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Learning how to build the One Big Union

BY X351814, LOS ANGELES GMB

Wobblies from around the country met in Oregon to learn how to organize the One Big Union. During the first weekend in August, more than 40 fellow workers converged on the Portland Industrial District Council hall from as far as New York and Texas. We discussed the basics of organizing and contract negotiation, as well as the finer points of building a solid organization.

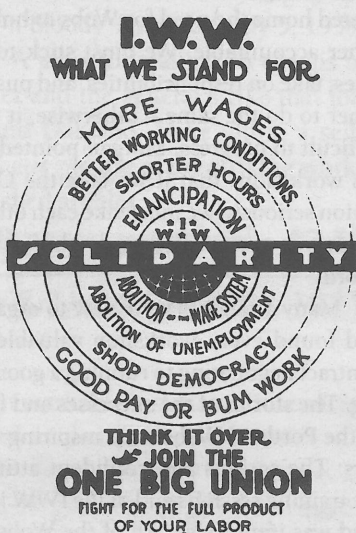
Portland Wobs offered generous hospitality and a welcoming union hall. They were also generous with their honesty about their mistakes and successes over the years. Many visiting Wobs learned as much chatting with Portland fellow workers as they did from the weekend's workshops. Wobs from the Los Angeles GMB also returned home with their branch's charter. A fellow worker in Portland discovered our 1970 charter at a garage sale and kindly returned it to its original home.

GEB chair Joshua Freeze started the conference by discussing unionism and the IWW. Although we must organize in our communities, the workplace is where the working class holds the most power; therefore, we organize industrially to overturn the capitalists' power. General Secretary-Treasurer Alexis Buss followed, noting that recent IWW organizing has largely come about from hot shops approaching the union. She said we must add strategic targets to our organizing, and went on to explain the basics of organizing a shop: making contacts, approaching and educating workers, and leading a successful campaign. Role-playing difficult conversations between organizers and skeptical workers kept people lively and engaged.

Ryan Gaughan from Portland IU 660 discussed a recent organizing campaign at a local grocery chain. The campaign did not win recognition, but he shared some valuable lessons about organizing too quickly and overestimating the union's foothold in the shop. Joshua then discussed how to win victories without official recognition in the shop. He offered suggestions for more creative tactics such as sickouts, calling in OSHA, workplace zines, and direct action. Joshua stressed that these actions must relate to workplace grievances to be successful and that we should always claim responsibility for our victories.

Alexis went on to outline 100 years of labor law. The conclusion: workers have precious few rights if they are unionized and no rights on their own. We learned the importance of knowing the laws, even if they poorly protect us. After discussing the pros and cons of gaining official union recognition at a workplace, folks chuckled that the "cons" list seemed to be much longer.

After an exhausting but informative 11 hours of workshops, we retired to a worker-run café and bar, the Red and Black. The Portland Wobs were



The end of the Pacific Northwest yardbirds?

Shipyards wreck an industry and a planet in mad drive for profit 6-7



Major League Baseball in foul territory

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U.S. Labor Department: A worker-funded farce

BY BRIAN OLIVER SHEPPARD

For anyone who might have doubted it, a memo circulated around the U.S. Dept. of Labor earlier this year provided irrefutable evidence: "A key priority in the coming year will be to firmly and clearly establish business as the primary customer." The Department of Labor was open for business – and for businesses only.

This memo, penned by Assistant Labor Secretary Emily Stover DeRocco, drew criticism from some union officials and activists when it became known in February of this year. But DeRocco refused to back down, cynically claiming that the focus on helping business was justified because corporations are a "crucial means" to helping workers lead better lives. What many labor activists saw, instead, was undeniable evidence of a class war waged on workers by big business, which has used the Bush administration as its proxy since it was installed into office.

The Department of Labor's role in this class war against workers has been ironic; ostensibly the Department of Labor exists to help workers. But in the past two years it has been the target of a long series of reforms, setbacks, budget cuts and project reassignments. The DeRocco memo is only one instance of the Bush regime's reassurance to corporate America that the Dept. of Labor will not act against them. In fact, there is a

sinister pattern of the Labor Department acting hand in hand with the unscrupulous bosses from whom it is supposed to be protecting workers.

Take Elaine Chao, for example. She is the head of the Labor Department, and a fellow of the archconservative Heritage Foundation who has vocally opposed increases in the minimum wage. She is married to Republican Senator Mitch McConnell, a Bush friend, and was vice president of Bank of America's Capital Markets group. Of course, she has never been in a union. Just before accepting the chief Labor Dept. position, she served as CEO of the United Way organization, where she argued for a highly regressive flat tax system that would decrease taxes on corporations (and thus, in her logic, boost "charitable giving").

When Bush submitted his national budget in February of this year – a budget literally wrapped in the U.S. flag – he proposed slashing the Dept. of Labor's funding by a staggering 40 percent while demanding record-high increases for weapons and combat training. Chao and her team didn't offer a hint of criticism.

A funding cut of this magnitude would ensure that the department would not have the resources to investigate worker complaints against employers. In fact it would

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Confronting the G8 Summit

Wobblies Take the Capital

BY BRADEN CANNON, X351663
OTTAWA-OUTAOUAIS GMB

On June 26 and 27, anti-G8 protests entitled "Take the Capital!" were organized in Ottawa, Ontario, in solidarity with similar actions in Calgary (the city closest to the remote resort where the G8 summiters were holed up), and around the world. The Ottawa-Outaouais General Membership Branch, together with contingents of Wobblies from Peterborough, Thunder Bay, Toronto, and Lawrence, Kansas, played an active role in the events.

"Take the Capital!" was organized on a decentralized basis with emphasis placed on independent, autonomous actions. In this spirit, the Ottawa-Outaouais GMB planned an action to support Starbucks labour struggles underway in British Columbia, where Starbucks workers organized with the Canadian Auto Workers are responding to union-busting efforts with an UnStrike.

In the weeks leading up to "Take the Capital," Wobblies distributed information about the BC UnStrike, unions and the IWW to the ten local Starbucks locations. We were met with disdain by Starbucks managers, and Starbucks employees were reminded that they are under contract to not divulge information about the company to any "third parties," under threat of legal action.

At approximately 7 a.m. on the morning of the 26th, Ottawa-Outaouais and Thunder Bay Wobblies visited three downtown Starbucks locations to meet with Starbucks workers, talking to them about the BC UnStrike and their rights as workers, and to engage in peaceful economic disruption.

Managers at the three locations were unwelcoming, at best, and threatened to call the police, at worst. The Wobbly agitators were told that soliciting was forbidden, and they replied that they had nothing to sell.

Their only interest, they explained, was in the well-being of the workers.

At approximately 9:30 a.m., the agitators decided they had achieved their pre-action goals and would withdraw from the third and final Starbucks location.

Later that day, the Wobbly contingents, together with flying squads from the Canadian Auto Workers and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, participated in a snake march through the heart of Ottawa's business district. After the march, Wobblies participated in the establishment of a squat to protest Ottawa's housing crisis.

"Take the Capital!" was wrapped up on the 27th, the 97th birthday of the IWW, with a peaceful march entitled "No One is Illegal." The emphasis of this march was on immigrant and indigenous rights and the Wobbly contingents formed an IWW bloc for the duration.

Although "Take the Capital!" was relatively free from police brutality, the Wobblies were not immune to police harassment. On the 25th, before the protests began and as out-of-town participants were streaming into Ottawa and congregating at the protest Welcome Centre, police went snooping around the Centre asking if anyone knew of any protesters from Kansas. Also, on the 26th, police attempted to illegally interrogate members of the Ottawa-Outaouais GMB on the street after they were seen with an IWW flag. Later that day, a member of the branch was pulled over and had his car illegally searched after having been seen at a march.

"Take the Capital!" will be remembered by all as a particularly soggy affair, with Ottawa receiving record amounts of rainfall during the two days of the action. More importantly, however, "Take the Capital!" should be remembered as another step in the march to victory in the class struggle.

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Twin Pines workers choose IWW in struggle to save jobs

Workers at Twin Pines Natural Foods in Cincinnati, Ohio, are on the defensive. A small food co-op, with one manager and seven employees, Twin Pines was owned by the Federation of Ohio River Cooperatives until last summer, and the workers felt pretty good about their jobs and their workplace, as evidenced by the fact that 80% of the staff has there for at least three years. That all began to change last year when the Federation was contacted about a merger by Northeast Natural Foods, a large wholesale operation run out of Vermont.

Northeast was primarily interested in the FORC's wholesale distribution arm. Twin Pines and other retail operations were a secondary concern. Although Northeast assured employees that things would not change, problems began almost immediately. First employees were told that the store would be closing, then told it would remain open. Meanwhile, repairs were not made, supplies were not purchased, and useless merchandising moves were made.

This was followed by unjustified firings, a freeze on wages, changes in management, cutbacks in work hours, required work off the clock, and denying a voice to employees. Many employees felt they were being "run off," speculating that Northeast was trying to make them quit so that they could shut down with having to worry about unemployment benefits.

When the Co-op Board scheduled an "exploratory" meeting and invited employees to attend, workers hoped they would have the chance to voice their concerns and demands for better working conditions and wages. Four workers attended the meeting, but although Twin Pines' general manager was allowed to speak, none of the actual workers was allowed a voice. When one

180 Movement for Democracy in Education

Four Wobblies were among the featured speakers at the annual Campus Democracy Convention sponsored by 180/MDE, a network founded in the mid-1990s to challenge the growing corporatization of education. Dozens of activists from across the U.S. met in Lawrence, Kansas, August 2-4 to share strategies for confronting autocratic administrators and building a movement to democratize the education system.

Several speakers addressed the history of Lawrence (site of bloody battles between abolitionists and slaveholders); the strange tale of how U.S. judges came to define corporations as persons; campus and community organizing against corporatization; the fight for campus democracy; and overcoming university obstacles to learning.

Industrial Worker editor Jon Bekken opened his presentation by noting that the modern university is far from democratic. Corporatization takes many forms, from the growth of for-profit colleges to subcontracting of educational functions (from cleaning to actual instruction), to the imposition of a corporate model where curricula are determined by market research and highly paid managers proliferate amidst an increasingly ill-paid contingent workforce. The only solution, Bekken said, is to organize: "to unite education workers and students in a struggle against our common enemy – the administration and the board of trustees."

Workshops addressed organizing on the job, student organizing, online education, finding common ground between progressive issues, the Taco Bell boycott, etc.

Lawrence GMB Secretary Lowell Fletcher explained the differences between the IWW and business unionism and offering a short overview to direct action organizing on the job. Other workshops addressed student community organizing and a recently successful campaign to organize the University of Kansas teaching assistants and to pressure the administration into reaching an acceptable first contract.

worker stated that there were four workers who still needed to speak, the reply was, "We can't do anything for you," and, "We are not responsible for this."

Workers at the store began talking union, and one in particular favored the IWW. He had first been introduced to the IWW while working with the local delegate on the TABD/WTO protests in November 2000, and had a favorable impression of the union and our emphasis on grassroots organizing and worker control of the work place. Other workers contacted AFL-CIO types, who were supportive but ultimately encouraged them to set up their own independent union. After extensive discussion, a majority of workers signed up with the IWW.

Customers and members of the co-op have been supportive, but the Co-op Board and Northeast management refused to even

ACORN busted for union-busting

A federal administration law judge ruled June 24th that ACORN violated Federal labor law by "laying-off" its Dallas employees in retaliation for union activity, citing ACORN management's anti-union animus and weak testimony.

The news came after over a year after Dallas ACORN workers Gigi Nevels, Sarah Stephens and Erin Howley filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board as to their termination from the organization.

In her decision, Judge Jane Vandeventer found the testimonies of the former workers to be impressive, in comparison to Head Organizer Kimberly Olsen. "I do not credit her testimony in any respect where it differs from that of any other witness."

The judge concluded that the two primary defenses offered by ACORN were not believable. The first argument was that because of its pro-union and nonprofit principals, the organization would never bust a union. Vandeventer concluded that this idea "is entitled to very little weight. Respondent

discuss voluntary recognition of the union. One member of the exploratory committee threatened to have workers fired for organizing a union.

When workers filed for an NLRB election, Northeast's lawyers tried to break the momentum with absurd claims that two of the workers in the union were "managers" because they were in charge of opening and closing the store on days the General Manager was off, handling customer complaints, and acting as shift leaders. But after an informal NLRB hearing, Northeast realized their case was lost and backed down.

An election is scheduled for August 16th. With four of the six eligible employees already carrying Red Cards, and a fifth expressing interest in joining, the situation looks good for the workers and the union. We will keep you posted as to the results.

is presumed to be neither more nor less prone to unfair labor practices than any other respondent. Respondent's status as a non-profit organization rather than as a for-profit enterprise endows it with no extraordinary presumptions in the eyes of the law. Furthermore, its avowed pursuit of ameliorative works in the community does not insure that every individual in its organization will invariably act in accord with complete moral and legal correctness. Human nature is more complicated than that."

ACORN's second argument was that the financial trouble of the Dallas office was the reason why the workers were terminated. In her rumination, the judge concluded that the financial state of the office was not a new situation, that Olsen and her supervisors knew well in advance of financial difficulty and took no active or direct measures to correct the financial woes of the organization until workers decided to unionize.

In conclusion, Judge Vandeventer stated that ACORN broke the labor law by "inter-

Carleton University restaurant workers organize with IWW

Food service workers at Carleton University, in Ottawa, Ontario, are filing for IWW union recognition as we go to press.

FW Braden Cannon, of the Ottawa-Outaouais GMB, works for Chartwells Food Services (a subsidiary of Compass Groups, the largest institutional food services company in the world), which provides all of the food service on the university campus. This campaign, however, covers only a segment of the food service employees at Carleton.

More than two-thirds of the staff have signed on to the union campaign, which went public August 12 with the filing of the necessary paperwork with Chartwells and with the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

rogating employees about their union activities, informing employees that other employees have been discharged because of the Union, threatening employees that selecting the union to represent them will be futile, threatening employees with discharge," and by laying off the three workers.

In early 2001, Gina Giazzoni, an ACORN organizer in Philadelphia, sent IWW newsletters to ACORN offices around the country discussing issues of late paychecks, unsafe working conditions, and a greater voice for workers. Workers in Philadelphia, Portland, Seattle and Dallas began to discuss and organize unions and most workers lost their jobs, were "temporarily laid-off" or were pressured into quitting. Another Dallas worker, John Reese, quit the organization due to its hypocritical practices at the same time the Dallas workers were being terminated.

ACORN now has the choice to settle the case, issue a public notice to employees about its violations of federal labor law, and offer both reinstatement and back pay to the workers, or appeal the case to the federal board in Washington, D.C.

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.



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Membership includes a subscription to the *Industrial Worker*.



Praise Boss!

When workbells chime
for bits of overtime
whose wars we love to fight
for leech and parasite.

by F.N. Brill

It's let's bash the A.F.L.'s leader(less)ship month in Praise Boss!

I must report that John Sweeney is really mad at corporate America. I mean really, really, hand wringingly, mad. He's mad as heck and won't take very much more. At a recent A.F.L. rally on Wall Street, Lapdog Sweeney condemned the corporate corruption and fraud that has recently been uncovered. Somehow forgetting the previous 460 years of corporate piracy, slavery, genocide of indigenous peoples, etc., Sweeney declared that "This is not how we do business in America." What a liar!

Sweeney's biting cynicism makes Praise Boss! look like the pathetic satire column it is. Sweeney's A.F.L. compatriots raided the union-run-into-the-ground ULLICO insurance company in a completely ENRONistic fashion. Of course America does business this way, John, your fellow union presidents divested themselves of ULLICO shares knowing that share prices were going to drop. You never warned the little guys that ULLICO was in trouble. Like Ken Lay, George Bush, and all the other rich and powerful, Sweeney says he didn't think the ULLICO board did anything wrong.

★ ★ ★

The A.F.L.-MAO is born? When John "The AFL is not a Crook" Sweeney announced a day of action of "action" called "No More Business As Usual," I was struck by a frightening realization. The American Maoist group, Revolutionary Communist Party, held many days of action with the very same name!

Something tells me there must be more to this than mere coincidence. Perhaps R.C.P. agents have infiltrated high into the ranks of the A.F.L. with the task of manipulating Sweeney to send a secret code word out, thus unleashing their mighty middle-aged army of liberation into action?

Or maybe Sweeney just admires the personality cult of R.C.P. CEO Bob Avakian. By stealing some R.C.P. slogans, Sweeney, a lawyer by trade, wishes to mimic some of the pseudo-streetwise swagger of Avakian, son of a California judge. Or perhaps it is only coincidence. Self-defined great leaders always think alike.

★ ★ ★

Praise Boss! has received inside documents showing the A.F.L.'s Organizing Department has been busy recruiting new members to prop up ULLICO share prices until A.F.L. leadership can sell them. Part of the recruitment campaign will be to develop a new image for the market-research-focus-group-deamed-dreary A.F.L. One typically rearguard action will be to rename the union to appeal to younger union consumers - I mean members. The always "with it" O.D. is suggesting the new name be the American Phederation of Labor.

★ ★ ★

A poem for a F&W Cafe worker by x346725:

She serves them coffee, she serves them bread,
Sweat stains skin until the kitchen closes.
She always feeds, but is she ever fed?
There must be more, there must be roses!

★ ★ ★

In my last column I had occasion to tell a story of life imitating art. This month I get to wish life imitated art: A courageous art critic has decapitated the marble statue of former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. According to the *Guardian* newspaper: "The head on the two-ton statue, which is an imposing eight feet high, was knocked off after the assailant deployed a metal rope support stanchion, according to the Corporation of London. A man was arrested. The damaged work, sculpted by Neil Simmons and unveiled by Lady Thatcher in May, was removed from display. It was due to be installed in the Commons after the next election."

★ ★ ★

U.S. "President" George Bush is concerned that the number of African-American and Latino home owners trail significantly behind those of white Americans. He promised new policies to try and close the gap. My suspicion is his proposal will be to adjust the economy so as to lower white home ownership.

★ ★ ★

Anagram = Arm a nag; WorldCom = Cold Worm = Do cow! Mr; Securities Fraud = Us ice rat if us red; Praise Boss = rabies sops = spies boars = posers bias = biases pros = is ass probe...

★ ★ ★

The definition of a great leader is someone whose great works outlast them. Ronald Reagan has been held up to be one of those great leaders. But stick a fork in him. It appears Reaganomics has paralleled the Great Communicator's descent into senility and preceded him into the trashcan of history. Good riddance to both.

★ ★ ★

"A couple with two children would have to work a combined 3.3 full time minimum wage jobs to make ends meet. Minimum wage workers now earn a third less than such workers in '68 in real terms. If wages had kept up with productivity, the average wage today would be \$24.56/hr, not \$13.74. The minimum wage would be \$13.80, not \$5.15. Average CEO pay now is 525 times that of average worker pay, vs 100 to 1 back around 1990." Holly Sklar, "Minimum Wage - It Just Doesn't Add Up," Knight-Ridder News Service, August 29, 2001.

★ ★ ★

Note from a stock broker: The \$1,000 worth of Nortel stock you bought a year ago is now worth \$49. If you had bought \$1,000 worth of cheap beer a year ago, drank all the beer and returned the cans for the nickel deposit, you would have \$107. Given the current condition of the economy, my advice is to drink heavily ... and recycle.

★ ★ ★

As a child F.N. Brill's mother dressed him funny. Unfortunately this didn't help being funny in other sectors of his life. You can help by sending clippings, jokes and bits of hair from capitalists suitable for use in curses to: F.N. Brill; c/o IWW; 616 E. Burnside, Portland OR 97214, USofA.

Toronto city workers' strike ends with back-to-work order

BY JEFF SHANTZ

This summer more than 25,000 municipal workers in Toronto struck for eight (outside workers) to 16 (for inside workers) days. Members of Canadian Union of Public Employees Locals 79 and 416 work jobs ranging from filing to garbage collection. Despite their valuable work, the city has been intransigent in demanding an end to job security and to open a wide range of work up for private contracting.

The strike began with the promise of a fightback against privatization schemes, and ended meekly with back-to-work legislation by an emergency session of the provincial legislature. The province used the excuse of health concerns over garbage pile-ups, despite the city health officer's claim that there was no health threat, to legislate all workers back. Of course the impending arrival of the pope for Catholic World Youth Day played no part in the province's decision.

Negotiations could continue into November and the groundwork is now in place to designate city workers as essential service providers, thereby removing their right to strike in the future. The strike's end could hurt negotiations well into the future.

The strike's end also revealed the true character of the New Democratic Party. The NDP vowed to delay the legislation through filibustering, but then capitulated the very next day after reaching an agreement on the mediators. Once again the lesson that workers cannot count on "representatives" to do their work for them was brought out clearly.

This battle is just one manifestation of a

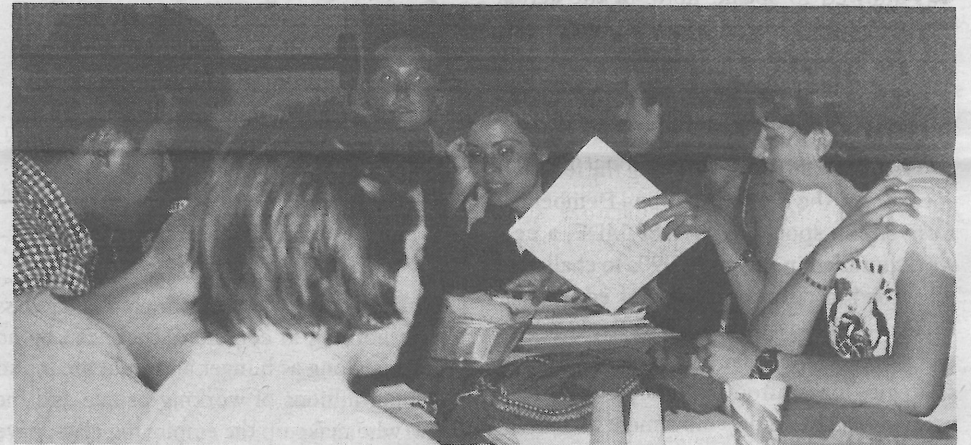
struggle which is raging in communities across the country. Governments at federal, provincial and municipal levels have been moving for years to open a wide range of public services to private interests.

Toronto, like other Canadian municipalities, has suffered from the effects of reduced financial transfers. The federal government has withdrawn from funding a wide range of services, most notably social housing and health care, while the provincial government in Ontario has implemented drastic cuts to social services over a six-year period.

The purposeful undermining of public services has left those services vulnerable to the advances of private providers looking for profitable venues to expand investments. As federal and provincial levels of government have passed financial responsibility downwards, usually to underwrite tax cuts to corporations and the wealthy, municipal governments have faced the responsibility to deal with the impacts of cuts (for example social assistance or shelters) while trying to maintain their own tax cuts. The combination has resulted in pressures favourable to privatizing charmers with easy "solutions."

In communities throughout Canada, experience shows that the working class suffers from privatization: services become more expensive while providing less at reduced quality; public workers lose their jobs or lose pay and benefits; and accessibility and accountability of services diminish.

While one would expect corporate-backed governments to push privatization, *continued on page 10*



USAS members discuss strategies for international solidarity campaigns.

Student activists linking up with sweatshop workers

BY JON BEKKEN

United Students Against Sweatshops drew 150 activists to its national conference in Cambridge, Mass., August 9-11, hearing reports on dozens of ongoing campaigns, considering strategies and priorities for the coming year, and joining daily actions in solidarity with workers around the world.

The largest anti-sweatshop organization in the country, USAS's affiliates across the country have succeeded in persuading more than 100 colleges and universities to join the associated Workers Rights Consortium, which works with local organizations around the world to help workers report violations of labor rights and brings pressure on apparel companies to respond. Backed by the implicit threat that participating schools might cancel contracts, the WRC has been able to persuade some contractors to abandon harassment of union activists, improve working conditions, and recognize unions.

Although several U.S. unions sent representatives, this model is very different from the AFL-CIO's traditional protectionism. UNITE! representative Patricia Campos seemed to acknowledge this shift when she said the union now recognized the need to improve conditions for all workers around the world, discussing a campaign in which UNITE! had helped a union manufacturing clothing for the Gap gain recognition.

However, Gap campaign material distributed by the UNITE! delegation seemed to uncomfortably straddle the line between giving voice to sweatshop workers about the often horrific conditions in which they labor and suggesting that consumers to buy American.

USAS activists seemed more sensitive to this issue. At the University of Arizona, Students Against Sweatshops persuaded administrators to begin buying logo apparel from two worker cooperatives straddling the U.S.-Mexico border in Douglas and Agua Prieta. The Lazos de Union co-op had its origins in a dispute against the SewGood maquila two years ago, when workers seized equipment to enforce their claims for back pay. Now they will link with the Douglas AriSewna co-op to produce t-shirts, helping workers in the depressed area escape their dependence on maquilas. UA student Celeste Espinoza hopes the program will be the start of a sweat-free zone in the campus bookstore.

The Workers Rights Consortium has been helping workers at the BJ&B factory in a Dominican Republic free trade zone that subcontracts for Nike, New Era and other sports and collegiate licensees. BJ&B has crushed several union drives over its 13 years, and responded to a new campaign by the Fedotranzonas union (which organizes garment workers in the country's free trade

Wobblies big hit at the "Home of Baseball"

BY PAUL POULOS

The IWW had a powerful presence in Cooperstown, NY, on the July 27-29 weekend — where Ozzie Smith was the single player inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. In sweltering heat, St. Louis fans came out in large numbers to see and hear the revered Smith at the induction ceremonies.

Over the summer, a quarter of a million fans from all over the world visit this small village of 2200 people — where baseball's Hall of Fame is housed at the foot of Lake Otsego in Upstate New York. Central to the town is Doubleday Field, which seats 9,800 people and is named after Abner Doubleday, who some say, arguably, was the originator of baseball. Cooperstown is often jokingly referred to as "a drinking town with a baseball problem." Two games were played and threaded in between induction day ceremonies.

Big business at its worst

In this, the town that boasts of being the "home of baseball," you will find no less than 29 shops selling all sorts of baseball clothing and memorabilia.

Notably, one of the larger ones is called the Factory Store, where one would be hard pressed to find any garment that was not made in "third world" sweatshops around the globe. Megabucks pass through the hands of the local merchants and everyone seems to get in on the act. In fact, the town has developed a sort of hawkish quality to it.

Main Street was jammed with lines of autograph seekers who patiently waited to get their baseballs, bats, cards, posters, etc., signed by former inductees and super stars

Milwaukee Wobs hit All-Star Game

BY JENNIFER PESHUT

The Milwaukee IWW and the coalition for Sweat-Free Baseball met July 29 with the Southeast Wisconsin Professional Baseball Park District (SEWPBPD, the public entity that owns Miller Park in Milwaukee, Wisconsin). They are in the fourth re-write of their lease agreement with the Milwaukee Brewers Baseball Club, and we are asking them to write our anti-sweatshop demands into their legal agreements.

The meeting followed a July 9 action, in which Wobblies and other activists leafleted the All-Star Game to inform baseball fans of the conditions in which Major League Baseball (MLB) (and other professional baseball zones) by firing activists. Nike and other producers cooperated with the WRC to pressure BJ&B to reinstate the workers and respect Dominican labor law.

Evelyn Zepeda has been working with an AFL-supported solidarity center in the Dominican Republic which has turned from its CIA roots to work with local unions trying to organize in the free trade zones. "If you don't think strategically about organizing in several countries you're not going to win," she said. Even in the DR, a new zone has been set up on the Haitian border in search of cheaper labor. This despite the fact that wages are so low that many Dominicans are slowly dying of hunger.

These and other activists spoke of the need to move beyond expressions of outrage and sympathy to offer concrete assistance to workers who are organizing to improve their conditions and secure their rights. Others spoke of the need to support immigrant workers and to help garment workers escape the 'race to the bottom' logic of corporate subcontracting. And many have worked to establish direct contact with the workers they are speaking for — avoiding the sort of sensationalized "solidarity" campaigns that have sometimes left workers worse off than before their self-appointed supporters arrived on the scene.

Many of the organizations which work with and fund USAS have different orientations; it will require some care to build on these promising efforts.



Wobblies Greg Giorgio and Pete Tsaffaras talk with visitors to the IWW's No Sweatshops booth on Induction Day at Doubleday Field, Cooperstown N.Y.

who bang these young fans big bucks for their signatures. The infamous Pete Rose, who was ousted from baseball, is an annual fixture at signature tables. Baseball is big business at its worst, and perhaps it is nowhere more obvious than in Cooperstown.

Inspired by an article in the *Industrial Worker* that described the efforts of our fellow workers in Pittsburgh and Wisconsin who are addressing the sweatshop industry as it applies to the major leagues, Upstate NY Wobblies joined the effort. Their 4 by 8-foot IWW banner hung high from a ten foot square booth located smack in the parking lot of Doubleday Field. Thousands read the no-sweatshop poster board signs as they arrived in tour busses and wandered about

ball merchandise is manufactured.

Leaflets pointed to All-Star and Brewers' merchandise manufactured in sweatshops in Bangladesh, China, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Macao, Pakistan, Thailand and other countries, and demanded that the Brewers stop selling merchandise produced under sweatshop conditions, stop selling scab-made goods, and disclose the locations of the factories where Brewers' merchandise is produced so that conditions can be monitored.

After two hours of leafleting in a designated "free expression zone," stadium officials asked police to move leafleters to a remote location. While police were speaking to the group, Travis Beamann rode away on his bicycle, taking pictures of the scene as he left. Police claim they told Beamann to stop; not hearing the command, he continued to ride away. Three police took chase, knocking FW Beamann to the ground and arresting him on felony charges.

Many fans signed petitions, and the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* ran an article highlighting the IWW's role in the campaign and noting that the players' union was looking into the issue.

Sweat-free baseball

If Wobblies in other cities, especially those with public-owned ball parks, submit the Sweat-Free Baseball Code of Conduct to their teams and public entities, while leafleting, petitioning and organizing to build community support, we can build the power base we will need to make them sign the Sweat-Free Code of Conduct.

The chairman of the SEWPBPD has already called twice to ask what other teams are doing and what is happening around the country. If we have a national coordinated plan we can win this struggle.

Baseball caps and other merchandise are manufactured under license in sweatshops around the world, often by workers earning less than \$2 a day. Young women in Bangladesh work for 8 cents an hour making baseball merchandise. Revenue from the sale of licensed merchandise goes to a central fund operated by Major League Baseball, and is distributed equally to the 30 clubs.

town. And hundreds stopped to sign the petition that NY Wobs fashioned after the Pittsburgh/Wisconsin model aimed at the commissioner of baseball and the major league teams (see petition below).

Fans check labels

It was amazing to see people checking their caps and surprisingly finding they were made in Bangladesh; several asked us to check the labels in their T-shirts, which similarly carried third-world labels. Many were thrilled to see the IWW presence and thanked us for being there. Copies of the *Industrial Worker* were distributed freely and sales of IWW literature exceeded our expectations. It was a great three days.

It became obvious to us all that the multi-tiered approach to ending sweatshops in sports is the way to go. Major League Owners/Players' logos are trademarked and they could and should be used only in plants

No Sweatshops Bucco!

Pittsburgh Wobblies and supporters outside PNC Park July 4. Some 1,500 Steel City residents have signed petitions calling for Pirate sweatshop responsibility.

New Era settles

An 11-month strike at New Era Cap in Derby, NY, ended in June after colleges stopped using New Era to produce logo merchandise and the Pittsburgh IWW forced Major League Baseball to address conditions in New Era plants. Workers struck against speed-ups. Although they won pay and safety improvements, the production quotas will stay in place.

New Era produces caps for professional and college teams (most sold to fans) in its own plant and through contractors around the world. The Derby plant is its only unionized facility.

Manchester Commonwealth Games

BY BRUCE ROBINSON & KAREN AMAS, NO SWEAT

A lively demo and a fundraising night at Manchester (England) Metropolitan University August 3 finished a week of activity calling for Sport Without Sweatshops at the Commonwealth / Share the wealth / Corporate wealth Games.

Armed with foam javelins and cardboard medals for Number One Sweatshop Exploiter, over 100 people took to the streets

where workers' human and legal rights are guaranteed.

Secondly, sports fans and the public at large fund the cost of their local stadiums. Therefore, it is reasonable to demand that our city councils negotiate leases with the major leagues for these "public" stadiums which guarantee that vendors located on stadium grounds not sell goods and merchandise manufactured in sweatshops.

And lastly, with sufficient public pressure from both fans and taxpayers, local stores and merchants can be persuaded that selling sweatshop garments and gear is not in their best interest.

We feel certain that our union's effort will complement the growing student movement that is beginning to have a voice in where educational institutions purchase their sports' uniforms and gear. NAFTA and Fast Track notwithstanding, look for changes at the "home of baseball" in upcoming months.

To Commissioner Bud Selig and All Other Major League Baseball Owners:

We the undersigned, demand that the Major League Baseball owners take immediate actions to protect the rights of sweatshop workers who sew our teams' clothing and logos.

Major League Baseball owners share responsibility with sweatshop bosses for the gross violations of civil and organizing rights wherever team clothing and logos are sewn. Major League Baseball fans have a right to expect that their team and fan clothing/logo are sewn under conditions that respect basic human dignity by paying a living wage and upholding civil rights. Major League Baseball must provide full public disclosure of factory locations and participate in efforts to verify that the fan/team clothing is being produced under decent conditions.



to put across the message that behind the 'Friendly Games' were some very nasty sweatshops such as Corgi Toys, made in one of the Chinese economic zones where independent unions are not allowed and workers face appalling conditions.

In the evening a benefit for the Indonesian trade union federation FNPBI raised nearly £400 — a lot of which came from No Sweat members being forced to embarrass themselves by singing karaoke.

The downfall of the Northwest metal trades

BY ARTHUR J. MILLER,
SHIP BUILDING IU 320, IWW

The American dream: work hard and your labor will gain you a good life. To hell with the American dream; I want to speak about the American reality.

Work hard and you get yourself a bad back, aching knees, some fancy-named cancer, or maybe death on the job. The American reality is that you may be able to "get ahead" if you step on those below you or around you, cheat folks out of their hard-earned pay, or swindle the masses to buy junk. Sell the folks fantasies to make up for the lives they lose being slaves for wages in order to survive. The American dream is an intoxicant to drive the wage slaves to greater labor and consumption, the American reality is to slave for wages until your body can't take it any more, or the benefactors of your labor cast you out as no longer a useful slave, ain't no good for nothing no more.

Lowering down 14-inch pipe and fittings through a cutout hole in the deck. The crane can't give you a straight drop because it is boomed out as far as it can go. So you rig the pipe so that it goes down at an angle and as the lower end starts through the hole you push the top of the pipe, which has a flange on it, over as the pipe is lowered down. Once the flange gets close to the deck the pipe must be pried over even further so that it does not catch on the lip of the deck. That is the most dangerous part of the process, because if the flange gets caught the sling on the pipe can loosen and the pipe can slide down upon the workers guiding the pipe below.

Rigging the chainfalls

A pipe's size is measured by its inside diameter, so a 14-inch pipe is rather large. Hell, you can't even pick up the fittings by hand. We had a few long pieces of pipe, one 21 feet long, and now that we got them into the tank we have to rig them over to where they go. This called for chainfalls. Chainfalls have two sets of chain, your load chain and a round chain that you pull in order to turn the gear that pulls the load chain.

In order to move your load you must be able to pick it up high enough to pass over any obstacles. You place one chainfall over the back end of the load, and one in front. In placing your chainfalls you must find secured attachments. You can weld a padeye to a bulkhead or beam, use a beam clamp, rap a sling through a rathole, or hook it to the edge of a beam facing away from your load, but that is risky because if the load slackens your chainfall can become loose and move.

If the pipe is clear of obstacles you can pick up the pipe by lifting both ends up, but the bottom of tanks often have beams running on the deck so you may have to pull up on one end or another in order to clear the beams. Once you have the load up in the air clear from obstacles you will have one chainfall pulling back on it and the other pulling it in the direction you want; then as the person in the back lets off on that chainfall the person in front pulls the load. Then it's just a matter of pulling on the chain until the load gets right under the front chainfall. Then you lower the load, move the back chainfall out in front, and move the rigging of the other chainfall to the back of the pipe. That is the time when you must be very careful, because for a short time both chainfalls are pulling the pipe.

It took us about 15 hours to rig all the pipe and fittings. To give you an idea of how much work that is, I had on a new pair of work gloves at the start of the rigging; by the time we had all the pipe and fittings where they needed to go I had worn holes all the way through the gloves where I had gripped the chain as I pulled it.

The tank we were fitting this pipe in was in a rail barge for use up in Alaska. Rail barges are used to run rail cars up on the topside of the barge for transport. Below the main deck

are large tanks. The tanks serve two purposes. In order to offset the weight of the rail cars you need a large pocket of enclosed air or the damn thing will sink. You must also be able to balance the barge, which is done with a ballast system. The barge is divided up in a series of tanks. You equalize the weight by pouring water in different tanks. The water for the ballast system comes into the barge through an opening called a sea chest.

Now that we had our pipe and fittings in the area, we had to fit the ballast system together. People often think of so-called blue collar workers as being all muscle and no brains. The highbrow intelligentsia folks seem to believe that us lowly working stiff must be led around by our noses because we are too damn dumb to think for ourselves. Even so-called radical labor intellectuals ain't got a clue to the reality of down and dirty working stiff.

But if I may, I would like to ask how many of these self-inflated intellectual egos it would take to fit up a 14-inch ballast system. Not only is there the hard physical work, but figuring the fit-ups and outsets takes a good deal of knowledge. Everything must be square to the system and to the structure of the tank. If you are off even slightly on your fitting down to up or side to side, that small amount will become a large amount at the other end of the pipe. Your flanges must be perfectly twoholed and your offsets' angles must be on the dime. Even with all that fitting done right you will sometimes run into trouble because the tank structure may not be perfect and then you must miter the pipe in order to make it fit.

Down a pipe, the drip pan in my back, my feet in the air...

Out on deck of an old tugboat, trying to break loose vent pipes. The damn things have threaded pipe with unions. I try to bust the first one loose with a 38-inch pipe wrench. It don't move at all. The bossman has me hook up a 2-ton comealong and the union breaks, but if the damn wrench slips it will come flying back at me. The next one has a threaded flange threaded into a nipple that is threaded into a deck penetration, and I have to thread it out of that. Again the damn thing don't break loose. I have to put two bolts up through the flange and use a nut to tighten it to the flange. I wedge a long piece of pipe between the bolts and pull. With my first attempt I bend the 5/8s cad bolts. So I go to the machinists, get the hardest bolts they have, and try again. This time it works.

Any marine pipefitter can tell you not to use threaded pipe out on an open deck because it will rust and freeze up. You should use welded flanges. Even if the bolts rust and expand, you can easily cut them off. But they don't ask the people who build and work on things about how they should be designed.

Back a bit I was working on a ship in which they wanted their sea valves and piping off the sea chest taken out. In new construction most of the piping around the engines is installed before the engines are put into place. In the great wisdom of the marine architects, on the port side an engine covered up the route that a valve and pipe needed to be taken out through. Hell, it was so tight in there it was hard to just get to the bolts to break the damn thing loose.

One end of the pipe had a flange on the sea chest with cap screws going into a flange welded to the sea chest. Now I understand why they have that set-up, but I have a major bone to pick about the cap screws. If you look at a bolt you will see that the cap is far shorter than the nut. Wrenches slip off the cap so most folks break it loose whenever

possible and only use the cap for the back-up wrench. When you only have the cap, like on cap screws, breaking it loose can be a real pain in the ass. Why can't they make the caps with as much grabbing surface as the nut has? Sometimes when a wrench slips it rounds the corners of the cap and then you have to take it out with a pipe wrench. Again, why do they never talk to the folks that have to work these damn things?

To get to the flange on the sea chest I have to squeeze down the pipe with the drip pan of the engine in

my back and my feet up in the air. Once I get there I find that I can only work with one hand. So a rather thin pipefitter wiggles his way through the bilge and finds he too can only work with one hand. The cap screws are hammer-tight so we must use an old slugging wrench and a two pound maul to hammer them loose. Well we get everything broken loose and ready to come up, then we have to cut away part of the catwalk and the drip pan and remove a few interference pipes. Then we can pull the valve and pipe out.

This part of the ship was not designed to be worked on, even though the pipe off the sea chest and sea valves are commonly removed in overhauls. One compartment over had a lot of open space. They could have moved the bulkhead back two feet and given us the room we needed to work. But those who do the work have no input on the design of that which we have to work on and those who design things never work on them.

This is a very common problem on ships. In new construction or in major overhauls where I am given a blueprint, the first thing I do is to go down into the space and figure out the problems and where I have to make modifications to the design and get them approved. On some jobs that means going back to the person who designed the system. On one job the blueprint was so bad that the designer told me to pipe it in the way it should be piped - he would go behind me and draw it up as I made it.

On one fishing boat they were having problems with the exhaust pipe. So a new hanger system was designed, all high tech and looking real nice. But the damn fool did not look to see what was on the other side of the bulkhead the thing had to be welded on. On the other side was the galley, with a grease trap right where the welding on the other side would take place. Had I followed the print, and not looked on the other side of the bulkhead, I would have burned up the boat. They were not going to take the stove out and wash down the grease, so the great hanger system had to be redesigned.

The designers of things are like the intelligentsia and politicians who design how societies function. They conceive ideas in abstract theory, and it is up to working people to make them function. The more bureau-

cracy you have in the process, the more you have people making decisions on things that they know little about and the harder workers have it making the designs work. The point is not efficiency or the fulfillment of needs, but rather social and economic privilege - having a bunch of useless parasites living off the labor of working folks, with the parasites in the driver's seat.

It is a bit ironic that us working stiff make all that is used and consumed in society, but somehow the intelligentsia, who make not a damned thing, believe that they must direct us. The fact is, the problem in society is that the people directing it are not the ones who do the real work. Even as wage slaves, it is we working stiff who take the orders from above and turn them into something of substance.

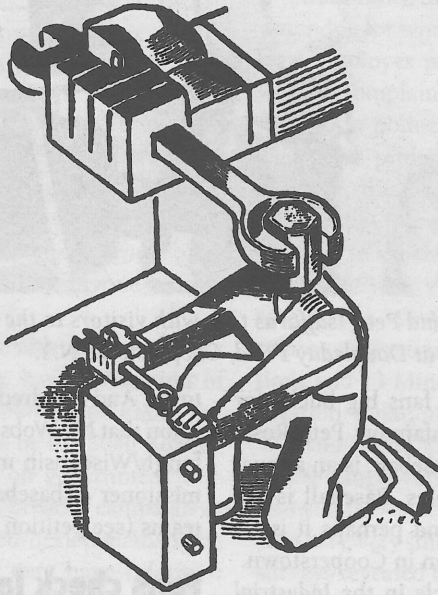
Why in hell do we need a bunch of worthless parasites feeding upon our labor and telling us what to do, when we do all the useful work and know best how to do it? Since it is us who makes any social/economic system function, we are more than able to create a society without all the bosses, politicians, and harebrained fools of the intelligentsia, because in fact we already do it - the parasites only get in the way. No society can function without labor, but labor can function just fine without parasites feeding upon us. We can design what we create, be it a ship or a society, to function in the best way possible. It all comes down to this: society, workplaces and communities can function best when we remove the obstacles and those who do the work, along with those who the work is being done for, work together to fulfill the needs of society.

The shipyard trades are organized into what is called the metal trades, with a Metal Trades Council which is unfortunately made up of union pie cards. Once the metal trades were a powerful force here in the Pacific Northwest. The famous Seattle General Strike of 1919 came out of a metal trades strike. Though that strike was named after Seattle, the shipyard strike also took place in Tacoma and Aberdeen and union workers in both towns also walked out, with Tacoma unionists being the first to walk.

Though the general strike was a good show of the power of organized labor, it failed in the end because of sell-out union bosses. Yes, people will point out all the anti-union propaganda, the anti-labor proclamations by the mayor of Seattle, Ole Hanson, the raids

on Wobbly halls and the arrests of Wobblies and other radicals, but those things did not break the general strike. What broke the strike was that the rank and file did not control their own organizations - they were controlled by a class of labor fakers, the union bosses. From the local trade union bosses, to the labor councils, all the way up to the international union fakers and even to the head union boss himself, Samuel Gompers, head faker of the AFL, all worked in the interests of the employing class to do all that they could to break the general strike and in the end they were successful in winning the day for the capitalist class.

Though the failure of the general strike was a major setback for working people, organizing continued in the shipyards as the industry went through bust and boom cycles. In the 1950s the labor movement all but capitulated to anti-labor laws and most of the metal trades organizing came to an end. I only know of one shipyard organized since the 1950s within the region. Some union gains were made in the union yards but a major setback took place in the Lockheed Shipyard strike, which led to the closing of that yard. Later another lost strike took place at Tacoma Boat and in time that yard closed down too. By striking industrially and using the general strike if needed these strikes



Those who do the work have no input on the design of that which we have to work on, and those who design things never work on them...



would not have been lost.

Global capital on the seas

The 1980s saw the election of one of the most anti-labor right-wing presidents the U.S. has ever seen, Ronald Reagan. When Reagan came into office the maritime industry was in a worldwide slump. He proceeded to remove subsidies for ships being built in U.S. shipyards, though he did sign a bill giving a U.S. shipping company a subsidy to build three container ships in South Korea. Then he removed the tariffs on U.S.-flagged ships getting major repair work done outside of the U.S. and eased restrictions on foreign flagged ships, starting a major run by U.S.-owned ships to reflag their ships as Flag Of Convenience ships, which could be seen as the first step in the new massive wave of globalized capitalism. And then when he broke the air controllers' strike, that sent shock waves through the labor movement and began an offensive by the bosses against the unions.

The metal trades unions then began a series of givebacks that almost seemed like workers were competing to work for less. This would not have happened if the metal trades workers had stood together, but the labor fakers would rather workers lose that which they had gained than to stand up to the bosses as one great force. Twenty years later we still have not made back what we lost in real dollars, what we gave up in the early 1980s.

Capitalist globalization led to the closing of many shipyards and a reduced workload in those that stayed up. Here in the Pacific Northwest, most of the work was reduced to fishing boats, ferry boats, barges, and every once in a while a cruise ship or other ship that needed repairs done that could not wait until they reached a port with cheap unorganized labor. Most metal trades workers are forced to work non-union jobs and/or work outside the industry between dispatches from the union halls. This could have been prevented with solidarity among all maritime workers, but such solidarity is illegal. Those damn anti-labor laws have gutted the power of organized labor.

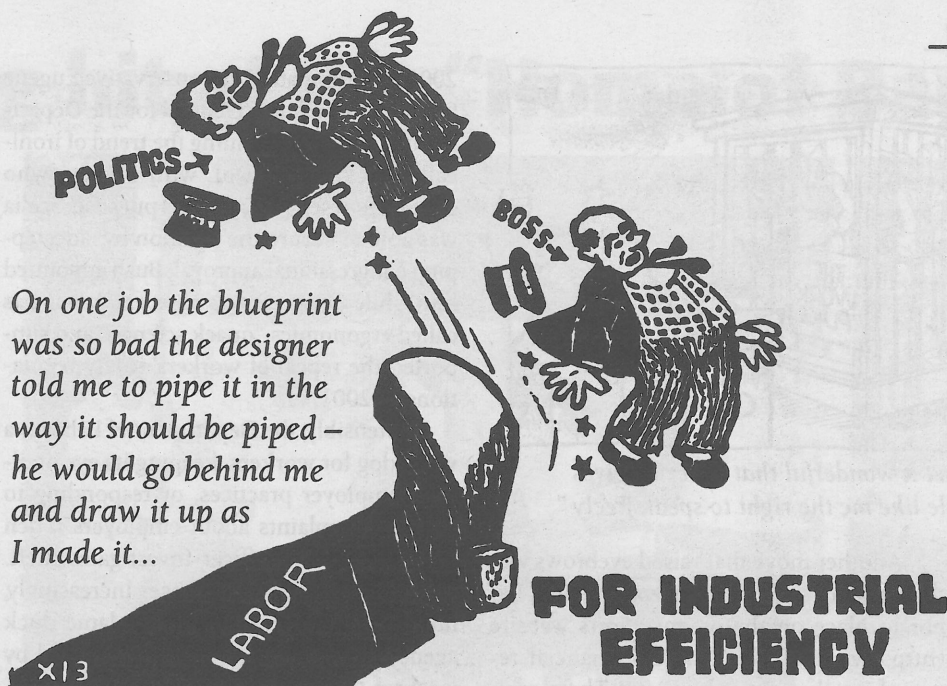
Aging yardbirds, rusty gears

Many people believe the capitalist media hype that the working conditions today are somehow better than in the past. Well in the metal trades that is just a lie. Since there is less work in the shipyards today, there is less capital investment into the shipyards. The equipment has gotten old and is not well-maintained. The chainfalls I spoke about are all old and rusty, a hell of a lot more strength is needed to operate them, gears slip and then old yardbirds must play a game of dodge or get body parts smashed.

When there is work, our hours are long – 10, 12, 14, 16 hours a day and often seven days a week – and we are forced to labor those hours because we must make money while we can, both to save up for slack times and because unemployment compensation is based upon your earnings. The shipyards are forced to get as much as possible out of each skilled worker because there just ain't that many of us left to do the work. The union don't give a damn about this because them parasites get a percentage of our wages, called working dues, so the longer hours we work the more cash the union bosses get. And there ain't no help for us, for the yards don't take on helpers any more, no apprentices are to be found and the shipyard workers are getting older and older. We yardbirds are nothing more than old men performing the final acts of some cursed tragedy.

Now why should you care if the metal trades workers in this land disappear? Who gives a damn about yardbirds away? So what if they hit bottom and their families suffer? Just another group of working stiffs hitting the scrap heap of society. Well I'll tell you friend why you should care.

1. If ship construction is moved around the world to break unions and for lower



On one job the blueprint was so bad the designer told me to pipe it in the way it should be piped – he would go behind me and draw it up as I made it...

wages, construction and environmental standards, you end up with shoddily built ships which are more likely to pose safety and environmental threats. The ship building industry is built upon acquired experience in trade skills. The industrial standard of my trade, as a marine pipefitter, is five years of on-the-job experience before you reach journeyman level. Inferior inspection and testing of work also makes for inferior ships. These ships are a threat to the environment and the safety of anyone around them.

2. Union seafarers work at a high standard of workmanship, reflagging a ship to a FOC ship is done to replace union crews with less experienced non-union crews who have little or no documented work experience – another environmental and safety threat.

3. FOC ships have little or no inspections done by the country they are flagged with. There are few environmental or safety standards. They often lack safety equipment or the equipment is non-functioning. Often they are not even outfitted with septic tanks and thus are dumping raw sewage overboard. These ships are basically sailed until they fall apart, sink or are involved in an accident.

4. FOC ships are floating sweatshops where basic human and labor rights are ignored.

5. FOC ships are the major source of marine disasters, loss of life, oil spills and environmental damage.

6. FOC ships and some other ships will hold off on important repairs until they reach a port with low-paid workers and thus are not truly seaworthy.

7. Environmental damage knows no borders, even if the damage is done far away it can have an impact on the coastal areas of the land in which you live.

8. The globalized capitalist drive to break the maritime unions has a direct effect on all working people and our working conditions will decrease along with our wages.

9. Within the Pacific Northwest metal trades there are few young people learning the trades and the workforce is growing older. Today, in my trade, a young guy is someone in his forties. I have not seen an apprentice or helper in shipyards in over ten years. As the workforce grows older and older and then retires there are not workers coming behind them learning the trades and thus there is a loss of skilled workers in the industry that makes for inferior work.

10. Globalized capitalism is a threat to the well-being of every worker, and thus taking a stand against it benefits us all.

Bent beyond their years

Back on the barge, straining body parts to get the damn thing fitted up. Old men trying to act like they are still young, but walking around bent beyond their years. Down time comes along, the old yardbirds sit around speaking about all their unhealed injuries, bad backs, bad knees, bad elbows, scars here and there and a few with missing body parts. We all know the truth, there is that look in every eye: we are a doomed lot with no real way out. Damn near the last of a breed of working stiffs that few have any understanding of. Hard as iron, but with a

soft spot for the well-being of our kind. As we die off the collection is passed around on the shop floor or at a union meeting for the surviving family.

Our lot was sold out back in 1919 and again in 1934 in the San Francisco General Strike that was also betrayed by so-called labor leaders. Our greatest weapon against the employing class was stripped from us by those who falsely claim to be working in our behalf.

To hell with all those damn labor fakers and all those two-bit politicians who smile at us as they sink their fangs in our necks to suck our life blood, the NLRB, OSHA and so on that are only on the books to benefit capitalism. As to those anti-labor laws that keep workers from using their strongest weapons, I say that the day will come when the rank-and-file workers realize that they must commit open disobedience of those laws in direct actions of defiance and reclaim the workers' rights to act in their struggles by any means necessary. The labor fakers tell us that if we did that which we should do then the state will toss them in jail. I say they can do us more good in jail than in the union halls selling us out to the bosses.

We workers were not born to this world to be slaves to a class of worthless parasites and we have the holy right of existence to end the feeding upon us by those who live off our labor. A slave will always seek to break their chains, and though our chains come in the form of the wage system, we should continue to struggle until we are able to cast off

Gov't threatens dock union with troops

Government officials have told the International Longshore and Warehouse Union that they might seek a Taft-Hartley injunction against the union or have the military operate west coast ports if the union stages a strike or work slowdown.

"He made these threats in a meeting with our top officers," said ILWU spokesman Steve Stallone. "He even threatened that the government would use the National Guard. The government said these weren't threats, that they were just giving us information they thought we should know. This is mobster talk."

The longshoremen's contract (covering some 10,500 dock workers) expired on July 1, and negotiations have been stalemated despite the ILWU's offer to surrender hundreds of clerk jobs so long as the union retains jurisdiction over the work.

In addition to automating the clerk jobs, the Pacific Maritime Association is seeking a second-rate health plan for new hires and the right to subcontract union work.

The union says negotiations have stalled because of the government's intervention on behalf of the bosses, encouraging the PMA's unreasonable demands. "The government has no business in these negotiations," said Stallone. "We never even got a chance to begin negotiating before they started interfering. This is why negotiations are completely deadlocked."

Even before the contract expired, Labor Department lawyer Andrew Siff told the

the capitalist system and their lackey politicians and begin to build a new world, a society without economic classes and based upon the well-being of all, production for use and not profit.

In the American reality we wage slaves are doomed to labor our lives away for little or no benefit. But we, too, can dream a dream, but a dream of ultimate reality, the day when we wake up to our cursed fate and realize that we can reverse the roles and send our tormentors straight to hell!

Uptown fitters in the hole

When there ain't enough metal trades fitters to fill a job order, the union hall will send out building trades pipefitters, or, as we call them, uptown fitters. Those fitters have land legs that sometimes don't function well on ships.

Fitting pipe on a ship is a whole different ballgame than it is fitting pipe in some square building. First off a ship ain't a square, though everything is fitted squared, forward to aft, port to starboard. Often you have little room for your pipe because of obstacles, thus you have to make many offsets, even rolling offsets. Next, you can't fit straight pipe from bulkhead to bulkhead because it will break, for at sea ships stretch. Then on a ship there are far more piping systems and different types of pipe. You may find black steel, galvanized steel, copper, copper nickel, 90/10 or 70/30, fiberglass reinforced pipe, PVC, and once in a while titanium and unipipe. You will work low-pressure drains to high-pressure steam lines. You must know the lay-out of a ship and how to get where you need to be, engine room, shaft ally, holes, tanks, the bridge, mess deck and so on.

And then there are the tanks, and that is where land lovers tend to lose it. Tanks can be so tight that you cannot even sit up in them. Just imagine crawling through a tight space all bent down, with steel bulkheads and stiffeners with holes in them that you must crawl through. It ain't a place for those who get claustrophobia.

The uptown fitters always say to me that I should get my building trades card and get the hell out of the shipyards. Well, I am an old yardbird and too damn old to change my ways. It seems that I will die out with the metal trades books, for while there are over 2,500 cards in my local, less than ten of them are metal trades cards.

union that if it took industrial action the government would intervene. He also threatened to break up the ILWU's coast-wide bargaining unit into 29 separate units, each with its own contract expiration date.

The government has not brought a Taft-Hartley injunction since 1978, when President Jimmy Carter unsuccessfully tried to break a national coal strike. Process servers and lawyers proved unable to dig coal, and many believe the National Guard would prove no more effective moving cargo.

Trapped miners worked for unsafe, nonunion firm

Successful efforts to rescue nine Pennsylvania coal miners trapped 240 feet underground received extensive media attention. Left unreported was the fact that the non-union operator that runs the mine, Black Wolf, has been cited 26 times since March 2001 for mine safety violations.

Bosses butchering teens

At least 73 U.S. teens were killed on the job in 2000, the most recent year for which government statistics are available.

That's more than double the worst one-year toll for school shootings, but we don't see police frisking managers or random searches of corporate office suites. 80 percent of teens work during their high school years. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health estimates that 230,000 teens are injured at work each year.

A worker-funded farce...

continued from page 1

strip the DoL of almost any meaningful function and leave it standing as a mostly symbolic organization. Under President Eisenhower, the Labor Department employed 1,100 inspectors to investigate complaints against employers, Clark University Sociologist Robert Ross reports. Now the number is 950 — “a significant drop during a period in which tens of millions of new jobs have been added to the work force.” Bush’s massive budget cut would make that number even less.

“Clearly the Department of Labor is understaffed,” UNITE! Vice President Susan Cowell said. “There are thousands of small shops [that violate labor law] and it’s difficult to monitor them, but they’re not literally invisible.” Still, the case isn’t so much that the DoL is understaffed as that it lacks the desire to go after businesses at all.

Chao, for example, appears often at industry association conferences, reassuring business leaders that the Dept. of Labor is their ally, not their foe.

In a June speech to the National Federation of Independent Businesses, Chao announced a “new culture of responsibility” to business at the Dept. of Labor. “Our culture is changing to one where NFIB and other employer groups are viewed as allies,” Chao said. “Now we encourage our agencies to form partnerships with groups like yours.” (These comments were reported by the Associated Press on June 14.) The AP noted that the Bush-run DoL seemed to be “rolling out the welcome mat to employers.”



“Isn’t it wonderful that America gives people like me the right to speak freely.”

Another move that raised eyebrows was the recent decision at the Department of Labor to place on the organization’s website (<http://www.dol.gov/>) annual financial reports from the country’s unions. These open records could be viewed by anyone visiting the web page.

While many responsible and democratic unions, like the IWW, have a tradition of making finances transparent and easily understandable, the move by the Bush Administration to put them on government web pages seemed part of a broader campaign to intimidate the more well-heeled mainstream unions. Though they may have reformist leaders, mainstream unions are nevertheless bitterly hated by far-right elements in the Republican Party. Emphasizing that unions open their books while the White House blocks moves by the SEC to open books on several current corporate scandals seems hypocritical.

Bush’s anti-union animus has been exhibited in his various executive orders as well, such as his order that forcibly delayed a mechanics’ strike at a major airline in 2001, or especially his order that unions simply be banned from the Justice Department. In

2001, he nominated the conservative Eugene Scalia to be Solicitor General for the Department of Labor, continuing the trend of ironically stacking the DoL with officers who seemed to resent the agency’s purpose. Scalia was able to secure the position by sidestepping congressional approval; Bush appointed him while Congress was in recess. Scalia has called ergonomics “quack science” and supported the repeal of workers’ safety regulations in 2001.

Ostensibly, the Department of Labor is a watchdog for workers, keeping its eye on illegal employer practices, or responding to worker complaints about employers much the way a police officer investigates theft. That is its professed purpose. Increasingly, however, the DoL sits silent, a lame duck agency that hopes it won’t be pressured by workers to do too much in their favor. Already this year, the DoL has obediently responded to White House directives that it refuse to investigate at least 16 OSHA violations and 13 Mine Safety & Health Administration violations.

And while Elaine Chao boldly stated before employers that “[e]mployers who knowingly neglect or abuse their employees are a very, very small minority,” the DoL’s own surveys revealed that 60% of garment workers alone in Los Angeles and New York do not comply with minimum wage and overtime laws.

It remains to be seen whether the tens of thousands of layoffs that have recently resulted from corporate accounting scandals will be considered willful “neglect or abuse” of employees as well. Though the DoL seems as if it should have its work cut out for it, it has become a useless facade that does nothing but reassure business leaders it will pose no obstacle to them; it reassures them, in other words, that it will not do its job.

Speed-ups sweep workplaces

Reluctant to spend money on new equipment, bosses are instead trying to boost productivity by requiring workers to work harder and faster. Other bosses are requiring workers to put in longer hours or work more quickly to make up for laid-off colleagues. Unable to keep up with the grueling pace, many workers are suffering crippling injuries and persistent fatigue.

Workers at a Los Angeles pork-processing plant once limited by union contract to boning 60 hams an hour are now boning 70.

Maids at a Las Vegas Strip resort have in five years gone from cleaning 14 rooms to 17 rooms per shift.

A frozen-food plant in Marshall, Missouri, runs 1,200 chicken pot pies an hour, compared with 800 in 1980.

The toll of this speed-up can be found in workers being fired for failing to keep up with new production quotas, in fatal accidents as workers rush to keep up, in unpaid overtime, and in exhausted workers collapsing at the end of the day, unable to enjoy their time off.

Many health and safety experts suspect that speed-up is at the root of an epidemic of musculoskeletal injuries such as tendinitis.

“Owners are going to have to realize these are not machines cleaning their buildings. You can’t just crank up the dial,” said David Huerta, an organizer for SEIU Local 1877 in Los Angeles, which is fighting attempts to make janitors clean downtown office buildings faster. “People have reached their max,” he said.

In the 1980s, many U.S. unions surrendered contractual production limits and stopped grieving production speed as part of a wave of concessions. Today, some unions are revisiting the issue. In Las Vegas, a union-commissioned health study found high levels of stress, pain (many housekeepers were taking painkillers to get through their shifts) and unreported injuries, and won new contract language reducing overall workloads after threatening to strike over the issue.

Bosses picking workers’ brains

Faced with speed-ups and downsizing, the *Wall Street Journal* reported July 1, skilled workers are carefully protecting the tricks of their trade from the bosses. A 56-year-old machinist was quite clear about why: “If I gave away my tricks, management could use [them] to speed things up and keep me at a flat-out pace all day long.”

“Process sheets” hang over many of the workstations on the floor of the plant where he works. The sheets display diagrams and specifications for parts, so that workers can be quickly shifted onto new machines. Some workers object to the sheets, the *Journal* says, fearing that they could be used to train replacement workers in the event of a strike. Others say they like using the sheets, instead of their own knowledge, to train new employees. That way, when the greenhorn makes a mistake, the sheets are to blame.

For years, workers at the plant ignored management specifications in order to make the pumps they manufacture work. But production collapsed when the bosses brought in efficiency experts who reorganized the plant floor without talking to the workers.

Many companies solicit workers’ expertise in the name of making their plants more competitive, the *Journal* noted, only to turn around and move jobs to lower-wage locations in the U.S. or abroad once they have picked the workers’ brains.

Goodwill fires worker for political views

Goodwill Industries fired sewing-machine operator Michael Italie Oct. 22, after learning that he was a member of the Socialist Workers Party.

Italie’s job was sewing U.S. Navy jackets in Goodwill’s Miami plant. Shortly before the end of his 10-and-a-half-hour shift, Italie’s supervisor called him into the personnel office and told: “Because of your views of the U.S. government, which are contrary to those of this agency, you are a disruptive force and

cannot work here anymore.”

His views came to management’s attention when he appeared in a televised debate where he criticized U.S. military policy.

Many workers believe they have free speech rights under the U.S. Constitution, and so Italie turned to the American Civil Liberties Union, which informed him that under U.S. law Goodwill is allowed to fire workers based on their political views. Indeed, private employers have the right to fire workers for no reason at all, just because they feel like making someone’s life miserable.

U.S.: 9 percent in unions

While U.S. unions won 53.6% of the 2,378 NLRB representation elections held in 2001 (up from 52.7% in 2000), the number of new members gained was only 69,796, according to the Bureau of National Affairs. Unions contested fewer elections than in earlier years, and lost nearly two-thirds of elections at workplaces of 500 or more. Unions not affiliated to the AFL-CIO had a slightly higher win rate, at 67.5 percent.

These figures do not include union organizing in the public sector, at airlines and railways, or workers organized through card-check or other voluntary recognition.

In 2001, only 9% of workers in private industry were union members, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

Boss carted from plant

A thousand shipyard workers in Szczecin, Poland, invaded the Odra clothes factory August 7, where workers have not been paid for months. The shipyard workers dragged the director out of the plant in a wheelbarrow and threw eggs on him, the traditional Polish ritual for firing your boss.

Adjuncts to meet in Montreal

The Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor will meet in Montreal, Quebec, Oct. 4 to 6. COCAL unites unions and activists working around the exploitation of part-time and temporary labor in colleges and universities. Registration and additional information is available at www.cupfa.org/cocalv.

Teamsters foul out with new UPS deal

Although Teamsters president James Hoffa calls the union’s new six-year agreement with United Parcel Service “a grand slam,” it looks more like a foul for UPS’s 120,000 part-time workers.

While full-time wages will increase by \$5 an hour over six years (a bit more than 3 percent a year), starting pay for part-timers will go up by just 50 cents, to \$9 — far less than is paid by nonunion rival Federal Express. While existing part-timers would receive pay hikes of up to 9 percent a year, because of high turn-over the average part-time wage would only reach \$11.20 an hour when the contract expires in 2008, compared to \$28 for full-timers.

UPS will continue to define “part-time” work by the job, not the hours, meaning that thousands of workers assigned to “part-time” shifts will put in 30 to 50 hours a week on the job for half the pay.

While the Teamsters’ 1997 contract succeeded in cutting UPS’s part-time ratio from 60 to 57 percent, the new deal calls for a two-year moratorium on new full-time positions and is almost certain to end with part-timers closing in on the two-thirds mark.

The Teamsters also agreed to reduced pension benefits for retirees in order to protect UPS from rising health care costs. New England Teamsters had already been hit with substantial cuts to their union-administered health care plan before the contract expired.

Many rank-and-filers complain that the deal would widen the gap between full- and part-time workers, lock workers into a substandard contract for six years, put starting pay below what fast food outlets pay in some cities, devastate retirees, and allow UPS free reign to expand its nonunion operations.

Bay Area janitors form indy union

San Francisco janitors have formed an independent union, United Service Workers for Democracy (USWD87), as part of continuing efforts to disaffiliate from the Service Employees International Union.

Some 300 members of SEIU locals 87 and 1877 formed the union May 18, outraged by the International’s decision to merge northern California SEIU locals into the Los Angeles-based Local 1877.

Two years ago, the SEIU took over control of another SEIU Local in San Francisco, Local 14, and merged it into Local 1877 even though union members voted against it. The local then signed a sweetheart contract allowing management to replace workers making \$17/hour with full benefits with workers making \$9/hour with no benefits.

Since the SEIU placed local 87 in trusteeship, members complain that their prescription drug benefits have been slashed, workloads increased, and companies allowed to bypass the union hiring hall.

Politician doesn’t want to hear from jobless workers

A group of unemployed workers distributing fliers critical of New York Gov. George E. Pataki were ejected from a Dominican Day Parade July 14 at the request of the governor’s re-election campaign. Police surrounded members of the New York Unemployment Project and forced them out of the parade.

The workers, some of whom lost their jobs because of the World Trade Center attack, were carrying signs calling for extended unemployment insurance benefits and distributing bilingual fliers accusing the governor of “keeping our families poor” and “ignoring the unemployed.”

Labor’s Voices/LaborTech

Labor and media activists will meet Sept. 26 - 28 in New York to discuss reaching out to new audiences and new media, the disappearing labor voice, and other topics. For info: www.laborvoiceslabortech.org.



NEWS ITEM: WAL-MART SUED FOR STEALING EMPLOYEE OVERTIME

Wal-Mart, other firms, cheat workers of overtime pay

A wave of lawsuits across the country charge Wal-Mart with systematic abuses of overtime laws. Already Wal-Mart has paid \$50 million to settle a class action suit in Colorado for forcing thousands of workers to work off the clock.

Workers in several other states report being locked in stores at closing time, told to clock out, and then forced to work one or two hours straightening up the store. Other workers were ordered to clock out at the end of their 8-hour shifts, and then continue working off the clock. Several payroll clerks have reported being ordered to alter time cards to avoid paying overtime.

A lengthy report in the June 25 *New York Times* cites dozens of Wal-Mart workers who report being pressured to put in unpaid overtime. And the violations are continuing despite the mounting lawsuits. One Las Vegas Sam's Club worker told the *Times* he put in several hours of unpaid work every week. "They give you a lot of work to do, and there is no possible way to do that in the seven and a half or eight hours you're been assigned," he said. "So you feel pressure to clock out and do what you need to do."

Managers find themselves under intense pressure to force workers to work off the clock. One assistant manager reported putting in 75 hours a week in order to avoid pushing unpaid work on other employees.

As the US workweek grows longer, overtime pay disputes are heating up, according to the July 1 *Christian Science Monitor*.

Starbucks Coffee announced in April that it will pay some \$18 million to settle a lawsuit filed by more than 1,000 managers of its California stores who were forced to

spend long hours doing nonmanagerial tasks but were denied overtime pay for that time.

In May, the Labor Department sued Tyson Foods, Inc. to recover back wages for workers who were not paid for time spent putting on and taking off work clothing and protective gear.

And growing numbers of white collar workers are complaining of long hours of unpaid overtime. Because "professionals" and "managers" are exempt from most wage and hours laws, employers often call workers professionals even though few employees meet the legal requirements. Generally employees directing other workers or engaged in "creative" or "self-directed" work can be exempt from overtime protections.

Nearly a third of professionals work 49 hours a week or more, according to the data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Last year, Rite Aid Corp. paid \$25 million to 3,000 managers and assistants for overtime violations, while Pacific Bell paid \$35 million to settle a suit by 1,500 engineers who worked 50 hours a week but were paid for only 40.

The *Monitor* notes that the workweek is steadily growing longer, with many white collar workers putting in 10 or more hours of (often unpaid) overtime each week.

Average overtime for U.S. manufacturing workers has inched up from 2.8 hours a week in 1980 to the current 4.4 hours a week.

Workers with questions about their status under the Fair Labor Standards Act can visit the Dept. of Labor website (www.dol.gov) or call its toll-free help line (1-866-487-9243) for referral to a local office. State law often provides more expansive protections, and so should also be checked.

Huge gap in information tech wages

A new study by the Washington Alliance of Technology Workers challenges the perception that information technology workers are well off.

"The average wage has become convenient shorthand to remark on the wealth of the IT sector, but creates a false picture of widely shared prosperity," WashTech says. While some workers bring in huge salaries and bonuses, many workers are paid starvation wages.

And a continuing wave of lay-offs have left many technology workers without jobs, or forced to take lower-paid temporary and contract work.

Because few U.S. computer workers are unionized, most must accept whatever severance packages their employers offer. In Europe, however, companies are being forced to negotiate with unions as they axe tens of thousands of jobs.

Hewlett Packard, for example, is being forced to go through extensive negotiations with unions and work councils in France and Germany, and is finding that the "trust us" line it has been able to impose to U.S. work-

ers just won't fly. As a result, announced layoffs have been delayed for several months while unions negotiate severance terms. In Germany, unions say they hope to prevent the company from laying off any workers. Compaq/HP workers have staged rallies in several cities and are demanding that the company honor its labor contract.

"They tell us, 'We will treat you right. You only need to trust us,'" a German union official says. "We say: 'We are not talking about trust. We are talking about a contract.'"

Silicon Valley temps

Activists in San Jose publish De-bug, a glossy bilingual magazine targeting workers at the low-wage end of Silicon Valley (www.siliconvalleydebug.org) – the workers who clean the shops, package the equipment, answer the phones, and make the chips. The fourth issue is filled with articles by young workers about life on the job, but also about the growing numbers of older workers forced into bottom-tier jobs. Other articles address toxic wastes, automated jobs, education, economic insecurity, and discrimination.

Labor Ready shorts workers' hours

West Virginia workers are suing Labor Ready, charging that the temporary agency cheats workers by not paying for time spent being transported to job sites, forcing workers to pay for required safety equipment, not paying the full amount on "prevailing wage" jobs, and charging workers to cash their daily paychecks. More than half the company's profits come from cashing workers' checks.

As a result of the unpaid hours and deductions, many Labor Ready workers are paid less than minimum wage.

Labor Ready bills itself as the U.S.'s leading provider of temporary manual workers. The Tacoma, Wash.-based company has about 700 branch offices.

Labor Ready has one of the worst safety records in the country. Since Jan. 1, 1999, it has been cited 72 times for safety violations by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration, according to data on its web site, www.osha.gov. Labor Ready received more OSHA violations than its 10 largest competitors combined.

Bosses defy laws

New York's Danmar Finishing Corp. is defying a court order to rehire a worker fired in April for complaining that she was forced to work overtime hours off the clock.

Sewing machine operator Maria Arriaga was one of a dozen workers who protested against the company. She was fired after Danmar officials saw her talking with a Labor Department investigator. After a temporary restraining order was issued, company officials told Arriaga that there was no work for her and former co-workers threatened her safety if she returned.

Unpaid work and wage violations are common in the garment industry, and many workers fear losing their jobs to overseas sweatshops if conditions are improved.

Australian unions demand curb on overtime

The ACTU federation says it will press for limits on overtime in upcoming negotiations, following on a July 24 Industrial Relations Commission decision giving workers the right to refuse overtime.

ACTU Secretary Greg Combet noted that there are over 20,000 full-time jobs that could be created in the finance sector alone by curbing overtime. Instead, banks are laying off thousands of employees and demanding that remaining staff pick up their work.

Navistar strike blocks concessions

A six-week strike against truck maker Navistar Intl. was settled July 15 when Canadian Auto Workers members in Chatham, Ontario, ratified a contract preserving wages, benefits and the eight-hour day. Navistar also withdrew a threat to close the plant.

The strike was prolonged by union scabbing, with Navistar plants across North America producing throughout the dispute. Even in Chatham, members of a sister local honored picket lines for only one day before CAW officials ordered them to cross the picket lines.

Navistar's suspended efforts to import production scabs June 24, after a guard escorting scabs drove a van into a group of strike supporters, sending one worker to the hospital with life-threatening injuries. Don Milner, a 38-year-old father of two young children, remains in critical condition after undergoing two eight-hour surgeries to reconstruct his pelvis, bladder and shoulder, which were shattered in the attack.

Milner was one of hundreds of CAW Local 444 workers from DaimlerChrysler plants in nearby Windsor who set up a mass picket on Highway 401 outside of Chatham, where scabs were being loaded onto a bus to be shipped to the Navistar plant.

Jeffboat workers lose safety strike

Some 720 workers at the Jeffboat shipyard struck April 30 after months of unsuccessful negotiations. Workers wildcatted a year ago when Teamsters union officials imposed a one-year contract extension. The strike was over widespread safety problems and inadequate pension benefits.

Workers stayed out for nine weeks, before returning to work July 9. The new contract includes substantial wage hikes, but does not address safety problems. Teamsters officials say they will take these issues up with federal regulators. Workers had been attempting to resolve those issues through direct action for several months, but received no support from union officials.

Not believing that union officials would put up a fight, many workers had voted to accept management's demands and dozens scabbed. Returning strikers are working alongside nearly 70 scabbing union members and 30 "permanent replacements" hired during the strike.

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"Catching Out" with The Rose Tattoo

BY SOURDOUGH SLIM

A performance of The Rose Tattoo is like hitching a ride on a fast rattler, "catching out" in the old hobo parlance. The troupe, "We are not a band" they're fond of saying on stage, brings the songs and stories, poems and lore of trains, tramps and traditions, spiced with keen-edged labor views sharpened by their working class consciousness and the IWW red cards held by most of the group.

The Rose began when Utah Phillips' ill health began to limit his ability to travel and make contact with his musical and cultural comrades afield back in the mid '90s. On a recent leg of The Rose Tattoo's most recent tour, the Upstate N.Y. Regional GMB lent support to the players' scheduled stop at the

annual Old Songs Festival in Altamont. FW Greg Giorgio organized and produced recordings of the group for his Labor Show and another feature, Talking History, heard over WRPI-FM and on the web at www.wrpi.org. Mark "Smokestack" Ross, Diana "Mama Pipes" and Bob "Boomer" Suckiel, Larry "Cream City Slim" Penn and Kuddie, "The Feather River Kid," poured forth with songs of the rails, poems and working songs for over an hour. Later that day, they were joined by Bruce "Haywire Brack" Brackney, Rik "Song of the Elk" Palieri, and Tim "Captain Cloud" Colvin.

Torrential rains transformed a campfire sing into a pre-festival concert at the Old Songs Dutch Barn. The two-hour show was a unique mix with strong guitar accompani-

ment from Boomer and Smokestack, and spirited singing by Mama Pipes, Haywire Brack and Song of the Elk. Cream City Slim shined with his "Run Kate Shelley Run," a moving song about a young girl who saves many passengers from certain death when a rain-swollen river begins to shake the footings of a high trestle. A welcome Friday break from the performance schedule gave the group some time to recharge from their long journeys to eastern New York.

On Saturday and Sunday The Rose Tattoo worked hard in musical workshops and main stage festival performances. Some of the themes for workshops included labor songs, songs of Woody Guthrie, and even a how to

yodel session. Ross, Brackney and Penn also paid tribute to the recently deceased Dave Van Ronk, a Wobbly alum' whose unique folk, blues and jazz stylings were always accompanied by his outstanding guitar playing and an unforgettably gravelly voice.

From Smokestack Ross' ribald hobo numbers to the stirring vocals of Haywire Brack, the blues-spiced guitar riffs of Boomer, soulful labor and social justice songs by Mama Pipes, heartfelt ballads by Kuddie, Larry Penn's brilliant ironies and forgotten bits of history, or Rik Palieri's rhythmic banjo and spirited singing, The Rose Tattoo has a little bit of something for everyone – a mix of talents that inspires and informs.

While their occasional touring may not bring The Rose Tattoo to your town, you can hear two 30-minute shows via the Internet at www.talkinghistory.org.

Life and work of a Wobbly soapbox artist & poet

REVIEW BY ROBERT L HOPPER

Carlos Cortez Koyoukikal: Soapbox Artist and Poet, edited by Victor Alejandro Sorrell. Available from Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum, 1852 W. 19th, Chicago IL 60608.

FW Carlos Cortez, a Wobbly for over 50 years, does not believe in "art for art's sake"; rather, he sees art and the creative energy behind it as an essential force for social change. This does not mean that he is dogmatic in his artistic endeavors, nor does he eschew beauty and sensuality. I have had the pleasure and honor of studying with FW Cortez in his study/home in Chicago, and he is truly a treasure and a lot of fun to work with. According to Cortez, "There is an artist inside of everyone just waiting to break out if given the opportunity and the encouragement."

The catalog begins with an essay, a biographical sketch of the artist and the man. At various points in this sketch, the author illustrates the text with reprints of Cortez's

work, giving the reader a visual framework for understanding his development as an artist, a human being, and a Wobbly.

A brief sketch of his childhood gives insight into the influence of his parents and his multicultural, multilingual environment. FW Cortez's mother, of German descent, instilled pride in the indigenous ancestry of his father (Mexican-Indian). He relates the experience of growing up in the Great Depression, with his parents making sacrifices in order to provide him with art materials. The tolerance of opposing views and encouragement to question the world around him were other gifts from his parents.

The rest of the essay discusses his Native American, Latino and Chicano influences, and the impact of the Beat Poets of the 1950s on Cortez's poetry, and the landmarks in labor history, especially the Haymarket massacre and the anarcho-syndicalist experience in Spain during the 1930s, that steered him toward his syndicalist posi-

tion. FW Cortez's experience as a conscientious objector during World War II also played a pivotal role in his political development. One of the greatest influences on his life, though, and an essential support for all that he has done was his comrade and wife, Marianne Drogitis Cortez.

A second essay looks at Cortez's work from an aesthetic and sociopolitical/cultural angle, illustrating its points with reprints of his works. The author brings out the relationship of FW Cortez's works to those of other artists and the cultural and political movements of the past century.

The third essay examines Cortez's poetry. His poems are steeped in Wobbly culture and deeply influenced by his indigeous/Chicano roots, as well as his studies of other cultures. This essay also includes a history of Cortez's involvement in projects and grassroots cultural organizations as well as the IWW.

This is followed by an interview with Marianna Drogitis Cortez, who was an essential part of FW Cortez's creative endeavors as well as his best friend and lover. To

understand Carlos Cortez and his work it is important to understand Marianna and the role she played in his life. The stories of their meeting and early relationship are also very endearing.

The catalog finishes up with dedicatory poems by another well-known Chicano poet, Carlos Cumpian, followed by testimonials and brief biographies of the authors.

This catalog is the result of a great deal of hard work and commitment. FW Cortez has donated his works to the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum with the instruction that should his work begin to sell at exorbitant prices, the museum is to "print copious copies" and thereby flood the market and drop the price.

This instruction says much about FW Cortez's world view and his commitment to making art available to all, especially those who have typically been denied access to the arts for economic reasons. I highly recommend this catalog to anyone interested in the arts, especially those with an interest in the role of the arts in the IWW.



"Pledges of allegiance are marks of totalitarian states, not democracies," said David Kertzer, anthropologist at Brown University. "I can't think of a single democracy except the United States that has a pledge of allegiance." Besides being an example of paranoia on the part of those who demand the allegiance, pledges of allegiance evidence a lack of confidence.

One may question the good professor on including Freedomland as a democracy; however, a bit over a half-century ago Huey Long, who was the despot down in Louisiana, said that dictatorship will come to America, but it will go under the name of democracy.

Governments are not satisfied with the high taxation levied on us working stiff, they also aid the parasite class in keeping the biggest hunk of the surplus value of our labor power. I have said before that the principle function of governments is to protect the robbers from the robbed.

Al Capone was the one who said, "Don't think that I am one of those radicals. I am not knocking the American system." He sure as Hell did not attack the system – he was only a piker who couldn't keep up with the big boys. To quote one working stiff, "Recent news stories about crime and corruption in politics and corporate America almost make you want to respect the street-level criminals. At least they have the guts to look you in the eye when stealing your wallet or purse."

Sounds like your scribe, who has written in this column that it is not street crime that bothers him. One can stay off the streets. It is the plunderers who never get on the streets who steal from all of us. Compared to the corporate executives, Al Capone was nothing but a small-time crook.

Capone was a killer too, but how many deaths can be laid at the feet of the corporate giants through hunger, job accidents and wars. Six billion of our species live on this planet, and we are all under the thumbs of the corporate executives – a situation that is disastrous not only to us six billion, but to all the other forms of life that share this planet with us. Elections aren't going to change such a situation, due to the aforementioned function of governments.

Don't vote! It only encourages them.

— C.C. Redcloud

Toronto city workers strike...

continued from page 4

it would be reasonable to hope for a strong battle against it from organized labour.

Unfortunately, while the CUPE leadership blustered about this strike being a stand against privatization, in the end they were unwilling to defy back-to-work legislation from the most hated anti-worker government in recent history. As the largest union in Ontario CUPE could have mobilized workers in every corner of the province to oppose this legislation. It would have given them a platform to expose privatization initiatives while showing that organized workers can defend community resources in the face of capitalist claims that the process is unavoidable. Instead CUPE chose to roll over and accept the government order.

A solidarity rally outside of City Hall was halfheartedly organized with only a couple hundred people showing up. The vast majority were CUPE members, with few signs that other unions had done more than send a couple of top bureaucrats to make speeches.

A number of activists were worried that their bargaining team was about to sign off

FTAA on Fast Track

Congress has given President Bush "fast track" authority to negotiate the Free Trade Area of the Americas agreement and other "free trade" deals. Under "fast track" Congress can not amend any trade agreements, preventing efforts to add protections such as labor and environmental standards.

The House passed the bill in the dead of night, beginning debate at 1 a.m. 25 House Democrats supported the bill, which had the full support of the Democratic Senate leadership. No doubt the AFL-CIO will increase its funding of the Democrats in response.

on a bad deal. One told me that she was convinced that the only thing which kept the bargaining team from giving in was the back-to-work order. This speaks to the dangers of undemocratic and non-participatory unions. Workers are left out of the decision-making processes and are easily sold out by piecards.

In the end the insularity of organized labour, distancing itself from anti-poverty, student and other social justice groups and divided within its own ranks, will allow for the continued dismantling of social services and the extension of privatization.

In fact the general passivity of labour and its inexplicable confusion regarding the intentions and commitments of recent Ontario governments have already facilitated massive attacks on the institutions and services implemented in response to the struggles of previous generations of workers.

"Sacred" contracts

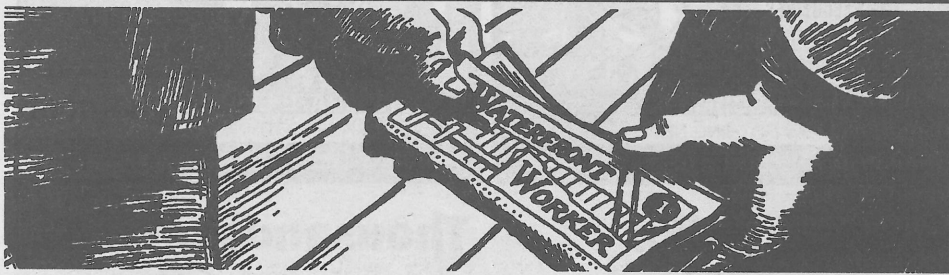
Moral of the story? Don't call off a strike before your contract is ratified by the rank and file and signed by *both* sides. After settling last year's statewide teachers strike by pledging salary hikes, the Hawai'i state government recently informed the teachers union that there's no money in the coming year's budget for the bonuses that were a major factor in getting the teachers to settle.

The University of Massachusetts has also reneged on contractual faculty and staff pay hikes, sparking a systemwide fight that has workers demanding that administrators justify their pay and their pet projects, and threatening job action.

Of course, if workers decided mid-contract that they couldn't afford to work for the wages agreed to, the injunctions and fines would be flying thicker than a swarm of politicians at an AFL-CIO meeting.

BOOKS FOR REBEL WORKERS

BOOKS ABOUT LONGSHORE WORK



The Big Strike by Mike Quin

On May 9, 1934, International Longshore Association (ILA) leaders called a strike of all dockworkers on the West Coast who were joined a few days later by seamen and teamsters, effectively stopping all shipping from San Diego to Seattle. San Francisco would become the scene of the strike's most dramatic and widely known incidents, aptly described in one headline as "War in San Francisco!" On Bloody Thursday, July 5, 1934, two strikers were killed by the San Francisco police. A mass funeral march of tens of thousands of strikers and sympathizers four days later and the general strike that followed effectively shut down both San Francisco and Oakland. Mike Quin, a self-described "rank-and-file journalist," offered a sympathetic picture of the striking workers' actions in *The Big Strike*, a collection of his published articles.

259 pages, paperback \$7.50

New Orleans Dockworkers: Race, Labor & Unionism 1892-1923 by Daniel Rosenberg

This book investigates the conditions which led to a remarkable instance of interracial solidarity known as "half and half," an expression used to identify the cooperation and cohesion among 10,000 Black and white dockworkers during the early twentieth century. Through interracial agreements which divided work and union leadership equally between Blacks and whites, dockworkers reduced the workload and pace imposed by shipping firms, and formed the basis for the general dock strike of 1907, described as "one of the most stirring manifestations of labor solidarity in American history." IWW influence on integrated unionism is also discussed. Rosenberg probes the nature of longshore work, dockworkers' views of Jim Crow, and industrial unionist trends, as well as the conclusions drawn by dockers after the levee race riots of the 1890s.

233 pages, hardcover \$10.00



Reds or Rackets?: The Making of Radical & Conservative Unions on the Waterfront by Howard Kimeldorf

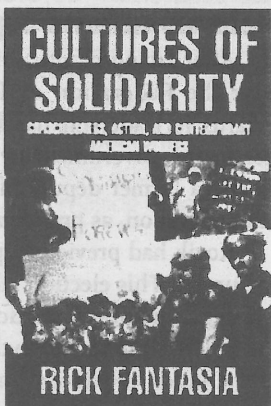
Why is the American working class "different?" For generations, scholars and activists alike have wrestled with this question, with an eye to explaining why workers in the United States are not more like their radicalized European counterparts. Approaching the question from a different angle, *Reds or Rackets?* provides a fascinating examination of the American labor movement from the inside out by analyzing the divergent sources of radicalism and conservatism within it. Kimeldorf focuses on the political contrast between East and West Coast longshoremen from World War I through the early years of the Cold War. He explores the politics of the West Coast union that developed into a hot bed of working class insurgency and contrasts it with the conservative and racket-ridden East Coast longshoreman's union. Two unions, based in the same industry--as different as night and day. The question posed by Kimeldorf is, why? Why "reds" on one coast and racketeers on the other?

242 pages, paperback Published at \$25.00 Now \$10.00

Cultures of Solidarity: Consciousness, Action, and Contemporary American Workers by Rick Fantasia

A commonplace assumption about American workers is that they lack class consciousness. This perception has baffled social scientists, demoralized activists, and generated a significant literature on American exceptionalism. In this provocative book, a young sociologist takes the prevailing assumptions to task and sheds new light upon this very important issue. In three vivid case studies Fantasia explores the complicated, multi-faceted dynamics of American working-class consciousness and collective action. Especially interesting is the discussion of wildcat strikes, contrasted with bureaucratically-entrenched labor unions.

304 pages, paperback Published at \$25.00 Now \$10.00



Environmentalism for workers

The Fate of the New Carissa

by Arthur J. Miller A first-hand account of a ship explosion which filled Oregon's Coos Bay with chemicals, fuels, and filth. Also discusses the "flag of convenience" system which allows ship owners to escape safety, environmental, and labor laws. 16pp \$2

Dangerous Premises: An Insider's View of OSHA Enforcement

by Don J. Lofgren. A former inspector for the California Occupational Safety and Health Administration tells a compelling tale of corporate disregard for worker health and safety in conversational, accessible language.

In the format of eleven case studies of different kinds of worksites, Lofgren maintains a critical tone towards OSHA, a toothless law that has been worsened by politicians since its inception. Lofgren's case studies and analysis also make it clear that workers with strong and responsive union representation gain the most from OSHA, as union representatives are generally not afraid to make complaints.

244pp \$12.00

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

The Great Bisbee Deportation by Rob E. Hanson Wobblies so worried the authorities of Bisbee, Arizona, that the state ran them out of town. This comprehensive account brings the events of the day alive. \$2.00

Solidarity Forever by Stewart Bird, Dan Georgakis, and Deborah Shaffer Oral histories of IWW members. \$10.00

Strike! by Jeremy Brecher A classic text -- 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

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One Big Union An introduction to the structure, methods and goals of the Industrial Workers of the World. \$2.00

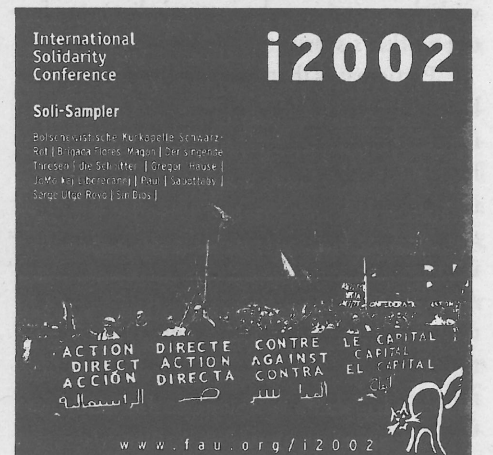
A New Union Vision by Arthur J. Miller A discussion of the present-day need for democratic, revolutionary unions. \$2.00

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. 263pp \$17

Cool Stuff



i2002 Soli-Sampler

From August 27 - September 1 is an international conference of revolutionary unionists in Essen, Germany. Conference organizers, the FAU, have produced an excellent "pre-soundtrack" CD for the event, featuring songs in German, English, French, Spanish and even Esperanto. Contributors include Sabotabby, Brigada Flores Magon, and Sin Dios. \$15

Music for Rebel Workers Compact Discs

Don't Mourn - Organize!

14 songs by and about Joe Hill, labor martyr. Includes performances by Billy Bragg, Utah Phillips, Pete Seeger, Hazel Dickens, and Paul Robeson \$17

Bucky Halker: Don't Want Your Millions Includes little-known songs such as "New Made Graves of Centralia" and "Death of Mother Jones." Also features Wobbly classics "Rebel Girl" and "Dump the Bosses" and spoken word by Studs Turkel. \$15

Strobing Bike Lights Two-inch red reflectors printed with the IWW's logo. Clips onto the belt or pocket of runners & riders. Battery included. \$4.50

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Honduran unions organize to survive

BY HANNAH FRISCH

Union leaders from Yoo Yang, a Honduran textile plant (or maquila) met April 27th to sharpen their organizing skills and to initiate a cooperative program with the women's secretariat of the Honduran Banana Workers' Federation. Women in both industries work long hours under abusive conditions for poverty-level wages.

Liz O'Connor of STITCH, a women's cross-border labor solidarity organization that focuses on sponsoring training exchanges helped workers practice the skill of talking to non-members one-on-one about the union. STITCH staff had previously met with Honduran organizers to plan the workshop. They also held a train-the-trainer session on using role-play as a teaching method.

Liz went over steps of a one-on-one "recruiting" conversation: Anger – asking questions and getting the non-union worker to talk about her problems and frustrations at work; Hope – showing how the union can address her problems; and Action – asking her to do something, such as coming to a meeting. The emphasis was on listening – the worker should speak 70% of the time, with the union member actively listening for the worker's story.

Participants then broke into small groups led by the Honduran organizers to practice in role plays. First, they practiced listening. It was a struggle for most to keep from jumping in to explaining the union's benefits. They then practiced an entire conversation, including getting the "worker" to join the union. At the end, a few participants demonstrated their skills before the whole group, who critiqued these performances. The members reported that they felt most convinced when the "organizer" (played by the participants)

in the role play listened to them.

Nine women from the Yoo Yang union stayed afterward to meet with STITCH and with women from the Banana Union Federation. Women from both industries talked about the similar problems they face as workers and as women: the triple day as worker, homemaker and union activist; their own feelings of inferiority; and sexism and sexual harassment. The differences in their situations, however, will make their collaboration particularly useful.

Banana workers have been unionized for many years and are so well-established that they have not needed to actively recruit. Although women are a minority of the workforce, they have a well-developed program of women's leadership training. But the banana union is being weakened as plantation owners begin moving production to non-union plantations. If they are not to have their wages undercut, they must organize workers at those plantations.

The textile union, however, is very new. They obtained their legal status by visiting workers one-by-one in their homes and signing them up as members. They achieved their first union contract less than six months ago.

STITCH brought the unions together because they knew how much the experienced banana union leaders have to offer to their newer colleagues. The banana unions have years of experience in the nuts and bolts of being a union, while the secretary of the Yoo Yang union, like her comrades, joined a union for the first time only two years ago.

On June 29th, they held a morning organizing workshop, and spent the afternoon doing joint field work. Teams of one banana and one textile leader visited maquila workers who are not yet members of the union.

portunity to enrich themselves. While repression thus far has been relatively restrained, the crackdown seems likely to intensify if protests spread from closed to active factories or threaten foreign investment.

Yahoo! to censor Internet

Internet portal Yahoo! is ignoring Human Rights Watch's request that it withdraw its signature to China's "Public Pledge on Self-discipline for the Chinese Internet Industry." Signatories agree to investigate all web sites to which they provide links and to block anything the government might consider "harmful information."

Many Chinese Internet users rely on free services, such as e-mail and web access provided by Yahoo!, making the U.S.-based firm especially prominent in China.

Uruguay: Banker arrested during general strike

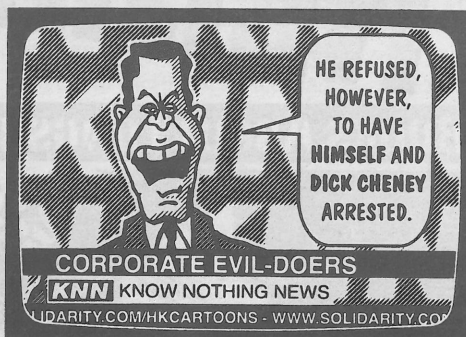
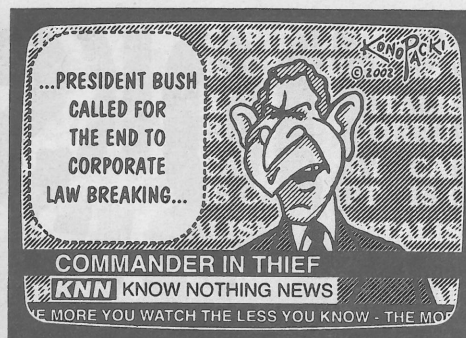
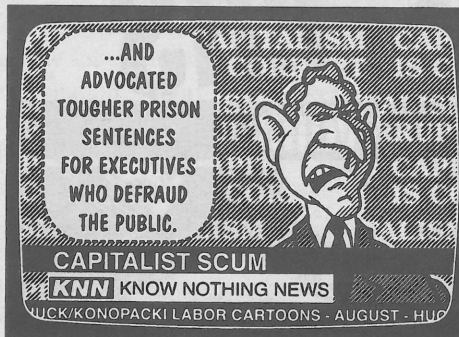
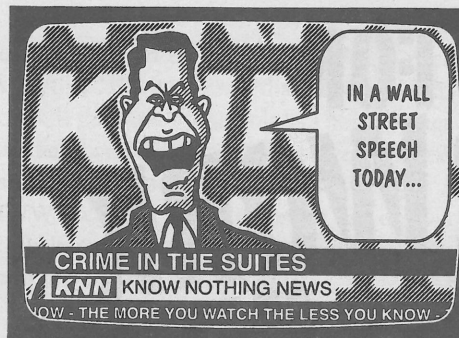
Uruguayan workers held a general strike August 1 to protest the country's worsening economic crisis and the government's austerity policies, bringing the country to a halt. Authorities responded by arresting banking magnate Jose Peirano on fraud charges related to the collapse of Banco Montevideo.

Wildcat shuts Mex. subway

Mexico City subway workers staged a wildcat strike August 8 against unsafe conditions, shutting down two of the metro system's 11 lines and forcing about 500,000 people to seek other transportation. Trains and monitoring systems are not properly maintained, workers say, causing serious risk of collisions and derailments.

Sodexo workers strike

Multinational catering firm Sodexo has flown in scabs in an attempt to break a strike by workers at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary in Scotland. Workers struck after 18 months of futile negotiations to reverse the second-rate conditions imposed after these health service jobs were privatized.



General strike shakes Spain

BY MIKE HARGIS

The June 20 general strike shut down major industries throughout Spain, with up to 85 percent of workers honoring the strike call. The strike was called by unions to protest new unemployment policies which would increase labor market flexibility, and consequently increase job insecurity.

Spain's revolutionary unions joined the strike, also protesting pension "reforms," anti-immigrant measures, labor law reforms, and joint labor-management pacts.

In Madrid, demonstrations cosponsored by the CNT-AIT, CGT and other syndicalist unions who put aside their differences for the day, drew 15,000 workers. Hundreds of thousands joined demonstrations across the country, and 85 workers were arrested and hundreds injured in clashes with police.

Letters in blood

More than 200 workers presented a letter written in their own blood to the Thai parliament July 16, protesting events at the Light House production plant, managed by a sub-contractor of the American luggage multinational, Samsonite Corporation.

In October 2001 the company dismissed 600 workers (out of a total workforce of 1400), the majority women with more than 10 years of experience with the company. Overtime benefits were cut and wages slashed by 25 percent to \$3.60 per day for the remaining workforce, despite a dramatic increase in their workload.

In June 2002, the company sacked all 20 elected union representatives at the plant; 849 workers were dismissed when they stopped working to protest.

Nukes ok, workers not

The Maritime Union of Australia has slammed the government for allowing shipments of nuclear waste to pass the Australian coast, without adequate emergency plans. "They turn away boatloads of harmless refugees and asylum seekers but leave our coast open to this sort of thing," said MUA shipping coordinator Sean Chaffer. "It's a real threat."

Belarus unions capitulate

After facing months of efforts to liquidate the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus, its leadership has decided to surrender to the government by electing Leonid Kozik, a former deputy of the presidential administration, as president of the FTUB.

Kozik had previously played no role in the union. This election takes place against a background of systematic pressure against the FTUB to put an end to the independence of the union movement in Belarus. Recent events included suppression of the check-off system, suspension of the social dialogue, support to "company" unions, and to all unions which would declare themselves independent from the FTUB.

Thousands march vs. privatization

Thousands of workers struck July 18 and marched through the main streets of Burkina Faso's capital, Ouagadougou, to protest against privatization and to press demands for salary increases. Thousands also marched in Bobo Dioulasso.

Wages have been stagnant since 1994, three years after Burkina began programmes prescribed by the International Monetary Fund which have eliminated 5,200 jobs. On the other hand, the cost of basic services have gone up: water by 114 percent and petrol by 50 percent. Sixteen state companies have been sold under IMF mandates, and the government plans to sell another 13, including water and telecommunication utilities.

The minimum wage is US\$38 per month. More than 45 percent of the country's 11 million people live under the poverty line, set at CFA 72,000 (US \$109) a year.

Coca-Cola workers want global agreement

Coca-Cola workers are seeking a global agreement on minimum union rights for all Coca-Cola workers. Melbourne workers wore black armbands July 22 in solidarity with Colombian and Guatemalan Coke workers who have faced intimidation and murder by armed gangs working with Coca-Cola management.

Unions in Australia, the United States, and other countries are demanding that Coca-Cola management meet with unions, and negotiate protections for workers in countries where Coke does business.

While Coke has been laying off workers around the world and dropping non-Coke products from canteens to bolster its profits, CEO Douglas Daft received a total of \$105 million in compensation last year, primarily in stock and stock options.

Congo arrests unionists

A court in the Democratic Republic of Congo has sentenced ten unionists to 10-month jail terms. The ten were arrested at the offices of the country's Labour Inspectorate, where they had been invited for a meeting with management of the sugar firm Compagnie sucrière de Kwilu Ngongo. They were charged with having written strike leaflets, although the strike was averted by negotiations prior to the arrests.

Aus. Post workers defy boss

Workers at an Australia Post call centre defiantly decorated their desks with personal items July 16 in support of a fellow worker whose pay was cut because she displayed too many photographs. Management says having more than three personal items on a desk breaches the Post's code of ethics.

Call centre employee Cori Girondoudas' pay was reduced by two increments for two years - the equivalent of AUS\$3,000 a year - for ignoring an order to remove one of four photographs from her desk. Forty staff took photos to work to protest against the rule.

China: Brick workers seize factory

Some 2,000 former workers at Changzheng Building Materials Corp. in Inner Mongolia have been occupying the collective turned private factory since July 15, demanding payment of pensions. The workers tried to march from the factory to the city government office, but were held back by 900 police. Since then they have been penned in the factory by police, though nearby streets have been blocked by periodic scuffles.

In Hong Kong police detained 23 workers July 22 after they clashed with their employer in a heated dispute over unpaid wages. Workers are owed seven months of wages, totaling US\$1.3 million. Police cordoned off the building to stop more workers from joining the confrontation.

Steel factory head arrested

After five months of protests by 4,000 workers who lost their jobs when the Ferroalloy factory went bankrupt last year, police have arrested manager Fan Yicheng on corruption charges. However, four workers' representatives who have been imprisoned since March are still being held.

Ferroalloy was at the center of massive protests in Liaoyang. When the factory closed, workers were owed a full year's wages and pensions. On March 11 and 12, over 10,000 workers hit the streets, protesting massive corruption in state-owned enterprises and demanding protections for workers suffering from China's market reforms.

State-owned enterprises are shutting down or downsizing across China, often abandoning pension obligations and owing workers several months' pay. The resulting protests are discussed in a new report from Human Rights Watch, "Paying the Price: Worker Unrest in Northeast China" which documents massive demonstrations in Liaoyang, Daqing and Fushun.

The report notes that 170 million Chinese workers are now unemployed, many with no prospects for securing new jobs. While workers have been devastated by China's economic restructuring, many Party officials and managers have seized the op-