The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions reports that 145 workers were killed around the world due to union activities in 2004, 16 more than in 2003. The report documents over 700 violent attacks and thousands of death threats. Unions continue to face imprisonment, dismissal and discrimination as legal obstacles to organizing deny millions of workers their rights.

In the Americas, Class Act continues its fierce repression of the ZCTU federation, and the president of the Progressive Teachers’ Union was the victim of an automobile bomb attack.

Three people were killed during police attacks on union demonstrations in Nigeria, and over a hundred arrested for their alleged role in union activities in the Nigerian Labour Congress, which the government is attempting to outlaw. Thousands of workers have been fired for union activity in Benin, Botswana, Kenya, and several other countries also faced anti-union repression. The government continues its fierce repression of the ZCTU federation, and the president of the Progressive Teachers’ Union was the victim of an automobile bomb attack.

More than 15,000 workers took to the streets of Victoria Oct. 17 to support 42,000 teachers who struck across the province in defiance of special anti-strike legislation. Protests are continuing on a daily basis across the province as we go to press.

The provincial government is refusing to negotiate so long as workers remain on what they claim is an illegal strike. The government refuses to discuss limits on class sizes or any wage issues for teachers.

But the teachers refuse to give in. On Oct. 11 B.C. Teachers Federation President Jinny Sims told thousands of striking teachers, “There is a big difference between breaking the law and having a law created to break them. We are not going to be broken!”

Teachers voted 88.4 percent in favor of a strike in September, in response the government introduced legislation to extend their contract until June 2006 just as the strike was beginning. B.C. teachers have been subjected to imposed contracts four times since 1993. The teachers’ Federation held meetings across the province to decide their next step. By the time the legislation passed Oct. 6, they had already taken another vote on whether to abide by the legislation. BCTF members voted 90.5 percent in favor of an illegal strike, showing that far from being broken by the anti-labor legislation, it had enraged them.

“Teachers know what the legislation means,” Sims said. “They’re saying that there are some laws that are so bad, so flawed you have to take a stand.”

While the provincial government court turned down a government request for massive fines against the teachers, apparently fearing this would spark a general strike, it did set the union’s assets Oct. 13, prohibiting the teachers from paying creditors from continuing strike pay or using its offices. A government monitor has been appointed to take charge of the union, and is being paid out of seized union funds.

Although the British Columbia Federation of Labour did everything in its power to discourage the strike, the court ruling threatened the very right of unions to exist. B.C. Fed president Jim Sinclair responded to growing rank-and-file calls for a general strike with the call for a mass rally at the provincial parliament buildings in Victoria, B.C. on Monday, Oct. 17.

Provincial authorities were clearly frightened by the prospect of a general provincial strike, deciding not to seek an injunction against the Oct. 17 citywide walkout despite desperate efforts by CBI to discourage the strike.

Thousands of unionized workers in Greater Victoria joined the strike, stopping city buses and closing most workplaces. Unions exempted hospitals and other essential services from the strike. The provincial Attorney General’s office has appointed a special prosecutor, and is threatening to pursue criminal contempt proceedings against union members.

Stop union scabbing! Northwest Air workers need our solidarity

In November We Remember, remembering those who died building our union

Stolen time on the killing floors

Tyson workers robbed of time spent donning protective gear

45 workers killed for union efforts

British Columbia unions defy no-strike order

November 2005 #1679 Vol. 102 No. 10 $1.00 / 75 p
New Mexico workers need general strike versus poverty

Recently a statewide labor leader described New Mexico should increase its state minimum wage to $7.15 an hour to help reduce poverty and benefit working families struggling in low-wage jobs. But while New Mexico’s mis-organized labor unions insult the working class with a fantasy campaign for a $2.00/hour increase to the minimum wage, real-life economics dictate that today’s minimum wage should be at least $7.15.

While the left in New Mexico whup another superficial political fix to the deep-seated socio-economic, cultural and racial issues of poverty there is little evidence that much will be done to address and overcome the structural reasons for New Mexico’s embarrassing poverty rate.

In a state and nation of great wealth, the existence of poverty is a crime against humanity. It reflects our material and moral priorities, not to mention the inability of our so-called “progressive” social institutions to wage a real “war on poverty.”

As long as capitalism and its supporting religions remain intact, poverty will never disappear but what we can expect from the neo-liberal, pro-corporate labor unions who would rather keep the labor peace and make common cause with the corporate class and politicians than defend workers from class exploitation? Labor would rather entertain their dis- paying members and political benefactors with fantasies of progressive change than do the hard work of educating and organ- izing all workers for a real working-class revolution. Why would anyone work to unionize the bosses to lead them anywhere but into the hands of the capitalist classes?

As a former organizer with AFW-NM, it is known that it was time to organize the rank and file union members and other workers to demand that their so-called progressive la-

bor unions forget the political groveling for minimum wages and start fighting the wealthy corporate bosses on the corporatized front for living wages.

Instead of wasting time on “lobby days” and petitions, New Mexico labor needs a general strike against poverty.

Kevin Farvaks, Pittsburgh Education Workers Organizing Committee, IW

Petler solidarity

Organizing for the 11th Annual Northwestern Regional Day of Solidarity with Leonard Petler in Tacoma F. has begun, and we need your support. The IWWP officially supports Leonard Petler by means of resolutions passed at IWWP General Assemblies, and many IWWP members have done a lot of support work for him over the years. The day will begin with a noon march from

Correction

Our article last month on the IWWP Radical Economics conference got the names of the performers who regaled the audience wrong. Attendees of a program of IWWP songs were wrong. They were Bob and Dana Sorokin. Sorry for the error.

Portland Ave. Park to the federal courthouse in Tacoma where there will be a rally with drummers, dancers and speakers including one of Leonard’s lawyers.

We need your help publicizing the event, sharing information on Petler’s case with coworkers and friends, organizing video showings and other events in your community (we can help with finding speakers and have a number of videos), etc.

This is an event of unity for supporters who want to let Petler know he carries his struggle alone, and it will continue for however long it takes to free Leonard.

The annual Day of Solidarity with Leonard Petler is more than just about Leonard Petler because Leonard Petler is more than just about his case. This struggle is a part of a long struggle for freedom, justice and the well-being of the people. And thus we organize this annual event not just for Leonard, but also as a part of a global movement to create a better world for all to live in.

In the Spirit of Unity and Solidarity

Steve Hay and Arthur J. Miller

Tacoma Leonard Petler Support Group PO Box 5464, Tacoma WA 98413-0464 TacomaLeonardPetlerasers@gmail.com or hayboby@blarg.net

Farewell, Fellow Worke

Sean Blackburn

Fellow Worker Sean Blackburn, a musi-
cian and artist who held membership in the IWW for over 30 years, died of a heart attack in late September. A tribute concert/get-together is being held Oct. 27 at 7 p.m. at the Cedar Cultural Center in Minneapolis.

Sid Brown

Musician and printer Sid Brown (best known for his work with The Spike Direc-
tors) joined the IWW membership in the 1960s, and remained a member for several years, rejoining in 2002. Sid lived in Vancouver, Washington, at age 62.

In an article about his decision to reign and continue to Wobble into his twilight years, Sid responded: “I retired after his death. FW Brown spoke of his commitment to “struggles against the writing of book, a collection of poems, and concomitant outreach into Leaders. When the workers of the world unite – and they will – it will be born not only for justice for all workers, but it will serve as an example to the profiteers, plunderers and politicians...”
Preamble to the IWW Constitution

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want, poverty and overwork, exist among millions of working people. Nor can they be separated by any barrier of摘自

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 themselves 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 represent 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 organizing a boycott 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.

Ballots for 2006 IWW officers have been mailed to all members recorded as being in good standing in the IWW constitution in November 23 in order to be counted. Members who have not received ballots by Nov. 1 should contact their branch or GHCQ in Philadelphia. Members in Australia and the British Isles receive ballots directly from their Regional Organising Committees.

The IWW is a union of working people and is composed of all workers in the industries or professions who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life

In order to ensure as smooth a transition as possible branch council representatives and delegates are urged to send November and December reports promptly so they are not caught up in the move. Members paying directly to headquarters may wish to pay their dues a bit ahead of schedule and delegates needing new supplies are advised to submit their requests as soon as possible. A proposal to keep the IWW Literature Department in Philadelphia after Jan. 1 is currently being reviewed by the General Executive Board. The Industrial Worker will be published from Philadelphia through 2006.

Florida State University

In Chicago, on July 20th, The Hyatt Cougar building and South Loop West hyatt court Damien Singleton from the building, for life, they said. At the messenger center, they had searched his bag, and found a smoking pipe which they said could not be brought into the building. He was subse-

mation of industries into fewer and fewer hands 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.

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Northwest strikers undercut by union scabbing

As Northwest Airlines seeks $1.5 billion in labor savings in its latest bankruptcy reorganization, reports indicate that management's plan to void its contracts with unionized workers and bring in strikebreakers has been met with resistance from Northwest workers. The company, which is still accessible at www.ericlee.me.uk, is still accessible at www.ericlee.me.uk.

According to reports, Northwest workers have organized to protect their jobs and Union representatives have been on the picket line as early as 4 a.m. Northwest management, on the other hand, has been none too forthcoming with details of its plans to bring in strikebreakers.

Some workers have responded by launching a website, www.nelt.net, intended to keep workers informed of the latest developments and to provide a forum for workers to share their experiences. The site has already become a source of information and support for workers across the country.

In a statement released by the site, a worker said:

"We are facing a difficult time in our history. Our company, the management, and the workers are all working together to find a solution. We are committed to preserving our jobs and maintaining our standard of living."

The website provides a platform for workers to share their stories and experiences, as well as a forum for workers to discuss their options and strategies. It also includes a calendar of upcoming events, including rallies, meetings, and other activities.

The site is run by workers, for workers, and is a testament to the power of solidarity in the face of corporate greed and the constant threat of union-busting.

Just the two of us

BY ERIE LEE

Last month, I attended the founding convention of the Workers and Mechanics Federation – the alliance of unions which have broken away from the AFL-CIO. I wrote at length about it last month in the Charter -- the official website of the Federation, at www.federation.org.

For the moment, it's just Jonathan and me. For the moment, it's just Jonathan and me.

...
by the Red Cross in Europe. Unions tried to create a new charity that would direct funds to attack and infection in Europe. Unions tried to continue to abuse the universal welfare. Unions tried to do more work than other unions. We are the coordinators who coor

The 1st of January Boot Factory A CASE STUDY IN COOPERATION

BY CHRIS ARSENAULT, HALLIFAX

It's been more than a month since the Zapatistas of Chiapas, Mexico said “hasta la batalla” enough to neo-liberalism and initiated a struggle for self-determination. Today, the Zapatistas are creating a variety of participatory economic institutions to meet their growing needs, including co-ops, communal corn farming organizations, fair-trade coffee cooperatives and a no-shoes-boot workshop.

On the 1st of January last year, myself and a delegation of foreign solidarity activists tramped the muddy hills around Oventic, Caracol, in the Chiapas region, to visit the 1st of January boot co-op. Rafael Hedez, a leading activist with the co-op, and several other compañeros welcomed us with Cokes and bottles of imported tough beef soup stowed on an open fire.

Inside the workshop, basically a barn with corrugated iron roof, one of the higher-end buildings in a region of thatched farm cottages, a dozen or so men busily cutting leaf, stick patterns and heat branding irons, large blue flames erupt as glue is melted to stick on the soles.

After showing us around, Hedez begins speaking proudly about ownership structure up to the trade. The independent workshop that trained Hedez and others has since shut down, due to a huge influx of low-cost footwear from China. It is at these times, when capitalism does not influence our solidarity, that I'm proud to be a worker – proud of my class.

For more information: www.stacmexico.org

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Are capitalists so blinded by greed that they don’t understand they will go down with us if we continue to abuse our environment for their profit?

With significant national and international interest in Zapatismo, the cooperative decided they could use sales to non-indig.

The differences between the priorities of the ruling class, government is obvious. How long, fellow workers?

The Zapatistas end up doing more work than other unions. We are the coordinators who coor

Are capitalists so blinded by greed that they don’t understand they will go down with us if we continue to abuse our environment for their profit?

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The IWW in the history books

by Jon Beeken & Keith King

Every year we offer an overview of new work on the history of the IWW. This year, the focus is on the Pacific Rim of the early twentieth century. Let’s begin with Finns. The IWW movement in the early 1910s brought Finns, who made up a significant part of the Pacific Rim population, into contact with the radical labor movement. Many Finns, who had been recruited by the IWW to work in the mines of Western Montana, played an active role in the IWW movement. The IWW also played a significant role in organizing Finns in Auckland and other parts of the Pacific Rim (primarily Australia, Canada and New Zealand) and were for a time IWW members. Hickey’s membership was brief; he was in the Western Federation of Miners (WFM) in 1906, pioneering the concept of “Americanism” which would later be used to organize the IWW in the Western United States. He later served as the WFM’s general agent in Canada and New Zealand and was later a leader of the IWW in the industrial factories of Victoria. When Hickey was in prison in 1920, the Australian IWW had been crushed. He remained a radical for the rest of his life, including an uneasy period with the Communist Party. Shor examines their journeys as examples of a “proletarian counter-public” that transcended political boundaries and had significant influence during the first three decades of the twentieth century.

The same issue includes Vertiy Burgmann’s “From Auckland to Seattle: Class and the Politics of Identity” (pp. 1-21), responses from the readers, and the book review of “The Hobo Anomalous: Class, Minorities and Political Invention” by Nicholas Thornburn, which explores the Hobo movement in Australia, the United States, and Canada. The Hobos were a group of people who roamed the country in the early 20th century, looking for work and adventure. They were often referred to as “hobos” or “ramblers,” a term used to describe people who were on the move, often living in trains and other forms of transportation. The Hobos were often associated with the IWW, as they shared many of the same ideals and beliefs, such as the desire for social change and the rejection of the capitalist system. The Hobos often worked in the factories and mines, and were involved in the IWW’s organizing efforts.

In Australia, the government is pressing employers to restrict union access to workplaces and to encourage individual, rather than collective, bargaining. Migrant workers have been threatened with deportation for joining unions, and workers are increasingly told they will be fired if they insist upon union conditions. Employers routinely engage union-busting firms to deter workers from voting for union representation, and use “captive consulting” to restrict industrial action in solidarity with other workplaces if workers join unions. Some governments were nonetheless criticized for proving less effective than ever in protecting the fundamental rights of collective bargaining, the ability to disrupt production at will, the right to strike, and the right to organize and bargain collectively.

The Case of the Paterson Pageant (“pp. 565-572), which proves that outsourcing is a surly substitute for in-house expertise – somehow, even though both authors know better, someone has changed the union they discuss to the International Workers of the World (IWW). Or perhaps they have discovered the book, The Fragile Bridge, celebrating the alliance between hoboes and labor radicals that most clearly manifested itself in the Pacific Northwest. Perhaps they have realized the role the immigrant silk workers were playing in creating the Pageant. Golin concludes that the Pageant “was a bridge between a hopeful and vital labor movement and a hopeful and vital bohemian movement. That bridge, that collaboration, are part of the legacy of the IWW, and we should remember it.”

Peter Rachleff’s “The Living Legacy of the IWW: Austin, Minnesota” (pp. 555-563) reprises the IWW’s role in organizing meat packers in Austin. The Pageant continued to resonate 50 years later during the historic P-9 strike.

Hannah Rogers notes that “Joe Hill Ain’t Never Died: The Legacy of the Hobos’ Practical Syndicalism” (pp. 545-554) asserts that today’s IWW is little more than a web site, but recognizes that the IWW was a “practical syndicalism” – built on mass mobilization, the ability to disrupt production at critical moments, and unrestricted direct action. In the words of the Hobos, the IWW “still available to those who hope.”

The IWW was one of the most important labor unions in the United States in the early 20th century, serving as a vital labor movement and a hopeful and vital bohemian movement. That bridge, that collaboration, are part of the legacy of the IWW, and we should remember it. The Hobos were a group of people who roamed the country in the early 20th century, looking for work and adventure. They were often referred to as “hobos” or “ramblers,” a term used to describe people who were on the move, often living in trains and other forms of transportation. The Hobos were often associated with the IWW, as they shared many of the same ideals and beliefs, such as the desire for social change and the rejection of the capitalist system. The Hobos often worked in the factories and mines, and were involved in the IWW’s organizing efforts.

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In November, We Remember

In November we remember the rebel workers murdered by the employing class: a long list which grows longer every year. Fred Thompson used to speak of an IWW soapbox whose rap went something like this: ‘Workers are being fired for joining the IWW. Workers are being killed…Join the IWW.’ It demonstrated. Fred used to say, a fine sense of solidarity but was not necessarily the best way to sign up new members.

The IWW has contributed more than its fair share to labor’s martyr, because we have always been in the forefront of the struggle for workers’ rights. By some accident of the calendar, many of our fellow workers have fallen in November, from the Haymarket Martyrs murdered Nov. 11, 1887, to the Nov. 4, 1936, death of FW Dalton Gentry, shot on an IWW picket line in Pierce, Idaho. Some, like Joe Hill (killed Nov. 19, 1915) are famous, others, like R.J. Horton, largely forgotten. Fellow Worker Horton was shot down by a ‘broadside’ cop Oct. 13, 1915, while giving a speech protesting the impending execution of Joe Hill.

Some died in prison, like Samuel Chin (July 4, 1913) in San Quentin, or Thomas Martinez (March 3, 1921) in Guadalajara, Mexico. Some were murdered by vigilantes, including Joe Marko (April 8, 1911) in the San Diego free speech fight and Wesley Everets (Nov. 11, 1919) in Centralia. Others were killed by police, such as Steve Holmavik (Aug. 2, 1908) in the McKeans Rocks strike or Matty Slaughter (Feb. 21, 1917) in Philadelphia.

It is a long list, even if too many are unknown, including the Stettin, Germany, dockworkers murdered by the Nazi regime, or the fellow workers who fell to military dictatorships in Chile, Argentina and Peru. A researcher is uncovering the names of Wobblies who died in Spain, fighting the fascists in the 1930s, but who will recover the names of the Wobblies murdered as they rode the rails, organizing the harvest stuffs.

In 1973, Frank Terrugi was killed by the Chilean junta; the next year the Philippines army killed FW Frank Gould. We can not forget those who while grievously injured were not killed, through no fault of the bosses, such as Judi Barl who survived a 1990 assassination attempt but the rest of her life in pain, or the 15 Tulsa oil workers who survived a lynching party Nov. 7, 1917.

The November 1996 Industrial Worker published a long list of IWWs killed on picket lines. The list includes Roger Martin, Decatur Hall, Ed Brown and J. Tooledy murdered by gun thugs in May 1912 in Grabow, Louisiana; and Anna LaPiazza and Joe Bailey killed by a mob Oct. 19, 1912, Felix Baran, Hugo Gerlot, Gus Johnson, John Looney and Abraham Rabinowitz killed Feb. 2, 1918 in the Bisbee Deportation, John Eastenes, Nick Stamudakis, Mike Videtich, J.R. Davies, E.R. Jacques and G. Kovic, all killed Nov. 21, 1927, in the Columbus Massacre. However long we make the list, it falls short by the thousands. But the victims we honor for asserting themselves are but a handful compared to the millions victimized by the meekness of the working class: miners killed in unsafe mines, seamen lost in ships they knew were overloaded, construction workers killed because safe practices cost too much, textile workers who succumbed to brown lung, the millions who have died in the bosses’ wars, and the millions more who have died of hunger in a world of potential abundance. Consider these numbers next time someone tells you it doesn’t pay to stick your neck out.

Every year we possess today we possess because our fellow workers fought and died for it. We owe it to them not simply to defend the rights and conditions they won, not just to preserve their memory, but to carry the struggle they began forward – to bring an end to this brutal system built on murder and exploitation.

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New labor coalition has lots of money, no plan

BY HARRY KELBER, LABORTALK

The Change to Win Coalition is prepared to spend hundreds of millions of dollars in major campaigns to "empower" the nation's working people and achieve the "American Dream," but it has given no indication of how it is going to do it.

Organizing many hundreds of thousands of workers employed by large corporations is a formidable undertaking that will require tremendous support from a vast majority of union members. Yet there is no indication that the Coalition is taking steps to involve members of its seven unions, much less other sections of the labor movement. And without the participation of battalions of union volunteers, no massive organizing campaign can succeed.

Let's remember that there are only seven unions in the Coalition. (Why couldn't it recruit more?) They represent hospital workers and janitors, teamsters, food and commercial workers, carpenters and laborers, apparel and hotel workers, and farm workers. Almost all of them are industries that pay low wages. Organizing these workers and improving their wages and working conditions is a praiseworthy, difficult task that the Coalition has pledged to undertake.

But they represent a small part of the national economy.

The Coalition has little influence and organizing prospects in manufacturing, education, financial services, real estate, communications, electronics and high-tech industries. For better or worse, these industries are in the jurisdiction of many of the AFL-CIO's 50 international union affiliates.

To be sure, the Coalition has three of its affiliates – Carpenters, Laborers and Teamsters – in the relatively high-wage construction industry, but the AFL-CIO contains a dozen craft unions, including Electricians, Pipefitters and Operating Engineers. Despite its grandiose rhetoric, the Coalition has inspired little enthusiasm, even from members of some of its own unions. It desperately needs a major organizing victory at a large, well-known corporation to build public confidence that the breakaway from the AFL-CIO was a necessary action.

Aside from the SEIU, the other six unions within the Coalition have a lackluster organizing record. The United Food and Commercial Workers could not organize a single Wal-Mart store after trying for years and spending millions. Now, it will head the Coalition's new Wal-Mart campaign. The Teamsters lost a three-year battle to organize the 13,000 employees of Overnite Transportation Co.

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Unite has spent more than two years trying to organize the 17,000 employees of Citas, the uniform rental company. Neither the Carpenters nor the Laborers has scored any remarkable gains. The Coalition will not count on the Farm Workers to advance much beyond their 16,000 members.

Coalition leaders have to come to grips with reality. Will their organizing efforts be restricted to a relatively few low-wage industries? Will that be enough (even if they are successful) to transform the labor movement into a powerful economic and political force?

The crucial test is: Will they be able to make enough progress toward their goals to prove that their breakaway from the AFL-CIO was justified? Time will tell.

AFL-CIO's new plan for industry-wide coordination

There is no reason for union members to cheer at the announcement by the new 46-member Executive Council that it has formed the first 10-union Industry Coordinating Committee covering the arts, entertainment, media and telecommunications industries. An accompanying press release proclaimed: "Top AFL-CIO Leaders Forge New Ground in Organizing and Fighting for Working Families' Top Priorities." It called the new initiative "one of the most sweeping reforms included in the AFL-CIO's Winning for Workers plan."

Is this the answer to labor's organizing problems? How will the ICC relieve the plight of America's working families? Despite its glowing advance billing, ICC has not yet been born. The Council statement says that "the creation of the new ICC is subject to the approval of the leadership groups of each of the ten individual unions. (The unions are: Teamsters, represent actors, musicians, television and radio staff, communication workers, theatrical and stage employees, electricians, broadcast employees, screen actors, newspaper workers and writers.)" It may take weeks, probably months before each of the ten unions discusses whether or not there are any advantages in joining the ten-union consortium if there is no consensus on how the new committee is to operate, it may be months, if not years, before it is taken off the shelf.

What a disappointment it would be to see the light of this new organizing committee (with each union having its own agenda and self-interest) establish a consensus on aspects of an organizing campaign. These unions have little more than tenuous connections with each other (examples: actors and electricians; musicians and newspaper staffs), and they will never make them all march to the same tune.

What the AFL-CIO Council has done is to create a bureaucratically hierarchical structure without solving the basic organizing problems. The ICC will spend valuable time at considerable expense, not in organizing, but attending to its internal needs. It will have to get agreement on a set of by-laws or some rules. It will have to select staff to run the committee. It will have to agonize over financial contributions from each of the ten unions and draw up a budget. It will have to assemble a mass of volunteer organizers from members of the ten unions who don't know each other. There will be countless meetings at which reports will have to be analyzed and new strategies formulated.

The ICC plays itself into a life of its own. And all of these activities can take a year or two – even before any worker is approached to join a union. In the meantime, workers keep on losing thousands of jobs through outsourcing, their health care costs are rising out of reach, their pensions are being slashed or eliminated and their working conditions are worsening.

Employers are aggressively demanding outrageous concessions. Delphi, the giant auto parts corporation, wants to cut the base wage of its 35,000 American workers from its current $26 an hour to $10 to $12 an hour. The ICC can't respond to the fierce assaults. Worker rights and living standards. Do President Sweeney and the Executive Council have any better ideas to fight back in behalf of unions and working families?

Kelber’s weekly “LaborTalk” and “Labor and the War” columns can be viewed at www.laboreducator.org

United Transport Union, Calif. Nurses to join AFL-CIO

The United Transportation Union has voted to leave the AFL-CIO. Four years after quitting the federation over jurisdictional disputes, the 60,000-member union is embroiled in a bitter fight with the Teamsters-affiliated Organization of Police Officers over representation rights for train crews. (The Teamsters are now part of the Change to Win coalition.) As railroads slash crews, both unions are being pressured to make additional and their working conditions are worsening.

The independent California Nurses Association have also decided to ask the AFL-CIO for membership. However, neither of the two unions would boost AFL membership to 34 unions and about 8.5 million members.

CBC ends 50-day lock-out

The public service Canadian Broadcasting Corp. has ended a 50-day lock-out of 2700 union workers that disrupted its national program service, agreeing to a 9.5 percent cap on the portion of its workforce that can be made up of temporary staff and independent contractors.

During the lock-out the CBC replaced its television newscasts with BBC programming, with its news runs filled much of the prime-time schedule. Managers and satellite feeds filled in for radio programming. Union members expressed the hope that CBC board members and managers chosen on the basis of political connections might be replaced with people with broadcasting experience.

Under the settlement, which models a four-year national program service, agreeing to a 9.5 percent cap on the portion of its workforce that can be made up of temporary staff and independent contractors. Managers and satellite feeds filled in for radio programming. Union members expressed the hope that CBC board members and managers chosen on the basis of political connections might be replaced with people with broadcasting experience.

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Donning and doffing to the chicken killing floor

BY MARK WOLFF

Coal miners faced with their under- ground workplace, surgical nurses washing up, airline attendants traveling to jet planes, and workers in factories each are spending their workday performing operations that are controlled, according to labor law, for the time spent putting on and removing, or donning and doffing, protective gear, and the waiting and walking associated with the time they needed to change clothes and wash after working with toxic chemicals, such as battery acid.

Workers at the Pasco, Washington, meat processing plant owned by the Tyson Foods Company were required to put on and take off protective gear – hardhats, hair nets, ear plugs, gloves, boots, and when using knives, metal aprons, leg guards, and plexiglass arm guards – in order to work in the meat packing and processing facility. Employees must don that equipment before entering the slaughterhouse floor, and remove that equipment, the clothing, including the knives, and store each type of gear in special areas located in the facility.

Donning the protective equipment is essential. Meat processing in the slaughterhouse is one of the most dangerous industries. And the Tyson Pasco facility holds a record for injuries two and one half times that of any other plant, according to OSHA. In 2003, for example, a worker lost his arm as a result of a mechanical injury between the meat processing plant’s two sets of sharp limits of animals. Workers must endure a work environment with loud noise, odors, blood and feces from recently killed animals underfoot, and lifts and cut with mechanized knives.

A recent report by Human Rights Watch lists Tyson Corporation's failure to respect rights of workers in violating immigrants' rights, shorting workers' compensation and union busting.

Over 1,500 Latino, Vietnamese and other immigrants from around the globe struggle to survive in the crowded working conditions that became increasingly dangerous when Tyson bought the plant from Iowa Beef Products, reduced the workforce, and sped up the production lines. After the buyout, Tyson went to a lot of trouble to interfere with union organizing and got charged with 22 violations of labor law by the NLRB.

Workers at the Pasco plant used Tyson in 1990 (JBF v. Alusare) for failure to compensate them for the waiting time necessary to begin putting on the equipment, the time spent donning and doffing the protective equipment, walking time to and from work and from work to work stations. Before the Ninth Circuit Court in Washington ruled in favor of the workers, finding that the donning and doffing time was a "non-unique," or "integral and indispensable" part of their principal activities, therefore compensable under the FLSA, and that the walking time was also compensable under the FLSA, the district court in Washington ruled in favor of the workers, finding that the donning and doffing time was a "non-unique," or "integral and indispensable" part of their principal activities, therefore compensable under the FLSA, and that the walking time was also compensable under the FLSA. The Ninth Circuit Court concluded that donning begins the work day and doffing ends it.

Employees at the Pasco meat packing plant were awarded damages of over $3 million for overtime and minimum wage by the district court. When Tyson challenged the award in the Ninth Appellate Court broadened the definition of compensable time to include “any activity occurring thereafter in the scope and course of employment” – walking time to and from locker rooms, even during breaks. Damages were recalculated to include meal breaks that workers truly claimed should be included in compensable time. In their decision, the justices concluded that the workplace could not possibly end at the lunchtime break, and then again start once the break ends.

In Jum v. Barber Foods in 2004, however, the First Circuit Court of Appeals held that the Portal Act excludes walking time associated with donning and doffing of safety equipment. Both the Ninth and First Circuit Court distinguished between “non-unique,” or portable, and “special,” or "integral and indispensable" activities "essential" to tasks for the employer. The jury concluded in Jum that the chicken meat processing workers’ waiting in line to don equipment and clothes and their walking to work stations was de minimis, that is, too minimal a amount of time to be worth compensation. The time was an issue of jurisdiction – state law that actually prosecute Tyson for not paying for walk time and doffing.

At the Portland, Maine, Barber Foods plant, workers take poultry that has already been processed at poultry slaughter houses, such as boned chicken breast in bulk, and make frozen TV dinners, chicken fingers, and nuggets. The plant has two shifts where workers rotate positions on six assembly and packing lines. All workers must be at the work stations when the shift begins, but are paid from the time they clock into the computerized system on the production floor. Waiting in line to put on protective gloves, face masks, hair nets and other throw away equipment is done on their own time that accumulates along with walking time to the floor. Leaving the shift, workers must walk to a special area and then wait in line in order to use the facilities. At Tyson, workers must walk to a special area and then wait in line to dispose of protective attire.

Whether the Secretary of Labor could actually prosecute Tyson for not paying for break time and other violations of FLSA is a matter of jurisdiction – state law that enforces compensation payment and federal regulations that must be interpreted through the Portal-to-Portal Act before they can be utilized by the courts to assess damages. The Dept. of Labor has asked the Supreme Court to review these cases to resolve the matters in conflict between determinations of the Ninth and First Circuit specifically over the walking and waiting time issue. The Supreme Court decision will affect the amount of damages low-wage workers can assess regarding findings of unpaid compensable time.

The Supreme Court’s decision would most likely affect those workers in the meat and chicken processing industries who have suffered some of the worst exploitation and abuse of any industry. Poultry companies such as Tyson and Poultry are notorious for cheating them out of wages and overtime.

African-Americans and Latinos comprise most of the poultry workers, half of whom are women. Less than a third are union members. The turnover rate is near 100 percent, according to the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

The temporary contingent immigrant workforce is hired by employment agencies for these jobs or work under contract at a very low wage, without benefits. When these temporary workers of workers willing to do the work, poultry companies such as Tyson will hire recruiters to entice migrant laborers across the country to complete transportation, then force them into crowded housing conditions and not compensate them properly. Temporarily part-time workers are often relegated to the most grueling high turnover jobs, and lack the same legal protections as full timers under the National Labor Relations Act and OSHA.

Migrant workers risk harassment and deportation from the INS.

The high turnover rate is indicative of the difficult workplace environment and the dangers. In the poultry slaughterhouses, where products are processed for use by Barber Foods, low-skilled workers either have the job of catching the chickens, or must hang them up, pull off the hair, and then get them and remove the bones. Working in darkened warehouses, workers must endure blood, feces and fat as they struggle to keep up with production pace. At the line, they must stand for hours. The plants, OSHA has cited Tyson facilities for lacking adequate toilet facilities, restricting their use of the restrooms, and for the high probability of injury and disease in the facilities. Indeed, workers have suffered back injuries, repetitive stress injuries, and even death from electrocution and toxic chemicals at these plants.
Unlike the best of the breed, however, he is not too good at explaining why. While he points out the apparent failure of Keynesian economics in the stagnation of the 70's, which brought a sharply rising unemployment and an unprecedented and stag
stant increase in corporate power, he offers no analysis of the reasons for this
debacle, which enabled neoliberals to move their doctrine from the fringe of economic
thought to the center of discourse. Also
carried is any real attention to the mea
s, if any, of the millions of dollars Neoliberals would have opposed him. For Harvey, the rise of
teleological is treated almost as though it were willed by God.

As the author correctly points out, the role of government in the economy changed radically, almost overnight by historical standards. While the mission of the govern
ment under Keynesian economics had been to ensure full employment, economic growth and the welfare of the citizenry, those goals became secondary to the goal of
creating a “favorable business climate” characterized by strong property rights, free markets and free trade. Accomplish these aims, Neoliberals insisted, and everyone
will win out. “Individual freedom.” “Free choice” and “personal liberty” in the economic sphere would lead to everlasting prosperity.

Of course, amidst all this prosperity, generally imposed by the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund, would be necessary, and of course, about this monument
world, those who might resist would need to be convinced, not by the, or union, as in England, then by ers and right, as in Chile. In the meantime, society was to be profoundly altered. In 1980, the

Though society seems not to have occurred to the supporters of this New Order, and “free year” started as a test project in some communities in 2002-2003 and now covers the whole country. It gives workers the possibility of taking a one-year “break” from work for a 5-month training period. In order to get your “free year”, however, you must have paid your tax or you will be sued for unpaid taxes. One of the beneficiaries has been a woman who has been unemployed for more than a year and who was able to get her dream job.

Sweden’s “free year” program under attack

The “free year” scheme in Sweden is something unusual – these days as a welfare reform. It was a result of negotiations between the Green Party, the Left (ex-communist) Party and the Social Democrats (the government from the Greens to support the Social Demo
cratic minority-government. The “free year” scheme started as a test project in some communities in 2002-2003 and now covers the whole country. It gives workers the possibility of taking a one-year “break” from work for a 5-month training period. In order to get your “free year”, however, you must have paid your tax or you will be sued for unpaid taxes. One of the beneficiaries has been a woman who has been unemployed for more than a year and who was able to get her dream job.

Switzerland: General Secretaries-Treasurer Alexis Huss is speak

In Europe, the employers are against the “free year” and will end the project if they win the elections next year. The “free year” has also been attacked by some Social Democrats and activists in their reformist trade union LO; a recent report published in the LO pa
per shows that 83 percent of LO members like the “free year” scheme but only 57 percent feel they can afford it because the amount you get in benefit is too low.

This November we remember
Our good friend and mentor
CARLOS CORTÉZ

His life was a gift to the workers of the world. Carlos came to Lafayette, Colorado in 1989 to spread a few of Joe Hill’s ashes on the graves of five Wobblies who were murdered by Colorado State Police during an IWW strike at the Columbine Mine on November 21, 1927.

Gary and Carol Cox
NLRB rules Indian casino workers can unionize

In a decision that will affect thousands of casino workers across the country, the National Labor Relations Board has ruled against Indian gaming organizations and corporations doing business on Indian lands.

The NLRB ruled that its rules cover workers employed on federally administered Indian reservations where casino employees work in a case against the San Manuel Bingo and Casino in Highland, Calif. The Board also ruled that the casino violated labor law in “rendering aid, assistance, and support” to the Communications Workers of America by permitting CWA to organize out of a trailer on casino property. CWA agents were permitted to talk to employees of the casino inside the facility during work and non-work time. Security guards restricted access by organizers from other unions.

The NLRB ruled that San Manuel Indian Bingo and Casino engaged in unfair labor practices and ordered it to desist from allowing CWA access without allowing the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees and other unions access to its property and employees on an equivalent basis, and to post a notice at the casino stating the rights of workers to organize stating guarantees of non-interference, and specifically, that HERE representatives will not be denied access.

This means that the NLRB has affirmed that federal labor laws apply to all employees at tribal casinos. Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, who filed a friend of the court brief in the case, noted the ruling means some 20,000 casino workers in Connecticut can now choose to join a union. The ruling ended over 30 years of legal precedent that restricted the NLRB’s jurisdiction.

Rat bosses win at NLRB

The Laborers’ Eastern Region Organizing Fund in New York is appealing a NLRB administrative judge’s ruling that its display of a giant inflatable rat outside nonunion construction sites amounts to unlawful picketing. The union says the rats are meant to educate the public, not to encourage job action.

An Ohio state judge had earlier ruled that the rat was protected free speech. Rats and other inflatable puppets are widely used by unions in the construction trades. “The court cases reflect that the rat has made its claw marks felt,” said University of California professor Harley Shaiken.

First Amendment experts agree that in any other context the rats would be protected as long as they didn’t create safety or traffic hazards. But management lawyers claim they are a signal, appealing to workers much like a picket sign. Were workers to refuse to deliver goods or to work alongside nonunion operators, that might violate U.S. anti-labor law.

Argentine workers take over and run bankrupt hotel

BY HARRY KIEBER

In 2001, the Hotel Bauer went bankrupt, firing all of its workers, many of whom remained without work for a full year. Today, the former lowest-ranking staff — maids, dishwashers and receptionists — run the enterprise democratically, without a management hierarchy and with a nearly flat wage scale.

The cooperative owners took a vacated hotel with no rooms ready for guests, and transformed it, investing over a quarter of a million pesos in new beds, televisions and a new restaurant. Today, the hotel employs 50 more people than when the workers opened it, and will need more workers as they finish renovating the remaining 20 percent of unopened rooms over the next three months.

Hotel Bauer is one of more than 170 enterprises, ranging from bakeries to auto parts factories, that were once abandoned and have now become thriving worker-run “recuperated companies.” In a nation where about 1 in 5 are out of work, and many remain frustrated and distrustful toward the government, this kind of do-it-yourself movement has gained considerable support.
Koreans picket Wal-Mart

Third of UK Labour Party

Two killed in police attack

General strike in Belgium

British Air strikers joined marchers in Paris so successful a demonstration that the UK government in September declared it would ban any strike other than a legal one in the company. The Wal-Mart case is one of the most high-profile cases in recent years.

Million strike, march in France

More than 1 million public and private sector workers took to the streets Oct. 4 in 150 protests against French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin’s decree making it easier for companies with fewer than 10 staff to fire workers in their first two years of employment, and to protest plans for priva-
tization of several public companies.

The one-day general strike, backed by eight union federations, brought public transport to a standstill and closed schools across France.

The Wal-Mart protest was one of the biggest in recent years. The population told pollsters they supported the strike.

Workers are particularly angry about plans by the company to fire workers in their first two years of employment, which for the first time will allow employers to sack employees within two years of their start dates for no particular reason. Workers are also angry about high unemployment and stagnant wages.

Similar protests forced the resignation of the Sri Lankan prime minister. The financial newspaper Les Echos said the prime minister faced a “Black Tuesday … a social baptism of fire.”

General strike in Belgium

An Oct. 6 general strike called by the socialist Freedom Union of Belgium was阻塞 all the main lines to the city by 10 a.m. at the start of the official strike. The trade unions also said that the government was blocking the strike. The strike was called to protest against government plans to privatize the electricity and gas industries.

A strike in the Netherlands led to the closure of an airport and a train station, bringing traffic to a standstill. The strike was called to protest against government plans to privatize the airport and train station.

Several workers were injured in the protests, including a worker who was hit by a police baton. The protests were peaceful, with no major incidents reported.

Strike at Australian Envelope over

Two killed in police attack

on Chinese steel workers

B Y C H I N A L A B O U R B U L L E T I N

Police attacked protesting workers from the steel company in southern China, injuring two women and killing 24. Three activists were the striking workers were not allowed to carry signs or banners, and were not allowed to march in the streets.

The protests began August 12 when more than 2,000 workers occupied a major road, paralyzing traffic in the city. Workers had planned to take their protest outside the Asia-Pacific Mayors’ Summit, held in Chongqing October 11-14, but the police crackdown was much more violent than expected.

The steel workers’ main demand was extremely modest: that the factory should pay them 2,000 Yuan each in severance.

Third of UK Labour Party
debates back solidarity ban

A motion to allow unions to take “indus-
trial action” in support of other workers was approved with 69 percent of the vote at the British Labour Party conference Sept. 27. Strikes in support of fellow workers have been illegal in Britain since 1980.

Koreans picket Wal-Mart

Hundreds of heavily armed public police troopers were deployed to block a Wal-Mart protest in Seoul, Korea, Oct. 12 against union demonstrators demanding that the retail giant respect workers’ rights to organize. Workers held a giant banner reading “Stop the Wal-Mart Taxi” and demanded that the company enter into discussions with unions around the world.

Wal-Mart established itself in Korea by taking over an existing retail chain and quickly crushed the union there.

Pakistanii workers defend union

Hundreds of supporters of the struggle for union rights at the Pearl Continental Karachi hotel to the streets Sept. 30, in the most visible union mobilization in Karachi in recent years. Threats and intimidation began in 2001 when the hotel fired 300 casual workers and replaced them with union members and fired them when they sought to negotiate. In 2002, managers arranged for union leaders to be falsely accused of crimes. Three union leaders spent months in prison, but were acquitted after a single piece of evidence being produced. In 2003 the United Nations’ International Labour Organization ruled these actions were clear breaches of international law and labour rights and called on the government of Paki-

strike collects 30 percent of the dues from Palesti-

tians working in Israel. The other half of the estimated $3.2 million a year goes to the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions, and Labor for Palestine delegations witnessed working condi-
tions, worker rights and organizing efforts in the West Bank and Jerusalem where they interviewed Palestinian workers and reported to delegates. Through the Palestinian General Confederation of Trade Unions, U.S. workers linked up with the organization’s dilemma of trying to develop Palestinian unions in occupied territories.

AFL-CIO affiliates, as well as others from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the International Confederation of Free Unionists (ICFU), have also supported the Palestinian workers. The ICFTU and the ICPU have both recently adopted resolutions in support of Palestinian workers.

Labor for Palestine meets with workers

BY M. WOLFF

Labor for Palestine had its first conven-

on Christian and Liberal unions in recent years.

T he International Confederation of Free Unions has decided to support the formation of a new coalition aimed to spread resistance and build solidarity with workers in the occupied territories.

This new coalition aims to spread resistance and build solidarity with workers in the occupied territories. It is not too late for workers to get involved and start building a movement of resistance.

UNI-SPAK, the U.S. union of Palestinian workers, has called for a general strike in the occupied territories.

Hundreds of Palestinian workers took to the streets Oct. 7 to protest against the closure of the Pearl Continental hotel, saying that it’s “just not cricket” to patronize institutions which violate workers’ rights.

Union leaders and activists have been targeted by the Israeli military, who have arrested and detained union leaders, and attempted to block union meetings.

Palme delegation witnessed working conditions

The Palme delegation witnessed working conditions in the Pearl Continental hotel, saying that it’s “just not cricket” to patronize institutions which violate workers’ rights.

Eight union federations, brought public

transport to a standstill and closed schools across the country in a protest against plans to slash social security and pension benefits. It was the third of a series of mass strikes that have hit the country in recent years.

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Unofficial strike closes

Stockholm subway

A strike in the capital city of Sweden led to the closure of the Stockholm subway for four hours on Oct. 6, in an unofficial strike by train drivers. The strike was called to protest against the closure of the Pearl Continental hotel, saying that it’s “just not cricket” to patronize institutions which violate workers’ rights.

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