

Industrial Worker

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE
INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD

February 2004

#1661 Vol. 101 No. 2

\$1.00 / 75 p



The Zapatistas Ten Years On

BY COLIN BOSSEN

On January 1 thousands of Zapatistas and their supporters celebrated the tenth anniversary of the 1994 uprising of the primarily indigenous Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN).

On Jan. 1, 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement went into effect and the Zapatistas rose up to oppose it with the cry of "liberty, justice and democracy." The advent of NAFTA locked the U.S., Canada and Mexico into a series of trade reforms aimed at increasing trade between the three countries. They did so primarily at the expense of labor unions, environmental laws and campesinos (peasant farmers).

The EZLN marked the arrival of NAFTA with the seizure of seven municipalities in Chiapas, the southernmost state of Mexico. The Zapatista rebellion was in opposition to Mexico's corrupt political system – embodied for many years by the Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI – 500 years of oppression and neoliberalism. NAFTA was the last straw. The passage of NAFTA had required the reworking of the Mexican constitution and the alteration of its 27th article. Article 27 was created to appease Emiliano Zapata and his supporters. It created the ejido system, which allowed for communal landholdings, land redistribution and homesteading. Communal landholdings are regarded as a barrier to free trade and Mexico eliminated them in order to implement NAFTA.

The Zapatistas viewed NAFTA as a virtual death warrant. The removal of agricultural tariffs between the three countries meant that Mexican campesino farmers would be placed in direct competition with the large agricultural combines in Canada and the United States. They felt that the choice was between a slow death in silence or quick death struggling for change. To quote EZLN spokesperson Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, "We think no, no more; enough dying this useless death; it is better to fight for change. If we die now, it will not be with shame, but with dignity."

The Zapatistas were the first new Mexican guerilla movement in a generation. They are different from previous guerilla movements on at least three levels: they are primarily indigenous and identify as such; they struggle to make power accountable, rather than to seize it: "for everyone everything, for ourselves nothing," is a Zapatista slogan; they are explicitly feminist and a large number of their combatants and commanders are women.

After 12 days of intensive fighting, the Mexican military recaptured all of the urban centers. Soon a cease-fire was declared. This cease-fire has more or less held since then. For ten years the army has been entrenched in strategic positions surrounding the Zapatista support communities. For ten years, the Zapatistas have controlled a small swatch of liberated territory.

It seems that every time the Zapatistas mark a major anniversary or hold an event that attracts attention the mainstream media writes their politi-

continued on page 2

IWW Elections **3** Michigan Nurses in Long Strike **3** Fight for Shorter Hours **8**
Trying to Silence Dissidents **9** Leonard Peltier Day **10** Anti-War Strike **12**

Industrial Worker
PO Box 13476
Philadelphia, PA 19101

ISSN 0019-8870



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Periodicals Postage
PAID
Philadelphia, PA
and additional
mailing offices

Millions starve as bosses celebrate

Stock market booming,
politicians ecstatic, but
where are the jobs?

6-7

Solidarity or xenophobia?

Birchers exploit anti-
globalization movement
to mislead workers

9

U.S. is labor scofflaw

International report
notes violations of
workers rights

5

Nazis firebomb Joe Hill House

BY LARS HAMMARBERG,
SAC GENERAL SECRETARY

Three fire bombs were thrown at the Joe Hill House in Gävle, Sweden, January 18th, but failed to ignite the wooden structure. Nazis had earlier bombed the house in 1999.

The building houses the Joe Hill Museum – the famous syndicalist singer and agitator was born here – and local offices of the Swedish syndicalist union SAC. It is located in an old section of Gävle, filled with wooden houses and buildings set closely side by side. Had the building caught fire, the entire quarter would quickly have gone up in flames, with many deaths.

The bombing followed a month of fascist attacks. Windows at the Joe Hill House were smashed Dec. 20th. The next day, nazis attacked a meeting of SAC's Malmö Local Federation and stole a union banner. On Dec. 23rd windows were smashed at the office of Sandviken Local Federation, a small town close to Gävle. On the 25th windows were smashed at the office of Gothenburg Local Federation, and on New Year's Eve the office was firebombed, but the fire died down quickly and caused limited damage.

The nazi home page Info-14 says the at-

tacks on our Swedish fellow workers will escalate in the coming months.

Other parts of the labor movement have also been attacked. But most of the attacks are against syndicalist locals.

Despite the nazi murder of SAC activist Björn Söderberg three years ago, the police continue to ignore threats from the right-wing extremists. On Dec. 6th nearly 2,000 nazis and fascists marched in Salem, a Stockholm suburb. This was the biggest nazi demonstration in Sweden since World War II. While the nazis marched unmolested, police brutally attacked an antifascist demonstration the same day, injuring many people.

Extreme right-wing political parties had a break-through in the last election to Parliament in September 2002. It looks like we all should be worried about the escalation of this right wing extremist violence and terrorism.

The SAC asks that supporters e-mail the Swedish Department of Justice demanding they investigate the attacks. E-mail to registrator@justice.ministry.se and copy to sekretariatet@sac.se. Sample letters are available from the IWW's webpage, www.iww.org, in the section marked Alerts.



Z. LANE

Unions vow to win California grocery strike

One hundred days after 71,000 Southern California grocery workers hit the picket lines, and shortly after the Teamsters announced that they would no longer honor picket lines at company warehouses, the AFL-CIO is stepping in to salvage the increasingly desperate situation.

After negotiations with the three largest grocery chains broke down, workers struck the Safeway-owned Vons and Pavillions chains Oct. 11. Ralphs (owned by Kroger) and Albertson's (owned by American Stores) then locked out their workers in solidarity with the Safeway bosses.

At first, the union seemed to be in a strong position. Nearly every worker walked the picket lines, store parking lots were empty, and other unions were pledging to do whatever it took to win. But as the dispute has dragged on, much of that solidarity has melted away. And despite rhetorical flourishes about taking the strike national, UFCW officials have done everything in their power to ensure that the California workers fight alone.

The AFL-CIO says it will turn the situation by hounding corporate executives and directors, staging demonstrations across the country (including a prayer vigil outside the home of Safeway's CEO), and urging company shareholders to support the workers.

Some unions are also contributing money to bolster the UFCW's dwindling strike fund, and to help strikers maintain health benefits.

"We have our work cut out for us," AFL Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka told the *New York Times*, "but I predict that three months from now, there will be a whole different attitude out there."

\$1 billion in losses

The three companies have lost more than \$1 billion in sales since the strike began, but have only agreed to two rounds of new negotiations. They are keeping their 852 stores open with a scab workforce recruited in the weeks leading up to the strike and lock-out, supplemented by a small but growing number of union members who began crossing

picket lines as the Christmas holidays approached with no end to the dispute in sight.

Ralphs is also using convicted felon and veteran strikebreaker Clifford Nuckols, who brought in hundreds of scabs from around the country to keep warehouses running while Teamsters were honoring UFCW picket lines.

"They're like locusts," said Frank Halstead, a Teamster who normally works in the Compton warehouse. "They fly in, destroy the good jobs and then fly out to do it again somewhere else."

Secret talks aimed at ending the supermarket strike and lockout ended Jan. 11, three months from the date the job actions began. During the last formal negotiating session a few days before Christmas, the United Food and Commercial Workers offered major concessions, including higher deductibles and co-pays for health benefits, but the grocery chains did not even respond with a counter-offer. There were no negotiations over the holidays, normally one of the busiest and most profitable seasons for supermarkets.

The UFCW proposal would have saved the supermarkets some \$375 million over the life of the three-year contract.

Holding on to health benefits

The Southern California contract was one of the best in the entire country, as workers successfully resisted concessions the UFCW agreed to in many other regions which have left many unionized grocery workers earning little more than minimum wage.

The supermarkets are trying to replace the current defined benefits plan with one in which they would pay in a fixed amount per worker regardless of actual health coverage costs. As health care costs continue to rise, the union would be faced with the choice of slashing benefits or dramatically raising workers' premiums. If the UFCW loses, the supermarket chains are certain to go after health benefits across the country.

The chains are also demanding a two-year wage freeze, and a substantially lower pay and

continued on page 5

Subscribers: The number (top line) reflects the last issue due on your subscription

Police riot in Miami

I was pleased to read Nathaniel Miller's article, "Miami Police Riot as FTAA Advances," in the January issue of the *Industrial Worker*. Fellow Worker Miller did an excellent job describing the police state that was Miami during the FTAA meetings and the days preceding them.

In response to his assertion that at least two IWW members were among the 282 protestors arrested, I would like to point out that there were definitely more than two. Four Wobs from the Lawrence (Kansas) General Membership Branch were also arrested by the Miami police; I was one of them.

If it's possible to have a good memory of police repression, a highlight of my day occurred when a man wearing an IWW shirt was brought onto the jail bus where I was handcuffed and detained. I cheered for the IWW, and he asked me if I knew any songs. I began singing "Solidarity Forever," and other folks (including the other arrested Wobs from Lawrence) joined right in. Even those who didn't know the words to the verses chimed in on the chorus. After that, we sang every revolutionary song we could think of, comforted by the fact that even while under arrest we could sing with our comrades.

Chantel C. Guidry, Lawrence

Facing Barbarism

In George Orwell's novel *1984*, the proles are a sort of permanent underclass. Bush's policies are moving in the direction of the creation of such a permanent underclass. Many people react to Bush as if he is a "Big Brother" whose "macho" actions are protecting us. Do the families of the Americans killed in Iraq or their relatives appreciate Big Brother Bush? Do the American soldiers maimed, who have lost limbs or lost their eyesight in Iraq, appreciate Bush? And in the 2005 budget Bush is cutting veterans' benefits!

On the other hand, Orwell wrote about the classless society with almost complete equality that he experienced in the Marxist militia he was fighting in during the Spanish

Civil War. This was the POUM [Workers' Party of Marxist Unification]. In *Homage to Catalonia*, George Orwell wrote about how the "normal" motives of capitalist society — "fear of the boss," being on the "make" in the economic sense, etc. — had

seemed to disappear. In explaining his reasons for joining the British Independent Labour Party, George Orwell wrote: "The tempo of events is quickening; the dangers which once seemed a generation distant are staring us in the face. One has got to be actively a socialist, not merely sympathetic to socialism." ...

In *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, Rudolf Rocker wrote: "For the Anarcho-Syndicalists the trade union is by no means a mere transitory phenomenon bound up with the duration of the capitalist society, it is the gem of the socialist economy of the future, the elementary school of socialism in general."

Unions are the "stem cells" of the new society. Union volunteers, activists and officials are the kindest and most socially committed people I have known. Unions do so many good things, most of which the general public does not know about.

Raymond Solomon, Rego Park NY

No Overtime Pay?

Have they lost their minds? Are we heading back to slavery days?

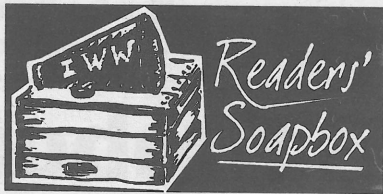
I work so that I can get paid. In my job I have no choice about overtime. I am a New York City hospital police officer, and it is mandatory that you work overtime or be reprimanded or suspended. If I am forced to work, I better get paid time and a half.

The corporations will make every one work overtime whether they like it or not. They will be putting all that extra money in their pockets instead of where it belongs, in our pocket. Well, I am one voter that knows who not to vote for.

Lawrence Smith

Letters on the grocery strike

See page 5 for letters and commentary on the Southern California grocery workers' strike.



Zapatistas 10 years on...

continued from page 1

cal obituary. Newspapers ranging from the *Washington Post* to the left-leaning British daily *The Independent* ran pieces marking the EZLN anniversary and casting doubts on the continued viability of the movement.

This analysis is far from the truth. The reality is that in the last ten years the Zapatistas have succeeded where other revolutionary movements of the 20th century have failed. They have managed to create a space to develop alternative models of economics and social organization, models that escape both rigid ideology of Marxist communism and the sham democracy of the Western capitalist democracies.

The Zapatistas have based their social model on the traditional indigenous community structures. Their model is one of radical democracy, with each community held to be autonomous. The ultimate authority in a community is a general assembly. Groups of communities federate together and pool their resources to create clinics, schools and cooperative economic projects. This structure was formalized in August at the "Festival of the Caracoles," a three-day event attended by thousands of the Zapatistas and their supporters from across the globe. At the festival five juntas de bien gobierno, one for each autonomous region, were installed. These juntas are to serve as a coordinating bodies for the Zapatista movement, coordinating the work of the 38 autonomous municipalities and the 500,000 indigenous people who live in them.

In their territories they have created the beginnings of a health care system, educational system and a variety of different economic cooperatives. Their philosophy is radically different from those who hold state power. According to the educational committee of the Zapatista community Moises y Gandhi, the aim of their school system is not to prepare children to be individualistic obedient citizens. Instead it is "to become more human" and learn to cooperate together.

The Zapatistas have accomplished everything they have in the face of intense pressure from the Mexican military — there are upwards of 250 military bases and 60,000 soldiers in Chiapas — and paramilitaries financed and trained by the PRI and their allies. The Zapatistas' continued survival has

been due in part to the large amount of support they have received from the international community and Mexican civil society.

There is little doubt that over the next ten years the Zapatistas will continue to serve as an inspiration for those working to make a better world. They will face many challenges, both from their own government and the global economic system. They will meet these challenges more readily if the international community continues to stand in solidarity with their struggle for "liberty, justice and democracy."

To learn more about the struggle in Chiapas, visit the Zapatista Index at flag.blackened.net/revolt/zapatista.html.

Delegation to Chiapas

The Mexico Solidarity Network and the Chiapas Peace House Project invite you to join a delegation to Chiapas from March 13-21. The delegation will arrive during a time of celebration, but also a time full of difficult challenges. The delegation will:

- Provide an international presence in communities that are under threat by paramilitary groups, putting the paramilitaries on notice that the communities can count on international support.

- Meet with activists and organizers to discuss 10 years of resistance to neoliberalism in Chiapas and around the world.

- Develop strategies to deepen solidarity work in the United States, and organizing against the Free Trade Area of the Americas, the Central America Free Trade Agreement, and Plan Pueblo Panama, a corporate development scheme promoted by the Fox administration. Delegates will meet with sister organizations in Chiapas to discuss strategies for international solidarity work.

The cost of the delegation is \$450, covering ground transportation within Chiapas, meals in the communities, hotels, translation, background materials, and program. Delegates are responsible for their own travel arrangements to Chiapas. Scholarships are available, with strong preference for youth of color under the age of 30. You can apply online at www.mexicosolidarity.org.

To reserve a space on the delegation, complete the application and return it with a \$100 deposit to Mexico Solidarity Network, 4834 N. Springfield, Chicago, IL 60625.

Industrial Worker

The Voice of Revolutionary Industrial Unionism

- ★ ORGANIZATION
- ★ EDUCATION
- ★ EMANCIPATION

Official newspaper of the Industrial Workers of the World

Post Office Box 13476
Philadelphia, PA 19101 USA
215.222.1905 • ghq@iww.org
www.iww.org

General Secretary-Treasurer:
Alexis Buss

General Executive Board:
Heather Hall (chair),
Jim Crutchfield, Mark Damron,
Jim Ellsworth, Matthew Kellard,
Samara Paysse, Adam Welch

Editor: Jon Bekken
iw@iww.org

ISSN 0019-8870 Periodicals postage paid Philadelphia PA.

Postmaster: Send address changes to: Industrial Worker, POB 13476, Phila. PA 19101 USA

Individual Subscriptions: \$15
Library Subs: \$20/year
(Member sub included in dues)

Published eleven times per year

Articles not so designated do not reflect the official position of the IWW. Contributions welcome.

Press Date: January 18, 2004



IWW directory

Australia

IWW Regional Organising Committee
PO Box 241, Surry Hills NSW 2010. email: roc@iww.org.au www.iww.org.au

British Isles

IWW Regional Organising Committee:
P.O. Box 74, Brighton BN1 4ZQ, UK. email: BrightonIWW@hotmail.com www.iww.org.uk

Canada

Alberta

Edmonton GMB: PO Box 75175, T6E 6K1. email: edmonton@lists.iww.org <http://edmonton.iww.ca>

British Columbia

Vancouver IWW: PO Box 4755, Stn. Terminal, V6B 4A4. 604-682-3269 x8493. email: gmb-van@iww.ca <http://vancouver.iww.ca>

Manitoba

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

Ontario

Ottawa-Outaouais GMB: PO Box 52015, Ottawa K1N 7E7, (613) 241-0382. ott-out@iww.org French-language del: Mathieu Brûle parti_hardcore@yahoo.com

Peterborough IWW: c/o PCAP, 393 Water St. Unit 17, K9H 3L7. email: ptoiww@riseup.net

Thunder Bay IWW: c/o Indymedia, Suite 19c, 12 Court St. S., P7B 2W3. tbayiiww@resist.ca

United States

Arizona

Phoenix GMB: 1205 E. Hubbell St., 85006-1758. 602-254-4057 phxiww@pro-union.net Aaron Rothenburger, del., 480-303-9580.

California

Los Angeles GMB: PO Box 91691, Pasadena 91109. 626-644-1973. lagmb@iww.org

San Francisco Bay Area GMB: PO Box 11412, Berkeley 94712. 415-863-WOBS. Meetings 1st & 3rd Thursdays at 7 p.m. (2022 Blake St., Berkeley) Curbside and Buyback IU 670 Recycling Shops: Bruce Valde, del., 510-652-9462.

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

Santa Barbara GMB: PO Box 23008, 93121. 805-689-3086, sbgmb@iww.org

Colorado

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

Hawaii

Honolulu: PO Box 11928, 96828. Tony Donnes, 808-547-2042. donnes@hawaii.edu

Illinois

Chicago GMB & General Defense Committee Local 3: P.O. Box 18387, 3750 N. Kedzie, 60618. Patrick Brenner, 224-381-4088.

Kansas

Lawrence GMB: c/o Sean Whittier, 1305 Tennessee, 66044. lawrenceiww@hotmail.com, 785-865-0578.

Kentucky

Louisville: Ben Fletcher GMB, P. O. Box 1313, 40201. 502-727-5583.

Maine

Norumbega GMB: Barry Rodrigue, del., 75 Russell St., Bath 04530.

Massachusetts

Boston Area GMB: PO Box 391724, Cambridge 02139. Steve Kellerman, del., 617-469-5162.

Western Massachusetts Public Service Workers IU 650 Branch: IWW, PO Box 1581, Northampton 01061.

Western Massachusetts GMB: 43 Taylor Hill Rd., Montague 01351. 413-367-9356.

Michigan

Detroit GMB: 8916 Royce Drive, Sterling Heights 48313.

Grand Rapids GMB: PO Box 6629, 49516. 616-459-5928 (Matthew) or 453-0305 (Frank).

Minnesota

Duluth GMB: c/o Laverne Capan, 1522 N 8th Ave E, 55805-1115. 218-724-2647.

Missouri

Kansas City GMB: c/o 5506 Holmes St., 64110. sherrimichelle@hotmail.com. 816-523-3995.

St Louis: P.O. Box 11551, 63105. Del: Richard Burke, 314-727-6565. burkemo@earthlink.net

Montana

Construction Workers IU 330: Dennis Georg, del. 406-494-5837, trampiu330@aol.com

New York

NYC GMB: PO Box 7430, JAF Station, New York City 10116, iww-nyc@bari.iww.org
Upstate NY GMB: PO Box 74, Altamont 12009. 518-861-5627. Rochelle Semel, del, 291 Bristol Rd, Hartwick 13348. 607-293-6489.

North Carolina

New Bern: Bruce Arnold, del., 1350 Trent Blvd #Q-4, 28560.

Ohio

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

Oklahoma

Tulsa: Karl Howeth, del., 7102 South Utica #5516, 74136. 918-499-3977 vaneigem25@hotmail.com

Oregon

Lane County GMB: P.O. Box 371, Eugene 97440. Hall: 454 Willamette St. #213. 541-343-7828. www.laneiww.org.

Portland Industrial District Council: (Construction Workers IU330, Restaurant

Workers IU640, Public Service Workers IU650) Union Hall: 616 E. Burnside St., 97214, 503-231-5488. Portland GMB: branch@iwwpdx.org

Pennsylvania

Lancaster GMB: PO Box 796, 17608

Philadelphia GMB: PO Box 42777, 19101. 215-222-1905. phillyiww@iww.org
Union Hall: 4530 Baltimore Ave., 19143.

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

Pittsburgh GMB: c/o Meisberger, PO Box 162, Turtle Creek, 15145. pittsburghiww@yahoo.com

Rhode Island

Providence GMB: PO Box 27001, 02907. 401-455-4619

Texas

Austin GMB: PO Box 650011, 78765. 512-322-0083, jrfreeze@earthlink.net

Utah

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

Washington

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

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

Seattle GMB: 1122 E. Pike St. #1142, 98122-3934. 206-931-3745 disruptive@yahoo.com www.seattleiww.org

Spokane: Tim Hill, 509-218-9622.

Wisconsin

Madison GMB: P.O. Box 2442, 53703-2442. Lakeside Press IU 450 Job Shop: 1334 Williamson, Madison 53703. 608-255-1800.

Madison Infoshop IU 620 Job Shop: 1019 Williamson St. #B, 53703. 608-262-9036.

Milwaukee GMB: IWW, PO Box 070632, 53207.

Around Our Union

The **Chicago** GMB is larger and more active than it's been in many years, with three organizing campaigns under way. With the growth in membership, several members in the northern suburbs are forming a separate General Organizing Committee.

Chicago Wobs say much of their recent success is due to regular focussed discussions of goals and strategy, setting specific objectives and developing concrete plans to realize them. The branch has also reduced turnover with a new member orientation program.

In **Edmonton**, Alberta, Wobs continue walking the picket line with workers at a local television station. The **Milwaukee** GMB is setting up a printing press to help in the production of local agitational materials.

Lawrence, Kansas, IWW members are working to build a coalition around Coca-Cola's involvement in the killing of union activists in Colombia. Eight Lawrence Wobs joined the FTAA protests, four were arrested.

Negotiations with Dare Family Services continue in **Boston**, 11 months after workers won union recognition. While there has been steady (if very slow) progress in negotiations in recent months, management is stepping up its harassment of union activists on the job, and one worker's tires were slashed and her car damaged while she was at work. (A collection was taken to help with repairs.)

Wobs from three MidAtlantic branches met Jan. 13 to launch a regional newsletter, which will join local newsletters in Chicago, Portland and Wisconsin (the Australian and British ROCs also issue publications).

Next month, look for news of IWW organizing of television network staffers...

IWW officers elected for 2004

After a delay in counting ballots to allow time for results to come in from Australia and the British Isles, the ballot committee convened in Philadelphia January 2.

General Secretary-Treasurer Alexis Buss was reelected to another one-year term.

Elected to the 2004 General Executive Board were Jim Crutchfield, Mark Damron, Jim Ellsworth, Heather Hall, Matthew Kellard, Samara Paysee and Adam Welch. The Board has elected FW Hall to serve as chair. Ed Boraas will be first alternate; Zach Lane will serve as second alternate to the Board.

A GEB meeting is being planned in Philadelphia for February 7 and 8. IWW members wishing to bring matters to the Board's attention should be sure their communications arrive at headquarters before then.

Elected to the International Solidarity Commission were Jon Bekken, Jefferson Laffey and Peter Moore. Mark Damron was elected General Defense Committee Secretary-Treasurer. The Conflict Mediation Committee will be headed by Laura Price.

One of three proposed constitutional amendments governing the conduct of the IWW's General Assembly was approved. A measure to increase the number of IWW members required to place a referendum on the ballot from 15 to 5 percent was also approved.

The 2004 General Assembly will be held in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada on the weekend of Sept. 4. Approximately one-fifth of members receiving ballots voted.

Oakland 25 hearing Feb. 6

The 24 anti-war activists and one longshoreman arrested last year after city police attacked a picket line at the Port of Oakland will appear in court Feb. 6 for a pretrial hearing on their motion to dismiss the charges.

Meanwhile a federal civil rights suit has been filed by an attorney who was hit four times by wooden bullets as he observed the peaceful picketing April 7, called to protest shipper APIs role shipping war cargo for the war on Iraq. At the time, police told reporters they opened fire out of fear that the number of picketers might grow.

GDC calls for Miami solidarity

The Madison General Defense Committee is urging workers to contact Miami officials demanding that the charges against all those arrested at the FTAA Ministerial meeting be dropped, and that independent investigations be convened into the police misconduct.

Call and write: Manuel A. Diaz, mayor, City of Miami, mannydiaz@ci.miami.fl.us, 305-250-5300; Alex Penelas, mayor, Miami-Dade County, mayor@miamidade.gov, 305-375-5071; and State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle 305-547-0100.

While Miami police were able to draw upon \$8.5 million in federal support for their attacks, and to draft thousands of troops from across the state, the nearly 300 arrestees must rely on grassroots support. Already, the Madison GDC and supporters have \$10,000 tied up in bail money and bond fees, severely depleting their resources. If the charges are not dropped, much more will be needed for legal defense and to help arrestees return to Miami to make their court dates. Contributions can be sent to: PO Box 811, Madison WI 53701.

World Social Forum

Tens of thousands of people assembled Jan. 16 in the Bombay suburb of Mumbai for the start of the World Social Forum. The six-day annual event aims to help activist groups connect and develop alternatives to free trade policies. The IWW is participating, and we will publish a report next issue.

"This forum will blow up the myth that there is no alternative," said W.R. Varada Rajan, an Indian union leader. "It will also explode the myth that this model of globalization has universal acceptance."

About 100,000 activists from 130 countries are expected to attend the event, being held for the first time outside Brazil. India was chosen for this year's meeting to ensure greater participation from Africa and Asia.

More than 1,000 seminars, workshops and cultural programs will be held on militarism and peace, religious fanaticism, unfair global trade, poverty and the rights of women, children and animals.

Striking Michigan nurses still strong after 14 months

BY SARAH HERARD, MICHIGAN INDEPENDENT MEDIA CENTER

Fourteen months after going on strike when Northern Michigan Hospital management refused to bargain in good faith, 250 nurses have set a new U.S. nursing strike record. Management refuses to adequately address issues such as wages, pensions, a voice in hospital decisions, and nurse-patient ratios.

The hospital last presented a contract offer more than a year ago, on Dec. 23, 2002. There was not another negotiating session until Dec. 31, 2003; that three-hour session yielded no agreement.

Teamsters Local 406 refused to accept NMH's final offer in part because it called for an "open shop." Every other unionized hospital in Michigan has a "union shop," where all nurses are members or pay an agency fee. Sharon Norton, Local 406 business agent, explains that by demanding an open shop, NMH is purposely trying to "make the unit weak."

Scab nurses called for a vote to decertify the Teamsters, but the union won the Nov. 13, 2003, election with 58 percent of the hospital's nurses voting in favor of continuing representation by the Teamsters. Some 200 nurses have crossed union picket lines, supplemented by professional scabs from U.S. Nursing Corp. of Denver, which pays scabs \$40 an hour plus overtime for 60-hour work weeks. NMH staff nurses averaged \$21 an hour before the strike.

Many Petoskey citizens are concerned with the quality of patient care since the strike began, and as Jim Brege, a member of the Detroit Federation of Teachers and a summer resident of northern Michigan said while he was picketing with the nurses, "it's a helluva hospital, and it deserves the best people it can get. You're not going to get the best people if you don't give them what they're worth." The strike cannot be hidden from visitors; signs reading "NMH Negotiate" can be seen in yards



and along roads all over northern Michigan.

A Blue Ribbon Panel created by Gov. Jennifer Granholm in the summer of 2003 reviewed hundreds of comments from local residents before releasing a report reproaching NMH officials and urging the hospital to return to the bargaining table.

"The panel found indicators that the failure to (bargain), to date, due in large part to the intransigent and ideological position of the NMH board, has had serious and deleterious effects on NMH and the community," explains the report. "Since Nov 14 2002, rather than acting as prudent stewards of this community asset, the NMH Board has authorized large additional expenditures to pay temporary nurses at premium rates, jeopardizing the hospital's already precarious fiscal stability."

Teamsters organizer Sharon Norton said that the money spent by Northern Michigan Hospital to pay for scab nurses could cover a ten-year contract with the Teamsters. According to information released by the hospital, she states that they spent \$5 million on replacements in the first 48 days of the strike. Although the hospital refuses to release further information, Norton calculates they have spent \$20 to \$25 million to date.

The hospital board has also employed the Fishman Group, an expensive downstate law firm which advertises that it can help employers maintain a "union-free workplace."

The full report and links to related articles can be found at michiganimc.org

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.

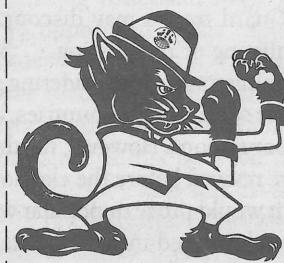
We are a union open to all workers, whether or not the IWW happens to have representation rights in your workplace. We organize the worker, not the job, recognizing that unionism is not about government certification or employer recognition but about workers coming together to address our common concerns. 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.

Will the System Men sink BC Ferries workers' militancy?

BY MEMBERS FOR DEMOCRACY

On December 12th, veteran labour relations mediator Vince Ready called for binding arbitration to end a six-day dispute between the British Columbia Ferry Marine Workers Union (BCFMWU) and B.C. Ferry Services Inc., a former provincial Crown corporation now run as a private business.

The 4,000 workers had walked off the job over demands for wage rollbacks and other concessions. When ordered by the BC Labour Relations Board to return to work, the workers refused. Ready was appointed by the government to intervene in the dispute as a "special mediator." The 11th hour mediation session took place just as contempt proceedings against the workers were about to begin.

When the marathon mediation session failed to end the strike, Ready recommended binding arbitration, ending a strike that inconvenienced thousands of commuters.

The ferry workers' strike, perhaps more

than any other Canadian labour dispute this year, has the potential to be a watershed event. As strikes go, it was short but was very illuminating about the role of working people under the labour relations system – to suffer in silence for profit – and the extent to which mainstream labour leaders support and enable that system. It's a wake-up call for us to stop putting our faith in a system that abuses and exploits us and to stop believing in the people who make it hum: our employers, unions and legislators.

Inside the System

When we talk about the Labour Relations System we are referring to the various laws and government agencies that regulate labour-management relations in Canada. Conventional wisdom tells us that system is a good thing. It gives us rights – like the right to organize and to bargain collectively – and protects us from people who seek to interfere

with our rights. It gives us Labour Boards where we can go if our employers interfere with our rights and arbitrators to whom we can turn if we are our collective agreements are not honored. The conventional wisdom is that the system gives us workplace justice, but that's bullshit. The LR System is not about justice in the workplace and was never intended to be. It exists to maintain order in the workplace by keeping workers in line.

The system was introduced in Canada in the 1940s when the Industrial Relations Disputes Investigation Act was implemented. The IRDIA gave unions the right to recognition and required employers to bargain once a union was recognized. Organizing became much easier and, in the decades that followed, unions organized millions of workers. The legislation came with a big string attached, however: strikes were prohibited during the term of a collective agreement. Instead, disputes were to be taken to binding arbitration.

This element of the IRDIA brought about a big shift in the internal culture of unions. Thousands of staff reps were hired to ensure compliance with agreements and to advise and counsel members as to their legal rights. The reps were a boon to business union leaders who were anxious to control a not-always-satisfied membership.

The new legislation gave significant rights to unions, placed major obligations on employers, and gave union members the right to fair representation and to periodically see a financial statement. What was meant by fair representation or how detailed a financial statement needed to be were questions the law never addressed. Members had the right to decertify their union and join another one if they wished, but this could only take place during a narrow window of opportunity at the conclusion of a collective agreement.

On a practical level, union members had no rights at all in their relationship with their unions. They could be neglected, poorly represented, bullied, lied to, bought, traded and sold. There was no requirement that unions govern themselves democratically. The conventional wisdom was that unions were democratic organizations by their very nature and dissatisfied members would toss out unresponsive leaders. An alternative view was that unions didn't need to be democratic at all. Workers needed leadership – they needed tough, strong guys who were not afraid to make decisions, even unpopular decisions.

But it didn't really matter. The legislation wasn't intended to give workers a whole bunch of rights. It was about controlling their growing militancy.

By the 1950s, the federal government spun off responsibility for labour relations to the provinces. Labour relations acts were passed in the provincial legislatures and LRB's were set up to administer the new laws. Across the country, it was decided that grievances would be resolved by arbitration.

In theory, arbitration was supposed to be a fair and fast way of resolving labour disputes. Representatives of management and labour would put their cases before a knowledgeable third party (the arbitrator) who would hear both sides and issue a legally binding ruling. Arbitrators would function much like judges but there was one major difference: labour arbitrators were unregulated, fee-for-service practitioners selected and paid by both sides. In order to successfully ply their trade, they had to please the two institutional parties – employers and unions.

The system has evolved so as to meet the needs of the two "institutional parties." It gives employers the right to expect loyalty, obedience and compliance from their workers. It gives unions the right to do pretty much what they want to their members. If a union wants quiet, obedient members, that's fine. In fact, order is best kept when employers and

unions work together to keep the workers quiet. The system is particularly harsh on workplace rebels and reformers.

The system guys – the arbitrators, LRB officials and mediators – work hard for the institutional parties. ...

If you are a member with a grievance or a part of a bargaining unit whose collective agreement will be settled through arbitration, the system guys have the ultimate power to make you or break you. They can work with your employer and your union to make a deal and then shove the deal down your throat. Or they can just decide, based on whatever, what you're going to get. As far as the system is concerned, there's nothing wrong with that.

To function efficiently, the system requires a degree of cooperation among its three principle players: Employers, unions and governments. Although the government is supposed to play a balancing role between the first two and does to a certain extent, all must work together towards one important objective: Keeping workers in line.

The ferry workers' union's tough stand, in the face of demands for significant concessions by BC Ferries Services, drew harsh criticism from the business community, hand-wringing from labour leaders and some pompous snorting from other labour scene luminaries who characterized the striking workers as crazies who needed to give their heads a good shake. The union's president, Jackie Miller, was the target of a great deal of the criticism with union and business leaders alike suggesting that her principled stand was simply the result of inexperience and inability to "lead" her members with a sufficiently firm hand.

The criticism from all three corners of the system was because, as a union leader, she wasn't playing the game by the system's rules. But the system is prepared for such occurrences (as rare as they are), and it worked its magic on her.

Jubilation about Arbitration

According to media reports, the agreement to go to binding arbitration was met with jubilation by the striking ferries workers and some apprehension on the part of their employer. Miller told reporters she was hopeful that the arbitrator would listen to workers' concerns, and reach a fair decision.

It's understandable that the workers would be happy to return to work and that, after a week of fielding acrimonious attacks on her sanity and her members' motives, Miller was content to go off to arbitration.

It's also understandable that, during a lengthy mediation session where there was little if any movement on the part of the employer, arbitration began to look like a good option. The process has a kind of judicious smell about it. For those who haven't been there or haven't been there enough to know what it's really all about, it's easy to believe that it will result in a settlement that is fair, equitable, reasonable, etc.

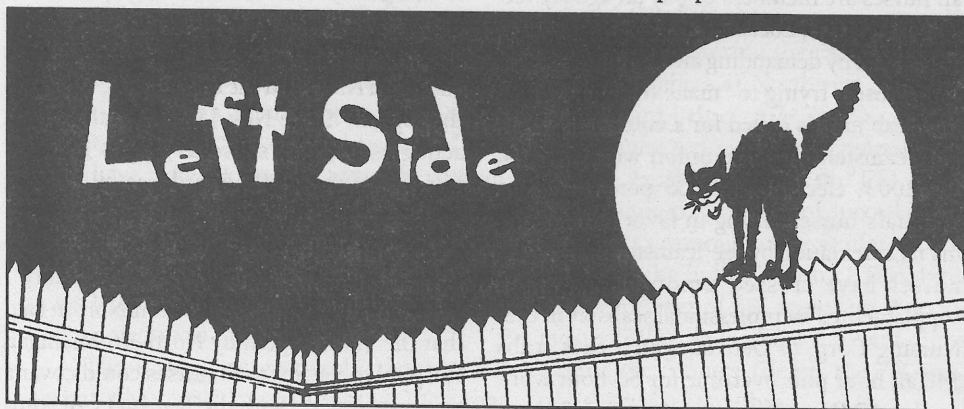
That's how binding arbitration is usually presented to workers who can't be persuaded to settle for less. It's like going to court. We equate the courts with justice, so it's just a given that we'll come out with something "just." But that's just not the way it is.

Arbitration is arbitrary. It's a process that allows a single person to decide very important issues, with no recourse for anybody who doesn't like the outcome.

Nothing to Cheer About

Will binding arb prove a good move for Miller and the ferries workers? Probably not. Ready will throw Miller and the 4,000 or so members a few bones – maybe he'll leave their wages intact or even grant a small wage increase – but he will side with the employer

continued next page



Two decades have passed since 1984, and contrary to what his detractors have been asserting, old George Orwell has been right on the button. It is highly doubtful that he is having any satisfaction out of it, but he had Nostradamus upstaged by a hell of a mile.

I remember, upon reading *Animal Farm* many years back in a paperback edition, continually paging back to the front of the book to see the original publishing date, because I could not imagine that the book was not a commentary on events as they were happening. Who was it that said that those who ignore history are condemned to repeat it?

The specter of mad cow has finally made its debut in Freedomland. As of this writing, our watchdogs have been assuring us that only the parts of the bovine affected by the disease will be removed from the market; the other parts of the afflicted quadruped will go to your supermarket shelves. (The recall was extended after this column went in the mail – ed.) Is this a sneaky attempt at population control? It's enough to convert one into being a vegetarian!

For this the buffalo have been eliminated from the plains.

Well, the minions of Freedomland have finally unearthed the hiding place of Saddam Whosis. It's a miracle how they were able to flush him out from under all that dirt and straw. Pardon the impertinence of your scribe, but yours truly has a sneaky hunch that this was a negotiated capture. Obviously, old Saddass found it preferable to be "captured" by the "enemy" than by his own people. No doubt reflecting on an erstwhile colleague of his by the name of Mussolini and his fate, he chose not to ignore history. Wisely did he choose to be captured by his enemy, who can be expected to treat him with greater compassion than if he should fall into the hands of his own proletariat. There is indeed honor among thieves.

According to latest reports, his captors have not gotten much information out of him. Of course, the Arabs have been on the scene a few millennia more than the Yanks, and are well-skilled in caginess. The Yanks aren't dealing with innocent Indians or unspoiled Polynesians.

Despite Saddam being definitely out of commission, Freedomland soldiers are still being picked off one by one, and things are no better than at the outset of the crusade for freedom.

According to recent reports, there has risen an alarming rate of suicides among Freedomland soldiers. Actually, the initial tendencies toward suicide, in your scribe's opinion, is the submission to accept participation in military servitude. The media has finally gotten around to acknowledging the suicide phenomenon as something new. Your scribe knows one veteran who made frequent visits to the local veterans home. Said vet would tell of another "heart attack" written in the records of the veterans hospital which was in actuality another suicide. These happened to be vets from the first World War, a generation and a half after the fact. This has been a factor among veterans all over the world.

To have grown up in a society with a strict ethic against taking the life of another human, only to be told it is their patriotic obligation to go and shoot at someone they don't even know, much less have any grudge against, is bound to have an adverse effect on one's inner conflicts.

I was asked once, at a university appearance, how I could maintain any hope for humanity with its long history of war after war. I replied that all those wars were not fought by volunteers.

It is the normal instinct to stay alive as long as possible, and no matter what we feel about other varieties of our species, our possibilities for living as long as possible could be seriously endangered by acting negatively toward our fellow two-leggeds while we continue the continued existence of those minuscule few who control our existence.

Those are the babies we should wage war against. That war will not be fought with guns, but with our folded arms.

— C.C. Redcloud

A draft in the wings?

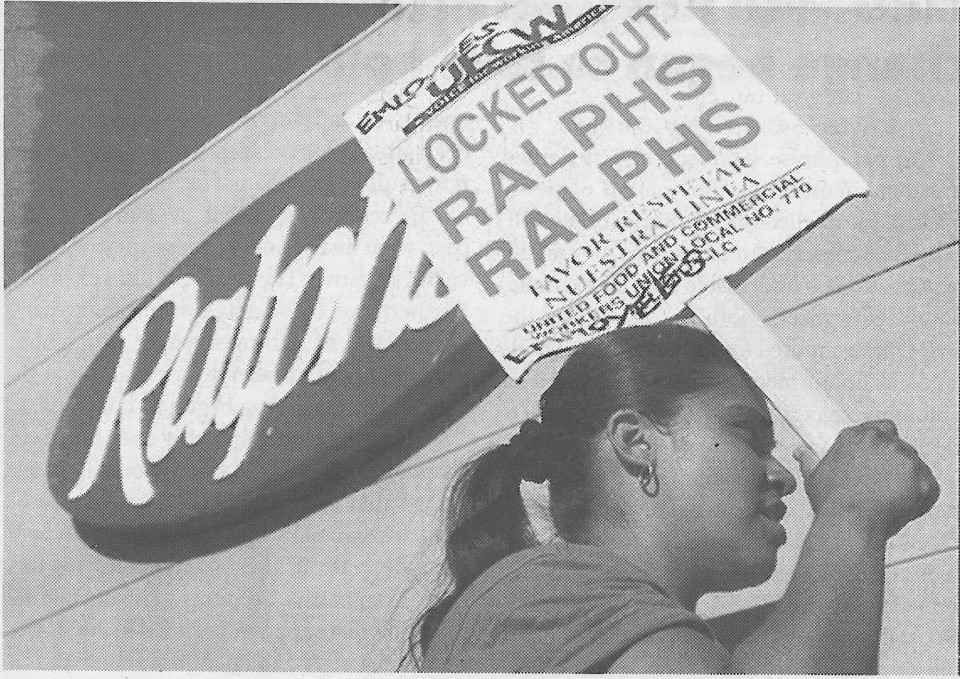
The Bush administration is gearing up to revive military conscription, according to an article in the Dec. 22 issue of the Long Island, NY-based *Newsday*.

Although the administration insists it has no such plans, the Pentagon has issued a plea for volunteers to serve on local draft boards and appeals boards that will decide whether men can get deferments or exemptions.

While the Pentagon prefers to rely on

"volunteers" for cannon fodder, military brass apparently fear that the endless casualties in Iraq and the prolonged deployment of Reserve and National Guard troops may discourage people from enlisting or re-enlisting.

And the administration is considering going to war against several other countries, but lacks the necessary troops. However, the draft is unlikely to be revived before the elections, as officials fear it would prove unpopular with many of those to be forced into the military.



Grocery strike in disarray

continued from page 1

benefit scale for new hires. The UFCW rejected a lower pay scale, but has offered to stretch out the number of years new workers must put in to reach the top of the scale.

In mid-December, the UFCW began sporadic picketing at Safeway-owned grocery stores across the country, and threatened a "complete shutdown" of some stores to increase pressure on the company. But UFCW officials passed up the opportunity to take the strike national by tying negotiations in other regions to the California strike or by systematically picketing the chains' other outlets.

Even in Southern California, picketing has been sporadic and half-hearted. In a failed attempt to break the bosses' solidarity, the UFCW stopped picketing Ralphs Oct. 31 — ostensibly as a convenience to shoppers — even though workers were still locked out. Ralphs stores quickly filled with shoppers, generating profits that the three chains will share to offset their losses from the dispute.

Picketing resumed at some Ralphs stores in January, after it became clear that the chain would not break with its bargaining partners. But each of the seven UFCW locals involved decided on a different strategy. In some areas, the union is picketing loading docks in an attempt to discourage deliveries (nowhere is the union putting up strong enough picket lines to actually prevent scabbing); other locals are sporadically picketing store entrances in an attempt to discourage shopping at the scab stores. And in some areas, there is no picketing at all.

Many locked-out Ralphs workers had been pressing the union to allow them to picket their home stores again, in part out of concern that shoppers might think the chain is no longer involved in the dispute.

"We don't want Ralphs to get off the hook," said Local 770 (Los Angeles) President Rick Icaza. He went on to capture the union's lacksadaisical approach: "Periodically we may have a member who wants to do a rally at Ralphs to let shoppers know [the chain is] an intricate part of the problem."

"We're not trying to keep shoppers out," said Local 1428 President Connie Leyva. "We took the lines down for the duration, and we are people of our word here at 1428."

Union scabbing

Some 8,000 Teamsters who began honoring picket lines at the chains' warehouses Nov. 24 (six weeks into the strike) announced Dec. 19 that they would resume work. The UFCW obliged them by ordering workers to remove picket lines at the warehouses and issuing a statement describing the Teamsters' union scabbing as a "good-faith gesture" intended to create a better atmosphere for negotiations. UFCW International President Doug Dority thanked the Teamsters for their support, saying, "We have never seen such solidarity amongst workers in the supermarket industry."

Workers in El Monte refused to go along, picketing a Vons distribution center despite UFCW orders, and rank-and-file Teamsters continued to honor that picket line. While

they have kept the warehouses running, Teamsters have also refused to drive through picket lines at stores, instead stopping short of the loading docks and handing the keys to managers or scabs to actually cross the line.

After many members complained, the UFCW announced Dec. 23 that it would keep picketing Safeway warehouses as well, and Teamsters officials said they would honor those picket lines.

The UFCW also dispatched striking workers to Northern California to leaflet Safeway stores there. UFCW contracts with Albertsons, Ralphs, Safeway and other chains expire in September.

"We certainly expect this fight to be on our doorstep then," says Rich Benson, president of UFCW Local 870. "That's why our local unions fully support the efforts of unions in southern California. ... This is a watershed moment, not just for the UFCW, but for the whole labor movement."

If the Southern California strike is lost the grocery chains are sure to demand even deeper concessions up north. Despite this, there has been no attempt to take workers out in a solidarity strike. Instead, solidarity has been limited to donations to the strike fund, clerks in some stores wearing solidarity buttons, and a boycott campaign against Safeway stores.

The UFCW has targeted Safeway chief executive officer Steve Burd, who they blame for the impasse, and announced it will disrupt business at select Safeway stores throughout North America "to empty the stores as well as the cash drawers" of Safeway stores, as UFCW president Doug Dority put it. The AFL-CIO seems determined to continue this failed strategy, ignoring the fact that the other two chains could end the lock-out any time they wanted but have refused to do so.

The companies claim they need deep concessions in order to compete with non-union outlets like Wal-Mart, which now offer a limited selection of groceries. Yet their top executives rake in salary packages as high as \$12 million a year, and the chains remain highly profitable.

The dispute is the longest grocery strike in the UFCW's history. The bosses are paying a heavy price, but so far show no signs of compromise. However, the UFCW is clearly weakening. Strike benefits have been slashed, and picket lines at most stores reduced to a token presence (although parking lots at Safeway and Albertsons stores are still empty). Many workers have taken part-time jobs to make ends meet, and some have crossed their own picket lines — particularly at Ralphs, where there are often no lines to cross.

This is an important fight, and one that can still be won. But it will not be won by praying to the bosses, or through appeasement, or by trying to starve them out. New tactics — or, rather, the sort of old tactics on which the labor movement was built — are needed. Strong picket lines are needed, not only at the Southern California stores and warehouses, but at the chain's operations across the country.

The stores must be shut down. That is the only way to win.

Needed: real unionism

The articles in the January IW exemplify why we need a strong IWW presence in General Distribution (IU 660), especially grocery retail and distribution.

The UFCW, in spite of the occasional rank-and-file activist on the inside of that union, continues to mismanage itself. I use the word "manage" because to say they are misorganized would imply that they encourage participation and leadership from the ranks. They built their union not from successful organizing, but from mergers and acquisitions of troubled locals throughout the last 20 years.

When they have managed to organize large chains, the membership was built by signing sweetheart deals with the employer, who in turn will not fight card check elections. For example, Safeway was organized when it was a few stores, and the membership of the union grew out of the corporate growth of the business over the years. A look at many of their contracts shows that workers in the deli make little more than minimum wage. The UFCW serves as an arm of industrial management to be sure workers are kept at bay.

The union often refuses to train stewards to handle grievances, and will discourage stewards from organizing rank-and-file activity, and will not pursue charges against employers that interfere with it. In fact, members complain that follow-up on grievances in general is weak, and officials wait until people are fired before initiating action. This sends a message to employers that it is okay to flagrantly violate contracts, and that employees can be harassed to the point of quitting before the grievance procedure runs its course, which lets both the employer and the union off the hook.

I predict that the employers will continue to crush the strike in Southern California, and will continue to do so in other regions. Over the years, the UFCW has not built the loyalty it needs to win these industrial campaigns for healthcare, which are defensive in nature. In fact, many people have negative opinions about unions because they were members of the UFCW.

This is how the corruption in this union plays out in real life. The reform group (REAP) was formed in the 1980s by

Lewie Anderson, who was part of the international sellout of the P-9 struggle in Austin, Minnesota. I do not doubt that there are dedicated activists in this camp, but the real function of a reform group is to keep the radicals in the union, rather than allowing them to start anew, which was what members had originally wanted to do before REAP was formed.

The IWW needs to pay attention to this industry, because it will be up to us to pick up the pieces, should these workers give unionism a second chance. — X337969

A sorry story

Many of us remember the UFCW's role in the crushing of P-9 at Hormel. That was a sorry story if there ever was one.

Many years ago I observed a UFCW picket around Cub Foods, a Denver supermarket. I approached a picket, inquired "how is the job action going?"

He stared at me blankly.

I said, "you're picketing for the union, right?" He offered a noncommittal "yeah, I guess."

I asked, what are the issues? Don't know.

I later found another fellow who seemed better informed about the job action at Cub Foods. But he had already quit this "job," saying it was a lousy way to try making a living.

It turns out this was a content-free "informational picket." The UFCW had hired people through ads in newspapers to hold picket signs for about \$5 an hour. They were nonunion. They knew nothing of union. They had no literature to pass out.

The arrangement was (according to this fellow), make \$5 per hour to start. Each month completed without missing a single day of required participation, you get a quarter increase. Sick a day or bad weather, miss the pay increase.

The UFCW had become an employer using nonunion workers being paid minimum wage under adverse working conditions in an effort to put pressure on the company. Imagine what impression many customers of Cub Foods must have gotten from interacting with these poor, unhappy, non-union folks holding the union's picket signs.

Business unionism.

Yours for the OBU,
Richard Myers

BC Ferries from page 4

on issues of management flexibility, and those are the issues that are at the heart of this dispute. The members will be sorely disappointed, but there will be nothing they can do to challenge Ready's decision legally.

Having agreed to go to arbitration with Ready, the union can hardly take issue with his ruling. Workers will be expected to eat it whether they like it or not.

If they walk off the job in protest, they will be engaging in an illegal strike and will face the same threats and penalties as they faced before. It's unlikely that the pro-business BC government will bow to pressure from her union — certainly not after an arbitration award is issued (although the BC government overturned a binding-arbitration agreement with its physicians in 2002).

Whatever Ready dishes out will be labeled "just" and "fair" by the mainstream labour community. The gentlemen's rules that govern good labour relations dictate that every good union leader must accept as a "good thing," the decision of any presiding rent-a-judge. Miller will feel a great deal of pressure to make like a seasoned labour leader and promote Ready's arbitration award as a good deal for the members — even though it won't be a good thing for them at all. We fully expect that Ready's award will stick the workers with at least some (if not most) of the concessions demanded by their employer, including the ability to contract out work.

Ties that Bind

It's important to understand what binding arbitration is all about, who presides over

the proceedings, and how things shake out.

Binding arbitration in collective bargaining works like this: Representatives of the employer and the union present the issues in dispute to a supposedly impartial individual (an arbitrator) or an arbitration panel (an arbitrator and two sidekicks, one representing management and one representing the union) who carefully consider the positions and supporting arguments of both sides and issues a binding (nonappealable) award that decides all the issues in the dispute.

The issues dealt with in the award, as well as issues settled at the bargaining table, form the new collective agreement between the workplace parties. The award (sometimes called a "decision" or "ruling") is final. There is no recourse for anyone on either side who is dissatisfied with any aspect of it. The workers don't even get to ratify an agreement arrived at through binding arbitration.

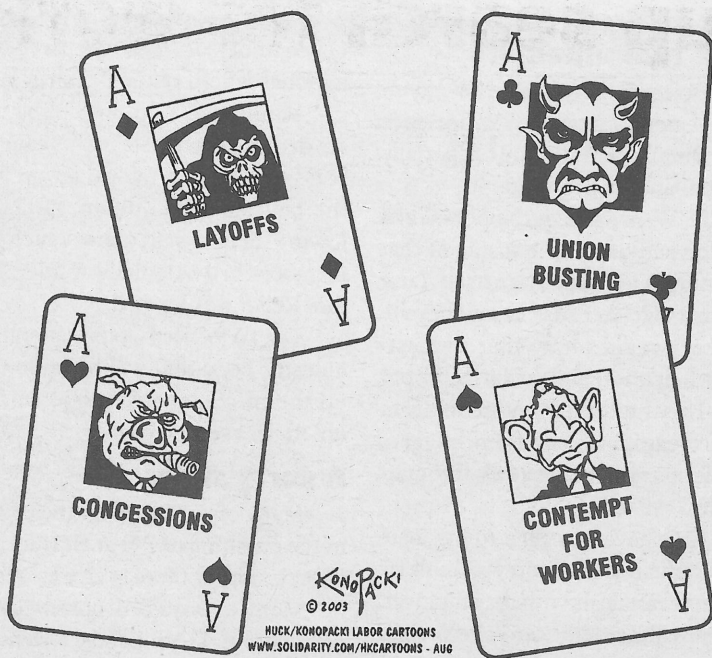
Who benefits from binding arbitration? Government officials who would rather not deal with the controversy that legislating strikers back to work might set off; mediator-arbitrators like Vince Ready who make their living arbitrating labour disputes and have a strong vested interest in keeping government officials happy; labour leaders who don't want to get dragged into some dispute that doesn't involve their own members; business people whose profits might be affected by a strike... Lots of well-heeled people have something to gain from binding arbitration. Union members? It's hard to say what's in it for them.

True, an agreement to go to binding arb will end a strike and get union members back

continued next page

ACES OF EVIL

ACES OF EVIL



A grim year for workers & unions

BY HARRY KELBER, LABOR TALK

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney must think that by criticizing President Bush and antilabor employers with statements on his Web site, he is defending hard-pressed working people and their battered unions. But there's no evidence the White House or union-hating corporations are paying the slightest attention to Sweeney's spitballs, because there is no firepower behind them.

Sweeney bemoans the fact that there are more than nine million people who can't find a job and blames President Bush for callously ignoring their plight. He notes that more than two million workers have been unemployed for more than 27 weeks, and castigates the Republican-controlled Congress for not extending unemployment insurance benefits.

Sweeney is especially outraged that the White House coerced members of Congress to "strip overtime pay from up to eight million workers." And he is highly critical of the new prescription drug law that "provides giveaways to private insurers and opens the door to privatization of the entire [Medicare] program."

That's as far as he's prepared to go in fighting the Bush administration and its right-wing cohorts in Congress. He and other labor leaders seem to feel that as long as there's someone to blame, there is no need to go to the trouble of mobilizing union members for action.

It's hard to find even one national labor leader who is willing to call for a full-scale mobilization for jobs, health care, unemployment insurance and an end to overseas outsourcing. The prevailing mood in Washington's union headquarters is resignation, not anger.

It's no wonder that the AFL-CIO is falling far short of its organizing goals, because it has become increasingly irrelevant to unorganized workers, who don't see unions helping them with their problems.

Top labor leaders have maintained an unbroken silence on the war in Iraq even though they know it will be a prime issue in the 2004 elections.

By its silence and inaction, the AFL-CIO, despite its 13 million members, has become marginalized as a force in American life. No U.S. president throughout the 20th century has treated organized labor with such utmost indifference as has President Bush.

How much longer can we afford to remain passive and voiceless while the needs of working people are ignored and their unions weakened?

Let's make 2004 a year of action. If national labor leaders are looking for actions that can win them the respect of politicians and the loyalty of workers, both union and non-union, here are a few suggestions:

- A march for jobs in Washington to de-

mand that Congress spend \$18.3 billion (the same as in Iraq) for public works jobs for the unemployed. There's plenty of work to be done to make America a better place to live in. Many of our roads, bridges, dams, public buildings, schools and hospitals are in need of repairs. We can use more construction workers, teachers, nurses, firefighters, child care workers and a host of other workers to perform jobs that are essential to a well-ordered society.

Such a march could attract huge numbers of unemployed representing a cross-section of the U.S. population. It would enhance labor's public image. It would serve as an excellent organizing effort. It would be a dramatic event that the media, the White House and politicians everywhere would have to pay attention to.

- Let's mobilize 25,000 unemployed workers in front of the White House to ask President Bush for those promised jobs. Bush has repeatedly said that he won't be satisfied until "every American who wants a job can have a job." Let him hear directly from the unemployed, who want to know when and how he plans to fulfill that promise. If it were done right, with imagination, it could be an event that the media would have to feature and it would put the administration on the defensive. It could provide fuel for a sustained national campaign for jobs.

- A day, or a block of hours, when workers across the U.S. would refuse to work overtime. It's not enough to protest the Labor Department's new ruling on overtime with phone calls, letters, faxes and e-mails. The White House and Congress have to see some visible, physical expression of the anger millions of workers feel about being deprived of premium pay when they work overtime. Such a demonstration (and others like it) could make the public aware that organized labor is aggressively defending the rights of working people.

- A mobilization day at every unemployment insurance center. Union members can show their solidarity with the unemployed whose jobless insurance payments are nearing exhaustion by demonstrating on a set day inside of every unemployment center in the nation. Such demonstrations would provide an ideal opportunity to gather petitions for an extension of jobless benefits. They could win respect for unions and influence many unemployed to vote for pro-labor candidates in the 2004 elections.

Once the unions decide to fight back, many other suggestions will surface on how to do it. Will Sweeney and the leaders of major international unions break their silence and timidity and take up the challenge?

Kelber's weekly "LaborTalk" and "Labor and the War" columns can be viewed at www.laboreducator.org.

It's no wonder that the AFL-CIO is falling far short of its organizing goals... it has become increasingly irrelevant to unorganized workers.

2003: The year that institutional change began to take hold

BY X355424, VANCOUVER

To paraphrase Gramsci, any sustained resistance requires a combination of pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the will.

There are several reasons to be thoroughly pessimistic. It is undeniable that, for example, unionized workers, both in Canada and the States, have endured rough conditions. Thousands of union members were murdered in Colombia, yet again. And global capitalism is more openly vicious than ever.

The planet may, using the economist's measure, be out of the worst downturn since the early '30s. The recent recession started in 2000 and ended just last year. But poverty and homelessness are still expanding everywhere. Workers just don't see a recovery at all, and talk of a world without bosses seems otherworldly to some, probably to most.

But it's wrong, I think, to interpret Gramsci as saying that optimism of the will is irrational. At any rate, I'm going to argue that there are perfectly good reasons why we should be optimistic now.

2003 was a turning point – real institutional change has finally started to take root. Attitudinal changes are old news, but the phenomenal growth of cooperatives is virtually unknown. By May 2003 there were 700 million cooperative accounts.

And it's not just cooperatives – the number of indymedia sites is now almost 120, up from just one in December 1999.

True, there didn't seem to be much to celebrate if you were glued to the tube all the time. But consider these facts: the largest anti-war march in global history successfully delayed the outright invasion of Iraq by over one month; the WTO meetings in Cancun were shut down and the U.S. government quietly conceded in Miami that the multilateral approach of the FTAA would have to be abandoned in favor of bilateral agreements. Why? Because of all the domestic dissent.

"Tell me when the effin' shuttle lands," most Wobs will object. The big objection: co-

operatives and alternative institutions have been around for decades. Their existence did not result in any change for the better.

It's certainly true that, even in the recent past, what institutional change there was was visibly negative. The WTO is a solid example. Furthermore, old society institutions actually appeared to be getting stronger throughout the 1990s. But I'll stick to my claim that institutional change has begun to take hold.

Every time the employing class causes an economic downturn, it can reasonably be expected that cooperatives and other institutions we associate with the new society will see a decrease in their supporters. Not this time. Cooperative accounts grew during the recession that supposedly ended in 2003. The indymedia sites exploded in number and in the degree to which ordinary people get their news from them.

It is critical, in my view, that we build on the gains made thus far. We must actively support those alternative institutions, especially the IWW ones. And the IWW is playing its part in building the new society more reminiscent of our first two decades. Let's hope that the party continues 'till we have a world without bosses.

This change, to be sure, doesn't mean that the war with capitalism is somehow over. Not by any stretch of the imagination. Nor can we say that this is the beginning of the end. But, to paraphrase a loyal boss class crony, we might perhaps say that this is the ending of the beginning.

I'll end with a note of caution about the times ahead: don't ever expect significant change from the ballot box. Let's be clear: politicians will never end capitalism.

Representative democracy has proven to be a failure. Thousands of times, during the past few centuries. Direct democracy is the only way forward. That means, in part, building, supporting, and participating the IWW. Similar actions regarding cooperatives is another important part of direct democracy.

BC Ferries militancy...

continued from page 5

to work. That's beneficial to workers in the short term. But over the long haul, workers almost always end up one step ahead and two steps back if bargaining ends in a visit to the arbitrator. They get tossed a bone in the form of a wage increase or some minor benefit improvement, but concede (or rather, the arbitrator imposes concessions on them) on issues that are of critical importance to them – issues like management flexibility, contracting out, hours of work, scheduling – issues like the ones that caused the ferry workers to walk off the job earlier this month.

Binding arb robs workers of what little voice they have in collective bargaining and leaves decisions about their working conditions to outsiders who are, in reality, completely beholden to the labour relations system that exists to keep workers down. Binding arbitration is a tool used to deprive workers of their single greatest source of power: The right to withhold their labour.

We are not suggesting that BCFMWU President Miller agreed to binding arb just to make some already done deal look legitimate. She would never have displayed the degree of militancy that she did if she was doing the backroom boogie. What we are suggesting is that she agreed to binding arb at least partially because of her faith in the labour relations system, and also at the instigation of mainstream labour leaders – men who put labour peace ahead of workers' rights and who, just like the employers, rely on system guys like Ready to keep workers in line.

Ready has a lot of experience in imposing labour peace. He's done it hundreds of times in the past and will do it again in the BC Ferries case. A strike will be averted and much public inconvenience avoided. However, the fact remains that arbitration takes

control of the outcome out of the hands of workers. If you don't have control, you're going to get screwed – especially if your interests are opposed to those of your employer, your provincial government and the mainstream labour movement which professes to represent your interests but doesn't.

Guys like Ready are not impartial or unbiased. Ready makes his living sitting on government panels and arbitrating disputes. In order to continue scoring those lucrative appointments, he's got to stay on the right side of the provincial administration. If he issues a ruling that is terribly controversial with employers, employer representatives won't agree to have him as an arbitrator.

The system is set up to suppress workers' militancy, not to encourage it. Ready will not do anything that might promote disorder (i.e., workers' militancy).

Here's a classic example of one of Vince Ready's binding arbitration decisions: In December Ready gave 2,800 Yukon government workers a 10 percent pay hike over four years, but they were asking for a lot more. They wanted a paid day off on National Aboriginal Day, an hourly raise for weekend work, and an increase in their annual travel bonus.

This is how it goes. Workers get a bit of money but rarely gain ground on issues that impact on the quality of their working lives or that might restrict management flexibility.

When Ready rules on the BC Ferries dispute, the company will have to pay out some dollars but will have achieved the kind of flexibility that it couldn't otherwise hope to achieve without a long and bitter strike. The workers will be stuck with the new flexibility and – because it's especially hard to negotiate language out of a contract once it's been awarded by an arbitrator – will be stuck with it for a very long time.

The complete article is at www.ufcw.net

Hundreds of thousands give up search for work

The U.S. unemployment rate dropped to a 14-month low (5.7 percent) in December, but not because more workers are getting jobs.

The government's Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that the number of people holding jobs increased by only about 1,000. However, the work force, which typically grows in an economic recovery, shrank as 309,000 people gave up looking for work.

Meanwhile, extended unemployment benefits expired Dec. 21, eliminating 13 weeks of benefits for jobless workers who exhaust their regular six months of eligibility. Some 2 million U.S. workers have been jobless for six months or more, by official figures, and hundreds of thousands more have never held jobs at all.

And consumer debt (which includes credit cards and car loans, but not mortgages) hit a record \$1.98 trillion in October 2003, or about \$18,700 per U.S. household. Many workers owe more, sometimes much more, than they will earn in a year of full-time work.

The Economic Policy Institute reports there are now three unemployed workers for every job opening, making it very difficult for the long-term unemployed – and for people newly entering the work force – to find jobs. It takes 20 weeks for the average unemployed worker to find a job, and a fourth of them have been looking for 27 weeks or longer.

For workers in the rapidly disappearing manufacturing sector, it can be much longer. "It's frustrating, to say the least," William Holland – a 50-year-old laid-off steelworker who has been unemployed for nearly three years even after retraining on computers – told the *Baltimore Sun*. "I don't give up. I am

sending out resumes, I am on the Internet, I am trying every avenue."

The U.S. economy has lost nearly 2.9 million jobs in the last three years, and gains in recent months have been minuscule even as hundreds of thousands of new workers enter the job market each month.

Combined with cutbacks in social services at the state and federal level, growing numbers of single parents who have exhausted their eligibility for assistance under welfare "reform," reduced funding for higher education, and the end of the federal supplemental jobless benefits program, the result is a tide of social misery that is pushing hundreds of thousands of people onto the streets and into already overcrowded soup kitchens.

Making the situation even worse, while average wages have been losing ground to inflation, that average hides the fact that the number of minimum wage jobs (and jobs that pay even less) has skyrocketed. In New York State, for example, the number of minimum-wage workers has tripled since the 1970s.

The Children's Defense Fund reports that 13.1 million U.S. children live in households classified as "food insecure" by the Agriculture Department. That means they either suffer regularly from hunger, or they or their parents have had to skip meals or experienced difficulties in getting enough to eat.

While politicians say they want an economy in which every one who wants a job has one, that would be disastrous for employers – who fear such conditions would give workers the confidence to demand better wages, safer working conditions and generally upset the climate of fear and desperation



the bosses have worked so hard to build.

If anything, the job market seems likely to get worse. Retailers slashed 38,000 jobs in December, the busiest time of the year for the sector. Leisure and hospitality industries cut 4,000 jobs, and government trimmed workers too. Manufacturers, who have eliminated 2.8 million jobs since July 2000, cut another 26,000 jobs. Many of those jobs have gone overseas; many more have been eliminated through overtime and speed-ups.

The AFL-CIO estimates that nearly 15 million U.S. workers are now unemployed, or have been forced into part-time work because they can not find full-time jobs. Millions more are forced to work long overtime.

And increasing numbers of workers find themselves in jobs where it is impossible to support themselves. As a result, consumer debt has more than doubled in the past 10 years, as workers maxed out their credit cards in order to pay the bills.

Credit card debt stands at \$735 billion, or nearly \$7,000 per U.S. household. And since a third of all card users pay their balances in full each month, the debt of those who carry balances is closer to \$12,000 per household.

Consumer bankruptcies hit a record 1.54 million in 2002, and are on pace to set a new record in 2003, once last year's numbers are tallied.

The companies are lobbying against limits on offshore employment, while urging the government to approve new tax credits for research and development spending, higher subsidies for research on physical science and accelerated tax depreciation schedules for technology purchases.

In a global capitalist economy, there is no way to prevent the bosses from roaming the planet searching for cheaper workers, except for global solidarity and direct action.

Starving amidst plenty

A new study of the effects of welfare reform by the California Budget Project found that many former CalWORKs recipients are not working, and many of those who do work do not earn enough to make ends meet.

Under welfare reform, recipients are being pushed into the job market or forced to work for free for 40 hours a week to retain benefits. Few job training or other support services (such as child care, transportation assistance, or health insurance) exist to help these former welfare recipients, most of whom are raising young children.

Using data from major California cities and other states, the report looks at why individuals leave welfare; their success in getting jobs; the extent to which they participate in programs designed to help the transition to employment; the hardships they face after leaving cash assistance; and how many return to welfare.

While many recipients cite employment or increased earnings as the reason for leaving CalWORKs, only about half of recipients who left welfare in 1999 were working in any given quarter during the follow-up period.

The weaker economy has made it even tougher to get jobs. Only 42 percent of 2002 leavers throughout the nation were employed.

Those holding jobs often earned above the state minimum wage, but much less than what was needed to provide for a family's basic needs. More than half of Los Angeles County families who left welfare in the late 1990s had household incomes below the federal poverty level. Many families experienced hardships after they stopped receiving cash aid, including not having enough food to eat.

The full report is available on the CBP website at www.cbp.org.

Economics as a Disabling Myth

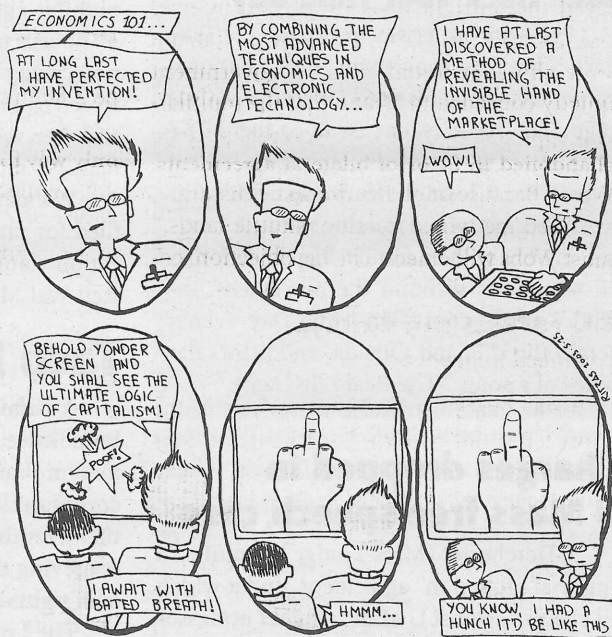
BY FRED LEE

To understand the impact of free trade on workers it is necessary to distinguish between economic theories and what is actually going on. There are two distinct theoretical approaches in economics: neoclassical and radical economics. Neoclassical economics is associated with the argument that supply, demand and scarcity determine prices; an emphasis on the isolated individual and the corresponding absence of class and the distinction between capitalists and workers; and the idea that competitive markets always work.

Radical economics rejects the concepts of supply, demand and scarcity and is associated with the concept of social system of production and classes; surplus and its conflictual distribution between workers and capitalists; and markets as institutions that are designed to work for the benefit of capitalists.

The two approaches are quite different and in fact are incommensurable with each other. Neoclassical theory portrays a competitive market economy as the best of all possible worlds where individuals get precisely what they produce. In contrast, radical theory portrays a capitalist economy as riddled with class conflict, class power, the exploitation of workers for the benefit of the few, and generally a hellish world that must be entirely replaced.

Free trade is based on the neoclassical argument of comparative advantage. By exporting goods that a country has a comparative advantage in producing relative to other countries and importing goods for which it does not have this advantage, the overall outcome is that all countries experience material gains – a win-win situation. However, this theoretical argument, being based on neoclassical theory, is problematic. From a radical perspective, it is possible to simply dismiss the comparative advantage argument by challenging the existence of scarcity or the concepts of



supply and demand.

Consequently, using the radical approach one can dismiss as nonsense statements such as that under free trade exporting jobs will not create unemployment or that the globalization of free trade will improve the living standards of all people everywhere.

The radical approach is also useful for dismissing silly statements such as that workers are now faced with an iron law of wages – that is, wages around the world are being driven to a common subsistence level. The problem with this statement is that in a social system of production, what is subsistence is socially determined and is altered with every round of class conflict, technological innovation and advertising initiative by big business.

By distinguishing between neoclassical theory with its free trade and what is actually happening in the real world, you can reject the notion that free trade is hostile to unions, social legislation, etc., because free trade based on comparative advantage never existed because free trade as a theory was and is nonsense. Clearly international trade takes place, but it never has been theoretical free trade.

What the theory of free trade does is to legitimate attacks on unions, workers' rights and safety regulations, social programs, and protection of national groups and industries. However, from the radical economic perspec-

tive, you can argue that this is done not because of the 'gains' of free trade but because it enhances the power of capitalists over workers. Yet as long as workers believe in the myth of free trade and the benefits it produces, they will be prevented from challenging the capitalist status quo.

In this way neoclassical economic theory acts as a legitimizing myth to obscure what is actually going on, thereby disabling workers from trying to change the system.

Knowing the difference between neoclassical and radical economic theories prevents you from being taken in by the economic tricksters, known as economists and their political pundits. But to actually know what is actually going on in the economy requires not just knowing radical economic theory, but also knowing something about how the economy actually works.

Tech firms defend moving jobs overseas

"Worried about possible government reaction to the movement of U.S. technology jobs overseas," the Associated Press reports, "leading American computer companies are defending recent shifts in employment to Asia and elsewhere as necessary for future profits."

The AP dispatch summarizes a position paper by the Computer Systems Policy Project, whose member companies include Intel Corp., IBM, Dell and Hewlett-Packard.

The trade group argues that moving jobs to countries where labor costs are cheaper helps companies break into foreign markets and hire highly skilled workers. "Americans who think that foreign workers are no match for U.S. workers in knowledge, skills and creativity are mistaken," the report says.

"This is not a recipe for job creation," noted Marcus Courtney, president of the Washington Alliance of Technology Workers. "This is a recipe for corporate greed. They're lining up at the public trough to slash their labor costs."

A recent Commerce Department report found that increasing numbers of technology jobs are moving from the United States to Canada, India, Ireland, Israel, the Philippines and China, and concluded that "many U.S. companies that are not already offshoring are planning to do so in the near future."

New overtime rules set for March release

As we go to press, Democratic senators are filibustering against a major spending bill, demanding measures barring the Labor Department from implementing new overtime rules, the FCC from relaxing limits on media ownership, and adding a requirement that meat and produce carry labels indicating the country of origin, be restored. The measures had been passed by the Senate, but were removed from the final version at the administration's request.

While the AFL-CIO issued a statement Jan. 20 praising the senators, Democratic leader Tom Daschle told the *New York Times* that the filibuster was purely symbolic, and that the spending bills would be passed soon. "Our desire isn't to kill this bill," he said.

The Labor Department has announced plans to issue a final rule changing the Fair Labor Standards Act's overtime provisions by the end of March. The changes would affect millions of American workers—eliminating overtime pay for many, perhaps most, of the 11 million workers who received it in 2002.

At least 8 million workers would lose time-and-a-half pay under a provision exempting workers who hold "a position of responsibility" or earning more than

\$65,000 a year from overtime pay.

Tens of thousands of workers wrote the Labor Department to oppose the rules, and about a quarter of a million have petitioned the White House to try to stop it.

While the Department claims the rules would extend overtime coverage to many low-wage workers, it is already advising employers on how to avoid overtime pay under the new rules. A Labor Department memo to employers suggests they can reduce hourly wages and add the overtime to equal the original salary, limit employee hours, raise salaries to the new \$22,000 threshold (any employees making less would be automatically eligible for overtime), or making various "payroll" or "bookkeeping" adjustments so workers don't qualify for overtime pay. The Department says it is just advising businesses of available options.

"The rules are a sham. And they can be summarized as a 'work more - earn less' philosophy," said Diane O'Brien, communications director for the Minnesota AFL-CIO.

Last year, the Labour Department investigated more than 31,000 worker complaints and recovered \$212 million in unpaid overtime wages, a 21 percent increase over 2002. A particularly notorious case was retail giant Wal-Mart, which is fighting dozens of lawsuits

Fight for shorter Hours



around the country brought by employees who were forced to work unpaid overtime.

Tammy McCutchen, who heads the Labour Department's wage and hour division, says increased productivity and fewer lawsuits under the new rules could mean savings of up to \$1.9 billion for employers.

UK transit workers strike for shorter work day

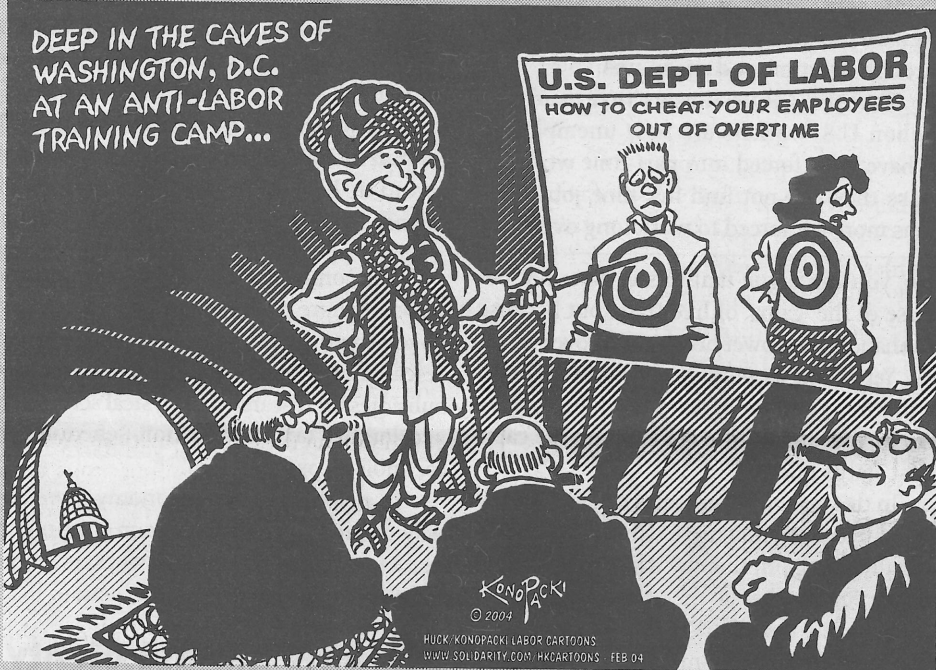
Workers on the Tyne and Wear Metro system called a 24-hour strike for Jan. 18 after management violated an agreement to cut work hours from 37 to 35 hours a week—part of a settlement reached in 2002. Management instead proposed a one-hour reduction, saying productivity was not high enough to honor the original agreement.

Ontario to end 60-hour week

The Ontario provincial government is consulting with workers and employers before introducing legislation to end the 60-hour work week imposed by the former Tory government in 2000. The new administration says it is seeking a "balanced" approach that would protect workers from being forced to work more than 48 hours in a week, without hurting corporate profits. Unions are demanding that the 60-hour week simply be eliminated immediately.

Take Back Your Time Day

Plans are underway to expand the Take Back Your Time movement, with a national conference being planned for spring in Chicago. The most recent issue of the TBYT newsletter (www.timeday.org) opens with a letter from a former steelworker forced to work long hours and rotating shifts, destroying his health and family life. It also discusses efforts to build the movement, includes brief reports on Time Day events across the U.S. and Canada, and prints the lyrics of a song, "The Real Life Game."



DC parking workers demand living wage

Parking workers around Washington DC have kicked off a campaign for living wages, affordable health care, and justice on the job. Currently, 43 percent of DC's predominately Ethiopian, Eritrean and Latino parking workers are represented by HERE Local 27, Parking & Service Workers' Union. Now union workers are reaching out to DC's non-union parking workers in a campaign to raise standards for all parking workers.

Parking workers work in one of the highest revenue-generating businesses in town, make poverty wages, and pay skyrocketing amounts for healthcare for their families. Parking companies are getting rich, while parking workers struggle to survive.

Workers are also reaching out to building tenants. The *Vornado Tenant News* is one example of efforts to alert other building workers to conditions in the garages. In Vornado buildings, customers report paying up to \$235 a month or \$15 a day to park their cars in these garages. Many were shocked to learn that while they pay high rates to park, (non-union) workers pay from \$55 to \$111 a month for individual health insurance. Since workers are paid only about \$17,000 a year, health coverage is unaffordable. But in garages where Vornado has hired union companies workers pay just \$5 a month for healthcare.

The price of parking is comparable in all of the garages. The garages are all packed. Obviously there is enough revenue for Vornado's contractors to provide affordable health coverage.

The parking management industry is extremely competitive. Parking companies compete to win the right to operate garages, and

have strong incentives to cut back on workers' wages and benefits. This competition serves to drive wages and benefits down.

The DC parking industry is the third most lucrative in the country. For years parking rates have gone up while wages and benefits have stayed down. Now, parking workers are organizing for change.

Six-year steel strike ends

The six-year-long fight between nearly a thousand Pueblo, Colorado, steel workers and Rocky Mountain Steel has ended, with the United Steel Workers union agreeing to a new five-year contract.

Rocky Mountain is owned by Oregon Steel Mills, which will pay four million shares of its stock, \$2.5 million in cash and future profits of up to \$35 million into a labor dispute settlement trust to benefit union members employed by Rocky Mountain Steel when the strike began in 1997. Strikers will not return to their jobs.

Chicago construction workers take day off to save jobs

Eight thousand city employees have agreed to take one unpaid furlough day during the first quarter of this year in order to save some 350 building trades workers' jobs.

The agreement was made so the employees, who had already received layoff notices, "could keep their jobs, houses, cars and health care and pay for their kids' Christmas," said Charles LoVerde, president of Laborers Local 1092. If an early retirement program is approved, lay-offs would be averted; otherwise, they would be delayed until Spring.

Charges dropped in U Mass free speech case

A Dorchester (Mass.) judge has ratified a "pretrial probation" agreement under which all charges against U Mass. adjunct professor Tony Van Der Meer were essentially dropped.

Van Der Meer was assaulted and arrested by campus police April 3 after challenging an Army National Guard recruiter who threatened Wobbly Tony Naro as he handed out flyers for an anti-war commemoration of Martin Luther King's assassination. Van Der Meer objected to the recruiter's remark that Naro should be "shot in the head" like Dr. King.

Van Der Meer tried to mediate the tense situation, but what unfolded was chilling: the police told him to "shut the [expletive] up" and wrestled him to the ground. His clothes were ripped and his glasses broken. Five officers brought him to the campus police headquarters, where he was chained to a wall.

Despite more than 15 witnesses who could testify that, in fact, it was the National Guard recruiter and campus police who were responsible for the altercation, Van Der Meer was charged with assault and battery on a police officer and resisting arrest, facing up to five years in prison. While no charges have been brought against any of the others involved, Van Der Meer and Naro are considering suing the National Guard and the UMass campus police for violating their civil rights.

The assault and arrest outraged UMass staff, faculty and students, who organized rallies and packed pretrial hearings. The case highlights how even a campus police department, in the new environment, is expected to play a "Homeland Security" role by repressing democratic rights.

In-house audit says Wal-Mart violated labor laws

The Jan. 13 *New York Times* reports that an internal audit now under court seal warned top executives at Wal-Mart three years ago that records at 128 stores pointed to extensive violations of child-labor laws and state regulations requiring time for breaks and meals.

The audit of one week's records for some 25,000 employees found 1,371 instances in which minors apparently worked too late at night, worked during school hours or worked too many hours in a day. It also found 60,767 apparent instances of workers not taking legally required breaks.

Federal law does not require lunch and meal breaks, but most states do for employees working seven or more hours a day. Missed breaks and lunches have become a major issue in more than 40 lawsuits charging Wal-Mart with forcing employees to work without pay through lunch and rest breaks.

And the Jan. 18 *New York Times* reports that hundreds of Wal-Mart stores lock workers in at night, often with no way to get out in an emergency. Managers say they do this to keep robbers out, or to deter employee theft; the result is that when workers are injured or suffer medical or other emergencies, they are unable to leave the stores.

Retailing experts and Wal-Mart's competitors told the *Times* the company's lock-in policy was unusual. Officials at Kmart, Sears, Toys "R" Us, Home Depot and Costco said they did not lock in workers. Wal-Mart said it would change its policy to make sure someone was present with a key to let workers out in emergencies.

Because of Wal-Mart rules that generally prohibit employees from working more than 40 hours a week in order to avoid paying overtime, many locked-in night-shift workers were forced to clock out in the middle of the night, and then wait several hours in the store until a manager arrived to let them out.

Walmart workers in Jonquière, Quebec, filed for union recognition Dec. 21. Certification would make the store the only unionized Wal-Mart store in North America.

Taco Bell Truth Tour

A caravan of tomato pickers will leave Immokalee, Florida, Feb. 25th and head north to Yum Brands (Taco Bell's parent company) corporate headquarters in Louisville, Kentucky, for the first of two major actions aimed at moving the fast food giant to clean up human rights abuses in its supply chain.

The Louisville rally will take place Friday, Feb. 27th, with a full program of music, speakers and political theater. The caravan will then head toward Los Angeles.

Starting March 2nd, Immokalee workers will lead a three-day march from East Los Angeles to Taco Bell headquarters in Irvine. The march will culminate in a day-long rally March 5th, shaking the foundations of a fast-food industry built on the exploitation of workers and consumers alike.

For details, visit the *Coalition of Immokalee Workers website at www.ciw-online.org*

Borders strike settled

Borders workers in Ann Arbor, Michigan, settled their strike in early January after winning a two-year agreement that includes some minor gains, including agency shop status, a grievance procedure, a less intrusive bag check policy for employees, restrictions on outsourcing, and two 15-minute breaks instead of the company-wide 10-minute breaks.

Workers will receive the same benefits as at other Borders stores (but will retain their benefits as long as they work at least 32 hours), but will no longer be considered "at-will" employees. Caps on pay rates at the store have been lifted, benefitting workers who had maxed out after several years in the store, and starting pay will increase by 25 cents an hour.

Workers at the only other unionized Borders store, in Minneapolis, are still seeking a first contract.

Seafarers lose bid to muzzle dissident

The Seafarers International Union lost a motion Nov. 21 for a temporary injunction to force retiree Robert Swanson to take down www.seajustice.org. The website contains information about SIU officials suggesting that some have engaged in corrupt and illegal activities. An Iowa judge held that SIU officials are public figures, and would have to prove Swanson was knowingly disseminating false information in order to win.

Swanson, who joined the SIU when he worked on ore boats on the Great Lakes in the '70s, said he'd continue to make his site available to seafarers to criticize SIU officials and discuss ways to strengthen the union.

The court did bar Swanson from criticizing the SIU's attorneys. The Washington, DC-based Public Citizen Litigation Group has joined Swanson in appealing that ruling, arguing that it unconstitutionally infringes upon his free speech rights.

Piecards' porkchopping

For years, many union piecards have received salaries many times what they would have made on the job (though growing numbers never worked the jobs where their members toil in the first place). Even as business unions lose ground in the workplace, many still pull in corporate-sized pay checks.

John Bowers, president of the International Longshoremen's Association since 1987 (and an officer since 1956), collects \$390,825 a year on the international's payroll. He pulls in another \$160,296 as head of the ILA's Atlantic Coast District, for a total of \$551,121. Bowers' son makes \$260,957 as international and Atlantic Coast legislative director.

When Bowers Sr. first took union office, there were some 41,000 longshoremen in New York. Today, there are only 3,000.

Five other ILA officials make more than \$400,000, and a dozen top \$300,000, according to the *New York Daily News'* review of U.S. Department of Labor filings for 2002, the most recently available year, when the union had 59,000 members.

"Too many of our leaders are driven by the salary and not by the needs of our rank-and-file," said Ken Riley, cochairman of the dissident Longshore Workers Coalition.

ILA Vice President Arthur Coffey collects six paychecks from the union: one in New York, one in Texas, and four in Florida.

"Only leaders divorced from all accountability to members would spend so exorbitantly on their own salaries ... and scheme to hide them on so many payrolls," said Carl Biers of the Association for Union Democracy.

Meanwhile, Teamsters for a Democratic Union reports that 270 Teamsters officials made more than \$100,000 in 2002 – up 20 percent from the year before. The union lost 48,000 members and net assets declined by \$61 million from the previous year.

The top-paid Teamsters official was Frank Wsol of Chicago Local 710, who pulled down \$636,394. IBT President James Hoffa came in fourth, at \$284,151. The appointed trustee overseeing NYC Local 295 was paid \$250,000.

Meanwhile, Teamsters across the country are seeing their health benefits gutted, and carhousers are working under a two-year wage freeze. TDU suggests that officers' pay be tied to the contracts they negotiate.

SEIU 36 trustee voted out

Members of Service Employees International Union Local 36 elected new officers Dec. 13, rejecting a slate preferred by the international. The vote came in the 18th month of trusteeship over the local, which represents 4,300 janitors, maintenance workers, and technicians in Philadelphia and its suburbs.

Workers chose former officer Denys Everingham as president over trustee Wyatt Closs. Closs, a former staffer at SEIU's national headquarters, has refused to turn the local over to the elected officials. Closs is seeking a new election, and some fear the international may merge the local into another rather than allow it to return to self-governance.

U.S. hit for weak labor protections

The International Confederation of Trade Unions has filed a report with the World Trade Organization, noting that the United States falls far short of meeting internationally recognized labor rights.

The United States has ratified only two of eight core ILO labour conventions, routinely violates workers' union rights and has continuing problems with child labour, the ICFTU report notes, calling for the WTO to intervene in the situation.

The U.S. has not ratified the ILO core conventions on the Right to Organize or on Freedom of Association. The ICFTU notes that the right to strike and the right to collective bargaining are severely restricted in the U.S., particularly for public sector and agricultural workers.

Some 32 million workers are excluded by law from the limited protections offered under U.S. labor law, while workers where unions have not met rigid legal standards for certification are routinely denied their rights to union representation – a practice which violates international labor standards.

In most countries, workers' rights to join a union and bargain alongside their fellow workers are protected even where the union represents only a minority of employees. Union representation is not strictly tied to majority status.

"Remedies for intimidation and coercion [of workers] are both limited and ineffective," the ICFTU notes, with a backlog of some 25,000 cases waiting attention and an average wait of 557 days before the National Labor Relations Board resolves a case.

The report also points to the imposition of the Taft-Hartley Act against West Coast longshoremen and the NLRB's failure to protect workers at Chicago's Azteca Foods as examples of routine violations of internation-



ally protected labor standards.

The U.S. government has not ratified ILO conventions on Equal Remuneration and Discrimination. The report notes widespread pay inequities between men and women, and along racial lines. Discrimination is prohibited by law, the ICFTU notes, but it continues to occur in practice.

Although the U.S. has ratified the ILO convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, it has not ratified the Minimum Age convention. Some 9.4 million U.S. children work, according to ILO statistics, and more than 100 are killed on the job each year.

Child labor remains widespread in U.S. agriculture, where few regulations apply and where children are exposed to dangerous working conditions. The ICFTU cites a study by Human Rights Watch that found that many child workers do not make minimum wage.

The report also points to forced labor in

U.S.-controlled territories and prisons, and to abuse of workers brought into the country under employer-sponsored visas.

Mind control in the academy

Congress recently passed House Resolution 3077, which would impose restrictions on what professors can and can't teach in area studies programs (studying international culture and politics in specific regions), which proponents portray as "hotbeds for anti-American sentiment."

The bill would establish an advisory board with final say on curricula, course materials, and even the faculty hired in schools that accept federal funding (including financial aid to students).

Professors who do not support U.S. practices abroad could have their appointments terminated, and curriculum containing criticisms of U.S. foreign policy censored.

The John Birch Society's "labor" websites

BY ERIC LEE

The annual labor website of the year competition – which the IWW won four years ago – has led me to discover many strange and wonderful websites. Some of these are more strange than wonderful. And some of the strangest of all have got to be the websites of the ultra-right wing John Birch Society.

I should begin by explaining that while there are "officially nominated" sites in the annual competition, anyone with an email address can vote for any site they want. This has led to some anti-union websites getting votes, though never more than a handful. Companies sometimes create the web equivalent of a company union, websites which tout the advantages to employees of not organizing. But this year, I discovered something far more dangerous.

It began with a single vote cast for a site called RescueAmericanJobs.org. I decided to have a look at the site. One's initial impression is that this is just another union website – and that impression is deliberately cultivated. There's a banner with the slogan "One person can make a difference." There's an appeal to buy American-made products. There's even a quaint story behind the site, apparently – one which is designed to make a person think there couldn't possibly be a racist motive behind the campaign. "The founders of Rescue American Jobs are a unique pair of patriots – an American-born citizen from the rural South and her husband, a Chinese-Singaporean immigrant who is in the process of becoming a naturalized citizen," we are told. So there you go, we're not racists at all. One of us isn't even white.

One has to dig deeper, however. Rescue American Jobs is part of something called the Coalition for the Future American Worker which unites, it claims, some 100,000 people in a wide range of organizations – none of which I can honestly say I have ever heard of. These include a number with very innocent sounding names, such as the National Asso-



ciation for the Employment of Americans, American Jobs Coalition, and American Labor First. No mention of anything as nasty as the John Birch Society, but hang on a minute.

On the site's news page, you'll find a link to two stories from *The New American*, the magazine of the John Birch Society. The articles are by William F. Jasper, the magazine's senior editor, and are both from 2003.

One of them concludes with these words: "more and more Americans are feeling the harsh reality of the planned 'new world order' or are beginning to see the writing on the wall concerning their own jobs, businesses, and professions... These newly awakened Americans can be reached and organized into a formidable force to upset the subversive globalist agenda and preserve our independence. But we have no time to waste."

A visit to John Birch Society's own home page reveals that its main campaign is now to "Stop the FTAA." It's even more prominent than its efforts to get the U.S. out of the United Nations, or get the Panama Canal returned to U.S. control. And they've created a special website at www.stoptheftaa.org.

The Birchers are clearly trying to tap into two genuine concerns of the labor movement in the U.S. – job loss and opposition to globalization. They're working on fertile ground. Their sites are virtually indistinguishable from genuine left wing and trade union sites, with their fluttering American flags on the one hand and opposition to the capitalist "new world order" on the other. They are trying – with some success – to blend in.

All the various anti-immigration/anti-globalization sites in this network link to one another – but they also link to sites which are part of the mainstream labor movement. For example, follow a couple of links from

the Coalition for the Future American Worker site and you're on the "How Americans Can Buy American" website. This site promotes "Union Jeans and Apparel," a company which appears on the "Union Mall," together with a number of union-backed shops. There are also links to genuine union sites, such as the Communications Workers of America and Wash-Tech, the union organizing high-tech workers in the Pacific Northwest.

One can fairly quickly throw together a website, creating what appears to be a genuine grassroots organization in a matter of minutes. The Birchers and their allies seem to have done this over and over again. Front groups of this kind were invented by twentieth century totalitarians of both the Communist and Nazi variants to make it easier to recruit and organize. These websites are net-based versions of the old front organizations.

Unions that engage in over-the-top patriotism and flag waving, which don't know the difference between "buy union" and "buy American," are making it easier for the ultrarightists to get a foot in the door. And left-wing anti-globalization protestors who substitute xenophobia for international solidarity are also setting themselves up for Bircher's "stop the new world order" propaganda. Only an informed, critical approach to these issues – and a commitment to genuine internationalism – can protect us from this danger.

Subscribe to the Industrial Worker today

Subscriptions are \$15 per year.

- Enclosed: \$15 for 1 year
 \$ donation to IWW Sustaining Fund
 \$15, bundle of 5 for 6 issues
 (ask about special IWW member rates)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____

Postal Code: _____

send to: Industrial Worker Distribution
 PO Box 13476, Philadelphia PA 19101 USA

Free Leonard Peltier

BY TACOMA (WA.) LEONARD PELTIER SUPPORT GROUP

The case of Leonard Peltier shows how far the government is willing to go to frame an activist, and brings together many important issues including: the government's long-standing policies in dealing with Native people; the continuing theft of Native land; the government serving multinational corporations at the expense of the people; nuclear power and weapons; the destruction of the environment; the illegal use of the military within the borders of this country; the unconstitutional abuses by America's political police force, the FBI; and the denial of basic human rights to activists.

Back in the 1970s, Norman Zigrossi, the head of the FBI office in Rapid City, defended the FBI's illegal actions by saying that "Indians are a conquered nation and that the FBI is merely acting as a colonial police force."

"When you're conquered, the people you're conquered by dictate your future. This is a basic philosophy of mine. If I'm part of a conquered nation, then I've got to yield to authority." Though the original people of this land have suffered much in over 500 years of genocide, they weren't conquered but rather signed peace treaties with the U.S. government. The government has treated Native people along the lines Zigrossi stated in direct violation to those treaties.

The treaties set geographic borders for each tribe's land (reservations). Often that land was land that white people viewed as worthless. When reservation land is found desirable, the government seeks to acquire that land, often by illegal means. The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 assigned the Lakota people land including the Paha Sapa (the Black Hills). When gold was found, the government aided miners in stealing the Paha Sapa from the Lakota people. Even though this was illegal, the government would not return the land but did offer payment for it, which the Lakota have steadfastly refused to this day.

Through the use of satellites, the National Uranium Resource Evaluation Program located major uranium deposits in the northwest corner of the Pine Ridge Reservation, in an area called Sheep Mountain. Multinational energy corporations such as Kerr-McGee wanted that uranium. The government had learned through its experiences with the Lakota and the Paha Sapa that they would not willingly give up any of their land; thus they had to find ways to suppress the Lakota opposition. They found a willing ally in Dick Wilson, a corrupt tribal chairman who had won election through fraud and intimidation.

As Leonard Peltier says, "I have no doubt whatsoever that the real motivation behind both Wounded Knee II and the Oglala firefight, and much of the turmoil throughout Indian Country since the early 1970s, was – and is – the mining companies' desire to muffle AIM and all traditional Indian people, who sought – and still seek – to protect the land, water and air from the thefts and depredations. In this sad and tragic age we live in, to come to the defense of Mother Earth is to be branded a criminal."

Wilson harassed and terrorized the traditional Lakota people, who requested assistance from the American Indian Movement. A council of traditional elders requested that Lakota warriors occupy the site of the 1890 Wounded Knee massacre. Even though the Wounded Knee occupiers faced the combined

forces of Wilson's vigilantes, the FBI, U.S. marshals, BIA agents, military advisors, elements of the 82nd Airborne Division, and considerable military firepower that was used against them, they were able to hold on to Wounded Knee for 71 days.

After Wounded Knee II the government arrested hundreds of AIM members. A reign of terror existed for two and half years after Wounded Knee II, in which over 60 traditionalists, AIM members and supporters were murdered – mostly by a private armed force organized by Dick Wilson called the GOON Squad. The GOONS were armed by the FBI and given intelligence on AIM members. They set up roadblocks, assaulted many people, ran cars off the road, and on January 30 and 31 of 1975 several carloads of heavily armed GOONS shot up the town of Wanblee and firebombed homes, because Wilson said, "Wanblee needed straightening out."

Oglala Lakota elders again requested help from AIM; answering the call for help were mostly members of Northwest AIM including Leonard Peltier. AIM set up an encampment on the Jumping Bull's compound.

On April 24, 1975, the FBI issued a memorandum, "The use of special agents of the FBI in a paramilitary law enforcement operation in the Indian country." They built up a huge number of FBI agents on Pine Ridge, mostly SWAT teams from different divisions around the country. Clearly the FBI was getting ready for something.

The FBI then went about creating a diversion for Dick Wilson, who was in Washington to illegally sign away the part of Pine Ridge where uranium was found. The FBI knew that there would be strong opposition, so they set out to instigate an incident. There had been a drunken fight in which a young Lakota was accused of stealing a pair of used cowboy boots. On June 25, 1975, two FBI agents came to a cabin overlooking the AIM encampment. They said they were looking for Jimmy Eagle, the youth accused of stealing the boots, and said he had been seen riding in a red pickup truck. It is clear that the FBI was doing reconnaissance of the area.

The next day, roadblocks were set up, and local hospitals were put on notice to expect casualties. Two FBI cars followed a red pickup (which they had identified as being associated with the AIM encampment) out of a nearby town, claiming that Jimmy might be in it. The two FBI agents were Ronald Williams and Jack Coler; both were counterintelligence agents and members of a FBI SWAT team. One has to ask why, with all that was going on at Pine Ridge, two highly trained agents were wasting their time looking for Jimmy in a matter that would normally be handled by tribal police.

Rather than stopping the vehicle on the main road, the agents followed it into the Jumping Bull compound at a high rate of speed. These agents were well aware that they were driving into an AIM encampment; as a matter of fact, they had a map in their car with the area circled and identified. They knew that AIM set up that encampment to provide protection against the reign of terror, and that many of the attacks had involved drive-by shootings. The people at the encampment had no way of knowing that these two cars were not part of a GOON attack.

When the red vehicle stopped, the two FBI cars pulled themselves into a defensive alignment and the agents jumped out with guns drawn. A firefight ensued, drawing in AIM members from the encampment. The two agents were hit by gunfire; when people approached them, one agent raised his gun to fire at them and then they were hit by the gunfire that killed them. Within a very short time there were hundreds of FBI agents and BIA agents, including snipers, firing upon the AIM encampment. A sniper killed one AIM member, Joe Stuntz Killright.

Thirty people at the AIM encampment managed to get away, and then the FBI interned hundreds of people for questioning.

"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..."

— Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals



The trial of the first two AIM members for the firefight was held in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The defense was allowed to present evidence of the reign of terror, which showed the reason why AIM thought they were under attack and thus defended themselves. The case for self-defense was so strong that the jury found them not guilty.

Leonard Peltier was arrested in Canada on Feb. 6, 1976, based upon an affidavit by Myrtle Poor Bear. Later she revealed that she had been held by the FBI and told she would lose her daughter unless she signed the affidavit they had written for her. The fact that the U.S. government lied to the Canadian courts is still a major issue in Canada. Myrtle Poor Bear wanted to testify at Leonard's trial, but the judge denied that request stating that "if Myrtle Poor Bear was to be believed she would shock the conscience of the court."

Leonard's trial was given to a new judge in Fargo, ND, Paul Benson – a Nixon appointee with a history of anti-Native bias. He would not allow evidence that the firefight was an act of self-defense. Witnesses have testified that they were intimidated by the FBI into giving false testimony connecting Peltier to the shootings. A government ballistics expert, Evan Hodge, testified that shell casings the FBI said were found near the agents' car matched the gun the FBI said Leonard used. Hodge stated that a firing pin test, which is the best test, could not be done. Years later, in documents Leonard's lawyers got through the Freedom of Information Act, it was found that the government withheld a document from the defense showing that in fact a firing pin test had been done which found that the shell casings did not come from Leonard's gun. This is very important because the government used those shell casings to "prove" that Leonard killed the agents.

Using the testimony of three intimidated witnesses and the fabricated ballistics report, the government stated at Leonard's trial that: "We proved that he went down to the bodies and executed those two young men."

After the witnesses revealed that they were forced to lie, and after it was shown that the firing pin test showed that the shell casing did not come from Leonard's gun, the government changed its story: "We had a murder (if you can call self-defense a murder), we had numerous shooters (there were over 30 people at the AIM encampment) ... we do not know who shot the agents." The government now says they "do not know what role Leonard Peltier may have played in the deaths," but that Leonard was convicted for "aiding and abetting" the deaths of the agents. Remembering that the verdict in the first trial resulted in a not-guilty verdict because of self-defense, Leonard Peltier has been in prison for all these years for "aiding and abetting" an act of self-defense.

Leonard was not convicted of "aiding and abetting," but rather for being the person who killed the agents. Through the appeals process and gaining more information from withheld evidence, Leonard's lawyers have disproved the government's case and have left it with nothing else than to say that he was there that day. But the courts have refused to grant Leonard a new trial.

One of the judges (Heaney) who denied Leonard a new trial, said in a letter to Senator Inouye: "The United States government overreacted at Wounded Knee. Instead of carefully considering the legitimate grievances of the Native Americans, the response was essentially a military one, which culminated in the

deadly firefight on June 26, 1975. The United States government must share responsibility with the Native Americans for the firefight." He went on to recommend clemency/commutation of sentence for Leonard.

While Clinton was president Leonard's lawyers filed for clemency. FBI agents created an anti-Peltier organization; they pressured newspapers to write anti-clemency editorials; they took out ads in papers giving a completely false story about what happened; and some 500 agents took "sick leave" to march on Washington against Leonard. We are sure that the FBI also placed other behind-the-scenes pressure on Clinton, who did not grant Leonard clemency.

Even though the government admitted that they could not prove that Leonard killed anyone, when he went in front of the Parole Commission the commission used the disproved testimony and fabricated evidence to rule against Leonard – adding something that even the government never claimed, that the agents were ambushed. The Parole Commission ruled that Leonard could not go before them again until 2008. On Nov. 4, the U.S. Court of Appeals, Tenth Circuit, issued their ruling denying Leonard Peltier's appeal.

The court ruling concludes: "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. Mr. Peltier asserts, 'The blatant government misconduct is a mitigating factor which should bear strongly on whether (he) should be immediately considered for parole...' He may be correct. But whether the Parole Commission gave proper weight to this mitigating evidence is not a question we have authority to review. Our only inquiry is whether the Commission was rational in concluding Mr. Peltier participated in the execution of the two federal agents. On the record before us, we cannot say this determination was arbitrary and capricious."

The court added that "the Commission's description of the firefight as an 'ambush' was imprecise: there is no indication any of the participants were lying in wait for the agents." And, the court admits, "In 1975, the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota was embroiled in conflict between traditional elders, who sought independence from Bureau of Indian Affairs managers, and Native Americans supportive of the BIA power structure. The conflict became violent, and the traditional elders sought protection from members of the American Indian Movement. Mr. Peltier and other AIM activists arrived at Pine Ridge to defend reservation traditionalists."

So the court acknowledges the reason why Leonard was there; it acknowledges that the government behavior at Pine Ridge is to be condemned. It acknowledges the violence.

The first two AIM members to be tried were found not guilty because of self-defense. But the court states that the Commission's denial of parole for Leonard, which was based upon things that the court agrees should be condemned, was not "arbitrary and capricious." Again the courts have shown that in the case of Leonard Peltier such things as justice and common sense do not apply.

As in the past when Leonard lost appeals, there are those who want to give up saying Leonard will never find justice in a system that only acts in its own interest. Though it is clear that the system will not grant justice to Leonard, we should not give up. Enough

continued next page

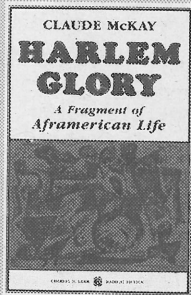
International Day of Solidarity with
LEONARD PELTIER
FEBRUARY 7

In Tacoma: Rally & March, Noon,
Portland Avenue Park
(between East 24th and Fairbanks)

For information: Tacoma LPSG,
P.O. Box 5464, Tacoma WA 98415
Tacoma-lpsg@ojibwe.us

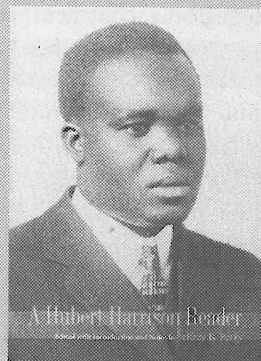
BOOKS FOR REBELLIOUS WORKERS

February is Black History Month



Harlem Glory by Claude McKay
Written in the 1940s, this semi-autobiographical novel by the renowned Jamaican poet and novelist evokes the life of Harlem in the Great Depression and New Deal. McKay captures the exuberant clash of social movements and ideologies, acutely sensitive to the vitality and diversity of Black culture and drawing on McKay's experiences in the IWW and the socialist movement.

112 pages, \$10.00



A Hubert Harrison Reader edited with introduction & notes by Jeffrey B. Perry.

Hubert Harrison (1883-1927) was a brilliant writer, orator, educator, critic, and radical political activist and one of the most important, yet neglected figures of early 20th-century America. Harrison was drawn toward the policies and practices of the militant and egalitarian IWW, whom he considered to be practitioners of true unionism. He argued for direct action and praised the work of the integrated IWW-affiliated Brotherhood of Timber Workers in Louisiana. Besides being an excellent collection of nearly forgotten writings by Harrison, the overall work poses interesting questions on the concepts of multi-cultural unionism, political action, and "Race First" organizations.

473 pages, \$25.00

Black Labor and the American Legal System: Race, Work, and the Law by Herbert Hill

Herbert Hill joined the staff of the NAACP in 1948 and became labor relations assistant to NAACP executive secretary Walter White.

As a teenager in New York City he had been drawn to Harlem jazz clubs where he met Duke Ellington and Richard Wright, in Greenwich Village he had long discussions on the "Negro Question" with C.L.R. James.

This book, a classic and monumental piece of legal history, discusses the evolution of laws governing Black labor, from the aftermath of the Civil War to the Civil Rights Movement. Hill doesn't pull any punches with politicians and labor bureaucrats who pander to racism. Special attention is paid to the World War II-era Fair Employment Practice Committee, which was abandoned as soon as the war was over and demand for war-effort workers and "labor peace" was over.

455 pages, Published at \$22.95, Special price \$10.00

From Chattel Slaves to Wage Slaves



From Chattel Slaves to Wage Slaves: The Dynamics of Labor Bargaining in the Americas edited by Mary Turner

Fourteen case studies explore the ways in which slaves in the Americas and the Caribbean "negotiated" the conditions of their labor (through strategies ranging from sabotage to rebellion), and then continued to struggle over the conditions of their labor once they had been "emancipated" into wage slavery. Whether slaves or wage workers, the whole of their lives were consumed in the struggle to secure the necessities for life itself, but these richly detailed, engaging histories make it clear that these workers did not meekly accept their fate.

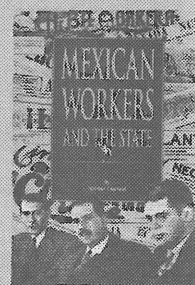
309 pages, \$12.00



IWW Baseball Cap. A beautiful black cap with red under the visor. Embroidered logo in white and red, and "Solidarity Forever" embroidered on the back of the cap. Union made & embroidered, one size fits all. \$16.00

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

Mexican Workers and the State: From the Porfiriato to NAFTA by Norman Caulfield
In contemporary Mexico, as during the Porfiriato, the forces of global capitalism are transforming labor, the political system, and other sectors of society. The situation has generated political fragmentation, popular uprisings, violence, militarization and a volatile economy. Within this context, organized labor seeks to redefine itself. Caulfield's book, which contains extensive work on the IWW's cross-border organizing, helps readers understand the importance of independent, internationalist, working class movements.

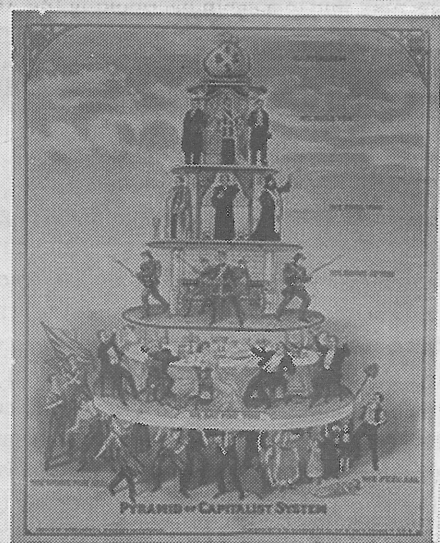


180 pages, \$15.00

Red November, Black November: Culture and Community in the Industrial Workers of the World by Salvatore Salerno

Salerno's book is about one of the most significant traits of the IWW: the union's use of cultural expressions like songs, poems and cartoons to educate and unify workers. Dozens of examples help us understand what mattered to the immigrants, artists, and Wobblly intellectuals whose work filled the IWW press.

220 pages, \$22.00



Pyramid of the Capitalist System poster Color reproduction of the classic graphic explanation of capitalism: profit on the top, workers on the bottom. 17"x22" \$6.50

Book Review:

Sticking to the Union

Sandy Polishuk, *Sticking to the Union: An Oral History of the Life and Times of Julia Ruuttila*. Palgrave, 2003.

One fellow worker with a Germanic veneration for accuracy expressed to me his distaste for oral histories, due to inaccuracies via hazy memories and the tendency for self-aggrandizement on the part of the informant. I responded that that was still more reliable and honest than the omissions and outright misrepresentations on the part of the official historians, particularly when it comes to labor history, where other "historians" will repeat the same omissions and inaccuracies. Such has been the case with many histories of the IWW, particularly when deep-sixing us during the first world war.

Sandy Polishuk, the compiler of this book, interviewed the subject of *Sticking to the Union* over the years, conscientiously checking the facts of her life, allowing for memory gaps and other inaccuracies in her own notes throughout the text (comments from Ruuttila's family and friends, and from contemporary documents, are also included).

Julia Ruuttila (1907-1991) led a productive life in the labor and anti-war movements. Her father, who had been in the Spanish-American war and later joined the Industrial Workers of the World, was the primary influence in her life, imparting the principles that remained with her throughout her life.

She was active with many other groups, including the Communist Party in later years – but never joined them as she could not accept their hard line directed from the top. During her active career, she endured her share of hard knocks at the hands of cops and employer goons, until she became "too old to get beat up."

Ruuttila was active in working for the release of Ray Becker, who with his involvement in the Centralia affair had been in prison from 1918 to 1936. He and a group of Wobblies were defending the IWW hall against a gang of Legionnaires agitated by one of the lumber barons who wanted Centralia "Wobblly free." The Legionnaires' raid resulted in three of their number being dispatched to that vet's home in the sky, and was the excuse for the biggest kangaroo court in the state of Washington's history.

Ruuttila participated in the anti-Vietnam War protests, as well as in many union organizing drives. Unfortunately, she did not live to see the publication of this book, which accounts for a long life fighting the good fight. This book should provide inspiration for many budding unionists, and is a valuable addition to any workers' library.

— Nuberoja

Leonard Peltier...

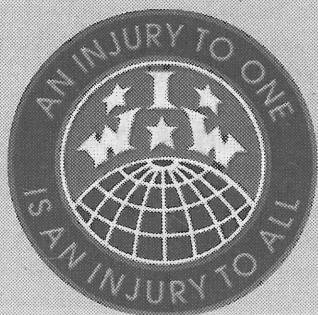
continued from page 10

people demanding justice for Leonard will result in his freedom. Rather than give in to the government and its system of injustice, we should use every act by the government and its courts as further example of the righteousness of our cause, and struggle even harder.

Leonard's defense team continues to work to get all the documents on his case released. The first time documents were released – over 6,000 pages – the FBI said it had another 6,000 pages it would not release because of "national security." The number not released is actually about 120,000 pages. Whose security is the FBI protecting by withholding this evidence? Clearly it is their own.

We are committed to supporting Leonard Peltier for however long it takes to free him. We work to publicize Leonard's case as much as we can, for only public pressure will free him. For this reason, we in Tacoma have held public demonstrations and have kept the story behind Leonard's case alive for the past 11 years. Though the government has many resources, and a lot of guns, we have something that they can never have: truth, justice and the spirit of strong, committed people who come together to Free Leonard Peltier now!

Embroidered Patches



3" circle with IWW logo and "An injury to one is an injury to all" embroidered in black, red, white and golden \$3.50 each \$2.50 each for five or more

ORDER FORM

MAIL TO: IWW LITERATURE, PO BOX 42777, PHILA, PA 19101

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE: _____

QUANTITY	ITEM	PRICE

***Shipping/Handling**
In the U.S., please add \$2.00 for first item and 50¢ for each additional item
Canada: Add \$3.00 for the first item 50¢ for each additional item
Overseas: Add \$4.00 for the first item \$1.00 for each additional item

SUB-TOTAL: _____
SHIPPING*: _____
ORGANIZING FUND DONATION: _____
TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

England: Worker killed by overwork

Chinese immigrant Zhang Guo Hua dropped dead in Hartlepool, England, recently after stamping the Samsung logo on ovens for 24 hours nonstop. No one attended his funeral – his family in China was not even told he had died; his friends, also undocumented, were afraid of arrest and deportation.

Zhang's death was the first publicised case of an illegal immigrant dying on the job in England. Zhang worked for Thames Oriental Manpower Management, living in a company house he and his 27 housemates called Lao Fang – the prison. Their regular work week was 72 hours, but their 12-hour shifts were often extended to 16 or even 24 hours. They often put in 100 or more hours for £670 a month – far below minimum wage.

Zhang's work involved stamping the Samsung logo on microwave oven doors hour after hour, day after day. He began to suffer from intense headaches, but could not afford to take time off from work or to seek medical care. One night, he collapsed after a 24 hour shift. A blood vessel in his brain had burst. He died a few days later, less than two years after he arrived in Britain.

Fiji unions under attack

Fiji's Minister for Labour and Industrial Relations has warned three of the country's biggest unions that they face de-registration unless they abandon strike plans.

The government says it will freeze the bank accounts of the Fiji Public Service Association, the Fiji Nurses' Association and the Fiji Teachers' Union; discipline or fire their members; and bring criminal charges against union officials for destabilizing the economy.

El Salvador: Girls working as domestics face abuses

Tens of thousands of girls in El Salvador work as domestics, a form of labor that makes them particularly vulnerable to physical abuse and sexual harassment, according to a new report released by Human Rights Watch.

Girls as young as nine work as domestics in El Salvador and may labor 12 hours or more, up to six days a week, for wages of \$40 to \$100 a month. They are particularly vulnerable to physical abuse and sexual harassment from members of the household in which they work.

"For girls, this is the biggest child labor problem in El Salvador," said Michael Bochenek, counsel to the Children's Rights Division of Human Rights Watch. "The challenge is to get labor officials to see domestic employment as real work with real risks."

Over 60 percent of girls reported physical or psychological mistreatment – including sexual harassment – from their employers, according to a study by the International Labor Organization's International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor.

Many girls working as domestics are not able to continue their education, most commonly because their work hours conflict with the school day or because of school fees and other education-related expenses.

The Salvadoran labor code excludes domestics from many basic labor rights, notably the eight-hour workday and the 44-hour work week guaranteed other workers. Domestics commonly receive wages below the minimum wages in other sectors of employment.

Domestic work is the largest employment category for girls under 16 worldwide, according to the International Labor Organization.

El Salvador is the only Central American country to participate in an ILO Time-Bound Program, an initiative to eliminate the worst forms of child labor within five to 10 years. The program provides children with education and training in an effort to give them realistic alternatives to working in hazardous occupations. An ILO study on work in domestic service concluded that it was among the worst forms of child labor, but the Salvadoran government has not included domestic labor in its Time-Bound Program.



In China, the bosses often run the union

The state-run All-China Federation of Trade Unions claimed 134 million members at its September 2003 conference, where it decided to experiment with representing workers' interests in the burgeoning private sector and allowing members to elect officials.

Chinese law theoretically protect workers, but many workers say the state-run union is a charade – and hundreds of workers sent comments to official web sites during the ACFTU congress demanding that managers no longer be permitted to run union branches.

In Shenzhen, the Dec. 29 *New York Times* reported, workers pressured the ACFTU to establish a branch at Neil Pryde, a New Zealand-based maker of sailing and wind-surfing gear. But the ACFTU nominated the manager for union chairman, and the human resources director for vice chair. Two managers and two workers rounded out the slate.

Liu Youlin, a cutter on the wetsuit assembly line who campaigned to establish the union, interrupted the proceedings. "I object

to the factory manager being named head of the union," Liu shouted from the floor. "A boss cannot represent workers."

Lieu was threatened with criminal prosecution if he continued to object, and the vote proceeded. But his fellow workers denied the required 50 percent majority to all but the two worker candidates, rendering the new union leaderless.

Neil Pryde's two Shenzhen plants employ about 2,000 workers, who told the *Times* that conditions were somewhat better than at other area factories. But some departments operate 100 hours a week with one shift, and benefits and annual bonuses were recently scaled back. Workers live in dorms, with 180 workers sharing a single bathroom.

Twelve hour days are common in Chinese factories, as are seven day weeks. Wages for migrant workers, adjusted for inflation, have fallen despite booming economic growth, according to research by the Institute of Contemporary Observation in Shenzhen.

Spanish dockers still fighting casualization

BY PETER SHAW, SWEDISH DOCKWORKERS UNION

Three years ago, European dockers got wind of a proposed port services directive which prompted renewed union awareness and a series of trans-European union actions. Prominent in the fight were Spanish dockers. On Nov. 20, the directive was kicked out of the European Parliament. It was a day to celebrate, and most dockers saw it as a signal that the fight was over. Of course, it's not over. The opponents of organized labour on the docks are still out there and will be back after our job security and working conditions.

For dockers organized in Coordinadora del Mar (a rank-and-file, direct action union), the fight is on now. Early last year, the Spanish government presented legislation reflecting the anti-union spirit of the European Directive. Negotiations between the various unions, the government and the national port-owners association broke down, and Coordinadora embarked on a series of strike actions.

They were mostly on their own, receiving little support from the larger transport unions which organize smaller groups of dockers in other Spanish ports. But through determined strike action Coordinadora managed to hammer out a compromise on all aspects except the self-handling issue (under which shippers could supply their own crews to load and unload cargo). Now the Spanish government is pushing ahead with the new port legislation. For Coordinadora this means that they are back to square one and they will need all their resourcefulness and determination. Inevitably it will almost certainly mean a lot of time on the picket line.

Dockers have been on strike in the port of Gijón, on the north coast of Spain, since Dec. 15, and occupied the gantry cranes after police repeatedly broke through their picket lines. A solidarity strike closed ports

across Spain Dec. 29, and future strikes are planned if a settlement is not reached.

Air traffic controllers sacked

Zimbabwean authorities have fired 43 workers who struck in November, hiring a team of lavishly paid Zambian technicians to help the air force staff airports. Workers are challenging the dismissals in court.

Italian wildcat strike

Milan was paralyzed Jan. 13 by a public transport workers strike that left the city without a single bus, tram or underground train. The strikers, whose wages have not been adjusted for two years, demanded a 106 euro monthly pay rise, rather than the 81 euros accepted last month by the main union leaders.

The strike was called by a small union representing only 7 percent of the country's 120,000 public transport workers, but it was 100 percent effective. It was the second wildcat strike to hit Milan in six weeks. A similar one-day stoppage December 1 also closed the city's underground rail, bus and tram services.

UK rail union head threatens to fire strikers

The new head of the British rail union ASLEF has threatened to sack union workers if they go on strike, and replace them with non-union staff on lower wages. Letters containing the threat were sent to some 40 employees at their home addresses as workers were voting on whether to take strike action.

He also threatened a legal challenge to the ballot, unilateral cuts in sick pay, withdrawing holidays and abolition of childcare vouchers, and to withdraw recognition of the workers' union and blacklist its members.

Many members reacted angrily, saying the threats violate fundamental union principles and might inspire similar measures by employers against Aslef members.

Longshore workers to strike against war

LABORNET SPECIAL REPORT

ILWU Local 10 members voted Jan. 15 to hold a stop work meeting March 20 to demand an end to the war in Iraq, an end to the occupation and the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops. They are hoping for similar actions by ports up and down the west coast.

Their action will coincide with efforts in Asia by the Doro-Chiba railway workers and the Korean KCTU to build an international day of labor action March 20 against war, repression and privatization. Japanese dockers are considering joining as we go to press.

Oil strike threat wins

BY X355424, VANCOUVER

In Nigeria, unionized workers ended 2003 on a victorious note. Members of the Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers merely threatened to strike. The government quickly agreed to their two demands: to stop privatization of the oil industry and to significantly upgrade the refinement plants.

Four refineries are owned by the Nigerian government. They require improvements to increase output. When the government proposed partial privatization, the workers promised strike action. The highest petroleum prices in years resulted in the government giving in to the workers.

But this explanation downplays the willingness of the workers to strike back when their collective interests are at stake. When the owners – be they corporate or, as in this case, government – see the united strength of workers, especially technically sophisticated workers, they readily conclude that they just cannot break the strike using scabs. Scabs can't run technologically sophisticated jobs – the overwhelming majority of them lack the expertise. So the boss has to give in. Which simply adds further proof to our maxim that the longer the picket line, the shorter the strike.

Mexican labor activist beaten

BY MAQUILA SOLIDARITY NETWORK

Martin Barrios, coordinator of the Human and Labour Rights Commission of the Tehuacan Valley, was brutally beaten by an unknown assailant Dec. 30. Barrios was about to enter his house, which also serves as the Commission office, when he heard a voice behind him, turned, and saw a man coming at him with a brick. He suffered serious injuries to his face and skull before throwing off his assailant.

During the past year, the Commission has defended the rights of hundreds of workers who were fired from blue jean factories owned by the Los Angeles-based Tarrant Apparel Group, as well as workers from other smaller Tehuacan maquilas. It has succeeded in pressuring Tarrant and local authorities to ensure that workers received severance payments that are at least close to what is required by Mexican labour law.

The attack appears to be part of a campaign by maquila owners to silence Barrios and other Commission members. Other recent attacks on human rights activists in the state of Puebla include the murder of lawyer Griselda Tirado Evangelio in Huehuetla and threats against members of the independent union at Tarrant's Ajalpan facility.

Strike for right to strike

The CITU has rescheduled the all-India strike to protest the high court's decision to ban public sector strikes to Feb. 24, in an effort to gain the participation of the Congress-controlled INTUC labor federation. Representatives of all central trade unions, except the BJP-supported Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, agreed to call the strike to protest the Supreme Court's verdict.

"Bandhs and strikes are the last weapons left with us to protest against the Centre's anti-people policies. So should we sit idle when such fundamental rights are being curbed?" asked Gurudas Dasgupta of the CPI-controlled AITUC union center.