

# 43rd IWW Convention Building for the Future

While AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland was issuing his Labor Day message proclaiming that the AFL "was never in better shape", and Teamsters president (and FBI informer) Jackie Presser was buying full-page ads in the boss press calling for workers to make common cause with our exploiters against our fellow workers from other countries, at least one group of workers was sitting down to confront the hard issues that face the labor movement.

The IWW's 43rd General Convention, held over the Labor Day weekend, brought together 25 Wobs from Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Manitoba, Michigan, Minnesota, Washington, and Wisconsin, along with several visitors and reporters. And it showed that the IWW, at 80 years of age, still continues its struggle to organize the working class and fight the boss, despite its small size and the current anti-union climate.

This was made clear by the area reports, in which delegates spoke on a wide range of activities being carried out by the IWW—particularly strike support, solidarity work with Native Americans and fellow workers from other countries, and educational activities. Delegates from Michigan spoke of ongoing contract talks at two IWW shops there, and their determination to resist the bosses' efforts to extort concessions. As General Secretary-Treasurer Jon Bekken noted in his report, the IWW has added two general-membership branches in the last year (with a third application now pending), issued several shop cards, re-issued various IWW literature, and continued a number of organizing drives.

In addition, the IWW has been re-activating its General Defense Committee, originally founded in 1917 to defend hundreds of IWW activists being swept up in police raids around the country. GDC Secretary Arthur Miller gave a rousing account of his efforts over the last year, with particular emphasis on his activities in the campaign to defend imprisoned Native American activist Leonard Peltier (see the related story in this issue for a brief update). A Saturday-evening program on the Peltier case filled the hall, as Chicagoans and Convention-goers turned out to hear Peltier's attorney, Margaret Gold, speak on the case, along with shorter presentations by FW Miller (on Peltier and Big Mountain) and FW Bekken (on the campaign for amnesty for British miners).

Following these and other reports, delegates broke up into committees to discuss the issues before the Convention and the Union in greater detail and to lay the groundwork for Sunday's session. In these smaller, informal meetings there was extensive discussion over issues such as how to make the Union's literature and publications more effective; strengthen defense and solidarity work; increase and speed up support of organizing campaigns; and update the IWW Constitution. Plans were also made for the international labor conference the IWW is organizing for next year.

Not as grueling as last year's, both sessions were wrapped up by evening. FWs Carlos Cortez and Allan Anger served as chairperson and recording secretary, ably moving the Convention along. Sunday's session attended to considerable business, sending 13 Constitutional amendments to referendum, approving a tentative agenda and financing for the international labor conference, approving a number of solidarity resolutions (see Page 2 of this issue), revising the oversight arrangements for Nelson Bequest funds, and nominating candidates to serve next year as General Secretary-Treasurer and on the General Executive Board. In addition, committees were established to explore options for purchase of a headquarters building and union hall, and to consider additional revisions to the Constitution.

## International Labor Conference

What was perhaps the most important order of business was among the least controversial. The delegates unanimously approved plans to sponsor an international labor conference next May to mark the centenary of the Haymarket tragedy. Funding for hall rental, food for delegates from abroad, and publicity was approved, with the understanding that additional funds would be raised through the sale of a special assessment stamp

GIVE TO THE SUSTAINING FUND!



and other fund-raising appeals to aid in other Conference expenses, such as assisting speakers and delegates from other parts of the world in meeting transportation costs where necessary. A conference committee was approved, with the understanding that other interested fellow workers may join in, and a tentative agenda was presented.

The agenda calls for the conference to run May 1st through 5th, with a combination of public sessions and delegates-only sessions that would deal with more procedural and practical matters. Sessions on labor struggles in South Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America are envisioned, along with programs on unemployment (its causes, organizing unemployed workers, and the struggle for a shorter workweek), ecology (inside and outside the workplace), global industries, repression of the labor movement, and a commemoration of the Haymarket martyrs and the Spanish and Hungarian revolutions.

While plans are still in the preliminary stages, this initiative has been well received, with fellow workers from Australia, England, France, Japan, North America, Spain, and Sweden expressing interest thus far, along with Solidarnosc exiles. Invitations have been sent to revolutionary unions around the world, as well as to selected rank-and-file and exile groups, and new invitations continue to be issued to appropriate organizations.

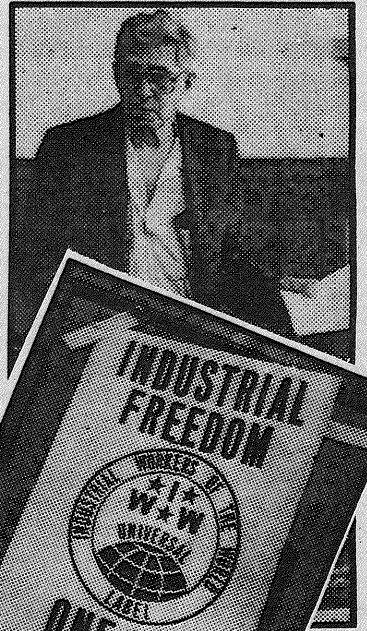
The other major item of business was issuing a number of referenda to update and clarify the IWW Constitution. Ranging from defining more clearly the function and responsibility of general-membership branches to clarifying the procedure for resolving disputes between fellow workers not part of a general-membership or industrial-union branch, these amendments will be submitted to the IWW membership for ratification by mail ballot.

## DIRECT ACTION!

The 110 workers at the Livingston and Spencer hosiery manufacturers in Dublin occupied the premises for two weeks in June after management threatened to impose 35 compulsory "redundancies". In the confrontative style that Irish employers are increasingly resorting to, the manager informed the workers that if they didn't accept the layoffs and leave the factory, the plant would be permanently closed and the orders transferred to the parent English company.

The workers, members of the Allied Transport and General Workers Union, ended the occupation when the management compromised on 37 "voluntary" redundancies and a short workweek for the remaining 73. The compromise, however, was only a ploy to give management time to transfer an estimated one million pounds of stock to the parent company and to complete existing orders. That done, the 73 workers were fired with only statutory entitlements.

Some 20 cleaning workers, all Irish Transport and General Workers Union members employed by Contract Cleaners, occupied offices in the administration building



The New York Times/Steve Kagan

The organizing committee presented a number of suggestions for expanding the IWW's organizing efforts and making them more effective. After some discussion these were referred to the General Executive Board for action.

The Convention was the subject of a major article in the *New York Times* which was generally fair, although riddled with (mostly typographical) errors.

The Convention adjourned early in the evening with a rousing version of the Wobbly anthem, "Solidarity Forever".

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of Dublin's University College from July 31st through August 6th. The occupation was undertaken to protest the College's actions in canceling its contract with Contract Cleaners, whose employees worked 24 hours per week, and offering it to two other cleaning companies whose employees worked 18 hours per week. Under Irish law, workers employed over 20 hours per week are entitled to claim full benefits, including holiday, maternity, and sickness pay; while those working less than 21 hours are entitled to occupational-injury benefits only.

The campus Student Union was in full support of the strikers, and in a gesture of solidarity, bus crews refused to drive onto the campus. The cleaners' union, ITGWU, did not officially sanction the strike, and in the face of two High Court injunctions union officials prevailed on the strikers to end the occupations.

As the *IW* goes to press, 19 members of the AGTWU at Leyland Vehicles in Dublin's dock areas are continuing their sit-in, which began July 25th. The dispute has its roots in a 1975 agreement with the company which guaranteed 30 assembly jobs as long as the company operated in Ireland.

In July, workers heard a radio report that the company was closing down and all workers would be terminated. When questioned, company officials affirmed that all workers would be "made redundant", but said that the company would continue its operations in a different form. When they refused to disclose the nature of their plans to either the workers or the ATGWU, the workers felt they had no option but to strike. Support for the occupiers has been good in the area, and donations have come in from workers in other factories.

# 43rd Convention Resolutions

In place of an editorial for this issue, the *Industrial Worker* is reprinting the text of several of the resolutions adopted at our 43rd General Convention September 1st.

## LEONARD PELTIER

The Industrial Workers of the World recognizes Leonard Peltier, American Indian Movement activist, as a class-war prisoner and extends its solidarity to Leonard Peltier (POW 89637-132, Leavenworth Federal Prison, PO Box 1000, Leavenworth, Kansas 66048) and to his defense committee (Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, 3005 La Fayette 2-W, Saint Louis, Missouri 63104). The General Defense Committee of the Industrial Workers of the World recommends that the General Administration of the Industrial Workers of the World issue a statement of solidarity to both Leonard Peltier and his Defense Committee.

## SPAIN

The Industrial Workers of the World re-affirms its comradely relationship with the Spanish Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) and with the International Workers Association (IWA) to which it belongs, and [recommends]

That the General Secretary of the Industrial Workers of the World send a letter or telegram to the Spanish authorities demanding that they return to the CNT-AIT funds and property stolen by the Franco regime.

## BRITISH MINERS

The Industrial Workers of the World calls for amnesty for the British miners imprisoned or blacklisted for participation in last year's coal strike. All IWW branches and groups are encouraged to leaflet or picket British facilities in support of this demand, and to solicit the support and participation of other labor organizations.

## SOUTH AFRICA

The Industrial Workers of the World strongly condemns the apartheid regime in South Africa, particularly the suppression of the rights of black workers to organize independent unions. Furthermore, we will do everything in our power to support the efforts of workers in South Africa to organize independent, non-racial unions to pursue both immediate demands and an end to apartheid and wage slavery.

## NICARAGUA

The Industrial Workers of the World re-affirms its support of the Nicaraguan people in their struggle against United States imperialism.

At the same time, the Industrial Workers of the World criticizes the Nicaraguan Government for its refusal to recognize the autonomous rights of the Indigenous Peoples of Eastern Nicaragua, its suppression of independent unions, and its denial of women's rights.

## BIG MOUNTAIN

Whereas the struggle of the traditional Dine and Hopi peoples of Big Mountain to resist relocation exemplifies and encompasses the most pressing concerns of the working class, that is,

That government removal of traditional peoples from the Joint Use Area serves only the interests of the exploiting class, making possible the extension of strip mining for coal into that area with resulting ecological disaster, and further making possible removal of uranium to feed the nuclear monster, and

That policies of racial and cultural genocide and denial of the sovereignty of native peoples mirrors the contempt of the exploiter class for all classes below them,

Therefore, be it resolved that the Industrial Workers of the World supports the struggle of the traditional peoples of the Big Mountain Area, and the General Defense Committee of the Industrial Workers of the World is

\*EDUCATION \*ORGANIZATION \*EMANCIPATION



AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

ONE UNION ONE LABEL ONE ENEMY

## Industrial Worker

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Running true to form, that wholesome institution known as the Boy Scouts of America recently excommunicated a 15-year-old for the heinous crime of not believing in a supreme being. The national council of Sprouts upheld the Charlottesville, Virginia Sprout officials in their decision to expel young Paul Trout when he failed to give the proper answer to their quiz on how he thought the World was created and how "man" arrived on Earth.

This brings no great surprise to your humble scribe, as he would just as soon have his progeny enrolled in Hitler's *Jugendkor* as in the Boy Sprouts of Amerika, and would just as soon disown them for joining either. I well remember a group decked out in their Sprout regalia teasing and bullying a couple of Indian kids who had accompanied their elders to an exhibition powwow. So much for that kind of god-fearing "good citizenship". The Reverend Jerry Falwell can have them all.

For those of you overseas fellow workers who may not know, Jerry Falwell is one of those fundamentalist "christians" who own their own Cadillacs and television networks and want to re-initiate prayer sessions in the public schools. (Fundamentalist prayers, of course.) The fundamentalists don't even believe all "christians" are eligible to go to Heaven, much less Jews, Moslems, Hindus, or Buddhists. Having read a little of the Good Book myself, I can see where even Jerusalem Slim might not get through the Fundamentalists' Pearly Gates.

The current flap over various spies defecting into each other's camps is another beautiful example of the obsolescence of the State. Imagine all the hard-earned taxes of working people being squandered on the luxurious upkeep of pampered Sam and Samantha Spades who change their allegiances with their dirty underwear. Next to soul-saving that has to be one of the sweetest rackets, especially when you can get paid by both sides at the same time for showing them each other's dirty laundry.

Admittedly there are certain risks that come with such a profession. One might come into contact with some naive, unsophisticated soul who still labors under the delusion that Global politics can still be integrated with such things as honor and integrity.

In spite of all this flap about defecting undercover agents, the computer nerds are still happily dreaming of the day when computer terminals will be linked with each other the World over, and one will merely have to connect with some machine at the other end of the Globe to benefit from the knowledge thereof. Perhaps all the spies would have to do would be to crack each other's computer programmers and re-program the efficiency of their respective adversaries. Can you imagine the pleasant prospect of the USSR becoming the bastion of lacy-fair free enterprise while we here in Freedom Land pursue our five-year plans, just because some computer experts did a little creative fiddling around?

Despite these frightening prospects, one computer expert sees the possibility of home computers being fed by large computer banks to form a vast Global computer network, and further asserts that this would be a great stride in human progress akin to the emergence of language and the invention of the printing press.

Your scribe cannot help but feel a little cynical about this expert's rosy future of Global computer networks. Having spent a good part of his life being regaled with the offerings of radio and television networks, he is unable to envision any great beneficial enlightenment from computer networks, other than being lulled into an even deeper stupor.

As Dwight MacDonald very wisely put it: "It is not the lawbreaker we must fear today so much as he who obeys the law." Just look at dudes like Eichmann and Lieutenant Calley. They were just good order-followers.

"Nuke, Nuke!"

"Who's there?"

"....."

Draftees of the World, unite! You have nothing to lose but your generals!

C. C. Redcloud

## LIMITS OF SECRECY

One may well suspect that the military secret has become as obsolete a weapon of war as the crossbow. Consider the tonnage of secrets lugged across international frontiers in the last 40 years. Legions of agents working two or three sides of every rumor have copied, transcribed, edited, collected, and sold enough information to take up all the space on the shelves in the Library of Congress.

And what has been the result of this immense labor? How has the exchange of classified news impinged, even slightly, on the course of events?

The only real secret is that the working classes of the US and Russia have more in common with each other than either has with its respective employing class.

therefore directed to provide a link between the Union and other support groups, and provide whatever assistance to the peoples of Big Mountain is within its scope.

Whereas we are all in danger from the multinational corporate wars which are escalating in the US and abroad at an alarming rate, and

Whereas this is an international issue, since these wars and the wars of other power blocs have no concern for borders, and

Whereas Big Mountain has been declared a profitable commodity by the multinationals, requiring the "civilizing" of this autonomous area by fencing it and relocating thousands of indigenous people from their homes, so that a few can hold title to the land, thus selling energy rights to the multinationals,

Therefore, with the understanding that Big Mountain is one struggle among many, we believe that it would benefit not only Big Mountain but also the overall struggle if ALL people who can support the following appeal:

We call on all people to form informational picket lines, hold vigils, or do theater in front of federal buildings in the United States or US Government buildings/businesses outside the United States, on November 6th, 1985.

## Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World

THE WORKING CLASS AND THE EMPLOYING CLASS HAVE NOTHING IN COMMON! THERE CAN BE NO PEACE SO LONG AS HUNGER AND WANT ARE FOUND AMONG MILLIONS OF WORKING PEOPLE AND THE FEW, WHO MAKE UP THE EMPLOYING CLASS, HAVE ALL THE GOOD THINGS OF LIFE.

BETWEEN THESE TWO CLASSES A STRUGGLE MUST GO ON UNTIL THE WORKERS OF THE WORLD ORGANIZE AS A CLASS, TAKE POSSESSION OF THE EARTH AND THE MACHINERY OF PRODUCTION, AND ABOLISH THE WAGE SYSTEM.

WE FIND THAT THE CENTERING OF THE MANAGEMENT OF INDUSTRIES INTO FEWER AND FEWER HANDS MAKES THE TRADE UNIONS UNABLE TO COPE WITH THE EVER GROWING POWER OF THE EMPLOYING CLASS. THE TRADE UNIONS FOSTER A STATE OF AFFAIRS WHICH ALLOWS ONE SET OF WORKERS TO BE PITTED AGAINST ANOTHER SET OF WORKERS IN THE SAME INDUSTRY, THEREBY HELPING DEFEAT ONE ANOTHER IN WAGE WARS. MOREOVER, THE TRADE UNIONS AID THE EMPLOYING CLASS TO MISLEAD THE WORKERS INTO THE BELIEF THAT THE WORKING CLASS HAVE INTERESTS IN COMMON WITH THEIR EMPLOYERS.

THESE CONDITIONS CAN BE CHANGED AND THE INTEREST OF THE WORKING CLASS UPHELD ONLY BY AN ORGANIZATION FORMED IN SUCH A WAY THAT ALL ITS MEMBERS IN ANY ONE INDUSTRY, OR IN ALL INDUSTRIES IF NECESSARY, CEASE WORK WHENEVER A STRIKE OR LOCKOUT IS ON IN ANY DEPARTMENT THEREOF, THUS MAKING..... AN INJURY TO ONE AN INJURY TO ALL.

INSTEAD OF THE CONSERVATIVE MOTTO, "A FAIR DAY'S WAGE FOR FAIR DAY'S WORK," WE MUST INSCRIBE ON OUR BANNER THE REVOLUTIONARY WATCHWORD, "ABOLITION OF THE WAGE SYSTEM." IT IS THE HISTORIC MISSION OF THE WORKING CLASS TO DO AWAY WITH CAPITALISM. THE ARMY OF PRODUCTION MUST BE ORGANIZED, NOT ONLY FOR THE EVERY-DAY STRUGGLE WITH CAPITALISTS, BUT ALSO TO CARRY ON PRODUCTION WHEN CAPITALISM SHALL HAVE BEEN OVERTHROWN. BY ORGANIZING INDUSTRIALLY WE ARE FORMING THE STRUCTURE OF THE NEW SOCIETY WITHIN THE SHELL OF THE OLD.

## Gomperism

Samuel Gompers, shaper of the American Federation of Labor, was a canny cuss. He was able to combine spurts of idealistic sayings with an appeal to the selfishness of skilled workers. On more than one occasion he declared that "Nobody believes in socialism more than I do." But as he saw it, the logical step was to organize skilled workers into unions which would be concerned only with the welfare of the particular craft represented. "More NOW!" was his catch phrase.

According to Gomperism, the unskilled worker was not a concern of the skilled artisan. Besides, bettering the standard of living of the skilled worker would lead to a better standard for the unskilled—a sort of "trickle down" theory of labor's own.

Those who gathered in Chicago in 1905 to form the Industrial Workers of the World knew that combinations of capital and industry, together with advancing technology, were already rendering Gomperism unionism ineffective at the time, with the prospect of less and less effectiveness in the future.

Gompers' "More NOW!" has washed out. His heirs and successors in the trade unions, some calling themselves "industrial" (they're really not), have been reduced to saying "Less NOW!" All you have to do to see it is read the papers. They promise some kind of carrot on a stick if their remaining members will keep the faith. (Well, it looks *something* like a carrot, doesn't it?)

Fellow workers, whoever you are, wherever you are, however you're fixed or affiliated, you owe it to yourselves, your families, and your class to acquaint yourselves with this union, the IWW, then support it every way you can. No magic wand will wave you a free and fair society; it will only come with struggle. No one has said it better than those who met in Chicago in 1905.

Pervicacia

FREE-SPEECH RIGHTS: If you work for the City, State, or Federal Government and get fired because of your political views, you can usually get your job back with the help of the local American Civil Liberties Union affiliate. Workers in such jobs *do* have First Amendment rights. But if you work in the private sector, your boss is free to retaliate for any employee political views and activities, unless you work under a union contract specifically protecting your free-speech rights. (Quick, does your union have such a contract? If not, why not?)

# Meatpackers Strike Against Concessions

United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9 in Austin, Minnesota went on strike August 17th against the George Hormel meatpacking company. Workers objected to wage cuts and changes in seniority, job assignments, weekend shifts. Hormel's latest offer would reduce pay for new hires by \$2 an hour and impose a nine-dollar ceiling on their hourly wages, undermining the industry standard of \$10.

Hormel is enjoying record profits (83% over last year) yet continues to seek new concessions from its workers, having received dramatic concessions in the past. In ad-

dition to striking against Hormel's concession demands, Local P-9 is targeting the First National Bank System. First Bank and Hormel have interlocking directors and stock, and First Bank is Hormel's major source of credit. So workers have gone from Austin to Minneapolis, where a thousand surrounded not only First Bank's headquarters, but the entire city block.

Hormel filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board August 29th, accusing P-9 of setting up a secondary boycott. But the local contends that it is not calling for a boycott, but merely asking people to let it

know if they remove their funds from First Bank in sympathy with striking workers.

This summer Local P-9 sponsored a picnic open to all union members in an Austin park. Five Wobblies attended, and found the union spirit as authentic as the beer and weiners. Between bands, speakers stressed the need for unions to turn back the concessions tide and build solidarity between unions.

As the *Industrial Worker* goes to press, however, the UFCW and the other Hormel locals are not supporting the 1700 striking workers, contending that P-9's anti-concessions stance will somehow jeopardize existing contracts. (These locals recently accepted concessions similar to those rejected by Hormel's Austin workers.)

Local P-9 is appealing to the rank-and-file of these other locals for support, and is setting up informational pickets in Iowa and Minnesota. Despite the lack of support from their international union, these workers are determined to stop the concessions shakedown.

## UNION BUSTING

In the last four years, forcing unions to go on strike has become a key element in many companies' union-busting strategies. Aided by experienced anti-union lawyers and public-relations consultants, management provokes a strike with the intention of replacing the strikers. A PR firm churns out letters to the workers, alternately enticing and threatening them. Meanwhile, drawing on the large pool of unemployed workers, the company recruits and trains new employees. As the number of scabs grows, production gradually returns to pre-strike levels. The strikers panic and begin returning to work.

In a textbook case of strikebreaking, the elementary-school board of Hinesburg, Vermont replaced 29 teachers after they walked out last April. Hinesburg's teachers negotiated with the board for more than a year without reaching agreement on salary and contract offers. The board's offer raised base salaries for starting teachers to \$12,300—up from last year's \$11,900, but \$600 below the level recommended by an arbitrator. The teachers walked out April 3rd, and on April 22nd 13 new teachers crossed the picket line, replacing the fired strikers. That the board did not seek a court injunction ordering the strikers back to work fuels suspicions that breaking the union was as much the board's goal as ending the strike.

This school board's decision represents a "danger for Vermont teachers and teachers everywhere," says Margaret McNeil, negotiator for the teacher's local. "There

will no longer be a right to strike if the minute you walk out, they can hire replacements. It will make collective bargaining something of a farce."

Labor will have to come up with imaginative alternatives to walkouts to beat the bosses' union-busting strategy. Striking on the job, occupations, general strikes, and other forms of direct action are what is needed now.



## UAW REACHES NEW LOW IN SATURN PACT

The United Auto Workers recently negotiated unprecedented concessions to General Motors' new subsidiary, Saturn. Saturn will open a factory in Spring Hill, Tennessee by 1990 to make GM's new Saturn model. Through a combination of sweeping concessions, massive automation, and introduction of Japanese-style management (a brutal system of super-exploitation described in a series of articles in this paper last year), Saturn hopes to earn record profits for GM and compete more effectively with foreign-made cars.

Base pay at the new plant will be 80% of the industry average, with workers expected to scramble for performance, quality, and profit-sharing bonuses and incentives in order to approach the earnings of other auto workers. Work rules, seniority, and pension plans are being scrapped. In exchange for these sweeping concessions, GM has agreed to hire the bulk of Saturn's anticipated 6,000 workers from current and laid-off GM workers, and has agreed not to lay off any more workers (aside from 20% of the workforce which can be laid off at will) unless "severe economic conditions" occur; to permit workers to use the same cafeterias and parking lots as management; and to implement a "co-determination" scheme whereby workers can suggest ways to speed up production.

Workers have been increasingly reluctant to approve these concessionary agreements—recognizing that they merely embolden the bosses to impose new demands. (Indeed, as this issue goes to press, Chrysler is entering negotiations demanding a pact modeled after the Saturn terms.) In this case, however, the workers didn't even get a chance to reject the pact—the UAW officers signed this sweetheart agreement before a single worker was hired—even before the foundations were laid for the new plant.

Is the right to put a token worker on various management committees, to have limited flexibility in organizing day-to-day work, and to "consult" with management worth giving up contractual protections, health and safety reps, pay, pensions, and so forth? Or is it just that the UAW is now concerned more with collecting dues, "co-operating" with the bosses, and getting a few second-class jobs thrown its members' way than with fighting the bosses?

JB

## FW THOMPSON RETIRES COLUMN

With this issue, FW Fred Thompson—who has written and edited for the *Industrial Worker* since 1922—is retiring his column "Labor in North America". Fred will continue to submit articles from time to time, but will be unable to continue the prodigious research which has characterized his work for the *IW* over the last 63 years.

**NORWAY:** At the recent 17th Congress of the Norwegian Food and Allied Workers' Union (NNN), president Einar Hysvaer called for greater militancy in dealing with employers, noting that there is no evidence to support the view that moderate wage demands save jobs. Hysvaer condemned the use of compulsory mediation by the Government, observing that the Government's supposedly-impartial mediators generally side with the bosses. The NNN appealed to other Norwegian unions to fight for a wage policy based on solidarity with low-income groups and the removal of artificial wage differences between men and women workers.

## SPYING AT THE POST OFFICE

A postal worker recently mailed us a copy of a letter he sent to a Congressperson sitting on the Post Office Committee. Excerpts follow:

Postal workers are surreptitiously observed and listened to around the clock. Postal facilities are equipped with enclosed catwalk galleries from which inspectors can observe workers through one-way mirrored ports. These spy windows are also present in workers' locker rooms and rest rooms, where they are supposed to have been securely covered. Interestingly, spy galleries are not installed in any of the management areas.

Anytime a postal worker looks up, he or she is greeted by long rows of glinting silver-surfaced spy ports which jut out and angle down for added visibility from the overhanging galleries. Would you call this an intimidating work environment?

Compounding the damage from this internal spy network is the fact that postal workers are denied labor's most critical tool: the right to strike. And often the Post Office "Inspection Service" (which administers the spy programs) plants blank money orders and other "bait" to lure postal workers into petty crime.

The spy network is built and maintained at enormous expense. As early as 1972, the cost of installing the spy galleries in the post office where I work was \$360,000. And today that figure would be twice as high.

How do such expenses affect the cost of stamps?

## CORRECTION

The first sentence of the fifth paragraph of the editorial in the September *IW* should have read: But when the prosperity bubble burst and American capital found itself losing ground to that of other nations, and the union bureaucracy found itself faced with growing rebellion in the ranks, the bosses came to the conclusion that they could do without unions, particularly because union leaders were showing themselves increasingly incapable of controlling the rank and file. (A typesetting error turning *incapable* into *capable* rendered this sentence incomprehensible.)

## US CLERICAL WORK DRIFTING OVERSEAS

American workers are painfully aware that production of more and more of the textiles, cars, and electronic appliances sold in this country is taking place overseas—a phenomenon commonly known as "outsourcing" or "capital flight". Weak as the US labor movement now is, past generations have won the battles for unions, minimum wages, hour and safety regulations, and overtime pay that workers in many Third World countries are still fighting. Until they win, however, formerly-US-based corporations are relocating part or all of their production processes to take advantage of their enforced cheap labor.

With the advent of ever-increasing levels of computer technology, clerical work is increasingly being teletyped abroad. Credit-card houses are using offshore labor—some as far away as India, where English is spoken—to put information on magnetic tapes. A Dallas-based information company sends work to Taiwan, where workers (probably female) are paid a dollar a day. US magazine subscriptions are processed in Limerick, Ireland.

Publishing companies are using non-English-speaking workers in South Korea to key-punch legal documents. Clerical workers in Barbados key-punch data for American Airlines at a third of the hourly rate US workers were paid when they were doing it in Tulsa. Other US companies are setting up offices to have their clerical work done in India, Israel, Melanesia, and Mexico.

This development is of major concern to the nation's 20 million clerical workers—who outnumber the combined automobile, steel, electrical-equipment, and other durable-goods workers. The average salary for US clerical workers is \$13,624 a year—not much, but more than twice the estimated \$5600 that foreign workers probably average (when records are kept at all).

Clerical workers are the least-organized sector of the US workforce, so companies can't blame unions for their flight to foreign offices. If companies use the possibility of foreign competition to cut wages and speed up the work pace here, however, they may spur unionization as clerical workers fight to protect their jobs.

plp

## PROFS VIEW OUR FUTURE

The University of Michigan and the Society of Manufacturing Engineers have released a study on robotics. It anticipates that by 1995 robots will have replaced 4.3% of our total workforce (or about four million workers) and will have created 44,500 jobs in making, maintaining, and running the robots. So how about shortening the workweek?

Edward Cornish, president of the World Future Society, answers a question on the future of labor unions: "Unions could make a strong comeback if they develop strategies to fit the new environment." And what is that new environment? A global market that requires union co-operation on a global scale, and a rapidly-advancing technology that requires us to re-direct production to improve the human condition and find uses for leisure more fitted to the human potential. Yet futurist Cornish proposes co-operation with management rather than confrontation.

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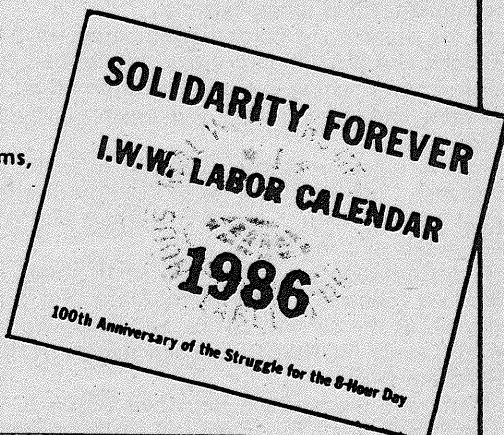
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City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Country \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_



# Around Our Union

**YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO:** The Ohio Supreme Court has ordered a new trial for FW Ed Mann, arrested in 1982 on a Trumbull Hospital picket line and convicted of resisting arrest (a charge of aggravated rioting was dropped when a grand jury refused to indict) following highly prejudicial rulings by the trial judge.

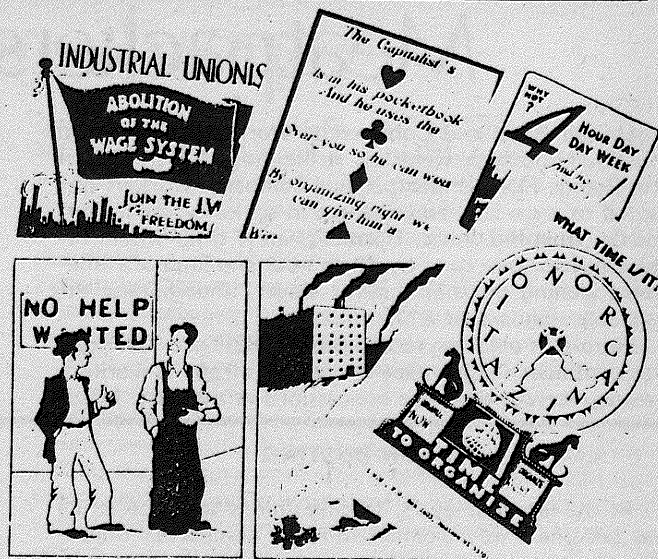
**KANSAS:** General Defense Committee Secretary Arthur Miller has been on the road lately, helping to boost the defense campaign for imprisoned Native American activist and class-war prisoner Leonard Peltier and speaking at Peltier rallies in Saint Louis and Columbia, Missouri and Lawrence and Leavenworth, Kansas.

**MADISON:** Lakeside Press, Madison's IWW print shop, ran off a set of silent agitators this summer. The Madison Branch selected 10 different designs, avoiding the "he-man" images and those focusing exclusively on workers in heavy industry. The agitators are printed in red and black on gummed paper, and include the Madi-

son local address (there is room for other branches to stamp their own address). A set of 10 is available for 50¢; 10 sets for \$2, postage included. Write the Branch for the cost of different quantities or of printing some with your own address substituted.

**ANCHORAGE:** FWs Bernard Wheeler and Ruth Sheridan joined a demonstration against South African apartheid August 25th. A report on the protest made the first page of the local paper, alongside a brief reference to a Teamsters local that is refusing to unload South African cargo. Anchorage Wobs are also helping cannery workers in their efforts to organize against intolerable working conditions.

**CHICAGO:** Local Wobs and friends returned to the British Tourist Authority September 14th to picket and leaflet in support of amnesty for British coal miners being victimized for participation in the recent strike.



Lay the Boss Off - It Makes More Sense

## OHIO PRISON OFFICIALS BACK DOWN

Last May we reported that officials of the Southern Ohio "Correctional" Facility had seized the membership cards of IWW members Brumfield and Perotti and were preventing them from receiving IWW publications. Shortly afterward, officials began letting them through. Now word has reached us that in response to a grievance filed by Fellow Worker Wolfel, the third IWW member at the SOCF, the prison has agreed to return their membership cards to all three Wobs.

This change of heart appears to have been prompted by officials' learning—through an intercepted letter from Wolfel to Perotti—of a lawsuit then in preparation challenging this and other violations of prisoners' rights. The Southwest Ohio General Defense Committee is continuing to monitor the situation, to ensure that the prison authorities honor their agreement.

## IWW GST OFFERED \$7500 TO DROP SUIT

IWW General Secretary-Treasurer Jon Bekken has been offered \$7500 by the City of Chicago to drop his false-arrest/false-imprisonment lawsuit. The suit stems from FW Bekken's April 18th arrest for distributing leaflets urging people to organize against US military intervention, and the Chicago Police Department's practice of holding people in jail on minor charges for which they cannot legally be imprisoned because of their inability to post cash bond (see article in June IW, Page 4).

Because the 7500-dollar settlement offer did not address this question, FW Bekken rejected it. His ACLU attorney notified the City that he would agree to settle for that amount if the City would agree to stop holding people solely for inability to post cash bond.

Bekken and Pamela Hall (arrested with him) went to court August 6th, where motions for discovery were rejected (the judge assuring the FWs that the City attorney would turn over anything they really needed). The case has been set for jury trial October 3rd.

democratic action. Discussion followed on the union's publications and the need for greater educational work and increased communication with isolated Wobs.

The conference concluded with an open meeting of the General Executive Board.

(adapted from *Solidarity Bulletin*)

## FREE LEONARD PELTIER

During October the US 8th Circuit Court of Appeals in Saint Louis will hear oral arguments by imprisoned Native American activist Leonard Peltier for a new trial, based on overwhelming evidence of Government misconduct and perjury in the original trial. The IWW's General Defense Committee is active in Peltier's behalf, and asks that fellow workers circulate petitions supporting a new trial (available from the IWW in Chicago or from the GDC at Box 6130, Kansas City, Kansas 66106) and write the judges expressing support for a new trial. Letters should be addressed to the Honorable Donald Ross, Gerald Heaney, and John Gibson, 8th Circuit Court of Appeals, 1114 Market Street, Saint Louis, Missouri 63101.

The General Defense Committee has obtained limited quantities of Peter Mathiessen's book on Peltier's case and the Native American struggles that underlie it, *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*. This book was suppressed upon publication by a libel suit and court order that were later dismissed, and by the decision of the publisher to destroy 40,000 copies for tax purposes. Originally published at \$20.95, copies of this 628-page book are now available from the General Defense Committee (3435 North Sheffield, Suite 202, Chicago, Illinois 60657) for \$15 (US) postpaid, while supplies last. Proceeds will support the General Defense Committee's work in behalf of class-war prisoners.

**GUATEMALA:** The Government has agreed to freeze prices of basic goods and rescind a 50% increase in bus fares in the face of strikes and demonstrations against the austerity measures. Police arrested over 600 people, closing schools and using the Army to disperse demonstrators.

**JAMAICA:** A three-day general strike involving over 200,000 workers from both the public and private sectors brought the island "paradise" to a virtual standstill in late June. Strikers were protesting the high cost of living and the Government's layoff of 17,000 workers.



Demonstrators in Juneau, Alaska protesting the House of Representatives' approval of \$27 million in aid to the Nicaraguan contras outside the federal building. Eight

## VANCOUVER WOB CONFERENCE FOCUSES ON ORGANIZING

Some 35 IWW members and friends gathered in Vancouver's Hastings Community Center July 18th and 19th to exchange ideas on organizing, international activities, and the future of the One Big Union. Though most participants were from Washington state and British Columbia, Wobs from Champaign, Illinois; Ypsilanti, Michigan; and San Francisco also turned out, as did General Secretary-Treasurer Jon Bekken.

The conference was dominated by discussions of organizing—farm workers, small shops, co-ops, and the unemployed—and the futility of relying on labor law to protect workers' rights to organize and act. Small shops, the bulk of today's workplaces, are especially vulnerable to legal union-busting, with the Government aiding the bosses through delays and diversions when it does not openly side with them.

The opening session on agricultural organizing featured Sarwan Boal of the Canadian Farmworkers Union and a fellow worker from the IWW's Orchard Workers Organizing Project. Boal discussed the origins of the CFU, its organizing activities throughout Western Canada, and the special difficulties that confront farm workers. Mostly immigrant and migratory workers, farm workers are not covered by workers' compensation, have only limited unemployment benefits, and are faced with horrendous working conditions. The CFU has been actively targeting the Labor Contracting System, whereby fully one-half of workers' pay gets swallowed by the contractors, and has ended this system at one farm. At present the CFU is active only in the Fraser Valley, having had to close its other offices due to financial difficulties and Government-aided union-busting.

In the orchards of Central Washington, as in Canada, pesticides and discriminatory pay differentials are major concerns. An ongoing exchange of information on farm pesticides and other sprays and organizing tactics was agreed to.

After a lunch break discussion turned to the Vancouver Branch's job-problems telephone hotline and its potential as a tool for organizing workers and educating them about existing rights.

A presentation on organizing small shops and co-operatives followed, led by Marni Maser and Muggs Sigurgeirson of the Service, Office, and Retail Workers Union of Canada (SORWUC) and Jim Hansen of the IWW's Bellingham Branch.

Maser and Sigurgeirson described SORWUC's efforts at organizing small shops, mostly in the social services. SORWUC, with 250 members, currently has some 20 bargaining units, the largest with 50 workers. Although SORWUC has mounted several drives in private industry—most notably pioneering bank organizing—it has found small units too vulnerable to the bosses' delaying tactics,

persons, including three Wobs, were arrested June 12th when they occupied Congressional offices. They face jury trial this month. (Photo by Mark Kelly)

firings; and the like to be organizable at this time. In the wake of these drives, however, SORWUC has left improved conditions.

SORWUC organizes in industries dominated by women workers, and is committed to rank-and-file control of the union. It has faced numerous attacks and raids from the business unions, who are especially vicious in resisting their own workers' efforts to organize.

Jim Hansen noted that many co-ops and worker-owned businesses are run just like any other business, with professional managers working to maximize profits, but using the myth of worker ownership or "co-operation" to justify speedups, low pay, or lousy conditions. In these situations, unionization is essential to defend workers' interests.

Thursday afternoon's sessions were followed by dinner. In the evening some conference-goers attended a benefit for the Organization of Unemployed Workers, while others remained at the Center to talk, join a sing-along, or watch a video on South African unions.

Friday morning opened with a presentation on unemployed organizing by FWs Sandra Nichol and Michel Daigneault. While the IWW is active in the local Organization of Unemployed Workers (OUW) and played a major role in getting it off the ground, the OUW is entirely autonomous. It has been active in fighting against bus-fare hikes and for free service for unemployed workers and those on fixed incomes, and in strike-support work. Extensive discussion touched on the need for universal public free transportation and for a shorter workweek (mention was made here of the Vancouver Branch's new leaflet, "Lost Time").

Following lunch the conference returned to the topic of small-shop organizing, with discussion focused on a specific organizing possibility based in the Pacific Northwest, but active through much of the US and Canada. Extensive discussion on the problems of dealing with (anti-) labor law also took place, with general agreement that shop-floor organization and direct action were far preferable to getting entangled in the courts and government labor bureaucracies.

Discussion then turned to the May 1986 international labor conference the IWW is organizing to mark the Haymarket centennial and the anniversaries of the Spanish Revolution and the Hungarian workers' revolt. Positive responses have come from around the world, and plans are moving ahead. FW Jeff Stein led this discussion, noting that the conference would be organized by the IWW, but that participants would take over once it convened. A spinoff would be tours by conference participants speaking at meetings arranged by local IWW branches.

The conference concluded with a discussion on the IWW's future which was opened with an address by FW Larry Gambone. Gambone noted that workers' struggles around the world over the last 20 years have gone beyond traditional unions or parties, tending toward direct

# Journalists Strike Against Censorship

## BRITISH BROADCASTERS STRIKE AGAINST CENSORSHIP

On August 7th the Thatcher Government's readiness to sacrifice the last trappings of free speech in the process of holding on to the last remnants of empire finally went too far when some 2,000 British Broadcasting Corporation employees, joined by hundreds of broadcasting journalists in commercial TV and radio newsrooms, struck against censorship.

Since the British Army was sent into Northeast Ireland in 1969, a succession of British Governments have felt that it was the duty of the British media to support the troops and those who sent them. By and large, most British journalists have agreed. Seldom have the press asked any inconvenient questions themselves or given air time to anyone who suggested that the troops should be withdrawn and the Union Jack be hauled down for the last time from Britain's first colony.

In the case of the odd nonconformist who wanted to produce an in-depth documentary on the Six Counties situation, BBC internal restrictions on coverage of events in Ulster have grown more rigorous in the last decade and a half, so that less now appears in contradiction of official views than when the trouble began. At the same time, the ploy of semi-secret internal restrictions has preserved the BBC's image of impartiality.

As the Secretary of the Federation of Broadcasters Unions, Tom Rhys, put it in a letter to the BBC chairperson in early 1972, the so-called "checks and balances" introduced by the BBC management "were becoming as effective as censorship, probably more effective because they were not much known outside the circles immediately involved, were superficially merely an intensification of normal safeguards, and were too vague and distant a target for public criticism". Frustrated BBC staff, continued Rhys, were beginning to avoid "items on which they ought to work" or avoid Irish subjects altogether, and believed that their careers were jeopardized by disagreements over items on Ireland.

Despite clear warnings that censorship, once permitted, always spreads, British broadcasting unions acquiesced to Government dictates on what they could say about Ireland, until this summer. The stage for confrontation was set by Thatcher's speech to the American Bar Association in July, when she trotted out the counter-insurgency theory that the media should "starve the ter-

rorists of the oxygen of publicity". The next step was Home Secretary Brittain's public demand that the BBC Board of Governors cancel the scheduled *Real Lives* documentary "At the Edge of the Union", profiling Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness and the Democratic Unionist Party's Gregory Campbell. Despite the careful balancing of views, any exposure of Irish Republicanism was too much.

BBC's governors duly canceled the program, and at one minute after midnight journalists started a 24-hour protest walkout. The BBC external services were off the air for the first time in 53 years, giving millions around

service, "secretly controls the hiring and firing" of BBC staff members. The BBC management rather contradictorily responded that security clearing had been going on since 1937, but that the number of people involved in the screening was "small". The failure to give those who were blacklisted any explanation why they failed to get the jobs they applied for has enraged the journalistic and technical unions, and they have threatened to take renewed protest action unless some sort of changes are made and announced promptly.

Rather late in the day, but better than nothing.

## IRISH JOURNALISTS STRIKE OVER CENSORSHIP

Journalists at the Irish Government-owned RTE radio and TV network called a 35-hour strike starting August 11th to protest the RTE director's decision not to allow radio interviews with Irish Northern Aid publicity director Martin Galvin. The National Union of Journalists said they rejected RTE's explanation that the Galvin decision was based on normal editorial grounds, and declared their belief that it was a clear example of self-censorship engendered by the provisions of Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act. (The Act allows the Irish Government to censor almost everything on either moral or political grounds.) The NUJ president congratulated the RTE journalists on their stand, and pledged full support for any member who might be subjected to RTE retaliatory action for joining the strike.

The journalists' union has lobbied in several campaigns since 1981 to have Section 31 revoked. This strike, coming on the heels of the one-day BBC strike against censorship of Northern Ireland news, is their strongest action yet.

Irish political censorship, though less widely known abroad than the country's literary censorship, is no less heavy-handed. In 1972, for instance, the Government fired the entire RTE Board of Governors for supporting the refusal of a journalist who interviewed the IRA chief of staff to identify his source. This censorship, together with the jails filled with republican political prisoners and the new laws that give the police even wider powers to detain and interrogate suspects, has had a stifling effect on criticism of the present Irish power structure.

The current minimum wage in Bolivia is from \$15 to \$20 per month—not enough to feed a single worker, let alone a family. Bolivia suffers from hyper-inflation, currently running at an annual rate of 14,000%. Four years ago one could buy a small car for the amount of money now required for a loaf of bread. The "centrist" Government—which recently replaced a "leftist" Government brought down after its austerity measures failed to get the economy in shape—has declared the general strike tantamount to collective suicide, and proclaimed that it would rather step down than revise its economic program. Juan Lechin Oquendo, COB executive secretary, responded: "If the President wants to leave, it would be marvelous and he would be doing the country a favor." Information on the outcome of the strike was not available at press time.

## POLISH CLASS-WAR PRISONERS

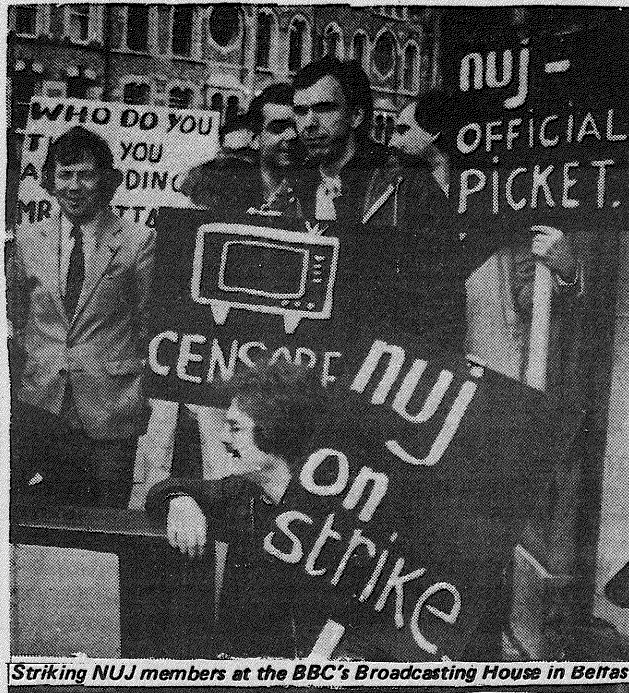
Immediately following the Polish Government's proclamation of a state of war against its working class, Robert Chechlac and Tomek Lupanov, apprentices in Warsaw's suburbs, tried to organize armed resistance to the dictatorship. The bloody fights in the Silesian mines, the mass of misinformation, and the emotions stirred by the imposition of martial law led them to believe that an insurrection was imminent.

They formed a clandestine group, distributing leaflets and disarming two soldiers while trying to get weapons to free several Solidarnosc members from Bialoleka prison. On February 18th, 1982, they accidentally wounded a militiaman, Sergeant Karos, while trying to take away his weapon. Although the Government announced the next day that Karos was out of danger, he died five days later in mysterious circumstances.

Robert and Tomek were arrested March 4th, 1982, tortured, and sentenced September 8th to 25 and 13 years of prison respectively by Warsaw's Military Tribunal. Two other members of the group, Stanislaw Mateczuk and Abbe Zych, were sentenced to six-year terms. These four fellow workers joined more than a dozen other class-war prisoners not released in the July 1984 amnesty. (They have subsequently been joined by large numbers of new prisoners—mainly activists in the Solidarnosc underground.)

An international campaign to gain the release of these class-war prisoners has been launched. In North America it has been taken up by the Polish Workers Solidarity Committee (Box 284, Main Station, Saint Catherine's, Ontario L2R, 6T7, Canada).

The IWW, meanwhile, continues to raise funds to assist the Solidarnosc underground.



Striking NUJ members at the BBC's Broadcasting House in Belfast

the world a glimpse of workers' power. The strike ended on a rather limp promise from the BBC Board that the program would be broadcast in amended form sometime "after Christmas".

Just as the furor was dying down, however, the BBC's cherished image of political independence received a new blow with the revelation that MI5, the British security

to have committed the acts he was accused of he would be sent home (he was variously reported as being from Hong Kong or Taiwan). The company also offered to reinstate all employees, and about a hundred went back to work, but the remaining 400 quit voluntarily.

Alain Laridon, technical advisor to the FTU, expressed the union's position that "jobs can't be created at any price, without the least regard for the workers' dignity". The union is now preparing a defense for the upcoming trials of its president and strikers.

## WORLD LABOR NEWS

**SOUTH AFRICA:** The Federation of South African Trade Unions has joined with the Food and Canning Workers Union, the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union, the General Workers Union, the Cape Town Municipal Workers Association, and the National Union of Mineworkers to support a national consumer boycott in protest of the state of emergency that has seen scores of union activists "detained". The boycott—aimed at shops in the central business districts—demands the lifting of the state of emergency, removal of police and army from the townships, release of all detainees, and political rights for all of South Africa's people. If the Government should refuse to meet these demands, or should undertake reprisals, the unions pledged to take stronger action.

Meanwhile, a strike by black coal and gold miners has been called off in the face of mass firings and reports that mine owners were forcing workers into the mines at gunpoint. In July 3,000 National Automobile and Allied Workers Union members at the Volkswagen Uitenhage plant struck when they learned that the company was building free busses for an upcoming rugby tour. Management backed down when the tour was canceled.

The inaugural congress for the new federation set to bring together most of South Africa's non-racial unions has been set for November 30th through December 1st. 25 unions are scheduled to take part in launching the new federation, which could approach 400,000 members. As part of the unity process, steps will be taken toward merging unions in the same industrial sector, so that there will be only one union for each sector.

**BOLIVIA:** After two days of spreading strikes, the Bolivian Workers Center (COB) called a 48-hour general strike September 4th and 5th to protest Government austerity measures. The strike shut down Bolivia's mines, factories, businesses, public transport, government offices, and central bank. On August 29th the Government imposed a series of austerity measures—including authorization of mass dismissals, higher food and gas prices, and a 95% currency devaluation. Many food prices rose 10-fold in the hours following the Government decrees, though workers' wages were frozen for four months.

# A Glance around the Globe

## SEMI-GENERAL STRIKE IN MAURITIUS

Intolerable conditions at many plants in the Mauritius Export Processing Zone reached the boiling point in late May. Overworked and underpaid, workers had long complained that their most pressing problem is the recognition of their human dignity. As in many such zones around the world, exceptional concessions by government to attract investment had led employers to believe that basic human rights could also be waived.

The Polytex manufacturing company is a wholly foreign-owned maker of "quality blue jeans". One of its managers, Christopher Ma, had long been noted for his abusive behavior toward workers, and in one case he was said to have shoved a pregnant woman down a staircase, creating a miscarriage. On May 16th, at the company gate, he assaulted two women who were trying to escape his wrath after they said they were quitting. When one ran away, according to onlookers, he tried to knock her down with an industrial trolley.

The next day, when the entire 500-member Polytex workforce walked out on a 24-hour protest work stoppage, the IUF-affiliated Federation des Travailleurs Unis (FTU), to which many workers in the Mauritius Zone belong, called a sympathy strike zone-wide.

Since the strike was of limited duration and had no other primary aim than the removal of the offending manager, the matter could have had limited repercussions. But the Government and employers, in defense of the special conditions in the free-trade zone, reacted harshly and clumsily.

The labor ministry declared that since strikes in the Zone were illegal, the employers could cancel their recognition of the FTU's bargaining rights and automatic check-off system if they wished, whereupon many immediately did. Furthermore, the Prime Minister proposed widespread sackings. "If people there now don't want to work," he said, "there are plenty of honest ones who do."

At the site, one employer's large truck broke through a crowd of protesting workers, mostly women, crushing one woman's knee. The Government arrested FTU President Sowkhatally Soodhun and four other workers (one man and three women).

The above incidents brought the labor centers in the country together on May 21st to lodge a common protest. The IUF and other international organizations were contacted, and their support for the workers' position was made known. At last the Government and the employers began to cool down. The announced cancellation of union recognition was suspended till a tripartite meeting could be called to deal with the situation, and Soodhun and the arrested strikers were released on bond.

Meanwhile, Polytex announced that the offending manager was being investigated, and that if he was found

SEPTEMBER 1894: W. H. HENKELMAN  
IWW VETERAN CARTOONIST  
BIRTHDAY GREETINGS, BILL!

# This Bad Dream Won't Go Away

"First, you vote. When that doesn't turn things around, you take to the streets. Then you try more-direct action, like handing the hungry a tray of food.

"Sometimes you shut your eyes, hoping hunger and hopelessness are somehow just bad dreams that'll go away. But they keep coming and coming, these wretched men and women, in a never-ending stream." (Worker in Hospitality House in East Los Angeles)

At 10:30 sharp they stand waiting at the door of the yellow-brick building. This is prime time for 600 to 1100 hungry men and women, when they amble through the dining hall of the soup kitchen with tray and spoon in hand. Their number varies with season and time of the month, but they all wear deep-settled poverty like the sweaty and greasy coats garbing their bodies.

The dull and spiritless no employer would ever hire. The flamboyant sporting pink and green ribbons in hair innocent of soap and comb. The blind and broken with arms in slings. The shamed and defeated elderly hobbling on crutches or easing themselves about in wheelchairs. The alcoholic between sprints. The jaunty ones sporting orange buttons boasting "God Loves You". The young and clear-eyed temporarily down on their luck. The homeless trundling shopping carts stuffed with bulging plastic bags.

Black faces. Brown faces. Yellow faces. White faces.

## readers' soap box

### WINDS OF CHANGE

Dear IW:

The following story was related to me by my best friend, Harry (not his real name), worked in a hospital as a security guard. The job paid okay, with a few good bennies. But then Harry's wife needed quadruple bypass surgery, and Harry took her to the hospital he worked at and used his benefits to save her.

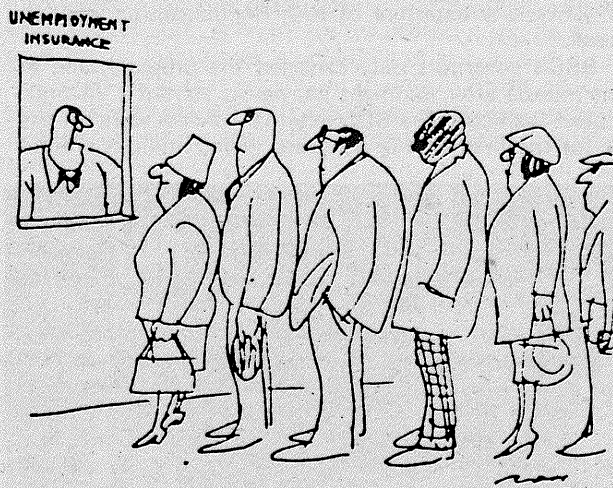
All of a sudden, the hospital was in monetary trouble. It fired Harry and hired a younger man with less experience, giving him less pay and even fewer benefits. Soon Harry went broke, while still owing the hospital lots of money for his wife's surgery. So he hired a bloodsucker, and finally won his unemployment comp. He is also taking the capitalist hospital to court for age discrimination, and his wife is taking the Social Security people to court to get her payments. They are claiming she can still work; but could you work with four veins missing in your legs and two that failed to survive the surgery on your heart?

The above is a true story. Harry loves this country, he fought in its wars, he disowned his son when the latter grew a ponytail, he did all those things that are supposed to make this country great. But now Harry is seeking the truth. Time will change this place—there is still hope—because all the Harrys are starting to see, feel, and be affected by the truth. The time is coming.

Forest Worker

Scarred red faces. They drain three huge vats of stew, plunder the salad bowl, demand extra slices of bread with mumbled accents and pointing fingers, muttering "Thank you" and "God bless".

As weeks lengthen into months, the mass of humanity filing through the dining room takes on aspects of individual pathos and humor. Somebody stole Old Dan's



"Go home, I tell you! The recession is over."

### THAT WOBBLY IMPACT

A footnote on Page 206 of the Spring 1985 issue of *Labor History* gives some idea of the IWW's enduring impact on West Coast lumber—perhaps better than a lengthy essay. The article by Jeremy Egolf deals with the rise of unionism in Raymond, Washington in the 1930s.

"Several of Raymond's key unionists in the 1930s had significant exposure to the IWW. Clifford Kight first encountered them in 1920; in 1923 he had a contract to haul single bunks and other supplies into camps as a result of the Wobblies' bindle-burning strike. A logger he aided with a ride to camp signed him up in the IWW. Wayne Sower worked in camps with his father, an IWW logger, and helped him saw apart bunk beds in 1923. Ed Stallcop joined the IWW in 1922 and was a leading left-wing logger and partisan in the IWA's faction fights in the 1930s and 1940s. Jack Price joined the IWW during World War I, was active in the 1924 Raymond strike, and when blacklisted went to work on the waterfront. He was the founding president of the Raymond longshore local . . . and served as an ILWU International vice-president during the 1940s. Leslie Younglove, first president of the Raymond Federal Labor Union, had worked as a youth in a logging camp, cutting firewood and feeding it into a donkey engine. He was so proficient he put another man out of work. When he refused to heed the donkey engineer's admonition to slow down, the engineer, a Wobbly, hauled in wood so filled with pitch that Younglove could not cut it. Younglove quit the job."

*Labor History* is one magazine you should make sure your local library carries.

### 42ND CONVENTION MINUTES AVAILABLE

Minutes from last year's IWW Convention (September 1st and 2nd, 1984) are now available for \$1 per copy. Also still available—while supplies last—are copies of the minutes from IWW Conventions going back to the late 1970s, at \$1 for the first copy and 50¢ for each additional copy.

#### Posters:

- ( ) Joe Hill . . . . . 10.00
- ( ) General Strike . . . . . 10.00
- ( ) Huelga General . . . . . 10.00
- ( ) Draftees of the World Unite . . . . . 10.00
- ( ) Four Hours Work for Eight Hours Pay . . . . . 10.00
- ( ) Fat Cat . . . . . 10.00

\* These items are offered for sale as a convenience to the readers of the IW. They are not official IWW literature, and the union takes no position on their content. The IWW does not engage in direct or indirect alliances with political or anti-political groups or sects. Quantity discounts are available on only some of the above titles.

green stocking cap while he slept. His hair points east and north. Mamie's had her baby. They now live on a park bench. Roger has lost a front tooth. Just how, he won't say. Katie showers the room with cuss words. This late in the month she hates everyone, and with the rent due and never any money to pay it, who can blame her? Pablo's had an earache for three days. With much grimacing and moaning, he finally gets it across to a Hospitality House worker that he wants to visit the clinic.

Workers serving food greet everybody with a cheery "Good morning. How are you?" (And how is anyone supposed to be in their circumstances?) But the irony is lost on most down-and-outers. Watch the answering smiles, the fleeting gleams of intelligence that light up their faces. For one moment in the day they're individuals, persons seen and heard from when they demand a second piece of bread.

Finally, the doors are closed. Bellies filled, the men gather on the lot across the street at their clapboard shantytown dubbed Justiceville. Old Jose stumbles on crutches back to his barren room three blocks away. Ben sourly wonders just how he happened to skid down to a soup kitchen.

Problems. The human tragedy that never ends. Nothing solved by all this good will at Hospitality House. " . . . They keep coming and coming, these wretched men and women, in a never-ending stream . . . "

Dorice McDaniels

### BOOK REVIEWS

*Plant Closings: Public or Private Choices*, Richard B. McKenzie, editor, 1984 revision, Cato Institute, 336 pages

This book is largely a free-enterprise answer to the 1980 *Capital and Communities: The Causes and Consequences of Private Disinvestment*, by Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison. It is plainly one side of the debate on the question of whether either state or federal governments should punish companies that close down plants by requiring them to see that laid-off workers eat for the next year or so. The answer given here is that governments that adopt such policies merely induce corporations to avoid building plants in their own jurisdictions and thereby further reduce job chances in the long run. Somehow the book falls short of taking this argument to the logical conclusion of urging an end to unemployment insurance, and the editor assures us that it is really "a pro-labor argument".

This book is issued by the tax-exempt Cato Institute, which says it accepts no government funding but survives on the "contributions of foundations, corporations, and individuals".

If you find it in your public library, you can have a lively debate with it, and perhaps take its basic issues a bit further. If, as the authors argue, capitalism cannot perform well if it is required to consider the general welfare, what then should we plan to do with our arms and legs and this planet's resources?

Fred Thompson

### LITERATURE DISCOUNT POLICY

Bulk orders of five or more of any item on the IWW Literature List, unless otherwise indicated, may be ordered at a 40% discount if orders are prepaid. We offer a 30% discount on similar orders which we must invoice. Postage will be added to all orders that are not prepaid. Please allow three weeks for delivery. (ND) indicates that no discount is available.

### AVAILABLE FROM LOCAL IWW GROUPS:

A Workers' Guide to Direct Action: 50¢. New York IWW, PO Box 183, New York 10028.  
Fellow Union Member: 10¢ each; bundles of 5 to 15, 5¢; 16 to 500, 3¢; over 500, 2¢. Tacoma/Olympia IWW, 2115 South Sheridan, Tacoma, Washington 98405.  
Introduction to the IWW: 10¢ each; bulk rate 40% discount, paid in advance. San Francisco IWW, PO Box 40485, San Francisco, California 94140.  
Solidarity Bulletin (monthly publication): \$10 a year. Vancouver IWW, PO Box 34334, Station D, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6J 4P3.  
IWW baseball caps (one size fits all): \$4 each, add \$1 each for shipping. University Cellar IU 660 Job Branch (checks to IWW), 341 East Liberty, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107.

# Literature!

#### Practical and Informational:

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- ( ) Collective Bargaining Manual . . . . . 2.00
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# Sound of a Distant Drum IWW Directory

The television spectacle of Ma Thatcher dashing back and forth across the wide Atlantic to sit at the bedside of the leader of the "Free World" and instruct him and his government on policy and planning for the coming apocalypse is no longer a joke.

I am not one of those who believe that if the Roy Rogers of the White House rides off into that great corral in the sky, or if Ma Thatcher turns in her police truncheon to sink down to the vault of the Bank of England, the world will be that much better or cleaner. For these people are no more than the vocal paper-signing creations of powerful interests who cannot be bothered to hold public office.

But for the large population seeking standing space within our small islands, what was once social disaster has now become the accepted norm. Our Second World War dragged on for far too long, and as the years went by people on both sides came to accept bombings and privations as normality.

The backlash of Britain's coal-mining strike is now being felt within the British economy, for debts and losses of more than five billion dollars are landing on boardroom tables. State railways lost their coal-carrying trade, but still had to pay wages and maintenance costs. Power stations starved of coal went into frantic Tory-ordered death dances to change their power-producing plants from coal to imported oil, and then to stopgap imported coal, and finally to nuclear power. The bill for a futile and idiotic exercise by right-wing politicians to hammer into the militant working class the realization of where authority lay staggers the imagination, when for a tiny fraction of that lost sum wage claims could have been agreed on, and uneconomic mines could have been closed down with a peaceful transference of local labor into newly-established light industry, with no loss

of the right of men, women, and children to say this is my village; this is my community; this is where our dead are buried; this is where our dreams are born.

The right-wing fanatic simply spits on the earth in a genuine rage born of futile hate for his fellow men and women. But the rational person says: "Ah yes, I agree with all that. But let us be sensible, old man: Where would the money have come from?" For as the Prime Minister, Mrs. Thatcher—and I hold no brief for her, old man, for I never voted for her—rightly says, the money is not available for these idealistic dreams of yours, old man. But as the only person within these small islands who never went to the London School of Economics, I would suggest in my simplicity that it lay within that wasted five billion dollars said to have resulted from the year-long coal strike. For slice the salami however you will, comrades, history (in spite of Henry Ford) demonstrates that the striking coal miners fought their just war with a clear conscience.

But what shall we do with Father Bernard Bussy, a 74-year-old parish priest who believes in the teachings of Christ that his church proclaims? And when the suffering, the foolish, and the just plain criminal called on him at the house of the Lord for alms, he handed out the monies of his church and ended up with a bank debt of almost \$200,000 before the rational members of the congregation were able to enforce the point that he should not take the teachings of Christ too literally. While Peter Dawson, the general secretary of the white-collar Professional Association of Teachers, says he has files proving that the sad, ineffectual rank-and-file of the National Union of Teachers are deliberately plotting to overthrow Ma Thatcher's Tory government (dem files, dem files).

Arthur Moyse, London

## NOTICE? DID YOU NOTICE? DID YOU

**DEPRESSION?** What depression? Statistics Canada has reported that pre-tax profits of Canadian industrial corporations in the fourth quarter of 1984 were up for the 10th straight quarter, hitting an all-time high of \$9.3 billion. For 1984 as a whole Canadian pre-tax profits for industrial corporations added up to \$35.6 billion, compared to \$28.3 billion in 1983 and \$19.5 billion in 1982. Meanwhile, Labor Canada reported that in 1984 the average wage hike for Canadian workers was 3.6%, the smallest increase since they began keeping track of such figures in 1967. 1984 also marked the third consecutive year wages failed to keep pace with the rising cost of living. Canadian unemployment, of course, remains at record high levels despite the current corporate-profit bonanza.

**THE BIG TICKET:** "Military things breed business," says Ed Schloss, vice-president in charge of sales for Cincinnati Milacron, the world's largest toolmaker. "We favor the B-1 bomber. We got a good boost from the B-1." Orders from military contractors account for about a fifth of the US machine-tool industry's business.

**BANANA REPUBLIC:** Since July 7th more than 200 *campesinos* have been camping in front of the Costa Rican Agricultural Development Institute (IDA) in protest of their eviction from uncultivated land controlled by the Standard Fruit Company. Any move to expropriate the Standard Fruit property, declared the IDA, would come properly through high-level negotiations between the Costa Rican Government and the US transnational corporation: nothing for grubby farm workers to concern themselves with.

**I THINK THAT I SHALL NEVER SEE:** There are roughly 14 billboards for every 10 miles of US highways.

**ABORTION: A WORKING-CLASS ISSUE:** An Alan Guttmacher Institute analysis of poll results shows that most of the women surveyed who have had abortions report family incomes between \$10,000 and \$29,000; the second-largest group of women report family incomes of \$10,000 or less; and the third-largest group report family incomes of \$30,000 or more.

**GOOD NEWS FOR SOME** is bad for others: About 50 million US women (54.5%) worked outside the home at the end of 1984, compared to about 33.5 million in 1972. But for many women this means working in someone else's home, though the ethnic status of female domestic workers has shifted from disproportionately black to disproportionately Hispanic. The renewed popularity of domestic workers points to the gaps left unattended in the changing American family. Domestic workers do the household chores many women are too overworked to do and have given up hope of sharing with the men in their lives. Studies show that while the number of hours women spend on domestic tasks has decreased since the '70s, the number of hours spent on these tasks by men has increased only slightly—not even enough to fill the gap. Many women also feel dissatisfied because even men who do share household chores have taken on some of the tasks women liked best—such as cooking and some of the more pleasant aspects of child care, while spurning more tedious tasks like shopping and cleaning. Thus women still feel responsible for the nitty-gritty running of the household, while men feel their increased efforts are unappreciated.

### WAGE SLAVE'S DICTIONARY

**ALARM CLOCK:** A small machine made by a wage slave for the purpose of calling slaves so they will get busy producing more for the master class.



I'M A ... PROFIT ENHANCEMENT !!

**WHO'S DISINVESTING?** In 1980 US bank loans to South Africa totaled \$1.4 billion. By June 1984 this figure had reached \$4.5 billion. In response to mounting disapproval of apartheid, most banks now say they make no loans to the South African Government or its agencies, but only to bank groups. But this merely amounts to money laundering on a grand scale, as these banks promptly re-lend the money to the South African Government.

### SEDITIONOUS CONSPIRACY LIVES

This summer, four members of the Puerto Rican Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional (FALN) were charged in a Chicago court with having conspired to help gain independence for their island by plotting bombings, prison escapes, and armed robberies—and, on top of this, having committed seditious conspiracy (that is, plotting to oppose by force the authority of the US Government).

None of the defendants recognized the court, but two of them addressed the jury, pointing out that US-owned drug companies conduct birth-control experiments on Puerto Rican women (the 60% of them who have not yet been sterilized as part of an ongoing US campaign); that the US Government has systematically attempted to efface the Puerto Ricans' heritage (English was enforced as the primary language in Puerto Rican schools until 1938); and that Wall Street capitalists dictate the country's politics and exploit its citizens and natural resources (in 1982, the average US worker earned twice as much as the average Puerto Rican worker). They also cited the United Nations resolution that sanctions war against colonialism.

None of this impressed the jury much. On August 6th the four were found guilty and joined the 14 other FALN members currently in prison. The FALN, which has been active primarily in New York and Chicago, has claimed responsibility for more than 140 bombings since 1974. The "seditious conspiracy" charge gained notoriety in World War I, when it was used against radical draft resisters, but for the last 47 years the only people it has been used against have been Puerto Rican *independen-tistas*.

**ALASKA:** Southeast Alaska General Membership Branch, c/o Bird, 1680 Harbor Way, Juneau 99801. Barry Roderick, Delegate, Box 748, Douglas 99824. Ruth Sheridan, Delegate, 4704 Kenai, Anchorage 99508.

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**ILLINOIS:** Chicago General Membership Branch, 3435 North Sheffield, Suite 202, Chicago 60657, (312) 549-5045. Meetings first Wednesday of each month, 7:30 pm. Champaign-Urbana IWW Group, Jeff Stein, Delegate, Box 2824, Station A, Champaign 61820.

**INDIANA:** Mitchell Rice, Delegate, 7333 West Isom Road, Bloomington 47401.

**KANSAS:** General Defense Committee, Arthur J. Miller, Secretary, PO Box 6130, Kansas City 66106. IWW Delegate, PO Box 522, Wichita 67201.

**KENTUCKY:** Louisville IWW Group, 2024 Baringer Avenue, Louisville 40204.

**LOUISIANA:** IWW Group, PO Box 16725, Baton Rouge 70893.

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**MASSACHUSETTS:** Boston General Membership Branch, Box 454, Cambridge 02139. Meetings first Monday of each month, 522-7090. Western Massachusetts IWW Group, Box 465, Hadley 01035.

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**MINNESOTA:** Twin Cities IWW Group, Nancy Arthur Collins, Delegate, 1621 Marshall, Number 3, Saint Paul 55104.

**MONTANA:** Clark Fork Valley IWW Group, PO Box 8562, Missoula 59807, (406) 728-6053. A. L. Nurse, Delegate, Route 5, Box 88, Thompson Falls 59874, (406) 827-3238.

**NEW YORK:** New York City General Membership Branch PO Box 183, New York 10028. Henry Pfaff, Delegate, 77 Eckhart, Buffalo 14207, (716) 877-6073. Jackie Panish, Delegate, 99-12 65th Road, Number 5-J, Rego Park 11374, (212) 868-1121.

**OHIO:** Southwest Ohio General Membership Branch, Box 92, Clifton 45316, (513) 767-9217. Meetings first Sunday of each month at 7 pm at IWW Hall, 68 Water Street, Clifton 45316. Prison Organizing Project: Dennis Wolfel, Number 145-554, Box 45699, Lucasville 45699-0001.

**ONTARIO:** Brian Burch, Delegate, 257B Carlton Street, Toronto M1A 2L4, Canada.

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Many thanks, fellow workers, for your generous support. (The *Industrial Worker* loss for July was \$261.90)

# Direct Action in the Orchards

*This is a true story, about how a few apple pickers last year saw an opportunity to get a raise and took it. Do you know any stories about job actions in other orchards? (Or other industries?) Let's make an organized push to get better pay and conditions, and eventual control over our work. Join up with the IWW's Agricultural Workers Union 110. Contact the Orchard Workers Organizing Project, PO Box 2223, Chelan, Washington 98815.*

The tractor driver met us at the end of the road and told us to hang on. Six Mexican men, all young, squatted by a pile of bins and eyed us. I walked over and greeted them in my poor Spanish. One fellow, in his late 20s, I judged, asked if we were going to work today.

"Well, Monty called the orchard we were staying on, said he needed some hands here at this orchard", I answered.

"Bueno. Guess that means we'll finally get to work today, too." Turns out they'd been coming each day for a week, driving 20 miles from town, to be told that the fruit wasn't ready: "Come back tomorrow." They figured Monty wouldn't give four gringos the run-around. It was a good sign that there were some whites on the crew.

We sat around, waiting to get started. Curt came back on his tractor in a cloud of diesel fumes. A grizzled old coot, he'd been driving on Monty's place for years. He told the six Mexicans he didn't have any work for them today, and before we knew it they got into their old Chevy and hit the road. I felt bad—it was the first time I'd been directly involved in the sort of racist hiring we always knew was happening. The Mexicans had been strung along till the boss could find some Americans, then dropped like rotten fruit.

## GETTING THE GOODS

"What are they paying?" asked Martha. She'd picked here last year, but got fed up with the poor conditions at the orchard. She'd gotten hired at Dick's, up the road. Curt said the piece rate was eight bucks a bin, same as last year—but Martha told us that last year Monty'd promised a raise for this season. We were getting ten up at Dick's. Eight was pretty bad. Nine was the minimum for golden delicious apples—they bruise easy, so the picker has to be gentle and pick a little slower. Good orchards were paying ten or eleven a bin.

Karen, another of our bunch, glanced around—"How 'bout ten?"

Curt the tractor driver couldn't raise us. "I only work here. The boss'll be around later."

We'd finished the golds three days before up at Dick's. We didn't know when we'd begin getting the golden delicious apples off his trees, and there was a solid eight to ten days of pickin' golds here, so we got started. We'd talk to the boss when he showed.

Our aluminum ladders started clanging as we set them up and started to pick. We each had a row of trees. From the top step of my ten-foot ladder, I could just reach the highest apples, the largest. These were the ones that filled the picking bag fastest. It was slung over my shoulders, hanging against my waist and thighs. You have to go pretty easy on golds, laying each one among its fellows in the bag.

I started at the top of the tree, picking everything within easy reach. It doesn't do to reach and strain for a few extra apples—the key is to learn how to move the ladder around the tree efficiently. I worked my way down the ladder. You don't pick the easy bottom fruit till you come down with a partial bag—never walk over to your bin to dump without a full bag. And you don't go back up the ladder with a part-full bag, fighting gravity. You get tired if you do, and the fruit hangs against the ladder and the branches. It gets beat up bad, and the grower will send your ass down the road if he sees you're bruising too much.

Each time I filled my bag I walked over to my bin, a 4x4x2½-foot plywood box, and emptied out. I was pretty sore, and my partner Tony could see I was steam-in'. The fruit thundered loudly into the bin—the booming carries pretty good, and the boss will listen for it.

"Take it easy", said Tony. He was a short guy, with long arms and a muscular back and shoulders. He'd been picking fruit a long time.

"I don't like being used that way", I grumbled as I went back up the ladder. We get paid by the bin—faster we pick, more we make, as long as there's fruit. Actually, it just means that the faster pickers get a bigger share of the apples picked; the slower pickers get fewer apples picked and so make less money.

"Shoot", says Tony. "Just figure you were getting even. They probably took some American's job when they first showed up this far north."

That did get me pissed! "Get off it, Tony. You know the growers themselves started this whole mess. They knew they could pay the Mexicans a couple bucks less, and still get more skilled pickers out of it. The American pickers stopped coming around when the wages didn't keep up, and when the growers didn't have jobs left for us. We were used to better money and conditions. Hell, this is paradise compared to Mexico, and those Yankee dollars make a man a king down there. Don't blame the Mexicans!"

Now, Tony was the type of worker that takes the bosses' line without any serious thought—what we'd call a scissorbill. He'd grown up hearing the same old crap, like all of us. He just never questioned it. "It's just the

old divide-and-conquer game, man."

By now I had another bag of apples, and he'd moved over to the other side of his tree—end of conversation. I picked the rest of mine, working around from top to bottom. The next three were red delicious, so I skipped them till they ripened up later in the harvest. Godawful, cardboard-tasting things. The goldens are so juicy and sweet—you'll never know what a real one tastes like if you've only had 'em from the supermarket, 'cause they've been in storage for months by the time they get there. I'd never buy one.

I hollered for Curt and his tractor to move my bin up to the next tree. Saves walkin' a lot with that full bag hanging and bouncing.

Karen was in the row to my right. She was grouching about the eight-dollar bin price. "You're the organizer man", she said. What should we do? Quit?"

"What good would it do? He'd just find someone else." I grinned. "We gotta organize ourselves here."

"Whoa!" she said. "I don't want to lose my job!"

"Well hell, you just want these growers to keep on ripping us off? If we're ever gonna get better conditions, we simply have to organize!"

I went on and told her about the IWW and others organizing the forest workers. I told her about the fight for the eight-hour day and minimum wages. How if it hadn't been for the workers who organized unions, there wouldn't be any of these things. I reminded her about the farm workers down in California in the UFW, and how some of the citrus workers down in Arizona had gotten together the last few years and gotten real wage increases and much better conditions. We could do the same here, by standing together—all of us. I must have gotten through, 'cause she later joined up into the Orchard Workers section of the IWW.

We kept pickin' and talkin' together like that into the morning, until by about 10 o'clock I had her pretty well convinced we were gonna have to do something. And we had a pretty good idea what that was.

I took a break and walked off to see who else was working. A group of three folks with Southern accents were all picking into the same bin. After a few "how dya do's", I asked about the wages. It was their first harvest, and seemed like good enough money to them. "Besides", said the skinny woman with the wrinkles, "we're just up here he'pin' our brother with the harvest." Relatives! Figured we better leave 'em out of any planning for now.

Another fellow, we later called "Thrasher", was real lanky: long fingers and sunken cheeks and all legs and arms. His first harvest, too. He'd been picking here for three days now, and living in a run-down trailer by the river the boss had given him for the season. This guy was going like mad, ripping fruit off, and I could hear each one land in his bag with a "pok". Bruise city. Applesauce.

"Seen the boss?"

"Nope, he usually drags in about noon", he answered.

"Does he ever give you a hard time about your fruit?"

Thrasher says Monty never really looked—the boss was in debt bad and just wanted to get his fruit off the trees; he was late starting up, too. And why did I want to know? I told him most growers would send him down the road with those bruises.

Thrasher'd come over 'cause he'd heard you could make good money off the harvest, and needed to make payments on his land. But he wasn't happy, still only getting four bins a day. He wasn't very efficient, working too hard.

I showed him a few tricks. For example, it was better to make an extra ladder set or two instead of straining to lean over for more apples from the top of the ladder. "Hard on the back", I told him. "And call for the tractor often. Keep your bin moved up to where you're pickin'. Saves a time-consuming walk with that heavy bag. And eight bucks is real cheap wages, by the way."

"That's what I figured", he grumbled. "A woman said we should be getting more—she quit yesterday. If you got any ideas, let me know." I asked him to meet us for lunch and a talk.

## SHORT PAY—SHORT BINS

Back at my trees, I noticed Tony had started another bin. His first one wasn't topped off, though. About three or four bags short. "Short pay, short bins", he grinned. He'd already talked to Karen, or else she'd had the same idea. I heard thunder as she started her second bin. I couldn't see any apples heaped above the walls of her first.

Now a good, full bin has about two dozen bags of fruit. And for goldens, the picker should get at least \$10, which comes to about 44¢ a bag. So for an eight-dollar bin, the grower ought to get only 18 bags. That makes good economic sense to me, and I guess to Tony and Karen too. The little old guy who was checking bins had accepted our short bins and given us our tickets, worth \$8 each. I finished my first, a bag less than Karen. Sure enough, the guy gave me a ticket! We had about two and a half bins apiece when a muscular middle-aged guy pulled up on another tractor. Monty, the owner.

After introductions, he said to put another bag into each bin. I gave a quick glance around the group of us. "We were wondering about a raise. I know you been having some hard times with the bank, but the going rate for goldens is \$10."

He jumped! "I'm in debt so bad, I couldn't afford to prune the trees last winter."

I knew this. We all knew it. Monty was in the same fix as most of the other small growers around here. Most



*A short bin in the foreground. The grower pays only \$9 a bin, so pickers put only \$9 worth of apples in it. The inside walls would not be visible in a full bin.*

of these orchard owners were having the screws turned by the bank or the fruit packers. Three, four years before they'd taken out big loans to irrigate and plant more land, or to pay off the mortgage sooner. Then comes a big price drop because of new apple varieties or a glut on the market, and they can't pay up. Just like that there's some big corporate "farmer" like Dole or Naumes waiting in the wings to gobble 'em up like a big golden delicious. It's as American as apple pie, and it's called free enterprise. Concentration of wealth, I call it, casualties of a profit-oriented economy: a ripoff.

"All right", Karen said, "how 'bout \$9.50?" He let out a deep breath. He said he'd talk to the bookkeeper, and left.

Thrasher came by, and we pulled out our lunches. First we walked back to the shed and washed the dust and the black aluminum oxide off our hands. We breathe enough dust from the sprays—no point in eating it too.

Martha was mad. "No way is he gonna raise us to \$9.50! You just went and pissed him off. Now he'll start watching us closer."

Karen said to lighten up. "Monty obviously doesn't care that much. Look at the fruit Thrasher here's been churning out, and that other guy, Pablo. Monty said he was real happy to have us experienced pickers here, and you know he can't afford to lay us off. There's a shortage of pickers this year, ya know."

This was true. Word was out all the way to Oaxaca that the fruit was sparse and small—"Bad pickin', don't bother to go north." A real good opportunity to start agitating, though. Wish I'd known it would be this bad a lot earlier! We agreed to hold out for a raise to at least \$9, or walk out.

Monty came back on the smoky John Deere. "Any chance you can bring more pickers from your camp tomorrow? I know that Dick always has a good crew of pickers."

I told him I doubted anybody'd be coming back for only \$8.

"Well, I can't raise you—not more than 50¢."

"Sorry, Monty. I guess we'll finish off our bins and head out."

He was sorry to hear that. He needed some good pickers, bad, if he wasn't gonna lose more money by being late in the harvest and getting stuck with the Thrasher and Pablo's fruit.

We walked away slow, leaving him on his tractor. He was seeing red, alright.

I finished up my bin after lunch. Found lots of bird nests in the trees, with abandoned, dried eggs. The pickers figure it's the sprays that kill 'em off, or drive away the adults. I went over to help Tony finish up. Martha was already helping Karen. Thrasher came by. "You really leavin'? I guess I will, too."

The women came by just as we heard Monty's tractor coming back. Martha asked if we could get our checks. He answered by offering us \$9. "Does the raise apply to the whole crew?" we asked him. Pablo and the relatives hadn't been in on our little bargaining action.

Monty looked us over. We really hadn't discussed that, but we all knew what the answer would have to be. So did he. "I reckon so", he said.

So we came back with four others next day. Monty got quality picking, and nine bucks worth of apples in every bin. And you can bet that Monty's pickers this season will find out what he paid last year.

"Shortbin"

## WAGE SLAVE'S DICTIONARY

**JOB:** The most valuable possession of the master class, loaned to the slaves on shares—one-fifth for the slaves and four-fifths for the master.

**TAX NIBBLE:** In 1960 US corporate taxes were 23% of taxes paid to the feds. In 1984, they were only 8.5%.

**IN A DEPRESSION,** money doesn't disappear. It just gets into fewer and fewer hands.