

INDUSTRIAL WORKER

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Unions Call For Blockade Of Israeli Maritime Trade

By BNC Palestine

The Palestinian trade union movement, as a key constituent member of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee, calls on dockworkers' unions worldwide to block Israeli maritime trade in response to Israel's massacre of humanitarian relief workers and activists aboard the Free Gaza Flotilla, until Israel complies with international law and ends its illegal blockade of Gaza. Drunk with power and impunity, Israel has ignored a near-consensus among world governments to end its siege, as well as recent appeals by the U.N. Secretary General, putting the onus on international civil society to shoulder the moral responsibility of holding Israel accountable to international law and ending its criminal impunity.

Dockworkers around the world have historically contributed to the struggle against injustice. This was most notably against the apartheid regime in South Africa, when port workers unions refused to load and offload cargo on and from South African ships as a most effective way of protesting the apartheid

regime.

Today, we ask you to join the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU), who resolved not to offload Israeli ships in Durban in February 2009 in protest of Israel's war of aggression on Gaza, and the Swedish Dockworkers Union who resolved to blockade all Israeli ships and cargo to and from Israel in protest of Israel's attack against the Flotilla and the ongoing deadly Israeli siege of the occupied Gaza Strip.

Israel's ongoing blockade of essential food, health, educational and construction supplies is not only immoral; it is a severe form of collective punishment, a war crime that is strictly prohibited under Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention—inducing mass poverty, water contamination, environmental collapse, chronic diseases, economic devastation and hundreds of deaths. This three-year old medieval siege against 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza has been squarely condemned by leading legal experts, including U.N. Special Rapporteur on

Continued on 10



The Free Gaza Flotilla was violently raided by Israeli forces on May 31. Photo: freegaza.org

Crime On The High Seas: The "Deepwater Horizon" Oil Rig Disaster

By John Reimann

An environmental disaster is spreading through the Gulf of Mexico and beyond. On April 20, there was an explosion and then a fire on the deep-water oil drilling rig, the "Deepwater Horizon," operated by Transocean Ltd. under contract from British Petroleum (BP). Eleven workers lost their lives in the explosion. The rig then capsized and sank and oil started pouring out of the well, which is nearly one mile deep. BP and their public relations agent—the U.S. government—estimate that some 5,000 barrels daily are polluting the ocean. Some scientists estimate the rate is between 25,000 to 80,000 barrels per day.

"Free" Market

From its very start, this entire calamity was caused by the basic laws of motion of capitalism itself and exacerbated

by the "free" market policies that are so prevalent today.

BP leased the rig and its operation from Transocean Ltd., one of the world's largest deep-water operators of oil-drilling companies. That particular well was going to be the world's deepest. Considered an ocean vessel, the rig was flagged from the Marshall Islands and had many workers from the underdeveloped world. As such, they were not given proper training for just such emergencies. The plan was to drill the well and plug it with cement. BP would then move on, reopening and exploiting the well at a later date.

Cutting Corners on Safety

Wells such as this one are lined with concrete, which must be allowed to set for a certain amount of time. During the drilling procedure, a heavy fluid known as "mud" is pumped into the bore hole.

This is pumped out and sea water allowed in when the drilling is finished. Normally, the cement plugs are set prior to that procedure. This is because as gas enters the well, the heavier mud will prevent the gas from rising to the surface until the cement plugs sets. In this case, presumably in order to save money (the operation was costing BP \$1 million per day), the mud was replaced with sea water prior to plugging the well.

Halliburton, which was responsible for setting this plug, claims that it requested permission from the Minerals Management Services (MMS, the federal agency responsible for regulating the industry) to undertaking drilling in such a manner. While it is far from certain that Halliburton even requested permission for such a practice, the multinational has been unable to provide a paper trail proving they ever received

a response from the MMS. In any case, even prior to setting the plug and replacing the mud with sea water, they are supposed to "pressure test" the well. If pressure within the well fluctuates, this is an indication that gas is leaking into it and measures should be taken to halt this before the mud is removed. In this case, the test revealed that pressure was mounting, but BP decided not to run a second test to confirm these results. Instead, less than two hours before the explosion, they decided to proceed to remove the mud.

The CBS television show "60 Minutes" interviewed a former worker on the rig, Mike Williams. According to Williams, the entire procedure was running some three weeks over schedule, costing BP some \$21 million. Several weeks before the disaster, a worker accidentally

Continued on 11

FAU Berlin Wins Union Freedom

By Matt Antosh

The Freie Arbeiterinnen-und Arbeiter-Union (FAU) achieved a victory on June 10 when a Berlin court ruled that the previously unrecognized anarcho-syndicalist union could call itself, and therefore operate as, a trade union.

In December 2009, the Berlin local of the FAU was effectively prohibited by the German courts after being threatened by the employers of Babylon Cinema, the pseudo-Stalinist "Left Party," and the mainstream ver.di (Vereinte Dienstleistungsgewerkschaft) union, which is part of the state-backed Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB) umbrella union. These groups acted in retaliation for the FAU's efforts to win better working conditions at the Babylon Cinema, demanding that the FAU be stripped of its rights to represent workers or

function as a labor union.

Germany's restrictive rules meant that any organization not recognized as a union by the courts could not legally act as such. In effect, this gives monopoly to the DGB over industrial disputes.

However, after months of campaigning, and solidarity actions across the globe, the FAU-B has won the right to call itself a trade union.

This ruling means that the FAU can get back to organizing workers in Babylon Cinema, where it had taken the lead in a heated and high-profile dispute with the bosses.

"We are happy that they have failed to banish the strongest and most active trade union in the movies. The ruling allows militant unions to be active," said Lars Röhm, General Secretary of the FAU Berlin.

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Some Stories Should Not Appear In The IWW Newspaper

This letter is a quick response to two articles that appeared in the May 2010 issue of the *Industrial Worker*.

The first, "Are We Hiding Our Revolutionary Nature?" by Jim Del Duca, which appeared on page 5, shouldn't have appeared in the *Industrial Worker*. For one, it's not our lack of open radicalism that's holding us back; it's the fact that on the level of practical activity our skills and confidence are not nearly as developed as they could be. Once every IWW member is actively organizing around direct grievances in their workplace, it will be that practical activity that will open the space for us—as individuals and as an organization—to begin talking to our workmates about class, capitalism, and revolution. More importantly, however, FW Del Duca's article was a matter of internal debate. As such, it should have appeared in the "GOB," not the *Industrial Worker*.

My second concern comes from FW Walt Weber's thought-provoking article on pensions, titled "End Corporate Feudalism With Industrial Pensions," which appeared on page 8. FW Weber writes: "After the United Autoworkers...formed



Graphic: elmazzika.com

and displayed militancy in the 1930s, their sit-down strikes set the bar." I have to disagree with my FW's emphasis. It was the autoworkers themselves who forced the UAW's hand. As outlined in chapter 5 of Jeremy Brecher's "Strike!"—a book that absolutely should be required reading for any Wob—the unions felt the autoworkers were being reckless and premature in their willingness to take direct action. It was only once the sit-downs occurred that the UAW then sought to bring the strikes under the auspices of the union.

In this case, like most others, the unions lagged behind the militancy of the working class. Their role, as unions, was to mediate this raw power. In the process, the unions did use this potential militancy to make gains for the workers. Yet, this also entrenched the unions as representative agents who negotiated on behalf of workers. To remain effective in this role, those same unions had to be able to control struggle on the shop floor. As Marty Glaberman articulates so well in his book, "Punching Out," the initial militancy expressed by the UAW provided no immunity to the structural role of unions as mediating agents within the framework of industrial capitalism. So when the UAW later repressed wildcat strikes and conspired with auto manufacturers to fire workplace militants, it was precisely their role as mediating agents that led to this.

It's the opinion of this Wobbly that this particular piece of history contains lessons for today's IWW as we continue to move forward and grow.

X361737
London, U.K.

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Wobblies To Sue U.S. Military For Spying And Infiltration In Olympia

By **Brendan Maslauskas Dunn**

One year after the outing of a spy who spent two years infiltrating and spying on anti-war, student, anarchist, IWW, and immigrant rights activists in Olympia and Tacoma, Wash., the former delegate and treasurer of the Olympia IWW are joining several other activists in a lawsuit against the City of Olympia and all four branches of the U.S. military: the Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard.

A man known to Wobblies as both fellow activist and personal friend "John Jacob" was outed after the Olympia IWW filed a public records request with the City for "any... information on anarchy, anarchists, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the Industrial Workers of the World." The request was made after numerous suspicions in Olympia about: police surveillance of activists, the targeting of the anti-war group Port Militarization Resistance (PMR), which since 2006 has taken direct action to block military shipments throughout Northwest ports and shut

down the Port of Olympia twice in November 2007; and the theft of the IWW's newspaper box by the Olympia police station. The City returned hundreds of documents to then Olympia IWW delegate Brendan Maslauskas Dunn that revealed a vast intelligence network that included numerous police departments and all four branches of the military. This vast network had their eyes on Port Militarization Resistance in particular, as well as other activists and organizations in the region. Some of the documents were emails, mostly redacted, sent by John J. Towery II from Fort Lewis's (now Joint Base Lewis-McChord) Force Protection Unit. After some research was done, it was discovered that "John Jacob" was in fact John Towery. John Towery met with Maslauskas after this revelation and admitted that he had spied on him and many other activists for more than two years. He admitted to reporting to an intelligence network



November 2007 Port of Olympia demonstration that brought 400 people.

Photo: Elliot Stoller

down the Port of Olympia twice in November 2007; and the theft of the IWW's newspaper box by the Olympia police station.



Graphic: inconvenientbody.files.wordpress.com

The City returned hundreds of documents to then Olympia IWW delegate Brendan Maslauskas Dunn that revealed a vast intelligence network that included

that consisted of dozens of law enforcement agencies, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTF), the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard.

The story received full coverage on July 28, 2009 on "Democracy Now!," which was the first news agency to report on Towery. Coverage soon spread to the *New York Times*, the *Guardian*, local news outlets, and to newspapers in South America and Europe. The Army responded

by doing an "investigation," which they claim is almost finished, even though absolutely no activists or the people who were spied on were ever questioned during the investigation.

Although the IWW was not the military's primary target, it was certainly one of them. Eight Wobblies were in the Olympia 22 trial of PMR activists that took action at the Port of Olympia blocking military shipments in 2006. The attorney-client listserve used by the defense was hacked by police agents (along with John Towery), and a mistrial was declared. Phil Chinn, a former Wobbly, was pulled over and arrested in 2007 en route to the coastal town of Aberdeen to protest military shipments. His car had a tracking device and, according to police, was stopped because "three known anarchists" were in the car. Chinn recently settled out of court in a lawsuit worth

\$169,000. Perhaps the most frightening form of police intimidation of the IWW was the Olympia Police Department's continual threats to raid the house that four Wobblies and several other activists lived in. This was a raid that thankfully never took place, although there was constant police surveillance, including undercover sheriffs following Wobblies and PMR activists from their residence to demonstrations, and in some cases following them for a whole day across many counties.

The lawsuit, known as *Panagacos v Towery*, is going after the City of Olympia and the military for violating the First, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Fourteenth Amendment rights as well as the civil liberties of PMR activists. The lawyer who has taken up the case is Larry Hildes who joined the IWW as an organizer in California's timber country during the union's Redwood Summer campaign with Judi Bari in 1990.

John Towery is just the tip of the iceberg of a national surveillance program targeting activists on the Left, including Wobblies. The severity and depth of this program will slowly be uncovered in this lawsuit. The U.S. Attorney assigned to this case and officials from Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington know this fact and are shaking in their boots.

More information can be found about John Towery and Port Militarization Resistance at: www.johntowery.com and www.olywip.org.

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.

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- I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer.
- I agree to abide by the IWW constitution.
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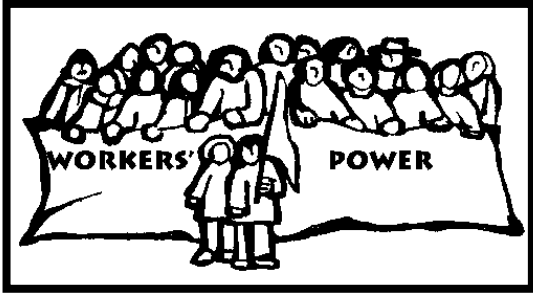
It Takes More Than Direct Action

By Colin Bossen

Over the last seven years I have been involved in three major IWW organizing campaigns. The first of these was with the Chicago Couriers Union. This campaign succeeded in building a union of bike messengers that over the last seven years has maintained a small but dedicated membership. The Couriers Union has, throughout its existence, managed to make a difference in the lives of the workers in the industry. Since its inception, the union has: won a wage increase at the third largest courier company in Chicago; advocated for numerous workers who have been unjustly fired, denied back pay, illegally docked at work, harassed or otherwise victimized; taught novice bike messengers about safety; and improved access to buildings. The union has also organized numerous social events and bike races for members of the Chicago, national and international courier industry. These events, combined with the union's victories, have made the couriers union a significant presence in Chicago and in the wider industry.

The other two campaigns I have been involved with have not been as successful. The first was an effort to organize the *troqueros*, or port truck drivers, in the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. This effort got off to a solid start. The IWW was contacted by a group of *troqueros* interested in organizing. As many as 50 workers attended the group's initial meeting. More importantly, the group was able to organize a strike that shut down the both of the ports. Despite this spectacular job action—involving thousands of workers and disrupting a large segment of economy—the *troqueros* were unable to successfully build a lasting union presence in the industry.

The second failed campaign I was involved with shared similar characteristics to the *troquero* campaign. It involved a group of taxi workers in Cleveland. Again, there was great enthusiasm initially. Before ever meeting with the IWW, the group had managed to organize meetings with as many as 80 workers in attendance. Over the course of a year, the taxi workers held a series of direct actions and protests that built some respect for them in the industry. The director of the Cleveland Hopkins International Airport met with the workers to listen to their concerns and they vocally presented their demands to the owners of a couple of taxi companies.



After a year of this kind of activity, and despite their promising start, the taxi workers' organizing efforts also petered out.

The two failed organizing campaigns had a lot in common. In both instances, they took place in cities where the IWW lacked a well-organized local branch, I was trying to organize the campaign with little additional support, and the workers involved had little interest in doing institutional work of union building—people did not want to step up to be delegates or use any sort of structure for running their meetings. This meant that the workers' meetings were often dominated by personalities and there were no formal mechanisms for accountability.

The campaign that resulted from the Chicago Couriers Union provides a sharp contrast with the other two. It took place in a city with a well-organized and vibrant local IWW branch. Between the branch and the international union, money was put together in two separate instances to fund a paid, full-time organizer for three months. Throughout the initial phases of the campaign there were always a handful of people from outside the industry involved in organizing efforts. These differences meant that there were people to work on the campaign when the workers in the industry's interest slackened and that there was a model of organization that the couriers could refer to when building their own.

The differences between these three campaigns have led me to believe that, in order for organizing efforts to succeed in the long-term, organizers and workers must focus on institution building. I am positive that if strong IWW branches existed in either Los Angeles or Cleveland when I was working with the *troqueros* and taxi workers, then the outcome of both of those campaigns would have been different. Likewise, I believe that if the IWW had been able to devote a full-time organizer to either campaign the results would have been different.

If the IWW is to grow into a powerful force for the working class then we must focus on making our institutions stronger. This means, at the least, having better-organized local branches and more resources for funding organizers. If we devote our energies to these things, we will be a force to be reckoned with. If we do not, our organizing efforts will continue to have a mixed track record and, more often than not, end in failure.

The Defiant Spirit: News from your General Defense Committee

By Kenneth Miller

Start Planning For "In November We Remember" NOW!

Please participate in the *Industrial Worker's* "In November We Remember" issue. IWW members and branches submit "remembrances" in the form of advertisements to the union's newspaper in time for publication in the November issues. We do this in November because, historically, November was a bad month for Wobblies. Joe Hill was executed by firing squad on Nov. 19, 1915. The Palmer Raids of 1919 occurred in November. We continue to educate new members about these things that happened long ago because they have defined who we are today and we have to learn from these events.

Spend a little time in August, September and October thinking about how you will participate in the "In November

We Remember" issue by including this on the agenda of your IWW meetings. The few moments you spend planning for "In November We Remember," explaining the commemoration to new Wobblies, reflecting on possible contributions you can make, will be time well spent. The IWW is engaged in writing our own history and sorting through the things that make us what we are and preparing ourselves for the struggles before us.

Struggle to prosecute police who beat Jordan Miles is escalating

The Pittsburgh IWW is the first labor union in the city of Pittsburgh to have joined with community groups demanding that Pittsburgh police officers Richard Ewing, Michael Saldutte and David Siste be criminally prosecuted for beating Jordan Miles on Jan. 11, 2010 (see



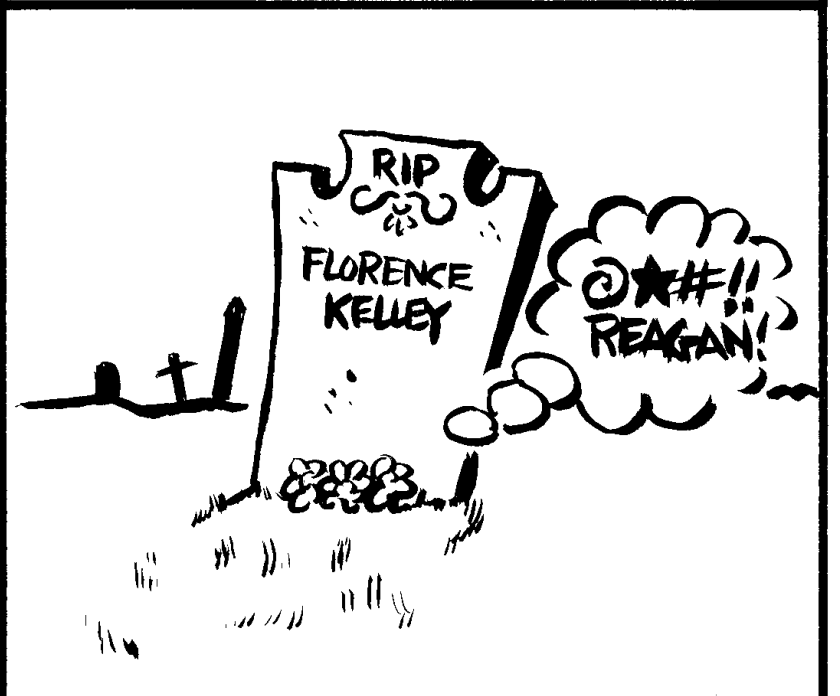
WOMEN WORKERS' HISTORY



Chapter 35 Florence Kelley

As we saw in the last chapter, the Illinois Women's Alliance and labor movement led a successful campaign for anti-sweatshop legislation. Following passage of the Sweatshop Act, Florence Kelley was appointed chief factory inspector by Gov. Peter Altgeld in 1892. She served in this position until 1897.

A native of Philadelphia, where she led evening classes for women workers, Florence Kelley in 1891 became a resident of Chicago's Hull House, the "settlement house" founded by Jane Addams for community service and worker education. Kelley and other members of Hull House had worked in the anti-sweatshop campaign described in the last chapter. As factory inspector, Kelley helped expose the dangerous and unhealthy conditions forced on many Illinois workers. An admirer described her as a "guerrilla warrior" in the "wilderness of industrial wrongs."



In later years Kelley became known as a campaigner for consumers' rights and the right of women to vote. But she remained active in the fight against child labor and sweatshop conditions. As historian Barbara Wertheimer pointed out, "she vigorously opposed tenement labor, both because it destroyed the health of sweatshop workers and because it forced down the wages of factory workers, competing with sweated labor for work." She would be horrified to learn that, because of the Reagan Administration, manufacturing returned to the home in January 1989.

Graphic: Mike Konopacki

"The Defiant Spirit" column on page 4 of the April *IW*). The Pittsburgh branch participated in at rally at Freedom Corner on June 12.

On Saint Patrick's Day, the police marched in the annual parade to assert that they would "stand with their three brothers." It was shameful. They looked the like Klu Klux Klan marching in Pittsburgh. It is very important that labor unions actively oppose the Fraternal Order of Police.

Join the GDC in the Twin Cities

The GDC will have a table at the IWW's General Convention in the Twin Cities from Sept. 4-5. Initiation and a year's dues is \$25. We expect to sign up EVERYONE who is able to attend the Convention this year. Members of the GDC will have a special caucus during

the Convention to discuss the Committee's work. We need folks to serve as GDC delegates to work the table and take dues. We need a big sign announcing our presence at the Convention. Call Kenneth @ 412-867-9213 if you can help.

October 22 / National Day of Action Against Police Brutality

For many years the GDC has proudly co-sponsored October 22 demonstrations. I urge Wobblies to put Oct. 22 on your calendars and be a part of planning for local protests on that day. This is a very important coalition of civil rights activists and victims' families that we should be proud to stand with. Opposing incidents of police brutality in your community and working with this coalition and its Stolen Lives Project is an important way to move forward.

Starbucks Union Celebrates Six Years Mott's Workers Strike In Upstate NY

By Starbucks Workers Union

The IWW Starbucks Workers Union (SWU) is proud to celebrate the sixth anniversary of our campaign for fair wages, consistent scheduling, a healthier and safer workplace, and a voice on the job at the world's largest coffee chain. As we enter our sixth year of struggle, we leave behind us a year marked by the continued rapid deterioration of working conditions at Starbucks: the doubling of our health insurance costs, massive layoffs, reduced staffing, and the continued disregard of greedy company executives for the well-being of hard-working baristas and their families, even as Starbucks achieves record profits of \$760.3 million in the last 12 months. This represents a profit of roughly \$5,354 from each of Starbucks' 142,000 workers. Rather than return the wealth of our labor to hard-working baristas who are living in poverty, Starbucks executives issued the first-ever dividend to shareholders, further enriching the financial class that has driven our world to ruin in the worst economic crisis since 1929. However, even as conditions continue to worsen in corporate management's greed-fueled race to the bottom, our movement for justice at work continues to gather strength. We now take a moment to celebrate our victories as we prepare for the battles to come.

In the past year, we gained members and took action to win our demands and build power on the job on shop floors across the world. The SWU expanded to Canada as baristas in Quebec City joined the IWW in response to Starbucks' new "Optimal Scheduling" system, which forces students to choose between keeping their jobs and staying in school and pressures working parents to choose between their children and their careers. In the United States, we have continued to gain ground in our fight to defend our right to organize, with Starbucks cornered into signing its sixth settlement agreement with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) pledging to end its anti-union misconduct. We gained valu-



able public support thanks to our new allies at Brave New Films, who launched a social media campaign to raise awareness of Starbucks' repeated and intentional violation for our right to organize. A YouTube video about the SWU filmed by Brave New Films was viewed over 80,000 times, forcing a response from Starbucks. In New York, Starbucks was hit by yet another NLRB legal complaint, increasing pressure on company bosses to respect our right to association.

Despite continued illegal interference from management, we have forged ahead with organizing efforts, welcoming scores of new members to the campaign and taking numerous direct actions to win gains on the job. In St. Paul, Minn., the SWU sprang to the defense of wrongfully-fired barista Azmera Mebrahtu as she was unjustly targeted by Partner & Asset Protection. In Fort Worth, Texas, union baristas took direct action to demand the right to call in sick when they were forced to work with H1N1 symptoms, as well as to highlight Starbucks' decision to line executives' pockets by doubling our healthcare costs. In New York City, baristas called on Starbucks executives to end their hypocrisy and honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by offering holiday pay on MLK Day. We stood up for the right of all workers to a workplace free to sexual harassment by standing with barista Kati Moore in her battle with the company over their support for a supervisor who repeatedly coerced her into sex. Unfortunately, we found that tolerance of sexual harassment has its roots high in the corporate hierarchy at Starbucks. Our public stance in support of Kati Moore inspired high-level managers to expose the pattern of sexual harassment and abuse engaged in by Starbucks Regional Vice President Andrew Alfano.

Looking back, we are horrified by the intensifying cycle of exploitation and abuse that corporate management is unleashing on workers at Starbucks. But looking ahead, we are confident that our movement will continue to gain strength. Our struggle for an independent voice on the job will end in triumph for Starbucks workers. Until the final victory!

From rwdsu.org

Over 300 full-time manufacturing workers at the Mott's plant in Williamson, N.Y. went out on strike on May 23 after company executives demanded painful wage cuts while the company enjoyed a record year of \$550 million in profits. The work stoppage was caused as a direct result of the Mott's (a subsidiary of Dr. Pepper Snapple Group) executives' Unfair Labor Practices as they tried to peel away good jobs and wages, including not bargaining in good faith. The company had publicly declared an impasse and plans to implement their last contract terms, which offered nothing but a reduction in hourly wages and drastic healthcare and pension concessions for the skilled, dedicated workforce at the Williamson manufacturing plant.

Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU/UFCW) Local 220, which represents the workers, has been tirelessly negotiating to secure a fair and decent contract for months with Mott's management. Despite the company's profitability, Mott's/Dr. Pepper Snapple have demanded givebacks, including a \$1.50 per hour wage cut for all employees, a pension elimination for future employees and a pension freeze for current employees, a 20 percent decrease in employer contributions to the 401K and increased employee contributions toward health care premiums and co-pays.

Mott's workers overwhelmingly rejected this offer and voted in favor of authorizing their negotiating committee at RWDSU Local 220 to call an Unfair Labor Practice strike. The union has continued to demand that the company bargain in good faith in order to quickly reach a fair contract.

By contrast, Dr. Pepper Snapple Group President & CEO Larry D. Young has enjoyed a 113 percent salary increase over the last three years (or 28 percent each year). In 2009, Young's total compensation was \$6,519,378.

Michael Leberth, president of RWDSU Local 220 said "the company



Photo: RWDSU Local 220

Mott's workers picket in Williamson, N.Y.

has not budged from our reasonable and dignified offer and there will be no late night negotiations. We are tired of being juiced by such a profitable company."

The Williamson plant is the only plant that produces Mott's applesauce, including high margin single serve packs, with 70 percent of the workforce in skilled labor categories. A labor dispute could damage the value of Mott's family-friendly brand by associating it with corporate greed and union busting. Additionally, the product may suffer quality issues, as the skilled workforce is not easily replaceable. The Mott's brand is responsible for more than \$550 million worth of Dr. Pepper Snapple's retail sales each year.

"Why would DPS, with millions in profit, risk interrupting production at a high volume plant?" asked Ira Bristol, who has worked at the plant for almost five years. "Destroying goodwill and creating this antagonistic atmosphere will badly hurt the production system and bottom line, not to mention, negatively affect employee morale and tarnish the Mott's good brand around the country."

For more information and the latest updates on the strike, visit <http://www.mottsworkers.org>.

Students, Parents, Teachers And Union Members Protest New Jersey Budget Cuts

By John Kalwaic

Tens of thousands of New Jersey residents, students, teachers and parents came to protest the \$820 million in cuts to education proposed by New Jersey Governor Chris Christie on May 22. The budget cuts came after voters, thinking that the proposed budgets would raise property taxes, rejected the proposals. Governor Christie has come out in favor of budget cuts that would freeze workers' wages and accept health care cuts. Christie would also cut services to schools that most of New Jersey's teachers, students and community members consider vital. New Jersey high school students were angry that their classes and extra-curricular activities might be cut and that some of their teachers would either have their salaries cut or be laid off completely. This also comes after Governor Christie vetoed a bill to tax millionaires—a tax that would have brought in enough revenue to make the budget cuts unnecessary and give millions in rebates for people who paid property taxes.

Tens of thousands of New Jersey high school students walked out of class on April 27 to protest the cuts. Around 17,000 students walked out at Montclair, Eastern Regional and West Orange High School and many other high schools in Newark and Camden. The walkout was made possible by Facebook, a social networking site that high school students



More than 30,000 rally at the Trenton Statehouse on May 22.

Photo: 1010wins.com

used to facilitate communication. At Williamstown High School in Gloucester County, students walked out of class and police did not allow them to come back in, even after the police had promised that the students would be let back in. In downtown Newark thousands of students crowded City Hall, chanting "save our schools!" At Montclair High School, students held signs saying, "cut class not classes." Governor Christie issued a statement saying that "students should be in class" and the walkouts should not have been allowed to take place. Many of the students were threatened with repercussions, including having their driving, prom and extra-curricular activity privileges revoked.

A month after the walkout on May

22, between 30,000 and 35,000 parents, children and teachers union members, as well as many other public sector union members and community activists, came to protest the cuts. Unions that participated included the New Jersey Education Association and the Communication Workers of America. Police stated that they have not seen anything like this in years.

"We're sending out an SOS today... save our schools, save our students, save our state," said William McNary, president of USAction, a national group that advocates for social issues, who went on to say "The human-needs infrastructure of New Jersey is falling apart, and that is a crisis as well." His speech drew cheers from the crowd. A Sussex-

Wantage teacher named Dorothy Caufield said she drove 90 minutes to Trenton. She is eligible to retire from her teaching job, but not ready to quit. She said the message to older teachers is to retire to make room for younger, cheaper replacements. "How can I stand up there and complain and not at least take a day to come down here?" Caufield said.

"We ask the governor, while our school system is trying to teach diversity and anti-bullying, to stop being the biggest bully in the state," said James Harris of the NAACP. The Governor was not in the Trenton State house when the rally took place; he defended the cuts as being necessary.

These actions came a few months after massive walkouts on March 4 in California by teachers, professors and students in high schools, universities, colleges and even elementary schools against budget cuts proposed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. A resistance movement among student, parent and teacher populations has built up to the persistent budget cuts to education in both California and New Jersey. As the economic downturn continues, more people are going to scapegoat social spending, and there will be more resistance to these cuts as well. The recent walkouts and strikes in California and New Jersey prove that students and teachers will resist education cuts in a way that is considered radical by many.

Special

Organize For Workers' Safety

By Arthur Miller

The undeniable reality under the capitalist system is that the lives of workers only have value based upon the wealth they can produce for the employers. In general society, if a person causes the death of someone by means of willful negligence, they are charged with murder. But in industry, if an employer causes the death of workers by means of willful negligence, even after they have been fined by inspectors for safety violations, the most they are faced with is another fine. In most cases the fines are so low that they are looked upon as just another business expense. Though the government has laws that cover safety, often these laws are violated if they in any way interfere with profit. There is no doubt about it, as the IWW puts it: "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common."

Many times I have had to work in pressure tanks, knowing full well that the company was violating state and federal law as to confine spaces. By law there must be a holewatch when working in tanks. Only a few times over my many years in shipyards have I seen that law followed. They don't even put up a notice that there are workers in a tank. Some tanks are deep, and others are very long; and the worry is always that someone will put the tank lid on while you are in there and you get trapped. I know at one shipyard they killed two workers by closing the lid and filling the tank full of water. It did happen to me once while working in an aft tank, and the tank was being closed for the painters. I just happened to be very near the hole, and I guess you could hear my response a mile away. I hit that damn lid with my two pound hammer with everything I had.

Since I have no faith in either the employers or the laws, I try to take direct steps to protect myself. In the case of working very far into tanks I will take a padlock and lock it into one of the holes on the lid so that the lid cannot be placed upon the hole.

Throughout our lives in this society, we are told about such things as liberty,

freedom and justice. We are taught that we are responsible for our actions. If we harm or kill others due to direct intent or clear negligence, we will be held accountable for our actions. This only applies to the common people of this land. It does not apply to the owners of industry. If it did, then Don Blankenship—CEO of the Massey Energy Company and owner of the Upper Big Branch Mine where 29 miners were killed, along with his managers would be sitting in a jail cell, without bail, charged with 29 counts of murder and conspiracy to commit murder.

The reality of this society, as it now exists, is that we have been lied to. As every worker knows the social responsibilities that we must live with are not the same responsibilities that the employing class have when it comes to their relationship with their employees. If any worker caused the death directly or by clear negligence of some boss, we would be arrested. But the employers can commit mass murder of workers by clear negligence and all that our political system does is cry crocodile tears of sympathy for the dead and their families.

The evidence against the murderer Don Blankenship is overwhelming. In the two months before the murder of the miners the mine was evacuated three times because of dangerously high methane levels.

The mine had been cited many times for ventilation problems, and it received two citations on the day of the murders. Last year the mine was issued



Graphic: Mike Konopacki

over 500 citations. The company was even fined \$382,000 in the last year. But clearly \$382,000 is pocket change to Massey Energy Company, which has 2.2 billion tons of coal reserves in three Appalachia states and ranks among the United States' top five coal producers and is one of the most profitable coal companies. Since 1995 this mine has had more than 3,000 violations. And what was murderer Don Blankenship's response to all these violations? "Violations are unfortunately a normal part of the mining process," he said. Rather than being arrested for murder, when Dan Blankenship showed up at the mine, he was escorted by at least a dozen state and other police officers who were there to protect him.

The government states that over 104,000 miners have died in coal mines. One inspector stated that, "many, if not a majority of those 'accidents' should

not be considered mishaps, but acts of negligent homicide."

Just days before the murder of 29 miners at the Upper Big Branch Mine, five workers were killed and two are still in critical condition from a fiery explosion at the Tesoro oil refinery in Anacortes, Wash. In 2008, a several-month investigation turned up 17 serious safety violations (defined as those that can "cause death or serious injury") in which 150 instances of deficiencies, including that the company did not "ensure safe work practices." Last year the Tesoro Anacortes refinery was fined \$87,500 but later the fine was reduced to \$12,250—less than one hour of profit made by a refinery that refines up to 130,000 barrels of crude oil daily.

This seems to be the point where the question should be asked: if this has been going on for so long why is it that

Continued on next page

Suicides And Militancy In China's Class Conflict



Graphic: zeitgeist.yopi.de

By Phil Dickens

Workers at Foxconn, a Chinese company that makes electronics and computer parts, have just been awarded a 30 percent pay rise. The downside to this seemingly generous pay award, "to assist the company in staff retention and staff recruitment," is that it comes after news coverage of a number of worker suicides in the plant.

The Chinese press is amongst those who have blamed the suicides on the horrendous working conditions at the factory.

The *South China Morning Post* opines that "workers on the mainland should be treated properly by the companies that make the products we

buy." Columnist Liu Shinan says "we should realize that social injustice may have reached a critical point before such large-scale incidents were triggered," whilst his paper, *China Daily*, adds that although "Foxconn may not be a sweatshop in the sense that it physically abuses its employees or forces them to work extra hours," this "does not mean it is showing enough humanitarian concern for its employees."

The *Huanqiu Shibao* further elaborates:

"When more and more post-1980s, post-1990s and even post-2000s are entering the workforce, it is unsustainable to keep relying on this low-end means of production that is built on cheap labor. The 11 [deceased] Foxconn employees... used this extreme choice of jumping from buildings to tell us that they do not accept China's manufacturing industry's continued advance in this direction...Enterprises must treat and respect staff as real living human beings and not as a part of the production line."

These analyses were vindicated by

Sothern Weekly reporter Liu Zhi Yi, who spent 28 days undercover at the factory. There, he found that "the factory workers live in a sort of indentured servitude" and "work all day long, stopping only to quickly eat or to sleep." With public holidays being the only break from this, "for many workers, the only escape from this cycle was to end their life."

The conclusion is that "Foxconn really needs to be more human and be concerned about the health—mental and physical—of their workers, instead of treating them like dogs."

Instead, Foxconn chose to add the following to employee contracts:

"In the event of non-accidental injuries (including suicide, self-

mutilation, etc.), I agree that the company has acted properly in accordance with relevant laws and regulations, and will not sue the company, bring excessive demands, take drastic actions that would damage the company's reputation or cause trouble that would hurt normal operations."

This addition to the contract, and the attempt to retract the 110,000 yuan (~\$16,000) compensation for suicides in favor of the "legal minimum" of nil, were scuppered by press attention.

Rather callously, Telegraph Shanghai correspondent Malcolm Moore suggests that the compensation is a "very tempting sum," and that "if these enormous payments don't stop, the suicides are

unlikely to either." This, of course, ignores the fact that the best way to end the suicides is to end the "indentured servitude" and staff bullying. As long as this goes on, the idea that "suicide is not a workplace injury, so the company is not responsible" is obscene.

Moore also suggests that "if Foxconn takes the pragmatic option, there is every chance that its workers, fanned by the media, will revolt at its callousness." Here, evidence from other workers' revolts across China suggests that he is right.

Certainly, the Honda Motors strike offers Foxconn workers a more positive way to challenge appalling working conditions. It also demonstrates that the trade unions "act as the complicit of the company" and "appropriate the fruits of the workers' struggles" for themselves. Meanwhile, positive change "is the result of the tremendous pressure created by the workers' strike and the result of the workers' sweat and blood."

The Chinese working class needs global solidarity in their struggle against the full brutality of state and capital. Moreover, as they witness the effectiveness of rank-and-file organization and the tendency of bureaucrats to sell them short, we would do well to learn the same lessons.

This story originally appeared on June 6, 2010 at <http://truth-reason-liberty.blogspot.com>.

Special

Organize For Workers' Safety

Continued from previous page
our laws do not prevent such murder? Because there is little real enforcement and when fines are assessed they are so low that they are looked upon as just another cost in the accumulation of profit.

I once worked for Bunker Hill Mining Company as a zinc stripper, and in 1973 a fire badly damaged the baghouse, where smelter emissions were filtered through cloth bags before being released into the air. Rather than close down the smelter and repair the damage, the employers ran the smelter bypassing the baghouse, and the built-up lead rained down upon the surrounding towns. The families, and most tragically the children, were poisoned with lead.

The family of miner Bill Yoss, who had worked underground for 25 years at Bunker Hill, was tested by doctors from the Center for Disease Control. His daughter, Arlene, was found to have more than four times the threshold then considered dangerous. The lead had settled in her bones, and her legs grew twisted. Only hot soaking baths would ease her continuous pain. Her mother was told, after the tests on Arlene and her two other children, that she had "three walking dead babies." In 1975 Bill Yoss went to see an attorney in Spokane to see what could be done. While he was away, he was fired. The Yoss family filed suit against Bunker Hill. The information gathered for the suit told a story of corporate crime almost beyond comparison. Bunker Hill settled with the Yoss family and the families of 35 other children in 1981. All records and information gathered was sealed by the court, and it was not until 1990 that the records and the story that the suit revealed of the poisoning of the people of the Silver Valley became known.

Within the unsealed documents was found a two-page memo in which the vice president of Gulf Resources and Chemical Corp. (the company that owned Bunker Hill at that time) calculated an estimation on how much Gulf would have to pay if it continued to expose children to lead emissions rather

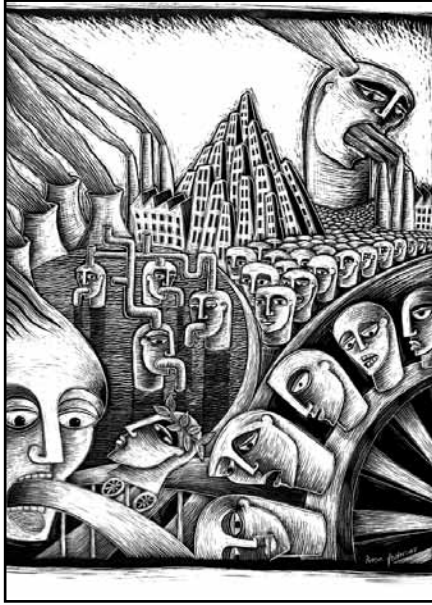
than shut down the smelter and repair the bag house. His estimate came to \$6 to \$7 million for poisoning 500 children. He also examined the possibility of discrediting the doctors who warned of the dangers of lead poisoning. At the time, prices for lead ore were high, so Gulf decided that the profits were far greater than the "costs" of poisoning children and more than 56 percent of the workers at Bunker Hill. That year Gulf raked in \$25.9 million from lead ore.

The reality is that so-called health and safety laws are only a smokescreen to cover-up the killing, injuring, and sickening of workers by the employers. I have worked in the hard rock mining industry, in shipyards (14 shipyards all together) for many years, as a port and long haul trucker, and as an environmental technician and have been a wage worker for over 40 years. I have yet to see a workplace where the employers cared about safety or even about following health and safety laws.

In the shipyards the employers seem to always know in advance when inspectors are going to show up. I remember once when all production work was shut down for a day so that the shipyard could be cleaned up the day before an inspection. I have been told many times not to speak to the inspectors unless they speak to me first, and then only answer their direct questions.

Often they find ways to get around the laws that we think protect us. Once I had to remove some valves out of a barge that hauled caustic soda, real nasty stuff. The foreman told me to just use rubber gloves and that it was not a real problem. I noticed, when I got down into the tank,

where the valves were, that there was a decontamination station and warning signs. I looked at the piping system and saw that all the valves were closed and that two pumps had been removed. That told me that the system had been closed



Graphic: radicalgraphics.org

down, since all the valves would not normally be closed and that it was possible that caustic soda was still in the pipes and since the valves to the tanks were closed the piping system could still be under pressure. I also heard stories about serious burns to workers in the past at this shipyard due to caustic soda. I then found the man responsible for safety and asked him if I could see the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for caustic

soda. By federal law every worker has a right to read the MSDS on any hazardous substance they work with or are around. The safety man started to look for the MSDS when my foreman came up yelling about why I was not taking the valves out, and I told him what I saw and that I was going to read the MSDS. A supervisor came up. I guess he realized that the foreman was directly violating federal law, and he shut the job down. After that happened, all of the pipefitters (myself included) were laid off. When I went back to work at that shipyard, after that job was done, I found out that the workers were never told about the hazards and that there was still caustic soda in the lines.

Even when you have the union rep there with a safety inspector it can sometimes be nothing more than creating an illusion of safety. I once was working on boilers in a fire room on a ship. The stream pipes and the boilers were wrapped in asbestos lagging. Every

morning the inspector would test the air for asbestos. We were working a 12-hour shift with no night crew because of the nature of the job. That meant that the inspectors were testing the air after 12 hours of no work and the blowers off. On some days the union rep would be there watching the inspector, and I asked him why. He said to make sure that the inspection was being done. I then asked him why was the air not tested again a few hours after working had begun and the blowers were on? He looked pissed off at me and sneered, "just be happy that you have this work."

Many workers are killed, injured or sicken every year because of the employer's greed. This is the nature of capitalism; this cannot be reformed without changing the fundamental purpose of capitalism, which is to produce great wealth for the few at the expense of the many. Almost from the very beginning of capitalism there have been those that sought to reform capitalism through governmental action. But still the workers' dead pile up.

Maybe if the employers were held to the same standard as the rest of society, and they are thrown in jail under murder charges when they cause the death of workers due to clear willful negligence, things would be different. But that will never happen, because we workers are only a means to profit for the few in this society.

The only answer to this grave situation is for us working people to realize that we, as workers, are the only ones who are going to look after our real interests. We must go beyond the traditional union movement and create a workers' survival movement, for it is our right to live that we need to be fighting for. We must organize and stand together all the way to a social general strike for safety. If not that, then what? When will we decide that enough workers have died and that the political/economic system will not and cannot do anything about it? Only by our actions, as working people, will there ever be safe work for all.

Union Repression Grows Internationally, Survey Finds

By Mathieu Dube

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has released its annual survey of violation of trade union rights and the numbers are catastrophic. At least 101 labor activists were killed in 2009, a steep 30 percent increase from the 76 activists killed in 2008. The global economic crisis has made the work of organizing workers even more dangerous than it previously was. The survey gathered data on 140 countries and ordered a list according to the number of assassinations that occurred in each. Cases of repression that are not murders as well as general evaluation of workers' struggles conditions were also included in the study.

The unemployment caused by the economic crisis has put a downward pressure on workers' conditions. A significant expansion of precarious and atypical work has contributed to creating a more vulnerable workforce across the globe. This augments the importance for workers to struggle and defend their rights but it also makes it harder. Indeed, anti-democratic forces, whether corporate or governmental, are striking back at union organizers. This explains a spike in assassinations, imprisonments and other repressive measures against militants. In 2008, there were 76 documented murders of workers struggle activist, the number rose to 101 in 2009. It is very likely that many other cases go unreported as the same repressive enti-

ties that commit these despicable crimes also prevent the free circulation of information.

Again this year, Colombia holds first place in union activists killed with 48 murders. Guatemala and Honduras follow with 16 and 12 murders, respectively. Mexico had six and so did Bangladesh; Brazil had four. The Dominican Republic and the Philippines each had three murders. India, Iraq and Nigeria all had one. Colombia has a long history of repression against workers despite PR claims to the contrary by the state's officials. Colombia is a strong ally of the United States, who prefers to look the other way when it comes to the numerous human rights violations. The Colombian repression obviously ranges further than the mere workers' struggles with students, journalists and progressive militants being targeted. It is estimated that over 7,200 political prisoners are being held in Colombian jails. Honduras' second place is doubtlessly related to the coup that ousted President Manuel Zelaya in June 2009. The violence that followed has certainly contributed to Honduras' high numbers.

Though most countries have laws on the books protecting workers' rights,



Honduras: Trade unionists have been beaten, arrested, tortured and murdered following the coup d'état of former President Manuel Zelaya in June 2009.

Photo: ituc-csi.org

the reality on the ground is far different. Death threats, intense police surveillance and other forms of intimidation are routinely used against workers according to ITUC's survey. In some cases, several means of struggle such as strikes are outlawed by means of "essential services" legislation. Very often organizing one's workplace will result in dismissal which, with the high numbers of unemployment, creates a strong hindrance to

action.

As the economical conditions deteriorate around the world, workers need to step up their struggle and they are met with an increasingly brutal reaction. This reaction, although painful, illustrates the threat that workers represent to the power holders in our society.

The ITUC survey can be found online at <http://survey.ituc-csi.org/+Whole-World+.html>

IWW Organizing Summit

Solidarity in L.A.: On The Ground At The IWW Organizing Summit

By Ted Dewberry

After a long crowded flight where my wife and I weren't able to sit together, we landed in Los Angeles, not knowing what to expect. I got a call almost immediately from Fellow Worker Michelle Cahill of Fort Worth, Texas. She was calling from Venice Beach. She was already dipping her feet in the Pacific and getting a head start on L.A.

We coordinated various rides and finally reached our host home in the Mid-Wilshire District. Allison was one of the kind L.A. union members that opened their homes to visiting Wobs. I can say with conviction that the L.A. branch did a fantastic job of making us feel welcome. I know that I have slept in some pretty rough spots in my travels, but the beautiful accommodations were just amazing.

People filtered in from across the country and Canada that I had only met over email or on the phone. It was then that I began to feel the sense of homecoming that I always feel at the start of events like this, as well as a premonition that, at this summit, I would leave a changed man.

Flashback to 1997. Just blocks from where the Summit would be held (The Chuco's Justice Center) was a charter school for Severely Emotionally Disturbed (SED) children. We teachers were not part of the L.A. Unified School District, but we taught students that were shipped out of the regular system. This created an opportunity for private (non-union) schools that sometimes operated in draconian ways. The kids were never the problem, it was the bosses who supplied us with books from the 1960s (though the school was supposedly given money to buy new books) and verbally abused the overworked teachers, often threatening to fire us on the spot since we had no contract. I witnessed teachers having nervous breakdowns because of the abuse and lack of supplies. Most teachers didn't last for more than a few months. When I left the school, I left L.A. for good and was never willing to set foot in a classroom again.

Looking at the person I am now, and being inspired by my Fellow Workers across the country, I would know just what to do if I could go back. I would organize and our fellow teachers would stand up for each other and prevent the abusive tactics of the administration. I know because, with my fellow workers, I have done it on the shop floor in Minnesota. Saturday at the Chuco's Center, we had introductions all around and quickly got to work. There was a lot of ground to cover. One of the highlights of the morning was Fellow Workers from three recent campaigns who discussed their success and some of their mistakes along the way. Gifford Hartman from the Bay Area, whom I later found out went to my high school in East Hollywood, talked about his effort to organize the school where he taught English as a Second Language (ESL) students. Michelle Cahill of the Starbucks Workers Union (SWU) spoke about what it was like to go public in Fort Worth and get many of the workers' demands met. FW Kyle spoke about organizing as a bike messenger in L.A.

The success stories were inspiring, but I found the frank discussion about mistakes to be refreshing. FW Kyle reflected that personal strife within a committee was not addressed quickly and led to damaging divisions within the campaign.

FW Liberte Locke spoke next about diversity and solidarity within the IWW. She observed that the first meetings



Wobblies gather in L.A. from May 14-16 for an organizing summit.

Photo: DJAlperovitz

that she attended were almost all older men who did not welcome her with open arms. Now, a few years later, the attendees at this summit are much more reflective of the general workforce: women, workers of color, openly queer, and young workers were all working together. In my experience, the IWW Starbucks Workers Union was always fairly diverse, so FW Liberte's experience demonstrated the tectonic changes toward inclusion and diversity that I had taken for granted.

At lunch, the largest pizza I have ever seen in my life was brought in. After lunch, while trying not to feel like a python that swallowed a goat, I talked with Gifford Hartman and we discovered that we both went to John Marshall High School. He was a few years ahead of me and was attending the school when they shot the movie "Grease," and he remembered the songs being blared over the loudspeakers while he tried to concentrate on his studies. I happened to be at the same school when I was asked to be an extra on "The A-Team" while they shot an episode on our football field.

After lunch, there was a presentation on multi-shop campaigns—a trend that will quickly become the norm as more retail shops become union.

FW Nick Driedger spoke about being a dual-card union member. As members of other unions become frustrated at their bloated and bureaucratic structure, dual-carders are finding opportunities through the IWW to take direct action against the bosses and to demonstrate the effectiveness of solidarity unionism to their single-card fellow workers.

The day ended with a discussion about the overall vision for the future of the IWW. Great ideas were exchanged and the summit was adjourned for the day. We all looked forward to the Wobbly social held in the Jewelry District downtown.

Once inside, we were treated to a great meal of tamales—very good tamales like the ones my grandmother made. For many Wobblies that got into town late, this was their first opportunity to cut loose after a long flight and a day of strategizing. The space was intimate, no larger than a big living room. Now, I have to be honest, I didn't know who Tom Morello was. I had heard of Rage Against The Machine, but didn't follow them closely. I didn't know what to expect. When he came in, he had a simple setup: a guitar, a harmonica and a wooden box that he stomped on with his left foot for a booming drum-like effect. Mr. Morello quickly put a spell on the crowd, putting his heart into performances of "Worldwide Rebel Song" and "This Land is Your Land." Wobs crowded around the tiny stage and sang

along passionately. As the set reached a crescendo, I found myself clutching my red card and holding it in the air. The pride in my membership compelled me to hold it up for several minutes as the songs came to a close.

At the end of the set, Mr. Morello was soaked with sweat from his energized performance and was sitting down on the stage gathering his things. I walked up to him and thanked him and he seemed to genuinely appreciate it. The night was not over, though. "Revolutionary Jeopardy" was next and somehow I ended up being a contestant. Now after the long day, the great food and the amazing private concert (not to mention a few beers), I can't say that I got many questions right, but damn it was fun. I slunk back to FW Allison's house and got some sleep while the more energetic (younger) Wobs hit the clubs.

Somehow, everyone got up on time for a new day of the summit on Sunday. There was much ground to cover with the first presentation, "Developing a Strong and Active Branch." Since so many Wobs were there from across the United States and Canada, it became a good opportunity to share ideas about the changing culture within the IWW and to get on the same page about the nuts and bolts of meetings and procedures.

The next presentation was "Life After 'Going Public.'" FW Erik Forman talked about the challenges that any shop faces after going public—especially how to keep solidarity strong in the face of setbacks. In the case of our shop at Starbucks Mall of America, low pay, high turnover and the well-organized union-busting machine that Starbucks has in place offered big challenges. The problems that we faced at Starbucks were considerable as FW Forman is the only IWW member remaining at the Mall of America after a four-year campaign (though other stores in the Twin Cities have since gone public).

After a break, we did breakout sessions within our own industries. My current job is in health care so I talked with a member who worked in teen shelters, group homes, and other health facilities. As I write this article, the largest nurses' strike in history is about to happen. We all talked about the challenges of organizing an industry in which innocent patients or clients are used as pawns by the bosses to curtail strikes or direct action. As a barista, it was easy to leave a customer without a latte during a direct action, but the same tactics cannot be utilized with a human being that depends on you for their well-being. We talked about the options that were still open to organizing in our specific shops. What was shocking to me was how poor-

ly my counterparts in California are paid. Workers in one shop, I learned, were paid minimum wage for California. That's just over \$8 an hour to carry out the responsibilities of passing life-saving medication. In addition, cost of living in California is so much higher than in Minnesota. I could not believe the greed of the bosses of these FOR PROFIT group home companies.

"Mobilizing Public Support" was the next topic. The bosses have their multi-million-dollar public relations campaigns to get their message out. We talked about what we could do on a grassroots level to get our message across with the limited resources at our disposal. Keep in mind, I originally wanted to work at Starbucks because I believed their PR that it was a great place to work and that they treated their workers well.

The final topic was "Developing Leaders." FW Driedger held a discussion about what the union as a whole could do to develop new leadership. A frank and productive exchange produced some great ideas that we could implement union-wide in the future. The joy of the weekend was broken by the actions of Starbucks as FW Locke's phone delivered terrible news via text messages. FW Vance and other workers that I didn't know personally were fired while the company knew that FW Locke would be at this Summit.

Tears flowed and hugs were abundant. Anger and planning would come another day, but we all reflected on the loss of these workers. I remember FW Vance when he came to Baltimore and the Twin Cities. He was a great source of kindness and wisdom and it filled me with emotion to think of him being treated with such disrespect. It made me wonder if the bosses grieve this way when one of their own gets fired or do they just thank God that it wasn't them and move on like nothing happened.

As the day wound down and we knew this great experience was coming to an end, FW Adam W. stood and praised the SWU as an inspiring example to the IWW as a whole. Honestly, I and other SWU members in the room were very moved as a lot of the struggles from the last few years flashed through my mind. I thought of the SWU workers that were not in L.A. to hear this because they did not make enough money to pay for rent, much less a plane ticket, or they had been fired for union organizing and were still unemployed, struggling to find work while their case went through the NLRB process. I thought of them and realized that this experience had indeed changed me as I had predicted it might. I am leaving with a deeper sense of purpose within my union and a stronger sense of solidarity with the people that I have now met face-to-face, as well as those who couldn't come for the above-mentioned reasons. I thought of them while we formed a circle and sang "Solidarity Forever" to close our day.

As we disbanded at the end of the day and people started to arrange their rides to the airport, or caravans back up north or out east, I tried to think about the many things I would take home with me. Aside from all that I have learned and the friendships I have solidified, the predominant memory that I will have will be of the absolute kindness and generosity of the L.A. IWW branch in hosting this event. They are a small chapter, but they have giant hearts and really showed the rest of us how it can be done. I think that I speak for all of us when I say with great conviction, "THANK YOU!"

Interview

New Rounds Of Enclosure And Resistance: Fighting Notes From “Transitional” Serbia

Interview with Pokret za Slobodu (Freedom Fight Movement)

By Andrej Grubacic

Andrej Grubacic: Let me begin by asking about the last round of privatization in Serbia. What used to be called in the state-socialist system of former Yugoslavia “socially owned property” is being enclosed and privatized. How advanced is this process of “privatization through bankruptcy” at the moment? And at the risk of sounding legalistic, how legal is this process of accumulation by dispossession?

Freedom Fight: The privatization of socially-owned property is almost completely done. The few big structures that remain are now turned into state enterprises, like the Bor complex (mines and mining industry) or the arms industry in Čačak, Užice, Kragujevac, and so on. There are also some mid-level and small socially-owned companies that are still not privatized, and last year the government decided simply to liquidate them. This liquidation is not based on economic reasons—it is a completely political decision to shut down all the remaining socially-owned companies. The Ministry of Economy calls it “privatization through bankruptcy.” The decision is absolutely illegal. Serbian law on bankruptcy proscribes the causes for starting the liquidation process, and the government’s order to kill an otherwise well-doing company just because it is socially owned is not one of them. This decision was a cause for several protests last year and the strongest group of workers who are still fighting is the one in Ravanica from Čuprija. Last summer its workers blocked the factory to prevent the government’s people from taking over the management. The protest gained strong public support, especially after the newspapers published the fact that Ravanica is not only the last factory in Čuprija up for privatization, but also the only one that still works and works very well. Čuprija used to have several well-known factories, and literally all of them were closed down or went bankrupt in the privatization process. The government feared this would initiate further debate about the success of the privatization process in Serbia, so they retreated from Ravanica and confirmed the old management as the official one. At this point Ravanica is the last remaining socially-owned company in Serbia that remains in operation.

As far as the state-owned companies, the government is planning to sell the pharmaceutical factory Galenika, Telekom Company, JAT Airways and Elektrodistribucija. They decided to sell Telekom this year, which caused very strong public protest. Both big unions of Telekom are against privatization, and they are supported by lots of intellectuals, some media (Republika and Balkan online magazine) and a former Telecommunications Minister. We can expect a big fight over the issue this summer.

AG: Freedom Fight collective, or *Pokret za Slobodu* in Yugoslav, is a member of the Coordination Committee of Workers’ Protest in Serbia. What is the news from below? One of the goals of Freedom Fight, of Pokret, is to help create a horizontal, prefigurative, self-managed structure that would allow for genuine workers’ self-management, or solidarity unionism. What is the reality of rank-



Zastava Electro factory workers on strike.

Photo: globalbalkans.org

and-file workers’ resistance, and what is the relationship with the old, vertical union structures?

FF: Last year’s wave of protests was caused by the results of the privatization process. Privatization failed to provide promised economic development, and this problem was further emphasized by the global economic crisis. People began holding strikes and protests. Lots of privatization contracts were canceled (such as Zastava Elektro, Vršački vinogradi, Ikarbus), and several of these workers’ groups formed the Coordination Committee of Workers’ Protests. Pokret za slobodu is also a member of the Coordinating Committee. Forming this committee was not only a reaction to the government’s policies, but also on the policies of the big unions. It was previously the union’s job to connect the workers’ groups that are protesting, but they instead choose to take the government’s side. During the protest of the Zastava Elektro workers, we witnessed the union actually sabotaging the workers’ plan to organize demonstrations in front of the Privatization Agency’s (PA) building in Belgrade. Then Pokret za slobodu called Zrenjanin and Belgrade workers to help them—they organized demonstrations together, and that was the beginning of the Coordination Committee. The Zastava Elektro protest was successful. The PA was forced to cancel the privatization contract, but two months ago they sold Zastava Elektro again to the Yura Company from South Korea. Yura officials banned union organizing and most of the old workers who were in last year’s protests left the factory. They feel that the new sale of the company is a kind of revenge by the government for the protest. Furthermore, the pro-government press is now attacking them by saying that they are lazy—that “last year they were protesting for their jobs, but when a Korean company offers them jobs, they refuse to work!” On the other hand, the protest of another group from the Coordination Committee, Trudbenik gradnja workers, was unsuccessful even though they proved that their boss was severely breaking the privatization contract. The PA accepted their evidence, and it released the official 100-page detailed report on how the boss was breaking the law, but then they said, “OK, you guys were right, he is robbing both you and the state. It is outrageous, but we won’t break the contract.” Just like that. Why? Because this was a clear message for all the other workers of what would happen if they rebel, especially if they are doing it outside of the union structures.

The cost of this for the workers was very high—more than 200 Trudbenik workers were sacked because of the protest. At the beginning of the strike in August last year they knew what would happen if they turned it into a protest against the privatization contract. But they took the risk, knowing that the canceling of the privatization contract was their only chance to get their jobs back. It was him-or-them, and they proved that the law is on their side, but now they are out [of work], not the boss. At the same time, Zastava Elektro workers are being punished for their successful protest last year. The Coordination Committee is still far from being strong enough to help them, besides holding more protests, so at this point the situation doesn’t look good. However, we are expecting a new wave of protests this summer, and that would be the chance for our organization to grow stronger.

AG: So is this the new focus of your current activity? Are there any efforts to document the experiences of last year and your struggle for solidarity unionism against the theft we know as privatization?

FF: Besides our work within the Coordination Committee, Pokret za slobodu is now trying to broaden the network. We are establishing contacts with peasant associations. They are the group most repressed by the government because they don’t have a level of organization strong enough to fight radically against neither the government’s measures that are destroying their economy nor against the private monopolies trading with the agricultural products which are the fruit of their labor. This is a very important issue here, since over 2 million people in Serbia have agriculture as their livelihood.

We are currently working on a film and a book about last year’s protests, because we believe it is important to analyze what really happened and its continued significance and to give our side of the story. The Serbian press is writing about workers’ issues only from the perspective of big politics or big unions, and we want to show the perspectives of the people who were in the protests. These protests are not just another subject of somebody’s political agenda, they are coming from the people, and what we are doing is trying to help these people be heard.

AG: In my view, one of the truly “Balkanopolitan” elements of the Balkan and Serbian society are the Roma. Their struggle against hierarchical, state-

imposed authority and regulation, against the market economy, and systems of both state socialism and capitalism, along with their culture, are a powerful inspiration for other Balkans. On the other hand, and for this very reason, they were and remain to be the single most oppressed group in the Balkan states.

FF: Roma are the only group in Serbia that is completely left to its own fate. It is a desperate, catastrophic situation. The number of itinerant poor is now even larger due to the exclusionary mechanisms of the neoliberal state. Roma live in the streets and collect trash and paper in order to survive. Some estimates put the number of Roma in Serbia at 600,000, although the 2002 Census only registered 102,193 people

as Roma. According to the UNICEF report on the condition of Roma children in the Republic of Serbia (2006), almost 70 percent of Roma children are poor and over 60 percent of Roma households with children live below the poverty line. Children are the most imperiled, living outside of cities in households with several children. Over 80 percent of indigent Roma children live in families in which the adult members of the family do not have basic education.

AG: And in the meantime, the activist scene in Serbia is, in my opinion, very disconnected from these realities—or at least it was when I lived in Serbia. I hope that some things changed for the better since then, and that there is now at least an attempt to bring about a relationship of active solidarity, radical community organizing, and “accompaniment” towards the situation of Roma in Serbia and the Balkans as a whole.

FF: The activist scene in Serbia is still weak and without influence, but there are some signs that this might change. Since the “transition” process started in 2001, the biggest problem of the Serbian leftist community wasn’t the fact that it was small, weak, outnumbered by Nazis and so on, but that it was incompetent and ignorant about local problems. Lots of energy was wasted on activities that had little to do with the actual problems of Serbian workers in “transition.” And those problems were huge—too huge not to be seen and confronted. For that reason we can say now that it was almost lucky that most of the activities of the leftist collectives in the past decade went virtually unnoticed by the broad public. It was pretty embarrassing to have some self-proclaimed anarcho-syndicalist leaders preaching against privatization from the ideological point of view, but without a clue about the local context, as if they just fell in from another world. For years we were practically the only collective that was working with the actual people on the ground in strikes. But since last year this has started to change: there are several Belgrade collectives now that are trying to support different groups of people in strikes or some other kind of protest, which is very significant because only by broadening our movement will the current leftist scene begin to have an influence, even though for the time being it is still small.

Andrej Grubacic is a member of *Global Balkan Network*, the *IWW*, and *Workers Solidarity Alliance*, as well as the author of the forthcoming book *“Don’t Mourn Balkanize! Essays After Yugoslavia”* (PM Press, 2010).

Reviews and Commentary

Urban Organizing: A Case For Direct Action!

Mason, Paul. "Meltdown: The End of the Age of Greed." *New York: Verso 2009. Paperback, 173 pages, \$14.95.*

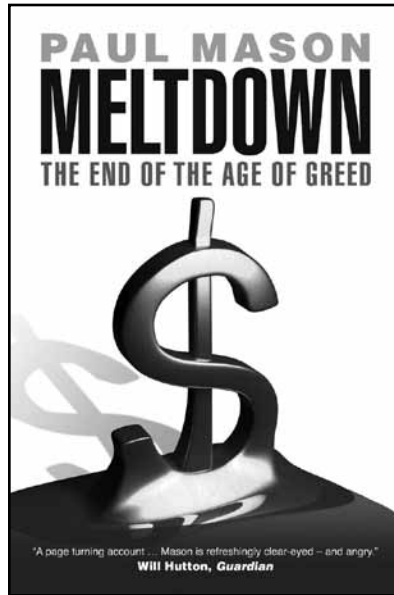
By Peter Moore

When U.S. President Barack Obama introduced new legislation for the financial system this April, he laid the blame for the financial meltdown of October 2008 squarely on the shoulders of the financial sector, describing it as a "failure of responsibility." His reform package for the industry would create a bankruptcy system for firms considered too-big-to-fail, create investors' consumer protection, and give stakeholders more voting rights on executive compensation and corporate governance. In short, Obama is trying to prop up capitalism.

While Republicans and Democrats tear into each other over this bill, independent working class activists would do well to read Paul Mason's "Meltdown" for insight into the long-term causes—and the danger of recurrence—of the crisis that crushed institutions and

countries alike. As the recent \$910 billion Eurozone bail-out demonstrates, the financial crisis is not over yet, nor is it likely to be until dramatic changes are made to the financial sector to end its reckless mismanagement of the global economy.

Mason takes aim at the "whole era of financial hypocrisy" that is neoliberal economics, which spawned off-balance investment funds and a cozy alliance of investment bankers, insurers, consulting firms, accountants and risk-assessment companies. The crisis was "the product of giant hubris and the un-trammelled power of a financial elite," not to mention complicit politi-



Graphic: versouk.files.wordpress.com

cians who dismantled regulations and then scrambled to throw public money at the problem with as few strings attached as possible. He paints a useful picture of the events leading up to October 2008, the booms and bubbles, the predatory sub-prime mortgage schemes, and the credit freeze that forced companies and banks alike to change their borrowing and operating habits or die.

Mason also provides a picture of what could be ahead. He believes that the kind of speculative capitalism that has had such devastating effects on the poor and working people must be reduced in scale and firmly regulated. Indeed, he men-

tions the idea of nationalizing the banks and turning them into financial utilities whose duty is to ensure access to credit, rather than to turn a profit.

The other point he makes is that the monolithic status of capitalism as the "end of history" is shattered, which opens room for major change. Indeed, "there is nothing permanent, nor even well-entrenched, about the current shape of the global economy." The state, as the backer of capitalism, has returned as an economic force, and "horizontalists" who have chosen to ignore it should take notice. Public complicity with an "abrasive, selfish" society that honors individuals over communities is now under question.

What we as working-class activists need to do is to promote our own vision of a democratic, worker-controlled global economy. People are open to new ideas—we should start answering their questions if we are to build an enduring alternative to both neoliberal and state capitalism.

Wobblies! In Words And Song

Kahn, Si. "Creative Community Organizing: A Guide for Rabble-Rousers, Activists, and Quiet Lovers of Justice." *San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers 2010. Paperback, 240 pages, \$17.95.*

By Paul Buhle

It is interesting, more than interesting, that the return of "WOBBLIES! A Graphic History of the Industrial Workers of the World" to print, after an absence of several years, is preceded by the appearance of a memoir and organizing manual by one of the singers who has most frequently been heard with Wobbly standards: "Creative Community Organizing," by Si Kahn.

Speaking as a historian of radicalism and labor with a special fondness for syndicalism (labor or student) and a persistent hostility toward bureaucracies,

I am drawn to Kahn's rank-and-file mentality, and to the ways in which his political-cultural experience of more than a half century brought him from the civil rights movement into labor struggles and many others—gay and lesbian rights, immigrant rights and so on. He has written songs with Joe Hill as one of his heroes, and he has frequently, one might say endlessly, sung Joe Hill songs along with those of Ralph Chaplin and others.

The main thing for



Graphic: images.indiebound.com

Kahn all along, since he found himself as an activist, has been to find ways to build self-confidence in working people and others, to give themselves the chance to believe in the awesome powers of solidarity, and to understand that democracy is never a gift. It always comes with struggle.

The particulars in "Creative Community Organizing" are so numerous, and so helpful in their detail, that to recount them here would be impos-

sible. Get it, read it between spells of workplace, street and clubhouse activities, and you will see what I mean.

It is almost but not quite immodest (I was only a co-editor, not an artist) to say the same about the comic art in "WOBBLIES!" Its value grows amazingly with repeated readings, including mine. Imagine that the story of the IWW is as big as the largest canvas ever made, or the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel times ten, and then populate it with Wobbly heroes and heroines starting at the beginning and coming up to now. Comic art has its own methods and meanings, and not infrequently artists do even better than they "know." This is clearly the case here, because the inspiration gave the dozen or so artists more narrative sensibility and skills as historians than a hundred PhDs.

Nate Smith's Revolution In Pittsburgh

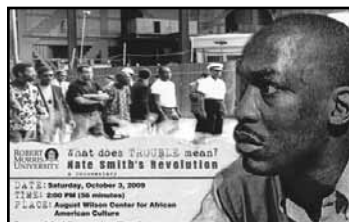
"What Does Trouble Mean? Nate Smith's Revolution." *Written and produced by Erica Peiffer and Alexander Wilson. Pittsburgh: Robert Morris University, 2009. 56 minutes.*

By Kenneth Miller

"What Does Trouble Mean? Nate Smith's Revolution" is a new documentary film about the life of Nate Smith and the struggle to integrate the building trades unions in Pittsburgh in the late 1960s and early 1970s. I viewed it at the Pump House in Homestead and many people in attendance were older African-American trades workers who attributed

their jobs to the movement described in this film. There were lots of civil rights folks, black and white, who participated in the marches and demonstrations described in this film. Everyone with firsthand experience attested to the accuracy of the film.

The civil rights era in Pittsburgh is most remembered by the riots that occurred in the Hill District after Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated and by the struggle against the labor unions to admit African-Americans into the build-



Graphic: thesoulpitt.com

ing trades. Nate Smith and thousands of others stopped the construction of the U.S. Steel Tower and Three Rivers Stadium for three days. Smith was an operating engineer. His understanding of the apprenticeship programs made him a very effective negotiator. He understood the power of the media and he wanted to be an effective and relentless spokesperson.

The apprenticeship program Smith negotiated was called "Operation Dig." He forced negotiations and the federal

and state Departments of Labor ended up subsidizing efforts focused on helping African-Americans enter and complete the apprenticeship programs.

This is an important film for IWW members to watch and understand. In Pittsburgh, the gains in minority labor participation have slipped. I've participated in lots of meetings where civil rights leaders meet with the building trades' pie cards. The language used to explain the lack of minorities in the unions is exactly the same as what it was in the early 1970s. Our union is defined by its opposition to exclusionary trade unionism.

Unions Call For Blockade Of Israeli Maritime Trade

Continued from 1

Human Rights, Richard Falk, who described it as constituting "slow genocide."

Israel's deplorable attacks on the unarmed ships are a violation of both international maritime law and the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea, which states that "the high seas should be reserved for peaceful purposes." Under Article 3 of the Rome Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation of 1988, it is an international crime for any person to seize or exercise control over a ship by force, and also a crime to injure or kill any person in the process. As prominent international law scholars have recently confirmed, there is absolutely no legal justification for Israel's act of aggression against international civilian ships carry-

ing humanitarian and developmental aid to civilians suffering under occupation and a patently illegal blockade, which has created a man-made and deliberately sustained humanitarian catastrophe. Our response must be commensurate with this crisis.

Gaza has become the test of our universal morality and our common humanity. During the South African anti-apartheid struggle, the world was inspired by the brave actions of dockworkers unions who refused to handle South African cargo, contributing significantly to the fall of apartheid. Today, we call on you, dockworkers unions of the world, to do the same against Israel's occupation and apartheid. This is the most effective form of solidarity to end injustice and uphold universal human rights.

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Wobbly Arts We'll Be Marching On The Boss

By Sean Carleton, X364847

"We'll Be Marching On The Boss!" is dedicated to the baristas of the Ft. Worth Starbucks for reminding us all that direct action really does get the goods. Congratulations on marching on the boss, your much deserved first-aid kit, and joining the One Big Union! Here's to blocking the drive-through!

Tune: "She'll Be Coming Around the Mountain."

Verse 1

A*

We'll be marching on the boss today

A E

We'll be marching on the boss today

A

We'll be marching on the boss

D

We'll be marching on the boss

A E A

We'll be marching on the boss today!

*(same chord arrangements for all verses)

Verse 2

We'll be plotting in the break room at lunch x2

We'll be plotting in the break room x2

We'll be plotting in the break room at lunch!

Verse 3

We'll be storming his office at five O'clock x2

We'll be storming his office x2

We'll be storming his office at five O'clock!

Verse 4

We'll be getting a raise or we'll lock him in x2

We'll be getting a raise x2

We'll be getting a raise or we'll lock him in!

Verse 5

We're not letting him out until we get it x2

We're not letting him out until x2

We're not letting him out until we get it!

Verse 6

We'll be showing him there's power in the union x2

We'll be showing him there's power x 2

We'll be showing him there's power in our union!

Crime On The High Seas: The "Deepwater Horizon" Oil Rig Disaster

Continued from 1

caused a seal key to rupture in the blow-out preventer. Bits of rubber started appearing at the top of the well, but Transocean, under pressure from BP, decided to keep on going. Williams then said that the first sign that something was going wrong came when engines on the rig started speeding up—presumably because they were burning the methane gas as well as their regular fuel. A few minutes after that, the massive explosion occurred.

Some five or more privately owned and operated fire boats spent hours pouring water on the burning rig. There was neither coordination nor planning in this effort and after some hours, having taken on tons and tons of water, the rig turned over and sank.

Once the rig sank, oil started to pour out. A "blow-out preventer" was supposed to shear off the well pipe at its head, thus sealing it. This preventer, operating 6,000 feet below sea level, didn't function. There are several guesses as to why, including a dead battery, a broken seal in the preventer, and other known malfunctioning parts. Most likely any one of these problems could have caused its malfunction. Some other countries require the use of two such preventers, but not the free-market champion U.S. regime. At \$500,000, the preventers cost too much, according to the MMS.

Thus did this series of corner-cutting in safety and criminal neglect as well as simple lack of coordination lead to a huge disaster.

As of mid-May, those responsible for dealing with this disaster have poured some 400,000 gallons of oil-dispersant on the oil. This chemical is toxic to sea life, but no matter. It will help BP cover up its crimes since it will leave less oil slick hitting the shores of the Gulf of Mexico. Coincidentally, this dispersant, "Corexit," is manufactured by a BP

subsidiary. In order to fully know the possible toxicity of Corexit, its contents would have to be known, but citing "proprietary interests" the manufacturer refuses to disclose this. Profits are more important than life, after all.

BP's Dirty History

BP leads the industry in dirty workplace practices. In 2005, a fire at a BP refinery in Texas killed 15 employees. One year later, a BP pipeline in Alaska sprung a bad oil leak after BP had been warned about corrosion of its pipelines there. According to a letter sent by U.S. Congressman Henry Waxman, Between September 2008 and November 2009, three BP gas and oil pipelines on Alaska's North Slope ruptured or clogged, leading to a risk of explosions. A potentially cataclysmic explosion was also avoided at a BP gas compressor plant, where a key piece of equipment designed to prevent the buildup of gas failed to operate, and the backup equipment intended to warn workers was not properly installed.

On April 27, one week after the disastrous fire, BP announced strong profits. According to a banking analyst report, the company benefited from having cut some 5,000 jobs and saving \$4 billion in operating expenses, which partially accounts for its first quarter profits of \$6 billion.

Corporate Control Over Politics

The MMS also bears responsibility. According to the *Wall Street Journal*:

"In 2000, the MMS issued a safety alert saying it expects oil companies to have a backup system to activate blowout preventers if the main activation system fails...Last June, nine years after the safety alert, the MMS issued an almost identical safety notice, but to date has issued no rule requiring the back-up switches."

Basically, the MMS was covering for itself by sending out a notice while not

enforcing anything.

Typical of all government regulatory bodies, the MMS operates largely as an industry-owned subsidiary. MMS regulators have been disciplined for accepting "gifts" from the oil industry as well as for having sex with industry "representatives" (i.e. industry-hired prostitutes).

In addition, BP has spent millions of dollars lobbying (i.e. bribing) the U.S. Congress, including \$15.9 million last year alone. On May 14, President Obama blasted the "cozy" relationship between BP and federal authorities. What he failed to mention was that during his time as a Senator, he was the single largest recipient of BP's generosity.

On top of all the legalized bribing and criminal neglect by BP, the underlying reason for the seriousness of this disaster is the extreme depth of this well—set to be the deepest ever—which makes it so difficult to seal off the well. This means that other similar disasters are simply waiting to happen.

Deep Water Wells, Peak Oil & Capitalism

The reason for this increased exploration in hard-to-reach places like the deep sea is the peaking of oil supplies. World oil discoveries peaked in the 1960s, but oil demand has steadily increased. Today the world consumes about four times more oil than is discovered every year. Thus, we see the phenomenon of the "picking of low hanging fruit first." In other words, the easier to reach oil wells are in the process of depletion. Very few easily accessible deposits are left on earth, so oil companies go after the harder-to-reach ones. What will happen when those are depleted is never a thought by the capitalist class.

This fact is the perfect example of the anarchy of the capitalist means of production. Under capitalism, if one oil company doesn't deplete oil supplies, its competitor will. If one company spends

Oceans For Them And A Drop For Us

By John Martin Holland

It's a fine mess they've got us in
But it's only 'We' to blame;
Slippery like eels with their closed door
deals

And Justice ain't the game.
Why do we trust them too many times
with the things our people need?
It's time to call the hand they hold
and stop the wounds that bleed.

It's a dirty deal we've let them do
To "Trust" them with our lives;
The workers sold to poverty
With our children and our wives.
Are we slaves to our 'lected leaders?
Oceans for them and a drop for us.
It's time they shared their winnings
Health care would be real nice.

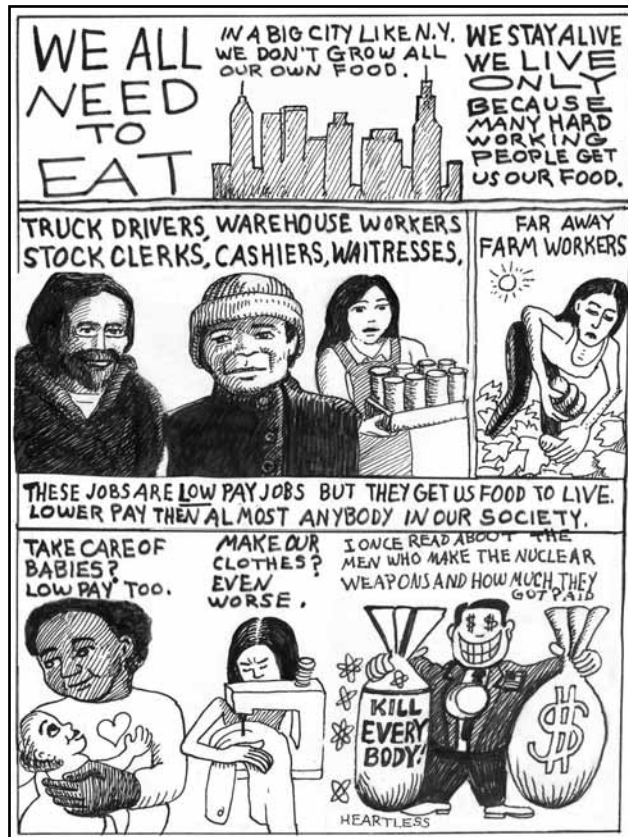
They answer "There's no money.
We've got to cut somewhere!"
But I know it's just more lies again;
They just don't want to share.

Who am I to accuse them
These crimes against the poor?
The lines are getting longer outside the rich
man's door.

They'll scream and shake their fists at you
say: "It's the poor that are the blame."
But anyone with eyes and ears, hears lies
and sees their game

Feels their cheating and their scams.
I see your mansions on the hills
Your boats down on the lake.
I see your doctors sold to the insurance
ones
and the trillions that they take;
Leaving drowned, destroyed and bloated
lives
Floating in your wake.

*The above song was penned on or
about April 15 for the Health Care is a
Human Right campaign in Vermont. Not
feeling real good about our representative
Democracy.*



Graphic: Tom Keough



Graphic: Bree Johnson

World Labor Solidarity

A COLUMN BY THE
INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY COMMISSION

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

By Matt Antosh

The 2010 International Solidarity Commission continues to work to build international solidarity. Palestine has been held as a priority of our work throughout the past month, with the recent attack on the Free Gaza Flotilla dominating our time. Also this month, the Philadelphia IWW protested the banning of the German FAU; we received a report that the National Garment Workers Federation in Bangladesh held a protest for higher wages (see "NGWF In Bangladesh Campaign For Wage Increase," right side of page 12); and we continue to build branch level volunteers to help the work of building worker-to-worker international solidarity.

Wobblies respond to the Free Gaza Flotilla incident

On May 30, in international waters, Israeli commandos attacked a flotilla taking humanitarian aid to the besieged Gaza Strip. The cargo included toys, medicine, wheelchairs, books, stationery, building materials, and other supplies. Israeli forces boarded the ships illegally and opened fire on the 600 human rights campaigners on board, killing at least nine people, injuring many others, and arresting the remaining people.

The following is the tentative statement from the ISC:

"The International Solidarity Commission (ISC) of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), a global union dedicated to revolutionary social change and workers self-management, is shocked and appalled by Israeli forces' attack on the lead ship of a humanitarian aid convoy, the Turkish vessel 'Mavi Marmaris,' killing at least nine people.

"The ISC holds the Israeli authorities entirely responsible for the provocative storming of the ship, and condemns the harm caused to the civilians on board, who included peace activists and parliamentarians from many different countries.

"The ISC supports any efforts to deliver humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza, who have been suffering the effects of the Israeli blockade since 2007, a suffering greatly intensified by the massacre from December 2008 to January 2009. We salute the brave human rights activists attempting to deliver aid to the people of Gaza, including the crew and passengers on the MV Rachel Corrie, [a cargo ship from Ireland carrying aid supplies] en route to Gaza.

"The blockade is a clear assault on the working class of Gaza, and the ISC supports any efforts by the nonviolent International Coalition to End the Illegal Siege of Gaza—to break the blockade and deliver much-needed supplies to the people of Gaza.

"The IWW has a long history of opposing imperialist wars. We, as workers, have often been used as cannon fodder for our imperialist masters, and these imperialist wars have been used to justify state repression of the IWW specifically and the working class in general. But, we also recognize that there can be no true and just peace as long as exploitation continues and people are victimized by systems of oppression such as capitalism, colonialism and apartheid.

"The only way to achieve a true peace in Palestine/Israel is for these systems of oppression to be dismantled.

"To help achieve those ends, the ISC reiterates our support for the Boycott-Divestment-Sanctions campaign called for by various Palestinian labor unions and civil society organizations. The ISC urges all unionists and IWW members to educate themselves and become active in the campaign.

"An injury to one is an injury to all!"

At their general membership meeting on June 3, the San Francisco IWW voted unanimously to issue a statement of support for International Solidarity Movement's (ISM) actions toward breaking the Israeli blockade in Gaza. The branch specifically acknowledges Fellow Worker Paul Larudee in his courageous efforts in this endeavor. The branch also went on record as supporting the international campaign of Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS).

Also, members of the recent IWW delegation to Palestine presented a workshop at the U.S. Social Forum in Detroit, Mich., entitled "Labor Solidarity in Action: Report from the IWW Union Delegation to Palestine." The first half of the workshop spent a portion of the time reporting back on the state of the Palestinian labor movement and the experience of the delegates. The second half of the workshop was devoted to a discussion and strategy session for building a current within the U.S. labor movement for boycott, divestment and sanctions to pressure Israel to end its 60-year apartheid regime.

Finally, for all Wobblies who are concerned with labor rights and human rights in Palestine and want to get involved in organizing solidarity between IWW members and Palestinian workers and developing a Boycott-Divestment-Sections campaign in the IWW, email iwwinpalestine@gmail.com or visit: <http://www.iww.org/projects/isc/palestine>

Philadelphia IWW Protests for the FAU

The Philadelphia General Membership Branch of the IWW picketed the German Consul (from New York) at the swank Philadelphia Union League on June 10. The German-American Chamber of Commerce met at noon at the Union League. This luncheon coincided with the appeals court hearing on the government's ban against the Freie Arbeiterinnen-und Arbeiter-Union (FAU) in Berlin (see "FAU Berlin Wins Union Freedom," page 1).

Call for ISC Liaisons!

The ISC is very proud of the recent growth of the ISC Liaison program! Branches are stepping up to elect a representative from their branch to work with the ISC to build strong, worker-to-worker international solidarity.

As always, we are looking for motivated people who are interested in international solidarity work to liaise with the ISC. This work will include:

- * Passing motions of solidarity at the branch level
- * Helping organize events, tours, and pickets
- * Keeping members informed on the activities of the ISC and the IWW's international allies

We continue to look to having a member from each branch volunteer. If you are interested in this work and would like to volunteer, email: solidarity@iww.org.

Indonesian Garment Workers Win Back Their Rights

By Clean Clothes Campaign

After a campaign that lasted for over three years, the Indonesian garment factory PT Mulia Knitting Factory finally acknowledged the right of their workers to form unions of their choice. The factory, on the outskirts of the capital, Jakarta, signed an agreement on May 20 with the Gerakan Serikat Buruh Indonesia (GSBI) union.

The agreement also clearly recognizes Serikat Buruh Garmen Tekstil dan Sepatu (SBGTS), the factory-based subsidiary of GSBI, as representing their members in the Mulia factory, and provides compensation measures for five former employees who were dismissed in 2007 because of their union membership, and who had continued their struggle for the right to freedom of association.

GSBI and the Clean Clothes Campaign appreciate the role recently played by one of the foreign buyers at the factory, Tommy Hilfiger. The company's pressure on the factory management over the last few months has been crucial in bringing about the agreement.

At the same time, we regret that it has taken more than two years since our initial contact with the Tommy Hilfiger corporation in February 2008 before the company decided to take effective measures to bring the gross labor rights violations at this supplier to an end.

The other main foreign buyer at the Mulia Factory, Polo Ralph Lauren, has consistently refused any communication on the labor rights violations—a policy that is in line with their conservative practices when it comes to corporate social responsibility. Although Polo Ralph Lauren actively promotes charities and philanthropic programs, it refuses to practice mainstream ethical trading principles in its day-to-day operations.

Because of the slow and lengthy process of this case, 14 former Mulia employees and union members were forced by economic hardship to stop the fight for their rights at an earlier stage and opt for a financial settlement with the factory. Unfortunately none of the irregularly dismissed union members have been reinstated in their former positions.

The new agreement doesn't cover all concerns that the union originally raised, such as pregnancy leave for female workers, failing to offer safe transportation for female workers after night shifts as per Indonesian law, non-compliance with laws on health and pension benefits, and inadequate safety equipment and keeping workers on precarious contracts.

However, with the union now firmly established at the factory, hopes are high that these issues will be resolved through regular social dialogue between the union and factory management.

NGWF In Bangladesh Campaign For Wage Increase

On June 4, the National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF) in Bangladesh organized a demonstration to increase the wage of garment workers in Bangladesh as a part of its "Wage Increase Campaign." Leaders at the rally said it has become impossible for garment factory workers to sustain their family with 1662 taka (\$24) a month as a minimum wage, and their wage should be raised to Tk 5,000 taka (\$72) a month.



Photo: NGWF

Swedish Port Workers Blockade Israeli Ships & Cargo

From transportworkers.org

On June 3, the Swedish Port Workers Union announced a blockade of all Israeli ships and cargo to and from Israel from June 22-29 (at press time).

The reason for the blockade is the unprecedented May 31 criminal attack on a peaceful ship convoy Free Gaza Flotilla from Turkey on its way to Gaza to deliver humanitarian goods. Several peace activists were killed by Israeli commandos and other participants were detained without any reason. The Swedish Port Workers Union supports the Flotilla to Gaza and protest the state of Israel's violation of international law

against a convoy of peace activists delivering supplies to the people of Gaza, who are suffering because of a blockade.

The Swedish Port Workers Union demands that the assailants be brought to justice, that international law be respected by the state of Israel and that the blockade of Gaza be immediately lifted.

The Swedish Port Workers Union would urge other unions and other organizations to take similar initiatives and to call for a general blockade of Israeli goods until the Palestinian people's rights have been restored in general, and in particular that the blockade of be Gaza lifted.

Register For The IWW General Convention!

By Twin Cities IWW

The Twin Cities IWW is preparing early to make this year's convention, from Sept. 4-6, a success. We encourage you to register ASAP so that we can have an accurate idea of how many people we need to house and feed that weekend. If you are an elected delegate, please remember that delegate credential forms

need to be filled out directly with GHQ.

The registration fee this year is \$20. We will accommodate all members' financial issues, but do need anything you can contribute as most of it will go to buying food for the duration of the convention. Please call 612-378-8845 or email twincities@iww.org for a registration form.

Support international solidarity!

Assessments for \$3, \$6 are available from your delegate or IWW headquarters

PO Box 180195
Chicago, IL 60618, USA.