

Industrial Worker

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EDUCATION ORGANIZATION EMANCIPATION

Mersey Dockers Defeated in War of Attrition

I was sitting in my car in a traffic jam when I heard the news that after 26 months of hard and often unrelenting struggle the dockers had finally been forced to throw in the towel. For a long time I was dumbstruck. What on earth had happened – only two weeks before the Liverpool dockers had announced to the union movement that they were going to hold mass pickets at the dock gates every Friday morning in order to try to close the docks.

But then the details emerged, the dockers leaders had come to the conclusion that they simply could not win. Their own union had threatened to withdraw hardship payments to penniless dockers' families and there was every likelihood that the pension benefits that many of those in their 50s would be wiped out so that they would be forced to live in penury in their old age.

How the strike started

For those who have been on Mars for the past 26 months, in September 1994 a dispute arose at a small company called Torside in Liverpool. It was a small stevedoring company ironically set up by two former dockers who had received large redundancy payments. Most of the company's employees were youngsters, sons of existing Liverpool dockers by-and-large proud of being able to uphold the family traditions. The company sought to impose new conditions on the workers and coming from good union households they decided to resist.

They resisted by mounting a picket line and asking MDHC dockers not to cross. The dockers did not cross and were sacked.

For 26 months they stood up to the assaults of their employer, the Merseyside Docks & Harbour Company, partly owned by first an uncaring anti-union Conservative Government then by an uncaring anti-union Labour Government. The dockers stood up to a conniving union leadership which did everything possible *not* to support their members, from *instructing* union members to cross the dockers' picket lines to steadfastly refusing to ask for support from dockers elsewhere in the world.

Midway through the dispute we had the absurd spectacle of a world-wide campaign to secure union rights for seafarers and dockers led by the International Transport Federation, which did absolutely nothing in

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Applebee's restaurant workers organizing

Fed up with low wages, unreasonable management and poor working conditions, a majority of workers at Applebee's Neighborhood Bar and Grill in Metairie, Louisiana, filed a petition for a union election in January. Seventy workers at the franchise location just outside New Orleans are eligible to vote in the March 9th and 10th election. While Applebee's management is pulling out every dirty trick in the book to crush the union, the workers are fighting hard for a union victory.

Applebee's workers need a union

Workers at Applebee's get low pay and no say over their working conditions. Waitstaff gets paid the bare minimum of \$2.13 an hour plus tips. That means if it's a slow night, or the customers aren't tipping well, servers can work a whole shift and not even get minimum wage, especially if they're scheduled to work off the floor where they can't pull tips. Recently, management cut hostess' salaries from a regular minimum wage down to \$2.13 an hour – expecting the servers to make up the difference with an additional percentage of their tips beyond what they already pay to the bartenders. Needless to say, this didn't make the hostesses or the servers happy.

Workers in the kitchen get paid minimum wage, or close to it. They're supposed to get regular raises and bonuses, but most of the time management doesn't deliver.

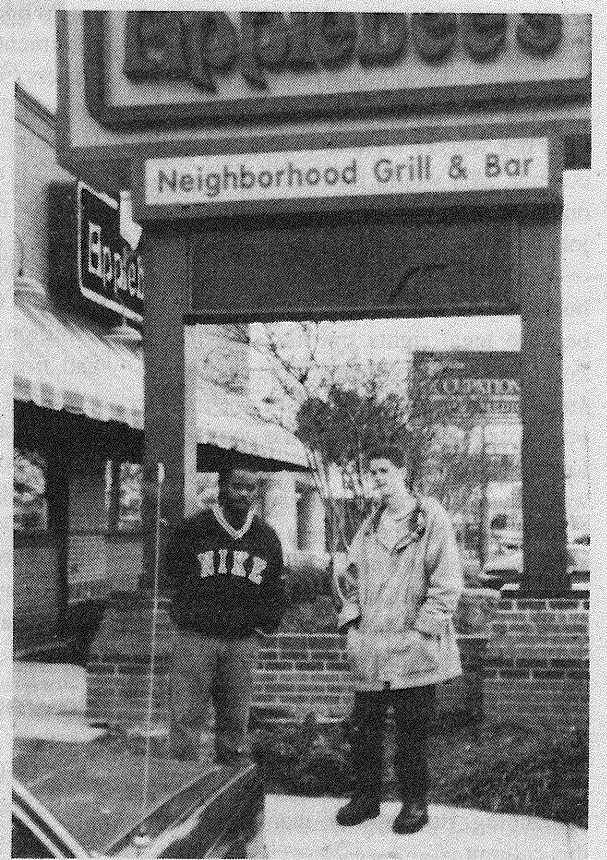
Workers at other Applebee's locations have reported significantly higher wages. "We're one of the most profitable Applebee's locations around, but we're making the least money," said employee Jeff Brite, one of the Wobblies who spearheaded the union effort.

Very few Applebee's employees have any health benefits. "We're expected to have a doctor's excuse even if we're sick only one day," said Brite. "But most of us don't have doctors, thanks to the company's lack of benefits." Workers report that the company frequently fails to comply with its own employee handbook when it comes to sick pay or vacation pay, and drags its heels

when it comes to paying workers' compensation for accidents on the job.

Other reasons for the union drive include the lack of job security and vindictive management practices. Workers get fired unexpectedly and for unclear reasons, while management plays favorites with some and makes life difficult for others.

On January 4, an Applebee's employee was killed in the store in the course of an attempted robbery after hours. Workers say that Applebee's lack of adequate security was a factor in his death, and that the company failed to respond to the tragedy properly. Now, the company is using the need for better security as an excuse to create new rules that allow them tighter control over



Applebee's workers are talking union in Metairie

their employees without actually making it safer for them.

Union supporters are asking for Applebee's to commemorate victim Tyrone Washington's death by closing the store every January 4 in his memory, a simple request which the company has so far failed to take seriously. A recent meeting of the core organizing committee began with a moment of silence in honor of Washington.

Applebee's illegal threats

When faced with a union drive, some companies will try to sweet-talk their workers and promise to improve. Not Applebee's. As soon as the petition was filed with the NLRB, managers started to make illegal

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Tomato pickers demand a future

Although farm workers in Immokalee, Florida, called off a 30-day hunger strike January 18, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers continues to demand union recognition from the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association. The hunger strike was called off after some strikers were hospitalized, in hopes that the growers would accept an offer by former president Jimmy Carter to mediate the dispute. However, the Association claims it can not interfere with member growers' right to bargain in their own behalf. The farmers, meanwhile, say they are standing with the bosses' association.

Tomato pickers were paid 45 - 60 cents for a 32 pound bucket in 1977; today the rate has fallen to 35 - 40 cents. That was a poverty wage 20 years ago, and today it is nearly impossible for workers to survive. Most Immokalee residents are farm workers, and so the entire town has been hard hit.

A thousand tomato pickers joined a general strike in the depressed agricultural town in December, prompting one grower to raise wages slightly, and workers say they will strike again if their demands are not met. CIW spokesman Greg Asbed says the Coalition was inspired in part by the IWW and by liberation theology. Jason Adams interviewed Asbed while the hunger strike was still underway:

"Like most communities of poor workers, the farm workers here have seen their wages drop slowly but surely over the past 20 years and lose an incredible amount of value. Farm workers here average about

\$9,000 a year without any kind of benefits – no overtime pay, no health insurance, sick pay, vacation pay, pension or anything.

"About two years ago one of the biggest companies here, Pacific Land Co., tried to drop wages even further. That was when the Coalition first appeared in the news because we organized a general strike here in town to block that cut. We occupied the central spot where the crew leaders come to get workers in the morning and for five days we led a general strike here that reversed that decision by the company and at least maintained wages where they had been...

"Now we're not just blocking cuts, we're working to reverse 20 years of falling wages. This season began with a signature card campaign. About 2,000 workers signed signature cards calling for a raise in the piece rate for tomato pickers. We wrote letters to the tomato companies and they refused to

talk to us, so we did a series of strikes out here in the community. That brought one company in, and through dialogue we reached an agreement for a raise, but the other companies have refused to listen. The six workers who started the hunger strike decided that it was time to take it to another level, to really express just how desperate this community really is for a better life."

How did it get to the point where workers were willing to hunger strike? Are they saying that they are actually willing to die?

Asbed: "That's a question for the growers to answer. The growers have to decide how important it is to them as a principle to not change when workers ask for a raise. That's what the growers are standing on right now. They feel that farm workers should not have anything above the shoulders, just hands and arms and legs, so they can go out

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Jobless Fight Back

Our Right to Organize

Wharfies Draw the Line

A World At War?



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Abolish Unemployment

Solidaarisuus, a Finnish syndicalist group slowly proceeding in its IWW membership application process, made a symbolic occupation of the Finnish ministry of labor Jan. 26.

A small demonstration on the theme "Stop bullying unemployed" ended with an audience at the ministry of labor to present petitions and listen to empty promises from empty-minded bureaucrats. Ten people were allowed to come in, and after the audience three of us decided to stay in the ministry to ensure that the bureaucrats will start to realize their beautiful words.

We had planned a real French-style squatting, but because there were only three of us we only dropped a red and black "Abolish Unemployment, Abolish Wage Slavery" (in Finnish) from third floor and waited until the police came and carried us out. They didn't even beat us this time.

We plan to start monthly Bureau of Labor squats in several cities. There was a tv news clip here about French tactics; in Lille unemployed people started every day with drumming in front of the Unemployment Benefit Bureau, they continued throwing paint bombs at the windows of the Socialist Party office and then marched to the center of the city where riot control ended the demo. It would be a shame if we couldn't do anything; the unemployment rate is 50% higher here than in France!

Antti Rautiainen
Solidaarisuus

Legalize Unionism in Washington

Olympia Wobblies are organizing a May 1 rally at the Washington state Supreme Court steps to demand repeal of the state's criminal syndicalism laws. (Syndicalism, of course, is French for unionism.)

The so-called "Anarchy and Sabotage" statutes were passed in 1919 at the behest of the timber trust and other employer groups trying to crush the IWW. Revised Code of Washington Section 9.05 has been held by the state's courts to bar membership in the IWW (State v. Hennessey, 1921, and many subsequent cases), to prohibit union activity, and to disbar an attorney for speaking at IWW meetings and defending union members against persecution (In Re Smith, 1925).

The language of the law is extremely vague. Among other things, it prohibits any "intent to supplant, nullify or impair the owner's management or control of any enterprise," any attempt or threat to occupy or take control of any enterprise, the display of any "flag, banner, standard, insignia, badge, emblem, sign or other device of ... any

Around Our Union

group of persons who ... espouse ... any theory, principle or form of government antagonistic to, or subversive of, the Constitution, its mandates, or laws..." and prohibits landlords and their agents from permitting proscribed organizations (such as the IWW) to meet in their premises.

Hundreds of IWW members were jailed and deported under Washington's criminal syndicalism statutes, often accompanied by mob violence such as in the infamous Centralia Massacre.

Criminal syndicalism statutes are now generally considered unconstitutional, based on court rulings beginning in 1927 (Fiske v. Kansas), where the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that an admitted IWW member could not be imprisoned simply on the basis of his membership in the union but must be shown to have committed some criminal act, through the late 1960s, when California's criminal syndicalism law was ruled unconstitutional.

However, in June 1997 a Cowlitz County, Washington, jury convicted six Rainforest Action Network protesters on felony charges under the "anarchy and sabotage" statutes for their part in an Oct. 29, 1996, demonstration in which they hung a banner from the side of a Mitsubishi vessel reading "Protect our Forest. Stop raw log exports. Boycott Mitsubishi." The ship - stacked high with raw timber, representing hundreds of workers' jobs - was not damaged in the protest. That conviction is currently under appeal.

Although it is evidently unlawful under the language of the statute to do so, a coalition including the IWW's General Defense Committee, the Rainforest Action Network, the Chiapas Solidarity Network and several other organizations is circulating literature "antagonistic to" this law and demanding its repeal. Washington State Senator Adam Kline has agreed to sponsor a bill to repeal the statute. The coalition is also circulating a rather obnoxiously worded petition which notes that the statute "effectively outlaws membership in the Industrial Workers of the World" and suggests that "adequate regulation of the IWW's activity exists within the National Labor Relations Act..."

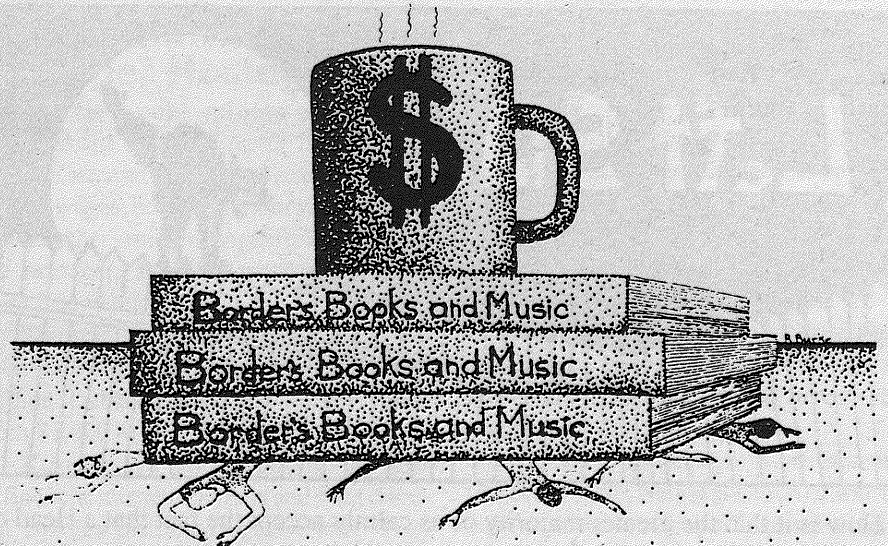
PREAMBLE TO THE IWW CONSTITUTION

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.



UFCW abandons Borders drive

The United Food & Commercial Workers Union has abandoned its high-profile publicity campaign to pressure Borders Books into dropping its union-busting. The UFCW bought magazine ads and organized demonstrations beginning Oct. 1, but quickly learned that Borders' union-busting management was completely uninterested in agreeing to the neutrality agreement the UFCW was hoping for.

The UFCW lost union representation elections in Harrisburg, Penn., and Evanston, Illinois, Dec. 19th, and has reportedly pulled its organizers from Borders stores across the country. Borders has signed a second contract with the UFCW, covering workers at its Des Moines, Iowa, store. Like the contract signed earlier in Chicago, it contains no pay increase beyond Borders' pre-existing national scale and generally mirrors Borders' personnel manual. Borders has effectively used these contracts to persuade workers that they have nothing to gain by unionizing.

The IWW's boycott - called when the bookselling chain fired IWW organizer Miriam Fried as part of its national efforts to intimidate workers - against Borders Books continues. Although Borders seems to have succeeded in silencing or getting rid of most union supporters right now, the miserable pay and working conditions will inevitably lead workers to organize. And when they do

they'll be looking for a union ready to fight the bosses - not grovel, begging them for "neutrality."

Meanwhile, in Chicago African-American merchants in the South Chicago neighborhood of Beverly are taking up arms against Borders' plans to invade their community. 95th Street has evolved into a black shopping district as corporate operators fled to the suburbs and several black-owned stores replaced them. Borders has already served eviction notices on a dozen merchants who stood in the way of their plans to build yet another "superstore" where they stand. City officials have joined the dispute, offering tax money to Borders and other operators willing to help drive the black merchants out.

Barnes & Noble Unfair

The NLRB has charged Borders' main competitor, Barnes & Noble, with a pattern of union-busting activity against workers at its Louisville, Kentucky, store.

According to the complains, Barnes & Noble has been spying upon and interrogating workers suspected of supporting the union, forbidding them from talking to one another in off-duty time in the parking lot, offered a variety of pay hikes and other inducements to workers if they abandon their union efforts, and constructively discharged a union supporter.

Bunge: "Ingredients To Oppress"

Likewise as the phrase "Are You Furious?" was coined by the IWW as a rebutted attempt to run parallel to the Borders Books & Music slogan "Are You Curious?", so, we shall do the same with the Bunge Foods slogan "Ingredients for Success" - Bakery, Food Service, Dairy, Food Processor - and change it to "Ingredients to Oppress"; these being Racism, Anti-Union, Discrimination, Corrupt Management.

Bunge Foods likes to describe itself as "The innovative leader in the manufacturing and marketing of products to the food service industry." Instead this should be changed to "The innovative leader in the manufacturing and marketing of attacks on Black workers," even though this 'innovation' isn't all that new: supporting racist white workers in their attacks, and firing Black workers for standing up for their rights.

For those of you who have on-line service, the FoodShow home page (<http://www.foodshow.com/>) will link you to a "More about Bunge Foods" sub-section, where they refer to Bunge as having "been a major force in international agribusiness for almost 200 years." Bakery-Net (<http://www.bakery-net.com/rdocs/cobun.html>) puts this figure at only 75 years. You can also connect to Bunge's home page (<http://www.bungefoods.com>), although it's pretty bland, with only one link working.

It seems that Bunge has developed enough of a following over the course of

however many years, to not only produce "prepared foods," such as oils, icings, fillings, et cetera, but also to have a product line consisting of hats, shirts and books on the preparation of certain products.

Easily enough, you can contact your local Bunge representative by calling 1-800-828-0800; I suggest asking whether or not Bunge has a distributor in your area, and then finding out who carries Bunge-related products, so as we can leaflet or petition these places to stop carrying Bunge products until they replace their racist management with a better management: industrial unionism!

Bunge seems to have a majority of their processing plants located in the Midwest, with plants in Chattanooga, Tennessee, headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri, a "Bunge Foods Group" in Illinois, and so-on, although they do deal internationally.

Support your brothers and sisters and boycott Bunge Foods!

— Nick Normal X345050

'98 GA Assessment Stamp

The Portland Branch has issued a special voluntary assessment stamp to defray costs of hosting the 1998 General Assembly, to be held in Portland OR. It's a sliding scale - \$5, \$10, \$25. Nice looking stamp, hand crafted in four colors. A truly handsome addition to any red card. Don't be without one! Contact your delegate today! Thanks for the help.



How is it that the greater majority of us calmly accept the fact that a Head of State holds our very destinies in his hands or at the twinkle of his eye send us off to die fighting the dupes of some other Head of State, yet when this Head of State becomes embroiled in some bedroom peccadilloes too many of us become indignant, or at least our prurient curiosity is aroused. Accepting a head of state's stranglehold on our destiny is evidence of centuries of conditioning that we have yet to liberate ourselves from.

Likewise the greater majority of our species, throughout history, have accepted the bedroom peccadilloes of our heads of state, with the exception of those of us in Freedomland, but such is typical of a puritanical society that was brought over by the Pilgrim Fourflushers, whom Merrie Olde England obviously did not shed any tears over their departure. Too bad the Indians didn't leave them starve that winter! Squanto was indeed a fink.

Too many of us get indignant over the wrong things.

The Ku Klux Klan continually manages to get itself from newsprint. This past December the Klan launched a recruiting drive in Beloit, Wisconsin, where a dozen of them held a rally on the local courthouse steps, preaching the importance of supporting white-owned businesses. The little group was overwhelmingly outnumbered by some 400 people from around the state who were vociferously disagreeing with them.

One young woman kissed a black man in front of them to show her disagreement with the Klan, and was called a "race-mixing whore" by the defenders of racial integrity. One bright ray in all this nonsense is that when the Klan, Nazis or some other lunatic right-wing group holds a public rally they only succeed in attracting far more oppositionists than recruits to their cause.

What is a bit disconcerting is that besides the dozen Klansmen and the four hundred protesters, there were some two hundred police – which must have been the entire police force of Beloit – there in riot gear, lined up in attack formation to "keep order." During the rally there were eight arrests: one Klansman and seven protesters! You gentle readers may arrive at your own conclusions as to whose side the minions of law and order are on.

In quite a few municipalities, including the one your scribe resides in, members of the local constabulary belong to the local Klavern. Insofar as their bedsheets are bankrolled by big bucks, it should come as no surprise as to the cops' ideological preferences. Your scribe has witnessed the presence of the Byes in Blue at peace demonstrations, picket lines and boycott demos, leaving no doubt whose noggins they were itching for an excuse to clobber.

Now that one scientist has announced that it is within the realm of possibility to clone human beings, there has risen a cry from certain quarters as to the morality of such. Your scribe, not being of scientific aptitude, still does not understand exactly what cloning is and being concerned with, to him, far more important matters is not making any great efforts to enlighten himself on the matter. Furthermore, messing around with Mother Nature is not a very wise field of endeavor.

Can you imagine cloning Clinton?

One of the beneficial potentials of contemporary technology can be found with the Internet. The Internet, needless to say, is another item beyond the technological aptitude or understanding of yours truly, but nevertheless presents the opportunity for mass communication for the greater majority of us to whom the other media of mass communication is an impenetrable fortress. But now there are those spoilsports who are discussing the need for censorship, using the dire need to protect young minds from pornography, to name but one excuse.

Readers of this stalwart periodical may well draw their own conclusions. These apostles of censorship who so vigilantly guard our morals, in reality, quake at the prospect of free and open discussion among the unwashed multitudes. Your scribe happens to be an implacable foe of any form of censorship as he does not cotton up to the idea of somebody else deciding what he is permitted to see, read or be exposed to. If our young impressionable youth can be exposed to the obscenity of modern society, they are quite capable of surviving pornography.

Verily, Squanto was a fink!

— C.C. Redcloud

May Day Greetings

It has for some years been tradition to run in the May *IW* greeting ads in honor of International Workers Day. Greeting Ads must be received by April 10th to run in the May issue. Suggested donation levels are \$10 for a 1 inch tall ad (1 column wide); \$35 for 4 inches by 4 7/8 inches (2 columns); or \$80 for a quarter page. We can set it up from your message, or you can send it in camera-ready. These rates are for non-commercial greeting ads only – enquire for commercial rates.

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

They're Doing Fine, Thanks

A new study from Educational Testing Service – the folks who make their living making kids fill in circles with #2 pencils, pretending it has something to do with education – sets out to refute the notion that we're becoming a nation of hamburger flippers. No, "we're going from high-wage manufacturing to high-wage office jobs" in telemarketing, customer service and data processing. (I didn't make these examples up, honest!) With swell jobs like those, we're on the way to easy street. Or at least the bosses are, as they continue this shell game that we call an economy...

As our economy continues "booming" (yes, those are bombs you hear going off), more and more workers find themselves forced to turn to their credit cards to put groceries on the table. The work week continues to grow ever longer, and bankruptcy filings are way up.

Meanwhile, economists are busy telling our Asian fellow workers that they need to look to places like Mexico for a way out of the financial crisis there. Cut back investment and public spending, throw workers on the streets, slash wages and take all the money saved and hand it over to the rich – that's essentially the recipe the *Financial Times'* Stephen Fidler recommends. This will solve the region's crisis of profitability; what matter if a few million wage slaves starve to death in the process?

The New Unionism

Laborers' International Union President Arthur Coia writes about the need for a new labor vision in the Fall 1997 *Laborer*. "The new unionism requires a greater emphasis on cooperation with management," he writes. Unions should train their members to become more profitable and productive wage slaves. Indeed, the Laborers have set up "global solidarity" programs to train Latin American workers so they will become more productive – hoping that the bosses will reciprocate by upping their pay.

— Farewell, Fellow Worker —

Bill Whitbread, 61 years young, died on 16 October 1997.

For a couple of years Bill was the sole *IWW* member this side of the Atlantic. He was the first *IWW* member I came into contact with after I joined in 1992 and I will always remember him for his combination of wit and seriousness, adventurism and sense of enjoyment. We marched together many times under a beautifully stiched red banner Bill had paid to have made (it cost \$600 in 1990). It bore the legend "Labor Is Entitled To All It Creates" (authentic, even down to the spelling mistake).

Bill had two abiding passions in his life – transport and justice. He had been a railway worker in his younger days and knew everything there was to know about trains especially. It was fitting perhaps that Bill should die suddenly on a bus, his second favourite means of transport, on the way to see his woman friend.

In his long struggle for justice Bill had been simultaneously a member of the Green Party, the Labour and Co-operative Party and the *IWW*. If either Party had known of his membership of the other he would have been expelled. We didn't care how many parties he belonged to – he was very careful not to bring any party politics into the *IWW*.

Bill's wit caused some exciting trouble at work, trouble his sister Mary reminded me of at a Memorial concert put on by the Workers Music Association. Being employed in the post room of the Liverpool-Victoria Insurance Society Bill was able to get hold of some headed paper and concocted a joke memo about the company being in the throes of being taken over by

I've been in this wage slave business a long time, and I've never noticed that the folks who worked the hardest got the best pay. Truth be told, I'd have to say the opposite is more the case. Don't believe me? Grab a stopwatch and follow your boss around for a few days...

Sticky-fingered Carey

Labor reform poster-boy Ron Carey continues to stir up controversy as he battles efforts to expel him from the Teamsters union he led just a few months before. Carey's backers paint a picture of a sickly piecard so busy running for re-election that he didn't have time to keep an eye on the union's finances (or even on his campaign's finances, apparently).

Let's say this is true; if so the "reformers" apparently are quite content to have union business conducted not by the members or their elected

officials, but by a clique of high-paid consultants who never worked a single day on the job. Even the Association for Union Democracy, which has long backed Carey, concedes that it is "highly unlikely" that Carey financed his \$4 million re-election bid by following the rules. (Hoffa violated the rules too, they note.) That said, they rightly question the government's right to determine who the members can vote for.

Two things seem clear: Carey is a crook, and Hoffa is a crook. The government has no business deciding which crook will run the Teamsters union, though if it wants to lock them both up I, for one, will shed no tears. The rank and file deserves better, but they will get it only by organizing themselves to take control of their destiny...

Tried and Tested

That's the old-time, tried-and-tested approach we prefer in the *IWW*. The members run this union, the officers serve short, 1-year terms, and if they get uppity we toss 'em out on their ears. I wouldn't have it any other way.

— Jon Bekken

another larger firm. He made sure that every single employee got a copy one morning. It purported to come from one of the Directors. Management went ballistic – not because of the spoof nature of the memo, but because their carefully crafted scheme to sell out to another firm had been found out. They immediately launched an investigation and began accusing one another of leaking things to the staff!

Bill was also very fond of music and sang with the Workers Music Association singers at concerts they put on every May Day and at events for Spanish Civil War veterans. The WMA singers put on a memorial concert on 5 February which was very well attended. The concert ended with a rousing rendition of "Preacher and the Slave" which was one of Bill's favourites. The look on the faces of two invited guests (both Church ministers who valued Bill's community work) was a sight to behold.

Hope you've organised the Angels!

Kevin Brandstatter
IWW British Isles

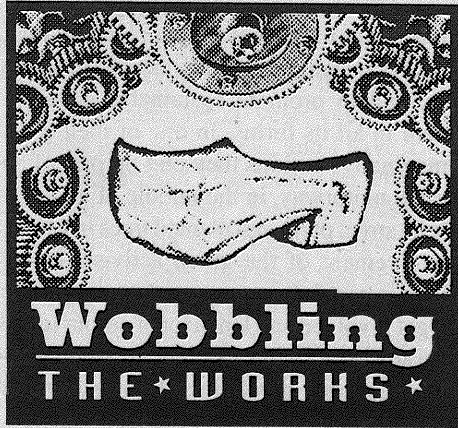
Industrial Worker Sustaining Fund

Mark Chicwak, Caldwell OH	\$10
Lance Feik, Pinckneyville IL	5
Tom Johnson, Newmarket NH	15
John Liebau, Springfield PA	5
Roland Thurmaier, Stevens Point WI	20

Charlie Sato Memorial Fund
Hajime & Aiko Sato, Wahiawa HI \$500

Many thanks, fellow workers, for your generous support.

Union Recognition Elections



Wobbling the Works is a column designed to help workers understand their rights and use the meager protections that U.S. laws give us to the fullest extent possible. But even if you meet the requirements for being covered by these protections, the remedies involved are little more than a slap on your boss' wrist. Laws alone can never replace the power of direct action, but can occasionally be used to make it safer for you to organize for better conditions. If there is an issue you would like to see addressed in Wobbling the Works, please write Alexis Buss, PO Box 42531, Philadelphia PA 19101 or email phillyiww@iww.org

"For every action there is an equal and opposite government program." — Bob Wells

When workers decide to make a union, they get together, talk about what they would like to change about their workplaces, and make a plan to start organizing. Soon after, if they are able to gain enough support, it becomes time to take demands to the boss. Then it starts getting complicated. The boss usually won't recognize the union or negotiate anything with the workers. And then, more often than not, the workers look outside of their own numbers for a way to secure their rights. In the United States they end up at the National Labor Relations Board.

For the past seven and a half decades, most workers wanting to form unions have been forced to deal with the National Labor Relations Board because bosses can legally refuse to bargain with unions if they have not had an NLRB election. I, like most Wobblers, am not a fan of the Labor Board and urge anyone interested in organizing to avoid governmental meddlers as much as possible. Sometimes it seems easier to involve the NLRB in order to legally bind the boss to bargain with the union, but don't make the decision a matter of routine. The rules of the NLRB give the advantage to the boss — plain and simple. This is the basic process for getting an NLRB election, which usually takes a month and a half.

The NLRB will schedule an election after being presented with authorization cards from 30% or more of employees at a workplace. (You can get a sample card from the address above.) It is not recommended that you only get 30% of your co-workers aboard; you will want to have a clear majority of workers from a diversity of job descriptions signed up. A Board agent asks a few questions about your workplace including the name of the owner or general manager, the address, how many people work there, and the type of business it is. All of this information is recorded on a standard form. You will also be asked for the name of the union, an address, and a contact person. The contact person will receive all communications from the NLRB.

The next day, the NLRB notifies your boss that a request for an election has been filed at their office. From this day until the election, your boss will use every trick in the book to get your co-workers to vote against the union. Your boss does not get to know the names of the people who signed authorization cards, but will see the contact person's name. A hearing is set up to deter-

mine the appropriate bargaining unit and a date for an election. The NLRB picks a hearing date usually within two weeks of the petition's filing, but the boss or the union can ask for another date if they have a good reason.

Defining a bargaining unit is a usual hang-up. Your boss will attempt to load the unit, or group of workers who will be voting, with people who are anti-union or identify closely with management. It is the union's job to alert the NLRB when the boss tries to include managers or other people who shouldn't be in the unit. The NLRB will encourage an agreement on the unit before the hearing. If none can be reached, the hearing will be conducted, but you won't get a result until about a month later. It's usually in the best interests of the union to have an election as soon as possible, so compromises are often made at this stage. An election date is also suggested by the Labor Board. If the boss or union would rather have a different date, they can ask for it. The boss will usually ask for a later date on some pretext so they can have more time to browbeat the workers into voting "no." The union again isn't in the strongest position here, since the choice is to either agree to the boss' request or to go to litigation, which will hold up the process by at least another month.

After a date for the election is settled, the NLRB gets a list from your boss of the names and addresses of all workers who will vote in the election, and the union receives a copy (known as the "Excelsior list"). The list is usually determined by the pay period which ended before the petition was filed, but the boss can try to push the inclusion pay period to a later date, and hire workers in the interim.

Three days before the election, the boss is required to post a notice supplied by the NLRB which includes a sample ballot. Twenty-four hours before the election, the boss and the union are not allowed to raise new issues in their respective campaigns or hold captive meetings. On the day of the election, the union and the boss both have worker representatives at a table to verify the identity of people who want to vote. The NLRB conducts the election right at your workplace, and counts the votes as soon as the polls close.

If you are able to hold the fort through a month and a half of mandatory anti-union meetings and harassment of pro-union workers, you may end up with a union. A lot of union certifications are won on the second or third attempt, because it sometimes takes going through the process for some to understand that the promises your boss makes don't come true if the union is defeated.

The big trick if you choose to deal with the NLRB is to not make the election the reason for your union to exist. Make a plan to stay active even if you don't win the election. Discuss ways to get your boss to improve conditions through direct action on the shop floor and public pressure from the outside. Cultivating a strong organization to fight for the rights of workers is the top priority. Because business unions are so hell bent on legal certification, they will not accept membership from workers who are not covered by a contract. The IWW understands that making a union is the business of workers alone, so sign up today and start organizing, with or without a legal stamp of approval.

— Alexis Buss

"A Rebel's Toast"

Wobbly Mattie O'Boyle will perform a dramatic interpretation of IWW and working-class poetry Saturday, March 14, at 7:30 p.m. at 4722 Baltimore Ave., Philadelphia. The program is a benefit for the Philadelphia GMB. FW O'Boyle hopes to tour the program in the coming months.

As I write this column the *Industrial Worker* won't be on the streets for another two weeks. I fear that by then Gulf War II may be in progress, maybe even over. But I've got to hope that the fools in power will be forced to delay at least that long so that maybe my words can be some small help to stave off some of the madness by urging an overwhelming reaction from the working class.

I'm feeling more than a bit distressed by the possibility/probability of another round of bombing in Iraq. What's another 100,000+ lives to add to the 100,000+ who died the last time and the 500,000 who have died since due to the sanctions? When I hear people saying we should bomb the madman who's threatening world peace back to the stone age, I have to wonder if they mean Saddam or Clinton and his clone Tony Blair.

I went to hear Bishop Gumbleton of the Detroit Archdiocese talk Saturday. I don't usually care much for religious leaders, but this one is pretty unique. He has a gay brother and has spoken out on the rights of gays in the church and society as

from the desk of...

a whole. He's been there at every major demonstration for the Detroit newspaper workers. He's been on a fast for a couple weeks now in protest over the sanctions in Iraq. Last year he visited Iraq. He told some things I didn't know, some things I'd forgotten as it's been a while since Iraq was last on the front burner.

Is Saddam an asshole? No doubt. Seems to go along with being a government leader. But do you wonder why Saddam isn't enthusiastic about U.N. (read U.S. and its flunkies) "humanitarian" aid in exchange for the sale of oil? According to Gumbleton Iraq is allowed to sell \$4 billion worth of oil every year. There are estimates that it would take \$12 billion every year for 10 years to repair the damage caused in Iraq by the Gulf War bombings and the concessions of the intervening years. When they sell that \$4 billion in oil, the first 30 percent goes to Kuwait for reparations, a country with one of the highest per capita net worths in the world. The next 18% goes to the U.N. to administer the inspections and concessions. The remaining 52% goes into an account administered by the U.N. All contracts for this money have to be approved by U.N. administrators. The U.S. has veto power over any contract and has exercised it hundreds of times whenever it suspected the product being purchased might have a dual purpose. Never know what might be used for chemical or biological warfare. One of the contracts vetoed by the U.S. was for powdered milk!

Wonder why some of the inspections might have been refused by Saddam? Gumbleton said that one inspection was of a convent! Never know what those nuns might be up to...

Why would Iraq object to U.S. and British inspectors? Maybe because they are representatives of the governments which have caused such devastation over the last decade. It's the height of arrogance to suggest that no inspectors from other nations with comparable skills could be found. It's the depths of subservience for the other nations of the U.N. to allow the U.S. and Britain to insist on this sort of garbage. It seems pretty certain that the insults to Iraqi sovereignty are geared to encourage defiance which can then be twisted for propaganda purposes.

Let's not forget that Saddam, a buddy of the U.S. when he was killing Iranians who were being supplied with F-14 fighter planes to kill Iraqis at the same time, asked the U.S. what their reaction would be before he invaded Kuwait. He was told that it would be considered a regional matter, the implication being that the U.S. would not intervene. Bush needed a war to raise his popularity in the polls. Boom! over 100,000 dead Iraqis, mainly teenagers killed as they retreated; the regular army having been devastated during the war with Iran, many of the wounded buried alive in trenches bulldozed by oncoming U.S. forces. Pow! Smart bombs with a 50% accuracy rate (wish I had been considered smart in school when I got 50% on a test) proving their effectiveness in one instance by massacring hundreds of women and children when it drilled into an underground shelter. If that bomb knew what it was doing then it was mass murder by the person giving the order.

And here we go again. You liked the original? You'll love the sequel.

War against civilian populations violates international law, but we're kind of selective about which violations will lead to carpet bombing. Last time around, the U.S. and its flunkies engaged in over 200,000 sorties, dropping a bomb every 3 seconds for 42 days in GW I — more bombs than were dropped by the U.S. in all of its little escapades in prior history! Wonder what they have up their sleeves to top that. As usual it will be the working class who suffer from the war. Saddam is likely to survive. Clinton seems unlikely to be phased even by his scandals, let alone by bombs. He won't hold a dead Chelsea in his arms and cry as thousands of Iraqis are likely to have to do with their children. The same old shit.

We get used to capitalist atrocities. It's hard to keep track of them, let alone respond to them all. But once in a while one with a potential to be so horrendous comes along, that it's time for people of good will to lay down their tools, step away from their desks, and say "you've gone too far." This feels like one of those times to me. It will take hundreds of thousands, maybe millions in the streets to get Washington's attention. I'm not confident that can happen soon enough. But I'll be there, wherever any protest and direct action I can reach is going on, and I hope you will too. I'm hoping for actions which will block traffic, shut down federal buildings, shut down business as usual until it becomes clear to Clinton and the capitalists he serves that we aren't going to be complicit in their war crimes. Do what you can, Fellow Workers.

See you on the picket line. See you at the sit-in. See you in jail. I think that's where most people with any sense of justice are likely to be found in the coming days. And Butcher Clinton, Butcher Blair, if there should prove to be a just god, I'll expect to see you in Hell!

— Fred Chase, General Secretary-Treasurer

Mersey Dockers: World was their picket line

continued from page 1

the UK, let alone Liverpool.

The role of the TGWU

Throughout the dispute the TGWU sought an agreed settlement to the dispute. The terms of the settlement however were always based on abandoning the Torside employees to their fates and arguing for the reinstatement of most of the MDHC dockers. There is a lot of feeling among rank and file activists that the TGWU saw the dispute and its settlement terms as an ideal opportunity to rid the union of left wing opponents of the leadership and cement the hold of Bill Morris and his acolytes over the second largest UK union. Reinstatement of the strike leaders was never seriously pursued by the union despite the fact that one of those strike leaders was a member of the union ruling executive council.

The TGWU continually sought to hide behind UK employment law as a major reason for not doing anything practical in support of the locked-out dockers. In the first few months of the dispute the union refused to set up a hardship fund, refused to print news of the dispute in its internal newspaper and refused to commit any money to help the dockers' families. A local panel of church leaders agreed to set up a hardship fund partly because of TGWU activity (or rather lack of it) and partly because they were appalled by the attitude of the bosses. This hardship fund, to which the union eventually contributed had the task of providing the staples of life to some five hundred families for over two years.

The TGWU could perhaps have been forgiven by some people for not wanting to break the law. After all in the 1980s, when the leadership appeared to be a bit braver, it paid millions of pounds in fines and almost lost control of its assets to the courts for standing by workers who had taken "illegal action." However the TGWU did not simply "not do anything," it actively sabotaged the work of the dockers' shop stewards. The TGWU was and remains affiliated to the International Transport Federation. The ITF was formed in the early part of this century by striking rank and file transport workers as a means of providing solidarity support in times of crisis! Like many similar organisations, however, the ITF has become a club for highly paid professional officers of independent national unions and is powerless to do anything to support any dispute in the absence of support from the relevant national union. A key question asked by the dockers throughout the dispute was "ITF - where are you when we need you?"

The answer came in the form of a spate of faxes during the dispute between dockers leaders and the ITF. The dockers had convened one of their international conferences only to find that the ITF, presumably at the behest of the TGWU, were doing their level best to dissuade affiliated unions from sending delegates.

The ITF remained at best neutral (though how can this be during a battle between the classes?) and at worst hostile to the Liverpool dockers.

The TGWU went from bad to worse. It sought to impose a settlement on the dockers, one rejected at meetings of dockers almost unanimously. It held a number of postal ballots on the same offer, believing that in the privacy of their own homes dockers would vote to accept compensation and a lifetime of unemployment. They held to the notion that somehow a band of shop stewards, numbering no more than a dozen, were intimidating 500 fellow workers into not accepting such a paltry offer. They were proved wrong time and again.

The union even went so far as to commission a report with the employers about

In retrospect it is obvious that the employers were waiting for a strike ... knowing full well the TGWU was too cowardly to back its membership...

solving the dispute and accepted recommendations from "independent" consultants that only 40 of the original 500 would get jobs after the dispute, and only on a casual basis, and bizarrely that they would be expected to work with and train the very scabs who had stolen their jobs!

Women on the Waterfront

One of the most impassioned speeches I heard during the dispute came from Doreen MacInally at a civil service union conference. In no uncertain terms she told the conference that the lack of solidarity action from the rest of the union movement disgusted and appalled her. As she piled on tales of scabbing, picket line crossing, and refusals to lend any assistance many union delegates in the conference hall looked decidedly uncomfortable, particularly those from the Customs and Excise Department who while using lots of leftist rhetoric in the set piece conference debates were probably driving through dockers' picket lines every morning to get to work. The leaders of the union looked particularly sheepish and their relief when Doreen had stopped haranguing them was obvious.

WoW had taken inspiration from Women Against Pit Closures, the support group of (mostly) miners' wives and daughters who were very active in the pit strike of 1984-85 and the brief campaign to halt further closures in 1992. WoW were the backbone of the dockers' resistance in more ways than one. Introducing novel and more militant picketing, many of the women undertook successful speaking tours of their own and forged links with women around the world.

Some of the dockers I have listened to spoke with great praise of WoW and jested (with some justification) that they were terrified of giving up because of the reception they would receive from their families.

The Dockers' International

The lack of international support through the ITF led the dockers themselves to spread the cause internationally and it was spontaneous, unplanned but determinedly successful for all that. The Liverpool dockers built up successful relationships waterfront workers unions in almost every country that had unionised port workers. The physical, financial and moral support which came from fellow workers in the same industry was a key factor in the staunch resistance shown by the dockers of Liverpool.

They held international conferences which planned and coordinated action and mounted international pickets. A couple of Liverpool dockers brought trade on parts of the eastern seaboard to a halt more than once.

The international conferences also led many dockers in other parts of the world to the realisation that there was a co-ordinated attack on union control of the world's ports. A campaign against casualisation of port work grew and led to action Holland, Japan, Brazil and most notably Australia where the Government's plans to use troops to break the Australian Maritime Union became public knowledge.

In the UK

If only the international support shown to the dockers had been repeated at home. Domestically the dispute followed a pattern which had been seen in many previous dis-

putes in the 1980s and 1990s, but the difference being that the Liverpool dispute went on much longer. Essentially the dispute revolved around daily pickets of the port (ignored by unionised drivers and service providers), police harassment of the pickets, tours around the country to raise support, and crucially money and a hell of a lot of energy expended on seeking support within the union.

Many activists in the dispute seemed to spend more time fighting their own union bureaucracy than they did the employer! That perhaps shows the depths into which the TGWU sank. It must be said that this is not an isolated case. The TGWU had led a group of bus drivers in Chelmsford, a town to the east of London, to ignominious defeat despite overwhelming public support and a high media profile. The TGWU prevented the drivers taking their battle to other bus garages working for the same employer and argued consistently that any action outside the law would damage the union.

Support from the "Left" varied. Some political parties spent most of their time attacking the dockers' shop stewards not because of the way the dispute was conducted but because the dockers leaders were or had been members of the Communist Party. In the eyes of many of the left they were therefore automatically evil and needed to be attacked to enable a proper (i.e. Trotskyist) leadership to gain control and lead the strike to victory. Unfortunately for the Trot parties (the Workers Revolutionary Party in particular), the rank and file dockers, who actually ran the dispute through weekly meetings, appeared not to understand the finer points of marxian theology and made it abundantly clear that parties were not welcome on their picket lines unless they were going to give support to the dockers and turn their attacks not on the workers but on the bosses.

Being remote from the dispute, many on the left called for the workers to put pressure on their union to make the strike (sic) official! The dockers had to constantly remind the uneducated left that it was not a strike but a lockout and that making the dispute official would have conceded control to the union.

The IWW

The IWW can be rightly proud of its contribution to the defence of dockers' jobs. The *Industrial Worker* carried monthly updates on the dispute which did more to spread the word than most labour papers.

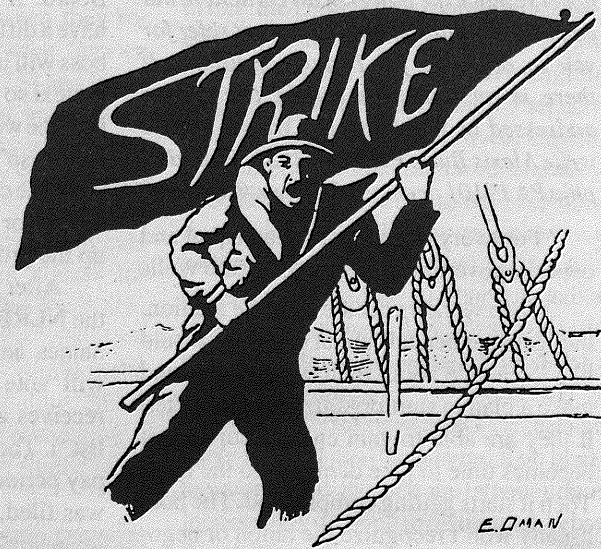
Thousands of dollars were raised in support on both sides of the Atlantic and IWW in Birmingham, England initiated a very successful tour of West Midlands workplaces which raised funding, promoted solidarity and regenerated unionism. IWW members in the rest of the country agitated, picketed and raised funding by their own efforts and with non-IWW unionists. A constant flow of information across the Atlantic was assured to get the news out. IWW members in the U.S. contributed financially, morally and most importantly physically. The successful picketing of the Neptune Jade and the thousands of dollars lost to its owners were testament to that solidarity. It is a pity that more workers who could have boycotted Liverpool goods did not do so.

The Greens

Surprisingly to the dockers and to many others an alliance emerged with activists from "reclaim the streets." This is an organisation devoted to militant direct ac-

tion tactics to prevent further road building, protect ancient woodlands, especially in cities, and to promote sustainable development in all its forms. In one of their most imaginative actions they dug up part of an urban motorway, in the middle of an unofficial street party and planted trees in it! The involvement of the green activists in the dispute certainly encouraged young people to get involved and lent a lot of colour to the activity. The sight of stereotypical middle-aged dockers marching side by side with dreadlocked drum-banging eco-warriors brought a certain amount of dread into the minds of the police. If militant unionists and militant eco-warriors could forge such an unlikely alliance where would it all end?

Sadly it ended with the TGWU destroying any chance the dockers had of winning their jobs back, and 500 Merseyside families abandoning two years of struggle.



What lessons are there?

This is a frequent question asked at the end of any long or sometimes short dispute - particularly those where the workers got trounced. No doubt in years to come one academic or another will base his or her entire career on an examination of the minutiae of the dispute, its critical turning points and the result of its outcome for the rest of the labour movement. As activists ourselves we cannot wait that long. So at the risk of jumping the gun here is a personal analysis of the dockers dispute and what revolutionary industrial unionists can learn from it.

The first point is that in retrospect the dockers started from a position of weakness and went downhill. This is not to doubt their commitment and bravery, nor to ignore the importance of some of the alliances that were forged and some of the imaginative tactics employed.

In retrospect it is obvious that the employers were waiting for a strike to occur so that they could sack the workforce, employ scabs and start again. They waited for the dockers *not* to turn up for work, and then replaced them, knowing full well the TGWU was too cowardly to back its membership and that the employers had resources the workers could not match.

The major lesson is that workers cannot win a war of attrition under any circumstances and that picking the right time to fight is a very important and critical issue. Another important issue is not conceding control of the workplace to the employer because that is precisely the time when scabs will be brought in.

The second point is that the dispute marks an end of a fierce and ferocious attack begun in 1989 against waterfront workers in Britain. Up to that point there was a state-run docks labour scheme which tended to guarantee employment on the waterfront to dockers. Not only did it guarantee employment but it also guaranteed a standard of living when work was slack. The *laissez-*

You have the right to fight...

continued from page 1

there and work like a good tractor. But the minute that farm workers starts to think and say, 'Wait a minute, for 20 years you have been paying me less and less, and I have a family to support and I can't do it on what you pay me,' then they don't recognize them. You know you're perfectly recognizable as a worker when they need you to go out there and work like a donkey, but when you ask for a union you can't be recognized. That's the principle the growers are standing on, and if they're willing to let people did for that principle then I guess that what the hunger strikers say is that's what they'll have to do."

Have you gotten much contact from the growers in response?

"We've gotten no contact from the growers whatsoever. The hunger strikers are in an increasingly weak condition."

I read an article recently about the problem of child labor ...

"Everything really goes back to this central issue of low wages, because it's not that the parents think that their kids should be in the field, or that they don't think that they should be in school, but the parents who do take them there cannot afford day care.

"A mother I was talking to the other day says that she makes about \$34 a day in the fields; she has to pay \$12 of that the minute she gets home to get her two kids out of day care. That leaves her with \$22 without anything else. ... Those who take their kids to the field do it only because they don't make enough money to lead a decent human life already.

"The issue of slavery is one that the Coalition has been involved in. This was just brought to justice with the sentencing of Miguel Flores and Sebastian Gomez, who ran a slavery operation out of Immokalee and LaBelle for the past four or five years.

faire Tory Government did not like the scheme and wanted to open up dock labour to the market. They also had revenge on their minds after the dockers had done what they could with the railway workers to block imports of scab coal from Poland.

The union decided to fight the abolition of the scheme and there was a strike which threatened to close down all ports. It was called off by the TGWU leadership after it was declared illegal. Dockers in Tilbury, a container port east of London, did not go along with this and as a result their shop stewards (about 23 of them) were sacked. Another national strike was threatened which the union sabotaged. Once that was over union control in port after port was lost until Liverpool remained. Bizarrely the TGWU acquiesced to the losses in union membership and the loss of recognition. It is clear that many union members simply deserted the TGWU after it had sold out at Tilbury and other took their redundancy payments and set off for new pastures.

The defeat of the dispute may mark the end of the lengthy drawn-out set piece disputes for the foreseeable future. That may be no bad thing. While in other countries it is not uncommon for employers to reinstate or rehire after a long strike, it is almost unheard of in Britain. Under current em-

The Coalition led the investigation because the Justice Dept. and the FBI weren't really equipped to deal with the idea that Mayan Indians were being held in slavery...

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers is a grassroots, community-based organization with a strong emphasis on education and mobilization around workers' rights. Greg Asbed explains:

"The idea that working at a wage that has fallen every year for the past 20 years while the cost of living goes up every year is not something that you're obliged to do simply because you're an immigrant or simply because you're poor. You have the right to fight for that. Our community is marked by constant turnover, so that we have new people every year who don't know anything of the history of the struggle here. That has demanded that we take this approach that is rooted more in individual worker awareness that then leads to action, rather than organizing on a strictly union model.

"The other key difference [between the Coalition and the United Farm Workers] is that the UFW for better or worse focuses on Cesar Chavez as a symbol. That has left in a certain way a legacy of inaction on the part of workers themselves, because time after time workers express the idea that the reason things haven't changed is because there is no great leader. No great individual who will lead us out of this misery, and that's a real negative message to give to somebody because obviously change didn't happen, even in Cesar Chavez's case, because he was leading people out of misery. It happened because of all the people who committed themselves to make this change. That part of the story never gets out.

"One of our basic mottoes is 'we are all leaders' and another is 'from the people for the people' and we constantly reinforce that. The day that each day each person wakes up with the capacity to make a change

employment law the bosses have the right to refuse to re-hire even if ordered to do so by a court! Workers find it almost impossible to win a war of attrition. The resources behind the employers were vast, with MDHC profits barely affected during the strike.

The bosses also knew that they had the politicians on their side with the Government owning a stake in the company of around 14%. When the Labour Party got elected in May 1997 there was a mistaken assumption that political influence would be brought to bear on the company. Nothing could have been further from the truth. Firstly the Government refused to get involved saying it was a matter for the employers and the union to resolve, then it appears the Labour Party put pressure on the TGWU to get the dispute over with quickly because of the awkward questions being asked by some Labour MPs and many labour supporters about the role of the state. The TGWU were already looking for a way out of the dispute and this was a well-timed suggestion.

The end of the dispute is as much as anything else an indictment of traditional trade union organisation in a transnational economy - an indictment not only of the structure of union organisation but also of the prevailing "theory" behind it.

The TGWU likes to parade itself as "a union of all workers." It may even have got the slogan from us. It is divided into trade sections which broadly resemble Industrial Departments. Indeed the TGWU was forged from the militant industrial unionist and syndicalist struggles of the early part of this century, so that should come as no surprise. However rather preaching industrial unionism the TGWU preaches "crowd unionism." All workers irrespective of the industry they work are lumped into branches which the bureaucracy can conveniently



is the day that we do make that change.

"The work we do is the basis for an incredible amount of wealth in this area, and as such we should be able to see the fruits of our work; also as people we all have certain rights to live as people and support our families. That idea of each person's individual worth is the basis of our work as well.

"The way that we work is determined by the community that we work in. It's a mobile community, a changing community, a community of many different immi-

grant cultures that has a thousand different forces acting to inhibit collective action. So we have to spend most of our efforts trying to counteract those forces and encourage collective action. Our direction is towards general strikes as opposed to contracts with particular companies, and we're making change."

The Coalition is demanding 20 cents more per bucket, which would bring real wages back almost to the level of 20 years ago. The growers say any pay hike would make their tomatoes uncompetitive with Mexican tomatoes, and try to convince the public that tomato picking is well-paid work. But if you go down to Immokalee, you won't see any growers hunched over in the fields.

Letters of support and contributions to help support workers during upcoming job actions can be sent to the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, 215-F West Main Street, Immokalee FL 34142.

control. I have been told (though I have not been able to verify this) the Liverpool dockers were not all in the same branch and that the branches they were in covered more than the docks!

The TGWU is organised as a national union, with an affiliate in Ireland. It in turn is affiliated to the Labour Party and has consistently supported the plans of the Party to undermine the existing benefit system and force people to work through a workfare programme. Of its 900,000 members the 1,000 or so dockers in Britain are a very small number, and because of their traditional militancy an embarrassing and "old fashioned" reminder of the past. The TGWU recognises the right of the employing class to exploit the working class and the leadership believe in a beneficial partnership between unions and bosses. In common with most other trade unions the TGWU is pursuing a policy of collaboration with the bosses.

This stands in complete contrast to the IWW. Our preamble is clear "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common..."

The national focus of the union's organisation makes it exceedingly difficult for workers to recognise transnational assaults, world-wide industrial opportunities and to promote effective solidarity. Many readers will say that the tenacity of the dockers shows what can be done in the international area; while this is true I can't help thinking what might have been had the ports been organised into a single transnational industrial union. Would the Liverpool dockers have lost? Would the bosses elsewhere be pushing casualisation - I think not.

— Kevin Brandstatter
IWW British Isles Regional
Organising Committee

Direct Action hits subcontracting

Over 100 Irish building workers defied an injunction to picket two Dublin sites last month. Thirty picketed C. & G. Crampton's £11 million development at Dublin City University and 80 blocked the entrance to its £29 million development at the Smurfit Business School in University College.

The unofficial picketing was organized after the company secured an injunction barring the building & Allied Trades Union from picketing the sites. The company has hired subcontractors who insist on paying workers off the books, thereby avoiding benefits and undermining wages. Crampton secured an injunction barring picketing on the basis that the dispute is with individual sub-contractors and should not disrupt other work on the sites.

The contractors and the Irish courts evidently prefer something akin to the U.S. two-gate system, whereby union construction workers enter sites through different entrances from scabs and workers employed by rat contractors, and are therefore not legally permitted to honor picketlines. Fortunately our Irish fellow workers are instead insisting that an injury to one is the concern of all.

On Trial for Solidarity

The ILWU and the Liverpool Dockers' Victory Defense Committee rallied Feb. 26 in Oakland, Calif., outside the courthouse where activists faced a hearing on charges that picketing the Neptune Jade and its scab cargo cost the bosses money. Messages of solidarity can be faxed to the Committee at 510/531-2257 or e-mailed to chairman Jack Heyman c/o jhock@igc.apc.org

Teamsters reach freight deal

The Teamsters' tentative Master Freight Agreement is at best a mixed bag for workers. The 5-year agreement will see 75,000 Teamsters drivers and warehouse workers wages continue to lose ground to inflation, even as their bosses continue shifting work to non-union subsidiaries. Unionized freight haulers would be barred from relocating work or facilities to Mexico.

The contract covers Teamsters members working for four major trucking companies: Consolidated Freightways, Roadways Express Inc., Yellow Freight System Inc. and ABF Freight Systems Inc. Several smaller regional carriers are also expected to sign on to the deal.

The *Wall Street Journal* praised the pact, noting that the trucking companies "got their longest contract ever, promising stability for shippers while the booming economy is filling trucks." The *Journal* added that the contract was "likely to disappoint many union members."

Under the agreement, truckers and warehousemen will get a \$750 signing bonus and an average 2.5 percent increase in wages and benefits each year – well below the inflation rate. The contract allows trucking companies greater flexibility in the use of railroads to move freight, a cost-cutting measure. They will continue to have a free hand to employ low-paid, part-time employees and to ship freight through their non-union subsidiaries. Non-union firms now dominate the trucking industry.

The Hoffa and Carey camps have reportedly joined forces to sell the agreement.

Reports:

Portland, Oregon, IU330: We are getting organized and should have a PO Box and phone number. We are going to take on the task of being the IU330 Clearinghouse.

Butte, MT: Most of the IWWs in Butte are heading out for warmer climates. But that doesn't mean the IWW isn't active...

Letters: Right to Refusal

Just finished reading the Feb. issue of the IW. I am also a two-carder in the IWW and IBEW, journeyman-wireman. The article in *The Wobbly* really hit home. Everything that happened to my brother electrician has also happened to me. In fact, whenever I go on the road and hit the big jobs, you get to talking to your fellow-workers about different experiences on the job and you really hear some horror stories!

But the one that keeps surfacing more and more is the "contractor's right-to-refusal." This has happened to me, also. In fact, in two cases I was turned down for employment from contractors I had never worked for before. Contractors can use that little clause "right to refuse" and not even have to give a reason. The only time they can't use it is in minority cases. I know that's a fact because I filed charges with the NLRB and was told unless I was a minority the contractor didn't have to give a reason for his refusal.

And if you go to the local B.A. all he will give you is the old song-and-dance: Hey fella's, my hands are tied, my backs against the wall, it's in the contract – there's nothing I can do!

Ahh-yes – there is nothing he can do, maybe he's right, I don't know. I do know that if he stands up like a man and tries to do what is right the I.O. will be in his office the next day and he'll be out on his ass on the street and some other pie-card B.A. will be sitting behind his desk!

But none of this matters. If we can organize and educate enough fellow worker into sticking together we can beat the contractors at their own game. We don't need the I.O. or B.A.s to help us, we help our-

Paperworkers set to buy mills

Union paperworkers in Canton and Waynesville, North Carolina, have set out to buy the two Champion plants where they work. Champion put the plants, which employ 1,600 workers, up for sale in October. "We feel [a buyout] is the only avenue we have as employees to have a say in our future," said Kenny Sutton, chairman of UPIU Local 507's benefits committee.

Champion is selling the profitable plants in order to shed "non-strategic segments" including newsprint, premium papers, paper recycling and other paper lines. The company has operated in the area for 90 years and is the county's largest employer.

The Canton mill has been dumping waste products into a nearby river for decades. Union representatives have vowed to stop this practice if their buy-out is successful.

Piecards Falter

Several recent strikes indicate that workers are increasingly fed-up with their piecards' go-slow policies. Some 2,500 Twin Cities Honeywell workers rejected a contract recommended by Teamsters officials and hit the picket lines – forcing management to back off on a plan to force new hires into a substandard health plan. That wasn't enough for many workers, and the new contract was approved by only a half-dozen votes. A few weeks before, Teamsters at Metal-Matic rejected the piecard-backed contract 2 to 1, and quickly got a better deal.

525 workers at the Coca-Cola Bottling Co. of New England struck Jan. 18, after rejecting a proposed contract that would

have cost them two holidays and done nothing about Coke's practice of requiring workers to come in on their days off. Workers lost two paid holidays and a week of vacation in their last contract three years ago.

"We never get advance notice from the union about negotiations or a contract," one striking worker said. "They don't even tell you how negotiations are going ... but then you come into the union hall and they say, 'Here it is. Take it or leave it.'" UFCW/Retail Wholesale Local 513 says it agreed to closed-door talks to prevent rumors.

During the two-week strike Coca-Cola sent scab drivers out with security guards to protect them from irate passers-by. One guard told this writer he was "neutral" in the dispute. Also "neutral" were UFCW members who put the scab product on store shelves. In the end, workers got back one of the holidays union officials had agreed to surrender, the right to decline work on days off, and improved pension benefits – proving that it's better to fight than to grovel.

Meanwhile, 110 Tufts University custodians who lost their jobs when they refused a sweetheart deal between Service Employees Intl. Union Local 254 and International Service Systems that would have cut their wages by \$3.50 an hour will receive severance payments of up to \$8,000 each after months of picketing.

Local 254 frequently negotiates pay cuts for ost workers, who are not always informed of contract votes. The local also opposed efforts to increase the minimum wage, apparently fearing this would make their contracts look less appealing. SEIU national officials are now investigating a series of sweetheart deals and rigged elections involving Local 254.

New NLRB Appointments

The Senate has confirmed four new appointments to the 5-member U.S. National Labor Relations Board, bringing the Board up to full strength for the first time in many months. Two of President Clinton's new appointees – Peter Hurtgen and Robert Brame – are management attorneys. Wilma Liebman is a former attorney for the Bricklayers and Teamsters unions. Sarah Fox is a former aide to Senator Edward Kennedy. NLRB Chairperson William Gould is a law professor.

So far as we can tell, none has ever held union membership or worked with their hands. The Board hears oversees elections to determine if workers will be allowed union representation and hears complaints of illegal union-busting practices.

UTU Builds "One Union" in Rail?

Under the guise of building 'one union in rail' the United Transportation Union has asked the federal government to eliminate the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers' bargaining unit on the Union Pacific railroad. If the request is approved, engineers, conductors and brakemen would be asked to choose between UTU and BLE representation. Since the UTU now represents a majority of operating workers on the line, it expects to defeat the BLE in such an election. (Maintenance, clerical, shop and other rail workers would remain outside of this "industrial" union.)

The UTU petition claims that railroad technological and organizational systems have changed to such an extent that it is increasingly difficult to distinguish between the duties of engineers, conductors and brakemen, and points to "the vision of Eugene Debs" which it claims "still remains the UTU's guiding principle to this very day." Debs, of course, worked to build One Big Union of railroad workers, which would include not only the operating crafts but all workers employed in the industry.


The UTU was created out of a merger of rail craft unions which opposed the industrial American Railway Union which Debs helped found, and which later became a founding member of the Industrial Workers of the World.

Free Radio Memphis


The Federal Communications Commission is trying to force Free Radio Memphis 94.7FM off the air. The Constructive Interference Collective began the micro-radio station nearly two years ago by purchasing a transmitter, amplifier, antenna and other equipment from Free Radio Berkeley.

As an organization we are committed to uprooting the current system and the creation of a new one. From our mission statement: "It is our mission to continue the fight for freedom of speech, which has also been fought for by many strong individuals and organizations... from Margaret Sanger working for the right to have information on birth control, to the workers of the IWW, who fought for the worker's right to speak out, from Harvey Milk, who brought gay issues to the forefront of the mainstream, and then to Martin Luther King, who fought for the liberation of African Americans... We hope to continue in this spirit of freedom.... Our intention is to motivate ourselves and others to be fully liberated and to also work towards the creation of a truly democratic society. As a collective, our contribution to this work is to offer alternative views and information which is being deliberately filtered out by the mainstream media."

The most significant steps towards a micro-radio movement were taken by Mbanna and Dia Kantako of Springfield, *continued on page 10*



The Wobbly



News from IU 330-Construction Workers

selves. It's this simple – They boycott one of us, We boycott them! When we find a contractor that has a habit of turning people down for employment because of political reasons then everyone should turn him down. We have our own "Right to refusal." And we should spread the word around to our sister locals that "Joe Blow Electric is boycotted." We don't want to cut our own throats so we will have to be selective, go after them one at a time. I think that after we cut off their labor market one-at-a-time, the others will get the message that we've had enough of their bull-shit and aren't going to take it anymore!

Now, we all know the problem with this theory. How in hell do we get everyone to stick together. Well we have to try, if we can organize and educate enough it will work. Anyway, I've had my "contractors boycott list" going for about 10 years now. I've been in the IBEW 27 years. The contractors that turned me down before are now experiencing a boom in my home town and I've heard from other FWs that they will now hire me, they can't get enough electricians here. I've been in for 27 years without working for the bastards and I'll go another 27 before I will work for them! Maybe the original owners will be dead and in hell, then maybe I'll consider it, maybe.

It might be a good idea to start a "contractors boycott list" right here in *The Wobbly*. It would let our brother and sister travelers know the good contractors to work for from the bad. Please send any comments on this to *The Wobbly*.

I also encourage other crafts to get involved. I know the electricians aren't the only ones having problems. We welcome all comments, suggestions or other stories.

For The OBU, X342399

On the Road?

Remember the IWW is the One Big Union. Get involved wherever you are by contacting the local IU 330 delegate listed below or General Membership Branch listed on page 2 of this newspaper.

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

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 e-mail dgeorg@aol.com

Cape May Courthouse, NJ: Richard Neill, POB 261, Cape May Courthouse, NJ

Detroit: Jason 313-832-4074

W. Michigan/N. Indiana: Patrick Klocke

(Vicksburg, MI) 616-649-1214

Monterey, CA: Ray Brown, 1240 3rd St. 93940

Portland, OR: Ian 503-650-7187

Richmond, VA: Tom Williams 804-285-3699

Seattle/Tacoma: Mark 206-935-9012 or Paul Harris 425-271-0518

St. Louis: Tom Madden 314-647-2093

Got news for 330s? Want to be a contact? Call the Portland IWW Hot-line at 503-650-7187 and leave a message. We'll call you back! Or mail to POB 15005, Portland, Oregon 97293, USA. E-mail to obu@teleport.com



"Sorry, Boss. I don't have you scheduled for an appointment today."

SOLIDARITY

Parisian subway cleaners strike

Cleaning workers of the Parisian tube went on strike Jan. 6th against COMATEC (subsidiary of the big corporation CGE), which has refused any negotiations and made several attempts to break the strike by violent means (vigilante assaults and use of police forces and judicial actions).

COMATEC workers are demanding a pay hike, improved working conditions, and decent contracts for the growing number of temporary workers employed in the system. These claims are addressed to a company which represents the international neo-liberal disregard for workers' living conditions. The CGE is making more than 10 billion French Francs on the workers' backs each year. The Confederation Nationale du Travail called an international action week against CGE interests all over the world starting Feb. 18th.

Turkish medical supply workers

TIBSET is the biggest medical supply producer of Turkey, producing plastic injectors, syringes, steriles and the like. It has an important market share in Europe with its quality assurance certificates, ISO 9002 and CE 46002, and also supplies firms such as SB Euromedic, Deuchmed and Metrik. TIBSET workers work 12 hours a day, 7 days a week.

TIBSET workers organized in the Petrol-Is union August 16, but management sacked them and brought in untrained scabs. The technical director, technical employees and quality assurance chiefs resigned in response, saying that the factory could not produce qualified products with the scabs.

TIBSET workers demand "a clean society, democratic labour laws, justice and to live like a human being. But we know that just to 'want' is not enough. We can make our demands come true only by unity, solidarity and struggle."

"Our tomorrows are in darkness. Our children have no future. We workers are divided, thick-headed and unorganized. But capital is organized to the core and it attacks systematically.

"This disgraceful life is not a fate. We workers need struggle and solidarity now... The unity of workers is our power and our future."

They are calling for a boycott of TIBSET products. For information or to send statements of support, fax the Petrol-Is Union Istanbul Branch at 0 90 212 589 13 15

State workers in Canada face tough negotiations

State workers in the Canadian provinces of Quebec and Ontario face governments threatening to legislate contracts regardless of worker consent. The Quebec workers are fighting against a proposed 6 percent pay cut. Workers in Ontario are beginning negotiations on a 1996 contract agreed to after police assaulted strikers.

South Korean unions drop general strike plan

The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions has backed down from plans for a Feb. 13 general strike against a social pact which would allow a million workers to be laid off and in many cases replaced with temporary workers. The KCTU signed the pact in January but reversed course after strong protests from its members. However, the general strike failed to win broader support from workers—many of whom fear that resistance might encourage employers to flee the country in search of more docile workers elsewhere.

Tea and rubber workers strike in Sri Lanka

Over 400,000 tea and rubber workers in Sri Lanka remained on strike in early February against wage offers below their 20 percent increase demand. The unions' strategy is to wait until estate firms make better wage offers than managers.

"Police state" in Palestine

People accused of crimes against the state in Palestine face a State Security Council which decides suspects' fate based on internal PLO regulations supposedly without force in the Palestinian Authority. "The mechanisms of a police state are in place. The Authority is practicing these mechanisms as the average citizen looks on in horror," the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group wrote in its 1997 report.

Two people were sentenced to 15 years of hard labour January 19 without being allowed to defend themselves against accusations that they are connected to two bombings in West Jerusalem. In 1997, seven people died in the custody of the Palestinian Authority—up from four the year before.

Gay workers deported

Authorities in Qatar are in the process of deporting foreign gay male workers. The method of determining who is to be deported includes forced rectal exams for supposed evidence of the person having received anal sex.

Russian Miners Hold Manager Hostage

Siberian coal miners seized the Kuznetskaya mine's director hostage Jan. 27 in an attempt to demand years' worth of unpaid wages, holding him for several days. Fifteen other senior managers remained with the manager, although workers say they were free to leave.

The miners, some of whom have not been paid for 2 1/2 years, are owed \$3.5 million. Debts to individual workers range from \$1,600 to \$7,400.

Kuznetskaya workers accuse the boss of financial mismanagement and want criminal charges instituted against him. They said they would only release Ternovykh into police hands.

Santa Cruz police shoot unarmed man

I remember 'Happy' John Dine as a friendly man who would often flash a peace sign and offer a warm greeting. He was often homeless, and he was a man with developmental disorders, but that didn't stop him from standing up for himself and others, attending rallies and vigils for the homeless and against police brutality.

John Dine was a frequent victim of "sleeping tickets" issued under Santa Cruz's notorious anti-homeless ordinances. City law not only makes it illegal for homeless people to sleep in public, but makes covering oneself with a blanket or sign a more serious "crime." Being busted on a charge of sleeping, covering yourself with a blanket, and holding a "Stop the Sleeping Ban" sign is punishable by up to 6 months in jail.

John Dine's life ended suddenly Nov. 12 when he was shot and killed by Santa Cruz Police Officer Conor Carey. Police say Dine was brandishing a toy gun when he was shot, but none of the eight independent eye-witnesses saw any such thing. Police accounts putting Dine in a "combat stance" are similarly refuted by several eye-witness accounts now on display at the Santa Cruz Public Library.

Police insist the shooting was justified, but many disagree. Ongoing protests and reports on Free Radio Santa Cruz and public access TV have challenged the official account. Even the police witnesses disagree on nearly every substantive point (except, of course, that they were right to shoot this unarmed man).

Alani Balawejdor says he had "a perfect bird's eye view of the whole thing. It looked like the cops just got out of their car and shot him... I didn't see him display any type of weapon." Another eyewitness, Stacey Buckelow, said it appeared the officer "shot out of anger."

Three witnesses observed an officer search Dine's body after the shooting, removing something from a pocket and throwing it to the ground. This may have been the toy gun investigators say they found at the scene.

Curiously, the police dispatch tape from the night of the shooting is missing 4 minutes and 57 seconds, covering virtually the entire incident. This and other evidence clearly suggests an official cover-up. The

UK "communist" daily struck

Journalists at the London-based *Morning Star* went on unofficial strike on 4 February after their editor, John Haylett was suspended by the paper's management committee on 24 January without any reason.

The newspaper is controlled by the Communist Party-run Peoples Press Printing Society. Representatives of PPPS met the 12 journalists but refused to reverse or justify their decision.

Managers of the paper have threatened members of the National Union of Journalists that if they took unofficial strike action they were likely to be sacked and the union sued for "illegal" strike action. The workers themselves were advised not to strike by their own union.

The Deputy Editor, Paul Corry, and a small number of other staff decided to scab on their colleagues and tried (to no avail) to bring out an edition of the *Morning Star*, which has for many years campaigned for workers rights.

Sources close to the *Morning Star* have alleged that the fiasco is part of a power struggle going on within the Communist Party of Britain and within the PPPS. The General Secretary of the CPB, Mike Hicks has been instrumental in deposing John Haylett, who is seen as too independent, of failing to toe the party line and not giving enough prominence to CPB pronouncements. A worker at the *Morning Star* said "This is supposed to be a workers paper. We wouldn't stand for this treatment anywhere else so we won't stand for it here."

The management of the *Morning Star* refused to make any public comment.

— Kevin Brandstatter

Migrant workers deported from South East Asia

Authorities in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia plan to deport millions of migrant workers in hopes of shifting blame for the current economic crisis from their policies to immigrants.

On January 19, the Thai Prime Minister formally approved deporting 300,000 migrant workers. In Indonesia, thousands of people rioted for food in various towns and hundreds were arrested in Jakarta for demanding a democratic form of government.

Citizens Police Review Board and the local media have gone along, accepting police accounts on nearly every point and insisting that eye-witnesses who contradict them are not credible.

In the aftermath of Dine's shooting, some homeless people say police have threatened them with the same. The effort to drive the homeless off the Santa Cruz streets must be taken within the context of Clinton's "end to welfare as we know it," with more and more people going hungry and losing their homes, on the one hand, and more and more police to "keep order" on the other.

We need an independent citizens tribunal to weigh the evidence in John Dine's killing and Santa Cruz's anti-homeless laws. To get involved call 408/687-0942.

— Steve Argue

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Free Radio Memphis...

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IL. They have been operating a microradio transmitter since 1986, always with a theme of Black Liberation. Today their station is called Human Rights Radio reflecting a broader analysis.

The micro-radio movement is global, with perhaps a thousand small community stations set up in Chiapas, Mexico and Haiti, among other places. Free Radio Berkeley has called for "thousands of transmitters taking to the air in an all-out, no-holds-barred movement of electronic civil disobedience. When was the last time you were referred to as a citizen and not a consumer by the media?"

The purpose of such a movement is to break the capitalist stranglehold on the flow of information and ideas over the airwaves. It is a striving for the freedom to express a diversity of ideas and non-corporate music/culture.

Constructive Interference is a diverse bunch. Some of us are Wobblies while others identify as social ecologists, anarchists, women's liberationists or Marxist Humanists. Through it all, we believe in the necessity to struggle for freedom and create a democratic society. We see micro-radio as one way to broadcast a critique of state-capitalism and to offer our ideas for cooperatively creating the new human relations of a free society. Constructive Interference is a collective, a learning process, a message, and an example of people trying to create new human relations.

I would like to end with another part of our mission statement: "Through Constructive Interference we build bridges between people and ideas in order to strengthen relations within our community and abroad. In this way, we hope to provide a total radio experience, filled with critical thought along side our emotional expression of life. We also hope to promote a more responsible and respectful interaction with the world in which we live. We, humanity, cannot be contained and Constructive Interference strives to continually evolve as our tool of liberation."

— Denny Henke, x345495

Slaving in the Strawberry Fields

Strawberry Fields: Politics, Class and Work in California Agriculture by Miriam J. Wells. Cornell University Press, 1996, 340 pp., paper.

Despite the promise of its subtitle, *Strawberry Fields* is basically an ethnographic treatise aimed at academia and essentially complete almost a decade ago. Offering it to the general public now is simply an opportunistic attempt to take advantage of the current turmoil in California as the United Farm Workers union tries once again to organize and protect the workers who gather the berries that grace our tables.

Wells is justifiably proud of the many hours she spent interviewing workers and growers, agricultural agents and state officials, and in fact just about anyone who might have something useful to say about the situation in the strawberry-growing region of California. She also spent, as she lets us know, more than a few hours picking strawberries herself, and knows the physical strain of the work at first hand. What is disappointing is how little has come out of her labors. What might have been an epochal study of the realities of life "down on the farm" is little more than yet another professorial tract destined to strengthen its author's claim for academic advancement.

Wells sets out to demonstrate that the progression from agriculture to agribusiness, the "factory in the field," is not inevitable. Share cropping, once thought to be a feudal throwback, can be a rational response to local political and economic changes and not seriously disturb the framework of capitalism. The fortunes of the strawberry growers and pickers over the past century are used to demonstrate her thesis.

The idea is simple enough. But sentences like "Even where core-periphery disjunctions are acknowledged, they tend to devolve into bifurcated linear predictions, hampering explication of fluctuations and reversals in form within each sector" hardly help readers outside her discipline grasp her argument.

Early on in her work, Wells puts her

finger on the particular local contradiction leading to tension in the industry. Because of the nature of the crop and its resistance to mechanization, growers are dependent on hand labor to harvest it. Prices cannot be raised much, and costs of machinery, fertilizer, transportation, etc., are already as low as they can reasonably be brought or are beyond the growers' control altogether.

This situation naturally leads them to focus on controlling the price of labor, the one large cost that seems to be within their power to reduce. Yet the growers are still not in as good a position as they would like to be, since the labor needed must be careful and skilled if the crop is to be harvested properly and on time. Incompetent field work can mean losses running into the thousands of dollars a day. The growers are caught between the proverbial rock and hard place of trying to hire skilled labor — cheap. Sometimes they succeed, sometimes not, for reasons Wells goes into at great length.

In discussing these labor relations, Wells points out that the Strawberry Fields actually consist of three distinct regions in which quite different models of labor relations prevail. These differences, she points out, go a long way toward explaining the varying success of the union movement among the workers. In the Salinas Valley, Wells explains, a United States model of labor relations prevails with the workers well aware of developments in other crops like lettuce and feeling themselves far more connected to one another than to the Anglo and Japanese owners of the large farms. In the Pajaro Valley, growers are also a mix of Anglos and Japanese, but the worker-management relationship is moderated by Mexican custom and tradition, and a desire on both sides to avoid confrontation. Finally, the isolated "ranches" in the North Monterey Hills are run almost completely on the Mexican model with the patron dispensing jobs to his peons more as personal favors than commercial transactions. Conditions approach the horrible. But union presence is

nearly nonexistent with most of the workers undocumented and no other employment available.

As political pressure increased in all of these regions, the change to share cropping became general. Share croppers, it was thought, would be independent contractors, beyond the pale of legal protections extended to wage workers an unable to join any union because they were managers. Yet they could be supervised and directed just

Book Review

like the field hands they had theoretically replaced and they, in turn, could exploit the workers under their direction with no responsibility on the part of the grower. But court cases in the late '70s and '80s brought an end to this arrangement and established these "share croppers" as wage workers in all but name, a development that led growers to rethink their methods of controlling labor and its costs.

While share cropping is being revived today under "new" conditions, the most threatening move by the growers is the hiring of workers through labor contractors in parking lot "shape ups" reminiscent of the indignities endured by dock workers half a century ago. These contractors have often proved very difficult to police under existing law, and this arrangement has already succeeded in driving wages down as immigration continues to rise and the labor pool grows ever larger. The UFW has countered this trend with a demand for a union hiring hall, a sticking point in many negotiations with growers, and the issue remains in doubt.

All in all, Wells' book is a useful contribution to an academic understanding of developments in the Strawberry Fields over the last century. But the information she has gathered could have been presented in a briefer, less opaque form that would make her discoveries more accessible and useful beyond the confines of her profession.

— John Gorman

Applebee's Workers Organize With IWW...

continued from page 1


threats and intimidate workers. Workers were told that if they supported the union, they would be fired, and that if the union was brought in everyone's wages would be cut.

In one particularly dirty tactic, management told the kitchen workers that if the union was brought in the waitstaff's wages would improve only at the expense of the kitchen workers. Moreover, some kitchen employees were told that they would have been given a raise, but it was being withheld due to the union drive. Clearly, management is attempting to divide the waitstaff and kitchen staff to make it more difficult for the union to stick together and win.

Employees were also forbidden to talk about the union at work and forbidden to wear their IWW buttons (the "Fire Your Boss" buttons are particularly popular among Applebee's workers).

Organizers immediately filed unfair labor practice complaints about these illegal threats and prohibitions, and the NLRB is currently investigating the company's illegal actions.

The company is holding captive meetings every Thursday, which means many employees not scheduled to work on that day have to come in just to hear the company line for an hour of minimum wage. Vice-President Tom Kellogg is full of anti-union bluster, and has used the captive meetings to tell the workers, "The union will not control



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for
Bum Pay?**

**TIME TO MAKE
A UNION**



INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD
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the store. I will control the store." Needless to say, this did not win Mr. Kellogg any popularity contests among his employees.

At the captive meetings, management is trying to scare the workers by telling them a union means "shootings and the tipping over of cars." Workers were told, "We know who the organizers are and they will be dealt with."

In a flyer, management explained their position: "We intend to keep the union out by every legal means available to us...Some of our employees may have the mistaken

belief that since we have taken a strong stand against the union, that we are against them. We are not against you — we are for you. It is the union that we are against!" Workers who were amused by this flight of illogic were also interested to hear the company claim, "We will bargain in good faith if we have to, but we will never give you a better deal than you're getting now."

Wobs make New Orleans NLRB take notice

The South is notoriously less union-friendly than the North, and the response of the New Orleans NLRB to management's attempts to control the Applebee's election shows how much Southern union-busters are used to getting away with.

Applebee's tried to control the election with all sorts of outrageous conditions. Their lawyer wanted the election to be held in a company-owned trailer in the parking lot of the restaurant. Workers were to be allowed to vote only after being granted individual permission by a manager. All workers were to be called in to work on the day of the elections and then sent home if there was insufficient work for them (this was calculated to produce the greatest possible annoyance for the workers).

While the board agent assigned to the case recognized that these were outlandish conditions, he was unwilling to put his foot down. Instead, he asked the IWW to concede to these terms or proceed to litigation.

The local NLRB seemed unused to handling elections according to clear and unbiased procedures, and did not have rules established even for such issues as which pay period determined the employees eligible for the election.

After organizers Jeff Brite and Alexis Buss strongly resisted Applebee's demands, the company's lawyer conceded most of her previous demands. Clearly, Applebee's was not expecting a fight, but the IWW was ready and willing to give them one.

Applebee's workers holding firm

Workers at Applebee's aren't taking the company's lies. They are sticking together to create a powerful union that will force Applebee's to give them what they deserve. All IWW members are asked to lend their voice in support of the Applebee's workers. If you'd like to let owner Tom Kellogg know how you feel about his union-busting shenanigans, call Gulf Coast Restaurants corporate headquarters at 770/978-4524.

— Miriam Fried

Child labor on rise

In Latin America, one child out of five works for wages; in Africa, one in three; in Asia, it is every second child. Even within the EU, there are over two million children at work. Altogether, this makes for a global figure of 250 million.

New Arrivals

The Racist Mind: Portraits of American Neo-Nazis and Klansmen by Raphael Ezekiel

A chilling tour of the diverse hate groups of the radical right, travels from a Klan rally in Georgia to a Detroit neo-Nazi cell, seeking to discern whether they represent a real threat to free America. 330 pages, Viking, published at \$24.95 Our price \$10

The Muckrakers by Louis Filler

Colorful account of the men and women whose vivid exposes of political corruption, industrial brutality, corporate greed and social injustice set in motion a surge of reform in the U.S. 456 pages, Stanford, paper published at \$17.95 Our price \$10

The Iron Heel by Jack London

Novel first published in 1908 and initially banned in several parts of America, the story of a terrorist war between capitalist oligarchy and a socialist underground 195 pages, Wordsworth paper import \$6

Homestead: The Glory and Tragedy of an American Steel Town by William Serrin

A sweeping narrative of America's most famous industrial town, a community built by Andrew Carnegie and the thousands of immigrants and blacks who were drawn to jobs in the mills, chronicles the 1892 strike, the boom times during the war years, and the slow death of the city in the 1970s and '80s. Photos. 452 pages, published at \$25 our price \$12

Autobiography of Mother Jones

"The most dangerous woman in America": That's what employers called Mother Jones. But rebellious working men and women loved her. Today those who are struggling for a truly free society are still inspired by her exemplary courage and devotion to the cause of solidarity and freedom. This abundantly illustrated edition includes a new Foreword by Meridel LeSueur and an Afterword by the IWW's Fred Thompson. Also included are a 1901 article by Mother Jones on child labor in the South, a tribute by Gene Debs, helpful annotations to the text, and a full bibliography. \$14 paper

Direct Action & Sabotage

Three classic IWW pamphlets by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Walker C. Smith and Wm. Trautman, showing how these age-old practices can be integrated into the struggle for industrial freedom. \$15

The Case of Leonard Peltier

by Arthur J Miller & Pio Celestino. An introduction to Peltier's frame-up for his political activities. \$3

Fields, Factories & Workshops by Peter Kropotkin.

A classic vision of how we could redirect production to meet human needs, with a new introduction by Yaacov Oved. \$7.50

The Story of Mary MacLare

A vigorous early feminist attack on conformity and puritanism. \$15

Work Hazards and Industrial Conflict, \$6

Silent Agitators

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

Books for Rebel Workers

One Big Union. by IWW.

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

1998 Labor History Calendar

14 photos, hundreds of dates. \$8.50

The General Strike.

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

Labor Law for the Rank & Filer.

by Staughton Lynd.

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

IWW Organizing Manual (2nd Ed)

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

Bread & Roses, \$2

British IWW magazine #1 Lead story: Five More Years of Hard Labour?

A New Union Vision

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

IWW Little Red Songbook (36th Edition)

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

Rebel Voices.

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

We Have Fed You All for 1,000 Years.

Utah Phillips sings Wobbly songs. Tape \$10.

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

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Cat knocking over xmas tree \$5/dozen. Christmas card designed by Joe Hill, 4 color, \$10/dozen. Merry Commodity Fetishism (tree crashes tv screen) \$5/dozen.

Posters by Carlos Cortez

Lucy Parsons, Ben Fletcher, Joe Hill or Mother Jones. \$25

Bumperstickers

Eight bumperstickers, each with IWW Globe on left. Slogans: Solidarity Forever, One Big Union, Profit is Theft, Stop World Hunger - Eat the Rich, Because Capitalism Cannot Be Reformed, An Injury to One Is an Injury to All!, Don't Mourn Organize, Labor is Entitled to All It Creates. Black on durable white stock, \$1.25 each, post-paid.

Workers' Culture

Juice is Stranger than Friction.

by T-Bone Slim.

Funny and irreverent, Slim's popular writings for the *Industrial Worker* of the 20s and 30s are collected for the first time. \$10

Canadian IWW Songbook

41 songs by Arlene Mantle, Rick Fielding, Faith Nolan, Len Wallace & others, with music & chords. \$5.

Crystal Gazing the Amber Fluid.

by Carlos Cortez.

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

The Flivver King: A story of Ford-America by Upton Sinclair

Walter Reuther called this labor novel "the best single organizational document ever written." \$12

Harlem Glory by Claude McKay

Black life during the Depression and New Deal, drawing on the author's experiences in the IWW and socialist movement. \$12

Images of Labor. compiled by John Gorman

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

Education for Struggle: American Labor Colleges of the 1920s & 1930s by Richard J. Attelbaugh

The IWW's Work People's College in Minnesota, Brockwood in New York, and Commonwealth College in Arkansas. \$20

Schooling for "Good Rebels":

Socialist Education for Children by Kenneth Teitelbaum

Explores the weekend schools American socialists organized to teach children about social justice. \$20 (published at \$44.95)

Art for the Masses: A Radical Magazine and its Graphics, 1911-1917 by Rebecca Zurier

An innovative revolutionary magazine that showcased artwork by Robert Minor, Art Young and Pablo Picasso to name a few. 150 illustrations, \$10

Food Not Bombs.

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

Break Their Haughty Power.

by Eugene Nelson.

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

Cassettes, \$10 each.

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

All Used Up. Utah Phillips

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

I Have Seen Freedom. Si Kahn

As Seen on No TV. Chris Chandler

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

A World to Win. Tom Juravich

Greenfire. Dakota Sid, Travers Clifford

Food Phone Gas Lodging. Charlie King

Justice. Toshi Reagon

Out of Darkness. Tom Juravich

Compact Disks \$15 each.

Look to the Left. Anne Feeney

Heartland, Anne Feeney Live

Video Documentary

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

Labor History

The Centralia Tragedy of 1919: Elmer Smith and the Wobblies by Tom Copeland. \$17.50.

Fellow Worker: The Life of Fred Thompson. Edited by D. Roediger.

Autobiographical reflections and philosophy from a veteran Wobbly who bridged the generations. \$10

The Great Bisbee Deportation of July 12, 1917

compiled by Rob Hanson. \$2.50

Solidarity Forever-An oral history of the IWW. Steward Bird, Dan Georgakas & Deborah Shaffer, eds.

A compilation of interviews with former and veteran Wobblies. Badly transcribed, but interesting reading. \$11

Memoirs of a Wobbly.

by Henry McGuckin.

A rambling Wobbly organizer of the 1910s tells how they hoboed, organized and lived. Free speech fights and "fanning the flames of discontent." \$5

Rebel Girl, the autobiography of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. \$9.95.

Working the Waterfront.

Wobbly longshoreman Gilbert Mers tells of 42 years on the Texas waterfront as a rank-and-file radical. Hardcover: \$20

Proletarians of the North: Mexican Industrial Workers in the Midwest by Zaragosa Vargas.

A compelling history of the struggles of Mexican workers who migrated to the Midwest between the First World War and the Great Depression. \$15

We Are All Leaders: The Alternative Unionism of the Early 1930s

edited by Staughton Lynd

Workers were taking charge of our own destiny before the State and labor fakers intervened. Includes Wob Mike Kozura's account of coal miners seizing the mines to operate them themselves. \$21.95

The River Ran Red: Homestead 1892, ed. Demarest & Weingartner

Anthology of period texts & artwork tell the story of the lockout at the Homestead Steel Works. \$22 (published at \$49.95).

Work Without End: Abandoning Shorter Hours for the Right to Work by Benjamin Hunnicutt \$15

Available from IWW Branches

T-SHIRTS

Wobbly Globe, (S, M only), Join the OBU (L, XL only), Sabo-Cat, General Strike (S, M, L, XL) \$12 each, 100% cotton. State size & color (red or white) San Francisco Branch, PO Box 40485, SF CA 94140.

Film Workers (worker stepping over Hollywood sign), One Big Union \$10 Red shirts, black print. Button: Don't Whine - Organize Film Workers Organizing Committee IU 630. \$1. Los Angeles GMB, 1748 Clinton St., LA CA 90026. Ask for list of books about the IWW. 213-353-9885.

IWW Globe Black on Red, L or XL. \$14 + \$3 s/h. P&L Printing, 2298 Clay Dr., Denver CO 80211

Guinea Pig Zero, a Wobbly zine for human research subjects. Sample copy \$3, PO Box 42531, Philadelphia PA 19101 bhelms@iww.org

3" IWW Button (Red & Black, "Labor Is Entitled to All It Creates") \$2. Twin Cities IWW, Don Kurth, 7315 Dupont Ave. S., Richfield MN 55423-3025.

OUTSIDE U.S.

Canadian Songbook \$5. 36th Edition Little Red Songbook \$10. c/o J. Chang, 137 Roncesvalles #208, Toronto ONT M6R 2L2

British Isles - Songbook (36th Edition) £4 post-paid; a selection of literature is available from IWW, 75 Humberstone Gate, Leicester LE1 1WB.

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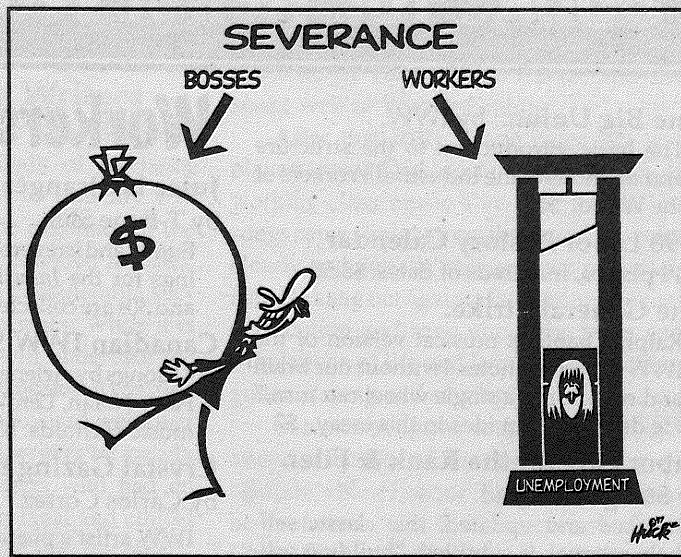
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Jobless Fight Back

In a series of New Year's Eve actions dedicated to the 108 arrested for eating at Montreal's Queen Elizabeth Hotel Dec. 3 (see story in January issue), homeless protestors with the Comité des Sans-Logis (CdSL) occupied the swank Royal Monceau hotel and won 40 free meals from Paris landmark Fouquet's restaurant before demonstrating in front of the Canadian Embassy to highlight the police repression faced by members of the Comité des Sans-Emploi Montréal-Centre. The protests were part of an ongoing series of actions in France against unemployment and for increased social assistance that have seen 23 social-service centres, or ASSEDICs, occupied by jobless militants.

The 100 protestors chose the famous Fouquet's restaurant to make a symbolic parallel with the Montreal protest, giving briefings to the French media in front of the restaurant and finally winning 40 free meals from the diner that charges 2,500 francs (about \$500) per person for New Year's Eve dinner. The meals were taken to activists occupying a government office for a non-traditional reveillon.

The CdSL has occupied over 100 buildings in Paris in an effort to force negotiations aimed at finding housing for homeless people.



Solidarity under attack on Aussie wharfs

I'm don't usually subscribe to political conspiracy theories, but in the current dispute on the Australian waterfront the usual balance is reversed. In this instance only the cranks seriously argue that there is NOT a conspiracy afoot.

The object of the conspiracy is the destruction or emasculation of one of Australia's most powerful unions, the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA). The cast of plotters includes the leadership of the right-wing National Farmers Federation (NFF) and senior members of the government, including the Prime Minister and the Defence Minister (who happens to be a former NFF president).

The game-plan of the bosses in the current waterfront dispute in Melbourne was to provoke the wharfies into some sort of violent confrontation with the front employer group set up by the NFF. They want to destroy the maritime union and de-unionise the waterfront, but the union is playing it cool mostly. The government has put in place powerful anti-union legislation

and have been trying to provoke a dispute for months, but existing employers have too much to lose so a dummy stevedoring company has been set up, with the stated intention of employing non-union labour.

This is like a red rag to a bull for the traditionally militant wharfies, the obvious intention is to provoke them into taking industrial action against a supposed "third party", the stevedoring company which is "sub-letting" part of its facilities to the new company fronted by the NFF. Of course "secondary boycotts" are banned by the legislation, the union and individual workers could be dragged through the bosses courts, the union bankrupted and de-registered, the workers sacked en-masse, the whole neo-liberal agenda.

So far the wharfies have displayed uncharacteristic moderation, and why not. The plot to hatch a non-union workforce is a long way from success. Even if scab workers can be hired and trained, the front employer has to convince nervous customers that it is wise to entrust their valuable cargo

to such a dubious enterprise, then that cargo has to be able to navigate the stormy waters of international working class solidarity and be unloaded and shipped on to its intended destination. Of course, the wharfies hint, there is also the question of whether a ship-owner can be found who is willing to load a "scab" cargo. The Maritime Union has loudly proclaimed its belief that such a ship would only be worth its scrap value to its owners henceforth, suggesting that no-one would ever load or unload it again.

Maybe the wharfies are bluffing, then again maybe not. Their message to nervous employers is - "Are you feeling lucky, punk?"

— Bill Bartlett

Union Scabbing

Thousands of registered nurses are waging quickie strikes against 54 Northern California Kaiser Permanente medical facilities, in an attempt to revive contract talks which have been stalled for more than a year. A two-day strike in late January targeted inadequate staffing levels.

The strike had a ripple effect on other hospitals, and public health states of emergency were declared in Alameda, Contra Costa and Solano counties.

Service Employees International Union Local 250 the union that represents most Kaiser employees, advised members to cross picket lines. The AFL-CIO asked the union to participate in the national labor-management partnership it has forged with Kaiser, rather than go on strike.

Meanwhile, a telemarketing company that markets the AFL-CIO's "Union Privilege" credit card closed up shop Feb. 1, just weeks after 70 percent of Telespectrum Worldwide workers signed C.W.A. union authorization cards. The company said it would relocate from Cambridge, Mass., to New Mexico to thwart unionization.

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.
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 Name: _____ Occupation: _____
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Education Workers

U Mass TAs may strike

The University of Massachusetts administration has declared impasse in bargaining with the Graduate Employees Organization (UAW), unilaterally imposing its last offer upon more than a thousand teaching assistants and other graduate employees.

That offer had been unanimously rejected by GEO members Feb. 11 after nearly two years of bargaining. Under its terms, pay and benefits for most workers would be frozen, and union rights severely curtailed.

As we go to press, U Mass graduate employees are considering a strike.

AFT/NEA to merge

The American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association have reached a preliminary agreement to merge into a 3.2 million-member union in 2002.

The two unions have battled each other for years, pointing to the other's sorry contracts and lack of democracy in a series of expensive representation campaigns. The threat of a raid has often forced officials to represent members more vigilantly than they might have preferred, and school administrators across the country hope the merger will lead to more "stable" labor relations.

In recent years, leaders of both "unions" have called for closer cooperation with management, including programs to reduce protections against arbitrary discipline and termination of education workers.

Squalidity Forever?

A Community College of Spokane

(Washington) part-time instructor was recently fired by her boss, who is a member of the same NEA affiliate which "represents" her. The "union" has refused to file a grievance in her behalf. Willene Goodwin worked for the college for 8 years before her supervisor objected to her organizing a meeting with her fellow part-timers to discuss safety concerns. She was reassigned to a lower-paying job, and then notified Christmas Eve that she was being terminated. Goodwin was replaced by her supervisor's sister.

Part-timers constitute nearly three-fourths of the college's teaching staff, but have few rights under the union contract. Part-timers receive much lower pay and most have no benefits. The union also represents full-time faculty, including many who hold administrative appointments in which they oversee other full-time and part-time staff. Goodwin had been the only part-timer on the union's executive board.

Part-time workers play an important role in educational institutions of all types, yet few unions take their needs seriously. Many "part-timers" put in just as much work as full-time staff for half (or less) the pay. The lousy pay and conditions unions have allowed administrators to impose on our part-time fellow workers, in turn, encourages the bosses to steadily increase their numbers and drags all of us down.

It's our choice — we can organize with our fellow workers for better conditions for all, or we can continue to see our pay and conditions deteriorate in a competitive rat race to the bottom.

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