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INDUSTRIAL WORKER

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Police attack warehouse solidarity march

By Mike Bell

Police attacked a group of 30 IWWs marching to a restaurant in North Providence, Rhode Island, supplied by New York food warehouse HWH/Dragonland on August 11. After surrounding the group with squad cars, New Providence police arrested two IWWs, dislocating Alexandra Svoboda's leg and rupturing an artery, macing one protester badly enough to leave chemical burns, and grabbing and shoving others. Jason Friedmutter was arrested for trying to help Svoboda.

IWWs had marched on Jacky's Galaxie on Mineral Springs Avenue in North Providence to pressure the owner to stop buying from HWH/Dragonland in solidarity with the New York City IWW minimum wage and overtime campaign. The HWH owner recently changed its name to Dragonland to evade paying its workforce minimum wage and overtime. The company is notorious for its slave labor conditions of up to 110 hours per week.

Disabled veteran and eyewitness John MacLean said that the march was calm, until the police tried to move people from the street onto the sidewalk.

"They used their vehicles, and loud noises to some effect, and the march began to tend toward the roadside," said MacLean. He then saw police officer number 25 grab a photographer by the back of the head, "pull on his camera and wrestle him around."

After dispatching people to accompany Svoboda to hospital and Friedmutter to jail, the marchers went on to picket

Jacky's Galaxy. They eventually spoke with the owner, Jacky Ko, who denied doing business with HWH, although he had no documentation to prove it. He told the Providence Journal newspaper he stopped ordering from HWH in July.

Meanwhile, state troopers and an officer with a police dog joined the police, reportedly harassing the protesters with threats of loitering charges and trespassing in the restaurant's parking lot.

The Providence police are denying they overreacted to a peaceful protest. A spokesperson told local newspaper, The Providence Journal, that there were "a hundred people screaming in the middle of the street, refusing to move and disobeying every order the officers gave them." Photographs of the picket line in front of the restaurant show about 20 people.

"I remember seeing an overzealous officer standing there with an extended riot stick at the ready. We had no intention of being violent, and I feel that the police created more problems than they solved," said MacLean.

The IWW held a candlelight vigil outside of Rhode Island Hospital on August 14, where Svoboda remains recovering from two operations to her leg. The branch is also planning a march to the Attorney-General's office on August 26 to raise awareness about the brutal



Photo by Jonathan McIntosh

IWW Alex Svoboda lies on ground, her knee dislocated and broken, while a police officer pepper sprays a protester trying to help. Back, police officer grabs protester.

police response to a peaceful protest.

The Providence IWW branch is now dealing with the aftermath. Alex Svoboda has no health insurance. Donations to help cover her costs should be sent to the Providence General Membership Branch, PO Box 5795, Providence, RI 02903 or contact Mark Frey at 201-669-0714 or Billy Randel at 646-645-6284 or

by email ProvidenceIWW@riseup.net. The IWW is asking people to denounce the attack to Mayor Charles Lombardi, North Providence Town Hall, 2000 Smith Street, N. Providence, RI 02911, 401-232-0900, ext. 226 or fax 401-232-3434 and Police Chief Ernest Spaziano, 401-233-1433. Demand all charges be dropped and medical expenses paid.

Indonesian Nike shop wins reprieve

By x355910

The Indonesia investment board bowed to massive street rallies by workers who faced 14,000 layoffs at two factories producing Nike shoes.

Nike has agreed to extend the the contracts for one year at the Hardaya Aneka factories and two years for Naga Sakti factories.

Workers from the factories protested at Nike offices, the Ministry of Trade, and at the stock exchange. Outside the stock exchange, 5,000 blocked traffic carrying signs that said Nike lies and Go To Hell Nike.

The workers from Naga Sakti Pharama Shoes Corp. and Hardaya Aneka Corp. rallied to protest production cuts that would lead to layoffs of workers who had worked in the factories for 18 years.

Nike claimed their planned withdrawal was due to poor quality work. Nike gave the factories only nine months, until March 2008 to close down and said it would have no responsibility for the laid off workers.

Nike's reportedly has contracts with factories in Indonesia that employ 115,000 workers in Indonesia.

Hazleton anti-immigrant rules struck by US court

By x355910

When Mayor Lou Barletta of Hazleton, Pennsylvania passed an ordinance in 2000 that made it illegal to hire migrants or to rent apartments to them, a coalition stepped up to challenge him. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, the Community Justice Project, the US Chamber of Commerce, and the US Council of Catholic Bishops, spoke up on behalf of thousands of immigrant residents, landlords, and business owners that lived there.

Both immigrants who have lived in Hazleton for a long time, and were legal with documentation, and immigrants who have been residing there without the paperwork were required by the Pennsylvania Illegal Immigration Relief Act to provide proof of their status to employers and landlords.

As a result of the intense reaction from the immigrant community and the legal work in response to the PIIRA, Federal Judge James M. Munley issued a temporary restraining order suspending implementation of the Pennsylvania Illegal Immigration Relief Act for two weeks, and then extended the order for another 120 days.

When the case, *Lozano v. Hazleton*, went to court, the ACLU defended the so

called "illegal aliens" who paid property taxes, who are good workers and dependable tenants. The Hazleton mayor and his associates, however, blamed increasing crime and murder on the city's immigrant population and questioned the additional costs of social services required since the influx they claimed began in 2000.

On July 26, 2007, the Federal court ruled against the PIIRA citing the US Supreme Court's interpretation of the 14th Amendment's guarantees.

According to the ACLU press advisory, Judge Munley wrote in his decision that the 14th amendment applies "to all living in the United States whether they were born here, immigrated here through legal means, or violated federal law to enter the country."

The city ordinance had become a model for cities and towns across the country who passed similar statutes, threatening the livelihood of immigrant families already held hostage as a result of increased surveillance and enforcement by federal immigration officials. 1208 immigrant workers were arrested in December 2006, at Swift and Co. meatpacking factories in six states and held in custody by Homeland Security

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Continued on 8

UK Posties fight privatization of Royal Mail

By Ronnie

When Tony Blair appointed Allan Leighton as Chairman of Royal Mail in March 2002, he was already on the boards of nine other companies, had sold Asda to the anti-union Wal-Mart supermarket chain and was in the process of the transforming Leeds United Football Club from Champions League contenders to relegation certainties and ultimate bankruptcy. He receives a basic salary of £20,000 (US\$40,000). Not bad for a two day week.

Leighton introduced to Royal Mail the idea of 'huddles', an innovation he brought with him from Asda. Embarrassed managers would call together a few workers to discuss issues around the job. Staff quickly dubbed these meetings 'muddles' when it became clear managers had little idea of the duties they were supposed to be in charge of and simply refused to participate in them.

Leighton was soon joined at Royal Mail by Football Association reject Adam Crozier who was somehow appointed as Chief Executive by Blair despite turning the new English national football stadium into an international joke and managing to upset one of the most conservative bodies in the sporting world, Premiership Chairmen, into virtually forcing his resignation. A basic salary of £500,000 a year with massive bonuses (over £57,000 for two months 'work') was too tempting for Crozier. His sidekick, New Zealander Elmar Toime, on similar money, lasted just 18 months before finding life too tough. Royal Mail gave him a £750,000 golden handshake.

In 2003, the CWU postal union lost a ballot on pay by a mere 1,600 votes and Leighton, Crozier and just about every manager under them thought the result gave them licence to impose 'team-working' and four hour delivery spans. The culture of bullying and harassment from managers increased leading to unofficial

industrial action in many large towns and cities which forced Royal Mail to the negotiating table. Leighton gave up referring to 'activists' in his letters to staff as it was obvious the 'activists' made up a sizeable majority of the workforce and his 'divide and conquer' tactics had failed.

Early in 2007, Royal Mail unveiled its Business Plan, which included unpopular later starting times, 'team-working' (which is a failure in the US Postal Service) which means covering for staff on holiday or off sick with unpaid overtime, 'Summer Lapsing' which means five staff covering six duties during the summer months (and which will no doubt lead to it being an all year round exercise, thereby losing another 40,000 jobs), closing the pension scheme to new employees, (a leaked document has shown there are insufficient funds in the pension plan due to Royal Mail deciding to withhold payments for a number of years) and delivering leaflets for no extra payment. Royal Mail say that these measures and more must be agreed to before any pay rise will be granted. An offer of 2.5 per cent on basic pay equates to £8 per week, but staff will lose £12.50 per week by agreeing to later starting times.

The offer is a pay cut by whatever means it is viewed. The alternative of a £600 lump sum isn't even worth consideration. Royal Mail say they will pay each full-time worker a bonus of £800 if targets are met, but the targets remain undisclosed. They are also offering 'phantom shares' for some employees, but again, the details of this ill-thought out scheme are vague. How can anyone take the idea of 'phantom shares' seriously anyway?

In June, the postal union membership delivered an overwhelming decision in favour of strike action the significance of which Royal Mail attempted to play



Photo by indymedia.org.uk

Postman Pat and Wildcat drop banner in Victoria Square, Birmingham.

down. However the first strikes have seen massive support with very few scabs turning into work. After the first strike, Royal Mail claimed 60 per cent of staff worked normally, but this was proved to be false. In a desperate attempt to undermine the strike, a manager repeatedly drove a Royal Mail minibus with blacked out windows through a picket line to give the impression of people wanting to work whenever a camera from the local media turned up. The minibus was later spotted, parked up and empty behind some advertising hoardings as the driver waited for the next call from his manager on his mobile phone.

Since the strikes began, more and more delivery office staff have chosen not to perform unpaid overtime before official start times and are refusing to use their own cars to transport them-

selves and their mail to their deliveries. Both practices are responsible for job losses. Managers in offices where this is taking place have been unable to cope with demand for vans and have been delivering mail which has been left or brought back by staff unable to complete delivery in the appointed time span.

The biggest fear now is that of being let down by the leadership of the CWU. This is always a possibility while those at the top of the CWU are enthralled by the notion of a link with the Labour Party. If ten years of Labour looking after the interests of big business and trampling on the working class have taught them nothing, perhaps the near total silence from the party they help fund on this latest battle might.

What is required is a united front of all public sector workers to combat the united front of the capitalist class and their Parliamentary puppets. In other words, what is required is a union prepared to fight for the working class. Only one union fits the bill, the Industrial Workers of the World.

US House votes to reverse Ledbetter

By x355910

The United States House of Representatives have passed HR 2831, better known as the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2007, in order to reverse the May 29 Supreme Court decision that held that workers cannot sue for the effects of wage discrimination since the time the disparities appeared. Ledbetter was told that her claim of sexist discrimination was invalid because she did not file her complaint within 180 days of the Goodyear's first decision to pay her in a discriminatory way, even though she did not know that other workers had received better pay until years later.

Now workers must wait for the US Senate to pass the measure.

Jury tips balance to boss

By x355910

In 2001, Samantha Smith, Bruce Porter, and Charles Kimball complained to the owner of the upper echelon Locke-Ober Boston restaurant that they were forced to share their tips with the managers, in direct violation of Massachusetts law. They were fired. They took the owners to court, but jurors in the Suffolk Superior Court in Boston, who were asked to decide if the waitstaff were actually fired in retaliation, ruled against them.

Locke-Ober owners contended that the waiters were fired for their poor job performance; not in retaliation for complaints of violations of Massachusetts tip laws.

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).

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

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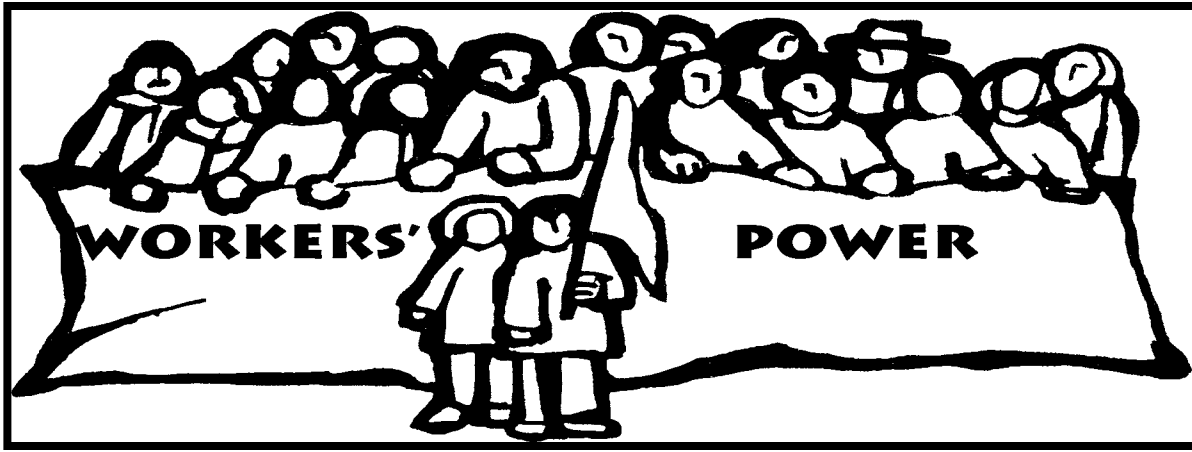
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Membership includes a subscription to the Industrial Worker.





By Colin Bossen

Recently I received a call from Seth, someone I have been advising on how to organize a union for his workplace. Seth has been diligently slogging away for months, reaching out to his co-workers and organizing them to improve their working conditions.

Over the course of the past few months he and his co-workers have had some small victories—they forced management to replace unsafe equipment after someone was injured, to staff shifts appropriately and to give them an unpaid holiday for Christmas. However, when I received a call from Seth he was depressed. His efforts to bring his co-workers together were not going well. The company had brought in a new manager to break the union by bribing the workers. The tactic seemed to be working and previously staunch supporters were telling Seth that they weren't interested in the union anymore.

We spent a few moments talking about Seth's feeling of hopelessness. I shared with him how hard and depressing I found my own organizing at times. I also told him that in organizing it is always difficult to know what people are thinking or what they will do next. The most important thing, I suggested, was to be persistent. When workers try to form a union, employers almost always try to break their spirits. If you don't let

them break your spirit you'll probably win in the end, I said. And then, I offered him a story from the Taoist tradition to illustrate my point about not knowing what will happen next.

Long ago in China there was a peasant whose horse had run away. His neighbor commiserated with him. He said, "Who can know if it's good or bad?" The very next day the horse returned bringing with him a herd of wild horses. The peasant was suddenly very rich. When his neighbor commented on his good fortune he replied, "Who can know if it's good or bad?"

The next day the peasant's son tried mounting one of the wild horses. He fell off and broke both his legs. Again the neighbor offered the peasant his sympathy and again the peasant replied, "Who can know if it's good or bad?" The very next day the army came to the village to draft soldiers into service for a faraway war. The peasant's son was exempted from military service because of his injuries.

So, I said, you see you can't always know in the midst of things what is helpful and what isn't.

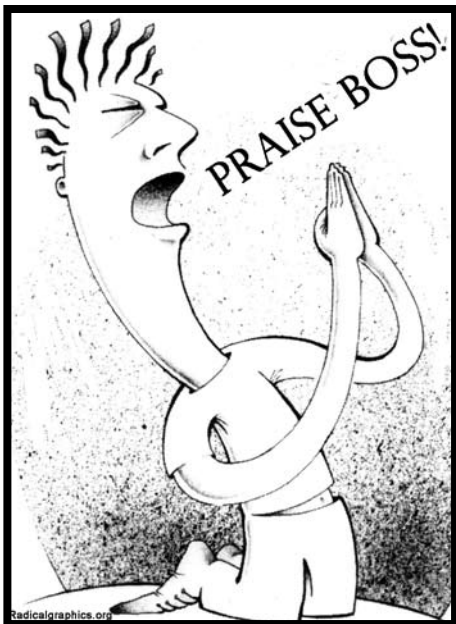
Seth told me that he found the story helpful and that it improved his spirits. A few days later he called me to tell me that he'd gotten five of his co-workers to join the union. A few of his co-workers had been talking things over without

Seth and realized that all of the bribes—the better shifts and safer working conditions—management was giving them were because of the union, not despite it. He felt that things were going well and thanked me for the story I had shared with him.

This monthly column asks different writers to reflect on their organizing with stories and theories that derive from their experiences with the IWW.

Send your submissions and correspondence to forworkerspower@gmail.com.

Submissions should be 800 words or less.



By FN Brill

Just like a bad penny or an STD, Praise Boss has returned to lower both the journalistic quality of this fair paper, but also to lower an industrial sized humo(u)r boom upon our bettors.

The capitalists and aristocrats style themselves "bettors" but actually they are our "bettors" as they survive on playing a giant crap game with stocks, land and our lives...

Speaking of bettors, an Atlanta boss has resurrected the old time method of preventing higher wages.

According to the Associated Press, an owner of a car dealership, Rolandas Milinavicius, has been charged with two counts of murder in the shooting deaths of Inga Contreras, 25, and Martynas Simokaitis, 28. He told police he "shot the two Thursday after they kept asking for more pay."

Milinavicius, a Lithuanian immigrant, has failed to understand the basic rules of American capitalism.

The basic rules of capitalism...

It's OK to have your employees offed, but you must pay the government to do it. That's why Milinavicius' business failed where as a murderer such as say, John P. Rockefeller, became obscenely wealthy.

When is work not work? When you volunteer off coarse.

Just like volunteer armies survive off the poor having to "volunteer", that struggling little chain store WalMart, has agreed to let 19,000 14-16 year olds become "volunteer" baggers in it's stores in Mexico.

"Our volunteer packers collect no salary, only the gratuity that you give them", proudly proclaim signs in WalMart's Mexican Superama stores.

According to MSNBC (July 31) "The use of unsalaried youths is legal in Mexico because the kids are said to be "volunteering" their services to WalMart and are therefore not subject to the requirements and regulations that would otherwise apply under the country's labor laws."

I've been reading some IWW history. Evidently some IWWs started a Fiji Fishing Union in the mid-1910s. I figure they would be Red Baiters. Which got me figuring that China's capitalist, err, I mean business class, are Red Bettors. And hard rock mine owners are Lead Bettors.

And speaking of Red and Lead Bettors, Chinese workers continue to fight the Bourgeois Blues. One brewery

worker Zhou Yuanwu "was sentenced in May to 2.5 years' imprisonment for defending workers at the state-owned Jinchu Brewery who were laid off without compensation or benefits when the factory closed in February 2002.

Following the closure, the machines and other equipment were sold off quickly, below market price, but the workers received nothing.

Zhou assisted the workers in petitioning the authorities at local, provincial and central level for their pension and medical insurance. On 18 August 2006, Zhou was asked to go to Jingzhou District Police Station without being served a subpoena. When he refused, he was reportedly severely beaten and detained. He was then charged with "obstructing public officers in the execution of their duties," convicted and sentenced on May 15.

As a result of his efforts, workers who had reached retirement age were able to receive their pensions, but the rest of the workforce are still waiting for the benefits to which they are legally entitled."

The International Transport Federation reports Israeli and Palestinian transport trade unions recently reached a ground breaking agreement to work together.

"Twenty Israeli and Palestinian transport union representatives met for two days to tackle common issues such as collective bargaining, delayed payment of wages, loss of union membership and the increasing outsourcing

of work to contractors. They agreed to establish a joint liaison committee to deal with practical problems faced by transport workers in the region and build trust between Israeli and Palestinian transport unions."

That Israeli and Palestinian unions can work together gives me hope that the North American building trades unions can, too.

Speaking of which, NorthWest Labor Press reports that Barry Mitchell IBEW 48 Business Manager who encouraged his Local to cross Carpenter picket lines during the recent Drywall Strike was booted by his members in their recent election.

The IWW has always argued that workers need to "Take Back our Time", now scientists are proving that night shift is bad for you. The CBC reports:

Researchers at the University of Buenos Aires studied 683 men comparing 437 day workers to 246 rotating shift workers. Rotating shift workers tend to have lower levels of the feel-good hormone serotonin, leading to disturbed sleep patterns. Shift workers' serotonin levels, measured through blood tests, were much lower than the levels of workers on regular day schedules.

Shift workers were also found to have greater hip-to-waist ratios, higher cholesterol and insulin levels, increased blood pressure and higher triglyceride levels. Low levels of serotonin are associated with conditions such as anger, depression and anxiety.

Starbucks froths at Europe union organizing

An IWW filmmaker's diary of the Starbucks Workers Union awareness tour in Europe

By Diane Krauthamer with Adam Lincoln

Starbucks is growing shaky as its "partners" in Europe are now organizing with the IWW. The company is reacting to increased union activity by intimidating workers with vicious public relations maneuvers that are new to this side of the Atlantic Ocean.

This summer, I traveled across Western Europe, presenting film and discussions to draw attention to the efforts of Starbucks workers organizing with the IWW in the United States, and to bring to light the vicious union-busting campaign waged by the world's largest coffee chain. Throughout the continent, people are expressing solidarity with the six fired baristas from New York City, while embarking on organizing in their own communities. Although the company is reacting negatively to the increased union activity, it has not stopped baristas and organizers.

London, England

Members of the London IWW greeted me on June 7 with a social event and film screening at the worker-owned and operated Bread and Roses pub in Clapham. Members of the South London Solidarity Federation (SolFed) and No Sweat joined us. Both of these groups have organized information pickets and leafleting for the fired New York City baristas, and promised to carry on.

As the event closed, a Starbucks shift supervisor came to the pub to meet with organizers. He told us that he makes little more than the salary of baristas, approximately £10 (US \$20) an hour

A manager immediately launched herself at me and attempted to grab my video camera ... When the CNT-F comrades came to my defense, the manager tried punching them, too.

(which is a low wage in expensive London) and the shift scheduling in his shop is a nightmare. Baristas are typically scheduled for longer shifts than they ask for, and rarely given the hours they request.

While Starbucks expands throughout London, Baristas United is also fighting for a union at a UK "competitor" coffee chain, Caffè Nero. Baristas United, a branch of the IU 660 formed in 2006, publishes seasonal bulletins and other literature while organizing informational pickets and providing union support for workers at the two major coffee chains.

In one case, the campaigners provided legal support to a Nero barista who was suspected of stealing money from a safe and subsequently sacked for the offense and had his outstanding pay withheld, despite a lack of evidence. Because of IWW support, the worker won his appeal, with the termination wiped from his record, full reimbursement of back wages, and reinstatement.

The Baristas United campaign has called for a national day of action on August 18 against Starbucks. The IWW, No Sweat and other organisations and supporters are holding protests in cities right around the United Kingdom. We are asking the public not to drink at Starbucks today and to show support for the workers and farmers trying to improve their lives and make a living wage.

Newcastle, England

IWW organizing in the UK is growing significantly in a variety of sectors, and pertinent networking amongst the international community is also taking



Photo by Diane Krauthamer

IWW British Isles secretary Adam Lincoln, far right, demonstrates with members of the CNT France at a Starbucks in Paris.

shape. On the weekend of June 16-17, I attended the British Isles Regional Organizing Committee (BIROC) annual conference in Newcastle upon Tyne, an old industrial mining town in northeast England. During the meeting, organizers discussed the relevance of their area's is-

ssues with that of the international community, and developed strategies to aid the expansion of the BIROC, as branches throughout the UK continue to sprout. Since 2006, new branches have

formed in Leicestershire, London, Manchester, and Tyne and Wear.

Local struggles in the education, health and social sectors are shaping the IWW's organizing in the UK. In Scotland, the wobblies are working with staff and students of Glasgow University to protest the planned closure of the Crichton Campus in Dumfries, which would result in job losses for staff and a severe disruption of student education.

Additionally, BIROC members are fighting the impending centralization of the National Blood Service. If the centralization occurred, there would only be three blood bank 'supercentres', in Bristol, Manchester and Colindale, at the cost of 600 national job losses and a life threatening reduction in service for patients.

Paris, France

On June 30, the Confédération Nationale du Travail (CNT-F) organized leafletting protests in five different Starbucks locations in Paris. To welcome us into their city, we spent the afternoon leafletting Starbucks customers and workers, while chanting "Non non non, à la répression, à Starbucks!"

At each shop we approached, store managers were waiting at the door for us to show and immediately tried to force us out, tearing up some of the flyers and sometimes physically expelling us.

Upon arriving at the third store of the day, a manager immediately launched herself at me and attempted to grab my video camera and push me against the display of coffee mugs and beans. When the CNT-F comrades came

to my defense, the manager tried punching them, too. What followed was more arguing and ultimately the fight scene did not do well with Starbucks' image of being a "socially responsible" company. Many customers and potential custom-



ers looked disgusted and left.

Baristas at these shops were very supportive, but could not openly show this while on the clock.

On July 1, I interviewed a Starbucks barista who had just come from closing the store after a busy 10-hour shift on a Sunday evening. He told me only large corporate chains such as Starbucks are open on Sundays, a traditional day off for workers in France. He said that his managers warned him of the CNT-F and that he and his co-workers should ignore their fliers and protests because the workplace conditions are fine.

In reality, he said, the conditions at his shop are sub-standard, with a wage just above the minimum and a lack of guaranteed hours. His main concern was how management pre-emptively reacted to potential unionizing at his store.

Although Starbucks only operates in the Parisian tourist areas and are not an overwhelming presence in France, regional management is still militantly anti-union, as we witnessed firsthand.

Frankfurt, Germany

The next stop on our journey was to meet with members of the German Lan-

guage Area Membership Regional Organizing Committee (GLAMROC) for three film screening and discussion events in three cities. The first stop was on July 8 in Frankfurt and it was an inspiring night at the local activist space, Café Exzess. Many interested locals attended, and while there are only a few Starbucks locations in the city, wobblies who leafleted in these stores before the event said they are hoping to build contacts with baristas in the coming months.

Köln, Germany

In the days leading up to our July 10 event, wobblies leafleted many Starbucks stores in the old western city and made significant contacts with baristas. Köln branch member Elmar was leafletting when store managers told him to leave and attempted to confiscate all the fliers.

He said baristas reported that their store managers were already aware of the IWW visit and had warned them against forming unions and attending the event. Article 9 of the German constitution guarantees a wide scope of freedom of association rights for workers, including the right to strike and the right to collective bargaining. Both of the managers' violated German law.

Any group of workers can declare a union and receive immediate legal rights and protections, even in just one store, without needing a formal National Labor Relations Board-type process as in the US.

About 40 very enthusiastic people, including two journalists and possibly some Starbucks management in the crowd, made for an exciting event. We were warmly greeted by fellow workers and supporters, and had the opportunity to participate in a discussion about fighting back against Starbucks' vicious union busting and propaganda tactics.

Berlin, Germany

Concluding my German travels, the local syndicat of Die Freie Arbeiterinnen-und Arbeiter Union (FAU-IAA) organized an evening event on July 12 in coordination with the IWW. Prior to this event, FAU organizer Lewis explained that management at two of the Starbucks stores he leafleted had confiscated the fliers and told him that they would distribute these leaflets to the workers at a later time.

This information was not surprising, but it was indicative of the extent to which internal bulletins from higher management had circulated throughout the country, from west to east.

Starbucks' headquarters in Seattle, United States, is now advising regional management in both France and Germany to embark on campaigns of worker intimidation, while concealing these campaigns with disinformation.

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Iraqi tour calls for end of anti-union laws, occupation

By Sparrow

Iraqi workers toured the United States in June to call for liberation from the anti-union laws of Saddam Hussein and from the US-led occupation.

Hashmeya Mohsen al Hussein (right), president of the Electrical Utility Workers Union (EUWU) and Faleh Abood Umara, General Secretary of the Iraq Federation of Oil Workers (IFOW) spoke in the San Francisco Bay Area, Washington, DC, Chicago, and Atlanta. US Labor Against the War organized the tour. They spoke urgently of Iraqi labor's unified demand for the end to the brutal US occupation. They sought the support of US labor in the fight against the imposition of an oil law that would privatize Iraq's oil and allow foreign corporations into the industry.

Within days of the invasion, workers spontaneously began to organize their workplaces and their industries to decide for themselves how they were to

operate. Despite the United States' refusal to recognize the legitimacy of their unions and the decision by the Coalition Provisional Authority head, Paul Bremer, to continue enforcing Saddam Hussein's anti-union laws, they fought for and won victory after victory.

The unions fought successfully against starvation wages and extended work-days that the US occupiers tried to impose. In January 2004, workers in the Najibeeya, Haartha and Al Zubeir electrical generating stations mounted a wildcat strike, stormed the administration buildings, declared the lower September wage schedule void, and vowed to shut off power if salaries were not raised. The ministry agreed to return to the old scale. The Basra Oil Workers struck for two days in August 2006 and won their demands for higher pay. Basra Oil Employees forced KBR, a Halliburton subsidiary, out of refinery workplac-

es, despite Cheney's award of a "no-bid" contract. In June 2006, the General Federation of Iraqi Workers organized large demonstrations to protest government decisions to hire private contractors to do reconstruction work, supplanting the industry's own employees.

The victories have come at a price. The US and its puppet Iraqi government closed union bank accounts and looted the funds, reminiscent of Saddam Hussein's own tactics.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has made the passage of the privatizing oil law a "benchmark" for its funds. It is also a condition for the withdrawal of US troops.

In answer to a question concerning reparations, Faleh asked, "Do you seriously think the United States would give reparations to Iraq?"

"Iraq is a country rich in agriculture and national resources. We can build our own land ourselves. Just get out."



Photo by uslaboragainstar.org

Hashmeya Mohsen al Hussein.

Part 1

Iraqi labor has fought century-long battle

By Sparrow

The struggle of Iraqi labor today cannot be fully understood without knowing its history of resistance over the last century. Aside from Egypt, Iraq has the longest known labor history in the Middle East.

Railway workers struggle first:

Controlling Iraq's oil fields have preoccupied western imperialism since 1912, when the Turkish Petroleum Company first formed in the Ottoman Empire's provinces of Baghdad and Mosul. Britain seized Basra in 1914 and Baghdad three years later during World War I. The British built the north-south railroad to better exploit its new colony. Railway workers agitated for labor rights and began Iraq's labor movement.

Revolution of 1920: Britain committed atrocities to pacify Iraq, from using poison gas "against recalcitrant Arabs as (an) experiment" to the Royal Air Force machine gunning men, women and children as they fled their villages. The Revolution of 1920 overran British military posts and controlled vast areas of countryside for three months, killing 450 British troops and wounding 1,500. In 1921 Britain installed King Faysal with British advisors to pull his strings. Uprisings continued to break out in the Twenties and Thirties.

The General Strike of 1931:

In 1931, 3,000 petroleum workers and thousands of other workers and artisans participated in the General Strike of 1931 against a 300 per cent increase in municipal taxes and also demanded unemployment compensation. Two years later, the Artisans Association sustained a boycott of the British-run Baghdad Electric Light and Power. Despite attempts to crush them, 35,000 chauffeurs and repair garage workers won demands by striking in 1934 against police persecution and excessive taxes. The Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) in Kirkuk and the National Cigarette Factory in Baghdad led protest strikes in 1936-7 against the military government of Mussolini admirer, General Bakr Sidqi.

Cabinet resigns over oil strike:

In 1946, IPC oil workers in Kirkuk again struck for better wages and benefits. The police fired on a mass meeting killing ten strikers. In August that same year, British troops moved into Basra when oil workers struck again, this time at the Iranian port of Abadan. When opposition newspapers criticized this

move, they were shut down. Printers and railway workers struck in response and forced the government cabinet to resign.

The 1948 Wathba ("the leap"):

On January 15, 1948, the Iraqi government signed a treaty allowing Britain to control its military policy until 1973. The next day, police killed four students demonstrating against the treaty. A country-wide uprising (the *Wathba*) ensued. Protests were, at first, directed against the treaty, bread shortages, and rising prices, but, police brutality provoked a country-wide uprising called *al-Wathba*. Near Haditha in May 1948, the IPC K3 pumping station was shut down by 3,000 workers striking for higher wages. About 20 days later, IPC and the government cut off strikers' food and water. In what Iraqis call *al-Masira al-Kabra*, strikers set off to march the 250 kilometers to Baghdad carrying signs reading, "We the oil workers have come to claim our violated rights." They were arrested in Fallujah, 70 kilometers from their goal.

1952 the al-Intifada ("the tremor"):

In 1952, port workers, demanding more housing and better wages and working conditions, struck and occupied the Basra generator, cutting off water and electricity to the city. Police responded by attacking and killing strikers. Later that year, a student strike over examination rules sparked urban riots that burned a police station and the American Information Office to the ground. Eighteen demonstrators died in this *al-Intifada*. Martial law was declared, a curfew imposed, mass arrests made, and newspapers were shut down. Mass peasant uprisings and growing workers' movements of the Forties and Fifties caused soldiers and their officers to recognize their class interests. They joined the mass movements they were supposed to suppress. The Communist party organized a national committee for a union of soldiers and officers.

July 14 Revolution: By June 1958, the government was crumbling. A three hour battle in Diwaniyah killed 43 police. On July 14, General Qasim, supported by the Communist party in Iraq, seized power in an officers' coup. The ban on union organizing was rescinded. However, while both Communists and Ba'athists had united for the revolution, they soon separated over the ethnocentric Ba'athist concept of *Wahda* ("Arab Unity"), which excluded Kurds and other non-Arabs, who were critical members

of the Communist coalition. The US and Britain considered invasion to restore their control, but found no allies inside Iraq.

The Growth of the Unions:

By 1958, the Iraqi General Federation of Trade Unions (IGFTU) mobilized a million people, five per cent of Iraq's population, for May Day. Union members numbered 250,000. In the countryside, 200,000 peasants had joined 3,000 village associations; 20,000 women joined the Iraqi Women's League; and the Democratic Youth Federation had 84,000 members. Iraq's new leader, General Qasim saw this strength, borne in large part by the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP), and decided to purge communists and union organizers from government and the army in 1959. He also suppressed the party's mass organizations of students, workers and women and shut down their presses. Nevertheless, the party supported him throughout his rule.

CIA support Ba'athist coup:

In alliance with a sect of the nationalized armed forces and with the help of the CIA, the Ba'ath Party overthrew General Qasim in February 1963. The new regime jailed and executed all Communist elements, including union organizers. Thousands died. Ba'athists held power for ten months until a coalition of pan-Arab nationalists and Nasserite officers ended their regime. The coalition survived until 1968. Workers once again strove to organize and promote their working class interests under a union banner. They used one strike after another to press their demands. In retrospect, they are accused by some observers of enfeebling the regime and helping pave the way for the Ba'athist coup.

1968 Ba'athists gain absolute power:

In 1968, with Saddam Hussein as a significant plotter, the Ba'ath party staged another successful coup and began to nationalize the economy while simultaneously stripping workers of their hard-won gains. In October 1968, workers in Baghdad's largest industry, crude oil factories, struck. The Ba'athist government, refused to negotiate and raided the factory, killing some union leaders and arresting others. Law 151, passed in 1970, stripped workers of the right to strike, demonstrate, organize or even associate. The 35-year long night of darkness had begun. The IGFTU was allowed to exist and be semi-autonomous from the state.

Nationalization of Oil: In 1973, the same year as the 1973 Arab-Israeli War and the global oil crisis, the Ba'ath Party nationalized the Iraqi oil industry, providing the Ba'ath Party with a ready source of money to prop up the economy and secure its hold on power. Nationalization increased efficiency in the industry. The oil crisis led to a jump in oil prices and sector growth, which translated into a larger workforce. Union membership in the sector reached 47,870.

To further consolidate power, Saddam Hussein launched a purge in 1977 of political opponents, driving opponents underground or into exile. Despite Ba'athist crimes and growing signs of even greater crimes to come, the Iraqi Communist Party supported the Ba'athist regime until a year later, when most ICP leaders fled Iraq. Many thousands of brave and dedicated union men and women paid the price of the communist party's loyalty and were killed, imprisoned or "disappeared."

Saddam finally consolidated political control of the country in 1979. Ba'ath supporters and unions became a front for the government. By the 1980's, Ali Hassan al-Majid (known as "Chemical Ali" for gassing the Kurds in 1987 and 1988) was the head of the union.

Underground unions: An underground workers' movement began to develop communication channels between expatriate unionists and small, underground local union groupings. The Workers Democratic Trade Union Movement (WDTUM) was formed in defense of union solidarity and as a means for workers to counter the political paralysis Saddam Hussein had tried to impose on dissenters.

An estimated 350,000 Iraqis, civilian and military, died in the 1980-1988 war with Iran. Men, both young and old, were conscripted, leaving women to become a significant force in industry.

Saddam feared a workers movement renewed by class conscious and courageous women workers. His anti-union decrees redefined public employees as "civil servants" rather than "workers", stripping their right to a union and cutting the number of unions from 12 to six. Leadership in the remaining unions was lucrative, thanks to compulsory union assessments. With wages set by the state and no collective bargaining, the formal unions became tools for Ba'athist Party policies.

Next: Part 2—Iraqi Labor, Post-Saddam.

Palestine unions support Israel boycott



Photo by Michael Eisenscher

“Support this worldwide divestment and boycott campaign against Israel and Apartheid,” said Manawel Issa Abdellal in San Francisco.

By Sparrow

“We actually don’t have any other way to exercise international pressure except calling our friends and supporters in the trade unions around the globe to call for this Boycott and Divestment.” said Manawel Issa Abdellal (above) member of the Executive Committee of the 250,000 member Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) in a recent speech to union activists and labor movement supporters in San Francisco.

“Factories actually exist inside the settlements and their products are going to the markets in Europe and in the United States. The whole world is saying these settlements are actually illegal settlements. So why would it be wrong to boycott them?” he said. “My message to you as labor activists is to follow the lead of unions in Canada and Britain.”

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) in Ontario passed Resolution 50 in May of 2006. Adopted unanimously by 900 delegates, the resolution expressed support for the global campaign against Israeli apartheid.

CUPE Ontario is the largest public sector union in Ontario representing over 200,000 workers.

The same month, the British National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) declared its active support of boycotts against Israeli academics and academic institutions that do not publicly take an explicit stand against Israeli apartheid and Israel’s discriminatory educational system. NATFHE is the largest union of university teachers in Britain (70,000 members).

Relations with Histradut tense

Israel’s labor federation, Histradut, has responded to the call for the boycott with a resolution condemning it as an act of intimidation and for creating “unnecessary tension” and damage to the “relations and co-existence” between the Israeli and Arab unions, including Palestinian unions. The resolution refutes the use of boycotts as a tactic in general as it “may directly or indirectly harm employees.

“Any sort of boycott, either as a means or as a goal is an utterly invalid act and it is an attempt to undermine the efforts to achieve a real peace between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples,” according to Histradut.

In a wide-ranging talk, Issa Abdel-

l described how Histradut has used its privileged position to take advantage of Palestinian workers.

Solidarity between the two labor federations is non-existent, he said. “Until now I have not seen any sort of solidarity. Even when Arab workers are hurt, which should be the ABC of solidarity with workers, I have never seen the Histradut say that they condemn such an act or do something about it.”

“Histradut has failed to represent any Palestinian workers inside Israel,” he said. “The PGFTU is forbidden from defending Arab workers in such areas. It is very painful. We can see, witness, and hear of Israeli brutal exploitation of Arab workers, but we cannot do anything... It can only remind us of the Cantons of the Apartheid State of South Africa.”

In one example, Palestinian workers who have worked in the same East Jerusalem hospital continuously for over 30 years are not allowed to leave Jerusalem to visit their families. If they were to leave Jerusalem, they would lose their jobs because they would not be allowed to return. Just over a year ago, a worker from Gaza working at the Makassed Hospital left to visit his family in Gaza. Although he had a permit to work at the Hospital, he wasn’t allowed back in and lost his job. He was the sole breadwinner for his entire family.

He said that Histradut and the PGFTU have a longstanding dispute over trade union fees. Since 1970, Histradut has automatically collected one per cent of the salaries of Palestinian workers since 1970 as “trade union fees”, for a total of New Israel Shekel 400 million (US \$94 million) between 1970 and 1994. In post-Oslo accords 1995, Histradut signed an agreement to share half of the fees with the PGFTU. Since 1996, Histradut has kept all funds, breaking the agreement, he said.

He reported that the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, now known as the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) is pressuring the PGFTU to change the dues-sharing agreement in favor of Histradut.

Part of the problem, said Issa Abdellal, is that Israel does not fear sanctions from the US. The US Congress has 30 representatives and 13 senators with dual Israeli-US citizenship and he doesn’t believe they would vote sanctions against Israel. He called on working class Americans to take action.



Iran: Free Osanloo, Salehi

The International Transport Workers’ Federation held a Global Action Day on August 9 to demand freedom for jailed Iranian union leaders, Mansour Osanloo and Mahmoud Salehi.

Protesters raised the pressure on Iran to free Osanloo and Salehi in at least 21 countries in Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and Russia.

Iranian authorities have repeatedly closed Tehran bus drivers union meetings, harassed and beaten its leaders and supporters over the last two years. August 9 marks the one year anniversary Iran released Mansour Osanloo from prison after an earlier period of imprisonment for union activities with Tehran’s bus drivers union. Now he is back in jail, arrested on July 10. Police at first denied holding him for two days, before admitting he was in Evin Prison. Iran’s intelligence services are directing his imprisonment, charging him with “conspiring against national security.”

Mahmoud Salehi, co-founder of the Saqez Bakery Workers’ Association and the Coordinating Committee to Form Workers’ Organisations, is in Sanandaj jail for exercising his rights to conduct legal trade union activities.

“I have gone through extremely harsh and unbearable situations in the past three decades of my life, struggling for the realization of workers’ and

people’s rights. During all these times, I have been able to keep my morale high and continue the struggle because I have always seen myself as a part of the world’s working class, a class that has always been engaged in a struggle for the achievement of its rights and the



Norwegians protest jailing of Iranian unionists.

emancipation of human beings from exploitation, rightlessness, war, racism, the destruction of the environment and other disasters of capitalism,” said Salehi in a letter to campaigners for his and Osanloo’s freedom. He did a 24-hour hunger strike on August 9-10 in solidarity, despite having only one kidney and being in poor health.

Palestinian labor under fire from all sides

By John Kalwaic

The main Palestinian Union, the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU), and others find themselves attacked both by Israeli forces as well as Hamas and Al-Fatah.

The situation of Palestinian workers is grave with 43 per cent unemployed, and, for those employed, a near-impossible situation as many of the walls, fences and check points make Palestinian worker’s commute to Israel or other parts of the occupied territories difficult. Palestinians cannot use many of the roads in which only “Israeli citizens” are allowed to travel. Israeli armed forces have also targeted the PGFTU to search for “terrorists”. The most recent attack came on July 4 of this year when the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) raided the PGFTU offices in Ramallah.

Many Palestinians work for the government of the Palestinian Authority. Since Hamas was elected to power, that faction has persecuted the PGFTU in the public sector and the Fatah-aligned unions out of existence. They also tried to eliminate all the employees in the Palestinian Authority that were hired by the previous Fatah government. Members of the PGFTU and others have tried to

resist Hamas’ attempts to sack workers who worked for Fatah and for non-payment of their salaries. Hamas launched several assignation attempts on PGFTU leaders and tried to suppress the revolts and strikes with armed repression and kidnappings.

Then, after Hamas and Fatah agreed on a coalition government, Fatah tried to sack all the workers that were hired by Hamas and not pay them their salaries. The workers are stuck in the middle.

Islamist groups aligned with al-Qaeda, have threatened to behead female TV workers who do not wear the hejab or headscarf. These groups have also targeted women in general and tried to bomb UN schools and Internet cafés, which they view as “immoral.”

However, Palestinian unions are fighting back and they are trying to form a new democratic trade union outside the control of political parties and religious groups. There are currently four trade union federations in Palestine—three controlled by Al-Fatah and one controlled by Hamas.

This new attempt to create a non-sectarian trade union federation would be a step forward for workers and a step closer toward peace.

Opinion

Americans resisting US war on immigrants

By Tom Keough

Recently I read a union paper which reported on 21 people seized and detained by agents from ICE, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

I wanted to learn more about the situation so I went to Google and entered the words “immigration raids”. Try it. I was shocked.

US newspapers have story after story of ICE raids pulling people out of their jobs or taking them from their beds in the middle of the night. It is part of a major Homeland Security crackdown on migrants, egged on by the US president. Thousands are being swept up all over the United States and especially in California.

Reading these news reports was devastating to me. There are so many pieces but no one is trying to build the puzzle. Why are surprised journalists still interviewing surprised politicians and surprised neighbors? They should be reporting this story as a national tragedy.

This tragedy has hit home for me, too. Recently my son’s high school Spanish teacher spoke to his class about being captured by the ICE agents while shopping in a store owned by a Spanish-speaking family in a Spanish-speaking neighborhood in Brooklyn.

She was held with her husband and father, all who were born in the US. They were held with many other people rounded up in that store and other parts of the neighborhood on a Saturday afternoon. They were told that they were all going to be deported.

It took many long hours of pleading with the ICE agents before these three people were released late at night. The other people rounded up were not so lucky. We don’t know what happened to them.

The teacher said that she will never again go shopping in that neighborhood or in any stores owned by Spanish speakers. She advised the students to do the same for their protection. The teacher asked each student to keep a copy of their birth certificate in their wallets. Reading the news, I can understand her fear.

ICE playing dirty

Our government is acting in a dramatically new way with no respect for the laws and rights that represent the foundation of the American form of government. Everything is kept secret. In this raid like most raids, ICE refused to give information about people or where

they are sent. In San Rafael, local officials wanting information were rebuffed. It was only after Representative Lynn Woolsey demanded information that ICE began to respond.

In many raids, ICE will not say how many people were taken. In the US, when a person is arrested there must be a public record of the arrest. Usually the local police department is required to list the name of an arrested person within 24 to 72 hours depending on the local regulations.

But ICE is using a technicality to hide this information. Many of these people are not actually being arrested, just detained. ICE detentions make getting arrested look good. A person who is arrested in the US has legal rights according to the US constitution. These rights include a defense lawyer, even if you have no money, and the right to call someone such as your spouse or parent. The federal government claims that people detained don’t have the rights of an arrested person. Rights get in the way of meeting the deportation quotas.

ICE justifies raids with stereotypes

Reports from across the US have similar descriptions of people being taken—often in a neighborhood round-up. When local police and politicians have demanded an explanation, ICE has replied that all of the detainees have dangerous criminal records. But this isn’t true.

For instance, *El Diario* in New York reported 1,772 people were taken from New Jersey in the last half of May. ICE claims they were serious criminals. Of the people taken, however, only 162 have ever had any trouble with the law in the US.

In Richmond, California 119 people were taken in January. When Mayor Gail McLaughlin demanded to know why these people were taken, ICE said these people were all “criminal gang bangers.” Many of these criminals, the mayor learned, were women, babies and children.

ICE is trying to reinforce racial stereotypes to get the public to accept the raids and their excesses. But the cracks are showing.

People are resisting

In Santa Fe, 30 people were taken away by ICE the first week of March. But instead of praise for protecting the US from the threat of illegal immigrants, Mayor David Cross called the ICE raid

“an attack on our town...I don’t even know if it’s possible to find out who got deported.”

On March 15, the Chicago Mayor and City Council passed a resolution calling for an end to the escalation of raids after 17 people were taken in that city. The 17 are “held with excessive bonds including mothers with infant children,” according to the resolution, which passed unanimously, 45 votes to zero.

After many protests from state and local officials and legal aid groups, including the ACLU and from several unions, some people have been released from the detention camps by ICE “for humanitarian reasons.” Releases are only granted if they have small children abandoned at school or home when the parents were seized. Yet even release is bittersweet. People waiting for their deportation hearing are prohibited from working by federal law, making supporting themselves or paying a lawyer, impossible. That’s guilty until proven innocent.

And that is the idea. Many employers

are reluctant to hire Hispanic or Asian people because they fear raids and audits. No one wants to be like the Crider poultry plant in Stillmore, Georgia, which lost over two-thirds of its employees after an ICE raid. Stillmore couldn’t find replacements so it has brought in prison labor.

In turn, civil libertarians are protesting prison labor, stopping some of the plans by state governments from allowing it.

In Painesville, Ohio people fled an ICE raid. ICE was only able to capture 24 people while over 400 ran to the basement of St. Mary’s Catholic Church. They boarded up the doors and these people are being given sanctuary. Other people fled into the woods. Large anti-ICE vigils are being held in front of the church and people from the area are building a great show of solidarity. Across the country, unions, churches and community groups are responding locally to the crisis caused by ICE raids. Children need to be cared for. People need to be found.

Solidarity is in the air.

Ottawa non-picket wins back wages

By Matt

The IWW helped me get paid. And it didn’t even have to carry out its threat to picket the Pita Pit on Dalhousie Street in Ottawa, Canada.

In the Fall 2006, I worked a couple of shifts at the Pita Pit and was never paid. I had taken the job as a way to pay my expenses. My case worker had cut me off welfare because I was a university student and, while diagnosed “schizo-affective”, it takes six months to be approved for the Ontario Disability Support Program.

I walked off the job at Pita Pit. I had gone to work, but was told to go home as I wasn’t scheduled. I quit. Still, I expected to get paid, but it didn’t come. The owner, Kent, apparently didn’t fill out the employee forms, so there were no records I ever worked there. Yet he promised to pay me anyway and broke his promise repeatedly.

I recruited the help of Sean McKenny, president of the local labor council,

who talked to my boss for me. But the boss only offered to pay for six hours, not the 14 I had worked.

So I got in touch with the Industrial Workers of the World Ottawa-Outaouais branch. After a quick conversation, they agreed to represent me and a week later Andrew Nellis and Jason Pinkney went down to talk with Kent. It was simple, either Kent pays up or the IWW will picket his stores.

At first, he refused to pay up, but when the IWW showed up the next day with placards and ready to picket his lunch hour, he finally, eight months later, agreed to pay me the hundred bucks he owed.

Since this victory, Kent has paid another former Pita Pit worker her wages and vacation pay, sent her a T4 employee form needed to file taxes and to apply for employment insurance. The “non-picket” won two victories. Direct action gets the goods!

Detroit organizer training heartens Wobblies

By Jim Abbott

Take the Detroit branch, add IWW organizers from Iowa and Minnesota, sprinkle in a dab of Detroit’s Wayne State University (housing the IWW archives) and toss into the mix the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) second annual conference and you get one hell of an IWW organizer training session on July 28-29.

Organizing Department member Jeff Pilacinski from the Twin Cities and Drew Robertson teamed up for the presentation, delivering a top drawer event for up to 30 local IWWs and supporters during the weekend.

The session was bursting at the seams with valuable point of production information, working class solidarity and camaraderie. Wobblies came from Grand Rapids, Michigan, Washington, DC, Providence, Rhode Island, Council Bluffs, Iowa, Boston Massachusetts, and Cleveland, Ohio for the event.

The coincidence of the SDS conference, perhaps due to the divine intervention of Big Bill and a guy named Joe, brought more Wobs and left-minded folk

into the session than expected. A number of SDS members spent the better part of the weekend with us, finding our session more useful.

Detroit’s Wobbly Kitchen, “volunteer cooking for the working class”, provided the breakfast and lunch sustenance for both days; note, no animals were harmed in the making of either the early or midday meals.

From a personal perspective, I was overjoyed with the turnout. The apathy, the lethargy, that exists in this Detroit, this “union town”, is frankly, for any believer in social justice, appalling. The enthusiasm and commitment to the cause generated during the weekend gives one hope.

Knowing there are people more than willing and able to pick up the torch, the one whose flame is far, far too hot for the “business” unionists... Well, sir, it gives a body reason, after witnessing and suffering through yet another labor defeat, to drag oneself up off the dark and bloody ground and climb back in the ring to take another swing.

Hazelton struck down by court

Continued from 1

Agents at the military base, Camp Dodge near Des Moines, Iowa.

On March 6, 2007, 361 undocumented immigrant workers, were arrested in New Bedford, Ma. at Michael Bianco, Inc. leather manufacturer, by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and deported immediately, leaving children of working mothers in custody of Massachusetts’ social services agencies.

In anticipation of the Hazelton Federal court decision, right-wing pundits such as Lou Dobbs spoke on national radio and television, in support of vigilantes and anti-immigrant organizations that push the Hazelton type ordinances in other towns, protest social services for immigrant families, and organize street tactics to keep migrant workers from being hired. The day following the May Day 2006 immigrant rights solidarity marches, Dobbs broadcast his national radio program from Hazelton, taking calls in a mock town hall forum in support of Barletta’s ordinance.

Based on an email from FW Ken-

neth Miller of Pittsburgh GMB, the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO was divided over supporting the Hazelton immigrants, but Building Trades unions have actively supported anti-immigrant initiatives there.

Lawyers for Hazelton presented experts to justify statements by the town administration that the immigrant influx since 2000 was the cause of increased crime and violence. Counsel for the undocumented showed how immigrant rights have been protected by the Constitution, and explained how legislation passed by the US Congress delineates jurisdiction and the extent to which municipalities can implement such restrictions.

The ACLU and counsel for the immigrants argued that the ordinance is unconstitutional because it bypasses federal immigration policy mandated by the US Congress, because it would interfere with the procedures in law that protects workers when they are threatened with being fired or evicted, and violates federal civil rights laws.

The ICFTU is dead: Bureaucrats and lobbyists unite!

By Dave Bleakney

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) is dead, sort of. But old unions don't die, they merge.

The new ITUC represents 168 million workers in 153 countries and territories. But those seeking an improved and powerful, innovative force for global resistance may be disappointed.

Georg Adam of the University of Vienna said the merger between the "left-wing" ICFTU and the Christian World Confederation of Labor was "inevitable for the international trade union movement in order to remain a key player at the global level." But this justification for the merger begs two questions. Was the ICFTU ever "left wing"? Was the international trade union movement ever a key global "player"?

It remains to be seen whether the ITUC, like the ICFTU before it, will be a vehicle for real change or an agent of co-optation and suppression of workers resistance to capitalism. The early signs aren't good.

Lobbying the IMF and World Bank

The ICFTU has brought into the new ITUC practices that work against the interests of working people. One such practice is relying on close relationships with global capitalist institutions and western geo-political interests. Rather than looking to build workplace and community organizing for the emancipation of labour, the ITUC is carrying on with its predecessor's efforts to reform capitalism.

The ITUC does play an important role in monitoring and producing an annual survey of violations of trade union rights around the world. But is an annual survey of victimization the best that an organization claiming to represent the global working class can do?

The ITUC should articulate and fight for something far better than how governments and employers can improve respect for workers' rights. Yet, the ITUC apparently is picking up where the ICFTU left off—an organization that legitimizes global capital through endless lobbying.

The question is not whether labour organizations should lobby or communicate with their oppressors. In fact, labor organizations often are legally required to do so. The question is how to fight corporate and political power in the long run. It's a question the ITUC has ignored.

At the ITUC's founding congress in November 2006, it declared its goal to be "challenging globalization" with sustainable, social, environmental practices, decent work for all, and respect for worker's rights. It set up its lobbying committee and called for International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as the IMF and World Bank to "include trade unions as development partners." In March 2007, the ITUC lobbied the World Bank and IMF to "do far more to support labour rights."

On the surface, this appeal to include workers rights sounds rational. However, the IMF is in a legitimacy tailspin. Its drastic "structural adjustment" policies that gutted social programs in poor countries who needed loans have no credibility and are widely resisted. When people in the global South are calling for the end of the IMF, ITUC General Secretary is praising the IMF and World Bank for progress made.

"There has been some progress on important issues, but we are still a long way from seeing the sort of coherent policies which addresses poverty, hardship and inequality which are so clearly missing from the work of these two powerful institutions," said Ryder. In other words, these global tools of capitalist and Western domination can be reformed.

Petitioning power from weakness

Core Labour Standards (CLS) is another concept promoted by the ITUC. These standards to respect workers' rights are side agreements, tacked on to bilateral and multilateral trade agreements and international development projects. Regardless of whether it works, CLS looks so good that the beleaguered World Bank's now ex-president Paul Wolfowitz announced all infrastructure programs in the future would fully respect core labour standards.

The rationale is clear. Core labor standards are generally unenforceable. The proof of their ineffectiveness lies in the labor side accords of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). NAFTA has led to maquiladoras and union busting. Efforts to enforce labor standards legally are stymied. Only resistance on the shop floor is making a difference. In effect, core labor standards provide cover to sell otherwise disastrous, anti-democratic trade deals that

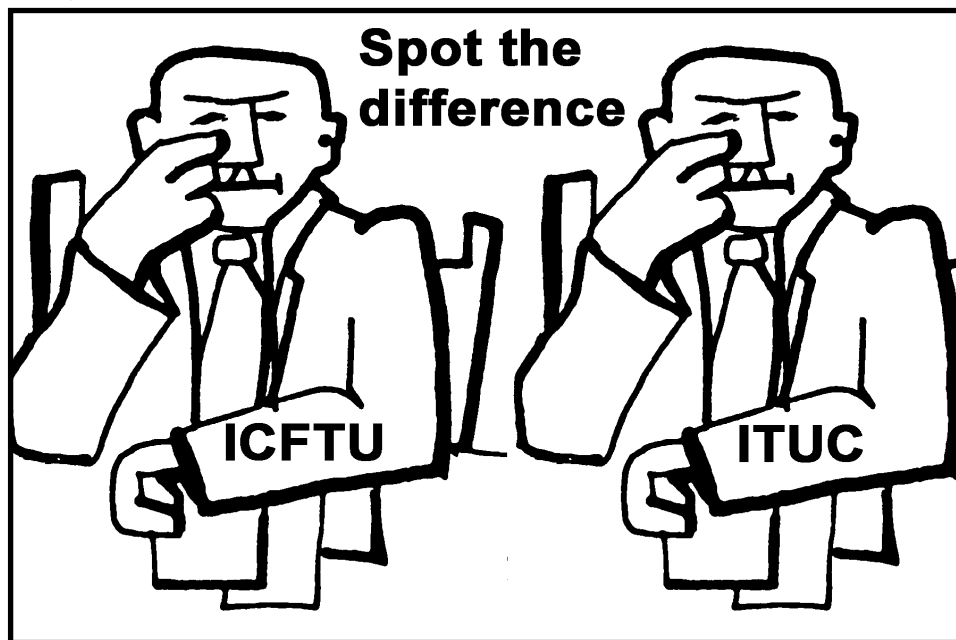
Can we afford to prop up capital? The struggle for justice will never be achieved by powerless bureaucrats with an absence of ideas, belief in the possible, and the best of the human spirit.

own execution, a disempowering process to say the least, but a common one at labor conventions where workers pass resolutions urging politicians and bosses to change their minds about "what they are doing to us."

This petitioning power from a position of weakness is not all the ITUC and its predecessor the ICFTU has done. It is one thing to beg your oppressors for change. It is quite another to undermine worker struggles for justice.

Dark history

The ICFTU has a dark history. From



benefit corporations, above all else.

The ITUC is happy to oblige, urging the Bank to keep its promises to "work closely with trade unions" on its governance and anti-corruption strategy and show "a commitment to achieving equitable and sustainable development."

"Real and consistent improvements on labour rights must be a cornerstone of tackling poverty and growing inequality worldwide," said Ryder, adding that this would make a "positive contribution to a fair globalization."

Ultimately, under the core labor standards model the struggle will be resolved through market forces. This helps explain the ITUC's latest campaign that launched a "strong attack on the activities of private equity firms and hedge funds."

The lobbying doesn't end with the IMF or the World Bank or monitoring financial markets to make them kinder. The World Economic Forum (WEF) is an annual soirée of elites (politicians, financiers, celebrities such as self-important jesters like Bono, etc.) that helps add a carnival atmosphere to the clink of champagne glasses in the Alps.

The ITUC also acts as a lobbyist through "The Trade Union Advisory Committee" (TUAC) of the Organization of Economic and Co-Operative Development (OECD), an assortment of 30 rich countries. TUAC is a "structured partnership with the global union federations" that grants them "speaking rights" but no vote.

By participating in these forums, the elite get to say that they are listening to labor, but it doesn't compel them to act. Even if their conscience is pricked, their class interests will ensure they do little. This reality, coupled with the absence of the ITUC being able to exercise any sort of collective power, makes lobbying a perpetual act of institutional begging. Labor has the voice to complain about its

time to time, it was an instrument of geopolitical objectives by governments engaged in mass human rights abuses from Haiti, Brazil, Guyana and elsewhere.

In recent years, the ICFTU, International Labour Organization (ILO), the regional ICFTU affiliate Organization of the Americas (ORIT), and the AFL-CIO, heard allegations that they played a key role in the destabilization of the Aristide government in Haiti. When the bosses called a strike, workers who refused to respond to a boss-led strike were targeted. Thousands of public sector workers were fired without compensation. The ICFTU remained silent, according to *Labor Notes*. Soren Ambrose of the Africa Solidarity Project says this is "living up to a long time pattern of ICFTU/AFL-CIO affairs."

The ICFTU, if not purely a puppet of the AFL-CIO, was a team player. In 1961 the ICFTU played ball with the US State Department in the overthrow of elected Social Democrat Cheddi Jagan of Guyana in 1961. In other cases, solidarity funds came directly from CIA front organizations.

If the ICFTU was 'imperialist light', the AFL-CIO was the big gun. Even though they were allies in the Cold War, relations between the "left-wing" ICFTU and the AFL-CIO were tense. The AFL saw ICFTU affiliates as critical of American expansionism in places like Vietnam, too social democratic and too friendly with allegedly communist WFTU unions.

In response, the AFL-CIO ran parallel efforts to ICFTU organizing in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The AFL-CIO's American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) was, as Reuther put it, "wide open wide to the doors of the US government." AIFLD was a CIA instrument that sought to divide and destroy workers movements and promote US-friendly regimes.

The AFL-CIO also retained membership in the Americas affiliate of the ICFTU, to keep a close eye on and assert control over its own backyard.

Time for a reckoning

The ITUC as an inheritor of this legacy has some reckoning to do. The ITUC Constitution pledges to "champion the cause of human freedom", yet it is unclear how the ITUC structure reflects these goals. For starters there are 15 Asian-Pacific delegates and 24 from Europe. The ITUC, like the ICFTU before it, remains Eurocentric.

The rhetoric sounds good. "The Confederation calls on the workers of the world to unite in its ranks, to make of it the instrument needed to call forth a better future and for all humanity." Yet, it remains to be answered how lobbying capitalist institutions, with a direct interest in stifling worker rights, can be used to achieve this purpose.

Somehow the ITUC believes, as the ICFTU before it, that "core labour standards" and accommodation with capitalism will balance labour injustices. In the world of the international trade union bureaucracy, officials are looking for justice in boardrooms and economic summits, not in the streets and communities and among those who live with the fallout of an unsustainable and unjust system.

The struggle for justice will never be achieved by powerless bureaucrats with an absence of ideas, belief in the possible, and the best of the human spirit. Can we afford to prop up capital?

The ITUC apparently does not understand that markets are not based on justice. They are driven by power (overt and covert) and manipulation. Building a just world now requires more than freedom of association and collective bargaining rights, important achievements as they may be.

We as the working class cannot afford to let our struggles be contracted out to 'father figures' living in privilege in faraway places. We cannot afford trite answers and nodding heads while treading water.

When we know our history and ask the hard and relevant questions then perhaps the ITUC will truly confront capital or get out of the way.

Who's Who

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)

The ICFTU formed on December 7, 1947 claiming to be the voice for "free" workers during the Cold War. It broke ties with the allegedly "communist" World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). When the Soviet Union disbanded, the ICFTU was a major beneficiary, gaining 13 million mostly Eastern European members.

The ICFTU merged on October 31, 2006 with the World Confederation of Labour. The ICFTU, at dissolution, claimed to speak for 157 members in 148 countries.

World Confederation of Labour (WCL)

This federation was founded in 1920. It had a cooperative joint union-management approach and claimed 26 million members in 116 countries.

BOOKS FOR REBELLIOUS WORKERS

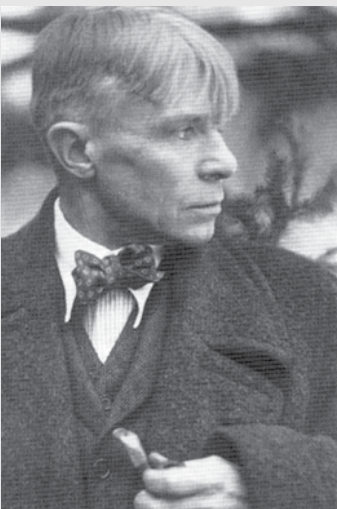


Chumbawamba: A Singsong and A Scrap

This new, mainly acoustic Chumbawamba album is, for the first time, a collection of songs, pure and simple. Songs with a radical voice, songs with those same old same old Chumbawamba fourpart harmonies and catchy choruses, but songs nevertheless without drumloops or samples, without backwards cymbals or synth sequencers. It won't fit neatly into any categories, since it stands with its eight legs in different camps. Traditional English music, "unplugged"

pop, choral secular music, jangly acoustic singalongs... oh! Just sling a few barely-related words together to create categories that sound vaguely familiar.

The Joe Hill-inspired "By and By" is a beautiful tribute, with lyrics that start "Don't waste the days when I'm dead and I'm gone/Wind up the clocks, ring around, carry on" and just keep getting better. Whether they're attacking capitalism, fundamentalism, or war, Chumbawamba will entertain and inspire you. **13 tracks, \$14.98**



The Other Carl Sandburg by Philip Yannella

Best known for his Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Abraham Lincoln, his Rootabaga stories for children, and his long career as "poet of the people," Carl Sandburg got his start writing for socialist and progressive newspapers in Chicago and Milwaukee, including for the leading socialist magazine (and one that supported the IWW) of the day, the International Socialist Review. This biography focuses on Sandburg's early socialism and progressive journalism, and the ways in which his politics influenced his later work.

Yanella's biography documents the federal government's surveillance of Carl Sandburg, as well as examining his radical journalism and the commitment to social equality and justice that informed his entire career as a poet, historian, and writer.

Hardcover 186 pages, published at \$27.00, now \$8.00



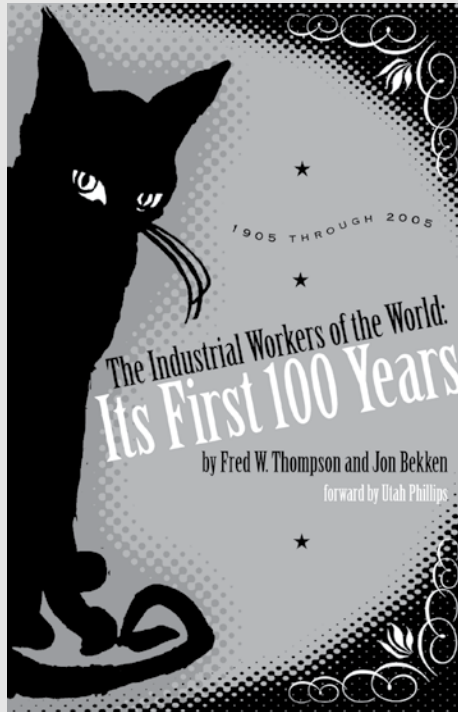
The Big Red Songbook Edited by Archie Green, David Roediger, Franklin Rosemont and Salvatore Salerno

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**

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 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 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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New York HWH boss changes name to Dragonland, but can't escape IWW

By Stephanie Basile

Since the July 1 HWH warehouse march in New York City, wobblies have hit the streets, handing out flyers and talking up workers outside restaurants and foodstuffs warehouses around the city. On August 25, new members will join with the old in a march through Brooklyn.

The boss at HWH has retaliated by locking out the union members and neglecting to pay them for their last four weeks of work. A few weeks after the march, the union workers arrived to work to find the gate to the warehouse locked and the delivery trucks nowhere

to be seen. It turns out the boss had actually moved the location of the delivery trucks in order to force the union members out of their jobs. It was also discovered that the company changed its name from HWH to Dragonland.

Despite this crass retaliation, the workers continue to fight. The attorney general's office is currently looking into backwage violations at HWH.

Meanwhile, the workers are putting pressure on restaurants and grocery stores who do business with HWH by planning marches at various cities throughout the northeast United States.

Analysis

Philippines sweatshop rejects labor rights report

By Kenneth Miller

Managers of the C. Woo factory in the Philippine Free Trade Zone have rejected a February 2007 Workers Rights Consortium report.

C Woo works for collegiate licensees, which contracted with the WRC to carry out this investigation. The 49-page report verifies sweatshop conditions, such as collaboration between the company and government labor agencies. One recommendation is for management to start bargaining with the workers' union. Yet, the report has not stopped management's persecution of union members. Workers interviewed for the report face pressure for speaking out.

The greatest concern in each situation is that the factory will close or that management will stop taking orders from the collegiate licensor trying to enforce its code of conduct. As a result, the ability and willingness of large buyers to maintain work in factories with union activity or investigations is a critical factor.

Looking back, after eight years of university commitments and investigation, we have almost no examples of improvement in sweatshops sewing

university apparel. The WRC Academic Standards offer a new direction for sweatshop monitoring with large private corporations and C. Woo is a test case. Leveraging the Academic Standard set by United Students Against Sweatshops and the Workers Rights Consortium and endorsed by 150-plus colleges and universities is the best tool that anti sweatshop activists have. The disclosure requirements cut through numerous legal shells, including licensees and retailers.

The WRC's investigatory protocols are fair, honest, specific and objective. They should be used as yardstick for all other reporting of factory conditions and contrast with "factory monitors" whose purpose is to help companies at different points in the supply chain avoid liability.

The Academic Standard with multiple buyers differs greatly from the proposed Designated Supplier Program (DSP) now being discussed. The DSP attempts to consolidate university apparel in few factories so that university apparel becomes the sustainer of particular factories. The implementation of a DSP will be a clear step backwards for the anti sweatshop movement.

Swaziland strikes for democracy

By John Kalwaic

A two-day general strike to demand multi-party elections brought the small African kingdom of Swaziland to a halt in July. The major labor federations, The Swaziland Federation of Labor (SFL) and the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU), launched a general strike to protest the absolute rule of King Mswati III. The new constitution continues the ban on opposition political parties.

The sugar industry and others felt the pinch of the strike. Government factories and schools were closed, with skeleton crews of replacement workers

working Swaziland's banks, hospitals and sugar plantations.

The trade unions have been a powerful force in movement for democracy in the Swaziland. This former landlocked British colony is surrounded by South Africa and had its national borders respected due to its compliance as satellite state of apartheid South Africa.

Popular opposition to the king's absolute rule has increased since apartheid's fall in South Africa. The country faces problems ranging from drought and a poor Maize harvest to a high rate of HIV-infection.

Film counters state attack on Australian construction sector

By www.constructingfear.com.au

Constructing Fear is a new documentary that attempts to expose Australian Prime Minister John Howard's industrial inquisition targeting building workers across Australia.

In August 2001, the Cole Royal Commission was established to enquire into and report on any unlawful or inappropriate conduct in the building and construction industry. The Final Report of the Cole Royal Commission was tabled in Parliament in March 2003. Cole found that the industry was characterised by a widespread disregard for the law and that existing regulatory bodies had insufficient powers and resources to enforce the existing law.

The union movement was unhappy with the process and the findings and felt that the Commission was an attempt by the Howard Government to eradicate their ability to effectively represent their members and set wages and conditions.

The government founded a taskforce on the basis of the Cole commission's initial report. The government had made up its mind, well before the facts were in. On October 1, 2005, the taskforce became the Australian Building and Construction Commissioner (ABCC).

The ABCC has extensive powers no other regulatory body has. Those that appear before the Commission have no

right to silence and may be compelled to answer questions.

In effect this means that a witness must reveal information that can implicate themselves or another person in a crime.

The commission can prosecute for fines of up to \$28,600 against individuals and \$110,000 against organisations. It can also sue for unlimited damages relating to industrial action. It can gag those that appear before it so that they cannot speak about what occurred in an interview. Anyone who refuses to cooperate fully with a commission interview faces six months jail.

A majority of the cases that come before the ABCC are to prosecute unions or workers who may have acted unlawfully or with inappropriate conduct. ABC Commissioner John Lloyd said, in an interview with Radio National's Peter Mares in June 2007, not all of their cases prosecute workers or unions.

"In the 61 cases we have taken to court 27 of those involve employer parties. We have prosecuted employers for, for example, agreeing to strike pay," said Lloyd.

The vast majority of cases involving employers are to prosecute perceived links with the unions.

Trailers for Constructing Fear are available on Youtube.



Centralized UK blood service being reviewed

IWW and other protests against the centralization of British blood services have forced management to announce a review of their centralisation plans.

This is an ideal time for the public and service users, who have been excluded from the management's so-called consultation, to get involved in the campaign to Save Our Blood Service.

Protests continue apace, with a banner placed opposite the entrance to Birmingham's National Blood Service on Vincent Drive, Edgbaston. Elsewhere, IWWs are distributing leaflets to raise awareness and call people to act.

The banner drop coincides with the end of Martin Gorham's career as Chief

Executive of the National Blood Service and architect of the centralisation plans. Workers recognize centralisation is one of the early stages in the move towards privatisation.

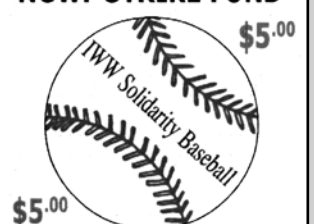
Earlier this year, the National Blood Service (NBS) Directors had announced plans to centralise the blood service by closing blood processing and testing labs at ten local centres in favour of three supercentres in Bristol, Manchester and London. Hundreds of technical staff, about half the lab workforce, face redundancy. Advocates fear the cost-saving move will have serious human costs by undermining the services and emergency deliveries.

Still available! NGWF assessment stamp.

Help build the bridge from the shop floor of the global apparel weatshops to the IWW! Join hands with the National Garment Workers Federation of Bangladesh and aid their strike fund with this \$5 assessment. As they sew gear for Major League Baseball and other sweatshop profiteers, their struggles continue to mount.

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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.

By Mike Pesa

ISC Delegate to Oaxaca returns

ISC Delegate Eric Larsen has temporarily returned to the United States after spending over a year in Oaxaca, Mexico, where he has worked with several grassroots organizations involved in the struggle against oppressive state governor, Ulises Ruiz and his government's devastating neoliberal economic and social policies.

While in the US, Larsen plans to co-organize a gathering of IWW members in the northeast United States to raise support and money for the Vocal collective, an umbrella group for several working-class grassroots organizations in Oaxaca.

Some of Larsen's recent activities in Mexico include giving a presentation about the IWW at an anarchist bookfair/conference in Mexico City and working with several women who were fired from their jobs in Oaxaca City for political reasons. He plans to return to Mexico later this year to continue his solidarity work.

ISC Delegate Presents at Argentina Conference

On July 19, ISC delegate Rhiannon Edwards gave a presentation about the IWW in Spanish at an international worker self-management conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Edwards became active in Argentina's recovered enterprise movement in January 2007 and has worked as an ISC delegate since March.

During the past few months she has been in contact with several groups on behalf of the ISC, including the anarcho-syndicalist Regional Federation of Workers of Argentina (FORA). She plans to remain in the country until December.

Observing at the 2007 Zapatista Encuentro in Chiapas, Mexico

ISC delegate and "Workers Power" columnist Colin Bossen attended as an official observer and representative of

the ISC the 2007 Zapatista Encuentro in Chiapas, Mexico. A report from the gathering will be printed in a future issue of the *Industrial Worker*.

Bangladesh Solidarity follow-up

After ISC delegate Jason Fults' recent groundbreaking meetings with the National Garment Workers Federation and the Bangladesh Workers Solidarity Center in Dhaka, the ISC sent a letter and a shipment of posters to the two groups, continuing the dialogue and working towards meeting some of the specific goals that came out of these meetings.

Fults briefly returned to the United States in July but will return to India live for the rest of the year.

Meanwhile, ISC chair Lauren Anzaldo plans to staff an information and fundraising table, with Bangladesh as a major focus, at the IWW's General Assembly in Chicago on the Labor Day Weekend. Fellow Worker Anzaldo will lead a presentation at the Assembly, outlining the ISC's strategy in Bangladesh.

Protesting El Salvador crackdown

The ISC sent a fax to Salvadoran and U.S. officials expressing alarm and outrage at the recent roundup of grassroots activists and unionists in El Salvador on terrorism-related charges.

In recent years, and especially since the implementation of the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), incidents of police repression in El Salvador have been on the rise, prompting fears of a return to the human rights abuses that characterized El Salvador throughout its long and bloody civil war, which ended in 1992.

In its letter, the ISC demanded that all charges be dropped against the activists and that the government make a clear statement that activists and unionists are not terrorists.



Photo by Liz Mason-Deese

Left to right: IWW members Caleb Gallus and Ben Canavan of Boston, Colin O'Malley of Buffalo and Rhiannon Edwards of Edmonton rally for the Hotel Bauen in Argentina (cover story). Edwards helped organize and spoke at the Argentina workers' self-management conference and is a delegate of the ISC.

Argentina workers' self-management conference a success

From July 19-21, over 300 people converged in Buenos Aires, Argentina to participate in the conference "The Workers' Economy: Self-Management and the Distribution of Wealth" and talk about building a world without bosses.

The discussion of the three days was centered on the limits and possibilities of self-management, such as in the recovered enterprises of Argentina and other types of cooperatives, within the framework of capitalism. Accompanying these conversations was a reflection on the challenges for the union movement and alternative forms of workers' organizations. Practices of self-management were considered both as methods to be considered within the fight against the economic and political bosses as well as experiences to look to, encourage, and learn from as we work towards organizing industry ourselves.

The gathering brought together cooperatives, social and political organizations, unions, and academics from Argentina, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, Columbia, Chile, Brazil, South Africa, Germany, Croatia, the US and Canada, and included a small contingent of wobblies. Rhiannon Edwards of the Edmonton GMB spoke about the need for greater democratization of unions and London, England, member Dan Jakopovich shared information and reflections on the experiences of self-management in the former Yugoslavia.

A unique element of the conference was the attempt to bridge the gap between the academic world and that of workers' organizations and social movements. Workers, activists, and researchers from many parts of the globe had the opportunity to exchange experiences and reflections on the many questions surrounding worker self-management, both in order to fuel strategies for organization and political action and to enrich the theoretical analysis of self-management processes.

As well, the conference was accompanied by various cultural events, including a musical play that was performed within the workspace of a recovered factory.

The conference was organized by the Open Faculty Program of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Buenos Aires and co-organized by the International Institute for Self-Management, the Argentine Workers' Central (Central de Trabajadores de la Argentina, CTA), the Global Justice Centre, and the Argentine Autonomist Project. The organizers hope this will be the first of many such gatherings.

The gathering was an important opportunity for individuals and organizations to connect and articulate possibilities for the struggle to create a more just world, where workers control production and distribution.

Support international solidarity

ISC Assessment Stamps Available!



Two new assessment stamps (a \$3.00 stamp and a larger \$6.00 stamp) are now available for all IWW members. All proceeds from the stamps directly support the international solidarity work of the ISC.

Examples of projects that will benefit from the stamps include raising money for this Fall's IWW delegation to Mexico and providing material aid to the National Garment Workers Federation in Bangladesh so their organizers can devote more time to working with us.

To order individual stamps to decorate your red card or entire sheets of stamps to distribute to the members of your branch, email solidarity@iww.org or send your check or money order and a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

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Cincinnati, OH 43223 USA

Polish nurses inject solidarity into labor movement

Grazyna Wiercinska and Taodhg Burns, IWW Toronto GMB

Striking nurses from the Polish Nurses and Midwives' Union took to the streets in Warsaw on June and July, refusing to report for work and living in tents, to demand a living wage.

They currently earn 290-340 Euros (\$390-\$450) monthly. Nurses say that is not enough to live on. To press the point, five nurses have moved to 'hunger street' camp and 50 more were reported ready to join their ranks.

Their situation is typical of the unregulated marketplace that has become the new economic norm for most East Europeans.

Protesters, including miners from the August'80 Solidarity group, walked sympathy picket lines in solidarity with the nurses. On July 6, 2,200 trade unionists from across Poland demonstrated outside government buildings in

Warsaw.

They carried banners saying, "We want a decent living, like lawmakers" and "We want to work, not emigrate."

Conservative Prime Minister Kaczynski is now arguing the familiar story that Poland cannot afford major pay increases for health service staff.

In an irony of history that will come as no surprise to progressive unionists, Polish workers' autonomous direct action impulse, first directed at post-Stalinist bosses in 1980 is now taking aim at the "free market" *economistas* who have replaced them.

As the East European free market races public sector wages to the bottom, workers around the world should support Polish nurses as they rise up in support of dignity for public sector workers and better health care for all.