

# Industrial Worker

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## Talkin' Union

BY NICK DRIEDGER, WOBBLY DISPATCH  
(EDMONTON IWW NEWSLETTER)

**Kate and Hannah:** The first day Hannah bussed into camp she was tired. It had been a while since she worked this kind of job, and the long trip up Highway 2 was not one she made willingly. But she was broke, and it was either this or moving back in with her parents. Taking this job meant she could make rent quickly and keep her apartment. The camp was like many others Hannah had worked on and off for the past few years. About fifty men and women, including the gas workers and the kitchen staff, populated a remote cluster of ATCO trailers in the woods just north of Slave Lake.

She met Kate that night working her first shift and they quickly hit it off. Maybe it was the kitchen supervisor, who they both hated, or maybe that they liked the same music. The work rate in the kitchen was fast, among the most demanding conditions they had ever worked under. A few times Kate told off the supervisor and Hannah quickly came to her aid; sometimes he would let them work a bit slower, but sometimes he was hard-nosed and wouldn't budge. With knives flying about, and a couple of nasty burns each by the end of the first week, their resolve only strengthened – working fast is dangerous in a small kitchen, and they decided they would rather work safe and do the job right.

After a few days of dicing onions, weighing sandwiches, and generally trying to ignore the supervisor, they made a deal. The deal was simple: they would work the same rate, they would stick up for each other, and if one were to quit she would give the other one week's notice, though none was required to be given to the supervisor.

The weeks flew by, and over time Kate and Hannah won a couple other people over to their deal, though they still jokingly referred to their arrangement as a “two person union.” The longer they stuck with it, the better things got. Soon the supervisor stayed right out of the kitchen almost entirely, finding other jobs to do or taking his work elsewhere. For the last months of that long, dark winter, they ran their own show. When the thaw finally came, Kate and Hannah parted ways. As they stepped on to the bus, the grouchy old supervisor bid them good riddance: “It was almost like there was some kind of union in this camp as soon as you two showed up, and even worse, your bad attitude was starting to catch on in other parts of the camp. Now that you kids are gone we can try and get things back to normal.”

They smiled, grabbed their pay stubs and went home.

**Phil:** Phil had been working in the lumberyard for a few months before he decided to talk to his co-workers about the conditions. Their job mostly consisted of unloading rail cars full of wood and sometimes steel. Even when done properly, the work was dangerous: all of the equipment was aging, and the cars themselves



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**NLRB strips more workers of labor rights**  
Working “supervisors” lose right to unionize, engaged in concerted activity on job **4**

**In November We Remember workers’ history & martyrs**  
IWW founder William Trautmann, Brotherhood of Timber Workers, Victor Miners’ Hall, and more **5-8**

## International support for Starbucks workers

As picket lines and other actions reach new Starbucks locations across the United States and the world every week, the coffee giant has told workers it is raising starting pay in an effort to blunt unionization efforts.

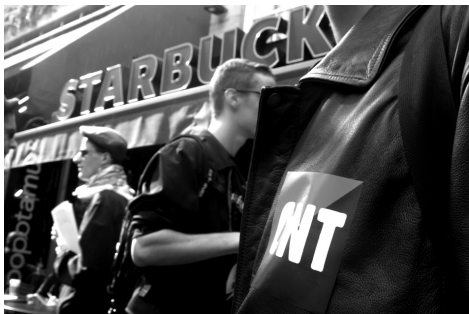
In Chicago, where workers at a Logan Square store demanded IWW union recognition August 29, Starbucks has raised starting pay from \$7.50 an hour to \$7.80. After six months, Chicago baristas who receive favorable performance reviews will make \$8.58.

In New York City, where Starbucks organizing began, baristas will make \$9.63 an hour after six months on the job and a favorable performance review. Senior baristas will receive only a ten-cent raise to discourage long-term employment. Similar raises are being implemented across the country.

Meanwhile, the National Labor Relations Board continues its investigation into the firings of four New York IWW baristas for union activity on pretexts ranging from insubordination to undermining employee morale. A resolution of these unfair labor practice charges is not expected before next year.

Messages of solidarity have come from far and wide. The C.E.K. union in Guinea, Africa, wrote Starbucks Sept. 23 declaring its support for the Starbucks workers. In France, members of the National Confederation of Workers (CNT) entered Starbucks outlets in Paris, distributing leaflets to customers and workers about the company's repeated violations of workers' rights. The Comité de Solidarité de Madagascar has also condemned Starbucks' union busting, joining earlier solidarity statements received from Austria, Canada, England, Germany, Korea, New Zealand, and across the United States.

In Massachusetts, the Cambridge City Council has passed a resolution supporting the right of Starbucks workers to organize with the IWW and condemning Starbucks'



Picket lines went up at Paris Starbucks anti-union campaign. UAW Local 2320 in Brooklyn has told Starbucks that its members will not drink their coffee until the fired unionists are reinstated. Several union locals, student groups and the National Lawyers Guild have declared they are boycotting Starbucks in solidarity with the fired workers.

In England, Manchester Wobblies picketed a Starbucks in Albert Square Sept. 23, reducing the clientele to a gaggle of police officers monitoring the picket line and drinking what are believed to be free drinks provided by management. The British Isles Regional Organising Committee has launched an outreach campaign to coffeeshop workers at [www.baristasunited.org.uk](http://www.baristasunited.org.uk).

The coffee giant is a 100 percent part-time employer, and workers rarely know what their schedule or hours will be week to week. While the wage increase is a step in the right direction, low pay and a lack of secure hours still combine to mean poverty. And the majority of Starbucks workers remain without health insurance from the company.

“We fought hard and this is a great union victory, but there's still a ways to go,” said Isis Saenz, an IWW member and Starbucks barista in New York City. “Starbucks Chairman Howard Schultz needs to accept that baristas deserve a living wage and have a right to join a union free of coercion.”

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## Garment strike closes Bangladeshi sweatshops

Workers began a 24-hour general strike October 15 as riot police fanned through factory districts, ostensibly to prevent attacks upon factories. “None would be allowed to create anarchy in the garment sector,” said Home Minister Lutfuzzaman Babar.

Police have arrested more than 100 workers for allegedly participating in earlier protests in which thousands of workers fought pitched battles with police and factory security guards Oct. 10. Employers have filed charges against some 10,000 workers, on charges ranging from blocking roads to assault.

The protests broke out as the government was announcing a “compromise” minimum wage of Tk 1662.50 (up only pennies from the original proposal of about US\$23 a month), far below the Tk 3,000 minimum workers have been demanding as the bare minimum to sustain life.

Since the garment workers' revolt in May and June, negotiations on promised improvements in conditions and setting of a livable minimum wage have broken down as employers refused any substantive concessions, claiming this would render Bangladeshi garments uncompetitive on the world market.

Workers poured out of factories in the thousands Oct. 10 at 9 a.m. (several hours into the work day), and marched to other factories still working and closed them down.

Smaller groups spread through the capital, blocking roads and attacking factories. Eventually a massive force of Rapid Action Battalion paramilitaries and police reinforcements managed to regain control.

The garment bosses' federation, BGMEA, demanded that the government arrest several union leaders they named as supposed instigators of the unrest. “If steps are not taken, we may close down our factories together for an indefinite period.”

Meanwhile, the National Garment Workers Federation has once again launched a national campaign demanding payment of the EID festival bonus equal to one month's wages. Such a bonus is customary in Bangladesh, but garment workers had been excluded until the NGWF launched its first campaign three years ago which won at least partial bonuses for half of the country's garment workers.

Workers rely on the bonus in order to return to their home villages during the holidays and spend time with their families. The bonus is particularly urgent this year, as the cost of living has risen sharply, while wages have remained stagnant.

The NGWF has registered branches in 28 factories, and committees in hundreds more. It claims 21,655 dues-paying members, and is one of six unions making up the Bangladesh Garments Workers Unity Council.

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## Bosses’ strikes

When an industrial plant closes, often to relocate in another country, it is a strike by management. The great Big Bill Haywood made this point. But it is different from a labor strike, because a labor strike is usually settled. As far as I know, there is no law for stopping or postponing management strikes. Often, they put a whole town out of work.

Meanwhile, we are in a war for democracy, or so we are told. The first world war (1914-1918) was the “war to end wars” and to “make the world safe for democracy.”

Rabbi Avraham Karelitz wrote, toward the beginning of the war, of the great suffering it caused: “This land is engulfed by a way... Provinces and cities have been ravaged and destroyed; tens of thousands of people have been exiled with no support of any kind.”

Thousands of Wobblies were jailed for opposing the slaughter. And still it goes on.

Raymond Solomon  
editor, *Free Voices*, New York

## Rumors of war and oil

We have heard a great deal of late about the possibility of a war between the United States and Iran – a war in which working people on both sides would be killing each other. The capitalist press tells us that Iran’s “nuclear ambitions” are driving up world oil prices, and prices are indeed going up. But is there another reason?

A spokesperson for the Oppenheimer brokerage firm admitted on the PBS Nightly Business Report August 30 that much of the price increase is attributable to violence in the West African oil exporting nation of Nigeria, where residents are fighting the devastation of their lands by the oil companies.



It seems that wealthy speculators are driving up prices by buying crude oil “futures” on news of violence there, thus raising the price of gasoline and heating oil here in North America by buying and selling barrels of oil that have not yet been produced, and perhaps never will be.

Workers should not trust the capitalist press as it tries to whip up war fever.

Robert G. Rice II  
St. Louis

## Farewell, Fellow Worker — Joe Glazer —

Labor singer Joe Glazer died Sept. 19 at age 88, after more than 60 years of singing and writing songs of solidarity, justice, unions and workers. Among his 30 albums was a collection of IWW songs, reissued for the centenary and available from the IWW Literature Department (\$15).

Born in New York City in 1918, Glazer’s father was a member of the Ladies’ Garment Workers Union. After Glazer took a job with the Textile Workers Union in 1944, he and his guitar were dispatched to picket lines in the south where he began writing labor songs, sometimes based on gospel hymns. Among his best-known were “Automation,” “The Mill Was Made of Marble,” and “Too Old to Work.”

In his memoir, *Labour’s Troubadour*, Glazer described leading strikers around a textile mill singing those songs. They were “basically one-line verses that could be quickly changed” to suit any situation, he said.

## Radical attorney Lynne Stewart sentenced

Attorney Lynne Stewart was sentenced to 28 months in prison Oct. 16, far less than prosecutors had been seeking. The 67-year-old grandmother, who is suffering from breast cancer and other ailments, has also been barred from practicing law.

Stewart was convicted of defrauding the government, conspiracy and providing support for terrorism; charges stemming from her representation of Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, an Egyptian Islamic scholar convicted in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. She was charged with sharing her client’s views with the press, violating a prison rule prohibiting him from communicating with anyone except his wife and attorney, and discussing matters with him that went beyond what the government permitted. An interpreter, Mohammed Yousry, was also convicted for doing nothing more than translating conversations between Stewart and her client; paralegal Ahmed Abdel Sattar was convicted of disseminating Rahman’s views to others.

Over the course of the prosecution it became clear that the government had eavesdropped on Stewart’s conversations with her client, and may have wiretapped her phones.

## San Francisco journalist jailed for refusing to aid frame-up

Indymedia videographer Josh Wolf is entering his third month in federal prison for refusing to surrender video he shot of a July 2005 San Francisco protest to a grand jury, and if authorities hold him to July 2007, as they have threatened, would become the longest-jailed journalist in U.S. history. California law protects journalists’ right to protect confidential sources and unpublished materials, but federal prosecutors took control of the investigation under the pretext that a police car that a demonstrator might have attempted to light on fire (a piece of smoldering Styrofoam was on the ground nearby) was purchased in (small) part with federal dollars. A policeman was also reportedly injured by demonstrators.

Wolf’s video does not capture those scenes, but prosecutors are seeking footage of his interviews with 10 protesters. Wolf posted a highly critical video report on the protest against the G9 economic summit on the Internet ([www.joshwolf.net](http://www.joshwolf.net)) and sold some footage to a local television station. When police went to his home, asked him questions about local anarchists, and demanded his footage he refused to surrender it.

Wolf spent much of August behind bars at the order of a U.S. District Judge, was freed during his initial appeal, and returned to prison Sept. 22 when the appeals court ruled against him. His is one of several cases in which federal prosecutors are trying to imprison journalists for refusing to reveal confidential sources. “This is yet another sign that the government doesn’t understand what journalists do,” Gregg Leslie, legal defense director of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, told the *San Francisco Chronicle*. He added that Wolf risks being “seen as an agent of the police and the state,” which would destroy his credibility.



# IWW directory

### Australia

**IWW Regional Organising Committee**  
M. Payne, Secretary, PO Box 1866, Albany W.A.  
[roc@iww.org.au](mailto:roc@iww.org.au), [www.iww.org.au](http://www.iww.org.au)  
**Sydney:** PO Box 241, Surry Hills. [sydney@iww.org.au](mailto:sydney@iww.org.au)

**Melbourne:** PO Box 145, Moreland 3058.  
[melb@iww.org.au](mailto:melb@iww.org.au)

### British Isles

**IWW Regional Organising Committee:**  
PO Box 1158, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE99 4XL  
UK, [rocsec@iww.org.uk](mailto:rocsec@iww.org.uk), [www.iww.org.uk](http://www.iww.org.uk)

**IWW London:** c/o Freedom Press, 84b  
Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.  
[londoniww@iww.org](mailto:londoniww@iww.org)

**Leicestershire:** PO Box 7903, LE3 0WT. [klas-batalo@aol.com](mailto:klas-batalo@aol.com) [www.leicestershire-iww.org.uk](http://www.leicestershire-iww.org.uk)

**Manchester:** [www.iww-manchester.org.uk](http://www.iww-manchester.org.uk)

### Scotland

**Clydeside GMB:** [iwwclydeside.mahost.org](http://iwwclydeside.mahost.org).  
**Edinburgh IWW:** c/o 17 W. Montgomery  
Place, EH7 SHA.

### Canada

#### Alberta

**Edmonton GMB:** PO Box 75175, T6E 6K1.  
[edmonton@lists.iww.org](mailto:edmonton@lists.iww.org), <http://edmonton.iww.ca>.

#### British Columbia

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

#### Manitoba

**Winnipeg GMB:** IWW, c/o WORC, PO Box 1,  
R3C 2G1. [winnipegiww@hotmail.com](mailto:winnipegiww@hotmail.com). Garth  
Hardy, del., [garth.hardy@union.org.za](mailto:garth.hardy@union.org.za).

#### Ontario

**Ottawa-Outaouais GMB:** PO Box 52003,  
298 Dalhousie St. K1N 1S0, (613) 241-0382.  
[ott-out@iww.org](mailto:ott-out@iww.org) French-language del:  
[Mathieu Brûle parti\\_hardcore@yahoo.com](mailto:Mathieu Brûle parti_hardcore@yahoo.com).

**Peterborough:** c/o PCAP, 393 Water St. #17,  
K9H 3L7, 705-749-9694, [ptboiww@riseup.net](mailto:ptboiww@riseup.net)

**Toronto GMB:** c/o Libra Knowledge & Infor-  
mation Svcs Co-op, PO Box 353 Stn. A, M5W  
1C2. 416-925-7250. [torontogmb@iww.org](mailto:torontogmb@iww.org)

#### Finland

**Helsinki:** Reko Ravela, Otto Brandtintie 11 B  
25, 00650. [iwwsuomi@helsinki.fi](mailto:iwwsuomi@helsinki.fi)

#### Germany

**IWW Kontaks:** Lutz Getzschmann, IWW c/o  
RMB-Infoladen, Hamburger Allee 35, 60486  
Frankfurt am Main. [iww-germany@gmx.net](mailto:iww-germany@gmx.net).  
**Frankfurt:** [iww-frankfurt@gmx.de](mailto:iww-frankfurt@gmx.de).  
**Koeln:** [iwwcologne@yahoo.de](mailto:iwwcologne@yahoo.de).

### United States

#### Arizona

**Phoenix GMB:** 1205 E. Hubbell St., 85006-  
1758. 602-254-4057. Aaron Rothenburger, del.,  
480-303-9580.

#### Arkansas

**Fayetteville:** PO Box 283, 72702. 479-200-  
1859, [nwar\\_iww@hotmail.com](mailto:nwar_iww@hotmail.com).

#### California

**Los Angeles GMB:** PO Box 65822, 90065.

**North Coast GMB:** PO Box 844, Eureka  
95502-0844. 707-725-8090. BST Angie Hart:  
[angstink@gmail.com](mailto:angstink@gmail.com)

**San Francisco Bay Area GMB:** (Curbside and  
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94712. 510-845-0540. Meetings first Thursdays  
at 7 p.m. (2022 Blake St., Berkeley)

**San Jose:** Adam Welch, del. 408-795-9672.  
[email:adam\\_freedom@yahoo.com](mailto:email:adam_freedom@yahoo.com)

**Santa Barbara GMB:** PO Box 23008, 93121.  
805-689-3086, [sbgmb@iww.org](mailto:sbgmb@iww.org)

#### Colorado

**Denver GMB:** c/o P&L Printing Job Shop: 2298  
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**Four Corners (AZ, CO, NM, UT):** delegate:  
970-903-8721. [4corners@iww.org](mailto:4corners@iww.org)

#### Florida

**Gainesville GMB:** 1021 W. University, 32601.  
352-246-2240, [gainesvilleiww@riseup.net](mailto:gainesvilleiww@riseup.net)

**Pensacola GMB:** 610 E Wright St., 32501.  
850-429-0336. [www.angelfire.com/fl5/iww](http://www.angelfire.com/fl5/iww)  
[iwwpensacola@yahoo.com](mailto:iwwpensacola@yahoo.com)

**Hobe Sound:** Peter Shultz, 8274 SE Pine Circle,  
33455-6608, 772-545-9591, [okiedogg2002@yahoo.com](mailto:okiedogg2002@yahoo.com)

#### Georgia

**Atlanta:** Keith Mercer, del., 404-992-7240,  
[iwwatlanta@gmail.com](mailto:iwwatlanta@gmail.com)

#### Hawai'i

**Honolulu:** Tony Donnes, del., 808-547-2042.  
[donnes@hawaii.edu](mailto:donnes@hawaii.edu)

#### Illinois

**Chicago GMB & General Defense Committee**  
**Local 3:** PO Box 18387, 3750 N. Kedzie, 60618.  
phone: 312-638-9155.

**Carbondale:** Jason Leonard, Southern Illinois  
delegate. [chachioldiablo@hotmail.com](mailto:chachioldiablo@hotmail.com).

**Champaign:** David Johnson, 217-356-8247.

**Waukegan IWW:** PO Box 274, 60079. [waukeg-aniww@iww.org](mailto:waukeg-aniww@iww.org)

#### Iowa

**Cedar Rapids:** Drew Robertson, del., 206-290-  
9072.

**Iowa City:** Seamus Mulryan, del., 319-248-  
3589. [iowacityiww@riseup.net](mailto:iowacityiww@riseup.net)

### Maine

**Norumbega:** Barry Rodrigue, del., PO Box 57,  
Bath 04530.

### Maryland

**Baltimore IWW:** c/o Red Emma’s, 800 St.  
Paul St., 21202, 410-230-0450, [iww@redem-mas.org](mailto:iww@redem-mas.org).

### Massachusetts

**Boston Area GMB:** PO Box 391724, Cam-  
bridge 02139. 617-469-5162.

**Western Mass. Public Service IU 650 Branch:**  
IWW, PO Box 1581, Northampton 01061.

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

### Michigan

**Detroit GMB:** PO Box 08161, 48208. [detroit@iww.org](mailto:detroit@iww.org)

**Grand Rapids GMB:** PO Box 6629, 49516.  
Chuck Neller, Secretary.; Cole Dorsey (del.)  
616-881-5263. [griwww@iww.org](mailto:griwww@iww.org)

**Central Michigan:** David Finet, 5007 W.  
Columbia Rd., Mason 48854. 517-676-9446,  
[happyhippie66@hotmail.com](mailto:happyhippie66@hotmail.com)

### Minnesota

**Duluth:** Laverne Capan, 1522 N 8th Ave E,  
55805-1115. 218-724-2647.

**Twin Cities GMB:** PO Box 14111, Minneapolis  
55414. 612-339-4418. [jpila@iww.org](mailto:jpila@iww.org)

### Missouri

**Kansas City GMB:** c/o 5506 Holmes St., 64110.  
816-523-3995.

### Montana

**Construction Workers IU 330:** Dennis Georg,  
del. 406-490-3869, [trampiu330@aol.com](mailto:trampiu330@aol.com)

### New Jersey

**Central New Jersey GMB:** PO Box: 10021,  
New Brunswick 08904. 732-979-9973  
[xaninjurytoalk@yahoo.com](mailto:xaninjurytoalk@yahoo.com)

**Northern New Jersey GMB:** 60 Martha Ave.  
Apt. 3, Elmwood Park 07407. 201-873-6215.  
[northernnj@iww.org](mailto:northernnj@iww.org)

### New Mexico

**Albuquerque:** 202 Harvard SE, 87106-5505.  
505-331-6132, [abq@iww.org](mailto:abq@iww.org).

### New York

**NYC GMB:** PO Box 7430, JAF Station, New  
York City 10116, [iww-nyc@bari.iww.org](mailto:iww-nyc@bari.iww.org).  
Jim Crutchfield, I.U. 650, [classify@iww.org](mailto:classify@iww.org).

**Upstate NY GMB:** PO Box 235, Albany 12207,  
518-833-6853 or 861-5627. [www.upstate-ny-iww.org](http://www.upstate-ny-iww.org).  
secretary@upstate-ny-iww.org, Ro-  
chelle Semel, del, PO Box 172, Fly Creek 13337,  
607-293-6489, [rochelle7@usadatanet.net](mailto:rochelle7@usadatanet.net).

### Ohio

**Ohio Valley GMB:** PO Box 42233, Cincinnati  
45242. **IU 660:** PO Box 317741, Cincinnati

45231, [iu660cincy@hotmail.com](mailto:iu660cincy@hotmail.com).

### Oklahoma

**Tulsa:** Karl Howeth, 4510 W. Archer, 74127.  
918-282-7348. [vaneigem25@hotmail.com](mailto:vaneigem25@hotmail.com)

### Oregon

**Portland Industrial District Council:** 311 N.  
Ivy St., 97227, 503-231-5488. [pdxiwwhall@riseup.net](mailto:pdxiwwhall@riseup.net)

### Pennsylvania

**Lancaster GMB:** PO Box 796, 17608.

[membership@LancasterIWW.org](mailto:membership@LancasterIWW.org), <http://LancasterIWW.org>

**Philadelphia GMB:** PO Box 42777, 19101.  
215-222-1905. [phillyiww@iww.org](mailto:phillyiww@iww.org)  
Union Hall: 4530 Baltimore Ave., 19143.

**South Street Workers Union /Workers Rights**  
Hotline 215-990-8250. [southstreet@iww.org](mailto:southstreet@iww.org)

**Paper Crane Press IU 450 Job Shop:** paper-  
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**Pittsburgh GMB / Education Workers Or-  
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### Texas

**Austin GMB:** PO Box 650011, 78765.  
512-320-8427, [waterloowob@monkeywrenchbooks.org](mailto:waterloowob@monkeywrenchbooks.org)

### Utah

**Salt Lake City GMB:** PO Box 520835, 84152-  
0835. [slcgmb@iww.org](mailto:slcgmb@iww.org).

### Washington

**Bellingham:** P.O. Box 1793, 98227. Belling-  
hamIWW@gmail.com 360-920-6240.

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

**Olympia GMB:** PO Box 2775, 98507.  
360-956-9256. [olywobs@riseup.net](mailto:olywobs@riseup.net)

**Seattle GMB:** 1122 E. Pike #1142, 98122-3934.  
877-815-5684, [www.seattleiww.org](http://www.seattleiww.org), [seattle@iww.org](mailto:seattle@iww.org). John Persak, General Distribution  
IU660: [bp172@scn.org](mailto:bp172@scn.org).

**Spokane:** Tim Hill, 509-218-9622.

### Wisconsin

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[www.madisoniww.info](http://www.madisoniww.info). **Lakeside Press IU 450**

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P.O. Box 811, 53701. 608-262-9036.

**Railroad Workers IU 520:** Ron Kaminkow,  
PO Box 3010, Madison 53704, 608-358-5771.  
[eugene\\_v\\_debs\\_aru@yahoo.com](mailto:eugene_v_debs_aru@yahoo.com).

**Milwaukee GMB:** PO Box 070632, 53207.  
414-481-3557.

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Cincinnati, OH 45223  
USA, 513-591-1905  
email: [ghq@iww.org](mailto:ghq@iww.org)  
<http://www.iww.org>

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**Editor:** Jon Bekken  
4530 Baltimore Avenue  
Philadelphia PA 19143  
email: [iw@iww.org](mailto:iw@iww.org)

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## Chicago couriers fight NICA contractor scam

The Chicago Couriers Union continues its fight to remove the National Independent Contractors Association (a pay-to-work scam) from our industry. After Intercept Courier seemed to renege on removing NICA, we held an informational picket outside the company's office October 10. We spoke to several couriers coming in to get their paychecks, who were glad to learn of our efforts.

One worker who had recently quit found that his last paycheck was missing; he was told he'd have to take it up with the boss, who had left for the day. Several calls yielded no results, but we soon learned that the boss was on his way back from the Northwest suburbs because of our picket.

When the boss arrived an argument ensued. Two delegates accompanied the courier into the office, but were told the boss was writing a check and were kicked out.

The end result was that the courier was given a check for \$24 for two weeks of work. He did owe money to Intercept for bike parts, but he says he was overcharged and that the company owes him much more money. The union is helping pursue the matter and also helped him out financially, as his 3-year-old daughter's birthday was last weekend, and he would have been unable to even pay bills let alone the planned birthday party.

By the time the sun went down we had disseminated information about NICA, Intercept and the CCU to a majority of Intercept's couriers, demonstrated to the company that we were escalating the fight to boot NICA from their business, and assisted an individual courier with a serious grievance. We continue the fight.

## East End workers still union

Workers at Pittsburgh's East End Food Co-op continue fighting on the job for better conditions, despite losing a representation election by one vote. However, that election was set aside because of management's unlawful conduct. Since the election loss, workers have won small increases in store credit, and successfully insisted on having union witnesses present during disciplinary proceedings.

## German Language Area ROC

Wobblies in Germany, Austria and Luxembourg have begun the process of applying for the establishment of the German Language Area Regional Organizing Committee of the IWW. They have begun the work of translating union literature into German, established a web site ([www.wobblies.org](http://www.wobblies.org)), and are planning a German-language organizing bulletin. They held a regional meeting in September, and will meet again Dec. 16 to approve bylaws.

## Organizing in England

The British Isles ROC is chartering three new branches, in London, Manchester and Leicester, is working to form a number of industrial union branches, and has launched a coffee shop workers organising campaign.

## Australian officers

The AusROC has elected FW Mike Payne to serve as secretary, Meela Davis as international secretary, and Evan Young as *Direct Action* editor.

## Work Peoples College

The Twin Cities Branch is pleased to announce the opening session of the Work Peoples College, which continues the legacy of working-class education for emancipation carried out by the Duluth, Minn., IWW in the first half of the 20th Century.

The first class offering is "Lessons of the Spanish Revolution" (Meeting Saturday afternoons, Oct. 14 - Nov. 18), with films, discussions and readings. Classes will initially meet at the Minneapolis Central Library. To register or for more information email [twincities@iww.org](mailto:twincities@iww.org) or phone (612) 339-4418.

## Solidarity with Starbucks workers...

Senior workers were given a disproportionately low wage increase, reflecting a trend of large retailers to eliminate costlier long-term workers. The performance review basis for the six-month raise is problematic as well. Starbucks often issues negative performance reviews to punish baristas who challenge unjust company policies.

Starbucks has instructed store-level management to hold one-on-one meetings with employees to push its claim that the pay hike is the result of a company survey, not union pressure. Starbucks has similarly characterized past gains won by the union as "random acts of kindness."

The IWW Starbucks Workers Union now has an organized presence at seven Starbucks locations in New York City and Chicago fighting for systemic change at the company and remedying individual grievances. In New York, the union has raised the wage of many workers almost 25 percent in less than two and a half years of organizing. IWW baristas have also fought successfully for improved scheduling and store safety.

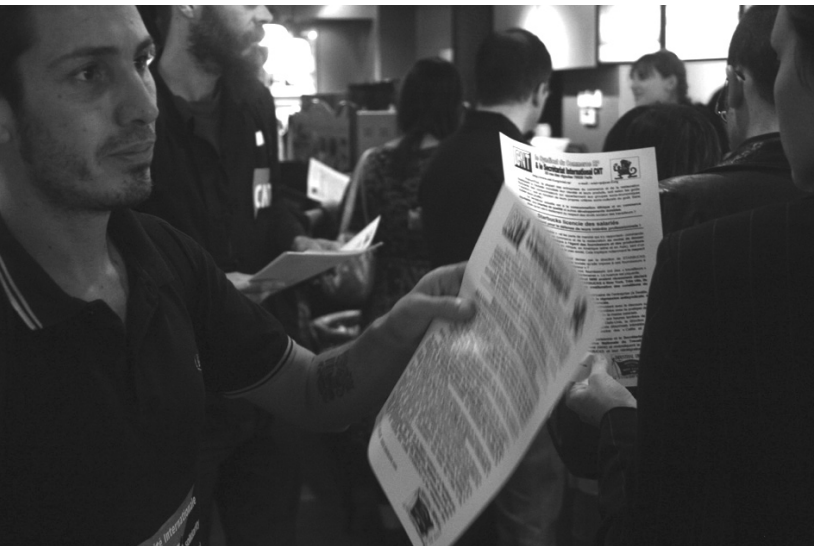
## Portland Industrial District Council anniversary bash

Portland Wobs will be celebrating the anniversary of the IDC's founding November 18 and 19 with a gathering at their new hall. West Coast Wobs (and Wobs from further afield who can make it) are invited to come to Portland for discussions, a book fair, and Joe Hill night.

Saturday will see two discussions – one on long-term goals for the union, the second on prospects for interbranch organizing. If numbers permit, there would also be industrial union break-out sessions. A members-only party is planned for the evening.

Sunday's meeting would seek to synthesize the discussions, followed by an afternoon book fair. The annual Joe Hill night would close the proceedings with traditional and folk music.

Pre-registration is essential in order to arrange food, housing and other logistics. Please contact [logos@riseup.net](mailto:logos@riseup.net) as soon as possible with contact and other information, and with any proposals (at least two weeks in advance) that you or your branch would like to submit for consideration.



CNT members distribute leaflets about Starbucks' union-busting inside one of its Paris outlets. Updated information on the campaign and downloadable leaflets and other resources are available at [www.starbucksunion.org](http://www.starbucksunion.org).

## Border fence bill passes

The U.S. House and Senate approved legislation to build 700 miles of double-layered fencing on the U.S.-Mexico border, costing an estimated \$6 billion, as they prepared for midterm elections. The government would first erect a network of surveillance cameras along the Arizona border, followed by the massive fence.

The legislation also calls for unmanned aerial vehicles, ground-based sensors, satellites, radar and cameras to prevent "all" unlawful entries and achieve "operational control" of the border.

Another 1,300 miles of border would remain unfenced, including the most dangerous terrain along the border – inevitably increasing the number of immigrants who will die attempting the crossing.

The fence may prove difficult to build, as the designated route plunges down steep ravines, climbs steep mountain peaks, crosses rivers and streams, and cuts through the lands of the native Tohono O'odham Nation, which strongly opposes it.

The bill passed with the votes of nearly all Republicans and a sizable block of Democrats, despite its self-evident absurdity.

## Workers for McD's supplier live in "squalid housing"

According to an expose published in North Carolina's *News and Observer*, entitled "Ag-Mart workers land in poor housing," state labor officials found 30 to 40 workers who pick grape tomatoes for Florida-based tomato giant Ag-Mart crowded into a former nightclub building with "no hot water, no shower, and not enough beds."

The workers were placed in the housing by contractors "who not only hire and supervise Ag-Mart workers but also arrange housing." Ag-Mart is a key supplier of grape tomatoes to McDonald's. The story says "many of Ag-Mart's workers live crowded in fly- and roach-infested dwellings."

You can find the article at the Coalition of Immokalee Workers web site, at <http://www.ciw-online.org>. From Oct. 15-23, the CIW caravanned from Immokalee, FL – home of one of the largest farm worker communities in the country – to Chicago, home of the world's largest restaurant chain, McDonald's.

The Coalition is pressing McDonald's to accept responsibility for the conditions under which its tomatoes are harvested, and negotiate with workers to improve them.

## 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 23085, Cincinnati OH 45223, USA.

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

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



Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Membership includes a subscription to the Industrial Worker.*



## NLRB ruling will strip thousands of union rights

The National Labor Relations Board has voted along party lines to expand the definition of workers it considers supervisors, and so not covered by U.S. labor law.

While less sweeping than many unions had feared, the decision will nonetheless encourage employers to claim that lead workers and other employees with limited coordinating duties are supervisory, slowing the process of setting a union election and allowing union-busting consultants several more months to intimidate workers. And in the case-by-case analysis that the ruling mandates, hundreds of thousands of workers could lose their right to union representation and concerted activities.

The decision turns on how to interpret the Taft-Hartley Act; among its many anti-union provisions was one stripping supervisors of the right to union representation. At the time, the demarcation between supervisory and line workers was fairly clear in most workplaces, but in recent years growing numbers of workers find themselves helping to set schedules or maintain quality standards in addition to their regular work duties. The NLRB had not considered such workers supervisors unless they exercised independent authority in directing workers for a significant portion of their work day.

Now “charge nurses” who assign other nurses to patients at Oakwood Heritage Hospital in Michigan have been ruled to be supervisors, even though they spend only about 10 percent of their time in such activities and then join their coworkers in taking care of patients. Charge nurses who rotate through the position on a temporary basis were held not to be supervisors. Charge nurses at a second hospital were held not to be supervisors because they lacked the authority to require other nurses to work past the end of their shift, call off-duty workers in, or discipline other nurses. In a third case,

## Detroit news strike legal battles end

Three workers (one of whom is now dead) fired during the Detroit newspaper strike for picketing a distribution facility during the 1995-1997 strike will get their jobs back, after the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the publishers’ appeal.

The workers are also entitled to accumulated back pay and benefits, less any amounts they earned in other jobs during the ten years that their case dragged through first the National Labor relations Board and then the courts. The dead fellow worker will presumably have his pay docked for time spent in the ground.

The three were among some 200 workers fired during the 19-month strike, which ended in February 1997 when the unions surrendered with an unconditional offer to return to work. The National Labor Relations Board ruled that the workers did nothing wrong and ordered the Detroit Newspaper Agency to reinstate them with back pay.

Several workers were reinstated, while others settled their cases. But publishers refused to reinstate these three, despite a Court of Appeals ruling upholding the NLRB.

Meanwhile, the Toledo (Ohio) *Blade* has locked out several smaller unions in an attempt to pressure its two strongest unions to agree to wage cuts, higher co-pays for health insurance, and work rule changes.

Nine unions represent some 500 workers at the newspaper. The electrical workers settled for deep concessions in July. In August the *Blade* locked out its engravers, paper handlers (both part of GCIU), typographers and mailers (both CWA). The GCIU-affiliated pressmen and Newspaper Guild/CWA editorial and business office staff continue to work during the lock-out, and have assured the publisher that they “have no intention of striking, boycotting, or engaging in any other



the NLRB said that “lead men” at a metals company “directed” other employees, but were not supervisors because they could not exercise independent judgment. Instead, their decisions were governed by pre-established guidelines and production schedules.

The decisions dramatically expand employers’ ability to transform workers who exercise initiative on the job into “supervisors,” and could hit professional workers particularly hard. But as employers learn to manipulate the Board’s definition, many lead workers and working foremen might also lose their rights under U.S. labor law.

“This could be the worst thing to happen to workers in a long, long time,” says Stewart Acuff, organizing director of the AFL-CIO. AFL-CIO president John Sweeney said the NLRB should be renamed the “National Labor Attack Board.”

In their dissents, two NLRB members said millions of professionals who have some supervisory duties could be hurt by the ruling. The decision “threatens to create a new class of workers under federal labor law: workers who have neither the genuine prerogatives of management, nor the statutory rights of

form of concerted activity.”

The unions have offered to take a 7 percent pay cut, increase their share of health care costs, give up two paid holidays and accept a sweeping management rights clause, but the *Blade* insists on 14 percent pay cuts, unlimited subcontracting, and draconian health care cuts (workers already pay nearly two-thirds of the cost of health coverage).

The Toledo Council of Newspaper Unions responded to the lock-outs with an advertising and subscriber boycott, and has offered to buy the paper from publisher Block Communications.

### No right to speak

Reuters has fired one of its two editors in charge of U.S. markets coverage, Joe Maguire, after reading the proofs of his new book, *Brainless: The Lies and Lunacy of Ann Coulter*. Maguire had received permission to write the book from his bosses, who apparently in the end did not like what he had to say.

U.S. workers generally have no free speech rights at work, and several have been fired in recent years for posting lawn signs at their homes for mainstream politicians, comments posted to blogs, criticizing bosses in private email messages, and speaking out against U.S. foreign policy. However, workers with union representation are usually protected against this sort of arbitrary dismissal.

### Teachers defy injunction

Detroit public school teachers struck for 16 days, defying a judge’s back-to-work order. When teachers refused to accept the deep pay cuts demanded by the school board (which gave hefty pay hikes to administrators) the school board came up with a tiny pay hike, coupled with increased health care costs and other concessions on benefits.

ordinary employees,” they wrote.

The Oakwood case joins a growing list of NLRB decisions which have slashed workers already very limited protections. Last year, the NLRB overturned a union victory at the *Chinese Daily News* after managers fired a worker for union organizing and successfully defended their action to the NLRB by claiming the worker had supervisory duties. They then used that decision to claim that managers had coerced workers into joining the union. Of such Alice-in-Wonderland fantasies are dangerous precedents built.

### Supreme Court will consider union agency fee challenge

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to decide whether states may bar a labor union from using non-union workers’ representation fees for political activities if those workers have not explicitly consented. The issue arises in two cases – Davenport v. Washington Education Association and Washington v. Washington Education Association.

A Washington state law prohibited unions from using agency shop fees paid by non-members to influence elections “unless affirmatively authorized by the individual,” or opt-in. The Washington State Supreme Court ruled the law unconstitutional as a violation of the WEA’s First Amendment rights. Fourteen states have similar laws.

The Washington Educational Association is the exclusive bargaining agent for approximately 70,000 state educational employees. Membership is voluntary, but nonmembers must contribute for the costs related to collective bargaining. Twice each year, WEA notifies employees of their right to object to paying the portion of fees used for political and other exempt expenditures.

## Northwest Airlines mechanics surrender

Fourteen months after 4,400 mechanics and plane cleaners went on strike against Northwest Airlines, the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association has recommended a tentative agreement to its members that would see most workers surrender their jobs in exchange for modest cash payments.

Some mechanics could return to work alongside scabs hired to break the strike and some 880 mechanics who crossed union picket lines. No cleaners would get their jobs back, as Northwest has subcontracted their work.

The strike was undercut by union scabbing, as every other union representing Northwest workers crossed picket lines and members of some unions did AMFA work despite labor laws that allow airline and rail workers to honor each other’s picket lines.

Northwest offered the deal as its flight attendants asked a federal mediator to declare a 30-day cooling-off period as required under the Railway Labor Act before they could strike against deep concessions imposed by a bankruptcy judge. The mediator refused, instead calling for more talks. The flight attendants voted to launch intermittent strike action against Northwest, only to have a federal

### Nurses protest NLRB rulings

Nurses formed pickets outside hospitals and rallied to protest the Sept. 29 NLRB decision excluding RNs who make clinical decisions at Oakwood Heritage Hospital in Taylor, Mich., from union protections by reinterpreting the criteria utilized to distinguish supervisors, foremen and lead workers from other employees. On Oct. 5, outside the entrance of Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles, hundreds of union nurses and supporters marched, chanting “Hey, hey, ho, ho, Kentucky River has got to go!” using the name of the 2001 Supreme Court decision that laid the groundwork for redefining what constitutes a supervisor under the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947. Some 400 people marched through downtown Los Angeles to the NLRB offices, where they railed against the Republican-controlled NLRB.

Rallies and pickets were also held by the 11 unions comprising the AFL-CIO’s RNs Working Together in Chicago, St. Louis, Louisville and Bangor, Maine. At Stroger Hospital in Chicago, nurses from the National Nurses Organizing Committee representing 1,800 Cook County nurses picketed on Oct. 6.

In Boston, nurses confronted Robert Battista, chairman of the NLRB, who attended the Mass. Nurses Association Conference. Nurses at the conference said the ruling not only endangers nurses’ workplace rights, but also will delay union votes as the board decides case-by-case who should be classified as a supervisor and excluded from bargaining units. Members of the Boston IWW, Jobs with Justice affiliates and the Green-Rainbow party picketed the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce Oct. 7 to protest the rulings.

California Nurses Association organizers warn of strikes should hospital management attempt to utilize the rulings. The CNA has collected thousands of strike pledges in the San Francisco Bay area and elsewhere.

Members of other unions have said they may refuse charge nurse duties if managers try to implement the ruling, invoking their contractual right to refuse managerial work.

### No taxes for union-busting

In a 12-3 ruling, the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has reinstated a law that prohibits California employers from spending money they get from the state on anti-union activities. Employers claim the law infringes upon their free speech rights. The National Labor Relations Board argued the law should be overturned, as did the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other business groups.

“Employers remain free to convey their views regarding unionization, ... provided only that they do not use state grant and program funds to do so,” Judge Raymond Fisher said in the majority opinion.

injunction of dubious legality imposed.

Results of AMFA members’ ratification vote will be announced in mid-November.

The proposed agreement would grant Northwest the unlimited subcontracting and 26 percent wage cuts it demanded. “We’re just hoping some of our members, especially those that are close to retirement, would have the opportunity to go back,” said AMFA contract coordinator Jeff Mathews.

Workers who resigned could collect unemployment benefits. Cleaners could receive as much as \$6,008; mechanics as much as \$10,612, for surrendering their jobs, depending on seniority and pay grade. Mechanics who wanted to return would receive a one-time payment of as much as \$5,306 and be placed on furlough; they could apply for jobs over the next two years, as positions opened. Northwest now hires far fewer mechanics than it did before the strike, relying on subcontractors for the bulk of its maintenance work.

Northwest commuter line Mesaba Airlines, meanwhile, is back in court seeking permission to overturn its contracts with pilots, mechanics and flight attendants and impose deep concessions.



# William E. Trautmann, New Zealand Wobbly

BY MARK DERBY & JAY MILLER

"I was born in a country considered to be free – in New Zealand," said William Trautmann, when he accepted the position of general secretary at the IWW's founding convention in Chicago in the summer of 1905. Although he left New Zealand at an early age and never returned, Trautmann seems never to have forgotten his connection with his country of birth. He would no doubt have been proud to learn that his many publications on industrial unionism strategies, and his achievements as a Wobbly organiser in the United States, became well-known and influential in New Zealand as well as in many other countries, and that a book published in New Zealand this year finally recognises his contribution to the rise of the Wobblies in his homeland.

William Ernest Trautmann was born on 1 July 1869 in Grahamstown, a gold rush settlement on the Coromandel Peninsula, in New Zealand's North Island. The town was then just a year old but already had a population of 18,000, mostly miners who worked by candlelight to hack gold-bearing rock from poorly ventilated shafts in mines which bore their owners' optimistic names – Queen of Beauty, Lucky Hit, Bright Smile. To prevent the theft of ore, those owners forced each miner to strip naked at the start and end of each 10-hour shift, and cross a passageway separating their street clothes from those they wore in the mine.

One of the first miners to arrive in Grahamstown in 1868 was the German-born Edmund Trautmann, who had earlier been a 'miner, forty-niner' in the California gold rush. By 1874 Edmund and his wife Augusta had four small children. In May of that year, during a graveyard shift, Edmund Trautmann died after entering a pocket of poisonous gas in the Crown Prince mine. His work mates formed a committee to send his ailing wife and her children, ranging in age from seven years to nine months, back to their relatives in Germany. Ernest, the second of these

children, was left there in the care of a military orphanage while the rest of the family departed again, this time for New York.

Ten years later, at the age of 14, Ernest moved to Poland and began an apprenticeship in a brewery owned by a distant relative. The apprenticeship was pure peonage as Trautmann was required to work unlimited hours, at the beck and call of the brewmaster. After qualifying, he moved to Dresden, Germany, where he agitated on behalf of child workers in the bottling shops. He emerged from these experiences with an anarchist's allegiance to individual liberty and a Marxist's certainty in the class struggle.

Trautmann worked his way through Eastern Europe as far as Odessa in Russia before returning to Germany. En route he encountered traditions of European radical thought from which he would draw throughout his life. After agitating on behalf of the most abused workers in the brewery industry, he was expelled from Germany as a dangerous radical in 1890, and followed his family to the New World, which proved to be indistinguishable from the Old.

After settling in Massachusetts, Trautmann became active in the United Brewery Workers Union, the first major industrial union in the United States. In 1900, he became editor of the union's German-English newspaper, *Brauer-Zeitung*, where his dedication to the principles of socialism and industrial unionism soon put him in conflict with the American Federation of Labor. His vocal opposition to the increasing political conservatism of the AFL cost him his position as editor, and he was forced out in the spring of 1905.

Between 1900 and 1905 Trautmann combined his experience of the U.S. labour movement with his knowledge of intellectual currents in the European working class to develop ideas which later formed the theoretical framework of the IWW. One labor historian has suggested Trautmann "played the most central role in the founding of the IWW... [H]e provided the ideological starting point of the revolutionary industrial unionism of the IWW." In 1904 Trautmann was appointed to the three-member committee that drew up the Industrial Union Manifesto calling for the formation of the IWW "as the economic organization of the working class, without affiliation with any political party." At the IWW's founding convention in 1905, a succession of tributes testified to Trautmann's broad knowledge of international labour movements, his dedication and his personal qualities ("he stands almost peerless in the way of a personal sacrifice to the interests of the working people").

In its first years the IWW had fought numerous industrial skirmishes without winning a single major strike. Trautmann

looked to break this pattern by concentrating his organising efforts among his fellow European migrant workers in the industrialised eastern states. In 1909 he told readers of the IWW newspaper the *Industrial Worker*, "I am off for McKees Rocks, perhaps to face the bullets of the foe." McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania, was a steel company town. When employers introduced an unpopular change to the pay system, five thousand workers, mostly eastern Europeans, spontaneously walked out of the mills. Violent clashes followed when the company's private police force tried to bring in scab labour. As the violence escalated, the Pennsylvania state constabulary charged and clubbed picketing workers.

In response to a call from a group of exiled European revolutionaries, Trautmann arrived to head the strike organisation. He cautioned against further violence, but tensions in the town were already at breaking point. A gunfight broke out in which several strikers and five state troopers were killed, and Trautmann himself was arrested. Thousands of strikers thronged the town to demand his release and with a full-scale riot threatening, he was taken from his cell to an improvised courtroom, tried and acquitted. Two weeks later the strike was settled, the company compromising on most issues.

In the few exultant years following this victory Trautmann criss-crossed the eastern industrial states in response to a flood of requests to lead direct actions and set up IWW locals. In the northern winter of 1912, he joined Big Bill Haywood and other leading Wobblies as an organiser of the textile workers' strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts, the legendary 'Bread and Roses' strike. The strikers, mainly women and children, were opposed by a mounted militia of vigilantes, local businesspeople and students, who rode down the picket lines with bayonets and batons. Using a pedal-powered printing press, Trautmann and his team deluged the militia with pamphlets, urging them, with some success, to covertly support the strikers.

The same period saw a surge of revolutionary industrial unionism in his homeland. As Trautmann had rightly observed in 1905, New Zealand at that time could only be "considered to be free." A long period of liberal, mildly progressive government had introduced better conditions for workers, but required all unions to submit to compulsory arbitration of their disputes. This regime meant real wages fell during the early 20th century, and workers were chafing under a paternalistic form of state socialism. However, from about 1908 an influx of seasoned labour agitators from the United States, Canada, the UK and Australia introduced IWW-style direct action strategies and side-stepped the arbitration system by negotiating directly with employers, through strike action if necessary. The response from miners, wharf workers, drivers, labourers and thousands of other mainly unskilled workers was immediate and enthusiastic. Branches of the IWW were set up in major cities and mining towns, helped by the distribution of large quantities of revolutionary literature, some of it written or translated by Trautmann.

In 1912 a prolonged strike broke out just a short distance from Trautmann's birthplace in the company town of Waihi, which was run by a foreign-owned gold-mining consortium. The Canadian Wobbly J.B. King played an active part on the strike committee. After several months, the company persuaded the government to send in large numbers

of strikebreakers reinforced by armed and mounted police. These police were soon labelled 'Cossacks' by the strikers, a term first used to refer to the mounted troops at McKees Rocks. The police deliberately encouraged violent riots between the strikers and the scabs, which culminated in the death of striker F. E. Evans.

The following year a strike on the Wellington waterfront spread to most of the port cities of the country. The 'Great Strike' of 1913 saw the greatest civil unrest ever seen in New Zealand, before or since. Tens of thousands were on strike, headed by Wobblies such as the English-born Tom Barker who produced a weekly paper with regular articles in the Maori language. However they were confronted by police, military and large bands of strikebreakers from the rural districts, armed officially with long wooden batons and unofficially with Army revolvers. As at Waihi, this combination of state-sponsored violence and organised mass scabbery caused the defeat of the strike, and most of the Wobblies were forced to leave the country.

Trautmann's autobiography shows that he considered his greatest achievement to be the many publications that helped spread the revolutionary industrial unionism movement throughout the world. Today, he would find that despite such efforts his country of birth remains unfree. Gold is still mined in the hills above Coromandel, where a vast and ugly open-cast mine disfigures a landscape which is otherwise one of the most beautiful in a very beautiful country. Some locals defend the mine for the jobs it provides, yet the average income for Coromandel people is lower than elsewhere in the country, as the foreign owners of the mine siphon off the profits.

We close with a Maori salutation: No reira, e te kaituhi o te Uiniana o Nga Kaimahi o te Ao, ka whawhai tonu tatou, ake ake, ake. (Loosely: Therefore, to the one who wrote on behalf of the IWW, we will carry on your struggle for as long as necessary.)

Mark Derby lives in Wellington, Aotearoa/NZ, and wrote "The Case of William E. Trautmann and the role of the Wobblies" in *Revolution – the 1913 Great Strike in New Zealand*, ed. Melanie Nolan, Canterbury University Press, 2006.

Jay Miller is author of "Soldier of the Class War – the life and writing of William E. Trautmann," a Ph.D. dissertation completed in 2000 at Wayne State University, where Trautmann's unpublished memoir can also be found.

*In November We Remember:*

Jenny (Lahti) Velsek (1913 - 2006)

Steve Lindenmeyer (1953 - 2006)

## In November We Remember

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

The IWW has contributed more than its fair share of labor's martyrs, because we have always been in the forefront of the struggle for workers' rights. Some, like Joe Hill (killed Nov. 19, 1915) are famous; others, like James Brew (killed resisting deportation in Bisbee) or Dalton Gentry (shot to death Nov. 4, 1936, on an IWW picket line in Idaho) largely forgotten.

The history of the IWW – indeed the history of the labor movement as a whole – is written in blood. Too many victims remain unknown, including the Stettin, Germany, IWW dockworkers murdered by the Nazi regime, or the fellow workers who fell to military dictatorships in Chile, Argentina and Peru.

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



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

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# The IWW in the history books

This is our annual summary of recent historical writing about the IWW, which appears every November as part of our “In November We Remember” coverage:

The new edition of *The Industrial Workers of the World: Its First 100 Years* (Jon Bekken and Fred Thompson, IWW, 2006) is shipping from the printer as we go to press, and readers who ordered pre-publication copies should soon have them in hand. This, our union’s official history, offers the most comprehensive overview of the history of the IWW available – discussing countless strikes and organizing campaigns that have been ignored by other historians; demolishing the common myth that the IWW was a fly-by-night organization that would blow into a community, organize a strike, and then disappear; and documenting the union’s efforts to adjust to changing conditions and find new ways to carry out direct action unionism on the job as we rebuilt in the post-Cold War years. It includes extensive notes pointing to sources for further research on the union’s history, and dozens of photos and other illustrations. Anyone interested in IWW history should start with two books: Joyce Kornbluh’s *Rebel Voices*, and this one.

### Wobblies confronting racism

Some of the most important work being done on IWW history looks at our local history, focusing attention on the rank and file and their efforts to realize Wobbly principles in day-to-day struggles on the job. James Koshan’s unpublished dissertation, “We hold the center of the line of battle: The IWW, immigrant labor, and industrial unionism in the Pittsburgh district, 1909-1913” (Kent State University, 2005), focuses on organizing of Pittsburgh’s ethnically diverse immigrant workforce during and immediately after the industrial conflicts of 1909. “Wobbly” organizing bridged differences that divided immigrant workers elsewhere, something Koshan attributes to the IWW’s emphasis on an industrial unionism that encompassed “social justice” issues.

Several books were released in time for the IWW centenary with so little fanfare that we have only just learned of them. Kristofer Allerfeldt’s *Race, Radicalism, Religion and Restriction* (Praeger, 2003) looks at the rise of nativism in Oregon and Washington from 1890 and culminating in 1924 with the passage of restrictive immigration legislation authored by Washington congressman Albert Johnson. Allerfeldt argues that the Pacific Northwest experienced rapid urbanization and immigration, giving rise not only to radical movements but also to a Ku Klux Klan that came to play a major role in local politics and helped channel unrest into attacks on Catholics, Wobblies and the Japanese.

The mainstream labor movement was eager to establish its “American” credentials, even as the IWW violated local norms by successfully reaching out to immigrant workers, fighting the miserable job conditions imposed by the region’s leading citizens, refusing to keep quiet about the bosses’ war, and bringing class conflict into the streets where it could no longer be ignored. These traits helped organize many new Wobblies into a truly diverse movement (Allerfeldt cites a 1925 survey that found that nearly half of Portland Wobblies were of Chinese descent), but also galvanized

local elites’ determination to crush the union through brutal vigilante attacks.

Mark Fannin’s *Labor’s Promised Land: Radical Visions of Gender, Race & Religion* (University of Tennessee Press, 2003) is a comparative history of the IWW-affiliated Brotherhood of Timber Workers and the Southern Tenant Farmers Union of the 1930s, with which the IWW maintained friendly relations. Fannin does this in alternating chapters presenting an overview of each organization, and then examining each in terms of its approach to gender roles, race and religion. It is the most comprehensive treatment of the Brotherhood presently available, even if the organizational scheme results in a good bit of jumping around. He notes that both organizations were built by indigenous southerners and enjoyed substantial popular support as they challenged the region’s racial hierarchy and the entrenched poverty it helped enforce.

The Brotherhood was initially independent, but modeled on the IWW. After the 1912 election, in which the Brotherhood actively worked for the Socialist ticket only to be snubbed by a party unwilling to be seen embracing a multi-racial union, the Brotherhood’s 20,000 members affiliated to the IWW, seeking alliances to help them overcome the brutal repression already aimed at them and which was soon to escalate. Fannin cites a Maryville spy’s estimate that the BTW had the support of 83 percent of white workers, 95 percent of blacks and 100 percent of Mexicans in that lumber camp.

Brotherhood organizers appealed to Southern “traditions” of revolt, chivalry and spirituality, but recast these in class terms. Women played an active role even though they did not work in the lumber camps, putting their bodies on the line during strikes and holding local office. While Brotherhood organizers said they did not call for “social equality” and initially organized blacks into segregated lodges under the supervision of white workers, from the outset they successfully organized across racial lines. At the insistence of IWW leaders, the Brotherhood integrated its meetings in 1912.

The Brotherhood’s rhetoric turned notions of racial superiority on their head, insisting that black workers who had joined in the common struggle for better conditions were more “manly” and entitled to respect than white workers who had not. Nor was this simply rhetoric; the Brotherhood practiced equality in struggle, repeatedly demonstrating its determination (and ability) to mobilize workers in solidarity across racial lines.

On religion, the argument is more muddled, perhaps because this chapter relies more on Covington Hall’s poetry and other writings from the BTW press than on struggles in the camps. Hall spoke of the “rebel carpenter of Nazareth,” and the BTW press noted that the “wrath of God” had been visited upon scabs. But Hall also invoked Lucifer as a symbol of rebellion, and it would be interesting to learn how these rather contradictory rhetorical approaches played with the Brotherhood’s membership and with the workers it was trying to organize. By 1916 the BTW had been crushed, less by the violence meted out against it than by the blacklisting of thousands of union activists, and its members scattered across the southwest, playing a key role in IWW organizing in Oklahoma and elsewhere.

William Jones’ *The Tribe of Black Ulysses: African American Lumber Workers in the Jim Crow South* (University of Illinois Press, 2005) also briefly touches on the IWW in his history of black lumber workers and how they shaped the rural South – but focuses on the 1920s and beyond, and so looks at the aftermath of the IWW’s inter-racial organizing in the Louisiana woods.

Richard Street’s monumental history of California farm labor (*Beasts of the field: A narrative history of California farmworkers*, Stanford University Press, 2004) starts with campesinos from the Spanish missions in

1796 and concludes in 1913 with the struggle of farm workers to organize through the IWW, but also includes some material from the 1920s including an anecdote by IWW organizer and historian Fred Thompson about a successful direct action through which orange pickers defeated attempts to pay them in company scrip instead of cash. (This incident, which I believe has not been previously written about, is drawn from the author’s interview, part of exhaustive research documented in 240 pages of notes.)

The IWW is not the focus of this book, the bulk of which is devoted to a detailed, meticulously researched description of California farm workers’ lives and struggles and to the changing composition of the workforce as an ever more commercialized agricultural industry sought a cheap, docile and reliable work force. But its 936 pages leave room for discussion of IWW efforts. Chapter 21 opens with FW Thompson’s anecdote, framing a discussion of the role of bindlemen who rode the rails and worked the fields in the 1910s and 1920s. That chapter, and one that follows on jungle camps and slave markets, notes the hard lives these workers led and their determination to assert their human dignity.

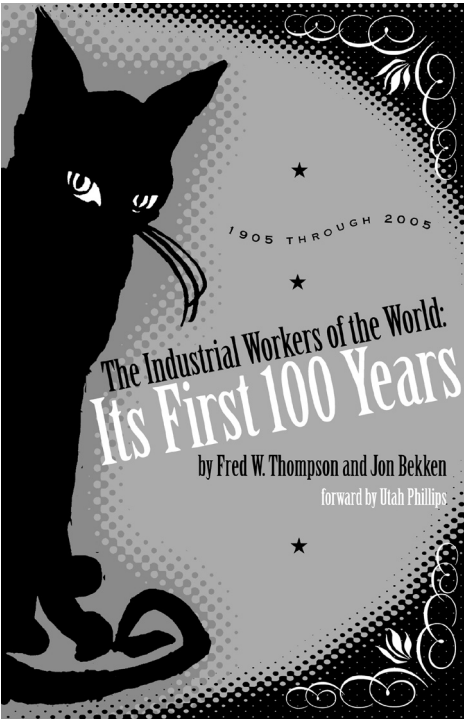
The book’s final chapter, “I’ve Been Robbed,” examines the IWW’s effort to organize the bindlemen, beginning in 1906 with soapboxing in the slave markets, developing into a more systematic campaign in 1908, and by 1913 introducing the job delegate system that made the IWW a strong force in agriculture (and also construction, timber and other industries that relied on migratory labor). Street places the free speech fights in the context of this organizing work, notes that IWW efforts far outstripped the better-financed United Laborers Union the AFL established in an attempt to blunt the Wobbly campaign, and concludes that IWW tactics and strategies continue to “inform the farm worker movement even today.” Although it does not add much to our overall knowledge of the IWW’s role in organizing farm workers, *Beasts of the field* brings together that literature and places it in a broader social context. The book is highly readable, available in paperback (\$31.95, 936 oversize pages), and deserves a wide audience.

Also overlooked when it appeared was Katherine Benton-Cohen’s “Docile Children and Dangerous Revolutionaries: The Racial Hierarchy of Manliness and the Bisbee Deportation of 1917” (*Frontiers* 14, 2003, pp. 30-50), which notes the critical role played by Mexican miners in the Bisbee strike and argues that contemporary understandings of “manliness” help explain why authorities responded so brutally to the IWW strike.

The mines paid “Mexicans” much lower wages, and managers spoke of their child-like character. When they struck in support of the IWW’s demand for equal pay, these workers were suddenly transformed from docile children into dangerous revolutionaries, and the sheriff made no attempt to disguise the fact that his deputies deported any Mexican worker they could find, without regard to whether they were strikers. “How could you separate one Mexican from another?” he asked the federal commission investigating the deportation, saying the last straw was when a delegation of Mexican Wobblies approached white female laundry workers to ask them to join the union. Some may question the usefulness of the theoretical schema, but the article calls needed attention to the role of Mexican workers in this strike and in the IWW more generally, a role overlooked by too many historians.

### The singing union

Ben Lefebvre revisits the legacy of the IWW’s most famous martyr in “Joe Hill: ‘I Never Died,’ Said He” (*American History* 40:5, December 2005, pp. 56-62). This richly illustrated article, aimed at a popular audience, is friendly enough and notes that the IWW still exists, even if it falsely describes us as



The IWW’s official history is now available

“Marxist,” “a radical offshoot of the American Federation of Labor.” Lefebvre praises Joe’s songs and condemns the trial, and while adding nothing to our understanding of either will help preserve Fellow Worker Hill’s memory for a new generation.

Joseph Grim Feinberg, in “Gifts of the IWW” (*Against the Current*, July 2005), notes: “The IWW has been both a pioneering revolutionary organization in the history of North America, and one of the most aesthetic.” “It lived through years of slander and repression; limped along, still proud and singing, through decades when its membership dropped ever closer toward zero; and remains, not only as a piece of history, but as a force in the present and an inspiration for the future.”


His essay quotes many IWW songs and discusses their role in building an activist culture, concluding: “The Little Red Song Book stands out... as a masterpiece of world literature. ... The songs of the IWW are not great because they sit published in a book, already made. Like any folk songs, they remain great only as long as they are sung. May the IWW live another 100 years, and its songs live on forever – but recreated, always changing, with each new voice that sings.”

Similarly, Virginia Martin’s unpublished dissertation “You can’t weave cloth with bayonets’: The role of singing in the 1912 Lawrence textile strike” (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, 2005) argues that communal singing helped create a sense of community that transcended interethnic antagonisms and knit together Lawrence’s diverse textile workers through song – both the stories the songs captured, and the physical experiences of hearing and singing them in unison.

Paul Buhle continues recycling elements of his co-edited *Wobblies! A Graphic history*, spreading its radical comics and his sometimes misleading introductions far and wide. Kevin Pyle’s contribution appears as “The Wobbly year: Remembering Judi Bari” (*Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 16:3, 2005, 63-73). In “Toward the Understanding of the Visual Vernacular” (*Rethinking Marxism* 18:3, 2006, 367-381), Buhle argues that contemporary radical comics have reclaimed the visual tradition pioneered by the IWW, pointing to *Wobblies!* as a bridge between these two worlds.

Van Gosse’s review essay of *Wobblies!*, “Heroes and Villains: Picturing the IWW” (*Reviews in American History* 34, 2006, pp. 57-63), criticizes the book for its focus on the nonpolitical, direct action IWW for masterfully invoking a radical tradition “that does not exist.” Gosse laments the decision not to focus on one or two great leaders, and to ignore “the core problem that faced the organization: its equivocal relationship to the Socialist Party,” while ignoring the many factual errors – more in Buhle’s introductions than in the artists’ work. This essay is more interesting as an example of the academy’s inability to incorporate the IWW into its prefabricated explanations than for anything it tells us about the IWW or the volume under review.

continued on page 10



We Remember  
Our friend & mentor  
**Carlos Cortez**  
Gary and Carol Cox



# Western Federation of Miners landmark at risk

BY RICHARD MYERS

Ludlow. Columbine. Cripple Creek. The names conjure unmistakable sentiments for Colorado unionists, memories of workers fighting for their rights against ruthless corporate interests. At least three Colorado locations qualify as landmarks worthy of great honor. First is the sacred soil of Ludlow where, in 1914, the babies and the wives of striking miners lay suffocating and dying as angry flames consumed their tent colony. Ludlow's grounds are owned and protected by the United Mine Workers.

The second hallowed site, location of the (first) Columbine Massacre, was a nondescript company town called Serene, the entirety of which history has swept into a public landfill – an ignominious end as outrageous as the machine guns used to murder unarmed workers, and to bloody their wives.

A third significant landmark hangs in the balance. The Western Federation of Miners union hall in Victor, Colorado, was central to a titanic struggle for labor rights at the turn of the last century. Nine bullet holes in the bricks still testify to the building's history.

Today the building is owned by the Victor Historical Preservation Society (VHPS,) which seeks to restore the hall to its original state – with bullet holes left intact. In 2005 the VHPS obtained a restoration grant from Colorado's State Historical Fund for \$242,295. However, in an unusual decision that has never been fully explained, the Fund's board of directors rescinded the grant. Some suspect anti-union politics played a role, and that powerful interests would like to abolish every trace of unions in the Cripple Creek area for the sake of the gambling lobby and a burgeoning tourist industry. Whether Victor's WFM union hall becomes an inspiration like Ludlow or is lost forever is up to all of us.

A century ago, most of Cripple Creek's mine owners lived in Colorado Springs, a safe distance away from the chaos that their policies created in the mining area. Today the Cripple Creek & Victor (CC&V) Gold Mining Company partners with a South Africa conglomerate called AngloGold. The CC&V web site briefly mentions the district's history:

“Two periods of labor unrest (1893-1894 and 1903-1904) led to the Cripple Creek Mining District being union-free after 1904. Government troops were called out in both instances but most violence took place in the 1903-1904 period. Albert Horsely, better known as Harry Orchard, came to the district from the Coeur d'Alene and set a bomb on the 600 level of the Vindicator Mine resulting in the death of the Superintendent and one of the foremen. Shortly, thereafter, he blew up a railroad station in the town of Independence as the night shift crew from the nearby Findlay Mine were waiting to go home, killing

13 miners. Orchard fled from the district to Idaho where he killed Ex-Governor Steunenberg with another bomb. Orchard was apprehended for these tragic acts and served the rest his life in the Idaho prison.”

Corporations trumpet their “union-free” status as a signal to investors. When company propaganda describes “periods of labor unrest” as attacks by one violent individual, it obscures much more than it reveals.

Undoubtedly, Harry Orchard was a scoundrel. He was a seriously disturbed former businessman who confessed to committing arson for the insurance, as well as placing explosives meant to kill. But there had been violence on both sides of the union struggle in the Cripple Creek district, and it was often impossible to know who was responsible. For example, mine owners were said to have formed a shadowy vigilante force calling itself the Committee of 40 to “uphold law and order.” The miners feared this group was planning provocative acts of violence which could be blamed on the union. Whether Harry Orchard's attacks were committed in a misguided attempt to assist union miners, or were really provocations calculated to justify the destruction of the WFM at the behest of the rumored Committee of 40, has never been determined. An Idaho jury found the WFM's leaders innocent of alleged complicity in Harry Orchard's murderous activities.

The CC&V account also fails to record the brutal repression by mine owners against union miners. In 1894 Colorado's Governor Waite called out the National Guard to protect union miners from an attack by 1,200 armed men, a private army of thugs in the pay of mine owners. With violence by the mine owners thwarted, Waite brokered an agreement on hours and pay between the owners and the WFM that lasted nearly a decade.

From its inception in 1893, the Western Federation of Miners grew to 180 locals from Wisconsin and Michigan in the east, into Canada and to the west coast. Its base of power remained in the Rocky Mountain region, and most of its leaders came from Colorado. Historian George G. Suggs, Jr., declared the WFM in its time the most militant labor organization in the United States. The WFM gave us Big Bill Haywood, spawned the Industrial Workers of the World, and in a later incarnation inspired the movie “Salt of the Earth.”

In 1903 the WFM was organizing mill and smelter workers in accordance with its philosophy of industrial unionism – all workers in an industry were invited to join the same organization. Gov. James H. Peabody, a former businessman, used the WFM's organizing strike as an excuse to eradicate unionism in the Cripple Creek district. It is impossible to record in one article all of the outrages and illegal actions committed against

the WFM. By March of 1904, Emma Langdon had already published two books about the union's “lawful, law-abiding and manly fight against the lawless, corrupt and un-American methods” of the mine owners and the Colorado state government. The governor's orders willfully superseded a fully functional local government. Although local courts sided with the union, their decrees were ignored and a state of martial law was imposed. Scabs were shipped in under military protection. The union's safe was burglarized, and assaults against union miners were commonplace.

After a full year of strike-related turmoil, with the National Guard enforcing military rule, anti-union forces were ready to rid themselves of the union once and for all. Immediately after one of Harry Orchard's bloody provocations, the union-friendly sheriff was held at bayonet point and ordered to choose between resignation and immediate lynching. The Mine Owner's Association put their own man in as the new sheriff, and the county commissioners were bribed or terrorized into acquiescence.

The Mine Owner's Association and an anti-union vigilante group called the Citizen's Alliance, an organization made up mostly of businessmen and merchants, then called a public meeting in a vacant lot across from the Victor union hall. The secretary of the Mine Owner's Association proclaimed that nonunion miners should purge the district of all union influence. Someone suggested burning pro-union businesses throughout the community. A union miner dared to object and a fist fight erupted, culminating in indiscriminate gunfire that killed two and injured five. Members of the WFM took refuge in the union hall, which was subsequently attacked by Company L of the Colorado National Guard. The militia laid siege with marksmen lining nearby rooftops. Forty union men eventually surrendered, with four of them wounded. The Citizen's Alliance entered the hall and destroyed everything in sight.

In his 1972 history of *Colorado's War On Militant Unionism*, Suggs observed that mobs “directed by prominent members of the local alliances ... turned their fury against union halls and stores, looting and destroying records and merchandise. By midnight of June 6, every union store and hall in Teller County had been wrecked.” The alliance members beat up pro-union merchants and threatened pro-union ministers. Union men were sent to a “bull pen” at the local armory. Union clerks were banished, while lawyers for the union and an assistant district attorney suspected of union sympathies were beaten and ordered out of the area.

At one point the union newspaper in Victor was ordered to shut down; when it refused to do so, the publisher and several pressmen were arrested and sent to the bull pen. Mine Owner's Alliance members were seen destroying the print shop's presses with sledge hammers, and the publisher faced bankruptcy. Anti-union agitators blamed the union for the destruction, and Governor Peabody arranged compensation for the damage – and brokered some sort of agreement under which the publisher switched sides.

The plan to eradicate unionism in Cripple Creek was systematic and ruthless. Union members were given a choice: denounce the union or be deported. Those who declined were charged with vagrancy or soliciting prostitution, but their real crime was loyalty to the WFM. It didn't matter how long banished miners had lived in the district, whether they had family or property. They were transported to the prairie and ordered never to return on pain of death.

National Guard General Sherman Bell, himself a former mine manager, ensured that families were also forced out, giving the miners no reason to return. He declared it a crime to aid the families of deported union miners beyond the meager survival rations provided by the militia.



Victor, Colorado, at the turn of the century.

Unable to tolerate a union presence in the district, General Bell used military force to close the Portland Mine (and others) because its owner, James Burns, had come to an agreement with the WFM. Military force was used to enforce a rigid, universal anti-union policy on the part of all district businesses. By such methods did the companies accomplish their “union-free” status.

For a time the WFM union hall in Victor was used by the local school district, and more recently it was operated as a restaurant. While the building has been deteriorating, some stabilization work has been completed. The Victor Historical Preservation Society is fighting to save this historic landmark as part of the legacy of working class struggles. They're asking for your help.

The Total rehabilitation of the Miners' Union Hall Local #32 is estimated at \$3.2 million, with a start to finish timeline of three years. The purchase of the buildings and completion of Phase I Emergency stabilization has been funded exclusively by supportive individuals and unions across the nation. The VHPS is currently fundraising for Phase II and III of Emergency Stabilization. Estimated cost to complete the emergency stabilization is \$250,000. Upon completion of the emergency stabilization phase, the threat of abatement will be removed from the building and the finishing stages can begin.

The Victor Historical Preservation Society is asking for letters of support to preserve the landmark, and for donations. To encourage support for restoration, please contact: Mark Wolfe, Director Colorado State Historical Fund, 225 E 16th Ave Suite 950, Denver CO 80203 (303) 866-2776; Nan Rickey, CSHF; David N. Wetzel, Publications Director, *Colorado History Now*, 1300 Broadway, Denver CO 80203; CPI (Colorado Preservation Inc.), 333 W. Colfax Ave. Suite 300, Denver CO 80204.

To prevent possible condemnation of the structure, please send letters supporting preservation to: Mayor Kathy Justice, City of Victor, PO Box 86, Victor CO 80860 (719) 689-2284; Hank Gibson and Lonesa Wyatt, Victor City Council members, PO Box 86, Victor CO 80860; Jim Harris, Teller County Building Department, PO Box 1886, 540 Manor Court, Woodland Park CO 80866.

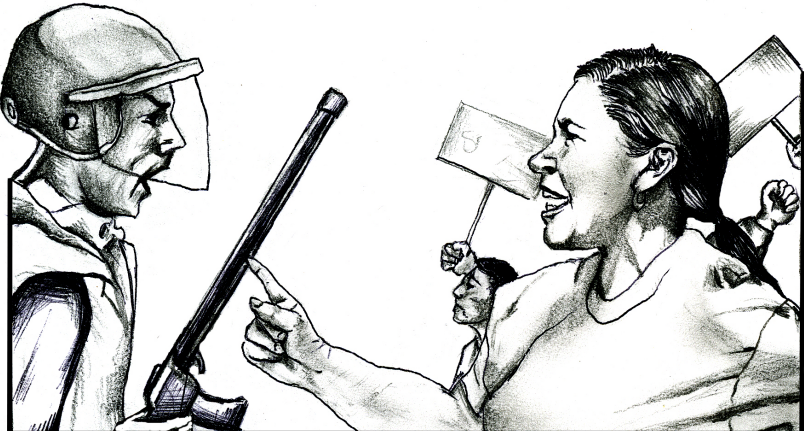
The VHPS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible. Donations will be acknowledged, and receipts provided. The VHPS would appreciate a copy of all letters of support as an aid in fund-raising efforts. Please send donations, and copies of support letters to: Victor Historical Preservation Society, Miners' Union Hall Preservation Project, PO Box 151, Victor CO 80860 (719) 689-5568.

## Fred Thompson inducted into Labor's Intl. Hall of Fame

Long-time IWW organizer, editor and class war prisoner Fred Thompson was inducted into Labor's International Hall of Fame at the George Meany Center Oct. 5, in a ceremony attended by IWW General Secretary-Treasurer Mark Damron. Also honored were former United Farm Workers Secretary-Treasurer Pete Velasco and former AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland.

Phil Mason of Wayne State University, the chief historian for the Hall of Fame, spoke of his warm friendship with FW Thompson, and of Fred's commitment to labor, the IWW, and to preserving the history of our union.

IN NOVEMBER WE REMEMBER !



THE CHICAGO GENERAL MEMBERSHIP BRANCH  
SALUTES ALL THOSE FELLOW AND SISTER WORKERS WHO HAVE  
MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR  
WORKING CLASS EMANCIPATION.

WE NEVER FORGET ! WE NEVER FORGIVE !



# The IWW is *the* Class Act

I joined the IWW in '68 or '69, shortly after the Democratic Convention where I got my first up-close feel for how US democracy *really* works. I was 26 cards short of a deck, but slowly Fred Thompson, Jon Bekken, Carlos Cortez, U. Utah Phillips, with his pregnant one-liners, and others began to explain to me why the “wage system” and the “labor market” were only more subtle extensions of the “slave market,” leaving Mr. Money Bags in complete charge of our lives. They also explained their objection to the capitalist term, “wages.” “Wages” describe the value the bosses decide they will pay today for my back, my hands, my mind, whatever it is I can rent out to the corporations in order to feed myself and those six children that showed up on my front porch.

Unlike those poor slaves sold on the auction block, I no longer have to stand naked to be inspected by the public like cattle on sale. No sir, if I applied for work at Coors brewery in the 1970s, I was taken to a nice private room, bent over, stretched out, mouth looked into, blood tested, body X-rayed, drug tested, examined by a psychiatrist, and then given a lie detector test to find out if I was gay, a thief, or, worse, a radical. The labor market is much more efficient for the bosses than the slave market was. It took awhile for Southern bosses to see the advantages of not having to provide housing, clothing, food or permanent employment for slaves but they caught on. Southern bosses began to see that they could bend a “worker” to their will much easier if workers had to beg for work on their plantations, and then degrade them even further by offering raises and titles to the workers most easily dominated, than they could by forcing their will on “slaves” with a whip.

Slowly, I began to understand that the IWW was not just another political party that mouthed the word “democracy.” Everyone uses that word from Bush to the fascists in North Korea. Democracy is the most abused word in every language. Few, however, can tolerate real democracy. “Real democracy” defined as a society in which one has some control over everything that has an affect on one’s life. Every politician I have ever met, from right to left, feels threatened by the word democracy. They might tolerate it after workers have been converted to their particular “ism,” but not until then would they trust workers to guide “*their*” revolution. Every socialist revolution has failed, in my opinion, because the “vanguard” would not trust the people to run their own communities, their own factories, their own farms, or to defend their own revolution. The IWW is the only organization I have found that asks you and me to accept NO bosses; capitalist, socialist, communist, anarchist (sound like a contradiction?), religious, or union bosses.

Fundamentalism comes in all forms. Ask any new convert to an “ism” if theirs isn’t the only truth. The fact rarely enters the mind of a vanguard elitist that books will not make one a good farmer, mechanic, machinist, stone mason, etc. Decisions affecting workers must be left to workers or you get the incredibly stupid bungling that we have seen in every socialist revolution to date.

The older I get, the more I understand that “democracy” is the most radical political

idea being offered. Test yourself. Would you trust your future to the democratic decisions of the workers in the USA? If not, why not?

I have heard some of the nicest, most well-intentioned leftists say they could not trust today’s workers with democracy and they seem not to understand how elitist that sounds to me. It tells me that they believe themselves smarter, more moral, more capable to make decisions, than us common folk. They would have to be our new bosses until we measure up, you see.

Not in the IWW. Democracy is the radicalizing force in the IWW. Through the democratic process itself will workers become radical, not through political classes given by the vanguard of, which party, comrade? Party politics is the most divisive force I have come in contact with in my 71 years. “One Big Union” will be made up of millions of diverse workers from every corner of the world. Anyone think we must convert them all to one mind before we can organize One Big Union? No room in the IWW for that kind of divisive fundamentalism, in my opinion. Democracy is the only structure that can unite such a powerful diversity.

Democracy is a powerful idea. I have remained a Wobbly for almost 40 years because of the strength in that idea. It takes time and patience to trust your fellow worker, to let your ego meld with the idea of “democracy.” The bosses, preachers, union bureaucrats, the universities, the media, the political parties all tell you that we workers are too racist and too stupid to be trusted with democracy. All I am suggesting is that democracy, having some control of our lives, is the quickest cure for these weaknesses. The alternative to democracy is to accept bossism in one of the ugly forms that exist on our planet today. I’m not ready to accept this degrading alternative. How about you?

Another reason I have remained a member of the IWW so long is that I watched the AFL-CIO accept a role as a partner in the capitalist system. Capitalism made its fortunes off of the exploitation of all the other workers that were not part of this holy alliance. How could the leadership of the AFL-CIO do this and call themselves the unions of workers?

I criticize my fellow workers in the AFL-CIO with great love. Every advantage I live with in terms of time off, safety, security in my old age, pension, education, decent income, the freedom to write this column, and on and on, came from the struggle of millions of these fellow workers walking picket lines, getting their heads cracked, losing their jobs, and sometimes their lives for us. I was a dual carder every time I had the opportunity to work organized AFL-CIO jobs, so this is also self-criticism. It is easy to criticize now that we have the advantage of hindsight, I know; but criticize I will because the future looks very bleak for my six children and 13 grandchildren because of the serious errors we have made as workers in this country.

When we chose, in the twenties, to suck up to capitalism and settle for a piece of the capitalist pie (later we even invested our pensions in their stocks, talk about schizophrenia), we lay down with a rattlesnake. We watched the bosses’ courts strip our unions of the right to strike in sympathy with other



workers, give the bosses the right to hire our replacements if we strike, force us to get permission from the government to strike at all if we work for the railroads or airlines. We sat back and allowed the bosses’ government to gut our unions. Our union leadership became partners with the government and the capitalist bosses and we workers allowed ourselves to be stripped of any chance to show solidarity or have any real power. If my pension is invested in GM stock, how can I fight GM and still have a retirement income?

I read recently that if I train another person to take a place on my production line, I will be classified as a supervisor by the NLRB and cannot belong to any union.

I have never worked any job on construction, in a factory, in a mine, in a warehouse, in an office, in the oil fields, any job, where it is not the responsibility of workers to train other workers on the job. Who else could? Can a boss train a welder to weld a pipeline? Perish the thought. Will a boss show a new iron worker how to walk a beam 300 feet above the ground? Maybe they could before WW2, when foremen were chosen from the ranks; but that is ridiculous for our college-educated bosses of today. Most haven’t a clue how to do our jobs. We workers train other workers willingly, often to save our own lives and theirs.

Will we cower to this boss-controlled NLRB decision too? We have got to stop allowing rich men to decide the value of our labor for us, and from “defining” for us who can belong to our unions and when we can and cannot withhold our labor. Those are our decisions to make. If we don’t, we are not a union, we are a scout troop.

Capitalist bosses are deciding for us to bomb Iraq, the birthplace of civilized mankind, off the map. Seventy percent of the people in the United States opposed this war without a UN mandate before the war began. U.S. bosses declared war on Iraq with our kids, not theirs, anyway. Many felt they must support those kids after they were in Iraq; but now, over 60 percent of those polled want the troops home today. The bosses say never. This is democracy as it is actually practiced in the U.S. We can change that. Will we?

Capitalism sells soap and cars. Even though the bosses know that this earth can only sustain so many human beings at our level of consumption, they cannot bring themselves to say that we should consume less or decrease the birth rates. That would decrease their profits. So the earth heats up, wars explode and “illegal emigration” happens in countries where the environment has

## Solidarity forces Harvard to rehire janitor who fainted on job

BY MARK R. WOLFF

During Oct. 4 negotiations with SEIU Local 615, Harvard University has agreed to reinstate Saintely Paul with back pay to July 3, when he was fired for fainting at work.

Students, researchers and faculty who knew Saintely Paul from his workplace petitioned Harvard to rehire him. Along with marchers from SEIU 615, IWW, Student Labor Action Movement, and the Haitian community, they joined the second large rally of about 100 people at the Holyoke Center administration building Sept. 22.

SEIU 615’s Courtney Snegroff decried the firing and Harvard’s disregard for workers. Cambridge City Councillor Marjorie C. Decker asked if worker mistreatment is what is taught in Harvard classes. Marchers then carried banners protesting the firing and the Harvard corporation’s abuses of workers across Massachusetts Ave to Memorial Hall – occupied by student protesters in 2000 to

been destroyed and will no longer sustain its people. Oil is running out as a source of power, clean water will probably be the cause of many future wars. Do the bosses say “slow down, cut back, or live within your means”? How can they? They are trapped in a double bind of their own making.

Are the socialist bureaucracies any better? Bureaucrats behave like bureaucrats in every top-down authoritarian system. In capitalism, they behave in favor of markets. In authoritarian socialism, bureaucrats respond to fear and privilege, just as capitalist bureaucrats do, not because the system demands it, but because socialist bosses demand it.

China is destroying its own environment at a faster pace than we. One (1) percent of the Chinese national gross income is spent on education at present. Many Chinese working families can no longer afford to send their children to school. Why spend more than one percent? Workers don’t need to think, only to listen. Workers in Shanghai have jumped to their deaths from the scaffolding they built to construct China’s new growth because they haven’t been paid in months. Are China’s coal mines any safer than ours in West Virginia?

We do not even need to discuss the USSR, do we? Those Wobblies who thought that politics might be a shortcut to industrial freedom after the Russian revolution and gave up on the slower but surer method of workers running their own lives through their industrial unions have been proven wrong. I can understand their error in the 1920s. Russia appeared to have an answer then. Hindsight is always easier. But what excuses can we make for these political dreamers in 2006?

The IWW was at its best when we who were lumberjacks, migrant workers, sailors, dockworkers, railroad workers, and factory workers were in the majority. We wrote the songs and the poetry that made the most sense. We decided what was important and made our own plans to achieve the goals of the IWW. This is still happening. One hundred years later, I am invited to express myself in this paper even though I did not finish the ninth grade. I decided for myself what books to read from that point to this.

The IWW and Yip Harburg have taught me that we do have a brain, and a heart, and the courage to run our own lives through our unions. We’ll make mistakes, but we have come to a time in the evolution of this fragile earth when we must remove from power capitalist *and* socialist bosses along with their lackeys, their preachers and their politicians, who together are steering a straight and certain course towards disaster; and begin to take responsibility for our own lives. Thanks again, socialist, capitalist, religious nuts, trade union fakers of all kinds for your offers to lead us out of the mess you have made, but NO THANKS.

Next month, my view of how our IWW forefathers conspired to operate such a large and diverse group of workers democratically in the One Big Union, The Industrial Workers of the World. Impossible?

pressure the university to guarantee every custodial worker a living wage.

Paul was fired after his supervisor found him unconscious at work June 27. He had notified his boss that he was feeling unwell, had fainted a few days previous, and was seeing a doctor. Paul had worked for Harvard for six and a half years without incident.

## Teacher blacklisted for opposing ROTC in schools

The American Civil Liberties Union and the Boston Teachers Union have filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of long-time substitute teacher Jeffrey Herman against the headmaster of Boston’s English High School. Duarte put Herman on the public school’s “do not call” list after he testified on his own time at a Boston City Council hearing against the school department spending \$1.2 million a year for Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps programs in the public schools.

## This November the Boston GMB would like to honor the thousands of workers in Eastern Europe shot down by the Soviet army in 1956.



We commemorate, fifty years on, the chain of events that started with a General Strike in Poznan, Poland, and culminated with the mass uprising along the banks of the Danube (Budapest) in late October. With their cries of Ruszkik Haza! (Russians Go Home), industrial workers across Hungary drew new lines for the realization of a classless society; forming Workers’ Councils in defiance of the Soviet government.



# Human Rights Baseball

BY BRET GROTE, CLARK CLAGETT,  
AND KENNETH MILLER

Members of the Pittsburgh Anti-Sweatshop Community Alliance, United Workers Association of Maryland, and baseball fans from Kansas, Maryland and Pennsylvania met at the UWA offices in Baltimore the last weekend of August to found HumanRightsBaseball.Org.

The United Workers Association, which works with low-wage workers who clean Baltimore's Camden Yards, hosted the founding meeting. Evolving from UWA's relationship with PASCA, HumanRightsBaseball.Org comes at the end of a summer of solidarity between the two organizations. On June 24 PASCA members traveled to Baltimore for a Freedom from Poverty Vigil and March, and on July 11th the UWA lent a vocal presence to PASCA's Anti-Sweatshop Carnival at the baseball All-Star game in Pittsburgh.

The new alliance will coordinate the work of local organizations that recognize that professional baseball in the United States is a public utility that needs to be regulated in exchange for the public benefits it receives; challenging sweatshop practices and other human rights abuses by professional baseball teams by appealing to the values the game claims to represent, and to the fans.

The Alliance hopes to work with the IWW and United Students Against Sweatshops. The IWW's One-Big-Union internationalist outlook dovetails with the anti-sweatshop movement's challenge of tackling a global apparel union organizing drive. The student

role and bargaining experience of USAS in winning sweatfree policy victories is another crucial component of the movement. It was in this spirit that Solidarity Greetings were formally sent to the 2006 General Assembly from the HumanRightsBaseball.org founding meeting and the "From Cooperstown to Dhaka" Voluntary Assessment Stamp issued by the Upstate General Membership Branch of the IWW was presented and discussed.

While traditional union models have no answer for the flexibility and insecurity of a temporary labor market, whether in the global apparel industry or amongst day labor at inner city stadiums, the United Workers Association's human rights model has proven successful in organizing workers around an expansive vision of justice that speaks to the shared experiences of poor workers in today's global economy. This model has allowed the UWA to build the substantial community support necessary for workers to win, and organizers left Baltimore with every intention of bringing those lessons home.

With its roots so deeply entrenched in the mythology of Americana, baseball is a legitimate and vital terrain in the struggle against poverty and oppression. By reclaiming the values of fair play, teamwork and cooperation, community, collective struggle, and equality, HumanRightsBaseball.org will act as a vehicle for those dedicated to reclaiming the shared values of our society that have been hijacked in the crass pursuit of profits accrued at the expense of human dignity, honesty and justice.



Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1700 – Greyhound drivers and mechanics – hosted a rally and contract meeting in Cleveland Sept. 27. Their contract expires Jan. 31, 2007. Walter Thomas, a driver from Chicago, is wearing his uniform. The jacket is made in a Cintas sweatshop in Costa Rica. To his right is Herman Green who invited members of the Pittsburgh Anti-Sweatshop Community Alliance to the meeting. Members of PASCA and SweatFree Communities are helping craft anti-sweatshop contract language with the ATU Local 1700 Bargaining Team.

## San Francisco hotel workers win

Workers at several downtown San Francisco hotels have claimed victory in a two-year battle that saw a short strike transformed into a prolonged lock-out. After workers were allowed to return to their jobs, their union waged a boycott campaign while negotiations dragged on to the two-year mark.

Workers turned back the hotels' demands for a two-tier health plan under which new hires wouldn't receive full coverage for their first five years on the job, and also won wage and pension improvements. The contract also improves workload rules and protects workers against losing their jobs if hotels are sold.

Negotiations continue with several hotels outside the master contract, including large hotels like the Marriott and the smaller boutique hotels which are capturing a growing percentage of the hotel market.

## Janitors' hunger strike

Janitors working at Gutierrez Company, in Burlington, Mass., began a five-day hunger strike Sept. 23 to protest unjust working conditions, low wages, and a lack of health care and paid leave. The eight workers represented by SEIU 615 initiated the strike to force Guierrez Company to reinstate four janitors fired by cleaning contractor American Housekeeping in July. Three of the fired janitors had filed discrimination charges against a supervisor for sexual harassment.

American Housekeeping says they were fired for repeatedly being late.

The eight janitors began the fast near the Burlington commercial center and then moved campsites to key locations, such as the Burlington High School to draw attention to residents attending the Town Meeting. The Massachusetts Inter-faith Committee for Worker Justice, the Jewish Labor Committee, the Catholic Labor Guild, and other groups joined the action in support of the workers.

## Phony 'direct action' in Los Angeles hotel protest

In an increasingly common spectacle, organizers of a September "direct action" organized to raise awareness of the plight of immigrant workers in the hotel industry negotiated every detail of their protest with local police, down to the number and names of those who would be arrested for blocking roads in a sit-down protest that disrupted a major airport access road for about 40 minutes during the tail end of rush hour.

Police were provided with advance identification for the arrestees, and warned six of them that they might wish to reconsider their plans. Arrestees also wore colored armbands so that they could be readily distinguishable from protesters who would not be arrested.

The action was part of Unite Here's campaign to publicize conditions at 13 hotels around the Los Angeles airport, which pay substantially less than hotels in the city.

## Vigil protests cluster bombs

Some 80 people joined the Northampton (Mass.) Committee to Stop the War in Iraq in an Oct. 5 vigil outside Textron Systems to protest its manufacture of cluster bombs. Textron is one of the two companies (Alliant Techsystems is the other) producing the greatest number of cluster bombs in the U.S.

Recently cluster bombs have drawn attention because of their use in Lebanon. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said that 200,000 Lebanese displaced by the recent war were delayed from returning home because of the danger posed by the unexploded bomblets.

Cluster munitions are particularly dangerous because they are used in such high numbers (sometimes in the hundreds of thousands of bomblets). They are designed to kill, and an explosion from a cluster munition bomblet or submunition can kill anyone within 50 meters. Cluster munitions are small and are often brightly colored, and therefore are very attractive to children.

## Wal-Mart fined \$78 million for stealing workers' time

A Pennsylvania jury has determined that Wal-Mart broke state labor laws by forcing up to 187,000 hourly employees to work through rest breaks and off the clock, and will pay at least \$78 million.

The jury found that Wal-Mart acted in bad faith, but rejected claims that the company denied workers their meal breaks.

Lead plaintiff Dolores Hummel, who worked at a Sam's Club in Reading from 1992-2002, charged that she had to work through breaks and after quitting time to meet work demands in the bakery. She worked eight to 12 unpaid hours a month.

"One of Wal-Mart's undisclosed secrets for its profitability is its creation and implementation of a system that encourages off-the-clock work for its hourly employees," Hummel said in her suit, which was filed in 2002.

The retail giant is facing a slew of similar suits around the country. Wal-Mart settled a Colorado case for \$50 million and is appealing a \$172 million award handed down last year by a California jury.

A class action suit involving some 65,000 Massachusetts Wal-Mart workers goes to trial Oct. 25, seeking compensation for unpaid overtime and illegally docked



wages. Workers had also sought compensation for being forced to work through meal breaks, but that claim was tossed out based upon a technicality in Massachusetts labor law.

Wal-Mart managers are accused of altering pay records electronically for the past decade, altering overtime punched on the clock, and claiming workers were on break when they were actually working.

## Teachers need shorter hours

A survey by the UK Office of Manpower Economics showed "no statistically significant changes" in full-time teachers' hours since a new "social partnership" workload agreement was struck last year. The agreement was supposed to allot more time for planning, preparation and assessment, thus reducing uncompensated work time.

However, notes the National Union of Teachers, which opposed the agreement, average work hours for secondary teachers have declined by only 2 minutes and 24 seconds a week. Other teachers have actually seen their work hours increase.

to written explanations for a non-reappointment and the right to appeal any such action "that appears to be discriminatory, based significantly on considerations violating academic freedom, or attributable to inadequate consideration."

Those who have served seven years during which they have taught at least 12 courses would be entitled to consideration for permanent status, much like tenure provisions governing most full-time faculty. Some adjunct leaders fear this could discourage some colleges from employing the same adjuncts for long periods of time.

Many colleges historically have pledged themselves to abiding by the AAUP guidelines, and on some campuses, AAUP has worked through its collective bargaining chapters or faculty senates to bring policies into compliance with the rules.

## More rights for adjuncts?

The American Association of University Professors has long had detailed guidelines on how colleges should evaluate tenure-track faculty members. Now the association is now asking members to approve a detailed set of guidelines for adjunct instructors.

The proposed guidelines outline a path through which part timers could achieve some measure of job security and due process rights. Under the guidelines, which are sure to meet resistance from administrators, all part timers would have the right to written terms of appointment and a hearing in case of dismissal before the end of a term.

Those who have served for three or more terms within three years would be assured of notice of reappointment or non-reappointment no later than one month before the end of a term. They would also be entitled

## In November We Remember

that the bigger and better the IWW becomes, the more we are going to need a **POWERFUL DEFENSE**. Join the **General Defense Committee** of the IWW, a fund raising committee open to IWW members and supporters too. \$25 for initiation and one year membership.

Mail To: GDC Secretary Treasurer Tom Kapas, PO Box 23085, Cincinnati OH 45223-3085.



The GDC is a proud supporter, for a second year, of the October 22 Coalition to Stop Police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation ([www.october22.org](http://www.october22.org)). The targeting of youth, poor communities, immigrants and Muslim people will continue to escalate in the years to come. Working with groups like the October 22 Coalition – we have to fight back because **WE REMEMBER** that an Injury to One is an Injury to All.

2006 Steering Committee, John Baranski & Kenneth Miller

Questions about the GDC? Get the attention of the Steering Committee, call Kenneth 412-241-1339



## Talkin' Union...

*continued from page 1*

were old and rusty. To make matters worse, in order to cut down on costs there were only about five people working a job that should probably have been done by eight.

One afternoon Phil had enough. While on coffee break, he talked to his coworkers – well, in reality, he ran his mouth off. When he was done ranting the other men in the yard agreed, and surprisingly one of them used to be a shop steward for the steel workers union. They went over their options, including calling the union to come organize them, but decided against it. A few of them had experience with unions around town and decided that the unions probably wouldn't be interested in a five-person shop, nor were any of them interested in sticking around long enough to try and organize. What they did decide to do was fight back.

They all agreed to take their breaks at the same time, to work as slow as possible until the safety of the workplace improved, and, whenever possible, not to let any managers talk to them alone. Well, management flipped out. Soon they couldn't force the workers to do anything. Management tried to implement a rule that stated that they couldn't take breaks together, so the group simply defied them. They made their safety concerns abundantly clear, and one would have to be daft not to see their slow work as an obvious protest. Slowly but surely shop conditions steadily improved, and the more they stuck together the better things got.

### What is a union workplace?

Now by conventional standards, these were not union workplaces even once the workers banded together. We tend to think of unions in very specific terms – that is, a group of workers legally recognized to negotiate collectively with their employer. To the mainstream unions there are “organized shops” and “unorganized shops.” Those they represent and negotiate for are considered organized, and those they are trying to get into their organization are not. This misses a very important fact – every workplace, to a certain degree, is organized. In fact, bosses often rely on the relationships between employees and their natural tendency to shape their environment to run their business.

Take staffing, for example. If you need

to pick up an extra shift or drop a shift, in many workplaces the first people you actually talk to are your co-workers. The boss doesn't care who fills a given shift in many jobs; he just cares that someone fills the shift at all. Production relies on the relationships that the producers have with each other. Businesses try and hitch their wagon to this motor force in order to propel their business and increase their profits. However, businesses also try to limit these relationships: they stagger breaks, managers watch who talks to whom, and when possible they manipulate their employees' relationships. For example, in many call centers seating plans are chosen by management to make sure people don't sit next to the same person too often.

Unions often miss out on opportunities that arise out of workers' relationships with each other. Primarily they see themselves as legal entities, created by and operating under the law. This can partially account for the labour movement's declining militancy. Unions tend to see themselves not as a set of social relationships constantly training the existing way of doing business, but as a party doing business itself. They don't challenge the existence of bosses because their mere existence as a union depends on the presence of a boss with whom they negotiate. Instead of a fighting organization that takes as its starting point the relationships between workers built through struggle with the ultimate goal of making bosses redundant, they exist to advocate for the better treatment of workers under the existence of bosses.

So what do we do as the IWW? Our job shouldn't simply be to replicate the pattern of the existing unions under a red and black banner. Our entire project would be the height of futility if we were simply to fall into the same pattern of contracts and grievances that other unions have done. Our primary task should be to raise hell, and to try to get better at raising it, too. If we measure our success by bargaining units we likely won't get far without the business unions' money, and will also have thrown the fight before we have even started. As ambitious as it sounds, our primary goal is a world without bosses, and this fight was here long before we started it, and would exist in our absence.

The existing way of conducting union business largely ensures that the business of fighting the boss is the job of negotiators and



## Economy grows, but wages do not

Unemployment remains high, and wages are barely keeping up with inflation, if that. In fact, the share of the U.S. economy devoted to workers' wages and benefits has declined by 2.5 percent over the last five years, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, even as working hours have increased. Inflation-adjusted wages are now 10 percent lower than they were in the early 1970s.

Workers in some countries have lost even more. According to data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, workers' share of gross domestic product in Germany fell 3.1 percent over the last five years. In Japan, the decline was 3 points. Over all, the workers' share of the economy fell in four of the Group of 7 industrialized nations.

Economists claim to be mystified as to why workers are losing ground while the economy is booming. (The way they measure the economy has little to do with the well-being of the population or even with the amount of useful production.) Wobblies will be less confused. It has to do with the ever-growing horde of parasites living ever more richly off our labor, and the heavy costs of their wars, their financial speculations, and their planet-wrecking. These bosses are an expensive luxury, and one we can no longer afford.

shop stewards, taking the wind out of the sails of rank-and-file workers. Most of the fight is conducted with pen in hand, and much of the rest in boardrooms. This isn't entirely the fault of the unions, however; most labour legislation encourages this. But unions largely go along with this process, thinking their cooperation will pay off in the long run.

“Phil” and “Hannah” are pseudonyms for two members of the IWW Edmonton Branch. Their stories are not unique – everyday stories of resistance come out of workplaces all over the world, and I could just have easily used stories from personal apolitical friends. What is unique is that these two people were conscious of what they were doing, and thought of themselves as part of a movement. Direct action is a matter of course in most workplaces, and on a small scale almost everyone uses it. This is because it works,

and in fact, work would be impossible and unbearable without it.

Now think of the current conditions in your workplace as a truck stuck in the mud. If you get one person pushing, you might be able to rock that truck a bit, but it is likely to stay stuck. A couple people pushing can get that truck out if it's a little deep. I think you get my point: the more people pushing in the same direction, the more weight you can put behind your demands. Every person involved compounds the strength of an action, and small actions can get small results but there is a reason why mass direct actions are so rarely encouraged: direct action by necessity cannot be directed from above. Unlike a faucet you cannot turn militancy on or off. Every day each of us pulls our own way, and the bosses pull another. What if all workers pulled the same way together?

## The IWW in the history books... *continued from page 6*

### Wobbly internationalism

John Laslett's essay, “Linking the old world with the new: Recent studies of labor migration, race, and political protest in America and the British Empire” (*Labor History* 46:2, 2005, pp. 185-194) argues that studies of social movements including the IWW, Knights of Labor and women's labor struggles must be examined in the context of the large-scale labor migrations that led to a cross-fertilization of ideas and the movement of labor militants between Africa, Australia, Canada, England and the United States.

Also exploring the role of radical diasporas is Dan La Botz's “American ‘Slackers’ in the Mexican Revolution” (*The Americas* 62:4, 2006, pp. 563-590), based upon his dissertation. La Botz's focus is on the thousands of draft dodgers and other radicals who fled to Mexico after the U.S. entered World War I, and quickly became active in Mexico's labor and radical movements, and particularly in those circles that helped give birth to the Mexican Communist Party. But in the process, he touches upon (in the later pages) the role of several of these exiles who joined with Wobbly seamen to build a Mexican IWW with particular strength among maritime and oil workers and which (though no historian acknowledges this) survived into the 1960s.

Mark Derby's “The Case of William E. Trautmann and the role of the Wobblies” appears in *Revolution – the 1913 Great Strike in New Zealand* (Melanie Nolan, editor, Canterbury University Press, 2006). While Trautmann was long gone from New Zealand,

Wobblies were very much involved in the strike (most fled the country in its aftermath), and Trautmann's writings were influential.

Ward Churchill's “The Trajectory of Political Policing in the United States, 1870 to the Present” (*CR: The New Centennial Review* 4:1, 2004, pp. 1-72) tracks the evolution of repression from privatized and vigilante forces to the more “professional” approach of the FBI, including several pages on repression against the IWW from 1905 through 1924, based on a rather superficial reading of the literature that captures the more famous instances but is far from a comprehensive picture of a reign of terror against IWW organizers that continued well past when he drops the story. It is hard to understand how the absurd claim that William Haywood was the “first” IWW president (an office he never held, and of course there only was one president, the office having been abolished at the second convention) gets into print.

Previously reviewed in the *Industrial Worker* are Bruce Watson's *Bread & Roses: Mills, Migrants and the Struggle for the American Dream* (Viking, reviewed June 2006), who offers a well-written narrative of the IWW's massive 1912 Lawrence textile strike, but unfortunately is unable to understand the workers' desire for a life freed of the fetters of capitalism, and Franklin Rosemont and Charles Radcliffe's *Dancin' in the Streets: Anarchists, IWWs, Surrealists, Situationists & Provos in the 1960s* (Kerr, reviewed December 2005), largely reprinted from the pages of the Chicago journal *Rebel Worker*.

## Book Review: The enemy of nature

REVIEW BY PERRY SANDERS

Joel Kovel, *The Enemy of Nature* (Zed Books, 2002), 273 pages.

A few weeks ago a political conversation turned to ecology when I asserted that capitalism is destroying the world we live in, which makes its overthrow a practical necessity. My friend agreed, adding that he had read a good book on just that subject.

Soon after our conversation I went to the public library and asked for the book, which arrived several days later via inter-library loan. I was thrilled, especially after reading the subtitle: “The end of capitalism or the end of the world?” “Yes!” I said to myself, went home, and eagerly started reading the book, which turned out to be sound ecologically but disappointing politically.

The first two parts are a searing, well-documented indictment of capitalism's disgusting, life-threatening ecological record. The author extrapolates the “grow or die” motion of capital to make Earth uninhabitable for humans (and many other species as well) in the not-too-distant future, without its revolutionary overthrow internationally. It includes the following chapters: Part I: The Culprit, The Ecological Crisis, Capital, Capitalism; Part II: The Domination of Nature, On Ecologies, and Capitalism and the Domination of Nature.

These are “must” reading, even though

Kovel says part of the goal of “the revolution” is “no more lower classes.” (10) This implies a class society, with a middle and upper class. But for me, the goal of the international working-class revolution is the elimination of *all* classes, and the creation of a global classless society.

The third and last part of the book contains the following chapters: Towards Ecosocialism, Critique of Actually Existing Ecopolitics, Prefiguration, and Ecosocialism. Although Kovel advocates what he calls “ecosocialism – carried out in a dreamy, utopian, populist way – he actually advocates a form of state capitalism, complete with a state (the Soviet state is cited as a form of public ownership of the means of production, p. 242), markets (244), money (ecoprises and ecodollars), and remuneration differentials of “perhaps” 3 to 1 (243).

This is some kind of impossible people's state, and it's not a truly ecological society either. We need to get rid of the state (which serves and must serve the employing class), commodities, markets, money, and the like. We need and want an ecological society too.

Although this book is state capitalist in its essence, it still contains important facts and insights. But to create a truly sustainable, ecological society we must rid ourselves of all forms of capitalism.







# Korean general strike planned

The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions has announced plans for a general strike beginning Nov. 15 to protest free trade talks, labor law “reform” and attacks on the rights of workers on temporary contracts.

The Workers’ Group of the 14th Asian Regional Meeting of the ILO released a statement August 31 expressing its deep concern “over the worsening labour situation in Korea where serious violations of workers and trade union rights are taking place...

“We condemn the violence and police brutality perpetrated against workers involved in peaceful rallies and demonstrations to uphold their fundamental rights and improve their wages and working conditions. Such aggression had caused the deaths of two workers and injuries to many others and led in recent months to the imprisonment of more than one hundred unionists. We demand the[ir] immediate release.”

The delegates called on the government to respect the rights of public employees to unionize and to reverse its decision to forcibly close the offices of public employee unions.

## “Communist” Korea violates workers’ rights

Human Rights Watch has called on the North Korean government to amend its law governing the Kaesong Industrial Complex, a new industrial joint venture between North Korea and South Korean companies, to ensure adequate protections of basic workers’ rights.

The Complex opened in June 2004 under a contract between North Korea and South Korea’s Hyundai Asan Corporation and South Korea’s state-owned Korea Land Corporation. The complex is located between the North Korean city of Kaesong and the western border between the two Koreas. Workers produce goods mostly for the South Korean market, including watches, shoes, clothes, kitchenware, plastic containers, electrical cords and car parts, among other items. As of August, more than 8,000 North Korean workers were employed by 13 South Korean companies.

Human Rights Watch found that South Korean companies are violating the KIC Labor Law, which stipulates that employers should pay workers directly in cash. Instead, the South Korean companies are paying workers’ wages in U.S. dollars to the North Korean government, which in turn pays the workers in North Korean won after deducting a mandatory 30 percent contribution to a social welfare fund.

The group has not been permitted to interview workers, who it believes are also being denied their right to form and join independent unions, among other core labor rights.

## BNP racist meeting stopped by workers’ direct action

The racist anti-immigrant party known as the British National Party booked a meeting in the Doncaster, UK, Throne Democratic Club to prepare for the BNP’s upcoming political campaign for local council seats. As local anti-fascist activists planned to disrupt the meeting, the workers who staffed the club took matters into their own hands. The shop steward threatened to resign and the bar staff threatened to strike if the meeting was held. As a result the meeting was cancelled.

## Carpet factory workers attacked in Iran

Workers of the Rash Alborz Carpet Factory in Babols, Iran, were attacked by security forces Sept. 16. After waiting for a resolution between strikers and the factory management, workers who returned to the Alborz carpet factory were in for a rude awakening. They came back to the “re-opened” factory only to find themselves and their families attacked by security guards. When other workers heard rumors of security forces attacking innocent workers, many decided to march in front of government offices to protest the repression. As a result, a confrontation occurred between

They also called for easing restrictions on the right to strike, repealing provisions barring fired and unemployed workers from retaining union membership or holding union office, and allowing workers to join unions of their own choice even where this means more than one union in a single workplace.

Meanwhile, the government continues its efforts to crush the KCTU-affiliated Government Employees Union. As of October 10, the local offices of 125 out of 251 KGEU chapters have been forcibly closed, and many have been sealed off with iron plates or bars to ensure that workers can not return to them.

At least 101 KGEU members and supporters have been arrested and several were severely beaten up and hospitalized. Twelve KGEU leaders have been summoned by the police on charges of leading illegal activities of an illegal organization and violation of the National Security Law.

The federal government has announced it will penalize local governments that do not close down KGEU offices and withdraw recognition from the union.

the protesting workers and Iranian military forces; 40 of the workers were badly injured and another 40 were arrested.

The Iranian MP from Babols, Hojatollah Rouhi, apologized for the massacre but then appealed to the workers to stay calm and wait for an investigation. He admitted the factory management was trying to downsize the factory from 800 to 300 workers and said that management should have informed the workers of this. One worker said, “We understand his proclaimed Mehrvarzi or ‘government of kindness’ all too well. No matter which side of the infamous ‘war on terror’ your country is placed on, the result is the same for workers: state repression of workers’ rights.”

Meanwhile, the head of the official Iranian labor union admits that some 200,000 workers have not received their salaries for months or, in some cases, years.

“Some of these workers have been waiting for their wages for about 50 months,” said Alireza Mahjoub, the secretary general of Iran’s House of Labour.

According to Mahjoub, 18.5 percent of Iran’s 70 million people live under the poverty line. He also expressed concern over rising prices, despite official claims that inflation is under control.

*The IWW Edmonton Branch is holding weekly strike support actions in solidarity with the 250 workers of the Palace Casino in West Edmonton Mall who struck Sept. 9 seeking a first union contract. Negotiations dragged on for over a year, and managers refused the UFCW’s request for arbitration.*

PHOTO BY  
DON CRISALL,  
WOBBLY DISPATCH



## Crisis in Oaxaca

In September, the IWW’s International Solidarity Commission issued an urgent appeal calling on IWW branches to organize delegations to visit local offices of the Mexican government to protest the threatened repression of the teachers’ union and popular movement in the Mexican state of Oaxaca.

*To the Federal Government of Mexico, National Union of Education Workers Section 22, Popular Assemblies of the People of Oaxaca, and the people of Oaxaca,*

The International Solidarity Commission of the Industrial Workers of the World stands strongly in support of the National Union of Education Workers Section 22 (SNTE-CNTE) and the Popular Assemblies of the People of Oaxaca (APPO) in their demands for the immediate resignation of the governor of the state of Oaxaca, Ulises Ruiz Ortiz, for the repeated acts of violence committed against the people of Oaxaca by police under his command. The IWW demands the Mexican government cease its military and police preparations to attack the members and supporters of APPO and the SNTE section 22 in Oaxaca state, and instead honestly address these groups’ concerns. Furthermore, the IWW demands the Mexican government free the political prisoners, Germán Mendoza Nube, Erangelio Mendoza González, Catarino Torres Pereda and Ramiro Aragón Pérez.

The IWW also condemns the paramilitary mobilizations which through acts of violence threaten the protests of members of APPO and the SNTE-CNTE, as well as the citizens of



Mexican teachers rally in Oaxaca.

## Workers’ demo in Thailand defies strict martial law

The very first massive demonstration since the coup in Thailand was staged Oct 8 by textile workers in front of the American Embassy, demanding the U.S. authorities investigate why the company they work for as lingerie workers, producing bras for Gap and Victoria’s Secret, is being closed down.

Troops did not intervene although the demonstration violated strict laws on public assembly. The grievances of the 1,400 workers to be dismissed without severance pay.

Some 800 Thai lingerie workers waved bras and placards during the protest. They were laid off by Gina Form Bra.

Somsak Praiyowong, adviser for the Gina Relation Worker Union, said around 80 police were present at the rally, but that it went ahead peacefully. “We are afraid but we make it clear to police that we are not gathering for politics, we have a problem,” he told the AFP news agency. “Our workers are suffering so fear is no big deal.”

Gina Form Bra is due to close by the end of October after company officials said they could no longer afford costs in Thailand and were moving operations to China.

## Coca-Cola case dismissed

The Colombian labor union that sued Coca-Cola in a Florida court with the backing of the Steelworkers Union and human rights groups will appeal the ruling of the federal judge who dismissed the complaint.

Javier Correa, president of the Sinal-

Oaxaca. The international community is well aware that many of these gunmen are, in fact, currently or recently employed police officers, ultimately under the command of Ulises Ruiz Ortiz; as are the Oaxacan CTM and CROC union officials currently conspiring to harrass and assault the people of Oaxaca for opposing this corrupt government...

The International Solidarity Commission of the IWW will work to make the violent acts of the Mexican government known in our communities around the world, and will take every step possible to support the members of SNTE-CNTE Section 22, and the APPO, in their courageous resistance to injustice.

## Korean government workers union under attack

The ISC wrote South Korean labor officials condemning “the unjust and reprehensible raids made against the Korean Government Employees Union” and demanding that the government immediately recognize the right to the Korean Government Employee’s Union’s existence, and allow it to operate freely and legally.

## Disappeared in Argentina

The ISC added its voice to human rights organizations protesting the “disappearance” and presumed kidnapping of Julio Lopez shortly after his testimony in a trial against former human rights violators under the last Argentine dictatorship:

“We recognize that witnesses like Julio are key to bringing to justice the military and police officers who during the military dictatorship from 1976 to 1983 committed crimes against humanity.

“The ISC supports the demands of Argentinean civil society that the Argentine government exercise its responsibility to protect such witnesses. We urge the government to employ all the resources of the State to find him, alive and intact. The ISC stand in solidarity with the compañeros and compañeras who are searching for Julio and hope for his immediate safe return.”

trainal labor union, said that U.S. district judge Jose Martinez didn’t determine the company was innocent but found he lacked jurisdiction over the matter.

“This is not a ruling over the merits of the case, it’s a decision on procedural grounds,” Correa said. “We believe our case is conclusive and we expect the justice to rule favorably.”

The Colombia union and several workers sued Coca-Cola and four of its local bottlers in 2001, claiming that it collaborated with local paramilitary groups to use murders, torture, threats and intimidation to eliminate union activity at its bottling plants.

In the past years, nine union leaders working at Coca-Cola plants were killed in Colombia while more than 60 others received death threats. More than 3,800 union leaders and activists have been assassinated in Colombia since the mid-1980s.

## Uniontex struggle continues

The anarcho-syndicalist All-Polish Trade Union Workers’ Initiative continues its fight to restore worker ownership of the Uniontex factory despite a recent labor court ruling allowing the firing of union activist Slawomir Skrzypczak two years ago. Other fired workers have won rulings only to receive token compensation without reinstatement. The union continues to fight the privatization.

Polish companies are increasingly turning to lay offs and firings to rid themselves of independent union activists. While illegal, labor courts have proved reluctant to require companies to reinstate workers.

