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LA 'troqueros' mobilize for May Day shutdown

By Gideon Dev, IWW Los Angeles GMB

Truckers in the Port of Los Angeles/Long Beach (LA/LB) are mobilizing to repeat last May Day's shut down, when over 90 per cent of trucks stayed off the road. The action, led by the port's predominantly Latino workforce, was a show of solidarity with the immigrant rights movement and an expression of shop floor anger over work conditions. The shutdown gave credibility to the protests that shook Los Angeles and the country as the single largest day of protest in US history so far.

Despite this success and stopping a reactionary anti-immigrant bill (HR4437) from becoming law, the immigrant rights movement has not been enough of an organized response

Truckers are employees

The drive for action by the troqueros (the Spanish word for truckers) this year is that they, as workers who drive international trade, are being exploited. The fiction of troqueros being "owner-operators" or "independent contractors" instead of carrier and port employees is the key to this exploitation. While the trucking companies or carriers keep most of the money paid by shippers to have freight hauled, the truckers who do the work only scrape by after paying their expenses.

Troqueros' labor, the hauling of freight to and from the ports and distribution centers, is what makes money for the trucking companies and makes "just in time" distribution possible. Troque-

ing companies. They have no collective contract and no legal right to collective bargaining.

The situation facing port truckers is particularly striking in Los Angeles. West Coast ports unload over 80 per cent of all Asian cargo to the United States. At times, half this traffic passes

through the Port of LA/LB and are hauled out by troqueros. Many workers in the ports—not just troqueros—have no union and no say. Of the 25,000 odd longshoremen on the West Coast, 14,000 are ILWU—9,400 members and roughly 4,000 non-members who

Troqueros continued on 13

The impetus for action among the troqueros this year is [...] a direct reaction to conditions of exploitation.

to pressing immigrant concerns. The momentum of last spring was lost by summer, allowing the corporate elite and their partners in the US government and Democratic Party to pass a similar bill (S2611) as well as the bi-partisan 'Secure Fence Act of 2006'. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has continued its highly publicized mass raids, in effect trying to pressure the US Congress to approve *bracero*-like guest worker programs.

The call for a second 'Great American Boycott' on May Day was made at the March 25 Coalition's National Conference for Immigrant Rights. As a coalition member, the LA GMB proposed a May Day shutdown to the port truckers with a call for solidarity from all related industries. As of this writing, the truckers have responded positively. They are encouraged by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) locals in San Francisco and Seattle, who resolved not to work on May Day. The ILWU resolutions highlighted both the LA GMB's own involvement in last year's May Day shutdown and the current efforts of the March 25 Coalition.

ros haul two to three loads per day all week to make what amounts to poverty income. Instead of paying for each hour worked, carriers pay by the mile or by each trip. They don't pay the drivers for all the time spent loading and unloading containers, waiting in ports or intermodal yards, stuck in delays or in doing paperwork. They certainly don't pay for the trucks, maintenance and repair, insurance or the rising costs of diesel fuel. Benefits such as healthcare, social security, workers compensation, disability, unemployment insurance are paid for by the troqueros.

Shielded by an elaborate veil of contractors and subcontractors, the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA), a coalition of shippers and terminal operators who control West Coast ports, has long claimed that troqueros are independent contractors who, under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, cannot press for their collective rights as workers. This denial of employee status is maintained despite the facts that truckers work directly in the port, are issued a security permit to do so, and the terminal operators exercise sufficient control and direction over their work to be considered joint-employers alongside the truck-

Starbucks violated IWW workers' rights, says NLRB

The United States' National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) on March 30 accused Starbucks of repeatedly breaking the law in an effort to crush the IWW Starbucks Workers Union.

Responding to the union's complaints, the board's Manhattan regional office found that the company violated federal labor law at least 30 times at four of its New York City coffee shops.

Starbucks illegally retaliated against the union by firing two pro-union workers, threatening to fire another worker and giving unfair negative performance evaluations to several other employees suspected of union sympathies, according to the NLRB.

The board also found that management had illegally questioned workers about their support of the union and banned workers from discussing the union during their breaks. Starbucks even discriminated against pro-union workers in its selective enforcement of the company's dress code and jewelry policy.

Together these charges paint a clear picture of a deliberate strategy by the company to use any means possible to obstruct its workers' right to organize a union. Despite abundant evidence of wrongdoing, Starbucks is contesting all charges.

"We believe the allegations are baseless, and we will vigorously defend ourselves," Starbucks spokesperson Valerie O'Neil told the New York Times. The company will have to defend itself against the charges before an administrative law judge. If Starbucks is found guilty, they could be forced to re-hire the two fired organizers and post a public notice that it will not engage in illegal, anti-union activities. The trial is set for June 12 in Manhattan.

Daniel Gross is one of the organizers the board said Starbucks illegally fired. A three-year employee and tireless union activist, Gross was sacked by the company in August 2006, following a



IWW supporters picket Starbucks shareholder meeting in Seattle.

false allegation that he had threatened District Manager Allison Marx at a union rally. Gross said he was simply expressing solidarity when he urged Marx not to fire a co-worker. Now the NLRB has sided with Gross and Joe Agins, also fired for union activity.

"Starbucks left the rule of law behind when the union campaign started in 2004 and according to this complaint has yet to return. It's remarkable that our union is growing stronger everyday despite an almost three year campaign of illegal dirty tricks to defeat us," said Gross in an April 3 press release.

Gross told the New York Times that the "NLRB's complaint illustrates that this is a company with a profound disrespect for workers' rights. Any idea that this was just a few bad apples is belied by the fact that the NLRB accused more than ten Starbucks officials of illegal activities."

This is not the first time that Starbucks has been in trouble for union-busting.

In March 2006, Starbucks settled a number of serious grievances with the IWW, agreeing to re-hire two workers, stop anti-discriminatory practices and pay nearly \$2,000 in back wages.

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Dear Editors,

Thank you so much for printing the article by Erik Davis entitled "Raising a Working Class Culture."

I am a preschool teacher and I see first-hand how working parents find themselves stuck on a treadmill of work and family responsibilities that leaves them with hardly any time for union and community activism.

It is inspiring to read about how the Wobs in the Twin Cities are finding ways to provide childcare for union members. What a great idea!

Hopefully, other IWW branches will also try to implement similar programs. I would love to read some follow-up articles on this project as it develops.

In Solidarity,

Nathan Moore
Lane County IWW

Detroit's Traveling Wobbly Kitchen

Jim Abbott, Detroit Branch, IWW

Towards the end of the new book, *The Industrial Workers of the World: It's First 100 Years*, FW Jon Bekken makes two mentions of the Detroit Branches traveling "soup kitchen." I am a proud member of same, and yes, indeed, we are still going strong, having been called into action three times in the first two months of 2007.

We started off in January, where we, along with the good, radical folks from Food Not Bombs, served the hungry and cold classes of the masses at the major Detroit observation of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Day celebration. That event was followed by two fundraising dinners for workers engaged in labor disputes: one at a steelworker local for the Goodyear strikers, and the other at a UAW hall for striking fellow workers who traveled to the Detroit-area from the Conn-Selmer high end musical instrument manufacturing plant in Elkhart, IN.

We are the Wobbly Kitchen; volunteer cooking for the working class. Fanning the flames and feeding the people, as it were. Where workers strike and organize, that's where you'll find the Wobbly Kitchen.

Who do we cook for? Striking/locked out workers, old reds, war protesters, immigrant rights groups & civil rights organizations; all those that fight for the idea of social justice. We do fundraisers for worker support associations such as Jobs With Justice, for leftist publications like the Fifth Estate, and we lend a Red-and-Black helping hand to those involved in the local labor artist scene; namely, the Detroit Worker/Writer and Arts Festival. We've taken part in benefit dinners that featured concerts by union/anarchist singer-songwriters FW Anne Feeney, FW Len Wallace, FW George Mann, Joe Jencks, David Rovics, Evan Greer and Atilla The Stockbroker, as well as Detroit/Ann Arbor lefty songsmith Chris Buhalis.

We've cooked/served up sustenance in union halls (auto workers, electrical workers, steel workers, service industry workers), in churches (Unitarian and Methodist), in alleyways, in bars, in Irish clubs, on picket lines & at the Labadie Library in Ann Arbor for a showing of the IWW Collection during the Centennial Celebration of the Wobblies.

What do we cook? Runs the gamut of food stuffs. Spaghetti dinners, chicken dinners and ox roasts; along with veg-

etarian meals for those who prefer to go meatless. Soups, salads, and sweet treats. Breads and bagels. Cheese and crackers and cookies and fruit cups. And always plenty of coffee; hot, steaming coffee.

Nothing fancy mind you, but good food and plenty of it. After all, you can't overthrow the capitalist system on an empty stomach.

We're fairly well known in the local lefty scene 'round these parts, & we've made a few bucks tabling here and there, hawking Wob merchandise (yeah, capitalism sucks, but what are you gonna do?). However, if truth be told, we haven't been successful in one of the main purposes of the Wobbly Kitchen; that being spreading the message of the IWW to the working class, least ways not as far as recruiting new members into the union. That is who we are. Might not be much, but it's our little way in contributing to the fight for worker emancipation.

Someone once told me that Walter Reuther's father called the IWW "ticks and gnats." Well, over 100 years have passed since the founding our union, and the Wobbly Kitchen is still bugging the bosses, stirrin' the pot and cooking up trouble for the employing class.

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Post Office Box 23085
Cincinnati OH 45223 USA
513.591.1905 • ghq@iww.org
www.iww.org

GENERAL SECRETARY-TREASURER:
Mark Damron

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Mike Bell, Patrick Brenner,
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iw@iww.org

Contributions welcome. Send to
iw@iww.org with "For the IW" in
the subject line or by mail.

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Canada IW address:
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IWW directory

Australia

IWW Regional Organising Committee: M. Payne, Secretary, PO Box 1866, Albany W.A.

www.iww.org.au

Sydney: PO Box 241, Surry Hills. sydney@iww.org.au

Melbourne: PO Box 145, Moreland 3058. melb@iww.org.au

British Isles

IWW Regional Organising Committee: PO Box 1158, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE99 4XL UK, rocsec@iww.org.uk, www.iww.org.uk

Baristas United Campaign: baristasunited.org.uk

London GMB: c/o Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. londoniww@iww.org

Leicestershire GMB and DMU IU620 Job Branch: Unit 107, 40 Halford St., Leicester LE1 1TQ, England. leics@iww.org.uk www.leicestershire-iww.org.uk

Manchester: 0791-413-1647 education@iww-manchester.org.uk www.iww-manchester.org.uk

Tyne and Wear: tyneandwear@iww.org.uk

Wales: 137 Priory St., Carmarthen. SA31 1LR. plebs.col@ntlworld.com

Scotland

Clydeside GMB: hereandnowscot@email.com iwvclydeside.mahost.org.

Edinburgh IWW: c/o 17 W. Montgomery Place, EH7 5HA. 0131-557-6242

Canada

Alberta

Edmonton GMB: PO Box 75175, T6E 6K1. edmonton@lists.iww.org, http://edmonton.iww.ca.

British Columbia

Vancouver IWW: PO Box 4755, Stn. Terminal, V6B 4A4. 604-682-3269 x8493. gmb-van@iww.ca http://vancouver.iww.ca.

Manitoba

Winnipeg GMB: IWW, c/o WORC, PO Box 1, R3C 2G1. winnipegjww@hotmail.com. Garth Hardy, del., garth.hardy@union.org.za.

Ontario

Ottawa-Outaouais GMB: PO Box 52003, 298 Dalhousie St. K1N 1S0, 613-225-9655 Fax: 613-274-0819, ott-out@iww.org French-language del: Mathieu Brule ott_out_fr@yahoo.ca.

Peterborough: c/o PCAP, 393 Water St. #17, K9H 3L7, 705-749-9694, ptboiww@riseup.net

Toronto GMB: c/o Libra Knowledge & Information Svcs Co-op, PO Box 353 Stn. A, M5W 1C2. 416-925-7250. torontoiww@gmail.com

Finland

Helsinki: Reko Ravela, Otto Brandtintie 11 B 25, 00650. iwwsuomi@helsinki.net

Germany

IWW German Language Area Regional Organizing Committee: Post Fach 19 02 03, 60089 Frankfurt/M, Germany iww-germany@gmx.net www.wobblies.de

Frankfurt am Main: iww-frankfurt@gmx.net

Goettingen: iww-goettingen@gmx.net.

Koeln: iwwcologne@yahoo.de.

Munich: iww-muenchen@web.de

Switzerland: germinal@gmx.ch

Luxembourg: Michael.ashbrook@cec.eu.in

Greece: Themistokleous 66 Exarhia Athens iwgreece@iww.org

United States

Arizona

Phoenix GMB: Terry Hughes, del., 480-894-6846 and Bill Krist, del., 602-254-4057.

Arkansas

Fayetteville: PO Box 283, 72702. 479-200-1859, nwar_iww@hotmail.com.

California

Los Angeles GMB: PO Box 621, Wilmington, CA 90748. 310-205-2667.

North Coast GMB: PO Box 844, Eureka 95502-0844. 707-725-8090. BST Angie Hart: angstink@gmail.com

Oakland: Evergreen Printing, 2335 Valley Street, Oakland, CA 94612. 510-835-0254 dkaroly@icg.org

San Francisco Bay Area GMB: (Curbside and Buyback IU 670 Recycling Shops; Stonemountain IU 660 Job Shop) PO Box 11412, Berkeley 94712. 510-845-0540. Meetings first Thursdays at 7 p.m. (2022 Blake St., Berkeley)

San Jose: Adam Welch, del. 408-795-9672. email: adam_freedom@yahoo.com

Santa Barbara GMB: PO Box 23008, 93121. 805-689-3086, sbgmb@iww.org

Colorado

Denver GMB: c/o P&L Printing Job Shop: 2298 Clay, Denver 80211. 303-433-1852.

Four Corners (AZ, CO, NM, UT): delegate: 970-903-8721. 4corners@iww.org

Florida

Gainesville GMB: 1021 W. University, 32601. 352-246-2240, gainesvilleiww@riseup.net

Pensacola GMB: PO Box 2662, Pensacola, FL 32513-2662. 840-437-1323, iwwpensacola@yahoo.com, www.angelfire.com/fl5/iww

Hobe Sound: Peter Shultz, 8274 SE Pine Circle, 33455-6608, 772-545-9591, okiedogg2002@yahoo.com

Georgia

Atlanta: Keith Mercer, del., 404-992-7240, iw-watlanta@gmail.com

Hawaii

Honolulu: Tony Donnes, del., 808-547-2042. donnes@hawaii.edu

Illinois

Chicago GMB: PO Box 18387, 3750 N. Kedzie, 60618. phone: 312-638-9155.

Carbondale: Jason Leonard, Southern Illinois

delegate. chachieldiablo@hotmail.com.

Central Ill.: PO Box 841, Charleston 61920. 217-356-8247

Champaign: David Johnson, 217-356-8247.

Waukegan IWW: PO Box 274, 60079.

Iowa

Cedar Rapids: Drew Robertson, del., 206-290-9072.

Iowa City: Seamus Mulryan, del., 319-248-3589. iowacityiww@riseup.net

Maine

Norumbega: Barry Rodrigue, del., PO Box 57, Bath 04530.

Maryland

Baltimore IWW: c/o Red Emma's, 800 St. Paul St., 21202, 410-230-0450, iww@redemmas.org.

Massachusetts

Boston Area GMB: PO Box 391724, Cambridge 02139. 617-469-5162.

Western Mass. Public Service IU 650 Branch: IWW, PO Box 1581, Northampton 01061.

Western Massachusetts GMB: 43 Taylor Hill Rd., Montague 01351. 413-367-9356.

Michigan

Detroit IWW: PO Box 08161, 48208. detroit@iww.org

Grand Rapids GMB: PO Box 6629, 49516. Cole Dorsey, secretary, 616-881-5263.

Central Michigan: David Finet, 5007 W. Columbia Rd., Mason 48854. 517-676-9446, happyhippie66@hotmail.com

Minnesota

Twin Cities GMB: PO Box 14111, Minneapolis 55414. 612-339-1266. twincities@iww.org

Missouri

Kansas City GMB: c/o 5506 Holmes St., 64110. 816-523-3995.

Montana

Construction Workers IU 330: Dennis Georg, del. 406-490-3869, trampiu330@aol.com

New Jersey

Central New Jersey GMB: PO Box: 10021, New Brunswick 08904. 732-979-9973 xaninjurytoalx@yahoo.com

Northern New Jersey GMB: PO Box 844, Saddle Brook 07663. 201-873-6215. northernnj@iww.org

New Mexico

Albuquerque: 202 Harvard SE, 87106-5505. 505-331-6132, abq@iww.org.

New York

NYC GMB: PO Box 7430, JAF Station, New York City 10116, iww-nyc@bari.iww.org. Jim Crutchfield, I.U. 650, classify@iww.org.

Starbucks Campaign 347 Maujer St. Apt. #C, Brooklyn, NY 11206 Daniel Gross: 917-577-1110

Tomer Malchi: 646-753-1167

starbucksunion@yahoo.com

Upstate NY GMB: PO Box 235, Albany 12207, 518-833-6853 or 861-5627. www.upstate-nyiww.org. secretary@upstate-ny-iww.org, Rochelle Semel, del, PO Box 172, Fly Creek 13337, 607-293-6489, rochelle7@usadatanet.net.

Ohio

Ohio Valley GMB: PO Box 42233, Cincinnati 45242. IU 660: PO Box 317741, Cincinnati 45231, iu660cincy@hotmail.com.

Oklahoma

Tulsa: Karl Howeth, P.O. Box 213 Medicine Park 73557, 580-529-3360.

Oregon

Lane County: 541-953-3741.

www.eugeneiww.org

Portland Industrial District Council: 311 N. Ivy St., 97227, 503-231-5488. pdxiwwhall@riseup.net

Pennsylvania

Lancaster GMB: PO Box 796, 17608. membership@LancasterIWW.org, http://LancasterIWW.org

Philadelphia GMB: PO Box 42777, 19101. 215-222-1905. phillyiww@iww.org Union Hall: 4530 Baltimore Ave., 19143.

Paper Crane Press IU 450 Job Shop: papercrane-press@verizon.net, 610-358-9496.

Pittsburgh GMB : PO Box 90315, 15224.

pittsburghiww@yahoo.com

Texas

Austin GMB: PO Box 650011, 78765. waterloowob@monkeywrenchbooks.org, 512-320-8427.

Utah

Salt Lake City GMB: PO Box 520835, 84152-0835. slcgm@iww.org.

Washington

Bellingham: PO. Box 1793, 98227. BellinghamIWW@gmail.com 360-920-6240.

Industrial Transportation Project: Arthur J Miller, PO Box 5464, Tacoma 98415-0464.

Olympia GMB: PO Box 2775, 98507. 360-956-9256. olywobs@riseup.net

Seattle GMB: 1122 E. Pike #1142, 98122-3934. 877-815-5684, www.seattleiww.org.

Spokane: Tim Hill, 509-218-9622.

Wisconsin

Madison GMB: PO Box 2442, 53703-2442. www.madisoniww.info. Lakeside Press IU 450 Job Shop: 1334 Williamson, 53703. 608-255-1800. www.lakesidepress.org. Madison Infoshop Job Shop: 1019 Williamson St. #B, 53703. 608-262-9036.

Two Degrees Coffeeshop Job Shop: 307 W. Johnson St., 53703. 608-257-7888. Just Coffee Job Shop: www.justcoffee.net.

GDC Local #4: PO. Box 811, 53701. 608-262-9036.

Railroad Workers IU 520: Ron Kaminkow, PO Box 3010, Madison 53704, 608-358-5771. eugene_v_debs_aru@yahoo.com.

Milwaukee GMB: PO Box 070632, 53207. 414-481-3557.

Zimbabwe workers win court case, face violence

A court has dismissed charges against three top officers of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), ruling on March 29 that the government failed to present evidence proving the union federation had violated "exchange control" regulations to affect the market. ZCTU secretary-general Wellington Chibembe, Elijah Mutemeri and Vimbai Mushongera were involved in an attempt to organize workers in the informal sector by founding a new organization, the Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations (ZCIEA). The Zimbabwean police raided its office in 2005.

Informal workers are one of the most widespread but precarious sectors of the Zimbabwean economy. Through the creation of the ZCIEA, the ZCTU had sought to represent these often voiceless workers. Reportedly, the government saw the new organization as a potential rival political party, fomented by the British-based Commonwealth Council of Trade Unions. The British government is one of Zimbabwe's most outspoken critics in the European Union and Commonwealth and its strong links to Zimbabwe's labor movement are well known.

The inability of Zimbabwe's government to prove its case in court and the court's decision to stand by the law instead of the government's desire to convict its opposition may signal a weakening of the government's authority.

In a recent police report, the Zimbabwean police also complain about the judiciary's independence and unwillingness to support the government's repression of the opposition. The police has "no support from the judiciary who continue to either release accused persons on either free or make them pay very small bail, allowing them to go out and continue with their illegal activities," according to the report.

Police violence dogs "Stay-Away"

Zimbabwe's government and paramilitary supporters used threats, intimidation, violence, kidnapping and murder to fight the April 3rd and 4th stay-away general strike called by the Zimbabwean trade union congress. Unknown assailants kidnapped one teachers' union officer who remains missing, while others beat a television cameraman to death. The government is now demanding that all companies that did close their doors justify their actions in writing.

Preliminary reports say that the stay-away was not as successful as the opposition had hoped for. However, the ZCTU points out that, considering the widespread intimidation that prevailed, the level of participation in the action was impressive.

President Robert Mugabe, once hailed as the country's liberator from colonialism, has ruled Zimbabwe since 1980. It is now in an economic and political tailspin. Mugabe blames Zimbabwe's current crisis on his domestic opposition and on foreign interference. Despite the dire situation, the ruling party has already confirmed Mugabe as its presidential candidate for the 2008 elections.

An opposition movement for change formed in 1999, but has failed so far to mobilize enough popular support to force Mugabe out of power. Its activists have faced systematic police harassment and brutality.



Graphic by Ned Powell

US Court of Appeals slaps NLRB

Ruling that classed nurse as boss "borders on the frivolous"

A recent ruling by the United States National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) that a registered nurse in Missouri was a "supervisor" and could be legally fired for circulating a petition has been shot down by the US Court of Appeals in Washington, DC.

In its ruling, the appeals court declared that the NLRB's decision is "fatally flawed", "devoid of substantial evidence" and "borders on the frivolous".

The NLRB's decision involved three cases, collectively known as the Oakwood ruling.

The Board had ruled that nurse Lisa Jochims could be considered a supervisor because her duties included sending employees home on orders from management, giving employees permission to leave early in emergencies and filling out written reports about misconduct.

The appeals court rejected these findings, stating that none of these examples met the criteria for classifying workers as supervisors under previous NLRB policy. The court sent the case back to the Board to make a new ruling.

The Oakwood ruling would have had serious implications for the labor movement, potentially stripping eight million nurses, construction workers, news media workers and others of the right to join a union.

The ruling was an attempt to expand the scope of the infamous Kentucky River decision in September 2006, a politically-motivated NLRB ruling that paved the way for re-classifying millions of rank-and-file workers as supervisors, thereby denying them the right to organize.

In mid-March, a bi-partisan bill that seeks to reverse the effects of Kentucky River was introduced in both houses of Congress.

Known as the Re-Empowerment of Skilled and Professional Employees and Construction Tradeworkers (RESPECT), the bill has garnered the support of the AFL-CIO and other major unions in the United States.

Readers' Soapbox has new address

Want to get on the Industrial Worker Soap Box? Make sure you send your letters, graphics or tips to the right address after June 1.

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We accept email, too. Send your letters to:
iw@iww.org with
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Preamble of the IWW Constitution

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want 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 23085, Cincinnati OH 45223, USA.

Initiation is the same as one month's dues. Our dues are calculated according to your income. If your monthly income is under \$1,000, dues are \$6 a month. If your monthly income is between \$1,000 - \$2,000, dues are \$12 a month. If your monthly income is over \$2,000 a month, dues are \$18 a month. Dues may vary 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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Why unions must set their own agenda in online campaigns

Knee-jerk assumptions undermine working class solidarity

I have been helping organize online campaigns in support of workers' rights for several years now. The latest campaign I'm helping with concerns Zimbabwe. It supports a call by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions demanding that President Robert Mugabe respect workers rights.

Very few of the campaigns that I have been involved in may be considered controversial – at least they are not usually controversial within the labour movement. When you attack a company like Wal-Mart, everyone on the left has only nice things to say about you.

But campaigns like Zimbabwe and ones we have done in support of trade unionists in Eritrea and Belarus, have generated their fair share of critical comment.

More critical comments have come in about Zimbabwe than any other recent campaign. Despite this criticism, it is still one of the largest and most successful online campaigns I've been involved in.

There is only a minority of activists who have an issue with this sort of campaign. What they say, more or less, is: 'Robert Mugabe, for better or worse, has made enemies of George Bush and Tony

Blair. If they and their stooges in the media (CNN and Fox News) say Mugabe is a dictator, therefore Mugabe must be a pretty good guy. Any anyway, didn't he do some kind of land reform?'

This argument reflects a larger failure of thinking and is a real problem for our movement.

Let's start with Zimbabwe.

The call for an international online campaign of protest came from the organized working class in Zimbabwe. The only national trade union center in that country is the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU).

It has all kinds of critical things to say about the Mugabe regime and as I write these words, it has called its members out in a general strike. Those unions in Zimbabwe are being backed by trade union movements all across Africa – in Nigeria, in Ghana, and above all in South Africa.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has taken a very strong stand in support of the ZCTU and against the Mugabe regime. They have done so for the same reasons that they are also struggling against the tyranny in Swaziland and for the same reasons that they played such a heroic role in the

struggle against the apartheid regime in their own country. The South African unions feel so strongly about Zimbabwe that they have broken ranks with their partners in the African National Congress, whose leadership is wavering on

These unions were being crushed by Belarussian President Aleksandr Lukashenko. I learned about the issues there not from Belarussian unionists, certainly not from Fox News, but from progressive Russian trade unionists who were concerned that a neighboring country was plunging back into the dark days of Stalinist dictatorship.

Despite this seemingly clear-cut case, I got the occasional angry email from leftists in the West who had a knee-jerk reaction – if the Bush administration didn't seem to like the dictator in Minsk, ipso facto he must be some kind of progressive.

When Eritrea arrested trade unionists and jailed them in a secret prison in Eritrea a year or two ago, I had a number of angry emails from leftists who were vaguely convinced that the Eritrean regime was progressive and could not possibly be arresting innocent trade unionists.

I think that for many of the people who send these kinds of messages, Bush and Fox News are setting their agenda much more than they would like to admit.

Rather than form independent judgments based on reading a wide range of media – and online media offers us lots of news that you don't see on network television – these comrades are simply taking whatever agenda they see coming out of the White House and reversing it. If Bush says black, they say white. They are allowing the corporations and their political representatives to determine their politics. This is nonsense.

During the Cold War, we knew that Western opposition to Stalinism didn't make the Soviet Union a workers' paradise. One had to form independent judgments based on what was in the interests of the working class – and not be guided solely by opposing whatever the ruling elite seemed to be supporting.

In the post-Cold War world, we cannot afford to make that error. When workers appeal for our support, we need to look at the concrete situation in their country, and not make our decision based on what we think George Bush or Tony Blair would do. An injury to one is an injury to all – and that's true even when the one doing the injuring is no friend of George Bush.

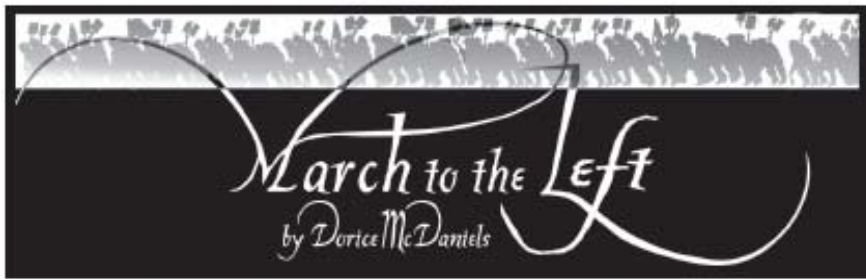
These are the ABCs of working class internationalism and they must be repeated from time to time and passed on to the next generation.

If Bush says black, they say white.

Zimbabwe rather than taking a stand.

In other words, among African trade unionists in the front lines of the struggle against poverty, racism, neo-liberalism and neo-colonialism, there is near-unanimity on the question of Zimbabwe. If this had happened in any other country, activists would not hesitate to lend their support.

A few years back I was involved in a similar campaign in support of free and independent trade unions in Belarus.



Such a bustling business is going on in this room! Maria stands in wonder as she listens to the clatter and chatter and chatter of sewing machines. She notices rough gunny cloth being turned into big bags.

'Bags for potatoes or onions?' she wonders. 'Or perhaps they'll hold cotton for cotton pickers in the field.'

Overhead is another department. She senses the thump of heavy machinery converting raw material into coarse-grained cloth, weaving, shaping it into appropriate size, and then sending it downstairs to be stitched into bags.

Right now, Maria is assigned to Stall 6 in Row 3. This stall will be home base for 48 hours a week, straight time, minimum wage.

Maria is thankful to be a part of this busy crew of workers in this huge building. There are eight mouths to be fed at home, with only three working members of the household.

The appointments of Stall 6 are the basic essentials to get the job done—a low, flat metal table with a cutting edge. The finished product of the seamstress is a bag attached to another bag and another, a long succession of bags. Maria's job is simply to lay each bag on the metal table, then snip that dangling white

thread on the table's cutting edge. This, and no other task, occupies her work life.

It takes only a couple of days for Maria's limber young body to adapt to a measured motion as it braces, swings from left to right, to pace itself to the rhythm, to the beat, to the pulse of the task as gunny sacks keep ever hurtling forth. 'Faster, faster!' Lest the tumbling bags sag to the floor.

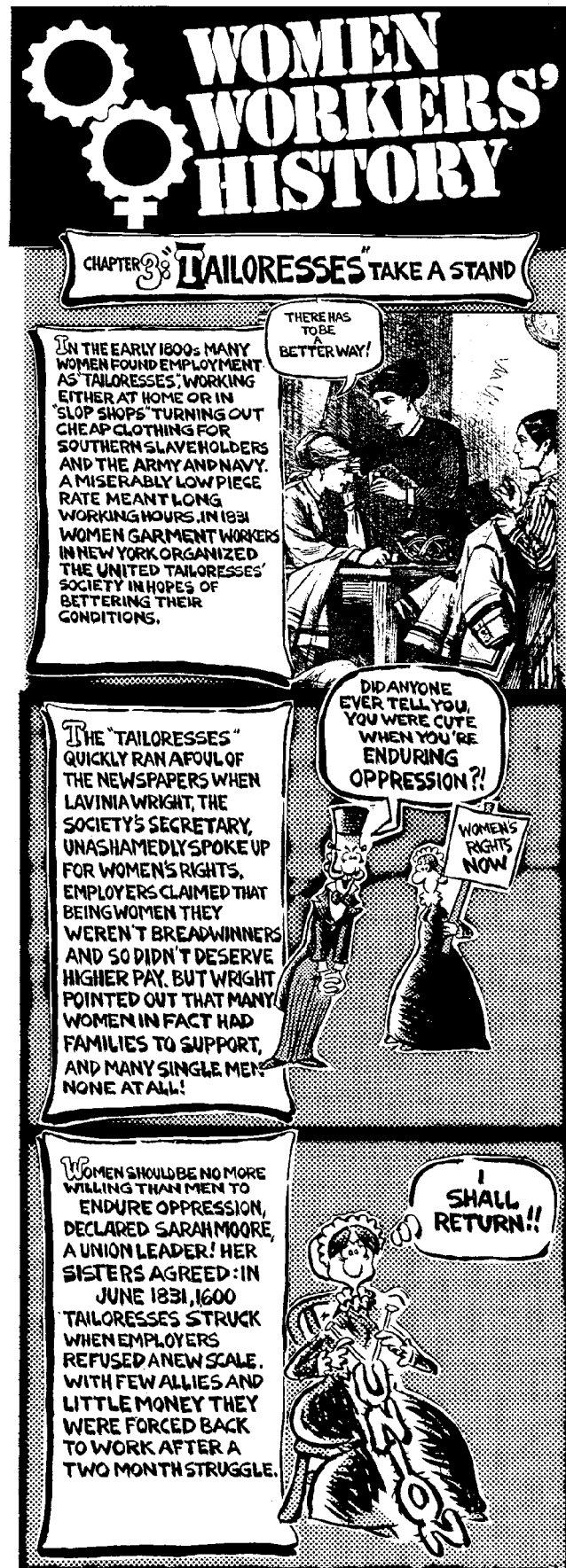
Five weeks, and the whir of machines becomes a steady dirge, occasionally interrupted by a skip of the combined beat of 40 machines, then once more in sync as they pick up the rhythm, the steady pulsation of a united pace. The electric lights above take on a life of their own, suspended blobs of illusory luminescence.

At night, there is little rest for Maria. Lay-them-straight-cut-those-threads-lay-them-straight-cut-those threads. Toss and turn with the syncopated rhythm of the job.

And scratch! Ever work with gunny? Thousands of fleas make their home in gunny. SCRATCH!

Two years later. Maria is roused by a rude bell. The alarm clock.

'iMadre de Dios! Another Day.'



BUILD IT NOW!

May Day Greetings
from the IWW LA GMB

Telephone 310-205-2667
PO Box 621, Wilmington, CA 90748

EuroMayDay calls for party, action, protest

Activists in 22 cities mobilize against temp and short-term work across Europe

The EuroMayDay network is organizing May Day parades for a generation of workers who have never known job security in 22 European cities in Austria, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden.

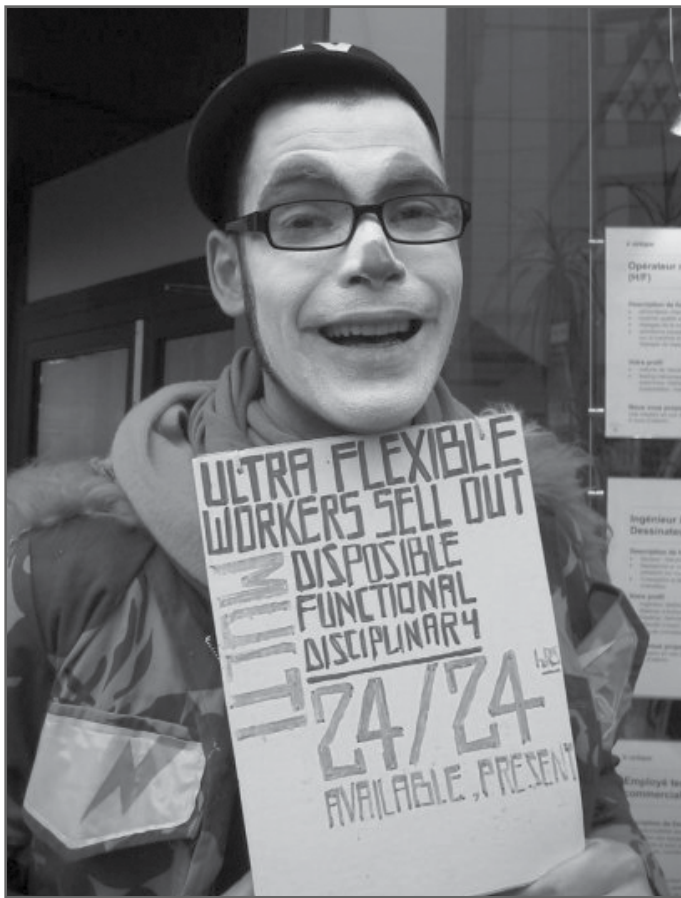
Precarity work—short-term, no benefits, low-paid, transitory—for millions of Europeans is “the most crucial and burning social issue in Europe today, as the gigantic demonstrations in France of a whole generation against precarity and the CPE [first employment contract for new French workers] are proving.”

May Day is for “queer temps, immigrant part-timers, student stagiaires, nomadic free-lancers, pregnant flex-workers,” announced the euromayday.org web site.

This will be the fifth annual EuroMayDay event with the network claiming 200,000 participants last year.

The EuroMayDay declaration states their position:

“We have no trust or faith in those who, at the helm of governments, unions, political parties, or cultural institutions, pretend to speak in our name and take decisions on our lives, while ignoring social demands and repressing practices of social transformation.



EuroMayDay 2006 in Liège, Belgium.

Photo: francois.schreuer.org

“We will parade on mayday to reclaim our lives and fight against workfare or other authoritarian solutions to mounting inequality and welfare crisis. We want to give flesh with our conflicts a new welfare system and a more horizontal, democratic society, where immaterial, service, affective, flexible work is not subjected to pitiless exploitation, blackmail flexibility, and existential impossibility. Nobody wants to be sentenced to the same job for life. But nobody wants to spend her whole day wondering how to pay the next bill, while juggling three jobs.

“We want life-affirming social equality, not subservient, discriminative employment. European welfare provisions should be made independent from

either employment or citizenship so to benefit native as well as migrant precarious people.

“We are determined to sever the link between welfare and employment, and between welfare and citizenship, as basic pre-conditions to create truly democratic, libertarian, and egalitarian polities in the age of war-making globalization.”

EuroMayDay Wants:

- full+immediate adoption of EU directive on temporary workers
- european birthright of citizenship (ius soli)
- closure of detention centers for immigrants
- european basic income
- european minimum wage
- free upload, free download
- queer rights for all genders
- protection of THC consumers

U Michigan temps organize with IWW Candlelight vigil for cafeteria worker James Kirk

Temporary workers at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business kicked off the public phase of their IWW unionization campaign March 12.

The union presented management with a list of demands that include access to health care, pay raises, full-time work status and a manager who is subject to election and recall.

The workers are affiliated with the IWW Education Workers Industrial Union (IU620).

The action was the culmination of several months of quiet planning and organizing by U of M employees and the IWW, with strong support from the campus chapter of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).

On the day the union made its demands, students and other union supporters across the country jammed phone lines and barraged university officials with emails urging them to agree to the temps' demands.

Thus far, management has been reluctant to respond to the demands, referring them instead to the University's Human Resources Department.

Meanwhile, the workers and SDS have brought their message to the Board of Regents and to the student body, speaking at a “Campus Unite!” rally on March 15. Organizers also sent an open letter to U of M faculty calling for solidarity.

The union organizers also received a grim reminder of the urgency of their campaign. In late March, the union learned that James Kirk, a fellow worker from the Business School's cafeteria, died unexpectedly. To honor Kirk's life and to highlight the consequences of denying workers access to University Health Services, the temps organized a candlelight vigil on April 7.

Temp workers and their allies are now in the process of examining university policies that potentially violate US labor law and planning a long-term strategy for their campaign.

To sign an on-line petition supporting University of Michigan temp workers, go to http://www.petitiononline.com/mod_perl/signed.cgi?temps

Mississippi shipyard workers settle strike

Workers at defense company Northrop Grumman's shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi voted by a narrow margin to accept a three-year contract in early April, ending a 28-day strike that involved over 7,000 workers from 14 unions.

Workers went on strike March 8, overwhelmingly rejecting a proposed four-year contract that would have increased health care costs for workers without granting them a needed pay raise. All but one of the unions also rejected a second contract proposal that the company made after the strike had begun. Many of the shipyard workers are struggling financially because of the continuing impact of Hurricane Katrina.

A serious housing crisis exists, with some workers still living in temporary FEMA trailers that will be revoked. Rising insurance costs are also taking their toll.

“Since Katrina,” electrician Nick Mariakas told *Labor Notes*, “you can't get housing. People raised the rents up so high—they pretty much price gouged. There's just not a lot of houses left down here.”

“We can't live off what they're trying to pay us,” said Mariakas. Northrop Grumman profited from the disaster, raking in \$2.7 billion in contracts to repair Katrina damage plus an additional \$356 million from FEMA.

The two largest groups of workers, Pascagoula Metal Trades Council and local 733 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, voted 60 per cent and 67 per cent respectively to accept the contract, with approximately 46 per cent of members voting. Many workers say the union should have held out to win a better contract. In spite of 500 workers who crossed the picket-line, reports indicate that community support for the strike was high.

Under the new contract, journeymen workers will get a \$1.68-per-hour (about 9.2 per cent) pay raise the first year and an additional 55 cents per-hour raise for the following two years for a total increase of 15.2 per cent.

LabourStart

Where trade unionists
start their day on the net.

<http://www.labourstart.org>

Shattuck Cinema workers rally for contract

Demand recognition, more healthcare

Singing and waving red and black flags emblazoned with the IWW logo, more than 80 cinema workers, union members and supporters blocked traffic outside Shattuck Cinemas in downtown Berkeley, California on March 16 to demand union recognition, an expanded health care plan, excused sick days and consistent hours.

The rally and march was the latest action in a contract renewal struggle between the IWW-affiliated workers and parent company Landmark Theaters that has dragged on for over eight months.

Despite setbacks, the union is optimistic that it is making progress, citing a February resolution by Berkeley City

Council supporting the workers.

"This is a proactive move for us to continue to organize the community in support of what we are doing," organizer Bruce Valde told the Daily Californian.

"I do not consider this a protest. This is a community support rally."

The rally was timed for the peak movie-going hour to raise awareness and support among Shattuck customers.

Workers credit two recent wage increases to their ongoing public pressure on the company, saying that Landmark Theaters has made these concessions in order to avoid having to recognize the union.



Shattuck Cinema workers and supporters rally for union recognition.

Photo: Shattuck Cinema Workers

Melbourne IWW on the picket line, in the community

Preston Motors Threaten Strikers

IWW Melbourne members attended the Preston Motors community-protest solidarity events as the boss offered a miserly "\$4 a week pay rise" and has union-busting lawyers Freehills advising. Management at Preston Motors has threatened to sue striking National Union of Workers members.

For more information on this struggle, see www.unionsolidarity.org.

Wobs attended the Paris Commune 1971-2007 March 28 commemoration.

IWWs also attended the Nuclear Fools Day rally on April 1 and marched to IWW stall at the Music Bowl, distributing the new edition of our paper Direct Action & pamphlet *Fanning Discontent's Flames*.

IWWs were also active with stalls at the Melbin Social Forum on April 21; the Victorian Unions Family Day on April 22; anti-War commemoration on April 25 and, of course at May Day week events.

IWW Melbourne PO Box 145, Moreland VIC 3058 Australia Tel 0403 139 818 www.iww.org.au

By Viola Wilkins

An injury to one projectionist

View from the Toronto Royal Cinema picket line

By Jerzy Smokey Dymny, IWW Toronto

I've been playing union music for strikes, parades & protests for nearly three decades. Not just unions of course, but anti-poverty events, anti-G-7 & G-8 demos, anti-war, environmental events and more.

Now, I have a good story to tell you about last Christmas 2006. There was a local second-run movie house in my neighbourhood on College Street, "The Royal", in Little Italy, which had been closed along with several others in Toronto. My friends and neighbours were upset because we like to go to second-run movies rather than the big corporate palaces.

Then there was a glimmer of hope. Someone was renovating the Royal and posters announced it would reopen November 15th. Then there were delays. But in mid-December a film was opening and I was going to go see it on the opening night 'cause the reviews said it was about bicycle activists, of sorts.

Imagine my surprise when I saw half a dozen men with picket signs. Here's what I found out.

The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) has represented projectionists and others in the Ontario Theatre industry since 1909. Local 173 of the union covers Toronto. The Royal renovators thought they could re-open the cinema and not hire the only

union guy, the projectionist. They were saying that the previous owner's contract with the union was void. And they hired a scab. But the IATSE contract stipulated "successor rights" which means if a new owner still runs the building as a movie house, they must abide by the union contract and hire the same projectionist.

My faith in unions was restored! Here it was the darkest, saddest time of the year. It was cold; it was raining. There was no snow on the ground. But five men had come out to support their fellow worker who'd been illegally laid off. I was seeing pickets walking in front of the Royal Cinema to protect the rights of just one worker. Well, as I see it this is the essence of unionism. After all the Wobbly motto reads: "An injury to one is an injury to all." It didn't take me long to promise I would be back with my guitar.

On December 17, I sang union songs with the IATSE picket for an hour. That is, I taught them songs. I had printed up four songs on a sheet of paper and they sang along. They repeated the picket on the 19 and 22 so I brought four more songs for them to learn. We sang even longer. They really liked "Are You a Scabby?" which was written by a Wob I

had known from Vancouver Island. We all returned on the 29 and picketed the Royal again. The owner wasn't smiling very much by then. Besides picketing I had e-mailed the cycling community to advise them to stay away. There were a few days off for the New Year and negotiations were to start early in '07. But however this little action turns out, this bunch of stalwarts rekindled my faith in unionism. I came up with a song for them while they were off negotiating. I call it "Solidarity is Easy" which is a bit ironic when you hear the rest of this Local's story (see below for the words).

Meanwhile, the IATSE rank-and-file tried to replace an executive that they thought had failed them, but narrowly lost the election. The re-elected IATSE executive is still negotiating with the Royal owner, who promised to respect successor rights in one meeting and then reneged on his promise at the next one.

"I'm afraid organized labour is in deep trouble in this country, mainly because of narrow self-interest at the top plus not minding the store while corporations have strong strategic alliances within their ranks to de-unionize their work places," said one IATSE rank-and-filer.

A song for the picket line... Solidarity is easy

By Jerzy Smokey Dymny

Sometimes I'm disgusted when there's no solidarity,
In the business trade unions 'cause they often fail to see
That their workers want to fight for a cause that's real and strong
But the leaders sell out easy and make a deal that's wrong.

chorus:

'Cause Solidarity is easy when you know a thing is right;
Solidarity's when your friends join together for a fight.
Solidarity's no stranger to union members when
They help a fellow worker who needs a helping hand.

This winter I saw a picket line, in front of a movie house,
Defending a single worker who'd been laid off by a louse.
Who'd renovated the cinema to make it modern, then
He renovated the contract by firing the union man.

His friends they stood beside him all through that Xmas time;
They marched & sang thru rain and sleet to keep his spirits high.
When a Local supports a worker even tho' he's just one man,
Solidarity's on the march and growin' throughout the land.

It was just those six workers who were with their union brother.
The union wouldn't go to bat for just one member.
But after seven solid pickets in front of the movie house
The union was embarrassed into dealing with the louse.

*"We swear by the
Southern Cross
to stand truly by
each other and
fight to defend our
rights and liberties."*



**Australian Wobblies send fraternal
May Day greetings to all workers
organising and struggling against
militarism, state repression and the
dominance of capital.**

FAU calls for solidarity with German carers

Compiled from the Hanover Local of the Free Workers Union (FAU) appeal

On March 14, 20 members of three unions protested in Hanover against the behaviour of the management of Klinikum Wahrendorff GmbH, a nearby private psychiatric hospital and residence.

The protest took place in front of the hotel Luisenhof in Hannover, where the management hosted their third annual general meeting. The unionists and syndicalists present asked the management of the hospital to immediately stop its attacks against union representatives and to accept that employees can make use of the existing union rights.

Hospital employees, and leaders of the emergency and housing units, principal doctors were among the 75 guests at the meeting. The leader of the German Liberal Party (FDP) parliamentary group delivered a speech.

In the street, the Ver.di union of public and private services; DGB-Ortskartell Lehrte, a local group of German Trade Union Organization; and Freie ArbeiterInnen Union (FAU) Hanover participated in the protest.

The hospital in Sehnde-Ilten is one of the biggest private psychiatric hospitals in Europe. Care for 277 patients in an emergency area and 680 mentally-ill residents in a housing area is provided by 785 employees.

For years the management has tried

to cut down the rights of the employees, attack union organizing efforts and expel combative union representatives from the company by all means possible. Since 1994 union officers have faced regular attempts to fire them.

A surge in employer attacks against workers prompted the Hanover protest. The workers' representation council, elected one year ago, has to deal with ten proceedings before a labor court of justice. Four cases are for the immediate dismissal of four employees, while three are requests of expulsion from the workers council. All the targeted people are members of the ver.di-list, a union which participates in representative elections to the workers council. The attacks are designed to deter the organization of employees.

The employer has ignored the workers council's report on the present economic situation of the hospital for more than eight months, giving no reply. It has not even provided a financial statement for 2005.

Discontent is widespread, but many employees don't dare to fight against their working conditions and pay. Most of them delegate their own responsibility to fight for their rights to their representatives in the workers council. Some rather reserved attempts made by ver.di functionaries led to nothing.

However, there are efforts being made to activate the large number of

Sample Protest letter

To the Hospital Wahrendorff GmbH management:

Dear Mr Wilkening and Mr Jeske,

I hereby strongly protest the behaviour of the management in its poor treatment of members of ver.di in your workers council in Klinikum Wahrendorff GmbH.

Your unacceptable hostility to organized unions, members of the workers council and legitimate union activity is well known and condemned in Germany and abroad.

I therefore demand you stop your anti-union activities and attempts to dismiss union members and remove others from the workers council and to accept the rights of your employees to organize in unions and exercise their union rights at work. We further demand that you provide the workers council access to all the information, required by law, which it needs to examine and judge the company's situation and represent workers' interests to the best of its ability.

We also urge you to respond to the workers council's finding of the discrepancy between the supposed and actual number of employees. If there should be any differences, then meet your obligations and provide the proper workplaces.

Respect the rights of patients and employees in this crucial matter.
Sincerely,

ver.di members in the company by the few ver.di unionists who want to fight back, but the atmosphere at the workplace is poisoned with fear.

The FAU is calling for a global solidarity campaign to force the employer to listen to its workers. Send by email to dr.wilkening@wahrendorff.de and jeske@wahrendorff.de or fax letters to

management at 00495132/902266 or 00495132/902200. Be sure to email blind copies (BCC) to the workers council betriebsrat@wahrendorff.de and the FAU ggb-hannover@fau.org or fax a copy to the FAU 00495132/902275 so we can show the hospital workers that they are not alone.

Sit down at work? Meet Deep Vein Thrombosis

By Mike Payne, www.iww.org.au

Office workers take notice. You are at risk of developing deep vein thrombosis (DVT) just from sitting immobile at your desks, according to a New Zealand study.

The study to be presented at the annual conference of the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand in April has found prolonged immobility at work is, absolutely, the most common factor shared by DVT patients. DVT is the formation of a blood clot in a deep vein, most commonly in the legs, which may cause death if untreated.

One in three people attending an out-patient clinic reported sitting for eight hours or longer before suffering a venous thromboembolism or blood clot that detaches from the vein wall and lodge elsewhere in the body. Office workers, IT workers and taxi drivers are

Office and IT workers, taxi drivers are amongst the absolutely most at risk

amongst the absolutely most at risk, according to the research from the Medical Research Institute in Wellington. Chances are, the stats are not going to change when you locate yourself anywhere else on the planet.

For the Great Fishes sake, you evolved to wander and wonder and run across the wide savannah by day and spend the evening partying, feasting

(or starving), telling stories and making love. Do a bit of hunting here, bit of gathering there. This lifestyle capitalism forces you into does you no good at all either physically or psychologically.

Its symptoms include pain, swelling, redness and dilated surface veins seen on the skin. The risk is caused by the sitting position which can impede blood flow.

Thankfully the impeded blood flow affects mostly the legs and hardly at all the brain. That numbness you feel after the five hour stint in front of the monitor has other causes. So, anyway, use the bit that's working. Or at any rate has blood flow. Look out for the warning signs such as "stiff" or "fidgety" legs. You feel stiff or fidgety legs you should get up and wander around for a bit. Your life

could be on the line here. Chat to your fellow workers – tell them all about the one big union and the transformation of daily life – run off a couple or hundred subversive pamphlets on the copy machine and make sure everyone gets one although not necessarily everyone knows who it came from. This type of activity is good for the brain cells as well as the legs. The small risk puts a little more epinephrine into the vascular system and brain, bounce in the step and straightness in the spine. Pace around a bit. You're caged!—in the cappoe's world we all are. But we don't have to like it or take it quietly.

Bangladesh to privatize port to bust unions

Bangladesh's interim government is laying plans to privatize the country's main port in the southeastern city of Chittagong. A port official openly admitted to reporters that the move is an effort to wrest control of the port from an alliance of militant unions which have shown their strength in a series of recent strikes.

The port is essential to Bangladesh's booming textile industry, shipping over 90 per cent of the country's \$25 billion export and import economy. It has become an important battleground for union and political disputes that have caused millions of dollars in losses to firms that ship to Wal-Mart and other large retailers. Fearing a loss of investment, government officials have now decided to rid the port of its union presence by turning it over to private management. In its crackdown on the port, the government has also arrested several prominent politicians who oppose privatization.

Wal-Mart Calls for Chong Won Fashion to reinstate fired union members

Bowing to strong pressure from workers rights advocates, retail giant Wal-Mart is calling for the immediate reinstatement of 117 union members who were unjustly fired by its Filipino supplier, Chong Won Fashion.

The Chong Won Fashion factory, which manufactures clothing for Wal-Mart supplier One Step Up, has used violence, intimidation and mass firings to crush a union that was on strike for recognition.

The union had won an election certified by the Philippines' Department of Labor, but the company has refused to accept the outcome of the election.

When management dismissed 116 striking workers in November 2006, the Workers Rights Consortium (WRC)—a sweatshop monitoring group backed by a number of prominent universities—launched an investigation into the issue. The resulting 49-page report details overwhelming evidence of widespread and severe violations of local and international labor laws.

Another anti-sweatshop group, the Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN), also investigated the case.

Wal-Mart's own code of conduct requires suppliers to respect workers' rights to freedom of association and not attempt to interfere with workers' legal activities.

Since the firings, WRC and MSN have pressured Wal-Mart to formally investigate the matter through independent monitoring group, Verité.

After months of frustration at Wal-Mart's inaction, the recent call by Wal-Mart for reinstatement is seen as a promising sign.

Organizers are now urging Wal-Mart to take their commitment one step further and demand that Chong Won respect international and Filipino law by negotiating a collective bargaining agreement with the union, NMCW-Ind.

Retaliation against union members continues.

Serb workers, students occupy University of Belgrade

By John Kalwaic

Students and faculty affiliated with the Anarcho-Syndicalist Initiative (ASI) occupied the University of Belgrade to protest neo-liberal reforms in education.

The student-faculty blockade at the university protested the government's proposed education reforms.

This issue has been going on since the fall of 2006 when a similar blockade was formed. The Serbian students were following the example of the French anti-CPE students as well as students from Greece and other places in the world who have protested neo-liberal reforms in education.

The protest ranged from 400-600 participants in the biggest action of anarchists Serbia has seen. There were at least 15 gatherings across the city of Belgrade between March 9-14.

The ASI is a new affiliate of the historical anarchist international known as the IWA-AIT.

The ASI also functions as a labor union which organized the first retail union in Serbia at the Mama Mia Italian restaurant in June of 2006.

The Revolution will not be amplified

Interview with guitarist Tom Morello

Musician and activist Tom Morello is known around the world for his innovative use of the electric guitar, a skill that earned him a ranking of number 26 on the Rolling Stone's "100 Greatest Guitar Players" list. The Grammy Award-winning guitarist has sold over 30 million albums with his previous bands Rage Against the Machine and Audioslave.

Through it all, Morello has used his fame to promote social justice. Performing at countless protests and picket lines, he has been tear-gassed, arrested for civil disobedience, and awarded the Eleanor Roosevelt Civil Rights Award. Through his organization Axis of Justice, he has pulled many of his fans into the world of activism.

For the past four and a half years, Tom Morello has been reinventing himself as a political folk singer/songwriter, calling himself the Nightwatchman. On April 24 he will release his first solo album, *One Man Revolution* (Epic Records), a politically-charged series of original acoustic songs. On the album cover, Morello dons an IWW baseball cap. *Industrial Worker* co-editor Mike Pesa spoke with Tom Morello to talk about it.

IW: Up until now you've been known to most people as the earsplitting guitarist for Rage Against the Machine and Audioslave. Now suddenly you're playing unplugged folk music in local coffeehouses. What brought about this transformation?

TM: I've actually been playing the unplugged folk music for about four and a half years now and for me it was an important balance to my arena rock-ing. I co-founded the nonprofit political organization Axis of Justice with Serj Tankian from System of a Down about six years ago, but while I found the organizing and the educating that that organization does very worthwhile, there's something in music that can inspire, and as a musician I thought it was my responsibility to use my gift as a guitar player to help fan the flames of discontent. My favorite guitar player of all time is Joe Hill. So the inspiration of people like him and Woody Guthrie and early Dylan made me decide to pursue this full time.

IW: Your first solo album as the Nightwatchman, "One Man Revolution", is being released on April 24th. The lyrics to all the tracks here are extremely political. What motivated you to make this album?

TM: My twin passions have always been political activism and music. And I've always been drawn to heavy music, but it dawned on me more recently that some of the heaviest music is often made with just acoustic guitar, three chords and the truth. For example, whether it's Bruce Springsteen's "Nebraska" album or Dylan's "The Times They Are A-Changin'", those records are pretty damn heavy. And I actually think this record, "One Man Revolution", even though there are no Marshall stacks on the record, is probably the heaviest album I've been involved in.

For me, it's an important outlet to be able to express myself in this manner. And I started playing these Nightwatchman shows in large measure because there was a need. There was a big grocery workers' strike here in Los Angeles and I'd be asked to play at these rallies, and I needed songs to play at these rallies, so I wrote "Union Song". When I was on the "Tell Us the Truth" tour with Billy Bragg and Steve Earl and Boots Riley from the Coup, and we were tear-gassed at the FTAA demonstrations in Miami, I thought that those [events]

needed a soundtrack, and so I continued to get a bigger body of material and I'm glad it's finally coming out.

IW: I noticed that in your promotional photos and even on the album cover itself you are wearing an IWW cap. When did you become interested in the labor movement and the IWW in particular?

TM: [I've been interested in the] labor movement since I was a very young man. The Morellos were coal miners in a small town called Marseilles, Illinois. All my [ancestors] from my great, great grandfathers [onward] were union coal miners. So union activity has always been very important to me. And as I read about different workers' struggles in North America, the wobblies always ap-



Tom Morello is the Nightwatchman.

pealed to me the most. They were always on the front line making what seemed the most outrageous demands, whether it was equality between the races or the eight hour day—these ludicrous demands—and they always were the ones willing to put themselves on the line and fight the hardest to achieve justice. So the wobblies have always been a great inspiration of mine.

IW: How do you balance your radical politics with your high profile existence in the entertainment industry? What would you say to critics who might accuse you of selling out?

TM: The thing that I have in common with most of the people who inspired me, whether it was the Clash or Public Enemy or Bob Marley—those were all people who were pretty high-profile in the music industry and managed to live the integrity of the words that they sang. I've always tried to do the same, and—at least on an activist front—to a much greater degree than those artists that I've just mentioned.

From my first underground high school paper through building shantytowns in Harvard Yard in support of the anti-Apartheid movement, to supporting countless demonstrations and workers' struggles, to the anti-war movement, my political activism has been as much of a priority in my life as music has been. Incredibly, whether it was in Rage Against the Machine or in Audioslave, despite these radical politics, I've managed to make music that appeals to millions of people. I've always looked at that as a positive.

IW: I hear that you and Zack de la

Rocha are playing at the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' farmworker justice mobilization in Chicago this April. Can you tell us a little about that?

TM: Yeah. Both myself and the Axis of Justice were very much involved in the Imokalee Workers' dispute with Taco Bell, and so when they came calling this time around, I was happy to lend my services. So I'm going to go there and play my heart out for the people.

IW: Both of your parents have been very politically involved and your great-uncle is Jomo Kenyatta, the first President of independent Kenya. What role has your family played in shaping your political perspective?

TM: I think a very big role. While I didn't grow up with my Kenyan family,

cians is not responsive to the needs of rank-and-file musicians. Has anything happened with that?

TM: It is a dream of mine and it is something that is so needed, because musicians—whether it's guitar players or rappers or DJs—are just like little lambs sent to the slaughter in this industry. [LAUGHS.] And there is no one to speak out for you. And the cabal of managers and attorneys and record companies just lay in wait for each new wave of acts that just kind of blindly go in, and there's no recourse. I've seen it hundreds of times... And so that is one of my life goals—to organize a radical union of musicians and artists and rappers and DJs to have some sense of solidarity and at least shared information and maybe even

the idea that half of my family fought hard to oust Britain from Kenya was a big part of my home, even in the small, suburban town I grew up in. But I think one of the things that really affected my politics, I mean—I literally integrated the town of Libertyville, Illinois. I was the first person of color to reside within its borders. And so the accompanying racism that went along with that when I entered school and stuff, it was really eye-opening and made me think of a lot that is not right with this world. And my mom, who is a very fiery character, always taught me to question authority and if you see injustice to always confront it, whether it's on the playground or whether it's in the world at large.

IW: What was it like to play in Cuba with Audioslave?

TM: It was pretty amazing. We were the first U.S. rock band to ever play a show in Cuba. It's something we'd wanted to do with Rage Against the Machine but we just couldn't get it together. To be able to play in Havana in front of 70,000 people on a beautiful Caribbean night was really one of the highlights of my life. The way we were treated was amazing. The Cubans have a very different set of priorities. And of course people here don't really know what it's like there because there's such anti-Fidel and anti-Cuban propaganda. But just the emphasis on education and health and things like that as priorities stand in such marked contrast to the profit motive and celebrity culture that permeate American society.

IW: I read somewhere that you had plans to start up a new musicians union since the American Federation of Musi-

power.

IW: Well, when you're ready for all that, give us a call. We already have Utah Phillips!

TM: [LAUGHS.] That's a good start!

IW: You mentioned Axis of Justice. What is the purpose of this group?

TM: Axis of Justice started as a way of answering the question that fans have been asking Serj and I for ten years, which was "How do I get involved?" [...] Growing up in the small town that I did, I had these ideas about the world and that the world could be dramatically different and better than it was, but I didn't know how to do anything to about it. So the idea is to answer that question. Over the course of the last three years or so we've established chapters in Los Angeles, and San Bernardino [...] and there are some fledgling chapters around the country of young people.

IW: Are there any plans for a Rage Against the Machine reunion?

TM: Rage—we are playing four shows this summer, starting with the Coachella Festival outside of Los Angeles on April 29, and there's three more shows (we're playing at all the "Rock the Bells" shows), one in New York, one in San Francisco, and another one in LA. We're playing with Wu-Tang Clan, Immortal Technique, Cypress Hill and a number of other hip-hop acts as well.

IW: Is there anything else you'd like to talk about before we go?

TM: I think that that covers it, just that I've been a longtime supporter of the wobblies and I think it's certainly the best union that this country's ever seen, and you will continue to have my support.

Review

We'll be singing for 100 years more

But mind the radical vision in our lyrics

Industrial Workers of the World. Songs of the Workers to Fan the Flames of Discontent: Centenary Limited Edition, 2005, pamphlet, \$6.

Review by Smokey Dymny, Toronto GMB

The Centenary Little Red Songbook is a bold new version of the traditional IWW songbook. The changes in cover design and graphics are what appealed immediately, so congratulations are due to the designers. The wider format allows the songs to be printed in a larger font, which is a benefit to those of us who are older and probably useful to younger folks too, as they're more likely to be singing along in darkened concert halls than they were in days of yore.

More importantly, there's a good mix of old and new songs which shows that the IWW is well aware of both its role in the musical history of radicalism as well as the need to make new songs available to organizers. Unfortunately, the number of songs written by men outnumbers those by women 38 to four. This may be due to the number of historical songs in the volume.

I have some other concerns with the Songbook.

First, where's the music? I know many older members probably know the traditional melodies, but newer ones often don't. And most people will not have heard the newest melodies unless they have a recording from the artist.

I understand the need to save space, so I have a suggestion. Let's post digital mp3 files of these songs on our web site, so that everyone can learn the melodies they don't know. The composers could get a link to their own web sites in exchange for making songs available in this way.

Secondly, I have problems with some of the word changes. I know the editors wrote on the title page that "People's music... is living music." I agree, but some of these songs have been changed over so many years that we've lost track of the original writers' intent and we have adopted changes by previous editors who were not good poets.

For an example, let's look at the

working class anthem, *L'Internationale*.

The Centenary Songbook says it uses the US translation by Charles Kerr. But this is not exactly Kerr's translation. By comparing the Centenary version with the original IWW songbook of 1909, quoted in Joyce Kornbluh's *Rebel Voices* (p.174), I found that there were eight changes made to Kerr's translation over the years. Two were to remove sexist language, those were needed. But other changes were clumsy and wrong.

First of all, putting the "International Union" in the chorus instead of Kerr's "Industrial Union" is the worst change as it contributes to the confusion so many people have who call us the "International Workers of the World." We should really go back to the original French lyrics here and just sing "the Inter-na-tion-ale" because this is historically the most accurate translation and causes no problems when singing with folks who are not Wobblies. Len Wallace (a Wob from Windsor, Ontario) recorded his version this way.

Other changes editors made were unnecessary and worse poetry than the original: "The law oppresses us and tricks us, Wage slav'ry drains the workers' blood;" adds unnecessary words to Kerr's original: "The law oppresses us and tricks us, wage systems drain our blood."

Similarly, why change Kerr's line: "Fruits of the people's work are buried, in the strong coffers of a few;" to:

"Fruits of the workers' toil are buried, in strongholds of the idle few." Again the change seems gratuitous.

Lastly: "The earth belongs to us, the

people, no room here for the shirk" was revised to read: "The earth belongs to us, the workers, No room here for the shirk."

Replacing "people" with "workers" is

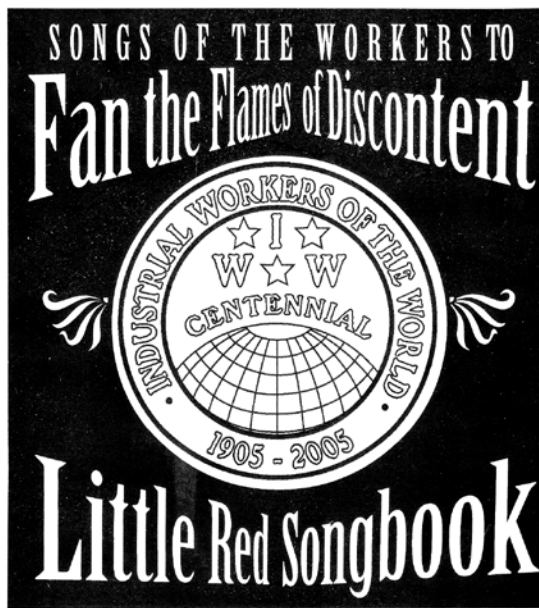
less inclusive and unnecessary. But when you see the capital letter in the middle of the line on the word "No" you get a hint about when these changes happened. More about that later.

The one change of Kerr's version that was made that I think was worth making was: "Toilers from shops and

fields united, the union we of all who work;" nicely changed to: "Toilers from shops and fields united, join hand in hand with all who work." This was one line which was awkward as hell in the original.

The current editors are by now jumping up in their seats proclaiming: "We didn't make all those changes!" And they're right. Someone putting together the 34th edition in 1973 did, or carried on changes which had been made even earlier. I think it was the 34th edition because the way that the lines are punctuated and have capitol's half way through some of the lines is the same as they were in that edition. I can't figure out why they made all these alterations but I say, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." If you want to sing a song differently, that's fine. But when we change the words in our "official" Songbooks, we should acknowledge those changes, and do it with care. So much for *L'Internationale*.

I could talk about changes in other songs but will only mention two more here. First, I should say I am grateful for



Review

When workers sang what ought to be

Archie Green, David Roediger, Franklin Rosemont, Salvatore Salerno, editors, The Big Red Songbook. Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, Chicago, 2007, 537 pages, cloth and hardbound, \$24.

Review by Len Wallace

Allow me to establish right now that folk music as we know it would not exist or at least be what it is without the tradition in song of the working class and especially organized working class movements. It is a tradition that is enduring, too often overlooked, deliberately ignored, distorted or misunderstood.

We can make a link from songwriters Woody Guthrie, Leadbelly and Cisco Houston to Pete Seeger, the Weavers, Peggy Seeger, Sis Cunningham and Ewan MacColl to Rambling Jack Elliott to Bob Dylan, Hazel Dickens, Phil Ochs to artists of our own time such as Bruce Springsteen, Billy Bragg and many others. Yet the red thread of it stretches back even further back.

Charles H. Kerr Publishing has come out with a remarkable collection of songs and poetry from the openly revolutionary Industrial Workers of the World, the most singing-est movement there ever was. In 1909 this militant union in which

many thousands of workers across North America participated, published its first "little red songbook." These songs stirred the spirit, proclaimed the union, identified the problems, pointed the finger and sought solutions for the folks who create the wealth of this world.

The editors collected all the IWW songs published in the many editions of this little red organizer from 1909 to 1973 plus the poetry and song that appeared in many publications of the union including its official organ, the *Industrial Worker*. Each song and poem is reviewed with extensive historical background notes. Critical commentary is provided in essays examining working class culture.

As singer and performer Utah Phillips notes in the Afterward, this collection of songs contains our history, the good and the bad. Some of these songs are not prettified or bourgeoisified to

'sell'. They were written by workers themselves, meant to be sung by workers and were not depending on the aesthetic of the paid artiste.

At first glance some of these songs may appear downright crude, stodgy, formulaic, heavy-handed with this last criticism often leveled against songs of definite non-conforming political or social content. But even the crudest of songs contains an unquenchable spirit that is honest and true felt self-expression from

below.

In one essay, union member Richard Brazier writes how organizers of the first red songbooks chose songs:

"We shall run the gamut of emotions in our songs, the argument went on. We will have songs of anger and protest, songs which shall call to judgement our oppressors and the Profit System they have devised. Songs of battle won (but never any songs of despair), songs that hold up flaunted wealth and thread-bare

having one of my songs included, but I wish someone had contacted me before sending it to print. My song's chorus was:

"General strike! General strike!
That's the only 'general' working people like.

We may not be an army but the enemy's in our sight

And the way to bring them down is general strike."

The third line was printed in the Songbook as: "We may not have an army..."

It may not seem like a big thing to you at first glance, but it's the capitalists who have an army, and we, the workers, who want to bring them down with a general strike. It brings in an unwanted change of meaning to my ear.

The last change I'll mention, and one, which I detest, is in "Casey Jones - The Union Scab." This one also seems to have been made in the 34th edition. Joe Hill's second verse originally read:

"The Workers said to Casey "Won't you help us win this strike?"
But Casey said: "Let me alone, you'd better take a hike."

Then someone threw a bunch of railroad ties across the track,
And Casey hit the bottom with an awful crack."

In the 1973 songbook someone substituted: "Then Casey's wheezy engine ran right off the worn-out track,
And Casey hit the river with an awful crack."

This change makes the song much less radical. Instead of what Joe said, which is that workers took direct action against a higher-waged scab, someone is saying that lack of maintenance caused Casey's demise. That's a huge change in meaning, and I don't sing it that way. Neither does Utah Phillips and neither do most other Wob performers.

Before we produce another songbook, let's get all our musicians, or even all of the membership, if it came to a vote on something like "The Internationale" to agree to a standard set of words.

If word changes are made, they have to be footnoted. Otherwise, we'll continue to perpetuate bad changes, and new Wobblies won't even be aware that they are not reading the original words.

In future editions, we should avoid taking past song versions for granted and look for the best, most Wobbly lyrics to include. And let's add more songs by women to the collection.

morality to scorn, songs that lampoon our masters and the parasitic vermin, such as employment-sharks and their kind, who be-devil the workers."

These were strong words for hard times. The songs may be forgotten, some faded with changing times, but others remain rallying cries for workers. One wonders at how these songs shaped and influenced the folk music revival. Words passed from person to person, movement to movement in an aural chain?

In his past work on Joe Hill and working class counterculture editor Franklin Rosemont wrote how the IWW's image of "Pie In the Sky" (the hopeless cause) became a part of our vernacular and an image that entered the work of diverse songwriters from Scotland's Dick Gaughan to reggae artist Jimmy Cliff. Many of these songs were written by self-educated workers, well-read and ready to use the "classics" of literature to make their point. Today, when workers are again under attack and bearing the brunt of economic recession/depression which disempowers at multiple levels—political, economic, cultural—it is important to be able to examine how workers in the past responded to their own situations. In the IWW that response was not one of acceptance, resignation or despair, but a militant opposition. And for no reason other than that, this new book is invaluable.

IWW in Scotland presses Save Crichton Campaign

Unnerved Scottish government demands principal Sir Muir Russell listen

By Nick Durie

The Glasgow University IWW job branch along with other campaigners are planning a series of events to increase the pressure on university bosses and the government to cancel the planned pull-out from the Crichton Campus.

Fellow workers plan to turn the local trades council May Day in Dumfries (normally a subdued affair) into a high-profile national wobbly mobilization with dozens of fellow workers confirmed already to attend the march alongside numerous Dumfries campaigners from the campus.

The government is fighting a particularly bitter Scottish Parliamentary election campaign, which could see the ruling coalition government ousted. So campaigners believe that now is an opportune moment to pile on the pressure, in anticipation that the Labour-Liberal Democrat coalition government will exercise unusual

responsiveness to this popular cause and use its power to reverse the decision.

Campaigners further plan to demand talks with the increasingly isolated Principal of the University, Sir Muir Russell, who has hitherto refused to engage in any constructive dialogue with the IWW or representatives from the campaign, despite government pressure to do so. Plans are in motion to attend both forthcoming Senate and Court meetings with the demand, while campaigners continue to disrupt university corporate and external functions with the aim of creating uncertainty for university PR planners.

Sir Muir Russell has presided over a sea-change in the nature of the University and is widely credited with having 'successfully' turned the university around to focus on core subjects like business, bio-technology and medicine from which the University receives a great deal of its corporate

sponsorship. He has also 'streamlined' the business by sacking 10 per cent of the workforce and re-scaling the pay of workers employed by the University. The IWW, which now has nine members in its job branch, aims to embarrass him in front of his rich mates.

We have also concentrated on developing outreach on the main campus, where many workers are disgruntled and a number of grievances and struggles are in the offing. This month we published our first workplace bulletin, with the aim that the IWW job branch can also act as a support network for rank-and-file co-operation amongst union members in many of the plethora of trade unions on campus, as has started to happen already.

This twin-pronged attack has borne some fruit. Initially, university bosses had planned to bring redundancies in

very quickly at Crichton with the aim of panicking staff, separating them and their concerns from students, and killing off the campaign. However, as a result of consistent pressure the campaign has won a stay of redundancies until the end of the academic year. The campaign has also brought a focus to the IWW, particularly in Dumfries, which it has not achieved in years. We're sure that when we are victorious, this will lend increasing credibility to the union in the region and at the University of Glasgow where a number of future organising drives are being planned.

If anyone wants to know more of our plans for Dumfries Mayday or the campaign write the job branch at iww_gu@yahoo.com, the Scottish Organisers iwwscotland@gmail.com or call 44-07910627970. Alternatively see www.iwwscotland.wordpress.com.

Iraq street vendors win right to sell on city streets in Nasiriyah

By John Kalwaic

In the city of Nasiriyah, street vendors organizing with the Union of Unemployed of Iraq (UII) organized a sit-in on March 22.

City authorities had denied street vendors in Nasiriyah the right to sell their goods, in spite of the fact that it is their only means of livelihood in a country with an incredibly high unemployment rate, due to the US occupation and sectarian violence.

As a result of their successful sit-in, the city granted street vendors the right to sell their goods in city.

The UII works to organize Iraq's unemployed and is affiliated with the Federation of Workers Councils and Unions of Iraq. Most unions in Iraq organize oil and gas workers, but the UII is the first to attempt at organizing people who are unemployed and those who do not work in heavy industry.

Argentines protest killing of striking teacher

By Ed, www.libcom.org

Argentina was brought to a standstill on April 9 amid protests over the killing of a teacher in the south-west of the country last week.

Chemistry teacher Carlos Fuentealba, 40, was killed after being hit by a tear gas canister police fired on protesters in the south-western province of Neuquen. He had joined his colleagues to demand a pay rise.

In response to his death, tens of thousands took to the streets of Buenos Aires and other cities. Schools closed, public transport was halted and banks and public transport and many offices shut for a couple of hours. Banks and some offices shut their doors in a protest

called by the country's trade union movement.

Clashes between provincial police and protesters are common in Argentina, but the killing of the popular, gentle family man angered the nation. Protesters in Buenos Aires marched from the centre of the city, calling for the killers to be prosecuted and for the resignation of Neuquen province governor Jorge Sobisch who they say is responsible for police brutality.

The national government of President Nestor Kirchner has so far kept quiet on this issue which seems to have struck a nerve in the Argentine population just months before the general election.

Royal Mail carriers face pressure to use private cars, then suffer risks

By Ronnie

Use of private cars by postal workers has become part and parcel (excuse the pun) of the working lives of staff.

Car use was hardly an issue 20 years ago when the mail for a delivery could fit into one pouch and there were adequate vans to convey staff to the start of their deliveries.

These days it's an entirely different matter. Years of partial revisions, all carried out 'on the cheap'—meaning inadequate numbers of pouch boxes, not enough numbers of seats in Royal Mail mini-busses and more mail-on-deliveries which has the effect of making staff late on delivery—has placed undue pressure on postal workers to use their cars.

It has to be said that many staff are their own worst enemies when it comes to car use. If they insisted on using the Royal Mail vans or mini-busses to take them out to the start of their deliveries, that would put the pressure on Royal Mail to provide the correct mode of transport, thereby saving jobs.

Then there's the issue of who takes responsibility for private cars. Postal workers who use their cars are required to co-sign a bond with their manager. Workers must produce their licence, insurance and MOT certificate of road-worthiness for the manager. Then the manager must judge if the car is roadworthy. What makes a Royal Mail manager qualified to make such a judgement is anyone's guess, much as they can tell you if you should or should

not be off sick without any medical training.

All of this was agreed with the postal workers' union, CWU, who pretend to be against car use on one hand whilst entering into such arrangements with management on the other.

Needless to say, there have been incidents around the issue which have given pause for thought. Numerous cases of mail theft from private cars, which have caused damage to the vehicle, is one thought.

More serious still are the car accidents involving postal workers. Last year, a manager told a part-time postman that he would no longer sanction booking overtime caused by having to wait for a Royal Mail van to convey him to his delivery.

Under pressure, the postman decided to use his car. One morning as he drove to the start of his round, carrying five bags of mail in his car, he was hit by another car coming in the opposite direction on the wrong side of the road. Left with a broken femur, a broken right kneecap, a shattered left kneecap which had to be replaced, two broken ribs, a broken left wrist and a dislocated hand, he has been off work for months with no return in sight. All this because he had no reliable access to a Royal Mail van and his manager pressured him to drive.

The message is simple. Using private cars costs jobs, and could cost postal workers their living or their lives.

UK maternity benefits tied to concessions

British parents are getting more parental benefits, but so are employers with changes brought in by the New Labour government.

Mothers will receive 90 per cent of their pay for the first six weeks after giving birth, and then a maximum

of £112.75 (US\$222) per week for the remaining 33 weeks of their paid maternity leave. Previously, mothers had 12 months leave, with the first six months paid. The British treasury reimburses employers for the weekly maternity pay.

Employers also get up to 10 days when the mothers can come into work during their leave, plus the right to 'reasonable' contact to arrange parents' return to work. Employees wanting to take maternity or paternity leave must provide two months notice, rather than the one month notice previously required.

If the mother returns to work, the father can claim up to 26 weeks of unpaid leave. Currently, fathers get two weeks paid leave, up to £112.75 per week. Many small employers do not top-up this amount so the loss of income is often a deterrant for fathers to take leave.

May Day Greetings from 1903

before the IWW:

**A Mass Meeting
will be held on**

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, AT 8 P. M.
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(CLERKENWELL ROAD, NEXT TO HOLBORN TOWN HALL)**

**To Commemorate the Legal Murder of the
CHICAGO ANARCHISTS**

**and to protest against the
BARBAROUS EXTERMINATION
of Boer Men, Women, and Children in South Africa**

Speakers:

**S. MAINWARING, P. KROPOTKIN,
E. MALATESTA, F. KITZ, LOUISE MICHEL,
WITHINGTON, KAPLAN, KELLY, and others.**

Text taken from a poster printed in the pamphlet *Anti-Parliamentary Passage: South Wales and the Internationalism of Sam Mainwaring (1842 - 1907)*. Dr. Ken John's Greenwich University Thesis. For more information on the pamphlet contact ac.thomas@ntlworld.com.

Ilyan Thomas, IWW in Wales

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Coke workers worldwide gear up to fight cuts

Teamsters and IUF say 3,500 jobs are on the line in Europe, North America

Hundreds of Teamsters, along with human rights activists, environmentalists and students, rallied in New York City's Times Square April 2 to protest increasing worker and environmental abuses by Coca-Cola and its bottler subsidiary, Coca-Cola Enterprises (CCE).

They were joined worldwide by workers at CCE plants elsewhere in the United States, Belgium, Canada, France, Guatemala, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Uruguay who took part in an April 2 international day of action for Coke workers.

In February, CCE announced without warning that it would cut 3,500 jobs from its North American and European workforce.

The Teamsters, representing more than 14,000 Coca-Cola and CCE employees in the United States and Canada, teamed up with the food, hotel and farm workers' international union (IUF) to demand the recognition of union

“Coke has essentially declared war on workers here in the United States and around the world, and the Teamsters will not stand for it.”

—Jack Cipriani, Teamsters Brewery and Soft Drink Workers Conference.

members' right to job security, union representation in cases of restructuring, and a meaningful dialogue and negotiations with unions and works councils for a long-term economic strategy for the companies.

Coke's recent moves toward employing non-union workers and slashing health benefits spurred the Teamsters union into action.

“Coke is discriminating against union workers, cutting healthcare

benefits and risking American families' futures,” said Jack Cipriani, Director of the Teamsters Brewery and Soft Drink Workers Conference.

“Coke has essentially declared war on workers here in the United States and around the world, and the Teamsters will not stand for it. We are putting Coke on notice today that it must clean up its act.”

The union is threatening the possibility of widespread strikes and service

disruptions if Coke does not act soon.

Along with concerns about jobs and health care in North America, the union is also protesting Coke's environmental practices and the corporation's complicity in human rights abuses around the world.

Coke is currently facing a lawsuit for allegedly allowing death squads in Colombia to murder eight pro-union employees.

The Teamsters are part of the global coalition of Coke unions and NGOs that has pressured Coca-Cola and CCE since Columbian union SINALTRAINAL launched a boycott of Coke in 2004. The organizations are demanding that the corporation sign a global workers' rights agreement that would be enforced through independent monitoring.

These efforts “are hitting critical mass,” according to Cipriani.

“It's time to put the brakes on Coca-Cola before more workers and communities are hurt.”

Struggling AFSCME local in Amherst gets a taste of IWW

By James Bouthillier, James Connolly
Upstate New York Regional GMB

Walls came tumbling down at The University of Massachusetts at Amherst's “Blue Wall” cafe March 25 when school employees got their first taste of the IWW.

What began as nothing more than a conversation between AFSCME local 1725 member James Bouthillier and IWW branch secretary Avraham Qanaï concerning tensions between workers in this small western Massachusetts community and dissatisfaction with the AFSCME union, ended up a highly productive informational meeting meant to ease tensions and show support for the struggling AFSCME unit.

The source of the tension was AFSCME's “heavy-handed” response to a recent employee push to split the bargaining unit.

Tensions boil over

However, not all went as smoothly as putting butter to bread as IWW organizers Paul Poulos and Chris White, delegate Greg Giorgio, Avraham Qanaï, and Ed McCorkindale, delegate of the Western Massachusetts GMB learned.

They saw a sample of some of the division within the roughly 60-strong members of the bargaining unit when Stu Kinsman, an AFSCME board member and steward wearing an anti-IWW t-shirt angrily disrupted the gathering. He announced his intentions to charge Bouthillier with organizing an “illegal meeting”, among other unspecified charges.

In response to the threats, White and Poulos came to Bouthillier's defense, calmly explaining the IWW was not there to bash another union, but simply to provide support to someone reaching out to the IWW. The steward sat down, apologized to everyone and stayed for pictures.

Suspicious that the lower than expected turnout on the University campus was due to Kinsman warning members to stay away from the get-together proved accurate. He had contacted a number of individuals prior to the meeting.

One of the attendees said he had overheard one such message when a custodian played his voice mail on speaker-phone.

Despite the disruption, the two-hour meeting went ahead and gave AFSCME members a chance to voice their concerns with their union and work

through divisions facing the unit.

The unit is about to enter what may prove to be difficult negotiations with the town for a new three year contract in a climate of unprecedented budget deficits.

Potential for cooperation

After the meeting ended, AFSCME members agreed to take a fresh look at the union. The IWW added another member to its ranks and possibly more will join.

AFSCME members have a union meeting on April 17. On the agenda will be talks with an AFSCME servicing representative concerning tension within the local 1725 and disappointment with the union's approach to the bargaining unit. Also on the agenda will be how the IWW might be of service to Amherst employees in the future.

“If, from now on, [AFSCME] don't want to listen, maybe we can look at the IWW,” said one AFSCME member.

So impressed was union steward Kinsman by the IWW that he said that if AFSCME doesn't get it together in Amherst, he would have no problem leaving it and moving to the IWW.

Kinsman's attempt to foil the Sunday meeting back-fired in that it made people very eager to find out what had happened.

Since the meeting, Kinsman has been open with many individuals regarding how much the meeting changed him. He has begun looking into some of the issues discussed at the meeting like getting rid of the AFSCME contract's “no strike clause.”



IWWs Avraham Qanaï and Greg Giorgio shake hands with Stu Kinsman, who is covering over his anti-IWW t-shirt after hearing how the IWW wanted to support his local.



CN Rail locks out picketers

Canadian National Rail (CN) locked out picketing members of the United Transportation Union (UTU) who started rotating strikes on April 11 in the port of Vancouver and in Kelowna, British Columbia.

The UTU members had returned to the picket line after they voted against a one-year status quo agreement negotiated by the UTU International president, Paul Thompson. Thompson had sacked the Canadian UTU negotiating team, led by Rex Beatty, for violating the UTU constitution and striking without his permission. His

newly-appointed representatives then negotiated the deal and brought it to the members to ratify.

The UTU members faced heavy pressure to ratify the patch-over deal from both the UTU International and the Canadian government, which had threatened to bring in back-to-work legislation.

However, the rank-and-file conductors and yard service workers roundly rejected the deal on April 10, with 79 per cent opposed and 70 per cent of members voting, sending the negotiators back to the bargaining table.

Troqueros shutdown

Continued from 1

vote on contracts. Aside from a handful of Teamster drivers, that leaves 11,000 casuals and everyone else who works in ports. In Los Angeles alone there are an estimated 12,000 troqueros.

Three looming issues raise not only the need for organized mass action, but the possibility of change throughout the industry: the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) permit's conversion to the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC), the demand for ports to improve their environmental performance, and impending master contract negotiations in 2008.

The Department of Homeland Security has demanded all ports replace the temporary permit (TPS) that is renewed every six, 12 or 18 months with a five-year transport worker identity card (TWIC). The TWIC card will be required for all workers who enter ports. Estimates have as many as a third of port troqueros hold a TPS permit. Initially, these TPS drivers will be denied the new TWIC card and will have to do a waiver process which must include a letter from an employer, to get the new card. This poses a problem: what trucking company or port authority is going to sign an affidavit saying it is the employer, given all the responsibilities such an admission would entail? Yet, the only options for current TPS holders are either for the trucking companies to accept the employment status of the drivers or to have some form of national amnesty passed.

Taking control of the agenda

The Air Resources Board's (ARB) call for better air quality and environmental performance by ports puts a second pressure on truckers. Nearly all of the 10,000 trucks working the Port of LA/LB will not meet the stringent emissions requirements set by the ARB for the year 2012. Trucks must be replaced, but where and who will do it? Collectives of workers at key companies are already aware that the Port of Long Beach intends on buying 500 trucks immediately. The fear spreading in the harbor is that the terminals will get the new clean trucks and business unions in the harbor—the ILWU and the Teamsters—will raid on the troqueros' jurisdiction by forging a deal with the terminals to drive them.

At a January 30 California ARB public meeting, which the LA GMB got 150 truckers to attend, the workers' consensus was that cleaner trucks were a good idea, so long as the costs weren't dumped on the drivers. Workers gave angry testimony about onerous leasing arrangements, the failures of the Gateway program, control of the trucks and work by the motor carriers. No one asked what the replacement trucks were or how much they would cost, how one might apply for one, sources of financing or environmental tax credits. By participating in a discussion about decisions affecting them, the truckers turned the meeting from industry strategies for minimizing their public responsibilities to a forum on workers concerns: wages

and labor rights. Truckers said they needed to take action to prevent being forced to work more with less security.

The security permit and environment issues highlight their need for an industry-wide organization. In the spring and summer of 2008 master contracts will expire throughout the transportation, warehousing, and distribution industries. As *Labor Notes* editor Chris Kotalik noted, this is a rare and strategic opportunity for mass concerted action.

This action should include the troqueros who have had Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and workers' compensation rulings certifying them as employees and those who have not had the amnesty of 1986 upheld. Imagine what could be achieved if troqueros organized industry-wide, along with the thousands of other workers who control the flow of goods—from the docks and airports to the truck barns and railways to the warehouses and packages centers—organized in a concerted nation-wide effort. Perhaps their militancy and democracy could be preserved by winning full labor rights without having to surrender their real power by signing a no-strike clause. Perhaps labor might be able to organize down the supply chain all the way to Wal-Mart, McDonalds, even Starbucks.

For the past 25 years, the troqueros have self-organized and formed individual collectives of workers at the major trucking companies serving the Port of LA/LB. If a solution cannot be negotiated, then the workers shut down to get what they need. Simple. The troqueros have needed no one to teach them; they well understand that through collection action they can achieve what they cannot individually. When a situation needs action at a terminal or even port-wide level, a network of groups and collectives should take the initiative and shut down specific terminals or the entire harbor to make their demands heard.

The December 7, 2006 shutdown organized by the LA GMB of the BNSF railway—one of the busiest intermodal facilities in North America—over unfair punishment without recourse or appeal was one such success. The workers got reinstated and the company re-evaluated its ticketing policy. However, things have quietly returned to pre-strike conditions because there is no lasting organization to ensure workers constantly receive fair treatment. Troqueros understand the power they have; if they shut down, international commerce shuts down, and the entire supply chain of neo-liberal globalization grinds to a halt. May Day 2007 will be an expression of that power, but more must be done.

The word is out in these loose-knit collectives and the greater troquero population in the harbor that “el movimiento” is back. People are beginning to see the IWW at the forefront of port actions. As we see it, the most pressing current task is to build a movement with lasting institutions and infrastructure that preserves rather than co-opts the grassroots democracy and militancy troqueros have long had, with the ultimate goal of winning full labor rights.

Aside from being a deal that did not deal with their primary complaints, another potential reason for the rejection was the pending certification application the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference had filed for 2,500 UTU members in Canada on March 1. UTU members who wanted to swap unions signed Teamsters union cards on the picket lines and in special meetings during the 16-day February strike. Canada's industrial relations board has yet to rule on the application.

Canadian UTU vice-president John Armstrong met with CN Rail on April 14 for five hours, but the meeting “ended with no further talks scheduled.”

The UTU decided to “turn up the heat” with the rotating pickets, telling its members that it would notify them when their unit would go to picket. Conscious that the government has back-to-work legislation ready to go, UTU representatives are taking pains to say the pickets are designed to bring CN back to the bargaining table, but not stop Canadian freight or hurt Canadian industry.

“It's not about hurting Canadian businesses. It's about getting CN back to the table. The union doesn't want to hurt anybody,” said UTU spokesperson Scott Montani to Canada's public broadcaster, CBC. The union has not targeted Toronto's commuter rail system.

“CN is disappointed with the contract rejection announced [...] by the UTU. We believe the settlement was fair, equitable and consistent with collective agreements the company recently signed with another Canadian union,” said E. Hunter Harrison, CEO of CN Rail in an April 10 media release. CN signed a contract in late 2006 with the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference.

CN's decision to lock out workers who comply with the UTU's picket orders rather than deal with the uncertainty of rotating pickets has infuriated Armstrong.

“CN's self-serving lockouts of our members are continuing across the country and Canadians should ask why CN Rail is shutting down rail service on its own initiative,” said Armstrong in a UTU statement.

New column

Workers' Power

Wherefore art thou supervisor?

This month we introduce a new monthly column that will feature reflections on IWW organizing and movement building and be a collective space to share organizing stories and thoughts on strategies and tactics for building workers' power on the shop floor.

Each month will feature the reflections of a different member of the union. This month a Fellow Worker from the San Francisco Bay Area GMB tells how he turned down a promotion at work in order to create unity among his fellow workers. Topics of upcoming pieces include the difference between solidarity unionism and solidarity activism, informal work groups, and why we should rely on direct action in the workplace.

If you would like to submit a piece please e-mail it to forworkerspower@gmail.com. Submissions should be no more than 800 words. We hope you like this first story and we look forward to hearing some of yours.

—Colin Bossen, column coordinator

By J. Pierce

One Friday afternoon, the bosses called a big meeting in the recycling yard where I work. It was cool because I used it to count 40 workers and 10 boss types. I took the opportunity to see how many names I knew. It gave me a premonition of a large strike meeting—only the bosses wouldn't be wearing those stupid grins.

At this meeting the bosses handed out memos that, among various threats and pomp, told everybody that I was the new supervisor for the warehouse. I laughed out loud when I read it. Meanwhile, the whole place was silent as everybody read the Spanish version of the memo. The whole meeting was in Spanish so I barely knew what they were saying. Most of the supervisors (more properly called foremen) stood with their guys in the crowd instead of up by the bosses.

I thought the various supervisors in the crowd appeared to be asking controversial questions. The bosses looked nervous. I asked my fellow workers later but they said these comments were crap. I couldn't understand what they were saying so I took it for what it looked like. It seemed like people were challenging the bosses!

At the end of the meeting, the new head guy asked, “Any last questions.” I shot up my hand. “I have a question!” I shouted in English, as all eyes turned to me. “When are the bathrooms gonna be finished?” I asked, pointing to the building behind us that looked like an abandoned construction site. Eyes lit up and everyone started smiling and chattering. Most of my co-workers have heard me complain about the locker room/bathroom situation so they knew what I was up to. One of the supervisors laughed really loud and said “When? When?” meaning ‘Don't Ask!’ The bosses squirmed saying, “Um, we're working on

that. They'll be done soon.”

Everybody was talking and grinning. In between being called ‘Jefe,’ I got some good pats on the back as we all went to clock out.

That weekend I fixed up a plan to give the bosses a letter saying that I was declining the promotion. My roommate translated this letter into Spanish so that I could show it to all my co-workers. I finally gave it to the bosses that Wednesday after telling all my co-workers (that were saluting me and calling me Jefe and Patron) that this whole supervisor nonsense was “Mentida, Huey!” I went around showing the letter to my co-workers and they read or heard from me the Spanish translation. If the bosses inferred that I had it translated for the benefit of my compañeros, good, so be it.

The conversations we had strengthened me because people inevitably asked, “Why don't you want to be a supervisor?” That's the perfect place to talk about how the bosses are racist and how they want you to work harder and longer for nothing. They want you to take responsibility for their incompetence and the list goes on. All my co-workers understood my reasoning and had the same thoughts themselves. The whole thing turned out to be a very solidifying and educational process.

But don't get too excited just yet. It took them two months to do it but they finally canned me. There was plenty of reason for them to want to get rid of me but you can bet that the supervisor stunt was a big factor.

Is it all a loss? Not quite: There are lights in the locker room and plumbers in the soon-to-be-bathroom. But beyond that, for two months we were the only department with no one looking over our shoulder. Any new supervisor that comes in will face a situation where the workers know they don't need one.

BOOKS FOR REBELLIOUS WORKERS

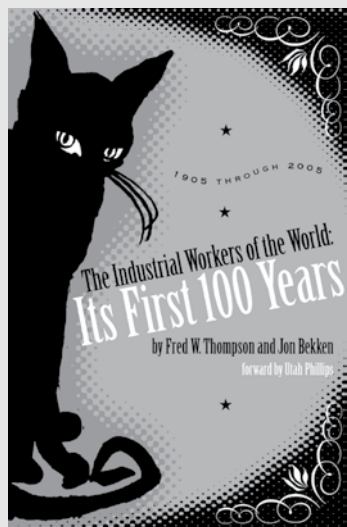


The Big Red Songbook Edited by Archie Green, David Roediger, Franklin Rosemont and Salvatore Salerno

This is indeed an incredible endeavor. The most comprehensive collection of rebel workers' songs and poems ever compiled in English, *The Big Red Songbook* includes all the songs that appeared in the IWW's celebrated *Little Red Songbook* from 1909 through 1973, plus dozens more. Here are the songs of Joe Hill, T-Bone slim, Dick Brazier, Ralph Chaplin, Covington Hall and other Wobbly legends; lesser knowns, but ought to be legends such as Eugene Barnett, Paul Walker, and Henry Pfaff; for the first time anywhere, a good selection of songs by

women Wobblies: Angas Thecla Fair, Laura Payne Emerson, Sophie Fagin, Jane Street, Laura Tanne and others; Australians Bill Casey and Harry Hooton, Englishman Leon Rosselson, Germans Ernest Riebe and John Olday, and Scotsman Douglas Robson. A special section focuses on variants and parodies of IWW songs: a Depression-era version of "Hallelujah I'm a Bum," Jack Langan's 1960s version of "Solidarity Forever," an Earth First! adaptation of Joe Hill's "There is Power" by Walkin' Jim Stoltz, and Hazel Dickens' bold update of "The Rebel Girl." And there's the wealth of essays, analysis, references, bibliographies, and discographies, provided by Archie Green, his coeditors, and other collaborators, giving not only historical context, but also a wide range of perspectives on the Wobbly counterculture and its enduring legacies.

546 pages, \$24.00



The Industrial Workers of the World: Its First One Hundred Years

by Fred W. Thompson and Jon Bekken
forward by Utah Phillips

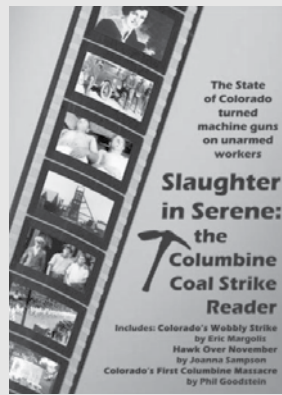
Many histories have been written of the Industrial Workers of the World, often called the Wobblies. Founded in 1905 in hopes of uniting the working class into One Big Union, the IWW promoted industrial organization at a time when craft unionism was the established pattern. The IWW welcomed all workers, regardless of ethnicity, race or gender when other unions boasted of their exclusionary policies. Its reliance on direct action on the job generated much of the strategy and tactics of the modern labor movement. Often referred to as the singing union, Wobblies wrote hundreds of labor songs and published millions of copies of their *Little Red Songbook*. The IWW's theme song, "Solidarity Forever," became the anthem of the entire American labor movement.

The first book on the history of the IWW was published in 1919, just 14 years after the union's founding. Since then, countless articles, novels and histories (an annotated bibliography issued in 1986 lists more than 5,000) have been published on the union – showing that the IWW's influence has extended well beyond its membership and captured the imagination of generations of labor activists, novelists, poets and historians.

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

255 pages, \$19.95

COMBO DEAL: Big Red Songbook & First 100 Years for \$38.00



Slaughter in Serene: the Columbine Coal Strike Reader

Slaughter in Serene: the Columbine Coal Strike Reader uncovers a history that has nearly been forgotten. It is a

history of triumph and tragedy, of working class dreams and rapacious corporate greed.

Colorado deployed machine guns, bomber aircraft, and cannons to control the miners—men who descended into the dark maw of hell in a rickety cage. They worked with blasting powder; wrangled with coal car mules and waded through black water floods to chisel their living from the depths.

Eric Margolis, Joanna Sampson, Phil Goodstein and Richard Myers present a compelling history of the 1927 coal strike led by the Industrial Workers of the World. **\$19.05**

Am I My Brother's Keeper?

A Study of British Columbia's Labor & Oriental Problems

Just before the outbreak of the Great War, members of the Industrial Workers of the World—the infamous Wobblies who entered the nightmares of capitalism across North America—went on strike in British Columbia, calling for humane conditions in the mines and mills.

AGNES C. LAUT

Am I My Brother's Keeper? A Study of British Columbia's Labor & Oriental Problems Agnes C. Laut, edited by Mark Leier

Just before the outbreak of the Great War, members of the IWW went on strike in British Columbia, calling for humane conditions. The action followed years of racist incidents in BC about "Orientals" (Chinese, Japanese and Indians). In the mind of Central Canada, these two obviously distinct facts were somehow linked, if only by the province's climate of extremism. Saturday Night, a fearless champion of the overdog, sent the popular historian Agnes Laut to investigate. Her articles—outwardly so reasonable to Canadian ears at the time—were so popular that they were quickly reprinted in pamphlet form. The work was entitled *Am I My Brother's Keeper?* Only a few copies survived, but now this curious piece of propaganda has been republished with a contextualizing introduction by Mark Leier, the author of many important works in Canadian labour history. For all its incendiary wrong-headedness, the text speaks to us of how labour, race, immigration, radicalism and gender were understood (and practised) in western Canada at the time. **\$14.95**



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Fight for shorter Hours



Brendan Bruce, Wobbly Dispatch of the Edmonton IWW

You will hear many people saying: "When I am Fifty I shall retire into leisure; when I am Sixty I shall give up public duties" ... Aren't you ashamed to keep for yourself just the remnants of your life and to devote to wisdom only that time which cannot be spent on any business? How late it is to begin to really live just when life must end!

—Seneca, *On the Shortness of Life*

In our current political and economic climate, we are losing our free time and our ability to experience leisure. The term "leisure" is not easily or consistently defined, but I would suggest that all activities which workers do outside of the workplace should be included. Leisure does not just encompass arts and athletics, but also time spent with one's family or at social gatherings or doing volunteer work. The enjoyment of the individual while performing the activity is what defines it as leisure.

Workers are losing their leisure time not because they are squandering it in the pursuit of useless and un-stimulating activities, but because their work week is becoming ever longer. According to a study released by The Centre for the Study of Education and Work (www.learningwork.ca/csew), the average Canadian work week increased from 44.6 hours in 1998 to 46.3 hours in 2005 (with fathers working an average of 53.2 hours and mothers 44.1 hours).

In contrast, leisure hours declined from 31.5 hours to 29.5 hours. Decades of gains made by the labour movement in pursuit of a shorter work week are being wiped away. This increase in work hours doesn't just eat up time that could be used for leisure activities. It also makes workers more tired and stressed during their off-work hours. It seems that the mainstream labour movement has abandoned the fight for a shorter work week for the average wage slave.

Things used to be different. In preparation for the Trade and Labour

Congress of 1919, the British Columbia Federation of Labour called a meeting of all western trade unionists to decide on a common front. In this meeting all ties to the "AFL internationals" were severed and an independent industrial union, the One Big Union, was formed. The organization plan of the OBU called for an endorsement of socialism, support for the Soviet model, and for a general strike for the six hour day. The strike did not materialize, largely due to government interference, the actions of the labor internationals, and the weariness caused by the Winnipeg General Strike. But this historical call to action for a shorter work week shows that work hours were a serious issue before World War Two and the subsequent establishment of labour peace and the institutionalization of mainstream unions.

One reason for workers' loss of leisure time is the perception of leisure in our society. Leisure is seen as frivolous, when in fact it provides many benefits both to society and to the individual.

More time for workers to pursue athletics would mean an increase in their overall health and the amount of energy they would have with which to enjoy life.

Accessible education would allow workers to cultivate their individual passions, and would provide a stimulus for debate on how our world should be run.

Participation in the arts, both as performers and as audience members, would give workers a medium through which to express their creative impulses.

An increase in leisure time and a shorter work week would create stronger families and communities, healthier individuals, and would allow more debate about society and its direction. The IWW calls for a shorter work week without pay reductions, and increased access to all leisure activities for the working class.

To this end, all workers should unite in the One Big Union to achieve this goal.

Egypt targets workers center

By John Kalwaic

Seeking a scapegoat for a wave of wildcat strikes in February, Egyptian authorities have turned their attention to the labor group known as the Center for Trade Union and Workers Services (CTUWS).

In early April the city council of Naj Hamadi in the southern governorate of Qena, issued an administrative decision to shut down the local branch of the CTUWS, claiming that the group had encouraged workers to go on strike. Other branches are being threatened with similar fates.

The CTUWS is one of the few independent voices for workers in Egypt. The country's only major union, the General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) is controlled by the government, the ruling National Democratic Party. The CTUWS is not a labor union but an NGO, unfettered by government control and dedicated to helping workers organize. This independent action made it a target for the authorities.

In recent months, Egypt has experienced a rolling wave of wildcat strikes, which have not been authorized by the GFTU or the Government. In all, more than 35,000 workers walked off their

jobs in February and brought Egypt's textile industry to a grinding halt. Many of the strikers resorted to blockades, factory occupations and other forms of direct action.

The biggest opposition group in Egypt is the Muslim Brotherhood, which is banned but at times tolerated. The government often uses crackdowns on fundamentalist militants as an excuse to clamp down on all grassroots organizations and independent trade unions in Egypt.

This is not the first time the CUTWS has come under attack; it has been harassed many times for helping workers organize independently outside the GFTU. The organization insists that they did nothing more than defend workers' legitimate right to strike and did not instigate the strike wave.

Even the Muslim Brotherhood, which is present in many unions and grassroots groups in Egypt, was not solely responsible for February's wildcat strikes. What governments often do not understand is that many times workers organize massive strikes themselves and no single organization is responsible for their actions.

Iran punishes teachers

By John Kalwaic

The protests started on March 3 when thousands of Iranian teachers picketed parliament for better wages and working conditions. Statistics show that 70 per cent of teachers live below the poverty line and 30 per cent live just above the poverty level. On March 5, Tehran factory workers and others joined the teachers at the Parliament building, numbering 100,000. As the state controls the only legal union in Iran, all strikes are wildcat strikes, primarily organized by word of mouth.

On March 8, International Women's Day, the teachers' picket culminated with another massive demonstration organized by the Organization for Women's Liberation (OWL). Women from all over Iran protested at Tehran University and at the Parliament building in a demonstration against what they called "gender apartheid." Women's demands ranged from stopping honor killings to the new national dress code.

These three events came together as many of the striking Iranian school-teachers were women as well as men. The women's rights march happened in spite of a large police and paramilitary presence.

In Iran there is much cohesion between the workers movement, the student movement, and the women's movement as they all face repression from the

government. One of the OWL demands was for the government to respect the rights of the striking teachers to organize. Demonstrators also brought up the issue of Afghan refugees who fled to Iran during the US invasion of Afghanistan and are now under threat of deportation by the Iranian government.

On March 14, the government decided to crackdown on a demonstration of striking teachers. Police and paramilitaries beat many of the demonstrators. Police arrested up to 1,000 striking teachers with charges ranging from plotting illegal gatherings to failing to comply with police orders.

The government has not stopped repressing the teachers, according to the International Alliance in Support of Workers in Iran www.workers-iran.org. On April 8, the government arrested 45 teachers in the province of Hamadan. They were members of the teachers union that has continued to protest and demand government action. In response, the teachers union are organizing a two day strike where they won't teach on April 15-16 following that action by another one day strike and protest on April 29. They are also planning a big rally on May 8, should the government not meet their demands for pay parity.

The unofficial protests were the largest the country has witnessed since the Iranian revolution of 1979.

Polish workers from anarchist union fired

By John Kalwaic

Floor panel factory Greenkett Poland recently fired two workers for trying to organize with a small anarcho-syndicalist trade union known as the Workers Initiative. The Workers Initiative founded the Works Commission in mid-January to organize workers at the company. Greenkett is part of a Spanish company, Grupo Ig, that owns several factories in Brazil, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, and the United States.

The company has retaliated against union organizers Aurelia Włodarczk and Jolanta Szpura, disregarding Polish laws protecting union workers from getting fired or being dismissed for union organizing. The union demanded a 30 per cent raise and an end to a regime that

included no permanent payment plan nor work contracts over the past seven years.

Workers also demanded better working conditions at Greenkett. Temperatures fall dangerously low in the winter and rise dangerously high in the summer, creating uncomfortable and dangerous working conditions.

The Workers Initiative began as a small labor project organized by the Polish Anarchist Federation. Its first organizing drive was with the security guards of Impel-Tom who blatantly fired its organizers.

Since then, the union has expanded to Uniontex and Greenkett.

A MAY DAY SALUTE TO OUR FIGHTING WOBS AT



Starbucks & Landmark Cinemas

From Harry Siitonen, IWW Bay Area Branch

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.

The International Solidarity Commission is gearing up for action, with several important events and projects on the horizon.

We plan to have representatives in place at four upcoming conferences: the International Syndicalist Conference in Paris, the Clean Clothes and Fair Food conference in New York City, the Latin American Solidarity Conference in Chicago and the Raise the Floor! campaign strategy meeting in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Look for reports on these meetings in the next two issues of the Industrial Worker.

Meanwhile, we have been in recent contact with several unions and other organizations in many countries around the world and are working to develop stronger relationships with our existing allies.

Plans are being made to raise money for an IWW delegation to Mexico that will take place around September of this year. If you would like to help out, please email solidarity@isc.org.

We are also in the process of designing a long-term assessment stamp that will be used for all of our future fundraising efforts. With all this activity we have only had time for one solidarity letter, but more are on the agenda for the next month.

Mike Pesa
International Solidarity Commission

Opposing the ratification of CAFTA in Costa Rica

The ISC wrote a letter to Costa Rican President Óscar Arias and US Ambassador Mark Langdale, urging the Costa Rican government not to ratify the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). Costa Rica is the only country in Central America that has yet to ratify the agreement, which has already been implemented throughout the rest of the region. The letter notes the massive numbers of Costa Ricans who have recently taken to the streets to protest CAFTA. In the letter, the ISC also notes the negative impacts CAFTA is having on workers and communities, impacts that are already becoming measurable in places where the treaty has been implemented. "CAFTA is benefiting a small group of people who were already very privileged beforehand, while the vast majority of working people in Central America and the United States are suffering from the consequences of this ill-advised treaty," the letter reads.

The letter also calls on Ambassador Langdale to immediately stop interfering with Costa Rica's internal process by pressuring the country's Assembly to ratify CAFTA. In closing, the letter reminds President Arias of the pivotal role Costa Rica has to play as the one remaining country holding out on CAFTA: "Your country has the power to turn the tide against exploitative top-down trade policies crafted by corporate lackeys in Washington and toward a genuine grassroots movement for Latin American autonomy that values people over profit and communities over corporations. The fate of millions of people rests in your hands. We hope you make the right decision by opposing the ratification of CAFTA."

McDonald's gives in to Coalition of Immokalee Workers, Burger King is next

McDonald's reached an agreement with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) ending an international boycott of the fast food giant. In the agreement, announced April 9, the company pledges to pay a penny more per pound for its tomatoes, to help raise wages for struggling Florida farm workers. McDonald's has also agreed to a stringent third-party monitoring system that will ensure that the money actually finds its way into workers' pockets.

The announcement came just days before what would have been a major protest against the company at its national headquarters outside Chicago. A nationwide bus tour to promote the McDonald's boycott was also in the works.

The agreement follows a precedent set by Taco Bell in 2005. Taco Bell's commitment to pay more for its tomatoes was the result of four years of high-profile demonstrations, hunger strikes, and pressure from musicians, actors, high-ranking religious leaders and even former US President Jimmy Carter. By comparison, McDonald's—the world's largest fast food chain, serving nearly 54 million customers every day—gave in to the CIW's demands in less than two years, a sign of the farm worker movement's growing power.

"This is one step forward in the fight," said Lucas Benitez, CIW co-founder and farmworker, in an Associated Press interview. "It sends a strong message to the rest of the fast food



Photo by JJ Tiziou
CIW Real Rights Tour marches on McDonald's Global Headquarters in Oak Brook, Illinois.

industry that the leaders of the industry are taking concrete steps to improve the lives of workers, of human beings."

The CIW is pressing on and has launched a new campaign to hold McDonald's primary competitor, Burger King, to the same standards. Thus far the company has refused, claiming it cannot control what its suppliers pay their workers.

"Given that we represent such a small percentage, others in the industry need to step up and follow our lead," said McDonald's USA Spokesman William Whitman.

Meanwhile, the mobilization for farm worker justice in Chicago will take place as planned, April 13-15, with expected appearances from labor, religious and political leaders and musical performances by Rage Against the Machine's

Mexico

Migrant organizer beaten to death in Monterrey

Edited from www.floc.com

Staff at the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) of the AFL-CIO found their co-worker Santiago Rafael Cruz bound and beaten to death, in their Monterrey, Mexico office on Monday morning, April 9.

"It is with pain and sadness that we report the tragic murder," said a FLOC media statement.

FLOC opened its office in Monterrey, Mexico in 2005 as a way to help members coming to North Carolina as H2A workers in processing their visas, to fight corruption in the recruitment process, and to develop leaders and train members.

The office is next door to the US Consulate. Although this is the first murder of a staff member, it is not the first attack against FLOC staff and offices.

Since their breakthrough agreement in North Carolina in 2004, FLOC has had to battle against anti-union hostility

in the southern United States' "right-to-work" environment, with constant attacks in both the US and Mexico. Staff were harassed, offices burglarized and broken into several times and a number of other attempted break-ins.

FLOC has asked the National AFL-CIO and US Congressman Marcy Kaptur to lobby the State Department to pressure the Mexican government for a "thorough and speedy investigation to bring the perpetrators to justice."

"Santiago spent years defending his countrymen's rights in the U.S. and Mexico. His life and service will be missed but not forgotten."

FLOC has set up a Santiago Tragedy Fund to raise funds for the transport of Santiago's body home, his funeral, and securing the Monterrey office from further attacks. Donations can be sent to:

FLOC, c/o Santiago Tragedy Fund,
1221 Broadway St., Toledo, OH 43609.

FAT battles 'protection contracts'

By Mexican Labor News and Analysis (FAT-United Electrical Workers)

Mexico's Authentic Labor Front (FAT) launched a campaign intended to expose the existence of and to demand the end of protection contracts.

Protection contracts, so-called because they protect the employers from legitimate unions and real collective bargaining agreements, make up more than 80 per cent of all union agreements in Mexico, according to Jorge Robles of the FAT. These contracts usually provide only the legal minimums already guaranteed under the Federal Labor Law (LFT) of Mexico.

Working with specialists in labor studies from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), the FAT produced a document titled "Protection Contracts: a Product of the Federal Labor Law" which argues that many such contracts exist and that they do not reflect the will of the workers who are covered by them.

The document in Spanish can be found at www.fatmexico.org. The FAT is also being supported in this effort to end protection contracts by the Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers (ORIT) of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).

Oaxaca Popular Assembly calls for governor's resignation

By Mexican Labor News and Analysis (FAT-United Electrical Workers)

The Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO) returned to the streets of Oaxaca City on March 8 with a mass demonstration of thousands demanding the removal of Governor Ulises Ruiz Ortiz of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). The organizers estimated the march at 100,000 people though the Oaxaca security forces said only 8,000 marched. More than 2,000 police were deployed.

Felipe Cruz, a spokesperson for APPO, told the press that unless Ruiz Ortiz steps down or is removed there will not be peace in Oaxaca "not even in the graves."

APPO, which was joined by teachers from Local 22 of the Mexican Teachers Union (SNTE) called upon the Secretary of the Interior to fulfill the agreement with Local 22 and to ensure that all schools were open to Local 22 teachers.

During the past weeks members of the PRI and the newly-created Local 59 of the Mexican Teachers Union have taken control of some schools.

The secretary of Local 22, Ezequiel Rosales Carreño, demanded that the Secretary of the Interior enter into negotiations, saying that if he failed to do so the teachers would take the appropriate action.

Meanwhile, a combination of investigations, reports and debates brought to light the repression of APPO and Local 22 that had taken place during the last several months.

A report of the International Civil Commission of Human Rights Observers (CCCIODH) found that 23 people had been killed as a result of the repression by the Ruiz government. The group also accused the Mexican government's National Commission of Human Rights of having attempted to minimize the repression that had taken place.

Zack de la Rocha and Tom Morello. The mobilization will take place in conjunction with the fourth Latin American Solidarity Conference, an international gathering to strategize on a host of issues, including trade policy, military operations and immigration.

Florida farm workers harvest about 90 per cent of the United States' winter supply of tomatoes. Tomato pickers labor for long hours under backbreaking conditions and are frequently abused by supervisors. Pesticide poisoning continues to be a serious problem and numer-

ous cases of slavery have been exposed in recent years.

For their work, pickers make a mere 40 cents per 32-pound bucket of tomatoes. At this rate they need to pick about two tons of tomatoes to earn \$50. On an average day, most tomato pickers make less than that, often much less.

If corporate buyers like Burger King pay a penny more per pound and insist that that money is passed on to farm workers, the difference will result in workers being paid 72 cents per bucket, nearly doubling their income.