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General Strike in the French Antilles

By A.L. Martinez

A 44-day strike on the French Caribbean colony of Guadeloupe has come to an end. The strike focused on the issues of pay raises and lowering the costs of 54 basic goods, such as bread. The Collective Against Exploitation (LKP) led the strike.

A major point of contention during the strike was that while prices were higher for goods on Guadeloupe and the neighboring Martinique than metropolitan France, wages were lower. Among the concessions won by the LKP was a supplement to the wages of the lowest-paid workers that will consist of a €200 (US\$254) monthly payment.

Unemployment is high on Guade-

loupe—higher than 20 percent, according to the latest statistics. The island, along with Martinique and French Guyana in South America, are three of the four regions of the European Union with the highest unemployment rates.

The strike had one fatality—union member Jacques Bino was killed after leaving a union meeting on Feb. 17, 2009. In his memory, the first agreement on raising wages was called the Jacques Bino Accord.

LKP leader Eli Demota has warned that strikes would resume if the government reneges on its promises.

Compiled from articles by Associated Press and British Broadcasting Corporation.

More on 3



Workers in the French Antilles protest for improved conditions.

Photo: LKP

For Labor Solidarity with the NYU Student Occupiers

By Daniel Gross

The almost two-day student occupation at New York University around demands of transparency and accountability has ended but the dialogue set in motion by the action is just beginning. Also just beginning is the University's punitive measures against participants in the occupation - measures clearly designed to have a chilling effect on future dissent.

Eighteen students have reportedly been suspended and face expulsion. To maximize hardship, NYU and its President John Sexton have evicted several students from university housing. It's also believed that NYU is working closely with the New York City Police Department toward bringing criminal charges against some students.

The reprisals being undertaken by NYU executives are eerily reminiscent of those carried out in the breaking of the union of graduate student employees

in November 2005. I'm reminded of President Sexton's stomach-churning ultimatum to the striking graduate workers: cross the picket line or be blacklisted from your paid teaching post and lose the health benefits that go along with it.

As the students of the Take Back NYU! coalition contend with the disproportionate punishment being meted out by the university, I hope that working people and their labor organizations conclude that the students are deserving of firm solidarity. While many in the labor movement are broadly supportive of student activism, there are some who are privately dismissive of student efforts as inward-looking or irrelevant. But the historic and present-day record is replete with examples of students powerfully struggling for their own autonomy at school while working side-by-side with class-based social movements beyond campus; May 1968 in France and Greece today are two oft-cited examples.

More on 3

Australians Rally in Support of 7-Eleven Workers in Geelong

By Kirk Leonard, UNITE member

On Feb. 13, 2009, more than 100 people attended a rally outside the 7-Eleven store in the heart of Geelong. The protest called for 7-Eleven to start paying its workers the legal minimum wage and for all unpaid wages to be paid back to them. The rally was also demanding that one of the workers, who was sacked for making a complaint, be reinstated.

This 7-Eleven store on Moorabool Street is particularly dodgy. The operator makes any new employees work for up to two months in what he calls an "unpaid trial." When he realized that some of the workers were thinking of reporting his illegal behavior to the Workplace Ombudsman, he threatened them with violence. While breaking nearly every law in the book, 7-Eleven still had the audacity to visit the Geelong police station on the morning before the rally asking them to put a stop to it!

Despite management's attempts, the rally went ahead and was very successful. The action was broad-based and vibrant, with many unions affiliated to the Geelong Trades Hall Council (GTHC) attending. Some people stopped work to attend while others came down during their lunch break. Many 7-Eleven workers, past and present, also came along.

Hundreds of leaflets outlining 7-Eleven's despicable employment practices were distributed. People also stopped to sign the petition or to have a chat. Many Geelong locals tooted their car horns in support as they drove past. Some people took leaflets pledging to let-

terbox their streets.

Tim Gooden, Secretary of the GTHC, led the rally in chants such as "Low pay? NO WAY!" Anthony Main, Secretary of UNITE, gave a speech outlining the background of this dispute. He explained that, despite the bullying and intimidation, the workers were not about to back down.

An ex-worker from the store named Kholi, who is still waiting to be paid for working on Christmas day last year, also spoke. Kholi got the best response from the rally. He gave a firsthand account of the horrible conditions in the store and explained that most of the workers 7-Eleven employ are vulnerable international students. Due to the low wages they pay, 7-Eleven forces the workers to work more than the 20 hour limit imposed by their visa regulations. This is happening on a mass scale.

Kholi also explained the need for workers from all companies and industries to stop 7-Eleven from exploiting their workers.

"If we allow them to get away with it here, more and more companies will be trying to follow," he said. Both Gooden and Main called on 7-Eleven to sort out these problems and to sort them out quickly.

"When you treat Geelong locals like this, you have no longer just involved the workers and UNITE. You have involved the entire trade union movement," Gooden said. If 7-Eleven continue to refuse to stick to the law, further protests both in Geelong and in Melbourne will ensue.

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May Day Announcements

Announcements for the annual "May Day" *Industrial Worker* deadline is **April 3**. Celebrate the real labor day with a message of solidarity! Send announcements to iw@iww.org.

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- \$12 for 1" tall, 1 column wide
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- \$90 for a quarter page

Industrial Worker Editor Stepping Down

Fellow Workers,

When I ran for election with Diane Krauthamer last November, I was fully committed to bring my experience as editor to helping produce a high quality *Industrial Worker* for the next two years. This was on the understanding that Diane and I would divide tasks as we thought best, I here in Europe, Diane in the U.S.

However, after one issue, several things have become apparent. Firstly, as the *IW* is printed and distributed in the U.S., Diane is obviously best placed to deal with Saltus press and distribution. Secondly, the administration of the internet lists, which is part of the remit of *IW* editor, has fallen on Diane as I wouldn't know where to start.

Thirdly and most importantly, though, Diane has expressed confidence that she can edit the paper on her own. As I would never have stood as editor of the *IW* myself, for the practical reasons above, we have decided that I should step down and Diane can get on with the job herself.

So, there it is. Short and sweet. I have to say, thanks for giving me the opportunity.

For the One Big Union,
Phil Wharton



Graphic: iww.org

Commemorating Resistance

In approximately two years we mark the hundredth anniversary of the Triangle Shirt-Waist Fire of March 25, 1911. Over one hundred workers were killed in that sweatshop because exit doors were locked and fire department ladders were smaller than what was needed to reach the floors that the women were on. There should be a world wide commemoration this event. Perhaps a one-hour stoppage of work.

In solidarity,
Raymond Solomon

Correction

Adam Welch's article, "Can we rebuild the labor movement with the Employee Free Choice Act?" on page 6 of the January 2009 *Industrial Worker*, claimed that Canada has card check recognition similar to that proposed in the Employee Free Choice Act. Most Canadian provinces and territories, including Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario (excepting building trades), do not include card check recognition in their labour law. British Columbia, Manitoba and Quebec labour law do include card check recognition.

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

GENERAL SECRETARY-TREASURER:
Chris Lytle

GENERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Sarah Bender, Nick Durie,
Jason Krpan, Bryan Roberts,
Heather Gardner, Stephanie Basile,
Koala Lopata.

EDITOR & GRAPHIC DESIGNER :
Diane Krauthamer
iw@iww.org

PRINTER:
Saltus Press
Worcester, MA

Send contributions and letters
to: IW, PO Box 7430, JAF
Station, New York, NY 10116,
United States.

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IWW directory

Australia

IWW Regional Organising Committee: PO Box 1866,
Albany, WA www.iww.org.au
Sydney: PO Box 241, Surry Hills.
Melbourne: PO Box 145, Moreland 3058.

British Isles

IWW Regional Organising Committee: PO Box 1158,
Newcastle Upon Tyne NE99 4XL UK,
rocsec@iww.org.uk, www.iww.org.uk

Baristas United Campaign: baristasunited.org.uk
National Blood Service Campaign: www.nbs.iww.org

Bradford: Sam@samjackson6.orangehome.co.uk
Burnley: burnley@iww-manchester.org.uk

Cambridge: IWW c/o Arjuna, 12 Mill Road, Cam-
bridge CB1 2AD cambridge@iww.org.uk

Dorset: dorset@iww.org.uk
Dumfries: iww_dg@yahoo.co.uk

Hull: hull@iww.org.uk
London GMB: c/o Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel
High Street, London E1 7QX. londoniww@iww.org
Leicestershire GMB and DMU IU620 Job Branch:
Unit 107, 40 Halford St., Leicester LE1 1TQ, England.
Tel. 07981 433 637, leics@iww.org.uk www.
leicestershire-iww.org.uk

Leeds: leedsiww@hotmail.co.uk
Manchester: 0791-413-1647 education@iww-
manchester.org.uk www.iww-manchester.org.uk
Norwich: norwich@iww.org.uk
www.iww-norwich.org.uk

Nottingham: notts@iww.org.uk
Reading: readingantig8@hotmail.com

Sheffield: Cwellbrook@riseup.net
Somerset: guarita_carlos@yahoo.co.uk

Tyne and Wear: PO Box 1158, Newcastle Upon Tyne,
NE99 4XL tyneandwear@iww.org.uk
West Midlands: The Warehouse, 54-57 Allison Street

Digbeth, Birmingham B5 5TH westmids@iww.org.uk
www.wmiww.org

York: york@iww.org.uk

Scotland

Aberdeen: iww.aberdeen@googlegmail.com
Clydeside GMB: hereandnowscot@email.com

www.scotland.wordpress.com.

Dumfries IWW: 0845 053 0329, iww_dg@yahoo.
co.uk, www.geocities.com/iww_dg/

Edinburgh IWW: c/o 17 W. Montgomery Place,
EH7 5HA. 0131-557-6242 bill_durruti@yahoo.com

Canada

Alberta

Edmonton GMB: PO Box 75175, T6E 6K1. edmon-
ton@lists.iww.org, edmonton.iww.ca.

British Columbia

Vancouver IWW: 204-2274 York Ave., Vancouver, BC,
V6K 1C6. Phone/fax 604-732-9613. gmb-van@iww.
ca, vancouver.iww.ca, vancouverwob.blogspot.com

Manitoba

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

Ontario

Ottawa-Outaouais GMB & GDC Local 6: PO Box
52003, 298 Dalhousie St. K1N 1S0, 613-225-9655
Fax: 613-274-0819, ott-out@iww.org French:
ott_out_fr@yahoo.ca.

Peterborough: c/o PCAP, 393 Water St. #17, K9H 3L7,
705-749-9694, ptboiww@riseup.net

Toronto GMB: c/o Libra Knowledge & Information
Svc Co-op, PO Box 353 Stn. A, MSW 1C2. 416-919-
7392. iwwtoronto@gmail.com

Québec: iww_quebec@riseup.net

Finland

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

German Language Area

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

Frankfurt am Main: iww-frankfurt@gmx.net.

Goettingen: iww-goettingen@gmx.net.

Koeln: stuhlfauth@wobblies.de.

Munich: iww-muenchen@web.de

Luxembourg: Michael.ashbrook@cec.eu.in

Switzerland: IWW-Zurich@gmx.ch

Greece

Athens: Themistokleous 66 Exarhia Athens
iwgreece@iww.org

Netherlands: iww.ned@gmail.com

United States

Arizona

Phoenix GMB: 480-894-6846, 602-254-4057.

Arkansas

Fayetteville: PO Box 283, 72702. 479-200-1859,
nwar_iww@hotmail.com.

DC

DC GMB (Washington): 741 Morton St NW, Washing-
ton DC, 20010. 571-276-1935.

California

Los Angeles GMB: PO Box 65822, 90065.

North Coast GMB: PO Box 844, Eureka 95502-0844.
707-725-8090, angstink@gmail.com.

San Francisco Bay Area GMB: (Curbside and Buyback
IU 670 Recycling Shops; Stonemountain Fabrics
Job Shop and IU 410 Garment and Textile Worker's
Industrial Organizing Committee; Shattuck Cinemas)
PO Box 11412, Berkeley 94712. 510-845-0540.

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

San Jose: sjwww@yahoo.com.

Colorado

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

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

Florida

Gainesville GMB: 1021 W. University, 32601. 352-
246-2240, gainesvilleiww@riseup.net

Pensacola GMB: PO Box 2662, Pensacola, FL 32513-
2662. 840-437-1323, iwwpensacola@yahoo.com,
www.angelfire.com/fl5/iww

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

Georgia

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

Hawaii

Honolulu: Tony Donnes, del., donnes@hawaii.edu

Illinois

Chicago GMB: 37 S Ashland Ave, Chicago, IL 60607
312-638-9155.

Central III GMB: 903 S. Elm, Champaign, IL, 61820.
217-356-8247

Champaign: 217-356-8247.

Waukegan: PO Box 274, 60079.

Indiana

Lafayette GMB: P.O. Box 3793, West Lafayette, IN
47906, 765-242-1722

Iowa

Eastern Iowa GMB: 114 1/2 E. College Street
Iowa City, IA 52240 easterniowa@iww.org

Maine

Norumbega: PO Box 57, Bath 04530.

Maryland

Baltimore IWW: c/o Red Emma's, 2640 St. Paul
Street, Baltimore MD 21212, 410-230-0450, iww@
redemmas.org.

Massachusetts

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

Cape Cod/SE Massachusetts: PO Box 315, West
Barnstable, MA 02668 thematch@riseup.net

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

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

Michigan

Detroit GMB: 22514 Brittany Avenue, E. Detroit, MI
48021. detroit@iww.org.

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

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

Freight Truckers Hotline: 847-693-6261,
mtw530@iww.org

Minnesota

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

Red River IWW: POB 103, Moorhead, MN 56561
218-287-0053. iww@gomoorhead.com.

Missouri

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

Montana

Two Rivers GMB: PO Box 9366, Missoula, MT 59807,
tworivers@iww.org 406-459-7585.

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

New Jersey

Central New Jersey GMB: PO Box: 10021, New
Brunswick 08904. 732-801-7001 xaninjurotoallx@
yahoo.com, wobbly02@yahoo.com

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

New Mexico

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

New York

NYC GMB: PO Box 7430, JAF Station, New York City
10116, iww-nyc@iww.org. wobblycity.org

Starbucks Campaign: 44-61 11th St. Fl. 3, Long
Island City, NY 11101 starbucksunion@yahoo.com

www.starbucksunion.org
Upstate NY GMB: PO Box 235, Albany 12201-
0235, 518-833-6853 or 518-861-5627. www.

upstate-nyiww.org, secretary@upstate-ny-iww.org,
Rochelle Semel, del., PO Box 172, Fly Creek 13337,
607-293-6489, rochelle71@peoplepc.com.

Hudson Valley GMB: PO Box 48, Huguenot, 12746,
845-858-8851, hviww@aol.com, http://hviww.
blogspot.com/

Ohio

Ohio Valley GMB: PO Box 42233, Cincinnati 45242.
Textile & Clothing Workers IU 410, PO Box 317741,
Cincinnati 45223. ktacmota@aol.com

Oklahoma

Tulsa: PO Box 213 Medicine Park 73557, 580-529-
3360.

Oregon

Lane County: 541-953-3741. www.eugeneiww.org
Portland GMB: 311 N. Ivy St., 97227, 503-231-5488.
portland.iww@gmail.com, pdx.iww.org

Pennsylvania

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

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

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

Pittsburgh GMB: PO Box 831, Monroeville,
PA, 15146. pittsburghiww@yahoo.com

Rhode Island

Providence GMB: P.O. Box 5797 Providence, RI
02903, 508-367-6434. providenceiww@gmail.com

Texas

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

Washington

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

Tacoma IWW: P.O. Box 2052, Tacoma, WA 98401
TacIWW@iww.org

Olympia GMB: PO Box 2775, 98507, 360-878-1879
olywobs@riseup.net

Seattle GMB: 1122 E. Pike #1142, 98122-3934.
206-339-4179. seattleiww@gmail.com

Wisconsin

Madison GMB: PO Box 2442, 53703-2442. www.
madisoniww.info. madisonworkers@yahoo.com

Lakeside Press IU 450 Job Shop: 1334 Williamson,
53703. 608-255-1800. www.lakesidepress.org.

Madison Infoshop Job Shop: 1019 Williamson St. #B,
53703. 608-262-9036.

Just Coffee Job Shop IU 460: 1129 E. Wilson, Madi-
son, 53703 608-204-9011, justcoffee.coop

GDC Local 4: P.O. Box 811, 53701. 608-262-9036.

Railroad Workers IU 520: 608-358-5771.
eugene_v_debs_aru@yahoo.com.

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

Antilles in Struggle: Interview with a CNT-F militant

Interview by Jérémie, International Secretary of the CNT-F.

In the French Antilles' islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique, a general strike shut down economic activity between Jan. 29 and March 4, 2009. The populations of these islands protested against the cost of living, and the rising costs of essential foodstuffs and fuel. The following interview is aimed at explaining the current movement and the popular anger that launched it. The interviewee, Marcel, lives in Martinique and is a CNT-F activist.

What is the current situation in the French Antilles?

The official unemployment rate in Martinique is 22 percent, and 8 percent of the population receives the RMI (a temporary social payment made to the unwaged). There is little industry in the Antilles, which is a hangover from colonial times. The economy is based on buying "finished" products from France, and only producing raw materials for export, such as sugar cane or fruit, on the islands.

The only accepted industrial sector is the production of rum. After having long been landowners, and the true owners of the Antilles, the "békés"—descendants of the white plantation owners—are nowadays involved in distribution, owning the supermarkets and car dealerships. Ironically, industrial work and organization were born in the islands, long before they emerged in Great Britain. In the 18th century, France was the world's main producer of sugar and as a result had made large investments in the Antilles. The most up-to-date and expensive machinery was sent from Europe to the islands, along with personnel to run it. Initially they were from Europe, but there were never enough qualified

people, so they needed to train slaves in the mainland.

The organization of work was based on a division similar to that of the 19th and 20th century workshops in Europe. But, as was the case in England, it was difficult to recruit enough workers. The most efficient and cynical solution was to capture slaves and transport them to the Caribbean. The exploitation, the blood and the horror, formed a melting pot of crossroads between Europe, Africa and America.

Who lit the flames?

Naturally a lot of resentment has built up against the whites, even among those who take the wider situation into account. The anti-white racism on the islands is nothing compared to what blacks must support on the mainland.

What is true, for example, is that a business, when faced with a choice between a black candidate and a white one with equal qualifications, or even a more qualified black candidate, will usually pick the white one. Career progression works in the same way—it's not luck that allows a white to climb the ladder faster than his black colleague.

But what has set off the protests now is simply the cost of living in a country



Strikers confront police.

Photo: LKP

where the average salary is much lower than in France, and where the price of essential goods is often three times higher than in the mainland.

What precedents can be found in previous struggles in the Antilles?

The largest pre-war movement came after the assassination of André Alier, the editor of the communist newspaper *Justice*, which denounced the corruption and greed of the békés. His funeral in 1935 brought together a massive crowd. Several months later,

with the support of the popular front, the island's first union was created, called the CGTM. It is from this period that the first employment laws on the island were created, although they're often not enforced.

I will limit myself here, there's a lot I could mention! So much has happened in the last 50 years in Martinique. The strikes and riots of 1959, when security forces committed unheard of violence when they opened fire crowds of demonstrators, lead the municipal council, whose mayor had been Aimé Césaire since 1945, to call for independence. Also I should mention the repression of the banana workers' strike in 1974, when the Conseil Suprême de la Révolution (CRS) troops in helicopters fired machine guns at a crowd of 200 demonstrators, killing one and wounding four people. The

singer Kolo Bart has recently evoked this massacre, of which we've recently commemorated the 25th anniversary, in a song.

How is the movement in Martinique organized?

There are the CNCP, local committees in each area, nationalists and anti-colonialists very close to the Martinique Independence Movement (MIM), whose leader Alfred Marie-Jeanne is president of the regional council.

The unions, regardless of affiliation, seem to be relatively more powerful than in the mainland. Their unity in action came about spontaneously, which led quickly to cohesive mass action.

What is the specific influence of independent unionism? What are the specific demands?

There is a growing tendency to demand more and more, especially in Guadeloupe, where the General Union of Guadeloupean Workers (UGTG) won 51 percent of the votes in the recent elections to the employment tribunals. Its methods are radical, reminiscent of North American trade unionism. It's not a good idea to oppose a strike that they've called. Bosses and businessmen who ignore their orders will pay dearly for it. In general, they always obey the UGTG's orders. During each strike they encourage workers to join the unions.

The UTGT, like the Union Générale des Travailleurs de Martinique (UTGM) brings Creole culture and identity to the forefront; the fight against colonialism and the békés. They want to develop a polyculture, allowing the islands to achieve self-sufficiency. The same goes for industry, on the islands they want to create what they currently lack.

Translation: Jeff Costello

IWW Constitution Preamble

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 \$2000, dues are \$9 a month. If your monthly income is between \$2000 and \$3500, dues are \$18 a month. If your monthly income is over \$3500 a month, dues are \$27 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: _____

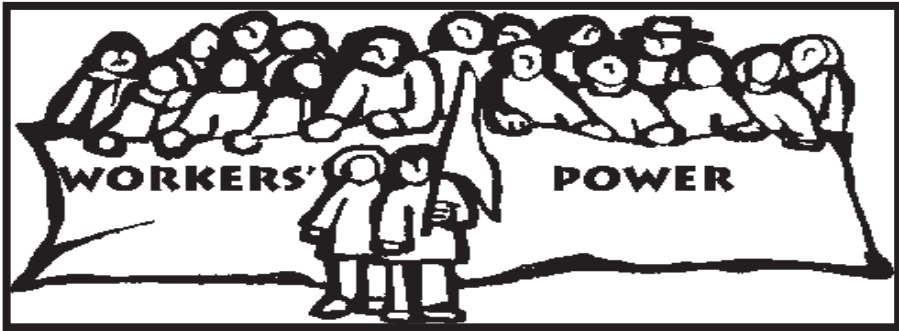
Phone: _____ Email: _____

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Membership includes a subscription to the *Industrial Worker*.



Graphic: riniart.org



What We're Changing

By Matt Jones

In our organizing we are trying to establish power on the job. This power can be seen and felt in different ways depending on the job. What we want from our organizing is control over our daily working lives. This control will come from the power we can establish through collective action.

The collective actions we take on the job change the conditions on that job; they change how we daily interact with our bosses and with each other. This results in a bettering of conditions. I believe old time Wobblies called this "job conditioning." It comes out of workers collectively and directly confronting the boss on an issue, and sticking up for one another. It is done with or without a contract; often the contract is an impediment to actions that can condition the job.

One of my first experiences with this was during my first job out of high school, throwing boxes at UPS. The workers here, although only informally organized, exerted strong control over the job, and had no fear in voicing their opinions to the boss. The workers rallied around one or two strong leaders. These leaders were the first workers to extend a hand to me and the other fellow I got hired on with. When there was an issue between two other workers, these leaders would work it out.

These leaders were also the workers who were the first, but not the only, to bring up an issue to the boss. Often they confronted the boss during the post-break discussion session. These confrontations were often loud and tense. It was during these episodes that first I saw the first fruits of our power as workers and what it meant to be organized. As a result of the control we won on the job we worked the pace we wanted and worked with who we wanted. Eventually, this

culminated in a threatened strike where we stuck up for a fellow worker who was in danger of being fired.

When I moved on to another job, this one at a truck manufacturing plant, I found a much different situation. Workers did not condition the job in the same way. They did not stick up for each other. Moreover, the leadership that had existed on the job at UPS did not exist here. The leadership that did exist was found in the "team lead." This person was often a good leader and a company man. The workers followed the team, fell in line and did not stick together. Our job conditions were much different. We were at the mercy of the company. We were out-organized. We had no control over our daily lives on the job.

With my current job we are starting the long process of organizing. One of the first tasks was getting my fellow workers to take action together and to stick up for one another. Most of them are decent folks, willing to help each other out but with no experience of being organized. Most want to confront problems as individuals, thinking they may get a fair hearing from the boss. In small ways though, I can already see some changes, from a willingness to be critical of how things are handled to having each other's backs and helping each other out. These are some of the small changes that can lead to larger ones.

Job conditioning, I have learned, is based on the small confrontations that happen everyday. When the boss comes out ready to tell us a decision he or she has made and is not confronted by workers as a group, the boss sets the conditions. If we workers confront the boss and stick up for one another, and lay out our demands, we set the conditions. We are making a point with our actions. The boss is learning. We workers are learning our power.



Graphic: radicalgraphics.org

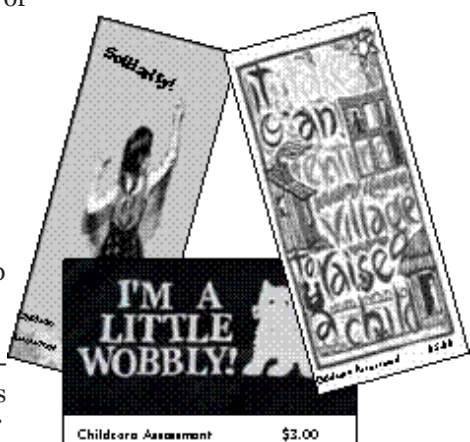
Dealing with Childcare Collectively

By Alex Paterson, Winnipeg GMB

In the last few years, the union has been discussing how to remove barriers to participation, especially for women. Here in Winnipeg we have recently identified childcare as a significant barrier to the participation of women in our branch. Over the last few meetings we have been discussing how it is our desire deal with this collectively.

We recognize that it benefits all of us in our branch for our fellow workers, who have children, to participate. This is just an obvious fact for us. So we decided to share the costs of childcare amongst branch members who were able to contribute. To be creative, one of our branch members has offered to make a voluntary assessment stamp dedicated to branch childcare. So from now on we will be building a pot of childcare money to use whenever necessary to make sure parents in our branch can participate in our

business. Now that the design is ready, we are sharing this stamp with the rest of the union in hopes that other branches take this concrete step to making sure childcare is seen and treated as a collective responsibility. It is our hope that our union can continually make these little steps to increasing participation and build the union we all want.

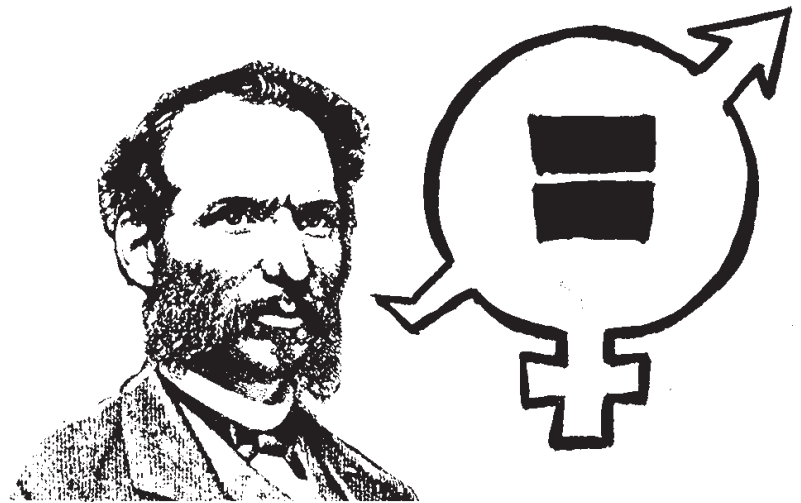


Childcare Assessment \$3.00

WOMEN WORKERS' HISTORY

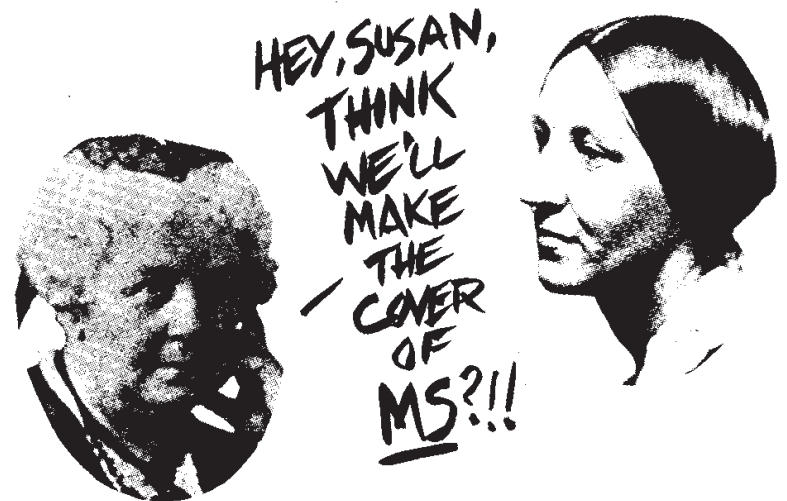
Chapter 22 NLU and "The Daughters of Toil"

The need for a national labor federation led to the founding of the National Labor Union in Baltimore in August 1866. The NLU's founders -- all men -- adopted a resolution pledging support to sewing women and to "daughters of toil" and asked in return for the cooperation of working women and their organizations.



The new organization didn't take off until William Sylvius became its president in 1868. The young dynamic president of the Molders Union, Sylvius recognized the importance of organizing women workers, and supported their demand for equal pay for equal work. "Why should women not enjoy every social and political privilege enjoyed by men?" asked Sylvius.

At its 1868 convention the NLU admitted four women delegates, including Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the famous women's rights advocates. A heated debate broke out over whether Stanton should be seated. She didn't have credentials from an actual labor organization, but that wasn't the real issue. Many delegates objected to her campaign to win women the right to vote.



The NLU never did support women's suffrage. But it took important stands on behalf of the rights of women on the job. It encouraged women to join or form unions and "use every other honorable means to persuade or force employers to do justice to women by paying them equal wages for equal work."

Graphic: Mike Konopacki

Buy a prisoner subscription to the *Industrial Worker*. Send a cheque for \$18 to IW Prisoner Subscription, c/o IWW, PO Box 23085, Cincinnati OH 45223 USA with a note on the cheque: 'prisoner subscription.'



For Labor Solidarity with the NYU Student Occupiers

Continued from 3

The case for worker solidarity with the NYU activists is especially strong given the explicit pro-worker, pro-union orientation of four of the student demands:

1) Full compensation for all employees affected by the occupation.

2) Respect for the right of student workers to collectively bargain; an especially poignant demand in light of the recent dismantling of the graduate employees union at NYU.

3) A fair labor contract for NYU employees at home and abroad; a thoughtful demand given the certainty of migrant worker exploitation as NYU establishes its Abu Dhabi campus.

4) A reassessment of the recent lifting of the campus ban on Coca-Cola products after the company successfully spun its way out of accountability for anti-union violence in Colombia.

The students also demonstrated respect for the working class in the dignified way they conducted their protest. NYU sought to pit its hard-working

rank-and-file security guards against the student occupiers. But the students refused to take the bait and maintained their focus and indignation on the university's senior leadership where it belonged.

Certainly a conversation is and will continue to take place in movement circles regarding the strategic and logistical preparation of the NYU occupation. But the students' commitment and most importantly their willingness to use direct action in support of just demands deserves praise. Indeed, the U.S. student and workers' movement as a whole is engaged in a learning and re-learning process as escalatory tactics like occupations and general strikes become more and more viable amid economic crisis.

Corporate-imposed economic pain, including millions of lost jobs and lost homes, has created a tremendous opportunity for aggressive organizing around transformative demands. The NYU occupation has inspired dialogue on the important question of student

voice within the university. It has also undoubtedly inspired workers and students alike to consider the path of direct action, just as the occupations at the New School and the Republic Window and Door factory did.

Take Back NYU! and its allies are now engaged in the hard work of both growing their coalition and defending the students being targeted by the Administration. They're going to need some serious and lasting support to move their work forward.

I hope we in the workers' movement acknowledge the decisively pro-labor orientation of the NYU occupation with real and forceful solidarity. Please log on to www.takebacknyu.com to join the solidarity effort and encourage unions, community groups, and houses of worship to come aboard as well. Together, we can build towards occupations where workers and students simultaneously withdraw their cooperation from the universities until democracy prevails.

Originally published on Znet.



Photo: politicalpoet.wordpress.com

SDS and the Wobblies: Memories and Observations

By Paul Buhle

Student occupations of university buildings and student participation in campaigns and demonstrations happen more and more these days. More importantly, they have begun to happen in previously unlikely places, community colleges, religious schools, high schools and so on. Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), reborn on Martin Luther King, Jr., Day in 2006, has often been in the lead because the name and the history give today's students something to identify.

Wherever SDS exists, "student syndicalism" also exists in a germ of collective memory about the earlier SDS, or in the basic ideas that campus activists are bound to develop themselves. It's a simple as the transition from the sit-down strike (IWW) to the civil rights movement sit-in to the antiwar teach-in. The logic of the movement contains a purpose beyond voting or waiting for leaders to make decisions.

Recently, former SDS National Secretary Carl Davidson (who coined the term "Student Syndicalism") spoke on the Brown University campus, where I teach, on a range of issues, mostly practical experiences rather than theories and how students can learn for themselves what to do in today's multiple social crises. One of Davidson's vivid 1960s memories and one of my old favorites involves the SDS national office members of 1965-66 realizing that their Chicago headquarters was nearby the IWW office. They had stumbled across an inter-generational counterpart and shortly, regional travelers wore Wobbly buttons.

It was hardly the first SDS/IWW encounter. A lot of us had discovered little things along the way, often inadvertently, such as learning Marxism through Socialist Labor Party ("DeLeonite") study classes, where IWW history was both applauded and hissed (that is after the 1908 Wob convention). What we gleaned sooner or later could be boiled down to the conclusion that the Wobblies were a totally unique radical outfit, and probably generations ahead of their time. History had to move to catch up with them.

The Rebel Worker, published by the Chicago surrealist group in the middle 1960s, is the best single case of IWW/SDS interaction. A splendid little mimeographed magazine, in the humble technology of the political age, it marked young Wobblies' efforts to revive radical principles, reached a wide circle of young radicals (myself included) and foreshadowed much to come. The group also had a local bookstore, a share

in the Wob effort to organize blueberry workers in Michigan and a presence in Chicago's Roosevelt University, where a free speech fight preceded and perhaps inspired the famed Free Speech Movement in Berkeley. A few years later, Rebel Worker activist Penelope Rosemont was a printer in the SDS national office (in a couple decades, she and Franklin Rosemont would operate the Kerr Company, the IWW's old friends of pre-1920 days). Hundreds of 1960s SDSers in various locations had soon become members or sympathizers with the IWW, and more would after the implosion and collapse of SDS in 1969. For that matter, the SDS journal Radical America was printed in Madison, WI, on a Wobbly press, emblazoned an early cover with Wobbly graphics, and carried many articles in sympathy with Wobbly traditions.

What happened from 1965 to 1969, embodying "Student Power" but also precipitating a crash and a catastrophic turn of the SDS leadership toward Maoism, may best be understood as a brilliant grappling with Wobbly traditions, a reinterpretation of syndicalism, and a failure to deal with the political crises on all sides.

The Port Huron Statement, drafted collectively by conference attendees in the Michigan town in 1962 and reshaped by SDS leader Tom Hayden, was the most important political manifesto of American radicals in 30 years, and the most important generational statement that young American radicals had made since perhaps the 1830s of New England Transcendentalists. Unlike earlier platforms of socialists and communists, with the distinct exception of the IWW convention documents of 1905, it was not shaped by European experiences. It was not about "socialism," at least not in anything like classical terms. It was, or is (inasmuch as the new generation of SDSers holds to its central points) about values, along with generations.

That conference had only 59 attendees. Just enough, one might suggest, to work together on a complex document, and not too many to make such work phrase by phrase, formulation by formulation, all but impossible. In the next four years, SDS had become an organization of thousands on many campuses, and cut its ties with the social-democratic Old Left that had paid for its predecessor, the Student League for Industrial Democracy. The spirit of Port Huron had gone beyond the bounds of liberalism, not so much programmatically as philosophically. To these youngsters, the liberal ideology and the reform successes of the New Deal (and additions

afterward) did not stand up against the threat of nuclear war and the American government's own role in the proliferation of weapons. Nor did they explain away the persistence of US intervention, by hook and crook, against movements from Latin America and the Caribbean to Africa, Middle East, Asia and the Pacific that threatened American corporation holdings. Nor could they explain the fate of mainstream labor. Embodied in the thuggish George Meany, president of the AFL-CIO, organized labor's leadership had become its ugliest in all American labor history.

How was a group of powerless young people to cope with the vastness of institutional authority? Students for a Democratic Society, an organization or movement so amorphous that a majority of its "members" never actually bothered to officially join, remains at the heart of the mystique and mystery of the 1960s. Naturally, along with the civil rights and Black Power movement, the Women's Movement, marijuana and LSD, Bob Dylan and so much more. But within this mélange, SDS is unique, for better and for worse. It was the organization of student power on the campus, pinpointed by the FBI as the epicenter of trouble among the children of the white middle class. It skyrocketed to a following of perhaps 200,000 supporters. And what went up came suddenly down, very much like the '60s themselves.

Almost as suddenly, the memory of SDS and of the antiwar protest of the 1960s in general, has returned to fashion or at least public interest. What the Vietnam War and the public knowledge of FBI misdeeds did to the trust in the U.S. government during the 1960s, including its agencies and elected officials, the Iraq War and the Patriot Act's varied manifestations have done again. And there is an element, a stronger reminder perhaps than any other of the lasting impress of SDS, in the circumstances of generational unrest. The generation of 9/11, come of age in the wake of the World Trade Center attack, the Afghanistan attack and occupation, the mass detentions without charges and so on, is also the generation facing the literal, undeniable effects of global warming in daily life. The world of secure consumers, circa 2000, is gone, and in its place is a world of politicians who barely manage to keep a straight face while issuing frequent denials of the obvious.

All this is still more true of the global working class now located, thanks to post-1965 immigration, within the United States. Never has the world of the original Wobblies become so nearly the world of today, with masses of foreign

born, a terribly weakened official labor movement, and an urgent need for solidarity.

Speaking as a U.S. history teacher, I can say that the college courses on the 1960s, going back to the later 1970s or 1980s, never lacked for a certain appeal. Free love, communes, LSD and other reputed mass phenomena of the young naturally appealed to another generation of the young, especially with higher rents and rampant venereal diseases closing off the carefree low-income bohemia of earlier days. The boom in those courses has increased immeasurably since 2001 or so, for every good reason, but for many students seeking a "how to" rather than vicarious thrills or the chance to listen to music rather than reading textbooks. Meanwhile, as if by remarkable coincidence, a generation of young scholars just ten or twenty years behind the radicals of the 1960s came to press with their scholarly studies going back a decade in graduate school.

Only in the last decade, as the former members of SDS entered middle age, has the understanding of the movement seriously thus begun to probe and poke the aura and the memoirs of prominent minority. Hostile critics have pointed to the number of young intellectuals involved and the few essayists produced, as if this were a key test of virility or fecundity. It would be better to meditate the paucity of local historical studies, because SDS was above all a local movement, arguably the most decentralized and localistic movement since the Wobblies in the whole history of American radicalism. But perhaps one problem has also been overlooked: that a phenomenon so deeply set within popular culture would need an approach shaped by the techniques of cultural production. A song might be grand, but could not be expected to go far lyrically.

The graphic history of SDS that I produced with an array of artists in 2008, following the 2005 graphic history of the IWW by some of the same artists (and me as editor or coeditor), on the other hand, offers a crime (in the view of respectable society) to fit the punishment (forty years of liberal and conservative denigration). These books also could not have come, I believe, at a better time. Because these movements face the prospect of a great revival, young people in particular can learn visually, and also come to appreciate radical artists, like the half-dozen IWW members who drew or wrote stories for "Wobblies!," striving to make the old story newly meaningful.

Paul Buhle is the founding editor of Radical America (1967-1992).

Colibri Workers Fight for Pay and Dignity

By Justin Kelley

Locked out... what is a working person to do? Your job just closed its doors and gave you no notice. Left in a panic, you scramble to figure out how you're going to pay your bills, make your rent and put food on the table. A group of workers in Rhode Island is showing that, with organization and courage, we can fight back against the bosses' attacks.

Factory Closes

On the morning of Jan. 15, 2009, the workers of the Colibri lighter and jewelry factory discovered that they were the latest victims of the encroaching economic depression. The Colibri workers found the doors of the factory chained shut, with a notice on the door that the factory was closed.

CEO of Colibri manufacturing, Jim Fleet, made cowardly attempts to glean a few more dollars in profit by violating the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act.

Fuerza Laboral and Colibri Workers meet

As the shock turned to outrage, 22-year employee Emilio Blanco called the local Spanish language radio station, Poder-1110 AM. Emilio, at a loss for what to do, turned to Poder for help. The staff at Poder recommended Emilio call folks from Fuerza Laboral (Workers Power), who spoke about workers rights and past victories on Poder radio.

Fuerza Laboral (FL) is a workers center that focuses on organizing workers to take direct action to recover stolen wages from exploitative bosses. The organizers at FL asked Emilio to gather as many of his fellow workers as he could. Emilio and 40 workers met with FL organizers. The workers and the workers center staff talked about what the situation was and how that the bosses had violated the WARN act. Through further meetings, the workers identified their demands: 60 days pay, 60 days medical insurance coverage, and a week of severance for every year worked.



Colibri workers rally on Feb. 10, 2009 to demand Founders Equity negotiate.

Photo: Justin Kelley

and suffer, was reiterated in a letter to Fuerza Laboral offices. The response from Colibri workers was "all or none of us," or "todas en la cama o en todas fuera la ella." The workers, once again showing solidarity, refused to submit to the process, allowing those with less access to the court system to get left behind.

Colibri Workers for Rights and Justice fight for pay and dignity

Faced with press attention, the ex-workers of Colibri manufacturing

by the same lawyer, the Colibri workers asked to deliver a letter aloud to him. The judge, remarking that it was unusual, allowed it none-the-less. Michael Masi, a 10-year employee and Vietnam War veteran, delivered the letter, stating: "All we are asking for is to be equal to everyone else. Banks have insurance, they can wait. We can't."

"Founders Equity meet with us"

Founders Equity is a private equity firm based in New York City, and the Colibri workers group decided to pay them a little visit. With help from Fuerza Laboral, Jobs with Justice and other local labor and community activists including the Providence IWW, a bus of 70 people—the majority of whom were ex-Colibri workers—went from Rhode Island to NYC on Feb. 20 to confront the owners of the factories assets and demand what is theirs'.

We arrived at the Murphy Institute for Labor Studies at CUNY, and got ready to go and confront the corporate bosses and demand 60 days back pay, 60 days vacation time and a week of severance pay for each year worked.

The workers and allies proceeded to go over the plan for the day. The steering committee that the workers elected from amongst their ranks was to go into the office, a few people at a time, and attempt to get upstairs past security. Then the rest of the group was to enter the office and try to get as many people as possible upstairs to the Founder's Equity office.

With the plan set, a few chants worked out, we proceeded down through Manhattan as a bloc. A block away from the Founders Equity office on Fifth Avenue, the steering committee went ahead. A few minutes after, we all proceeded to go to the building and enter the lobby.

The group was unable to make it upstairs and confront the bosses, but a rowdy demonstration was held for about 20 minutes in the lobby, much to the guards' chagrin. We chanted "Ooh Ahh what's that fuss?, Founders Equity meet with us!" and "Founders Equity broke the law."

Afterwards, the group went to Long Island to converge at a Unitarian Universalist church. We then went to the

home of one of the senior partners of the Founders Equity firm, John Teeger. Teeger unfortunately was not home. The workers let his neighbors know what he has been up to, as well as leaving a letter taped to his door and a sign on his lawn, demanding that he pay the Colibri workers.

The Providence city council passed a resolution on Feb. 23 supporting Colibri Workers for Rights and Justice in their struggle for pay and severance, and condemning the corporation and equity firm. On March 5, the workers went to the city hall to talk further and make sure the councilors will back up their resolution with action.

Towards Victory

As we dare to struggle, we dare to win, and the Colibri Workers for Rights and Justice are an example to all of us in the IWW and labor movement at large. The implications of factory workers fighting back against closings are many and deep. The occupation in Chicago at the Republic Window and Doors facility was not the beginning or end of this current wave of struggle, and we can only expect more occupations and direct action resistance to capital strike, as the economy worsens. The Colibri Workers show us again that the new world is built here, in the shell of the crumbling old world. Self organization and action teach us our own strength and abilities to do things we never before thought possible.

As we know, our solidarity is our greatest strength as working people, and the Colibri Workers continue to need your help to make it on the long path to victory over corporate greed. Founders Equity has portfolio companies all over the United States, information about these companies is easily accessible, and pressuring them would be a nightmare for Founders Equity.

A quick fax can be sent by visiting www.unionvoice.org/campaign/colibri-justice. To make a solidarity donation to the Colibri workers, send checks made out to "Providence IWW," marked for "Colibri workers" in the memo line.

Fuerza Laboral, RI Jobs with Justice, and the fellow workers of Colibri Workers for Rights and Justice contributed to this article.



Photo: Justin Kelley

Action at corporate headquarters

On Tuesday, Feb. 3, more than 250 Colibri workers and supporters held a rally at Colibri's East Providence corporate offices. On that blizzard-like day, the spirits were high and people held firm as a swell of community support came out in solidarity. Chants of "Justice for Workers" and "Enough Abuse" rang out in the cold February air. The lawyer appointed by Rhode Island superior court, Allan Shine, told the crowd that they should file claims, and that they have until June to do so. He said he could not predict the outcome, but promised the workers will get a fair hearing, and a fair and prompt decision.

This same message, asking for the workers to submit to the process of the bosses' courts that allows the wealthy to get paid first, and the workers to wait

decided to name their new self organization—"Colibri Workers for Rights and Justice."

On Feb. 10, about 50 Colibri workers and supporters rallied across from the court-appointed lawyer who is taking Colibri into receivership, Allan Shine. The rally demanded that Shine do the right thing and make Founders Equity come to the table.

The Colibri Workers for Rights and Justice went to the Feb. 27 hearing at the Rhode Island Superior Court, to stand up to the banks and demand that they get paid first. Arriving before the court session, the Colibri workers group packed the court house, leaving no room for the lawyers and other court attendants, forcing the judge to make the lawyers sit in the jury box. As HSBC and Sovereign bank were both represented

Western Australian Mine Workers: The Silent Clampdown

By Phil N. De-Blanks

The collapse of global financial markets in late 2008 has given mining companies in Australia a welcome gift for 2009. The rejection of the anti-worker “Work Choices” legislation by the Rudd government in 2008 kick started feelings of optimism and solidarity amongst mine workers in the conspicuously non-unionised mines of Western Australia.

The future looked bright for these workers to once again stand up for their rights and reinstitute collective bargaining within the industry. Presently, however, the tentative mine workers movements of Western Australia have been challenged by the hyped decline in demand for their products. This instability has played directly into the hands of employers who can plead “poor me” to governments, unions and the media, to turn public opinion against worker solidarity, and to use the fear of job loss against the workers who are seeking to organise and defend their rights.

To get a sense of the current situation, one only needs to look at the struggle by Rio Tinto train drivers in the Pilbara. At issue is a battle to get Rio Tinto to simply negotiate with workers collectively, an aspiration that Rio has stone walled at all junctures. This dispute predated and spanned the initial months of the financial collapse. Fortunately for Rio Tinto, their ability to ignore the intensifying collective actions of these workers was bolstered by the financial collapse in the closing months of 2008, which allowed the media, state and federal governments and the company to write off the movement as at best greedy, and at worst treasonous against state, nation, industry and company.

Fast forward to January 2009, and we find Alcoa workers agreeing to drop wage increases that they had already won in 2008 negotiations. In the media the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, who devised the deferral in wage increases, are portrayed as “mature and sensible,” while the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) has been described as “militant” for continuing with wage demands. The mainstream media even falsely aggregated wage claims to come to a headline figure of an immediate 33 percent pay increase to discredit the CFMEU, when the actual figure behind the anti-union headline was 5-10 percent.

This is how the clampdown on collective action is progressing; it is a conscious attack on mine workers’ rights, under the pretext of immanent financial collapse, and to add extra force to employer disdain for workers Rio went further and sacked 14,000 employees across the globe in the blink of an eye, a



Graphic: Ned Powell

move blamed on the financial crisis. This is how the employing classes operate when they need to reduce production, and discipline their remaining workforce with fear. Yet we, the workers, are asked to act honorably in our places of work and remain loyal to the company. Rio’s pleas of “hard times” are hard to swallow, when we consider that the lay-offs came at the same time that Rio Tinto’s Coal and Allied profits had surged 731 percent, to a new record \$804 million (AUS) by February 2009.

Many workers who are not employed in the mining sector are encouraged by the media, governments, and business activist groups to dismiss any conflicts between mine workers and their employers. The old story goes something like, “bloody whining miners, they make too much money anyway! Who cares about their problems?” Employer groups used the same tactics against the Maritime Union of Australia in their dispute with Patricks Stevedores in 1998; it’s the old divide-and-conquer routine, and we have to be smarter than that.

Wages are inconsistent between industries, partially because some commodities attract more value than others, and the supply of skills in the labour market varies. However, while workers receive the price they can get for selling their skills on the labour market, no worker receives the full value of the product of their labour. Regardless of the unevenness of wages, it is to the benefit of all oppressed people to have workers organised in solidarity with each other. This is the only way to counteract, and begin to democratize, a system which allows employers to do as they please with us, and to waste the product of our labour on their own excesses. I say to fellow workers, resist the media poison about wage disparity and see the struggle as a common one of those who labour

against those who take the products of our labour.

The endless drone of pro-employer media during this period has the net effect of inferring that any collective activity by workers in the mining sector is against the national interest, and therefore Joe and Jane Public should see these scoundrels as cutting the throat of the Australian economy. This vilification of unions is a familiar tactic used by employer classes in most industrial disputes, but mining in Western Australia has even more of a ‘life or death’ aura surrounding it in the depths of the current financial crisis, because it was the engine of the economic boom. Behind closed doors we miners are considered almost seditious if we suggest an entitlement to personal safety, let alone a right to collectively bargain—if we were to openly organise then we would surely be accused of sabotaging the national interest, and ordered to shut up and get back to work.

The real danger of the present clampdown on collective action in Western Australian mining isn’t wages however; it is health and safety. I work for a major mining company and through my own experience and from accounts of other workers at different sites in the Pilbara, it seems to me that we are being put into unsafe situations by managers who know full well that the workforce will be compliant under the fear of sackings. They can do this safe in the knowledge that government and media will be reluctant to publicly scrutinize methods when the future of Western Australia apparently depends on these mining projects. This includes situations such as continuing to work when weather conditions, gear, or job set-ups are blatantly unsafe. Workers comply because, unlike six months ago when their skills were in demand, they know that they can be replaced tomorrow.

row. Undoubtedly, workers have a natural instinct to close ranks and organise in the face of safety breaches and broken promises by management, however these instincts are being circumvented by self-censorship, as anti-union paranoia goes up a few notches.

There is resistance in all of this however, and this unspoken clampdown is not entirely a one way event. A number of unions, with support from the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), are holding employers to account to a certain degree and some continue to press for pay demands, despite being slated in the media.

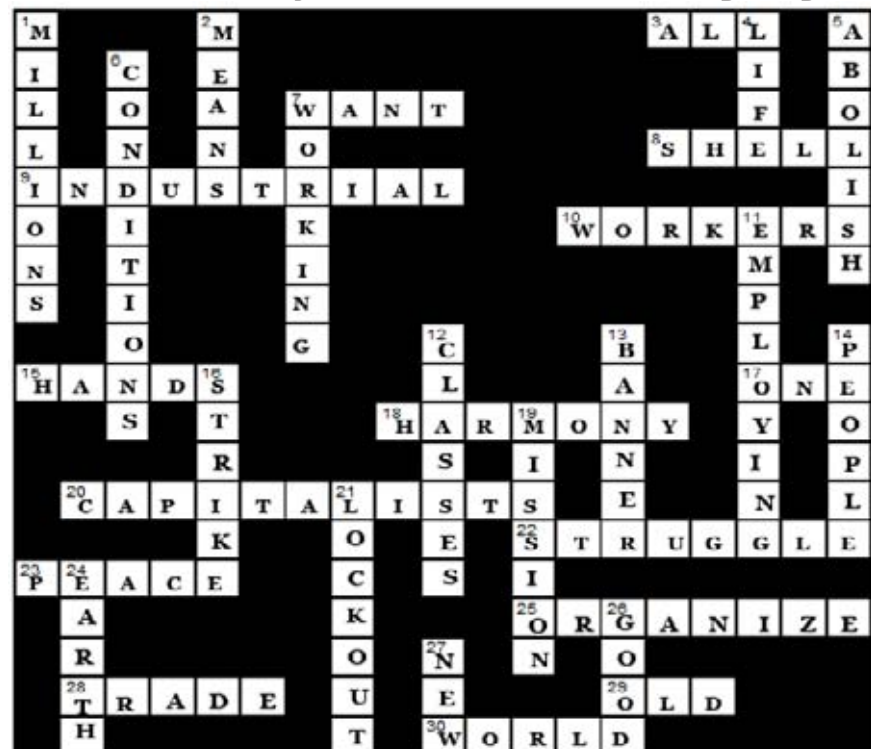
BHP Billiton, after closing the Ravensthorpe mine and leaving that community of workers with houses worth next to nothing after the closure, has suffered a massive backlash from local communities and the general public. Nobody thinks that calling the workforce in for a safety meeting and sacking the lot of them on the spot is acceptable behaviour for a company as big as BHP. Regardless of the job we do, we all feel for those 2,100 sacked workers in Western Australia, and the other 4-5,000 worldwide; employers would rather sack 10 workers to save \$10 of profit, or lay-off two productive workers to preserve their own overpaid jobs.

Sadly the proof is always in the pudding, with BHP only weeks after the sackings posting a record \$22 billion (AUS) profit for six months until February 2009; that’s nearly \$1 billion a week! The “crisis” is proving to be a blank check for mining giants to crack down on workers and mothball poorly managed mines. That is the nature of this rotten system, and we are all the victims. This type of behaviour does companies like BHP no favours in the eyes of working people across the globe, and hopefully disgust will turn to education and agitation across the board.

Mine workers have continued to subvert the company and its psychological clampdowns, through stealing back time from the boss, leaking all manner of safety and legal breaches to regulators, or interested media organs; and by continuing to discuss indirectly, and behind closed doors the need for collective action.

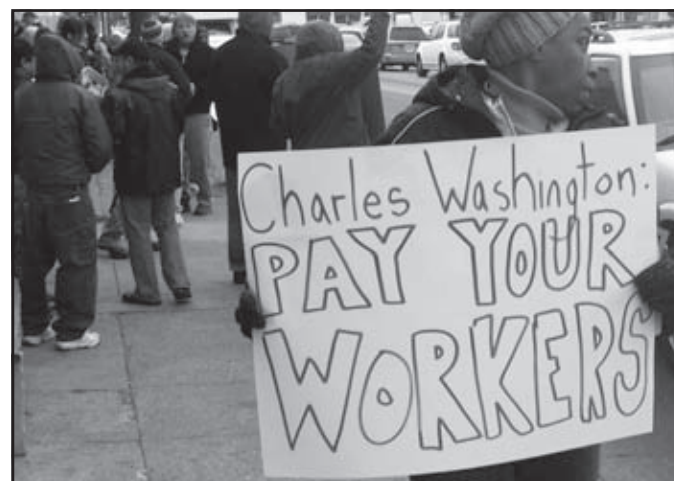
We all take hope, because the instinct to resist attacks from above is always just simmering under the surface, and although the financial crisis has given employers in Western Australia mines an extra dose of chloroform for their mighty workforce, that ploy will lose effectiveness with overexposure, and the time for mine workers to organise for their own defence will begin again with a renewed urgency.

Solutions to February/March Crossword “In the Beginning”



Puzzle design: Jason Krpan

Workers picket for unpaid wages in Cincinnati



By Tom Kappas

The Cincinnati Interfaith Workers Center held an informational picket for a group of workers on Feb. 21, 2009, demanding unpaid wages of nearly \$6,000. The workers claim they cleaned and painted for Charles Washington, alleg-

edly for his Laborers of the Vineyard Ministry Thrift Shoppe (LOVM).

Several local unions participated in the picket, including members of the IWW, SEIU and the UFCW. The local International Socialist Organization (ISO) chapter also came. It was good to see such a powerful response to an ever growing and disgusting problem of people doing work and being

Photo: Tom Kappas

taken advantage of.

Negotiations were supposed to happen shortly thereafter between the workers and Washington, but he didn’t show up at the agreed time. The workers are still waiting to be paid.

Book Reviews

The Return of Depression Economics and the Crisis of 2008

Krugman, Paul. The Return of Depression Economics and the Crisis of 2008. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2008. 288 pages, paperback, \$25

By John MacLean

Paul Krugman, in a new edition of his book "The Return of Depression Economics and the Crisis of 2008," says that we are not currently in a depression; he wants to remain optimistic, and he is not certain that we may not fall into one.

Despite this optimism, he claims that "depression economics" has made a "stunning comeback" around the world. This *New York Times* editorialist and Nobel Prize winner writes that no one thought that the global economy would end up in the perilous condition it has; where currency raiders can force cruel recessions on national economies, and major economies find themselves unable "to generate enough spending to keep their workers and factories employed."

The reason why this snuck up on people, was that those who should have known better ignored dire economic happenings around the world, and subscribed to "foolish ideas" like supply-side economic, he says, that it is these ideas, which "clutter the minds of men," that are a major obstacle to "prosperity."

Krugman begins by telling of the flight of capital from Mexico in the 1990s, and the harsh punishment visited on this Central American economy, for very minor mistakes in communicating with the markets. The U.S. Treasury acted by going against the original intention of a law, and the wrong lessons were learned; serious people were somehow in control.

Japan experienced recessions all through the 1990s. In this country, a form of "crony capitalism" had developed a close relationship between

government and business. Krugman says: "Welcome to the 'bubble economy,' Japan's equivalent [to] the Roaring Twenties." All of this resulted in serious "moral hazard" effects, with some taking great risks, while others bore the costs "if things went bad." Japan experienced what came to be known as "growth recession"—a situation in which growth stumbles on while workers continue to be shed. This went on for a decade, and the experience "verged on a new phenomenon: a growth depression." Krugman says that "expected inflation" is the way out because it "discourages people from hoarding money."

He then goes on to describe how many other Asian economies, including Thailand, became vulnerable "because they had...become better free market economies, not worse" and were exposed to investor panics.

After discussing Argentina, in the early 2000s, he asks: "Why weren't governments able to do more to limit the damage?" In Krugman's opinion, all of this occurred because policy-makers turned away from economics and into a "confidence game with investors and speculators. Peoples' livelihoods were turned over to an exercise in amateur psychology and of hoping to persuade the financial markets." This guessing game usually involved policies that made slumps worse for workers.

Now, to mention the "Masters Of The Universe," hedge funds, and financiers like George Soros; and what Krugman refers to as "Banking In The Shadows."

Alan Greenspan, the wizard of the bubble economy, makes an appearance tambien.

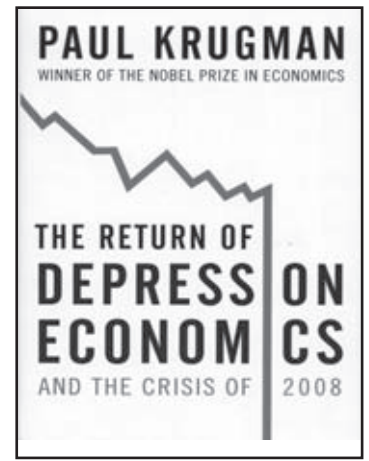
Hedge funds try and squeeze out as much as possible from "market fluctuations." They do this by going "short" and

"long" on assets, and promising to return them "at a fixed price" in the future. To go short is to bet on a drop in price, and to go long is to predict a rise. These massive funds can make a lot of money, but their "downside," says Krugman, is that they can "also lose money very efficiently." There is very little knowledge about the size of these funds, because "until quite recently nobody thought it necessary to find out." They are also not regulated.

George Soros, founded the Quantum Fund in the late 1960s, and in 1990 he forced a devaluation of the British pound, and forced this country off of the Exchange Rate Mechanism of the European Union. There were also similar fund assaults on Malaysia, and Hong Kong.

Then came the failure of Long Term Capital Management; the New York Fed got a group of investors together to buy the Connecticut company, and "panic turned into euphoria" when interest rates were lowered. This again brought to the fore "moral hazard" questions—speculators of this kind were seen as villains in the 1930s.

It was Alan Greenspan who allowed bubbles, one in stocks, and another in housing, to proceed. The longest serving Fed chairman, William McChesney Martin Jr., used to say "take away the punch bowl before the party gets going." Greenspan, on the other hand, was a believer in Bacchus. Krugman mentions, Robert Schiller, the author of "Irrational Exuberance," and how asset bubbles are "natural Ponzi scheme[s] in which people keep making money as long as there are more suckers to draw in." The problem comes when the suckers are no longer lining up, and the whole thing comes tumbling down. It was the low interest rates that made housing "at-



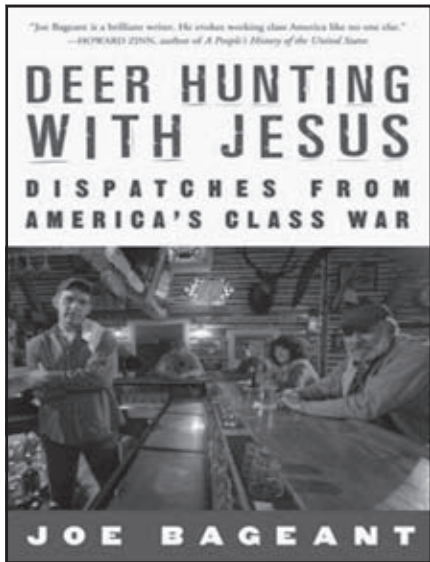
Graphic: popular.com

tractive." Stupidity entered when people suspended basic borrowing principles in the belief that home prices would always rise.

Krugman sees a connection between the Panic of 1907, and our current difficulties. This older panic began with the private trusts, much as today's began in the "shadow" or "parallel" banking systems. Both of these banking arrangements were not regulated against risks. It was after the Panic of 1907 that "the Federal Reserve System was created with the goal of compelling all deposit taking institutions to hold adequate reserves and open their accounts to inspections by regulators." Later, the Glass-Steagall Act was passed; separating banks into commercial, for deposit, and investment types. In 1999, this act was repealed, but it wasn't absent regulation that caused the collapse of the "auction-rate security system," the shadow banks, because they were already beyond regulating. It was, says Krugman, "a massive bank run that caused the shadow banking system to shrivel up."

This short, republished, and updated, book is worth reading. And, don't be a Ponzi sucker, line up with the IWW.

Deer Hunting With Jesus: Dispatches from America's Class War



Bageant, Joe. Deer Hunting With Jesus: Dispatches From America's Class War. New York: Crown Publishers, 2007. 288 pages, paperback, \$25.

By Mike Ballard

These "Dispatches from America's class war" ring as true as America's Liberty Bell. Of course, like the "Liberty Bell," the American Revolution's promise of "liberty and justice for all" cracked on first use.

As with other bourgeois democracies, the ideals of the American capitalist revolution were undermined by class rule. Liberty, equality and fraternity tended to break down under the rule of Capital, where, as the old wag's saying about the golden rule goes, those with the most gold have made the rules. What Joe Bageant has done in *Deer Hunting With Jesus* was give his readers an up-to-date snapshot concerning the preemptions of America's revolutionary ideals as he focuses on the lower strata of the rural-based working class.

His microcosmic example is focused on the majority of the people who now live and work in his old home town of Winchester, Virginia. To be sure, he also shines in a light on his fellow workers' rulers: the lawyers, real estate agents, landlords and small business people.

Bageant describes Winchester's cockroach capitalists this way:

"Members of the business class, that legion of little Rotary Club spark plugs, are vital to the American corporate and political machine. They are where the institutionalized rip-off of working class people by the rich corporations finds its footing at the grassroots level, where they can stymie any increase in the minimum wage or snuff out anything remotely resembling a fair tax structure. Serving on every local governmental body, this mob of Kiwanis and Rotarians has connections. It can get that hundred acres rezoned for Wal-Mart or a sewer line to that two-thousand-unit housing development at taxpayer expense. When it comes to getting things done locally for big business, these folks, with the help of their lawyers, can raise the dead and give eyesight to the blind. They are God's gift to the big nonunion companies and the chip plants looking for a fresh river to piss cadmium into—the right wing's can-do boys. They are so far right they will not even eat the left wing of a chicken."

Bageant peppers his aphoristic style with enough humor to keep all but the dourest social stoic smiling. In his chapter titled, "Valley of the Guns" (a piece of writing sure to upset liberal gun control advocates like Michael Moore), Bageant explains his book's title:

"To non-hunters, the image conjured by the title of this book might seem absurd, rather like a NUKE THE WHALES bumper sticker. But the title

also captures something that moves me about the people I grew up with, the intersection between hunting and religion in their lives. The link between protestant fundamentalism and deer hunting goes back to colonial times, when the restless Presbyterian Scots, along with English and German Protestant reformers, pushed across America, developing the unique hunting and farming-based frontier cultures that sustained them through most of America's history. Two hundred years later, they have settled down, but they have not quit hunting and they have not quit praying. Consequently, today we find organizations such as the Christian Deer Hunters Association (christiandeerhunters.org), which offers convenient pocket-size books of meditations, such as "Devotions for Deer Hunters," to help occupy the time during those long waits for game. Like their ancestors, deer hunters today understand how standing quietly and alone in the natural world leads to contemplation of God's gifts to man. When a book like *Meditations for the Deer Stand* is seen in historical context, it is no joke. For those fortunate enough to spend whole days quietly standing in the November woods just watching the Creator's world, there is no irony at all in the notion that his son might be watching too, and maybe even willing to summon a couple of nice fat does within shooting range."

The ideological crack between the more liberal, urban, and coastal-based U.S. workers and their small town, conservative rivals living in the interior of the country, is one of the main political thrusts of *Deer Hunting With Jesus*. The gun control issue is but one of many sore points dividing the U.S. working class, thus making its members easier to rule.

The elephant standing in the room is the issue of work-time. Too many hours sold to the bosses makes it difficult for small town wage-slaves to do much in the way of educating themselves, reading or expanding their views of the world beyond the easily accessed, instant, canned gratification available from conservative Republican corporate AM radio pundits and their brethren on the bully pulpits of the nation's fundamentalist Christian churches. The toilers of Bageant's home town are literally being worked to death at jobs which market for low wages, kept even lower by the anti-union ideology which is so common in their everyday parlance as to be taken for 'commonsense.' The same can be said for their socially conservative cultural traditions concerning: race relations, the possession of firearms, Big Gov'mint, namby-pamby intellectuals and warlike nationalism.

Across that great bellwether, the great crack in the working class remains unrepaired as left liberal workers sit and sit and sit, disdaining contact with their 'benighted' fellow citizens thus, leaving both sides ignorant of what the other is saying or doing and by extension the potential of their power as a class united. According to Bageant, this is a recipe for continued impotent expressions of working class power, while serving to maintain a ruling class status-quo which is on track to continue cutting U.S. workers' living standards and furthering the commodification of human values and humane relations.

Joe Bageant has written a book which should be on every IWW organizer's shelf. *Deer Hunting With Jesus* answers many of the questions concerning how and why the workers in the U.S. are largely blind to their own class interests.

Starbucks Workers Union Pickets for 8 Hours

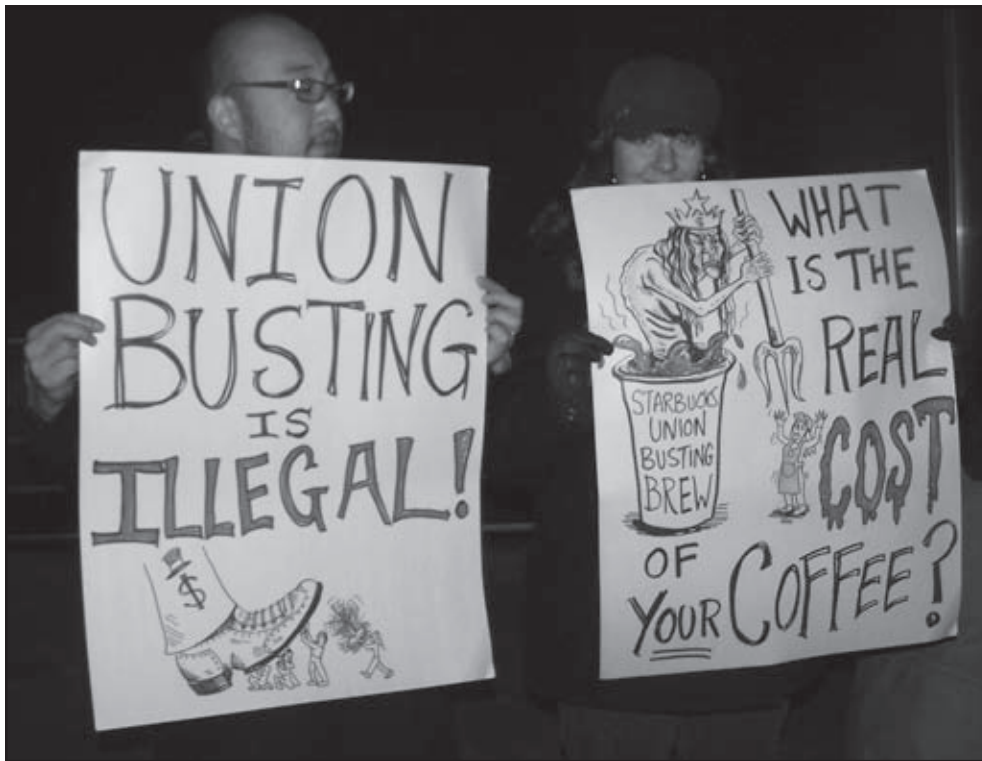
By FW Double Jeff

On Feb. 16, 2009, the New York City branch of the IWW Starbucks Workers Union (SWU) held an energetic eight-hour picket outside two separate Starbucks locations. Originally planned as a “loose informal picket” outside the Union Square East Starbucks location, managerial stupidity and increased union-busting activity on the part of Starbucks turned it into a media circus and all night protest. Between the time when the picket was planned and when it actually took place, Starbucks decided to fire yet another union barista, Sharon Bell from the 17th and Broadway location, conveniently located across the park from Union Square East.

The picket was called to protest the recent wave of Starbucks layoffs and to draw attention to the refusal of Starbucks to pay severance to fired workers, despite their claims to the media that they will be providing severance pay for all fired workers. The message was expanded to include the demand for the reinstatement of Sharon Bell, and an immediate end to the illegal, unethical, nationally coordinated union-busting operations of Starbucks Coffee.

An hour before the picket was to take place, union organizer and barista at Union Square East, Liberte Locke, started receiving phone calls from members of the press inquiring as to whether or not the picket was still happening. Apparently when photographers and camera people showed up early to scout the location, they were greeted by someone with a clipboard claiming to represent the union and they were told the picket was cancelled. This is another example of the dirty tactics Starbucks uses to squash dissent and undermine the union. Thankfully that tactic backfired, because in spite of it being a rather small turn out of less than 30 people, the media showed up in full force, turning the scene into a street level press conference. Whether it was because the press doesn't like to have the wool pulled over its eyes, or because of the strength and conviction of the demand letter which was included with the press release, the media for once seemed to want to represent our side, rather than just be a mouthpiece for Starbucks's anti-union, anti-worker propaganda department.

As we lined the whole front of the store with signs containing messages ranging from “Stop The Layoffs” to “Stop Union-Busting,” local and national television, radio and print ranging from CNN to NPR interviewed union organizers Sharon Bell, Daniel



IWW protesting at the Union Square East Starbucks in NYC. Photo: Diane Krauthamer

Gross, Liberte Locke and Henry Marin.

Other signs demanded that Starbucks “Stop Slashing Labor Hours” and “Restore Benefits,” and demanded that Starbucks “Obey Judge Landow’s Ruling” and “Reinstate Fired Union Baristas: Joel Agins, Jr., Sharon Bell, Coley Dorsey, Daniel Gross, Neal Linders and Isis Saenz.”

Things got tense when police started ordering picketers to stop “blocking the door,” even though no one was anywhere near the door. Cops threatened to arrest union barista Mischa Lefebvre who was standing far from the store’s entrance. They started to push him around and drag him off, but fellow workers Liberte Locke and Daniel Gross intervened, helping him avoid arrest. Gross had made it clear to the police that “when our people are arrested we sue the police for wrongful arrest.” The police were still making threats to arrest the whole crowd and were overheard calling for police vans. Locke and Gross tried to reason with the cops, which is like trying to reason with goldfish. The police finally backed off when Locke told the press to focus their cameras on the door which was not being blocked in any way, so that when the cops arrested everyone there would be proof that it was under false pretenses. Later Locke remarked that “it was like they were pointing to a desk and telling me it was not a desk.”

Around 7 p.m. we marched to 17th and Broadway, where Sharon Bell had been fired for being a union organizer. Only a few reporters followed us there, but that’s where the real action took place. Several of us went inside to meet up with union barista and IWW

organizer Henry Marin so he could deliver the SWU demand letter to the store manager “Little Mark” Vanneri. Little Mark, who is known to have an anger problem, threw the demand letter back in Marin’s face several times. In retaliation “Big Mark” Ormsbee, the District Manager in charge of both 17th and Broadway and Union Square East, refused to let Marin go back to work for the rest of his shift because he “walked off on the job.” Marin was later written up for the incident, even though he was engaging in a legally protected work stoppage.

Not letting Henry Marin finish his shift was a huge mistake on the part of Ormsbee. We told Big Mark that we would not leave until they let Marin go back to work, which they were too pig-headed to do, so a “loose informal” two hour demo ended up being a nearly eight hour indignant protest.

According to Starbucks policy, any time there is a union action against any Starbucks location, the Store Manager and District Manager are required to be there. They were not allowed to leave until we left. And we stayed until the end, all the way until closing time. We effectively kept them inside their own store for nearly eight hours. Normally store managers never work closing shifts, so it was nice to force both Little Mark and Big Mark to work this late, even though nothing a Starbucks manager does could really be considered “work.” They mostly played on their laptops, drank coffee and talked on their cell phones all night while we chanted at them and banged on the windows, following them from the front of the store to the back of the store and back

to the front again. We chanted “Let Henry Work!” until our voices gave out. We protested Big Mark Ormsbee with a “Warriors” reference, “Ormsbeeeeeee, come out and plaaaaaaaaa-ay!” which a lot of New Yorkers seemed to really appreciate. Several New Yorkers joined in the protest for a few minutes, or a few hours because “New York is a Union Town!” We chanted “What’s Disgusting? Union Busting!” and “What’s Outrageous? Starbucks Wages!”

Around 11 p.m., District Manager Tracy Bryant and two other district managers were finally given permission to leave by the corporate office. Bryant was the district manager for the region that 17th & Broadway and Union Square East are located in, and is known for her union-busting skills.

Once the two Starbucks PR reps left, Little Mark and Big Mark were on their own. When the store closed at 1 a.m., Mark Ormsbee went outside to plead with the cops to arrest the five of us who were left. We circled around him screaming “SHAME SHAME SHAME ON YOU!” at the top of our lungs while the police told him they weren’t going to arrest us. Ormsbee stormed angrily back into the store. About 15 minutes later he and Little Mark finally made their exit. The two not-very-pleased managers came out of the store and hailed two separate cabs. We continued chanting “SHAME! SHAME! SHAME!” and telling everyone in earshot that they were union-busting scumbags! As Mark Ormsbee got into his car he called Daniel Gross, one of the founders of the Starbucks Workers Union, a “pussy.”

How telling is it that Ormsbee chose the word “pussy” to describe someone who is fighting for dignity and respect in the workplace? That term is not only misogynistic and anti-woman, but in this context it’s meant to be queer-baiting and demasculating as well. Mark Ormsbee is the man who is responsible for investigating sexual harassment and discrimination claims for an entire region. Are we to believe that the concerns of women and GLBT people are going to be treated seriously Ormsbee?

In the past month, Ormsbee has fired two black female union baristas for organizing in the workplace, which is legally protected. Sheanel Simon from Union Square East has already won her job back through union pressure. We are still fighting for Sharon Bell.

Liberte Locke and Daniel Gross contributed to this story. For more information, visit: www.starbucksunion.org.

Support the Starbucks Workers Union!



If you are a delegate, contact Liberte Locke of the NYC - SWU at 917 - 693 - 7742 or liberte.angrybarista@gmail.com about obtaining assessment stamps or write to the NYC - GMB at P.O. Box 7430, JAF Station, New York City 10116.



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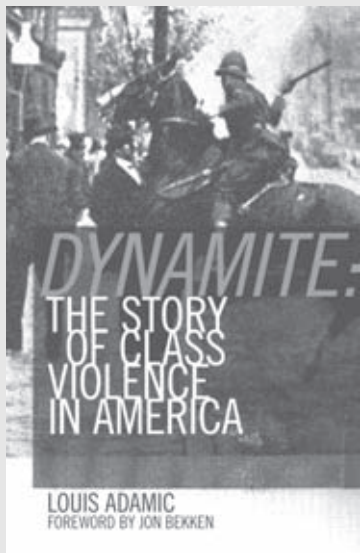
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Dynamite: The Story of Class Violence In America

BY LOUIS ADAMIC
 WITH A FORWARD BY JON BEKKEN

The history of labor in the United States is a story of almost continuous violence. In *Dynamite*, Louis Adamic recounts one century of that history in vivid, carefully researched detail. Covering both well- and lesser-known events—from the riots of immigrant workers in the second quarter of the nineteenth century to the formation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO)—he gives precise, and often brutal, meaning to the term “class war.”

This AK Press edition of Adamic’s revised 1934 version of *Dynamite*, includes a new foreword by professor and labor organizer Jon Bekken, who offers a critical overview of the work that underlines its contemporary relevance.

“A young immigrant with a vivid interest in labor—and the calluses to prove his knowledge was more than academic—Louis Adamic provided a unique, eyes-open-wide view of American labor history and indeed of American society. *Dynamite* was the first history of American labor ever written for a popular audience. While delineating the book’s limitations, Jon Bekken’s foreword also makes clear for today’s readers its continuing significance.” —Jeremy Brecher, historian and author of *Strike!*

“Adamic’s *Dynamite* is a classic, written with the verve and perspective of an author who was a first-hand observer and participant in many of the struggles he chronicles. And it is a powerful reminder that class struggle in America has always been pursued with ferocity and intensity. With all the book’s strengths and weaknesses, outlined in a perceptive foreword by Jon Bekken, it remains a foundational text for those who wish to understand the world...and to change it.”

—Mark Leier, director of the Centre for Labour Studies, Simon Fraser University

380 pages, \$19.95



Singing Through the Hard Times: A Tribute to Utah Phillips

In his life, Utah Phillips was many things - soldier, hobo, activist, pacifist, union organizer, storyteller, songwriter. He was an oral historian who documented the events of the working class and turned them into stories and songs. And in the folk tradition, he passed them on to others. Righteous Babe Records continues that tradition with *Singing Through The Hard Times*, a 2CD set that celebrates the music that Utah sang and loved.

Included are performances from Emmylou Harris and Mary Black, Pete Seeger, Tom Paxton, John McCutcheon, Rosalie Sorrels, Gordon Bok, Ani DiFranco, Magpie, Jean Ritchie and many others - folksingers whose music springs from the same rich vein of the people’s history that Phillips chronicled throughout his life.

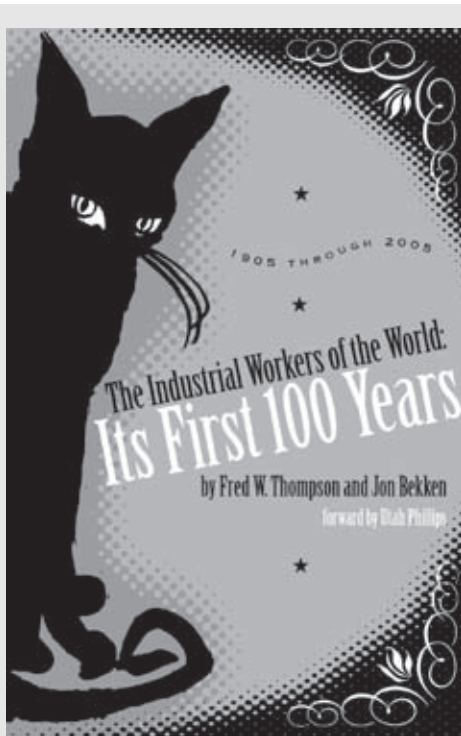
The project itself started as a way to help Utah through his own hard times. Last year, folksinger Dan Schatz spoke with fellow musicians Kendall and Jacqui Morse about putting together a CD to help Phillips defray medical expenses. Phillips had been ill for some time when the project began, and died in May of 2008. It meant a lot to him that his songs would continue to live for years to come. “Utah himself once said, “Kids don’t have a little brother working in the coal mine; they don’t have a little sister coughing her lungs out in the looms of the big mill towns of the Northeast. Why? Because we organized; we broke the back of the sweatshops in this country; we have child labor laws. Those were not benevolent gifts from enlightened management. They were fought for, they were bled for, they were died for by working people, by people like us. Kids ought to know that. That’s why I sing these songs. That’s why I tell these stories. No root, no fruit!” **39 tracks on 2 CDs, \$15.98**



Wobblies and Zapatistas: Conversations on Anarchism, Marxism & Radical History

BY STAUGHTON LYND AND ANDREJ GRUBACIC

Wobblies and Zapatistas offers the reader an encounter between two generations and two traditions. Andrej Grubacic is an anarchist from the Balkans. Staughton Lynd is a lifelong pacifist, influenced by Marxism. Encompassing a Left libertarian perspective and an emphatically activist standpoint, these conversations are meant to be read in the clubs and affinity groups of the new Movement. The book invites the attention of readers who believe that a better world, on the other side of capitalism and state bureaucracy, may indeed be possible. **300 pages, \$19.95**



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

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

Static Cling Decal



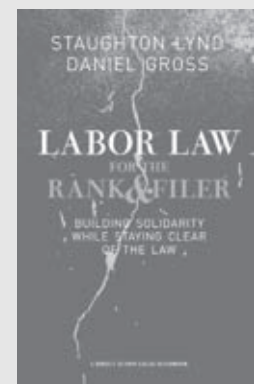
3.5" black and red IWW logo, suitable for car windows, \$2.50 each



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Labor Law for the Rank and Filer: Building Solidarity While Staying Clear of the Law

BY STAUGHTON LYND AND DANIEL GROSS

Have you ever felt your blood boil at work but lacked the tools to fight back and win? Or have you acted together with your co-workers, made progress, but wondered what to do next? *Labor Law for the Rank and Filer* is a guerrilla legal handbook for workers in a precarious global economy. Blending cutting-edge legal strategies for winning justice at work with a theory of dramatic social change from below, Staughton Lynd and Daniel Gross deliver a practical guide for making work better while re-invigorating the labor movement.

This new revised and expanded edition includes new cases governing fundamental labor rights as well as an added section on Practicing Solidarity Unionism. This new section includes chapters discussing the hard-hitting tactic of working to rule; organizing under the principle that no one is illegal, and building grassroots solidarity across borders to challenge neoliberalism, among several other new topics. Illustrative stories of workers’ struggles make the legal principles come alive. **110 pages, \$10.00**

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Activists at a Russian Ford Plant Struggle Against Union Busting Threats

By Elias Krohn, Viikkolehti

The Ford factory near St. Petersburg is on the front lines in the development of an independent trade union movement in Russia. The plaudits belong to a charismatic leader, welder Aleksei Etmanov, and other militant activists.

According to Etmanov, the large majority of Russians still don't understand the significance of trade union activity. The workers' awareness of their rights at the Ford plant nevertheless has increased.

"Both employers and the state bureaucracy are trying to deprive the workers of their rights and possibility to become organized and defend their own interests. The other great problem is the low educational level of the workers which enables the employer to manipulate the workers in his own interests," said Etmanov.

Etmanov is the chair of the union at the Ford plant at Seuloskoi, near St. Petersburg. He participated at a trade union conference in Jyväskylä (Finland) and prior to that told Viikkolehti about the challenges of the independent Russian trade union movement. He was accompanied by his wife Tatiana, Aleksandr Astafjev and Irina Tkatšenko, all employed at the Ford factory.

Etmanov and his co-workers established an independent union at the plant because they were not satisfied with the old metal industry union, which was part of the traditional Russian central labor organization. According to Etmanov, the central organization functions in the same way as it did in the Soviet era: it talks about being the representative of the workers, and occasionally makes a few demands, but in reality does not defend the workers' rights. It works closely with Russia's political leadership and the trade unions that belong to it are run from the top down.

"The independent unions that represent us have been established by their members. According to the policies of the independent unions, representatives of the employers are denied membership in them, whereas in the so-called 'official' unions there is no such ban. They also include employers' representatives," Etmanov said.

At this moment, there are no relations between the official and independent trade unions.

"They take care of their own business and we of ours. There is no open confrontation, but the official unions are trying to establish rival unions in those factories in which there is an independent union already and try to destroy it," said Etmanov. The difference between the two types of unions often remains unclear to the rank-and-file workers, which is a big challenge to the

independent union.

"Because of the history of the Soviet era, the large majority of the people still don't understand what a legitimate union is," said Etmanov.

Intimidation by lawsuit

The activities of Etmanov and his comrades have brought results. For example, a 25-day strike a year ago was productive.

"The workers actively participated in it. The strike brought about a 17-21 per cent wage increase and social gains and pensions were improved," Etmanov said. However, the repercussions from the strike are still ongoing. The plant management has demanded 4.5 million rubles in damages from the strike committee in court. This is an obvious countermove to a suit raised by the workers for unpaid overtime.

The workers have now won four lawsuits on the employers' compensation demands. Another four are open, but the accusations are similar to the previous lawsuits. The union activists think these open cases will also be decided in their favor in the future. Etmanov believes the employers' motives from the beginning were not to win the lawsuits but to intimidate the workers.

"The purpose of these demands is to show that if you participate in organizing a strike you will have problems; you will waste time when you attend court sessions on your own time and so forth," he said. There are also comic aspects to these occurrences.

"All 30 strike committee members were sent indictments, which consisted of a copier paper box weighing 12 kilos, full of papers. They (the committee members) donated the papers to the homeless who sold them as recyclables and used the money to buy beer," he added.

Strike spurred organization

"We have to show people that achievements produce results," said Aleksandr Astafjev, who emphasized the value of education so that people can understand the meaning of trade union activity. The strike was important from that standpoint, too, in the minds of the activists.

"People understand that there is power in the movement, and the importance of unity," Irina Tkatšenko said. At the Ford factory there have been notable changes in the consciousness of the workers, according to Etmanov.

"They are no longer satisfied that the firm gives out New Year's presents, trips and other such things. They understand that the union exists just for the reason that it defends the interests of the workers concretely," he said.



Union leader Aleksei Etmanov.

Photo: Viikkolehti

Security threatened

Independent unionism is not easy in Russia. Last November, Aleksei Etmanov was subjected to two violent physical attacks. In the first instance, three unknown men with brass knuckles attacked him as he arrived at his front door from the night shift. Etmanov shot at his attackers with a gun equipped with rubber bullets, and they fled from the scene. A week later an unknown man attacked him at his doorstep with an iron bar. The assailant was caught and held but was quickly released.

There have been other assaults against union activists. Investigations were initiated over the incidents but they didn't lead anywhere. In Etmanov's case, it didn't help that his assailant had been caught in the act.

"At 2 a.m., he had detached the lamps on the stairwell so it was totally dark, and he had an iron bar in his hand. But the conclusion of the inquest was that he was only going to the toilet," Etmanov said. The attack and other pressures haven't gotten the unionists to even think about stopping their activity.

"If you understand the reason that you are doing this work, then all these attacks on behalf of the employers are explainable and logical. I consider myself a supporter of the homeland and want all ordinary workers to live well in my country. That's why I can't stop this activity," said Tatiana Etmanova.

Economic crisis can activate

Aleksei Etmanov offers three scenarios on how trade union activity in Russia can develop:

"The worst alternative would be for all labor unions to degenerate into pseudo-unions which are totally under the control of the authorities. The second is that people finally understand that legitimately functioning trade unions

need to be established in this country which are able and want to defend the workers' interests against the employer and state authority. Third would be that there wouldn't be any kind of unions but that people would defend themselves as individuals. We, of course, strive to realize the second alternative."

Etmanov and his union comrades are somewhat optimistic, but cite that the situation is quite unsettled.

"Russian capitalism is still new and people are trying to relate to it. They don't still fully understand its legal ramifications," he said. The economic crisis appears to Etmanov to allow the employer under its guise to pursue layoffs, which are often directed toward union activists. On the other hand, with this crisis, Etmanov believes that people will begin to think more about questions related to politics and become activated.

Solidarity across borders

The Russian union activists maintain numerous contacts with other countries.

"Cooperation is crucial since the enterprises are multi-national and very often are trying to coordinate their practices in the different countries. International solidarity among trade unions and workers helps to win labor struggles. During last year's strike, the workers at the Ford factory in Spain strove to stop Ford's plans to fill the (production) gap caused by our strike to bring cars from Spain to Russia," Etmanov said.

"The employers' and workers' conflicts with each other are the same everywhere. Through cooperation unions and workers can share their experiences," added Tatiana Etmanova.

Russia has learned lessons especially from Brazil, Canada and Venezuela, as these countries have strong unions in their auto industries.

Translation: Harry Siitonen.

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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.

ISC endorses resolution on crisis

In March 2009, the ISC endorsed a resolution put out by the CNT-F about the worldwide economic crisis:

"Today's current crisis of Capitalism is placing workers in front of two well-defined options: either keep on being subjected to an authoritarian and inegalitarian economic and social system, or build up resistances in order to impose a fair deal of wealth, and have our rights and freedom respected.

"The revolutionary syndicalism or anarcho-syndicalism we embody means a clear choice.

"We refuse to keep on negotiating our defeats. On the contrary, we want to organize our victories. In that perspective, only inter-professional, renewable and general strikes, such as those currently sketched out in a few countries, can help us bend economic and political leaders to our will. Only the flawless international solidarity of all workers, from the North to the South, and the West to the East, can shatter the economic and political system which crushes our rights and freedom daily.

"Workers' Unions must take on their responsibility and do their utmost to reverse the balance of powers, thus put an end to this blackmail-with-the-threat-of-crisis which leads to policies of social destruction. It's time we stopped complaining about the "excesses of liberalism" or accepting "reform through negotiation." It's time we stopped believing in "political changeovers" or "social dialogue." It's time we took action!

"Because we hold for true that exploitation has lasted too long; because we're fed up of working faster and harder day after day to increase their profit; because we demand the right to health, education, quality public transport; because we demand the right for all to go about freely without countries no borders; for all these reasons and for many more, we call for the building up of a class unionism: revolutionary, anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian; the only unionism in a position to reverse the balance of powers.

"For we assert, without beating about the bush, that the ground of all social, political, international or environment crisis is Capitalism. For we assert that behind the logic of profit lies a logic of death. Let's put an end to Capitalism when it's still time to do so! Through union and social struggle, let's impose another social model, freer, fairer; to make sure our future is not a worse version of our present."

CFMEU appeal for solidarity—Australian bushfires

The Construction, Forestry, Mining & Energy Union (CFMEU) is appealing for assistance following the devastating bushfires that are still burning across Victoria in southeast Australia. Over 180 people have been killed as fires burn out of control across many rural areas, some deliberately lit. Thousands of homes have been destroyed.

One CFMEU member is confirmed killed. Many members have seen their livelihoods threatened as timber growing

and timber manufacturing communities have seen their homes, sawmills and timber resource destroyed. The fires have destroyed towns and forests that support timber workers across whole areas of Victoria. The CFMEU is aiming to raise AUD\$1 million through a levy of members to support those in need. The union has appealed to unions worldwide to donate in support of union members that have lost their homes and their jobs.

The ISC will be publicising the appeal and encouraging fellow workers to support those affected by these devastating fires.

ITF condemns crackdown on Iran's independent workers' movement

The International Transport Worker's Federation (ITF) is backing a campaign by a fellow global union federation to clear five union leaders in Iran who were arrested for standing up for workers' rights. The trade unionists, representing thousands of sugar cane workers at the Haft Tapeh Sugar Cane Plantation and Industry Company in Shush, were summoned to appear before the Islamic Revolutionary Court in Defzul on Dec. 20, 2008. The leaders of the Union of Workers of the Haft Tapeh Sugar Plantation—Ali Nejati, Feridoun Nikoufard, Mohammed Heydari Mehr, Ghorban Alipour, Jalil Ahmadi—were arrested and charged in connection with actions taken by workers in 2007 over unpaid wages and in defence of basic workplace rights.

The union is a member of the global union federation, the International Union of Food (IUF), and the International Trade Union Confederation, both of which are lobbying for a "not guilty" verdict. The ITF is supporting the campaign and backing the emergence of an independent workers' movement in Iran, of which the ITF-affiliated Tehran Bus Workers' Union is a part; the leaders of the union, Mansour Osanloo and Ebrahim Madadi, remain in detention.

ITF Inland Transport Section Secretary, Mac Urata, commented: "The ITF is fully behind the IUF and the sugar cane plantation trade unionists. These arrests clearly show that an independent workers' movement is growing in Iran, which is why the authorities are taking measures to crackdown on trade unionists. Our colleagues from the Tehran Bus Union are not an isolated case."

Starbucks Workers Union proposes international union coordination

Since 2004, a number of unions around the world have been organizing Starbucks workers at in the United States, New Zealand, Spain, and France laying the foundation for a truly global labor movement. The IWW Starbucks Workers Union sees this as a tremendous opportunity for to globalize solidarity in the wake of globalizing capital. Now is the time to build an International Starbucks Workers Union to coordinate organizing on a global scale. Invitations are being sent to independent unions to affiliate to the international.

The International will run a multilingual web portal for organizing at Starbucks and coordinate actions on a global scale.

Israeli wildcat strikers kicked out of union



Graphic: Libcom.org

By John Kalwaic

In northern Israel, Israel Railways workers, who started a wildcat strike on Feb. 5, 2009, were expelled from the Histadrut union confederation, which is the only major labor federation in Israel. The wildcat strike was organized by an unofficial union committee, which Histadrut did not recognize. A court ordered the workers back to work, but the workers refused to stand down and continued their strike. The following week the leaders of the wildcat strike were kicked out of the federation by the union bosses.

Spanish CNT in conflict with Ryanair at Zaragoza

By John Kalwaic

The historic anarcho-syndicalist union, know as the CNT, has undergone a labor dispute with the Ryanair Company in Zaragoza, Spain. The union section of the CNT that represents airport workers in Zaragoza is demanding an end a reduction of hours for airport workers who work at the airport. This reduction was imposed by Ryanair, the British discount company.



Graphic: Libcom.org

U.S. Steel lays off 2,100 in Hamilton, Canada

By Tom Keough

In January 2009, U.S. Steel announced "substantially higher fourth-quarter earnings," up to \$308 million from last year's \$35 million, according to a report from AM900 CHML, an Ontario-based radio station. The Pittsburgh-based steel giant credits large sales of steel for pipes and "acquisition related gains" for this huge increase. One month after this huge profit announcement, U.S. Steel also announced they it will indefinitely lay off all 2,100 of its employees in their Hamilton operations. This is in addition to their layoff of more than 700 workers in November. Hamilton is hit hard by recent layoffs in the Arcelor Mittal Dofasco steel operations, which is a competitor to U.S. Steel.

U.S. Steel said that the reason for the layoffs is that the economy is bad in general, and in the future they expect a loss of sales and profits. They are passing these future profit losses onto the

employees by cutting labor costs now. U.S. Steel has recently laid off 3,500 workers in Detroit and southern Illinois.

Many large corporations are talking about the bad economy and demanding wage freezes or wage cuts, serious cuts in benefits including health care, paid vacation days and holidays, and cuts in retirement pay and benefits. Many are cutting benefits and pay to retirees and the retirement plans for current employees. Bonuses, stock options and the huge paychecks of the people at the top of those corporations continue to be riches beyond belief.

Ontario has been hit by many layoffs but with a much stronger, larger and more active labor movement than the U.S. Workers there are used to many advantages that U.S. citizens only dream of. These include the well known health care system and better schools. Ontario is raising the minimum wage to \$9.50 on March 31, and by 2010 the minimum wage will be \$10.25.

Workers in Kherson, Ukraine seize their plant

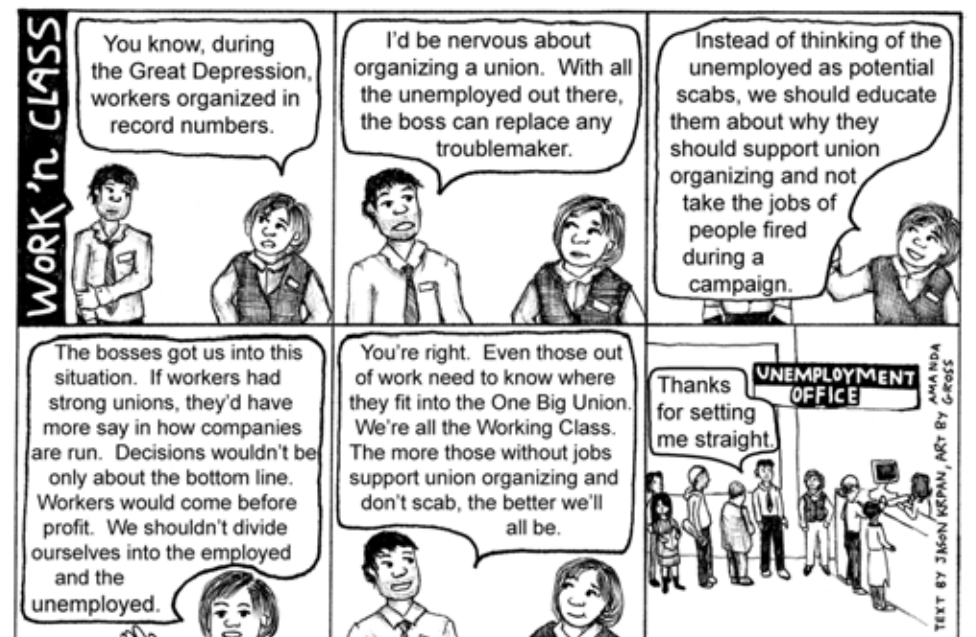
By John Kalwaic

Workers at a harvesting machine building plant in Kherson, Ukraine, have seized their workplace in a bid to keep it open. The plant in Kherson is 120 years old—it has a rich history and is one of the oldest plants in Ukraine. The plant has changed hands many times since the fall of the Soviet Union, and it continues to be in jeopardy. The main demands of the workers are: payment of wage arrears, (almost 4.5 million Ukrainian hryvnias), nationalization of the plant

without compensation to the owner, state-secured plant production and high-quality machinery. Workers claim that they will turn to more severe forms of protest if their demands are not met. On Feb. 2, 2009, 300 workers protested that their wages had not been paid since September 2008. The workers elected a five-person workers council to have meetings with the bosses and list their demands. Both communists and anarchist activists have come out to support the workers of the Kherson Plant.

Wobbly Art Corner: "Work 'n Class"

by Jason Krpan and Amanda Gross



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