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This is what FBI harassment looks like

BY TABITHA CHASE, ATLANTA IWW

When I awoke on March 17, 2005, I checked my phone and found that I had five calls from three different phone numbers that I did not recognize. All of them were from special agent Dante Jackson of the FBI stating that I “*had* to call him back.” I immediately called my friend and attorney Ken Driggs, gave him the name of the agent and numbers, and asked him to find out what these calls were about. He called back later that day saying that they “were demanding a compulsory interview, and that should I refuse to schedule one or fail to show up, they would come and pick me up.” We scheduled the appointment for the following day.

On March 18, 2005, he picked me up and we headed to the interview. He asked what this was all about and I answered, “Frankly I have no idea, I’ve never even been arrested.” We went to the Atlanta FBI office; I walked in with nothing but the clothes on my back and my I.D. Three agents led us into a room with seven chairs and a table; two of them left, the one who remained identified himself as Special Agent J. Omar Molina with the FBI domestic terrorism task force, the other two returned. One identified himself as special agent Dante Jackson, also with the domestic terrorism task force; I never caught the name of the third and he refused to give me his card. They asked for my I.D. which I gave them. I confirmed the information on it and they asked for my Social security number, which I also gave them. Then they asked who I was dating, to which I responded, “That is none of your business”; so they asked again, and then I asked them what this was about. They refused to answer. Ken and I both started asking this question over and over until one of them asked me, “Do you have plans to go to Iraq to medic for the insurgency?” Dumbfounded by this question, I asked to speak to my attorney alone; they refused. An argument ensued until they relented and left Ken and I to speak alone.

In the summer of 2004 I had made the decision to go to Iraq with Circus2Iraq.org, an NGO that does circus performances for children in many areas inside Iraq. I planned to go in the late spring of 2005. I received notice that September that all trips had been permanently suspended, people who the group had worked with in Iraq had been kidnapped thus creating an atmosphere where the performers might cause a danger to the people who they were staying with and doing the acts for. I’m also a street medic with Action Medical, and travel a great deal inside the United States to medic at protests and actions. I intended to travel to the G8 in Scotland to medic after my trip to Iraq, but as I couldn’t go to Iraq I had failed to solidify my plans for going to G8. In fact at the time the interview was happening I hadn’t even applied for a passport. It was as though these accusations were being made by someone who had access to some personal information about me and interpreted it with wild abandon.

When the agents returned, their posture had changed they seemed intent on drilling me on things that had nothing to do with the previous question. They asked why I don’t have a credit card, bank account, or car. They asked if I was an anarchist at least 20 times, they asked if I was a U.S. citizen, they asked if I was against Bush, the war, capitalism, government, commerce, etc. What especially makes this line of questioning hilarious to me is that they could have easily and readily found out this

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Restaurant supply workers go IWW

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Never Again? Sago just the latest coal disaster

BY RICHARD MYERS

One miner is injured in an explosion and will soon die. Twelve miners walk through the mine without necessary information or direction, their lives also in mortal danger. The communication system has failed and ventilation controls were damaged during an explosion, allowing the buildup of dangerous gases. The emergency response is deficient, it fails to protect and evacuate miners at risk.

But this was not the Sago Mine in West Virginia. This was Brookwood, in Alabama, September 2001. There had been a methane explosion, injuring four miners. Three were carried to safety. A second, larger explosion took the lives of the miner immobilized in the first blast, and twelve would-be rescuers. It was one in an endless thread of disasters, a continuing calamity across the ages.

In 1815 a young coal miner transcribed his last thoughts for his mother in the Heaton Main Colliery, near Newcastle-upon-Tyne. “Fret not, dear mother, for we were singing while we had time, and praising God.”

Today we read a bittersweet note penned by helmet’s glow, testimonial to another bitter heartbreak: “Tell all I’ll see them on the other side. It wasn’t bad. I just went to sleep.” To the mothers, the families, the close-knit coal communities, we’re two centuries on and nothing’s changed.

Unlike Sago, the mine at Brookwood was a union mine. The United Mine Workers of America conducted an extensive investigation of the Brookwood disaster, reportedly more thorough than that conducted by the Mining Safety and Health Administration (MSHA).

The UMWA report on Brookwood found: 1) a faulty emergency evacuation plan; 2) failure of the mine operator to adequately control explosive coal dust; 3) failure to implement sufficient roof control measures; 4) failure to effectively ventilate the mine; and 5) failure

to properly inspect for, record and correct hazardous conditions.

This brings us to the Sago Mine in West Virginia, where 12 miners died and one was seriously injured resulting from the Jan. 2 explosion.

The joint state and federal investigation at Sago is still underway as this article goes to press. However, consider what we already know: 1) On at least two occasions since August, MSHA cited Sago management for not properly maintaining escapeways for miners; 2) the Sago Mine had been cited in September for coal dust and coal pieces piled nearly three feet deep. On Dec. 14, less than three weeks before the disaster, Sago was cited again for loose coal piled 29 inches deep, and coal dust on the mine roof and walls. As at Brookwood, MSHA found Sago had done a poor job of spreading limestone material meant to keep coal dust from igniting; 3) two safety violations were issued in August following roof collapses that seriously injured one miner, with 11 roof collapses recorded during the past year; 4) nine times in the past year, the Sago Mine was cited for failing to properly enact a mine ventilation plan. Three of those violations were considered “significant and substantial”; and 5) pre-shift examinations at Sago were not always done properly. In one case the inspector named a Sago foreman in his report, declaring that he “has engaged in aggravated conduct by his failure to record and take action on a known hazard.”

In short, all the types of failures and violations recorded by the United Mine Workers’ investigation of Brookwood appear to have been in play at Sago as well.

The Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 declares that, “the first priority and concern of all in the coal or other mining industry must be the health and safety of its

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“No Contract, No Work” The 2005 New York City transit strike

BY NEW YORK CITY MTA TRAIN OPERATOR HARRY HARRINGTON

The drama of the New York City transit strike began three years ago during the last contract struggle. The president of the subway and bus workers union local 100 of the Transport Workers Union went down to the deadline with threats of a strike but no preparation until, the day after the contract deadline, he accepted what members considered a terrible deal. It called for no raises in the first year of the contract, with givebacks in health benefits, discipline and job security – the future of hundreds of bus drivers and support personnel – by accepting little input in the MTA’s bus consolidation plans.

The union president admitted that he was afraid of a strike, which means he was willing to give up all leverage to secure much-needed changes in work conditions. He was unable to change the grievous amount of discipline transit workers suffer – 15,000 cases a year out of a total of 34,000 employees, a condition that persisted yearly into 2005.

No givebacks, Strike!

On December 10, thousands of New York City’s subway and bus workers crowded into Jacob Javits convention center for a Transport Workers Union’s Local 100 mass meeting. As members entered they were relieved of any

dissident literature or forbidden to enter with it. The meeting was scripted, with no motions or questions from the floor. A strike vote was passed on the motion from the podium. The Transport Workers Union made their slogan “No Contract No Work,” “A deadline is a deadline” and “No givebacks.” Under pressure from organized union dissidents, local President Roger Toussaint made a demand for an 8 percent salary increase.

The negotiating climate had been made difficult by a number of factors. In the past the New York City Metropolitan Transportation Authority had lied about its finances, claiming poverty while in actuality having hundreds of millions of dollars in surpluses. This year they had almost a billion dollars in admitted cash surpluses. This embittered transit workers, many demanding justice from an employer they had hated for decades.

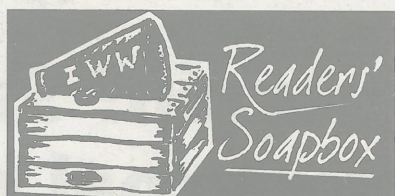
TWU members are the lowest-paid transit workers in the NYC metropolitan area. Transit workers at the Metro-North, Long Island and other area railroads all received several dollars more per hour for the same jobs at a much less intense speedup. This many TWU members attributed to the infamous Taylor law that made strikes by municipal workers illegal and subject to fines of two days’ pay for every day of strike for the workers and

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A class act

I have just read the November 2005 issue of Industrial Worker and want to praise and thank Gary Cox for his front page article "A Class Act." It is one of the most lucid, accurate, timely and damning reminders of capitalism and its inherent horrors I have seen in a long time. Well done Gary, Well done *Industrial Worker*.

Dave Hewitt,
Nottingham, UK



IWW Organizing Summit

"By building organizations based on solidarity, rather than on bureaucratic chain-of-command, we build organizations that by their very existence help to bring a new kind of society into being." — Staughton Lynd, *Solidarity Unionism*

You are invited to the IWW Organizing Summit in Austin, Texas, March 10-12.

The Organizing Summit is what many Wobs have been wanting for years. It is a chance to focus on organizing in the union and what it means to say, "Every member is an organizer." The weekend will be hosted by the Austin GMB and was endorsed at General Assembly 2005 in the hopes of supporting the work of the Organizing Department Formation Committee.

Over the weekend we will discuss the state of organizing in the union, participate in organizing workshops, and review efforts to launch an IWW Organizing Department.

Attendees must be in good standing in the IWW. Presenters in some cases will not be required to be IWWs. For more information or to make suggestions contact: waterloowob@monkeywrenchbooks.org

Lucy Parsons GMB, Austin

Major League sweatshops

In July, Wobblies and other activists will converge on Pittsburgh, Penn., to protest Major League Baseball's sweatshop profiteering on the occasion of the sport's annual All-Star game. Efforts

associated with this issue have been ongoing in the IWW for about four years, with branches in Pittsburgh, Upstate New York, Milwaukee and other areas conducting protests, petitioning and creating publications to educate and agitate with.

Last year, the ISC endorsed such local actions and this year, with the events planned in Pittsburgh

this year, those of us active with this work want to give the greater union a heads up and would like to get more IWW members involved. While specific details of what other can do are forthcoming, it would be nice to get support and endorsements.

Please contact Ken Miller, noseatshops-bucco@yahoo.com for more information.

Greg Giorgio, Upstate New York

Northwest Day of Solidarity with Leonard Peltier

The 13th annual march and rally for justice will be held Saturday, Feb. 4, in Tacoma, Washington. We meet at 12 Noon at Portland Avenue Park (between East 35th and East Fairbanks), marching to the U.S. Federal Court House for a 1 p.m. rally.

An after-rally potluck meal and get-together will begin around 4 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, 423 Martin Luther King Jr Way.

Speakers and performers will include native activists, Wobblies and other unionists, and peace activists.

Those who need transportation are encouraged to join Caravans for Justice leaving from cities throughout the Northwest.

Leonard Peltier Support Group

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Solidarity Gets the Goods: Chicago picket wins wages

Around 19 Wobblies and friends of Wobblies (aka wobsymp) picketed the Ideal Car Wash on Chicago's Northwest Side January 14th in a wage dispute between Fellow Worker Neal Rysdahl and the company.

In October 2005, FW Rysdahl went to work for Ideal under a verbal contract washing cars for \$5.00 per hour, to be paid in cash at the end of the week. Neal worked 45.5 hours and was expecting to get \$227.50 for his labor but when pay day came there was no pay for Neal.

After making several attempts to get Ideal to pay him what was owed, Neal brought the issue to the November meeting of the Chicago GMB. The GMB established a Grievance Committee to take up Neal's beef with Ideal.

In November Chicago GMB Secretary, Mike Hargis, sent Ideal a polite letter asking them to make good their obligation to our Fellow Worker. A week later FW Hargis received a call from Eduardo "Eddie" Amenero, one of Ideal's managers, claiming that he never hired Neal; that in early October Ideal was in the process of being sold to a guy named Lee Alicia who backed out of the deal at the last moment and skipped town. Amenero said that this Alicia character may have hired Neal but that he, Amenero, never hires people by the hour but that he does hire people to work for tips.

FW Hargis relayed this conversation to the Grievance Committee, which decided to send another registered letter demanding that Ideal pay Neal what he was owed or else. FW Penny Pixler wrote this letter and gave Ideal until January 1st to pay up or face industrial action.

Comes January 1 and still no dough.

The Grievance Committee got together and organized an informational picket for Saturday, January 14, to pressure Ideal to pay our fellow worker his due.

Picketing began at 9:00 a.m. We managed to turn away a few cars and received several supportive horn-honks from passing motorists. Around 11:30 the owner showed up, along with Amenero and a few goons. The owner started in to harangue Neal, claiming that he never hired Neal to work for him and that Neal was a liar. Meanwhile one of his would-be thugs biased himself making idle threats against pickets.

Although tension began to build, FW Pat Brenner of the Chicago GMB intervened and told Amenero that we didn't want any trouble; that we wanted to resolve the issue peaceably.

After a brief negotiation, punctuated at times by threats from the gangster wannabes, the boss pulled a wad of cash out of his pocket and paid Fellow Worker Neal what he was owed, all the while denying that he owed Neal anything. (But having his business disrupted and embarrassed was potentially more costly than the pittance owed to Neal.)

The picket line came down and we left, satisfied that solidarity works and that direct action gets the goods!

Thanks to all the FWs who came out to picket, including the comrades from Food Not Bombs who brought some grub. A special thanks to Neal for not walking away from a beef. Who knows how many other workers Ideal has screwed out of their pay? By standing up and saying "no more," FW Neal showed that you don't have to take it, that you can fight back if you have a union at your back. An Injury to One is an Injury to All!



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- ★ EDUCATION
- ★ EMANCIPATION

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Union victories at NYC Union Square Starbucks

BY TOMER MALCHI

On Friday Nov. 18, Starbucks workers at Union Square publicly declared their membership in the Starbucks Workers Union. Throughout the weekend workers showed their strength by refusing to take off union pins in the face of management attempting to enforce a no-pin policy. Our key demands were for guaranteed hours, a group meeting with management, and an end to anti-union discrimination.

District manager Kim Vetrano informed us three days after we went public that we could not wear our pins; although pins have been worn in the past, the policy was suddenly being enforced. Vetrano also insisted there would be no group meeting. We could have one-on-one meetings with managers, but not as a group.

In response to the denial of our demands and constant harassment over our union membership, we formed a picket line on Friday Nov. 25. With over 50 IWW members and supporters picketing throughout the day, we brought one of the busiest days of the year to a standstill. Our presence had a severe economic effect on the store. Managers were forced to give out free samples in order to get rid of all the milk. Store manager Mike Quintero told me that we were directly affecting his bonus.

In the past two months we have had several leaflets and many confrontation on the floor. Management has attempted to break the union, but a solid core of IWW members at Union Square have shown that we are not afraid. We have shown that as a union the company listens and our working lives improve.

On Dec. 15 Starbucks targeted one of our strongest Wobblies. Suley Ayala was told to take off her pentagram necklace, a symbol of her being Wicca. An assistant manager said that religious items can not be worn at work. Meanwhile we were forced to wear Christmas hats and listen to non-stop Christmas music.

Workers were sick and tired of the illegal anti-union activity and religious discrimination. Three union members walked off the floor and confronted our manager in the back room. This was to no avail and managers threatened to send people home. Management did change their reasoning, though. The problem was no longer that the necklace was a pentagram, but rather that it was now too big.

In response workers took direct action. Union members wore their own necklaces and refused to tuck them in or take them off. Still Suley was the only one targeted, and was sent home for wearing her pentagram for violation of Starbucks dress code. Meanwhile

Madison Downtown Workers

The Madison (Wisconsin) General Membership Branch has launched a campaign to organize the 400 or so businesses in the downtown area. The campaign began last Fall by canvassing the district, gathering contacts in dozens of shops, and is now well on the way to mapping the entire district.

The IWW Downtown Workers Union has opened an office at State and Gilman streets, produced a brochure on Workers' Rights in Madison, and is working to build a strong union presence among these low-paid, hard-working, unorganized workers. They are working to establish new industrial union branches in IUs 640 (restaurant and building service) and 660 (general distribution), and to build an ethos of solidarity unionism that will give these workers the tools to win some of the good things of life.

The December 2005 issue of *Prairie Fire*, the Wisconsin IWW newsletter, reports on this campaign, local IWW centenary events, local fall-out from the split in the AFL-CIO, announces the "One Big Blend" of coffee available from the IWW-organized Just Coffee, and offers a look at Whole Foods, "the Walmart of Organic."

EZ Supply workers go IWW

Deep in the gritty, industrial district of North Brooklyn/Queens, 15 workers of EZ Supply started the new year right by marching to their workplace and demanding that their highly abusive boss sign a petition recognizing the IWW as their union.

Little over a month earlier they had come to the workers' night at Make The Road by Walking, and told of working long hours without being paid overtime, which ultimately amounted to being paid less than minimum wage. Sometimes the trucks would finally be loaded to the top at 3 p.m., and the workers would be told that all 25 stops in Manhattan had to be made. And they did something rarely heard of: they collectively forced their boss to rehire a fired worker, who had been fired because he hadn't made all the stops that day.

Soon they signed up with the IWW, and decided on some direct action.

Wearing IWW pins and carrying IWW flags and a banner saying "abolish the wage system," they were joined by members of the local NYC-GMB, Make The Road by Walking, and workers from Handy Fat, another warehouse nearby which has also organized with the IWW. Soon there were rowdy chants and a picket line which turned away at least one delivery.

"The boss thinks he's God," said FW Bert Picard, one of the key organizers in the campaign. FW David Temple's command of the Chinese language conveyed the importance to this "god-like" boss of coming out to speak

other workers were violating the unenforceable dress code in numerous ways without any repercussions.

We began leafleting. A flyer was passed out to customers telling people about the injustice Suley was facing. Aside from the religious discrimination, Suley was not being paid the correct wage. A mother of four and a Starbucks worker for three years, she has received some of the most unjust treatment from the company. When rehired in the beginning of 2005 her wage was brought down from \$8.54 to starting pay of \$8.25. According to Starbucks policy, if rehired within a year's time a worker should be rehired at their previous wage rate. There was a clear mistake, and for the past year Suley's voice was not heard. Leaflets with a picture of Suley and her kids were given to customers to let them know the situation behind the counter. We were spreading the truth about Starbucks and they wanted it to stop.

with the workers and signing the petition, or else there would be no work that day.

Ironically it wasn't the chants in Chinese of "rat, rat, come out of your hole" by those on the picket line that finally brought the managers out of their hole, but instead management's call to the police. By 11 a.m. the boss had the petition, to be shown to his lawyer, and the workers were back at work.

EZ Supply provides restaurants with coffee cups, take-out bags and other sup-

Our direct action in support of one another forced the company to give Suley back pay for the past year and adjust her wage. A clear victory for the union! In addition, Suley continues to wear her pentagram without any reaction. At Union Square we have been able to secure a minimum amount of hours for members, get better equipment and management is finally addressing the rodent and insect problem at the shop. As a union we have a voice at work.

Overall the IWW drive has forced Starbucks to improve working conditions across NYC. Most recently we have seen a 25-cent across the board raise for all NYC Starbucks workers. Since the union campaign started 18 months ago there have been three separate raises, which have increased starting salary from \$7.75 to \$8.75. In addition, the union has pressured Starbucks to change its employment practices and move towards an option of guaranteeing hours for Starbucks workers.



plies, but the union drive at their warehouse is providing the sweatshops and exploited workers in the area with a wonderful example of revolutionary unionism. After the EZ Supply workers returned to work, Bert and other organizers remained outside and took the names and numbers of other deliverers and workers who had witnessed the brief strike and wanted to learn more about the IWW and how to organize.

It was only the second day of 2006, a year which so far promises to be very rewarding.

Handyfat workers organize

A majority of the 15 workers at Handyfat Trading, Inc., a food wholesaler in Brooklyn that serves the Chinese food industry, have joined the IWW, and will have an NLRB election on Jan. 17. The boss has circulated a letter to Spanish-speaking warehouse workers warning that they will be replaced if they vote union and try to "interfere" with how he runs the business.

The New York IWW's organizing in the food and warehouse industries led to an article in the Jan. 4 *New York Sun*, which quoted a New York City Central Labor Council official saying they are following IWW organizing closely.

"If they are now declaring themselves to have a better way to organize, I hope they're right," said public policy director Ed Ott. "The labor movement needs new ideas."

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.

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.

New York transit strike...

continued from page 1

millions in fines for their union. The Taylor Law was passed by the state of New York after the effective 1966 transit strike.

At the Grand Hyatt Hotel, at a Dec. 15 press conference at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, TWU Local 100 president Roger Toussaint was accompanied by several local labor leaders expressing their support for transit workers: heads of the hospital workers, teachers and police benevolent society pledged support; the heads of the Metro-North commuter lines, also an MTA subsidiary, pledged that they would not cross Local 100 picket lines.

Later that night Roger Toussaint let the "Deadline is a Deadline" pass without taking action. The MTA had dropped their "final offer" that would require future hires to pay 2 percent of their wages for their health benefits and give them a 30-year age-62 pension. They offered a 3-year contract at 3%-3%-3%.

TWU leader Toussaint correctly rejected this offer, since it would gain (modest) benefits for current employees at the expense of the next generation of transit workers, and would doom the rest of the municipal labor force to copycat givebacks in pensions and health benefits. Still, he had "blinked," as he did not call the strike as promised. This caused great dissatisfaction on the part of his fellow transit workers, all fearing a sellout.

He then announced another plan, calling another deadline for the following Monday morning, when, if no progress was made in negotiations over the weekend, he would call out two private bus lines in Queens that were being consolidated within the MTA but were not yet legally subject to the New York State Taylor Law's severe anti-strike penalties. To get them to agree to strike for the benefit of their municipal co-workers, Toussaint promised to pay their wages out of the union

A tale of two cities

BY ERIC LEE

When friends of mine from New York City visit me in London, they often refer to our citywide underground rail system as "the subway." I explain to them that here in England, we have subways – but the word has a completely different meaning. (A subway here is an underground passageway.) Here, we call our underground rail system "the underground," or, more usually, "the tube."

The difference between New York's subway and London's tube was highlighted over the Christmas break when short strikes broke out in both cities.

The transit strike in New York lasted three days, ending just before the likely arrest and jailing of the leaders of Transport Workers Union Local 100. On the very morning that union president Roger Toussaint was due to appear before a judge, the union reached a tentative settlement and ended the walkout.

Only days later, Britain's National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) shut down the London Underground on New Year's Eve, and held a second walkout a week later.

What struck me was the difference between how the two societies reacted to the strike.

In New York, the strikers were breaking the notorious "Taylor Law" which forbids public sector workers in New York state from striking. Toussaint had to invoke the spirit of Rosa Parks and the Montgomery bus boycott to remind the public that sometimes breaking the law is the right thing to do.

In London, the question of arresting Bob Crow, the leader of the RMT, never came up. The strike may have been unpleasant for commuters, it may have angered London's "socialist" mayor, but no one for a moment suggested it was illegal.

The right to strike is a fundamental human right. Almost all countries ban members of the security services – the police and military – from striking. But very few would consider bus and subway staff to be in the same category.

treasury while they were on strike.

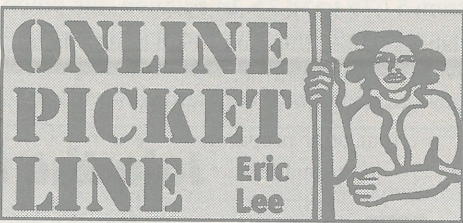
Roger Toussaint lost a decisive advantage by not walking out at the contract deadline as TWU leaders in the past had done. The TWU fought for years for this advantageous time to strike. Every day of a pre-Christmas strike would cost the city of New York \$400 million and Toussaint threw away the last weekend of Christmas shopping by failing to keep his threat. He began to look more and more like he was blinking, as he had done in previous years. The TWU president had fooled his members before with strike talk before. It seemed to many that they had the power but no one could be found to use that power.

Provoking a strike

That Monday night, December 19, the Local 100 Executive Board met to consider the latest "final offer" by the MTA. That board has been known to rubber stamp Roger Toussaint's wishes.

The MTA dropped its demand for a 30-year age-62 pension, but insisted that new hires would have to pay 6 percent of their wages into their 25/55 pension (current employees pay 2%); and lowered their request for new hires' health benefits premium to 1 percent. This was a surprise, and set the negotiations back even further. Many labor watchers felt it was meant to provoke a strike or destroy Roger Toussaint's union career. The MTA felt his protests against their policies had interfered with their total control over the city's transit system. The MTA then upped the offer of 3%-4%-3 1/2% raises.

The Executive Board met late Monday night and rejected the deal. The Board then voted to strike by a vote of 28 for, 10 against, and 6 abstentions. All the International officers on the Local 100 Executive Board voted against striking or abstained. International



Frightened by the "Taylor Law," the national leaders of the TWU did not support Local 100 – a fact that city and state officials made much of. But the London strike was organized and led by the national union.

New York's bus and subway workers were denounced by the mainstream media as overpaid, underworked and greedy. In London, people tended to remember the heroism shown by bus and tube workers at the time of the July 7th and 21st terrorist bombings. (Tube workers were on the front lines, evacuating the dead and injured from deep underground, surrounded by smoke and flames.)

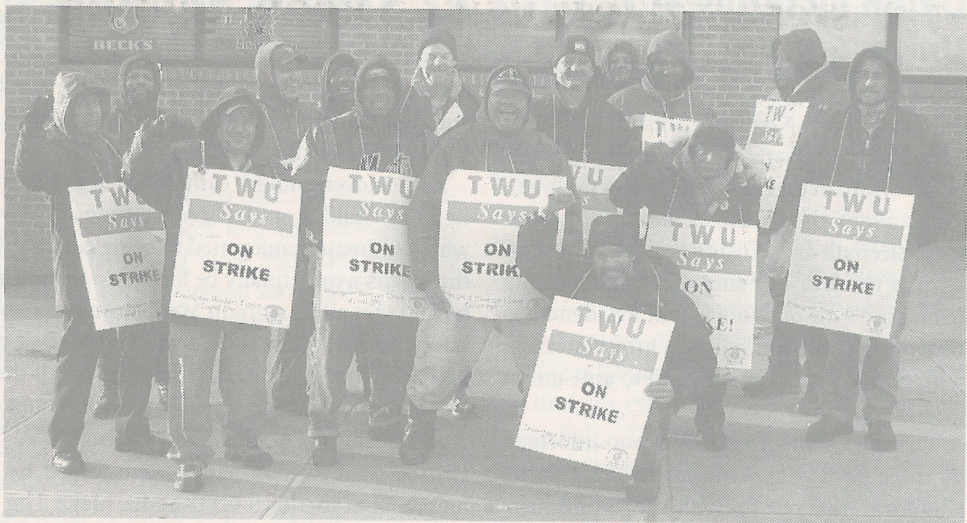
New York and London are both cosmopolitan, liberal cities. They have much in common.

But the two strikes made me wonder about why one was nearly broken by state repression and ruled illegal, while the other – while unpleasant for many – was accepted as part of the normal course of life.

One fundamental difference is that workers in New York, unlike workers in London, do not have and have never had a real political party of their own.

I know that there exists today in New York a Working Families Party which tries to throw the weight of the trade union movement behind this or that Democratic candidate. And in the past, New York's unions were instrumental in setting up the American Labor Party and the Liberal Party. But the idea of trade unions organizing an independent political party to elect working-class candidates to office never really took off.

Britain has had a Labour Party for a century now. Ask trade unionists today if that party still serves the interest of working-class people and you might get laughed at. Tony Blair's "New Labour" bears little resemblance



President Mike O'Brien, who was present at the Local Board meeting, advised the Board that the International would not sanction a strike, as he thought a satisfactory deal could be reached with the MTA.

International officers had been at odds with the Local 100 president for some time. As a result, the international failed to show solidarity or partake in the class struggle.

The MTA became more intransigent; with all the politicians facing the prospect of a citywide transportation stoppage, all began to warn of severe penalties. The class loyalties of the "Friends of Labor" became more apparent as the deadline approached. Hoping these threats would work, the city made no new offers and Roger Toussaint, backed into a corner, was forced to call a walk-out.

The Queens bus strike took place Monday, inconveniencing 50,000 New Yorkers but bringing no concessions from the MTA.

That Tuesday night there was a rally near the hotel where the contract was being negotiated. Many who attended from other unions were eager for labor to strike back and the power of the transit workers made them likely candidates in their eyes. Roger Toussaint's speech was popular. He compared the Taylor

to the party formed by industrial workers and coal miners a century ago.

Just how far today's Labour Party has moved away from its origins is illustrated by the fact that the RMT union, representing London's tube workers, got itself thrown out of the party – which it helped found, and to which it had been affiliated for decades – two years ago. The reason: the union had allowed some of its members in Scotland to affiliate to another party, the left-wing Scottish Socialist Party.

Nevertheless, even with a Labour Party more remote from unions than ever before – a Labour Party that bears little resemblance to the party founded a century ago – even with a Labour Party like that, something like the "Taylor Law" would be unimaginable in Britain.

At their very worst, when Labour Party politicians are pushing for privatization, pursuing policies that would once have been considered "Thatcherite" and betraying the legacy of Keir Hardie and Clement Attlee, even then no one in the party would dare talk about banning all public sector strikes.

Does that mean that all New York's workers need to do is form a labor party (or turn the Working Families Party into one) to solve their problems? Yes and no.

Even with a hundred years of independent labor political action here in Britain, with a Labour Party in power nationally and "socialist" Ken Livingstone the mayor of London, workers here face the threat of privatization, downsizing and attacks on unions. This is hardly a workers' paradise.

As the Wobblies always understood, political action is at best just one weapon in labor's arsenal and is no substitute for other weapons, such as organizing, the picket line, and the strike.

And yet, as I watched the TWU end its struggle faced with million dollar a day fines and possible imprisonment of its leaders, I had to wonder if Roger Toussaint didn't feel a little bit jealous of his British counterparts, who were able to conduct their struggle without fear, and with the law on their side.

Law to the laws enforcing segregation laws, such as Rosa Parks' struggle, that were used against poor and working and minority people. It was the high point of his efforts to date. He had won the support of his members, most of whom are black or members of other minority groups, who resonated with this comparison. The workers were eager to revenge themselves on the MTA, which is amongst the most abusive employers in the nation, and eager to walk out.

The strike begins

That night, really Tuesday morning at about 2 a.m., I received a call from a friend on the TWU's executive board saying the strike was going forward. He told me to go to my work location where I was one of the shop stewards and tell my fellow transit workers the walkout was on. He asked me to take a taxi. I grabbed the picket signs and instructions for the walk-out and was at work within ten minutes. I had them all by my door. There I began to get my fellow workers to stop work and we formed a picket line in front of our work location. We were amongst the first pickets set up in the Bronx and we had only one scab – a probationary employee, fear-struck with the threat of losing his job. I was overjoyed to be striking against this miserable management and hoped that the strike would get them all fired.

That Tuesday morning the city of New York found itself by and large unable to get to work. The hoped-for scabs to run the system never materialized and the threats of supervisors running trains were nothing but an empty bluff. The subways and buses were shut down completely. Turn-out for the picket lines was high, and spirits were high too, in spite of the bitter cold. The public gave the transit workers widespread support against the much-hated MTA. At our picket the local pizza parlor operator gave us free food and drinks throughout the strike. Passersby on foot and vehicles honked their horns and some joined our picket lines. Some gave us donations and containers of coffee.

The union had done a decent public relations job, especially in campaigns linking transit jobs to public safety (the fight to keep conductors in the trains and station agents in the booths); and the MTA's \$1 billion plus budget surplus was common knowledge, so New Yorkers tended to blame the MTA rather than the strikers for their misery.

The city began to take action against these rebellious and so-effective workers' strike before the example spread. New York City Mayor Bloomberg – who called us thugs, which many workers took as a racist remark – went to court to seek contempt charges against Local 100 and transit workers, and by the end of the day the judge had imposed a fine of \$1 million a day on the union, demonstrating the solidarity of the courts with the interests of state and local corporations.

Then the president of our International showed his true colors. TWU International President Mike O'Brien announced publicly that the parent union did not agree with the strike. He said it was illegal and his treason soon found its place on posters decorating the MTA gates quoting his order to return to work as the strike was illegal. The transit workers had nothing but contempt for him, having voted with their feet – all the authorization they needed. Many of the minority as well as

Northwest strikers vow to keep fighting

Striking Northwest Airlines mechanics and cleaning crews stunned the boss press and industry “experts” when they refused to accept a surrender pact under which workers would abandon the strike in exchange for four weeks’ severance pay. All 4,100 strikers would have been laid-off; a handful might eventually have been reinstated to their jobs.

“It’s the worst contract in aviation history,” said striking mechanic Mike Bauer. “I didn’t go on strike for a contract like this.”

Some 56 percent of the 2,223 votes cast were for continuing the strike. Workers were voting on the contract Northwest imposed when the strike began August 20, terms that continued a string of “final offers” each of which was worse than the one before.

“Our striking members refused to bow down to Northwest’s arrogant, self-enriching management and will continue the strike against this renegade, union-busting airline,” said AMFA head O.V. Delle-Femine.

Northwest continues flying with outsourced cleaning staff, maintenance contrac-

tors and scabs, and scabbing by members of the airline’s other unions, each of which also faces demands for deep concessions. Northwest now proposes to lay off thousands more workers in every classification and shift jobs to a new low-wage subsidiary.

The airline says it will impose new concessions on the unions through the bankruptcy court if they do not agree. Flight attendants say they will strike if their contract is thrown out, noting that the concessions Northwest is demanding would leave them no reason to continue work.

Unions representing ground crews and pilots have also threatened to strike. Northwest claims they do not have the right to strike under federal bankruptcy law.

Had the scabbing unions told Northwest that they would honor the mechanics’ picket lines last summer, they would not now be facing this third round of concessions. Instead, by crossing picket lines they not only undermined the strike and cost thousands of AMFA members their jobs – they have also

emboldened management at Northwest to take its meat axes to their own conditions and jobs. And if Northwest succeeds, other airlines are sure to follow suit.

Meanwhile, as United Airlines emerges from bankruptcy, having slashed workers’ wages and jobs, the company plans to give its eight top executives \$45 million in stock. Workers at the company gave \$4 billion in concessions in the last three years. They gave billions of more in prior years, in exchange for valueless stock in the airline that left them with lots of paper but no control.

Union scabbing at Wabash

Drivers with Teamsters Local 135 began crossing picket line at Indiana’s Wabash Alloys Jan. 9. In March 2005, 193 members of Boilermakers’ Local 1240 were locked out after rejecting concessions of up to 42 percent on wages and benefits.

Wabash had been using nonunion drivers to move rigs in and out of the plant, with Teamsters (who work for Wabash under a separate contract that bars them from sympathy strikes, but allows individual workers

free to make any decision without having to answer to the members. We went back as he had surrounded himself with defeatist union bureaucrats and Democratic Party politicians who advised surrender in effect.

The *New York Times* reported that local union leaders who publicly shouted their support for the TWU’s demand but did not declare their support for the strike said something different in private to TWU leaders.

Privately, in the conference call on Wednesday afternoon, the other union leaders warned Toussaint that the fines, public anger and contempt citations from the strike could be disastrous and destroy the union. What they did not tell him is that the TWU defeated such fines from a similar law in 1966 and made great gains even winning a twenty-year at fifty years of age retirement plan. Surrounded by such leaders, afraid or unaware of labor’s power, they counseled returning to work without a contract.

There was little preparation for the strike. Despite that poor preparation, the members stepped up and made sure picket lines were up and staffed and were making efforts to coordinate their actions in different boroughs.

But, why was the local so poorly prepared? Why were picket captains not trained over the summer or early fall? Why were there no satellite union offices in the boroughs to serve as strike HQs? Why were there no meetings of picket captains and activists? Why weren’t pickets sent to Metro-North and LIRR yards? Why wasn’t there a strike newspaper to offset the deluge of lies in the corporate newspapers? No one reported in the corporate press the survey that stated 72% of New Yorkers supported our strike, as did Democracy Now.

Why didn’t other unions organize their members to demonstrate in mid-town or join us on the picket lines (many members from other unions expressed their support and picketed with us, but their unions did little but give us lip service – except for the PBA coffee wagon!)? Why were there no contingency plans for what to do if the International took the Local over? And why did the union seem so unprepared for the ferocity of Bloomberg’s and the MTAs response? Surely they must have known that they would be facing massive fines and the possibility of jail.

Despite any criticisms I might have about how the strike was prepared and run, I’m proud to have been a part of the strike and honored to have stood on the lines with all my fellow transit workers and our supporters.

What did we get?

What did we get? Raises that will not even cover the most conservative estimate of inflation: 3% year one, 4% second year, 3.5% third year. Martin Luther King day finally and Veteran’s Day. A refund of pension money owed to about 50 percent of the membership. And we have to pay 1.5% for our medical and will get lifetime medical of some sort off past

to respect picket lines) taking charge of the scab cargo at an off site transfer point.

Farm workers quit AFL-CIO

The United Farm Workers union has left the AFL-CIO to join the breakaway Change to Win Coalition. The UFW claims 27,000 members. The Laborers International Union now is the only Change to Win union still in the American Federation of Labor.

International Sea-scabbers

Back when the IWW was a force on the high seas, we derided the SIU as the sea-scabbers for their cut-rate contracts and propensity for strike-breaking. Now dissidents complain that SIU work for wages much lower than those paid under Sailors Union of the Pacific contracts, with the result that the average SIU sailor quits within his first two years. (The SUP is technically part of the SIU, but operates autonomously.)

Under SIU contracts, seamen can be required to do maintenance and other work while on watch, meaning that no one is at the wheel for much of the day.

retirees. This will go up if costs go up, so this is a cause for great trepidation. Assault pay upgrade, the MTA will pay two years of your run pay not your base pay. Company-paid disability insurance up to \$170 a week for 26 weeks, 37-month contract, no more Christmas contracts, a great bargaining loss.

And the MTA agreed to obey arbitrator decisions in the future. This last shows the degree to which this company has sunk, where it won’t even obey arbitrator decisions.

The strike was a lesson for all of in the TWU and the labor movement. It is clear that following the same old leaders alienated from their membership will not be effective. We must find a new path. A look to the example of the IWW in its monumental struggles could help us all. Solidarity Forever

A Wobbly, FW Harrington successfully fought the MTA bosses’ bigotry for the right to wear his Sikh turban on the job.

Pensacola transit strike nears end

BY SCOTT SATTERWHITE

Union officials from the Amalgamated Transit Union local 1395 recently returned to the negotiating table with Pensacola Bay Transportation owner Margie Wilcox to bring an end to the 70-plus day transit strike. On January 12th, the workers of Pensacola Bay Transportation Company received word that their long strike may soon be over.

Jubilant union officials drove up to the hastily called rally honking their horns, giving the thumbs-up sign. “We’ve got good news. We’re 99.5% certain we’re going to win,” said local president Mike Lowery.

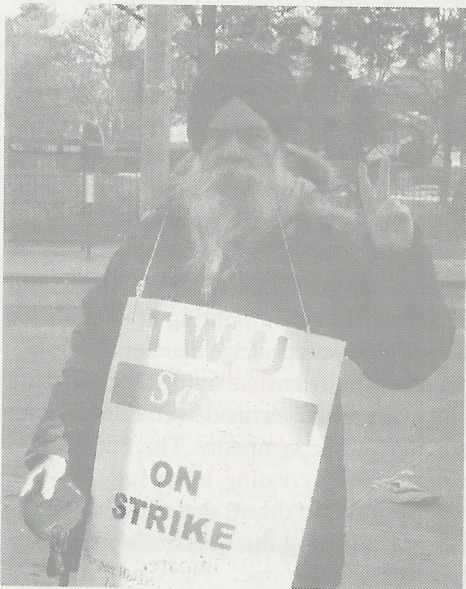
ATU local 1395 members normally handle transportation for disabled clients, but went on strike in early November after their own health-care coverage was threatened. Among their other demands are an increase in wages (pay currently is between \$6 and \$8 an hour) and an end to unfair termination policy and harassment of union members.

Since the strike began, not one striker has crossed the picket line.

Final word should come shortly after the Martin Luther King holiday weekend. The strikers plan to march in the annual MLK Day Parade in downtown Pensacola, carrying signs that read “Thank You Pensacola for Supporting Our Strike.”

The Pensacola IWW Branch has supported the strike since the beginning by bolstering picket lines almost daily, delivering food boxes and free coffee, and raising money for their strike fund. At the ATU rally, the IWW was the only union thanked by name.

Workers will know for certain whether they won the strike after a local disability transit board gives final approval to the proposed contract. The transit workers strike is the first local strike by organized labor in Pensacola since the late 1970s.



FW Harrington on the picket line

up the conference call and I knew that bad leadership was going to lose us this strike.

The next day Toussaint ordered us back to work without a contract and facing fines, with no punishment for our employer whose decades of abuse had brought on this strike.

My co-workers on the picket line who had gone through the past few days on strike began to see the union leadership more as an obstacle and hindrance to victory than a help. In the space of three days the International and local leadership had made our strike ineffective, even more so than the mayor or the governor. Local and International leaders had begun to close ranks when the TWU Local 100 Secretary-Treasurer Ed Watt was quoted on radio explaining away the International union’s refusal to sanction Local 100’s strike, and putting the best possible construction on their appeal to the judge not to impose fines on the International. He claimed that was no big deal – they were just doing that to avoid heavy fines, and it didn’t mean a thing

Democracy slowly died

Over the years of Roger Toussaint’s administration of local 100, democracy slowly died despite his election as a “radical” candidate of the New Directions faction. He soon replaced any elected officers who opposed him, sending them back to their tools, leaving them little time for union work. He gave a majority of the Executive Board members jobs within the union dependent on their continued loyalty. This turned the Local 100 executive board into a rubber stamp for his policies. Contrary to the Local’s constitution he negotiated in secret, made side deals and kept division officers from negotiations.

This all had an effect on my fellow transit workers. Many of us felt that the lack of democracy let our union turn against, as in the case of the international. The international president was not elected by the members but by representatives at closed conventions where there was no opposition candidate.

Our local president, isolated by the blind careerist support of his executive board, was

Transit strike, from page 4

white transit workers felt that orders to work reminded them of slavery. The strike was rapidly changing the consciousness of many of my fellow transit workers as they saw the unity of the state, courts, corporations and press against the union and workers.

With this public stab in the back by the International, our prospects seem to have dulled considerably. Any likelihood that the MTA would be cowed into offering rapid concessions now seemed remote. Nevertheless the strike was holding strong and the workers were prepared to stay on the picket line until we neared parity with our fellow transit workers on nearby railroads. WE felt our power and their impotence. Nothing moved in the city, business was at a virtual standstill

The International began urging the members to “stop their illegal strike and return to the bargaining table.” The mayor was saying the MTA should not negotiate with the union until we called off the strike. And Governor Pataki, who appoints the MTA Board and who is a prospect for the 2008 Republican nomination, was keeping a low profile, hoping to appear remote from the conflict in pro-labor New York and tough on labor to the country at large.

The strike rolled into its second day. My fellow pickets were even more enthusiastic than the day before. The word got out and more and more began to show up to picket. Many spent 12 hours a day on the picket line. I gave out IWW buttons, “The longer the picket line the shorter the strike.” It was a great occasion for exchanging ideas about labor and future of organized labor. I gave out issues of *Industrial Worker*. It was clear to us that many of our leaders were out-and-out scabs, such as our International president.

That Wednesday night Roger Toussaint had a conference call with many picket captains to find out about scabbing, as the MTA had reported falsely that there were thousands crossing our lines. The captains told him that was a complete lie reported by corporate press pursuing their own interests. He then began to say that he had “mis-spoke” and would not return to work if the pension issue was taken off the bargaining table but only if we got a contract. He then said, “The Governor of New York State, with national political aspirations in the Republican Party, had taken the same stand as the New York City mayor against negotiating while we were on strike, and that such a stand would be hard to beat.”

I chimed in that we should not give up our strike or go back without at least the Taylor Law fines being nullified. I sensed that our president, who had expressed his fear of striking in the past, was beginning to waffle and would go back without anything for us, putting us in a bad bargaining position. Our power was in the strike. Roger Toussaint said, “Oh, the governor will never go for that.” I replied, “You at least have to bounce it off him to show him we demand it.” He then wrapped

Is the strike dead? *Not according to Bob Schwartz*

BY STEVE EARLY

From the *Forward to Strikes, Picketing, and Inside Campaigns: A Legal Guide For Unions* by Robert Schwartz (Work Rights Press, 2005, 165 pp.). Available in paperback for \$24 from www.workrightspress.com or by calling 1-800-576-4552)

Three years ago in Boston, downtown streets and office buildings were the scene of inspiring immigrant worker activism during an unprecedented strike by local janitors. Their walk-out was backed by other union members, community activists, students and professors, public officials, religious leaders, and even a few “socially-minded” businessmen. The janitors had long been invisible, mistreated by management and, until recently, ignored by their own SEIU local union. Simply by making their strike such a popular social cause, they achieved what many regarded as a major victory.

On the same day that the janitors’ dispute was settled, a much larger strike – at Overnite Transportation – ended quite differently in 2002. Faced with mounting legal setbacks and dwindling picket line support, the Teamsters were forced to call off their nationwide walk-out against America’s leading non-union trucker. The 4,000 Overnite workers involved were not able to win a first contract. And since their three-year strike was suspended, all have lost their bargaining rights in a series of “decertification” elections.

The intersecting trajectory of these two struggles – one hopeful and high-profile, the other tragic and now almost forgotten – raises important questions about the state of the strike and the future of labor in America. Maintaining “strike capacity” is no less important than shifting greater resources into organizing new members – and just as essential to union revitalization and growth. Unfortunately, developing new ways to walk out and win has not been a big part of recent debates about “changing to win.”

Labor’s strike effectiveness and organizational strength have long been connected. Throughout history, work stoppages have been used for economic and political purposes, to alter the balance of power between labor and capital within single workplaces, entire industries, or nationwide. Strikes have won shorter hours and safer conditions, through legislation or contract negotiation. They’ve fostered new forms of worker organization – like industrial unions – that were badly needed because of corporate restructuring and the reorganization of production. Strikes have acted as incubators for class consciousness, rank-and-file leadership development, and political activism. In other countries, strikers have challenged – and changed – governments that were dictatorial and oppressive (plus union leadership no longer accountable to the membership).

In some nations – like Korea, South Africa, France and Spain – where strike action helped democratize society, general strikes are still used for mass mobilization and protest. In recent years, millions of Europeans have participated in nationwide work stoppages over public sector budget cuts, labor law revisions or pension plan changes sought by conservative governments. In Brazil, voters have even chosen a one-time strike leader, Luis Ignacio (“Lula”) da Silva, to serve as president of their country.

In America, meanwhile, “major” work stoppages have become a statistical blip on the radar screen of industrial relations.

As the recent experience of transit workers in New York City and mechanics at Northwest Airlines has shown, striking continues to be a high-stakes venture. It involves considerable legal and financial risks, particu-

larly in the public sector, where walk-outs are severely restricted and, as in New York, subject to draconian penalties. Since 1992, walk-outs by 1,000 workers or more have averaged less than 40 annually. In 2003, there were only 14, with just 129,000 union members participating. In contrast, at the peak of labor’s post-World War II strike wave in 1952, there were 470 major strikes, affecting nearly three million workers nationwide.

As strike activity continues to decline in the U.S., the pool of union members and leaders with actual strike experience shrinks as well. That’s why union activists need to analyze, collectively and individually, their strike victories and defeats – summing up and sharing the lessons of these battles so they can become the basis for future success, rather than a reoccurring pattern of failure.

Attorney Bob Schwartz’s new book, *Strikes, Picketing, and Inside Campaigns: A Legal Guide For Unions*, makes a valuable contribution to this educational process. It’s the latest in a series of easy-to-read guides from Work Rights Press, which also publishes the author’s best-seller, *The Legal Rights of Union Stewards*. As in his previous books, Schwartz provides useful sample letters, legal notices and answers to commonly asked questions – in this case, about the many different types of union picketing and strike activity. There are also relevant case citations, tracking the development of labor law in this area.

Beginning with the PATCO disaster in 1981, when thousands of striking air traffic controllers were fired and replaced, the U.S. labor movement entered a dark decade of lost strikes and lock-outs. Many anti-concession battles ended badly – at Phelps-Dodge, Greyhound, Hormel, Eastern, Continental Airlines, International Paper and other firms. The lost-strike trend discouraged many unions from using labor’s traditional weapon. Among those that did, set-backs continued into the mid-’90s, at firms like Caterpillar, Bridgestone/Firestone and A. E. Staley, whose Decatur, Illinois, plants became part of the strike-bound “war zone” in 1994.

Even during this difficult period for strikers, there were contract campaigns that bucked the tide of concession bargaining – and Schwartz’s book discusses some of the tactics and strategies they used. In 1989, for example, 60,000 members of the Communications Workers of America and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers waged an effective four-month strike in New York and New England over threatened medical benefit cuts at NYNEX. Telephone workers made extensive use of mobile picketing tactics and targeted top officials of the company and their allies in places where they least expected it. (See Chapter 8 of *Strikes, Picketing and Inside Campaigns*, entitled “Follow That Truck,” and Chapter 6, “Making It Personal.”)

At the same time, the United Mine Workers succeeded in making their 12-month walk-out against Pittston – in geographically isolated Appalachian mountain communities – into a national labor cause. The union mobilized its members for sympathy strikes at other companies, used civil disobedience tactics, staged the first plant occupation since the 1930s, and created an encampment in southwest Virginia (Camp Solidarity) that hosted strike supporters from around the country. Even an avalanche of injunctions, fines and damage suits did not deter the miners and their families.

West Virginia aluminum workers, locked out by Ravenswood, then applied many of the lessons of the Pittston strike in a wide-ranging corporate campaign orchestrated by

the United Steel Workers of America. The USWA leveraged international union connections to put mounting pressure on key financial institutions and investors who were tied to the employer. (See Chapter 5 on finding the pressure points of “integrated businesses.”) Despite massive hiring of replacement workers and other union-busting measures, Ravenswood was finally forced to end its lock-out and settle with the USWA. Since that victory, the ILWU and Bay Area hotel workers have both turned the table on offensive lock-outs by employer associations trying to thwart shop floor action or a selective strike. (Consumer-oriented picketing – and boycotts like the one HERE Local 2 has pursued since its 51-day lockout in San Francisco – are discussed in several chapters, including “Buyer Beware.”)

In 1997, the contract strike made its biggest come-back in recent years with the now-famous walk-out by 190,000 United Parcel Service workers. The backing of Teamster drivers has long been appreciated by other strikers. As Schwartz notes (in Chapter 9, “Honor Thy Line”), IBT contract language has been “a boon to other unions who count on Teamster drivers to respect their picket lines.” In 1997, it was time for the rest of labor to return the favor, which unions did in a tremendous outpouring of support for UPS drivers and package handlers.

How the Teamsters framed their dispute with UPS was a critical factor in gaining broader public sympathy. The main strike objective was creating more full-time job opportunities to thwart management’s strategy of converting the UPS workforce into a largely part-time one. “Part-Time America Doesn’t Work!” the Teamsters proclaimed, in a successful effort to invest their contract fight with larger social meaning. The UPS strike not only beat back the company’s concession demands and made job security gains, it became a rallying point for everyone concerned about the societal impact of part-timing, with its accompanying erosion of job-based benefits.

Unions engaged in more recent struggles against health care cost-shifting have tried to borrow from the Teamsters’ playbook at UPS – by linking their strikes to the movement for health care reform. When 18,000 General Electric workers staged a two-day nationwide walk-out in 2003, to protest medical plan changes, many locals organized around the slogan, “Health Care For All, Not Health Cuts At GE!” Strike-related rallies and publicity emphasized the common bond between union and non-union, insured and uninsured workers. (The UFCW’s 2003-2004 strike and lock-out involving thousands of grocery workers in southern California was less successful in making the connection between management demands for benefit cuts and the need for universal medical coverage.)

As Schwartz notes, some unions are now striking with greater tactical flexibility than before, experimenting with limited-duration walkouts and inside campaigns to reduce the risk and cost of protracted shut-downs. HERE members at Yale University have repeatedly demonstrated creativity – and unusual solidarity between separate white collar and blue-collar units – during their campus-based bargaining battles. In 2003, Yale workers skirmished effectively with the university for the ninth time in the last 35 years. Faced with aggressive picketing, mass rallies and strike-related arrests, Yale sued for peace in the form of a long-term contract.

In similar fashion, thousands of telephone workers in the northeast entered regional bargaining with Verizon in 2003 with a record of five strikes in the previous two decades and a deeply ingrained “no contract, no work” tradition. Confronted with unprecedented strike contingency planning by management,



CLIFF HARPER

members of CWA and IBEW shifted gears to throw their corporate adversary off balance. For more than a month, they worked without a contract (engaging in all the “job wobbling” activities described by Schwartz in Chapter 2, “No Contract, No Peace”).

Verizon incurred enormous strike-preparation costs, without getting the opportunity to replace its existing workforce with an army of scabs, as planned. The result was a new contract that preserved job security guarantees, plus fully paid medical coverage for workers and retirees. (In 2004, a four-day national “warning strike” by 100,000 workers at SBC Communications – some of whom had not been on strike in twenty years – produced similar results, while avoiding the risk of an open-ended walk-out.)

“Job wobbling” – in the form of work-to-rule and other “inside tactics” – has also figured prominently in recent rank-and-file discussions about how to respond to the deep wage and benefits cuts demanded by Delphi Corp., the nation’s largest auto parts supplier. UAW leaders and some dissidents seem to have endorsed the work slow-down approach in a situation where walking out might actually facilitate the company’s downsizing and plant-shutdown plans.

Regardless of what form worker militancy takes, it helps to have adequate financial backing for strikes and contract campaigns. One bottom-line requirement is a strike fund, with the flexibility to pay out fixed weekly benefits (of at least \$200 to \$300 per week) either for strikers or for the disciplinary casualties of concerted in-plant activity. Some unions also maintain a separate source of contract campaign funding – for use by workers who are prohibited by law from striking and for the payment of strikers’ medical expenses and/or COBRA premiums. (See Chapter 10 of Schwartz, entitled “Benefit Daze,” for valuable advice about COBRA coverage, unemployment claims, and related issues.)

Creativity, careful planning and membership involvement are essential to success – whether a union chooses to stop work or pursue a non-strike strategy. A big part of the internal planning process is sizing up the strengths and weaknesses of management’s position – and your own. Before (rather than after) walking out, union members need to line up labor and community support. Otherwise, there is great danger that a small group of workers – and sometimes even a large one – will end up on picket lines isolated, frustrated and impoverished.

Bob Schwartz’s new book is a unique tool to use in membership education, leadership training and union strategy discussions about what to do when a contract expires. In situations where striking is a necessary and viable worker response, Schwartz outlines what it takes to make a walk-out effective, while helping unions anticipate likely employer counter-measures at the bargaining table, in court, and at the NLRB. The author has pulled together an enormous amount of material that has not been readily accessible to non-lawyers in the past – even to activists relying on the official strike manuals of the few unions that have them. Union members who fail to consult Schwartz’s book while preparing for a contract fight will not be as ready as they could be to deal with the many legal and organizational problems that may arise. Any union bargaining team that doesn’t have a copy of *Strikes, Picketing and Inside Campaigns* is missing out on information and advice that will make the hard job of winning good contracts just a little bit easier.

Sago, W. Va. or Serene, Colorado?

Miners' funerals are also a Class Act

BY GARY COX

Nineteen years ago, in 1986, Boulder and Denver Wobs began forming a broad coalition of ten unions, five local communities, retired miners, and interested workers from all over (we received donations from as far away as England and Sweden) in order to honor six IWW miners. These miners were shot down by the machine guns of the Colorado State Police while picketing at the Columbine mine at the company town of Serene, Colorado, during the state-wide coal strike called by the IWW in 1927. They were murdered because they dared to ask greedy owners for decent pay, safer mines and union representation.

On June 10, 1989, about 150 of us dedicated a beautiful new granite marker at the site of their graves in the Lafayette cemetery. The late Carlos Cortez came out from Chicago to scatter the last of Joe Hill's ashes. Softly he said, "This part of you has been held prisoner in a government office too long, Joe. It is high time you got back to your own people again." We also celebrated the placement of a Colorado State Historical Marker on Colorado Highway 7, just south of the site where these men were shot dead. Over the years, this coalition has had to fight three times, most recently in 2005, to save this highway marker.

Ten days ago, as I write this, 12 miners suffocated and the 13th is still in a coma due to

an explosion at the Sago Mine in West Virginia. It has been 78 years since the 1927 IWW strike, and miners continue dying in unsafe, non-union mines because without union protection workers are fired for complaining about unsafe conditions. The Sago Mine *had no rescue squad* on duty because International Coal Group CEO Wilbur Ross said it would be too expensive. As a result, it took 24 hours to get a rescue team outfitted and into the mine. Rescue squads are too expensive? Wilbur Ross just made a \$300 million profit (*Fortune* magazine) in April 2005 selling off the International Steel Group. A rescue squad on duty could have saved 13 lives.

Returning to Lafayette, the strongest and most vocal members of the Columbine coalition have always been the Lafayette Miners' Museum, the Lafayette Historical Society, the Erie Historical Society, and the Lafayette Library. Tonight, Jan. 12, the Library hosted IWW members Lowell May and Richard Myers, editors of the book, and Colorado historian Joanna Sampson, one of four authors, to discuss their new book, *Slaughter in Serene: the Columbine Coal Strike Reader*.

All three are well known in Lafayette as they were all instrumental in the success of the Columbine commemoration on June 10, 1989. It took three years of hard work to prepare for that day, so the people in the small coal towns near Serene saw all of us more than



they cared to, probably. I counted 130 people who came to hear Richard and Joanna discuss local mining history of the early 1900s and to get their books signed by the authors. It was a standing-room-only crowd. I had to stand for two hours, as we ran out of chairs.

Several who came were from mining families and others had lived in the area in 1927, and a few shared their memories. Both authors did a great job of bringing old history back to life as did those in the audience who participated. I saw no one leave early. We sold three dozen books and distributed a sack of our IWW 100 year anniversary buttons.

The Lafayette Historical Society and the Lafayette Miners' Museum sponsored this evening's book signing event. To get 130 people out on a work night was quite an ac-

complishment. What is so important about these events, in my opinion, is that we get a chance to exchange ideas with people from all walks of life. Too often we only communicate with the choir. At the end of the discussions, the point was made that history hasn't gone anywhere. Twelve lives were lost the week before last in a non-union mine to prove it.

What? You want to know more about IWW history in Colorado? Curious about female leadership in an all-male industry? How did the IWW pull off the most effective coal strike in the history of Colorado? Never heard of Serene, Colorado? Send \$19.05 for the book, plus \$2.95 shipping to: Bread and Roses Workers' Cultural Center, c/o P & L Printing, 2298 Clay St., Denver CO 80221. Or forever be curious.

Sago Mine disaster...

most precious resource – the miner." Over the years, mining safety in the United States has improved. Annual death counts that numbered in the thousands a century ago are now tallied in the scores. Yet many of the deaths that continue to occur are preventable if coal operators simply choose to follow the rules.

Alas, the safety of miners (and other members of coal communities) is frequently sacrificed to corporate greed. The reported fatality numbers don't factor in the thousands of deaths from black lung disease. Nor do they include the 14 West Virginians who have been killed during the past three years by floods and mud slides triggered by mountaintop removal, nor the approximately fifty Kentuckians killed by overloaded coal trucks.

Wilbur L. Ross, head of International Coal Group (ICG) which owns the Sago mine, does not perfectly fit the stereotypical mold of the conservative business tycoon. He opposes free trade and eschews the off-shoring frenzy of capitalist colleagues, believing that the U.S. should maintain its core industries such as manufacturing. Ross has supported Democratic politicians, calling John Kerry a friend and raising funds for Bill Clinton. Ross even supports national health care, declaring, why should business pay for it!

Ross specializes in corporate welfare and bankruptcy law. Most investors abruptly shed any stock which smacks of corporate failure, but Ross is a vulture investor, seeking out distressed companies ripe for the picking. Never waiting for his targets to hit bottom, Ross gains control as a company is taking on water, buying up 25 to 50 percent of the company's debt before it crashes onto the shoals of financial disaster. For Wilbur Ross, bankruptcy court becomes the perfect sledgehammer for smashing union contracts, while off-loading pension and health care liabilities onto the taxpayers.

The federal agencies which insure these programs, of course, typically pay benefits at a greatly reduced level, if benefits are granted at all. Who cares that mining families are plagued with black lung disease? What does it matter that Appalachian families need health

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care for sickly children raised on silt- and slurry-polluted stream water? In his search for riches, Wilbur Ross leaves devastated families in his wake by the hundreds of thousands. But his own fortunes are looking up nicely, thank you.

When he recently sold his steel holdings, Ross increased his investment fourteen times over in two years. Coal looks just as promising. Coal prices doubled in the past couple of years as utilities switched from natural gas to coal generation of electricity. The current price hovers around \$57 per ton, with \$22 billion mined in 2004. What is at stake in West Virginia and elsewhere is simple greed, the "right" of the corporation to be unfettered by whatever they see as unnecessary impediments in the drive for profits.

Whenever disaster strikes a mine in some remote coal town, management spins like a top for the media. The Sago explosion was an "act of God," the result of a lightning strike they declared. Certainly no one could blame the corporation for such an unexpected calamity. Hundreds of media outlets dutifully passed on this explanation. Yet who was identified as a witness to this bolt from the heavens? No one. While lightning sometimes represents a hazard, and it remains a possible explanation for the explosion, experts have cast doubt upon the story.

Then we heard that ICG had taken over the Sago Mine just weeks before the disaster, and therefore should escape blame. The sale had indeed been finalized in November. But this story is misleading – Sago is owned by Anker, and Ross began investing seriously in Anker in 1999. He joined the Anker board of directors in 2001, already controlling 47 percent of the company, making him by far the largest shareholder. Anker filed for bankruptcy protection in 2002, a typical evolution for a Wilbur Ross target.

In another apparent deception, ICG Vice President Gene Kitts declared there had been recent changes in mine management. This appears to be another attempt to shift the blame, but the *West Virginia Gazette* reported there hasn't been any change in on-the-ground mine managers.

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While ICG offers spin, they've relied upon MSHA to keep their day-to-day operations under wraps. On Jan. 11 California Congressman Henry Waxman sent a letter to Labor Secretary Elaine Chao decrying the 2004 decision by the Bush Administration to block access to mining reports filed by mine inspectors. "This unwarranted secrecy may protect the mining industry from embarrassing disclosures," wrote Waxman, "but it undermines accountability and mine safety ... [MSHA's] secrecy policy limited public disclosure about the [Sago] mine's violations." Waxman further noted that the policy had been used to shield "accusations, threats, and profane invective" by company executives against MSHA officials.

But secrecy isn't the only impact of Bush Administration policies on the safety of coal miners. Fines assessed by MSHA have dwindled over the years. Jack Spadaro, a retired MSHA inspector and engineer in West Virginia, was granted federal whistle-blower status after he was demoted four years ago for trying to enforce safety laws too aggressively. He was quoted by the *Washington Post*, declaring that "the managers in Washington won't let [inspectors] close a mine." The *Post* continues, "MSHA's first leader under President Bush, David D. Lauriski, was a former coal industry executive who advocated a less confrontational style and gave inspectors a less-intimidating job title: 'compliance assistance specialists.'" Lauriski left his post after accusations of manipulating dust regulations to directly benefit his former employer.

Of 208 total safety violations in the past year, MSHA cited the Sago Mine sixteen times for infractions that could have caused fires or explosions. The agency assessed fines of only \$1,221 for these violations. According to the *Washington Post*, the largest single fine was just \$440, "about 0.0004 percent of the \$110 million net profit reported last year" by ICG. Considered another way: Howard Stern didn't endanger any lives, but his fine for a single instance of indecency was more than a thousand times greater.

In an environment of deregulation, even fines that MSHA does assess are often reduced; the fine against the operator at Brookwood, where 13 miners died, was dropped from \$435,000 to \$3,000 when a judge ruled MSHA failed to prove wrongdoing.

Eugene Oregon's *Register-Guard* newspaper reports that the Bush administration

proposed reducing MSHA's budget and easing restrictions on the amount of coal dust to which miners are exposed, and "its nominee for the post of agency director has operated mines with injury rates two times the national average." Meanwhile, the web site opensecrets.org reports coal industry political contributions of \$2.3 million in the 2004 election cycle, with more than \$2 million of that amount going to Republicans.

Democratic congressional aides say that MSHA "has shed about 120 coal-industry enforcement jobs since 2002," according to the *Boston Globe*. "After President Bush took office in 2001, the administration pulled back a series of regulations proposed under President Clinton, including the requirement to upgrade miners' emergency respiratory devices and to add more mine rescue teams."

Rescue teams have become an issue because Sago had no emergency rescue team on site. Even after the first team was assembled, they were required to wait for a backup team to arrive before they could enter the mine, greatly delaying rescue attempts. The *West Virginia Gazette-Mail* complains, "Every coal mine in the country is supposed to have at least two teams, either on site or on contract nearby. As of 2004, there was only one team for every four underground coal mines in the country. ... Three years ago, an MSHA study group started during the Clinton administration drafted a plan to improve MSHA's mine rescue program. In December 2002, the Bush administration ended that effort, despite warnings from industry and labor officials."

The *Roanoke Times* observes, "Instead of beefing up the system, rescue teams maintained at local MSHA offices like the one in nearby Morgantown, W. Va., were phased out in favor of a single MSHA-wide emergency crew." They quote former MSHA director Davitt McAteer, "The first rule of mine rescue is that you have to be quick. ... It should not take 12 hours to get teams together."

Joining in a chorus of platitudes, Labor Secretary Chao called for an investigation to "determine the cause of this tragedy and will take the necessary steps to ensure that this never happens again." Comforting words, repeated at most every disaster. David G. Dye, the acting Assistant Secretary of Labor for Mine Safety and Health, used nearly identical words to declare, "We will take every step – including looking at our own performance

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Hundreds march against GM-Delphi

BY TODD M. JORDAN

On January 8, 600 to 700 rank-and-file members of the United Auto Workers took to the streets of Detroit despite the lack of support from their union leadership. Average line workers, retirees, ex-chairmen and dozens of active plant level union officials from Michigan came out to protest the GM-Delphi's assault on the working class.

Together they stood in solidarity on the freezing sidewalks of the North American International Auto Show. At the protest there was at least one worker from every major UAW-represented automotive corporation in the state of Michigan.

The majority were workers from Delphi, whose very livelihoods lay on the brink of extinction while UAW leaders remain idle. Several Ford and General Motors workers, both active and retired, were also present in solidarity due to recent concessions made by international union leaders against them.

The Michigan brothers and sisters were joined by dozens of UAW rank-and-file who traveled from far as away as Indiana, Ohio, New York, Alabama, Kentucky, Wisconsin and even California. There was not a single Delphi or GM plant in the Midwest that did not have delegates to the picket.

At their side were members of the IWW, Green Party, Canadian Auto Workers, AF-SCME, Teamsters, and others who believe in the class struggle.

We are very pleased with the number of workers who attended. It was clear that over 500 UAW workers from Michigan and UAW activists from around the country are ready for serious economic, social and political change in the United States.

We initially expected more than 1,000 and the Detroit police had prepared for 3,000. Unfortunately we couldn't get the word out fast enough and we had resistance from several UAW locals whose bureaucratic leaders insisted on attacking their own membership who are mobilizing.

I am not surprised the UAW bureaucracy and their businessmen posing as union leaders in Solidarity House did not respond to our invitation or even attend, let alone support the protest. They do not believe in rank-and-file mobilization and are unable to compre-



Anti-labor NLRB shifts further right

On January 4, President Bush appointed Ronald Meisburg as NLRB General Counsel and union-busting attorney Peter Kirsanow as a member of the NLRB. Both were originally nominated last year, but had not been confirmed by the Senate because some senators were concerned by their anti-labor records. Bush appointed the two while the Senate was in recess, and they will serve until the Senate approves permanent replacements.

The appointments came days after the president of the National Right to Work (for less) Legal Defense Foundation, Mark Mix, wrote a column in the *Wall Street Journal* urging the White House "to get off the dime and install an NLRB majority" that could overturn decades of NLRB precedents somewhat restricting employers' union-busting efforts.

With Kirsanow's appointment, there are now three Bush-appointed Republican members on the Board (and one hold-over Democrat), all former management attorneys.

Two of the three are recess appointments; the third, NLRB chairman Robert Battista, has continued to speak at union-busting seminars since his appointment. Many fear this newly bolstered majority will accelerate the Board's recent string of decisions overturning many long-established labor rights.

hend real solidarity from the bottom.

Our beloved Mother Mary Harris Jones, whose puppet led the march towering far above the protesters in the sky above us said, "Mourn the dead, fight like hell for the living." Her words guided the spirit of the protest. Our leaders today say somewhat similar words, "Ignore the dead, and fight like hell for the bureaucracy. Solidarity forever, as long as it's sanctioned by us."

UAW rank & file rebellion

BY BRUCE ALLEN,
VICE PRESIDENT CAW LOCAL 199

Led by a larger-than-life size replica of legendary labour heroine Mother Jones, hundreds of rank-and-file UAW members rallied outside the International Auto Show. Calling themselves "Soldiers of Solidarity," they gathered to denounce demands by Delphi and the Big 3 for major contract concessions. Among those in attendance to support them were local CAW leaders and activists from Ingersoll, Kitchener, Windsor and St. Catharines. Our presence was vividly on display in the form of several CAW flags fluttering in the cold winds of a January day in the Motor City.

Though the turnout was not especially large, what was on display was just the tip of the iceberg. The magnitude of the movement the marchers represent was made clear at Ford in December. 49 percent of Ford workers in the U.S. voted against reopening their contract and granting contract concessions like those the UAW just gave GM.

This was a powerful vote of non-confidence in the international leadership of the UAW and its long track record of contract concessions and continuous retreat.

A rank-and-file rebellion is brewing in the UAW, prompted mainly by Delphi's radical demands for sweeping, union-busting concessions. Hundreds of UAW members and some local UAW leaders have attended a series of local meetings designed to organize resistance to Delphi's attempts to wipe out everything these former GM workers fought and gained over the past 70 years. Indeed, the meetings they have been holding are similar to the type of gatherings that led to the formation of the UAW in the 1930s and ultimately to the Great Flint Sit-Down Strike of 1937. Those involved are acutely aware of this historic parallel.

CAW members have every reason to rejoice in these developments. We can and must extend our hands in solidarity with this growing fight back by the UAW rank and file. They are showing us that fighting back still makes a difference.

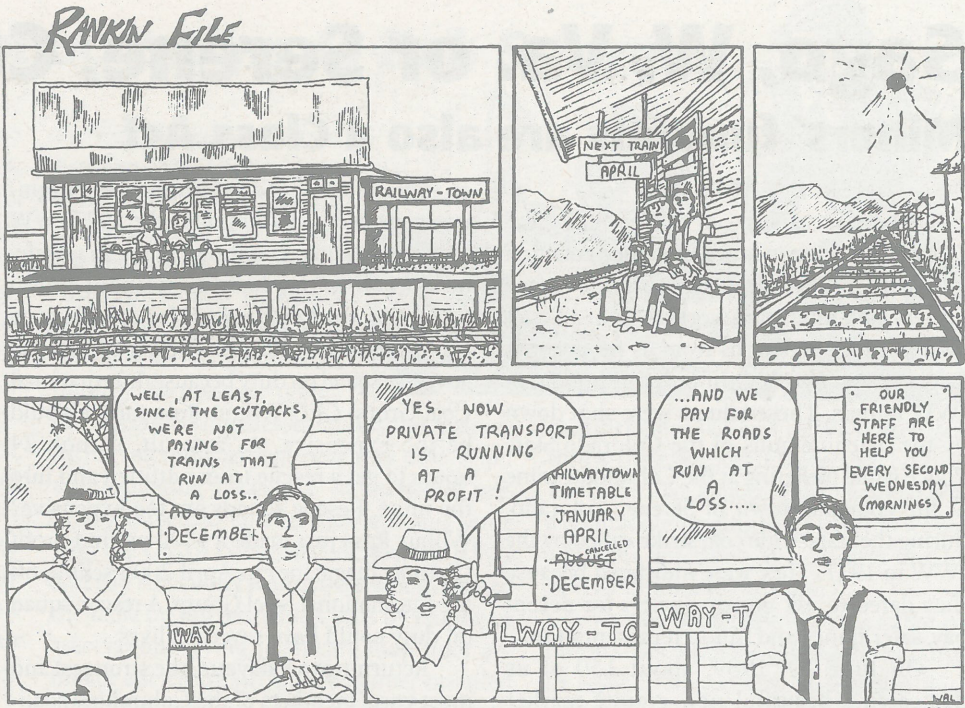
A statement by AFL-CIO President John Sweeney on Kirsanow's appointment expressed "grave concerns," noting that Kirsanow opposes "the minimum wage, affirmative action, prevailing wages, voting rights legislation and other basic protections for workers and citizens, and he has expressed a marked hostility to unions."

Scab wins \$1.3m from union

Firestone scab Robert Eliserio has won a \$1.3 million judgement against a United Steel Workers local in Des Moines, Iowa.

The jury did not find that the union actually retaliated against Eliserio, one of 600 workers who crossed picket lines in 1995, but rather that the USW local was liable for instigating and approving the harassment, in part because it furnished union members with "no rat" stickers to wear. Union members allegedly insulted Eliserio with racist names such as "Burrito Bob" and "Rateserio." The local got one worker fired for this his job back.

According to the *Des Moines Register*, the tire inspector left his job after 14 years in 2002 because of harassment and the hostile climate at the Firestone factory where union members returning from the strike work alongside former scabs.



Perfect price discrimination

BY J. PIERCE

My workplace has a program where 'professionals' get a 10 percent discount if they buy over a hundred dollars worth at one time. These 'professionals' are either white employers of Latino workers or self-employed "small white business owners." The self-employed get to ride the coat tails of capitalism – buying personal items with a trade discount – while wage slaves, mostly immigrants, must buy everything at full price.

There is a separate program whereby the customer sets up an account with the store and receives their break as well. These customers get a 10 percent discount if they buy over \$1,000 a month. They don't have to work in the industry, they just have to be rich. Just one more application of what I call the "preferred customer discount."

At a previous job, my fellow workers and I delivered wholesale produce to restaurants. My boss charged each restaurant a different price for similar shit. Prices were pegged to, um, let's call it, English language proficiency. White restaurant owners got the best prices and the best shit. Then Mexican owners. Then Korean and Chinese, generally. Black restaurateurs and other non-white English speakers fell somewhere in the middle. I try never to shed tears for business owners of any racial group. But I learned quickly who were and were not the "preferred customers" in this industry. Mom behind the register, Dad on the grill, and child translating the invoices were not preferable, indeed.

Not only was the race-price hierarchy in effect, but fancy restaurants got the best produce at the cheapest prices. My suspicion was that the boss wanted to claim, "I deliver to So-and-So's White Bistro X." The deep discounts and the bending-over-backwards (by us!) put our bottom feeder capitalist in the same pod with Portland's restaurateur elite.

It goes down the same way at my current job in the Bay Area. There's a Piedmont-Oakland Hills elite that gets their discount every time. How much does 10 percent off amount to? Well, the local government's take is 8.75 percent. So that means our "preferred customers" skipped out on the local sales tax. So who has to foot the bill for the new jail or a pay raise for the cops? You guessed it: the same people who can't afford to buy over \$100 worth of shit each time.

I have a suspicion that this "preferred customer discount" occurs over and over again, in every industry. At the hotel I worked at, the rich would get a special "corporate rate." If they 'knew' the boss they'd get a "manager's special."

But take a step back to view the logic of it. On the one hand, the "preferred customer" system is racist. We've all seen it. But on the other hand, it's the simple mechanics of capitalism: charge the customer what they're "willing" to pay. Straight out of the textbook! Now we see what the bourgeois economists really mean when they talk about "perfect price discrimination."

FBI harasses Wobbly...

continued from page 1

information by reading my Live Journal, but I certainly wasn't going on record with them about any of that. They also asked me who pays my cell phone bill, how I was planning on paying for my trip to Iraq, and other details about my finances.

Every so often one of them would interject, "This is the United States of America. You have the right to believe whatever you want to believe, but we need to know what that is so we can clear this up; this isn't a joke, we are the domestic anti-terrorism task force." After two hours, having refused to answer most their questions, I finally started laughing at them and they ended the interview, but made sure to get in the last jab by saying, "This investigation is not over and you are likely to hear from us again." One even joked that I must "want them to be hiding behind the bushes and jumping out at me."

Santiago Velasquez, who has my cell phone attached to his bank account, was questioned at home by the FBI after my interrogation. He reports: "A few days prior to the visit, agent Jackson showed up and found me to be gone, so he knocked on my neighbor's door, showed her a photo of Tabby and asked if said neighbor had sighted her, saying that Tabby was 'a known associate of mine and a suspected terrorist' and that if they had any information regarding her they should contact the Atlanta office of the FBI. ... From that point on my neighbor's usual friendly demeanor towards me was replaced by one of disgust and distrust."

When they found him at home three agents asked "about Tabby's job, whereabouts, dating habits, her relationship to her parents, her current boyfriend, and online habits. ... The FBI even went on to inquire about my cat and his slightly distended belly, as if to almost imply that something was hidden in there. One inquired, 'Do you expect us to believe that you would risk your credit for this lady and not have any idea of her political beliefs?'"

Ken and I went to the ACLU later that week, and they filed a FOIA for us. I received a heavily redacted response in December 2005 that listed my personal information, the fact that I am involved in Action Medical, Circus2Iraq.org, am a member of the IWW, that I work as a stripper at the Clermont lounge and have a permit to do so, that I have done porn, and that I was the head Domina at the Chamber. Only one and a half pages out of six were sent, and no reason for the interview to have taken place is listed.

None of us have heard from the FBI since, and I can only speculate as to whether or not my case is still open. The FBI has also refused to comment on my investigation to the media. At the time, all this put a great deal of stress on me, and that was the last thing I needed. Now, though, I can appreciate some of the humor involved, and I am glad to be able to share this story with others. Please remember if this happens to you: never go to an "interview" without legal representation.

NY Wobs join East Buffet picket line

BY TOMER MALCHI, NEW YORK

Workers at the East Buffet Restaurant in Long Island have been on strike since August 10. Members of local 318 Restaurant Workers Union are demanding better working conditions and justice on the job. Workers struck in response to long hours, low pay, anti-union discrimination and illegal union busting. East Buffet fired workers for demanding their rights and speaking up against the owners, who were paying less than minimum wage, stealing tips and enforcing illegal rules.

Many workers have been enduring 65-hour weeks for as little as \$1 per hour and without overtime pay. On August 4, local 318 filed for a National Labor Relation Board election. The following day the boss began a vicious anti-union campaign, interrogating and harassing workers and threatening to close the restaurant if the union won.

The union has filed a federal lawsuit and an unfair labor practice complaint with the NLRB. Workers have been picketing and calling for a boycott, demonstrating that they are fully aware that the NLRB and the legal system does not protect our rights. Direct action is necessary for worker's rights to be enforced and for justice to exist on the job.

On Jan. 8 over 150 union members and community supporters joined the East Buffet workers on the picket line. A coalition of organizations including the Justice Will Be Served! campaign, IWW, Million Worker March and Jobs With Justice is showing the labor movement what solidarity is all about. The coalition supports the workers' call for a boycott of East Buffet until their demands are met, including reinstatement of all workers fired for standing up for their rights, an end to harassment of union supporters, and reimbursement for stolen tips, wages and taxes.

Sago disaster *continued from page 7* – to make sure this tragedy never happens again.”

But looking at their own performance is one of the coal industry watchdog's activities most open to criticism, as unlike other regulatory agencies the MSHA allows companies to sit in on investigations. *USA Today* interviewed Tony Oppegard, an MSHA senior adviser from 1998 to 2001. “Oppegard says interviews can be ‘intimidating’ because mine company officials watch as MSHA investigators question miners. ... ‘The only [reason] for a coal company to sit in on an accident investigation interview is to intimidate the witnesses,’” Oppegard told them.

Some details of the current investigation have already surfaced, and these likewise raise questions about regulations and practices. Apparently indications point to an explosion in a former section of the mine that had recently been sealed. The *West Virginia Gazette-Mail* states that a concrete seal is mandated. The United Mine Workers insist that only a concrete seal offers sufficient protection. Yet an inspector for the state of West Virginia approved sealing the closed section of the mine with Omega blocks, a light-weight plastic foam product. According to some accounts the pressure resistance of the foam blocks is one-fourth that required by MSHA regulations.

So we have a joint investigation by MSHA and the state of West Virginia, which may have a conflict of interest over its own suspect regulatory decision on seals.

In the aftermath of heartbreaking confusion over rescuers' communications, with “one alive” being interpreted as “all alive,” and a perplexing delay in setting the record straight, ICG CEO Ben Hatfield may have created heartache anew with the January 9th observation that there was nothing except smoke and bad air preventing the miners from escaping the mine. “Sadly, they could have come out and made it to safety,” Hatfield told *USA Today*. Footprints indicate the miners made an effort to flee, but turned back.

With Hatfield raising the issue, we can

“Stop the Illegal Alien Invasion” national protest day

BY RICHARD MYERS, DENVER

The burly fellow next to me asked what my button said. “We’re Industrial Workers of the World,” I replied. “Good to see all of you here,” he responded. “I’m a Teamster.”

I responded in kind, and then observed there was a lone fellow from the Carpenters’ Union on the other side. “Everybody’s got a right to be confused” said my new Teamster friend.

This was a “Citizens for Immigration Reform” event. They called for it, they organized it. They wanted the confrontation, working people against working people. For once, I am a counter-protester. Not a familiar role for me, but one I’ll accept whenever working people go up against other, less-privileged working people.

We stood with working people who are under the gun, the most exploited and most derided in our society. We, the counter-protesters were several hundred strong, we were loud, we were boisterous.

If we’re generous enough to count the TV camera man, the Citizens for Immigration Reform mustered almost twenty in Denver.

A real bust.

So I’ve had to rethink my concerns.

I was concerned these protesters might be the new brownshirts, and I thought their invoking General Patton (‘May God have mercy upon my enemies, Because I won’t...’) on their web site displayed a dangerous jingoist mentality. But the brownshirts were a mass movement, using racism and brutal intimidation to build their numbers in support of Hitler’s racist policies. What I saw this morning wasn’t a mass movement, it wasn’t a threat, it wasn’t militant. It was impotent.



And they knew they were impotent. The schedule declared: Time: 7:30 a.m. - 11 a.m. But they put down their signs, gave up and went home two hours early.

I’ve been marching, protesting, walking picket lines for more than thirty years. I’ve seen a lot of protests. This Denver effort was the most obvious, resounding defeat in any cause I’ve ever seen.

What does it mean, such a dismal performance by the Minutemen right here in the heart of Tancredo territory? When folks quietly disappear from a confrontation, leaving not a soul to deliver the message, you know they’ve admitted something to themselves.

The next question becomes, will they think about the real issues? Will they realize that our problems result from actions of the powerful, actions against us all?

UK: 5 million work unpaid overtime

The TUC declared 24 February as “Work your proper hours day.” TUC researchers estimate that nearly 5 million UK workers put in an average extra day a week in unpaid overtime in 2005.

If each employee worked all their unpaid overtime at the start of the year, they would not get paid until 24 February.

Workers in small workplaces were least likely to work extra time without pay.

For example, Alan Addis, managing director of Verdict Aerospace Components, which supplies commercial jet maker Airbus, told the BBC that unpaid overtime was essential for his company to compete in the global manufacturing market.

“We need the support of the employee to not put their palm out for every penny for every moment they work,” he said.

Off the clock at Wal-Mart

A Philadelphia judge has approved a class-action lawsuit against Wal-Mart Stores

Fight for shorter Hours



Inc. by employees in Pennsylvania who say the company pressured them to work off the clock. Similar claims have been raised in suits filed across the United States.

A California jury recently awarded Wal-Mart workers \$172 million for illegally denied lunch breaks, while Wal-Mart settled a similar Colorado case for \$50 million.

In Pennsylvania, the lead plaintiff’s suit alleges she worked at a Reading Sam’s Club through breaks and after quitting time – eight to 12 unpaid hours a month, on average – to meet work demands.

Management issued a statement asserting, “Wal-Mart’s policy is to pay associates for every minute they work.” The statement did not explain why the retailer has been repeatedly ordered to compensate workers it forced to work off the clock.

With hundreds of thousands of coal miners losing their lives over the years, why didn’t ICG provide Sago miners with these simplest of necessities? Why haven’t they followed the common sense recommendations of the United Mine Workers?

Although members of the UMWA assisted with the rescue efforts, it seems a certainty they will not be granted the investigative access to the Sago Mine that they enjoyed at Brookwood. On the other hand, West Virginia’s investigative team includes state delegate Mike Caputo, D-Marion, who is a ten year representative of the UMWA, and several other delegates who hail from coal mining families. In time we shall see what their investigation reveals.

But at Sago, the greatest tragedy must be this: just a little foresight and planning, together with minimal expense, might have saved the lives of all 13 miners. We should all raise hell.

Richard Myers is co-editor and one of the authors of *Slaughter in Serene: the Columbine Coal Strike Reader*.

The protester’s web site said they were protesting the employers of the immigrant workers. They came to El Centro Humanitario, the place of the workers. But if there is a movement gaining strength in this country, it is workers standing together.

We were white. We were brown. We were black. We were Asian. We were Native American. Some were in wheelchairs. ... We cooperated, shared food, felt incredible strength in our numbers.

The counter-protest at 8:36 a.m. I couldn’t fit everyone in the photo. Psychologically, the workers who stood together with the immigrant workers won this confrontation.

Easily.

But that doesn’t solve any of the problems. We demonstrated only that worker against worker doesn’t work. We have yet to prove that worker joining together with worker can accomplish something.

My friend and fellow IWW member Gary, a grandfatherly type with a knack for communicating, talked with a few of the protesters across the street. He told them that they were attacking people they should ally with, that the corporations are the ones kicking all of our butts, and they ought to join us in confronting the real enemy.

I haven’t yet sorted out the reactions in my own heart. I wonder if the results were similar across the country. I wonder if there will be soul-searching, re-thinking.

There’s no doubt in my mind, I will always stand with working people against the corporate powers when it comes to struggles. But I’m troubled that it is so difficult to reach people who see the struggle in terms of workers against workers. That’s exactly what the corporations and their paid-for politicians love. And that realization cuts deeply.

What momentarily felt like a victory now feels like a lost opportunity. It isn’t a victory if it’s over folks who should be your allies, your friends.

You see, I share the concern that many of these people have about jobs, about corporations off-shoring, yes, even about immigration policy enacted primarily for the benefit of the wealthy. I want justice for all working people, and I see a world in which corporate elites make decisions for all of us.

The only way forward is to recognize the power relationships. But how do we reach out to people who seem to have so much bitterness toward their fellow working people?

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Wal-Mart: the High Cost of Low Price

REVIEW BY JOHN GORMAN

Robert Greenwald, "Wal-Mart: the High Cost of Low Price," 98 minutes, \$12.95 from www.walmartmovie.com

Two and a half centuries ago, Benjamin Franklin observed that "there is nothing someone cannot make a little shoddier and sell a little cheaper. Customers who consider price alone are this man's lawful prey." Wal-Mart, as this film shows, has decided that the world is its lawful prey, and low price is the universal bait.

But, as we soon learn, "there's trouble, trouble, right here in River City." Not everyone is glad to learn that Wal-Mart will soon be here. The first victims, as we might expect, are the owners of small businesses in nearby towns, like H&H Hardware, 40 years in business in Middlefield, Ohio. Next, of course, come their employees, some with decades of service to the store and its customers. But the casualty list doesn't stop there. In no time at all, the town looks like a neutron bomb has fallen. This once-thriving village is now a ghost town. The buildings are all intact, but the people are gone. Real estate values have plummeted, as no one thinks of moving into a town so obviously doomed.

The "ripple effect" goes on and on. Wal-Mart offers jobs, many jobs, most at wages only a bit over the mandated minimum. For this pittance, workers are expected to put in hour upon hour "off the clock," to fatten the company bottom line. There are, of course, "benefits," a health plan with \$75 deducted from each bimonthly check and hefty co-payments. The company's generosity, however, does not end there. Employees can get the firm's help in applying for Medicaid, food

stamps, free school lunches for their children and other forms of public assistance for which their low wages qualify them to the tune of one billion 557 million dollars a year. In the meantime, of course, they can shop at Wal-Mart, the only place they can afford to shop, and, for that matter, the only place they can find to shop, since the "big box" has driven every other retail establishment for miles around out of business.

But the workers at Wal-Mart are not the only ones suffering. Low wages, like a plague, are catching. If a store the size of Wal-Mart is only paying \$7.15 an hour, why should any establishment pay more? This rationale has already been used to depress retail store wages by three billion dollars nationwide. Wal-Mart's incessant demands for lower prices from its suppliers in turn require them to find ways to cut costs, with the wages of their own workers a prime target. In Third World countries, labor costs are kept low by repressive governments and brutal bosses to meet Wal-Mart's demands.

The litany of corporate crime goes on and on, but the most intriguing part of the film is how it was made. As might be expected, a company with policies like Wal-Mart's has generated hundreds of "disgruntled former employees," and some of them were more than willing to talk to the film makers. Not only ordinary workers but also managers, some once high in the company hierarchy, were willing to spill their guts and ease their consciences on film, making it clear that these abuses are not individual aberrations but corporate policy, set at the highest levels and enforced by unbending company discipline.

As might be expected, Wal-Mart is

hardly a union-friendly environment, and the company has already had to pay out notable sums in fines for Unfair Labor Practices. Nonetheless, it is clear that the firm regards these fines, like those imposed for violations of child labor and wage and hour laws, for pollution, discrimination and other misdeeds, as simply a cost of doing business, and any improvement is unlikely.

Seeing this parade of oppression and abuse gives rise to the question, "Why? To what end?" The salaries of upper level executives are already astronomical, and the personal fortunes of the Walton family approach the unimaginable. What could they possibly want with still more money? Are we just seeing one more example of the psychopathic behavior described so well in *The Corporation*? What force can possibly save us from this all-devouring monster, making over \$3 million in political contributions as he "goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour"?

While unions have had only slight success in battling this giant, Wal-Mart has not been unbeatable. As the film draws to a close, we are treated to a quick survey of the literally scores of towns where aroused citizens have kept this behemoth out, destroying the image of inevitable triumph so assiduously cultivated by the company. Not all of these fights have been won, but each victory brings hope to those who are willing to consider more than price when they buy into their own futures. This film reminds us, to borrow Abraham Lincoln's words, that, "you can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time. But you can't fool all the people all the time."

Wal-Mart ordered to pay California workers \$172 million

A jury has ordered Wal-Mart to pay \$57 million in back wages and \$115 million in damages to 116,000 workers it cheated of the paid lunch they were entitled to under California law. The law requires employers to give 30-minute unpaid lunch breaks to workers who work at least six hours a day. But if they miss lunch – as they often were forced to do – they are supposed to get a full hour's pay. They never did. Wal-Mart settled a similar suit in Colorado last year, paying workers \$50 million.

And Maryland has become the first state to require Wal-Mart to spend more on employee health care or pay the difference to the state. Under the law, passed over the governor's veto, Wal-Mart will have to spend at least 8 percent of payroll on health benefits. Wal-Mart is threatening to close stores in the state if the law is not overturned.

While Wal-Mart is attempting to project a more worker-friendly image, it is tightening the squeeze on workers in response to sagging profits. Managers are increasingly demanding that workers accept "open availability," where they can be scheduled for any shift at any time, and scheduling many workers for 34-hour "full-time" work weeks in order to increase flexibility and avoid overtime pay.

In central Florida, some workers have turned to direct action to address grievances. The Wal-Mart Workers Association says it now includes 300 current and former workers, and has helped workers petition against cuts in their hours and confront managers

over schedule changes. In one store, workers who biked to work asked for a bike rack. When managers refused, they bought the rack themselves and demanded that Wal-Mart install it. They gave in, and donated the amount of the rack to a local charity.

The Association is jointly funded by the SEIU and UFCW, and largely run by the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now – a union-busting outfit with close ties to the SEIU.

Ironically, the two Change to Win unions are sniping at each other in the boss press, according to the Jan. 11 *Wall Street Journal*.

The UFCW-financed WakeUpWalMart.com ran a television advertising campaign over the Christmas shopping season questioning whether Christians should shop at Wal-Mart given its low wages and benefits. The group also sent a letter to Wal-Mart signed by 65 ministers, concluding that "Jesus would not embrace Wal-Mart's values of greed and profits at any cost, particularly when children suffer as a result of those misguided values."

The SEIU-backed Wal-Mart Watch quickly distanced itself from the ad. "What would Jesus do, indeed," Wal-Mart Watch communications director Tracy Sefl emailed the *Journal*. "I think he would say the ad was a mistake. We heard from numerous supporters who were offended."

Meanwhile, WakeUpWalMart.com is criticizing Wal-Mart Watch for welcoming the retailer's new health-care plan as an improve-

ment. WakeUpWalMart campaign director Paul Blank issued a press release complaining that Wal-Mart Watch hadn't properly analyzed the plan, which was no better than what Wal-Mart had been offering.

The *Journal* says that after its defeat in the Southern California grocery strike, the UFCW abandoned its decade-long campaign to organize Wal-Mart stores in the United States. (Organizing has continued in Canada, with several recent successes.) Instead, new president Joe Hansen is trying to pressure Wal-Mart to raise pay and benefits to union levels. As part of that effort, the UFCW launched WakeUpWalMart.com last April, with a staff of six working out of union headquarters in Washington.

The bickering between the two groups was picked up by several newspapers, forcing SEIU President Andy Stern to issue a statement "clarify[ing] my support and respect for the UFCW and WakeUpWal-Mart.com. For years, the UFCW exposed the Wal-Mart threat to workers and American values. It was the UFCW that demonstrated just how significant and negative an impact Wal-Mart has on workers' lives and our communities."

Stern's statement says that the UFCW is leading the campaign to change Wal-Mart, and that SEIU established Wal-Mart Watch "to enhance the UFCW effort."

Tax agency goes after poor

While taxes for the rich and corporations are being cut, the Internal Revenue Service has frozen tax refunds owed to hundreds of thousands of poor Americans and launched secret fraud investigations against them, according to recent testimony to Congress.

The taxpayers' average income is \$13,000, and a sampling by the IRS taxpayer advocate's office found that less than 20 percent of the returns were questionable. The taxpayers were selected for investigation by a computer program. The advocate said the IRS devotes vastly more resources to pursuing questionable returns filed by the poor, which she said can not involve more than \$9 billion, than on an estimated \$100 billion problem with unreported business income.

Telus lock-out ends in bitter defeat

BY 355424

Canada's second-largest local phone (and largest cell phone) company, Telus, locked its workers out from mid-July through November. The dispute is now over, but only after two sets of votes on essentially the same offer. The strike was an unmitigated disaster for the Telecommunications Workers Union.

"This labour dispute has been a challenging time for everyone," said TWU president Bruce Bell. "The Courts, the Canada Industrial Relations Board and the Federal Liberals didn't do us any favours. Not all of our members are happy with the deal. But it's good to be back at work in time for Christmas."

Wrong on every count. The dispute ended with the TWU gaining no ground at all on contracting-out, on wages, not even on greater union recognition. Nothing. So it was hardly challenging for the people running Telus, for the people who own it. Secondly, notice that the TWU president omitted the class enemy from his list of people who didn't do the TWU any favours. Telus is overwhelmingly owned by members of the employing class. The per share value of Telus roughly doubled during the strike. I'm sure this made for a very Merry X-mas for some....

Every single TWU member that I spoke with from July 13th to November 17th saw very clearly that Telus really wanted to kill the TWU. The fact that it's still, for now, around is truly cold comfort for the telecommunications workers. Canadian unions, if they want to assist working people, must make a few crucial changes to their strike funds, so that the courts cannot cut short our greatest weapon-withholding our labour.

Modern Canada has managed to fool both the world and itself into with this cozy picture. That Canada, like all settler states, relies on past and ongoing theft of other people's resources, is an undeniable reality. The right in Canada has been tremendously successful. Many, probably most, of Canada's left, don't like to admit defeat. But it's still true. Unions must be reformed. Forget about politics, the strike is our weapon. But Canadian unions must change their structure so that their best weapon is no longer stolen from them.

Finally, there has been a labour reality in Canada which virtually guarantees defeat for the workers. Don't make the mistake of thinking that the current election will somehow undo these terrifying realities. It took decades to reach the current state of affairs; it will take years to repair the damage done to working class Canadians since the 1970s. But the task is clear: build a strong labour movement with working-class values. And that's why continued success for the IWW is so critical.

New Zealand maritime workers ban whaling fleet

The New Zealand Maritime Union has black-banned working with Japanese whaling ships. General Secretary Trevor Hanson said the union supports environmental groups in their attempts to end Japanese whaling in the Southern Ocean.

The Maritime Union sees the whaling issue as a part of a wider maritime crisis with overfishing, exploitation of maritime workers, and 'flag of convenience' shipping. "In many cases the exploitation of the maritime environment goes hand in hand with the mistreatment of maritime workers, but because it is out of sight, out of mind off the coast, it is easy to ignore," Hanson said.

Teachers banned from wearing union buttons

The East Bridgewater, Massachusetts, school superintendent has banned teachers from wearing union buttons on the job. She says the buttons, reading "E.B. teachers deserve a contract," are disruptive. The union has filed an unfair labor practice complaint with the state, and is considering a First Amendment legal challenge as well.



1905-2005:

*A Century of
Revolutionary
Industrial Unionism*

Flagstaff, Arizona: The IWW! 100 Years Of Revolutionary Class Struggle. Art & photography exhibit featuring the work of Carlos Cortez, Sue Coe, Seth Tobocman and others. Opening reception Friday, Feb. 3, 7 p.m., with music by Ted Warmbrandt and Adam Frumhoff. Feb. 4, 1 p.m., a panel of historians will discuss the IWW's role in organizing in northern Arizona, followed by a meal and a 6 p.m. showing of "Matewan." Hive Community Center, 319 S. San Francisco St Exhibit runs through March 2.

Millville, New Jersey: Portraits of Workers Movement by Morel Pagano. High Street Design, 16 East Pine St. through Feb. 11, 2006. Pagano was a union bricklayer and artist.

A timeline of IWW history and other centenary materials, can be found at www.iww.org/projects/centenary.

BOOKS FOR REBELLIOUS WORKERS



Solidarity Forever: The IWW's Labor History Calendar

Historic photos and commemorative dates are combined in this edition of the IWW's annual labor history calendar.

\$10.00 (postage included) • \$5.50 each for five or more to the same address.

This year, our calendar theme is workplace occupations. In an era when bosses seem to embrace strikes as an opportunity to clear out union workers, we might do well to look to our past – or to the example of our fellow workers in other countries. By taking control of our workplaces, if only for a few days, we implicitly challenge the bosses' "right" to control industry, and by extension, our lives. Seizing a factory or occupying a store is a declaration that our rights as workers are more important than the bosses' "right" to own the workplaces we and our fellow workers built and maintain and operate.

The images in this year's calendar commemorate factory occupations and other workers' direct actions in Argentina, Mexico, Poland, and the United States. They document instances where workers seized a shipyard to protest the suspension of union delegates; a direct action campaign where 50,000 IWW lumberjacks burned the lousy bed rolls they had been hauling from job to job forcing the bosses to provide clean bedding; occupations of factories in Argentina and Chicago to block the bosses' efforts to shut down production and throw workers on the street; a picket line that followed scab cargo across the globe; shipyard workers in Poland whose occupation of their workplace began the process that toppled the Stalinist regime that had oppressed them for so long; and occupations by immigrant miners in Arizona, auto workers in Flint, and retail clerks in New York City who won their demands by taking over their workplaces and refusing to be budged.



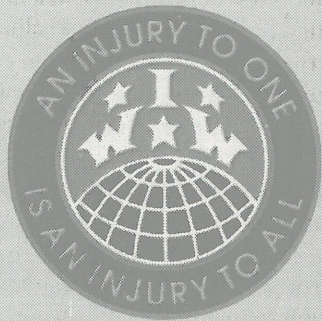
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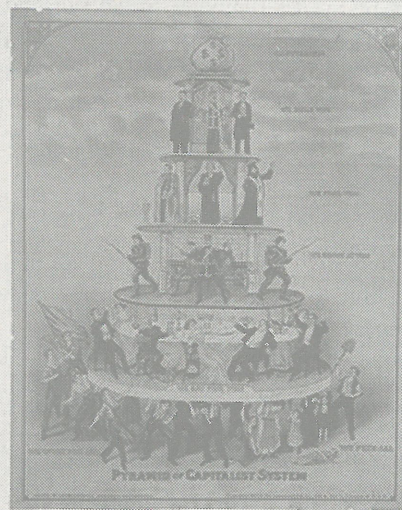


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\$12.00



Jack Herranen & the Ninth Ward Conspiracy: To Fan the Flames of Discontent A project born from a collection of musicians gathered in New Orleans, this release is a soulful and original celebration of IWW song.
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Pyramid of Capitalism poster.
17"x22" full color reproduction of the classic graphic
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by Martin Glaberman, edited & introduced by Staughton Lynd

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231 pages, **\$14.00**



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9/11 survivors open worker co-op restaurant

After years of effort, surviving workers from Windows on the World, the top-floor restaurant obliterated in the World Trade Center attacks, have opened their new upscale eatery, Colors. The new restaurant is owned by its 50 workers and offers a menu with food from their 22 native nations.

"This is the new American food. It's cooked in a kitchen where everyone is equal, no yelling, no screaming. And you actually own the dishes you're washing," said executive chef Raymond Mohan, born in Guyana.

The restaurant was financed by the workers, an Italian workers' co-op, and the Nonprofit Finance Fund. It is a project of the Restaurant Opportunities Center, founded after the 9/11 attack to help displaced workers (See Sept. 2004 IW). The ROC hopes the Colors model can spread to other restaurants.

Everyone, including back-of-the-house staff, will make at least \$13.50 an hour, far above average New York restaurant pay.

"This is not about money," said ROC executive director Saru Jayaraman. "It's about creating an economic model of a restaurant that does well – but not just for the owners, on the backs of the workers."

Coke boycott spreads

In December New York University and the University of Michigan joined 23 campuses now banning Coke products for its role in murders and attacks on union organizers in Colombia and environmental damage in India. The Michigan ban alone will cost Coke \$1.4 million a year in sales.

Campaigners are pressing colleges to request that Coke agree to independent monitoring of its bottlers. When the company refuses, this lays the groundwork for cancelling its contracts. "We are costing Coke tens of millions of dollars, and this is growing," said Ray Rogers, director of the Campaign to Stop Killer Coke.

NLRB rules against private prison psychology services

BY M. WOLFF

Yaina Williams and Hyun Kim have won NLRB charges against Midwest Psychological Services, owned by psychologist Shelvy Kegar. Midwest provides mental health services at the Marion County Jail and the Arrestee Processing Center in Indianapolis through a contract with Corrections Corporation of America, which manages the prisons.

Midwest uses psychologists to do mental health evaluations of inmates, as well as forensic case managers to do intake and conduct the first interviews.

Williams and Kim were fired after complaining about wages and conditions faced by the 17 psychologists and case managers, and asking to be compensated for time spent in mandatory meetings and for the actual hours they worked in the lengthy process of filling out reports on each inmate interviewed.

Midwest refused to pay them for attending weekly staff meetings on their days off. When management realized it could not legally avoid paying them, Williams and Kim were told they only had to attend two meetings a month, instead of one a week.

The NLRB hearing officer found that Midwest's owner and personnel director had falsified documents and provided clearly false testimony about the firings. On appeal, the Board ruled Dec. 9 that the two had been fired for "concerted protected activity."

Rail union pays BNP lawyers

The British train drivers' union Aslef has agreed to pay out £30,000 to cover the legal costs of British National Party activist Jay Lee, who said his reputation was damaged after the union's magazine and union officials accused him of being a racist. Lee, who stood as a candidate for the BNP in a local elections in 2002, denied this, saying he was rather "pro-white and pro-British." British libel law makes it very difficult for defendants to win.

Lee agreed to resign from the union.

A class act

I have just read the November 2005 issue of Industrial Worker and want to praise and thank Gary Cox for his front page article "A Class Act." It is one of the most lucid, accurate, timely and damning reminders of capitalism and its inherent horrors I have seen in a long time. Well done Gary, Well done *Industrial Worker*.

Dave Hewitt,
Nottingham, UK



IWW Organizing Summit

"By building organizations based on solidarity, rather than on bureaucratic chain-of-command, we build organizations that by their very existence help to bring a new kind of society into being." — Staughton Lynd, *Solidarity Unionism*

You are invited to the IWW Organizing Summit in Austin, Texas, March 10-12.

The Organizing Summit is what many Wobs have been wanting for years. It is a chance to focus on organizing in the union and what it means to say, "Every member is an organizer." The weekend will be hosted by the Austin GMB and was endorsed at General Assembly 2005 in the hopes of supporting the work of the Organizing Department Formation Committee.

Over the weekend we will discuss the state of organizing in the union, participate in organizing workshops, and review efforts to launch an IWW Organizing Department.

Attendees must be in good standing in the IWW. Presenters in some cases will not be required to be IWWs. For more information or to make suggestions contact: waterloowob@monkeywrenchbooks.org

Lucy Parsons GMB, Austin

Major League sweatshops

In July, Wobblies and other activists will converge on Pittsburgh, Penn., to protest Major League Baseball's sweatshop profiteering on the occasion of the sport's annual All-Star game. Efforts

associated with this issue have been ongoing in the IWW for about four years, with branches in Pittsburgh, Upstate New York, Milwaukee and other areas conducting protests, petitioning and creating publications to educate and agitate with.

Last year, the ISC endorsed such local actions and this year, with the events planned in Pittsburgh this year, those of us active with this work want to give the greater union a heads up and would like to get more IWW members involved. While specific details of what other can do are forthcoming, it would be nice to get support and endorsements.

Please contact Ken Miller, noseatshops-bucco@yahoo.com for more information.

Greg Giorgio, Upstate New York

Northwest Day of Solidarity with Leonard Peltier

The 13th annual march and rally for justice will be held Saturday, Feb. 4, in Tacoma, Washington. We meet at 12 Noon at Portland Avenue Park (between East 35th and East Fairbanks), marching to the U.S. Federal Court House for a 1 p.m. rally.

An after-rally potluck meal and get-together will begin around 4 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, 423 Martin Luther King Jr Way.

Speakers and performers will include native activists, Wobblies and other unionists, and peace activists.

Those who need transportation are encouraged to join Caravans for Justice leaving from cities throughout the Northwest.

Leonard Peltier Support Group

Post Office Box 5464

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Tacoma-lpsg@ojibwe.us

Solidarity Gets the Goods: Chicago picket wins wages

Around 19 Wobblies and friends of Wobblies (aka wobsympes) picketed the Ideal Car Wash on Chicago's Northwest Side January 14th in a wage dispute between Fellow Worker Neal Rysdahl and the company.

In October 2005, FW Rysdahl went to work for Ideal under a verbal contract washing cars for \$5.00 per hour, to be paid in cash at the end of the week. Neal worked 45.5 hours and was expecting to get \$227.50 for his labor but when pay day came there was no pay for Neal.

After making several attempts to get Ideal to pay him what was owed, Neal brought the issue to the November meeting of the Chicago GMB. The GMB established a Grievance Committee to take up Neal's beef with Ideal.

In November Chicago GMB Secretary, Mike Hargis, sent Ideal a polite letter asking them to make good their obligation to our Fellow Worker. A week later FW Hargis received a call from Eduardo "Eddie" Amenero, one of Ideal's managers, claiming that he never hired Neal; that in early October Ideal was in the process of being sold to a guy named Lee Alicia who backed out of the deal at the last moment and skipped town. Amenero said that this Alicia character may have hired Neal but that he, Amenero, never hires people by the hour but that he does hire people to work for tips.

FW Hargis relayed this conversation to the Grievance Committee, which decided to send another registered letter demanding that Ideal pay Neal what he was owed or else. FW Penny Pixler wrote this letter and gave Ideal until January 1st to pay up or face industrial action.

Comes January 1 and still no dough.

The Grievance Committee got together and organized an informational picket for Saturday, January 14, to pressure Ideal to pay our fellow worker his due.

Picketing began at 9:00 a.m. We managed to turn away a few cars and received several supportive horn-honks from passing motorists. Around 11:30 the owner showed up, along with Amenero and a few goons. The owner started in to harangue Neal, claiming that he never hired Neal to work for him and that Neal was a liar. Meanwhile one of his would-be thugs busied himself making idle threats against pickets.

Although tension began to build, FW Pat Brenner of the Chicago GMB intervened and told Amenero that we didn't want any trouble; that we wanted to resolve the issue peaceably.

After a brief negotiation, punctuated at times by threats from the gangster wannabes, the boss pulled a wad of cash out of his pocket and paid Fellow Worker Neal what he was owed, all the while denying that he owed Neal anything. (But having his business disrupted and embarrassed was potentially more costly than the pittance owed to Neal.)

The picket line came down and we left, satisfied that solidarity works and that direct action gets the goods!

Thanks to all the FWs who came out to picket, including the comrades from Food Not Bombs who brought some grub. A special thanks to Neal for not walking away from a beef. Who knows how many other workers Ideal has screwed out of their pay? By standing up and saying "no more," FW Neal showed that you don't have to take it, that you can fight back if you have a union at your back. An Injury to One is an Injury to All!



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- ★ ORGANIZATION
- ★ EDUCATION
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