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INDUSTRIAL WORKER

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD

July/August 2008 #1707 Vol. 105 No. 5 \$1 / £1 / €1

IU 410 shop scores 3-year contract, raises, healthcare

By Walt Weber

The workers and management at Stonemountain & Daughter, a Berkeley, California fabric store, reached a tentative agreement on a new contract on the night of June 26. The contract is still pending final approval of the workers in the shop in the next few weeks.

All the IU 410 Garment & Textile Workers Union workers in the shop will gain from this agreement: a raise in the starting wage from \$9.25 per hour to \$10.60 per hour, employer-funded healthcare for employees working over 24 hours per week, a 35 per cent raise in paid time off, new holidays, and an easy chair in the break room.

In a win for the campaign to retain the eight hour day, all overtime is now guaranteed to be voluntary, meaning that anyone who chooses to work only eight hours cannot be disciplined for refusing overtime.

In a change from the bargaining for the previous two contracts, this session was run totally by IWW members who work in the shop, with the addition of one representative from the local branch. The shop negotiating team consisted of Heather Gardner, Maggie Wihnyk, Masae Kubota, and Janet Sandberg. Gardner served as the lead negotiator and shop delegate.

Rank-and-file shop floor pressure played a key role.

—Heather Gardner

“We are excited about this new agreement because we believe it will lead to less turnover in the shop, which will result in long-term workers and union members,” said Gardner.

Management tried several times to reduce the progress that the workers sought by claiming that there was not enough money to fulfill the workers’ requests, even proposing to set a cap on wages.

Management claimed that they followed “industry standards” in the “notorious” retail industry, refusing to acknowledge the experience and expertise in textiles and sewing demanded of their workers.

The bargaining committee successfully resisted all of the regressive management proposals and used shop floor agitation to put pressure on manage-

ment.

“Rank-and-file shop floor pressure played a key role in our ability to win this great agreement,” said Gardner.

The tentative three-year agreement is without a no-strike clause nor does it have binding arbitration as the final result of a grievance procedure, preserving the rights of the workers to take direct action over shop floor issues.

Thousands sign petition to decriminalize prostitution in San Francisco

By espu-ca.org with files from the IW

On July 14, the Erotic Service Providers Union submitted 12,763 signatures to San Francisco City Hall to put on the November 4, 2008 ballot an initiative to strip funding from the enforcement of prostitution laws and mandate equal protection under the law for sex workers.

The number of signatures, vetted to remove people that didn’t qualify as city residents, was well above the 7,168 required to put the measure on the ballot.

The elections department has 30

days to verify the signatures.

The union said it was confident the initiative would qualify for the ballot.

“Existing statutes that criminalize prostitution and immigration as well as other forms of regulations of erotic labor serve to intimidate workers from reporting violence,” said Maxine Doogan, a union organizer.

If voters approve the measure, arrests on the grounds of prostitution would be prohibited. Police would also

Continued 9



Photo: Christopher Dunn

Prominent IWW member and radical folk singing elder Utah Phillips died on May 23, 2008. Read his life story in a final interview on page 8.

Zimbabwe still persecutes teachers, unionists after election fraud

By Education International, www.ei-ie.org

The national campaign of intimidation against human and trade union rights activists continues even after Robert Mugabe was sworn in for another five-year term, following the June 27 presidential run-off election.

The African Union described the election as “falling short of accepted AU standards.” The Southern African Development Community election observer team said the election did not express the will of the Zimbabwean people and took place under “unprecedented levels of violence and political intolerance, followed by extreme statements from the country’s principal political figures.”

In the days leading up to the presidential run-off election, teachers were targeted as some had stood as MDC candidates and many others served as electoral officials. Two have died and three remain missing.

The Progressive Teachers’ Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) reported that Simbarashe Chikomba, a teacher at Zaka Secondary School, died on 15 June at a Militia Base in Zaka Central. He had been abducted from his home the previous day.

On June 5, colleagues of Sheperd Chegwa, Headmaster at Katsukunya Secondary School in Mutoko District of Mashonaland East Province, found his dead body. Chegwa had been kidnapped two days earlier from his school residence. His body had many marks suggestive of severe torture and a gunshot wound in the head. Chegwa had previously been interrogated by “war veterans” and militia about actions taken by PTUZ members at his school to protest the governments’ actions during the presidential election campaign. There are no signs that the police are taking any action to investigate his murder.

The PTUZ also reported that three teachers were abducted on 13 June and are still missing. They are: K. Ndoro, a teacher at Vengere High School; Chitombo of Dumbamwe Secondary School; and, Hamadziripi, Headmaster of Nyahukwe Primary School.

The climate of violence remains persistent. Ruling party activists and security forces harassed and beat up members and officials of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and its affiliates. The ZCTU district chairperson for Chivhu, Tinashe Murau, was seriously beaten after Zanu PF militia questioned him about wearing union t-shirts and attending union meetings.


Rebecca Butau, a ZCTU councilor based in Chegutu, was also seriously beaten and had to seek medical attention. Those who beat her said they were looking for David Zunde, another union official from the food industry. Currently Zunde is on the run.

Forty-six members of the General Agriculture Plantation Workers’ Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ), an affiliate of the ZCTU, have sought shelter in Harare after being harassed and beaten up by the militia. The members include men, women and children. The ZCTU and GAPWUZ are currently providing them with food. Indications are that more farm workers will be displaced.

The PTUZ, an affiliate of the ZCTU, says it has closed its main office after its officials were harassed by unknown people since the start of the presidential run off. Two cars came for PTUZ General Secretary Raymond Majongwe, but fortunately he was not at his home.

On 29 June, the PTUZ treasurer’s wife received visitors in cars who said

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Industrial Worker
PO Box 13476
Philadelphia, PA 19101
ISSN 0019-8870 
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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Speaking as a supermarket "lifer"

I'd like to thank Adam Welch for his thoughtful description of some of his co-workers at Safeway. I think that the first and most important task of any organizer is to be able to really listen to what their co-workers are saying. To me, this means not only to hear the words that come out of their mouths, but be able to understand what lies behind those words. I think Adam's article does this.

Speaking as a "lifer" myself (in construction), I fully understand where these supermarket lifers are coming from. Given the role of the leadership of the establishment unions, trying to lead an organized fight-back against the bosses does not exactly jump up as an easy option to most workers.

But I also think that we have to recognize that the overwhelming majority of workers are in one way or another "lifers", and there are far more of them organized in the establishment unions

than are organized anywhere else. At the end of Adam's article, he raises the issue of the role of these unions. It would have been interesting to know a little more of how Adam—and other fellow IWW members who hold dual cards—see what can be done in these workplaces.

In fact, as a former 30-year member of the carpenters union, I think it might be worthwhile for the IWW dual card members as well as for all IWW members to discuss how we see our role in relation to the rest of the labor movement. After all, they are there and they play an important role in the lives of tens of millions of workers.

John Reimann
Oakland, CA

Correction: Jonathan Christiansen, not Mark Wolff, took the picture of the boy marching ahead of the Boston IWW banner on page 10 of the June *Industrial Worker*.

Letters welcome!

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

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

Leonard Peltier needs access to diabetes testing kit during prison lockdown

The U.S. penitentiary at Lewisburg, Pennsylvania is in lockdown for the fifth consecutive day [as of July 7]. Lockdowns, especially those that last a long while, are dangerous. Why? First, it's common for Leonard not to receive his medications at such times. Second, the prison has told us that Leonard has access to a diabetes testing kit in the infirmary.

Unfortunately, during a lockdown, Leonard isn't allowed to go to the infirmary at all. There's no way for him to test his blood glucose level.

Please help us ensure that Leonard receives proper medical care.

1. Leonard must receive his medications as prescribed.

2. Leonard also still needs access to a diabetes testing kit. Leonard should be allowed his own kit at the pharmacy for accurate readings, as well as easy and regular access. In this way, he'll be able to test himself three or four times a day

and hopefully achieve a balanced blood glucose level.

3. Leonard needs diabetic shoes that will help him with his diabetes-related foot problems.

If the prison cannot provide a kit and/or a proper pair of shoes, the family will work with an approved medical supply company to see to it that Leonard gets what he needs.

All supporters are requested to continue to contact: Warden Bledsoe, USP Lewisburg, US Penitentiary, 2400 Robert F. Miller Drive,

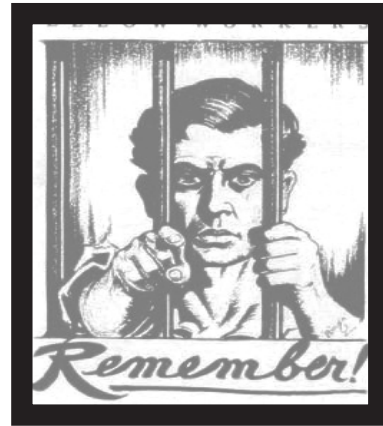
Lewisburg, PA 17837, Phone: 570-523-1251, Fax: 570-522-7745, E-mail: lew/execassistant@bop.gov

Thank you for your concern.

Betty Ann Peltier Solano

Coordinator

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Industrial Worker

The Voice of Revolutionary
Industrial Unionism

ORGANIZATION
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Official newspaper of the
**INDUSTRIAL WORKERS
OF THE WORLD**

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**Next deadline is
August 8, 2008.**

US IW mailing address:
POB 13476, Philadelphia
PA 19101 USA

ISSN 0019-8870
Periodicals postage
paid Philadelphia PA.

POSTMASTER: Send address
changes to IW, Post Office Box
23085, Cincinnati OH 45223 USA

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Individual Subscriptions: \$18
International Subscriptions: \$20
Library Subs: \$24/year
Union dues includes subscription.

Published ten times per year.
Articles not so designated do not
reflect the IWW's official position.

Press Date: July 15, 2008



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Restaurant joins Wild Edibles boycott

By www.brandworkers.org

One if by Land, Two if by Sea, the highly-regarded Greenwich Village, New York City restaurant, has joined several

other fine dining companies in refusing to buy from Wild Edibles, Inc., a seafood wholesaler and retailer.

Wild Edibles workers are campaigning to reclaim unlawfully withheld overtime pay and to gain a living wage and health care as union members. Wild Edibles owner, Richard Martin, has responded with a fierce campaign of retaliation, firing 11 workers for asserting their rights.

“One if by Land has a long history of supporting workers’ rights and we

are proud to support the effort of the Wild Edibles workers making positive change,” said Rosanne Martino, the gen-

Cutting expenses by violating the law and cheating your own employees costs more down the road than it is worth.

—Rosanne Martino, manager

eral manager of the restaurant.

“Cutting expenses by violating the law and cheating your own employees makes an unlevel playing field in the market and costs more down the road than it is worth.”

A federal judge issued an injunction in December prohibiting Wild Edibles from further retaliating against employ-

ees. But the workers’ lawyers recently had to file a motion asking the judge to find the company in contempt of court for continuing its retaliation campaign despite the injunction.

The National Labor Relations Board has also issued two complaints against the company for interfering with the workers’ efforts to form a union with the Industrial Workers of the World.

“We come to work at 2 AM, six days a week and work hard through the

night,” said Carlos Molina, one of the 11 Wild Edibles employees fired or forced out of the job for asserting their rights.

“We’re just looking for our contribution to be respected and we appreciate One if By Land’s support very much.”

The other restaurant groups which have disassociated from Wild Edibles over concern for workers’ rights are Pastis, La Goulue, Union Square Cafe, Mermaid Inn, Giorgione, and Sushi Samba.

Flaum Appetizing violates Jewish law, say locked out IWW members

By New York City IWW

A Flaum Appetizing worker was fired without cause in May. Co-workers who demanded her reinstatement were also fired.

The workers held a press conference and protest on June 19 at the Flaum plant in Brooklyn, New York City to denounce the firings at the high-end kosher food producer.

Workers organized with the Industrial Workers of the World have been waging a bitter struggle with management at Flaum Appetizing, a major distributor of high-end kosher products in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

Previously required to work more than 60 hours per week without legally-mandated overtime pay, without sick leave, holidays, vacations, or even drink-

ing water on the job, the workers joined the IWW. Through collective action they have won some concessions, but management continues to treat them with contempt and to pay them starvation wages.

Members of New York’s Jewish community are rallying to support the locked-out workers. Jewish law is emphatic in its demands for justice toward workers, and many ask whether food prepared by mistreated workers can truly be kosher.

Many community organizations, including Make the Road New York, the Chinese Staff & Workers’ Association, and the Million Worker March Movement-NYC have joined the IWW in fighting for these workers’ rights.

Support the IWW’s Wild Edibles Campaign!

Send cheques or money orders to:
Ken Estey c/o IWW NYC GMB
4461 11th St. Floor #3
Long Island City, NY 11101

Make checks payable to “IWW NYC GMB” and in the memo line write “Wild Edibles Campaign”.

Every contribution helps exert pressure against the sweatshop and keep the workers and their children from getting evicted.

IWW Assembly to land in London, UK

For the first time in the IWW’s history, the 2008 General Assembly will be held outside of North America in London, England, on August 30-31, 2008.

The rapidly growing IWW British Isles Regional Organizing Committee, numbering more than 500 members in good standing, is hosting the event.

Delegates from the German Language Area Regional Organizing Committee (Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, and Switzerland) and other parts of Europe as well as from Canada and the United States are expected to attend.

This year’s assembly agenda is packed with proposals from branches and committees formed at last year’s General Assembly in Chicago.

One proposal would amend the constitution to convert the General Assembly into a General Convention of Delegates from Chartered Branches, which could make decisions and set policy. Currently, the Assembly can only amend and endorse proposals to be sent to referendum.

The Charges Reform Committee proposes to deal with the need for clearer internal disciplinary procedures. A second proposal would introduce a conflict mediation procedure branches could use to deal with internal conflict before it reaches the charges stage. In 2007, two competing proposals failed to get the two-thirds of votes required to pass.

The Chicago branch proposal would dramatically increase the initiation fee for new members paying sub-minimum, minimum, and regular dues from \$3, \$6, and \$12, respectively, to a flat rate of \$15.

The Constitution and Bylaws Maintenance Committee has tabled three minor constitutional changes, notably one to integrate a long-standing resolution prohibiting political alliances into the Constitution itself.

The Committee on Industrial Classification is proposing to create an Industrial Reserve Organization as a formal part of the union to integrate casual and temporary workers who work in many different industries each year. Under the current rules, members who switch industries would need to be transferred by their delegate into the industrial union of their new job. Currently, most members do not bother to transfer Industrial Unions.

The rationale for the change is more than reducing paperwork, according to the proposal, because it addresses a strategic gap. “[T]he IWW should organize such workers into an auxiliary Industrial Reserve Organization, in order to build class solidarity among them through education, social activities, the establishment of hiring halls, and other means, thereby turning the bosses’ chief weapon against themselves.”

Other proposals include creating a liaison system that puts branches into direct contact with the International Solidarity Commission, standardizes the bylaws requirements for branches, and denounces the deportation of illegal immigrants and urges members to refrain from participating in these “violations of human rights.”

All international officers of the union will deliver verbal or written reports and answer questions from the floor on their activities. The assembly will also be the primary place for officer nominations.

Preamble of the IWW

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 outside of North America and in Regional Organizing Committees (Australia, British Isles, German Language Area).

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.



Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Post Code, Country: _____

Occupation: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

Membership includes a subscription to the **Industrial Worker**.

Twitter new campaign tool

Those of us trying to use email as a campaigning tool are running into some serious problems these days.

Getting heard over all the background noise is becoming more difficult. Inboxes are filling up rapidly. At best we skim, and don't read, the hundreds of messages we receive every week. And that's the messages that actually get through our spam filters.

Unions need to find a way to cut through that noise and reach their members. Members need an alternative to the spam-filled, overflowing inbox. Everyone needs messages to be brief and to the point.

Twitter may offer a solution. Twitter is a relatively new online service that allows people to sign up and post very short messages. The limit is 140 characters. Twitter is completely free of charge, and advertising-free as well. Once you've signed up to the service you can sign up as a "follower" of an individual or organization, and receive those short messages, which are called "tweets".

The real power of Twitter is that it's platform-independent. You receive those messages where it's most convenient for you. That can be through your own Twitter page on the web or it can be as text messages to your mobile phone or via the Instant Messenger of your choice or through an RSS news feed.

I have to confess that when Twitter was launched, I was told about it by a friend in the Netherlands. I didn't get it. It struck me as being just one more time-waster. It turns out that he was right and I was wrong.

Now I think that Twitter offers real potential for campaigning organizations like unions. Though launched for one specific purpose (to tell your friends what you're doing), Twitter was quickly adapted by campaigning organizations for our own purposes.

I'm reminded of Meetup.com, designed as a dating service but now widely used by political campaigns.

The Hillary Clinton presidential nomination campaign began sending out 'tweets' and eventually had over 4,000 followers. The Barack Obama campaign did the same thing and got 44,000 followers. That says something about the success of the two campaigns in using new technology.

Twitter is used by the American Red Cross for get out short messages regarding natural disasters. Nasa uses Twitter to stream news from the Mars lander. (Followers of Nasa's tweets were the

first to learn that ice had been discovered on the red planet.) Mozilla used it to provide updates on the launch of the new Firefox web browser.

One of the most interesting uses of Twitter

occurred when a young American activist visiting Egypt was arrested while covering anti-government demonstrations. While in police custody, he used his mobile phone to send off a one-word message to Twitter: "Arrested." (Posting Twitter messages from one's mobile phone is incredibly simple.)

His friends, who were following his tweets, immediately began making phone calls and sending out emails. He was released from custody.

LabourStart launched its Twitter service in June 2008 twitter.com/labourstart.

We were initially aiming to solve one particular problem: How do you send out short text messages to phones in different countries, free of charge?

Within a few hours, over 100 people—most of whom had not previously used Twitter-- signed up to our group. By the time this article appears in print, we expect that number to exceed 1,000.

Unlike the other social networks such as MySpace and Facebook, Twitter need not be a time sink. We encourage people to sign up and become "followers" of LabourStart, and to ensure that our messages are delivered to their mobile phones.

But we don't encourage people to amass hundreds of friends, as one tends to do on other networks because you don't want too many text messages pouring into your phone. (You can instruct Twitter to only send messages from certain accounts to your phone and read the others online.)

The idea is not to add one more way to receive junk mail nor to contribute to information overload.

What we are trying to do is cut through the background noise, and to create a new delivery channel for important information and campaigns, in very short bursts.

Twitter may be the solution we were looking for.



Obama won't save the US working class

The United States' union federations have once again surprised no one by endorsing the Democratic candidate for the US presidency, Senator Barack Obama.

The six million member Change To Win coalition endorsed Obama first, on February 21, during the Democratic primaries. The 10.5 million member AFL-CIO endorsed Obama on June 26, after its affiliates' favored candidate, Senator Hilary Clinton, had lost the nomination.

Obama's endorsement by both the traditional union federation and the self-proclaimed dissident coalition once again underscores how US unions are on a political auto-pilot that is getting working people nowhere. The working class has no choice politically and the country's union federations offer none but the same old program. Now working families must brace themselves for being asked for money and volunteer time to support Obama's bid for the presidency, on vague promises of hope and change.

Both union federations are reminding workers they lack the right to unionize effectively, don't have access to good

jobs or healthcare and are facing higher food and fuel prices.

Incredulously, the solution is to vote for Obama. Change To Win's Chair, Anna Burger, describes Obama as "the candidate of the American Dream" who has "inspired working families to get active and involved in politics. Barack Obama is building a movement that not only will win in November, but will transform our country."

The AFL-CIO also wants us to believe. "With 80 per cent of the public saying our country is headed in the wrong direction, it's time to turn around America. And the first step is electing Barack Obama," said AFL-CIO president John Sweeney.

The idea that the right US president would solve the working class' problems is dishonest. No US president is right, if American workers put the ballot before taking their own first step to organize and democratize the economic power that makes the United States a world leader. If politics are the shortcut, organizing is the path to emancipation.

WOMEN WORKERS' HISTORY

CHAPTER 15 WARNING NOT HEEDED

IBURED BY QUICK AND EASY PROFITS, CAPITALISTS CAME TO LAWRENCE, MASS., BUILDING THE PEMBERTON AND OTHER MILLS IN THE EARLY 1850s, BUT MARKET CONDITIONS REVERSED; DEPRESSION WAS BROUGHT ON BY OVEREXPANSION. ERASTUS BIGELOW, A MANUFACTURER, SAID OF THE PROFIT FRENZY: "CAPITALISTS WHO HAVE INVESTED UNDER THE STIMULUS OF HIGH PROFITS ARE IMPATIENT FOR RESULTS, AND URGE... HASTY ACTION OR ILL-CONSIDERED PLANS." HIS WORDS WERE A WARNING UNHEEDED!!



ON JAN. 10, 1860, THE PEMBERTON MILL COLLAPSED, REDUCING THE FACTORY TO RUBBLE WITHIN 60 SECONDS. OF THE 900 WORKERS TRAPPED IN THE WRECKAGE, MOST WERE WOMEN. FIRE BROKE OUT, HAMPERING RESUE EFFORTS. IN THE FINAL COUNT, 89 WORKERS WERE KILLED, 275 INJURED. THE IRON PILLARS SUPPORTING THE BUILDING HAD GIVEN WAY; REPORTS INDICATED THAT THE COMPANY HAD KNOWN OF THE PILLARS' POOR QUALITY CAST IRON WHEN BUILDING THE MILL SIX YEARS EARLIER. SOME POINTED OUT THAT THE MILL FLOORS WERE TOO WEAK FOR THE MACHINES, AND THAT NECESSARY REPAIRS WERE IGNORED.



FEW ATTRIBUTED THE DISASTER TO AN "ACT OF GOD." THE MILL COLLAPSED BECAUSE OF THE FACTORY OWNERS' GREEDY HASTE TO BUILD THE PEMBERTON MILL, TO CASH IN ON TEXTILE INDUSTRY PROFITS. THE COLLAPSE OF THE PEMBERTON MILL WAS ONE OF THE FIRST GREAT INDUSTRIAL DISASTERS TO HIT THE U.S. AND WORKING WOMEN WERE THE VICTIMS.

Zimbabwe persecutes teachers

Continued on 1

that they wanted to take her to "a funeral." The missing PTUZ Treasurer Labistuo Zunde has since been found by the union's officials.

On June 28, four men in a black 4x4 bearing no license plates went to the PTUZ Vice President Abigail Tagwirei's house in Glenview (Mashonaland East). The men, who claimed to be Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) officials, demanded to know Tagwirei's whereabouts. The next day, parts of her house were ransacked.

Aside from the threat of violence, the country is besieged economically.

ZIMTA teachers' union leader General Secretary Richard Gundane, said the situation of teachers remains very difficult due to high inflation. A loaf of bread now costs Z\$600 million. Teachers are paid Z\$400 million and they are quitting their jobs as their salary does not even pay for transport to and from school.

Education International is urging its members and all unionists to call on Zimbabwe to end harassment and violence against teachers and all trade unionists, guarantee workers' rights, affirm its commitment to human rights, and respect the fundamental freedoms of all Zimbabweans

Bermuda public servants, police fight govt

By Rowland Robinson

A stand-off between Bermuda workers and the government resulted in a march that brought one-thirteenth of the country's population onto the streets, including the island's striking police force.

The Bermuda Public Services Union (BPSU) and Bermuda Police Association (BPA) had binding arbitration with the government that, among other things, granted them a one per cent raise, barely covering cost-of-living.

In response, the government took the BPA ruling to court for judicial review in order to throw it out and asked the arbitrator to review its decision in favour of the BPSU. The workers saw the government's move as a slight against them.

An emergency meeting of the Bermuda Trade Union Congress on June 26 made it clear that the member unions, of which the BPSU is one, would not stand for this.

On the morning of June 27, 5,000 people marched on the parliament building. The marchers were made up of the Bermuda Trade Union Congress, which includes the Bermuda Public Services Union, Bermuda Union of Teachers, Association of School Principals, Bermuda Prison Officers Association, Electrical Supply Trade Union, Bermuda Federation of Musicians and Variety Artists.

They were joined by segments of the Bermuda Industrial Union, representing building and engineering workers.

What was quite momentous though was the the Bermuda Police Association, the very people who break strikes and crush demonstrations to enforce the will of the state, broke ranks with the government and marched on parliament, too. Both regular police (in blue shirts) and inspectors and chief inspectors (white shirts) joined the protest as participants.

Police participation bodes well as plans for a general strike are being drawn up. The police are committed to participate in defiance of their classifica-

tion as "essential workers", which strips them of the right to strike.

The government's only option to suppress the strike would be the armed forces regiment, but there is talk of the soldiers forming a union as well.

Since the June 27 march, the government has given the 3,000 public servants a five per cent raise in pay, but are still challenging the raise awarded to the police. Workers suspect the government is trying to pull a divide-and-conquer maneuver on the workers. However, it appears that the public service unions are not backing down, despite the government's concession.

As the only wobbly in Bermuda I felt it my duty to report this and I hope the rest of the IWW stands in solidarity with us.

Eyewitness account

By Jonathan Starling, Bermuda Public Services Union

The Bermuda Aquarium, Museum and Zoo (BAMZ) workers rendezvoused with their BPSU allies in the morning. The Electrical Supply Union workers held an emergency meeting and decided to walk off the job site and join ranks with the BPSU. The Prison Officers also joined us. On their arrival they were met with mass applause and shouts of solidarity.

We then received word that the police were falling into formation, and that the BUT (Bermuda Union of Teachers) had voted to join us and were coming from their headquarters. Just as we were about to set off we received word that the Bermuda Industrial Union (BIU) had voted to join us.

Our morale was super high and we swarmed out of the BPSU HQ and took over Cedar Avenue. We marched up to Reid Street and towards the House of Assembly. All the way we were greeted with solidarity from pedestrians and



Photo: Rowland Robinson

Police joined civil servants on strike against the government's reneging on an arbitrated settlement.

non-unionized workers and drivers. At the intersection of Parliament and Reid we saluted the BUT, the Police and the BIU, and then marched on Parliament. The BPSU contingent largely occupied the Western and Southern slopes. The BUT followed after us, occupying the Eastern and Southern slopes. The BIU mostly stayed outside on Parliament street, providing a drum band.

As we were all sitting and enjoying the scene, a large wave of applause started from Reid and Parliament, and then we saw the cause. Several hundred police officers, in uniform and out, were marching in formation right up the steps into the House of Assembly (our parliament building). The sight was stunning.

Due to our numbers it wasn't possible for all of us to see what was going on, but information rippled throughout the masses. As I understand it, our Prime Minister Dr. Brown went into hiding and didn't bother showing his face, leaving

the Minister of Labour, Col. Burch, to bear the brunt of the anger.

As we left to return to our respective HQs for a quick debrief, we left sentries around the House of Assembly. Dr. Brown emerged after 95 per cent of the workers had left. The workers took this news as a snub that had Dr. Brown's credibility plunging. He is now regarded as a coward.

Many in the crowd, including party members (most union members are members of the ruling Progressive Labour Party), were openly calling him a national disgrace. Others were calling for his immediate resignation and a general strike to bring him down.

What happens now? That's up to Government. If they want a general strike, they'll get one. We are ready for it, and we have the support of the people

There is serious talk of further industrial actions, including that of a mass general strike to happen this summer.

SOAP for Workers Power

By Todd Hamilton

Healthcare workers have a way of note-taking called SOAP. SOAP stands for Subjective, Objective, Assessment, and Plan.

In the subjective section, the clinician will write down the general condition of the patient, usually based on

what the patient says about their health. All the vitals and observed information are collected in the objective portion of the note. This could be blood pressure, pulse, skin discoloration, whatever. An assessment is a skeleton of the main symptoms and corresponding diagnoses in the order of most to least likely. Based on the evidence and assessments, the provider then gives a plan for correcting the problems.

This way of documenting interactions with patients and coming up with a game plan is a useful tool for workplace organizing. It can help us think critically about the conversations we have, the conclusions we draw, and how to move forward out of our one-on-one discussions.

As organizers, we are trying to get a handle on the situation in a workplace and what we have to do to build an organization. How do we get from where we are to where we want to be? With this in mind, our subjective assessments are the conversations and things our co-workers say around the shop. Our objective section is the actions that we can see our co-workers taking part in. This allows us to see the difference between what

people say and what they do. This isn't to judge people or harass them about what they do or don't do, but just to get

a sense of what we can rely on, what we need to help along, and what motivates people so that we can effectively build a real democratic group effort to change our

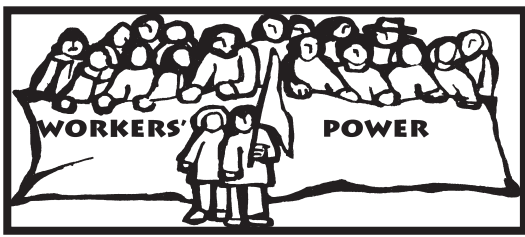
workplaces.

In the assessment section, we lay out our take on the person, situation or action planned. We come to that conclusion based on the evidence we have (written in the other sections). Our plan gives the next steps to build more workplace power.

The idea with all this is that we use objective standards for the conclusions we draw and the plans that we cook up. People naturally rely on their instincts and impressions of others around them, but our instincts tend to be filtered through our personalities and where we are at, which can color our organizing. By separating out observations and activities, like we do in healthcare, we can get a better sense of the situation.

They are also accessible to other organizers working on the campaign and can be scrutinized, altered, and revised. This allows others to see how the work is done, hold each other accountable, and have concrete documentation should we need to use it against the boss.

Send your submissions to Workers Power to forworkerspower@gmail.com. Submissions should be 800 words or less.



Polish Workers' Initiative wins, fights on

By John Kalwaic with files from the IW

Poland's Workers Initiative union won a court-ordered reinstatement for union activist, Piotr Krzyzaniak, fired from the Auchan shopping center in Zielona Gora. The Auchan Company had accused Krzyzaniak of stealing 4,000 Zlotys.

However, Workers' Initiative is now fighting for the reinstatement of Bartosz Kantorczyk, who was a leader in the 2006 postal strike. Polish Post fired Kantorczyk by sending him a letter on June 30 while he was on vacation, citing disciplinary reasons. He was given no

disciplinary hearing nor consultation with his trade union, a right required by law.

Kantorczyk was at the forefront of a fight demanding on-the-job security for postal workers delivering money orders. Postal workers are often assaulted and robbed of their money orders, yet the post office has raised the amount for how much cash in money orders a postal worker can carry.

In response, Kantorczyk on June 12 told management he refused to carry money orders because it wasn't safe.

Solidarity wins evicted 3-months rent

The IWW-affiliated Seattle Solidarity won another victory for Seattle residents evicted from Green Lake apartments on June 6. After facing a home visit from 30 tenants and supporters as well as regular pickets at their other hotel properties, the landlords agreed to pay relocation assistance equal to three months' rent for each of the 12 apartments evicted.

On May 16, landlords tried to use the threat of arrest to evict 12 apartments with just two days notice and no compensation. The owners claimed their license was being suspended due to unsafe conditions. An attempt by the landlords to use police to evict the

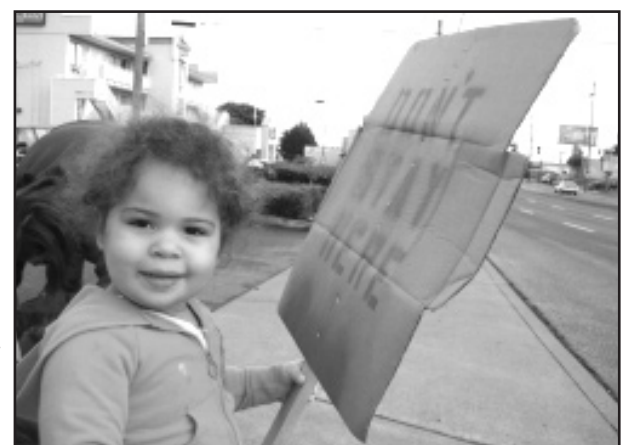


Photo: www.seasol.net

Young resident pickets landlord's hotel.

residents on May 18 failed, as the police left the residents alone.

The residents then began to organize.

The IWW in Japan: Fighting together

Travel Diary of the IWW

By Diane Krauthamer

From June 25 to July 7, 2008, I participated in the mobilization against the Group of 8 (G8) summit in Hokkaido, Japan, as part of the International Solidarity Commission (ISC) of the IWW. Joined by IWW members Sabu Kohso and Abe Greenhouse, the ISC delegation helped to develop a strong relationship with the *Freeter Zenpan Roudou Kumiai* (Freeters' General Union), while forming ties with other independent labor and activist individuals and organizations in the international fight against global capitalism. It was an exciting and meaningful experience I will never forget.

The G8 is an annual elite meeting of the eight richest countries in the world: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States along with the head of the European Union. They met on the northern island of Hokkaido, Japan.

June 25: Arrival in Tokyo

After 22 hours of travel, I arrived in Tokyo on Wednesday and was greeted immediately by Noiz from the Freeters' General Union. We rode the subway directly to the social centre in Koenji, where many of the international activists had gathered in preparation for the counter-G8 activities. Here I met with Sabu Kohso and a few of the main Freeters' organizers, who gave me copies of their organizing pamphlet and were excited to receive IWW t-shirts, patches, calendars, sticker, pins and a DVD. I also met some of the core local activists doing a variety of legal and media work in preparation for the mobilization.

The WATCH Legal Network said some of the speakers lined up for the Counter-G8 International Forum were interrogated and detained by immigration officers upon their arrival into Japan. This was just one of many tactics that the police used to repress dissent during the G8.

June 26: Goodwill bankruptcy

On Thursday morning, I went sight-seeing at the 400-year-old Koishikawa Korakuen Gardens in the city with a beautiful variety of plants, trees, bridges and sites of old temples. After that I strolled around Ginza, the shopping district, and browsed through the Sony headquarters, looking at the latest in digital technology.

In the evening, Noiz escorted me to a protest against the Goodwill Group, a temp agency that had declared bankruptcy due to illegal company practices, and fired its entire temporary staff unit. For nearly two hours, approximately 50 workers representing the Temporary Workers Union and the Freeters' General Union demonstrated outside of the company's headquarters in Roppongi Hills.

The Goodwill Group is an umbrella company which bought out smaller temp agencies in various sectors of industry. Much like other staffing agencies, they hire workers on one-day contracts. One temp union activist, Atsoshi Hinata, explained that staffing companies in Japan are able to require workers to sign one-day working contracts, essentially allowing the company to make more money.

Precairety appears to be a growing trend in Japanese labor law. Sekine Shuichiro, another temp organizer, explained that earlier that day the union had held negotiations with company representatives in order to win unemployment benefits that were owed to them and to hold the government accountable for allowing the company to grow so large.

By law, day workers who lose their jobs are paid 60 per cent of their regular wage for 26 days in a two-month period. Since Goodwill did not comply because it was bankrupt, workers were asking for their back-wages from the state.

June 27: Hello Union

On Friday, the Temporary Workers Union invited me to their office, located in the Shinjuku-ward, to screen *Together We Win: The Fight to Organize Starbucks* and discuss the IWW. This event was actually an informal gathering for information exchange or peer counseling, called Hello Union. The Hello Union gathering is open to everyone, and typically draws people who work for temp agencies, non-union members, as well as people from the Temporary Workers Union, the Tokyo Union, and the Freeters.

We compared and contrasted the precarious conditions of low-wage workers in Japan with those in the US, and found some differences that impressed us.

For instance, they were astounded and somewhat appalled to hear that you need to have a majority vote for union representation in a shop in the US; in Japan, only one person needs to join a union to be represented. They were also appalled by the fact that at most low-wage jobs in the US, workers do not have contracts at all. At least we have one-day contracts, joked the Goodwill Group workers.

June 28-July 1: Rallies, panels and forums

From Saturday to Tuesday, Sabu, Abe and I joined international activists and representatives from many organizations and unions, at the Tokyo Action against Poverty, Precarious Labor and Social Exclusion rally, the Freeters' Union May Day report back, and the Counter-G8 International Forum.

The rally included speakers representing various organizations and unions throughout Japan, Bangladesh, France, Korea, and the United States. Each person reported on their struggles



The banner of the Tokyo Action against Poverty, Precarious Labor and Social Exclusion rally.



Photo: Diane Krauthamer

Temporary workers' denounced temporary worker agency Goodwill Group, which declared bankruptcy and left them with nothing. They seek compensation from the government.

against poverty, unstable working conditions and social exclusion, each with a focus on these problems stemming from neo-liberalism. Sabu and I spoke about the current and past work of the IWW in an expression of solidarity with struggles throughout Asia.

The May Day report-back was entire-

ly in Japanese with little translation, but it was exciting to see two presenters energetically narrating video footage of their festive, Japanese-inspired march through the streets. The event was accompanied with a reception of candy and sugary drinks, which matched the organizers' informal motto about the importance of having fun in

our struggles.

At the Counter-G8 International Forum, internationally renowned anti-globalization activists and theorists (and Wobblies), such as David Graeber, Marina Sitrin, Michael Hardt and Andrej Grubacic spoke on an interesting variety of panels. I spoke on the activities of the

IWW at the "Precarity Creates" panel, where I was joined by Maurizio Lazarato, Gen Chijiwa of the Freeters, and members of No Vox (www.novox.ras.eu.org), a French-based network of grassroots social movements and organizations of "deprived peoples." All in all, the rich discussions of theory focused on common struggles.

July 2: In the streets of Sapporo

On Wednesday morning, I met a small group of "internationally renowned anti-globalization activists and theorists" at Haneda Airport to fly to Sapporo on the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido. It was a flight I was sure would get shot down, but nonetheless we boarded anyway.

A little more than an hour later, the cityscape below turned into beautiful green mountains spotted with occasional snow caps, and we landed in Sapporo. Upon arrival, all 15 of us were stopped by police, who demanded to see our passports, asked the purpose of our visit, and copied our identification. Part of our group was a small *ad hoc* legal team, so they took pictures of the police officers. Luckily, no one was detained or interrogated further.

We took the train into Sapporo station and went straight to the convergence center located in a school in Hosui Susukino. It was early, so a few of us found a post office and shopped for supplies. This was definitely an interesting city to explore—unlike Tokyo, the climate was dry and hot during the



from Tokyo to the streets of Sapporo

day, cold at night. Unlike Tokyo, we internationals were noticed on the street for being in the area. We may have even fit the profile of “terrorist” for which locals were told to watch.

Later in the evening, there was a welcoming party back at the convergence space with some amazing food and organizers from the unions, the legal team, the media centers, and the international community. Early the next morning, more Counter G8 International Forum panel discussions took place at Hokkaido University, and at night there was a planning meeting for the July 5 day of action, and a “Punks Against G8” show. Some of us went to the meeting, while others, a little burned out, went straight to the show.

July 4: Fighting films

On Friday, I woke up early and met Noiz to attend the Sapporo Action Against Poverty and Unstable Employment rally at the G8 Action Network Solidarity Forum, which was similar to Tokyo’s rally.

Afterward, we went to the Tenjin-yama Media Center to screen my Starbucks union film and speak at the International Precariat Film Festival. Two other films played, one was a long and heartfelt documentary called *Nogada*, about South Korean construction workers who work in atrocious conditions and have been injured and killed by company thugs when attempting to organize. We had an intimate discussion after the films and we turned in early.

July 5: Day of action

On Saturday, people from all corners of the world marched in the first demonstration against global capitalism in Sapporo City, quite possibly the largest demonstration in the city’s history.

Called the “Peace Walk for Challenging the G8,” people from all walks of life—trade unionists, syndicalists, the Kimono and Yukata bloc, clowns, puppetistas, IMCistas, the

black bloc, communists, Wobblies, and others from Australia, Belgium, China, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the US—converged in Odori Koen park and marched through the center of the city. I met with two members of the French syndicalist union CNT-F briefly.

Then I linked up with the 200 or so people represented by giant red-and-black flags, led by a large sound truck with a DJ blasting hip-hop, punk and reggae music.

We commenced the march, but not without lines of thousands of riot police walking alongside, containing us onto one side of the street. We still enjoyed ourselves; people danced and spirits were high. But we knew it was only a matter of time before escalation.

At one point during the march, the truck stopped with some commotion



Photo: Diane Krauthamer

ISC delegate Sabu Kohso waves an IWW flag at the July 5 rally in Sapporo.

and the word was that the cops tried to seize it, but they were met with a lot of resistance.

The march continued on, but only for a few more minutes before the cops forcefully attempted to seize our beloved sound truck. They managed to form a barricade in front of it, and banged on the driver’s window with clubs. The driver refused to open the door, and honked the horn in protest.

More and more police formed on the sides of the truck and, despite the driver’s resistance and the support that demonstrators gave him from the sides, the police smashed the window, forced

the door open, and violently dragged him out by his ankles.

Two other people, one a sound DJ from the top of the truck, and a news reporter from the Associated Press were also arrested during this clash.

As of the printing date, they remain in custody.

According to the No-G8!

Legal Action Team, those

detained can be held for 23 days without prosecution, and their families harassed.

Furthermore, the Japanese legal system imposes collective punishment; protest organizers can be punished for the activities of others. Within jail, prisoners’ physical movements are greatly restricted: they must ask permission to lie down or sit up.

After the arrests, the march continued without music and concluded at Nakajima Koen park with a few announcements and the decision to march to the jail. Approximately 200 people walked north, stopping by a police station to see our sound truck being driven away as we approached.

We eventually reached the jail where our friends were being held, and raised flags and chanted in the face of the heavily guarded station for about one hour. Organizers called off the protest because

the law allows such long detention times that the protest at the police station was unlikely to have much impact.

We were warned to be careful, that the police might raid the convergence center and the camp and had scattered police and secret service agents throughout the city.

There was an extremely visible police presence on the streets.

The next day, many people left for the Toyoura camps to protest the summit, while a few of us stayed in Sapporo to do legal support work and write calls for solidarity for the July 5 arrestees. Fortunately, we managed to raise a lot of money and awareness.

I feel fortunate to have had the experience of helping to strengthen international solidarity through our conversations and activities in fighting against the common enemy of neoliberalism.

Although the IWW and the Freeters Union did not shut down the G8 summit, the relationships we developed with each other and with people from every corner of the planet continue to grow stronger. We are all fighting against an oppression that takes on different shapes; we should continue our rich discussions, share our experiences, and give the kind of support we gave each other on the streets of Sapporo, in our everyday struggles.

For more information about the IWW delegation to Japan, visit the delegation’s blog *IWW in Japan* iwwin-japan.blogspot.com.

Police raid Doro-Chiba union HQ, arrest one



Photo: Doro-Chiba

Doro-Chiba board member Kawasaki is surrounded and then arrested by police during raid for pointing out an error in the search warrant.

Police raided the headquarters of Doro-Chiba, one of Japan’s largest trade unions on July 4 as part of a crackdown on activists during the Group of 8 summit in Japan.

One hundred Tokyo metropolitan police occupied the union headquarters for 3.5 hours.

When Doro-Chiba board member Kawasaki pointed out an error in the search warrant, police surrounded him, seized him forcefully, tore his shirt and

threw him into jail in his underwear.

Doro-Chiba denounced the police and Japan’s government “in our unrestrained anger for this outrageous oppression against Doro-Chiba and the struggle to crush the G8 Robbers’ Summit,” said H. Yamamoto of the International Labor Solidarity Committee of Doro-Chiba in an email statement.

“We respond to this kind of reckless deed by strengthening the unity of our union and workers across the country.”

Utah Phillips: can I tell you another story?

May 15, 1935— May 24, 2008

Interview by Peter Werbe, Nightcall, WRIF-FM Detroit on May 11, 2008.

Peter Werbe: The IWW has not gone away. It still exists. And one of the most wonderful things the IWW did, besides its organizing, besides its vision of a new world, was to produce an amazing variety of many storytellers and songwriters and troubadours of labor. Utah, welcome to the show.

Utah Phillips: Thank you very, very much. You know, I don't sing those songs from the IWW as historical artifacts. I sing about them unhappily because they're just as true today as they were then. (Laughs.)

I mean, take Joe Hill's "There's Power in the Union", which he wrote in 1912. Well, there is power in the union. I was born in a time in the mid-1930s when almost 60 per cent of the wage workers in this country belonged to unions. And what's the percentage now?

Werbe: Pretty low, particularly in the private sector.

Phillips: One of the reasons why I've been singing those songs for so many years and telling those stories is to say, 'Look at what we were able to do when we were organized.' We broke the back of the sweatshop system at Lawrence, Massachusetts, the textile strike, that I could sing about "Bread & Roses". All in all, the titanic amount of energy, of struggle, of bloodshed that has gone into ending up with an 8-hour day, with mine safety clauses, with child labor laws. It came from such pressure from below.

OK, look at me right now. I'm laid up. I have got serious, serious heart disease. I have a permanent catheter in the middle of my chest and a tube coming out of a bag on my shoulder with medicine it will pump directly into my heart. That's what keeps it beating. So that's all from medicare, OK?

So, what's pressure from below? We've got social security, we've got medicare, we've got workman's comp, unemployment insurance, and minimum wage. These were normally unheard of in the rest of the industrial world. Why? Because workers organized. That past is the mirror we look into when we look at ourselves today to say, 'What the hell are we doing?'

Werbe: Well, I was going to say we made lots of strides forward, but in many ways people say we are going back to the 19th Century. When you said 8-hour day, a lot of people around here, if they still have their job, are saying, 'Eight hour day? I can't remember one of those.'

Phillips: We fought and we went to the wall and we went to jail by the thousands to help us emerge from an Industrial Dark Age. Now, we are stumbling blindly back into it. It has to stop. You know where that starts? I know exactly where that starts, arresting this, it starts in the public schools. In public schools, we have kids coming out of high school who don't know what a scab is, who don't know what a union is.

Werbe: You better tell people what a scab is because I don't think anybody thinks it's anything other than what's on your arm after you cut it.

Phillips: A scab is someone who will cross a picket line and work at your job. They call them replacement workers, that was a scab. It's the worse thing you could be: to betray your own working class. What is the working class? The working class is if you work for wages and you've got a boss, you're the working class. It doesn't matter whether you're a college professor or a ditch digger. You're in the working class and better be proud of it.

Werbe: You were in the United States army beginning in 1956 and you were in Korea. Tell us how that influenced your life choices.

Phillips: It was a little bit before that. My mother worked for a time for the CIO, the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Of course, that was what really rescued the labor movement. The CIO, started in 1935, the year I was born, was the rebirth of the idea of industrial unionism, a more latter day IWW.

My mother was a strong, strong union mother and she had the books in the house. She never tried to force me to be or do anything, but these materials were always there. Out of high school, with no negotiable skills at all, I rode the trains for a while, just as freight and then I joined the army. I mean, talk about a dumb move. Some people learn things the hard way and I'm one of them. (Werbe laughs.)

I wound up a radar tech in Massachusetts, Boston area anti-aircraft defence. I managed, through sheer clumsiness and ineptitude to fry an enormous amount of radar equipment, simply by pressing the wrong button. Of course, the orders came down, 'Get this guy out of here' and I was pipelined for Korea. I was hauling around a rifle and I was trying to avoid infiltrators. This was after Panmunjom, after the truce, but the place was crawling with people who really didn't want you there and were willing to let you know it.

That's where I really woke up. When someone asks me, 'Tell me about Korea' I say, "Crying babies." That's it. The orphanages I visited with a hundred kids, babies in them, a lot of GI babies, blond-headed kids. The GIs had gone home and the Koreans wouldn't accept them and the US government wouldn't acknowledge them. I would go around the various units and get bags of rice to send in there.

One time I was up in the guard tower looking out over the paddies, which were empty; it rained during the winter and it was cold.

These little guys with shoe-shine boxes would show up at our gate and try to make however much they could for shining the boots. Then they would carve out a little hole in the dike side of the patties and make a little fire. I would get up in the guard tower to spot the fires so I could take cups of canteen food cooked or coffee out in the morning.

One time I found one of the little boys dead and frozen. I carried him in and took him to med and they said give him to the Korean army, the soldiers, so I did. They took him but I could see right away how much they hated me. Where I finally broke down was up on the Injin river. That's when I knew I was the wrong person, in the wrong place at the wrong time and that it all had to change. And that change had to begin with me.

Werbe: And how did you separate from the Army?

Phillips: Well, I played the game and I wound up in Fort Riley when I got back on the troop ship *Mitchell*. I made a good bit of money shooting crap. Anybody who's going to shoot crap with me is either suicidal or insane. I'm just good. You know, I wanted to have enough money to float myself when I got out because I knew I wasn't good for anything. I wasn't going to go get a job and just pretend things were normal. They weren't normal, I was half-crazy. I wound up in Fort Riley for a while and that's where they discharged me. Then I made my way back up to Seattle and then I got on the trains again.

Werbe: That's when we described you as a hobo. That's when you were riding the rails, right?

Phillips: A hobo is not tramping. A hobo works and wanders. A tramp dreams and wanders. And a bum drinks

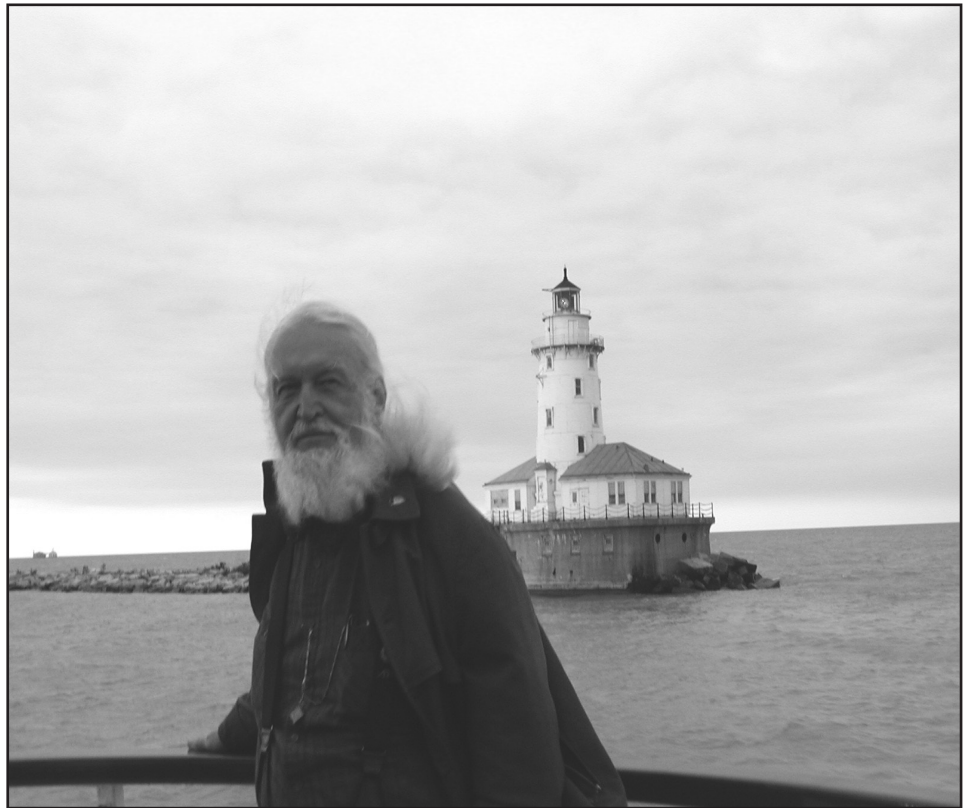


Photo: Christopher Dunn

Utah Phillips was a working class elder who used stories to forge links between today's IWWs and past Wobblies' wisdom and experience.

and wanders. (Werbe laughs.) I wasn't out there to find a job. I had a Missouri bank roll in my bindle and I didn't know what I was going to do. I didn't know whether I could live in the country anymore. No, I was tramping. I was wandering.

Werbe: You were in your late Twenties?

Phillips: Yeah, that's about right. About 25 or around there. But I saw a whole lot of the country and I was close to the ground all of the time. It was there that I realized that I had a great, passionate and enormous and curious love of the country. I was down at the bottom, you know. And I was finally able to make the distinction that Mark Twain made, 'Loyalty to the country always, loyalty to the government when it deserves it.' I have yet to find that [government] but it might yet show up. (Werbe laughs.)

Werbe: You wound up with an organization called the Catholic Workers movement.

Phillips: Well, that was Ammond Hennacy, one of Dorothy Day's great friends, who loved her with a great animal passion and she loved Ammon Hennacy with a great spiritual passion. And they used to say in the Catholic Worker that the horniest of men make the holiest of women. Well, never the twain shall meet, so he came West to start the Joe Hill House of Hospitality. I had got a job at a warehouse and one with the state, but I spent a lot of time, about eight years, working with Ammon Hennacy.

Werbe: How did you hook up with the IWW and how did you find it at that particular time?

Phillips: As a young boy, it found me serendipitously. I'd go out to national parks like Yellowstone to find work during the summer. I'd work in the kitchen as a 'pearl diver', what we call now a 'hydro-ceramic technician'—

Werbe: —a dish washer—

Phillips: Yeah, a dishwasher. And there were the road crew guys, the old guys, drunks, who were just good enough to shovel gravel, were up in these clapboard shanties in the trees where the tourists couldn't see you. At night, they would have a fire and sing old songs.

That's where I first started to learn to sing those old songs. One of those guys had the rigging for a delegate from the IWW. He didn't even know if the union still existed. He signed me up, after all these macho stories. You know, I joined for all the wrong reasons, and when I got back from Korea, I read as much as I could, I thought about it, I called Carl Keller, the General Secretary-Treasurer

of the Wobblies in Chicago [1965-1969], and we corresponded and I re-joined the union. I've been really a member of the IWW for over half a century and it's still my proudest association. The philosophy of industrial unionism: 'an injury to one is an injury to all.'

Werbe: Tell us some about your singing and storytelling career.

Phillips: You know, I was backed into this trade. I didn't choose it. It's a wonderful, fine, honorable trade that gave me that opportunity to explore the country and all of North America. Town for town, I beat the streets and talked to people and visited organizations. I'm just so frustrated that I can't be out there anymore.

When I got East [after leaving Utah to escape being blacklisted for his Peace and Freedom candidacy in 1968], I had to be told I was singing folk music. I didn't know what it was.

I should remind people that [a benefit concert] is not for medical expenses. The only thing I learned how to do was to sing songs and tell stories and leave town the next day. My income went from a reasonably good income to zero. That's what people are helping us do to get over this hard time—excuse me, I'm losing my breath—to replace that lost income so that we can keep the heat on.

Werbe: In the tradition of the Industrial Workers of the World, it's called mutual aid. What is the proudest moment of your life so far?

Phillips: (Pause.) The proudest moment in my whole life is marrying the woman who has taken over my life and has taken care of me now, Joanna Robinson. It's like living with an angel. She is the warmest, deepest heart I have ever encountered anywhere and is indescribably beautiful. It is such a privilege to me in my situation now and have that person in my life.

Peter Werbe is the host of Night Call on WRIF-FM in Detroit that aired interview on May 11. www.peterwerbe.com. A portion of it appeared in the Summer 2008 Fifth Estate www.fifthestate.org. This interview was edited by the IW.

Utah Phillips' family requests memorial donations to: Hospitality House, P.O. Box 3223, Grass Valley, California 95945 (530) 271-7144 www.hospitalityhouseshelter.org

Read the family's obituary at www.utahphillips.org.

Starbucks union-busting exposed in 20 countries

Workers in Spain and the United States organized a successful global day of action on July 5 to put the spotlight on two recent firings of union activists by coffee giant, Starbucks.

Just four days before, on July 1, Starbucks had announced it would be closing 600 “under-performing” stores. The Starbucks Union called on the company to provide advance notice to employees, minimize layoffs and to “immediately disclose the locations it intends to close and outline its severance plan.”

The company’s firings and store closure announcement spurred a strong response from workers who want to organize a union.

On July 5, workers from the IWW,

Norway, Poland, Russia, Slovak Republic, and Poland all took action either through demonstrations or letters of protest.

In New Zealand and Australia, Starbucks did not escape protest visits. In Melbourne, the strong police presence scared away customers of the city’s main Starbucks, which stayed empty for 1.5 hours during the lunch hour rush while Union Solidarity leader Dave Kerin spoke.

Three police cars appeared at the Rochester, United States, protest, but left without interfering with the enthusiastic IWWs distributing flyers, talking to customers, singing and dancing. In Philadelphia, the manager called the police to no avail, yelled at the protesters and finally resorted to posting an orange sign that said, “We love our jobs.”

Starbucks’ disrespect for the right to join a union will not stop our efforts to have a voice at work.

—Cole Dorsey, fired barista

Spanish Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT), and many other unions and groups picketed 300 Starbucks in 80 cities in 20 countries.

In Spain, the CNT protested in front of 20 coffee shops in Barcelona, Madrid, Sevilla, and Valencia. American IWWs and allies picketed Starbucks in Alameda, Albuquerque, Baltimore, Boston, Burlington, Chicago, Fresno, Grand Rapids, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Rochester, Salt Lake City, and Tempe.

In South America, Starbucks in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile faced *piquetes* outside of their stores.

In Europe, the Freie Arbeiterinnen- und Arbeiter Union (FAU) in Germany as well as workers from Ireland, Italy,



Photo: Tim Adams and P. Swartzfager

IWWs Devra and Jake dance on the picket line in Rochester, United States.



Members of the FAU in Germany picket Starbucks.



IWWs in Philadelphia, United States, picket Starbucks.

relentless union-busting campaign,” said Cole Dorsey.

“Starbucks’ disrespect for the right to join a union is appalling and absolutely will not stop our efforts to have a voice at work.”

Dorsey’s firing comes as a National Labor Relations Board judge is set to rule after a lengthy trial on the retaliatory terminations of three New York City baristas. Even before the firing, the NLRB was investigating whether Starbucks had violated a settlement agreement entered into in Grand Rapids over anti-union discrimination. In 2006, Starbucks was forced to re-hire two union baristas who had been unlawfully fired for union activity.

Founded in 2004, the IWW Starbucks Workers Union is an organization of baristas, bussers, and shift supervisors united for a living wage, secure work hours, and respect on the job.

With files from Ted Forsyth, John Kalwaic, CNT Seccion Sindical en Starbucks, the IWW International Solidarity Commission, IWW Starbucks Union, J. Pierce, Viola Wilkins, x353983, and Clayton Beverly.

Police seize *Industrial Worker* news box

By Brendan Maslauskas Dunn

On April 7, an IWW supporter was surprised to see city workers cutting the locks off of the *Industrial Worker* newspaper box and the Anarchist information box in downtown Olympia, Washington. The workers said that the Olympia police had told them that the boxes were stolen property and they had to confiscate them.

Two days and several discussions with cops and city bureaucrats later, the IWW found out what happened to the boxes. Apparently, Public Works was pressured by both the Olympia Police Department (OPD) and the city department for Community Planning and Development to take the boxes.

The OPD alleged that the two boxes were stolen from the *Seattle Weekly* newspaper. *The Seattle Weekly* had reported two of their boxes missing a week prior to the newspaper box seizures, but the IWW and Anarchy boxes are different designs and had been on the street for months before the theft.

The Community Planning and Development department’s complaint was that the boxes obstructed wheelchair access

to the crosswalk and that the boxes were chained to city property. However, dozens of *The Olympian* and *Seattle Times* boxes are locked down to city property as well and were not seized. The two boxes were also in no way obstructing wheelchair access.

After a few phone conversations and the threat of both legal action and direct action, the City returned the boxes to the IWW and apologized.

The Olympia GMB declared victory, fixed the *Industrial Worker* box and placed it back in the same spot.

A letter of complaint was sent to the City to pursue the matter. Another IWW member is in the process of filing records requests with the City and police to find out more about the reasons behind the seizure.

The confiscation of the boxes comes during increased repression of political dissent in the area, especially against anarchists, participants in port militarization resistance, and members of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in Olympia. SDS recently fought a free speech fight at The Evergreen State College, which lasted over four months.



Firings spark protest

New firings sparked the collaboration between the two unions to organize the global protest. On April 24, Starbucks fired a barista named Monica for her organizing activity in Sevilla, Spain. She asked that her surname be withheld to avoid being blacklisted by other employers. Monica is a member of the CNT’s Commercial and Hotel Workers union.

Monica’s dismissal is similar to the charges of anti-union discrimination currently under investigation by the United States’ National Labor Relations Board in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

On June 6, Starbucks terminated Cole Dorsey, a barista active in the IWW Starbucks Workers Union as part of its union-busting efforts against employees pressing for a living wage and secure work hours. He had worked at Starbucks for two years. Starbucks’ pretext for the firing was an attendance infraction that had happened months before.

“Today I joined the growing number of baristas that Starbucks has fired in its

Decriminalize prostitution

Continued from 1

be directed to treat sex workers who are victims of rape and robbery equal protection under the law and ensure crimes against them are consistently and rigorously investigated. The \$11.4 million budget for prostitution prosecution would be re-allocated to making sex workers safer.

Currently, prostitutes and clients who are victims of violence sometimes will not report crimes to the police for fear that they will be arrested for prostitution.

“Arresting prostitutes and their clients only perpetuates the violence and discrimination against them, and when you have a criminal record it’s harder for those who wish to pursue other careers to exit the sex industry,” said Robyn Few

of the Sex Workers Outreach Project.

The ballot initiative would also end the First Offender Prostitution Program, which is facing a value-for-money audit. The District Attorney, San Francisco Police Department and the SAGE Project, which runs the first offender program, receive fees for each person that goes through the program.

“Why should city employees be able to profit off of someone else’s labor when sex workers don’t have the right to negotiate for our labor and our safe work conditions?” said Doogan.

The signature gathering campaign kicked off on March 3, International Sex Workers’ Rights Day. The union said it would “plunge ahead with the campaign.”

FULL PAGE AD

Mexican teachers struggle for union democracy

By Paul Bocking

Democratic rank-and-file teachers continue to struggle with long-time teachers' union leader *la Maestra*, Elba Esther Gordillo, and her allies for control of Mexico's National Union of Education Workers (SNTE).

With approximately 1.4 million members employed in public schools throughout Mexico, the SNTE is the largest union in Latin America. Preparing for a new campaign to re-take control of Mexico City's locals, on April 24 Gordillo shuffled the union's national executive committee, appointed a new secretary general and extended her 19-year reign by creating the new position of president and subsequently declaring herself its permanent occupant. She conceded in a press statement that she would have to die someday, "but not when they want me to."

According to the Mexico City daily newspaper, *La Jornada*, in the week leading up to the Mexico City local's congress on July 1-2, Gordillo's supporters transported delegates to brunches at Holiday Inns around the city, where they were informed on how to vote in the coming local executive elections and received generous door prizes.

Meanwhile, the exact location of the congress was kept secret until the last minute in an effort to frustrate the organizing of activists affiliated with the National Education Workers Coordinat-

ing Committee (CNTE), a driving force in the local. Despite these efforts, 80 per cent of the delegates voted in favour of a slate of dissident teachers.

Despite of these results, Gordillo declared her own results in a brief parallel session concluded in the back of a limousine, according to reporting in *La Jornada*.

Soon after her chosen slate occupied local offices on July 2, a crowd of angry teachers forced their way into the building, evicting the newly-imposed leaders. Several hours later, a large police force re-took control of the union headquarters.

Despite her significant institutional power, the transparent illegitimacy of the intervention may defeat Gordillo's bid for control.

The CNTE and other dissident teachers continued mobilizing in the following week, gathering support both from other unions and the public. Banners were hung on the walls of public schools around the city decrying the imposition of the union bosses and in support of the leaders elected by the rank-and-file.

Oaxaca teachers

On July 1, IWW International Solidarity Commission representatives Paul Bocking and E. Larson met with several activist teachers in Oaxaca, a southern state known for the militancy and independence of its teacher's local section 22.

After explaining the history of the democratic teacher's movement in Mexico, the teachers commented on the 'truce' declared last month between the leadership of section 22 and Gordillo, that allegedly safeguard's the local's au-

tonomy, but recognizes her ultimate authority. The agreement may signal a shift in Mexico's

foremost dissident teachers' local. The concession appeared to be motivated by the local leadership's own desire for positions within the national union controlled by *la Maestra*.

"Her power is on an equal level with [Mexican president] Calderón," one said. "Neither would do anything that opposed the other."

The machinations were in strong contrast to the experience of rank-and-file teachers who continued to defy the state in demanding more funding for public education, respect for civil liberties and improved standards of living in Mexico's second poorest state.

A teacher and father of four, Eme-terio Merino Cruz, was arrested and led away by police during a massive public

protest against the state government on July 17, 2007. The following day he was released from custody, after having been beaten to the edge of his life.

Meeting in his home in a rural municipality outside of Oaxaca City, Merino pointed to an indentation visible on the side of his skull, where a rock was smashed against his head and to the cigarette burns on his chest; only some of the scars remained a year later.

His case is only one of many that demonstrate the violence with which rank-and-file unionists and the participants in other social movements in Oaxaca and Mexico as a whole must struggle against. After lengthy campaigns by his wife, also a teacher, and their children, the state agreed to provide basic medical treatments necessary for his partial rehabilitation.

Merino will be testifying before state judicial authorities in July.

To date, only five local police officers have been charged with his torture. Evidence has indicated that his detainment was directed by prominent state government authorities as part of a broader campaign to suppress the democratic teacher's movement, and the broader movement of neighbourhood associations, indigenous organizations and worker's groups that comprise the Popular Assemblies of the People of Oaxaca (APPO).

Despite the political power of right-wing political operators like Elba Esther Gordillo and the continuing presence of state violence, the grassroots organizing that led to the formation of the CNTE nearly 30 years ago persists among teachers in Oaxaca, Mexico City and other regions of the country.

International Solidarity

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Hanes to fairly compensate the workers, expressing hope that the company will live up to its responsibilities but warning that if it does not the IWW will take further action.

Fired Haitian workers

The ISC wrote a letter expressing outrage over the recent arrest of two female workers at the Ministry of Social Affairs in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. These workers, along with others, were seeking redress over severance pay they have been owed since December of 2007 due to the closing of their place of employment. Since the owner of the factory where they worked, Jean Paul Faubert, has for six months refused to pay them their back wages, the workers were seeking help from the Ministry of Social Affairs. In response to this appeal, these two individuals were arrested.

In the letter, the ISC pointed out that it is the duty of the Ministry of Social Affairs to assist workers who are mistreated by their employers and that this recent action only gives credit to the often expressed suspicion that the Ministry exists only to serve the interests of factory owners and business people, and not the workers. The IWW urged the Ministry to demand that Jean Paul Faubert pay the fired Sohacosa workers what he owes them, as required under Haitian law.

FAT members in Mexico

The ISC sent a letter to the government of Mexico demanding the immediate reinstatement of six employees of OESSA, a cleaning services company contracted by the government of Mexico City. The workers were fired because they were members of the STRACC, a democratic union affiliated with the Authentic Workers Front (FAT). These union activists were subject to forced confinement and physical assaults by their supervisors and police officers in an effort to force them from their jobs.

In the letter, the ISC urged the government of Mexico City to take immediate action to discipline this contractor, ensure fired workers are rehired

and the union's collective agreement is respected.

Attacks on independent unions like the FAT were common during the long era of control by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). The Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), which currently comprises the government of Mexico City, claims to support the right to free association and formation of democratic labour unions. However such abuses of labour rights still occur, often through the refusal of the PRD-led city government to accept its legal responsibility for enforcing Article 123 of the Mexican Constitution which guarantees these rights.

Delegates in India, Ukraine

Two members of the Twin Cities General Membership Branch of the IWW recently were authorized as official ISC delegates: Eli Meyerhoff will represent the ISC during his travels through southern India from July 6 to August 16, where he will follow up on contacts made by Jason Fults of the Gainesville, Florida branch last year. Also in July, Raphi Rechitsky will attempt to meet with independent unions and other like-minded organizations in the Ukraine, a country that the IWW has had very little contact with in recent years.

Bringing the OBU to Portugal

ISC delegate Carlos Guarita, a member of the London GMB, travelled to Portugal in June and will return in July to meet with independent workers' organizations in Portugal, including a group of workers who have expressed interest in forming a Portuguese IWW regional organizing committee (ROC). Prospects for a new Portugal ROC are now high. Look for updates in future issues of the *Industrial Worker*.

Connecting to Palestine and Israel

ISC delegate Sharon Vance returned from a two-week trip to Israel and the West Bank in June and July. During her trip she met with several unions and related organizations on behalf of the ISC. The highlight of her trip was meet-

Mexico City market cleaners defeat union-busting contractor

By Paul Bocking

Members of the Frente Auténtico del Trabajo (Authentic Labour Front, FAT) came to an agreement with the Central de Abastos, Mexico City's largest foods market, on July 1, ending two months of struggle between the union and the market's cleaning contractor.

"We've established a very important precedent that businesses cannot ignore union agreements in Mexico City," said Javino Himenez, press officer for the FAT, in a phone interview.

Beginning on April 29, the contractor attempted to break the local of the Sindicato de Trabajadores de Casas Comerciales, Oficinas y Expendios, Similares y Conexos (STRACC). This union is affiliated with the FAT and includes workers in the public washrooms of the fruits, vegetables and kitchen zone of the market.

In one meeting, the contractor demanded all workers sign resignation papers; the majority who refused were locked in a room for several hours and threatened with charges of robbery.

As the cleaners continued to report to work, local police assisted the company in assaulting and arresting four workers and a FAT organizer on May 6; released the following day after a rapid

mobilization by the union. Workers responded by walking off the job and mounting legal challenges.

Following a call by the FAT and its US-based ally, the United Electrical Workers, unions around the world sent letters to the Government of Mexico City, the ultimate authority over the market, demanding it intervene against the cleaning contractor. The International Solidarity Commission of the IWW sent a letter stating that despite the change in government eleven years ago that brought the centre-left Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD) to power, companies continue to violate Mexican labour law with impunity.

Mexico City's Labour and Arbitration Board later ruled that a collective agreement existed between the union and the market that the contractor was legally required to recognize. Through the worker's strike, as well as pressure from the city government and unions in Mexico and abroad, the company was forced to cease its efforts, according to Himenez.

Of the original 42 employees, the 22 who refused to resign will receive from the company 100 per cent of their lost wages during the two month of conflict.

ing Muhammed Aruri from the Ramallah-based Independent Workers Union Federation. The union is largely concentrated in the professional sector (banking and universities) and is also organizing the unemployed, demanding that the Palestinian Authority deliver on its promise to provide health insurance for the unemployed.

Vance also met with others, including the Palestinian General Federation of

Trade Unions (PGFTU). The PGFTU is the main union representing blue collar workers who worked in Israel.

The PGFTU is trying to force the Histadut (Israel's powerful business union federation) to turn over the money collected from Palestinian workers from the Occupied Territories who worked in Israel.

So far they have only received a fraction of what they say is owed.

World Labor Solidarity

A COLUMN BY THE
INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY COMMISSION

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

By Mike Pesa

Reactivating the IWW in Chile

On June 6, Alex Van Schaick, the current International Solidarity Commission (ISC) delegate in Bolivia, and Peter Montalbano, a union member from New York, visited Arica, Chile. The ISC in conjunction with the Colectivo de Agitación Libertaria (CAL) and the Federación de Estudiantes Libertarios (FEL) coordinated a forum to debate current union organizing strategies for industrialised work.

About 40 people attended the event which took place at the Sindicato Sutrapeva, the social centre of the stevedores union. A short video from the New Jersey truckers started the night and then the IWW speakers focused on the Wild Edibles campaign from New York, highlighting challenges in the legislation, strategic lessons, supply chain organising and community support. Ricardo Olivero from the CAL facilitated the event and there were two other speakers, Daniel Riquelme from the FEL, who referred to the history of the IWW in Chile and the changes in the current situation of Chile that bring up the need to reorganise industrially. Finally, Herval Correa shared his experience as an organiser of the recently formed food workers union at one of the biggest supermarket chains in Chile, LIDER. Correa said they want to have a federation of supermarkets in northern Chile.

Questions spanned from the history of the IWW in the States to the role of the student movement in class struggle and direct action, making this event a unique exchange of organising strategies that hopes to reactivate the IWW in Chile.

Solidarity with ZSP against Lionbridge

The ISC is coordinating solidarity pickets and actions on behalf of a Warsaw-based member of the ZSP (Polish Syndicalist Union), fired for union organizing by Lionbridge, a multinational information technology corporation.

An international day of action in July (date to be announced) at Lionbridge locations worldwide is being coordinated between several radical unions, including International Workers' Association (IWA) sections and IWW branches, among others.

For a listing of Lionbridge locations around the globe see: www.lionbridge.com/en-US/company/locations.htm. Get involved! Please contact solidarity@iww.org.

Solidarity with Indian Guest Workers on Hunger Strike

The ISC is participating in a campaign to support Indian guest workers who were trafficked to the Gulf Coast to work for Signal International who held a hunger strike for 29 days from May 14 to June 11 demanding dignity and justice.

The workers were charged \$20,000 each and promised permanent residency but instead were given temporary H2B visas that bound them to their employer, allowing the company to impose deplorable conditions and threaten workers with deportation.

When they organized, Signal sent armed guards to detain the organizers and fired the leaders. The intimidation hasn't stopped their organizing. The workers have already won their first demand: Congress will hold a hearing

later this year to investigate Signal International and the use of the guest-worker program.

Help these workers win their second, key demand: that they be granted "continued presence" so they can end their hunger strike. The workers must be released from the terror of deportation and granted this legal status as authorized by the U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act so they may safely participate in the federal government's investigation.

Visit nolaworkerscenter.wordpress.com/sign-the-petition/ to take action.

Defending SVA Ruba Electronics Employees Union

The ISC sent a letter to the Government of Pakistan, urging officials to uphold the rights of workers at the SVA Ruba Electronics Factory, which is a joint venture with China.

Workers at the factory make less than minimum wages and are forced to do overtime. Management is violating labor laws, using terror tactics and has even resorted to violence, especially against women workers.

Several times in May the factory management has locked workers either in the factory or out of the factory. Workers demanding their rights have been threatened by goons and thrown out of the factory.

When the workers formed a union named SVA Ruba Electronics Employees Union and submitted an application to the Registrar of Unions in the National Industrial Relation Commission (NIRC), the Chairman of the NIRC gave the workers a "stay order" and instructed the management to not terminate any workers. Despite this order, workers have been locked out of the factory, protesting under the hot sun for their jobs.

In the letter, the ISC declared its solidarity with SVA Ruba workers and demanded the immediate reinstatement of Waheed Il Hasan and a major salary increase for the workers. The ISC further insisted that the company recognize the SVA Ruba Electronics Employees Union, cease intimidation and begin bargaining in good faith with the union.

The letter called on the government of Pakistan to take immediate action against SVA Ruba Electronics for the violation of ILO Conventions 87 and 98 and any other violations of Pakistani or international labor law.

Seeking Justice for laid-off garment workers in Haiti

Joseph Lapp II, who represented the IWW in Haiti in April and May, recently sent a letter to underwear manufacturer Hanes Brands, Inc. and Global Supply protesting the actions of Hanes subcontractor CD Apparel.

In the letter, Joseph described how during his trip to Haiti he became aware of the ongoing struggle of 500 factory workers who lost their jobs as a direct result of Hanes' decision to withdraw its contract from CD Apparel and move production to a different factory.

He pointed out that although these workers were in time paid their legally required severance (a tiny amount), they have not received the same level of compensation as workers employed under contract by Hanes in other parts of the world have been. The letter urged

Continued on 11

German-area IWWs picket Boesner for union-busting



Photo: x357702

IWWs picket Boesner in Frankfurt, Germany to protest union-management's attempt to stop workers from electing a works council.

By Lutz Getzschmann, GLAMROC

On June 7, IWW members and supporters rallied at the stores of the art supplies chain Boesner in the German cities of Cologne, Frankfurt, Berlin and Austrian cities of Vienna and Graz.

They were protesting the Cologne store management's harassment of workers that prevented an organizing drive of the Cologne IWW, which had tried to form a works council (*Betriebsrat*).

German labour law guarantees workers the right to form works councils elected by the workers in shops with five or more employees. It prohibits management from taking action against the election of a works council.

When members and supporters of the IWW at the Boesner shop in Cologne announced the elections for a works council in early January 2008, the management panicked. Only one of the 24 Boesner shops in Germany has a works council, set up by the service workers union, ver.di.

Overall, union membership in the company is low and the management doesn't want workers' representation in their stores, which they see as a hurdle for further expansion.

Workers were questioned under pressure in interviews at the manager's office. One day before the scheduled election, the management held a meeting with all workers and threatened to cut wages and extend working hours if they formed a works council. They forced the workers to vote publicly in front of the managers against a works council.

Frustrated by the divisions successfully made by these illegal employer actions, the IWWs withdrew their election announcement in order to regroup.

A few months later the management of Boesner Cologne began to implement

the very measures they had threatened the workers with if they voted for a works council: the extension of working hours by opening the stores on Saturday. Obviously, management had intended to do this anyway, regardless of whether the workers elected a works council or not.

Management has not hired new staff, instead forcing current employees to staff the extra shifts, without paying the weekend work bonus, which is common in Germany. As a result of more work, workers are feeling more stress on the job.

In response, the Cologne IWW is calling Boesner workers to action at the local shop and other Boesner stores in Germany and Austria. While the IWW branches in Cologne and Frankfurt organized the rallies on their own, the Berlin branch of the FAU supported the move and held a rally in front of the Berlin Boesner store, too. In Austria, the anarcho-syndicalist Federation of Workers Syndicates (Foederation der ArbeiterInnen-Syndikate, FAS), where some Austrian IWW members are also organized, held rallies in Vienna and Graz.

Customers reacted positively to the rallies, taking leaflets into the stores and signing a petition to respect workers rights at Boesner. Printed transparencies with the motto, "Democracy for workers, too!" will see more use at future rallies.

Furthermore, the IWW made contacts with radical trade unionists and workers activists who supported the action.

Workers will continue to pressure the company to accept works' councils. The Boesner company depends on its image as a fair and friendly, social responsible firm. By failing to respond, it faces the risk of earning a bad reputation as a union-buster.

UFCW ratifies migrant workers' contract

By www.ufcw.ca

On June 20, workers at Mayfair Farms in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, Canada ratified 93 per cent in favor of the country's first-ever contract for migrant agriculture workers employed seasonally at farm operations.

The migrant agricultural workers now have a grievance procedure, a right to be recalled each season based on seniority, and other contract language to protect them from being ejected from their employer-owned lodgings or expelled from Canada until their case is heard by an independent arbitrator.

"Equal labour rights for migrant workers is now more than a concept. It's a contract," said National President Hanley. "It shows the way for thousands of other migrant and temporary workers

brought to Canada for agriculture and other industries... This is history in the making."

The Mayfair Farms workers are represented by UFCW Canada Local 832, which originally applied to represent the unit in September 2006. Legal challenges by the employer followed but ultimately the unit was certified in June 2007.

In Quebec, three other bargaining units comprising of migrant agricultural workers are in various stages of the process leading to a first-contract. In Ontario, a decision is expected shortly on a UFCW Canada constitutional challenge of Ontario's ban on agriculture workers forming unions for the purposes of collective bargaining.