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It Started In Wisconsin: Labor Fights Back Across The U.S.

By Diane Krauthamer

When public school teacher Kathy Ponzer started protesting state budget cuts in February, she didn't think she would be igniting a mass labor movement. But when she heard that the state would be taking away her rights and the wages and that she, her three children and her fellow teachers need in order to survive, she knew she had no choice but to fight this battle.

"Most of us make less than \$50,000 a year. We're not living the fat life, we're just making a living," she said. Now, Kathy is protesting recently-passed legislation that imposes severe budget cuts and strips workers of collective bargaining rights, amongst other things. "It is going to hurt everybody," she said.

On March 11, Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker signed into law a "Budget Repair Bill" which strips public-sector unions of collective bargaining rights regarding all workplace issues other than basic wages. With the new legislation, workers will not have a legal say in their pensions, their healthcare plans, workplace safety, or

any other issue. Walker says the bill is estimated to save \$30 million to help pay down a \$137 million budget deficit, but the cuts are being taken directly out of the public sector. Workers, in turn, will be paying off the deficit out of their own pockets.

Walker unveiled his budget repair bill on Feb. 11, 2011. In the days following, unions and public workers mobilized opposition to the bill, and by Feb. 15 large-scale protests took place, with thousands of demonstrators occupying the Capitol and millions more holding solidarity rallies in cities throughout the country. On Feb. 17, the situation escalated as 14 senate Democrats fled to Illinois to block passage of the bill. In order to pass any fiscal-related measure, 20 senators are needed to make quorum, and the remaining eight Republicans could not fit the bill. In the week that followed, massive protests continued with demonstrators and support spreading throughout the world.

Continued on 6 The IWW joins more than 100,000 protestors on March 12 in Madison, Wisconsin.



Miners Protest Against Outsourcing In Western Australia



Western Australian miners march in Perth. Photo: Mike Ballard

By Mike Ballard

There's a mining boom going on now in Western Australia (WA). Billions of dollars are being made by Rio Tinto and

India.

On March 15, between 5,000 and 10,000 workers marched five kilometers from the Perth Esplanade up through

BHP Billiton, a global mining, oil and gas company headquartered in Melbourne, Australia. BHP uses workers to extract minerals, iron ore, natural gas and oil from the rich deposits which lie in the WA soil and off the state's coastal waters. Once the workers get these natural resources out, they have to be shipped to various countries—mostly to China, Japan and

the center of the city to the WA Parliament building to protest the outsourcing of jobs in the natural resources industry. The month-long organizational campaign demanded government action so that large resource projects did not contract out manufacturing and construction work overseas. Of course, the capitalists—who own the natural resources and the collective product of the workers' labor—wish to receive the highest rate of profit possible. This means contracting out a lot of the work which Western Australians could do. In fact, as union leader after union leader verified in their speeches to the demonstrating workers, everything which *can* be contracted out, *is* being contracted out. What they didn't say is that this is being done so that the multinationals can maintain the highest rate of profit. At the demonstration on March 15, the union leaders were essentially asking the

polytricksters to pass laws so that WA workers would be the first considered for such work and that such work be kept within Australia.

On the steps of the WA Parliament building, they were knocked back by the Liberal Party Premier Colin Barnett. The Liberal Party essentially represents the right-wing of Australian Capital Territory, along with its further right junior partner, the rurally-based National Party of Australia. Eric Ripper, head of the Labor Party (the left-wing of Capital), came out on the steps of Parliament and gave the workers an empty promise of putting forward legislation which would require the capitalists to give reasons why they export and contract out jobs. The elephant in the demo-room is that the capitalists already have given the reason why they contract out as much as possible to countries where workers'

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Solidarity With Fired Whole Foods Worker

By X359217

Like an increasing number of other corporate food retailers, Whole Foods enforces its "time and attendance" policy with a stringent point system that allows management to fire workers for arriving to work just minutes late. Needless to say, this is not a popular policy amongst Whole Foods workers.

Many of Whole Foods' best workers have been put on final notice as a result of this policy, which workers believe to be unfair and impractical, often despite the fact that they have given years of great service and hard work. More significantly, workers with families, including single mothers, have been fired due to one-minute time-clock infractions. Compounding workers' troubles further, it is not uncommon for Whole Foods to challenge these fired workers' unemployment benefits.

In response to this situation, a solidarity group calling itself "Friends of Tom" took action at a Whole Foods in San Francisco in support of their recently-fired friend, Tom Camilleri.

They made it known that Tom was a well-respected worker whose firing had fueled strong criticism from workers toward management. They also argued that Tom deserved better treatment from the world's leading "socially responsible" corporate retailer.



Photo: Friends of Tom

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Is Shlomo Sand Teaching Junk History?

Fellow Workers:

It is hard to know where to begin criticizing Mike Ballard's review, "Understanding Zionism, Judaism And 'Mythistory,'" which appeared on page 8 of the December 2010 *IW*. If Ballard's review correctly represents what Shlomo Sand wrote in "The Invention of the Jewish People," then the book is junk history whose arguments, claims, and conclusions would be subscribed to by few conversant with the subject.

- A thread running through the entire review is the claim that Judaism is illegitimate because the modern-day Jews are not the genetic descendants of the ancient Jews. Aside from the monstrosity of making a racial argument, the charge is a false one. The history of the Jews is a continuous one going back to Abraham. Ballard/Sand would have us believe that, since Judaism has always been enriched by the accession of converts, the accretion of new genetic material has swamped the old blood line. In fact, conversions to Judaism are normally individual acts in which one person at a time joins him- or her-self to the existing Jewish people—hardly a genetic swamping. Converts have always

been welcomed and honored; one of the 18 benedictions of the Jewish daily prayer services includes thanks to God for, among other classes, "righteous proselytes." Famously, Ruth, the heroine of the biblical book of the same name, is a Moabite who joins the Jewish people and becomes the ancestress of King David (and according to the genealogy in the Christian scriptures, Jesus Christ as well). The two great exceptions to this are the forced conversion of the entire Edomite people by the Hasmonean king of Judea, John Hyrcanus around 150 B.C.E. and the accession of the Khazars, a Tartar-speaking semi-nomadic Turkic people of central Asia, to Karaite Judaism (a venerable Jewish heresy) by the decision of the Khan (or king) around 850 C.E. Ballard/Sand would have us believe that these two very different events, occurring a millennium apart from one another with nothing like either happening in between, mark the beginning and end of the Jewish age of proselytism. I'll return to Sand's claims regarding the Khazars later.

- Dismissing biblical accounts as "stories" and the generally accepted history of Judaism as "myth," Sand denies that most Jews were expelled from the Land of

Israel by the Romans in the wake of the Bar Kokba revolt of around 125 C.E. In fact, the Jews were always desirous of being independent and practicing their monotheistic religion which was difficult as their land fell under a succession of pagan empires—the Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and finally Roman. Resisting the efforts of the Romans to impose their pagan standards and government, the Jews rose in a series of three titanic revolts: the Jewish War (circa 65-70 C.E.), the revolt of the Jews in Cyrenaica and Cyprus about 25 years later, and the largest, the Bar Kokba revolt (125 C.E.). These required Rome to mobilize the entire strength of its empire to suppress them—efforts that took years of campaigning. In the course of the last revolt, large numbers of Jews were massacred or sold into slavery while most of the others were expelled from Judea; the land was systemically destroyed, forests and fruit trees cut down, towns obliterated, and farms wrecked. While some Jews had spread over the Roman and Parthian empires in earlier times, it was this mass expulsion that resulted in Jews living all over North Africa, the Middle East, and

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The Railroad Industry And The Need For One Big Union

By Rail Falcon

Since the mid-1990s, the major U.S. railroads (“Class Is”) have been hiring new trainmen to staff the nation’s freight trains. Passenger carriers such as Amtrak, together with various metropolitan commuter railroads in cities like New York, Boston, Los Angeles and Chicago, are also regularly seeking employees. This offers an invaluable opportunity for young activists to hire out in an industrial setting and make some money, all the while: learning about the transportation industry; working under and understanding a union contract; becoming familiar with the great history of the class struggle on the railway; taking part in the rank-and-file movement of railroad workers; and joining with your fellow workers to build the One Big Union in a key sector of the economy.

The recession has eased and nearly all furloughed railroaders have been called back to work. The railroads are once again hiring in terminals all across the United States and Canada. Their websites are flush with job openings in all the crafts, especially in train and engine service. Since everything to do with personnel on the railroad is seniority driven, NOW is the time to hire out so you don’t get left behind and have to follow a crowd of others for your entire career.

For those who would hire out in “transportation,” the new hire usually begins work as a brakeman or conductor trainee. After a specified period of time and the requisite tests, the new hire is promoted to conductor. Then at some point in the future, depending upon seniority and the needs of the carrier, the conductor will be selected to attend engine school. Following an extended on-the-job training that lasts six months to one year, s/he will be promoted to licensed locomotive engineer. If “train and engine” is not your scene, the railroads are also hiring—although not as regularly—track maintainers, train dispatchers, signal maintainers, car inspectors, clerks, electricians, machinists, laborers and others in

the shop crafts.

All “train and engine” (T&E) jobs are union jobs, paying between \$30,000 and \$100,000 per year with full benefits. Union membership is obligatory upon successful completion of a probationary period of usually 60 to 90 days upon “marking up.” The T&E employee has a choice of joining the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen (descendent of the oldest craft union in the United States) or the United Transportation Union (UTU), an amalgamation of four old craft unions that merged in 1969—the Switchmen’s Union of North America (SUNA), Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen (BRT), the conductors’ union (OCA) and Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen (BLF). Dues usually range between \$70 and \$120 per month. Most locals and divisions hold regular monthly membership meetings.

Railroad workers have a proud and militant tradition. National strikes that have rocked the United States include: the country’s first nationwide and general strike in 1877; the 1894 Pullman Strike and boycott led by Eugene V. Debs and the American Railway Union; the National Shopmen’s Strike in 1922; and the post-World War II national strike in 1946, which together with the miners, briefly brought the nation to a standstill. In addition, countless other smaller strikes on a single carrier and/or by a single craft have taken place over the last 150 years.

In the 1860s and 1870s, the various crafts on the railroad began to organize into “brotherhoods.” These organizations came into existence initially to assist their members in time of hardship. Railroading was, and of course still is, an extremely dangerous and difficult job, and the brotherhoods pooled the resources of their

memberships to assist members and their widows in times of disaster. They quickly evolved into fighting organizations to defend their members’ rights, safety and health, wages, benefits and conditions of employment. However, their fragmented nature and narrow vision limited their effectiveness. Eugene V. Debs, a leader of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen (BLF), together with other railroaders soon realized the shortcomings of the railroad craft unions, and proposed a new form of union—the “industrial union.”

They set about the task of building the nation’s first such union—one based upon inclusion of all members of all crafts into its ranks—the American Railway Union (ARU).

Within a year after it was founded in 1893, the ranks of the ARU had swelled to well over 100,000 members. Railroaders were joining at the rate of 2,000 per week at its peak. In its first test of strength, the new union took on the Great Northern Railway and the powerful railroad tycoon, James J. Hill (whose name is forever immortalized in the song “Hallelujah I’m a Bum”: “That’s why I’m a boomin’ down Jim Hill’s mainline”). Within two weeks, the ARU had brought the “Empire Builder” to his knees. The strike ended in near total victory for the workers. The power of industrial unionism had been proven. Just a few short months later, the ARU took on the Pullman Company. In solidarity with the striking workers at the Pullman Works just south of Chicago, the ARU called for a boycott of handling Pullman cars. ARU members refused to handle them in their trains. This direct action was so effective that the strike was sure to be won. In response, the carriers, Pullman and the U.S. government conspired to break the strike,

destroy the ARU and arrest and imprison its leaders. With the ARU decimated, the carriers turned their attention to negotiating with the brotherhoods. While most of the robber barons would have preferred to operate in a strictly non-union environment, they began to see the advantages of dealing with the weak and divided craft unions of the day. By 1926, the Railway Labor Act, which institutionalized labor-management relations on the railroad and remains the model in use to this day, was signed into law with the support of both craft unions and carriers.

Through mergers and affiliations, the myriad craft unions on the railroad have now been pared down to “only” 13 or so. Some are affiliated with the AFL-CIO while others are now part of the Change to Win Coalition. The infighting and backstabbing, union scabbing and sweetheart deal-making continues, alternating between periods of truce, merger or attempted merger of the various organizations. In this environment, it is extremely common to hear talk among rank-and-filers of the need for One Big Union, one union of all crafts, one union to represent all railroaders. Even the leadership will invoke such sentiment (between their name-calling, bashing, scabbery, and backstabbing) from time to time, such as the UTU’s “Power of One” slogan during the attempted merger with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLE) in 2000-2001, and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT)’s Jimmy Hoffa with the “Teamster Umbrella” notion and the rhetoric of a “seamless union in transportation.”

It is in this context—the long and militant tradition of railroaders; the experience of industrial unionism, Eugene Debs and the ARU; the colorful history of direct action; and the glaring short-comings of craft unionism at its absolute worst—that the ideas of the IWW are more vital and relevant than ever on the railroad. The Wobblies shunning of electoral politics, reliance on self-help and direct action, the notion of the industrial union, the concept of “an injury to one is an injury to all,” the general strike—all this plays well among workers on the nation’s railroads. Railroaders today are looking for answers beyond the narrow confines of their own increasingly irrelevant craft union. They want an organization with strength and power, one capable of taking on the huge corporations, the modern day “robber barons.”

Corporate profits on the railroad today are at record levels. All through the recession—even while employment levels and tonnage handled were down by 10 to 20 percent—the major carriers have been flush with cash. Yet even while they rake in the money, the carriers are pushing for expanded use of Remote Control Operations and single-employee operation of freight. They are making concessionary demands at the bargaining table in wages, benefits and working conditions. The craft unions are not able to effectively stand up to this bullying and harassment that the carriers are meting out, not just at the bargaining table, but on a day-to-day basis in the field, where discipline is at an all-time high.

All members of the IWW who are looking for work should consider joining the struggle and hire out on the railroad. The major Class I carriers are hiring trainmen and others regularly at most rail terminals all across the country. To learn more about hiring out, check out the Railroad Retirement Board Website at <http://www.rrb.gov> and click on the link “Railroad Job Vacancies” on the lower right side of the home page. Scroll down and then check the links to the various railroads’ websites. Current jobs are listed on each site with directions of how to submit your application and resume online.

For more info. about the railroad, rail unions, the movement for rail labor unity, hiring out, training, or other questions, please write to railfalcon@yahoo.com.



Graphic: Ned Powell

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**.

Direct Action? Who Cares!

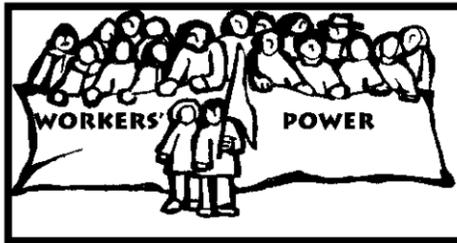
By Nate Hawthorne

The old slogan goes “Direct action gets the goods!” This is sometimes true, it depends. Obviously, not all direct action gets the goods. That is, direct action is not a guarantee of success. Just as obviously, sometimes people get the goods without direct action. Direct action is not the only guarantee of success. It’s undeniable, though, that in some settings direct action really is the best route to success. Sometimes direct action really does get the goods.

But who cares? Who wants goods anyway? Let me put it another way. I used to argue for non-contractual workplace organizing, or “solidarity unionism” as we usually call it, in the following way: If you’re strong enough to get a good contract, you don’t need to go for a contract. If you have the organization to get what you want via a contract, you can get it without a contract. Good contracts that contain real gains are the result of good organizing. You get a good contract when you have a dedicated, well-organized group of workers with good tactics and strategy. If you have all that, what do you even need the contract for?

The basic perspective here is that you don’t need recognition or a contract—you can get just as much or perhaps even more without it. That’s false in at least one important sense. One of the things that goes along with contracts and recognition is an agreement that limits (or, an agreement to limit) the struggle. In the United States, the National Labor Relations Act (or the Wagner Act) explicitly argues for unionization as a way to maintain labor peace. No strike clauses and similar things express this idea as well. That agreement is worth something.

Imagine two different groups of workers in contract negotiations with their employers. Imagine that there is basically no difference between these groups, their work, and their employers. One group of workers wants a contract that does not contain a no-strike clause. The other group is not concerned with that. Other than this difference, the groups are basically the same: well organized, serious, etc. Let’s say they both succeed. All things being equal, the group that gets a contract with-



out a no-strike clause will probably come out with less other gains. The group with the no-strike clause will probably have a contract with more other gains. That is to say, the no-strike clause is worth money. Refusing it will come at a cost; accepting it will come with benefits.

The IWW is a radical union. As radicals, we are generally motivated by morals and emotional impulses that make us care about other people—that’s part of why we’re radicals. Of course, we want people to have better lives. But people having better lives is only sometimes an issue for radicals. Radicalism is not simply “we want people to have better lives.” There are non- and anti-radical ways to get better lives, for some people.

My point is that “getting the goods” is not the most important goal. If asked why we should we focus on direct action, our answer should not be “because it wins more stuff, more often.” Not only is that not always true, even if it was true that would not be sufficient to recommend it.

Let me try another hypothetical example. Imagine that the global economy recovers in a big way. Prosperity is the new order of the day. A rising tide begins to life most boats. There are increasing opportunities for electoral politics and in the United States, National Labor Relations Board elections begin to genuinely improve many people’s lives. In that case, we could “get the goods” in a variety of ways other than direct action. Would this change how we orient toward electoralism and recognition? I would say no, because our main motivation is not getting the goods. We don’t just want more under capitalism. We want a different type of society.

In order to get to a new society, we want more people to be class conscious and committed to creating a new society. We should not care about direct action because it gets us goods. It doesn’t always, and besides, with the time it takes to organize, people could probably get more goods by putting that time into a part-time job. We should care about direct action because direct actions moves more people closer to class consciousness and commitment to having a new society.

Working Family Part-time Workers Vital To Organizing Drives

By X348328

Part-timers, especially those who work at home or off-site, are often sidelined by the boss—and by union organizers. This type of worker is becoming more and more common every year. In 2009, part-timers made up 24.7 percent of the Australian workforce; 19.1 percent of the Canadian; 21.9 percent German; 23.9 percent United Kingdom; and 14.1 percent of the workforce in the United States. We’re talking millions of workers.

Part-timers are a complex bunch of workers with many reasons for working part time. There are part-timers who want to work more but can’t get a full-time job. According to 2009 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) numbers, in Australia this group makes up 32 percent of part-timers; 27.6 percent in Canada; 8.3 percent in Germany; 5.8 percent in the United Kingdom; and 8.1 percent in the United States.

Organizers need to understand what is motivating the rest of these workers to choose part-time work, and how this impacts union organizing drives and post-

unionization solidarity.

For a lot of part-time workers, the main reason they choose part-time work is family. School hours or daycare availability are forcing families to choose between the expense of after-school childcare, or full-day daycare, and one parent working part-time hours. Maternity leave, particularly in the private sector, is short and underpaid. Paternity leave is even shorter. Both types of leave are often frowned upon by bosses. Parents going back to work sometimes find themselves punished or pushed down the ladder for taking the leave.

Personally, I went from a full-time to a part-time job. Another co-worker and I proposed a job share, but the boss said no. It was only when his superior insisted the position be filled until a replacement could be found that I found myself back on the payroll as a part-timer.

Being a part-time worker, splitting my time between the office and home, I found myself often disconnected from my boss and my co-workers. From an organizing



WOMEN WORKERS' HISTORY

Chapter 42 'The Most Dangerous Woman in the Country Today'

America's most famous labor organizer was born Mary Harris in Cork, Ireland in 1830 and emigrated to the United States as a child. As a young woman she worked as a convent school teacher and later opened her own dressmaking business. She married George Jones, a union iron molder, in 1861; six years later her husband and four small children died in a yellow fever epidemic. Disaster struck again when the great Chicago fire of 1871 destroyed her dressmaker's shop.

Mary Jones joined the Knights of Labor. “From 1880 on,” she wrote in her autobiography, “I became wholly engrossed in the labor movement.” Mother Jones was nearly sixty when she started organizing for the United Mine Workers of America. In northeast Pennsylvania's anthracite coal fields, she organized miners' daughters as well as the men, leading a 1901 strike of Scranton silk mill workers.

MOTHER EARTH,
MOTHER NATURE,
MOTHER LABOR...



Mother Jones's first arrest came on June 20, 1902, as she was discussing a coal strike at a miners' meeting in West Virginia. The prosecuting attorney declared in court, “Your Honor, there is the most dangerous woman in the country today. She called your honor a scab. But I will recommend mercy of the court if she will consent to leave the state and never return.” Mother Jones retorted, “I didn't come into court asking mercy, but I came here looking for justice. And I will not leave this state so long as there is a single little child that asks me to stay and fight his battle for bread!”

Graphic: Mike Konopacki

perspective, it was difficult to keep up-to-date. I found out about major incidents in the workplace weeks later, reducing my ability to agitate or respond to the boss effectively.

From a worker's perspective, I found it easy for the boss and co-workers to ignore or forget my advice and views. On my day in the office, I had to choose between doing work and keeping in touch with the staff. Repeatedly, I found myself excluded from decision-making that I had a stake in. People forgot to call or claimed that they felt “uncomfortable” calling me at home. In effect, my co-workers needed to learn how to work with a part-timer, who was working from home, and no one was there to train or support them in how to do it. Who would have thought that working with part-timers was a skill?

In short, the working conditions were difficult because of my invisibility, despite my best efforts. To be heard, I had to be direct and vocal—and that often meant that I had to act alone.

Organizing committees need to listen to and engage part-time workers. Yet, it is

easy for organizing committees to disparage or deny their importance. Part-timers are hard to identify or contact, which makes it difficult to assess their interest, or recruit them into a drive. Part-timers' lack of responsiveness may be interpreted as disinterest or not caring, or even not doing their part. I've heard all of these reasons before, so I know the bias is there.

The challenge for an organizing committee is to find out the “what” behind the behavior before discounting the interest or commitment of part-time workers. Their isolation makes them difficult to reach for organizers. However, isolation also makes it easy for the boss to turn to the part-time worker when faced with concerted action in the workplace, to do extra work from home or do others' work, in order to undermine solidarity.

There are no half-votes in certification drives. Each employee gets a vote, regardless of how many hours they work. Organizers should ensure that their campaigns get part-timers to vote union and find ways for them to participate in the life of the union, for everyone's sake and solidarity.

Call For Solidarity In Appalachian Mountains

By Jasper Conner

There has been a long history of working-class rebellion in the coal fields of Central Appalachia that has included some of the most militant and bloody union struggles in our country's history. One moment in that long history was the Battle of Blair Mountain, where in 1921 over 10,000 miners rose up in solidarity with their fellow workers in an effort to break company control over southern West Virginia. These miners took up guns and fought for the freedom of their fellow workers while wearing red bandanas as a symbol of the class war that they were fighting. Today, Appalachians proudly call themselves "rednecks" in remembrance of this history of rebellion and militancy.

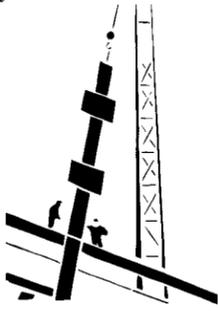
The coal companies are seeking to obliterate this history by mountaintop removal (MTR). MTR is a mining practice developed to lay off workers and to externalize environmental costs onto the local communities which experience increased flooding, poisoned water, and a loss of the very mountains that define home for so many. MTR is a mining practice that Appalachians are fighting against in the coalfield communities of east Kentucky, east Tennessee, southwest Virginia, and southern West Virginia.

The Blair Mountain Coalition is mobilizing to defend the history of Appalachian workers, and of the entire U.S. labor movement. We invite all IWW branches to be

a part of the March on Blair Mountain to abolish mountaintop removal in Appalachia, strengthen labor rights, and invest in sustainable job creation for all Appalachian communities. The event will consist of a five-day march from Marmet, W.Va., to Blair Mountain in Logan County, W.Va., beginning on June 6, 2011. Participants will march ten miles a day, and evenings will consist of workshops, cultural festivities, and music. On the sixth day, June 11, a large rally will be held in Blair, followed by a march to the crest of Blair Mountain where culminating activities will occur.

The owning class has taken our benefits, our wages, our rights as workers, and now they're after our history. We invite all IWW branches to endorse the March on Blair Mountain, and encourage endorsing branches to reach out to other unions and organizations in your area to defend the history of working class rebellion. We believe that this march can be a uniting moment for the labor and environmental movements to press forward against the current atmosphere of reaction, and we hope that all IWW branches will join us.

For more information on the March on Blair Mountain, including how to endorse, visit <http://www.friendsofblairmountain.org/march-on-blair-mountain/endorse-and-support> or contact Jasper Conner at 540-598-7552, or by email at jasperconner@gmail.com.



Graphic: Ned Powell

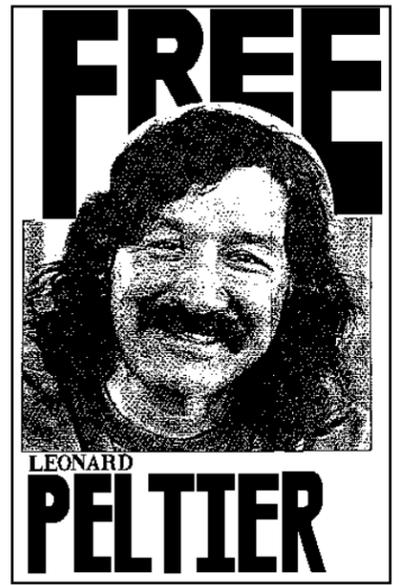
Support Political Prisoner Leonard Peltier

From the Tacoma IWW and the Leonard Peltier Defense/Offense Committee

At two different IWW General Conventions, resolutions in support of Leonard Peltier were passed. Over the years many Wobblies have actively supported Leonard. In that spirit, the Tacoma General Membership Branch of the IWW has endorsed the May 21, 2011 Regional Leonard Peltier Clemency March and Rally. It begins at 12:00 p.m. at Portland Ave. Park (on Portland Ave. between E. 35th & E. Fairbanks. Take Portland Ave. exit off I-5 and head east), and marches to a 1:00 p.m. rally for justice at the U.S. Federal Court House, located at 1717-Pacific Ave.

We call on you as sisters and brothers to join us as we send the message: We will not give up! We will not surrender! We will continue to stand for justice for Leonard Peltier and for justice for all that he represents for as long as it takes to set him free! Our strength is building and time is on our side, the sweep of justice is moving throughout the world and we are a part of that great wave of truth and justice.

Leonard has been in prison since 1976 for a crime he did not commit. Leonard is an American activist and member of the American Indian Movement (AIM) who was convicted and sentenced to two consecutive terms of life imprisonment for "aiding and abetting" the murder of two Federal Bureau of Investigation agents during a 1975 shootout on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. His health has gotten bad and he needs all of us now. This



Graphic: nativeamericannetroots.net

clemency campaign may be Leonard's last chance to be freed. We request help from our fellow workers in getting the word out about the march. Using email lists, websites, Facebook and just sending the appeal to your friends, groups and organizations, will help a lot. We need to make this march as large as possible to show others that there is support for Leonard Peltier.

For donations: Please make checks out to the Leonard Peltier Defense/Offense Committee (mark them for "NW March") and send them to: Tacoma LPDCC, P.O. Box 5464, Tacoma, WA 98415. Join Tacoma LPDCC on Facebook at: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/profile.php?id=100002154914197>.

Correction: The Real Matilda Rabinowitz

By the Industrial Worker

In the special IWD piece, "Celebrating A Rich Tradition Of Women In The IWW: They Weren't Kept At The Back, So They Went To The Front," which appeared on page 7 of the March 2011 *IW*, we mistakenly published a picture from <http://upstateearth.blogspot.com> which claimed the woman in the photo was Matilda Rabinowitz. Matilda's granddaughter contacted the *IW* and said that was not his grandmother, but supplied us with this photo of Fellow Worker Matilda. The *IW* apologizes for this error, and hopes that readers will remember Matilda as the spirited Wobbly who appears here.



Photo: provided by Robbin Henderson

IWD In Australia



Photo: Anjilene Phoenix

IWW members Aaron Gremlin (left) and Mike Ballard (right) demonstrate in Perth, Australia on International Women's Day, March 8.

The Joe Hill-gården

By Monika Vykoukal

A museum since 1971, this small house in old Swedish town of Gävle, about one-and-a-half hours north of Stockholm, is where Joe Hill lived with his mother and siblings from 1880 until he emigrated to the United States in 1902. The permanent exhibition about Hill's life ranges from school photos to his last letters home. Joe Hill-gården is also an active cultural center, hosting events such as the annual music and poetry festival "Rebel Voices."

All donations to this free, independent museum are very much appreciated. For more information, see the website (Swedish only): <http://www.joehill.se>.



Photo: Joe Hill-sällskapet

Obituary

Remembering Teacher, Writer & Labor Activist Bob Fitch

By Jane LaTour

Dr. Robert J. Fitch, or Bob Fitch, died on Friday, March 4 at the age of 72. Born in Chicago on Dec. 27, 1938, Fitch was a graduate of the University of Illinois with a bachelor's degree in history. After military service in the Intelligence Division of the 82nd Airborne Division, U.S. Army, he received his master's degree from the University of California at Berkeley. His dissertation, "The Political Economy of New York City: Space, Class and Power, 1958-1992," earned him a doctorate in sociology from the State University of New York (SUNY), Binghamton.

His career traveled two paths—teaching and writing. He taught politics, sociology and economics to thousands of students, including those at Long Island University, New York University, Empire State College, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Brooklyn College, and, until his death, LaGuardia Community College. In 1984, he served as Visiting Critic at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design. After his book, "Who Rules the Corporation?" was translated into Japanese, he taught business history at Chuo University, Tokyo in 1985 as a visiting professor.

Whether writing about colonial Africa ("Ghana: End of an Illusion," 1966, co-written with his ex-wife, Mary Oppenheimer), capitalism ("Who Rules the Corporation?" 1978), city politics and planning ("The Assassination of New York," 1993), or labor ("Solidarity for Sale," 2005), Fitch sought to analyze power relations and to provide an analysis of institutions. He produced a prodigious amount of scholarship on a wide range of subjects. His essays and articles appeared in numerous publications, including *Ramparts*, *the Village Voice*, *The Nation*, *Working USA*, *New Politics*, *The Baffler*, *Newsday*, *Tikkun*, *Washington Post Book World*, *the New Left Review*, and others. His essay, "Planning New York," which appeared in "The Fiscal Crisis of American Cities" anthology in 1977, provides a classic analysis of the 1970s fiscal crisis.

His independent, critical analyses earned him both enemies and acolytes. Rank-and-file trade unionists sought his advice, and he lent his skills as investigative journalist, skillful editor, and organizer, to many of their efforts. He devised a set of "hard rules for hard hat writers" and contributed articles and served as consultant editor to the

New York Hard Hat News. A formidable orator, he characteristically began every speech with a witty remark, usually self-deprecating. During the mid-1980s, he was a union organizer for Local 802, American Federation of Musicians. His passions included art, architecture, classical music, history and politics, Chicago—including the Cubs and the Bears—and his adopted home, New York City.

Always a Marxist, his life was devoted to independent scholarship. From an isolated, often lonely perch on East 17th Street, he took on giants and allied himself with the working class against the forces of power, privilege and wealth. He was a dear friend and will be deeply missed. Fitch was scheduled to participate on two panels at the Left Forum in New York City, and was excited about a new manuscript, which he described as knitting together



Bob Fitch spreading his wisdom. Photo: provided by Jane LaTour

his work on urban politics, labor and the Left. A memorial ceremony in Manhattan is planned for May.

Cause of death was a pulmonary embolism and heart attacks, suffered in connection with a broken leg, which developed blood clots that traveled to his lungs. He is survived by his beloved mother, Josephine Fitch, his step-father, Marvin "Bud" Fitch, sister, Laurel Gillette of Los Angeles, and brother, Jonathan Fitch, of Washington, D.C., along with nephews and nieces.

Fighting Back: From Wisconsin to the World

It Started In Wisconsin: Labor Fights Back Across The U.S.

Continued from 1

By Feb. 23, the South Central Federation of Labor (SCFL), a federation of over 97 labor organizations representing 45,000 workers, endorsed to educate and prepare for a general strike—a resolution which the IWW played a key role in endorsing. As the people of Wisconsin continued to mobilize, so too did the politicians. At 1:00 a.m. on Feb. 25, the Republicans in the state assembly outnumbered the Democrats and abruptly voted to pass the bill, with Democrats and protestors chanting “Shame!” as they exited the chambers. Massive demonstrations followed, yet the remaining senators unanimously passed a resolution finding the missing 14 Democrats in contempt, threatening to layoff and arrest them if they returned back home.

On March 9, a committee stripped some financial elements from the budget repair bill—a maneuver which Republicans said made it legal for a vote to occur even though no Democrats were there—and the Senate passed the bill. Finally on March 10, the bill went back to the Assembly for approval, and the Assembly voted 53-42 to pass it. Governor Walker immediately signed it into law on March 11. As the Republicans played dirty tricks to ensure that the Democrats had no voice, even senatorial power could not invoke the change needed. People are angry, but they haven’t been defeated. They know that passage of Walker’s bill is only a setback in the larger struggle. If they felt that once a law became a law the battle was lost, they wouldn’t continue fighting.

On March 12, the day after legislation passed, the largest demonstration in Wisconsin’s history took place. More than 100,000 public and private sector workers,



Thousands demonstrate in Madison on March 12.

community supporters, elected officials, students, syndicalists, and people from all walks of life joined together on the streets of Madison to call for a general strike, demand a recall, and sing renditions of such hits as “Solidarity Forever” and “Which Side Are You On?” from the IWW’s brand new “Very Little Red Songbook.”

“It has been very encouraging to get the support from other unions and from those people who aren’t even in unions but who can see that this [bill] is going to be hurting a widespread part of the population,” said Kathy Ponzer upon entering the march.

Russ Faulkner, an IWW member from Mississippi who recently moved to Madison, agreed. “We are building a coalition with as many people as possible. This is not just about organized labor,” he said. Russ is working with dozens of active IWW members from Madison, the Twin Cities, Chicago, and the surrounding area in order to “spark worker consciousness and actual have some ‘meat and potato’ changes in this country.” The IWW is organizing 24 hours a day, seven days a week to agitate for a general strike.

“We are working towards the general strike because we know it’s the best and most powerful tool the working class has against big business and their puppets,” he said. “Others are putting efforts into recall, but as we all know: direct action gets the goods.”

As the momentum towards a general strike is growing in Wisconsin, the IWW is working with public and private sector unions and allies

in building a diversity of tactics to oppose similar legislation across the country. Such proposed legislation is sweeping the country in Iowa, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Idaho, Missouri, Colorado, Nebraska, Tennessee, and New Hampshire, just to name a few.

In Indianapolis, Indiana, thousands of unionists swarmed the State House every day for nearly three weeks, beginning on Feb. 21, to oppose 11 anti-labor bills. Following the lead of Wisconsin, Democratic senators fled to Illinois to block legislation from passing. In turn, the Republicans were forced to shelve the right-to-work bill.

On March 11 in St. Louis, Missouri, upwards of 5,000 carpenters, laborers, pipefitters, boilermakers, teachers, auto-workers, teamsters, janitors, nurses, policemen, glaziers, machinists, electricians, and insulators stood together to oppose bills that would hurt working families, including Right-to-Work-for-Less legislation (SB 1), Minimum Wage Repeal (HB 61 and SB 110), and the Child Labor Repeal (SB 222). On March 14, the right-to-work bill had a hearing in the Missouri Senate. After debating the bill for three hours, Republican senators couldn’t muster up enough support for a vote, and the bill was shelved.

In Columbus, Ohio, at least 20,000 public and private sector unions and allies gathered at the Ohio State House on March 8 to oppose SB5, a harmful anti-worker bill being pushed by Governor Kasich and Republicans in the state legislature which seeks to strip public employees of their collective bargaining rights.

In Michigan, thousands of workers are coming together to oppose a slew of bills

which are designed to severely undermine workers’ rights. This includes legislation which would give the state the power to terminate union contracts in schools and repeal the state’s “prevailing wage” laws. Currently, labor activists are focusing attention on a right-to-work bill (HB4054), introduced on Jan. 13. In effect, the bill has the potential to create county-wide right-to-work zones—it would lower wages and limit public employees’ collective bargaining rights. On March 8, hundreds of firefighters and union members from around the state stormed the rotunda of the Michigan Capitol building in Lansing to protest. One week later, on March 16, an estimated 10,000 demonstrated inside and outside the building, “filling the rotunda...[with] high energy,” according to the Lansing Workers’ Center.

Detroit IWW member Christian Alexander said the rise of labor opposition and growing momentum of union activity was inspired by Wisconsin. “With the recent upsurge of anti-austerity organizing and especially the great work of our Fellow Workers in Wisconsin, many of us are inspired to rebuild and work to expand our presence here,” said Christian.

The same holds true in Nebraska, where there are nine bills being presented in the state legislature that would ban public employees’ rights to engage in collective bargaining and destroy the Commission of Industrial Relations (CIR), which is the non-partisan arbitration panel that handles disputes between the state and public unions. Inspired by the resistance in Wisconsin, IWW member organizer Tyler Swain said he and the recently-chartered Nebraska IWW are organizing in Omaha to oppose this legislation. “We’re growing steadily, and with all the attention from Madison, it seems to have opened several doors for us,” he said.

As anti-union legislation is spreading rapidly, solidarity and working-class consciousness are on the rise. Public and private sector unions are putting their differences aside to fight on the same front, and in many cases, are winning. This movement began with school teachers and other public employees in Wisconsin, like Kathy Ponzer, who are merely fighting to hold onto their basic rights, but it ignited a fire that is now rapidly spreading across the country. The fire is burning down the barriers that divide us by race, religion, gender, and political affiliation. It is bringing us together across those divisions and uniting us around our struggles as workers. By continuing to stand together, the working class of this country has the ability to do what’s necessary in taking back our rights, our wages, and our lives.

For more information, please visit <http://www.madison.iww.org>.

Photos by Diane Krauthamer.



School teacher Kathy Ponzer at the capitol.

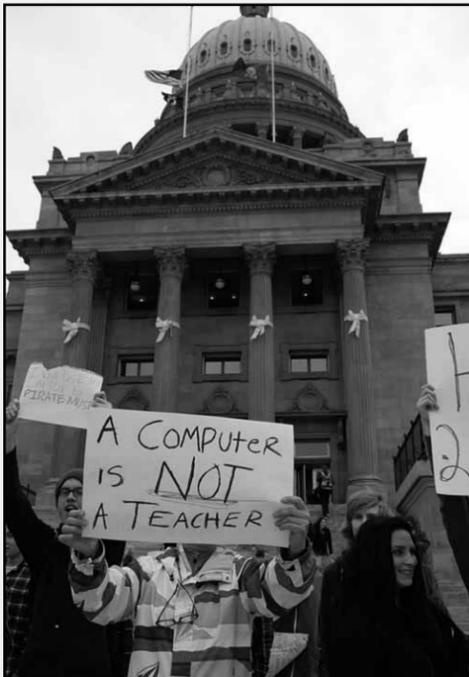
Student Walkouts In Madison And Idaho

By John Kalwaic

When Wisconsin governor Scott Walker announced his plans to strip public sector workers of their bargaining rights, hundreds of high school students walked out of their classrooms. Many of them went with their teachers and other public sector workers to a large protest at the capitol building in Madison.

Both undergraduate and graduate college students in Madison also walked out in support of the public sector workers. The teachers’ union eventually negotiated for teachers to go back to work and the students back to school. College students occupied The Peck Theater at the University of Wisconsin to protest education cuts, and another walkout occurred in one of the most conservative states: Idaho.

In Idaho, students from several high schools left class to protest the state government’s “Luna” plan to cut funding to education and to cut the number of teachers, which the state plans to replace with large classes filled with computers. The students marched to the state capitol in Boise chanting slogans supporting their teachers such as “Teach me don’t chat me,” a reference to computer-based teaching. The students were eventually escorted from the capitol building by police. Before the protests started in Idaho, a school superintendent’s car was vandalized, his tires were slashed, and the word “Luna” was spray painted and crossed out on his car.



Students in Idaho.

Photo: boiseweekly.com

Boston Students Walk Out In Solidarity

By the Boston IWW

On Friday, March 11, about 125 students and a few teachers left mid-afternoon classes at Brookline High School in Brookline, Mass., in response to a call by an officer of the teachers’ union to demonstrate in support of the rights of Wisconsin workers.

A spirited rally was held in front of the school featuring chants supporting workers’ rights. The rally was addressed by IWW member Steve Kellerman, a substitute teacher at the school, who spoke of the need for workers to protect themselves from the rapacity of capitalism and the role of unions in supporting the standards of all working people.

The demonstrators then marched, chanting and beating drums along the way, to Brookline Town Hall where a second rally was held. After more chants and the spirited singing of “Solidarity Forever,” Kellerman once again addressed the crowd on the efficacy and history of demonstrations, on the necessity of workers advancing their interests through unions, and on the current fiscal crisis being caused by military spending (59 percent of government revenues) and the wealthy being excused from paying taxes. He made a strong connection between imperialism and the ongoing wars of aggression on the one hand, and the declining standards of working people on the other.

The militancy of the Brookline students augurs well for the future and the reversing of current reactionary trends.

Fighting Back: From Wisconsin to the World

CNT Solidarity Statement To Wisconsin's Workers

From the CNT-AIT

The National Committee of the Confederación Nacional de Trabajo (CNT), Spain, would like to take this opportunity to greet the American workers who have taken a stand against acts of aggression toward their rights as laborers and especially to their right to organize. We believe the workers' struggle has to take place in their own midst, not dictated from above by their bosses, not from the upper hemispheres by their governmental "representatives" and not from their union "leaders." As Madison is showing, the workers can defend themselves just fine, all by themselves. They are not lacking in solidarity and know how to react when attacked.

As anarcho-syndicalists we believe in that the workers need to join and fight together, pick their own battles, decide how to fight those battles and, ultimately, control their own jobs and workplaces. Our revolutionary aims—the overthrow of capitalism and its faithful servant the state and the establishment of anarchy—do not prevent us from standing with and behind any grassroots workers' struggle, anywhere in the world as and when they



Graphic: CNT-AIT

arise and we would like to do so now, with the public servants of Wisconsin who have rightly rejected Governor Walker's poorly veiled assault on the rights they earned through more than 100 years of battle in the streets and in the shops.

We hope that this battle succeeds in stopping the governor's plans and that it rides the momentum to go one step further and ask for more, take more, take what is rightfully its own. To do that, you don't need leaders telling you what to do, not leaders in the big establishment unions, not leaders in the capitol. You just need each other, you need horizontal organization, mutual aid and self-management. The right to organize is the right to control over our own work and, fundamentally, the right to a free human society.

Buenventura Durruti said in 1936 that the workers weren't worried about "the ruins, because we're destined to inherit the earth and we carry a new world in our hearts...a world that is growing right now." All of our solidarity in your struggle to plant the seeds for that new world.

Salud y apoyo mutuo.

ZSP In Poland Calls For U.S. To Fight And Win

Statement from the Związek Syndykalistów Polski (ZSP, or Union of Syndicalists, of the International Workers' Association) in Poland

The ZSP would like to express its support for calls for a general strike and its solidarity with those who would continue to fight against attacks on union rights. We mustn't give in and allow our rights as workers to be taken away by politicians proposing anti-social measures and imposing austerity on employees while knowing no budgetary constraints for bailing out banks, warmongering or subsidizing corporations.

Now is a make-or-break time for work-



Graphic: zspwawa.blogspot.com

ers not only in Wisconsin, but around the States as well. Will you fight and win, or will you back down or stick to moderate protests which will have no impact? Only decisive action can impel this struggle. We would also like to express our support for rank-and-file unionism, with workers organizing themselves, free of union bureaucracy. An essential challenge for the U.S. labor movement is the development of democratic and militant unionism which is able to empower people to fight back! All of our best wishes and support for this struggle!

In Solidarity,
ZSP-IWA

Solidarity From The NGWF In Bangladesh

Statement from the National Garment Workers Federation, Bangladesh

We stand in solidarity with the workers in the United States resisting the assaults on their rights. We applaud the workers in Wisconsin, Ohio and elsewhere who have taken to the streets and capitols to reject the attempts to deny them of their rights to collectively bargain, and to decide on the conditions of their labor. Their resistance has been inspirational to the labor movement and to working people all over the globe.

Further, we reject attempts by governments to balance budgets at the expense of working people. These are clearly attempts by the owning class and their allies to weaken the labor movement, which has historically been the counter-balance to the power of big business and their control, not only of economic power, but also political power. We also reject efforts by governments and business groups to split the working class, either by distinguishing



NGWF march in solidarity with U.S. workers on March 16 in Bangladesh. Photo: NGWF

between public sector and private sector, or American, foreign, or immigrant workers. This division only serves the interests of big business. We wholeheartedly support the statement "an injury to one is an injury to all." Only through a strong working class movement can we defend against the current assaults on working people all over the globe.

Solidarity forever!
Amirul Haque Amin, President, NGWF

'Your Victory Is Our Victory'

Statement from the Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy Solidarność (NSZZ) in Poland To Public Service Workers in the State of Wisconsin,

On behalf of the 700,000 members of the Polish Trade Union NSZZ "Solidarność" (Solidarity), I wish to express our solidarity and support for your struggle against the recent assault on trade unions and trade union rights unleashed by Governor Scott Walker.

We are witnessing yet another attempt of transferring the costs of the economic crisis and of the failed financial policies to working people and their families. As much as some adjustments are necessary, we cannot and must not agree that the austerity measures are synonymous with



Graphic: solidarnosc.org.pl

union-busting practices, the elimination of bargaining rights and the reduction of social benefits and wages.

Dear friends, please rest assured that our thoughts are with you during your protest, as we truly do hope that your just fight for decent working and living conditions, for the workers' rights will be successful.

Your victory is our victory as well.

In Solidarity,
Piotr Duda President

Workers Solidarity Alliance Call To Action

Statement from the Workers Solidarity Alliance (W.S.A.)

The WSA extends solidarity and our most sincere wishes for victory to the workers of Wisconsin in their current fight, and to all public sector workers now struggling against attacks on their pensions and their rights.

The rank-and-file workers have demonstrated the best aspects of the combative spirit of the working class, and may help ramp up the lagging spirit of solidarity in the American labor movement.

We also condemn the actions of top union officials to control and suppress the fighting spirit of the workers involved. The officials desire to narrow the struggle has come at a time when broadening the struggle is most needed. Instead of limiting the struggle to the public sector, it must be expanded to encompass the entire working class. Instead of submitting to the concessionary demands of the state, it should be attacking the state's corporate masters.

For many years those in power have tried to paint the term "class war" as dirty words. For the past 30 years the bosses assaulted workers in the private sector. Year after year, decade after decade workers have seen their jobs decimated, whole communities destroyed and union bureaucrat after union bureaucrat surrendering to the boss class. After rendering most private sector industrial unions weak and almost useless, the assault now



Graphic: WSA

turns on to public sector workers. "Class war" can only be the way to describe wave after wave of attacks on working people.

The class war being waged by the capitalists against working people is not limited to the public sector. The public sector is only the latest target. The politicians and their masters will not be satisfied until ALL working people are reduced to the level of indentured servants. We recognize that the fight in Wisconsin, and elsewhere, is a defensive fight. A fight to stave off the worst of the bosses attacks. We also recognize the potential of rank-and-file workers from different worksites, institutions, agencies and industries and services informally talking together, networking, building worker-to-worker relationships, bonds and solidarity. These relations are key and cornerstones for building a fight-back. But rank-and-file workplace organization linking workplaces is also needed to carry the struggle forward and deepen the relationships. Whatever form these inter-workplace organizations may take, the key to enhancing our power is by making sure they are membership controlled and organized from the bottom up.

We call on all workers, public sector and private, to unite in solidarity and fight back against the politicians, the capitalists and union bureaucrats, to build a grassroots workers movement from below that demands nothing less than everything.

The fight will not end in Wisconsin. It's only the beginning.

Solidarity

The United States are in the midst of a Great Awakening unlike anything we've seen here in many years. The beast that is Organized Labor is under attack and workers are fighting back. Help us take this opportunity by the horns; donate to IWW organizing in Wisconsin, Iowa, Ohio, Indiana, Tennessee, Nebraska, Michigan, New Hampshire, Colorado, Idaho, Tennessee and all other states effected by capitalism-in-crisis austerity measures against working people.

GENERAL STRIKE

Industrial **W**orkers of the **W**orld

Make a Contribution:
donations.iww.org

Fighting Back: From Wisconsin to the World

Viewing Public Sector Unions Through Lens Of Class Theory

By Jeremy Weiland

I support the public sector unions opposing Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker's agenda. While I'm neither a fan of government nor the civil service, it's clear that the so-called lavish benefits and salaries public sector unions defend against Republican encroachment represent not entrenched privilege but merely the last vestiges of a minimally fair employment deal. The last 40 years have seen this deal eviscerated in the private sector, and it is only in comparison to the current paltry influence of contemporary labor that public sector unions seem pampered. One need not single out individual teachers to critique public schooling, for instance—in any case, the idea that a school teacher is grifting me provokes involuntary laughter.

As a Wobbly, however, the ideology of class struggle informs my activism on labor. Solidarity is never unconditional, as my friend Chris Lempa pointed out to me in a letter. True common purpose in the struggle against bosses must be framed in terms of legitimate class theory in order

not to degenerate into the business-as-usual, reformist, junior-partner-in-the-ruling-class unionism that has prevailed since the Wagner Act. And so while I support public sector unions in this conflict, I find it difficult to place them in the traditional model of class struggle.

In the private sector the class dynamics are clear: workers and bosses can be easily seen as in zero-sum competition. One gains at the expense of the other, the prize is



Wobbly soapboxing in Madison.

effective control over the means of production, and the players line up along the party whose control they favor. Customers and suppliers represent the third parties who, while not powerless in the equation, tend to deal with the organization as a whole on a voluntary basis. The adversarial relationship is more centered inside the organization, and market pressures from the third parties are accepted as a given. Much of the decline in labor power has arisen from capital's superior marketing of the narrative that union gains come at consumer losses.

This analysis falls apart when applied to the public sector. The government has no equivalent market pressures to which it is compelled to respond. As a monopoly producer, government has every incentive to pacify its workforce by delivering higher wages and benefits. The taxpaying consumer of these services is without recourse. Politicians cannot be seen as perfect analogs of the boss class, nor can civil service management be viewed in the same sense as private sector management. Indeed, to invoke the oft-cited preamble to the IWW Constitution, does the public sector working class and the public sector employing class really have nothing in common?

As a former public school teacher, my wife offered me an example of organizational dynamics in the public sector that might better explain the class disposition of the various players. Who is the favored class within the public schooling institution? Surely not

teachers—they are serially overworked and underpaid, but even more importantly from a radical labor perspective, they enjoy little control over the workplace. In fact, the history indicates that teachers have been viewed by the establishment as nearly as much in need of control and discipline as the students they teach. Curricula are designed not merely to guide student learning but, to the greatest extent possible, make classrooms teacher-proof. The fear has always been that a genuine relationship between teachers and students would be harmful to the institution as a whole, and so a factory model guided the development of modern pedagogy.

So, who is exploiting teachers? Who is denying them control of work conditions? Who is playing them off against the end consumers (students and parents) to limit their power and influence?

It would be easy to say: the public, through their designated politicians, from the governor down to the school board. However, the public has very coarse control over the schools (or any government function) through political means. The public is not the "boss class" in any meaningful way, least of all because they desire maximum effort from teachers at a minimum wage. They are imprisoned customers given a modicum of choice but no exit, and as they work for a living just like teachers they are more likely to see their interests aligned than opposed.

What about the politicians? Surely they have outsized control, at least as the managers. They seek to maximize their own control over the institution and position themselves for personal political advantage in the larger establishment. While market pressures may not factor in directly, they still have to deal with budget pressures, balancing interests among the entire government. The relative competition may not originate in the market so much as among the interest groups of the state: those seeking to grow one department's budget at another's expense, or those who favor capital over government power and fight taxes.

But even if politicians are the boss class, that is still insufficient to explain organizational dynamics within the school. Where is the class managing affairs on a daily basis on the boss's behalf? Who implements the control over workers? Who sees their interests as more aligned with the bosses than with the workers? The answer is obvious when you think about it.

The school administration is the management class of public schooling. They

are the class with fat salaries, minimal work to do, and an interest in running the school as a factory. They prefer stability to true empowerment and education. They hold both teachers and students in check. Their class actually grows pretty steadily, soaking up funds from those who actually teach, while implementing stupid policies like "zero tolerance" to subsume more and more of the classroom under their direct management.

I've focused on public schooling, but I imagine this model could apply to just about any civil service field. You have the people who do the work—in a zoning office, for instance, it's the clerks and surveyors and those who actually affect the end product. Then you have the city administration and the mayor, board of supervisors, etc., who use the institution as

a means to a political career focused on directing others and taking credit for it. They don't care about zoning per-se; their interest is in stabilizing the organization so they can grow the parasite administrative class and pursue their agenda of personal aggrandizement and its ideological trappings (set aside your feelings about zoning laws in general for a moment).

As a Wobbly and a mutualist, then, I'd like to see radical labor take a stand that does not simply provide unconditional solidarity to public workers, but pushes them to take increasingly radical stances on issues of workplace control. What do we want: state-recognized and -enforced collective bargaining rights, or a movement so powerful it can operate without the state's permission? Are we fighting for a bit higher wage and benefits for public workers, or an end to the wage system? Do we want civil servants to be treated with slightly more respect by their overlords, or do we instead demand worker control of these capital-serving institutions?

After all, we've established that public sector unions are the last vestiges of a fair deal between labor and capital. Perhaps we should remind capital why they sought to give us that deal to begin with, thus securing a better position for labor in all sectors. To accomplish this, Wobblies and all radical unionists must reassert the primacy of the class struggle and creatively compose the narrative that frames the public and private sector worker grievances in class terms. Only a rebirth of class consciousness will push the center of the labor movement leftwards and secure our interests. It's not enough to defeat Governor Walker or even to respond to these periodic crises in labor relations with solidarity: we have to resurrect the class struggle.

Photos by Diane Krauthamer.

Wisconsin Protest Powered By Pizza

By Lauren Vincelli, Richmond IWW

On Thursday, March 10, Republicans in the Wisconsin State Assembly snuck through a bill that includes extensive restrictions on collective bargaining rights for workers in the public sector. The Assembly bypassed the quorum of 20 needed to vote on budget issues removing sections of the bill that involved financial matters, and voted 53-42 to pass the bill without the 14 missing Democratic senators. Wisconsin police who once joined the protesters and refused to carry out orders to remove protesters from the capital building, ended up dragging protesters away from the Capitol so the Assembly could convene.

The bill will limit public workers' collective bargaining rights, enforce an increase in union members' pension and health care contributions, and impose a string of other restrictions. Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker insists the cut backs are needed to fill in a \$3.6 billion state budget gap.

Nurses, teachers, firefighters, and other public workers have made their way to the capital and tens of thousands of union supporters from Wisconsin and the rest of the country have flooded the streets of Madison in protest. Those people are hungry for dignity, justice and pizza.

Less than one block away from the State Capitol on State Street is Ian's Pizza by the Slice. Ian's has long been a favorite pizza place for cheese heads in Wisconsin. They have recently made national headlines by taking orders from all over the



Pizza delivery to demonstrators.

Photo: Ian's Pizza

world and delivering pizza to protesters.

Assistant Manager Jack Thurnblad said that since the protests began Ian's has dished up well over 65,000 slices (over 8,125 large pizzas). They have received pizza orders for protesters from supporters in all 50 states, Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico, all seven continents and over 60 countries, including Morocco, Finland, South Korea, Afghanistan, Iran, Egypt, Haiti and Italy. An order was even placed from McMurdo research station in Antarctica. Canada and England are among the biggest international donors while supporters in New York, Illinois and California are among top donors in the country.

Thurnblad is excited about the increased business and the show of solidarity from other places around the world. Thurnblad is originally from Minnesota and comes from a family of teachers. He said he has grown up amongst the discussions of unions and collective bargaining for public employees. "I never thought something like this would happen in Wisconsin," he said.



Graphic: Tom Keough

Wobbly Arts & Entertainment

**The Battle of Madison:
Which Side Are You On?**

By Sean Carleton, X364847

This is a solidarity cover dedicated to the workers and students protesting in Madison, Wisconsin! From the Middle East to the Midwest, there's a revolution brewing, so which side are you on? ON WISCONSIN!

Am Em Am
Come all you good workers, good news to you I'll tell
Em E7 Am
of the workers in Wisconsin, who are ringing freedom's bell.

Am E7 Am
Chorus: Which side are you on, which side are you on (x2).

If you go up to Madison County, there are no neutrals there
You're either with the unionists or a thug for Scott Walker.

O workers can you stand it? Oh tell me how you can?
Will you look the other way, or will you take your stand!?!

Don't wait for the politicians, don't listen to their lies
Us working folks ain't getting shit unless we organize!

So Brothers and Sisters, take heed from the Middle-East
There's a revolution for the taking and you'll find it in the streets.

We've fought a million battles to gain our hard-earned rights
We're going to have to fight again, so prepare the GENERAL STRIKE!

So to the people in Wisconsin, fight hard for your unions (and know)
Us fellow workers have your backs in the Battle of Madison!

We've Got Your Back

By Eval Herz

Guitar Chords G Major - D Major - C Major
2/2 or 4/4 time works best.

Well you know all this Koch money it stains the political scene
But why does that Governor Walker got to be so mean
Wisconsin workers said to the world "hey, we're under attack"
Cause Walker is strung out on Koch and he's cooking it into crack
And we have all responded with we've got your back
We've got your back, yes we've got your back
We've got your back against this attack
You know the whole world is watching cause we've got your back
When Walker pushed a bill to ban collective bargaining
Why is he such a fool to try and break down his own machine
I tell you this anti-union bill is so damn obscene
It'll uproot the basis of what's left of the American dream
We won't forget the meaning of solidarity
In the face of this Fascist plot against democracy
The only hope that we all have against this attack
Is to stand together and sing we've got your back, SING IT!
We've got your back, we've got your back
We've got your back against this attack
You know the whole world is watching cause we've got your back
Remember when Obama said that he'd march by our side
So now where does the President continue to hide
Wisconsin, Indiana and Ohio workers are under attack Koch Industries
take your dirty money and cram it up your crack



Photo: Diane Krauthamer

We all say to Wisconsin workers we've got your back
That's right
We've got your back, yes we've got your back
We've got your back against this attack
You know the whole world is watching cause we've got your back
From around the world come words of solidarity
From Egypt and Tunisia to the feet of Lady Liberty
Everywhere students and workers rise for democracy
With one loud and collective voice we all sing
in harmony
To the middle America struggle we all clap
We've got your back, we've got your back
We've got your back against this attack
You know the whole world is watching cause we've got your back
Industrial Workers of the World are joining hands as friends
With Teamsters and the AFL-CIO again
Teachers and the Firefighters walking hand-in-hand
With veterans and EVEN POLICE! All with one DEMAND!
Stop this war on workers executive attack
So we all sing together
We've got your back, SING IT!
We've got your back, yes we've got your back
We've got your back against this attack
You know the whole world is watching cause we've got your back
It's what democracy looks like we've got your back

OBU or STFU,
FW Red Kardd

Wobbly Humor

**In Wisconsin, The Legislation Stinks Like Limburger:
A Report From The Committee On Industrial Laughification**

Fellow Workers,

I regret to inform you that the Committee on Industrial Laughification (CIL) is not currently able to provide a report on our activities because we have not met. As chair, I take full responsibility for this, but really it's the other members' faults for refusing to travel to meet me in Madison, Wisconsin. I went there for the hospitality (for all you East Coast readers, that's Wisconsite for "beer and cheese curds") but while I was there a protest broke out. That happens to me a lot, but this was about some legislation that stinks like Limburger—an attack on workers' rights and livelihood.

The governor wanted the bill to pass right away so he could claim a feta compli, but thousands of workers from different unions were able to muenster a massive protest to stop this. The firefighters' march really wet my appetite to protest, I hope they extinguish Scott Walker's attempt to hose workers. The rest of the protest was rally fun, with lots of energy—especially the public utility workers' march, and the AFT and NEA could definitely teach us a thing or two. The labor movement should milk this opportunity for all its worth.

While in Madison I talked my way into a social event for visiting officers of the AFL-CIO, held at a bowling alley. Those people bowl awful strangely—whenever anyone stepped up to the lane one of the officers would pull them aside and say "now don't throw it too hard, you're not authorized to strike." Then I snuck into a meeting between a high ranking union official, an activist from the right-wing Tea Party movement, and the billionaire Koch brothers. In the middle of room there was a plate with a dozen cookies. The Koch brothers walked up, took 11 cookies, turned to the Tea Partier and said, "Watch out for that union guy, he wants a few of your crumbs." I stole a bottle of chardonnay (for any readers in Wisconsin, please explain to the Wisconsinites you're reading to that that's French for "booze") and then I skipped town.

I hitch-hiked my whey up north in cheese country to Green Bay, on a pilgrimage to meet the Packers enjoying the fresh dairy air. The highlight of the trip was this trucker who picked me up at a truck stop in Sheboygan. He gave me a ride, and drove me pretty far too. We really connected because we have the same favorite author, Curd Vonnegut, and I got him to join the OBU. He told me the only joke I heard all month: "How many Teamsters does it take to change a light bulb?" "How many?" "Screw you." If you



ask me, that's not a trucking funny joke, but then my dad's an IBEW member so I was always taught that non-union light bulb changes are no laughing matter.

Once in Green Bay I headed to a party hosted by the Packers. I had planned to ask them if they would participate in a work stoppage against Governor Walker but the quarterback spiked the punch so after drinking a while I got confused. I couldn't remember if an Industrial Union was calling for a General Strike or if the General Administration was calling for an industrial strike, or something else all together. The Packers were very nice about the mix up, they didn't get cheesed off at all. They gave me an autographed copy of their statement of solidarity with their fellow Wisconsin union members, and added that they really appreciate how much time and attention the *Industrial Worker* has dedicated to whether or not they are workers.

I hope next month to have a proper CIL report and something funny to tell you.

OBU or STFU,
FW Red Kardd

Miners Protest Against Outsourcing In Western Australia

Continued from 1

hands and organizing powers are tied even more firmly behind their backs than they are in Australia: they must by law get the highest profits they can for their shareholders, i.e. members of the capitalist class. The Labor Party doesn't control the WA state government anyway, so its toothlessly-proposed legislation will not pass watchful, conservative eyes of the governing Liberal/National Coalition. Labor was essentially pleading for votes at the next election. The Greens (the lefter party of Capital) trotted out one of their few state representatives in the WA state Parliament and congratulated the workers for uniting with local bosses to demand national consent for the labor and capital used to produce wealth from West Australian natural resources. The Greens also promised a further left form of toothless action than Labor, as is their wont to do.

According to Fellow Worker Bruce Campbell, the huge multi-union rally in Perth ended with a comment from the Maritime Union of Australia's secretary Chris Cain, who said that unions will sack

the Barnett WA Government at the next state election just like Australian Unions sacked the Howard Government in 2007. This was a step in the left direction of getting the bourgeois socialist Labor Party into government where it remains lodged to this day.

Still, it's always good to hear a conservative Premier Colin Barnett being booed by the 5,000 or so angry workers. According to FW Campbell, amid chants of "Colin's a wanker" and "send the government offshore," the workers were vociferous enough. There were also many chants of, "The workers united will never be defeated"—a principle close to any Wobbly's heart. Unfortunately, what was not pointed out by the business union leaders who rallied their members to protect local jobs was that the working class and the employing class have conflicting interests. Your reporter listened closely for some hint of this fact, and none was forthcoming from business unions dedicated to the notion that unionism is, in reality, "a fair day's wage for a fair day's wage" form of liberalism.

Solidarity With Fired Whole Foods Worker

Continued from 1

The action occurred on Feb. 9 during an ordinary Wednesday lunch rush. Friends of Tom reportedly entered the store inconspicuously through the main customer entrance, and also through the receiving dock. Weaving through the hordes of shoppers and organic impulse-buy displays, they saturated every department with flyers decrying the arbitrary firing of Tom and demanding that management solicit worker input on future terminations.

The action was in response to management's callous decision and served as a catalyst for critical discussion regarding management's anti-worker policies.

Accompanying the flyer was a letter that the solidarity group delivered to Customer Service. Also signed "Friends of Tom," the letter reportedly indicted management for its arbitrary dismissal of a committed, solid, and well-liked worker. It demanded that Whole Foods change its current time and attendance policy, and allow workers a voice in termination decisions by putting such firings to a vote.

Shortly thereafter, Whole Foods management issued an immediate radio alert to all department managers on duty. These managers went around snatching flyers away from both interested workers and customers, which angered both groups. Some indignant customers even snatched the flyers back, and chastised management!

In the letter presented to management, Friends of Tom apparently suggested that, "if Whole Foods values the input of its workers and their overall happiness, they would do well to include them in decisions that matter most." Certainly, this is a sentiment that Wobblies can stand behind.

It is also clear that Whole Foods workers like Tom Camilleri, whose lives are made worse by workplace injustice, need more support from their fellow workers. Hopefully, this model of action will inspire rank-and-file workers at Whole Foods to build solidarity, and to develop meaningful and effective organizing strategies. In doing so, they would be taking a monumental step toward improving their overall conditions and collective well-being.

Reviews

A Deeper Look Into The Life Of Phil Ochs

Director: Ken Bowser. "Phil Ochs: There but for Fortune." Produced by First Run Features, 2011. 96 minutes.

By John Pietaro

Documentarian Ken Bowser walked up the aisle to the front of the IFC Center in Greenwich Village, New York, for the premiere of "Phil Ochs: There but for Fortune" and explained that this film was some 20 years in the making. Twenty years for a documentary about a folksinger of a time that now seems far into the past, one who never lived to know of his place in the annals of topical music. Citing that Ochs' brief life and briefer still career fell far short of the popular acclaim he struggled for, Bowser reminded the audience that, "it's important that we who love Phil Ochs and understand his relevance let others know." It was never supposed to be a closed society of the initiated, so spread the news—all the news that's fit to sing.

The protest singer's vibrancy in performance, the visceral stir in his voice, and the earnest plead on his face are back. The music's depth, the urgency of the day, and the living movements that Ochs was so central to are visible for all to see. Leaning awkwardly over a microphone while cradling his Gibson 6-string, James Dean haircut spilling over his forehead, cocked eyebrow revealing sardonic wit while his mouth produces an earnest portal for songs of pride and revolution, Ochs erupts onto the screen, something of a celluloid hero. In the cinema that was once the legendary Waverly Theatre—a site frequented by Phil in the 1960s, walking distance from his Bleeker Street apartment—it was easy to feel transported. And necessary. These times, too, need Phil Ochs.

At least partially erased from popular memory, Ochs is recalled today in an awkward hush. But wasn't that a time? The singer didn't just burst upon the early 1960s folk scene intact—he was crafted out of pure determination and idealism. The product of a challenging, to say the least, childhood (Ochs' sister Sonny and brother Michael both attest to their manic-depressive father and coldly disconnected mother), young Phil tended to be a loner who idolized film stars and fostered a burning, secret desire for fame.

"The psychosis of the Eisenhower era," as record producer Van Dyke Parks described it, implanted in Ochs the conflict that was to mark the years of protest to come. Deeply patriotic, the teenage Ochs began to understand something of the injustice in his midst and to see beyond the surface. In college, while studying for a career as a journalist, Ochs befriended folksinger Jim Glover, who introduced him to the music of Woody Guthrie and the Weavers. His writings took a notable turn to the left. And after years of studying the clarinet, Ochs obtained his first guitar, winning it from Glover in a bet when he wagered that Kennedy would beat Nixon in the 1960 election. Ochs never retreated.

The writing of topical songs came easy to Ochs. They flowed at a blurring rate and offered up-to-the-moment social commentary. Phil noted, "Every newspaper headline is a song," and before long his performances in Greenwich Village nightspots led to a major record contract and a national tour. The film offers a look into the tumultuous relationship he shared with another stalwart of the Village scene, Bob Dylan. While they were friends as young men, Dylan's star shined considerably brighter than Ochs and, as Dylan rose to new heights, Ochs always felt at least a step behind. The rivalry haunted him. Still, Ochs' impact was deeply touched by the activists who soon felt forsaken by Dylan. Cultural critic Christopher Hitchens, among the notable talking heads who offer wonderful insights, stated, "There was a difference between those who listened to Dylan and those who even knew who Phil was. Anyone could like Dylan."

Eluded by wider popular acclaim, Ochs staunchly maintained an immersion in protest music even as he graduated beyond its standard fare of singer and guitar. By his third studio album, Ochs' transition was not into the realm of folk-rock—as his peers had moved into—but to an expansive, concept-driven format that made full use of orchestration and a variety of genres. String quartets, honky-tonk piano, woodwinds, and electronic music provided a sweeping soundscape for Phil's resounding tenor. Seemingly always aware of, yet in battle with, the tragic destiny of mental illness that would later claim him,

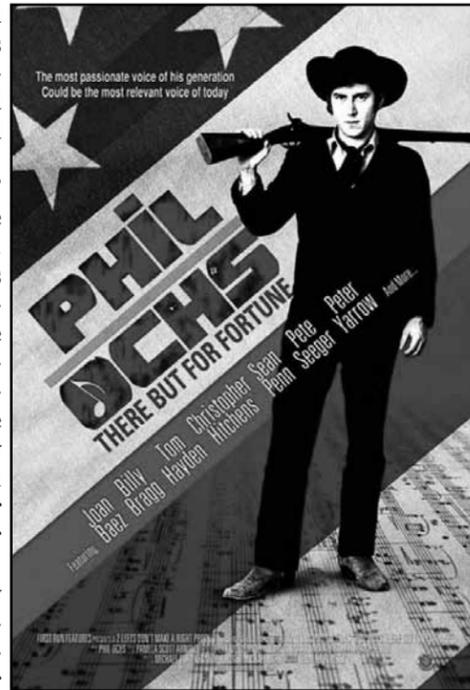
Ochs fueled his passion with alcohol and work. But the brilliance of his music was never enough to satisfy the burning restlessness within the man or his conflicted self-image, equal parts self-important and shattered.

"Phil Ochs: There but for Fortune" offers powerful insights into the choice songwriter of in-the-know progressives. The film is a whirlwind tour through his music, his politics, and his personal demons, with stopping points that include skillfully edited performance and interview footage, news reels, and rare photographs. First-person remembrances are provided by Ochs' family, as well as fellow folkies Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, Dave Van Ronk, Jim Glover, Judy Henske, and Peter Yarrow (the elusive Dylan was, as Bowser described, unavailable for interviewing).

Overall, the film is a fascinating view into the urgency of the times, the movement culture, and the folksong community's views on civil rights, Vietnam, labor strife, and the murders of the Kennedys, Medgar Evers, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Ochs was inflamed with activism and willingly thrust himself into the street heat—this is where he differed from the rest! Other important historic segments in the film are the interviews of Yippie founders Paul Krasner, Ed Sanders (of the Fugs) and, via archival footage, Abbie Hoffman.

Hearing the personal recollections of the debacle of the 1968 Chicago Democratic Convention protest, along with footage of the police riot and ensuing despair, was riveting. Tom Hayden, never far from his radical roots, again offered moving commentary. The assaults by the Chicago police, the loss of an anti-war presidential candidate, and the dissolution of the activists' base, post-1968, had a terrific impact on the already wavering Ochs. Sanders said that Phil saw the protestors as influenced by 1930s radicalism, part of "a united front against the war." Once it was broken, he began to state that he'd died in Chicago along with democracy—or at least the movement.

While Ochs' later years are painful to observe, the power of the songs stands strong. It is almost unfathomable that Ochs was only 35 at the time of his death. Yet Bowser is sure to illustrate some of the



Graphic: moviepostr.com

exciting highlights of his later period, including his organizing of large-scale events such as his celebratory "The War Is Over" concert in Central Park and "An Evening with Salvador Allende" in honor of the Chilean people whose radical democracy was stolen from them by a U.S.-backed coup.

The film does exactly what we want it to do. It offers a close-up view of the man who has often been deemed the protest song's grandest voice. You'll peer into the broken life of Phil Ochs, but this image will be far surpassed by his promise of a new day. And, hell, if this is not enough to inspire you to attend the next rally for social change, then the music cannot miss. "I Ain't Marchin' Anymore," "Changes," "The War is Over," "White Boots Marching in a Yellow Land," "Draft Dodger Rag," "My Kingdom for a Car," "Chords of Fame," "No More Songs," "Links in the Chain," "The Ballad of Medgar Evers," "Harlan Kentucky," "We Call for No Wider War," "When I'm Gone," "There but for Fortune"—it rolls on and on, through the decades and the next senseless war.

This review originally appeared on Jan. 10, 2011 on <http://theculturalworker.blogspot.com>. It was reprinted with

Is Shlomo Sand Teaching Junk History?

Continued from 2

Europe with no geographical center down to our time.

Sand tells us, by Ballard's account, that prior to the rise of modern nationalism in the French Revolution, the Jews would not have had any particular group consciousness. This may be the most preposterous of his claims. In Christian lands, until around 200 years ago, Jews maintained their own communal existence. They were forced to live in ghettos, were restricted from many pursuits such

as farming (by which most other people maintained themselves), were taxed under a completely different system, lived under separate laws and courts, and in short comprised a distinct estate of society. They were often persecuted, expelled from communities they had lived in for long periods, and heavily pressured to convert to Christianity. In Muslim countries they, along with Christians, had the status of *dhimīs*, which kept them similarly separated from the larger society. From the earliest time until the present, Jews have felt themselves a distinct group and have maintained strong bonds of solidarity with fellow Jews.

Sand tells us that peasants are an inert group bound by stupidity and inertia to continue dumbly farming the land and producing wealth for their masters. Therefore the Romans were happy to allow the Jewish peasants to remain after the Bar Kokba revolt. In fact, peasant societies have always been prone to immense *jacqueries*, titanic revolts in which the red cock would crow (the manor house would be torched) and the rule of the oppressors would be toppled. And the rulers, unlike Sand's tolerant Romans, were savage in their retaliation. Consider the depopulation of Morelos by the Obregonistas after the defeat of the Zapatistas in early 1920s Mexico, the massacre of the followers of Pugachev and Stenka Razin in czarist Russia, the 20 million or so mostly peasants killed in the Taiping Rebellion in 19th century China, the killing of millions of

peasants who resisted Stalin's collectivization in the U.S.S.R., the driving of peasants into concentration camps ("fortified hamlets") by the United States and its puppet regime in South Vietnam. Read "The Peasant War In Germany" by Friedrich Engels. No, the Romans were not going to let bygones be bygones in the case of the Jewish peasants who enthusiastically joined with their fellows in the great revolts.

Regarding Sand's claim that most of the Jews of Eastern Europe were descended from the Khazars, they were actually people whose ancestors had been expelled from England, France, the Italian states, and who left Germany after the destruction of Jewish communities there during the Crusades. These people kept migrating east into Poland, Lithuania, and surrounding countries where they were initially welcomed as bearers of modernity. The Khazars mostly stayed in Central Asia where their descendants continue to practice the Karaite version of Judaism, the only large concentration of such people in the world today. This is further attested to by the philological fact that the Yiddish language, the *lingua franca* of northern and eastern European Jews, contains almost no words or grammar of *Turkic* (Tartar) origin.

Ballard, and presumably Sand, would have us believe that Jewish longing for the land, the Land of Israel, was cooked up by the Zionists in the 19th century. In fact, this has been central to the Jewish religion



and people from the start. The Hebrew scriptures—starting with the stories concerning Abraham in the Book of Genesis, the balance of their Five Books of Moses, the Deuteronomic histories of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, the writings of the prophets, and the Psalms—are imbued with it. See, for example, Ps. 137 or the Book of Lamentations of Jeremiah. The Jewish prayer book is filled with prayers for the return to the land. In truth, Jews have prayed daily for a return to the land for 2,000 years.

Anyone wanting to know my opinions regarding Zionism, the State of Israel, nationalism and imperialism should feel free to contact me. People truly wishing to know about all this stuff should read the Bible (Old Testament) and find a reputable history of the Jews.

In conclusion, I'll repeat the question posed by a fellow worker in these parts upon seeing Ballard's review, "Why is this in the *Industrial Worker*?"

— Steve Kellerman, An IWW member and an observant Jew

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International Labor Struggles

September Strike Action In Cambodia, And Its Aftermath

By Erik W. Davis

In September 2010, Cambodian workers organized what appears to have been the largest labor action in that country's modern history. Workers, largely from the garment and sneaker factories, came out in rapidly expanding strikes over three days, throwing the garment sector into a crisis. This crisis was resolved, as is usually the case in Cambodia, behind the scenes, with a mix of private incentives and un-official threats masked by public performances of idealized roles. But as is also usual in Cambodia, other stories challenging the official rhetoric are easily obtained.

Two months earlier, on July 25, a tripartite commission sponsored by the government announced a new minimum wage. Unions had announced that any new minimum must be at least \$93 per month, rising from the then-current \$55 per month, owing to the trebling of living costs over the last year. Almost all past raises were the results of strike and protest actions by Coalition of Cambodian Apparel Workers' Democratic Union's (C.CAWDU) rival union the Free Trade Union Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia (FTUWKC), which did not join this action.

C.CAWDU represents an estimated 40,000 workers, and the strike quickly rose in estimated numbers from 30,000 to 210,000 over the course of four days. That latter number represents well over half of the workers in the national industry. The business and state response was coordinated and fierce, with police using electric batons, running down protesters with cars and trucks, and veiled and unveiled threats.

Rough History

The industry, which employs roughly 345,000 workers, more than 90 percent of whom over are female, has rocketed to significance in only about 15 years. Until the mid-1990s, the garment industry was nonexistent and industrialization in Cambodia was a vague memory of the 1960s in the minds of survivors of the intervening Khmer Rouge period. After the transition via a U.N. caretaker state to an unstable dual-executive free market state in the mid-1990s, Cambodia was open for business.

The rise of garment work for overwhelmingly young female workers has been transforming this country since that time. The young women, however, rarely have much control over the bulk of their wages; after living expenses, the rest is almost always sent to families in the countryside. In order to keep living costs low, these young women live in large communal apartments, deny themselves food and take second jobs—often in the service sector, and undergo their own transformations.

The emerging *kleptocracy* benefited enormously from its informal status as showcase for emerging free-market capitalism in Asia, as normal export tariffs to North America and Europe were lifted via the Multi-Fiber Agreement (which expired in 2004), and Cambodia became flooded with NGOs, including the International Labor Organisation (ILO), whose flagship program, Better Factories Cambodia, will serve as the model for new programs in other countries. The union movement in Cambodia has partly been constituted by these events and institutions, and in other ways has had to maintain their distance.

In previous articles, I have concentrated on the FTUWKC, one of only a handful of independent unions in Cambodia. One of the other dominant independent unions, and a competitor in many ways with the FTUWKC, is the C.CAWDU, which was the

leading force behind the September Strike. This was most consistently represented by its president, Ath Thorn. I met him in January 2011 on behalf of the IWW's International Solidarity Committee.

The September Strike

Thorn met with me in the lobby of the Phnom Penh Hotel on his lunch break.



Ath Thorn.

Photo: Erik Davis

It was an important day for him: day 1 of the joint meetings the unions were having with the government of Cambodia, along with the major business interests in the country. The business interests and the government were announcing the new draft law on unions in Cambodia, clearly designed to hobble independent unionism.

From 2007 to 2009, the garment industry in Cambodia suffered major setbacks (discussed in previous *IW* articles). While workers lost jobs and wages stagnated, costs of living continued to rise rapidly. Problems with overtime and illegal deductions of overtime pay were rampant in the factories. Thorn estimated in the spring of 2010 that an absolute minimum monthly living wage was \$75. A committee within C.CAWDU determined that the correct demand should be \$93.

The issue behind the strike was anger and resentment over the July 25th agreement by the government and leadership from various yellow unions to raise the monthly minimum wage from \$55 to \$61. This rise was accompanied by a freeze on wage hikes until 2014. The Ministry of Labor claims that 95 factories and 70,000 jobs were lost in 2009 due to the worldwide economic wage slump and that wage hikes at this time could destroy the national industry.

Disappointed and angry over the recommendation, C.CAWDU surveyed its membership with three questions. First, "Do you accept the recommendation of the commission?" Second, "If not, how much would be acceptable?" Finally, "What do we do next?" The answers were essentially unanimous, with percentages of the answers ranging between 95 to 100 percent, according to Thorn. They were: "No, we do not accept the recommendations," "We can accept raises in the range of \$75-\$93/month," and "Strike."

From July 25 to Aug. 1, 2010, the union and its members and officers gathered fingerprints and signatures approving those results. On Aug. 15, Thorn wrote a letter to the government requesting a new round of negotiations on wages and notifying them that if they refused new negotiations, more than 100 unions from the garment industry were prepared to strike. On Aug. 18, he filed a complaint to the employer association with the fingerprints of the workers surveyed. All of these overtures were simply ignored. Ath Thorn believes that they did not believe that C.CAWDU could accomplish those threatened strike numbers.

On Sept. 13, the strike began, with 60,000 workers from more than 50 factories taking to the streets. On Sept. 14, 140,000 workers from over 80 factories crowded the streets. On Sept. 15, more than 200,000 people from over 95 factories were on the streets. The government announced that if the strike were to continue for two more days, every worker in the country would be on strike. At this point, the employer, according to Thorn, determined to "wipe C.CAWDU away entirely, erasing it from the country, and destroying it completely."

Secret meetings on Sept. 15 included business interests and Prime Minister Hun Sen, and resulted in a three-page decree from the Prime Minister that declared the strike illegal and demanded it end imme-

diately. This was accompanied by threats against the legal status of the union and against the physical safety of both strikers and strike leaders. It was clear to Thorn that if he proceeded, he and many others would at the least spend serious amounts of time in prison.

On Sept. 16, the public face of the strikes turned bad quickly, and then disappeared entirely. In the morning, Thorn saw over 20 workers attacked by police who used cars and motorcycles as weapons against peaceful strikers and made mass arrests. By around noon, the directive from the government was finally presented to union leaders, after the anti-worker violence had already been going on for hours, and Thorn felt it was impossible to continue. Thorn also received warnings from other labor leaders that he would likely be arrested that day if he didn't accede to the government's demands. Despite Thorn's public call to end the strike in the afternoon on Sept. 16, some strikers remained on the streets until sometime during the day of Sept. 17.

The strike's end was followed by a massive wave of firings. Approximately 800 workers from 29 factories were refused re-entry to their jobs. They claimed to be fired, though employers later claimed, after Prime Minister Hun Sen demanded that employers rehire all fired workers, that most of these workers were merely "suspended," and that almost all had been re-admitted. By November, Thorn says that 378 workers from 18 factories remained without their former jobs, and that today the number is 301 workers from 15 factories.

I met Thorn in the lobby of the Phnom Penh Hotel, where the unions, employers, and government were having their first day of three-day meetings announcing and discussing the new draft of the labor law, created without input from independent unions. Most centrally, the new draft of the law appears to give the government unilateral decision-making power (which it already holds in fact, but rarely exercises) with regard to unions, all of which favor capitalists. Three provisions are particularly worrying:

1. One provision requires the designation of a "most representative" union with the "exclusive right" to negotiate on behalf of workers throughout an industry.

2. There are new requirements that "unions file financial reports with the government each year."

3. The new draft law prohibits "participation in 'illegal' strikes," which could "lead some unionists to face criminal charges."

It seems clear to me, after my discussion with Ath Thorn, that these changes are intended to hobble independent labor unions by setting up monopoly yellow unions dominated by the government in the garment industry, by subjecting independent unions to onerous new reporting requirements which can only be used

against them, and by criminalizing strikes of which they disapprove.

It is also clear that many of these changes were specifically inspired by the fear that over 210,000 workers (more than half of the industry in the country) struck into the hearts of the capitalist businessmen and kleptocratic politicians last September, a strike that threatened to be so successful that just when it was on the brink of a total national general strike, the strike screeched to a halt. This screeching halt was the result of the fear the government managed to strike in turn into Ath Thorn, not just for himself, but also for the workers he represents.

The vigor and numbers involved in that strike surprised everyone, except perhaps the rank-and-file workers, and leadership was not prepared to seize the opportunities that suddenly presented themselves. I hope that they will learn from that lack of preparation, and be prepared next time.

In the meantime, union demands are threefold: (1) Drop all criminal cases against workers, (2) Reinstate all fired workers with back pay, and (3) a promise from all parties to engage in good faith discussions.

In concluding, Thorn asked for the following from the membership in the IWW:

Please write letters in support of Cambodian workers to the U.S. government, the Cambodian Ministry of Labor, and to the unions themselves, demanding (1) the elimination of all criminal cases against workers from the September strike, (2) the reinstatement of all fired workers, with back pay, (3) the continuation of MFA-style tariff exemptions for the Cambodian garment industry (especially for US Government agencies), and to (4) put pressure on factory owners to obey the laws.

Contact:

- U.S. Department of State, 2201 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20520. Phone: 202-647-4000

- Garment Manufacturer's Association of Cambodia, No. 175 Jawahar Nehru Blvd (Street 215), Phnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia. Phone: 855-23-301 181. Fax: (855) 23-882 860. Email: info@gmac-cambodia.org

- Cambodian Ministry of Labor & Vocational Training, No. 3, Confederation de la Russie, 12156 Phnom Penh. Phone: 855-23-882-734 or 855-23-884-375. Fax: 855-23-882-769. Email: mlvt.gov@camintel.com

- C.CAWDU, #2,3G, St. 26BT, Tnotchrum Village, Sangkat Boeung Tompun, Khan Meanchey, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Phone: 012-998-906, 012-396-069, 012-709-509. Email: c.l.ccambodia@online.com.kh

- FTUWKC, #16A, Street 360, Sangkat Boeung Keng kang III, Khan Chamkarmon, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Phone: 855-23-216-870. Fax: 855-23-216-870. Email: contact@ftuwkc.org

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Five Wobblies Visit The West Bank

By Nathaniel Miller

It is impossible to understand the situation for workers in the West Bank without first grasping the realities of life under military occupation. Since 1967, Israel has been occupying the West Bank—controlling movement and commerce, as well as the political and social lives of Palestinian residents. From the travel restrictions, to the staggering



Protests in the West Bank.

Photo: Rob Mulford

46 percent poverty rate, the effects of the occupation can be seen everywhere. Last year I took part in an IWW International Solidarity Commission delegation to the West Bank to learn about Palestinian labor organizing. We met with an array of Palestinian unions, from the more politically entrenched Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions, to more independent unions, such as our host—the Independent Federation of Unions in Palestine (IFUP). A relatively new union of about 50,000 members, the IFUP represents workers in the pharmaceutical, construction, banking, education, agriculture, and service industries. The IFUP also helps unemployed workers organize local projects that create jobs, and pressures the Palestinian Authority government to provide promised unemployment benefits.

Labor organizing under occupation faces many obstacles. There are more than 700 military checkpoints throughout the West Bank, located on roads vital to inter-city commerce. It is common to be stopped, frisked, and interrogated for hours at checkpoints, and it is also common to be arbitrarily detained for several years without a trial. Almost every organizer we met with had been arrested for their union work, with most of the arrests having occurred in the middle of the night, and in front of family members.

In addition to the daily humiliation of checkpoints, systematically-enforced poverty, arbitrary imprisonment, and the inability to travel outside the West Bank, Palestinians live in fear of land confiscation and extrajudicial killing, carried out by Israeli settlers and soldiers. In East Jerusalem, a historically Arab city (which includes the Old City), we saw Palestinian families being evicted from their homes to make room for Israeli settlers and public parks. This practice has been the unofficial Israeli policy in the West Bank for decades. We visited a home in Hebron, another major city in the West Bank, which has belonged to the same family for centuries. Settlers, many from the United States, have been trying to evict the family for years after having successfully evicted many of their neighbors. But this family refuses to leave their ancestral home, standing up to the aggressive settler project, despite tremendous personal tragedy. In 2008, settlers jumped onto their roof and hurled a Molotov cocktail into the bedroom of two young brothers, killing them both in their sleep. This type of attack is common throughout the West Bank, where settlers forcibly occupy 40 percent of the land, including most of the strategic hilltops and aquifers, and routinely assault the local Arab population.

Prior to the Second Intifada—a Palestinian uprising that began in 2000—many West Bank residents like Waheeb Hamin, who organizes other unemployed workers,

had worked in Israel. But since 2003, Israel has cut off Palestinian travel into Israel, in part through the construction of a 30-foot high concrete wall that divides Israel from the West Bank. Even still, many Palestinians continue to enter Israel illegally to find low-wage work, having been forced by the dearth of employment in the West Bank. The travel restrictions imposed by Israel have caused Hamin to switch industries, from tourism to house painting. However, like so many in the West Bank, he has difficulty finding work. Furthermore, Israel's separation wall has annexed 19 acres of his family's land, preventing him from making a living as a farmer. In total, the separation wall slices off 10 percent of the West Bank's most arable land to Israel. A macabre irony is that construction work in settlements and on the wall is a major source of Palestinian employment.

The Israeli occupation would be impossible to sustain without U.S. military aid, which totals about \$2.4 billion a year. The consensus of almost everyone we met with was that international labor must support the economic, academic, and cultural boycott of Israel, which has been called for by all West Bank unions and many civil society groups. I am proud that the IWW has become the first union in the United States to support the boycott. The occupation hurts both Palestinian and Israeli workers—the cost of sustaining the settlement network alone is about \$556 million a year, and American tax dollars go directly to supporting it.

This May, Mohammed Aruri from the Independent Federation of Unions in Palestine will be visiting the United States. The IFUP is an organization with whom the IWW shares close solidarity, and they were extremely gracious hosts during the IWW's delegation to Palestine. We hope to be equally gracious during his visit here. As you can imagine, a radical unionist living under occupation does not have access to a large amount of money, so most of Mohammed's expenses will need to be carried by us. To that end, we're setting up a fund to defray some of his travel costs. I urge you to pass the hat at Branch meetings and other events, to raise money for his travels. Individual donations are also very welcome. Donations can be sent via PayPal to ghq@iww.org or mailed to IWW GHQ, P.O. Box 180195, Chicago, IL 60618. Please note "Palestine Funds" in any donations. Currently, the exact dates and destinations for his trip are not solidified, though we're looking at mid-May 2011. If you are interested in hosting him please contact nathaniel@iww.org for more details. He will definitely be touring the East Coast, though if we can raise enough money, his tour could potentially be extended to other parts of North America.

Truck Drivers Strike In Gaza

By Nicholas DeFilippis

Nearly 1,000 Palestinian truck drivers from the Union of Commercial Transportation Drivers went on strike on March 7. Refusing to load goods into their trailers, the union blocked the Israeli-controlled Kerem Shalom crossing in southern Gaza with 450 trucks to protest the closure of a different crossing.

The Karni crossing, the largest entry point to the Gaza Strip and its only bulk goods terminal, was permanently shut down three days before the strike. This entry point had the most capacity for the transportation of goods into Gaza, and its closure has left Kerem Shalom as the only entry point to Gaza for truckers.

Israel claims the crossing was closed for security reasons. Human rights groups, however, say it was closed as part of the Israeli siege on Gaza, which is illegal under international law. They fear the closure of the Karni crossing will worsen the already disastrous humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The strikers have maintained that both Israel and the Palestinian Authority are to blame for closing the Karni crossing.

The truck drivers say that Kerem Shalom is not large enough to provide enough goods for all 1.6 million residents of the Gaza Strip. The truckers stated that Gaza's roads are not suitable for transporting goods from the south to the north, and that leaving them with only one crossing would increase the cost of delivering goods. The

truck drivers' union also complained that having only one crossing will obstruct the shipment of tools, feed, gravel, and fuel needed for them to work.

Another focus of the strike was poor working conditions. Truck drivers must now travel twice the distance with no access to drinking water or bathrooms.

On March 11, the truck drivers temporarily ended their strike.

"We decided to halt the strike for 15 days after an agreement was reached with the coordination council for Gaza Strip associations to tackle the drivers' complaints with Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Strip authorities," said Jihad Isleem, Chairman of the Gaza Transportation Association.

"We received promises from the coordination council that our demands will be considered and the tight measures imposed on the drivers and the importers of goods will be eased," he added.

Before the Hamas victory in the January 2006 elections, there were five entry points into the Gaza Strip. Israel began shutting down entry points to Gaza in 2008, and has now closed all but Kerem Shalom in order to destroy Hamas at the expense of the innocent Palestinian civilians and workers. According to an Oxfam International report, the closure of the Karni crossing "is already affecting the Gaza Strip with longer waits for the entry of commercial and humanitarian goods and increased transport and labor costs."

IWW Protests Eurest's Labor Practices

By Harald Stubbe

On March 3, canteen workers at the company Eurest protested at the Commerzbank branch in Frankfurt Gallus, Germany. The Commerzbank branch will be closed and Eurest refuses to guarantee the workers employment in its other canteens.

Although the colleagues at Eurest are organized in the IWW, a member of the local board of the Gewerkschaft Nahrung-Genuss-Gaststätten (NGG) and a member of the regional board of the Verdi union, Hochtaunus, came to support the demonstrators. Many bankers briefly stopped to wish the demonstrators success. Activists of the IWW had, in the course of the previous week, distributed flyers at Commerzbank branches in many



Wobblies protest Eurest.

Photo: Harald Stubbe

German cities as well as internationally.

The IWW also holds Commerzbank accountable for letting a caterer such as Eurest run their canteens—a caterer that repeatedly gains attention for its bad treatment of workers.

Netherlands Fight Against Austerity

By Michael Dranove

Students in the Netherlands have responded to the announcement of university cuts by occupying buildings and taking to the streets. The proposed cuts would end funding for masters students, and impose a 3,000 euro fine on students that delay more than one year to graduate, as well as end student access to free public transit.

A manifestation against the cuts was called for Jan. 21, and universities postponed exams in order to allow students to attend. When students at Amsterdam University learned that exams at their school would not be postponed, they took matters into their own hands. On Jan. 17, students from Amsterdam University walked into the student information office and sealed all entrances and exits demanding that the university postpone exams and allow students to attend the demonstration planned for the Jan. 21. After some negotiations the university agreed to permit students to attend the demonstration and take their exams at a different time.

The demonstration scheduled for Jan. 21 was called by the country's student unions and was organized with the help of far-left groups. The plan for the demonstration was to gather outside of Holland's parliament, called the

Hague. On the eve of the demonstration the government attempted to divide the students by declaring that they had intelligence that radical anarchists would try to provoke riots. However, the manifestation saw 15,000 students take to the streets in a massive display of public anger against the government. Earlier that day a demonstration called by social democratic, socialist and anarchist groups saw between 600 and 1,000 people on the streets accompanied by a heavy police presence. The march was able to reach the rally safely, and the marchers gathered outside of the Hague and listened to several speakers. However, following the rally police attacked demonstrators without cause arresting 50 and wounding many demonstrators who ended up in the hospital after being attacked by police batons, dogs and horses.

Following the demonstration, the so-called "radical" groups that the government had tried to demonize prior to the rally produced a statement that condemned: "the misleading information given by the media. Generally the media talk about 'hooligans' and 'radical activists.' However, the people that were present in the demonstration know that it was not the students but the riot police that forced violence."