

# Industrial Worker

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## N'west flight attendants strike barred

BY JOSHUA DEVRIES

A United States judge has blocked flight attendants at Northwest Airlines from striking, even while allowing the company to abrogate their contract.

The company is in bankruptcy and the bankruptcy court judge permitted the company to impose its dream contract, but even he would not block a strike since the previously negotiated agreement had been abrogated. However, a judge in U.S. District Court pointed to the "vital role" that airlines play and issued an injunction blocking a strike.

Karen Schultz, a 21-year Northwest flight attendant and rank-and-file activist in Minneapolis, condemns the assaults from the company and its allies in government which protect the company while ignoring the workers. "Northwest overreached in their quest for concessions, even while NWA's profits are in an upswing. Solvency may matter in the 1113 [bankruptcy] process, but ignored was the need for the solvency of American families."

The judge asked both sides to report on whether further talks would be "fruitful." Interim AFA-NWA Master Executive Council president Mollie Reiley responded, "We remain committed to reaching a negotiated agreement with the company regardless of the hurdles along the way. However, at this time it appears that the company is more focused on their legal strategy than meaningful discussions. Until the time comes when they are willing to sit down and negotiate a fair contract, it is necessary that we level the playing field and exercising our right to strike does just that."

Unlike most private sector workers in the United States, airline employees are covered by the Railway Labor Act, not the National Labor Relations Act (Wagner Act). The RLA was passed to punish militant rail unions. Airline management later was successful in getting their industry included under it as well. In most regards the RLA is even more pro-employer than the NLRA. For example, under the RLA unions have to ask permission from the government to strike. In organizing drives, the unit is automatically every employee in the that craft throughout the country, and every person not voting is counted as a vote against the union.

However there is one advantage: intermittent strikes are permitted, unlike under the NLRA. AFA created a trademarked strategy called CHAOS – Creating Havoc Around Our System. It involves announcing that the union will strike, but only certain flights and without warning. Before a single flight has been grounded, business travelers – the source of most income – start flying on other carriers. This has the advantage of costing the company a lot of money without taking everyone out and draining the union's strike coffers.

The first time the strategy was used, it was very successful at Alaska Airlines in 1993. Just the threat of CHAOS action led to contract improvements at United and US Airways a few years later. However, all this was before 9/11 and the wave of airlines using bankruptcy as a strategy to break union contracts and force concessions.

Under the RLA, it is unclear whether unions have the legal right to strike when the contract is abrogated by the courts. That issue has never been tested. The Northwest flight attendants and their union, the Association of Flight Attendants – Northwest: continued page 8

## IWW General Assembly launches organizing dept.

Delegates from across Canada and U.S. discuss strategies for building union, solidarity **6-7**

## Workers' safety requires a culture of solidarity

Bosses' insatiable demand for profit must be confronted to defend our lives and planet **8-9**

## Starbucks workers joining IWW in global fight for labor rights

Picket lines are appearing at Starbucks outlets around the world, as word spreads of the coffee giant's firing of three IWW members for union activity between July 11 and August 5. Workers were illegally fired on pretexts ranging from insubordination to undermining employee morale as Starbucks grows ever more desperate to crush the union's growing support.

The German FAU union wrote Starbucks August 19 to protest the firings of Charles Fostrom, Evan Winterscheidt, Daniel Gross and Joe Agnis (a union supporter fired earlier), and warning of actions at Starbucks outlets across Germany if they were not reinstated. In Vienna, the Allgemeines Syndikat Wien has leafleted all Starbucks outlets in that city, alerting customers to the company's vicious union-busting.

New Zealand's Unite union, which won a landmark fast food agreement with Restaurant Brands Ltd. earlier this year, issued a statement expressing "disgust at Starbucks' clear discrimination against the union."

The Korean Teachers Union (Incheon Working Group) of the KCTU also condemned the firings, expressing unequivocal support for the "IWW Starbucks Workers Union's [right] to represent and defend the rights of all Starbucks employees."

IWW members have demonstrated outside Starbucks outlets in Bradford, Leicester and Manchester, England, and Edinburgh, Scotland. IWW members and supporters picketed the East McMillan Starbucks in Cincinnati August 19, distributing hundreds of leaflets to alert customers to Starbucks' union-busting. In Washington, D.C.,



Wobblies picketed the Dupont Circle Starbucks August 28, speaking to customers and workers. They picketed the Adams Morgan store Sept. 11, launching roving pickets at Starbucks locations throughout the city.

Boston Wobblies held a successful Solidarity Night fund-raiser Sept. 9, raising nearly \$400 to assist the fired workers and spread the word about Starbucks' assault on its workers. Musicians including Dieselhorse, Evan Greer, Jake and the Infernal Machine, Clara Hendricks, Bill Bumpus and Ryan Harvey performed, and speakers spoke about the Starbucks campaign between sets.

Growing numbers of union locals have added their voices to the demand that Starbucks reinstate the fired workers, including SEIU Local 707, representing 6,500 public sector workers of Sonoma and Mendocino Counties in California; Amalgamated Lithographers of America Local One, a Teamsters affiliate in New York City; and United Auto Workers Local 2334, which represents sanitation chemists in Detroit. Other organizations calling on members to boycott Starbucks until

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## Making work safer with direct action

BY DANIEL GROSS & JOE TESSONE

For years, baristas at the Logan Square Starbucks in Chicago requested a stepladder. Baristas constantly strained muscles and risked serious falls to do their job without one. Workers would hoist themselves up on shelves to reach heavy boxes of coffee beans stacked out of reach. Toilet paper and other supplies were locked in a box suspended near the ceiling in the store's bathroom.

Workers were forced to balance themselves on the toilet bowl and stand on tiptoes to maneuver the key into the lock and remove the needed bathroom products. Workers did a similar balancing act standing on cafe tables to clean the ceiling and change light bulbs.

In addition to the clear health risks stemming from musculo-skeletal strain and the possibility of serious falls, baristas were downright annoyed and outraged that Starbucks, a \$23 billion company and the world's largest coffee chain, refused to purchase a simple stepladder that workers needed. Annoyed but not surprised. After years of insult and injury on safety and many other issues, workers at Logan Square decided to join the IWW Starbucks Workers Union.

The night of April 29, baristas at the Logan Square Starbucks chose a store meeting to declare that they had joined the union and present their demands for a living wage, secure work hours, reinstatement of the New York City baristas illegally fired for union activity, respect for the right to organize, and health and safety improvements including the stepladder. IWW baristas now had a union presence at seven Starbucks stores.

Through its surveillance of workers, Star-

bucks management was prepared for the surprise action. In an unprecedented move, the store manager was joined at the store meeting by the district manager, regional director and "partner" resources manager to disparage the union and intimidate workers.

Managers proceeded to disparage unions in general and the IWW in particular. One went so far as to say the union didn't exist, as if the red IWW membership cards in baristas' pockets were figments of their imagination. The bosses also handed out the preamble to the IWW constitution thinking it would scare off workers. The preamble outlines a humane society where workers live in harmony with the Earth and are free from oppression – a society unlike the one Starbucks inhabits where its Chairman Howard Schultz is worth close to a billion dollars and Chicago baristas start at \$7.50 per hour with no guaranteed number of work hours each week.

Wobblies are known for good humor in the struggle for industrial freedom. But one thing the IWW doesn't joke around about is health and safety. You only get one body and one mind in this life, and the boss sure isn't going to take care of you. After years of needless strain and balancing acts because the coffee giant was too cheap to buy a simple stepladder, baristas found themselves in a new workplace dynamic. Instead of individuals requesting a ladder and being denied again and again, the workers could fight union.

Direct Action entails doing what it takes to make things right. For example, faced with employer opposition to the eight-hour day, Wobbly timber workers began blowing

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**The Other Campaign**

In the September edition, the *Industrial Worker* ran a story by FW Dean Dempsey of the Bay Area GMB about the Other Campaign launched by the Zapatista's in Mexico.

The real question is why was this published in our union's newspaper, for it is an internal matter. Because Dean advocated for policy, I feel the editor should not have published the story. Articles where opinions on items for referenda are expressed should be marked "For the Gob."

Jason Krpan, Chicago  
**Editor's Note:** It is my policy to give as wide a scope as possible to members to discuss labor issues and struggles in the pages of the *IW*. In the case of the two articles on the Other Campaign, it was my view that these were primarily about the campaign itself, which is of much interest to Wobblies and other rebel workers.

While I personally do not believe the *IWW* should "adhere" to the Other Campaign - I am not quite certain what this means in practice, but at minimum it is open to misinterpretation and it might constitute a formal alliance with a political movement including members of the employing class

**In November We Remember**

The November *IW* remembers the struggles of those who have come before us - in particular of Wobblies imprisoned and murdered by the bosses in their efforts to crush the *IWW*. Members wishing to place greeting ads in that issue should submit them no later than Oct. 12. Suggested donation levels are \$10 for a 1 inch tall ad (1 column wide); \$35 for 4 inches by 4 7/8 inches (2 columns); or \$80 for a quarter page.



and established in part to amend Mexico's Constitution - the members of the *IWW* do not sponsor this paper as a venue for me to air my opinions. Rather, it is the members' paper, and the members should have wide latitude to air their views in it.

There was similarly much online controversy over FW Lee's column last issue, although no letters were received at press time. I disagree with FW Lee's views on the Israeli attacks on Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, even if some of the response to his views was intemperate and contained groundless accusations which reflect more on those who level such charges without the slightest basis in fact than on their target.

**- Official Notices -**  
**Referenda ballots in field**

General Headquarters will issue ballots to all members on the books in good standing Oct. 15. Members whose dues are in arrears are urged to bring themselves current, and all delegates and branch secretaries should file reports as promptly as possible.

Members wishing to submit arguments on the referenda (dues increase, new branches to approve ByLaws before being chartered, adhere to Other Campaign) for the ballot *General Organization Bulletin* should submit these to GHQ no later than Oct. 10

**Correction to IW numbering**

Both the July/August and September issues were labeled whole number 1686. September was actually #1687.

# Farewell, Fellow Workers

**Steve Lindenmeyer**

FW Steve Lindenmeyer of the Portland *IWW* was killed August 22, apparently hit by a train while hiking. He was 53 years old.

Steve was an active Wobbly, serving as the Industrial District Committee's representative to Jobs with Justice. Steve was passionately involved in a wide array of progressive causes throughout the region. Chances are that if you attended a protest, strike, rally, or teach-in around Portland, Steve was there either as an organizer or an active participant.

Portland Wobs held a memorial meeting Sept. 10 at the union's new Liberty Hall.

**Jenny (Lahti) Velsek**

Jenny (Lahti) Velsek, 93, passed away April 18 in a nursing home at Tucson, Arizona. She was born March 4, 1913, at Eagle River, Wisconsin, the fifth of seven surviving children of Finnish immigrant parents.

Her parents were part of the Finnish-American labor movement, active with the Finnish clubs associated with the Industrial Workers of the World. Jenny described her father as an avid reader of *Industrialisti*, the Finnish-language *IWW* newspaper.

As a young woman, Jenny attended classes at Tyovaen Opisto (Work Peoples College), the Finnish *IWW* school for labor activists near Duluth.

Most of her life she lived in Chicago. She was married to Charles Velsek, secretary of the Czech branch of the *IWW*, who died in 1979. Jenny then became a companion to an

old friend, Fred Thompson, whose Finnish-American wife Aino had recently passed away. Thompson was a well-known figure in *IWW* history as an organizer, labor historian and educator, and as an editor and writer. In the 1930s, he had been a director and teacher at Work Peoples College, after classes at that institution began to be conducted in English.

After Fred Thompson died in 1987 at age 87, Jenny moved to Springfield, Missouri, to be near a niece. Later she moved to Tucson where she had a brother and his family, and where she lived for the remainder of her life.

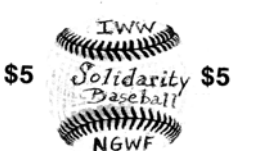
— Harry Siitonen

**New NGWF strike fund assessment**

The Upstate NY Regional GMB is offering this new \$5 assessment stamp to support a request from Bangladesh's National Garment Workers Federation to help create a strike fund for the many struggles they engage in with the global garment bosses. Help build the bridge from the floor of the global sweatshop to workers' rights. This assessment came about through the work of the *IWW*'s International Solidarity Commission and our union's participation in ongoing Solidarity Baseball measures.

Order yours today from *IWW* delegate Greg Giorgio, P.O. Box 74, Altamont NY 12009, [ggblackcat27@yahoo.com](mailto:ggblackcat27@yahoo.com).

**NGWF Strike Fund**



**From Cooperstown to Dhaka**

# **IWW directory**

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## Industrial Worker

The Voice of Revolutionary Industrial Unionism

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## East End Food Co-op workers lose close NLRB election

By a razor-slim margin (22-21), workers at the East End Food Co-op in Pittsburgh failed in their attempt to force managers to recognize the IWW as their union.

On August 30 Co-op workers participated in a union recognition election conducted by the National Labor Relations Board after management refused to accept union authorization cards signed by a majority of workers. U.S. labor law compels an employer to recognize a union for the purpose of collective bargaining if a majority of employees vote for the union in a secret-ballot election run by the NLRB.

The current Co-op organizing campaign is the second attempt by workers to win union protection. In June the Co-op's Board of Directors refused to voluntarily recognize the union through the card-check procedure. In July the union verified through the impartial Thomas Merton Center that a majority of Co-op workers did in fact want IWW representation.

Unable to persuade the Co-op to accepting such evidence, the IWW then tried to negotiate with management over terms for a non-NLRB election. Workers unsuccessfully tried to establish a number of agreements over a basic meeting protocol, employer neutrality, and the Co-op's use of anti-union consultants. Additionally, management was unfairly favoring attempts to form a company union. Given management's intransigence, the union finally petitioned the NLRB to facilitate a recognition election.

The union's narrow loss means that the Co-op is not legally obligated to recognize the union. Despite this setback, the IWW Workers Committee plans to continue organizing at the Co-op and to work on behalf of its members for improved wages, better health care coverage, and job security.

"As long as the East End Food Co-op continues to be yet another low-wage, high-turnover employer in this city," said IWW organizer Kevin Farkas, "the union is committed to helping workers organize."

"The East End Food Co-op is typical of most employers in the consumer food co-operative industry," Farkas added.

"Despite their rhetoric of social consciousness and so-called alternative business practices, these are not the same grass-roots, collectively owned and operated co-operatives of the 1960s and '70s; today's Co-ops are sophisticated businesses increasingly concerned with profit-making and complete managerial control over operations and staff. The industry as a whole, in part guided by specialized anti-union consultants such as the one used by the East End Food Co-op during this campaign, is simply opposed to unionization."

Management's unfair labor practices mean that the IWW has solid grounds to contest the NLRB election. If upheld, a challenge could result in an order to management to cease its unlawful activities and a new election.

## Boston GMB marches to end firing of Harvard custodian

BY MARK WOLFF

On August 22, members of the Boston GMB marched with 75 other workers, students, and Harvard faculty members to protest the July 3 firing of custodian Sainately Paul by Harvard's Facilities Maintenance Operations.

Paul was fired by a supervisor who claims he was sleeping on the job. Paul, feeling ill on the 11th floor of William James Hall at Harvard, sat on the couch and fainted. Seeing him the supervisor took his picture and fired him three days later. Despite his clean work record of six and half years, and a note from his doctor concerning diagnostic tests, Harvard management refuses to believe he fainted the previous week and that he was not sleeping when he fainted a second time.

Faculty and researchers at William James Hall where Paul worked have signed petitions on his behalf.

# Organizing today for the One Big Union tomorrow

BY DEAN DEMPSEY - BAY AREA BRANCH  
IMMIGRANT OUTREACH COMMITTEE

To take part in the national day of action for immigrant and worker rights, the Bay Area IWW joined the march and rally in San Francisco, where several thousand turned out for the largest Labor Day celebration in years.

The IWW was one of the larger labor bodies there, with over 30 Wobblies. The half-mile march began at the Embarcadero, concluding at the San Francisco Civic Center. Nationally, actions were also held in Alabama, Saint Paul, Phoenix, Chicago, and many other cities around the country.

In San Francisco, the event was organized by the Regional Unity Coalition, consisting of various immigrant-rights and grassroots organizations. The theme was, "Stop attacks on our communities," not only in a global context but locally as well, encompassing the struggles of our own city, such as the displacement of working people of color in Bay View/Hunters Point.

The largest union present was most likely UNITE HERE. The theme of San Francisco's Labor Day action was centered around the renewed efforts to better the lives and working conditions of hotel workers in the UNITE HERE "Hotel Workers Rising" campaign. This campaign represents thousands of hotel workers demanding wage increases, decent pensions, a right to choose a union, and, in light of the fact that hotel workers have a 40 percent higher injury rate than other workers in the service sector, affordable health care and workplace protection.

In August, hotel workers in Local 2 voted overwhelmingly at 93% to authorize another strike, if need be. That is well over 2,000 workers, most of whom are immigrants, women and people of color. (A union contract was reached shortly after Labor Day)

This intolerance has built from the 2004 contract expiration and consequent lock-out of 4,300 hotel employees from over a dozen San Francisco hotels. Two years later, some 8,000 hotel workers are still without a contract and 13 local hotels remain under boycott, totaling \$100 million in losses, according to union officials.

Although many IWW members support the efforts in "Hotel Workers Rising," most



would also acknowledge that such alliances between the IWW and minority communities doesn't exist to the extent it should. As a labor union which seeks to create the "new society within the shell of the old," we have to collectively determine what our role can be in the new movement for immigrant and worker rights, and how we go about organizing with such communities.

Participating as contingents is one step in demonstrating our support. It is also enables people to dialogue and learn what the One Big Union stands for and the world we envision. On the march, IWW member and immigrant organizer Patricia Nuño says, "I was approached by folks curious about our bright red flags with the black IWW globe on them. It was a great opportunity to share IWW history and ideals, and inform them on actions we are currently engaged in. It was also a chance to significantly participate in solidarity with immigrants and their families."

The immigrant rights movement is playing a fundamental role in United States labor, with many workers willing to fight, boycott and, as May 1st demonstrated, even strike in the belief that a worker knows no border and deserves the equal rights and privileges that only some workers have.

In theory, the IWW would be at the forefront of such discontent and readiness

to fight, however in action, we find our words come short. Our efforts in these fields certainly are not nonexistent, but are rather works in progress with a lot more organizing to do.

Undoubtedly, we must continue and expand our current organizing, but also make the conscious effort to further diversify our union. As IWW contingent organizer, Sarah Zesmer says, "I think it is important to keep our focus on organizing workers through solidarity and direct action unionism, but to continually develop in building ourselves in a context of other issues as part of a bigger, global, socioeconomic movement by and for working people."

As we have learned before, forming these contingents is nothing short of useful and beneficial to us as a union. But we must also explore other ways, particularly workplace organizing, to welcome and include more women, immigrants, and people of color into the Industrial Workers of the World, diversifying our membership and reviving the Wobbly tradition of multi-lingual, ethnic and gendered representation. If the effort isn't made, and the space for this isn't created, we will find ourselves left behind in the sweeping movement we see today, the movement for unconditional empowerment and self-determination of every worker.

## Preamble to the IWW Constitution

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 \$1,000, dues are \$6 a month. If your monthly income is between \$1,000 - \$2,000, dues are \$12 a month. If your monthly income is over \$2,000 a month, dues are \$18 a month.

- 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 make myself acquainted with its purposes.



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

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

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Membership includes a subscription to the Industrial Worker.

## The storms that a resolution can cause

# Israel, unions & democratic debate

BY MARC B. YOUNG

On September 1, 2006, the Spanish post office put into circulation 600,000 78-(Euro)cent stamps celebrating the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and Spain. Some weeks before, apprised of the plan, the General Confederation of Labour (CGT) wrote to the head of the publicly owned corporation, as well as to two relevant government ministers, asking that the plan be put on hold, insofar as it seemed to members of the country's third-largest labour central that it was "entirely inopportune... to be celebrating anything with the state of Israel" as it was bombing workers in Lebanon and Palestine.

Naturally, the post office didn't listen. The anarcho-syndicalist CGT has a membership approaching 70,000 and a workplace presence that affects the lives of hundreds of thousands of Spanish workers, but it is obviously far from big enough to change the minds of politicians and bureaucrats on the strength of a letter.

So on September 5, the union called on Spaniards to boycott the stamps. Some days before, objecting to the details of the UN resolution setting the conditions under which international forces will act in Lebanese territory in the wake of Israel's retreat, the CGT had also called for an end to the weapons trade with the "occupying power." It also demanded that the European Union suspend its preferential trade agreement with Israel.

Within the union's membership, these demands will not cause much controversy. Workers who support the CGT include many apolitical men and women who back their union because it promotes grassroots democracy and fights concessions in the office and factory, something that often can't be said for the social democratic labour federations. These workers know that with their "membership package" comes an inevitable association with anti-war and anti-imperialist causes. Other members, in keeping with Spanish anarchism's traditional opposition to religion, consciously identify more with relatively secular Israeli life than with whatever Hezbollah and Hamas might plan for the societies in which they operate. But these pro-Palestinian trade unionists are unlikely to confuse a love of secularism with support for the bombing and oppression of Muslim civil-

### Skypecasts – Great new tool for union meetings online

BY ERIC LEE

In an ideal world, trade unionists would be able to gather for meetings whenever we wanted, anywhere on the planet. Just like corporations do.

We'd have no shortage of funds (and time) to fly ourselves around the globe, and working together at these frequent meetings, we'd build the kind of global trade union movement we can only dream of today.

That world is probably never going to happen, even if the costs of air travel have come down in recent years. In reality, we tend to rely on tools like email, online discussion forums, and good old-fashioned phone calls – none of which are able to do what a well-organized, face-to-face event can do.

There is always the option of conference calls using the phone network, which are enormously expensive, especially when done internationally. This is not an option for unions with limited resources.

But now a technology has come along which offers unions the possibility to hold international meetings in which up to 100 people can participate. These meetings take place online and they do not involve typing – they are like conference phone calls where people get the chance to speak.

Not everyone can speak at once, and a moderator (the "host") gives speaking rights to anyone who wishes to make a contribu-

tion. In short, the CGT resolutions will cause little grief or controversy within its ranks.

Across the Atlantic the story is of course different. Readers of the *Industrial Worker* will be aware of a recent controversy within the IWW itself stemming from the blog writings of regular columnist Eric Lee. Lee, in his "extra-IWW" compositions, does not hide his sympathies for Israel. In last month's *IW*, he also outlined his views on how the IWW should tolerate a diversity of political opinions... while members agree on a particular sort of democratic, membership-driven labour organization.

But the most controversial and probably instructive debate about the Middle East – and labour's proper position on the politics of that region – doubtless occurred in a much larger, "mainstream" Canadian union – the Ontario division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

As reported in a brief item in the September *IW*, CUPE Ontario, at its May 2006 convention, approved a resolution calling for a boycott of Israel that would include "an educational campaign about the apartheid nature of the Israeli state and the political and economic support of Canada for these practices." The resolution, apparently more ambitious than the CGT suggestion, noted that requests for such a divestment strategy emanate from popular organizations and unions inside Palestine. The campaign, prompted by the construction of Israel's wall of separation (deemed illegal by the International Court of Justice) and advanced prior to the invasion of Lebanon, would seek to pressure Israel to "recognize the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination."

Curiously, given the sort of passions matters pertaining to Israel provoke in North American gatherings, Resolution 50, as it is now widely referred to, passed unanimously on May 27 at the CUPE convention. David Kidd, from all accounts the only member to speak to the motion from the floor, has some thoughts on why this was the case. He suggested in an interview that "We probably didn't have the Jewish membership in attendance that we might have" had Zionists been more active in the union, but he dismissed right-wing commentators' argument that the Sabbath had something to do with the critics' initial silence. Kidd added that while

the room was still full of delegates on Saturday morning, when this and other resolutions were dealt with, members were probably thinking about going home. It was the last day of the meeting, after all. In other words, workers' minds weren't focused on debate.

In any event, the torrent of objections to Resolution 50 began soon after the convention doors closed. Phone calls poured into the offices of Local 79, Ontario's largest CUPE local. Articles and letters appeared on web sites and in newspapers. Trade unionists (members of CUPE and not) as well as Israel supporters from outside the labour movement weighed in, as did angry editorialists. CUPE was in the news. If it had shut down hospitals with a wildcat strike the union might not have obtained this much press.

### Evaluating the fallout

Some months later, it has become possible to place the objections to Resolution 50 into two broad categories. Certainly, many of the complaints were Zionist in inspiration; that is, they made the case, with varying degrees of sophistication, that the resolution was unfair to liberal democratic Israel. The other sort were basically business unionist criticisms. For example, the president of Local 79, Ann Dembinski, addressed a letter to the national and Ontario leaders of her union emphasizing the supposedly negative fashion in which fallout from the controversy had affected the day-to-day business of CUPE life (bargaining, addressing grievances, fighting privatization, etc.). She argued that "avoidable division" among members had been sown and that the resolution had discredited CUPE with the public. Dembinski's only purely political quarrel with Resolution 50 was that it failed an unexplained test of "even-handedness" and "fairness." She also raised questions about its consistency with past CUPE resolutions.

As far as David Kidd is concerned, the "practical" concerns raised by Dembinski's letter were exaggerations. Complaints were received but union business was hardly paralysed. The leader of CUPE's Ontario hospital employees, Michael Hurley, goes a little further; he stated that while local leaders certainly received negative calls, the content of telephone communications after the convention was mixed, with members also phoning in to support the adopted position.

In brief, controversy was provoked but there seems little evidence that the sky fell – or that, in the words of the Local 79 letter, an "unprecedented crisis" had taken hold. Normal business was proceeding.

Of course, resolution backers like Kidd object to suggestions that unions should place contracts, grievances and arbitrations over questions of war and peace in their priorities list. Nor does he like the suggestion that international issues, so-called, are removed from workers' daily lives. "I walked into a Toronto workplace [right after the attacks on the twin towers] five years ago and found eight members crying. They weren't crying out of sympathy for those killed but for fear that their children and husbands would be sent off to war." In other words, global conflict is, more than ever, a bread and butter issue. And all bread and butter issues merit serious treatment.

### What some Zionists say

More numerous of course are those critics who objected (and continue to object) to Resolution 50 on the very political grounds that it targets Israel. Some such voices, at least in a newspaper like *IW*, can be discounted on the grounds that they arise automatically in defence of the Zionist state regardless of its behaviour. But recent debates have also



revealed the views of a left-leaning subset within the pro-Israeli camp that almost certainly merit, in the interests of union democracy and clarity, some consideration.

Canadian Autoworkers president Basil (Buzz) Hargrove, a supporter of a two-state solution in the Middle East, criticized CUPE in a June letter, essentially on the grounds that its Resolution 50 doesn't give Israel credit for making "progress" on the matter of Palestinian rights. It is unclear why Hargrove thinks progress has been made, beyond his suggestion that the Israeli elite has come to the view that Palestinians require a state, and his naive (or disingenuous) claim that a withdrawal from Gaza has occurred. His refusal to address the matter of the wall (central to the CUPE resolution) and the way in which this construction serves to consolidate Israeli control over choice West Bank and Jerusalem territory arguably disqualifies his missive as a serious contribution to the discussion.

But the reader needs some context to understand (or be further baffled by) Hargrove: He has sold his union's recent break with the social democratic NDP as a move to the left – even as he has embraced a strategy of concessions to the car companies coupled with a cap-in-hand lobby at the governmental level, designed to boost private auto investment with taxpayer money. While his attack on CUPE can be explained as part of a general courting of the establishment, his poorly argued stance probably deserves attention simply because 1) his union has been a backer of Palestinian rights in the past and 2) his words, frequently recorded by reporters because of their flamboyant shape, are taken seriously by at least some on the left.

Inside the IWW, Eric Lee is also an articulate spokesperson for a sort of pro-Israeli posture, and is doubtless a more principled figure than Hargrove. In a recent conversation, Lee presented his views on the Middle East while expressing frustration with criticism he has received from fellow workers. "There is," he observed, "a strong current of support for Israel in the trade union movement [generally]," a fact he thinks should spur Wobblies to greater "openness" on the question. Lee is by no means an advocate of economist approaches to unionism, describing himself as a socialist and an admirer of Spain's historic CNT. He believes the IWW should pronounce more frequently and in greater depth on questions of war and peace. The union, he said, should discuss and debate the Middle East vigorously but in an "informed" fashion, a qualifier he is eager to add.

The frustrating thing about Lee's take – and what makes it difficult to either constructively tackle or denounce him – is precisely his willingness to give ground on almost any particular criticism of the Israeli state. By his own admission, were a debater to make ten charges against Israeli actions, it is quite likely Lee "would agree with all of them." He believes that "pressing the Israeli government is a good thing." Israel's invasion of Lebanon in the 1980s was a "crime." He has worked for years, he noted, to defend Palestinian rights.

But his firmest principle in matters Middle Eastern appears to be that Israel has the right to defend itself. And so, in the case of this Lebanese invasion, the initial killing and kidnapping of Israeli soldiers plus the



## Bradford IWWs stand up for fired Starbucks unionists

BY PETER MOORE

IWW Bradford in northern England leafleted two Starbucks stores on 12 August in support of IWW organiser Daniel Gross, who was fired in New York the Saturday before.

Store managers were taken by surprise. The manager in the new Centenary Square Starbucks jumped up from doing the accounts and told the IWWs to stop leafleting customers. The Fellow Workers only left once they had distributed leaflets to the clients and staff.

"I didn't think you could cause so much jitter with some A6 [leaflets]," said FW Clive, who reported that the manager said we should call ahead next time we want to leaflet. Sounds like a good idea.

The manager of Starbucks on the second floor of the Waterstones bookstore spread his arms to block IWWs from climbing the stairs to distribute leaflets. The other Starbucks manager had called ahead to warn him. He said that his clients had the right to relax and enjoy their coffees. The IWWs told him that Starbucks employees had the right to unionize before walking past him. The manager threatened to call the police and the IWWs said, "Go ahead" and distributed leaflets to customers. No police came.

The IWWs then left the store and continued to leaflet in the street, encouraging hundreds of people to boycott Starbucks until they re-hired the fired union members. People responded positively, sometimes taking an extra leaflet to share with others.

The Starbucks manager came into the street and spoke with the fellow workers leafleting. Like his colleague, he plainly had not been informed by Starbucks about the Starbucks Union. "You know about the health package and benefits, right?" he asked. FW Peter replied that Starbucks workers still had the right to organize a union and negotiate collectively for better conditions without facing firing or intimidation.

The IWW in Bradford calls on all people



Picketing Starbucks in Washington, D.C.

in the Yorkshire region to stop purchasing Starbucks products until the coffee company re-hires the fired IWW union organisers. No coffee is worth the dignity of our members.

### Starbucks actions spread...

*continued from page 1*

all fired union activists are reinstated include the National Lawyers Guild and the revived Students for a Democratic Society.

"The Guild is proud to stand in solidarity with the IWW baristas at Starbucks in their fight for a living wage and an independent voice on the job," said Heidi Boghosian, executive director of the National Lawyers Guild in a widely distributed press release.

"Starbucks should be ashamed to be cashing in on a socially responsible image when the company is in reality a serial violator of labor rights."

In Edinburgh, Wobblies leafleted the High Street Starbucks August 19, beginning

the action by entering the store to speak with employees. A barista came up and asked for leaflets to share with co-workers even as the manager was telling the IWWs that no one was interested. Police arrived soon afterward, threatened one Wobbly with arrest, and then stood down. Hundreds of leaflets were distributed, and dozens of would-be coffee drinkers (including a marching band in town for the annual festival) turned away. A Barista from another Starbucks came up and asked for leaflets to distribute at his store.

On campuses across the United States, students are launching the Justice From Bean to Cup! ([www.starbucksunion.org/bean2cup](http://www.starbucksunion.org/bean2cup)) campaign calling for the reinstatement of the fired baristas and fair compensation for coffee farmers.

Starbucks' workers fight for their rights continues in the streets, before the National Labor Relations Board, and in growing numbers of Starbucks outlets.

launch of rockets by Hezbollah justified the war. Not that he endorses the IDF's bombing of civilians. But he tends to the view that Israel commits bad, stupid and overblown acts for defensible reasons – and that its enemies are often not fighters for liberation but anti-Semites bent on the destruction of the Jewish homeland. It sounds like the sort of union resolution on Israel Lee would favour would begin by praising Israel as a worthwhile project and an attractive society... then enumerate its sins as they are committed against Palestinians and others.

Lee also has a problem with boycotts, suggesting that such campaigns are "blunt instruments" that often do more harm to workers and other innocents than good; they are "ill thought-out and ineffective."

CUPE's Michael Hurley says his union "is working to identify, with others, a short list of products that could be effective" in a boycott. "We would focus on [a limited selection] of goods that would make an economic difference" inside Israel.

### Defending free speech

So what should left unionists in general and IWW activists in particular draw from Lee's take? Most will shake their heads and side with the International Federation of Human Rights, which in September described the summer war in Lebanon as a "collective punishment" of its people that constitutes a "crime against humanity." And a conflict that also served as cover for the continuing repression of the Palestinian population in Gaza.

But Wobblies and others would do well to listen when Lee raises the banner of open debate. Unions, syndicalist and social democratic, rightly reject Leninism. They have no time for "democratic centralism." Informed debates about contentious questions, before

and after resolutions are passed, are welcome in organizations that want workers to be free thinkers. "Let a hundred flowers bloom!" was a cynical slogan of murderous Mao. But it remains an image full of meaning.

Also, unions are first and foremost places where workers organize to defend each other – not clubs where a line is pronounced and defended.

Lee also warns about the dangers of anti-Semitism mixing with criticism of Israel. Clearly, this card is played with shameless frequency by the right. But leftists should take his warning into account when they find themselves in the same demonstrations as those who mix affection for Iranian President Ahmadinejad with hostility to Israeli armies. Syndicalists and the radical left are hardly favourable to an Old Testament or Koranic-based (counter) revolution; they would do well to remember that they are neither on the side of fundamentalists nor the powers of global capital. Open discussions about such themes help activists remove the weeds of anti-Semitism (and other prejudices) from gardens meant to support oppressed Palestinians and homeless Lebanese. And Jews whose families died in Auschwitz have no reason to sidle up to Holocaust doubters, as Lee would rightly assert, even if these doubters rhetorically champion Palestinian refugees.

But back to CUPE. Did the minor storm provoked by its decision shake that union's resolve? Michael Hurley is of the view that the controversy "emboldened us." The CUPE Ontario leadership is "firmly committed to Resolution 50." Members will embark on a thorough discussion of the issues raised in the resolution. Peaceful resistance to Israeli policy will be championed in Ontario public sector workplaces.

Perhaps a last word for the CGT, in

the spirit of peace-loving principles long embraced by the Wobblies and their international friends and allies:

"Although we understand that the Lebanese people are asking for and need help so that others stop slaughtering them, we think, from our anti-militarist perspective, that the solution lies not in more arms and armies but through dialogue – and through the search for peace based on the right of self-determination, free association and social justice for all peoples."

### Trade Union Congress calls for end to Israeli terrorism

The British Trade Union Congress meeting in September approved a resolution that calls for restoration of all European Union and other international aid to the Palestinian Authority.

With a general strike underway by 160,000 Palestinian government and education workers to protest unpaid wages, the TUC's condemned "Israel's suspension of revenue payments to the Palestinian Authority," saying it threatens the "well-being of the Palestinian people as a whole."

The resolution said justice for the Palestinian people was necessary to bring peace to the region, also supporting the right of self-determination, the right of return for refugees, removal of Israeli military from the occupied territories, and "removal of the illegally constructed 'apartheid wall'" that now divides Palestinian villages.

The TUC resolution also called for dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian unionists and condemned "the recent Israeli attack on the Gaza City power station, the use of sonic booms over Gaza, and the seizure of members of the democratically elected Palestinian government."

## Seattle Starbucks faces discrimination complaint

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has filed suit against Starbucks, saying the coffee chain illegally discriminated against a woman with psychiatric disabilities in one of its Seattle stores. The woman had worked for Starbucks for two years before a new manager apparently decided to force her from her job. The EEOC says Starbucks slashed the woman's hours, berated her in front of customers, refused her requests for accommodations, and ultimately fired her.

The Commission sued last month, after more than a year of investigations and several meetings with the company. The suit seeks lost wages, punitive damages, and training of managers on anti-discrimination laws.

Retail workers are particularly vulnerable to arbitrary action by managers, who are often less skilled than the workers they oversee and often try to reinforce their authority through favoritism, petty discipline, and similar stratagems.

## Starbucks workers file OSHA complaint over rats in stores

Members of the IWW-affiliated Starbucks Workers Union have filed complaints with the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration over conditions at three New York City stores, after repeated complaints to management over inadequate training and chronic infestations of roaches, rats and other vermin.

City health department records indicate that 43 of 201 Starbucks outlets in the city were cited for rodent or insect activity in the most recent round of inspections.

"It's crazy, when you have to open at 5 a.m. and see mice on the pastry tray when you're not fully awake," said IWW barista Tomer Malchi, who's worked at the Union Square East Starbucks for more than a year. "There are cockroaches all over the espresso machine and fruit flies near the syrup."

Union members stood outside the Union Square East store August 16, displaying photos of dead rodents and roaches snapped at that and other nearby Starbucks outlets.

"We don't have the proper staff," Malchi said. "We're trained to be baristas, not janitors. But we have to clean up dead mice and feces and blood and needles in the bathroom." He said workers don't have the proper gloves, masks and other equipment for this.

## Hundreds of immigrants arrested, deported

At least 107 workers from Santa Cruz, Watsonville and Hollister, Calif., were arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers in a sweep September 7 and 8. Of the immigrants, mostly from Mexico but also from El Salvador, Guatemala and India, 44 have already been deported without access to lawyers. The rest are being held in custody at an undisclosed location.

Many of those arrested in "Operation Return to Sender" arrived here with their parents and lived in the United States for the majority of their lives, and have homes and U.S.-born children.

The arrests follow a new round of protests across California and the United States against immigration legislation over the Labor Day weekend. Last April 1, 187 undocumented workers were detained and 275 deported in raids across the U.S. Many of those workers were reportedly employed by IFCO Systems North America, an international corporation that builds wood pallets.

Meanwhile, the House of Representatives voted Sept. 14 to build another 700 miles of fencing along the border with Mexico as part of a package of anti-immigrant bills being pushed through the House as part of the build-up to the Fall elections. Other pending bills call for stepped-up arrests and deportations, and stiffer sanctions against employers. The bills are not expected to pass the U.S. Senate before November elections, as senators are pushing their own package of anti-immigrant legislation.

# IWW Assembly calls for Organizing Dept.

Delegates to the IWW's 2006 General Assembly kicked off their meeting Sept. 1 with a lively demonstration outside the Shattuck Cinema in Berkeley, where newly organized workers continue negotiations for the first contract, and ended with a labor history bike race and an IWW contingent in San Francisco's Labor Day parade. In between, 83 registered delegates heard reports, nominated candidates for union office, and discussed proposals sent from branches across the union over two sometimes grueling days.

The assembly was held in the Humanist Hall in downtown Oakland. A portrait of Joe Hill from the Oakland railroad workers' IWW hall (closed in the 1950s) hung on the wall alongside contemporary IWW banners.

Assembly delegates sent two proposals to referendum of the entire membership: Constitutional language establishing a new IWW Organizing Department, and a proposal to have the union become an "adherent" to the Sixth Declaration of the Lacondon Jungle issued by the Zapatistas. A proposal to increase IWW dues received extensive discussion but ultimately was not approved. However, some branches turned to the petition process to place a more modest dues hike on the Fall referendum ballot.

General Secretary-Treasurer Mark Dameron reported dues income is running ahead of budget and expenses slightly below, but that the union is still running a deficit on operations (of nearly \$16,000) for the first time in several years. However, he reported that we IWW organizing efforts continue to expand, and membership continues to grow.

The Gainesville General Membership Branch was chartered in June, and a charter application is under consideration from Central Illinois. Active groups in Atlanta, Dallas and Providence are working to build branches in those cities. However, the Duluth, Lawrence and Southern Illinois branches have collapsed and had their charters revoked, and the General Executive Board is working with several other branches which are in serious arrears. Both the Australian and British Isles Regional Organising Commit-



tees have been brought up to date and efforts to launch a German-speaking ROC are also progressing.

The General Executive Board's report noted that as the union rebuilds its job floor presence we face many of the same issues that faced the union in the 1930s, including the need to build a stable membership base, and to reconcile the constraints of workplace representation with our model of direct action unionism, which requires constant mobilization.

The International Solidarity Commission reported on its efforts to build direct contacts with unions and other workers' organizations around the world, including substantial periods when members were in India and Mexico. FW Goodenow met with the New Trade Union Initiative, a federation of Indian unions that have remained independent of the various parties that dominate other union centers, around a program calling for a revival of working class struggle and international solidarity. However, many of these unions lack a rank-and-file orientation, and are more prone to lobby politicians than to organize direct action struggles on the job.

FW Bocking met with officers and members of Mexico's Authentic Labor Front over

several months, wrote several articles for the *Industrial Worker* on labor struggles there, and worked to lay the groundwork for closer relations in the future. FW Chester reported on a meeting with a member of the Swedish Workers Center (SAC) international committee to discuss the possibilities for better supporting each other's workplace struggles and sharing international contacts.

The International Solidarity Commission also authorized representatives to the World Social Forum in Venezuela, to unions in Central America, and to France, and is hoping to send a delegation to Bangladesh to deepen our relations with the National Garment Workers Federation. (They are also launching an initiative to help the NGWF establish a strike fund.)

*Industrial Worker* editor Jon Bekken was greeted with rousing applause as he stood to announce that he was concluding his six years in that position. FW Bekken's report focused on the need to expand the newspaper's circulation and to encourage branches to send in news of their activities and of labor news in their industries.

The Organizing Training Committee reported that they have facilitated eight trainings since the 2005 Assembly, and are work-

ing on five more. The Committee is holding a Training for Trainers workshop Oct. 7-8 in the San Francisco Bay area, is working to finalize a training manual, and is beginning efforts to add new topics to the OTC curriculum around topics including building shop committees, winning demands, and strengthening union culture and activity where the IWW has won formal recognition.

Several members have argued that the union needs to expand its training efforts, and the Seattle branch sent proposals to Assembly calling for expanding the size of the Committee, requiring "equal opportunity for the funding of training[s]," and the creation of a new committee to develop a comprehensive educational program for members bargaining for or currently working under IWW contracts. The Assembly approved an amended version of the latter proposal calling on the OTC to develop advanced training curricula on collective bargaining, grievance handling and related matters.

## Organizing Department

The second day of deliberations opened with a rousing rendition of "Hold the Fort" by the delegates, led by assistant chair Jim Crutchfield.

The main item of business on the agenda was the report of the Organizing Department Formation Committee, established as part of the union's ongoing efforts to strengthen union-wide support for workplace organizing. The Committee submitted an extensive report including the results of a survey of branches, proposed policies governing an organizing department, and a Constitutional Amendment providing for union-wide elections to a new Organizing Department board.

While there was broad support for the proposal, some members questioned the union's ability to properly staff the department with experienced organizers without pulling people away from other union bodies. Particularly controversial was a suggestion to bar fellow workers currently engaged in local organizing from serving in the department – language in the explanatory material submitted with the proposal that turned out not to be in the policies themselves.

Ultimately, the proposal was sent to referendum with the Assembly's endorsement. Assembly also sent to referendum an amendment requiring new branches to adopt bylaws and elect officers before they are chartered.

More controversial was a proposal to send the question of adhering to the Zapatista's Other Campaign to referendum with Assembly's recommendation.

While the proposal ultimately won a strong majority from delegates, several spoke against it. Proponents argued that this was an important opportunity to declare solidarity with a grassroots, democratic movement of our Mexican fellow workers and to lay the basis for participating in future encuentros. Critics questioned what was meant by "adherence," objected to the Declaration's calls for an alliance between workers and small business owners (among others), and argued that we could better build solidarity with the Zapatistas and other grassroots movements in Mexico by developing joint campaigns and sending delegations to meet with unions and other workers' organizations.

Other resolutions sent to the Assembly included a resolution requiring disclosure of conflict of interests, which was not adopted although the Committee on Resolutions agreed that it was important for IWW officers to disclose any potential conflicts of interest to the union as a whole. A proposed amendment to the IWW constitution governing the filing and hearing of charges was not adopted, although a committee was formed to consider the issue and present new constitutional language to the 2007 General Assembly.

A resolution offered from the floor to endorse a boycott of Israeli goods was not placed on the agenda as it had not been circulated to

## 100 Wobblies and supporters rally for Shattuck workers

BY DEAN DEMPSEY, BAY AREA GMB

In the largest turnout to date, the Bay Area IWW rallied outside Landmark's Shattuck Cinemas in Berkeley, in support of the theater's workers who are negotiating for their first contract. The rally occurred one day before the IWW General Assembly, allowing fellow workers from all parts of North America to participate, putting our number at more than one hundred Wobblies and union supporters.

The rally began as a march, as Wobblies marched from the Bay Area GMB office to the Shattuck Cinemas half a mile away. As we approached the theater, everyone began to sing "Solidarity Forever," and then took position outside the theater on Berkeley's main commercial strip to display banners and picket signs.

Among those present were several workers from the Starbucks Union in New York City. As Starbucks organizer Daniel Gross said, "Starbucks workers were so inspired by the Shattuck victory... so for us, it was such a privilege and honor to take a stand with the Shattuck workers and to be with them in solidarity, and also to pledge to do whatever we can to make sure they succeed, and that we succeed as a class."

Landmark employees were equally supportive of the New York Baristas. Shattuck Cinema worker Ilya Gershov felt "impressed by the rally [and] that our fellow Wobblies... came across the country to show support for our cause."

The rally also served as an occasion for fellow workers to meet one another, sharing experience and encouraging each other through ideas and support. Fellow workers from Canada, Washington, Illinois, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Florida, Wisconsin and many other parts of the continent were able to network and meet their fellow workers face to face.

Workers from local IWW shops Buyback Recycling (IU670) and Stone Mountain & Daughter Fabrics (IU660) also joined the rally, demonstrating their solidarity not only for their union but for other fellow workers.

Shattuck Cinema organizer Harjit Gill saw the rally as "inspiring, with so many people there to be supportive of the drive. The workers felt very supported, and were really in shock by all the people who turned out for them."

"In the earlier rallies, workers were in even greater disbelief that other people would support them, but I told them this is called solidarity. An individual doesn't need to know who you are to give support. That's what this one word means."

At mid-rally we convened for a second march, circling around the block as people shouted from building windows their support for the workers at Shattuck Cinemas. Employees at a nearby theater smiled and clapped as we paused in front.

"It was wonderful seeing all the IWW flags waving in the air and seeing the Star-



bucks and Shattuck workers side by side," Gross said.

The support given to the Shattuck Cinema workers comes as contract negotiations are underway. Although wages and hours are being discussed, two major issues are the workers' uniforms and the right to a chair for the ticket collector.

Recently, in a possible effort to undermine union efforts, workers were offered raises nationwide, the first such wage increases at Landmark Cinemas in about three years. These were 70 cents up to \$1.00 raises. The union and the workers are optimistic about this action, because workers are receiving higher pay but remain committed in organizing to reclaim what is rightfully theirs.

The support is going strong, and so is the will and enthusiasm of the workers. Gershov says, "I share the feeling with all my fellow Wobblies at the theater that [one day] people will walk by the Shattuck theater and say, 'those guys didn't give.' ... 'They took on a giant and didn't accept anything less than what workers deserve.'"

all branches for prior discussion, as required by the IWW constitution. However, an ad hoc committee was formed by interested members, and will research the issue and report their findings over the coming year.

Delegates did adopt proposals from the floor to prioritize child care arrangements at future Assemblies, to encourage branches to adopt policies to facilitate more active involvement by women workers in the union, to establish a committee to draft bylaws barring sexual harassment within the union, and to reach out to the Federation of Worker Cooperatives to advance our mutual interest in building a world without bosses.

### Dues hike to referendum

Delegates were presented with a dizzying array of proposals to change IWW dues, including encouraging greater use of automatic deductions from members' checking accounts, online delegate reporting, annual or quarterly dues, creation of a new top dues tier for members earning more than the U.S. median wage, and increasing the union's existing dues rates by about a third. Some members argued from the floor for adjusting the existing dues tiers, noting that at present workers below the federal poverty level are assessed regular dues, while workers earning

as little as \$12 an hour are assessed maximum dues even though they earn far less than the median income for the United States.

These proposals received extensive debate in committee and on the Assembly floor. Delegates approved proposals to encourage automatic dues payments so long as these were not deducted from workers' pay checks, and to encourage branches to require delegates to maintain regular contact with new members in order to reduce turn-over. While the committee recommended across-the-board dues increases, delegates initially approved only increases to the regular and maximum dues rates. On a motion to reconsider raised by delegates distressed at the disproportional impact these increases would have on low-income members working in shops where the IWW has established union representation, those increases were also rejected – leaving consideration of dues for another year.

However, in the week following Assembly, branches successfully petitioned to place constitutional amendments on the Fall ballot to increase minimum dues by \$1 a month, regular dues by \$2, and maximum dues by \$3. Separate amendments would create a new top tier of \$28 for workers earning more than \$3,000 a month, and would rename dues



BuyBack workers at the Shattuck Cinemas rally

### Highlights of local reports

Starbucks organizing has picked up, with a new shop organized in Chicago and six shops in **New York City**. There've been a lot of firings in the last six months, but we're picking up a lot of contacts as well. The IU 460 campaign underway among largely undocumented workers has lined up four shops in Brooklyn, including Amersino where six IWW members were fired for demanding union recognition. Thanks to all for the contributions which have helped the fired workers pay their rent.

The **San Francisco** Area branch is reaching out to day laborers, participating in immigrant rights marches, and working with worker hiring halls to try to democratize these and bring them under worker control. The Branch is also organizing bike messengers, and in negotiations at Shattuck Cinemas and Curbside Recycling. Stonemountain and Daughter recently ratified their second contract. There is high turnover in many of these shops and we need more discussion on strategies to maintain solidarity on the shop floor in between negotiations.

One year after organizing, **Twin Cities** (Minneapolis and St. Paul) GMB now has 45 members. They have been active in Northwest strike solidarity, and hosted MidWest WobFest. They have contacts in several shops and are laying the groundwork for a drive.

Wobblies are working with **Los Angeles** taxi drivers, whose union was busted many years ago. Recently workers struck over long hours, with fuel prices many workers now earn less than minimum wage.

**Pensacola** is a low-wage area hit hard by recent hurricanes. It's still a low wage city, but now it has high rents and many workers have had to leave. They have a job branch at a collective coffee shop but it is a constant struggle to keep the union there.

**Ottawa** Wobblies have been working with a panhandlers union in a campaign against police harassment. They also represent projectionists at Carleton College, but negotiations for a contract have been stalled for two years. They did a Starbucks picket last week and had some good response talking to workers.

Since Centenary the **Toronto** branch has reformed for the third time in ten years. They have organized a shop of graphic designers and are meeting with workers in a plastics factory. They also have a committee forming in a supermarket, and contacts at a coffee shop.

**Chicago** GMB's main organizing campaign underway is the Chicago Couriers Union and its Stop NICA campaign. The union has been fighting bannings of activists, and established a variety of programs to offer practical assistance to couriers.

**Portland** IDC has moved to a new hall, which is larger but in a worse location, as a result of their former offices being sold. The new space will house Martin Glaberman's library. The branch is planning a campaign in the restaurant industry, and working to shore up their IU 650 contracts.

**Seattle** has won a new contract at Central Co-op which won an expanded unit and kept out the no-strike and management rights clauses management's high-priced union-busting attorney was demanding.

The **British Isles** ROC reported steady membership growth, establishment of new branches, revival of their *Bread & Roses* magazine, and formal certification as a recognized union (absence of which had blocked members fired for IWW membership from protection two years ago). In addition to the Scottish Parliament job branch, UK Wobs have active campaigns underway in the education, health care and retail sectors.



GST Mark Damron (Right), speaking outside the Shattuck Cinemas Friday evening.

stamp categories and end the current practice of printing the dues class on dues stamps.

### Nominations

Mark Damron was nominated to serve another term as General Secretary-Treasurer. Nominated to the General Executive Board (including all those who have not declined as we go to press) were Patrick Brenner, Chicago; Adam Lincoln, BI ROC; Bryan Roberts, Edmonton; Scott Satterwhite, Pensacola; Richard Seymour, Portland; Oliver Lanti, San Francisco Bay Area; Stacey Means, San Francisco Bay Area; Mike Bell, Boston; Ed Boraas, Edmonton; Alexis Buss, Philadelphia; Kevin Farkas, Pittsburgh; Jeanette Gysbers, Edmonton; Matt White, Philadelphia; Evan Wolfson, Pittsburgh; Sarah Bender, New York; Doug Gilbert, Bay Area; Jessica Hawthorn, Edmonton; Helen Hudson, Pensacola; Pete Little, Portland; Tabitha Millican, Portland; Peter Montalbano, New York; John Persak, Seattle; Melissa Roberts, Olympia; Skip Smith, Central Jersey; Walt Weber, Philadelphia

Nominated to a two-year term as Industrial Worker editor were Tom Howard, Central New Jersey; Peter Moore, Ottawa; Melissa Roberts, Olympia; Don Jennings, Georgia; and Marc Young, Toronto.

The following fellow workers were

nominated to the International Solidarity Commission (several others declined nomination): John Kalwaic, Philadelphia; Mike Pesa, Philadelphia; Dean Dempsey, Oakland; Druv Jain, Toronto; Skip Porter, Milwaukee; Lauren Anzalda, Pensacola.

Candidates for General Defense Committee Secretary are Drew Robertson of Iowa and Leo Stigman of Oakland.

Nominated as sites for the 2007 General Assembly were Chicago, New York City, Twin Cities, Minn., Gainesville and Pensacola, Florida, Edmonton, and Woodbine March, Colorado. It should be kept in mind that many nominees will ultimately not accept, and so the ballot will contain fewer names.

### Remembering our dead

The Assembly closed with good and welfare, including thanks to the San Francisco Bay Area for their hospitality and a collection for the victims of Starbucks' union-busting. But first FW Harry Siitonen delivered a tribute to Fellow Workers Reino Akkila and Jennie Velsek, followed by a moment of silence in memory of them and FW Steve Lindenmeyer of the Portland IWW.

Delegates then gathered in a circle to adjourn the proceedings with the singing of the IWW anthem "Solidarity Forever."

## The right to organize in education

As the National Labor Relations Board considers the Kentucky River cases, which could expand the legal definition of supervisor – taking away the right to join unions from up to 8 million workers – teachers continue struggling for the right to organize 26 years after the U.S. Supreme Court decreed that faculty at Yeshiva University were management, and so have no union rights.

Full-time faculty at Emerson College in Boston just won a new contract after three years of fighting administrators who refused to negotiate after part-time faculty won representation by their union, the AAUP. Faculty failed in efforts to force out the college president, but with solidarity from students made it impossible to break the union.

At Point Park University, faculty in the Pittsburgh Newspaper Guild (CWA), who overwhelmingly voted to unionize two years ago, face at least another year of legal battles after the Court of Appeals sent Point Park's appeal back to the NLRB to clarify its ruling that the faculty were not managers.

The regional director's 112-page decision that Point Park faculty were entitled to union representation is testimony to the degree to which college management has infringed on every aspect of teachers' work. At Point Park a new president subcontracted faculty work to private firms, dismantled departments, established new courses and graduation requirements without faculty involvement, imposed a merit pay system, required faculty to follow a rigid syllabus format, claimed ownership of faculty writings, changed grades assigned by faculty, and otherwise stripped faculty of much of their power.

As college administrations have become increasingly autocratic, many faculty have

unionized and the NLRB has in several cases ruled that they had so little say in setting policy that they retained their right to the protection of a union.

But only the most brutally autocratic administrators need fear the Board. When Quinnipiac College decided to end 31 years of AFT representation, claiming that faculty unions create an "adversarial structure and culture," the NLRB quickly agreed to strip the 240 full-time faculty of their rights.

If faculty really did run colleges, of course, the ranks of part-time and temporary teachers would not be exploding as quickly as the ranks of the high-paid managers sucking the life out of colleges across the country.

### Rail Teamsters' right to vote

Members of the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference voted overwhelmingly in August to change their by-laws to require direct election of the three national officers. Two months earlier, Teamster engineers and conductors in the United States also approved a system of one-member, one vote by a landslide. And in 2005, the Maintenance of Way Division of the TCRC also changed their constitution to provide for direct elections.

Delegates from divisions that supported this reform are now considering a proposal to have direct elections at the General Committee level as well.

"The General Chairmen are the ones who actually bargain our contracts, so we feel it's extremely important to hold them directly accountable to the membership," says Div. 320 member Craig Brown. "When they bargain our contracts they don't say 'look what we got'; they say 'look what we didn't give away.' That's got to stop."

## Northwest strike...

continued from page 1

tendants are treading new ground. The union leadership negotiated a concessionary tentative agreement, but the membership voted it down handily. The union has been preparing for CHAOS action, but the courts have denied it and for now the union is obeying.

Everyone covered by the RLA is watching the legal developments to see if a company can unilaterally break the contract without triggering the right to strike. Workers in the industry have taken many millions of dollars in annual concessions with unions afraid to challenge the company and the courts. If we have the right to strike, it could change the dynamic entirely since reluctant union leaders will no longer be able to point to the possibility of abrogation without recourse.

If the courts continue to rule against us, it will be a temporary setback. However, if we have no legal recourse, then airline workers will be forced to see that we no longer have any reason to respect the law, that we have to take matters into our own hands, and that we must quit relying on courts that have been purchased by our employers.

Karen Schultz puts it best: "The NWA flight attendants twice rejected the terms to which their unions and NWA agreed. Their voices should matter to NWA, to the courts of America and to the current administration. Nowhere in the court's decision was this indicated. We are not slaves and should have a right to strike. Now we have nothing to lose, but our dignity."

And that is one concession we will never give.

Joshua DeVries is a flight attendant and a member of AFA and the IWW.

## Are we not slaves?

BY JON BEKKEN

As the *Industrial Worker* goes to press, a federal judge has issued an injunction barring flight attendants from striking Northwest Airlines, while allowing the bosses to impose wage cuts and other concessions that flight attendants had overwhelmingly voted down.

This injunction was handed down even though nothing in the Rail Labor Act provides for such court orders. The "law" barring these workers from striking is an invention of the judge's fevered mind, who recognizes that another strike against Northwest would be inconvenient to the employing class. (Of course, working under the deep concessions management imposed in violation of a "contract" it entered into with the flight attendants' union is inconvenient to the workers, but workers have few rights that the bosses and their courts feel obliged to respect.)

We derive no satisfaction from the fact that the flight attendants stumbled into this desperate position by their act of treachery a year ago when they – along with every other air transport union, although they at least considered the possibility of solidarity action – decided to cross the picket lines of the mechanics and ground crew workers represented by the Airline Mechanics Fraternal Association. AMFA members remain on strike, with subcontractors and a handful of scabs hired for the purpose doing their jobs and other air transport unions crossing the picket lines to keep the scab-maintained and cleaned airplanes flying.

Because workers do not stand in solidarity with each other – acting on the principle that An Injury to One Is An Injury to All – we continue to be afflicted with the employing class. Because our unions seek an accommodation with the employing class, we are confronted with an endless series of demands for ever-more-humiliating concessions. Trusting in politicians and judges and arbitrators and labor boards invites nothing but abuse.

If workers stuck together, the bosses' injunctions would not be worth the paper they are laser printed on, good only for making paper airplanes. The power to run all industry, or to shut it down, rests in our hands. We neglect that power at our peril.

# What is the value of a worker's life?

BY ARTHUR J. MILLER

Under capitalism the value of a worker's life is measured in the ability to produce profit, consumption for profit and to reproduce the next generation of workers. For the maximum profit in production, the cost of production must be kept as low as possible even at the expense of the safety and well-being of those that do the producing. Even in the union shops of the business unions, an injured or dead worker can be replaced with a simple call down to the union hall for a dispatch.

Down at the local shipyard we were told to go down into two tanks on a barge and remove some valves. The lines in the first tank contained Caustic Soda, which is highly corrosive. We were told to wear rubber gloves, safety glasses and spray down the flanges with vinegar water. I asked what the danger was, and the foreman said that if we were to get any on our skin it might burn a little. When I got down into the tank, which was the pump room for the product, I noticed that there was a full decontamination station. That set an alarm off in my head. Why would they have a decontamination station down in a tank if the product was such a minor danger? Then I noticed that the valves, suction and discharge were closed at the bulkhead, and the valves at the pumps were closed, which meant that more than likely the pipes still had product in and could be under pressure.

I then went to the safety officer and asked him about Caustic Soda and to find out about the stuff in the other tank which was a form of liquefied fertilizer. He told me that there had been injuries in the past in the yard due to Caustic Soda. One pipefitter had part of his face and neck burned that left scars. Another had his knees burned. Another had his arm burned as the Caustic Soda burned through his clothing. I then asked for the Material Safety Data Sheet, which by law all companies must have on all chemical hazards.

While the safety officer was trying to find the MSDS the pipe foreman came up to me yelling about why I was not down in the tank taking out the valves! I told him I was

getting the MSDS so that I could do the job as safely as possible. He yelled that if I did not like the job to call the hall, a rather useless act. I said that if I called anyone it would be OSHA, and that I had the right to know what the dangers were.

The superintendent overheard the yelling and stepped in and said that, for now the valves were not to be removed. The shipfitters were cutting out the bulkheads and they could cut around the pipes without having the valves removed. Later on the whole pump room was to be removed, but they would deal with that problem later.

I did not refuse to do the job, I only wanted to do it safely. I had already determined that face shields and rubber boots were needed and some type of splatter shield in case any of the Caustic Soda was under pressure. Safety measures would not cost that much money or time, but they cost the company something – and maximum profit was the primary goal and a worker's life meant next to nothing. Just having safety concerns was counter to the interests of the company. The next day I was laid off, I guess in the hope that the next workers sent down there would do the job without questions.

In the months before that work, we were working on a major overhaul of a tugboat. This overhaul included replacing the engine and two generators, removing all the piping both to get them out but also so that new piping can be made for the different configuration the new engine would need.

To save time and money, thus making the owners more wealth, rather than have the lube and fuel oil lines sucked out by a tanker truck we were told to cut those lines and let what was in them drain into the bilge. The owner's thinking is that since the bilges must be cleaned before a "Safe For Hot Work" permit is issued, why not remove the lube oil and fuel oil at the same time? That creates a fire danger, as we are working around very flammable material below us. Many of the pipes we must remove run through the bilge and thus we must work in an oily mess. But

the danger is just a calculated risk and the danger to us workers and the conditions we must work in is not a consideration in the bottom line costs of such a job. Though the engine room was not "Safe For Hot Work" the outside bulkheads were being burnt on and at times there was hot burning slag raining down on us. Once, when I was draining fuel oil, a burner started to burn right above me. I yelled for him to stop. "Hey brother you're going to burn the boat down with us inside it!"

When it came time to remove the mufflers off the generators I requested a beam clamp in order to safely lower them down. First the foreman asks that we lower it down by hand saying it could not be that heavy. The muffler is in the overhead and is made out of steel and I told him that we are not going to lower it by hand. No beam clamp can be found and rather than take the time to have the steel shop make one and pay that small expense, the foreman tells us to lower it down with rope any way we can. We got the first one down without much of a problem. Using rope means that when you get the last bolt out the muffler will fall some no matter how tight the rope is because the rope will stretch. So we knew to stand out of the way. On the second muffler the rope broke and the muffler fell about 8 feet down. Doing the job safely with a beam clamp and a chainfall meant cutting in to profits and that just cannot be allowed even at the expense of safe working conditions.

We had to take off the piping to the oil coolers, which were all six inch pipe. At the top of the outlet of the waterside of the cooler was a six inch angle valve. Even with all of us pulling with rope there was no way we could lift that valve. There was a padeye in which we could hook a comealong, so the foreman gives us a small comealong. I noticed that this was the same comealong that I had brought in to be red tagged until it was fixed because when you change gears the load would free fall. That meant whenever you changed gears to pick up or to lower a load the load would

## Starbucks: Making work safer with direct action

continued from page 1

a whistle after eight-hours of work and going home. IWW timber workers won the eight-hour day in this manner and not through the ballot box or a union official. Direct Action is about more than winning demands though. It's about how the demand is won, that is, through workers' own initiative and self-organization.

The IWW baristas picked Labor Day to launch their direct action. First, the union bought a ladder. Next, workers placed a sticker on both sides of the ladder reading, "Brought to you by IWW Starbucks Workers Union for a safer, healthier workplace." The workers knew that when they brought the ladder to work, Starbucks could respond in one of three ways.

First, the company could allow the ladder to stay in the store and workers would have the tool they needed to work safer. The Wobbly baristas knew that the company wouldn't choose this first option. Starbucks is waging a fierce and unlawful anti-union campaign that resulted in a massive complaint from the National Labor Relations Board. The last thing Starbucks would want was a useful tool that workers needed with the IWW sticker on it. Allowing such a ladder to remain in the store would conflict with Starbucks' message that unions are antiquated and not necessary in Starbucks "pro-partner" environment.

Second, Starbucks could remove the ladder to rid the store of a useful gift from the IWW and reinstate the no-ladder status quo. This too would not be good for the company. Jettisoning a useful tool that workers needed to stay safe would make the company look bad to workers and to the public. Such a maneuver would conflict with Starbucks' message that it's a benevolent employer

(notwithstanding the poverty wage and lack of full-time status), while the IWW is a radical organization outside of the mainstream.

Third, the company could remove the IWW ladder and purchase a comparable ladder for the store. While this wouldn't be perfect for Starbucks because they'd have to spend money and concede a union victory, workers predicted this was the way management would go. After years of being turned down for a simple tool that makes everyday life at work a whole lot easier, the baristas would have their ladder. In addition, the company would foot the bill for the ladder, as it should under the law. The union would then return its ladder to recoup the cost.

September 4th came around and everything was set to go. Two Wobbly baristas from the Logan Square Starbucks including one of the authors, Joe Tessone, were selected to bring the ladder into the store. The contrast of the reactions to their entry into the store with the ladder was striking. Management, including a senior human resources official, looked shocked and mortified. On the other hand, workers were beaming with smiles cheek-to-cheek. The absolute power of their employer, which was first challenged less than a week ago, had been further eroded and they had set in motion a plan to get the ladder they needed! Afterwards, Joe's partner in the action, Monica Karpuk, said that this was the most exciting thing she had ever done.

Management sprang into action running around visibly shaken. Then they moved outside the store to speak in private. Returning to the store still distraught, management informed workers that Starbucks could not



I want to reiterate that the recent pay raises you've all received are not connected in any way to all this talk we've been hearing about I.W.W.

accept the union's ladder but that the company would purchase its own ladder. One hour later, after years of individual requests and less than one week as union members, the Logan Square baristas had the ladder they needed for a safer healthier workplace.

The IWW baristas and those acting with them in solidarity still have much work to do. Starbucks is still far from a decent place to work and the company continues union-busting with impunity. But with several key victories under its belt and a commitment to a powerful organizing model, the IWW Starbucks Workers Union is poised to continue growing and winning workplace demands.

Only one thing didn't go according to plan in Chicago. The baristas decided not to return their ladder to get the money back. They kept it to remember their Direct Action and to preserve a symbol for the millions of working people looking for their own ladder to a better life on and off the job.



fall. I checked to see if it had been fixed and it had not been. I found the shop steward and showed him the problem with the comealong and we got a red tag and both signed it, and had witnesses to that so that if the red tag was removed a safety grievance would be filed.

Once we had a lot of piping, valves and other stuff removed, the foreman wanted us to get all that material out on main deck. We were going to hook up a chainfall at the top of the stairs to pull each piece out. The foreman decided that would take too much time and gave us a pulley and some rope. In order to get up the stairs someone had to be by the load to make sure that it did not get caught up on the stairs. With a pulley you have no means other than your own strength to keep the load from going back down. With a chainfall that works right, the load stays where it is until you either lower it or raise it. We left all the material down there.

Removing the insulation off the exhaust piping had covered much of the engine room with dust. I had asked the foreman if the insulation has any asbestos in it. He told me no. Then one day we were told to leave the boat – the test results on the insulation had come back positive for asbestos. For over a week those of us working in the engine room had asbestos raining down on us. Though our lives may not have any value to the company, in their mad pursuit of profit they ended up costing themselves profit because the tug boat had to be shut down. Since the dust was now all over the place, there was a much larger area to clean up than if they had waited until the results came back and they just had to contain the asbestos while stripping the insulation off the pipes.

It would seem that these safety issues should be the concern of the union. We tried to file a grievance about the asbestos, and were told that the company was sorry. We tried to file a grievance about workers cleaning the tops of the engines while we

were under them and thus had stuff falling on us. The company was sorry. Later that day we had fire raining down on us instead. Every time there is a grievance the company is sorry and nothing changes. It was not the fault of our shop steward; he did try, but the union would not back him up.

One issue in the yard is overtime work. Yes, we have the right to turn down overtime, but the company uses a part of the contract that says they may keep workers based upon “skills and ability.” The company says willingness to work overtime is an ability, so if we refuse we can be bumped down the seniority list by someone who will work overtime. Our shop steward was the most insistent of all of us about refusing overtime. He did not have to worry about being bumped

because the shop steward is always number one on the seniority list.

That pissed off the hall cats at the union because they are more pro-overtime than the company. As in many construction unions, we pay both standard union dues and

“working dues” based upon how much you work. So the more hours we work, the more money the union gets.

One day our union B.A. came down to the yard. He told the shop steward that if he did not agree to work overtime that he would no longer be the shop steward. We did not realize that the B.A. had the power to appoint shop stewards and to get rid of them. He refused to agree to work overtime and the B.A. appointed a new shop steward. The guy he appointed had been a pipe helper, and was made a journeyman without apprenticeship or test by the B.A. He had been low on the seniority list. So without the B.A. talking to any of us, he makes this guy shop steward – jumping over all of us to be number one on the seniority list. Why were such favors shown this guy? Could it be that his brother was the union dispatcher?

The next time the B.A. came to the yard

*Solidarity is not just helping some strike; it must become a way of life for us working people...*

## Oct. 24 is Take Back Your Time Day

October 24th is Take Back Your Time Day and this year's theme is “Let's Get Back to the Table!” A variety of resources and suggestions on possible activities are available at [www.timeday.org](http://www.timeday.org).

“We've got the most Gross Domestic Product in the world,” says Time Day Coordinator John de Graaf. “But there's no time to enjoy all that stuff and we're sacrificing so much. Americans can hardly find time to sit down to eat together anymore. Is our economy just for raising the Dow Jones average, or is it to provide healthy and happy kids, families and communities?”

The growing American work week carries a heavy price in depression, stress-related health problems, and social isolation as too many of us simply don't have time for our families or our friends. Studies have shown that the number of intimate friends has continued to plummet, making us more isolated and lonely. And lonely people are less happy and healthy.

Nor are we making up for this social misery with more material wealth. Wages have been stagnant for more than 30 years, and American workers are falling ever deeper in debt even as we work harder and produce more than ever before.

Wobblies in San Francisco will be distributing leaflets reviving the IWW's historic campaign for the 4-hour day – a goal that has been economically practical for 75 years or so. Churches across Massachusetts will urge parishioners to reflect on the time crunch in their lives, and resolve to do something to reclaim more of their lives.

There are many ways to celebrate Take Back Your Time Day, from organizing an event in your union hall or local library to hosting a brown bag lunch at work. The TBYT also has several silent agitators which



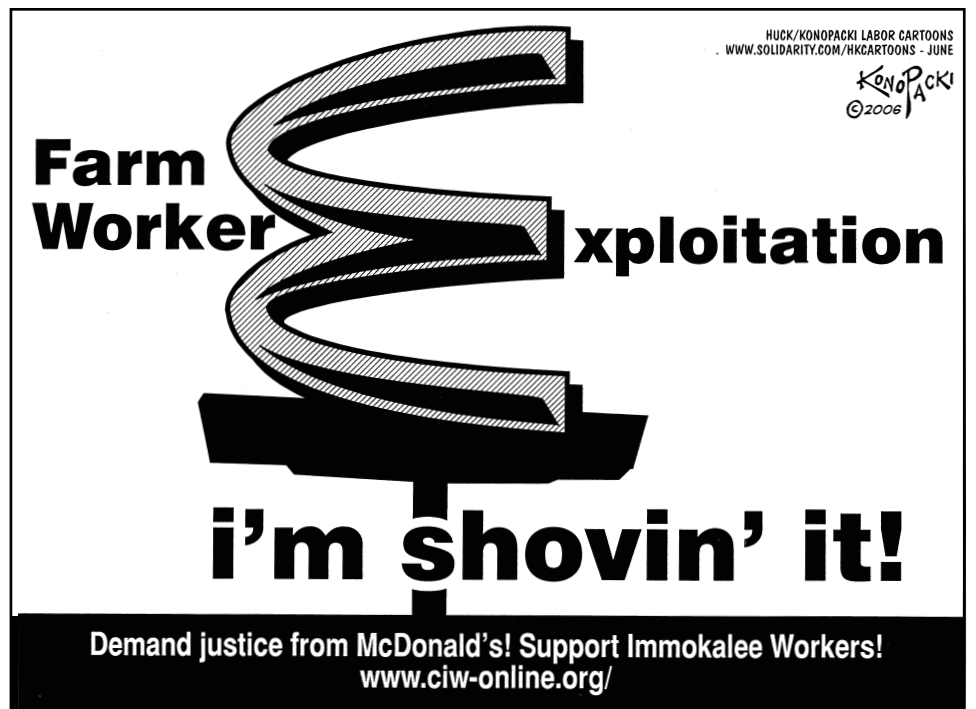
can be downloaded and reproduced.

## European vacations remain

With almost weekly headlines like “Europe's Long Vacation Is Ending” (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 11) one might conclude that the American model – no vacations – is winning the global vacation wars. However, notes John Messenger of the International Labor Organization, “The picture painted by these articles is an inaccurate one.

“Although some European firms, particularly in some sectors in Germany and France are pushing for longer working weeks, there is certainly no movement towards a reduction in paid annual leave (paid vacation) in the EU – where a minimum of 20 working days (4 weeks) of paid vacation is required under the European Working Time Directive. This is a key point because the main reason for the difference in average annual working hours between the US and the EU countries is not weekly hours, but rather the difference in paid annual leave, which is between 5 and 6 weeks in most of the old EU – 15 (the average number of days of collectively agreed annual leave across the entire EU is 26 working days), as compared with only 2 to 3 weeks of paid vacation in the U.S. (and U.S. workers, like the Japanese, also don't take all of their vacation days)...

“When it comes to paid vacation, it is not the EU but the U.S. that is the outlier because the US is now ... the only industrialized country that provides no statutory minimum entitlement for paid vacation for its workers.”



he told us that it is his power alone to appoint stewards and that the shop steward works for him. So with conditions already bad, we now have a shop steward who is a lackey of the hall cats.

About a week ago, while inspecting pipe going to the keel coolers of a large tug, a hole was found in a pipe. This pipe was down in the infamous number 14 double bottom tank. I had already worked in that tank three others times, so with two other pipefitters and a welder I found myself in that damn tank again. That tank is tight to begin with, but when you had to crawl under the foundation of the port engine it was even tighter. To make matters worse, there were pipes running through some of the holes you had to crawl through them. There was mud and anti-freeze on the bottom of the tank, which you had to lie down in because there was only enough room to work the pipe lying down.

I could not get in there without crawling around the backside, so first the other two pipefitters who were thinner than I am tried to do the job. The first one was a building trades fitter who had never worked in such a place. When he reached where the work was he turned around and had to get out of there. The look on his face was of sheer terror.

Then the other fitter went in and got the old pipe cut and the new one tacked up. Once the new pipe was out of the tank and welded up, I took it around the backside. We had already nearly completed our normal shift when this job came up and by the time it was done we had pull down a 15 ½ hour shift.

The tug had to leave at high tide and we were done shortly before it left. This job should have been done while the tug was in dry dock, but in the planning of the job it got left to the last moment. Thus the company's crisis became our hell. It only got done because of the human solidarity between us workers who gave comfort and aid to each other to get through such hard conditions.

At what point do we tell the capitalists that their problems are not our problems and refuse to bail them out? Like it or not that time is coming is coming for all workers. The painters are pushed very hard to get their work done and sometimes that causes the rest of us problems. Another pipefitter and I were working on the lines to the steering shaft when all of a sudden we heard the tank lid being closed. Luckily I was near the opening and yelled out to stop them. Had we been further in the tank we could have been sealed in. The painters did not know that anyone else was working on the tug and were getting it ready to paint. They were pushed so hard they did not have time to think about the other workers who might be around them.

On another tug we had to work a Saturday because the new sea valves had just come in and the tug was scheduled to leave drydock on Sunday. There we were installing the sea valves right off the sea chest when strong fumes hit us hard. Our eyes and throats were burning and we grabbed rags to cover our mouths as we ran out of the engine

room and off the tug. All of the painting is done at night and on weekends because other workers cannot work around the painting. Marine paint is very strong and toxic. The painters painted the exhaust trunk right on top of us. They were in such a rush they did not take the time to see if any one was in the engine room and to warn them. I was sick for two days. All the foreman would say is that we should have had our respirators on, but how would we know to use them without some warning?

The capitalist system places little or no value on the lives of workers. We can be replaced. Workers are injured, sickened and killed throughout the industries so that the bosses can make their profits. Profits are the highest economic and social value under capitalism and we workers have the lowest value. It should be clear to all that capitalism can not be reformed because the interests of capitalism and the interests of workers are too far apart to ever find common ground.

The labor movement has been so concerned about more nickels and dimes for bargaining units that it often overlooks the conditions of labor and the well-being of our communities and the environment. We need more than just these bargaining units; we need a labor movement based upon the idea on universal class solidarity as a way of life. This means we look out for each other and the highest concern of all is the well-being of all. No job that we perform is more important than the well-being of the workers who do the work. Even when pushed hard by the bosses, we should first look out for each other.

An injury to one is an injury to all is the most fundamental principle our class should live by. I have a friend and long-time public worker who is bed ridden with cancer that is killing her. I visit her often and try to make her life more comfortable, not out of some bleeding heart charity, but out of solidarity.

Solidarity is not just helping some strike action; it must become a way of life for us working people. Be it on our jobs, be it in support of workers on other jobs, be it in our communities, solidarity does not have an up or down hierarchy of importance. It matters not what the situation workers find themselves in, sick in bed, fighting conditions on the job or resisting the bosses' wars. Solidarity is our revolutionary way of life and the means of creating a new society within the shell of the old.

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# Poetry can be a class act

A few weeks ago, I went to a poetry reading at a local book store in Denver, because the book of poems were primarily about a subject close to the heart of the working class of many nations: the Ludlow Strike in 1914. The author, Eleanor Swanson, is a professor of English at Regis University here in Denver.

I might have been leery that I was going to hear another failed attempt by an intellectual to put working class experience to rhyme; but as I'm drawn to anything about this quintessential example of the struggle between workers and the owning class like a moth to a flame, I went to hear her poetry. I would have been dead wrong to miss this reading. Once again, I was reminded of the truth that we can never assume we know where we are going to find working class hearts and minds.

Eleanor entitled her book of poetry, *Trembling in the Bones*. Reading the poems in the book is a deeply moving experience for any student of labor history. You will not read them all with dry eyes. But when she reads her own poetry, one quickly discerns that, although *Trembling in the Bones* refers to a poem about a mine cave-in, Eleanor's bones also tremble, with the rage, fear, and pain of a non-union coal miner in 1914.

Eleanor Swanson begins her book with a short history of the Colorado Territory that would, in 1876, become the state of Colorado. In reality, this area was always just another third world country with lots of resources to exploit for the wealthy back east who ignored the laws and took what they wanted regardless of what the area was called.

Towards the end of Eleanor's book is a poem about Baron Beshoar's memories as the young son of the only doctor who would treat the striking miners. (Later in his life, Baron wrote an excellent book about the strike of 1913-1914, *Out of the Depths*, that you can only find as a rare or used book, but it is worth the search. The Rockefeller family still intimidates anyone who wants to keep the memory of this strike alive.)

I will only give you a taste of Eleanor's poetry. You will have to order *Trembling in*

*the Bones* from [www.ghostroadpress.com](http://www.ghostroadpress.com) for \$13.95 to savor the rest. Every student of Ludlow must have this book of pain and struggle.

## Glenda Downie Listens

Lying sleepless beside my husband,  
I listen to the sounds of midnight,  
light, complicated noises,  
like an embroidery on a dark  
cloth fine as air itself.  
My husband snores softly and frets,  
rolling this way and that, then settles.  
Outside, wind shudders through pines,  
muffling a hoot owl's cries.  
I've always had good ears,  
and used them many a time  
to seek out solitude amid  
the maddening noise of everyday,  
or as a way to learn secrets  
and enter into mysteries  
beyond the ken of most.

Keen hearing's almost better  
than the gift of prophecy.  
That's a footstep now, a boot  
crushing a twig, and another.  
Strangers in the camp  
who've gotten past the guards.  
My ears tell me more  
than my mind knows.  
It's union men come to organize  
this near-beaten band of men  
and boys, into a boisterous force  
that the bosses will finally hear,  
voices roaring like rushing water  
sweeping over the land.

## Yip Harburg's "Wizard of Oz"

In the June issue, Mark Wolff wrote a nice tribute to E. Y. "Yip" Harburg on page 10. I was so glad that Yip is remembered. By the way, when Yip moved to Uruguay for three years, it was to avoid World War I. He refused to bear arms for capitalism.

Then in the July/August paper, Jeff Stein added to Mark's praise of Yip. Jeff's article ended with, "I am forced to wonder if Harburg did not have the ruling class in mind when

construct an extensive warehouse. The city had sold the property to Horowitz in 2003 for \$5 million. Now, somehow, the price had spiraled to \$16 million if Horowitz agreed to sell the land back to the little farmers.

The date of eviction was postponed from April to June to permit the peasants to raise this impossible sum. Celebrities and concerned citizens got into the act, setting up round-the-clock vigils. They broadcast the news of the people's plight. They did their darnedest to raise funds. (And don't raise the ugly specter of anti-Semitism. Concerned Jews joined the party.)

The day of reckoning arrived on Thursday, June 13. Hundreds of loyal pawns of the state swarmed over the area, tossing tree sitters out of trees, cutting metal chains binding protesters to trees, confiscating personal property, handcuffing and arresting over 40 people. Bulldozers began the job of crushing, pulverizing the labor of 350 families. The transaction took eight hours.

On July 26 a court ruled in favor of the developer. An appeal is planned. To what purpose?

Feeble plans are proposed to relocate the dispossessed farmers to little plots of land here and there – somebody's big back yard, a weed-strewn acre nobody wants, an enterprising angel with a piece of land to donate... "With liberty and justice for all." What say you?



he wrote the lyrics, 'if I only had a Brain ... a Heart... the Nerve.' Very close, Jeff.

Yip's son, Ernie Harburg, co-authored a wonderful biography of Yip's life and contributions, *Who put the Rainbow in The Wizard of Oz?* (University of Michigan, 1993), in which he discloses the radical politics of this play. A novel called *The Wizard of Oz*, written by L. Frank Baum, was the basis for the play. Baum wrote this novel in 1900 as a political allegory for grown-ups hidden in a fairy tale for children amidst the wreckage of the failure of the Populist movement of the 1890s.

As Baum saw it, the potential coalition of farmers (the Scarecrow) and urban industrial workers (the Tin Man) had been subverted by the political chicanery of financial interests and the shortcomings of the Populists' own leaders, most particularly presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan – the model for the cowardly Lion. Dorothy, a farmer's daughter from Kansas who wants to escape the drab life of farming, befriended the Scarecrow, the Tin Man and the Lion in hopes that the all-powerful Wizard (the federal government) would fulfill all their needs.

The Wicked Witch of the East (capitalism) tried to foil their journey for fear they would discover the ugly truth, that the Wizard was a scam and possessed no special powers; worse yet, that the Scarecrow would discover that he did possess a brain and was not stupid; that the Tin Man would discover, though brutalized by a ruthless capitalism, that he still had a heart and a soul; that, though cowed by financial power, the Lion might discover courage on his own.

Even Dorothy might find that farming in Kansas could be quite fulfilling if the Wicked Witch of the East were dead. "Ding Dong the Witch is Dead," sung by the Munchkins (the little people) in the play, was a dream that went unfulfilled for Baum; but we continue to dream his dream.

The Wizard of Oz is full of symbolism.

## Harvey slays the time-study monster

BY J. PIERCE

Harvey shows up to deliver mail at a warehouse in West Berkeley. He chuckles to himself. Not because this drop brings him any particular joy, but because he's got a story to tell. What used to be one drop at an empty edifice not long ago is now a 15-minute mini-route to a dozen different drops in a labyrinth of offices and 'work-live spaces' for yuppies.

I'm at this May Day party at Inkworks Press and I meet Harvey. He's a middle-aged Asian guy with a soft-spoken manner and a mischievous humor about him. He's dressed as though he just got off his mail route. Indeed, he did, having been forced to labor on May 1, the Workers' Holiday. Harvey made acquaintances on his route over the years, and the folks at Inkworks treated him to a respite among friends.

As we talk over hot dogs, I learn that management has been after Harvey for a while. He's a typical worker militant: hated by management as well as his union's picard local officials and always standing up for himself in creative ways. The bosses wanted to increase his workload and lengthen his daily route. They were arguing that he takes too long on his current drive. The post office insists that his route is an eight hour route when in fact, Harvey claims, it takes nine and one half to do it. Unlike the bosses, I take Harvey's word as a matter of course. Every worker knows the job better than the boss.

Management decides to time Harvey's route the old fashioned way – ride his ass all day. They're gonna look over his shoulder,

Written at the time when there was a very bitter debate going on in Washington about a gold standard versus a silver standard; and with William Jennings Bryan carrying the torch for gold, it is not surprising that our four heroes traveled the "yellow brick road" or that "Oz" is the symbol for ounce.

The play was not very popular. Critics scorned it. But the play was made into a movie in the '50s and became a smashing hit at, ironically, the very period when Yip had been blacklisted by McCarthyism.

As Mark Wolff pointed out in his June article, in 1932 Yip also wrote the song that became a hit among the unemployed during the depression, "Brother Can You Spare a Dime." The words of this song are Wobbly to the core. The tune came from an old Russian folk song and Yip changed the words. A Wobbly trick, wouldn't you agree? For those of you who missed Mark Wolff's article in the June issue, I'll repeat some of the words here. "Once I built a railroad, made it run / Made it race against time / Once I built a railroad, now it's done / Brother can you spare a dime? / Once I built a tower, to the sun (Rockefeller Center – 1931) / Brick and rivet and lime / Once I built a tower, now it's done / Brother can you spare a dime?"

The idea for this song is known to all familiar with the history of the Ludlow Massacre in Colorado. After the brutality of the Ludlow strike of 1913-1914 was finally reported in the press, John D. Rockefeller's image was so tarnished that he was among the first industrialists to hire a public relations agency. The railroads preceded him. They agreed to loan out their master of propaganda on a part-time basis. Ivy Ledbetter Lee went to work for Rockefeller's CF&I company for \$1,000 per day; good part-time wages. Ivy immediately hired photographers to follow John D. around taking pictures of him giving dimes to little children and distributing the pictures to the press. The idea for Yip's song came from this PR gimmick. Capitalism weaves a nasty web that ties much ugliness in our history neatly together, and the web is growing and growing and...

How long, fellow workers? Dorothy still needs your help. Remember her every time you see a rainbow.

The moral to Yip's story? Pay more attention to children's fairy tales. Thanks, Mark and Jeff, for reminding me that Yip Harburg was one of our own.



In the never-never land of fantasy I am granted three wishes. I immediately bring home the troops from whatever outpost they are station. I convert the funds used to support them in their unproductive mission to social services. And, as befits war criminals, I lodge both George Bush and Saddam Hussein in the same narrow jail cell for the rest of their lives.

I recall all CIA agents, reassigning them to the dangerous but essential task of removing land mines throughout the world.

I declare the city of Los Angeles's transaction selling the peasants' plot of land in central Los Angeles to a developer null and void. I tear up the contract, and throw the pieces at Mr. Horowitz's feet. And I assign a team of reformed police to guard the people's garden against any vengeful incursion of the developer.

Down to earth, you dreamer.

How reckon the cruelty of a system, the blind folly of compliance with a legal mandate?

Bulldozed! Ten years of productive labor plowed under: a plot of land granted by the city where 350 families raised corn, beets, tomatoes, and fruit trees to feed themselves. This 14-acre central city garden project had drawn national attention for its self-help gumption.

This suddenly changed when a developer decided he needed this particular plot to

clipboard and stop watch in hand, just like the classic 'time-study men' in an assembly plant. A couple days before, management installs another chair in his regular vehicle for the time-study boss to ride around in. Harvey believes this to be a safety hazard, seeing as how there is no escape route for this passenger in the event of an accident. Harvey puts his diabolical brain to work. Our friend enlists a lawyer buddy and draws up a very official looking 'waiver form' to bring to work with him. The day arrives when the time-study wonk shows up to climb in the cab and harass Harvey for an entire shift. Harvey whips out his waiver form and says, "Sure boss, climb aboard. But first I need you to sign this waiver form. It says that you release me of all liability for any injuries you sustain in the event of an accident."

Time-study man can't think on his feet so he goes away. Days later our friend, Harvey, repeats his waiver form routine at the door of his vehicle to yet another stop-watch boss who's half-way in the truck. Stumped, the bosses relent and send a stooge out to trail Harvey in a separate vehicle. At every stop the snoop truck parks parallel to Harvey's so the boss can peer into Harvey's window and watch him sort mail.

All this time-study business could've made a person pretty angry. But Harvey got a good laugh when exiting the building he saw a parking ticket on the boss' Post Office truck. The time-study clown got a ticket for being triple parked on a narrow street in front of the warehouse in West Berkeley.

## IWW Victory for Taxi Drivers at LA Airport

BY ERNESTO NEVAREZ,  
TURNING THE TIDE

The City of Los Angeles has issued nine Franchise Contracts to taxi companies which allow them to work LAX. These companies have permission to use about 3,000 drivers. Most are poor immigrants from a variety of countries, such as Iran, Russia, Congo, Pakistan, etc. The companies have banded together and have invented a non-standard workplace with characteristics that have been institutionalized and accepted as the "standard" and which the workers have fatalistically believed was their reality. That was until the Nick Search Decision!

Most of these companies vary in legal entity with the standard being a non-profit membership corporation made up of members who own the vehicles. The first thought was that since the taxi company was made up of taxi owners, no one would be employees. This thought was erroneous. Even in small partnerships, if you do work for the partnership, you are an employee.

You can be a limited partner and only have a passive participation to safeguard an economic investment but if you do work, you are still an employee. Eventually the "owners" allowed for multiple cab ownership and the standard is now limiting owners to 5 cabs maximum. Well, you can just imagine what happened to the immigrant work force of drivers. They were all denied their employment rights and have been treated as independent contractors and almost none receive even a 1099 and none are known to receive a w-2 form.

An original member of the Waterfront Rail Truckers Union of 1987, who has become a taxi driver over the last 15 years, was recently released from a job at a taxi company. He requested wage credits for all of last year during which time he worked at ITOA, Independent Taxi Owners' Association, driving a cab belonging to the CEO. The company claimed that he was an independent contractor, and the worker strongly insisted that he was an employee. Just last week, he received word that his employment status was upheld, and has received some nice size unemployment benefit checks! Political fall-out: All of the "owners" are in denial and the LATDA is having an emergency meeting. The driver and his friends from the competing LATDO are having their meeting Sunday night to celebrate and plan on how to promote the victory and go after the rest of the companies.

Their mobilizers are IWW members with dual membership and supporters. ONE single unemployed, homeless, living out of a shelter worker, Vietnam Veteran, with NOTHING, nothing at all except his pride, his IWW shirt, and a desire for justice, has just FUCKED the whole damn cab industry! The competing group, the LATDA, with all of their lawyers, have failed to accomplish what this one Wobbly worker has done. There are many "do-gooders" that come to the non-standard work places, the underground economy, and attempt to find a solution within the parameters of the non-standard workplace. The true solution will come from the workers themselves. The industry and government regulators "allowed" the workplaces to become nonstandard with the understanding that the workers are complacent and that the "do-gooders" will confine themselves to the status quo. Never did anyone expect the workers to educate themselves and to use the "non-standard" characteristics to destroy the same industry. The "leader" of the LATDO, Mike, has been put in jail at least three times this year for organizing at the LAX holding yard. Everyone else and their mother are allowed on the holding yard except for him. Yes, we know about the NLRA but it is part of a dream in a different world and not ours. This time brother Mike will not stand outside the holding yard by himself, but will include the rest of his brothers that are organizing at the airport and at the harbor.

The purpose of the non-standard workplace is to deny the workers their rights and to keep out legitimate competition. The only recourse for the workers is to create economic chaos and anarchy. After the war, when the dust settles, then there can be a collective agreement. Congratulations to our Wobbly brothers and sisters at the Airport!

## Charges Against Toussaint

Fellow workers;

Please note the activity of Transport Workers Union president Roger Toussaint in calling for attacks on fellow transit workers who exercise their right to dissent. The Stalinist Anwar Hodja [of the Albanian Communist party] past of Transport Workers Union president Roger Toussaint is not lost in his application of tactics. We call on all genuine lovers of union democracy to fight this and make his tactics known. The complete absence of democracy in the Transport Workers Union destroyed the strike and left its workers open for more anti-worker attacks and added to the demoralization from the heady days of the strike. Transport Workers Union president Roger Toussaint is now laying the groundwork for further givebacks and refusal to fight the MTA during a time when attacks on transit workers is increasing on a daily basis with no word from the union. Transport Workers Union president Roger Toussaint and his cronies sit alienated from the membership at the union center on 80 West End Ave. They are more concerned with posturing for the upcoming November election. The fight for union democracy is severely limited in the face of Transport Workers Union president Roger Toussaint's Stalinist tactics. We call on all workers to ask Transport Workers Union president Roger Toussaint what is going on in his local and take the darling of liberals to task.

Marty Goodman 8/25/06

Below are two items: a press release and a copy of charges I filed against Roger Toussaint on August 8, 2006. It is in "text only" format.

The two items pertain to a speech Toussaint made to the Executive Board on June 10th urging violence against dissidents.

PRESS RELEASE!

WATERGATE IN TWU LOCAL 100?

CHARGES FILED AGAINST TOUSSAINT FOR VIOLENT SPEECH AND COVER-UP.

August 23, 2006

Roger Toussaint, President of the Transport Workers Union Local 100, during a June 10, 2006 meeting of the union's Executive Board, said that his opponents within the union are a "lunatic fringe" and urged that members "run people like that out with baseball bats."

We are outraged. Such threats are unprecedented for a Local 100 president.

In response, Marty Goodman, a member of the Local 100 Executive Board, filed internal union charges against Mr. Toussaint for violating the TWU Constitution and the Local 100 By-Laws [See accompanying charges].

The charges include Mr. Toussaint's responsibility for a Watergate style cover-up in which Local 100 Recording Secretary Darlyne Lawson has denied several Executive Board members their right to listen to the official tape recording of the June 10th meeting. Numerous requests, both verbal and in writing, were ignored by Ms. Lawson. The right to listen to recordings of Executive Board meetings was upheld by a vote of the Local 100 Executive Board under Mr. Toussaint's administration.

Violence within the labor movement

cannot be tolerated and it is our duty as elected officers to speak out. Mr. Toussaint, whose intolerance for opposing views is well known, has now declared war on the democratic rights of every Local 100 member. We demand the right of every member to express their opinions without bodily harm or intimidation.

What's more, democratic unions have the best record defending the rights of its membership.

Mr. Toussaint's actions do not bode well for the upcoming union election in December in which he is a likely candidate. Will there be physical violence? Will candidates be free to campaign without fear? Will there be full disclosure of the process? Can the official election results be trusted?

Local 100 members must demand that Mr. Toussaint and his supporters repudiate violent threats and acts of intimidation. In addition, members must demand an end to the cover-up and allow union officers full access to the official record.

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT:

Marty Goodman, Local 100 Executive Board member: 212-781-5157 Ainsley Stewart, Local 100 Vice-President for Car Equipment Division: 917-318-8356 John Mooney, Local 100 Vice-President for Station Division: 917-770-4082

Marty Goodman  
731 W. 183 St.  
NYC 10033

Recording Secretary Lawson,  
August 8, 2006

During the June 10, 2006 Joint Executive Board – Executive Board meeting, President Roger Toussaint referred to dissenters within the union as a "lunatic fringe" and urged members to "run people like that out with baseball bats."

By encouraging violence against members of our union, Mr. Toussaint has made himself unworthy of being Local 100 President. Violence or the threat of violence has no place in Local 100.

To my knowledge, such comments are without precedent for a Local 100 President. Union democracy is the life-blood of the TWU and the labor movement. As history shows, democratic unions are best able to defend its members against management. The cause of transit workers cannot be advanced when fear prevents us from expressing our own opinions. The enemy is the MTA, not each other.

We must ask ourselves whether the 11,000 members who voted against the contract Mr. Toussaint negotiated are part of this "lunatic fringe," as he describes it? How many of them must be driven out with "baseball bats" to satisfy Toussaint's hatred of union democracy? And, just what constitutes being "driven out" in Mr. Toussaint's eyes? A push down the stairs? A baseball bat to a member's skull? A member's death?

With calls to violence being expressed by our President, how democratic will our union election be in December?

Lastly, inquiries into listening to the official audio record of the June 10th meeting have been ignored by Recording Secretary Darlyne Lawson, despite numerous written and verbal requests. Toussaint bears responsibility for Lawson's defiance of the Executive Board decision that upholds our right to hear the tapes.

Therefore, Mr. Toussaint is charged with violating Article XVI, Section I and Article XIX, Section I of the TWU Constitution. Mr. Toussaint is further charged with violating Article III and Article VIII, Section (b) of the Local 100 By-laws.

## Working Families Party wins Massachusetts ballot line

BY MARK WOLFF

The Massachusetts Working Families Party has gotten enough signatures to get union activist Rand Wilson on the November ballot for state auditor. Wilson has worked as an organizer with CWA, SEIU, the Boston Teachers Union and the Teamsters.

The WFP was a New York union initiative founded with help from ACORN. The party campaigns around issues such as wages, retirement security, education and health care, excluding issues such as abortion and marriage rights. Although the WFP opposed the war in Iraq, it endorsed Hillary Clinton.

The Wilson campaign cites a Suffolk University poll which gives the WFP/Wilson campaign 11 percent among likely voters. The WFP submitted the signatures needed for official third party ballot status, and is using the candidacy for state auditor to push a ballot reform question supporting 'cross-endorsement' or fusion voting. With fusion voting, a candidate is placed on the ballot more than once on different party lines.

According to Bill Cunningham, writing in the August *The Bridge* (a Somerville, Mass.-based Green Rainbow Party vehicle), the WFP strategy is to get enough votes to secure their ballot line, and then to bargain with Democratic candidates to deliver their ballot line and their voters.

Wilson campaign manager and Teamsters Vice President John Murphy says the strategy is to show voters how to choose candidates based on issues and to make those choices with fusion voting.

Eric Chester, a Socialist candidate for Congress, says fusion voting was once an opportunity for two third parties to support the same candidate that more recently became a way to place Democrats on the slate of independent parties. Candidates from the Socialist, the Green Rainbow and Libertarian parties oppose the ballot initiative.

Cunningham says that if workers really want to use the vote to push their issues without the threat of a "spoiler," or the "lesser of two evils," then they should organize initiatives to promote Instant Runoff Voting rather than fusion voting. IRV allows voters to rank candidates, making it easier for voters to select the candidate they really prefer without the danger of a detested major party candidate slipping in with a minority of the vote.

## Electronic pink slips

Some 400 workers at RadioShack Corp. in Fort Worth, Texas, recently received an email notification that they were fired immediately: "The work force reduction notification is currently in progress. Unfortunately your position is one that has been eliminated." Employees got one to three weeks pay for each year of service, up to 16 weeks.

## Bush Labor Dept. dropping equal opportunity survey

The Labor Department is eliminating its annual Equal Opportunity Survey, which is used to help identify contractors most likely engaging in systematic discrimination against women and people of color, and so most likely to merit investigation, according to the Workers Independent News.

The survey measures employers' affirmative action performance and pay by gender and race, and was originally sent to 50,000 of the more than 100,000 federal contractors. The Bush administration reduced the number of annual surveys to just 10,000.

In a letter to the Labor Department, Harry Alford, president of the National Black Chamber of Commerce, said: "This requirement has been the lynchpin in successfully encouraging compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A reversal of this policy would mean a redirection back to the status of Jim Crow."

Elimination of the survey lets federal contractors who discriminate off the hook and fails to protect workers from sex and race discrimination in federal projects.

## Iran Khodro Diesel workers struggle

BY WORKERS' ACTION COMMITTEE,  
TRANSLATED BY IRANIAN WORKERS'  
SOLIDARITY NETWORK

On Sept. 3, Abbas Kangarloo, head of the Islamic Labour Council at Iran Khodro Diesel, reported that there was a hunger strike by workers at this company but that production had not been stopped. He said the workers gathered in front of the Islamic Labour Council's office demanding answers about the 300,000 to 400,000 rials cut in their wages [about one week's pay]. He denied reports that riot police had attacked workers.

But what the leader of the Islamic Labour Council said about the Iran Khodro Diesel production line not coming to a standstill and the nature of workers' grievances is not true. After a number of workers were called up to sign monthly contracts, all the workers came out on strike and all the production lines came to a halt. Then the factory's security force surrounded the company.

The strike began a week after managers persuaded workers to suspend an earlier strike to give them time to resolve workers' grievances. To break the strike, management came up with a new trick: whoever wants to continue working must sign a monthly contract! When the workers got to know about this, they came out spontaneously and gathered in front of the factory's Islamic Labour Council and management to protest.

The workers who had been asked to sign the monthly contracts were generally on old six-month contracts. When management decided to deduct 300,000 rials, and after they were faced with workers' protests, they tried to create divisions among the workers. Managers prepared forms that the workers had to sign if they wanted the 300,000 rials, but then there would be no work contract for them. When the workers saw that if they receive the 300,000 rials they would be sacked, they decided to prevent divisions among themselves by urging that nobody should go to the personnel department and that they should continue with the hunger strike.

The workers of Iran Khodro Diesel have a long history of struggles. It is the only vehicle manufacturing company that had a workers' council from the first days of the 1979 insurrection. During the protests of the 1980s, workers fought against the suppression of workers' disputes in this company, and was stopped. Management's way out of this predicament was redundancies and the transfer of a section of workers to other companies. But despite the suppression, transfers and the retirement of workers, the flame of struggle never went out.

Mainly younger workers took part in the protest. Few official workers were involved and some production continued because the official workers did not join the stoppage.



## Textile workers killed in minimum wage fight

One worker was fired and more than 200 injured Sept. 7 when police opened fire on protesting textile workers in the Bangladesh port city of Khulna. The striking jute workers responded to the killing of 20-year-old Mohammad Hanif by blocking rail lines and expanding protests throughout the country.

Bangladeshi garment and textile workers have been pressing for a higher minimum wage, better safety conditions, and other demands. The government has announced a new monthly minimum wage of about US\$23 (1,604 taka), saying that employers would have difficulty paying more.

"It's far lower than our expectations. We hoped the commission would think about the cost of living in the country before fixing this absurd minimum wage," garment union leader Nazma Akhter told AFP. Workers are demanding at least \$29 a month, saying they can not live on anything less.

More than 2 million workers, some 85

percent of whom are women, work in the sector. Bangladesh has 4,200 garment factories, accounting for more than three-fourths of the country's export revenues. Business has boomed since the lifting of global textile quotas last year, as the international garment industry has had difficulty finding cheaper workers elsewhere.

National protests against the minimum wage in May saw workers torch 16 factories and ransack hundreds of others. At least two workers were killed and scores injured after security officers shot at employees.

Those strikes ended in June after employers promised a new minimum wage.

The most recent killing occurred in Khulna when police fired on jute workers they said had grown "rowdy" following a rally in the industrial park where they are on strike. Police fired rubber bullets and live ammunition on the strikers, who defended themselves with stones and sticks.

## Zimbabwean general strike shut down by police brutality

Zimbabwean riot police barricaded streets and arrested more than 200 activists throughout the country to shut down marches prior to a general strike in Harare planned for Sept. 13 to protest government economic policy. Meanwhile, Zimbabwe's president headed for a lavish summit in Havana

Sixteen imprisoned members of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, including General Secretary Wellington Chibembe and President Lovemore Matombo, were in very serious condition Sept. 14, held in harsh prisons and awaiting transfer to hospital as a result of uncontrolled beatings. Chibembe suffered a broken arm, while ZCTU Vice President Lucia Matibenga was one of

several imprisoned unionists whose heads were bashed against prison walls.

Working with the Movement for Democratic Change, the opposition front that has called for direct action to protest inflation, unemployment, food/fuel shortages, and the AIDS epidemic, ZCTU labor leaders had organized a general strike to demand pay increases, minimum wages, tax breaks for low income earners, and price regulation.

The ZCTU also is demanding an end to brutality by police against street vendors that has continued since the government removed them from slum areas. UN agencies have said this action left 700,000 homeless and without a means of survival.



## Mercadona offers 300,000 euros to dismiss all strikers

Dear comrades of the IWW!

We received a solidarity letter from you in April. Thank you a lot. As you know, workers, members of to the anarchosyndicalist CNT-AIT in Spain, are on strike in the logistic centre in Barcelona of the supermarket "Mercadona" for now more than 150 days.

It is one of the most longest strikes in Catalunya in the recent decades and the CNT has struggles and conflicts with Mercadona all over Spain. But the most important and hardest struggle is this strike. The workers and our comrades in Mercadona need solidarity.

This company is big and powerful: They've got 20 policemen of the "Guardia Civil" – the state paramilitary security force – at his orders to protect the logistic centre, it is able to make the local government to forbid demonstrations and actions, it is able to suppress notices in the public press, etc.

But as a result of our struggle and never-ending actions Mercadona returned to negotiations and reached a tentative agreement to end the strike. Nevertheless, they

then demanded to dismiss all the strikers by offering E300,000. The general assembly of the strikers didn't accept this offer: "They can't buy us."

Now we are trying to make more pressure against the company, not only with more actions in Spain but all over the world.

Although Mercadona only exists in Spain, we think that this struggle should be known worldwide as an example that it is possible to organize and to defend our interests and dignity like workers. We will win this struggle!

It is possible to show solidarity and help us win this strike by sending solidarity mails to the workers (cnt@badalona.cnt.es and cnt@barcelona.cnt.es), protest letters to the company (Mercadona S.A., CIF:A-46-103834, C/ Valencia, nº 5 Tavernes Blanques Valencia - C.P.46016 Spain), protest actions at Spanish embassies and consulates, and donating money to the strikers and their families.

We want to ask you if you could publish this notices in your sincerely great and very good web page and maybe in your newspaper *Industrial Worker*.

Marc Stehle, Local Federation of the CNT-AIT Badalona, www.cnt.es

## TUC delegates walk out on UK 'Labour' prime minister

Bob Crow, general secretary of the RMT, National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers, led a walkout during Tony Blair's speech before the TUC. Joining him were Dean Mills, representing the Fire Brigades, and Derek Simpson, general secretary of the Amicus union.

Angered by privatization plans and the Iraq war, protesters held signs urging Blair to "Go Now!" The remaining thousand delegates seated in the hall heckled when the Prime Minister spoke about Iraq, Afghanistan and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

## Chilean copper miners vote to strike BHP Spence

In Chile, 374 miners at BHP Billiton Ltd.'s Spence copper mine have voted to strike Sept. 15. Rejecting a 3.8 percent wage increase matching the inflation rate, workers demanded a 7 percent increase, bonuses and increased benefits.

BHP can legally delay the strike by extending negotiations until Sept. 26.

Melbourne-based BHP must also satisfy worker demands at the Cerro Colorado mine in Chile, and at the Antamina copper and zinc mine in Peru. Earlier this year workers struck BHP's Escondida in Chile, the world's biggest copper mine, and Grupo Mexico.

## Solidarity wins seafarers \$250,000 in back wages

Crew members on the Greek-owned carrier Endless ended a four-day sit-down strike Sept. 11 after the ship owner agreed to pay the 18 workers \$250,000 of the more than \$300,000 they were owed as a result of months of miscalculated pay checks.

The owner was forced to settle quickly as the ship was struck while in the Long Beach port being loaded with petroleum coke bound for Asia, and longshoremen reportedly refused to work the scab ship even after an arbitrator ordered them to resume work. The strike not only tied up the Endless, but also another ship moored in the harbor waiting for the berth to open.

The Endless is registered in Panama, owned in Greece, and crewed by Filipinos who work under dual contracts negotiated by Greek and Philippines seafarers unions.

Kevin Schroeder, vice president of Local 13 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, said dockworkers refused to

load the ship in support for the strike.

"The owner has threatened to fire the crew, take the ship out to anchor and hire a new crew," Schroeder said. "This is a basic human rights deal. They are standing up for their rights."

## S. Korean unions press for industrial unionism

Auto workers at South Korean auto maker Hyundai have agreed to a tentative agreement with the country's largest carmaker after a series of partial strikes that cost Hyundai hundreds of millions of dollars in lost production. The workers had been seeking a 9 percent wage hike, but settled for just over 5 percent in a one year deal.

Workers have struck the South Korean auto giant every year for the last twelve years, each time winning wage and benefit gains.

Now the union is trying to broaden its struggle by creating an industry-wide industrial union for the automobile industry. A member of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, the Hyundai union wants to increase its industrial power by uniting all workers at Hyundai Motor, its affiliated companies and parts makers into a single union.

This is a trend that is being mirrored throughout the KCTU as unions reorganize into industry-wide unions, such as the Korea Metal Workers' Federation, once illegal under the country's repressive labor code.

## Wage dumping in Sweden

With the German page jobdumping.de as a model, three Swedish businessmen have launched the site jobbakt.se (jobhunting). Workers register themselves free of charge on the site, and are then supposed to place bids on the available jobs – the lower the "better." This tasteless auction reduces salaries in general, undermines collective wage agreements, and forces workers to commit treason against their fellow workers.

The site is not just a way to push down wages, but also a means to beat competitive attitudes into our heads and shatter us in an area where we, the workers, always benefit from sticking together to demand higher wages and better conditions.

The Syndicalist Youth Federation is working to close the site by registering dummy job seekers who place low (but not insanely low) bids on the listed jobs and then don't show up – rendering the system useless for employers in need of wage slaves.