

# Industrial Worker

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## CAFTA rhymes with NAFTA

BY GLOBAL EXCHANGE

The proposed Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) is yet another corporate power grab disguised in the happy language of free trade. Rhymes with NAFTA, and it's just as bad.

Recently signed by the governments of the United States, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and El Salvador, the Central American Free Trade Agreement would impose NAFTA's failed policies throughout Central America and the Caribbean. The agreement would accelerate an international "race to the bottom" in wages and living standards, drive countless family farmers off the land, and ultimately lay the groundwork for the expansion of NAFTA throughout the hemisphere.

CAFTA would initially expand the failed NAFTA model to five new Central American countries, with plans to include the Dominican Republic already under way. But ten years of NAFTA have shown just how devastating these agreements can be for workers and the environment. In the United States over 766,000 jobs have been lost due to NAFTA. In the maquiladora zones along the U.S.-Mexico border wages are low, union organizing is suppressed, and industrial pollution has dramatically increased. NAFTA should be repealed, not expanded.

CAFTA contains no meaningfully enforceable standards that might prevent countries from lowering their public health, workplace safety and environmental laws in order to attract investment. NAFTA has already contributed to a "race to the bottom" in wages and environmental protection as companies pit desperate workers in each country against each other. Trade agreements are presented to the public as a vehicle for economic development, but when they fail to condition trade access on enforcement of international labor and environmental standards, only corporate CEOs see the benefits. Free trade is clearly no model for sustainable development.

CAFTA does not require countries to live up to international labor standards. Instead, it would require only that they enforce existing domestic labor laws, regardless of how inadequate these laws may be. In the context of Central America - where laws fall far below international standards, death squads murder unionists with impunity, and governments are often actively hostile towards unions - this amounts to nothing less than a recipe for rampant labor violations. CAFTA will no doubt lead to an expansion of the region's maquila industry, already one of the world's most developed.

Thousands of small family farms in both the U.S. and Central America will be lost because of CAFTA - much like what has already happened to their Mexican, American and Canadian counterparts under NAFTA. Giant corporate agricultural operations like ADM and Cargill will be the ones benefiting most from their downfall. CAFTA would likely force a massive migration of erstwhile farmers to large urban areas to work in the maquila industry, or to risk the dangerous journey to the U.S.

CAFTA investor rules will make it impossible for governments in Central America and the U.S. to give preferences to public providers for services. Under CAFTA, domestic regulations protecting people's right to food, education, health, and basic utilities could be considered "barriers to trade" open to challenges *continued on page 7*

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# May Day: The Workers' Holiday

BY ARTHUR J. MILLER

From all corners of the world, upon every land that humans tread, among those who toil for their bread, May Day stirs the spirit of discontent.

From the board rooms of the corporate masters, within the halls of their political lackeys, and in the studios of their paid deceivers, May Day stirs a sense of dread.

For upon this day the past becomes the present, and the present becomes an opening to future possibilities. May Day, the International Day of Labor.

May Day, as the International Day of Labor, finds its roots on May 1, 1867, when massive parades were held for the eight-hour day. Finding that moral persuasion had little effect, a general strike was called for the eight-hour day to begin on May 1, 1886. Hundreds of thousands of workers went on strike that day across the United States. The next day even more workers joined in. Unfortunately, in Chicago the general strike was lost May 4 in the fierce repression that was the aftermath of the police riot in Haymarket Square.

A rally was held that day to protest the murders by police of striking workers. The police attacked the rally without cause, and some poor working stiff threw a bomb in self-

defense. Eight labor activists, members of the Central Labor Union and the International Working People's Association were charged and convicted, even though there was no evidence connecting them to the bomb or to the still unknown bomb thrower.

Four men were hung: August Spies, George Engel, Adolph Fischer and Albert Parsons. One man, Louis Lingg, cheated the executioner by taking his own life the night before the hangings. Three other men were sent to prison for many years.

These men forever in the hearts and minds of toilers are remembered as the Haymarket Martyrs, and May Day honors their great sacrifice. At the Second Labor and Socialist International Congress in Paris, May 1, 1890, was declared the International Day of Labor. And so it has been ever since.

May Day has been a time of resistance, of strikes, demonstrations and even of revolution. A time when the exploited rise up over all that they have lost, of all that is robbed from them each day of their lives.

The struggle of the many begins with each person individually, deciding that they will no longer be willing slaves to the greed of a few. Movements, struggles, social change and revolution are built one person at a time.

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## The new international labor force

# Guest Workers of the World, Unite!

BY JOHN KALWAIC

The labor movement needs to develop new strategies to address a growing factor in the world labor force: the plight of "guest workers" around the world.

Wealthy nations increasingly use labor from third world nations for low-paying jobs. However, instead of giving citizenship to these workers, they give them "guest worker" status which makes it virtually impossible for them to unionize, strike or even quit work without being deported. As a result, these workers must do as they are told or else risk being deported and possibly starving in their native countries.

For the bosses this situation serves three main purposes. One is that it prevents these workers from unionizing and fighting for better conditions. Bosses can get away with paying a guest worker much less than a native-born worker.

Although in many cases minimum wage laws and other labor rights do technically cover guest workers, the fear and reality of being deported and losing everything is so strong that most dare not raise a fuss about hours, working conditions or even back pay. When guest workers demand their unpaid wages, their employers may conveniently check to see whether their visas have expired or not. As a result, employers do not have to treat them with the same respect because they are not citizens and have few legal rights.

Second, it weakens the already existing unions and work forces in these countries. Foreign workers who are extremely hard to unionize replace work that could be done by native union labor. It is difficult for these workers to raise concerns about minimum wage laws and health and safety standards.

Guest workers are especially vulnerable during economic downturns. For instance in

South Korea - a major player at the guest worker game - 27,000 workers were deported from or "voluntarily" fled the country between October 2003 and February 2004, amidst a government crack-down; government forces are still hunting another 120,000.

The third and most dangerous reason is that it divides the working class. Native workers can easily blame their problems on foreigners rather than look at the capitalists who engineered this problem. At the same time it frustrates third world workers when they hear unions in these wealthy countries talk about guest workers taking jobs from citizens.

If conservative unions had their way, guest workers would never have the opportunity of even temporarily living and benefiting from the relatively high wages offered in wealthier countries.

Some of the worst players at the guest worker game are in the Middle East, particularly in Saudi Arabia, one of the worst dictatorships in the world. Over 25 percent of its residents are guest workers, mainly from Muslim countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan and Indonesia. They are often mistreated and have the double problem of living in a country that can deport guest workers who have even fewer rights than citizens living under the brutal fundamentalist monarchy.

In another oil-rich gulf state, Kuwait, 63 percent of residents are guest workers, more than half the population of this slightly less fundamentalist monarchy which the United States saved from being annexed by Iraq.

One Middle East country with non-Muslim guest workers is Israel, which has guest workers from Thailand, Philippines, Romania and China. As Arab-Palestinian workers are being banned from working in Israel, employers have turned to these foreign guest

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## Iraqi labor solidarity

USLAW calls on U.S. labor unions, councils, federations and activists to contribute generously to help Iraqi's emerging labor movement create strong, democratic, effective unions to enable Iraqi workers to defend themselves against the invasion of U.S. and European multinational corporations bent on privatizing the Iraqi economy.

All funds donated to the fund will be divided equally between the two labor federations organized in the wake of the fall of the Hussein regime – the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions and the Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions (including the Union of the Employed).

You can contribute by credit card at the USLAW secure website at <https://secure.groundspring.org/dn/index.php?aid=1822>. (Please be sure to indicate on the form that the purpose of your donation is the Iraqi Labor Solidarity Fund.)

If you prefer, you can send checks payable to Iraqi Labor Solidarity Fund to:

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1718 M Street NW  
Washington DC 20036

All funds contributed to the ILSF will be used exclusively to aid Iraqi unions which are in desperate need of funds for furniture, office equipment, computers, telephone service and organizing activities.

U.S. Labor Against War



who seek to challenge authority of both the company bosses and the labor bosses in their workplace.

Initially, due to new federal regulations for baggage screeners (post-9/11), there was a tremendous turnover among screeners at SFO – roughly 80%. Covenant Aviation Security was brought-in as a private contractor to employ and manage the screeners. SEIU had represented the screeners, and continued to represent them in a contract with Covenant.

Several workers complained that the contract between SEIU Local 790 and Covenant was a weak one, with an enormous dependent health care contribution and an unpopular retirement plan, and said that those charged by SEIU with enforcing the contract were failing to pursue grievances surrounding issues such as shift bidding. Some workers were also upset that the SEIU was using their dues money for political projects and campaigns with which they disagreed. Many workers believed that this SEIU local was more or less in bed with management.

When SEIU officials removed from the ballot a candidate for a position in the local, many workers – including George Valdes, who had previously challenged union corruption as an organizer with HERE Local 340 in Burlingame, Calif. – felt that they had no choice but to organize their own union to deal with management.

One worker, Jeff Michaelson, filed a claim on Aug. 23, 2003, with the NLRB to have SEIU “decertified” as representative of the 1000 or so screeners at SFO. After legal claims that the SEIU never had the authority to represent the current screeners, and after at least 30% of the work force signed a decertification petition, the parties entered into a settlement agreement whereby SEIU agreed that it was not the representative of the SFO screeners and agreed to return their union dues.

This is not the first time claims such as this have been leveled against the SEIU, which has become famous for cozy neutrality and recognition agreements with bosses, effectively pushing out other, perhaps more demo-

cratic, union locals. We should be wary of these types of “in advance” card check or other recognition schemes when employers appear to welcome them with open arms. This is especially true as the New Unity Partnership participant unions seek to increase their share of the labor market through increased “organizing” work.

The workers who formed United Screeners Association Local #1, far from being a company union, supported taking a stronger stand against unilateral changes and anti-worker actions by their employer. It is somewhat ironic, of course, that the SEIU's politics may be considered more “progressive” by mainstream liberals. Of course, IWW members know that a union that does not fight hard in the workplace is not really progressive at all, especially when political endorsements are not made by the membership of that union.

While the union did lose the NLRB election, after arguing successfully that SEIU should not appear on the ballot as it was a “mixed local” representing both security guards and non-guards\*, USA Local #1 has filed more complaints with the NLRB. They are challenging the validity of the election, claiming that sentiment against them was coerced by the SEIU and management, that USA Local #1 supporters were threatened by other workers with the consent of the SEIU and Covenant, and that the SEIU added many workers to its payroll as “organizers” right before the election.

Both the SEIU and Covenant urged a “no” vote for representation by USA Local #1. Workers claim that Covenant, during the lead-up period to the election, reinforced its desire for a “no” vote by drastically improving the terms and conditions of employment, while the SEIU waged a smear campaign against USA Local #1 and committed the cardinal labor sin of buying food for workers from Safeway during the UFCW strike.

This situation highlights a particular response to corrupt AFL-CIO unions that, while not satisfactory, strives to make progress and build workers' power on the job. While seeking an NLRB decision barring SEIU from the election did not provide the workers with a free choice, neither did the ULPs alleged by USA Local #1, which occurred throughout

their organizing drive.

The decision by USA members to seek to exclude SEIU may have been based on a genuine belief that guards should be in their own union, or it may have been due to the desire to gain some advantage against a union local bent on stifling dissent and rank-and-file activity. The decision should more appropriately have been placed in the hands of all the workers involved. Of course, workers had previously indicated support for bringing in the Teamsters, but SEIU demanded they withdraw, claiming it was a raid.

Another point of disagreement I have with the USA Local #1 organizers is the building of what essentially amounts to a craft union, versus organizing along a more industrial basis. I believe the desire for representation of a smaller group of workers, however, is due to the desire of USA organizers to fairly represent the workers involved, where they feel the SEIU has overextended itself and has been unresponsive to the needs of SFO screeners. Of course, the IWW's structure, with relatively autonomous industrial unions and locals would give full effect to the workers' desire for union democracy while preserving the strategic and necessary role of industrial organization and struggle, laying the groundwork for a new society through worker-run industries.

When all is said and done, I consider the courageous struggle of USA Local #1 to be an experience from which we can all learn, and a step forward for rank-and-file union democracy.

Yours for Industrial Freedom,  
X353983

\*I think this would also be a point of theoretical contention within our own union, as some members might favor organizing guards separately, due to their job protecting management's plant security, while likely many more would favor One Big Union local of all the workers at SFO.

**Editor's Note:** The key issue here would seem to be that U.S. labor law prevents workers from organizing unions of their own choice. Workers who want union representation are entitled to it, whether or not the union they prefer can win an NLRB election structured so as to give every advantage to the employer.

## Challenging the company bosses & the labor bosses

I was a bit disheartened to see the *Industrial Worker's* (April, p. 10) limited and, thereby, potentially misleading coverage of the situation at San Francisco Airport (SFO). I have been following this situation for over a year. The relationships between the unions, management and the National Labor Relations Board are complex, yet quite symptomatic of the problems faced by U.S. workers

## Industrial Worker

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## Chicago Wobs in anti-war march

FROM THE CHICAGO IDEA

Wobblies from the Chicago GMB, the Lake County General Organizing Committee, the Milwaukee GMB and Madison GMBs joined a 10,000-person demonstration against the U.S.'s continuing occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan March 20.

The day of action started at 6:45 a.m. with a Walk Against War that began with two dozen activists on Chicago's far South Side. Black flags waved to the sounds of drums as the marchers made their way to a rally in Pilsen, where they were joined by several community activists who tied the U.S. invasions around the world to cuts in funding for health care, education and housing.

Their numbers swelling, the marchers then made their way to the University of Illinois at Chicago, where after a tasty meal served up by Food Not Bombs, more than 300 people marched to the main rally site.

The 30-mile march was all over the news, including prominent TV footage of banners reading "Fight the Rich, Not Their Wars" and the Chicago branch's new black on red "Abolish the Wage System" banner.

Demonstrators gathered at Pearson and Michigan avenues, near the site where 700 anti-warriors were rounded up by police last year during the emergency mobilization in response to the invasion of Iraq. That protest, which began at Federal Plaza with a few thousand, swelled to 15,000 enraged demonstrators who swarmed onto Lake Shore Drive, shutting down one of Chicago's main arteries for two hours. The cops regrouped and took their revenge by arresting 700 as the protestors attempted to return to Michigan Avenue for a march back to the plaza. In the days that followed, demonstrators were constantly surrounded by armored cops.

The organizers of this year's demonstration were determined to "finish" last year's march by walking down Michigan Avenue. However, the Daley administration and the police were even more determined that businesses and shoppers on Chicago's "Magnificent Mile" would not be inconvenienced by the rabble. The city denied a permit for the assembly and march. Protesters believed that even without a permit they could still legally march on the sidewalk, but police had other ideas. As protesters prepared to march, hundreds of armored police warned people that they were illegally assembled and ordered them down Clark Street.

Demonstration organizers relented, and we proceeded down Clark, surrounded by a phalanx of riot-equipped cops. This tactic prevents protesters from interacting with passersby (of which there weren't too many on Clark anyway, which is probably why the authorities chose that route), and intimidates people from joining the demonstration. In addition, the spectacle of hundreds of cops surrounding a protest tends to criminalize protesters in the eyes of the general public.

The march ended with a rally at Federal Plaza, which could barely hold the throngs of demonstrators.

## Stonemountain workers win IWW contract

BY BRUCE VALDE

With chain stores taking over the retail business, the independent fabric store is a dying breed, but still left in Berkeley, California, is a storefront with 15 - 20 workers called StoneMountain & Daughter Fabrics - and they now have a union, an IWW union to be precise.

The fabric and garment industries have long been a battleground for workers. Sweat shops in "free trade zones" lead to retail outlets around the world from New York's Lower East side, to the streets of Paris, to San Francisco's Mission District, or any nondistinctive shopping mall.

At StoneMountain & Daughter the work is part-time for the most part, the pay is low, and turnover is high. Though some workers stick it out for years because they like the fabrics, the sewing, the designing, the camaraderie, and the occasional fabric bonuses that cut down on their personal sewing expenses, for most of them it is not a career. Like many garment industry jobs, StoneMountain is nearly all women.

The campaign for union recognition began with a gradual building of solidarity over period of about a year, and took itself public

dramatically when 15 workers marched on the boss and demanded union recognition in March 2003. The union presented the company with a list of demands. At the top of the list was respect, fairness and better working conditions. These noneconomic concerns covered issues such as consistent shifts, training, and a grievance procedure to give them recourse against erratic expectations and chastisements from management. It was important for the workers to drive favoritism and jockeying for privileges out of their workplace, and create a more worker-friendly shop that rewarded seniority and other less subjective qualifications.

But management was not ready to recognize the union, so the workers decided that given the strength of support an election would not be risky. They were totally on the mark, and the pro-union vote was unanimous, with only three abstentions.

Since the workers wanted a signed contract, next came a series of meetings and parties to map the main points of a labor agreement and a strategy for achieving them. After nine months of negotiations, a two-year contract took effect April 5th. Key points include a grievance procedure, paid days off,

extra pay on holidays, the beginnings of a health care plan, and a minimal immediate pay increase. And perhaps the most critical agenda-setting victory of the negotiations was when workers insisted on a union shop over management's persistent opposition, and eventually management signed off on it.

Two union members at StoneMountain were voted in as delegates reporting to the Bay Area Branch, and StoneMountain may spark organizing interest in IU 660 workers around the Bay. Many of us here are pretty excited by the possibility of more retail organizing, and we may also soon see our first IWW sewing circle.

## Attention Wobblies: Midwest Wob Fest

The 2004 Upper Mid-West Wob Fest will take place in Chicago, Illinois, on the weekend of June 25, 26, 27.

We are presently looking for a venue but have outlined the following agenda for the weekend:

Friday night, June 25: a social evening to meet and greet fellow workers.

Saturday, June 26: workshops during the day and a speaker in the evening, followed by an open mike for singing, soapboxing, poetry, etc..

Sunday, June 27: a picnic in one of Chicago's many parks or perhaps at Forest Home Cemetery, site of the Haymarket Martyrs Monument.

The June *Industrial Worker* will have the final details. In the meanwhile if you have ideas for workshops (either in facilitating or simply attending) please send e-mail to Mike Hargis at michaelhargis@netscape.net.

We will try to house and feed as many out-of-town Wobs as we can. Please call our voice-mail (see the IWW Directory) if you plan to come.

For the works,  
Mike Hargis

## Pensacola Wobs join anti-war protest

BY SCOTT MYLXINE

In Pensacola, Florida, local Wobblies joined a March 20 demonstration to oppose the wars and occupations of Iraq and Palestine. One hundred workers, activists, punks, veterans, students and Wobs (and everyone in between participated).

The demonstration started off with protesters taking over central downtown intersections carrying picket signs calling for an end to the war and bloodshed. Some were more creative, such as the giant puppets of skeletons carrying signs bearing the body count of Iraqi and American casualties to date. Others carried various anti-war signs, peace flags and a lot of anti-Bush signs.

As the protest continued, a life-sized piñata of George Bush (filled with condoms and candy) was brought out. A couple of older activists tied a rope around the piñata, strung it up in the center of the busiest intersection downtown, and people in the crowd began to take turns beating it.

Eventually, the piñata broke open and fell to the ground as another overzealous activist was blowing fire and accidentally caught the Bush piñata on fire. The fire department was called out and laughingly poured a bucket of water on the smoldering Bush effigy.

The protest, which was in solidarity with March 20th protests around the world, continued for a few more hours with no arrests.

## Preamble to the IWW Constitution

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Join the IWW Today

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Membership includes a subscription to the Industrial Worker.



## MAY DAY GREETINGS

In honor of my father  
**ANTTI SIITONEN**  
(1888-1944), who at age 17  
participated in the 1905  
Finnish General Strike

Harry Siitonen  
SF Bay Area GMB





More criticism from my readers... This is from Susan T. in Vancouver, B.C.: "Your column brings an entirely new meaning to the phrase 'Infectious Humor.'"

★ ★ ★

Mark Twain once said something to the effect of "Everyone complains about the weather, but nobody does a thing about it." This isn't true. Capitalism has done something about it, it's called global warming. It's hot and sunny in Oregon in early April. What will they think of next?

★ ★ ★

President Bush has his week-long Easter vacation in Texas. This is part of his plan to get in touch with ordinary Americans and see what it's like to be at home not working.

★ ★ ★

The following is part of a poem made from George W. Bush quotes. While we have all seen these for the last couple years, I think the following is important for its summation line: It looks like even pie in the sky is being withheld from workers...

I think we all agree, the past is over. This is still a dangerous world. It's a world of madmen And uncertainty And potential mental losses.

Rarely is the question asked Is our children learning? Will the highways of the internet Become more few? How many hands have I shaken?

They misunderestimate me. I am a pit bull on the pant leg of opportunity. I know that the human being and the fish Can coexist.

Families is where our nation finds hope Where our wings take dream. Put food on your family! Knock down the tollbooth! Vulcanize society! Make the pie higher! Make the pie higher!

★ ★ ★

You want to know why so many corporate criminals aren't in court? It is not easy raising your right hand while you're trying to cover your ass at the same time...

★ ★ ★

U.S. presidential candidate John Kerry had surgery to repair his right shoulder, which he hurt when he suddenly switched positions on Iraq.

★ ★ ★

The *Socialist Standard* reports: "Every year the magazine *Forbes* publishes lists of wealthy men and women and notes their assets. It is by its nature only an approximation. As soon as they have completed the amount, the interest on their capital makes the figure outdated. Here are a couple of findings from the lists.

"The Duke of Westminster, 52, is Britain's wealthiest individual and the 36th richest person in the world. He owns assets, mostly property in Mayfair, worth \$8.7 billion (£4.7 billion), an improvement of \$1.2 billion on the previous year. The second richest Briton, at position 84 and with assets of \$5 billion, is Philip Green, 52, the shopping tycoon whose empire includes British Home Stores, Top Shop, Burton and Miss Selfridge. He has more than doubled his fortune in the past 12 months from the \$2.3 billion he possessed last year."

A good year for billionaires then, but how about you and your family?

FN. Brill welcomes your correspondence and bits for inclusion in this column. Please write: FN Brill c/o IWW; 616 E Burnside; Portland OR 97214, USA or e-mail fnbrill@yahoo.com

## RNC 3 acquitted four years later

# No perjury charges for Timoney

Three men facing an array of felony criminal charges stemming from protests at the 2000 Republican National Convention were acquitted of all charges April 6.

Camilo Viveiros, Eric Steinberg and Darby Landy were acquitted when Philadelphia Common Pleas Court Judge William Mazzola rejected police testimony implicating the three in an August 1, 2000, confrontation where two police claimed they were struck with bicycles while breaking up a demonstration.

While hundreds of people were arrested during a brutal police crackdown on three days of demonstrations, these were the only charges involving claims of violent activity — charges that were ludicrous to those who knew Viveiros, who has long been active building links between affordable housing organizations and unions in the Boston area.

Viveiros, who faced assault charges that would have incurred a penalty of up to 40 years in prison, had been identified by former Philadelphia Police Commissioner John Timoney during a preliminary hearing in August 2000 as the man who hit him and

another police officer with a bicycle. During the trial, Timoney admitted that he did not see who threw the bicycle.

The Philadelphia District Attorney's office told the *Industrial Worker* they will not be bringing perjury charges against Timoney, who is now chief of police in Miami, where he oversaw brutal repression of demonstrators at the recent Summit of the Americas. Timoney is also serving as a consultant to Boston police in connection with the Democratic National Convention this summer.

The charges had earlier been dismissed, but were reinstated largely on the basis of Timoney's perjured pretrial testimony.

Although police testified that Viveiros had resisted arrest by squirming, kicking and flipping over, a videotape introduced into evidence showed Viveiros on the ground being punched and leaned on by bike cops. It also showed him lying motionless on the sidewalk, not resisting arrest.

Defense attorney Jack McMahon told the judge that the videotape raised "significant credibility issues" with police testimony. "It just didn't happen," he said.

## Chicago: Police spying on activists

In the wake of a court decision easing restrictions on intelligence gathering, Chicago police infiltrated at least five protest groups in 2002 and launched four other spying operations in 2003.

In 2002, undercover officers were assigned to attend meetings, rallies and fundraisers of the Chicago Direct Action Network, the American Friends Service Committee, The Autonomous Zone, Not in Our Name, and Anarchist Black Cross.

The were planning protests at the Trans-Atlantic Business Dialogue — a meeting of international business leaders held in Chicago in 2002. Police refuse to disclose which organizations were targeted in 2003.

Michael McConnell, regional director of the AFSC, is outraged that police infiltrated the anti-war group. "What was the officers'

participation and did it affect the group?" he asked. "This is a disturbing pattern throughout the country of infiltration of peace groups that are doing nothing more than fulfilling their rights of freedom of speech."

Chicago's new spying activity stems from the 7th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals decision in 2001 to modify the 1982 Red Squad consent decree, which barred the city from gathering information on dissident groups because it violated their First Amendment right to free speech.

In 2001, though, Chief Judge Richard A. Posner wrote that the decree "rendered the police helpless to do anything to protect the public" and approved a modified decree that allows police to snoop on demonstrators and other groups as long as they keep records of their spying.

## May Day...

continued from page 1

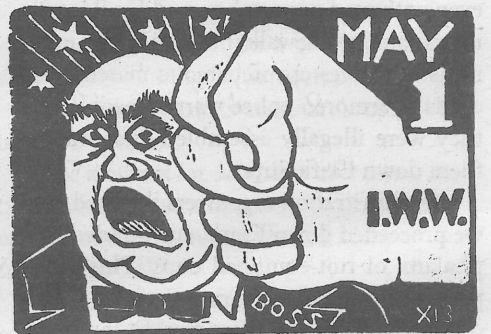
Some may think that one person is powerless in the face of the great power of the greedy parasites, but that is not true. One person can talk to another person, who then talks to another person, and so on. That is the foundation that the resistance is built upon.

Though the great powers that we face may seem all powerful, when you think about it you will see their weaknesses. Though they control wealth and production, they produce nothing. We do the producing. Though they have great armies to fight for their interests, they themselves fight no one. We make up their armies. Though they have their governments pass many laws that are used against us, it is we who enforce those laws upon ourselves. When we make the decision to no longer produce for them, no longer serve in their armies and no longer enforce their laws, and to serve our own interests instead, they will be powerless to stop us.

When we decide to act in the common interest of all, for the well-being of all, a new world will be ours to build.

Today we are threatened by the globalization of the organizations and agreements of the economic master class. The greedy parasites realize the need of international organizations and bonds of common interest. In other words, they have been organizing unions of the rich and powerful.

We need to come to the same understanding and organize internationally in our common interests against our common foes. Every person who lives upon Mother Earth and is not of the class of the greedy parasites has something in common. We are all affected, in one way or another, by the global organi-



zation of those who aim for universal exploitation and control.

We should unite in common resistance. Leave no one behind, make no separate peace! In order to build the solidarity that we need, we should view the diversity of humanity as our strength, not as our weakness. And thus, in common respect and in common interests, we rise up as the many against the few who have kept us in bondage.

Excerpted from Arthur J. Miller, *Upon the Backs of Labor: Unruly Working Class Essays*. Working People's Library (PO Box 5464, Tacoma WA 98415), available from the IWW, \$10.

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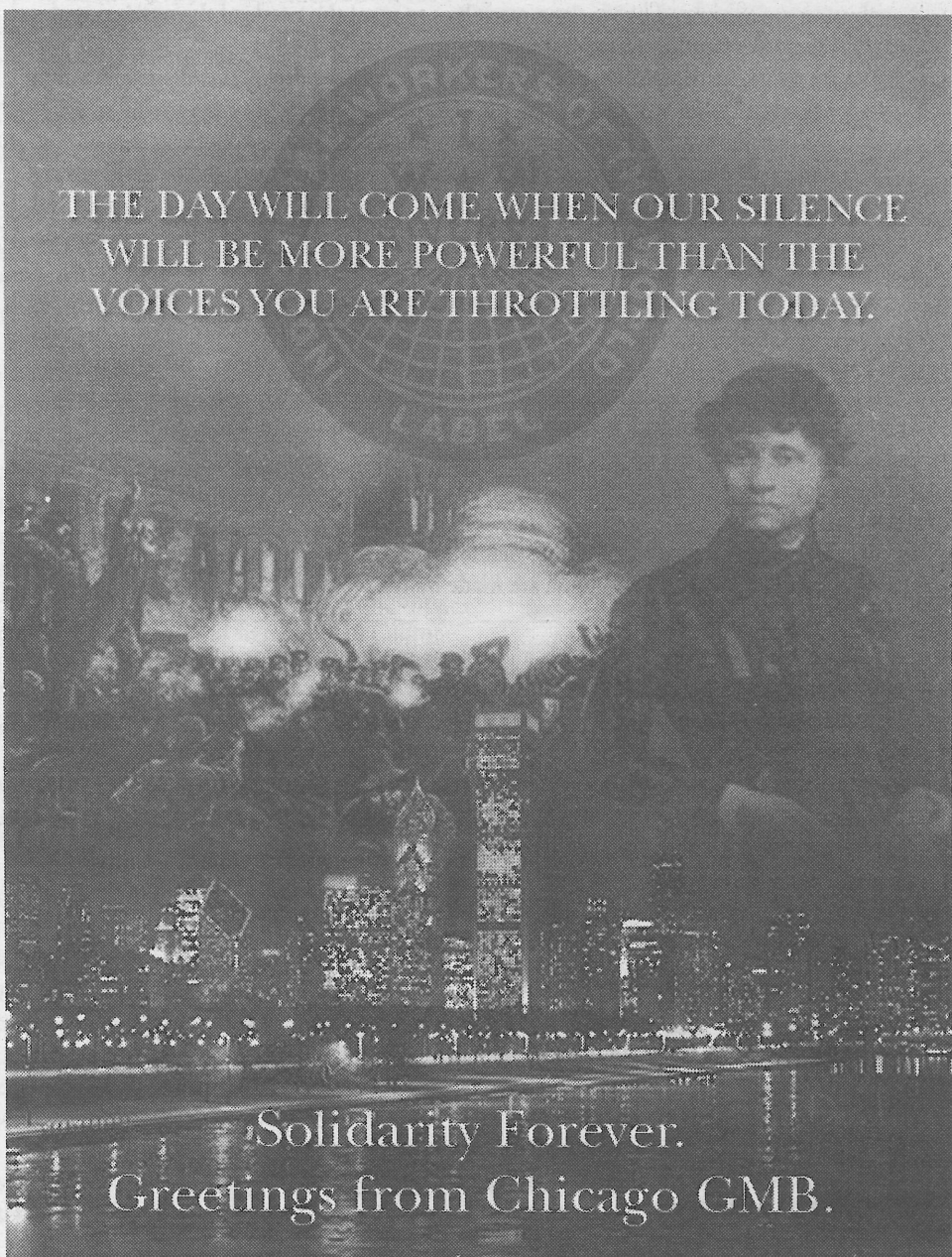
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 VOICES YOU ARE THROTTLING TODAY.

Solidarity Forever.

Greetings from Chicago GMB.



## Part-time faculty strike U Michigan

Scores of classes were canceled and construction crews honored picket lines when adjunct faculty held a one-day strike at three University of Michigan campuses April 8.

The 1,500-member Lecturers Employee Organization, which represents adjunct and visiting faculty, struck after eight months of fruitless negotiations with administrators.

Unionized graduate student instructors and some tenured faculty canceled classes to support the union, but most other campus workers crossed picket lines.

The lecturers are trying to negotiate their first contract. The main sticking points are job security and wages. Many lecturers make less than \$20,000 a year and don't know if their contracts will be renewed until after each semester ends.

## Oakland cited by UN for human rights abuses

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights' annual report says police attacks on anti-war demonstrators in New York City and on pickets at the Oakland docks were among the worst abuses of activists' rights around the globe last year.

The 2004 report is the first in several years to add the United States to a list of such repressive regimes as Indonesia, Burundi and China that routinely kill, torture, imprison or spy on activists. The report also noted other U.S. human rights abuses including child prostitution, executions, poor treatment of migrant workers and violence against women.

After police fired on the Oakland pickets, sending several to hospital, the Department of Homeland Security reimbursed the city of Oakland for more than \$424,000 in police overtime for "protecting" the port.

Hundreds of protesters returned to the port April 7 to mark the one-year anniversary of the police attack.

Twenty-four activists and one longshore worker charged with creating a public nuisance, interfering with a business and failing to disperse in the incident still await trial.

## PEI Carpenters form cooperative

FROM THE DOMINION,  
HTTP://DOMINIONPAPER.CA

Citing low pay and meager benefits offered by private contractors, a Prince Edward Island carpenter's union has started a cooperative that will bid on home construction projects. Carpenters who work with the new company will receive \$5 to \$10 more per hour for their work, along with better benefits.

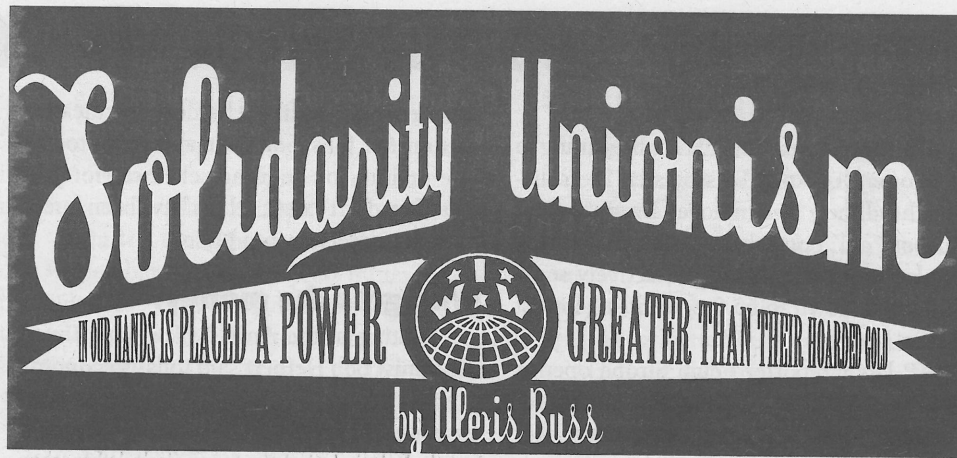
"We spent last few years trying to meet with residential contractors to work with us, paying living wage, pension, health plan — we did not have success," said Martin Kenny of the PEI Carpenter's Union. "That's why we chose to form our own company."

The union says that any profit above what it needs to cover costs and pay workers will be invested in training and educational bursaries for the carpenters' children.

## CN Rail strike ends

Five thousand CN Rail workers ratified a new contract March 18 to end a month-long strike that had affected the railroad's operations from Vancouver to Halifax.

While pay increases under the new agreement are roughly equal to those in a proposed deal workers voted down before striking, the agreement restores earlier grievance rules which workers hope will bring an end to a pattern of harassment and unwarranted discipline of workers attempting to insist upon safe working conditions.



Last month, I was invited to share some thoughts with college students about the labor movement and environmentalism at the COOL idealist.org National Conference. Here are some excerpts from what I had to say:

I want to share a story with you that inspires me, about some construction workers who took a stand for the environment and for the integrity of the community in which they lived. In the 1970s, the Builders Labourers Federation in Australia carried out a series of "Green Bans," refusing to work on a number of projects they determined were environmentally or socially unacceptable, and thereby prevented them from being built.

They also undertook more traditional strike action, such as a general shutdown of construction jobs to demand an adequate workers' compensation system for injured workers — a demand they raised not just for themselves, but for all Australians.

That strike, and a series of struggles to build the union's presence on job sites, imbued a sense of militancy in the membership — a sense of their own industrial power, and some experience in using it.

When residents of a neighborhood with a lot of "professionals" in it was trying to save a local wilderness area from a developer, local politicians who they had come to think of as allies turned a deaf ear. In desperation, the residents asked to meet with the workers who would be hired to do the demolition and site preparation, represented by the BLF.

The BLF called a community meeting to discuss the issue, inviting the developer and community activists to make their case. And after considering the arguments, workers decided to save the park through a "green ban," refusing to do any work on the project.

Most workers couldn't afford to live in the area, so the workers had little hope of being able to enjoy the little patch of nature they saved, but these workers decided they were not going to lend their labor to anti-social projects.

They went on to refuse work on projects to gentrify working-class neighborhoods, refused to build a highway that would have devastated local communities, and implemented a "red" ban refusing work on a maximum security prison. Other job actions were taken in solidarity with aboriginal and student groups. (Meredith and Verity Burgmann wrote a book about this, *Green Bans, Red Union*, which is well worth the trouble to get your hands on.)

When I first heard about this, it was really inspiring. But then I thought about my own work situation as a printer, and how working long hours on unsafe equipment with toxic chemicals and so on wears you down — making it difficult to imagine ever being that powerful.

When you're working 10- and 12-hour days it gets hard to make decisions even about your personal life. You're too tired to do things right; it's easier to do what's quick and easy

and cheap.

Every day you wake up in time to rush to work, work away most the day, and then stumble home to sleep so you can go on to work again the next day. That kind of life breeds alienation, and too often encourages us to look for individual escape rather than thinking about the kind of world we'd like to live in.

So how can we help make a movement that will serve to inspire? That will help us to realize our potential power, and encourage us to think about ways we could use it not just to better our own situation but for the good of all?

There is no limit on the power we can build in our workplace, if we can get together to decide how we'd like to run things (rather than letting the bosses make the decisions). But with that power comes a responsibility to the rest of the working class — not just in our local community or our country, but around the world. Because the environment is a global system, and our lives are interconnected in ways we often don't realize until the planet starts overheating or toxic plumes spread through the oceans.

What kind of unionism puts on this road? It can't be based in protectionism, in the notion that we can carve out decent conditions in our little corner of the world and put up fences to keep the rest of the world at bay.

It can't be based on the sort of social contract that continues to guide most of the labor movement (even though the bosses broke the contract years ago), in which we trade industrial peace for enough money to live and a health plan. That deal isn't on offer any more, and it was never available to more than a small part of the world's working class.

And it certainly can't be based on an appealing to the social conscience the bosses never had. It's the IWW's hope that our organizing can inspire a kind of movement that learns from struggles and helps workers come together to realize our power, and to think about the kind of world we'd like to build with it.

## Ottawa's homeless fight back

BY JOHN DUNN, THE DOMINION

The number of homeless in Ontario is on the rise. So is the enforcement of the Safe Streets Act, which bans panhandling, and other legislation designed to keep people off the streets. While homeless people are traditionally among society's least politically influential citizens, many homeless people in Ottawa are working to change that.

Working with antipoverty activists and the local Industrial Workers of the World, homeless people have initiated a panhandlers' union in Ottawa. The union will support individual members who are targeted by police

## Seafarers refile suit against union dissident

After losing a motion in state court for an injunction to force the closure of the union reform site, [www.seajustice.org](http://www.seajustice.org) (February IW), and facing a deposition of SIU head Mike Sacco, the Seafarers International Union withdrew its libel suit against retired member Robert Swanson. Instead, the SIU has dropped Sacco as co-plaintiff and refiled the case in federal court. It is not clear whether they are simply trying to harass Swanson with a lawsuit they know to be frivolous, or are shopping around for a friendlier judge.

The website is harshly critical of SIU officials, who it suggests have engaged in corrupt and illegal activities. However, under U.S. law the union would have to prove Swanson was knowingly disseminating false information in order to win. The Iowa court had ruled that the SIU could not do so.

Swanson has been forced to hire an attorney to defend himself against the federal suit, with funds donated by other dissident seamen. Contributions to defray future legal expenses can be sent to: Seamen's Justice Center, 427-8th Avenue, DeWitt IA 52742.

or have difficulties with the government. The union will also provide the possibility of a livelihood by supplying a local edition of *The Dominion* for panhandlers to sell.

## Hiding the homeless

BY JANE SCHARF

Although it might seem as if the number of homeless persons has remained constant, 650,000 people were cut off welfare following enactment of the Social Assistance Reform Act of 1997. To hide the increase in panhandling and homelessness, the provincial Progressive Conservative Government began to sweep the streets under new legislation that made it illegal to be homeless.

Panhandling and squeegeeing were criminalized under the Safe Streets Act, and many homeless people were jailed under new legislation mandating incarceration of the homeless pending psychiatric evaluation even if they were not a danger to themselves or others, the previous standard.

About 30 homeless persons joined a protest of this legislation last summer. We set up what we called the Homeless Action Strike near the provincial welfare offices, giving public testimony about the treatment we were receiving from the welfare system and police.

The resulting attention did serve to slightly improve the response to youth by the welfare system and to reduce police brutality. However, the homeless are still being ticketed for panhandling and sleeping outside.

Homelessness is a shameful and unnecessary feature of life in the capital city of one of the world's richest countries. Unfortunately, maintaining the most minimal human rights and dignity for homeless people is what is most pressing right now.



PHOTO: JEFF CLARK

Jane Scharf and Richard Beltmore. The new panhandlers' union will offer legal assistance and lobby for changes to anti-panhandling legislation.

With the help of the Ottawa Industrial Workers of the World, we are recruiting volunteers to provide support with filing complaints to police and securing legal assistance for panhandling and illegal camping tickets.

What is most urgently needed is a way to respond productively to the criminalization of panhandling and the lack of economic opportunities for the homeless. A street newspaper is a way to address both of these needs.

In addition to providing a source of income, a street newspaper can be a powerful tool for calling attention to the reality of the streets where it is sold. It should include the views and serve the interests of the common folk and the disenfranchised, not just the wealthy and powerful people who own all of the major newspapers in Canada.

*The Dominion* is a paper featuring coverage of citizens' resistance to government and corporate corruption and stories about the rebuilding of our Canadian communities. A deal was struck to include an Ottawa section in the paper, which poor and homeless persons are now selling on the street.

On May Day and every day,  
it's time for the 4-hour day.

[www.iww.org/4-Hours](http://www.iww.org/4-Hours)



# Unemployment up as economy adds 300,000 jobs

The U.S. economy added 308,000 new jobs in March, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the first time it has met the Bush administration's pledge of creating more than 300,000 jobs a month, every month.

However, the unemployment rate rose slightly, from 5.6 to 5.7 percent – or 182,000 more officially jobless workers than the month before. The Economic Policy Institute says this increase was largely caused by workers shifting from “self-employment” back into the job market. After falling by over 700,000 people in the previous three months, the labor force expanded by 179,000 in March.

March marked the first time in 44 months that the U.S. manufacturing sector did not lose jobs. But even so, there are three million fewer manufacturing jobs than four years ago.

The number of workers out of a job at least six months – and so no longer eligible for unemployment benefits – increased by 117,000, to 1.988 million. These workers now make up 23.9 percent of all unemployed workers, the highest level since July 1983.

The number of workers in part-time jobs who would prefer to be working full time increased by 296,000, to 4.733 million. This brings the “underemployment” rate to 9.9 percent, according to government figures.

In fact, despite the addition of hundreds of thousands of new jobs, the number of total hours worked actually fell in March – in part reflecting reduced overtime, but primarily pointing to the steady replacement of full-

## Bosses' success danger to workers' health

The British newspaper *The Independent* reports that working for successful, growing companies leaves workers more likely to suffer long-term illness and hospitalization.

“In a study that casts an unflattering light on modern employers, scientists have found that workers in organisations which are growing rapidly are more likely to suffer the symptoms of work-related stress...”

Working for failing firms, which are likely to cut staff and speed-up workers in hard times, also increases stress and has been linked with a rise in heart disease deaths among workers.

The researchers studied 24,000 employees who worked for a variety of organisations in the public and private sectors in Sweden between 1991 and 1996. They found that those organisations that grew most rapidly – by more than 18 per cent in a year – had the highest levels of long-term sickness absence (more than 90 days) and hospital admission.

Women were affected worse than men by expansion. Women in the study who experienced big increases in the work force in every year of the six-year study had two to three times the rate of long-term sickness compared to those who had never been involved in a big expansion.

*The Independent* suggests that the study reveals the ruthless nature of modern workplaces, where employers worry more about their bottom lines than the welfare of their work forces.

“The re-engineering of corporations may sound progressive, especially to shareholders, but the apparent price workers pay is an undercurrent of anxiety and diminished loyalty and commitment, their morale eroded by a chaotic and often dysfunctional work environment in which individuals are devalued or discounted altogether.”

“What's the solution? Value people over profits? Recognise human capital as paramount? These answers are obvious. But given the high-handed, soulless treatment doled out today by many employers, it's a start.”

But those more familiar with bosses – modern or otherwise – will have little faith in such obvious answers. If workers wish to be valued over profits, they are going to have to organize the industrial power to make that happen. Otherwise, the employing class will continue working us into early graves.

time jobs with part-time, casual ones.

Even mainstream media are beginning to take notice. An April 1 Associated Press dispatch headlined “Unemployed Dropping Out of Labor Pool” notes that the share of the U.S. population either working or actively seeking a job is down to 65.8 percent, its lowest level in 16 years.

AP labor reporter Leigh Strope opened his report with an Arizona computer programmer who took early retirement after months of looking for work. That worker was old enough to claim reduced Social Security benefits, but in many smaller industrial towns workers laid off when their plant closed have little hope of finding new work, and no social safety net to fall back on when their unemployment benefits run out.

And many of the few jobs being created are substandard. “This is the era of the bargain worker,” said John Challenger of employment research firm Challenger, Gray and Christmas.

While growing numbers of older workers are being forced back into the labor market because of shrinking retirement funds and skyrocketing health care costs, the sharpest declines in labor force participation are among younger Americans, who lack work

experience and so find it harder to secure even bottom-tier jobs. Some are able to go to college or into job training schemes (for jobs that often don't exist); others have been forced onto the streets or into prison.

## Who gets the money?

Writing in the April 5 *New York Times*, columnist Bob Herbert said today's economy is “like running on a treadmill that keeps increasing its speed. You have to go faster and faster just to stay in place. Or, as a factory worker said many years ago, ‘You can work 'til you drop dead, but you won't get ahead.’”

While economists assure us that the U.S. economy is doing nicely, as measured by the sort of statistics that matter to those who own it, things can look quite different to those of us who must do the work.

“What is happening is nothing short of historic,” Herbert says. “The situation is summed up in the long, unwieldy but very revealing title of a new study from the Center for Labor Market Studies: *The Unprecedented Rising Tide of Corporate Profits and the Simultaneous Ebbing of Labor Compensation – Gainers and Losers from the National Economic Recovery in 2002 and 2003.*”

The recent productivity gains have been

widely acknowledged.

“But workers are not being compensated for this. During the past two years, increases in wages and benefits have been very weak, or nonexistent. And despite the growth of jobs in March that had the Bush crowd dancing in the White House halls ... there are fewer payroll jobs now than there were when the recession ended in November 2001.

“So if employers were not hiring workers, and if they were miserly when it came to increases in wages and benefits for existing employees, what happened to all the money?”

The study is very clear on this point. The gains did not go to workers, “but instead were used to boost profits, lower prices, or increase C.E.O. compensation.”

So profits are up, stock prices are skyrocketing, and chief executive officers are pulling down multimillion dollar salaries. But for growing numbers of workers, a job at a living wage with benefits is a distant dream.

“I have to laugh when I hear conservatives complaining about class warfare,” Herbert concludes. “They know this terrain better than anyone. They launched the war. They're waging it. And they're winning it.”

## Two-thirds of U.S. companies paid no tax during “boom”

The British newspaper *The Guardian* reports that two-thirds of U.S. corporations paid no income tax during the “boom” years from 1996 to 2000. Now that the economy isn't booming, they're laying off workers and offshoring jobs. But they're still not paying taxes.

The article quotes financier Warren Buffett, who understands what's going on better than many of our fellow workers: “If class warfare is being waged in America, my class is clearly winning.”

When will the public finally rebel against this economic abuse? Can they not see that they are being exploited by the greediest elite that ever lived?

## New concessions in D.C. Safeway pact

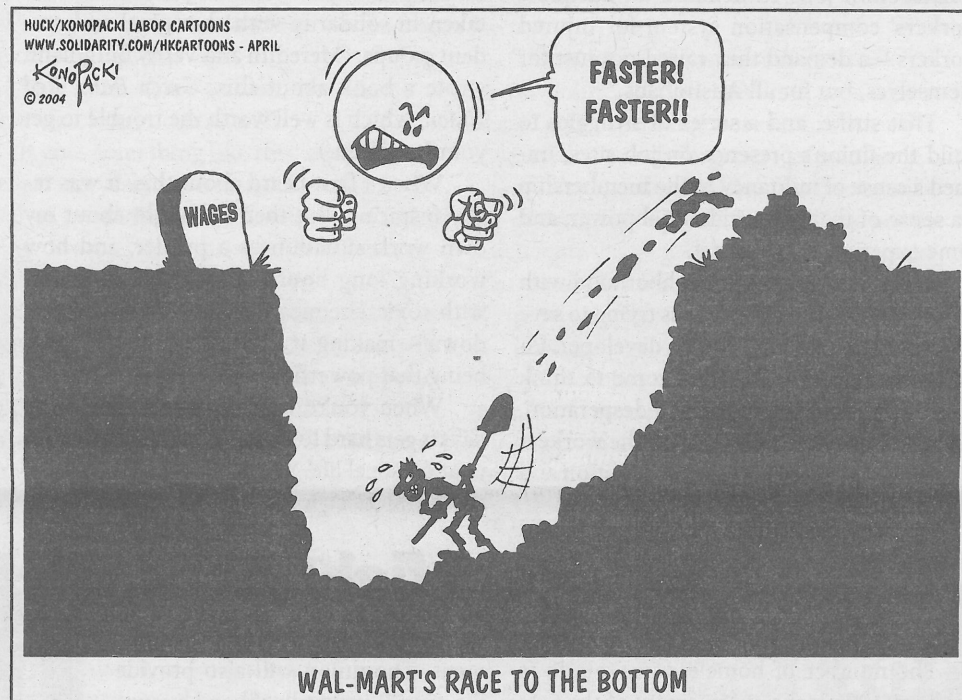
UFCW officials have claimed another “victory” in settling a contract for 30,000 grocery workers in 325 Washington, D.C.-Baltimore area Safeway and Giant stores.

The four-year contract closely tracks the concessions the companies recently won in Southern California, protecting current employees' health care benefits and providing for modest wage hikes (a little less modest than in California), but offering new hires a much more expensive health care package and lower wages. Unlike the Southern California deal, the UFCW says new workers will be eligible for the regular wage and benefit package after putting in six years on the job.

Meanwhile, in Southern California, the grocery chains took full advantage of a clause in the new contract giving them three weeks before locked-out and striking workers had to be returned to their jobs, and a free hand in setting hours and arranging the call-back. Several workers are being transferred to other stores to punish militancy on the picket line, and 80 workers have been suspended pending disciplinary proceedings.

In Northern California, Safeway management has threatened to discipline workers who exercised their contractual right to attend religious services on Good Friday held by clergy with strong ties to organized labor, claiming the services were thinly disguised labor rallies. At least one El Cerrito worker was suspended for insubordination after attending a service.

Some workers report being questioned as to why they had become “suddenly religious.” One worker told her manager she would have taken the time off before had she realized it was provided in the contract. Union representatives distributed leaflets to workers alerting them to their right to take up to three hours paid time off to attend the services.



## Wal-Mart action

BY BRAD BOWEN, X355746

Every summer thousands of Wal-Mart shareholders gather at the Bud Walton arena in Fayetteville, Arkansas, to celebrate capitalism and the ascension of Wal-Mart as the largest company ever.

Let me be the first to tell you that Wal-Mart has made these shareholders extremely rich. The Walton children are in fact among the richest people in the world, and these hills are their stomping grounds. Northwest Arkansas spawned the beast from Bentonville, and it has also always been one of the more supportive regions of the Wal-Mart paradigm.

Sam Walton used to love his shareholders conventions and they have kept growing even after his death in the early '90s. The convention is basically a huge pep rally for union busting, urban sprawl, and the cheap sweatshop-made goods that Wal-Mart has become the undisputed champion of retailing.

Each convention has its own theme, such as last year's theme, “It's My Wal-Mart.”

There is singing, some jerky dancing, and even a band that has started opening the whole weekend. Yes folks, Guido and the Wal-Mart band rock the shareholders at 6:45 a.m. with hits like “Wal-Mart Pride,” “Mr. Sam,” and the inevitable title track of their debut album, “It's My Wal-Mart.”

Quoted in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, Guido says, “I write about swimming upstream, going the distance, pride, what their goals are.

“It's all red, white and Wal-Mart blue.”

Have no fear, dear reader; all hope is not lost on this prefabricated spectacle, because resistance is blooming in the Ozarks.

Many people in Arkansas and the world are tired of Wal-Mart and the cheap plastic genetically modified future that it is trying to create for the world. Resistance networks and food co-ops are beginning to flourish in the hills as people begin to take responsibility for their communities instead of leaving our well-being up to companies who care about nothing except the dollar.

This subversion is leading naturally towards one of the more historic events that will occur in Fayetteville this summer. This is going to be the summer that Wal-Mart's home territory stands up and says *enough* to shareholders from around the world.

Unions, environmentalists, sprawl campaigners, anarchists, peace activists, human rights activists and all the riff-raff in between will be converging in Fayetteville this summer to form a unified front to Wal-Mart's domination of the world.

There will be free housing, food, workshops, strategy sessions, networking, nonviolent actions, and a whole lot of partying as we celebrate the largest movement that Arkansas has seen.

See you in Fayetteville the first weekend in June. For more information or to download materials for local organizing efforts visit [www.againstthewal.org](http://www.againstthewal.org) or email: [againstthewal@gofairtrade.net](mailto:againstthewal@gofairtrade.net)

## Voters reject Wal-Mart

Residents of Inglewood, California, voted two-to-one against a referendum to override local zoning laws and approve construction of a Wal-Mart Supercenter in the town.

The City Council had rejected the store, Wal-Mart responded by spending \$1 million trying to buy local voters' consent.



# Death roams the workplace

BY THE CONSTRUCTION SAFETY CAMPAIGN (UK)

Patrick O'Sullivan was killed on 15th January this year after falling 100 feet when working on the new Wembley Stadium. The Construction Safety Campaign is going to march down Wembley Way and lay a wreath for Patrick on Workers Memorial Day April 28. We hope building workers in London will stop work and join us for a short rally to pay respect to Patrick.

We will also dedicate the rally to other construction workers such as Chris Kesterton, aged 16, who was killed on the job and whose court case we attended in January with his family; Michael Whittard, Martin Burgess and Peter Clark killed in May 2001 in the Canary Wharf Crane crash whose inquest we attended in December; and to Ionut Simionica, who was killed on the day of the Construction Safety Summit.

We should not forget those workers killed abroad, the construction of the Athens Olympic facilities has already claimed the lives of 13 construction workers.

We want this carnage stopped. At least 59 killed on UK construction sites this year, and the year is not over. In 2003 the average fine for killing construction workers was less than £330,000 and no construction employer went to prison.

Far from reforming the law on involuntary manslaughter and introducing a new offence of corporate killing, as promised in the New Labour election manifestos, they are again about to consult on this legislation and have made it clear their proposals do not involve directors being sent to prison. We want employers who kill workers jailed.

## Kill a worker, get a fine; Kill a swan, get sent to jail

The following "crimes" have been dealt with more severely than killing workers on the job. We are not making them up: Three months in jail for naked walker Stephen Gough. Two years for a teenager spray painting graffiti on the London Underground. Six months for a man who bit two police officers on the hand. Three months for a man who

killed a swan. The chairman of the bench at Exeter Magistrates' Court said: "We consider the offence was so serious only a custodial sentence can be justified."

**Jailed for fighting for workers rights.** Remember 1984: over 400 miners pickets jailed. 1974: Shrewsbury Builders jailed. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the year-long battle by the NUM to protect jobs. Despite the inherent dangers, deep coal mining was safer in the UK because of 200 years of struggle by organised labour. Twenty years on we import coal from Colombia, where children are forced to work in mines, and where unionists are murdered by state- and multinational-supported gangsters.

Also this year marks the 30th anniversary of the jailing of Des Warren, Ricky Tomlinson, Arthur Murray and others whose only crime was to take part in the 1972 Building Workers Strike for decent pay working conditions - we want a full pardon and compensation paid to these workers.

The government have failed to deliver the promised union roving safety reps. The construction safety advisers are a sad compromise with few powers and no rights to inspect. Unions do not have automatic access to all sites with members or potential members as they do in other countries. We want roving safety reps with legal powers of access and to stop dangerous work.

Thousands of migrant workers work in London including on London building sites. Their work is vital to the economy. But like the cocklepickers in Morcombe Bay they face the worst conditions and are most at risk of being killed at work.

We believe that any deaths of migrant workers are caused not just by exploitation by gangmasters, but are the fault of those at the top levels of industry who encourage casual employment and are the fault of the government's right-wing asylum policies which prevent asylum seekers from working legally. Until this changes the government has blood on its hands.

We want all workers to join unions and be united by fighting together for proper safety and conditions at work.

# Day laborers march on Camden Yards

The United Workers Association of Baltimore marched on Camden Yards (a fancy new stadium built at taxpayers' expense) April 4 for the opening night of the baseball season. The UWA is an organization of day laborers and low wage-workers, who are fighting for better working conditions.

They are fighting for living wages and a voice on the job at Camden Yards, where day laborers are hired to clean up the stadium after each home game. However, workers are paid poverty wages, are often not paid for all the hours they work, and sometimes do not receive breaks during their 6 - 10 hour shifts.

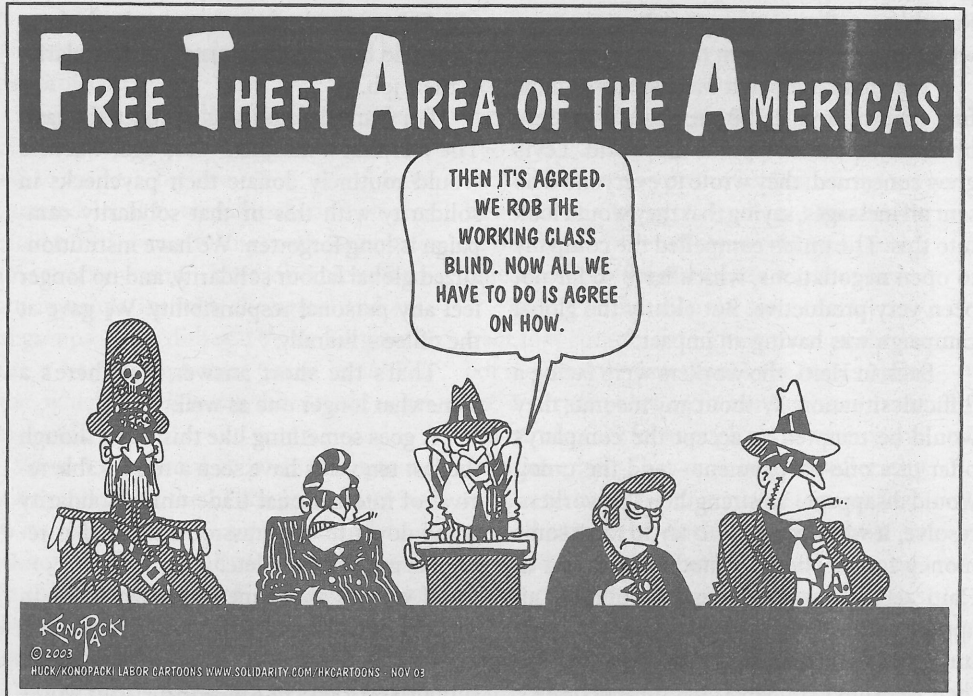
While the publicly financed Stadium Authority is notorious for no-bid contracts and nepotism, it outsources its cleaning work to the day labor agencies.

Here's how the trickle-down system

works at the stadium. The Orioles abdicate the responsibility for cleaning up the stadium to the Stadium Authority. The Authority also doesn't want to do the work, so they subcontracted with Aramark, which outsources to several day labor agencies to get the job done.

Workers are required to wait approximately three hours at Camden Yards to find out if they have been hired. They then must wait another hour without pay before the work begins. Workers are paid upon completion of the job, but if it takes longer than six hours they often find they worked the "extra" hours for free. Many are homeless, and working under these conditions helps to keep them in that condition.

A UWA activist distributing fliers for the Camden Yards action outside the Just Temps agency was assaulted by a dispatcher, while the owner of the Tops labor pool threatened an organizer and then got a baseball bat to make his point more clear.



# CAFTA rhymes with NAFTA

*continued from page 1*  
by multinational corporations. CAFTA would require that governments bid out work currently done by the public sector for services contracts, resulting in price increases, reduced access, and compromised quality that would most severely impact the vulnerable in our society.

CAFTA would expand NAFTA rules that allow companies to sue governments over any law that might stand in the way of their ability to profit. These rules have already been used 27 times since 1994 to challenge important public health, workplace safety and environmental laws.

CAFTA's provisions to protect and expand the patent monopolies of U.S. pharmaceutical companies in Central America will undermine access to affordable generic AIDS drugs and increase the price of medicines. Meanwhile, hundreds thousands of HIV-positive Central Americans are in immediate need of treatment or else they will die.

## UK teachers: "More excluded under Blair than Thatcher"

The outgoing head of the National Union of Teachers, Britain's largest teaching union, has branded British Education Secretary Charles Clarke "childish and immature" over his refusal to talk to the union.

"We are more excluded than we were under Margaret Thatcher and the Tories," NUT Secretary Doug McAvoyn said.

However, NUT membership is growing despite the Labour government's stance. The union is fighting government testing policies and a work load agreement signed by the government and the other major teaching unions. The NUT's refusal to sign the agreement, and its threat to take industrial action against the new measures and potential job cuts, led to government attempts to isolate the union.

The union is also campaigning against league tables and national SATS tests, although a proposal to simply refuse to administer the tests failed last year when turnout

Passing CAFTA would be a strategic first step towards the larger Free Trade Area of the Americas agreement, which would include every country in Central America, South America and the Caribbean except Cuba. Talks on the FTAA have collapsed in recent months. By bullying its smaller CAFTA trading partners into accepting dangerous rules on services, the Bush Administration hopes to divide the growing coalition of developing countries that oppose it and set a dangerous precedent for its position on FTAA.

Thousands have been organizing to defeat CAFTA throughout Central America and the U.S., with mass mobilizations in Managua, San Salvador and San Jose and pickets at the negotiations in Cincinnati, Houston, New Orleans and Washington DC. Following on the heels of victories for civil society at the WTO talks in Cancun and the FTAA talks in Miami, the defeat of CAFTA could set back the already reeling FTAA process, perhaps for good.

Information can be found at the Stop CAFTA coalition website: [www.stopcafta.org](http://www.stopcafta.org)

in a union-wide referendum was too low. The Department for Education and Skills says the union's stance shows that it is "living in cloud cuckoo land," and says that the union must accept government policy if it wishes to be consulted with.

The NUT's general meeting unanimously approved a motion noting "the contrast between inadequacy in the funding of public services and the unlimited ad hoc funding of military action in Iraq," and calling for joint action with other education unions "up to and including strike action" to demand adequate funding and staffing levels.

## Japanese protest Iraq war

Thousands of unionists packed an outdoor auditorium in Tokyo April 9 to demand the immediate withdrawal of Japanese troops from Iraq, after marching through the city's shopping district. A smaller group who marched toward the prime minister's residence were blocked by police.



MAY DAY GREETINGS FROM  
THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA  
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP BRANCH OF THE IWW



## Why we don't give: Online donations & int'l solidarity

BY ERIC LEE

One of the great things the Internet allows organizations to do is raise money. Any organization can easily and quickly set up a secure online payment facility and then sit back and watch the money pour in.

And there are the big success stories that inspire one to believe that it really is this easy. First Howard Dean, and later John Kerry, succeeded in raising millions and millions of dollars from a very large number of people who donated online.

The experience of unions has been somewhat different.

In early March, workers at a textile factory in Haiti who had tried to form a union were sacked by their employer and then intimidated by gun-toting "rebels." A number of groups including LabourStart campaigned to get people to email protests to the employer, a company based in the Dominican Republic, and to jeans giant Levi Strauss, which buys textiles from the plant.

The email campaign was a success: in the first month, over 2,100 messages were sent by trade unionists around the world. Levi's grew concerned; they wrote to everyone who sent off messages, saying that they would look into this. The union compelled the company to open negotiations, which have so far not been very productive. But clearly the global campaign was having an impact.

Back in Haiti, the workers were facing a difficult situation. Without any income, they would be tempted to accept the company's offer of a one-off payment – and the union would disappear. To strengthen the workers' resolve, it was necessary to try to raise some money for a solidarity fund. The union in Haiti, activists in Europe, and LabourStart all appealed to the tens of thousands of trade unionists on their email lists and through their websites to donate small sums of money.

At the same time, LabourStart together with other organizations launched an appeal for funds to support the new independent



trade union movement in Iraq.

To be honest, the response has been less than what we had hoped. A lot less.

Because of our failure to raise money for the workers in Haiti, we risk losing an important battle.

I've been thinking about why this might be the case and came up with two answers.

The short answer is that individual unionists have grown used to having their unions pay for things like solidarity campaigns. We all pay dues to unions and we expect the unions to share some of that money with campaigns for workers rights. We know that many of our unions belong to things like the global union federations (GUFs), whose budgets come entirely from dues paid by us. And international solidarity is their job.

For many decades, this has been the case. The fact that a hundred years ago, workers would routinely donate their paychecks in solidarity with this or that solidarity campaign is long forgotten. We have institutionalized global labour solidarity, and no longer feel any personal responsibility. We gave at the office – literally.

That's the short answer, but there's a somewhat longer one as well.

It goes something like this: even though the last ten years have seen a remarkable revival of international trade union solidarity going down to the grassroots level, that revival is not yet complete.

If we run an online campaign today in support of workers in, say, the USA, we will get a lot more support than if the campaign supports workers in Korea. American workers are far more likely to send off email messages in support of striking California grocery workers than they are in support of im-

prisoned Korean construction workers.

We can now mobilize thousands of people around the world in support of workers in a Haitian textile factory. We can get those people to send off email messages, but we cannot – yet – get them to donate money.

Workers will donate money online in support of workers in their own country. We saw that in the case of the California grocery workers, who were able to raise an extraor-

ordinary amount of money through the Internet. But we are not yet seeing the same level of support in international solidarity campaigns.

There's an irony here that's painful. I just saw an appeal from the union in Haiti, suggesting that what was urgently needed right now is around \$8,000, and half of that would go to paying for food for the union members who lost their jobs.

John Kerry and Howard Dean were able to raise mil-

lions of dollars from activists, even though each individual small donation in itself made only a small difference. For a tiny fraction of the money they were able to raise, we could keep alive the flame of free and independent trade unionism in Haiti, and make a big difference.

The same people who rush to donate to liberal political campaigns, and to a lesser degree give to striking workers in their own country, don't yet fully grasp that a dollar invested in supporting incipient union organizing campaigns in places like Haiti is worth much more than a dollar spent on politicians who claim they are going to stop the export of American jobs.

In an increasingly globalized world, the only job security any of us have is a strong trade union movement. If you don't want your job exported to a low-wage country, help strong unions emerge in that country.

I think we have reached a crossroads. We

now have an extraordinary new technology (the Internet) which allows us to be more involved than ever before in international solidarity work. This has been an educational experience for trade unionists everywhere. A decade ago, none of us would have known the slightest thing about the emerging trade union movement in Haiti or Iraq; today the net is full of information on the subject.

Thousands of us are getting involved in

online campaigns, sending off messages of protest and solidarity. Some of us are even beginning to use the new online tools to donate money to striking workers in our own country, like the California grocery workers. Many of us are donating online to support political candidates who seem to be offering solutions to the problems posed by globalization, such as job loss.

But we have not yet fully grasped the real meaning of

globalization, the one which should be compelling us all to donate, and donate regularly, to workers in need around the world.

Over the next few months and years there will be more and more appeals like the one we have just had from Haiti. Those appeals test our understanding of that most famous of trade union slogans: an injury to one is an injury to all.

Those who understand the meaning of that phrase give and give generously.

I think it is not an exaggeration to say that we can measure the growth of our understanding of globalization with nearly-mathematical precision by measuring the growth of our solidarity donations. And judging by the response to recent appeals, we still have a long way to go.

Donations to Haiti: [www.haitisupport.gn.apc.org/whats\\_new\\_index.html](http://www.haitisupport.gn.apc.org/whats_new_index.html)  
For Iraq: [www.iraqitradeunions.org/](http://www.iraqitradeunions.org/)

## Pay soars for corporate CEOs

BY JAMIE CHAPMAN, WORLD SOCIALIST WEB SITE

While over two million U.S. workers received pink slips last year, Wall Street chief executives treated themselves to some of their fattest pay packages ever.

Leading the pack was Citigroup's Sanford Weill, who was paid \$44.6 million – \$122,000 a day – for his work as head of the world's largest financial services company. The cash portion of his 2003 package came to \$30 million (including a \$29 million bonus). Weill also realized \$23 million from stock options granted in prior years, and Citigroup agreed to buy 5.57 million of his 19.6 million shares in the company for \$262.4 million.

Other top Citigroup executives also received big pay boosts. Charles Prince, who recently succeeded Weill as CEO, took home \$29.2 million, nearly four times his 2002 remuneration. Robert Willumstad, who became chief operating officer in October, was paid \$28.6 million, a 280% increase over 2002.

Elsewhere on Wall Street, Merrill Lynch' CEO E. Stanley O'Neal received his largest paycheck ever at \$28 million – half in cash, and more than triple his 2002 pay. O'Neal is credited with boosting Merrill Lynch's profits to a record \$4 billion last year after cutting over 20,000 jobs at the company.

James Cayne, chairman and CEO of Bear Stearns, another big investment house, received more than \$39 million. At the low end of the Wall Street scale were Henry Paulson, chairman and CEO of Goldman Sachs, and William Harrison, CEO of J.P.Morgan Chase, each of whom pulled in about \$20 million.

Some reports on executive pay have also come in for those working outside Wall Street.

Apple Computer CEO Steven Jobs received a restricted stock award of \$74.75 million to supplement his official salary of one dollar a year. The stock is due to vest in three

years, and was awarded in return for his agreement last March to forego most of his outstanding stock options, which were largely worthless at the time because of the sharp fall in the value of the company's stock.

Health insurance giant Aetna paid its chairman and CEO John Rowe \$18.2 million last year. Gary Forsee, the new chairman and CEO of Sprint Corporation, received \$16.4 million, much more than the \$2.28 million paid to his predecessor in 2002. Insurance conglomerate Conoco paid its new chairman and CEO William Shea \$16.7 million, mostly in restricted stock awards, for bringing the company out of bankruptcy last September.

A survey of 50 of the largest U.S. corporations that have filed their proxy statements so far showed that the average CEO collected \$10.3 million last year.

While the bosses were being extra generous to themselves, the same cannot be said for the way they treated their workers in 2003. According to the Economic Policy Institute, persistent high unemployment has contributed to the first decline in real hourly wages for blue-collar workers in manufacturing and non-managers in service industries (80 percent of the work force) since 1996.

As compensation consultant Brian Foley put it to the *New York Times*, "There are a substantial number of companies where the top of the house is doing extremely well in part on the backs of those who have been outsourced, offshored, terminated or otherwise left out. There's been a silver lining for some and an empty envelope for others."



May Day Greetings  
from the Salt Lake City  
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP BRANCH  
P.O. Box 520835, SLC Utah 84152

## German workers' vacations robbed

Nearly one-third of all German workers are cheated of part of their annual leave entitlements, according to the April 9 *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

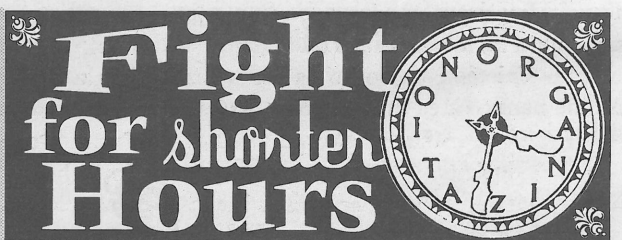
The average worker receives 2 days less than the legally "guaranteed" 28 days. Younger and highly skilled workers are least likely to receive their full leave, as well as to work overtime, while civil servants tend to receive their full 30 days of annual leave.

## Gutting U.S. overtime rules

The Labor Department has sent the final paperwork to gut current overtime protections to the Office of Management and Budget. This action means that official release of the new rules is imminent.

Rather than organizing against this theft of workers' already inadequate "free" time, the AFL-CIO continues to frame the issue as "the Bush overtime pay take-away" and an "outrageous pay cut." But workers did not fight for overtime protection in order to win larger pay checks – no, it was a fight to regain control of our time.

And at a time when mass demonstrations and strikes are desperately needed (the sort of actions which won the 8-hour day in the first place), the AFL's campaign focuses on raising money to buy political



advertisements – essentially using the issue as another bullet in their campaign to boot Bush from the White House.

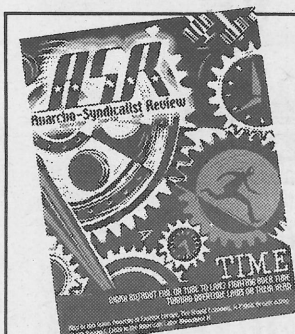
At a time when millions of workers are already forced to work 10- and 12-hour days, the proposed rules would encourage employers to subject millions more to these inhuman conditions. That AFL-CIO officials see this simply as a struggle for time-and-a-half pay tells us just how far they have degenerated from the days when they built their Federation on a campaign for a national general strike for the 8-hour day.

## Fighting over time

The new issue of *Anarcho-Syndicalist Review* features an in-depth review essay looking at several books on working hours (\$4, Box 42531, Philadelphia PA 19101).

## Take Back Your Time confab

There's still time to register for the Take Back Your Time Day conference being held in Chicago June 10-13. Several IWW members will be participating. Details and a registration form are at [www.timeday.org](http://www.timeday.org).



## May Day Greetings from Anarcho-Syndicalist Review

#38 Out Now: Fighting Over Time  
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# Wide wide world of sweatshops

Eighty blacklisted workers fired from El Primo manufacturing plant in El Salvador will begin work at a new facility, Just Garments. The blacklisted workers sewed Lands End garments emblazoned with university and Major League Baseball logos for El Primo.

Their case gained international attention through the efforts of the university sweatshop watchdog the Workers Rights Consortium. The machinery being used to start Just Garments was confiscated by the government from another factory, Tainan, that was shut down in response to union organizing efforts.

Lands End will be giving nearly \$50,000 in materials and 50 hours of technical assistance to Just Garments and has promised to consider moving work to Just Garments after it starts production. In the meantime Lands End's collegiate and MLB gear continue to be sewn at El Primo, where union rights continue to be systematically violated and the union leaders are out of that shop and working at Just Garments.

## Wage transparency

Student activists at the University of Michigan and Indiana University demonstrated for wage transparency in multinationals' supplier factories by flooding their administrative offices with phone calls and staging simultaneous protests. Students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison will take similar action, while Duke, Georgetown and Columbia University students hold teach-ins and meet with their administrations.

This coalition of schools is issuing mul-

tinational corporations an ultimatum: Open the books! The books will be opened according to each school's code of conduct, which requires items bearing university logos to be made in sweat-free conditions.

Most codes state that the university will only do business with firms that pay workers the legal minimum wage. Other codes stipulate a living wage. Chancellor Wiley of the University of Wisconsin has already agreed to require wage disclosure, and other administrations are expected to follow suit within weeks. In addition, to ensure effective monitoring, the coalition will be demanding that schools add standardized wage-disclosure language in each university code to clarify the level of corporate commitment.

## Sweat-free Pennsylvania?

Governor Edward Rendell has signed an executive order banning Commonwealth agencies under his control from contracting with companies that employ sweatshop labor to make or launder apparel.

The order precludes agencies from entering into contracts until the vendor certifies that every employee engaged in making or laundering apparel is not working under sweatshop conditions. To qualify, companies must pay workers "at an hourly rate at least equivalent to the poverty threshold" and provide "working conditions that meet or exceed the International Labor Organization Conventions governing forced labor, child labor, payment of wages, hours of work, occupational health, occupational safety and non-

discrimination," the executive order says.

## Sweated laundries

Cintas Corporation is the largest company in North America that supplies and launders uniforms for government agencies, schools and other customers, with 2003 sales of \$2.7 billion and profits of \$250 million. Unfortunately, Cintas did not become the top uniform supplier by treating its workers well.

In Chicago: Illegal wages, as little as \$3 per hour, and required off-the-clock work, including through lunch and breaks.

In Haiti: Forced overtime to meet excessively high quotas for wages so low that workers must borrow from management to feed their families. Workers also report that despite the sweltering heat and dust-filled air inside the plant, they are left to drink from a tub of dirty water or forced to spend their already meager wages to buy clean water.

In Mexico: Workers are not allowed to speak to each other while working, and must wait for a ticket in order to use bathrooms that are dirty and often broken.

SweatFree Communities distributed a Cintas report, calling on its members to encourage public agencies with Cintas contracts to tell the company to improve conditions, and other public agencies not to procure uniforms from Cintas until they take steps to alleviate sweatshop conditions.

## China complaint

The A.F.L.-C.I.O. has filed an unusual trade complaint against China, which it as-

serts has gained commercial advantage through violating workers' rights by suppressing strikes, banning independent unions and not enforcing minimum wage laws.

"This will put the onus on the Bush administration to explain that China is not repressing workers' rights, and to me that is an extraordinarily difficult case to make," said James Mann, a China expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"The record going back for decades is that China has intensely resisted independent trade unions, and I don't see how the administration can pretend otherwise."

This is the first case ever brought under the Trade Act of 1974 seeking penalties over violations of workers' rights. The complaint could be vulnerable to challenge at the World Trade Organization because global trade rules do not protect labor rights.

## Sweat-free grade schools?

The Los Angeles school board has adopted an anti-sweatshop procurement measure impacting \$600 million in goods and services, and established a policy of preventing public dollars from subsidizing poverty wages. The victory came after 14 months of negotiations with a coalition of garment workers advocates, unions, religious and student groups coordinated by the No More Sweatshops! campaign.

The new district code will require a "non-poverty wage" standard based on data from the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services and, for offshore production, World Bank purchasing power ratios by country.

Left unresolved was the issue of enforcement, however. The coalition demand that the district contract with an independent outside monitor such as the Workers Rights Consortium was opposed by district staff on budgetary grounds.

## Truth in labeling

No Sweat Apparel is rolling out the world's most revolutionary sneaker. It may look like a Converse All-Star knock off, but this sneaker comes with a feature that no sneaker in history has ever had. Each shoebox contains a detailed fact sheet that tells consumers exactly what wages and benefits the union workers who produced the sneakers get paid. The social enterprise start up has challenged Nike and Reebok to do the same.

## Coke workers end hunger strike

A hunger strike by Colombian Coca Cola workers ended March 27, on its 12th day, with management's agreement to begin negotiations over the fate of workers displaced by the closure of production lines at 11 bottling plants operated by Coca-Cola FEMSA.

The company has agreed to discuss transferring the affected workers to other jobs, to provide two weeks' paid medical leave to the strikers, and to revoke all sanctions imposed on union activists in connection with the campaign against the plant closings.

Coca-Cola FEMSA will also publish a statement in a national newspaper demanding respect for the strike and the physical integrity of the workers.

As the hunger strike was underway, several protesters interrupted a speech by Coca-Cola Co. Chairman and Chief Executive Doug Daft at Yale University.

Daft was speaking at the 11th annual Coca-Cola World Fund at Yale Lecture when activists went to the front of the hall and staged a "die in" around the lectern. Daft continued speaking during the protest over the company's role in the deaths of union members at Coke bottling plants in Colombia.

Coke has long been a target of complaints about violence in Colombia, first from unions and more recently from college students. Coke and its bottlers in Colombia were sued in the United States three years ago over the allegations. Coke was dismissed from the federal suit, which continues against the bottlers.

# Workers fight theft of hours through electronic time cards

Several years ago, an assistant manager at a Toys "R" Us store in Albuquerque discovered his boss sitting at a computer altering workers' time records, deleting hours to cut their paychecks. He quit, landing a job managing a Family Dollar store. Top managers there ordered him not to let employees' total hours exceed a certain amount, and one day his district manager told him to delete some workers' hours electronically in order to make that target. When he refused, the district manager erased the hours herself.

The April 4 *New York Times* reports that the illegal doctoring of workers' time records is far more prevalent than most people believe. The practice, commonly called shaving time, is easily done and hard to detect — a simple matter of computer keystrokes — and has spurred a growing number of lawsuits against some of the country's largest retail firms.

Many companies alter time cards to reflect lunch breaks workers did not receive or

to avoid paying for overtime. Wal-Mart has agreed to halt a years-long practice where it clocked workers out for the day when they forgot to clock back in after lunch breaks.

Workers have sued Family Dollar and Pep Boys, the auto parts and repair chain, accusing managers of deleting hours. A jury found that Taco Bell managers in Oregon routinely erased workers' time. Several former Wal-Mart employees told the *Times* that managers had altered time records to shortchange them. The U.S. Department of Labor recently reached back-pay settlements with Kinko's photocopy centers totaling \$56,600, after finding that managers in two stores had erased time for 13 employees.

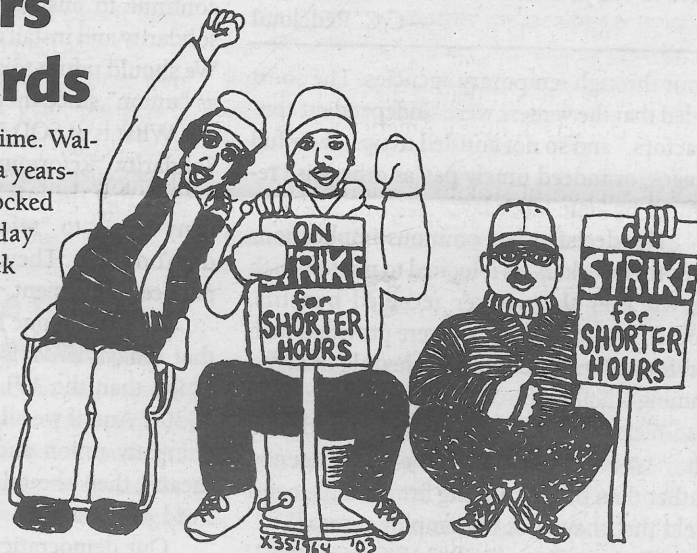
Each company claims their policy prohibits altering time cards to cheat workers of their pay. Even so, many managers fear they have no alternative if they are to keep labor costs in line with company demands.

"The pressures are just unbelievable to control costs and improve productivity," Cornell University professor of industrial relations George Milko-vich told the *Times*. He added that compensation plans based on meeting cost targets also created incentives to falsify time cards.

In the punch-card era, managers would have had to conspire with payroll clerks or accountants to manipulate records. But now it is far easier to accomplish this secretly with computers.

Shannon Priller, who managed a Family Dollar store in New Mexico, admits that she watched her district manager erase hours. "The manager and I would sit there and go over everybody's time cards," she told the *Times*. "We were told not to go over payroll, or we would lose our jobs. If we were over, my hours would get shaved."

Some weeks she lost 10 or 15 hours. A clerk at the store said her paycheck was sometimes cut to under 30 hours on weeks when



she worked 40. The women have joined a lawsuit accusing Family Dollar of erasing time and requiring off-the-clock work. "It needs to stop," said Ms. Priller, who now cleans houses for a living.

Another Family Dollar manager said employees could not finish the work in the hours allotted. "The message from the district manager was, basically, 'I don't care how you do it, just get it done.'" So she altered clock-out times and inserted half-hour lunch breaks. "I felt horrible that I was doing this," she said. "If I refused, I would have been terminated." After five months, she quit.

Rosann Wilks, who was an assistant manager at a Pep Boys in Nashville, said she was fired in 2001 after refusing to delete time. At first, she bowed to orders and erased hours. Some workers asked questions, she said, but they refused to confront management. "They took it lying down," she said. "They didn't want to lose their job. Jobs are hard to find."

She said Pep Boys fired her when she confronted her district manager over the practice. Pep Boys says it does not tolerate deleting time, and that any manager found to have done so will be terminated.

At many companies employees receive no paper time records, making it hard to challenge management when their paychecks are inexplicably low. One former Family Dollar manager noted that when she managed a McDonald's, workers received a printout each day giving their total hours and when they clocked in and out. "We never had any problems like this at McDonald's," she said.



May Day Greetings  
in memory of  
Sidney Solomon  
1911 - 2004  
Raymond Solomon, Free Voices





The Third Millennium is well on its way, and it tiresomely looks pretty much like the one we have just endured. The class society that we chafe under had already been in operation well before the first millennium even got started. The ancient Greeks are credited with bequeathing us with the word Democracy, the rule of the people, of the Demes. However, the demes did not include all residents of Greece. The magnificent examples of architecture erected in that land were not erected by demes, but by half-clad and underpaid proles. But as the historians were from the upper crust, they credit themselves with the surviving splendors of bygone millennia.

Democracy is a very much perverted word. Huey Long, a well-known demagogue here in Freedomland a number of decades ago and an admirer of Hitler and Mussolini, made the remark that dictatorship would come to these shores, but it would be called democracy. Like Freedomland's foreign policy, the democracies happen to be the ones that have a cozy relationship with their own.

Freedomland has long been touting itself as a democracy, when in reality it was a military occupation. The fact that this continent was already occupied by humans did not seem to phase them. They merely pushed the natives further away from European settlement, shooting them down if they did not move fast enough. All the land now controlled by Freedomland has been stolen, and the original inhabitants reduced to third-class citizens. They established themselves on stolen land along with the stolen labor of kidnapped Africans.

It's too bad that history is being written by the upper crust. There is an old African proverb, "Until history is written by the lions, history shall always glorify the hunter."

It is we, the working class, who have built this great technology, the work places where we work for substandard wages, who have built the palaces where our masters live; and ever made them their guns and bullets - and I don't have to tell you who receives all the bullets.

— C.C. Redcloud

### Carpenters flirt with Bush

While the AFL-CIO pours tens of millions of dollars down the Democratic rat hole, the Carpenters union is flirting with President Bush. In an event staged for the media, Bush recently went through a few minutes of carpenter training in Phoenix, emerging without hammering a single nail or thumb after using a power tool to drive four screws.

United Brotherhood of Carpenters President Douglas McCarron literally held Bush's coat as he drove two screws deep into a section of dry wall. Press reports do not indicate who repaired the damage.

### Costco workers forced to push workers' comp initiative

As Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger presses to gut California's workers compensation system, the Teamsters union has blasted Costco Wholesale for directing employees to collect signatures for the scheme on company time.

The union represents a third of Costco's 30,000 California employees, and says the practice violates state law barring employers from coercing workers' political activities.

The company has diverted hundreds of workers from stocking and cashier duties to collect signatures, but says workers who object will be reassigned to other duties.

Initiative backers have been scrambling to gather 600,000 valid signatures of California voters by April 16. The measure would then go on the November ballot unless legislators agree to the cutbacks themselves.

### New York court rules catering boss can steal waiters' tips

The New York state court of appeals has ruled that a banquet catering firm can keep tips and "service charges" it collects from servers, rather than passing them along to workers. The ruling affects temporary staff hired as waiters by the Cipriani Group and paid a straight hourly rate (from which workers compensation premiums were deducted, which a lower court had ruled was illegal).

The company also employs a permanent staff covered under a union contract who split the service charges with management.

The temporary wait staff are hired by the

hour through temporary agencies. The court ruled that the waiters were "independent contractors," and so not entitled to tips, their full wages, or indeed timely pay as otherwise required by state labor law.

The decision has ominous implications for other workers, as it looked to matters such as whether the worker received benefits, could hold multiple jobs, were provided with uniforms, and had a fixed schedule in determining whether the waiters were independent contractors. (A strong case could be made that they were employed by the temp agency, rather than by the catering firm, but the court held that they were not employees at all.)

(*Bynog v Cipriani*, 2003 NYSlipOp 18982)

### Workers train replacements

USA Today reports that computer programmers are being directed to train their own replacements as companies like Boeing send their work overseas.

Almost one in five information technology workers has lost a job or knows someone who lost a job after training a foreign worker, according to a survey by the Washington Alliance of Technology Workers.

While offshoring work is hardly new, asking the workers being laid-off to train their own replacements - in essence paying them to dig their own unemployment graves - is.

Sometimes the offshored worker is kept on for a few weeks while their replacement is brought over to learn the job; in other cases severance packages are tied to the training. Employers claim the practice is voluntary.

WashTech is pushing for legislation to ban the practice; a more effective measure might be to use the opportunity to organize the replacement workers and let them know what the job used to pay.

While employers have been sending manufacturing work overseas for decades, new communications technologies now make it possible for design, programming, and even telephone answering work to be sent to countries such as India which have a well-educated work force accustomed to lower wages.

In the next 15 years, American employers are expected to move about 3.3 million white-collar jobs and \$136 billion in wages abroad, according to Forrester Research.

## Book Review: The Rambling Kid

REVIEW BY CARLOS CORTEZ

Charles Ashleigh, *The Rambling Kid: A novel about the IWW*. Introduction by Steve Kellerman. Charles H. Kerr Publishing Co., 2004, \$17. Available from IWW Literature Department.

Charles Ashleigh, an Englishman by birth, through many travels eventually came to the U.S. where he was introduced to the IWW. He remained active in the union until his deportation nine years later. This novel, first published in London in 1930, has never before been reprinted and is next to impossible to locate even in libraries. While described as a novel, the book is in large part an under-the-table autobiography, and Joe Crane, its main character, is Ashleigh's alter ego.

Within these pages can be found an accurate account of life for the working stiff in the years preceding the Russian Revolution. Like long-standing IWW cartoonist Joe Troy, Joe Crane worked in every field, so you have an accurate picture of what migratory work was like. Joe is eventually confronted with overtures by the Communist Party in the

heady days following the Russian Revolution, when it showed there was some promise for the rest of humanity. Joe Crane, however, stuck to the basic principles of the IWW to the end - nothing less than control at the point of production on the part of the workers themselves.

While only a novel, this book is still highly recommended for the serious IWW historian.

**Editor's note:** Once the reader gets past the tedious opening chapters, *The Rambling Kid* does indeed offer a fascinating picture of life on the road.

However, the final chapters portray Wobblies as stickup men and common criminals - perhaps to justify the hero jumping bail to become a Communist functionary.

While it is certainly possible that among the more than a million workers who have held red cards some resorted to criminal acts, there is no evidence that this was a common practice. It would appear to have been inserted into the novel for the sole purpose of smearing an organization Ashleigh had left to become a party hack.

## Time for Mass Refusal

BY TOM LANEY, CLNEWS

This is excerpted from [www.CLNews.org](http://www.CLNews.org):

Good people have been picketing (UAW headquarters) Solidarity House forever. A lot of things end there, but the democratic revolution will never begin on that traitorous doorstep. It is more likely that the consolidated, dictatorial power at SOD house will continue to push its own revolt to destroy solidarity and install dog eat dog everywhere. We should refuse to even acknowledge them as "union" since they are the opposite.

What is at SOD House is the opposite of Solidarity. "Reforming" the UAW is like suggesting that the original UAW join the company union to "reform" it. Of course they didn't do that. They started their own independent movement, which became the UAW.

Is there anyone left out there suggesting that today's UAW is any less of a company union than the AFL company union of the 1930s? And if we all agree that the UAW is a company union and understand what that means, then should we be trying to reform Ford, GM and GE?

Our democratic revolt will mean something entirely different. Democratic revolution stems from our friendships on the job and around our homes, it is based in solidarity and direct action and grows as we are able to connect ourselves in conversations about how we exercise our power. It means seeing who our friends really are, and persuading them that we all need to get back to solidarity and direct action. We need to make it clear that workers who trust other workers in slowdowns can build that direct action solidarity into shutting down the docks.

You say you will never see the revolution in your lifetime? I say there are little revolutions going on every day. When one worker assists another when the Forduaw program says throw people away, friendly assistance becomes a revolutionary act.

Some years ago, I argued with Owen Bieber about there being no difference between Clinton and Bush I on NAFTA. Clinton, who had broken a UAW strike in Arkansas, was being held up as the reformer. Many people said, "We've got to get rid of Bush! Nothing else matters." And they joined Bieber's push for the lesser of two evils.

So we got Clinton, who starved somewhere between 1 to 1.5 million innocent people, dismantled welfare for the poor, and whose favorite "union" was the strikebreaking dog eaters at SOD House. Did we win?

Voting for evil does what?

Mass Refusal is not apathetic or passive. Mass Refusal calls on voters to think about what it means to support evil. Mass Refusal suggests that good people should refuse to

participate in the presidential charade and instead organize meetings with other good people to talk about what democracy really means. Mass Refusal asks people to think about real change, about how we can gain a society based in solidarity instead of greed. Things can only change for the better when people organize themselves in direct action to change the country and world. Mass Refusal is a strike for common sense.

Mass Refusal also suggests that we stop cooperating with bad stuff. Why are we assisting our enemies? We should all stop going to joint meetings and call for worker meetings. We should stop paying for nonsense politics like UAW-CAP and the Democrats and call for real democracy. We should all refuse to do more work and do less work and create a shorter day and more jobs. We should refuse to join Sweeney and the Finger in Miami to save us from "bad" competition and start calling for dock closures until every worker in the world has a good wage. We should stop looking for democracy and hope amongst the capitalists and start seeing it in our own friends.

The answers for solidarity and direct action are found laterally, between ourselves and our communities, not in the hierarchy of the once-great UAW.

What if Bush is reelected? We still need to organize. What if Kerry wins? He's already committed to 40,000 more troops in Iraq. He's already committed to the war industrial profiteers and the ruling class. He's already committed to corporate tax cuts. He certainly is never going to help us win slowdowns and strikes and shut down the docks.

I understand that the UAW's concerted dog eat dog activity over the past 25 years has caused many people to turn on themselves. My own plant has its share of snitches to make us believe we can't trust each other. These people are there in all our plants causing us great disappointment every day.

On the other hand, we can also see lots of good, frustrated people. They help each other out on their jobs and continue to stand up to the (Forduaw) bosses. Most of them don't believe they can do much more than that because of the disappearance of wide solidarity. We need Mass Refusal to believe we can't connect these good people and start a democratic movement. Mass Refusal to lose is what we need.

And we can only get that by having faith and confidence that our friends at work are like millions of other people in our country and world. If we just see them as the answer and keep working on the solidarity conversation about direct action we can change our factories and world to the way we want them.



# BOOKS FOR REBELLIOUS WORKERS

Happy May Day!

## LUCY PARSONS FREEDOM, EQUALITY & SOLIDARITY

Writings & Speeches, 1878-1937



Edited & Introduced by  
GALE AHRENS  
with an Afterword by  
ROXANNE DUNBAR-ORTIZ

New this month!

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

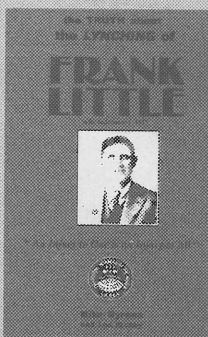
edited and introduced by Gale Ahrens with an afterword by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz  
"More dangerous than a thousand rioters," that's what the Chicago police called Lucy Parsons – America's most defiant and persistent anarchist agitator, whose cross-country speaking tours inspired hundreds of thousands of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

183 pp, \$17.00



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### The Truth about the Lynching of Frank Little

by Mike Byrnes and  
Les Rickey  
This is the first book-length treatment of the August 1, 1917, lynching of IWW organizer Frank Little during a miners'

strike in Butte, Montana. The authors, both long-time Butte residents, have tracked down contemporary historical records and newspaper accounts – and several photographs reproduced here for the first time – to offer a definitive answer to the question of who killed Fellow Worker Little, and why. A richly detailed narrative of the event that transformed Butte and crushed the IWW presence in Montana's mining industry.

127 pp, signed, \$16.95



### The Rambling Kid: A Novel About the IWW

by Charles Ashleigh, intro by  
Steve Kellerman

See review, page 10

302 pages, \$14.00

## HAYMARKET SCRAPBOOK



Edited by Dave Roediger & Franklin Rosemont

### Haymarket Scrapbook

edited by Dave Roediger &  
Franklin Rosemont

This profusely illustrated anthology focuses on the most powerful world-reverberating event in American labor history: the Haymarket Affair of 1886-87, and on the vast, incredibly varied and enduring influence it has exerted in the United States and across the globe.

The book describes who the Haymarket martyrs were, the legal defense of the imprisoned labor leaders, and the international movement to remember these heroes. Writings and speeches on the Haymarket and May Day, along with an abundance of cartoons and illustrations make this an excellent coffee table book.

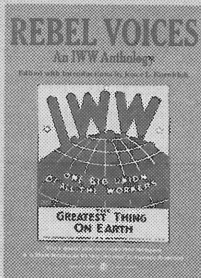
253 pp, \$19.00

### Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology

edited by Joyce Kornbluh

Culled from Wobbly periodicals from the movement's founding in 1905 to the present, Rebel Voices presents pamphlets, stories, songs, poems, courtroom testimony, skits, cartoons & illustrations that bring the story to life in native accents.

–Detroit Labor News  
446 pages, \$24.00

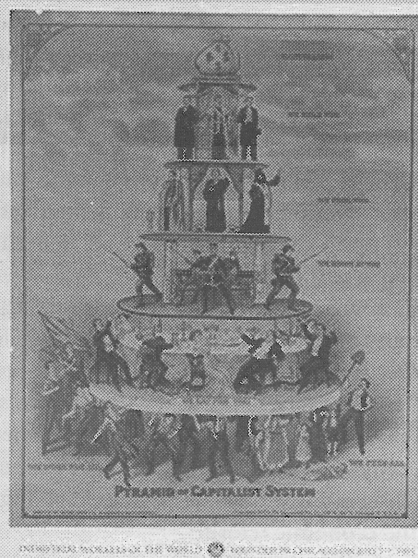


### Mexican Workers and the State: From the Porfiriato to NAFTA

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

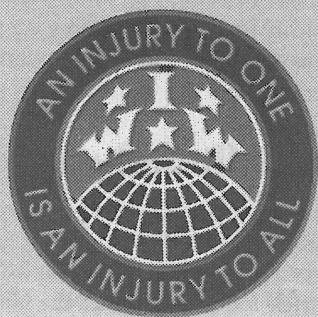


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## Guest workers of the world...

continued from page 1

workers as a new, less threatening source of cheap labor. The plight of Israel's guest workers goes ignored by radicals in Israel-Palestine and the world alike who seem to be focused solely on the Palestinian issues. But in order to make progress in that country we must be able to see the interconnectedness of all these issues.

Soon there could be a much larger culprit, namely the United States. President Bush is now developing an immigration proposal that would pave the way for a new, expanded guest worker program allowing mainly Latin American workers to work in the United States without becoming citizens. If this proposal passes, we seem to be heading in the same direction as the Middle East.

If the labor movement in general, and the radical labor movement in particular, wants to catch up with the times, we will need to find new ways to organize guest workers. We will also have to find ways to get community support behind guest workers if they attempt resistance.

There are sharp contrasts in the different attitudes in the way native workers perceive their fellow workers from foreign lands. In South Korea members of the KCTU labor union march in solidarity with the guest workers' own (ETU-MB) union against deportations. On the other hand, in South Africa native workers and unionists riot against guest workers from other parts of Africa.

This is why we must educate the community and our fellow workers about the plight of these workers. Guest workers do have the numbers and the potential power to organize because many economies in the world would not be able to run in their current form without them. New forms and methods of revolutionary unionism will have to form in order to combat the situation which capitalist globalism has delivered us.

## Unpaid guest workers in United Arab Emirates

There are more than two million guest workers in the UAE, most of whom are low-paid workers. The Emirate of Dubai is in the midst of a construction boom which employs many of these workers, who complain that unpaid wages are increasingly common.

Recently, 1,170 workers of an Abu Dhabi construction company staged a sit-in at the labour ministry, after going unpaid for seven months. The ministry summoned the owner, but the dispute was not settled because he was short of money. In another incident, more than 2,000 workers of a construction firm in Dubai marched to the labour ministry's office to complain against nonpayment of wages but were blocked by police.

While UAE law says such complaints must be resolved within two weeks, workers in fact face long waits and empty promises from officials who accept contractors' explanations that they can not pay workers until they are paid by project owners.

## Women in the informal sector

The January 2004 Asian Women Workers Newsletter is largely devoted to problems facing women working in the informal sector not covered by normal social security programs. A large, rapidly growing number of predominantly women workers have lost social protections which can be much more sweeping than those available in the U.S.

A cartoon asks when these workers will get health coverage and maternity leave which are evidently taken for granted in many Asian countries. In the Philippines, for example, workers are covered by a socialized health insurance program covering up to 90 days' hospitalization per year, while in Pakistan, workers with four months' service are entitled to 12 weeks' paid maternity leave.

The issue discusses a variety of strategies ranging from mutual aid societies to bringing pressure on governments to extend social security benefits and other labor rights to workers in the informal sector.



## McDonald's settles 363-day strike

McDonald's settled a strike at its Strasbourg-St. Denis (Paris) branch March 8, just shy of the sit-down strike's one-year anniversary, replacing a franchise operator that workers refused to tolerate any longer and reinstating an assistant manager whose unjust firing sparked the strike. The company also agreed to raise salaries and to pay workers for a third of the days they were on strike.

Although represented by the reformist union the CGT, the restaurant's 30 workers occupied the restaurant, and held it throughout the strike. They also "visited" other outlets around the city throughout the dispute, bringing their case to customers and to their fellow workers. The CGT said workers had delivered a "singing snub" to those who dream of precarious employees.

The ousted manager had been put in place by McDonald's after workers had won an earlier strike in February 2002, and charged him with cleaning house. The March 11 strike was in response to his decision to



dismiss the assistant manager (who had testified in behalf of workers to the industrial tribunal) for insubordination.

McDonald's also settled with strikers at its Denfert-Rochereau branch, preserving their employment rights as a new franchisee takes over management.

## Olympic slaughter

Immigrant workers racing against the clock to build Greece's Olympic facilities are dying in shockingly large numbers according to *The Independent* newspaper.

At least 13 workers have been killed, while scores more have been seriously injured. "These are just the deaths that we know about, there may be many more," said Osman Feim, a union official.

"All of these accidents were avoidable," said Giorgos Philiousis, president of the construction workers' union at the Athens 2004 Olympic Village. "What's happened is criminal in the truest sense of the word and it's been done in the name of profit."

The union has compiled a list of 13 men killed in 2002 and 2003. While 3 percent of construction funds are supposed to be spent on on-site safety programs, contractors are instead pocketing the money. Meanwhile, workers are being pushed to work long overtime, and to complete the work quickly.

Workers on the projects have been drawn from throughout the Balkans and Middle East, living in appalling conditions and enduring long commutes to work sites.

Workers say the Olympic Village, the only unionized Olympic construction site, was a dangerous battleground where poor conditions and a series of serious accidents led to strikes in early 2002. Management then demolished the union's on-site office with bulldozers.

Union leaders blame the death toll on government incentives to contractors who stand to earn substantial early-delivery bonuses. Nine of the 12 construction areas at the Village were delivered in advance, but at a heavy toll in injured and maimed workers.

The deaths are only the tip of the iceberg, with more than 80 serious injuries for each death. In many cases contractors pressure non-Greek speakers into signing legal waivers they are unable to read in return for tiny payments. One worker, paralyzed from the neck down when he fell from a scaffold while operating a high pressure hose, was pressured into signing away his legal rights for a payment of Å7,000 (about US\$7,500).

## Police attack fire fighters

French police fired tear gas and water cannon at firemen protesting against cuts in their pensions March 25, in front of Paris's ornate 19th century opera house, the Palais Garnier. "It's a dangerous job and we're tired of the government not appreciating us," one angry fireman said as his colleagues were hosed down.

Pension "reform" legislation making people work longer before retiring has cut an ordinary fireman's retirement payout to 940 euros (\$1,140) a month from 1,400. Firefighters are demanding that they be made eligible for early retirement at full benefits.

## Korean unions face crackdown

The South Korean government began arresting officials of the Korean Government Employees Union and the Korea Teachers and Educational Workers Union in the run-up to April 15 national elections, on charges that they violated laws prohibiting government employees from partisan political activity.

Arrest warrants were issued for more than two dozen union officials, and 18 workers protesting the arrests outside a police station were also taken into custody.

Prosecutors say the unions have publicly endorsed the Democratic Labor Party; the unions insist that they have the right to engage in political activity, but insist they have followed the specific requirements of the law while demanding its repeal.

"The laws ban public workers from involvement in political campaigns, but it doesn't necessarily mean that we can't express our political opinions," noted a joint statement issued by the two unions and the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions. The unions say they did not endorse a particular party, but rather condemned the corruption and anti-labor policies of the ruling parties.

The teachers union has collected thousands of signatures from teachers across the country condemning the repression.

Although the Democratic Labor Party has no representatives in the National Assembly, its support rose in the wake of a political scandal which saw the impeachment of the president for illegal electioneering. Opinion polls say the DLP could receive as much as 8 percent of the vote, bringing the party into parliament for the first time. A new electoral law allocating some seats to parties on a proportional basis is expected to help the DLP and other minor parties.

The DLP opposes the government's decision to send troops to Iraq, and calls for creating jobs by cutting working hours and free medical care and education.

The KCTU is asking the International Labor Organization and Amnesty International to intervene. The IWW's International Solidarity Commission has written Korean authorities calling for the release of the imprisoned unionists, and urging the government to respect workers' rights to participate in political activity, should they so choose.

## The right to retire

Pensioners marched across Europe April 3, protesting plans to "reform" social welfare systems by cutting benefits and pushing back the age at which workers can retire.

Governments claim they need to cut back pension plans to balance their budgets, increase national competitiveness, and cope with an aging population. Unions note the schemes would increase unemployment and hit poorer workers particularly hard.

In Italy, elderly people demanding increased pension payments waved union flags and blew whistles as they converged on the center of Rome. "There's an impoverishment, a situation that every day becomes more untenable for the elderly," said Guglielmo Epifani of Italy's largest union, the CGIL.

In Germany, pensioners were joined by younger workers angry at plans to make them work longer before retirement. More than a half million people joined marches in Berlin, Cologne and Stuttgart.

In Paris, demonstrators marched through the city center behind a banner reading "Together in Paris and Europe for jobs, social rights, the welfare state and public services."

While turnout was low, the government recently suffered a landslide defeat in regional elections, a result widely attributed to anger at the economic reforms.

## Nepal: Mass arrests of union officials

More than 4,000 people have been arrested in Nepal during a wave of sit-down protests that have paralyzed the capital Kathmandu. Among those arrested were the Secretary General and several other officials of the GEFONT union federation, a union with Marxist roots which has been reaching out to the international syndicalist movement in recent years.

Nepal's king dissolved parliament and reestablished monarchal rule in November 2002, after 12 years of democracy. As popular resistance has mounted, the government responded with the Essential Services Act sharply restricting workers' union rights, and with a policy of meeting peaceful demonstrations with tear gas and plastic bullets.

On April 5, three leading union centers - GEFONT, Nepal Trade Union Congress, and the Confederation of Professionals - issued a joint statement condemning "the continued beastly suppression of the people's demonstration by this unconstitutional Royal government" and calling for a general strike against the regime.

## France: Workers cut power to bosses

French power workers switched off street lights and cut electricity to the Chateau de Versailles April 8 in a one-day strike to protest plans to privatize public utilities.

Electricite de France and Gaz de France employees also marched in Paris and other cities to protest plans to sell stock in the state-owned power and gas utilities.

Versailles lost power just as it was to open its doors. With no lights or ticketing machines, workers let 3,500 waiting tourists visit the sumptuous gardens for free.

Most power cut-offs lasted for only a few hours. In some towns, protesting workers restored power to families that had been cut off for nonpayment and cut supplies to local officials and public buildings. Power to 30,000 homes in Rouen was cut for 90 minutes; a cut-off condemned by unions.

If the government does not back off of its privatization plans, workers intend to step up their campaign, and have warned that government ministers could be the next to lose power.

## Indian tea workers starving to death

BY SYED ZARIR HUSSAIN,  
ONEWORLD SOUTH ASIA

Around 800 tea garden workers have died of starvation, with several surviving on wild roots and rats in the Indian state of West Bengal where the closure of unprofitable plantations has cost a million workers their jobs.

The deaths resulted from starvation, malnutrition, general debility and diseases among workers in the abandoned tea gardens in North Bengal, says a report by the Indian People's Tribunal on Human Rights and the Environment, a civil rights group based in India's financial capital, Mumbai.

The situation is volatile, with tea work-

ers threatening to revolt against bosses for locking out workers without prior notice and cutting off electricity and water supply to workers' homes.

At least 25 of an estimated 160 gardens in North Bengal have closed. The region accounts for about 30 percent of India's annual tea production. India is the world's largest tea producer and North Bengal produces premium leaves. But global tea prices have collapsed, drastically impacting India.

The Indian Tea Association denies that any workers have died, noting that government authorities has not yet reported any starvation deaths in tea gardens.

## South Africa: 52 arrested at privatization protest

Fifty-two members of the Anti-Privatization Forum (APF) were arrested March 21 at South Africa's Constitution Hall and charged with participating in an illegal gathering after police banned their protest against privatization. Many others were forcibly prevented from boarding buses to the protest.

Several Durban APF activists who had gathered at the Workers Library in advance of the demonstration were forced to give their fingerprints to police for entry into the Crime Detection System and also prevented from proceeding to Constitutional Hill.

APF supporters who gathered at the police station where their fellow workers were being held were shot at with pump guns while

dispersing in compliance with a police order.

The Landless People's Movement condemned the "apartheid-like detentions," noting that the rights to assemble and protest "were not granted as a favour from the politicians who run this country, but [are] rights which we, as ordinary people of South Africa struggled for."

"The arrest of the APF activists is an affront to the memory and sacrifices of the people who died in Sharpeville so that we may be able to exercise our fundamental rights without fear of being shot at or detained. ... The South African police, acting on the instructions of decision-makers in government, have declared war on the poor."

## Bonded labor in Pakistani brick kiln industry

BY ALL PAKISTAN FEDERATION  
OF UNITED TRADE UNIONS

In response to a complaint we received from our affiliated union Pakistan Brick Kiln Labour Union that a family of 11 had been detained in a private jail by the owners of a brick kiln factory in the Islamabad area, we initiated legal action to secure their release.

When police raided the factory they found several workers being held with iron chains just like animals. The workers were released after a judge rejected their "owner's" plea that they were not slaves, but rather

bonded labourers working off debts.

Bonded labour has been illegal in Pakistan since 1992, but remains quite common in the brick industry. Neither the landlords nor the capitalists have any interest in freeing the brick workers, of whom there are more than 8 million in our country.

The government has fixed brick workers' wages at Pak Rupees 184 (US\$3.22) for each 1,000 bricks. As two workers can make only 3,500 bricks over the entire year, it is impossible for them to meet their obligations, and so many fall into debt slavery.

**May Day Greetings**  
from the Edmonton General Membership Branch