

INDUSTRIAL WORKER

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Immigrant Detainees on Hunger Strike in South Texas

By Greg Rodriguez

RIO GRANDE VALLEY, Texas - Nearly 100 immigrants being detained at the Port Isabel Detention Center (PIDC) began a hunger strike on April 22, 2009. The detainees have resorted to this form of non-violent direct action after months of relentlessly demanding adequate medical attention and an end to abuses by guards.

PIDC is a prison used to detain immigrants arrested by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). It is located in an extremely isolated area of the remote South Texas town called Los Fresnos.

Those responsible for prisoner neglect and abuse are DHS, ICE and, more specifically, Field Director for ICE, Michael J. Pitts, who has been trying to break up the hunger strike by planning the isolation of participants, pressuring them to eat, and calling for the speedy deportation of detainees engaging in the strike. These are tactics which will not solve the problems, but instead deny justice to the struggling detainees. Special Advisor on ICE and Detention/

Removal to DHS, Dora Schriro, is also among the responsible heads for her failure to report to the public on the conditions at PIDC.

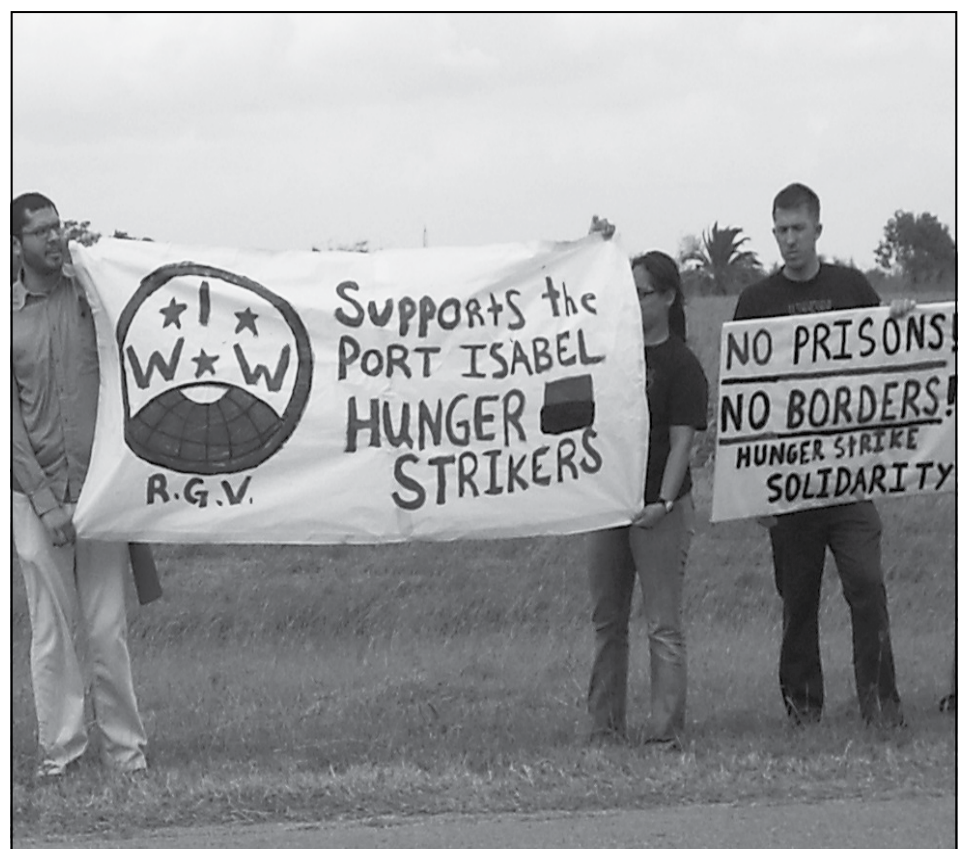
The hunger strikers are also demanding due process. In an interview with the *Texas Observer*, Rama Carty—one of the detainees and hunger strikers at the Port Isabel prison—said to the reporter: “It’s unjust... We are held here beyond any reasonable time, period.” Carty has been at the Port Isabel facility for about 13 months now, according to the report.

Deplorable conditions and lack of legal access are not uncommon at these types of facilities nationwide. It is important to note that the PIDC detainees have set a precedent for all the victims of immigration detention with this form of direct action. They have called on the community to make their struggle public.

Community Action

On the week when most class-conscious workers prepared to celebrate International Worker’s Day, members

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IWW stands for solidarity outside the PIDC.

Photo: Anselmo Garza

First Independent Trade Union Forms in Egypt

By Mathieu Dube

The workers of the Real Estate Tax Authority (RETA) have submitted their application to become the first independent union in Egypt. Around 300 members of RETA’s General Assembly gathered in Cairo to pressure the Ministry of Manpower into accepting their petition. The formation of the union, which represents 270,000 members, was built on struggles dating back to 2007. The workers voted to form the union in December 2008 after a year-long struggle.

Since the establishment of the General Federation of Trade Unions in 1957, there have not been any unions outside of the regime’s reach. Union democracy in the Federation is nonexistent—elections are rigged, candidates that aren’t

card-carrying members of the ruling National Democratic Party are either banned or sidelined, and its officials are thus usually pro-government and pro-employer. The Federation is a tool for the regime to mass mobilize for parliamentary elections and to put on a show for any given issue.

Initially struggling to bring equality between workers in governorates (regions) and their counterparts in the main RETA in Cairo, 10,000 workers held a sit-in in front of the prime minister of Cairo’s office in December 2007. The sit-in was a culmination of a general strike movement in RETA offices all over the country, and it succeeded in allowing the General Strike Committee to have

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Starbucks Workers Organize In Chile

By Diane Krauthamer

On May 5, 2009, the IWW Starbucks Workers Union (SWU) announced the formation of the first union of Starbucks workers in Latin America—Sindicato de Trabajadores de Starbucks Coffee Chile S.A.

Starbucks baristas and shift supervisors in Santiago have organized for respect on the job, a dependable work schedule, and a living wage, among other issues. Currently, Starbucks Coffee Chile S.A. has 30 stores in the region, with plans to open six more stores in the near future.

“Starbucks has been in Chile for six years now, and since they opened, management’s communication with the workers has been getting worse and worse,” said organizer Andrés Giordano.

“We have seen some reprisals against those who have voiced constructive criticism to management about such issues as dismissals and a lack of promotions for baristas,” he added.

Much like the working conditions in North America and Europe, Starbucks coffee shops in Latin America do not pay a living wage. In Santiago, for instance, baristas and shift supervisors only make \$2 to \$3 per hour, while they continue to sell over-priced specialty drinks for twice that amount. Meanwhile, the cost of living has increased by 26 percent in the last five years, according to Giordano.

“Around the world, Starbucks jobs must work for hard-working baristas,”
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New School Students, Workers Protest Union Busting

By Thomas Good

NEW YORK - At the New School students and faculty are uniting to demand embattled president Bob Kerrey’s resignation, more student-worker participation in university decision-making and the rehiring of a dozen faculty fired as a result of “curricular changes.”

On April 23, New School faculty—members of ACT-UAW (United Auto Workers Local 7902)—rallied outside the New School’s main administration building on 12th Street in Greenwich Village. A moving picket was followed by speakers, including representatives of elected officials, union organizers, and students and faculty from the Parsons School of Design, who were adversely affected by the New School’s decision to declare them “non-rehired.”

According to an unsigned “Facts At A Glance” statement, dated April 22 and distributed to press at the rally, 12 part-time Parsons faculty were not rehired for the 2009-2010 academic year. The faculty members include “six probationary or post-probationary part-time faculty whose assignments ran only through the spring,” “three probationary part-time faculty (who) received letters confirming they would not teach in the fall” and “three annual part-time faculty (who) received letters indicating they would not teach in the Fine Arts program,” but who may be offered alternate teaching assignments.

The affected staff were notified in March via email that they would not be rehired in the fall. The Parsons School
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Letters welcome!

Send your letters to: iw@iww.org with “Letter” in the subject.

Mailing address:
IW, PO Box 7430, JAF Station, New York, NY 10116, United States

Get the Word Out!

IWW members, branches, job shops and other affiliated bodies can get the word out about their project, event, campaign or protest each month in the *Industrial Worker*. Send announcements to iw@iww.org. Much appreciated donations for the following sizes should be sent to IWW GHQ, PO Box 23085, Cincinnati OH 45223 USA.
\$12 for 1” tall, 1 column wide
\$40 for 4” by 2 columns
\$90 for a quarter page

‘Industrial Worker’ Mailing Issues Resolved

Fellow Workers,
After resolving a number of mishaps and delays, we finally have some good news. The *Industrial Worker’s* mailing problems have been temporarily (and hopefully permanently) resolved! Subscribers should be receiving their copies within the first week of each month. We apologize to every one of you who had to wait weeks to receive your newspaper(s), or to you who never received them at all.
In the past, we relied on the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) to tie bundles together with a plastic belt. Saltus Press, our printer and mailer, informed us that at some point in the mailing process the post office was cutting the ties—so bulk subscribers were only receiving one *IW* in the mail, for instance, even if they were expecting 50 copies. Now, we are using the USPS to “polybag” bundles at an affordable cost, but it took much longer than anticipated to reach this agreement between myself, GHQ and Saltus Press.

Many un-labeled copies were returned to GHQ, so please contact them at ghq@iww.org if you would still like to receive missing back issues.
For the future, it is important that each person who is involved in the creation of this newspaper understand how they can help expedite the process. The longer it takes for content to come in, the longer it takes to lay out and mail the newspaper. So please, if you are submitting a story, adhere to the deadline, posted on the masthead of each *IW* and on the international IWW email list.
If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the address listed below. Thanks for all of your patience.

For the OBU,
Diane Krauthamer
Editor, *Industrial Worker*
iw@iww.org



Graphic: iww.org

Correction

Dek Keenan’s article, “Multiple Factory Occupations in Scotland” on page 1 of the May 2009 *Industrial Worker*, states that the factory occupations were all in Scotland. The author would like to clarify that the occupations were in Scotland (Dundee), Ireland (Belfast) and the south of England (Enfield).

Industrial Worker

The Voice of Revolutionary Industrial Unionism

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Contract Battle At ‘Boston Globe’ Exemplifies Industry’s Pain

By Matthew Andrews

The New York Times Co. is demanding \$20 million in concessions from employees at the *Boston Globe* and it looks likely they will get it. Divided by craft into seven different unions, *Globe* employees have been forced to accept concessionary contracts one by one. The New York Times Company, which purchased the paper in 1993 for \$1.1 billion, has won nearly all the cost-cutting measures they wanted. The Boston Newspaper Guild is the largest union and was the last of seven to come to an agreement. For a few days the Times Co. even threatened that the paper would permanently close, during which time three of the remaining four unions settled their negotiations.

Boston Newspaper Guild Concessions

Under the proposed contract for Guild members, some 600 workers face concessions of \$10 million including an 8.4 percent wage cut, five days of unpaid furlough, a range of benefit cuts, and an end to lifetime job guarantees held by about 190 members.

The contract under consideration includes a pension freeze, elimination of company contributions to retirement plans, a cut of more than \$800,000 in company contributions to the healthcare plan, elimination of life insurance benefits, eye care, tuition reimbursements, and retiree death benefits. The contract would also increase the workweek from 37.5 hours to 40 hours.

Almost a week after the final deadline for negotiations passed, the Guild made the unorthodox decision to present their members the final offer of the Times Co., without making a recommendation for or against it. It appears the Guild believes this is the best deal they are going to get, yet they are not willing to sell it to their membership. If the contract is not approved, the Times Co.

has threatened a 23 percent across-the-board pay cut. The vote was slated to be held on June 8 or 9.

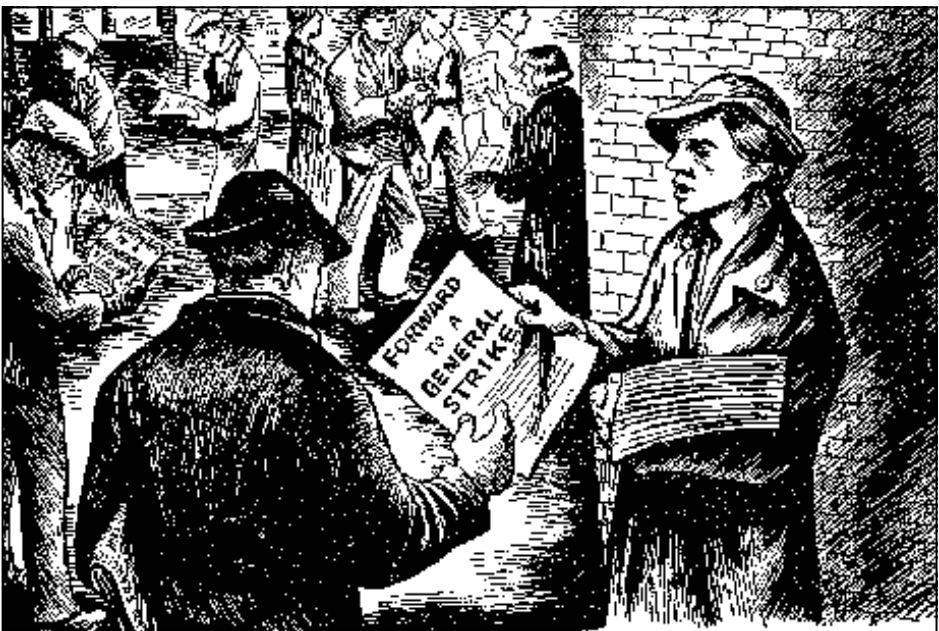
Lifetime Guarantees

The plan to eliminate lifetime job guarantees has been one of the most controversial aspects of the contract under consideration. The lifetime job guarantees were given to Guild workers hired before 1992 in exchange for eliminating a “no layoff” clause in the contract. The guarantee only applies in the event of layoffs. Workers can still be fired for just cause. Although 55 more Guild members were given this protection in 1999, less than one-third of the Guild’s membership is now covered.

The daily newspaper was once a major manufacturing endeavor, requiring skilled tradesmen who set type, composed pages, engraved photos, ran the presses, and packaged the paper for delivery. With the advance of automation and computers, unions gave up minimum manning requirements and other job protections, allowing production to be reorganized. In exchange they won employment guarantees to ensure that workers would be reassigned to new tasks rather than eliminated. Nevertheless, the workforce shrunk as the need for these workers declined and union power receded. Although the decision to not protect new workers may have seemed like a minor concession in 1994, today the issue is dividing the union between new and old workers. Now it appears layoff protection could disappear completely. Workers must learn that a contract that protects their jobs is only as strong as the union that negotiated it.

Changes in Production

The traditional business model of newspapers has been to sell their audience to the advertisers. That’s where the money is made. It also has meant that newspapers must attract wealthy readers



Graphic: iww.org

and set a business-friendly tone in order to satisfy the needs of their true customers, the advertisers.

The cost of advertising is built into every consumer product. Each time we buy a product we pay for the cost of advertising it. So we already indirectly pay for the journalism that advertising supports, whether we like it or not. In truth, advertising is a wasteful enterprise with universally antisocial ends such as making us more materialistic, less confident in our own self-worth, and uncritical of corporate messages. The journalism that it supports provides no incentive for us to challenge corporate power or market forces.

Now that advertising revenue is drying up and unlikely to return, newspapers are cutting back or closing down across the country. The profession of journalism is dying at daily newspapers in cities across the U.S. Newspaper workers still have the potential to exercise collective power at work, but under the limits capitalism has placed on their employers, they see little point. These

workers understand that the problem goes beyond greedy bosses. The for-profit business model will not sustain them any longer.

Newspaper bosses are fighting a losing battle against the inherent openness of the internet. Efforts to make users pay for content have failed because the ensuing drop-off in readership at pay-for-use websites undercuts advertising revenue. Furthermore, readers can switch to competing sources in a matter of seconds.

Revenue at New England Media Group, the regional advertising wing of the New York Times Co., plunged more than 30 percent in the last year. Under the additional challenge of a general economic crisis, the owners of the *Boston Globe* are predicting a \$85 million shortfall this year. It is unclear if the *Boston Globe* is really unprofitable or if it is just making less than enough to make investors happy. After the *Baltimore Sun* made similar claims to financial hardship in order to cut jobs and benefits, it came to light that they turned a 37 percent profit.

According to national statistics, newspaper profit margins peaked at about 23 percent on average in 2000. With access to the internet easier and faster than ever before, many readers are making the switch for their daily news, while advertisers are switching to target their audiences at a lesser cost. Are the same productive forces that destroyed union jobs and gave newspapers huge profits in decades past now threatening to put them out of business?

A New Model is Necessary

Without a movement for a new economic model, those newspapers that remain will probably only become more desperately subservient to corporate messages. Journalists who wish to continue working in the industry should not be expected to go down with this sinking ship while stockholders and executives plan their escape. Newspaper workers need radical ideas and bold action to avoid the demise of their industry and save their jobs.

Newspaper workers must unite to propose not-for-profit alternatives, such as reader-supported community ownership, nonprofit status and cooperatives. They must also demand that their unions play a leadership role in advocating, organizing and defending these changes.

This could be a positive development toward having a media that is more accountable to the public. But to get readers to pay when so much free content is available online, newspapers themselves must change. They must offer more original news and analysis. They must serve the public interest. Readers must be given a stronger voice in shaping what news is covered and how.

IWW Constitution Preamble

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life. Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, “A fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work,” we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, “Abolition of the wage system.”

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for the everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

Join the IWW Today

The IWW is a union for all workers, a union dedicated to organizing on the job, in our industries and in our communities both to win better conditions today and to build a world without bosses, a world in which production and distribution are organized by workers ourselves to meet the needs of the entire population, not merely a handful of exploiters.

We are the Industrial Workers of the World because we organize industrially – that is to say, we organize all workers on the job into one union, rather than dividing workers by trade, so that we can pool our strength to fight the bosses together.

Since the IWW was founded in 1905, we have recognized the need to build a truly international union movement in order to confront the global power of the bosses and in order to strengthen workers’ ability to stand in solidarity with our fellow workers no matter what part of the globe they happen to live on.

We are a union open to all workers, whether or not the IWW happens to have representation rights in your workplace. We organize the worker, not the job, recognizing that unionism is not about government certification or employer recognition but about workers coming together to address our common concerns. Sometimes this means striking or signing a contract. Sometimes it means refusing to work with an unsafe machine or following the bosses’ orders so literally that nothing gets done. Sometimes it means agitating around particular issues or grievances in a specific workplace, or across an industry.

Because the IWW is a democratic, member-run union, decisions about what issues to address and what tactics to pursue are made by the workers directly involved.

TO JOIN: Mail this form with a check or money order for initiation and your first month’s dues to: IWW, Post Office Box 23085, Cincinnati OH 45223, USA.

Initiation is the same as one month’s dues. Our dues are calculated according to your income. If your monthly income is under \$2000, dues are \$9 a month. If your monthly income is between \$2000 and \$3500, dues are \$18 a month. If your monthly income is over \$3500 a month, dues are \$27 a month. Dues may vary outside of North America and in Regional Organizing Committees (Australia, British Isles, German Language Area).

☐ I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer.

☐ I agree to abide by the IWW constitution.

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

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Lasting Lessons from the Class Struggle

By Matt Jones and MK

“To build the new society you need new people, and people can be transformed only in activity”—Martin Glaberman, “Work and Working Class Consciousness.”

March 20, 2004: Over the course of a year, a group of UPS loaders had developed a lot of camaraderie with one another. They had the power, and they openly expressed it by refusing to work at the speed demanded by the bosses.

A new worker was brought in, and management tried its best to isolate him from the activist group. When this fellow worker defied management and lined up with

the rest of the workers, working at their pace, calling management “blue shirts,” and spending his breaks with other militant workers, management brought even more pressure on him, pushing him to change and work faster or he would be fired. His coworkers responded after a break one morning by refusing to go back to work until a certain “blue shirt,” the one mostly responsible for the pressure brought on the new worker, was taken off the line. It was a stand-off, and the tension was high, none of the workers having been involved in anything like this before. They won their demand, the supervisor was taken off the line, and they were threatened with firings if they tried anything like that again. Over the course of the next year, they all began to leave the job, moving to other work, other shifts at UPS, or to other departments.

Roughly a year-and-a-half after the action had taken place, two friends from the UPS job get together. Chatting over a beer, they talked about how one had quit UPS but the other still worked there. The one who was still at UPS relayed how he would bring the story up whenever he saw their old despised manager, how that “blue shirt’s” face would turn red and he would storm off. Nostalgic for the old crew and their bold action at work, the worker who had since moved on called another former coworker. He too expressed pride in their defiance of the boss and added that he looked forward to the next time he could stick it to management to show ‘em who was really in charge. Though the gains were long gone, the memory and experience still lingered, with the workers holding onto a desire to take action next time they had the strength.

May 17th, 2006: Messengers from Arrow Messenger Service in Chicago gather for a special anniversary party at a fellow worker’s home. Exactly one year before, on a busy Thursday afternoon, they all had turned off the two-way radios messengers use to communicate to their dispatcher. Having been through three fruitless negotiating sessions with the company, this was their way of showing Arrow that if the bosses wouldn’t meet their terms, the company wouldn’t run. After a pitched battle during the ensuing month, the company agreed to the workers’ demands.

As they gather at the anniversary party, make little drunken speeches, and reminisce about the drawn-out struggle of the year before, they realize only three or four of them—out of 20—still work at Arrow Messenger Service. Several were fired during the campaign, others quit in frustration, and others just decided to move on.

There is virtually no organization left at Arrow and no existing struggle against the boss to speak of. In another year, the union will be completely gone, and what will become of the gains made in the winter of 2005 is anyone’s guess.

But one thing is clear: none of the workers involved would have changed a thing. For some it was the greatest work experience they had ever been a part of. There is consensus that the whole thing was nothing less than life-changing. Crappy work is no longer something that must only be endured. It can be collectively resisted.

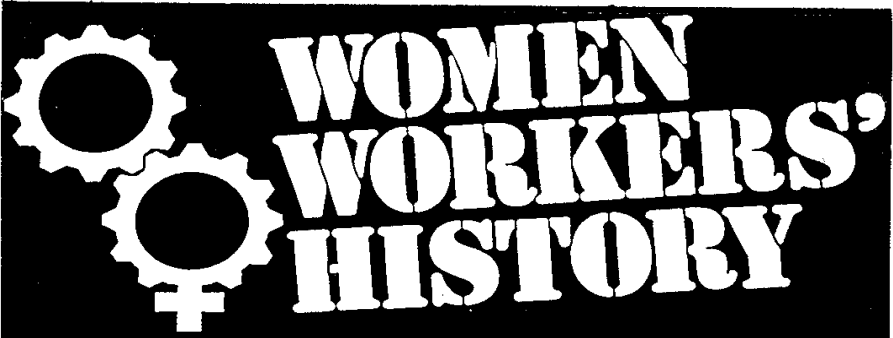
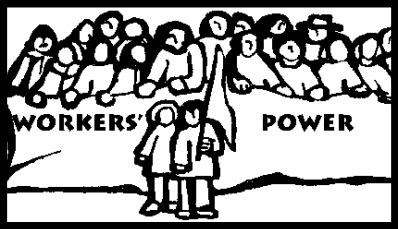
At first glance, one can look at these shop-floor skirmishes and see defeat. Gains were eroded, and no lasting organization was ever built. But through struggle, we don’t just produce better working conditions, resolve grievances, and build a union: We produce new kinds of people. A major part of our organizing has to be

a change in consciousness. This is why our tactics are so important. This type of change in outlook isn’t facilitated as clearly through an NLRB election campaign. Direct action, where workers themselves are making the change, gives the feeling of power to us workers. Most members of our class have not felt this power, but once it has been summoned up, it is much harder to push down.

When we workers act as a group, we are making a statement to each fellow worker involved. This statement is clear: I am willing to stand here with you if you are here to stand with me. We may win this fight, or we may lose, but that statement always stays with us. It resonates with us as we go through our lives. When we organize and when we take action that effectively challenges our boss, we have the power to demand the changes we want to see. This is the key to understanding why these types of actions change our lives. In the UPS story, workers stood up, put themselves on the line for another worker. In the Arrow story, workers took action to strengthen their position and to make a clear point: we are united and without US you do not have a company. When we put ourselves on the line for one another, no one forgets what is possible.

The concept of producing organizers at one company who scatter out to other companies has become a maxim for some IWW organizers in industry-wide efforts, and the concept is a good one, but there’s something more to it. Not everyone is going to become an organizer, but everyone is going to have to assess the fight they’ve just been through and draw conclusions for their own lives. When the dust settles from our action, as it inevitably does, we are left to consider what happened. We have seen the power we have as workers, a power unknown before. It may not occur to us immediately, but with any major change in our lives, there is a resonance—a white noise that does not go away. It could be a month later and we could be at the same job, or a year later and we could be two jobs down the road, but we will remember. And when we have the chance, we line up with, or maybe even lead, an effort to organize and take a stand against the boss. This time we do it with less hesitation than before, maybe with more foresight and with more vigor, because now we know exactly what it means.

The bottom line is this: Our organizing needs to have as its byproduct a new increase in workers’ willingness to resist—an increase in our propensity to act on our urges to resist the bosses, even if the resistance is individual. This is the revolutionary outcome. This will lay the groundwork for future organizing, in this industry or others. To “organize the worker, not the job” as we say in this union, is to gradually create new kinds of people, people who are most likely to never again roll over and take the shit the boss throws at them.



Chapter 24 Daughters of St. Crispin*

Conditions which prompted the great shoe strike of 1860 in Lynn, Mass. (Chapter 18) worsened in the years that followed due to increased mechanization. Rebelling against longer hours, lower wages and speedup, Lynn’s male shoe workers organized a local of the Knights of St. Crispin, a national trade union of shoe workers. Shortly after the Lynn women organized the Daughters of St. Crispin.

* PATRON SAINT OF SHOEMAKERS...



From this beginning in Lynn the Daughters of St. Crispin became the first national union of women workers. A founding convention took place in “The Shoe City” on July 28, 1869, attended by 30 delegates who represented lodges in Massachusetts and Maine and in Rochester, N.Y., Philadelphia, Chicago and San Francisco. Two veterans of the 1860 strike, Carrie Wilson and Abbie Jacques, were elected president and secretary.



The Daughters of St. Crispin fought militantly for their rights, and in coalition with the Knights of St. Crispin, were able to force shoe manufacturers to increase wages. In three years the Daughters’ organization grew from 11 to 29 lodges. But their success was short-lived. A determined effort by the bosses to break both shoe workers’ unions, followed by the Depression of 1873, brought about the demise of the Daughters and the Knights.

Graphic: Mike Konopacki

The Missoula Floods were enormous, landscape-changing events during the last Ice Age, some of which discharged 2.6 billion gallons of water every second, but they were only possible due to sudden small ruptures of the ice dam on the Clark Ford River. Small ruptures led to larger ruptures; they built off each other, weakening the dam. In the IWW, our workplace committees, our campaigns, and our fights with the boss have ruptured production, but we have seen companies rebound and get back to business. The true ruptures are the changed individuals that come out the other end of these fights. One day, our years of struggles will turn these ruptures into a revolutionary flood that will forever change the landscape of the world’s economy.

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May Day 2009

First IWW Event in Wales Celebrates Past & Present

By **Huw Jones**

The IWW held its first ever event in north Wales on the weekend of May Labour Day when 30 people came along for a guided history walk around the village of Llanberis.

Activist Selwyn Williams showed fellow walkers around some of the old slate quarrying areas, scenes of bitter struggles for union recognition and against pitiful conditions which eventually lead to a three year lock-out between 1900-1903, one of the longest labour disputes ever. The tour included a visit to Craig yr Undeb (union rock) where the quarry worker's union once held clandestine meetings.

Selwyn explained some of the history never included in glossy tourist leaflets such as how local aristocrats (who where also the local members of parliament and local magistrates) developed the quarries by first passing statutes in the London Parliament giving themselves

ownership areas of common land which were then cleared of subsidence farming communities with the help of the British army. Profits from the slave trade and sugar plantations in the Caribbean where then invested to exploit slate deposits to provide roofing for housing in the rapidly growing cities of the industrial revolution.

Much of the quarrymen's pittance wages for grueling labour were paid back to the owners in the forms of steep rents and through company stores. In 1874 the North Wales Quarrymen Union was formed but faced determined opposition from the owners and time after time was starved back to work following bitter disputes.

As the demand for slate diminished during the second half of the twentieth century, thousands of quarrymen were layed-off. Part of the Llanberis quarry was turned into a hydro-power plant at huge expense to tax-payers only to be

later privatised at a cut down price into the hands of a multi-national corporation. A multi-national pharmaceutical company has set up a plant near the site of another quarry, and true to history, opposes union recognition.

The walkers finished the tour at a café where staff where handed copies of the DVD "Together We Win: The Fight to Organise Starbucks," a film about the victory of workers in the US against Starbucks.

It is hoped to set up IWW branches in both north and south Wales. Supporters have set up a bi-lingual website: <http://www.union-wales.org>.



Fellow-walkers overlooking Llanberis. Photo: Huw Jones

May Day and Violence: A Workers' Perspective from Istanbul

By **"Macurata," Unionbook.org**

Some media reports are linking May Day events worldwide with violence. For example, a story in the New York Times, "Anger and Fear Fuel May Day Europe Protests," wrote of "riot police working overtime as unions and anarchists link arms for May Day," and suggested that the current global financial crisis could spark more social unrest. This statement lacks both accuracy and balance, at least from where I was—Istanbul, Turkey.

The report says that in Istanbul, "(police) officers used tear gas and water cannons to prevent protesters from entering Taksim Square." While the story correctly separated the trade union organizations and groups of protesters that battled with the police, it did not say why the demonstrators insisted to enter Taksim Square.

Today, all organizations in Turkey, except trade unions, are allowed to use the Square for their events. As my Turkish union colleague said, "the venue has been a source of conflict, as workers have not been allowed to celebrate May

Day in Taksim Square since 1977, when 34 people died after unidentified perpetrators opened fire on the public."

Last year was particularly nasty as the police did not even allow unionists to leave their offices. Windows in one building were smashed by water cannons, and thousands were taken into police custody throughout the day.

That is why the Turkish unions have been campaigning to make May Day a national holiday again and to celebrate their event at the Square. The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) setup its online petition page in early April to support this initiative. The Turkish government gave in to the unions' demand and announced in mid-April to legislate May Day as a holiday. However, they did not give permission to any union confederation to hold a mass rally at Taksim this year again. In the end, they compromised to allow a "reasonable amount" of people to enter the Square and commemorate those who were killed in 1977.

I was with the Confederation of

Turkish Trade Unions (TÜRK-İŞ) group and all were allowed in at approximately 8:20 am. Later, a group from the Confederation of Progressive Labor Unions (KESK) and the Confederation of Public Workers' Unions (DISK) came. Police did not allow all of their participants to enter the Square. Here, a group of protesters battled with the police. Later, TÜRK-İŞ moved to Kadıköy and organized a march and a mass rally.

The Hurriyet Daily News described this development as: "In a historic march, laborers walk into the square on May 1 for the first time in 31 years. Surely, all confederations must now work more closely to pressure the government so that one full May Day rally will be held in Taksim Square next year."

This is the background of the incident in Istanbul that the New York Times referred to. Although the economic crisis is high on the unions' agenda in Turkey (and everywhere), I don't think it was the main reason for those fights on the streets. Nor was it the main focus of the day and what the Turkish colleagues

have achieved this year.

Worse still, the newspaper fails to report anything from the Iranian capital of Tehran where the May Day plan by independent workers' organizations including the ITF-affiliated Syndicate Vahed (the bus workers union) was crushed by the police and intelligence forces.

Now, if the state turns violent against the workers on May Day, there is no space in the newspapers to report it? Although May Day today is celebrated peacefully in many countries, let us not forget that there are some countries where the workers are not allowed to express themselves freely and their basic workers' rights are denied, like Iran. Let us also recall that International May Day originates with the Haymarket Martyrs in Chicago. The founding congress of Second International, two years later, resolved to organize international demonstrations on the 1890 anniversary of this Chicago massacre and campaign further for the eight-hour work day.

Surely, that spirit of solidarity and its practice must be carried on.

Vassar College Students & Workers Protest Budget Cuts

By **MEChA de Vassar and the May Day Working Group**

On Friday, May 1, a group of staff, students, and faculty held two rallies at Vassar College. We were loud. We were disruptive. For the first time in years students and faculty at Vassar are standing in solidarity with staff with more than just words.

Vassar traditionally has given its staff summer employment, generally 40 to 50 folks who work in dining centers on campus are assigned to assist in prepping the dorms and grounds for autumn, another 20 or so people remain in the kitchens for summer programs. This year the school, hiding behind the financial crisis, has reduced the number of jobs overall to around 20. This puts a large number of folks who are a part of our community in precarious situations for the summer; many do not know how they will be able to feed their families or keep their houses. And who are those most affected? Working class folks, mostly women, people of color and/or immigrant folks who keep our school running.

The Vassar administration claims there is nothing they can do. That only so much money was allocated to Operations (Well, allocate more!). Or that they are not under a contractual obligation (We say: "So what?!"). The school does not have enough money to support the employees at the bottom, but we do have

enough for the President of the College, Catherine Bond Hill, to remodel her bathroom (\$60,000) and there is enough money for the head of Human Resources, Ruth Spencer, to get a raise.

Even during the Great Depression the school never had to fire or layoff anyone. So we ask: why now?

Vassar College has lost \$300 million from its endowment. It claims that cutting classes, firing professors, and systematically ridding the school of the people who actually make it run, will bring it back. We know that it will not. The school continues to run on the same neoliberal corporate model that put the world in this mess in the first place. We recognize that creative financial thinking is important, not this mimicry of banking giants (Why do these people make up our board of trustees?).

We want to tell other students, the ones who claim we just need more dialogue, more debate, more facts, more numbers, that the only thing we need more of is action. That we've spent months talking and debating and the administration always sets the terms and rules. So it's time to be unruly. Nothing at Vassar (or the world) was ever achieved by asking nicely. In the 1960s it took a takeover of a building for black students to achieve some respect on campus, including the implementation of a Black Studies department. It took a takeover to get the ALANA (African-

American/Black, Latina/o, Asian, and Native American Center) and the Blegen House (the GLBTQ Center, which was recently moved to a room in Main Building). It will take action to accomplish what needs to be done.

We want to let the administration know that we are not fooled by their vague threats. We shout "Worker's Rights!," and they respond with "Financial Aid!" We refuse to allow the school to make students and staff antagonistic towards each other. We stand in solidarity with staff because we can't let such an important part of our community be pushed around.

This is why on May Day 2009 the students, organized under MEChA de Vassar & the May Day Working Group, stood in solidarity with staff organized under the SEIU and CWA locals for not one, but two rallies.

We marched all around the campus, including outside of a fancy luncheon that Catherine Hill was attending in one of the dorms. We marched into Ruth Spencer's office. We ignored security officers' pleas for us to leave, and left when we were good and ready. We marched into Main Building, making as much noise as possible, and watched as Dean Chris Roelke stormed out of his office and down the stairs.

We were pumped. Our student body president showed up at the end asking to speak, and we sent him away. We can-

not waste time anymore with folks who are in positions to speak out every day, and only do so when it is advantageous, when they hope it is a good photo-op.

The administration thought that no students would attend a rally in support of staff. They couldn't be more wrong. Each rally numbered over 100 people, with students calling their friends to join us as we went along. We forced the rest of the student body, the administration and the faculty to know that we are here, and we're not done yet.

We also ask that anyone who wants to voice support, especially if you're an alumni, to contact Catherine (Cappy) Bond Hill and tell her what you think of Vassar's method of dealing with this "financial crisis" by aiming for those at the bottom of the campus hierarchy. Please help us force President Hill to do what is right. Let Cappy and everyone else in the administration know that they should be getting creative and developing programs that allow for full year employment for all employees. Not attacking the little folks. Not making members of the Vassar community risk homelessness and hunger while members of the administration keep making their six-figures.

You can reach the President to politely share what you think:

Contact President Catherine Bond Hill by e-mail at chill@vassar.edu, or by phone at 845-437-7200.

May Day 2009 NYC Workers Fight Bosses, Rain on May Day

By **Diane Krauthamer**

Despite the torrential late spring rain, thousands of workers spent their May Day marching and rallying through the streets of Manhattan, displaying solidarity with workers at home and abroad. New Yorkers celebrated this international workers' holiday with actions, events, marches and rallies, coordinated by a number of labor unions, community associations, political parties and non-profit organizations. In the spirit of celebration, the New York City IWW marched on Starbucks to demand that the coffee giant treat its workers with respect.

Beginning with a 2:00 pm a rally in the heart of Chinatown, the IWW joined hundreds of individuals from community and labor organizations to demand "Equal Rights for All Workers." IWW members Stephanie Basile and Vance Hinton delivered powerful speeches on top of the soapbox.

"May 1st is the real Labor Day. They want us to forget that, but we'll never forget. It was through collective action that those before us made the gains we currently enjoy today," Basile said.

"It was through collective action that we won the 8-hour workday, the right to form a labor union, and wage and hour laws," she added.

Hinton spoke about the necessity of workers organizing at retail stores and warehouses, specifically at Starbucks, where he currently works.

"The next time you walk into a Starbucks, I want you to congratulate the baristas for all the hard work they put into making your drinks," said Hinton, a union barista.

The rally was organized by the Break the Chains Alliance, and featured speakers from the National Mobilization Against Sweatshops (NMASS), the Chinese Staff and Workers Association, and a few local progressive politicians. Additionally, the members of the Social-

ist Party-USA and the Workers Solidarity Alliance (WSA) attended.

After the Chinatown rally, the crowd of approximately 700 people marched uptown to join thousands of workers in Union Square for an annual May Day rally, organized by the May 1st Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights. As the marchers approached the park, a few dozen IWW members and supporters broke away from the main group and headed to the Union Square East Starbucks—the third Starbucks Workers Union (SWU) shop to go public, and one of the many SWU shops in the U.S. that harbors union baristas. Most recently a barista from this shop, Anna Hurst, joined the SWU to fight for back wages after store manager Gwen Krueger denied her two weeks of work. Recently, former barista Sheanel Simon was fired, re-hired, and then fired again for participating in the union.

Armed with drums, leaflets, organic lollipops and signs reading such slogans as "No War But The Class War," the Wobblies swarmed into the store to deliver gifts to the baristas, who were forced to work on an international holiday. Each barista was given a lollipop and a flier, and they were thanked for their hard work.

According to Union Square East SWU barista, Liberte Locke, the store's management attempted to gather information on the actions prior to May Day.

"In the days leading up to the event, Krueger questioned several baristas about what the action would be. They certainly were not expecting lollipops," said Locke.

During the action, Krueger and district manager Adler Ludvigsen helplessly watched as baristas thanked the IWW for their holiday gifts. Ludvigsen was overheard telling a customer that the union was "just a bunch of anarchists and communists."

The IWW then marched from Union

Square East across the park to the 17th and Broadway Starbucks, where many union baristas have been mistreated and wrongfully reprimanded since going public with their union affiliation. Store manager "Little Mark" Vanneri fired former barista Sharon Bell for being a union organizer, and imposed disciplinary measures on current barista Henry Marin for his union involvement. The SWU organized a three day call-in action to Vanneri, from May 1 until May 3, to demand that he respect his workers and their right to organize.

At the action, management stood aghast at the end of the bar, looking extremely nervous as the IWW swarmed into the store. The managers grew confused when the Wobblies started handing out harmless organic lollipops and leaflets to baristas and customers. Before leaving, the IWW banged on drums while chanting "What's disgusting? Union busting! What's outrageous? Starbucks wages!" for a number of minutes, and left without being kicked out. They stayed outside waving red and black flags before a torrential downpour hit. Locke said that baristas from both stores were happy that the union came in.

Despite being drenched, half the group maintained their fighting spirit and joined the rally in Union Square. The rally included a number of speakers and musicians from congressional leaders to indigenous artists. Thousands of workers marched in the pouring rain from Union Square downtown to City



NYC IWW march from Chinatown. Photo: Diane Krauthamer

Hall. Some of the groups in attendance were Make the Road New York, YKA-SEC: Empowering the Korean-American Community, Jornaleros Unidos De Woodside, National Alliance for Filipino Concerns (NAFCON), the New York Immigration Coalition, the Retail Action Project (RAP), the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the African Services Committee, the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and the IWW.

The rain did not keep the IWW's fighting spirit down. In fact, the spirit of May Day lasted throughout the night, as dozens of workers joined together at the NYC IWW office in Long Island City, Queens for a rooftop party. Miraculously, the rain cleared right in time for the Wobblies to finish off the holiday with beer, music and a perfect view of the Manhattan skyline.

Wobfest 2009 Celebrated in Scotland

By **Tom Morton and Dek Keenan**

Edinburgh, Scotland Wobs celebrated May 1 with a great evening of music and comedy. Seven local artists came together to wow the thronging masses on a packed May Day evening at the Forest Café "art space."

The night opened with David Ferrard, singer-songwriter and producer of the anti-war compilation CD "Not in Our Name," and his own debut album "Broken Sky." The tradition of IWW song-writing was not ignored, with Edinburgh Wob Enradgey entertaining us with blues and cool slide guitar. Aberdeen Wobbly Fiona Keenan played traditional IWW tunes as well as original songs before the night was completed by Versificator, with their strictly old school hardcore! Lots of IWW t-shirts and other materials were sold, and the branch welcomes three new members who signed up on the night. And the Wobblin' fun continued!

The traditional Edinburgh May Day march and rally took place on the first Saturday after May 1. Originally organised by the mineworkers unions, the event has in recent times attempted to recapture the spirit of May Day's gone by.

In this spirit, the Edinburgh GMB



Wobblies rally in Edinburgh.

Photo: Bill J.

were out in force, sporting new flags and an impressive new branch banner. The march also heralded the debut of the branch's Wobbly Kazoo Marching Band who delighted the crowds with their note-perfect renditions of "Bella Ciao," the "International" and the ever-popular "A las Barricadas!" Edinburgh Wobs were joined by One Big Union members from Fife, Stirling, Clydeside and Invergordon, on what was a memorably sunny day in the Scottish capital. The IWW stall proved popular, with two people signing up and a number of new contacts made. The branch has used the events around May Day as an opportunity to launch a number of outreach initiatives which will spread into the summer and beyond. There are exciting times ahead in Auld Reekie.

Spirited May Day in London

By **x355622**

More than 500 people participated in the annual May Day march through London. IWW members had mobilised for the day, with new flags and banners that came from the G20 demonstrations in April, where a number of Wobblies had been beaten and arrested. After an unofficial round of speeches from various rank-and-file trade unionists, anarchists, troublemakers, a visitor from the anarcho-syndicalist SAC union in Sweden and IWW members, we headed off.

The march itself was the usual affair, with the trade unions only sending out their banners and a handful of poor souls to carry them, alongside various kinds of socialist parties selling each others' newspapers. The IWW led a contingent that comprised of speakers and supporters of the unofficial rally before the march. With a contingent of a dozen or so IWW folks, each with either a flag or one half of the banner to carry, our presence was felt as we happily marched on.

As we reached Trafalgar Square at the end of the march, rather than listen to the usual fat cat Trades Union Council (TUC) leaders depress everyone with their empty rhetoric, we headed down to join the picket line of the Ford Visteon workers.

These workers had been occupying their factories for a month or more, after their bosses sacked them all with six



Waving the banner in Trafalgar Square. Photo: x355622

minutes' notice. As we arrived, we heard that management had finally come to them with an offer—an offer which comprised of the largest payout that Ford has ever made in the U.K. Of course, redundancy payments are nothing compared to a decent job, but their struggle has really shown us all that direct action gets the goods. Workers are still occupying the Prisme plant in Dundee, and parents have occupied schools facing closure in Glasgow and London. Things are heating up here in the U.K., and the IWW intends to stay on the front lines!

May Day 2009

May Day in Iraq: Report from Baghdad and Basra

By the Trades Union Congress (TUC)

Iraqi trade unions once famously celebrated May Day in 1959, with a million people on the streets of Baghdad to celebrate the fall of the monarchy. This year the celebrations were smaller, but the trade union movement and the Iraqi Communist Party are rebuilding.

Iraqi trade union movement international representative Abdullah Muhsin reports.

“About 2,000 workers marched through Basra towards the main office of the Governor of Basra where he joined the demo by delivering a speech saying that he would work hard for Basra and its people; that he would work with the General Federation of Iraqi Workers (GFIW) and its unions in Basra and encourage non-interference in the affairs of the unions; and that he would work to reduce unemployment.

“Then the head of Basra GFIW delivered a speech in which he strongly criticised the federal government. Key demands he called for were: Abolishing

Decree 150 of 1987 and Order 8750 of 2005; At the Basra demonstration, on May 1, 2009, the government of Iraq must honour its international obligations regarding workers' rights; Reduce unemployment; No to child labour; The government of Iraq must stop its interference in the affairs of the unions; End corruption.

“The demo was supported by the ICP in Basra and chanted the following: We march together to build strong representative democracy. Peace loving people of Iraq: unite and move together to rebuild and renew Iraq.

“Meanwhile in Baghdad, Salaam Saadi, international secretary of the Iraqi Communist Party, reports on an even bigger demonstration led by trade unions.

“Iraqi Communists, waving red banners, joined thousands of workers and trade unionists in celebrating International Workers' Day in central Baghdad on Friday.

“At the Baghdad demonstration, the marchers started off from under Nasb



Photo: tuc.org.uk

Iraqi workers march through Baghdad.

al-Hurriya (Freedom Monument), the historic landmark, in Sahat Al-Tahrir (Liberation Square), moving towards Firdos Square and eventually ended at Andulus Square where a mass rally was held.

“The rally, held in front of the headquarters of the Iraqi Communist

Party, was addressed by the Secretary of its Central Committee, comrade Hamid Majeed Mousa.

“Many democratic organizations joined the march and rally, with banners and slogans calling for working class and national unity, and for defending workers' rights and democratic freedoms.

Swedish Radical Unionists Celebrate

By Klas Rönnbäck, SAC

Gothenburg witnessed a really great May Day. There were an estimated 3,000-3,500 people in the march held by the Svensk Arbetaren Centralorganisation (SAC), the central organisation of Swedish workers. We had the best possible weather, and a there was a positive

vibe throughout the day. There were no bad incidents either, as in some years there were problems with Nazis, for example. While marching, we received news from Stockholm that the previous night, our comrades had won a massive victory against a posh restaurant. This improved the day even further.



Swedish SAC marches through Gothenburg.

Photo: Erik Hjältberg / SAC

Violent May Day Repression in Iran

By the Trades Union Congress (TUC)

Attempts by Iranian workers to celebrate May Day through a peaceful demonstration called by independent trade union organizations were violently repressed by the Iranian government, according to eyewitness reports.

Following days of intimidation of the organizers, including demands from the Iranian government that a rally in Laleh Park in Tehran be called off, about 2,000 people gathered in the park at 5:00 pm on May Day.

Before the rally started, police and security forces closed the park entrances and started punching, kicking, verbally abusing and arresting demonstrators. Cameras and mobile phones were smashed to prevent reports of the demonstration and the violence from being seen by the wider public. Using batons, tazers and tear gas, police forced protesters out of the park, and at 8:00 pm they were still surrounding the park. Alongside government agents, security guards from certain companies and factories where independent trade unions have been active were also present, filming and photographing demonstrators.

Eyewitness observers report that “a significant number of workers and other participants were assaulted and subsequently arrested, many with bloodied heads and faces. Following their massive assault on the crowd, the security forces

moved on to arrest a large number of people in the streets surrounding Laleh Park.”

The May Day rally in the city of Sanandaj was also attacked by security forces and plain clothes officers and many were beaten and arrested. Of approximately 80 people arrested on May Day, 30 people were released on May 2.

Prior to the demonstration, the Allied Workers' Associations (IUF), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Education International (EI) and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) jointly wrote a statement to the government of Iran that they expect workers to be able to publicly celebrate May Day 2009 free of the customary violence and arrests. The union internationals announced the declaration of an action day in countries across the world to protest at the continuing attempts to crush Iranian workers' rights.

In the statement, the IUF, ITUC, EI and ITF also called for an end to the repression of independent trade unions and their members in Iran, and for the immediate and unconditional release of jailed trade unionists including Mansour Osanloo, Ebrahim Madadi, and Farzad Kamangar, and the five leaders of the Haft Tapeh Sugarworkers Union, who were each recently sentenced to one year in prison.

With files from labourstart.org

Rally and Picnic in Philadelphia

By Jon Bekken

Several Philadelphia Wobblies attended a May Day rally sponsored by the Philadelphia Area Project on Occupational Safety and Health, and endorsed by several unions. We set up a table, distributed some literature, spoke to several people, and listened to a mix of speakers and performers—several of whom noted that the labor movement needs much more radical action. Indeed, one union official pointed to some French workers who recently refused to allow their manager to leave the plant until their terms were met. He suggested that U.S. workers could learn from their example. After more than a decade of work, construction is apparently about to start for a labor monument in Elmwood Park, where the rally was held—and the IWW is to be one of a half-dozen unions featured on it. After the rally, we joined a May Day picnic in a park near the IWW hall; spirits were good, even if most of us got a bit damp from intermittent rain.



Graphic: marxists.org

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Pittsburgh IWW Join Baltimore’s Human Rights March for Living Wages

By Kenneth Miller

Ten people from Pittsburgh traveled to Baltimore on April 18, 2009, for the Baltimore Fair and a Human Rights March hosted by the United Workers Association (UWA).

The UWA is the human rights organization that organized the Camden Yards cleaners, part-time workers, “temporary” workers hired through a contractor, by putting pressure on Maryland’s Stadium Authority and Peter Angelos, owner of the Baltimore Orioles Baseball Club. They coined the term “Sweat-Free Baseball” in reference to the sweatshop working conditions at Camden Yards at the same time as the Pittsburgh Anti-Sweatshop Community Alliance (PASCA) coined the term in reference to its demand that the Pittsburgh Pirates accept the testimony of sweatshop workers sewing apparel. The UWA came to Pittsburgh for the All Star Game in 2006 and joined with PASCA to demand that our local baseball teams respect the rights of all workers.

The UWA interviewed 150 workers at three restaurants in Baltimore’s Inner Harbor development. The interviews demonstrated systemic violations of workers’ rights, such as poverty wages and sexual harassment. The UWA has begun to process these violations by using the International Declaration of Human Rights like a union contract. By declaring the Inner Harbor a “Human Rights Zone,” the restaurant bosses, the developer, public officials who provided subsidies to the Inner Harbor developers and the Baltimore community are made aware that the workers intend to

remedy violations of their rights. The enforcement of workers’ human rights is different from traditional union organizing in that it emphasizes workers knowing their rights and exercising them. The emphasis is not on achieving a union contract, but on the community of workers who educate and provide support to one another on a daily basis. There is an obvious similarity between the Human Rights Zone and the Community Benefits Agreements at the new Penguin’s Hockey Arena in Pittsburgh. In both cases, community groups try to leverage the huge tax subsidies to ensure respect for workers on the job. However, a Human Rights Zone is built on the job *after* the permitting process and tax subsidy is in place—the implementation strategy is focused on workers demanding their rights rather than on the mobilization of political support on the boss’s development time frame.

The symbol chosen to advertise and educate about the Human Rights Zone was Harriet Tubman, emphasizing her leadership in the struggle against slavery. Members of the UWA have traveled along the Underground Railroad and educated themselves about the struggle against slavery, thus identifying themselves as being part of a continuous struggle for human rights that has lasted throughout American history. In that spirit, members of the Pittsburgh delegation stopped at Harpers Ferry before arriving in Baltimore to learn about John Brown and the armed resistance he led more than 20 years before the outbreak of the Civil War.

All were strengthened and affirmed



Photo: Mike Pesa

IWW joins UWA for a march in Baltimore.

that the International Declaration of Human Rights is indeed a living document. The proclaiming of Human Rights Zones in Baltimore is similar to the best organizing that has occurred in the world’s Export Processing Zones, where sweatshop workers have to organize at multiple work sites simultaneously and cannot rely on local legal systems to protect them. Members of the Pittsburgh Anti-Sweatshop Community Alliance have long asserted that the workers sewing Pirates apparel will be fired from their jobs, or worse, when they try to exercise their rights. The “Civil Rights Bridge” we are building from the floor of global sweatshops is a necessary precondition for their success.

The most exciting Pittsburgh/Baltimore connections made on our trip were with Baltimore’s organization of

high school students, known as the “Red X Party,” and the Algebra Project. The Algebra Project uses the pedagogy of Bob Moses in a peer-to-peer algebra tutoring program. The tutoring programs have demonstrated success in improving student test scores, and describe education as a right derived from the U.S. Constitution. The Algebra Project pays its tutors through grants and some funding from the Baltimore Public Schools. The leadership that has developed through the Algebra Project has taken up other kinds of organizing amongst the student body and advocacy for public policies that affect young people. Members of the Algebra Project will be hosted in Pittsburgh by B-PEP’s Regional Equity Monitoring Project and the Community Empowerment Association in the near future.

Immigrant Detainees on Hunger Strike in South Texas ICE Facility

Continued from 1

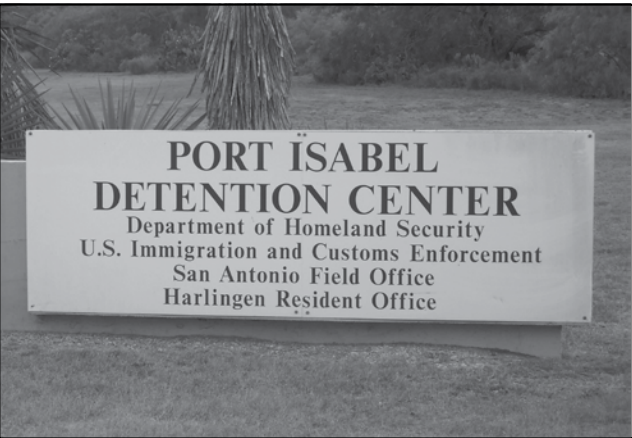


Photo: Anselmo Garza

Many remain detained at the PIDC. and organizers with Southwest Worker’s Union (SWU), the Rio Grande Valley IWW and other community and student organizations approached the holiday with a much more somber attitude. On April 29, 2009 the groups organized a protest and solidarity fast with detainees of PIDC.

At the protest, organizers announced a solidarity fast that lasted until May 1, at which point the groups made yet another public declaration in support of the hunger strikers to local justice organizations rallying for immigrant and workers’ rights. Also on May 1, communities in San Antonio, Texas and Philadelphia engaged in public solidarity fasts with the PIDC detainees.

Organized

SWU organizer Anayanse Garza tells us this: “Prisoners we spoke to stressed that no one person is responsible, or

spearheading this movement. The hunger strike was organized collectively with the support of many people.”

Some detainees went without food for 11 days, and engaged in a rotating hunger strike in order to prolong their strategy. Their goal was to have at least 100 detainees participating in the action.

“We estimate approximately 200 participating in the strike. Staff at the prison continues to falsely report that prisoners are taking their trays of food when they clearly haven’t,” Garza said. She has been visiting with some of the detainees.

PIDC detainees are well-organized and will continue the hunger strike until justice is served. However, our support is critical in their victory. Apart from ensuring that the PIDC hunger strikers’ demands are met, the SWU has made it a priority to gain access to hunger strikers in order to ensure their well-being.

In a letter delivered to ICE officer A. Machacek, the SWU writes, “Our main priority is to ask for you to recognize the hunger strike publicly and allow community members...into the facility to monitor the detainees on hunger strike so that we can have a transparent process.” The letter was addressed to ICE Field Director Michael J. Pitts and Special Advisor

on ICE and Detention/Removal to DHS Dora Schiro—holding them directly accountable for the health and conditions of the detainees.

It is important for the community to take action. Many of these people have serious medical conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure, making every day on hunger strike more dangerous than the last. The groups organizing outside the facility, including the IWW, stress this urgency as they continue to gather community support and engage in solidarity fasts and protests.

As IWW members, let’s not forget the concept of solidarity. We should recognize that the detainees at the Port Isabel facility are, in fact, international workers. These workers have been forced to migrate to the U.S. by dire economic conditions—caused by first-world business and their local puppet governments—in search of quality labor conditions, which are near impossible to find in their homelands; once in the U.S, they are arrested and locked up by the same institutions that caused their migration in the first place. Injustice continues behind the walls of immigrant detention centers all over the country, where immigrants are subject to abuse and treated as less than human.

Every member of our Union should view these prisons as part of the U.S. and its capitalist agenda that aims to keep poor people in poverty and international workers repressed and in fear of speaking up for their rights. The detainees

should inspire us, and remind us that even in the most repressive conditions, organized workers engaging in direct action are the driving force for change.

Solidarity

We must ensure victory for PIDC detainees. Several of you have responded with words of support and questions on how you can show your solidarity with the international workers being detained at PIDC.

We ask that you call the numbers below and tell them what area of the country you are calling from. Tell them you know about the hunger strike at the Port Isabel Detention Center. Tell them you support the detainees on hunger strike, their families, and the Rio Grande Valley community working to make the issue public. Tell them you demand an end to the abuses at PIDC, demand adequate medical attention for all PIDC detainees, and you demand transparency and community monitoring of all those on hunger strike!:

- Michael J. Pitts, Field Office Director, Central South Texas: 210/967-7056
- Department of Homeland Security, Operator: 202/282-8000, Citizen Comment: 202/282-8495

The Rio Grande Valley IWW also encourages your branch to hold a solidarity action at the ICE or DHS offices closest to you. Contact us at rgviww@gmail.com if you plan on having an action or once you have called any of the numbers above.

Continued from 1

The union demanded international support to counter this systematic harassment of their members.

The struggle won some improvements between RETA workers in Cairo and workers in other governorates. In some cases, they achieved a 300 percent salary increase for workers outside of Cairo. The union also succeeded in establishing a social and health care fund for RETA workers.

First Independent Trade Union Forms in Egypt

direct negotiations with Egypt’s finance minister, Youssef Boutros-Ghali. This victory prompted workers to mandate the Strike Committee to establish an independent union. The committee thus contacted boards in every governorate to consolidate the push for an independent union which led to sub-committees in various regions to ensure a real link between the general committee and the rank and file. They started to publish a

newspaper to inform the workers about their right to establish an independent union. The committee also started to collect endorsement signatures from the members. Finally it started to develop relations with the international trade union movement to earn support and increase exposure of their movement.

The union delegates have been under pressure by the government. Khaled Mubarak from the Aswan governorate

was transferred to the Administrative Prosecution for collecting signatures for the Union. Mohamed Khalaf was prevented from collecting signatures in the Suhag governorate. The State Security in Beni Suef governorate summoned Abdul Nasser Hussein for interrogation over his organising activities. One of the main leaders of the Strike Committee, Kamal Abu Eita, was given many administrative sanctions for his role in the campaign.

Anzac Day Commemoration of the IWW Anti-Conscription Campaign

By the Melbourne Protests Blog

As in past years, while tens of thousands at Melbourne’s Shrine of Remembrance and elsewhere around the country did what they thought appropriate, others, numbering hardly more than ten, met outside the former headquarters of the Melbourne branch of the IWW in a commemoration with a different flavor.

As one speaker recalled, it was the IWW that spearheaded the WWI era anti-conscription campaign, without which Australia’s already appalling tally of dead and wounded would undoubtedly have been far greater. It may be worth reproducing here a January 2007 post from Melbourne Indymedia, which set out some of the reasons for this gathering:

“One of the greatest popular victories in Australian history was the defeat of conscription in World War One in a campaign spearheaded by the IWW. The Australian union movement owes much to the IWW and the traditions it created; this despite its brief existence as a largish organization. (The IWW survives as a smallish organization).

“Just an example taken at random: the IWW was resolutely non-racist

at a time when conventional wisdom would have us believe that the Australian labour movement was very much whites only. Yet the IWW was influential enough to lead the labour movement opposition to the war and to conscription and to actually defeat conscription.

“The IWW deserves to be remembered, and so does its anti-conscription victory. I hope that this year we can organize a more large-scale event than in previous years.

“We can still learn from the history of the IWW and from its greatest victory in Australia.

“The purpose of the IWW commemoration is not a publicity stunt; more to ‘honour those to whom honour is due,’ and to start creating a healthy tradition. With a largish turnout, the event could also be very useful for networking, of course. The event is not intended to physically confront or tangle with the other thing happening that day.”

The centerpiece of the event was a “War-Tree,” based on a famous cartoon of the period. Here is how the tree’s maker explained the background in a report of a previous year’s action:

“The ‘War-Tree’ at the IWW celebra-

tion was based on a famous Wobbly cartoon That capitalist is telling the soldier/worker tending the tree that he can keep its fruit, i.e. Death, for his wages; the capper only wants the roots.

“The cartoon, in turn, was presumably inspired by an old and widespread folk tale about a devil who demands half of a farmer’s crop ... the farmer offers to give the devil everything that grows above the ground and the devil agrees to accept this (and like all magical beings, its word is binding). The farmer, of course, grows carrots or turnips. Next time the devil insists on having everything below the ground, so the farmer grows wheat or barley, etc. The folktale tells the story of a shrewd peasant tricking a powerful but stupid oppressor. Sadly, as the cartoon shows, the reality tends to be the other way around.”

The street corner is now on the edge of Melbourne’s Chinatown, and its history is probably not widely known (though anyone interested could take a look at the relevant chapters of “Radical Melbourne – A Secret History” by Jeff and Jill Sparrow), but there was talk of making use of the conveniently situated “dustbin of history” next year.

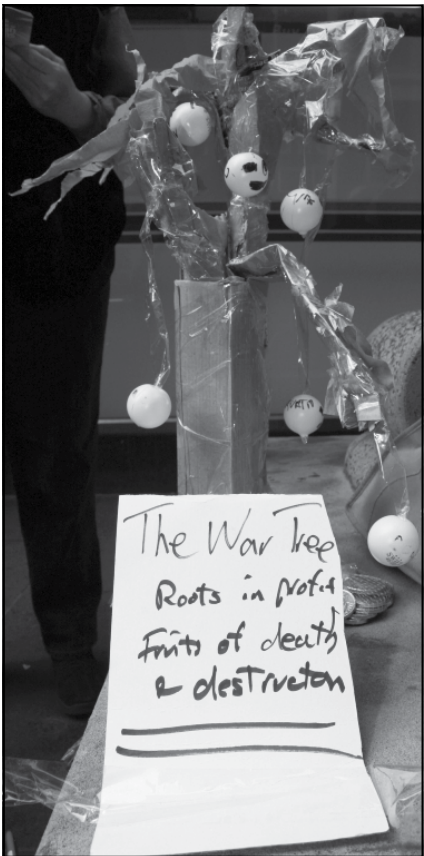


Photo: melbourneprotests.wordpress.com
The "War-tree" in Chinatown.

New School Students, Workers Protest Union Busting



Students and faculty rally at the New School. Photo: Thomas Good

of Design has a total of 42 Fine Arts professors.

The statement concluded by noting that “these decisions were not driven by economic concerns of the university but academic needs.”

However, the economic situation was raised as an issue in a statement released by Provost Tim Marshall. The “Provost’s Statement On Parsons Fine Arts,” dated April 22 and distributed at the rally, said that the goal of the university is to enroll the “most talented and diverse incoming class possible” because “in a delicate economic climate like the one we currently face, it is imperative that we all do everything possible to succeed on this front.”

The provost’s statement acknowledged “a lack of communication and participation between administration and faculty” in arriving at the decision to fire faculty, offered “sincere apologies” and pledged to “transparently remedy the

situation in a timely manner.” Towards this end, Marshall created a faculty taskforce which includes full-time and part-time members.

The union, whose New School contract expires on September 1, responded to the March firings by issuing a statement rejecting the “corporate model of top-down educational planning” and accusing the New School of union busting. ACT-UAW Local 7902’s “Statement On Faculty Dismissals In Parsons Fine Arts” deplored the “unjust action ... and the administrative mentality it represents.” The statement noted that, on March 10, the union filed grievances related to the dismissals. The statement also said that New School administrators were “trying to hide behind a smoke screen of ‘curricular changes’ and other management priorities to justify what amounts to the decimation of a department.”

On March 18 staff from Parsons sent a petition to the New School asking that

the faculty members be rehired.

At the end of March, faculty members from Columbia University’s visual arts division sent an email to the New School signed by the department chairman and five other professors. The email expressed dismay at the decision to fire the faculty members.

To keep pressure on, the union called the April 23 rally, which was attended by students and faculty from the New School and New York University (also represented by ACT-UAW) and members of the Central Labor Council, including representatives of the Teamsters and the American Federation of Musicians (Local 802). Assembly member Deborah Glick and state senator Tom Duane sent representatives and city council member John Liu spoke at the rally.

Liu demanded the New School administration “show some respect” to the faculty and students of the New School.

“This is not a corporation, this is a school,” Liu said.

Marie Dormuth, ACT-UAW’s Unit Chairperson for the New School, moderated the rally, introducing speakers and offering commentary.

Dormuth told the crowd “Here’s the worst of it, now they’re telling us what art is,” referring to the Kerrey administration’s involvement in the disputed curricular changes that resulted in 12 faculty being given the Orwellian status of “non-rehired.”

“The only thing they’ve perfected is union busting,” said Dormuth. “We’re going to be making the curriculum!” she said.

The rally drew a few hundred people, and police set up metal barriers in an at-

Starbucks Workers Organize In Chile

Continued from 1

not just senior executives,” said Chrissy Cogswell, a Starbucks employee in Chicago and a member of the IWW Starbucks Workers Union. “The Chilean baristas have created a voice at work to make sure their contribution to the company is respected.”

Missteps by management at Starbucks, including over expansion and lack of value on the menu, have resulted in serious hardships for baristas. Starbucks workers are facing mass layoffs and employees who manage to avoid losing their jobs are seeing their hours drastically cut.

“As an union, we are making reasonable demands, such as a wage increase, decent working conditions, and for

Starbucks to adhere to their values of ‘Corporate Social Responsibility.’ The company isn’t following these principals, which are the base of our daily work and behavior in the stores,” said Giordano.

Giordano said the union workers in Chile are “glad and proud” to announce their union, and they look forward to more international solidarity with the IWW.

“We believe our purpose will be stronger, as we strive together,” he added.

Supporters of Sindicato de Trabajadores de Starbucks Coffee Chile S.A. can learn more about the effort at: <http://sindicatosbux.blogspot.com/>.

With files from starbucksunion.org.

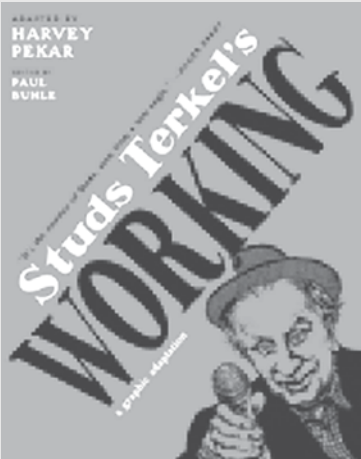
Support the Starbucks Workers Union!



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



OFFERINGS FROM THE
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Studs Terkel’s Working: A Graphic Adaptation

BY HARVEY PEKAR (AUTHOR)
PAUL BUHLE (EDITOR)

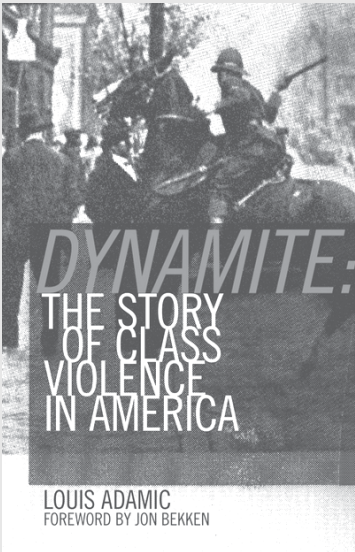
“Working has been a book, a radio drama, a Broadway musical, and now a gripping graphic novel. I can’t speak for Studs, but I suspect he would have been tickled to see it adapted by a former government file clerk and wage slave, who knows all about working.” —Roger Ebert

In the thirty-five years since Pulitzer Prize-winner Studs Terkel’s *Working* was first published, it has captivated millions of readers with lyrical and heartbreaking accounts of how their

fellow citizens earn a living. Widely regarded as a masterpiece of words, it is now adapted into comic book form by comics legend Harvey Pekar, the blue-collar anti-hero of his American Book Award-winning comics series *American Splendor*.

In Studs Terkel’s *Working*, Pekar offers a brilliant visual adaptation of Terkel’s verbatim interviews, collaborating with both established comics veterans and some of the comic underground’s brightest new talent including Dylan Miner, Pablo Callejo, Peter Kuper, and Sharon Rudahl. Here are riveting accounts of the lives of ordinary Americans—farmers, miners, barbers, hookers, box boys, stockbrokers—depicted with unsurpassed dignity and frankness. A visual treat with a visceral impact, Studs Terkel’s *Working* will delight Terkel fans everywhere, and introduce his most powerful work to a new generation.

208 pages, \$22.95



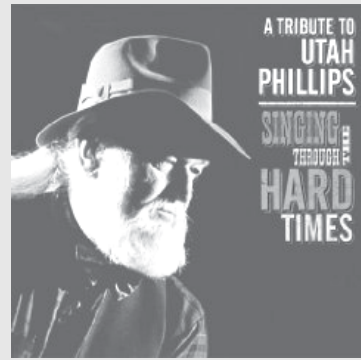
Dynamite: The Story of Class Violence In America

BY LOUIS ADAMIC
WITH A FORWARD BY JON BEKKEN

The history of labor in the United States is a story of almost continuous violence. In *Dynamite*, Louis Adamic recounts one century of that history in vivid, carefully researched detail. Covering both well- and lesser-known events—from the riots of immigrant workers in the second quarter of the nineteenth century to the formation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO)—he gives precise, and often brutal, meaning to the term “class war.” This new edition of Adamic’s revised 1934 version of *Dynamite*, includes a new foreword by Wobbly Jon Bekken, who offers a critical overview of the work that underlines its contemporary relevance.

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

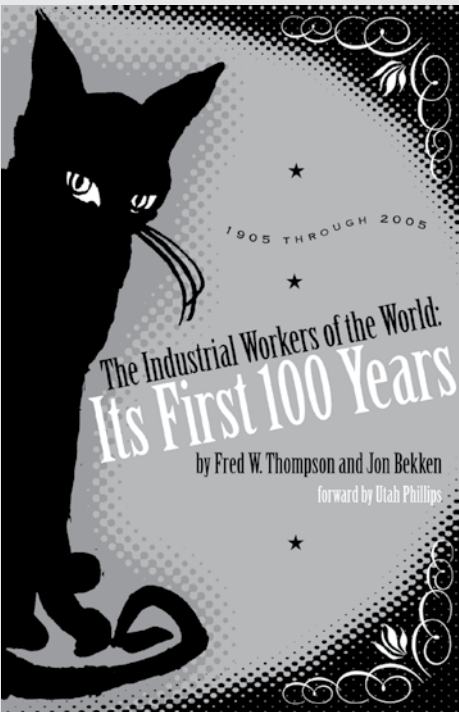
380 pages, \$19.95



Singing Through the Hard Times: A Tribute to Utah Phillips

In his life, Utah Phillips was many things - soldier, hobo, activist, pacifist, union organizer, storyteller, songwriter. He was an oral historian who documented the events of the working class and turned them into stories and songs. And in the folk tradition, he passed them on to others. Righteous Babe Records continues that tradition with *Singing Through The Hard Times*, a 2CD set that celebrates the music that Utah sang and loved. Included are performances from Emmylou Harris and Mary Black, Pete Seeger, Tom Paxton, John McCutcheon, Rosalie Sorrels, Gordon Bok, Ani DiFranco, Magpie, Jean Ritchie and many others - folksingers whose music springs from the same rich vein of the people’s history that Phillips chronicled throughout his life.

39 tracks on 2 CDs, \$15.98



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

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

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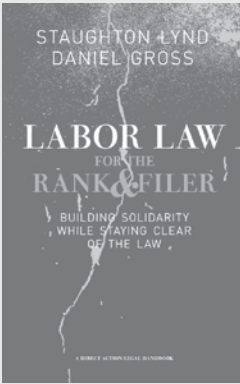


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Sabo-cat design printed on union-made taffy pink or olive green shirt

Sizes S-XL \$15.00

Sizes run small, order up a size for a looser fit. Specify color and size when ordering.



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

BY STAUGHTON LYND AND DANIEL GROSS

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

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

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Obituaries

The IWW Mourns Fellow Worker Franklin Rosemont

By Joe Grim Feinberg

Franklin Rosemont, celebrated poet, artist, historian, street speaker and surrealist activist, died Sunday, April 12, in Chicago. He was 65 years old. With his partner and comrade, Penelope Rosemont, and lifelong friend Paul Garon, he co-founded the Chicago Surrealist Group, an enduring and adventuresome collection of characters that would make the city a center for the reemergence of that movement of artistic and political revolt. Over the course of the following four decades, Franklin and his Chicago comrades produced a body of work, of declarations, manifestos, poetry, collage, hidden histories and other interventions that has, without doubt, inspired an entirely new generation of revolution in the service of the marvelous.

Franklin Rosemont was born in Chicago on October 2, 1943 to two of the area's more significant rank-and-file labor activists, the printer Henry Rosemont and the jazz musician Sally Rosemont. Dropping out of Maywood schools after his third year of high school (and instead spending countless hours in the Art Institute of Chicago's library learning about surrealism), he managed nonetheless to enter Roosevelt University in 1962. Already radicalized through family tradition and his own investigation of political comics, the Freedom Rides, and the Cuban Revolution, Franklin was immediately drawn into the stormy student movement at Roosevelt.

Looking back on those days, Franklin would tell anyone who asked that he had "majored in St. Clair Drake" at Roosevelt. Under the mentorship of the great African American scholar, he began to explore much wider worlds of the urban experience, of racial politics and of historical scholarship—all concerns that would remain central for him throughout the rest of his life. He also continued his investigations into surrealism, and soon, with Penelope, he traveled to Paris in the winter of 1965 where he found André Breton and the remaining members of the Paris Surrealist Group. The Parisians were just as taken with the young Americans as Franklin and Penelope were with them, as it turned out, and their encounter that summer was a turning point in the lives of both Rosemonts. With the support of the Paris group, they returned to the United States later that year and founded America's first and most enduring in-



Photo: Thomas Good / Next Left Notes

digenous surrealist group, characterized by close study and passionate activity and dedicated equally to artistic production and political organizing. When Breton died in 1966, Franklin worked with his wife, Elisa, to put together the first collection of André's writings in English.

Active in the 1960s with the IWW, the Rebel Worker group, the Solidarity Bookshop and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), Franklin helped to lead an IWW strike of blueberry pickers in Michigan in 1964 and put his considerable talents as a propagandist and pamphleteer to work producing posters, flyers, newspapers and broadsheets on the SDS printing press. A long and fruitful collaboration with Paul Buhle began in 1970 with a special surrealist issue of *Radical America*. Lavish, funny and barbed issues of *Arsenal/Surrealist Subversion* and special issues of *Cultural Correspondence* were to follow.

The smashing success of the 1968 World Surrealist Exhibition at Gallery Bugs Bunny in Chicago announced the ability of the American group to make a huge cultural impact without ceasing

to be critics of the frozen mainstreams of art and politics. The Rosemonts soon became leading figures in the reorganization of the nation's oldest labor press, Charles H. Kerr Company. Under the mantle of the Kerr Company and its surrealist imprint Black Swan Editions, Franklin edited and printed the work of some of the most important figures in the development of the political left: C.L.R. James, Marty Glaberman, Benjamin Péret and Jacques Vaché, T-Bone Slim, Mother Jones, Lucy Parsons, and, in a new book released just days before Franklin's death, Carl Sandburg. In later years, he created and edited the *Surrealist Histories* series at the University of Texas Press, in addition to continuing his work with Kerr Co. and Black Swan.

A friend and valued colleague of such figures as Studs Terkel, Mary Low, the poets Philip Lamantia, Diane di Prima, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and Dennis Brutus, the painter Lenora Carrington, and the historians Paul Buhle, David Roediger, John Bracey, and Robin D.G. Kelley, Rosemont's own artistic and creative work was almost impossibly varied in inspirations and results.

Without ever holding a university post, he wrote or edited more than a score of books while acting as a great resource for a host of other writers.

He became perhaps the most productive scholar of labor and the left in the United States. His spectacular study, "Joe Hill: The IWW and the Making of a Revolutionary Working Class Counterculture," began as a slim projected volume of that revolutionary martyr's rediscovered cartoons and grew to a giant volume providing our best guide to what the early twentieth century radical movement was like and what radical history might do. His coedited volume *Haymarket Scrapbook* stands as the most beautifully illustrated labor history publication of the recent past. Indispensable compendiums like "The Big Red Songbook," "What is Surrealism?," "Menagerie in Revolt," and the forthcoming "Black Surrealism" are there to ensure that the legacy of the movements that inspired him continue to inspire young radicals for generations to come. In none of this did Rosemont separate scholarship from art, or art from revolt. His books of poetry include "Morning of the Machine Gun," "Lamps Hurlled at the Stunning Algebra of Ants," "The Apple of the Automatic Zebra's Eye" and "Penelope." His marvelous fierce, whimsical and funny artwork—to which he contributed a new piece every day—graced countless surrealist publications and exhibitions.

Indeed, between the history he himself helped create and the history he helped uncover, Franklin was never without a story to tell or a book to write—about the IWW, SDS, Hobohemia in Chicago, the Rebel Worker, about the past 100 years or so of radical publishing in the U.S., or about the international network of Surrealists who seemed to always be passing through the Rosemonts' Rogers Park home. As engaged with and excited by new surrealist and radical endeavors as he was with historical ones, Franklin was always at work responding to queries from a new generation of radicals and surrealists, and was a generous and rigorous interlocutor. In every new project, every revolt against misery, with which he came into contact, Franklin recognized the glimmers of the free and unfettered imagination, and lent his own boundless creativity to each and every struggle around him, inspiring, sustaining, and teaching the next generation of surrealists worldwide.

Goodbye, Fellow Worker Jennie Cedervall

By Evan Wolfson

The IWW recently learned of the passing of long-time member and supporter, Jennie Cedervall, who died in Willoughby, Ohio, on January 22, 2009, at the age of 95. Born as Eugenia Anekite near Montreal, Canada to Romanian immigrants and IWW members George Anekite and Victoria nee Galason (Galtzan), she moved as a child with her family to Minnesota where she lived on a farm, and then to Detroit, where she worked as a book keeper at the Mt. Elliot Coal Company, which housed IWW workers.

FW Cedervall later worked as a stenographer, and was involved with several IWW locals in Detroit and Cleveland over the years. While she was not getting the publicity reserved for other members of the union, FW Cedervall nevertheless contributed tirelessly to the union and helped to keep the organization running through some bleak times. She met her future husband, IWW organizer Frank Cedervall, at an IWW event in Michigan, and later relocated with him to Cleveland, where some of the IWW's most important work took place with the Metal and Machinery Workers Industrial Union from the 1930s into the

1950s. During the 1970s, she drove with her husband on an IWW speaking tour through the West Coast of the United States.

Jennie and her husband retired to Willoughby, Ohio, while continuing their union support. FW Cedervall was able to attend the IWW's Centenary event in Pittsburgh in 2005, where she was recognized for her many contributions to the union. She stressed that while it is important to have a vision of a better world with a radical analysis, this is of little importance if it is not put to practical use, through bread and butter gains for workers.

FW Cedervall contributed her time in her later years to many organizations, including the Clean City Association of Willoughby, Edison Elementary School, and the Lake County Historical Society. Services were held for her at the Davis-Babcock Funeral Home, with Rev. Arthur Severance of the East Shore Unitarian Universalist Church.

We will remember FW Jennie Cedervall for helping all of us "get the goods." She is survived by daughter Pat and son-in-law Don Lewis, and many nieces and nephews. The family welcomes contributions to the IWW in her name.

North of 49° Assembly, June 13-14, 2009

The North of 49° Assembly Committee is pleased to announce that the Winnipeg GMB of Manitoba, Canada, has agreed to host the Assembly on June 13-14, 2009. The committee is now working in earnest on putting together a program of panels, workshops and presentations that will help build the One Big Union in Canada.

Program proposals to date include:

- Building Industrial Union Branches from General Membership Branches,
- the IWW and Canadian labour law,
- race and organizing,
- the Working Homeless in Canada and the U.S., and
- the IWW and the Canadian labour movement.

Is something missing from the list above? Have a program idea? Want to present or be part of a panel? It's not too late. Get in touch right away with your idea and we will discuss at our next committee teleconference. Want to participate in the teleconference? Send us your Skype name and we'll link you in.

Want to register? Send us a note and we will let you know when the Assembly's online registration form is available.

The North of 49° Assembly is an event open to all IWW members, regardless of whether you're on the north or south side of 49°.

Hope to you see you there!

Publicity Contact, North of 49° Assembly:
Peter Moore at pmoore26@yahoo.com





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

By Michael Ashbrook
“Boss nappings” and “office trashings” sweep across Europe

Managers at FM Logistic, Caterpillar, 3M, Continental, and Sony in several locations across France found themselves locked into their offices by angry workers who were fighting for better severance packages as companies downsize or go out of business. The blue collar “bossnappers” released their poor hostages unharmed after getting some real concessions.

A union rep with a megaphone told workers at one company that they had been sheep long enough and should now become lions and have good time. When a TV journalist asked him whether he felt that the ends justified these lawless means ,he replied that the closure meant the end for up to a thousand families who might be homeless within two years.

Continental occupation in France

Two Continental tyre plants in Hanover, Germany, and Clairoux, France, announced plans to shut down by 2010. Following this announcement, between 250 and 300 workers occupied the offices of the sou préfecture (the local representatives of central government) in Hanover. When the labor tribunal ruled against their demands to halt the plant closure on suspicion of fraud, they trashed the place thoroughly while the police looked on. They told the TV crews “We regret nothing!”

According to the France 24 television station, “trade unions at the Clairoux Continental plant say management betrayed an earlier deal to save the factory until 2012. In 2007, they agreed to work more hours and scrap the 35-hour week, in return for guarantees the plant would not be closed.”

Additionally, the factory made €17 million in profit last year, despite the fact that management said the French plant is one of their least productive sites.



Steelworkers protesting. Photo: netzeitung.de

Steelworkers protest in Luxembourg

In neighbouring Luxembourg, steel workers from several countries converged on the annual stock holders’ meeting of ArcelorMittal, the world’s biggest steelmaker, to protest the payment of dividends of slightly over \$1 billion while thosands of jobs were being cut. The AFP reported that police fired rubber bullets into a crowd of approximately 1,500 workers after a few of them stormed the plant.

In November, the company announced it might have to slash up to 9,000 jobs worldwide, including 6,000 in Europe. Recently, workers at the ArcelorMittal plant in the Belgian city of Liege have walked out on strike to protest these cuts.



Visteon workers in Enfield. Photo: libcom.org

Occupations in the U.K. continue

Three plants belonging to the Visteon group were temporarily occupied in Britain. After serious threats of mass arrest the occupiers agreed to continue the protest as pickets outside the factory gates. Considering the murderous brutality of Her Majesty’s Police at the recent G20 summit in London, their caution is understandable. A document that is several years older than the current crisis has come to light; it is a detailed plan for closing down Visteon.

Join the IWW Delegation to Palestine!

The IWW International Solidarity Commission is leading a delegation of workers to the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel. The IWW delegation to the Occupied Palestinian Territories is being organized to build solidarity between IWW members and Palestinian workers. The delegation hopes to educate ourselves about the conditions in the Territories and build broad based solidarity with workers in the Middle East. Human rights and workers rights are inextricably linked, and by reaching out to

Palestinian workers in an effort to build support for their struggle we advance the Wobbly tradition of forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old. The delegation will be held in October, with dates firming up as our itinerary is finalized. The tentative cost, including airfare, is \$2000.

Space is very limited! Applications are due July 16th and should be emailed to katezaidan@gmail.com. Note that once you are accepted to the delegation we are asking for a \$200 non-refundable deposit which will go to overall delegation expenses. (However, this will be refunded if there are extenuating circumstances that prevent you from going at the last minute-- an illness or death in the family for example.) The idea for the deposit is to lock people into the delegation so we can have firm number to give our fellow workers in Palestine—there have been problems with previous IWW delegations where people have committed, then bailed out at the last minute which creates awkward situations with our hosts.

Call 267-455-9279 with questions!

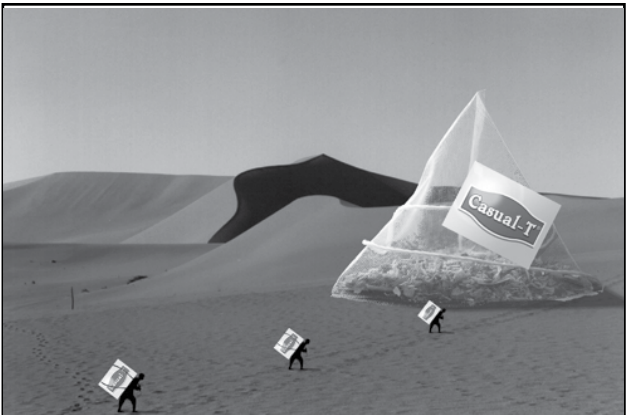
Unilever Denies Employment to Lipton Workers

By the IUF

While Unilever corporate managers were meeting with the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) in London, in talks under the aegis of the U.K. government, the company's Pakistan management was engaged in vicious, discriminatory reprisals against workers employed under the "no work, no pay" system at its Lipton tea factory in Khanewal, Pakistan.

In response to the IUF's latest Unilever submission to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the U.K. government called for good faith negotiations to resolve issues arising from Unilever Pakistan's egregious abuses of employment and trade union rights, beginning with the retaliatory firing of close to 300 workers at the company's factory in Rahim Yar Khan. While these talks were beginning in London, the IUF learned that nearly two-thirds of the 237 contract agency workers who have joined the Action Committee to demand permanent employment status at Khanewal had been sent home without pay due to a “production downturn” for the week of April 27 to May 2. This included the shutdown of the entire night shift (and the denial of employment to 120 workers). This has never happened before—the customary practice is to reassign night workers to the two earlier shifts. "Seasonal" demand for tea is unknown in Pakistan, a nation of tea drinkers.

At the same time, new contract workers are being engaged to handle a considerable increase in production beginning on May 2, but they won't be hired from among the group of those who are fighting against disposable jobs. The "no work" part of "no work, no pay" looks set to continue. The move is clearly



Unilever workers build pyramid tea. Graphic: iuf.org

intended to punish Action Committee members and supporters and create new divisions and competition for poverty-level wages in an area where few jobs are on offer.

Unilever Pakistan has descended to new levels of abusive discrimination in its continuing efforts to thwart the Khanewal workers' fight for justice.

Slaves built the pyramids—Unilever casual workers build pyramid tea!

Shortly before this new assault took place, the "Ethisphere Institute" placed Unilever high on its 2009 rankings of "the world's most ethical companies". "Unilever has proven to be one of the world leaders in upholding high ethical standards, making it a true standout in its industry, especially as unethical business actions and decisions grab headlines each day," said Alex Brigham, Executive Director, Ethisphere Institute. "The competition for this year's World's Most Ethical Companies was very strong and we applaud Unilever for rising to the top."

Tell corporate management to halt repression and retaliation: http://www.iuf.org/cgi-bin/campaigns/show_campaign.cgi?c=404. The Lipton Khanewal temporary workers must be given permanent employment status - and the way to implement this is through direct negotiations with the affiliated National Federation of Food, Beverage and Tobacco Workers of Pakistan.

CUPE Locals 82 and 543 On Strike in Windsor, Ontario

By CUPE Ontario

Since mid-April, two locals of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) have been on strike. Local 82, which represents some 300 outdoors municipal workers, and Local 543, which represents 1,600 indoors municipal workers, have been holding the line for the hard won wages and benefits that sustain their local community in Windsor, Ontario. This strike could be happening anywhere in Ontario. Across the province, more employers are using the current economic crisis to try to extract concessions from workers. Help to send a clear message that CUPE members won't let that happen.

Instead of finding solutions to benefit both the local community and municipal workers, Windsor's mayor and city council have fuelled a city workers' strike affecting nearly 2,000 CUPE members and their families. Now in a

city reeling from the economic crisis, some city politicians are trying to pit public and private sector workers against one another.

Support our Windsor City Workers and send a message to governments and employers that workers didn't create this economic mess. Workers are part of the solution. Bargaining concessions won't help the local economy. We know that the best way out of this economic crisis is for our governments to invest directly in local communities, to expand our public services, and to promote green, sustainable jobs.

Get updates and send web support by visiting the locals' strike websites: <http://www.82.cupe.ca> or <http://www.543.cupe.ca>.

Checks can be made payable to “CUPE Local 543 and Local 82 Strike Fund,” 1576 Parent Avenue, Windsor, Ontario N8X 4J7, Canada.

Paid Maternity Leave for Working Mothers in Australia

By the ACTU

Unions welcome the historic introduction of a universal, government-funded paid maternity leave scheme covering the majority of Australian women and their families.

“The campaign to win this essential piece of social infrastructure has taken 30 long years,” said Sharan Burrow, presidents of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU).

“This is a major achievement for the thousands of women and men who have worked so hard to bring this scheme to fruition. The scheme will cover hundreds of thousands of women in lower paid jobs with poor job security, especially in

hospitality and retail where there's been very limited access to paid maternity leave,” reported the ACTU.

Treasurer Wayne Swan confirmed that a universal paid maternity leave scheme will go ahead, with funding to be committed in the near future.

Burrow said the 18-week scheme would give mothers time to bond with and breastfeed their babies without financial stress forcing them back to work too early, sometimes within weeks, as is currently the case.

“The ACTU and unions will continue to help working women bargain for measures to help balance their work and family responsibilities,” said Burrow.

Support international solidarity!

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