the end of an historical epoch.

INDUSTRIALISATION and KIT ARCHITECTURE

Office Construction in the CBD, Frame and panel

Kit house on site, timber frame, brick skin

Retail Park, Steel Frame and Aluminium cladding

26 storey housing, prefab Concrete Frame and panel

Factory, steel frame and aluminium cladding

32 storey housing, prefab concrete frame and panel

DEFENDING LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICES AGAINST PRIVATISATION

Occupation of Swimming Pool against closure

Occupation of Primary School against closure

From 1969-1988 as a proportion of total new construction in the UK, Public Sector House Building fell from 51-13%. New orders for public sector work fell from 48 - 23%. By 1990 Public Sector run construction entreprises were virtually extinct. 92% of Total National Output and 98% of new public sector housing was conducted by private contractors. UK *Housing and Construction Statistics*.

In Scotland owner occupation doubled at the same time as rented public halved between 1979 and 1998. The proposed housing stock transfer will signal the end of rented public sector housing in Glasgow as it has elsewhere in Britain. By 2000, Manufacturing and Construction employed approximately 20% of the Scottish Workforce, Tourism, Retail, Finacial and IT Services 40%. Casual Part Time Employment increased by 15% over the last decade. Between 1992 and 2002 contractors output on public works declined by 40%. *Scottish Executive Government Statistics*

PRIVATISING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

16. However, a rather different picture emerges if we understand capitalism as a global economic system that organises production and labour on a world basis within an international division of labour. In the latter half of the nineteenth century Glasgow was famously the second city of empire constructed out of the wealth accumulated from the plantation economies of the Americas and the exploitation of indigenous wage labour. It exported rolling stock to India and pre-fabricated and exported cast iron buildings to Brasil. It was both a financial and industrial centre, resplendent with dock, factory, stock market and law court. The subsequent geographical relocation and development of manufacturing and heavy industry in places like China, India and Eastern Europe, forced cities like Glasgow to re-define themselves and look for new business opportunities. From being one of the powerhouses of the industrial revolution and one of the headquarters of the early world capitalist system, Glasgow was relegated over a period of fifty years to a minor supervisory role. It was left to compete with other de-industrialised local economies for a share of the service sector, retail and tourist industries. The consequences were devastating, and the corrosive effects of long-term unemployment; poor health and lack of opportunities continue to scar the city.

17. But although the introduction from the nineteen seventies onwards of neo-liberal economic policy founded on trade liberalisation, free markets and privatisation, accelerated the process of local industrial decline, the story of closures, redundancies and geographical switch in the pursuit of cheaper labour power is as old as capitalism itself. In the face of economic competition the epic battles to protect national steel production at Ravenscraig and car production at Linwood brought the twentieth century to a close. But it had begun with a similar tale of decline in the mills of the Vale of Leven, put out of business by the importation of cheaper textiles from abroad.

18. Whilst Glasgow and other former industrial hubs in Britain struggle to make a living out of civic boosterism, shopping, and information processing, the classical stage of industrial capitalism, manufacturing, continues apace abroad. We still need energy, cement, steel, textiles, ships and machines. It is simply that capital being mobile and amoral will inevitably seek out regions where it can rent land and produce such commodities more cheaply. This economic opportunism is the leitmotif of capitalist development. It comes as little surprise that capital in the twenty first century is no more loyal to employees and regions trying to rebuild an economy through new information and financial services than it was during earlier periods of industrial expansion. The call centre is a case in point. Call centre companies have even less commitment to local economies than old 'industrial' capitalists. Indeed the absence of any need to invest extensively in fixed capital makes it easier for them to relocate. And this is exactly what is happening with the loss of thousands of jobs to India where labour is a fraction of the cost in Glasgow.

19. The global character of economic re-structuring is complex. But even if cities like Glasgow in terms of population appear to be 'shrinking', of greater significance is the extraordinary process of urbanisation that is taking place in the world's mega cities. From 1982-2002, Brasil like Britain experienced a major shift in the structure of its economy. Industry as a proportion of GDP almost halved while the service sector doubled. However, the population of Sao Paulo, the old industrial heart of Brasil did not decline with the collapse of manufacturing but rapidly expanded with the migration of the landless and the poor into the informal settlements of the periphery. But whereas in nineteenth century Europe landless peasants were able to find work in the mines, mills and factories, these new proletarians find the office doors and factory gates shut and are forced to survive outside of the formal economy, through poorly paid service work, barter, banditry and land occupation.

20. This relentless shifting history of uneven development is the real and *continuous* spatial history of industrialisation expressed at every level of social reality where a class, gender or race develops and achieves prosperity at the expense of another. It is a relationship that is as old as capitalism, and as ancient as the historic collision between the development of a wage labour economy in Europe and the slave economies of the Americas. The only thing that we can be sure of is that recent transformations in the structure of space and society do not represent anything that can be described as post-capitalist. Far from having vanished the wage relation remains intact and the social inequality that defined earlier phases of capitalist industrialisation has become an almost permanent feature of urban life. In this sense rather than coming to an end, capitalist industrialisation has entered a new phase in its history.

INDUSTRIALISIERUNG UND GEBAUTE UMWELT

Industrialisierung bezieht sich auf die historische und geographische Transformation des Arbeitsprozesses in dessen Zentrum der Wandel von Technik und Arbeit liegt. Von ihrer ersten Stunde an reorganisiert die Industrialisierung Geographie und soziale wie ökonomische Aktivitäten. Sie restrukturiert alle Abläufe des täglichen Lebens was sich emblematisch in der Harmonie von Fabriksirene und Kirchturmglocke ausdrückt. Jeder Aspekt des gesellschaftichen Lebens ist so auf die eine oder andere Weise mit der Massenproduktion und der Konsumierung von Gütern verbunden.

In der kapitalistischen Industrialisierung ist der Arbeitsprozess nicht von dem Wunsch getrieben die Form des Gebäudes zu emanzipieren um so einem gesellschaftlichen Bedürfnis zu dienen. Ihr Antrieb ist vielmehr der wirtschaftliche Wettbewerb zwischen Kapitalisten um Profitmaximierung. Diese kapitalistische Logik tendiert dazu die gesellschaftliche Welt zu homogenisieren. Die Geschichte der Industrialisierung ist sowohl eine Geschichte der Erfindungen und des wirtschaftlichen Fortschritts als auch des Konfliktes zwischen Unternehmern und Arbeitern oder des Konfliktes von Frauen und kolonialisierten Völkern in Bezug auf eine institutionelle und räumliche Diskriminierung.

Als wärend der 70er Jahre die ersten Brüche im sozialen Gefüge der massenproduzierten Stadt auftauchten wurden als Reaktion Industrieanlagen und die moderne industrielle Stadt mit Dynamit, Privatisierung und neo-liberalen Reformen beseitigt. Neue Slogangs hielten in ein Vokabular Einzug welches mit dem utopischen Glauben an den „freien unregulierten Markt" durchzogen war. Man war der Ausfassung, in ein neues post-modernes und post-industrielles Zeitalter eingetreten zu sein. Alle Spuren der Industrialisierung sollten ausgelöscht werden als Städte und Regionen in einen offenen Wettstreit traten sich mit einem neuen Image zu vermarkten. Dennoch blieb der soziale Charakter der Arbeit, vor allem der der Lohnarbeit intakt. Der Arbeitsalltag des mobilen Arbeiters im Europa des 21. Jahrhunderts hat noch immer viel mit dem des Lohnarbeiters der industriellen Revolution gemeinsam. Ebenso findet man Übereinstimmungen im Arbeitsleben des Call Center Angestellten und des frühen Schreibgehilfen oder selbst des Fabrikarbeiters. Arbeiter sind in all diesen Fällen einem System von Überwachung und Disziplin unterworfen.

Auf den ersten Blick scheint der Begriff post-industriell für Städte wie Glasgow oder Liverpool angemessen zu sein. Allerdings ergibt sich ein anderes Bild wenn man Kapitalismus als globales Wirtschaftsystem versteht welches Produktion und Arbeitskraft im Rahme einer Arbeitsteilung auf weltweiter Basis organisiert. Wärend Glasgow und Liverpool sich bemühen ihren Unterhalt durch das Rühren der touristischen Werbetrommel, durch Shopping oder Informationsverarbeitung zu bestreiten findet die klassische Form des Kapitalismus in der Ferne weiterhin statt. Wir brauchen nach wie vor Energie, Zement, Stahl, Textilien, Schiffe und Maschinen. Es ist keine Überraschung, daß das Kapital im 21. Jahrhundert keineswegs loyaler gegenüber seinen Angestellten oder einer spezifischen Region ist als es wärend der Phase der industriellen Expansion in Europa war. Dieser globale Charakter der wirtschaftlichen Umstrukturierung ist komplex und auch wenn Städte wie Glasgow und Liverpool zu „schrumpfen" scheinen so ist dies nur im Zusammenhang mit dem Prozess der rasenden Urbanisierung der Megastädte in der sogenannten dritten Welt zu verstehen. Die ungebrochene Geschichte von ungleicher Entwicklung ist die wahre und räumliche Geschichte der Industrialisierung. In diesem Sinne ist die kapitalistische Industrialiserung nur in eine neue geschichtliche Phase eingetreten und ist nicht an ihrem Ende.


Street labour market
Sao Paulo


Self build ghetto "jardim de paraguai" Sao Paulo


Homeless recycling builder


Street labour market
Sao Paulo


Favella with prison behind
Sao Paulo


Hillside favella, Rocinha
Rio de Janeiro

TRANSITION OF LABOUR

AUGER MAKER, BACK WASHER, BACKMAKER, BASS or BAST DRESSER, BATT MAKER, BATTLEDORE MAKER, BEATER, BEETLER, BEAVER, BENDER, BILLYMAN, BLACK DYER, BLEACHER, BLOCKER, BLOWER, BLOWFEEDER, BLUE DYER or MAKER, BOBBIN CARRIER, BOBBIN SHIFTER, BOBBIN TURNER, BOLL, BOWKER, BRABENER, BRAIDER, BRAKEMAN or BRAKESMAN, BRATMAN, BROAD CLOTH WEAVER, CALICO PRINTER, CARD NAILER, CARDER, CARDMAKER, CARDROOMER, CEMMER, COLOUR MAN, COLOURATOR or COLORATOR, COMB MAKER, COMBER, COMBER or COMBERE, CONE WINDER, COP WINDER, COTTON FEEDER, CROPPER, CURRIER, DANTER, DEVILLER, DEXTER, DOUBLER, DRAWBOY, DRESSER, DYER, EMBOSSER, ENGINE TENTER, FELTER, FETTLER, FILLER, FINISHER, FIREBEATER, FLAXDRESSER, FRAMEWORKER KNITTER, FULLER, HACKLER, HANKWINDER, HECK MAKER, JACK-FRAME TENTER, JUTE WORKER, KEMPSTER, KNOCKER-UP, JERSEY COMBER, BALLARD MASTER, BALLAST HEAVER, BLOCKER, BOATMAN, BOILER PLATER, BOY RIVET HEATER, CAULKER, CHIP, WELDER, WHARFSMAN Coal and energy BAL MAIDEN, BALANCER, BANKSMAN, BARROWMAN, BEARER, BOTTOMER, BROW GIRL, COAL-CUTTER, COAL DRAWER, COAL HEAVER, COAL RUNNER, COAL WHIPPER, CORVER, DIGGER, DRAWER, JAGGER, KEEKER, MINER, PIT BROW LASS, PITMAN, PROP BOBBY, PUTTER, ROLLEYWAY MAN, STATIONARY ENGINEER, SURFACE MAN, TAKER IN, TAKER OFF, TRAMMER, CHIPPERS LABOURER, CRANE DRIVER, DOCK WALLOPER, DOCKER, FIRST HAND SMELTER, FITTER, HAMMERMAN, HOLDER-ON, JOINER, LOFTSMAN, MARINE ARCHITECT, MARINE ENGINEER, PLATER, RIGGER, RIVETER, SENIOR SMELTER, SHIP'S JOINER, STEVEDORE, STOKER, TIME KEEPER, TOE RAG, WEIGHER, TRAPPER, TROLLEY CARTER, TUBMAN, VIEWER, WAILER, WHEELERLISTER, LOG WOOD GRINDER, MULE OPERATIVE, NARROW WEAVER, ORRICE WEAVER, PACK THREAD SPINNER, PICKER, PIECER, PIRN-WINDER, POWER LOOM TUNER, QUILLER, QUISTER, RAG GATHERERS, REELER, RIDDLER, RING SPINNER, ROLL TURNER, ROLLER COVERER, ROVER, SELF ACTING MINDER, SHUTTLE MAKER, SILK ENGINE TURNER, SPREADER, THROWSTER, SILKER, SLUBBER, SLUBBER DOFFER, STRETCHER, TACKLER, TAN BARK STRIPPER, TANNER, TENTER, TEXTOR, TURNING BOY, TWISTER or TWISTERER, WALKER, WARPER, WEBSTER, WHITENER, WHITESTER, WINDER, WOOL MAN, WOOL STAPLER, WOOLCOMBER, WOOLEN BILLY PIECER, YARN POLISHER, YARN TWISTER, YARN THREADER, YARN SPOOLER

a person employed to clean the wool in the worsted manufacturing industry, a person employed in dressing fibre or matting, a person who made the wadding used in quilt and mattress making, a person who made the beaters used on clothes, carpets, etc., to remove the dust, a person who cleansed and thickened the cloth by treading it underwater with fullers earth, a person who operated a beetling machine, used in the textile trade for embossing fabric, a person who made felt used in hat making, a person who cut leather, a person who made wooden blocks used in the hat trade, a person who laid down the blocks on which a ships keel was laid, a person who operated a machine used in the cotton industry to prepare the cotton for spinning, a glass blower, a person who operated a "blowing machine" used to clean and separate fibres in the textile trade, a person who operated the bellows at a blacksmiths, a person who fed the fibres into a "blowing machine", a person who worked with blue dye used by calico printers and laundries to stop the white materials from discolouring, a person who worked in spinning and weaving sections of the mills, a person who made the bobbins used in the spinning and weaving industry, a person who looked after power looms in the weaving industry, a person who bleached yarn, a person who made cord by twisting threads or strips of leather, a person who operated the winch at the pit head, a person who operated a female mine worker who worked on the surface, a person employed in the coal mines to operate the "balance" which is a slope with a pulley at the top where empty coal tubs pulled full tubs up the slope, a person employed in the mining industry being in charge of the cages at the pit, a person who operated a beetling machine, used employed in the coal mines to push the barrow from the pit face to the shaft, a person who worked underground carrying the coal to the bottom of the pit shaft and placed it in the containers for uplifting to the surface, a person who worked down the pits moving the ore etc to the bottom of the shaft for removal, a female employed at the pit head, a person who worked in the mines pushing or dragging the coal carts the bottom of the pit, a person employed to move coal e.g. from boat to shore or from shore to boat, a person who attended the coal carts underground, a person employed to unload coal from ships using baskets attached to a simple form of crane, a person who made baskets used in coal mining known as corves, a person who worked at the coal face, a person who raised the coal up the shaft to the surface, a young boy in charge of 'jags' or train of trucks in coal mine, a worker in a mine, digging for coal, ironstone, lead, a person who made cord by twisting threads or strips of leather, a person who operated the winch at the pit head, a person who operated a person who operated the braking mechanism on trains and trams, a railway worker who operated the points to change the line (track) on which the train was travelling, a person who moved rolling stock around the railway yards, a person who made wooden railway ties, a rail road yard worker, a person who assisted the potter by measuring out the balls of clay, a person who made barilla, a substance obtained from burning saltworts, the resulting mixture of sodium salts being used in the glass and ceramics industry, an assistant to the shot firer in the pits, a person who worked in the clay pits usually preparing the clay for making bricks, a person who put the fire proof containers which held the pottery for firing into the kiln, a person who made bowls and dishes from clay, a specialist worker in the glass industry, a glassworker who inserted the blow iron into the molten glass ready for the blower, a person who held a shovel to shield the gatherer's face from the heat of a fire or furnace, a pottery moulder's assistant, a young boy who ran between master and drying oven, carrying full moulds and returning with empty ones, a person responsible for making the bottoms of pill boxes in the pottery trade, a person in the pottery trade, a person who placed the pot in a furnace to be fired, a person employed

a person who polished metals, a person who worked with iron ore, a person who made or repaired household items made from brass, a person who made the metal points that go in the holes of a belt, a person in the metal industry who made wire by drawing the metal through a die, a person who made eyes in needles used for sewing, a person who founds or casts iron, a maker of moulds or castings, a needle maker, a person who was employed to put things in to some form of mechanised process, a person who poured the molten steel into the moulds, a person who made wire proof containers which held the pottery for from metal by drawing the metal through various size holes in a template., the person in charge of loading the ballast into the hold of empty ships, a person who loaded ballast into the hold of empty ships, a person who made wooden blocks used in the hat trade, a person who laid down the blocks on which a ships keel was laid, a person who made rolled iron plate used to make boilers for steam engines etc, a person who made boats or casks watertight by caulking the seams using tar or oakum-hemp fibre, a shipwright or carpenter, an assistant to a shipwright or ships carpenter, a person employed in a dockyard to load and unload cargo between ship and quayside, a person who tends the fire of an engine boiler, a person employed on the docks to weigh the cargo as it was unloaded.

the person who answers the telephone, the person who talks to tourists, the person who stacks the supermarket shelves, the person who gives out parking tickets, the person who works in insurance, the person who cleans the office, the person who serves drinks in a bar, the person who looks after security, the person who sells bakery products, the person who works in a shop, the person who flips hamburgers, the person who stops undesirables from entering night-clubs, the person who accepts theatre bookings, the person who empties the dustbins, the person who ...

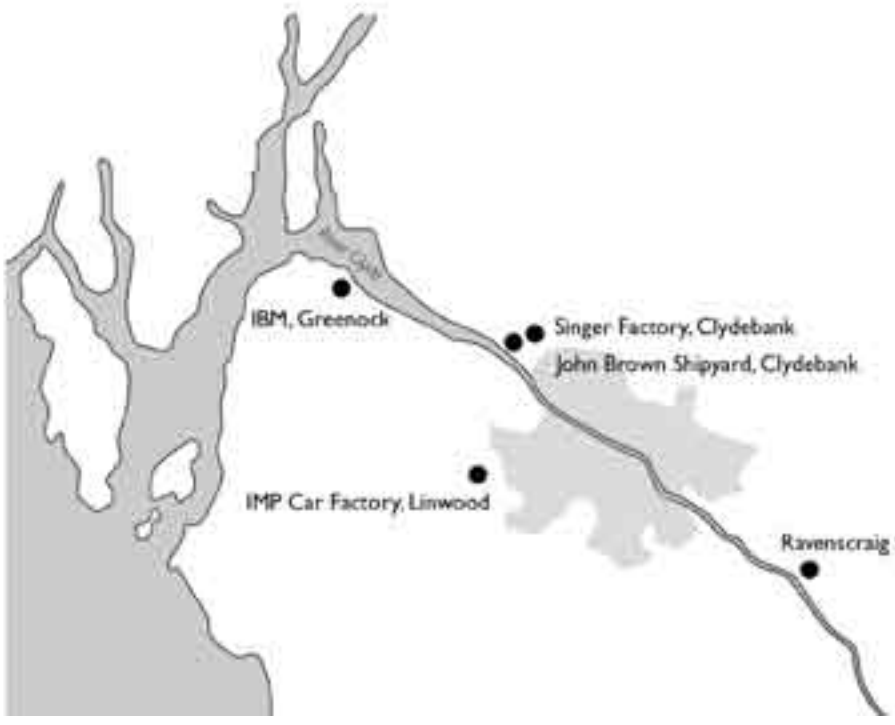
'Capitalism cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production and with them the whole relations of society [.] Constant revolutionising of production, uninterupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertaintity and agitation distinguish this epoch from all previous ones'.

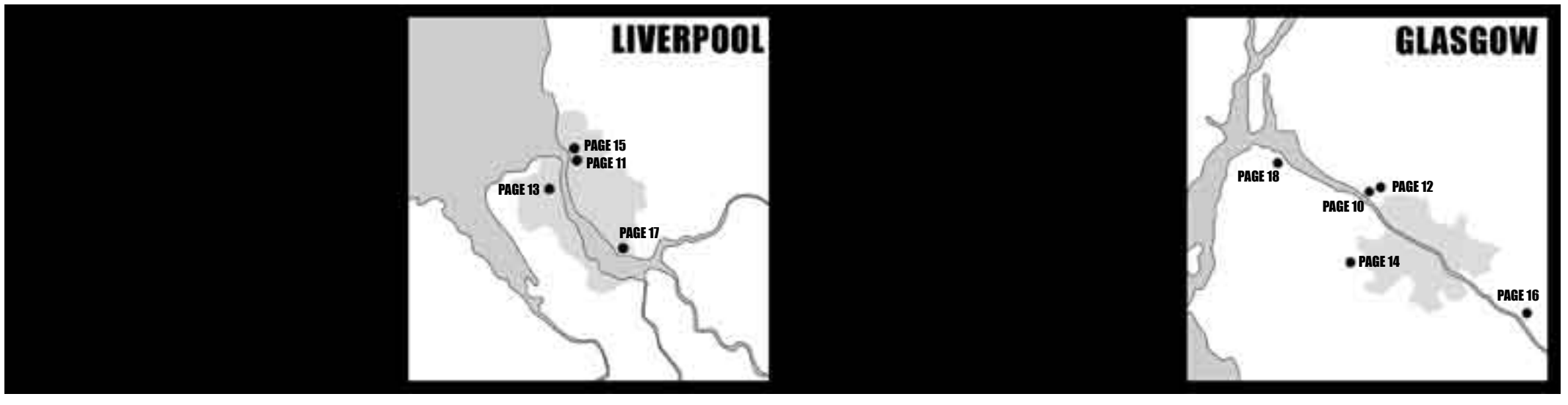
Karl Marx, Communist Manifesto, 1848

MAP


GLASGOW
LIVERPOOL


Tate and Lyle Factory
Albert Dock
Port Sunlight, Birkenhead
Matchworks, Speke


IBM, Greenock
Singer Factory, Clydebank
John Brown Shipyard, Clydebank
IMP Car Factory, Linwood
Ravenscraig Steelworks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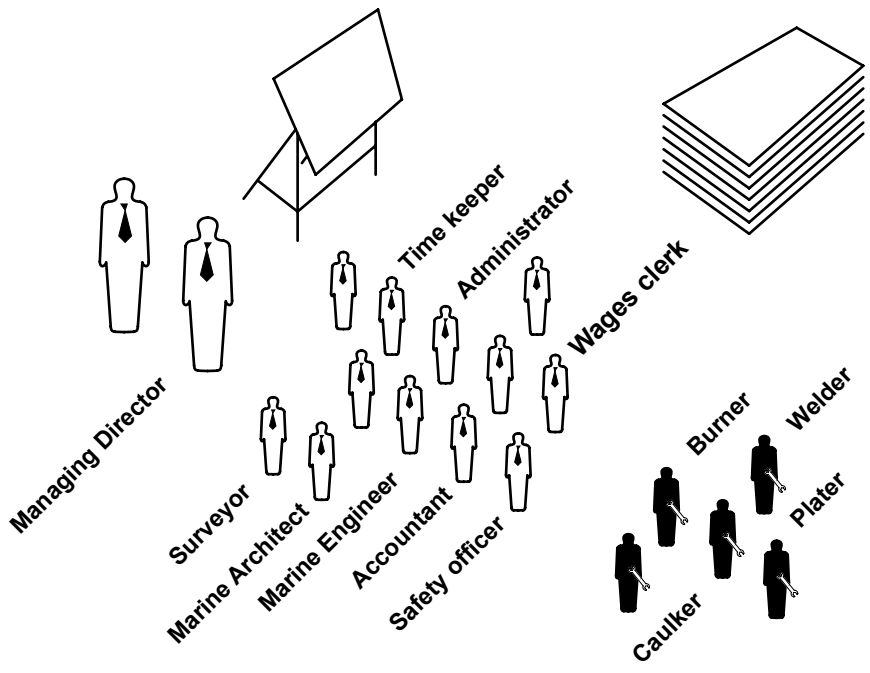
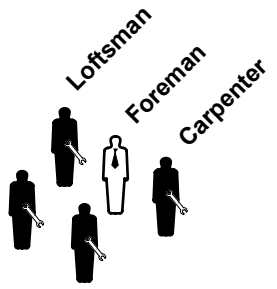
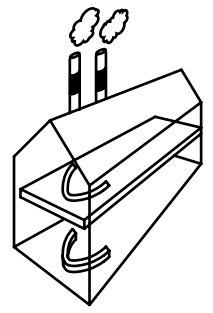
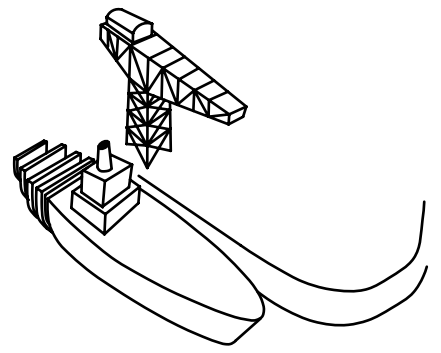
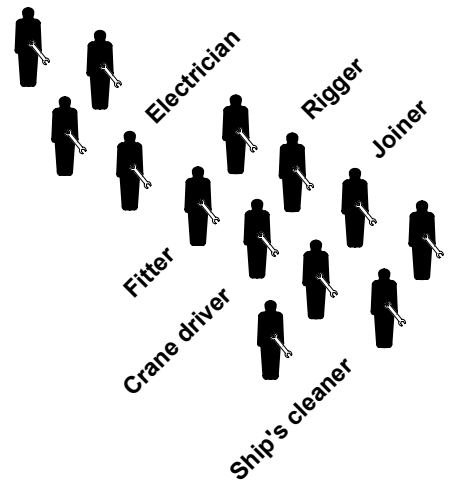
JOHN BROWN SHIPYARD, CLYDEBANK

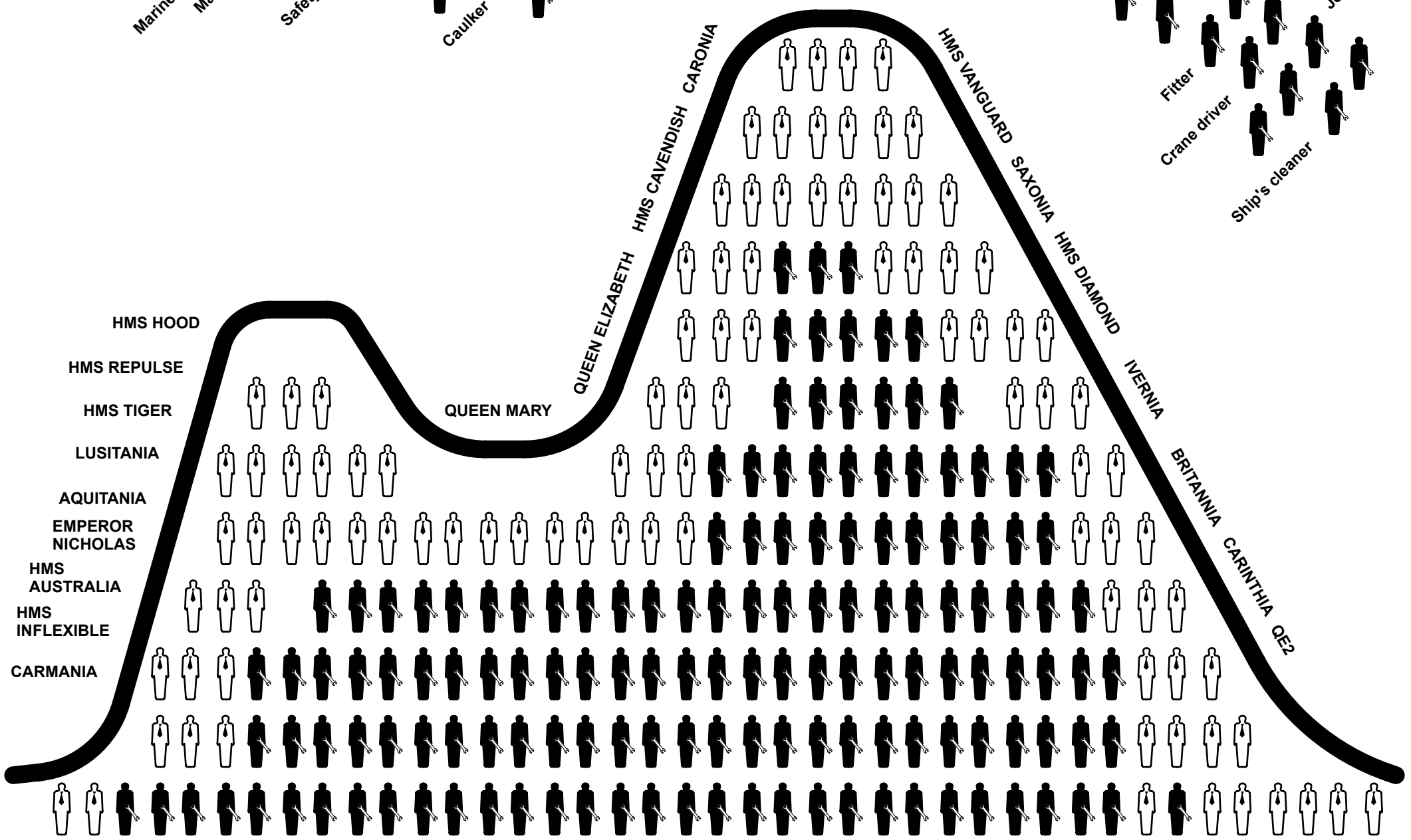


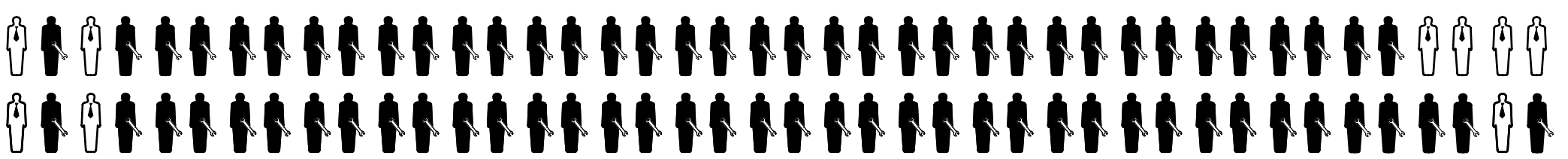












John Brown Shipyard started off in 1874 as the Clydebank Iron Shipyard in Govan on the South banks of the river Clyde. With the move the North banks further downstream the shipyard became the nucleus and name patron of one of Scotland's fastest growing towns. Building Ocean liners as well as countless battle ships for the Royal Navy the yard employed in its peak times almost 10.000 people. Today only a lonely listed gigantic crane remains.

Die John Brown Werft begann als Clydebank Iron Shipyards in Glasgow-Govan am Südufer des Clyde. Mit dem Wechsel stromabwärts auf das Nordufer wurde die Werft Zentrum und Namenspatron einer der am schnellsten wachsenden Städte in Schottland. Ozeandampfer wurden hier ebenso gebaut wir zahllose Kriegsschiffe für die Royal Navy und in Hochzeiten beschäftigte die Werft fast 10.000 Arbeiter. Heute ist der riesige denkmalgeschützte Kran einsames Überbleibsel aus dieser Zeit.

ALBERT DOCK, LIVERPOOL

Pan American Restaurant, Albert Dock
One if a number of superb eating places around the quayside, this is a particular swish affair. Original warehouse features – red brickwork, cement floor and alcoves – have been retained throughout this bar/restaurant. The lower floor is great for meeting friends with light snacks in the bar, while the main restaurant is set on the upper level. Keeping in tune with the Tokyo style furnishing, the menu has delights such as hot and cold sushi dishes plus steak cooked to perfection. As for the desserts, well they are practically orgasmic, so the in house private booth areas come in handy.
Recommended dish: Sloe gin duck £13.95, House wine £11.95

A strike in 1866 had secured a day rate of 4s for quay porters and 4s6d for stevedores. Following the settlement of the 1890 dock strike, sample rates of pay exclusive of overtime rates for dock works were agreed to be:
Shipmen: stevedores 7s a day; labourers 5s a day; headman of gang breaking out screwed cotton 6s a day; filling in hold sulphur, manganese, valonia and bones 6s day; Quay porters: quay porters 4s6d a day; lotters, wheighers, scribers and sackholders 5s a day; shipping grain on the quay 4s6d a day; Coal labourers: When working by the day work, 6s per day. When working by piece work 1 1/4d per ton per man.
The cost of building was £514,475 8s 1d and the cost today would be over £27 million.

The Pumphouse, Albert Dock
Once an original working building pumping water between the docks, it's now serving a far more useful purpose by pumping gallons of fine ales into hoards of thirsty mouths. There's so many great bars around the docks it's often overlooked for the trendier venues, but if it's more a pub than a posing session you are looking for then this is as good as any. Great views, perfect for out-door drinking on warm days, and they serve a mean ploughman's lunch as well.

Liverpool Dock Striker Mike Carden
There is no work. While politicians in the UK talk about returning to a policy of full employment, in cities like Liverpool and like Glasgow it's very difficult to identify any areas of employment. But I'm optimistic. We need communities like Liverpool to unite and to move forward for the sake of the people who live there. With or without work, people have to live and feed their families. It's not going to be done simply by standing in dole queues and watching the world go by. I think it's about time we started taking some direct action for ourselves, and making things happen.

Baby Blue, Albert Dock
Sumptuous private members lounge bar, that's a firm favourite with the city's glitterati. Kick back in the gorgeous surroundings with a cocktail and a fine cigar and be entertained by comedians, DJs, cabaret acts, or the regular fashion show modelled by their extremely well dressed clientele.
Recommended dish: Fillet steak sandwich £9.95, House wine £13

Brian Dooley, sacked Liverpool docker.
I would see my father, a docker, returning home after failing to get a day's work, despite leaving home as early as 5.30 am. He would then return to the pen at lpm and start the process again. Often he had no bus fare and had to walk miles to the dock. If he didn't work he didn't get paid, and when he was ill he could not afford to take time off. My father vowed, 'No son of mine will ever work on those docks.'

Tate Liverpool, Albert Dock
Set over four floors, and featuring work from artists of the moment, Tate Liverpool is the largest gallery of modern and contemporary art outside London. With a collection of hip and sexy modern art, it's obvious that they are not afraid to take risks with the work they show. Interesting and thought provoking. It's really worth at least a fleeting visit; even if art's not your thing, you may discover there's more to it than meets the eye. There is also a great ground floor café.

Brian Dooley, sacked Liverpool docker.
After many attacks on our conditions, in September 1995 the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company sacked the workforce for refusing to cross a picket line, set up by some of our colleagues from another company who had also been unjustly sacked. Our struggle was to last 27 months, . . . but when I meet my former colleagues, we all agree that if called upon we would do it again. Others say that they miss the camaraderie of the picket line. Despite not winning back our jobs, we were enriched by the experience of the struggle. Families were drawn close together, some found talents they didn't realise they had, speaking, organising, and even acting. Politically, we became more aware, and began to recognise the things that are used to divide us, racism, religious differences and homophobia. We made links internationally which continue to the present day. Hopefully we have given other the confidence to continue the fight: 'the harder the struggle, the sweeter the victory'.

Over the last fifteen years Liverpool's Albert Docks have been completely transformed from a place in which goods were stored and exchanged to one of the city's prime tourist attractions. From 1846 onwards and until the late 1970s the Albert Docks served as warehouses for tea, silk, tobacco, and spirits. Today they deliver the picturesque backdrop for up-market bars, restaurants and a series of museums of art and the city's heritage.

Die Anlage der Albert Docks wurde in den letzten 15 Jahren von einer Stätte der Warenlagerung und des Umschlags von Gütern zu einer der touristischen Hauptattraktionen Liverpools umgewandelt. Bereits 1846 in Betrieb genommen, dienten die Albert Docks bis in die späten 1970er Jahre als Lagerhäuser für Tee, Seide, Tabak und Alkohol. Heute sind sie malerischer Hintergrund für Bars und Restaurants und eine Reihe von Museen.

SINGER FACTORY, CLYDEBANK

SINGER 150TH ANNIVERSARY 1851 2001

1980

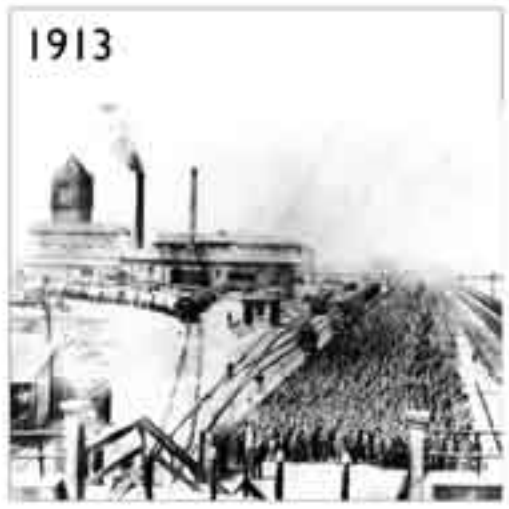
The Singer Sewing Machine Factory in Clydebank, once the world's largest factories, closes with the loss of 25,000 jobs.

1851

1979

'The actions announced today are designed to stem the tide of losses in our developed world sewing operations with the least possible impact on the Company's financial condition, its shareholders and employees'

Chief Executive, Singer Company
Letter to Employees, announcing intention to phase out sewing operations in Clydebank
Friday 12th October 1979



1971

Consolidated Sales
$2.1 billion
Shareholders
over 60,000
Emloyees Worldwide
120,000

1939

IMPORTANT

All Departments are requested to attach to their notice boards a copy of the current issue of the *Compendium* to enable their workers to become acquainted with the various Singer Welfare Activities.

1945

WW2 scale of operations:

60 million rifle components
1,293,600 Bayonets
125 million Bullets
1.25 million Fuzes
15,000 Tank Tracks

GOLF ASSOCIATION	Secy.—Mr. R. SMITH, No. 28 Dept.
HOCKEY CLUB	Secy.—Mr. W. SMITH, No. 45 Dept.
HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY	Secy.—Mr. A. M'GREGOR, Recreation Hall.
LADIES' ATHLETIC ASSOC.	Secy.—Mr. A. M'GREGOR Recreation Hall.
LADIES' SEWING CLUB	Secy.—Miss H. TURNBULL, No. 19 Dept.
MUSICAL ASSOCIATION	Secy.—Mr. J. DONALDSON, No. 28 Dept.
ORCHESTRAL ASSOCIATION	Secy.—Mr. W. WARDE, No. 7 Dept.
PHYSICAL CULTURE CLUB	Secy.—Mr. A. JOHNSTONE, No. 12 Dept.
PIPE BAND	Secy.—Mr. A. M'GREGOR, Recreation Hall.
PLAYERS	Secy.—Mr. R. LOUDON, No. 28 Dept.
TENNIS CLUB	Ladies Secy.—Miss E. BENNETT, Counting House.

See page nineteen for meeting nights.

Originally the centre of European production for the American sewing machine manufacturer Singer, the Clydebank plant was an extraordinary example of a paternalistic capitalism. Along with the John Brown shipyard, Singer's was the centre of the community and provided a cradle to grave existence for many in the town. It transferred production to munitions during the 1939 – 1945 war and since its closure in 1980 has been regenerated as a service sector business park and retail park.

Ursprünglich die europäische Zentrale des amerikanischen Nähmaschinenherstellers Singer, stellt diese Fabrik in Clydebank ein typisches Beispiel des patriarchalischen Kapitalismus dar. Die Singer Fabrik war für viele Einwohner Bezugspunkt von der Wiege bis ins Grab und bildete neben der John Brown Werft das Zentrum der Gemeinde. Von 1939 - 1945 wurde die Produktion von Nähmaschinen auf Waffenmunition umgestellt. Seit der Schließung 1980 wurde das Gelände als Gewerbepark entwickelt.

LEVER FACTORY, PORT SUNLIGHT

1888
William Lever, the founder of soap manufacturer Lever Brothers commences construction on his project to create the workers village Port Sunlight on Merseyside.
The village which provided quality housing and community institutions adjacent to the company's factory had grown by 1909 to contain 700 houses.

"PROSPERITY SHARING"

Believing that the individual working man was likely to squander any extra monies on luxuries which wouldn't improve the living conditions of the entire family, Wiliam Lever created a system of subsidised housing and public institutions including a church, 2 schools, a public hall, tennis courts and bowling greens, co-operative stores, drinking fountains and laterlly as a result of local demand a licensed public house.

1980
The houses of Port Sunlight are put up for sale and today the village has become an expensive and highly desirable merseyside commuter village.

1999
The Village Trust takes responsibility for the management of Port Sunlight, aiming to "preserve and enhance the character of the village & retain the essential fabric of the community."

1990
A Unilver subsidiary is fined £35,000 for leaking fifty tonnes of concentrated sulphuric acid into sewage systems in Merseyside

1991
Unilver features on Greenpeaces report 'Murder on the Mersey' which lists major corporations who pollute Liverpool's River Mersey. Ironically the river was one of the key factors in the decision to build Port Sunlight, providing global transport links.

2004
Unilever is an Anglo-Dutch company with subsidiaries in many countries. It is one of the worlds top 3 food firms, the 2nd largest packaged consumer goods company and likely to be the world's number one advertiser. Unilever does not generally trade under its own name preferring brand names to create the illusion of diversity. These include Persil, Radion, Lynx, cK one, Walls, Slim-Fast, Ben & Jerry's, Knorr, Magnum, Jif, Flora, Pears, Elizabeth Arden, Blue band and I Can't Believe it's Not Butter.

"PROFIT SHARING"

Unilever is a PLC and as such is obliged to maximise profits to ensure the largest possible dividend for its shareholdrs.

HALF YEAR 2004

Turnover - **20.6 Billion Euros**

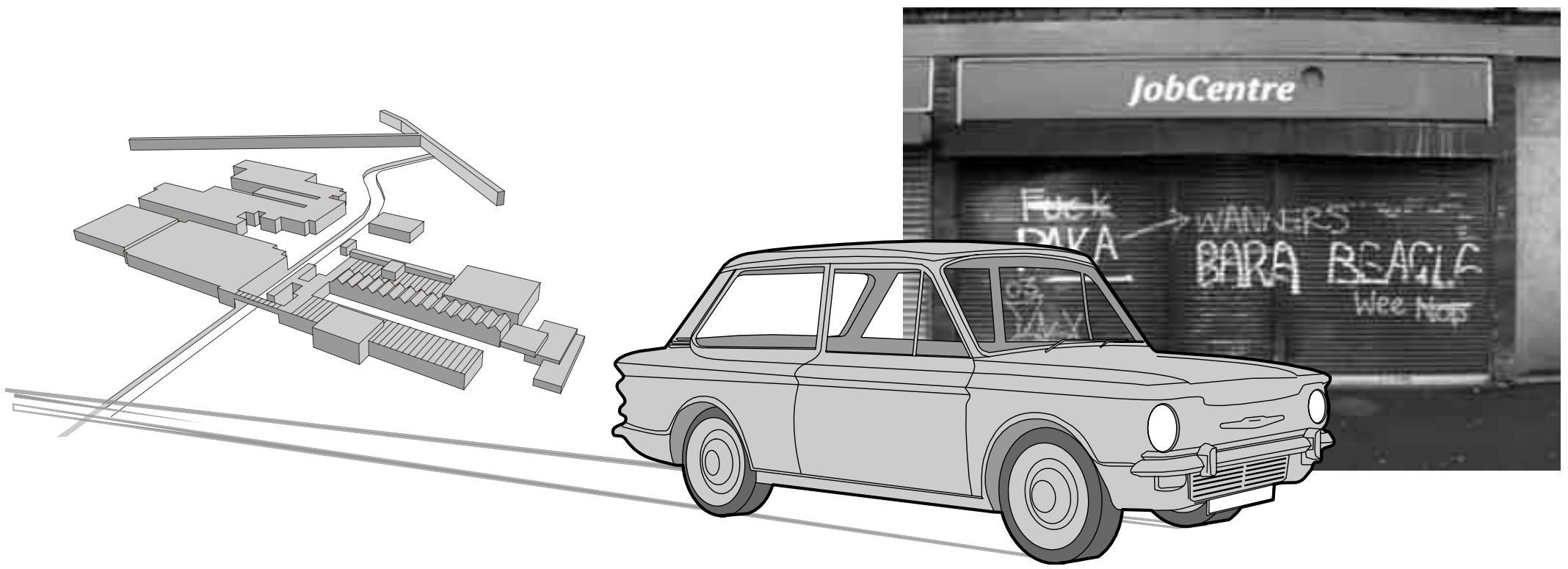
Pre-tax profits - **2.1 Billion Euros**

"At Unilever we are dedicated to meeting the everyday needs of people everywhere. We provide washing powder, shampoo and toothpaste, teas, ice cream, oils and spreads for consumers all over the world." (www.unilever.com)

The history of the company Lever Brothers (latterly Unilever) relates to the changing fortunes of the Garden City company town Port Sunlight. On one hand we see the development of the paternalistic (and highly moralistic) Lever Bros. into a global food conglomerate. At the same time the ethos of Port Sunlight, originally conceived as a source of housing, leisure and virtue for the employees of the factory changed over time, reflecting the changing housing policy and trends in tenure experienced throughout the UK.

Die Geschichte des Unternehmens Lever Brothers (heute Unilever) ist mit dem wechselnden Schicksal der Werkssiedlung und Gartenstadt Port Sunlight verbunden. So wie sich die patriarchalischen (und höchst moralistischen) Lever Brothers zu einem globalen Konzern entwickelten so reflektiert die Veränderung des ursprünglichen Ethos von Port Sunlight als Modell guten Wohnens, von Erhohlung und Tugend für die Fabrikangestellten den Wandel von Wohnbaupolitik und Wohnformen in Großbritannien.

LINWOOD CAR FACTORY, LINWOOD



L IMP LINWOOD

In the main, cavernous factory to the north of Linwood road, a procession of Imps continue to appear from the production line at something below the official rate of one per minute. All is normal; workers repeat action after identical action, management peer on officiously and the union representatives circle restlessly.

In a corner of the room a bulb ends it useful life with a slight 'ting'.

This bulb hangs above a short production line, one on which the engine happens to be assembled. The workers pause, a member of management and a union official notice almost simultaneously. They each approach, from opposite sides. They observe the light bulb and then each other.

Union official: "We cannae work without the light. Right boys, everybody out."

The production line stops. It no longer feeds in to the main assembly. The paralysis spreads and a factory of eight thousand people grinds to a standstill.

Minutes later the bulb is replaced. During that time the production of several units has been lost.

THE BRIGHT FUTURE 1963

The Hillman Imp arrived in Linwood on May 2 1963. Built in the £23 million state of the art Rootes car plant the future looked bright for the Imp and its new West of Scotland home.

The unemployment rate in the west of Scotland was twice the UK average and the Tory government at the time tried to encourage businesses to move north to areas of deprivation such as the west of Scotland. Rootes, under some pressure, eventually acquiesced and sited their new factory in Linwood to begin production of the Imp.

Linwood's population quadrupled in the following three years.

The Linwood plant was seen by management as the poor relative of the home Coventry plant, this was reflected in wages and management practice. The unions contained remnants of the 'Red Clydeside' mentality and so were particularly tough for incoming management to deal with.

THE £1 STRIKE, 1976

Significant damage was done to the reputation of he plant during the infamous £1 strike. 57 workers in the Linwood plant were being paid £1 less per week than their colleagues. 6000 workers chose to strike because Chrysler refused to level the wages. £500,000 was lost as a result.

1250 JOB STRIKE, 1979

1979 saw the French owners stamp their authority on the plant. 8000 workers went on strike to save 1250 colleagues. The strike was broken and the jobs were lost. Threats of further job losses were met with little resistance and with profits not appearing the pressure on the plant to close became great.

CLOSURE 1981

On 22nd May 1981, the plant was closed for the last time. Peugeot, the plants third owners, took the decision to close following sustained losses and a lack of government interest in bailing the plant out following the ascendance of Margaret Thatcher's government.

Following the closure the 'sale of the century' took place. All equipment in the plant was sold off at rock bottom prices, however this still netted the company £5 million. This was perceived as rubbing salt in the wounds of the workers as the factory had been bailed out with £150 million worth of government grants only a few years previously.

THE PRESENT DAY

Linwood has seen a slight increase in population but a huge decrease in amenities and affluence since the factories closure. It now acts primarily as a commuter town for nearby Paisley and Glasgow.

The site of the factory has partially been redeveloped and houses a number of smaller industrial functions. The new businesses provide jobs to a fraction of the number employed by the car plant. Much of the site remains derelict, patially occupied by an increasingly typical out of town retail/leisure development populated by the Wal-Mart avatar, numerous fast food outlets, a cinema and more D.I.Y. aids than even the most home conscious could reasonably experience in one visit.

The construction of the Linwood Car Factory in 1963 was funded entirely by the British state to replace blue-collar jobs that were haemorrhaging in the ship-building industries. The new build factory encouraged the growth of a new feeder town for Glasgow. Within 15 years the plant had collapsed with horrendous social consequences of such a closure for the local community who had little else in the way of a local economy to fall back on.

Die Errichtung des Linwood Automobilwerkes in 1963 wurde komplett durch den britischen Staat finanziert um neue Arbeitsplätze als Ersatz für die dahinsiechende Schiffsbauindustire zu schaffen. Als das Werk innerhalb von 15 Jahren kollabierte fand sich die mit dem Werk entstandene Gemeinde Linwood mit untragbaren sozialen Problemen konfrontiert und ohne alternative Wirtschaftzweige die die Werksschließung ausgleichen konnten.

TATE & LYLE, LIVERPOOL

Henry Tate was one of the founders of Tate & Lyle. Their sugar refining plant in Love lane Liverpool was connected to a global network of production, refining and sales.

Whilst this Space of Labour was of great significance to the economy and labour history of Liverpool, its played just one small part in the capitalist exploitaion of human labour and natural resourceswhich has defined the compnaies history.

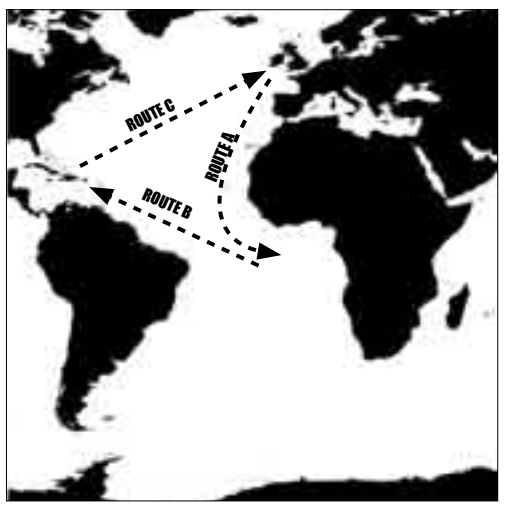
Today the Tate Gallery at the Albert Dock presents a very different history of henry Tate's legacy and bequeathment to the city

A HISTORY OF MONOPOLISATION AND GLOBAL EXPANSION

1819	Henry Tate born Chorley, Lancashire
1820	Abram Lyle born Greenock, Scotland
1859	Henry Tate forms sugar refining partnership in Liverpool
1865	Abram Lyle forms partnership and buys Glebe Refinery in Greenock
1869	Henry Tate dissolves partnership and starts own sugar refining company
1872	**Tate's Liverpool refinery begins operations**
1891	Abram Lyle dies
1897	Henry Tate endows Tate Gallery
1898	Henry Tate created baronet
1899	Sir Henry Tate dies
1921	Henry Tate & Sons and Abram Lyle & Sons merge to become Tate & Lyle
1922	Tate & Lyle begins beet sugar growing and processing
1936	British Sugar Corporation created to include Tate & Lyle's beet factories
1936/7	Tate & Lyle acquires cane sugar plantations in Trinidad and Jamaica
1953	Tate & Lyle acquires a 50% interest in the Rhodesia Sugar Refining Company
1959	Tate & Lyle acquires 51% of Canada & Dominion Sugar Co
1963	Tate & Lyle acquires Belize Sugar Industries
1965	Tate & Lyle acquires United Molasses and with it Pacific Molasses
1976	Tate & Lyle acquires Manbré & Garton, and Refined Syrups and Sugars in USA
1976	Tate & Lyle's Jamaica and Trinidad properties nationalized
1981	**Liverpool Refinery closed with loss of 2000 jobs**
1983	Tate & Lyle invests in Alcântara (Portugal)
1985	Tate & Lyle acquires Western Sugar (Colorado, USA)
1991	Tate & Lyle acquires Bundaberg Sugar in Australia
1993	Tate & Lyle invests in Juhocukor in Slovakia
1994	Tate & Lyle acquires control of Orsan, and invests in a refinery in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and Cocanougher Feed in the USA
1995	Tate & Lyle expands American sugar interests – Occidente (Mexico) and Allen Sugar and acquires O H Kruse, a leading supplier of mixed dairy. Tate & Lyle makes investments in China and Vietnam. Tate & Lyle also invests in Odessa Sugar Company in Ukraine and in three beet factories in Czech Republic, and takes controlling interest of Zambia Sugar
1996	Tate & Lyle invests in Bharat Starch Industries Ltd. Tate & Lyle increases its stake in SOMADIM in Morocco, and acquires R W Patten in Canada. In Africa Tate & Lyle makes investments in both Namibia and Botswana
1997	Greenock Refinery closed

1912

2004



Route A
Refined and processed commodities such as iron, firemarms and cloth accelerate the process of colonisation and establish the Atlantic Slave Trade.

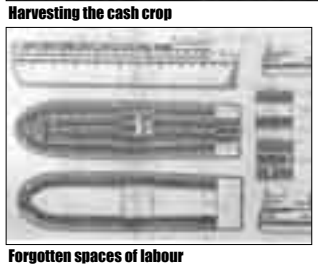
Route B
Slaves are transported to the West Indies and America, supplying the labour necessary to expand the harvests of cotton, tobacco and sugar.

Route C
Raw cotton, tobacco and sugar are shipped to cities such as Liverpool where they are refined to add value. In lIverpool the sugar refining plants existed alongside biscuit production, matchworks and chemical processing.


Arms and refined commodities


Colonial expedition


Harvesting the cash crop

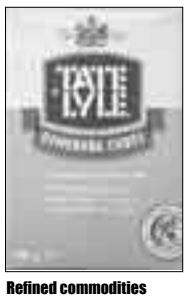

Forgotten spaces of labour


Violent transportation of slaves


Sugar cane


Trade routes


Love lane



Refined commodities

Nachdem Henry Tate und Abram Lyle zunächst eigene Zuckerwerke gegründet hatten, formten ihre Söhne 1921 die Zuckerraffinerie Tate&Lyle und schufen ein globales Produktions-, Veredelungs- und Handelsnetzwerk. Wärend die Arbeitsstätte in Liverpools Love Lane eine bedeutende Rolle für die lokale Wirtschaft und Arbeitergeschichte darstellt, so ist sie nur ein kleiner Aspekt innerhalb eines internationalen Systems kapitalistischer Ausbeutung von Arbeitskraft und natürlichen Resourcen.

1981 stellte die Zuckerraffinerie in Love Lane die Produktion ein nachdem bereits der Großteil von Tate&Lyles Zuckerproduktion nach Südamerika und Afrika verlagert worden war. Heute vermittelt die Tate Gallery in den Albert Docks eine komplett andere Geschichte und Hinterlassenschaft von Henry Tate.

RAVENSCRAIG STEELWORKS, MOTHERWELL

THE DINARDOS
A LIFE OF STEEL

1931

THE DINARDOS ARRIVE

TONY DINARDO ARRIVES IN GLASGOW WITH HIS TWO BROTHERS, AFTER EMIGRATING FROM GENOA, ITALY AGED 16.

HE SOON MEETS AND MARRIES LOCAL GIRL MARGRET.

1939

THE WAR

TONY IS CALLED UP TO FIGHT IN WORLD WAR II AND IS SENT TO AFRICA & ASIA.

MARGARET TAKES A JOB IN COLVILLE'S, THE LOCAL STEEL WORKS AS A CRANE DRIVER, SHE WANTS TO PLAY HER PART, BUT ALSO ENJOYS THE RESPONSIBILITY AND CHALLENGE. SHE HELPS PRODUCE 9 MILLION TONNES OF STEEL FROM MOTHERWELL DURING THE WAR.

WHILE TONY IS OFF FIGHTING HIS LOCAL AREA IS GROWING INTO A VERY PROSPEROUS STEEL TOWN.

1945

THE FAMILY MAN

TONY RETURNS FROM SERVICE A HERO TO FIND HIS TOWN BOOMING AS A RESULT OF THE ESCALATING STEEL AND IRON INDUSTRY. HE DECIDES TO START HIS OWN FISH & CHIP SHOP AND ICE CREAM PARLOUR ADJACENT TO THE STEELWORKS.

MARGARET QUITS HER JOB IN THE STEEL WORKS AND RETURNS TO THE HOME TO START A FAMILY. MARCO 1946, ANDREW 1955 AND ANTHONY 1958 WERE BORN. TONY WAS DELIGHTED WITH HIS BOOMING BUISSNESS AND FAMILY.

1967

MARCO - THE 1ST SON

AT THE AGE OF 16 MARCO LEAVES HIGH SCHOOL, BRIEFLY WORKS IN THE SHOP AND THEN TAKES UP AN APPRENTICESHIP AS AN IRON WORKER WITH THE NEWLY NATIONALISED BRITISH STEEL CORPORATION AT RAVENSCRAIG.

BRITISH STEEL IS FORMED BY THE CONSOLIDATION OF COLVILLE'S AND 13 OTHER CRODE STEEL PRODUCTION COMPANIES. MARCO ENJOYS THE EXCITEMENT OF HIS JOB BUT HE FINDS IT TIRING AND DANGEROUS.

1971

ANDREW - THE 2ND SON

ANDREW LEAVES HIGH SCHOOL AND BEGINS TO WORK AS A FREIGHT TRAIN DRIVER AT THE AGE OF 17. HE TRANSPORTS STEEL FROM RAVENSCRAIG TO VARIOUS PLACES ALL OVER BRITAIN.

ANDREW LOVES HIS JOB AS HE WAS ABLE TO TRAVEL TO MANY NEW PLACES AND HE ESPECIALLY ENJOYS THE THRILL OF THE TRAIN THUNDERING THROUGH THE COUNTRYSIDE.

1974

ANTHONY - THE 3RD SON

ANTHONY LEAVES HIGH SCHOOL AND BEGINS AN APPRENTICESHIP AS A DRAUGHTSMAN AT THE AGE OF 17. HE CAN SEE HOW HARD MARCO AND ANDREW'S JOBS ARE, AND WANTS TO USE HIS BRAINS RATHER THAN HIS BRAWN.

HE IS THE FIRST PERSON IN HIS FAMILY TO WEAR A SUIT TO WORK AND LIKES THE RESPECT THAT HE RECEIVES. HE DOESN'T WANT TO BE WORKING CLASS.

HE WANTS SOMETHING BETTER.

1975

THE EXTENDED FAMILY

TONY IS ONE HAPPY MAN, LIFE IS GOOD. HIS FAMILY HAS GROWN JUST LIKE THE STEEL INDUSTRY. ALL HIS CHILDREN HAVE MARRIED AND MOVE OUT. MARCO HAS TWO BOYS AND ANDREW HAS ONE GIRL.

TONY LIKES NOTHING BETTER THAN SPOILING HIS GRAND CHILDREN WITH ICE CREAM AND SWEETS.

TONY'S FAMILY IS INTRINSICALLY LINKED TO RAVENSCRAIG, ALL THEIR LIVELIHOODS ARE INTERTWINED WITH ITS CONTINUING SUCCESS.

1978

DAVID - MARCO'S 1ST SON

DAVID DINARDO IS NOW 16 AND HAS NO INTEREST IN SCHOOL. HE HAS DECIDED TO FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF HIS FATHER AND STARTED AN APPRENTICESHIP IN THE NEW 30 MILLION POUND CINTERPLANT. HE WILL BE PART OF 13,000 STRONG RAVENSCRAIG WORKFORCE.

MARCO AND TONY DISAGREE WITH HIS DECISION, AS THEY WANT HIM TO HAVE A EASIER LIFE THAN THEY DID, BUT ALL DAVIDS FRIENDS ARE WORKING IN I RAVENSCRAIG SO NOTHING WILL STOP HIM.

1979

MARCO - UNION MAN

MARCO HAS BEEN IN THE UNION BUT NEVER REALLY TAKEN AN INTEREST, BUT THE 1979 STRIKE HAS CHANGED ALL THAT.

SINCE THEN HE HAS RISEN THROUGH THE UNION TO BECOME UNION LEADER AFTER FIGHTING A VALIANT CAMPAIGN TO SAVE ANOTHER LOCAL STEEL PLANT IN GARTCOSH.

THE WORKERS LOVE MARCO AND HE APPEARS IN ALL THE PAPERS AS A SPOKESMAN FOR THE RAVENSCRAIG TRADE UNIONISTS.

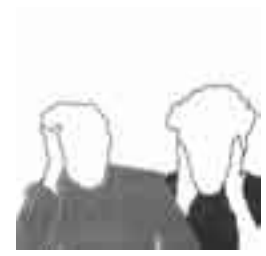
1988

SWITCHED OFF

BRITISH STEEL IS PRIVATISED AND CHAIRMAN SIR ROBERT SCHOLEY WARNS THAT RAVENSCRAIG "... WILL PROBABLY CLOSE."

MAY 15TH 1992 - BRITISH STEEL SAY "MARKET FORCES" DICTATE A JUNE CLOSURE FOR THE PLANT
JUNE 27TH 1992 - THE FINAL 1220 STEELWORKERS LEAVE RAVENSCRAIG FOR THE LAST TIME.

THE BLAST FURNACES ARE EXTINGUISHED AND SCOTTISH STEELMAKING ENDS.



1992

BITTER END?

MARCO (48) & DAVID (30) LEAVE WORK TOGETHER ON THE FINAL SHIFT DISTRAUGHT AT THE BLEAK FUTURE THEY FACE.

ALTHOUGH THEIR REDUNDANCY WILL PROVIDE THEM TEMPORARY SECURITY, THE SKILLS THEY HAVE HONED WILL NO LONGER BE NEEDED. ALL THE WORKERS ARE NOW ADVISED TO SEEK RE-TRAINING AT THE LOCAL COLLAGE WHERE THEY WILL BE RE-TRAINED.

THEY ARE NOT KEEN!

1994

KNOCK-ON EFFECT

TONY (79) HAS BEEN RETIRED FOR SEVERAL YEARS AND PASSES DAY TO DAY CONTROL OF THE SHOP TO HIS HIS GRANDDAUGHTER EMILY. SINCE THE CLOSURE AT RAVENSCRAIG BUSINESS HAS SEVERELY DWINDLED AND THE FAMILY IS FORCED TO CLOSE AND SELL UP. TONY IS GUTTED.

ANDREW (41) HAS JUST BE MADE REDUNDANT FROM SCOTRAIL, WHOM RELIED UPON RAVENSCRAIG FOR 40% OF THIER FREIGHT BUSINESS.

1996

KEVIN - MARCO'S 2ND SON

KEVIN (20) IS THE BLACK SHEEP OF THE FAMILY. HE HAS BEEN UNEMPLOYED SINCE LEAVING SCHOOL IN 1992.

THERE HAVE BEEN FEW OPPORTUNITIES SINCE THE RAVENCRAIG CLOSURE. HE HAS SLIPPED INTO PETTY CRIME AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE. THE ONLY JOB HE CAN FIND IS REFUGE COLLECTION.

HE THINKS HE IS BETTER THAN A BIN MAN BUT THERE IS NOTHING ELSE.

1998

THE NEW FAMILY BUSINESS

THE DINARDO FAMILY HAVE HAD A TOUGH FEW YEARS, WITH HALF THE FAMILY UNEMPLOYED AND THE OTHER HALF A MOSTLY WORKING IN TEMPORARY OR PART-TIME JOBS.

BANKROLLED BY TONY, MARCO AND DAVID HAVE STARTED A NEW BUSINESS INSTALLING CONSERVATORIES TO MEET THE DEMAND OF THE FELLOW REDUNDANT WORKERS WHO ARE INVESTING THEIR PAY-OFFS INTO THEIR PROPERTIES.

2002

CORUS GET RICH

SINCE BEING MADE REDUNDANT ANDREW HAS WORKED FOR THE COUNCIL DESIGNING SOCIAL HOUSING BUT THIS MONTH HE HAS FOUND A NEW JOB WORKING ON THE RAVENSCRAIG REGENERATION.

THE STEEL COMPANY (CORUS FORMERLY BRITISH STEEL) ARE DEVELOPING THE LAND TO BUILD LUXURY HOUSING AND SHOPS FOR MASSIVE PROFITS. ANDREW IS LOOKING FORWARD TO RELOCATING TO THIS EXCLUSIVE AREA.

The Ravenscraig Steel Plant was once one of Europe's largest steel manufacturing plants. Closed in the early 1990's the site is currently subject to ambitious plans to create a new town on the contaminated land. While Corex - formerly the nationalised company British Steel - was able to rationalise the workforce, they stand now to make many millions from the re-development of the land.

Ravenscraig Steel Plant war einer der größten Stahlproduzenten in Europa. Zu Beginn der 1990er Jahre wurde das Werk geschlossen. Für das kontaminierte Gelände existieren heute ambitionierte Pläne eine neue Stadt zu errichten. Nachdem Corex – das ehemals staatliche Unternehmen British Steel – die gesamte Arbeiterschaft entlassen hat, wird der Konzern durch die Entwicklung und den Verkauf des Geländes heute viele Millionen Pfund Gewinn erwirtschaften.

MATCHWORKS, SPEKE

The former Matchworks Factory in Speke, Liverpool was until 1994 used for processing and storing millions of matchesfor the manufacturer Bryant & May. Sharp falls in the sale and use of matches, coupled with increased mechanisation led to the plants closure. It has since been transformed into a business villageby developer UrbanSplash with tennants including major corporations Vodafone, UPS, lastminute.com and BBC Freeview. The call centre operator Vertex also have an operation in the building.

The matchmaking factory at Speke played an important role in women's labour history in Liverpool. As with many other refining indudtries in the city, the large workforce of women and children undertook many of the low paid and arduous tasks which often brought with them dangerous working conditions. Sulphur poisoning was a common ailment suffered in the matchmaking industry.

Today, with its service sector administrative and customer service focus, Matchworks continues to be a key site for women's labour. Many of the extreme injustices suffered by women in the workplace have long sincebeen remedied, however women can still expect to receive poorer pay and conditions on average than men undertaking similar employment. In short the need for labour to organise itself in pursuit of fair pay and conditions is as strong as ever.

Could the inspiring example of the Matchgirls Union serve as an example for those working in contemporary service sector industries in places suh as Liverpool?

The Matchgirls Union 1888
Investigative journalist, Annie besant (left) joined forces with a group of women workers from the Bryant & May factory in London to campaign against dangerous working conditions and miserly levels of pay.
Having gone on strike, the management at Bryant & May threatened to move production abroad or bring blackleg workers from its other UK plants in Liverpool and Glasgow. After weeks of campaigning Bryant & May backed down and granted the women their demands to abolish systems of fines and improve working conditions.
Shortly after the Matchgirls Union was formed. It has served as an inspiration to all who are engaed in struggles in the workplace, particularly those in casualised low paid emplyment.

5 FACTS
Women in the UK workplace 2004

- women are less likely than men to work as managers or senior officials (10% of employed women compared with 18% of working men)
- women's hourly earnings are lower than men's (£8.87 and £11.14 per hour respectively)
- minority ethnc women are less likely to be employed than white women
- on graduating women can expect to be paid 15% less than men
- 97% of people taking engineering apprenticeships are men, wheras 97% of apprentices in the childcare sector are women

The Matchworks Factory in Speke has been the last producer of wooden matches in the UK and has since its closure in 1994 been transformed by Urban Splash into a retail and business park, exploiting its links to the motorway and airport. The Matchworks, once part of a global production circuit that included Canadian lumber and European smokers, has currently Vertex call centres as a major tenant dealing with service enquiries from across the UK.

Die Matchworks Fabrik in Speke war der letzte Hersteller von Streichhölzern in Großbritannien und wurde nach der Schließung durch die Projektentwickler Urban Splash in einen Gewerbepark umgewandelt der von seiner Nähe zu Autobahn und Flughafen profitiert. Einst Teil eines globalen Produktionskreislaufes der kanadisches Holz und europäische Raucher einschloß, haben die Matchworks derzeit das Großbritannien-weit operierende Call Center Vertex als Hauptmieter.

IBM, GREENOCK

HECTOR MACNEIL (GREENOCK MP)

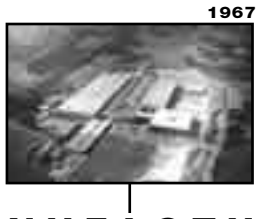
MASSIVE GRANTS

T.J. WATSON (IBM CHAIRMAN)

WORKFORCE (NO TRADE UNIONS: disincentives prevent joining)

600 1670 2500 5500

1950 1954 1967 1982 2003



GAS WATER ELECTRICITY RAILWAY

PUNCH CARDS
VERIFIERS
TYPEWRITERS

MANUFACTURE

SELECTRIC TYPEWRITER

5100

FRAGMENTATION

DEPARTMENTS INDEPENDENT OF EACH OTHER WORKING FOR A WORLD WIDE IBM NETWORK RATHER THAN FOR LOCAL CONCERNS

IBM 'CAMPUS'

TECH. SUPPORT LEVEL 1

WORLDWIDE PROCUREMENT

TECH. SUPPORT LEVEL 2

BUSINESS RECOVERY SERVICE

WORLDWIDE FULFILL-MENT

CONVERTED SOLD

(IBMíS EXIT STRATEGY)

SOLUTIONS

PRODUCTION

3 yr supply contract

600 workers transfered

SANMINA

?00 TEMP.WORKERS

ADECCA

AGENCIES

CLAREMONT

REDUNDANCIES
(DOING IBMíS DIRTY WORK FOR THEM)

INTERNATIONAL RECTRUITMENT

MANPOWER

600 WORKERS

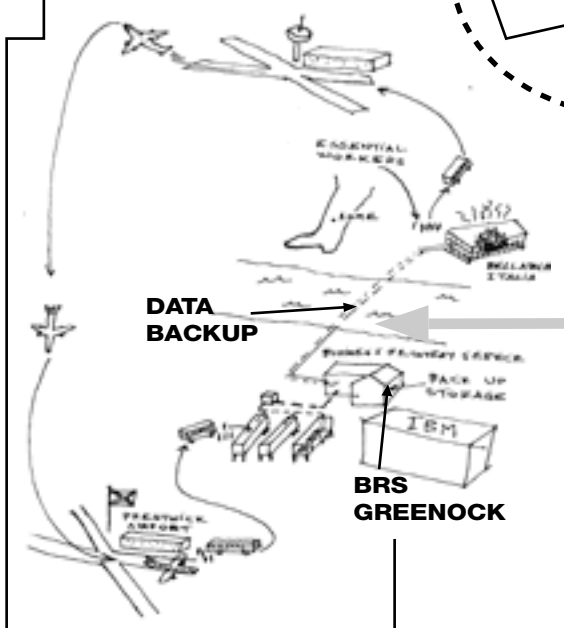
DOTCOM CALL CENTRE

MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUE

NEO UNITARISM MANAGEMENT STYLE:

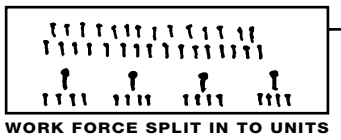
A) DIVIDE WORK FORCE IN TO UNITS
B) DISCOURAGE COLLECTIVISM
C) WORKERS DEPENDENT ON LINE MANAGERS FOR PAY RISE
D) WORKERS FALLING OUT OF LINE BECOME ISOLATED AND LOSE OUT FINANCIALLY
E) ENCOURAGES PACK MENTALITY

Example of IBM Business 'solution'

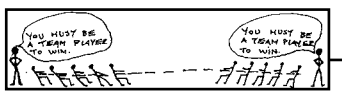


DATA BACKUP

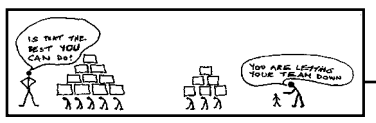
BRS GREENOCK



WORK FORCE SPLIT IN TO UNITS



COMPETATIVE MENTALITY SET UP BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS



WORKERS BECOME ISOLATED IF PROBLEMS ARISE

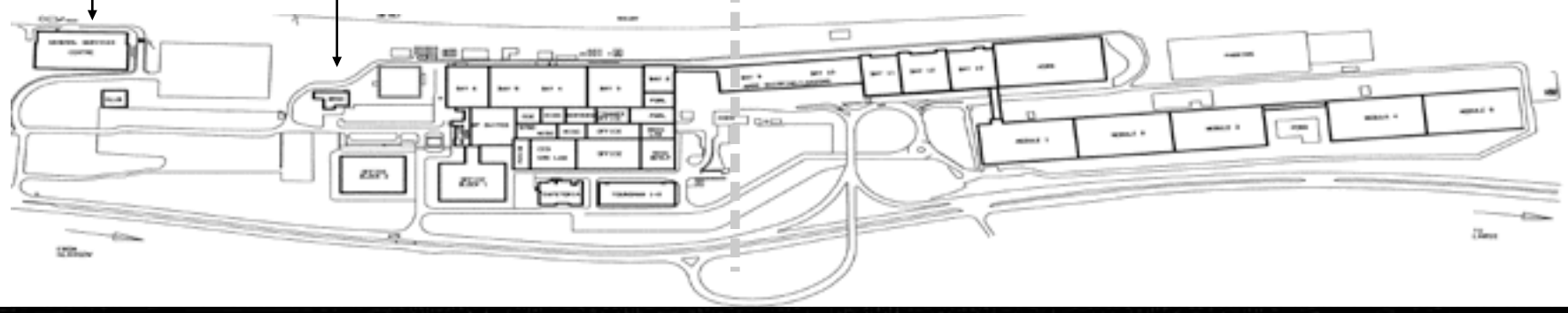
STRESS RELATED ILLNESSES

CHEAPER LABOUR

2005?

BUDAPEST

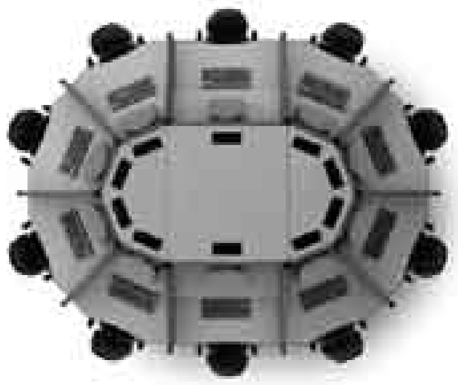
PRODUCTION TRANSFERRED TO HUNGARY



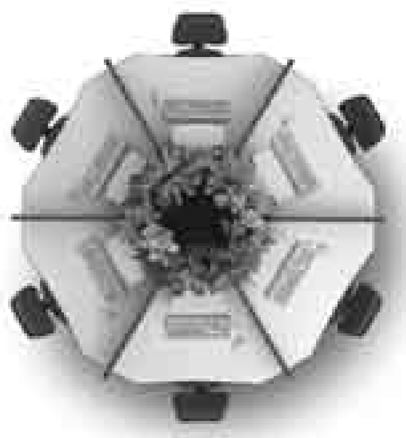
The IBM plant in Greenock no longer produces microprocessors. Today it houses a multi-national workforce employed in the call-centre industry. Skilled workers are encouraged to migrate to this part of Scotland to compensate for the falling population despite general attempt to enforce stronger immigration measures. Hi-tech manufacturing follows 19th century heavy industries in relocating production to the poorer southern hemisphere and casualising their existing workforce.

Die IBM Fabrik in Greenock produziert heute keine Mikroprozessoren mehr sondern beherbergt eine multinationale Belegschaft, die in der Call Center Industrie angestellt ist. Facharbeiter werden dabei entgegen der allgemeinen Einwanderungsbegrenzungen angeworben um den Bevölkerungsschwund in diesem Teil Schottlands auszugleichen. Die Hi-Tech Industrie folgt damit dem Model der Schwerindustrie, die Produktion in Billiglohnländer auszutagern und die existierende Arbeiterschaft mit Zeitarbeitern zu ersetzen.

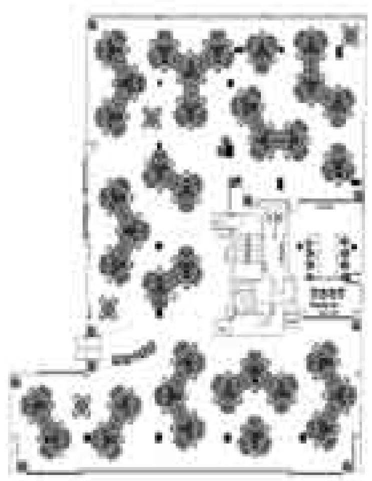
CALL CENTRE WORKSPACES





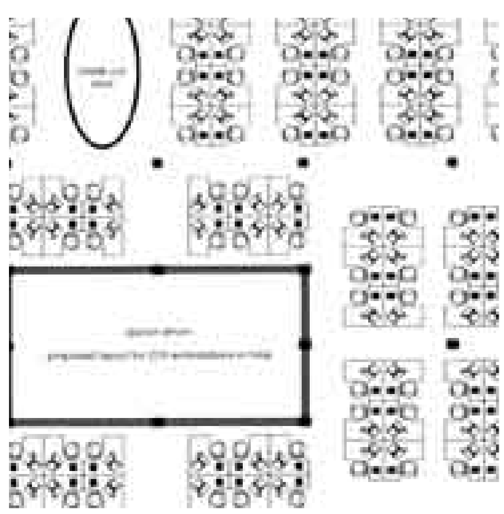











FROM THE LOOM TO THE INDUSTIRAL MILL BY TOM MARKUS

Vom Webstuhl zur Textilfabrik

Raum (Space) bedeutet gleichzeitig etwas konkretes und etwas Abstraktes. Die konkreten Elemente welche den Raum definieren sind Teil einer mehrdimensionalen Struktur oder Konfiguration. Es ist diese Konfiguration welche die sozialen Beziehungen innerhalb des Raumes definiert.

In öffentlichen Gebäuden wie Banken oder Kirchen befindet sich das diese sozialen Beziehungen kontrollierende Element tief innerhalb der räumlichen Struktur während sich die Situation in institutionellen Bauten hingegen umkehrt. So ist in der Textilmanufaktur der Eingang durch die Mittel der Zeitkontrolle und das nahe der Fassade liegende Kontor überwacht. Eine ähnliche räumliche Struktur findet sich in Gefängnissen oder Krankenhäusern.

Räumliche Konfigurationen sind folgendermassen definiert: durch diejenigen die den Ort der Arbeit wählen, die Räume der Arbeit errichten und ihre Bedingungen festlegen, sowie ökonomische und politische Macht ausüben können; und durch diejeningen die sich zu diesen Arbeitsstätten begeben müssen und sie als Arbeiter besetzen, die wenig Macht und Einfluß haben den Arbeitsort, den Arbeitsraum oder die Arbeitsbedingungen zu bestimmen.

In der Phase der Pre-Urbanisierung wurden Erzeugnisse des Feldes, der See und des Wald zu Gebrauchsgegenständen verarbeitet, wobei der Hersteller weiterhin das Recht über seine Produktionsmittel behielt.
Im Laufe der Entwicklung zur vorindustriellen Weberei und dem frühen Fabriksystem ergibt sich dann ein Wandel von der handwerklichen, auf der Familieneinheit basierenden Textilproduktion, hin zu einer Kapitalintensiven Produktionsweise.

Der mutlifunktionale Raum im Haus des Handwerkers oder Webers der sowohl als Produktionsstätte als auch alltäglicher Lebensraum diente, entwickelte sich zunächst in die gemeinschaftliche Webereiwerkstatt, welche von einem seperaten Treppenhaus aus erschlossen wurde, das neben dem Kaufmannshaus lag und von dem aus der Transport der Ware, die Zeitkontrolle und der Lohn überwacht wurde.

Der Webereiwerkstatt folgt die Baumwollweberei des späten 18. Jahrhunderts in der Raum, Arbeit und Maschine vollkommen hierarchisch organisiert wurden.

Die Einführung von Elektrizität befreite schließlich die Produktionstätte von den lokalen Energiequellen Wasser oder Dampfmaschine und veränderte so auch die Organisation der Maschinen selbst.

Die heutigen Stätten von Kapitaltransaktionen, Bank und Dienstleistungsbüro, brauchen nur mehr kleinste Maschinen, wie den PC im Gegensatz zu den einst fixierten Produktionsstätten. Jedoch ist die ehemals visuelle Kontrolle der Arbeit nur von der elektronischen Überwachung abgelöst worden. Als Folge bleibt für den Großteil der Arbeiter und Angestellten das Konzept von Freiheit in der Arbeit nur ein utopischer Traum.

Both title words are open to interpretation. Is *space* a concrete, material thing, or is it an absence, something interstitial between events or objects or? And work now being dependant on information technology and on the mobility of workers, how can *labour* be adequately defined? And, since we hear much about the workforce, workplaces, and workspaces, is *labour* distinguishable from *work*?

Here I use *space* as meaning something which is both concrete and abstract. It is concrete, first, in that it forms the reality of all social experience, examples of which are listed by Hillier (1996, p29): ' … encountering, congregating, avoiding, interacting, dwelling, teaching, eating, conferring' which, he says, '..are not just activities that happen in space. In themselves they *constitute* spatial patterns' (my emphasis). He could have added that ancient and universal social experience – working. Secondly it is concrete in that our bodies, and all the objects we use, are contained in space. But built space is also abstract in that whilst it is *formed* by concrete, elements – building facades, walls, floors, roofs, windows, doors – it is of itself abstract, intangible and invisible.

The concrete elements which define spaces are more or less permeable and both they and the spaces they define are parts of a spatial structure or configuration. It is this configuration which governs social relations in space. Individual spaces have no more meaning than individual, a-social, human beings. So all space is social and all society is spatial.

To describe the structure or configuration of space I draw on the Space Syntax work of Bill Hillier and his colleagues at the Bartlett, in University College London (1984, 1996). The approach is topological rather than geometrical. Space is described by nextness and permeability through its boundaries, rather than by dimensions, shapes or proportions. At its simplest, one can imagine three adjacent spaces *a, b* and *c*, with openings between *a-b* and *b-c*, and between Ø (all the external space - symbolised by Ø) and *a*, giving *Ø-a* (Figure 1). If one imagines a journey from Ø, the outside, progressing through *a* and *b* into *c*, one can plot this journey as a planar graph by putting the three spaces onto three lines – 1, 2 and 3 (Figure 2a). This spatial structure is three layers deep and is completely linear or tree-like (though in this simple case it has only a trunk, without branches); it is as deep as any three-space complex can be. With an additional opening from the outside into *c*, the structure become shallower, with only two layers, and it now has a ring – that is one can return to the outside without passing through the spaces *a* and *b* (Figure 2b) With a further opening between Ø and *b* the structure becomes only one layer deep (as shallow as any structure can be) and now has three rings – two small ones and a large one (Figure 2c).

Evidently some structures are deep, some shallow, some tree-like, some "ringy". These signify quite different relations between users or objects, degrees of freedom in the choice of routes, opportunities for chance encounters, solidarities and possibilities for control and surveillance. In other words spatial maps also map social relations; and since these are of power, which is political issue, all space is political. Even drawing the most elementary component of space, a line on a plan, is a political act. At the building's boundary this line separates private and public space; inside a building, the space of one group from that of another.

Hillier *et al* argue that public buildings such as banks, churches or theatres separate inhabitants, who control the building's programme, deep within the structure, from visitors (customers, congregations or audiences) near the surface, in shallow space. The interface between them, the counter, communion rail or proscenium arch, is a crucial spatial element. They then argue that institutional buildings are reversed; the inhabitants near the surface and the visitors (hospital patients, prisoners or school children) deep. Whilst in most buildings increasing depth signifies increasing power, in reversed buildings it signifies decreasing power - the most controlled people in the deepest space. This inversion has importance for production buildings. In some – such as the textile mill – entrance is adjacent to and under surveillance from timekeeping, counting house and managerial offices, located near the surface; in this they resemble prisons, military barracks and hospitals. In other types – typically the modern electronics factory or insurance office – the executive offices are deep within, with power delegated to some peripheral control functions such as gatekeeping, security and information.

Not all social relations are embedded in space. The members of a family, the employees of an enterprise or the users of a health centre, related to each other by differences in status, gender and work roles (=organic solidarity), produce and reproduce their social relations in the local space of the home, the factory or the clinic. On the other hand members of a profession, an academic discipline, a religious group, or a trade union - with equivalent status and roles (=mechanical solidarity), maintain their relationships only, or partly, trans-spatially. Communication by publication, 'phones, correspondence or the Internet is more important than spatial propinquity. Space is profoundly implicated where the relation of men to women, or owners of capital (or their agents) to workers, is marked by differentiation of roles and power in organic solidarities. One way of overcoming, or subverting, oppressive social structures of, say, gender or class, is through trans-spatial relationships. Science fiction's cyberspace is precisely that - liberation from the strongly programmed, local space such as that of the home, factory or office.

For an adequate definition of *labour* one can do no better than return to Marx's, 'Das Kapital', with its analysis of two conflicting desires: to be free *from* work and to be free *in* work. Freedom *from* work envisages an escape from the creation of surplus value. Here the product, beyond having a use, also creates a value greater than the sum of the values of materials, tools, machines and labour put into its production; in other words a surplus value, which gives a profit to the investor. To maximise the surplus value, the value (or cost) of production must be minimised by exploitative conditions of labour, to which the natural response can only be 'escape *from*'. Such conditions, which alienate the worker from him/herself, from society and from nature, exist even when the material conditions of life are relatively affluent.

On the other hand freedom *in* work is a condition where the worker owns his or her labour and all the means of production. The product has a use value, directly, or by exchange. Initially exchange was barter, but using symbolic tokens for value (eventually money), through exchange or sale (a particular form of exchange) the producer obtains other usable products. The seamless fabric of work, buildings, materials, tools, machines and labour yields, even in harsh conditions, a meaningful relationship with yourself, with others and with nature – in other words an unalienated existence. A desire for such conditions is a desire to be free *in* work.

In Marx's German original the two forms of work were signified by the same word – *arbeit*. However in English, ever since Engels' translation of Marx in 1887, 'work' has been used to describe the process of creating use value, and 'labour' (in the sense of 'toil') for creating surplus value. Underlying imagined utopias, such as William Morris's *News from Nowhere,* is a vision of moving from 'freedom *from'* to 'freedom *in'* – from labour to work. Since the industrial revolution, for all but a fortunate minority, experience has been of 'labour'; 'work' has increasingly receded to a deep, mythical, memory.

Spatial configurations can support either alienated (labour) or unalienated (work). An asymmetry arises because those who choose the places of work, produce its spaces, and define its conditions, have economic and political power; those who travel to or between these places and occupy them are the workers who, have little power to determine the location, the spaces, or the conditions of work. This asymmetry is evident in the macro and micro structures of space.

That in today's rhetoric we speak of *work*places and *work*spaces should not obscure the fact that we should really speak of *labour*places and *labour*spaces (as our title does). The evasion avoids overt reference to the conflict of labour and capital. That we reluctantly use the undifferentiated 'work', whatever the conditions of production might be, simply makes it marginally more likely that we will be heard.

The creation of use value goes back, of course, to the beginnings of civilization, even to the time before urbanization. Products from land, sea and forests were directly consumed or were transformed into objects of use value such as pottery, textiles, leatherwork and building materials. Even when these were exchanged or sold as commodities, so long as the producer retained ownership of the means of production, the process retained the necessary autonomy to be free *in* work. The places of production were juxtaposed with the places for dwelling. Of course there were exceptions, such as summer pastures distant from settlements, or fishing grounds at sea. But in general both place and space were juxtaposed. Multifunctional space in artisan dwellings served both the needs of production and of everyday living, as with the spinning

wheel in the main living room, the dairy next to the farmhouse, or the weaving loft above the house.

One step towards changing from artisan to capital-based production was the eighteenth century 'putting out' system in the textile industry. Here a merchant supplied material to workers who worked under a piece rate contract in the domestic situation. Often the merchant also owned the machinery such as looms. Spatially nothing had yet changed – the worker's house was indistinguishable from that of the artisan. But a new, and separate space, the merchant's house, appeared – containing the necessary functional spaces of capital - vault or safe, meeting room, yarn store, and finished goods store. The economic system was entirely new. The investor now owned machinery, labour and products. In effect an invisible 'factory' was in the making.

Even earlier, when the producer was also the merchant, as in many 15th and 16th century Hanseatic towns, a single complex contained the family's living spaces, a shop open to the street, and production spaces and yards to the rear. Through the employment of resident or non-resident workers and apprentices, working under supervision in the workshops and yards, we have a proto-factory. Both this and the 'putting out' processes created surplus value for the merchant. Radically new forms of social relations appeared involving the owner or merchant, his or her family and servants, employees, apprentices and customers. Step by step the workers ceased to be free *in* their work.

Before the mature mill and factory systems came into being there were other intermediate stages. One of great interest was the transformation of artisan textile production, based on the family unit, to capital-intensive production. Three stages can be observed.

In the first stage the traditional textile family house had three storeys. The ground floor contained entrance, kitchen and living spaces where the woman and children would carry out the spinning and other preparatory stages of yarn production. The first floor was sleeping accommodation. The second or attic floor was the weaving room where the man operated the heavy handloom. The finished cloth was sold to a merchant of his choice. A typical plan, section and spatial map are shown in Figure 3. But two radically different economic and social systems came to use this same kind of production space. One was 'the 'putting out' system which has already been described. In the other the investor or 'company' owned everything – buildings, machines, raw material and (wage) labour.

In the second stage, whilst the weaving attic was still directly accessed from each house, the party walls were omitted in the attic, thus giving a long, communal loomshop (Figure 4) where, though each loom might still have been owned by one weaver, nevertheless a co-operative work and social pattern developed, which occasionally become a trading partnership. At the same time a new gender relation emerged - men increasing their power through spatial and social solidarity, whilst women and children retained their traditional, segregated space. It was the transformation of *space* which allowed– one might say created – these changed relationships. But more frequently such communal loom shops operated, as in stage 1, either in the 'putting out' mode, where the materials and, usually, the looms were owned by the merchant, or in the 'company' house mode.

In the third and final stage the staircases from each first floor to the attic disappeared (Figure 5). The long communal loom shop could now only be accessed by leaving the house and climbing a two storey staircase next to a larger, end house occupied by the merchant or his employee. From this house not only the movement of goods and workers in and out of the loom shop was controlled, but also timekeeping and wages.

The next major innovation was the substitution of water, and later steam, power as the driving force for a large concentration of machines, housed in a single, multi-storey mill. Since the first textile machine inventions were for spinning, it was these machines which replaced the domestic spinning wheels, and, with them the manual labour force of women and children. Thus a curious reversal occurred – women and children in the mills, as machine hands, men still working the heavy handlooms in a domestic mode. Some fifty years later they too moved into the weaving sheds next to the spinning mill, to work with power looms

Before considering the mature cotton mill of the late 18th century such as David Dale's and Robert Owen's mills at New Lanark, an odd, and possibly unique, type was built in the early 18th century. This was the Lombe Brothers' five storey silk spinning mill (1717-19) on the River Derwent in Derby (Figure 6). The waterwheel-driven machinery consisted of winding machines on the upper two floors and huge, vertical, cylindrical twisting and throwing machines on the lower three floors. The water wheel at one end drove a single *horizontal* shaft at basement level, which in turn drove a series of *vertical* shafts rising from the basement to the top floor. It was these which drove the cylindrical machines on the lower two floors, and the other machinery on the upper floors. Thus mechanical power was grouped vertically, but space and social relationships were structured horizontally. On each level groups of workers, not necessarily engaged in a single process, worked around the vertical shafts. All, on any single floor, were controlled by one (floor) manager. So supervision and maintenance of each mechanical power device (vertical shaft) was divided between five (floor) supervisors, and supervision of the labour force on each floor by a single supervisor.

Fifty or so years later, when the first massive cotton spinning mills were constructed, the distribution of mechanical power from the water wheel was radically different. The wheel drove a single *vertical* shaft, at one end of the building. This in turn drove a *horizontal* shaft on each floor, which, by means of ropes or belts, powered all the machinery along the full length of that floor. As a result the three structures - space (floor by floor), labour (now differentiated and specialised on each floor), and mechanical power - became completely congruent and hierarchical (Figure 7). The mill owner could sell or rent out one or more entire floors, and also charge for the power he supplied. In this fully developed hierarchical form there is a tree-like structure which with little change lasted through the next century and well into the 20th. Its clarity strangely

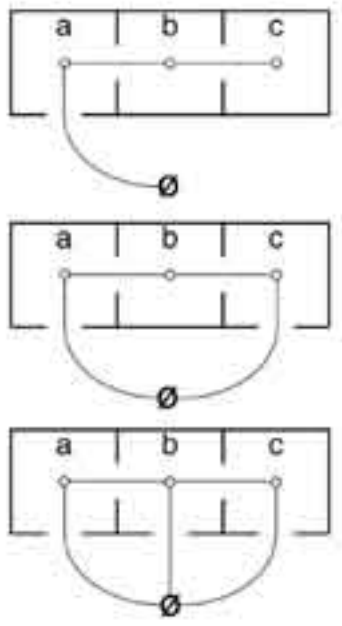


Figure 1
Three arrangements of a "three-space" plan

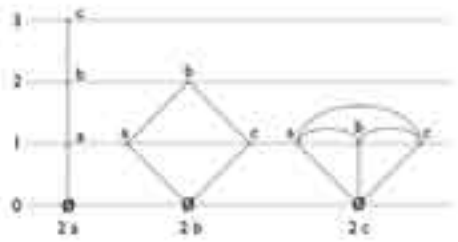


Figure 2
Space syntaxes of figure 1 plans

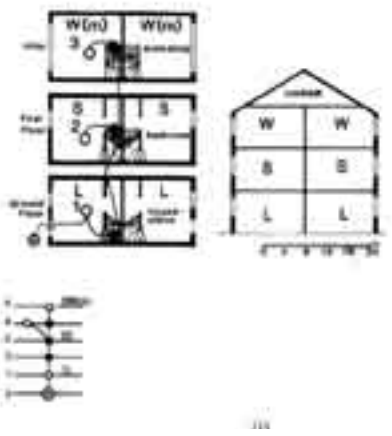


Figure 3
Plans, section, and syntax of a mill worker's house with attic weaving room

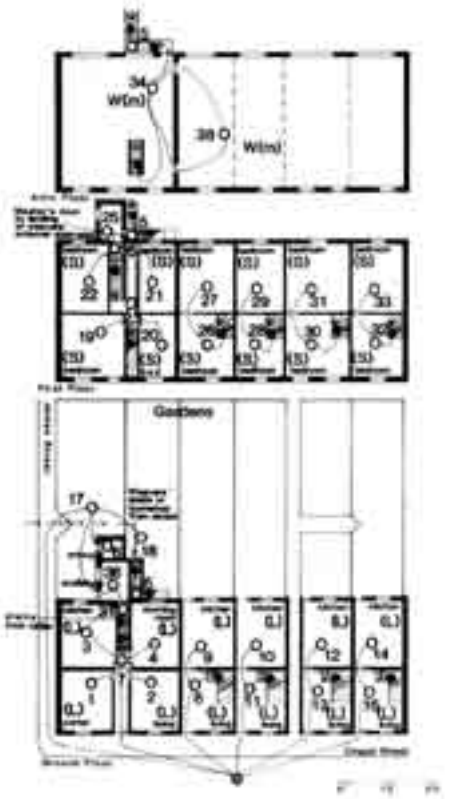


Figure 5
Plans and syntax of a row of weavers' houses with single external access to an attic loom shop

Figure 6
Lombe Brothers' five-storey silk spinning mill on the River Derwent in Derby, (1717-19)

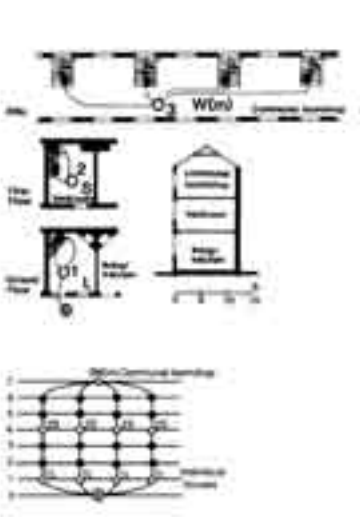


Figure 4
Plans, section, and syntax of a row of weavers' houses with separate access to common attic weaving room

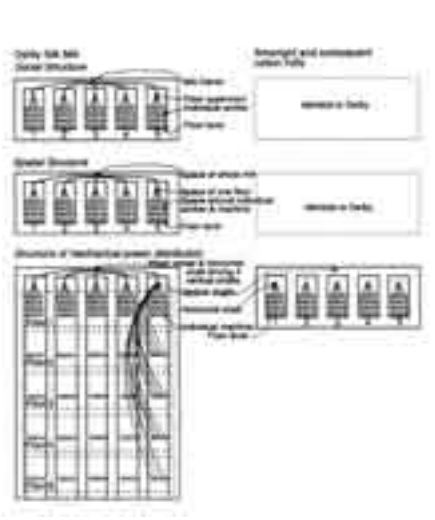


Figure 7
Syntaxes of Derby Silk Mill and typical 18th century cotton spinning mill

resembles that of military and penal

Phil Taylor, Peter Bain – Orte der Arbeit - Orte der Hoffnung

Über die letzten 10 Jahren hat das Call Center die Struktur und Art des Dienstleistungssektors in den hochentwicklten kapitalistischen Ländern transformiert. Im Jahr 2003 arbeiteten allein in den USA ungefähr 6 Millionen Menschen in diesem Sektor, in Großbritannien waren es wenigstens eine halbe Million, und – im Zuge der zunehmenden Verlagerung der Branche in die sogenannten Entwicklungsländer – sind in der lindischen Call Center Industrie bereits 100.000 Menschen angestellt.

Unser allgemeines Bild des Call Center Phänomens ist dabei durch propagierte Mythen von Medien, Industrie und unkritischen Akademikern verzerrt worden. Unzutreffende, optimistische Bilder von glücklichen Call Center Angestellten die für persönliche Kundenbefriedigung sorgen, erscheinen in den Hochglanz Magazinen der Branche und im Stellenmarktteil von Zeitungen und Journalen. Die dystopische Kehrseite dieser Abbildung ist die der „Legefabrik“ oder des „Elektronischen Sweat Shops“.

Dieses verzerrte Bild geht einher mit einer weitverbreiteten Weigerung das ethische Verhalten dieser von Kostenminimierung und Maximierung der Aktienwerte getriebenen Firmen zu hinterfragen. Ursprung, Entwicklung und Wesen der Call Center sind ohne den Kontext von Kapitalismus und Wettbewerb nicht zu erklären. Die Kostenminimierungs- und Profitmaximier ungsstrategien dieser Firmen sowie deren Bestrebungen nach einem stetig wachsenden Marktanteil haben dabei grundlegende Auswirkungen auf die Art wie Arbeit organsiert und erlebt wird.

Zwar können Arbeitsorganisation und Ablauf sowohl innerhalb als auch zwischen Call Centern variieren, dennoch kann ein typisches Call Center als ein System von überwachten und gemessenen Arbeitsleistungen in Relation zu den als Kontrollmechanismen dienenden Arbeitszielen beschrieben werden.

Call Center Agenten haben dabei in Hinblick auf die Arbeitsgeschwindigkeit, die Pausen, oder das Planen von Aufgaben wenig Kontrolle. Dies ist gepaart mit schlechten räumlichen Arbeitsbedingungen. Ergebniss dieser stressvollen Bedingungnen sind vorzeitige Burn-Outs, hohe Kranheitsausfälle, Unzufriednheit und Kummer.

In diesem Zusammenhang ist es wichitg festzuhalten, daß Gewerkschaften relevant und bereits in Call Centern verbreitet sind. Sie schöpfen aber ihr Potential dort nicht völlig aus. Die Verteidigung der Arbeisplätze muß organisiert sein um dem Kostenminimieren und den üblichen Strategien des „Teilens und Herrschens“ der Arbeitgeber, das vor keiner Grenze halt macht, entgegnen zu können.

Call Centres and Myth Creation

In the last decade, the call centre has transformed the structure and nature of service employment in the advanced capitalist countries. No area of economic activity where customer servicing takes places - from telecommunications or financial services to holidays or shopping – has, it seems, remained impervious to the call centre's onward march. Consider the scale of employment. By 2003, an estimated six million worked in the sector in the US, at least 500,000 in the UK and, as offshoring has grown, probably 100,000 are now employed in the Indian industry. Moving from the global to the local, our research has established that 56,000 were employed in Scottish call centres in 2003, compared to just 16,000 in 1997 and 46,000 in 2000. That is to say, 1 in 43 of the working population in Scotland is now a call centre worker (Taylor and Bain, 2003a).

Bare statistics alone cannot convey the significance of the changes the call centre has brought in its wake - to the work realities of millions, to the customer experience of many more millions, to employment prospects in areas blighted by long-term industrial decline, to the built environment of cities' central business districts and suburban business parks, and to towns and cities worldwide.

Yet society's understanding of the call centre phenomenon has been distorted by the myth propagation industry; by the media in its quest for simplistic sensationalism, by industry 'boosterists', apologists and consultants expressing their vested interests, and by the writings of uncritical academics.

Unfeasibly optimistic images of the shiny, happy (and young) call centre agent, providing personalised customer satisfaction in a reassuring, relaxed and professional manner, still appear in newspaper recruitment sections and industry glossies. Less common now, though, is the associated fiction that agents' comforting regional accents are the source of competitive advantage and companies' locational choice. However, to the extent that an uplifting portrayal of the call centre continues to be presented in the face of contrary evidence, it supposes that profitable company, contented customer and fulfilled worker form a virtuous circle of mutual gain, a cheerful no-loser scenario, itself part of the grander legend of the 'new economy'.

Its dystopian counterpart has seen the call centre potrayed as a 'battery farm', or 'electronic sweatshop' or even, in the impressionistic and pseudo-intellectual musings of certain academics, as an 'electronic panopticon' – a sort of cyber-prison where surveillance is total, control complete and 'supervisors' power has been rendered perfect' by the technology.

Several other myths have been refuted by subsequent developments. Firstly, for example, during the fastest period of the sector's growth, during the late-1990s', it was widely believed that the call centre was an ephemeral organisational form, 'here today and gone tomorrow', to be displaced by the rise of internet and automated customer interaction, a view still being peddled (see Michael Skapinker, Financial Times, 11 February 2004). That call centres have continued to grow in number and employment, with many becoming multi-channel contact centres, where the volume of voice and e-contact have increased in tandem, cautions us against speculation based upon a crudely revamped technological determinism.

Secondly, many predicted that because call centres embodied 'distance shrinking technologies', widespread geographical dispersal would follow with decentralisation producing empowered, small-scale servicing units. Yet, distinctive urban and regional concentrations developed, often in the euphemistically-named development regions, with companies' locational decisions primarily influenced by access to supplies of skilled but cheaper labour, low building and occupancy costs, infrastructural accessibility and an array of incentives and support provided by local enterprise bodies and investment agencies. For example, 86% of all Scottish call centre employment is to be found in the old industrial central belt. Further, far from the fantasies of the 'Wired' technopians, the call centre has stubbornly refused to conform to the ideal of Alvin Toffler's 'electronic cottage'. That three-quarters of total Scottish employment is in call centres of 250 or more workers indicates the underlying capitalist tendencies to centralisation to gain the benefits of mass production and economies of scale.

However, before our eyes new myths are being created, again without regard to evidence. That all call centre jobs are set to disappear to India, and that services provided by an educated Indian workforce are of superior quality, are now accepted as received wisdom. While, undeniably, there are real forces driving offshoring – overall costs of 40-60% those of the UK, labour costs roughly 70% less – there are also powerful factors inhibiting migration. Yet the fact that globalisation is not inevitable and that genuine problems exist in India are scarcely alluded to. An example of the dumbed-down 'journalism' which wilfully misrepresents reality was provided by the BBC television documentary Frontline Scotland (4th February 2004). Sympathetically accepting employers' self-interested accounts as established fact; simultaneously ignoring the stated intentions of most Scottish employers not to migrate jobs; failing to report widely-known problems in India such as turnover rates of up to 50%; neglecting to mention stressful working conditions which include intensive 9-hour night-shifts; treating cultural and linguistic difference as non-problematic, were all symptomatic of an unwillingness to consider complexity or contradiction. Worse still has been the widespread refusal to question the ethical conduct of companies driven by the twin obsessions of cost-cutting and maximising shareholder value. How can the practice of obliging, or encouraging, Indian workers to adopt anglicised names and identities be justified? And, relatedly, is it acceptable for companies – either directly or through their outsourcers – to compel their employees to conceal from customers the (Indian) location of their call centre? And even worse, for it panders to racism, is a reporter asking an Indian worker how she feels about taking a British worker's job- as if offshoring decisions were made by call centre agents and not their employers!

Given the prevalence of misinformation, it is hardly surprising then that essential characteristics of the call centre remain obscured in contemporary discourse. In attempting to redress this situation we focus, firstly, on the call centre's origins and development, and then turn to what we consider to be the highly significant questions of work organisation and the labour process, which contribute greatly workers' experiences. Finally, in evaluating the contested terrain between labour and capital, we consider call centres as sites of resistance, in which workers' appear as active, rather than passive or cowed, subjects.

Origins, Development and Capitalist Political Economy

Within the circuits of capital, call centres - or more accurately their workers - provide important functions in terms of adding, or realising, value in relation to the products and services, tangible or intangible, being delivered. In this sense, call centre employees hardly represent novel types of 'knowledge worker' but are the Taylorised successors to earlier office workers, whether bank tellers, ledger clerks, insurance salespeople, booking clerks or telephone operators. Organisational antecedents can be traced back both to old switch-based telephone exchanges and to 'white-collar factories'. However, following the centralisation of 'back office' functions in sectors such as finace and the utilities, it is the late-1980s that sees the emergence of the call centre in its recognisable, contemporary form. What makes the call centre distinctive, though, is not widespread telephone and computer utilisation, but the integration of these technologies, which constitutes its defining characteristic. Thus, Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) systems distribute incoming calls to waiting agents who, typically, on completion will immediately receive a further call, and so on.
his innovation in the methods of customer servicing promised massive cost-cutting opportunities for organisations. In fact, the rapid expansion of call centres, in the USA, came with adoption of direct selling techniques and the centralisation of servicing functions previously conducted in dispersed locations. In the UK call centres first developed in the finance sector, where their potential was quickly realised through the success of branchless banking (First Direct) and insurance (Direct Line), 'front office' operational models which generalised throughout the sector as servicing and sales functions were centralised and High Street facilities closed. The provision of 24/7, 365 day services intensified competition within the sector, a reality succinctly described by one employer, 'once First Direct had done it, the rest of us had to follow'. The finance sector then acted as catalyst for the wider diffusion of the call centre throughout the economy.

Thus, the origins, development and nature of call centres are inexplicable without reference to capitalist, competitive contexts, to the overheads and cost-reduction and profit-maximisation strategies of companies locked in a struggle for greater market share, all of which have profound implications for the way work is organised and experienced. However, an understanding of these quite fundamental facts of political economy eludes most academic writing on the subject, in which call centres appear as strangely de-contextualised organisations, rather than places of capitalist accumulation and/or realisation.

Work Organization and

the Labour Process

Contrary to simplistic analysis call centres are not homogeneous. Differences exist between and within centres in the complexity /simplicity of agent /customer interaction, the degree of routinization/customization in customer encounters, the length of call cycle times and the extent to which employees are permitted discretion over call content. At one extreme, agents are obliged to adhere to strict scripts, while, conversely, they may exercise latitude in their communications with customers, albeit within defined parameters. To illustrate the nature of possible differences one can contrast an outsourced telecommunications call centre, concentrating on directory enquiries in which calls are measured to 100th of a second and average calls last less than half a minute, with a specialised mortgage facility where professional advisers may engage with clients for up to two hours. In short, differences in volume and value reflect managerial prioritisation of transactional quantity or quality. However, recognising diversity should not lead to the conclusion that call centres are equally distributed between 'quantity' and 'quality' operations. They tend to be concentrated at the quantitative end of the spectrum, where call throughput is prioritised but, even in the most 'qualitative' of operations, management seem unable to resist measuring call times.

Consequently, a distinctive, or typical, call centre regime can be identified, in which workers' performance in terms of call volumes and times are extensively monitored and measured, where calls are recorded and the quality of agents' interaction with customers is evaluated. Through the widespread, but not universal, use of scripts, the very speech of workers is calibrated into regulated and routinised queries and responses. A central conclusion emerging from our decade of research into the sector is management's pervasive use of targets as control mechanisms (Bain et al, 2002), which take not just obvious quantitative forms, but which increasingly extend into the very heart of the customer interface. Typically agents are assessed on their conformity to prescribed call conventions ('salutation', 'closure') but also on the structure and style of their speech ('pace', 'pitch', 'emphasis', 'inflection', 'construction', 'control'). Criteria which make judgements – subjectively by supervisors – on attitude, manner and behaviour ('pride in the company', 'rapport', 'listening skills') are applied as well as those which gauge operators' success in interesting customers with a particular service ('product knowledge'), dealing with queries ('problem solving') or assessing customers' financial worth ('profiling'). And agents may be judged on their success against perhaps 25 criteria within a three-minute phone call! It is clear, then, that call centres represent not the triumph of creative, relational customer servicing, but the application of new developments in Taylorism.

Experiences of Work

We have likened the call centre labour process to 'an assembly line in the head' (Taylor and Bain, 1999), with agents receiving calls in endless succession, interrupted only by the obligation to complete clerical tasks in 'wrap time'. Questionnaire findings from numerous projects confirms that agents experience little, if any, control over key aspects of their job, including the pace of work, planning of tasks or ability to take breaks. There are many call centres indeed in which agents are required to be 'ready', or 'on the switch' for 90% or more of the time spent at work. In a Scottish utilities call centre, not untypical of the sector, three-quarters of call handlers reported being 'quite' or 'very pressurised' because of work 'on a normal day'. The factors which agents see as causing these levels of pressure include the shortage of time between calls, the repetition and monotony of tasks, the infrequency and brevity of breaks, the difficulty in finding time to socialise with colleagues, and supervisory pressure. Mention should also be made of the pressures associated with the performance of 'emotional labour', the need for agents to 'smile down the phone', the compulsion to fake outward expressions of feeling. However, whenever agents are given the freedom to openly report their experiences, the need to meet their targets emerges as the single greatest source of pressure.

"You get upset when you don't meet the standards expected, the targets. That's when the stress factor goes up. After training you are put on the phones and a lot of people don't know what to do, and can't make the targets. They can easily get into a hole they can't get out of. Then they get stressed and depressed and they're soon on tablets. They then get put on a sickness review, feel under constant pressure and feel victimised" *(Customer Service Representative, 18 January 2001, Energyco).*

For many, then, task performance is experienced as intensive, pressurised and stressful, often leading to emotional withdrawal and burnout. It is no surprise that turnover rates - 'churn' in the industry's parlance – and sickness absence tend to be high, problems widely acknowledged by employers. Workers' ill-health may also be exacerbated by ergonomic problems at the workstation, and more profoundly by the failure of heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems to deliver satisfactory levels of thermal comfort and internal air quality. In fact, the call centre's built environment generates so many problems for its occupants that it frequently complies with the World Health Organization definition of Sick Building Syndrome.

One final, notable area of workers' experience stems from the call centre's imperative to match staffing levels to the peaks of customer demand. Agents, therefore, are subject to 'temporal flexibility', working complex shift patterns in the evening, night and at weekends. When agreed shifts are changed at short notice, a relatively common occurrence, it upsets agents' work-life balance causing difficulties for (particularly) women with child-care commitments.

The critical thrust of this section should not lead to a biased understanding which obscures the fact there are positive experiences of call centre work. Most obviously, many agents derive considerable satisfaction from providing customer service, however much their ability to do so may be constrained by the inescapable imperative to meet quantitative targets. And, despite both the characteristic flat structures which restrict promotion opportunities, and the 'stop-gap' motivation of many employees, the rapid expansion of the industry has enabled a layer, many of them women, to develop careers. Furthermore, as already indicated not all call centre work is highly routinised and repetitive, and some requires developed skills and professional qualifications.

However, given the quotidian majority experience, it is not surprising to find a plethora of discontents amongst call centre workers, which, under particular circumstances, may become honed into more focused grievances. We now illustrate some of the ways in which workers have attempted to combat conditions considered unacceptable, unjust or simply unwelcome.

Resistances

Industrial conflict and resistance are commonly distinguished between individual and collective forms, although often these cannot be so sharply demarcated in practice. For an individual action to occur or be successful, frequently requires peer group approval. Those few call centre studies which have actually considered the significance of workers' attitudes and behaviour, have uncovered manifold and creative forms of individual resistance, sustained often by collective support. For example, despite intensive monitoring agents have developed ways of unobtrusively disengaging from waiting queues of calls. Further, contrary to the supposed 'all seeing eye' of the panopticon workers frequently know when they being monitored and their calls recorded - whether through audible clicks in their headphones or keeping a close watch on supervisors – and, forewarned, are able to perform to required standards. Where management impose individually-competitive targets, regularly tied to bonus payments, peer group sanction has been brought to bear on any white-collar Stakhanovites. More positively are examples like the one in a travel operation we studied, where agents negotiated a multi-layered and targeted bonus system – total value of holidays sold, numbers of sales, add-ons like car-hires etc – to ensure that lucrative customers were passed to underachieving workmates, enabling an equitable distribution of rewards.

Acts of resistance, or deviant behaviour, are also expressed against customers, particularly those seen as difficult, arrogant or downright abusive. Customers have even become the focal point of attempts to relieve the boredom and frustration of task performance through abrasive humour. Routinely subversive satire is also directed at unpopular supervisors and against managerial actions seen as illegitimate or unfair.

More significantly, resistance has taken collective form. The strike by 4,000 Communication Workers Union members in November 1999 across 37 British Telecom customer service centres over stress, unachievable targets and management style were a sharp reminder of the widespread union presence in UK call centres and of member' willingness to challenge oppressive employment practices. Contrary to uninformed assumptions regarding the dominance of non-unionism, union recognition covers around one half of all British call centres, although overall density is lower. However, particularly in financial services (Bain and Taylor, 2002) and telecommunications, unions have succeeded in extending existing collective agreements to newly-established call centres. In both the USA and Sweden, unions have been succeeded in constraining employers' previously unfettered monitoring and related disciplinary measures.

In addition, there are remarkable examples of successful union recognition campaigns. At the outsourced, telecommunications centre in Glasgow, run by Excell Multimedia, CWU members fought this viciously anti-union employer over several years , mobilising discontent over poor pay, unjust disciplinaries, bullying management, impossible targets and appalling (even life-threatening) customer service (Taylor and Bain, 2003c). Ultimately, in March 2000, despite victimising leading union activists, Excell was suspended from its contracts and replaced by another outsourcer, Vertex, who recognised the CWU following a 99.4% ballot in the union's favour in early 2002. At Barclaycall, Unifi succeeded in winning a ballot and union recognition in the face of employer opposition and despite – or rather because of – management inflicting indignities on the workforce. These included workers who had failed to make sales being forced to wear dunces' caps!.

In short, trade unions are relevant and widespread in call centres but, it can be argued, not fully capitalising on their potential. Our research shows a deep reservoir of pro-union and collectivist attitudes amongst members and non-members alike, equally expressed by male, female, young or old workers. The evidence strongly suggests that workers wish their existing – or potential – unions to be more effective in challenging the prerogatives of management, both over conditions directly associated with the 'unique environment' of the call centre (targets, breaks, lack of control, repetitiveness) and over the more traditional union bargaining agendas of pay, hours, holidays, etc.. Time and again, workers identify those issues which arise from the experience of work 'on the front line' of customer service as areas which unions should address on their behalf. In addition to these point of production issues and the more conventional agenda items, unions currently face a major challenge in fighting to defend jobs and communities in the face of overseas migration. Here no concession can be made to nationalist, racist or xenophobic sentiment as internationalist strategies are adopted. The defence of jobs in Britain must be allied to a recognition that Indians have an equal right to call centre employment, but that they too need to be organised in order to combat the cost-cutting and divide-and-rule strategies of employers whose pursuit of profit recognises no national boundaries.

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