

Industrial Worker

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EDUCATION ORGANIZATION EMANCIPATION

SF Bay Area Wobs Picket UA Cinema

Bay Area Wobs hit the United Artists Emeryville-10 cinema with a Valentine's Day picket to protest the theater's firing of an IWW member and discrimination against black employees. Picketing began at 5 p.m. with five Wobs, and eventually grew to 12, including one of the fired Warehouse workers. One resourceful Wob made a list showing non-UA theaters where each movie playing at the UA Theater could be seen.

Management did not appreciate this helpful gesture. Michael Tozour, the manager who fired Berlin Scales and Jason Mottley threatened to have our picketers arrested. He ordered them to move to a traffic island across the street, claiming that the sidewalk by the building was "private property." The FWs refused. He threatened to call the police, but they failed to show until much later, after 50 bicyclists from Critical Mass entered the parking lot and joined the picket. Two police cars then showed up to observe the action.

Several customers were turned away, including several union members. Picketing is continuing on a weekly basis.

Boycott Borders

Opposition to Borders Books' union-busting continues spreading throughout the country, with a Florida AFSCME local, Detroit newspaper strikers and members of the Catholic Worker movement recently joining the Boycott Borders Campaign. A secret Borders union-busting manual recently obtained by the IWW documents the chain booksellers' concern over unionization efforts. And Borders has shaken up its top management in response to disappointing sales (see report, page 3).

IWW picketing in support of Miriam Fried continued in New York's Capital District at the Albany area Borders Feb. 17. The demonstration brought together a coalition of local activists from teacher and public employee unions, the National Writers Union and church groups, all calling for justice in the illegal firing of Fried last June by the corporate bookseller.

"While it's difficult to maintain support for such a protracted struggle, especially when the temperature is in the single digits out on the picket line, we've been given a boost from the local Catholic Worker house,"

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In This Issue...

Mersey Women Determined to Fight On
Build Democracy at Work
The IWW in Australia
General Strike, Solidarity free Swazi unionists



Clinton board worse than Reagan era...

Wobs Blast Anti-Labor NLRB

The following open letter was delivered to National Labor Relations Board chairman William Gould by Boston Wobblies during a Feb. 20 speech to the Harvard Trade Union Program:

Which side are you on?

You appear today as the head of the National Labor Relations Board—appointed by President Clinton with the promise that you would reverse the anti-labor bias of the Reagan-Bush era Board. Since your appointment the Board has done little if anything to protect the rights of workers to unionize and to fight for better conditions.

It is true, as many labor activists pointed out during the Reagan-Bush years, that Justice Delayed is Justice Denied. Our union "won" several NLRB cases during those dark years, "victories" so long in the deciding that the union presence on the job had long since been destroyed. Today the NLRB acts much more swiftly. But where the Board once helped the bosses stay union-free by dragging its feet, now it simply approves their union-busting tactics outright. The result is the same: under your administration workers still have no rights which the bosses are obliged to respect.

NLRB turns a deaf ear

When workers at El Cerrito, Calif., Warehouse outlet #280 got fed up with \$4.75 an hour wages, speed-ups and deteriorating conditions they turned to our union, the Industrial Workers of the World, for help. A solid majority of workers became dues-paying members of the union, and all but five workers signed authorization cards. The Warehouse responded to their request for union recognition by firing two workers for union activity. Warehouse managers



admitted as much in a conference call inadvertently broadcast to workers and customers over speakerphones at its Alameda store (where the IWW also has majority support). In that conversation managers agreed to assign known union supporters to the worst jobs and to cut their hours, to fire union workers, and to "bribe" workers to oppose the union. Managers were directed to report suspected union supporters to the regional manager to be added to a centralized blacklist. Since that meeting workers have been threatened with firing for discussing the union on off-duty time. In the Alameda store, a manager told workers "if you join the union you're fired" as he handed them anti-union literature.

How has the NLRB responded? By rejecting unfair labor practice charges on the

firings which have already taken place, and refusing to take any action to defend workers who have been threatened with firing.

Fired for organizing

In Philadelphia, the NLRB has decided to dismiss unfair labor practice charges against Borders Books for firing IWW organizing committee member Miriam Fried. Just a few weeks before she was fired, ostensibly for questioning a store policy which was being routinely violated by store clerks and managers alike, Borders gave Fried a glowing evaluation, terming her "a fine model for other booksellers." (After workers in another store voted to join the UFCW, a Borders spokesman threatened workers' jobs: "[T]he union won't work. I

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Amtrak rail workers fight racism

Black and minority workers employed in Amtrak rail operations across the United States are being subjected to regular verbal and physical attacks, when they are not excluded from jobs altogether, prompting workers in Boston and other facilities to organize to demand fair play.

Former Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE) Local 987 president Bill Regan was set on fire on the job, assaulted and suspended when he complained that supervisors routinely used racial slurs, threats and violence against workers, and were ignoring pervasive racist graffiti and posters throughout the workplace. Six foremen were in the room on the October 1993 morning when someone set Regan's windbreaker on fire—amazingly no one saw it happen. When a foreman punched Regan while he was talking about discrimination, he turned to the three workers present and said, "Nobody saw nothing." (One of those workers confirmed the incident, but was afraid to be identified.)

But when Regan demanded that Amtrak improve its minority hiring record, Amtrak officials brought him up on disciplinary charges, suspending him for three days and putting him on probation for six months for an incident in which a supervisor grabbed him by the shoulder and threw him back several feet. (The supervisor was put on probation too, but not suspended, after admitting to the attack but claiming he had been insulted.) And when Regan took the

issue public, BMWE Local 987 barred him from union meetings for nine months.

Black workers report being subjected to nigger jokes, confronted with black paper dolls hanging from nooses, being denied access to training programs, assaulted on the job, and disciplined for incidents that happened while they weren't even on duty.

Blacks make up only 4 percent of workers in Amtrak's Boston commuter rail division; 87 percent of workers are white men. Minorities are much rarer in better-paid engineering and managerial divisions. When Regan asked why, Amtrak officials said they couldn't find qualified minorities. So he teamed up with the Greater Roxbury Workers Association to recruit minority applicants, only to find that even workers who had held the jobs before were refused. (Dozens of minority workers were hired

after the story broke in the *Boston Phoenix*.)

The problem is not limited to Boston. "There is a lot of racial discrimination," says James Pitts, chairman of the Chicago branch of the International Association of Machinists. "The only investigations I've been involved with over the last two years have been on black people." In one incident there, a black manager was suspended without pay for dispatching a defective train even though he was off duty at the time and had not given the order.

Six black workers in Los Angeles have filed complaints with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and workers in Los Angeles and Washington D.C. have set up ad hoc committees to meet with managers to discuss Amtrak's discriminatory practices. In Boston, the Amtrak Com-

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Utah Phillips: Thanks

Dear Friends and Fellow Workers,

In behalf of Joanna, my wife, and myself, I would like to thank those who have helped to support us through a very difficult period of our lives. For the past 30 years, I have pursued a trade which has been essentially boss-less. The trade-off has been that it is also essentially pensionless. Over the years, I have carried with me the sense that if I cared for those around me to the limit of my ability, that when the time came, some sort of reciprocity would appear. Sounds like a mystical way to approach a very practical matter; but then, all we really have is each other, and if we lose that, we have nothing. This is at the center of our movement as Wobbly unionists. The loss of one's trade is not the end of the world. Your generosity gives us the space and resources to build a different kind of life, and to seek out new opportunities.

Speaking of opportunities, if there ever was a time for realizing Bill Haywood's dream, "world labor needs a world union," that time is now. With the internationalization of capital, labor must internationalize. The tools are there, tools that have only recently come into existence. The boss has no use for nationalism other than as a way to divide the working class. As I find through your open-handed generosity, that I am not alone in the world, every wage worker everywhere must understand that none of us is alone if we stand together.

Job Branch= 5 or more members in workplace
GMB=General Membership Branch
IU=Industrial Union Del=Delegate
GOC= Organizing Committee.

IU 330: Building Construction Workers
IU 450: Print & Publishing House Workers
IU 460: Food Processing Workers
IU 510: Marine Transport Workers
IU 610: Health Service Workers
IU 620: Education Workers
IU 630: Entertainment Workers
IU 660: General Distribution Workers
IU 670: Public Service Workers

Industrial Worker

THE VOICE OF REVOLUTIONARY UNIONISM

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Readers' Soapbox

I have always been proud to declare that the IWW is the single most important association of my life. Once again, thanks.

Yours for the OBU,
Utah Phillips

Turn Off Your Television

April 24 - 30 is National TV Turnoff Week. Last year more than one million people participated in leaving their TVs off for a week to focus that time on more family/community oriented things. Television may be the most dangerous weapon the capitalists have with 2.24 sets in the average home and the nation watching 250 billion hours annually. In 1985, 100 percent of the top ten selling toys were related to TV shows. (Yeah, I know its an old statistic.) Advertising is fast becoming one of the largest, most expensive industries, and more and more people are becoming addicted to this mind-numbing device. Join in a week of solidarity and leave the "idiot-box" off for a week. Yes, it's only a week, but also a step towards less TV in general.

Also, according to the Free Burma Con-

ference, Pepsico has pulled out of Burma. But wait, before you go out and buy some of that Wild Cherry stuff that you never got to try because they came out with it after you'd been boycotting them for a few years, Pepsico still has similar operations in Nigeria and is boycotted by groups in India for dumping plastic bottle waste in Madras. It's not over yet.

And don't forget the Nestle boycott!
Corey O'Hern

Reading Solidarity Action

I've got together with some others and we successfully set up a Liverpool Dockers support group last September. Since then we've held a number of meetings, handed out several thousand leaflets, and raised approximately 1500 pounds through weekly street collections and fortnightly benefit concerts.

Some of this money has been raised for Hillingden Hospital cleaners who were sacked in September 1995 when they struck against a 20% pay cut (from wages of approximately £5000 a year). At the same time

the Hospital Trust Fund Chief Executive, Philip Brown increased his own pay by 70%. The sacked cleaners were employed by Pall Mall recruiting agency, six of whose directors are paid altogether £300,000 a year.

In January this year the cleaners' union, Unison, told them to accept a pay off from Pall Mall of less than £5000 each. When they refused the union stopped their regular funding and support, although they have since given a £10,000 donation. Messages and donations should be sent to: Councillor Kennedy, Hillingden Hospital Support Campaign, Civic Centre, Uxbridge Middlesex UB8 1UW England (Cheques payable to Hillingden Hospital Support Campaign)

As we're also supporting the Hillingden cleaners we decided we couldn't really call ourselves a Liverpool Dockers Support Group, so we changed our name to Reading Solidarity Action.

Despite the obvious hardship to the Liverpool dockers, the dispute has been very beneficial for the labour movement as a whole, for, at least on a local level, it has brought us of people together in support activities and also in promoting one of the most basic principles necessary to a successful labor movement: solidarity.

X343263, Reading

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ENGLAND

Swindon Region GMB & Research Councils IU 620 group- del: Kevin Brandstatter, 9 Omdurman Street, Swindon SN2 1HA, 01793-610707
General Distribution Workers IU660 and Bocememouh IWW- Ray Carr, Flat 2, 35 Parkwood Rd., Boscombe, Dorset BH5 2BS

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UCB Recyclers/Compost IU620 Job Shop- 504 Eshleman Berkely 94720 510/642-4895. del.s: Cathy Brennan, Charles Long
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Long Haul Resource Center, 3124 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 94705. 510/845-0540. GMB meets 3rd Saturdays at Long Haul, 1:30 p.m., Open delegates meeting 1st Saturdays at Long Haul, 1:30 p.m. General Organizing Committee meets 4th Saturdays at San Francisco office. GDC meets as needed contact: 510/549-0358.

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Pioneer Valley Group- PO Box 154, Northampton 01061, e-mail: pviww@iww.org del: Mike D'Amore 413/549-1143

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IU630 Workers Stories Workers Lives Job Shop- Albert Parsons 313/769-0695
IU670 Ann Arbor Tenants Union Job Shop- 4001 Michigan Union, Ann Arbor 48109. 313/763-6876.

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Duluth GMB- 8 N. 2nd Ave E., #301, Duluth 55803 218/723-7887.
Minneapolis-St. Paul- 7315 Dupont Ave. S., Richfield 55423-3025. 612/869-4139.

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St. Louis GMB- c/o Bob Tibbs, Jr., 10072 Hedge Dr., St. Louis 63137. 314/868-1472

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Capital District Group- POB 74, Altamont 12009. 518/861-5627.

Rochester- Del: Ric Garren, 716/385-6681.
NYC GMB- Del: Wade Rawluk, 5610 Netherland Ave #4D, Bronx 10471. 718/796-3671.
Rochelle Semel, RD 1 Box 158-B, Hartwick 13348. 607/293-6489.

IU670 Socialist Party Natl Office Job Shop- 516 W. 25th St. #404, NYC 10001. 212/691-0776

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Olympia- PO Box 2775, 98507. 360/753-5919.
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WISCONSIN

IU450 Lakeside Press Job Shop- 1334 Williamson, Madison 53703 608/255-1800.
Madison GMB- c/o Lakeside. Del: Jerry Chernow

WYOMING

Jackson- Teton Jack Langan, del., POB 4056, 89001. 307/733-4553

Borders losing ground

Borders Group sales were up 14 percent for 1996, to \$1.85 billion from its 1,050 stores. However, Borders lost ground to arch-rival Barnes & Noble, which reported a 24% increase on sales for the year (to \$2.448 billion from 1,008 stores). Barnes & Noble has reached an agreement with America On-Line to sell books on-line, and has replaced Borders as a sponsor of the National Public Radio program, Fresh Air.

Borders responded to the disappointing sales with a Jan. 30 management shake-up, which included promoting the head of Borders' Waldenbooks division to President and CEO of Borders Inc. Seven other top-level executives were shuffled about, including the former president and Borders' former senior vice president of merchandising, who were transferred from operations to a new Emerging Ventures division.

But Borders still has friends in high places. Investors and politicians continue pouring money into Borders' pockets. In January Borders received a nearly \$1 million training grant from the Michigan Jobs Commission to subsidize training some 500 workers. The IWW is letting the Job Commission and Washtenaw Community College (which helps provide the training) know what we think of their collaboration with a union-busting corporation.

Borders Loves Scabs

Over 30 demonstrators showed up to greet Susan Ager, *Detroit Free Press* scab columnist when she appeared at the Ann Arbor Borders bookstore Feb. 12 for a reading and signing of her new book. Demonstrators outnumbered the sympathetic members of the audience, which appeared to be made up largely of family members and middle-class friends. Ager's scab column appears in "The Way We Live" section of the *Free Press*, where never a piece of hard news is permitted. Some who heard her speak said they were almost as offended by the quality of her writing as by the fact that she is a scab and was being hosted by union-busting Borders. One came out saying "She actually said 'The ring is round!'"

The demonstrators were an informal coalition of Wobblies, striking Detroit newspaper workers, Labor Party members, U of Michigan graduate employees, and members of Jobs With Justice. Flyers announced: "Free Press Scab Susan Ager hosted by union-busting Borders—a marriage made in corporate hell. Boycott Borders—Boycott the Detroit Free Press and News." The other side of the flyer explained the reason for the IWW's Borders boycott—the firing of Wobbly organizer Miriam Fried at the Philadelphia Borders last June.

PREAMBLE TO THE IWW CONSTITUTION

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 the 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 means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth.

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 interests of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all 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 a 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 everyday struggle with the 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.

Around Our Union

As a demonstrator was handing out leaflets with the comment "A Free Press SCAB is talking here tonight," one person going in said "You're talking about my daughter." The demonstrator smiled, shrugged and replied: "She's still a scab. You should have taught her better."

Ager was peppered with questions about the strike by protesters in the audience. One question was how she could justify working for a company which had driven a truck directly into a line of picketers. Police were called when a Graduate Employee demonstrator became too vociferous in the eyes of Borders management. The two who arrived were met with calls of "Free Speech, Officer!" from protesters outside. But management apparently realized that arrests would lead to even more negative publicity for the store. The police were told that "Everything is under control" although the demeanor of the protesters inside had not changed significantly. The police left with no arrests.

It's hard to imagine that Ager will venture far afield to promote an insipid book; but just in case, folks might want to keep an eye on Borders upcoming events in your area. If she shows up, it's a fine opportunity to show support both for the striking newspaper workers, 2000 of whom have now been out for 19 months because Gannett and Knight-Ridder continue their refusal to bargain in good faith; and to show Borders that we aren't going away until they reach a settlement with Miriam Fried.

Bloomington, Indiana

We picketed and handed out flyers in front of Borders for about an hour Feb. 28 before police chased us off. We handed out a couple hundred flyers, and were able to discourage many people who would otherwise have gone in and bought something.

Unfortunately, most of the workers at this particular store seem to have bought the company line hook line and sinker. The first worker we handed a flyer to and tried to talk to about Borders' union-busting promptly scurried to the assistant manager, muttering about how she didn't like unions. The assistant manager stormed out and told us, "I'm sorry, you're going to have to leave; this is



On February 21 the Philadelphia office of Merrill Lynch was visited by members of the Philadelphia IWW General Membership Branch. Merrill Lynch, the former parent company of the Wherehouse chain (Merrill Lynch Capital Partners' ownership was terminated by a bankruptcy judge Jan. 31), was warned that their office should expect many more visits if the firing, harassment and bribing of workers organized by the IWW continues. A vice president faxed our flyer about union busting at the Wherehouse to Merrill Lynch's corporate headquarters in New York, and security was called shortly after. In this photo, Roseanne Scotti mugs for the camera while Alexis Buss calms a troubled receptionist.

Photo: Sharon Vance

private property." Our response was "yeah, but it isn't your property." She threatened to call the police, and we told her to go ahead, figuring the police wouldn't do anything unless they heard from the mall owner.

About half an hour later, four officers arrived. The cops were actually pretty friendly, and agreed that Borders itself couldn't have them do anything to us as long as all we were doing was passing out flyers. After a while, one of them told us that they'd just heard from the mall manager and that we'd have to leave to avoid being arrested for trespassing. Actually, my understanding is that the sidewalk is considered a public thoroughfare and legally we could have stayed, but we had passed out a lot of leaflets by then, so rather than risk arrest we left... for now.

— Jeff Melton

Union-Busting Manual

The IWW has secured a copy of a 39-page union-busting manual issued by Borders headquarters in September, 1996. The manual gives managers detailed talking points, warning signs of union activity to look for, and instructions not to fire unionists without first clearing the action with officials in Ann Arbor. (Borders insists that former Philadelphia Manager Dave Stewart acted on his own in firing FW Fried.) It offers vague and inaccurate characterizations of the Fried dispute, quotes the IWW and UFCW Preambles (and takes a slam at UFCW officers' salaries, but so sketchily that a boss who tried to use the information could surely be easily tripped up).

The manual notes that many workers may be inclined to listen to the union. "Our employees are intelligent, involved and committed people. They also often feel over-qualified and underpaid. In most cases they are." However, it offers no solution, other than explaining that the conditions of Borders workers can not be improved, and claiming they are treated better than workers in other retail establishments.

The manual and a memo circulated to managers Jan. 9th warn that union organizers are approaching workers on the job to give them information on the union. Managers are told to order organizers out of the store, but to avoid arrests if possible. Apparently workers are posting IWW material on store bulletin boards, as managers are warned to look for such materials.

The January memo directs managers to "be sure that the management team watches the union video that includes Joe Gable (this is not to be viewed by the hourly staff!)." And it promises a new "union-avoidance

manual" in the near future. We can hardly wait.

As for managers whose consciences twinge at being pressed into union-busting, Borders has this to say: "Unions serve a necessary and valuable role in society, but ... they will not be compatible with our management style."

Borders Management Shuffle

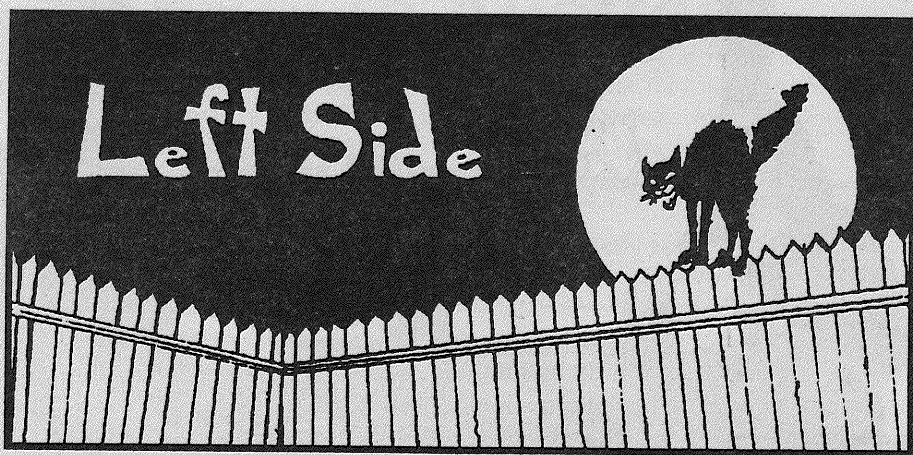
Borders Corporate Headquarters has decided to shuffle management around in order to stop further unionization. Two General Managers have been transferred recently: Carole Weiner from Stamford, CT, now works as an Assistant Manager in White Plains; Philadelphia's Dave Stewart, who gained national notoriety for firing Wobbly organizer Miriam Fried, has been transferred to an opening store in Atlantic City, NJ. Employees of Borders in Stamford were preparing for an election for United Food & Commercial Workers when Carole Weiner was replaced by a stricter General Manager.

Borders Headquarters transferred Dave Stewart when it was learned that a UFCW organizing committee had sprung up in the store. Stewart has also bungled public relations during the continuing national boycott. Word from inside the store says he cried when he was reassigned from managing one of the highest-grossing Borders in the country to opening the new store in Atlantic City. Philadelphia Wobs hope to make him feel right at home in Atlantic City when the new store opens by greeting him and his new customers with pickets.

Wherehouse union-busting slows drive

El Cerrito Wherehouse Workers voted against IWW representation by a 7-2 vote in a Feb. 28 NLRB election. The original bargaining unit was 25 workers, of which 16 were Wobblies. By Feb. 28 the unit was reduced to 10 by firing, transferring-out, laying-off and promoting union supporters out of the bargaining unit. Out of 10 eligible voters remaining in the shop, four were Wobblies. One Wob never showed to vote, two fellow workers voted yes, and one apparently voted no. Two workers fired for their union activities also voted, but Wherehouse managers challenged their votes and they were not counted.

The IWW has three Unfair Labor Practices pending against the Wherehouse with the National Labor Relations Board. The election at the Alameda store has been postponed until they can be investigated. The NLRB will no doubt sell us out in the end.



Your humble scribe and his Fellow Worker Compañera had come to the conclusion that Greece was a better place to spend February than Chicago. And Greece being FWC's home stomping grounds, it afforded this rebel couple a vacation together. Your scribe's mastery of the Greek language being rather limited, it is always nice to have one's own personal travel guide. Besides one gets saturated with the Freedomland boob toob spewing forth about OJ and JFK Junior. Not that European television is that much above the Freedomland variety, which has to be expected so long as the mass media is safely out of the hands of the masses.

However, despite all previous talk about iron curtains, it is a bit disconcerting to see how much of world news one never gets to hear about over the Freedomland media. Not spending so much time on OJ and JFK Junior there is space for what's happening in other parts of the globe.

But there is no escaping the Ghengis Khan of the Twentieth Century. OJ's face is on the Athenian billboards promoting what else but running shoes. Many signs are in the Latin alphabet promoting Freedomland merchandise. American popular brand cigarettes outsell the local product, and of course the ubiquitous cowboy-killers are to be found all over.

Nevertheless, things are happening in that part of the globe. Greece has long had a strong labor movement, mainly due to the political left. There are a number of strike situations going on as of this writing. The construction workers, the teachers and students, and the farmers in the countryside are all taking direct action. The construction workers have always been strong even during the years of the Junta. The teachers are not only striking for better conditions, but for quality of education as well. The students are backing them up by staying out of the schools and taking to the streets marching through various parts of the city and further tying up already chaotic traffic.

In the countryside, especially in the northern area of Greece, the highways are blocked off by miles of tractors and other farm equipment. The farmers protest being told what to grow by the European Economic Community. The government has already made some concessions to the strikers in their various fields, but as of this writing the class war appears to be escalating. When writing for a monthly periodical, one is faced with the annoying realization that when one's observation finally reach print, they are already history. However, this all may escalate into a general strike.

Greece has become inundated with foreign workers as have other European countries. In some countries, like France and Germany, bosses are trying to deport these workers, but all over there is a strong reaction against foreign workers being ousted on the part of the native workers. In Germany Turkish children who have lived all their life there and many having been born there are staying out of school in protest of having to register as aliens. In France, workers have taken to the streets protesting against proposed legislation to send aliens out of the country. On the streets of Athens one can see graffiti proclaiming "Foreign workers are our brothers and sisters!"

One is naturally pleased to observe that working class solidarity is more than just a misty-eyed dream of doddering old radicals.

One of the largest group of foreign workers in Greece happen to be those from neighboring Albania. Despite several decades of socialism, many Albanians come to Greece to make a better living while at the same sending money home to their families. But now the government of Albania, no longer socialist, is in deep trouble with its citizenry. What was and still is referred to as pyramid investments left a majority of the population high and dry with their savings being lost, including those who received money from family members in neighboring Greece. Nobody, including the government, seems to know what happened to all the money and the people there have taken to the streets leaving the government on pretty shaky ground. After years of socialism that didn't work, the poor Albanians got a taste of capitalism shoved right up to their tonsils.

As old Uncle Karl wrote, and was later repeated by the Wobblies, "Capitalism has within it the seeds of its own destruction."

Refreshingly both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts were presented, which unfortunately is not the case with the boob toob here in Freedomland. Many things of ecological concern were voiced, including the sheep that was cloned in Scotland, that is raising many ethical questions around the globe. Ironically, the name of this cloned sheep is "Dolly." One shudders at the prospect of homo sapiens being cloned to serve the desires of those who manipulate us. It becomes imperative for those of the majority to decide that too many decisions have too long been left in the hands of the minority, lest we become Barbie Dolls in the hands of the parasites.

— C.C. Redcloud

Outside of Society

Workers have no rights that any one of importance need respect. This has been made abundantly clear in recent weeks. President Clinton decreed that American Airlines pilots have no right to strike. (I called the AFL to find out their position, but they didn't have one.) The Securities and Exchange Commission has ruled that the treatment of workers falls outside of "ordinary business," and thus that five religious orders can not bring to a vote a proposal calling on Allied Signal to report pay levels at its maquiladora plants (though in this case a more reliable source of information is surely at hand — the workers themselves).

A look at the Annual Report from my pension plan shows that the money I put in their "Social Choice" account is invested in union-busting outfits like Gannett and Knight-Ridder, and in sweatshop operators like Nike and the Gap. (You can tell it's a socially responsible account because the plan's Borders, nuclear and tobacco shares are held in other accounts.) Workers' rights clearly do not come into play when TIAA/CREF applies its social screens.

Workers do not have the right to control our unions either. The head of the National Maritime Union is on his way to jail for treating union funds as his personal piggy bank. But "Greedy Gus" Bevona continues living high on the hog off the janitors and other low-paid service workers of SEIU Local 32B-J; no one even seems to notice how long AFL-CIO head John Sweeney fed at the same trough. Sweeney was recently ordered to repay the union his share of the \$19,000 of members' money he voted to use hiring detectives to tail a union dissident. Sweeney also voted to kick back \$190 million of pension funds to the bosses over 20 years. And Sweeney turned a blind eye for years as "Greedy Gus" ran a shake-down ring, selling jobs to workers for thousands of dollars in bribes.

Meanwhile, the Carpenters union is stripping workers of the right to elect Business Agents, claiming that appointment by the national president will make BAs "more accountable." In Philadelphia carpenters have lost the right to vote on their contracts.

And "human rights advocate" Bruce Klatsky, CEO of Phillips-Van Heusen, sees no contradiction between sitting on the board of Human Rights Watch while paying workers around the world below-poverty wages to make P-VH shirts....

Every day it becomes more clear that workers stand entirely outside of society, and that our needs (let alone rights, of which we evidently have none) need not be taken into consideration. Like the chattel slaves of old, we produce the wealth which keeps our masters fed (and in their yachts, their vacation homes, etc.) and comfortable. We've been carrying the bosses and other assorted parasites on our backs for so long that we don't even notice them any more. Not liking to be ignored, they've taken to digging in their spurs and kicking us, just to make sure we remember who's in charge. Some suggest we should grovel and placate the brutes, I'd rather dump the bosses off our backs...

May Day Greetings

It has for years been tradition to run in the May issue greeting ads in honor of International Workers Day. Greeting Ads must be received by April 10th. Suggested donations are \$10 for a 1 inch ad (1 column wide), \$35 for 4 inches by 4 7/8 inches (2 col.s), or \$80 for a quarter page. We can set it up from your message, or you can send it camera-ready.

We can also provide extra copies of the May issue at normal bundle rates (10 cents per to members and branches to cover postage; 60 cents per to non-members).

Born with a silver spoon

A new report by United For A Fair Economy takes a look at the Horatio Alger stories being peddled in the boss press nowadays. *Forbes Magazine* claimed its annual round-up of America's richest people shows that today's great fortunes are held "by young entrepreneurs who hadn't a dime when we created this list 14 years ago." But just like Alger's heroes, who earned their fortune through hard work and strong moral values — and stumbling upon a large inheritance — more than half the Forbes 400 inherited at least \$50 million in assets. Even those who started "without a dime" often had substantial help along the way, such as H. Ross Perot who built his fortune on government contracts feeding off the welfare racket...

Editor's Notebook



A labor daily?

A recent *Nation* calls on the AFL-CIO to divert some of the millions they're spending on public relations and electing anti-labor politicians to launching a national labor daily. It's certainly doable, but its equally certain that the piecards over at the American Separation of Labor would never do such a thing. And if they did, it would be completely unreadable. The AFL recently replaced its dull-as-dust weekly newspaper with a monthly magazine, *America@work*. It's glossy, it's pastel, it reads like *USA Today* on quaaludes. Full color on every page, lots of pictures, and a new letters page in which no one gets more than a paragraph.

I suppose it might do well on the magazine rack at the dentist's office, but there's nothing here to fire the spirit or a rebellious wage slave (not that this glossy mag gets to many rank and filers), and amazingly little information per page considering the megabucks evidently being spent.

Seems to me these piecards have spent too much time closeted with their image consultants and pr flacks. Better they should go back to working for a living (stop that snickering — Sweeney spent several months working in the trade before he went on the union payroll), and let the members run the unions for a change.

Direct Action Gets the Goods

But too often we don't hear about it. You and your fellow workers wobbled a job recently? Drop us a line. A little solidarity force the boss to back down? Might be information on how it was done could inspire others. Here at the *Industrial Worker*, we can't wait for the fat-cat piecards to send in "news" about their latest doings — and we wouldn't print it if we got it. We want to hear about your struggles to make your job and this planet a better place, especially about efforts that broke out of the bounds in which we are normally confined...

In coming issues look for discussion of the lessons of the Detroit newspaper strike, that long-promised exposé of "reformer" Ron Carey (coming as soon as FW Poulos recovers from a hit-and-run accident), and of course news of labor struggles around the world. Better yet, don't just look for it, help make it happen.

As I write the mail arrived, including a note that "everyone is worried and shocked at the decline and power of the trade unions in the good ole US of A. Wobbly membership is swelling and activity is increasing — what does that tell you?" A lot of workers are tired of being ridden like jackasses. They're looking to do something about it. And the IWW offers a vehicle through which they can act for themselves.

One Big Union, that's the thing.

— Jon Bekken

**SUPPORT THE
WORKERS' PRESS
Give to the Sustaining Fund**



Indonesian seamen demand justice

In view of the recent news of Nedlloyd's merger with P&O, I and more than 100 Indonesian seafarer colleagues demand Nedlloyd address our claims in a fair and just manner and not hide the problem behind the merger.

I worked as a seafarer for Nedlloyd Lines for 22 years, from 1972 to 1994, with a long and distinctive service. Since May 1988, the company has exploited us and violated labour agreements. Namely, I and my seafarer colleagues signed an agreement for a trading vessel, but arriving at the workplace, we found that it was instead a drilling rig in offshore Angola.

The company employed us in offshore drilling for a period of 180 working days. In practice, we had to work non-stop for 12 hours per day, without any days off (Sundays and/or public holidays). This did not conform with the agreement signed for the trading vessel, which stipulated the hours of work at eight hours per day Monday through Friday, and four hours per day on Saturday. The agreement that was signed by both parties was approved by the Indonesian authorities and the Director General of Sea Communication (Ministry of Communication). But Nedlloyd intentionally made allowances for ways to achieve its aims by misusing the said agreement, namely by deceiving the Indonesian Seafarers Union and the Indonesian government (Director General of Sea Communication).

Whenever we took steps, we were al-

Conference on Chiapas & the fight against Neoliberalism

Delegates from Chiapas and other struggles in Mexico will join a conference on the international struggle against neoliberalism April 4-6, being organized by Alternatives and the Mexico Solidarity Network. The conference will be held on the University of Quebec at Montreal campus. For information call 514/982-6606 or email: alternatives@alternatives.ca

— Farewell, Fellow Worker —

Judi Bari

Judi Bari, best known as an organizer of Redwood Summer and as one of the first radical environmentalists and Earth First!ers to build the bridge between timber workers and environmentalists, passed away March 2 of breast cancer.

FW Bari fought for the rights of workers, for an end to classism and sexism in the radical environmental movement, and for the last of the ancient redwoods. She was also an anti-war activist and an emphatic proponent of a woman's right to choose.

She joined the IWW in 1988, attempting to bring timber workers and environmentalists together to save both the forests and workers' jobs through sustainable forestry practices. Bari often said that being a unionist or an environmentalist wasn't enough, but "working-class environmentalism scares hell out of the bosses."

Bari was rewarded for her dedication with many death threats and ultimately, on

ways threatened with dismissal, and this (dismissal) happened to some of our colleagues. I therefore had think of my wife and children and be patient, waiting for the right time to act on the matter.

We have requested the adjustment of our salaries as drilling workers several times, because we were employed as drilling crew from May 1988 to April 1994, but we received a seafarer's salary according to the agreement signed by us.

When we tried to get Nedlloyd to address our claims, we were dismissed without notice.

Therefore, we tried to prosecute the company through many means, including negotiations, appeals to the Dutch Embassy, appeals to the Indonesian House of Representatives and the minister of foreign affairs, and finally took the protest to the National Commission on Human Rights on October 3 1996.

Many publications have exposed and followed our cause... I have also reported this matter to some British members of the European Parliament and they have urged Nedlloyd to solve the matter, but Nedlloyd has disregarded this.

Despite all our efforts to reclaim what is owed to us by Nedlloyd and to solve our problems, we have seen no result yet. We must now ask ourselves, is Nedlloyd Lines invulnerable to the law?

Of course, P&O may not know about how Nedlloyd exploited Indonesian Seafarers. Before the merger, Nedlloyd sold its offshore drilling unit, Neddrill, to Noble, and this is how Nedlloyd always avoids our claims. Nedlloyd lawyers say that since Neddrill has been sold, Nedlloyd is not responsible, but the agreements were made and signed by Nedlloyd. We hope P&O will listen and bring this matter to Nedlloyd. Nedlloyd must clear this matter and not hide behind the merger.

Henki Rumampuk
Indonesia

May 24, 1990, with a pipe bomb that exploded under the seat of the car she was driving, nearly killing her. Her pelvis was shattered and she was permanently crippled.

Immediately after the assassination attempt, Bari and Darryl Cherney, a passenger in the car, were arrested and smeared in the media for accidentally blowing themselves up with their own bomb. No charges were ever filed. According to one of Bari's attorneys, the FBI arrived on the scene so quickly after the bombing, "it was as if they were standing around the corner with their fingers in their ears."

She and Cherney filed a lawsuit against the FBI for their role in the bombing and subsequent violations of their civil rights, which is still pending.

Bari is survived by her daughters Lisa, 16, and Jessica, 11. Donations towards their support may be sent to "Judi Bari Trust Fund," c/o Mendocino Environmental Center, 106 West Standley, Ukiah, CA 95482.

The Detroit Newspaper strike is no longer a strike. Now it's a lockout. Over 2,000 workers have been on the street since July of 1995. They recently made an unconditional offer to return to work. It was a tactical move. All along the newspaper unions have been engaging in an unfair labor practice strike rather than an economic strike, because it was clear from the beginning that the companies had no intention of bargaining in good faith. The unions' ULP claim was reinforced last week when a worker admitted that he had received his job and a promotion in exchange for spying on the union for the last seven years. In December of last year, when his conscience would no longer allow him to continue, he was fired. If the NLRB rules that it is indeed a ULP strike, Gannett and Knight-Ridder will be legally obligated to offer the striking workers their jobs back, displacing the scabs currently holding them.

The offer to return to work unconditionally has some very negative, even sell-out aspects to it. 300 strikers have been charged with breaking the law during the strike. Under the unconditional offer, they don't have to be rehired. By this offer the unions are cutting some of the most militant of their members loose.

from the desk of...

The companies, doing business as the Detroit Newspaper Agency, have been painting the offer as the end of the strike. They say they will be taking the strikers back, but only as positions open. They say they have an obligation to their loyal scabs; so they won't be displacing the scabs with strikers. And because the strike has been effective in cutting circulation of the newspapers in half, not as many workers are needed to meet the reduced demand for the papers. If the strikers return only to openings caused by attrition among the scabs, it could take decades before the last striker/locked-out worker is offered a position.

Rank-and-filers are doing their best to inform the public that the strike has been transformed into a lock-out and that 2,000 solid Union folks are still being denied their jobs. A coalition of strike supporters have been engaged in militant actions throughout the strike and are stepping up their activities to publicize the lockout. Hundreds have been arrested, many Wobblies among them, in attempts to "shut down Motown," blocking traffic at Detroit Metropolitan Airport, the bridge and tunnel to Canada, and on main thoroughfares in the city. The message is that there will be no more business as usual in Detroit as long as the companies continue their union-busting activities.

I believe this strike could have been won in September of '95 when thousands of strikers and supporters blocked the gate of one of the main newspaper production centers, forcing Gannett to use helicopters to get the papers out. There were clashes with goons and police whose overtime was being paid for by Gannett. Strikers and supporters were fired up and ready to fight. The union leaders have been carrying out self-defeating policies throughout the strike. In this instance they accepted a court injunction limiting pickets to 10 at the main gate to the newspaper plant. If they had been willing to defy the injunction, the rank-and-file was ready to go. But the leaders were more concerned about fines and contempt of court citations than about winning the strike.

When talks broke down union leaders called the strike without returning to their memberships for democratic approval. Deciding to strike seems to have been foolish in face of the fact that the companies were obviously trying to provoke one. On-the-job actions might have been much more successful. In deciding to offer to return to work unconditionally, only two of the six unions found it necessary to get approval from their membership. Efforts by activists to win the strike have been undermined by these same leaders. They've withheld their approval and even engaged in red-baiting to discourage the strikers from working with supporters. Still the efforts have continued with the support of locked-out workers who aren't conned by their "leadership."

Saying that the unions' leadership has screwed up isn't to say that the locked-out workers aren't getting screwed. They need the support of right-thinking labor activists. The AFL-CIO leadership has been persuaded by rank-and-file appeals to attend a national rally in Detroit in June. It's being coordinated with a Canadian labor rally/general strike in Windsor, right across the river. [see article page 6]

If it's just one more parade intended to demonstrate support which doesn't go beyond the surface, like the rally at Staley in Decatur, Illinois, in '95, it will be a total waste of time. But militant strikers and strike supporters are involved in the planning. They've earned the right to participate by their commitment. The leaders of the locked-out unions and of the AFL-CIO may have plans for a milque-toast rally. The militants have other plans. It could be interesting. I urge you to attend. And meanwhile, boycott *USA Today* and any and all other papers owned by Gannett and Knight-Ridder; and let 'em know why.

• • • As reported elsewhere in this issue, Judi Bari died of cancer last week. She was an incredibly courageous woman. For four years she was a very effective

Industrial Worker Sustaining Fund

William Johansen, San Francisco CA	\$25
Daniel Zimmermann, Duisburg	8
Barbel Poltrock, Duisburg Germany	4
Michael Lowrey, Milwaukee WI	35
Jim Woodruff, Harrisburg PA	5
Justin Jackson, Farmingdale ME	5

Utah Phillips Solidarity Fund

Folkert Mohrhof, Hamburg Germany	20
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Many thanks, fellow workers, for your generous support.

Wobbly organizer, uniting timber workers and people in the ecology movement in a way that terrified the timber bosses. To the end she was engaged in the struggle against the bosses and the government—the only way to go. We can be very proud that she was once one of us. I extend the deep sympathies of the IWW to her family and friends.

See you on the picket line in Detroit in June.

— Fred Chase
General Secretary-Treasurer

AFL to march on Detroit

Under growing pressure from Detroit newspaper workers and their supporters around the country, the AFL-CIO has agreed to hold a national labor march on Detroit, to be called "Action! Motown 97." The AFL originally agreed to schedule it for the week-end of June 13-14 to coincide with a general strike and Days of Action in Windsor, Ontario, across the border.

However, several days after agreeing to a coordinated action, the AFL rescheduled

the march for June 20-21, pleading a scheduling conflict on AFL President John Sweeney's part. This will inevitably greatly reduce the numbers who participate, as well as diluting its political impact. Days of Action in Toronto shut down the entire city last year for a protest against the anti-labor, anti-worker policies of the Ontario government. The prospect of tens of thousands of workers marching across the bridge separating Windsor from Detroit was apparently

too frightening for the piecards.

Sweeney's announcement referred to the newspaper unions leaders' unconditional offer to return to work (taken in most cases without consulting the workers affected) as "a new phase ... an effort to take back the plant, and set up the contract campaign both in Detroit and throughout the companies' corporate empires.

"Action! Motown '97 will help focus attention on anti-union *USA Today* parent Gannett Corporation which has already sunk more than \$250 million in an effort to bust the locals of the Teamsters, Communica-

tion Workers of America [which has absorbed the typographers and the Newspaper Guild] and the Graphic Communications International Union."

While the six newspaper unions abandoned the strike and offered to return to work under the bosses' terms, they are still boycotting circulation and advertising. Publication of the strike paper, the *Sunday Journal*, is also continuing. The unions are seeking a NLRB injunction ordering the Detroit Newspaper Agency to take back all the strikers, and are pursuing unfair labor practice charges against the *Detroit News* and *Free Press*. If the NLRB upholds the charges, the newspapers could be liable for millions of dollars in back pay.

tion Workers of America [which has absorbed the typographers and the Newspaper Guild] and the Graphic Communications International Union."

The unions also said they would mount a corporate campaign, similar to those conducted against Bridgestone/Firestone and Ravenswood Aluminum. After several years, those campaigns got workers their jobs back, albeit largely on the bosses' terms.

The unions abandoned the strike after it became clear that without shutting down production and distribution of the scab papers, Gannett and Knight-Ridder could draw on profits from the hundreds of newspapers and other media outlets they own across the country to outlast the strikers.

While Gannett and Knight-Ridder have been starving out newspaper workers in Detroit, members of the same unions have been writing, producing and delivering their newspapers in other cities. Other union members have delivered mail and electricity and telephone service to the struck plants, while thousands of copies of the scab newspapers have been sold by union retail clerks.

Some 30 people, including three Wobs, were arrested Feb. 11 in Detroit while blocking Jefferson Avenue on the anniversary of the winning of the Flint sit-down strike. Protestors chained themselves to each other and to poles on either side of the street, while supporters chanted and unfurled banners reading "No Justice No Peace" and "Boycott the News and Free Press."

Newspaper strike solidarity

While Gannett and Knight-Ridder have been starving out newspaper workers in Detroit, members of the same unions have been writing, producing and delivering their newspapers in other cities. Other union members have delivered mail and electricity and telephone service to the struck plants, while thousands of copies of the scab newspapers have been sold by union retail clerks.

Russian workers get screwed

When Russian workers don't get their salaries paid out (typically because the directors are busy building mansions or diverting funds), they sometimes at least get part of their production. It isn't uncommon for workers who produce pans to have to go out and hawk them to get money for food to go in them. Such "payment" of back wages has become increasingly common and leads one to wonder, if workers have to both make and sell what they produce, what the hell do they need the middlemen for?

Not so long ago Ukrainian workers wound up getting paid in coffins. Now workers in the Akhtuba factory in Volgograd, who haven't been paid for 13 months, are getting a similar deal. The factory was converted from the defense industry and is now making various "appliances." But not all these appliances have sold well and apparently they overestimated the market demand for dildos. Workers now have a "choice"; go hungry, or sell off the sex toys.

We hope workers will at least have more use for the dildos than the coffins.

The story of the dildos themselves is typical of life in cash-strapped Russian. When the factory originally wanted to produce the "Adam" (in '93) it was to be a vibrator, but lack of cash for development meant they had to produce them as "hand-operated." Workers sell the dildos to sex shops for about \$4 each, but they aren't selling well. (Maybe the real thing would work better?) "They're primitive," one sex shop owner said. "The more expensive ones with more features sell better. People don't look for price. They look for quality."

Ah, the lessons of the market.

— Akai

Lincoln Park Mini Mart strike ends

The picket lines came down Feb. 27th, marking the end of the 150-day LPMM strike in Seattle. While it appears that the NLRB is still unwilling to award Wobblies union recognition, even on a rusty platter, we won some major victories none the less.

When the boss got a look at his fourth quarter receipts, a favorable piece on the strike in the *Post Intelligencer*, and a growing number of unions (most recently International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers #17) pulling business from his other business, All Around Travel, he got tired of having Wobblies picketing the store. Yet another goon dropped by, yanking signs from our hands and assaulting picketers, but we refused to be provoked and this transparent attempt to bring in the police failed. Even the scabs seemed shocked at the attack, though.

Meanwhile, the Labor Board continued to pressure us to "settle," which amounted to going away. One Board agent was flab-

bergasted at our choice of union. "Why the IWW?" he demanded.

Parko made us an offer - he would pay three of the four still on strike \$500, which left the worker he had fired with nothing. In return we would adhere to a gag order and the IWW would not come within 500 feet of the mini mart. Parko's hot-headed lawyer was infuriated by our counter-offer - full pay for time lost during the strike, in exchange for a promise not to return to our jobs. Even the NLRB couldn't understand why we would reject such a grand offer, until we explained that our free speech was not for sale, and we would not abandon a fellow worker fired for backing the union.

It looked like the representation election was lost since the NLRB allowed some bosses to vote, and none of us really cared to work for Parko without a union, so we made another offer, proposing that everyone on strike receive the same severance and Parko pay all legal fees incurred by the IWW and

chairmanship. Are you here to tell us to, in the words of an NLRB attorney (4/7/1947), "lie down like good dogs"? We will not lie down. We demand that the NLRB either support workers' rights to organize or get out of our way. We do not need the NLRB stabbing us in the back as we struggle for better lives.

Boston Area General Membership Branch

A resolution to withhold business from Borders Bookstore and affiliates

Whereas, the management of Borders fired bookseller Miriam Fried in retaliation for her attempt to organize a local of the Industrial Workers of the World in the Philadelphia Borders store, and

Whereas, the act of firing Ms. Fried was both illegal and immoral, and

Whereas, Borders has promoted itself as worker friendly, and

Whereas, Borders management has enjoyed record compensation while workers have been forced to accept concessions to their compensation, and

Whereas, members of labor are deeply concerned that the behavior of Borders management is detrimental to future relationships between management and labor and must be reversed.

Now therefore the members of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) local 3106 hereby resolve to refrain from doing any business with Borders Bookstore or its affiliates, Waldenbooks and Brentano's, until fellow worker Miriam Fried is reinstated to her position with full back pay.

We further resolve that AFSCME Council 79 and AFSCME International should consider joining this protest.

Resolved this 27th day of February, 1997

Signed

Lisa Lanza, President, AFSCME 3106

Dan C. Marelli, Secretary-Treasurer
St. Petersburg, Florida

Open Letter to Gould...

continued from page 1

think in a year you'll see the Lincoln Park store close.") The Board agent balked when we demanded a written explanation for this decision and has not yet provided one - but he was quick to let the IWW know of his objections when we began picketing Borders stores around the country to let customers know of Borders' union-busting.

NLRB loves scabs

In Seattle, the Board allowed a manager and other scabs to vote in a union representation election at Lincoln Park Mini-Mart conducted during an Unfair Labor Practice strike called in response to firings of union members. Union support was demonstrated by the fact that more than three-fourths of the store's workers joined the strike. But we lost the representation election by one vote when the Board decided to let the scabs and manager vote.

These three rulings were all handed down this year. But we are still picketing in Seattle, still picketing Borders outlets across the country, still picketing Warehouse stores. We will continue until these union-busting employers agree to respect workers' basic rights - rights which we never surrendered to the NLRB or the bosses it serves.

The IWW opposed the NLRB's formation, recognizing that it would prove a potent tool in the hands of the bosses. Our union has suffered grievously at the Board's hands ever since. We are hardly alone in this - it is no accident that the proportion of workers represented by unions has plummeted since the Board's creation, and that union growth is almost entirely limited to sectors outside the NLRB's "protections."

"Lie down like Good Dogs"

You are here today to speak under the auspices of a program established to assist workers in exercising our rights. You appear as the representative of a body which long ago proved itself hostile to those rights, and which has become an even more implacable foe - if such is possible - under your

Waterfront Women Keep Mersey Strike Strong

The Mersey dockers are still out, though the company has re-opened negotiations over a proposal to establish a cooperative hiring hall which would employ the locked-out dockers and distribute the work among them on an equitable basis. The main stumbling block thus far seems to be the Mersey Docks & Harbour Company's insistence on keeping its scab work force on the job, using the locked-out workers only to fill in. The dockers, of course, refuse to consider such a surrender, so international pressure is as necessary as ever.

The following interview with Tricia Hall of Women on the Waterfront was conducted in Liverpool by Sharon Vance:

My partner, Terry and I were talking about this the other day. We didn't realize that the dispute would go on for so long. In the beginning of the strike the men were saying that it would only last a few months and now it's been almost a year that they're out and it's been really hard, especially financially, with the women having to do extra shifts at work.

And I'm lucky my family has grown up. There are hardships. At our age life should be a little bit easier. Terry worked down there on the dock for 37 years and we thought now we could sort of settle down and do things. And weeks go by and months go by and you're living in limbo and there's no light at the end of the tunnel. And I think when we have these national conferences. They did a documentary ... And February came and we had the international conference, and I personally didn't go to it because I was working, but we were all informed. And we attended a social and everyone was sort of saying, "We're gonna help you." And five months later we were still - we didn't see any light at the end of the tunnel.

It's very awkward because in each country everyone is tied to their unions or can't do certain things. Personally actions speak louder than words. Going back to the women. We've gone to scabs' houses because what we feel, those initial scabs going in crossing the picket line and training them. They shouldn't have gone in. They hurt people a lot. Why should they go home to their families and go on like nothing's happened and they're destroying other people's lives. And then a couple of weeks ago we had a big function to raise money at the dockers club and that was in July. I can remember being in the transport port house and one of the chaps was on the telephone talking to the local paper and he said what will happen if you go back to work in a fortnight. And the chap replied, it will all go to charity. And I was just thinking there's no chance of that going to charity because this won't be settled in a fortnight. The thing is what I feel, that it's one big family, you're helping one another. And I think it must be like this is a war. You can talk to the people and the kids met one another and they've all become friendly. Like they all went to Calummendy last week. And we had the Turkish people [from the Turkish and Kurdish Community Solidarity Centre] and we organized to take the kids to a holiday camp.

Did the families know each other before the strike?

No, no. I knew a couple of the girls. Terry worked with three or four and other men worked with seven or eight. Over the years I got to know the wives, we've gone out occasionally. But regarding the rest of the women, no one knew one another. And now we've become very close. One woman got on the radio, we have a local radio you can ring in. She called and said, "I just feel I need to go every Wednesday [to the meetings], because they keep me sane. Because a lot of the men, for whatever reason, they can't discuss what's happening and talk

about what's on the line. They want to come home and forget about it. And it becomes hard not knowing what's going on, you know. And at the meeting, stewards will come to the meeting and let us know what's going on. And delegation work, they'll ask for perhaps a man and a woman. Some British meetings, they'll ask just for the women. They want to hear the women's side of the dispute. At the beginning of the dispute one of the miners wives said, "The thing is all, I'll say to you is don't rely on the men to give you information. You have to find out yourself or you'll be very miserable." [Prior to this dispute, there was a very long and bitter Miners' Strike when the mines were privatized and thousands of workers were laid off.]

How have the women's actions contributed to the struggle?

The thing is we know it's the men's dispute but basically the women are keeping the homes going. They're going to work. They're taking the kids to school and just generally keeping things together, and taking over and trying to be a support to their husbands. Because the financial strain is enormous and the stress it's causing. You know quite a few of the girls said their husbands are really really depressed. Because those men have worked down there a minimum of 25 years, or 40 years. You've got men who are 59, 60 that could have gone and took that money and used it with part of the pension, and walked away from the dock with 70,000 pounds. But they decided to stay because they're union men. And it's not just our husbands, they're fighting for the future of that port. Because the thing is if they don't win this dispute we'll end up with casual labour and there won't be any permanent jobs here. I've talked to people who said, "Why didn't you take the £25,000?" And I say, "This isn't about money, this is about jobs. If everyone in this country sold their jobs where would we be?" And everyone you talk to, it's all contract and money. I have one friend who was a docker, he's 45 and he left the dock industry 15 years ago. He went into the factory as a fitter. And he said the docks was just so different an industry. And another friend he's a teacher. He's been teaching five years. He decided to go on and do an MA. And he can't get any further up the ladder. It's all been lost.

And young people coming in. If you're female, they won't give you a permanent job. They say, "You'll just leave to have a family." And we can't have that because why shouldn't - you've trained to do that job and you watch it go to someone else. Because you might leave in two years' time to have a baby. People are getting dictated to in every way over wages and whether you can have a family. My sister works and her children are 13 and 10. She says "I've resigned myself to the fact that when they leave school there won't be permanent jobs. And I said, "We can't have that." It's alright if you're in a secure job. If you're not permanent you're nothing. You can't get a mortgage. I think it's sadistic. Because you'd be thinking I can't do this, because in 12 months time I might not have a job. We can't let that happen.

So it's not just about ...

It's not just about the docks, it's about everything. The women, most of the women were not political. But at the end of the day, you get drawn into it, you can't get away from it because it's the government policies are doing it. They had an inquiry here, a government inquiry, to the dispute; and it's all very nice and they generated a report which will come out pages and pages. But nobody's got time to read it. Basically what did they come up with the inquiry? It's all very nice, but it's just an exercise, isn't it.

"Work Relationships," and that's not gonna get you anywhere. I saw on the television, they built a brand new children's hospital in Derbyshire, and it's not opening because they can't finance the personnel. I'm thinking, what the hell is going on? If the government has it's way, privatizing everything. Someone will come along and say, "Well that's a very nice hospital. It cost x millions of pounds. I think we'll have that here." It's unbelievable.

I know that there were women on the picket line, does this have any effect? Is there a different dynamic when the women are on?

No, no. I think some of the men don't

policeman, we went to talk to, and he was pretty reasonable. And we said, "There was no need for that." And he said "I wasn't there. I didn't see it. You can make a complaint and go through procedures." Yes go through procedures and just get bugged off. And I'm watching this policeman and one of the girls' husband was standing there next to him and this policeman said something to her. He looked the type to jump on people. And I just shouted over, "Just watch that policeman, because he's gonna cause trouble." Just to let him know that I was watching him. It only takes one of them. One police to go near the dockers. Just last week there were five arrested, four men and



Women on the Waterfront with a banner from the Swedish Workers Central-organization (SAC), which has organized several actions at the Swedish offices of shipping lines using the Liverpool port.

like it, but I know when I'm on the picket line I've got no time for the police whatsoever. And I never thought I'd have to say that in all my life. I've never involved in any of the demonstrations. A friend of mine in the '60s, she used to go on the demonstrations. And when she'd come to the picket line the odd time she used to say, "Now don't have anything in your hand bag that can incriminate you or anything that gives your name and address." And I'd say, I got into a bit of a huff. But the thing is I've seen the police and they're enjoying it. You can tell by their faces. And after about 7 months I was confronting them. One of the girls said to a young policeman, "Haven't you got a mortgage?" And he just looked and she said, "We've got mortgages and homes and families to keep." And he said, "No I haven't got a mortgage." And I couldn't help it, I said, "That's probably because you flippin well live at home with your mother and father and you don't have to pay any bills." I said, "Well we don't want to be here, we're only here fighting for our jobs, our husbands' jobs." I said, "The thing is we don't like your attitude towards us."

The other week I don't know really what happened but, the next minute one of the dockers, and he's in his fifties. He was on the floor with his face pressed to the floor and handcuffed behind his back with about six policemen. Well, I just dived in. And my daughter said you're gonna end up getting arrested. But the thing is, it's a gut reaction. And you just stand there and start grabbing the police man and one of the lads pulled me off. And he said, "You're hitting women?" And I didn't realize that one of the policeman had a truncheon and was ready to hit me on the head, because I didn't see him. So that's why they dragged me away. And I, we were all upset over this man. He could have had a heart attack. And there was another

one woman. And they weren't doing anything. And people, you say this to them and they look at you. And I said, "I'm not lying. You have to be on that picket line to see the police."

Has all of this changed the women?

Oh, yes. It has changed. I can speak for myself. You're more politically aware of things and you'll argue about things. Whereas before I just brought my children up and went to work. We're all guilty of being oblivious. But once it affects you; so I say to people, "It's me and my family today, tomorrow it will be you and yours." And people look at me like and there are still a lot of people isolated, who don't really care. As long as they're working at their age. People say "How are you getting on?" You know, and, "It must be awful" and like this. And I feel like saying, "Why don't you come down and help on the picket line? We need lots of bodies." Because people think it's finished with. They go, "Oh, they're still on strike? I thought they settled." We are sacked. That's a fact and there a lot of men who say they'll stay on the picket line until they get their jobs back, however long it takes.

And the thing is that it is working ... There's very little traffic going in.

Discrimination

The International Labour Organisation recently released figures showing that the jobless rate is 50 to 100% higher for women than for men. Worldwide, women only earn between 50 and 80% of men's wages; about 60% of the 100 million children without access to primary education are girls.

Shorter Work-Time

An April 26 conference to discuss the need for shorter hours will meet at Boston College. For information: 69 Dover St., Somerville MA 02144 or 617/628-5558.

Angelino port truckers still fighting for union

Last spring, a strike by thousands of Latino immigrant truckers on the Los Angeles-Long Beach waterfront collapsed in a humiliating defeat after longshoremen crossed their picket lines and shipping lines refused to contract with a new trucking firm that had agreed to the union's terms.

Because they are considered independent contractors, the truckers cannot turn to the National Labor Relations Board for help, or even to the state labor department to force shippers to guarantee minimum wages and overtime pay. But they have not given up.

Some 1,200 of these poorly paid drivers pay dues of \$9.50 a month to the Communications Workers of America, more as a symbol of their determination to unionize than from any benefits the union is able to provide.

Their effort has been hampered by issues common to many organizing drives: rivalries between unions, fierce business pressures, questionable strategy and legal barriers to organizing.

The vicious economics of the port trucking business stem from the 1979 deregulation of the U.S. trucking industry and a subsequent influx of an army of immigrant drivers hungry for work. Too many truckers vye for too few jobs, pushing their rates down to rock bottom. Many work more than 40 hours a week but clear only \$10,000 to \$15,000 a year after expenses.

Drivers have repeatedly tried to unionize for better conditions, but employers have refused to recognize their unions, insisting that they are not employees. The Communication Workers tried to overcome the independent contractor problem by allying with a new trucking venture called the Transport Maritime Assn. The businessman behind it promised to hire thousands of the truckers

and quickly them into employees so that they could unionize. But shippers refused to use TMA and it quickly folded, leaving drivers little alternative but to abandon their strike.

The drivers were upset and frustrated, but conditions are so bad they are still determined to organize. Rampant exploitation and abuse leaves them little alternative. Luis Alberto Baca is an example of why they are organizing. Two days before Christmas, Baca, 52, was run over by the back of a 16-wheeler while walking to a pay phone at a port terminal. He will need months of therapy before he can walk normally again. Meanwhile, Baca gets no workers' compensation insurance or any other employer-paid medical benefits because of his status as an independent contractor.

"The struggle of the union has been [for trucking companies to] give us benefits, so that they pay us by the hour and so that they look at us like people," said Baca, sitting in a wheelchair at his Los Angeles apartment.

The union in the best position to help the drivers, the powerful International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, has instead chosen to scab on them. Although the ILWU shut down West Coast ports Jan. 20 in support of striking longshoremen in Liverpool, England, it has been unwilling to do the same for the drivers.

And, drivers complain, they are hassled by ILWU-represented clerks at the ports.

Despite the difficulties, hundreds of workers are attending union meetings, and a new strike seems inevitable so long as the bosses refuse to deal with the drivers they rely upon to move cargo from the waterfront to rail and trucking terminals like human beings, or to afford them any say in the conditions of their labor.

Swazi workers demand rights

The Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions ended a 28-day general strike March 2nd after the government released four imprisoned union leaders. The strike was supported by the neighboring South Africa's Transport and General Workers Union's refusal to handle goods sent to Swaziland.

The Swazi union called what was to be a two-day national strike in response to the government's failure to agree to 25 demands the union first raised in 1994, including revocation of a 1973 decree banning unions and opposition parties. The government had agreed to most demands after a general strike last year, but never implemented the changes.

SFTU General Secretary Jan Sithole, President Richard Nxumalo, Vice President Themba Msibi and Assistant General Secretary Jabulani Nxumalo were arrested by Swazi police on the eve of the strike. More than 100 COSATU members marched on the Swaziland High Commission offices in Pretoria demanding their immediate release. Assistant general secretary Zwelwenzima Vavi said the union would not rest until the situation in Swaziland is resolved. "Swaziland's total population is only half the size of the 1.9 million-strong COSATU therefore we are numerically strong enough to launch complete economic sanctions against the country," he says.

The Swaziland labor federation says it will resume two-day strikes if its demands are not met.

Clinton bans strike

U.S. President Bill Clinton has broken the American Airlines pilots strike. In a move highly reminiscent of former President Ronald Reagan's breaking of the air traffic controllers' strike in 1980, Clinton intervened and ordered an end to the strike only 24 minutes after it began. This is exactly the outcome which AMR corporation was seeking. Management told travellers: "American Airlines is pleased to announce that we have averted a strike. We are grateful to our customers for their patience." After Clinton intervened to bar strike action, American withdrew its latest contract proposal and replaced it with one offering pilots less money and fewer protections on job security.

Although pilots would be allowed to resume their strike April 14th, Congress could intervene under the terms of the Railway Labor Act, which covers airline workers, and impose the bosses' contract by fiat, as has been repeatedly done to railroad workers in recent years.

The dispute centers around American's attempts to transfer work from American to its American Eagle subsidiary, where pilots and other workers earn much lower salaries while working longer hours. In the last few years 550 pilot jobs were transferred from American to American Eagle. The struggle is complicated by the fact that American workers are organized into a jigsaw puzzle array of trade unions, with separate unions for pilots, flight attendants, baggage handlers, mechanics, ticket agents, clerical workers, etc. American Eagle workers (including pilots) often belong to different unions and work under different contracts.

Although pilots did formally support flight attendants during their strike a few years ago, with many pilots refusing to fly with scabs (the union declined to launch a solidarity strike, claiming that flying empty planes would cost American more), this fragmentation has led to distrust and a lack of solidarity among unions, which has not been helped by reports that in ongoing negotiations the pilots have suggested contracting out baggage handlers' jobs as one way to finance the pilots' contract.

Korean workers hold warning strike

Members of the outlawed Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) staged a four-hour strike Feb. 28, as ruling and opposition parties were negotiating changes to the controversial new labor law.

The KCTU is demanding abolition of clauses that would enable employers to lay off workers more easily and replace striking workers with scabs. Other demands included the legalization of Chongyojo, or the National Teachers' Labor Union.

Unionists held rallies in major cities. About 170,000 of the KCTU's half-million members walked off the job, including workers from the giant Hyundai Group.

As we go to press, the government and opposition parties have reached an agreement to revise the labor law, legalizing the KCTU and delaying provisions making it easier to dismiss workers for two years. The "compromise," which was reached without the participation of the unions, was immediately denounced by the KCTU, who demanded that the teachers union be legalized and other anti-worker provisions scrapped, rather than merely delayed.

Us or them

Occupiers of the Fiat factory in Cordoba, Argentina won negotiations on three firings January 27. The bosses claimed the fired workers sabotaged equipment or threatened co-workers.

Profiteering

The Palestinian Authority has infiltrated the local economy for its own profit, according to a news story by Deborah Horan of the InterPress Service. The main vehicle for corruption is the state-owned Palestinian Commercial Services which was supposed to import cement and gasoline into the West Bank and Gaza. The lucrative firm has expanded into a variety of import-export industries. In the process, deals have been made with at least one former Israeli secret service agent who is now a businessperson. Profits are unknown, but combined unofficial trade profits are thought to total \$1.5 million a day according to the Palestinian Minister of Economy and Trade. Some members of the Palestinian Legislative Council claim the state firm's accounts are "blacked out" from official records. Several people in opposition have been jailed after speaking out against the shady dealings.

Bolivians seize mine

Miners and campesinos in Cerro Rico, Bolivia, tookover the local state-run mine Jan 10, attracting 10,000 more mineworkers three days later demanding recognition of their cooperative production. The workers began protracted negotiations with the state Jan 14. In the meantime, the workers shifted focus from cooperative production to barricading the mine's entrance. The takeover follows the state's torture and murder of at least 10 miners the previous December, now known as the "Christmas massacre."

Racism at Amtrak...

continued from page 1

mittee for Equal Rights rallied outside South Station March 1st to demand an end to Amtrak's racist practices and an end to harassment of Bill Regan and other workers who have been fighting them.

Discrimination in hiring practices is complicated by Amtrak's tradition of nepotism in which most new hires are related to current workers, and by an old boy network which seems determined to keep women and minorities out of better-paying jobs. Thus, black workers make up 10 percent of Amtrak workers in Detroit, but 67 percent of service workers there (Amtrak has no black, latino or Asian managers or technicians in Detroit).

Beating the heat down under

Factory management often seem to find the concept of heat hard to grasp, maybe because they work in air conditioned offices themselves. I've been working for the past few years at the Holden plant in Port Melbourne, Australia, so I thought I was beyond being surprised at management stupidity, but the way they are handling the current heat wave (it's summer down under) is a reminder of what bossdom does to the brain. The "heat agreement" at Holden is very modest - when the temperature outside the factory is 30C the company supplies cold drinks, when the heat hits 35C we get ten minutes rest in the hour. It's hotter inside the factory than out, how much hotter depends where you work.

Management resents this, saying that workers in Thailand, etc., work in the heat so why not Australian workers? Supervisors discourage people from taking heat breaks, but we've had a string of mild summers so the issue has not hit in a big way for a few years... until this year. Management usually pretty much sort of provides the cold drinks. They did try fobbing us off with a warm sugary concoction; but after a few days and a stop-work meeting by the trade workers an acceptable cold drink was distributed. The non-trades vehicle division workers should of course have joined the tradies in this and a later stop work meeting, but the Vehicle Division of the AMWU union is pretty much dysfunctional. Tradies also got a slightly improved heat agreement, basically 15 minute breaks at 40C outside temperature. The lack of vehicle division support was all the more shameful as they are the ones who really need the breaks, tradies are mostly maintenance workers in a much better position to structure

their time than production workers.

Production workers are routinely cheated out their heat breaks. Sometimes they are simply told not to take them, sometimes management lies to workers about what the temperature is and for that matter so sometimes does the shop steward; on at least one assembly line teabreaks (which are 20 minutes because of RSI) are broken into two periods of 10 minutes, and declared to also be heat breaks. So it may be that workers don't work much more than 50 minutes at a stretch at +35C, yet they get no extra heat relief at all. On the V6 assembly line workers had to threaten to walk out to get their cold drinks, this with an outside temperature of +40C, they continue to be harassed about taking heat breaks. On other occasions production workers have spontaneously called in sick in such numbers as to stop assembly lines from running.

Although I am a production worker it happens that I am able to attend the tradie meetings, and was present at the last of the stop-work meetings mentioned above where the tradies voted to accept an improved heat agreement. There was a motion from the floor that workers should walk off at 40C and claim at least half pay. The tradie organizers present made light of this suggestion, but all the same it nearly got up. Afterwards I found out that the official policy of the AMWU on heat is that we should knock off at 38C on full pay! The breach between trades and production workers is one of the long-running problems at Holden; so it was another good sign that numbers of tradies made it clear that production workers were welcome at tradie meetings with or without the support of the Vehicle Division.

— Jeremy



WAR POSTERS

Managerial Satan

Labour leaders have dubbed Irving Oil in New Brunswick "a managerial Satan" for trying to "rehabilitate" former strikers. About 100 unionized workers who survived an acrimonious two-year strike at the refinery and subsequent buyouts, have been undergoing forced reorientation. Labour fears the Irving re-education program will spark a new trend of psychological retooling across the Canadian workplace. Ex-strikers must reportedly accept that their union was wrong, they must socialize with scabs and they must be cooperative and be appreciative of work.

Unionize workfare

The Service Employees International union in Thunder Bay, Ont., plans to unionize welfare recipients if they're forced to work for their benefits. "These unfortunate individuals need someone to stand up for them," said union president Jack Drewes. "We want to do this to protect the rights of these people that we feel are getting trampled on by this Harris government. The right to free labour, the right to choose their labour instead of being forced."

Protest hits unemployment

Labour groups are preparing a demonstration to protest the longest period of unemployment since the 1930s. Canadian Labour Congress president Bob White said the Day of Protest will take place May third. "We've had six years of more than 9 percent unemployment and that hasn't happened since the Depression," said White.

Solidarity with jobless

A coalition of French unions including the syndicalist CNT began occupying a National Employment Agency to demand minimum rights for unemployed workers February 12. This latest occupation coincides with three others in different cities. The actions are united in their demands for the provision of a meeting place, publicity within employment agencies, free access to agency resources, free transportation, and the right to attend relevant state meetings.

Workers protesting welfare cutbacks rallied in St. Paul, Minnesota February 26. Thirty-six were arrested for occupying the state legislature with an encampment. The workers demanded an end to poverty.

AFL-CIO supports pollution

AFL-CIO leaders have declared their opposition to a pending international agreement to curb pollution in industrialized nations. The agreement would update the 1992 Rio Treaty to stem global warming by requiring industrialized countries to cut their carbon emissions after 2000.

The executive council of the AFL-CIO has passed a resolution warning that such measures "will cause the loss of high-paying U.S. jobs in the mining, manufacturing, transport and other sectors."

Holt "labor library" fires unionists

On January 17, the Holt Labor Library fired both of its workers, Ali Bruce and Kurt Biddle, and replaced them with a non-union worker. Both were involved in a SEIU union organizing effort at New College and the Holt Labor Library. The Holt Library is a small library located inside New College of California specializing in labor history and radical politics. Ironically, the IWW picketed the Library's opening in May 1993, protesting New College union-busting against the IWW. "If New College of California can open a Labor Library," one picketer noted then, "perhaps the American Nazi Party can develop a Third World Caucus."

Kurt Biddle and Ali Bruce were active in the SEIU from the beginning of its organizing drive. They attended union meetings, were members of the organizing committee and were vocal in their support for the union. In August, 1996, library director Rod Holt attempted to intimidate them by demanding to know the names of those who were on the union organizing committee and who had signed cards. On August 20, 1996, workers won union recognition from New College administration. More than 70% of the employees signed union cards.

On September 6, Holt invaded a union meeting and demanded to talk to Ali Bruce. He told Ali that he had no business attending the meeting, that the Holt Labor Library was not affiliating with SEIU. He told both Kurt and Ali that he would shut down the library if workers insisted on unionizing.

Please send protests to Rod Holt (holtlabor@igc.apc.org) or 1390 Market Street, Suite 1924, San Francisco CA 94102

New Abu-Jamal Appeal

Attorneys for Mumia Abu-Jamal filed new legal papers with the Pennsylvania Supreme Court March 10 requesting a hearing to present testimony from a new witness – a former police informant and witness for the prosecution in 1982.

The witness will testify to having been pressured by police to falsely identify Mumia Abu-Jamal as the shooter of Police Officer Faulkner and will provide evidence that chief prosecution witness Cynthia White was also subjected to threats by police which produced her false identification of Jamal as the shooter.

The new legal papers also call for release of all prosecution files in support of Jamal's post-conviction petition demanding dismissal of the charges based on the record of widespread and egregious police and prosecutorial misconduct in this case.

Getting the goods

Strikers at the National Pedagogical University in Mexico won the re-hiring of 17 fired workers, amnesty from legal charges and economic negotiations in early February. Fifty out of 73 university campuses participated in the strike.

Solidarity with Leonard Peltier

After President Bill Clinton took office he cut \$26 million out of Indian health care, then he went on to speak of the greatness of the diversity of this country. He cut welfare, food stamps and health care for the poor, and went on to speak of the importance of the children of America. He spoke of the responsibility of each person to pull their own weight, then he gave handouts to the rich. He signed a bill to force Dineh families off their land, and then went on to speak about family values. He cut fuel subsidies while Lakota people are freezing. He has turned his back on people throughout the world who have called for Justice for Leonard Peltier, and spoken of the necessity for a just society. History will judge Clinton, not upon his words, but upon the actions that he has taken.

If the people do not stand together and demand that Clinton's words match his actions, then the situation will never change. On Feb. 6th the Northwest Leonard Peltier Support Network held a march and rally marking the 21st year since Leonard's arrest, 21 years of injustice, lies, and cover-ups. The march and rally also called for congressional hearings. The march made its way through ten blocks of downtown Tacoma, Wash., just as many people were getting off from work. The march ended at the rally site, the U.S. Courthouse and the office of U.S. Rep. Norm Dicks. As the rally began federal police locked the doors to the courthouse and posted guards. Outside even B.I.A. police showed up to watch what was going on. This shows where our society is at this point in time. When the people ask to be heard, the government responds by locking us out, for fear of our words.

Justice will not become a reality if no one demands it. For this reason we will continue to speak out. This was the 33rd such rally in three years here in the northwest.

IWW job shop destroyed by fire

On Wednesday, February 12, fire destroyed Philadelphia's Wooden Shoe Books and Records. Wooden Shoe was a collectively run bookstore that has provided the region with anarchist texts and sundry other materials for 21 years. The store was also the headquarters of Philadelphia's boycott Borders campaign, located three blocks away from the Borders store where Miriam Fried was fired.

The four-alarm fire began in a fusebox in the storage room. Fire and water destroyed everything in the store, but readable books are being donated to Philadelphia's books to prisoners program.

The Wooden Shoe collective is committed to reopening as soon as possible, and an ambitious fundraising campaign was kicked off on March 8th when the Wooden Shoe Funeral was held in the streets of Center City Philadelphia.

To help rebuild Wooden Shoe Books, please write Wooden Shoe, 4722 Baltimore Avenue, Philadelphia PA 19143.

Boss rule in Ecuador

Workers in Ecuador brought down the President in February, but the state and World Bank remain in power. After only one day of a general strike by millions of workers, the Congress impeached President Abdala Bucaram Ortiz February 6. Two days later, the Minister of Defense resigned after his army refused to implement a state of emergency. The general strike was called to remove the president for implementing state cutbacks encouraged by the World Bank, which called the austerity "painful but necessary." The strike was organized by a broad coalition of male industrial workers, indigenous peoples, students and women.

Hospital workers seize works

Health workers in Honduras took over numerous hospitals in a mid-February strike but violent state repression left the strikers' key demand of accessible care untouched. Police attacked the workers Feb. 19 and 20 with clubs and tear gas. The 14,000 strikers were forced back to work February 21 with the sole victory of not being fired. The strike was called to guarantee free health service to the poor.

Unity against capital

Commune members and small farmers have created El Barzon (a joiner of plows and tractors). Their unity is based on shared debt to banks and opposition to 'free' trade. El Barzon blockades roads, occupies state offices, banks, and factories, and pressures banks not to repossess foreclosed land. El Barzon includes almost 500 lawyers working on 350,000 court cases. The movement now claims up to one million participants and plans to open its own bank. Some sections have joined the Zapatistas in Chiapas.

Meanwhile, indigenous campesinas/os in Chiapas began blockading a regional highway February 10 to demand that their electricity be turned back on and the rates be reduced. The state began a military buildup in the area January 11, fuelled by recent American arms deals worth \$50 million.

Iranian oil workers strike

Oil workers in Iran rallied in mid-February to demand follow-through on previous commitments for pay raises, food coupons, and housing loans. The state reacted by banning all oil workers' organizations and arresting hundreds of protesters. The International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign urges people to protest the repression at the nearest Iranian embassy or consulate.

Education cutbacks

Workers and students in Australia are planning two national strike days March 26 and May 8 in protest of state education cutbacks. The strikes are timed to pressure the state before its annual budget is delivered on May 13.

No Scabs

Workers in Nova Scotia, Canada took direct action against scabbing by burning down a non-union worksite February 24. The 1,000 demonstrators harmed nobody but four were charged with taking place in a riot. An estimated 75% of construction workers in Nova Scotia are unemployed.

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The IWW in Australia

Revolutionary Industrial Unionism: The Industrial Workers of the World in Australia by Verity Burgmann. Cambridge University Press, 1995, 346 pp.

I had another reason for celebrating, too—it was here [in Australia] that the IWW had had perhaps its greatest victory of all, when in 1916 it had organized a national referendum that got the draft law repealed—right smack-dab in the middle of World War I. —“Joe Murphy” in *Break Their Haughty Power* by Eugene Nelson

“Joe” didn’t get it quite right—the two referenda in October 1916 and December 1917 prevented the government from instituting the draft—but he was correct in contending that the IWW had won an enormous victory. Since the War’s beginning in 1914 the Australian Wobblies had been forthright in opposing it and in exposing the greed for profits that lay behind it. Without question, the referenda would have carried were it not for the IWW’s resistance campaign to delegitimize the War. This occurred at a time when the war-makers held sway in every other belligerent country to the extent that even groups like the IWW in the United States felt constrained to mute their opposition to the slaughter.

Who were these Australian Wobblies

and what were they after? Although there have been a few books which deal with the subject, it is only with Verity Burgmann’s history that these questions can be answered fully.

In the early years of this century, Australia had a working class pretty much thoroughly organized into craft unions, a powerful Labor Party which was by 1910 in a position to form governments, and a fully elaborated system of arbitration courts which were supposed to be the alternative to class strife. Needless to say, these all functioned in a manner which perpetuated capitalist rule and kept the workers from ever making more than a living. Therefore, when word reached Australia in 1905 that the IWW had been formed in July of that year in Chicago, militants in a number of unions proposed reorganizing them on the basis of the IWW Preamble. These efforts were turned back but the IWW was in the minds of Australian militants to stay.

The DeLeonists of the Australian Socialist Labor Party established the first organized IWW presence when they set up “IWW Clubs” in the major cities. These Clubs never did much more than talk, but they had two major accomplishments: they kept the idea of one big industrial union before the Australian working class and they strenu-

ously opposed the racist conception of “White Australia” advocated by the craft unions and the Labor Party with the idea that all workers regardless of color have an identity of interests and should be organized together. The Clubs continued to exist, following a career parallel to the “Detroit IWW” in the U.S., eventually changing their name to the Workers International Industrial Union and finally petering out during the 1920s.

The IWW’s real career began in 1910 when industrial unionists in Adelaide, disgusted with SLP domination of the IWW Clubs, appealed to the Chicago IWW for a charter and were invested as the Australian Administration of the IWW. Following the doctrines of direct action and organization at the point of production, these folks attracted like-minded militants throughout Australia and issued charters to Locals in Sydney, Perth, Melbourne, Broken Hill and the other population centers. These Locals, which were mixed branches, remained the organizational form of the union throughout its existence. They attracted militants who espoused direct action and who had considerable backgrounds as agitators in New Zealand, South Africa, Canada, the U.S., Ireland and Britain as well as Australia.

They put out the lively newspaper *Direct Action*, soapboxed in the Sydney Domain and the public speaking venues of the other towns, agitated where the migrant

workers gathered and on the jobs. They established free speech by putting their bodies on the line in actions as brilliant and daring as those of the free-speech fighters in the U.S. Most important, they held forth an alternative to the class collaborationism of the unions, the Labor Party and the arbitration system which were designed to keep the working class chained within capitalism. As time went on, more and more workers were attracted to direct action and its proven ability to get improved pay and conditions. The union bureaucrats increasingly found themselves facing a membership

Book Review

which spoke in the language of the IWW and favored the application of economic action at the point of production and class-wide solidarity. IWW-led workers won better settlements after strikes in metal mining, coal mining and sheep shearing while the craft unions advised settling for crumbs. Slow-downs and inefficiency were practiced successfully in all industries.

In Australia, unlike the U.S. and Canada, there was not a large body of unorganized workers. Therefore, the IWW proposed not so much to organize the unorganized as to re-orient the organized. What they were arriving at was to supplant the craft system with revolutionary industrial unionism. And their efforts were so successful that the union and Labor Party bureaucrats felt that their constituency was slipping away from them. It was this as well as the Wobblies’ success in organizing against conscription that prompted the legal assault and frame-up prosecutions that resulted in the crippling of the IWW.

In 1916 and 1917, IWW organizer and editor Tom Barker was jailed for prejudicing recruiting; 12 active Wobs were framed up and convicted in a spectacular show trial

UK unionist sacked...

continued from page 12

ogy. He was told that he was redundant and had ten minutes to clear his desk, given four months’ notice and told that ‘It would not be in the interests of the College for you to reappear.’ This is a blatant case of victimisation for union activity. Pat had a full timetable, including degree-level work. He was employed on a permanent contract and had taught at the College for nine years. The union was not consulted about the proposed redundancy, and Pat was the only member of staff given the sack.

On 25 January NATFHE organized a demonstration in Accrington joined by over 600 people. Walsh has been denied access to the college, although his contract runs until the end of March, and the college refuses to recognise him as Branch Secretary, denying union members access to their democratically elected Branch Secretary.

The branch had voted for all out strike action to secure Pat’s re-instatement, but backed down under pressure a few days before the strike was to begin.

Messages of support to Pat Walsh can be sent to: Accrington and Rossendale NATFHE c/o TGWU Offices 2a Abbey Street Accrington Lancashire. Protests condemning the victimisation of Pat Walsh and demanding his re-instatement, can be sent to: Michael Austin, Principal, Accrington and Rossendale College, Sandy Lane, Accrington Lancashire BB5 2AW; Roger Brunt, Chair of Governors, Haworth, Nuttall & Warburton, 17 Cannon Street, Accrington Lancashire England

This campaign is an important one, both to defend Pat Walsh and also to protect other union activists. If the employers get away with this victimisation, many more union activists in colleges will come under intimidation from management.

— Elizabeth Lawrence

César Chávez and the UFW on video

The Fight in the Fields: César Chávez and the Farmworkers’ Struggle. A documentary by Rick Tejada-Flores and Ray Telles to be broadcast on PBS April 16 at 9:00 p.m. (EST).

This two-hour documentary chronicles the life of César Chávez and the United Farm Workers union he led until his death. The filmmakers combine archival footage with interviews with politicians, UFW staffers and other participants. The politicians are a recurring and annoying presence, and at one point Robert Kennedy seems on the verge of taking over despite his marginal role in actual events.

I will leave these politicians aside, but their presence is emblematic of a broader problem—this film tells its story almost entirely in terms of “leaders”; the farmworkers themselves are almost voiceless. Only five of 29 interviewees are farm workers, and we learn relatively little about their conditions or the ways in which the union changed their lives.

The opening sequences set the tone, contrasting the wealthy agricultural industry with the miserable conditions endured by the workers who produce this abundance. This point is made through juxtaposing old photographs and newsreel footage of strikes and workers with a voice-over narrator who frames the entire documentary as a story of slow, steady progress and inspired leadership. Dissenting voices are heard (aside from the bosses and other villains subsumed within the broader narrative) only toward the end of the film, with the UFW’s disastrous change of focus in the late 1970s and early ’80s, characterized by its abandonment of grassroots organizing for direct mail and public relations campaigns. While these raised relatively large sums of money, they were a total failure in bringing pressure to bear on the companies.

During this period, problems that had long existed in the union (though the film-makers do not address this) came to the surface. The UFW was built on a community organizing model that left most day-to-day activity and power in the hands



of its staff, rather than the members themselves. These staffers devoted long hours at wages little better than those which could be earned in the fields. But few had actually worked in the fields, or were in any way accountable to the rank and file. UFW members saw the union as “César’s union,” not as their own creation, and while they often supported it fervently they did not shape its policy. Nor was the UFW active in the fields on a day-to-day basis. Growers soon learned they could bust the union with relative impunity, as it had little active presence on the ground. When politicians stacked California’s agricultural labor board with anti-labor zealots, the UFW never considered direct action to defend its members. Instead, it turned to its computerized mailing lists to spit out press releases and fund appeals as wages and conditions collapsed and membership plummeted. The UFW became so removed from the fields that at one point (not discussed in the film), Chávez actually called in the Immigration and Naturalization Service to deport undocumented Mexican workers from nonunion farms.

The narrator skirts over many of these issues. At one point he refers to California’s Criminal Syndicalism law, but ignores the fact that it was put in place to crush IWW organizing. We hear a great deal about Chávez’s commitment to non-violence, but relatively little about the institutionalized violence farmworkers lived with every day on the job. But there is a fair amount of information about the way Chávez and his

fellow organizers went about building the UFW; their efforts to integrate music, art and poetry into their organizing; and their successful alliance with other social movements to build a massive grassroots boycott against the grape growers. That boycott eventually forced the growers to settle with the union, after attempts to break the workers through lawsuits, injunctions (which workers ignored) and police brutality failed. The documentary is at its most moving when it tells the story of the battle for union recognition, though I suspect it would have been even more compelling told in workers’ own voices without the slow-motion footage and lush soundtrack.

But despite its flaws, it is very rare for PBS to treat labor sympathetically (or indeed at all—PBS devotes hours each week to airing the bosses’ stories, and only a few seconds to labor). The film’s Hollywood-style production values should resonate with those accustomed to spending their evenings before a television set (I don’t own one), and I doubt very much that there will be anything better on. And despite the focus on Chavez’s life, it is made clear that the battle for decent conditions in the field is an ongoing fight—and that its ultimate success will depend both on organizing the workers in the fields and on solidarity from those fellow workers (referred to in the film as consumers) who eat. If you can get some of your co-workers to watch it too, it might make for some interesting discussions.

— Jon Bekken

Picket Line Attire

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Black globe on red cap, adjustable sizing \$9

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Silent Agitators

10 designs to a sheet. 50 cents a sheet, minimum order 4 sheets. Wet and stick.

on arson charges; the most active IWW members including octogenarian Monty Miller were jailed after a show trial in Western Australia; "every alien" IWW from Germany and Austria-Hungary was interned; non-citizen Wobblies were deported to Chile, the U.S. and elsewhere. Finally, the government passed an Unlawful Associations Act which made the IWW illegal and subjected members to imprisonment. By 1924, when the Act expired, the IWW was reduced to a shadow of what it had been.

Burgmann tells the story well and in great detail. She has consulted pretty much every source and has created a great monument to industrial unionism in Australia. The chapters on women and the IWW and on "Ethics and Economics" are especially good. This book is likely to remain the standard work on the subject. The weakest part of the book was Burgmann's effort to force the IWW's ideology into a formula. She concludes that the Wobblies were not syndicalists, based on her reading of the second-rate works of F. F. Ridley and Peter N. Stearns. What they were, she tells us, were Marxists. Probably some of this confusion would have been cleared up if she had consulted IWW members instead of books. This is generally the subject which most confuses writers who are not themselves Wobblies.

One last intriguing note: Dr. Burgmann lists works by herself and another person named Meredith Burgmann in the bibliography and states that a cousin of her grandfather was convicted in 1916 when a number of Wobs were tried for printing counterfeit £5 notes. It would be interesting to know what connection Burgmann's family has had with the IWW.

There is still a Wobbly presence in Sydney and Melbourne and Wobblies can be heard soapboxing on the Sydney Domain every Sunday at 2 p.m., weather permitting.

— Steve Kellerman

Books for Rebel Workers

IWW Calendar

1997 Calendar, 14 photos. \$8.50

Greeting Cards

May Pole cards feature workers dancing around a May Pole flying the red flag, \$5/dozen. The cat knocking over the xmas tree \$5/dozen. Also a card designed by Joe Hill, 4 color, glossy cover, \$10/dozen.

One Big Union. by IWW.

The basic introduction to the structure and methods of the Industrial Workers of the World. \$2

The General Strike.

Ralph Chaplin's musical version of the IWW Preamble notes "without our brain and muscle not a single wheel can turn." He develops that idea in this essay. \$2

Labor Law for the Rank & Filer.

by Staughton Lynd.

Revised and updated, this classic self-help manual is subtitled: "building solidarity while staying clear of the law." \$7

IWW Organizing Manual (2nd Ed)

A guide to building the IWW on the job. \$5

A New Union Vision

Arthur J. Miller reflects on the need for revolutionary unions today. \$2

IWW Little Red Songbook (36th Edition)

103 labor songs from around the world, with music. Includes classics and new songs by Billy Bragg, Anne Feeney, Charlie King, Utah Phillips, etc. \$10

Rebel Voices.

IWW Songs sung by IU 630 Wobs. Tape \$10.

We Have Fed You All for 1,000 Years.

Utah Phillips sings Wobbly songs. Tape \$10.

IWW Buttons

Fire Your Boss! \$1.

Black Cat/Direct Action, \$1.

IWW Globe circled by motto: "Labor is Entitled to All it Creates." Black & Red, \$1.50.

Workers' Culture

Juice is Stranger than Friction.

by T-Bone Slim.

Funny and irreverent, Slim's popular writings for the *Industrial Worker* of the 20s and 30s are collected for the first time. \$8

Canadian IWW Songbook

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Lucy Parsons, Ben Fletcher or Joe Hill. \$15

Crystal Gazing the Amber Fluid.

by Carlos Cortez.

IWW artist's poetic take on life today. \$4

Images of Labor. compiled by John Gorman

Gorman

Memorabilia from the National Museum of Labor History, London - badges, banners, buttons, sculpture, paintings, etc. from the British labor movement. \$12

Images of Labor. edited by Moe Foner

A coffee-table book alternating color art work and quotes. \$10

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by Gary Huck & Mike Konopacki.

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Woodie Guthrie's songbook for little kids. Hardcover, \$10.

RAW, High Culture for Low-

brows ed. by Art Spiegelman & Francoise Mouly, \$10.

X, Pictures by Sue Coe by Coe and

Judith Moore

Life of Malcolm X, \$5.

Food Not Bombs.

Veggie recipes and how-to information for feeding the hungry in this society where food is a privilege. \$9

Break Their Haughty Power.

by Eugene Nelson.

Fictionalized biography of Joe Murphy, who was an IWW member between 1919 and 1924. \$12

Cassettes, \$10 each.

Heartland, Anne Feeney Live includes "War on the Workers"

Good News. Sweet Honey in the Rock

All Used Up. Utah Phillips

Don't Mourn, Organize! Songs of Joe Hill by various artists

I Have Seen Freedom. Si Kahn

As Seen on No TV. Chris Chandler

Smash the State and Have a Nice Day. Citizens Band

It Takes A Lot of People. Tribute to Woody Guthrie by Larry Long & kids

A World to Win. Tom Juravich

Greenfire. Dakota Sid, Travers Clifford

Food Phone Gas Lodging. Charlie King

Justice. Toshi Reagon

Out of Darkness. Tom Juravich

Look to the Left. Anne Feeney

Video Documentary

Older = Bolder: Anarchist Elders, by Zimya Toms-Trend. 28-minutes; veteran Wobblies reflect on their struggles and ideas. VHS, \$20.00

Radical Thought

Death Blossoms by Mumia Abu-

Jamal

More death row writings by America's most famous political prisoner. \$12

A Little Working Class Sense by

Gilbert Mers

A veteran labor activist calls on workers to once again take up the struggle against capitalism. \$3

The World Bank: A tale of power, plunder & resistance by Alec Dubra & Mike Konopacki

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Behind the Silicon Curtain, The Seductions of Work in a Lonely Era. by Dennis Hayes.

All the dirt and alienation of technomonad-"paradise," \$6.

Life & Thought of Friedrich Engels, A Reinterpretation. J.D. Hunley. \$15

The Political Economy of Participatory Economics. by Michael Albert & Robn Hahnel.

A nuts-and-bolts approach to a participatory, egalitarian economy. \$8.

Opposing NAFTA, International Opposition to NAFTA. Jason Justice, \$1

Classrooms First! The 1996 Oakland Teachers' Strike. Jason Justice. \$2

Fields, Factories and Workshops. by Peter Kropotkin.

Analysis of early 20th Century production of relevance to contemporary adherents of decentralized production. \$10.

Live From Death Row by Mumia Abu-Jamal, \$17.

The Disappearance of Local 717: An Underground History of Packard Electric by Benjamin Sachs, \$3.

Solidarity Unionism.

by Staughton Lynd.

Critical reading for all who care about the future of the labor movement. \$7

Democratic Rights for Union Members: A Guide to Internal Union Democracy. by H.W. Benson

What you need to know to take on union bureaucracy through established procedures, \$8.

Progress Without People: In Defense of Luddism. by David F. Noble.

Technology is a political question, and too often workers are excluded from the decisions. A detailed analysis of technology's effects and working-class responses, \$15.

From the Ground Up, Essays on Grassroots & Workplace Democracy. by George Benello

Essays by eminent libertarian philosopher with commentaries by others, \$6.

Mask of Democracy: Labor Suppression in Mexico. by Dan LaBotz.

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Stonewall by Martin Duberman, \$15.

The Movement and the Sixties, Protest in America from Greensboro to Wounded Knee. Terry Anderson. \$15

Available from IWW Branches

T-SHIRTS

I'm A Little Wobbly Red with black kitten (childrens sizes 11-12 & 14-16 only) \$8. **The Hand That Will Rule the World - One Big Union** Grey pocket-t, IWW on pocket, workers with fist on back. \$15. **An Injury To One Is An Injury To All** Navy pocket-t, SLC branch seal on pocket, sab cat on back \$15. **Joe Hill** White t with picture by FW Cortez \$10. **Employing Class** Red sabo cat t-shirt \$10. Salt Lake IWW, PO Box 520514, Salt Lake City, UT 84152-0514

IWW "Wings" 3" wide bullion pin, IWW Globe between sabots. \$10. Zeta-max, POB 8882, Baltimore MD 21224.

Workers' Guide to Organizing

\$4.50. **Guide to Direct Action** \$4.50; both \$8.25. Lehigh Valley GMB, POB 4133, Bethlehem PA 18018.

Collective Bargaining Manual \$2.50. New York GMB, RD 1 Box 158-B, Hartwick NY 13348

Out of the Depths (Ludlow Massacre) \$11.95; Introduction to the U.S.: An Autonomist Political History by Noel Ignatiev. \$7. P & L Printing, 2298 Clay St., Denver CO 80211

British Isles - Songbook (36 Edition) £4 post-paid; a selection of IWW literature is available from IWW, 75 Humberstone Gate, Leicester LE1.

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Union teacher sacked for defending part-timers

Victimisation of union officers is recognised by all labour activists as a serious attack on union organization. A particularly vicious case of victimisation recently occurred at Accrington and Rossendale College (a community college) in Accrington, Lancashire, England. Pat Walsh, union Branch Secretary and National Executive Council Member of NATFHE (National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education) was sacked on 20 December 1996, the last day of academic term.

In recent years a bullying, managerialist culture has taken root in further education colleges. Until a few years ago they were controlled by local councils. They are now managed by 'independent' corporations, often dominated by local business interests, who have sought to impose new contracts with longer working hours, shorter holidays

and the removal of contractual safeguards on workloads, such as limits on teaching hours and number of evening sessions lecturers can be required to work. Attacks on union officers have become more frequent. Many union members are scared to take on union positions because they know it means they will be targeted by management.

Accrington and Rossendale College has had a recent history of industrial conflict, particularly over attempts to sack part-time lecturers and bring in agency staff. Last year, shortly after the end of the summer term, 340 part-time lecturers were sacked by the college. They were told they could be re-employed if they registered with Education Lecturing Services (ELS). Staff working through ELS are classified as self-employed and thus receive no benefits, such as sick pay, holiday pay and maternity leave.

As union Branch Secretary Walsh persuaded his branch of over 100 full-time lecturers to vote 2-1 in favour of all-out strike action in opposition to the ELS scheme. It is not always easy to persuade full-time staff to strike in defence of part-timers' rights. (The union could not include part-time lecturers in the ballot because they had been sacked by the college, and so their inclusion would have given the employer grounds to challenge the ballot in the courts.)

Since 1979 the right to strike has been severely curtailed for British workers. Political strikes are illegal. Strike votes have to be conducted by postal ballots to members' homes. Employers must be given a list of all the members the union is balloting. Employers must be given at least seven days notice before industrial action starts. It now takes unions a minimum of several weeks to

organize a lawful strike. And given all these requirements, it is very easy for employers to take unions to court to challenge a ballot result, for instance on the grounds of minor inaccuracies in the list of names.

This happened at Accrington and Rossendale College. The day before the strike against use of ELS was due to start, the College took the union to court, claiming the list of names was inaccurate. The court upheld the challenge and the union had to start the whole process over again.

Meanwhile on 20 December 1996, the last day of term, the Principal at Accrington and Rossendale College summoned all the social science lecturers to individual meetings, at which he told them their area was being re-organized.

Pat Walsh teaches history and sociology

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Towards Democracy at Work

As we all know, the average workplace is far from being a bastion of democracy. Indeed, if your experience matches mine, it is more likely to be a stronghold of authority and bureaucracy on the one hand, and of slavery and exploitation on the other.

There is no truer statement than which declared that freedom and responsibility go hand in hand. Therefore, as we have the responsibility for getting our work done, should we not also have the freedom to decide how, when and why we do that work?

As long as we let other people control our lives (which is what our employers effectively do), then our working lives will continue to be drab, boring and unfulfilling.

Hence the choice before us is between that of continuing to accept our position in society as the slaves of others, or of getting together and asserting our right to manage our own lives ourselves.

By taking over and democratically running our workplaces, we will be able to both free ourselves from wage slavery, and also introduce those changes which will make our lives easier.

We will be in a position to decide both what work needs to be done and how it will be done. It will also be up to us to agree upon the length of our working day, so that we can find an equilibrium between fulfilling our economic needs and our desires for leisure, recreation and having the time to pursue our own hobbies and interests.

Sounds very nice, I hear you say, but no doubt you have some doubts as to whether it is possible.

The answer to the question of whether or not it can be done is contained within us all. If we seriously want more control over



our lives, then the only thing that will be able to stop us from gaining it is our own timidity.

Our employers are helpless without our co-operation, and our power lies in the fact that it is us, the workers, who produce all the world's wealth.

This is why the strike is such an important workers' weapon. While the world would hardly be affected if all bosses took the day or week off, the world would certainly come to a complete halt if workers did the same.

Thus the most important weapon in our arsenal is the general strike, as has clearly been shown by recent events in both France and Canada. These strikes have shown just how important working people are to the

smooth running of the world, and they explain why our employers would be well advised to treat us a lot better than they do.

However, if our employers feel that we will never do anything against them, that we will never go on strike, let alone visualise ourselves taking control of our own destinies, then they will continue to treat us as they do.

Even the simple threat of a strike may well be enough to win us a pay rise or improvement in working conditions.

Yet we cannot just concern ourselves with events in our own company or industry. As the world is becoming more and more dominated by multinational companies, a multinational response is becoming increasingly necessary. In the future, all workers' struggles will have to be international in scope if they are able to have more

than a moderate chance of success.

As our employers can at present run rings around us by transferring business from one country to another, so we will be able to reverse the situation as soon as we are organized globally to prevent them from doing so.

This brings us back to the question of how these things can be done. Of how we can reduce our employers control over our lives and increase our own.

The answer is quite simple really. Basically, the better organized we are the the more we stand up for ourselves, the more control we will have and the better our lives will be.

Now to our second question. If workers were to be in a position to democratically run industry themselves, would they be able to run it efficiently? We are not here talking about "Heaven on Earth," simply of having a healthier and more stable economy.

Yet we already do run industry ourselves. The problem is that policies are decided by a small number of large shareholders and top executives who don't actually do the work, or feel the full force of the result of their policies. You shouldn't have to look any further than the backlog in your in-tray to see the proof in this.

The experiences of previous occasions when workers have managed to take control of industry and run it themselves show that we should have more faith in our own abilities, and that we should place the ideas of our employers firmly in the dustbin where they belong.

With the freedom to decide how industry is to be run, we are more than capable of running the economy efficiently. Or do you not think that you would be responsible enough to make a good job of it?

Fire your boss today!

X343263

Big Brother's watching you

Most people are unaware of just how much bosses are invading workers' privacy. According to a survey by the American Civil Liberties Union, it's a lot.

A new ACLU report on worker rights – including free speech, due process, equality, and privacy – says more than 20 million American workers are subject to electronic surveillance – up from 8 million in 1990, when the last study was done. Workers are monitored by computer terminals, time clocks, telephones and other devices. If you're unplugged from your terminal for what the boss thinks is too many trips to the restroom, you could risk discipline.

Over the last six years, as the percentage of major companies requiring drug testing climbed from 38 to 70 percent, employers have also been administering genetic tests, which can reveal potential health problems and influence hiring or promotion. In a

Georgetown University survey of people with family genetic disorders, 43 percent claimed they were denied insurance or a job based on the disclosures of potential genetic problems. One woman was fired a day after she told her boss she had a genetic disease.

Consumers are affected, too. Some 400 million phone calls every year are monitored thanks to a federal loophole exempting eavesdropping on "job-related" employee conversations.

Unless workers have union contracts, they have no legal recourse if management decides to fire them because of what they say on or off the job. Efforts to get states to pass laws protecting constitutional rights on the job have met with only moderate success. "Legislators have been resistant to considering, much less passing, new laws that would protect private-sector workers," the ACLU said. – UAW Solidarity

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- I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer.
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