

# RESIST SAMSONITE'S PRODUCTIVITY DRIVE!

Over the past few months the Carter administration and the capitalist news media have been pushing the fraudulent propaganda that the cause of inflation and the growing unemployment is the "low productivity" of the American workers and that to solve these problems the workers must speedup. Just like Carter's "voluntary" wage control program, the national drive of the rich for more productivity from the worker has nothing to do with reducing inflation or unemployment and everything to do with swelling the profits of the big capitalists at the expense of the workers.

Just look at what is going on at Samsonite. Overall production has increased 68% in the last year from about 11,000 cases a day to over 18,000 today. Mean while the number of production workers has increased only about 20%. This means that the average worker is producing 40% more than a year ago! But has this tremendous increase in productivity protected the Samsonite workers from the ravages of inflation as Mr. Carter and the big capitalists tell us? Of course not. In fact the constant rate slashing and quota raising by the company has kept the gross wages of most incentive workers at the same level they were 2-3 years ago. with the cost of living skyrocketing in Denver at a rate of 18% a year this means that the workers are suffering enormous cuts in their real wages (purchasing power). Even the straight time workers who can see the 8% annual raise under the contract in their checks are suffering drastic cuts in their real wages. It is by forcing the workers to work harder and harder for what amounts to less and less that the owners of Samsonite and other capitalists are tremendously increasing their profits.

Under the capitalist system the worker only receives in wages part of the value which he creates each day with his labor. The rest, the unpaid labor, goes to capitalists and the government in the form of profits and taxes. It is this unpaid labor which is the source of the wealth and luxury of the capitalist class. By speeding the workers up and by cutting their real wages through inflation, the capitalists increase the amount of unpaid labor which they sweat out of the workers. This is the essence of Carter's "anti inflation" program and Samsonite's austerity program.

Indeed Beatrice Foods, the owners of Samsonite are bragging in all their publications about record profits (up 24% over last year) about their international expansion, etc. And has Mr. "Anti Inflation" Carter who talks day in and day out about combating inflation asked Beatrice Foods to lower its prices? No, he has exempted Beatrice Foods (along with Exxon and 55 other corporate giants) from even having to pretend to comply with his price "guidelines". It becomes clearer every day that the "anti inflation" program of the rich and their government is nothing but a fraud behind which the most vicious attacks are carried out against the workers.

But what about the capitalist propaganda that times are rough and that to save our jobs we must cooperate with them and increase our productivity? This too is a blatant lie. Indeed times are rough; the rich have so impoverished the masses that markets are drying up and business is slowing down. The world capitalist economy is stuck in another of its periodic economic crises or "recessions". As business slows down the capitalist are throwing millions of workers out of their jobs. But the faster the employed workers work the fewer are needed and the more are thrown out on the streets. This is simple logic. The slogan of capitalists "More Productivity!" is the slogan to make the workers bear the burden of the crisis through overwork and unemployment.

But the owners of Samsonite are even more vicious. Over the past few years out of the profits sweated out of the workers in Denver they have built facilities along the Mexican border and they are now planning to move sewing and some other departments to these plants where they will exploit the workers at  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  the wage in Denver. The owners of Samsonite, have all along been telling the workers about the common interest between the company and the workers to increase productivity and save jobs. But over the next year these same capitalists are planning to force hundreds of workers out of their jobs. This is Samsonite's reward for increased productivity.

To cooperate with "anti inflation" and productivity drive of the rich and their government would be a disaster for the working class. But the workers are not cooperating, they are resisting. The coal miners, the truck drivers and other sections of the workers have risen up in heroic strikes to resist this offensive of the rich. The battle cry of the whole working class must be "Mass struggle to defy the productivity drive, Carters wage controls, and all the attempts of the rich to make the workers pay for the economic crisis." At Samsonite too this resistance movement of the workers is developing. More and more workers are realizing that they cannot rely on the reasonableness of the company or the channels of the grievance procedure (which the company regards as so many pieces of paper!) Instead at a low level they are more and more waging a mass struggle to defend their interests. In a number of departments the workers have resisted by mass denunciations of the supervisors and the company, by slowdowns to resist speedups and by standing up to defend the workers singled out by the company for harrassment. The workers are absolutely correct to take up the path of mass struggle. They must prepare to wage their struggle on a wider scale.