

Taylorism and Fordism (see Antonio Gramsci's Notebook 22)

TAYLORISM

Frederick Taylor (1911) *Principles of Scientific Management*

devised a means of detailing a division of labor in time-and-motion studies and a wage system based on performance.

Taylor's gospel also known as "Taylorism" would become the standard for businesses worldwide

The main elements of the Scientific Management are: time studies (e.g., screw on each bolt in 15.2 seconds), standardization of tools and implements, the use of "slide-rules and similar time-saving devices", instruction cards for workmen (detailing exactly what they should do), task allocation, etc.

Taylor called these elements "merely the elements or details of the mechanisms of management"

Perhaps the key idea of scientific management and the one which has drawn the most criticism was the concept of task allocation. Task allocation is the concept that breaking task into smaller and smaller tasks allows the determination of the optimum solution to the task. "The man in the planning room, whose specialty is planning ahead, invariably finds that the work can be done more economically by subdivision of the labour; each act of each mechanic, for example, should be preceded by various preparatory acts done by other men."

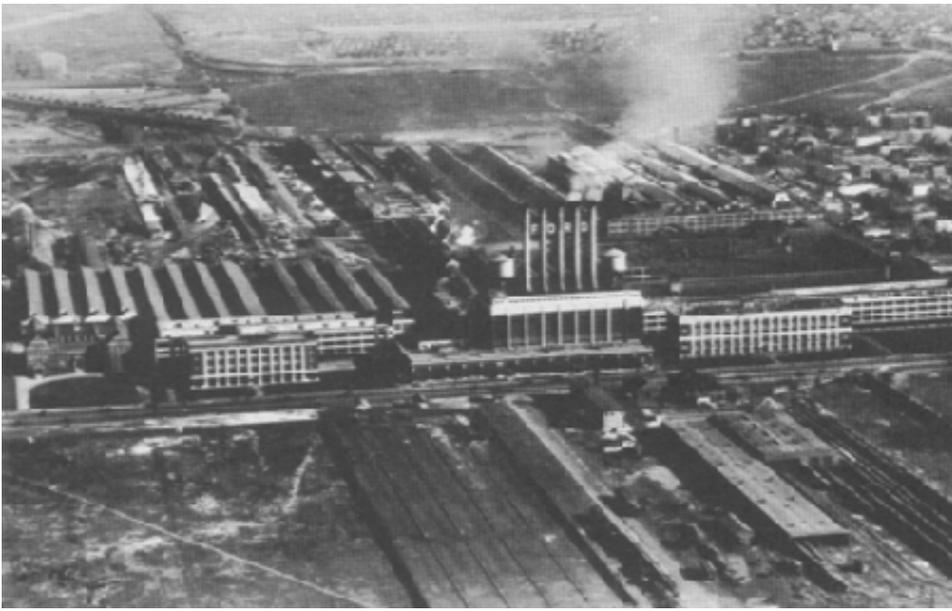
FORDISM

Antonio Gramsci called Fordism "an ultra-modern form of production and of working methods such as is offered by the most advanced American variety, the industry of Henry Ford."

Henry Ford and the Model T:



Ford pioneered the modern model of mass production which bears his name, and which is often said to date from the development of the first moving assembly lines, put into operation at Ford's Model T plant at Highland Park, Michigan in 1914.



The assembly line increased labor productivity tenfold and permitting stunning price cuts in Ford cars: from \$780 in 1910 to \$360 in 1914. Fordism thus involved standardizing a product and manufacturing it by mass means at a price so low that the common man could afford to buy it.



Fordism displaced predominantly craft-based production in which skilled laborers exercised substantial control over their conditions of work, Fordist production entailed an intensified industrial division of labor; increased mechanization and coordination of large scale manufacturing processes (e.g., sequential machining operations and converging assembly lines) to achieve a steady flow of production; a shift toward the use of less skilled labor performing, ad infinitum, tasks minutely specified by management; and the potential for heightened capitalist control over the pace and intensity of work.