

DIRECT ACTION:

14 ways to improve your job



- 1.** *Workers run the world.* Everything would stop without our labour. Withdrawing our labour is our weapon, and the right to run things is our demand.
- 2.** *At the same time, most work is a bore.* As it is organized in our society, most labour kills the spirit and body of the worker, not to mention the mind. But to simply call for a four-hour day at eight hours pay is not enough. Who will benefit from the automation that could realize such a demand? Who should control technology's introduction and integration into the economy? Potentially, we can.
- 3.** *Collective action is the source of our strength as workers.* Many of the direct actions described below can be done by individuals, but they are far more effective when done collectively. This should not be mistaken for unionism. If collective action and union activity are simultaneous, fine. But collective action is not limited to unionism. Friendships and common grievances on the shop floor are enough to carry out most of the actions below.
- 4.** *Slow down.* Your job is killing you anyway. When your boss tries to speed things up, drag your feet.
- 5.** *Work to rule.* Follow every regulation and order down to the last detail, no matter how stupid they are. If you get absurd instructions, carry them out to the letter to demonstrate how absurd they are.
- 6.** *Ask questions.* Pick apart your boss' instructions with questions about everything, even about the most mundane details. Plead your ignorance and make your boss show his or hers.
- 7.** *Strike through good work.* If, as in a service-industry job, your strike would hurt other people more than your boss, strike by giving the public better or cheaper service, at your boss' expense naturally. Bus drivers can give cheap or free fares, restaurant workers can give heaped servings, hospital nurses and clerks can refuse to process billings or charge for services, etc.
- 8.** *Pass the buck.* Ask your boss to make every decision and every judgement on the job. You can bury your boss under a load of petty decisions.
- 9.** *Don't forget the power of sit-down strikes and wildcat walk-outs.* Well-timed collective action can win a demand or grievance in minutes.
- 10.** *Practice deliberate inefficiency* (aka sabotage. Caution: This is dangerous and sometimes illegal). If working conditions are unsafe or brutal, a single loose bolt or missing part might bring things quickly to a halt.
- 11.** *Report on poor working conditions and fraudulent practice.* Whistle-blowers, especially in consumer industries such as restaurants and hospitals, can be very effective. Call the fire marshal if there's a fire hazard. Call in the feds on labour practices, health, and safety issues. Call the Tax Department on your boss' shady bookkeeping.
- 12.** *Everybody call in sick on the same day or days.* The sick-in can cripple your workplace in a morning.
- 13.** *Take what is rightfully yours.* If your boss refuses to give you breaks or longer lunches, get everybody on the job to take them anyway.
- 14.** *All of this is the day-to-day preparation for more dramatic forms of action such as a strike in one industry, the general strike of all workers in the economy, and the creation of organs of power and workers' self-emancipation (assemblies or councils) to run society.* These forms of direct action, though far more organized, build from the simple direct actions described above.