

Crash course in (trade union) organising

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Content:

Organising jargon

Anti-union environment in Poland

Workplace - Examples of employer's narrative and anti-union tactics

Scenario 1

Simple plan to win for workers

Examples of organising techniques

Questions?

Organising jargon 1

- **Organising** vs recruitment (issue-based organising model and approach)
- **Sectoral Organising** – strategic, country-wide, simultaneous organising in a sector of economy, with significant resources devoted; aimed at raising working standards across all companies in the sector including the supply chain, to avoid under-cutting and at creating sustainable structure of union shop stewards capable of independent bargaining up to national level ; includes leverage strategy.
- **Local Leverage** – additional pressure points that can be used to move employer, e.g. local politicians or leaders of communities, shareholders, customers, suppliers, local public, local media, industry associations, charity organisations etc
- **Community organising** – complementary thread of industrial organising campaign; expanding it to the environment in which the workers live and company is operating in

Organising jargon 2

- **Collective issue – collectivising an issue**
- **Collective actions** – low, medium and high risk not only strike
- **Workplace Leader** – *‘The best way to recognise a leader is to determine if they have followers’ Marshall Ganz*
- **Representative organising committee, representative union**
- **Bulling or disciplinary culture** – abusing use of ‘formal warnings’ etc remains unchallenged by workers who fear for their jobs
- **2 – tier workforce** – a workforce split in to 2 (or more) sections with different terms and conditions, used by management to ‘divide and rule’; full time/temporary (agency), core (native)/agency (migrant),

Anti-union environment in Poland. Wall of Shame

DECEMBER



JANUARY



JANUARY



MARCH



JUNE



JUNE



JULY



Society: Anti-union environment in Poland

Neoliberal agenda and narrative have dominated in media and politics for last 25 years

Precarious work

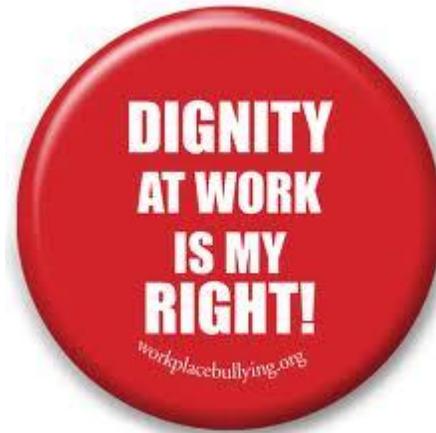
Full time union officials 'have a bad name'

No social dialogue

Employers' aggressive anti-union behaviour

Limited 'wider' TU movement cooperation'

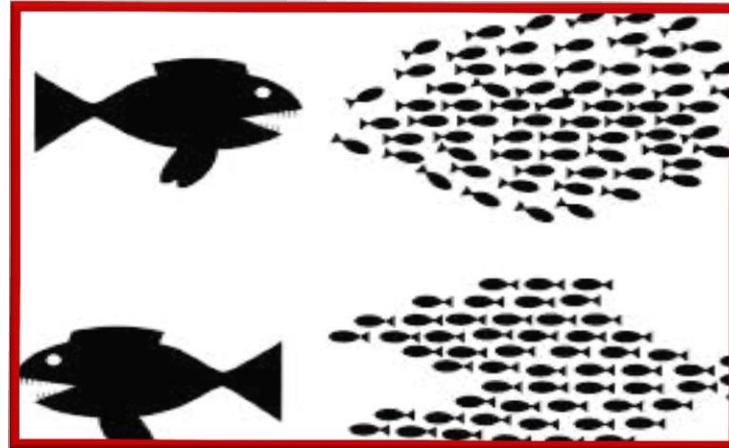
'We demand and are accustomed to democracy in our society but accept dictatorship in a workplace' Source Unknown



Workplace: Examples of employer's narrative and anti-union tactics

- 'Subtle' bullying
- Informal, unregulated, selective and judgmental
- 'Carrot & Stick'
- Divide and Rule
- 'Total War' – direct attack and union busting

Balance of power



Scenario 1

As part of international organising campaign you are to organise a multinational company's factory in Poland.

The site is located at an industrial estate on the outskirts of a small town. It is gated and employees parking, smoking shed, company office etc are all located beyond the security gate. The gate is at a busy road. There is a bus stop not far from the gate and mini bus stops there (on demand). Majority employees travel to work by car. Few people on each shift travel to work on foot or by bike.

There seems to be 2 separated areas of production – Production A's (1 large machine) shifts are 6am-2pm and 2pm-10pm Monday to Friday although you know all workers in that area are being asked regularly to work 12 hr shifts everyday and to work on Saturdays. Production B's shifts are 6am-2pm, 2pm-10pm and 10pm-6am Monday to Friday, however you know that shifts are being changed daily (you may be working early on Monday and afternoon on Tuesday and again early on Wednesday etc). You also know that in Production B there are 9 machines and workers operating each of them usually have separate shift patterns.

You know most workers live in the town or nearby villages. Some workers you have spoken to (briefly) are employed by agency (from 6 months to 2 years). At the first contact workers say it is a good place to work except for the pay.

The multinational company has a mixed record of dealing with unions: unions are present in 17 out of 32 countries they have their factories (including Ireland, France, UK, Germany); EWC has been recently set up; The polish factory has sent a shift supervisor to first EWC meeting, however he introduced himself to trade unions as 'machine operator'; After the management found out about union organisers, supervisors have advised some of the workers not to talk to the union; company's HQ are in Ireland. The company prides itself (and has got some recognition) for being 'safe and sustainable' business. They have recorded a substantial rise in profits over last year (until 30 June 2014 profits after tax have risen by 74% compared to last year)

Scenario 1

Please consider the information available and think about how would you propose to achieve the objectives in each of the tasks? Try to be as specific as possible, giving examples that take into consideration questions like: when?, where?, what?, who? and how?

Task 1 – To establish contact with as many workers as possible without putting them at risk of being victimised for engaging with the union.

Objective 1 – Speak to as many workers as possible privately, about their working conditions and benefits of being organised in a union

Objective 2 – Get the workers you have spoken to, to agree to another meeting and get them to bring a work colleague to next meeting or refer you to their work colleague

Objective 3 – Establish which workplace problems are: ‘collective’?, which should be addressed by a trade union? Which of them should be addressed first, second, last?

Scenario 1

Please consider the information available and think about how would you propose to achieve the objectives in each of the tasks? Try to be as specific as possible, giving examples that take into consideration questions like: when?, where?, what?, who? and how?

Task 2 – To move workers towards a collective action

Objective 1 - Get the workers you have contact with to, speak to their work colleagues about their working conditions and benefits of being organised in a union

Objective 2 – Get the workers to agree which problem they would like to resolve first and how they want to resolve

Objective 3 - Get a significant amount of workers to agree to take action to resolve the chosen problem by organising into a trade union

Scenario 1

Please consider the information available and think about how would you propose to achieve the objectives in each of the tasks? Try to be as specific as possible, giving examples that take into consideration questions like: when?, where?, what?, who? and how?

Task 3 – To move the employer to resolving the workers issue

Objective 1 – Deliver planned collective action successfully and successfully withstand any anti-union action from employer

Objective 2 – Deliver successive collective actions successfully and successfully withstand any anti-union action

Objective 3 – Have a leverage plan ready to complement the organising plan and successfully use leverage if the employer refuses to agree to demands despite collective actions

Simple plan to win for workers: resolve problems and build union power

Organise workers:



Move workers to collective action:



Move employer to resolve problem:

- Establish trust
- Establish effective communication
- Handle objections (LEEE)
 - Help develop relationships/bonds
- Help leaders to develop
 - Educate

- Help overcome fear (AHA)
 - Agitate
 - Inoculate
 - Plan
- Collective action/sign-up
 - Re-view

- Collective action: Public display of TU unity and strength
 - As many 'escalating' C.A. as necessary
- Leverage plan prepared to use
 - Publicise WIN

Handling objections (LEEE)

- Objections are real
- Listen
- Explore
- Equalise
- Elevate

Move to action (AHA)

- Anger
- Hope
- Action

Leverage

‘a process whereby the Union commits resources and time to making all interested parties aware of the treatment received by Unite members at the hands of an employer. Those interested parties may include shareholders of the employer; competitors of the employer; communities within which the employer operates; customers of the employer and the market place of the employer. We ask all interested parties to make moral and ethical decisions about their future relations with an employer who we believe is acting immorally.’



Questions???

Thank you for your attention!!!

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