

# Industrial Worker

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INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD

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## Restaurant Workers' Justice Ride

To draw attention to the pervasive problem of racial discrimination in the restaurant industry, New York City's Restaurant Opportunities Center organized a Restaurant Workers' Justice Ride on Dec. 8. The ride also commemorated the 51st anniversary of Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus to a white man – an act of protest that sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

A study sponsored by ROC-NY released in January 2005, *Behind the Kitchen Door: Pervasive Inequality in New York City's Thriving Restaurant Industry*, found that 64 percent of the city's restaurant workers were foreign-born. Yet a huge majority, 83 percent, of those working "in the front of the house" as bartenders, hosts and waiters were non-Hispanic whites. Front of the house jobs are typically the highest-paid non-managerial jobs in the industry.

About 100 restaurant workers and their supporters rallied on a blustery New York night Dec. 8 to express their frustration with a profitable industry bent on discrimination. Speakers included Ron Daniels, president of the Institute for the Black World 21st Century, and Roger Toussant, president of Transit Workers Union Local 100. Among the stops on the ride were Café Fiorello, owned by the Fireman Hospitality Group (owned by Sheldon Fireman – nothing to do with firefighters), at 64th and Broadway and restaurant Daniel at 65th & Park Ave.

Former and current workers at three well-known restaurants in the six-restaurant Fireman Hospitality Group – Redeye Grill, Shelly's New York and Café Fiorello – have filed lawsuits with ROC-NY's assistance, alleging misappropriation of tips, failure to pay overtime, sexual harassment and racial discrimination.

Seven workers at Daniel also filed suit in early December charging that chef-owner Daniel Boulud underpays and discriminates against minority employees. According to the suit, Daniel has consistently denied minority workers promotions to higher-paying positions of Captain, Assistant Captain and Lounge Server while promoting white workers with the same or lesser skills, experience or seniority. "Daniel's promotion practices reveal a two-track system whereby managers give white workers greater opportunities to move quickly to higher-paying, higher-status positions while denying those opportunities to Latino and Bangladeshi workers, who remain in the lower-paying and more physically demanding Busser and Runner positions," according to the complaint.

The suit also alleges that Boulud and his managers subjected the plaintiffs to a hostile work environment and disparate treatment by disciplining them more harshly than white workers. Additionally, management made insulting comments about Latino and Bangladeshi employees' race and ethnicity and singled them out for verbal abuse.

Both Fireman and Boulud have filed separate suits against ROC-NY claiming slander and loss of business from protests outside of the restaurants.

ROC-NY is also working to transform racial inequality and bad employment practices through its own cooperatively-run white tablecloth restaurant, Colors, which opened in 2006. The restaurant is collectively owned by 50 workers. All work is equally paid, and work schedules are made to accommodate people's lives. In designing the restaurant, workers took care to make it ergonomically sound. Money to finance the project was lent by a federation of cooperatives in Italy.

In order to help low-paid restaurant workers gain skills needed to move into better-paying positions in the industry, ROC-NY also sponsors free classes for members such as English as a Second Language, bartending, cooking, baking and waiter training.

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## Starving amidst world's plenty

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## Resisting the attack on faculty

Two-thirds of college teachers now 'adjuncts'; ill-paid, no rights **5**

## Global actions target Starbucks union-busters

Actions in some fifty cities around the world, including Australia, Canada, Germany, Great Britain, New Zealand and American cities including New York, Chicago, Minneapolis and San Francisco protested Starbucks' anti-union practices and the wrongful firing of five union activists over the Thanksgiving weekend Nov. 24.

The global day of action kicked off Nov. 22, when five New York City IWW baristas illegally fired for their union activities entered Starbucks regional headquarters to demand their jobs back and that Starbucks cease its scorched earth union-busting policy.

As SWU members and community supporters picketed outside, the fired baristas addressed their demands to Starbucks "Partner and Asset Protection Investigator" Marc Stella inside the company's posh office across from the Empire State Building.

Stella is the company's internal Pinkerton who conducted the sham investigation against FW Daniel Gross and is likely complicit in all the baristas' terminations. Regional Director Jim McDermott was conveniently out of the office enjoying the Thanksgiving weekend and his fat cat salary as baristas work extra hard meeting holiday demand on a poverty wage.

The roster of fired unionists now includes: Joseph Agins, fired from Starbucks at 2nd Ave. and 9th, Dec. 12, 2005; Charles Fostrom, fired from 57th and Lexington, July 11; Evan Winterscheidt, fired from 14th and 6th Ave., July 18; Daniel Gross, fired from 36th and Madison, August 5; Isis Saenz, fired from 57th and Lexington, Nov. 1.

In Germany solidarity actions took place in Essen and Munich on Nov. 25. In Essen, Starbucks Workers Union supporters leafleted in front of the shop near the



Pittsburgh Wobs picketing Starbucks

Central Railway Station, and sent faxes to the German headquarters of Starbucks, also in Essen, warning that they would return if the baristas' demands should were not fulfilled.

In Munich supporters distributed leaflets in front of the shops in Leopold and Feilitzsch streets. Most participants were members of the German anarcho-syndicalist Freie ArbeiterInnen Union (Free Workers Union) or the German IWW organizing committee.

In Pittsburgh, 25 IWW members and other union supporters carried picket signs and chanted in front of the Squirrel Hill Starbucks at the corner of Forbes and Shady Ave. As the post-lunch crowd milled about, union activists entered the store in an attempt to talk with employees and customers, but managers blocked leafletting or union discussions inside the store and ejected customers who were discussing the action.

Unionists then took to the sidewalk in front of the store and began their picket. Motorists honked and waved their support and passers-by stopped to talk with union members handing out flyers. "It's amazing how many Starbucks customers don't know what it's like to work at Starbucks," said Ken

*continued on page 4*

## 'Socialist' bosses attack Scottish Wobblies

As Christmas approaches, eleven workers at the Scottish Parliament face broken contracts and unemployment in the new year, courtesy of the self-proclaimed champions of the Scottish working class, MSPs Tommy Sheridan and Rosemary Byrne.

They are both Members of Scottish Parliament, Sheridan being the only candidate for the Scottish Socialist Party elected when the parliament was founded in 1999, and Byrne one of five more who joined him after the second election in 2003.

Their party has been torn by a bitter dispute, centred around Sheridan's leadership, and a legal action he took against the *News of the World* when the paper made allegations about his private life. The rancour ended in Sheridan and Byrne's resignation from the SSP to found a new party called Solidarity.

The IWW of course takes no side between these groups, and their members are entitled to align themselves as they choose. However, in the course of this fight, Sheridan and Byrne decided to jettison their obligations to their parliamentary workers.

The SSP group of six MSP's originally employed 13 workers, promising them work until the next election in 2007 on wages paid from their pooled parliamentary allowances. Sheridan and Byrne have now withdrawn their support from this fund, and though two workers have switched employment to the new group, there is not enough money left to pay the remaining 11 for the rest of

their contracts.

They are therefore placed in an impossible position: forced to choose between having their employment transferred to the new group against their will, and losing their jobs over a political split they did not precipitate. Meanwhile, Sheridan and Byrne now fund their parliamentary work with money taken straight from the pockets of the workers they themselves employed.

Five of the affected workers are members of the Industrial Workers of the World, while others are members of the National Union of Journalists. Both unions are pressing Sheridan and Byrne to honor their commitments to these workers, but thus far they have refused.

This is the second battle in as many years to defend the Scottish Parliament workers. They previously faced down a parliamentary decision to dock their wages in retaliation for the SSP parliamentarians having waged a brief silent demonstration on the parliament floor.

The IWW Scottish Parliament Job Branch is demanding of all six MSP's in the employing group retention of all remaining 10 FTE jobs until the May 2007 Scottish Parliament elections, No redundancies, No pay cuts, and acknowledgment of and adherence to the contractual obligations toward all staff employed by the original employers' group.

Regular updates and an email protest ready for dispatch are at [www.iww.org.uk](http://www.iww.org.uk).

## Educate to organize

As fellow workers know, relating the facts in the education industry, especially for adjuncts, can be an essential initial step in organizing contingent workers – workers educating each other. For this reason, I wrote “Adjunct professors...” (p. 5) last issue. IWW members have been instrumental in establishing a meeting place, a forum, for contingent academic labor to facilitate worker organizing in higher ed.

The first COCAL in Boston, and some of the first publications comparing adjunct salaries, benefits and working conditions came out of this effort.

Now is the time, I think, for fellow workers to follow suit, to go down the street from the coffee shops and build the much needed informational picket outside colleges and universities. With your help, contingent education workers, adjunct professors, can find common purpose and organize their own branches and hiring halls.

Contingent academic laborers cannot wait for business unions and faculty associations to address their issues. When administration bosses are forced into negotiations by faculty full-timers and graduate assistants, adjuncts who organize in solidarity must occupy a place alongside and present their demands for wages, benefits and job security.

Mark Wolff, Boston

## Gambling for Christ

So what's this?

The American “gaming” industry has

joined forces with the religious right!

You read that correctly. You might think that major American casino companies had become born again Christians, judging from their zealous crusade against the evils of Internet gambling.

It seems that web sites located in places like Gibraltar, Malta and St. Vincent now offer American gamblers better odds and a faster pay-off than American casinos.

So the bosses suddenly discovered a deep concern for the welfare of the people who work in their casinos. They called on their workers to sign on to form letters lobbying against the evils of Internet gambling, and sent their lobbyists to work the halls of Congress arm in arm with the religious right.

Unionization of the casino workers might offer better odds of salvation on the job floor (and perhaps in the hereafter as well), but that will have to wait 'til the sweet by and bye.

Remember when bingo workers in Pennsylvania organized into the IWW, and the bosses fought them so hard they fought themselves into bankruptcy?

Remember all those St. Louis casino workers the industry tried to keep from getting a union after they had voted for legalized gambling in Missouri?

The casino bosses have fought unions tooth and nail, in city after city. So this newfound concern for their workers' livelihood reeks of more than a little hypocrisy.

Robert G. Rice II, St. Louis



## A letter from the incoming editors

Fellow Workers,

We are honored to be elected as the next co-editors of the *Industrial Worker*. We would like to take this opportunity to introduce some of our plans for the immediate future of this newspaper. For the most part we are not planning any radical departures from the current format, as it is our opinion that outgoing editor Jon Bekken has done an exemplary job of developing the paper. However, we have identified several key areas that we plan to focus on improving and expanding:

**More coverage of industries that employ large numbers of IWW members:** In an effort to encourage participation by the members of our industrial unions and job branches, we will provide ongoing and extensive news coverage of the industries where the IWW has a strong presence. These industries include education, food service and retail, among others. We hope that dedicated coverage of these industries will help persuade more workers from those sectors to join the IWW, enabling our industrial unions to grow in size and power. We are looking for members who are interested in becoming industry “beat” reporters, covering news and perspectives about your industry on a regular basis.

**More interviews of workers and activists telling their stories:** Why beat around the bush when you can go straight to the source? Within our union there are many amazing people engaged in important struggles that readers can benefit from hearing about. We intend to interview these members (both the well known and the obscure) as well as our allies from around the world. Please contact us if you know someone who would make a good subject for a featured interview.

**More photos, art and comics:** All too often an important story is ignored by many readers because it lacks a good image to draw them in. Photos and artwork really help to convey the message and feeling of an article. We ask that everyone who submits an article do their best to find some quality photos or artwork to accompany it. If you need help figuring out how to do this we'll be happy to assist you. Do you have photography or art skills but don't like writing? Get in touch with us and we'll put you to work doing what you do best! We are also looking for talented people who can build on the long-standing tradition of Wobbly cartoons that use humor and/or symbolism to express the ideas of the IWW. Some of our most popular comic strips have recently been discontinued as the cartoonists have moved on to other projects in their lives. We need some new folks who can keep the torch burning.

**Article exchanges:** We hope to facilitate an ongoing exchange of articles between the *Industrial Worker* and regional and local IWW publications. If your ROC or local branch has a newspaper or magazine, please share it with us and send us any articles that might be relevant to fellow workers outside your geographic area. We are also trying to collaborate with and support a new Spanish-language IWW newspaper that is still in the works.

**Member contributions:** The *Industrial Worker* welcomes *continued on page 4*

## Apologies for our appearance and size

As a result of a computer crash from which our templates and other files have not yet been recovered, this issue is reduced in pages and type faces and other elements have had to be substituted.

## Industrial Worker

The Voice of Revolutionary Industrial Unionism

- ★ ORGANIZATION
- ★ EDUCATION
- ★ EMANCIPATION

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## Upstate New York Wobs on picket line, promoting IWW culture at year's end

BY SOURDOUGH SLIM

The James Connolly Upstate N.Y. GMB of the IWW finished 2006 with a busy schedule of cultural activities and in support of the Starbucks Workers Union of the IWW, in conjunction with coordinated activities around the world in late November.

In mid-November, Upstate N.Y. IWWs hosted a concert with working class troubadour Anne Feeny. The IWW member and dual card holder in AFM Local 1000 gave a rousing acoustic performance at Albany's Steamer 10 Theater to a union-friendly and activist-oriented crowd. Local IWW members worked with local concert promoter The Eighth Step to put on a show that rewarded union members with a 50 percent admission discount at the door.

The intimate performance space was decorated with IWW memorabilia and Wobbly banners that Feeny said inspired her. And she delivered a memorable show. Check out her latest recording, "If I Can't Dance," at her web site or through the IWW Literature Department. She may return soon to work with Wobs here and with organizers of the annual May Day labor celebration in the Capital District area of Upstate New York.

On Nov. 25, a half dozen Wobblies and some community activists picketed one of the newest Starbucks locations on busy Western Avenue, outside Albany, N.Y.

Sporting placards decrying the corporate coffee giant's union busting as a "bitter brew" for workers and in support of Ethiopian

coffee farmers, the 90-minute picket was a lesson in the corporation's newest way to attempt to stifle dissent. This and several other of the newer Starbucks locations in the Albany area are drive-thru shops. This presents more of a challenge to reach the consumer, somewhat reluctant to stop their vehicle to talk or take a flyer. And in the colder weather, the driver is less likely to roll down their window to see what's going on outside their comfort zone. But the action was lively and a theatrical turkey made a strut up and down the walk in front of the shop. Wobs also carried overstuffed coffee bags to point out the plight of the world's poorest coffee farmers. Future actions are in the works at several Starbucks locations in the area.

The Upstate N.Y. IWWs also unveiled their permanent "Wobbly Show" exhibit at Schenectady's Cable Access Channel 16 in December. After enthusiastic support from station staff and the public following the display of a smaller version last December and January, the Branch queried about giving one of the travelling exhibits a lasting home.

A press release quoted local IWW Delegate Greg Giorgio, explaining plans for the assemblage of IWW history: "We have enough materials in the collection to create different theme displays and travelling exhibits, as well." The collection will serve as backdrop for regular history lectures and will also become the subject of a future documentary produced through Channel 16.

### Solidarity picket at DC's Landmark E Street Theater

Members of the newly formed Washington, D.C., IWW branch held an informational picket outside the Landmark E Street Cinema Nov. 18. The picketers were showing their solidarity with Bay Area IWW members at the Landmark Shattuck Cinema in Berkeley, Calif., who are currently in negotiations.

The Shattuck workers voted overwhelmingly to join the IWW back in June 2006, and



Anne Feeny in concert in Albany.

since then have been met with an unwillingness on the part of management to sit down and negotiate in good faith.

### NY foodstuffs workers win contract at EZ Supply

The IWW has negotiated a tentative agreement with Brooklyn-based EZ Supply after a year-long fight that saw repeated job actions and leafleting in the area served by the business. At the table, the boss acknowledged that the union campaign was cutting into his business. As a result, the distributor's immigrant workers have won union recognition, wage increases of \$1.70 to \$2.45 an hour over the next two years, a grievance procedure, paid sick days and vacation time, and premium pay for certain types of work.

Workers' personnel files will be purged of all mention of union activities and related discipline, and several workers will receive back pay for unpaid work. Workers will continue to pursue other pay claims in court.

Most EZ workers participated in bargaining sessions, and were joined by workers from IWW-organized shops at Handyfat, Amersino and Starbucks, all seeking their own agreements. The agreement was awaiting ratification by workers at press time.

### IWW truckers picket West Coast intermodal hub

IWW truckers organized a one-day job action Dec. 7 over traffic tickets issued by the BNSF Railway at its Los Angeles-area facility. Dozens of troqueros picketed the Hobart, Calif., terminal, normally one of the busiest intermodal facilities in North America.

Following the action, the troqueros caucused and agreed to start building a May Day strike that they will try to take national.

BNSF disputed picketers' claims that traffic had been dramatically slowed, saying sheriff's deputies kept traffic flowing. However, spokeswoman Lena Kent said the company will re-evaluate its ticketing policy.

Truckers object to unjust tickets issued for violations of rules. Guards in intermodal terminals often hand out draconian penalties at their whim. "If you talk back, you get kicked out for life," Ernie Nevarez said.

Kent said truckers can be barred from no more than a year. "You are not banned for life," she said. Violators must attend a class after the first ticket, Kent said; the second ticket bars them from the facility for 30 days.

BNSF Railway, a subsidiary of Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corp., operates one of the largest rail networks in North America.

### 2007 IWW officers elected

IWW members voted to increase union dues and establish a new organizing department, and also elected General Administration officers to serve in 2007.

General Secretary-Treasurer Mark Damron, running unopposed, was re-elected to a second term. Elected to the General Executive Board were Mike Bell, Patrick Brenner, Kevin Farkas, Adam Lincoln, Bryan Roberts, Scott Satterwhite and Richard Seymour. Matt White will serve as first alternate.

The 2007 International Solidarity Commissioners will be Lauren Anzaldo, John Kalwaic and Mike Pesa; Eric Chester will serve as first alternate, after securing more votes as a write-in candidate than did the other nominee on the ballot.

Peter Moore and Mike Pesa have been elected to edit the *Industrial Worker* for the next two years, securing more votes than Marc Young and the team of Tom Howard and Diane Krauthamer (which came in second) in what was the closest election.

Tom Kappas will serve as General Defense Committee secretary. The 2007 IWW General Assembly will be held in Chicago.

A resolution that the IWW become an "adherent" to the Sixth Declaration of the Laconodon Jungle (the Zapatistas' "Other Campaign") was rejected, with many members arguing that it would violate the union's longtime policy of political independence.

Members overwhelmingly approved constitutional amendments to establish an Organizing Department and to require applicants for IWW branch charters to have first adopted bylaws and elected officers.

A proposal to increase IWW dues rates placed on the ballot by petition was approved by a nearly two-to-one ratio, as was a proposal to rename the rates; a companion motion to establish a new top dues tier for higher income workers was approved by a nine-vote margin. However, the General Executive Board is considering a motion to suspend implementation of these items pending a review of their constitutionality. Critics charge that members were not properly notified of the proposals, and so were unable to include arguments against them in the discussion bulletin issued with the ballots. In addition, they say, some provisions conflict with existing constitutional language.

### Preamble to the IWW Constitution

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Join the IWW Today

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

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

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

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

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

**TO JOIN:** Mail this form with a check or money order for initiation and your first month's dues to: IWW, Post Office Box 23085, Cincinnati OH 45223, USA.

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

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



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

## Wobs serenade Starbucks union-busters in Pittsburgh

BY KEVIN FARKAS

Pittsburgh Wobblies set up a picket line outside a Bloomfield Starbucks Dec. 2, in solidarity with workers fired by the coffee giant for union activity. Bloomfield is a working class neighborhood known for its strong union heritage and as a close-knit community of local independent retailers.

For nearly two hours on a sunny but frigid Saturday afternoon, workers carried picket signs, banners and the ever-present red IWW flag as they chanted in front of the Bloomfield Starbucks on Liberty Ave.

Before the picket started the IWW serenaded fellow workers and customers inside the store with a resounding rendition of "Solidarity Forever," the classic labor anthem written by Wobbly Ralph Chaplin in 1915. But on this day the union sang a new verse written for coffee industry workers:

"It is we who pick the coffee, ship it here and roast it brown / Then we brew it and we froth it up, for folks to drink it down / Instead of bloating profits, lift baristas in our town / For the Union makes us strong."

As expected, Starbucks again brought in high-level managers on a weekend to salvage the corporation's public relations-inspired "warm and feel-good" image. Managers handed out free coffee samples to passers-by on the street, but this only gave picketers a chance to talk to customers as they stopped to see what was going on. It was also a chance to sign up "Friend of Labor" supporters who pledge support for the union and to "strike" against Starbucks as consumers.

The action was very successful in informing the Bloomfield community about Starbucks' anti-worker behavior. However, an unidentified and uninvited man briefly showed up with a sign stating, "God hates Starbucks and [homosexuals]." Wobblies quickly confronted the man and voiced outrage at his message. When asked whom he worked for, he said "Starbucks."

An IWW protester noted that someone was filming the action from across the street. "Corporate surveillance is all too common at these protests. It's a form of intimidation used to dissuade workers against going public in support of the union. But we'd like to believe that Starbucks didn't have anything to do with planting that hateful man on our picket line. For whatever reason he was there, it seemed that he was only interested in a quick photo-op and then he was gone."

Pittsburgh Wobs are organizing another local day of action against Starbucks union-busting December 16.

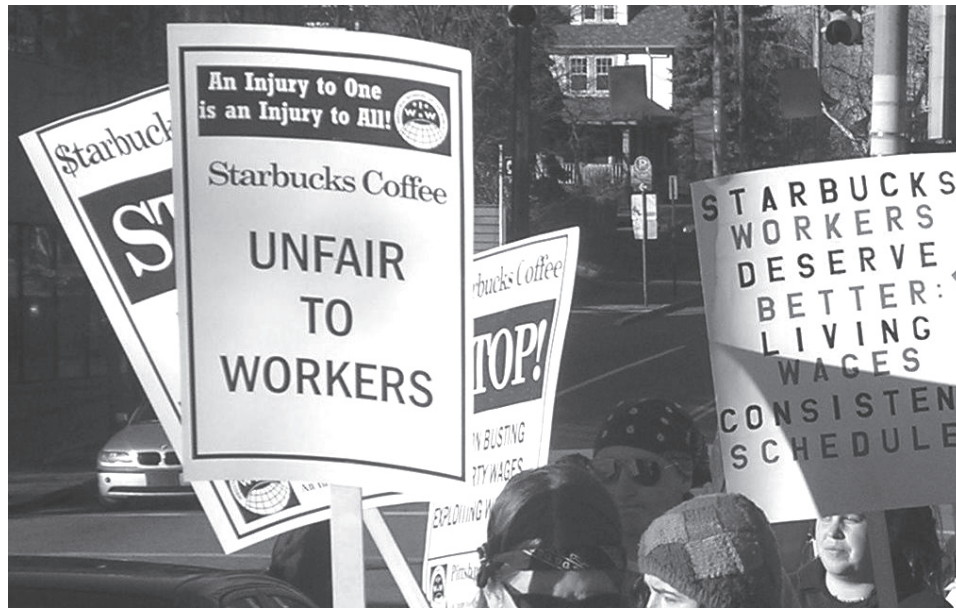
## We Are All Humans! No One Is Illegal!

The National Immigrant Solidarity Network has called for a strikes and rallies in solidarity with immigrant workers for May Day 2007. ([www.mayday2007.org](http://www.mayday2007.org)) The actions would protest Congressional anti-immigrant legislation, the militarization of the border, guest worker programs and the criminalization of immigrant communities, and support amnesty for undocumented workers, immigrant family reunification, a humane path to citizenship and labor rights and living wages for all workers.

"On May 1st 2006, we showed the world that our force, our strength and our voice cannot be silenced from this moment on! This is the birth of a new civil rights movement for the 21st century, and we will fight for our demands until we prevail.

"Understand there'll be diverse tactics and demands at the May Day 2007. We understand this is just one of the calls, and we'll be openly working with different groups to form broad-based common ground coalition, in order to build a new immigrant rights/civil rights movements of the 21st Century.

"United We'll Win! Together We'll Achieve Our Dreams!"



## Global day of action against Starbucks' union-busting

continued from page 1

Miller, an IWW member and ex-Starbucks worker. "Once we explain the hardships of employees, people are sympathetic and supportive of unionization."

Several baristas (Starbucks' term for employees) came out of the store to see what was going on, talking about the union under managers' watchful eye.

Between December 2005 and November 2006, Starbucks fired five New York City IWW members on pretexts ranging from insubordination to undermining employee morale. The National Labor Relations Board is investigating these firings and is not expected to issue a ruling until sometime next year.

In March 2006 the NLRB did reach a settlement with Starbucks on earlier union complaints. That settlement reinstated two union workers, and forced Starbucks to pay

back pay to three employees and change discriminatory policies infringing upon workers' right to wear union buttons and distribute union materials in the workplace. Starbucks also promised not to provide employees with benefits, including after-hours store cleaning services, free pizza, free gym passes and free baseball tickets in order to encourage employees to withdraw support for the union.

Messages of solidarity are coming from far and wide. The C.E.K. union in Guinea declared its support for the union in September. In Paris, members of the French National Confederation of Workers protested the company's repeated violations of workers' rights. The Comite de Solidarite de Madagascar, along with labor groups in Austria, Canada, England, Germany, Korea, New Zealand, and across the U.S. have also condemned Starbucks' union-busting.

## 25 years of fighting for justice

BY JIM KENNEDY

December 9 marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of Philadelphia activist and radical journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal's incarceration on a frame-up murder charge. Several hundred people rallied at Philadelphia's City Hall that day to demand his freedom.

A recent court victory makes a new trial more likely than ever before. The judge who tried the case, Albert Sabo, said that he would "help them fry the nigger" in the presence of a court stenographer and another judge. In the sentencing phase, Sabo instructed the jury to consider mitigating factors only if the jury met consensus on them – even though the law requires only one juror to agree with the defense on a mitigating factor. The prosecution violated the law by preemptively striking 11 black people, resulting in a jury with a skewed racial composition. The prosecution also urged the jury to sentence Abu-Jamal to death, because, in their words, he would have "appeal after appeal" – thus legally undercutting the level of scrutiny required for sentencing someone to death.

In addition to considering these issues, which the court selected from the many violations of Abu-Jamal's rights cited in his appeal, the judges will also consider the prosecution's request to reinstate the death sentence previously overturned because of the unconstitutional jury instructions.

Numerous speakers came to the rally in Mumia Abu-Jamal's defense. Pam Africa of MOVE spoke at length about the case. Michael Coard explained the legal issues in his typical, well-reasoned fashion. The featured speaker was Ward Churchill, who drew wild

## Friedman, Pinochet die

Milton Friedman, a mediocre economist who shilled for the rich and provided ideological cover for the immiseration of millions around the world, has died. Also dead is ousted Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, who found it necessary to murder thousands of our fellow workers, including Wobbly Frank Terrugi, in order to impose Friedmanesque economic policies in Chile.

applause when he said that he has supported Mumia Abu-Jamal "since October 12, 1492." I enjoyed his speech, but thought that the most eloquent speaker of the day was "Brother Rob" of the local Philadelphia community. In a clearly worded and impassioned speech, the 72-year-old addressed his community directly about the many issues that black folks have to deal in their neighborhoods before they can gain freedom. As a white person, I knew that the speech was mostly not for me. But I appreciated it all the same.

This event was encouraging, but Mumia Abu-Jamal nonetheless remains in prison. We have to make it a top priority to get him a new trial – at least! If you want to assist the efforts to free Mumia, contact the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal ([www.mumia.org](http://www.mumia.org)).

## Letter from the editors...

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submissions from anyone who agrees with its message of revolutionary rank-and-file unionism. We will often supplement our own material with external sources. However, the vast majority of material that appears in this newspaper should come from the membership of the IWW. Within this, as many articles as possible should be directly related to IWW campaigns, activities or issues.

If you are an IWW member, this is *your* newspaper. Your dues money pays for it and it is up to *you* to create its content. Over the next month we will be contacting branches individually to find out what they are up to, but please don't wait until then. If your general membership branch, job branch, regional organizing committee or other unit has an event or starts working on a project or campaign, please write about it or at the very least let us know it's going on so we can try to cover it. The same goes for individuals who have newsworthy experiences on the job. We also need people who can be ongoing columnists, writing regularly on some particular theme.

George Orwell once wrote, "In a day of universal deceit, telling the truth is revolu-

## London IWW: Starbucks, there's nowhere to hide!

BY ANT INCE, LONDON GMB

On a tip-off that Starbucks CEO Jim Donald would be delivering a speech at the London NASDAQ Conference, London IWW members took the opportunity to show him that just like capital, solidarity crosses international borders. Despite massive transport delays, a van full of police and the speech being held at 9 a.m. on a weekday, a handful of Wobs gathered outside the hotel at which he was speaking and gave out hundreds of leaflets to rush hour passers-by.

Despite the hotel's location near the Square Mile, London's financial hub, many were very receptive to the campaign, and some stopped to speak to us in more depth. Some leaflets found their way into the hotel, and hopefully into the sweaty palms of Donald himself. The action demonstrated that our union is a global union, and will hassle the union-busters wherever they may go.

## Ontario Wobblies hit Starbucks union-busting

BY X354176, PETERBOROUGH

Wobblies in Toronto and Peterborough, Ontario, responded to the call of the IWW Starbucks Workers Union to inform customers of Starbucks' anti-worker policies, and baristas of their right to organize Nov. 24.

A half dozen union members and supporters visited the main Starbucks store in Peterborough, introducing baristas to the union, while distributing leaflets to customers. In Toronto, two stores were visited and the situation discussed with customers.

## Farm workers join Florida Starbucks protests

Members of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers joined Florida Wobblies and other activists Nov. 24 in actions at two of the three Starbucks locations at the Fort Myers Market Square shopping center.

Nearly 20 people protested at a stand-alone store and at the in-store location in the Super Target store located a few hundred yards away.

The CIW's Melody Gonzalez told reporters she was there to protest Starbucks' firing of workers who are unionizing and demanding better wages and health insurance, and Starbucks' failure to use only fair-trade coffee. "A fair trade means the coffee farmers are receiving a fair price for the coffee they produce," she said.

The protest began at about 10 a.m. with people bearing signs saying, "Starbucks robs coffee farmers" and "know where your bean has been."

The IWW's Starbucks Workers Union is an active supporter of a global campaign for justice for the small farmers who grow much of the world's coffee cup, recently joining Oxfam in a campaign to help Ethiopian coffee farmers receive a living wage for the premium coffee beans they grow.

The local newspaper quoted a Starbucks PR flack who noted that the company had recently raised pay for most of its workers, including those in Fort Myers area stores, in response to "employee concerns."

tionary." The IWW has always known this and has made it a priority to spread our message of industrial democracy to every corner of the globe. This goal has never been more relevant than it is today. When a handful of mega-corporations own the vast majority of the world's media outlets it is absolutely essential for an independent and critical news source like the *Industrial Worker* to exist. The two of us are proud to be at its helm.

The submissions deadline for the next issue is January 9. As in the past, the *Industrial Worker* can be contacted by email at [iw@iww.org](mailto:iw@iww.org), by phone (via General Headquarters) at 513-591-1905 or by mail at PO Box 13476, Philadelphia PA 19101. We look forward to seeing your work!

In Solidarity,  
Mike Pesa and Peter Moore

# Starving amidst plenty

While the economic pundits continue trumpeting the great news that the economy is booming (see the Dec. 8 *New York Times* for a recent example that conflates the salaries of bus drivers and stockbrokers to conclude that workers are doing well), the Economic Policy Institute and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities report that most U.S. workers continue to lose ground. Not only are inflation-adjusted earnings down for the majority of workers, but even consumer spending is slumping for the bottom 60 percent as credit cards are maxed out, savings exhausted, and benefit programs slashed.

The personal savings rate is now at minus 0.4 percent, the first time it has been negative since the Great Depression, as workers are forced to borrow against their assets or run up their credit cards in order to keep their heads above water.

Meanwhile, the gap between men's and women's wages continues to narrow, but only because men's earnings continue to shrink. The gap in median hourly pay between men and women has narrowed to "just" 18.3 percent, which the U.S. Labor Department says is the smallest since they began tracking it 33 years ago. But while women workers are earning somewhat more (largely because they're working longer hours), working-class households overall are poorer.

Some people are doing quite well, of course. After 25 years of freewheeling global capitalism, including endless tax cuts for the wealthy, an orgy of free trade and the emergence of a supposedly global economy, the rich are stunningly richer than ever while the poor have fallen farther behind than ever.

The World Institute for Development Economics Research reports that more than 40% of all household wealth on the planet is

now owned by 1 percent of world adults. The top 2% own more than 50%, and the top 10% have corralled 85% of the planet's wealth. By contrast, the bottom half of all adults on the planet lay claim to just 1% of the wealth.

And although the politicians and media pundits keep telling us things are getting better – indeed, the Federal Reserve is worried that wages are “rising” too quickly and is trying to “cool down” the economy – workers aren't buying it. In the exit polls conducted on Election Day, only 30 percent of U.S. voters said they expected life to improve for the next generation of Americans.

Since 2000, the median U.S. family headed by someone of working age has seen its income drop 5.4 percent after adjusting for inflation. This represents a loss of \$3,000 in annual income. Meanwhile, health and pension benefits have been falling much more rapidly. The percentage of U.S. workers getting health insurance through their employers has dropped from 61.5 percent in 1989 to 55.9 percent in 2004, even as workers have had to pick up a much larger share of the costs.

In 2005, the bottom fifth of households made just 8 percent of all expenditures, the lowest rate on record. With the government looking to trim Social Security and Medicare benefits, times will only get harder.

Hard times are good times for some, of course. The Consumer Federation of America reports that payday lenders – predators who lend workers a few hundred dollars to make it to their next pay check, at annual interest rates of 400 percent or more – will rake in \$4.2 billion this year, most of it from repeat customers who must roll their loans over again and again. And consumption by the richest fifth of Americans is skyrocketing.

## Protests in 90 cities target Israeli human rights abuses

BY SOPHIE YON-GHARBI

Israel has been controlling the entrances and exits to Gaza for the past months, preventing the population from receiving the humanitarian aid they so desperately need and creating a disastrous human crisis.

On December 2nd, the International Day of Action to Stop the Siege of Gaza, Jewish Voice for Peace/Boston held a demonstration in Harvard Square, one of many JVP-initiated demonstrations across the United States in which members and supporters stood in solidarity with peace and justice groups in Israel, Palestine and in more than 90 cities around the world who want to see this terrible disaster end and to ask for what should be a given: the respect of every human's rights.

On Nov. 8, the day after they announced they had halted military operations, the Israel Defense Forces killed 18 civilians while they were sleeping – they claim accidentally, however, when launching bombs against a civilian area, casualties are not an accident, they are inevitable. Unfortunately, bombs cannot tell the difference between a threat and an innocent civilian. The cease fire between Israel and the Northern Gaza strip was supposed to be the first step towards peace negotiations between both parties and a more human approach to the way Palestinians were being treated. It has been anything but.

Over 70 percent of the population of Gaza lives below the poverty line, imports and exports are limited, and the Palestinians have no way out. All this is represented as a country's right to defend itself: Israel claims this siege is the only way to restrict Hamas' resources, disarm the area and thus resume peace negotiations. Their “control” and their “defense” has only lead to more deaths.

The demonstration took place in front of a graveyard and along a fence, symbolizing the fence around Gaza and in memory of the victims of Israeli attacks against the civilian



PHOTO: HOWARD LENOW

population of Beit Hanoun on Nov. 8.

Over 60 demonstrators made a powerful statement holding foam tombstones with the names and ages of the 17 members of the Al-Athamna family who were the victims of the Israeli raid. The flyers they handed out informed passersby that by writing to their legislators, they can demand we stop providing Israel with weapons they use for purposes other than defense.

The goal of this weekend's demonstration was simple: Let the Palestinians know they have the support of the world; show the world we will not look the other way when faced with clear human rights violation; tell Israel that what they call defense, we call a graveyard. Isn't it a given that bombs go against what a cease fire should be?

For more information please visit [www.JewishVoiceforPeace.org](http://www.JewishVoiceforPeace.org)

## Ontario activists protest weapons manufacturer

Members of peace groups from Hamilton, Toronto and Guelph, Ontario, put symbolic grave markers near the entrance to L-3 Wescam with names of civilians killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. The rally, organized by Homes Not Bombs, targeted weapons systems manufactured at the facility.

Wearing orange jumpsuits and black hoods over their heads, protesters decried the torture at Guantanamo Bay prison. As peace activists rallied, others attempted to occupy entrances to the company offices in order to confront management. Eleven were arrested for trespassing.



## Adjuncts now 2/3 of college faculty

College faculty have traditionally worked under a tenure system that provided that after serving a seven-year probationary period and undergoing institutional review, they could henceforth only be fired for serious misconduct or in the event of financial crisis. They and civil service workers have been the only U.S. workers with any real job security or protection from arbitrary dismissal other than that conveyed by a union contract.

The tenure system gave faculty the freedom to organize their classes and research without having to worry about political interference, and to criticize the administrators who run their institutions. However, as administrators have increasingly embraced corporate models of governance, they have turned their backs on the tenure system.

Instead, nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of U.S. college teachers are now part-time and temporary staff (adjuncts), who earn much lower salaries, have no job security, and receive no health or retirement benefits.

The American Association of University Professors has published a new report documenting the growth of adjunct labor ([www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/research/conind2006.htm](http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/research/conind2006.htm)), including institution-specific data for more than 2,600 colleges and universities.

According to the AAUP report, only 24 percent of college faculty are now tenured, an all-time low. More than 46 percent are part-

time staff, typically hired by the course – often at rates so low that one or two students' tuition pays their entire salary. Full-time faculty are increasingly hired in “visiting” positions that might last for decades. These “visitors” serve at the pleasure of administrators, often teach heavier course loads than their tenure-track peers, and typically are paid thousands of dollars less a year than are faculty in tenure-track positions.

Growing numbers of adjuncts are organizing in response to these conditions, both through traditional unions and through pressure groups such as the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor. College administrations have generally been unsuccessful in efforts to deny union rights to adjunct faculty, and at many institutions where adjuncts were not ready to unionize have been pressured into raising pay, granting benefits to long-term faculty, and other gains.

At George Washington University, for example, administrators recently abandoned a two-year legal battle after the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals rejected their appeal of a NLRB ruling upholding a union representation election in which adjuncts voted to join SEIU Local 500. It will now begin negotiations with the union.

However, the NLRB has reversed rulings allowing union representation to graduate students who also teach courses at private colleges (public colleges are covered by state law), and some administrations have tried to declare adjuncts independent contractors in order to circumvent labor law protections.

## “Here's One for the Working Class”

BY JOSEPH LAPP II

Deprived of your sacred liberty,  
Deprived of the wealth you produce,  
Trading your life for a pay stub,  
Enduring the endless abuse,  
You sweat and you strain for slavery's wage  
Just trying to keep you afloat,  
A thirty-year mortgage and kids off to college  
And the tax man always at your throat,  
Your youngest she's sick and the bills won't relent,  
The insurance last year got cut,  
What can you do lying awake in the night?  
Cold sweat and a knot in your gut,  
So alone and afraid without hope,  
Arise! All you workers arise!  
This fear that you feel we all feel as one,  
Though high the walls of our cubicles rise,  
We're endlessly stretched by the debtor's demands,  
Robbed of the pride that we earned  
And our fate taken out of our hands,  
But take it back, I say, take it back!  
Your power lies in your defiance,  
Now if you'll just accept me as brother  
We can build up the Sacred Alliance,  
And when we all see  
That we need to be free  
We'll all cross our arms and we'll stop,  
We'll stop pushing papers, we'll stop pushing mops,  
Till our red sun rises at dawn.

## Harper adjuncts struggle for equitable contract

A couple hundred adjunct faculty filled a Harper College meeting hall, some standing in the corridors, to hear Anna Lewis, chief negotiator for the HCAFA, at a Nov. 14 hearing before the Harper College Board of Trustees. The union has struggled for a fair agreement for contingent faculty in negotiations that have dragged on since 2004.

Lewis compared privileges and benefits of adjuncts who teach more than half of the classes at the college with full-time professors and other instructors and staff. Showing salary rate charts and discussing benefit arrangements at the College of DuPage, Oakton CC, Elgin CC, and College of Lake County, in comparison, Lewis pointed out how organized adjuncts receive more equitable compensation – insurance, leave time, and a Professional Development Fund – at the other schools.

As they negotiate for an equitable contract, the Harper College adjuncts union is filing grievances using their current contract which outlines a grievance procedure. The college has been paying adjunct professors less for classes that are not fully enrolled – paying them by the number of students, rather than by the credit hour – even though this is not authorized under the contract. (Adjuncts are, of course, not paid more for over-enrolled courses.)

## Smithfield Packing walkout brings results

Over 500 workers walked out of the Smithfield Packing plant in Tar Heel, N.C., Nov. 16 to protest the termination of 75 immigrants. The next day another 1,000 workers walked off the job, bringing hog packing to a halt. As a result, Smithfield management agreed to negotiate with an elected group of workers to reverse the firings and agreed to changes in immigration enforcement policy.

The struggle to unionize the Smithfield hog processing operations go back to 1994, when UFCW began a campaign to organize the plants. Workers and organizers struggled with racist fear and intimidation tactics from management that were resulted in the NLRB finding 40 major violations of labor law during union representation elections in 1997. Using appeals in the federal courts, Smithfield delayed efforts to unionize for another eight years. Last summer, the NLRB denied Smithfield's last appeal.

In the meantime, according to Human Rights Watch, workers and union organizers have been abused, beaten, maimed, and killed by Smithfield's private police force.

Latino workers who had worked at the plant for two to three years and were union supporters were fired for allegedly having unverified Social Security documents.

On May Day 2006 these workers were amongst thousands who rallied for immigrants rights. When the walkout began Nov. 16, hundreds of phone calls were made to management by civil liberties and immigrant rights groups from all over the United States demanding workers rights. Smithfield capitulated to workers' demands to give immigrant workers time to resolve documentation issues, and to allow those involved in the walkouts to return to work.

## Union must surrender organizing plans to Cintas

A federal judge in Pennsylvania has turned UNITE-HERE organizing records over to attorneys hired by Cintas Corp., one of the U.S.'s largest industrial laundry companies. Cintas hired the lawyers for workers who said the union violated their privacy by visiting them at their homes to discuss working conditions and urge them to unionize.

Unite-Here is appealing an earlier ruling by the judge that the union unlawfully used motor vehicle registry information to learn where the workers lived.

Now the judge has agreed to turn over to the Cintas lawyers information on the union's organizing strategies, though he has

promised to withhold the names of workers who have been working with the union.

Unite-Here had argued to keep depositions and other material filed with the court confidential, saying its release would reveal union strategies to Cintas and set a precedent whereby companies would try to learn union strategies through lawsuits.

## Jeffboat stays union

Workers at the Jeffboat boat yard in Jeffersonville, Kentucky, have rejected an employer-backed bid to decertify Teamsters Local 89 on a 649-190 vote. Several Jeffboat workers formed an IWW job branch six years ago, waging a direct action campaign against unsafe conditions that culminated in a wild-cat strike that shut the yard for a week.

The Teamsters, which has represented Jeffboat workers since 1970, broke that strike by accepting a one-year contract extension over the vehement objection of most members. Although working conditions improved in the aftermath of the strike, the job branch was lost to turnover and demoralization.

According to workers, Jeffboat passed out anti-union propaganda to workers, had foremen wear anti-union buttons and shirts, and allowed anti-union flyers to be posted on company property. However, workers were not prepared to trust their lives or their livelihoods to management's tender mercies.

Jeffboat is raking in record profits, and has announced plans for 1,000 new jobs. Now that the decertification campaign is behind them, workers will begin negotiations for a new union contract.

## FedEx drivers vote to join Teamsters Local 25

Drivers at two FedEx sites in Wilmington, Mass., voted to join Boston Teamsters Local 25 in a NLRB election held Oct. 20. The vote count was delayed awaiting FedEx's appeal of an NLRB staff ruling that drivers are employees, eligible to be part of the bargaining unit, rather than independent contractors, as FedEx maintained.

These FedEx Ground drivers are the first to unionize of the over 15,000 drivers who work at the corporation's 500 locations.

## SEIU accepts lay-offs of 7,000 NY hospital workers

New Yorkers often get a surprise from city or state officials right after elections, such as subway fare increases. This time New Yorkers got a gigantic bit of bad news – over 50 hospitals in the state are to be closed or

merged. In a tricky arrangement, newly elected governor Democrat Elliot Spitzer will be required to carry out the recommendation of a commission set up by lame duck GOP governor Pataki.

Over 7,000 workers face layoffs, most of them 1199 SEIU members. The *New York Daily News* reports that the union will not fight this plan, "saving" their fight until next year when the governor unveils his new budget. Spitzer ran with a promise to cut \$1 billion from state health care costs.

1199 SEIU is one of the biggest and most politically active unions in New York state.

## ILWU shuts port to back Alcatraz ferry workers

BY MARC NORTON, BEYOND CHRON

International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 stages a port-wide shutdown Dec. 9, in support of maritime workers who have been battling the new non-union Alcatraz ferry operation for over two months.

Nearly a thousand maritime workers and their supporters marched from Harry Bridges Plaza across from the Ferry Building to Hornblower's "Alcatraz Landing" at Pier 33 for hours of mass picketing.

Workers from the Inland Boatmen's Union and the International Masters' Mates and Pilots have maintained a spirited picket line for over two months, ever since the National Park Service turned over the Alcatraz ferry service to Hornblower – a blatant attack on the long-standing union jurisdiction over San Francisco's port.

However, Hornblower has encountered a bit of rough water lately. Hornblower had expected the Park Service to approve their request for a 45 percent increase in the Alcatraz fare. Instead, only a \$3 increase was approved, with all the funds going to the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy.

The denial of Hornblower's fare increase came after incoming House Majority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-San Francisco) wrote the park service "strongly" opposing Hornblower's request and expressing her "great displeasure with the loss of a unionized workforce on the Alcatraz ferry service."

Alcatraz ferry workers, also very displeased, have "opened up a new front" by bringing "the fight into cyberspace," launching a new web site at [www.AlcatrazUnion.com](http://www.AlcatrazUnion.com). This web site proudly proclaims that it is "run by rank & file workers." Check it out.

## New York City staff rely on food stamps to survive

The *New York Daily News* reported Dec. 1 that 8,000 New York City government employees rely on food stamps because of "abysmally low salary." Some 340 full-time city workers also receive welfare in order to support their families.

The city's top welfare official said some of her full-time staff needs to go to charity food pantries to make ends meet. Starting salary at the NYC Human Resources Administration is \$22,099; another 198 HRA employees are paid less than \$26,000. HRA is the city agency created to help the poor, but keeps some of their full-time staff poor and dependent on charity and food stamps.

Last year the New York police and fire departments cut their starting salaries from \$44,500 to \$25,000 per year. The New York police academy now has about 25 percent of the students they used to get.

The mayor's office responded by saying that they can't do anything about it without raising taxes.

Currently the city is giving over \$350 million to the Yankees for a new baseball stadium and the same amount to the Mets and the New Jersey Nets to move that team to Brooklyn. The state government is giving similar donations to the Mets and Yankees to replace perfectly good stadiums with new luxury box stadiums. The builder who owns the Nets will get hundreds of millions more from the taxpayers to build luxury high rise condos in Brooklyn.

## 5,300 Houston janitors win first contract, pay hikes

Some 5,300 janitors working in private buildings in Houston joined the Service Employees International Union in September, and began a struggle for a citywide union contract that included wage increases from the present \$20 a day to \$8.50 an hour, with health insurance. On Oct. 23, 1,700 janitors went on strike after national cleaning companies ABM, OneSource, GCA, Sanitors and Pritchard refused to bargain in good faith.

In three weeks of protests, the striking janitors staged demonstrations and engaged in civil disobedience.

On Nov. 17, workers blocked an intersection adjoining buildings owned by national landlord JP Morgan Chase to confront the real estate corporation's role in exploiting workers. Houston police charged the protesters on horseback, trampling them and sending workers from Houston, and from as far away as New York City, to the hospital. Several janitors and their supporters were arrested and sent to jail, held on bond of \$20,000 each.

After a month of strike actions, an agreement was reached which doubles workers' wages over the next two years. The cleaning companies also agreed to increase the number of hours on the job per worker, paid holidays and vacation time. The contract also provides some health insurance benefits by 2009. The agreement does not guarantee full-time employment, however.

## ILO backs U.S. screeners' right to organize

The International Labor Organization has found that the Bush administration has violated the fundamental rights of American workers to form unions by denying unionization rights to the 56,000 passenger screeners at U.S. airports. The screeners were denied the right to organize a union in 2003 for "national security reasons."

The ILO was ruling on a three-year-old complaint by the American Federation of Government Employees. One thousand screeners have signed cards expressing their desire to become members of a union.

The Bush administration has used the same national security argument to deny collective bargaining rights to more than 700,000 U.S. Defense Department workers and 160,000 employees in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Federal courts have rejected that argument, but the Bush administration has appealed.

TSA spokesman Darrin Kayser said the agency would defy the ILO ruling. "Given the critical national security mission of our security officers, collective bargaining is not appropriate," Kayser said. The ILO has no mechanism to enforce its decisions.

## Gov't staff face Iraq draft

Overlooked in much of the reporting on the Iraq Study Group's recommendations to the Bush administration was a proposal to "reassign" civilian public employees to Iraq.

The government has asked many workers to take such assignments, but few have agreed. "If not enough civilians volunteer to fill key positions in Iraq, civilian agencies must fill those positions with directed assignments," the report says.

American Federation of Government Employees President John Gage told the *Federal Times* this amounted to "a 'draft' for federal workers."

"It's just like getting any person on the street and telling him or her that working in Iraq is now a condition of employment," Gage said. "The contractors are getting out of Iraq, our soldiers are getting out of Iraq, and now there's an idea to send in federal employees."

Richard Brown, president of the National Federation of Federal Employees, said he also opposes mandatory civilian deployments. "That doesn't make even a modicum of sense from what I can see," Brown said.

### Take Back Your Time

The fourth annual Take Back Your Time Day was celebrated October 24th, with events ranging from a discussion in Geelong, Australia, to leafleting on the Boston Common. The emphasis was on public education calling attention to the time poverty epidemic and talking about what we can do to solve it. Most events focused on individual approaches, rather than building a broader social movement that recognizes and confronts the employers' insatiable demand for more of our time.

### Long work hours linked to high blood pressure risk

Americans who work long hours each week may be damaging their health, researchers report in *Hypertension: Journal of the American Heart Association*. The survey of 24,205 California workers found that the more hours they worked, the greater their risk of developing high blood pressure.

After researchers eliminated other risk factors, they found that the number of hours people worked each week was significantly associated with self-reported hypertension. Compared to people who worked 11 to 19 hours per week, the risk was 14 percent higher among those who



worked 40 hours per week and 17 percent higher for those who worked 41 to 50 hours per week.

American workers now work longer hours than workers in any other industrial country in the world.

"Clearly there's a connection [between work and health]," said Work to Live's Joe Robinson. "It's not only a connection, it's like someone shouting with a megaphone, saying, 'Wake up America!' We clearly are working beyond the physical capacity of our bodies as well as our minds."

### Longer hours at VW

Volkswagen has struck a deal with German unions to extend the working week at six plants without any increase in pay. The base work week will increase by four hours a week to 33 hours; the company had been demanding a 35-hour week. In return, VW has agreed to job guarantees for 100,000 workers through 2011 and to build the next generation of its flagship Golf model at its main factory in Wolfsburg.

## Workers in Minnesota

Richard Hudelson and Carl Ross, **By the Ore Docks: A Working People's History of Duluth**. University of Minnesota Press, 2006, 336 pages, \$18.95, paper.

Charles Rumford Walker, **American City: A Rank and File History of Minneapolis**. University of Minnesota Press, 2005, 304 pages, \$18.95, paper.

REVIEW BY JON BEKKEN

Despite the continuing resurgence in labor history, the history of working people continued to receive too little attention – and the history of the rank and file who built the United States (and, of course, the world) even less. So one must welcome these two new books from the University of Minnesota Press, and the decision to issue them at a price working people can afford.

*American City* is a reissue (with a new introduction by Mary Wingerd) of a book first published in 1937, and while the opening chapters offer a quick overview of the city's history the heart of the book lies in the labor and political battles of the 1930s – in particular, the 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strike and the Farmer-Labor Party – which the author believed were laying the foundation for an emancipatory and imaginative labor movement that could transform the culture. Walker was a radical journalist and novelist, and while not at all a traditional history *American City* makes for a lively read, and a glimpse of the possibilities many saw.

*By the Ore Docks* looks to Duluth, an industrial city that was home to vast steel, lumber and shipping industries and to a radical labor movement that included the IWW's daily *Industrialisti* and Work People's College. The authors recognize the central importance of immigrant workers to Duluth's history, giving particular attention to the Finns and Swedes but also to smaller ethnic groups including an embattled African-American community. However, they rely entirely upon English-language sources and fail to understand the political diversity within even radical immigrant communities.

Hudelson is a philosopher, and Ross (who died during the writing of the book) a former Communist who set out to document the history of the immigrant left after his retirement. Perhaps this explains their fascination with the Popular Front era, their relentless focus on politicians and leaders, and the refusal to accept the deep divisions within the radical movement. Thus, they conflate the Finnish Wobblies, Socialists and Communists even though each maintained their own daily newspaper, halls, and cooperative and other societies in the region, and place Communists in the center of the IWW timber strikes of the 1930s even though they were off boring from within the AFL.

The authors have closely read Duluth's English-language labor and socialist press, and reviewed many oral histories of participants in the struggles they chronicle. The result is a fairly detailed portrait of Farmer-Labor politics in Duluth, of the role Socialists and later Communists (their interpretive scheme only has room for one at a time) played within the local community, and of the interplay of differing tendencies within the mainstream labor movement.

But there is relatively little on the actual lives and working conditions of the workers who made Duluth, and despite several references to the IWW (which played a major role in the region for several decades) little of substance is added to our knowledge of the union's activity there. All in all, *By the Ore Docks* should be of interest to residents of the city but will, I think, be a disappointment to those seeking a deeper understanding of the interplay of class and ethnicity on the industrial frontier – an interplay that did much to shape the American radicalism.

Both books place too much emphasis on politics and leaders, and too little on the rank and file. But despite ending well before Minneapolis' radical movement was crushed (a gap the foreword helps fill), *American City* is ultimately a more satisfying book.

## 250,000 protest Aussie labor law "reform"

More than 250,000 workers joined demonstrations across Australia Nov. 30 in a campaign against new industrial relations laws meant to gut union power on the job and move from sectoral agreements to individual contracts dictated by the employers.

While the ACTU was careful not to call the protests a general strike, many employers threatened to fire anyone who took off work for the day. The threats helped hold down attendance, apparently emboldening the ruling party and the bosses in its attack.

The protest should be renamed the national day of inaction, sneered Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief Peter Hendy, who might more appropriately have thanked union officials for rejecting rank-and-file demands for a general strike.

Instead, unions are spending some \$30 million on advertisements and other public relations efforts, trying to maintain public



outrage during the long lead-up to the next national elections.

The demonstration was stronger in some outlying cities such as Perth, where municipal train service was cut back to compensate for staff who had taken off work to join thousands of unionists in a march.

The Australian Building and Construction Commission has threatened 107 Perth construction workers face fines of up to \$28,000 each for taking unauthorized strike action over conditions on a railway job.

## Protesters confront profiteers at G20 Melbourne

FROM INDYMEDIA DISPATCHES

The G20 meeting in Melbourne, Australia, Nov. 17-18 was met with creative protests by local activists. G20 is a meeting of Finance Ministers of 20 major developed and developing nations, Reserve Bank Governors, the IMF and World Bank held every year.

Police locked down parts of Melbourne city for the G20 meeting at the Hyatt Hotel in the expectation of protests. As delegates were arriving in Melbourne, businesses which profit from war or environmental destruction were targeted for disruption. On the second day it was the G20 meeting itself, resulting in street confrontation between protestors and police. Late Saturday night saw a police payback operation when police violently attacked festive G20 protestors.

Friday morning started with two actions against warmongers and profiteers: Tenix and the army recruitment office. Offices of the ANZ Bank were also closed down. In the early afternoon, 100 activists occupied Oricas Head Office in Melbourne to protest the supply of 6,000 tons of cyanide a year to

Barrick Gold in the contentious Lake Cowal Gold Project in Western NSW.

On Saturday protestors were on the offensive against the G20 meeting with some of the most confrontational actions of recent times in Australia. Although, the day started at 3.45 a.m. when the police moved a Living Theatre protest "Christian embassy for the poor and the environment" out of sight of the Hyatt Hotel and the G20 ministers and bureaucrats, protestors were not intimidated.

A rally at the State Library drew thousands of people. After speeches the crowd marched down Swanston to the Russell Street Barricades. The crowd was festive, loud, and raucous, wanting to be heard by those meeting in the Hyatt Hotel.

Police launched a running, baton-wielding attack on protestors, saying that they faced "insurrection" with a police riot truck suffering damage. Later that night, police violently attacked a festive gathering outside Parliament House, injuring several G20 protestors. An ambulance was called to attend several people, and three were arrested.

## Poland: 3 workers fired for testifying against boss

Three more members of the anarcho-syndicalist union Workers Initiative were fired because they testified in a court in Zielona Gora against their employer, Impel-Tom, which is illegally discriminating against union members.

The union drive at Impel-Tom began in early 2006 because of repeated broken promises to raise wages. Many workers at Impel-Tom decided to go with Workers Initiative and had their first meeting May 7.

However, the company tried to prevent the meeting. Two organizers, including Jacek Rosolowski, were not let back into the workplace. Rosolowski filed charges against the company and the court ruled in his favor on October 31 and ordered the company to pay him damages. Retaliation came swiftly as on November 2 Czeslaw Toczek, Piotr Duplaga and Robert Szkwarek were fired for testifying in court against the company. The company offered all other workers jobs at its new Acromar Company except the three members of the Workers Initiative who were fired.

The Impel-Tom Company is an outsourcing company, which employs about 700 workers. It is a member of the Impel-S.A. Corporation, which employs about 17,000 cleaners, catering and security workers nationwide. The company employs disabled workers, which allows it to benefit from government subsidies.

## Labor repression in Iran

The leader of the crushed independent bus workers Syndicate Mon sour Osanloo was re-arrested on Nov. 19. Two other members of the union were arrested Dec. 3.

Also the leader of the Iranian Writers Union, Mohsen Hakimi, was sentenced to two years in prison for trying organize a May Day demonstration. He was sentenced

by a Revolutionary Islamic Court in Saqez for trying organize a illegal demonstration.

## Jamaican utility paid 'no strike' bonuses

The Bustamante Industrial Trade Union, National Workers Union, and the Union of Clerical, Administrative and Supervisory Employees in Jamaica are challenging a 25K bonus paid to Jamaica Public Service Company employees rewarding them for not striking over the December holiday.

Workers went on strike Oct. 30 at Hunt's Bay and later at Old Harbour to protest the JPS negligence regarding an oil leak. They later returned to work pending negotiations. The alleged bribes are a breach of the provisions of the Jamaican Labour Relations and Industrial Disputes Act.

## Purdue students hunger strike for labor rights

At press time, Purdue students are in their fourth week of a hunger strike protesting the use of sweatshop labor to make the university's signature Boilermaker clothing. Seventeen students from the Purdue Organization for Labor Equality began the action to pressure Purdue University President Martin Jischke to sign onto the Designated Suppliers Program that would restrict purchases from companies that maintain sweatshop working conditions, where workers are paid well below a living wage, and fear to join unions. Seven subsequently withdrew from the hunger strike on doctors' orders.

The IU No Sweat! campaign began its campaign to pressure the IU president to sign onto the Designated Supplier Program a year ago. Some 3,000 people have signed their petition for the labor rights campaign.

## France: CNT fights post office union-busting

The French syndicalist National Confederation of Labor, or CNT-F, which has maintained a union presence among postal workers in the French La Poste, has now been banned from the postal system with the connivance of other unions. An agreement between the postal bosses and five mainstream unions, which represent a minority of postal workers, would bar smaller unions.

The unions that backed the agreement to ban the CNT-PTT at postal workplaces include the former communist CGT and FO unions, the Catholic Christian CFCT and the secular CFDT union. The largest union of postal workers supports the rights of the CNT's postal sector division, the CNT-PTT.

The CNT believes the ban is part of an effort to facilitate "social dialogue" to lay the groundwork for privatization schemes which

are bound to arouse protest.

The postal bosses have sanctioned a Parisian postal worker, suspending him for handing out CNT leaflets at his job. Other workers have also been threatened for their CNT-PTT related activities. As a result, on Nov. 25, the CNT-PTT organized protests across France in Paris, Lille, Aubenas, Perpignan, Lyon, Toulouse, Foix, Metz, Nancy, and other cities.

This is a direct attack on syndicalism or revolutionary unionism by the bosses and the mainstream business unions. Employers want to do the same with public workers and the private sector. The employers know that the CNT will be the only union to put a fight against restructuring a privatization. The mainstream unions know that when a militant union like the CNT takes center stage, their establishments will lose support.

## Polish postal workers in wildcat strike

FROM AINFOS, POLAND

On Nov. 13, a wildcat strike of mail carriers started in the Gdansk post office. Now the strike has been taken over by different unions, mostly Solidarity (which has been lobbying for privatization of the post), and has spread to most major cities in Poland.

Slightly over half of Warsaw's mail carriers remained on strike in late November. On Nov. 22, mail carriers occupied and blocked the entrance of the second main post office in Warsaw, in the Praga district.

The mail carriers' demands include an 8 hour work day (most mail carriers work 10-12 hours daily), a raise to 1500 zl. a month (about \$500 or E375) from the current 800-900, overtime payments, and no more carrying heavy bags filled with advertisements.

Poland is under pressure from the European Union to remove the last protectionist regulations concerning mail delivery. The overwhelming bulk of mail delivery is comprised of letters, and in 2007 private firms will be allowed to compete in this market.

InPost started operation in Poland Nov. 15. This private post office has opened 75 out-

lets and plans to open 800 more by the end of the year. When the ban on competition in the small letters market is lifted, they plan to compete with the Polish Post by cutting prices on letter delivery - relatively easy considering Polish Post's rates are 10-15 percent higher than in the U.S. for example.

Under its current management structure, Polish Post can afford only a modest raise - and in exchange would need to increase workloads and lay off workers.

The unions have apparently not discussed these issues with workers, many of whom were greatly surprised. Workers' Initiative made the connections between exploitation and price wars and between management greed and waste and diverting funds away from the workers. We argued that management has to go, that budget cuts have to be made at the expense of bureaucrats and that the post office can be self-managed.

In reality, it was a little much to take in at once, some people preferring populist slogans but many people took leaflets and financial information and everyone appreciated that we compiled this for them.



## French postal workers

The International Solidarity Commission has written the French government protesting the decision of the French postal system to target CNT members for disciplinary actions. "We stand with the CNT in demanding that all unions, including the CNT, be granted the full opportunity to organize among French postal workers, and in every French work site. These are fundamental rights that can not be withdrawn by either governmental agencies or private corporations."

## Indonesian unionists jailed

Amnesty International is calling for brief letters to be sent to union activists who are unjustly imprisoned in Indonesia. Sending mail to these prisoners lets the authorities know that people care what happens to them. Amnesty letter-writing campaigns often keep prisoners alive and the attention often helps bring better conditions and even release.

Six union leaders were given long prison sentences last year for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. Three men have been recently released due to public pressure, but three are still in jail. Robin Kimbi, Masri Sebayang and Sruhas Towo were arrested in September 2005 while leading a strike at the Musim Mas palm oil plantation. During a rally, the factory gate was pushed down, injuring two company employees.

Although there is no indication that

any of these men were involved in violence, police charged them with "openly committing violence against persons or property." At no point did the state show that any of the men came into contact with that factory gate. Amnesty feels that the company and the authorities used the damage to the gate as an excuse to arrest the six labor activists and weaken the union.

The six were sentenced in early 2006 to prison terms between 14 months and two years. Amnesty International believes that they were targeted because of their roles as union leaders. Amnesty considers them prisoners of conscience and seeks their release.

Please send letters of support to: [prisoner's name], Lembaga Pemasarakatan, Bukit Cadika Kelas IIB, Jalan Lembaga, Bangkinang, Kabupaten Kampar, Propinsi Riau 28412, Indonesia. Letters should avoid language the authorities might see as pro-communist, anarchistic, etc. Write that you hope they are in good health and that they get freedom or justice soon. A letter to Indonesia only costs 84 cents to mail from the U.S.

## Bangladesh solidarity

The ISC cosponsored a Nov. 23 benefit concert in Peterborough, Ontario, to raise funds for the Bangladesh National Garment Workers Federation. The four rock/funk bands were great, and more than 100 people packed the hall. The proceeds are being divided between flood relief in Vietnam and the NGWF.