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A desperate struggle to survive

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that wages are falling behind inflation, up just 2.4 percent in the last year as inflation rose by 2.7 percent. While corporate profits, production and productivity rise, and employment levels begin to creep up, workers continue to lose ground. The result? "The recovery is no longer jobless," the Economic Policy Institute concludes, "but it is beginning to look 'wage-less.'"

While energy costs account for some inflation, wages are being held down by employers' refusal to hire new workers. In a normal recovery, the economy would add 300,000 jobs each month – the current "recovery" is running at less than half that pace, and is now 4.2 million jobs below normal. Indeed, each month there are fewer new jobs than there are workers entering the labor market. The unemployment rate has held steady for the past several months only because so many workers have given up on finding jobs.

When the recession began in March 2001, the U.S. employment rate stood at 64.3 percent of the adult population. Last month, after two years of economic "recovery," it had fallen two points to 62.3 percent. Meanwhile, September layoffs soared 45 percent, with 107,863 workers losing their jobs.

The situation is so desperate that when the longshoremen's union and the Pacific Maritime Association agreed to open 3,000 temporary longshore jobs in the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports, they received a half-million applications from workers for jobs that hire by the day, with no benefits or job security.

The new positions were necessary because shipping volumes have skyrocketed, as companies continue to import clothing, food and manufactured goods in record quantities. The result is that our fellow workers in other countries are toiling long hours at low wages making goods they will never see, while U.S. workers are piling up credit card and other consumer debt as they struggle to afford the necessities of life.

Starvation wages clog soup kitchens

Some 43 million Americans live in desperate poverty, despite having at least one family member who works full time, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities; 23 million people rely on food banks and soup lines in order to get by – and many live in cars, homeless shelters or on the streets because their paychecks are too small to afford rent. The U.S. Agriculture Department reports that the number of Americans who don't know where their next meal will come from reached 35 million in 2002. Meanwhile, farmers around the world continue to struggle to deal with

Boom: continued page 9



Remembering workers' history of struggle

In November We Remember: A special section on IWW history, Frank Little, & Violet Wilkins 6-8

10,000 rally in Washington for workers' rights

We can not rely on politicians, unionists say; we must build our own power on the job 5

Hotel workers fight to build union power

Four thousand San Francisco hotel workers struggling for a new contract have been locked out since Sept. 29, when the union struck four hotels in what was planned as a two-week strike aimed at pressuring the 14 hotels in the San Francisco Major Employers Group. The remaining hotels responded by locking out the other 2,600 workers covered under the SFMEG contract with UNITE-HERE Local 2. (Smaller unionized San Francisco hotels work under separate agreements that expire soon.)

When the two week strike ended and workers attempted to return to their jobs, the hotels refused to end their lock-out.

The strike briefly spread to Hawaii Oct. 29 and 30, when locked-out workers from the Sheraton Palace hotel took their picket line to the Starwood-owned Sheraton Waikiki and Royal Hawaiian hotels in Honolulu. The Starwood hotels have been sending non-union staff to scab in San Francisco. Workers picketed for 24 hours at employee entrances. Management says a third of workers honored the picket line, the union says more than 90 percent of union workers refused to cross.

UNITE HERE Local 5, which represents workers at four Sheratons in Waikiki, told management workers had the right under their contract to honor the line. It was the first time in 30 years that the union had invoked its contractual right to honor picket lines.

"Local 2's fight is our fight," said Local 5 Secretary-Treasurer Eric Gill. "If hotel workers in San Francisco are forced to pay for their medical coverage then we will be next. Our members in Hawaii also support the efforts of hotel workers in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Washington DC to negotiate contracts that expire in 2006, when our contract expires."

San Francisco police are ticketing motorists who honk horns in solidarity with the

strikers, and threatening to arrest workers who engage scabs in conversation. The union has agreed not to picket in front of hotel entrances, and worked diligently to ensure that picketing does not prevent anyone (customers or scabs) from crossing picket lines.

Instead, the union has been trying to bring political pressure to bear. After the hotels refused to end the lock-out for a 90-day "cooling off period," San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom joined picket lines and announced he would pull city business from the hotels. The union welcomed this turnaround, not making an issue of the fact that up until that point the city had been actively supporting the bosses with its business.

UNITE-HERE members face similar issues in every hotel, casino and union restaurant across the country. The hotel, restaurant and gambling conglomerates want workers to pick up the increased costs of health care for their families and retirees, to hold the line on pension contributions, and to accept increased workloads. And they absolutely refuse to agree to have major hotel contracts expire in 2006, the common expiration date that the union is fighting for.

In the last two decades, hotel companies have undergone major consolidation. The Hilton, Hyatt, InterContinental, Marriott and Starwood chains operate thousands of hotels around the world, dominating the upscale lodging industry and controlling more than a fifth of all U.S. hotel rooms. The 2006 expiration date the union is fighting for would align contract negotiations for up to 70,000 hotel workers in major cities.

UNITE HERE has tried to mobilize workers around the country behind the struggle for a common contract expiration date.

Hyatt Chicago Regency workers marched into management offices August 13 wearing

continued on page 9

20 years after Bhopal: The struggle goes on

BY RYAN BODANYI

Nearly 20 years after the 1984 gas leak in Bhopal, India, known as the "Hiroshima of the chemical industry," Bhopal remains the worst industrial disaster in human history.

Shortly after midnight on Dec. 3, 1984, a pesticide factory owned by Union Carbide spewed poison gas out across the sleeping city of Bhopal, killing thousands. How many thousands, no one knows. Carbide says 3,800. Municipal workers who picked up bodies with their own hands, loading them onto trucks for burial in mass graves or to be burned on mass pyres, reckon they shifted at least 15,000 bodies. Survivors, basing their estimates on the number of shrouds sold in the city, say about 8,000 died in the first week. Such body counts become meaningless when you know that the dying has never stopped.

"At about 12.30 am I woke to the sound of my baby coughing badly," remembers survivor Aziza Sultan. "In the half light I saw that the room was filled with a white cloud. I heard a lot of people shouting. They were shouting 'run, run.' Then I started coughing with each breath seeming as if I was breathing in fire. My eyes were burning."

In those apocalyptic moments no one knew what was happening. People simply started dying in the most hideous ways. Some vomited uncontrollably, went into convul-

sions and fell dead. Others choked to death, drowning in their own body fluids. Many were crushed in the stampedes through narrow gullies where street lamps burned a dim brown through clouds of gas.

"The force of the human torrent wrenched children's hands from their parents' grasp. Families were whirled apart," reported the Bhopal Medical Appeal in 1994. "The poison cloud was so dense and searing that people were reduced to near blindness. As they gasped for breath its effects grew ever more suffocating. The gases burned the tissues of their eyes and lungs and attacked their nervous systems. People lost control of their bodies. Urine and feces ran down their legs. Women lost their unborn children as they ran, their wombs spontaneously opening in bloody abortion."

Those who lived through "that night" know better than anyone that Carbide's greed had doomed them from the start. Union Carbide decided to reduce the amount of its proposed investment in the Bhopal plant from \$28 million to \$20.6 million, and this meant the use of unproven and untested technologies. When the plant, which never reached its full capacity, began to lose money, the company systematically cut costs by compromising on safety and maintenance systems.

continued on page 10

Colorado, Ohio Wobs Picket Wild Oats to Protest Firing of IWW Delegate 3
Sweatfree Baseball 4 Left Side 10 Review: "The Take" 11 Mr. Block 12

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The eye of the hurricane

For those who were interested, all the members of the Pensacola IWW survived Hurricane Ivan. The hurricane slowed down our organizing efforts locally, but we were still able to send in our application for recognition as an IWW GMB to headquarters. Hopefully we'll receive word on that soon.

Many things were affected by the storm. Most notably our meeting space, End of the Line Cafe, a worker-run coffee shop in Pensacola, was badly hurt during the hurricane and suffered substantial water damage. If anyone wants to contribute to the costly repair process, the address is End of the Line Cafe, 610 East Wright St, Pensacola FL 32501. Checks can be made out to "End of the Line Cafe." The cafe is a rare thing in this part of the world. Far from perfect, but still an asset to the community in many ways. Any help at all would be greatly appreciated.

Also, the planned "Pensacola Labor Film Series" had to be put on hold. The location where it was to be held is now the temporary home for part of City Hall, which was destroyed in the hurricane. Other locations are being researched so we can get that going as soon as possible.

Right now in Pensacola, the class war is being waged and escalated. Many, many people are now out of work. Many are being exploited by opportunistic employers who are using the storm as a further excuse to make money for themselves at the expense of a lot of folks who are hurting badly now. Not to mention all the tenant/landlord issues that are coming up, with mass evictions of housing complexes and lower-income housing.

We, as Wobblies, plan to be active here at this stressful time in our community working on labor and housing issues where ever we can be most effective. We plan to reach out to as many people as we can.

The Pensacola IWW will also march in an upcoming anti-police brutality march on Oct 23rd here in the city, which is being organized by an IWW member and another woman who is being evicted from her housing

project, partially because of storm damage and maybe more so for trying to organize a tenants' union.

The struggle continues, but we wanted to pass the word on that the Pensacola IWW is still here and still strong. As the Bob Dylan song goes, "Now ain't the time for your tears."

Don't mourn, Organize.
In Solidarity, Scott Satterwhite

Corpse on Boomerang Road

Many thanks for your excellent review of *The Corpse on Boomerang Road: Telluride's War on Labor*. (October, p. 10) I appreciate your analysis, and would have loved to include more material on the rank and file. Unfortunately, publishers have limitations on the length of a book, so we had to compromise.

I thought your readers might like to know that none of the dialogue in *Corpse* was recreated. I actually found the conversations in original sources – eyewitness accounts in newspapers, court records, military reports, personal letters, memoirs, and the like. All are footnoted, but where there's a bank of dialogue from one source, I explained in the end notes that the preceding five or whatever paragraphs are from such and such a source. Because we were trying to reach a general audience, it was necessary to limit the clutter of footnotes; there are still hundreds.

I would be happy to share my source material. I have 26 boxes of material that I gathered since 1978, some of which could not be included in the book. I even tracked down St. John's sister, who died in 1975 at the age of 98. I have plenty more material on the mine operators' nasty plots, but the publisher said I had proved my case, so we left much interesting intrigue for another book.

In Solidarity, MaryJoy Martin
Editor's Note: As I said in the review, this is a valuable contribution to IWW history, especially for its treatment of Vincent St. John. Copies are available from the IWW Literature Dept. for

\$29.95 for those who want to see for themselves. While I understand that publishers strenuously resist complete footnotes, and this book is far better documented than many, I nonetheless found many of the notes too general. Historians are always constrained by our sources, and I do have some doubts about the reliability of contemporary newspaper accounts for dialogue.

Lay off the business unions

I loved the September and October issues of the IW. It warms my heart to see such fantastic IWW news and views out there in the laundromats and bus stops. The Andrew Linke articles on social service and restaurant workers were excellent. The Arthur J. Miller pieces, the port trucker coverage, and the Million Worker March publicity were all dead-on and exactly what we should be producing.

I believe that our newspaper's "target audience" is essentially our membership, and those likely to join our union. Where I see our organization, and thus our paper, having big potential is in the section of the working class that has little or no experience with trade unions: your disgruntled non-union worker.

When the IW focusses on "organized labor" and the alphabet soup, that stuff speaks mainly to people already in a trade union. Thus I feel obliged to distribute our paper to union halls instead of to places where non-union workers hang out.

Furthermore, when we constantly rag on the trade unions it makes us look like a tail that's complaining about the dog. They don't even know we're back here. When we are out there doing the exemplary work of the IWW, organizing our own innovative unions, and reporting on ourselves and others doing similar work, then we're no longer a tail, we're our own dog. Dig it?

Let's keep ourselves from being wagged by the AFL-CIO CLC and continue the type of news and views that I enjoyed in the Sept-Oct IWs. If we keep that coverage up, we're providing a paper that connects to a larger (and larger) percentage of the workforce. As well, we're producing a paper for working

people who join our union as their primary economic organization.

For the Cooperative Commonwealth,
Jeff Speed, Portland OR

Editor's Note: Readers are always encouraged to write on their work experiences, on IWW organizing campaigns, and the like. But I believe it is also important to critically cover labor movements around the world and put forward the IWW's distinctive labor vision.

Refusing dangerous work

As I am writing (Oct. 18) there has been a lot of news from Iraq about the 18 American soldiers who refused to carry out an order that put them in grave danger – that is, driving a very unsafe convoy. Of course, this is a tip of the iceberg of the suffering American military people in Iraq and their families are going through.

Why is Commander-in-Chief George W. Bush [43] so indifferent to the suffering of these people? Why is he indifferent to this great loss of American life? Is his loyalty to the New World Order greater?

Raymond Solomon, Forest Hills NY

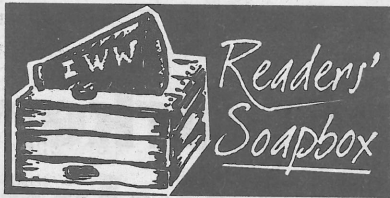
November issue delayed

This issue was delayed as a result of our production computer dying while the paper was being put together. As a result, some copy (most notably FW Redcloud's column, which we are pleased to welcome back) is no longer as timely as planned.

Copy deadline for next issue is Nov. 11.

IWW ballots in field

Referendum ballots have been mailed to all IWW members in good standing by GHQ records, and must be returned to IWW headquarters by Nov. 22. In addition to elections for 2005 General Administration officers, the ballot includes two proposed constitutional amendments: one to restructure the union's Conflict Mediation Committee, and another clarifying the conditions under which General Executive Board members can be removed for dereliction of duty.



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This is not a poem

All appearances to the contrary this is not a poem, this is an assault or, more properly, a return of fire this is a series of locutions asking questions like: how far is it from Cincinnati to Boulder and back again? this is a union placard that reads "class warfare is not over" despite all the duplicitous pronouncements of politicians and business leaders this is a protest rally outside Wild Oats headquarters up the road in Boulder decrying the union-busting tactics of corporate hypocrites or, should I say, hippies

this is a linking of arms with our brother in struggle Tom Kappas who was fired by Wild Oats management in Cincinnati for taking the employee discount on two half-rotten bananas this is a piece of investigative journalism the sort rarely found in mainstream media these days, that exposes the real reason for Kappas's firing

he was trying to unionize his store was hooked up with the IWW the Industrial Workers of the World aka the Wobblies, the folks who a century ago, coined the slogan "one big union" this is not a poem

it's a series of curses and rude hand gestures venting some long held frustration before the real work begins

it's my friend Lenny shouting through a megaphone, "fuck you Wild Oats and the horse you rode in on, we don't want you or your rotten bananas"

but he knows this goes far beyond the hypocrites peddling fair trade coffee all the while fucking over their own employees this is not a poem

not if poetry is the sort of thing sanitized, anthologized in college classrooms discussed in five-paragraph essays by middle class students who think the word "union"

signifies a big building on campus with movies, bowling and ATMs

no, this is not a poem

this is a nonviolent call to arms a charge up the hill to freedom a storming of the Bastille

Lady Liberty leading the people a black flag and red star

homegrown, grassroots anarchism a safety net and acts of solidarity an Indian swami charming the corporate cobras

Mother Mary and a choir of not-so-cheery cherubs singing the Magnificat an ongoing revolution that will not rest until all the oppressors are cast down from their thrones

a workers' cable network, listserv and website building a global movement that cannot be defeated

this is not a poem

this is a plea to the laboring masses to get off their asses, turn off the mind rot blaring in the living room and take to the streets (myself included)

this is a boycott and general strike to bring down the thieving classes corporate pirates beware, no more free passes this is Dorothy Day saying "damn this rotten system"

an impassioned restatement of Gandhi's first principle "never give up" and Joe Hill's last wish "don't mourn, organize"

this is not messianic rhetoric standing alone but millions of messiahs standing together and ending wage slavery forever

this is a bedraggled, yet wizened Lakota medicine man

who thinks the Ghost Dance just might be starting to work

this is a prayer for the return of the buffalo and all the wild places destroyed by human greed and arrogance

this is a prayer for justice and peace chanted in all four sacred directions this is not a poem

Angela Palermo, Denver

Cincinnati IWW targets Wild Oats

BY TOM KAPPAS

The second in a continuing series of pickets for workers rights at Wild Oats was held Oct. 23 at the Cincinnati Wild Oats store. Ohio Valley Wobs were joined on the picket line by members of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee.

The sister of a Wild Oats manager pulled up in her car and started screaming at the pickets. When I stepped in, she said I was a "pathological troublemaker and that if a union got in, the store would close."

After two and a half hours, we decided to wrap up the picket with a short action holding our 10-foot banner directly in front of the huge glass windows in front of the store. The manager stormed out, ordering us to leave or he would call the police.

Solidarity pickets happened in Princeton, NJ, and Denver. Another action is planned for November and beyond. Thanks to the brave souls that braved the weather in Cincinnati and to the Jersey and Colorado I.W.W.

40 picket Rookwood store

BY MARK DAMRON

Approximately 40 people showed up at the Wild Oats Natural Food Store at Rookwood Commons in Cincinnati Sept. 25 to join the Ohio Valley IWW informational picket at the store. With solidarity from local SEIU members, shoppers, and former and current employees, picketers covered every entrance at the shopping center.

IWW members and supporters picketed for nearly six hours, passing out over 1,000 leaflets demanding reinstatement of Tom Kappas, an IWW organizer terminated on the most spurious of charges, an end to arbitrary employment policies, and that Wild Oats stop retaliating against union members at the store. IWW members in Denver and Boulder, Colorado, where Wild Oats is headquartered, carried on their own informational pickets at Wild Oats stores in their area, taking the IWW message to Wild Oats' corporate heart.

The pickets received a very positive response from the public. Two television stations also covered the Cincinnati picket and interviewed several of the picketers.

Wild Oats management's response to the picket was delivered in a letter to employees two days before the event. In that statement, Store Director Fred Meyer claimed that FW Kappas' firing was justified, though he refused to give any actual reason for the firing aside from denying that it was union related. Wild Oats has a clearly stated anti-union policy in their employee manual.

The letter also intimated that the union was violent, and was going to attack or try to coerce employees and customers.

The Ohio Valley IWW branch was pleased with the response and the solidarity that we have seen in our ongoing battle at Wild Oats. Union efforts have been responsible for several small victories that have improved working conditions at the store, and the union still represents over a dozen workers at the site.

The Ohio Valley Branch and workers at Wild Oats are asking for your help:

Call Wild Oats Corporate at 1-800-494-WILD and demand that they recognize the rights of their employees in Cincinnati and throughout their organization.

Contact Cincinnati Wild Oats Store Director, Fred Meyer at 513-531-8015 and demand that FW Kappas be reinstated and that Wild Oats stop harassing employees who choose to support the union drive.

Boulder Wobs solidarity actions at Wild Oats

BY GARY COX

Wild Oats started in Colorado, and their corporate headquarters are in Boulder, so we decided to leaflet as many of their stores as we could Sept. 25 in solidarity with fired IWW organizer Tom Kappas.

I arrived at the Wild Oats at Arapahoe and Broadway in Boulder at 10:00 a.m. I bought

some carrot juice for energy, dropped a dozen or so fliers around, and began picketing with a sign reading "Wild Oats - Unfair?" A great deal of good feedback from people who took fliers. One ex-employee said: "It's the pits in there. They show little respect or concern for their employees ... I'm glad you are here. The Boulder public needs to know."

Many offered to boycott. We told them not to do that, but to talk with the manager after making their purchase to let him know how they felt. By noon, there were five Wobblies at this store so a few left to picket the Baseline store and I left to join Wobblies Betty and Gary Ball at the Alpine store. Two Wobs from Boulder's Free Speech TV job branch held the fort at the Arapahoe store.

The Alpine store was a trip. In the first hour, four ex-employees stopped to thank us and ask how they could help. We told them to join the union, and gave them some fliers to copy. They said they'd be back to take our place later. Another woman honked her horn, held up traffic to get a flyer, and told me she had also been fired here. Another pulled over and told me she worked over at corporate offices. She also had recently been fired.

Richard arrived about 2:00 to say he was out of fliers. Two more Wobs from Free Speech TV had helped him deplete his stock at the Baseline store. We were also getting low, so Richard and I went to picket the Superior store with the balance. We wanted to harass as many store managers as possible. Reminded me of the old Wobbly flying squadrons. The manager came out in a huff as we had caught employees at shift change.

The manager asked us to move off Wild Oats property. We asked him why they were illegally firing persons for practicing their rights to form unions. He promised to look into it. Yeah, yeah. We figure we passed out over 800 fliers around Boulder.

Denver Wobs hit Denver stores with more than 1,000 flyers printed at the IWW print shop there. Colorado is back.

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.



Wobs survey Sweatshop Baseball gear

BY SOURDOUGH SLIM

"Hey, aren't you the same guys who were leafleting here a month ago?" asked the window washer at the Cooperstown General Store. We said yes, and he added, "Right after you left the police chief was here looking for you. Thought you'd want to know."

It was apparent that the Wobblies' last appearance in town picketing against Major League Baseball sweatshop apparel was a threat to the power elite of Cooperstown, N.Y., home of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

A late September action in Cooperstown by Upstate New York IWW members also included informational picketing, but was focused on a survey of MLB-licensed gear like hats, shirts and jerseys – even pennants, flags and patches. The survey, developed by the No Sweatshop Bucco! contingent of the Pittsburgh IWW Branch, is designed to collect specific product information. Handy baseball-sized forms indicate team, brand name, country of manufacture and other details that could lead to uncovering actual factory locations. (Copies of this form and sweatfree baseball cards can be obtained from PO Box 99416, Pittsburgh PA 15233.)

Live Bookmarks: Powerful new tool for union websites

BY ERIC LEE

Every once in a while, an innovation comes along on the web that's truly useful for unionists. One of these is something brand new that you've probably never heard of called "Live Bookmarks."

A decade ago, when the web was young, the creators of the Netscape browser came up with something called "bookmarks." This was a pretty simple way to keep a list of web sites you frequently returned to. The term "bookmarks" was an odd one, as that implied that you were in the middle of reading something, paused, and needed to mark where you were. Which is not actually what this was all about.

Microsoft came out with its own web browser in the mid-1990s and, as Microsoft tends to do, decided to create its own terminology. No longer would there be bookmarks. Now we had "favorites." Same thing, different name.

If you use the web a lot, chances are you make extensive use of bookmarks. If you're really well organized, you'll have organized your bookmarks into different categories.

I have always found bookmarks to be an indispensable tool, though I have to admit that I often find people in union offices who have no bookmarks at all – or only have the ones which came with their web browser. I guess no one ever explained to them what bookmarks are and how they work.

Those people, like the rest of us, do return to the same web pages again and again, but they do so by either remembering the web addresses or by writing them down somewhere. I have even met people who use Google instead of bookmarks – every time they want to visit, say, the LabourStart web site, they key the word "LabourStart" into Google and it gets them there. Bookmarks could even be shared throughout organizations, though my experience with the research department of one British union convinced me that maybe the time wasn't yet ripe for this. While running a workshop on use of the web, when I suggested that all members of the department could share their favorites, one asked me "what favorites were." So even some union researchers were not yet using this important tool.

Over the last few years, innovation in web browsers has largely died out thanks to Microsoft's having won the "browser wars" of the late 1990s. Netscape is now only a memory, and the Norwegian alternative browser, Opera, has only a tiny market share. But there has always been hope for those who want using the Internet to be easier and faster and more secure – and that hope is Mozilla.

On this occasion, while half the group of IWWs leafleted outside the Baseball Hall of Fame, the other half went to work on the survey cards at most of the local retailers' baseball themed shops.

"The survey was difficult," Fellow Worker Martin Manley explained, "because the stores weren't busy and we were conspicuous." In some instances product information had to be memorized and recorded after the fact due to suspicious shopkeepers. One FW palmed his survey cards and scribbled quickly under cover of floor displays. Sometimes it was easier to resign oneself to memorizing the details of one or two items and then making for the door.

Greg Giorgio made baseball small talk and asked for pricing on items he feigned as his "Christmas list." While not comprehensive, the survey was certainly representative of MLB's foreign sweatshop production.

Some licensed logo gear, like some of the Cooperstown Collection, is stamped "made in the USA." There is no sure way to know by this indicator alone if that's true under modern trade policies.

At the Hall of Fame gift shop, a commemorative cap and t-shirt with the MLB



Mozilla as a project resulted from Netscape's realization that it had lost the battle to Microsoft. Its task was to create the best, most secure, fastest, most standards-compliant web browser and email client around.

That promise has largely been fulfilled with the recent launch of Mozilla Firefox 1.0. But in addition to creating a better web browser, the Mozilla team has actually come up with a real innovation, something new and interesting. They have decided to turn their web browser into an RSS reader.

Now for most of you, that means absolutely nothing. And for good reason. RSS, which stands for Really Simple Syndication, is a tool that webmasters like myself have used to allow syndication of content. It's been around since 1997, which makes it positively ancient by Internet standards. And it's the basis of LabourStart's Labour News-wire, which is used by hundreds of union web sites around the world. It's not exactly the thing that ordinary folks need to know much about.

But RSS always promised more. It promised to be a way to have current content on your desktop, without your having to necessarily visit web sites. (There was a similar project in the mid-1990s called "push" technology which promised the same thing; for a while it seemed to be making enormous progress and then evaporated during the Internet dotcom bust.)

Today, there are a number of programs around which serve as RSS readers for your desktop and I have friends who swear by them. FeedDemon is one the better-known of these. The people at Mozilla decided to integrate the idea of syndication with bookmarks, and came up with "Live Bookmarks."

Here's how it works. Let's say you're using the latest version of the Mozilla browser, which is now called Firefox. Go to the LabourStart web page at www.labourstart.org. In the lower right corner of your screen, you'll see a tiny orange rectangle with the white letters 'RSS' on it. If you click on it, a little box opens up that says 'Subscribe to RSS 2.0 feed.' You click on that, and you're done.

That was easy enough, but what have you actually done? You've created a bookmark that changes as the content of the LabourStart front page changes. Previously if you'd bookmarked our page, you'd click on the bookmark and go to our main page, scrolling down to see our news headlines. But if you create



Following a talk by members of the National Garment Workers Federation of Bangladesh, activists gathered at Pittsburgh's Freedom Corner Oct. 16 to protest Major League Baseball's reliance on sweatshop labor. Left to right: Mongezi Nkomo, South African freedom fighter now living in Pittsburgh; Sheikh Nazma, president of the Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity, holding a Willie Stargell figurine; Michelle Gaffey, Pittsburgh Anti-Sweatshop Community Alliance. photo: Pittsburgh IndyMedia

licensed stamp of approval is clearly marked "made in Bangladesh." The Upstate NY IWW presented the store's manager with a letter inviting her to survey her own goods.

a "live bookmark," those news headlines appear as a list inside your own bookmarks. You can see those headlines whether or not you are online. And LabourStart's headlines are updated automatically every 15 minutes, whether you have visited our site or not. If I move my cursor over the LabourStart "live bookmark" in my Mozilla Firefox web browser, I now see a list of the last 15 top news stories from the site.

This is particularly useful for news web sites which frequently change. Some of those sites are full of advertisements and distractions when in fact all you really want to see are the last few news stories. A good example can be found on the BBC website at <http://news.bbc.co.uk>.

The updates to your "live bookmarks" take place according to whatever the webmasters at those sites have decided. On LabourStart, it's every fifteen minutes. Other sites may be less frequent. Nearly every web log (blog) you visit will have the RSS feed built in. What that means is that in Mozilla Firefox, you'll see that orange "RSS" button appearing.

When we look at union web sites, few if any seem to be aware of this possibility. The AFL-CIO, the Canadian Labour Congress and Britain's Trade Union Congress don't offer this service. (Nor does the IWW.) But some unions which have pioneered innovation on the web do offer built-in RSS news feeds which "live bookmarks" can read. One good example is Canada's largest union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees. Go to their website at www.cupe.ca and you'll see what I mean. If you're a union webmaster, you need to do two things. First, you need to create an RSS newsfeed which is regularly updated. Use Google to find one of the many pages telling you how to do this. Second, you need to make sure that your website contains a line of code telling Mozilla Firefox where it can find the RSS file it needs to create "Live Bookmarks." On LabourStart's home page, you can see this in our source code.

If you're not a webmaster, but just someone who uses the web, download Mozilla Firefox today (www.spreadfirefox.com) and check out how Live Bookmarks will transform the way you see the web. As more and more of us abandon the insecure, slow and bug-ridden Microsoft Internet Explorer for the better browsing experience of Mozilla Firefox, we will begin to check out the sites we regularly visit – including our union sites – to see if we can get them to show "Live Bookmarks." This will put pressure on unions to begin to include RSS feeds as part of their web sites. Finally, an innovation in web browser technology that will drive further changes in the way we build – and use – web sites.

As another baseball season concludes, IWW activists are planning activities in the coming year aimed at Major League Baseball and its exploitative practices. When the survey information leads to factory locations, the next step is to organize them right!

Sweatfree baseball

The sports section of the Oct. 16 *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* features an article on local efforts to challenge Major League Baseball's profiteering off sweatshop labor, in an article quoting IWW activist Kenneth Miller. The article appeared in conjunction with a visit to Pittsburgh by Bangladeshi garment workers touring the United States.

Pittsburgh Pirates officials told the paper they had nothing to do with the merchandise, passing the buck to the league which they claim is "very responsive" to such concerns. (MLB said the Pirates contract for their own give-away merchandise, but use only the most responsible contractors.) The only responses on record are attempts to whitewash the sweatshop conditions. FW Miller notes that the Pirates profit from this exploitation, and need to be held accountable.

Baseball licenses more merchandise than any other professional sport and has no labor-rights standards in place. Not only caps, t-shirts and bobble-head dolls are made in sweatshops – the baseballs themselves are produced for starvation wages by workers sewing 156 balls a day, for about 28 cents per ball, and suffering repetitive stress injuries at alarming rates.

No right to seek witnesses

The NLRB has ruled that U.S. labor law does not protect a sexually harassed worker fired for seeking witnesses to aid her case. The Oct. 15 ruling upholds Boncroft-Holling Printing Group's 1996 decision to fire Catherine Fabozzi, claiming she acted only to protect herself, not to aid others. (Labor law offers limited protection of workers' right to engage in concerted activity, but does not afford any individual rights to workers.)

Democrat Wilma Liebman issued a stinging dissent, saying the ruling sets "an arbitrary roadblock" in front of workers. "Fabozzi's solicitation ... was an exhortation that they join together to resolve an unsatisfactory and possibly illegal condition of employment. The 'mutual aid or protection' element was satisfied as well," Liebman wrote.

Silence costs rights

In two rulings involving the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, the NLRB has ruled that GCIU and The Newspaper Guild abandoned their right to object to unilateral changes in health benefits because they allowed management to make more modest unilateral changes over the preceding 10 years. The 2-1 decision overturned an administrative law judge, and points to the need for unions to vigorously resist management at every turn.

FBI, UK police seize Indymedia servers

More than 20 Indymedia sites went dark when the FBI issued an Oct. 7 subpoena against a U.S.-based Internet Service Provider which was hosting two Indymedia network servers in London. Authorities seized the two machines, presumably copying their contents before returning them a week later.

The FBI says it acted at the request of an as-yet unidentified third country. The Italian and Swiss governments are reportedly investigating Indymedia coverage of protests in their country, and considering bringing terrorism charges. Rackspace, the web hosting provider, says the order prevents them from divulging the reasons for the seizure or to whom the servers were turned over.

The International Federation of Journalists issued a statement denouncing the seizure as "an intolerable and intrusive international police operation against a network specializing in independent journalism."

This is not the first time Indymedia has been targeted by U.S. authorities. During the Republican National Convention in August, the Secret Service attempted to obtain private records from NYC Indymedia's Internet Service Provider; the ISP refused. The FBI unsuccessfully attempted to obtain similar records from Indymedia servers during the massive protests against the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas in Quebec City.

Among the Indymedia sites knocked off the web were those serving Brazil, France, Italy, Poland, UK and Uruguay.

"Uruguay has a long history of media repression," says Libertinus, an Indymedia volunteer from Uruguay. "We don't have the money to pay for web hosting, and so we rely on the solidarity of other countries. Actions like the seizure of the servers make the whole world insecure for free media."

The right to picket

A federal judge has overturned an NLRB order, ruling that the Carpenters union can continue to display banners scolding Utah businesses for hiring New Star General Contractors and Okland Construction. Union members have been appearing at businesses that hire the contractors to erect banners that read, "Labor Dispute - SHAME ON [Name of Business] - Labor Dispute."

U.S. District Judge Paul Cassell agreed with two other courts that decided similar cases in favor of the union and against the National Labor Relations Board, which claims the banners unfairly lead the public to believe the businesses are in a labor dispute with their own employees. The judge said the union's tactics are protected by the Constitution's free speech protections.

The Board said it would continue to consider Unfair Labor Practice charges the companies have filed against the union.

10,000 rally for workers' rights

Up to 10,000 workers from across the country rallied at the Lincoln Memorial Oct. 17, in what was billed as a "Million Worker March." Although there were significant contingents present from the American Postal Workers Union, International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10, and the IWW, other endorsing unions – notably the National Education Association, the largest union in the United States – were conspicuously absent.

A seemingly endless array of speakers spoke from the steps of the Memorial, in front of a giant banner calling for the repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act. While several speakers addressed the coming elections, and a few pushed the Kerry campaign while admitting that he was not at all the sort of politician any class-conscious worker would want to rely on, most focused on the need to build an independent working-class movement.

Teamsters National Black Caucus Chair Chris Silvera put it this way: "If I have the right to strike, I can solve my own problems. I don't need Kerry or any other politician to solve them for me."

"The majority of working people in America are not doing well," said Clarence Thomas, a crane operator on the Oakland, Calif., docks and a leader of ILWU Local 10. "With jobs being offshored, outsourced, privatized, our young people are looking at a much more dismal future."

While the crowd was smaller than expected, it was peppered with unionists from across the country, with a smattering from around the world. Many seemed to have come from southern states where unions struggle to survive under the Taft-Hartley "Right to Work for Less" laws. A number of African-American workers carried signs calling for a general strike.

Antiwar sentiment was also strong, with workers criticizing the Bush administration for leading the country into an unjustified



war with Iraq.

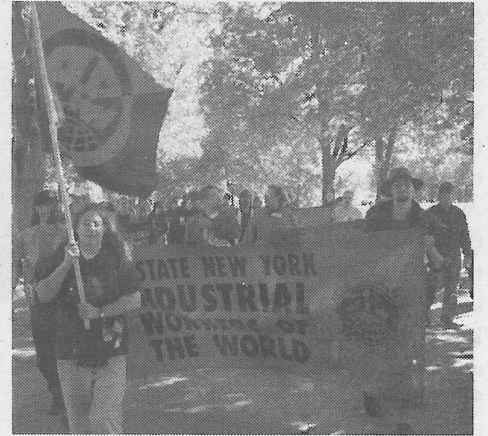
"We need to employ, not deploy," said Mark Barbour, a member of Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Local 551.

Steve Burns, a teacher at a Madison community college, carried a hand-made "End For-Profit Health Care" sign. He is one of tens of thousands of part-time college faculty who do not receive health care benefits, and is paying off a recent \$1,200 hospital bill. "Our health care system is a disaster, and neither candidate wants real reform," Burns said.

Hundreds of protesters were diverted by police, who would not allow their buses to drop them off at the rally site. Police also harassed workers as they gathered for the rally, threatening to arrest people who displayed banners or signs anywhere outside the site. One woman who refused orders to hide her sign was arrested, but released after several hours.

Later in the afternoon, as the demonstration was drawing to a close, a few hundred marched to the Hotel Washington in support of District hotel workers. Negotiators for several major Washington hotels and the union that represents 3,800 hotel workers remain deadlocked on a new contract.

IWW members came from as far south as Pensacola, Florida, and as far west as Law-



rence, Kansas, carrying branch banners and red IWW flags. Red and black IWW balloons dotted the crowd. While the IWW had no presence on the speakers platform, no union had a more visible presence in the crowd.

Many people stopped by the busy IWW literature table, and Wobblies gathered for a discussion in front of the Reflecting Pool that ended with the singing of "Solidarity Forever."

While we, like the rally organizers, had hoped for a larger turn-out and a more militant challenge to the politics as usual that has led the U.S. labor movement to its present, dire condition, the event was nonetheless an important challenge from the grassroots; a visible manifestation of the growing demand for a very different sort of labor politics and labor movement that scared the AFL-CIO bigwigs enough that they felt compelled to lean on unions across the country to squelch it. It was probably a mistake to bill the event as a Million Worker March, when there was no prospect of turning out anywhere near a million workers, and to have so many speakers and so little marching (though it is not clear that the police would have allowed very much marching). But if the workers who came together to build the rally continue to challenge the piecemeal and fakers, it could be an important first step in breaking the unions free of the Democrats' death grip.

Taco Bell boycott builds

The Boot the Bell Campaign has won two victories. The Associated Students of UCLA voted to end Taco Bell's contract Oct. 22, following strong student support for the Immokalee tomato pickers. A few days later, the Boise State University Faculty Senate voted to end all Taco Bell sponsorships on campus.

For info: www.ciw-online.org

Cargo backlogs hit LA port truckers

Los Angeles port truckers, who were involved in a dramatic wildcat strike earlier this year, say they are routinely forced to wait for several hours at port terminals as they pick up and drop off cargo. Wait times have grown as the port has grown busier and steamship lines have refused to schedule the work efficiently or to pay truckers for their time and fuel.

"The steamship lines are profiting off of their inefficiency," said Patty Senecal, vice president of Transport Express, one of the companies that dispatch the "independent" truckers, who are paid by the trip.

Since the strike, the California Trucking Association estimates that up to a fifth of Los Angeles/Long Beach port truckers may have

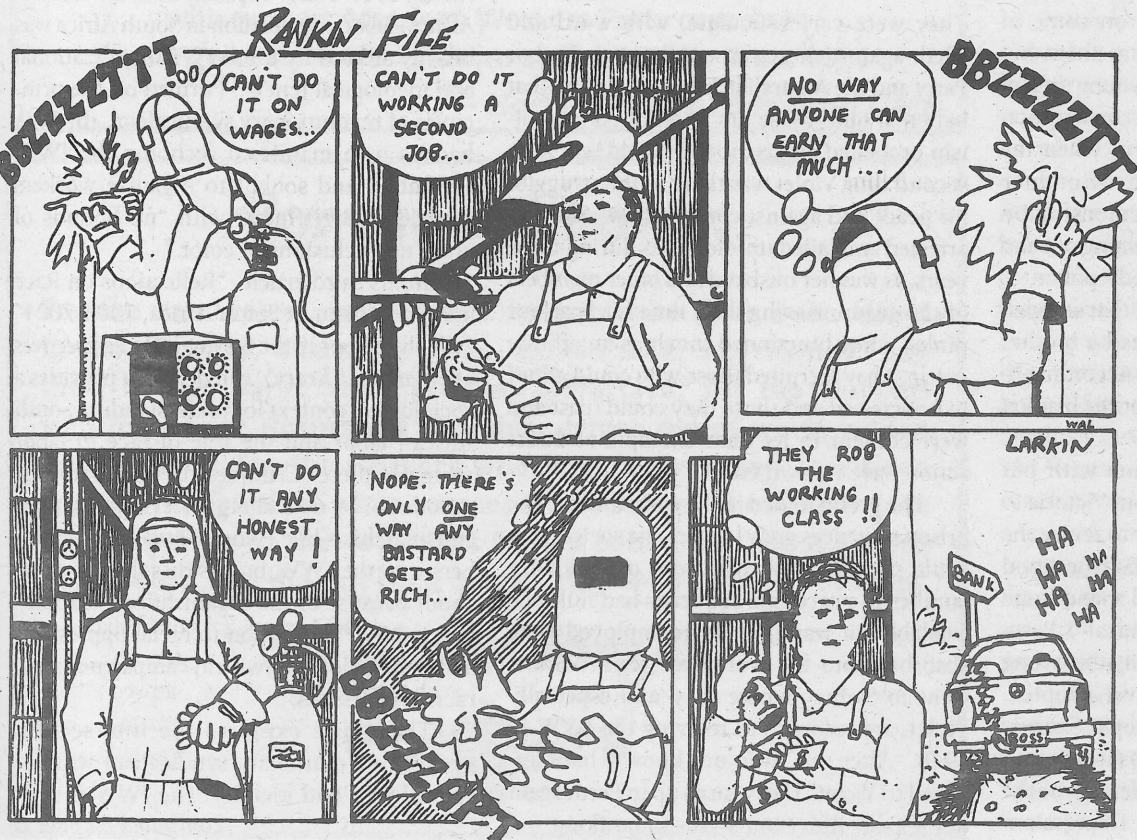
left the industry. "The drivers are quitting, they can't make a living," said Stephanie Williams, senior vice president of the California Trucking Association trade group.

The Pacific Maritime Association, which represents the ports' marine terminal operators, says it is unconcerned, and that delays of up to seven hours per trip are an inevitable result of overall congestion of cargo traffic.

Senecal said the independent port drivers, many of whom are immigrants, are being forced to work in "sweat shop conditions."

"They can't get out of their trucks 'cause it's too dangerous, they can't use the bathroom; they can't eat a hot meal [while they wait], they have no running water and they're not getting paid for their [waiting] time," Senecal said.

"Intermodal trucks are being used to do dock work for free," she added. "It's flat-out wrong."



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The IWW still making history

BY WES ENZINNA

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

Recent publications touch on the IWW and the environment, free speech fights, race, culture, and in Mexico and South Africa.

John Richardson's dissertation, "Green Chain: Work in a Western Mill" (Emory, 2002), deals with struggles between forest labor and management in Idaho – including the IWW in its early chapters. His main concern, however, is with workers' and capitalists' relationship to nature and the environment, and he concludes that if the environment is to be treated respectfully, capitalist conceptions of time and measures of productivity must be "reconsidered" – a somewhat softened version of what Wobblies were and are fully aware of: capitalist production has concern neither for workers nor for the environment.

The cover of *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* (1[3], Fall 2004) titillates readers with "Undercutting Themselves: The IWW's Environmental Blindspot." Inside, Philip Dreyfus' "Nature, Militancy, and the Western Worker: Socialist Shingles, Syndicalist Spruce" (pp 71-96) argues that neither the AFL unions (the main focus of the article) nor the IWW challenged the exploitation of the forests in the pre-war era, instead focusing on wages and working conditions. He suggests that workers might have done better to try to control the forest resources, and ends by briefly touching on the IWW's late-1980s effort to unite timber workers and environmentalists, agreeing with Judi Bari that their interests are in fact the same.

Paul Buhle also touches on the IWW ("Eco-Wobblies," *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 15, March 2004, 27-28) in a short article that is more a meander than an argument. He claims the Wobblies were one of the first groups to embody "eco-socialism" and that contemporary groups such as Earth First! are not only inspired by Wobbly struggles against capitalism, but the direct descendents of their ecological viewpoints. However, the article is rampant with an obscurantist revisionism making a superficial link between the Wobblies and their struggles for better lives and utopian visions with modern-day primitivist ecological romanticism. He "demonstrates" this by claiming that Joe Hill typified Wobbly feelings on the environment, and that 45 years later Gary Snyder expressed the same sentiments as Hill when he wrote of the desire to "create wilderness out of empire."

Such ludicrous analogies permeate the entire article. If the goal is to show how the IWW was ecologically oriented, then surely

Buhle would include what they actually did. Instead, he presents decontextualized quotations by Wobs on how they loved "nature," attempting to draw a link to the present primitivist emphasis on a romanticized nature, devoid of engagement with real political analysis or struggle (Judi Bari notwithstanding); an attitude that, as Buhle suggests, favors the wholesale destruction of civilization. This leads me to believe that his point is not to deepen understanding of the IWW, but rather to employ its history in the service of romanticizing nature and a primitivist simplification of struggle in a capitalist society – that is, of promoting the eco without the socialism.

David Dilgard's "Free Speech in a City of Smokestacks: Everett's Ordinance 1501" (*Alki* 19, March 2003, 19-21) expands upon the substantial literature on the IWW Free Speech fights, focusing on the site of the infamous 1916 Everett Massacre. Dilgard is a historian at the Everett Public Library, and his article includes some useful reproductions of primary documents: a restored photo of "Free Speech Corner"; the full text of Ordinance 1501, passed in 1913 against Wobbly soap-boxers, which provided the impetus for the free-speech fights; and three beautiful IWW posters commemorating the martyrs of Everett. This top-notch article focuses on the history of labor, agitation and the IWW in Everett before and after the massacre, and explaining how urban geography influenced the trajectory of the IWW and Everett workers' struggles.

Diane North's dissertation, "The State and the People: California during the First World War" (Univ. of California, Davis 2001) explores how the state used war hysteria as a justification for trampling on the rights of Asian-Americans and the IWW as well as freedom of speech, assembly and due process; they also sanctioned vigilantes, enacted "loyalty oaths," and produced citizen-spies. The persecution led to the imprisonment of hundreds of IWW members and the 1919 enactment of the criminal syndicalism bill, still being used to prosecute Wobblies in 1969 (when it was declared unconstitutional). By 1924, 317 California Wobblies had been indicted on criminal syndicalism charges, and 140 convicted without any evidence of illegal acts (beyond IWW membership).

Much interesting material can be found at the Tacoma Public Library web site (<http://search.tpl.lib.wa.us/unsettling/>). Under the dubious title *Unsettling Events in Washington State history*, two sections include the IWW: "Labor" and "Strikes." The latter includes material on the Everett Massacre and

the IWW from 1909-1920, mostly composed of excerpts from newspapers and secondary sources. The IWW takes center stage under "General Strike of 1919" and "Lumber Workers Strike of 1912."

On a more scholarly note, IWW-interested academics are expanding their studies beyond a traditional class approach, considering the intersections between the IWW, gender and race. In his dissertation, "The Emergence of a New West: the Politics of Class and Gender in Seattle, Washington, 1880-1917," John Putman (Univ. of California San Diego, 2003) focuses on the construction of the "West" as a political, economic and cultural arena where during the tumultuous industrialization period the capitalist-state enterprise, middle class reformist feminists, and radical wage workers – male and female – fought to direct the region's future. Clinton argues that the Western labor movement represented an attempt by some to transcend the class and gender hierarchies of the eastern labor establishment – the IWW was, Clinton argues, at the fore of this struggle, and he attributes to them a significant role in his narrative of how "gender and class shaped the West."

"Quakertown Blues: Philadelphia's Longshoremen and the Decline of the IWW" (Peter Cole, *Left History* 8(2), 2003, 39-70), shifts the focus to class and race, exploring the relation between the American Communist Party, the IWW, and its only black-majority, black-led branch, Local 8; and the relationship between the IWW and communism.

Focusing on the years leading up to and during the first World War, Cole refutes the claim that "systematic and brutal [government] repression... deserves the primary role in explaining the IWW's decline." Instead, he highlights a post-war controversy involving Local 8, "The Philadelphia Controversy," to argue that the decline of the IWW "occurred in the 1920s, due to ideological... debates, rather than simply government repression." Cole focuses on the power struggle between the American Communist Party and the IWW (stemming, he argues, from the CP's decision to focus on capturing the AFL, and the IWW's rejection of intensified centralization and Bolshevik principles after the October Revolution). This struggle ultimately resulted in CP efforts to destroy the IWW, beginning with one of its most powerful branches, Local 8.

The article is particularly valuable for its elucidation of the role of race in the success

of Local 8, explaining how the formation of racial identity for Philadelphia's immigrant workers (primarily Irish, Poles and Lithuanians) was a complex process in which these immigrants did not initially see their black fellow workers as inferior but "were forced to learn a set of race relations in which people of African descent were considered, by whites, inferior to those who hailed from Europe"

The Western labor movement represented an attempt to transcend the class and gender hierarchies of the eastern labor establishment – the IWW was at the fore of this struggle...

(43); this process did not take hold immediately, and allowed for the interracialism that Cole sees as the key component of Local 8's successes.

Another study examining the intersection between race and the IWW focuses on South Africa. As part of his study-in-progress entitled *Anarchism and Revolutionary Syndicalism in South Africa, 1904-1921*, Lucien van der Walt has written three articles on the history of revolutionary syndicalism in South Africa. The first, "A History of the IWW in South Africa," situates the IWW as central to the story of South African labor struggles and seeks to explain how "the IWW and the ideals, goals and organizational practices for which it stood had an important influence on the early labor movement and radical press in South Africa."

Beginning with industrialization and the discovery of diamonds and gold between 1867-1886, van der Walt explains how the British and Dutch operated South African capitalism based on a racial division of labor, with poor white Afrikaners and native people of color (Africans and Indians) at the bottom. Aside from brutal conditions in the mines for all, the plight of the Africans was exacerbated by "pass laws preventing free movement, indenture laws banning strikes, and residential laws condemning [African workers] to all-male hostels or grim ghettos."

This racial division affected the attitudes of white, skilled unionists who defended segregation and feared losing their jobs to the "black peril." It is in this context that van der Walt explains the emergence of the IWW – as a reaction against the brutal reality of capitalism and the "segregationist reformism" of the white labor parties. Thus in 1908, a new radical paper, the *Free Voice of Labor*, denounced racial segregation and discrimination, and in 1910 A.B. Dunbar, a militant Australian blacksmith, formed the South African IWW. His account highlights strikes and massive repression, as well as attempts by authoritarian socialists to hijack the organization – both of which led to the formal collapse of the IWW in South Africa around 1917. However, IWW militants and revolutionary syndicalist practices played a vital role in forming labor organizations to come.

"Fight for Africa, Which You Deserve: The Industrial Workers of Africa in South Africa, 1917-1921" explains how the first all-African labor organization in South Africa was heavily shaped by the IWW's organizational and ideological tenets. Formed on the principles of revolutionary syndicalism, the IWA had its own manifesto (echoing the IWW Preamble) and sought to organize workers into "One Big Union" with "no bounds of craft, no exclusions of color."

In his third article, "Reflections on Race and Anarchism in South Africa, 1904-2004" (which appears in the Spring 2004 *Perspectives on Anarchist Theory*), van der Walt provides a sociological context for understanding South African labor and the role of race in labor struggles there. Critiques of "segregationist unionism" by radical organizers like Dunbar and anarchists like Henry Glasse drew members into the IWW, but its dissolution came about because of the organization's inability to combine "opposition to racial oppression and trade unionism [with a] campaign against racial oppression."

This piece explores the intersection between revolutionary syndicalism with issues of race and identity. The IWW is seen *continued on page 8*

Remembering Violet Clarke Wilkins

BY MIKE PAYNE, AUSTRALIA

*Yes, her hands may be hardened from labor
And her dress may not be very fine;
But a heart in her bosom is beating
That is true to her class and her kind.
And the grafters in terror are trembling
When her spite and defiance she'll hurl...*

— Joe Hill

*"All I want to say is a long life to the I.W.W.
and onward the world to revolution."*

— Violet Clarke Wilkins

Melbourne police arrested Violet Clarke in 1919 on charges relating to the Red Flag Campaign (the bearing of the people's standard had been made illegal during the war and many resisted the imposition). At one time, she had four summonses served on her at the same time. When she refused to plead, which was always, they put her in goal. The second time this happened she went on hunger strike and had her sentence shortened – a case of direct action getting the goods.

She was involved with the feminist Adela Pankhurst, with the socialists, with the Australian anti-conscription movement and with the IWW. A fellow worker in the IWW

in Perth, Bill Mackay, passed on some of the stories Mrs. Wilkins told him about her Melbourne days: "She was only young then of course but she was on the anti-conscription fight... She used to tell us about when the bloody police galloped into them two or three times – terrible! So they had a demonstration once when the churches were coming out and the big cathedral, and the bloody police, ... rode into the congregation, and that stopped them." Bill also says that she had a brother who fought and died in France. According to the story, her mother got a bill for the blanket in which they buried him.

Violet Clarke Wilkins came with her husband Harry, a shoemaker, from Victoria to Western Australia in 1928 to try to revive the IWW here. Until the early 1940s, she stood firm to the IWW line. Harry did spend some time in the Communist ("Comical") Party until they expelled him for having the wrong general attitude. Violet was never tempted. She was a true daughter of the people. She was an anchorperson for the group as it involved itself in the protests and the sufferings of the unemployed during the Great Depression.

They were very articulate, with word and deed, against those, especially in the Labor Party and the Australian Workers Union, that battered onto those out of work. As capitalism propelled civilisation to world war for a second time Violet was there in the struggles for peace and against conscription. She was arrested and jailed untold times during these years, as was her husband and other members of the group. Having little time for "parlour pinks," they functioned much as an affinity group. They recruited those who could afford to be arrested and those they could trust and were content to let their example of direct action have its own effect.

The group folded in the early forties. The prison sentences grew longer. The society that could not afford to create jobs or look after families in peacetime suddenly had millions available for war and the unemployed were absorbed into the workforce. The Wilkins went to Sydney where they, and especially Violet, are recorded as reviving the IWW in 1948. After this, I do not know what happened to Violet. Harry turns up in Perth again in the early fifties but seems to be alone.

Frank Little and Radical Western Americanism

BY GERALD RONNING, HISTORY DEPARTMENT, ALBRIGHT COLLEGE

Scholars seemed to suddenly rediscover the IWW in the 1960s and 1970s, producing a flood of books and articles about the union's history. Though the volume of scholarship on the Wobblies has subsided somewhat since, a stubborn scholarly debate turning on the issue of the union's ideological lineage – whether the IWW's intense radicalism originated in the United States or in Europe – has persisted.

Casting the IWW as exemplary of indigenous radicalism, an American origins school, best exemplified by Melvyn Dubofsky and his recently republished *We Shall Be All*, emphasizes the Western American roots of the union. Influenced by the New Social History and determined to write histories of the union from the “bottom up,” an alternate school of thought emerged in the 1980s and gathered strength in the 1990s, arguing that the influence of European radical ideologies had been vastly understated by previous studies. In the end, although both schools of thought have brought impressive evidence and arguments to bear on the question of the IWW's ideological origins, consensus has remained elusive.

Clearly, ideological genealogies have not been able to tell the definitive story of the IWW or explain an enduring sense of “Americanness” that has remained attached especially to the western Wobblies. One explanation that has received minimal scholarly attention, however, are the possible meanings that resided in one famously martyred member's claim to a Native American ancestry, suggesting that a possible key to understanding the cultural image of the IWW resides in “Indianness”; the historical and cultural presence of the nation's indigenous peoples in fact may mark a site of significant ideological substance for the union.

Few historians – labor or otherwise – have taken seriously the cultural and historical influence of American Indians and the history of conquest on the industrial battlefields of the West. What historians of the union may have missed, in part because they devoted little space to analysis of the cultural presence of the Native Indian, is that in many ways the IWW seemed irrevocably American precisely because of its Western cultural heritage.

Prominent Wobblies frequently remarked upon the significance of Native Americans in their radical educations. In his memoirs,

IWW General Secretary William Haywood described his brushes with Indians. Ralph Chaplin recalled that as a child he relished his father's stories about the Old West, especially the Indians, and on a 1910 trip his exposure to Mexican Indians galvanized his commitment to radicalism. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, just 15 when she began speaking at workers' meetings in the east, grew up with stories about the Irish clan system which her mother described as “a form of primitive communism.” “The Indian's Fate,” a composition Flynn wrote as a teenager, displayed both her gift for argument and what would become a lifelong and passionate empathy with the downtrodden. With the righteous anger of youth Flynn condemned whites who, with guns and whiskey, dispossessed and exterminated American Indians. From the historical imagery of the Indian and her own life, the teenage Flynn articulated a moral economy based on the shared indigeness of Irish and Indian.

The presence of the Native that resided in legendary organizer Frank Little – hanged by vigilantes in Butte, Montana, in August 1917 – linked the history of the IWW and its working-class constituents to a larger cultural history originating in the conquest of the American West. In a way few other radicals could, Little embodied a remarkable conjuncture of Indianness and radicalism, an association missed by historians intent on exploring more conventional measures of national and ideological identity. Described by Wobblies as half-Indian, half-white, all IWW, or the only real red in the union, as Elizabeth Gurley Flynn once put it, Little connected the IWW to the nation's Indian past and Native Americanness.

The IWW materialized the shared redness of Indians and the revolutionary red flag of the IWW in the famously martyred organizer – a physical link to the Native, a touchstone for cultural legitimacy. According to Haywood, Little was an energetic worker, “black-eyed, hot-blooded, and reliable.” IWW poet and GEB member Ralph Chaplin remembered that he “liked [Little] because the sight of factories made him wrathful and ribald.” Little's exploits even touched the likes of novelist and erstwhile Pinkerton operative Dashiell Hammett, who claimed to have refused a \$5,000 reward offered by the Anaconda Copper Company for Little's assassination.

Each of these Wobblies, and most his-

torians, highlighted the most noted feature of the fearless Little: his Native American ancestry. But Frank Little's legend did not entirely square with the facts of his life – as with most legends, in some respects his represented something of a fabrication. His parents, Walter Raleigh Little and Almira Hays, met in southern Illinois and married in 1859. Walter Little claimed to have descended from old English stock that had arrived in the New World during the colonial period; Almira Hays, Frank's link to Native America, perhaps one-quarter Cherokee, was born in Kentucky.

The Littles tried to make a go of it as farmers, but somehow Walter managed to become a doctor, vaulting the Littles squarely into the middle class. The family's profitable participation in the invasion and dispossession of Indian land with the ranks of the so-called Boomers – families on the make who claimed the Indian Territory during the Oklahoma land runs – confirmed the Littles' privileged position as Anglo-American conquerors.

Though not quite an imposter, Frank Little and his champions considerably overstated his Indianness. Nevertheless, Little's supposed Indianness provided the union with a wellspring of cultural strength. The “romantic Indian,” or “noble savage,” represented a lost civilization worthy of emulation – childlike and innocent, yet at the same time

virile, virtuous and independent. The romantic Indian served as a link between Americans and the primordial past of the New World, a symbol of natural virtue and uniquely

American attributes. The indigeness that he and the IWW espoused linked New Immigrants to Native Americans through the shared experience of colonial subjugation, cultural subordination and industrial exploitation; a historical conquest that depended upon naturalized categories of race and culture for its disguise.

As previous historians of the union have ably demonstrated, the insti-

tutional ideology of the IWW, as well as its membership and character, grew out of a multiplicity of international and indigenous sources. The IWW's political, social and intellectual family trees have been unable to tell the entire story of the organization, however. They have not fully explained contemporaries' frequent descriptions of the IWW as a “New World development.” Neither have they solved the ongoing historiographical debates about the origins of the union. A consideration of the cultural influences on the IWW and the cultural productions of the IWW evident in the myths surrounding Little, however, can circumvent the question of national origins, allowing the simultaneously international yet indigenous cultural presence of the IWW to emerge more clearly.



Film Review: An Injury to One

BY NATHANIEL MILLER

“An Injury to One,” Travis Wilkerson's didactic documentary about Butte, Montana's copper mining industry and the murder of IWW organizer Frank Little leaves a lot to be desired. While on a certain level the documentary is informative in that it tells of the horrific conditions in Butte's early-twentieth century copper mines, the Anaconda Company's strangulation of union efforts, and Little's lynching while trying to organize Butte's miners, the piece is hardly engaging.

“An Injury to One” begins with a shot of Butte's landscape while the IWW's Preamble flashes, word by word, across the bottom of the screen. Wilkerson uses this technique throughout the documentary, flashing words and statements over still photos, most of them black and white archival photos.

Frank Little, the veteran IWW organizer who was lynched by thugs, presumably in the employ of Anaconda, while he was in Butte organizing with the copper miners, is not introduced until a third of the way through the movie. While Wilkerson demonstrates that Little was hated by Anaconda and loved by the miners (his funeral was the largest ever in Butte with 8,000 in attendance), “An Injury to One” does not really explore the circumstances surrounding Little's death and tells us nothing about his previous experience as an IWW organizer. Nor does it describe much of Little's organizing while in Butte. The documentary makes it seem that Little simply appears in Butte in 1917 and then is murdered. Nor does it tell of the fate of the organizing drive after Little's death, save that the IWW is attacked throughout Montana and that ultimately this sets the stage for national persecution of the IWW.

“An Injury to One” is about more than Little's murder and Anaconda's anti-union conspiracies. It tries to demonstrate, somewhat successfully, that Anaconda destroyed Butte, finally pulling out, leaving the city and

its population stripped and barren. The narrator tells of the large, now abandoned copper pit, which has since filled with water and is so contaminated that its PH balance is equivalent to that of battery acid, but is nonetheless called “safe” by Arco, Anaconda's successor. Unfortunately “An Injury to One” does not do a very good job explaining what ultimately happened to Butte, and does not tell us much at all what the city is like now.

The overall problem with “An Injury to One” is that it does not successfully demonstrate anything that we don't already know – that is, Frank Little was killed in Butte in 1917 while organizing with the copper miners, and that ultimately Anaconda destroyed the community. It is an uninspired piece of work with the narrator, an eerie disembodied voice, simply dictating what happened in Butte. It does not explore the circumstances surrounding Little's death, nor does it explore the organizing drive that brought him to Butte in the first place, and while it tells of the destruction wrought on Butte by the mining industry it does not discuss any workers' attempts to organize after Little's death. Since “An Injury to One” lacks any fresh images, it is not even visually pleasing.

“An Injury to One” is certainly an injury to all who might look to it as a valuable resource on the history of Butte's mining industry or the IWW's efforts to organize hard rock miners. Although it is slightly informative to those who know nothing about Butte or the IWW's efforts to organize miners in the West, as a whole it is as rough and barren as the Butte, Montana, that Anaconda left behind.

Rail union, Teamsters merge

Members of the 40,000-member Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees have voted to merge with the Teamsters. BMW members build, maintain, inspect and repair tracks, bridges and other railroad infrastructure throughout North America.

In November, I Remember:

My Older Cousin
JANE C. ARENZ
(nee Lempi Rauha Siitonen)
(1911-1983)

who was an American Workers Party organizer
in the great Auto-Lite sitdown strike. Toledo, Ohio, 1934

– Harry Siitonen, Bay Area GMB

For the unknown:

For the numberless, unrecorded workers who have been killed in the struggle, beaten, starved, driven mad, imprisoned, had their houses burnt, their families terrorized; for the workers who have been thrown off of trains, driven out of work, ridden out of town; for the workers who have striven and sacrificed without recognition, whose names we no longer know, who gave up everything so that we might have a better day and a chance at freedom, and did not back down. May we be worthy of them.

We never forget.



Book Review: A social history of hobo workers

REVIEW BY MATTHEW WHITE

Indispensable Outcasts: Hobo Workers and Community in the American Midwest, 1880-1930, by Frank Tobias Higbie. University of Illinois Press, 2003.

The title of this book, *Indispensable Outcasts*, best describes its argument and its implicit critique of the capitalist system. *Indispensable Outcasts* describes the culture and, to a degree, the history of migrant labor (or hoboes, tramps or bums, depending on your take) from 1880 to 1930. As such, it touches on the history and culture of the IWW.

While some members of the middle and upper classes may not like migrant workers or today's casual, contingent or temp workers, Higbie argues that they are essential to capitalism. And the hobo workers of old would easily recognize more 'modern' scams, such as Labor Ready, where workers hire on to temp jobs that are purposely not that temporary, lack benefits, and are very hard to organize. Temp agencies had a different name 100 years ago that Wobs should be familiar with: job sharks. Sharks or Labor Ready, shit by any other name smells just as bad.

Higbie also briefly discusses the busi-

ness unions' failure to organize in this 'new' business climate. He writes that to organize temps, casuals, contingents, etc., unions will have to be unorthodox and "look beyond single workplaces and industries and beyond the legalities of collective bargaining." (215) As Higbie notes, this is what the IWW did and much of his narrative relating to the IWW touches on those issues.

Indispensable Outcasts describes the many facets of hobo culture. Higbie writes of their history, their conception of work, their mutuality, their individualism, their conception of race, and their conception of masculinity and gender. And he relates the profound disconnect between outsiders and hoboes. Outsiders, for instance, did not understand why someone would want to work just enough to save up some money to sustain themselves until they could find a better job – or just so they wouldn't have to work. Higbie also shows how the IWW interacted with hobo culture, how its organizers, organizer-members and members were affected by hobo culture, and how the IWW redirected and restructured elements of hobo culture.

Of particular interest to *Industrial Worker*

readers is how the IWW shifted from propaganda tactics and actions centered in large towns to on-the-job actions backed up by small-town local offices. Higbie argues that it was the IWW's cultural sensibility, and not so much its structure, that attracted members. "The structures Wobblies created reflected their own lives: seasonal, valuing individual and local initiative, and generally unconcerned with the appearance of respectability." (136) This sensibility, as well as the IWW's ability to harness workers conceptions of mutuality and masculinity, enabled the IWW to form a powerful agricultural organization. United in the IWW, workers were better able to obtain better jobs, transportation, protection, companionship, a sense of being, and a sense of manhood.

Unlike the government reformers of the period, the IWW let its members decide what their problems were and empowered them to ascertain and fix those problems themselves.

Higbie has produced a solid and readable book, which is effective in adding to our understanding of hobos. *Indispensable Outcasts* should be useful, or at least thought

provoking, to our members and to others. Higbie's treatment of how the IWW and hoboes themselves dealt with race and gender is fascinating. The IWW used manhood and masculinity as an organizing tool. The IWW tried using gender solidarity to get around race, and occasionally this was successful. It is our duty, however, to get past male worker solidarity into worker solidarity, and this book may be helpful in that respect. Higbie could have spent more time describing the decline of the AWIU (a subject taken up in Greg Hall's *Harvest Wobblies*), though his generalizations that government repression, vigilantism and, by 1924, the IWW's internal problems were the main causes probably holds up.

Higbie's description of what the labor movement should be doing to organize casual workers, temps and contingent workers should be familiar to IWWs. When he says that the labor movement should look "beyond single workplaces and industries and beyond the legalities of collective bargaining... (to a) movement for social and economic citizenship" (215), we can say that is what we have been trying to do for nearly 100 years. But for now we have some work to do.

IWW history...

continued from page 6

as central to the story of South African labor – this is a pioneering study of the brief history of the "One Big Union" in South Africa, a history which may inform our historical and contemporary understanding of race and revolutionary syndicalism. All three articles can be found at www.anarchist-studies.org/article/author/view/18.

Norman Caulfield's *Mexican Workers and the State: From the Porfiriato to NAFTA* (Texas Christian University Press, 1998 – available from the IWW for \$12), which we overlooked when published, is the most comprehensive available treatment of the rich history of the IWW in Mexico. He sheds light on the Tampico general strike of 1917 and the role of the IWW in this strike and the labor movement in general, expanding upon a 1995 article in the *International Review of Social History*. The book also explores Mexican labor's struggle with its relationship to the state, and to unions north of the border.

While the work is useful for its breadth, it does raise a few questions. For example, Caulfield asserts that Mexican workers were inherently militant, but ultimately failed as a result of repeated co-optation by the state. But how could they be bought off with such ease? Violent repression was used, of course, but a more nuanced argument might be more useful. For example, Caulfield could have explored Mexican labor's seeking of alliances, a position possibly brought about by organizational insecurity and economic vulnerability. Such an analysis might help explain the otherwise incomprehensible teaming-up of General Carranza and the syndicalist Casa Obrera to exterminate the followers of Emiliano Zapata (the original Zapatistas).

Two new works in the en vogue Cultural Studies field analyze language and cultural phenomena to extend the scope of IWW studies. Gerald Ronning's "Jackpine Savages: Discourses of Conquest in 1916 Mesabi Iron Range Strike" (*Labor History* 44(3), 2003, 359-382) focuses on the Mesabi Range miners (almost entirely immigrant) from the 1890s to their 1916 strike. Ronning explores the cultural interaction between Finns (the largest ethnic group on the range), "America," and industrial conflict. His central argument is that employers "whip[ped] up nativist and anti-radical chauvinisms in order to delegitimize the striking miners and justify their brutal suppression." (359)

How did the employers do this? They "drew on a discourse generated during the 19th-century conquest of the state [from] the Native Americans. Anti-radicals emphasized the brutish, savage nature of the strikers,

their childlike propensity for falling under the sway of the malevolent IWW, and cast the industrial struggle as a battle between the forces of civilization and savagery." (360)

However, while the article offers many examples of this IWW-as-savage rhetoric, his assertion that the employers actually believed such rhetoric seems somewhat contrived – the reader is provided with little evidence to distinguish between what discourses truly formed employers' consciousnesses, and which served merely as public justifications for brutal repression of the workers.

W. Sayers' "Joe Hill's 'Pie in the Sky' and Swedish Reflexes of the Land of Cockaigne" (*American Speech* 77, Fall 2002, 331-336) is an etymological study of the phrase "pie in the sky," and its evolution from Swedish tradition to Hill's "The Preacher and the Slave."

Two works of IWW-related fiction recently became available. Charles Ashleigh's *The Rambling Kid* (Charles H. Kerr, 2004 – reviewed in our May issue) was originally published in 1930 in the UK, and has been virtually unknown outside of that country. Its author was a middle-class labor agitator, traveling from Wales to Argentina, Peru and Chile before reaching Oregon in 1912, where he joined the IWW. By 1916 he was appointed publicity director for the IWW legal defense effort for the victims of the Everett Massacre. In 1917, Ashleigh was one of the many IWWs rounded up and sentenced to prison amidst the domestic hysteria of World War I – he was sentenced to ten years and freed after two on condition he return to the UK, thus ending his career with the IWW. Ashleigh's novel is somewhat autobiographical, drawing on his experiences as an organizer and his associations with migrant IWW workers. While *The Rambling Kid* is a far cry from working-class classics such as *Bound for Glory* and *You Can't Win*, it is nonetheless important as an early example of British/American working-class writing, and as one of only three works of

fiction by and about Wobblies.

George William Shea's *Spoiled Silk: The Red Mayor and the Great Paterson Textile Strike* (Fordham University Press, 2001) is a biographical novel. The tale begins slightly before the great Paterson Textile Strike of 1913, when the book's main characters, William Brueckmann and Katherine Ruhren (in fact, the author's grandparents) emigrate to Haledon, New Jersey, and get work as weavers. From there, the novel divides its attention between their personal history and Brueckmann's dramatic involvement in the Paterson strike as the Socialist mayor of Haledon, a short distance from Paterson. Despite its rich historical context, the author sacrifices specific historical detail and documentation in favor of telling his grandparents' story in a literary fashion – the book includes no specific dates, quotations, citations or bibliography. So despite the rich history upon which it draws, *Spoiled Silk* must be read primarily as a work of fiction.

Other recent work on the IWW includes *The Corpse on Boomerang Road* (a popular history of the Telluride labor wars with much information on Vincent St. John, reviewed last issue); Mike Byrnes' and Les Rickey's *The Truth About the Lynching of Frank Little* (reviewed in our June issue); Todd DePastino's *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America* (U of Chicago Press 2003), which has a chapter discussing Wobbly cartoons; and two recent titles from Charles H. Kerr which touch on the IWW: *From Bughouse Square to the Beat Generation: Selected Ravings of Slim Brundage* (edited by Franklin Rosemont) includes a few pages on Brundage's time in the IWW; *The Rise & Fall of the Dil Pickle* (another Rosemont collection) includes recollections by Ralph Chaplin, Sam Dolgoff, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and Harry Haywood and an introduction stressing the IWW's role in the radical Dil Pickle club. Both are available from the IWW.

We hope to review Michael Miller Topp's *Those Without a Country: The Political Culture of Italian American Syndicalists* (University of Minnesota Press) in the near future. Topp traces Italian anarcho-syndicalists from the birth of the Federazione Socialista Italiana to Carlo Tresca's death in 1943, discussing the FSI's role in the IWW and several of its key organizers such as Joe Ettor and Arturo Giovannitti. Among other topics, it touches on conceptions of gender, especially the prominent role played by prevailing conceptions of masculinity, and the rise and reaction to fascism within the Italian immigrant community. This is one of very few substantive treatments of the central role immigrant workers played in the American IWW.

Workers looking for online materials will

want to check out Jim Crutchfield's IWW page (www.workerseducation.org/crutch) and the Committee on Industrial Classification web site (www.iww.org/cic), both of which include a wide variety of IWW historical pamphlets and other materials.

Lastly, a symposium on American syndicalism and labor historiography was printed in *Labor Studies Journal* (27, Summer 2002), centered around Howard Kimeldorf's *Battling for American Labor: Wobblies, Craft Workers and the Making of the Union Movement*, which attacked the notion that American workers were intrinsically conservative. Peter Meiksins' "Whither Labor Studies?" (7-20) compares Kimeldorf's book to Ching Kwan Lee's *Gender and the South China Miracle* to demonstrate the diversity of modern labor history. Larry Isaac's "In Search of American Labor's Syndicalist Heritage" (21-37) highlights the implications of Kimeldorf's analytical arguments and methods – also considering the Brotherhood of Timber Workers in Louisiana, rubber workers in Akron, and metal/machinery workers in Cleveland. It too is primarily historiographical in approach.

Kimeldorf contributes the last essay ("In Search of Syndicalism," 39-49), reaffirming the role of the IWW as central to any understanding of the American labor movement. He expands on his work in *Battling*, refuting the claim that American labor allegiance could be explained in terms of ideology – rather, he asserts, American workers had a propensity for self-activity and direct action at the point of production, and a predilection for eschewing politics, which led many to the IWW. This "syndicalism of practice" has implications beyond the IWW, he argues – it "defined the broad contours of American trade unionism for at least the first half of the 20th century and, to a diminished extent, down to the present." (40) That leading labor scholars are placing the IWW at the fore of their analyses is a tremendous comment on the efficacy of the IWW and its place in the American labor movement.

Joe Hill opera

"Joe Hill: 16 Actions for Chamber Orchestra & Voice," a new 90-minute opera written by Seattle composer Wayne Horvitz and librettist Paul Magid premiered at the University of Washington's Meany Theater October 31.

"Joe Hill" combines traditional songs by Hill and others, orchestral writing, and sung and spoken word. The story is drawn from Wallace Stegner's viciously fictionalized "biography," but reportedly is sympathetic to Joe Hill and his Wobbly ideals. The work is written for three singers, chamber orchestra, piano, guitar and percussion.

IN NOVEMBER WE REMEMBER...

CELIA LIPSCHITZ - Long-time IWW member. Sec., Treas. of Pittsburgh Local #215. Jailed in 1912 for her part in the Homewood Free Speech Fight, organized by Socialist Party members and Wobblies.

ANDY LELKO - Joined the IWW IU 460 during the 1920 Midwest Packinghouse Workers strike; later a traveling delegate in harvest fields and construction sites. Moved to Pittsburgh in 1935, serving on the 1936 GEB and acting as a Pittsburgh delegate until his death in 1962.

Pittsburgh General Membership Branch
Chartered May 1, 2002

Casino workers drop fight for future

BY WALT WEBER JR.

As we go to press, UNITE-HERE local 54 has tentatively settled its five-week strike against Harrah's Atlantic City, Showboat Casino-Hotel, Resorts Atlantic City, Bally's Atlantic City, Caesars Atlantic City, the Atlantic City Hilton, and Tropicana Casino and Resort. Nearly 10,000 workers went on strike October 1, in a fight over wages, health care costs, the use of non-union subcontractors to undermine union power, and the length of the contract.

UNITE-HERE was seeking a three-year deal so that contracts in Atlantic City and Las Vegas casinos would expire at the same time. However, the casinos refused to negotiate until the union abandoned that demand.

Union negotiators accepted the operators' final offer Nov. 1, which provides significant wage gains, maintains a no-deductible health plan (though benefits could be cut if premiums rise sharply), and guarantees that workers will not lose their jobs because of subcontracting. However, casinos would be allowed to continue leasing space to existing non-union bars and restaurants, and two casinos will each be allowed to add an additional subcontracted outlet.

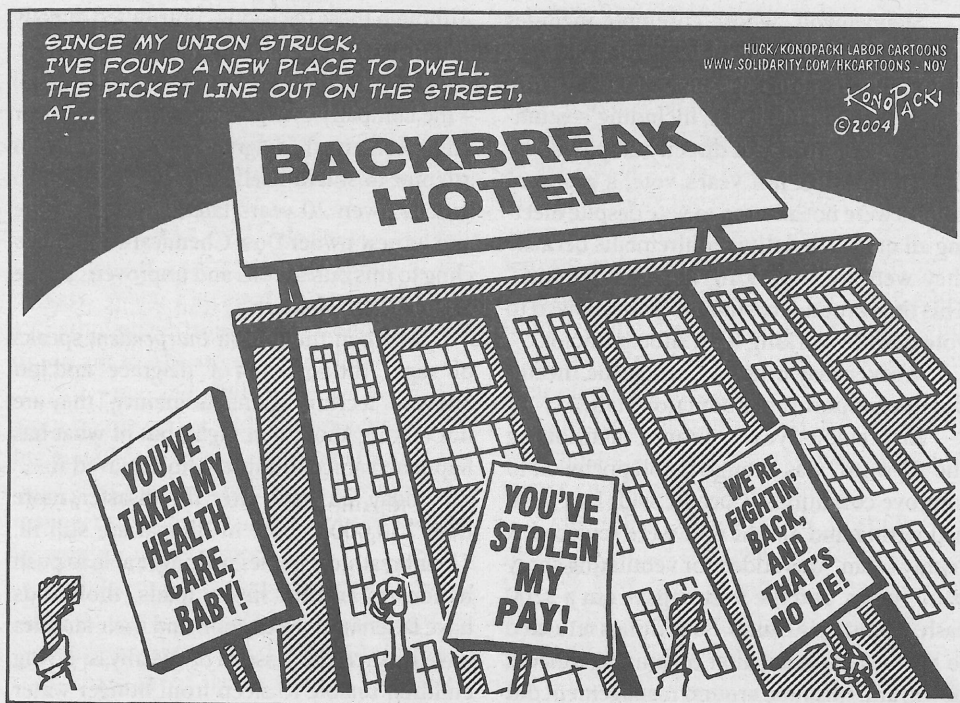
The union had sought to align its Atlantic City and Las Vegas contracts in order to address the casinos' growing power. Harrah's is in the process of merging with Caesars Entertainment – the combined company will own five of the seven struck casinos and be the dominant player in the rapidly growing U.S. gambling industry.

Harrah's spokesman Gary Thompson said the union's demand would give it too much power. "We think it is irresponsible if we allow them to be able to shut down the casino industry in Las Vegas and Atlantic City... The term of the contract is non-negotiable."

This strike was marked by a high level of militancy for an AFL union. On Oct. 8, 3,000 union supporters took to the streets and blocked the main entryway into Atlantic City. Almost 100 people were arrested, volunteers in symbolic acts of civil disobedience. The rally was followed by a march down the boardwalk past the struck casinos.

At the end of the march, the strikers decided to take the streets, much to the dismay of the union officials. One screamed at workers through a bullhorn to get back on the sidewalks. Then police showed up and also told workers to get out of the street. Neither had a noticeable effect, and the march continued for blocks, snarling traffic on one of Atlantic City's busiest nights.

One week later, on Oct. 15, Local 54 staged the largest union solidarity rally in the history of Atlantic City, with over 10,000 workers. Although many union bureaucrats made speeches, it was also a good chance to



hear striking workers tell their own stories. The event wrapped up with a performance from Wyclef Jean, who told the striking workers, "Don't ever let anyone fuck with you!" before he performed.

The rally then took off down the sidewalk, because no permit could be acquired. After about two blocks, union members began to walk in the streets, which led to the arrests of three union leaders. This protest snarled traffic on the first day of the Atlantic City Antique show, a huge event for the casinos.

Once again, union marshals made sure that no one spontaneously did anything other than march down the side of the designated street. Ignoring the wishes of many workers, the union acted as a disciplinarian for the strikers and visiting solidarity marchers, making sure that the police would not be impeded in their duty to protect private capital and their interests throughout the city.

Although the strike succeeded in disrupting business operations through symbolic picket lines, a publicity campaign, and large marches, the casinos still pressed on. Harrah's flew over 400 managers out from Las Vegas to work 16-hour shifts. Security guards attacked picketers, sending one to the hospital with a broken knee cap. The union had filed 214 Unfair Labor Practice charges against the casinos, complaining of illegal harassment and intimidation of striking workers.

The casinos had also gone to court for an injunction restricting picketing. Although police testified that they saw no violence or foul language by pickets, Tropicana lawyer Jedd Mendelson said the picketing cost it business. "We suffered loss of customers. No one knows the extent or bounds of that." That, apparently, was enough for the judge.

Instead of expanding the strike to Las Vegas, the union bused strikers to the state

capitol in Trenton to ask the politicians to intervene, and organized token protests at the casinos' corporate offices in Las Vegas (not at the casinos themselves, which might hit the bosses in their pocket books).

On Oct. 14, 95 union workers were cited for trespass in a protest at Harrah's Las Vegas headquarters. The union had arranged for the symbolic arrests and provided police with their names in advance. UNITE-HERE Local 226 demanded that Harrah's agree not to hire replacement workers. However, they continued work as usual in the Las Vegas casinos despite the large numbers of managers and supervisors who were off scabbing.

This article was written while the strike was still on, and updated at press time.

SF hotel strike... *continued from p. 1* red and black "2004 Unity, 2006 Power" buttons to present a 500-signature petition. In the days that followed, dozens of workers were sent home for refusing to remove buttons, seriously disrupting food service operations. The hotel soon agreed to call workers back and allow them to wear their buttons.

And while there has been no real attempt to enforce picket lines in San Francisco, the union has been tacitly threatening to spread the dispute if the operators do not relent.

In Boston, nearly 100 HERE members demonstrated in the lobby of the Hyatt Regency hotel Oct. 20 to show support for the locked-out workers in San Francisco. Six workers were arrested on trespassing charges; the other workers took the protest outside after police arrived.

Letter Carriers: Dump postal supervisors, save money

The Letter Carriers national convention recently voted to negotiate with the Postal Service, seeking a policy allowing workers to manage their own time, rendering 65,000 supervisors (who routinely harass and time study workers) superfluous.

Janitors win \$22.4 m for stolen overtime

Supermarket janitors in California have won a \$22.4 million settlement from three major grocery chains and a cleaning contractor as a result of a class-action lawsuit charging that they were worked 14 days out of 15, denied breaks, and not paid for overtime.

Some 1,000 janitors – many immigrant workers – joined the class-action suit, which was filed in November 2000 against the supermarket chains and the cleaning contractor they employed, Building One Service Solutions.

Safeway and Vons settled for \$14 million; Albertsons settled for \$4.5 million; and Ralph's settled for \$3 million. Building One Service Solutions settled for \$900,000.

Building One pushed workers to work long hours and scrimped on their pay to keep down contract costs. The supermarkets were liable as joint employers under California law, which makes them equally responsible for workers' conditions.

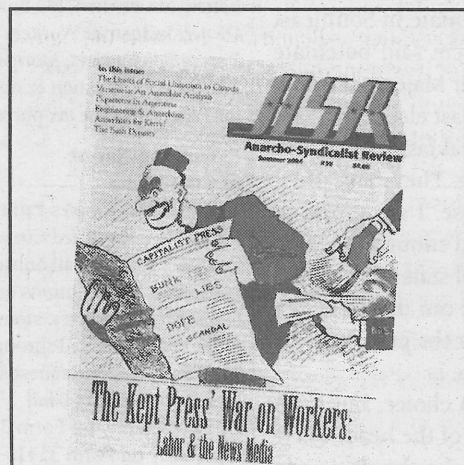
Fight for shorter Hours

EU bosses stealing time

Business demands for longer working hours and delayed retirement held up a European Union report on how to make the EU the world's "most dynamic and competitive economy" by 2010 – a goal the EU adopted five years ago.

Bosses on a 13-member working group are demanding that workers put in longer hours on the job each week, and more years before they are allowed to retire. Otherwise, they say, the EU will become increasingly uncompetitive.

Union representatives insisted the EU would do better to look north, arguing that the Scandinavian economies – which still have comparatively generous social benefits, though these are under attack – are among the world's most competitive.



In November We Remember those who have fallen in the struggle for workers' emancipation

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Boom goes the bust...

continued from page 1

overproduction, trying to find markets for vast quantities of food which no one can afford to buy (while millions die of starvation around the world).

"This is not just a function of unemployment," said Robert Forney, CEO of America's Second Harvest. "A larger percentage of Americans are working poor, and the numbers have been growing for nine years. This could be the low-water mark for the economy, but for a whole lot of Americans – 40 million of them – the option of [earning] a living wage and benefits? Forget it."

Even as millions of workers clamor for jobs, employers are complaining that they can not find workers willing to work at the starvation wages they are willing to pay. As a result, they continue to ship jobs overseas in record numbers, and to import workers through the H-1B program, in which employers can bring in workers under special visas that limit them to working for the sponsoring employer on whatever terms it offers. Employers snatched up all 58,200 available visas Oct. 1, within hours of the 2005 quota opening, and are clamoring for more.

Like lambs to the slaughter

The AFL-CIO and its affiliated unions poured hundreds of millions of dollars of duespayers' money into the campaign to defeat George W. Bush by electing Senator John Kerry as president. SEIU alone spent \$65 million on the Kerry campaign.

Even as the unions pour money and time into electing Democrats, they are squandering union members' dues on the Republican party as well. The Associated Press reports that the SEIU was the biggest contributor to the Republican Governors Association for the 2004 election cycle, giving \$575,000 to the GOP group working to elect Republican governors in 11 states Nov. 2. The SEIU said its donation was to support the Republican challenger in North Carolina, who pledged to raise state workers' pay if elected.

The AFL-CIO boasts that its 2004 election campaign was the biggest in U.S. history. But despite spending hundreds of millions of dollars and lending tens of thousands of unionists to the Democrats, labor issues were practically invisible in the campaign.

Kerry said not a word on the campaign trail about new Labor Dept. rules allowing employers to force millions of workers to work unpaid overtime. Kerry called for an increase in the minimum wage, but so modest a hike that it would leave tens of millions in desperate poverty. The Democrats once claimed to support repeal of Taft-Harley, but did nothing when in power. Now they no longer bother to promise. Although U.S. labor law is so repressive that it has been condemned by the International Labor Organization, Kerry was mum on this issue as well.

It is pointless to try to bribe the politicians to solve our problems – the bosses will always be able to pony up bigger bribes. If we continue waiting for this "booming economy" to bring prosperity, we'll all be busted.

It's time to organize, to join with our fellow workers around the world to defend our common interests. We either organize to dump the bosses off our backs, or we will be doomed to the spurs of hunger and the whip of global competition.

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Steppenwolf crew union bid crushed

BY SCOTT GIBSON

An attempted unionization vote by the production staff of Chicago's famous Steppenwolf Theatre Company failed in September after a union-busting campaign and a lack of solidarity from other theater unions left organizers out in the cold.

The production staff was attempting to organize under the International Alliance of Theater and Stage Employees Local 2, which represents stagehands at most Chicago theaters. Cherry Lynn Cocadiz, former assistant properties master for Steppenwolf, said the local provided organizing and legal advice for this drive, the second union campaign the production staff has attempted in two years. Workers also contacted a local IWW organizer for advice and help in the campaign.

The main grievances are low pay, a lack of respect from theater staff and managers, and bad working conditions such as poor heating and ventilation in the scene shop where sawdust frequently clogs the air.

Cocadiz said the organizing ran into problems from the start, primarily due to efforts by the company to manipulate the bargaining unit by claiming many workers had not put in enough hours or were temporary "over-hires" – employees who are hired for as little as one day to perform a specific task.

Management refused to release its eligibility list until one week before the vote. This, combined with the transient nature of theater work, made it difficult to target organizing efforts, or even to determine who would be

eligible to vote in the NLRB election.

Steppenwolf, whose ensemble includes such famous actors at John Malkovich and Gary Sinise, also padded the voter list with known union opponents, including costuming staff who were not directly employed by the company. In last year's vote, a group of roofers were not allowed to vote despite meeting all other eligibility requirements because they were not "working on a production." This time around, costumers were allowed to vote despite working for a subcontractor.

Workers say other unions at the theater did not support the production staff.

In previous years, simply mentioning the "U-word" was enough for Steppenwolf to improve conditions, Cocadiz said. Last year, bad wiring and an old roof were replaced, a "spray room" was added for ventilating spray paint fumes, and the theater gave out a \$200 cash "Christmas Bonus." But things returned to business as usual after organizing quieted down, and this time around management did not make any concessions.

It will be another year before the workers at Steppenwolf will be legally allowed to vote on union representation. Before then, much needs to be done by workers on the ground to organize and agitate, both among old and new workers. Meetings can be held, strategies devised, contact and grievance lists compiled, and lessons can be learned from past mistakes. If the workers begin acting as a union, the government will not have to tell them they are a union – they will just win.

Bhopal 20 years on

continued from page 1

Although these decisions contributed directly to the disaster – on the night of the gas leak, not one of six safety systems were functional – the company cynically blamed the disaster on an unnamed "disgruntled worker" in an attempt to shield itself from public outrage. Indeed, even 20 years later, Union Carbide and its new owner Dow Chemical continue to cling to this outrageous and unproven "blame the workers" defense.

Yet when the British *Independent* speaks of "rape," the *Guardian* of "disgrace" and Jon Snow of "a crime against humanity," they are not talking about *that night*, but of what has happened since to those who survived it.

Today, 20 years after the disaster, more than 120,000 people in Bhopal are still ill. Their breathless bodies no longer able to push handcarts and lift heavy loads, thousands have fallen into destitution and their families have learned the lessons of the abyss, giving children unable to sleep from hunger water to fill their empty bellies. People continue to die in Bhopal each week because of their gas exposure, contributing to a death toll now well over 20,000.

Carbide fled India after the disaster, leaving behind a site so contaminated that its chemicals have seeped into the drinking water, re-poisoning those Carbide first poisoned 20 years ago. And although two courts in the United States and India continue to hear arguments in the case, both Carbide and Dow continue to claim that they retain no liability related to Bhopal. This oft-repeated refrain is particularly galling to the survivors, who have been waiting 15 years for Union Carbide and its former CEO, Warren Anderson, to answer a summons and appear to face criminal charges of "culpable homicide" or manslaughter. If convicted, Anderson faces 10 years in prison for his crimes; Carbide, a fine which has no upper limit. Both the corporation and the man are considered international fugitives from justice by the Indian government.

The campaign

Yet for the past two decades, some of the poorest people on earth – sick, living on the edge of starvation, illiterate, without funds, powerful friends or political influence – have continued struggling against one of the world's richest corporations, backed by the government, military and, it often seems, the judiciary of the world's most powerful nation.

The corporation and its allies have it all – wealth, power, political influence, lawyers, public relations companies, the ear of presidents and prime ministers, the power to bend policy to their will, and manipulate the courts and laws of two countries to avoid

justice in either.

The 'nothing people' have literally nothing. If 35,000 of them clubbed together they could not afford one American attorney. Their efforts to obtain justice have been thwarted in every way possible by the corporation that killed their families and ruined their lives. Naively trusting that the Indian government would come to their rescue, they were instead abandoned, sold down the river by politicians and judges, obstructed and swindled by corrupt bureaucrats, cheated by unscrupulous quacks and not infrequently beaten by the police for daring to complain.

The campaign itself has been conducted on the most unequal terms. On one side, multi-million dollar budgets and the best professional brains money can buy – armies of corporate lawyers, political lobbyists, spin-doctors and media manipulators (including Burson Marsteller, the world's biggest PR company) – on the other a handful of unpaid volunteers, often without money for stamps, photocopying, telephone bills or travel.

It's David against an army of Goliaths.

Yet the campaign for justice continues, and as it prepares to mark its 20th anniversary it can celebrate some important victories. In March, the Indian Supreme Court ordered the state of Madhya Pradesh to begin supplying safe drinking water to the 20,000 Bhopali residents exposed to Carbide's deadly chemicals on a daily basis. In July, the same court ordered the immediate distribution of \$370 million in compensation, left for 15 years in the hands of the Indian government, to the survivors. In April, Rashida Bee and Champa Devi Shukla, two leaders of a women's trade union of gas-affected stationary workers, were awarded the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize for their work as leaders of the International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal. And most significantly for the campaign and international law, the Indian government was forced to buckle under the pressure of thousands of faxes, emails and phone calls from our international supporters, and issue a "no objection" statement allowing the Southern District Court of New York to order Union Carbide to clean up the factory site it abandoned in India 20 years ago.

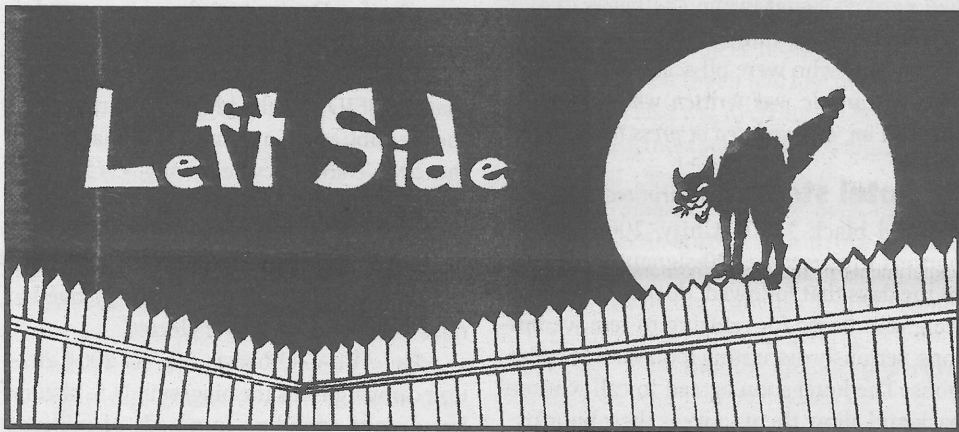
The international solidarity we've received has allowed the Bhopal Campaign to win some important victories, but there's still much work to be done. Our demands of Dow and Carbide include a comprehensive cleanup of the site, medical treatment and alternative employment for those who need it, and justice – Carbide and its former CEO should stand trial. This December 3rd will mark the 20th anniversary of the Bhopal disaster, and to mark the event we're organizing a Global Day of Action for Justice in Bhopal, and against corporate crime. Your solidarity is welcome and needed – please visit the website of the campaign, at www.bhopal.net, to read more about the Day of Action, look over the list of action ideas, and register.

The Bhopal Campaign is one of the longest-running and most important struggles against corporate crime in the world. Despite the horror of "that night" and the chemical terror that its survivors have endured, the people of Bhopal continue their struggle for justice, for corporate accountability, and for their basic human right to an environment free of chemical poisons. The outcome will have lasting implications for the future of globalization, the labor and environmental movements, and the health and well-being of the people of Bhopal.

The only memorial ever built in Bhopal was privately funded, designed by a survivor of the Holocaust. In bold letters, the inscription reads, "No Hiroshima, No Bhopal, We Want To Live." With your help and that of others, the justice that has been so long delayed in Bhopal cannot be denied.

5,559 U.S. workers killed

Workplace deaths in the United States rose to 5,559 in 2003, an increase of 25 from the year before, with most occurring in the construction and transportation industries.



Well, these days, with the election coming on (*this column was received four weeks before the election, ed.*), the media continues to spew forth with the latest in BS. Nobody knows for sure who the clown in the not-so-white house is going to be, and your humble scribe thinks there are many of you out there who share his enthusiasm, or lack thereof. As it turns out, for some damn reason every new prez makes the old one look good by comparison.

Took boogiemanager Goldwater to clinch the election for LBJ, who also had the advantage of having a clown like Humpty Dumpty to keep him ensconced. Peanutboy Carter also had the same clown to hand the keys over to him. It can be said that Humpty Dumpty helped put many in that high office – always a bridesmaid, but never a bride. But eventually, Carter's had to bite the bullet.

If elections changed anything, they would be made illegal. I still haven't come across the name of the dude who first made that statement. He certainly deserves his place in history, if only for that witticism. Having observed the electoral process for seventy years of my all-too-brief life, I have come to the conclusion that the majestic impartiality of the two potty system rests in the fact that the two pottys decide who our choices for prez will be. I am reminded of a cartoon by Guindon, in an alternative magazine named *The Realist* back in the sixties, of two dudes with whips standing over some poor bloke's bare backside saying to each other, "Well, now it's your turn!" During the same sixties, Heinz der Gross, who apparently didn't have a state of his own to attend to, was visiting a potentate in Southeast Asia who had a lavish palace with a naked harem said potentate was introducing Heinz to, when Heinz said, "Your Majesty, let's talk about matters of state. When did you have your last election?" Said potentate is said to have replied, "Just before breakfast."

Not that our parasites practice continence. They have their testosterone treatments at the taxpayers' expense. I am proud to say that I have boycotted elections since I was old enough to vote. I realize that in assisting some SOB become head of state, I am giving that bastard power of life or death over me. He can draft me, tax my take-home, or raise said taxes as he pimps for the puss butts he fronts for, and I don't even know who the Hell he is.

In your innocence, you are told you have a choice, but if it's not election year they won't give you a civil nod of the head. Their closed-door secret meetings are where they make the decisions who your choices will be. In some other countries you have what is called proportional representation. Each political philosophy can be represented, regardless of how few there are allowed under Freedomland regional restrictions. At least it makes for lively shake-ups in the main legislatures.

Draftees and other suckers of the world, Unite!

You have nothing to lose but your generals.

— C.C. Redcloud

Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation

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<i>Paid and/or Requested Circulation</i>		
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In-County Subscriptions on Form 3541	53	56
Sales through dealers, street vendors, etc.	74	28
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This Statement of Ownership will be printed in the November 2004 issue of this publication. I certify that all information on this form is true and complete.

Jon Bekken, Editor, Sept. 30, 2004

BOOKS FOR REBELLIOUS WORKERS



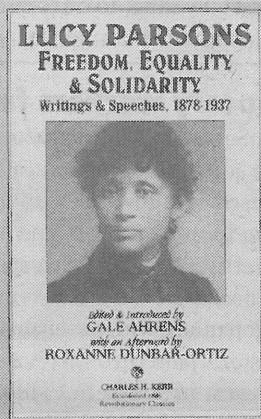
Singlejack Solidarity by Stan Weir
 Edited and with an afterword by George Lipsitz
 Foreword by Norm Diamond
 Blue-collar intellectual and activist publisher, Stan Weir devoted his life to the advocacy of his fellow workers. Weir was both a thoughtful observer and an active participant in many of the key struggles that shaped the labor movement and the political left in postwar America. He reported firsthand from the front lines of decisive fights over the nature of unions in the auto industry, the resistance to automation on the waterfront, and battles over racial integration in the workplace and within unions themselves.

Written throughout Weir's decades as a blue-collar worker and labor educator, *Singlejack Solidarity* offers a rare look at modern life and social relations as seen from the factory, dockside, and the shop floor. This volume analyzes issues central to working-class life today, such as the human costs of automation, union policies, mass media images of work, and intergenerational relations in working-class families. It also provides humorous commentaries, historical vignettes, and moving portraits of people Weir encountered, including James Baldwin, C. L. R. James, and Eric Hoffer. Gathered here for the first time, Weir's writings are equal parts memoir, labor history, and polemic; taken together, they document a crucial chapter in the life story of working-class America. **384 pages, \$20.00**

Lucy Parsons: Freedom, Equality & Solidarity: Writings & Speeches: 1878-1937

edited and introduced by Gale Ahrens with an afterword by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz
 "More dangerous than a thousand rioters," that's what the Chicago police called Lucy Parsons – America's most defiant and persistent anarchist agitator, whose cross-country speaking tours inspired hundreds of thousands of working people. Here, for the first time, is a hefty selection of her powerful writings and speeches: on anarchism, women, race matters, class war, the IWW, and the U.S. injustice system.

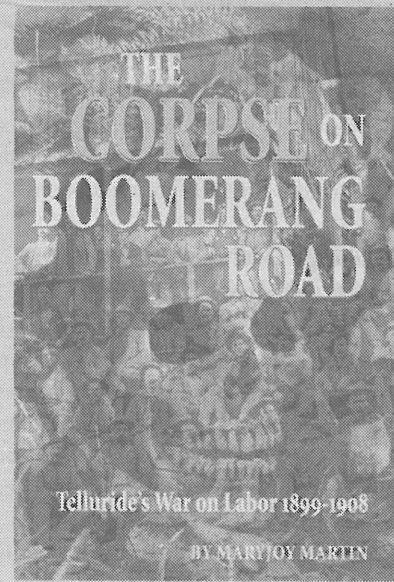
183 pp, \$17.00



**The Corpse on Boomerang Road
 Telluride's War on Labor 1899-1908**

by MaryJoy Martin Also see review page 10
 On August 8, 1907, newspapers in Telluride, Colorado, declared that the bones of William J. Barney had been recovered from a shallow grave on Boomerang Hill, thus proving the Telluride Miners' Union had butchered him in 1901. Many mine owners, newspaper editors, and Pinkerton detectives claimed the union had inaugurated a reign of terror with Barney's slaying, a nightmare of brutality that would end only when the union men and their families were driven from the region.

The belief that the Miners' Union was a pack of assassins and its victims were numerous has endured for more than a hundred years. Yet meticulous research has revealed no reign actually existed, and the alleged victims were, in fact, alive



long after their alleged murders. *The Corpse on Boomerang Road* not only shatters long-held convictions, it also unravels several murder cases and exonerates those unjustly accused. **392 pages, hardcover, \$29.95**

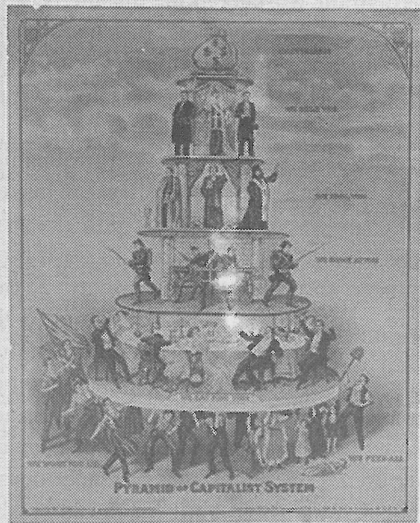


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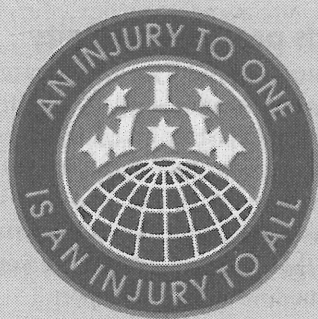
Solidarity Unionism: Rebuilding the Labor Movement from Below by Staughton Lynd
 Staughton Lynd discusses how small groups of workers have created new forms of democratic organization, and argues that building a revolutionary labor movement today means nurturing such experiments in the face of corporate power. A modest, but deeply optimistic, search for possibilities. **63 pages, \$12.00**

Punching Out & Other Writings by Martin Glaberman, edited & introduced by Staughton Lynd
 A collection of writings by autoworker, historian and poet Marty Glaberman. This collection reprints Glaberman's classic writings on the union movement, Marxism, the challenges facing radical movements in the 1970s and 1980s, the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, and a selection of labor poetry. Among the gems to be found are Egghead comics, an appreciation of C.L.R. James, and of course a reprint of the classic pamphlet on business unionism, *Punching Out*. Glaberman celebrated the possibilities of informal work groups both to resist capitalism and to run industry once we've dumped the bosses off our backs. **231 pages, \$14.00**



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MOVIE Review: The Take

BY JOHN GORMAN

"The Take," released in September, is one of several political documentaries coming to theaters this fall. This film, however, goes much further than most in providing alternatives to globalization and the Race to the Bottom, which corporate capitalism insists is the only viable path to the future of this planet. Indeed, what started author Naomi Klein on this quest for an alternative to this gloomy scenario was a question from a globalizer who argued, "We know what you're against. But just what are you for?"

Ironically enough, as we discover from this movie, it is Argentina – once the "poster child" for the International Monetary Fund and globalization – that is providing at least the outlines of an answer to that question. Argentina, as the film explains, is not a poor country that was made poorer by privatization and IMF demands for reductions in already inadequate government services as a condition for loans. It is a rich country that has become poor thanks to these measures.

As the Argentine economy melted down in 2001 and the country defaulted on its foreign debt, thousands of businesses closed, leaving literally millions of workers in the street, reduced from the "middle class" to a proletariat almost overnight. Revolution was in the air as people were cut off from their bank accounts while millions of dollars left the country. One government after another fell, as angry crowds demanded, "¡Que se vayan todos!" (Send them all packing!) Many workers, however, were not impressed by these marches and began to think in more concrete terms, occupying closed factories first to prevent the owners from selling off the machinery and then to put them back into production.

As the film shows, these efforts are not easy, and the Argentine courts have not been helpful, looking on private property as a sacred right. Nonetheless, the machines are started and production of things like auto parts, tiles and clothing resumes under the motto, "Occupy, resist, produce." What these workers have understood is the need, not only to seize the means of production as in the sit-down strikes of the 1930s, but to take over the production itself, or, in IWW terms, "Fire the boss" as well.

As quickly becomes clear, the workers are in no need of managerial advice or entrepreneurial direction. They already know how to make the product, and whatever skills they need to market it are quickly learned as they cooperate with one another. In the meantime, interviews with the ceramics factory owner show us the face of the enemy, as a positively vampiric-looking capitalist assures us the government will get his ceramics factory back for him and restore his wealth and power.

The workers, for their part, care little about ideology. They simply want to work, live with dignity and support their families in decency. While the capitalists scheme to get back their plants, the workers drill with slingshots to repel anticipated police assaults. On the face of it, these preparations seem ridiculous, but the main weapon in the workers' arsenal is not their slingshots but their solidarity and the implied threat of general strike if the government insists on bringing back "the Good Old Days" of capitalism.

It would be pleasant to end this review with a report of worker triumph. As we learn from the film, however, the issue remains very much in doubt, as the government vacillates, the IMF fumes, and the workers dig in. What we can take away from "The Take," however, is a conviction that there is another way of doing things, not worked out in every detail, but real enough to give every capitalist indigestion, if not nightmares. We see that ordinary workers are able to act effectively in defense of their own interests, to rely upon themselves instead of on political bosses or even labor leaders, as they stand up in dignity and strength when those interests are threatened.

5 China labor protesters jailed

Five workers at a Taiwanese-owned shoe factory in southern China have been convicted of taking part in a protest against wages and conditions. Four were sentenced to three and a half year prison terms, while the fifth was given a suspended sentence.

They were among 40 arrested after thousands of workers went on strike at two factories in Dongguan April 23. Workers were being paid \$54 a month, much of which went back to the bosses for room and board. Stella International, which makes shoes for international brands such as Brown, Wolverine World and Timberland, claimed protesters caused US\$18,600 in damage at the factory.

Another five workers arrested at a different factory in Dongguan after a protest April 21 are expected to stand trial soon.

Strikes and other protests are increasingly common in China despite fierce repression. Some three million people took part in protests last year according to official statistics.

6,000 in sit-down strike

A seven-week sit-down strike by more than 6,000 textile workers that began Sept. 14 at the recently privatized Tianwang Textile Factory in Xianyang City (northern China) has ended in a compromise settlement after police rounded up hundreds of strikers. Most have been released, but more than 20 are said to face criminal charges.

Banners hanging from the factory gate declare: "We want to survive," "Protect workers' rights" and "Give us back the funds we

Zimbabwe kicks out COSATU union delegation

Zimbabwe police have expelled a South African union mission investigating repression of the labor movement in the country, after the Congress of South African Trade Unions delegation refused to agree to government demands that they not meet with dissident groups.

Police held the unionists at gun point in the airport for several hours. When they refused to pay for their own deportation, police drove them to the border and dumped them at the bridge between the countries.

worked hard for."

The factory's new owner, China Resources Co., dropped its demand that workers sign short-term labor contracts as probationary workers, but refused to maintain wage levels or properly compensate workers for the loss of their state employee status and benefits. Instead, workers will receive severance payments equivalent to one month's basic salary for each year of service.

Nearly 1,000 police tried to evict the strikers Sept. 18, but were turned back as thousands of workers fled the streets surrounding the factory.

When contacted by *China Labour Bulletin*, union authorities stated that they could not help the workers in the dispute because they had "not received any instruction from the Xianyang Municipal Government." The strikers had demanded the right to elect their own union representatives.

The striking workers' main demands were: 1) that the government send an inspection team to review the terms of the factory's merger with China Resources to see if there has been any financial impropriety; 2) that more equitable contracts be offered to the workers with preservation of seniority rights, compensation for their loss of state-owned enterprise employee status, and continued payment of their pension and medical insurance premiums; and 3) that China Resources be held responsible both for the losses incurred during the suspension of production and also for workers' wages during the period of the strike, since the new contracts offered by the company are illegal.

Chile: Public workers strike

State workers struck Oct. 5 to demand better working conditions and retirement benefits, noting that the Concertación alliance of center-left political parties has not adopted any concrete measures in their favor since the taking power a decade ago. The general strike was held on the 16th anniversary of the 1988 referendum in which Chileans voted to oust the Pinochet dictatorship. Pinochet privatized the government pension plan, leading to drastic reductions in benefits.



Guatemala Pepsi workers continue struggle

On October 14, Pepsi workers marked two years – 106 weeks or 742 days – since being illegally fired by the bottler La Mariposa SA of Pepsi. They have been protesting in front of the National Palace for 632 days.

Workers marked the anniversary by meeting with other unions to urge them to boycott Pepsi. The company has begun a series of one-on-one visits to the fired workers' homes offering them Quetzales 5,000 (about US\$640) if they abandon their demand for reinstatement. But, the union says, "We remain strong. We don't want Pepsi's dirty money. We want our jobs back immediately."

Letters supporting the workers can be sent to: BoardofDirectors@Pepsi.com.

Cambodia: Murderers of union leaders enjoy impunity

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has charged Cambodia's government with being "at best unable, and at worst unwilling" to carry out a proper investigation into the murders of two union leaders

that occurred earlier this year. Chea Vichea, president of the Free Trade Union of the Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia, and Ros Sovannareth, president of the Trinonga Komara Garment Union, were killed in broad daylight on January 22 and May 7.

Bangladeshi garment workers lowest paid in world

Bangladeshi garment workers get the lowest wages in the world, and often go months before receiving their meager wages. Although labor laws provide for a maximum 10-hour day and six-day week, 14-hour days are common as are seven-day weeks.

Bangladesh has 3,700 garment factories where 1.8 million people work. Unions say a million garment workers are in danger of losing their jobs with the pending expiration of the quota system that helped Bangladeshi garment industry thrive.

Even with its low wages, long hours, failure to provide legally required benefits, and unventilated workplaces, employers say that can not compete with lower-cost operations in other countries without the quotas.

Grocery workers face fight

Some 17,000 Colorado UFCW members face a possible lock-out after management refused to allow them to accept terms the King Soopers, Safeway and Albertsons chains advertised in local newspapers. Northern California grocery workers are also in difficult negotiations, with the chains demanding concessions patterned on those reached earlier this year in Southern California.

Meanwhile, in Ohio the UFCW has struck a deal with Kroger covering 8,500 workers despite deep worker discontent with concessions on health care and other issues and lower pay for new part-time workers.

The UFCW had announced Sept. 8 that its California, Colorado and Ohio locals would ally in order to strengthen workers' hands in negotiations with the chains that now dominate the U.S. grocery industry. The alliance lasted only three days before UFCW Local 7 agreed to a five-week contract extension in Colorado.

Local 7 has filed an Unfair Labor Practice charge protesting a revenue-sharing agreement under which the chains will pool their profits or losses during any strike or lockout. A similar pact in California undercut the UFCW's attempt to divide the chains in Southern California by pulling pickets from the Ralph's (Kroger) chain even though their members were still locked out.

Health care costs have been a key issue in UFCW negotiations across the country.

Canada: Ferry workers hit with 7-year deal

B.C. Ferry workers, who entered binding mediation last December after a bitter five-day strike, have now reaped the bitter fruit of that defeat. Canadian mediator Vince Ready imposed a seven-year contract on the 4,300 workers, which includes a wage freeze for the first three years – followed by annual increases of 1 to 2 percent. B.C. Ferries president David Hahn welcomed the contract. "It gives us a period of time that's, I think, unique in B.C."

Aussie bosses demand unionists' bank records

FROM WORKERS ONLINE #242
An Australian judge has issued a stern rebuke to the Building Industry Taskforce after it demanded personal bank records from CFMEU members working at a Melbourne job site where a worker was killed in an industrial accident. "Such notices are foreign to the workplace relations of civilised societies, as distinct from undemocratic and authoritarian states," Justice Marshall ruled.

However, the Coalition government intends to bolster the anti-union agency's powers with new regulations compelling workers to give evidence or produce documents to the Taskforce under threat of imprisonment.

Germany: GM-Opel workers wildcat against lay-offs

Protests by more than 50,000 workers at 13 General Motors facilities across Europe disrupted production Oct. 19 to protest plans to lay off some 12,000 workers. Unions insisted GM's European losses resulted from management blunders, and that workers should not have to pay the price for them.

"All that the idiots in pinstripes can think of is job cuts," said Dietmar Hahn, head of the Bochum plant's works council. Workers at GM's Opel plant there struck for several days, blockading the factory to protect their jobs.

The strike cut off parts to other GM plants, closing down assembly lines in Antwerp and Ruesselsheim, and prompted unions and the government to plead with workers to end the action.

Dutch protest austerity

Some 200,000 workers marched in Amsterdam to protest plans to cut public spending. Reforms of welfare support and health coverage, and a freeze on civil service salaries and the minimum wage, sparked protests across the country. Earlier strikes closed the world's busiest port at Rotterdam and shut down public transport.

Wal-Mart threatens to close only unionized store

Wal-Mart has announced that its Jonquière, Quebec, store is losing money and may have to be closed. The statement follows a provincial order to recognize the UFCW union at the store, which management had earlier said was profitable.

