

# INDUSTRIAL WORKER

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## Korean Motor Workers Under Police Seige

By Loren Goldner

The Ssangyong Motors strike in Pyeongtaek, South Korea grows increasingly dire.

Ssangyong Motors is 51 percent owned by China's Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation. In February 2009 the company filed for bankruptcy, proposing a restructuring and offering the Pyeongtaek plant as collateral for further loans to re-emerge from bankruptcy. The court approved the bankruptcy plan, pending adequate layoffs to make the company profitable again.

Following job actions through the spring in anticipation of the layoffs, the current strike began on May 27, when the company announced layoffs, and forced retirement of 1,700 out of 7,000 workers, with immediate additional firings of 300 casuals. The workers slated for layoff immediately occupied the plant, demanding no layoffs, no casualization and no outsourcing.

The Korean Metal Workers Union (KMWU) supported the occupation but tried to channel negotiations strictly

around the question of layoffs.

As of mid-June, about 1,000 workers have been continuing the occupation, with their families providing food. The government and the company bided their time, in part because of a broader political crisis of the hard-right Lee government which militated against any immediate massive police and thug attack. But two weeks later, they felt confident to go on the offensive. The workers, for their part, had armed themselves with iron crowbars and Molotov cocktails.

From June 26 to 27, a serious government and employer attack began. They hired thugs, and scabs were recruited from the workers not slated for firing. Riot police tried to enter the factory. They secured the main building after violent fighting in which many people were injured. The occupying workers retreated to the paint sector, which was part of a defensive plan based on the belief that police would not fire tear gas canisters into the highly flammable area. This plan stems from an incident in

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## French Auto Workers To Blow Up Factory?

By "Auto," libcom.org

CHATELLERAULT, France — Workers at collapsed French car parts maker New Fabris in ChateLLerault, near Poitiers in central France, threatened to blow up their occupied factory if they did not receive payouts by July 31 from auto groups Renault and Peugeot to compensate for their lost jobs.

New Fabris was declared to be in liquidation in April, so the 366 workers stand to get no redundancy money, although they are entitled to draw state unemployment benefits.

Ninety percent of the work at the factory is for Renault SA and PSA Peugeot Citroen, and the workers have demanded that the companies finance a payment of 30,000 euros (\$41,800) for each of the 336 workers at the factory, or some 10 million euros (about \$14 million) in total. PSA and Renault recently funded redundancy packages for 200 workers at another subcontractor, Rencast.

Workers are claiming that there are 2 million euros (almost \$3 million) worth of parts in the factory and a brand new machine belonging to Renault of similar value. They are threatening to blow up these parts and equipment if they do not receive an acceptable redundancy package.

"The bottles of gas have already been placed at various parts of the factory and are connected with each other," CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail) trade union official Guy Eyermann told France Info radio.

"We won't let PSA and Renault wait for August or September to pick up their stock and machinery... If we get nothing, then they won't get anything at all," he continued. A delegation of 150 workers visited PSA headquarters. Police also declined to comment on the threat by the workers, who are occupying the New Fabris factory.

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NYC IWW members hand out leaflets at Kmart on June 17.

Photo: Dave Buccola

## False Advertising? MPG Lays Off Workers While Profits Grow

By Diane Krauthamer

On Wednesday, June 17, members of the New York City IWW protested against the callous layoffs at Havas Media Planning Group (MPG), a multi-million dollar media agency whose clients include some of the largest corporations in the world.

MPG recently cut 11 percent of its staff, primarily at its headquarters in New York. But the media giant did not anticipate that a former employee, Joseph Sanchez, would publicize its anti-worker practices.

"This extremely profitable corporation laid me off just to put extra money in their pockets," said Sanchez, who worked in the client accounting department. "Instead of making a living wage,

I'm surviving off unemployment benefits and food stamps."

In an attempt to encourage Kmart to stop advertising with MPG until a fair severance package is negotiated, nearly a dozen IWW members handed out leaflets at a Kmart store in Astor Place in the Village. Sears Holdings—the parent company of both Kmart and Sears, and one of MPG's biggest clients—spent \$590 million on ads in 2008.

MPG laid off approximately 50 of its 460 employees in New York, Boston and Chicago on April Fool's Day. The company said that it needed to free up resources to support growth. However, according to a report in Media Buyer-Planner, the CEO of MPG-North

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## Starbucks Workers Union Expands To Canada

By the Starbucks Workers Union

QUEBEC CITY — Steamed over unreasonable new scheduling demands and deteriorating working conditions, baristas at the Germain-de-Prés Avenue Starbucks filed for union accreditation July 13, becoming the first store in Canada to affiliate with the IWW Starbucks Workers Union. The Labor Relations Commission of Québec will grant the union—which stands to be only the second union of Starbucks workers in all of Canada—accreditation after verifying their authorization cards in the next few days.

Policy changes related to Starbucks' new "Optimal Scheduling" program, one of a slew of recent schemes intended to slash labor costs, provided the main impetus for unionization. Under the new policy, Starbucks requires nearly around-the-clock availability from workers, while refusing to guarantee a single work hour each week.

"Starbucks workers have no job security and make a poverty wage, but at least until now, the hours were flex-

ible, which was convenient for the many students who work here," said Simon Gosselin, a member of the union in Québec City. "These policy changes would force our six shift supervisors, who are students as well, to take demotions, and a 10 percent pay cut."

Once seen as a paragon of socially responsible business, the coffee giant's image has been tarnished in recent months as executives have gutted workers' benefits packages, decreased staffing levels, and increased demands on baristas in an attempt to shore up sagging profits amidst sharpening market competition and declining sales.

"For many Starbucks workers, the anti-student, anti-family requirements of so-called 'Optimal Scheduling' are the straw that broke the camel's back," said Erik Forman, a barista and member of the Starbucks Workers Union in Minneapolis. "Our campaign for secure work hours, fair pay, and a voice at work is gaining momentum. We welcome our sisters and brothers in Québec to the union with open arms."

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IWW members, branches, job shops and other affiliated bodies can get the word out about their project, event, campaign or protest each month in the *Industrial Worker*. Send announcements to [iw@iww.org](mailto:iw@iww.org). Much appreciated donations for the following sizes should be sent to IWW GHQ, PO Box 23085, Cincinnati, OH 45223 USA.

\$12 for 1" tall, 1 column wide

\$40 for 4" by 2 columns

\$90 for a quarter page

# Creating A New World In The Shell Of The Old

Dear *Industrial Worker*,

First, I would like to say congratulations to Fellow Worker Nate Holdren on the upcoming birth of his daughter! I'm sure I share the feelings of all IWW members when I say that we are all there to support you in your fatherhood adventure.

FW Holdren's "Workers' Power" column, titled "Build a Ship" which appeared on page 4 of the July 2009 *Industrial Worker* reminded me of a story told by Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos of the Zapatista National Liberation Army. The story goes something like this:

In a certain town, men and women toiled at work in order to survive. Every day the men and women went out to their respective jobs: the men to the fields and the bean crops; the women to get firewood and water. At times there was work that brought them together as equals. For example, men and women would join together for the cutting of coffee, when its time had come. And so it passed.

But there was a man who did not do

that. He did work though, but not in the fields or bean crops, nor did he go to the coffee plantations when the beans reddened among the branches. No, this man worked planting trees in the mountain. The trees this man planted did not grow rapidly; all of them took entire decades to grow and to make all their branches and leaves. The other men laughed at and criticized this man quite a bit.

"Why do you work at things that you are never going to see completed? Better to work in the fields, which will give you fruit in months, and not in the planting of trees that will be large when you have already died. You are a fool, or crazy, because you work fruitlessly."

The man defended himself and said: "Yes, it is true, I am not going to see these trees full grown, full of branches, leaves and birds, nor will my eyes see



Early IWW editors, year unknown.

Photo: [iww.org](http://iww.org)

children playing under their shade. But, if all of us work just for the present and for just the following day: who will plant the trees that our descendants are going to need, in order to have shelter, consolation and joy?"

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# Oil: Dirtier Than A Can Of Worms? You Bet!

By David Patrick

In what could have been a firestorm of nationalistic antagonism, xenophobia and violent labor clashes, a peaceful and progressive solution soared from the ashes of a wildcat strike by oil refinery workers in North Lincolnshire. Workers in the Lindsey oil refineries, employed by Total SA, have come to an understanding with management in regards to outsourcing labor and the protection of local integrity in the workforce. Ten days after 900 workers were sacked after a walkout of nearly 1,200 on June 19, amid spreading sympathy strikes and accusations of bigotry at high government levels, it appears that the labor movement has taken a step forward.

The anticlimactic resolution came after many hills and valleys of a roller coaster ride dating back to the beginning of the year. At the end of January, 800 Lindsey workers went on the first strike in protest of the Italian contractor IREM being given primary employment over British workers, despite the ravaged local economy, high unemployment and the overall conditions of the global financial markets. In the European Union, the first set of protests sent white-hot signal flares into the capitalist air and it drew significant attention in European media.

Soon after, the plot line of the story, like the black gold itself, became thicker, dirtier, and darker. In early February, the British and Irish trade union—Unite The Union—issued a statement to reject the claims of ethnic prejudice circulating in the British media. The early protests were shown through the prism of the European Union's utilization of Posted Workers Directive. The PWD regulates the movement of workers and guarantees the right of European laborers to seek work in other countries. The PWD has been labeled as being discriminatory against British workers, a sort of reverse outsourcing: bringing in workers from other countries to work at lower wages

in the aim to undercut the local population where standards of living and wages might be higher.

Even British Prime Minister Gordon Brown was forced to acknowledge the issue by stating: "When I talked about British jobs, I was talking about giving people in Britain the skills, so that they have the ability to get jobs which were at present going to people from abroad, and actually encouraging people to take up the courses and the education and learning that is necessary for British workers to be far more skilled for the future."

Notwithstanding this defense of British labor, when the workers tried to take the matters into their own hands against corporate power structures, many of which form the foundations of Gordon Brown's support, the Prime Minister decried the wildcat strikes of the later months, saying that: "that's not the right thing to do and it's not defensible."

The laborers did not really stick by Brown's later remarks as more than 1,000 workers across Wales, Scotland and England joined the Lincolnshire strikers in sympathy strikes. The fire was fueling rapidly as the strike demanded the attention of the corporate headmasters—Total SA, the French energy Conglomerate—when talks began in early February.

While many in America speak of the morbidly obese profits of Exxon Mobil, the people of the western hemisphere remain largely ignorant about the smallest of the "super-major" oil companies. However, the company in various parts of the globe has been fined hundreds of millions of dollars for oil spills and environmental catastrophes over the past decade. Total has also been the subject of notorious scandals as Italian executives of the company, in attempts to secure rights to an oilfield, were charged



Workers picketing in North Lincolnshire.

Photo: John Giles

with corruption in December 2008. Also, what can only be seen as intolerably repugnant, Total is the subject of Belgian and French legal inquiries into slave labor being used to construct a pipeline from Burma (Myanmar) to Thailand despite EU sanctions against Myanmar's military dictatorship.

Total's initial talks with the GMB—the general trade union of the U.K.—were successful, as Total got its Italian labor as well as 102 new jobs created solely for British workers. Of what can be expected between marriages in the Western world nowadays, a messy divorce was imminent. The strikes

resumed in June 2009 as a subcontractor, Shaw—working for Total to build a hydro-desulphurization plant—laid off 51 workers while another subcontractor also employed by Total SA was hiring more workers. The wildcats started wildfires as three power stations and an oxygen plant, among others, rejoined the sympathy strikes to put pressure on employers seeking to leave local labor in the dust.

Total SA would not be so gregarious this time around as it responded to this new wave of protests by sacking 900 workers from the Lindsey site. General Secretary of the GMB Paul Kenny gave a response to Total on GMB's website as five more plants walked out in support of the sacked workers:

"GMB condemns the action of Total. Total has for a full week refused to meet the union to resolve the problems through ACAS. It seems pretty obvious that there is a mass case of victimization taking place here. Locking out the workforce at Lindsay will not solve the problem. It will escalate it."

The conflict was getting hotter and hotter as rhetoric intensified and other protests were staged. On the eve of a mild English summer and the deadline to re-apply for the jobs, workers for the Lindsey site burnt their dismissal notices in furious anger with the reaction of management and 3,000 other workers from plants across Britain walked out in support.

Total's main dispute was that the walkout was staged illegally, as a wildcat strike is performed without the authorization of trade union officials, and the talks reached a stalemate on how to resolve this particular issue.

Just passing the 41st anniversary of the famous French May 1968 protests, which virtually shut down the country for a brief period, the wildcat strikes appeared to have worked for now as a tentative deal was reached and ratified by the GMB on June 29, 2009. Details include reinstatement or reassignment of almost everyone who had lost their jobs in the dispute. With no punitive actions being taken against the laborers reported aside from a few jobs having been lost, it appears a new honeymoon for a new shotgun wedding has begun. So, if labor-management disputes do really in fact follow the pattern of holy matrimony, well then, at least let us pray with all that is at stake here for workers home and abroad that they don't follow the example of Elizabeth Taylor.

## 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.



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

# Work Is The Only Power We Own

By Gregg Shotwell

Power respects power, not punks. In manufacturing power is production, not grievances. If you wait for United Auto Workers (UAW) office rats to act, you won't get a break until you're flat on your back.

The General Motors (GM) plant in Lansing, Michigan, which makes crossover SUVs, is working full bore, but GM refuses to call back laid-off workers for summer replacements. It's a trend. Workers are expected to sacrifice time off with their families and postpone vacations "until the end of the year" or whenever it suits management. GM isn't satisfied to cut wages, benefits, and hard-won work rules. Now they want to control when, if ever, workers take vacation. What next? Less break time? Shave another six minutes and double stitch the repetitive stress?

Slow down. It's the only way to exert power and get what workers deserve: time off at full pay, recall of laid-off brothers and sisters, and a humane work pace. Vacation isn't entitlement. It's earned.

When management canceled summer vacations at my old plant, we raised hell. We circulated petitions. We demanded a rank-and-file meeting with the boss, and his boss, and his boss's boss, and on up the ladder. We weren't just talking words. To put some heft in the talk we worked really slow. Production crawled, keeled over, and passed out. Management canceled summer vacations, but like the proverbial horse led to water, they couldn't make us work and soon restored the protocol for summer vacations: summer replacement workers.

One of the reasons that summer vacations were canceled at the GM plant in Coopersville back in 1993 was because our sister plant in Austria got the whole month of August off and we had to make up for the lag in production. While Austrian workers enjoyed fresh air and sunshine with their families, we were expected to work 24/7 in a polluted factory with fluorescent lighting.

Europeans get better pay, more time off, universal health care, and state-funded college education, and we get "freedom." Freedom to work longer for less. Freedom to pay exorbitant prices for prescriptions and health care. Freedom to take out a second mortgage in order to send our children to college. Freedom to maintain military bases in 130 countries. Freedom to support a government that funds bankruptcies, plant closings, and off-shoring. Freedom to vote for concessions until voting is the only thing left to concede.

What's the sense of trying to keep up when progress means you continu-

ally work harder for less? It's like trying to walk up a down escalator. If you outpace the stairway to hell, you get to the next floor only to find you have 29 more flights to go before they cancel your health care and dump your pension. Might as well pull the plug while the lights are still on and you can find the outlet.

The promise of pension and health-care in retirement was a hoax. No money was invested in a trust for healthcare. Two years ago they told us the pension was over funded, now it's going broke, right along with our 401K plans and our homes. It's a hoax. With each new contract we make more concessions on the premise that concessions save jobs. Work hard and you'll get ahead is drummed into our heads. It's a hoax.

Experience has taught us well. Don't trust the boss. Don't trust the company. Don't trust the government. Don't trust the union. Don't trust the stock market. Don't trust any kind of broker or financial advisor. Beware of those who claim they are messengers of the divine market and advise you to bend meekly to the will of forces beyond your control. It's a hoax. The "free" market is rigged to lower wages. Capital strip-mines labor and leaves toxic waste dumps in place of pensions.

Who can you trust? Your coworkers. When in doubt, ask your coworkers for help. Don't take chances. Work slowly and safely and ask your coworkers for help. When the boss makes threats, keep your mouth shut and slow down. When the boss says hurry, drag your feet.

When management demands overtime, help your coworkers by slowing down more. If a union rep says, "Management has the right to manage," don't trust the rep, trust your coworkers, and slow down harder. You want a stimulus plan that creates jobs? Slow down. When management says no one can have time off, help your coworkers by going to the nurse or the boss or the cafeteria and throwing up. When they pay less, work less. When your coworkers get walked out or laid off or injured, slow down. When the cost of living goes up, compensate yourself by slowing down. When they raise the price of gas, drive slower. When they raise the price of medicine, grow your own. When they raise utility prices, conserve energy with a rapidly advancing slowdown. If you're a soldier deployed in Iraq or Afghanistan, slow down. There's nothing to win. As soon as one war ends, they'll start another. Don't get fired. Say, "Yes, sir," and slow down.

Power respects power. Show them you mean business. Slow down. Work is the only power we own.

Reprinted from "Live Bait & Ammo #131," July 2009.



"Workers Power" is on vacation this month and will return next month. If you're interested in writing for "Workers Power" send your submission to Colin Bossen at cbossen@gmail.com.

# Our Own Festival: A Wobbly Reports On His Recent Visit To Paris

By Mischa Lebevre

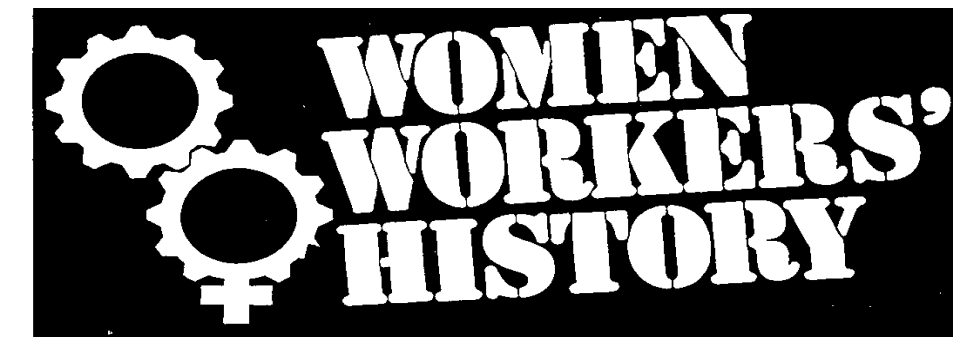
Through a haze of smoke, punk rock bands, beer and wine, one would expect to find yet another benefit show for some crusty squat with no vision or cleanliness. But this past June in Paris was a benefit for the CNT-F's newspaper, the *Combat Syndicaliste*. For many years, the CNT-F and the IWW have called each other "comrade." Both are revolutionary, syndicalist-leaning and direct-democracy based. We have taken our cues from each other, paying close attention to organization, action and education, to hopefully arrive one day at the global emancipation of our class.

However, lately the IWW has not been observing its own principles. We

have begun to compromise our internal democracy, wherein the latest manifestations of organization are losing ground on our now-international platform. Because of this, our local campaigns will begin to suffer.

A lack of adequate funding—including certain dues schedules and misallocations of funds—has put our union in the hole financially and administratively. The CNT-F as well is no stranger to this, because they too have been under the microscope of the French government in the past. This is what happens when we don't pay attention to our internal debates.

So our best weapon against the boss-ess is solidarity. Our second best weapon



## Chapter 26 The Great Labor Uprising

The long depression of the 1870s saw outbursts of worker anger. "Factory girls" went on strike against pay cuts in the mills of Paterson, Passaic and New Brunswick, N.J. in December 1874. When Fall River, Mass. textile companies cut wages by 10% for the second time in a year, women workers walked off their jobs for eight weeks in the summer of 1875. These strikes, although militant, failed to stop reduction of wages.

Women were out in force during the Great Labor Uprising of 1877. A strike that started in Martinsburg, W. Va. among railroad workers who objected to the second pay cut in eight months spread far and wide as railroad and other workers rebelled against depression conditions. Federal troops eventually crushed the strike, but only after pitched battles in several cities; 20 men, women and children were killed by soldiers in Pittsburgh.



Women took part in fierce fighting in Chicago, where a newspaper headline declared: "Bohemian Amazons Rival The Men in Deeds of Violence." The *Baltimore Sun* reported: "The singular part of the disturbance is in the very active part taken by the women, who are the wives and mothers of the firemen. They look famished and wild, and declare for starvation rather than have their people work for the reduced wages. Better to starve outright, they say, than to die by slow starvation."

Graphic: Mike Konopacki

is information. But our second best weapon is closer to being a spoon than a knife—maybe even a spork. The IWW's newspaper is suffering, plain and simple, but that is not to say it is hopeless.

The Fête du Combat Syndicaliste is a straight and to-the-point way of raising funds for the *Combat Syndicaliste*, with a "pay-what-you-can" admission, a bar, a soup kitchen, debates, lectures, films and a book fair. Figuring out a way to raise funds for the *Industrial Worker*, where we could have bands, a bar, a soup kitchen, etc. would make us more sexy and dynamic! You want to be sexy and dynamic, don't you FWs? Besides, what better way to bring people into the fray! Something to this effect would educate,

inspire and lay down the informational platform for revolution.

This will also help us out in our organizing efforts in the street. If the *IW* has the resources to publish once a month, publish on time and increase distribution, then the IWW's efficacy increases and we cease to be some obscure piece of history and become relevant to the public. Having something other than the General Convention for debates, films and camaraderie—something which the Fête du Combat Syndicaliste includes—will increase our solidarity. Sometimes, we all need to chill out and have a good time. All this said, I offer up a challenge to the rest of you. Let us put our heads together and have the *IW* Festival.



# Scoop New York: One-Stop Shopping—For Labor Violations

By Diane Krauthamer

NEW YORK — On Wednesday, July 8, fired workers from Scoop NYC gathered outside the trendy retail store in SoHo to protest against labor violations. Handing out free scoops of ice cream and chanting “Scoop Scoop is unfair, all we want is our fair share!” the workers announced a lawsuit against the company, alleging racial discrimination and numerous labor violations.

The rally was organized by the Retail Action Project (RAP)—a community-labor partnership of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU) and Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES)—and featured speakers from local political leaders to rank-and-file workers. Community, labor and religious groups came to support the workers as well, including the Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York (ROC-NY), the New York Labor-Religion Coalition, St. Marks Church, the Lower East Side Girl’s Club, the Jewish Labor Committee, Reverend Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping, half a dozen RWDSU locals, and the IWW.

“The company took advantage of hardworking immigrants,” said Madou Kone, a former Scoop NYC security supervisor. “I’ve never felt so discriminated against in my life.”

The workers, who hail primarily from West Africa, are filing suit with the U.S. Department of Justice for unlawful firings, document abuse and citizenship-status discrimination. According to RAP, in October 2008 Scoop NYC initiated an internal I-9 audit of the immigrant workers’ papers. Seven of these work-

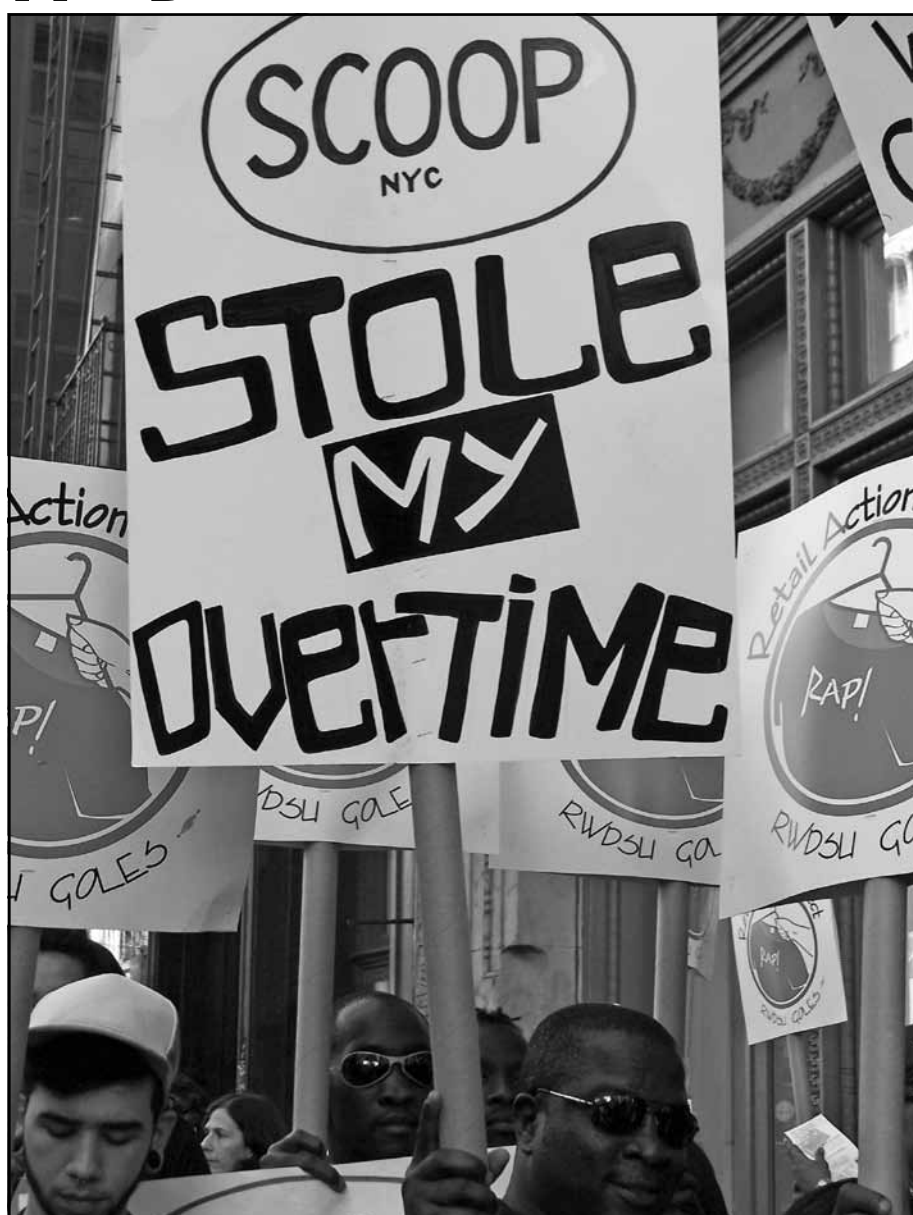
ers presented authorization as soon as requested, but Scoop NYC fired them, alleging that they failed to produce proper documentation. These workers are asking for approximately \$200,000 in lost wages since the time of their termination. Additionally, workers charge Scoop NYC with multiple labor violations, including failure to pay overtime.

“For over six years, nearly every single stock and security worker would work over 60 hours per week and never receive a single penny in overtime pay,” said RAP organizer Pete Montalbano. Fifteen of these workers are accusing Scoop NYC of neglecting to pay overtime and other benefits by deceptive measures and wrongfully attempting to misclassify these workers as managerial, thereby exempting them from receiving overtime pay, as stipulated in the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). These workers are asking for approximately \$300,000 in back wages.

In addition to the discrimination and wage violations, workers also cite hazardous conditions in the store.

“Our break room was a boiler room in the basement,” said Kone. “This is where we had to eat our lunch, change our clothes and even sleep.” According to RAP, the break room had poor ventilation, electrical hazards such as exposed wires on the walls and ceilings, and frequent leaks and flooding of raw sewage from bathrooms and drainage systems.

“You can’t hide these workers in the basement any longer,” said Montalbano. “You need to make amends for what you’ve done, and we’re not going away until you do!”



Former Scoop NYC workers rally on July 8.

Photo: Diane Krauthamer

## The Wheels Of Injustice Continue To Turn Against Immigrants

By Rio Grand Valley IWW

Rama Carty is a man that has been wrongfully detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs enforcement and the Department of Homeland Security (ICE/DHS) for well over a year now. Having been shifted about the Immigration and Detention Court system for such a long period, he has seen abuse, been abused, and has incessantly denounced and documented patterns of abuse inside of it. He is an adamant human rights advocate and a peaceful activist.

On July 9, the public received word that DHS/ICE, in correlation with the U.S. Attorney’s Office, is indicting our friend and ally, Rama Carty, on false charges of “assaulting, resisting, opposing, impeding, intimidating or interfering with [official duties] ICE guard Lt. Eric Saldivar and detention officer Hector Buentello Jr.” around an incident which occurred on June 3, 2009.

The incident at hand is being trumped up to a total and intentional misinterpretation by ICE/DHS. Commu-

nity members have spoken to detainee witnesses of the alleged assault. All maintain that Rama was peaceful during the incident. As far as one can tell, the only person assaulted was Rama Carty, as he let himself be dragged from his detention pod in an act of peaceful resistance. None of the witnesses’ testimonies are being taken into account. See sidebar for an account of Rama Carty’s treatment so far, including the assault in question.

Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) Rio Grande Valley, a democratic, worker-run organization, views ICE/DHS’ allegations as a further attack on Rama Carty for his defense of justice.

If fully convicted, Rama Carty faces 16 years in jail and a \$500,000 fine, according to court records.

IWW denounces the indictment of Rama Carty. We say: Drop the false charges on Rama Carty! End the abuses that are widespread inside immigrant prisons! Free Rama Carty! Freedom to the global working class!

### THE FACTS

- Rama Carty helped his fellow detainees around their legal cases as much as he could, considering that he does not have a professional legal background. In this sense, Rama was a legal resource to detainees in a system that does not provide access to any such resources.
- Rama Carty inspired and organized a Hunger Strike with detainees at the Port Isabel Detention Center (PIDC) when grievances about lack of medical attention, abuses by guards, inadequate legal resources, and denied due process went ignored by the entire ICE/DHS bureaucracy. The Hunger Strike is an act of self defense.
- The Hunger Strike was largely ignored by complicit government and private media agencies, but Rama Carty, along with fellow detainees, continued to be outspoken and managed to get some word to the public about the lack of humane conditions at PIDC and throughout the broader U.S. immigration system.
- Rama Carty brought the attention of international human rights group Amnesty International to the PIDC. Amnesty visited the PIDC and spoke with Rama Carty. The following day Rama Carty was assaulted by guards and dragged away, bleeding, to be transferred to LaSalle Detention Facility in Louisiana.
- Rama Carty organized a Hunger Strike while at LaSalle Detention Facility.
- ICE/DHS tried to illegally deport Rama Carty to Haiti. He is not a citizen of Haiti, and has never been there. The General Consulate of Haiti has refused to issue travel documents allowing the deportation to Haiti based on the fact that there is no birth record for Rama Carty.
- ICE/DHS’ plan for deportation failed. The current charges seem to be a desperate form of punishment (as if being denied your basic freedom wasn’t enough) for human rights advocate Rama Carty.

## Trespassing Charges Against Denis Rancourt Dropped

By Peter Moore

On June 25, 2009, the University of Ottawa dropped charges of trespassing that it had laid against physics professor Denis Rancourt, whom it had suspended over a dispute on how to grade and teach his graduate students.

Rancourt and his graduate student Marc Kelly had been hosting his weekly Friday political movie and discussion



Denis Rancourt

Photo: cdecde.blogspot.com

night, Cinema Politica/Academica, on January 23, when campus security and police entered the hall and arrested both Kelly and Rancourt. Kelly was held overnight in jail and released without charge.

Rancourt maintained that he had a right to be on campus and that the arrest was an attack on free speech.

“The University of Ottawa knowingly gave the Ottawa Police incorrect information that I had no right on campus. The police then lied to apply a false charge of trespassing,” said Rancourt in a press release announcing his victory. Rancourt represented himself in court.

While free of the trespassing charges, Rancourt continues to fight for his reinstatement. The University of Ottawa’s board of governors voted to dismiss him on March 31, 2009 over his inten-

tion to give the students in his graduate level physics course an A+ so that they could get on with learning. While the university claimed his dismissal was necessary to maintain its credibility, Rancourt said that he believes the university voted to remove him for political motives, particularly his vocal criticism of the way the university is run and his expressed views on controversial issues such as Palestine and climate change.

Rancourt continues to receive the support of the Committee for the Defence of Education and the IWW’s General Defense Committee Local 6.

To help get Rancourt his job back, send an email to the University of Ottawa president Alan Rock allan.rock@uottawa.ca and please be sure to copy the chair of Denis’ defense committee, claude.cde@gmail.com. Also, please sign the online petition: <http://www.petitiononline.com/uOttawa/petition.html>.

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# London Workers Shut Down Underground for 48 Hours

By Tom Levy

Workers on the London Underground subway system went on strike from 7:00 p.m. on June 9 until 9:00 p.m. on June 11, 2009. The rank-and-file strike committee of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) had called the strike. The main issue was job security, but the usual issues of pay, conditions, health and safety, as well as management bullying, also contributed to the workers' decision to take action.

## The Issues

The strike committee, acting on the authority of the estimated 10,000 RMT members who work on the Tube, had organized the strike to commence in the event that contract negotiations broke down between the RMT and Tube management. Negotiations had been ongoing, and in response to numerous sticking points, the RMT had convened a general meeting in which 88 percent of attendees had voted to authorize a strike.

Last fall the RMT had requested a five percent pay increase. In light of the current economic situation, the union had expressed a willingness to reconsider that demand, but the proposed counter offer was not only for significantly less money, it sought



Graphic: Ned Powell

to change the structure of negotiations. Management wanted a five-year contract to replace the one-year contracts that had seen such large gains for Tube workers. The main concern for the union, however, was mandatory redundancies. Transport for London, the local government agency that oversees the Tube, had requested 1,000 workers be let go. This was one demand workers were unwilling to accept.

Adding fuel to the fire, in 2008 then-mayoral candidate Boris Johnson had made a campaign commitment to secure a no-strike deal with the Tube unions. Since assuming office, his relationship with the Tube unions, and especially the RMT, has been acrimonious at best.

## Media Distortion

On the day the strike was to begin, the London press—especially the sensationalist right-wing tabloids given out for free throughout the city—began to claim negotiations faltered after the “shock demand” that management reinstate two fired employees. The *Evening Standard's* front-page headline on June 9 boldly proclaimed “Tube strike caused by dispute over two sacked men.” Besides branding the disciplined workers as incompetent, the papers went so far as to imply one of the sackings was a “criminal” matter and as such could not be openly discussed in print. It is true that the firings were a side issue in the negotiations (the union claims management brought them up at the last minute in an effort to force a confrontation), but the two terminations were far from the main issue. (It is worth noting, however, that one of the workers was allegedly fired for opening the doors on the wrong side at a Victoria line station. Yet, after the driver was suspended, workers on the Victoria line struck for 24 hours to demand more safety accommodations. The union claimed that, since the introduction of the private sector onto the Tube, concern for passenger safety had been diminished. According to the RMT, the mistake occurred as a result of a lack of adequate safeguards. All of the papers neglected to mention these inconvenient facts).

In an even more egregious distortion, the London papers placed the

“blame” for the strike on “union leadership,” and Bob Crow in particular. For the media, the strike was merely a contest between the “RMT boss” and Conservative London Mayor Boris Johnson. Recriminations were exchanged between the two men and at one point Johnson publicly called the union's leadership “deranged.” However, the irony of the media's claim is that Crow, the general-secretary of the RMT and a self-proclaimed socialist, is rumored to have initially opposed the strike. The RMT executive sanctioned the action only after the rank-and-file pushed the strike upon their leadership.

An agreement had been drawn up and signed an hour before the strike began. As Bob Crow stated in an open letter to the London public:

“At 6:35 p.m. whilst awaiting the final typed agreement we were told by management that they had made a phone call and that they could no longer abide by the agreement—they reneged before the ink was even dry... I have no doubt that the phone call made was to the Transport Commission or City Hall and they instructed the negotiators to pull the agreed deal.”

## Strike!

The union has claimed a victory in shutting down the majority of London's underground train services. Although the RMT is the main union of Tube workers, it competes with other unions for members. For instance, the craft-oriented Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen did not endorse the strike and many of its members crossed the picket lines. As a result, the London Underground did manage to run 120 out of 500 trains during the action. Nevertheless, considering that on an average weekday some 3.5 million people ride the Tubes, there can be little doubt that ridership was severely restricted by the strike. The power of the Tube workers does not necessarily lie in their ability to inhibit the profits of the “public-private partnerships” that run the lines—it is their ability to severely disrupt London's economy. They undoubtedly accomplished this. Even though the city attempted to provide extra bus services, it is estimated the Tube strike cost the London economy £100 million over the three-day dispute.

The other angle that must be considered is public perception. In England, as in much of the world, the current economic crisis has created a rise in worker militancy. The country has experienced factory occupations to demand adequate redundancy payments, wildcat strikes aimed at ensuring immigrant labor is paid equally to established workers and does not undermine union standards, and school occupations to protest cuts in social spending by the faltering Labour government. Given this turn of events, it is not surprising that many Londoners were willing to support the strike and use it as an excuse to take a day off work themselves. However, rightly foreseeing the media would highlight the naysayers, the RMT offered the following message on their strike support website:

“If popularity won pay rises, then nurses would be millionaires and politicians would be begging on street corners!”

In the days following the strike, negotiations began anew. Currently, it is unknown whether progress has been made toward a new contract, but militancy is still running high on the Tube.

Even as he was returning to the bargaining table, Bob Crow said “If we don't make progress and come to an agreement with Transport for London, then we will definitely strike again.”



The London Underground prepares for a strike.

Photo: libcom.org

**Tube workers are known for their militancy, and in an effort to understand the dynamics of the strike, a group of London radicals travelled to numerous pickets on the first evening of the strike. On our travels we met a worker who, besides being a rank-and-file militant, was also an RMT safety officer. This is what he had to say:**

TL: In terms of how the strike was organized, was there a lot of rank-and-file involvement?

FW: It's a rank-and-file union. It's rank-and-file from the bottom up. It's the only democratic fighting union left in the country.

TL: Have there been a lot of meetings to determine the course of the strike?

FW: We got a strike committee set up. The strike committees are based from activists within every grade and every location across the board. They're from all walks of life—all working-class people. They make the decisions. I mean, ultimately the executive committee of the union makes the decisions, but the strike committee makes the recommendation of what the rank and file want.

TL: Has there been any conflict between the strike committee and the union hierarchies?

FW: There's always conflict between the rank and file and the union hierarchies; it's the nature of the beast. It always happens, but we tell them what to do; we elect them. If they don't do what we want, we just de-select them in the next election. It's as simple as that.

TL: You said this depot is like 50/50 between RMT and ASLEF. What's the communication like between the two unions? [Note: ASLEF is the British train drivers' union and did not endorse the strike. RMT is an industrial union and, although membership is open to all drivers, it is estimated that only 40-60 percent choose to join].

FW: It gets difficult at a time like this. You can try to maintain a bit of comradeship, a bit of solidarity, but when you've got people crossing picket lines it's difficult to be civil. We're hoping a lot of them...well, not a lot...but if we could get a few of them not to cross our picket lines we'll be happy. There are obvious safety issues because there's no fleet maintenance, there's no track patrols, there's no qualified signal personnel—they're all on strike. So we've got leaflets we're handing out to drivers when they do cross the picket line. And if they do cross—God forbid—then we'll be asking them not to drive on the grounds of safety. Either way, we'll be shutting down the service. It'll be having the desired affect.

TL: What's the result of the strike?

FW: It's pretty good at the minute. It's a 48-hour strike. Nobody wants to lose two days' pay. It might be a bit more difficult to put on another 48-hour strike in a couple weeks' time. People are going to start to dither. That's the way it works.

TL: Where do you see this going after 48 hours?

FW: That's a difficult question. I mean, where do we go after this? The strike committee will have to decide that. Whatever it will be, it will be a majority decision and a democratic decision.

TL: Could you speak briefly again about the privatisation of the rail line and how this has affected strike action?

FW: The compulsory redundancies that we're talking about now are a result of the previous privatisation of Metronet. The “infracore,” as they call it—the fleet, the track, the signallers—they were all taken out of London Underground Limited (LUL), the publicly owned and administered government agency that ran the Tube until 2003. Metronet sold off under the PPP—the so-called “public-private partnership” that proceeded the LUL. [Current Prime Minister] Gordon Brown as chancellor was the architect of the PPP—he wrote it all up. And now, when Metronet—one of the companies brought in under the PPP—failed, they've had to spend millions and millions of pounds bringing it back in-house. But in the six years it was privatised there has been duplication of work, so you've got two people doing the same job at various locations across the combine. We need to lose these people. But we're saying they should be lost for involuntary service, you know, “natural wastage” (i.e. quitting and retiring). And they want to introduce compulsory redundancies, and we've got a previous agreement saying there'll be no compulsory redundancies. As usual, it's the workers they want to take it out on.

More money would be good. We'll tighten our belt even though the politicians have their snout in the trough and LUL managers are giving themselves fortunes.\* But the redundancies are the big one for us.

\*[Note: at the time of the strike there was an ongoing “expenses scandal” in which it was revealed parliamentary politicians had misappropriated millions in taxpayer funds to cover lavish expense accounts].



# High Stakes for Honduras

By Ben Dangl

When rallying in the streets of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, for the ousted President Manuel Zelaya, Alejandra Fernández, a 23-year-old university student, told a journalist why she supported Zelaya: “He raised the minimum wage, gave out free school lunches, provided milk for the babies and pensions for the elderly, distributed energy-saving light bulbs, decreased the price of public transportation, and made more scholarships available for students.”

Others gathered around to mention the roads and schools in rural areas the president had created. “That’s why the elite classes can’t stand him and why we want him back,” Alejandra explained. “This is really a class struggle.”

But it’s not just because of these relatively progressive reforms that Zelaya enacted that he deserves our support. Nor is it simply because this democratically-elected leader was ousted in a repressive coup led by right-wing oligarchs and military officials trained at the infamous torture and counterinsurgency school, the School of the Americas, now known as Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, based in Georgia.

He also deserves our support because he was ultimately overthrown in response to his plans to organize a popular assembly to rewrite the country’s constitution.

According to Central American political analyst Alberto Valiente Thoresen, Honduras’ current constitution, written in 1982, “was the product of a context characterized by counterinsurgency policies supported by the U.S. government, civil facade military governments and undemocratic policies.” In an assembly made up of elected representatives from various political parties and social sectors, a new, likely more progressive and inclusive constitution could have a lasting impact on the country’s corrupt politicians, powerful sweatshop owners and repressive military institutions.

Many commentators have said that Zelaya sought to rewrite the constitution to extend his time in office. Yet nothing indicates that that was the case. Leading up to the coup, Zelaya was pushing for a referendum on June 28 in which the ballot question was to be: “Do you agree that, during the general elections of November 2009 there should be a fourth ballot to decide whether to hold a Constituent National Assembly that will approve a new political constitution?” This nonbinding referendum—not plans from Zelaya to expand his power—was enough to push right wing and military leaders to organize a coup.

If the Honduran people approved the formation of a constitutional assembly in November, it would likely take years—

as it did recently in Bolivia—to rewrite the document. Zelaya would not be president by that time, as he will not be running in the upcoming elections. His term in office finishes in January 2010, too short a time to complete a national assembly’s rewriting of the Constitution.

Given that it was the call for the constituent assembly that led to the coup, it appears that the coup leaders are more worried about an assembly in which the people could rewrite their own constitution than Zelaya himself. Clearly, it’s the Honduran oligarchs, rather than Zelaya, who are more interested in concentrating and conserving their own power.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met with Zelaya in Washington on July 8, and one development was that Costa Rica’s president, Oscar Arias [a Nobel Peace Prize laureate] will act as mediator for the return of Zelaya. But there still is plenty of room for improvement in the United States’ stance. The Obama administration should listen to Zelaya’s demands rather than impose preconditions for U.S. support. And it should avoid bullying Zelaya into dropping his plans for the new constitution or limiting any progressive reforms he may want to enact upon returning to office. The Honduran people should decide what course Zelaya should take, not the Obama administration, and certainly not any right wing junta.

Although the Obama administration has been critical of the coup and relatively supportive of Zelaya, it should go much further. Some clear signs that Washington backs Zelaya would be withdrawing the U.S. ambassador from Honduras, following in the footsteps of the other nations that have condemned the coup. The U.S. should also cut off all of its aid to the rogue government and end all military aid to the country. These actions would put pressure on the already weak military and send a clearer message to the region that, at this point, Washington is entirely against the coup and willing to respect the demands from Latin American leaders, all of whom have called for Zelaya’s reinstatement.

On July 5, after his plane was turned back upon trying to land in Honduras, Zelaya told reporters: “The United States, which has tremendous power, should take action. Specifically, the strongest government in economic matters, in aspects of the sphere of the dollar, for us is the United States. If they decide to live with the coup, then democracy in the Americas is over.”

(Note: On July 24, *Al Jazeera* reported that the U.S. government cut \$16.5 million in military aid to Honduras).

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Hondurans protest in the streets of Tegucigalpa.

Photo: juventudrebelde.co.cu

## How Sweatshop Bosses Are Responding

By SweatFree Communities

Trade unionists in Honduras—a country that despite its small size is the fourth largest exporter of garments to the United States—have been vociferously rallying in support of democratically-elected President Manuel Zelaya, who was violently ousted from power by a military coup on June 28. SweatFree Communities supports workers in Honduras, including Elizabeth Gutierrez, a former garment worker and leader in FESITRADEH, the Honduran garment workers’ union, who toured the U.S. this spring with SweatFree Communities to educate the public about conditions in the Honduran garment industry.

While the Honduran National Business Council (COHEP)—whose members include the apparel industry trade group Asociación Hondureña de Maquiladores (whose members in turn include U.S. companies Dickies, Cintas, Russell, and Hanes)—has come out publicly in favor of the de facto government, trade unionists have been victimized in the weeks since the coup. The Spanish daily newspaper *El País* reports that freedom of association among other civil liberties have been suspended. According to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, “Roger Ulises Peña, a union member, was allegedly attacked by a military command on June 29, 2009, and his current health situation is very critical.” And on July 4, one week after the coup d’etat, the offices of the Cen-

tral General de Trabajadores (CGT), the national trade union center, were broken into and ransacked, with important documents stolen. CGT staff report that police have not responded adequately, and many believe the crime was political in nature.

According to media organization Honduras Laboral, on July 8 approximately 1,000 members of the Bloque Popular (Popular Block)—peasants, labor unionists, students and teachers—stopped traffic on the Pan-American Highway for five hours in the town of Comayagua, as a form of pressure to restore a constitutional government. This “paro” took place as anti-coup marches continued in the larger cities of San Pedro Sula, El Progreso and Tegucigalpa. The National Labor Committee also reports that the Honduras Teachers Union has called on its members to join a national strike.

“The take-over [of the road] was done peacefully, and the police did not suppress it because the majority of the anti-riot forces are concentrated in Tegucigalpa,” said Víctor Petic, director of the Honduran Cement Industry Workers’ Union (SITRAINCEHSA).

“In addition to the marches and take-overs that have been expanding since last Sunday, more people have joined in and this is a sign that the people are aware that what has happened is a Coup d’Etat that needs to be disavowed by everyone,” he added.

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## Book Review

# Capitalism Is Transforming The African Working Class

*Water, Mary-Alice and Martin Koppel*  
"Capitalism and the Transformation of Africa: Reports from Equatorial Guinea." *Pathfinder Press, 2009. 150 pages, paperback, \$10.*

By Heath Row

In 2005 and 2008, the authors and other reporters took two trips to Equatorial Guinea, a coastal country with a population of about 630,000—and one of the smallest in Africa. Since gaining independence in 1968 after 190 years of Spanish rule, the West African country experienced an 11-year dictatorship under Francisco Macias Nguema, human rights violations that inspired the exodus of more than one third of the country's citizens, and a coup led by the current president Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo. With the discovery of offshore oil reserves in the early 1990s and the arrival of American oil companies, the country is now the third largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa.

In the last two decades, Equatorial Guinea has experienced massive economic development, much of which has yet to translate to stable improvements in basic national infrastructure such as education, healthcare, electricity, and transportation.

"In the blink of an eye, historically speaking," the authors write, "one of the most capital-intensive, technologically complex, and highly monopolized industries has been superimposed on a foundation of labor productivity that was the product of thousands of years of hunting, fishing, and subsistence agriculture."

That collision—the introduction of globalization and the oil industry to a still largely pre-capitalist and -industrial society—makes for a fascinating opportunity for the mindful development and emergence of a working class, as well as workers rights. Yet this slim, readable, and insightful book indicates that in many ways, the opportunity is largely being lost.

In the chapter "Transformation of Production and Class Relations Highlights Realities Facing Millions in Africa," originally published in the Sept. 8, 2008, edition of *The Militant*, Koppel indicates that the country has almost no manufacturing industry. Its food is imported from Cameroon, Spain, and other countries. Even the oil rig, construction, hotel, restaurant, and other workers are primarily brought in from other parts of Central and West Africa, as well as China, North Africa, Lebanon, and Iran. When you have to import the food, materials, and workers to support an economy that exports a country's wealth, in this case oil, what's left for the people who live in Equatorial Guinea?

Perhaps not even work. In the "Reporter's Notebook," section at the end of the book, which I found most interesting, Waters suggests that there are very few Guineans working on the oil rigs and other infrastructural projects to support the oil industry. "Over and over you hear the comment that these businesses—and Equatorial Guinean ones too—don't hire Equatorial Guineans because Guineans don't like to work," she writes. "Whenever we get the chance, we ask, 'Why should they?' ... There are individual alternatives to wage slavery and debt slavery, so why work?"

Indeed, while that could lead to an idyllic utopia, that can also make for some major disconnects between the country's populace and the working class. In one instance, a Cuban electrician remarked that maintaining the new electrical infrastructure is challenging because, while foreign companies came in to install underground cables, they didn't leave any plans or diagrams for their maintenance.

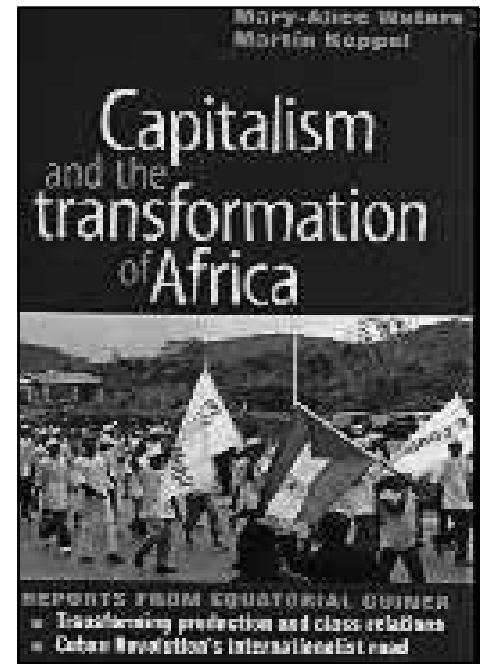
While the above two sections, which open and close the book, account for about 50 pages, the bulk of the text considers sectors in which Equatorial Guineans are taking more of an active stake, largely with the help of the Cuban international. In 2000, Cuba sent bri-

gades of medical workers to staff hospitals and public health centers in Equatorial Guinea. In 2006, the first class of doctors graduated from a medical school associated with the national university in Bata. Even though those graduates, as well as subsequent classes, are now staffing Equatorial Guinean healthcare facilities, they still need to persuade residents to seek medical care—and not the assistance of tribal healers, or curanderos, which can delay timely healthcare. Perhaps as importantly, if not more so, however, hardly anyone can afford such hospital care or stays. Many Equatorial Guineans live on less than \$1 or \$2 a day. A doctor's visit can cost \$225.

Part III, "Without Culture You Cannot Be Free" addresses the nascent culture industry, which is tightly tied to the educational system. The authors participated in the First Equatorial Guinea Book Fair in 2005, a groundbreaking event given that there are reportedly no printing presses or bookstores in the country. Educators at the National University of Equatorial Guinea hoped the event would help develop a culture of reading, as well as the documentation of Guinean literature and history. This section is composed primarily of transcripts of remarks given at the fair by Waters and Victor Dreke, then Cuban ambassador to Equatorial Guinea.

Even with those valid and valuable efforts and projects, the problem of the lack of an organized working class remains. "Working-class organization is illegal, as are strikes, yet there are initial signs of a proletariat being born!" Waters writes. It seems that it might be in Equatorial Guinea's interest to more strongly assert its citizens as employees of the global enterprises that are taking advantage of the offshore oil reserves. I also wonder whether some form of nationalized industry to support the country's growing economy and infrastructure might also be promising.

With increasing numbers of Equatorial Guineans becoming workers on



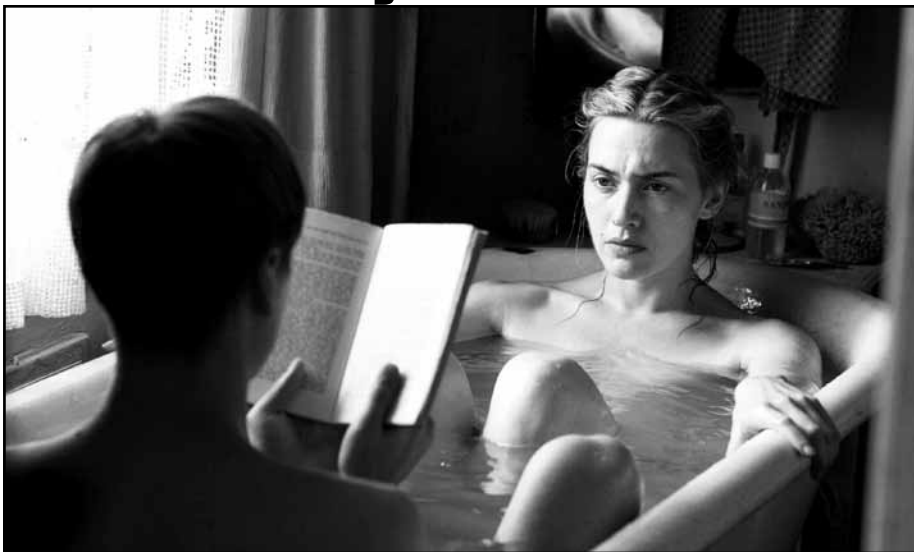
Graphic: africabookcentre.com

road and construction projects—many for the first time—and most of the skilled workers coming from other countries, there's also a sizable opportunity for organization and training to ensure that Equatorial Guinean workers don't miss out on the bounty being reaped by others—and that the country is left holding the keys to its own shop once the infrastructure is complete (or the oil is depleted).

Granted, it's still early days—non-oil industry in the country mostly includes a small bottling plant, a brewery (beer costs 50 cents, water \$3), and a cement factory—but those can be the most important days. The country still uses DDT to fumigate for malaria, for example. Safer methods "take a different level of labor productivity and social organization," Waters says.

When should that labor productivity and social organization be established? Now. There's already a Rotary Club in the city of Malabo. If you can have a Rotary Club, you can have a union. Perhaps the introduction of the IWW would be a sensible next step.

## A Love Story In Post-World War II Germany



Hollywood actress Kate Winslet plays Hanna.

Photo: thelonelyreview.com

Director: Daldry, Stephen. "The Reader." *The Weinstein Company, 2009. 123 minutes. \$15.*

By Mike Ballard

"Every single day—365 days a year—an attack against children occurs that is 10 times greater than the death toll from the World Trade Center...We know how to prevent these deaths -- we have the biological knowledge and tools to stop this public health travesty, but we're not yet doing it." - Jean-Pierre Habicht, professor of epidemiology and nutritional sciences at Cornell.

Eight million of the 11 million childhood deaths a year could easily be prevented. This is because almost 60 percent of deaths of children under five in the developing world are due to malnutrition and its interactive effects

on preventable diseases. Is this not a holocaust?

An old Soviet piece of gossip had it that Comrade Khrushchev was interrupted during his famous 'secret' speech before the Communist Party elite when he denounced Stalin's crimes in 1956, three years after Stalin's death. A voice from the audience shouted, "Why didn't you speak out against these crimes when Comrade Stalin was committing them?" Khrushchev looked up from his speech and asked loudly, "Who said that?" A long silence ensued after which Khrushchev observed, "That is why."

When you see "The Reader," ask yourself why you are doing nothing about the holocaust which is happening every year to the poorest children of the world. Is it because you are afraid to be seen as being "silly" or too "socialist"

or "soft hearted" or because the system demands that you pay attention to the important things of life like obeying your bosses and keeping order? Besides, "What can a lowly person like myself do about the situation?" and perhaps you're too busy speculating on what the real estate market will be doing in the coming months and or finding a pair of jeans at Jeans West which will fit.

Michael meets Hanna when he is 15. Unbeknownst to Michael, he is coming down with scarlet fever. He is throwing up in an alley on a very rainy day when Hanna, the tram conductor, stops to offer him a warm place to rest until he feels better. Hanna also cleans up his vomit from the pavement. Hanna believes in orderliness and cleanliness. This penchant for order is apparent from the beginning of their relationship and these traits lead her to offer Michael baths and to bathe herself as well and as the movie progresses the motherly Hanna and her son-like friend begin to explore the attractions which flow from such erotic circumstances.

Both Hanna and Michael are full of hidden passions. Michael could have been a Heydrich in Prague, had he been born 15 years earlier. He is clearly "officer material." Hanna, on the other hand, is a working-class woman born 30 years earlier into a society which told women that their highest aspirations could be fulfilled by staying in the kitchen with the children when they weren't engaged in taking in a church service. Education was unnecessary. Both Hanna and Michael are intelligent and attractive. Both are turned on by the doors which are

opened to them by great literature. Both are also social products of their own German culture, with its various and sundry facets of puritanical, psychological repression. This includes a kind of reserve which leads to the peculiarly German goodness of keeping one's mouth shut in public about things political—things which the authorities have well in hand. Hanna's fear of exposing her own illiteracy and Michael's fear of public condemnation as a young law student at speaking up for Hanna in a court of law are the stuff of tragedy.

Even after many steamy sexual encounters, Hanna is shocked by passages in D.H. Lawrence's "Lady Chatterly's Lover"—she tells Michael that it is the equivalent of smut and that he should stop reading from it, almost as his mother would have. But clearly, Michael is not attracted to Hanna because she is a mother replica.

However, it is "klip und klar" that Hanna loves Michael and he loves her but, unbeknownst to them both when they are together, their love runs very, very deeply. They might believe that they will get over their summertime romance as time goes by, but the reality is that such love does not die, no matter what happens: there are no conditions for it.

There are elements of Fassbinder's "Ali, Fear Eats the Heart" and "Berlin Alexanderplatz" in "The Reader." "Sophie's Choice" also comes to mind. See this movie and be prepared to cry for humanity because as Thoreau observed, "Most men lead lives of quiet desperation and go to the grave with the song still in them."



# Korean Motor Workers Under Police Siege

Continued from 1

January, when five people in Seoul died in another fire set off during a confrontation with police, sparking weeks of outrage.

The following day, the company issued a statement to the effect that there had been enough violence, but in reality following recognition of the tenacious worker resistance, and police and thugs were withdrawn. The company urged the government to involve itself directly in negotiations. All water in the plant was nonetheless cut off at the end of June.

Following a court order, the forces of repression struck again on July 11 as the riot police moved to seize the factory area with the exception of the paint

sector, and encircled the entire factory.

Ever since the June 26-27 attack aimed at isolating Ssangyong's struggle and breaking the strike, solidarity actions took place outside the plant, attempting to build broader support. These included a street campaign, mainly from family organizations in the center of Seoul and Pyeongtaek areas, and a four-hour general strike by the KMWU during which metal workers from nearby plants rallied in front of Ssangyong factory gate. Also, on July 4 and on July 11 the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) held nationwide labor rallies in support of the Ssangyong's struggle. These actions were poorly attended and the leadership of the KMWU has hesitated in declaring an all-out strike in response to the attacks on the plant. Activists think the KMWU and KCTU leaderships are more preoccupied with upcoming union elections.

Finally, on July 16, 3,000 KMWU members gathered to support the Ssangyong strike in front of the Pyeongtaek City Hall. When they tried to move to the factory after the rally, they were blocked by police and 82 workers were arrested on the spot.

All in all, chances for a serious generalization of the struggle to other factories look remote. Activists on the scene feel that even if the KMWU called a general strike, only a few districts would follow it. The Hyundai auto workers are in the midst of wage negotiations themselves. Nearby supplier plants have already gone through structural adjustment and are not likely to mobilize.



Occupiers use defending the factory. Photo: libcom.org



Police spray tear gas at occupiers on July 16. Photo: libcom.org

## Korean Police Fail To Break Ssangyong Factory Occupation

From Libcom.org

South Korean police were not able to carry through with a pledge to enter a Ssangyong Motor Co. factory, which has been occupied by fired workers for almost two months, as the carmaker tries to resume production at the plant.

On July 20, about 800 fired employees were still in a paint shop, confronting more than 3,000 police as in Seoul, Ssangyong spokesman Cha Ki Woong said by phone at the plant in Pyeongtaek, where the automaker is based.

Ssangyong came under court control in February, after facing a "serious" cash shortage as the global recession damped demand for the automaker's sport-utility vehicles while it lost domestic customers to Hyundai Motor Co. and Kia Motors Corp. The occupation has caused production losses of about 10,800 vehicles worth 230 billion won (\$183 million) as of July 15, according to the automaker.

The Gyeonggi Provincial Police Agency said earlier today it will enter the factory to assist a court officer demanding the former employees leave the factory. The court officer left after failing to deliver the document, said Ssangyong's Cha. Police spokesman Kim Dong Ho declined to comment.

A strikebreaking Ssangyong worker was hit by a projectile from the occupied factory and was sent to the hospital.

Ssangyong plans to eliminate 36 percent of its workforce to return to profit and meet a Sept. 15 court deadline to submit a restructuring plan to avoid liquidation.

About 800 workers are still in the plant and they'll resist "in the face of death" if police tries to forcibly disperse them, union spokesman Lee Chang Kun said by phone.

The output losses at Ssangyong will rise to 14,590 vehicles worth 316 billion won by the end of July if the former workers continue the occupation, which has stopped Ssangyong's production entirely.

## Safe Haven Tent Community Under Attack

By Neil Parthun

The national housing crisis has led to thousands of families losing their homes. The rise in homelessness has contributed to the increase in tent communities across the United States as a grassroots solution to the problem.

### Nowhere to go in Champaign County

This crisis has impacted Champaign County, Illinois, with the closure of Autumn Glen apartments in Rantoul and Gateway Studios in Champaign due to the landlords' failure to pay bills. The closures of Autumn Glen and Gateway Studios were only the latest examples of the decline of affordable low-income housing in Champaign. To further compound matters, the City of Champaign also allows for landlords to discriminate and not rent to tenants using Housing and Urban Development Section 8 housing vouchers.

The City of Champaign does not have any shelters where a person can simply get a bed for the night—it only has transitional centers which require entrance into a program if one qualifies. Most of these transitional centers are at capacity already or have extensive waiting lists. Other transitional centers have rules that exclude many homeless from eligibility. Champaign's social services also face difficulties as the City of Champaign has pulled funding from homelessness service programs over the past year. Due to these various challenges, many homeless do not see this as a viable or dignified solution.

### Tent Community Roots

According to many homeless, Champaign can be a very dangerous place to camp alone. As a result of this danger,

a group of about 12 homeless men and women came together organically in an area near the Catholic Worker House to camp together in safety.

On June 8, 2009, the Champaign police department came to investigate complaints from the neighbors. The police began videotaping the community and entered the Catholic Worker House property without permission. When asked why the officers were videotaping and coming onto the property without permission, one of the officers stated that he "could do what [he] want[s]."

When a member of the tent community blocked the camera from filming, he was given a citation for obstructing a police officer. The same resident tossed his cell phone to a friend in an attempt to document the officers' behavior. He was subsequently given a citation for assault as the officer alleged the phone was thrown at his head.

The police harassment brought allies and the tent community together in solidarity. The tent community was renamed Safe Haven and has become a safe, dignified grassroots solution to end homelessness.

Safe Haven moved to the back yard of the Catholic Worker House and quickly adapted rules from another successful community called Dignity Village in Oregon. Safe Haven promotes a safe, clean and dignified community life for the homeless and is run democratically by the people living there. The residents dutifully abide by the rules and have created an excellent low-cost solution to homelessness.

### The Fight Begins

By June 23, the City of Champaign stated that the Catholic Worker House and Safe Haven were violating the zon-

ing ordinances that prohibited outdoor living. The city continued their offensive when City Council member Tom Bruno stated in the local newspaper, News Gazette, that Safe Haven was a "political statement." Throughout the entire discussion, the City Council has used the local media to speak with activists rather than addressing the activists directly.

On June 30, the Catholic Worker House had a routine fire code inspection. Approximately an hour before, the City notified the Catholic Worker House that additional building inspectors would be doing a more detailed inspection. These inspections found a host of code violations that must be corrected by August 3 or the Catholic Worker House will be condemned. A condemnation would end the six-day-a-week meal program and the housing assistance provided at the Catholic Worker House. The City zoning administration also told the residents of Safe Haven that they had to be off the property by July 17 or they would face fines of \$750 per day.

Local housing activists believe that this is an overt attack on both organizations. It is selective enforcement of the law because the Catholic Worker House has given a site to Safe Haven. The City of Champaign knew for more than a year about the deteriorating conditions of Gateway Studios and never sent inspectors to make sure the building was up to code. Multiple other buildings in Champaign would also fail such inspections if the City chose to enforce all such regulations.

Activists showed up at the July 7 City Council meeting to address the Champaign City Council about how the city was demanding that Safe Haven be dismantled but was not providing any alternative solutions. Some activists

discussed other successful tent communities and explained that Safe Haven would like to see "whether or not the city is willing to address the changing social and economic landscape in town" by creating a viable and dignified solution to the homelessness crisis in Champaign County.

Other activists discussed the tax incentives given by the City Council to a local developer whose wife is on the City Council. The city gave \$3.7 million in tax incentives for the building of a new commercial/residential development called M2 while agreeing to pay for a nearly \$12 million parking deck.

Multiple residents of Safe Haven told the City Council that Safe Haven was their only option. One resident told his story of becoming homeless after losing his wife to illness. He stated that Safe Haven is the lifeline that is keeping him alive and giving him something to fight for.

The City has yet to commit to official meetings with Safe Haven while threatening the existence of the community and not developing any alternatives. One of the Council members said on July 7: "If the City wanted [Safe Haven] gone, it would be."

### What you can do

Contact the Champaign City Council members. Ask them to meet with Safe Haven and develop a dignified solution like adapting the zoning laws to allow for Safe Haven's presence in the community. Ask them to work on developing adequate low-income housing in the city of Champaign .

- Mayor Gerald Schweighart: jerryschweighart@ci.champaign.il.us.
- Deputy Mayor Michael LaDue: michael.ladue@ci.champaign.il.us il.us



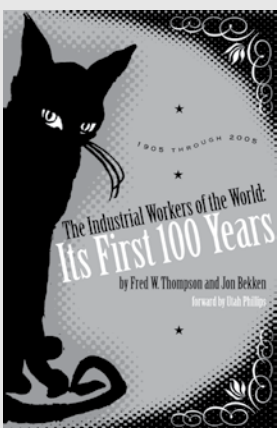
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organizing of African-American and immigrant dock workers on the Philadelphia waterfront, the international union of seamen the IWW built from 1913 through the 1930s, smaller job actions through which the IWW transformed working conditions, Wobbly 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.

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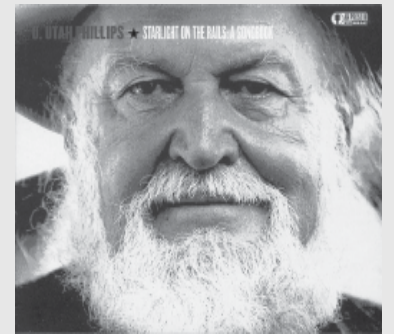


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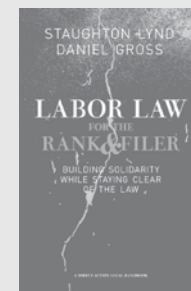
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# Canadian IWWs Move To Form Regional Organizing Committee

By Peter Moore

The North of 49° IWW Assembly in Winnipeg on June 13-14, 2009, gathered IWW members from Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and Ontario to share skills and talk organizing strategies for the union in Canada.

Elected delegates from the Edmonton, Ottawa-Outaouais, Toronto and Winnipeg branches also negotiated a constitution as the first step in forming a Canadian Regional Organizing Committee (CanROC). If ratified, the CanROC would have three officers, a Secretary-Treasurer, Organizing Department Liaison, Editor, and be directed by an elected representative from each affiliated charter-holding branch.

A referendum of all Canadian IWW members in good standing is currently underway to ratify the constitution. Ballots are due on August 31 and the results will be counted and released by a ballot committee formed by the Ottawa-Outaouais branch.

The North of 49° IWW Assembly agenda featured a session on the Labour Movement, Indigenous Workers and Solidarity, with guest speaker Cheryl-Anne Carr, a former postal worker and current member of the Winnipeg Labour Defence League. Other sessions included Canadian Labour Law, a strategy discussion on the General Defense Committee, and Building Industrial Union Branches from General Membership Branches.



Photo: Peter Moore

North of 49° Assembly participants visited Winnipeg's Ukrainian Labour Temple, "one of the most spied on buildings in Canada" according to one of its caretakers. It was completed in 1919 just months before the Winnipeg General Strike.

## Cadillac Fairview "Could Not Sink Any Lower"



Cadillac Fairview workers hold an information picket on July 22. Photo: Martyn John

By the CEP

TORONTO – Canadian real estate giant Cadillac Fairview is "union busting" and "could not sink any lower" at its downtown Toronto flagship property, the Toronto Dominion Centre, said Ontario Vice President of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP), Bob Huget.

On July 14, the company announced the mass termination of all of its maintenance and skilled trades employees at the TD Centre. The 61 workers are members of CEP Local 2003 and have been locked out by the company since June 14.

Huget said that the workers are long term employees with an average of more than 20 years of service to the company.

"A number of these people have committed their entire working life to this employer and to be tossed out on the street and terminated as if they had no rights whatsoever is simply outrageous and we won't stand for it," said Huget. "This is nothing less than union busting."

Cadillac Fairview Corporation locked

out the maintenance and skilled trades employees in two bargaining units after tabling a "final offer" that proposed to eliminate employees, force workers to re-apply for their jobs, restrict union representation and undermine bargaining rights. After four weeks of a lockout, the company this week sent a letter to all locked out employees stating that it is pleased with the contractor hired to do the union members' work and is therefore terminating all 61 employees, including those on sick leave and long term disability. "I didn't think this company's tactics could sink any lower, but I am shocked by their actions," said Huget.

Cadillac Fairview has assets of \$16 billion and is wholly owned by the Ontario Teachers Pension Plan. This last fiscal year was their most lucrative ever with nearly a billion dollars in profit. Company properties include the TD Centre, Eaton Centre, Pacific Centre and Sherway Gardens, to name a few. The union has filed bad faith bargaining charges at the Ontario Labour Relations Board

## False Advertising? MPG Lays Off Workers While Profits Grow

Continued from 1

American, Shaun Holliday, said the "reductions are not about 'shrinking the business into a more profitable core — on the contrary, they are about finding and fueling growth."

In 2008, MPG's parent company, Havas—the sixth largest communications group worldwide—increased profits by 25 percent. In January 2009, Virgin Mobile agreed to use MPG as its media planning and buying agent. Virgin spends approximately \$15-20 million per year on advertising. In February 2009, the recently-formed CBS Films, which plans to spend upwards of \$100 million per year on advertising, also agreed to use MPG as its media planning and buying agent.

Despite the company's increasing revenue, MPG only gave workers a four-week severance package, which Sanchez says is simply "not enough time to find a new job."

When Sanchez and his fellow workers were laid off, MPG also required that they sign an "Agreement of Separation & Release" in order to receive their severance pay. Included in this statement was the stipulation that the former employees would not "in any way denigrate any aspect of the company." The agreement, however, made no mention of the company not denigrating any aspect of the employee.

Now former employees are demanding the pay that they deserve, and the IWW is asking Kmart to stop advertising with MPG until they negotiate a fair severance agreement. For more information, please visit <http://www.wobblycity.org> or email [iww-nyc@iww.org](mailto:iww-nyc@iww.org).

## French Auto Workers To Blow Up Factory?

PSA stated their willingness to purchase the parts within the factory, but are refusing to accept responsibility for the workers. Renault's statement claims that they have been trying to help the company find a buyer as a going concern, but that this has not been possible.

The company is the successor to Fabris, founded in 1947 and put into liquidation in 2007. After liquidation, the firm was acquired by ZEN of Italy, which retained 380 of the 416 workers. ZEN SpA, based in Albignasego near Padua, makes cast iron parts for vehicles. Florindo Garro, head of ZEN, controls other metal firms in France, such as Rencast and SBFM, which are also having financial difficulties.

Some French workers have adopted militant tactics during this economic crisis, including "bossnappings," where managers have been held hostage in their offices.

In more recent developments, the BBC reports a U.S. construction equip-

ment firm has agreed to pay extra compensation to the French workers of JLG Industries, who had also, in a tactic similar to that of the above New Fabris workers, threatened to explode gas canisters at their respective plant. The BBC explains, "Staff at JLG Industries in Tonneins, south-western France, made the threat in order to get better redundancy terms for 53 workers." JLG Industries is a subsidiary of the US company Oshkosh, which makes cranes and work platforms.

The happenings at JLG constitute the third such incident of late in which workers have threatened violence against manufacturing and company property.

Meanwhile, the tense stand-off continues at the bankrupt New Fabris car plant in Chatellerault, some 305 kilometers (190 miles) southwest of Paris. The workers have given a July 31 deadline for Renault and Peugeot, which provided 90 percent of the plant's work, to pay them

Continued from 1

30,000 euros each. Renault and PSA Peugeot said it was not their responsibility to pay workers.

According to the BBC, "New Fabris company director Pierre Reau said workers with 20 years or more experience would get between 10,000 and 15,000 euros, but junior staff would get only 3,000 euros.

Union members hope to negotiate with Renault, Peugeot and the industry ministry for a larger pay-off, and claim that workers at another supplier received 30,000 euros each from the carmakers."

The workers at the factory in Chatellerault remain, according to state official Anne Frackowiak, "calm and determined."

BBC correspondent Emma Jane Kirby reports "there is an acute sense of injustice in France at the moment, with many workers complaining that while their bosses continue to reap company benefits and bonuses, they are paying for this economic crisis with their jobs."

## Creating A New World In The Shell Of The Old

No one understood him. The crazy or foolish man continued planting trees that he would not see, and sensible men and women continued planting and working for their present. Time passed, and all of them died, their children continued in their work, and those were followed by the children of their children.

One morning, a group of boys and girls went out for a walk and found a place filled with great trees, a thousand birds living in them and their great branches giving relief from the heat and protection from the rain. Yes, an entire

mountainside was found filled with trees. The boys and girls returned to their town and spoke of this marvelous place.



The men and women gathered together and they went to the place in great surprise. "Who planted this?" they asked. No one knew. They went to speak with their elders

and they did not know either. Only an old one, the oldest of the community, could give them the information and he told them the history of the crazy and foolish man.

The men and women met in assem-

Continued from 2

bly and had a discussion. They saw and understood the man who their ancestors had dealt with and they admired that man very much and they were fond of him. They knew that memory can travel very far and arrive where no one can think or imagine.

We are creating a new world in the shell of the old. This concept is hard for people to understand, it's something outside of the "realism" of the establishment neo-liberal world. Without this radical vision, we are nothing but a "pure and simple" union, which no real change can come from.

For a World Where Many Worlds Fit, Matt Antosh

# World Labor Solidarity

A COLUMN BY THE  
INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY COMMISSION

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

By Michael Ashbrook and John Kalwaic

## Knock, knock. Who's there? Open up, it's the police!

People under contract with the Eurest Catering Service often found themselves working up to 16-hour days, which is illegal in Germany. The yellow union NGG (Food and Allied Workers Union -Germany) and the works council turned a blind eye to these unlawful sweatshop conditions. Because the IWW job branch at Eurest is still getting off the ground, we decided to simply call the cops, like good citizens. The three officers who came to inspect the premises of the Deutsche Bank canteen at 9:00 p.m. found several of our colleagues on duty who had begun their shift at 6:30 a.m. Now the boss faces a stiff fine and our colleagues are happy to be free of excessively long hours. The bosses at other Eurest job sites are beginning to worry about more IWW job branches forming because for some of the workers this was the first time they saw resistance paying off. They are beginning to demand the 25percent overtime bonus that Eurest has simply "forgotten" to pay until now.

## Sacked Polish Worker Climbs Chimney In Protest

A sacked Polish steelworker climbed the chimney in protest of wage cuts and firings on June 29. He remained in the chimney for seven hours, until police intervened. The 40-year-old worker, identified only as Rafal S., claimed that the management of his factory had betrayed the workers by offering concessions and wage cuts to keep the factory open. The Buczek mill in Sosnowiec in southern Poland was hit hard by the global economic crisis and its government funding was cut after the European Union ruled that it violated the free market.

## Workers Take Control of Plants Finances in Sverdlovsk, Russia

Factory workers in Russia's Sverdlovsk Ural mountain region have seized control of their plant's finances. The workers formed the Council of Labor Collective to oversee the finances of the Baranichi Electro-Mechanical Factory to recover lost wages, boost factory sales and save their jobs. The Baranichi factory is the dominant firm in the region and employs more 1,000 workers. It is now on the verge of bankruptcy and owes its workers up to 208 million rubles (approximately \$6.7 million).

The Sverdlovsk Regional Governor Victor Koksharov claimed that he supports the Council of Labor Collective, and stated there was no reason law enforcement should establish ties with the council. For now, it seems that the government is not pursuing any actions against the workers at the Baranichi Factory. This comes at a time of great labor unrest in Russia. Workers in Pikalyovo blocked federal highways

to protest their plight. Some commentators see the action in Sverdlovsk as being inspired by the one in Pikalyovo. Workers across Russia are adopting more militant tactics to bring attention to their working conditions and unpaid wages in the midst of economic collapse.

## SAC Supports Wildcat in Sweden

Workers of Sweden's state-owned alcohol monopoly in Stockholm, Systembolaget, have been on a wildcat strike since June 2009. Systembolaget management have been trying to replace workers with a "casualized"(temporary) work force on short-term contracts. The union workers have been trying to resist this move by management without much help from the mainstream Landsorganisationen i Sverige (LO) union, which represents these workers. A meeting was supposed to take place between LO representatives and the monopoly's management, but this meeting never occurred. Workers began a wildcat strike without much support from the mainstream labor movement.. Systembolaget's striking workers got the help and support of the local branch of Sweden's anarcho-syndicalist SAC union as well as other groups from the "extra-parliamentary left." Police took this as a threat and labeled their protests as a demonstration, rather than a workplace dispute, thereby giving themselves more authority over the workers. Police helped scabs come in the back entrance of the building that the strikers were picketing. Police have often used these tactics against the SAC but usually not workers from the mainstream LO union. Wildcat strikes continue to be supported by the SAC in state-owned alcohol stores.

## Guest Workers Wildcat in Bahrain

More than 5,000 guest workers went on a wildcat strike on June 10, protesting two months of unpaid wages. The strike took place at the Al-Hamad construction company in the Persian Gulf country of Bahrain. Unpaid wages was just one reason for the anger among guest workers. The other issue is that the body of Gulab Singh— a Punjabi Sikh worker who was killed on the job—was not repatriated to his family in India. The striking workers feared that the body would never be returned to its rightful place. One worker even feared that if any of them died on the job their bodies would not be flown home. The employers of Al-Hamad Company first threatened to arrest the workers, but the workers refused to cave in to these empty threats. The company then promised to pay the workers after 15 days, but the workers had heard that excuse earlier, when they had gone on strike during the previous year. This is not the first time workers went on strike: 2,220 workers walked out in April 2008 for pay raises. . One worker commented, "we are working out negotiations but they don't seem to be listening to us."



Graphic: Mike Konopacki

## Striking Garment Worker Killed In Bangladesh

By Ret Marut, libcom.org

SAVAR, Bangladesh — In June, 1,800 workers at a sweater factory in Ashulia walked out on strike, demanding a pay increase and settlement of outstanding wages. Management agreed to the demands on June 25, but upon returning to work on June 27, three workers who had taken leading roles in the agitation and negotiations—representing the Ready Made Garment (RMG) union—were told they were sacked "on charges of leading the demonstrations." Upon learning this, the workforce immediately left the factory to demonstrate and demanded the reinstatement of their three fellow workers. This led to fierce arguments and scuffles with the factory bosses, two of whom were beaten up.

Soon after police and Ansars—a civilian volunteer defense group, an auxiliary to the professional security forces—arrived, police began firing tear gas shells to try to disperse the demonstration, which now blocked a main highway. Workers responded with hails of stones and bricks. Then the Ansars opened fire with live rounds of bullets into the crowd. Two workers were shot—one, Al-Amin, 26, died at 12:30 p.m. in the hospital.

As news of Al-Amin's death spread during the afternoon, the workers' numbers swelled. They were joined first by workers from other factories striking in solidarity, and then by the employees of other RMG factories which were closed early by bosses due to fears of the unrest spreading to their premises. The insurgent crowd then occupied the Ashulia factory, smashing windows and wrecking offices. They continued to occupy the

factory for 1.5 hours, during which time they set fire to the factory's warehouse and torched a company pick-up truck.

The workers then broke into the hated Ansars' camp situated in the factory grounds—and promptly set fire to it. In response, the Ansars fired more rounds, enraging the growing numbers of workers as factory property continued to be attacked. The officer-in-charge of Ashulia police station said, "We picked up the Ansars personnel along with their arms to ease the situation and save them from the angry mob."

Forty workers and police were injured in the clashes. The surviving shot worker remains in critical condition.

The Ansars in Savar have a history of clashes with RMG workers in recent years and are sometimes deployed within factory compounds as a semi-permanent paramilitary presence.

The police eventually brought the unrest to an end, aided by deployment of the notorious Rapid Action Battalion—an elite anti-crime/anti-terrorist paramilitary force famous for summary executions, known as "crossfiring."

As they have admitted, the RMG unions really have a very limited influence over workers' struggles. Most garment sector struggles are expressions of quite capable workers' self-organization. But the unions have organized protests against the Savar killing to take place the following day across the country.

This incident is only the latest in a series of recent similar clashes in the Bangladeshi garment sector. As the economic crisis hits harder one can expect more of the same—and a likely escalation.

## CNT-PTT Regains Its Rights In France

By John Kalwaic

A French labor court has recently ruled the CNT-PTT (postal service workers union) once again has a right to represent postal workers. The CNT-PTT is the postal workers branch of the syndicalist CNT-F union in France. Its right to represent postal workers was revoked in 2006. Problems started in the late 1990s when the government took a neo-liberal turn and started to dismantle the PTT public postal system in France. This created France Telecom and the Post Office, which were semi-public institutions. These institutions tried to enforce new labor contracts, many of which were illegal under French labor law, that were much worse than the ones under the PTT. Postal workers, of course, resisted these new contracts: the fiercest resistance came from the CNT-PTT, which had represented workers there since the 1980s.

The CNT-F is a militant syndicalist union, which has always resisted class collaboration and participation in government-sponsored "work council" elections, focusing instead on direct action by the workers. This attitude of the CNT-F and its PTT branch made it a target of the postal industry, the government and other more moderate unions. In 2006, four unions—the Confédération Fran-

çaise Démocratique du Travail (CFDT), Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens (CFTC), Force Ouvrière (FO) and the Union Nationale des Syndicats Autonomes (UNSA), which represented a minority of postal workers in the industry—signed an agreement with the Post Office, canceling the right of the CNT-PTT to represent workers. The two more left wing "majority unions"—the Solidaires Unitaires Démocratiques (SUD) and the Confédération générale du travail (CGT)—did not sign the agreement, but also refused to veto it. With the stroke of a pen the CNT-PTT was stripped of its bargaining rights and postal employers began targeting CNT-PTT members, firing its members and removing CNT bulletin boards. There were further moves towards downsizing and privatization, sorting offices were closed and postal workers were laid off.

In the fall of 2006 the CNT-PTT filed multiple complaints with the labor court in France. Finally in May 2009 the courts came to a decision restoring CNT's bargaining rights without having to participate in the work council elections, which the CNT opposes. The Post Office has also been ordered to pay the union 3,000 euros. The CNT-PTT is happy about this victory, but say that now is the time for direct action.

## Support international solidarity!



Assessments for \$3, \$6 are available from your delegate or IWW headquarters PO Box 23085, Cincinnati, OH 45223-3085, USA.

