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# INDUSTRIAL WORKER

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## South Korea orders arrests of union leaders

By the KCTU

The South Korean government reacted to massive candlelight vigils and a general strike protesting a US beef import deal that came into effect in June by issuing arrest warrants for the president and general secretary of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) and eight other union affiliates.

The protests called for the government to renegotiate the US beef import protocol to have more stringent health protections. Korea had banned beef imports in 2003 when US inspectors found a case of mad cow disease in the United States. The beef import trade was worth US\$800 million.

The surprise lifting of the ban by the newly-elected government sparked a social movement with citizens and the labor movement holding candlelight vigils and demonstrations in protest.

Rallies at night require police permission, but up to 20,000 protesters have attended the vigils, marching through the streets in streams of flickering red and orange. Police attempts to block the protesters' path, using police buses, lines of riot police and water cannons have sometimes resulted in street clashes.

The Korean Metal Workers' Union (KMWU) played a leading role in organizing the July 2 general strike on the issue. In response, the prosecutor and the Ministry of Labor declared the general strike illegal and preemptively convened a meeting of 66 senior prosecutors on June 30 who called it a "political strike" and announced they would pursue investigations against "law-breakers." The prosecutor filed for arrest warrants against the leadership of KCTU, KMWU and Hyundai Motor Branch on the grounds of an 'obstruction of business' provision in section 314 of the Penal Code.

The warrants to arrest and search the homes of the union leaders included Lee Suk-haeng (KCTU President), Jin Young-ok (KCTU First Vice-president), Lee Yong-shik (KCTU General Secretary), Jung Gab-deuk (KMWU

President), Nam Taek-gyu (KMWU First Vice-president) and all six of the top elected officers of the Hyundai Motor Branch, Yoon Hae-mo, Kim Tae-gon, Kim Jong-il, Jung Chang-bong, Joo In-koo, and Jo Chang-min.

Hundreds of police have surrounded the KCTU headquarters building, stopping and searching all of those who enter the building. Union leaders have gone underground to avoid arrest.

However, on July 27, the police arrested KCTU First Vice President Jin Young-ok in downtown Seoul, while she was on her way to meet her family. Police had her home under surveillance and followed her husband to her. She is now detained in the Youngdeungpo Police Station.

Declaring the strike illegal is "an extension of the government's anti-labor policies," said a KCTU statement. The union federation denies that the general strike was illegal or a political strike. It argues that advocating the renegotiation of the April 18 protocol on US beef importation alongside long-standing demands such as national, industry-level collective bargaining are not related to wages or working conditions.

The international response to the government's bid to end the protests has prompted a sharp international response from working people. Labourstart.org has launched an on-line email protest under the headline, "August: a good month for crushing a labour movement." The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) also responded with a letter to the Korean president.

"The government's actions are completely unacceptable, and we call on President Lee to release Jin Young-ok immediately, to withdraw all the arrest warrants, and to cease the harassment and surveillance of the trade union leaders and their families. The government should be engaging in dialogue on these issues of huge importance to Korean workers, instead of once again resorting to anti-union repression," said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder.



Photo: Oipul & Co.

**South Korean protesters sit-in at candlelight vigil before a line of riot police.**

The union is calling for supporters to send protest letters to President Lee Myung-bak by fax to +82-2-770-1690 or +82-2-770-4735 or e-mail president@cwd.go.kr or foreign@president.go.kr with copies to the Police Commissioner

of Korean National Police Agency, Eo Cheong-soo to cnpa100@police.go.kr and the KCTU fax +82-2-2635-1134 or e-mail at inter@kctu.org. Supporters are encouraged to also organize "every possible form of protest."

## Female migrants unlikely to be paid minimum wage in the UK

By TUC, [www.vulnerableworkers.org.uk](http://www.vulnerableworkers.org.uk)

A new United Kingdom Trade Union Congress (TUC) research report reveals that female migrant workers are more likely than any other group to be paid less than the national minimum wage.

Reports of the abuse of migrant workers have become increasingly common and the research, commissioned by the TUC's Commission on Vulnerable Employment and carried out by the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) at the University of Oxford, aimed to investigate the available information to uncover the reality of working life for migrant workers.

COMPAS reviewed the pay, working hours, type of work and accommodation of recent migrant workers who have been living and working in the UK for less than 10 years, in the West Midlands and in the East of England/East Midlands (both areas with high levels of recent migration). National information about migrant workers, such as the Government's Labour Force Survey, was also included in the report.

The report found that migrant workers were much more likely to experience problems at work, and highlighted a number of worrying trends. Recent migrants work longer hours per week than most other workers.

For example, 55 per cent of recent migrants work 31-48 hours per week and 15.4 per cent work more than 48 hours per week, compared to 48.3 per cent and 13 per cent of workers generally.

Migrant workers are more likely to be working as temps or in insecure work, such as not having a written contract, than any other workers. Recent migrant

workers are more than twice as likely as other workers to be earning less than the appropriate national mini-

mum wage for their age.

Women who are recent migrants to the UK are 1.5 times more likely than male migrant workers to be paid less than minimum wage. Around 35,000 women are illegally denied the national minimum wage.

"The rogue employers who underpay the national minimum wage deserve zero tolerance," said TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber.

"Belonging to a trade union is the best form of defence a worker can have against exploitative bosses.

"UK unions are stepping up their efforts to organise migrant workers to stop employers from using a poor grasp of English or ignorance of UK employment law as an excuse to treat people badly."

**35,000 women are illegally denied the minimum wage.**

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# Mall of America Starbucks baristas join IWW

## Protest 27 store closures in Minnesota, demand transfers or fair severance

By Starbucks Workers' Union

Baristas at the Mall of America Starbucks in Twin Cities, Minnesota, walked off the café floor on July 21. They delivered a demand letter to management calling for just treatment of all employees affected by Starbucks' closure of stores nationwide. The surprise job action came in the wake of the coffee giant's announcement that it will close 600 stores, including 27 in Minnesota. The baristas demanded an option to transfer to other stores and a fair severance package for affected workers. Starbucks reportedly plans to give workers just one month notice before laying them off with two weeks' pay. The company will insist that some baristas transfer. If transfer offers are refused, the company will refuse to pay the two weeks' severance.

The protesting baristas are members of the Starbucks Workers Union, which is a campaign of the IWW. Starbucks previously backtracked on its refusal to disclose which locations would be shuttered after the union and others condemned the company for leaving workers in a nerve-wracking limbo. The store action makes the Mall of America location the first Starbucks in Minnesota, and the first store in the Mall of America, to have a public union presence. "With the skyrocketing cost of living, workers have no other choice than to stand up for improvements on the job. The alternative is a continued decline into poverty and a degraded quality of life for working families," said Erik Forman, a barista at the store recently fired for union activity. "But this doesn't have to happen. Our message is hope—even at Starbucks in the Mall of America, we can organize and fight!" While portraying itself as a 'socially-responsible' employer, Starbucks pays baristas a poverty wage of \$7.60 per hour. In addition, all retail hourly workers at Starbucks in the United States are part-time employees with no guaranteed number of work hours per week. According to Starbucks figures released to the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 40.9 per cent of its employees (including managers) are covered by the company health care package, a lower percentage than the oft-criticized Wal-Mart, which insures 47 per cent of its workforce. Since the launch of the IWW campaign at Starbucks on May 17, 2004, the

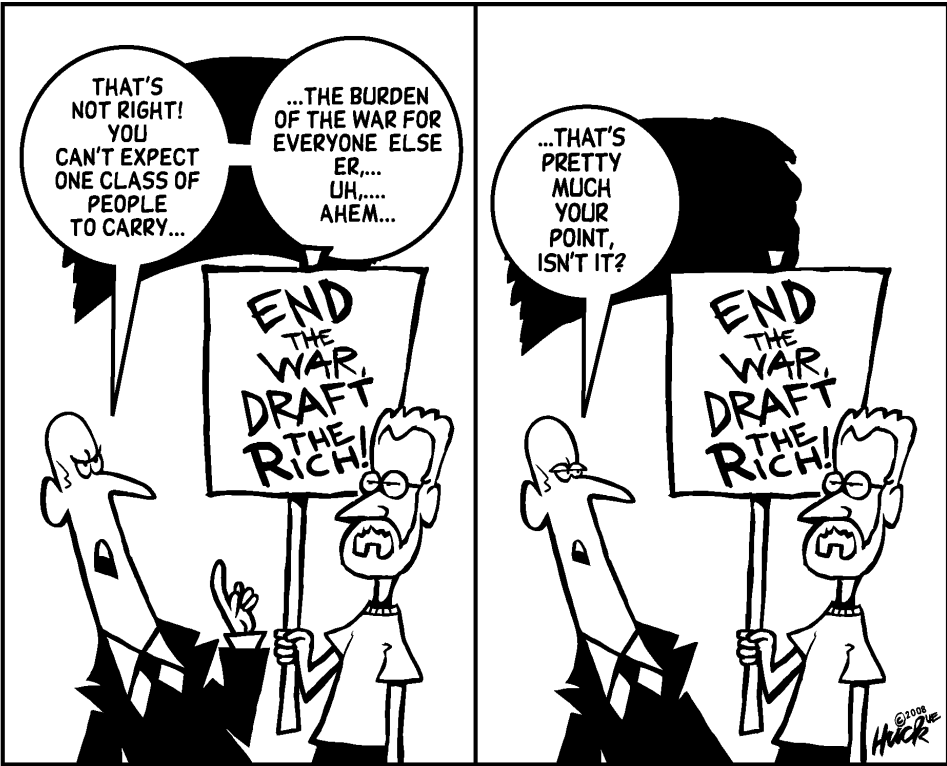
company has been cited multiple times for illegal union-busting by the National Labor Relations Board. The company settled two complaints against it and is awaiting a decision by a judge in New York on more than 30 additional workers' rights violations. Starbucks' large anti-union operation is operated in conjunction with the Akin Gump law firm and the Edelman public relations firm. The IWW Starbucks Workers Union is a grassroots organization of over 200 current and former employees demanding secure work hours and a living wage. The union has members throughout the United States fighting for systemic change at the company and remedying individual grievances with management. The SWU is especially active in New York City, Chicago, and Grand Rapids.

## No heat at Ohio textile shop sparks complaint, workers win NLRB ruling

By Textile and Clothing Workers IU 410

The United States' National Labor Relations Board ruled in favor of an IWW organizer who filed a complaint about the lack of heat in a clothing printing and embroidery company in Ohio. Tom K. filed the complaint in May 2008 over a one-day suspension in December 2007 and threats to "write him up" (discipline) and fire him. The Ohio Valley IWW filed the Unfair Labor Practice on K.'s behalf in May. The t-shirt and uniform printing and embroidery company is owned by Sean Mason, who verbally abused employees and threatened them with punishment. When they talked to him about working conditions, he punished them. In December 2007, four of the company's six employees, including K., approached Mason about working in no heat. Mason said he would remedy the

situation the next day and brought in a space desk heater for the whole building. When K. questioned him about the size of the heater for such a large factory, Mason threatened to write him up and then suspended him without pay for one day. When the workers returned to work after New Year's Day, Mason had made no improvements to the heating. The temperature in the shop was 28 degrees Fahrenheit (-2 degrees Celsius) and it was much colder outside. Two of five employees quit. Another employee involved with the meeting was then laid off a month later. After repeated individual attempts, all three employees were still waiting for their last paycheck as of August. Mason now must comply with the NLRB ruling.



## 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. Dues may vary outside of North America and in Regional Organizing Committees (Australia, British Isles, German Language Area).

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

☐ I agree to abide by the IWW constitution

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



Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Membership includes a subscription to the **Industrial Worker**.

## Wild Edibles files for bankruptcy

By Brandworkers International

The Chapter 11 Bankruptcy petition filed by Wild Edibles, Inc. is the latest in a year-long series of foot-dragging maneuvers by owner Richard Martin to avoid accountability for years of illegal employment practices. That Wild Edibles continues to operate as a 'going concern'; it did not file a Chapter 7 Bankruptcy petition to liquidate its operations. Legal counsel for Wild Edibles workers are currently assessing all options to respond to the Chapter 11 filing, including a motion to dismiss the petition as a misuse of the Bankruptcy Code designed to evade the class-action overtime lawsuit that the company faces. The Wild Edibles workers are still willing to negotiate a reasonable resolution of their outstanding claims to bring the company in compliance with all applicable workplace laws. Wild Edibles owner Richard Martin has thus far opted for a protracted and costly battle rather than a settlement fair to both sides. Tavern on the Green and China Grill are the latest restaurants to quit Wild Edibles' customer list. Other restaurants who have disassociated from Wild Edibles include Pastis, La Goulue, Union Square Cafe, Mermaid Inn, Giorgione, Sushi Samba, and One if by Land, Two if by Sea.

In the last year, Wild Edibles has had an injunction placed on it by a federal judge to stop retaliation against its workers; two complaints from the National Labor Relations Board; and it continues to lose key customers concerned about its record on workers' rights. Despite it all, Wild Edibles continues to avoid settling with its employees.

# Activist online translators?

As anyone who has done any kind of global solidarity work will tell you, the number one problem we face is the problem of language.

It's not a problem companies face. When McDonald's wants to summon all its managers from around the world to attend a meeting, the company decides what language everyone will speak: English.

Unions can't do that. We believe in cultural and linguistic diversity and equality. So instead, international union meetings are incredibly expensive events due in large part to the need for simultaneous translation. And being expensive, they are held infrequently.

The Internet has long promised to help solve the problem and for more than a decade we've had online translators that promise much such as Google Translate, AltaVista's Babelfish and Babylon.

Some of these tools are based on commercially available software and when you buy the software, you get the chance to tweak the dictionaries and improve the translation—for yourself. At least one global union federation that I know of invested a considerable amount of money, time and effort to customize one such translation tool in order to have it better serve trade union purposes. But all the work they did could only be used within the organisation. No one outside could benefit.

Now imagine if we could have an online translation tool that instead of relying on a fixed dictionary was actually being continually updated by those who use it. And now imagine that those using it numbered in the millions.

At the moment, even the best of these online translators usually gets it wrong. For example, Google Translate (which is actually very good) takes the French phrase "La Corée du Sud doit respecter les droits fondamentaux syndicaux" and translates it as "The South Korea must respect fundamental rights union".

A human would have made the obvious corrections, most importantly

knowing the phrase "fundamental union rights." A phrase like that is used all the time.

Google itself knows that these translations are often very poor and it does invite you to suggest improvements. But I wonder how many people actually do this and if suggestions are included.

I've recently learned about another service, this one offering real-time translation of on-line chat. It's called MeGlobe (meglobe.com) and it promises to translate from and to 15 different languages, among them some of the

key Asian languages. This sounds like something that is bound to work poorly, and I was initially dismissive, but was intrigued to read this about their service: "Every time you send a instant message on MeGlobe's network you have the opportunity to make our translations better. When you notice that a translation on MeGlobe is a little off, let us know by 'editing' the translation. Your buddy will immediately see the corrected translation and at the same time you are contributing to our knowledge base.

"These contributions are used to teach MeGlobe to become a better translator. Every correction from the community brings us closer to our goal of erasing the borders of language."

In other words, this service aims to make use of the "wisdom of crowds" to constantly improve its translations. At the moment, to use MeGlobe you need to sign up and it's free. It would be much better for this kind of tool to be embedded in existing instant messagers that people already use—including Skype, MSN, AIM, and ICQ.

I know that some trade unionists have already begun trialling MeGlobe. I hope it works. The key to it working is a massive number of people using it—and responsive software.

That second part is crucial as well. I've now told Google how to properly translate the French phrase I gave before, and it's still coming out as "The South Korea must respect fundamental rights union."



## IWWs remember Utah

Continued from 2

as loudly as the music onstage that day from Pete Seeger, Dar Williams, Redwood Moose, Sarah Underhill, Norm Wernet, Bill Vanaver, my own Flames of Discontent, and others. Utah came to champion the IWW and its Little Red Songbooks, making full use of the amazing heritage of song within the Wobbly repertoire. His rounded baritone adorned more than one collection of IWW recordings. In between writing many powerful originals songs such as "All Used Up", Utah brought to life the ballads of Joe Hill, Ralph Chaplin, T-Bone Slim and the "Unknown Proletariat", who could have been most any of us. But Utah never failed to see the importance in the smallest of the small.

Oddly enough, Utah became something of a cult figure with the college crowd in recent years. Two strong CDs with Ani DiFranco brought him a bit of notoriety, but Utah remained, well—Utah. Sometimes singing and fighting are just that interchangeable. Each time we lift up a guitar, put pen to paper, speak our mind or simply count our blessings, let's pause a moment for Utah Phillips.

John Pietaro, New York

### Utah and Rubber Cockroaches

It was sad news. Fellow Worker Bruce "Utah" Phillips passed away quietly in his sleep on May 24, 2008. He was one my mentors.

He was passionately committed to the belief that people could change the world and he insisted on the power of remembering. He was fond of the adage that "You don't know where you're going unless you know where you came from."

The elders of our community came up with some darned good ideas, one of them being the idea of the One Big Union of all workers. Remembering is a subversive thing because it points to the "not now."

The powers that be and their defenders want us to think that the way things are, are the way they have always been and always will be. Nonsense.

Utah's stories were based on objective reality but he never let the facts hamper a good yarn. They were artfully crafted in a Mark Twainesque style full of eloquence that challenged this day and age of the Internet, iPods and text messaging that has dumbed us down and made us inarticulate.

Utah's pockets were often a treasure

# WOMEN WORKERS' HISTORY

## CHAPTER 16 WHAT THEY DID

PRIOR TO THE CIVIL WAR, MOST WOMEN WORKERS WERE EMPLOYED IN DOMESTIC SERVICE; THEY WERE HOTEL MAIDS, WAITRESSES AND COOKS, AS WELL AS PERSONAL SERVANTS, HOUSEKEEPERS AND LAUNDRESSES. ALSO, WOMEN REPRESENTED 24% OF THE COUNTRY'S MANUFACTURING WORKERS. THE LARGEST CONCENTRATIONS OF FEMALE MANUFACTURING WORKERS IN 1850 WERE IN CLOTHING, COTTON TEXTILES, SHOEMAKING, AND WOOLLEN TEXTILES.

THERE WERE ALSO WOMEN WHO MADE ARTIFICIAL FLOWERS, STRAW HATS AND UMBRELLAS, SLAVING AWAY AT HOME WITH THE HELP OF THEIR CHILDREN. THEY WERE DESPERATELY POOR. IN 1836 THE UMBRELLA MAKERS' WAGES WERE CUT FROM 14¢ TO 10¢; IN 1863 THEY EARNED ONLY 6¢ TO 8¢ PER UMBRELLA. A LABOR PAPER SAID OF THE UMBRELLA MAKERS, "NO CLASS OF FEMALE OPERATIVES... HAVE SUFFERED MORE FROM THE LACK OF JUST COMPENSATION FOR THEIR LABOR."

WOMEN WHO WORKED AS UPHOLSTERERS AND CIGAR MAKERS AND IN OTHER TRADES WERE PAID HALF OF WHAT MEN RECEIVED FOR COMPARABLE WORK. DUE TO THE DEPRESSIONS OF 1853-1854 AND 1857, AND IRREGULAR AND SEASONAL EMPLOYMENT WOMEN WORKERS' WAGES FELL FAR BELOW MINIMUM STANDARDS IN THE 1850s. THE PHILADELPHIA EVENING BULLETIN SAID IN 1857 THAT "ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, THE LOT OF THE WOMAN WHO HAS TO LABOR FOR HER LIVING IS ACTUALLY HARDER IN THE UNITED STATES THAN IN ANY OTHER CIVILIZED COUNTRY IN THE WORLD."

trove of unexpected items—pins, clown noses, rubber cockroaches. The cockroach routine was something he picked up from the hobo jungles.

Yes, I saw Utah use the routine at the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) Educational Centre in Port Elgin, Ontario. While we sat eating with 200 other trade unionists in the huge cafeteria I caught him reaching into his pocket. "Oh no!" I said to myself. "Please don't do this to me!" Sure enough, he slipped that damned rubber cockroach ever so neatly into those mashed potatoes and then

set up bellow. The Centre's cook was brought in.

Why did he do it? For fun and to teach some real history. This just isn't the stuff one learns in school, where you won't learn much about the history of the working class, the great majority of us in this society. We've been made invisible.

Workers' songs, stories and poetry are the real history needing to be preserved and they became his playground of subversion. Utah disbelieved the no-

Continued on 8



# US working poor lose ground in Midwest and Northeast US

Poverty in the United States has made a comeback in the last five years, according to a report issued by The Brookings Institution, a Washington-based think tank.

In the Nineties, the number of low-income working people living in poor neighborhoods had declined--mostly because people were getting and holding better paid jobs.

However, in the last five years that trend is turning back, with the number of poor people living in low-income neighborhoods increased by 41 per cent since 1999.

The result is reinforced economic segregation: poorer quality schools, a lack of good jobs, a fall in the population's health, more crime, and less opportunity.

The study, "Reversal of Fortune: A New Look at Concentrated Poverty in the 2000s," uses data from the United States' national tax agency to measure "concentrated working poverty", defined as the share of low-income tax filers (those receiving the Earned Income Tax Credit) living in communities where at least 40 per cent of all filers receive the EITC.

The study showed that 34 of 58 major cities aalyzed had seen an increase, particularly in the traditional industrial regions of the Midwest and Northeast.

In tune with the economic boom on the West Coast, there was a drop of 42 per cent of people who no longer receive the low income tax credit in that region.

"It's clear that despite gains in the 1990s, we have not solved the problem of concentrated poverty," stated Elizabeth Kneebone, lead author of the report and senior research analyst at the Metropolitan Policy Program. "As the economy stalled this decade, many of the poorest communities were left behind first and fastest. The weak economic forecast ahead makes it likely that we will finish this decade having ceded some of the stunning progress we achieved against concentrated poverty in the prior decade."

The report recommends changes so that poor people are not always the "last in, first out" of the job market.

"Concentrated poverty is problematic because there's basically less opportunity for people to really improve their living standards," Jared Bernstein, director of the Living Standards Program at the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, told the *Christian Science Monitor*.

"But [the solution] can't just be a matter of moving people out of poor neighborhoods. We also have to think about creating opportunities within those neighborhoods."



Photo: Stu Neatby

**Members and supporters of the Ottawa-Outaouais IWW branch in Canada picketed Hooley's for one hour and forced the owners of Hooley's restaurant to pay a court-ordered settlement with an IWW member.**

## Ottawa IWW picket wins \$2,500

Ottawa-Outaouais IWW members and community supporters won \$2,500 owed to member Miguel Yanes Lobaina.

Lobaina, who had worked as a dishwasher before being fired, had won a Superior Court of Canada ruling on March 5 ordering Hooley's restaurant to

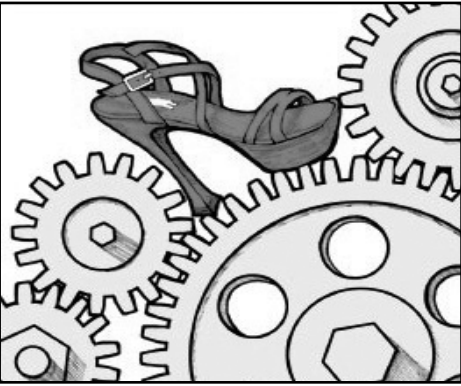
him, but it refused to comply. On August 6, 20 picketers marched in front of its doors, with IWWs holding signs saying, "Pay What's Owed." It took less than an hour for the owner to ask for a meeting with the picketers and sign a cheque to pay Lobaina. It didn't bounce either.

# Sex workers campaign to decriminalize jobs

By Erotic Service Providers Union (ESPU)

The San Francisco Department of Elections announced on July 18 that the measure prohibiting city officials from spending money arresting and prosecuting people for prostitution, and mandating equal legal protection for sex workers, has qualified for the November 2008 ballot. The department randomly sampled 500 signatures of the 12,745 signatures and found 80 per cent of them valid.

"This is a happy day for San Franciscans who want government to focus on fighting real crimes like homicides and robberies, and are tired of seeing resources wasted in a futile effort to



Graphic: America Meredith

police consensual sex between adults," said Starchild, a sex worker activist and spokesperson for the campaign.

The campaign to decriminalize prostitution held a kick-off rally and press conference on July 22, 2008 in front of the Polk Street entrance of City Hall.

"Under criminalization, sex workers don't even have the right to form unions," said Slava, an IWW organizer involved in collecting signatures for the campaign, on the city hall steps. "We want sex workers to advocate for themselves and not to have government agencies or any other agencies or anyone else advocate for them."

"It is way past time that the recommendations of the Board of Supervisors 1996 Prostitution Task Force were implemented," said organizer Maxine

Doogan. "Criminalizing sex workers has been putting workers at risk of violence and discrimination for far too long."

The San Francisco Democratic County Central Committee and the Harvey Milk Democratic GBLT have endorsed the initiative to date.

The prostitution reform measure joins two other voter-submitted measures on the local Nov. 4 ballot, along with eight measures put on the ballot by the mayor or members of the Board of Supervisors, with many others expected to be added in the next several weeks.

For updates on the campaign, visit [www.espu-ca.org](http://www.espu-ca.org).

*With files from the IW.*

## Troublemaking in Edmonton for 10 years



Photo: J. Gysbers

**Edmonton IWWs sing a solidarity farewell at Edmonton branch's 10-year celebration. Left to right: Katia Reid, Michael McNichol, Jessica Hawthorn, Brendan Bruce, Mikhail Bjorge, Sachia Longo, and Nick Driedger.**

By J. Gysbers

The IWW Edmonton GMB celebrated its 10-year anniversary on July 19. Local wobbles played soccer, ate barbeque, listened to music and ate some more delicious food at the Ukrainian Hall.

Master of Ceremonies Gordie Thomas gave an inspiring speech about the powerful past and future of the branch, while Brendan Bruce regaled the audience with cheesy radical jokes. We enjoyed live music from Rhianon, Mer-

ryn, and Mark Edwards, who also led us in singing some old wobbly favourites. During the 'open mic', we enjoyed poetry and many kind words about the solidarity that our branch consistently shows to its members and to others in the labour movement.

The party was a little bittersweet, as the branch is saying goodbye to six fiercely committed members who are moving away to pursue new opportunities in other provinces.

## Canadian boss fires 180 French workers, Canadian IWWs respond

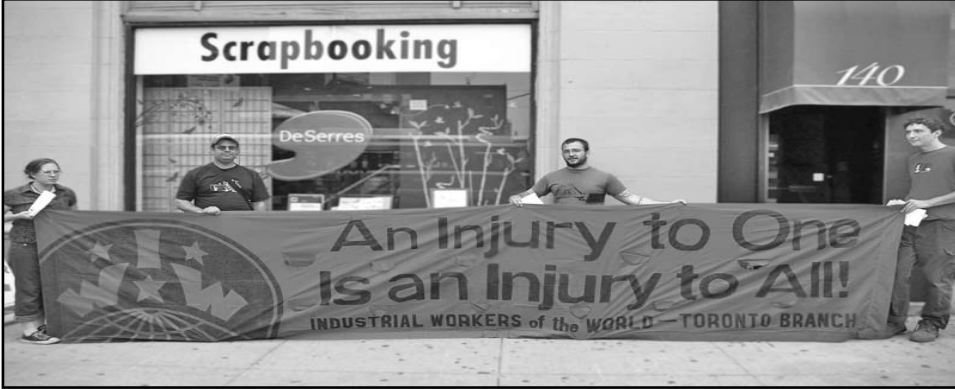


Photo: Edward Wong

**The IWW banner is a picket all by itself at a Loomis store in Toronto.**

By Toronto IWW

On July 27, IWW and Common Cause members picketed the Loomis art store at 130 Spadina Avenue in Toronto, which is owned by De Serres.

Marc DeSerres, a celebrated Quebec entrepreneur and the man behind 26 cross-Canada art supply stores, took over France's Artacréa SA in May 2007. He told French workers and customers that he would turn the company around and criticized previous owners for not investing enough in the enterprise. He promised to renovate his stores and upgrade their information systems, describing his French investment as "an extraordinary opportunity." The year of 2008 would be a year of profit, he said.

Despite managerial incompetence, workers improved the sales volume in their stores and notably improved their company's prospects.

Yet, one year later, on June 11, DeSerres told his board of directors at DeSerres France that he would not be injecting more money into the company. By July, a state of suspension of payments was declared. The result? Some 180 jobs are at stake, leaving "many families [that] will find themselves in distress," according to the French National Confederation of Labour (CNT). In solidarity with the workers of DeSerres France, the protesters demanded that DeSerres provide financial compensation for every dismissed worker.

# Rambling to Revolution: Hobohemia and the IWW

By Joe Grim Feinberg

When the Industrial Workers of the World formed in 1905, its founders had little idea that their union would soon become North America’s foremost organization of hobos.

Organizers set their sights on the stable work forces of massive mines and mills; but their greatest successes came among migrant laborers on farms, in forests, and at sea. They looked to the crowded, urban east; but the rank-and-file rode West across empty, dusty plains.

The IWW grew most markedly among groups that were by most standards hardly industrial and barely even working. This came from a fortuitous meeting of situation and strategy. The international labor movement saw the future of the world in large factories, but the world of stable, large-scale workplaces was still only a fraction of the world of capitalism.

Worse still, such workplaces were often not even a growing fraction. During the period of the IWW’s greatest growth (1905-early 1920s) labor only became more precarious. The North American proletariat responded by staying constantly on the move, similar to today’s increasingly rootless workforce.

The IWW’s particular understanding of industry and work that disposed the union so well to organizing non-industrial non-workers. The IWW’s greatest strategic innovation was to organize not by “craft” but by “industry.” All workers in an industry should organize together,

which meant that even people far from the centers of production had a legitimate role in creating the One Big Union that would abolish the whole wage system. No part of industry could be left out, no gear left out of reach of a militant worker’s wooden shoe.

If the strategic centers of industry were important, the fact soon emerged that even the reserve army of the unemployed was a crucial piece of the capitalist machinery. Its members had interests and were interesting; they had fighting and singing and moving spirit, and—until their power was broken by the state—they put more fear into the hearts of the US ruling class than any factory workers organized by craft, no matter how strategically powerful they might seem.

As more precarious workers joined the IWW, they began to lay the foundations for a new critique of work itself. The IWW is remarkable in its historical moment as a radical labor organization that not only exalted the muscular “commonwealth of toil” but also sang praises to the “big rock candy mountain... where they hung the jerk who invented work,” as IWW member Harry “Haywire Mac” McClintock wrote in his song.

IWW members organized as workers against wage work. They did this first of all as any workers do: by recognizing that it is both a great misfortune and a great opportunity to be a worker, a member of the class uniquely exploited and uniquely capable of overcoming it.

But the IWW also had in its ranks thousands of members whose relationship to work was so tenuous that they had little trouble imagining a world where work would exist no longer. They lived in misery, riding the rails from hobo jungle to town, living off wages from months before or begging for food and endlessly fleeing the police. They were half-forced into this situation by a cruel economy, but they half-chose it of their own free will, having experienced enough of work to know that they should avoid it at all costs.

Runaways from wage slavery, the hobo camps filled with songs of better lands and stories of adventure in a world made insipid by time-clocks and top hats. They used their relative leisure to discuss human existence and the politics of the day; they brought their insights to the public in parks and on street corners from coast to coast. Their “Hobohemia” laid the foundations for a proletarian public sphere the likes of which few of us have ever seen, raised as we are in cities that are hardly cities, on streets overrun with cars, in parks with more poodles than people surrounded by iron fences

where soapboxes once rested beneath the feet of unbathed orators.

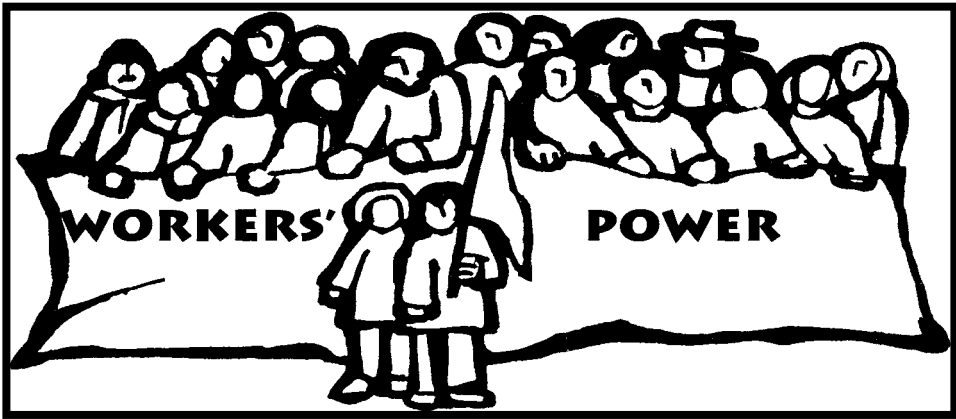
Amidst the wreckage of present-day “progress,” hope may rise again alongside misery. After a long detour, Fordism to some and the Welfare State to others, precarious labor is again the salient feature of the day. The illusion of stability has faded away.

Immigration rises and soon we will all be migrants. Rare is the worker who keeps a job for months, and no more common is the workplace that does not break apart and move away.

If there was ever a need for migrant workers to come together in One Big Union, where we keep our membership as we move from job to job and where we keep our union as jobs move from place to place, the time is now.

The last remnants of community hang together each day by a looser thread. But the possibility for new community may rise again.

We are forced out of work, but we can begin to envision a world in which work is not work at all. We are forced from our homes—but we can begin to build better places to dwell.



## Replace yourself

By J. Pierce

The primary task of an organizer is to build more organizers. We need more and more working class leaders and the way to do this is to constantly replace yourself.

Here are a few easy ways to help you build up your successors: Reveal your sources so others can think with you: “I had a long talk with MK recently. He really convinced me that we should reorganize as a shop committee instead of having one or two ‘stewards’. He gave me this awesome article on how IWW shop committees used to work.” Telling others where you got an idea from demonstrates that you think of them as equals. You also provide an opportunity for them to question your sources.

Show others how it’s done and take them through the process: “Hey Keith, has anyone showed you how to post an article to iww.org? I’m going to post that write-up on the strike right now. Let me show you how to do it. We need another person who can post.” Pass on the technical know-how so others can be ‘experts’ just like you.

Encourage people because you believe in them and you know they can do it: “We really need this message to get to the people upfront. Can you have a talk with Shannon? She respects you and you’re the best person to talk to her.” You run faster for coaches that want to win. We’ve got to show that what we do matters and that we believe in each other.

Ask people to do things that are difficult. Move them to take on responsibilities outside their comfort level: “I’m glad you’ve been talking things up so much at your shop. You’re one of our best guys, Jerm. The next step is for you to start coming to the Industrial Organizing Committee meetings. I know its gonna be tight with your schedule but we’re gonna help you fit it in. You have to be

there or this thing doesn’t move.” We need to help others break out and step up. It’s a sign of respect to ask people to do difficult things.

Train your replacement for an officer position: “Hey, Mei, you got a second? Has anyone talked to you about becoming the chair of the Committee? I’m going to be stepping down at the end of my term and you’re everyone’s pick for this position. Put some thought into it. Meanwhile, I’ll start showing you what the job entails.” If we train new officers properly and regularly, we can avoid crust and dust in our leadership structures.

Encourage other members to read what you’ve read: “For those that didn’t make it to the Summit, Maxine did a killer presentation on the legal barriers to organizing in her industry. It totally reminded me of this thing I read in an old One Big Union Monthly. So I ran off some photocopies of that article for y’all to check out. I think it will help us come up with some good strategies we can try.” In making IWW history and principles accessible, you cut down on the knowledge monopoly and pass on valuable lessons and experiences.

Introduce people to each other and have them exchange phone numbers: “Tenaya, have you met Steve yet? Steve, this is Tenaya. Yeah, you guys both work in the same industry and would have some awesome stories to tell each other. You two ought to collaborate and submit something for the next newsletter.” By introducing and ensuring info exchange, you avoid ‘Old Boys Clubs’ and now information doesn’t have to go through you. The task that we have as IWWs is to build working class leaders everywhere we go. We are constantly looking for opportunities to teach others what we know so that they could do what we do without us.

## Frank Little’s grave restored

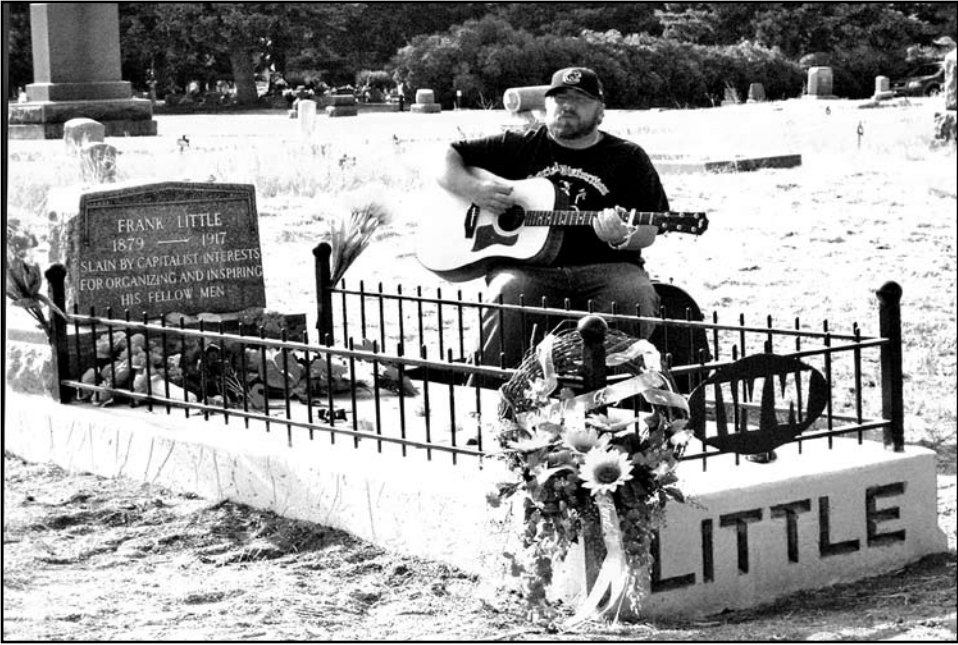


Photo: Zena Beth McGlashan

**IBEW International member Bob Brock performs “There is Power in a Union” at the dedication of Frank Little’s newly refurbished memorial. The grave stone reads Frank Little 1879-1917, Slain by Capitalist Interests for Organizing and Inspiring his Fellow Men.”**

By Amanda Curtis

Carpenters Local 112 recently refurbished the grave of IWW labor martyr Frank Little at the Mountain View Cemetery in Butte, Montana, which had fallen into disrepair.

The Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters donated a \$1,000 restoration fund while workers Jerry Ball, Mike Boysza, Michael C. Boysza, Jody Hollingsworth, Jeremy Lee, Davin Quist, and Mick Wonnacott volunteered to complete the work.

A sunken concrete tablet was removed and a new one poured in its place bearing the name “Little.” Boysza welded iron fencing bearing the IWW logo, which was placed in the new tablet. Dallas, a retired worker from Travillion Johnson (the donors of the original headstone) colored the epitaph which reads “Slain by the capitalist interest for organizing and inspiring his fellow men.”

On the anniversary of Little’s lynching, August 1, workers and community members gathered to dedicate the refurbished site.

Several workers spoke, sang, and read poetry. Following the graveside memorial, a reception was held in the Carpenter’s Union Hall in uptown Butte.

Frank Little, 38, came to Butte to organize for the IWW following the deadliest mining disaster in US history, the Granite Mountain-Speculator Mine Fire Disaster. Demanding safer working conditions, several thousand miners went on strike. When Frank Little came to help with the strike, the miners became pro-IWW.

After the union hall was destroyed, copper company thugs abducted Little on August 1 from his boarding house in the middle of the night. He was dragged behind a car to the bottom of the Butte Hill where he was hung from a railroad trestle.

A warning was left on his body that read “First and last warning, 3-7-77”. The numbers are thought to be the measurements of a Montana grave site and was used by vigilante gangs in the state.



# Providence IWW rallies against police brutality

By Justin Kelley, Providence IWW

On the first anniversary of the North Providence police attack on an IWW warehouse workers' solidarity march, 75 people rallied on August 10 against police brutality and in celebration of IWW member Alexandra Svoboda, who has partially recovered from a dislocated leg and ruptured artery. She remains unable to work due to her injuries.

IWW members from Massachusetts, New York, Philadelphia, Providence, Vermont, and elsewhere gathered in the warm afternoon sun in Donigian park with members of the Providence community to reject police brutality and Rhode Island state's attempt to repress the free expression of labor.

## Police Riot in North Providence

On August 11, 2007, the Providence branch of the union was marching towards Jackie's Galaxy in North Providence, a pan-Asian restaurant that was refusing to stop doing business with the union-busting, labor-abusing HWH/Dragonland facility. The members of the branch intended to hold an information picket and demand the restaurant drop HWH/Dragonland as a supplier.

As the march proceeded down Mineral Spring Avenue the police arrived, pulling their cruisers abruptly in front of the march, nearly driving their cars into people.

When the protesters did not comply fast enough to the police demand to get off the street, the police began to aggressively push people onto the side walk.

They police targeted Alexandra because she looked like a protest leader. Although Alex was maimed and in shock and pain, the officers continued to use pain compliance maneuvers on her as they placed her under arrest, while she lay pinned to the grass, her leg twisted to the side. The officers also pepper sprayed the crowd and brandished their clubs at the remaining protesters.

## One year later: "We Never Forget"

Bringing to life the old IWW maxim "An injury to one is an injury to all" one year after the police attack, a vigorous contingent of folks rallied together, listening to speakers, socializing and dancing to several musical acts. IWW member John Holland from Vermont sang, closing with an original song dedicated to Alexandra, the passionate tune "Alexandra: true lady of liberty."

Jason Friedmutter and Alexandra Svoboda both spoke at the rally. Fried-

mutter talked about the case so far and thanked everyone for their continued support.

Svoboda is facing one charge each of assaulting an officer, resisting arrest and disorderly conduct. Originally felony charges, they have since been dropped to misdemeanors. Jason faces one count of obstruction of justice. Svoboda is expecting her case to go to trial by January 2009.

When Svoboda, wearing a leg brace, stood up from the chair where she sat during the rally to speak, the assembled crowd applauded and cheered. She thanked everyone and spoke powerfully and eloquently about her belief in the power of working people to resist, dubbing the efforts of everyone as "the true spirit of resistance."

John MacLean, a wobbly organizer, Marine veteran, and anti-militarist peace activist who was an eyewitness at last year's rally, addressed the crowd. The assembled people listened as he spoke about the "long and sordid history of vigilante military and police violence being directed at working people in the US." He ended his rousing speech by asking people to broaden their understanding of scabbing, beyond crossing a picket line.

"When we live in 'whiteness' we become scabs, we do not love or practice solidarity," he said. "When we coldly hide in 'legality' and watch immigrants being taken away, we scab again."

The band "Jake and the Infernal Machine" entertained and inspired with their brand of folk-influenced rock, singing "The Prison Song", Joe Hill's "The Preacher and the Slave, and "Class War".

IWWs Mischa Lefebvre and John Cronan then talked about the IWW's style of labor organizing. Lefebvre and Cronan described the struggles and victories in the warehouse industry in New York City with Industrial Union 460 that motivated the Providence IWW to organize the march last August.

The final speaker was John Prince from the long-standing Providence community group Direct Action for Rights and Equality. John gave a message of solidarity with Alexandra and the IWW's struggle locally and everywhere.

"I'm there when there is a struggle against oppression and struggles in my community," he said.

The rally ended with dancing to Providence marching band What Cheer? Brigade, dressed in red and black.



Photo: Justin Kelley

**Alexandra Svoboda speaks about recovery and resistance after being injured by Rhode Island police during an IWW solidarity march in Providence, Rhode Island for New York City warehouse workers.**

## "Solidarity forever"

Alexandra, Jason and the Providence branch need your continued support. The need to put pressure on the state and raise funds is immense. Alex's legal bills alone are anticipated to be \$25-50,000. Fortunately, she has medical insurance to help with the healthcare costs.

Please participate in the letter writing campaign to the state authorities,

demanding that all charges are dropped. A sample letter to the Attorney General, mayor and chief of police of North Providence is available through the Providence branch. Other creative ways of pressuring the state are also welcome. The monumental amount of legal fees facing Alexandra is perhaps the biggest issue at hand beyond the demand for charges to be dropped. There are assessment stamps available, and the Providence GMB has urged all members and supporters of the union to hold fundraising events.

Contact Providence IWW, PO Box 5795, Providence, RI 02903 united States, providenceiww@gmail.com for information on how to donate or the IWW's General Defense Committee.

# Rail Workers United founding convention

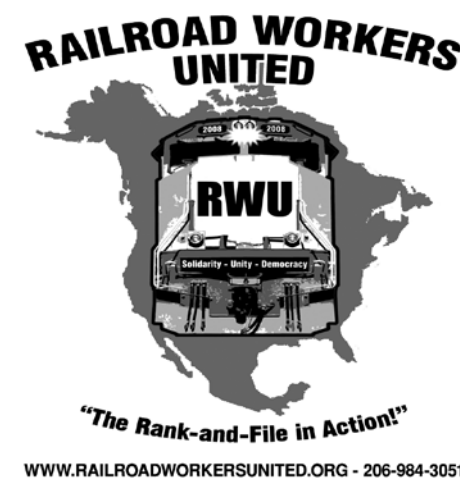
From The Highball, newsletter of the RWU

A new caucus of North American railroad workers established an organization in April that hopes to spur solidarity, unity and democracy within and between unions that represent rail workers across North America.

Caucus members at the founding convention of Railroad Workers United came from five different unions in the rail industry, traveling from coasts, as well as north and south, to attend. All came on their own time and their own dime.

In the morning session, caucus members adopted Railroad Workers United as the official name, a "Statement of Principles" to serve as a moral compass for the group, and approved, with a number of amendments, a set of bylaws to govern the organization until the next convention, set for Spring 2010.

In the afternoon, 11 members were elected to the leadership body, the International Steering Committee. From this body were then elected an Executive Committee composed of three Co-Chairs, a Secretary and a Treasurer, and three Trustees.



The participants passed 12 resolutions ranging from safety issues to contracting out work, from questions of diversity in the workforce to support for West Coast dockworkers and union members protesting the Iraq War.

The growing squeeze on the working class was on the minds of delegates. This situation prompted a call for an emergency wage re-opener in all rail union contracts. Workers should not have to

pay the price for the failures of national and corporate leadership, whether it be the disaster of the Iraq War or the catastrophe of the sub-prime mortgage meltdown. Nor should workers have to confront skyrocketing living costs without adequate wage increases to relieve increasingly unbearable pressures on the living standards of ordinary people.

RWU was born in the Fall of 2007, when members of Railroad Operating Crafts United (ROCU)—an organization of United Transportation Union and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen members who wanted to see a democratic merger of their two unions—joined with other rail labor activists from the non-operating crafts and laid the groundwork for a new organization of all rail labor to build unity, solidarity, democracy and rank-and-file action among all crafts and all unions that represent railroad workers in North America.

RWU also staffed an information table at the Labor Notes conference running concurrently. RWU members took part in a workshop called, "Ain't

Misbehavin': Confronting Management's "Blame the Worker" Safety Programs", led by Steelworkers Union staffer Nancy Lessin. The workshop explained how management safety programs redirect the focus away from the real hazards of the workplace and attempt to focus attention strictly on worker behavior as a way of letting the company off the hook. Lessin described what a real union safety program could and should look like, one that takes on the real issues, does not blame individual workers, and one that builds solidarity and worker empowerment, rather than erode the union's cohesiveness.

The next morning she met with RWU members to analyze the specifics of railroad "safety" programs, including the Total Safety Culture program that is appearing on some major Class I carriers. The group discussed how to combat "Blame the Worker" safety programs.

The next RWU conference is scheduled for Spring 2010 in the Midwest.

Review

# Dishwasher Pete wanders, entertains, rebels

*Pete Jordan, Dishwasher, Harper-Perennial, New York, 2007, 386 pages, paperback, \$13.95.*

Review by Scott Satterwhite

In the early Nineties, an occasionally employed dishwasher found a calling that led him on an atypical mission to wash dishes in every state in the United States.

Pete Jordan’s trek became legendary in punk circles as he recorded his adventures of bouncing from dish tub to dish tub in the seminal Nineties fanzine “Dishwasher.” While finding his niche in the zine world, the writing of Pete Jordan (aka Dishwasher Pete) stood out because he could tell a good story.

While it may be difficult for those who have not worked in a kitchen to understand, there is no shortage of adventures that happen every day in the average restaurant. Add to that the element of interesting travel that is far from aimless and you have the material for what is one of the most appealing, readable, and unique books on modern labor to come out in years.

While Dishwasher started out as a fanzine, HarperPerennial found Pete Jordan’s story intriguing enough to want to publish it in book format, which is an odd move for a major publisher and an even more strange testimony toward the universal appeal of this book.

Throughout the book, Jordan tells story after story of bouncing around from one kitchen to another, working

anywhere, from small restaurants to big ones, from ski resorts to off-shore oil rigs, all in his quest to wash dishes in all 50 states.

While most would find this a strange profession to spend a considerable amount of time devoted toward, Jordan explains that in reality washing dishes is one of the most ideal jobs. The dish area is usually a solitary environment, free of oversight. There are few employee benefits, but food is as plentiful as the availability of work. While generally looked down upon in the typical kitchen hierarchy, the dishwasher’s job is arguably one of the most integral parts of any restaurant. Not only is the task itself crucial for obvious reasons, but more importantly, no one else wants to do it. Dishwasher Pete found this situation alone gave him a good deal of power in the workplace.

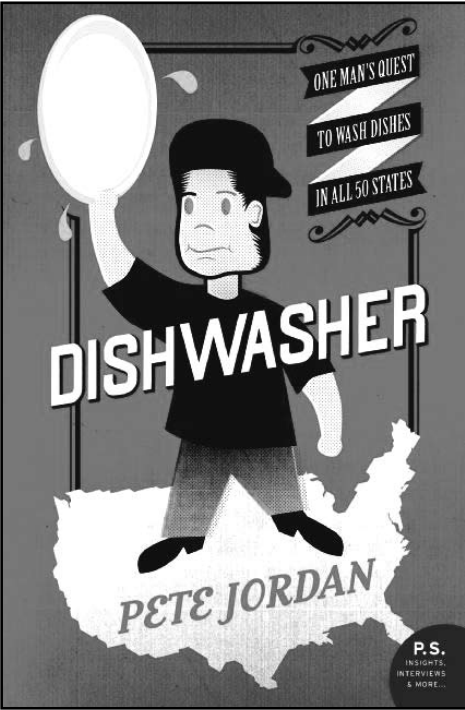
How he used this power is what I would criticize; this same power is seldom used in a profession where there is so much potential to win workers’

demands. When the workplace becomes intolerable, most people quit and the job remains a “shit job” for the next person. The only ones who benefit from

this scenario are the employers who are rarely forced to give concessions that are not mandated by law (if even that is respected) to the workers.

While there are few feelings as nice as telling a bad boss to shove it, that joy is short-lived, lasting as long as the last paycheck. After that, it’s back to the grind. If the workers in this industry realized their power to change their workplace, the benefits gained could mean greater joy that lasts. What is better? Telling a boss to stick his job where the sun doesn’t shine or winning better wages and health care?

That said, there are moments in this book where the workers rise up to their potential. In a few touching scenes, Dishwasher Pete begins researching the lives of other dishwashers. He learns of past dishwasher strikes and people who attempted to organize this profession.



Jordan even pays tribute to these “Pearl Divers” who had gone before him and leaves makeshift memorials at the sites of these strikes and also at graves of dishwasher union organizers. This affinity for other suds busters ultimately led Dishwasher Pete to join an independent union where he gives a great account of kitchen worker solidarity in a wildcat strike.

In fact, there is a great deal of dishwasher history and trivia in this book. (What’s one thing that Gerald Ford and Ho Chi Minh had in common? They were both dishwashers!)

Also filling these pages are great personal stories about the “rootless irresponsibility” touted in the cover blurb and a few very funny moments, most notably the infamous story of Dishwasher Pete hoodwinking *Late Night with David Letterman* by getting a friend to impersonate him on the talk show.

*Dishwasher* obviously will appeal to those who have worked the worst of these jobs and cleaned dishes in the grimmest kitchens. Yet, Jordan’s writing goes further than the obvious and leaves plenty for those who are interested in travel, labor history, love, and the love of strange accomplishments. *Dishwasher* is a fun read with great (and sometimes inspiring) stories about the day-to-day workplace struggles for the so-called unskilled worker. Now that Jordan has moved on to greener pastures in another country, I only hope his next venture will give us more great stories in the future.

## Reader’s Soapbox, continued



## IWWs remember Utah

Continued from 4

tion that workers are mere consumers of the dominant culture. We create culture. The problem is that history is a top down affair and Utah was out to rectify the situation. If you believe in the rat race then only rats will win. If you think that humans are hopelessly greedy and warlike, that is a hopeless position that only leads to despair. Despair and hopelessness are the gateways to fascism and totalitarianisms of all types. If you resign yourself to the way things are, then you have made the choice to side with the powerful few against the powerless.

Two weeks before he passed away, I was able to perform at a benefit concert in Ann Arbor, Michigan. During the concert a phone hook-up allowed the audience to hear Utah’s voice.

He described his illness and commented that at one point of serious depression he actually contemplated suicide so he dialed the suicide hotline for some counseling. When he got on the phone he asked the hotline counselor: “Mind my asking, but where am I calling?” The guy answered, “Afghanistan.”

“You’re kidding”, said Utah, “You mean to tell me the suicide hotline has been outsourced to Afghanistan?” The guy at the other replied, “Yes, now how can I help you?”

“Well,” said Utah. “I was having suicidal thoughts.”

“Really?” said the guy on the hotline. “Do you know how to drive a truck?”

Good ol’ Utah had us going ‘til the end. I mourn his loss. Just before he passed away I wrote him a long letter telling him to hang in because I’ve learned a lot from him and there was so much more I needed to learn. He never saw the letter. I guess I got my work cut out for me. We all do.

Len Wallace  
Windsor, Ontario, Canada

**Donate to Utah’s own Hospitality House, P.O. Box 3223, Grass Valley, California 95945, United States, (530) 271-7144, [www.hospitalityhouseshelter.org](http://www.hospitalityhouseshelter.org).**

## Column

## Working Family

By Arthur J. Miller

Often the greatest amount of pressure on workers involved in organizing or job actions comes from their families and friends. Most of the time this pressure is unseen by the organizers.

Over the years I have seen how some of the strongest union supporters among the workers give up on the union, go back to work or just find another job because the pressure they get at home becomes too much for them.

This pressure comes about for a number of reasons. First, there are the economic reasons during a strike.

Then there are the personal reasons. Most workers live rather simple lives; they go to work and then spend most of their free time with their families and friends. Then the union comes around and takes some of that free time away from families and friends and it becomes union time. Often in organizing drives and job actions, the union will become the major focus in workers’ lives. Families and friends can feel neglected and scornful of the union. This can lead to disharmony at home.

Yet, if families and friends become union supporters with the workers being organized or in job actions you have a strong bond that is hard to break. Some unions like miner’s unions understand this very well.

Some families and friends with union backgrounds or with very good communication will support the union, but many may not. So either the organizers must hope things work out for the best or they can pro-actively deal with this issue. The following are some ideas how to take action with families and friends.

1. In your one-on-one talks with workers and at union meetings, talk to them about family and friends and make sure that they have an understanding of the problem from the beginning so that they are not blindsided by the problem.
2. If your organizing includes a number of organizers, let one of them be the

union liaison for families and friends. It should be someone they can talk to for information and about problems.

3. Hold informational meetings by the union for families and friends. In other words make sure that they are informed. At these meetings ask them what union issues are important to them. This will give them input into the situation and it will allow the organizers to understand the issues important to the families and friends. Where possible, include their issues as union issues.

4. Find ways that families and friends can help. There is a lot of union work that goes on and thus there are many things they can do. During a strike they can work on food and supplies. Even organizing social events is helpful in creating stronger bonds.

5. A step further can be to organize an auxiliary support organization of families and friends. There are some things that the union can’t do that such an organization could do because it is not the union. An auxiliary could be useful in organizing support in the communities. They can take on general support for the problems that families and friends have during organizing and job actions. They can publish a newsletter where they can express themselves.

Organizers must take families and friends into account and make them part of their plan. To think that families and friends do not matter in union organizing and job actions and thus are no concern for the union, is just naive. But if the union communicates with and involves families and friends it helps create a bond that is almost unbreakable.

*Working Family is a column dedicated to issues that affect people who work and raise families in their many forms. Contributions to Working Family are very welcome. Send your submission to [iw@iww.org](mailto:iw@iww.org) with Working Family in the subject line or by post to PO Box 52003, 298 Dalhousie St, Ottawa, ON K1N 1S0 Canada.*



Humor



Building a Thank You Culture  
By Red Card

I once read an article about how collective action was good for your health. I have engaged in enough collective actions on the job, at protests, pickets, organizations and coalitions that I should live to be 100. But when I read this article I felt worn down, burnt out and the exact opposite of how I generally feel. I began to wonder what the heck this article was talking about.

For one the article was based on the British, so maybe they do things dramatically differently on that side of the pond. Then one day, a fellow worker noticed that I was feeling burnt, pissed off and just about ready to say, ‘Damn it.’ All he had to do to make me feel better was say, “Hey Red, thanks for the good work you’re doing.”

I began to think a bit about what happened there. In practical terms, not much. All my fellow worker did was thank me for doing something I had been doing for the past year. But what it said to me was more than that; it showed that this fellow worker supported me and figured I was doing something worthwhile. This brings me to the point of the article. Our organization suffers when we don’t say thank you to our fellow workers.

First, saying thank you to your fellow worker lets them know that you appreciate the work that they do to build the One Big Union. I believe this point to be self-evident and needs little explanation. After all saying “thank you” is a sign of appreciation that has been cultivated over years of civilization.

Second, saying thank may mean the difference between your fellow worker doing a task because they agreed to do it and because they want to do it.

Take my job, for instance. When I am at work, it is because I agreed to do it (for a small paycheck) and I do the least possible that I can get away with (often instead of working, I write articles such as this one). Our union’s lack of financial resources means we don’t have anyone making a living off of it. Our General Secretary-Treasurer no doubt could find himself a better paying job.

So what is there about work, other than a paycheck? Well, how about the pride and appreciation of your fellow workers? When I am working hard on union stuff because I want do a righteous job that any fellow worker could be proud of, often simply a gesture of appreciation from my branch mates is all I need. One is more likely to do a higher quality job when one knows that others will appreciate the work.

Third, saying thank you to your fellow worker creates an understanding between you and the person you thanked. Solidarity is based on shared understanding of the struggles each individual within our class goes through based on being a member of the working class. If the fellow worker does not receive appreciation for the work they have done, it is possible they may not know that you understand the work they put into the project. Thus, you may have a harder time building solidarity because of a perceived lack of understanding from you.

Building a Culture of Screw You  
By Mr. Block

First of all, I don’t want to hear any of this IWW nonsense. Don’t try to take my dues money or get me to some meeting full of whiners or preach any sort of hateful doctrine to me. I like my job and I like my boss. You hear me?

Still, Red is a friend of mine, despite his dumb ideas, and he asked me to say a few words to you people. You probably won’t listen but here goes.

You don’t need any kind of culture of thank you. Red is just being whiney. He keeps coming to work every day and our boss never says “Thank you.” See? You don’t need thank you to run a sophisticated operation. Not that your IWW is sophisticated; you people are simpletons. My boss never says thank you. He says “do it!” and “now!” and “what did I just tell you?” Translation? “Screw you!” I like my boss, he’s a good friend of mine. He just knows that to really make things happen you have to lay down the law.

Here is some of the ways that my boss keeps things going. He never says thank you to individuals. He knows that’s a waste of time. He always asks for more and more and more time on the job, because he knows that what we do is important. He doesn’t rotate tasks because he knows that doing one thing and only one thing is the best way to get good at something. If someone doesn’t like how things are going, they can leave. That’s my boss’s attitude, and it’s the right attitude. People who leave aren’t as talented as the ones who stick around. Saying thank you all the time is just asking to keep sensitive losers around instead of people who want to really get the job done. And in the end we all get paid and that’s the point, isn’t it?

Maybe if you IWW people would start handing out the green stuff instead of those red cards you wouldn’t need this thank you nonsense.



Folk singer Mark Ross entertains a crowd at Union Corner. Photo: Vicki Watson

IWWs set up Union Corner  
at National Folk Fest

By Amanda Curtis

Local Wobblies forced the Seventieth annual National Folk Festival to remember Butte, Montana’s rich labor history, by setting up a Union Corner on private property in the heart of the folk festival.

IWW member Kevin Curtis, who lives in Butte, was surprised to find that folk festival organizers would not allow a labor informational booth inside its boundaries. Curtis approached the Butte-Silver Bow Council of commissioners about the prohibition. In response, folk festival organizers twice redrew the boundaries in order to prevent the labor booth. Local resident Mike Bingham rented a site to the IWW to host Union Corner on private property inside the folk festival’s boundaries. He donated the \$1 rent received back to the IWW branch.

The Montana IWW, along with Taking Actions for Peaceful Solutions (TAPS, a local peace organization) and the Montana Folklore Society, hosted Union Corner during the three-day music festival. IWW member Vicki Watson and the Montana Folklore Society pro-

vided the event insurance, without which Union Corner could not have happened.

Union Corner evolved into a community project, with contributions from diverse sources. Labor agitator and folk singer Mark Ross attended from Oregon and played three local venues, including Union Corner. Many artists participated in the three-day open-mic session, thanks to equipment donated by Bob Brock of the IBEW and powered by electricity donated by the neighboring Thornton Building.

The Butte Archives lent several labor history boards to the cause, allowing Butte’s rich labor history to reach hundreds of festival-goers. Montana Folklore Society representative Vickie Watson hosted a labor sing-a-long, and several local unions set up informational displays, including the laborers, teamsters, and carpenters. Wobblies from Bozeman, Billings, Butte, Missoula, Hamilton, and Utah attended. Four new members joined the branch and several more stopped by to pay dues.

UK IWWs support fired polish postie

Members of the London and Edinburgh IWW branches in the United Kingdom picketed the Polish embassy and consul to support postal workers belonging to Workers’ Initiative (Inicjatiwa Pracownicza) being victimized for their role in postal strikes last year. Bartosz Kantorczyk was fired for his lead role in a wave of strikes last year and further efforts to ensure the safety of posties carrying money orders on delivery.

“The protesters handed out bilingual leaflets to passers-by and managed to collar the top dog present at the embassy to discuss the issue,” said a London IWW statement. The IWW also sent a formal letter to the embassy demanding that the government put pressure on the postal service to quit their union-busting ways. The reason they are not co-operating with the union is that unlike the main Polish unions, Workers’ Initiative refuses to cosy up to management and maintains a militant platform.

BIROC election

The IWW’s British Isles Regional Organizing Committee elected its officers in June.

Adam Lincoln was re-elected as secretary with Frank Syrratt elected as BIROC treasurer. Regional organizers elected were Dek Keenan (Northern Scotland), Nick Durie (Central Scot-



London IWWs picket the Polish embassy. Photo: Ant Ince

land), Matthew Hardcastle (Northern England), Rob Blow (Central England), Sandy Hale (South East England), and Carlos Guarita (Southern England).

Membership Administrator was a tight race, with Philip Le Marquand winning by one vote over Ruth Henderson. Three Website Administrators were elected, Keir Lawson, Nick Durie, and Philip Le Marquand. Euan Sutherland was re-elected as the Supply Depot Coordinator.

Becca Kirkpatrick was elected as the Health Workers Industrial Union 610 National Secretary and Ant Ince was elected as the Education Workers Industrial Union 620 Secretary. The newly-constituted Bread & Roses Editorial Board now consists of Miv Jones, Darren Poynton, Doug Fielding-Smith, and Dan Read.

IWW Mason needs support

By IWW General Defense Committee

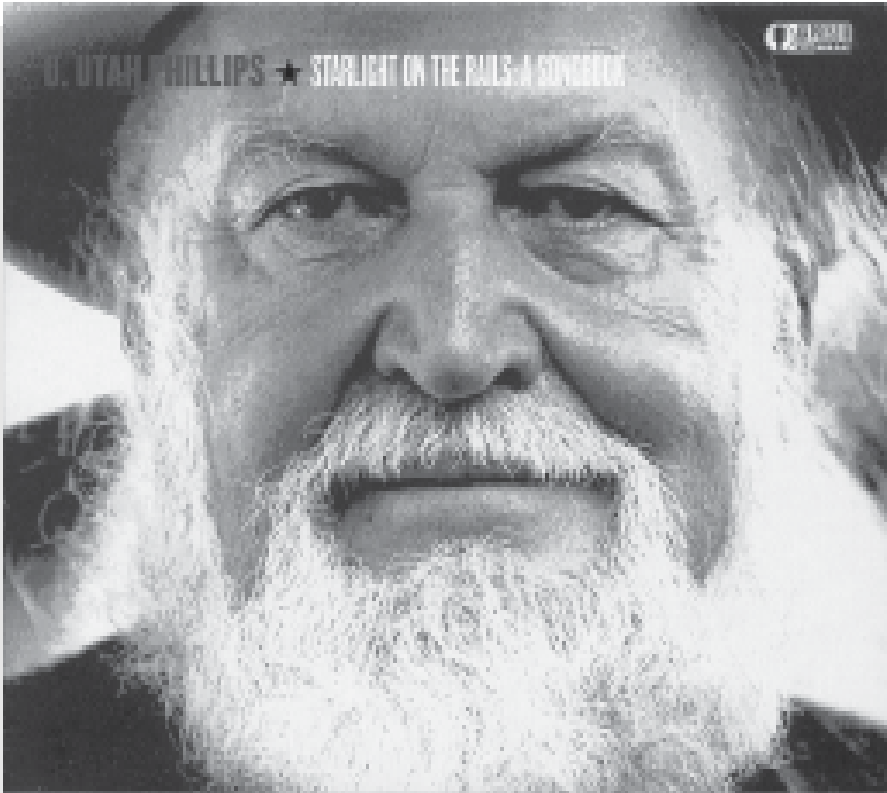
Marie Mason is a school teacher, environmental activist, wobbly, and mother of two. On March 10, 2008, Marie was arrested by the FBI, Homeland Security, and the local police at her home in Cincinnati, Ohio. Marie and three others were indicted on charges of arson for political purposes at Michigan State University in 1999 and the destruction of logging equipment shortly thereafter. Learn more at [www.freemarie.org](http://www.freemarie.org).

Marie’s support group, Got Your Back!, is raising funds to help with Marie’s legal costs. Marie has petitioned the IWW’s General Defense

Committee for help. In response we have issued 50 assessments stamps for \$10 each, available for purchase by IWW and GDC members. New GDC members who sign up can have half of their dues donated to Marie’s defense. To date, we’ve raised \$335.

To join the GDC or buy an assessment stamp, send a cheque or money order to “GDC” to GDC, PO Box 23085, Cincinnati, OH 45223 or send us an email [gdc@iww.org](mailto:gdc@iww.org).

A GDC membership includes a member card, copy of our bylaws, button and subscription to *The Defiant Spirit* newsletter.



Utah Phillips: Starlight on the Rails Boxed CD Set

This four CD set contains 63 stories and 61 songs, spanning over 40 years of Utah's performing career. He says, "The way I see it is this: if you take most of what you sing from people, sooner or later these songs will help you disappear into the people. If you have listened to their voices close enough, the people will embrace your songs and make them their own. But they will not embrace you, because they will no longer know who you are. You will know the people and will be able to vanish into them. Nothing you have given to the people will be owned by anybody but owned by everybody. If you want that, you will turn away from possession. You will turn away from riches and power and fame. For these songs to do their work they must give up your name and be free in every way."

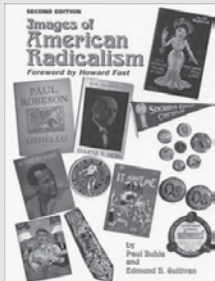
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Chumbawamba: English Rebel Songs 1381-1984 CD

English Rebel Songs 1381-1984 is Chumbawamba's homage to the men and women who never had obituaries in the broadsheets; those who never received titles or appeared in as entry in "Who's Who." This is an album that conjures up the tragedies and triumphs of the people who shaped England: its citizens. The songs were discovered in songbooks, in folk clubs and on cassette tapes, chopped and changed and bludgeoned into shape

with utmost respect for the original tunes. Originally released in 1988, this new CD version is fierce, sweet and powerful, and contains ballads not included on the original album. It's guaranteed to sway the listener, break hearts and encourage hope...just as those who inspired the songs by changing history. 13 tracks, \$14.95

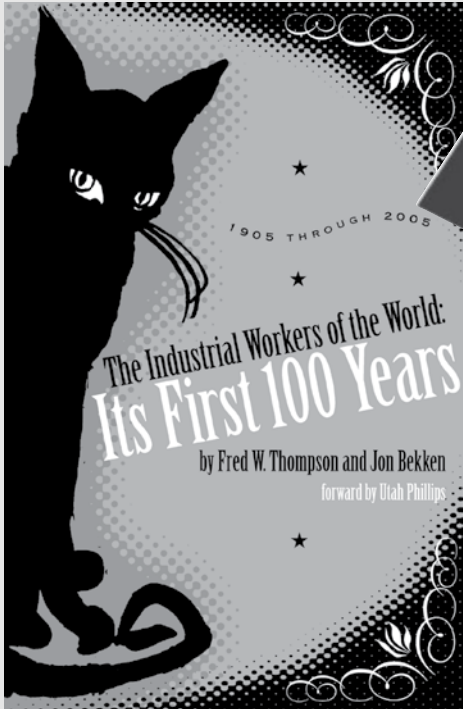


Images of American Radicalism

BY PAUL BUHLE AND EDMUND B. SULLIVAN  
Historians Buhle and Sullivan engagingly document here the history of American radicalism. The more than 1500 illustrations provided – 72 in color – are paintings, drawings, cartoons, photographs, lithographs, posters, and other graphics depicting religious visionaries, Shakers, abolitionists, suffragists, anarchists, socialists, Wobblies, feminists, Civil Rights workers, gay and lesbian activists, environmentalists, and others in their quest for a cooperative society overcoming a competitive capitalism. This handsome book is a superb visual approach to an important but little discussed aspect of American social, political, and cultural history. \$20 paperback, \$25 hardcover

A Century of Writing on the IWW 1905 - 2005: An Annotated Bibliography of Books on the Industrial Workers of the World Compiled by Steve Kellerman

This annotated bibliography published by the Boston IWW lists all known books on the IWW, organized by category in chronological order. Brief critical notes describe the books, quickly and helpfully identifying their strengths and weaknesses. Other categories are Biographical Works, Miscellaneous Works including substantial discussion of the IWW, Writings by Wobblies, and a listing of novels featuring the union. An excellent resource for anyone doing research on the IWW. 38 pages, \$5.00



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

The IWW: Its First 100 Years is the most comprehensive history of the union ever published. Written by two Wobblies who lived through many of the struggles they chronicle, it documents the famous struggles such as the Lawrence and Paterson strikes, the fight for decent conditions in the Pacific Northwest timber fields, the IWW's pioneering organizing among harvest hands in the 1910s and 1920s, and the war-time repression that sent thousands of IWW members to jail. But it is the only general history to give substantive attention to the IWW's successful organizing of African-American and immigrant dock workers on the Philadelphia waterfront, the international union of seamen the IWW built from 1913 through the 1930s, smaller job actions through which the IWW transformed working conditions, Wobbly successes organizing in manufacturing in the 1930s and 1940s, and the union's recent resurgence. Extensive source notes provide guidance to readers wishing to explore particular campaigns in more depth. There is no better history for the reader looking for an overview of the history of the IWW, and for an understanding of its ideas and tactics. 255 pages, \$19.95

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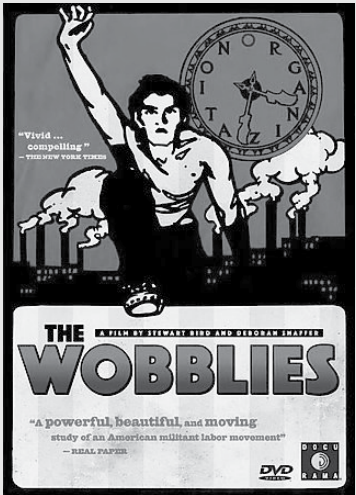


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# Opinion

## Nationalization controls Venezuelan workers

Venezuela’s President Hugo Chávez is accelerating his program of nationalizing companies to the applause of his supporters domestically and internationally.

His latest target is the Spanish-owned Bank of Venezuela. This year alone, he has announced the nationalization of steel (Argentina) and cement companies (Mexico, France, Switzerland). While some companies are agreeing to cede majority control to Chavez, others such as Mexico’s Cemex, are asking for more than Chávez is willing to pay and he has turned toward state seizure or expropriation. In 2007, he nationalized the country’s largest telephone and electricity companies as well as bought majority control over four large oil projects.

Concentrating the economic power of the country in the President’s hands echoes Chávez’s strategy to merge all friendly political parties into the United Socialist Party of Venezuela, also founded last year. Some are applauding this latest direction of Chávez’s Bolivarian Revolution, which they see as a bulwark against the imperialism of the United States. The rationale for concentrating so much power in the President’s hands is simple: Venezuela needs a strong leader to fight imperialism and resist domestic subversion. In turn, Chávez has said he is nationalizing these companies to put their production at the service of the Venezuelan people and to advance his social programs to build homes and provide cheap fuel and electricity for the poor. It is a program that is hard to argue against, since Venezuela’s poor need all the help they can get.

However, the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of the President is worrisome. Venezuelan working people should keep their eyes open and their hands ready for the struggle that awaits them. As with every takeover, the number one question is: what does the new boss plan to do? For the workers, having Venezuela’s president replace their CEO may be less than beneficial.

Chávez’s aspiration is plainly to succeed Fidel Castro as the revolutionary socialist leader of the Americas. His rhetoric and actions have polarized Venezuela into the unfortunately familiar ‘us and them’, ‘patriots and traitors’ model of social control. In such an environment, workers with legitimate complaints can be seen as the opposition and

those who strike as counter-revolutionary. Workers in the newly-nationalized companies must come to grips with the idea that they are now public servants. Public servants in countries across the world have always struggled for the right to strike and negotiate with the most powerful of bosses, governments. Governments have the power to re-write the rules of negotiation by changing the law, making certain workers exempt or making union membership illegal or subject to conditions—and backing it with the military. What this new status for long-time private employees may well mean in today’s polarized Venezuela is that their ability to exercise job control as well as their right to strike are limited, if not curtailed completely by presidential decree.

President Chávez did exactly that during the two-month 2002-2003 oil workers’ strike by deploying soldiers as strikebreakers and branding the strikers as traitors. One of the key complaints of these vital and powerful workers was the appointment of incompetent people to key positions in the state oil company by Chávez’s new pet president. This political interference into the running of a company vital to the national economy prompted the workers to join with the opposition demands for a recall referendum on Chávez as president. Appointing people who are loyal to the President but don’t understand the oil industry puts the whole enterprise at risk.

Chávez supporters labeled this strike a “bosses’ lock-out”, but there is little doubt a substantial number of workers did strike. Chávez, who had sacked the Venezuelan state oil company’s CEO in February 2002 to put it fully under his thumb, fired at least 12,000 oil workers out of a workforce of 40,000 during and after the strike. Trade union leader, Carlos Ortega, fled to Costa Rica. When he returned under an assumed identity in 2005, he was arrested, tried and convicted of citing civil unrest with a 15 year sentence. He has since escaped custody.

The crushing of this strike sent a message to the rest of the Venezuelan working class: be an ally of Chávez or face overwhelming repression. Striking can be punished politically.

The seizure of the arm’s-length state oil company was a critical battle for Chávez; its revenues have allowed him to engage in petro-dollar diplomacy throughout the region, promise cheap fuel to allies, and pour money into social

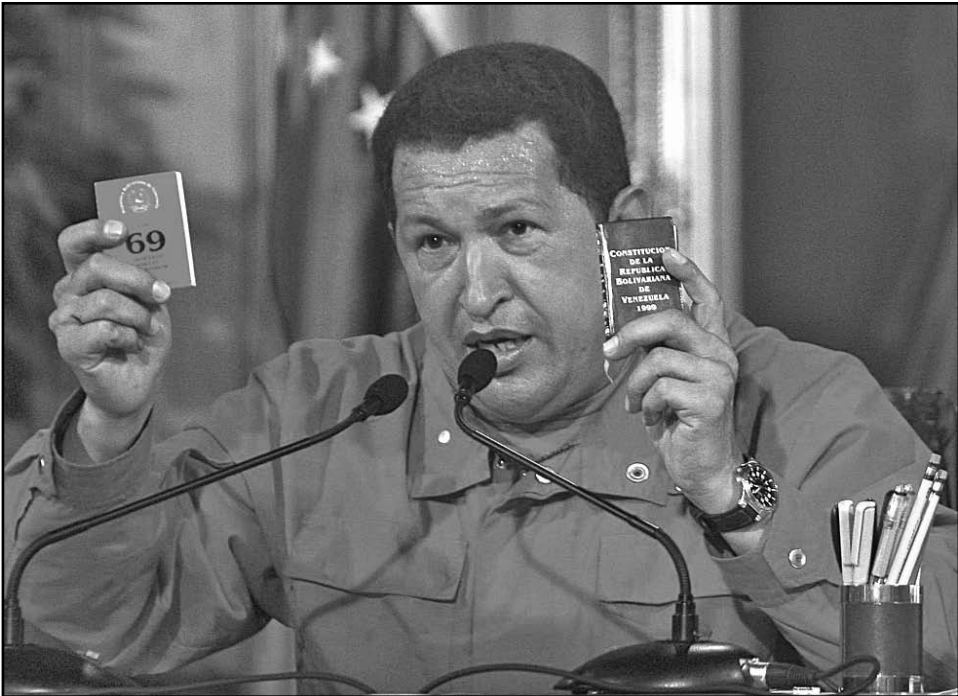


Photo: ¡quecomunismo!

**Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez is concentrating economic as well as political control through an ambitious nationalization program.**

programs and building housing projects to meet people’s desperate needs—and secure their loyalty and dependency. Alarmingly, Venezuela’s production in this sector has decreased since the strike, which puts into doubt Venezuela’s economic sustainability and further puts the poor that support Chávez at risk.

The idea that nationalization or national control of the economy is the panacea for workers is dangerous. If the Soviet Union taught workers one thing, it should have been that state-controlled economies can be tyrannical and dys-

functional. In such a situation, ideology trumps facts and loyalists attempt to bend the reality of a situation to the vision of the leader.

The risk of the Venezuelan nationalizations is that the workers become subjugated to the whims of the State and lose their independent voice and ability to exert control over their work through job actions and the right to strike. Workers’ rights are fundamental, universal rights and should not be subject to whether the worker is on the right or wrong side of a political ideology.

## Georgia

### No to a new Caucasian War!

*The Federation of Education, Science and Technical Workers affiliated to the Russian Confederation of Revolutionary Anarcho-Syndicalists (KRAS-IWA) released the following statement on the military situation in South Ossetia and Georgia.*

“The eruption of military actions between Georgia and South Ossetia threatens to develop into a large-scale war between Georgia supported by NATO on the one hand, and the Russian state on the other.

“Thousands of people are already killed and wounded, principally peaceful inhabitants; whole cities and settlements have been wiped out. Society has been flooded with nationalist and chauvinistic hysteria.

“As always and everywhere in conflicts between the states, there is not and cannot be a righteous cause in this new Caucasian war—there are only the guilty. The coals which have been fanned for years now have caused a military fire.

“The Saakashvili regime in Georgia keeps two-thirds of the population in poverty. The greater the internal discontent in the country, the more it desires to find a way out from the deadlock in the form of a ‘small victorious war’ in the hope that it can write everything off.

“The government of Russia is full of determination to maintain hegemony in the Caucasus. Today they pretend to be the defender of the weak, but their hypocrisy is abundantly clear. Saakashvili only repeated what the Putinist soldiery did in Chechnya nine years ago. Ruling circles of both Ossetias and Abkhazia aspire to strengthen their role as exclusive allies of Russia in the region, and at the same time to rally the impoverished population around the time-tested torch of the “national idea” to “rescue the people.” Leaders of the United States, the European states and NATO, on the contrary, wish to weaken the influence

of their Russian rival in the Caucasus as much as possible to provide themselves with control over fuel resources and their transport. Thus, we become witnesses and victims of the next coil of the struggle for power, oil and gas. This fight does not bring anything to working people—Georgians, Ossets, Abkhazians or Russians—except blood and tears, incalculable disasters and deprivation.

“We express our deep sympathy to the friends and relatives of the victims, to the people who have been left without a roof over their head and means of subsistence as a result of this war.

“We shouldn’t fall under the influence of nationalist demagoguery which demands unity with ‘our’ government, flying the flag of ‘protecting the homeland.’

“The main enemy of simple people is not the poor brothers and sisters on the other side of the border or of other nationality. Their enemies are the rulers and bosses of all kinds, presidents and ministers, businessmen and generals, those who generate wars for the sake of multiplying power and riches. We call on the working people in Russia, Ossetias, Abkhazia and Georgia to reject the bait of nationalism and patriotism and to turn the anger on rulers and the rich on both sides of the border.

“Russian, Georgian, Ossetian and Abkhazian soldiers! Do not obey the orders of your commanders! Turn your weapon against those who sent you to war! Do not shoot the soldiers of your “opponent”—fraternize with them: a bayonet in the ground! Working people in the rear! Sabotage military efforts, leave to go to meetings and demonstrations against the war, organize yourselves and strike against it!

“No to the war and to its organizers - rulers and richmen! Yes to solidarity of working people across borders and the front lines!”

## International Solidarity Commission

**Continued from 12**

gin addressing the needs of the people. One of the highlights of the delegation was the Hello Union gathering, which featured an international film festival focusing on temp workers/day labor. ISC delegate Diane Krauthamer screened her film about the IWW Starbucks Workers Union and talked about the Starbucks struggle, as well as the differences in labor laws between the United States and Japan. The delegates also had an opportunity to meet with union organizers from other countries, including a member of the CNT-France. All in all, the delegation was highly successful. Read the full story with photos and videos on [iwwinjanpan.blogspot.com](http://iwwinjanpan.blogspot.com)

### Condemning Police Raid on Railway Workers’ Union in Tokyo

The ISC published a statement condemning a July 4th raid on the Doro-Chiba Railway Workers Union by the Tokyo Metropolitan Police. About 100 metropolitan police raided the headquarters of the Doro-Chiba Railway Workers Union in Tokyo from approximately 3.5

hours on July 4. When a Doro-Chiba board member, Mr. Kawasaki, pointed out a critical error in the search warrant the police brutally grabbed him, tore his shirt, and put him in confinement in his underwear.

The ISC insisted that this raid and the inhumane treatment of Kawasaki is part of a concerted effort to suppress peaceful protest against the G-8 Summit (see July-August *Industrial Worker*). The ISC declared its solidarity with the Doro-Chiba Railway Workers and all like-minded organizations exercising their basic human right to free speech by protesting the G8 Summit and its anti-worker agenda.

The ISC demanded that the Tokyo Metropolitan Police and all government bodies in Japan immediately cease this campaign of repression and respect the right to peaceful protest. The ISC further called on the police department to issue a public apology and compensate the victims of this raid and other similar police actions that have taken place before and during the G8 Summit.



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

By Mike Pesa, Saku Pinta and Daniella Jofre

**Protesting Death Sentence for Iranian Teacher**

The ISC sent a letter to the President of Iran and several international human rights monitoring groups, strongly protesting the recent decision of Iran’s Supreme Court, which upholds the death sentence passed against Farzad Kamangar, a teacher, journalist and trade unionist in Kamyaran.

On February 25, Kamangar was arrested and charged with Moharebeh (“enmity against God”) and with membership in the Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK). In the letter, the ISC stated its belief that these charges do not deserve a death sentence. Furthermore, the ISC pointed out that the Revolutionary Court of Iran did not even present any solid evidence to prove that Kamangar was a member of the PKK, an affiliation he has vehemently denied. International observers have insisted that Mr. Kamangar did not receive a fair trial and that the actions of the court have not upheld even the most basic international standards of justice. The entire closed-door hearing lasted less than five minutes. The ISC stated its belief that Kamangar was convicted because of his Kurdish ethnicity and his legitimate involvement in the labor movement, grassroots activism, and investigative journalism.

The ISC also expressed outrage that Farzad Kamangar was severely tortured during his interrogation by Iranian authorities. The ISC demanded that all individuals involved in torturing Kamangar be held responsible for their actions and that the Iranian government compensate him for his suffering. The ISC insisted that Kamangar’s death sentence must be overturned, calling on the Government of Iran to immediately release him, clear him of all charges, and issue a full public apology.

**Solidarity with Jakub G. and ZSP**

The ISC continues to stand in solidarity with Jakub G. of the Union of Syndicalists of Poland (ZSP) and condemns the union-busting policies of the Lionbridge corporation.

Jakub, a union representative, was summarily dismissed on February 12, 2007 by his employer, Lionbridge Poland, shortly after the announcement that a union had been formed in the workplace. The official reason given for the dismissal by the company was that Jakub had “damaged the company’s image” by publishing an article on the internet. There is no evidence to support this allegation nor does it take into account that someone else wrote the article. Jakub is fighting for his reinstatement in the courts and is being supported by militant unionists around the world. A global week of solidarity actions took place in early July, with IWW branches in the UK participating. The Boston IWW is planning an action at Lionbridge’s international corporate headquarters in Waltham, Massachusetts before the next court date in mid-August.

**ISC Attends Euro-Mediterranean Counter-Summit**

Michael Ashbrook of the Luxemburg IWW represented the ISC at the recent Mediterranean Counter-Summit held in Paris on July 5-6; an event held in opposition to the proposed, neoliberal

Mediterranean Union. In a report to the ISC, Ashbrook noted both the festive atmosphere of the demonstrations and the many challenges associated with supporting union work in Africa. Ashbrook also reported on the work of the Spanish CGT amongst migrant workers: “the slump in the construction industry [is] hitting the migrant workers especially hard... under the ‘socialist’ government the period of notice to be given to a worker before s/he can be dismissed has been cut from 45 to 33 days, with a further cut to 12 proposed.”

**ISC Delegates Visit Mexico**

Following ISC delegate Paul Bocking’s successful trip to Mexico earlier this summer (see the July-August *Industrial Worker*), a follow-up delegation was launched in late July. Fellow Workers Janky Hellface and Oliver Lanti of the San Francisco Bay Area GMB spent two weeks in Mexico City and Oaxaca, meeting with many of the same contacts as well as some new ones. The ISC hopes to implement some of the exciting ideas and opportunities that have arisen from these meetings.

**Sweatfree Communities Conference and Rally**

ISC representative Mike Pesa attended the 2008 international conference of Sweatfree Communities in Philadelphia the weekend of July 12. The conference coincided with the National Association of Governor’s annual meeting and focused on pressuring state governments to implement effective anti-sweatshop policies and join the Sweatfree Consortium, which supports products made under fair labor conditions. Former factory workers from Bangladesh, Saipan, and Latin America testified about the horrific working conditions in the apparel export zones. Speakers also described their organizing efforts and the alternatives they are working for. Workshops and strategy sessions took place throughout the weekend. The high point of the conference was a rally for workers’ rights across the street from the Kimmel Center, where the governors were meeting. IWW members attending included Kenneth Miller of Pittsburgh, former ISC rep John Kalwaic of Philadelphia, Wes of southern Oregon, and David Temple and Benjamin Ferguson of New York City. To see photos and video from the conference and rally, visit [www.phillyimc.org](http://www.phillyimc.org) and [www.youtube.com/profile\\_videos?user=wolfman1027](http://www.youtube.com/profile_videos?user=wolfman1027).

**ISC Delegation Protests G-8, Meets with Unions in Japan**

The ISC sent a delegation of workers to Japan in late June and July at the invitation of the Tokyo-based All Freeter’s Union (see July-August *Industrial Worker*). In addition to meeting with the Freeters and other independent unions, the delegates also participated in the protests and conferences being organized against the G-8 international summit in Hokkaido. In spite of intense police repression, the demonstrations were large and festive, with strong participation from the labor movement. The message was clear: The G8 nations need to end their neoliberal economic policies and imperialistic war-mongering and be-

# Anti-mining union leader murdered in Guatemala

By [www.nisgua.org](http://www.nisgua.org)

The Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala reported that Antonio Morales, a former Municipal council member of Colotenango and a Maya Mam community leader in Huehuetenango in western Guatemala, was assassinated in the morning of August 7. He was shot four times in front of his house on the Inter-American highway, near the Chanjon bridge.

On June 23, the municipality of Colotenango had become one of 26 municipalities to reject mining on their territory through a community referendum. Morales had actively opposed mining by GoldCorp’s Montana in the area.

In previous days, Morales had told people of threats made against him by armed groups that operated in the region. Intimidation and constant threats against human rights activists for their human rights defense work is common in Guatemala.

The assassination occurred one day before the International Day of Indigenous Peoples, August 8. On this day rural communities and organizations

were planning mobilizations throughout the country, particularly in western Guatemala, to voice their resistance to mega-projects such as hard metal mining and hydroelectric dams, and defend their right to autonomy and self-determination.

“The imposition of transnational mega-projects—such as chemical open-pit or underground metal mining, hydroelectric dams, and the related problems of access to, use of and ownership of land—only brings us destruction, repression, and death. We see that ‘development’ policies only benefit shameless speculating businesspeople, who are not obliged to pay taxes proportional to the wealth they obtain from these projects or proportional to their foreign capital. This occurs with the approval of every government administration,” said the Peoples Council of San Marcos, a Guatemalan coalition.

The Center for Human Rights Legal Action called for an investigation and prosecution of the “material and intellectual authors” of Morales’ murder.

# Indian police deployed to seize land for export zone

By [Gurgaon Workers News](http://GurgaonWorkersNews)

In July, the state of Haryana, south of New Delhi, ordered 1,500 riot police to secure the construction area for a wall surrounding the free trade Special Economic Zone (SEZ). Local villagers, most of them landed peasants, are demanding higher compensation for their expropriated land.

A quarrel about a legal curb over how large a SEZ can be and the mounting real estate crisis had delayed the start of the construction work, but it seems set to start again. After months of silence, the move by Reliance Industries to start construction work for a boundary wall in and around Harsaru village in Gurgaon for India’s largest special economic zone (SEZ) once again resulted in tension in the locality. Over 1,500 policemen, along with two deputy commissioners of police and Sub-Divisional Magistrate JS Sanghwan were present during the deployment. Of the 1,700 acres in Garhi Hasru around 12 km from Gurgaon along the Pataudi road, the SEZ company Reliance Industries was able to gain control of 1,000 acres.

Haryana Kisan Majdoor Sangharsh Samiti (The Haryana Peasant and Workers Struggle Committee), the organisation opposing the state government move to hand over 1,395 acres of agricultural land to Reliance Industries for the joint-venture SEZ, said that people from different villages would turn out at Harsaru and oppose the move.

“We will not let them take possession of the land here until our concerns are addressed. Farmers have been feeling cheated by the government,” said the Samiti chief Mahavir Gulia to the Times of India.

Once more the new multi-lane National Highway 8, India’s most modern highway, has become a pivotal point of struggle. In Gurgaon, whenever there is a group in struggle—be it workers on strike or conservative caste-based communities—they tend to block the highway. Last summer, when there was a lack of drinking water mainly due to the deep wells of the industry, Gurgaon villagers blocked the highway—the symbol of India’s path towards an automobile industrial society, a polluting, resource-consuming society. As proletarians they have to take advantage of any means available in order to put pressure on

those in power, even be it by making use of the very same industrial structure which puts them into misery.

This time it was the attempt by the state to prevent the unruly road-blocks, which actually created the stand-still.

“It was mayhem on the Delhi-Gurgaon expressway. Traffic came to a standstill for at least three hours during the morning rush, and the tailback stretched from the 32-lane toll plaza to Mahipalpur. And it was all because the Gurgaon Police first put up barricades to stop Haryana Janhit Congress (HJC) supporters from entering Gurgaon and later blocked all the cash and tag lanes at the toll plaza. Earlier, HJC supporters and their leader Kuldeep Singh Bishnoi declared their intention to turn up at Gurgaon in full force to register their protest against the construction activities at what will be India’s largest SEZ. Expecting unrest, the Gurgaon Police moved a large contingent to the 32-lane toll plaza. Meanwhile, all those who took the expressway to work were delayed by up to three hours.

## Oz solidarity shutdown

More than 100 Union Solidarity community activists shut down the CSR construction site in Yarraville, Australia, on July 25 after learning the company had hired a work speed-up specialist, John Kint.

At his previous post, Kint had reportedly fired 150 workers and introduced a six day work week, backed by the threat of 10 firings per week, at a site in Port Campbell. CSR workers reported that Kint had warned them that he would dock them four hours pay for every time they talked to a union organizer.

“Union activities are not criminal as current industrial law paints them,” said a Union Solidarity statement, “but are simply designed to insure that workers have the same rights as employer organisations in the pursuit of their interests.”

Building workers have few rights under the Building Construction Industry Improvement Act, which has greatly weakened their ability to organize and advocate on the job without being victimized. Union Solidarity is an organization that trumps laws restricting union activity by mobilizing citizens.