

# Industrial Worker

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INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD

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## Korean unionists driven to suicide

A wave of suicides by unionists being harassed by employer lawsuits has led South Korean Labor Minister Kwon Ki-hong to announce plans to cap the damages companies can claim in lawsuits stemming from labor disputes, ensure that workers faced with provisional seizures receive a minimum living allowance (employers can now seize up to half their wages pending a trial), and allow unions to continue functioning if members' dues are seized.

Korean law allows employers to sue unions and individual members to recover damages from illegal strikes, or in anticipation of damages from proposed strikes. Judges can then order provisional seizure of union's and workers' assets and income. Nearly all South Korean strikes are illegal because of complicated, prolonged legal requirements.

Recently, companies have become far more aggressive in initiating such lawsuits in an attempt to prevent strikes and to harass union activists. So far this year, employers have sought US\$124 million in suits against unions at 46 work sites. The government also arrested 144 union activists during the first eight months since President Roh Moo-hyun, a former labor lawyer, took office in February.

Among the imprisoned unionists is Lee Sung Woo, who lost both his legs and an arm in a tragic accident at work eight years ago. Today, he is president of a local construction workers union in Daejeon. Prosecutors have declared him a "flight risk," and are holding him in jail until the end of his trial for organizing illegal strikes. No trial date has been set.

Thousands of workers have clashed with police in protests across South Korea over the lawsuits, and unions are threatening a general strike if the repression continues.

Among the union activists to commit suicide recently while facing provisional seizure are Bae Dal-ho, who worked for Doosan Heavy Industries; Park Dong-Joon of the Daehan Synthetic Fiber Union; and Sewon worker Lee Hae-Nam. Sewon workers joined the Korea Metal Workers Federation in October 2001. The company responded by hiring 150 thugs to drive unionists from the workplace, and with lawsuits against union supporters.

"I cannot forgive Kim Moon-Ki, president of Sewon Group," Lee said in his suicide note. "Although it will be long and hard, we must protect our dream and hope, our democratic union... You must not make any arrangements for my body until you have solved the problems around Hyun-Joong's funeral." Lee Hyun-Joong, from the same union, was severely beaten in 2002 by the thugs, and died August 26 after months of suffering.

Other workers have committed suicide out of frustration over management refusal to negotiate. Lee Yong-Seok, president of the Kwangju branch of the Korea Labor Welfare Corporation Irregular Workers Union, set himself on fire Oct. 25 during a rally protesting harassment of casual workers. Lee had been pressing for negotiations since May.

Kim Ju-ik, leader of the union at Hanjin Heavy Industries, killed himself in early Oct. *continued on page 12*



The charred clothing of Lee Yong-Seok, a member of the collective bargaining committee of the Irregular Workers' Union.

## Workers' Control Conference

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IFTU working to build independent, worker-run unions **9**

## Craft unionism undercuts workers 71,000 workers out in California grocery strike

As we go to press, 71,000 Southern California workers are fighting three of the largest grocery corporations in the world: Kroger, Safeway and Albertson's. The strike began at Vons and Pavillions (owned by Safeway) Oct. 7. Ralphs (Kroger) and Albertson's (American Stores) then locked out their workers. The companies claim they need to slash health care and pension benefits in order to compete with nonunion chains such as Wal-Mart.

Members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union in the region hadn't struck in 25 years, but the grocery chains were prepared. Managers from outside the region and scab labor were in place to keep the firms' 859 stores open, even if few customers have crossed picket lines to shop in them.

Unfortunately, while the bosses are sticking together, the same can not be said of the unions. Many pharmacists have crossed picket lines, but few other workers are scabbing. But the labor movement is limiting its solidarity to symbolic actions. Union workers continue work as usual at most Safeway, Kroger and Albertson's stores across the country, generating profits to help the companies cover their massive losses from the strike.

Moreover, on Oct. 31 the UFCW pulled picket lines from Ralphs stores even though the company is continuing its lock-out. While the UFCW is still officially asking customers to shop at several smaller unionized chains, a leaflet explains that "we are taking down our picket lines at your neighborhood Ralphs to give you a convenient place to shop."

Taking down the picket lines at Ralphs means that Teamsters drivers will resume shipments to those stores, and sales will quickly return to normal levels, if not higher ones. The companies have a mutual assistance pact which is believed to require them to share the costs of the dispute, meaning that increased business and profits at Ralphs will directly aid all three companies in this fight.

This strike is part of a national struggle against demands for concessions. More than 3,000 Kroger's workers struck 44 stores in West Virginia, Ohio and Kentucky Oct. 13. In Indiana, 4,000 Kroger's workers are on the verge of striking against demands that new hires receive lower pay with stripped-down benefits. Workers there now start at \$6.50 an hour, and top out at \$12. Kroger's has been promising potential scabs \$10.

More than 10,000 St. Louis-area UFCW members ended their strike a couple of weeks into the Southern California strike, agreeing to minuscule pay hikes targeted toward workers at the top of the pay scale.

But each group of workers are being left to fight on their own, even as the grocery bosses continue a decades-long assault on their workers. Rather than extending the strike, the UFCW has stopped picketing grocers' distribution centers, apparently at the request of the Teamsters union. Teamsters will continue to honor picket lines at the stores themselves, but this is largely symbolic. Rather than return shipments, drivers usually stop short of the picket lines and hand the keys over to managers or replacement drivers who – inexpertly and often illegally, as few have the required licenses – drive the trucks to the loading docks. (Some drivers have refused to turn over keys, and Reuters has reported fights "inside the cabs" as managers tried to seize them.)

The union says it will resume picketing at the distribution centers in mid-November if there has been no progress in contract talks by then. But that is simply an invitation to the bosses to continue to drag out the talks.

The companies want to slash health benefits, abolish premium Sunday pay, cut retirement benefits, and bring new hires in at much lower wages and benefits. But the key strike issue is a familiar one: soaring healthcare costs. "They're talking about cutting our benefits in half," UFCW Local 770 president Rick Icaza

*continued on page 9*

## National Labor Assembly for Peace

U.S. Labor Against the War held a National Labor Assembly for Peace in Chicago's Teamster City complex Oct. 24-25, drawing 200 delegates and observers on a weekend when many labor activists were marching in anti-war demonstrations on both coasts. Those demonstrations were organized well after the conference had been announced.

Delegates adopted an organizational structure based upon local affiliated unions, as well as labor-related advocacy and service groups. Task forces were established to develop action proposals around areas such as war and the economy, defending immigrants and communities of color, defending social programs, labor rights in Iraq, defending civil liberties, and outreach to veterans and military families.

While some delegates wanted to commit the organization to supporting the Democrats in the coming elections, others pointed out that Democratic legislators had supported the war and the Patriot Act, and only began voicing criticisms as the occupation became increasingly unpopular. Even now, the leading Democratic candidates support continuing the occupation, albeit under cover of United Nations sponsorship.

Recognizing that many Labor Against the War members will be unable to bring themselves to vote for, let alone campaign for, the

Democratic presidential candidate next year, Assembly resolutions limited themselves to criticizing the Bush war, without endorsing the Democrats' tepid "opposition."

In the months preceding the invasion, hundreds of local, state and national unions and central labor councils came out against the impending war, leading to the founding of U.S. Labor Against the War in January.

Since U.S. troops invaded Iraq, Labor Against the War has worked to expose the role of U.S. corporations in profiting from the occupation, and worked to build alliances with the fledgling Iraqi labor movement. Its report on the labor, human rights, environmental and criminal records of 18 major contractors has been translated into Arabic, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Japanese and circulated around the world.

USLAW activists have also been active in protesting the impact of the war and occupation on the labor movement in the United States, including the devastating cuts in public services to foot the bill. And it has worked with United for a Fair Economy to develop popular education workshops making the connection between the war and the military budget and their economic consequences for workers, and present these to labor groups across the country.

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## Pie in the sky

It seems that some readers object to being informed about the plots and machinations of various capitalist interests to add to the hours of the U.S. workers' work week (Soapbox, September). Efforts to resist this tendency by workers would be insufficiently revolutionary for these fellow workers. Would they prefer ignorance and passivity?

No, they want immediate and total revolution – the immediate and total abolition of money, wages, exploitation, oppression, class difference, and production based on profit. ... Did anybody bother to tell our fellow workers worldwide that they is what they want and can get right now because capitalism is collapsing?

Perhaps real people in this present world may be forgiven for not all seeing things so clearly and holding a general strike to gain this partially imagined world. At this point in history, getting together with fellow workers to struggle with the boss for better conditions and share of their product and voting for parties who promise and deliver social and working conditions they can live with wins their support and participation.

While labor unions and political parties may be corrupted, compromised, bought off, scab herders, fakirs, co-opted, bureaucratic and blind to real class interests, they promise more than the pie-in-the-sky super-revolutionaries who want us to put our heads in the sand while we are being screwed and dream of the coming world socialism-communism.

Abraham Bassford, X351274

## Class control of media is issue

Many in the alternative media are skeptical when confronted with claims that increased concentration of media ownership (CMO) is inherently dangerous, resulting in less scrutiny and less critical thought. This is harmful in a democratic society. No doubt, more critical thought is important. But do we have any reason to believe that less concentration would be automatically beneficial?

In my view, fewer owners among the em-

ploying class is largely irrelevant to the level of critical thought. But when there is significant access to media controlled by the general population, or when you have popular movements prepared to dismantle doctrinal constraints, then you have corresponding levels of critical thought.

Class control of media matters much more than ownership concentration.

For example, in the late 1940s there were a relatively large number of media owners, but almost no media were controlled by the general population. The standard analysis of CMO does not make the point that class ownership is all-important. So a natural conclusion would be that levels of critical thought in the 1940s would have been higher than today. But there was essentially no critical thought: racism, sexism, etc. were orders of the day.

Pick any time you like in the last 50 years and you will encounter a disturbing trend: the media is controlled by fewer and fewer players, combined with more, and not less, critical thought.

There will be minor changes when one media group controlled by the employing class merges with another capitalist-run outlet. But it is inaccurate to hold that changes in CMO will result in a fundamental change in the manner in which a given story is presented.

Most of the moral and cultural improvement of the last 50 years have had little to do with the media at all, whether controlled by the employing class or the general population. They've had everything to do with the various popular movements that challenged dominant doctrinal constraints. Racial constraints were partly relaxed by the civil rights movement; U.S. foreign policy imposes considerable constraints that are in tension with the human rights movement; and so on.

I'm not sure at what point the alternative media began to lend a critical hand in stirring democratic thought. It could not have been during the first Gulf Slaughter of the early '90s, because it's obvious that few listened to the scattered voices of dissent. The grim truth is that America was essentially a totalitarian society in 1991. No popular protests emerged that could alter U.S. foreign policy.

But now the alternative media are definitely making a difference in both the U.S. and Canada. (I'm from Canada, where we can easily see both countries. They've got essentially the same pathologies: both highly racist with appalling treatment of indigenous peoples (among others), similar levels of concentrated ownership, public media in name only, high levels of investment in a death culture, shocking amounts of environmental degradation, and so on.)

The large global protest demonstrations on February 15th were, in my opinion, a result of both popular movements and the alternative media. Both served to rally people and to create more critical discussion concerning the direction of U.S. foreign policy, not to mention the two-faced approach to the Gulf Slaughter II by the government in my own country. (Massive political unrest forced the ruling Liberal Party to keep Canadian soldiers out of Iraq. But Canada continues outfitting American warplanes with hundreds of millions of dollars worth of expertise and equipment. Canadian capitalists and their media are no different from American capitalists and their media. Big surprise ... not!)

This emphasis on media concentration harms the efforts of those seeking to dismantle doctrinal constraints. Sure, it's important to know the nature of the enemy. But when we concentrate merely on ongoing corporate CMO, as opposed to the vastly more important question of class control of the media, we in effect are washing our hands, bemoaning rather than changing doctrinal constraints.

It's not as if dismantling such constraints has never been done before; we have a pretty good idea how to proceed. First, you have to be in contact with the correct analysis. This doesn't strike me as particularly hard. Second, you must join with other people.

My concern is that media analysts are still stuck on the first stage. CMO among capitalists is the wrong analysis – class control of the media is what matters. And it's not like CMO among the employing class is going to stop anytime soon. Mergers will continue, the employing class will get stronger. We must develop and grow alternative media institutions. We can not sit down and simply resent ongoing trends of the enemy.

X355424, Vancouver

## Real profit means real health

The U.S. is among those nations that believes individual liberty is best expressed by the freedom to make a profit. It even creates laws to subsidize the profit-taking of corporations and the select few who control them.

Profit is made by paying workers less than the true value of their labor. The difference between the cost of producing a thing and its selling price is profit. Thus the libertarian ideal, which claims that the hallmark of individual liberty is an unrestricted right to create profit, may be expressed more simply as the freedom to exploit the many to benefit the few.

Capitalist parasites now possess the freedom to exploit by taking wealth away from those creating goods and services. Their infection of the body politic involves thousands of small thefts so a big profit can be pocketed.

America and Mexico are among the last places on earth which do not have national health care. Everywhere else, medical care is free. One's home need not be re-mortgaged to pay bills which are an inevitable part of life. Everyone gets sick. Everyone dies. But because of parasitic profit taking, less money is available to provide quality care.

A woman has a better chance of surviving child birth in Thailand than in the U.S. The U.S. ranks 14th in international comparisons of health care, and only ranks that high because the rich buy the best care available.

People often die because they can not afford a doctor's visit. But the CEO of Aetna Life Insurance makes \$23 million a year in salary alone, not counting stock benefits and such. This is comparable with other insurance providers. Managers receive bloated salaries as well. A billion dollars or more go to these parasites which could be spent on improving hospitals, treatment centers, saving lives, or paying health care workers better.

We, the people, need to stop paying for this baloney payola. It is, after all, our money. Surely the freedom of millions must have greater value than the profits of a few dozen parasites. With one billion dollars extra available each year, there could be real health care for the poor and suburbanites alike. It would be a real profit for mankind.

Richard Geffken

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- ★ EDUCATION
- ★ EMANCIPATION

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## Women's Crisis Line workers go IWW

Workers at Portland Women's Crisis Line, a non-profit agency dedicated to providing advocacy and resources to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, have joined the IWW and asked for union recognition. After initial resistance, management has agreed to an expedited third-party (non-NLRB) vote.

Established in 1973, PWCL works 24 hours a day to stop violence against women, children and anyone affected by interpersonal violence. "We go to the hospital when a woman is raped, and provide support whether she reports to the police or not. We are often the only voice of support to people who have been beaten, berated and isolated," said Stacie Wolfe, an employee of PWCL.

The 14 workers joined Public Service Workers IU 650 in order to gain simple rights such as an open grievance policy, regular break periods, compensation for on-call time, and

an agency-wide benefit package.

Crisis work is often stressful, traumatic and in some cases physically dangerous. "As advocates in the anti-oppression movement, we believe that our work should be valued as highly as any other field. We should be granted the same rights to living wages, health care benefits and time compensation for the hours we spend in hospitals, courthouses or educating our communities," said Jodi R., a staff member at PWCL.

The Portland IWW has been organizing social services in Portland for the last four years, and has recognition at several agencies.

## Portland software workers fight back

Telecommunications Workers Industrial Union 560 (IWW) members in Portland, Oregon, turned to the union to collect their pay when software firm RedcellX began paying workers with bad checks and shut down its offices overnight. After FW Jasper Greves received only \$200 of the \$4,800 back pay the owner promised a 560 delegate he would pay, an 18-member grievance committee visited the company Oct. 1 to demand that Greves and another worker be paid immediately. The boss wasn't in, but promised to have the money the next day. However, he was \$4,000 short when the committee arrived.

At a grievance meeting, RedcellX owner Troy Melquist signed a personal promissory note to pay the two their wages. A couple days later, he was loading the furniture into his SUV at night and the company's office has closed. However, the IWW is continuing to pursue the boss, and intends to make him pay up.

Several computer and telecommunications workers in the Pacific Northwest have joined the IWW in recent months in response to deteriorating conditions, and in order to gain more control over their work and the conditions under which it is performed.

## Wobs join Modern Auto Plating picket

BY MARK DICKSON, VANCOUVER

On October 14th, the IWW joined with the striking Modern Auto Plating workers in their weekly show of solidarity. The workers have been on strike since January 24, 2002, and are organized with the Steelworkers. The strike is about horrible working conditions and inadequate pay. You only have to see the outside of this sweatshop to realize why these workers need health & safety improvements. On the inside they work under conditions similar to those that existed in England during the Industrial Revolution in the latter part of the 19th century.

This particular Tuesday, the local, and very progressive, choir Solidarity Notes sang several labour and political tunes. Earle Peach is their conductor. After a show lasting 30 minutes, Earle congratulated the strikers for "representing the finest aspects of organised labour

and for doing the best and highest thing possible for workers."

The strike continues despite provincial government safety inspections that confirm what the workers were saying all along – that Modern Auto Plating is an excessively dangerous workplace. The reason for this is all too familiar, for Wobs generally, perhaps more so for Canadian Wobs: governments, certainly all governments in Canada, are so deep under the covers with the employing class.

Most of the strikers are from Eastern Europe. The plant remains open because even though union membership in BC remains relatively high, too many workers don't see anything wrong about crossing a picket line. Even most union members in Canada are not prepared to show solidarity. It's going to require a lot of determined effort to turn this situation around. Our task as Wobblies is clear.

## Eastern Wobs join anti-war march

BY LAURA PRICE

On October 25th, Washington DC was the site of a huge demonstration calling for the return of our troops in the Middle East: "Support our troops, bring them home now!"

Tens of thousands of people from many states converged at the base of the Washington Monument in order to voice opposition to Bush's war machine and the incredible waste of human lives and taxpayer money that is supposed to support the current U.S. empire building campaign. The diverse group of activists included folks of many different ethnic, religious, political and labor backgrounds. Young and old, families and individuals joined in the renunciation of U.S. war policy.

Wobblies from several branches comprised part of the big labor contingent. Two women Wobblies from New Jersey carried a large white IWW banner and two other large banners signaled participation of Wobs in the demonstration. The Sabo Cat and IWW Globe could be seen on red and black banners as one IWW brother with an especially vibrant voice

sang out union songs, energizing marchers and tourists in the vicinity. Even non Wobs joined in a loud rendition of "Solidarity Forever" as the procession circled near the White House. Several IWs were distributed and IWW pins and patches were highly visible.

It was heartening to see the wide array of labor and political groups joining together to actively question the current imperial strivings of the U.S. administration. Calls for unity with all workers in the occupied territories and support for the families of U.S. and Iraqi troops were the overriding themes of the day.

## Tacoma Peltier march

The Tacoma Leonard Peltier Support Network needs help organizing their 11th annual rally February 7. They are hoping for a particularly strong turnout given the city's attempt to prohibit the march, and a pending court appeal seeking Peltier's release on parole.

Write: P.O. Box 5464, Tacoma WA 98415, email: Tacoma-lpsg@ojibwe.us. For more information on the case: [www.leonardpeltier.org](http://www.leonardpeltier.org)



## 3 Wobblies arrested in Vancouver, BC

Hours after members of the IWW Squeegee Council and Buskers Union visited Vancouver City Council Oct. 21 to challenge police harassment of youth working on the streets, police arrested three IWW members at an intersection where squeegee workers have frequently been harassed.

All eyes turned to the IWW delegation when they burst into Council Chamber and two buskers began to play the Wobbly classic "Power in a Union." Distracted by the musicians, security couldn't stop the delegation from handing out a letter protesting the police crackdown while others waved a Wobbly flag and the black and red Squeegee Council banner. When the song ended the delegation left, chanting "end the war on the poor."

The letter compared legislation pending in Vancouver City Council with Ontario's 1999 "Safe Streets Act," targeting so-called "aggressive panhandling" in the aftermath of huge cuts to welfare and other social programs. Toronto police have given out thousands of Safe Streets Act tickets as part of a vicious attempt to drive the poor out of the public eye.

Vancouver police are pursuing similar ends by ticketing squeegee workers for jaywalking and soliciting business on the road, handing out \$86 tickets, stealing squeegees, and jailing those who are unable to pay the fines. Many squeegee kids have been beaten.

Hours later, a dozen police attacked IWW Squeegee Council members, tearing up IWW membership cards and receipts for squeegees (which union members carry in an attempt to prevent police from stealing the tools of their livelihood), and stealing photographs of pre-

*continued on page 9*

## Corrections

Last issue we reported that the CWA and IBEW contracts with Verizon, while containing significant concessions, preserved job security language that recently forced Verizon to rehire 3,400 laid-off workers, in fact new hires will be covered by weaker provisions.

Similarly, the new UAW contracts contain additional concessions, including the right to impose the "team concept" and "flexible" schedules on workers, eliminate skilled trades job classifications, and shift the 43 percent of workers covered by Blue Cross health plans into HMO plans. Thus, while we were correct in reporting that health costs will rise, but by less than management had demanded, this is in large part because workers will be shifted into lower-cost, lower-service plans.

As is so often the case, things are much worse than we could have imagined.

## Preamble to the IWW Constitution

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system."

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for the everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

## Join the IWW Today

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership includes a subscription to the Industrial Worker.





In the hereafter, Alexander the Great, Adolf Hitler and Napoleon are looking upon events in Iraq. Alexander says, "Wow, if I had just one of Bush's armored divisions, I would definitely have conquered India." Hitler states, "Surely if I only had a few squadrons of Bush's air force I would have won the Battle of Stalingrad decisively in a matter of days." There is a long pause as the three men continue to watch events. Then Napoleon speaks, "And if I only had that Fox News, no one would have ever known that I lost the Russian campaign."

★ ★ ★

There was a labor dispute at a laundry place. One of the scabs said, "Let's iron while the strike is hot."

★ ★ ★

A reader passed along the following from the *Socialist Standard*: At the end of the second world war there was a scramble between the so-called "allies" to capture as many German rocket and atomic scientists as possible. The US eagerly sought information from Japanese medical teams who had carried out horrific experiments on captured Chinese children. The British government armed Japanese soldiers to protect British colonies from the threat of nationalists. War crimes were overlooked in the "national interest."

A similar situation is developing in Iraq. "While not confirming it, Mr. Bremer (the US-appointed administrator in Iraq), failed to deny a report in the *Washington Post* that the United States was recruiting members of Saddam's once-dreaded Mukhabarat, the former foreign intelligence service, to provide information on terrorist infiltration from Iran, Syria and Saudi Arabia"; *London Times* (25 August). Murderers and torturers are eagerly recruited by the "alliance." Surely there is something amiss here. Wasn't the war supposed to be a heroic battle to rid Iraq of such villains?

★ ★ ★

Bush and Blair have started a PR campaign to convince the world things are going well in Iraq. The problem is the best slogan they could come up with is 'Not your father's Vietnam.'

★ ★ ★

Proving nothing is sacred in capitalism, especially the Fourth Commandment, "Family Christian Stores," the US's biggest Christian retail goods chain, announced it would begin opening on Sundays.

★ ★ ★

A lobbyist, on his way home from work in Washington, D.C., came to a dead halt in traffic and thought to himself, "Wow, this seems worse than usual." He noticed a police officer walking between the lines of stopped cars, so he rolled down his window and asked, "Officer, what's the holdup?" The officer replied, "The President is depressed, so he stopped his motorcade and is threatening to douse himself in gasoline and set himself on fire."

"He says no one believes his stories about why we went to war in Iraq, or the connection between Saddam and al-Qa'ida, or that his tax cuts will help anyone except his wealthy friends; the press called him about the leak from the White House exposing a CIA agent, and Brown is threatening to sue him for a sexual innuendo he made at a recent press conference. So we're taking up a collection for him."

The lobbyist asked, "How much have you got so far?"

The officer replied, "About 14 gallons, but a lot of folks are still siphoning."

★ ★ ★

FW Curtis gives us more answers to the burning light bulb question (how many IWWs does it take to change...) Old-time IWW: "Permit me to note before the committee that according to Article 6, paragraph 3. a) of Constitution of the Industrial Workers of the World as last amended, the question must be submitted three months prior to this meeting through a petition signed by at least..." Utah Phillips: "That reminds me of a story..." Dring, dring, dring... Any wob: "Like I can afford a @\$@!%ing light bulb!"

★ ★ ★

Iraq awarded its first nationwide mobile phone licenses to three Middle Eastern companies last month, saying service could be available by the end of the month. So now Iraqis can talk anywhere at any time about how they have no water, electricity or food.

★ ★ ★

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## Teddy Bear defendant needs support

BY JAGGI SINGH

After many delays, and nearly three years after the large-scale protests against the Summit of the Americas and FTAA in Quebec City in April 2001, my trial in front of a Quebec City jury will begin January 19, 2004. I am facing up to two years in prison if convicted.

I was initially charged with possessing a dangerous weapon – a teddy-bear launching catapult – as well as participating in a riot. The weapons charge has been dropped, but the riot charge still stands. I initially spent 17 days in prison waiting for bail on these charges after being nabbed off the streets by an undercover police snatch squad. Now I am prohibited from speaking at any demonstration.

Hundreds of protesters were arrested and charged in Quebec City. Many were acquitted, others were convicted, and many others made deals. The jury trials, which are for the more serious cases, began only recently. To date, there has been at least one acquittal, but also one conviction by a jury (an appeal is pending). Nothing can be taken for granted

at a trial, no matter how bogus the charges. The Libertas Legal Collective continues to support Quebec City defendants, and can be contacted at legal@tao.ca.

Recently, I was acquitted, along with two co-accused, in another trial related to a protest in Montreal in 2000. One lesson I learned from that trial, where I represented myself, was the importance of being very assertive in asking for support beforehand, whether for witnesses or people who possess video footage, or for financial and moral support.

If you were involved in the protests at Quebec City, or know people who were, please ask them to get in touch if they witnessed or can help with video evidence of the Anti-Capitalist Carnival March or the attack on the fence. I would also like to make contact with other arrestees, to compare notes. And donations to help with costs, especially travel for out-of-town witnesses, would be appreciated.

Please e-mail both of these addresses if you can help: jaggi@tao.ca and jaggisingh2003@yahoo.ca

## Union scabbing undermines U. Minnesota clerical strike

The University of Minnesota settled a strike by clerical workers at its Crookston, Duluth, Morris and Twin Cities campuses Nov. 4, as this issue was headed to the printer. Administrators insist that the state budget crisis forced them to demand deep concessions.

"There is no budget crisis," says American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3800 president Phyllis Walker; "there is a distribution crisis. The employer has millions to spend on buildings and administrator salaries, but tells frontline workers they must 'share the pain.'"

The strike, which began Oct. 21, has been undermined by union scabbing from the start. Teamsters Local 320, which represents building and grounds workers, tentatively accepted concessions during joint negotiations, as did several other AFSCME locals. "But we were the only union local who left negotiations with smiles on our faces," Walker said. "Even though we picked a tough fight, we knew that we made the right decision."

"The hard times we face have made our decisions easier. We must fight back. The alternative is only a freefall to the bottom."

Local 3800 represents some 2,000 of the University's 18,000 employees, but about a third of those workers are not union members and are crossing picket lines.

Most faculty are also crossing picket lines, as is every other union representing UM workers (some workers join picket lines during breaks, only to cross them again to go back on the clock). Teamsters members who drive trucks for UPS, Coca-Cola, Cisco and Aramark – companies that deliver food and other goods to the University every day – are not crossing picket lines. However, they are allowing managers to make deliveries.

Roofers working on a building on the main campus honored picket lines the first day of the strike, but then returned to work. When

roofers struck two years ago, AFSCME members crossed their picket line. Postal workers crossed picket lines from the start. Carrier Terry Hannum chatted with picketers while he was scabbing. "I feel sorry for the workers," Hannum said, "but management told us to deliver, and the union didn't tell us not to."

AFSCME Local 3800 Treasurer Brad Sigal said the union is conducting a "family-friendly" strike, with picketers instructed to be friendly to people crossing the line. Many picketers were redeployed to central locations after picketing the buildings where they worked forced scabs to face them. Apparently, the scabs complained this was unpleasant.

The university is demanding that workers accept a pay freeze in the first year of a two-year contract, followed by just 2.5 percent in year two. Workers would also pay higher health care premiums. Throughout the negotiations the university has said it will negotiate only over how that money is distributed.

Even many AFSCME members began crossing the line after a couple days on strike. The University says only 45 percent of workers initially joined the strike; union estimates are only a little higher. "What we planned to get was a majority of our voting members," said AFSCME 3800 president Phyllis Walker, "and we succeeded."

Several years ago, a two-year living wage campaign forced the university to agree to a campus minimum wage of \$12 per hour, believed to be the highest in the country.

Despite the massive scabbing, recent layoffs meant that most departments were short-staffed, magnifying the strike's impact. The union did significantly increase its membership in the lead-up to the strike, but in the present difficult budget situation actually winning the strike will require much stronger support from clerical workers themselves, and from their fellow education workers.

## AFL-CIA no more?

On October 14, representatives of the AFL-CIO International Affairs Department and International Affairs Committee met for three hours with the head of the California AFL-CIO and about 50 union members, in response to the state organization's adoption of a resolution last year entitled, "Looking Ahead on AFL-CIO Policy Abroad."

Fred Hirsh, a veteran San Jose unionist who has written on ties between the AFL-CIO and the Central Intelligence Agency, reports that the meeting "was a step toward forging a policy that genuinely and credibly reflects the needs of workers."

Although the AFL representatives listened to concerns about the Federation's past role in repressing workers around the world, they were reluctant to discuss specific details. In-

stead, they discussed current positive programs, particularly in Brazil, Colombia and South Africa. They insisted that even though the U.S. government continues to pay most of the costs of the AFL-CIO's international activities, they are pursuing what they described as a "labor agenda."

Hirsh notes that the meeting fell far short of the full disclosure of past and present activities called for in the California federation's resolution. Proposals floated at the meeting included a Truth Commission to hold hearings and compile a report on these international activities, full disclosure of current funding and programs, and transformation of the IAD into an International Solidarity Mobilization Department funded by voluntary contributions from union members.

## Greenpeace faces criminal charges

After sentencing two Greenpeace activists to a weekend in jail for an April 2002 action where they attempted to unfurl a protest banner on a cargo ship they believed was smuggling rainforest timber into the United States, federal prosecutors in Miami recently brought an indictment against Greenpeace itself for authorizing the action.

The action is reminiscent of the criminal syndicalism prosecutions directed against the IWW throughout the 1910s and 1920s, in which hundreds of IWW members were jailed for advocating industrial unionism. Southern prosecutors brought similar charges against civil rights organizations in the 1950s and 1960s, but courts ruled those prosecutions violated the First Amendment.

Greenpeace's court filings say the prosecution "could significantly affect our nation's tradition of civil protest and civil disobedience."

"The heart of Greenpeace's mission," prosecutors responded, "is the violation of the law." Greenpeace is charged with violating an

1872 law intended for proprietors of boarding houses who preyed on sailors. It forbids the unauthorized boarding of "any vessel about to arrive at the place of her destination."

A trial is scheduled for December, and prosecutors are fighting Greenpeace's demand for a jury trial. If convicted, Greenpeace could face a \$10,000 fine and its tax-exempt status could be jeopardized.

## Raiding on CP Rail

The Canadian Industrial Relations Board has approved a United Transportation Union petition to combine 4,800 CP Rail workers into a single bargaining unit, merging Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers-represented engineers and existing UTU units covering conductors, trainmen and yard service workers. The BLE has long resisted UTU efforts to swallow it up, either through a voluntary merger or by persuading government regulators to force consolidation, and is currently negotiating a merger with the Teamsters.

## Australian workers' control conference

One hundred workers participated in a Workers Control Conference in Sydney, Australia, Oct. 10-12. The conference opened with three ranking trade union officials discussing recent initiatives within the Australian trade unions which parallel recent attempts by U.S. unions to refocus their efforts on organizing. Attendees were a mix of (mostly local) union officials, rank-and-file activists, and academics studying working-class movements, many of whom were themselves active in the struggles for workers control they discussed.

While Australian unions remain much stronger than their U.S. counterparts, they have lost much ground in recent decades. The ACTU is formally committed to an organizing model, but this does not always translate into more militance or worker involvement.

The conference featured several historical sessions, but also addressed current organizing in call centers and workplaces with little union presence. Many participants contributed their own experiences to the discussions. Workers' self-management in the 1956 Hungarian Workers' Revolt, May 1968 uprising and Chilean struggles in the early 1970s offered a historical context, while several speakers discussed Australian struggles in the 1970s where workers occupied workplaces and ran them themselves.

These "work-ins" were typically conceived as a strategy to avoid some of the problems of

more traditional strikes, but implicitly raised larger social issues and created possibilities for transforming workers' sense of their role in the workplace. But once an agreement was won, unions quickly tried to return to business as usual. Other sessions looked to the Builders Labourers' Federation experience and to rank-and-file struggles by Melbourne tram workers. The BLF's radically democratic structure helped to encourage workers' initiatives and avoid the entrenched bureaucratic control that swamps many struggles.

However, the conference did not engage several pressing contemporary issues, including employee involvement schemes, racism on the job and within some unions, and the sometimes ambiguous role of groups such as the Australian Communist Party (which broke from Stalinism in the 1960s, and is formally committed to workers' control) in the movement. Many use phrases such as workers control to mean little more than the right to look at company books or seek a union voice in management decisions, both of which could readily be accommodated within bureaucratic union structures without transforming actual power on the job floor.

But, workers' rebellions typically draw upon existing organizations and approaches. In Hungary, workers seized existing committees established by the Stalinist regime and transformed them into workers councils that

challenged the state apparatus. Like the Spanish Revolution of 1936, this uprising helped inspire uprisings in May 1968. Such rebellions point to the possibilities for confronting power at the workplace and state level, but do not answer the question of how to get there

Australian unions negotiate industry-wide agreements, but typically represent only workers in specific job classifications, resulting in several unions coexisting on the same job. In many cases, workers have formed combined union shop committees in response. Could such structures become organs through which the entire workforce could come together to discuss concerns and assert their power as workers over the enterprise?

One outcome of the conference is the launch of a Centre for Workers' Control, which hopes to work with rank-and-file labour activists to support industrial democracy and workers' self-management. The Centre will assist workers in day-to-day struggles through training and research programs and assistance in producing newsletters and campaign material, and work to link these struggles to broader questions of participatory democracy within unions today and ultimately democratic control of industry and society. For information, email workerscontrol@jura.org.au or write PO Box N32, Petersham North 2049, Australia.

Thanks to Michael Matterson, on whose remarks this report is based.

## Chicago teachers authorize strike

The Chicago Teachers Union's House of Delegates has voted 543-98 to authorize a strike beginning Dec. 4; the union's 33,000 members will vote on a strike Nov. 18 unless a new contract is negotiated by that date.

Teachers voted 15,965 to 10,723 to reject a proposed contract recommended by union leaders Oct. 16, reflecting the rank and file's deep anger after suffering years of attacks. The teachers' last contract expired June 30.

CTU President Deborah Lynch pushed hard for the proposed agreement, making thousands of phone calls, producing a pro-contract video, and mailing glossy brochures to all 33,000 members. But members refused to sign on to the contract's higher health care costs and failure to address critical issues such as class size.

Lynch was elected in 2001 on a reform slate that promised to stand up to the school board after years of concessionary bargaining.

## AFL unions split on presidential bids

Twenty unions that back Dick Gephardt's presidential bid have formed the Alliance for Economic Justice to support his campaign, a move that reflects the union bureaucracy's growing split over the best Democrat to challenge President Bush next year. The Alliance was created after the AFL-CIO declined to endorse Gephardt last month.

Gephardt's supporters include the Teamsters, International Longshoremen's Association, United Food and Commercial Workers and Laborers.

Meanwhile, SEIU district 1199 is launching a \$35 million campaign to send 1,000 union members and staffers across the country to organize get-out-the vote operations in key states. SEIU members will take one-year leaves from their jobs, which most 1199 contracts permit, with the union reimbursing them for their lost salary and travel costs.

If other unions follow suit, the next 12 months could set a record for the tens of millions of dollars of union members' hard-earned dues poured down the Democrats' pro-boss rat hole. Already several million were wasted in a futile effort to keep anti-labor California governor Gray Davis in office.

While an "anyone but Bush" campaign has better prospects for success, at most it would return us to the misery of the Clinton years, in which welfare programs were dismantled, weekly bombings over Iraq and other countries killed thousands, and corporate hand-outs reached new heights of lavishness.

## Scissorbill's holiday

Oct. 16 marked National Boss Day in the United States, a sort of anti-holiday (no one gets the day off, not even the boss) initiated in 1958 when an insurance worker was looking for a way to ingratiate herself with her boss and to improve the relationship between employees and supervisors.

While greeting card companies continue to promote the holiday, it doesn't appear to be catching on. Surveys find that about 80 percent of Americans agree that the U.S. economic system is inherently unfair, way up from the days when the holiday was started.

IWW members at Pittsburgh's East End Food Co-op celebrated "Brown Nose Your Boss Day" by meeting to discuss working conditions, unionization, and how to create an alternative vision of their workplace. Bosses were not permitted to attend.

## Jobless insurance fund broke

California's unemployment insurance system is on the verge of bankruptcy, and the incoming Republican regime is likely to slash benefits even as lay-offs continue. In any event, California will be the seventh state forced to turn to the federal government for a loan to keep its unemployment fund afloat.

## Minimum wage, living wage, or the whole damn pie?

One out of every four U.S. workers earns less than \$8.70 per hour, or about \$18,100 per year (the official poverty rate for a family of four). Worse yet, most of these dead-end, low-wage jobs have no benefits – no healthcare, no child care, no pension plan, no vacation time, nada. A 1997 study out of Syracuse University found that U.S. workers in the lowest wage bracket "enjoy" living standards 13 percent below those of the least-well-off Germans, and 24 percent below the poorest Swedes.

Meanwhile, the purchasing power of the minimum wage continues to plummet. According to the Economic Policy Institute, the real value of \$5.15 an hour is now 21 percent less than it was in 1979. A recent University of Michigan study found that half of those stuck in the bottom fifth of wage earners in 1960 were still in the same cul-de-sac thirty years later – so much for the Horatio Alger myth of U.S. upward mobility. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that by 2010

half of all new jobs will require virtually no training as globalization leads to more deindustrialization and skilled ex-factory workers are forcibly herded into the service sector. The expendable McWorker stands before us in the mirror.

Closer to home, Madison is now considering whether to adopt a citywide minimum wage of \$7.75 an hour (\$3.88 for those receiving tips) – hardly a living wage, but still a major boost for service workers who struggle to make ends meet at \$5.15/hr. as the cost of living keeps climbing. Current living wage laws only apply to those who directly contract with the government or receive public money, and those "living wages" vary widely from the city of Madison (9.57/hr.) to Dane County (\$8.70) to the Associated Students of Madison, UW's student government (\$8.25).

Gov. Doyle, being a proper corporate liberal, swiftly condemned the proposal, arguing it would just "Balkanize" the state – and

besides, it one-upped his own plan to raise the minimum wage statewide to \$6.80/hr. Madison's ruling "business as usual" crowd is already opening their warchest to defeat the measure, and they're being aided by a cadre of "progressive" small business owners who claim they can't possibly offer other benefits along with higher wages. Some have even told the local media that their workers are not "worth" more than \$5.15/hr. One wonders if that is also how the sweatshop managers feel about the teenagers they pay a whopping 4 cents an hour in Burma. Meanwhile, more creative minds – often in worker collectives – are figuring out how to incorporate local currency, pooled insurance coverage and other perks into a better community deal beyond more crumbs from the master's table. Workers don't just want a bigger slice of the pie, they want a whole different pie for themselves!

This article is reprinted from *Prairie Fire*, newsletter of the Madison IWW branches.

## Carpenters win right to elect regional council officers

BY CARL BIERS,  
UNION DEMOCRACY REVIEW

In a major victory for union democracy, New England carpenters have won the right to directly elect the officers of their regional council. On October 8, federal judge Richard Stearns directed the U.S. Department of Labor to order the New England Regional Council of Carpenters to hold officer elections. The NERC represents 27,000 carpenters in 26 locals from Connecticut to Maine.

The regional council structure was imposed on New England carpenters by the international union in 1996 as part of a restructuring plan that transferred authority for contract negotiations, grievance handling and job referrals from locals to the regional council.

Under this structure, which has been put in place throughout the U.S. and Canada, locals are reduced to administrative shells. Their members elect local officers but can not pay salaries to those officers, organizers or attorneys. Locals collect monthly dues, but not the lucrative hourly work tax which is remitted directly to the council. Locals elect delegates to the council, which elects the all-powerful council executive secretary treasurer.

But that right offers the illusion, not the reality, of power because the delegates themselves are largely at the mercy of the secretary treasurer who has actual power over every phase of union life. No person can hold a paid

union position without the secretary treasurer's approval. Many delegates are hired on as at-will, appointed organizers or business representatives. In New England, nearly half of the council's 120 delegates had been appointed to organizer positions. Such is the system which was under challenge in federal court.

The complainants argued that because the council has taken over functions normally performed by locals, it should meet the requirements imposed on locals by the federal Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act, particularly that its officers be elected by direct secret ballot vote of the membership. When they asked the Department of Labor to order an election, the DOL refused, stating simply that locals still exist within the council and that, as an intermediate body, the council could elect officers by vote of delegates.

Harrington sued to reverse the DOL's decision. To win, he had to meet a high legal standard, showing that the DOL was not just wrong, but "arbitrary and capricious." He lost the first round in district court, and took the case to the Court of Appeals. (Harrington, meanwhile, was narrowly elected NERC executive secretary treasurer on a wave of rank-and-file outrage over the new system which was effectively channeled into his candidacy by Carpenters for a Democratic Union.)

The appeals court rejected the DOL statement and directed it to provide a new State-

ment of Reasons. The DOL then produced a statement which argued that locals maintained enough functions to be considered real locals, and that this made the regional council an intermediate body. Judge Richard Stearns rejected the statement: "The logic of Harrington's argument is inescapable... the issue is not whether the NERC's locals perform some of the tasks associated with a labor union, but rather whether the NERC (in the Secretary's own words) as an intermediate body 'has taken on so many of the traditional functions of a local union that it must in actuality itself be considered a local union.'" Stearns directed the DOL to order the NERC to hold elections.

The ruling provides ammunition for carpenters and other unionists throughout the country, who are fighting to democratize similar regional council structures.

## BC Carpenters to break away?

British Columbia Carpenters union members are presently voting on a referendum to transfer their affiliation from the United Brotherhood of Carpenters to a Canadian union.

Provincial officials say the UBC has demonstrated that it is unwilling to abide by the membership's wishes for greater autonomy and democracy. If the measure is approved, UBC officials are expected to take the provincial body to court, demanding that its assets and contracts remain with the International.

## Rhymsters and Revolutionaries

# Joe Hill and the IWW

BY PETER LINEBAUGH

Franklin Rosemont, *Joe Hill: The IWW & the Making of a Revolutionary Workingclass Counterculture* (Charles H. Kerr: Chicago, 2003), \$17 from IWW.

It's the right man by the right biographer at the right time.

Joe Hill's the man, the artist and songwriter of the Industrial Workers of the World. Franklin Rosemont's the biographer, the Chicago surrealist activist and publisher; the time is ours when warring monotheistic capitalism rains terror against a polyglot planetary proletariat privatized out of clean water, health care and home.

Joe Hill composed a song while awaiting execution by the authorities of the state of Utah. The song unifies the demands of the antiglobalization movement, not for "Communism," but a commons of actual equality and reparations of actual justice:

Workers of the world, awaken!  
Rise in all your splendid might;  
Take the wealth that you are making,  
It belongs to you by right.  
No one will for bread be crying,  
We'll have freedom, love and health,  
When the grand red flag is flying  
In the Workers' Commonwealth.

This magnificent, practical, irreverent and magisterial book has 16 chapters and more than 600 pages, profusely illustrated with 137 cartoons, pictures of posters, portraits, stickerettes and buttons or badges. It is written in a direct, passionate, sometimes funny, deeply searching style. Its slang and hard-boiled prole talk is itself a tribute to the Wobs and its elusive, martyred troubadour of discontent. It is a labor of love. Rosemont came across the Wobs in 1959 and took out a red card of membership in 1964.

Founded in 1905, their convention adopted a preamble saying the workers and employers had nothing in common, that a "struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the earth and the machinery of production, and abolish the wage system." Its language was demotic; its innovations of communication included song and slogans. Abolition of the Wage System, An Injury to One is an Injury to All, the New Society within the Shell of the Old: these were the principles contained in the Preamble. There were many other slogans:

Dump the Bosses Off your Backs!  
Workers of the World, Unite!  
Don't Mourn, Organize!  
Direct Action Gets the Goods!  
Sit Down and Watch Your Pay Go Up!  
Bread & Roses!  
Solidarity Forever!  
The Good Old Wooden Shoe!  
The Thousand Mile Picket Line.

It was a talking, speaking, soapboxing, arguing, singing movement. Thirteen of the fifty songs in the 1973 edition of the *Little Red Song Book* were written by Joe Hill. Mr Block, The Rebel Girl, Scissor Bill, There is Power in a Union, Workers of the World Awaken, Casey Jones - The Union Scab, Where the Fraser Flows, and The Preacher and the Slave are the most well known.

The Wobbly songs originated in Spokane, Washington, in competition with the Salvation Army. The authorities opposed the Wobs, so the Free Speech fights resulted. The singing victorious Wobblies rode the rods as the Overalls Brigade to the 1908 Chicago convention, and threw the SLP out. A debate ensued.

One faction felt only the written and spoken word could effectively educate the workers in the class struggle. Joe Hill answered, "A pamphlet, no matter how good, is never read more than once, but a song is learned by heart and repeated over and over." In addition to the didactic purpose, songs are politics taking refuge. They calm down beating hearts, or they rouse torpid souls, they cheer a picket line. They fan the flames of discontent, as the subtitle says.

Joe Hill was musical. Born Joel Hägglund in Sweden, he came to the U.S.A. in 1902. He played banjo, violin, guitar, accordion and piano. This was before TV or radio. He didn't smoke or drink. He was a good cook of Chinese food. He was a longshoreman in San Pedro, California. He took an active part in the Mexican revolution; he loaded sugar in Honolulu; he helped out strikes of Canadian railroad workers.

In January 1914 he was arrested in Salt Lake City and charged with murder. The victim was a grocer and ex-cop. The police, the copper trust, and the Mormon Church launched a campaign of vilification. The San Pedro police chief favored execution, explaining, "He is somewhat of a musician and writer of songs for the IWW songbook." He was executed by firing squad the following year refusing morphine or a shot of whiskey. His funeral was the largest in American history. His last will and testament combined Buddhist purity with proletarian reality:

My Will is easy to decide  
For there is nothing to divide  
My kin don't need to fuss and moan  
'Moss does not cling to a rolling stone.'  
My body? - Oh! - If I could choose  
I would to ashes it reduce  
And let the merry breezes blow  
My dust to where some flowers grow.  
Perhaps some fading flower then  
Would come to life and bloom again.  
This is my last and final Will.  
Good luck to all of you.

Joe Hill.

The cardinal significance of Joe Hill is that he sang; the capital importance of him is that he was shot. He epitomized the IWW at its best as he was victimized by capitalist terror at its worst. "If angels are persons, how is it that they can fly?" asked the child, and the sage replied, "because they take themselves lightly." This is why Joe Hill is also known as The Man Who Never Died. It is the theme of the song, "I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night."

The legend also works in the opposite way, inasmuch as his significance and importance are constantly being lost and in need of rediscovery. For instance, take the opening of one of the major Wobbly autobiographies, Ralph Chaplin's. "The battle-scarred old-time 'stiffs' who fought in the Industrial Workers of the World's wild crusade for economic justice a

generation ago are aged and scattered. In the fo'c'sle head on the high seas, in secluded stump ranch cabins, or around an occasional 'jungle' fire under a railroad bridge, the saga is still being told. But, when the last of the old-time migratory revolutionary dies, the story must not die with him."

The defeat is felt in two ways. First, it is felt as excess. Why declare the project of equality as "wild crusade," except as a tale to be told if not by an idiot then a marginalized, old man? It is an honorable trope - The Last of the True Wobs. For this trope to work effectively, a prior forgetting is helpful. Thus, the IWW "has all but been erased from popular consciousness," as *Radical America* put it. The early articles of *Telos* liked to say that they were discovering the IWW

from the oblivion of neglect or of design. Rosemont observes that discovering the IWW was a "compelling spiritual need of the time." Second, the defeat is noticed in miniature, in the necessity Chaplin felt to enclose "stiff" and "jungle" in quotation marks. The living talk of the Wobs had become too vulgar.

Ralph Chaplin published his story in 1948. The physical setting which both hides and preserves the saga is the labor process. The self-activity of the primary work group generated workers' control; it was documented by Paul Romano; James Boggs found it the starting point of the anti-racist American Revolution; Stan Weir found it essential for development of theory and vision to overcome the surliness of sectarians. They came from the Trotskyist movement, whose congruence with the Wobbly emphasis on point-of-production democracy omitted acknowledgment, and provides the exception to the rule of continual rediscovery.

Tens of thousands dreamt they'd seen Joe Hill only last night, "alive as you and me," indeed sang him into their political subconscious by listening over and over again to recordings of Paul Robeson in Carnegie Hall and Joan Baez at Woodstock. The superego of a new generation thus had a baritone and soprano register to its nostalgia. First the songs, then the prose. This was the truth of the Civil Rights Movement in America. Al Haber traces the origins of the first SDS chapter to the Folksong Society at the University of Michigan where the union songs and the Wobbly songs sung during the 1950s drew the politicians together.

While the U.S. student movement organized against the Vietnam war, in Europe in 1967 intellectuals at the University of Padua reassessed the October Revolution, the German worker's councils and the experience of the IWW as a three-fold articulation of the global struggle against capitalism. The conference influenced student militance and its ideas played a part in the "hot autumn" of 1969. They pointed to the importance of Taylorism in decomposing a work-task into a precise set of motions which become the basis of the total objectification of work. Henry Ford and the assembly-line re-engineered production around the wage. The Wobblies provided an answer based on mobility and the socialization of the class struggle outside of the factory. The former gave us the mass worker, and the latter the social wildcat. The Wobs discovered the revolutionary character of collective worker. These Italian comrades of the late '60s and early '70s laid the ground work for the movement of the autonomists.

The social relations of Fordist production were based on the repression of constant capital. In concert with the repression of the machine was the direct discipline of terror. This provides us with the background for under-

standing the significance of the judicial murder of Joe Hill. The postwar repression - the Palmer raids, the Chicago trial against the Wobblies, the incarceration of militants, the creation of the FBI - began earlier with capital punishment and lynchings. The Ku Klux Klan, to quote Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz's father, "swelled up like a tick - night riding, killing stock, burning barns and crops, lynching, burning crosses. Good Christians they were." Thousands were lynched in order a) to preserve white supremacy, b) to please the oil, wheat, and timber interests, and c) to produce human beings who would submit to the assembly line. The photographic evidence of that terror is published. The aquiline noses, the Panama hats, the suspenders, occasional starched collar, ties on the boys - lent an air of Aryan respectability to many of these stinking burnings and mutilations whose nauseating, exemplary cruelty became a national characteristic, the Terror of the Racial Capitalist Nation. And the Klan passed out little red-white-and-blue cards saying, "We are watching you."

Joe Hill's execution opened a campaign of economic, racial terrorism. The deafening noise, the unremitting toil, the goon squads, the armed security guards, the speed-up, the physical intimidation, the assembly line of Ford anticipated the work-camps of the gulag and Auschwitz alike. The terror inherent in the full socialization of capital in both production and reproduction was recorded by Frieda Kahlo. Her cool, indigenous eye depicted the fear and pain of the Dearborn hospital and her intelligence and knowledge of revolutionary Marxism linked the terror to that of River Rouge. Thus she provided the witness to the unity of the capitalist circuit, the production of carriages and the miscarriages of reproduction.

Rosemont is especially interested in the women Wobs, such as the founder of the Catholic Worker movement, Dorothy Day, or the advocate of birth control, Margaret Sanger, or the Oklahoma advocate of wages for housework, Mary Inman, or the boardinghouse keeper and publisher of song, Mary Gallagher, or the editor, rhymster and economist, Mary Marcy, to name a few.

Mary Inman fled Tulsa, the Oklahoma epicenter of the mid-continent oil field, in 1917 while the local newspaper screamed, "Kill them, just as you would kill any other kind of snake. Don't scotch 'em; kill 'em dead. It's no time to waste money on trials and continuances and things like that. All that is necessary is the evidence and a firing squad." Wobblies organized its roughnecks; and lynch mobs cracked the necks of the Wobblies. Silence and amnesia was one result. Pure fantasy was another like the Broadway musical

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## IN NOVEMBER, I REMEMBER:

My Mother

HANNA (SAIKKONEN) SIITONEN

1894 - 1997

In 1909, at age 15, Hanna and two other teen-age women dairy workers presented a list of written demands to improve their deplorable working conditions to dairy owner Schmidt at Lahdenpohja, Finland, on the Karelian Isthmus.

They were fired. It was the first known collective job action ever initiated by women in then Finnish Karelia.

- Harry Siitonen, SF Bay Area GMB

# The IWW in Hartford: "Billions for War, How Much for Jobs?"

BY STEVE THORNTON

In a few rooms above Giolito's Restaurant on Market Street, not too far from the Hartford, Connecticut, Police Station, Sam Bernowsky hung the charter for the local branch of the Industrial Workers of the World. The document was signed by Big Bill Haywood, who was under federal indictment at the time for obstructing the United States' role in the First World War. Sam's job was to organize Hartford's unemployed, part of the IWW's goal of organizing all working people.

It was March 1919, and within a few weeks, thousands of Hartford-area workers were flocking to IWW meetings chaired by Peter Kraskowsky and secretary Harry Nelson. The IWW's success was growing particularly among immigrant workers. Unemployment was high now that soldiers were returning home from the war. The guarantee of a minimum wage was still being opposed by local manufacturers. Blacks were petitioning the

state to end discrimination. Women were organizing for the right to vote. And labor unrest was at its peak, with 18 strikes in Hartford alone during the past year.

The official response to the union that was trying to organize these different communities into One Big Union was fast and furious. A local newspaper reported that it had "uncovered" local IWW literature, but refused to print it because it was "so dangerous that complete publication is prevented." Instead, the paper printed a large photograph of the building in which the union rented office space with the caption "Headquarters of Reds in Hartford." Soon after the photo appeared, landlord Timothy Long threatened to kick the IWW out. "What good will it do to make us get out of here?" asked organizer Harry Nelson. "We'll only get quarters somewhere else." They were soon evicted.

Similar harassment took place when the union planned a Grand Concert and Ball at

the Italian Club around the corner. The building's owners initially rented the IWW the space, but balked at the last minute and wouldn't open the hall on the night of the event. Young men and women, dressed for the occasion, jammed the sidewalks.

Hartford Mayor James Kinsella put the police chief on alert "for when the IWW breaks the law." Kinsella was under a lot of pressure to simply round up and arrest radicals, like the city of Waterbury had just done. The Waterbury raid nabbed Sam Bernowsky, who was then threatened with deportation. Kinsella, however, noted that most of those arrested in the raid had been released without charges.

City officials urged the state legislature to allow towns to "authorize the construction of armories within their respective limits and the issuance of machine guns to be prepared to cope with threatened uprisings." The Hartford Board of Aldermen passed an ordinance mak-

ing it a crime to carry a red flag, and the state General Assembly soon followed suit. (It took a group of University of Connecticut law school students to have the statute overturned in 1972 as an infringement of free speech.) In the spirit of the times, the Hartford Fire Insurance Company began to offer "strike insurance" against riot, civil commotion and the "occupying of factories" by workers.

Even members of Hartford's conservative religious community got into the act. Rev. Howard Ross of the First Methodist Church warned upstanding native-born churchgoers about subversives and how to spot them. His public comments were directed as much at the local immigrant population as the union that was trying to organize them. He told his flock that immigrants were:

"A sodden, sour, bitter mass of humanity that resists the best ideals of American and Christian civilization. From the lowest peasant class of Italy, with their ideas of low living and filth and poverty, from the Balkans with low instincts of society and womanhood. If you seek the anarchist, the Bolshevik, the wild-eyed turbulent radical, when you find him and look into his face, behold it is the face of a foreigner."

Not to be outdone, another local preacher, the Rev. Herbert Judson White, laid out his plan for dealing with unemployed immigrant workers. "They ought to be treated like any other criminals," White said. "They want to live without working, ... several boatloads should be deported from every state in the union."

These views did not go completely unchallenged by other church leaders. Although they would not support union organizing efforts, a number of local clergy did respond to Ross and White, suggesting that "we should be willing to remove proven social injustice" in order to dampen the revolutionary fires that were being ignited in Hartford.

IWW organizers picked the issue of unemployment to expose the inability of both business and government to meet the basic needs of working people. Two thousand workers attended a packed rally at the Grand Theater organized by the union. The house was standing room only, jammed with workers dressed in their Sunday clothes. They cheered the speakers who delivered their talks in Polish, Russian and English. They responded enthusiastically to verbal jabs at the inflammatory news coverage the IWW was receiving. As one organizer exclaimed, "We aren't going to have any violence, even if the editor of the *Hartford Courant* wants it!"

Mayor Kinsella's response to the meeting's demand for jobs was to announce that 300 jobs were available at the Trout Brook Ice Company in New Hartford. The actual number of openings, as well as the safety of working conditions at the plant, were sharply disputed.

One speaker at the Grand Theater put the question succinctly. Michael Rosenberg, a veteran of the recent "great war," spoke for more than just Hartford's unemployed when it was his turn to address the crowd: "We say to President Wilson and to Congress: While this war was on, you appropriated billions for the war. How much are you willing to appropriate for peace and for jobs?"

## Documentary looks at Everett Massacre

Washington filmmaker Denise Ohio previewed "Verona: The Story of the Everett Massacre" Nov. 5 at the Everett Theatre. The film commemorates the Nov. 5, 1916, Everett Massacre, when police opened fire on IWW members on two ships approaching the town for a free speech fight, killing at least seven people.

Several other Wobblies fell overboard during the shooting and are believed to have been killed by gunfire and drowning.

The documentary, still a work in progress, should be done by early next year. Oddly, the filmmaker appears to believe it is possible, even desirable, to remain neutral in telling this story. A Web page on the making of the film can be found at: [www.holytoledo.com](http://www.holytoledo.com).

## The IWW in the history books

COMPILED BY JON BEKKEN

Each year the *Industrial Worker* looks back at recent historical writings on the IWW:

Industrial Worker contributor Jeff Shantz has recently published several articles exploring efforts to link the ecology and syndicalist movements, drawing on IWW efforts in the northern California redwood forests in the 1980s and early 1990s that led to the attempted assassination of IWW organizers Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney. Among them: "Solidarity in the woods: Redwood Summer and alliances among radical ecology and timber workers" (*Environments* 30, December 2002, 79-93); "Green Syndicalism: An Alternative Red-Green Vision" (*Environmental Politics* 11, Winter 2002, 21-41); and "Judi Bari and 'the feminization of Earth First!': The convergence of class, gender and radical environmentalism" (*Feminist Review* 70, 2002, 105-22).

In these articles Shantz explores the theoretical and practical implications of a syndicalism made green and the struggle to overcome decades of division between timber workers and environmentalists – a difficult struggle that had some successes, and which Shantz argues illustrates the need for a global movement that builds workers' power in order to create the possibilities for workers to

refuse environmentally destructive work.

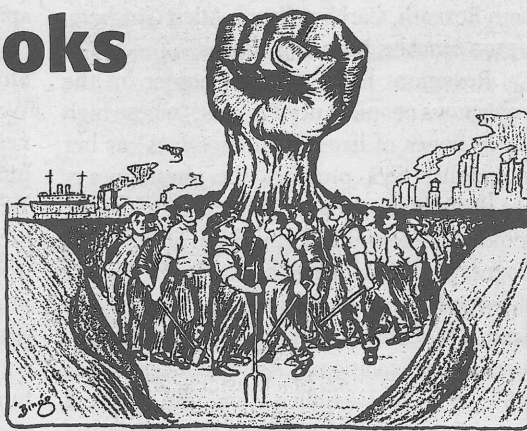
The University of Illinois Press has published Toby Higbie's *Indispensable Outcasts* (based on his dissertation on 'floaters,' tramps and other migratory workers briefly discussed in last year's installment), a social history of the workforce that provided the backbone of IWW agricultural organizing in the 1910s and 1920s. We hope to review this book soon.

British sociologist Nicholas Thoburn recently published "The Hobo Anomalous: Class, minorities and political institutions in the Industrial Workers of the World" (*Social Movement Studies* 2, 2003, 61-84). And Mel van Elteren's "Workers' Control and the Struggles against 'wage slavery' in the Gilded Age and after" (*Journal of American Culture* 26, 2003, 188-203) includes a section on the IWW, adding little to decades of condescending scholarship on IWW utopianism.

There has also been recent attention to the IWW's cultural presence, most notably Franklin Rosemont's monumental *Joe Hill: The IWW & the Making of a Revolutionary Workingclass Counterculture* (Kerr, 2003), reviewed previously in these pages. Rosemont explores every aspect of Joe Hill's life and legacy in nearly 500 pages, and some topics which touched Joe only tangentially, if at all. The result is a treasure chest of Wobbly folklore and musings about the relationship between the IWW and a wide array of cultural and social phenomena, ranging from environmentalism, racism and internationalism to labor cartooning, songs, art and poetry. There are many fruitful angles to be pursued here (and also some blind alleys); no collection on the IWW is complete without this book.

William Sayers' "Joe Hill's 'Pie in the Sky' and Swedish Reflexes of the Land of Cockaigne" (*American Speech* 77, Fall 2002, 331-36) argues that over the years Joe's metaphor has lost its cutting edge. In a less flattering vein is Lawrence Dugan's "O'Neill and the Wobblies: The IWW as a Model for Failure in 'The Iceman Cometh'" (*Comparative Drama* 36, Spring 2002, 109-24). Dugan shows that "the Movement" in the play's backstory is the IWW, and offers a lengthy digression on IWW cofounder Thomas Hagerty.

Also on the cultural front, Carol McQuirk's "Bradbury, Heinlein and hobo heaven" (*Science Fiction Studies*, July 2001, 319-21) argues that the favorable portrayal of hoboes in novels by the two is drawn from IWW songs. And Terese Volk offers a woefully ignorant discussion of our songbook and Work People's College in "Little Red Songbooks: Songs for the Labor Force of America" (*Journal of Research in Music Education* 49, Spring 2001, 33-48). Volk's discussion of Work People's College seriously misunderstands its relation to the IWW



(to which it became affiliated in 1913), and more importantly to the Finnish immigrant Wobbly community that remained its most important constituency throughout its existence. Many of her claims about the college are wrong, and the attempt to view the songbooks through the lens of the college is wrong-headed. Nonetheless, she is enthusiastic about the role IWW and other labor songs have played in the movement, and suggests that music teachers have much to learn from our history.

The Summer 2002 issue of *Labor Studies Journal* features reflections on Howard Kimmeldorf's study of IWW organizing among New York City restaurant workers and Philadelphia longshoreman, *Battling for American Labor*, in which Kimmeldorf argued that far from being alienated by the IWW's syndicalism, workers sought a "practical syndicalism."

Several recent dissertations also touch on the IWW. Most notably, Gerald Ronning's "I belong in this world: Native Americanisms and the western Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917" (University of Colorado, 2002) focuses on rhetorical war between the IWW and the bosses and government, in which concepts of "the Indian" and "savage" were used by both (if in radically different ways). In the process, Ronning offers the most comprehensive biographical treatment to date of IWW martyr Frank Little, who organized throughout the West. Little, by the way, is also the ostensible subject of a recent film, "An Injury to One," which might better be described as a meditation on the ravaging of the Butte district by the mine and smelter capitalists.

Adam Hodges' "World War I and local change in America" (U Illinois, 2002) examines labor relations in Portland, Oregon, and the government's efforts to ally with AFL unions to crush Wobblies and other radicals. The IWW also plays a supporting role in Goffroy de Laforcade's "A laboratory of Argentine labor movements: Dockworkers, mariners, and the contours of class identity in the port of Buenos Aires, 1900-1950" (Yale, 2001). And John Richardson's "Green chain: Work in a western mill" (Emory, 2002) discusses the IWW as part of the backdrop for examining labor relations at an Idaho plywood mill and the interaction between labor and nature.

### In November We Remember

Every November, the IWW remembers the many fellow workers who have fallen in the struggle for labor's emancipation. November is a particularly fitting month for this remembering – it is the month when the Haymarket Martyrs were hanged, when Karen Silkwood was killed; when IWW organizers Wesley Everett and Joe Hill were murdered; the massacres of IWW members in Centralia, Washington, and Columbine, Colorado, where striking miners were shot down by the state militia in 1927.

Some, like Joe Hill, remain well known to this day; many others, like Wobbly James Brew, murdered during the Bisbee deportation while defending himself against company thugs, are largely forgotten. The history of the IWW – indeed the history of the labor movement as a whole – is written in blood.

Every right we possess today, we possess because our fellow workers fought and died for it. We owe it to them not simply to defend the rights and conditions they won, not just to preserve their memory, but to carry the struggle they began forward – to bring an end to this bloody capitalist system built on murder and exploitation.



## Joe Hill & the IWW

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"Oklahoma." The terror suppressed the Wobly dream of the common wealth. At Hiroshima and Nagasaki the reign of nuclear terror began. This takes us to E.P. Thompson, the Brit, the vet, the Red, and Ban-the-Bomber.

The Rosemont's subtitle, *The Making of a Revolutionary Workingclass Counterculture* alludes to E.P. Thompson's *Making of the English Working Class* of 40 years previous. Rosemont's book, like Thompson's, has a job to do, making the class which brings to birth a new world from the ashes of the old. There are differences. For instance, Rosemont has little time for types of work – house work, assembly line work, outdoors work (he makes one word out of working class), or the details of the labor process. Against the corporate media, against Hollywood, Rosemont's theme is counterculture, reminding us that the American gloss on Thompson's *Making* was culturalist. Both books are part of that "awakening" Joe Hill sang of before he was shot in the heart.

From trying to write the working class into existence, Thompson went on to the peace movement. Having helped to revive the old English peace movement (CND), now enlarged as European Nuclear Disarmament to include West Europe and with its sights upon east Europe, Thompson called the American peace movement to attention. The aftermath of the June 12, 1982, demonstration in New York was too introverted, its self-criticisms too therapeutic; the mixture of race, gender, class, age, sexual preference issues too willy-nilly or indulgent. Only by deconstructing the hegemonic ruling ideology of the 'nation' could the aggressive, deluding system of exterminism be defeated. Authentic, American internationalism needed to be discovered, and this was the task of poets and historians, Thompson argued. He said, "We need, in some new form, a 'Wobly' vocabulary of mutual aid and of plain duty to each other in the face of power."

The old man of the peace movement, the veteran of political and military battles in the East and in the West, the most influential social historian of the late 20th century, and the lonely bastard of Muggleonian Marxism, was turning to the myth of the Wobs, trying out for size the overalls of the last of the true Wobs including their anarchist tag ("mutual aid").

To Staughton Lynd, what Edward associated with the Wobs was passion; to Bryan Palmer, Edward used the Wobs to assert a "moral agenda" over "traditional Marxism." These are the gut reactions of the thirsty, parched from the dessicated deserts of American ideology. But Thompson was not moralizing, or speaking only in a passion. There was more to his conception of the Wobblies. His oldest American comrades were a North Dakota poet, Tom McGrath, and a Texan sociologist, C. Wright Mills. They too sometime

spoke as The Last of the True Wobs.

The IWW flourished in the second decade of the 20th century which was characterized by a) vast geographic of expansion of capitalism, b) growth of industrial as opposed to craft unions, c) World War I, d) a population which was one third immigrants or children of immigrants, e) rapid unionization among sailors, railway and streetcar worker, finally, f) the Wobs made, in the words of David Montgomery, "the myth of 'One Big Union' ubiquitous." The Wobs adapted language to immigrant workers, and they adapted hymns from the immigrants' one cultural institution, the churches. In a sense Thompson's emphasis on vocabulary is appropriate.

The Wobs were an organization of poets, making it dear to Rosemont's heart, and his chapters on the classic Ralph Chaplin, the gothic Arturo Giovannitti, the gnomie T-Bone Slim, the spell-binding houseworker Laura Tanne, and the dandy seer Covington Hall put Joe Hill in an uncanonized, radical poetic pantheon. A revolutionary organization has to be poetic as the future requires present imagination. The Wobs recited Shelley and Whitman, they rose to the Bardic responsibility outlined by Blake. They influenced Claude McKay, Kenneth Rexroth, Carl Sandburg, Allen Ginsberg, Upton Sinclair, John Dos Passos. ...

Rosemont has a crucial chapter on the indigenous people. Lucy Parsons, "whose high cheek bones of her Indian ancestors" as her biographer says, provided the physiognomy of a countenance of utter inspiration when she spoke at the founding convention of the IWW. August Spies lived with the Ojibways; Big Bill Haywood attended pow-wows. Abner Woodruff, a Wob, had a chapter on Indian agriculture in his *Evolution of American Agriculture* (1915-6). The Wobblies were "the spiritual successors to the Red Indians as number one public enemy and conscience botherers." IWW organizer Frank Little was lynched in Butte, Montana, by the same hard rock copper "bosses" that caused Joe Hill to be shot. Little was a Cherokee Indian.

Ralph Chaplin drifted into dreams of the Indians (*Only the Drums Remembered*, 1960) in much the same way that William Morris remembered the 'dream of John Ball.' In the era of Sigmund Freud, the oneiric faculty preserved the radical root which the conscious mind was politically required to repress. "No matter how many times he told me," Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz remembers of her father, "I loved to hear his agenda of Wobly dreams: abolition of interest and profits, public ownership of everything, no military draft, no military, no police, the equality of women and all races. 'The O-B-U, One Big Union,' he would say and smile to himself, lost in memory."

C. Wright Mills, as Thompson recalls, often referred to himself as a Wob. When the Cuban revolution came, C. Wright Mills was reminded of the Wobblies by its improvisation, its egalitarianism, and the self-activity of the campesinos. The "vocabulary" was part of a revolutionary movement: if the movement is repressed, the vocab is put in quotation marks, or specialized dictionaries, the formaldehyde of speech. Thompson explained how the Wobblies "never fell into that most dangerous error which supposes that socialist endeavor achieves some consummation in State Power ... and Mills' study of Weber, Sorel, Simmel, Mosca, and Michels had served to confirm in his mind the wisdom which had come instinctively to the transport-workers and lumberjacks of the old IWW." They didn't trust politicians.

Instinct is a term of unwelcome ambiguity alluding to social Darwinism as if the transport-workers and lumberjacks were primitive,

or pre-literate, or beastly and animalish. Thompson's category of "experience" might be better in this context as mediating between the concrete realities of the labor process and the counter-hegemonic cultural practises of the working class. To be sure, there is no "instinct" to study that long list of European professors, any more than there is "instinct" to file a grievance and wait months for redress, or an "instinct" to put a paper in a ballot box every four years and wait for regime change. Those are capitalist socializations, respectively, of knowledge, production and politics. The Wobly vocabulary of mutual aid that Thompson called for is not going to be found in theory, or in instinct, but it might in song. Here we need Rosemont and Joe Hill.

Rosemont's chapter on the beats particularly Jack Kerouac and Gary Snyder introduces the Wobly concept of the "hip" and the theme of west coast Buddhism. In light of the widespread influence of Buddhism in general and Zen in particular in the American peace movement and the suspicion between the political and the spiritual impulse, we should dig deeper in this particular past. Furthermore, since the Asian financial crisis of 1997 capitalism is importing more than cheap goods and spiritualism from the Pacific.

Manuel Yang has shown me that Kotoku Shusui maintained a correspondence with Wobblies in north America. He was a Japanese anarchist who was executed in 1911 with his comrades in what was known as the Great Treason case, accused of conspiring to take the life of the Emperor of Japan. Four Buddhist priests were arrested in the same case, three imprisoned for life and one, the Soto Zen priest Gudo Uichiyama, who had operated a socialist and anarchist printing press behind the huge temple statue of the Buddha, was also executed. He had criticized the doctrine of karma, pie-in-the-sky again. ...

What has changed since those Freeze times when E.P. Thompson urged us to Wobly mutual aid? First, the revolt of the indigenous people led by the Zapatistas; second, the antiglobalization movement initiated with such a Wobly bang at the 'battle of Seattle.' Third, the worldwide 'war on terror.'

One of Rosemont's most important themes is that the moral authority of the IWW is increasing, and ought to increase more. This volume says it for song, not theory, though, for the epistemologically inclined Joe Hill did suggest a notion:

If the workers take a notion,  
They can stop all speeding trains;  
Every ship upon the ocean  
They can tie with mighty chains.  
Every wheel in the creation,  
Every mine and every mill,  
Fleets and armies of the nation,  
Will at their command stand still.

The full text of this review, including references, can be found at [www.counterpunch.org](http://www.counterpunch.org)

### IWW commodity fetishism?

If E-Bay auctions are a measure of a union's significance (a dubious proposition), then the IWW is hot indeed. Recently a Frank Little memorial button, circa 1917, sold there for \$616. A (not particularly rare) picture postcard of the Bisbee Deportation, also from 1917, just sold for \$322.17, after spirited last-minute bidding.

Rare book dealers have also sharply raised their prices on old (and some not so old) IWW materials. Government economists, when they measure inflation, like to look at things like pork bellies or crude oil – not things that are no longer being made, like beachfront properties or old, original IWW pamphlets. Could this be the first harbinger of hyperinflation?

## Dissident Teamsters steward reinstated

Miami Roadway IBT steward Amadeo Bianchi has won a jury trial over the company's firing of the veteran Teamster after he helped a member win a workers compensation case.

Bianchi will receive back wages with interest and be reimbursed for medical costs, pension fund contributions and attorney's fees.

Bianchi was fired in October 2001, when management cooked up a story that he had coached a worker to lie about his injury. The grievance panel returned that member to work Nov. 13, 2001; the very next day they ruled exactly the opposite on Bianchi's case.

These remarkably different results in the same case resulted from Local 390 Secretary-Treasurer Don Marr's intervention. Marr was a strong Hoffa backer during the 2001 Teamster election, while Bianchi is active with Teamsters for a Democratic Union.

The federally appointed IBT Election Officer found that Roadway and union officials had Bianchi fired in retaliation for his election activity, but the judge overseeing the Teamsters was unwilling to enforce his decision on an employer.

## OCAP charges blocked

Criminal riot charges against Ontario Coalition Against Poverty activist John Clarke have been stayed by a Superior Court justice, who cited the length of time that has passed since an earlier trial ended in a mistrial May 11. Clarke was the last of the OCAP 3 to face charges stemming from a June 15, 2000, incident in which police attacked demonstrators in front of the Ontario legislature.

Prosecutors could appeal the stay, but in light of the government's recent electoral defeat and their inability to secure conviction in the previous trial are considered unlikely to. The stay means that bail conditions that barred Clarke, who was a speaker at the IWW's 2002 General Assembly, from attending demonstrations or associating with OCAP members are no longer in force.

## China: 8 get jail time for union work

A Chinese court has convicted eight people accused of seeking to establish a labor union of incitement to subvert state power, according to a human rights group. Li Jiangfen received a 16-year jail term, while Li Chan received the lightest sentence – two years imprisonment, Human Rights in China said. Also convicted were Lin Shunan, Huang Xiangwei, Lin Shunhan, Zhan Gongzhen, Zheng Xiaohua, Lin Chan and Lin Shuncheng.

The eight were arrested in April and charged with counter-revolutionary crimes and setting up a subversive labour union. Police claimed they stockpiled firearms and shot at the windows of the office of the chief judge of the intermediary court. Li Jianfeng and his co-defendants pressed counter-charges, accusing the police of framing them on trumped-up charges and torture during detention.

Meanwhile, Yao Fuxin and Xiao Yunliang, the imprisoned leaders of the March 2002 mass demonstrations against corruption and unpaid benefits that rocked the city of Liaoyang, were transferred to the notorious Lingyuan Prison October 8. Many dissidents arrested after the crackdown on the Tiananmen pro-democracy movement were held at Lingyuan Prison, and numerous confirmed reports emerging from the prison indicated that the prison was one of the most brutal in the whole of China.



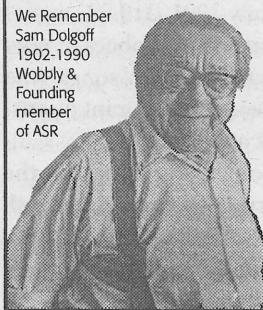
### New 'Bread & Roses' verse

BY NICK PATTI

I've written a new, additional closing verse for the IWW song "Bread and Roses," which I offer for your consideration:

As we come marching, marching, we'll build our dream today,  
The struggle is our heritage, it'll be our legacy.  
We'll forge revolution from the love deep in our hearts,  
For the people hear us singing bread and roses, bread and roses.

We Remember  
Sam Dolgoff  
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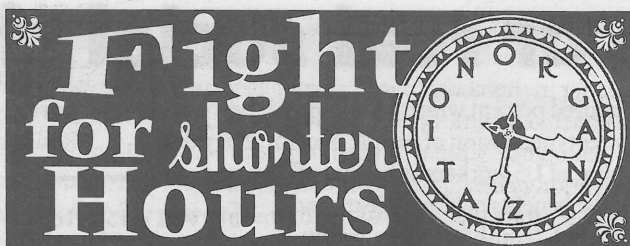
## Take Back Your Time

The first Take Back Your Time Day was marked Oct. 24 by events in at least 19 states and the province of Ontario, sponsored by churches, parent-teacher associations, unions and other community groups.

Plans are already underway for the second annual celebration, in October 2004. The day marks the point when U.S. workers have put in as many hours on the job as our fellow workers in Western Europe.

IWW branches cosponsored events in Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia and Santa Barbara, and nearly 10,000 copies of our "More Time For Life" supplement were distributed across the continent.

IWW General Secretary-Treasurer Alexis Guss was the featured speaker at the Chicago event, where she challenged the campaign to focus more on the needs of workers – particularly low-wage workers, who have borne the brunt of America's steadily lengthening work week. In Santa Barbara, California, the IWW



organized a day-long festival in a downtown park, encouraging workers to take the day off. In Boston, a month-long series of events culminated in a noontime speak-out in historic Faneuil Hall.

For more information: [www.timeday.org](http://www.timeday.org)

## House rejects overtime rules

The U.S. House has joined the Senate in voting to block Labor Department rules aimed at eliminating overtime protections for millions of workers. However, Congressional leaders say they will eliminate the provision from the final bill. The House had earlier sided with the Bush administration on the issue.

The Labor Department is expected to issue final regulations early next year.

## Grocery workers fight alone...

*Continued from page 1*

...told the *New York Times*. "This could mean the loss of vision coverage, dental, even pension benefits."

A handful of veteran workers earn as much as \$18 an hour, but years of concessions throughout the industry mean that most grocery workers start just above minimum wage, and work their way up to \$8 an hour – less than part-time baggers were being paid two decades ago. "I get paid 80 cents above minimum wage," Gina Guglielmotti, a locked-out floral clerk at a Pasadena Ralphs, told the *Los Angeles Times*. "We want to stop the constant regression [sic] of wages."

Under many UFCW contracts, workers start at minimum wage and most get only part-time hours – and may have to work as long as three years before their health benefits kick in. The concessions management is demanding would mean that even fewer workers could hope for a living wage – and that many would lose health benefits altogether.

All three companies are highly profitable. Kroger is the nation's eighteenth-largest company, with revenues of more than \$51 billion. Albertson's ranks thirty-fifth, with revenues of

\$36 billion. Safeway ranks forty-first, with revenues of \$32 billion. The three chains' combined operating profits increased from \$5.1 billion in 1998 to \$9.7 billion last year.

Although the strike will hurt profits in the short term, management sees this as an opportunity to slash labor costs for the long term. Clearly, the stores have the financial upper hand. But if the workers could count on the solidarity of unionized grocery and delivery workers throughout the country, they could force a quick end to the strike and lock-out.

Although extending picket lines to other stores operated by the same employer is legal, unions seldom take such action. The reason is simply that union officials don't want to hurt their harmonious relations with the bosses. In the present case, the Northern California operations of the struck firms are conducting business as usual, even without the managers that have been dispatched to the south.

More than a year ago, the grocery bosses met with UFCW officials at the union's Washington headquarters and told them that they would have to make concessions in upcoming contracts across the country, according to a report in the *Los Angeles Times*. The supermarket bosses insisted that they would "need a new and different kind of agreement if we are going to stay in business."

Even with that early warning there's no indication that UFCW leaders took steps to keep the grocery chains from picking off their members one contract at a time. Instead, they are fighting for each contract as if it was an isolated battle. While the bosses are marshaling all their resources to win, the UFCW is leaving workers to fight by themselves.

Is that a winning strategy? No. Across the nation the UFCW has conducted a prolonged retreat. Two decades ago, working in a unionized grocery store was a relatively good job. Now the industry pays an average of under \$11 an hour, the work is increasingly part-time and short-term, and the bosses are after workers' healthcare and pensions.

This article draws heavily on reports by Charles Walker for the Labor Tuesday web site.

## Stopping the Free Trade Area of the Americas deal

A Chicago conference called to plan protests for the FTAA ministerial meetings being held in Miami later this month called for one-hour work stoppages on Nov. 20, the day when protests in Miami would be at their height. The hope is that the campaign for stoppages would provide an opportunity to raise awareness of the FTAA proposal, and to point out the linkages between the global web of neoliberal agencies and their trade agreements.

The ministers will meet in Miami Nov. 18-21, joined by bankers, CEOs and other global profiteers with a direct interest in extending NAFTA beyond its current confines to engulf all of North and South America.

for info: [www.ftaareistance.org](http://www.ftaareistance.org)

## Iraqi unions: A new beginning

BY ERIC LEE

I was recently invited to attend the general conference of the International Federation of Workers Education Associations, which was held in Albufeira, Portugal, in early October. I knew what the highlight of my two days at the conference was going to be – and I was sure it wasn't going to be the plenary sessions or workshops. The highlight would be meeting Abdullah.

Abdullah and I had exchanged a couple of email messages and when we each learned that the other would be guests of IFWEA, we arranged to meet up. Abdullah, you see, is a representative of the new, independent Iraqi unions. And I was meeting him the day before he returned to Baghdad for the first time in a quarter century.

We discussed business of course – how Iraqi unions could use the new information technology, and LabourStart in particular, to achieve their goals. We discussed the possibility of an exciting international campaign, using the Internet, to pressure the coalition governing authority to release the assets (including buildings) that belonged to the former regime's state-controlled 'unions.'

For me, it was an introductory course in Iraqi trade unionism. I knew that under the Saddam regime there had been a state-controlled 'trade union' – but this was no more a real union than, say, the All China Federation of Trade Unions, which, though it claims to be the largest union in the world, is actually nothing of the sort. But I knew nothing of what had happened since Saddam's regime fell.

It turned out that with collapse of the Ba'athist regime, the official 'unions' collapsed as well, and two distinctly different movements stepped into the breach. One, the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), was the one Abdullah represents. Another is a union of unemployed workers, which has gotten a lot of press attention in the Left press, at least here in Britain. There are even remnants of the Saddamist unions, the former GFTU, though Abdullah sees them more as gangsters than a rival trade union movement. Indeed the IFTU refers to the Saddamists as a "yellow union."

The IFTU was officially formed in May following a meeting attended by some 400 people at the headquarters of the transport union in Baghdad. Its goals include:

- workers rights;
- a new democratic trade union movement actively involved in influencing economic and social policies and rebuilding civil society, together with other social movements;
- the increased role of women at all levels



within unions and civil society;

- cooperation with international and regional labour movements, and also to seek their help and cooperation to equip Iraqi working people with new skills and knowledge;
- special attention to social and economic needs of disabled people (of which there are many after Saddam's wars).

The IFTU's first press conference in late August began by condemning the terrorist attack on the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad. Earlier in the month, it organized a series of protests in Basra and its representatives met with the British authorities there.

IFTU now includes: the Oil and Gas Union, Railway Union, Vegetable Oil and Food Staff Union, Transport Union, Textile Union, Leather Products Union, Construction and Carpentry Union, Transport and Communication Union, Electrician and Municipalities Union, Printing Union, Mechanics' Union, Service Industry Union, and the Agriculture and Irrigation Workers Union.

It has established contact with the closest neighboring trade union center, in Syria, and sent a mission to Damascus to meet with them. (That's not the one I would have picked, as Syria's unions are no more independent nor real than the Saddamist unions. But the IFTU, like the new governing council in Baghdad, is looking for legitimacy in the Arab world.) It is involved in a new initiative launched by several workers education associations in Arab countries, including the Democracy and Workers Rights Center in Palestine.

Facing an estimated seven million unemployed, a collapsed economy, and the need to build up a new society from scratch, the Iraqi unions face enormous challenges. They will be needing the help and support of trade unionists everywhere.

Full coverage of their struggle is on LabourStart at: <http://www.labourstart.org/iraq>

## PATCO lives

While the Federal Aviation Administration explores privatizing 69 air traffic control towers, the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Association – whose membership was decimated when Ronald Reagan fired its members during their 1981 strike – is poised to sign them up. Far from disappearing, PATCO has been busy organizing controllers in private towers across the U.S., and now represents workers at nearly two-thirds of those towers.

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## In November We Remember

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# Review: Romantic violence or real social change?

FILM REVIEW BY NORM DIAMOND

"The Weather Underground," a film by Sam Green and Bill Siegel.

A surprising number of otherwise sober friends on whose good judgement I normally can rely, recommended that I see "The Weather Underground." They encouraged me not because they saw it as the misleading and manipulative film it is, about a sorry and tangential episode in our political history, but because they actually liked it.

And therein lies the mystery: What is the present appeal of a film about a small faction of 1960s student activists whose political practice, mainly macho posturing, escalated from getting kids to fight cops in the streets to bombing government toilets?

There's no doubt a lesson to be learned from the film. The lesson that comes across to me is that frustration and impatience combined with the lack of strategic vision can turn you into a romantic outlaw, cause harm to the larger movement of which you're supposedly a part, and eventually make you a movie star. But then I lived through those years and don't have to rely on the distorted history presented in the film.

That's not the lesson the filmmakers would have us draw, however. Indeed, one of the ways in which the film is dishonest is that we never do know what the filmmakers think about their subject – other, of course, than the glorification they provide the Weathermen (who included women) by resurrecting them, giving them a forum and asking no tough questions. Resurrection without analysis may encourage piety, but it is not a way to learn from

our history.

To start with, the film simply accepts the Weathermen's self-justification: terrible things were being done in our name, and nobody else was doing anything to resist. "We had to do something, at least," say Bernardine Dohrn, Bill Ayers, Mark Rudd, et. al. But the premise is wrong. There was an awful lot happening in the late '60s and early '70s, with the potential for much more. The Weathermen simply went off on their own.

Even accepting for the moment their narrow focus on the Vietnam war, there was a mass anti-war movement that brought down two presidents and turned a majority of the population against the war. There was increasing organizing and insubordination among US troops that ultimately undercut the effectiveness of the military and forced US withdrawal.

Beyond the war, there was a wave of strikes in key industries, transport and communications, directed as much at entrenched union officials as against the companies (and post office). The civil rights movement moved North and deepened its organizing to economic issues. And women's and environmental concerns started receiving serious attention.

Equally important, all this activity was shifting the focus from "bad leaders" and individual "bad policies" to an entire system in need of change. Capitalism itself was starting to be challenged. Not, however, by the Weathermen. (The word "capitalism" makes one forlorn and extraneous appearance in the movie.)

They looked instead to Third World nationalist rebellions as their model. Well-to-do students, they romanticized violence. One

hundred percent white, they idolized their own stereotyped vision of people of color. They denounced US workers as bought off by the benefits of imperialism, and targeted "youth" as their revolutionary agent. (Here, too, the film is dishonest, letting one of them say they went after "young workers." In fact, they were very clear that workers as workers had no interest for them and might be part of the enemy. Anything having to do with workplace issues was, for them, a distraction at best.)

There is, to be sure, a critical voice in the film, Todd Gitlin, from the early Students for a Democratic Society leadership that the Weathermen ousted. But this is where the film is most deficient. Other than denouncing Weathermen violence and the ways they contributed to destroying SDS, Gitlin represents no alternative. Even in hindsight he seems to have learned nothing. He is one with the Weathermen in not recognizing the real forces at play in that era and in offering no sense of what could have been attempted.

So why is the film appealing to some, especially young, segments of the activist community now? Perhaps because frustration and impatience run rampant among us also. We too, or some of us at least, might take vicarious pleasure in a well-placed bomb. But lashing out thoughtlessly, or acting on our moral indignation without carefully calculating what understanding we're trying to impart and whom we're trying to reach, only sets us up

for failure.

"Resistance is good," Naomi Jaffe says in an attempt at a summary statement, and as audience we're pleased that she continues to identify with struggle.

But the real question is what type of resistance.

Anyone who's ever had to work a job knows that there are always little acts of rebellion. Many of them, like stealing or drug use, can be part of what makes the work tolerable, but they also enable the same work-

place structure and organization to continue. Some forms of resistance may temporarily salve our individual souls, but contribute little to, or even undermine, efforts at social change.

Another of the Weathermen, Brian Flanagan, warns us against the danger of thinking we have the moral high ground. He, too, misses the point and misunderstands the lesson of the Weather Underground experience. When it comes to war, racism, sexism, and all forms of exploitation and oppression, we do have the moral high ground.

The danger, rather, is acting only morally and not also politically. It is failing to think through present possibilities and how they might fit into our longer-term vision. It is failing to constantly reevaluate our actions in light of their outcomes, and reassess the present possibilities. The real danger exemplified by the Weather Underground, in short, is the lack of strategic vision.

## The union-busting industry

BY JONATHAN TASINI

Far from the headlines and with little fanfare, corporations spend huge sums of money to attack workers and frustrate their desire to exercise basic democratic rights at work. Corporate America has created a multi-billion dollar industry of anti-union lawyers and consultants who abuse Americans every day by twisting or breaking the law, which, in theory, gives people the right to democratically vote for a union. This union-busting industry, operating outside the public eye, has made a shambles of the Wagner Act's recognition of the right of workers to "self-organization, to form, to join or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through the representatives of their choosing."

Some resort to the stereotypical head-bashing you might conjure up from movie images of the past – Rueben Cepeda, a worker fired for union organizing at Chef Solutions (owned by the German airline, Lufthansa), was scheduled to testify against the company before the National Labor Relations Board when a man appeared at his home and showed

### SIU sues retiree for libel

The Seafarers International Union, an AFL-CIO affiliate long known among maritime workers as the "seascabbers," is suing disabled retired seaman Robert Swanson for critical comments about the union on a rank-and-file web site, [www.seajustice.org](http://www.seajustice.org), he sponsors.

The suit charges Swanson with libeling the SIU and its officers, and seeks \$1 million in damages and the closure of his web site. The Seamen's Justice Center site includes complaints that the SIU failed to represent workers, links to articles linking SIU officials to corrupt and undemocratic practices, information on officers' salaries, and a forum where maritime workers can discuss the SIU's inaction in the face of deteriorating conditions.

Rank-and-file SIU members working with Swanson say the SIU hiring hall has become a patronage machine which officials manipulate to maintain control of the union and preserve their lavish salaries.

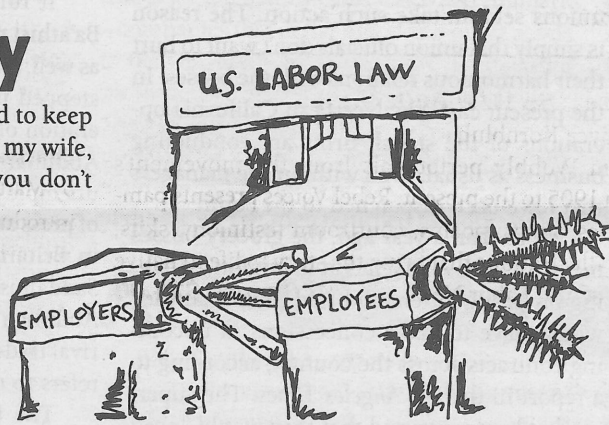
Swanson is unable to afford an attorney, and so is defending himself in the Iowa District Court proceedings.

him a pistol. "He said that if I wanted to keep living and if I loved my daughter and my wife, I better control myself. Because if you don't you're gonna die," he recalls.

But, mostly these modern-day Pinkertons inflict pain not with brass knuckles, but with psychological warfare aimed at creating a war-like atmosphere and dragging out conflict in the workplace as long as possible. The first thing a company does when workers start organizing, is hire an anti-union consultant. This isn't like looking for a professional killer – these guys hide in plain view. Try it yourself; type in "union avoidance" in Google and see how many options you get, all presenting their wares on sophisticated Web sites. There are more than 7,000 attorneys and consultants across the nation, who make their living attacking workers and their unions, billing at rates of up to \$1,500 per day.

Inside the workplace, the consultant glides around generally behind the scenes. They offer packages – a company may just want a video on how to scare workers with a threatened plant closing. Kentucky-based Adams, Nash, Haskell and Sheridan, for example, charges \$12,500 for a set of slide presentations to show employees, who are forced to attend "captive audience" meetings. Or maybe the company wants to train supervisors how to play good cop ("we really care about what you think" or offer Powerball tickets to workers who participate in company-sponsored meetings) or bad cop ("if you vote for the union, you'll be starting from the beginning in terms of pay," a false assertion). Or maybe it's as simple as working the press to demonize the union. The basic goal is to create fear and doubt – every hour of the day, every week, every month, until the workers give up.

When Fred's Inc, which runs 500 low-cost department stores across the southeastern United States, wanted to defeat workers at its distribution center in Memphis, it hired The Kullman Firm. In short order, the women's bathrooms were not stocked; distribution center workers were barred from using the company dining area; workers were prohibited from drinking water at their workstations; and



they were forced to watch an anti-union video featuring an African-American man gambling on the street. Despite those tactics, in May 2002 workers voted 276-117 to join UNITE.

But the story had just begun. The company filed objections to the election with the National Labor Relations Board, the government agency charged with enforcing labor laws. Every one of the objections was thrown out, mainly because the company's witnesses were not credible. Fred's appealed, and the case is still pending (a typical problem in the grinding NLRB bureaucracy). And the workers, who exercised their democratic rights on the job, still wait for a chance to bargain for their livelihood – more than one year after their vote. Fred's best friend? Delay, delay, delay – the key weapon in the arsenal of the union-buster.

Out in Petosky, Northern Michigan Hospital brought in The Fishman Group to declare war against more than 400 nurses who had voted to join the Teamsters. By dragging out negotiations on a first contract, the hospital forced a strike which has dragged on for more than a year, becoming the longest nurses' strike in the nation's history. An independent panel's report is highly critical of the hospital's intransigence. "They had no intention of negotiating a contract and they hired him to do make sure that never happened," said Sharon Norton, a Teamsters business agent.

And, then, there is the ugly fight at Smithfield Foods in Tar Heel, North Carolina, where 6,000 workers slaughter 34,000 hogs a day. The company's union busters have led a campaign over several years that includes threats to close the plant, interrogations, surveillance and firings. The company has its own private policy force, with a holding cell. During one recent campaign, they used riot-clad

police during the election. The workers are still trying to gain a union.

Universities have gotten into the union-busting game, too. Brown University, Tufts and the University of Massachusetts (using public funds, by the way) all hired Seyforth and Shaw, a real nasty actor. New York University hired Proskauer Rose, a huge corporate law firm. Since universities try to project a good image, it's a little harder to fire workers so the university-type campaign usually is focused on one goal: delay, delay, delay.

Why do these companies – all in different industries – do this? Because they can violate the law, either in its letter or spirit, and get away with it. They can walk right up to the line of what the law permits, and either stop or cross the line. Either way, they face no serious penalty or remedy that can return a poisoned atmosphere to normal.

The toll of the war against workers waged by these anti-union consultants and lawyers, though unnoticed because it cannot be counted in a one-day tragedy, is high – deaths of workers because of dangerous working conditions, inadequate pay and benefits that lead to inadequate health care and a shortened lifespan, and, finally, relentless trauma in the place – the workplace – that should afford not fear, but dignity and respect.

### Child labor in Canada

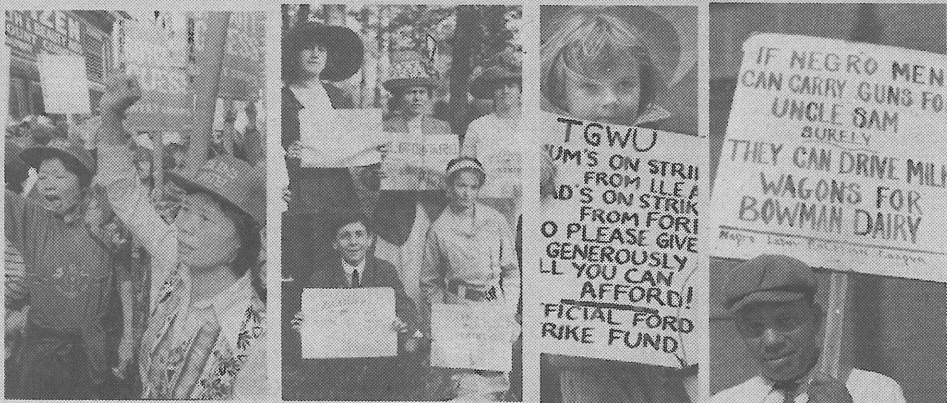
BY GRAEME MOORE

The British Columbia Liberals are considering legislation to permit children as young as 12 years old to work full time, at all hours of day and night, in agriculture, retail and service work, including food preparation. Currently, government permission is required to employ children younger than 15 years old.

The Director of Employment Standards would no longer investigate applications for child employment permits to certify that the work and the workplace are safe and that the hours of work are not too long.

The rules would still require consent of one parent. But historically, parental consent has not kept children out of coal pits or cotton mills. Whether out of dire economic need or ignorance, parents have consented for their children to work alone; on machinery that they could not reach the kill switch of; with power cutting tools like rotary saws and band saws; from dawn to dusk.

# BOOKS FOR REBELLIOUS WORKERS



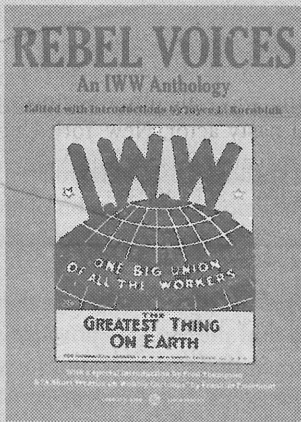
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An Idaho governor who spent his career cozying up to mine bosses is assassinated. Pinkertons and state prosecutors pin the blame on three union officials, including Big Bill Haywood. Lukas examines every facet of the case, from the sensationalized press coverage to the prosecution's manufactured evidence. This is a rich, engaging narrative of one of the labor frame-ups of the 20th century. **873 pages, hardcover, \$15.00**

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See review, page 6 **639 pages, \$17.00**

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## In November We Remember The Palmer Raids of January 2, 1920

Without warrants, Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer orchestrated a massive national raid of offices of the IWW, other unions, activist organizations, and immigrant societies; arresting occupants, ransacking records and destroying political literature. 240 people were deported as a result of the raids. In 1921, charges were dropped against all remaining arrestees.

Staff & Volunteers of IWW General Headquarters



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## Bangladeshi garment worker killed while demanding back pay

A garment worker was killed and more than 200 workers injured when police attacked workers at the BSCIC industrial park in Narayangoang Nov. 3. Workers at the Pantex, Tamnanna, Obonti and Crony factories were demanding back pay to make up for short checks and a Festival Bonus.

Several of the injured are members of the National Garments Workers Federation, which is campaigning for payment of a Festival Bonus before EID, to enable garment workers to properly celebrate their greatest religious festival. Most employers pay an annual bonus equal to one month's salary, as required by law, but garment firms either do not pay the EID bonus at all or provide only a fraction of the required amount.

Workers traditionally use their bonus to visit families, as well as for new clothes, gifts and food for the festivities. Since most workers live hand to mouth, they rely on the annual bonus to meet these needs. Last year's campaign by the NGWF gathered widespread support, and won bonuses for some workers.

On Oct. 27 the NGWF kicked off its campaign including mass meetings inside factories, at factory gates and in workers' neighborhoods; marches and rallies; and direct actions targeting the employers federation and

labour ministry. On Nov. 14 they will march on factories to demand payment of the bonus. Several garment unions have called a general strike for that day to protest the killing.

There are 1.8 million Bangladeshi garment workers in 3,700 factories. They earn 76 percent of the country's foreign currency, but labor under some of its worst conditions. Solidarity messages can be sent to the NGWF at GPO Box 864, Dhaka, Bangladesh; ngwf@aitlbd.net

### Bangladeshi workers appeal

BY AMIRUL HAQUE AMIN

The National Garment Workers Federation is engaged in a struggle at the Karnaphuli Fabrics Ltd. and the Newtex Group in Bangladesh. Karnaphuli Fabrics and Newtex subcontracted garment manufacturing for a number of multinational companies from Austria, France, Italy and the United States.

Working conditions are harsh, with workers putting in 14- and 15-hour days, and sometimes required to work the whole night through. There is no fresh drinking water, and no canteen to eat. Monthly pay starts at US\$15.51, rising to \$46.55 for skilled operators. Workers are routinely cheated of their



overtime pay, as there are no time cards documenting the actual hours worked.

In addition to the poor working conditions and pay, the bosses fired 17 workers, some of them NGWF members, Sept. 8.

The NGWF is asking that protest letters be sent to demand that the companies reinstate the 17 workers, provide weekly time off, maintain time cards, provide workers with written contracts, provide a canteen and on-site medical facilities, and stop harassment and torture of workers.

Send letters to: Karnaphuli Fabrics Ltd., 70 Green Road, Dhanmondhi, Dhaka-1205, Bangladesh; Newtex Group, 69/1 Green Road, Pantha Path, Suvastu Tower level 10 - 11, Dhaka-1205. U.S.-based firms using these contractors include: Mayflower Mfg. Co., 3 Maxson Drive, Old Forge PA 18518; Alperin Inc., 1 Maxson Drive, Old Forge PA 18518; Basics, 4950 Pacific Avenue # 200, Stockton CA 95207-6307.

## Unionists march on NSW parliament

Some 10,000 protesters rallied outside New South Wales parliament house Oct. 27 to demand tougher penalties against employers who fail to protect workers' lives.

Construction, manufacturing, plumbing and electrical workers walked off the job to march through Sydney, led by the families of people killed at work.

At the front of the march was Sue Baxter, whose 16-year-old son Joel Exner died earlier in the month when he fell from a construction site roof on his third day at work.

"What I don't understand is why we all have to be here, why we all have to rally around just for safety that should automatically be there," she told the crowd.

The government is resisting demands for industrial manslaughter laws, which would allow for the jailing of managers and executives whose failure to maintain minimum safety standards results in death.

Instead, Australia's federal government is pushing legislation to restrict union officials' access to workplaces and limit the rights of workers to take industrial action over breaches of occupational health and safety rules.

## General strike topples Bolivian president

Thirty-seven workers and peasants were killed by the army and police during a six-week struggle against a natural gas pipeline that would have stripped Bolivia of one of its most valuable natural resources, before President Sanchez de Lozada finally resigned. Strikes and demonstrations closed roads and work sites across the country.

After the collapse of Bolivia's tin mining industry, many Bolivians want its natural gas reserves to be used to develop local industry and jobs. The government insisted that the project was an essential part of a package of economic reforms meant to integrate Bolivia into the emerging WTO/FTAA regime.

A decade of neo-liberal, cost-cutting privatizations and other policies advocated by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank have increased poverty in a country where more than 60 percent live in poverty.

The president resigned as columns of striking tin miners and peasants were converging on the capital, throwing dynamite at police who tried to force them back. The capital, La Paz, was already crowded with tens of thousands of workers, while the presidential palace was guarded by a ring of riot police and armored vehicles.

## Wildcat postal strike spreads across Britain

Wildcat postal strikes involving more than 20,000 workers ended Nov. 3 with an agreement to take outstanding issues to binding arbitration. Millions of letters were held up by the strike, and postal officials say it will take weeks to catch up on backlogged mail.

Wildcat strikes began throughout the London area in mid-October, as workers refused unsafe conditions and protested discipline of workers who refused to handle struck work. Royal Mail management sometimes addressed the immediate cause of the wildcats, but insisted on back-to-work agreements that would have gutted work rules. The Nov. 3 agreement allows workers to return under existing conditions, although management may ask the arbitrator to impose those changes.

Managers have also been spying on union activists, according to a report published in the Nov. 1 *Guardian*. Union representatives are being interrogated and ordered to obtain management's prior approval of their remarks before they meet with workers. Managers have

## Italy: General strike defends pension rights

A 4-hour general strike brought much of Italy to a halt Oct. 24, as workers protested plans to require workers to pay in to the state pension system for at least 40 years before they would be eligible for retirement benefits. Currently workers must pay in for 37 years. Given massive unemployment, growing numbers of Italians are forced to work off the books, aggravating the impact of this attack on workers' right to retire while they are still young enough to enjoy their time off.

More than a million workers marched

## Euro dockers strike set

The International Dockworkers Council has called a Nov. 17 Europe-wide strike to coincide with a scheduled European Parliament vote on the EU's Port Services Directive.

Thousands of striking dockworkers will demonstrate in front of the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

Global maritime corporations are attempting to push through a privatization measure which, in effect, would eliminate longshore workers' unions. It is the maritime equivalent of WTO's so-called "free trade" agreements, giving employers the "right" to hire whomever they want regardless of union contracts.

Shipowners, terminal operators and stevedoring companies would be allowed to use ship crews to do longshore work. Exploited crew members, mostly from third world countries without union representation, would be forced not only to do lashing in port but do

also been directed to videotape picket lines in the event that strike action ensues. The directive is apparently aimed at pursuing legal action against union activists and possibly the Communication Workers Union, which has denied responsibility for the strikes.

This approach has helped spread the strikes across England as this issue goes to press. Managers and casual staff have been sorting some mail, but little mail is being delivered in affected regions and efforts to maintain service by forcing postal staff to handle struck mail are spreading the dispute.

The Communications Workers Union terms management "industrial anarchists who are responsible for halting Greater London's post." Roger Baynes, head of operations for Royal Mail, said management was determined to assert absolute control on the job floor. "The union needs to pull its activists out of the '70s timewarp they are stuck in. They need to look forwards, not backwards, and behave in the modern way most unions do."

across Italy. In Rome, workers chanted "Defend your future!" Similar protests toppled the first Berlusconi government nine years ago.

"I think we should look in general at the life of a human being, which cannot be considered only in terms of work," said one worker, Amico Antonucci.

"If the government doesn't change its course and recognize the strength of our arguments, they can expect us to continue our protests," said Guglielmo Epifani, leader of the CGIL union, at a demonstration in Bologna.

dock work including operating any equipment on the dock. The result would be increased exploitation of ship crews, who would lose time off; an end to the dock workers' unions; and many serious accidents as untrained, fatigued workers were pressed into service on unfamiliar equipment.

## Germany to slash welfare

Germany's "socialist" government has pushed a controversial plan to slash welfare benefits through the German parliament, after threatening to resign if they did not pass.

The plan slashes benefits for the long-term unemployed, while cutting taxes for the well-off. Unemployment benefits now reflect what workers made in their last job; under the "reform" they will receive a subsistence stipend.

German union leaders condemned the measures, and have threatened to withdraw their historic support for the ruling SPD party.

## Japan: Independent unionism growing

Company-based "enterprise unions" dominate Japan's union movement, often with heavy input from management. As the economy has stagnated, such unions have mounted only symbolic resistance to a wave of lay-offs, speed-ups and unpaid overtime as bosses try to maintain profit levels on workers' backs. However, several grassroots unions around the country are proving that workers have not thrown in the towel.

One of those unions, the National Union of General Workers, Tokyo South, calls itself a "fighting union." Representing 2,600 workers, many from publishing and foreign-language schools, the union has been growing as it fights to force employers to respect labor laws.

"The country is struggling. Companies, too. Nobody's doing well. That's precisely the reason not to give up," said 60-year-old NUGW activist Tadaaki Onodera.

No longer can workers look forward to lifetime job security or stable wages; a third of workers are now in temporary and part-time jobs. "We are exploited when convenient and discarded when no longer needed," says Tokyo South President Yujiro Hiraga.

Mainstream unions are primarily composed of full-time staff. Tokyo South, on the other hand, considers organizing transient workers (including the country's many immigrant workers) a priority. The union has set up new branches at dozens of workplaces (the NUGW will charter job branches once they enroll three members), and is training workers to assert their rights on the job.

## Lebanon: General Strike against 7-year pay freeze

A general strike closed workplaces throughout Beirut Oct. 23, as workers protested a seven-year pay freeze and government plans to further slash public spending.

Strikers congregated outside the cabinet offices, where the government was debating the 2004 budget. The government has been cutting public spending and selling off public services in an attempt to pay off debts of more than \$32 billion. Meanwhile, unemployment tops 20 percent.

The government says it will continue cutting spending, and proposes to privatize social welfare funds that cover healthcare and public sector pensions. Government workers' pay has been frozen since 1996.

## Zimbabwe: Mass arrests

Nearly 150 officials of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions were arrested October 8, and many more were beaten as police stormed union offices across the country.

The attacks were the latest in a string of attacks on the union movement, and took place as the ZCTU and its affiliates were about to launch a wave of protests against spiraling transport and fuel costs, and violations of union and human rights by the regime.

## Korean suicides from page 1

tober after occupying the 40-meter crane since June after negotiations collapsed. Workers are now on strike, and negotiations have been stymied by workers' insistence that management apologize for hounding to Kim to his death. The company says it will not discuss an apology until all other issues have been resolved. Attempts to seize Kim's body have led to pitched battles between police and workers, who point to Kim's Oct. 4 suicide note describing the crane as his tomb. They say they will release the body only after an apology, and appropriate punishment of company executives.

The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions issued a statement "hop[ing] that there will be no more sacrifice of lives of our precious workers. We also cannot swallow down our anger at the repression of capital and the Roh Moo-Hyun government, both which have driven the workers to take their own lives." The KCTU said the government proposals were "empty promises," noting that the Roh administration had promised the same reform measures months ago, but taken no action.