

Industrial Worker

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EDUCATION ORGANIZATION EMANCIPATION

Direct Action Gets the Goods for Building Workers

If we walked out of a store with food to eat but didn't pay, we'd be arrested. But if a boss doesn't pay a worker, the cops don't get out the cuffs and sticks. Not even if the boss doesn't pay 125 workers. But that's what happened a year and a half ago in Austin, Texas.

The 125 were employed by a subcontractor to do work converting abandoned buildings into an upscale apartment complex they could never afford to live in. The state workforce commission agreed that they were owed the money, but was powerless to act. A year and a half of lawyers couldn't get them paid. Finally they found the Industrial Workers of the World.

The millionaire apartment owner that benefited from their labor was legally not liable for their wages. The original employer had died with no assets and the general contractor was a convicted felon with no known address. But the millionaire wanted a nice-guy image.

We'd helped individuals and small groups with this before. Usually, all it took was someone speaking English with a backup crowd and the boss would cough up the dough. This was bigger.

So we helped the workers call a community meeting that brought out immigrant rights groups, and even the Mexican American Democrats. It soon became clear who would stand with the workers. The immigrant rights group, El Buen Samaritano, and the IWW began planning a picket during prime student housing season. The AFL-CIO Central Labor Council wouldn't let us put up flyers, but hundreds went up around town and the fax machines ran hot with the press releases.

Come picket day the rains came - after a summer of drought. As the main demonstration time came near, picketers remained huddled in cars. The leaflets were late. Spirits were as gray as the sky. But an hour before the demonstration, the rain died to a sprinkle and we had attained some critical mass. The IWW banner went up and so did our spirits and many posters. Damp leaflets began making their way into the hands of current and prospective tenants. "Did you know 125 workers helped build your apartments and they weren't paid?" "Did you

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World Labor Solidarity: The Bosses' Worst Nightmare

The Pacific Maritime Association is continuing its efforts to compel IWW member Robert Irminger to name each of the dozens of workers and supporters who picketed Yusen Terminal in the Port of Oakland, California, last Fall in solidarity with the locked-out Liverpool dockers.

The bosses' association is also demanding the identity of everyone with whom FW Irminger communicated regarding the picket and detailed descriptions of those communications, and a list of all organizations with which he is associated. "A lot of the information I don't have," Irminger notes. "Word got out through the radio and just through an informal network, and people just came down on their own initiative and joined in the picket line. So obviously I didn't know a lot of the people, but of course if I did know

their identities I would not divulge them."

Irminger, who is also San Francisco Region chair of the ILWU-affiliated Inland Boatmen's Union, served as picket captain during the three and a half days of picketing. After word got out that the Neptune Jade was due in port, several activists showed up early on a Sunday morning, meeting longshoremen with a picket line when they arrived to work the ship around 7:30 a.m. "Ordinary workers see the sense of solidarity," Irminger told the IWW General Assembly, and so they refused to cross the line.

When an arbitrator rejected FW Irminger's contention that he was a representative of the Liverpool dockers, the longshoremen refused to cross the line on health and safety grounds. The arbitrator agreed, a ruling that was repeated several times over

the next three days. But the arbitrator ruled that there was no longer a health and safety issue when police showed up in force to break the picket line. The longshoremen still refused, "saying they do not cross picket lines with an armed escort, and especially with an armed police escort, citing the murder by police of six strikers in the 1934 maritime strike on the West Coast."

The Neptune Jade then fled for Canada, where longshoremen again refused to cross a picket line, and for Japan, with no more success, before being sold in Taiwan.

While Superior Court Judge Henry Needham has cleared most defendants of the PMA charges, he has allowed the suit to proceed against Irminger on the grounds that he bore particular responsibility for the

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IWW Assembly looks to future

Organizing dominated a packed agenda at the IWW's 1998 General Assembly in Portland, Oregon, over the Labor Day weekend. More than 87 members attended, making this year's the largest such meeting in many decades.

General Secretary-Treasurer Fred Chase reported that membership has more than doubled since the 1995 Assembly, and is up 34 percent from last year. Over the last year the IWW has chartered Industrial Union Branches in Sedro Woolley, Washington (construction), Toronto (public service), Portland (entertainment and public service), San Francisco (marine transport) and Winnipeg (general distribution). Fourteen new General Membership Branch charters have been issued, and several new charter applications are in the works.

The IWW now has members in 12 countries, with the largest concentrations in Australia, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. There continues to be strong interest in the union in Latin America and Africa. This international growth offers exciting possibilities for building an IWW truly capable of taking on the bosses on a global level, but it also raises financial and organizational issues which the union will continue to grapple with over the next year.

Indeed, the strains of our rapid growth were evident throughout the Assembly. So many branches were represented that the time allotted proved insufficient to allow for



As is traditional, the General Assembly closed with a rousing rendition of the Wobbly anthem, "Solidarity Forever."

reports on the abundant organizing and other activities now underway despite the firm but understanding efforts of co-chairs Missy Rohs and Tim Acott. More than two dozen proposed constitutional amendments and other resolutions also overwhelmed available discussion time, and an ad hoc committee was appointed to continue the process of reviewing and refining these proposals before they are presented to the membership for a union-wide vote.

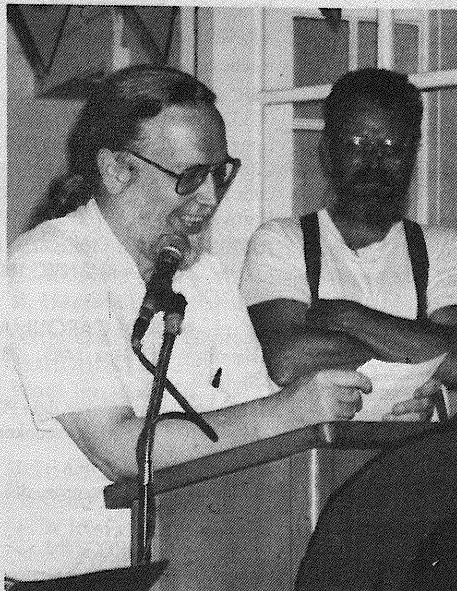
The highlight of the two days was probably the talk by IWW and ILWU member Robert Irminger, who is facing a lawsuit in retaliation for his alleged role in organizing picketing of the Neptune Jade last year in solidarity with Mersey dockers. Irminger was singled out by the bosses because he served as picket captain during the four-day action. (See report above) He told delegates that IWW members played an critical role on the picket line, constituting half the pick-

ets at one point. The recent organization of the San Francisco Bay Ports Marine Transport Workers Industrial Union 510 Branch is, at least in part, an outgrowth of our efforts to build solidarity for the Mersey dockers in their long struggle.

The ongoing drive at Skagit Pacific in Washington state was also reported on, as was the recent organization of IWW branches in Edmonton, Alberta, and Victoria, British Columbia. Fellow Workers from Austin, Texas, reported on their successful fight to force a local developer to pay some \$28,000 in unpaid wages to 125 mostly undocumented workers there.

Members broke into smaller groups Saturday afternoon for more focussed discussions on organizing strategy, working within the business unions, constitutional revision, international structure, the Industrial Worker and other topics. Sunday morn-

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General Secretary-Treasurer Fred Chase delivering his report as General Assembly co-chair Tim Acott looks on.



In This Issue...

Official: Workers' Lives Worth Just \$3,400

Democratic Unionism

The Silver Platter: Organizing Restaurants

Asbestos: White Death

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Boss lays-off IWW supporters

Skagit Pacific managers have essentially shut down the night shift, transferring a handful of workers to day shift and laying-off the rest. Nearly the entire night shift crew were union supporters, and management told workers the lay-off was retaliation for an alleged job action. Meanwhile, the day shift is being forced to put in overtime to replace the lost production.

Efforts to expand union support on the day shift are continuing while the newly chartered Sedro Woolley Building Construction Workers IU 330 Branch begins addressing the boss' retaliatory lay-off policy and getting our fellow workers their jobs back. The Branch has opened an office, and many workers around the town are lining up in the OBU.

Devon lining up

Workers at a pharmaceutical plant in Wrafton, north Devon, UK, have decided to join the IWW, rejecting a plea from the Trade Union Congress. Forty of the 200-some workers in the plant attended an IWW organizing meeting despite the boss and his personnel office lurking outside attempting to intimidate workers into staying away.

Whilst the TUC proposed dividing the workers into three trade unions, FW Kevin Brandstatter stressed the importance of industrial unionism and the many advantages of IWW affiliation, among them the union's commitment to democratic, rank-and-file control and direct industrial action.

Several workers have taken out IWW membership, and a branch charter application is in the works. Devon Wobblies are working to line up a majority of the workforce at the plant, and are also talking to workers at a local furniture factory.

Wobs engage in Active Resistance

Over 600 anarchists from all over the world converged on Toronto August 17-23 for a week of workshops, networking and demonstrations. Present were IWW members from Michigan, Massachusetts, Tennessee, Florida, Louisiana, New York, California, Manitoba, Ontario and Australia as well as a number of "trainhopping bindlestiffs" who weren't "from anywhere in particular."

Fellow Workers John and Darryl from Winnipeg, Brian Burch from Toronto, and Jason Adams from Gainesville hosted a lively "How To Fire Your Boss" workshop which was attended by approximately 40 people. The workshop was opened and closed by John and Darryl's hearty accapella

Around Our Union

renditions "Dump the Bosses off Your Back" and "Go Down and Join the Union."

The Active Resistance conference culminated in a militant 700-person march and protest against police harassment of street youth, in which protestors took over the streets without a permit and held large street theater actions. The enormous Toronto GMB's "An Injury to One is An Injury To All" banner backed up the protest from start to finish.

There was also an IWW Caucus during Friday's dinner, which generated interest in participants, and served as a meeting ground for wobs who had not yet met.

— Jason Adams x345417

Chicago IWWs support locked-out projectionists

Members of the Chicago IWW did picket duty August 21 in solidarity with 150 locked-out film projectionists, members of the International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees Local 110. The projectionists have been locked out since April, when the newly merged Sony/Loews and Cineplex/Odeon companies revealed plans to sell 11 theatres and cut 75 percent of the 150 workers employed in 60 theatres represented by the union. The projectionists were locked-out when they refused to go along.

Local 110 has been campaigning for a boycott of Sony/Loews/Cineplex/Odeon theatres. However, the theatre conglomerate owns all but one of the first-run motion picture theatres in the Chicago area, leaving determined movie goers little choice. So the locked-out workers are urging them not to purchase popcorn, candy and other concessions, since this is where the theatres make most of their money. The union reports that there are numerous complaints from customers about the poor quality of the shows resulting from unqualified workers running the projectors.

The pickets were stationed on the four corners of the crossroads of 82nd and Wentworth on Chicago's southside, just outside the mall where the theatre is located. When we asked why they weren't picketing in front of the theatre itself, the picket captain explained that as the mall is private property, pickets have been chased off. Still,



Pictured are some of the participants in the second annual Northeast regional gathering, held in Lake George, NY, August 15th and 16th. The mountain campground was the backdrop for 30 IWW members and others to discuss the state of the union, meet other Wobblies, and do battle with local mosquitos. Next year, northeast Wobs will meet in Philadelphia.

one supporter infiltrated the theatre and handed out boycott leaflets before being ejected. A few others planted themselves on the private access road to the mall without incident, waving placards and handing out leaflets to motorists who stopped at the light. The union also had a giant inflatable rat, named "Sony the Rat," on the back of a pickup truck, and after dark projected a huge "Boycott Sony/Loews-Cineplex/Odeon Theatres" on the side of a building. The Branch will be joining the pickets again in the future, as the lock-out continues.

Chicago Wobs discuss workers self-management

Chicago Wobblies concluded a series of public lectures on "Boss rule or Workers' Self-Management" in June.

Sparsely attended, as were all of the monthly talks at the Autonomous Zone, a storefront anarchist community center, there was nevertheless a lively discussion on the best way to get to workers' self-management: co-ops or union organizing? One suggestion was that forming workers' cooperatives such as the Mondragon Cooperative Federation (MCF) in Spain might offer the best present hope for workers to get themselves out from under the bosses' thumbs. In a U.S. example, a group of hairdressers in Portland recently got fed up with the demands of the owners of the salon where six of them worked. With the help of some IWW construction workers (in exchange for haircuts) they renovated a building into suitable space and organized themselves into the Pleiades collective salon.

Other people pointed out that the Mondragon cooperatives did well as long as they had the Spanish market to themselves. When Spain joined the European Common Market and the MCF had to compete in a broader capitalist market, the co-op had to cut labor costs. The MCF worker-owners did so not by cutting their own wages and benefits, but by opening up factories that were not cooperatives, run capitalist style (except that the boss was the MCF).

The weakness of co-ops is that they do

nothing to change the capitalist system in which they compete; unionized job shops, on the other hand, actually seize a little chunk of capitalism and try to rewrite the rules. In Michigan, for several years, workers at the University Cellar bookstore and the People's Warehouse (owned by a food co-op federation) were able to exercise a certain amount of job floor control.

The story of the rise and fall of the Dietzgen Co-op in Chicago was recounted to point out that under capitalism co-ops lose even if they succeed. Dietzgen was set up by a group of German-American workers who had been blacklisted for their activities for the 8-hour day movement. Unlike many attempts, it thrived making graph paper and protractors. Younger workers coming into the co-op could not afford to buy into it, so they worked as employees with multiple bosses instead of one. Eventually the Dietzgen family of the founder bought out the shares of the other co-op members and it became a regular capitalist-style corporation.

At the July Branch meeting, we tried to critique the series of talks. We decided that the topics might have been geared too much toward those people who already knew a fair amount about revolutionary unionism, and agreed to have another series of talks this winter on more down-to-earth topics, and to try to do better publicity.

The new series kicks off Sept. 30 with a talk by Wobbly artist Carlos Cortez on revolutionary art. It will be followed Oct. 28 with a discussion of the role of technology in the workplace. Phone the branch at 773/549-5045 for details.

In November We Remember

Next month we look back at IWW history and remember the many Wobblies who have given their lives and their freedom to the struggle for our emancipation.

We invite greeting ads that fit the theme. We're asking \$10 for 1 1/2 inch tall ad (1 column wide), \$35 for 4 by 4 7/8 inches (2 columns), or \$80 for a quarter page. We can set it up, or you can send in camera-ready copy. All ads must be received by Oct. 8.

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.

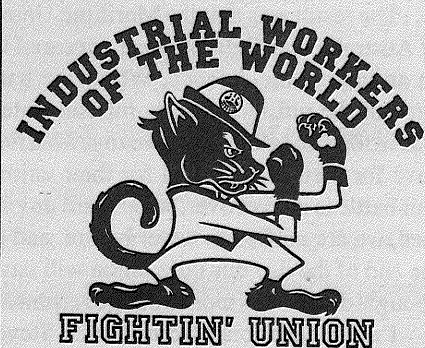
Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system." **It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism.** The army of production must be organized, not only 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.

T-Shirts from the Philadelphia IWW



with "Fire Your Boss" printed on back

\$12 each, postage paid \$8 each postage paid for 5 or more
specify small, medium, large or x-large 100% cotton silkscreened by Philly Wobs
order from: Phila IWW, 4722 Baltimore Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19143





It's quite obvious that the boob-tube viewing public are getting a bit tired of hearing about Prezzie-poo's extra-curricular hanky-panky, but the news media keep playing it to death. Your humble scribe is of the opinion that this is all a big smoke screen to divert our attention from some of the real jive that is going on. Remember the Watergate incident when we were given enema over that while at the same time our taxes were paying for the bombing of Laos and Cambodia?

There are those who say that Willie wet-drawers is being set up by the other political party, but methinks both sets of pollies are playing the same game of pulling the wool over our eyes. How else are we not seething with indignation over our taxes being used to bomb other countries on the supposition that ingredients that are blowing up embassies are made there? Heaven forbid that we boob-tube captives arrive at the conclusion that there are parts of the world where out butinsky politicians are not welcome!

Since the bombing of Sudan and Afghanistan, our pollies are nervously waiting for the other shoe to drop; but yours truly remembers an old middle eastern proverb that says that the fruit of revenge tastes the best when it is cool. Meanwhile as our politicians are awaiting the next onslaught of sabotage, they seem to be doing a credible job of sabotaging the turf that they supposedly were elected to protect.

The abundance of commercial fertilizers are not only polluting a large part of Freedomland, but the runoff flows down the Mississippi to create a dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico where sea life has been obliterated, putting many fishermen and shrimp trawlers out of business. So much they care for free enterprise! The certain ingredient in the cornfield is too much anhydrous ammonia in the fertilizer. Your scientifically unsophisticated scribe confesses ignorance as to what exactly what that is, but is firmly convinced that he would not want even a little anhydrous ammonia on his roasting ears.

The folks who were farming this continent for millennia before the fair-skinned invaders crossed the ocean grew not only ample fields of corn but many other food products that saved the invaders' home continent from certain starvation as well as probable revolution. They did this blissfully unaware of anhydrous ammonia. Our present-day species can do the same thing once we divest ourselves of the profit system.

Last year, when our duly elected representatives were voting for a bill to raise their own pay, some wiseacre snuck in an amendment directing the Treasury Department and Customs Office to enforce the 1930 law banning imports made by using forced labor as well as child labor. Miraculously, the bill passed and the International Labor Rights Fund immediately petitioned customs to exclude all South Asian carpets unless importers can prove that they were not made by child labor. The Teamsters Union threatened to take action to support the Brazilian unions that are trying to keep children from picking oranges which supply juice for companies like Caca-Culo's Minute Maid brand. As of yet, our horny chief exec has not gotten around to enforcing that amendment. Maybe we can get Monica to remind him.

As an old wag once said, "If elections changed anything, they would be made illegal!"

— C.C. Redcloud

MUA Here to Stay

Your article about the MUA surrendering (August *IW*) was unreasonable – what did you want, blood on the side walk? Only about 20 percent of workers in Australia are now in unions, and most are ineffectual. The very unLiberal Party is extremely right wing on social issues and has enacted fascist-type industrial laws.

The result was that the Maritime Union of Australia was fighting what appeared to be an impossible defence. Where the bastards of the unLiberal Party miscalculated was in the strength of the love that wharfies have for their fellows and for their union. Our battle is not yet over, we are still unionized, we are unified as never before, and at the end of the day our little union will have "bought down" this monstrous government.

I'm an electrician from Patrick Stevedoring, Port Botany, Sydney. As a maintenance worker I'm one of those who have been sacrificed to the forces of union bashing. If I'm lucky I may be employed by the maintenance contractor, but I'll tell you

this, we are still M.U.A., we are not cowered nor are we beaten. I can promise you that our greedy bosses and their sniveling dogs in the unLiberal Party will rue the day they took on the M.U.A.

We will never forget the debt of gratitude we owe to all our brothers and sisters around the world, especially those who gathered in peaceful assemblies in solidarity with us. In Australia we had ordinary citizens in their tens of thousands flocking to our 160-odd ports and standing through raging tempests and around the clock. In Melbourne, hundreds of police dressed in full riot gear and advancing in military fashion upon the peaceful M.U.A. assembly there were at first mystified then startled and finally scared out of their wits when they realized that they had gone from being the hunter to the hunted. Behind them they found hundreds of building workers, who, upon hearing of the coming savagery had downed tools and marched en-mass in the M.U.A.'s defence. The police begged for a treaty and were never again a serious threat.

The Wheels of Justice

The National Labor Relations Board has just ordered Youville Lifecare to reinstate a nurse it fired in 1996 for objecting to unsafe conditions, and to compensate two co-workers who were punished for complaining about inadequate staffing. A patient subsequently died from a medication area.

Although Barry Adams has been waiting for nearly two years to get his job back, it seems he'll have to wait a lot longer for justice. Youville announced that it plans to close the nursing home where they worked by the end of the year.

(Ir)responsible Investing

Several unions are moving their pension funds to a "union-friendly" investment fund. What does it take to be union-friendly? All they ask is that the companies they invest in not be on the AFL-CIO boycott list, and that at least 5 percent of their workers be unionized. Pretty modest requirements, you might think, but they recently loosened the criteria to let totally non-union firms into the mix...

Meanwhile, a prospectus for a different "socially responsible" outfit – run by millionaires, just like all the others – just crossed my desk. Among its upstanding corporate citizens are Time Warner, Darden Restaurants (which is suing the city of Chicago for the right to fire workers for being gay), Starbucks (which packages its coffee with prison labor), Microsoft (which does the same with its software), Venator (fired hundreds of older workers when they closed Woolworths, replacing them with minimum-wage workers in their new footwear and clothing outlets), and I could go on...

Over in England, the Solidarity Federation is leafletting outside Body Shop outlets, protesting its policy barring workers from joining unions. Social responsibility guru Anita Roddick says workers only need a union where the boss is bad, and she isn't. Oddly, she doesn't trust her wage slaves to see things that way...

It was never possible to invest our way into a just society, of course. But I learned years ago that when the bosses start talking about empowerment and social responsibility it's time to grab hold of my wallet – and fast, the boss probably has it half-way in his pocket by then.

Losing Sleep

Average work time for U.S. workers has gone up 2 hours a day over the last 20 years. Our pay actually went down, when you adjust for inflation, which is what's been driving this booming economy.

But the insanity of this system – where the bosses leech off us working stiff, raking in profits as they drive us into the ground – is not my point today. Rather, I'm asking

In Fremantle, West Australia, troopers mounted on horseback charged the M.U.A. peaceful assembly, but the assembly held firm – their resolve could not be broken. We have a debt to our fore fathers who fought, suffered and in some instances died so that others could live and work with dignity but most of all we have a duty to ensure that our kids have a decent world to live and work in.

We are not happy with the final solution of our dispute with Patrick's. But there is little doubt that if we had pursued the issue to its logical conclusion the victory would take 2 to 3 years, by which time that union would have been bankrupt, all of Patrick's workers would have been bankrupt and probably would have lost everything they possessed, and all the people responsible for the conspiracy would have gone to ground and have hidden their assets. It would have been a hollow moral victory only – the MUA would no longer have existed, all our wharves would have been run by scab companies and

where those extra two hours of daily work came from. (If you count commuting time, also up over the last two decades, the time drain is even worse.)

Actually, there's not much mystery about that missing time. It's time we should be spending in bed asleep.

The average American worker now sleeps only about seven hours a night. At the turn of the century, before that slave-driver Thomas Edison invented the electric light bulb, we slept nine hours a night. Even today, in less industrialized societies where working folks don't have the bosses and their machines breathing down our necks, total daily sleep time runs 9 to 10 hours a day (often including a mid-afternoon siesta).

Well, it turns out we need that sleep. People who don't get it become irritable and clumsy as their sleep debt builds up. When the sleep debt gets too big the brain starts crashing for brief periods – often as little as 10 seconds. Driver fatigue is a major cause of vehicle wrecks and deaths, but the problem is also growing in hospitals. A

recent study suggests that 25,000 people are killed each year in accidents caused, at least in part, by inadequate sleep.

More than 100 years ago, Paul Lafargue wrote *The Right to Be Lazy*. It's not just a right, it's a basic human need. With their insatiable demands for more and more of our time the bosses are driving us around the bend, running us into the ground, and planting thousands of us six feet under.

It's us or them, fellow workers, it's us or them.

— Jon Bekken



We're number one

Among the 19 largest industrialized democratic nations, on a per capita basis, the US is "Number One" in:

Billionaires, wealth; income inequality, and children living in poverty (remind you of Mexico?)

Total health spending and percentage of population without health care coverage

Infant mortality, death of children under 5, infants born at low birth weight, preschoolers not fully immunized, and *not* providing paid maternity leave

Highest paid athletes and lowest paid teachers

Defense spending and *not* spending on the poor

Providing military aid and *not* providing humanitarian aid to developing countries

Bank failures, bank bailouts, and differential between average executive salaries and average worker salaries

Deaths by guns and deaths by capital punishment

manned by scab workers, the marine portion of our membership would have ceased to exist.

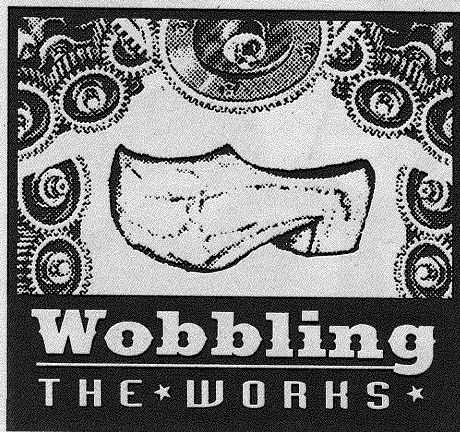
This was the biggest attack ever launched against the working people of Australia. If the MUA had gone down most other unions in Australia would have been crushed. My union and its members have suffered at the hands of the Right over and over again but we come back stronger each time, and we will this time also.

The fight is a long way from being over yet and we still need all the help we can get. The Australian government's attacks on the MUA go a lot further than just Patrick's, the union with the advice of their lawyers are dancing a nervous jig trying to keep the Government off balance. The truth is the MUA only has to lose one round and they will be destroyed.

In Solidarity with you and all my new brothers and sisters from around the world,

Roger Covell

Protections for Potty-Mouths



During a contract negotiation session last month, management's lawyer saw fit to loudly say "bullshit" over and over while we addressed the issue of the boss' duty to bargain about pay rates and pay equity. We decided not to engage this lawyer in a cursing war, and instead called for a caucus. The workers were alarmed that the lawyer would disrespect our position in such a way, and asked me if it was legal to curse at us. And indeed it is. So long as they actually bargain the issue, the boss and lawyer can curse up a mighty storm all they want.

Then I brought up the advantage to us: we've got that right, too. Not only at the bargaining table, but our shop stewards, once a contract is in place, would have identical protections. All of a sudden folks were volunteering to be stewards so that they could exercise this very right.

I have heard many stories of stewards being suspended or even fired for insubordination after cursing or ranting at a boss during a grievance meeting. Arbitrators and the National Labor Relations Board will generally find in the steward's favor because it is generally understood that unless there is extreme profanity tied up in violent threats, workers have a right to get angry while trying to resolve a problem. Stewards do not have a legally protected right to threaten or insinuate violence, or carry out a violent act in a grievance meeting, but cursing is not in and of itself considered violent.

Here's a review of cases that refer to stewards' rights to let their temper loose on a boss: At makeup and perfume giant Max Factor, a steward called the boss a "twerp" and was protected in 239 NLRB 804.

Imagine the poor, thin-skinned, quivering boss who was so offended by being called a twerp that they had to wade through

over probably two years of litigation to justify firing a steward for using the relatively obliging language.

But it gets better for our fellow workers who learned to defend workers' rights from listening to that George Carlin album with all the dirty words. In a case at the United States Postal Service (250 NLRB 4), a postal worker steward called the boss a "stupid ass" and was legally protected. A steward called a foreman a "fucking incompetent asshole" at United Technologies (274 NLRB 504) during a grievance meeting and was protected. At Consumers Power, a steward told a manager boss "I don't give a fuck who you call" when the manager said he was going to call to verify facts and was protected in 245 NLRB 183. And at Severance Tool Industries (301 NLRB 1166) a steward called the company president a "son of a bitch" and got to keep his job and smile at the S.O.B. for years after.

Related cases include Synadyne Corp., (228 NLRB 664), which articulates the steward's right to point their finger at their boss and shake it around. Call your boss a liar in a grievance meeting, and it's ok, too (Hawaiian Hauling 219 NLRB 765), apparently even if it's not true. Another case to do with heated exchanges is an additional one from our friends at the United States Postal Service which provides for a "cooling-off period" after a heated exchange (250 NLRB 4). The case says that workers should not be expected to be totally robot-like and have the ability to switch our emotions from high to neutral in a matter of seconds.

Again I must reiterate that the cases above are rights only for stewards in shops where the union is recognized and has a collective bargaining agreement — so non-union stiff's don't be confused! Cussin' for you ain't a right, it's a duty. And my advice would be that it's a duty better done under your breath when the boss is well out of hearing range. Non-union workers are employees-at-will, and cursing can be considered insubordination which can, among a million other things, get you legally fired and sometimes even denied your unemployment benefits.

— Alexis Buss

If there is an issue you would like to see addressed in Wobbling the Works, write FW Buss at PO Box 42531, Philadelphia PA 19101, or email phillyiww@iww.org

The IWW on the Job — Job Control

WHEN THE IWW builds a presence on a job site or in a specific industry it should be a very different thing than the presence of a business union. The IWW is as completely different from the other unions as night from day, and its methods and results should be just as different. With a business union, the focus is on the contract, the NLRB decision to grant bargaining power to the union. With the IWW, the whole point of the exercise is **Job Control**, direct worker control over the job site, taken as far and as deep as can be done. It's a different goal that implies a very different approach.

The tactics that work best for job control don't always make great copy. A strike is news. Lots of high drama and noble resolve, a dramatic sellout and a lot of suffering and human interest. A quickie wildcat strike, however, is over before you know it, gets the job done neatly and precisely with a minimum of high drama and human suffering, and makes no real story at all in the paper. Much less a slowdown, or a threatened but never carried out wildcat action that gets best results without any publicity or embarrassment. Nothing is more subtle and less newsworthy than the gradual establishment of dual power on the job. It's a total yawner to the press, and the best thing going

to the workers on the job. So, you don't read much about the real Wobbly stuff, neither in history nor in the news.

The tactics that get the job done directly aren't that dramatic. Go slow. Sit down. Work to rule. The open mouth. The usurpation, through efficiency and good sense, of the functions of management, often without the boss even noticing. To run the shop well and get the work done at a safe, reasonable pace, while gradually establishing certain practices of safety, rotation of tasks, relief from boredom and repetitive motion injury, gradual lengthening of breaks, elimination of involuntary overtime — these things aren't splashy, but they get the job done. That is, if the job to get done is establishing job control for a long term better life. It's subtle, infectious and insidious — and it's a real threat to the boss and his pals all around the world.

Organize IWW on your job today and every day, for job control, for workers' power, for a better life, and let the NLRB tend to the business unions while they tend to themselves and the bosses' best interests. **Job Control** is the real menace to the status quo. How well does the status quo serve you and your needs?

Work for a better life. Establish workers' job control. Join us!

— Portland IWW

JUST GOT BACK from General Assembly in Portland, Oregon, to face an omigod pile of mail on my desk. It could have been worse. Fellow office workers Robin Hood and Carol Igoe beat me back to General Headquarters and took care of most of what had arrived during our absence while I took an extra day to visit one of my two darling daughters who lives just across the river from Portland.

This year's assembly was another good working vacation as most of them are. I always come away inspired by the good work Wobs are doing, warmed by renewed acquaintances with those who have been at it for years and revitalized by the new acquaintances made. With 88 Wobs registering, it was one of the largest assemblies in our 93 year history. I'm told that even when our membership was in the tens of thousands assemblies were generally small delegate affairs rather than mass gatherings. The growth in numbers and in the volume of business has many

from the desk of...

of us thinking it may soon be time to go back to the delegate system and longer assemblies. The number of regional assemblies has been growing recently. Those may be a substitute for mass General Assemblies, saving participants travel time and expense.

Overall the tone of the '98 assembly was extremely positive. Participants in disputes generally treated each other with the respect due to Fellow Workers. Observers and workers at the assembly said they were impressed with our democratic process. May it always be so.

Many of us were delighted to spend an evening at a local bar where most of the musicians and comics were Wobblies. One of the few sore spots in the weekend was that nearly a dozen of the Wobs at Assembly were too young to enter the bar. When our membership was aging rapidly a decade ago we didn't have to worry about such things. Being an organization which welcomes and unites workers from their teens on up is a nice problem to have. Apologies were extended and word will be passed on to the hosts of the next assembly that we need to have facilities which are accessible to our younger members.

Information presented at Assembly indicates it has been another good year to be a Wobbly. We've been on an upswing for several years now, with each new year surpassing the successes of the previous. Since last September we've added 13 new branches, more than half again as many as we had then. Many of them are industry based rather than General Membership Branches. We find ourselves getting back to the industrial organizing structures which didn't fit too well when we were smaller. Membership has more than doubled in the past 3 years. It promises to be more than triple what it was in January of '95 by the time this year is over. The rate of growth has been doubling from year to year.

New members in Poland and Italy are forming Regional Organizing Committees. Membership and industrial organizing are on the increase in Canada and the U.K. as well as the U.S.

The advances are due to the hard work of Wobs in the field. Expanded distribution of the *Industrial Worker* and heroic efforts to maintain email lists and web pages have made us visible to more and more folks who thought we had died decades ago. Wobs are making contact with new members and linking them up with other Wobs to form branches. And we're synergistic. Effective activity breeds more of the same.

I'm winding down my fourth annual term in this office. As a position appropriately structured to serve the membership rather than consolidate power for the office holder, election often falls to the first volunteer. For the first time since 1993 there will be competition for the position of GST. That's good for the union. Democracy requires choices. But I can't bring myself to think of an election as putting me in competition with or opposition to Fellow Worker Alexis Buss of Philadelphia. We've been supportive comrades to each other in too many struggles in the past few years. If she gets elected I'm confident she'll do an excellent job. If I do, I'll continue to try my best. In either case I'm optimistic that the Once-again-getting-Bigger Union will continue to prosper.

The work continues. Discussion of issues have abounded on the internet since Assembly. New organizing efforts keep coming to light. New membership applications arrive with practically every report to General Headquarters from our delegates. Seldom do I go through a day without thinking it's a good day to be a Wobbly. I fully expect that the coming year will be a good year to be a Wobbly. During that year I expect to see a lot of you on IWW picket lines. And a year from now I look forward to seeing a lot of you once again or for the first time at the next General Assembly.

— Fred Chase, General Secretary-Treasurer

IWW Fighting Fund

Sam Paniagua, San Francisco CA	\$5
Bob Heald, Montpelier VT	20
Michael Araujo, Providence RI	5
Enrique Garcia Gonzalez, Thogro, Catalonia, Spain	25
Chris McDowell, United Kingdom	10
Lance Feik, Pinckneyville IL	5

Total raised to date: \$1,898
Goal by Dec. 30: \$5,000

Your contribution to the IWW Fighting Fund helps the IWW meet the expense of responding to the growing number of requests for information and IWW literature and reduce the union's operating deficit.

Utah Phillips Solidarity Fund

Lance Feik, Pinckneyville IL	\$5
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Industrial Worker Sustaining Fund

William Johansen, San Francisco CA	\$10
Mary Hynes, Wendell MA	3
Ben White, Monrovia CA	10
Barbara Engle, Jacksonville FL	15
Louis Bargo, Iron Mountain MI	5
Leon MacLean, Phoenix AZ	5
McArthur Gunter, Camp Springs	18.31
Lance Feik, Pinckneyville IL	5

Many thanks, fellow workers, for your generous support.

Dying from Asbestos

One day, while I was working at NASSCO (National Shipbuilding, in San Diego), we had our weekly safety meeting. Most of the time these so-called safety meetings were a waste of time. A man from our union came that day to talk to give us a two-minute talk about asbestos. He did not give us very much information, for what could he say when only given two minutes on such an overwhelming subject. What his talk did for me was to create an awareness that there was a serious problem. Being around a bit, I knew that we were not getting the complete story. I decided that when I had the time I would do some research.

Then one day, while watching TV at a friend's home, a commercial came on dealing with asbestos. The government was asking pipefitters who had worked on ships for longer than ten years to get a checkup by a doctor. To say the least, this was a big wake-up call, and what was once something I would look into some day became something I had to look into immediately.

One of the first things I read about was the government's research project on

Ban Asbestos

The Canadian government is urging British prime minister Tony Blair to "favour the use of chrysotile asbestos," instead of moving ahead with regulations proposed by the UK Health and Safety Commission to stem an epidemic of asbestos-related diseases.

Some 3,000 British workers die every year from asbestos-related diseases, and the number is increasing rapidly. Canadian authorities responded to the Commission's last effort to ban asbestos by impounding and destroying large quantities of legally imported British beef.

The Canadian government has also complained to the World Trade Organization that a French ban on all asbestos products is an illegal restraint of international trade. France was the eighth European Union member state to ban asbestos.

On June 15, the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers with 13 million members in 115 countries called for a "world-wide prohibition of mining, processing, commerce and use of asbestos."

Direct Action gets goods...

continued from page 1

know your buildings weren't tested for asbestos?"

That got the millionaire's attention pretty quick. He walked among us with his cellphone and surmised that the rain wasn't deterring us and that we would be there for the next three hours as promised. So we negotiated a basic agreement there on the line while still leafletting. But we stayed out there in the rain long after that.

Lawyers are now busy penning the agreed wage total from the timesheets plus ten percent, with another \$1,000 dollars to cover publicity - over \$28,000.

The next step is using this victory to build an industrial union. After the checks are ready, the press will direct the workers to call the "Trabajadores Industriales del Mundo" to get paid. Our Spanish-speaking fellow workers are ready to talk union to people when we hand them their money. We'll be there to help them with current problems - legal aid, a health clinic and a soup kitchen through El Buen Samaritano (a church-based immigrants organization) and the inevitable pay day problems. Workers are good listeners when they're being handed money. Only this pay-day they'll be listening to fellow workers instead of the boss. Direct action by "el Sindicato" got the goods.

330 at General Assembly

330 members from throughout the West met at the 1998 General Assembly in Portland,

pipefitters at a Baltimore shipyard. They found that out of those who had worked there over ten years, 56% of those pipefitters had lung damage. On ships asbestos was used in the lagging on boilers and steam pipes and it can be found in the ventilation system. There are a few other uses like in flexitalic gaskets. Asbestos has been almost eliminated in new construction of U.S. ships, but asbestos is still being used on older ships and on ships that don't have a U.S. flag.

It is not just pipefitters who are exposed to asbestos. U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare statistics estimate that 4 to 8 million American workers may die of asbestos-related diseases. The government also acknowledges that 10 to 15 percent of all cancer deaths have a direct link to asbestos. The most common asbestos-caused cancer is lung cancer. One out of every three asbestos workers dies of lung cancer.

Mesothelioma is a cancer of the membrane lining in the chest and abdomen. The only direct cause of this type of cancer that has been found is asbestos.

Then there is Gastrointestinal cancer. This affects the stomach, large intestine and rectum, and is caused by the presence of asbestos fibres in the lining of the gastrointestinal tract. Asbestos is digested through foods and liquids and/or fibers trapped in the lungs reach the stomach by being carried by the mucus of the lungs to the back of the throat then swallowed. They have also found a direct link to Laryngeal (throat) cancer.

If all this was not bad enough, asbestos also causes a breathing disease called Asbestosis (white-lung disease). This is a scarring of the lungs due to exposure to asbestos fibers. This disease is similar to silicosis, experienced by hard rock miners, and Black Lung, which kills coal miners. As the scarring becomes more extensive, the victim's lungs lose their flexibility and breathing becomes difficult. In time they slowly suffocate to death. Some lucky victims face a quicker death from failure of the right side of the heart because the asbestos-scarred lungs cannot provide enough air.

Asbestos is a mineral that the profiteers have found many uses for. It is heat resistant, corrosion resistant and because it is a



General Assembly delegates broke into committees to discuss organizing strategies, union work where a business union has bargaining rights, and other topics.

fibrous material it is very flexible and can be woven together with other fibers. Asbestos is also nearly indestructible.

The following are some consumer products that may contain asbestos: aprons, arm protectors, bags, blankets, boards and shingles, bonded pipe, brake linings, caps, cards, cement boards, cement roofing, cement sewer pipes, cement tile, cements, clothing, coatings, cords, corrugated roofing, corrugated sheets, cable coverings, covered hoses, curtains, discs, fabrics, filtering materials, flooring, gaskets, hats, helmets, insulated cables, insulation, lagging, legging, lining, mats, metallic cloth, mill boards, mittens, overgaiters, packed corrugated metal gaskets, packing, pads & covers, paints, panels, paper paste, pipe & boiler covers, plastic shingles, pot & pan holders, protected metals, rings, roof ventilators, ventilation ducts, rope, sheathing, siding, stove linings, stove mats, suits, table padding, tapes, textiles, thread, tubing & tubes, wallboard, wicking, wire and yards.

Yes, dear friends, the bosses are here to serve your every asbestos need. If none of these products will give you your share of asbestos exposure, the profiteers have made it more convenient. You may have your asbestos for breakfast, lunch, dinner and in your leisure drinking time. The orange juice that you drink and the vitamin tablet that you take with it, may very well have been filtered through asbestos filters. Many vegetable oils, sugar, fruit juices and some

alcoholic beverages, including 60 percent of European wines, use asbestos filters. And if this is not good enough for you, try this, the drinking water in most of the U.S. and Canadian cities are contaminated because of asbestos cement pipes and the asbestos cement-lined reservoirs.

There is no safe level of asbestos in the body; just one exposure can lead to your death! Asbestos is such a potent carcinogen that families of asbestos workers have gotten cancer through exposure to the worker's dirty clothes. Asbestos not only can directly cause cancer, but it can also aid other carcinogens do their dirty work within your body. Where asbestos fibres have attached themselves to your body they collect other substances at that point rather than letting them pass through the body.

Are you beginning to understand why one out of every four Americans will have cancer in their lives? And why 96% of all cancer comes from what we put into our bodies? Unfortunately, the story does not end here. There are over 3,000 products made of or with asbestos. In 1976 (the latest study that I found) over 750,000 short tons of asbestos was poured into the environment in the U.S. alone. Brake linings were 33% to 73% by weight asbestos. That means every time you stop your car you are putting asbestos into the air. One study estimated that in 1970 the emission level from brake linings that year was 72 tons in the U.S. (Since then many restrictions on asbestos use have been put in place, but asbestos continues to pervade our environment.)

In the 1970s asbestos was banned from building construction. But most buildings and homes built before the ban contain asbestos. In one study of 19 buildings they found asbestos levels ranging from 1,000 fibers per cubic meter of air to about 100,000 fibers per cubic meter. The asbestos maybe in the cement structure itself, or in paneling for walls and the ceilings. Fresh air systems often circulate right over the sprayed-on asbestos, picking it up and dispersing it in the air throughout the building. Millions of office workers every working day breath air that is contaminated with asbestos.

A librarian in Lander, Wyoming, became suspicious of a layer of dust covering furniture throughout the school. The dust turned out to include asbestos, which had fallen from deteriorating ceilings which had been sprayed with asbestos insulation. The school was closed down in April 1972. This discovery sparked investigations of schools throughout the U.S. and Canada which found that the vast major of schools had asbestos, and many of them had asbestos contamination from deteriorating building materials.

What do you do with all these asbestos-contaminated buildings? If you tear them down before all the asbestos is removed, that disperses asbestos into the air. On the other hand, if the profiteers were forced to remove all asbestos from buildings alone that would bankrupt the economic system.

Asbestos fibers are very small, and when

The Wobbly

News from IU 330-Construction Workers

Oregon, over the U.S. Labor Day holiday. Discussion centered around the Sedro-Wolley organizing drive and tactics in organizing there. A quarterly agitational newsletter is planned, please send ideas to the Portland IU330 branch.

Scottish Electricians

UK 330s have signed up a number of electricians in Scotland. They have developed a series of leaflets and are distributing them on unorganized work-sites.

On the Road?

Remember the IWW is the One Big Union. Get involved where-ever you are by contacting the local IU 330 delegate listed below or GMB listed on page 2.

On-Line: Portland IU 330 Branch is maintaining a World-Wide Web page at: www.teleport.com/~obu/330.html

IU 330 Delegates & Contacts

IWW Delegates can sign up new members and take dues. If you are already a member consider becoming a delegate by contacting IWW Headquarters.

UK- For contacts ring the IWW on

0116-266-1835

USA

Asheville, NC: John 704-258-4879

Boston: Mark Dupont 508-584-9881

Butte: Dennis Georg 406-494-5837

hotstick14@aol.com

Cape May Courthouse, NJ: Richard Neill,

POB 261, Cape May Courthouse, NJ

Chicago: phone/fax 708-482 7055

IWW330Chgo@aol.com

Detroit: Bernard Labowitch 313-875-6407

Denver: Bob Madsen 303-823-6091

W. Michigan/N. Indiana: Patrick Klocke

(Vicksburg, MI) 616-649-1214

Monterey, CA: Ray Brown, 1231 4th St.

93940

Portland, OR 330 Branch: Steve 503-408-8809

Richmond, VA: Tom Williams 804-285-3699

Seattle/Tacoma: Mark 206-935-9012 or Paul

Harris 425-271-0518

Sedro-Wolley, WA 330 Branch: 360-855-0914

St. Louis: Tom Madden 314-647-2093

Got news for 330s? Want to be a contact? Call the toll-free IU330 Hot-line at 888-790-8809 and leave a message. We'll call you back! Or mail to POB 33674, Portland, Oregon 97292, USA. E-mail to obu@teleport.com

Organizing the key...

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ing, we broke into industrial meetings after nominations were completed. Maritime workers from San Francisco brought copies of their new newsletter to spark discussion. Many Wobs work as casuals on the Oakland docks, and the MTW is undertaking health and safety training to educate casuals on their rights.

Public Service IU 670 workers discussed organizing within the already largely unionized public sector, which has many legal restrictions including making strikes illegal and not being able to bargain over pay. 670ers also discussed the nature of working for private and publicly funded non-profits, where workers are often expected to make wage concessions and other sacrifices for a "common good" which the bosses do not allow them to shape the vision of. Because of the nature of IU 670, it was generally agreed that the democratic principles of the IWW would be embraced by others in the industry, especially non-profit workers and government employees saddled with undemocratic or lazy unions. We will be developing literature to address this issue.

Education workers shared stories of efforts to organize their workplaces and discussed the prospects for issue-based organizing where there was little prospect of winning a job branch or job control in the near future. Education workers at the University of Memphis are launching a local newsletter as part of their efforts to organize the campus' low-paid workers. Other meetings brought together construction, restaurant and entertainment Wobs.

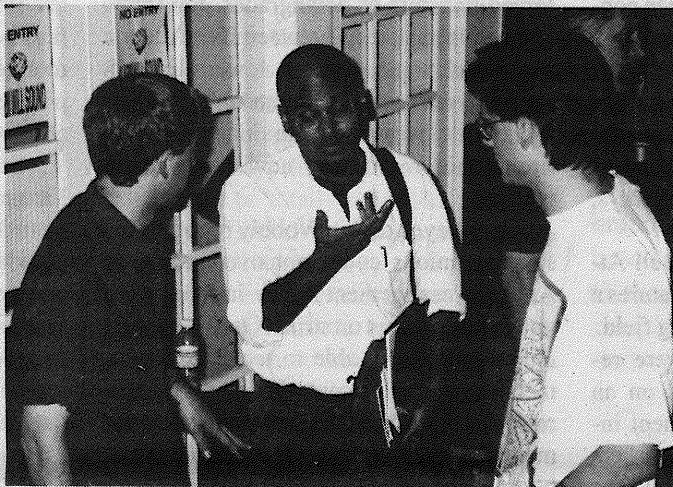
Spreading the word

A proposal by the Literature Committee to develop an indexed archive of material to better support organizing drives was approved, while a workshop on international issues proposed that the IWW return to our earlier system of regional administrations. The Radio Committee reported that the first episode of the "Soapboxing the Airwaves" show has been produced, and that several stations have

agreed to air it. Future programs will be distributed on compact disk.

The Internet Committee reported on the dramatic growth of the union's online resources, which now includes six servers in three countries. While the network makes possible a much wider geographical distribution of IWW information, the burden of maintaining it falls fairly heavily on the shoulders of a few branches and individual members. FW Deke Nihilson noted that the small number of volunteers maintaining the network leaves the system vulnerable, and called for volunteers to take on a variety of support tasks ranging from helping members get on-line to more advanced technical support. Nihilson also noted the need for increased financial support, both to maintain the existing service and to enable the San Francisco Branch to secure more bandwidth to accommodate growing usage.

And the Organizing Strategies workshop discussed the different conditions facing organizers in the U.S. and Canada and the need to provide better training and support, particularly for first-time organizers. Participants agreed that the key to success-



ful organizing was not winning Labor Board certification, but rather establishing a functioning union presence on the job. Even where the union remains a minority presence, real improvements can often be won through workplace struggles and the union can build legitimacy and broader support. A variety of strategies for sharing organizing



Asbestos...

continued from page 6

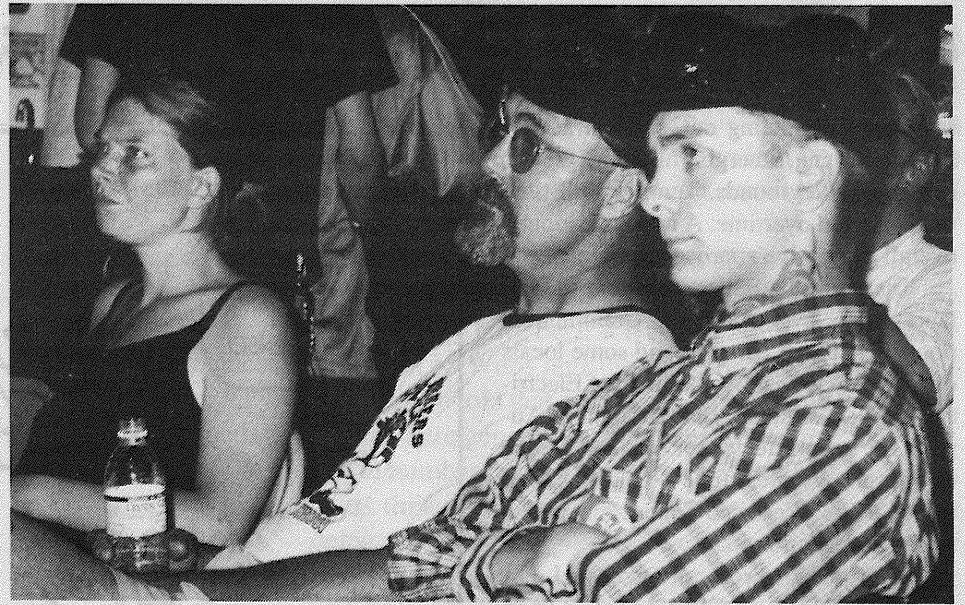
released into the air they are picked up by the wind. Since asbestos does not breakdown, all the asbestos that has been released into the environment is still there. One study found that of 50 U.S. cities tested, all had measurable levels of asbestos in the air, with New York having the highest levels.

In 1900, a London physician first discovered some of the deadly dangers of asbestos. Since that time the profiteers and the governments they control have been trying to cover up the facts. I believe that these evil monsters should be held responsible for

their actions. Their actions have been deliberate, premeditated mass murder for profit. They should be stripped of all their wealth and that used to aid victims and clean up as much of this mess as possible. For the most part I am against the death penalty, but for these monsters I would support their extermination for the safety of all living things. A social/economic system that places profit above the lives of the people cannot be reformed. For the safety of all, it must be completely changed.

Remember, there is no safe level of asbestos, or capitalism!

— Arthur J. Miller



skills were discussed, including regional tours, training sessions incorporated into regional meetings, and videotaped presentations on labor law and organizing tactics. Participants also discussed the need for more reflection on our organizing efforts, perhaps in the form of a regular section in the *General Organization Bulletin*.

Members attended from Austin TX, Boston, Butte MT, Cincinnati, Detroit, Edmonton, Eugene OR, Gainesville FL, Hawaii, Louisville, Memphis, Mendocino, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Monterey, Olympia WA, Philadelphia, Portland, Salt Lake City, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, The Dalles OR, and Victoria. Greetings were received from the British Isles, Baltimore, Greensboro NC, Lancaster PA, New York, Tacoma, and Washington D.C.

IWW members can look forward to a bulging referendum ballot next month, addressing issues ranging from a dues hike to changes in the provisions for membership eligibility to our international structure.

Members will also be asked to endorse the I-99 International Solidarity Conference being organized by fellow workers in the San Francisco Bay Area for June 1-5. The sponsors hope that the conference — open to all who agree that the working class and the employing class have nothing in common, that the working class should take over the economy, and that workers must organize into unions to fight the capitalists — will replace factionalism with mutual aid, and explore the possibilities for coordinated international efforts against our common enemy, the employing class. Many other proposals were left on the table for further debate and discussion.

Nominations

Fred Chase and Alexis Buss accepted nomination for General Secretary-Treasurer. More than three dozen candidates were nominated to serve on next year's General Executive Board, and are currently being contacted to verify eligibility and to determine if they accept nomination. Nominees include: Joshua Freeze (Austin), Morgan Miller (Portland), John Persak (Seattle), Denny Henke (Memphis), Monica Berini (San Francisco), Kevin Brandstatter (Swindon), Mark Damron (Cincinnati), Fred Lee (Leicester), Nathan Smith (Asheville), Liam Flynn (San Francisco), Mike Garcia (Salt Lake City), Mickey Valis (Atlanta), Dennis Georg (Butte), Rick George (Eugene), Heather Harmon (Mendocino), Harry Siitonen (East Bay), Susan Marsh (San Francisco), Chris Wall (Seattle), Bob Rivera (Michigan), Mark Janowitz (San Francisco), Colin Dewey (San Francisco), Penny Pixler (Chicago), Hillary Yothers (East Bay), Jason Justice (East Bay), Malini Cadambi (East Bay), Jen Kortright (East Bay), Steve Kellerman (Boston), Pete Wilcox (Oahu), Robin Walker (East Bay), VT Lee (Florida),

David Christian (Atlanta), Frank Devore (San Francisco), Eric Chester (Boston), Obo Help (San Francisco), Mike Reinsborough (Los Angeles), Bob Helms (Philadelphia), and David Collins (East Bay). Several other nominees declined on the floor.

Nominated to edit the *Industrial Worker* for the next two years were Jon Bekken, a Detroit, Michigan-based collective, and Brian Wiles (San Francisco).

Members will also choose between Memphis, Tenn., and Winnipeg, Manitoba, for the site of the next General Assembly.

On a personal note, it seemed clear to your editor that we will need to rethink how we handle our Assemblies, given our ongoing growth. Requiring that resolutions and proposed constitutional amendments be circulated to all branches well in advance of the Assembly could have made it possible to resolve many wording issues in advance, and perhaps to consolidate proposals addressing similar issues. Similarly, by more strongly encouraging advance registration for the Assembly, it would be possible to mail out agenda packets a couple of weeks in advance, so that delegates would arrive already familiar with the content of the reports and proposals to be considered. These modest changes might lead to more focused discussion, and reduce the inevitable confusion resulting from trying to address proposals which many delegates are seeing only for the first time.

Right to strike?

The National Labor Relations Board has ruled that a no-strike agreement signed by a Teamsters local did not void rank-and-file members' right to strike over grievances (Silver State Disposal Service 326 NLRB No. 25). In the past, the Board and courts had routinely found that workers abandoned their legal right to strike by agreeing to union contracts with no-strike clauses or binding arbitration.

Seventy-one workers walked off the job when a fellow worker was unfairly fired by Silver State. The Board held that the no-strike clause only pertained to conduct involving the union. Since the strike was spontaneous and unauthorized, it was not prohibited by the no-strike clause and thus the strike was protected activity.

When the workers struck, the boss followed them to the parking lot and begged them to return to work. Once they did he proceeded to fire several activists who, he claimed, sparked the job action.

Mumia free to write

A federal appeals court has ruled that prison officials must stop reading the legal mail of class war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal and allow him to write professionally while he is on death row. Officials at the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections violated Abu-Jamal's rights by punishing him for writing a book and articles that were critical of the prison system, and by rifling through correspondence with his attorneys, the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said.

Bell Atlantic workers strike for union jobs

Mergers. Contracting out, subcontracting, and outsourcing. Emerging high-tech growth industry battlegrounds. Temp or full-time work. Forced overtime. A newly fashioned overall aggressive approach to unions.

These are the issues, common to U.S. labor today, over which the Communications Workers of America and some locals of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers struck at Bell Atlantic in August. The strike affected service from Maine to Virginia. (At press time a strike has been settled at U.S. West, and Connecticut phone workers were still out.)

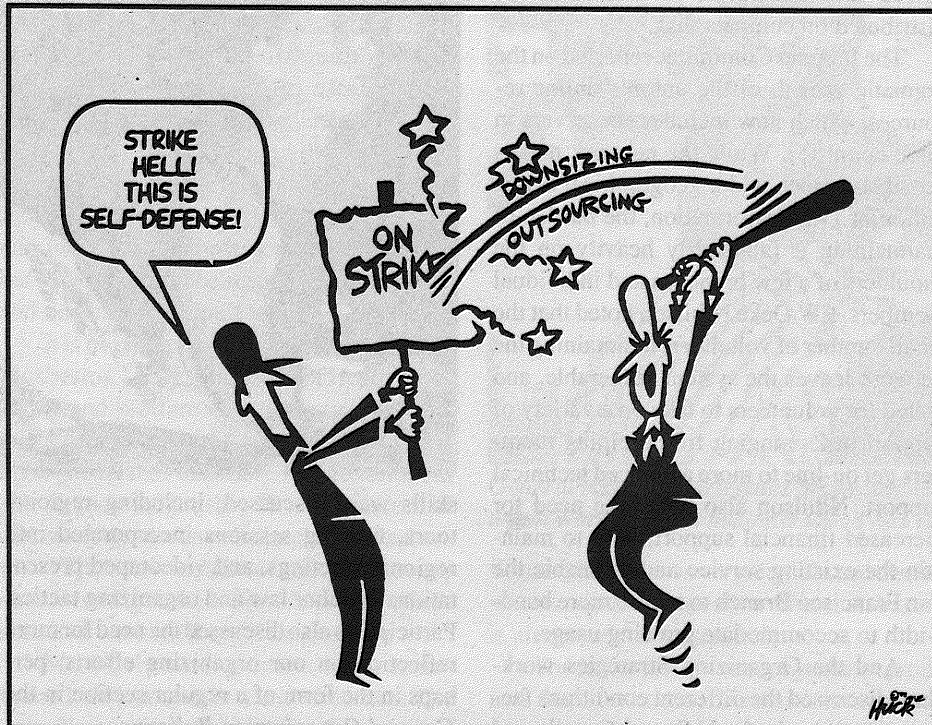
"The pickets were strong," said Jim O'Hare, president of CWA Local 1118 in Albany, NY. "Probably 40% of our membership had never struck before, but we were solid and unified."

Pickets went up in dozens of cities along the Eastern seaboard. The Bell Atlantic strike lasted just two days before management agreed to a new contract, which the rank and file is voting on this month.

The agreement covered all the contentious issues faced by labor throughout the U.S. today. Even though the unions gained substantial ground in this skirmish, the class war continues unabated. Even though the unions won the return of thousands of non-union jobs in the emerging high-tech sector back into the union fold, workers still face the ongoing issue of the use of temporary help instead of full-time workers.

O'Hare pointed out that the agreement converts 3,000 temporary workers to full-time status, and permits the remaining temporary workers union membership.

The most divisive issue was the increasing use of non-union labor in the growth areas of the industry, particularly the emerging high-tech sectors. These include new long-distance services, data handling, the internet, and video and voice services. On this score, the union says it won hands down.



At Bell Atlantic Plus, a marketing and customer service subsidiary in Hampton, Virginia, for instance, all of the work was restored to union members. It had been non-union, much lower-paid, and was siphoning off work from union members.

A similar achievement was gained at Bell Atlantic Network Integration. This subsidiary handles "complex data networks" for large companies, including US Airways, and is growing fast.

For new organizing in future Bell Atlantic subsidiaries, the agreement features a neutrality clause to level the playing field.

Early retirement incentives were restored after the company reneged on an earlier promise, while new retirement incentives were added to encourage workers to stay on the job. Here the union held the company to its previous word, but also allowed the company to offer new incentives to try to retain workers in response to

its increased labor needs.

Job protections were carried over from the previous contract, including no lay-offs, forced transfers or downgrades. Job transfers between states – between Bell Atlantic North and South division – were limited. Forced overtime was not an issue in New York State because of previously existing limits, but regionally new limits were reached.

In the eyes of this Wobbly reporter, the striking unions could not overcome Bell Atlantic management's new intransigence until they went out on strike. Only then were union negotiators able to reach an agreement they could accept. At press time, the rank and file have yet to ratify the agreement. One more time we see that old Wobbly slogan proved once again, that direct action gets the goods, even in a modern industry undergoing serious consolidation and change.

— Nick Patti

The Silver Platter

Restaurant & Hotel Workers IU 640

Fellow Workers,

Welcome to the first installment of The Silver Platter, the voice of Industrial Union 640 of the IWW. We hope to make this section of the *Industrial Worker* one that speaks to the interests and concerns of workers in our industry as well as spreading useful information concerning the industry for other 640 Wobblies.

All information pertaining to the struggle of restaurant and hotel service workers can be sent to davecoker@usa.net or to the IU640 list at iu640@iww.org.

Fast Food Giant Topped by Teens

The fast food giant McDonalds felt the first blows of unionism in Squamish, British Columbia, recently at the hands of the Canadian Auto Workers. An organizing campaign spearheaded by two high school girls began early in August with the two collecting signed membership cards from their fellow workers.

One of the main catalysts for the organizing drive was poor treatment and disrespect on the part of management. In one instance one of the main organizers, a 17 year old, showed up for work suffering from cramps and nausea and was forced to sit in the bathroom for two hours until a replacement was found. In one other case a worker was taken out into the lobby and berated in front of customers.

In an effort to overturn the overwhelming union vote, employers hired 28 new workers in one pay period. Later, company lawyers withdrew the claim that the union did not represent more than 55% of the

workers. In a written statement to the public, Squamish outlet owner Paul Savage called unionization "distracting to the restaurant operation, upsetting for some employees and disruptive for their families and the community."

McDonalds is the largest fast food chain worldwide with 23,726 stores. It employs 70,000 workers in Canada alone with its 1,000 restaurants. Only 23,725 to go!

Canadian Auto Workers Organizing Food Workers

Along with the recently unionized McDonalds, the CAW is the bargaining unit for 11 Starbucks and 40 Kentucky Fried Chickens. CAW also recently renewed an agreement with Canada Pacific's flagship, Hotel Vancouver, after a five-day strike.

More than 450 workers of Local 4275 struck to gain improved health care benefits. Workers gained extended health care, vision care, dental care and prescription. Before the strike workers only had dental. The two year agreement has a 3% wage increase each year for non-gratuity earners and a 1.75% increase for gratuity earners.

Old Dirty Tricks of the "New" Silver Palace

For the last eight months in Chinatown, NYC, workers of 318 Restaurant Workers Union have been on daily picket duty against the New Silver Palace.

The restaurant, formerly known as the Silver Palace, closed shortly last year only

to reopen under its current moniker. This was in an effort to rid the Palace of its union. Workers are being told they have to give up the union and the right to organize in order to be employed. Since its inception in 1980, 318 union workers have been an inspiration to other workers in Chinatown. They have also been blacklisted, fired, and threatened with physical harm. The most desperate measure of the anti-union forces was a 1997 firebombing of the Chinatown office of the Chinese Staff and Workers Association. For more information contact Graham Wong at 212-619-8081.

Dishwasher Zine

Issue #14 of *Dishwasher* is definitely something for 640 Wobblies to check out. In this latest installment our intrepid hero, Dishwasher Pete, tackles New York City.

Enclosed are personal stories of washing dishes, comics, highlights of Woody Guthrie's dishwashing days, Pete's David Letterman fiasco, and book and newspaper excerpts concerning dishwashers. The article that stands out most in this issue though is a history of restaurant and hotel workers unions in New York City. The article begins in the early part of this century with strikes, union infestations by mobsters, and broken dishes, and carries the reader all the way to the present day. Pete ends with the conclusion that unionization for dishwashers and other culinary workers is just as relevant and needed today as it was at the turn of the century. *Dishwasher* can be obtained for \$1 post-paid from *Dishwasher*, P.O.Box 8213, Portland OR 97207-8213.

Q: How much a workers' life? A: \$3,400

The *Detroit Journal* reports that Michigan authorities fined Fitzgerald Finishing Co. just \$3,400 for unsafe working conditions that led to the 1996 death of 24-year-old Michael Aldridge just 20 minutes after starting his first day of work as a temp. The company did not report the death to officials, and the homeless man's body lay in the morgue for months before his mother learned of his death.

In July Ed Prophet III died at Fitzgerald after his head was caught in a spinner machine. A union representative at the plant said maintenance crews removed the protective wire mesh guards from the machine shortly after it was taken into the plant. Prophet was 28 and had six children.

"For the size of the shop, it's got to rank as one of the killer workplaces in Michigan," said Jeff Ditz of the Southeast Michigan Council on Occupational Health and Safety. "What's the term, negligent homicide? Somebody's being negligent in killing workers at a place where there are two deaths in two years."

Fitzgerald Finishing heat-treats metal fasteners and bolts for the Big Three automotive companies. It employs about 80 people. Employees voted in March to affiliate with the UAW.

State investigations in late 1996 showed Fitzgerald had no guards to protect workers from being crushed by the plant's eight parts hoppers, and had numerous other safety problems. At the time Prophet died, Fitzgerald still had not paid any fines related to Aldridge's death. Company lawyers sent the Department of Labor a check for \$3,400 five days after Prophet's death.

Ditz told the *Journal* that the low fine is "not unusual, but it's dead wrong. That's what they value workers' lives at."

Prophet was killed on his first day working the spinner machine alone. The machine had experienced sporadic breakdowns for weeks and broke down again that day. Under pressure to keep production going, and with maintenance workers overloaded, Prophet apparently decided to try to fix the machine himself.

He was found with his head lodged between a metal parts basket and the inside of the machine. His throat was severed, and he bled to death while pinned inside the spinner. The state has not yet determined whether to fine the company for the incident, but says the earlier death will have no bearing on its decision.

Ford kills worker

At Ford Motor Company's Rouge plant in Dearborn, Michigan, supervisors decided to call workers who were on medical leave back to work, sending them to company doctors to determine if they were in fact fit to go back to work.

One such worker, Daniel Steelmont, a 50-year-old welder-fixture repairman with 30 years seniority, protested that he had a serious heart condition and was not able to come to work. He was told that if he didn't come in he would be put down as a five-day-quit – fired from his job and cut-off from his pension and benefits.

FW Steelmont reported to work August 28, was seen by company doctors, and put back to work. Feeling ill, he asked to be sent home, was denied permission, and then died.

It is only just that the supervisors and doctors responsible for the decisions that led to Daniel Steelman's death be terminated with no compensation, as it is incidents such as these that lead to revolting developments. It is the UAW's responsibility to see that justice is attained.

— a fellow worker

Casual Killers

Activists closed the Brighton, UK, docks Sept 1, climbing the 80-foot floodlights to unfurl banners saying "Simon Jones RIP" and "Casualisation Kills." On the ground, the dock gates were blockaded and workers leafleted, until Euromin finally agreed to close the docks down for the day and send workers home on full pay.

Sept. 1 would have been Simon Jones' 25th birthday, had he not been murdered by the bosses' demand for ever-higher profits four months ago. Two days later, activists occupied the offices of Personnel Selection, the temp agency that sent Jones to his death. Outside his friends leafleted passers-by, asking: "Why should agencies such as Personnel Selection take half your wages when you're doing the work?" Eventually Personnel Selection was also forced to shut down for the day.

Dole officials pressured Jones to sign on with Personnel Selection as part of their efforts to force unemployed workers to take any job on offer, no matter how unsafe or poorly paid. The company dispatched him to work at Euromin as a longshoreman, work for which he had no training or experience. He had only been working on the ship for about an hour when his head was crushed by the grab of a crane.

Jones' death is tragic, but was no accident. It was a direct result of the low paid "flexible" market workplace which is now endemic throughout Britain, and increasingly throughout the world.

Casualisation has returned to all British docks since the abolition of the national dock scheme in 1989. No holiday or sick pay, no job security, more injuries and deaths. Within four years the accident rate at British docks had leapt by a third. However, the advantages to the companies involved were enormous - a 41 percent saving in wages caused by 5,000 redundancies and cheaper labour with fewer rights.

Joining the Sept. 1 action was Bob Ritchie, one of the 500 sacked Liverpool dockers, who said their 2-year strike fought "to prevent deaths like this, which are inevitable with an untrained, casual workforce. Before casualisation, this sort of thing would never have happened. If these companies are allowed to get away with employing casual staff to do skilled jobs the death toll will just keep rising."

Immokalee workers continue the fight

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), a "one big democratic independent union" in the south Florida community of Immokalee, is preparing for yet another season of militant labor action to demand recognition of farmworkers' rights from the growers. Last year, they engaged in a general strike, a month-long hunger-strike, and actively busted a virtual slavery operation in Florida's tomato fields.

The coalition is most concerned about the "guest worker" program that threatens to turn farmworkers into practical indentured servants for American agribusiness, and is working to keep the program from coming into existence. CIW spokesman Greg Asbed called for nation-wide solidarity to stop the new laws from being enacted.

Recently, a new community group has arisen in support of the CIW, known as "Religious Leaders Concerned" in the local area. The CIW hopes to work with local, national and international organizations to further the cause of farmworkers rights. In addition, they are currently looking at affiliating with a mainstream labor organization so that they will be able to financially endure long strikes.

Contact: Coalition of Immokalee Workers, P.O. Box 603, Immokalee FL 34143, 941/657-8311 or coaimmwr@aol.com

Against the dictatorship of the Free Market

Nearly 1,800 workers marched through central Stockholm Sept. 6 amidst the frenzy of the ongoing national parliamentary election campaign.

Slogans such as "Against the Dictatorship of the Free Market," "The Stock Market gets Fat upon Unemployment" and "The Election is an Illusion, Our Answer is Direct Action" were well received by onlookers. The demonstration began in the central city and ended in front of the Stockholm Stock Exchange with music and speeches.



Slaves in Europe

Thousands of domestic workers have been reduced to the status of slaves in France and Switzerland, in some cases by delegates to the International Labor Organization, ostensibly established to protect workers rights. Syndicats sans frontières (Unions Without Borders) has been fighting for eight years to get the United Nations to ensure that its diplomats implement UN charters in their own homes, thus far without success.

A 24-year-old Indonesian woman was promised \$150 a month to work in the home of a consular attaché of the Saudi Arabian embassy in France. She found herself working a 17-hour day cooking, doing the laundry, cleaning and caring for two children. All she received was a slice of bread in the morning and evening and a bowl of rice at noon. Confined and regularly beaten, she escaped four weeks after arriving in Paris, via the balcony of her ninth-floor prison.

The Committee Against Modern Slavery has recorded 135 such cases in the last two years. The employers are usually protected by diplomatic immunity, while the victims generally are not able to find legal jobs in the country and so face deportation.

Living in countries where they know nobody and often cannot speak the language, workers find themselves at the mercy of employers who have replaced the chains normally used to confine slaves with the confiscation of identity papers and warnings to their domestic workers that they will be thrown in prison if they leave the house without a passport. When this proves insufficient, bosses resort to death threats - against

Garment workers flooded

Devastating floods in Bangladesh have killed more than 700 people and caused enormous damage throughout the country.

Among the victims are many of the country's 1.5 million garment workers, most of whom lived in low-lying areas around the cities and so lost everything. One hundred thousand workers are out of work because the flooding closed their factories, while many others are encountering difficulty getting to work. The National Garments Workers Federation is demanding that the owners grant an aid allowance equivalent to one month's salary, assist workers with transportation to the factories, suspend overtime and night-shift work, and introduce an 8-hour work day.

The Federation is collecting clothes, medicine, dry food, other necessities and distributing these to NGWF's flood-affected members, and is asking for assistance as their resources are quite limited.

Amirul Haque Amin, General Secretary, NGWF, G.P.O. Box-864, Dhaka, Bangladesh alamint@bangla.net



the workers themselves, or against family members in their home countries.

In Geneva many of the perpetrators are posted to the United Nations. Unions Without Borders is involved in a number of cases, most of which entail non-payment of wages or a level of pay well below local standards. Although these cases are normally won in court, enforcing them is another matter. In not a single instance have employers honored court decisions against them. Instead, UN officials try to force workers into mediation - and "settlements" generally amounting to little more than a ticket back home.

-International Confederation of Free Trade Unions

Wharfies settle

Patrick Stevedores will pay \$7.5 million for harm suffered by small businesses during its dispute with the Maritime Union of Australia, after the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission refused to withdraw legal action against the union.

The MUA has agreed not to violate secondary boycott provisions of the Trade Practices Act for two years, which many rank-and-file wharfies fear will tie the union's hands if and when Patrick and other stevedore companies resume their heavy-handed union-busting.

Under the settlement, 626 out of 1,400 Patrick workers reinstated after they were sacked last April will now receive redundancy payouts. As many as 100 will return as unionized sub-contract workers in security, cleaning and maintenance. The union has also agreed to workrule changes that are expected to save the company millions of dollars a year in overtime pay and reduced staffing. The MUA has also signed a three-year no-strike agreement.

Longer Hours

Economist Barry Bluestone notes that annual U.S. work time increased by 66 hours between the late 1960s and the 1980s, the equivalent of a week and a half of extra work each year. The upward trend in hours continued right through 1995, the most recent year for which data was available.

Riot police attack Korean workers

The South Korean government sent in more than 10,000 riot police to smash a 17-day strike Sept. 3. Police attacked hundreds of workers and their families occupying six factories of the country's largest auto parts maker, Mando Machinery.

Helicopters sprayed workers with tear gas, while armored personnel carriers crashed through their metal and human barricades. Riot police armed with gas canisters, water canons and heavy equipment were shown on national television beating and kicking workers. At least 1,600 workers were detained.

Mando workers had been sitting in the factories since August 17, fighting company plans to terminate 1,090 workers out of a total of 4,500. Riot police also stormed an occupation at Halla Electronics, owned by Mando's parent, the Halla Group.

Mando supplies auto parts to domestic car makers and also international giants such as GM and Ford. It posted a turnover of 1.4 trillion won last year, but went bankrupt in December in the wake of the country's currency and share market crash.

Management took advantage of new labor laws to tear up an agreement with Mando unions for more modest concessions. Mass sackings are now legal, and workers are prohibited from calling strikes to fight against them, under the revised laws passed earlier this year.

The police raids were also calculated to intimidate Hyundai workers, who had voted a day earlier to reject an agreement that their union had struck to end a protracted occupation against mass sackings.

U.S. immigration abuses workers

A network of grassroots organizations in the northwest United States released evidence of 12 human rights abuses by federal immigration officers September 3.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service reportedly sexually harassed, physically beat, kidnapped, and intimidated workers in Washington state within a recent eight-month period.

At least one adolescent student was kidnapped by federal authorities without even notification of the event to the youth's family. Other detentions occurred in housing shelters, health care clinics, and workplaces. The U.S. government estimates that 52,000 workers in the state are "undocumented," which is commonly known as "illegal."

"There is a basic and fundamental dishonesty in our immigration policy. We need to create a program to help these people become legal," said Soya Jung, a Washington state social justice organizer.

Pentagon action

The War Resisters League is organizing a demonstration at the Pentagon October 19th. There will be a rally starting at 11:00, with speakers demanding a drastic cut in the military budget. This will be followed by civil disobedience, blocking access to the Pentagon, along with guerrilla theater. For more information contact the WRL at 212/2280450 or wr1@igc.apc.org

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Getting the goods

Oakland, California, recycling workers ended their 6-day wildcat strike August 27 when California Waste Solutions agreed to negotiate a contract with Local 6 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union. "Under considerable pressure, we have voluntarily recognized the union and we are in negotiations with them right now," said CWS general manager Paul Rottenberg.

The ILWU had been defeated in a representation election in May, and unfair labor practice charges were pending with the National Labor Relations Board charging the company with massive intimidation. But workers tired of waiting for the NLRB top act, and decided to strike for union recognition instead.

The Spanish-speaking workers complain of wages that start at \$6 an hour and of health and safety problems such as defective equipment, leaky roofs, inadequate dust masks and dirty bathrooms.

The strike was bolstered when some drivers joined the sorting workers on strike. Unionized port workers stopped CWS trucks from delivering recycled materials for export, while unionized truck drivers from other companies stopped making deliveries to the plant.

Detroit newspaper workers still out

The National Labor Relations Board has upheld a finding that the Detroit newspaper strike was caused by management's unfair labor practices, and ordered the newspapers to immediately return former strikers to work. Gannett and Knight-Ridder said they would defy the ruling, released Sept. 1.

The companies claim that nearly 700 of the 2,500 workers who walked out in July 1995 against the Free Press, the News and Detroit Newspapers are still locked-out. Unions claim the number is much higher.

Boycott Olive Garden

Darden Restaurants, the owner of Red Lobster, Olive Garden and the new Bahama Breeze restaurant chains, wants to be able to fire workers solely because they are gay.

Darden has gone to court to try and get Cook County's (Illinois) human rights ordinance barring discrimination based on race, sex, religion, sexual orientation and other categories declared unconstitutional.

The action is in response to an order from the Cook County Human Rights Commission that they reinstate a gay worker who was ridiculed and eventually fired because of his sexual orientation.

Limbaugh & the plutocrats

The Great Limbaugh Con by Charles M. Kelly, Fithian Press, \$14.95.

Although Rush Limbaugh's star may no longer shine as brightly as it once did, this book is still valuable because of the content indicated by its subtitle "and other right-wing assaults on common sense."

Kelly is far from a radical. He is, by his own admission, a believer in "democratic capitalism," which he defines as "control (of the government and economy) by an educated and informed public," as opposed to the "plutocratic capitalism" of control by a pseudo-royalty of wealth and privilege as is already the norm in Latin America. His book demonstrates both the glories and the limitations of bourgeois thinking in its best sense.

Putting it simply, Kelly is morally outraged by what Limbaugh and his "ditto-heads" have done to distort the reality of what is happening in this country. He compares Rush to the radio demagogue of the Thirties, Fr. Charles Coughlin, a clerical fascist even bigger in his day than Rush in ours. Both demagogues use the same techniques, "band wagon," "name calling," "glittering generalities," etc. to great effect. Rush has learned his lessons well, and Kelly is deeply worried.

The writer's limitations, however, surface early on when he identifies Rush's followers as "conservatives," a group to which he himself, by his own admission, belongs. Although Kelly perceives quite clearly that what Rush and his hordes yearn for is a plutocracy, he does not see that they

are not conservatives in his sense at all. The "dittoheads" are not trying to preserve or conserve anything. They are outright reactionaries wishing to restore America to the "glories" of the Gilded Age with themselves, of course, as the gilded ones.

While Kelly declares openly that "the Limbaugh Con is, at its heart, a scam against workers," he cannot bring himself to urge those workers to organize in their own defense. The best he can come up with is moral

Book Review

opprobrium for the bosses who are forcing them to the wall. This opprobrium, when unsupported by strong unions and an outraged public, has had little effect, as Kelly's study of history should have shown him. As Wobblies, we have every right to suspect it will not achieve much in the future either.

Perhaps due to his academic background, Kelly is confused about the nature of work, which he identifies solely with manual labor. While he is right in saying that much of what goes under the heading of work is simply drudgery, he does not understand that anyone, whether plumber or professor, who does not control the means of production is a member of the proletariat and is harmed when it is harmed. The harm may not be immediate, but it is coming. In the meantime, arbitrary divisions among workers are not helpful. "An injury to one is an injury to all."

To his credit, Kelly does succeed in

Sued for solidarity...

continued from page 1



action as picket captain. Irminger's only role as picket captain was to act as liaison with the arbitrator and police, and that he had no authority over the other pickets. He has already been subjected to hours of questioning by PMA attorneys who, Irminger says, seem incapable of realizing that informal structures exist and that he and others acted on their own initiative. "The corporate world does not have a clue about solidarity," he said. "They think there has to be someone at the top giving orders."

The lawsuit seeks unspecified damages, perhaps running into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. The Pacific Maritime Association has been turning to the courts with increasing frequency in the past two years. Part of the shippers' strategy is to engage the ILWU in as many lawsuits as possible, forcing the union to divert funds and energy to the courts. Dockers closed San Francisco area ports for half a day July 22 and rallied at the courthouse during an attempt by the PMA to subpoena documents about the picket from the ILWU. Judge Needham ruled in the union's favor three weeks later.

The bosses had threatened to sue FW Irminger and other pickets during the ac-

tion, but he didn't believe them. "They don't sue you for picketing, for god's sake," Irminger said. "But they do sue you, particularly when you're effective." Dockworkers wield enormous industrial power, he noted, and "the shipping bosses' worst nightmare is the port workers working together, coordinating their efforts."

The defense campaign has drawn wide support, "highlighting the fact that you bring out the best in people when you have a militant struggle," Irminger said. (Contributions for the legal costs can be sent to the Liverpool Dockers Defense Committee, PO Box 2574, Oakland CA 94614.)

Irminger placed the lawsuit in the broader context of a global assault against dockworkers' unions over the past 15 years. Shipping bosses are privatizing ports and smashing unions around the world. Dockers are facing massive automation, speed-up and sub-contracting of support functions in an effort to break their industrial power.

The Liverpool dispute which prompted the picketing of the Neptune Jade ended with the loss of the last organized port in England. West Coast Mexican ports were privatized a few years ago, and the military occupied them when workers struck. A similar scenario developed last year in Santos, Brazil, the largest port in South America.

This year's Australian strike was another battle in this war. And dockers have come to recognize that they can rely only upon their fellow workers for support in this global class war. And workers are learning their lesson. When workers picketed the Los Angeles docks last summer to block unloading of scab cargo they had no picket captain to be sued. And ultimately the scab-loaded cargo had to be returned to Australia.

Union sailors sacked

P&O Nedlloyd has moved to replace 330 union sailors with 3rd world, low-paid, slave labor sailors. Replacing well-paid, national-flag seamen with slave-labor crews is now standard practice with shipowners. The Sailors Union of the Pacific is calling for union ports around the world to turn back scab-crewed ships.

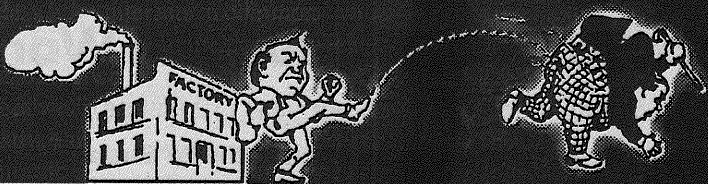
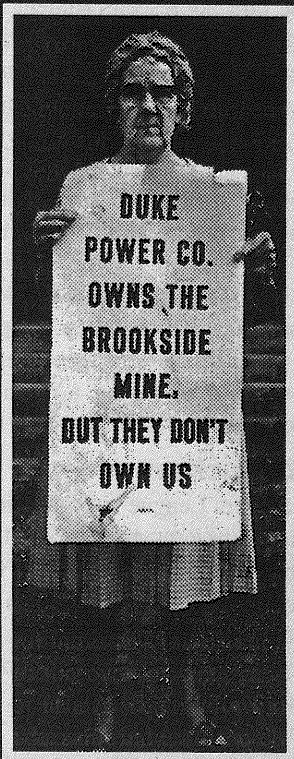
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explaining clearly what leveraged buy outs are, and how they work to the detriment of workers and the community as a whole. He also points out the deleterious effect of huge amounts of money in the hands of those who have done virtually nothing to provide tangible goods to society, as these sums enable them to appropriate those goods and bid up the price of many items, e.g. homes, beyond the range of the embattled middle class.

Kelly also grasps the concept of class warfare and the plutocrats as a well organized class, exploiting the divisions and confusions among workers. Helping in this exploitation, as he points out, is an efficient public relations apparatus that sees to it that "workers requests for more pay are considered inflationary," while "wanton greed among nonworkers is not only condoned (but) respected."

The author goes not to make an effective contrast between a political philosophy of stewardship holding that "every citizen has a moral obligation to help maintain both the physical environment and the human community" and one of "financial survivalism," which boils down to getting whatever you can, any way you can, since it is what "nature" intended. While survivalists judge any measure by how much it will do for them, stewards think in terms of Utility, i.e. the greatest good for the greatest number, when passing judgment. Once again, however, the exposition is not followed by any plan of action.

Perhaps the most interesting section of the book is Kelly's analysis of Spartanburg, South Carolina, the "poster child" of Milton Friedman and other free marketeers. As Kelly astutely observes, the economic health of Spartanburg is unquestionably improving. But social conditions, measured by crime rates, homelessness, divorces, admissions to mental hospitals, are clearly deteriorating. In short, "The affluent citizen is doing great materially, while workers, especially at the lowest levels, are losing out, and society is falling apart."

It is "society ... falling apart" that most concerns Kelly, and rightly so. His fears are genuine, and his analysis is correct. It is unfortunate that his own intellectual blinders keep him from seeing the only realistic solution to the problems he so aptly describes: concerted, direct action by a working class unwilling to be reduced from the middle class to poverty and from poverty to misery.

— John Gorman

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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

Available from IWW Branches

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

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 (36th Edition) £4 post-paid; a selection of IWW literature is available from 75 **Humberstone Gate, Leicester LE1 1WB.** **Bread & Roses #3** £1 from IWW, PO Box 12665, Edinburgh EH3 9YA

The IWW Constitution: Union Democracy

This is the fourth and last in a series of articles (based upon a 1990 series by Jon Bekken) offering an overview of the IWW Constitution. While the Preamble offers a concise statement of Wobbly philosophy, the Constitution spells out the structure and workings of the organization.

As we have seen, the IWW proposes to organize all workers, throughout the world, into a single organization built along industrial lines. But such an organization would be of little use to its members were it to be run by professional bureaucrats, gangsters or politicians. Thus the IWW Constitution includes a number of safeguards designed to protect the rights of all IWW members and ensure that the members continue to run the organization.

Union Democracy

We see every day how undemocratic union structures enable union bosses to enrich themselves at the membership's expense, to impose lousy contracts and working conditions, and to terrorize anyone who stands in the way of their autocratic reign. Business unionists justify such practices by claiming they are necessary to the efficient conduct of the organization. Union leaders, they explain, are invaluable experts who deserve compensation for their special skills, and who need the latitude to pursue policies that will promote the best long-term interests of the members, whatever short-term sacrifice must be made.

The IWW membership has no patience for such pretensions, knowing full well that it is the membership upon which the organization depends for its strength. The Industrial Workers of the World exists in order to fight for democracy in our everyday life on the job. This cannot be accomplished by subjecting ourselves to dictatorship in our union.

The IWW Constitution is designed to protect against any clique running this union to suit themselves:

- No officer can be elected for longer than one year, or for more than three successive terms (unless qualified candidates cannot otherwise be found). This protects against entrenched leadership, and guarantees that all officers must regularly return to the job floor to earn their living. It also guarantees an informed rank and file, as many members will have served as officers at every level of the union. Although it is not written in the Constitution, long-standing union policy

Getting the goods

The current *Black Flag* includes an interview with delegate Ray Carr about the IWW job branch organised earlier this year at the Co-op Retail Services in New Milton, UK.

"The whole issue took off when management proposed to open the store till 10 pm. Myself and one USDAW member opposed it, and after speaking to the other workers there there was 100% opposition.

"We organised by putting in a collective grievance and holding a meeting. At the meeting it was agreed that nobody would sign new contracts, which we expected they might try to impose on us, and that if any pressure was put on an individual, the others would support them. ... I explained about the IWW, the major factors in people joining were the low dues, the fact that there are no paid officials, and the internal democracy. Five people joined, making a branch of six including myself.

"What was management's response?"

"[We told] the Human Resource Manager ... that the grievance could only be called off by the whole workforce, as it was the meeting of all the workers there who had decided on it. The issue has not been mentioned since."

(and the state of our finances) ensures that officers are paid no more than the average pay of the workers they represent. Most officers serve with no compensation whatsoever.

- IWW officers are required to make monthly reports on their activities to the membership, including financial reports. Rank-and-file committees audit the financial records on a regular basis.

- All officers – from Branch Secretary to General Secretary-Treasurer – are elected by secret ballot on which all members they represent may vote. Any officer can be recalled by majority vote, and any 15 paid-up members can initiate a recall ballot. In addition, members are guaranteed the right to bring charges against union officers, and to appeal any decision all the way to referendum vote of the membership.

- No powers are given officers except those needed to carry out the membership's instructions. Strikes can not be called, or called off, by officers – this can be done only by the members concerned. Settlements can be negotiated only by committees of the workers involved. No IWW officer can meet with employers except in the presence of the committee, thus preventing backroom deals.

Each branch and Industrial Union has the right to choose its own delegates and officers, and to veto any organizer appointed by the General Executive Board for their jurisdiction. While the Board can visit branches and audit their accounts, it does not have the authority to impose trustees or otherwise impose its will, so long as the branch in question is conducting itself in accordance with the provisions of the IWW Constitution.

To the contrary, the membership can impose its will on the General Executive Board. The IWW Constitution provides that membership referenda and the annual General Assembly (open to any paid-up member) are the IWW's highest decision-making bodies. IWW officers are elected to implement these decisions, they cannot overturn them. Indeed, although IWW national officers and paid employees can speak during Assemblies, they are not allowed to vote.

- Any 15 paid-up members (also the General Executive Board or the Assembly) can initiate a referendum on any issue. The Constitution requires that these questions are presented to the membership for voting in a timely fashion, after proper notice so that members can discuss the issues and circulate their views throughout the union. Ballots are counted by rank-and-file members, elected by the branch(es) operating in the city where headquarters is located.

- The union's mechanism for handling union funds also protects democracy by keeping the power of the purse in the hands of the membership. The IWW rejects the "check-off" system of dues collection, where employers take union dues out of the workers' wages (just like any other tax) and hand them over to union officials. Such a system tends to discourage direct, regular contacts between union members and their elected delegates, reinforces the notion that dues are just another tax, and involves management in internal union affairs.

When union treasurers get their check from the company they rely more upon its goodwill than upon the support of the membership. After all, if management refused to issue the check, the officers would be out of a job. Without dues check-off the way dues are paid is a direct barometer of the members' satisfaction and involvement in the union (or lack thereof). Officers who don't do their job will face lagging dues payments and delinquent members.

Instead of the check-off, the IWW requires that union dues be paid directly to the delegate on the job, or the local delegate



John Hampton, Meeting House Custodian for the Friends Center in Philadelphia, stands victoriously with his new and improved paycheck. The IWW won recognition at the Friends Center in December 1997 and has been negotiating a contract since then. The negotiating team made pay inequity a major issue, as two workers doing the same job were being paid disparate hourly rates. The end result was a raise of more than \$2.50 per hour for John, when workers decided to make "an injury to one" a concern of all.
photo: Alexis Buss

where the job is unorganized. Dues stamps are issued in exchange for all funds received. All delegates are required to report to the branch on a monthly basis and can have their accounts audited at any time.

- No mandatory assessments or dues increases can be levied except when approved by a referendum of those who have to pay them.

- Union dues and initiation are kept as low as possible. Union funds can be spent only on legitimate union expenses – they cannot be spent in behalf of politicians, for sick or death benefits, etc. The IWW has always believed that its treasury should be kept in the members' pockets. In this way we guarantee that the members can decide (though voluntary contributions) which causes they will support – and we protect against the court injunctions and fines which so often force unions to capitulate in order to save their benefit funds.

Such funds, necessary though they may be, are best kept entirely separate from union control. Instead the IWW has always insisted that workers be paid their full wages in cash, leaving them free to join mutual aid societies or to make other arrangements that are not tied to any single employer or union. This protects against injunctions and court seizures of funds, and against the common practice whereby workers lose their pension plans and other benefits when employers go bankrupt or terminate workers just before they become eligible for pensions.

- IWW members are guaranteed the right to bring charges against local or international officers, or against individual members, and to have these heard by a committee of rank-and-file members. The Constitution scrupulously guarantees the rights of charges parties to notice of the charges against them, a neutral hearing panel, and to appeal. Both charged and charging parties are guaranteed the right to appeal the outcome of any charges proceeding to the general membership.

- The IWW Constitution outlaws the sort of "amalgamated locals" which group

together workers from disparate industries and localities – sometimes covering two or more entire states. It is not uncommon in other unions for workers to have to spend two or more hours travel time if they wish to attend their union "local" meetings. The IWW Constitution provides that Branch charters can be issued only when it is "feasible for their members to meet together." This prevents a small clique from avoiding membership control by creating sprawling locals so vast that few members can realistically attend meetings.

- The IWW Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex, nationality, creed, color or sexual preference. Only paid officers of trade or craft unions, politicians, managers and bosses, and those "whose employment is incompatible with the aims of this union" (such as sheriffs and union-busting consultants) can be barred from membership. Otherwise, any worker who agrees to abide by the IWW Constitution is eligible for membership.

A worker-run union

The IWW is organized on the principle that working people must control, and are capable of controlling, their own organization – and ultimately all of industry. Our procedures for realizing this goal were developed over more than 90 years of activity in diverse industries and under often difficult circumstances.

Because of our insistence on union democracy and membership control, the IWW has more than once survived the arrest and imprisonment of its entire "leadership." It is easy to incapacitate an organization that is run by one person or by a self-perpetuating Executive Board – all one need do is buy off or lock up those in charge. But an organization composed of members accustomed to making their own decisions and running their own affairs is much harder to control or to crush. Such a membership guarantees democracy, by refusing to tolerate any infringement of its rights.

Be a Wobbly – Join the IWW..

Real Democracy! All policy decisions are made by referendum. The IWW has just one (modestly) paid officer, the General Secretary-Treasurer. The 7-member General Executive Board is elected annually by the entire membership. All officers may be recalled by referendum. IWW workplaces and branches make their own decisions about bargaining and strategy.

To Join mail this form with a check or money order for initiation and first month's dues to IWW, 103 West Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti MI 48197, or contact your local delegate. **Dues:** Monthly income under \$1,000: \$5 per month; Income \$1,000-2,000: \$10 monthly; Over \$2,000: Dues \$15. Initiation Fee is same as one month's dues. A low-income worker can join for as little as \$10.00

I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer.
 I agree to abide by the IWW constitution and regulations.
 I will study its principles and make myself acquainted with its purposes.
 Name: _____ Occupation: _____
 Address: _____ City: _____
 State/Prov.: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Membership includes a subscription to the Industrial Worker