

# INDUSTRIAL WORKER

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## Fast-Food Unionism: The Unionization Of McDonald's & The McDonaldization of Unions

By Erik Forman

Fast food is America. First striking root in the economic hothouse of the long post-World War II boom, the industry took its place alongside freeways, suburbs, single-family homes, shopping malls, cars, and television as a thriving organism in the ecosystem of American consumer culture. From the dawn of the Cold War era to the dusk of the Great Recession, fast food was shaped by and in turn came to shape the core values of the United States.

Our lust for efficient instant gratification was satisfied with minuteman-like service with a (forced) smile at the drive-thru. A never-ending carousel of TV-advertised new-and-improved sandwiches and soft drinks fed and fed upon the American addiction to the latest, greatest thing. Super-sized meals catered to our seemingly rational calculation that bigger is better. From Taylorized back-of-house operations to genetically-modified, pesticide-infused burgers and fries, corporate management

garnished its product with a veneer of science, titillating the American love affair with technologically-enabled predictability. Craving profits made possible by highly rationalized economies of scale, fast-food executives colonized the landscape of the United States with the glowing emblems of their corporate empires from sea to shining sea. Nourishing, and nourished by, a culture that prefers representation to reality, appearance before substance, and short-term profit over long-term planning, Americans fall easy prey to the siren call of glossy burger porn advertising. American consumers will fatten the bottom lines of fast-food corporations with a projected \$191 billion in 2013. As the U.S. fast-food industry grew, so grew the dominance of its values in American society. We are what we eat. America is fast food.

In 1993, sociologist George Ritzer gave name to this "McDonaldization of Society," noting that, "the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to domi-

nate more and more sectors of American society as well as of the rest of the world." Ritzer decried the *gleichschaltung* of an ever-widening swathe of institutions to four values foundational to fast food: the "efficient" speedup of human social activity, reduction of life to a "calculability" that conflates quality with quantity, the "predictability" of a standardized human experience, and a fixation on bureaucratic control through technology. Updating a diagnosis elaborated by Max Weber and the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School, Ritzer sums up the malaise at the heart of our McDonaldized society as the "irrationality of rationality"—the subordination of all other concerns to one overriding goal: corporate profit. Of course, McDonaldization could be Disneyfication, Walmartization, or Coca-colonization...the signifier is irrelevant, at work beneath any of these corporate logos is the unfolding of the logic of capitalism at a world scale.



Photo: Diane Krauthamer

Continued on 6 McDonald's protest in D.C., July 24, 2013.

## Wobblies Fight Neo-Nazis In North Dakota

By Brandon W.

On Sept. 22, members of the Red River General Membership Branch drove five hours from Fargo to Leith, N.D., to confront members of the National Socialist Movement (NSM, a white nationalist party) who are planning to take over the city's government to create a white-only town.



Wobblies demonstrate against neo-Nazis. Photo: FW Dana H.

Community activists from the Standing Rock Reservation in Bismarck, N.D., and residents of surrounding towns attended the protest, as well as members of the Last Real Indians, Anti-Racist Action, and UnityND. The rally drew about 300 people on the anti-fascist side, with the cowardly neo-Nazis only managing to summon about 15 people.

As we drove into town, we saw the police had closed off all but one road. Moving past the police roadblock, we began to see the swastika flag of the enemy flying on buildings and in the town's park. A member of the Standing Rock Reservation Lakota Tribe greeted us and introduced himself to each of us. We were glad to have

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## Starbucks Workers Union Strike In Chile



Starbucks workers strike in Santiago, Nov. 7, 2013. Photo: Starbucks Workers Union of Chile

### From Ideas & Action

In September of this year, U.S.-based members of the IWW were able to meet and connect with members of the Starbucks Workers Union in Chile. At the time this piece was written, they were waging a strike over the company's refusal to meet a single demand of the union and calling for support and solidarity actions.

Beginning in one store in 2009 after workers wrote to the Starbucks Human Resources department, raising objections to a series of company-wide layoffs only to be arbitrarily fired, the union spread nationally to half the employees across the company in Chile (see "The Story And Struggle Of Starbucks Workers In Chile" on pages 1 and 12 of the November 2013 *Industrial Worker* for a more detailed interview). The union remains self-organized, unaffiliated to any larger labor body and led by rank-and-file workers. Since waging a labor strike and then hunger strike, the union has forged ahead despite Starbucks' continued refusal to negotiate or concede demands to meet basic workplace standards (such as paid meals) and even after numerous fines for

violations of basic labor law.

This should all come as no surprise to U.S.-based workplace organizers and labor activists. For a number of years, Wobblies in the United States have waged an innovative campaign, beginning in New York City, to demand basic rights—only to be met with outright hostility. Organizing led by rank-and-file workers won many hard-fought improvements as well as an increase in starting wages for NYC stores and holiday pay for Martin Luther King Jr. Day. But after numerous firings and violations of labor rights, the campaign was able to prove a systematic effort by high-level company officials to undermine and violate workers' rights. So it should come as no surprise that Starbucks, which has been expanding to countries around the world, especially in developing countries, is also taking these same labor practices around the world. Thus, the Starbucks Workers Union in Chile is part of the global fight against multinational corporations and their exploitative practices worldwide. The following statements were written by the Starbucks Workers Union:

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## IWW Culture

## Valuable Lessons Learned From 1935 Play “Waiting For Lefty”

By Brandon Oliver

I was recently pleasantly surprised to see that the local community college in Minneapolis was putting on Clifford Odets' 1935 play, “Waiting for Lefty.” It turns out that it was also presented in London this year after a 30-year absence, so perhaps there is something in the play that speaks to the current moment. The Minneapolis production also took the admirable step of arranging contemporary union members or labor activists to speak after each performance. Normally, I don't think that cultural review is the biggest priority for the *Industrial Worker*, but seeing the play live did start me thinking about some things that I think are important for our organization.

First, I'll give a little background on “Waiting for Lefty.” It seems like it was a pretty famous play in its time (supposedly, the first performance sparked a riot in Manhattan), but it seems to have faded from public knowledge. I wouldn't have known anything about it before the performance, except that FW John O'Reilly recommended I read it last year. Odets sets the play up as a meeting of a taxi drivers' union in New York City, with only one item on the agenda: a strike. Although I thought some of the characters had the depth of sock puppets, Odets pulled off a stroke of technical-political genius by having the play occur within a union meeting. There is no fourth wall to break as some of the cast members sit within the audience and sing “Solidarity Forever,” shout disagreements with the union boss, or get roughed up by goons.

The plot is pretty simple. The union boss, Harry Fatt, addresses the talk of a strike and tries to reassure everyone that “now that we've got our boy in the White House, we can't go out.” Of course, he would have supported a strike under the previous administration, but since “Roosevelt has our back, it's our duty to have his.” With his armed goons behind him, he goes on to blast the “reds” in the union,

saying that he's coming for them.

Members start shouting out for Lefty, the head of the strike committee, but he's not there. The four other members come up to speak one by one, and each of them has a vignette explaining why they are in favor of striking now. Of the four, one is a doctor who was fired for being Jewish and another was a chemist who did not want to make poison gas. Although his attempt to tie in other parts of society might have made political sense in some ways, this effort detracts from the idea that this is a struggle being led by workers. It's unlikely that half of the taxi drivers were declassed intellectuals, so why write half of their leaders to be? However, Odets did say later that he'd “never been near a strike” and wanted to use the strike story to discuss many of the problems with capitalist society. After the flashbacks, a union member bursts in to announce that Lefty's been found—behind the dispatcher's office with a bullet in his head. The strike committee, with the unanimous support of everyone but Fatt, declares that the strike will begin. Odets uses Lefty's death to argue that we can't wait for militant and charismatic leaders to come save us; we have to run our struggles ourselves.

The play's presentation as an actual union meeting proves to be its most interesting quality. As critics at the time pointed out, part of what was so engaging about the play for so many spectators was that it mirrored their experiences so well—coming to the union in search of a way to stand up to the bosses, seeing confrontations between entrenched bureaucrats and militant workers, and ending dynamically in either repression or some kind of vic-



Graphic: tcdailyplanet.net

tory. How many union members today would recognize their experiences in this play? From my own experience in a business union, I would guess the percentage is probably close to zero. If anything, people who have never had any experience with unions would probably be more likely to recognize the scenes as similar to what unions look like in movies and on TV. This is an important change to be conscious of, because, although unions look the same externally, they have lost their meaning in the years between 1935 and 2013. At one moment, even the most problematic unions were a battleground between militant workers and “labor fakirs,” as bureaucrats used to be called. In 1935 maybe it was still possible to kick out all the bosses like Fatt, tell the president not to wait up for us, and turn the unions around. However, 70 years of government collaboration and workplace contractualism has made them such dusty upholders of the status quo that it would take a more creative mind than Odets' to imagine them leading or inspiring a new workers movement. A local officer of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) spoke after the show and hammered the above point about the play home. While I was impressed that the cast reached out to labor and union activists, it quickly became clear that this one, at least, had more in common with boss Fatt than with Lefty. The resemblance began with the exhortations that our only weapon for stopping the privatization of the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) was to “write our congressperson.” Some audience and cast members asked why APWU wasn't preparing for a strike and the speaker said that

“it's illegal.” The speaker then let slip that the USPS has casual employees and a two-tier system, and after another Wobbly (and dual carder) that I was with pushed on it she confirmed that their union contract made these concessions.

I've been an IWW for long enough that I thought I was pretty well inoculated against the business unions. However, hearing how anti-combative they are from their own representative is somehow much more powerful than hearing it from another Wobbly.

The business unions aren't just good unions gone bad; they are literally zombies—shells that appear to still be alive but with all of their internal dynamic and thought process gone, destroyed by repeated doses of the poison known as the National Labor Relations Act. Finally, they have become incapable of acting out of the bounds that their poisoners have set. We can't “recapture” or replace them (that is, not at administering the contract).

Our task has to be to show a different path, as a permanent fighting workers' organization. We should also be visibly putting out our revolutionary message at events like this. Don't get me wrong—between a branch that focuses on workplace organizing and one that focuses on outreach, I'll take the organizing branch every day. However, as FW MK explains dialectics, there's “what's going on,” “what's really going on,” and “what's really, really going on,” which brings back the moment of truth from “what's going on.” We can bring forward a powerful message as long as it's rooted in experience of work and organizing, rather than pure ideology. We should become more intentional about bringing this message forward because we can't become the organization we need to be if our only activity is organizing at our individual workplaces. The business unions don't have any plan or desire to change the status quo, let alone rupture it. If we regain the confidence that our fellow workers had in the 1930s to proclaim publicly and loudly what we're about and organize aggressively, then we can once again help to initiate a widespread fighting workers' movement that brings the bosses—whether in the unions, government, or workplaces—to their knees.

## IWW Constitution Preamble

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

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

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

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

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

## Join the IWW Today

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

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

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

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

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

**TO JOIN:** Mail this form with a check or money order for initiation and your first month's dues to: IWW, Post Office Box 180195, Chicago, IL 60618, USA.

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

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

I agree to abide by the IWW constitution.

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

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

City, State, Post Code, Country: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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# Strategy And Tactics

By Nick Driedger

## On Tactics

We need a good framework for judging the usefulness of tactics and more discussion about strategy. Discussions about strategy are probably some of the hardest to have. Strategy is difficult to teach. It is almost always abstract. Instead of involving fixed objects taking on particular actions, it involves trajectories, power imbalances and timing.

## Strategy

The German military theorist Carl von Clausewitz gives a good definition of strategy:

“The conduct of War is, therefore, the formation and conduct of the fighting. If this fighting was a single act, there would be no necessity for any further subdivision, but the fight is composed of a greater or less number of single acts, complete in themselves, which we call combats... From this arises the totality of different activities, that of the formation and conduct of these single combats in themselves, and the combination of them with one another, with a view to the ultimate object of the War. The first is called tactics, the other strategy.”

So tactics are static; strategy is dynamic. Some tactics fit well with a certain strategy. Some tactics do not fit well with a certain strategy. In the movie “Braveheart,” the English king orders his longbowmen to fire into a melee between English and Scottish infantry. At first his generals are disturbed by how bad of a move this is, until it becomes clear the tactic of sacrificing some lower-class infantry fit with his

strategic interests in decimating the Scottish infantry. This also generally fits with a theme in the movie of principles versus pragmatism and how those with principles are actually at a disadvantage in war.

A phrase that is used a lot in activist circles is a “diversity of tactics.” Any clear strategy is going to have a diversity of tactics. However it will also have to rule out some tactics as counterproductive. So we often see a debate about tactics reduced down to the usefulness of a particular tactic in a particular instance.

This debate leads to both sides confusing, to return to Clausewitz, a “single act” with the “combination of [many acts] with a view to the ultimate object of the war.”

It is not about the justifiability of the individual action. Rather, the question is, how does the action fit with a chain of actions and build towards a general plan?

## Politics by Other Means

Revolutionary industrial unionism was a strategy in 1905. For the sake of simplicity we’ll reduce this down to a monolithic idea of the IWW; this is bad history but a good thought experiment. Within the IWW there was a diversity of tactics within certain parameters: sabotage, the general strike, the sympathy strike, job conditioning, free speech fights, and revolutionary education and agitation.

There were also tactics that were ruled out: electoralism, contractualism and arbitration. A diversity of tactics did not mean “anything goes.” Tactics should be

examined based on their usefulness to the broader struggle.

One tactic may fit an overall strategy better than another one. In the old IWW you could see this clearly. Free speech fights, while bringing prestige and attention to the organization, also put a lot of good organizers in jail. It’s hard to orga-

nize the job from jail. Tactically, it may have made sense, and it was part of a bigger plan to create more public space for organizing, but it also meant other tactics suffered as a result. There are stories

of effective sabotage and stories where sabotage turned out to be a liability. Being in favor of a tactic in one context does not mean you have to be in favor of a tactic in another context. Why is this so? Because, as Clausewitz puts it, strategy is about advancing “with a view to the ultimate object of the War.”

This brings up a bigger question: what is the ultimate object of our war? No doubt as revolutionary unionists this means some kind of socialism. As folks who sit outside the traditional left this means a socialism that is based on free initiative and not state planning. As our struggles become more intense we will need more discussion on what this actually means.

## Winning the Wobbly Way

If we evaluate our tactics based on our strategy and our strategy is a reflection of our politics, every step of the struggle needs to be seen politically. Do these actions promote the politics we claim to hold

based on our views? I don’t think this is an absolute value. Some tactics may contradict some of our values but reinforce others—this may make them useful as secondary tactics. A good example is the phone zap: it is participatory but mostly by people outside the struggle on the job. It isn’t based on an appeal to the good nature of authority so it empowers those involved.

Here’s criteria for a good tactic that fits with our political vision:

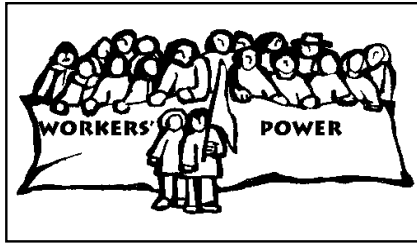
1) **The action is participatory.** The action needs to have group participation and a division of roles that allows for a broad degree of genuine participation.

2) **The action is autonomous.** It does not appeal to the better nature of those who typically hold power but rather holds the threat of further disruption.

3) **The action builds the confidence of those involved.** When done right, even if you don’t get what you want, you should walk away feeling stronger. We want to avoid substitutionism, in which we substitute the power of an activist subculture in the community for the power of the direct participation of those affected.

The question is not whether we are in favor of a diversity of tactics. No doubt any clear strategy will have a diversity of tactics within it. The question is: what is our strategy and do these tactics fit with our aims?

**Editor’s Note:** Due to space limitations, Mike Konopacki’s monthly comic “Women Workers’ History” will not be appearing in this issue. Stay tuned for Chapter 69 on page 4 of the January/February 2014 issue of the Industrial Worker.



# The Contract As A Tactic

By Matt Muchowski

The legacy of the IWW is one without labor contracts. In the era before there was a legal structure for unions to win legal recognition against the employers’ wishes, unions either made sweetheart deals with the boss or maintained standards through their own organizational strength. The IWW chose to eschew collaboration with the boss and focus on organizing workers. It was a strategy that worked in some cases, allowing us to improve standards in mining and logging towns, but it also cost us in places like Lawrence, Mass., where, despite a large and militant strike, without a contract the work remained one of low wages and sweatshop conditions.

Many people believe that the IWW is ideologically opposed to contracts or does not have any. Actually, today the union has several contracts that cover workers at domestic violence call centers, a recycling plant, the staff at a United Auto Workers local, and retail locations.

I would like to argue that contracts, like other tactics such as strikes, pickets, boycotts, slow-downs, press conferences, teach-ins, etc., can be used as part of long-term campaigns to raise the standards of living for workers, raise the ability of workers to have a say and control in their workplace, and act as a publicity piece to promote the IWW’s brand of direct and democratic unionism. Contracts can be especially useful in high-turnover industries, where they can lock in basic pro-worker conditions regardless of turnover and make it easier for the union to talk to new workers and raise their class consciousness.

Many other unions treat contracts as an end. Their primary goal is to achieve a contract with a company where there was none before. This can lead them to agree to sweetheart deals with the company without engaging workers, or to organize workers with a limited and narrow goal of what they can achieve.

One of the IWW’s goals is worker control of the economy. When we get there, we won’t need business owners

with whom to have contracts. However, we don’t have the strength or organizational capacity to completely do away with the capitalist class today. We have to wage battles that grow the working class’ understanding and acceptance of our ability to do more than just be cogs in someone else’s machine.

While other unions see the signing of a contract as something that guarantees labor peace for the employer, we must see the signing of a contract not as an end to struggle, but a beginning. We will still have to struggle to enforce the pro-worker provisions of the contract, we will have to work to undermine any provisions of the contract that give the boss power, and we will have to work to organize workers in the shop covered by the contract to continue to fight for better conditions and more worker control. We will also have to spread propaganda among workers in other shops to encourage them to organize for their own improvements in conditions and achieve worker control.

A contract fight can be a framework for discussing what workers want their jobs and workplace to be, starting with surveying workers and discussing what they do and do not like about their work conditions, and then bringing those demands to bargaining while mobilizing and flexing the workers’ strength until a contract is won. We can repeat the process, continuing to discuss what was achieved and codified in a contract and what needs to still be done.

Workers must own the contract campaign process: they must elect their bargaining representatives, receive and be engaged with negotiation updates, take action to pressure the boss on specific demands, and have the final vote on whether to accept the contract and for how long.

There may be some back and forth. The union can rank its issues for negotiating what is required to even consider the contract and what is completely unacceptable, but the union can also rank some of the less black-and-white issues to know better what can be negotiated and on what they need to stand firm. The

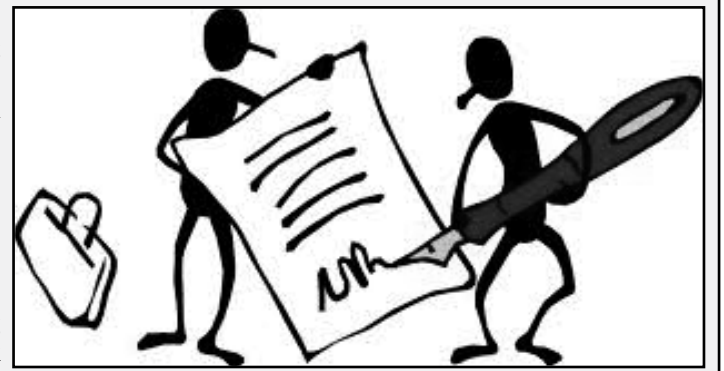
union can break its issues into different categories to consider as well: wages, work conditions, training, benefits, grievance procedures, and organizing and mobilizing tactics.

While some have an all-or-nothing mentality, I think that it makes more sense for workers to take what they can get now and use those expanded resources to fight for even more.

A contract will not likely codify our absolute victory over the capitalist class, and at times it could be a distraction, but so can many other tactics when they are elevated to the level of strategy. Striking for the sake of going on strike won’t help us achieve our goals any more than will bargaining for the sake of a contract. The product of contract negotiations will essentially specify the current balance of forces between the boss and the union.

Some may say that by agreeing to a labor contract with an employer the union is collaborating with the boss, conceding defeat in the class struggle, or agreeing to a ceasefire between workers and the boss. I don’t think so, at least not any more so than is going on strike for a specific demand such as a pay raise or to pressure the boss to rehire illegally fired workers. Further, most union contracts have a variety of rules, such as grievance procedures, that boost workers’ ability to challenge the boss’s authority. Enforcement of these provisions is often an important way for unions to engage workers, keep them organizing, and to highlight the ways in which the boss is trying to rob workers of their rights and dignity.

Other opponents of labor contracts argue that a contract limits the union and the specific tactics it is allowed to use. Many unions, for example, agree to no-strike clauses in contracts for the duration of the contract. I don’t think that a contract necessarily has to give up any tactics that



Graphic: granby.k12.ct.us

the union wants to hold on to. A contract will only limit the union to the extent that we allow it to or allow the boss to limit us. At the end of the day, we don’t have to agree to anything that we don’t want to.

If the employer violates a part of the agreement, we won’t necessarily be expected to not respond in kind. Further, contracts expire. A two- or three-year-long contract can give us the opportunity to regroup our strength, gather our forces, outline a new battle strategy, organize around it, and prepare for a new contract fight with the intentions of expanding workers’ power. Also, it takes time to organize around issues and convince all the workers at a shop to take a particular action on a particular point. Sometimes it might make sense for the union, understanding that it may not be able to organize workers, to commit to “X,” “Y” or “Z” tactic within a certain period of time, and to agree to give up such a tactic in a contract, until such a time that the union is capable of deploying it.

Workers may not be able to win everything they want with the first contract, but they can use what they do get to provide some sense of stability. In many ways, if workplace conditions are a building, organizing is the scaffolding for that building and a labor contract is the blueprint. Once the building is up, we can always remodel it, and when the time comes, we can tear it down and build a new structure. But when we do, we’ll have had the experience of building before to learn from and go off of.

## Wobbly &amp; North American News

## Boston Wobblies &amp; Allies Protest Brutality

From the Boston IWW

On the weekend of Nov. 16-17, the Boston IWW held two separate actions in Harvard Square to protest the Cambridge Police's attack on our legal picket at Insomnia Cookies, where the union is conducting an organizing drive. Cambridge cops swarmed our picket, assaulted and then arrested a Wobbly, supposedly for assaulting them. Our fellow worker was punched, thrown on a car trunk and then the ground and pinned partially under a car before being dragged away.



Wobblies &amp; allies protest police brutality.

Photo: iwwboston.org

This was a totally unprovoked attack on a legal picket on a public sidewalk. IWW members and allies protested in Harvard Square on Friday, Nov. 15, and returned on Saturday, Nov. 16, making the streets

of Cambridge ring with our chants ("Cambridge PD / Stop the brutality!"), and letting community members know what local cops have been doing to suppress labor rights, civil liberties and free speech.

## Faith Petric Bids Us Adieu At 98

By Harry Siitonen, Bay Area GMB

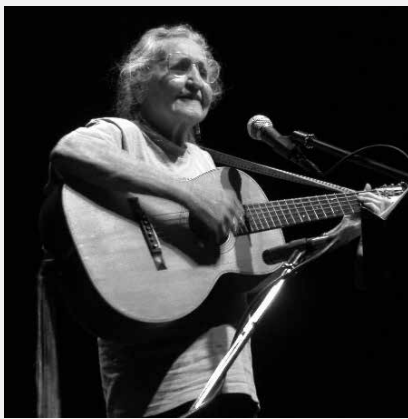
One of the IWW's most celebrated and beloved performance artists of many years, folk singer Faith Petric, passed away at age 98 in an assisted living/hospice facility in San Francisco at midnight on Oct. 24. Faith was the oldest member of our San Francisco Bay Area General Membership Branch and perhaps the eldest Wobbly in our whole union.

She was born in Idaho and learned to sing church songs with her Methodist preacher father who played the pipe organ in their log cabin home. When her parents divorced, she attended boarding school and eventually graduated from Whitman College in Walla Walla, Wash.

Faith worked many jobs, including a stint as a shipyard welder in New York during World War II. She later assisted farm workers for a number of years as she worked at the Farm Security Administration (FSA) in California's San Joaquin Valley. As a divorced mother, Faith put her daughter through college and then quit the FSA at age 55 to take on the life of a troubadour, travelling the world.

She discovered country and cowboy music during the 1920s and during the Spanish Civil War her vast repertoire was broadened to include protest, political and labor songs. Woody Guthrie used to say his guitar "killed fascists" and I'm sure the songs that accompanied Faith's strings didn't make the boss class very happy. Always the activist, Faith could be seen fighting for civil rights in Selma, Ala.

Settling in the Bay Area, Faith took over the San Francisco Folk Club, which jammed on Friday nights at her spacious



Petric performs in Santa Cruz, 2004.

Photo: indybay.org

home on Clayton Street above the Haight-Ashbury, starting in 1962 and continuing through the decades. That's where I first met Faith, as I attended one of her Friday night jamborees with a date. Singers and instrumentalists from all over the world would come to join in the warm hospitality of song and music. I believe I was in the IWW by then, but don't know when Faith joined. FW Petric was called the "Fort Knox of Folk Music" as she could sing thousands of lyrics from memory.

One of my most splendid moments in the IWW came during the 1991 General Convention in San Francisco when performers like Faith, Utah Phillips, Judi Bari, Darryl Cherney and then-IWW General Secretary-Treasurer Jess Grant raised the roof of a Noe Valley church before a full house and blew us all away in the greatest explosion of Wobbly music I've ever heard.

The whole Bay Area folkie scene converged on the Freight and Salvage Coffee House in Berkeley on Sept. 11, 2010 to celebrate Faith's 95th birthday in festive concert. It was a glorious evening! Shortly after that I went to hear her and a few other old-timers perform at the Berkeley Unitarian Fellowship. I had a chance to chat with her after the show and Faith said: "Isn't it ridiculous to still be here at my age and entertaining?" She was in good form that night. It was also the last time I ever saw her.

So our spirit and love go with Faith Petric as she "catches the Westbound" for another stage. We need many more young Wobbly talents, women and men, on the scene to fill the giant shoes left by Faith Petric, Utah Phillips and Judi Bari.

## School Bus Driver Wildcat Strike In Boston

By John Kalwaic

Around 600 to 700 Boston public school bus drivers went on strike on Oct. 8 against the private school bus company Veolia Transportation Inc. The workers who led the strike stated that Veolia was not honoring the terms of



Boston school bus drivers on strike.

Photo: libcom.org

its contract and had also installed a GPS system with the pretext that parents could track their children, but it is actually used by the company to bully and micromanage the drivers. Both Veolia and the school district administration acknowledged there were difficulties with the system. The workers are represented by United Steelworkers (USW) Local 8751, but the leadership of the USW did not support the strike and instructed them to go back

to work. The school bus drivers were going up against their union leadership as well as their employers.

The strike stranded more than 33,000 students; it got the attention of the mayor and city officials who condemned it. Boston Mayor Thomas Menino called the strike illegal. Some scabs tried to cross the picket line and city officials provided a police escort to the scabs. The strike only lasted a few days. However, both city officials and employers continued to harass the organizers. At press time, the drivers were still holding rallies for workers who were fired during the strike.

With files from Boston Magazine, The Guardian, and Libcom.org.

## D.C. IWW To General Motors: "Workers Are Not Disposable!"

By Jake D.

D.C. Wobblies organized an informational picket at a car dealership that sells General Motors (GM) vehicles as part of a national day of action in solidarity with the Association of Injured Workers and Ex-Workers of General Motors Colombia (ASOTRECOL) on Saturday, Nov. 2. If hostility from management is any measure of success, we did our job! Armed with a banner, leaflets and signs, we brought the issue to the public's attention during the dealership's busiest hours. Our action was one of a half dozen at GM dealerships across the country, organized by labor activists, including United Auto Worker (UAW) rank and filers in Michigan.

The members of ASOTRECOL were injured on the job at a GM plant in Bogotá, Colombia, illegally fired for their injuries, and have been battling GM ever since. They are demanding a settlement that respects what they and their families have sacrificed for GM. The group's members suffer from injuries to their spines, backs or arms that they will endure for the rest of their lives. Beginning in 2011, ASOTRECOL's struggle has included



D.C. Wobs demand justice for ASOTRECOL.

Photo: dciiww.org

occupying a space in front of the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá for the last two years, and multiple hunger strikes in which members of the group sewed their lips shut in protest. In that time, they have won important changes in the factory, including changing the working conditions that led to these injuries in the first place. However, GM's offer to the workers last year was not even enough to cover their continued medical expenses. ASOTRECOL and their allies will continue to raise the pressure on GM until their demand is met. For more information or to get involved, visit <http://www.asotrecol.com>.

## The Struggle To Save Worker Education At Brooklyn College

By Andy Piascik

As has happened at so many colleges and universities around the country, administrators at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York (CUNY) are moving to eviscerate a program that for years has provided invaluable educational opportunities for working-class students. The college's plan to dramatically scale back the Graduate Center for Worker Education is one of the latest efforts to curtail examination of working-class issues done in a way designed to provide students with activist skills.

This development will no doubt be familiar to anyone involved in or aware of similar programs around the country that have recently been killed or are struggling mightily to survive. Among the principles behind the trend to eliminate such programs, two stand out: first that college and graduate school should be the exclusive province of the well-to-do; and second, that education should serve the interests of the business class. Rarely do proponents openly enunciate those principles, however, and such is the case at Brooklyn College.

So, for example, managerial advocates of the suggested changes justify the proposed move of the Graduate Center from Manhattan to Brooklyn in the name of consolidation, glossing over the fact that there are far more union halls and working-class jobs in Manhattan. In addition, administrative criticisms that the program does not meet the standards of a labor studies program conveniently ignore the fact that the program is not, never was, and does not aspire to be a labor studies program. As for the rationale for cutting evening classes to a grand total of one, and that scheduled for 6 p.m. in a program long geared toward students who traditionally have things to do during the day like, say, work—well, apparently no one was able to come up with a good cover for that one.

Many of the program's students belong to unions, and some of them have gone on to leadership positions in their locals. Some are rank-and-file union members, while others are employed by workers' centers and similar organizations. Others who may not fall into any of those categories are nonetheless activists and writers who advocate for working-class concerns via articles, in-depth studies and research papers, while also participating in organizations and coalitions that resist

austerity. The need for the program's continuation in its present form—or, better still, its expansion—is obvious, as the devastating impact of the radical upward redistribution of wealth of recent decades is especially pronounced in New York City. Institutions with rich working-class traditions such as CUNY and Brooklyn College should be in the forefront in the fight against such trends, not in the business of accommodating corporate elites.

The Graduate Center also offers its students and residents of the city as a whole an ongoing series of events that deepen their understanding of crucial issues. Earlier this year, for example, it hosted the annual conference of the Labor and Working Class History Association (LAWCHA), which was the largest conference in LAWCHA's history. The center also hosts a regular schedule of forums featuring accomplished scholars, writers, and activists who, from this author's experiences, are always well-attended and lively. Of particular note is the regular inclusion of guest speakers who are rarely invited to mainstream venues, including union halls.

As adjunct teachers in the Graduate Center have been fired, the performance of the faculty union, the Professional Staff Congress (PSC), has been seriously lacking. Some in the program have described it as collusive, despite the PSC's progressive reputation. Rather than taking up teacher firings as a collective issue that is part of a concerted campaign, PSC staffers have instead approached cases on a one-by-one basis, with predictably poor results. With a few exceptions, the union's staff has also looked askance at the growing resistance to management's plan to eviscerate the program.

The Committee of Concerned Students, Alumni, Faculty and Staff has spearheaded this resistance. Formed earlier this year, the committee has reached out to academics, union members, and students throughout the CUNY system and other New Yorkers with a petition that has garnered nearly 2,000 signatures. It has also held several public actions; the most recent was a spirited rally at the main Brooklyn College campus on Oct. 3.

You can view the committee's petition at <http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/save-brooklyn-college> and reach the group at [committeeofconcerned@gmail.com](mailto:committeeofconcerned@gmail.com). Go to <http://www.workerdefense.org> for updates and other information.

## Special Fast-Food Unionism: The Unionization Of McDonald's & The McDonaldization of Unions

Continued from 1

Saturating the U.S. market by the 1970s, the U.S. fast-food industry turned profit-hungry eyes to foreign shores, soon seeking to turn all 6 billion human gastrointestinal tracts on planet earth into engines of profit. The Golden Arches became the battle flags of the vanguard of corporate globalization. By the 1990s, a liberal sprinkling of McDonaldses, KFCs, and Starbucks had washed up across the globe, capturing the zeitgeist of the triumph of free market capitalism as the happy ending of history. By 1997, McDonald's drew more revenue from overseas operations than those in the United States. Neoliberal *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman heralded the arrival of this "McWorld" as the dawn of a new world order with liberty and justice for all, claiming that no two countries with McDonald's would go to war with each other (he was wrong). But what symbolized freedom for the apologists of global capitalism had always meant a hidden slavery for a burgeoning service class of workers.

The world of exploitation behind every hamburger and fries is hidden no longer. Over the past year, a wave of telegenic one-day fast-food "strikes" has exposed an ugly reality. It's a reality I know personally. From 2006-2012, I was active in two union campaigns with the Industrial Workers of the World as a fast-food worker at Starbucks and Jimmy John's. I saw first-hand that the industry's enormous profits are premised on the original sins of U.S. society—racism, sexism and worker exploitation. The fast-food industry employs a disproportionate number of women and people of color in dead-end jobs with wages hovering around minimum. To our bosses, my co-workers and I were commodities, just like coffee beans or cold cuts, to be supplied when business picked up, and then tossed aside when things slowed down. Our hours fluctuated wildly from week to week based on the dictates of the company's computerized scheduling system, making budgeting and planning impossible. The job combined all the repetitive joy of a factory assembly line with all the charm of ritualized emotional abuse by customers. At Starbucks, chronic understaffing turned our shifts into a blur of ceaseless motion to produce lattes and Frappuccinos for a never-ending line out the door. Our boss showed his gratitude for our hard work by paying us around minimum wage. On busy days, he "asked" workers to stay past the end of their shifts, and then deleted the overtime hours from the payroll. Adding insult to injury, he made frequent sexually explicit remarks to my female co-workers. My boss at Jimmy John's made a habit of peppering her dictates with death threats: "I'm gonna stab you" if you don't spread the mayo more smoothly, or "I'ma bring in a shotgun and shoot you" if the sandwich line was moving too slowly. But even though these were bad jobs, they were hard to keep. In a ludicrous catch-22, one co-worker at Starbucks lost her healthcare coverage because she was too ill to work enough hours to qualify to buy insurance. Unable to afford medical treatment, she missed a shift because she was immobilized with pain. She couldn't afford to go to the doctor's office to get an excuse note and was fired. Two of my co-workers attempted suicide in the six years I worked at Starbucks, driven to wit's end by the stress of demanding managers, disrespectful customers, and the agony of watching their dreams slip out of reach as they slid deeper into poverty.

Despite deplorable conditions for the industry's 3.6 million workers, mainstream unions were, until this past year, uninterested in organizing fast food. The Senior Vice President of the Minneapolis UNITE-HERE union local told me in 2008, "It's not like we're going to just organize any group of McDonald's workers who come to us." He then declined to support our DIY organizing efforts at

Starbucks. Former Service Employees International Union (SEIU) President Andy Stern even said he would "applaud Starbucks" for paying tens of thousands of workers a few cents above the minimum wage. How did a labor movement that once led the starving masses into battle against the corporate autocrats who rule the United States come to turn its back on those hungriest for change?

### Business Unionism

Over the course of the post-war era, just as churches became mega-churches, and mom-and-pops gave way to megamalls, most American unions metamorphosed into business unions, adopting corporate structures that mimic those of their ostensible adversaries. Like corporations, business unions are run by small cliques of high-paid presidents, vice presidents and directors of this or that—union bosses, in short—who pass directives downward through a hierarchy of often exploited staffers to the rank and file. Rather than empower members through involvement in their own struggles, union bosses implant the toxic logic of careerism directly into the heart of the labor movement. The SEIU and UNITE-HERE in particular (ironically, generally seen as the most "progressive" unions in the United States) tend to hire a staff of idealistic fresh-out-of-college middle-class kids to do their organizing. Lacking roots in the communities they are tasked to organize, young staffers typically rapidly get burned out by the demands—and contradictions—of the job, and move along to graduate school.

Staff-centrism is the tip of the iceberg. The rise of business unionism in the United States is one moment in the much longer evolution of a tension simmering below the surface of the labor movement. In the words of Solidarity Federation's book "Fighting for Ourselves," it is "possible to identify two distinct meanings bound up in the term 'union.' The first is simply that of an association of workers..." and the second is "that of the representation of workers vis-à-vis capital." As an association of workers, unions have a theoretically limitless power to shut down or transform the economy. As an institution "representing" workers, unions behave like an "interest group" jockeying for influence using the same tools of lobbying, litigating, public relations (PR), and deal-making as any other corporate entity.

Rather than relying on the associational power of their members expressed through production-halting strikes, business unions are often heavily dependent on the provisions of the 1935 National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), which sets up a bureaucratized process for workers to vote a union leader in as their "representative." The NLRA is permeated with a politics, stated most clearly by its preamble: "It is declared to be the policy of the United States to eliminate the causes of certain substantial obstructions to the free flow of commerce and to mitigate and eliminate these obstructions when they have occurred by encouraging the practice and procedure of collective bargaining..." It bears repeating: the purpose of U.S. labor law is to sustain the "free flow of commerce," a goal wholeheartedly adopted by post-war union leaders who happily disarmed the rank-and-file, trading direct action for bureaucratic grievance procedures and no-strike clauses. C. Wright Mills dubbed them the "New Men of Power," labor statesmen eager to act as the junior partners of capital in the Cold War against Communism. Taking a running start toward our own era's "end of history," these partisans of business unionism purged radicals from the labor movement, jettisoned visions of qualitative social change for a narrow focus on quantitative bread-and-butter issues, and lulled themselves to sleep with the Keynesian fairy tale of never-ending virtuous cycles of rising productivity linked

to rising wages negotiated by unions as a permanent fixture of American political-economic life.

The union bureaucracy received a rude awakening in the late 1970s. Employers began intensifying resistance to union campaigns leading to declining win rates in National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) elections. As veteran labor negotiator Joe Burns has noted in "Reviving the Strike," unions have not responded effectively to the challenge laid down by employers, eschewing the kind of associational confrontations with bosses that established the political possibility of the New Deal in the 1930s. Instead, they attempt to secure employer "neutrality" through carrot-and-stick wheeling and dealing, all too often behind the backs of workers. The carrot: union bosses may offer political support for the company's legislative agenda and pledge not to organize other units or bargain over certain issues, or even accept sub-par wages and restrictions on workers' rights. The stick: the union will interfere with the company's political agenda or growth plans until they agree to neutrality. Campaigns for neutrality tend to rely not primarily on the associational power of workers, but on smoke-and-mirrors media stunts, friends in high places, and clever lawyering: in short, manipulation of our society's system of representation. The task of the "organizer" becomes getting a worker to do something that a union boss has decided they should do, rather than bringing workers together for collective decision-making. More often than not, worker involvement in campaigns for neutrality is restricted to photo-op meetings with politicians, or at most, made-for-TV one-day strikes. Or worse, unions substitute "community supporters" engaging in faux direct actions for the activity of the workers themselves. Generally, union bosses seek out campaigns based on a very businesslike calculation of how much they will cost, and how much dues money the new bargaining unit will bring in. For most unions, the odds in fast food seemed too long to merit an investment of organizing resources.

### Fast-Food Strikes

Many on the left have expressed hope that the current SEIU-directed mobilization in fast food and other "alt-labor" formations represent a break with the logic of business unionism, or at least an opening to go beyond fast-food strikes and build a more transformative movement. It has been hard to assess how these hopes stack up against reality; SEIU bans staff from speaking with the media and leaves most rank and filers in the dark about the union's plans. So I went around the official SEIU mouthpieces and spoke with workers and staff in the campaign to find out what's really going on.

To hear top SEIU officials Mary Kay Henry and Scott Courtney tell it, fast-food workers virtually organized themselves, beating down SEIU's door asking for help organizing. In truth, the strikes for \$15 are hardly a spontaneous upsurge. According to inside sources, the \$15 per hour demand itself was thought up not originally by workers, but by consultants at the Berlin Rosen PR firm working with the SEIU brass. SEIU's plans for a fast-food campaign have been in the works since at least 2009. According to another inside source, the initial cities for the strikes were selected based on areas where the union thought it could translate a splashy media hit into political capital to push through legislation. The one-day protests were conceived of not as an economic weapon to win gains, but as a juicy hook for a "march on the media," as IWW member Adam Weaver has noted. Many activists have used the term "wildcat strike" to define these one-day protests. A wildcat is a strike organized by rank and filers against or without the bureaucracy. These were its exact opposite—mobilizations directed

from above by bureaucrats inside the beltway. In a through-the-looking-glass twist, this means that SEIU planners knew that workers would be going on strike before the workers themselves did. Thus, the task of the organizer became to get workers to buy into the media-centric plan decided on by union bosses, often laboring under an unrealistic quota system that forces staff to instrumentalize their relationships with workers or fudge the numbers to keep their jobs. Likely reflecting this dynamic, I spoke with workers in three cities who stated that the actual number of strikers was substantially lower than the SEIU claims. Given the inefficiencies of communication (i.e. lying to your boss so you don't get fired) inherent in any corporate hierarchy, it's entirely possible that the SEIU itself doesn't actually know how many workers participated in the strikes.

Taking a page from the corporate playbook, the SEIU outsourced its fast-food organizing to "community based organizations"—a Jobs with Justice chapter, a few former Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) affiliates, and others, partially in order to reduce expenditures on organizer salaries. One fast-food worker in the campaign told me, "The organizers are working 12-hour days for weeks at a time. When you calculate their wage, it's less than minimum." One former staff organizer was ordered to abandon one group of fast-food workers shortly before a strike, shifting focus to another site that union bosses thought would get more media coverage. The same organizer was fired shortly before the holidays based on an arbitrary decision by a high-level SEIU staffer, forcing that person to scramble and scrape to put food on the table for their young child. Unsurprisingly, in at least one city, organizers have moved to form their own staff union to combat the SEIU-inspired high-turnover model of labor union management.

The shabby treatment of hard-working organizers points to a deeper deficit of democracy in the SEIU's model. Speaking on condition of anonymity, workers in the campaign reported having their arms twisted into support for the strike strategy decided on by SEIU union bosses, with no room for discussion of more sustainable, transformative, long-term alternatives. One source close to the SEIU informed me that some high-level staff on the campaign reject organizing for immediate gains in the workplace because they think victories would remove workers' reasons for wanting a union. While some cities have adopted a more rank-and-file-oriented approach, the overall strategy has remained beyond question by the rank and file. The SEIU packed a much-vaunted national meeting in Detroit with workers who had been convinced to vote "yes" on the August 29th National Day of Action, regardless of whether it would serve to build organization for the long term in their communities and workplaces. The risk of the quick-and-dirty organizing demanded by the SEIU to stay in the headlines is that workers are pushed to risk their jobs to meet quotas decided by bureaucrats atop the command economy of business unionism, without regard for building the relationships that form the basis of any successful social movement.

Ryan Wyatt, a Potbelly's worker in Chicago, was recently on strike. He said, "I believe that because of that, my manager is starting to retaliate. Just recently, after the last strike, they told me to go home and not come back for the next five days because I was five minutes late from lunch." Ryan's manager did not return his calls after five days, a de facto firing.

The Workers Organizing Committee of Chicago is fighting the retaliation, but such stories are likely to multiply, absent a strategy of involving more workers in the organizing before parading isolated

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## Special Fast-Food Unionism: The Unionization Of McDonald's & The McDonaldization of Unions

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workers from different shops before the cameras. Given the recent evisceration of OUR Walmart through the firing of over 60 worker-activists, one would think that the prospect of mass retaliation would have prompted the SEIU to take more care in building up a base before going public. Corporate management hardly needs to train or tell managers to union-bust or blacklist. Every fast-food manager knows how to tighten and selectively enforce rules in order to weed out a worker they want to get rid of and keep troublemakers out. Absent a shift in strategy to change the power relationships against fast-food companies to stop firings in each city, subtle retaliation will eventually take a heavy toll on the organizing.

It could be that the SEIU just doesn't care. After all, the union already got its 15 minutes of fame from the campaign. An SEIU spokesperson voiced a disturbingly cavalier attitude to the price workers will pay for this strategy, telling me that workers could easily go across the street and get a job at the next fast-food place after getting fired.

With all the major decisions in the hands of the SEIU international, the staff-driven nature of the campaign has taken on a troubling racial dynamic. I spoke with multiple participants who were dismayed by the recurring spectacle of mostly white staffers shouting marching orders through megaphones at mostly black and brown fast-food workers during the strikes. In New York, a white SEIU marshal actually physically pushed several workers of color, seeking to prevent them from occupying a McDonald's. All too often in the United States, hierarchies are color-coded. The SEIU and its surrogates are no exception.

And the words that SEIU has put in workers' mouths? While "\$15 and a union" makes for a good slogan, the problems plaguing our fast-food nation will not be solved by a dollar increase in wages. In another capitulation to the needs of the campaign's media narrative, the Fight for Fifteen has replicated the narrow economic focus of post-war business unionism. This is all the more unfortunate because the food industry stands at the crux of the complex of capitalist consumerism. Workers in fast food can speak and act directly against the horrors of industrial agriculture, the dehumanization of Taylorized production and absurd workplace hierarchies, corporate monoculture, the scourge of working-class hunger amidst plenty, and myriad other ills that flow from their workplaces. Imagine if a fast-food worker union advanced a vision not just of better-paying work in a fundamentally inhumane economy, but for a worker-controlled food system operated in the interests of all of humanity and the earth? Such a turn is unlikely while the campaign narrative is dictated by union bureaucrats who see themselves not as capitalism's gravediggers, but its doctors.

An honest appraisal of the campaign thus far forces us to an unavoidable conclusion: the corporate logic of fast food is alive in the SEIU union effort itself. From the decision to prioritize quantity of strikers over quality of worker empowerment and democracy, privileging of flashy media events and legislative pushes over substantive organizing to build power, to the simulacra of cookie-cutter PR consultant-designed messaging, to the centralized command-and-control modus operandi of the SEIU international, to the ugly reality of institutional racism inside the campaign itself, to the reduction of campaign goals to a dollar number while accepting the fundamentals of class society, this is true fast-food unionism.

### Neo-Business Unionism

Is there hope for the workers, staff, and supporters in the campaign to turn the SEIU's fast-food unionism into a broader long-term movement for more substantial

change, as several on the labor left have suggested?

The SEIU is no monolith. There are competing visions inside the SEIU about the direction of the Fight for Fifteen, and a certain level of autonomy (albeit under constant threat of trusteeship) in certain locals. There is a higher level of worker participation and democracy in some cities than others. There are hundreds of courageous workers and dozens of principled, hardworking staff active in the union, seeking to do the best they can to move from a transactional to a transformative organizing model within SEIU's confines.

It may be possible for rank and filers and radicals on staff to articulate a strategy that breaks with the logic of fast-food unionism, but it certainly won't come from the SEIU international, and it won't come without a fight with the bureaucracy. The union's track record, the tendencies inherent in its brand of neo-business unionism and frank off-the-record views from SEIU staff give us hints about what rank and filers and their allies can expect. A 2010 article in *The Nation* summed up the SEIU's modus operandi under Andy Stern:

*"As growth became his all-consuming passion, Stern came to rely heavily on back-room deals with employers and other shortcuts, perpetuating an illusion of robust growth that has obscured SEIU's failure to devise a viable long-term strategy for reversing labor's decline. Along the way, Stern's go-it-alone leadership style alienated rank-and-file members and isolated the union from former allies."*

As the bills for the high-priced PR consultants and small army of staff on fast-food organizing pile up, pressure will mount on the SEIU's union bosses to broker a deal that can be painted as a victory. As with any business transaction, it will involve a quid pro quo. Steve Early's research on the SEIU's machinations in "The Civil Wars in U.S. Labor" offer a glimpse of what this typically looks like. Over the course of 339 pages, Early pulls a seemingly endless parade of skeletons out of their SEIU's closet, many marked by the fingerprints not just of Andy Stern, but also President Mary Kay Henry and the current crop of SEIU bosses.

Driven by a growth-at-all costs rapacity on par with the corporations it faced across the bargaining table, the SEIU turned to a strategy of "partnerships" with employers and raiding other unions to secure new dues streams, worker democracy be damned. In most cases, new organizing took the form of getting employers to sign on to "template agreements" that trade away workers' rights to speak out or take action to resolve problems on the job, abandon control of the shop floor to management by allowing for few or no shop stewards, and restrict the parameters of collective bargaining—all without any input from workers. Even worse, in order to get employers to agree with these "partnerships," the SEIU often backs legislation that benefits the employer at the expense of the broader working class. For example, in California and Washington, the SEIU agreed to lobby for restrictions on patients' ability to sue over medical malpractice at the hands of hospitals and home healthcare providers in exchange for an eased path to union recognition for healthcare workers.

Once the terms of the deal are negotiated by the labor and management professionals, organizers are tasked with getting workers to sign a card authorizing dues deduction from their paycheck. That might be the last time the workers see an organizer. Once unionized, the SEIU keeps its overhead low by warehousing members in mega-locals that span hundreds of miles. It becomes impossible for low-wage workers to attend a meeting where they would have a voice, let alone run for union office or get active on the job as a steward. That job is left for college-educated labor professionals. What do workers get instead? A 1-800

number to call if they have questions or concerns.

Early concludes that the SEIU is a "deeply flawed, increasingly autocratic institution that doesn't deliver as advertised, no matter who is in charge." He seems to be right. While many hope that the SEIU has made a new beginning under Mary Kay Henry, and that the Fight for Fifteen's "strike first" tactic will be a real departure from business-unionism-as-usual, a look behind the media hype reveals the same old dynamics and patterns of behavior are already at play. An inside source reports that SEIU has already made overtures to the National Restaurant Association, offering to back tax cuts for corporate fast-food chains in exchange for some kind of neutrality deal. This is likely the shape of things to come.

### Beyond Fast-Food Strikes

Aside from the principled critiques of SEIU's neo-business unionism model, there is also the fact that it simply won't work. We are now more than three decades in to the U.S. employers' war of annihilation against the labor movement. As in the 1930s, employers will hold the line against any union incursion unless they are faced with an existential threat. The only lever long enough to move the mountain of resistance to workers' power in the U.S. fast-food industry is mass direct action by workers on a scale of disruptiveness not seen since labor's pre-World War II street-fighting years. The business unions aren't likely to pull that lever. As former SEIU strategist Stephen Lerner has written, "Unions with hundreds of millions in assets and collective bargaining agreements covering millions of workers won't risk their treasuries and contracts by engaging in large-scale sit-ins, occupations, and other forms of non-violent civil disobedience that must inevitably overcome court injunctions and political pressures." We might add that even if they wanted to, the business unions have long gutted their membership base, alienating workers with high-handed top-down decision-making and years of stultifying door-knocking for Democrats. Unwilling and unable to take the road that could lead to a real victory, the SEIU will begin watering down its "justice for all" slogan, bringing proposals for less justice, and for fewer workers (narrowing the focus to fewer cities, fewer companies, and demanding a smaller wage increase), to the bargaining table and the ballot. If this fails, the SEIU will likely look for a way to walk away and save face. Ironically, that may mean giving workers more room to do their own organizing. More tragically, it may also mean leaving workers who have taken a risk to strike high and dry to face retaliation on their own.

Fortunately, the SEIU's fast-food unionism is neither the first nor last word in class struggle in the industry. Fast-food workers have battled the bosses who exploit them since the industry's genesis. To give just a few examples, in the mid-1960s, McDonald's was so concerned about the unionization of its Bay Area workforce that it forced potential employees to take a lie-detector test to weed out union sympathizers. The burger chain's full-time anti-union specialist claims to have squashed "hundreds" of unionization drives in the early 1970s. In the early 1980s, ACORN launched a fast-food workers' union in Detroit that briefly won one of the only union contracts in franchised fast food in the United States. In the United Kingdom, the enigmatic McDonald's Workers Resistance waged a campaign of faceless guerrilla resistance to corporate bosses from 1998 into the early 2000s. While none of these efforts led to lasting organization, they all played a role in the long process of the growth of class consciousness in the global fast-food industry.

In my time organizing at Jimmy John's and Starbucks with the IWW, my wffellow workers and I learned from the experi-

ences of those who had come before us and created an associational organizing model that works in fast food. Our model was built on our own inherent strength as workers—our boss's reliance on us to do the work. Instead of spending millions (which we didn't have) on PR consultants and professional staff, we emphasized a long-term approach of training our own co-workers as organizers, empowering them to fight their own battles wherever they go, and making all decisions together democratically. And we won. We got the boss who was stealing our wages and sexually harassing co-workers fired, stopped unfair firings, got the company to install air conditioning and fix broken equipment, won improved staffing, won my reinstatement when I was fired by Starbucks for organizing, and even forced our district manager to cut a personal check for a co-worker who was owed back wages with a short strike. In another IWW campaign, we drafted a "Ten Point Program for Justice at Jimmy John's," listing the 10 most important demands identified by our co-workers, going beyond bread-and-butter issues to address fundamental questions of power on the shop floor. Using escalating direct action, we won direct deposit pay, raises, holiday pay, the right to call in sick, a consistent discipline policy, and many other demands, detailed more extensively in the forthcoming book, "New Forms of Worker Organization." Neither of these campaigns were perfect, and the labor movement still has a lot to learn about organizing the low-wage service sector, but our experience does make one thing clear: workers can declare independence from the business union bureaucracy, fight their own battles, and win.

In several cities, rank and filers in the fast-food organizing campaign have already begun building their own organizations autonomous from the bureaucracy, connecting with community supporters who are free from the fetters of a paycheck signed by D.C. union bosses. Class struggle didn't start with the SEIU, and it won't end once a contract is signed, a law is passed, the minimum wage increases, or the union bosses stop footing the bill for the campaign. The struggle will continue. Fast-food jobs are the jobs of the future—not just because 58 percent of jobs created in the post-2007 recovery are in low-wage occupations, but also more metaphorically, as George Ritzer noted, the corporate logic of fast food has come to permeate our society much more broadly. Whether we work at a McDonald's, an office, a hospital, school, nonprofit, for the government, or in virtually any workplace, we have all seen our co-workers abused or unfairly fired, been forced to do more with less, been told to cut corners at the expense of the public, and been denied a voice on the job and in society. Millions of workers live lives of quiet desperation, watching their labor disappear into the machinery of the capitalist system, turned against them to perpetuate the very evils that they oppose: fast-food workers watch the product they serve poison their communities; bank workers see their employer selling predatory loans to their neighbors; hospital workers bear witness to how profit is put before patient health; and teachers chafe under the dehumanization that standardized testing wreaks on their students. Collectively, workers produce all of the ills of our society; which means that collectively, we can stop producing them. And increasingly, we want to.

Wyatt, the former Potbelly's worker in Chicago, says it best: "We're asking not just for better working conditions for us. We're asking to live in a better America."

Fast-food unionism cannot change a fast-food nation, but it can be a step toward a movement that will.

*This piece was originally published in CounterPunch, Vol. 20 No. 10, Nov. 4, 2013. It was reprinted with permission from the author.*

## Organizing

# How I Got Fired And Won My Job Back

By Emmett J. Nolan

**The Termination**

Arriving to work, I entered through the break room as usual. There, awaiting me was my manager who immediately said that we needed to talk. He told me not to put away my bag; I couldn't get ready for my shift like I usually did. I asked him if this was a disciplinary meeting but he did not respond directly to the question. He just said, "We need to talk. This will just take a minute." While walking through the production floor I greeted co-workers as I usually do and I followed my manager into his office. Seeing that no one else was in the office, I asked, "Is someone from HR [Human Resources] going to be here?" He barked back at me, "This is coming straight from HR." I then asked him if I could have a co-worker in the meeting with me. He denied this request, responding, "Hmmm, no."

Immediately after the door closed, my manager informed me "this" wasn't working out, perhaps justifying this by stating I was "clearly unhappy" here. He went through a cursory explanation of paperwork and stated that I was terminated. I did not agree with the judgments and told him so; and when instructed to sign a termination form I refused.

I inquired if the termination was a result of my work performance. "No. You're a great worker, but a bad employee," he replied. While still in shock at what was happening, I had enough sense to ask some follow-up questions and see what he'd reveal. Foremost, I was curiously struck by that explicit worker/employee distinction he mentioned, and so I asked him about it. He elaborated that while I was a "leader" on the crew, I was nonetheless disrespectful to the owners. For example, he cited the frustration I've expressed to other co-workers, including him, about how the owners leave their week-old dirty dishes from the office by the sink and neglect to wash them. With that I readily pointed out how he and everyone else complain to me about just that practice as well.

"They're the owners, and it doesn't matter," he replied.

"Can I work my shift or am I fired?" I asked to clarify whether my firing was, in fact, underway.

I was told no, I could not work my shift. I inquired if the company would approve my unemployment, to which he responded affirmatively.

I've had many a nightmare about being fired from this job and have thought at length about what I would do should that day arrive. Having seen how managers call unsuspecting co-workers to cover shifts for workers walking into termination, and how they wait for their target to arrive through the break room, I recognized what was happening to me. Previously, when my departmental co-workers and I were better organized, we discussed what we'd do if one of us was fired for a collective action we'd taken.

First, we'd obviously ask for a witness, and wouldn't sign anything presented

to us. Next, the fired worker would do everything he or she legally could to stay on the premises and speak with as many co-workers as possible about what just happened. If organizers were on shift, they'd act immediately to stop work and call for an on-site meeting with management. Unfortunately, at the time of my firing our campaign was at a lull. We weren't taking collective actions on the shared and specific issues (staffing levels, holiday bonuses, profit sharing, etc.) usually discussed on the floor. As a result, I was making the rookie organizer mistake of talking shit about working conditions but not taking any collective actions to back things up. Therefore, management was able to spin a narrative of me being detrimental to morale and to justify firing me accordingly.

The timing of my firing was a further disadvantage for us. My fellow organizer was on vacation and another ally worker had just voluntarily left the company a week earlier. This left me with little immediate support in my department, so there was no one to organize a work stoppage in direct response. In hindsight, after receiving the termination notice, I probably should have immediately walked out and gathered my co-workers so we could read it together, thereby avoiding management's typical trap of trying to get me to say something I'd regret within the emotionally charged closed-door meeting.

When I did walk out of the office, I immediately sought my departmental co-workers. As I tried to explain what just happened to a co-worker whom I'd worked alongside for three years, the anger, rage and disbelief inhabiting me turned to sadness and confusion. We hugged, made plans to call each other later and I then went on to have the same emotional conversation another dozen or so times with other co-worker friends on-site. During these conversations I could see the shock and fear in their faces. Having worked for the company for five years, all of them knew this wasn't about work performance; but was another example of the company retaliating against workers who speak up and pushing out those who they didn't like. But, without a planned response, or an organizer already prepared to lead one, solidarity had to assume the simpler forms of hugs and handshakes. Yet, to make sure that everyone knew why I was fired, I made a copy of my termination form (on the office copier in front of the boss who just fired me) and passed it off to my co-workers (who in turn shared it with the afternoon crew). In hindsight, those individual conversations and the generalized sharing of the termination form proved extremely agitational for my fellow co-workers, and it assisted the campaign which would eventually develop to reclaim my job.

When I left the premises, I immediately called a co-worker and fellow organizer to confide my termination.

"What's the plan?" he asked.

Still reeling from it, I didn't know what to say. We made plans to meet for break-

fast. In between chain smoking cigarettes and transferring buses on my way to the diner, I called and texted every current and former co-worker I knew and relayed to them what had happened.

When I sign people up to the IWW and am asked why I'm a member, part of my reply is consistent: "I know that if I get fired for organizing, I know that the union will be there to have my back and fight tooth-and-nail for me to get my job back." Now that day had come, and for the next four months my fellow workers fulfilled that commitment beyond what I could've hoped and imagined.

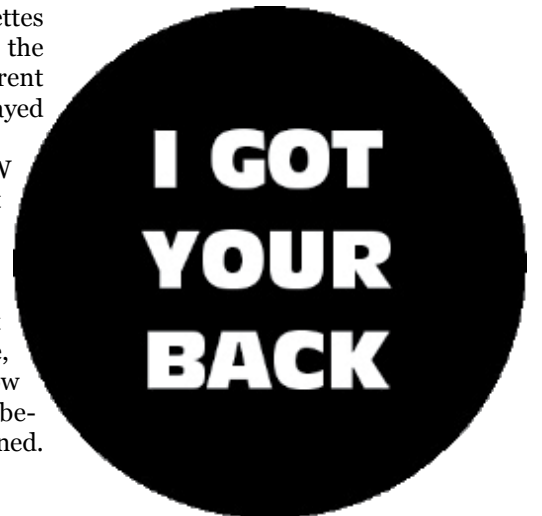
**The Committee Responds**

During the first three weeks following my termination I distracted myself from the realities of unemployment by assisting a newly-formed workers' organizing committee in their efforts to reestablish my employment. As I said earlier, the campaign was at a lull. Yet, prior to my termination we'd been preparing a timeline to reset the organizing campaign. The night I got fired, the committee met with two other fellow workers and we had a focused conversation about our options for response. We distinguished two immediate options: 1) take this firing on the chin and keep the organizing underground or 2) make our first cross-department and cross-store action that would fight to regain my job. Since I was an outspoken worker on conditions of employment, we were confronted with the question: How could we respond to future issues or firing if we didn't take action on my egregious firing? With a quiet acknowledgement of the immense work ahead of them, the committee decided action was necessary, even if they couldn't win my job back. We suspected that the company was clearing house and another outspoken organizer would likely be terminated soon, too. And if that happened our position to respond would be further diminished.

Rather than limiting the demand to my reinstatement, we decided to expand it to include addressing the broader issue of the company's subjective and usually unjust disciplinary procedures. This strategy proved beneficial. Our demands were constructed into a petition letter, coupled with a personal letter I'd written to my co-workers, addressing the charges used to terminate me. The demand for my reinstatement proved motivational for workers I was acquainted with; yet, the broader demand succeeded in acquiring the support of a vaster range of co-workers—who had presumably witnessed and/or experienced the company's abusive disciplinary practices in the past.

The committee understood that we needed to move fast on the petition, while the issue was still vivid in co-workers' minds. The anger, immediate and fiery, that grievances can ignite in a worker just as often dissipate when there's no timely path forward for action: paralyzed resignation often results. So the committee set a few immediate goals to pursue: first, to coordinate a delegation of four to six workers and compose and have 25 workers sign a petition, ready for delivery within a week. Also, more timely, at our Food & Retail Workers United Industrial Organizing Committee (FRWU-IOC) meeting the next day, the committee presented its escalation plan to other fellow workers for feedback. We then created a "social map" of our workplace and assigned shop organizers to meet with a few dozen co-workers we assessed as potential supporters of the petition.

As the fired worker, my role within the organizing campaign was threefold: 1) Assist with one-on-ones, 2) act as a general task monkey for the campaign's needs and 3) prepare my case for the Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) complaint with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), if we decided to file. The first role was the



Graphic: portlandbuttonworks.com

most important: setting up one-on-one meetings and assisting with two-on-one meetings with fellow organizers. My usual role in these conversations was to act as the agitational force while my fellow organizer would conduct the education, inoculation and organization tasks. These conversations were highly emotional as we uncovered other grievances, stories of discipline gone awry and the immense fear co-workers had of losing their jobs. Naturally, workers brought up unionizing frequently. For me, the hardest component of the one-on-ones was asking a worker to sign the petition knowing I couldn't definitely assure them I'd be present if or when they faced retaliation.

As the general task monkey, I spent most of my days at the IWW's office, addressing peripheral tasks of the petition drive. The paperwork—coordinating translation of documents, making copies and getting them to organizers—was to be expected. I feel my most beneficial role was checking in with organizers multiple times a day about their one-on-ones. In those first two weeks, our committee members were regularly at the office brainstorming escalation strategies, one-on-one conversations, and how to reach out to more workers.

Altogether, 34 workers signed onto the petition demanding a forum on the company's disciplinary procedure and my reinstatement. A week after I was fired, four organizers interrupted a meeting of our bosses, read aloud the demand letter and gave testimonials. Though noticeably uncomfortable, the employers remained confident in their power.

"We will never rehire Emmett," an owner defiantly stated.

Mistaking the letter delivery as the culmination of our efforts rather than the first public step in an escalation plan, the bosses would soon be proven wrong as internal and external direct actions created an environment which forced the company to accept the NLRB's determination and settle in my favor.

**How I Got My Job Back**

Before I detail my role in preparing for the ULP, let me stress another thing: our committee's direct action escalation campaign and our ULP strategy were largely informed by the experience of assisting and bearing witness to a fellow worker in our branch who was fired a year earlier from another campaign. In that previous campaign, our fellow worker lost what we believed was a solid ULP charge, so everyone questioned whether my fate would differ. The ULP process is a roll of the dice, the NLRB must let working people win a round every now and again in order to maintain worker confidence in the system.

While the ULP process would take over three months, the unimaginable was seemingly about to happen: I was going back to work. I was surprised to be awarded a back-to-work order and a "merit" ruling, which meant the NLRB believed there was compelling evidence that I was retaliated against. Even more surprising news was

**Continued on next page**

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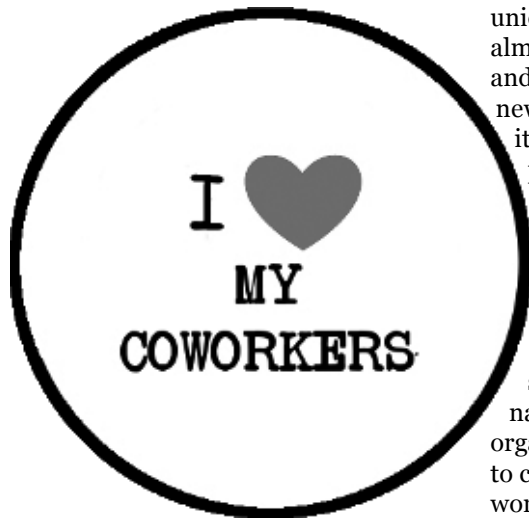
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## Organizing

## How I Got Fired And Won My Job Back



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## Continued from previous page

that rather than further appealing the NLRB's judgment the company expressed its interest in a settlement—including agreeing to my reinstatement. Though they first inquired if I'd accept a payout settlement, I had already informed the organizing committee and my NLRB agent that I wouldn't agree to any settlement that didn't include me going back to work. While at first my position on returning to work was based on principle and a desire to keep the organizing going, reinstatement became very personal as a way to reciprocate the mutual aid given to me by my co-workers. Just as an injury to one is an injury to all, my victory was a victory for all my co-workers.

So, how was this rather unthinkable outcome made a reality? I attribute it to four factors: 1) internal and external direct actions, 2) a solid ULP strategy, 3) a trained and experienced community of organizers, and 4) the company's naiveté.

First, while I'll likely never know exactly why management agreed to reinstate me, instinct tells me that without direct action it would never have happened. One thing I am 100 percent positive of is that, without internal direct action, my reinstatement would never have meant so much to my co-workers. The march on the boss, petition signatures, pins and magnets, plus all the time workers took out of their day to meet, brainstorm and motivate each other to take action, all effectively invested my co-workers in the situation. They became active agents within the process from which management had tried to exclude them. Furthermore, I believe the reason the company buckled to the NLRB had more to do with the visible shop-floor actions, support and discussion regarding my case than a sternly-worded letter from the NLRB. With the message that I "won" the ULP floating in the air, if the company had appealed the decision they would have run the risk of polarizing the workplace further away from them and closer towards the organizing committee. This was the move that shop organizers were anticipating and which organizers were readying an escalated response to.

Externally, Wobblies within the FRWU-IOC created a Friends of Emmett Committee, tasked to develop a two-month escalation plan to mobilize customers and the community behind my cause. We knew such support would be vital to our morale as organizers and hopefully serve as a lightning rod for further internal action by workers. For every step of the escalation plan, Wobblies in the organizing committee and the friends committee considered how the actions would polarize the workers on the inside.

Our external strategy was largely informed by participation in solidarity actions for fired Wobblies over the course of the past few years. Some of these actions involved just a Wobbly on the job without a campaign, while others contained an underground organizing committee. Often in these previous efforts, organizers applied an immediate and aggressive public approach to both scenarios: the

union or solidarity group would escalate almost instantaneously to pickets, rallies, and media coverage and thereby create a new set of obstacles. Organizers found it difficult to increase the intensity of pressure, maintain the frequency of actions, or win unorganized workers over to the side of the cause. While applying this full-throttle emotional and economic leverage can be effective in circumstances of wage theft and when a single Wobbly on the job is seeking settlement of wrongful termination, the presence of an underground organizing committee requires organizers to consider their level of reach within the workplace.

In assessing our committee's width and depth within the several worksites, we concluded that our committee was too small to conduct public pickets without encountering the same campaign-stalling results mentioned earlier that previous campaigns experienced. The Friends of Emmett Committee developed a measured escalation plan that sought to escalate slowly and provide the opportunity for the external and internal campaigns to synthesize. Simply, organizers envisioned the Friends of Emmett Committee as a tool not to win my job back but to provide public cover for the organizing within the shop and help initiate action.

The first step in the external escalation plan, which coincidentally occurred the day after the company received the NLRB merit notification, was a customer delegation. A group of customers, organized by Friends of Emmett and which included a Wobbly from the FRWU-IOC, delivered and read to an owner in front of my co-workers (and a few random customers) a demand for my reinstatement. We placed the rest of the escalation plan, which included neighborhood postering, canvassing, hand-billing and second delegation, on hold until we heard back on whether the company was willing to settle.

The second component I credit for my return to work was the ULP strategy the organizing committee developed with the assistance of fellow workers both locally and from across the country. Rather than rushing to the NLRB, I made the direct action campaign of my co-workers a top priority and brainstormed how/if the ULP process could be used to our advantage. As referred to earlier, this was my final role as the fired organizer. During the weeks prior to filing a complaint, I read through previous NLRB affidavits and consulted numerous fellow workers and allied labor lawyers to make sure my case was solid.

For days I went back and forth on the decision to file as the IWW. While the campaign wasn't public, my involvement within the union was public outside of work. Ultimately, I decided not to file as the IWW or an independent union. Hunches and assumptions aside, I could not prove management knew anything about me being union. Therefore, if I couldn't demonstrate it and management wasn't going to offer it, then the NLRB agent wouldn't be able to prove it. Bringing in the union at this point would only expose organizers to an anti-union campaign they were not effectively positioned to counter. Besides, most relevant to the ULP was keeping the NLRB agent focused on my best piece of documentation: management's clear violation of an employee's Section 7 rights, as observable in my termination form.

My charge accepted, I walked into the meeting with the NLRB agent, my affidavit testimony appropriately outlined with all supporting evidence prepared. With such preparation at hand, I was well positioned to substantiate a narrative beginning with me being labeled the head agitator of a petition delivery, continuing through with documented instances of managerial hostility toward me (hello, work journals!), and concluding with a managerial personnel change intended to isolate and,

finally, terminate me. Yes, the temptation to go off-topic into other unverifiables was certainly there, but I stuck to responding only to the accusations found in the termination form.

Timing was again very strategic with the ULP. The day after management held an all-company discussion forum which was demanded by workers and in which the ownership defended my termination and their disciplinary procedure, the company received its first ever letter from the NLRB informing them of the investigation. As my fellow organizer told me later, the department manager looked like he was going to vomit when the owner brought him the news.

Next, significant credit for this victory must go to the IWW's Organizer Training and the community of Wobbly organizers with whom I'm fortunate to share a General Membership Branch. You know how we talk a lot about documentation and those workplace journals? Well, those were integral in getting my job back. In those journals and my day planners where I recorded all my one-on-one meetings, some dating back years, I was able to piece together a narrative for both my co-workers and for the NLRB. Furthermore, the numerous organizers I learned from in my years within the IWW gave me the skills to know how to respond, while the Wobbly community present around me assisted in the campaign's strategy (not to mention countless burritos and timely funding from our Organizer Hardship Fund).

Finally, management arrogantly believed that their power would allow them to quietly terminate me and justify it however they saw fit. In doing so, management did most of the heavy lifting, polarizing my co-workers in support of me and giving enough evidence for the NLRB to side with my charge. Among the long list of judgments written on my termination form included documented instances when I was talking to co-workers about staffing levels, profit sharing and our absent holiday bonus. Certainly, I was not the only one who discussed these matters on the shop floor; the surprise withholding of our holiday bonus that year became a consistent topic of frustration and contempt for co-workers throughout the company.

Furthermore, I had participated in several direct actions in the past. One particularly important action involving our entire department was done just beyond the NLRB timeline for a ULP charge. I learned that one could effectively argue how latter individual actions could be protected under the law if judged to be extensions of a previous collective action.

However, this naiveté and arrogance by management will likely not be repeated so carelessly again. Since my firing, the company hired an experienced HR manager and has held several meetings with lawyers to ensure they're never caught liable for an unlawful termination or any other charge of violated labor or employment law.

## Reclaiming My Job

Returning to work was surreal. I was back from the dead, as some of my fellow workers said. The return could not have been better. Rather than quietly walking back on the job as if nothing had happened, my fellow organizers and I decided that we'd use the moment to claim victory and set the tone with management about what to expect from now on. Three fellow organizers accompanied me as I walked back onto the floor. When I re-entered the break room I was greeted with "I Missed Emmett" magnets that covered the lockers and a few that held up copies of the NLRB notification. When I arrived, one worker was there reading the posting and shaking his head in disbelief. I added to my work cap the pins of support my co-workers were wearing in my absence to show their solidarity. My fellow organizers followed

me as I set foot back on the shop floor where high-fives, hugs and handshakes awaited me from all my co-workers.

The greeting which I'll never forget came from the morning dishwasher, an old-timer in the company and a man 25 years older than me. As co-workers separated by our different native languages and different departments, our interactions at work were often limited to a short exchange when he'd pour his daily coffee. The day I was fired, with tears welling up in my eyes and a shocked but all knowing look in his, we said goodbye and shook hands. The day I returned to work I approached him to shake his hand once again, he hurriedly threw down his mop and gave me a hug. Later, he sought me out to express how happy he was to have me back at work.

We then marched on the boss and an organizer presented a letter demanding that I have a witness in my pre-work meeting with management and HR. The HR manager agreed to our insistence that I be allowed a witness of my choice but stated that one could not be expected at future meetings. I felt so much more confident in this meeting because I had a fellow worker there who had my back and was taking notes the whole time.

Throughout my shift that first day back and for the next few days, co-workers stopped and congratulated me and told me how happy they were to see me back. My response to all of my co-workers was "Thank you for your support. I wouldn't have my job back without it. Todos juntos!" Even some managers congratulated me on putting up a good fight! Regular customers who knew what happened likewise greeted me with hugs and handshakes. For those customers who didn't know why I was gone, I laid it out that I was fired illegally and that the company was forced to give me my job back because of the support of my co-workers.

## Where Do We Go From Here

Arriving to work these days, I'm constantly reminded of the struggle that took place to win my job back. I can't miss seeing the "I Missed Emmett" magnets scattered across my co-workers' lockers in the break room as I lace up my work shoes or sit down for a lunch break. In my locker are my NLRB back-to-work order, a welcome-back card given to me by a co-worker, and a picture drawn by the five-year-old son of a regular who, accompanied by her two kids, delivered the customer letter to an owner requesting my reinstatement. When I walk back onto the shop floor, I'm greeted by the dozens of faces of co-workers who did so much to ensure that I returned to work. Much has changed since I was fired. To the credit of my co-workers and fellow organizers, the question of "just cause" disciplinary procedure was raised publicly. Additionally, workers are questioning our compensation and discussing the need for a voice within our workplace.

While much has indeed changed, the power structure largely remains the same. Until my co-workers and I have the power to determine OUR conditions of employment, I believe it's my responsibility to continue the fight. As things are now, the lessons and meaning of our victory to win my job back are largely internalized by the workers. We need to make our working conditions subject to the lessons of our victory and institutionalize the conditions we demand. Since I returned to work four months ago, three of my co-workers have quit and a new crew of workers is being introduced to the workplace without the experience of struggle the rest of us shared. So, we must share our stories, organize more aggressively than we have ever before and be ready to not only respond to management's endless assaults collectively, but to initiate our own plan to win. Let's keep fighting; there's no alternative anymore.

## Headline News

# Wobblies Fight Neo-Nazis In North Dakota

Continued from 1

met our new allies, as the march would soon begin.

The march down the main street to the neo-Nazis' meeting hall was led by the local First Nations communities, followed closely by members of our branch, and then by brave residents of the town. A large banner on the main drag of road read, "Anti-Racism is a code word for anti-white" and was accompanied by the flags of Norway, Sweden, the Creativity Movement, the NSM, and various other white power organizations.

Before proceeding to the meeting hall, we stopped in front of the house of Craig Cobb, the neo-Nazi scum behind the fascist plot to buy up land and turn Leith into

an all-neo-Nazi town. It was there that we shouted down Cobb and his fascist cohorts. Members and leaders of the Standing Rock Reservation, whose borders are a mere 30 miles from the site, vowed that they would resist the neo-Nazis and refuse to allow the spread of their venomous hatred on their land. Afterwards, Fellow Worker Weise addressed the crowd, explained what the IWW is, and cemented our commitment to the fight against fascism in Leith and around the world.

Shortly after, the NSM marched into the meeting hall, which was heavily protected by the police, intending to strong-arm the residents into accepting their rule. About five minutes into the rally, a woman was escorted out of the hall, screaming that

she had been called a communist. She was soon followed by several members of the community who refused to sit through the hate speech.

Around this time, the riot police showed up without identification badges, dressed in their usual storm trooper attire, bearing rubber bullet guns and tear gas launchers. No incidents occurred, however, and the cops simply observed the events.

We chanted and sang until the neo-Nazis' rally ended and then assaulted them with marina- and party-sized air horns. Several exchanges occurred, but the neo-Nazis were unable to spew out anything beyond simple schoolyard insults.

As the day came to a close, a bone-

headed pig wearing a Golden Dawn t-shirt and a kilt began playing bagpipes, which we drowned out with air horns and chants. As the orders to disperse started, we were specifically targeted by the local sheriff and told, "This rally is now over. You need to leave or congregate in a different location." On our way out, we witnessed several local First Nations people tearing down the swastika flags and ripping them apart before getting into their car.

As we went through the barricade, they were stopped and forced to give up the remains of the flag, which the police then threw to the ground and kicked. This is only our first trip to Leith, and plans are in place to return until the Nazi menace is eliminated.

# Starbucks Workers Union Strike In Chile



Photo: Starbucks Workers Union of Chile

Continued from 1

## Starbucks Workers Declare Strike, Oct. 31, 2013

To the public:

The Starbucks Coffee Union began a legal strike on Oct. 29 after having been unable to find in the company willingness to negotiate in good faith. Our organization repeatedly expressed a desire to reach an agreement. We even reduced our petition from 13 points to only one: providing meal bonuses in an amount subject to discussion. Starbucks does not provide any type of food to non-management employees during the working day, unlike all other companies in the industry and among competition—a form of discrimination that is, obviously, unjustified. "No budget negotiations," "we cannot recognize collectives and grant privileges," "unions are unnecessary at Starbucks" are some of the responses from the company to argue why they will agree to absolutely none of the demands of the workers' union. The company has, however, recently reported an increase in profits of over 34 percent to (approximately) \$1.3 billion.

Officially, Starbucks will continue saying that it "has always recognized and respected the right of all partners to join the union." However, it has paid more than \$50 million in four fines for breaching the right to freedom of association in the most grotesque manner. Moreover, the company claims that we are a small group and that 95 percent of its workers "recognize and appreciate the good working atmosphere and the services offered by Starbucks, without sharing the union's demands," even though, in reality, surveys show that more than 80 percent of the company's workers support the demands of our organization but fear to organize and speak out due to a history of reprisals. One cannot ignore that after two years of anti-union practices, the unionization rate fell from 55 percent to less than 6 percent today. We know that "Starbucks is proud

to be [supposedly] a company with policies promoting open doors and meritocracy," but we are outraged that they are also proud to be an anti-union company.

Our reality is complex. We face a model of anti-union work on a worldwide scale. This has never simply been about resources—it is a philosophical and political struggle, and therefore the company has constantly thrown the full weight of its economic power and operations into weakening us as a collective. None of the four fines for anti-union practices have fazed the multinational giant, which continues to display the same behavior as always. Therefore, we urge the citizens, consumers, trade unions, and society as a whole to demonstrate in any ways that you can in support of these workers that now represent many more who genuinely fear organizing in a company like this. Today, in this unequal contest the sacrifice of these warriors is not for money, but for their right to bargain collectively and to win respect for the freedom of association at Starbucks. Therefore, we continue, united.

## Starbucks Union Strike Ends, Nov. 8, 2013

To our fellow workers, our friends, and the public:

Today, Nov. 8, we concluded our legal strike voluntarily, having achieved, over the 11 days of mobilization, each and every one of the political objectives we set as a group at the time of launching the strike. The campaign was not only to obtain the much-desired meal subsidy or some other benefit we knew that Starbucks was not going to compromise, given its anti-union philosophy. It was not about resources. Rather, it was about fighting for our collective rights and sending a political message full of solidarity to Chile and the world.

In just 11 days our organization strengthened its unity and political development. Non-union workers, who historically have been too afraid to join

the organization have begun to see justice in our cause, and are growing closer and closer to us. It has become clear that Starbucks is a hypocritical and obstinate business. Here there is no social responsibility but rather social irresponsibility. "No budget negotiations," "we cannot recognize collectives and grant them privileges," "unions are unnecessary at Starbucks"—these were the responses that the company posed to argue why it would not agree to a single demand of its union

workers despite a tremendous increase in profits.

We have also reached the public, collecting more than 5,000 signatures of support in Chile and 7,000 international signatures calling upon Starbucks to change its anti-union behavior. Presidential candidates Marcel Claude, Roxana Miranda and Marco Enríquez-Ominami expressed their support. The picket line was attended by Democratic politician Tucapel Jimenez, the Workers' United Center of Chile, the Labor Front, the Confederación de Trabajadores del Cobre and the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo and many, many other organizations. Outside our borders, La Confederación Sindical Internacional and La Confederación Sindical de Trabajadores/as de las Américas did their part to show the dark side of the company internationally, taking our case to the Inter-American Commission on Hu-

man Rights on Oct. 25. And the IWW and workers in Belgium, England, Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Bulgaria, New Zealand, Spain, Argentina, and of course the U.S. unions in Starbucks all staged actions to support our cause.

We firmly believe that today a scenario has been initiated that will favor the unity of the workers against the anti-unionism of the company. Although Starbucks purports to be "a company with policies promoting open doors and a meritocracy," what outrages us is that it is also proud to be an anti-union company. Therefore it is our duty to take all measures, domestic and international, to ensure that the business stops violating the inalienable collective rights of its workers. Starbucks is a repeat offender. We will, therefore, present our case not only to the Labor Courts of Justice, but also to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development for Starbucks' violation of the guidelines for multinationals. Likewise, we will file a complaint against the Chilean state at the International Labour Organization for abandoning its role as guarantor of the rule of law, thereby allowing violations of domestic law and the international conventions ratified by Chile. We will continue to publicize our struggle during this process, with the support and solidarity of all organizations that have stayed with us during this battle. That's why as Starbucks workers, we do not return to our jobs defeated; as we have cracked open the door that will allow us to democratize the company. We were always aware that this was the beginning of a long-winded fight against the violent imposition of a corporate job model. We'll meet again in 18 months, more united than ever.

Thanks to all.

Starbucks Workers Union of Chile

Translated by Steve Fake.



Photo: Starbucks Workers Union of Chile

## IWW History

# Nonviolent Direct Action And The Early IWW

By Stephen R. Thornton

Wobbly organizer Matilda Rabinowitz took the stage to address hundreds of striking mill workers and the townspeople who came to gawk: “I apologize to the people of Shelton who came here out of curiosity. I fear the IWW speakers here tonight have disappointed you. None of them have come to the stage with a stiletto in their teeth. They carry no guns, nor do they bring with them bombs with sputtering fuses.” And with that simple rebuke, Rabinowitz dispelled the prevailing myth of Wobblies as mad bombers—a myth that the press, police and plutocrats manufactured for decades.

It would be incorrect to say that the early IWW was an explicitly nonviolent or pacifist organization. There is nothing in the union’s Preamble or Constitution that indicates an adherence to nonviolent direct action. But there is widespread evidence that the Wobbly founders consciously chose nonviolence over violence as a strategy for self-defense, for winning strikes and in response to thousands of vicious assaults.

Consider the following article published in *Solidarity* in 1912, entitled “The Passive Resistance Policy of the I.W.W. and How it Works”:

*“As we have previously remarked in the columns of Solidarity, the policy of passive resistance is a very inconvenient proposition to handle.*

*“For instance, when the Solidarity boys were arrested, tried and convicted; the law set the penalty at one hundred dollars fine each and cost. The costs footed up about one hundred dollars more.*

*“The authorities and Mr. Taxpayer (poor fellow) had their mouths watering over this \$700 that they thought would drop like a plum into their mouths.*

*“Now here is how the affair turned out. First the boys refused to pay the fine and costs and the 700 good dollars went up the spout. Then of course the boys had to go to jail for 90 days each, and the county has to pay the sheriff 50 cents a day per man for board...it was fully expected that Solidarity would have to go out of business. But it did not nor will not. And it is getting stronger every day and so is the I.W.W.”*

Big Bill Haywood agreed. As a former leader of the Western Federation of Miners (WFM), he was no stranger to militant labor violence. In fact, the WFM had built its own army to fight state militias and vigilantes. But by the time he was organizing the Lawrence Textile Strike (or the “Bread and Roses” strike), Haywood told a reporter “I should never think of conducting a strike in the old way...I, for one, have turned my back on violence. It wins nothing. When we strike now, we strike with hands in our pockets. We have a new kind of violence—the havoc we raise

with money by laying down our tools. Pure strength lies in the overwhelming power of numbers.” For Haywood, nonviolent action was not necessarily a moral principle. It was, however, a conscious, strategic turn toward mass action without physical violence.

For the purposes of this article, I define nonviolent direct action as a technique of struggle outside of institutional methods (courts, voting) without the use of injurious force or threat to others. It is open and direct conflict that exposes oppression. It is protest, resistance, or intervention to stop injustice and/or to win control over the economic life of society. It uses a set of special methods that do not necessarily exclude coercion or property destruction.

## Gandhi, Union Leader

Whether they knew it or not, the Wobblies were building on the work of Mohandas Gandhi who was, during the same period, organizing the oppressed Indian minority in South Africa. From 1907 to 1914, he led massive peaceful protests of noncooperation to fight compulsory state registration and racist poll taxes.

In India beginning in 1916, Gandhi led the successful Ahmedabad textile workers’ strike. He had previously organized labor campaigns in South Africa and where he also promoted the eight-hour workday. The Indian leader organized indigo plantation workers in 1917 and believed in decentralized industry under worker control. Worldwide press reports followed his Satyagraha movement. Here in the United States, labor activists pledged their “assurance of support” to Gandhi in the fight for independence from England.

The early Wobblies perfected the strategic use of free speech campaigns and mass industrial strikes during the first two decades of the 20th century. Both types of action are classic nonviolent tools, even though both elicited violent responses from the boss. Withholding labor, refusing to cooperate with authority, and filling the jails won victories for the IWW. And these techniques of struggle proved to be so successful that they were adopted by the civil rights movement and many other campaigns, most recently by Occupy Wall Street and against construction of the Tar Sands pipeline.

At the IWW’s 1905 founding convention, Lucy Parsons foresaw that “the strike of the future is not to strike and go out and starve, but to strike and remain in and take possession of the necessary property of production.” Her call was heeded in 1906 by General Electric workers in Schenectady, N.Y., where Wobblies and machinist union members cooperated in the first 20th century sit-down strike. Parsons was no pacifist, having repeatedly called for workers to arm themselves with dynamite. IWW rhetoric was sometimes



Photo: ucblibraries.colorado.edu

**International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers (formerly the Western Federation of Miners, the IWW’s largest founding union) strike against the Potash Company of America in Carlsband, N.M., in 1949. Strikers prevented the moving of ore by train by sitting on the tracks.**

just as violent. But a 1939 study at Johns Hopkins University found that despite the hundreds of accusations against the Wobblies, law enforcement never caught or convicted one Wobbly for sabotage.

Other nonviolent tactics developed in response to specific conditions, such as when in 1918, dozens of Sacramento Wobs, who had been arrested on trumped-up charges, organized their “silent defense.” They refused to recognize the court’s authority by silently sitting in the courtroom, rejecting the use of attorneys and refusing to defend themselves.

## The Women Lead

Women in the IWW challenged the culture of violence, even in the face of ferocious capitalist brutality. As Andy Piascik wrote in his piece “Bread And Roses A Hundred Years On: Lessons From The Lawrence Textile Strike,” which appeared in the March 2012 *IW*:

*“Knowing all too well that violence always reverberates hardest on those on society’s lowest rungs, women strikers called the men on their beatings of scabs and their fights with police and militia. It was women who moved to the front of many of the marches in an effort to curtail state violence against the strike (though the police and militia proved not at all shy about beating women and children as well as men).”*

In response to a textile strike in Connecticut, private detectives would “insult and aggravate the strikers in many ways,” according to a news report, while the workers “desire to conduct themselves peaceably.” In one of her daily talks, Matilda Rabinowitz warned the striking mill hands against the overuse of alcohol. “In a time like this, men with strong drink are led to do things they ought not to do,” she said. “Let the strike breakers and the guards do the drinking. We must get along without it.”

## Trade Their Clubs for Shovels

More often than not, picket line violence comes from a place of seething anger and the desire for revenge—an eye for an eye. As one Syrian silk weaver told a New London, Conn., reporter in response to police violence, “We are not dogs. We will be as bad as they are if we cannot have some of our rights.”

By no means were all Wobblies pacifists. IWW members fought in the Magonista rebellion of 1911, and many joined the U.S. Armed Forces to fight in World War I. James Connolly helped lead the Irish Citizen Army during the 1916 Easter Rising. At one time or another, Wobbly leaders argued for the use of violence if it would help workers win. “To kill is a great crime, but to be killed is the greatest,” wrote the rebel poet Arturo Giovannitti in 1913.

Wobblies have picked up the gun for self-defense, notably during the Centralia

Massacre (1919) and the Everett Massacre (1916). Even Gandhi wrote “I do believe that where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence I would advise violence.” But in the same essay he wrote that “strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will.”

IWW organizers sometimes mixed their metaphors when cautioning workers about violence. Jean Spielman conjured up the Haymarket anarchists and the Molly Maguires to inspire striking weavers at Russell Manufacturing near Wesleyan University in Connecticut. Then he told them “We do not believe in using physical force. We possess a weapon stronger than physical force or violence; it is to use our labor power. We will quit producing.” Joseph Ettor was even more pithy. “We are at war with war,” he said. At an Italian Socialist Federation meeting Giovannitti saw cops spying on him at the back of the hall. He predicted that the time would come when “we will take the uniforms and clubs away, place shovels in their hands, and set them to work.”

## In Good Company

Maybe the best indicator of the IWW’s successful practice is the impressive list of how many nonviolent activists the union has attracted. It’s hard to believe that “Howl” poet Allen Ginsberg would join the IWW if he believed it was a violent organization. Ammon Hennacy, a tax resister, and anti-war activist, was a longtime IWW member. He was also a Catholic Worker sent by Dorothy Day (a former Wob) to establish the Joe Hill House of Hospitality in Salt Lake City. He taught Utah Phillips, the great Wobbly troubadour, about the connections between personal and institutional violence.

Phillips had become a pacifist as a result of his traumatic experience as a soldier in the Korean War. As he explains it, Hennacy taught him that “you came into the world armed to the teeth. With an arsenal of weapons, weapons of privilege, economic privilege, sexual privilege, racial privilege. You want to be a pacifist, you’re not just going to have to give up guns, knives, clubs, hard, angry words, you are going to have lay down the weapons of privilege and go into the world completely disarmed.” (At his request, Hennacy’s ashes were scattered across the Haymarket Martyrs’ graves).

Bayard Rustin was a labor organizer, civil rights leader, gay activist and non-violent advocate. His union affiliation was not the IWW but primarily with A. Philip Randolph’s Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. He has provided us with a provocative contribution to the ongoing debate surrounding nonviolent action. This consummate organizer melded nonviolence theory with the Wobbly watchword when he said “We are nonviolent because an injury to one is an injury to all.”

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# World Labor Solidarity

A COLUMN BY THE INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY COMMISSION

## Labor Law In France: "Socialist" And Employer Flavored

By Guillaume Goutte

Continental, PSA Peugeot Citroën, Goodyear, Fralib, ArcelorMittal, Sanofi—these are the major companies where layoffs are taking place right now. Today there are countless “redeployment” plans in France that threaten the jobs of tens of thousands of workers. There are also increasingly radical struggles and a resurgence of solidarity across sectors and jobs, some of which have become symbols of France—a country whose workers are refusing the inevitability of capitalism.

But the attacks against workers on the part of bosses (who are firmly supported by the Socialist government), are not limited to the workplace alone. Since Jan. 11, 2013, labor law itself has been severely attacked by this sinister but historic coalition. This attack has the hypocritical and cynical name “job protection agreement.”

This law is the fruit of negotiations which were (from their start) doomed to be a defeat for workers. It has been ratified by the Mouvement des Entreprises de France (MEDEF), the largest employers association in France, and several of France’s largest unions, including the Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (CFDT), the Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens (CFTC), and the Confédération Française de l’Encadrement (CGC), who only think about saving their ass in terms of being recognized as representative. Amongst the big unions, only the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) and Force Ouvrière (FO) refused to sign this heinous agreement, which glorifies employment flexibility.

Now, thanks to these historic negotiations, employees are forced, under threat of dismissal, to accept mobility within

the company, without any guarantee of this being limited to within the country. Salaries can be lowered and working hours changed for a period of two years. Redundancy and redeployment plans will now be possible with a simple document that is approved by La direction Générale du Travail (department of labor), and a basic consultation of the Comité d’Entreprise (works council) is sufficient, even if its opinion is negative. Meanwhile, a new type of employment contract is created, more flexible than ever before, and generalizing precarity: the so-called “intermittent” permanent contract—a permanent contract consisting of periods of employment and unemployment.

With regards to the justice system, the time period to bring an action to the “Prud’hommes” (employment tribunal), changes from five to two years for layoffs, and from five to three years for matters relating to wages. Compensations will also be capped, and allow bosses to escape penalties proportionate to their wrongdoing.

Not content with stabbing labor law in this manner, the Socialist government is also preparing to reduce employer contributions by 20 billion euros! And if the government gives to the rich in this manner, it’s of course not without taking from the very poorest, notably by planning the taxation of benefits.

In other words, under the pretext of “adapting to the crisis,” employers can now more easily fire their workers and draw in a plentiful supply of precarious labor, while receiving valuable gifts from the government. Workers, for their part, will just have to work. And, of course, keep their mouths shut.

Translated by Monika Vykoukal.



Graphic: CGT

## Rising Tide Shuts Down Port Of Vancouver

By John Kalwaic

On Nov. 4, the environmentalist action group Rising Tide shut down the Port of Vancouver, Wash., in solidarity with locked-out longshore union workers. United Grain, part of the Japanese conglomerate Mitsui & Company, locked out the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 4. United Grain chose to lock out its union workers rather than negotiate with them in good faith. On July 15, 2011, workers of the ILWU came



Port shut-down on Nov. 4.

Photo: Portland Rising Tide

to the terminal to protest United Grain and blockaded a grain train. The struggle of ILWU Local 4 is now spilling over into another terminal as the port has decided to build a Tesoro oil terminal near the Port of Vancouver. Tesoro is responsible for an oil spill of 20,000 barrels in North Dakota in October that left five workers dead. ILWU Local 4 was concerned that this unaccountable company was coming to build an oil terminal near their port. Rising Tide

and its allied groups were also shutting down the ports in protest of the proposed oil terminal’s violation of the treaty rights with the local indigenous people of the Columbia River. Around 50 people came to shut down the port. ILWU Local 4 did not participate but stood in solidarity with Rising Tide and their other community allies in their shutdown of the port.

With files from Earth First! Journal and PaperBlog.

## Bangladeshi Garment Workers Hold Boss Hostage

By John Kalwaic

In mid-October, Bangladeshi garment workers locked their boss in his office and demanded him to give them their bonuses. The workers went to the Tuba Group factory to demand their



Photo: sexgenderbody.tumblr.com

bonuses for the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha. They forced their way into owner Delwar Hossain’s office and held him hos-

tage when he said there was no money available to pay them. Negotiators were sent to talk with the hostage takers for the release of their boss. After negotiations, the boss paid 900 workers their bonuses, totaling 5 million taka (\$64,000). In this case direct action got the goods!

With files from Reuters.

## Teachers Union & Anarchists Join Forces In Brazil

By John Kalwaic

Massive social unrest has hit Brazil in recent months and anarchists are taking the lead. Anarchists have taken to the streets in greater numbers and are using more militant tactics. Mass protests in Brazil erupted in the summer during a protest against public transportation cuts. These first protests attracted a mixed group of people from across the political spectrum, including fascists, but more progressive forces came into the movement as well and changed the discussion.

Brazil’s indigenous movements have been reignited by the recent wave of social unrest. Unions are also going on very militant strikes. The latest account of militant unrest is the protest by the Brazil’s teachers involved in Sindicato Estadual dos Profissionais de Educação do Rio de Janeiro (SEPE) and their black-clad anarchist supporters. The anarchists were having militant marches in support of their teachers. This was widely criticized



Anarchists protest public transit cuts in Sao Paulo in October. Photo: gulf-times.com

by the mainstream media, who accused “black bloc” anarchists of hijacking a “peaceful teachers’ strike” and turning the demonstrations violent. The teachers of SEPE had a different opinion: the federation decided unanimously to endorse the anarchist demonstrations. It is important to realize that the teachers’ union endorsement of “black bloc” tactics exists not just in this union but also in the context of Brazil’s growing anarchist movement. Anarchists in Brazil have also recently called for free public transportation.

With files from Revolution News! and the Gulf Times.

## The IWW Survey & Research Committee Expands Its Activities

From the SRC

The Survey & Research Committee (SRC) consists of three members appointed by the General Executive Board and a number of member volunteers. The mandate of the SRC is to develop research trainings for members, conduct analyses of organizing strategies and tactics, and support local campaigns in their research needs.



The SRC is expanding its activities this year and will focus on three projects:

1. **Research 101 training.** The SRC is developing training to empower and build capacities within workers to reclaim areas of “knowledge-making” and power structure analysis that will aid in campaigns to directly confront and attack oppressive and unjust power systems in their workplaces. Kate D. is leading this effort. Contact her at [kate@militantresearch.org](mailto:kate@militantresearch.org) for more information or to get involved.

2. **National campaign research.** The SRC is coordinating campaign research on the three national targets. The committee will create an online repository of research to share information and strategy across the union. Eric D. is leading this effort. Contact Eric at [eric@militantresearch.org](mailto:eric@militantresearch.org) for more information or to get involved.

3. **Global supply chains.** A working group of the SRC is trying to understand the global flow of goods by mapping out logistics and how strike waves have stopped the flow of capital over time. See Empire Logistics for initial maps: <http://empire-logistics.org>. Inquiries with logistics workers in London, Oakland, and Los Angeles are also underway. Yvonne YL is leading this. Contact her at [yvonne@militantresearch.org](mailto:yvonne@militantresearch.org).

If you’d like to talk with the SRC, there are monthly conference calls in which members can call in with questions. And the Committee is always looking for more volunteers to contribute to developing the strategic research and analysis capacity of the union, so please consider joining. For more information, please contact the SRC at [src@iww.org](mailto:src@iww.org).

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