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Georgia Prisoners Organize Largest Prison Strike In U.S. History

By Brendan Maslauskas Dunn

"..ON MONDAY MORNING, WHEN THE DOORS OPEN, CLOSE THEM. DO NOT GO TO WORK. They cannot do anything to us that they haven't already done at one time or another. Brothers, DON'T GIVE UP NOW. Make them come to the table. Be strong. DO NOT MAKE MONEY FOR THE STATE THAT THEY IN TURN USE TO KEEP US AS SLAVES...."

This was the message sent out by one of the strike leaders on the fifth day of the largest prison strike in U.S. history. What started out on Dec. 9 as a coordinated strike in at least five of Georgia's state prisons was originally intended to last only a day, but quickly evolved into a larger, longer struggle when prison officials locked down a number of the prisons. The strike was coordinated by a network of prisoners using cell phones that were smuggled into the prisons. If caught with a phone, a prisoner could face five more years in prison.

The strike is noted for the unity and solidarity among striking prisoners of

different backgrounds in a system where, if there is little or no cultural, religious, or racial antagonisms to begin with, the prison guards will pit group against group. Blacks, whites, Latinos, Christians, Muslims, Rastafarians, and numerous rival gangs are working as one cohesive unit—as one class—in this struggle against those who incarcerate and enslave them.

The prisoners sent out a list of demands at the beginning of the strike, among them a living wage for work, educational opportunities, decent healthcare, an end to cruel and unusual punishments, decent living conditions, nutritional meals, vocational and self-improvement opportunities, access to families, and fair parole decisions.

An underlying demand of the thousands of prisoners on strike is an end to slave labor. Georgia's prisoners are forced to work in the prison system without being paid, some for companies contracted through the prison system. But most prisoners are forced to do the work necessary

to maintain the functioning of the prisons. This forced labor, the strikers maintain, is in clear violation of the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which abolished slavery. One of the calls put out by strike leaders was: "No more slavery. Injustice in one place is injustice to all. Inform your family to support our cause. Lockdown for liberty!"

It is unclear how widespread the strike is and what exactly is happening, but word has slowly trickled out from the inside that in some of the prisons, authorities confiscated prisoner property. In others, they resorted to beating, isolating, transporting, and throwing prisoners in "the hole"



Georgia prisoners of all races pray together in at Calhoun State Prison.

Photo: voiceofdetroit.net

and sending in tactical squads to commit acts of intimidation and violence. These are attempts to break the strike or possibly to force the prisoners to respond violently

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Starbucks Baristas Win Equal Holiday Pay After Three Year IWW Fight



Photo: Tom Good, Next Left Notes

Baristas march on MLK Day, 2008 in New York.

By the Starbucks Workers Union

Starbucks baristas across the United States for the first time this year will begin receiving a time-and-a-half holiday premium for working on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The move comes after a spirited three-year initiative of the IWW Starbucks Workers Union (SWU) which

made public the company's second-class treatment of Dr. King's birthday and called on the coffee giant to pay the same premium that it pays workers on six other federal holidays. After Starbucks refused to change its policy, union workers and their supporters launched a determined campaign of grassroots actions in Starbucks stores and communities all across the country in support of equal treatment for MLK Day.

Starbucks union members say this is an especially emotional victory, given that the SWU has long-cited the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as a major inspiration. Dr. King, who was assassinated in Memphis while supporting the effort of striking sanitation workers to form a union, was a staunch and outspoken defender of workers' rights, including the right to a living wage and the right to join

a labor union.

"We're deeply moved to have been able in our modest way to increase respect for Dr. King's legacy while ensuring that Starbucks employees who work on his holiday are fairly compensated," said Anja Witek, a Starbucks barista and SWU member in Minnesota. "This is a great example of what baristas and all low-wage workers can achieve by getting organized and taking direct action in support of workplace justice issues."

While Starbucks claims to "embrace diversity," it doggedly resisted the SWU's call for equal treatment of MLK Day for three years. The company based its refusal on the claim that its holiday policy was in line with the (abysmally low) standards of the food service sector. The SWU made the case that Starbucks' commitment to diversity was illusory, citing the disproportionate number of workers of color in the lowest-paid positions in the company and its intense exploitation of coffee farmers including the Ethiopian workers who

grew some of Starbucks' most expensive beans but received just 2.2 percent of the retail price.

"This is a great step forward and a moving victory yet we're mindful that there is much work to be done to make Starbucks a living wage employer that offers reliable work hours and respects the right of workers to join the union," said Daniel Gross, a former Starbucks barista and SWU member in New York City. "We're thrilled to continue building the SWU and demonstrating just how compelling a model solidarity unionism is for fast food workers and all working people."

Commonly misunderstood by the news media and denounced by corporate executives frightened by its effectiveness, solidarity unionism is a simple and powerful method of organizing outside of the government certification bureaucracy. In a solidarity union, workers simply self-organize and come to an agreement on workplace justice issues to pursue like

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Winnipeg Postal Workers Strike

By Howard Ryan, Labor Notes

A spontaneous one-day walkout of 70 Canadian postal workers over injuries triggered by a mechanization scheme has inspired a rising tide of solidarity across the country and internationally. It serves as a reminder of the enormous power of a simple bold act.

The walkout on Nov. 22 in the city of Winnipeg grew out of a dispute simmering for months. Canada Post launched a pilot restructuring project there in April—the first test site for a \$2 billion modernization initiative. The scheme is supposed to achieve productivity gains and cost savings once in place across Canada.

But management never consulted with postal workers before rolling out the new system. And it's been causing injuries and stress for the Winnipeg letter carriers, who are working late into the night to finish

their delivery routes.

The new machines sort 80 percent of the mail, explains Bob Tyre, president of the Winnipeg local of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), while the remainder must be sorted by the old hand method because items are off size or the address is illegible. Two types of sorting is not a problem as long as letter carriers are allowed to merge both stacks into a single bundle before leaving the mail facility to do their route.

But management insists that the carriers move out into the field right away, forcing them to manage two or more bundles of mail.

"You're walking with different shapes and sizes balanced in your arm, with another in your hand," Tyre says. "It obscures your feet. You can't see where you're

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Life And Death In The Lumber Mill

By Brendan Maslauskas Dunn

It was late spring and the sun still refused to show its face after hiding for most of the last seven months in the Pacific Northwest. The temperate rainforests in the saturated Valley of the Giants slowly drank the rain as my two friends and I approached the largest Sitka Spruce tree in the world on the shores of Lake Quinalt. It was something I had previously only seen in old photographs. The strength, the age, the sheer beauty of the tree seemed to make a statement to the civilization that had come to the region, occupied the land and shaved many of the mountains clean of trees, leaving only a stubble of brush. Trees this size and this old carpeted this land not too long ago. This tree wasn't the exception but the rule. I shook my head in wonder and amazement. I touched the tree softly as if to thank it, for I was a Wobbly first and a timber worker second. I felt a sense of camaraderie with the tree. The trees and the forest, along with the workers that saw, cut and plant them, who reproduce their flesh in mills into countless products, are all expendable to the small elite that run the timber industry and profit off the collective sacrifice of humans and trees.

My first job in the timber industry was as a janitor at a panel products lumber mill in Shelton, Wash. I was hired just several months after more than 100 workers were laid off. The recession sacked the plant hard after the housing bubble burst and construction which was once booming was choked nearly to death. The graveyard shift, when I usually worked, was a skeleton of its former size. My job was to clean all the break rooms, offices and bathrooms in the mill and for my back-breaking labor I brought home \$10 an hour while having the luxury of working under not one, but three bosses. My job wasn't the most dangerous one there, but it certainly had its hazards and risks. During my first week of employment the company attempted to get me to sign something relieving them of any responsibility if I got injured or

killed on the job. After sitting on it for a few days and giving it passing thought, the paper somehow made its way to the local recycling plant. Probably around the time the paper was being sorted at the plant I learned from some coworkers that in the previous year, 33-year-old Stacey Allen, who had worked at the mill, fell into a pit of 185 degree boiling water used for heating wood and boiled to death. His body was found the next morning and the mill was found in violation of safety requirements by the U.S. Department of Labor. As usual, in their condemnation the bureaucrats had come a little too late. My coworkers saw the death as tragic but not abnormal—the timber industry has after all claimed the lives of thousands of laborers over the last century in this part of the world. The IWW has over the years helped to drastically curb these deaths, even at the mills in Shelton.

There was a problem at the mill while I worked there. The Woodworkers Department for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) had representation there and the contract was up for renewal. I didn't know what was going to happen and neither did any of my coworkers. The IAM, as we viewed it, was in bed with the boss and the company. Any decisions the union made that had any real effect on the workers was made behind closed doors with management. People felt powerless at work and powerless in their union, but one possible way to exert their power and express their frustration, especially since the company wanted to cut back on medical coverage, was to strike. Feelings were mixed for the strike—one coworker wanted to fight back, but as a single mom she couldn't afford to be out of work at all. Another coworker was itching for a fight and wanted to show management and all the scabs they brought in what a union really means and what a union should mean. Since my boss and I were contracted out I wasn't in the IAM. But I told my coworkers that I was a Wobbly, and I told them what it meant and that I



The Simpson lumber mill in Shelton, Wash.

Photo: panoramio.com

would join the picket line. The results were in for the vote to strike—it was well over 80 percent. That sent a clear message to both management and the union leadership. The last strike at the company was messy and picketers from the company mill in the Deep South planned to come up to Washington to shut down the Shelton mill. Perhaps workers here would try the same tactic and make a trip down south. The message was clear and a strike was averted, but not before workers started to prepare themselves for the long haul, and certainly not before management backed off people's health plans.

After the strike was averted the company cut back on my hours and dumped more responsibilities on me. My boss didn't give me the raise he originally promised. I was going to stay and fight but weighed my options and found it better to leave and fight my battles elsewhere. Before I left, the nightly humming of the mill and the conversations I had with my coworkers were enough for me to stay. One

night the Simpson lumber mill, which was next to the one I worked at, caught fire. Quite a few of the security guards and my coworkers expressed a little excitement in this—one of them wishing that the fire would spread and burn down both mills in the yard. Others told me they were environmentalists and the pictures of wildlife, trees and forests in the break rooms stood testament to that, in stark contrast to the boss's office that had pictures on his wall of the lumber mill and trees getting chopped down. We spoke of Judi Bari, solidarity unionism, creating alternatives to police, forming a local resistance to foreclosures akin to what was done in the 1930s. We shared stories, ideas, but we shared more than that. We shared dreams.

The last night on the job was a bit of a poetic end for me. I walked into the break room, mop in hand, where all the millwrights hung out. The topic of discussion was the swine flu. One millwright threw the local newspaper on the ground in disgust and said, "Ya' know what? I hope that swine flu comes 'round and takes out every one of them god-damned blue bloods out there." Some laughed at that comment, some nodded. Another chimed in, "And while it's at it, how 'bout taking out all the cops? Who in the hell needs 'em anyway?" All the millwrights and I laughed at that one. Then there was silence, a fleeting silence. A third millwright remarked, "I suppose that swine flu could go after every god-damned politician too. Hell, even the ones I voted for." Everyone agreed on that one. I finally spoke up as I started to clean up, "No rich folks, no cops, no politicians. How are we going to run things without all them?" That got everyone talking. They all had ideas. They all had dreams. Without knowing much about the IWW's revolutionary vision for society, they discussed a world without bosses, without the rich, without authority, a world where the workers ran things on their own terms for the greater benefit of all people and the environment that cradles them. A world where no timber boss could profit off the collective sacrifice of both humans and trees.

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 180195, Chicago, IL 60618, 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.

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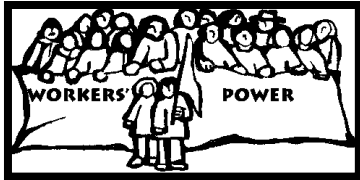
A Class Action

By Michael Edwards

In the last “Workers Power” column, “The Pamphlet As Passport,” which appeared in the December 2010 *IW*, I discussed an information picket that blocked access to a university in Spain and some resulting thoughts on the nature of class power, namely the threat of and willingness to disrupt production. Class consciousness cannot simply be “Oh, my buddy and I at work have the same grievances.” We must acknowledge our collective power and promote our willingness to use it. Exercising that power involves being disruptive, sometimes to a degree that we find uncomfortable. However, workers cannot win demands and improve their position without being prepared to significantly upset the status quo.

As a revolutionary organization, the IWW has a vision beyond just a society where the producers are simply in a better bargaining position. We want to switch the balance of power between classes entirely to ultimately abolish the wage system. Here I think a second event from the action is instructive.

Eventually the cars trying to get through the information picket started getting backed up. Being the foreigner who couldn't speak the language, a good role for me was to direct traffic. So I directed traffic effectively for a while. When one of the organizers came to check up on me I queried whether we were trying to disrupt traffic or distribute propaganda. I asked because while we were doing an excellent job disrupting traffic I wasn't sure about the effectiveness of our propaganda. I didn't think that people really cared about what we had to say when they had to wait 10 to 20 minutes to get anywhere. The organizer told me that our objective was to disrupt traffic and we were doing a good job of it!



If that was the case, why bother with traffic direction at all? Not managing drivers would have created additional havoc that added to our existing disruption, thereby adding to the basis of our class power.

Unconsciously, my comrades and I wanted to prove that we were capable of managing and maintaining some sense of order at the picket because how we act now reflects on how we will act when we become dominant. If the population at large only ever sees us causing a mess then they will inevitably turn to the forces of reaction to defend them from demonized revolutionaries.

I'm not saying a more cautious attitude should stay the cudgel of the working class. We should still come down like a pile of bricks on our target and when the dust has cleared I am happy with leaving the mess for the “haves” to clean up. But managing the unintended consequences of actions should be part of any strategy which has a goal of fundamentally altering the balance of power. In the case of our action, we could have let the drivers eventually cause a traffic accident. Without our intervention it was not a question of *if*, but of *when*.

If our objective is to solely cause enough havoc to force bosses and bureaucrats to cede to our demands, then sure, let the cars crash and burn. But the secondary function of revolutionary unions has always been to prepare its membership to assume the duties of a functional society. I'm not sure we are doing that in the IWW. We must be more capable at brinkmanship while simultaneously being able to manage the potential fallout of it. Within revolutionary unions we understand the need and execution of brinkmanship better than mainstream unions, but I'm not convinced we're preparing ourselves or our fellow workers for control.

Introducing A Feminism For Men

By J.R. Boyd

When we think about feminism amongst the working class, the people we usually think about are women. Feminism, after all, is understood as the struggle for the liberation of women in much the same way that industrial unionism is conceived in terms of the struggle for the liberation of the working class.

All too often, however, the role that working class men might play as feminists is not adequately defined. As Wobbly men, we might hold feminist values, but we may not know what to do with them in concrete terms. This is a frustrating experience for those of us who would like to establish real ties of solidarity to women's struggles, much like the ones we extend to other workers—even when they are struggling under circumstances very different than our own.

Identifying our role as feminists can be less intuitive than knowing our role as unionists: as unionists, we experience class subjugation directly; but as men, our relationship to the subjugation of women is ambiguous. After all, there always exists the possibility that we are contributing to the problem, somehow, even in spite of ourselves.

Working-class men should be reassured that this problem is not insurmountable. There is a necessary role for us within feminism; and what is more, men have something to offer feminism that even women cannot provide. This is the perspective of someone who directly experiences patriarchy as a man, but who utilizes this awareness as a feminist.

Patriarchy is a big word and complicated affair. However, to afford us a familiar starting point from which to proceed, let us think about patriarchy as being not unlike the kind of hierarchy we know so well at work. At work, there is a boss that tells us

what to do, enjoys privileges we do not, and who is free of responsibilities that we bear alone. Patriarchy, in other words, is a form of authority which assigns the role of “boss” to men.

Like bosses in the workplace, when a person occupies a formal position of authority over others, this does not tell us everything about what kind of person they are, or what their first preferences might be. But like bosses who were promoted from the ranks of the working class by their employers, the role that patriarchy assigns to men isn't something they choose. It is how their responsibilities are dictated by that system. But men don't even “apply” for the job of patriarchy; it is thrust upon them, and they often enjoy its benefits before they know what is going on, by the simple virtue of being “men.” Furthermore, most men don't have the option to “quit” being men, strictly speaking—as a manager might quit being a manager once he grasps the moral implications of class struggle.

If we think about men under patriarchy as being like managers who are forever condemned to be bosses until that system is destroyed, then the responsibilities appropriate for feminist men are easier to discern. Namely, it is incumbent upon us to actively resist our assigned role as “boss.” We cannot be neutral on this moving train—and identifying as “feminist” is only the first step. Active resistance means anticipating what patriarchy is trying to accomplish and directing our actions accordingly—namely, in solidarity with its intended victims. If patriarchy wants us to actively or passively endorse our boss-like authority or privileges, we need to identify what these are and reject them.

Much of the practical work of feminism for working-class men begins at

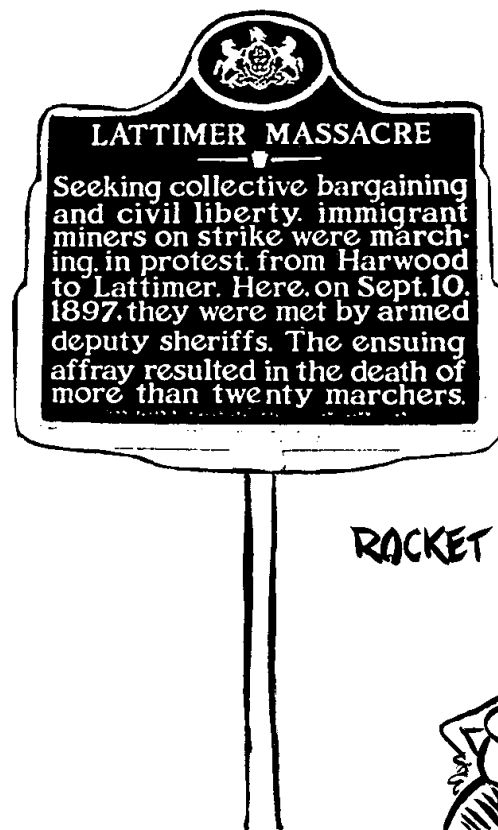


WOMEN WORKERS' HISTORY

Chapter 40 “Slavic Amazons”

In the late summer of 1897, several mines around Hazelton, Pa. were closed by strikes as the northeastern Pennsylvania anthracite region seethed with rebellion. On Sept. 10, strikers marching to mines still working were stopped by armed deputies in Lattimer. Without provocation, the deputies fired into the crowd, killing 19 miners and seriously wounding another 36.

Despite the tragic loss of life, despite the presence of the National Guard following the massacre, the strike continued. And it was the women of the immigrant mining communities who kept the struggle going. They successfully shut down mines not yet affected by the strike. They were led by “Big Mary” Septak, operator of a miners' boardinghouse in Lattimer. Mary lost nine of her 10 children to disease; before they died, her little sons worked in the collieries picking slate. She believed in the strike.



Beginning on Sept. 15, “Big Mary” Septak led as many as 200 women in a series of raids on collieries and washeries which forced the men to stop working. Big Mary openly defied the National Guard. She told a mounted captain: “If we had guns, you'd pay the devil.” National Guard officers complained, “the women are worse to handle than the men.” The *Wilkes-Barre Record* despised the “Polish Amazons” for their “ill-advised and unwomanly demonstrations.” But to the immigrant women, the fight for survival was more important than middle-class notions of femininity. And it paid off: the women's militance produced concessions from the mine owners.

Graphic: Mike Konopacki

the individual level; it means examining our relationships with women in order to identify the ways in which our behavior might impact them like the behavior of a boss. For example, do we tell them what to do, enjoy privileges they do not, or escape responsibilities that they bear alone? Once we start asking ourselves these questions in our relationships with women, we create the practical possibilities for modifying our behavior: we can reject the role patriarchy has assigned us as “men,” and create our own as individuals. But this takes quite a bit of work and introspection, as well as a readiness to hear the critical concerns of women as they are addressed to us.

In future installments, this column

will address the relationship between feminism and the class struggle for men from a variety of perspectives; underscoring how this can contribute to the work of women feminists, and ultimately inform the feminist and class struggles at large. Specific strategies, including workplace organizing as a feminist activity, will receive special attention.

This initiative wants you to write for it so that the benefit of your direct experiences can be shared with others as they relate to the interwoven struggles of all of us within the working class. Please write to lady Poverty@gmail.com, and contribute to our blog: <http://femenins.blogspot.com>.

Fighting For Workers' Rights At Flaum

By Tom Keough

Perhaps you have heard about the Flaum Appetizing Company cheating their employees out of large amounts of overtime pay and firing the workers for joining the IWW. Perhaps you were leafleting or picketing at supermarkets last summer or last spring to support the workers and get customers to boycott Sonny and Joe's Hummus. Perhaps you were in court or read about the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ruling against the owner.

Despite the opposition, Flaum owner Moishe Grudhut has simply refused to obey the federal laws, including the NLRB ruling. Flaum has been mistreating the staff and breaking federal labor laws for a long time. This is business as usual in New York—and many parts of the United States.

Still, these workers have been standing up for their rights. They are stronger and smarter than a lot of people who get cheated and unjustly fired. A lot of people just accept it and move on with their lives, look for a new employer and hope that they are not repeating the situation. When the labor union movement grew in the United States in the early 20th century, it was because labor united. People have to band together and try some ways to demand and get better treatment. It is just that simple.

Sure it is complicated in many ways but the rock-bottom basic truth of the matter is that people need to unite together and do something with as many of the other regular working people and taxed consumers as possible. We need to stick together to somehow force the wealthy, powerful owners of the businesses and the government to stop their wicked ways.

The government does not normally enforce laws when the wealthy break them.

The law tricks us and deceives us. The rich have no legal obligations. We've got to help each other. Lower wages down the block and cuts in benefits throughout the region will spread to where you work. We have these serious workers doing the right thing, banding together and fighting back in a city where that does not happen enough. Some people are watching what's happening. Do you want the bosses to see



Photo: Tom Keough
Wobbly Justin Romero w/ his son.

that the workers keep losing or try for awhile and then give up? When the Wobs are leafleting at a supermarket, some of the passers-by stop and talk. Some of them are small business owners or large business owners. They are very interested to see what is going on. Will they see a small group of concerned people or a large group? Will they see people who come back regularly or just once? Will they see people who are leafleting only on mild-summer days, or all year round? It is

rare to see picket lines or labor leafleting in New York City these days. What does this show the average New Yorker? For too many Americans the labor movement happened in the 1930s. Too many people read about labor history, listen to Billy Bragg sing an old Woody Guthrie labor song, and maybe even subscribe to a magazine like *Mother Jones*, but they have never been in a union, never seen people out on the

streets trying to build one, or seen unions asking a store's customers to help do the right thing.

We NEED to support these courageous workers who were fired from Flaum. We need to show the employing class who shop at the stores where we leaflet that we are going to keep trying to accomplish an important task. We need the rest of the regular working people to see that we can do it, keep doing it and do it again. We are teaching by example. It needs to be the best possible example. The IWW has recently been leafleting the customers at KRM Kolle supermarket and at the house of Flaum owner Moishe Grudhut in Brooklyn. While this is very effective locally, we need to expand the struggle as Flaum products are sold throughout New York and parts of New Jersey. Ask your friends, family and the corner bodega to boycott Flaum and the other brand names that Flaum goes by: Sonny and Joe's, Tnuva and Bodek. No leafleting near you? You can start leafleting in your town. As Daniel Gross from Brandworkers International says, "Brothers and Sisters: Let's start the final round against Flaum until victory."

For more information, visit <http://www.brandworkers.org> and find out how you can help these Wobbly workers in the struggle.

Uniting The People With Seattle Solidarity

By Larry Gambone

On Nov. 6, sixteen community and labor activists from Victoria, British Columbia and other parts of Vancouver Island met at the British Columbia Government Employees' Union (BCGEU) hall in an afternoon session, sponsored by the Vancouver Island IWW General Member Branch (GMB). Carley, Matt, Joel and Kurtis of Seattle Solidarity (SeaSol) explained the origins and methods of their highly successful organization. After this informative session we had Fellow Worker Smokey's famous salmon chowder. Wobbly songs were performed by Fellow Workers Art and Smokey. The following morning the whole gang had brunch together and Art took us on a fun-filled and informative working class walking tour of Victoria.

The initial SeaSol members belonged to the Seattle IWW, which had limited resources and was not in a position to easily organize workplaces. They had to do something new or forget about organizing. So, based on ideas of the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) and the IWW, they started SeaSol. The idea was to focus on workplace and tenant issues that were not being adequately dealt with by other groups. Issues include forcing landlords to make repairs, returning stolen deposits, and forcing employers to pay unpaid wages and acknowledge workplace

injuries. In order to do this, however, new tactics were needed.

These tactics were based upon a set of key principles:

Solidarity: When people come with problems they must be directly involved with the struggle. SeaSol is not a social service or charity and the aim is to create more organizers, more people who can initiate future actions.

Direct Action: Rather than rely on third parties like lawyers, public opinion, politicians, etc... SeaSol aims to directly cause a problem by costing the employer or landlord.

Direct Democracy: There is no leadership hierarchy and everything is voted on by the members involved.

SeaSol is neither a trade union, a political organization, nor does it have an ideology. Thus, SeaSol uses a method of involving a range of people who might otherwise feel out of place in a more narrowly-defined group. There are also a host of unions, parties, and activist groups which often work in isolation or at best in *ad hoc* coalitions. The SeaSol model allows them to all work together in a permanent coalition around specific common needs and goals.

SeaSol's basic concept is to focus on small-scale fights that can be won within a month or two. Confidence, skill and

knowledge are built by winning these small fights, and from this a larger organization can be built from the ground up to then tackle larger issues. The first stage is outreach. With posters, buttons, leaflets and stickers, SeaSol makes itself known. When someone calls with a problem, a first meeting is arranged. This is done to find out the details of the conflict and also make sure the person knows what it means to be part of a SeaSol fight. Then a decision meeting is held. The person who arranged the first meeting will give a short informative presentation. After this, the demand is formulated as clearly and simply as possible and a demand letter is written. At the demand delivery stage, as big a group of members as possible, with the person directly affected by the fight, brings the demand letter to the boss or landlord. Two weeks' notice is generally given to rectify the situation or further action will be taken.

At this point, some bosses and landlords will pay up. Most won't, so thus begins an escalating campaign. SeaSol doesn't use the heaviest tactics first, but start off slowly, handing out fliers, escalating to boycotts, then pickets. The fear of what might happen next encourages most to capitulate. All the tactics used are



Members of SeaSol pose.

Photo: SeaSol

legal and non-violent, so it is difficult for the authorities to prosecute SeaSol. What these tactics do is embarrass the guilty and ultimately cut into their profits, making it cheaper to settle than continue to hold out.

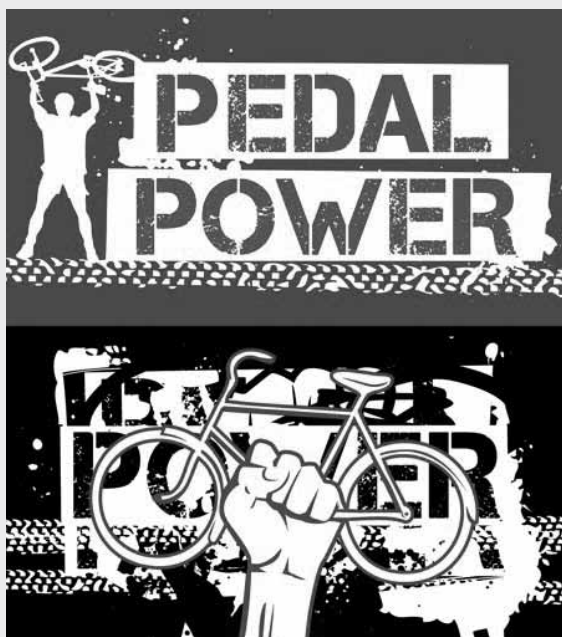
This approach has paid off in more ways than one. Since February 2008, there have been 23 fights and more than 75 percent of them were won. SeaSol now has 22 members, and can draw on a phone tree of 150 people and an email list of 400. The idea has spread—similar groups have recently formed in Tacoma and Olympia, Wash.; in Santa Cruz, Calif., and in Glasgow, Scotland. Maybe it's time other places picked up on the SeaSol idea?

For more information, visit <http://www.seasol.net>.

Bike Shop Workers Unionize In Toronto

By the Toronto IWW

Recently, something unique happened for bike stores and unions in Toronto. Thanks to the hard work of the Toronto Wobblies, the city's first unionized bike shop was organized. Workers signed a collective agreement with the Community Bicycle Network (CBN), the creator of an innovative yellow bike Bikeshare program, and a leader in the supply of inexpensive bikes and bike services. With their contract signed, CBN workers then set about organizing other bike store workers in the city as the Bike Mechanics Union. Located at the west end of the downtown at 761 Queen St. West (416-504-2918), the Community Bicycle network is a must visit for bike rentals and self-help bike repairs when you visit Toronto. Spread the word. Send questions or comments to iu440solidarity@gmail.com.



Graphic: bikelanediary.blogspot.com

Boston Hosts Successful Starbucks Union Event

By Steve Kellerman

On Tuesday, Nov. 16, the Boston IWW General Membership Branch sponsored a talk as part of our ongoing Starbucks Workers Union (SWU) campaign. Anja Witek of the Twin Cities IWW/SWU addressed a crowd of about 25 regarding the worldwide effort to organize the workers at the coffee retail giant.

She described the course of the campaign so far in New York City, Chicago, Omaha, Ft. Worth, and of course, in her own Minneapolis/St. Paul area. The tactics of solidarity unionism were discussed at length as were the means of approaching workers new to unionism.

The talk was followed by a lively question and answer session and socializing over drinks and snacks.

Anja participated in a panel discussion of the IWW/SWU campaign sponsored by the Harvard University Student/Labor Action Movement the following evening. The other panelists were University of Massachusetts economics professor Arthur McEwan and Communications Workers of America (CWA) organizer Steve Early. The discussion of the campaign's significance for retail workers in general was enlightening for many in the audience and a number of Harvard students expressed an interest in supporting the drive.



Panel discussion at Harvard University.

Photo: Steve Kellerman

Special

Labor Strikes Against Global Austerity Engulf Europe

By Monica Hill

General strikes, student protests and mass demonstrations are still rocking Europe in opposition to relentless budget cuts and belt-tightening. “We are at war with the government,” explained a Greek demonstrator, “because it is clearly at war with us.”

Too many jobless, homeless, sick and vulnerable people are unserved and unprotected by the governments that run their societies. Europe’s unrest is a sight for sore eyes to the wounded, and to the legions of working-class warriors who are fast becoming the leaders they’ve been looking for.

Crisis in the European Union

As the recession spread to Europe, creditor banks and governments responded with demands for poorer European governments to pay up their loans. Greece holds the biggest debt in the eurozone (those 16 countries who share the same currency—the euro). It is a member of the European Union (EU), which includes 500 million people in 27 countries.

Last May, Greek officials announced deep pay and benefit cuts for public workers, elimination of the minimum wage, big cuts to public school funding and pensions, and sharp sales tax increases. Outraged public and private sector unions took to the streets, and quickly swung nationwide public support their way.

Their mighty uproar scared the EU’s elite, especially German and French banks that could go bankrupt if Greece defaulted on its debts to them. Eventually, these major banks, along with the International Monetary Fund, bailed out Greece. Naturally, they exacted high interest rates, and then the financiers started pressing other debtor nations to pay up.

All of this is unfolding in a global recession that was sparked by a bursting housing bubble in the United States in 2007. The recession was not caused by spendthrift workers purchasing Jaguars on credit, or by governments paying too much to care for the sick or feed the hungry. But that is the propaganda dished up by politicians who tirelessly preach against the evils of “deficit spending” and for the redemption of “austerity.”

After the Greek bailout, Europe’s rul-



Photo: Thierry Monasse, news.xinhuanet.com

European workers and trade union representatives take part in a “No to austerity! Priority for jobs and growth!” protest on the streets of Brussels, Belgium, on Sept. 29, 2010. The demonstration was organized by the 27 trade unions of the EU countries.

ers launched a crusade against government “overspending” and stepped up grim plans that punish workers to resuscitate capitalism.

Rebellion Spreads

A few months after Greek workers went on the warpath, the French joined them. France’s standard of living has been backsliding for years, but when the government unveiled plans to “reform” a hard-won 1983 pension plan, workers went ballistic. The plan forces people to work for at least 41.5 years to get full retirement. For those whose work lives are interrupted, such as mothers, the unemployed, part-time and immigrant workers, the change means having to work until they die.

Public sector unions ignited the fight-back with a general strike on Sept. 7. It was influenced by the unity of tens of thousands of leftist, feminist, union, gay rights and anti-war activists who marched with persecuted Roma residents on Sept. 4. In more than 140 demonstrations throughout France they denounced the deportations of Roma by President Nicolas Sarkozy’s right-wing regime.

In September and October, planes, trucks and tankers were idled, schools closed, postal workers, garbage collectors

and armored truck drivers stopped work. Dockers blocked oil shipments to refineries, which closed gas stations.

Union members coordinated strikes in rolling work stoppages—taking turns in going on indefinite and one-day general strikes. They walked each other’s picket lines, defended each other from cops. They built solidarity and honed organizing skills. They inspired millions of other European workers to resist the same ruthless scarcity schemes.

By Sept. 29, on a Day of Action called by unions across Europe, 10 million people were demonstrating from Greece to Spain. In the EU capital of Brussels, Belgium, 100,000 people representing most EU countries marched.

Millions of others mounted strikes and protests in their home countries. Instead of running out of steam, as Sarkozy hoped, nearly three million came out in France. “Unemployed at 25, exploited at 67. No! No! No!” shouted the youth who quickly followed the workers lead.

Spain, with unemployment at 20 percent, was paralyzed by its first general strike in eight years. When police attacked picketers, strikers fought back. Essential organizers were the 16,000 shop stewards who met in Madrid to coordinate their strike. Leftists in Barcelona and Seville set up neighborhood strike assemblies. “If we don’t stay alert, this is just going to be the beginning. We’ll have to have a general strike every day,” said bus driver Angel Martinez.

In Eastern Europe, Romanian public workers held a general strike on Sept. 29 and Slovenians continued an indefinite strike against a wage freeze. In the Czech Republic, social security and healthcare workers hit the bricks in mid-October,

acutely aware that when public services are slashed, their jobs are too.

Keep on Rolling

With a high-five to the French, British workers and students hit the streets when on Oct. 20 their Prime Minister announced “Death by a thousand cuts,” as one headline put it. Firefighters went out on strike, students chanted “Stop the cuts, join the resistance!” Tens of thousands of students and teachers took to London streets in November when the government revealed its 40 percent cut of funds for higher education, which is largely free. Most teaching grants will be wiped out and tuition fees tripled.

On Oct. 23 thousands of Catholic and Protestant workers demonstrated together in Northern Ireland. In Belfast they chanted, “They say cut back—we say fight back!”

“This is all about clawing back hard-earned social programs and workers rights, and returning the Irish worker to the good old days of feudalism, and control by colonizing masters,” commented a blogger during the strike.

Just the Beginning

Protests continue to spread and shift throughout Europe. Different sectors take turns in rolling strikes to keep the cops and politicians off-balance. Union ranks and regional leaders challenge conservative national heads. Cross-union alliances among militants flourish.

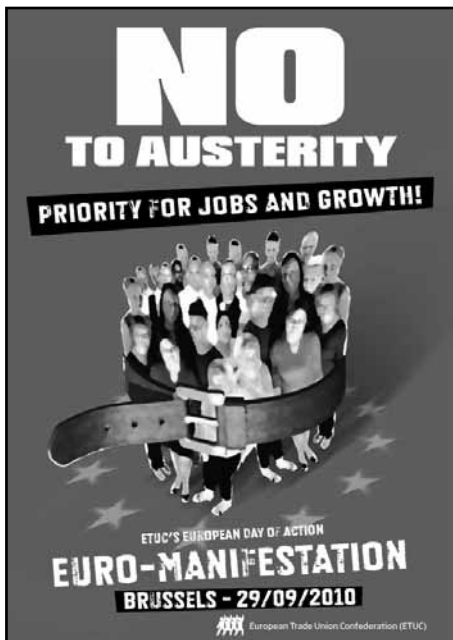
Will this hurricane of labor protest spread to the United States? It would be the logical tactic for workers here. State governments have already stripped funding from public schools, transit and healthcare programs, and the nation hovers at 10 percent unemployment—while the 20 percent in this country who own 84 percent of the wealth get richer!

And worse is yet to come. Soon after the U.S. elections, a federal bipartisan deficit commission released a draft report with these proposals: lower Social Security payments, raise the retirement age to 69, hike gas sales taxes, and cut 10 percent of the federal workforce. And reduce taxes for corporations and the rich!

What’s clear from Europe’s upheaval is that when working people boldly lead, they generate wide public support. Everywhere, huge gulfs have opened up between the working-class majority and their capitalist governments and political parties.

Those battle lines are not about to disappear. And in the U.S., as elsewhere, the forces of the working class are much larger, multi-skilled—and in position to shut things down! This is just the beginning. And one job of radicals is to fan the flames.

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Graphic: socialistsanddemocrats.eu

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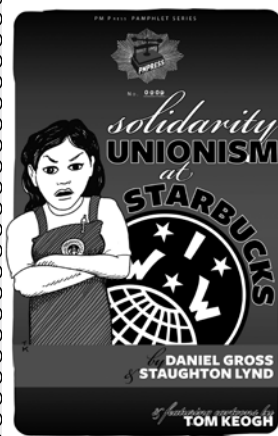
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Special U.K. Students Lead The Way In The Fight Against Austerity

By X361737

The end of 2010 saw an unprecedented display of resistance as students, often dismissed as apathetic, have taken the lead in creating a movement that has the power to fight the cuts and turn back the tide of austerity.

The issues are the same everywhere: the world's economy, led by profit-driven speculation in the banking industry, has nose-dived and left unemployment, home repossessions, and inflation in its wake. The stakes are high—from social benefits to minimum wage laws—and our living standards are being attacked to pay for a crisis that we didn't create.

Smarting from years of decreasing industrial militancy, job outsourcing, and the “rich come first” policies of successive governments, the British working class has already begun to feel the pinch. Politicians from all parties discuss not whether there should be cuts, but where those cuts will fall if they get into power. Employers in the private and public sectors alike have found another opportunity in the crisis. Wages, which in real terms have been stagnant for decades, have been frozen or, worse yet, slashed. Workloads have increased as redundancies and vacant posts became standard operating procedure in the credit crunch workplace. Alongside all this, unemployment, agency work, and part-time work increased, leaving those in full-time employment working too hard for too many hours and for too little pay.

The movement against this began in fits and starts. Across the U.K., anti-cuts groups began popping up. Unions, bureaucratically top-heavy and increasingly docile, offered little more than symbolic protest. Half-hearted one day strikes led

Georgia Prisoners Organize Largest Prison Strike In U.S. History

Continued from 1

so the Department of Corrections (DOC) can crush the strike with more aggressive measures.

Although word is getting out to supporters and slowly leaking to the press, it is being presented by the DOC as a non-issue. Prison officials are not responding to repeated press inquiries and denying all visitations to some of the prisons. For the most part, there is a blackout in the media about the strike, although there has been coverage by the independent, African-American, and progressive media.

The conditions in Georgia's prisons are by no means confined to that state. These conditions of abuse and slave labor exist in prisons across the United States, which collectively make up the world's largest prison system and perhaps the largest system of forced labor.

The Georgia strike differs from past mass actions of prisoners because of its nonviolent methods. But it does not stand alone. There is a rich history of prisoner and prison laborer rebellion, unrest, activism, and labor organizing—a history largely unknown and unwritten. While mainstream unions have ignored the plight of prisoners, preferring instead to organize those who enslave them, the IWW is one union that has had some recent history in the U.S. prison system. The largest case

Starbucks Baristas Win Equal Holiday Pay After Three Year IWW Fight

Continued from 1

fair raises, affordable health care, and respectful treatment from management. The workers' group then creates a strategic plan and leads workplace actions, community solidarity, and grassroots advocacy to win the desired job improvements.

The Industrial Workers of the World effort at Starbucks is the first time a labor organization in the United States has succeeded in building a base of organized baristas at the company. With over 300 worker-organizers across the country

to union officials taking disputes to Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS), the state-sponsored arbitration services, and then finally recommending workers accept below-inflation “raises.” But there were some inspirational acts of resistance. Fuel drivers went on a wildcat strike and won a 14 percent raise. Wildcats spread as oil workers and posties walked out. In the Isle of Wight, non-union workers occupied their wind turbine factory. Visteon auto supply workers occupied three factories nationwide. Parents, not immune to the appeal of direct action, occupied the roof of a school in London after it was announced it was to be demolished and replaced with a new privately run institution.

However, things really began to heat up on Nov. 10. On this date, tens of thousands of students converged on London to protest the rise in tuition fees and the scrapping of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) that gave children from low-income backgrounds a small weekly payment for those who were to continue their education beyond age 16. Although called by the National Union of Students (NUS) and the lecturers' union, the University and College Union, students broke beyond the bounds of symbolic protest and occupied the Tory headquarters. Thousands of students, many of them new to

was in the Lucasville, Ohio state prison, where 400 prisoners signed a petition for the IWW to bargain collectively on their behalf in 1987. It was denied by the DOC and the Ohio Labor Board, planting one of the many seeds that eventually sprouted into the Lucasville Prison rebellion.

Elaine Brown, former chair of the Black Panther Party, has acted as an outside voice and liaison for the striking prisoners. On KPFA's “Hard Knock Radio,” Brown told radio host Davey D that the prison strike, “...is a spark as far as I'm concerned that will recall and resurrect the idea of a prisoner movement. And if this one day is a protest, then that's what it's going to be, but it may spark other actions and hopefully it will inspire people on the outside to stop sitting around and letting these men be incarcerated and do something to change the status of things in this country.”

It is unclear where this strike will go, but it is clear that the prisoners need support. If this strike is a spark, the Georgian prisoners need people on the outside to help fan the flames of discontent.

For more information and to find out how you can help, contact Elaine Brown, 404-542-1211, sistaelaine@gmail.com; Valerie Porter, 229-931-5348, lashan123@att.net; or Faye Sanders, 478-550-7046.

and growing, the SWU has consistently chalked up victories at Starbucks including across-the-board raises, more secure work hours, and respectful treatment from previously abusive managers whose conduct improved due to union pressure campaigns. The SWU has repeatedly prevailed against Starbucks in the legal arena across multiple cities including in a lengthy New York City trial over pervasive illegal union-busting, the first time the company had to square off against baristas in open court regarding unfair labor practices.

politics and some even on their first march, tasted direct action. Galvanized by the energy of the 10th, students issued a call-out for a day of action on Nov. 24. When the day arrived, a movement of university occupations took root. All over the U.K., students occupied university buildings and made politics real—not in the ballot box or in the newspapers, but a lived, transformative experience. Through votes, debates, and even an occasional dance competition students decided the course of their struggles and linked up with other occupied universities.

After Nov. 24, things kept heating up. Further successful days of actions were called as students walked out of schools and once again thousands took to the streets. This culminated in a day of action on Dec. 9, the day the British Parliament was scheduled to vote on the rise in fees. Although the fees increase passed by a small margin, students made their anger known. Protesters broke away from the “approved” route negotiated between the NUS and the Metropolitan Police and attacked the British treasury building. Windows were smashed and bonfires set while pitched battles took place in Parliament Square. Prince Charles, heir to the British throne, and his wife Camilla made the mistake of driving through a group of protesters. Their car was immediately attacked and its

windows smashed, leaving the members of the royal family severely shaken. Despite the tuitions fees setback, the movement is still building. Organizing continues as the British political class continues to cut not just education, but programs across the entire spectrum of social provisions. While the occupations and escalating struggles are of course a heartening development, there is a larger story as well. Links have begun to be made between students, education workers, and the wider working class. It's these activities which hint at what the working class is truly capable of achieving. In Greenwich in London, teachers held a meeting with students to discuss the cuts, what can be done to oppose them, and what solidarity can look like between students and workers. A quote, taken from one of the students present, sums up the depth of feeling running through the movement:

Winnipeg Postal Workers Strike

Continued from 1

walking, and you're up and down stairs all day. You have to hold your arm rigid and balance the load while you're walking. It's caused a lot of slip-and-fall injuries, a lot of shoulder, arm, and neck pain.”

After a number of injuries and hassles managing deliveries during the first few weeks of the new system, local supervisors slacked off and allowed workers to merge the bundles at the depot.

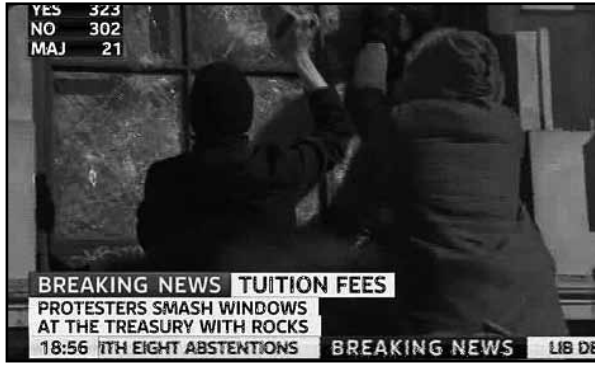
But on Monday morning, Nov. 22, at the city's southwest letter carrier center, management took a firm stance: use the new method or face disciplinary action.

One worker said no, Tyre recounts. The worker told his boss: “I've tried it and I stumbled a number of times. So you'll have to send me home, because I'm not doing it.”

Management issued an immediate five-day suspension. It took only 10 minutes for word to spread through the building, and about 40 workers held an immediate meeting in the parking lot. They decided to all go home, invoking contract language which gives the right to refuse unsafe work. When 30 workers arrived for the second shift and heard what had happened, they decided to go home as well.

Canadian media covered the wildcat action, and word spread quickly among CUPW members and especially through a blog called “The Workers Struggle with the Modern Post.” A week later, the blog had received 50,000 hits and had become a worker-to-worker communication tool for CUPW members, with individuals and locals sending messages of solidarity or launching support actions and then posting photos on the blog. Support also came from abroad, including from the international union federation, UNI Global Union.

Photo: atlara.wordpress.com



News from Dec. 9 in London. Photo: atlara.wordpress.com

“52,000 [protesters in London] and the storming of Millbank [Tory HQ] made the news and everyone is talking about it—imagine what is possible if we double it to 100,000. We need walkouts, occupations and street actions. We'll only know if we try. This is too serious not to go all out.”

Only by spreading and coordinating struggle between different elements of the working class will we create a movement capable of beating back the cuts. And it doesn't need to end there—life wasn't all peachy before the cuts, after all. Only a widespread class movement can ultimately create a different economy based not on profit for the few, but that instead functions to meet the needs and desires of the world's population.

For the latest news, visit <http://anti-cuts.org.uk> and <http://libcom.org>.

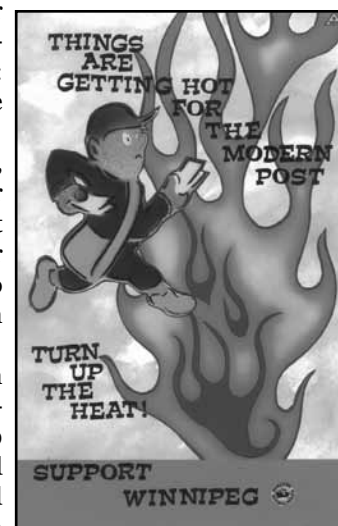
On Nov. 23, for fear of losing their jobs, workers returned to work and struggled to get the mail delivered under management instructions that remained unsafe.

While members challenge the work restructuring in Winnipeg, CUPW is in the midst of negotiating a new national contract for its 54,000 members. Health and safety—including the demand to return to one-bundle delivery—are front and center, says National President Denis Lemelin. The new system is being introduced at a few sites in Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax, and will spread nationally over the coming year.

But other important issues are on the table. Canada Post has cut about 1,800 full-time positions since 2009, mostly through attrition as workers retire. Temporary and casual workers have been cut. And, as in other industries, management is pushing a lower tier for new hires. “They want two tiers in wages, pension, benefits, job security, time off work—everything,” Lemelin said.

Coupled with these contract challenges are service cuts due to short-staffing, reductions in rural delivery services, and fewer collection mailboxes on the street. The impact of the cuts has been greatest in rural areas. CUPW has responded by asking local municipal councils in rural areas to sign on to a “People's Postal Declaration,” which demands that postal modernization be handled in a socially responsible way that doesn't sacrifice quality services or quality jobs. The declaration has been signed by 359 municipalities.

The ante will be upped this winter. Injuries under the multiple-bundle delivery system will rise as snow begins to fall. The CUPW is lining up another day of action at the end of January, which will focus on the contract that is set to expire then.



Graphic: theworkersstrugglewiththetmodernpost.blogspot.com

Reviews

Hope Is Found In Class Conflict And Rebellion

Hedges, Chris. *Death of the Liberal Class*. New York: Nation Books, 2010. Hardcover, 256 pages, \$24.95.

By John Maclean

Chris Hedges begins his “Death of the Liberal Class” with a quotation from Karl Polanyi, to the effect that as human beings’ futures get handed over to markets, the basis for society is undone. With the story of Ernest Logan Bell, and his lone protest walk against a failing United States. For Hedges, the liberal class includes the media, churches, institutions of higher learning, the Democratic Party, the arts and labor unions. All of these, while clinging to their privileges, have become “useless and despised appendage[s] of corporate power.” The “greatest sin” of this class, which left it without the words to battle the corporate state, was “its enthusiastic collusion with the power elite” in silencing, banning, and blacklisting “rebels, iconoclasts, communists, socialists, anarchists, radical union leaders, and pacifists...” Hedges believes that hope can only be found in a “return to the language of class conflict and rebellion,” and that the lifeless zone in the Gulf of Mexico is a “perfect metaphor” for our corporate present.

The United States, like the defunct Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, was seduced by the “ideology of permanent war”; in part due to a mistaken belief that the state can advance all our hopes. Hedges sees many historical instances of the embrace of war ruining communication, limiting rights, empowering conservative, state-centered profiteers, and, in general, corroding “democratic debate and institutions.” He says that, at this moment, in the United States, we “endure more state control than at any time in [our] history.” He writes that the “primary function of the liberal class” is to give war a “humanitarian and moral coloring,” and it is this service which makes it tolerable to power. Afghanistan is the source of over 90 percent of the world’s opium, a trade which “kills around 100,000 people annually,” and has also made solvent our feared enemies. Our largely privatized murderous efforts in this country manage to feed “steak and lobster” to contractors every week, while

many of the more than 8 million Afghans live with “food insecurity and starvation.” Hedges writes of the useless “myth of war” that “grinds into the dirt all that is tender and beautiful and sacred.”

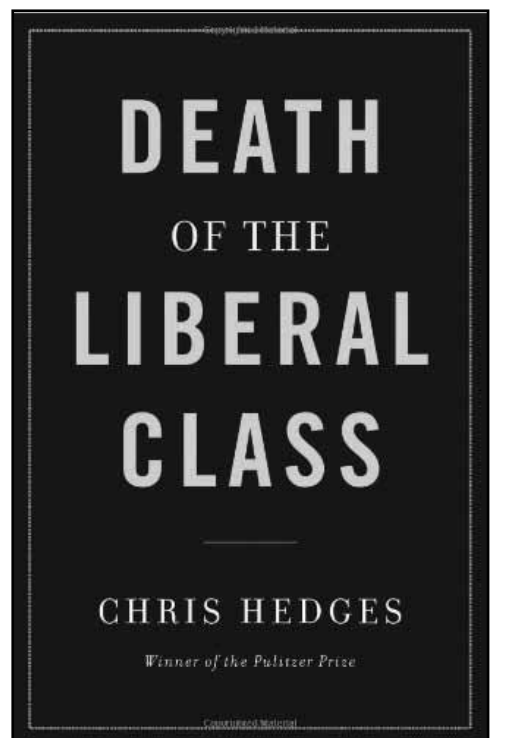
The college professor and eventual president of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, as well as others, gave us the “terrible leviathan of total war.” The declaration of the First World War was accompanied by the rise of mass propaganda which, for Hedges, was greatly influenced by Sigmund Freud, who “discovered that the manipulation of powerful myths and images playing on subconscious fears and desires, could lead men and women to embrace their own subjugation and... self-destruction.” Many of the period’s muckraking progressives found it easy to join the war effort, committing what the author calls intellectual and moral suicide. In 1917, the Espionage Act was passed by Congress, and in 1918, it was amended to include the Sedition Act. The 1922 book, “Public Opinion” by Walter Lippmann, became biblical for an emerging power elite. The Committee for Public Information (CPI), led by George Creel, set out to “demolish decentralized and diverse systems of information” all around the country. By the end of the war, the CPI utilized some 75,000 “four-minute men” who would stand up in public places and give “four-minute talks on topics prepared for them by the committee.” Hedges sees the war as the rock upon which U.S. radicalism was smashed. Decades later, with the advent of the Wagner Act, Taft-Hartley, and other amendments, labor “became as impotent as the arts, the media, the church, the universities, and the Democratic Party,” writes Hedges.

Parts of what was called the New Left in the 1960s took much of their inspiration from struggles overseas, not from U.S. labor; others, like the Beats, came out for “disengagement,” and some for “the stage set...by the television camera.” Hedges mentions how the Beatles song “Yellow Submarine” was often preferred over “Solidarity Forever.” Much of this simply collapsed, following the war, as it “shared commercial culture’s hedonism, love of spectacle, and preoccupation with

the self.” Art tended to be increasingly abstract, and this “expression became as domesticated and depoliticized as union activity, journalism, scholarship, and political discourse.” Leftist intellectuals became culture and literary critics, and imbibed the governing rule of the academy: teach and write as you wish, but if you make a “public stand that defies conventional mores and established structures, you risk your career.” Hedges himself insisted on crossing this line and was punished. He says that he is not so much angry at the institutions, but at “those within them that failed when we needed their voices;” people who were more interested in their careers, and in access to power, than in the “non-historical” values of justice, truth, and love.

As has been noted, the liberal class excludes the independent and advances the mediocre. In recent times and past decades, there have been some “high-profile apostate[s] from the liberal class”; Hedges mentions the jurist Richard Goldstone, the documentary filmmaker Michael Moore, and Sidney Schanberg, formerly of the *New York Times*. He insists that the bridge for creative workers to the powerful must be dismantled. Hedges calls the purging of radicals from religious groups “a body blow to the liberal class” and characterizes most “moderate-to-liberal religions” as cowardly. At this point in time, the liberal class is almost completely lined up against the empowerment of the majority in the United States. He fears that a nation-state which “stops taking care of its own,” and lacks compassion and empathy, risks breeding “dark ideological monsters that will inevitably rise up and devour” its body-politic.

Hedges concludes by citing Albert Camus, who wrote that revolt alone makes sense, as it is the constant struggle of people against obscurity. All coming revolt must begin with the recognition of the completed “corporate *coup d’état*” over our lives and institutions. Those who are bound to this exploitation are entangled in the irrational and suicidal. The author mentions previous periods of “bankrupt liberalism,” which went bad in Germany, Italy, and Russia. He says that “the cor-



Graphic: nationbooks.org

porate power elite is no longer concerned with our aspirations” and that appeals “to [its] better nature, or seeking to influence the internal levers of power, will no longer work.” The corporate state seeks to encourage “indifference to the plight of others” and the “cult of the self” and, by appealing to “pleasure” and “fear,” seeks to crush “compassion.”

He goes on further—as 350 parts-per-million of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere becomes 385 and rising—to ask “Why continue to obey the laws and dictates of our executioners?”

Hedges described one instance of “revolt” which took place in 1905, in Chicago, in the midst of an employer’s assault on labor, backed by government. Hedges cites William D. Haywood, at the founding convention of the IWW: “Fellow workers, this is the Continental Congress of the working class. We are here to confederate the workers of this country into a working-class movement that shall have for its purpose the emancipation of the working class from the slave bondage of capitalism...”

These principles surely apply today.

Schlöndorff Film Tells Story Of Red Army Faction



Graphic: new-video.de

Director: Volker Schlöndorff. “Die Stille nach dem Schuss.” (English title: “The Legend of Rita”). Produced by ARTE, Babelsberg Film, Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk (MDR), and Mitteldeutsches Filmkontor (MDF), 2000. 103 minutes.

By Mike Ballard

The Red Army Faction (RAF) was a self-described communist and anti-imperialist urban guerrilla organization based in the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany). The RAF had a theoretically superficial Marxist-Leninist set of politics similar to those of the Weatherman in the

United States and the Red Army Faction in Japan. These were young people, many of whom were college students, who felt both guilty about and sympathetic toward the Third World nationalist revolutions; revolutions they believed were the vanguard of a world revolution which would eventually sweep the “fascist imperialist” states away.

Che Guevara captured what Schlöndorff is attempting to portray in his film concerning the mental spirit of these German students—revolutionary romantics when he reflected on his own audacity and political commitment:

“At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by a great feeling of love. It is impossible to think of a genuine revolutionary lacking this quality... We must strive every day so that this love of living humanity will be transformed into actual deeds, into acts that serve as examples, as a moving force.”

Action and audacity were the RAF’s strong suit. “The Legend of Rita” (originally called “Die Stille nach dem Schuss” in German) is set in the divided Germany of the 1970s. Rita is a young fearless romantic in love with a left-wing revolutionary, one Andreas “Andi” Klein—a guy who is more or less the leader of an RAF group which she is a part of. Their RAF group is armed, ruthless and robs banks to fund “the revolution.”

These revolutionaries naively explained their robberies in terms of “anti-imperialist” politics: out loud, to custom-

ers as they cleaned out the capitalist bank vault and cash drawers, with weapons drawn.

Adrenaline and surprise hit one in this film from start to finish. From jail breaks to motorcycle chases, to life behind the Iron Curtain, the film comes at you again and again with images you’ve been brainwashed to feel uncomfortable with. You’ll also feel the kind of careless courage these young people of the RAF had, as they consciously faced death, even as they reached out for a better life—actually, a better life for others, mostly. As many, many of the New Left, Rita and her fellow RAF members are motivated to take violent political action in order to assuage a deeply felt guilt about being born in First World privilege. They are more moralists than materialists—romantic poets ready to use murder as a political weapon. In the midst of all this direct, violent action, some of them change, become harder hearted, mechanically calculating. Rita’s boyfriend is one of them, and when this happens, love dies. Rita is a lover first and a revolutionary second. In her heart of hearts, she wants to settle down, have kids, a husband, the whole modern suburban dream, albeit in a more egalitarian, “anti-imperialist” society. Rita wants mutual love more than anything else, and as she learns more about the duplicitous mendacity of the coldly calculating political apparatus in both the East and West, she comes to the realization that political States are always ready to opportunistically sacrifice their

oft-repeated, propagandized moral goals and callously toss human lives on the scrapheap for political gain. As a result, she grows closer to the only person who ever measured up to her romantic expectations: an East German woman named Tatjana.

Volker Schlöndorff has directed a master portrait of a political situation, a time and a place which is quickly disappearing down the memory hole. Not only are the West German RAF, with their Ton Stein Scherben albums and sneering hatred for bourgeois complacency, critically and sympathetically examined, but the “actually existing socialism” of East Germany during that era is laid bare as well. East Germany is portrayed realistically, down to the last idiosyncrasy, from the near-empty roads, to the Radeberger Pilsner, to the workers’ apartments in large, multi-storied college dorm-like buildings in urban East Berlin. This portrait will disturb long-held mainstream *Time* magazine inspired conceptions of East Germany, some would say, “with extreme prejudice.” Rest assured though; the film’s honesty extends across both sides of the East/West border. Far from revolutionary or socialist, most of the citizens of East Germany are portrayed as being quite conservative, endorsing whichever police are in charge of the political State. The point is hammered home at the end of the movie, when the fall of the Wall in 1989 is portrayed; a time when Rita and her audience are supposed to come to the realization of just what the “Stille nach dem Schuss” entails.

Wobbly Arts Work to Rule

By Sean Carleton, X364847

This song is dedicated FW Alex Allan Young. FW Young is a 90-year-old fighting Wobbly in the Vancouver IWW General Membership Branch. I was inspired to write this song after FW Young stood up in a meeting of about 30 activists to tell us "kids" about the importance of "working to rule." Everyone was silent as we listened and learned. His basic point was that workers today need to find creative ways to work together to hit the ruling class where it hurts: by controlling the means of production. In our fight to abolish capitalism, walking off the job and marching on the boss are important tactics, but so too is the strategy of working to rule. Utah Phillips was right, we can learn a lot from listening to our elders.

Am Am
Direct action/ gets satisfaction
C G
But sometimes we need/ some legal traction.
Am C
That's when it's time/ for a collective action, you see.
G Am
We need the conscious withdrawal/ of efficiency!

Chorus
1/3* 3/5*
We've got to work to rule/ We've got to work to rule
Am
It's a worker's tool!
1/3* 3/5*
We've got to work to rule/ We've got to work to rule
Am
We've got our work to rule.

Working to rule/ is simple enough
Just slow down, take your breaks/ it's easy stuff.
Rushing to make profit/ don't concern us as much
As taking the full time/ for our lunch.

The boss complains/ of "malicious compliance."
Whining that it messes/ with is bottom line finance.
We stop to listen/ as if in fright.
But that's just another way/ to assert out might – so kiss it parasites!

* (numbers represent which frets on E/A strings respectively your fingers show go)



Alex Allan Young. Photo: Sean Carleton

Wobbly Humor Punishing Work is Not Funny

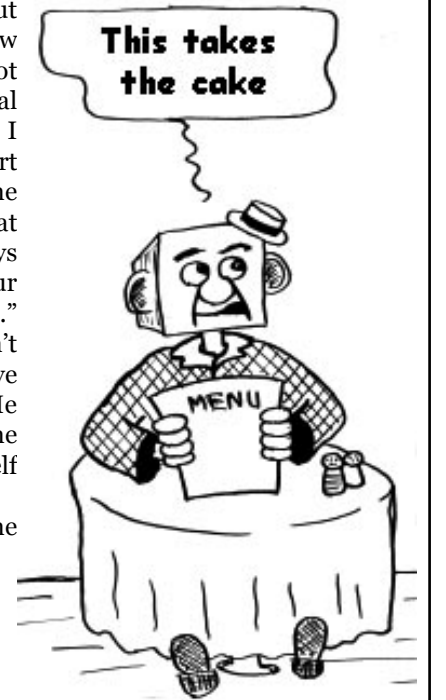
Fellow Workers,

I regret to inform you that I do not currently have a report to give you about the activities of the Committee on Industrial Laughification (CIL). I've been very busy with punishing work and job hunting. It seems like a never ending routine.

I applied for a job at a pencil factory. I wanted the number 1 job as 'lead' pencil sharpener. They gave me the number 2 position. After a while I quit because I really didn't get the point. I had a teaching job after that, but I got fired after they caught me giving out As to all my students. The principal said I just couldn't make the grade. I tried working as a bin man, but then I decided that was a load of rubbish. Then I wanted to be a doctor, but I didn't have the patience. After that I wanted to be a watchmaker, but I didn't have the time. I got a job for a while as a tailor, but I quit because I found the work to be sew-sew. I worked briefly on the pit crew for a NASCAR driver. I thought it would be a gas but I got really tired out. So I became a carpenter. Fired me after the first week, said I didn't cut it. As a wobbly, I should have saw it coming, as much as the IWW drills us that the boss is always out to screw you. I dealt with it the only way I know how. I went out and got hammered. My friend got me a job coaching soccer; he thought I'd get a real kick out of it. It didn't pay so good though, so I had to take on a second job, as a baker. I was short on bread. I kneaded the extra dough. I quit the coaching job, now I'm organizing a job branch at my new place – a ruler factory. The boss is always asking people to work extra, we keep telling our co-workers "if you give an inch, he'll take a mile." The boss hauled me into his office, he said I didn't measure up. I said, "I'm in the IWW and we have never had good relationships with rulers." He threatened to discipline me, but when I said the name of the union he quickly distanced himself from any threats.

Once things slow down, I will report on the CIL's activities very soon, no joke.

OBU OMG,
Redd Kard
Chair, Committee for Industrial Laughification



Wobbly History Commemorating The Bread And Roses Strike

By Steve Kellerman, X325068

On Dec. 8 a program on Joe Ettor and Arturo Giovannitti was put on at the Lawrence (Mass.) Heritage State Park, presented jointly by the Park and the Lawrence History Center. The Park is located in the old Lawrence mill district in which the IWW organized 25,000 textile workers in the titanic "Bread and Roses" strike of 1912. The strike, which lasted nearly three months in bitter winter weather, ended with an almost complete victory by the workers and was instrumental in bringing improved pay and conditions throughout American industry.

In the course of the strike, Ettor and Giovannitti, the initial organizers who set up the strike committee and the structures which led to the victory, were arrested on trumped-up charges of being accessories to murder when the police killed a striker, Annie LoPizzo. They were held in jail from late January until mid-November, facing the electric chair if convicted. The IWW

and its supporters carried on a large and vigorous defense campaign and called a region-wide one-day general strike in New England textiles. Ettor and Giovannitti were acquitted of the charges.

The program featured a talk by local historian Dexter Arnold in which he described the course of the strike including the enormous obstacles faced by the mill workers and the subsequent Ettor and Giovannitti defense campaign.

This was followed by the screening of the rare slides assembled by Rev. Roland Sawyer, a left-wing socialist who was active in the defense effort and who used them to illustrate his talks. The original slides, glass positives, have been held at the University of New Hampshire and until recently were unknown to historians of the strike. The scenes they depict are dramatic and the quality of the pictures is excellent.

Joe Ettor was a prominent figure in the early IWW who organized workers in different industries across the United States.

He was a great orator and fluent in six languages. Arturo Giovannitti was a poet who wrote in Italian and English, edited *Il Proletario*, the Italian-language IWW newspaper, and was the general secretary of the Italian-Socialist Federation. Together they created the strike committee, which enabled the strikers to control the strike and overcome the divisions of nationality and language in the largely immigrant workforce. They also set up the strike relief apparatus that sustained the 25,000 strikers and allowed



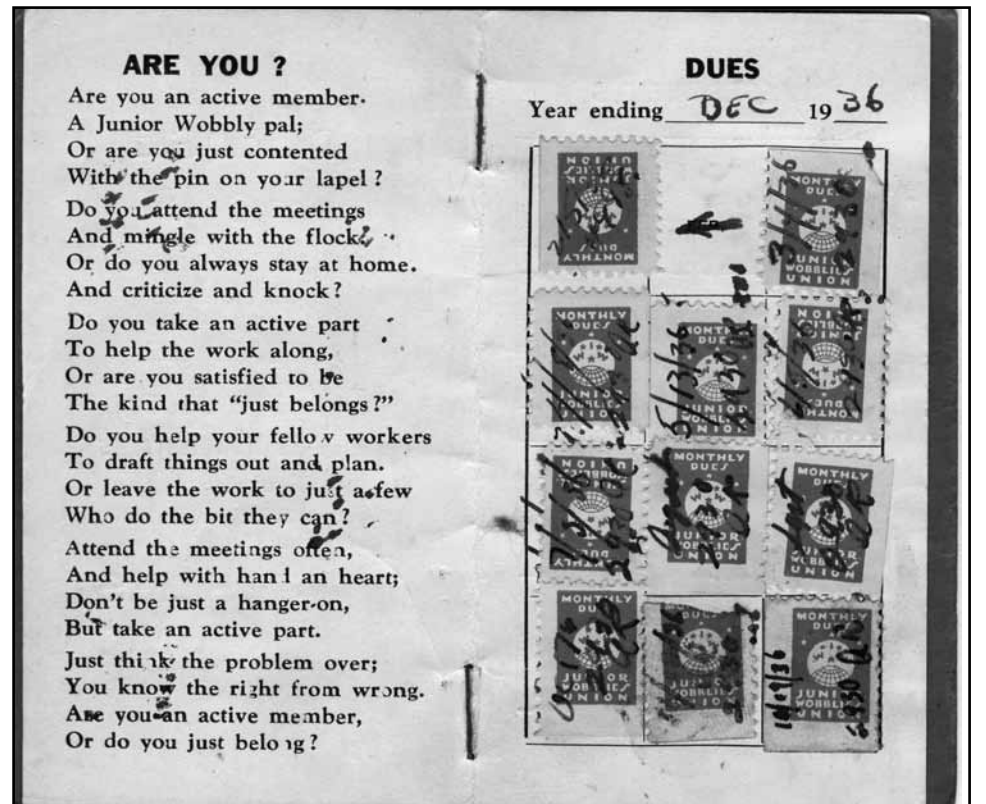
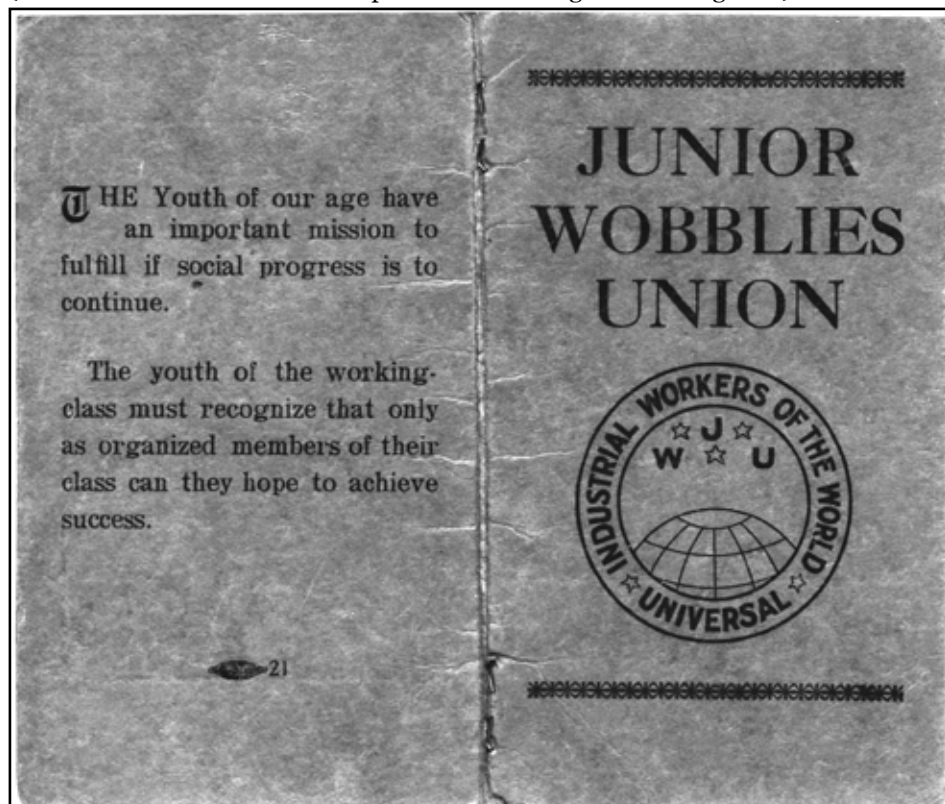
Painting from the Lawrence History Center. Photo: Diane Krauthamer

them to persevere and prevail. They well deserve to have their story known and honored back in Lawrence.

The Lawrence History Center is organizing a program for the centennial of the strike which will occur next year, 2012.

The IWW's Junior Wobblies Union Red Card Of 1936

(Thanks to Fellow Worker DJ Alperitz for scanning and sending this!)



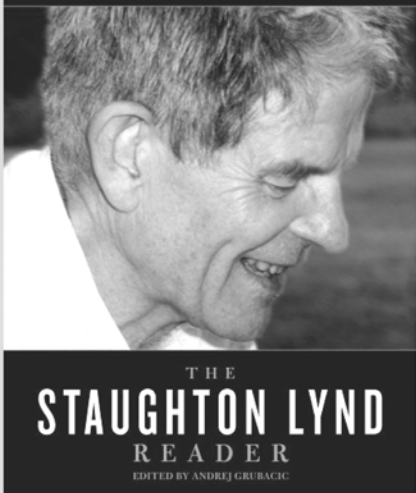
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FROM HERE TO THERE



From Here To There: The Staughton Lynd Reader
 Edited by Andrej Grubacic

From Here To There collects unpublished talks and hard-to-find essays from legendary activist historian Staughton Lynd.

The first section of the *Reader* collects reminiscences and analyses of the 1960s. A second section offers a vision of how historians might immerse themselves in popular movements while maintaining their obligation to tell the truth. In the last section Lynd explores what nonviolence, resistance to empire as a way of life, and working class self-activity might mean in the 21st century. Together, they provide a sweeping overview of the life, and work—to date—of Staughton Lynd.

Both a definitive introduction and further exploration, it is bound to educate, enlighten, and inspire those new to his work and those who have been following it for decades.

“Staughton Lynd’s work is essential reading for anyone dedicated to implementing social justice. The essays collected in this book provide unique wisdom and insights into United States history and possibilities for change, summed up in two tenets: Leading from below and Solidarity.” —Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz

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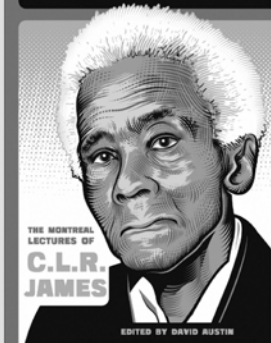


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YOU DON'T PLAY WITH REVOLUTION



You Don't Play With Revolution
 by C.L.R. James

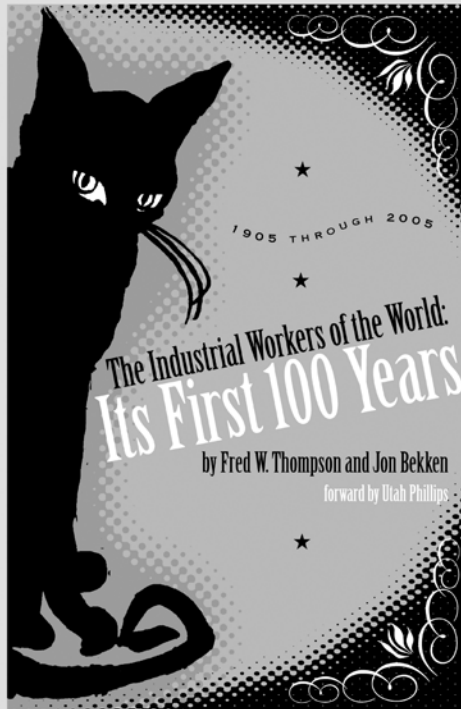
This new collection of essays by radical activist/critic C.L.R. James (perhaps best known today for his *Every Cook Can Govern*) features eight never-before-published lectures delivered in Montreal in 1967 and 1968, on subjects ranging from Shakespeare and Rousseau to Caribbean history and the Haitian Revolution.

Editor David Austin contributes a historical introduction to James’ life and work. The book also includes two

interviews from James’ stay in Canada, selected correspondence from the period, and an appendix of essays including Marty Glaberman’s “C.L.R. James: The Man and His Work.”

This book is essential reading for everyone who has grappled with James’ contributions to radical theory, in particular his efforts to fuse radical Marxism with an approach focused on supporting autonomous struggles by the dispossessed.

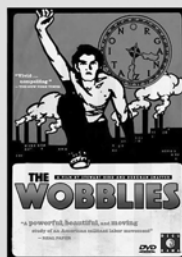
333 PAGES, \$18.95



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

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

255 pages, \$19.95



The Wobblies DVD

This documentary from 1979 takes a look at the IWW’s early days, with a combination of interviews and archival footage.

90 minutes, \$26.95

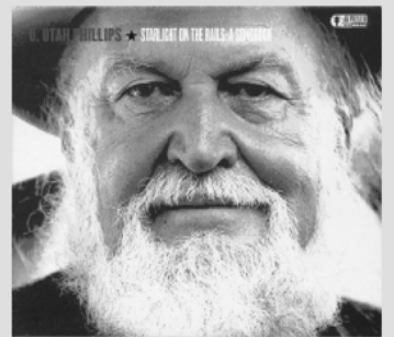


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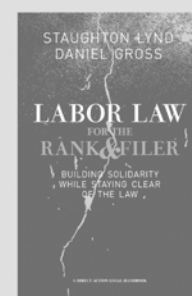
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BY STAUGHTON LYND AND DANIEL GROSS

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Getting to Know Fellow Workers

Forever Young: Staughton Lynd At 81

By Andy Piascik

Suddenly Staughton Lynd is all the rage, again. In the last 18 months Lynd has published four books—two new titles, one that's a reprint of an earlier work, and a memoir co-authored with his wife, Alice. Additionally, one book about his life as an activist through 1970 called "The Admirable Radical: Staughton Lynd and Cold War Dissent, 1945-1970," by Carl Mirra of Adelphi University was recently published, and another book about his work after 1970 by Mark Weber of Kent State University is due to come out soon.

In an epoch of imperial hubris and corporate class warfare on steroids, the release of these books could hardly have come at a better time. Soldier, coal miner, 1960s veteran, recent graduate—there's much to be gained by one and all from a study of Lynd's life and work. In so doing, it's inspiring to discover how frequently he was in the right place at the right time and, more importantly, on the right side.

Forty-six years ago, during the tumultuous summer of 1964, Lynd was invited to coordinate the Freedom Schools established in Mississippi by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). The schools were an integral part of the Herculean effort to end apartheid in the United States and became models for alternative schools everywhere.

That August, Lynd stood with the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) at the Democratic Party convention. Led by Fannie Lou Hamer and Bob Moses, the MFDP had earned the right to represent their state with their blood and their extraordinary courage. Instead, the party hierarchy supported the official, albeit illegal, delegation; a pathetic band of reactionaries who—the irony is too delicious—did not support Democrat Lyndon Johnson but his opponent, Republican Barry Goldwater, for president. This backstabbing was carried out by liberal icons Hubert Humphrey, Walter Reuther and Walter Mondale and endorsed, alas, by Martin Luther King, Jr.

In early 1965, Lynd spoke at Carnegie

Hall in one of the first events organized in opposition to the U.S. invasion of Vietnam. A short time later, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) asked him to chair the first national demonstration against the war, where he was again a keynote speaker. On April 17, 1965, a crowd of 25,000 demonstrators—five times larger than even the most optimistic organizers had anticipated—turned out in Washington, and the largest anti-war movement in U.S. history was born.

That summer Lynd helped organize the Assembly of Unrepresented People, at which peace with the people of Vietnam was declared. It proved prophetic, for in a few short years a majority of people in the U.S. had declared peace with Vietnam.

Lynd would continue as one of the seminal figures of the 1960s. He was both a tireless organizer and the author of numerous articles in important movement publications like *Liberation*, *Radical America* and *Studies on the Left*. With co-author Michael Ferber, he documented the movement against the military draft in "The Resistance," one of the best books about 1960s organizing.

Lynd was an enthusiastic supporter of the New Left and embraced precepts like participatory democracy and decentralization. Ex-radicals of his generation like Irving Howe, Bayard Rustin and Michael Harrington, by contrast, spent much of the 1960s attacking SNCC and SDS. He spoke for many when he mocked their enthusiasm for Lyndon Johnson and the Democrats as "coalition with the Marines."

This, too, proved uncannily prophetic. Within a year of being elected as President in 1964, Johnson ordered a massive escalation in Vietnam; sent an invasion force to the Dominican Republic to support military thugs who had overthrown a democratically elected government; and armed and funded an incredibly violent coup in Indonesia in which over a million people were killed. The "Peace Candidate," indeed.

At the end of 1965, Lynd made a fateful trip to Hanoi where he witnessed the

carnage inflicted by U.S. bombers. Up to that point, he was one of the most promising new scholars in the country. Upon his return, however, his career in academia was essentially at an end. A tenure track position at Yale suddenly disappeared. Department heads at other universities enthusiastically offered teaching positions, only to be overruled by higher-ups.

Lynd never looked back. He became an accomplished scholar outside the academy and one of the most perceptive and prolific chroniclers of "history from below," with a special interest in working-class organizing. From a series of interviews, he and Alice produced the award-winning book "Rank and File," which begat the Academy Award-nominated documentary film "Union Maids."

Lynd moved to Ohio in 1976, became an attorney and, when the mills in Youngstown, Ohio began to close, assisted steelworkers in an unsuccessful attempt to take them over. In a book he wrote about the effort, Lynd explored the biggest little secret of all, one that people everywhere would do well to heed: We who do the work can build a better world, and we can best do it without the parasitic super-rich who contribute nothing and weigh us down like a monstrous ball and chain.

Lynd is 81 years old now. His step is slower and his eyesight isn't the best. Two years ago he had open heart surgery—"an affair of the heart," he calls it. "My cardiac surgeon said I came as close to becoming permanently horizontal as one can come

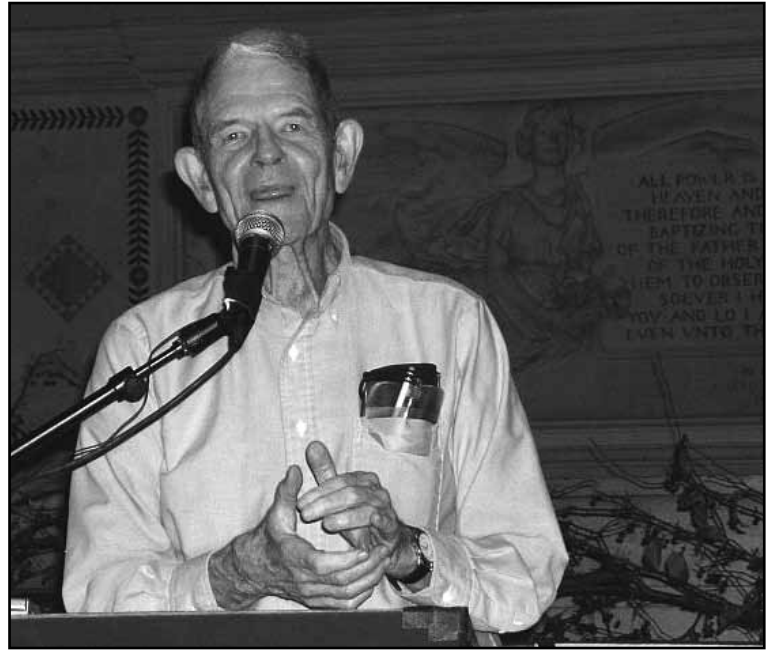


Photo: Tom Good, Next Left Notes

Staughton Lynd speaking in New York City in 2006.

without actually doing so," he says in his Ohio home.

He talks of how deeply he misses dear friend Howard Zinn, who died earlier last year. He talks of driving through Mississippi late at night, hopelessly lost, just days after civil rights workers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Mickey Schwerner had been abducted and murdered. He talks of his remarkable life's work with great humility and not at all wistfully, but in search of lessons it might hold, especially for the young. A teacher extraordinaire, he is guided by the principle that a teacher is also a student, and all students, teachers.

Lynd has seen more than his share of colleagues come and go. Some flamed out after a brief period of frantic busyness; others moved on to different lives and nice-paying gigs. Still going strong, Lynd offers long-term commitment ("long distance running," as he calls it) and accompaniment—professionals using their skills to assist workers and the unrepresented—as alternatives. He also believes as passionately as ever that a better world is indeed possible.

Sports

Ricketts, Wrigley Field And The Shock Doctrine

By Neil Parthun

Take me out to the ball game / Take me out with the crowd / Buy me \$200 to \$300 million in stadium renovations...

This is apparently the new mantra of Tom Ricketts, the owner of the Chicago Cubs. Ricketts purchased the franchise and Wrigley Field in 2009 for \$845 million.

The Cubs are one of the most profitable teams in all of professional sports. Yet, the Ricketts were hoping to have Illinois taxpayers foot the bill for Wrigley Field's refurbishments. The family asked the state legislature during the November 2010 veto session to float \$200-300 million in bonds to finance fixing the 96-year-old field over three to five seasons.

The money would have come from 35 years of future growth in an amusement tax that the City of Chicago levies on tickets and concessions at Wrigley Field. If the revenue did not go to refurbish the Ricketts' private property, it would instead be used in the city's general fund which the city desperately needs to fund fire departments, schools, etc. If Ricketts' request was successful, it would mean that future mayors would have to choose between increasing taxes on residents of the city or slashing vital social services.

The Cubs request to have public subsidies for their regular season stadium comes fresh off a vote in Mesa, Ariz.—the String Training home of the Chicago Cubs—that already granted Ricketts a massive subsidy. Mesa guaranteed \$84 million in public funds to build a new spring training stadium and team train-

ing facility.

These requests by the Ricketts family are galling on multiple levels. As municipal and state governments struggle to find finances to fund schools, medical coverage, unemployment benefits and other social services, it is appalling that Ricketts would ask for public financing to repair Wrigley Field. However, the other level is outright hypocrisy. According to the *Huffington Post*, Tom Ricketts' father, Joe, was the "sole financier of the Ending Spending Fund" which invested nearly \$600,000 in his failed U.S. Senate campaign against incumbent Senator Harry Reid. His father also initiated the non-profit called Taxpayers Against Earmarks, which is "dedicated to educating and engaging American taxpayers about wasteful government spending and the misguided practice of earmarks." Apparently, the Ricketts family is opposed to wasteful government spending unless it will make them even more ridiculously wealthy than they already are.

Taxpayers' subsidizing of privately owned stadiums is another example of Naomi Klein's concept of "shock doctrine"—using crises to benefit private/corporate interests. Dozens of baseball teams have threatened to move the franchise to another city if the local or state government will not give them sweetheart

deals and taxpayer money to build new monstrosities to their private greed. The impending football lockout almost entirely hinges on stadium funding. As owners struggle to get taxpayers to foot the bill for their stadiums, these barons of capital are demanding the players sacrifice their wages to pay the costs. This is very clear when looking at this statement from NFL spokesperson Greg Aiello: "We are facing different economic realities than we have in prior years...For the most part, these new realities reflect a significant increase in costs, including the cost of building, maintaining and operating stadiums." As Brian Frederick of the Sports Fan Coalition noted, "They have only themselves to blame. Since 1990, 28



of the 32 NFL teams have either opened a new stadium, done major renovations to an existing stadium, or are currently in the planning and negotiation stages for a new stadium." Stadium construction at this level was not necessary and now owners are asking players to subsidize their wanton greed.

While some may tout the jobs that may come with the construction work, there are many other more productive construction jobs that could be completed with that same tax money to benefit the public instead of private individuals. As Dave Zirin notes in his book "Bad Sports: How

Owners Are Ruining the Games We Love":

"In August 2005, when Hurricane Katrina flattened New Orleans and the world saw the levees rupture, the only safe harbor for poor residents was in the Louisiana Superdome. When the Mississippi River Bridge collapsed in Minneapolis, Minn., the new Twins stadium was to break ground that very week. In [the] spring of 2009, when a Washington D.C. Metro train went off the tracks, a publicly funded \$1 billion stadium had just opened its doors."

Public financing of stadiums has become the symbol of the failed policies of trickle-down economics and neoliberalism.

Fortunately for Chicagoans, the Ricketts lack the trump card when demanding public funds—the potential to move the team. The Cubs are inexorably intertwined with Wrigley Field. For now, the Ricketts proposal has been temporarily withdrawn during the veto session. However, there is the potential that the request could be rolled out in the future with a much more finessed public relations plan. The precursors of that could be seen when Tom Ricketts recently held a press conference with local business leaders to tout the potential benefits of Wrigley's stadium fixes.

Chicagoans and people who support appropriate use of tax money must remain on guard, even as we celebrate the success of preventing public finances from being used to enrich billionaires in this instance. If an owner wants to fix or build a new stadium, they can use their own damn billions.

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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.

IWW Joins BDS Movement



The Apartheid Wall in the West Bank.

By Brian Latour

The IWW has officially voted to support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement in support of Palestinian rights. The “Resolution in Support of the Workers of Palestine/Israel” was adopted in an overwhelming vote both at the IWW General Convention in Minneapolis and by the membership via referendum. This vote makes the IWW the first union in the United States and the third union in Canada to officially support the Palestinian United Call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions.

Inspired by the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, the BDS movement calls for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel until such time as fundamental Palestinian rights are recognized. The BDS call is supported by a broad cross-section of Palestinian society, including Palestinian unions.

The resolution to support the BDS campaign comes out of the work of the IWW’s International Solidarity Commission and the IWW Friends of Palestinian Workers Group, a grassroots network of Wobblies supportive of the Palestinian, Israeli and international struggle against Israeli apartheid. Support for the BDS campaign was also stressed by many Palestinian workers who met with members of the IWW on the delegation to Palestine.

“For a union concerned with international solidarity, supporting the BDS movement is the right thing to do,” said

ISC member Nathaniel Miller, who also participated in last year’s delegation to Palestine. “By officially supporting this BDS call, the IWW stands shoulder to shoulder with Palestinian workers in a global picket line against Israeli apartheid.”

“Our support of the BDS movement is in line with traditional wobbly principles of anti-racism and international solidarity,” he added.

The IWW Friends of Palestinian Workers Group resolves to continue to advance the cause of Palestinian rights inside and outside of the IWW. Email iwwinpalestine@gmail.com if you want to get involved.

Elect an ISC liaison NOW!

Of course, we are always looking for a little extra help on the ISC. So, we ask branches and interested individuals to volunteer to be ISC liaisons in order to develop branch-level and worker-to-worker international solidarity.

Every month, ISC liaisons will get an update and an action to bring to the branch level. We would like to invite every branch to select an ISC liaison to help spread the word about the solidarity activities in other parts of the world and to help develop our campaigns.

We ask all Fellow Workers to please continue sharing your international contacts and expertise. The ISC can be reached at solidarity@iww.org.

Photo: Rob Mulford

Croatian Furniture Plant Workers Strike

By “Kontrrazvedka,”
libcom.org

On Dec. 1, more than 200 workers of Mundus Varaždin began their two-day strike. The reasons behind the strike ranged from delayed salaries (which also happen to be lower than the national minimum) and an unsafe working environment, to issues related to unpaid transportation expenses and the workers’ pension fund.

The workers have also pointed out that the management has not been providing them with regular financial reports. The Network of Anarcho-Syndicalists (*Mreža anarhosindikalista i anarhosindikalistkinja*, or MASA) reacted with two letters—one to the workers, in which they expressed their solidarity, and one to the management, in which they emphasized the demands made by the strikers and insisted that they be met immediately.

On Dec. 3, the company’s electricity was shut off due to unpaid bills. On the same day, the striking workers received their salary for October, as well as a smaller amount meant for their transportation expenses. The strike came to an end, but the struggle was far from over. Five days later, on Dec. 8, it was announced that several workers would be fired due to their participation in an “illegal work stoppage.” The employer claims that the workers have done harm to the company because they began the strike without an official announcement by their union. They were



Mundus Varaždin workers strike.

Photo: libcom.org

also accused of insulting the employer and obstructing traffic on a nearby road. The Regional Industrial Union (RIS) has voiced their support for the accused workers and has announced that they would not let the employer’s decision go by without a reaction from the union.

Privatized in the early nineties, the Mundus Group consists of several companies, primarily involved in the manufacturing industry, with furniture being their main product. The working environment is far from appropriate and little money has been spent on improving safety conditions for the workers. It should therefore come as no surprise to learn that the management also fails at taking into account even the most basic right—the minimum wage. The monthly salary for Mundus workers is about 100 Kuna (approximately \$18) lower than the national minimum. The Network of Anarcho-Syndicalists stands in full solidarity with the workers and supports their demands for improved conditions.

Chinese Guest Workers Deported For Striking

By John Kalwaic

Saudi authorities arrested and deported 16 Chinese guest workers for striking in October 2010. Around 100 Chinese guest workers were striking for higher wages, as well as improved housing and working conditions. Authorities told the *Saudi Gazette* that the 16 arrested guest workers would be deported. The 16 workers who were in an 18-month contract are expected to pay for “damages” that were allegedly afflicted on four cars during the protest. The workers were working on a light rail project for the China Railway Construction Corporation in the Saudi capital of Riyadh. Officials from the China Railway Construction Corporation said “the incident would not be repeated” and gave no further details.

The workers have been also been charged with “cessation of work” in a country where striking is illegal and even state-controlled unions are not allowed to exist. A similar incident occurred Saudi Arabia in January 2009 when a group of Chinese guest workers were deported for

protesting the fact they were given lower wages than promised.

Just under half of the residential population of Saudi Arabia is made up of guest workers from an array of different countries, including China.

These guest workers are employed to compensate

for labor shortages in the wealthy oil rich gulf state and provide a source of cheap labor. Chinese workers have been working in many different countries, from Russia and Romania to Israel and the United Arab Emirates. According to the Chinese Commerce Ministry, the number of Chinese citizens working overseas was expected to reach one million by the end of 2010. On many occasions, Chinese workers have exported labor unrest from their own country, standing up to their bosses who are more often the most corrupt. In a repressive state like Saudi Arabia, it is very difficult for workers to win. In spite of the fact that unions and strikes are illegal, workers often engage in strikes and protest actions.



Graphic: upload.wikimedia.org

Support international solidarity!



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



Assessment Stamp for Friends of the Palestinian Workers Group
Benefit stamp designed by underground cartoonist Spain Rodriguez.



Send \$5 and a SASE to sparrow at IWW San Francisco, 2022 Blake Street, Berkeley, CA 94704.



Graphic: J. Pierce