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Korean workers strike against privatization

BY MICHAEL J HARGIS

As we go to press the illegal strike of 5,300 Korean electric power workers is entering its 15th day, and thousands of police are searching the capital, Seoul, for strikers and union activists in an effort to forcibly end the strike.

Gas, electricity and rail workers struck Feb. 25 for shorter hours and against plans to privatize public utilities and railways, which they fear will lead to mass lay-offs. Strikes by public service workers are illegal in Korea.

On the first day of the joint strike by workers at the three public utilities, the Korea Gas Corporation Workers Union reached an agreement, on the basis of management's commitment to review the entire restructuring plan. However, the government and management failed to present any proposal to address the demands raised by railway and electricity workers.

On Feb. 26th the militant Korean Confederation of Trade Unions staged a one-day solidarity strike that brought 132,000 workers onto the streets in 22 cities.

The KCTU strike demanded: Withdrawal of plans for privatizing strategic public utilities; Working hour reduction which does not discriminate against workers in small enterprises and in atypical employment; and Release of imprisoned unionists, including KCTU President Dan Buying-ho.

At the same time, the KCTU declared it would launch a broader general strike the moment the government presents new labor legislation that would introduce a variable working hour system (annualization), fewer rest days, and an eight-year implementation of shorter working hours (rejecting demands for immediate implementation).

Meanwhile, negotiations with the 25,000-member Korean Railway Workers' Union, affiliated with the more conservative Federation of Korean Trade Unions, resulted in a tentative agreement, achieving concessions on working hours and the rehiring of some union leaders who had been dismissed for so-called "unlawful protests." However, the government refused to discuss privatization and rail union leaders are threatening further strike action if this crucial issue is not resolved.

Although the rail workers returned to work Feb. 27, this did not stop the government from issuing warrants for the arrest of rail union leaders, 15 of whom had been arrested at press time. If convicted, they face up to five years in jail.

Declaring that the power strikers are "saboteurs of the very law and order system of the state," management cut off negotiations March 6. The government, for its part, from President Kim Dae Jung to the Prosecutor's Office, has been



RINI TEMPLETON

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Alberta teachers wage first-ever province-wide coordinated strike Striking for schools

BY EUGENE PLAWIUK

Over 21,000 teachers struck February 4, the largest walk-out of teachers ever, to demand smaller class sizes, increased funding for public education, and wage increases promised in the last provincial election. The Alberta Teachers Association – whose motto is *Magister ne Servitas; Masters not Servants* – is both a professional association and a union. They have the ultimate closed shop, being responsible for teacher accreditation and also for collective bargaining with the province's 62 school boards.

Unlike other striking workers who face being replaced by scabs, teachers in Alberta schools can't be replaced. So the teachers do not picket, instead they simply shut down the schools by not going to work.

Teachers spent the last year mobilizing around public education issues, including wage increases to make up for roll backs and wage reductions imposed on all public sector workers in 1995. During last year's provincial election, the ruling Conservative Party promised significant wage increases to

The government, following American-style privatization "reforms," has:

- created Charter Schools;
- increased tax funds to private schools;
- Instituted province-wide school-based funding/management (TQM applied to public education);
- Created a voucher system where funding follows the student – a market-based approach to public education forcing schools to "compete for customers" and provide "customer satisfaction";
- contracted out custodial, maintenance and support staff;
- cut the number of school boards;
- Taken direct control of all school board funding;
- Reduced funding to public education by over 40% between 1980-1995, prior to these reforms.

doctors, nurses and teachers. In a shameless act of vote-buying, the government gave unprecedented 22% increases to the United Nurses of Alberta, to the doctors, and to its own general services staff.

The teachers expected the same increases, but were to be disappointed fairly quickly after the election. Last summer the Minister of Learning announced that school boards would only get enough funding to pay 6% wage increases over two years for all public education workers: teachers, custodial, maintenance, support and administration.

Since last summer the ATA has mounted an aggressive public education campaign around the need to increase teachers in Alberta schools, to reduce class sizes, and to fully fund public education. Wages were brought up in the context of a broken promise, which left egg on the government's face.

Suddenly last fall we went from being a province with a billion dollar surplus and a government flush with cash to a province with an incredibly shrinking surplus due to decreasing oil and gas prices. The debt and deficit hysteria was whipped up to say we had no more money for education. The fact that government MLAs had just given themselves a 20% raise, much of it tax-free, was a slap in the face of public education workers who were being told that their wages would be frozen at 6% over two years.

Bargaining began in the press. ATA locals bargain with local school boards, as there is no province-wide bargaining in Alberta. But the ATA took the government to task for not providing enough money for education, forcing school boards to choose between putting money to reduce class sizes or increase wages. The ATA then unified its bargaining position across the province, in effect creating provincial bargaining.

Throughout December and January, teacher local after teacher local voted to strike. The ATA had developed a rotational

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Longer hours, less jobs

Weeks after the U.S. government admitted that the economy was mired in recession, economists are promising that prosperity is around the corner.

But it will be a funny kind of prosperity. If you're one of the more than a million U.S. workers who lost their jobs last year, don't go expecting them back. The economists predict another jobless recovery, noting that productivity is rising so fast that the bosses can get more work done with fewer workers. This, they think, is a good thing.

And the International Labor Organization recently reported that American workers added nearly a full week to our work year in the 1990s. We now work longer hours than any other industrialized nation in the world, toiling away our lives while our fellow workers pace the streets desperately looking for work.

With nearly 350,000 workers a month exhausting their unemployment benefits, Congress is considering temporarily extending benefits by another 13 weeks – to 37 weeks, by far the paltriest unemployment scheme in the industrialized world.

Once unemployment benefits are exhausted, there's always welfare – or at least

what remains of it after the Clinton reforms. Perhaps fearing that unemployment is not rising quickly enough, the Bush administration is pushing to allow states to replace public employees with welfare recipients forced to work off their meager benefits (usually not enough even to pay rent) at less than minimum wage.

Meanwhile, a new national study, published as *Divergent Paths*, concludes that upward mobility for American workers is all but dead. Only about 10 percent of white male workers can expect the wage progression of job security that was typical just 20 years ago. More workers are being funneled into low-paying jobs in sectors such as retail trade. "Growth in inequality appears to be the signature theme of the new economy," sociologist Martina Morris concludes.

"If we continue on the trajectory found in our study, it will make the gulf between the rich and the poor nearly unbridgeable."

Falling wages, longer hours, speed-up and rising unemployment are not inevitable, of course; rather, they are the consequences of our failure to organize and fight for our interests as workers. We do the world's work, it's time to reap the product of our labor.

Revive radical labor

Two comments: I agree with David Palmer in welcoming the "new emphasis on reporting worldwide labor news."

I believe there is a need for a revival of the American labor movement across other political differences. From reading *The Rebel Girl* by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, one sees the great variety of labor, radical and progressive people who were in the fights for labor rights and free speech.

Raymond Solomon

Too much cheerleading?

Dear Fellow Worker Editor,

It's great that the *Industrial Worker* has returned to a regular schedule, just like other labor newspapers. And it's really encouraging to read about our union's recent successes on the shop floor. Now I'm starting to wonder, is our paper too much like other labor papers that only serve as cheerleaders for the organization?

Successful organizing campaigns make the headlines; that's as it should be. But what about our failures? Not only was the end of the ACORN campaign never mentioned, but more importantly, there was no analysis of what went right and what went wrong, and what we need to do different in the future.

This tendency is apparently the policy of the *IW*, either by design or by default. I knew that an important election at the Nature's food store in Portland, Oregon, had been lost, so I looked to see a post-mortem in the March issue. The lost election was barely mentioned in an unrelated article about an election at the Daily Grind store.

I was fortunate to be able to spend several weeks in Portland last October. I attended several meetings of the Nature's Organizing Committee and was very impressed by the determination and energy of the com-

mittee members. These hard-working folks would start their meetings at 10 p.m., despite the fact some of them had to be back at the store early the next morning. These folks deserve recognition for their efforts, sympathy for their loss, and encouragement to continue the struggle. How can we do that if we don't even know the election was lost?

As a would-be organizer, I need to know the good, the bad, and the ugly of the campaign so that I can learn from it. Surely we can analyze the campaign without engaging in personal attacks on organizers who might have made mistakes in judgement or tactics.

I know it's damn hard to admit possible mistakes by the individuals involved or by the overall organization. But we won't advance very far if we can't turn a critical eye to our work. The folks in Portland are leading the way as far as I'm concerned. They deserve our complete, unqualified support for their efforts. But the union as a whole also deserves to learn from the Portland experience, both the good and the bad. That can't happen if our paper won't discuss it.

In Solidarity,
Jim Ellsworth
Manchester, Maine

Editor's Note: While I agree that analysis of our successes and our failures is important, both for the fellow workers involved and for the union as a whole, it can often take time for the necessary reflection – especially when those involved are also working on other campaigns. On page 5 of this issue, readers can find an article by a member of the Portland IU 660 organizing committee reflecting on the lessons of the Nature's campaign which arrived a week after this letter. It does not strike me as unreasonable for the fellow workers involved to have needed a couple of months for this essential task.

While an article reflecting on the ACORN drive might well be interesting, that campaign is far from over. *IWW* headquarters continues to regularly field calls from

ACORN employees seeking help in getting their wages paid and addressing the miserable conditions that sparked last year's union drive. As reported in the March *IW*, Portland IU 650 has won recognition rights for ACORN staff there, though management is balking at returning staff to their jobs and opening negotiations. In Florida, a union representation election is pending, held-up by ACORN's stalling tactics.

The ACORN campaign raises serious issues, ranging from the atrocious working conditions prevailing at many "social justice" workplaces to the difficulties of organizing workers who have little incentive to stay on the job through a prolonged struggle given that even McDonald's offers better working conditions, to balancing local autonomy with the needs of a national or international campaign. The latter, in particular, is a significant issue, but one I believe better addressed in the *IWW's* internal discussion bulletin.

Defy the G8, come to Kananaskis

The G8 meeting in Kananaskis, Alberta, June 26-27 presents a challenge to social movements around the world. This summit of the dominant economies of the world strives to present the G8 vision of the world as one of development and democracy. In fact, it represents an agenda of corporate globalization, which results in the social exclusion of growing millions of people, systemic global poverty, and the degradation of the natural environment, supported by escalating international militarism.

Civil society in Alberta is mobilizing to confront the G8 and present an alternative vision to corporate globalization. We invite people across the country and around the world to join with us in building a festival of resistance to the G8 in Kananaskis.

Solidarity Village will be a microcosm of the possible – a place where we can strategize, tell stories, share regional issues; build long-term coalitions; demonstrate liv-

ing alternatives to capitalism and teach each other new ways to manifest dissent.

Solidarity Village will provide a setting for teach-ins and workshops and celebrate art, music and drama as an integral part of building a global popular movement. It will provide a space for convergence, medical and legal aid, independent media, and other support to those participating in direct action. It will strive to create a collective, inclusive and diverse space that respects human safety, the environment, and the First Nations people who have invited us to their land.

Solidarity Village will grow out of the foothills near the summit site. Workshops and training will begin on June 21, and the camp will build to its height the days of the G8 Summit, June 26 and 27.

The Village will be a collective vision, and we call on individuals and groups to participate in the camp by organizing workshops, coordinating tents, creating art and music, providing resources, assisting with logistics, or by mobilizing your community to come to Alberta to challenge the G8 with Albertans. We also call on people to act in solidarity with us in Kananaskis by resisting the G8 in their communities, their regions, and their countries.

To get involved in Solidarity Village, visit the website at solidarityvillage.cjb.net or email us at solvil@activist.ca.

In Solidarity,
Communications, Energy & Paperworkers Union of Canada, Alberta Federation of Labour, Co-Motion Collective EcoCity, Edmonton Council of Canadians, Edmonton G8 Planning Collective, Alberta Council for Global Cooperation, Calgary District Labour Council

May Day Greeting Ads

We traditionally run greeting ads in our May issue. Ads must be received by April 4 for inclusion. Rates: \$10 for one column inch, \$25 for three, \$70 for 1/16 page (4" by 2 col.s), \$120 for a quarter page.

Extra copies also available.

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Post Office Box 13476
Philadelphia, PA 19101 USA
215/763-1274 • ghq@iww.org

General Secretary-Treasurer:
Alexis Buss

General Executive Board:
Bill Bradley, Joshua Freeze, Mike Hargis, John Hollingsworth, Patrick McGuire, Hazel Roehrig, Aaron Rothenburger

Editor: Jon Bekken
11 Bexley Road #2
Roslindale MA 02131 USA
jbekken@bari.iww.org

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IWW directory

Australia

IWW Regional Organising Committee PO Box 1013, Collingwood 3066. roc@iww.org.au
www.iww.org.au

Melbourne GMB: PO Box 145, Moreland VIC 3058. melbourne@iww.org.au

New Zealand

PO Box 5407, Dunedin, Aotearoa (New Zealand). iwwgmbdunedin@e3.co.nz

British Isles

IWW Regional Organising Committee PO Box 4414, Poole BH15 3YL, info@iww.org.uk. Membership application enquiries, phone Ray on 01202-257556.

Brighton: BrightonIWW@hotmail.com

London IWW: 0709-2016650.

Pioneer Cooperative Retail Society Job Branch & General Distribution Workers IU 660 c/o Regional Organising Committee.

Swindon Region GMB & Research Councils IU 620: Kevin Brandstatter, del., 9 Omdurman St., Swindon SN2 1HA. 01793-610707.

Yorkshire IWW: YorksIWW@hotmail.com, 0771-5517094.

Canada

Alberta
Edmonton GMB: PO Box 75175, T6E 6K1. iww-edm@iww.ca <http://edmonton.iww.ca>

British Columbia

Vancouver IWW: PO Box 4755, Stn. Terminal, V6B 4A4. 604-682-3269 x8493

Victoria GMB: PO Box 8283, V8W 3R9. 250-360-9803 vicwob@hotmail.com

Manitoba

Winnipeg GMB: IWW, c/o WORC, PO Box 1, R3C 2G1.

Ontario

Ottawa-Outaouais GMB: Peter Timusk, Sec., 701-151 Parkdale Ave., K1Y 4V8. email: ptimusk@sympatico.ca French-language del: Mathieu Brûlé parti_hardcore@yahoo.com

Toronto GMB: toronto.gmb@iww.ca

Germany

IWW c/o Barrikade, Bismarckstrasse 41a,

D-47 443 Moers. Daniel Zimmerman, del., syndikat-a@fau.org

United States

Arizona

Phoenix GMB: c/o Aaron, 1309 S Farmer Ln, Tempe 85281. aaron@iww.org 480-303-9580.

California

Los Angeles GMB: PO Box 207, San Pedro 90733-0207. 310-831-6023

San Francisco Bay Area GMB: PO Box 11412, Berkeley 94712. 415-863-WOBS. Meetings 2nd & 4th Tuesdays at 7 p.m. (Call for location)

Curbside and Buyback IU 670 Recycling Shops: Bruce Valde, del., 510-652-9462.

San Jose: Adam Welch, del. pager: 408-795-9672 email: adam_freedom@yahoo.com

Santa Barbara GMB: PO Box 23008, 93121. sbgmb@yahoo.com

Colorado

Denver: P&L Printing Job Shop: 2298 Clay, Denver 80211. 303-433-1852.

Hawai'i

Honolulu: PO Box 11928, 96828. Mike Long, del., 808-396-1078 molong@hawaii.edu

Illinois

Chicago GMB: PO Box 465 Ave., Evanston 60204. del: michaelhargis@netscape.net

Kansas

Lawrence GMB: PO Box 176, 66044. 785-830-0120

Kentucky

Louisville: Ben Fletcher GMB, P. O. Box 1313, 40201.

Louisiana

New Orleans GMB: c/o Jeffrey Brite, 2513 Carondelet St., 70130. jbrite@acadiacom.net

Maine

Norumbega GMB: PO Box 3343, Lewiston 04243. Jim Ellsworth, del., 207-626-5388. jimells@mint.net

Maryland

Baltimore GMB: 1621 Fleet St., 21231. bltgbm@iww.org

Massachusetts

Boston Area GMB & Education Workers IU 620 Branch: PO Box 391724, Cambridge 02139. Steve Kellerman, del., 617-469-5162.

Michigan

Detroit GMB: 6135 Regular, 48209. 810-321-7154.

Grand Rapids GMB: PO Box 6629, 49516.

Minnesota

Duluth GMB: c/o Laverne Capan, 1522 N 8th Ave E, 55805-1115.

Minneapolis/St Paul GMB: 1708 E 26th St, 55404. Dels. Sam Adams 612-724-9158.

Missouri

St Louis: P.O. Box 11551, 63105 Del. Richard Burke, 314-849-3530. burkemo@earthlink.net

New York

NYC GMB: PO Box 7430, JAF Station, New York City 10116, iww-nyc@bari.iww.org

Upstate NY GMB: PO Box 74, Altamont 12009. 518-861-5627. Rochelle Semel, del, 291 Bristol Rd, Hartwick 13348. 607-293-6489.

North Carolina

New Bern: Bruce Arnold, del., 1550 Trent Blvd #Q-4, 28560.

Ohio

Cincinnati: Mark Damron, del PO Box 42233, 45242.

Toledo GMB: PO Box 20128, 43610 419-242-0563, UEItoledo@accesstoleledo.com

Oregon

Lane County GMB: PO Box 371, Eugene 97401. iwwlu@efn.org 541-343-7828.

Portland GMB: PO Box 15005, 97293-5005. pdx@iww.org 503-796-3474.

Restaurant Workers Industrial Union 640 Branch: PO Box 15005, 97293-5005. 503-231-5488.

Public Service IU 650 Branch: c/o Red & Black Cafe, 2138 SE Division, Portland 97202. billbradleyiww@hotmail.com 503-236-6948.

Pennsylvania

Lancaster GMB: PO Box 796, 17608

Philadelphia GMB: PO Box 42777, 19101. 215-763-1274

Paper Crane Press IU 450 Job Shop, papercrane@erols.com, 610-358-9496.

Pittsburgh: Kenneth Miller, del, PO Box 99416, 15213. 412-231-2085.

Rhode Island

Providence GMB: PO Box 5795, 02903. 401-861-9864.

Texas

Austin GMB: PO Box 650011, 78765. 512-467-7360 delgin@io.com

Dallas: Covington Hall GMB, 972-993-2020 x1943. dallasiiww@dallasiiww.s5.com <http://www.dallasiiww.s5.com>

Utah

Salt Lake City GMB: PO Box 520835, 84152-0835. slcgm@iww.org 801-485-1969.

Vermont

Montpelier: Bob Heald, del, PO Box 1285, 05601. 802-229-1719.

Virginia

Harrisonburg: Mike Slaton, del., 645 Kyle St. 22801.

Washington

Industrial Transportation Project: Arthur J Miller, PO Box 5464, Tacoma 98415-0464.

Olympia GMB: PO Box 2775, 98507. 360-956-3713. olywobs@hotmail.com

Seattle Industrial District Council: 5215 Ballard NW, 98107. 206-706-6250. bp172@scn.org

Wisconsin

Madison GMB: P.O. Box 2442, 53703-2442.

IU 450 Lakeside Press Job Shop: 1334 Williamson, Madison 53703. 608-255-1800.

Railroad Workers IU 520: Baltimore Red, del., PO Box 3010, Madison 53704. baltimore@red@hotmail.com 773-255-5412..

Education Workers IU 620 Job Shop: UW Greens Infoshop, 31 University Square, Madison 53715. 608-262-9036.

Milwaukee: IWW, PO Box 07632, 53207.

Winnipeg lines up

BY PATRICK MCGUIRE

Interest in the IWW has picked up again in Winnipeg, Manitoba, as workers in a courier/bike repair shop and a health food store recently lined up with the OBU.

Natural Cycle is a worker-owned collective that operates a courier service and bicycle repair shop. All members recently joined the IWW to bolster IWW organizing in IU 540 Municipal Transport Workers. Natural Cycle is in the process of applying for an IWW shop card.

Also of interest to those who have been following the saga of Harvest Collective IU 660, will be the news that there is renewed interest by workers at Organza. Harvest Collective, a consumer-owned co-op, was organized by the IWW four years ago, but when Harvest went under and re-opened under private ownership as Organza the new management hand-picked workers who previously held management positions or were outspoken opponents of the IWW for re-hire.

The Winnipeg GMB filed an unfair labour practice against Organza for discrimination in hiring based on union affiliation, but sadly justice wasn't found in the boss courts. Now workers are starting to get fed up with their "green" capitalist employers. One boss scheme encouraged workers to sign away their right to paid overtime unless they worked over 40 hours each week.

Recently, a worker who inquired about a pay raise was told that management's hands were tied due to "the union." A very strange comment indeed, given that the IWW offered on numerous occasions to enter into bargaining a collective agreement and to represent the workers at Organza, all of which were ignored or rebuffed by Organza management.

It seems the Organza bosses want to have it both ways! But isn't that always the way it works with the bums on the plush? Wobbly delegates will be meeting with workers from Organza soon to see if a new drive is possible and to sign up the dissenting few who snuck through management's "clean, green and block-headed" hiring requirements.

Wobblies form GMB in Dallas, TX

BY BRIAN OLIVER SHEPPARD

Last Fall, members of the IWW in Dallas convened to form the Covington Hall GMB. The name was chosen to commemorate the Wobbly organizer, poet and author of *Labor Struggles in the Deep South*, who spent much of his time in the lumber yards of east Texas.

The branch was largely formed in response to the firing of ACORN workers in the Spring of 2001. Far from quashing union activity, the ACORN actions made many curious about the IWW. Dallas Wobs fired by ACORN are still in court as of this writing.

The Dallas IWW has so far agitated for class consciousness-raising by means of direct distribution of literature to workers, depositing literature in workplaces where bosses are known to treat workers harshly, and by tabling. Workshops are currently being prepared on subjects such as starting a workplace union for beginners.

The Dallas IWW webpage is at <http://www.dallasiwv.s5.com> and they can be emailed at dallasiwv@dallasiwv.s5.com.

Wob sentenced to 90 days

Lancaster, Penn., IWW member Tim Fasnacht was sentenced to 90 days in jail Feb. 22 when police suddenly fabricated charges of assault on a police officer in the midst of what was supposed to be a routine hearing on disorderly conduct charges for which the maximum penalty was a \$300 fine.

FW Fasnacht was one of more than a dozen anti-racists charged for their role in confronting white supremacists in York PA Jan. 12. He was the only defendant sentenced to jail time. The sentence is being appealed.

Taco Bell Truth Tour comes to Chicago

BY MICHAEL J. HARGIS

On March 3 the Taco Bell Truth Tour came through Chicago. Chicago Wobblies were among the 100-plus workers and students who gathered at Our Lady of Mercy parish in the Ravenswood Gardens neighborhood to welcome the Truth Tour.

Due to a snowstorm the day before, the tour buses coming from Atlanta were delayed, and the morning was spent finishing preparations for the march, making lunch, and viewing films documenting farm worker organizing by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in Florida and PCUN in Oregon.

One bus finally arrived around 1:00 p.m. (the second bus arrived 90 minutes later). The "Touristas" were greeted with drums and cheers as they filed into the church basement. After some words of greeting by local organizers and by CIW organizers in return, folks settled down to eat a lunch of tamales, tacos, rice and Mexican hot chocolate.

While people chowed down, three representatives of the Carousel Linen workers (mostly women and members of Unite!), who've been on strike against the laundry since last fall, related the story of their struggle and offered their solidarity to the embattled farmworkers. A laid-off member

of the Steelworkers union also talked about the plight of his industry, and the story of the struggle in the La Villita (Little Village) neighborhood for a new high school was told.

After a few more speeches by CIW organizers and a couple of warm-up chants, we were ready to hit the streets. The entire Tour contingent consisted of about 70 people, which included Immokalee tomato pickers, Tour organizers and interpreters, and two French McDonald's workers, who joined the tour as a show of solidarity on the part of striking McDonald's workers in Paris and Marseilles. Added to this were another 100-150 people attending the gathering and march from the Chicago area.

The march took off and immediately took over one lane of Montrose Ave. A tac-squad of plain-clothes types made the scene and basically directed traffic. The lively demo, which included a couple of giant puppets - a tomato picker and a lady liberty - made its way to a Taco Bell at the corner of Irving Park and California, much to the consternation of the police, and did a quick march through the drive-thru, then back onto Irving Park, on the way to our final destination - the Taco Bell at Western and Addison where the local Taco Bell Boycott

Committee had held several actions. During this leg of the march the cops made some half-hearted efforts to get people onto the sidewalk, but they didn't push it.

We finally made it to Western and Addison and proceeded to circle around the Taco Bell, which was nearly deserted except for a couple of wage-slaves and one patron who seemed to be quite amused, or bemused, by the proceedings. We Wobs donated our flagpole to the cause of hanging a Chihuahua piñata, which was promptly torn apart by members of the crowd.

After about an hour of picketing and chanting we decided to pack it in after a brief rally in the parking lot. Later on that evening people gathered at the Autonomous Zone for a "Taco Bell Boycott Festival" featuring literature tables, more food and three bands.

All in all the events were very energetic and inspiring. It was announced that just before the Tour hit the road Taco Bell had agreed to meet with CIW representatives to discuss the issues. This is an encouraging development. However, even if workers get Taco Bell to agree to increase the price it pays for its tomatoes one cent, there will still be the problem of getting the growers to pass it on to the workers. The struggle continues.

Portland IWW forming Industrial District Council

Facing increasingly large organizing drives, the four chartered and two applicant branches of the IWW in Portland have rented a union hall. The Hall located at 616 E. Burnside, will serve as office and meeting space for the IWW. We hope to have offices open by April 1, with a grand opening tentatively set for May 1.

Portland branches have organized out of cafes, bars and front rooms for years. But as we grow increasingly active, we are finding the lack of central offices detrimental. There are also plans for a small IWW-run café in the same storefront. Both the Cross Borders

Organizing Committee and Portland Indy-media will be renting offices at our hall.

At the February GMB meeting, members of the soon to be chartered IU540 Municipal Transport Branch brought a proposal to form an Industrial District Council. An IDC serves to coordinate the activities of multiple branches in one locality. Each branch and Industrial Organizing Committee would appoint a delegate to the IDC. All members of the IWW will be welcome to attend meetings but only delegates will have a vote.

The proposal has been met with some opposition. Many active Wobs have ques-

tioned setting up of another administrative body when the GMB has functioned well in that capacity. They also wonder about a lessening of direct democracy with a representative structure.

Proponents argue that the GMB has been saddled with too many general organization tasks (propaganda, fund-raising, education, etc.) to do what it's meant to do, generate new Industrial Organizing Committees. The argument for delegate-only voting is that open meetings lead to votes skewed toward those who can attend meetings and away from shop-floor members.

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 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 interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or 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 the everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

Join the IWW Today

The IWW is a union for all workers, a union dedicated to organizing on the job, in our industries and in our communities both to win better conditions today and to build a world without bosses, a world in which production and distribution are organized by workers ourselves to meet the needs of the entire population, not merely a handful of exploiters.

We are the Industrial Workers of the World because we organize industrially - that is to say, we organize all workers on the job into one union, rather than dividing workers by trade, so that we can pool our strength to fight the bosses together.

Since the IWW was founded in 1905, we have recognized the need to build a truly international union movement in order to confront the global power of the bosses and in order to strengthen workers' ability to stand in solidarity with our fellow workers no matter what part of the globe they happen to live on.

We are a union open to all workers, whether or not the IWW happens to have representation rights in your workplace. We organize the worker, not the job, recognizing that unionism is not about government certification or employer recognition but about workers coming together to address our common concerns. Sometimes this means striking or signing a contract. Sometimes it means refusing to work with an unsafe machine or following the bosses' orders so literally that nothing gets done. Sometimes it means agitating around particular issues or grievances in a specific workplace, or across an industry.

Because the IWW is a democratic, member-run union, decisions about what issues to address and what tactics to pursue are made by the workers directly involved.

TO JOIN: Mail this form with a check or money order for initiation and your first month's dues to: IWW, Post Office Box 13476, Philadelphia, PA 19101.

Initiation is the same as one month's dues. Our dues are calculated according to your income. If your monthly income is under \$1,000, dues are \$6 a month. If your monthly income is between \$1,000 - \$2,000, dues are \$12 a month. If your monthly income is over \$2,000 a month, dues are \$18 a month.

- I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer
- I agree to abide by the IWW constitution
- I will study its principles and make myself acquainted with its purposes.



Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____
 Occupation: _____
 Phone: _____ E-mail: _____
 Amount Enclosed: _____
 Membership includes a subscription to the Industrial Worker.



One farmer wanted to know, "Why are we giving millions of dollars to millionaires?" This query was prompted by an Associated Press report that more than 60 percent of federal farm subsidies in the past year went to only 10 percent of the farmers. Among these 10 percent were names like David Rockefeller, Ted Turner, Sam Donaldson, Scottie Pippen, etcetera. Such should not be surprising if one scans the signatories of the Declaration of Independence where many of them are listed as farmers – not the ones who were grubbing their livelihood out of the rocky soil, but those who had large plantations with armies of kidnapped Africans exploited for their unpaid labor.

So much for that great document that proclaimed, "All men are created equal." No mention about women, either!

In the golden state of California there seems to be a problem with overcrowded schools. Some of the native sons/sas are not questioning the mismanagement of the system they are living under but are putting the blame on the immigration of Mexican nationals, documented as well as undocumented, who come into the state and have children who are legally born citizens, but never-the-less flood an already overcrowded school system. So much for these people who boast of the free and open educational system.

One cannot but reflect upon Dick Gregory's famous quip that the Indians had a lousy immigration policy. Of course, they had very little to say about immigration once the invaders had established themselves.

It's nice to know that we have comedians in high places, namely Attorney General John Ashcroft, who seems to be disturbed by the bare-breasted statue in his headquarters, allegorically representing the spirit of justice. Is it because the presence of the statue interferes with his ability to concentrate on his official duties? Is it justice that bothers him? Or is it possible he would be less upset with a statue of a naked dude?

While I am aware of the fact that many feminists find it offensive that depictions of female nudes have been overworked as representations of allegorical figures, this is the legacy of a long-standing puritanical society; often these allegorical representations appear completely out of any context. Being a schmutziger alte mensch, your scribe has never been opposed to such representations. On the contrary, your scribe finds them quite pleasing.

However, this is the culmination of a long-standing patriarchal society where women are depicted as vessels of immediate gratification and not much else. It is but another example of how far we are from achieving an egalitarian society, despite the fact that the prevailing male-oriented attitude has produced such worthy practitioners as Rubens, Tiziano, Picasso and so on, not to mention the classic sculptures of ancient Greece.

Those who purport to guide the morality of the rest of us have a tendency to reject that which is clean and natural. One has only to look at the commercials of our consumerist society to see how sexual frustration is utilized to encourage the male segment to part with their hard-earned cash. Ads for the latest model of gas-guzzlers customarily show a very available and gorgeous female sitting in the empty seat. Drink the right brand of beer and there is always the over-eager lady there to share it with you. If you use the right brand of toothpaste or mouthwash, there is always the gorgeous woman ready to bump bridgework with you. Face it, sexual unfulfillment has become a big selling factor.

Of late, there has been some unpleasant press about certain men of God who have been discrediting their avocation of spiritually shepherding their flocks. It seems certain men of God have been accused of the heinous practice of pederasty. Those who are in a position to ride herd over such matters, instead of seeking some sort of therapy counseling or merely defrocking their charges, chose instead to assign them to another parish in the hopes of sweeping the matter under the carpet – except that such nasty things only pop up again.

Fellow worker wife, among her many job endeavors, had been employed by both Catholic and Protestant residences of spiritual shepherds. She reported that within their private lodgings there was to be found collections of the basest kind of pornography, both hetero and homosexual – either that or large supplies of empty liquor bottles. She used to bring home empty half gallon scotch bottles in which to store her olive oil. When contemplating the habits of those who have been entrusted with our spiritual salvation, I am happy that I am a godless person.

Our media pundits are still waxing indignant over 9-11 as the ultimate in terrorism. Author Caleb Carr, in his latest book, *The Lessons of Terror*, points out that there is no basic difference between terrorism and "conventional" warfare. The wanton killing of unarmed non-combatants has been a long-standing military tactic of "modern" warfare since the Old Testicle. His book grew out of an article in the *World Policy Journal* in 1996 criticizing the administration of Hot Pants Willie for treating terrorism as a crime rather than a form of warfare.

The primary target of "modern" warfare is the breaking down and demoralization of the non-combatant population. He blames the slaughter at the World Trade Center on the inept intelligence of the CIA and the inadequacy of airport security that won't dramatically improve until there are fewer flights. As long as the primary motivation of the air transport industry is the profit motive, one needn't expect any progress in that direction. People living in glass houses should not throw stones. He cites Tricky Dicky and Henry the Kiss for targeting civilians in Viet Nam and Cambodia, and World War II hero Jimmy Doolittle for his fire bombing raid on Tokyo in 1942.

History will bear out that more money is spend on bombers than on guns, regardless of which combatant side. He did not mention General Custer's slaughter of defenseless people at Wounded Knee or Colonel Chivington, the Methodist minister who led the slaughter of unarmed Indians who were flying a flag of truce over their village.

Face it, war is terrorism and terrorism is war. There are those societies that keep their warfare a safe distance from their civilians, but those societies are written off as "primitive."

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

— C.C. Redcloud

Sullivan Paper workers strike for union rights

BY JOSEPH BAKANAUSKAS
AND ROBERT CALDWELL

Over 100 Teamster paper workers in Western Massachusetts are striking a 60-year-old family dynasty. Despite sales topping \$50 million annually and planned expansions of operations, Sullivan Paper has demanded an inordinate number of concessions, many striking at the heart of union rights.

The company has moved into outright union busting after spending thirty years as a Teamster shop. Right before their contract was due to expire Dec. 31, the local agreed to extend negotiations two weeks in order to accommodate boss Richard Sullivan while he was out of town. Shortly after returning, Sullivan demanded that workers take a pay cut and shoulder an additional 35 percent of health insurance costs. Moreover, the company insisted on an open shop clause.

Recognizing the effort to shred their contract and hobble the union, a strike was called. Sullivan Paper then cancelled employee health benefits retroactively. Two months into the struggle, striking workers are limping along on \$55 weekly strike benefits, food bank donations, and gifts from area restaurants. IBT Local 404 has tried to establish its own food drives and strike funds

to help those most in need.

Scabbing and police scab-herding have been prevalent, but the scabs face the abuse of a non-union shop once inside the gate: insults from management, 12-hour days, and reportedly at least one scab was fired for asking questions about the union. Conditions are worsening, and many scabs have quit.

Members of Western Mass. IWW are organizing solidarity actions, including leaflets aimed at scabs informing them of their legal rights and moral wrongs.

Meanwhile, "negotiations" continue. Management maintains its belligerence, proposing they be allowed to fire 50 unionists in exchange for paltry raises, dues checkoff, and a return to union shop. The company has also thrown its weight around with the mayor and city council – leading to the banning of "burn barrels" (contained and monitored fires picketers use to keep warm), proposed by a councilperson named Sullivan.

In the face of this, support rallies are being organized sporadically by Teamsters Local 404. Western Mass. IWW is working to pull as much help from neighboring communities' unions and action groups as possible. Interested readers can visit the Teamsters 404 website at: www.teamsters404.com

The criminalization of dissent in Ontario

BY JEFF SHANTZ

On June 15, 2000, more than 1,500 people marched to the Ontario Legislature for a demonstration called by the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty. The demonstration was supported by 58 groups, including labour flying squads from the Canadian Auto Workers, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, and the IWW.

The reasons for coming together were, and remain, many. Twenty-two homeless people dead in 24 weeks. Forced workfare labour. Olympic bids instead of affordable housing. Targeted policing. Squats torched by cops. Politicians blaming us for the poverty of their system.

The demands were basic: 1) Return the 21.6% taken from social services by the Tories as one of their earliest expressions of contempt for poor people in this province.

2) Repeal the malicious "Tenant Protection Act," which has perversely removed many of the protections previously in place for tenants, including rent controls, and has led to thousands of evictions every month.

3) Repeal the "Safe Streets Act," which outlaws squeegeeing and panhandling.

The government had been notified of the action months in advance. The request was simply that a delegation of six people suffering under these policies be allowed to enter the "people's house" to address the assembled legislators. "No" was the response. Instead the crowd was met by hundreds of riot police who attacked them with batons, trampled people with horses, attacked first aid areas and medics, and continued to chase people off of the legislature grounds, beating and arresting as they went.

Demonstrators held off the cop attacks for more than an hour in one of the strongest shows of resistance Ontario has seen in decades. June 15 signalled a major turning point in anti-capitalist struggles in the province. Its significance was not lost on the powers that be who immediately set out to break the resistance movement.

At least 42 arrests were made relating to the events of that day. Thirty-four cases have been sent to trial, beginning in February, with some charges being dropped and people in vulnerable situations compelled to take pleas.

Outstanding charges include a wide va-

riety of things such as "obstructing" (falling in front of) or "assaulting" (being attacked by) "peace officers" (baton wielding, shield-carrying maniacs), or "possessing weapons" (a picket sign or water bottle). The state has even dug out an old charge, which has not been laid since the 1960s, called "participating in a riot" although they have not made clear whether a police riot in which one is caught standing one's ground constitutes such participation.

Trials will continue through May. It is already clear that the courts are going after the most vulnerable people the hardest. People who are homeless, have other charges or records, and people with addictions have received the most severe treatment.

From the outset the police and the Crown Attorney (government prosecutor) have used the charges as political weapons. They tried to secure very harsh conditions of release from prison against OCAP supporters. People were not allowed to attend OCAP meetings, speak to other members, leave the city of Toronto, go to Queen's Park or Allan Gardens (march starting point), and most had to report to a bail office every month. All of that before anyone had been convicted of anything. The conditions were clearly designed to try to criminalize OCAP, limit our ability to communicate, and isolate OCAP from its extensive network of allied unions and community groups. This did not have its intended effect as several unions expanded their flying squads to mobilize around OCAP direct actions. New executive members stepped forward to take the place of folks who couldn't attend meetings and OCAP has continued to fight on, playing a leading role in the Ontario Common Front and its fall 2001 campaign of economic disruption.

Still, strong support for the June 15 defendants is crucial for the developing resistance movement in Ontario.

On June 15th police played out their role as the strong arm of Ontario's neo-liberal government. We do not want the Tories to succeed in passing further legislation against working people, students and the poor just because their paid goons use court charges and outrageous bail conditions as a deterrent. People cannot begin avoiding all protests, strikes or other forms of resistance because of fear of police repression, because

Adventures in the forsaken industry...

Organizing Retail

BY RYAN GAUGHAN,
PORTLAND IUB 660 SECRETARY

We all learned an important lesson that day as we listened to the N.L.R.B. officer counting votes. "No, no, no, yes, yes, no, no." We'd been doing the charting for weeks, constantly reassessing our support and checking in with everyone who was on the fence. The odds were overwhelmingly in our favor, and up until the week before the union recognition election, management had muttered nary a peep about our presence in the store (save for the occasional carbon-copy union busting lit). Besides, nobody could honestly believe that those guys were looking out for the workers' best interests, right?

Located in Portland, Oregon, Nature's is a chain grocery store specializing in organic and "natural" foods. The business was started roughly 15 years ago by local money, and expanded as Portland's foremost purveyor of ethical food to the environmentally conscious and financially stable. Many workers fled UFCW-dominated mainstream grocers, such as Safeway and Fred Meyer's, to find a more comfortable niche in their industry; one where facial piercings, dreadlocks and an absence from highly bureaucratic unionism would be the new work-ethic.

The Division Street store, where this IWW organizing drive was occurring, had been around for 10 years or so, and had already changed hands twice; once through GNC, and then into the hands of Wild Oats. Wild Oats operates 110 stores throughout the U.S. and Canada, employing a textbook method of subsidize-and-conquer in which established natural foods stores are bought and transformed into their corporate image.

To capitalists, it's the legitimizing of the natural foods industry. Above all, keep the stockholders happy, hire a garrison of busi-

ness and marketing school graduates, and keep labor costs as low as possible.

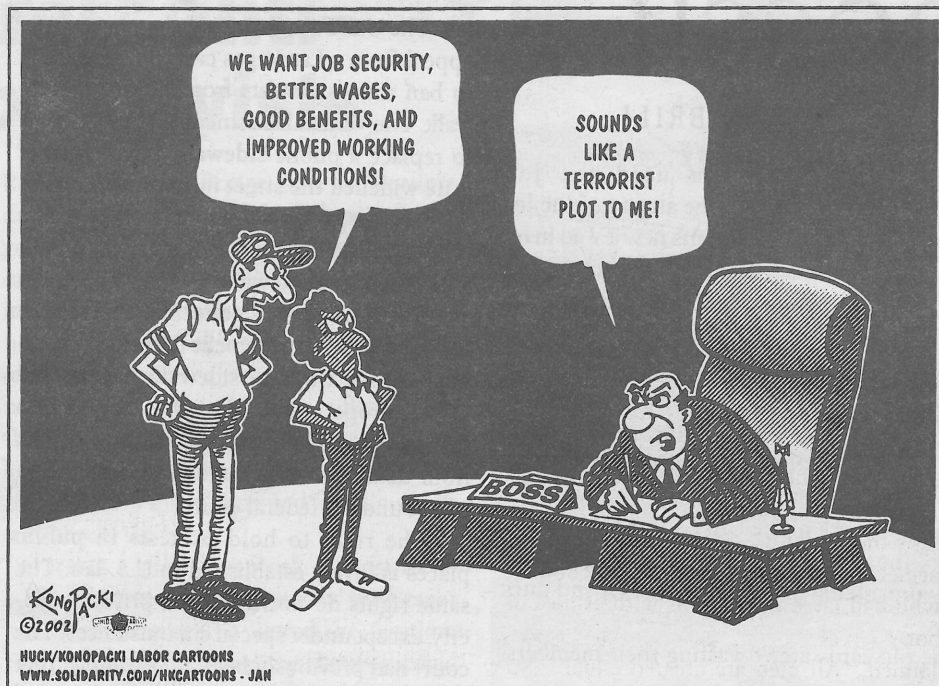
that will only strengthen the Tories' resolve. At the same time, we do not want people to feel they have to stand alone or to feel alienated by surveillance and images of riot shields and batons. We also need to recognize that some people are more vulnerable than others. So we need to establish networks of defence, not only to defend those arrested but also to demystify the state's legal processes and to bolster confidence that people can fight to win.

Most of us certainly do not want to go to jail, but we know that the prisons have become warehouses for poor people. If people go down because they took a stand then we must stand by them and their families. We must organize financial and social support so that people do not feel abandoned to the merciless court and jail system.

Court solidarity for June 15 defendants has been solid. As people show up at court to do solidarity work they also gain insights into the system. The extent of attacks on the working class which take place every day, literally behind closed doors, demonstrate the need to take our work inside the institutions. Visits to the courts, housing tribunals and immigration offices almost uniformly show poor people being worked over by the state.

Of course the police violence which took place June 15th is the same violence routinely meted out against poor people in Ontario. That violence is not simply delivered through baton blows and fists, but through lengthy court proceedings, bail conditions, demeaning legal aid applications and of course jail time. And that is why the defendants stress the political nature of their trials.

Donations are very much needed and should be sent to: OCAP/3903 Anti-Poverty Working Group, CUPE 3903, East Office Building, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M3J 1P3.



ness and marketing school graduates, and keep labor costs as low as possible.

Despite all the corporatization (and the gradual abandonment by long-time customers), there was a feeling at the Division Street store of family. Many people had worked there for several years, through all the buy-outs and guard changing. You hang out with fellow workers after a shift, distribute old produce to those who need it, and generally keep tabs on your personal lives. But the Wild Oats Way of Doing Things eventually began to cause enough friction that workers began calling meetings outside of work to build something they realized they'd never really had in the corporation: a voice.

The spark of it all was definitely the uniforms. Nature's employees had, ever since the conception of the company, been privileged to dress themselves in whatever way they felt comfortable (provided that they didn't wear logos or tattoo their face). Wild Oats decided, however, that this relaxed feel was too symbolic of the old ways and in October announced that Nature's employees would soon be donning black and tan polo shirts, stylishly branded with the company's logo. No consultation with employees, no real input from the customer base save for self-serving market research, and no regard for the subculture which frequented the stores exactly because of their non-corporate ambience. And to top it all off, they looked really ugly.

The camel had broken its back on the old straw, and a handful of employees decided to get together and see what they could do to reverse the decision. An anti-uniform petition for employees was circulated, anti-uniform propaganda was drawn up, and more and more people began attending the weekly meetings at the Red & Black Café. The topics started to change at the meetings, though, as workers began discussing Wild Oats' plethora of problems, especially the disrespect they forked out to the people making them all their money.

It soon became apparent that the tactics we were choosing could get us into a lot of trouble. We also realized that management really had no obligation to listen to us, which they had demonstrated multiple times. It was at this time, one summer evening at the Red & Black, that an IWW organizer happened to overhear the conversation and approached Nature's workers. At about this time, Nature's fired me. I had joined the union a week previous, and while planes were crashing into the World Trade Center, the axe fell swift and mercilessly upon my naïve, unsuspecting head. Like I said, though, Nature's was family. And although neither myself nor anyone else attending the meetings had ever had any union organizing experience, we decided to go for it. I stayed on as an organizer, along with Bill Bradley, and soon roughly 10 workers had joined the IWW, and we had ourselves an organizing committee.

In many ways, losing the NLRB election was a crash-course in corporate mischief. The

union effort was out in the open; people were wearing IWW pins, meetings were publicly advertised, and we even experimented with surveying customers on their way into the store. And management hadn't confronted us on the issue. Initially, we just assumed they weren't taking us seriously, expecting the movement to die out. Or, we conjectured, they were at least intelligent enough to not pull a "Borders"-type clear-cut of union members, knowing well that the liberal-leaning community of Southeast Portland in which they were operating was already slightly peeved at the conventionalizing of their community store.

It wasn't until we filed the petition for election with the NLRB that they pulled out the big guns. At first it was a seed of doubt distributed to workers in a letter informing them that management had been forced to give the IWW a list of their names and addresses (the "Excelsior List"). It was entitled, "And Now it Begins. Loss of Your Confidentiality and Privacy," and depicted the first of a series of opportunities for "harassment" that the union would embark upon. "We only hope that the Industrial Workers of the World act responsibly and not abuse the list of home addresses and do not give the list to anyone not connected with the union. Putting your home addresses in the hands of the union is only the first of a number of losses of privacy that you will experience if the union wins this election."

Management also took it upon themselves to inform employees that it was more than likely that the IWW would force people out on strike. They were pretty cut-and-paste piece of anti-union literature, and we didn't think anybody would take them seriously.

In fact, that was probably a characteristic problem in our union drive – we didn't think that our friends would actually buy any of these lies. It's called "inoculation," or so I hear. The process by which you take the time on an organizing drive to explain what management is going to say, and how they're going to say it. Had we had an archive of managerial propaganda from previous organizing drives, which I'm sure would have said basically the same thing that was coming out of the Wild Oats lawyer's portfolio, workers in the store might have been better prepared to make a rational decision. As it was, we didn't take the time to educate ourselves, management started spreading rumors and lies which infuriated union members, and the end result was tension – exactly what management wants and exploits.

The election became such a focus of our organizational meetings that we had difficulty prioritizing the essential, solidarity-building fundamentals that the IWW stands for. Union tasks – such as treasurer, liaison,

editor, chair – were not adequately handled by the workers themselves, falling more often upon the shoulders of the organizers. Unorganized meetings (which usually lasted for over two hours) became more focused on charting union support in the store than looking at the functional things we could accomplish to demonstrate our good intentions. We were not completely practicing the democracy that we were preaching.

Not that the union was completely non-functional in the store before the election. A delegate attended several meetings between a fellow worker and management, even though her place in those meetings was not officially acceptable. We successfully called upon management for an all-staff meeting, which hadn't been held in several months. At this meeting, IWW members handed out an employee-made agenda, clearly stating that there were issues in the workplace not being dealt with. Union members wore pins, and a few supporters did as well. It was an empowering moment to call management to the table in front of everyone, despite the fact that a few moments became quite heated. No wonder, though, that employees of Nature's who had had negative union experiences in the past had difficulty seeing the uniqueness and benefit of our efforts. Management used these people to drum up anti-union support, and looking back on it, those workers probably had reason to be cautious (even though they never came to any meetings to see what it was all about themselves). A split in the store developed, where one had never been

before. And we became proponents of promises, rather than agents of change.

Oh, and they pulled the IWW Constitution out on us too. At a captive audience meeting two days before the election, C.E.O. Perry Odak (who had flown out from Boulder just for the occasion) quoted the IWW Preamble and asked a packed room of 50+ people, "How can you (IWW) claim that

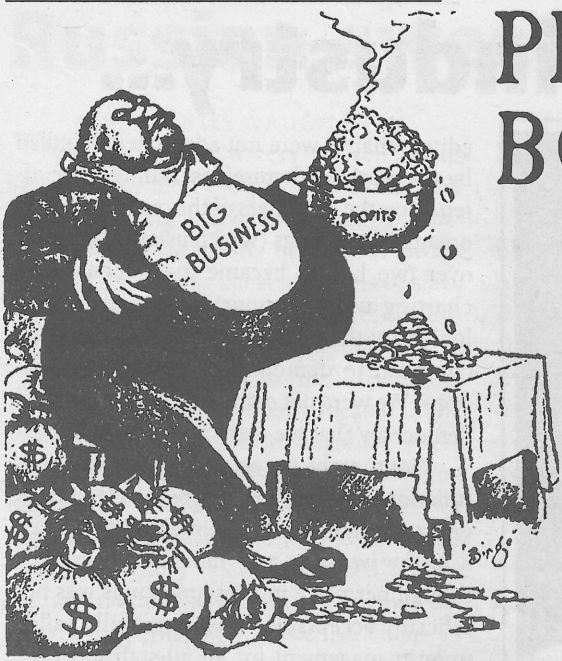
the employee class and management class [sic] have nothing in common. Aren't we all human beings?" Workers weren't prepared for that one either. Again, I don't think our organizing drive was properly inoculated against this kind of redbaiting. The meat department manager stood up when he heard this and asked, "How can you say that?" One more nail in the coffin.

"No. No. No. No. Yes. No. No." Roughly 70 people had turned out for the vote, and management had even personally picked people up from home, hired Spanish speakers to influence Deli workers, brought people in from maternity leave.

We knew it would be close. The end count of 27 "Yes," 45 "No" for union recognition was a larger gap than we had ever imagined. What happened to everyone? Had we really overestimated our support that grossly, or were people telling us one thing to our face, and voting the other? In the end, it doesn't really matter. What's significant is that the majority of people just weren't 100 percent sure if it was a good idea, and in that scenario people will vote for the status quo over the uncertain.

So where are we at right now? Nature's workers still hold regular meetings. We are taking a step back and working to build strong delegates, a strong grievance procedure, and a strong IUB 660. The house was built before the foundation in this case, and we have a year before an NLRB election will be available again, if we decide to go that route. More importantly, we are all learning how to do this work ourselves from the ground up. And we hope that future IWW organizing drives remember our experience, and take precautions to be as democratically operated and educational as possible.

The election became such a focus of our organizational meetings that we had difficulty prioritizing the essential, solidarity-building fundamentals that the IWW stands for...



PRAISE BOSS!

BY F.N. BRILL

"When you need the job done"... That's the slogan of the local AFL Electrician's new TV ad here. The local IBEW is sponsoring the promotional ads for the United Auto Workers-Daimler-Chrysler 400 Stock Car race.

What a NASCAR race in Las Vegas has to do with electrical work in Portland, I haven't the faintest. What auto races have to do with the work of the UAW, I leave to my betters to decide.

I guess it's just another example of the new AFL's emphasis on organizing. When you want the job done, don't spend money organizing in the workplace; spend dues money organizing stock car races with the bosses.

One good point though, at least this time the pie-cards aren't wasting their members' dues money on back-stabbing politicians.

Or maybe they thought Portland 330 was an IWW-sponsored race and just felt jealous.

★★★

Speaking of back-stabbing politicians, U.S. Strongman George Bush announced today that he wants further cuts in welfare rolls. 'To teach people on welfare the dignity of work' or some such prattle. I guess the IWW has been wrong all this time; the working class and the employing class HAVE got something in common. We've always wanted the rich to learn the dignity of work, too.

★★★

I read in e-mails that most of Italy went on strike against among other things, the war in Afghanistan. And the Japanese Dockers and Sailors too. No matter what your opinion, don't you have to wonder why its not mentioned in the papers? Perhaps too much information is bad for us. Avert your eyes now!

★★★

So a bunch of economists go out backpacking and get lost. One pours over the map and announces, "According to this, we're on top of that mountain over there."

★★★

Like time and the rain, the Capital Consultants case drags on here in Portland. The CCI case (see "High and Dry Dock" in July/Aug. 2001 IW) is the largest union-pension fraud case in US history. CCI President Jeffrey Grayson, created a financial house of cards then wine, dined and bribed union pension officials to invest in it. Thousands of would-be union pensioners from LIUNA, Plumbers, OPEIU and the IBEW lost major portions of their pensions thanks to this weasel. Well, it looks like Grayson is 'cooperating' with authorities which means we can bet he does much less time than the homeless African-American man in California doing life for stealing a slice of pizza.

★★★

So the US has a 'shadow government' with Vice President Dick and other high-up officials cowering in bunkers. It's rumored they are just avoiding ENRON-related subpoenas. It's called a shadow government because if there is any light these important government officials scurry away. If that happened we wouldn't have a government anymore and that's bad because working people would have to run things. We wouldn't want that, no sir.

★★★

Wade Rathke, ACORN Strongman, union buster and SEIU \$100K+ waged double-dipping VP is interviewed in the most recent *Clamor* magazine. So sayeth the lord: "Here's my plea: Let's build a bridge in the sky that links our worlds together while allowing us to stay autonomous and anonymous."

One would think that someone earning that sort of money could get a better ghostwriter! To be fair, maybe Wade is just having some ill-conceived wordplay. Two can play at that game, as I am a master of both the ill-conceived and wordplay. Always remember Wade: "Direct action" spelled sideways is "It edict ACORN"

★★★

Speaking of shadows, the Liberal Democratic Party in the UK has formed a "shadow cabinet" which for us stateside means they are aiming to topple the Labour Party and Tony Blair. These days the UK and US influence each other so much. Thatcher begat Reagan then the US got even when Clinton begat Blair. And just like the UK's LDP, our liberal democrats are in the shadows too. And that's-no-Lady Thatcher's Conservative Party is about alive as Ronnie Reagan.

But at least a number of major TUC unions have stopped sending election funding to the 'new' Labour Party. I'm awaiting THAT influence to reach these fare shores.

★★★

This just in: The IMF and World Bank have placed a trademark on the word 'free.' It is now spelled f/æee and the 'r' is silent.

Send observations, jokes, party invites, indecent proposals and small unmarked bills to: Praise Boss! c/o Red and Black Café, 2138 SE Division, Portland OR 97214 USA or e-mail wobbly640@yahoo.co.uk

Enron fired workers for web postings

As Enron was heading into bankruptcy proceedings, it fired at least two workers for posting information about its shady practices on Internet message boards.

One of the fired workers had earlier challenged Enron's accounting practices, and was fired a day after anonymously criticizing Enron chairman Kenneth Lay. The second was fired for revealing that the company had paid \$55 million in retention bonuses to top managers just before it filed for bankruptcy protection and laid off 4,000 workers.

Both messages were posted in an online forum about Enron on Yahoo. Although many people post anonymously to these forums, many companies can track posts from corporate computers and servers. It appears this is how Enron identified the two fired whistle-blowers.

While Yahoo says it did not disclose the workers' identity in these cases, Yahoo policy permits disclosure of the identities of persons posting "abusive" or "otherwise objectionable" comments.

Right to picket on sidewalks upheld

The U.S. Supreme Court has rejected an appeal from a Las Vegas casino that wanted to ban union protests from the front sidewalk. The Venetian Casino built the sidewalk to replace a public sidewalk lost when the state widened the street in the 1990s.

The dispute arose from a 1999 union rally which spilled onto the disputed 10-foot-wide stretch of sidewalk.

The casino called police, who refused to make arrests. Management then sued, seeking a ruling that the sidewalk was indeed private property, even though it was open to the public, and that it could keep unions from demonstrating there. The casino lost two rounds in federal court.

The right to hold protests in public places is firmly established in U.S. law. The same rights do not extend to private property, except under special circumstances. The court had previously held, for example, that protesters could use the private property of a "company town," where there may be no truly public alternative.

As public spaces are brought under private control – in shopping malls, privately owned parks and similar facilities – the right to leaflet and demonstrate is now routinely challenged under trespass laws.

ILA officials charged

Six past and present officials of International Longshoremen's Association Local 1588, have been charged with running an extortion ring that forced dock workers in Jersey City to pay kickbacks for better jobs, overtime, or training for job improvement at Global Terminal, a sprawling Chinese-owned container facility.

UK postal workers reap bitter fruits of privatization

Tens of thousands of British postal workers stand to lose their jobs as management rakes in corporate-style paychecks and tightens its notorious military-style management. The Communications Workers Union, which represents most UK postal workers, backed off from strike threats as we went to press, announcing few details of a broad agreement. It had been seeking 5 percent pay hikes for workers who average just £250 a week.

The CWU has also called upon the public to reject the corporate-style name, Consignia, by which the Post Office now wishes to be known.

"Consignia means a profit-centred, declining, competition-ridden low-wage outfit in constant crisis," says CWU secretary Billy Hayes. "The Post Office means service to the public... We all want to say, 'Cheerio Consignia, welcome back The Post Office.'"

In the process of privatization, the government has brought in high-paid bankers and other corporate executives who have proposed slashing mail deliveries to many parts of the country, massive lay-offs of postal workers, and raising the price of stamps.

Spain: CNT garbage collectors fight for jobs

When garbage workers in the Spanish city of Seville decided to unionize with the CNT, the "socialist" mayor announced he was canceling Pilsa's (their employer) contract for violating workers' rights. All 20 Pilsa workers were told they were being thrown on the streets, and another contractor brought in to take their jobs.

Workers responded by striking Feb. 17; after ten days the government brought in scabs to clear the streets of garbage. CNT pickets blocked trucks, resulting in three arrests and serious injuries to one worker. After the police attack, workers roamed the streets overturning garbage bins and confronting scabs.

Ecuador: Banana workers organize

Banana workers in the world's top exporting country went on strike Feb. 25 in the first major union drive in Ecuador in 20 years. The struggle is being watched carefully by banana unions throughout Latin America, whose wages and benefits are threatened by the dominance of non-union, low-wage Ecuadorian banana exports.

A recent study found Ecuadorian workers earning an average of US\$56 per month, compared to an average wage of over \$500 in Panama, \$200 to \$300 in Colombia, \$200 in Costa Rica, \$150 to \$200 in Honduras, and \$120 to \$150 on Guatemala's Atlantic Coast. Subsequent minimum wage increases have only slightly narrowed the gap.

More than 1,400 workers at seven plantations producing for the Noboa Corporation in Ecuador went on strike to call for basic labor rights "guaranteed" under Ecuadorian law, including overtime pay and health care benefits. Workers are also demanding recognition of a new union they have formed, the General Union of Plantation Workers.

Management responded to the strike action by firing eight union leaders. Workers have returned to work since their wild-cat strike was technically illegal, but union supporters have signed up hundreds of members and filed an application for legal registration of the union.

Noboa's main fruit brand is Bonita. Readers who see Bonita bananas sold in local stores are asked to notify the Campaign for Labor Rights (CLRmain@afgj.org, Fax: 202-544-9359, 1247 E. St. SE, Washington DC 20003) with the name and location of the store, date of sighting, and whether the store carries other Bonita-brand produce.



Korean power strike...

continued from page 1

attempting to crush the strike.

Up to 10,000 police were mobilized in a search for 24 union leaders. Police are also seeking 221 union militants who they say are inciting workers to maintain the strike.

Over the last four years, the government's primary concern has been to demonstrate its resolve to walk the line set forth by the IMF-WB and international investors. The government has no "room" to negotiate with unions; so it tries to silence them. This has led to the imprisonment of nearly 700 unionists in the last four years.

KEPCO, the state-owned power company, has fired 47 strikers and asked courts to seize the property of 200 union leaders to cover losses incurred during the strike.

Traditionally, Korean strikers gathered at a public location in order to maintain a visible show of solidarity. However, the power workers slipped away from the campus where they had rallied under cover of darkness; thwarting the busloads of riot police deployed to force them back to work.

Police have found it difficult to locate the hundreds of small groups of up to a dozen strikers each, while workers have relied on the Internet and cell phones to coordinate their efforts. Police are trying to shut down the strikers' Internet site, saying it "is being used to instigate illegal activities, including delivery of 'struggle orders,' assisting the hide-out efforts of the leaders of the union wanted for arrest, and the continuation of the illegal strike." However, the KCTU has arranged for mirror sites overseas to fill in if the police obtain their shutdown order.

These "guerrilla" strike tactics have enabled workers to maintain their strike without the constant danger of riot police raids hovering over their heads.

No Sweatshops, Bucco:

Pirates arrest anti-sweatshop activists

BY X346812, PITTSBURGH

A group of college students and teachers visited PNC Park March 3 to educate Pirates fans about gross violations of worker rights in factories sewing the Pirates logo. The lines were long during the PNC Park Open House, the first day fans could buy individual game tickets and get an insider's look at the still-new taxpayers-built stadium.

Expecting that Pirates fans would have some sympathy for the young women that sew the logo and might join us in demanding the Pirates try to implement some basic standards for human dignity through the Major League Baseball licensing contracts, we leafleted and petitioned the crowd. We included a report about the strike in upstate New York of New Era workers who used to sew the most expensive fitted caps and their counterparts in Bangladesh who now do some of the work for 8 cents an hour. Our petition demanded that the Pirates take New Era products off the shelf at the ballpark and provide disclosure information about the locations where all their licensed products are produced. Nearly everyone read with interest and many people signed the petition.

The Pirate's goons, both PSSI stadium security and the Pittsburgh Police Department officers, were on hand and advised us that our publicly financed stadium was private property. It is like "the Pirates' house," and we had no right to be there. We could cross the street or stand half-way across

Roberto Clemente Bridge "like the vendors do." Sadly, we complied, but when we saw a young intern from the National Aviary handing out leaflets for the Baby Penguin Feeding to the same crowds we were told we could not talk to, we cried 'unfair!' The Pirates relented and again we were working the line, handing out leaflets hand over fist. Seeing the eagerness of the crowd to learn more about "No Sweatshops Bucco" the goons changed their mind again and forced us half-way across the bridge.

It was a good day's work. Almost 2,000 strike reports found their way into eager hands and about 150 signed the petition. Feeling fine, although somewhat perturbed that our stadium was someone else's private property, the group dispersed.

Four of us headed into the Pirates Gear Shop for a little research in preparation for our next educational effort. Clip boards in hand, we wrote down companies and countries of manufacture from the labels in the hopes that we would be able to find some more of the workers who sew the team's logo. Enraged, the cops gathered us into a corner and slapped on the cuffs. We were informed that Pirates managers were prepared to testify that we had been told to leave four times! "Defiant Trespass." What a bunch of crap!

Taken to the PNC Park security office, we were photographed and told that we were banned from the park for the next 28 years, until the Pirates lease expires. Should we



Four of the anti-sweatshop crew, outside PNC Park before the arrests.

show our mugs again, ever, we would be immediately cuffed and stuffed. Then we took a wagon ride down to the City Jail, another relatively new taxpayer-built facility, where we spent nine hours.

Opening pitch is still more than 30 days away and we are hopeful that these bogus charges can be whipped. Come hell or high water, we will continue doing anti-sweatshop education with our sister and brother baseball fans. Major League Baseball is the larg-

est corporate licensor in the world, and the licensing contracts are a great way for Pittsburghers to extend our civil rights to the workers who sew our team's logo.

No Sweatshops, Bucco!

If anti-sweatshop activists in other cities are interested in a little baseball fan/ballpark education, you are welcome to join our email list and bounce around ideas and experiences: pgh_iww_iu450@yahoo.com.

Casualized workers defeat McDonald's

BY NICOLE T./G. SORIANO
(COLLEGAMENTI WOBBLY)

Mainstream unions rarely get involved in organizing fast-food employees. When such people strike and turn to the unions, they usually meet with a polite but distant disinterest in involvement in such thankless sectors of the economy. The result, in France, is usually the dominance of in-house union reps appointed by the boss.

At the McDonald's in the Strasbourg-Saint-Denis neighborhood of Paris, workplace relations were similar to those found at McDonald's everywhere, with super-exploitation (part-time minimum wage work, flexible scheduling, dangerous working conditions) and the potential for revolt undermined by a team spirit ("if you slack off, your workmates pay the price") and almost family like relations between managers and workers that gave rise to deals worked out individually, making it difficult for workers to get the necessary psychological distance to defend their interests.

And yet the miraculous did occur, due to the arrogance of a new franchise boss, who used the pretext of some missing cash to fire five "managers" (i.e. work-crew leaders, generally seen as "big brothers" by the staff), setting off a massive strike to have everyone reinstated. This strike showed how a sense of injustice can checkmate the best-laid management strategies. (See report last issue)

The strikers went knocking on different doors to obtain some official union cover, and finally got a favorable hearing from the business federation of the Confederation Generale du Travail (a formerly communist-oriented union federation). A CGT section was set up by a few militants who saw the symbolic importance of the strike (and who were themselves barely supported by the union apparatus), and a solidarity collective was formed. It included militants of different stripes, with a important libertarian fla-

vor (even though the Confederation National du Travail, the syndicalist union federation - which in other circumstances had thrown itself into difficult situations - missed the boat on this one), as well as other CGT members from other struggles going on at the same time in other businesses.

An interesting dynamic emerged. The strikers, for the most part quite young, discovered struggle and learned to organize themselves. Though they had the benefit of help from more experienced militants, and of legal and logistical backup from the CGT, they were the ones who decided - in their own way, far outside normal union practice - on how to advance the struggle and how to negotiate. The initiatives of

the solidarity collective (despite the long list of supporting organizations, a small number of determined militants did the work) also helped expand and publicize the strike, in particular by regular Saturday blockages of other McDonald's sites over a three-month period. On these occasions, strikers made contact with other McDonald's employees and tried to convince them to join the struggle (which did occur in various places).

The strike held for nearly four months. Three of the five fired employees were reinstated by the courts, which was an important psychological victory. Moreover, little by little, this strike inspired others: work stoppages happened in various McDonald's after strikers came to visit them, even if they were usually settled rapidly; a strike began at the Quick franchise in the Barbes neighborhood out of solidarity with a harassed employee. In a general way, the culture of self-organized struggle seems to be making its way in the fast-food world, where management had bet it would never happen. And this looks like just a beginning.

A demonstration on Feb. 2 drew a significant crowd. The media became interested, and the pre-election climate encouraged

take-over maneuvers by various left-wing politicians, ranging from the Communist Party to the left-wing Gaullists. Nonetheless, ordinary people encountered by the support collective had heard of the struggle, and often expressed their interest, solidarity and understanding of the real dynamic.

McDonald's management (which actively supported the struck franchise) continued to place its hopes in wearing down the struggle, adopting a posture of unshakable contempt for the handful of employees who had dared to defy it. Nevertheless, various signs indicated that it was starting to sweat about having chosen a strategy so disastrous for its image, particularly as business was slacking off.

On February 15, after 115 days on strike, the manager of the restaurant gave in to most of the strikers' demands:

- 1) cancellation of all layoffs and rehiring of the five laid-off workers;
- 2) 33% of pay for all days struck plus a bonus for ending the strike of 2500 francs;
- 3) full wages for the duration of remodeling planned for the restaurant (which the strikers had prevented);
- 4) no reprisals against the strikers.

The agreement does not resolve all the strikers' demands (it was approved only after long discussion), but it does deal with the main questions on the table. McDonald's realized that the struggle was not only not fading away, but was instead growing and winning increasing international support.

The support committee, which came into existence in order to help spread the struggle, intends to continue its activity and to support other struggles emerging in the ranks of casualized workers.

Those who became involved in the struggle feel they must not allow the dispersion of the amassed experience, solidarity networks and friendships which arose from it; rather, they intend to bring them to bear on behalf of further struggles of casualized workers which will certainly appear, in the fast-food sector and elsewhere.

Meatpackers fight company assault

BY BRIAN OLIVER SHEPPARD

On March 1, Smithfield Packing Co. was ordered by a jury to pay over \$700,000 in damages to pro-union workers who were assaulted by company security guards during a union certification election.

Workers Rayshawn Ward and John Rene Rodriguez were assaulted as votes were being counted for UFCW representation in one of the largest meatpacking plants in the world, located in Bladen County, North Carolina. Though the union lost the election, the union drive was the subject of widespread national attention.

As Ward and Rodriguez left the election area in August 1997, they were taunted, slapped and shoved by security guards. As Ward and Rodriguez began to counter the guards, dozens of workers rushed into the voting area, whereupon company security chief Danny Priest assaulted Ward with pepper spray. Although Ward and Rodriguez were initially arrested by police on suspicion of inciting a riot, their charges were later dropped. Priest was ordered to pay an additional \$30,000 personally to the workers.

Human Rights Watch has cited Smithfield plants in Tar Heel and Wilson, NC, as examples of the U.S. government's failure to enforce its own labor laws.

Greenpeace union-busting

Los Angeles Greenpeace canvassers were fired Jan. 22, days after they began efforts to unionize the regional office of the Fund for Public Interest Research, which contracts out staff at 10 offices around the U.S. to groups such as Greenpeace.

When Fund directors learned that staff were unionizing in response to its failure to reimburse workers for expenses and provide promised health benefits, officials arrived as the office was closing, terminated the staff, and spent the night clearing out the facility. Greenpeace did the same a dozen years ago, closing down its Seattle telephone fund-raising center after workers joined the IWW.

Russian sweatshops

BY CURTIS VAUGHAN

Unless you are a very conscientious buyer, it may have escaped your notice that a lot of clothing is now being made in Russia. Although we mostly hear about sweatshops in Asia, these latest additions to slave labor have arrived to Russian cities including Lipetsk, Voronezh and Belgorod.

One such factory is the Lipchanka Closed Joint Stock Company, located in the city of Lipetsk. Last year Lipchanka workers produced 230,000 men's pants for the German market, and 215,000 women's suits for the U.S. and 50,000 for England. Clothing from this factory is also produced for the Netherlands and, depending on ongoing negotiations, perhaps for a Swedish client, as well. Besides these immediate clients, however, Lipchanka's goods are distributed under various brand names worldwide.

The situation at Lipchanka is typical for Russia today. Management is 2 - 3 months behind in paying the wages of its workforce: about 1,000 employees, most of whom are women. Paid holidays, despite labor laws to the contrary, are practically unknown.

UFCW officials attack rank-and-file

BY X344510

The United Food and Commercial Workers is one of the worst examples of conservative business unionism in North America. It is a union with a history of fat bonuses for bureaucrats and minimal gains for rank-and file workers.

Local 1000A, representing workers at Loblaws and No Frills grocery stores throughout Southwestern Ontario, illustrates just how bad things are for workers who try to gain any support through the UFCW. A local of over 10,000 members, 1000A holds two membership meetings each year. In over 26 years there has been no election because executives are hand-picked from the U.S. International. While rank-and-file workers have seen 5 percent wage increases over 15 years, bureaucrats have no problem voting themselves 65% increases in a single year.

Members who try to organize reform campaigns within 1000A are targeted for intimidation. The ongoing harassment of one rank-and-file militant within 1000A shows how low the leadership will sink to stifle any opposition. Steve Guiliano's efforts have included initiating the only UFCW flying squad to do strike support work and solidarity actions with groups like OCAP. Steve has also been a good friend of the IWW in Toronto, writing for our local publication and meeting with us to discuss strategies around rank-and-file mobilization in his local.

This has not gone unnoticed by UFCW brass. At a public meeting to discuss the UFCW's bankrupt politics, the union president and staff rep came to disrupt the meeting and keep Steve from speaking. They reportedly threatened violence and refused to leave, thus stopping the meeting. In response to an article published in *Socialist Action* in which Steve exposed the union's intimidation tactics the UFCW has sunk even lower, launching a lawsuit against Steve and the editors of the paper in what is nothing more than an attempt to shut Steve up and possibly break him financially.

The articles in question appeared in a publication with limited distribution, but the UFCW is quite concerned about the word getting out. They are especially concerned that members might read things such as the following: "UFCW giveaways were rampant all over the board"; "All that happened from 1988 on is that the UFCW leadership and the employers worked out an array of giveback schemes that accomplished the same thing as hourly wage reductions across the board"; "In fact the leadership in the UFCW is notorious for scaring and softening up the membership to take bad deals. The bottom line is: business unionism, poor

This situation is further aggravated by low wages. The average worker receives 800 to 1500 rubles per month (about \$25 - 48).

In spring 2001, the Russian Minister for Light Industry visited the Lipchanka factory. Afterwards, in a local television interview, the minister said the factory was operating well and that salaries were being paid regularly. In response, the husband of one of the factory workers phoned the TV station and told the minister that his wife had not been paid for three months. The minister responded by accusing the caller's wife of being a liar.

Recently, Russian President Vladimir Putin awarded the general director of Lipchanka, Vladimir Torshin, an award "For Merits to the Fatherland." What indeed are the merits of this director?

Lipchanka's working women have been producing jackets, blazers, trousers, etc. for both foreign and domestic customers. Lipchanka's esteemed foreign clients include companies like "Steilmann" (Germany) and Harve Bernard Ltd. (USA). The latter company has enjoyed a "healthy" relationship with Lipchanka for more than one year,

negotiators, and no fire in the belly when a fight comes."

The articles also highlight union acceptance of multi-tiered wage schemes, low-wage part-time work, wage freezes, and new classifications allowing low-wage workers to do higher-wage work at the low rates. The truth usually hurts piccards who spend most of their time trying to hide it. We can not let them silence this rank-and file activist.

Steve and his family will need whatever support people can give to keep on this fight. Donations can be sent to Steve c/o the Toronto GMB. Letters condemning UFCW's heavy handed tactics should be sent to REAP (Research, Education, Advocacy, People), a reform movement within UFCW, at their website: www.reapinc.org.

UFCW sues member for posting constitution on web

The UFCW International has joined with UFCW Canada and UFCW Local 777 in a lawsuit charging a grocery worker with copyright infringement for posting the union's constitution on the Web. The suit seeks a court order closing the site, as well as hefty financial damages.

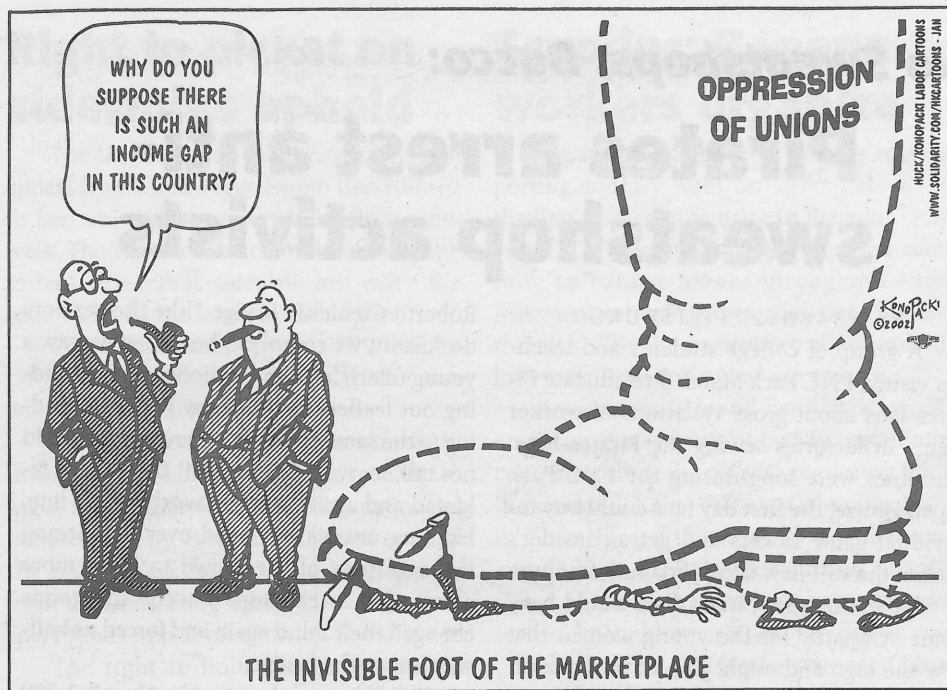
The UFCW is also suing over alleged defamatory comments about Local 777 and its president, Gib Whitlock. The site refers to the UFCW as "the United Fraud and Corruption Workers" and questions whether Whitlock's compensation arrangement amounts to bribery.

Carpenters, AFL - CIO still at odds

The AFL-CIO's Building and Construction Trades Department has rejected a proposal from the United Brotherhood of Carpenters to rejoin if the department was restructured to give greater control to its largest affiliates and protect the Carpenters against complaints for infringing on other unions' jurisdiction.

This marks the end of attempts by the 500,000-member Carpenters union and the building trades department to reconcile differences that came to a head last March when the Carpenters withdrew from the AFL-CIO. Carpenters' dues had accounted for about 20 percent of BCTD's revenue. BCTD officials are threatening sanctions against the Carpenters, which could touch off full-scale jurisdictional warfare in the construction trades.

The Association for Union Democracy will host a Construction Workers Conference in Brooklyn, NY, May 31 and June 1. Call 718-855-6650 for information



which has been marked by high production demands. Although the women at Lipchanka produce high-quality products, Mr. Torshin is apparently not pleased with their work as they are paid mere kopecks.

Salaries at Lipchanka are based on piece-work. Quotas are constantly raised, and the rates for completed work constantly reduced. Management is apt to provide perfectly logical pretexts for these reductions. For example, clothing at Lipchanka is finished with a regular iron. As a result, the clothing may acquire a shiny appearance in areas. The products are sent to the foreign client, where an automatic steam iron is used that removes those shiny areas. Regardless, Lipchanka management claims that such articles were "spoiled" and, therefore, the rates are reduced accordingly. Interestingly enough, despite this "spoilage" Lipchanka's clients continue to place orders as before.

The work schedule at Lipchanka is heavy: two 12-hour days in succession followed by two days of rest. This amounts to a work week of 48 hours, not the 40 hours required by labor law.* Often workers are "urged" to work nights with no increase in the wage rate (again in violation of labor law). In light of the need for a job, workers generally agree to night work nonetheless.

Perhaps the worst period in Lipetsk is summer. Temperatures in the shop can reach 100 degrees. In order to not lose consciousness, some women end up pouring water on themselves. Although the director is well aware of these conditions, he apparently has no intent of implementing any changes.

The equipment at Lipchanka is almost entirely worn out. Despite this, the director has stated that there is no money for new equipment. According to Mr. Torshin, he is a rather poor man, who receives a paltry monthly salary of 8,000 rubles, which is also in arrears. If that is the truth, then it is not clear how he managed to build a three-story private residence in the center of Lipetsk - a city where real estate prices are comparable with Moscow. Torshin retorts that his residence was built with his own blood - probably the same blood that he went on holiday with at the end of September after having failed to pay workers their July salary.

He did not have the opportunity to bask in the southern sun, as he was urgently called back from his holiday. On October 2, a strike broke out at Lipchanka.

The immediate reason for the strike was the director's failure to keep his promise to pay back wages. In September, Torshin had signed an agreement to pay off the wage debts for July. The deadline was set for Sept. 30, which came and passed without any wages being paid. Upon discovery that their director had gone on holiday to the Black Sea, the seamstresses became indignant at having been lied to yet once again. Each year the director had promised to pay a month's bonus salary for good work at the end of the year. But he never kept that promise.

Thus, on October 2, the morning shift of 200 working women arrived as usual at 7:00 a.m., but they refused to enter the shop and work until their July salaries were paid.

The strike was headed by work team leader Zinaida Shmeleva, chair of the local committee of the alternative trade union Dyelo. Although only 160 employees at Lipchanka are members, the union initiated the strike.

At the same time, the chairman of the local committee of the "official" Federation of Independent Trade Unions (FNPR), Valentine Korableva did not undertake any actions to assure employees that they would get their salaries. When the women refused to start work, she walked among them saying that this was "some kind of circus."

And a circus it truly is - people work for pennies while the factory's clients and management live the life of luxury. They refuse even to pay the few pennies demanded by the workforce. But then, no one is really surprised by this circus that has plagued Russia for the last 10 years.

Management was again quick in offering a "viable" excuse for the unpaid wages. The delay was not their fault, but that of one of their clients, the German firm Steilmann. The money had been sent, but due to some ludicrous reason had been sent back.

By evening the second shift joined the strike. On October 4, the administration's nerves gave out. Money was unexpectedly found and payment of July wages began. Production resumed the following day.

This is a familiar story not only to Russia, but to many underdeveloped nations and even sections of the U.S. Western consumers are confronted with the moral dilemma of just what products can be purchased. The ubiquitous "MADE IN *****" hardly ever divulges the points of origin of any product. The components of most any item today have been prepared throughout the world.

This also applies to clothing prepared in Russia. Nowhere does Lipchanka imprint its factory name on the clothing it makes - only the brand name of the seller is imprinted, which can be very deceptive for the buyer. But the point is not what we should or shouldn't buy, but how to change the system that brings goods produced under such conditions to the counter.

* The Labor Code referred to here is the old Code, which was recently replaced. A 58-hour week is now legally permissible.

For more detail, see Sergei Chekrygin's article: <http://members.aol.com/ISWoR/english/index.html>

Australia spying on unions

The Australian government secretly adopted new regulations authorizing it to tap union phone calls during industrial disputes late last year. The rules permit electronic eavesdropping on activities which affect national security, foreign relations and the country's "economic well-being."

"Both Government and employers constantly argue that any form of industrial action has national economic ramifications," notes Labor Council secretary, John Robertson. "Given their past record, that means they will intercept union communications."

Robertson highlighted the waterfront dispute and the MV Tampa debacle as examples of the government's willingness to use state forces against unions.

Farewell, Fellow Workers

Martin Glaberman

BY NEIL FETTES

More than 200 comrades and friends gathered to pay their respects to Martin Glaberman at a memorial meeting held at Wayne State University in Detroit February 17. Marty, to everyone who knew him, passed away at age 83 Dec. 17.

Among the many who came to pay tribute with stories of Marty's life long involvement in the workers' movement were Selma James, Staughton Lynd and Grace Boggs. Marty's brother Eugene recalled that Marty joined the Socialist Party youth group when he was 13 years old, and spent the next seventy years in the working-class movement. In the 1940s he was a part of the Johnson-Forest tendency, led by CLR James, Raya Dunayevskaya and Grace Boggs. And it was to their vision of the creative possibilities inherent in the working class that Marty remained true for the rest of his life.

Others spoke of how, in addition to Marty's work in the political left, which included teaching Marx's *Capital* to anyone anywhere for the price of a meal and a place to sleep, he spent twenty years

Dave Van Ronk

BY STEVE KELLERMAN

Dave Van Ronk, celebrated folk singer, guitarist, and song writer, died Feb. 10 from complications stemming from colon cancer surgery. He was 65 years old. Van Ronk was born in Brooklyn on June 30, 1936. He dropped out of high school at age 15 and later joined the merchant marine.

When his sailing days ended Van Ronk settled in Greenwich Village and became a key figure in the nascent folk music movement of the mid-1950s. He associated closely during this period with veteran blues and folk performer Odetta.

Rising to prominence as a folkie, Van Ronk acquired the title 'Mayor of MacDougal Street' after the Greenwich Village thoroughfare on which many of the folk music clubs and cafes were located. Bob Dylan, Tom Paxton, Phil Ochs, Janice Ian, Joni Mitchell, Ramblin' Jack Elliot and Christine Lavin were among the musicians who studied with or were influenced by Van Ronk.

Dave was a life-long fixture in the radical bohemian movement which flourishes in New York City. He joined the IWW and the Libertarian League in the late 1950s, forming long-term friendships with Dick Ellington and Sam and Esther Dolgoff. Dave, along with Ellington, co-edited *The Bosses' Songbook: Songs to Stifle the Flames of Dis-*

Nova Scotia faculty strike for full-time jobs

Professors, librarians and counselors at Nova Scotia's largest university struck March 4, demanding that administrators commit to filling vacant positions.

Construction workers who honored the picket line at Dalhousie University were ordered back to work March 7 by the province's labour relations board.

This is the fourth strike in the past 15 years, and was called after months of fruitless negotiations with administrators who are adamant in their refusal to fill vacancies. The university has been replacing full-time staff with lower-paid part-time employees.

working in auto plants serving as a shop steward and local union editor. The result of those experiences could be seen in such pamphlets as *Punching Out* and *Unions and Workers: Limitations and Possibilities*.

Another side of Marty was shown in 1994 when he published a volume of poems under the title *The Factory songs of Mr. Toad*. Marty was the author of *Wartime Strikes*, an

investigation into the struggle against the no-strike pact in the UAW during World War II, and recently *Working for Wages*, with Seymour Faber, which explored the roots of the insurgency against capital.

Staughton Lynd informed the meeting that a volume of Marty's writings will be published by Charles H. Kerr in 2003. Kerr will also take over distribution of titles formerly available from Marty's Bewick Editions.

Everyone who spoke had a telling story to recall, but all remembered Marty's desire not to lead, but to explain without the condescending attitude of many on the left. And it was this that drew

so many people to the meeting. The Johnson-Forest tendency were dubbed "revolutionary optimists," but as one speaker pointed out Marty was also blessed with a greater gift: revolutionary generosity.

content, a collection of satires of folk and political songs which followed the format of the IWW's *Little Red Songbook*. It included such classics as "Talkin' Stalin Blues" and "Which Side Are We On?"

Dave dropped out of the IWW around 1960 to try his hand at Trotskyism, but quickly became disillusioned with the authoritarian nature of the Socialist Workers Party. He told me that after a short while he would leave the Trotskyite meetings and adjourn to the Kettle O' Fish bar on MacDougal St. where he found the whiskey more to his taste than the hair-splitting ideological discussions. He eventually dropped out of the SWP, taking along several comrades who shared his critique.

Van Ronk toured extensively and was a fixture on the folk club and festival circuit. He issued some 20 albums including *Inside Dave Van Ronk*; *Dave Van Ronk, Folksinger*; *Going Back to Brooklyn*; and his last album, *Sweet and Lowdown*. Toward the end of his life Van Ronk returned to performing jazz, his first musical love, and played his own guitar transcriptions of tunes by Jelly Roll Morton and other early jazz composers.

Dave is survived by his wife, Andrea Vuocolo.

The *Bosses' Songbook* is available in a reprint edition from the Boston IWW, c/o Kellerman, 187 Cornell St., Roslindale MA 02131. \$4 postpaid. Make checks to "IWW."

Victory for Sears staff

BY GORDON FLETT

Sears Canada repair technicians of IBEW Local 213 in Burnaby, B.C., achieved a contract Feb. 19. They were in first-contract mediation and Sears and the union agreed to accept the mediator's recommendations.

This was a long, hard-fought struggle. It took four years and three months since the initial organizing began at Sears to finally reach their goal of having a true voice in their workplace. Many would have given up, but the workers and union hung in there through this long ordeal, and refused to quit. They would like to thank their many supporters throughout this protracted struggle.

Striking for schools

continued from page 1

strike strategy that would see both urban and rural locals strike together. Over a period of several weeks, locals would walk out within days of each other, steadily expanding the number of schools shut across the province.

The ATA had the potential of taking out Edmonton Public Schools, the second-largest in Alberta, as well as several surrounding northern boards as early as January. In a strategic move that won them increasing public support, the ATA waited to strike until after the provincial departmental exams for grade 6, 9 and 12 students. These exams for grade 12 students are crucial to their graduation. The ATA discussed striking during the exams, but decided to wait to show their concern for student interests.

The strike lasted 14 days. The government threatened to declare teachers an essential service, removing their right to strike, smash their union (decertify the union and separate it from the professional accreditation association, which is the practice in several Canadian provinces), declare a state of emergency and order teachers back to work. They refused to bargain increased funding.

During the strike the teachers held several rallies at the legislature, at government house in Calgary and at the Edmonton Public School Board. These were all well attended, with thousands marching on the legislature. The Edmonton IWW was well represented, our signs standing out even in such large rallies, attracting comments of solidarity from teachers and other labour activists.

The government refused to bargain, and on Feb. 21 it declared a state of emergency, ordering the teachers back to work.

Teachers returned to work and challenged the back-to-work order in court. The Court threw out the order when the government evidence showed that throughout the strike the public calls to MLAs and Ministers were increasingly supportive of the teachers' demands. In fact very few parents

called to complain that their children were suffering due to the strike, despite calls from the government in the press every day encouraging parents to complain.

Teachers now have the right to give 72-hour strike notice, however the ATA is discussing work-to-rule tactics in the face of a hostile and intransigent government. Both the ATA and government have agreed to go to binding arbitration, however the government continues to attempt to change the rules of the game, which may force the ATA into yet another face-off this month.

The teachers showed massive militancy in defending public education, they took united, province-wide action, and were supported by member of the Canadian Union of Public Employees who represent most non-teaching staff in Alberta public schools.

The support of the IWW and other labour unions for the teachers was widespread, and important. The teachers gained an increasing class consciousness of their role as fellow education workers, and not merely professionals. The support of other education workers in solidarity with the teachers is important, as these workers begin bargaining in May and face the same government-imposed wage freeze.

The battle over education funding in Alberta is not over, it has only just begun.

AFL-CIO dues to pay for politicians

Facing a massive shortfall in its effort to raise \$35 million to spend on its political activities before the November elections, the AFL-CIO is on the verge of approving a mandatory 10.5 cent monthly assessment on all members of AFL-affiliated unions.

The AFL-CIO says it is millions of dollars short, and needs a stable funding base for what has become the centerpiece of its strategy. The AFL has closed its education and Working Women departments in order to shift staff to political activities.

Some fear the assessment may deepen divisions within the federation. The Teamsters and other unions have been trying to build an alliance with the Republican Party, backing administration efforts to open the Alaskan wilderness to oil drilling. Teamsters President James P. Hoffa was a guest of honor at President Bush's State of the Union speech earlier this year. Responding to the pressure, AFL officials have indicated they will spend more union money on Republicans in this election cycle.

Despite the disaffiliation of the Carpenters union last year, AFL-CIO membership rose by about 326,000 to 13.25 million. Most of the increase was due to affiliating existing unions rather than from organizing gains.

A legacy of neglect

In 1995 the government took away the right to tax from public school boards, thus depriving them of their political autonomy. In Canada both Protestant and Catholic school systems are considered part of the public school system. For a hundred years, Alberta school boards had the right to raise municipal taxes without having to go to a plebiscite. For a decade prior to 1995, school boards had been forced to raise taxes locally to offset government funding shortfalls. For the past 12 years the government has actually had record surpluses while it deliberately reduced funding to health and education.

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Book Reviews: Harvest Wobblies

REVIEW BY STEVE KELLERMAN

Greg Hall, *Harvest Wobblies: The Industrial Workers of the World and Agricultural Laborers in the American West, 1905-1930*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, illus., 2001, \$34.95

Gregory R. Woirol, *In the Floating Army: F.C. Mills on Itinerant Life in California, 1914*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, illus., 1992, out-of print

The "harvest Wobblies," as Hall designates the IWW agricultural workers, were one of the mainstays of the union from the early teens of the 20th century until the late 1920s. Their long-term association with the IWW, the migratory worker culture to which they adhered, and the wealth their dues payments generated contributed significantly to the form the IWW took in that period.

As Hall tells the story, prior to 1915 most of the organizing activity undertaken by the IWW in agricultural regions consisted of soapboxing in the skid road areas of towns frequented by migratory workers. While this activity generated some membership and introduced IWW ideas to many thousands of workers, it was not capable of establishing the union on the farms and orchards where the workers faced their employers and where they were exploited. What it did was to ensure the establishment of mixed locals and perpetuate the IWW's status as a propaganda organization.

In 1915 Walter Nef, E.F. Doree, Henry McGucken and other Wobs proposed creating a centralized agricultural workers union which would be capable of surmounting these difficulties. With the support of then General Secretary-Treasurer Bill Haywood, they called for the conference in Kansas City which established the Agricultural Workers Organization, whose name was later changed to Agricultural Workers Industrial Union.

The AWO set itself the task of organizing the harvest workers in the three major agricultural regions of the West – the Great Plains, California and Washington state, all with significantly different types of crops and land tenure systems. They wished to avoid free-speech fights and propaganda as an end in itself and experimented in creating the organizational forms that would enable them to organize the harvest stiffs effectively. The job delegate system, control of transportation (boxcars) in the agricultural regions, and carefully planned campaigns with realistic

goals were the products of these initiatives.

The AWO's success resulted in greatly improved pay and conditions on the farms and generated a relatively large amount of dues money which could not only cover the AWO's expenses, but also allowed the AWO to undertake organizing of loggers, miners, oil workers, etc. Eventually these workers established their own industrial unions in their industries.

The AWO and AWIU had to contend with constant opposition from police and local authorities as well as employers. During the First World War the harvest Wobblies were subjected to the same repression as the rest of the IWW, but the organizational base they had laid was solid and the union continued to prosper

until the smash-up of the IWW in 1924 – and was able to hold on for a few years after that until the easy availability of used cars and technological changes in farm equipment undercut the old migrant way of life.

A major problem they faced was that the union was comprised largely of white men whose culture was that of the migratory working stiffs. In spite of their commitment to inclusiveness and their desire to organize all the workers in their industry, their strongest appeal was to workers like themselves. Consequently they enjoyed their greatest success in the wheat-growing district of the Plains where the permanent population was sparse and most of the work was done by migrants. In California many of the agricultural workers were ethnics (Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, Hispanics) who tended to act through nationality organizations and local residents, including many women and children, and these all proved to be much more resistant to the IWW's appeal.

Hall has given us an excellent history of the IWW's efforts in Western agriculture. His work stands alongside Nigel Anthony Sellars' *Oil, Wheat & Wobblies: The Industrial Workers of the World in Oklahoma, 1905-1930* and Peter Cole's forthcoming history of the IWW on the Philadelphia waterfront in filling in many of the gaps left by the general histories of the IWW written in the 1960s and

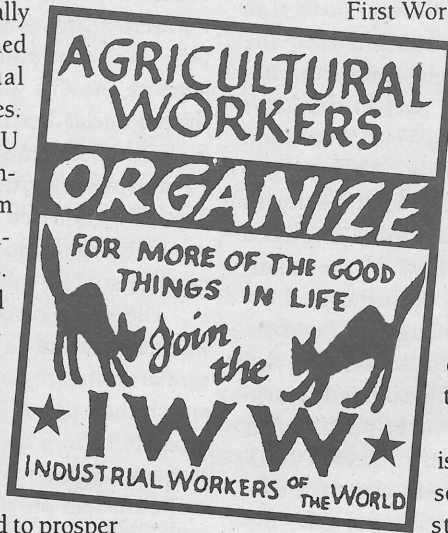
1970s. Among the services they have performed for us is their understanding of what the IWW actually is, how it has functioned, and what it has aimed to do. And they have undermined the erroneous but widespread idea that government repression destroyed the IWW during and immediately after the First World War. They present us

instead with the actual history of the IWW's continued organizing during that difficult period and its strong resurgence in the early 1920s. Hall's description of the 1924 split in the IWW is deft, and is among the best descriptions of that tragic series of events.

In *The Floating Army* is Gregory Woirol's presentation of F.C. Mills' studies of migratory workers in California. After the Wheatland Hops "Riot" of 1913, in which a meeting of agricultural workers called by the IWW was attacked by sheriffs' deputies and several people on both sides were killed, the state created a Commission on Immigration and Housing to determine what went wrong. Sociologist Carleton Parker was appointed to head the commission and he hired F.C. Mills as an investigator. Mills bought an outfit of ragged clothes, a blanket roll, and a pair of hobnail boots and went on the bum.

Mills worked in an orange orchard and a lumber camp, travelled around by freight trains and on foot, and learned what the life of a hobo really was. He experienced the hunger, cold, wretched camp conditions, hostility of the town clowns, insufficient income and insecurity that were the lot of the migratory worker. He kept a journal, filed three lengthy reports with the commission, and, late in life, wrote a short novel based on his 1914 travels.

Woirol has organized excerpts from this material by subject into a brief but valuable treatise which includes a chapter on the IWW which Mills joined as part of his masquerade. Woirol's book is out of print but can be found through libraries and used book services. It offers a useful first-hand account which gives us a view of migrant life not possible in more formal histories.



Poverty: Even worse than you thought

REVIEW BY JOHN GORMAN

Raising the Floor by Holly Sklar, Laryssa Mykita and Susan Wefald, ms. foundation for women, 2001, \$9.95

This book is not likely to tell Wobs too much that is new. What they will come away with is the realization that things are even worse than they had suspected.

Raise the Floor is a shorthand for raising primarily the minimum wage and secondarily the programs that help the poor get out of poverty. Along the way, the barriers that see to it that "the poor stay poor" are to be leveled. The authors suggest an \$8 minimum wage, extended to cover many now exempt, as a start, and are at great pains to show how this figure is arrived at and what it would do to lift most of the poor out of official poverty while putting significant purchasing power into their hands. A regiment of statistical tables is marshalled at the back of the book to support this and every other important assertion the authors make.

As the writers point out, the figures the federal government uses to estimate the cost of living are hopelessly outdated, taking no account of the considerable drop in food prices over the last four decades or the enormous increase in the rent real people have to pay in the real world. Non-governmental studies set the cost of subsistence at around twice these sums, which are used to deter-

mine eligibility for public assistance programs such as Medicaid.

The arguments of those who predict economic disaster should the minimum wage be raised are set forth and demolished. Just as AFL-CIO President George Meany, in one of his rare insights, reminded Congress, "You cannot solve the problems of teenage unemployment by putting their fathers out of work," the writers show that sub-minimum wages are no solution to youthful unemployment or any other economic difficulty. On the other hand, the role of minimum wage laws in preventing a domestic "race to the bottom" is also made clear.

The most impressive achievement of the authors is their success in showing how a steadily sinking floor harms areas of the economy and of daily life that we would not ordinarily think would be affected.

Consider education, usually considered as the best route out of poverty, a truism that loses much of its truth when we realize that low wages lead to poor school districts which can provide only poorly equipped schools, crumbling buildings and demoralized teachers, hardly a help to obtaining a first-class education.

The situation becomes even worse at higher levels, where scholarship has largely been replaced by loans, so that undergraduates finish their bachelor's degrees with sub-

stantial debts. Uncertainty about how these loans can be repaid is a serious deterrent to the children of poor families when they think of going on to college, leaving them far more likely to end up in poverty themselves. Beyond their personal hardship, there is also the shortage of educated workers needed for a modern economy. Although these losses cannot be exactly quantified, it would absurd to imagine they are not real.

Along the way, *Raising the Floor* offers telling indictments of our health care "system" built on avoiding the (unprofitable) sick, our willingness to pay animal trainers three times as much as child care workers, our tolerance of fast food restaurant working conditions that make employees more likely to die by violence than police officers, and many other inequities so gross as to be ludicrous, if so many were not suffering and dying as a result.

The book's shortcoming lies not in telling readers where they are, but in not telling them much about how they got there – not the statistical progression, but the motivations and actions behind that development, and, even more important, what they can do to break this impasse and move on. Exhortations to "take the road to progress" beg the question of why we are not on that road, and what we can do to get on it. *Raising the Floor* ends well before it should.

Digging up our history...

Ludlow Revisited

BY RICHARD MYERS

In 1914 Colorado coal miners were striking under the banner of the United Mine Workers of America. At Ludlow, just south of Denver, miners' wives and children were murdered by company-paid National Guard soldiers. With the cry "Remember Ludlow!" many of the union men went on a revenge spree after the massacre, killing mine guards and dynamiting mine camps. The UMWA eventually left Colorado in defeat.

A few years later, in West Virginia, company thugs murdered the pro-union chief of police of Matewan in broad daylight. Fifteen thousand armed UMWA miners attacked West Virginia coal companies in revenge. The resultant Battle of Blair Mountain was the largest insurrection since the Civil War.

The IWW conducted another coal strike in Colorado in 1927. Unlike the UMWA, the Wobblies had no intention of using violence as a tool. Every morning, guns and knives were collected and locked up at union halls before pickets were sent out. The IWW favored peaceful confrontation, made modest immediate demands, engaged in civil disobedience and fiery rhetoric, and advocated revolutionary long-term goals – nothing less than the restructuring of society to put workers in control of their jobs.

Even after the Columbine Mine Massacre north of Denver, where 500 IWW supporters were machine-gunned by a state ranger unit, killing six and injuring thirty or more, the IWW counseled for nonviolent resistance. Unlike the UMWA before it, the Wobblies won the 1927 Colorado strike when Rocky Mountain Fuel Company decided to sign a contract with a union. That is, any other union. The company invited the UMWA to come back to Colorado.

The UMWA, with 25,000 miners armed with rifles and dynamite in two previous strikes, was less threatening to Rocky Mountain Fuel than the Wobblies, who believed and preached the radical notion that labor is entitled to all it creates. The RMFC contract was the first sustained win for Colorado coal miners in fifty years of struggle.

The Columbine Mine Massacre site is now covered with a landfill. So much for our sacred ground. Our monuments and markers commemorating this history are a mile away in the northern coal fields.

Fortunately the citizens of the southern coal fields were able to protect the grounds of the Ludlow Massacre, and an archeological dig is currently underway to learn more about the tragedy. Denver University Professor Dean J. Saitta recently gave an update on the dig at the Metropolitan State College campus in Denver.

To an overflowing classroom, with students standing between the desks and in the doorway, Saitta recalled the working-class vernacular of a union miner when first approached about the proposed project. The fellow worker drawled, "I can tell you everything you need to know about Ludlow in three words: they got fucked." In spite of some initial hesitation, the United Mine Workers and the community have embraced the project. Additional support has come from the Colorado State Historical Society.

Professors openly discuss the working class goals of the project. To date the dig has produced guns, toys, company scrip coins, religious medallions, marbles, buttons and household items. There is particular interest in ethnic details relating to community layout and efforts to overcome language barriers. The effort has focused new attention on the history, and has generated some new construction at the memorial site.

The state provides support to the project in spite of participants' tendencies to mention socialism and Marxist ideology. One reason may be that the Ludlow mine dump, perhaps the most valuable site for excavation, is threatened with erosion. Without this effort, valuable history may be lost forever.

BOOKS FOR REBEL WORKERS



Labor & the Media



WCFL: Chicago's Voice of Labor 1926-78

By Nathan Godfried
paperback, 400 pp. \$15.00
Chicago radio station WCFL was the first and longest surviving labor radio station in the nation, beginning in 1926 as a listener-supported station owned and operated by the Chicago Federation of Labor and lasting more than fifty years. Nathan Godfried analyzes labor's challenge to the dominant media by examining the station's history and its dialectical relationship with the organized labor movement, the corporate radio world, and the federal government from 1926 to 1978. The station's story will be of interest to both labor and broadcast historians, showing how WCFL's development paralleled

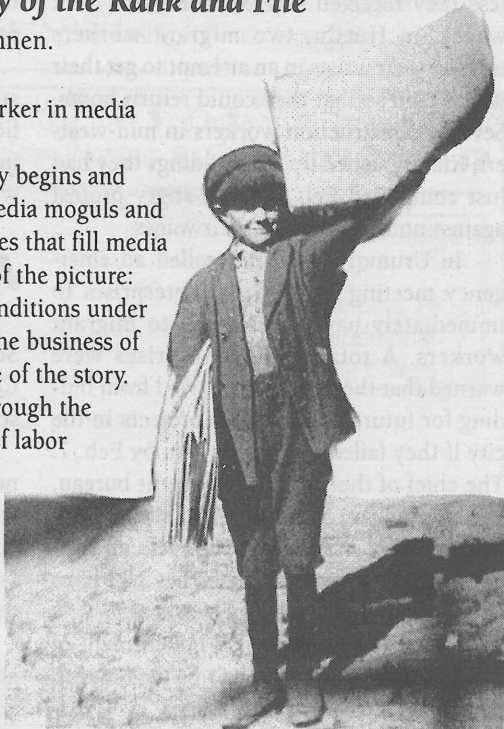
important changes in the organized labor movement and in the movement's interaction with business and government.

Negotiating Hollywood: The Cultural Politics of Actors' Labor

By Danae Clark paperback, 150 pp. \$10.00
Actors' screen images have too often stolen the focus of attention from their behind-the-scenes working conditions. In *Negotiating Hollywood*, Danae Clark begins to fill this gap in film history by providing a rich account of actors' labor struggles in 1930s Hollywood. For many years, one of the dominant approaches to film studies has been the "star studies" approach, like auteurism or biography wherein one actor or director becomes the object of study. Clark argues for a cultural studies approach as she investigates both the individual and collective political conflicts that actors encountered within the Hollywood production system in the 1930s. She reveals the contradictory position of actors caught in the forces between production and consumption, representation and self-representation, their role as images and their occupation as laborers. Taking the formation of the Screen Actors Guild in 1933 as its investigative centerpiece, *Negotiating Hollywood* examines the ways in which actors' contracts, studio labor policies and public relations efforts, films, fan magazines, and other documents were all involved in actors' struggles to assert their labor power and define their own images. Clark supplies information not only on stars but also on screen extras, whose role in the Hollywood film industry has remained hitherto undocumented.

Newworkers: Toward a History of the Rank and File

Edited by Hanno Hardt and Bonnie Brennen.
paperback, 237 pp. \$10.00
The first examination of the role of the worker in media history. What most of us know about media history begins and ends with *Citizen Kane*. The exploits of media moguls and visionary business leaders—these are the tales that fill media histories. What's missing is a crucial part of the picture: the rank and file of journalism, and the conditions under which they produced and participated in the business of journalism. *Newworkers* supplies this side of the story. Focusing on the period from the 1850s through the 1930s, the contributors show how issues of labor and class have been far more important in the formation of media institutions than previous accounts concede. These essays recover the history of ethnic and cultural diversity - including the contributions of women - that have enriched the process of communication.



Global Workers Organizing

Made in Indonesia by Dan La Botz
A dynamic new labor movement emerged in Indonesia in the 1990s, helping to bring down the brutal Suharto dictatorship in 1998. Through personal interviews with the activists who are leading the rebirth of struggle for democratic rights in the world's fourth-largest country, La Botz draws valuable lessons for workers seeking to build international labor solidarity. **256pp \$18.00**

Allies Across the Border: Mexico's "Authentic Labor Front" & Global Solidarity By Dale Hathaway
This first book on Mexico's pioneer independent labor federation, the Authentic Labor Front (the FAT), shows how activists are gaining strength in coalition with their "allies across the border." It also offers a description of Mexican history, explaining how globalizing the economy undermined workers' wages. It celebrates the organizing tactics both within plants and across borders that have given new hope to workers. **288 pp \$19.00**

Union Democracy

Democracy Is Power: Rebuilding Unions from the Bottom Up by Mike Parker & Martha Gruelle. This book offers practical ideas of how the rank and file can run unions. Major discussion of Teamsters for a Democratic Union experiences in this area. **254pp \$17.00**

Labor History

Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology
Compiled and edited by Joyce L. Kornbluh
Culled from Wobbly periodicals from the movement's founding in 1905 to the present, *Rebel Voices* presents pamphlets, stories, songs, poems, courtroom testimony, skits, cartoons and illustrations that bring the story of the "minutemen of industrial unionism" to life in native accents. - *Detroit Labor News* **\$24.00**

The Autobiography of Mother Jones by Mary Harris Jones. This reprint of the autobiography of "the most dangerous woman in America" comes accompanied by several extra goodies: a forward by Meridel LeSueur, an afterword by IWW historian Fred Thompson, a Mother Jones article from 1901, and a tribute by Eugene Debs. Jones (1837-1930) was a union organizer, a co-founder of the IWW in 1905, and a militant in countless other struggles. **\$12.00**

Strike! by Jeremy Brecher A history of American workers' struggle from a working-class viewpoint, arguing that class upsurges are based in everyday life and rank- and-file initiative. While this edition is somewhat less optimistic than the original, it still provides rich detail of workers' rebellions throughout American history, and abundant evidence for the proposition that workers are fully capable of making our own history, should we set our minds to the task. **\$22.00**

IWW Literature

Little Red Songbook 36th Edition
103 labor songs to fan the flames of discontent from around the world, with music. Includes songs by Joe Hill, Billy Bragg, Anne Feeney, Utah Phillips, and more. **\$10.00**
One Big Union An introduction to the structure, methods and goals of the Industrial Workers of the World. **\$2.00**
The General Strike by Ralph Chaplin
The classic text - a call for organization. **\$2.00**

Organizing Help

A Troublemaker's Handbook: How to Fight Back Where You Work-and Win! by Dan La Botz. An encyclopedic work on worker initiative and organizing on the job. Shows that sitdown strikes still aren't dead and immigrant workers can be organized. **262pp \$17.00**

The New Rank and File
by Staughton and Alice Lynd
With this inspiring collection of interviews with working class organizers from many facets of the international labor movement, the Lynds demonstrate the type of grassroots approach that we need if we are to build the strength to win against a global, wealthy and well-armed foe. Directed at two groups - rank-and-file workers and young people entering the labor movement - this book directly takes on the ideology of business unionism and offers hope and ideas for democratic, solidarity unionism. **262pp \$16.00**

Cool Stuff

Strobing Bike Lights Two-inch red reflectors printed with the IWW's logo. Clips onto the belt or pocket. **\$4.50**

Music for Rebel Workers Compact Discs
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Don't Mourn - Organize!
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Bucky Halker: Don't Want Your Millions
Includes little-known songs such as "New Made Graves of Centralia" & "Death of Mother Jones." Also features Wob classics "Rebel Girl" & "Dump the Bosses" and spoken word by Studs Turkel. **\$15**

Ani DiFranco & Utah Phillips
Fellow Workers: A musical stage set by Ani & friends on which Utah tells stories of the American workers' plight and their struggle for rights as the nation developed. **\$17**

The Past Didn't Go Anywhere: Ani remixes Utah's stories from live recordings, a terrific marriage of electronic, beat-driven music and folk-telling traditions. **\$17**

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Workers resist bosses the whole world 'round

Nike workers: 'We are not machines'

The charity Oxfam has issued a new report on Nike and Adidas factories in Indonesia that concludes that tens of thousands of workers still live in extreme poverty and work in dangerous conditions. The report, entitled "We Are Not Machines," is based on interviews with dozens of workers.

"Poverty and fear is still dominating the lives of Adidas and Nike workers in Indonesia," said Oxfam's Tim Connor.

He said full-time wages as low as \$2 a day mean workers must borrow to meet their children's most basic needs. Many are forced by poverty to send their children to distant villages to be cared for by relatives.

Workers are shouted at if they work too slowly. Many suffer illnesses from inhaling toxic chemicals, or injuries from cutting machines. Unionists fear losing their jobs or even being attacked if they protest.

The company often forces workers to work overtime to meet production targets. In one case, a mother whose child was sick was not allowed to leave at the end of her scheduled shift.

"Since the international campaign began, conditions have got better," said one woman, who works in the sewing department of a Nike factory. "Before, it was very difficult to get permission to take our annual leave.

"But now we can get this."

No right to laziness

Germany's "socialist" government has proposed radical cuts in unemployment benefits, straining relations with unions. The government has been slashing corporate taxes, while leaning on unions to abandon plans to strike for higher wages.

The government is considering eliminating older workers' entitlement to up to 32 months of unemployment benefits in order to increase pressure to take jobs at lower pay. Workers under age 45 are entitled to benefits for only a year. Germany's jobless rate currently tops 10 percent; the premier has responded by saying that workers have "no right to laziness."

Government officials have encouraged employers to explore greater use of part-time, subcontracted and temporary jobs.

Coke temp workers win full-time jobs

Workers at the Carepa Coke bottling plant in Colombia have secured full-time employment for half of the plant's workers currently on short-term contracts, and an agreement that the remaining half would gain permanent status by June.

Strike against death squads

ECOPETROL workers affiliated with the Unión Sindical Obrera struck in late February to demand that Jorge Torres Martínez, disappeared by the paramilitary AUC Feb. 25, be returned alive. The strike some 235,000 barrels of crude from being refined on its first day, though management was eventually able to resume production.

Fiji threatened with labor blacklist

The Australian Council of Trade Unions has warned Airports Fiji Ltd. that they will block all air service and cargo shipments between Fiji and Australia by the end of March if the airport authority continues to refuse to open negotiations with the Fiji Public Service Association. The ACTU will call on other unions around the world to support the ban.

New Chinese labor law seeks puppet unions

BY CHINA LABOR BULLETIN

On Oct. 28, the Chinese government announced revisions to China's labor law, last revised in 1992. Careful reading of the revisions reveal that there are a substantial number of people within the official All-China Federation of Trade Unions committed to enlarging the space in which the union can reform itself. On the other hand we can see in the revisions further evidence that neither the Party nor the government is willing to relax their hold...

The revisions follow more than 20 years of economic reform. Entry into the World Trade Organization will add to this process, as well as further aggravating disputes between workers and employers. Against this backdrop, the revisions to the trade union law testify to the fact that the Party is not only unwilling to weaken its hold over the unions, but even wants to strengthen it.

Article 4 makes this very clear. To the 1992 version that stipulates "[T]rade unions shall observe and safeguard the [Chinese] Constitution, [and] take it as the fundamental criterion for their activities," the new version adds "[Unions] shall take economic construction as the centre, adhere to the socialist road, uphold the people's democratic dictatorship, abide by the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, adhere to Marxist-Leninism Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory, persevere in reform and opening."

These additions confirm the fundamental principle that the union is under party domination. At all costs, the ACFTU must not transform itself into an organisation prepared to struggle for workers' rights and interests.

The new law contains many other articles hammering home the point that the ACFTU must remain a tool for CCP policies, "assist[ing] the people's governments in their work and safeguard[ing]... the socialist state power of the people's democratic dictatorship." (Article 5)

Having laid down the guiding principles and basic functions of the ACFTU, Article 27 stipulates that in the event of any strikes, the union's primary goal is to "assist the enterprise or institution in making proper preparations for resuming work and restoring work order as soon as possible."

In fact, getting workers back to work as soon as possible, regardless of whether or not their demands have been met, has always been the ACFTU's priority. The organisation has always been at its most effective at wrecking workers' independent struggles.

The new law also further consolidates – as if this was necessary – the ACFTU's monopoly on union activities and organising. As labour relations in China worsen, the working class is left without any legal space to organise independent unions, which can be formed only with ACFTU permission.

The new law does include provisions authorizing the ACFTU to take legal action to ensure that enterprises forward dues and other payments to the union. While these new provisions are definitely good news for the ACFTU, they are not necessarily to the advantage of workers... Independent unionists in China will find nothing to celebrate in legislation that guarantees the finances of an official trade union with a legal monopoly on organising.

The new law also allows ACFTU to take action against enterprises that violate workers' legal rights, or violate agreements covering wages, health and safety, and hours.

It is clear the ACFTU and its affiliates will thus have more room to act to protect workers' rights. But our interviews with ACFTU officials do not allow us to believe that its bureaucrats will take up this opportunity to go after employers who wantonly violate employees' rights. Such acts simply wouldn't tally with the interests of the government or the employers. It is going to take much more than a revision of labor law to reform the organisation from being a party puppet into a genuine trade union.



RINI TEMPLETON

50,000 Daqing oil workers organize independent union

50,000 workers from the Daqing oilfield are demonstrating to protest the unilateral breach of retrenchment contracts. Daqing is one of China's key state-owned oilfields and was held up as the leading model of communist industry in the Maoist era.

On March 1, 3,000 workers marched to the headquarters of Daqing Petroleum Administration Bureau to protest its breaking of the agreement. By March 4, the office was surrounded by tens of thousands of enraged workers. The company unilaterally terminated winter heating subsidies, and nearly doubled payments retrenched workers are required to pay into their social security fund.

Authorities responded by sending paramilitary police, and deploying tanks, while the official Heilongjiang Provincial Federation of Trade Unions condemned the workers' actions as unacceptable and illegal.

Workers have set up their own union, the Daqing PAB Retrenched Workers' Provincial Union Committee. — CHINA LABOR BULLETIN

Workers demand wages

Chinese workers are taking desperate actions to shame employers into paying unpaid wages. Seven construction workers climbed onto a crane in Shenzhen Jan. 22 and threatened to jump to their deaths unless they received several months of back wages. In Huadu, two migrant workers slashed their wrists in an attempt to get their wages paid so that they could return home. Seventy construction workers in mid-western Xian smashed up the buildings they had just completed Feb. 9 in an angry protest against non-payment of their wages.

In Urumqi authorities called an emergency meeting and ordered enterprises to immediately pay wages owed to migrant workers. A total of 22 enterprises were warned that they would be barred from bidding for future construction projects in the city if they failed to pay workers by Feb. 7. The chief of the city's development bureau, Li Jian-xin, gave some advice to these enterprises: "They can always spend less on banqueting and hospitality, then they will have enough money to pay their workers."

Similarly, the provincial government of Zhejiang declared January to be the "month of chasing after wage arrears."

Italian strikes hit war, austerity

In the wake of a successful Feb. 15 general strike called by Italy's self-managed unions (the Base Committees, COBAS, and Italian Syndicalist Union, USI), Italy's largest union, CGIL, has announced plans for a general strike April 5 against labor "reforms" that would make it easier to fire workers.

The Feb. 15 strike saw 50,000 workers march in Rome and more than a million workers join in actions ranging from short stoppages up to striking for the entire day. The strike protested the ongoing war in Afghanistan and government social and economic policies.

More than 100,000 workers marched through the streets of Rome March 3 in another protest of the Berlusconi government's policies. The CGILs call for an April 5 strike has thus far not been taken up by other unions, but it has already led the government to delay the labor "reforms."

Widespread industrial unrest played a key role in bringing down Berlusconi's first government after only seven months in 1994.

Zimbabwe: Unions in battle for life

The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions has threatened a general strike is the government insists on passing a Harmonised Labour Bill which would effectively ban strikes and demonstrations. Union officials who held a protest without police permission would face 20-year jail sentences.

ZCTU Secretary General Wellington Chibebe said the law was even more oppressive than the colonial-era Masters and Servants Act.

Since 1997, the ZCTU has staged a series of strikes against price increases, the state of the economy, and unfair taxes imposed on workers by the government. The government has threatened to outlaw the union, the main force in a broad coalition trying to topple the regime.

"The government should know that no one in the world has won a war against workers, never," said Chibebe.

In the weeks leading up to elections, several workers were injured and some killed by death squads linked to the government. The president of the Civil Service Employees' Association, Ephraim Tapa, and his wife were still missing after they were abducted Feb. 16 by government supporters.

India: Doctors strike to support public workers

Doctors employed in state hospitals, public health centers and medical schools struck for 24 hours March 6 in solidarity with government employees and teachers in the Indian province of Kerala, who have been on strike for a month.

The government has refused to negotiate. Besides bringing the functioning of offices and schools to a halt, the strike had its impact on the current session of parliament, where question hour had to be suspended.

A scab is a scab

An Australian paint worker sacked by South African multinational Barloworld Coatings in October for calling a manager a scab has been ordered reinstated.

Workers returned to work bitter after a nearly two-month-long strike, and the maintenance manager was called a scab by several workers. The fired worker had yelled "stroup," which is Polish for scab. Management tried to claim this was an ethnic slur.

The union has agreed to meet with workers to discourage the use of "inappropriate language."