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# INDUSTRIAL WORKER

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## IWW UK fights centralized blood service

### Cuts to close 10 blood centres risk slower emergency deliveries

By Becca Kirkpatrick

The IWW has launched a public campaign to fight the top-down centralization of the National Blood Service (NBS) in the United Kingdom. Health workers fear the merger will result in poorer service and possible deaths due to delayed blood delivery during emergencies along with massive layoffs.

Short-sighted cost-cutting is the primary concern for the NBS, not patients nor hospitals nor the skilled and loyal workforce. The NBS is ploughing ahead with a hotly disputed re-organization strategy. Directors plan to close blood processing and testing labs at ten local centres in favor of three 'supercentres' in Bristol, Manchester and Colindale (London). The reason given for this centralization is saving money. The cost of blood is rising but the NBS is unwilling to charge hospitals more. At the same time, the NBS will not disclose how much taxpayers' money it spends on external management consultancy agencies, suspected to be one of the causes of increased costs.

Having an effective blood donation and processing plan is essential to any modern healthcare system. The United Kingdom, like most Western industrial-

ized countries, is faced with an aging population that is growing in number. Older people frequently experience blood disorders, one of them being a lower level of platelets, which are essential to prevent thickening and clotting of the blood. The need for transplants, which require donated blood, is also rising. 'Washing' blood to remove plasma and leave a platelet concentrate for such procedures is done by processing labs, which are slated to be centralized.

Forty per cent of samples cross-matched by our special investigations department are classed as 'emergency'. This means that nearly half of the blood in the UK system is needed for emergencies, but it will be processed in just three locations throughout the UK.

The official line is that services which need to be close to hospitals will stay such as the issue blood banks. Staff believe otherwise. There will be no northern centre east of the Pennines and no centre for the West Midlands. Police figures back up staff concerns about jams on long south-west transport routes. Staff fear that the delays, particularly in emergencies. Delays are already a problem. A patient died the first week of June while waiting to be rushed a

'washed' platelet from the local centre.

The centralization will result in major job losses. Hundreds of technical staff—about half the lab workforce—face redundancy. Instead of retaining and re-training staff to meet the challenge of an aging population, the NBS is planning to waste their skills and many years of service through redundancies. The bosses claim that most of the job losses will be through natural wastage. However, annual turnover figures they are basing this claim on will be irrelevant as the NBS will need to recruit and train new workers at the supercentres. Many of the existing staff will be unable or unwilling to relocate to the new supercentres. Working conditions at these new centres may be more difficult as they will be run on harsh 24-hour shifts to cope with the massive blood requirements of the United Kingdom's health service. The NBS collects and processes 2.1 million blood donations annually.

While the NBS may save money, other parts of the already-stretched National Health Service may have to spend more to ensure quality care for their patients. Hospitals could be forced to spend more on training their own hematology staff, increase their storage capacity and reagents for their own testing. The NBS centres slated for closure do all of these jobs. That's really taking the serve out of service.

NBS leaders boasted about this strategy to the Financial Times newspaper before telling their own staff. Unsurprisingly, NBS management has accepted no staff input to these plans. The NBS has not consulted its volunteer donors either, risking alienating the very people that make it possible to exist.

The IWW is helping to educate the public on this important issue. A well-received leaflet for donors is being dis-

continued on 11

## Starbucks backs off pregnant barista

The Starbucks Workers Union (SWU) has claimed another victory with the company backing away from firing a pregnant barista in northern California.

Christina Rosevear had told her manager she was pregnant and due to severe morning sickness and on doctor's orders, she needed some days off.

The manager began to cut her hours, which were already part-time. Her store manager warned her that she had "abandoned" her job for listening to her doctor and taking time off. In the face of this pressure, Rosevear joined the IWW in order to fight back. She was the only member in the shop.

The manager scheduled a meeting for May 25. The IWW mobilized support and more than 100 calls from IWW members and Starbucks Workers Union supporters started to make management nervous.

Bay Area IWW members accompanied Rosevear to the meeting, only to have it cancelled at the last moment so that Starbucks could re-consider its plan. Starbucks later informed Rosevear that would restore her hours and not fire her.

"No doubt Starbucks will think twice before threatening a barista over a pregnancy in the future. Every working person, no matter the issue on the job, should take heart that by uniting we can assert our dignity at work and in society. The SWU dedicates this victory to all the mothers out there—thank you for the grace you bring to this world and for your contributions in the workplace," said the union's statement.

The union announced that it would pursue Starbucks to pay Rosevear for "damages she incurred because of its discriminatory conduct."

## Supreme Court tightens noose on victims of job discrimination

By Jon Bekken

In a 5-4 decision, the US Supreme Court has overturned decades of precedent and ruled against a \$360,000 judgment in favour of a Goodyear Tire supervisor who had suffered 20 years of discriminatory evaluations that denied or lowered her pay increases by sexist management.

In 1998, Lilly Ledbetter had filed the sex discrimination suit and won, with the Alabama jury awarding her \$3 million in back pay and punitive damages. However, while the trial judge upheld the verdict in her favor, he eliminated the damages. Goodyear appealed its conviction, arguing that Ledbetter had waited too long and should have filed within 180 days of the first pay increase it denied her. The appeals court agreed, reversing Ledbetter's victory. She then appealed to the US Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court majority held that Ledbetter should have initiated legal action within 180 days of her first sub-standard pay raise, ignoring the fact that Goodyear, like many employers, kept pay rates secret. Nonetheless, Justice Ruth Ginsburg wrote in a stinging dissent, under the majority decision "it was incumbent on Ledbetter to file charges year-by-year, each time Goodyear failed to increase her salary commensurate with the salaries of male peers."

Ledbetter worked at Goodyear's Gadsden, Alabama, plant as a supervisor from 1979 through November 1998 when she took early retirement, several months after initiating her pay discrimination complaint.

While she was hired at the same pay rate as other supervisors, she demonstrated at trial that negative annual evaluations by managers who were openly hostile to the presence of women in the plant resulted in smaller "merit

pay" raises that gradually accumulated to as much as 40 per cent.

Ledbetter had excelled as a Goodyear employee over 20 years, during which she received a "top performance award." However, she was paid thousands of dollars a year less than every other supervisor, several of whom had less experience.


While the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission had supported Ledbetter in the courts, the Bush administration filed a brief supporting Goodyear.

US workers bring some 8,000 pay discrimination cases a year, most of which will likely be barred by the Supreme Court's ruling that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires that employees bring charges within 180 days "after the alleged unlawful employment practice occurred."

The Supreme Court's insistence on immediate contest overlooks common characteristics of pay discrimination. Pay disparities often occur, as they did in Ledbetter's case, in small increments, the effects of which gradually compound over time, much like interest on a credit card.

Many employers prohibit workers from discussing their pay rates, precisely so that they will have a free hand to set pay arbitrarily and more easily pit workers against each other. While such policies are unlawful, at least when applied to workers covered by the National Labor Relations Act (which, as a supervisor, Ledbetter was not), millions of workers outside of unionized workplaces have no way of knowing what their co-workers are being paid, and so no way to be sure they are not the victim of discriminatory treatment.

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### Morello supports Castro

This guy is a blatant Bolshevik. He supports Castro's repression of free labor unions in Cuba and Cuba's drug war policies, anti-free speech laws, gun control, and lousy environmental record. This is authoritarian socialism, not anarcho-communism.

Tom's idea of a music union would not be anarcho-syndicalist at all. Anarcho-unionists in exile here in Florida put out [a] magazine, *guangara libertaria*, about a lot of repressive shit that Castro does/did to anarchists and free-unionists there.

Wake up. The IWW does not need to slide into the old 'new left' of the failed past.

So where is Utah Philips' view on this? He's no Castro supporter, I'm sure. Lenin built his Bolshevik throne on our bones, lest you forgot that. "Liberty without socialism is privilege, injustice; socialism without liberty is slavery and brutality," [said] M. Bakunin. Do I know

Tom or his mom? Yes. I have had contact with them both in [the] past; we have differences as stated above. So should the IWW, clearly. Period.

Ron Gould  
Mountain Ranch, California

PS. Should there be a music union branch of the IWW? Yes. An anarcho-syndicalist one, not Bolshevik! Our music union in the 80s, IMWU, should have merged into the IWW back then. It would have been stronger that way and likely still in operation. We failed to do this and collapsed in hard times.

### A union for all people

The person whose corner I fight in was Sam Mainwaring Junior who died in Neath in 1943 after giving me a strip cartoon cut from the Industrial Worker. These ideas were planted in me before 1943, having met many clever people.

Sam Mainwaring (Junior) was as good as any of them, and had a much more accurate understanding of what was happening and going to happen than them. There was one post-grad metallurgist in Swansea University who in one brief meeting showed he was up to Sam's standard. One question demolished an economic theory structure built up by an

London School of Economics lecturer. And later he said "After the Revolution everyone must be equal." He spoke from his experience of having lived through the Revolution in China. That had been Sam's message to me nearly 30 years earlier.

Sam was passing on attitudes he thought important to a child. Sam told me of being part of a group who decided not to push their birth control policies in the IWW so as not to upset the religious among our founders. It is hard to remember the words from 62 years ago. It is proving a major disaster for Life that people did not then take up the self-suppressed policies for themselves. That this Union refuses membership to people because of their work or class may be having as bad an effect on our prospects.

The difference is well put by Jim Crutchfield in this extract from an email he sent me: "So I, like you, want the new society to include everybody, but until we abolish the wage system I don't think we can let anybody but workers into our organization. I know there are people out there who aren't eligible for membership, but who sympathize with our cause. That's one reason why I'm so eager for us to establish the Workers' Educational Foundation as an auxiliary organization that can welcome people

who can't join our union. Let's be friends with them, accept their money and talents, work with them to change the world, but not give them power in our organization."

It is rather odd to have such a high level of agreement and disagreement. But this is my case: It will be better if the End is the Means. Sam had it wrong when they were not pushing population limitation he saw as necessary in the 1920s. Then he also did look for people to make the Constitution inclusive and he did not find support for that. We have been going down a road that has not worked for a century. I think it is time to try another. There is going to be an abrupt change in conditions we must be ready for by being fully inclusive.

Ilyan Thomas, Wales

## Letters Welcome!

Send your letters to:  
iw@iww.org with  
"Letter" in the subject.

Mailing address:  
IW, PO Box 52003,  
298 Dalhousie St, Ottawa, ON  
K1N 1S0 Canada

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Post Office Box 23085  
Cincinnati OH 45223 USA  
513.591.1905 • ghq@iww.org  
www.iww.org

GENERAL SECRETARY-TREASURER:  
Mark Damron

GENERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD:  
Mike Bell, Patrick Brenner,  
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Bryan Roberts,  
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Richard Seymour

EDITOR:  
Peter Moore  
iw@iww.org

MAILING COORDINATOR:  
Matt White, Philadelphia GMB

Send contributions and letters  
to: PO Box 52003, 298 Dalhousie  
St, Ottawa, ON K1N 1S0 Canada

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# IWW directory

### Australia

IWW Regional Organising Committee: M. Payne, Secretary, PO Box 1866, Albany W.A.  
www.iww.org.au  
Sydney: PO Box 241, Surry Hills. sydney@iww.org.au  
Melbourne: PO Box 145, Moreland 3058. melb@iww.org.au

### British Isles

IWW Regional Organising Committee: PO Box 1158, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE99 4XL UK, rocsec@iww.org.uk, www.iww.org.uk  
Baristas United Campaign: baristasunited.org.uk  
London GMB: c/o Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. londoniww@iww.org  
Leicestershire GMB and DMU IU620 Job Branch: Unit 107, 40 Halford St., Leicester LE1 1TQ, England. leics@iww.org.uk www.leicestershire-iww.org.uk  
Manchester: 0791-413-1647 education@iww-manchester.org.uk www.iww-manchester.org.uk  
Norwich: norwich@iww.org.uk  
West Midlands: westmids@iww.org.uk  
Tyne and Wear: tyneandwear@iww.org.uk

### Scotland

Aberdeen: aberdeen@iww.org.uk  
Clydeside GMB: hereandnowscot@email.com  
iwwclydeside.mahost.org  
Edinburgh IWW: c/o 17 W. Montgomery Place, EH7 5HA. 0131-557-6242

### Canada

Alberta  
Edmonton GMB: PO Box 75175, T6E 6K1. edmonton@lists.iww.org, http://edmonton.iww.ca  
British Columbia  
Vancouver IWW: PO Box 4755, Stn. Terminal, V6B 4A4. 604-682-3269 x8493. gmb-van@iww.ca  
http://vancouver.iww.ca.

### Manitoba

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

### Ontario

Ottawa-Outaouais GMB: PO Box 52003, 298 Dalhousie St. K1N 1S0, 613-225-9655 Fax: 613-274-0819, ott-out@iww.org French-language del: Mathieu Brule ott\_out\_fr@yahoo.ca.  
Peterborough: c/o PCAP, 393 Water St. #17, K9H 3L7, 705-749-9694, ptboiww@riseup.net  
Toronto GMB: c/o Libra Knowledge & Information Svcs Co-op, PO Box 353 Stn. A, M5W 1C2. 416-925-7250. torontoiww@gmail.com

### Finland

Helsinki: Reko Ravela, Otto Brandtintie 11 B 25, 00650. iwwsuomi@helsinki.fi

### German Language Area

IWW German Language Area Regional Organizing Committee (GLAMROC): Post Fach 19 02 03, 60089 Frankfurt/M, Germany iww-germany@gmx.net www.wobblies.de

Frankfurt am Main: iww-frankfurt@gmx.net

Goettingen: iww-goettingen@gmx.net

Koeln: iwwcologne@yahoo.de

Munich: iww-muenchen@web.de

Switzerland: germinal@gmx.ch

Luxembourg: Michael.ashbrook@cec.eu.in

### Greece

Athens: Themistokleous 66 Exarhia Athens iwgreece@iww.org

### United States

#### Arizona

Phoenix GMB: Terry Hughes, del., 480-894-6846 and Bill Krist, del., 602-254-4057.

#### Arkansas

Fayetteville: PO Box 283, 72702. 479-200-1859, nwar\_iww@hotmail.com.

#### California

Los Angeles GMB: PO Box 65822, 90065.  
North Coast GMB: PO Box 844, Eureka 95502-0844. 707-725-8090. BST Angie Hart: angstink@gmail.com

Oakland: Evergreen Printing, 2335 Valley Street, Oakland, CA 94612. 510-835-0254 dkaroly@igc.org

San Francisco Bay Area GMB: (Curbside and Buyback IU 670 Recycling Shops; Stonemountain IU 660 Job Shop) PO Box 11412, Berkeley 94712. 510-845-0540. Meetings first Thursdays at 7 p.m. (2022 Blake St., Berkeley)

San Jose: Adam Welch, del. 408-795-9672. email: adam\_freedom@yahoo.com

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

#### Colorado

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

Four Corners (AZ, CO, NM, UT): delegate: 970-903-8721. 4corners@iww.org

#### Florida

Gainesville GMB: 1021 W. University, 32601. 352-246-2240, gainesvilleiww@riseup.net  
Pensacola GMB: PO Box 2662, Pensacola, FL 32513-2662. 840-437-1323, iwwpensacola@yahoo.com, www.angelfire.com/fl5/iww

Hobe Sound: Peter Shultz, 8274 SE Pine Circle, 33455-6608, 772-545-9591 okiedogg2002@yahoo.com

#### Georgia

Atlanta: Keith Mercer, del., 404-992-7240, iw-watlanta@gmail.com

#### Hawaii

Honolulu: Tony Donnes, del., 808-547-2042. donnes@hawaii.edu

#### Illinois

Chicago GMB: PO Box 18387, 3750 N. Kedzie, 60618. phone: 312-638-9155.

Carbondale: Jason Leonard, Southern Illinois delegate. chachieldiablo@hotmail.com.

Central Ill.: PO Box 841, Charleston 61920.

217-356-8247

Champaign: David Johnson, 217-356-8247.

Waukegan IWW: PO Box 274, 60079.

#### Iowa

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

Iowa City: Seamus Mulryan, del., 319-248-3589.

iowacityiww@riseup.net

#### Maine

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

#### Maryland

Baltimore IWW: c/o Red Emma's, 800 St. Paul St., 21202, 410-230-0450, iww@redemmas.org.

#### Massachusetts

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

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

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

#### Michigan

Detroit GMB: 22514 Brittany Avenue, E. Detroit, MI 48021. detroit@iww.org, jimme.jr@juno.com

Grand Rapids GMB: PO Box 6629, 49516. Cole Dorsey, secretary, 616-881-5263.

Central Michigan: David Finet, 5007 W. Columbia Rd., Mason 48854. 517-676-9446, happyhippie66@hotmail.com

#### Minnesota

Twin Cities GMB: PO Box 14111, Minneapolis 55414. 612-339-1266. twincities@iww.org

#### Missouri

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

#### Montana

Construction Workers IU 330: Dennis Georg, del. 406-490-3869, trampiu330@aol.com

#### New Jersey

Central New Jersey GMB: PO Box: 10021, New Brunswick 08904. 732-979-9973 xaninjurotoallx@yahoo.com

Northern New Jersey GMB: PO Box 844, Saddle Brook 07663. 201-873-6215. northernnj@iww.org

#### New Mexico

Albuquerque: 202 Harvard SE, 87106-5505. 505-331-6132, abq@iww.org.

#### New York

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

Starbucks Campaign: 347 Maujer St. Apt. #C, Brooklyn, NY 11206 Daniel Gross: 917-577-1110

Tomer Malchi: 646-753-1167

starbucksunion@yahoo.com

Upstate NY GMB: PO Box 235, Albany 12207, 518-833-6853 or 861-5627.

www.upstate-nyiww.org, secretary@upstate-ny-

iww.org, Rochelle Semel, del., PO Box 172, Fly Creek 13337, 607-293-6489, rochelle7@usadatanet.net.

#### Ohio

Ohio Valley GMB: PO Box 42233, Cincinnati 45242. IU 660: PO Box 317741, Cincinnati 45231, iu660cincy@hotmail.com.

#### Oklahoma

Tulsa: Karl Howeth, P.O. Box 213 Medicine Park 73557, 580-529-3360.

#### Oregon

Lane County: 541-953-3741. www.eugeneiww.org

Portland Industrial District Council: 311 N. Ivy St., 97227, 503-231-5488. pdxiwwhall@riseup.net

#### Pennsylvania

Lancaster GMB: PO Box 796, 17608. membership@LancasterIWW.org, http://LancasterIWW.org

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

Paper Crane Press IU 450 Job Shop: papercrane-press@verizon.net, 610-358-9496.

Pittsburgh GMB: PO Box 90315, 15224. pittsburghiww@yahoo.com

#### Texas

Austin GMB: PO Box 301862, Austin, TX 78703-1862. austin\_iww@yahoo.com 512-320-8427.

Dallas & Fort Worth: 1618 6th Ave, Fort Worth, TX 76104

#### Utah

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

#### Washington

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

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

Tacoma IWW: P.O. Box 5464, Tacoma, WA 98415-0464 TacIWW@iww.org

Olympia GMB: PO Box 2775, 98507. 360-956-9256. olywobs@riseup.net

Seattle GMB: 1122 E. Pike #1142, 98122-3934. 877-815-5684, www.seattleiww.org.

Spokane: Tim Hill, 509-218-9622.

#### Wisconsin

Madison GMB: PO Box 2442, 53703-2442. www.madisoniww.info. Lakeside Press IU 450 Job Shop: 1334 Williamson, 53703. 608-255-1800. www.lakesidepress.org. Madison Infoshop Job Shop: 1019 Williamson St. #B, 53703. 608-262-9036.

Two Degrees Coffeeshop Job Shop: 307 W. Johnson St., 53703. 608-257-7888. Just Coffee Job Shop: www.justcoffee.net.

GDC Local #4: PO. Box 811, 53701. 608-262-9036.

Railroad Workers IU 520: Ron Kaminkow, PO Box 3010, Madison 53704, 608-358-5771. eugene\_v\_debs\_aru@yahoo.com.

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

# McDonalds petitions to redefine 'McJobs'

McDonalds UK has launched an on-line petition to force the Oxford English Dictionary to re-write the meaning of the word "McJobs."

Currently, the Oxford dictionary has defined McJobs since 2001 as "an unstimulating, low-paid job with few prospects, esp. one created by the expansion of the service sector." Canadian author Douglas Copeland coined the word in his breakthrough novel, *Generation X*.

McDonald's petition says: "This definition is out of date, out of touch with reality and most importantly is insulting to those hard-working, talented and committed people who serve the public every day in the UK."

"As the namesake for this derogatory term, this prejudice is felt most sharply by the 67,000 people who pursue careers and jobs at McDonald's in the UK. It's time the dictionary definition of McJob changed to reflect a job that is stimulating, rewarding and offers genuine opportunities for career progression and skills that last a lifetime."

While some may interpret McDonald's petition as an attempt by corporate power to muster public sympathy by

playing the victim, it also looks like a bad joke. The web site [www.changethedefinition.com](http://www.changethedefinition.com) backed up its claim with jazzy music, purple background and highlighted its standing in the top 50 of the *Financial Times* newspaper's "Best Workplaces UK" listing.

McDonald's is clearly concerned about its image with the petition. "This is not a marketing exercise and none of the communication in relation to the petition should be considered to be advertisements for our products, jobs or business opportunities," claimed the petition web site. To further guard its reputation, the petition will not knowingly accept signatories below 16 years old, "to help us make the petition as credible as possible."

McDonald's is still smarting from its 1997 pyrrhic victory with the high-profile McLibel suit it laid against two protesters distributing critical leaflets in front of its restaurants in 1990. The court ruled in favor of McDonald's, ordering the defendants to pay £40,000 (US\$ 79,000). The defendants have refused to pay. At the same time, the judge's ruling criticized McDonald's for its influence on the industry as a whole in "helping to depress wages for workers" among other allegations.



[www.mcspotlight.org](http://www.mcspotlight.org)



Steve Perlman, Madison IWW GMB

## IWW expands to two new Starbucks in Chicago and Grand Rapids

Starbucks workers marched into two stores in Grand Rapids, Michigan and Chicago, Illinois on May 17, presented lists of demands and called for recognition of the IWW as their union.

"Taking this action for secure work hours and a livable wage on the third anniversary of the Starbucks Workers' Union founding makes it all the sweeter," said Liz Clarkson, a Chicago barista.

Grand Rapids baristas start at \$7.25 per hour. These workers have already seen Starbucks respond to union pressure through improved scheduling. In the lead-up to going public, management had forced each employee to sign Starbucks' no-union policy, which only strengthened the workers' resolve to exercise their democratic rights on the job.

"Starbucks' crude union-busting is not welcome in our store or in any store," said Cole Dorsey, an IWW barista at the Grand Rapids location. "Chairman Howard Schultz needs to pay baristas

and coffee farmers fairly and get over his deep-seated aversion to unions."

The Grand Rapids wobblers announced that they will file a legal challenge against Starbucks' unlawful anti-union campaign, which included installing a four-camera surveillance system with controversial security contractor Diebold to monitor barista organizing activity in Grand Rapids. The company will now have to muster a legal defense on two fronts as Starbucks is set to go to trial over its relentless New York City union-busting effort last summer. Six IWW baristas lost their jobs through retaliatory firings by Starbucks.

The third anniversary of the Starbucks Workers' Union was marked with solidarity actions across the United States and in Europe and Australia. Workers in countries including Austria, England, Spain and Australia as well as several American states commemorated the founding of the IWW Starbucks Workers Union [[www.StarbucksUnion.org](http://www.StarbucksUnion.org)] by taking to the streets in demonstrations against the Starbucks union-busting and greenwashing operation.

In contrast to its carefully crafted socially responsible image, Starbucks pays a poverty wage and maintains a 100% part-time café workforce. More than 75,000 Starbucks workers in the United States are without company health insurance. The coffee giant actually insures a lower percentage of its workforce than Wal-Mart. The Starbucks work environment is extremely fast-paced and strains, burns, and exhaustion are common. At the same time, coffee farmers growing beans for Starbucks contend with malnourishment and difficulty accessing clean water.

The IWW Starbucks Workers Union is an organization of employees at the world's largest coffee chain united for a living wage, secure work hours, and respect on the job. Just three years after creating the first union in the United States at Starbucks, IWW baristas at ten stores in four states are publicly fighting and winning on workplace demands while baristas in several other stores are organizing quietly until they reach a critical mass of support.

**Speak Spanish?**  
Want to be part of a fighting union?

**The IWW needs you!**

Join the IWW by visiting [www.iww.org](http://www.iww.org) or see the directory on page 2 for the closest branch.

If you can help our Spanish-language campaigns with translation or organizing, call IWW headquarters at 513-591-1905. We'll put you in touch!

### Preamble of 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. Dues may vary in Regional Organizing Committees (Australia, Europe).

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

City, State, Zip, Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_



Membership includes a subscription to the Industrial Worker.



# Unions and Ubuntu Linux are natural allies

Over the course of the last few weeks, I've installed a new operating system on my computer. I no longer use Microsoft Windows XP and instead now use Ubuntu Linux. That's nice, you may be thinking, but what does that have to do with the trade union movement?

Before I answer that, I should mention that I have access to some privileged information about unions and computer operating systems. As the founding editor of the LabourStart website, I get to look at the statistics. I know how many people visit our site every day, I know what countries they come from and which web browsers they use. And I know which operating systems they are using as well.

In the last couple of days, over 91 per cent of those visiting LabourStart were using Microsoft Windows. Seven per cent were using Apple Macintosh. And just 1.16 per cent were using Linux.

I'm sure that most union websites are having the same experience. Linux has been around since the early 1990s. I first used it more than a decade ago. I bought my first desktop running Linux instead of Windows back in 2002 and, like others, have written about open source software for several years now. Yet, the majority are not listening and have stuck with Microsoft Windows.

I should qualify that: there is one case where you are listening. Millions of you have chosen Mozilla Firefox, the open source web browser, instead of Microsoft Internet Explorer. Less than 70 per cent of the visitors to LabourStart use Microsoft's web browser to reach the site. Over 20 per cent are using Mozilla. So at least some open source software appeals.

But Linux has not taken off, at least not in the trade union movement, and without trying to analyze why that is the case (I hope some of you will tell me), I want to point out five very good reasons why trade unionists should consider making the switch.

First of all, there's the issue of cost. Dell is now selling computers for the first time with a user-friendly version of Linux. In the United States, those computers cost on average \$50 less than computers with Microsoft Windows. A brand new Dell laptop running Ubuntu Linux sells for less than \$600. The reason for the price difference is that Linux is usually distributed free of charge, while Windows is paid for.

If you buy a copy of Windows Vista, the latest version of the Microsoft operating system, it can set you back US \$400 or "only" \$300 on Amazon.com. Meanwhile, a copy of the latest version of Ubuntu Linux costs nothing. In fact, Ubuntu can be mailed to you on CD or downloaded completely free of charge.

If you have CDs or DVDs with Linux on them, you can legally copy them and distribute them to friends and colleagues. You can pass around your CD at work. Try doing that with Windows.

Second, this brings up the issue of legality. When I mentioned to a colleague that Linux was particularly appropriate to—and becoming wildly popular in—the world's developing countries, the rebuttal was no one pays for their Windows software there anyway. That may be true; pirated software is very popular and not only in the world's South.

But companies that use pirated software quickly learn that they are taking a business risk. They can be sued, their assets can be seized, and they live under the constant threat of discovery by Microsoft and its agents. Unions face the same threat, and any union using illegal, pirated software is vulnerable to legal action.

Third, there's the issue of security. Most trade unionists are not IT specialists. They know little or nothing about firewalls and anti-virus software. If they're lucky, the union has sorted out a subscription to keep their anti-virus software up-to-date and the IT department in their union has made sure their firewall is turned on and is working.

There's a cost issue here as well. Norton's security suite costs around US \$70 to buy, and then \$60 per year to keep up to date.

In Linux, there are no viruses and in most cases (such as in Ubuntu Linux) there's no need for a firewall either. Your computers are completely secure, and you've saved your union \$70. If you're an IT pro, you don't really need Linux because you know all about trojan horses, defragmenting, viruses, firewalls, and so on. You've mastered all those issues. But if you're a normal human being, you want to use your computer to send and receive emails, surf the web, listen to music—and you don't want to have to choose which firewall or anti-virus is best, and to ensure you've got the latest updates every day. Linux is by far the more secure and easier solution.

Fourth, if you really love monopoly capitalism and companies like Microsoft earning billions in profits just warms your heart, go ahead, keep using Windows. But if you like the idea of a society in which goods and services might be distributed for free (does "to each according to his need" ring a bell?), you might find the free and open source software movement of some interest. For ideological reasons, unions should be lining up behind and aggressively promoting this one sector of the modern economy in which there is a real alternative to giant, profit-driven transnational capital.

Fifth and finally, you should switch because you can. A decade ago, Linux was for geeks only. It was hard to use and made no pretense at being a competitor to Microsoft Windows on the desktop. Five years ago, when I first tried it, I admit that it was still unfriendly, hard to get it to work with printers and the like, and wouldn't have recommend-

ed it to anyone else. Today, with Ubuntu Linux, I can't think of single thing I used to do with Windows that I can't do now on my PC. I am running a faster, more secure machine, and spending nothing on software.

It's time for unions to save their members' money, to make their offices more efficient and secure, and to support the free and open source software movement. It's time for unions to switch over to Ubuntu Linux.

## WOMEN WORKERS' HISTORY

**CHAPTER 5: RISING UP AGAINST PRIVILEGE**

THE EARLY TRADE UNIONS HAD A FIRM SUPPORTER IN FRANCES WRIGHT (1795-1852), A POWERFUL SPEAKER AND WRITER BEST KNOWN AS AN ADVOCATE OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND ABOLITION. BORN IN DUNDEE, SCOTLAND, SHE SETTLED IN THE U.S. AT AGE 30, ALREADY WELL-KNOWN AS THE AUTHOR OF A BOOK ON AMERICAN LIFE BASED ON A PREVIOUS VISIT.

FRANCES WRIGHT HAD INHERITED HER PARENTS' RADICALISM AND THEIR WEALTH AS WELL. WHEN SHE CAME TO THE U.S. IN 1825, SHE SPENT HALF HER FORTUNE FREEDING SLAVES AND ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY FOR THEM. SHE LECTURED WIDELY ON THE EVILS OF SLAVERY.

IN HER LECTURES FRANCES WRIGHT PROCLAIMED THAT WOMEN SHOULD ENJOY THE SAME LEGAL RIGHTS AS MEN. WOMEN, SHE SAID, SHOULD BE FREED FROM ALL "POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC HANDICAPS." SHE ENDORSED EQUAL EDUCATION FOR WOMEN, BIRTH CONTROL AND LIBERALIZED DIVORCE... DARING TOPICS FOR THE 1830S!

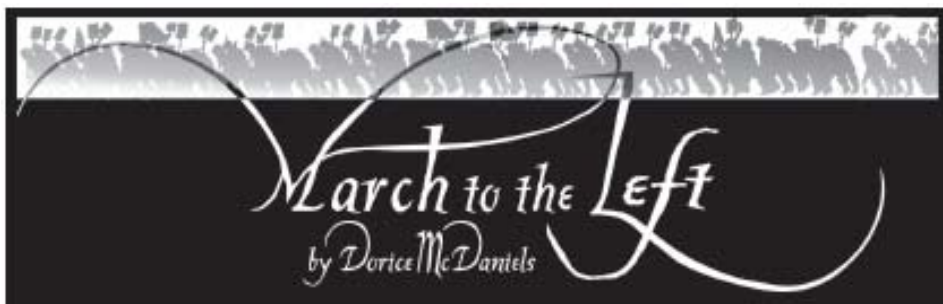
SOMETHING I SAID?

SPEAKING UP FOR AN EARLY LABOR PARTY IN 1833, SHE DESCRIBED IT AS "LABOR RISING UP AGAINST IDLENESS, INDUSTRY AGAINST MONEY AND PRIVILEGE." IT HAS LONG BEEN CLEAR TO ME THAT IN EVERY COUNTRY, THE BEST FEELING AND BEST SENSE ARE FOUND WITH THE LABORING CLASSES. FRANCES WRIGHT WROTE, HER SYMPATHIES LED TO THE RECOGNITION THAT UNIONS WERE THE BEST HOPE OF WORKING PEOPLE !!

**Working Man's Advocate.**  
AND WOMEN'S  
NEW YORK: ENLARGED  
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1833.

**WORKING MEN'S TICKET.**  
ASSEMBLY.

ALEXANDER Ming, sejour, Printer.  
FREDERICK FRIEND, Brass Founder.  
THOMAS SKIDMORE, Machinist.  
JEREMIAH C. BLATCHLEY, Physician.  
ROBERT M. KERRISON, Whitesmith.  
LEWIS POTTER, Machinist.  
MOS WILLIAMSON, Carpenter.  
BENEZER WHITING, Cooper.  
WON CLARKSON, Painter.  
NEZER FORD, Carpenter.  
WILLIAM MORT, Grocer.



Hard times for the Grimes family on Poverty Row. The house that shelters them has the earmarks of an object subjected to abuse. A dablot of white paint still clings to the boards as a reminder of happier days. Paint? Don't mention it to the landlord. Don't you know paint costs money?

The wooden porch tends to sag under your feet. Please open the door with respect. It whines in protest.

The heater still functions when Father Grimes gives it a bit of a thump to show who's boss.

Kitchen pans, battered and bruised from much experience warming up leftovers in the oven, bear deep burn scars.

But what really bothers teen Susan Grimes is the trouble she has with her shoes. Should she board the bus to school to spare her deteriorating shoe leather? But she doesn't have the bus fare. So Susan scissors out another patch from a cardboard box to fit inside

her shoe and hopes the supply of scrap doesn't give out.

Mother Grimes organizes her kitchen economy the best she can, making do with whatever spuds and cabbage and carrots come her way. Still, there comes the day when every item of food is licked up, even the last carrot, that spindle-shaped root that has come to be the symbol of penury on Poverty Row. Always the optimist, she observes, "Well, the salt cellar is still half full."

Folks on Poverty Row are outside and below the normal life of the country. They are spectators peering through the window at the big league game. Hence, the rules no longer appear to apply to them. It cannot be considered "wrong," in this new translation of values, to oppose a society that is alien to their basic needs.

Which will it be? Crime in the streets? Or a basic change in economics?

## Wobblies in Canada starting newsletter

*Dump the Bosses*, the internal newsletter of the IWW in Canada is seeking submissions for its introductory issue, to be published in September 2007 and distributed across nation-wide to all Wobblies.

In addition to reports from branches, you are invited to contribute pieces about past activities, strategy, hopes for the future, lessons learned, problems encountered or discussion about the internal workings of the IWW. Artwork, poems and songs are also welcome.

If you are a member of the IWW in Canada and are not affiliated to any branch, please get in touch so we can make sure you get your copy.

Deadline for submissions: August 7, 2007. Send them to: dtb@outaouaisiww.org Fax: 613-274-0819 or Dump the Bosses c/o IWW Ottawa-Outaouais PO Box 52003, 298 Dalhousie St., Ottawa, Ontario K1N 1S0 Canada



# Protesters bring the cost of Iraq occupation to congressman

By Thomas Good

Five anti-war protesters, including an IWW member, were arrested on March 23 at Congressman Vito Fossella's Staten Island district office. Congressional staff refused to call Fossella and schedule a meeting with the protesters.

The activists told staff they would remain until Fossella agreed to meet with them. They were arrested while reading aloud the names of the US war dead and charged with criminal trespass.

On April 12, the arrestees along with Peace Action and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) held a candlelight vigil outside Fossella's Staten Island home. Fossella, home for the holidays, again did not venture to meet with the protesters. Press coverage of the vigil was sympathetic as the activists continued to ask "Where's Vito?" The protesters vowed to continue the struggle to get a meeting with the elusive politician.

Fossella is a pro-war, right-wing Republican who is known for voting against veterans' benefits. He is now trying to distance himself from US President George W. Bush.

At the arraignment, District Attorney Dan Donovan issued letters to the activists indicating he declined to prosecute. It was learned later that Fossella had dropped the charges.

Sally Jones, Barbara Walker, Ben Maurer, Elaine Brower and Tom Good, dubbing themselves the "Fossella Five", held a post-arraignment press conference where they expressed frustration that the congressman continues to avoid his constituents.

One of the themes of the conference, which NY1 News and the Staten Island Advance understood was that Fossella



Thomas Good, Next Left Labor Notes

**Protesters read the names of US soldiers killed in Iraq before being arrested.**

dropped the charges to avoid having to appear in court and face his constituents.

Fossella Press Secretary Craig Donner called the Fossella Five "increasingly inappropriate" in an attempt to shame them into silence. In response, Sally Jones noted that Donner seemed "flustered." The Five said they would continue to press for a meeting.

"Vito Fossella has a very poor record as regards 'supporting the troops'" a position he professes to embrace, said Jones, a Peace Action activist.

Fossella voted against healthcare benefits for National Guardsmen in Iraq (the so-called backdoor or poverty draftees). He voted against educational benefits for veterans, against pay raises and Iraq service bonuses for active duty personnel and against funding for prosthetic research. Fossella also voted against supervision of defense contractors, instead offering his support to Halliburton, a major contributor to his election campaign.

The cost of the Iraq War to working people—and the refusal of the politicians

to end it—is one of several issues that the Five, along with Peace Action, will raise at a "Peace and Harmony Festival" being held in Staten Island's Tappen Park on June 30.

The Fossella Five plan to stage a mock fundraiser, asserting that Fossella will meet with Halliburton but not his constituents. Perhaps it is because his working class neighbors can't afford to pay for the privilege of discussing the war with one of its promoters, their own congressman.

## War profiteer halted for a day

By Jon Bekken

Oakland longshoreman honored an anti-war picket line May 19, refusing to work three ships at the Stevedoring Services of America terminals. SSA is a major military contractor, handling military cargo around the world. It is not clear whether military cargo was on the ships tied up that day.

There have been a number of actions at SSA facilities. Police opened fire on picketers and ILWU members who refused to cross the picket line on April 7, 2003. The shooting sent several people including ILWU members to hospital. Police have also attacked anti-war picket lines at ports in Olympia and Tacoma, Washington.

While the west coast longshore union is officially against the war and its members have honored picket lines by protesters, they continue to load military cargo at the nearby Concord Naval Weapons Station and at the SSA terminals on the 360 days a year that picket lines are not up.

Nonetheless, the one-day stoppage is a potent reminder of the power working people have to stop this war, if only we refuse to lend our minds and muscles to the bosses' slaughterfest.



THE "SHUT UP" STAMP

## New US postal rates hit small publishers hardest

Small publications will face higher periodical mailing rates from the US Postal Service on July 15.

"The new prices enhance efficiency, offer more choices, and better ensure that all types of periodicals mail cover their costs," said a statement on the US Postal Service web site.

However, a media advocacy group called [freepress.net](http://freepress.net) has called for a campaign to stop the rate hikes and an inquiry into the "unusual and unorthodox" decision to accept Time Warner's proposal over one proposed by the US Postal Service.

"Make no mistake about it, this is a public issue. We all lose if the media system loses numerous small publications due to massive postal rate hikes and if it becomes cost prohibitive for new magazines to be launched in the future. This is not an issue that should be determined exclusively by the owners of magazines,

with the biggest owners having the loudest voice," said [freepress.net](http://freepress.net).

The Time Warner plan called for higher costs for small publishers and discounts for big publishers, able to distribute in large scale.

While both large and small publishers will face hikes, the smaller publications will spend more of their budget distributing their product than the larger ones.

"What's at stake is the stifling, the future, the survival of an independent media that the founding fathers of this country thought was essential to a vibrant, flourishing democracy," said Katrina vanden Heuvel, publisher of *The Nation* magazine told Amy Goodman on *Democracy Now* radio show. She urged people to visit [stoppostalratehikes.com](http://stoppostalratehikes.com) and to write letters to the US Congress to oppose the new regulations.

### IWW GA 2007 Registration Form • Chicago, IL • September 1 & 2, 2007

**Contact Info:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

City, State/Prov. \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch: \_\_\_\_\_ Industrial Union #: \_\_\_\_\_

**Housing and Accommodation** (housing will be on a "first-registered, first-served" basis)

I will need Housing       For \_\_\_\_ (#) in addition to myself (kids, spouse, etc.)

I will bring my own sleeping bag & pillow       I can sleep on the floor if needed

I am  Allergic to cats / dogs (circle)       non-smoker       other: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Needs (diet, allergies, hearing, sight, etc) : \_\_\_\_\_

I will need childcare for \_\_\_\_ children, age(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration Fees, etc.**

I am enclosing \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (suggested \$25, more if you can, less if you can't)

I will make a contribution when I arrive in Chicago

**Arrival (date, time):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Departure :** \_\_\_\_\_

Please return a completed form for each registrant by Aug. 17 to:  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY 07 c/o Waukegan IWW, PO Box 274, Waukegan, IL 60079

# Working Without Bosses in Argentina

## The Worker-Recovered Enterprises of Argentina

By Rhiannon Edwards

Within the worker-recovered enterprises of Argentina, solidarity and democracy have taken the place of competition and blind obedience. These workplaces are no longer spaces where alienated individuals labour to create profits for an idle boss.

Argentina's recovered enterprises are businesses abandoned by their owners that the workers have returned to production and that are currently functioning as cooperatives. The workers of these enterprises produce or offer services without bosses or managers and have generated new forms of relating with the product of their work as well as with their fellow workers.

### Background

Worker-recovered enterprises emerged out of the failure of the neoliberal model in Argentina. The first few appeared in the late 1990s and as the national economic and social crisis deepened in 2001 and into 2002, there was a wave of workplace takeovers. There are currently close to 180 recovered enterprises, which encompass between 10,000 and 12,000 workers throughout the country.

In the 1990s, under the presidency of Carlos Menem, neoliberal restructuring policies were applied rapidly and ferociously, dismantling what was, until then, one of Latin America's strongest "welfare states." State enterprises were privatized and sold to multinationals for a song. Menem's economic minister Domingo Cavallo developed the policy of "convertibility" which artificially pegged the Argentine peso to the US dollar. This made imports cheaper than domestically manufactured goods, and encouraged the general trend of de-industrialization by undermining the national industry.

As a result, many small to mid-sized businesses went bankrupt or were abandoned by their owners (but not before trying to make an illegitimate buck by selling machinery, stock, copyrights, etc). Often the workers became major creditors in the business as the boss owed them months or even years of unpaid salaries, bonuses, and benefits. In the face of high and rising structural unemployment in the country, workers were often willing to work for a small fraction of their salary and the promise that some day, they would be paid in full. Usually these conditions were preceded by large lay-offs, so the choice was clear for the employees that remained: either accept the conditions of the bosses or join the ranks of the unemployed.

The crisis conditions that provoked the workplace takeovers are not as severe today. When the policy of convertibility failed, the Argentine peso rapidly fell to four to the US dollar. With a weaker but fairly stable currency, imported goods became no longer as affordable within the domestic market, a situation that favours the revival of national industry. This upswing has promoted the already established cooperatives, though the economic recovery has meant that fewer businesses became cooperatives in recent years.

### Links between cooperatives

Each cooperative has an entirely unique history and faces its own particular problems and challenges. The majority (about 80 per cent) are metallurgic factories, but they also include other types of manufacturing factories (textile, ceramic, food products) as well as printing presses, editorial houses, a hotel, supermarket, and even health clinics. Size ranges from groups of less than ten to 200 or more workers. There is a wide range of demographic constitution,

productive capacity, and technological development. In some instances, some cooperatives are essentially alternative forms of capitalist enterprises. They often reject involvement of outsiders within the factory, and they generally have a higher tolerance for hierarchies in pay or decision-making.

However, many worker cooperatives see their struggle as integrated in a larger anti-capitalist project. Within these enterprises, the workers' focus goes beyond the immediate tasks of generating

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### Cooperatives are not revolutionary in their own right. If these cooperatives are to be more than an alternative capitalist production, they must be part of a broad anti-capitalist movement.

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jobs and generating decent wages. There is a desire to expand the experience of recuperation to the community, as well as to encourage the construction of horizontal, democratic cooperatives.

### Unions and recovered enterprises

The phenomenon of workers taking over failed capitalist enterprises reveals the limitations of the union perspective that tends to stop at demands for better wages and improved working conditions, and so makes necessary the presence of the government and bosses to guarantee its own survival. The big unions and national federations of Argentina had little to offer in the face of soaring unemployment and the dismantling of the state apparatus in which unions had historically played an important role.

Initially, there was little connection between the big union federations and the emerging recovered enterprises. Nevertheless, in the last few years some unions are re-evaluating their tactics and are developing relationships and connections with recovered enterprises. For example, the recovered metallurgic factory *Cooperativa Felipe Vallese Ltd.* in Quilmes, on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, has become involved in the *Unión Obrera Metalúrgica* (UOM – Metallurgic Workers' Union, affiliated with the conservative *Confederación General del Trabajo*, CGT – General Work Confederation) of Quilmes, insisting that even though they don't have to bargain with a boss, they are still workers and as such have a place in traditional workers' organizations.

Even though the context of Argentina's recovered enterprises is unique and each cooperative is distinct, we can draw lessons from their experiences of worker control. The way that the workers of recovered enterprises have used direct action, established lasting relationships with the community, and built democratic, horizontal structures are to me among the most important features of the movement and can provide lessons for workers in very different circumstances.

### Direct action

The workers of recovered enterprises have used direct action in creative, flexible ways throughout the process of workplace recuperation. Even though we may never face comparable circumstances, we can learn from the ways the workers of the recovered enterprises directly addressed their particular circumstances.

Take the example of the printing press Chilavert, where the police put guards outside the factory doors during the occupation of the factory. Determined to start production as much for psychological as for economic reasons, the workers convinced the guards that

they needed to keep the machines running or else they would break down. Once they had finished the printing, they broke a hole through the factory wall and a sympathetic neighbour snuck the finished product out in the trunk of his car. The hole has since been filled in, but they've framed the spot where it was and show it to the many visitors who stop by.

Another case is that of the balloon factory ex-Global (now *Cooperativa La Nueva Esperanza* – New Hope Cooperative). The boss had taken the machines

out of the factory and put them into storage, apparently planning to move the operations elsewhere. The workers did some sleuthing and tracked down where the boss had taken the machines. They set up camp and maintained a 24-hour guard that lasted for months to make sure the boss didn't move the machines.

Workers taking over abandoned businesses have had to develop direct action tactics different than those at the disposal of workers with bosses. Though the tactics may be different, however, the goal of workers controlling industry is a common one. Occupation and production, like the strike, work slowdown, sabotage or any other tool used by employees, demonstrate that workers are the ones with the real power in society.

### Community solidarity

The solidarity of the surrounding community was a vital factor during many of the workplace takeovers. Neighbours brought food, showed up to prevent police repression, and offered general and responsive support while the workers occupied the factory. Some of the cooperatives have since offered factory space to the community.

Former management offices are now homes to cultural centres, art workshops or popular education programs where teenagers and adults take classes on cooperativism, English or history. Every day at Chilavert, the workers share a lunch prepared by the neighbourhood assembly in the community kitchen.

Having a community of people that are ready and willing to act in solidarity with a group of workers is important no matter what the issue at hand may be. Many workers in recovered enterprises are proud to have an opportunity to give back to the community, though not in any self-satisfied sense of corporate responsibility. Rather, for cooperatives that striving to create a social enterprise, opening up workplaces to the community is part and parcel of their project.

### Democracy and horizontality

The recovered enterprises are a good example of the importance of applying democracy and limiting hierarchies in any group of workers. Now that there is no boss or managers running the show, the workers make important decisions democratically, in assemblies of all workers.

Despite the wide variety of conditions within the cooperative, the majority of cooperatives have chosen and kept the one-worker-one-vote assembly as the way to make major decisions. Some of the bigger factories have a structure of councils organized according to the sections of the factory people work in, where each council elects a representative to an administrative body. Gener-

ally, representatives and administrators are elected and accountable directly to the assembly.

The success of the cooperatives demonstrates the effectiveness of incorporating a high degree of democracy and limiting hierarchies. Their commercial survival and even growth attest to the success of their model of worker control. Each worker has access to information about the administration of the business and the possibility to influence major decisions. The production process benefits from the know-how of all the workers instead of being dependent on the whim of managers.

### Challenges and limitations

The recovered enterprises are creating spaces and relationships that contest the exploitative framework of neoliberal capitalism. Some academics and activists speak of the recovered enterprises not only as challenges to the dominion of capital but also as viable alternatives. However, it is important to keep in mind that while these cooperatives exist within the reality of capitalism, the transformations of the relationships of production are limited to within the factory walls. That is, the experience of self-management in these cooperatives is limited while they remain an isolated phenomenon.

The pressures of the market and the state weigh heavily on many recovered enterprises. Most of the cooperatives have been functioning for at least three or four years, yet they continue to exist on shaky legal ground, as the temporary expropriation law they're granted is only valid for a couple of years. It is also difficult to find qualified yet trustworthy professionals, such as engineers, accountants or machinists.

As they mature and grow, some cooperatives are returning to practices associated with working under a boss, with more hierarchical forms of payment and decision-making or are re-implementing practices like punching time cards. Internal conflicts can interfere with the assembly proceedings. Though the pressure to produce more and faster may not come from a boss anymore, it remains.

Even though working without bosses can affect important and inspiring changes, cooperatives are not revolutionary in their own right. Capitalism is bigger and more complex than the relations within one or even 200 factories and it can and does absorb alternative productive relationships as long as they remain few and far between. If these cooperatives are to be more than merely an alternative form of capitalist production, they must be part of a broad anti-capitalist movement.

### IWW and recovered enterprises

The neoliberal "restructuring" that provoked the economic and social crisis in Argentina is a familiar process around the world. Though the context of the recovered enterprises of Argentina is unique, workers the world over can learn from their example of worker control and their experiences of working without bosses. Taking over factories was a reaction to de-industrialization and high structural unemployment—systemic problems that the entire Argentine working class faces. The official statistics that boast recovery are far from most people's current reality.

On a relatively small scale, the recovered enterprises are putting into practice part of what we in the IWW dream of. These microcosmic experiences of workers controlling production might even be understood as the beginnings of the path towards industrial democracy.

# Training IWW organizers in the US Midwest

## “Training for Trainers” spreads skills for solidarity unionism

By Adam Welch, Chair,  
IWW Organizer Training Committee

Thirty IWW members gathered in Madison, Wisconsin over the weekend of May 19 and 20 for a “Training For Trainers” session hosted by the Organizer Training Program of the IWW. The purpose of the weekend training was to bring together workplace campaign leaders and previous participants in our “Organizing 101” weekend workshops to learn to be future trainers. Many participants will bring the skills learned back to their local branches and campaigns they are involved in.

Many of the attendees came from surrounding branches across the Midwest, some driving five or more hours to attend the training. Midwest members are hoping to create a regular circuit of trainings within their region. The local coordinator of the event was Madison GMB member Matt Dimick who arranged for food, housing and the tea, soda and coffee that kept us all at tip-top alertness throughout the 15 hours spent in the training. Of note was a meeting of Starbucks workers at the training. There was also a discussion by experienced trainers and others on the creation of a second level of training focused on meeting the growing need across the union for skills related to solidarity union campaigns that have already gone past the stage of being public along with the needs of existing organized shops that are continuing to build their power and expand their gains on the job. Here is a modified version of my opening talk.

In the IWW we use the slogan “We are all leaders” and we try to make that a reality as much as possible. We don’t see this as just another radical slogan that is fine to hang up on a wall or poster and leave it at that—but we see this as something that we need to practice in our everyday work as a radical labor union, as the IWW.

If in the IWW we say we are not just fighting for short-term gains, but are fighting for a long-term vision of changing the world, of making a world where workers have control of their livelihood and have control in society, where there won’t be wars and poverty and wage slavery, then we need to start building that different world. That is what, in a small way, we are working toward this weekend.

The goal of the Organizer Training Program of the IWW is to give everyday workers on the job the tools and skills (and confidence as well) to organize their workplaces. And just to give people a picture of how this works, try to imagine this: Here we are today at this training for the weekend and from here we are going back to our branches, our campaigns, or maybe some of you will travel to another city to offer a training. You will be spreading the messages of solidarity unionism to those folks at the training. From here, these folks attending the training should be able to pass these skills further to their workplace or campaign. In this way, we are spreading skills and building our power horizontally, from worker to worker.

We believe that our training program is unique. We do not know another union in the US or Canada that offers a training quite like this one. I personally have been to trainings offered by the AFL-CIO’s Union Summer and the two day training offered by the Organizing Institute of the AFL-CIO and I have spoken with people who have even attended their week-long training program. Even in one week, you will likely not learn half of what is in this training.

Mainstream unions will teach certain specific skills, very similar to our AEIOU



Adam Welch

“Union? What are you talking about?” Fellow Workers Liz and Drew roleplay at the IWW organizer training in Madison, Wisconsin.

section (Agitate, Educate, Inoculate, Organize = Union). They are mainly focused on teaching you how to have a conversation so you can convince a worker to sign a card. But they do not put in your hands all the skills needed to organize from the beginning to the point where you become public. Maybe they have secret trainings and a secret manual describing this somewhere, someplace, but they certainly don’t offer this in a way where an average worker will have access to skills and information to empower themselves.

Overall this weekend training is just as much about learning to be a trainer as it is about becoming more of a leader. This weekend we’ll be asking each of you to step up and, in turn, you’ll be asking the people participating in your trainings to step up. Through this process, we are all becoming leaders.

### Origins of the OTP

Our curriculum today represents a compiling of wobbly wisdom from a number of individuals. It represents our experience, our victories and experience with ‘what’s worked’. It also is our experience with what we’ve learned the hard way—our mistakes, our losses and our defeats in organizing. From these we’ve taken lessons and we put them to good use by sharing them for future wobblers out there in the trenches of organizing.

Here is the story of how this came to be. The beginning of what we now know as the Organizing Training Program, run by the three person committee creatively called the Organizer Training Committee (myself, Tomer Malchi and John Baranski currently) started in 2000. The then-recently elected GST Alexis Buss began touring branches doing short and later day-long workshops on organizing. What she was trying to address then was

a huge problem. The union was growing and many branches were taking on small organizing campaigns. But we kept getting stuck in campaigns that seemed lost before we even got started.

Often the first thing wobblers would do once they had a presence in a workplace was make themselves public, which would piss off the boss, and as a result scare the other workers. Then they would be promptly fired.

The main question the first versions of the trainings tried to answer was “How do you deal with a first contact from a group of workers and begin organizing?” The goal then was to raise the floor as far as skills in the union.

Now, we can see the success of these first trainings in that those old problems of running out and going public to the boss are no longer the case. Now, we are much more focused on getting people to think strategically in their organizing and developing a second level that goes beyond what is discussed in this first training.

Another problem that wobblers encountered in their organizing is that many struggled with the question of how we were different from the mainstream unions that we saw as bureaucratic, undemocratic and stifling to worker militancy. Without a clear alternative of what we were doing differently, it was easy to fall into copying the way that ‘organizing was normally done.’ This often meant relying on the labor relations board and the flimsy protections of labor law that practically guaranteed that as long as you played by their rules, the bosses would win.

So this is why people in the IWW began to develop the concept that we now call “solidarity unionism.” It is our model of organizing that emphasizes building solidarity on the job and taking action to win our demands, whether they be large or small, a majority or a minority, and whether we have recognition from the bosses and government or not.

The training program in the IWW has been a key institution in spreading this model across the union and we hope to continue inspiring future generations of wobblers in this spirit.

### Workers’ Power

## Keys to organizing: Confidence and Solidarity

By Nate Holdren

In my June Workers Power column I talked about solidarity unionism and solidarity activism. Solidarity activism is when we show up to demonstrations and picket lines for others, to lend our power to support them in their struggles. That’s a good thing, of course. But it doesn’t build our power. Solidarity unionism is what builds our power. But it’s easy to emphasize solidarity activism over solidarity unionism.

One reason it’s easy to over-emphasize solidarity activism is lack of confidence in our organization. Sometimes we don’t believe that the IWW can be or is a real union or a real step toward forming the cooperative commonwealth. We want to be active, we want the union to matter, so we push for the union to be part of something we think of as real: a real strike, a real rank-and-file democracy committee or movement, real revolutionaries somewhere else.

This motivation is good intentioned, but it’s not good for the union. Lack of confidence gets in the way of the most important work of the union: organizing to make us bigger and more experienced. Lack of confidence is also disrespectful to people who are organizing in shops right now, who know the union is real and are putting a lot on the line to im-

prove their lives as part of the IWW.

Being realistic that we need to get our house in order is good. Our union has difficulties that we need to work through. But we’re not going to resolve any of those problems by prioritizing solidarity activism over solidarity unionism. That won’t lead to our house being put in order. It will lead to our house turning into a squat with all kinds of random stuff going on.

This lack of confidence is a real feeling, an emotion. That means we’re not going to get rid of it via ideas. Changing that feeling can be done in part through conversation, just like the emotional experiences we have with people when we agitate in our organizing. And just like in organizing, these conversations happen in the context of relationships. Any conversations that will be effective in changing our confidence will be conversations that are part of building and maintaining a relationship, rather than just debate with other members on ideas.

Organizing definitely involves ideas, but it takes more than that. We also need experiences. To build the union we need experiences of what a union is and what the IWW is and can be.

The best way to get that experience is for the union to keep organizing and

organize more. Unfortunately, lack of confidence makes us less likely to be active in organizing. We need to deal with lack of confidence by inviting and pushing people—others and ourselves—to be more active.

More specifically, we need to be more active in things that are likely to give us the experiences we need. People need to be offered concrete actions, like attending a one-on-one with a more experienced organizer, or a good shop committee meeting. We also need to share our experiences by swapping stories, just like when we agitate, and to discuss experiences with each other to find the elements that will motivate us further.

Existing lack of confidence in the union is partially due to people not having had these experiences and not having heard about experiences they could imagine having. Lack of confidence indicates a failure of mentoring in the union. Doing solidarity unionism is hard. One part of it is encouraging more people to get involved, so they get the experience and gain confidence. This is a lot of work, but it can and must be done.

Send your submissions for Workers Power to [forworkerspower@gmail.com](mailto:forworkerspower@gmail.com).

## Review

# Activism as a business fails to mobilize

## Book exposes top-down canvass campaigns, union-busting, racism

Dana R. Fisher. *Activism, Inc.: How the Outsourcing of Grassroots Campaigns Is Strangling Progressive Politics in America, 2006, 168 pages, \$24.95.*

When Columbia University sociology assistant professor Dana Fisher and Stanford University Press published *Activism, Inc.*, they no doubt expected controversy and debate. Not only would it sell more books, but it would point the finger at the tactics of so-called progressives in American politics. What they probably did not expect was the June 2006 letter from the organization Fisher investigated, The Fund for Public Interest Research, known anonymously in the book as "The People's Project." The Fund alleged Fisher had breached their research agreement and not taken the steps to protect its identity.

And it is easy to uncover The Fund's identity. Just by checking a few of Fisher's Internet sources related to The Fund's union-busting activities, I learned its identity in under 15 minutes. At the same time, Fisher as a responsible academic needed to back such serious allegations with sources. In effect, she chose academic responsibility and freedom over the need of The Fund for anonymity.

The Fund has also critiqued her methodology by saying she had interviewed too few of their canvassers, despite having set the rule that she could only interview confirmed staff, who had survived three days of canvassing. By Fisher's own estimate, the people who survive the first three days are 4 people out of 100 who try canvassing. Fisher interviewed 115 "official" canvassers from six regional offices with follow-up interviews the next year that revealed only 16 people still worked at The Fund. Fisher cited a 2002 study that found that more than 5.5 million Americans had canvassed, reveals the scope. This extraordinary attrition rate would devastate any other business, except that The Fund and its progressive colleagues run their top-down structure on the fuel of young people's idealism.

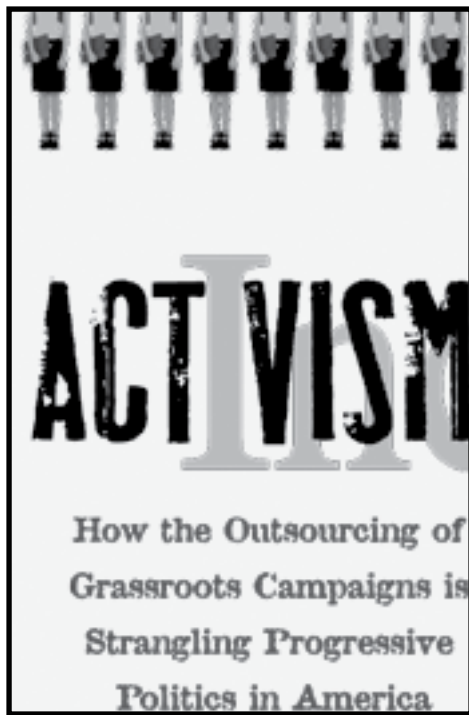
*Activism, Inc.* exposed this exploitation of idealism and self-sacrifice for progressive causes. Fisher's conclusion is that advocacy groups are sacrificing a genuine relationship with their supporters by outsourcing the grassroots work of their campaigns to lobbyists and fundraising canvass organization like The Fund.

Fisher's conclusion strikes to the bone of what popular movements should be about. While modern communication technology, advertising techniques, branding and personal grooming are powerful tools, they cannot replace the motivation that can be found through personal, face-to-face contact.

She pointed to the mobilization successes of the Republicans in the 2004 US election along with the Christian coalition and other conservative campaign groups which encourage their members to take the initiative and become an organizer, spreading the word through social networks and community groups. By making member empowerment the priority, the American Right is winning battles and cultivating a strong activist base that will be essential in the 2008 election and issue-based campaigns.

*Activism, Inc.* also serves as a potent warning for potential canvassers. The Fund and others may wave the progressive banner, but their own workers' rights are to be sacrificed for the cause.

"You can't treat your employees like peons," said Tiffany, a canvasser in San Diego.



Fisher cites The Fund's use of union-busting tactics in California such as closing offices at short notice and firing workers. This practice has not changed.

Ben Ehrenreich of the *LA Weekly* who reported on how The Fund crushed a union drive in 2002, reported in January 2006 that workers in two Los Angeles offices unionized with Teamsters Local 848 the summer before. The workers voted and won a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) election. In response, The Fund immediately altered health benefits, met infrequently with the union to bargain, and began to fire workers, sometimes several at a time. When the *LA Weekly* tried to confirm, The Fund replied saying that it respects its workers' right to organize. But the workers see it differently.

"If they can get rid of enough of the employees who were there during the organizing effort, they can decertify the union," said Christian Miller, one of the staff who helped organize the union. The issues that drove their campaign are those familiar to anyone in the non-profit sector, let alone canvassing: long hours, low pay, constant job insecurity, demands for flexibility and changing work rules.

Union-busting in the canvassing game isn't restricted to The Fund. In 2003, the environmental leadership program Green Corps fired two current IWW members, Daniel Gross and Nathaniel Miller, who had tried to organize around issues ending arbitrary firings and improving Green Corps' diversity (their group of 31 included only one non-white).

"Maybe racism will be solved in a couple hundred years, but the environmental movement needs to recognize its base of power is with the white middle class, and that is where we should organize," said one of Nathaniel Miller's trainers.

Institutional racism within these progressive organizations is one of many challenges to be tackled. Of the 115 canvassers Fisher interviewed from The Fund, only one was African-American. In that interview, he reported being shocked at how segregated American society remains-and how unwelcome black people are on people's doorsteps. For an organization that counts success by the dollars canvassing brings in, African-Americans don't stand a chance.

Judging from the leadership of these progressive campaigning organizations, diversity is not a priority; it may even be seen as a liability. The public interest research group umbrella group, US PIRG Federation of State PIRGs lists 39 people with pictures on the "partial list" of staff on its web site, with only one person

of color, a lawyer, appearing. Another major lobby group, GCI Grassroots Campaigns' "staff in key positions" counts not one visible minority out of 10 staff. Its major clients are the Democratic National Committee, MoveOn.org, ACORN, and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). These organizations need to do a double-take on who they are hiring, what it means and who is excluded.

Nathaniel Miller recommended people bypass professional canvassing and direct their idealism to genuine organizing that will make a difference. "I would tell potential organizers that they can learn far about organizing by involving themselves in workplace and community struggles rather than going through a formal training program. While there are no prefabricated workshops, the skills they learn will be far more relevant," he said.

Gross, currently an organizer on the IWW Starbucks campaign who was recently fired, called for canvassers in progressive organizations to stand up and organize on the job. "Whether you work at a non-profit, a multinational corporation or the corner store, the right to free association in the form of a union is absolute. Workers at Green Corps or elsewhere in the sprawling PIRG operation should know that IWW organizers are always ready to lend a hand. Working class activists looking to make an impact on environmental issues should join Earth First! not anti-worker union-busters like Green Corps.

"To its credit, the IWW has never been fooled by the phony progressivism of outfits like Green Corps."

## OBITUARY

Mark William Dickson  
1964–2007

IWW Vancouver member Mark Dickson passed away unexpectedly and peacefully in New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada on April 7, 2007 with family at his side.

Mark was born February 21, 1964 in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada. Since his teenage years, he was increasingly and severely handicapped by a neurological illness known as Friedrich's Ataxia, a disease that progressively destroys bodily coordination. He was the co-founder and current vice-president of the British Columbia Ataxia society.

Mark would travel long distances from his home in Surrey in his wheelchair to picket lines, demonstrations, IWW meetings, volunteering at CO-OP radio, and wherever else he was needed. He completed his BA, MA and PhD in philosophy at UBC and received the Killam Memorial Fellowship Award there in 1991 and 1992.

He was a proud contributor to the *Industrial Worker*, writing under the byline of X355424, his IWW membership number.

Mark was an inspiration to everyone who ever met him and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

## The Eye-Double-Double-You

Words by Jim Crutchfield  
Tune: "The Shores of Botany Bay" (Traditional)

CHORUS:

Hooray for the Revolution!  
Hooray for the Working Class!  
I've joined the One Big Union  
And the boss can kiss my ass!  
I'll fight for better wages  
And shorter hours too  
'Cause I've got my Red Card and I'm gonna work hard  
For the Eye-Double-Double-You.

The boss came in this morning  
And he says to me "Hello."  
"If you don't make my coffee right  
"I'll have to let you go."  
Well since he did insult me  
There was only one thing to do  
So I went downtown and I put my name down  
For the Eye-Double-Double-You

(Chorus)

Now some of us work with our muscles  
And some of us just our brains  
And some of us push papers  
And some of us drive your trains  
And some of us do most anything  
If there's anything left to do  
But we're workers all and we're answering the call  
Of the Eye-Double-Double-You.

(Chorus)

And when we're One Big Union  
We'll shut the whole thing down:  
We'll take this rotten system  
And turn it right-way-'round.  
There'll be no more room for parasites  
But plenty for me and you.  
Come along with me and we'll all be free  
In the Eye-Double-Double-You.  
(Chorus)



# Ontario workers march as factories close

## Premier masking job losses with rise in service jobs

By Marc B. Young

Warm days in Ontario, Canada seem to be accompanied this year by hotter tempers among the province's manufacturing workers. But it's the loss of hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs, not the weather, causing heated debate.

In late May, this trend spurred a rash of demonstrations and mobilizations in communities across the province. Highlights included actions by the United Steelworkers at nine plants slated to close or radically reduce their workforces, a rally in Windsor that drew tens of thousands led by Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) locals, and a May 30 gathering on Parliament Hill in Canada's capital promoted a 'Made in Canada' jobs campaign.

On May 24, a packed public meeting in London, Ontario took place. Labour leaders, workers and local politicians bemoaned a wave of closings that have rocked communities throughout the province's southwest. London and District Labour Council president Tim Carrie observed that while "an unemployment rate of 6.1 per cent looks good and rosy... we are losing 150 jobs a day in manufacturing."

That seems to be the crux of the matter in Canada's manufacturing heartland. Official numbers mask a depressing situation. Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty, recognizes that "in an era of globalization" manufacturing jobs are bound to be lost "throughout North America." Yet he pulls figures from his sleeve to demonstrate that over the last four years, a net 320,000 new jobs (of all types) were created in the province. No matter if this total is mathematically defensible or not; the calculation hides a relative pauperization of a once prosperous section of the working class, since statistics about pay also suggest that the jobs lost averaged around \$20 per hour. Ontario minimum wage is \$8 per hour.

Meanwhile, Canadian workers who do find work after being displaced as a result of closures or mass layoffs live, on average, with a pay packet 25 per cent smaller than what they enjoyed before, according to union data.

A partial list of recent and looming closures is overwhelming. The Ford St. Thomas assembly plant is dropping some 900 jobs and Sterling Trucks in the same town is reported to be laying off 800 in 2007. About 640 layoffs are slated at International Truck in Chatham, according to the *London Free Press*. In Windsor, the Ford casting plant, a factory that once employed 1,000 workers, produced its last products at the end of May. CFM Majestic in Mississauga, a city just west of Toronto, will probably have reduced its workforce by over 800 by September 2007, with some production reportedly shifting to Mexico and China. Masonite International, a maker of doors, also located in Mississauga, will close in August, leaving 300 workers out of work by shifting production to the US.

The key questions provoked by the crisis are the following: What chief factors are at work here? What can workers do about the situation?

The possibilities of worker response were to some extent highlighted precisely in the case of the Masonite plant. There, workers carried out an occupation which, given its one-day duration, can perhaps only be charitably described as such. United Steelworkers Ontario and Atlantic director Wayne Fraser, addressed a rowdy crowd and made the objective of the mobilization absolutely clear. The company had to be pushed "to negotiate a closure agreement...that [was] going to meet the needs of our

members going forward." A day later the company indeed responded by putting a better severance package on the table, including benefits stretching beyond the closure date plus support for an adjustment program for those laid off. Evidently, factory takeovers in the Argentinian style, aimed at keeping workplaces open and preserving jobs, wasn't on his agenda. But Fraser told the *Industrial Worker* that he doesn't discount an escalation of this type in the future.

No doubt labour leaders do think that demonstrations, meetings and marches can draw attention to the situation right now, as the Canadian Auto Workers president Buzz Hargrove recently observed. But then there arises the matter of solutions and who is to blame for the job losses.

### Who's the culprit?

Here, political disagreements within the Canadian and in particular the Ontario labour movement become apparent. For the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL), the provincial government led by McGuinty's Liberals bears considerable responsibility for the current state of affairs. Where is the industrial strategy this province needs? asked the OFL.

"We need a hands-on policy," said Fraser, one that declares "manufacturing is an important sector and we [the provincial government] will do whatever we can to protect it and the workers" employed in it. The Federation itself has passed resolutions in support of public sector-led industrialization programs that, as one union researcher privately joked at the 2005 convention, would not appear out of place in documents issued

**"An unemployment rate of 6.1 per cent looks good and rosy [but] we are losing 150 jobs a day in manufacturing." —Tim Carrie, president, London and District Labour Council**

by the French Communist Party. In an interview, Fraser mentioned Ontario labour's desire for a "jobs commissioner" at the provincial level whose office could bare some teeth and, for example, compel companies to economically justify shut-downs and sizeable layoffs.

Ontario will be going to the polls this Fall and the OFL, wedded to the New Democratic Party (NDP), knows that job losses make strong material for anti-Liberal cudgels. Federation president Wayne Samuelson has asserted that continuing mobilizations will seek to compel the McGuinty government to act, while never hiding his view that what workers really need is the NDP in office, a situation that last prevailed in 1995, when disappointed working Ontarians routed the social democrats.

Meanwhile, for the NDP-estranged and often pro-Liberal Canadian Auto Workers (who don't belong to the OFL), the Ontario government is not the chief culprit. This union points to dubious trade policies and a strong Canadian dollar, which stifles exports, as causes of the crisis.

In this view, the Stephen Harper-led Conservative federal government in Ottawa is a creature of western energy interests whose booming success (the engine behind a stronger currency) is

costing those in central Canada who build finished goods for export. The CAW argues for a system of managed exchange over 'free' markets, calling for a new North American Auto Pact that would insist that the number of automobile purchased in North America correspond to manufacturing/assembly realized here and stipulate similar intra-NAFTA rules to aid auto employment within each member of our trade and investment bloc.

Finally, there's the country-wide Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). On the day before the Parliament Hill rally at the end of May, CLC president Ken Georgetti called on the government to "appoint a task force with high-level labour, government and business representatives to develop a Made-In-Canada jobs strategy to maintain and sustain manufacturing and resource-processing sectors." That is to say, the CLC wants tripartite consultation, union input on trade deals, some action on interest rates to ease the high dollar, maybe accelerated tax write-offs on capital investment, a made-in-Canada procurement policy, and some bolstering of employment insurance and wage protection legislation to soften the layoff blows.

In short, unions are calling for moderate reform, not a fight-back.

## Teacher advocate and sweatshop activist get award

By Kenneth Miller

The secretary of the Kansas National Committee to Commemorate Brown v. Board, C.E. "Sonny" Scroggins, presented two Pittsburgh education activists with the Sister D. Baxter Humanitarian Rights Award in Topeka, Kansas, on May 17.

The award presentation was during the re-naming of a grade school to honor Lucinda Todd, the first teacher and parent to sign on to a lawsuit that led to the 1954 US Supreme Court decision to de-segregate schools. The Hope Street Academy is now the Lucinda Todd Education Center. May 17 was the 53rd anniversary of that civil rights victory.

Pittsburgh teachers Celeste Taylor and Kenneth Miller presented the testimony of the Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity at the event. They said that we should apply Americans' expectations for education, fairness and workers rights to hold true for Bangladeshi workers and their families who sew apparel for the Pittsburgh Pirates baseball team.

"Today we are hard pressed to find teachers leading the struggles in education and advocating for students. The fact that a teacher led this fundamental policy struggle [Brown v. Board] should not be lost," said Kenneth Miller, an IWW member and sweatshop activist. "Teachers should be expected to take a stand on free speech issues and must not relegate decision-making and the framing of the debate to be co-opted by today's 'data driven' policy models."

The event served as a reminder of the important role teachers can play



Celeste Taylor and Kenneth Miller accept their awards in Topeka, Kansas.

in pushing social change. The need for this change is evident in Pittsburgh, like many other urban school districts, which face a huge achievement gap between black and white students. Many schools within the district remain, in fact, segregated with more Black students than most districts in Allegheny County. Yet, school planners neglected to address this issue in a major re-organization of the Pittsburgh education system. The plan to standardize curriculum to improve state standardized test scores also completely ignores the input of teachers.

Instead of advocating for academic freedom and control over their classrooms, the AFL-CIO teachers union is trying to avoid being scapegoated for ongoing failures by complaining that

teachers are not receiving enough training in the new curriculums. Failure in vocational education is directly related to the difficulty black workers have finding well-paid work. The Building Trade Unions say that the reason for their low African-American membership is related to the lack of qualified candidates, such as students who know algebra and can read schematics.

The Building Trades Unions are trying to link efforts to increase minority membership in their unions to a Project Labor Agreement with the Pittsburgh Board of Education. This would give its current members restructuring-related construction jobs, without providing a real plan on how to include more minorities within its ranks.

# BOOKS FOR REBELLIOUS WORKERS



## The Mayor of MacDougal Street: A Memoir by Dave Van Ronk with Elijah Wald

Dave Van Ronk (1936-2002) was one of the founding figures of the 1960s folk revival, but he was far more than that. A pioneer of modern acoustic blues, a fine songwriter and arranger, a powerful singer, and one of the most influential guitarists of the 1960s, he was also a marvelous storyteller, a peerless musical historian, a Wobbly, and one of the most quotable figures on the Greenwich Village scene. Holding court in legendary venues like Gerde's Folk City and the Gaslight Café, Van Ronk's influence was so great that a stretch of Sheridan Square—the

heart of the Village—was renamed on June 30, 2004, and is now Dave Van Ronk Street. *The Mayor of MacDougal Street* is a unique first-hand account by a major player in the social and musical history of the '50s and '60s. It features encounters with young stars-to-be like Bob Dylan (who survived much of his first year in New York sleeping on Van Ronk's couch), Tom Paxton, Phil Ochs, Joan Baez, and Joni Mitchell, as well as older luminaries like Reverend Gary Davis, Woody Guthrie, Mississippi John Hurt, and Odetta. Colorful, hilarious, engaging, and a vivid evocation of a fascinating time and place, *The Mayor of MacDougal Street* will appeal not only to folk and blues fans but to anyone interested in the music, politics, and spirit of a revolutionary period in American culture. **Hardcover, 246 pages. Originally priced at \$26.00, now just \$12.00**

## The Bosses' Songbook: Songs to Stifle the Flames of Discontent Co-authored by Dave Van Ronk, Roy Berkeley, and more

Largely a spoof on authoritarian leftist movements, *The Bosses' Songbook* is pure Wobbly, written at a time when it was very difficult to have both a sense of humor and radical politics. The Kellermans have thankfully rescued this publication from obscurity, and the Literature Department is offering it for a limited time.

*They handed him his orders at Party headquarters,  
Saying, "Pete, you're way behind the times.  
This is not '38, it's 1947,  
There's been a change in the Party line."*

**42 pages, \$6.00**

### Special Deal: The Mayor of MacDougal Street and the Bosses' Songbook for \$15.00

## A Century of Writing on the IWW 1905 - 2005: An Annotated Bibliography of Books on the Industrial Workers of the World Compiled by Steve Kellerman

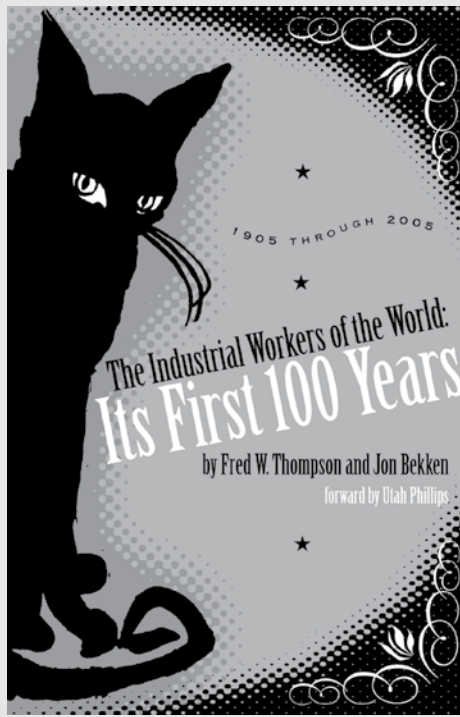
This annotated bibliography published by the Boston General Membership Branch of the IWW lists all known books on the IWW, organized by category in chronological order. Brief critical notes describe the books, quickly and helpfully identifying their strengths and weaknesses. Other categories are Biographical Works, Miscellaneous Works including substantial discussion of the IWW, Writings by Wobblies, and a listing of novels featuring the union. An excellent resource for anyone doing research on the IWW. **38 pages, \$5.00**



## The Big Red Songbook Edited by Archie Green, David Roediger, Franklin Rosemont and Salvatore Salerno

This is indeed an incredible endeavor. The most comprehensive collection of rebel workers' songs and poems ever compiled in English, *The Big Red Songbook* includes all the songs that appeared in the IWW's celebrated *Little Red Songbook* from 1909 through 1973, plus dozens more. Here are the songs of Joe Hill, T-Bone Slim, Dick Brazier, Ralph Chaplin, Covington Hall and other Wobbly legends; lesser knowns, but ought to be legends such as Eugene Barnett, Paul Walker, and Henry Pfaff; for the first time anywhere, a good selection of songs by women Wobblies: Anges

Thecla Fair, Laura Payne Emerson, Sophie Fagin, Jane Street, Laura Tanne and others; Australians Bill Casey and Harry Hooton, Englishman Leon Rosselson, Germans Ernest Riebe and John Olday, and Scotsman Douglas Robson. A special section focuses on variants and parodies of IWW songs: a Depression-era version of "Hallelujah I'm a Bum," Jack Langan's 1960s version of "Solidarity Forever," an Earth First! adaptation of Joe Hill's "There is Power" by Walkin' Jim Stoltz, and Hazel Dickens' bold update of "The Rebel Girl." And there's the wealth of essays, analysis, references, bibliographies, and discographies, provided by Archie Green, his coeditors, and other collaborators, giving not only historical context, but also a wide range of perspectives on the Wobbly counterculture and its enduring legacies. **546 pages, \$24.00**



## The Industrial Workers of the World: Its First 100 Years by Fred W. Thompson & Jon Bekken forward by Utah Phillips

*The IWW: Its First 100 Years* is the most comprehensive history of the union ever published. Written by two Wobblies who lived through many of the struggles they chronicle, it documents the famous struggles such as the Lawrence and Paterson strikes, the fight for decent conditions in the Pacific Northwest timber fields, the IWW's pioneering organizing among harvest hands in the 1910s and 1920s, and the war-time repression that sent thousands of IWW members to jail. But it is the only general history to give substantive attention to the IWW's successful organizing of African-American and immigrant dock workers on the Philadelphia waterfront, the international union of seamen the IWW built from 1913 through the 1930s, smaller job actions through which the IWW transformed working conditions, Wobbly successes organizing in manufacturing in the 1930s and 1940s, and the union's recent resurgence. Extensive source notes provide guidance to readers wishing to explore particular campaigns in more depth. There is no better history for the reader looking for an overview of the history of the IWW, and for an understanding of its ideas and tactics. **255 pages, \$19.95**



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# Boycott WH Smith

## IWW fights to save Leicester post office

The Leicester IWW branch is fighting the on-going privatization of the United Kingdom's Royal Mail with on-line pledges to stop the closure of a local post office.

The campaign built momentum during a June 2 information picket, distributing 500 leaflets and gaining 100 pledges to boycott WH Smith. The local newspaper, *The Leicester Mercury*, provided the demonstration advance coverage.

The government plan is to close the Bishop Street post office and move it to the basement of a bookstore, WH Smith. More than 70 post offices will move into WH Smith stores across the country as part of a government cost-cutting exercise.

"The low profit margin on some of our products makes it difficult. The market is changing and we are not making a profit in these branches," a Royal Mail spokesperson told the BBC.

The IWW petition asks for people to boycott WH Smith until the plan is stopped or, if it goes through, indefinitely.

"We have no intention of giving this to Post Office Ltd. bosses, the council or government. It stays with the IWW union but will be used to publicise how many people are pledging to boycott Smiths," according to Rob Blow, one of the organizers.

The IWW has done information pickets and garnered the support of local groups such as the Leicester Social Forum and the Communication Workers Union local (CWU). The CWU represents postal workers and has a campaign goal of keeping the post office "secure in public hands."

To sign the pledge, visit [www.ipetitions.com/petition/bishopstreet?e](http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/bishopstreet?e).



Diane Krauthamer

Truckers and their supporters from Ports Elizabeth and Newark, New Jersey, celebrated with the Industrial Workers of the World the opening of the José Gilberto Soto drivers' education and organizing centre. The centre's goal is to educate and mobilize truckers around workplace and community issues, from port security to diesel pollution. To contact the centre, telephone 908-436-9124 or fax 908-436-1991.

## IWW UK defends train driver

By Leicester IWW

Troubled train operator, First Great Western, already short of drivers, has taken the bizarre step of sacking a driver for swearing at a colleague during an argument, claiming that the swearing was "threatening."

Sacked Bristol driver Patrick Spackman said: "I regret swearing at him. And I regret referring to his weight. But for management to call this 'gross misconduct' is just ludicrous. I'm afraid that this kind of language is used all day and every day on the railways and if the company is going to start sacking people for it they won't have many drivers left."

First Great Western boss Alison Forster is already under pressure over the company's poor services. Last year,

Early Day Motions were tabled in Parliament condemning reductions in services and now David Drew, MP for Stroud, has tabled an Early Day Motion calling for First Great Western services to be run in the public sector.

Mr. Spackman is being represented by the Industrial Workers of the World, the union universally known as "the Wobblies."

A union spokesperson said: "First Great Western have mishandled this case from the beginning. It could easily have been resolved months ago but now it will have to be dealt with by an Employment Tribunal. Yet more unnecessary stress for our member and a total waste of time and money for everyone."

## Scottish Parliamentary workers sacked

The May 3 Scottish parliamentary election cut short the job dispute between Solidarity parliamentarian Tommy Sheridan and the IWW's parliamentary job branch.

Voters switched to the Scottish National Party, wiping out Solidarity and the party it split from, the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP) with neither party retaining any seats.

SSP parliamentarians typically donated half of their salaries to the party in order to fund much-needed staff to support their campaigns. Without the

resources provided by the parliamentary salaries, both parties will struggle financially and workers will be laid off.

The defeat ends a resurgence of left-wing parliamentarians that started with the election of Tommy Sheridan in 1999 as the first MSP of the fledgling unite-the-left Scottish Socialist Party (SSP). He was joined in Parliament in 2003 by five other socialist MSPs. Sheridan and Rosemary Byrne left the SSP after he won his libel case against the *News of the World* newspaper and accused a faction of the SSP as being out to get him.

## US Supreme Court

Continued from 1

Under the court's May 29 decision, workers must initiate legal action, whether by filing suit or bringing a complaint to regulatory agencies such as the EEOC, every time pay raises are awarded or denied, at least twice a year. The government would have no one to blame but itself for the millions of complaints that would result, freezing the bureaucracy and courts with a blizzard of paperwork much as free speech fighters once clogged city jails, until restrictions on union speakers were lifted.

The Supreme Court ruling is the latest of a series of rulings by the courts and labor boards that have a common theme—employers are not bound to respect workers' rights. Now that the labor movement is in retreat, those protections are being withdrawn.

## UK National Blood Service at risk

Continued from 1

tributed through campaign street stalls and demonstrations to get the message out and make sure the NBS directors can't throw us on the scrapheap quietly! While healthcare worker morale is low, it is lifting with support from donors and other healthworkers who support and back their fight to preserve a quality blood service in the United Kingdom for all people.

To join the fight, write to the NBS chief executive Martin Gorham, Chief Executive, National Blood Service,

Oak House, Read's Crescent, Watford, Hertfordshire WD24 4PH or by email to [martin.gorham@nbs.nhs.uk](mailto:martin.gorham@nbs.nhs.uk).

## South African public workers press strike

South African public servants are demanding a 12 per cent wage increase and backing it up with strike action that is crippling the government.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has called for wider solidarity from miners, metal and transport workers, which, if acted on, would amount to a general strike that would paralyze South African business. Miners and municipal workers have yet to decide on whether they will join the strike in sympathy.

"All of us [in the public sector] are involved in assisting communities. They need to stand by our side and say we cannot allow government to do what it is doing," COSATU president Willie Madisha told a South African business newspaper.

The government downplayed the effect of the strike, claiming it maintained its level of services. However, unions claimed workers are shutting down services by respecting the picket lines and maintaining a high level of solidarity. The teachers' union said that 90 per cent of its members voted in favor of the strike and less than 20 per cent of schools attempted to hold classes.

The public sector union demands include a pay increase, pay equity by collapsing the two lowest pay levels into the third level, filling vacants posts to reduce the stress of not having enough people to do the work, and increasing the government's contribution to the health plan to match the rising costs of healthcare.

Doctors at hospitals worked on their own, some with the help of volunteers. The health authorities have threatened to terminate striking workers as it is illegal for essential service employees to strike in South Africa. Nevertheless, health workers are picketing hospitals. Police used force to disperse the picketers in at least one instance.

## COSATU repeats call for Israeli boycott

Zionists tried to block the visit of Palestine's Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh on the invitation of South Africa's Intelligence Minister Ronnie Kasrils. Haniyeh is a prominent leader of Hamas, while Kasrils himself is Jewish.

The opposition to the visit is another attempt to block government sympathy for a campaign launched by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in September 2006 to boycott Israeli goods and withdraw diplomatic ties until it ends the occupation of lands taken in the 1967 war.

"[COSATU] vehemently condemns the latest atrocities committed by the Israeli government against the Palestinian people of Gaza," said the union statement. "COSATU is fully committed to the commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the Israeli regime's illegal occupation of Palestine and will be recommitting itself to its campaign of solidarity with the people of Palestine in their fight for national sovereignty and democracy."

At its ninth congress, the union federation called on the South African government to cut diplomatic ties and recall its ambassador to Israel and impose sanctions against Israel until it ended its aggression against Palestine and Lebanon. The union congress also promised a public mobilization strategy to press for the release of more than 10,000 Palestinian, Iraqi and other prisoners in United States and Israeli custody, boycott Israeli goods and demonstrate outside Israel's embassies.

This may mean a cabinet split on the issue which would involve a showdown with pro-business President Thabo Mbeki who is affiliated with the Africa National Congress (ANC). COSATU is allied with the ANC and the South Africa Communist Party in a tripartite alliance to press forward with a non-racial, democratic and just South Africa. The ANC itself has called for actions in June to pressure Israel.

The South African Zionist Federation has responded by calling Kasrils invitation to the Palestinian president an endorsement of terrorism and the ANC's mobilization "crazy."

COSATU and ANC activists are pressing ahead.

"The best way to have Israel comply with United Nations resolutions is to pressure it by a diplomatic boycott such as the one imposed on apartheid South Africa," COSATU president Willy Madisha told *Haaretz*.

## Pakistanis strike

Pakistani workers have launched a general strike against the repressive military dictatorship in Pakistan. Members of the opposition included hard-line religious elements as well as leftists. Shops and ports were closed and traffic was sparse.

The general strike was considered a referendum against General Musharraf and his ruling MQM party.

The MQM started out as party for Muslim refugees from India of which Musharraf is member. The MQM party quickly set themselves up politically and came to power. The general is now a leading pro-US dictator.

Although there are some free elections in parliament and independent trade unions exist, the military continues to dominate politics.

# Cambodian textile workers feel crunch



Marguerite Finn, United Nations Association

## Cambodian textile worker activist Phearak Ly speaks in Norwich, England.

By Pete Lux, Norwich IWW

Phearak Ly, a women workers rights activist from *Womyn's Agenda for Change* in Cambodia and Sam Mayer from *Labour Behind the Label* stopped in Norwich, United Kingdom as part of their speaking tour to raise awareness about exploitation in Cambodia's textile industry. The working conditions of these workers mirror those faced by the Lawrence IWW textile workers who struck for better conditions in 1912.

To understand what is happening in the Cambodian clothing industry it is useful to understand some of its history. Cambodia only recently entered the clothing industry in 1993. Without much infrastructure and with no indigenous textile industry it relied on cheap labour. With the 'opening up' of the local economy, these workers were easy to come by as agriculture became unprofitable due to cheap food imports. Many young women were forced to seek work in the factories to supplement their family income.

The quota system imposed by the Multi Fibre Arrangement (MFA), established in 1974, helped the relatively new and inefficient Cambodian industry be competitive in the international market. The MFA allowed Canada, the United States and the European Union (EU) to set quotas on the amount of clothing it would allow to be imported from each country. This agreement insulated smaller countries such as Cambodia by giving them a quota to fill, independent of international competition. In effect, the MFA insulated small countries from competing directly with major textile producers such as China and India.

The MFA ended in 2005, making the international textile market a harsh free-for-all. The European Union retained some quotas on imports during what the UK media called the "Bra Wars", which stranded more than 80 million pieces of clothing, including bras, from China destined for sale in Europe.

### Factory closures, worse conditions

Without set quotas and a guaranteed market, the end of this agreement had a negative effect on countries such as Cambodia and Bangladesh. Larger factories, which employed up to 10,000 workers, were forced to close. Smaller factories with 200 to 300 workers domi-

nated the sector. The smaller factories employed workers on short, one-month contracts rather than on a permanent basis with only 'good' workers being re-employed. As employers struggled to keep profitable in a more competitive market, working conditions and pay declined.

Like many clothing workers, Phearak Ly is from a rural background. At 16 she moved from town to town to get work. Even though she has only just turned 25 she is seen as 'too old' to work. More experienced workers are less easily exploited and therefore employers hire young women workers who leave home and migrate to get work. This leaves the workers isolated and fearful of rape or muggings as they return to their lodgings after leaving work at night.

Phearak said that about \$80 a month is needed to survive and with the minimum wage of \$50 per month this leads to excessive overtime just to make ends meet let alone have money to send back to their families in the rural areas. Although they should only work a maximum of 10 hours per day, they often work 12 to 14 hour shifts.

The workers are paid on a piece rate with bonuses based on performance of the production line. Sometimes score boards showing the number of finished garments are placed at the end of each line to increase the competition for the bonus for the 'winning' line. This situation makes workers view any sick or pregnant worker on the line who do not keep up as a problem for their fellow workers.

### The Role of Unions

There are over 800 unions representing the workers in the factory. Many of them are 'yellow' unions that are controlled by factory owners or by the state. Where unions do organise effectively, they face intimidation by armed groups. In February this year Hy Vuthy, president of the Free Trade Union of Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia (FTUWKC) was murdered—one of three trade union leaders killed in the last three years.

*Womyn's Agenda for Change* sets up drop-in centres where young women workers can meet and learn about their rights and discuss women's issues. Phearak explained that while 'her' union did solve problems for her, she felt that

# World Labor Solidarity

A COLUMN BY THE  
INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY COMMISSION

The IWW formed the International Solidarity Commission to help the union build the worker-to-worker solidarity that can lead to effective action against the bosses of the world. To contact the ISC, email [solidarity@iww.org](mailto:solidarity@iww.org).

By Mike Pesa and John Kalwaic

## ISC meets with National Garment Workers Federation in Bangladesh

ISC delegate Jason Fults met with leaders of Bangladesh's National Garment Worker Federation (NGWF) on June 10 in Dhaka. Fults represented the IWW as well as an allied organization, the Pittsburgh Anti-Sweatshop Community Alliance (PASCA). The meeting helped elevate the IWW's relationship with the NGWF to a higher level of dialogue and cooperation. The discussion focused on the current situation for workers in Bangladesh, the NGWF's history and more recent activities, a tentative international living wage campaign called Raise the Floor, ways in which allies in the western world can di-

A full report of these meetings will be published in a future issue of the *Industrial Worker*.

## Mahmoud Salehi still in jail

The International Solidarity Commission wrote a second letter to the government of Iran demanding the immediate release of union leader Mahmoud Salehi. Salehi is reportedly in poor health and has had no visitation rights since his arrest following a workers' rally on May Day (International Workers Day). Salehi and two other union leaders were unlawfully targeted for their activities on behalf of Iran's labor movement.

## Like Starbucks, IKEA claims to be a progressive company that tolerates employee free speech.

rectly impact conditions in Bangladesh, and several specific plans for increased cooperation between the IWW and the NGWF.

The NGWF stressed the need for "physical action [pickets, protests, pressure campaigns, possibly strikes] on the basis of solidarity between partners". This solidarity relationship can and should work both ways (that is, the IWW will act to defend the rights of NGWF members and the NGWF will also come to the assistance of the IWW when needed).

A general effort toward putting pressure on the supply chain from retail workers in the West down to garment workers in Asia is also a priority for the NGWF. Fults also relayed Kenneth Miller's idea for a strategic international summit between the NGWF, the IWW, and Central American unions. The NGWF was receptive to this idea and would like the IWW to take the initiative to explore this project. The need for material aid was also discussed, although the NGWF stressed that a solidarity relationship should not be built on the basis of financial support. Finally, the NGWF promised to stay in closer communication with the IWW and to submit articles to the *Industrial Worker*. They requested additional copies of our newspaper and also expressed interest in translating several IWW materials into Bengali and distributing them to their members.

Fults, who is temporarily living in India as part of a research scholarship, plans to meet with other Bangladeshi organizations in the near future, including the Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity, whose representatives met with several IWW members at a recent conference in New York City.

## Sweden: SAC workers at IKEA need solidarity

Like Starbucks, the international Scandinavian furniture company IKEA claims to be a progressive company that tolerates employee free speech. In Sweden, IKEA's founder Ingvar Kamprad is seen as a progressive for the way he does business.

However, workers of the anarcho-syndicalist union, the Central Organization of Swedish Workers (SAC), are trying to organize at IKEA warehouses in Sweden, would disagree. At the Torvick warehouse, IKEA was trying to write a new agreement to make workers work weekends and give them much less free time. During a collective bargaining agreement with the SAC, IKEA refused to budge on the issue of working hours and cited an agreement they had with another Social Democratic transport union that did not apply to the SAC.

IKEA is issuing warnings to anyone who speaks up about workplace issues. IKEA officially encourages its employees to speak up about workplace issues. However, the warnings expose this policy as hypocritical rhetoric.

What price should we pay for cheap furniture? The SAC workers need your help! The ISC is calling on IWW members and supporters to organize demonstrations outside your local IKEA.

We have been asked to do this by the SAC IKEA workers themselves. They have provided us with a leaflet that we can make available to you. Distributing this leaflet is an easy action to do that only requires a couple people to be effective.

Please email [solidarity@iww.org](mailto:solidarity@iww.org) for more information or to get involved.

it was important for workers themselves to be empowered with knowledge and confidence.

People in the United Kingdom now buy one-third more clothing while spending one-third less with companies such as M&S and Arcadia cutting 5 per cent every year on what they pay their suppliers. Nearly all the profit returns to the hands of these corporations since

little import or export tax is paid on the goods. The only tax revenue for countries like Cambodia is income tax on the worker's meagre wages. However, these companies are prone to pressure and do respond if they receive letters and emails from potential customers via campaigns such as Labour Behind the Label's Urgent Appeal online [www.labourbehindthelabel.org](http://www.labourbehindthelabel.org).