

# INDUSTRIAL WORKER

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## Fired Restaurant Workers Announce International Boycott

By Phoenix IWW & Pei Wei Workers' Committee

When 12 Pei Wei restaurant employees visited the corporate offices of P.F. Chang's (PFCB.O) in North Scottsdale, Ariz. on June 16, they were told: "You are on private property and we are asking you to leave." The workers had come to deliver a letter and speak with a company representative about their mass firing. Having only skipped a single day of work at their Chandler Pei Wei restaurant in order to attend, as a group, the historic May 29th Demonstration Against Hate in downtown Phoenix, their immediate termination threw these 12 workers' lives into chaos, uncertainty, and struggle.

"Management at our Pei Wei store has seen plenty of 'no call, no shows' in the past and very few of them have ever resulted in termination," said Elizabeth, one of the 12 fired employees. Elizabeth is a charismatic single mother of two and has become the spokesperson for her co-workers. "We felt we had to participate in this march against Senate Bill

1070 because it's racist and it will hurt our families. Pei Wei always hassles us for calling in sick or asking for days off so we decided to exercise our right to protest." Indeed, the U.S. Constitution protects that right to peaceably assemble and the Wagner Act also protects the right to "concerted activity" in the workplace. Based on this, the workers, with the help of the IWW, are in the process of filing an Unfair Labor Practice charge with the National Labor Relations Board.

Lack of time off for employees and inconsistent discipline are two festering issues that have revealed themselves in the aftermath of the firings. "I've worked at Pei Wei for 10 years, since it opened, and I have never called in sick and I've never been given a single day of paid vacation," said Ivonne, a respected worker known for her reasoned judgment. "My co-workers have been here [for] four, seven, and eight years. Pei Wei should be supporting us against these racist political attacks, but instead they've abandoned us."

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Pei Wei workers and their supporters gather outside P.F. Chang's Home Office minutes before Scottsdale police arrive.

Photo: Phoenix IWW

## Immigrant Workers Rally For Justice At Kosher Food Company



Fired Flaum workers protest at KRM Kollal supermarket on July 25.

Photo: Diane Krauthamer

By New York City IWW

In the sweltering mid-summer heat in the Hassidic neighborhood of Borough Park in Brooklyn, N.Y., immigrant workers fired en masse from leading kosher food processor and wholesaler, Flaum Appetizing Corp., rallied alongside dozens of community and labor activists on July 25 to call on the KRM Kollal supermarket to reassess the sale of Flaum products. Flaum is set to stand trial in federal court after denying workers overtime pay for years and launching a campaign of fierce retaliation when employees stood up for their legal rights. KRM is currently one of the largest retailers of Flaum products including hummus, pickles, and Middle Eastern salads.

"We worked hard every day to help Flaum grow and thrive but when we

demanded the pay we were owed under the law, they fired us all at once," said Felipe Romero, a Focus on the Food Chain member who worked at Flaum for nine years.

At least 17 workers, including Romero, were illegally fired on May 26, 2008 for engaging in a work stoppage over the right to form a labor union and payment in accordance with the law. Romero said his starting salary was \$4 per hour, and was many times forced to work upwards of 70-80 hours per week without receiving the legally-required overtime pay of time-and-a-half.

"Flaum underestimated our sense of dignity and we're not going anywhere until justice is won," Romero said.

Participants at the July 25th protest included such labor and community

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## The Battle Of Toronto: Protesting The G8/G20 Summits

By John Hollingsworth

My involvement in organizing against the Group of Eight (G8) and Group of Twenty (G20) meetings, along with others in Ottawa, began in earnest (after several years of anticipated activity) in December 2009. At that point in time, an open, local umbrella group of anti-capitalists, including some IWW members, called *le Collectif du Chat Noir* (Black Cat Collective) began meeting and planning our activities in the lead-up to the Summits in Huntsville (G8) and Toronto (G20). Early on, the group decided to focus our efforts on Toronto. Members of the organizing collective were also meeting in different cities with our counterparts in *consultas* from that time onward, as part of a multi-city convergence. Groups from other cities

included the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP), and No One Is Illegal (NOII), the Southern Ontario Anarchist Resistance (SOAR) and the newly-reborn Anti-Capitalist Convergence (better known as CLAC) from Montreal. We all worked within the terms and framework set out by the Toronto Community Mobilization Network (TCMN).

I was also involved in the labor mobilization for Ottawa, as a delegate to the labor council for my trade union. While the mobilization was already well underway on the part of the community-based groups, the G8/G20 started appearing on the radar of organized labor much later. Much of the push locally, including the production and dissemination of materials like flyers and posters, attending

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# NFL Players Are Not Workers: The Debate Continues

Howdy again, Fellow Workers:

This letter is in regard to "Authors Respond To 'NFL Players Are Not Workers Too,'" which appeared on page 2 of the June *Industrial Worker*.

Apparently, my response ("NFL Players Are Not Workers Too," page 2, April *IW*) to the two-part article, "Football Through Labor's Lens," which appeared in the February/March and April issues of the *Industrial Worker*, has stuck a tender set of nerves with the authors, FWs Neil Parthun and Dann McGeehan. To paraphrase William Shakespeare, "Methinks thou doth protest too much."

While their knowledge and devotion to football is overly abundant ("team spirit"?), it is reminiscent of one of the most quoted sayings of Karl Marx: "Religion is the opiate of the people." All governments and autocratic structures, for thousands of years, have used grandiose entertainment vehicles as a method of psychological distinction to the working class, the thinking being that a population diverted by amusement spends less time thinking about how to better its living/working situations. Instead, we

are subtly (and not so subtly!) tempted to spend our leisure time (what there is of it!) wasting our thinking energies and our communicative strategies on mindless hours of trash and fiction, overdone and overrated movies, and endless hours of television—including all sporting events, not just football.

I have to admit that my knowledge of players' salaries was entirely predicated upon the football players who seem to make the loudest press and I'm grateful that both FW Parthun and McGeehan have corrected my over-enthusiasm by offering the median salary range of NFL players as between \$484,000 to \$1,325,000 annually.

However, I doubt very strongly that anybody reading the *Industrial Worker* makes anywhere near that lesser amount (and probably less than 5 percent of that amount, or between \$24,000 and \$48,400). Despite what both FW Parthun and McGeehan maintain, I have a great deal of difficulty thinking of anybody in that salary range as "workers." Under their rather broad interpretation, then, we would also have to include John D. Rockefeller, James J. Hill, Henry Ford

(and so on and so on) as "workers," simply because they, too, struggled from a humble beginning, and fought their way to the top. Sorry, I'm not buying it.

The football players' union is more properly defined as a "performers' association," and has many similarities to the "unions" of middle-management professionals, as well as movie and television performers. One of the distinguishable characteristics of many members of these "performers' associations," which is not characteristic to most members of other unions, is the retinue that is maintained by the individual performer (and not his employer). This retinue of paid employees, either on salary or wages, may include: publicists, business managers, secretaries, accountants, attorneys, chauffeurs, gardeners, butlers, maids, etc. In fact, these members of "performers' associations" seem to have more in common with the bosses than they do with the rest of us workers. And, how does that first sentence in the IWW Preamble read? Oh yeah, "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common."

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# Wobbly Thoughts On The U.S. Social Forum In Detroit

By FW b

In going to the U.S. Social Forum for the first time (and building on my first experience at the Labor Notes Conference this last April) it seems to me that there are three core centers of potentially militant unionism within the labor movement today. It is my feeling that if we, as the IWW, don't build relationships, join together or act in solidarity with these constellations, we may miss the boat on this generation of struggles.

First, there is an increasingly well-organized anti-racist, grassroots and internationalist pole of the labor movement.

It is made up of workers' centers, independent unions and coalitions—

things like the Excluded Workers Congress (which includes such groups as the Domestic Workers Alliance, National Day Labors network, NYC Taxi Drivers Alliance and many other workers' centers)—and larger collaborations like Basta Ya! Moreover, there is organizing work forming around whole supply chains, most notably the newly-formed Food Chain Workers Alliance, which is building on the on the important work of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers. Individuals in all these groups are working hard to build together and to find funding streams that give them more leeway than corporate foundations. They are looking for partners that are more democratic than unions for whom collaboration mostly means taking dues from those already organized by these groups or giving small amounts of resources, but with demands for control.

Second, there has been a whole swath of struggles around the public sector. Union workers are often on the front lines of these struggles, but they can only be won if they organize on a larger scale than existing union formations. All

public work is at stake, although issues like education and health care have the most public resonance. What defines these struggles currently is that crises—economic, political, and moral—are used to transform the public sector towards privatization, which is currently the only “solution” on the table. Jobs with Justice, The United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE), and a number of other community-based groups seem to be ahead in general on these struggles, though there is yet to be a coherent alternative vision on the table and, as in most things, struggles

south of the border and around the world provide the best picture of where we need to go. As such, and given the exploding situations in Mexico and elsewhere, learning

from and supporting those struggles and getting people to see such struggles as precursors to our own could be extremely important in giving people the means necessary to win these types of struggles here in the U.S. These cutbacks will only intensify in the years ahead, and creating mass-based fighting coalitions at the rank-and-file level will be essential to saving the livelihood not only of public sector workers, but also large sections of the public at large.

As such, what is important about both the work in the public sector and of workers' center organizing is that they move beyond just “labor issues” into core questions about what society can be, including issues of economic democracy, food, sustainability, race and gender justice, and potentially, creating the new world in the shell of the old.

Third, of course, is the work that we of the IWW are doing within “unorganizable” workplaces, and as part of serious campaigns. We are not particularly unique in this, though our international structure and lack of strings to corporate foundations provides solid possibilities,

## IWW Makes An Impact At The U.S. Social Forum

By Stephanie Basile

On June 22-26, nearly 26,000 people converged in Detroit for the second U.S. Social Forum. The forum consisted of hundreds of workshops, cultural events, walking tours, and more. Activists, organizers, and others involved in grassroots organizing came from around the country to network and share ideas.

A number of IWW members were in attendance at the Social Forum, and many were able to meet and connect with one another. They came from places such as Grand Rapids, the Twin Cities, New York City, upstate New York, Philadelphia, Albuquerque, Detroit and Richmond, Va., among other places.

Wobblies took the time to meet with one another and report on what was going on in each person's city or town. Highlights from their conversations include the following:

- Richmond: Wobblies helped form a Transit Riders Union and are actively reaching out to the community to grow the union.

- Albuquerque: Wobblies organized the staff at a CWA local and currently have a contract there

- Detroit: Wobblies operate the “Wobbly Kitchen,” which feeds workers for various events and fed hundreds of people during the Social Forum.

- Starbucks Workers Union: Organizing continues nationwide, and SWU members said they were looking forward to attending the first international SWU conference in New York City, which took place in July.

- New branches continue to form around the country.

The IWW also hosted a workshop called “Building an Alternative Workers Movement: Opportunities and Challenges,” in which participants broke into small groups to flesh out ideas and share experiences. Small groups discussed such topics as organizing on the job, organizing across industries, membership recruitment and retention, and politics in organizing. Each group then shared and discussed with the larger group. San Francisco's Chinese Progressive Association and El Comité de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agrícolas (CATA) co-hosted the workshop with the IWW.

as does our open membership structure that, like workers' centers, can use a wider net strategy for building membership and industrial power. What could make us unique is having some serious victories that we could build collaborations around, as well as visibility and awareness, which would certainly give a boost to our organization as a whole. That said, we are currently extraordinarily disconnected from the most militant sectors of the working class, our strongest ties being to certain sections of the white working class and how we utilize successes should seek to transform that situation. Nevertheless, the white working class is extraordinarily important and the fact that it is made invisible in most liberal and leftist organizing

today is dangerous indeed.

I also think that bringing our analysis and experience to collaborative projects on larger scales around the public sector, supply chain organizing, or industrial campaigns would be useful for the work and for our organization as a whole. Moreover, our benefit as a collaborator and as an organizing force would be far stronger if we could become an effective national apparatus for solidarity actions for our own campaigns and for others, and what it would take to be this is a conversation of pressing importance. Lastly, as a rank-and-file union we have the potential to experiment, and I would love to see more working class community projects as a way of building a membership base, and more projects with local artists generally.

All of this points out to the fact that the IWW is not going to be the dominant force in the labor movement in our generation, though if we do our job, we can be an important contributor. As such, our goal should be to push the entire labor movement to operate like what we do at our very best, summarized by open membership, rank-and-file control, internationalism and direct action.

What is needed then is a plan for the future of our union in relation to these, and other trends, debated through the discussions of the membership and figured out on local, regional, national and international scales. Our relevance to the labor movement is going to be defined by our ability to organize ourselves to participate as effectively as possible. In conclusion, I am deeply impressed by the work and vision the Organizing Department has done to move towards this goal, but it is on all of us to figure out how to prioritize our energies to be qualitatively more organized, effective, and visionary.



### IWW Constitution Preamble

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

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

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

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

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

### Join the IWW Today

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer.
- I agree to abide by the IWW constitution.
- I will study its principles and acquaint myself with its purposes.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
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## The Defiant Spirit: News from your General Defense Committee

By Kenneth Miller

Today's IWW is filled with people concerned about free speech, police brutality and many other "defense" issues. They are working to organize responses to rights violations. Many of them are members of the General Defense Committee (GDC). Others are making inquiries about the GDC. Either way, it is obvious to them that our union needs a GDC. However, is not quite clear to them what the GDC does or how to fit in. Today, we are a group mostly of IWW members with vast experience doing defense organizing, working to make that experience, and the experience of this union, available to others. You should join the GDC today.



### How is the GDC going to grow?

The GDC was created to raise money for defense. Workers don't have a lot of money to give, but everyone has a little. The GDC correlated memberships with fundraising. The membership of the GDC exploded after the Palmer Raids, during the subsequent fights for free speech. We needed to pay lawyers and afford bail. People, thousands of non-Wobblies too, who wanted to help with this joined the GDC. We should be aiming to grow in the same way today. We need the right cases. We need a coordinated outreach effort to educate about those cases and present the GDC as a way to contribute financial support.

### Problems at the GDC?

In late June, I spent a weekend in upstate New York at the "Wobble-In" and I heard two specific complaints about the GDC:

The first complaint I heard was about a situation in which the NYC IWW fought the Department of Labor tooth and nail to avoid handing over their membership records. Significant legal support was mobilized and they were on the cusp of a victory. As that victory was imminent, and the sanctity of our membership records withheld, they learned that the records were handed over. Crap! What a slap in the face! What great work undermined. The GDC has the resources

and organization to provide significant support.

The second complaint I heard was regarding a Fellow Worker who made an error. After he went public about workers' rights violations at a silk screening shop where he had been organizing, the boss went after him with a Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP) suit. This Fellow Worker made a big mistake, in my opinion, by going to a lawyer rather than seeking advice from his Fellow Workers. Wobblies should never cave to SLAPP suits, and this member should have known to go to the GDC for help prior to paying a lawyer \$6,500. People need to know that the GDC is not continuing to raise money to pay the legal debt that this member incurred.

### Mobilize with the GDC

The GDC has not fully embraced some of the most high-profile instances of police/picket line violence—those perpetrated against Alex Svoboda in Providence, R.I., and Erik Davis in the Twin Cities. Donations need to be correlated with membership organizing drives, and not contributed directly from our general fund. If people want to give money to support Alex or Erik, for example, joining the GDC is supposed to be a mechanism for them to do so. As a member of the GDC Steering Committee, this is what I believe the GDC is designed for. I ask that you please join the GDC today and help us make concrete steps in this direction.

A GDC Delegate will be in attendance and signing up new members at the IWW General Convention in the Twin Cities this September. You can download a membership application form online at: <http://www.iww.org/en/projects/gdc/join.shtml> and send it to: The General Defense Committee of the IWW, c/o IWW, P. O. Box 317741, Cincinnati, OH, 45231, United States. You can contact Kenneth directly with any suggestions, concerns or recommendations for the General Defense Committee at 412-867-9213.

## NFL Players Are Not Workers: The Debate Continues

Continued from 2

If I get laid off or fired from my job, I can eventually get another job, probably in the same field, maybe even in the same state. But if a professional football player gets laid off or fired, end of story. He's not going to be playing professional football again—and that's another difference between the "performers' association" and the rest of us.

Another difference is that we understand the morality of honoring other workers' picket lines—we don't cross them! And yet, members of the NFL routinely cross the picket lines of hotels and restaurants. You would think that these guys would remember that they were workers too, but they don't. And here's a thought: When do you think the Arizona Cardinals will begin protesting the blatantly racist anti-immigrant laws in their home state? Wouldn't it be something if they arose as one workers' union in solidarity with all fellow workers, and refused to play until the law was revoked? It could bring Arizona to its financial knees, and open up talks for real, meaningful immigration reform.

But don't hold your breath. In the words of Malcolm X, "Well, you could put a shoe in an oven and that wouldn't make it a biscuit," and the National Football Players' Association is a "union" in name only.

Up The Revolution!  
X365465

## Victory In Boron? I Think Not

I am a member of the San Francisco Bay Area region of the Inland Boatman's Union (IBU), which is the Marine Division of the union. I serve on the IBU's Executive Board (unpaid, and I am not speaking here in any official capacity.) I am a ferryboat deckhand and I just received my 100-ton master's license. I am also a 15-year, dues-paying member of the IWW. This letter is in response to Mike Davis' story, "Labor War In The Mojave: California Miners Struggle," which appeared on page 9 of the June *Industrial Worker*.

I am unwilling to call the results of the struggle in Boron a "victory" for the members of International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 30, the union movement, or the working class in general. All along, Rio Tinto's goal was to undermine the ILWU's seniority system and, by their own admission, Rio Tinto has done exactly that.

Sure, Rio Tinto's most extreme demands were beaten back, but that is no doubt by design (i.e. it was the strategy all along by the Rio Tinto bosses). In fact, this is fairly typical of the employing class these days: start with a specific goal, couch that goal in a set of extremely draconian demands, make those demands and enforce them through lockouts or provoking a strike, stir up rank-and-file anger (which is then tempered by increasingly conservative



and class collaborationist union bureaucrats), concede most of the draconian demands, but win the key one, usually a concession by the union which ultimately has long-term erosive effects on union security and rank-and-file control of the workplace. The Boron struggle is a "textbook example" of this.

Surely, the authors, editors, and informed members who help create and produce *Labor Notes* should be able to see this. Don't let the wool be pulled over your eyes and don't have a blind spot, just because it's the ILWU. Sadly, the ILWU is becoming more and more like the SEIU every day.

This is nothing new. As an aside, but related note, I am soon to have a book

**Editor's Note: The Workers' Power column is on vacation this month. It will return in the October Industrial Worker.**

# WOMEN WORKERS' HISTORY

## Chapter 36 Homestead, 1892

In Homestead, Pa., where men made steel, women worked hard to make decent homes out of grimy, shabby houses. The working class women of Homestead, Pa. may not have worked in the town's steel mills, but they had a stake in the survival of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers when mill owner Andrew Carnegie and manager Henry Clay Frick targeted the union for destruction.

In 1892 Carnegie and Frick shut the mills and declared them non-union when the union refused a wage cut. In June the company attempted to sneak 300 armed Pinkerton agents into the mills via river barges, as a prelude to reopening the mills with scab labor. But the people of Homestead were waiting for them. When the barges pulled up to the landing place, several hundred men and women — "mothers, wives and sisters," reported journalist Arthur Burgoyne — broke down the gates and rushed the beach. The Pinkertons fired into the crowd; the workers fired back, beginning a day-long battle. At least nine workers lost their lives.



The Pinkertons were forced to surrender — and run a gauntlet of townspeople. "Women, converted for the nonce into veritable furies, belabored Mr. Frick's janizaries with bludgeons, stoned them, kicked them and spat upon them," Burgoyne wrote.

Eventually, after a long and heroic struggle, the strike was broken by the military and the courts.

Graphic: Mike Konopacki

published, to be called "One Big Union: Judi Bari's Vision of Green-Worker Alliances in Redwood Country" (details here: <http://www.judibari.info>).

Judi Bari was a veteran of many rank-and-file labor struggles and she instinctively knew that the union bureaucrats could rarely be trusted, no matter which union they ran (my book will detail some of the struggles that she and her fellow Earth First!/IWW members engaged in defense of union mill workers, sometimes against their own, corrupt, class collaborationist union). The situation was no different in Boron. This is no victory, except in as much as it isn't a total defeat.

Yours for the One Big Union,  
Fellow Worker Steve Ongerth,  
x344543

# Oregon Wobblies Make Mark With Long Walk For Free Speech

By John Terry, *The Oregonian*

Time was when mere mention of “Wobblies” was enough to provoke fear and loathing in the hearts of society’s capitalistic elements. Never was such fear and loathing more pronounced in Oregon than in February 1911. And never was there a time when the radical Industrial Workers of the World evoked greater sympathy in the state. The motivation for IWW demonstrations in Portland that year was not outrage against local or even regional business. The incentive came from Fresno, Calif., where Wobblies were battling city officials over the right to preach their doctrine on city streets. Fresno authorities were jailing the speakers. The IWW was responding by sending more speakers to overcrowd city jails and jam local courts.

The IWW successfully used that tactic in a 1910 free speech campaign in Spokane and decided to put it to the test in Fresno.

“Hundreds demonstrated their solidarity with Fresno by parading through downtown Portland, banners aloft,” history professor Jay Carlton Mullen of Southern Oregon University writes.

The Portland IWW held a meeting with local Socialists, and an executive committee was formed. It voted to refer to the crusaders by numbers instead of names to emphasize oneness. It raised some money and dispatched scouts to assess trains.

“Army Goes South,” read *The Oregonian*’s headline on Feb. 17, 1911, with subheads: “Workers of World Take Possession of Train,” “Loaded Cars Broken Open” and “Campaign for ‘Free Speech’ Is Planned by Socialists.” Mullen says

“take possession” was a stretch. Although Southern Pacific bigwigs in Portland would rather have denied access to their trains, he says, “the brakemen, engineers and so forth, who probably were union men as well, were probably more responsive” and freely provided space in empty boxcars.

In all, 112 men headed south.

At a stop in Albany, the crusaders “demonstrated their travel regimen,” Mullen says. A few solicited funds, but “most sat quietly, exchanging stares or occasional pleasantries with curious onlookers.”

In Junction City, “Almost all of the male population was waiting for them, backed up by a formidable array of weapons ...” The scene turned peaceful as townsfolk “began to suspect a prank” and turned a sympathetic ear to the Wobblies’ cause, Mullen says. Stops in Eugene and Roseburg were likewise quiet.

Problems arose in Ashland. Officials of Southern Pacific’s Shasta Division managed to block access. The group decided to hike 10 miles south to Steinman in hopes of boarding a train there.

There was snow in the mountains. In Steinman, the railroad section boss lent the ill-clad protesters shovels and axes to clear snow and build fires. His wife distributed apples and crackers.

Southbound trains sped past, so the protesters trudged four miles uphill to the Siskiyou Tunnel. They bought vegetables from a store and feasted on Mulligan stew.

Railroad detectives again barred them from southbound trains. The group debated whether to forcibly board a



Photo: mailtribune.com

The Wobblies’ 1911 journey from Portland to Fresno, Calif., draws a crowd during their stop in Ashland in this rare photograph provided by the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

freight but decided to demonstrate their peacefulness by walking the rest of the way to Fresno.

They tramped on through the Siskiyou Mountains, in snow as deep as six feet, and on into California as far as Red Bluff. They did hitch a ride 12 miles from Mount Shasta to Dunsmuir in the private rail car of an itinerant actress, May Roberts. Other than that, they walked the 150 miles from Ashland.

A tavern owner and the Knights of Pythias in Dunsmuir extended hospitality, as did the Eagles Lodge in warmer Kennett. The Wobblies played the Kennett baseball team and lost 2-1. In Red Bluff came word that the Fresno conflict had been settled. The Oregon contingent disbanded and, presumably, headed

home.

Nonetheless, theirs was an epic journey that should be remembered, Mullen says.

A committee is seeking to memorialize what it calls those “brave men of conviction whose solidarity stand for free speech is absolutely amazing.” Wes Brain of Medford, the de facto executive secretary, said the 16-member committee promoting the Wobbly Walk Free Speech Monument has no financing. But it’s determined to see an appropriate marking of the route in time for the event’s centennial. For information, email [brain@mind.net](mailto:brain@mind.net).

*This story originally appeared in the June 19, 2010 edition of The Oregonian. It was reprinted with permission.*

## Let’s Talk About Sweatshops At PNC Park

By Kenneth Miller

This summer was filled with strikes and police riots in Bangladesh. The Pittsburgh Anti-Sweatshop Community Alliance, and it seems the rest of the anti-sweatshop movement, was unable to offer any concrete support. Even after the Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity spent the month of April touring the United States, it is unclear that anyone in the United States could do anything to support them.

The Pittsburgh Anti-Sweatshop Community Alliance is headed back to PNC Park to talk about sweatshops. Pilot episodes of a new television program that will be aired on Pittsburgh’s com-

munity television station, PCTV, will be shot this fall. We’re going to demonstrate how to commandeer Roberto Clemente Bridge and how a Civil Rights Bridge from PNC Park to the floor of global sweatshops can be built when the Pittsburgh Pirates respond to worker testimony in a timely way.

On Sept. 1 the new statue of former Pirates player Bill Mazeroski will be unveiled, 50 years after the 1960 World Series homerun—a shot heard around the world. Dennis Brutus will be remembered at this ceremony. We are going to practice talking about Dennis Brutus, his impact on sports, black consciousness, and international solidarity at this event.

On the weekend of Sept. 17, the Arizona Diamondbacks will be at PNC Park. We’ll be there to continue the boycott of everything Arizona in response to Senate Bill 1070, which has legalized racial profiling in Arizona. The Pittsburgh IWW has endorsed this event. We will be at the grand opening of the Pittsburgh Penguin’s new hockey arena, the Consol Energy Center, to speak out against the myth of “clean coal.” In the fall we will be supporting the campaign to merge the Pittsburgh Public Schools athletic league with the other schools in Western Pennsylvania. The City League has its baseball playoff at PNC Park in the fall. We’ll be there talking about sweatshops!

We are inviting Starbucks workers to come to PNC Park, and folks to do voter registration on Roberto Clemente Bridge. Pittsburghers paid a quarter of a billion dollars for this space. The Pittsburgh Pirates claim to represent our city.

We invite you to PNC Park and to watch our show. The goal will be to demonstrate that we can commandeer this real estate and use it effectively as a Civil Rights Bridge. If you have ideas for a segment or some technical skills we can use, we need the help! Also, please keep Jonathan Christianson—the IWW delegate currently representing us in Bangladesh—and his family in your hearts and minds.

## Celebrating 105 Years Of Industrial Unionism



Photo: NYC IWW

By Diane Krauthamer

From June 25-27, members of the New York City and Pittsburgh IWWs joined long-time Wobblies Rochelle Semel and Paul Poulos for an informal retreat at the “Wobble-In,” located in Hartwick, N.Y. We used the beautiful weekend to reflect on current and past experiences and engaged in meaningful discussion on current and past organizing work while thinking about future goals and targets for our union. The IWW’s founding convention took place on June 27, 1905, and the retreat served as a great reminder that 105 years later, we are still going strong.

## Fired Restaurant Workers Announce International Boycott

Continued from 1

Since being terminated, the workers have resolved to fight for reinstatement to their jobs, back pay, and an apology from P.F. Chang’s corporate office. The Phoenix IWW made contact with the workers after seeing them on the news, and have been providing assistance and encouragement.

The strengthened group of workers has undertaken five actions so far: picketing at the Chandler store and at three other Valley Pei Wei stores, and boycotting Pei Wei and P.F. Chang’s locations across the United States and Mexico. With the workers’ determination and support from IWW branches in approximately 50 U.S. cities and six countries, the social and economic impacts on the P.F. Chang’s brand could be significant. “We will continue to stay united until we gain justice over this discrimination—both for ourselves and for our companions,” said Erik, a high-spirited Pei Wei worker and father who is enthusiastic about involving his family and friends in Mexico City in the boycott.

“Pei Wei – P.F. Chang’s is a repeat offender,” said Victor, an independent investigator and activist who has been

supporting the Pei Wei workers in their fight. “Chandler supervisors have stated that this decision came mainly from higher up the chain and it’s clear to us that political concerns had a lot to do with it. You’ll recall that Pei Wei made the news two years ago by unjustly firing a Fountain Hills store manager. He allegedly miffed some Maricopa County sheriff’s officers. As the story goes, old Joe threw his weight around and P.F. Chang’s did what they were told like regular cowards.” Additionally, in 2009 P.F. Chang’s in Kansas City, Mo. was hit with a lawsuit by an African-American server who said that P.F. Chang’s management protected the racist practices of white servers and retaliated against her and an African-American manager who spoke up about the discrimination.

So far, the ongoing campaign has been featured in the *Arizona Republic*, the *Arizona Daily Sun*, *La Voz*, National Public Radio, on TV news stations CBS 5 & 13, FOX 10, and NBC 12, and on dozens of left- and right-wing websites. Both the workers and organizers for the IWW say that the Pei Wei – P.F. Chang’s boycott will continue until the matter is resolved to the workers’ satisfaction.

Special

# Building Solidarity With The Palestinian Working Class Through Boycott, Divestment And Sanctions

By x347544

Anyone who stayed around in Detroit long enough to participate in the National People's Movement Assembly (PMA) that served as the culmination of the 2010 U.S. Social Forum couldn't help but notice the energy and enthusiasm exhibited by those advocating for the adoption of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel. Calls to spread the BDS movement and for participation in events that support BDS attracted the loudest cheers and the most strident waving of yellow and blue half-sheets of paper—the mechanism by which participants were to express their commitment to solidarity with the proposal being put forward, either in principle with a yellow paper, or in action with a blue paper.

Having spent much of my time over the last couple of years since a two-year sojourn in Cairo working on Palestine solidarity, I was heartened by the palpable momentum behind the BDS campaign, which I support. But I found something troubling about it as well. Someone learning about “the question of Palestine” through the BDS People's Movement Assembly could be forgiven for thinking that west of the River Jordan resided but two classes of people: the Israelis and the Palestinians. And such a person could be forgiven for thinking that, were it not for the constant and brutal repression visited upon the Palestinians by the Israelis, Palestine would be the ideal classless society; a myth based on the fact that there are no classes of Christians, Muslims and Druze, there are no classes of city-dwellers (*madanyeen*) and rural peasants (*felaheen*), and there is certainly no working class or employing class.

Beneath this instrumentalist myth of the valorized yet repressed Palestinian, however, is of course a much messier

reality. There most certainly is, in fact, a very wide gulf between the Palestinian working class and the Palestinian ruling class (to refer to them as the “employing class” perhaps overstates their usefulness to society). In Palestine proper, this manifests in all sorts of familiar ways: well-dressed men being chauffeured around in clean black SUVs, preaching to the dirty, dusty, smelly throngs about the need to keep their chins up, along with their “productivity,” in the face of daily humiliations. They are subjected to these humiliations more by their Palestinian bosses, who have paid for their travel permits and their freedom through years of subservience to Israeli demands at the negotiating (sic) table and through their self-interested efforts to quash (or, more recently, co-opt) domestic resistance.

In the Palestinian diaspora, especially in Central America, the role of the Palestinian ruling class against the international working class is even more stark. For one thing, those Palestinians living in the diaspora were naturally those who could afford, by hook or by crook (or, more likely, by pound or by shekel), to

get out of Palestine. Many of them were petty merchants who moved to other former British colonies like Honduras, and now, several generations later, have managed to cement themselves in positions as the ruling elite. Some of you may remember that there was a coup d'état in Honduras just over a year ago (a coup that is still ongoing, it should be noted). The vast majority of the “intellectual authors” of that coup were members of the Palestinian-Honduran elite families: the Facussés, the Canahuatis, the Handals, the Laraches, and the Kafatis, among others. These Palestinian elites in the diaspora, with their vast accumulated wealth, have been some of the most significant funders of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the political and economic instruments of the Palestinian Authority. None of this, apparently, prevents them from enlisting the aid of former Mossad (Israeli intelligence) mercenaries or importing weapons from Israel in order to suppress the Honduran resistance movements.

The last point is key. Neither the ruling class in Palestine proper nor the Palestinian elites in the diaspora have any apparent qualms about acting in class solidarity with their Israeli brethren, despite this rhetoric that we're fed about some existential enmity between Jews and Arabs. If only the international working class were so unified in its solidarity. It is for precisely this reason that I am advocating for adoption of BDS within the IWW. BDS is an initiative from the grassroots of Palestinian society, and has been endorsed by Palestine's labor organizations. Notably, our International Solidarity Committee, during their delegation to Palestine, was specifically asked to endorse it by both

the mainstream Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU), as well as the Federation of Independent & Democratic Trade Unions & Workers' Committees in Palestine, with whom the IWW maintains close solidarity.

After years of trying to subvert and undermine the BDS campaign along with other forms of grassroots civil resistance, the leadership of the Palestinian Authority, hailing from the Palestinian ruling class, has apparently begun to join the rest of the world in realizing the power of BDS, and the likelihood that it will succeed in bringing about some sort of negotiated peace between Israelis and Palestinians. They have begun to try to

position themselves, albeit in a clumsy, theatrical fashion, at the head of the boycott and non-violent resistance movements in an attempt to regain the legitimacy they've lost after decades of self-interested capitulation and collaboration.

The question, as I see it, is not whether BDS will succeed, but whom it will benefit when it does succeed. Parallels are often drawn between Palestine

and South Africa for good reason. I remain optimistic, however, about the possibility that our successes in Palestine can exceed the successes of the anti-Apartheid movement. For one thing, the Palestinian BDS campaign has gained momentum much more quickly than its South African precedent and, while the African National Congress was in ascendance

throughout the decline of the Apartheid regime, there is practically no political organization that can credibly claim a mandate in Palestine. There is considerably more open space for independent, democratic, rank-and-file Palestinian working class organizations to constitute themselves as loci of power, several among many, in a constellation of non-state solutions in the land west of the River Jordan.

As an early endorser of BDS, the IWW can participate in the constitution of that power.

*If you 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 and Sanctions campaign in the IWW, email [iwwin-palestine@gmail.com](mailto:iwwin-palestine@gmail.com) or visit: <http://www.iww.org/projects/isc/palestine>.*



Artists reclaim space on Israel's Apartheid Wall near Bethlehem, in the West Bank.

Photo: Rob Mulford



The PGFTU office.

Photo: Rob Mulford



Photo: Adrienne Pine

A common stencil of the Honduran resistance reads: “Code of the *chafa* (pejorative slang for ‘soldier’): #1, Serve the Turk.” Palestinian Hondurans are referred to most often as “Turks,” in reference to the identity papers they carried when many of the elite families first arrived in Honduras after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. This racial bias is unfortunately repeated with little reflection in Honduras, but it nevertheless points to the prevalence of Palestinian immigrants in the *golpista* (coup-making) Honduran elite.

## Special

# Historic Victory At Oakland Port: Israeli Ship Blocked From Unloading

By Gloria La Riva

*Editor's Note: This action was not called by the IWW, though some IWW members participated in the planning of the event and at least a dozen joined in the action. The organizers included the Transport Workers Solidarity Committee and the ANSWER Coalition.*



Photo: Bill Hackwell, pslweb.org

In a historic and unprecedented action on June 20, over 800 labor and community activists blocked the gates of the Oakland, Calif. docks in the early morning hours, prompting longshore workers to refuse to cross the picket lines where they were scheduled to unload an Israeli ship.

From 5:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m., a militant and spirited protest was held in front of four gates of the Stevedore Services of America, with people chanting "Free, Free Palestine, Don't Cross the Picket Line," and "An injury to one is an injury to all, bring down the apartheid wall."

Citing the health and safety provisions of their contract, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) workers refused to cross the picket line to report for duty.

Between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m., an emergency arbitration was conducted at the Maersk parking lot nearby, with an "instant" arbitrator called to the site to rule on whether the workers could refuse to cross the picket line without disciplinary measure.

At 9:15 a.m., after again reviewing the protests of hundreds at each gate, the arbitrator ruled in favor of the union that it was indeed unsafe for the workers to enter the docks.

Amidst loud cheers of "Long Live Palestine!", Jess Ghannam of the Free Palestine Alliance and Richard Becker of the ANSWER Coalition announced the victory. "This is truly historic, never before has an Israeli ship been blocked in the United States!" said Ghannam.

The news that a container ship from the Zim Israeli shipping line was scheduled to arrive in the Bay Area has sparked a tremendous outpouring of solidarity for Palestine, especially in

the aftermath of the Israeli massacre of volunteers bringing humanitarian aid to Gaza on May 31.

With 10 days' advance notice of the ship's arrival, the emergency "Labor/Community Committee in Solidarity with the Palestinian People" was set up. Prior to the blockade, some 110 people from unions and community organizations came to help organize logistics, outreach and community support. Initiating organizations included the Al-Awda Palestine Right to Return Coalition, the ANSWER Coalition, the Bay Area Labor Chapter of U.S. Labor Against War and the Bay Area Labor Committee for Peace & Justice.

The San Francisco Labor Council and Alameda Labor Council passed resounding resolutions denouncing Israel's blockade of Gaza. Both councils sent out public notices of the dock action.

The ILWU has a proud history of extending its solidarity to struggling peoples the world over. In 1984, as the black masses of South Africa were engaged in an intense struggle against South African apartheid, the ILWU refused for a record-setting 10 days to unload cargo from the South African "Ned Lloyd" ship. Despite million-dollar fines imposed on the union, the longshore workers held strong, providing a tremendous boost to the anti-apartheid movement.

The blockade action in Oakland, in the sixth largest port in the United States, is the first of several protests and work stoppages that occurred around the world. It is sure to inspire others to do the same.

*This story appeared in its original format on June 20, 2010 on <http://www.PSLweb.org>.*

## Swedish Dockworkers Block Israeli Goods In Boycott Action

By Saed Bannoura, IMEMC News

After similar boycott actions in California, Norway and South Africa, dockworkers in Sweden have decided to block the import of Israeli goods.

The boycott action was launched on June 23 by 1,500 members of the Swedish Dockworkers Union, affecting 95 percent of Sweden's ports. Trade with Israel accounts for just 0.2 percent of Swedish imports and exports, so the action is largely symbolic, but it could have an impact on the Israeli companies that export to Sweden.

According to a union spokesperson, the boycott action was organized "because of the [Israeli navy's] assault on the ship to Gaza, and that we supported before they took off...and the blockade of the Gaza Strip, which affects the civilian population."

The spokesperson was referring to an Israeli attack on a humanitarian aid convoy on May 31, in which nine international aid workers were killed and nearly 60 were injured. Participants in the caravan say the attack was unprovoked, and took place in international waters. Although Israel does not deny that the ships were in international waters when the Israeli forces attacked,

Israeli authorities claim that they are at war, and that the attack in international waters is thus justified.

The aid convoy was carrying hundreds of tons of humanitarian aid for the people of Gaza, including medical supplies, school supplies, and building materials. Israeli occupying authorities have prevented these materials from entering Gaza since 2007 when the democratically-elected Hamas party took power in the Gaza Strip.

Israel announced that it would ease some of the restrictions on goods allowed into Gaza, but the blockade remains in place, and the new amounts allowed in are still only a small fraction of the amount that entered before the blockade was put in place.

One Swedish Dockworkers Union spokesperson said, "We don't think it is far-reaching enough. We want them to lift the blockade."

This is not the first time that Swedish dockworkers have engaged in boycott actions against what they see as oppressive regimes. They launched a similar boycott of the notorious dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet in Chile, and of the apartheid regime in South Africa in the 1980s.

### Thoughts On The Successful Picketing Of The Israeli Zin Line Ship Oakland, California Sunday, June 20, 2010

By FW Sparrow

*History was made Today.  
Met together to flame the spark  
struck by the Gaza Flotilla.  
800 of us.*

*Long day to me. Up ready at a.m. 4:30  
Copwatch Security crew swept into office gearing up.  
Last minute hustling for rides to docks.  
Wobbly universal-labeled drum carried by Copwatch car.*

*Down empty streets, past committed comrades  
stringing out along the road hiking Bart to the dock at  
Berth 58.*

*Dropped off across tracks from closest gate  
and walked across to growing clustered pickets.*

*Sorting out.*

*Fellow workers Bruce and Donna  
flying red/black flag.  
Picket sign.*

*First forty formed a line at first gate.  
Took back copwatch Wobbly drum.  
Drum beat march to main gate,  
numbers growing.*

*Wobbly Banner strung across wire fence  
fellow workers down from Reno.  
Fellow Workers with Security,  
Steve and John waving a Wobbly flag.*

*6 am line swelled to hundreds.  
main gate circle lengthening to fifty,  
then seventy, then a hundred feet  
as more marchers crowded in.*

*Cadenced couple hours with Wobbly drum,  
handed off to another on the line  
beating out rhythm with his hands.  
Kept cadencing with claves as crowded line grew.*

*More instruments appeared, saxophone,  
trumpet, more drums  
Mixed with bullhorned chants  
and passionate line responses.*

*Sound system set up  
chanting down Apartheid Wall  
powerful women pacing us  
Sweet as song, strong as struggle*

*Third gate opened up.  
Joined a third line forming  
moving, chanting, militant  
No more cars got thro*

*First shift wouldn't cross our line.  
Arbitrators checked our numbers  
determined our show of strength,  
ruled for shift and for full pay.*

*Two hours rest at Wobbly hall  
until Second Shift came on  
4:30, back down the line  
to repeat the morning*

*cops wearing thin  
broke agreement  
no sound system  
Missed their Father's Day?*

*tired morning pickets  
mixed with late risers  
marching on the crest  
of morning's victory*

*"Free, Free Palestine,  
Do not Cross the Picket Line!"  
walking, chanting, drumming  
waiting for Arbitrators again*

*Finally heard the news  
As the Israeli ship was docking  
that 2nd shift was cancelled  
Thanks to First Shift, we'd won.*

*Kept the line going till 7:30 tho  
in case a 2nd shift late call.  
then speeches and a final chant,  
"An Injury to One Is An Injury To All"*

Interview

# Cindy Sheehan Talks Peace And Socialism

By Jon Hochschartner

*Cindy Sheehan is a woman who needs no introduction. When her son was killed in Iraq, she threw herself into anti-war activism across the country, quickly becoming the public face of the peace movement. I interviewed her on June 14 for the Industrial Worker.*

**Jon Hochschartner:** What do you think the state of the anti-war movement is today? Is it stronger or weaker since Bush left office?

**Cindy Sheehan:** It got even weaker since Bush was in office. When the Democrats regained the majority in both houses of Congress, that's when the anti-war movement started to weaken. I remember, it was the fifth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq in March 2008, and [the two anti-war groups], United for Peace and Justice, and Iraq Vets Against the War, decided that their movement would not have a mass mobilization in Washington, D.C. on the anniversary because they didn't want to embarrass the Democrats. So, in 2006, a lot of energy was wasted in electing Democrats. We've seen that they haven't done anything to end the wars or really any of the Bush policies.

**JH:** That was around the time you left the Democratic Party, right?

**CS:** I did. I left the Democratic Party in May 2007 when they passed the first funding bill, and when organizations like MoveOn.org encouraged people to support that vote to fund George Bush's wars. When Barack Obama was elected it was practically the last nail in the coffin for the anti-war movement. There's no energy in it. It's very small. It's almost like the wars have just left everybody's consciousness.

**JH:** You've said the anti-war movement was "used" by the Democratic Party. Can

you explain what you mean?

**CS:** I'll just give some examples. After Camp Casey, we had something called [the] Bring Them Home Now Tour. We had three buses leave Crawford, Texas and take different routes to Washington, D.C. When we got there I met with dozens of House Representatives and Senators. The Democratic ones—like Nancy Pelosi, Harry Reid, Hillary Clinton, John Kerry—they told me to my face, "Cindy help us regain the majority and we'll help you end the wars." Then in 2007, when I went and called them on it, they said, "We need a larger majority."

**JH:** You've dubbed 2010 the "year of resistance" against war. What can average people do to help?

**CS:** Well, you know, I've expanded my activism way beyond war. There's a robber class and a robbed class. [The robber class] are the ones waging the war. They count on their propaganda and the myths and the illusion that we have a democracy, or even a republic. They keep divisions going in the robbed class. So we not only fight members of the working class in other countries, but we're fighting each other. We fight each other over all these wedge issues that the robber class couldn't care less about. Here we are fighting each other over gay marriage, abortion, whatever. Divide and conquer so they can steal from us. The only way anything's going to change in this system is when working people get together and say, "We're not going to support you elites in the style to which you've become accustomed to anymore. We're tired of you stealing our wealth, our resources, [and] our children to kill in your wars." So my focus has widened into this class struggle, and I think the only way we can win a class struggle is through revolution. It's not going to be an armed revolution, because we're fighting against people who have nukes,

who have [an] unlimited amount of money, and they have the media too. So what we need to do is have a real, grassroots-based working-class revolution that takes back our power, our economy, our ecology, our education—anything that's been stolen from us.

**JH:** I think it's pretty clear, but how would you describe your economic politics?

**CS:** I think socialism is the only economic system that helps the people, helps the robbed class. But what I'm talking about in socialism is not a state socialism. I would almost be like a communist with a small "c." All get together in voluntary collectives to support each other, not collectives forced on us by an oppressive state.

**JH:** Could you tell us a little about your upcoming documentary, "Revolution: A Love Story?"

**CS:** My film, "Revolution: A Love Story" has three main goals. The first goal is to dispel the myths about President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela and the Bolivarian Revolution that he instituted, and to tell the truth about it, to show people in the United States that the robber class media and the government are not telling the truth about President Chavez. He's not a Communist dictator. There [are] elections in Venezuela all the time. That's democracy. The second goal of "Revolution: A Love Story" is to show



Photo: peaceoftheaction.org

Cindy Sheehan protests in front of the White House.

how people in Venezuela are empowered by the revolution. How they're not only empowered but how the revolution has improved their lives. You know, from almost total illiteracy in the poor and working class to almost full literacy. [The revolution has also improved] the missions: the healthcare missions, the dental missions, the education missions, the subsidized groceries and subsidized energy. The revolution was using the resources to help the people, not to enrich the state and the elite classes. The third goal of "Revolution: A Love Story" is to inspire people here in the United States to start taking back our power.

To download the entire unedited interview please visit: <http://www.mediafire.com/?tbbqjmyz3x>

## Immigrant Workers Rally For Justice At Kosher Food Company

Continued from 1

organizations as the New York City IWW, Domestic Workers United, the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU), the Green Party of New York City, and La Unión de la Comunidad Latina. Additional endorsers included the Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York (ROC-NY) and New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE).

"Workers' rights are assaulted everywhere," said Leticia Alanis of La Unión de la Comunidad Latina. "It is really important that we stand up for our rights," she added.

"We domestic workers are continually exploited as well," said Joyce Gil Campbell of Domestic Workers United. "We stand with you in solidarity because we want you to know that workers' rights are human rights."

The campaign for justice at Flaum is being carried out by the Focus on the Food Chain initiative, a joint effort of non-profit organization Brandworkers and the New York City IWW. The National Labor Relations Board has already found Flaum liable for extensive violations of workers' rights and the employees are confident that they will prevail in federal court this fall in their overtime and retaliation case. Workers at Flaum



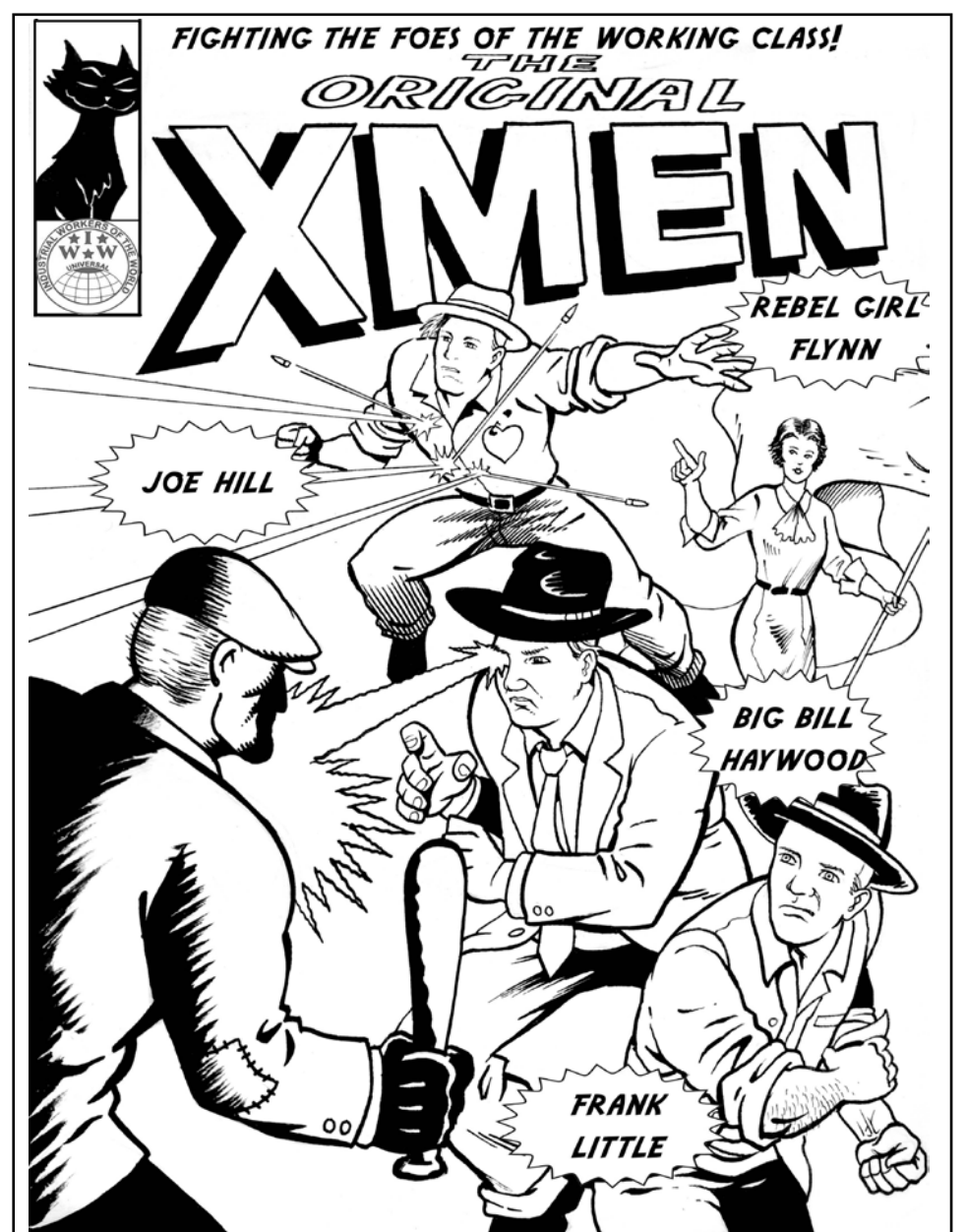
Photo: Diane Krauthamer

Former Flaum worker Felipe Romero discusses workers' rights violations in Brooklyn.

prepare, process, pack, and deliver large orders of kosher foodstuffs to supermarkets around New York.

"Food processing workers in New York City, mostly recent immigrants, have been ripped off by unscrupulous employers for far too long," said Daniel Gross, the director of Brandworkers. "But through organizing, community action, and litigation, workers like those at Flaum are standing together to ensure their tremendous contribution to our economy is recognized and respected."

For more information, visit <http://www.brandworkers.org>.



Graphic: Art by Robin Thompson, concept by DJ Alperovitz



## Anti-Globalization

## The Battle Of Toronto: Protesting The G8/G20 Summits

Continued from 1

meetings of union locals to speak on the G8/G20 (and to encourage motions in support, including fundraising ones), and coordination with other national and provincial unions, came from a handful of delegates and activists at the base. We also ensured that organized labor supported the broader mobilization which extended throughout a week of actions (not including the People's Summit the weekend before the G8/G20 meetings). This shaped the character of the Ottawa labor mobilization as one in which labor's grassroots was driving the mobilization work, ensuring that the organizational resources of labor were made available for community organizing, while funding for busing (our primary expense) was organized on more of a horizontal basis (local by local, community group by community group). This was born of necessity as infighting within the leadership of the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) had precipitated a financial crisis which led to promises of funding evaporating, as other central labor bodies were having to pick up costs associated with their main event on Saturday, June 26 (the People First march and rally). In spite of this, we were able to cover our busing costs and were even able to raise a surplus to help with additional transportation costs for arrestees back to Ottawa and legal defense.

Our experience in mobilizing in Ottawa was that there was a significantly greater uptake in interest and willingness to "get on the bus" from the more open, community-organizing side of things than through the institutional framework of the trade unions doing outreach to their respective memberships, including for the Saturday labor rally and march.

This general dynamic seemed to be reflected in the composition of the crowd on Saturday, which was much larger than many of us had anticipated. Sixty to seventy percent of the crowd was outside the union blocs that the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) had specified in their "standing orders" location. There were also many organizers from the ranks of labor who pushed hard to create space for those who wanted to see more than the usual "march to nowhere" characteristic of mainstream union and

NGO mobilizations—to confront the actual perimeter.

These dynamics—somewhat the reverse of the last major mobilization on this scale in Canada, the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City (2001)—ensured that there would be a greater likelihood of militant and confrontational action, but also respect for the framework and tone of all actions, including the labor march itself. One of the actions that many of us supported was the "Get Off The Fence" action, which aimed at confronting the perimeter and (apparently) it was also aimed at disrupting (or "humiliating") the security operation—much of the \$1.3 billion spent on over 20,000 personnel and special equipment, including surveillance cameras throughout Canada's largest city and the re-emergence of the long-range acoustical device (LRAD) seen in the 2009 Pittsburgh summit.

I went down to Queen's Park on Saturday with a friend (wearing his rain poncho from Seattle 1999!) as well as some folks from OCAP. We subsequently learned that there were no pre-emptive arrests made of the OCAP folks, fortunately. I was also able to meet up with other union sisters and brothers involved in the mobilization from Ottawa, as well as FWs Moore and Starr from the Ottawa-Outaouais IWW, but I found myself often wandering through the march on my own, running into many people (including our District Labour Congress's president) along the way. The wide diversity of groups and unions in Saturday's march energized the crowd, and from my point of view, the planned marching blocs of the CLC had faded into more of a mish-mash of various different groups of people.

Up until the march turned south on Spadina from its westward path down Queen Street, to head back to Queen's Park (and away from the direction of the perimeter), there had been a few attempts on the part of some groups to break off from the main march to confront the security perimeter, but these attempts were unsuccessful. Nonetheless, many thousands of people remained to



Photo: John Hollingsworth

Thousands of demonstrators converge on the streets of Toronto to protest the G20.

confront the perimeter, including many union brothers and sisters moving southward on Spadina, after the labor march retreated to Queen's Park. The tone became more serious, as mounted riot police moved in and many of us became worried that we were going to be surrounded without a way to get out. The standoff was eventually broken when a section towards the back broke off and doubled-back on the earlier march route, catching security completely off-guard. When we managed to get out of the potential "kettle," we found a trail of targeted property destruction, including several trashed cop cars, along the way east. The scene seemed very surreal, almost as though we were in the eye of the hurricane, watching cop cars getting trashed while buying hotdogs from vendors up the street as a row of riot police remained guarding a route south a few blocks up. Clearly, the instructions were to protect the perimeter at all costs, and the top-down operational chain of command of the security apparatus was unable to cope with other developments.

Eventually I managed to reconnect with some of the other people from Ottawa, and we attempted to rejoin the protest at Queen's Park (the "designated free speech area"). We were impeded from doing so by phalanxes of riot cops who were busy attacking peaceful protestors (given their apparent inability to get at those more confrontational demonstrators who were actually breaking the law). I expressed my confusion at why we weren't able to access the "designated free speech area" as had been promised, but I don't think that the riot police appreciated my sarcasm. We skirted the area west of Queen's Park as we had a number of friends trapped within, all the while dodging rubber bullets, snatch squads, and the general mayhem of a police riot, before somehow managing to join the large group that had been pushed to the northern end of Queen's Park.

At this point, the crowd, energized and angered by police attacks, had its own momentum. I noticed that there were many, many affinity groups, and a kind of organic collective intelligence of the crowd started manifesting itself. As we were being pushed out of Queen's Park, the crowd's chants coalesced into "Which Street? Bloor Street!" as we took over a major road in the downtown core. The support of non-protestors at this

point added further energy (and ranks) to the snake march. Unknown to us at that point was that there were other similar groups of 1,000+ people with varying degrees of militancy, snaking their way elsewhere across Toronto.

Eventually, many different groups had been able to get much closer to the perimeter than anyone had thought possible, and attempts to breach the perimeter were made among some of the more militant groups. Many people were able to actually touch the fence, which was quite the feat since the information previously known to us was that the provincial government had passed a secret order-in-council to amend the Public Works Protection Act so that being within five meters of the fence was grounds for arrest and detention. But overall, the tone of the crowd I was with, realizing we were vastly outnumbered by riot police and others effecting mass arrests, was to shift tactics to sitting down and de-escalation. We were also joined by many everyday people of Toronto who were caught in the snare of this latest stage of an incompetent policing operation aimed at "restoring order." Somehow, we managed to escape three lines of riot police and to leave the scene.

In the aftermath of everything, about 1,090 people were arrested and detained—the largest mass arrest in Canadian history. The vast majority—about 800—were released much later without any charges, but had to endure terrible conditions and treatment at the hands of an angry and seemingly directionless mass of police in a vast detention center (a film studio in the east end of the city),—many for well over 48 hours.

At the time this story was written, about 16 organizers remain imprisoned on a variety of conspiracy charges. Many people were woken up at gunpoint in the middle of the night on Friday and carted off before anything had happened on the streets of Toronto. People who came to jail solidarity events on Saturday and Sunday were brutalized and arrested. Everyday people who were at the wrong place at the wrong time (hundreds of them) were subjected to incredible police abuse. All of this, as well as endless footage of burning police cars and smashed windows of corporate retail outlets in the televised media, has changed the tenor of political protest in Canada probably irrevocably, and has significantly upped the ante for resistance.



Photo: John Hollingsworth

## Reviews

# “For The Win” Teaches Young Adults How To Organize

Doctorow, Cory. “For The Win.” New York: Tor Teen 2010. Hardcover, 480 pages, \$17.99.

By Erik W. Davis

“The more she read, the more sense this group from out of history made for the world of right now—everything that the IWW had done needed doing today, and what’s more, it would be easier today than it had been.” - FTW

Cory Doctorow is a significant figure in popular culture. He is one of the original founders of BoingBoing.net, the most popular weblog in the world and a best-selling science fiction author. His influence is extensive and he has the capacity to reach out to a large audience. Perhaps more importantly, he’s a compelling prose writer who orients most of his work to young adult readers. He’s also a son of the working class and publicly owns that inheritance. Finally, he has been a major advocate and influential force in the copyfighting wars, where artists and consumers alike have banded together (in some cases) to combat the predatory practices of the copyright lawyers and publishers.

His new book is called “FTW,” or “For The Win,” the tagline of which is “Online or offline, you’ve got to organize to survive.” I don’t often read young adult novels, but that grabbed me. What’s it about? Gold farming.

In a video of Doctorow discussing his book on June 10, 2010, located on the <http://fora.tv> website, he describes:

“For The Win’ is a book about gold farming. Gold farming is something that really happens in video games. It’s when people undertake repetitive tasks in order to pile up virtual wealth, whether that’s gold, or swords, or spaceships, or laser guns...and those people then sell those assets to other players who are either too lazy or too time-strapped to do this boring repetitive work themselves. Mostly the people who do the work live in poor countries and the people who buy the stuff live in rich countries and it’s considered cheating by the people who run these games, but nevertheless there are about 400,000 who make a living doing this right now in the world, mostly in China, and also in Vietnam, Cambodia, a little bit in Central America, and Eastern Europe.

“This [book] is about what happens when they form a union. The idea being that, unlike workers in today’s globalized world, all the workers who are in their industry are in the same place—a video game. So it doesn’t matter whether that worker is in Vietnam or Cambodia or South China or rural China or India or Singapore or Malaysia; they’re all in the same place. They can all talk to each

other. Moreover, their bosses are way worse at using the games than they are. So, they can do stuff in the games that their bosses can’t find out about.”

A lot of that sounds awfully familiar to Wobblies—the emphasis on getting all workers in an industry into One Big Union, the emphasis on the relative skill of the workers over their bosses, and the ridiculous value assigned to the commodities most of us produce. “All that is solid melts into air” under the regime of capitalism, even those things were air to begin with. Gold farming, a real if still relatively small industry, was a natural topic for Doctorow—a science fiction author deeply involved with virtual communities and gaming. Doctorow saw the possibility of a compelling kids-against-authorities story, in much the same vein as his best-selling “Little Brother,” about teenagers resisting a surveillance state.

This is a young adult novel. It will disappoint Wobblies and leftists who demand consistent, logically-coherent manifestos or programs for worker control of industry from a novel. It will probably be thoroughly enjoyed by those who are willing to find their programs elsewhere, and are not over-worried about long-term influence of specific organizing tactics in the book. Insofar as I can determine the intended impact on the reader, Doctorow wants to entertain first and inspire confidence and cooperation among rebellious kids second. This seems reasonable. Third, and the reason I’m writing this review for the *Industrial Worker*, Doctorow explicitly cites the Industrial Workers of the World throughout. Take for example this passage, in which the character of Big Sister Nor has just founded a gold-farming union of children around the world, starting in India:

“They called themselves the Webblies, which was an obscure little joke that pleased Big Sister Nor an awful lot. Nearly a century ago, a group of workers had formed a union called the Industrial Workers of the World, the first union that said that all workers needed to stick up for each other, that every worker was welcome no matter the color of his skin, no matter if the worker was a woman, no matter if the worker did “skilled” or ‘unskilled’ work. They called themselves the Wobblies.”

Information about the Wobblies was just one of the many “out of bounds” subjects that were blocked on the Singaporean Internet, and so of course Big Sister Nor had made it her business to find out more about them. The more she read, the more sense this group from out of history made for the world of right now—everything that the IWW had done needed doing today, and what’s more, it

would be easier today than it had been.

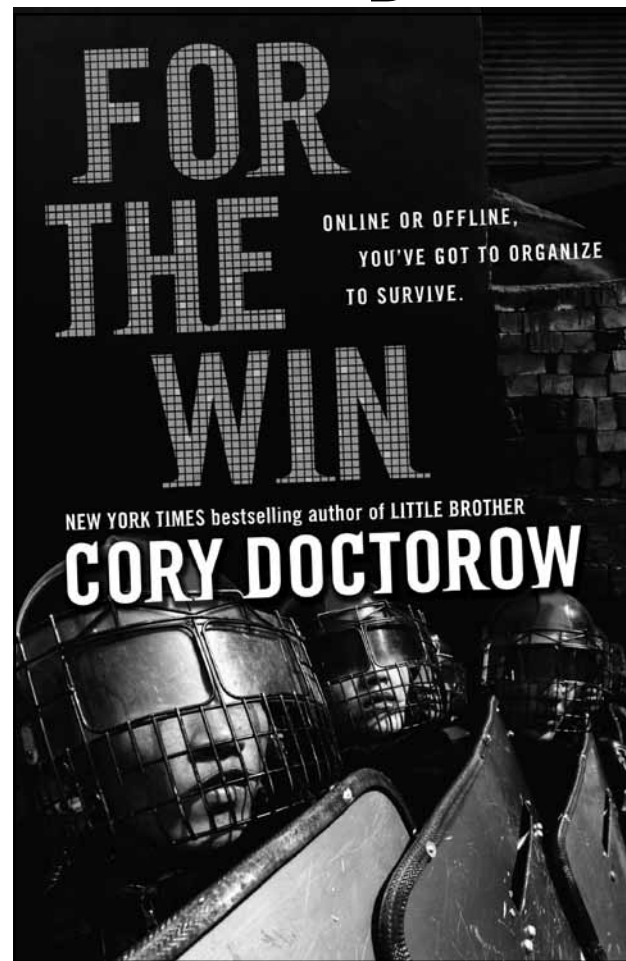
Take organizing workers. Back then, you’d have to actually get into the factory or at least stand at its gates to talk to workers about signing a union card and demanding better conditions, higher wages and shorter hours. Now you could reach those same people online, from anywhere in the world. Once they were members, they could talk to all the other members, using the same tools.

She’d decided to call her little group the Industrial Workers of the World Wide Web, the IWWWW, and that was another of those jokes that pleased her an awful lot. And the IWWWW had grown and grown and grown. Gold farmers were easy pickings: working in terrible conditions all over the world, for terrible wages, hated by the game-runners and the rich players alike. They already understood about working in teams, they’d already formed their own little guilds—and they were better at using the internet than their bosses would ever be.

Now, a year later, the IWWWW had over 20,000 members signed up in six countries, paying dues and filling up a fat strike fund that had finally been called into use, in Shenzhen, the last place Big Sister Nor had ever expected to see a walkout.

“FTW” is often inspiring, though the grasp of actually-existing IWW practices may fall a bit short of veracity (big fat strike fund?). Others may dislike the tendency to speak of the IWW as a mere historical event and not a current organization. Similarly, Doctorow’s obsession with the empowering value of the internet seems to fail to grasp the fact that in almost all industrial conflicts, victory is most commonly won on the basis of real or threatened physical force—are the bosses willing to use the full force at their disposal? Are the workers? Who’s more convincing and who blinks first? This is something which can never happen fully on the internet.

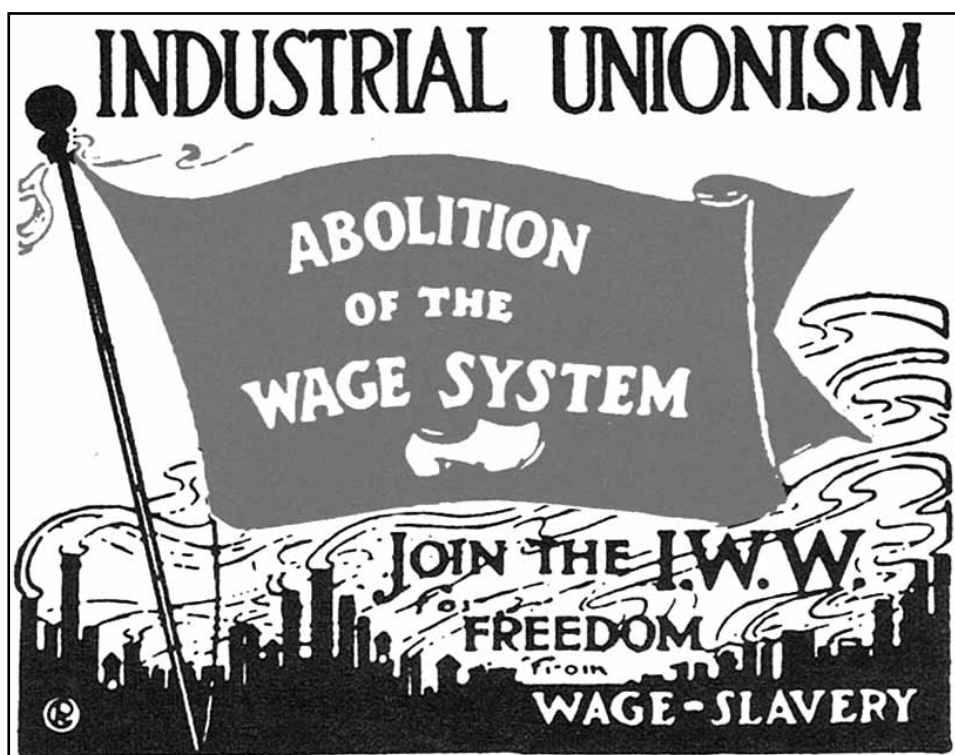
On the other hand, Doctorow’s narrative arc never loses sight of the very real physical violence that his workers live in everyday, or risk when they choose to organize. Characters die, are beaten, and risk their lives on a regular basis. It’s a thrilling story, and good in-



Graphic: craphound.com

oculation—no one should be in the business of playing the tunes of the Pied Piper Organizer to young adults just getting into the working world. New unionists must be informed about the risks we run as members of the organizing working class. More importantly, the story spoke to those deep rivers of instinct within me that scream “Fight back! Organize!” Like most Wobblies, those rivers well to the surface in a heartbeat, but it is significant for me that this book managed to elicit those responses. Maybe they will do so for others, including fellow workers who are not yet Wobblies.

I won’t be reading this to my children who are four and six years old because of the violence, largely. Like most Wobbly children, they’d be able to point out the occasional tactical flaws in the book, but I also think they’d be thrilled by the story, which replicates the struggle of the international working class at the level not only of narrative, but also of age. Youth are often used in narrative to represent the oppressed and alienated, whether the target is capitalism or not. The identification of youthful rebellion as a natural phase without a real cause is frankly reactionary; the identification of youthful rebellion as a natural consequence of their real oppression and alienation, and the clear identification of capitalism as the cause, can be revolutionary.



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## Reviews

# Understanding The California Healthcare Workers' Rebellion

Winslow, Cal. "Labor's Civil War in California: The NUHW Healthcare Workers' Rebellion." Oakland, CA: PM Press 2010. Paperback, 128 pages, \$12.00.

By John MacLean

"We can only prove that an alternative is possible by doing it, making it happen." - Staughton Lynd, from "Solidarity Unionism"

The California union, United Healthcare Workers-West (UHW), was "attacked and wrecked" by the national leadership of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). Cal Winslow, in his book "Labor's Civil War in California: The NUHW Healthcare Workers' Rebellion," sees two labor movement souls engaged: "one soul corporatist, authoritarian, top-down, and collaborationist; the other rank-and-file, bottom-up, class-conscious, and combative." Winslow asks two questions: "Which direction will the movement take?" and "Which side are you on?"

The UHW was comprised of members who spoke scores of languages and had roots going back to the 1930s and the San Francisco General Strike. There were many charges brought against the local, but the real issue is to be found in the SEIU San Juan convention of 2008. At this gathering, former SEIU President Andy Stern sought to force 65,000 members of the UHW—"furniture," as one labor commentator referred to them—into a California local controlled by former United Long-term Care Workers Local 6434 President Tyrone Freeman. The UHW committed the sin of resisting SEIU notions of democratic centralism.

In 2003, the SEIU put forward the idea of an "alliance" between nursing home workers and their bosses which would feature "employer neutrality." SEIU locals campaigned to secure more public monies for nursing homes—\$120 million overall—and in return received only \$20 million in contract improvements. While certain nursing homes, specified by the owners, were opened to SEIU organizers, 75 percent of the industry was left unorganized. These agreements also obliged the union to work against patients' rights by advocating for tort reform and to oppose healthful staffing requirements. These dirty SEIU deals also traded away free speech—so much so that one commenta-

tor said about nursing homes: "This is a sector where caregivers are the eyes and ears and witnesses when there is abuse. To tie their hands and to tie their tongues is to let people die." At that time, UHW workers made up 80 percent of those under these perverse partnerships.

In 2008, the *San Francisco Chronicle* broke the news that trusteeship was being proposed for the UHW. A bizarre series of setbacks followed for the stripped-down version of union representation put forward by Stern and the SEIU; first, an ill-advised attack on a Labor Notes conference over a jurisdictional dispute with California nurses, and then the corruption scandals that brought down Stern cronies Tyrone Freeman (the would-be beneficiary of tens of thousands of UHW members), former SEIU Local 721 President Annelie Grajeda, and Rickman Jackson, former chief of staff to Tyrone Freeman. Freeman claimed that his channeling of union funds toward family concerns was all "in the context of fighting poverty." It is important to recall the words of Charlene Harrington, a University of California -San Francisco sociologist and professor of nursing, who characterized the UHW agreements as empowering caregivers "to stand up for their residents" and leading the way to improved care.

Winslow writes that the SEIU has always been willing to use its resources "to keep unhappy members held hostage" and that, since Stern has led the organization, close to 80 locals have had their elected leaders removed and assets seized. On some occasions, the SEIU has even lost trusteeship battles—most notably in Ontario, Rhode Island, and the Bay Area of California. Finally, trusteeship proceedings were begun against the UHW in San Mateo and at the same time, a ballot was sent out about the forced reorganization of the local. For-

mer U.S. Labor Secretary Ray Marshall found no grounds in any of the charges brought for trusteeship, but ruled that "forced removal" of members must be complied with or trusteeship could be imposed. The cruel thing in all this was that only 24,000 eligible voters—out of more than 300,000—cast ballots; 80,000 signed petitions of protest and 40,000 sent letters condemning the whole affair. The SEIU got what it paid for and the reaction was swift from UHW members.

The next step for the SEIU, according to Winslow, "was to replace the 100 elected UHW executive board members, purge the UHW's 500-member staff, seize the local's offices and assets, and inform the employers that they could no longer deal with UHW representatives."

While Stern's nicely dressed agents were breaking windows and using bolt cutters at the Oakland offices of the union, the leader himself was far away in Davos, Switzerland, at the World Economic Summit. One of the UHW members who witnessed and resisted the seizure said, "I'm glad I was there. I'm glad I saw it with my own eyes—the SEIU, the police, the lack of integrity, us together. It made me want to fight more." Winslow called the trustees "a collection of carpetbaggers drafted from bureaucratic baronies across the country," and went on to say that they could seize property, but they could never seize the experience of the workers.

In early 2009, the UHW workers and fired staff from Kaiser Permanente petitioned the National Labor Relations Board to decertify the SEIU. Winslow writes that in less than a month "more than 100,000—the majority of the members of SEIU's once flagship local, UHW—had rejected the SEIU and petitioned for recognition of [the National Union of Healthcare Workers]

as their union." Some contend that this is the largest decertification campaign ever, and a week later, Fresno home care workers joined in by the thousands. This was no easy feat, given that under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), the SEIU has a government-sanctioned legal monopoly over these workers, or, as Winslow puts it, the SEIU holds them "hostage." The gross hypocrisy of the globe-trotting Stern, a supporter of the Employee Free Choice Act who has on many occasions stated that workers can "opt out of unions," is on display for all to see. The SEIU has become a poster child for anti-unionist propaganda.

In the chapter called "Fresno—SEIU's Vietnam," Winslow shows that the leadership's stated belief in free association is a lie. The union leadership spent as much as \$10 million in Fresno, an extremely poor city, to turn back the decertification election. One long-term care provider said, "They ran their campaign based on threats, bribes, lies... They showed us an appalling disregard." Charges have been brought against the SEIU in the aftermath of this betrayal.

Early on in this slender volume, the IWW is mentioned, but the outlines of solidarity unionism emerge only in part. Even though the author remains within the NLRA system, he will be branded by some as anti-union, as Staughton Lynd was before him. The members of the NUHW seem to realize that partnerships can't be forged within unrelenting class warfare and that an anti-democratic SEIU is not capable of changing corporate realities. Also, it should be obvious that the rights and needs of patients can never be bargained away. "An injury to one an injury to all."

Still, there remains the longstanding radical criticism of the NLRA itself; many were against it in the 1930s and predicted it would create difficulties for labor, even though it is desirable for unions to be "legal monopolies." They could now abuse dues check-off without accountability. As a Fellow Worker recently reminded me, many NUHW leaders supported Stern-like deals with the bosses, so it should raise questions when "progressive" historians sanctify a new legal monopolist. It is a good sign that the new union's constitution is democratic and that decisions will be made on the right coast for once.



Graphic: pmpress.org

## Forthcoming Book By A Tacoma Wobbly

By Arthur Miller

Black Cat Publishers has just finished publishing a book I wrote called "Yardbird Blues: 25 Years of a Wobbly in the Maritime Industry." The term "Yardbird" is an old term that longshore workers and ship crews used for those that came onto the ships to repair them.

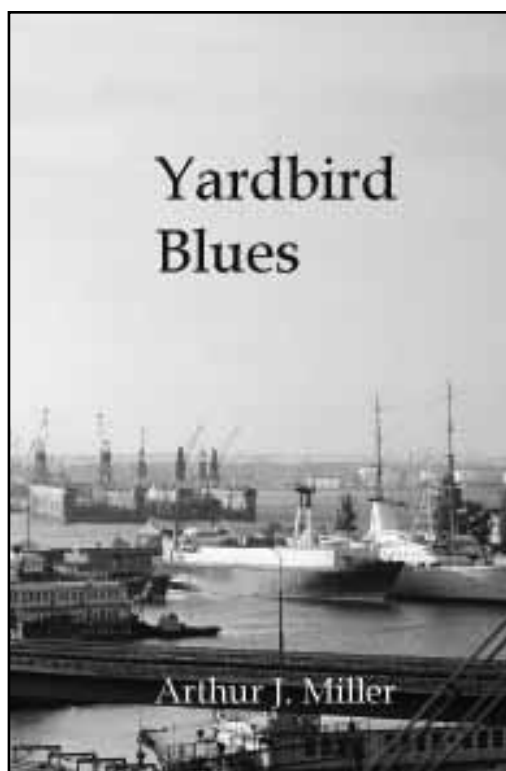
The book is about real workplace experiences and issues in the maritime industry such as workplace safety, general working conditions, environmentalism and how to begin to make earth-safe ships, the bosses, the unions, different types of ships, the great danger to workers and the environment of Flag Of Convenience (FOC) ships and more. This book discusses all of these issues from the viewpoint of a Wobbly shipyard worker.

A number of parts of this book were articles that have been published in the *IW*, *Bayou La Rose* and other publications. The introduction was written by FW Carlos Cortez before he passed away.

I wish to thank the people at Black Cat Press for publishing this book and the hard work they put into making it look so good.

This is the first book in a series of books that I hope to get published. The next one is in its final draft and was

edited by Tacoma IWW Branch Secretary Leah Coakley. That book deals with other industries. After that one there may be a book on the modern IWW. That book would include my experiences in the IWW for 40 years and IWW related writings included: "Organizing Solidarity," "Dual Unionism," "A New Union Vision," "International Industrial Unionism," "A Union For All Workers," "Green Unionism," "Organizing Tips," and more. Some of these essays have been rewritten from their original format. It will be made clear in the introduction that this is just the writings of one Wobbly, for only "A New Union Vision" was ever approved



Graphic: chicagoreader.com

as official, though other pieces were approved by the Tacoma IWW. For those of you who like to worry about such things, none of this includes any of our internal conflicts.

I base my writing on what I was taught by some old time Wobblies, in particular, Fellow Worker Gibert Mers, who encouraged me to write about what I know best. His book, "Working the Waterfront," was a good example of writing about direct workplace experiences.

The real purpose of my writing is not to get my views as an individual published, but rather to try to help encourage working people to speak for

ourselves and to write about our direct workplace experiences. I believe strongly that this is a very important part in worker self-organization. Too often workers are talked down to as if we are just sheep to be led and that our only role is to be followers. I believe workers do understand our class situation and we understand industry and how to change it better than any would-be leaders. We understand that real workers' self-organization, that we control, is the only means to reach worker self-management. And to do that, we workers must speak for ourselves. As for me, I am nothing more than a rebel Wobbly shipyard worker.

Many Wobblies have helped me over the years with my writings by proofreading, editing and making useful comments. I wish to acknowledge them and thank them for the help. And I wish to thank the IWW for being something that I could believe in, and I will stay with the IWW until I pass from this world.

"Yardbird Blues: 25 Years of a Wobbly in the Maritime Industry" can be ordered for \$12.00 from: Black Cat Press, 4508 118 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T5W 1A9. Email blackcatpress@shawbiz.ca or order the book online at <http://www.blackcatpress.ca>.

# 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](mailto:solidarity@iww.org).

By **Matt Antosh**

Greetings Fellow Workers! This summer has been an exciting time for the International Solidarity Commission. We have had contact with workers from Cuba, Brazil, South Africa, and the Ukraine. Also this summer the U.S. Social Forum was held in Detroit, during which members of the Delegation to Palestine gave a presentation on how to best develop solidarity with workers in Palestine. And in South Africa, Cape Town Wobblies continue to help in the defense of farm workers and their union from attack. Finally, our work at developing a strong base of volunteers continues, as we welcome Fellow Workers from Germany, Seattle, and the Twin Cities into the fold.

## Cape Town Wobblies Organize the Defense

The IWW group information center in Cape Town, South Africa has been at the forefront of the defense of farm workers and their union, the Commercial, Stevedoring, Agricultural and Allied Workers' Union (CSAAWU). CSAAWU is committed to fighting the medieval conditions farm workers are working in, including harassment and threats of evictions.

A video called "CSAAWU Fights for Farmworkers' Rights" has been posted to the "Defend CSAAWU Campaign" Facebook page, and can be viewed at <http://youtu.be/Qpow1gGqT38>. The ISC urges all members to lend whatever support they can to the ongoing struggle for farm workers' rights!

## ISC at the U.S. Social Forum

A large number of IWW members attended the U.S. Social Forum in Detroit from June 22-26, and participated in a number of different workshops. ISC member Nathaniel Miller gave a presentation on the IWW delegation to Palestine, and there was discussion among the various Wobblies at the Social Forum about the best form of solidarity for our fellow workers in Palestine. While in Palestine, the IWW delegation was asked to encourage the IWW to pass a resolution for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) of Israel, which has been called for by all the major Palestinian unions. Wobblies debated the best way to proceed with a BDS resolution within the union, and resolved to further educate our Fellow Workers on BDS and how it would manifest itself in the IWW. (see "Building Solidarity With The Palestinian Working Class Through Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions," page 6).

## Support Palestinian Workers

The following is a shortened version of a motion in solidarity with Palestinian workers, passed by the San Francisco Bay Area IWW. It is for inclusion on the agenda of the IWW 2010 Twin Cities Delegate Convention, and has been included in the *Industrial Worker* for discussion at the General Convention.

"WHEREAS the IWW was founded and remains true to the fundamental principle that all workers of the world must unite against our common enemy, the employing class; and

"WHEREAS workers of the world toil in different stages of their consciousness of this need; and

"WHEREAS when these workers and their organizations call for international unity in their own struggles against oppressive forces arrayed to prevent

their exercise of basic rights necessary for growth towards the idea of One Big Union; and

"WHEREAS the IWW has an international obligation to join with them to remove these impediments to their growth; and

"WHEREAS the working class of Palestine has made direct requests to the IWW through each union with which the IWW delegation to Palestine met, to join the international campaign of Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions ("BDS") call for by every union federation in Palestine against their occupier Israel as an effective form of resisting its military occupation, war crimes, and apartheid policies; and

"WHEREAS 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; and

"WHEREAS the continuing occupation, war, and apartheid will only increase the prestige and power of the reactionary fundamentalist forces.

"BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the IWW affirms its support of the BDS campaign and calls for the implementation of actions to actively support the campaign (*Editor's note: the full list of actions has been omitted due to space limitations*).

"FURTHERMORE, the IWW shall not recognize Histadrut ("The General Federation of Laborers in the Land of Israel") as the legitimate representative of Israeli workers unless and until it recognizes its impediments to working class solidarity and (1) call for the dismantlement of the Apartheid Wall, (2) calls for the withdrawal of Israel from all lands occupied in 1967, (3) recognizes the right of return for Palestinians with reparations, (4) ceases its discriminatory practices towards different workers based upon Zionist distinctions, (5) implements direct election of all union delegates and officers at Histadrut Conventions, and (6) calls for the abolition of all laws that discriminate workers on the basis of religion or ethnicity.

"We call upon all workers in Palestine-Israel to recognize the supremacy of their class interests over sectarian interests of religion, ethnicity, or nationalism thus making an injury to one, and make an injury to all."

## Liaisons Everywhere!

As always, the ISC urges branches and interested individuals to volunteer to be ISC liaisons in order to develop branch-level and worker-to-worker international solidarity. When your branch elects a representative to work with the ISC as an ISC liaison, you are not just helping build an international and radical labor movement; you are strengthening the IWW itself!

Every month, ISC liaisons will get an update and an action to bring to the branch level. In May, the ISC asked liaisons to help promote the development of the Defend CSAAWU Campaign. In June, the ISC asked liaisons to spread the word about the conditions of workers who make soccer balls in light of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. We would like to invite every branch to select an ISC liaison to help spread the word about solidarity activities in other parts of the world. We ask all Fellow Workers to please continue sharing your international contacts and expertise.

The ISC can be reached at [solidarity@iww.org](mailto:solidarity@iww.org).

## A Self-Organized Restaurant In Greece

From [libcom.org](http://libcom.org)

Since June 7, the restaurant Barthelonika in the center of Thessaloniki has been run by its workers. It all began when the owner of the restaurant announced to the workers that the restaurant would close for three months during the summer and that he would decide its fate in September. The workers claim the business is profitable and there is no reason for the owner to suspend its operation. What follows is a translation of a text issued by the workers themselves explaining their action and calling for solidarity:

### Against The Closure of The Restaurant Barthelonika: Let's Support The Self-Management Of the Restaurant By Its Workers

"Since Monday, June 7, we, the workers at Barthelonika, have been running the restaurant ourselves, and for this reason we ask for the help and the support of all the workers of Thessaloniki.

"Two weeks [prior to June 7], the owners of the restaurant announced that the establishment was not going well and that it would close down for the three summer months—and further, that it was uncertain whether it would reopen in September and if many of us would keep our jobs and under what working conditions. They also announced that all the workers at the restaurant would be fired immediately, and that compensations for the firing would only start to be paid out in October; that is, of course, if they had any money to pay the compensations.

"As workers in the food industry, we know well that a firing in today's climate of deep economic crisis and tough anti-worker attacks would mean our being thrown out in the cold. For this reason we decided as workers not to bow our heads, but instead to take matters in our own hands. We demanded and got the management of the restaurant to pay some expenses for the establishment and our insurance—and we now have taken on the management of the restaurant for the months of June and July. In August



Photo: [libcom.org](http://libcom.org)

### The Restaurant Barthelonika.

we will have our holiday as normal.

"As workers at the Barthelonika restaurant, we are determined not to allow the restaurant where we work to close, but also not to allow any restaurant to close and no coworkers to be fired. For this reason, we stand in solidarity with the just struggle of our coworkers at the Banquet restaurant.

"The restaurant Barthelonika will be under our control through our general assembly. Decisions concerning its running will be taken by majority vote and will be respected by all of us. Whatever remains from profit after expenses will be distributed equally among all coworkers. All coworkers will work the same hours, at the same positions we had before.

"We have also decided to offer a 30 percent reduction in meal prices to all customers of the restaurant.

"We call for all workers, the youth and the people of Thessaloniki to actively support our effort to run the restaurant in order to save our jobs and not to be thrown into unemployment and misery."

*This story appeared in its original format in the Greek newspaper The Street (O Dromos).*

## CNT: Make Spain's General Strike Indefinite

From [libcom.org](http://libcom.org)

As it plans a general strike to coincide with Europe-wide action, the anarcho-syndicalist Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) union in Spain is warning that one-day actions will not be enough to deter deep public sector cuts.

Spain's fifth general strike has been set for Sept. 29 amidst massive public-sector cuts and attacks on job security passed by the ruling Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE). The CNT is calling for this strike to be made indefinite.

Following a one-day public sector strike on June 8, the union warned that "gesture strikes" will not be enough to force the government to change course.

Larger Trades Union Congress-style unions called the public sector strike on June 8, which the Left claimed got 75 percent of public sector workers out (state sources said it was 16 percent) and saw tens of thousands of people on the streets in protest. The public sector accounts for around 2.5 million jobs in Spain. However, the measure has made

little impact on narrowly-passed plans to slash 5 percent from public-sector pay, part of a €15 billion package of austerity measures to be implemented in the next few years.

Other measures include the uncoupling of pension payments from inflation, an end to tax breaks for new parents, and cuts in public investment and development aid of up to €6 billion. The ruling PSOE is also taking the opportunity to "free up the labor market" by making it easier to hire and fire workers, a measure which would be likely to help drive a general strike outside the public sector.

The PSOE's actions, taken as Spain is threatened by international markets over its debt ratio, are widely seen as a betrayal of the electoral promises which put the party and José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero into power in 2004 on the back of widespread discontent with the Right. Spanish anarchist groups have pointed to the situation as emblematic of party politicians' inability to represent working people.

## 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](mailto:twincities@iww.org) for a registration form.