

# INDUSTRIAL WORKER



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## Union Workers And Immigrants March Together On May Day

By John Kalwaic

In many cities across the United States, tens of thousands of workers and other activists marched this year for the annual May Day celebration. May Day is an old English holiday celebrating the coming of spring and was recreated as a calibration of international labor commemorating the Haymarket massacre, which happened in Chicago in 1886. The Haymarket demonstrators were protesting for the eight-hour workday, as well as other issues. Many of these demonstrators were members of the early radical union known as the Knights of Labor. These demonstrators were immigrants and self-described anarchists. Ironically, the United States is one of the only countries in which May Day is not usually celebrated.

In 2006, May Day was brought back into mainstream American culture as a day to fight for immigrant rights against an anti-immigrant bill proposed by Wisconsin Congressman James Sensenbrenner. Other issues have been brought to the table as well. In 2007, the International

Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) launched a May Day strike against the U.S. occupation of Iraq and shut down all the West Coast commercial shipping ports for the day.

The revamped tradition of May Day in the United States has continued, and large-scale immigrant marches have now taken place every year since 2006.

This year, public-sector workers protested union-busting measures and other attacks against their rights in Wisconsin, Ohio, and other states across the country. On the heels of recent anti-immigrant legislation passed in Arizona in 2010, immigrant and public-sector workers joined together as one and rallied at annual May Day events in cities across the United States.



Continued on 6 Members of the Portland IWW march with thousands of workers on May Day. Photo: FW Ian W.

## West Coast Workers Picket Hotels In Solidarity



Workers picket Hotel Frank in San Francisco on April 29.

Photo: Marc Norton

By Marc Norton

A non-traditional alliance of workers in Portland and Seattle organized a Day of Solidarity with the San Francisco-based Hotel Frank workers on Friday, April 29. The Portland IWW, Seattle Solidarity Network (SeaSol) and Hotel Frank workers were all on the streets picketing Provenance hotels. Provenance is the hotel management company that threw the UNITE HERE Local 2 contract at Hotel Frank in the trash almost a year ago.

In Portland, the IWW picketed Hotel Lucia. Provenance has its headquarters in Portland, as well as two upper-crust boutique hotels, Hotel Lucia and Hotel deLuxe. The IWW has a long history as a militant and radical labor union, often credited with popularizing the slogan and philosophy that “an injury to one is an injury to all.” This spirit was certainly in evidence when the IWW set up their picket

in Portland.

In Seattle, SeaSol picketed Hotel Max—another high-end Provenance boutique hotel. SeaSol, founded in 2008, is a much younger organization than the IWW, but has already established a reputation for organizing successful campaigns for workers’ and tenants’ rights. They can mobilize an impressive number of people, and did just that on April 29.

In San Francisco, Hotel Frank workers have held a regular Friday afternoon picket since declaring a boycott in September 2010. Since then we have staged an escalating series of actions aimed at restoring our union contract, including active picket lines and unannounced delegations to management.

On Saturday, April 30, the day after the tri-city action, we set up a loud picket line at Hotel Frank at 7:00 a.m., rousing

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## Worker-Owned Restaurant In Michigan Joins Historic Labor Union

By Grand Rapids IWW

Bartertown Diner and Roc’s Cakes, a raw, vegan/vegetarian restaurant opening in downtown Grand Rapids, Mich., has decided to go “Wobbly.” The seven member team which constitutes the worker-run establishment, have all decided to join the old and storied Industrial Workers of the World labor union.

“It just seemed like the perfect fit for us. After meeting with members of the IWW, it was clear that we all want the same things and being that we really don’t want to be just another restaurant, it seemed logical,” said Ryan Cappelletti, a cook at the new diner.

Bartertown Diner and Roc’s Cakes, which will be located at 6 Jefferson Street, joins a growing list of worker-owned IWW

shops like the Red and Black Cafe in Portland, Ore., and Just Coffee in Madison, Wis.

“We are very happy that Bartertown and Roc’s Cakes has decided to go IWW and believe it can only help in our larger campaign to raise the standard of living and benefits for all food and beverage workers in Grand Rapids,” said Shannon Williams, Treasurer of the local IWW branch.

The Grand Rapids Branch of the Industrial Workers of the World has been involved in food service organizing for many years from the IWW Starbucks Workers Union to the IWW Jimmy Johns Workers Union.

For more information, be sure to visit <http://www.bartertowngr.com>.





# For A Union Of 10,000 Wobblies

By Alex Erikson

*"The percentage of the workforce that is unionized in the private sector is at an all-time low, and while the number of representation petitions against restaurants has increased in the past few years, the numbers are still extremely low in any given year. That being said, fast food restaurant owners and operators should take heed of the recent organizing campaign in Minneapolis against ten Jimmy John's locations. The Wobblies are at it again."* – Seyfarth Shaw, prominent U.S. anti-union law firm

In the year 2011, the IWW is once again feared by the capitalist class as a fighting union. Wobblies on shop floors across the world deserve to take a minute to congratulate ourselves: we are a threat again. But our work is far from done. As far as we have come, there is a long road ahead of us. We need to reflect on how we have come this far, and plan out our next steps.

Our successes in the last few years were built on a foundation that was laid over the last decade. At a time when the labor movement was at a low ebb, disoriented by the realities of globalization and the service economy, a handful of visionary workers picked up the banner of the IWW and began organizing their own workplaces. The results were mixed, but lessons were learned. Now, we have distilled the lessons we have learned about shop-floor organizing into a coherent training so that they can be easily passed on to others. With the help of our organizer training program, our campaigns start out leaps and bounds ahead of where we were ten years ago. With a mastery of the nuts and bolts of organizing, our organizers are capable of waging struggles against the bosses involving hundreds of workers. While it is difficult to make generalizations about an organization of hundreds of people that has evolved over decades, it seems safe to say that the IWW is stronger than it has been in years.

However, as Wobblies, we are always thinking of ways to bring the class struggle to another level. That's what brought us

into the IWW in the first place: the belief in a possibility of a better world for workers and a desire to build a better workers' movement to get us there. Over the years we have gained experience with a variety of approaches to organizing. We have had corridor campaigns, attempts to organize particular segments of industry with high levels of industrial power, campaigns against individual corporate chains, and many campaigns against individual shops initiated by workers who came to us for help. While we have learned a lot from all of these experiences, many Wobblies feel that we need to be more "strategic" with our next steps in order to maximize the impact we can make as a relatively small organization. There have been many several proposals for "strategic" campaigns over the years, but none of them have materialized. Why is that?

Before we are able to successfully implement a strategy, we need to build up the parts of our organization that would put a strategy into practice. We need to take one step backward and develop a plan to bring us to a point where we can implement an organizing plan. In other words, we need a strategy to implement a strategy.

In the next couple years, I think we should focus on building functioning branches of the IWW. We should look at our branches that are most effective at fighting bosses and building power, and replicate those successes. If we could take our largest branches of 100-200 members and copy that success in all of our 40-50 North American branches, we would have 4,000-10,000 members. We would have more organizers, more campaigns, and more funds to support all of our activities. We would be able to pick fights with bigger targets and organize them more effectively. We would have more brains wrestling with the question of how to build a new workers movement. We would have more workers learning more lessons about the class struggle. We would have more social leaders involved in the union, laying the basis for even broader recruitment and bringing us closer to a "tipping

point" in society where our vision of class struggle for industrial democracy becomes a major current within the working class. An IWW with 10,000 members would be a qualitative and quantitative leap in the class struggle in North America.

Of course we aren't going to build 10,000 Wobblies just by hoping it will happen. Just like in workplace organizing, we need to break this task down into smaller steps, and plan ahead so that a few years from now we will be successful. While we do need to fine-tune our approach to organizing and flesh out our solidarity unionism model, I think that we already have the knowledge in the union that would allow us to grow. We have branches that have 100-200 members. Let's just figure out what has allowed some branches to thrive, and apply these lessons to all branches across the union.

There are certainly external circumstances that impact branch growth, but it's more important to focus on the things we can control. I would say that there are a few key areas of competency that have allowed some branches to thrive:

**1) Stable Administration.** Having regular, efficient meetings makes it easy for people to get plugged in to the union. It also allows us to begin accumulating funds and personnel that can be used to build up our projects. However, stability is not an answer in and of itself. It is also critical that branches rotate tasks such as Secretary-Treasurer, allowing all members to take ownership over the administration of the branch.

**2) Focus on Organizing.** Our most successful branches are the ones that have active organizing campaigns. We need to make sure that all branch members understand that the IWW is an organization of working-class fighters who are building power on the job. We are not a social club or a political organization. There is room for folks who are not always actively organizing at their own workplace, but union campaigns waged by the workers themselves are the core of what we do. That

means you need to organize in your own workplace or get a job somewhere where you can organize, and push your Fellow Workers to do the same.

**3) Supporting Each Other.** Organizing is tough. There are often setbacks and things rarely go as planned. That's why it's important to support and help each other get through the difficulties we face while organizing. If there is no one with organizing experience in your branch, then get plugged in to networks of organizers in your industry from across the country. The greatest strength of our union is the enormous wealth of experience that Wobblies have in the class struggle.

Those are some general ideas. Here are a few specific proposals to strengthen the IWW in these areas:

**1) Build More and Better Branches.** The General Administration should create an updated manual on building IWW branches and set up a funded commission to fast-track the chartering of new General Membership Branches (GMBs) and Industrial Union Branches (IUBs) across North America, and help members who are seeking to revive stagnant GMBs. This commission would be made up of members who have experience successfully building GMBs and can help new branch-builders overcome the pitfalls of building the IWW from scratch in their area. In addition, branches could integrate themselves more fully into the IWW by making sure they have liaisons to the Organizing Department, International Solidarity Commission, General Defense Committee, and other union-wide bodies.

**2) Build Regional Networks.** Begin building stronger regional IWW networks with email lists and regular face-to-face conferences in each area of the continent. It is exciting to feel that we are part of a growing movement. Also, this will help cross-pollinate good ideas between branches. In the Twin Cities, we have started an email list to put us in more frequent communication with other branches in the area. The connections we had established over the last year helped us respond effectively to the situation in Madison, Wis.

**3) Build a Corps of Trainers in Each Branch.** The Organizing Department has been a major success story for the IWW. Let's build on that success by establishing a corps of trainers in each branch in the IWW to cut down on the time and expense of sending trainers to different cities to do trainings. This would also help ensure that the most important lessons of organizing are imparted to each and every branch.

**4) Build Industrial Networks.** In order to maintain a union culture that is focused on organizing, we need to develop stronger networks between workers who are organizing in the same industry. Ultimately, these networks would form the basis of Industrial Unions. They could also conduct industry-specific recruitment, much in the same way the Starbucks Workers Union has recruited amongst Starbucks workers. Also, building networks of workers in the same industry across geographic areas could allow us to spread "best practices" in different types of organizing campaigns between branches more easily.

If we implement these ideas, I think we have a chance of building 40-50 functional branches of 100-200 members in the next five years with networks of workers ready to take on industry-wide organizing campaigns across North America. An IWW of 10,000 Wobblies is within reach. This would position us to initiate bigger and badder organizing campaigns than ever before, bringing us one step closer to One Big Union of all workers. Whether you agree with these specific proposals or not, it's clear that we stand on the cusp of making substantial gains in building our organization and increasing the power of the working class. It's time to think big and it's time to act.

## 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.

I will study its principles and acquaint myself with its purposes.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Post Code, Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

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

# Two Concepts For IWW Organizing: Industrial Unionism And One Big Unionism

By John O'Reilly and Nate Hawthorne

*This article is the first in a series discussing the themes of the One Big Union and Industrial Unionism. We believe these themes are relevant to the future of our organization. Through these articles, we hope to push for a discussion about possible ways forward for the IWW and how we can get from where we are to where we need to be to build a new society. We welcome replies, whether in print or sent to us in private at [crashcourse666@gmail.com](mailto:crashcourse666@gmail.com).*

The question "how do we best organize the working class?" has been on the minds of many of our members recently. Our organization is small, but we have made great strides towards creating a model that builds power for working people.

We have one of the best member training programs in any union in North America and Europe, we are building solidarity with working people's organizations in our communities and around the world, and we are continually raising our own bar by taking on and winning bigger fights with bosses. As we continue to build the IWW, sometimes the ideas we have about how our organization ought to function come into conflict with the way that our organization actually functions. These conflicts require us to develop our ideas about revolutionary unionism in the long-term and in our day-to-day activity.

In this article, we reflect on ideas that have been around in our organization for a long time: One Big Unionism and Industrial Unionism. Reflecting on the relationship between these ideas and how they relate to our organizing can help clarify both our thoughts and our actions. By understanding how these ideas both overlap and conflict, we want to set the stage for a larger discussion about our organization.

One Big Unionism is the idea that guides us in the work of building the IWW as a revolutionary organization. It is a way to think about the organizing work that we do and the reasons we do this work. The One Big Union is the idea that we want the entire working class to be united to act in our interests as a class and against capitalism. The united working class must cross geographic, cultural, and industrial boundaries, be democratic, and be able to coordinate and marshal the forces of workers against the united power of the bosses and their rule over our lives and communities.

We in the IWW believe that the working class needs to be unified to fight the battle for economic democracy. We are One Big Unionists because we are committed to uniting all workers across industries and crafts and because we believe work under capitalism shares basic, fundamental similarities. While we do different kinds of work, we have the same basic role in the economy: we're the people that make our society run but who have no power over how it is run. One of the most important lessons that we have learned in the last few years in our organizing is that because we all occupy the same place in the class system, the basic framework for organizing workers does not change depending on what kind of work they do. Regardless of craft or industry, the basic skills and tools and techniques of organizing are pretty much the same. We organize by talking with workers, asking questions, building relationships with them, getting them to build relationships with each other, having frank discussions about the problems they and we all face under capitalism, building solidarity as a group, and taking action to fight the boss. These basic elements of our approach to organizing, based on our commitment to the revolutionary principle of

One Big Unionism, come from the fact that all workplace organizing uses basically the same set of skills and practices that any working person can learn and do.

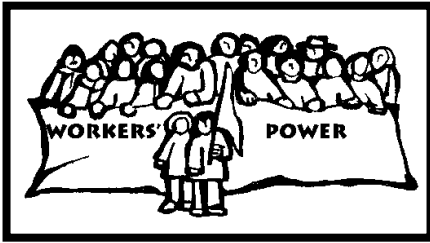
Industrial Unionism, on the other hand, is the idea that we need to build labor organizations connected to each other logically based on the way that the modern economy runs. By organizing unions in this way, we can strengthen our power across connected industrial chains. While One Big Unionism is a set of principles that guides our work, Industrial Unionism gives us practical suggestions about how to best implement our ideas and win when we fight the bosses.

Industrial Unionism is understanding how we carry out our principles in action. Industrial Unionism is fundamentally about how to build and exert power in the most effective way possible

in the near future. Organizing along the supply chain amplifies our power: a union of agricultural workers, food processing workers, truckers, and fast food workers in one chain has more power against the employer or employers on that chain than organizing all the fast food workers in one city. Industrial Unionism builds upon the strength of workers whose jobs are related as way to win fights. We use these fights to win membership to our union and use our membership to win these fights.

If we de-link One Big Unionism and Industrial Unionism and only pursue one of them, we become lopsided. If a branch or a group of organizers focus too much on One Big Unionism, they build bodies and activities that only work to build class consciousness, or worse, only gather together people who have already become class conscious through experiences outside the IWW. Class consciousness is important, but consciousness alone does not fight or build organization. By thinking only in the One Big Unionist model, we are unable to shape our world and build industrial democracy because we have no power. There's no way to stage and win fights in specific shops if we are everywhere at once; leaflet a Starbucks on Monday, talk to truckers on Tuesday, a hospital workers' forum on Wednesday...by the end of the week, we have not made progress in building shop-floor organizing in any one of those workplaces. Plus, if we overstress the idea that all workers are fundamentally the same, we will miss the concrete differences that do exist right now between shops, crafts, and industries and make them distinct: demographics, legal rights, concentration, forms of oppression, etc.

The other side of the coin is equally important. If we focus too narrowly on Industrial Unionism, we get cut off from the revolutionary idea that forms the basis of the IWW: all workers, as workers, are fundamentally in the same place in relation to the capitalist class and therefore can and should organize together to make improvements today and end capitalism tomorrow. When branches or groups of organizers focus only on one industry without seeing how all workers need to participate in the work of building the IWW, we lose our ability to learn from workers in different industries, from their successes and failures, tactics and ideas. Many of the best lessons implemented in our most active campaigns were learned from other IWW campaigns across a variety of industries. Additionally, turnover and firings associated with our union drives mean that if we only look at one industry, we will lose our members who change jobs. In the low-wage sector where many of our current campaigns are taking off, many workers move between different industries very quickly. Finally, if we only focus on Industrial Unionism, we lose our ability to turn workers into Wobblies and miss the big picture of our organization, a



## WOMEN WORKERS' HISTORY

### CHAPTER 44 National Women's Trade Union

To encourage and assist women workers in organizing, veteran organizer Mary Kenney O'Sullivan (Chapter 38), female labor activists and middle-class supporters initiated the National Women's Trade Union League in 1903. For years the only voice of working women, the WTUL lobbied for progressive legislation, trained women, and assisted in strikes and organizing. Many women workers became organizers and leaders in their unions during the first few decades of the Twentieth Century, thanks to the WTUL.

Born during an American Federation of Labor convention, the WTUL benefited from AFL funds and support. But relations between the two organizations were often strained. The league wanted to see AFL hire women organizers (one was, briefly), and place women on the AFL executive council (the AFL said no). And there were big differences of opinion over legislation.



Given the many difficulties facing working women, the WTUL pushed for progressive legislation that would improve their conditions. The league supported minimum wage legislation, believing that working women deserved a "living wage." The AFL opposed a statutory minimum wage. The WTUL endorsed a system of national unemployment insurance, labor protection laws and a labor party. But not the AFL. And the WTUL refused to back the racist Alien Exclusion Act (aimed at Asian immigrants) -- which the AFL supported.

Graphic: Mike Konopaeki

united working-class movement fighting to not only for a better life for ourselves under capitalism but also fighting to end capitalism and replace it with a better society.

Within the IWW as a living organization, One Big Unionism and Industrial Unionism should be linked together as ways of thinking about our organizing. The balance of the two allows us to build our organization and move our class forward. One Big Unionism allows us to visualize a united working class and sets our sights on organizing all workers. It's a vision of association which thinks about how more workers can be organized and work together for our class, as a class. It is the idea that all workers have interests in com-

mon as workers, have interests opposed to employers, and includes a commitment to building a new society to replace capitalism. Industrial Unionism is a vision of short-term conflict, expressing our commitment to creating the most effective organization possible for accomplishing goals. Industrial Unionism is about building an effective means to challenge the bosses' power under capitalism.

Only by carefully balancing the perspectives of One Big Unionism and Industrial Unionism can we push forward the work that needs to be done. Our organization has great ideas about how to organize and why, it's up to us to implement them and build up our class.

## Australian Wobblies Celebrate Anti-Conscription Movement

From the Melbourne Protests Blog

As has been the tradition in previous years, there was a protest to the “official” Anzac Day events in Melbourne, Australia on April 25. The traditional Anzac (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) Day is a national day of remembrance. This year, the protest took on the form of a celebration of IWW success in defeating attempts to introduce conscription during World War I. The gathering was held at the 8 Hour Monument across the road from Trades Hall, which is currently adorned by banners promoting the annual Comedy Festival and anti-nuclear messages.

In addition to some spirited singing of, amongst other things, (a modified) “I Walk the Line,” Jeremy of the Melbourne IWW read a selection of poems by Lesbia Harford. Additionally, members of Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group (MACG) circulated a statement entitled “End the Anzac Myth,” which follows:

### A Myth is Born

On April 25, 1915, Anzac troops stormed a Turkish beach at Gallipoli and were mown down by the defenders. They hung on until January 1916 before evacuating. It was an ill thought out attempt by the British to knock the Ottoman Empire out of World War I. Between 1914 and 1918, 9.6 million soldiers and 6.8 million civilians died in this clash of two rival imperialist alliances, each out to conquer territories and markets from the other. The soldiers and civilians died, not for freedom or democracy, but for the power and profits of their ruling classes. In Australia, Anzac Day has become a foundational myth for nationalism and militarism. The undoubted sacrifices of the troops are used to sanctify both the Australian military and Australia’s imperialist wars.

### Militarism is Brutality

This year, Anzac Day occurs in the midst of a series of scandals involving Australian military personnel. The Skype scandal involves a female soldier unwittingly being broadcast to a group of male soldiers while having sex. This has released a flood of other complaints, some current and some from decades ago, about beatings, sexual assaults and other examples of abuse. Even an independent Member of Parliament, Andrew Wilkie, has been



**IWW on Anzac Day.** Photo: melbourneprotests.wordpress.com

drawn in. Military forces around the world are hotbeds of such abuse and misconduct; they both attract many brutes and turn many soldiers into brutes. It cannot be otherwise, since the military requires not human beings but obedient killers.

### Imperialism on Franchise

The United States is overwhelmingly the most powerful country in the world, with the largest economy and a military which dwarfs all others. With that power, it dominates world affairs, maintaining a world order favorable to it (though not to the same extent as in previous decades). This domination is known as imperialism. Australia supports the United States in maintaining this order and, in return, gets to dominate East Timor and the South Pacific. It is effectively a franchise arrangement and the franchise fee is Australian participation in Uncle Sam’s wars across the region, regardless of either the justification or the direct relevance to the national interests of Australian capitalism.

### Workers of the World, Unite!

There is an alternative, a path to peace, to a world without the violence of war and the brutality that it breeds in order to produce soldiers. As workers, we need international solidarity for the daily fight against global capitalism. Without it, we are played off against each other country by country, in an endless race to the bottom. With it, we can sweep away nationalist myths and stand as comrades across national borders. And it is this internationalism that will enable us to build a global movement and have a workers’ revolution that spreads around the globe. We can establish a world society of libertarian communism and put an end to imperialism, militarism and war. Then, and only then, can we have peace.

- Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group, April 25, 2011

## IWW Work People’s College Event A Success

By FW John O’Reilly

On Saturday, April 16, IWW members and friends enjoyed a day of free educational talks in the new union office in South Minneapolis, Minn. The event was organized by the Work People’s College Committee—a project of the Twin Cities IWW branch—and promoted ideas and conversations about different important themes that working people are facing today. Over 60 people attended the talks through the course of the day, and many members took away important lessons and invaluable conversations.

Class topics included an update and discussion about the current struggles faced by pro-democracy movements in the Middle East and Northern Africa, a panel featuring organizers working in the low-wage sector and a talk about the importance of the strike as a tactic for workers. Members of the Madison IWW branch came to help lead reflections about the movement for a general strike in Wisconsin and explain where the situation stands today. Throughout the day, Wobblies talked and showed a characteristic dedication to educating one another and themselves.

Event organizer Kieran Knutson said that the purpose of the event was to reactivate the educational arm of the Twin Cities IWW and to try out the format of an all-day program. Participants listened to talks and panels, but audience participation and discussion was a key part of the event’s success.

“The most exciting part of the day was the opportunity to hear fellow workers’ thoughts on broad issues and analysis that



**Twin Cities Wobs in March.** Photo: Diane Krauthamer

we don’t often get the time to talk about in business meetings,” said FW Knutson.

The Work People’s College Committee also comes out of an older IWW educational body. The name comes from a labor school that the IWW ran in northern Minnesota for several decades.

“The original Work People’s College helped educate and train working-class activists and organizers,” FW Knutson said. “We are trying to root ourselves in that tradition,” he added.

The Work People’s College of old, located just outside of Duluth, was a center for worker’s education and IWW ideas and tactics and ran off the strength of the Finnish unionist movement of the Iron Range.

Today, the efforts of the Twin Cities Work People’s College Committee are centered on the modern-day need for workers to educate ourselves about our movement and our world.

There are plans to evaluate and reflect on the effectiveness of the Work People’s College event. If post-event considerations are positive enough, plans may be made to host another in upcoming months.

## Solidarity With Jimmy John’s Workers



Photo: Seattle IWW

**The Seattle IWW showed solidarity with the IWW Jimmy Johns Workers Union on April 23, showing support for the union and sending a big “screw you” to management. We took up a collection in advance and tipped the staff.**

## Obituary

### Remembering Hazel Dickens, 1935 -2011

By John Pietaro

The high lonesome sound that touched so many, so deeply, could only have been born of both strife and fight-back in equal proportions. Singer/guitarist Hazel Dickens’ sound was probably about as high and lonesome as it got. The soundtrack of “Harlan County USA” introduced her to the many outside of the country home she remained a visceral part of, even long after she’d physically moved on. Dickens didn’t just sing the anthems of labor, she lived them and her place on many a picket line, staring down gunfire and goon squads, embedded her into the cause.

She was born on June 1, 1935 in Montcalm, W.Va.—one of the faceless towns dotting Appalachian coal country. Her father was an amateur banjo player who worked as a truck driver for the mines and ran a Primitive Baptist church each Sunday. Here was where Hazel first began singing, unaccompanied out of necessity and the laws of tradition. But the devotional songs melded with the mountain tunes and ballads, creating a unique personal style. Bearing a rough, at times coarse timbre, her voice eagerly reflected the broken

topography about her as well as the pains of poverty in her midst. In a family of 13 residing in a three-room shack, the music was far from distant symbolism for her.

At age 16 Dickens relocated to Baltimore where she encountered Mike Seeger on the still fledgling folk scene. Seeger, working alongside his parents Charles and Ruth Crawford Seeger in the Library of Congress Archive of American Folksong, began performing with the Dickens family trio, but it was Hazel’s association with Seeger’s wife Alice Gerrard that offered notable opportunity for impact on the music. The duet of Hazel and Alice recorded original compositions and deeply explored the feminist archetypes in Appalachian song. Dickens was sure to not only raise issues such as the need for equal pay for women workers, but to actively fight for these on and off stage. Among the titles she penned were “Working Girl Blues” and “Don’t Put Her Down, You Helped Put Her There.” She also composed the noted “Black Lung,” which called on the miners’ plight back home. Like Aunt Mollie Jackson before her, Dickens was able to capture the struggle of the moment in

song, and this was most evident in her on-screen performances in celebrated films such as “Matewan” and “Song Catcher,” and her work on the above noted “Harlan County USA.”

The union cause was her cause and it lived anew each time she conjured a topical song set to a melody that sounded as old as the ages.

A clear heir to the Appalachian stylings of Aunt Mollie Jackson and Sarah Ogan, Dickens became a respected figure and was a featured singer at folk festivals for decades. Since the 1970s, Dickens had performed with a wide array of musicians including Emmy Lou Harris, Elvis Costello, Linda Ronstadt, Mary Chapin Carpenter and Rosanne Cash. In 2007 she was inducted into the West Virginia Music Hall of Fame. Dickens was active as recently as March when she was seen attending the South By Southwest Festival in Austin, Texas. Hazel Dickens died of complications of pneumonia in Washing-



Photo: theculturalworker.blogspot.com

ton, D.C. on April 22. In the blackened crawlspaces of West Virginia’s mines the lament was a deafening silence as the mountain peaks seemed to bow in solemn reverence.

This piece originally appeared on April 25, 2011 on <http://theculturalworker.blogspot.com>.

## May Day 2011

# Richmond Wobs March For Immigrants, Workers

By Kenneth Yates, Richmond IWW

Organizing began this year for May Day in Richmond, Va., with some anticipation surrounding a dozen or so pieces of anti-worker and anti-immigrant legislation.

One bill in particular, House Bill 2332, would have given Virginia State Police the authority to ascertain citizenship of suspected individuals. Just like the racist anti-immigrant legislation passed in Arizona in 2010, Senate Bill 1070, the possibility would be left to the discretion of the state police in whether or not individuals are profiled and arrested based solely on the color of their skin.

Fortunately, this bill, along with others concerning immigration, was killed in February by a special Senate Committee called the “Kill Bill Committee.”

Passing such legislation would have undoubtedly determined the focus of this year’s May Day, and transformed a day of celebration into a full-blown protest. And although a battle has been won, organizing must continue in Latin American communities with the goal of building a grassroots network of immigrant workers and organizations who are capable of taking a more direct and offensive approach to racist legislation and exploitative employers.

As May 1st approached, our organizing became more focused on acquiring commitments and endorsements from community organizations, student groups, labor unions, faith-based groups, and other radical and progressive organizations.

Although this process is growing increasingly more fluid as May Day becomes an annual event in Richmond, comrades in the African-American community have rightfully made the holes in our organizing apparent to us. They urge organizers to not forget the inclusion of the often marginalized African Americans, and remind us that there needs to be a commitment

made by every organizer for meaningful outreach and solidarity, not just when May Day is approaching, but throughout the entire year.

Ana Edwards from Virginia Defenders for Freedom, Justice & Equality stated at one point that “May Day should be viewed as a bookend on a year of organizing,” and that is exactly our goal. Organizing with the intent of articulating the intersectionality of each of our causes will only make our movements stronger and more effective.

Entering the last few weeks before May Day, the coalition ran into a snag surrounding a permit to march, transforming a May Day rally for workers’ rights into a battle for free speech.

The Richmond Police Department informed us that in order to acquire a permit to march, we would first need to pay for at least two off-duty police officers and their vehicles, at a cost of \$294.

The coalition, along with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), sued the city on the grounds that a limitation of one’s ability to express their right to free speech and freedom of assembly based on whether they could afford the presence of police escorts is a violation of the U.S. Constitution, not to mention extortion.

“Nowhere in the city code does it say that Richmond police have the authority to assess fees on parade organizers,” said ACLU of Virginia Legal Director Rebecca Glenberg. “The police cannot arbitrarily impose costs on individuals exercising their First Amendment rights.”

The city argued that it was an issue of public safety, to which we argued that as working people, we have already borne the expense of public safety through our tax dollars. We further argued that:

“We find it redundant and unnecessary to pay extra for public safety at a peaceful demonstration. Apparently, the



Members of the Richmond IWW march downtown on May Day. Photo: Jennida Chase

Richmond Police Department believes taxes pay only for the security of people who keep their mouths shut and continue shopping.”

In the end, a federal judge sided with the Richmond Police Department and denied our permit to march in the street, forcing participants to legally limit their rights to the sidewalk.

The Richmond May Day Coalition released a statement which outlined our efforts to inform participants of the possible legal repercussions that may follow if they decided to take to the streets, which included the following:

“While we believe the sidewalks are not the safest, least disruptive or most practical place for us to demonstrate, the members of the Organizing Committee intend to abide by all traffic and safety laws. Any necessary adjustments to accommodate our group on the sidewalk shall be made, but this is a diverse and

large group, so it is impossible to guarantee that all parade participants will follow our lead. All we can do is make every effort to advise participants of the restrictions the [Richmond Police Department] has placed on their rights.”

When all was said and done, May Day 2011 in Richmond witnessed participation from approximately 300-350 people, in what resulted in a spirited rally and a march through the streets and sidewalks of the city. Two-thirds of the march’s participants took to the streets of their own accord while parade marshals, volunteer medics and cop-watch activists made sure people were safe.

The No BS Brass Band led the parade and laid the rhythmic foundation for an ever-so-appropriate chant of “Whose Streets? Our Streets!” as we took Broad Street—a three-lane thoroughfare on the way to our destination. There were no incidents and police made themselves sparse.

## May Day In Vienna, Austria

By Benjamin Fasching-Gray

Wobblies in Vienna began the day with a picnic, meeting comrades from the anarcho-syndicalist social workers union, Libertäre Initiative Sozial Arbeitender (LISA), in a public park. Despite the cold rain, we broke bread and sang along to a CD of Utah Phillips and other fighting union singers. Fortunately, the sun came out in time for the May Day parade, which drew attention to the precariousness of work for migrants, temporary workers and others. Together with some 2,000 other activists, we marched through working-class districts waving IWW flags.



Photo: wobblies.at

## NYC Wobs March On May Day

By the NYC IWW

Members of the New York City IWW marched with thousands of workers from Union Square down to Foley Square for the annual May Day march and rally. This year, the Wobblies joined the May 1st Coalition for Worker & Immigrant Rights and The Labor Rights, Immigrant Rights, Jobs for All Coalition for a joint march and two rallies.



Photo: NYC IWW

# Union Workers And Immigrants March Together On May Day

Continued from 1

In some places, such as Milwaukee, immigrants and union workers—particularly teachers and other public-sector workers—joined together in a march of approximately 25,000 people. This unity unfortunately did not occur in every city. In Minneapolis, unions did not come out to join immigrant workers and the rallies were much smaller. In Los Angeles, the annual May Day march was smaller than in recent years; however, the march did bring out 3,000 car washers, along with restaurant workers and day laborers, who joined with unionized teachers, service employees and building union members. The Los Angeles May Day marchers chanted, “This is California! This is not Arizona! This is not Wisconsin!” and demanded immigration reform, an end to deportations and the separation of immigrant families, and union rights for all.

In other cities, such as Madison, Wis.—the heart of the recent struggles by public-sector workers to protect their rights—May Day demonstrations were

larger than in previous years as immigrants, public-sector workers and other workers joined together. Along with the speeches, a company of firefighters played bagpipes at the May Day rally. In Vermont, marchers used May Day to demonstrate in favor of the new single-payer health care bill and against the move by many Vermont state senators to exclude immigrant workers from eligibility for participation in single-payer healthcare coverage.

Around 2,000 Vermont workers—including nurses, farm workers, teachers, and IBM workers—marched on the state capitol in Montpelier to protest in favor of creating a universal healthcare bill without exemptions for immigrant workers.



Flyer for May Day 2011 in NYC. Graphic: infoshop.org

In Philadelphia, the independent security guards’ union at the Philadelphia Museum of Art celebrated May Day with the signature of its first contract after a four-year struggle for recognition by the museum. This is the first time that the museum’s security guards have had a contract since the early 1990s, when former Mayor Ed Rendell privatized the city’s museum security force through the use of private security company workers.

The new May Day contract raises guards’ wages by 14.5 percent, which increases their pay to \$10.88 an hour. The contract also gives the security guards a grievance procedure and seniority system.

Many May Day marches in different cities carried flags from all over the world,

as well as U.S. flags and peace flags. Some more radical marchers—socialists, communists and anarchists—carried red, black or red-and-black flags at demonstrations and marches. Many unions also marched with their banners, including members of the IWW.

It is important to keep in perspective that a lot of the issues discussed in the mainstream media—such as the stripping of public-sector workers’ rights in the Midwest and attacks on immigrants in Arizona and elsewhere—are not isolated problems. Both conservatives and socialists in Europe, as well as left-wing and right-wing governments all over the world, are implementing similar repressive measures that both Democrats and Republicans are implementing in the United States.

These are long-term fights that will not be easily fought or won. However, workers and activists seem to be rediscovering their May Day roots in the United States, and hopefully this trend will continue.

With files from Labor Notes.

May Day 2011

# “Beautiful” May Day In Western Australia

By Richard Titelius

On a beautiful sunny day, 4,000 workers, families and friends gathered to celebrate the international day of solidarity with the working class for the annual rally and march in the port city of Fremantle, Western Australia (WA).

Overall, the number of participants was down from previous years. However, a few of the blue-collar unions, including the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, Communications Electrical Plumbing Union, Australian Manufacturing Workers Union and Maritime Union of Australia—who have over the past few years marched under the grouping called “Solidarity”—were able to increase their numbers from previous years.

The working-class masses came to gather in solidarity to celebrate the victories and recall some of the struggles of the past and the heroes of the working class, whose unwavering commitment spurred workers on to achieve better wages and conditions—including a safe and healthy workplace. These men and women includ-

ed fighting communists such as Susannah Pritchard, Vic and Joan Williams and Paddy Troy. The latter’s daughter, Hazel Butorac, was the keynote speaker for this year’s May Day rally.

Butorac spoke of her father as a man “who lived life according to his ideals of world peace, decent wages and safe working conditions and free speech,” the last of which he went to jail fighting for.

Troy was most well known as the secretary of the Rivers and Harbours Workers Union, and later in the 1950s helped to establish the state branch of the Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union, the forerunner of today’s United Voice—the WA branch of the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union.

“In 1936,” Butorac continued, “Paddy Troy was sacked from his job as a rigger and safety officer at the Youanmi gold mine in the Murchison district for calling the industrial inspectorate to report on the unsafe work practices at the mine, following a death of a worker. His actions were vindicated when the indus-

trial inspectorate found that it was the very practices at the mine which he had reported that had contributed to the worker’s death.” A study program has recently been launched which will award scholarships to research Paddy Troy’s contribution to workplace conditions and safety.

A body representing over 40 affiliated unions and their members, UnionsWA, participated as well. UnionsWA Secretary Simone McGurk acknowledged that the fight will need to be taken up by the union movement to the Liberal government of Colin Barnett who is seeking to re-create a Howard-era “WorkChoices” industrial relations system for the third of the workers in WA still on state-based awards and agreements.

For these workers and the rest of us



Workers celebrate May Day in Fremantle. Photo: cpa.org.au

there will be difficult times ahead not only in regard to protecting jobs, wages and conditions, but also housing, public health, education, climate change, energy and food.

United in struggle and victory the workers of the world will prevail to build a decent life for all.

*This story originally appeared on May 4, 2011 on <http://cpa.org.au>. It was reprinted with permission.*

## Remembering Haymarket

By Michael Vincent

### Haymarket Reenactment

On Saturday, April 30, numerous Wobblies were present at the site of the Haymarket riot in Chicago. To mark the 125th anniversary of this landmark event in labor history, a full-scale reenactment of the riot took place, complete with an exploding “bomb” and charging “police” equipped with cap guns and foam batons. The crowd was treated to speeches by Lucy and Albert Parsons and other important figures as the story of the riot, its origins, and its unjust aftermath unfolded from atop a makeshift cart next to the Haymarket monument. Members of the IWW also addressed the crowd. The re-enactment was organized by Paul Durica of Pocket Guide to Hell, and music was supplied by Environmental Encroachment.



“Lucy Parsons” reenactor in Chicago.



The Haymarket Memorial.

### Haymarket Memorial Rededication

The IWW was again well represented on Sunday, May 1 at Forest Home Cemetery, where a large crowd turned out for the unveiling of the newly-restored memorial commemorating the Haymarket Martyrs. After a long round of speeches from business union leaders and politicians, the black and red flag was finally removed from the monument, and the crowd sang “Solidarity Forever.” Many of the Wobs later participated in the May Day march in downtown Chicago.

Photos: Michael Vincent

## Festive May Day In Scotland

By Dek Keenan

Wobblies, friends and family enjoyed the Glasgow sun to take part in this year’s May Day march. Fellow workers from the Clydeside General Membership Branch are pictured with the Branch banner. The Branch has grown in recent months and is developing outreach plans for the summer months.

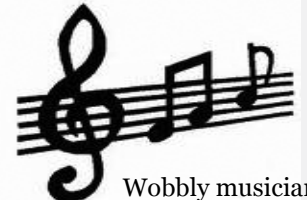


Photo: Dek Keenan

## Wobbly Music In Ontario



Photo: Matt Davidson



Wobbly musician Sean Carleton performed at the Peterborough May Day Cabaret in Peterborough, Ontario, this year. To view some of what FW Carleton has been up to, check out “Wobbly Arts” on page 9!

## West Coast Workers Picket Hotels In Solidarity

Continued from 1

the guests out of their beds a bit earlier than they were expecting and prompting a flood of complaints by guests to the beleaguered managers. Union-busting companies and guests who cross picket lines reap what they sow.

We are the room cleaners, front desk hosts, bellmen, housemen and laundry and maintenance workers who have worked at Hotel Frank for 10, 20, or even 30 years. Most of us have worked at the hotel since it was the Maxwell Hotel, and before that the Raphael Hotel. We have had a union contract for nearly 40 years. But in May 2010, Wells Fargo Bank bought the hotel in a foreclosure sale. The bank brought in a new management company, Provenance, and declared our contract null and void. Since then, it has been one travesty after another.

The room cleaners are cleaning many more rooms, often skipping their breaks out of necessity and suffering debilitating injuries to boot. Everybody works an

extra half hour per day for free. Staffing has been cut to the bone. There has been no agreement about medical coverage or pensions. And the hotel has fired union activists, including myself, and disciplined workers on frivolous and discriminatory charges. We are waiting for a decision by a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) regarding the hotel’s numerous violations of federal labor law.

All the San Francisco hotel contracts expired at the end of 2009. Since then, Local 2 has been waging a series of battles against the big hotel bosses. Recently the union won a series of contracts at the Hilton, the Westin St. Francis, the Palace, the St. Regis, the W, and the Fairmont, amongst other places.

But the situation at Hotel Frank is unique. Workers at other hotels where there have not yet been settlements are working under the terms of their expired contracts, preserving some semblance of work rules, rights and benefits, although without any raises since 2009. At Hotel

Frank, there is no contract, no rules and no grievance procedure. Nevertheless, Hotel Frank workers battle on. Local 2 is a union that doesn’t quit. We know we will win in the end. In the meantime, however, the road is hard.

Provenance, the new management company, is based in the Northwest, which is why the Portland IWW and SeaSol got into the act. In addition to Provenance’s two hotels in Portland and the one in Seattle, they also run the Hotel Murano in Tacoma, Wash., and the Hotel Preston in Nashville, Tenn.

Provenance is in turn owned by Aspen Capital. Both companies are based in Portland. The CEO of both Provenance and Aspen Capital is Gordon Sondland. Sondland sits on the Oregon Governor’s Economic Advisory Board and the Governor’s Office of Film and Television, chairing the Portland Art Museum, and serving on several corporate boards.

Last December, Wells Fargo sold the hotel to another financial speculator, AEW

Capital Management, based in Boston, Mass. AEW kept Provenance on as the management company, which has continued their anti-worker campaign unabated.

Hotel Frank workers have dug in, have stayed strong, and remain very solid and united. “This is a small group of workers facing a big bully,” said Maria Guillen of Jobs with Justice.

The hotel calls the police every time we set up our picket line, but so far the only action the police have taken is to arrest an out-of-control guest who took a swing at me.

The solidarity of workers in Portland and Seattle is, of course, music to our ears, and the support we have received from other workers and community folks on our picket lines keeps us going day-by-day.

Feel free to join us. It’s a true story—an injury to one is an injury to all.

*This story originally appeared on May 5, 2011 on <http://www.beyond-chron.org>. It was reprinted with permission from the author.*

## Industrial Worker Book Review

## You've Been Made Deaf And Blind: A Brief Look At Arab Literature

By William Hastings

In America, where our major book reviewing outlets plaster novels about upper-middle class angst all over their front pages, Arab literature is a welcome middle finger to the dilettantes praised here. What modern mainstream American writer is willing to risk citizenship, imprisonment, or their life to say what should be said? To stop making art for art's sake, but instead for the broken and lost? Certainly, the American state is slow to strip the citizenship of its writers, but that's not to say the influence of advertising dollars isn't helping to decide what the American reading public doesn't hear about. The *Washington Post*, owners of the for-profit Kaplan University, needs federal student loan dollars in order to draw students. Does that not affect what is *excluded* from the *Post's* book review pages? In light of the government's need to justify never-ending wars in the region, why would it be beneficial for American readers to find out that the subjects of Arab books have much more in common with them than they are told to believe? A Syrian cab driver working for \$60 a month in Kuwait is grinding himself to dust for pennies. That's not any different than the immigrant cabbies of Baltimore, San Francisco, or New York. To review works such as Alaa Al-Aswany's masterpiece, "The Yacoubian Building," or Nobel Laureate Naguib Mahfouz's classic, "Midaq Alley," would be to show the desperate masses in our ghettos that the ghettos of Cairo aren't much different. There has also been no coverage of Al-Aswany's latest book, "On the State of Egypt: What Made the Revolution Inevitable." This is not surprising considering that in it he writes: "Tahrir Square became like the Paris Commune. The authority of the regime collapsed and the authority of the people took its place. Committees were formed everywhere." The *New York*

## Meet The New "Industrial Strength" Editor

By William Hastings

Eric Miles Williamson will be writing a monthly column, "Industrial Strength," for the new *Industrial Worker Book Review*. Williamson is now a professor of English at the University of Texas, Pan American. A director for the National Book Critics Circle, he is also the fiction editor for *The Texas Review*, a senior editor at *Boulevard* and an associate editor at *The American Book Review*. He is the author of four books of fiction and a book of criticism. A second collection of criticism is forthcoming from Texas Review Press, "Say it Hot: Essays on Writers Living, Dying and Dead." For the inaugural "Industrial Strength" column we present an excerpt of an interview conducted with Williamson by the *Industrial Worker Book Review*, the rest of which can be found at <http://www.iwwbookreview.com>.

**Industrial Worker Book Review:** You have labored as a gunite worker, cement mason, professional trumpet player, and longshoreman amongst other things. At what point did you say "writer" and begin pushing yourself toward it? Why, when so many choose not to, did you claw your way out of destitution and struggle? How can others do it?

**Eric Miles Williamson:** I get asked variations on a theme of this question often, I suppose because it's a good question.

I never *wanted* to be a writer, never *set out* to become a writer, and, even today, with six published books and another on the way, I still don't consider myself a "writer." I'm a college professor. My university, the University of Texas, Pan-American, gives me a paycheck and benefits, not my books. What happened was this: I was a union laborer with Laborers Local Union #304 in Oakland, Calif., working as a guniter, shooting walls and ditches and so forth, when one day the foreman's son pulled a knife on me. I had

*Times Book Review* wouldn't go anywhere near that.

Not once since the Arab Spring began has any reviewing outlet in this country given focus to Arab literature. That willful ignorance reflects cooperation with official doctrine and helps to continue the manipulation of understanding and the cutting off of empathy that is required to perpetuate two endless wars. It allows the American public to continue to see Arabs as the enemy: By not reading their literature we close our ears to their voices.

In the Middle East, state censorship or control over the press has led writers, poets and playwrights to be the most forceful group depicting and commenting on the political realities of people's lives, not to mention the effects of politics on the laboring class. In doing so, these writers find themselves exiled, imprisoned, deported, assassinated or stripped of their citizenship papers. With the continued presence of dictatorships and foreign intervention, it is no wonder then that modern Arab literature is intensely political, in its best cases without being bludgeoning, and focused sharply on the downtrodden. Take for example the first great book of modern Arab literature, Taha Hussein's "The Days." In this three-part autobiography, Hussein details his struggle to rise up from poverty and blindness to become one of the first Egyptians to attend the Sorbonne. Truly the blind-seer, Hussein became a giant amongst men of letters. More recently, Ibrahim Abdel Meguid's "The Other Place" takes a close look at the rapidness of the petrodollar culture in the Arabian Gulf, focusing heavily on the desolation wrought on the migrant workers there.

While American fiction is just beginning to explore the effects of globalization, and even more recently the interactions between the Muslim world and our own, Arab literature has been exploring these

a shovel in my hand, and in my world, shovel beats knife. I clubbed him upside the head with it, and his daddy fired me. That's when I decided to go to college. You see, I'd grown up in the Oakland ghettos, and I was sick of the constant violence. I decided I wanted to go to college; to become a musician. I was a really good second-rate trumpet player. My father had played in the Oakland Symphony before he married my mother, who divorced him and reduced him to bankruptcy and ruin and a life working at a gas station, and I wanted to be a jazz musician to rebuild the family heritage.

I got to playing lots of gigs, but not the jazz I wanted to play. I played in Mexican bands: cumbias, rancheras, salsa, merengue. Then one night I was playing at a pretty good club with a pretty good band, and the band had hired another trumpeter to play alongside me, an older man named Thomas Ledesma. When he played it was like angels singing and warriors whooping at the same time. It was beautiful, and I'd never personally been alongside someone who played so well. It was then that I understood I'd never be anything more than a very good second-rate player.

About that same time my roommate at college, a now successful saxophonist named Tom Christensen, insisted I read a book he admired. I didn't want to read the damned thing, I'd always been bad at English and bored by books, but one night I started reading it, and I was so exhilarated that I stayed up all night and finished it. The book was Henry Miller's "Tropic of Cancer." Reading that book changed my life. I couldn't believe that a writer could say things the way people *actually talked*. It was like sitting at a workingman's bar in Oakland and listening to the men crank it up after a long day at work. So I walked up the hill to the administration building and changed my major from Music to English, took a creative writing course, wrote a story, and it got published in a na-

themes for more than 80 years. It appalls one to think what things might be like had we listened earlier.

Arab literature is as diverse as the people writing it. The reflections and preoccupations of Iraqi writers are vastly different than the writers working in Egypt or Lebanon for example, though our media would have us believe Arabs are the same everywhere. But as diverse and locally focused as it can be, modern Arab literature is also marked by universal themes, struggles and outlooks. Tewfik Al-Hakim's play "The Fate of a Cockroach," while distinctly Egyptian, is a savage satire of the shallowness of government and organized religion and a meditation on man's existential isolation. Likewise is Ghassan Kanafani's novella, an utter masterpiece, "Men in the Sun," depicting the psychological and moral struggles of men forced to smuggle themselves into Kuwait for work. While offering a hard look at migrant labor, it also examines Israel's effects on the Palestinians. The book, and Kanafani's writing in general, was powerful enough to have the Mossad assassinate him.

For obvious reasons, Israel's creation looms large over the vast diaspora of Palestinian poets and writers scattered all over the world. But this diaspora has led to Palestinian writing absorbing the worldly tones of exile. This year, Mahmoud Darwish's "Journal of an Ordinary Grief," was published in the United States by Archipelago Press. The journal, one of three pieces of autobiography the Palestinian poet left behind, is a raw look at the massacres and destruction laid upon the Palestinians by the Israelis in 1948. And yet, for all its blunt force trauma, it reads in a lyrical style that marks Darwish as one of the world's great writers. Thankfully his poetry is widely available in this country.

The sheer volume and diversity of tional journal (what is now *The Nebraska Review*).

I ended up working my way through college—spending summers guniting and doing demolition while taking classes during the rest of the year. When I got my degree I went back to Johnson Western Gunite Company, and the boss took me off the site and began training me as an architect so I could bid jobs, since I knew the work from the field. But I'd also applied to graduate school in Creative Writing at the University of Colorado, and they called and gave me a full fellowship: a graduate degree for free. And the same happened at the University of Houston.

So, in a way, writing chose me. I never wanted to be a writer. Hell, I don't even *like* writing. I wrote so I could get free education. I write because I feel worse when I don't.

So how did I climb out of the ghetto? I busted my ass on the construction sites, and I busted my ass in college, out-working all the rich kids who never had to work at all because mommy and daddy were paying their tuition and living expenses. How can other people do it? Work. Work as if you're working for more than just a paycheck.

Let me tell you something though: I don't consider the life of a laborer to be "destitution." The value of labor has been devalued by our service and white-collar push in America is all. A good plumber or electrician is a more useful human being than a scumbag lawyer. What this country needs to understand is that *nothing* works properly without labor, the most dignified and necessary element in any society. A farmer is more important than a doctor. Without food, we die. Without doctors, often we do just fine.

**IWBR:** Is the lack of an educated laboring class a worse threat than broken unions? Likewise, is the laboring class defeating itself by not voraciously reaching out and

Arab literature available in translation may seem daunting, but that should be a welcome challenge to American readers. Because there is so much of it (though more needs to be translated), there is that much more to explore, that much more to glean from. Since American coverage of the Middle East is paltry at best and grossly misinformed at worst, it is more important than ever to start reading Arab literature. It is a way to disassociate from the official narrative being forced upon us, and it is a way to begin understanding these events from Arab eyes. A thorough reading of modern Arab literature will provide context for the events the American media fails to cover properly. After all, Tahrir Square, despite what it was made out to be, was not an isolated reaction to the Tunisian uprisings. Instead, it was irrevocably tied into the 2008 general strike launched by textile workers in Mahalla. And what of our continued petroleum use without questioning the cultural effects of this usage? Abdelrahman Munif's evisceration of this in his "Cities of Salt" trilogy is the long needed emetic. One could also look at Ahlem Mosteghanemi's "Memories of the Flesh" or Joumana Hadad's magazine *Jasad* to utterly destroy our false notions of Arab female timidity. Beyond all of this though, there are works in Arab literature that are hallmarks of world letters, and it is high time that they be admitted into "The Canon."

In the coming months, these books and others will receive their critical due here and on the *Industrial Worker Book Review* website, <http://www.iwwbookreview.com>, as they have been purposefully ignored for too long. Perhaps then, official narratives will be broken down and the major book reviewing outlets in this country can be shown for what they are: mouthpieces of a wealthy few, totally ignorant of the struggles of millions.

educating itself, that is, recapturing that which is being purposefully withheld from them?

**EMW:** Being "educated" has never in human history been a "right." Being minimally educated, since the onset of the industrial revolution, has been a requirement. Industrialized nations needed to have a minimally competent work force, and a work force that was civically loyal. Hence, public education was sponsored by the state. Not *great* education, but *public* education. The idea that public education should do anything more than produce responsible and competent citizens sounds like something that would come out of the mouth of a hippy.

Education is not being purposefully withheld from workers. They're getting just the minimum of what they need to serve the society. Public education isn't supposed to teach kids to read Latin, it's supposed to teach them to read stop signs. It's not a conspiracy. It's perfect.

Workers, poor people, can become educated if they want, now more than ever. The great books are available on the internet, and there are plenty of sites which inform people of which books they should read. Professors are not necessary. I'm a professor, and the only thing I actually do is direct students to the stuff I think they should pay attention to, and they could get just as much from a book or a website, often written by someone who knows much more than I do.

If a worker wants to be educated in a way that is more than the public schools offer and finds himself not educated, then it's that worker's fault. Jack London educated himself at the Berkeley Public Library. I loathe people who think an education should be *given* to them. You want an education? Read some fucking books instead of screwing around on Facebook, surfing celebrity websites, watching NASCAR, or looking at porn.



Wobbly Arts

# Blitz The Boss

By Sean Carleton, X364847

This song is part punk rock anthem and part John Brill's 1916 IWW classic "Dump the Bosses Off Your Back." It is inspired by the fight of Jimmy John's workers for sick pay and dignity in the workplace. The first verse can be changed to any issue and the rest of the song still holds together and speaks, loudly, to the need for a "lighting war" against the boss.

Tune: "Blitzkrieg Bop" by The Ramones

Verse 1

We're gonna get sick pay  
We're gonna find a way  
We're gonna take the day  
When we blitz the boss.

Verse 2

We're plotting in the break room  
Our rage is in full bloom  
We're gonna lower the boom  
And blitz the boss.

Chorus:

Hey ho, let's go - Dump the bosses off our backs now!  
Hey ho, let's go - We're all pumped up and we're ready to go!

Verse 3

We're gonna win this fight  
We'll assert our collective might  
We can even get a pay hike  
If we blitz the boss.

Verse 4

We won't accept defeat  
We're going to take to the streets  
We'll march to our own beat  
And blitz the boss.

VERSES:

G|: |779999| |779999| |779999| 777 :|  
D|:7777777|779999|7777777|779999|7777777|779999|7777777777777:|  
A|:7777777|557777|7777777|557777|7777777|557777|7775557777777:|  
E|:55555555| |55555555| |55555555| |555 5555555:|

CHORUS:

G|7777777777777777| 77 |7777777777777777| 779999|  
D|7777777777777777|7777777777|7777777777777777|5555779999|  
A|5555555555555555|7777557777|5555555555555555|5555557777|  
E| |5555 5555| |3333 |

I wish we were having a general strike! They do it in other countries.

I wish most Americans could just get into unions. In other countries they have huge labor movements.

How do you think those countries got general strikes and bigger unions? People like us have to make general strikes and build unions!



# Response To "Practicing A Solidarity With Women"

Continued from 2

both ourselves, and the situations we find ourselves in, we begin a practice of dislocating the drive for power that is endemic of the "sovereign individual" and the very basis of dominant practices.

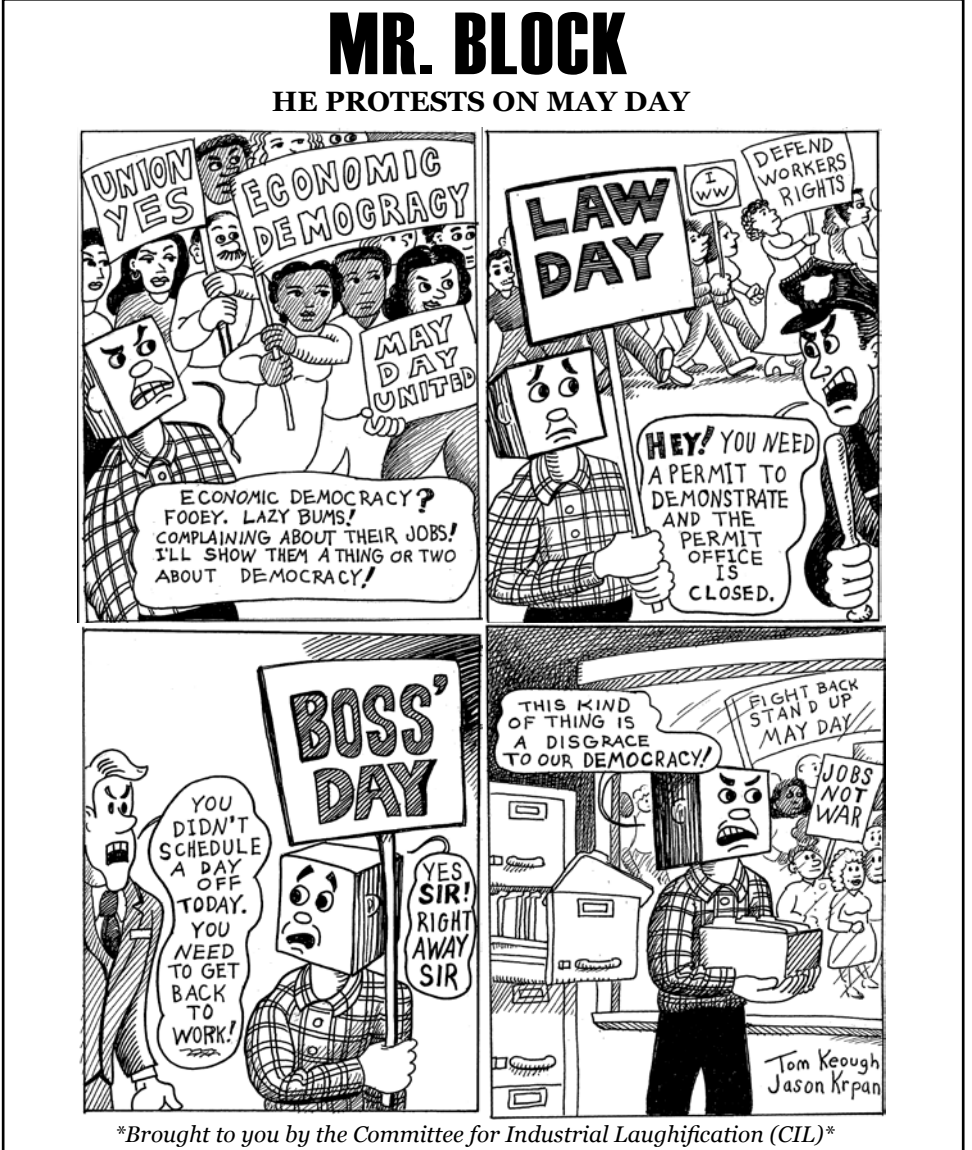
One of the brilliant things about "other"-oriented theory, such as feminist, multi-culturalist, and queer theory, is that they are integrative philosophies that resist dominant modes of thinking. At their base, they point to the bare humanity of us all in reference to cultural understandings of what it is to be in the world. This is further one of the brilliant things about the Wobblies as a union: the IWW aims to reproduce society as a series of relationships rather than an amalgamation of points of production/consumption. Boyd's argument for solidarity as a practice takes us to a point where the lines of the individual must be blurred in reference to a mutual inter-subjectivity. This is possible I think only if solidarity takes on the form of critique of the individual as the build-



ing block of society, as this same "sovereign individual" is the very point of oppressive and dominant practices in the consumer capitalist paradigm.

It is only the "individual-as-member" who can begin to make a radical critique of the very mode of dominance in the workplace (i.e., the individual as the one who bears the brunt of the bosses' brutal regimes of sexism, racism, homophobia and hierarchy). In an effort to do so, I think (with Boyd) that the fight begins with our "inner boss" and its endless need to control and dictate the terms of engagement in our interactions. In this sense the very things that make us feel safe and confident are the very things that lock us into a place. Only by seeking to engage the world can we move toward a more open perspective, can we truly begin the process of liberation from the liberal capitalist paradigm.

Solidarity,  
x371635



# The Wobbliemobile

Here's a photo/poem about Lane GMB Secretary-Treasurer Ed Gunderson to promote the "honor the earth" part of the IWW Preamble. It was written by 87-year young Dottie Neil, who also proofreads and writes a weekly column for a local paper.

## Human Propelled Rocket

Although he may sigh to express his despair as carbon emissions invade the air Ed Gunderson's not a guy to sit back and wait to let other forces determine his fate.

This Lane IWW member would often recall that an injury to one is an injury to all. He decided to take action to help clean the air and spent months in his workshop shaping the frame of a velomobile and when he attached the final wheel took a test run causing people to stare.



Photo: Gadflye

While the residents of this small Oregon town watched in amazement as the red and silver rocket raced down the streets, without using fuel moved by the strength of the drivers' legs and feet as a tool while gas consumption fell, adding cash to his pocket.

Celebration of Earth Day takes on more power in a rocket ship designed to protect drivers' from showers. Is it any wonder Ed smiles and waves at children he sees? he's helped their generation enjoy more trees.

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## Interview

## A Talk With Bernardine Dohrn

By Jon Hochschartner

An iconic figure of the New Left, Bernardine Dohrn was a leader of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the Weather Underground. She now teaches at Northwestern University Law School. She was interviewed on May 3, 2011.

**Industrial Worker:** What are your initial thoughts on the killing of Osama bin Laden?

**Bernadine Dohrn:** Well, it's hard to separate from the kind of jingoistic response in the United States, isn't it? I think that the killing of the leader of Al Qaeda at the time of the 9/11 terrorist attacks may have been justified. Or bringing him to a world court, you know, to the International Criminal Court, for war crimes, would have been justified. But I think that the triumphalism is obscene. I think the arrogance of U.S. military power is dangerous, intoxicating, narcissistic, and has nothing to do with justice. We're now in some kind of orgy that comes with the slaying of the [bin Laden] monster...It really masks a kind of growing economic weakness of the United States, and a kind of accelerating end of the U.S. empire, with a really phony notion of U.S. military power. So I think it's exactly the wrong direction. Of course, the direction we need to go [in] is something much closer to becoming a nation among nations, creating meaningful work, learning to live differently, and shutting down the—whatever it is—172 U.S. military bases abroad (*Editor's Note: the actual number, according to the U.S. Defense Department's 2009 Base Structure Report, is 716 foreign bases. However, this is incomplete as it doesn't include all the bases in Iraq and Afghanistan*). I think it's just important at this kind of time to stand for peace.

**IW:** I heard you and your husband went over to Wisconsin to protest. Do you see what happened there as a sign of the future for the right wing or a high water mark?

**BD:** Too soon to tell. It's in play. I think it's fully in play. I think that the occupation of the capitol by the nurses, teachers, firefighters, police forces and security forces, was wildly popular. The governor became wildly unpopular in Wisconsin. I think that it was a rollback of the election of the Tea Party people across the Midwest.

We'll see, but that's what the opinion polls suggest.

**IW:** Candidate Obama said that if workers were denied their collective bargaining rights, he'd "put on a comfortable pair of shoes" and join the picket line as president. Were you surprised he didn't find those shoes?

**BD:** No, I'm not surprised. He's always said he's a centrist politician. People on the right and the left don't believe him. They each think that he's something else. So, you know, that doesn't surprise me. Some things have surprised me. The turn to war and becoming a war president surprises me a little bit. But when you occupy the chair of empire, and particularly an empire in crisis—the end of late capitalism or whatever you want to call it—that's who you become in terms of your policy. That's what your job is.

**IW:** You've said the Tea Party movement could only happen at this particular historic moment. I was hoping you could explain what you meant.

**BD:** I think that one of the signs of this kind of economic crisis—which is not the first and not the last, but the big economic crisis that we're in—is the lack of a recovery at the bottom. So we're in this framework of discontent and of "Wait a minute, I was promised this..." We now have, this decade, a majority of kids entering school who are black and brown in the United States. So that changing demographic, the decline of U.S. economic power, those are all the elements that create simple solutions, and solutions that demonize some part of the population, and claim white privilege. You can't separate race from what's happening. [The Tea Party] is a white movement. It's a white, older-people movement. It's people who are clinging to a version of America that is over, if it ever existed.

**IW:** According to the *Washington Post*, half of the \$38 billion that Obama agreed to in federal budget cuts came from education, health and labor programs. Do you think this is reflective of his priorities, or



Bernardine Dohrn speaking at a Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) reunion held at Michigan State University.

Photo: Thomas Good

just his being a poor negotiator?

**BD:** I wouldn't pick either of the above. I think that he's running for reelection. He thinks that his base will stay with him. He is reaching to the middle, the people who voted Republican a year ago. I think he's wrong, of course, even in his own terms. You just had 89 disability rights activists arrested [May 2] in the U.S. Capitol building. People in wheelchairs who are protesting 35 percent cuts to Medicaid. It's atrocious what's happening. It's absolutely unconscionable. General Electric paid no taxes last year? Not a single tax dollar. We should look to these disability activists and we should take Wisconsin all the way to D.C. It's just incredible. We're just being lied to about deficits, and how

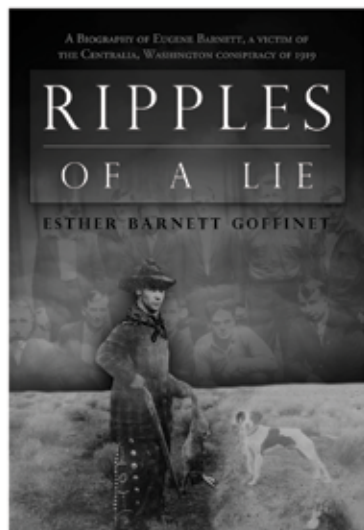
we don't have any money. We didn't have any money to invade Libya, but we didn't apparently have to have an appropriation.

**IW:** What would you say to the young, disillusioned Obama voters of 2008?

**BD:** I would say we need a peace and justice movement more than ever. One of the best things that the president said when he was a candidate was when somebody asked him whether Dr. King would support him or Hillary Clinton. He said, "Neither of us; he'd be out in the streets building a movement for justice..." It was a great answer. And it's totally historically true. Keep your eye on what we need. We need a movement for peace and economic justice just like Dr. King was building. They are tied together.

## Ripples of a Lie

The trial of the century did not involve a celebrity or well known public figure. The trial of the century centered around a man with character and integrity unmatched by most men. When the American Legion attacked the union hall in Centralia, Washington on November 11, 1919, it was the first time in history the union men fought back, leaving four soldiers dead.



Innocent and unarmed, union man Eugene Barnett stood in the window of the hotel next door, a witness who could not be allowed to talk. "We know you had nothing to do with this," the prosecutor said, "but unless you keep your mouth shut, we're gonna send you up."

Barnett had an extraordinary life through a turbulent time in our nation's history. Because of his willingness to sacrifice his life and freedom, every American has been touched by his contributions to our nation's history. Laws, beliefs and lives were transformed by his strength in doing what he believed was right....to tell the truth. This is the true story of Eugene Barnett.

Purchase signed copies of the book directly from the author at [www.EstherBarnettGoffinet.org](http://www.EstherBarnettGoffinet.org), or write to:

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Lewiston, Idaho 83501-0414

## SOMETHING TO SAY

Thoughts on Art and Politics in America

Profiles by Richard Klin

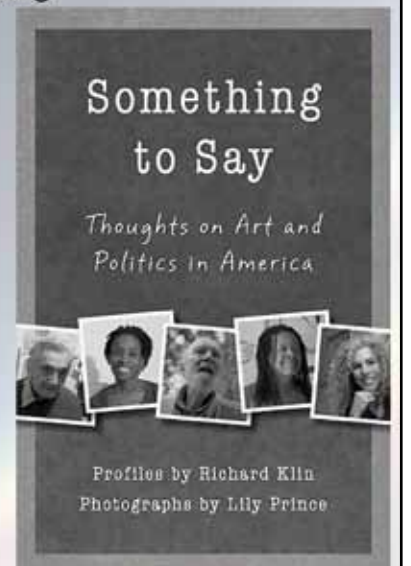
Photographs by Lily Prince

Buy at Amazon.com or from your favorite independent bookstore

The fusion of art and politics is axiomatic in much of the world. In America, their relationship is erratic. What is art in the service of social justice? Is an artist obligated to address the political? This book profiles, in words and photos, disparate creative forces who offer thoughts on their point of engagement with the political sphere. In the words of Pete Seeger, art "may save the world. Visual arts, dancing, acting arts, cooking arts. . . . Joe DiMaggio reaching for a fly ball—that was great dancing!"

Profiles in Something to Say:

- The late Howard Zinn
- Pete Seeger
- Yoko Ono
- Screenwriter Ron Nyswaner
- Palestinian-American standup comedian Maysoon Zayid
- Poet Quincy Troupe
- Dominican-American painter Freddy Rodriguez
- Filmmaker Gini Reticker
- Slowpoke cartoonist Jen Sorensen
- Performance and installation artist Sheryl Oring
- YA writer Jacqueline Woodson
- Chef and food activist Didi Emmons
- Poet and art critic John Yau
- Punk-rock activist Franklin Stein of the band Blowback
- Klezmer fiddler Alicia Svigals



# World Labor Solidarity

A COLUMN BY THE  
INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY COMMISSION

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

## Message To Cuban Comrades: You Are Not Alone

The ISC has signed on to support the following statement and continues to work with fellow workers in Cuba in building solidarity and union autonomy.

### You Are Not Alone

The Communist Party of Cuba's VI Congress has just closed with an endorsement of the liberal reforms ("to each according to his labors") promised in the realm of the economy, but along with these liberal reforms come cuts in social services and an increased presence for military and for technocrats in the machinery of government, along with a reduction in the presence of intellectuals and workers.

In terms of rhetoric and deeds alike, efficiency, control and discipline replace equality, solidarity and partnership. Against this backdrop, we have indications of a crackdown in the cultural realm, heralding yet another setback to Cubans' exercise of their fundamental freedoms. Performing artists find their names blackened by cultural officials-turned-censors engaged in frantic campaigns across the length and breadth of the country peddling false rumors and spurious accusations against them. A prestigious Cultural Theory Center finds its facilities and equipment being sabotaged again by "thieves" who forget to take anything and whom the authorities cannot seem to identify and punish. Poets and community activists are visited by police personnel who threaten to haul them before the courts as "counter-revolutionaries" and to leave them to the mercy of the "people's wrath," demonstrating that said wrath is not "of the people" nor independent of the powers that be who direct it.

Damage to social property, defamation and physical and psychological bullying (and violence) are not only offenses punishable under legal codes the world over—Cuba included. They are also considered acts of State Terrorism. For decades, the Cuban people have given their best efforts to their children and to the world in order to build up a fairer country with universal, high-quality culture, health and education despite the irrational and begrudging bureaucracy that always depicted the people's gains as its own creations. Are the repressiveness and lying of such "apprentice Stalins" to go down in history as the features by which the Cuban process is to be remembered, rather than the day-to-day heroism of the Cuban people? This is not justice.

But if we are to ensure that this is not the case, then, from below and from the left, we must banish the silence and the self-censorship that underpin the impunity of the censors; we should abandon the belief that we should never open ourselves up to the charge that we are allegedly "playing into the enemy's hands." The people who today are finding their integrity and their jobs threatened by these actions of the Cuban authorities are deserving of our utter respect, for we have seen them at close quarters in a range of different times and circumstances. They are not, as the official propaganda line has it, hirelings of the CIA, as they just about subsist on the same dismal income as the vast majority of the Cuban people. When they go on trips, they spend their meager savings on publicizing their humanistic creations and on the purchase of the materials they need in order to carry on with their efforts on behalf of a more cultivated country with greater freedom.

Whatever help they get from us (in the shape of DVDs, art equipment, or the proceeds of modest fundraisers) represents solidarity from us, male and female workers, artists and students who, in our own countries, resist the neo-liberal, authoritarian policies of the capitalists and their gendarmes in Seattle, Washington; Mexico City; Paris; Caracas, Venezuela; San Francisco; and Buenos Aires.

What a contrast between our comrades and the bureaucrats comfortably traveling the world in "Solidarity Drives" paid for with the Cuban people's money, bureaucrats who defect to Miami at the earliest opportunity and parade their repentance on TV as "freedom fighters"! What a contrast with certain "friends of Cuba" intellectuals who, naively or for hire, mistake the ideals of the Revolution for the policies of the Cuban state and deny to our Cuban comrades the very rights that they demand (and indeed, sometimes, enjoy) under their own bourgeois democratic regimes! The difference in quality, in terms of handiwork and spirit, from those "licensed reformists" who are ready to treat every wheel and turn of the Cuban regime with a fresh coat of theoretical gloss and to indulge in abstract (pseudo) critiques, as long as this suits the powers that be.

Our Cuban comrades' only sin is that they have the effrontery to contemplate (and change) their reality without waiting for promises from the Nanny State or Capital's siren songs. They believe in a fuller life, in a community where the unhindered growth of each individual is the precondition and measure of the unhindered growth of all. Dialogue with, and lessons learned from, our other worldly struggles, from piqueteros to Zapatistas, have broadened their horizons and also allowed us to learn from their historical record of mistakes and popular resistance. They represent the liveliest, most splendid bequest of the Cuban Revolution, which refuses to perish despite the canker of bureaucracy. They are (in body and soul) young Marxists, anarchists, libertarian socialists, followers of Marti, humanists, feminists, ecologists, and communitarians—but, above and beyond any such labels and descriptions, they are decent folk who have risked their lives in the service of others. For this reason we shall not allow them to stand alone.

We know that the forces of domination are mighty, that they control the billy clubs and cyberspace, punishment and reward, the intimidated and the paid retainers. But we possess the sense of shame and hope against which—as popular anti-imperialist rebellions around the globe can testify—despotic power cannot stand. Hopefully there may be, in the minds of the censor and the policeman, some lingering memory of the original commitment given to the Cuban people that hoisted them into power. But if not, we are ready to launch the mightiest solidarity campaign using every resource available to the law and to progressive public opinion worldwide.

We know our enemies are on the alert. Let them have no doubt of this: SO ARE WE.

Signatures of supporting groups:

AK Internationalismus der IG Metall Berlin (section internationaliste du syndicat, Berlin) (Germany); Asamblea Libertaria del Vallés Oriental (Catalonia); Ateneo Arte y Cultura de l'Escale de l'Alt Empordà (Catalonia); Biblioteca Popular

## Unions Strike Against Austerity In Greece

By John Kalwaic

A strike by thousands of Greek workers occurred in Athens against austerity measures in early May. The main union, the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE), as well as the communist-led All-Workers Militant Front (PAME), launched a general strike against the measures proposed by the government. Hooded youths engaged in riots and threw petrol bombs. The austerity measures are a result of European Union-International Monetary Fund bailout that was given to Greece years ago. This loan money runs out in 2013.



Photo: flickr.com/photos/mediactivista

## Inmates At Canadian Prison Create A Union

By John Kalwaic

Inmates at a prison in British Columbia have formed a union. The prisoners in the Mountain Institution in Agassiz, B.C., are trying to form the Confederation of Prisoner Labor Union, Local 001. Prisoners are often extremely exploited and make less than the minimum wage. Prisoners in the Agassiz Prison generally make between \$5.25 and \$6.90 per day, and they have not had a pay raise in 25 years. Last December in Georgia, prisoners went on strike to

demand a living wage for their work. The Georgia prison strike brought different racial, ethnic, and religious groups together, as well as rival gangs. Unfortunately, the warden put the prisoners on lockdown and the strike ended. In Canada, these prisoners are the first to form an official prisoners' union. Natalie Dunbar, the lawyer for the prisoners, said the administration was trying to resist the formation of this unique union, which could set a precedent for the rest of Canada and other countries as well.

## Report From The Critical Observatory In Cuba

By the Critical Observatory Activist Network

The following is a short article describing the emerging networks within Cuba which are working to connect various autonomous movements on the island, including (but not limited to) collectives of artists, workers, academics, activists and educators. The ISC has been in communication with fellow workers in Cuba and continues to offer our support and solidarity for their efforts.

March 26 kicked off the 5th Cuban Social Forum in the working-class Havana neighborhood of Cocosolo. The forum was convened by the Critical Observatory Activist Network.

In the headquarters of the self-managed community project Cocosolo Social Club, 60 social activists, writers, artists, cultural promoters, professors, researchers, journalists, bloggers and community leaders met to dialog about the Cuban and global reality from revolutionary and critical perspectives. They also worked to formulate proposals about emancipatory social change. The forum also hosted the International Anti-Capitalist and Emerging Social Trends Working Group, a part of the Latin American Social Sciences Council (CLACSO), and the Living the Revolution Workshop.

Topics discussed during the first day included the political agenda around gender and LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) issues; local development; changes in the economic model of Cuba; institutional responsibilities and procedures vs. self-organization and liberty; self-management and cooperatives;



Photo: Critical Observatory Activist Network  
Activists engage in the social forum.

the social use of the internet in Cuba and the impact of new technology in the culture, blogs, audiovisual and media space; the culture of violence and competition; mental health; education; and the use of genetically modified organisms.

For the first time, this annual meeting, previously organized by Critical Observatory, was self-managed. The conference transcended the narrow framework of an academic event on critical and socio-cultural research. Organizers have worked intensely to meet the objectives laid out in the first Critical Observatory, which took place in 2006 and included the creation of an activist network supportive of autonomist projects and the gradual transformation of the annual convention into a real social forum.

The first day of the forum culminated with a hip hop concert by the Eskuadrón Patriota project.

For more information, write to: [Grly-Flynn@gmail.com](mailto:Grly-Flynn@gmail.com) or visit: <http://observatoriocriticoesdecuba.wordpress.com>.

Libertaria "Mauro Mejiaz" (Venezuela); Bre@king Borders/Rompiendo Muros (United States); Confederation National du Travail - C.N.T. Le Havre (France); Confederación Nacional del Trabajo - C.N.T. (Spain); Colectivo Actores Sociales (Mexico); Colectivos Agentes de Cambio (Nicaragua); Colectivo A les Trinxeres - (Catalonia); Colectivo Editor de El Libertario (Venezuela); Colectivo Feminista Josefa Camejo (Venezuela); Colectivo Passapalavra (Brasil)- Coordinación anarquista de Le Havre - (France); El Bloque Anarquista - F.L.L. - (Mexico); Equipo Editorial de Insurrectasy punto (Argentina); FALCLC (Federación Anarquista - Comunista llibertària Catalana) - (Catalonia); FAU Alemana (Freie Arbeiterinnen Union-AIT) (Germany); FAU (Federación Anarquista Uruguaya) (Uruguay); Federation Anarchiste - FA (France); Forschungs- und Dokumentationszentrum Chile-Lateinamerika e.V. - (Germany); Frente Anarquista Organiza-

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