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Principles of labor solidarity

BY ARTHUR J. MILLER

The employing class is getting richer and more powerful while at the same time the working class is getting poorer and weaker. The reason for this is that the employing class has organized in its common interests through trade associations from industrial associations all the way up to the World Trade Organization.

Using their wealth and power the employing class has most governments in their pockets working for the direct interests of the employing class. These governments pass anti-labor laws, and repress labor struggles that weaken the power of organized labor while at the same time support the organization of the interests of the employing class and make international trade deals that profit the employing class at the expense of the environment and the working class.

At the top of the hierarchical class system are the multinational corporations that seek total economic control over the world's production of goods and services and exploitable resources. The drive for total domination of the world's economies by the multinational corporations is a process that is stripping the working class of its human rights and is turning the working class into indentured servants under the iron heel of corporate fascism.

The organizations of organized labor, here in the U.S., have almost become powerless by the passing of anti-labor laws that outlaw such things as sympathy strikes and secondary boycotts. The Taft-Hartley Act allows the president to suppress a strike for a so-called "cooling off period." The U.S. courts are used to issue injunctions against the number of people on a picket line thus limiting the power of a union to keep scabs out of a shop on strike.

The National Labor Relations Board, which oversees union certification and decertification elections and hears unfair labor practice charges, is a roadblock in the way of organizing working people. First its members are appointed to five-year terms by the president and thus are often anti-union. The NLRB takes job organizing out of the hands of the workers on the job and gives it to lawyers and professional union officers, thus making the unions into service organizations rather than a bonding of workers on the shop floor. Even if the union wins an election the employers can delay certification, sometimes for years, by appeals. Finally after a union is certified all that means is that the union is the bargaining agent, it does not win the workers even one red cent.

The government has tried to segregate some workers who own or lease some of their tools away from the rest of the working class and classified them as independent contractors - bringing them under anti-trust laws that do not allow them to act or organize together for better payment from their employers.

So far the labor movement has not put up much of a fight against the anti-labor laws and the NLRB. Rather than use their power of direct economic action, the unions have tried to get elected to national office politicians who may act for working people. So far this tactic has produced nothing, for the dominant political parties work primarily in the interest of the employing class. All this has done is to force working people to choose between the lesser of two evils.

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Alternative union models in Latin America

BY THOMAS SCHOMBERG

Privatization decimated her union. "Before the privatization we had 1,000 members. We were big. We were really strong, really powerful within the company," boasts Carmelina Contreras, General Secretary of the SUTTEL. "Today our organization has 197 workers... That's what privatization did." The SUTTEL, El Salvador's telecommunication workers' union is now a smaller union with no bargaining rights for their members. With a militant core of volunteer leaders and popular support, they are fighting to rebuild the strength they once had.

Sound familiar? That's what the IWW has as its task. Only it wasn't the IMF that did us in. It wasn't just yesterday either. SUTTEL has no collective bargaining contract with their employer but, through the labor department, individual members can volunteer for dues check off. Telephone workers bold enough to declare membership in the union pay \$2.90 a month to SUTTEL. After El Salvador's civil war of the 1980s, union membership carries a gravity that extends past mere employment. Salvadoran unionistas face right-wing terrorism as an ever-present reality. Those of us familiar with past persecution of IWWs can see the parallels.

In talking with Carmelina about their struggle, I inquire about organizing outside the contract model. "I understand that," she replies "As workers we can't get to that magic number, 50% plus 1. So what we're doing is forming an industrial formation... a larger union beyond just communication workers

but to include postal workers, to include television workers, and other workers all in the same kind of federation."

Their turn toward an industrial structure, called SITCOM, is exactly the tip that some of us need to hear. The long-dead single-shop tradition needs to take back seat to the industrial formation. Nevertheless, Contreras states, "As we bring those [smaller sectors] in we can support their efforts in getting 50% plus 1. Because they have smaller bargaining units they can get 50% plus 1." SUTTEL keeps open their option for contracts.

On the other end is a tiny organization in Ciudad Juarez called CETLAC, the Labor Studies Center. Armed with a handful of experienced organizers and a small budget from the FAT, Mexico's Authentic Workers' Front, CETLAC takes on some amazing projects. "So in our organization we have basically five people who are organizers. But who we organize is really what's important," explains Félix Perez, environmental educator and CETLAC organizer. "Groups of workers like shoe shiners, or street vendors that have no permanent stand or no shop but they just have to kind of roam around. And these workers, they don't have any other way to organize themselves so CETLAC provides organizers to help put things together."

CETLAC holds educational workshops and initiates campaigns outside of the traditional union purview. Félix told me he studied ecology in school. This understanding he applied to defeating a proposed hazardous waste

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AFL piecards flailing in battle to survive

In the aftermath of the elections, the AFL-CIO is embroiled in a bitter dispute about the future of the labor federation, with partisans on both sides threatening to quit the American Federation of Labor if they do not prevail.

The AFL Executive Council refused to engage in substantive discussions of its future at its Nov. 10 meeting, putting off the controversy until its mid-February meeting in Los Angeles. Instead, they met with John Kerry to discuss strategies for rejuvenating the Democratic Party.

Service Employees International Union President Andrew Stern had circulated a 10-point program on the eve of the meeting calling for a massive overhaul of the federation. His plan called for the AFL to rebate half of affiliate dues for organizing, devote the \$25 million a year the Federation receives from allowing Household Finance to market credit cards to union members to a national campaign to unionize Wal-Mart, fighting for universal health care, and greater top-down control of the labor federation. Stern and his allies have been campaigning to restructure the AFL's 60-some unions into a more streamlined, centralized grouping of 15 or so sectoral unions.

Stern's proposal did not specify what shape the health care initiative would take. The AFL-CIO has long been formally committed to health care reform, but has been unable to agree on any particular plan, in large part because many affiliated unions operate health plans which they rely heavily upon for membership recruiting, for patronage, and to subsidize other union activities.

The SEIU made it clear that unless there is drastic change, the federation's largest union might leave, possibly joining with the already independent United Brotherhood of Carpenters to form a new labor federation.

Stern described the Executive Council session as blaming "anybody but us" for the election outcome, with "no discussion on substance whatsoever." "We need to change the AFL-CIO now," he concluded.

Union membership has been steadily declining since the 1950s, with some 12.9 percent of the U.S. work force now belonging to a union. Only 8.2 percent of private sector workers are unionized, a number that continues to plummet as employers close and downsize unionized facilities, and U.S. labor law makes it extremely difficult to organize new workers through the NLRB.

The SEIU is one of the few unions to gain members in recent years, though those gains are as much from mergers with independent unions as from new organizing. More recently, the 1.7 million member SEIU has faced a wave of disaffiliation campaigns as outraged members struggle to regain control of union locals that have been merged into huge mega-locals or placed under national control.

AFL President John Sweeney, whom the insurgents hope to unseat at the AFL convention next summer, said the AFL already has established a task force to create a national Wal-Mart campaign. Stern says the task force has met only once, and has not begun a campaign to challenge the retail giant. The \$25 million the AFL-CIO gets from its credit card contract is the largest discretionary part of the

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Peltier March and Rally

We will hold the 12th Annual Northwest Regional International Day of Solidarity with Leonard Peltier Saturday, February 5, in Tacoma, Washington. The day will begin at noon with a March for Justice beginning at Portland Avenue Park (between E. 24th and E. Fairbanks) and ending with a Rally for Justice at the U.S. Federal Court House.

Leonard Peltier is an American Indian Movement Activist who was framed up by the government after a firefight on the Pine Ridge Oglala Reservation that happened because of an illegal government operation to steal Oglala land for uranium mining. The head of the local FBI office at the time, Norman Zigrossi, defended the illegal actions by saying: "Indians are a conquered nation and the FBI is merely acting as a colonial police force... When you're conquered, the people you're conquered by dictate your future."

In 2003 the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals stated in their ruling, "Much of the government's behavior at the Pine Ridge Reservation and in its prosecution of Mr. Peltier is to be condemned. The government withheld evidence. It intimidated witnesses. These facts are not disputed." But nonetheless, they refused to overturn his conviction.

The Oglala people were never conquered and Leonard Peltier will not give up the fight for justice. In today's world it is more important than ever to stand up to political persecution.

The last two years the City of Tacoma has tried to stop our march; last year the city tried to intimidate us with a massive show of police. The support of many good people and a legal team won us the right to march. Though our focus has been for 12 years to hold a peaceful march of solidarity with Leonard Peltier, we will not stop marching, we will not be intimidated and we demand the right to come out in public in support of Leonard Peltier without persecution.

We ask you to join us at our annual March and Rally in Solidarity with Leonard Peltier as we send the message, we will not

give up, we will not surrender, we will continue to stand for justice for Leonard Peltier for however long it takes! This action is in support of the important legal efforts of Leonard's

legal team (for more information: www.leonardpeltier.org).

We need to raise money for printing fliers, posters and for our mailings, as well as help spreading the word and organizing transportation and caravans from throughout the region.

In The Spirit Of Crazy Horse,
Steve Happy, Jr. and Arthur J. Miller
Tacoma Leonard Peltier Support Group,
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Radical Economics and the Labor Movement conference

This conference, being organized as part of the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the IWW, seeks proposals for papers and panels on any aspect of the theme, including radical economics in labor education and literature, alternative economic visions, the role of radical economics in supporting union activities, etc. The conference will be held Sept. 15 - 17, in Kansas City, Missouri. A complete conference call, including information on submitting proposals by mid-December, is available by email from iw@iww.org.

This notice appeared incorrectly last issue:

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In November, We Remember

www.earthbornfilms.com

A union of the wealthy

BY SHAUN RANDOL

Is it okay to support a union entirely made up of wealthy individuals? Do we support the principle of the Union (with a capital U) even if its average member earns \$1.8 million a year (compared to median American household income of \$43,300/year)?

Originally created to battle corporate wealth and disparities between the uber-rich and the destitute masses, the collectivity of multi-millionaire athletes and their arrogant self-labeling of "union" is a slap in the face of the philosophy behind collective bargaining, unionization and to the extant labor unions around the world.

As of Nov. 5, 2004, it has been 50 days since the National Hockey League Players Association has been "locked out" by the team owners. The rub? The NHLPA is miffed that the owners (among a couple of other items) are pushing for a (*gasp*) salary cap. The highest-paid NHL player, Peter Forsberg of the Colorado Avalanche, earns \$11 million per year. The lowest paid NHL player, Donald Audette of the Florida Panthers, takes home \$150,000 a year. Compare that to the median American male annual income of \$40,668.

Now, to be fair, the NHLPA is willing to take a pay cut in their annual salary - 5%. This would put Forsberg at \$10.45 million and Audette at a paltry \$142,500. A 5% decrease in the US median male income would knock it down to \$38,635. (Note: These numbers do not reflect corporate endorsement incomes both NHL players and the average American male receive.)

Nobody has noticed that the NHLPA has been locked out - not even the players. Thus far one-third of the members have taken off to Europe to play in their leagues. The fact is, NHL does not make for good TV ratings, but the lockout is damaging to host cities. For example, according to the *USA Today* (9/15/04) the "Detroit Regional Chamber and Comerica Bank estimate each Red Wings game brings \$2.2 million to the city's economy." So the individuals who work home games notice the hockey strike. I have not researched this, but

my guess is that one-third of the Americans affected by the strike have not gone to Europe to work the games there. Furthermore the average American union member cannot pick up and go to Europe or China or Mexico every time they are locked out of their jobs.

The NHLPA and their lock-out does not resemble your average union lock-out. There are no picket lines. There are no sit-ins. NHLPA members are not writing to their elected representatives or the local papers trying to sway public opinion in their favor. And why would they? Would the average American support a millionaires' strike? Since the strike began the NHLPA has only released two press releases. In the second release they called the 5% salary reduction "a major concession."

Please. According to the AFL-CIO today "full-time, year-round minimum wage earnings are nearly 20% below the poverty level for a family of three." Even a living wage would only come to \$17,050/year for a family of four (after taxes). And the NHLPA is calling a 5% reduction of their superfluous salaries a major concession. Tell that to the hotel workers in San Francisco, the grocery workers in Southern California, the tomato farmers in Florida, the janitors in St. Louis, and on and on. If the NHLPA wants to call itself a union they should try and relate to their fellow brethren across this nation (and around the world considering the international make-up of the NHL). Instead of taking off for the season to play in Europe NHLPA members should pick up a mop in A.G. Edwards corporate office in St. Louis and scrub floors with their fans who shell out \$50 a ticket and make it possible for there to be a National Hockey League in the first place.

The preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World constitution, penned by Father Thomas J. Hagerty, claims, "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common." Well, as long as NHLPA "union" members continue to live in mansions I offer the following statement: The National Hockey League players and their fan base have nothing in common.

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- ★ ORGANIZATION
- ★ EDUCATION
- ★ EMANCIPATION

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Alternative unionism...

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site in Juarez. As well as organizing non-traditional work forces like vendors, CETLAC supports community efforts in Juarez' outer colonias, "where people are really trying to organize themselves just for the very, very basics of life," explains Perez.

These two organizations offer some interesting examples for IWWs. When hearing of CETLAC, I'm reminded of our efforts in Vancouver to support busker and squeegee worker organization or Ottawa's homeless community challenging the city. In those situations, the government and the police, not employers directly, are the primary obstacle to power. Olympia's new Workers' Information and Networking Center, supported by IWWs, also comes to mind when thinking about CETLAC. As well, Santa Barbara's bilingual Workers' Rights Workshops have been a pole star for our union's educational efforts. This 'worker center' model is an exciting option for some of our branches; a great leap from the 'wobbly cultural club' in my opinion. There is, however, a major question we need to answer: Will these efforts produce strong industrial organization for the IWW?

Looking at Carmelina's SUTTEL, we can trace similarities as well. They have little paid staff, if any, and only 200 members at present. They enjoy massive support from the community and are "glued" together with eight other unions in El Salvador's FESTRAFE. Tied to the telecom industry, they have a rock from which to leap toward a broader structure. Our union as a whole has no base industry, but significant work is happening in Philadelphia, Chicago, and on the West Coast to lay that foundation.

Though a radical union, SUTTEL has dues check off - voluntary and potentially fatal. For the IWW, implementing monthly deductions from our individual bank accounts, silently and steadily, could put us on firm financial ground, clean up our delegate bureaucracy, and help us circumvent the boss' check off.

Carmelina's and Félix's organizations interact with their respective governments in a very conscious way, too. Asked about the CETLAC strike fund, Felix says, "Our strike fund is not in an account that has to do with the FAT or the organization. We keep it somewhere else." Carmelina states, "What the government knows [is that SITCOM] will be a threat. So at every step of the way they've tried to block the formation of this industrial union... They keep telling us, 'There's problems with the registry. There's problems with this and that.' They won't accept it. So what we've had to do is sue the labor department in the Supreme Court of the nation." SUTTEL expects a decision shortly. Carmelina adds, "And hopefully the people who were fired in the creation of this union will be forcibly rehired because [the Court will] recognize that what they were doing was union organizing."

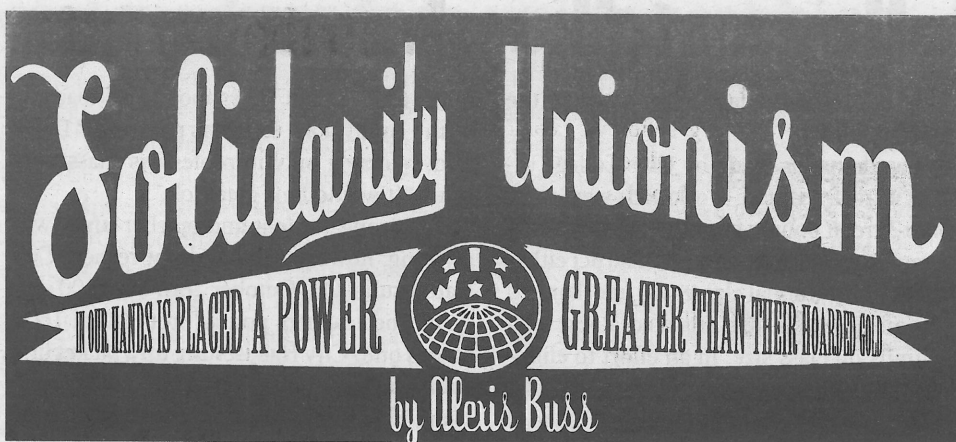
With ties to organizations from all parts of the world, both CETLAC - FAT and SUTTEL utilize cross-border solidarity to keep the bosses in check. But the IWW has work to do. Only by building an organization worth calling on, will our fellow workers in other regions benefit from IWW solidarity.

Interviews translated by Jason Wallach.

UE ousts AFL union

The independent United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (UE) won an NLRB representation election at Chicago-based Republic Windows Nov. 10, with 340 workers voting for UE representation, against only nine votes for the incumbent union. A management-led "no union" campaign received 108 votes; 10 ballots were challenged.

The ousted union cooperated with Republic management in saddling workers with spiraling health care costs without wage increases and refused to defend workers facing harassment on the job. The average production worker at Republic earns just \$8 an hour, well below prevailing rates in the region.



"Hope never dies... In the workers' movement, they say as long as people are subjected to this level of injustice there will be only one option: to challenge the oppression, to change the structure completely so that people can develop themselves and live in a real democracy. ... We have to maintain hope to live, not only to live but to live well. To live just for the sake of living doesn't make sense."

- Guatemalan labor activist Rodolfo Robles

I've been thinking about hope a lot lately. It started at the IWW's General Assembly back in September - first with the excitement of meeting with so many workers committed to making a better world, and then later as I was thinking about the truth of something a fellow worker from Edmonton said. (Forgive me, I forget which of you said it; whoever you are, you're brilliant.)

Anyhow, the fellow worker made a point about how so many workers get through the day by simply giving over to resignation. The attitude of "There's nothing I can do, nothing will work, just grin and bear it" has become a rock to bear the weight of the alienation too many of us experience in our work lives.

As organizers, we need to ask people to dare to hope. It's a lot to ask: to rearrange our thinking so that we start thinking about what can be done, and what our part in the doing is. The idea that we can work together and take charge of our own lives, and profoundly influence the lives of others is a lot of responsibility. Resignation takes no

responsibility whatsoever.

After the results of November election came in, as people in Philadelphia wandered the streets with the deer-in-the-headlights look, I overheard it - at a diner, on the trolley, and as I was picking up groceries: "There is no hope." The sense that the possibilities in the everyday lives of people in my city are now different, that things will get worse, that there's nothing we can do except brace for impact, really seemed to grab hold.

I don't think I would have felt an abundance of hope had the election results been different, but at times like this I think we do need to hold onto our hope the most. Because what happens if we don't? I think history will show that working people do our best when there is a sense of hope, not when we're resigned to go along with whatever the bosses dish out to us.

During a recent trip to Chicago, I got to make a toast to the hope that a campaign among messengers offers to us all. In an industry that hasn't had a history of unionization, which many would write off as unorganizable because of the atomized nature of the workforce, these workers have reached out to one another and stood up to police repression, bad bosses, and most of all, their own sense of isolation.

I think we can take it for granted that no single organizing campaign is going to save the world, but workers struggling to make it a better place is certainly a necessary element. Thank you, fellow workers, for the hope.

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: _____

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Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

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Chicago City College strike shows power of solidarity

BY CLIFF WILLMENG

Striking teachers from Local 1600 and students from Chicago City Colleges returned to class in mid-November after a three-week struggle to turn back the most ambitious administration attacks on working conditions, health care, and class size in perhaps 27 years. During a rapidly escalating battle between labor and management that played out on picket lines, in City Hall, City College offices, and in the halls of the colleges themselves, a fighting teacher/student solidarity proved to be the critical turning point, not only in bringing the administration to the table, but bringing them to the table with offers.

The battle had already begun by the time the first picket signs were hoisted onto the shoulders of teachers and strike supporters. Administration officials took to plastering the halls of colleges with posters telling students they "Must Attend Class," knowing one of the key components to strike strategy was the uninterrupted continuation of classes. Scrolling, electronic signs pressured students and part time faculty into crossing picket lines as representatives from the Student Government Association went onto the nightly news to announce classes would not be affected.

Because Local 1600 hadn't made an effort to mobilize students' opinion and action to the side of the teachers, college officials were doing so on behalf of the administration.

In the days leading up to the strike, however, students had been organizing themselves at all seven city colleges. Flyers were passed out at one college in favor of the teachers while petitions circulated at another. At Truman College, flyers speaking out against administration demands on teachers and for full support of the picket lines were placed alongside administration posters. After these students saw their flyers being torn down by Truman President Marguerite Boyd, a confrontation followed that forced administration to take down its posters and replace them with posters that made no statements about mandatory student attendance.

It was not to be the last show down in the weeks to follow.

The demands made by City College officials were draconian. Workloads were to go from 12 credit hours a semester to a mandated 15, requiring many teachers to instruct either one or two additional classes for free. Banked vacation time was also attacked along with the limits on class size. In an effort to eliminate affordable health care, administration officials demanded teachers pay a percentage of premiums rather than their standard monthly fee. If successful, it would have amounted to an increase in insurance costs for teachers potentially reaching 400 percent.

With nowhere else to go, teachers took to picket lines with support from many part-time teachers, adult educators, and the newly formed student Strike Solidarity Committee. Most classes ground to a halt, but several kept running because the three unions in the City College system were not under one contract and many workers crossed picket lines. Even so, the numbers on the picket lines were in the hundreds. Many students came to class on that day only to learn for the first time what a picket line is, and what is expected of people who face a real struggle.

Throughout the initial days of the strike, City College appointees of Mayor Richard Daley refused to budge at all. Backed by the will to bring the first public sector union in Chicago to its knees, CCC officials went on the offensive. Health care insurance was cut off for striking teachers, sending a wave of fear into a faculty that included people with cancer treatments and late term pregnancies. Arrests and intimidation of students took place at picket lines and at a meeting of the City College Board. Part-time teachers were fired for supporting the embattled Local 1600 and deans were dispatched to physically ensure classes were continuing amidst a desert of student attendance.

By the end of the second week, friend of business Mayor Daley started to publicly ridicule the teachers with ignorant comments

in the *Chicago Sun Times* about workloads. "I wish I could work 15 hours per week," Daley said, referring only to professors' classroom time. "It would be a great job."

A strong student and teacher unity was growing, however, that did not respect City Hall insults. On October 28th over 600 students and teachers poured from Local 1600 busses onto City Hall, setting up a picket line stretching a block long. Around 60 students charged onto the 5th floor Mayor's office and occupied the area for over six hours demanding the Mayor's presence. The chanting and noise of the students was so loud that it could be heard clearly all the way down to the first floor. Elevator shafts resounded with the calls for a real contract and meetings were held in which students pressed for their own demands: No Reprisals Against Students On Strike - No Tuition Hikes! At 4:40 p.m., students were told that they must either leave or face arrest. The only thing that moved them from the spot, however, was a false rumor that the administration had been forced back to the negotiation table because of their actions.

The administration still refused to drop their demands and the strike was building in tension and time. Working class students, often single mothers, could not afford to have their semester lost, and striking teachers were looking at expensive COBRA plans to keep their families insured. The fight reached a climax on November 4th, when a public City College board meeting refused to allow teachers and students to address the administration. A crowd, disillusioned with petitioning a hostile Board and furious at the growing attacks on teachers and students, had noisily gathered outside of the elevator lobby. When security guards stopped reading the names of people allowed admittance to the meeting, patience wore out completely and the crowd surged forward.

Ropes containing the crowd were cast to the side as people moved into the elevator lobby. Several guards grabbed one student

organizer and others rushed in for support. Small fights broke out as security fought to restrain teachers and students charging onto the elevators heading to the Board's meeting space. People began pulling off security personnel piling on top of the student organizer while other security guards struck students with their walkie-talkies. Elevators in the main lobby were immediately shut down to protect the building from the mass of people fighting to get to CCC officials. Within minutes one security guard was bleeding from the head, apparently from a missed swing by another guard. A *Tribune* photographer later described the atmosphere as so intense that her knees had literally begun to shake while she snapped pictures.

During this time a woman who had already made it onto the third floor "fainted," forcing paramedics to the scene. While the Chicago Fire Department shut down Jackson Street, paramedics headed up the stairs with a stretcher. When they arrived on the third floor and began to administer help to the woman, she suddenly woke and instructed them not to help her. "I have no health care insurance!" she told them.

When Chicago Police finally forced teachers and students from the building, people were neither tired nor intimidated. Trustee board Chairman James Tyree (a key player in CCC administration) had an investment banking office at Mesirow Financial just up the street. Teachers and students began to prepare on the spot for an action at the Chairman's personal office. Before it could take place, however, Local 1600 officials had "cancelled" the action as negotiations were back under way and the union had decided that they wanted more diplomacy than strike escalation by then.

Within 48 hours, the Chicago City College administration had moderated its position on class size and extra class loads. They also doubled the pay for clinical teaching in the nursing department, created a deal for part-time teachers and eliminated publishing requirements for faculty. On the darker side, health care costs still increased and the yearly pay raise was settled at around 3%.

CCC officials understood the contract as a loss before the ink was dry. Pushing into the strike with enormous demands, they were turned around by a building wave of teacher - student solidarity that was prepared to throw aside polite appeals to Mayor Daley and take the fight back to City College officials. Speaking about the confrontation at the City College Board meeting, Trustee Chairman James Tyree was quoted as saying, "We never want to see that again." In a long era of labor fighting with two hands tied behind its back, Chicago City College teachers and their students managed to loosen the bonds in a way that needs to be recognized.

For this reason, reprisals against teachers and students were quick to begin. Ten days after the contract was signed, students were being punished academically, part-time teachers had been fired, nursing student fees were jacked up \$900/year and disciplinary charges were being levied against supporting adult educators. CCC dispatched police to arrest a Malcolm X teacher for being at the City College Board meeting the day of the protest. In a clear policy of pay-back, City College officials are now trying to hammer the same people that forced them to back down during the strike.

Grad employees fight on

Graduate employees across the country are continuing to organize despite the recent NLRB ruling that they are not covered by federal labor law. At Tufts, Brown and Columbia, teaching assistants have threatened strikes and other job actions if administrators continue to refuse to negotiate.

Plans are underway for a walkout at Columbia University, where graduate employees struck in April - using their labor power to win the rights denied them by the Board.

Labor solidarity...

continued from page 1

Because of these conditions working people are becoming poorer, those who have health coverage find that coverage threatened while millions of working people have no coverage at all, many of our jobs have moved away to countries where workers are forced to work for next to nothing. Our working conditions are becoming a greater threat to our health and safety. And our ability to do anything about these conditions has been greatly weakened.

The employing class is incapable of controlling its greed, and thus our very environment is threatened. The employing class will not turn away from its greed in order to protect the environment. In this modern world, the class struggle of working people is not just about more pay and better conditions - it is also about our very survival on this planet.

The labor movement must change its direction and it must do it soon. The labor movement should look back to the Civil Rights Movement and how it took direct action through civil disobedience against segregation laws and do the same against anti-labor laws and the NLRB.

We, as a class, need to openly defy anti-labor laws to the point that those laws become impossible to enforce. We must act in direct solidarity with those working people who do defy anti-labor laws and make the slogan "No Justice, No Peace" a reality.

All working people need to adopt the following Principles of Labor Solidarity:

1. Every worker on every job throughout the world has a right to organize with their fellow workers in their common interests.

2. Every worker throughout the world has a right to a living wage, safe and healthy



Stick Together

working conditions, and health care coverage.

3. Every worker throughout the world has a right to labor free of harassment and discrimination based upon race, sex, nationality, religion, or any other form of bigotry.

4. Every worker throughout the world has the right to refuse to partake in or support wars where working people of one country are used to fight and kill working people of another country.

5. Every worker throughout the world has the right and responsibility to protect the environment of this world.

6. Every worker throughout the world has the right to withhold their labor as the means advance the above principles.

7. No worker throughout the world should ever be a scab.

- No worker should ever cross the picket line of striking workers.

- No worker should ever supply a shop on strike with goods or services.

- No worker should ever handle scab goods.

- No worker should ever consume scab goods.

- No worker should ever do the work that striking workers would have done if they were not on strike.

- Whenever workers are faced with government repression because of their right to organize and strike then all workers have the right to withhold their labor from the companies and industries profiting from that repression and a universal boycott should be in place of all goods going to that country, coming from that country and on the companies profiting from the repression in that country.

8. Every strike or job action is a class action and should be support with direct solidarity unless that action violates the Principles of Labor Solidarity.

Labor Solidarity needs to become a part of international working class culture and practiced on a daily basis.

Locked-out Frisco hotel workers face union scabbing

Nearly 4,100 locked-out San Francisco hotel workers were slated to lose health benefits Dec. 1, until their insurer agreed to forego premiums until management allows the workers to return to their jobs. Hotel management had blocked UNITE-HERE's request to use a joint union-management trust fund to provide coverage for the next two months. The hotel workers' union is taking the issue to arbitration.

Management paid into the jointly administered trust fund under its expired contract; the \$22 million fund was last tapped after the Sept. 11 attacks to extend workers' health insurance during lay-offs and to help the hotels recover from a disastrous fall-off in business. But although the fund is part of workers' benefits package, because it is jointly controlled by management the workers can only draw upon their funds with the bosses' permission — once again demonstrating the folly of such cooperative arrangements.

The hotels continue to demand that workers agree to steep increases in costs for health benefits for 4,100 workers and 3,100 retirees — changes that would cost workers with families \$19 a month in the last year of the five-year deal management is demanding. The hotels also want to eliminate health coverage for many part-time workers.

The length of the contract is another major issue, with the union seeking a two-

year agreement so that contracts in different parts of the country would expire around the same time. When hotels were locally owned, UNITE-HERE says, it did not matter when contracts expired, but now a handful of operators control more than a fourth of all U.S. hotel rooms. As a result, they can subsidize losses from a labor dispute in one part of the country with profits from other hotels — many unionized — where work continues as usual. Management has refused even to discuss anything other than a five-year contract.

There has been some solidarity in other cities. Workers in Hawaii, who honored picket lines for 24 hours in October, have indicated they are prepared to honor the San Francisco picket lines again, should they return. Other Unite-Here locals have also held solidarity demonstrations in Baltimore, Boston, Seattle, San Diego and Jersey City, N.J.

Meanwhile, the workers are being undermined by union scabbing by hundreds of front desk, clerical and garage workers represented by the Teamsters Union, who recently began scabbing after weeks of honoring picket lines. Some hotels report that as many as 9 percent of Teamsters are crossing picket lines, in others most are refusing to scab.

Teamsters Locals 856 and 665 both insist they support the hotel workers, and are paying strike benefits to members who honor the picket line. But most Teamsters began scab-

bing in early November, and the union has taken no steps to address the problem.

Hotel workers in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., are also seeking two-year contracts as part of the union's effort to align its contracts in major cities.

Workers are also on strike in New York, at the Crowne Plaza LaGuardia, Holiday Inn JFK, and Hampton Inn JFK hotels.

The Atlantic City defeat

Last issue we reported (based on boss press reports received as we went to press) that the Atlantic City casino workers strike had ended with UNITE-HERE abandoning its bid to build real power by aligning contract expiration dates across the industry in exchange for substantial short-term pay and benefit gains.

It turns out that those reports were wildly optimistic. Under the new five-year contract, workers maintain their health benefits (although if costs rise more than expected, the boss can take the issue to binding arbitration) but will receive no pay hike at all in the contract's first year, one-time bonuses in the second and third years, and 25 - 3 cents an hour in the fourth and fifth years.

Employees with less than eight years on the job will receive no general wage increase over the length of the contract, though they will remain eligible for pre-existing step increases tied to length of service.

Flight attendants may strike

Faced with unprecedented industry-wide demands for concessions — often imposed by bankruptcy courts where unions have refused to go along — the executive board of the U.S.'s largest flight attendants' union has authorized a national strike after its president said the airline industry is using the bankruptcy process to threaten workers' livelihoods.

"Almost everywhere we look, flight attendants are being forced to work longer hours with reduced rest time, and all for ever-decreasing wages," said Patricia Friend, president of the Association of Flight Attendants, which represents workers at 26 airlines. "This must stop."

The union said it would immediately begin the process of taking strike votes at four airlines — United, US Airways, ATA Airlines and Hawaiian Airlines — but will not tally the votes until the end of December and would not strike unless management continues efforts to get bankruptcy courts to cancel union contracts and impose deep pay cuts at those airlines.

US Airways has already asked a bankruptcy judge to cancel contracts for flight attendants and several other unions, impose a 15 percent pay cut, and eliminate its pension plan. Pay cuts already imposed as a "temporary" emergency measures have led many workers to quit, causing long delays in baggage handling and other operations.

US Airways says a strike against a bankruptcy-court imposed pay cut would be illegal, and would result in mass firings.

The union disagrees. "When a bankruptcy judge abrogates a collective bargaining agreement..., that judge says to the parties the contract no longer exists, to the company, you're free to employ your self help, which is to implement the terms and conditions of your choosing," Friend said. "We intend to exercise our right to self help, which is to withdraw our services."

Pizza drivers seek independent union

The Association of Pizza Delivery Drivers is demanding better wages and training, saying the large chains have been taking advantage of them for years.

An NLRB election at a Domino's franchise in Lincoln, Neb., failed recently after management intimidated enough workers to secure a tie. Pizza Hut drivers will soon vote at a store near Columbus, Ohio.

APDD treasurer Tim Lockwood said the union started just a couple of years ago with a few drivers in an Internet chat room (www.pizadeliverydrivers.org) commiserating about working conditions. "It's sort of like the thing reached critical mass. We built a Web site and they came."

The union, which collects no dues, claims to have some 600 members nationwide.

Pizza drivers are typically paid minimum wage, plus 5 to 75 cents per delivery for fuel, no matter how far the trip. They must supply and maintain their own vehicles.

The union hopes to negotiate mileage rates, group insurance, and better safety measures. Pizza delivery is among the most dangerous professions in the country, suffering high rates of robbery and assault.

RANKIN FILE



UFCW blocks Colorado strike

United Food and Commercial Workers Union International President Joseph Hansen ordered Colorado UFCW Local 7 to halt a strike vote Nov. 5, saying he wanted to review the final contract proposal from the King Soopers, Safeway and Albertsons grocery chains.

The chains are demanding deep concessions from 17,500 workers; Local 7 officials have recommended that workers reject the demands and prepare for a strike. Voting had been proceeding city by city, and it appears that the UFCW might have allowed the proposed contract to be signed in some areas even as workers were striking against it in others.

Plumbers lose millions in pension fund scandal

Plumbers' union President Martin J. Maddaloni is embroiled in a scandal over his management of the Plumbers and Pipefitters National Pension Fund, with several union officials demanding his removal. He was earlier forced to resign from his positions on the union's seven pension plans in a settlement with the U.S. Dept. of Labor.

The union has made a number of questionable investments, including \$8 million in the troubled Diplomat Hotel in Hollywood, Florida. The union has also spend more than \$3 million on a nearby country club which is assessed at less than \$1 million. The pension

plan also invested \$3 million investment in Value America, an online retailer that went bankrupt in 2003, and has lost at least \$2 million on another dot-com start up.

The union is investigating charges that Maddoloni and General Secretary-Treasurer Thomas H. Patchell (the two agreed to pay an \$11 million fine to the government last year) authorized the investments on their own, without consulting other fund trustees. Some union members say the union is now in such poor financial condition that it may actually be bankrupt.

Operating Engineers officials plead guilty to racketeering

Three leaders of International Union of Operating Engineers Local 15 have pled guilty to criminal charges including racketeering, taking bribes and mail fraud. Thomas P. McGuire, former vice president of the International Union of Operating Engineers and business manager of Local 15, was among the officials pleading guilty to receiving bribes from construction contractors.

Longshore officials indicted for on bribery charges

Albert Cernadas, executive vice president of the International Longshoremen's Association, has become the latest and highest-

ranking ILA official to be indicted on federal racketeering charges.

The indictment expands on previous charges against the president of the ILA's New York/New Jersey maintenance local and an ILA vice president who heads the union's Miami local. The three are charged with conspiring to steer ILA health-care contracts for prescription drugs and for mental health and drug treatment to firms that allegedly paid kickbacks to the mob.

Concessions on Eastern docks

A federal judge rejected ILA members' lawsuit to throw out union's new master contract despite evidence that ILA officials intimidated voters and rejected thousands of votes in order to win ratification. The judge said shippers would be hurt were an injunction to be issued against the contract.

Dozens of longshoremen from Louisiana to New Jersey had protested the new contract, which creates a multi-tiered wage system that gives management the power to hire new, lower-wage workers in place of longshoremen with seniority. Dock workers earn benefits based on hours worked per year, not years on the job. Under the contract, workers need to log 1,000 hours to qualify for even 5 percent health coverage, 300 more than before.

The ILA and maritime industry were co-defendants in the hearing, and their lawyers argued together against union members.

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Film Review: The psychos among us

BY JOHN GORMAN

"The Corporation" at 165 minutes is a long film, but the time passes quickly, as its makers, Mark Achbar and Jennifer Abbott, working from a script by lawyer and professor Joel Bakan, trace the evolution of the corporation from its beginnings in the early 19th Century on to the behemoth it has become today. As we learn from the film, corporations were originally set up to dispense charity or accomplish public works. Once the job was completed, the corporation was dissolved.

After the Civil War, however, corporations took on the form we recognize today, as they built the railroads, mined the minerals and cut the forests of the newly opened West. The most important change, however, came in the 1870s, when court decisions gave the corporation, already recognized as a legal person, rights that had previously only been enjoyed by flesh and blood people.

What Achbar and Abbott deliver, however, is more than just another expose of corporate wrong doing. They look for the source of that misbehavior and find it, not in the moral deficiencies of Ken Lay and others like him, but in the very "nature of the beast" that is the modern corporation. Since companies are now people, the film sets out with the aid of luminaries like philosopher Noam Chomsky, filmmaker Michael Moore and investigative journalist Edwin Black, author of *Banking on Baghdad*, to analyze corporations as though they were actual subjects in a case study. Interviews with unwary CEOs help flesh out the picture, as we are given quick courses in "guilt" marketing, union busting

and corporate dirty tricks. The conclusions of the study are not encouraging. If we were confronted by a person who behaved like Enron, General Motors, Liz Claibourne, Gap, Bechtel and many others, we would move toward the inevitable conclusion that the subject was a psychopath, marked by ruthless self-interest, indifference to harm caused to people, animals or biosphere, refusal to accept responsibility, inability to feel remorse, etc. The list goes on and on.

As the film promises, it goes beyond the moral shortcomings of individuals to examine the essential make up of the corporation and remind us that the only legally enforceable obligation the directors have to the shareholders is to maximize their investment. With this mandate, violating the law or even common decency is hardly reprehensible, so long as profits increase. Any penalties these infractions might bring are merely another cost of doing business, so long as they don't seriously affect profits. Even if the penalties are severe, the ultimate message sent is not to improve corporate behavior but to be more careful to avoid detection in the future.

Within this context, the efforts of General Motors, when exposed by Ralph Nader in his *Unsafe At Any Speed*, not to improve their products, but to try to silence Nader become entirely comprehensible. The persecution of whistle blowers also makes perfect sense, as the film shows the unhappy fate of two Fox Newscasters unwilling to kill a story connecting Monsanto's BST to cancer.

The film ends on an apparently hopeful

note with interviews with Ray Anderson, CEO of Interface, the largest commercial carpet maker in the world, who has understood that his firm's current business model is simply unsustainable. Anderson goes into encouraging detail as he explains the changes he has made as a result of a personal "epiphany" in the mid-'80s, and there can be no doubt of his good intentions. Yet we are also reminded that his firm is essentially a family enterprise, and he is not answerable to stockholders. He is free to act ethically only because he has no overseers. If his corporation were organized in the usual way, it is virtually certain the firm's behavior would be indistinguishable from any other corporate villain's.

As "The Corporation" ends, we are left with the realization that corporate accountability will not come from within. We must demand it, day in and day out, until the essential structure of the corporation is changed and its power broken. Corporations, like everyday psychopaths, cannot grow a conscience.

AFL in crisis...

continued from page 1

Federation's \$118-million annual budget.

Stern says the AFL-CIO "should have the authority to require coordinated bargaining and to merge or revoke union charters, transfer responsibilities to unions for whom that industry or sector is their primary strength, and prevent any merger that would further divide workers' strength." The SEIU has established a web site, www.unitetowin.org, to promote its reorganization plan, which unlike the increasingly autocratic union Stern heads is at press time allowing dissident views – a few highly critical of the lack of democracy within the SEIU – to be posted, even if they are buried behind Stern's many posts as comments (one such criticism had originally appeared as its own topic, but now is deep in the comments section).

Stern has repeatedly threatened to take the SEIU out of the AFL-CIO unless it adopts new leadership and commits itself to his restructuring plan. The International Association of Machinists has announced it will withdraw if the SEIU plan is adopted. Although AFL (and former SEIU) President John Sweeney has said he intends to run for re-election next year, some believe he may step aside in an effort to find a face-saving way out of the growing impasse.

A lost opportunity

Labor columnist Harry Kelber notes that AFL-CIO unions lost a historic opportunity in the recent elections: "They sent close to 5,000 staff people to work full-time on the campaign. They mobilized 200,000 union volunteers to knock on the doors of six million voters to discuss issues that most concern working families."

But after praising the union's heroic effort to elect the Kerry ticket, Kelber has a simple question: "One wonders why AFL-CIO strategists didn't see the election campaign as a way to recruit new members or at least build favorable sentiment for unions. With 200,000 union volunteers talking to millions of unorganized workers ... we had a made-to-order opening to get the union message to that vast audience in one-on-one discussions. Why did the AFL-CIO pass up this wonderful opportunity?"

Evidently, a labor movement that can't think of anything better to do with a couple hundred thousand members and a couple hundred million dollars than try to elect a millionaire to run the country can't be bothered talking to workers about conditions at their workplaces.

Kelber's column can be found online at www.laboreducator.org.

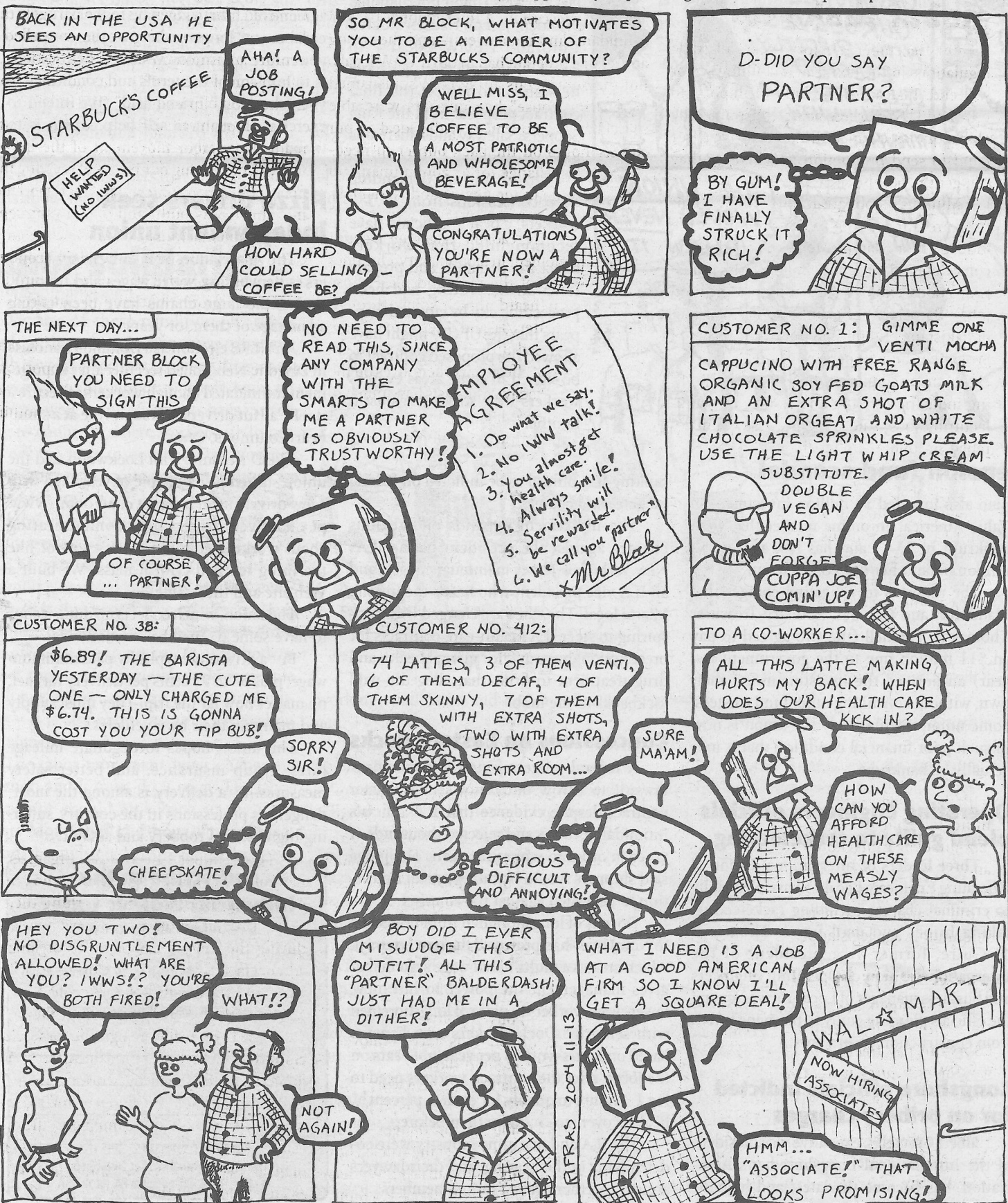
Unstrike at Starbucks

The Unstrike (strike on the job) that the members of CAW Local 3000 commenced against Starbucks on May 13, 2002, continues unabated. The major issues are job security, concessions and seniority. Starbucks still has no interest in negotiating. Please contact Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz at hschultz@starbucks.com and tell him you support the union. While you're at it you can ask him to stop retaliation against New York City Starbucks workers for trying to organize with the IWW. www.starbucksunion.org

U.S. unionist assassinated

Teamsters organizer Gilberto Soto was Nov. 5 while visiting his mother in Usulután, El Salvador. Soto headed Teamsters efforts to organize port truckers in the northeastern U.S., and traveled to Central America in an effort to build ties with shipping workers there – particularly those who haul containers for Maersk, one of the largest shipping companies in the world.

There are several union campaigns underway among the truckers who haul containers from Central American ports to the free trade zones that litter the region. The Teamsters are demanding an investigation.



Review: Fighting for shorter hours in the UAW

REVIEW BY JON BEKKEN

Jonathan Cutler, *Labor's Time: Shorter Hours, the UAW, and the Struggle for American Unionism*. Temple University Press, 2004, 236 pages, \$20.95 paper.

The U.S. labor movement was largely built out of the struggle for a shorter work week, but today has almost entirely abandoned the issue – instead demanding overtime premiums (and often as much overtime as possible) for the steadily diminishing share of the work force still represented by unions.

This is a fundamental shift from a unionism of solidarity, based on human values, to a scissorbill “unionism” in which we sacrifice our lives to the short-sighted pursuit of a few extra bucks in the paycheck, while forcing our fellow workers onto the unemployment lines. Traditionally, labor historians situate this shift in the World War II era, or in the postwar consensus in which workers allegedly traded shorter hours and a broader labor vision for ever-more-lavish consumption. Indeed, we are often told, workers don't want shorter hours – they want to work more overtime.

In *Labor's Time*, Jonathan Cutler looks at struggles within United Auto Workers Local 600 (the UAW's largest local, at the River Rouge Ford factory), demonstrating that the rank and file was deeply committed to shorter hours through the 1960s, and the UAW bureaucrats waged a long struggle to

suppress the shorter hours movement. Indeed, the issue remained potent enough that U.S. President Lyndon Johnson felt compelled to denounce proposals for a 35-hour week as part of his state of the union address.

Cutler also offers a useful reminder that for most of his career (after using the issue to gain the UAW presidency) Walter Reuther actively opposed the movement for shorter hours, instead pressing labor-management collaboration in an era when even the justly maligned George Meany still argued for a 30-hour week (even if he was incapable of mounting a real campaign for it). Cutler argues that Meany's position was completely opportunistic, aimed at undercutting Reuther's challenge to his leadership of the AFL by “exploit[ing] Reuther's major vulnerability as a labor leader: his repudiation of the demand for shorter hours.” (p. 4)

The abandonment of the shorter hours movement paralleled the corporate transformation of the union, Cutler argues. In 1938, when Reuther was fighting for control of the UAW, he championed the shorter hours issue; once in charge he sought to remove union voting rights from unemployed auto workers – eliminating much of the internal pressure for shorter hours campaigns – and entrench itself as management's partner on the shop floor. “We don't want more leisure,” Reuther said in 1947, “we want more goods”; suggesting that the 30-hour movement was a

Communist plot to “sabotage the American economy” (p. 37) and cooperating with a House Un-American Activities Committee investigation of Local 600.

This transformation was assisted by many factors. U.S. entry into the world war led the Community Party to embrace speed-ups and longer hours, absolutely discrediting what had once been a major force within the union. Meanwhile successive waves of union dissidents ran for office within Local 600 on programs calling for shorter-hours and a more militant stance against the company, only to concentrate on bureaucratic privileges once in office.

Much of *Labor's Time* chronicles the sordid internal political struggles between the different factions (many of which claimed to be socialist), who saw the rank-and-file as an instrument to be wielded in their struggles for power, rather than as the union itself. But whatever the sordidness of their motives, the fact that each wave of aspiring office holders felt compelled to seize on the shorter hours issue is, as Cutler argues, strong evidence that rank-and-file workers remained strongly committed to it.

Labor's Time offers a compelling blow-by-blow narrative of the fight within UAW Local 600 for shorter hours and union militancy, against a succession of International-backed candidates and maneuvers – and the strong appeal this program had in other UAW locals. But the bureaucrats at the UAW's misnamed “Solidarity House” headquarters were able to deflect the movement with a deal to put shorter hours on the back burner in negotiations in exchange for a “commitment” to press the issue in the next round. (That day, of course, never arrived.)

This is a very readable, engaging account of a critical moment in labor history. One does miss the voice of the rank and file (whose perspective is heard almost solely through their voting patterns), and discussion of how automation, speed-up and the changing organization of work affected workers' lives on the shop floor. But today's unionists have much to learn from this account of how our movement ended up on this track to oblivion.

Shorter-hours campaigns enabled unionists to bridge racial divisions through a demand promoting the interests both of entrenched skilled workers and of mass-production and unemployed workers seeking a response to automation and technological unemployment. The betrayal of the shorter hours movement, Cutler suggests, fueled racial polarization within the working class as labor “leaders” embraced corporatism over syndicalism, autocracy over rank-and-file control, and a “middle-class” lifestyle for a few over a broader social vision.

There was nothing inevitable about this. Rank-and-file workers were persistent supporters of shorter hours and a fighting union. Their insurgency was held off through a combination of buying off dissident activists, race- and red-baiting, the UAW's thoroughly undemocratic structure, and a labor relations regime that gave union officers the ability to collect dues and impose working conditions without regard to the wishes of the working members.

The defeat of the shorter hours movement, Cutler concludes, set the stage for the labor movement's current crisis. Today, “organized labor in the United States is so unresponsive to its own rank and file and so removed from its own history of struggle that labor leaders are no longer even compelled to venture a position on the hours question. . . . The vision of less work . . . has vanished from the horizon of possibility.” (p. 181)

We look in vain for any recognition in the mainstream labor movement of the importance of reclaiming our time – of reviving that great fight upon which the American labor movement was built, and which represents the fundamental human aspiration to control our own destinies and to build an economy and a working world structured not around the bosses' profits, but around our needs as human beings.

It is not, I think, too much to say that this blindness is a tragedy of historic proportions. A union movement that has nothing to say about time in the final analysis has nothing to say to workers.

Philippines: 14 killed in police attack on picket

Criminal charges of assault, illegal assembly, inciting to sedition and malicious mischief are pending against more than 100 strikers after hundreds of Filipino police and soldiers stormed barricades set up by workers outside the main gate of the Central Azucarera de Tarlac sugar plantation Nov. 16. As we go to press, soldiers are going door to door, dragging strikers out of their homes and detaining them.

The Philippine National Police Director General has suspended the Tarlac provincial police chief and the head of the regional police force pending an investigation into the attack.

An armored personnel carrier rammed the gate from inside the sugar mill while police fired tear gas and water cannons on the strikers. When the workers held their ground, soldiers fired live ammunition into the crowd.

Two children, aged 2 and 5, died of suffocation when tear gas drifted to their quarters on the plantation. Most of the other victims were killed by gun fire.

The plantation is owned by the family of former President Corazon Aquino, one of a small number of families which control huge tracts of land throughout the country. Aquino's son Benigno is deputy speaker of the Philippines House, “representing” many of the workers his family asked police to shoot down.

Hundreds of workers and their supporters have resumed picketing outside the main gate of the sprawling estate despite a heavy police presence.

Ricardo Ramos, president of the Central Azucarera de Tarlac Labor Union, said the workers were reclaiming their picket lines despite the heavy casualties.

The attack was apparently initiated at the request of the national Department of Labor and Employment, which has ordered workers to end the strike. Assistant Labor Secretary Benedicto Ernesto Bitonio Jr. told reporters the department was “on top of the situation. . . . As far as DOLE is concerned, all actions undertaken were according to law and the primary objective is to bring back the parties to the negotiating table.”

Textile workers face global shake-up

On December 31, forty years of trade regulations in the textile and clothing sector will end. Instead of the bulk of imports to E.U. and U.S. markets being constrained by global quotas, garment firms will have a free hand to send production to wherever they can get the best price.

Millions of jobs are at stake. Many countries are almost totally dependent on the industry. For example, textiles and clothing constitutes 95 percent of Bangladesh's industrial goods exports (providing 1.8 million jobs); 83 percent of Cambodia's; 75 percent of Pakistan's (1.4 million jobs); 72 percent of Sri Lanka's and 40 percent of Turkey's.

In many countries, the textiles and clothing industries are the only source of manufacturing jobs. And most of these countries relied on quotas under the Multi-Fibre Arrangement to win production contracts.

As global firms are freed from the MFA to take their production wherever they can get the best price, millions of garment workers around the world face the loss of their only source of income and the stage is being set for a new round of cut-throat competition.

Textiles and clothing already provides some of the worst employment imaginable. In Bangladesh, the legal weekly minimum wage was last raised in 1994 when it was valued at US \$33. Today it is worth no more than US \$17. And many companies do not pay the legal minimum. But, workers in Bangladesh are now being told that they must compete with China, where the government recently indicated that it is going to increase the amount of overtime hours of work permitted and relax regulations on night work.

The government of the Philippines says it will exempt the garment industry from the minimum wage legislation.

VW workers in 2-tier deal

Volkswagen has reached a new contract with the IG Metall union, winning a 28-month pay freeze and 20 percent lower pay for new hires in return for a no-layoff guarantee at its six West German plants. Workers will also lose most overtime earnings under a new scheme in which management can demand unpaid overtime at will, and “compensate” workers with reduced hours during slow periods.

\$79.5 mill overtime to Texas paramedics

Houston's City Council has approved a \$79.5 million settlement of paramedics' nine-year legal battle. The city had paid overtime only after 46.7 hours, claiming paramedics were not covered by the federal 40-hour law.

10-hour day in shipyards

Unions at Northrop Grumman's Ingalls shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi, have agreed to work a 10-hour day; a similar proposal is pending at the company's Avondale operation in New Orleans. The shipyards would initially work four-day weeks, and then might add a fifth shift at overtime rates or a weekend crew at straight time.

12-hour days in logging

Weyerhaeuser has imposed an 11.5-hour “standard” day for employees in logging operations on Vancouver Island, and some contract operations have employees working 15- to 16-hour days.

Unable to organize effective workplace resistance, the IWA has mounted a public campaign focusing on the danger of fatigued drivers crashing logging trucks. But instead of reducing hours, an arbitrator has imposed the 40-hour work week as a mini-

The defeat of the shorter hours movement set the stage for the labor movement's current crisis. Today, “organized labor in the United States is so unresponsive to its own rank and file and so removed from its own history of struggle that labor leaders are no longer even compelled to venture a position on the hours question. . . .”



mum, and would require many workers to put in 14 hours a day or more.

Weyerhaeuser has also cut the size of logging crews, increased work loads for truck drivers, and cut wages – pressuring many workers into accepting longer hours in order to make ends meet.

13-hour days at UAW

Three United Auto Workers organizers have filed a complaint against the union for not paying overtime while working them up to 13 hours a day, seven days a week, during the union's campaign to organize adjunct faculty at New York University. The UAW says the organizers were professional positions not covered by overtime law.

“The UAW really are fighting for workers and the poor, but at the same time I was quickly disillusioned by working there,” said Dan Gurvich, an NYU adjunct who worked briefly on the campaign. “Ironically, I've never experienced a more unequal manager-worker power dynamic than I did as an employee of the UAW.”

Korean workers strike to gain union rights

South Korean public sector workers launched an unsuccessful national strike Nov. 15 to protest "reforms" in labor legislation that would allow government employees to join unions but continue to deny them basic labor rights including the right to strike.

Meanwhile, more than 25,000 members of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions held a massive rally in downtown Seoul Nov. 14, ahead of a general strike scheduled to begin Nov. 26. The KCTU rally was called to support the government workers, and to demand that the government stop negotiations for a free trade agreement with Japan and scrap a temporary workers labor bill which would worsen their unstable job status. The KCTU said some 620,000 union members will walk off their jobs as the government bill is presented to the National Assembly.

The KCTU is demanding that temporary and other "casual" workers receive the same legal protections as regular employees.



The government had outlawed the strike by the technically illegal 140,000-member Korean Government Employees' Union, arresting 112 workers for picketing on the first day of the strike and announcing that it would sack as many as 3,200 workers for their role in the strike. The strike quickly crumbled under the repression. The government had earlier forcibly prevented union members

from participating in a strike vote by confiscating ballot boxes, seizing union banners and computers, and issuing arrest warrants against 33 national KGEU leaders.

At least 186 unionists were arrested across South Korea in early November as part of efforts to crush the strike. Police say nearly 200 local union officials agreed to resign in order to avoid arrest. More than a dozen union rallies across the country were broken up by police.

The government, headed by a former labor lawyer elected with union support, also announced it would seek tougher sanctions against illegal strikes, which are presently punishable by fines and up to a year in jail.

FBI/IRS raid Puerto Rican union in privatization fight

The FBI and Internal Revenue Service invaded the offices of the Genuine Independent Union (UIA) Oct. 20, detaining and interrogating union workers and confiscating union documents and computer files. The union members were later released.

The union's 4,300 members began a bitter strike against the government-run Aqueducts and Sewage Authority Oct. 5. Talks collapsed Oct. 22 after workers discovered bugs planted by the authorities in the union offices. Plans to privatize the authority are a major issue.

Iraqi rail workers refuse to supply U.S. attack

Iraqi railway workers have announced they will not transport supplies to U.S. troops or to forces belonging to the U.S.-appointed Allawi government, and condemned the assault on Fallujah. The Allawi government reacted by accusing the workers of civil disobedience. National Iraqi Railways workers also declared that they will only agree to carry food supplies to the Iraqi people as part of the UN for food program, and threatened a national strike if forced to do otherwise.

Italian supermarket looted

Some 200 protesters wearing balaclavas, carnival masks and bandanas over their faces went on a "proletariat shopping spree" in a Rome supermarket Nov. 6, shouting "free shopping for all." After failing to negotiate a 70 percent discount with the supermarket's manager, they barged loaded carts past cashiers and distributed the goods to a crowd outside. The protest coincided with a march by more than 10,000 workers complaining of soaring prices, insecure work contracts, cuts in state benefits and the Iraq war.

Fiat workers strike

Thousands of Fiat workers struck across Italy Nov. 5 in a four-hour strike called to protest plans to cut back production at several Fiat plants in an effort to improve profits.

Workers and competition

BY WOLFGANG SCHAUMBERG

Workers at General Motors' Opel plant in Bochum, Germany, struck for six days in October to protest plans to lay off 4,000 workers from the plant. The union persuaded workers to call off the strike just as it was causing parts shortages at GM plants throughout Europe.

About twenty-five years ago, management in that General Motors/Opel factory where I was working, started to surprise us with a new kind of information at the workplace. On the line, in all the departments of the factory, there are information boards, and we could read, for example, "your wage in this factory may be seen as 100%. For the same work, General Motors pays in England 75%. GM pays in Portugal 50%." And in the end, "in Mexico, General Motors pays 12%."

What had happened? The multinationals had begun to organize production in a new way. With the help of new technology, management was now able to compare costs on a global level within seconds. And they started to blackmail us more and more: "If you don't stop your demands, if you don't agree to concessions, we will give this or that part of production of the next model to another plant."

For example, the car being built in my town, in Bochum, is called Zafira, and GM has one other plant in the world where that model is built, in Thailand. We workers began to discuss what we can do against this new kind of blackmail, of playing us off against one another. So we started, with the help of organizations like Transnationals Information Exchange, to build a network. We had international conferences of GM workers in the Netherlands, in England, an auto workers conference in Sao Paulo, Brazil. We organized exchange visits to colleagues in Spain, in Belgium, United States, Canada, the Philippines, and so on. And we tried to publish an international GM workers newspaper in three languages.

The change of capitalist production forced us to look at the situation in other countries. To defend our interests, we had to learn about the situation of workers worldwide, and about their struggle.

A substantial part of our international activities was to inform and involve the colleagues in the factory, and to challenge our union to support our activities. But our union, the IGM, Metalworkers Union, really did not want to bring workers from different countries together on a grassroots level.

In Germany there is a long tradition of bureaucracy, and of the ideology that unions and government (especially under leadership of the social democratic party) and employers should cooperate very closely. A typical idea our union leaders always repeat is that German employers must keep on being the world champion in exports. If the first aim of a union is to save the role of the German

economy in the world market, how could the union be interested in organizing an international workers' struggle for our rights and demands?

So we were forced to build up an international network without our union. What did we achieve? We could use some of our connections to inform our colleagues on struggles in other factories in other countries, and send resolutions of solidarity. Sometimes we got useful information for our negotiations with our management. Rarely, we could achieve common actions or strikes at the same time in different countries. Our network is not very vivid or effective right now. Only a few contacts are still being used. Why?

First, the problem we had with our union exists in other countries too. Many workers' representatives on the plant level think of themselves as so-called 'co-managers' and try to help the company in the way of competition.

Second, most workers, too, are ideologically bound to the same idea of corporate identity. They anxiously fight for their short-term interests, hoping the plant they are working at might be able to survive.

Third, my coworkers ask: What is the alternative? How can we survive without considering our company's profit situation?

So my last point is the need to build up a network among workers from European and Asian and other countries. But we must not only discuss the question of defending what we have achieved. We must not only ask how to get better wages or rights.

We must find workers in other countries who are willing to discuss the real reason for this damned worldwide war of competition and how to approach another kind of world. What do we want to be produced? How do we produce the goods? How they are distributed? How we help one another across national borders so that all people can take part in production and consumption on a higher level? In the end, this means fighting for another, non-capitalistic work.

We should take into account that the capitalists offer us a lot of means to approach that vision. For example, the capitalists bring us together by globalization. Secondly, we have got the internet to discuss our experiences and opinions better than ever before. Third, we have learned how to produce the goods. We know how to use the technologies.

In the large factories, we learned to organize our works in groups. By outsourcing, we have become a part of the new division of labour. We know that we are working together hand in hand, on the national level and even in production chains on an international level, but not with human dignity. Why shouldn't we be able to work and live one day without the disturbing role of private owners of the factories workers have built?

ASEM 5 Peoples' Forum, Hanoi, Sept. 2004



Tour Tears up Track in the Pacific Northwest

BY THOMAS SCHOMBERG

Carmelina and Félix are both experts on the upcoming transnational trade agreement. Both are watching closely the drama of the Central American Free Trade Agreement playing out behind the curtains in the U.S. Part of the Derail CAFTA Northwest Tour, the veteran luchadores had only to relate their experiences with NAFTA and the IMF to convince West Coasters that CAFTA is bad news.

Already approved by the Bush cartel, the far-reaching legislation, with the Dominican Republic "docked" on, still needs to pass Congress and has yet to be officially introduced. The extension of a free trade agreement to Central America will bring with it the destabilizing effects seen with NAFTA. Imposing corporate liberalization will undermine local agriculture, forcing campesinos into the city to look for work in foreign-owned maquilas. With reduced wages, worsened conditions, and impunity for corporations, a decent living standard will be even harder to come by.

The Derail CAFTA Northwest Tour sped up and down the I-5 corridor of the Pacific Northwest ripping up track in Portland, Olympia, Tacoma, Seattle and points in between. Carmelina Contreras and Felix Perez exhorted hundreds of union members in each of the dozen halls they spoke at. From firefighters to bus drivers, telephone workers to construction workers, the Derail CAFTA Tour agitated for cross-border solidarity.

Carmelina Contreras, an unpaid leader of the telecomm workers union, spoke about the struggle to reorganize her union after massive layoffs followed privatization of the Salvadoran telecommunications industry. She warned that the arrival of DR-CAFTA for the entire region is a prescription for more of the same.

Felix Perez revealed the detriments that NAFTA has brought to Mexico and his locale, Ciudad Juarez. With poverty increasing, real wages decreasing, and the destabilization that accompanied NAFTA's forced economic shift, union organizing along the US-Mexico border

has never been so challenging for Perez's Labor Studies Center (CETLAC) and its parent, the Authentic Workers' Front (FAT).

At several college events, dozens of students pledged they'd occupy Oregon Rep. Blumenauer's office until he voted "no." Union members backed their Anti-Free Trade resolutions with financial support for the tour. Community events brought Portland and Seattle activists from diverse social movements to resolve to defeat CAFTA.

While phoning and translating non-stop, PCASC organizer Jason Wallach and Evergreen Labor Center organizer Lucilene Lira, could count on IWW members in the Northwest for needed support. From the events, to the union meetings, to the posters, to the foot work, Wobblies were proud to help the work along.

The tour was organized by a joint project of the Portland Central America Solidarity Committee and Portland Jobs with Justice. The International Solidarity Commission of the IWW endorsed this tour. To read the ISC's 'Derail CAFTA' resolution, contact us at solidarity@iww.org.

Workers defy president

On Oct. 28, Guatemalan president Oscar Berger, accompanied by five bodyguards, entered the tent pitched by fired Pepsi workers in front of the National Palace to demand they abandon their 22-month fight for reinstatement to their jobs at the La Mariposa SA Pepsi bottler.

"I am bored and tired of seeing this tent. You must take it down and accept the economic offer of the company as the situation facing you is inhuman," said Berger. The company has offered 28,000 Quetzales (US\$3,751) to each worker.

"This tent gives my government a bad image and it damages the plans of my government to get international donations for development, jobs and security. It makes me look like a liar in front of foreign delegations while you remain here."

However, the workers called for foreign governments to "boycott the Guatemalan government and Pepsi products" and to not provide aid until their case is resolved.