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The General Strike

BY STAUGHTON LYNDE

FW Lynd was keynote speaker at the Minneapolis regional IWW gathering July 15:

Ask any Wobbly how he or she proposes to bring about the Big Change in which we all believe, and they are likely to respond: by a general strike, of course.

But what is a general strike? And how does a general strike come about?

The IWW Preamble does not use the words “general strike,” but gives us a place to begin. It says that an organization must be “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.”

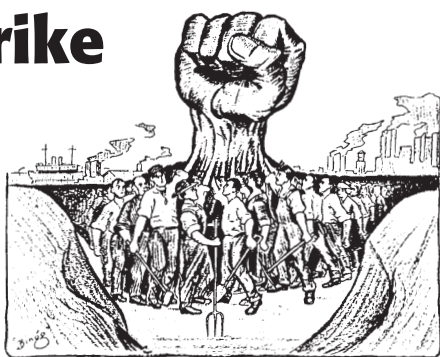
In the same historical moment that radicals in this country were creating the IWW with its Preamble, Rosa Luxemburg threw herself into the Russian Revolution of 1905 and then wrote her pamphlet, *The Mass Strike, the Political Party and the Trade Unions*. Therein she said that political parties and trade unions could not decree a general strike, which must boil up from below in a multiplicity of improvised actions; that workers who were not in trade unions might play a more important role than workers who were “organized”; that workers would improvise the institutions they needed in the moment of crisis as in Russia they had created local central labor bodies called “soviets.” She was at particular pains to stress that the seemingly anarchistic, chaotic actions of the 1905 general strike had produced tangible gains in working-class life throughout Russia. This pamphlet is available in English translation in a book edited by Mary-Alice Waters of the Socialist Workers Party. I urge you to read it.

There is a rich current of historical experience in the United States. The closest thing to a national general strike ever experienced in this country took place before the IWW came into existence. Local general strikes have occurred in abundance: most obviously in one-industry communities like Lawrence, Massachusetts, or the state of West Virginia, and also in Seattle after World War I, in Minneapolis, San Francisco and Toledo in 1934, in Oakland and elsewhere after World War II.

Right now in the United States, workers for Delphi Packard calling themselves Soldiers Of Solidarity advocate work-to-rule campaigns in the workplace and a general strike to resist proposed cuts in wages and retirement benefits. My friend Tony Budak, a Delphi retiree whom you may remember from the centennial gathering in Chicago, told our local newspaper: “Work-to-rule is when workers follow the precise letter of the contract, something that can slow production when health, safety and other contract provisions are strictly followed.”

But if workers do that, Budak said, the company could lock them out of the plant and use replacement workers and security guards. He said workers may have to sit down in the plant to prevent that from happening, as auto workers did in forming the UAW in the late 1930s.

General Strike: continued page 6



A new model for building international solidarity?

Zapatistas call for grassroots, nonelectoral movement of communities in resistance **4-5**

Growing workers' rebellion knows no borders

Bosses, who needs them? Chinese, South Korean & Serbian workers seize workplaces **12**

Starbucks fires 3 IWWs for union organizing

In its latest effort to crush the growth of the Starbucks Workers Union, Starbucks has fired three IWW members as part of a stepped-up campaign of intimidation of union supporters.

Charles Fostrom, a worker at New York's 57th & Lexington Starbucks, was fired July 11 was fired for “insubordination” after he refused illegal orders to work off the clock. Evan Winterscheidt, a two-year veteran at the 14th & 6th Avenue Starbucks, was fired July 18 after a minor dispute with a coworker.

IWW organizer Daniel Gross was fired from the 36th and Madison store August 5 for urging district manager Allison Marx not to fire FW Winterscheidt and joining an informational picket line called to protest the earlier firings. To provide cover for Gross' termination, Starbucks also issued an unsatisfactory performance review on the 5th, marking him down for things like “not communicating partner morale issues to the Store Manager.” The store manager confirmed that morale issues included complaints about wages and working conditions. Good unionists do not engage in surveillance of co-worker's protected activities.

Already, Starbucks' union-busting has drawn international condemnation. Hundreds of workers have emailed and telephoned the company to protest the firings. In Austria, the Allgemeines Syndikat Wien has leafleted all seven Starbucks coffee shops in Vienna. Similar actions are underway in Cologne and Frankfurt, Germany, and in Leicester,

England. David Bleakney, a national representative of the 55,000-member Canadian Union of Postal Workers, has written CEO Howard Schultz, demanding the reinstatement of the three fired workers and warning that if he does not receive a satisfactory reply by August 17 he will write all CUPW locals to inform them of the situation.

On July 29, Starbucks workers, other IWW members, and supporters from Make The Road By Walking, CODA and NMASS picketed in support of fired workers Joe Agins Jr. (fired some months ago for union activity), Charles Fostrom, and Evan Winterscheidt.

Organizing continues despite the firings. An organizing committee went public at the 17th and Broadway Union Square West Starbucks the day of the picket, and several members started wearing IWW pins. The IWW is already established at the Union Square East Starbucks across the park, and the fellow workers at the USW store have been subjected to a steady stream of anti-union intimidation and abuse.

Since May 2004, workers at several Starbucks stores have joined the IWW Starbucks Workers Union. The company has been consistently intimidating, harassing and violating the rights of workers who unite to address their workplace issues, and was previously forced to settle unfair labor practice charges stemming from its harassment of union supporters at three New York City stores and reinstate IWW member Sarah Bender.

(See photos and resolution page 9)

8 million U.S. workers may lose union rights

The National Labor Relations Board will soon decide three cases, known collectively as the Kentucky River cases, which could be a major step in stripping U.S. workers of their legal right to organize unions. Employers in these cases are pressing the Board to significantly broaden the definition of “supervisor,” potentially stripping millions of workers of the right to form unions or engage in collective bargaining.

The National Labor Relations Act excludes “supervisors” from the definition of “employees” who have the legal right to engage in union activity. Now the Board is ruling on three cases – Oakwood Healthcare, Golden Crest Healthcare Center, and Croft Metals – in which employers sought to exclude from union representation registered and licensed practical nurses who acted as “charge” nurses, essentially coordinating which nurses handle which patients, and “leadmen” and “load supervisors” in a manufacturing facility.

The Board is using the cases, which have been lingering for years, to reconsider its position that workers must exercise “independent judgment” in directing the work of other employees to be considered a supervisor. In 2001, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the NLRB's independent judgment test in *Kentucky River*, saying the Board had misinterpreted the law.

The current cases all involve whether such workers can be classified as supervisors and thus excluded from NLRA protections and participation in collective bargaining because they “responsibly direct other employees” even though they do not have authority to hire, fire, discipline, evaluate or promote the employees they supposedly supervise.

Skilled workers such as nurses who give

instructions to co-workers about how and when to perform certain tasks, are particularly vulnerable to reclassification as supervisors under this push for a broader reinterpretation. For example, nurses who tell orderlies or nurse aides to do certain things for particular patients are at high risk of reclassification, as are journeymen construction workers who guide other workers on a crew. But even workers who because of greater experience have been designated to train co-workers or help organize the work could be classified as supervisors if the Republican-dominated Board accepts the employers' position.

The Economic Policy Institute estimates that some 1.4 million workers (most nurses) could quickly be reclassified as supervisors and stripped of their union rights if the Board finds for the employers in these cases. If such a definition was expanded to the broader economy, as many as 8 million workers in the building and construction, broadcast, energy, shipping, accounting and health care industries could lose the legal right to join a union, nearly doubling the number of “supervisors” presently excluded from the NLRA.

Given the recent packing of the Board with management attorneys, unions fear the Board will seize the opportunity to rewrite decades of precedent. Unions organized protest rallies at NLRB offices across the country in July to criticize the Board's refusal to hear oral arguments from attorneys before reaching its decision.

The Board has been steadily stripping workers of long-established protections, including recent cases allowing hospital administrators to prohibit nurses from wearing union buttons even in non-patient care areas

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Against war on the people of Lebanon and Palestine

I. Whereas the IWW has always stood for international solidarity and against all exploitation, oppression and attempts to divide our class by war,

II. Whereas the State of Israel's U.S.-backed aggression against the people of Lebanon and Palestine has caused the murder of hundreds of



working-class civilians (including many children), the displacement of hundreds of thousands, and the destruction of communities and infrastructure,

III. Whereas this war – like the rest of the so-called “War on Terrorism” – will not bring security to working people in any country, but only more violence and repression,

IV. Whereas this war will only increase the prestige and power of the reactionary fundamentalist forces who are now leading the resistance,

V. Be it resolved that the IWW Twin Cities General Membership branch shall seek to:

1. Join and build popular mobilizations and direct action against the war – bringing our message of international working-class solidarity against the bosses. 2. Educate our membership, our friends and co-workers on the need to oppose this war. 3. Send direct aid to progressive working-class unions and organizations in Lebanon, Palestine and Israel who are against the war.

4. Forward this motion for discussion and action to: The IWW General Executive Board, The IWW International Solidarity Commission, and as a letter for publication to the *Industrial Worker* and the iww.org web site.

No War, But Class War!

Twin Cities (Minnesota) IWW

Remembering women's contributions to labour

Peter Moore (July-August) reports that British Wobblies recently discussed how to make IWW more attractive to women.

Although women are central to the reorganization of Toronto's IWW General membership Branch, they're certainly in the minority to date. Perhaps one way to attract more women to the Wobblies is for us to promote women's contribution to labour struggles, both present and past.

For instance, it is little known that women were central to arguably the largest labour movement of the 20th century post-war period: Poland's Solidarity uprising. A recent book by Shana Penn, *Solidarity's Secret*, notes that all of the original Solidarity leaders were women, including Anna Walentynowicz, a crane operator in the Gdansk shipyards, and the “real” founder of Solidarity, even though the leaders who became internationally famous were the men. The book tells an all-too-common story.

Maybe we Wobblies can begin to set the record straight and also attract more sisters by telling our brothers and sisters to read this book. There are other stories like *Solidarity's Secret* from around the world. Why not send them to *Industrial Worker* and start something happening. After all, that's the Wobbly way.

Taodhg (Tim) Burns, Toronto

Relations with AFL unions

At-large memberships in the AFL-CIO

unions can be a most strategic tactic in the class conflict. At-large membership can lay the groundwork for unionization at future dates. It can enable the recruitment of new union members in companies and in areas where individuals may not feel certain about wanting a union. It can help educate people about the need for unions, the history of unions, and current activities of unions.

For example, the United Federation of Teachers has a committee for disabled members and a committee fighting child labor around the world. With all the teacher union bashing, how many people in the general public know these facts? How many people in the general public know about all the low-cost units of cooperative housing that were established by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the International Ladies Garment Workers unions in New York City? Also, there is the Big Six housing established by the printing trades unions in New York City.

How many people know the history of violence against labor? How many know that it was the IWW who largely pioneered the nonviolent civil disobedience? IWW organizer Elizabeth Gurley Flynn talked often about the strike tactic of workers just folding their hands or putting their hands in their pockets.

Raymond Solomon, *Free Voices*

World's largest dirty bomb

The U.S. federal government is building the world's largest dirty bomb at Yucca Mountain where over 77,000 tons of plutonium, uranium and other radioactive materials are to be stored in 392 degree F casks in tunnels hot enough to evaporate minor leaks.

The layer of porous rock above the tunnels can hold large quantities of water after heavy rains. Two earthquake faults intersect both the porous layer and the planned tunnels. If an earthquake were to occur, Yucca Mountain could experience a steam explosion similar to Mt. St. Helens, but with deadly fallout as dust and rain. Southern Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, southern California and New Mexico could become death zones.

Bill Holmes, Portland

Chicago couriers fight NICA

The Chicago Couriers Union (IWW) continues its fight against independent contracting, seeking meetings with courier companies that have lined up with NICA. In these meetings they are presenting evidence of fraud by NICA executives, including the indictments of top executives by the state of California, and calling upon the companies to stop using NICA and return couriers to employee status. Several couriers who have been NICA'd have signed on, and the branch is organizing educational meetings on how independent contractor status hurts couriers.

On July 15, the Couriers Union held the Black Cat Messenger Race, featuring checkpoints at important locations in Chicago history (including the stockyards, the house where police murdered Fred Hampton, and the Haymarket Memorial), and ending with a party. Funds were raised and fun was had.

Chicago Wobs also participated in the annual Gay Pride Parade June 25, as part of a contingent that formed a buffer of radical banners between marchers and anti-gay protesters who every year spew their hate speech as the parade passes by.



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Aussie general strike bloc

Approximately forty members of the "General Strike Block Fiesta" met at the Bourke St Mall June 28 to call for a General Strike and a real campaign of industrial action to defeat new anti-union laws. Taking up position in front of the stage before the official march arrived, they carried placards such as "General Strike," "More strike – less talk," and "It worked in France – strike!"

As union officials lectured the crowds on how voting for the ALP at the next election is their only hope of salvation, Wobs kept up their chants for a General Strike. The strategy of the ACTU/Trades Hall was best summed up by Sharon Burrows who finished her speech this way: "We are going to talk about this 'til there is no other issue but decency and fairness in workplace rights as the next election issue."

Wow – the unions are going to keep "talking" until Beazley hopefully wins the election and then hopefully winds backs the new laws. This gem was greeted with the chant "Less talk – more strike."

Unlike the inspiring campaign recently fought in France with General Strikes and other direct actions, the union leadership is determined to herd workers into an electoral strategy. There is no faith that the union movement can protect itself industrially, and no thought to what happens to the workers if Beazley is not elected.

The General Strike Block was admittedly like a flea on the giant arse of the union movement, but calls for a General Strike need to grow if there is any real hope to defeat these laws. Thanks to all those who sang, made music, chanted and heckled with wit, and broke the ALP's hypnotic spell for a while.

— Viola Wilkins

Organizing the East Bay

After winning a NLRB representation election at the Shattuck Cinema Landmark Theater in Berkeley 22-2, the hard work of negotiating a first contract begins. Already, apparently in response to the vote (another Landmark recently unionized in Cambridge, Mass.), management has suddenly discovered it would be a good idea to raise starting wages nationally by 75 cents an hour.

Bay Area Wobs continue negotiating with the Ecology Center Curbside Recycling Program in Berkeley, as they have been since last September. But the pace has picked up after management was sent a strongly worded letter about their foot-dragging.

IWW General Assembly Sept. 1-3, Oakland CA

The 2006 General Assembly will meet at the Humanist Hall in downtown Oakland Sept. 1-3. Delegates will act on reports from union officers, consider resolutions forwarded by branches and union committees including a proposal to form an organizing department, and nominate officers for 2007.

Registration information is available at www.iww.org, and was sent (along with a *General Organization Bulletin* including all items submitted for consideration) to all members in good standing on GHQ records.

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Workers celebrate solidarity in Durham and Dorset

BY PETER MOORE

Workers in northern and southern United Kingdom remembered their bonds of solidarity at the Durham Miners Gala in Durham on July 8 and at the Tolpuddle Martyr's Festival in Dorset on July 15.

More than 100 brass and other miner bands marched through the medieval city of Durham on July 8. Banners, musicians and others thronged the streets, waiting their chance to play their finely honed set pieces in front of Durham's mayor and union leaders. In some bands, one could see three generations – grandparents, parents, and children – playing together.

While the overwhelming number of banners represented former mining communities, firefighters, railway, construction and distribution workers also marched with their banners. It was also the first time in memory that the IWW marched in the Gala.

The British Isles IWW banner joined IWW banners from Dumfries and Edinburgh, Scotland, and the newly-formed Tyne and Wear branch. When onlookers saw the banners of the One Big Union saying "An Injury To One Is An Injury To All," they broke into spontaneous applause.

The militant National Union of Miners has a long history of challenging the mine owners and government over wages, safety and job control. In May 1926, the lockout against the miners sparked Britain's only General Strike, which the Trade Union Congress cancelled under government pressure despite its initial success in shutting down swathes of the country.

In 1984, the miners once again struck nationally and for a year withstood extraordinary state and police repression before returning to work. Their strike served as a symbol of resistance against Thatcher's neo-conservative economic and social policies that split the country to this day. Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher oversaw the dismantling, closure and privatization of the British Islands' mining industries.



"Somebody, somewhere decided this leopard [the miners] ain't never going to change its spots. The only way we can solve the problem of the miners is to get rid of the mines," said Dave Douglass, an IWW member and former miner at Hatfield Main, near Doncaster, whose branch closed its doors last year.

With more than 70,000 former miners and their families combined with other workers, the Durham Miners Gala is another sign of working-class solidarity. This year, under a cloudy sky, about 70,000 people marched behind beautifully sewn, painted or quilted banners held by six people each for this 122nd Gala since 1871. Only when miners were fighting for their lives in the trenches of World War One and Two or during the grueling lockouts of 1921-22, 1926 and year-long strike of 1984-1985 did the Gala not go ahead.

"They've closed the pits but they didn't achieve what Thatcher wanted," said Michael

Renwick, the secretary of the Tyne & Wear branch whose banner debuted at the Gala.

Likewise, thousands of workers and their families travelled to the southern county of Dorset for the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival.

As the story goes, the high cost of living combined with the land grab of common lands during enclosure stripped thousands of farm workers from the means to survive. Riots in 1829 and 1830 resulted in mass arrests with 19 executed and 500 sent to penal colony Australia.

George Loveless and five other farm workers decided to form a union to negotiate better conditions. They were framed, convicted and exiled to Australia in 1834. A popular campaign freed them two years later. All but one eventually moved to live the rest of their lives in London, Ontario, Canada, where there is a memorial to them.

The Tolpuddle Martyrs inspired a new generation of workers to band together in solidarity.

Preamble to the IWW Constitution

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want 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.

- 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 make myself acquainted with its purposes.



Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Occupation: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

Membership includes a subscription to the Industrial Worker.

The IWW and the 'Other Campaign'

BY PATRICIA NUÑO, BAY AREA GMB

The Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) was fighting for democracy and justice in the southern indigenous lands in Mexico well before 1994. Today, the Zapatistas struggle not only for the indigenous people of Chiapas, but for all those across the world who are exploited and robbed by the rich and the governments that serve them. Like the IWW, the EZLN is an internationalist organization that fights for the "humble and simple" people, the everyday working folks who belong to "civil society," the majority who do not belong to political parties.

It was these folks, the working class, who stood up for the Zapatistas when they first publicly began to defend their lands. This international support was really what prevented worse attacks against those resisting in indigenous communities. In Atenco and Oaxaca, the world has witnessed the same brutal class war against organized indigenous and Mexican workers and their communities. The electoral fraud has left the doors open to growing violence and repression. Once again, the need for international support from fellow workers is critical.

In the Sixth Declaration of la Selva Laconda, the Zapatistas thank all who demonstrated support. Many international 'Encuentros' (encounters or gatherings) have allowed the Zapatistas to learn from other struggles. They say that after listening and learning from oth-

ers, "Our hearts are not the same as before, when we began our struggle. They are larger, because now we have touched the hearts of many good people. And we also saw that our heart was more hurt... not wounded by the deceits of the bad governments, but because when we touched the hearts of others we also touched their sorrows. It was as if we were seeing ourselves in a mirror."

The EZLN reports that government documents show that it was only those indigenous territories where the Zapatistas are organizing that show significant improvements in living conditions. The progress has only been possible because of the support they received from "civil societies" – the working class, grass-roots organizations throughout the world. "As if all these people have made 'another world is possible' a reality, but through actions and not just words."

Now, 12 years after the EZLN declared war against neoliberalism, against oblivion, they understand that, "A new step forward in the indigenous struggle is only possible if the indigenous join together with the workers, campesinos, students, teachers... the workers of the city and the countryside."

This "globalized rebellion" includes not only the working class, but also focuses on the resistance of women, of the youth, of the LGBT community, of immigrants and migrants, and many other groups who are not seen until they rise up against empire, against

capitalist exploitation and in defense of their own human dignity, and that of others.

The Zapatistas' Other Campaign is organizing in a national, non-electoral campaign to listen and help organize the word of the Mexican people in order to create real democracy, liberty and justice. This other form of political organizing, for a "program of national struggle," aims to create a new Constitution, from below and for below.

The Other Campaign is not interested in leading the movement or demanding that others do as they have done. Its purpose is to find agreements between communities in resistance, and, at least in Mexico, to develop a "national program of struggle."

Internationally, the Other Campaign's international Encuentros have already helped create new relationships of mutual respect and support, with those who are against neoliberalism and for humanity.

Throughout its history, the IWW has very much been a part of international movements for working class solidarity. Today, a great opportunity presents itself again, to unite with those from below and to the left. By joining the Other Campaign, the IWW could demonstrate their support to the Zapatistas and many other worker communities in resistance. Perhaps by participating in the "Other Campaign," our hearts will also grow a bit more, as we learn and unite with fellow workers in different but similar struggles.



BY DEAN DEMPSEY, BAY AREA GMB

The Industrial Workers of the World was the first American union to truly welcome all workers as equals – regardless of whether they were immigrants, women or African-Americans – within our organizational structure, free of bias and segregation. Some of the most influential members of the IWW have been immigrants, women and people of color, such as Matilda Rabinowitz, Carlo Tresca, Ben Fletcher and even Joe Hill. This commitment to include all workers carries on to contemporary union organizers of all branches of our union, from all parts of the globe.

When we formed, the IWW wasn't "sympathetic" to foreign-born workers. To be sympathetic would imply that they were seen as a separate set of workers. Rather, many of our founders were immigrants themselves, and some of our main resources were geared to immigrant members and communities. For example, *Industrialisti*, the Finnish-language IWW newspaper, printed daily at 10,000 copies per issue. The IWW published weekly and monthly newspapers in more than a dozen languages, and pamphlets in many more.

Within a year of our union's inception, a branch formed in the UK, and shortly after that in Australia. They are still active today. The IWW has always had, and still has, international standing.

As the new movement for social justice unfolds in the United States, there is fresh impetus for the expansion of IWW and immigrant worker relationships. As globalization escalates, migration and displacement are reaching all-time highs. Consequently, the working people of the world are made more vulnerable to under pay, little or no workplace benefits, insufficient job security and exploitation of our labor. As global capital expands, the need for international solidarity unionism becomes ever more evident.

The heart of the IWW has always been transnational solidarity and the belief that "An Injury to One is an Injury to All."

The recent American immigrant rights movement is occurring concurrently with the Other Campaign launched by the Zapatistas. The Other Campaign encourages all, especially Mexico's indigenous and working peoples, to abandon the corrupt electoral system and to alleviate their problems by taking matters into their own hands. Similar to the IWW, the Other Campaign advocates for workers' empowerment rather than abdicating our collective strength to the political ruling classes. Although organized by Chiapan Indians, the Other Campaign extends past the *compañeros* and *compañeras* of Mexico into the work fields of Central and South America, on north into the United States, and across all oceans on all parts of the earth.

It has become a popular idea in the Bay Area, and perhaps elsewhere, for the IWW to join the Other Campaign, providing us the ability to mutually share resources and organizational skills while reviving the Wobbly spirit of multinational partnership. This will also expand our international contacts and relationships, introducing us to like-minded individuals and organizations.

As Staughton Lynd mentioned during the Chicago IWW Centenary, business unions such as the Teamsters fight to keep Mexican truck drivers from crossing the Rio Grande, when a sounder approach would be to organize a conference of workers from north and south of the border to develop unified demands. These ideas of collective dialogue are not new to the IWW, and we need to organize to be on the forefront of transnational comradeship, bringing workers together in a common cause of organizing as a class to ul-

continued next page

War, Wobs and the Web

BY ERIC LEE

A controversy erupted a few days ago involving myself and some fellow members of the IWW and as I think back on it, I think that there are some issues here which relate to the new communications technologies – and to what it means to be a Wobbly. We are living in a new era, one in which cutting-edge technologies are quickly adopted (often a good thing) but we are sometimes slow to understand their ramifications.

Here's what happened: Somewhere buried in the massive IWW web site was a page which included RSS feeds, among them a feed of links to entries on my personal web site. For those who aren't up to speed with terms like "RSS feeds," this simply means that my personal web site has a file listing the recent material I posted, and the IWW webmaster had cleverly found a way to read that list and publish it to the Wobbly site.

The reasoning was, I guess, that as I am a member of the IWW, what I write on my site will be of interest to fellow workers. This is generally true. This article and every other article I write for *Industrial Worker* is on my site, as are my columns for other publications such as the British journals *Labour Research* and *International Union Rights*.

I use my personal web site to keep an archive of the articles I write, but I also use it – sometimes – to express my views on current events. This is what most people who have personal web sites do.

A word about my personal political history is in order here: I grew up in the Socialist Party in the United States – the same party that so many famous Wobblies were also proud to be members of. But the party I joined back in 1971 was a rather different one than the party of Eugene V. Debs, himself a founder of the IWW. This was a Socialist Party changed by the events of the intervening years – a party that had grown to reject totalitarianism in all its forms, and particularly Stalinist totalitarianism which falsely called itself "socialist." The party had also grown to be very sympathetic to the state of Israel.

My own sympathy for the Jewish state grew over the years and by 1981 I chose to move there and live on a kibbutz. I remained there for more than 17 years before coming to London in 1998 to launch LabourStart.

Why does all this matter? Because it might explain how my views and those of many in the IWW have diverged over the



years. And this divergence is what caused the problem with the RSS feed on the IWW web site.

In recent weeks, as the Middle East erupted into armed conflict again, I expressed my views on my personal web site. Those views are shared by some on the left, here in Britain where I live, elsewhere in Europe, in Australia, and perhaps even in the U.S. But I realize that the majority of those on the left do not share my views. Fair enough – I was happy to be invited to debate one of those groups here in London recently, and we had an amicable and comradely discussion not only of our differences, but also of the issues on which we all agree.

I am convinced that it is possible for members of the IWW to hold different views on current events. Some members, for example, might show a real sympathy for the emerging democratic trade union movement in Iraq. Others may label those unions as puppets of the occupiers. Some of us may be sympathetic toward Castro's Cuba, recognizing its achievements in the face of decades of US hostility. But others may feel that the Castro regime is simply a form of Caribbean Stalinism, and would welcome the democratization of that country. I could go on, but my point should be clear: what unites us in the IWW is our belief in a different kind of trade unionism, and in the values expressed in the preamble to the IWW constitution – which does not mention Iraq, or Cuba, or Israel.

Some of the fellow workers were upset when they found links on the IWW web site to articles I had written – articles with which they profoundly disagreed. When I was informed about this, I wrote to the IWW suggesting that all links to my personal web site be removed. I had not asked for those links to be there in the first place, and I certainly didn't want anyone to think that my views on controversial subjects were necessarily those of the IWW itself. As I wrote, "I suggest that this feed be removed at once from the IWW site and hope that this settles the matter." The feed was immediately removed. But it did not settle the matter.

One of the fellow workers wrote to me

saying: "I'm glad it won't be on the IWW web site because that is not acceptable ... but it doesn't settle everything for me because what you are publishing is something I find very offensive and warped. You ought to consider not printing this sorta thing in the first place... You sound like every right wing bastard on the planet ... fuck israel!"

More than a dozen fellow workers, including IWW branches around the world, were copied into this message.

An earlier message from a different IWW member – also sent to a long list of email addresses – referred to the effort I was making to help the Lebanese teachers' unions raise money. Working together with the Education International, I am proud of our effort which has so far raised over \$4,000 in support of Lebanon's teachers. What the fellow worker wrote was: "Given this guy's expressed opinions, how do we know that he's not going to take this money and give it to Israel to buy more cluster bombs and white phosphorus?"

I don't actually know how many cluster bombs and white phosphorus one can buy with \$4,000, but I'll have a look on eBay.

I can understand how a webmaster might rush to use a new technology (RSS feeds) and inadvertently create a problem by linking to articles which maybe shouldn't be linked to. Fair enough – those links should be removed, as I suggested.

But the tone and indeed the content of the messages I just quoted – widely circulated within the union – cause me some concern.

The IWW should welcome a diversity of views and encourage an exchange of opinions – and we should not stoop to the level of racist and anti-Semitic abuse.

The web gives each of us the chance to make our views known, even when they are unpopular views. The IWW should welcome such diversity and not try to suppress it.

Unions condemn bombing

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has condemned the Israeli bombing of the Lebanese town of Qana, which killed many children. "Once again, innocent civilians are bearing the brunt of the conflict. Most of the 750 Lebanese who have been killed [to date] were civilians, and as many as 900,000 Lebanese are now believed to have been displaced from their homes. ... The tragedy of Qana underlines the urgency of an immediate and total ceasefire."

Sweatshop All Stars picket Cooperstown

BY SOURDOUGH SLIM

A half-dozen members of the Upstate New York GMB picketed the Main Street retail district in Cooperstown, N.Y., in early July to support sweatfree baseball initiatives aimed at Major League Baseball.

Cooperstown is home to the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum and the site of a gauntlet of baseball gift and memorabilia shops awash in goods made under highly exploitative and abusive working conditions.

The Upstate N.Y. Wobs were part of the Sweatshop All Stars agitating and educating in advance of and including the annual Major League Baseball All Star Game at PNC Park, Pittsburgh, July 11th. Along with the Pittsburgh Anti-Sweatshop Community Alliance, Baltimore's United Workers Association (representing ballpark employees at Camden Yards), Sweatfree Communities of Bangor, Maine and other activists, the Upstate N.Y. Wobblies called on baseball fans to join in efforts to pressure baseball's boss class to come clean on sweatshop production. Team owners, players and league officials reap millions in profits from the sale of a growing market of team logo apparel.

The Cooperstown and Pittsburgh actions coincided with a week's worth of demonstrations organized by the NGWF of Bangladesh to demand payroll identity verification for workers who toil in that country's garment factory free trade zones. The Sweatfree All Stars groups have called on Major League Baseball to ensure the payroll

standard and other entitlements for workers in the factories producing licensed team logo gear like caps, jerseys and jackets.

Recently the focus of these disclosure efforts has shifted to the Pittsburgh Pirates baseball club. PASCA's work includes a new Pittsburgh City Council resolution directed at the team's procurement methods. The strategy sets a precedent that is seen as a model to include all of the sports teams.

Tom Lewandowski of the Fort Wayne, Indiana, Central Labor Council has been a leader on the wage disclosure issue. He drafted a statement directed at the Pittsburgh Pirates: "Wages paid to workers at the point of manufacture must be disclosed and certified under threat of real economic and legal sanctions. Otherwise corruption, fraud and exploitation are tolerated and even fostered."

Lewandowski explained that since passage of 1931's Davis-Bacon Act, "wage disclosure and certified payroll have been key tenets of both the building and construction trade unions and the U.S. government." What was necessary then to block abuses is indispensable now. The statement goes on to state that the Pittsburgh Pirates and the fan base's community, in view of the global garment industry today, must hold the sport accountable in the same manner to safeguard workers. "Whether in construction or apparel, blind eye end users corrupt our principles and lives."

The Upstate N.Y. IWW passed out flyers,

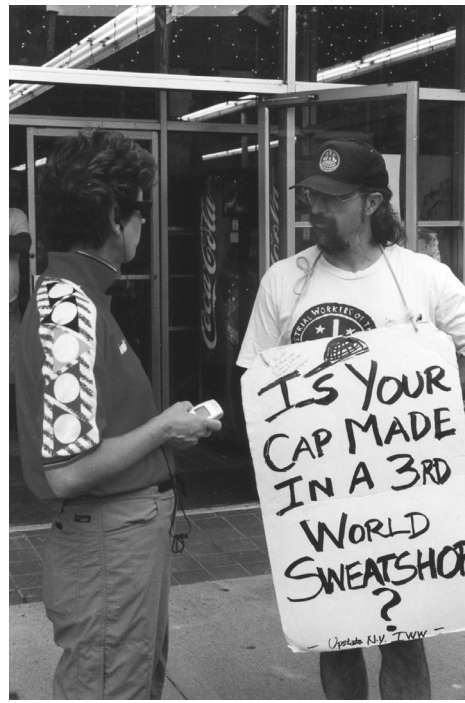


PHOTO: PAUL POULOS

sweatfree baseball cards and balloons for the kids to invite dialogue about baseball's dirty little (not so) secret. "Human Rights Baseball" is the message we want to convey, in the spirit of the late Pittsburgh Pirates All Star and humanitarian Roberto Clemente," said Greg Giorgio of the Upstate Wobblies. (See Human Rights Baseball.org)

"We're not asking you to boycott baseball," one picket told fans in Cooperstown. But the Upstate IWW will be asking baseball patrons to join them in a local sweatfree ordinance to be developed on the Pittsburgh model in the coming months.

Yuengling brewery workers attacked

BY WALT WEBER

In Pottstown, Penn., workers at the brewery that claims to be the oldest brewery in the United States are currently working without a contract and owner Dick Yuengling is trying to break the union.

According to Teamsters local 830, the brewery workers' contract expired March 31. But before this happened, Dick Yuengling held a series of captive audience meetings and told the workers that he would close the plant before dealing with the union any more. He also told the workers that if they wanted to keep their jobs they should create a petition that said that they wanted to get rid of the union, and circulate it around the plant.

As soon as the contract actually expired,

all hell began to break loose. Some workers who were union supporters were fired for "having a bad attitude" and many pre-existing conditions were changed.

The boss told the union that there was a petition for decertification, and that from now on they would be acting as if the union was decertified. But when asked to produce a copy of this alleged petition, the boss refused.

Dick Yuengling is acting as if the union does not exist any more, and ignoring it until it goes away. Teamsters 830 have countered by filing a complaint with the NLRB.

The union has called on all consumers to boycott all Yuengling products until the boss returns to the bargaining table and stops trying to break the union. Unfortunately, the Teamsters have not done a very good job promoting this boycott, as several members of the local including one worker at the brewery that I spoke with did not even know that the boycott existed. In fact, several workers at the brewery and members of the local told me they believed union leaders were more concerned about their upcoming election than the struggle against Yuengling.

Unfortunately this struggle shows us the problem that exists in the current labor atmosphere in the United States. While companies continue to get more aggressive in attacking workers, business unions continue to capitulate. Instead of relying on solidarity from inside and outside the plant, the Teamsters have put all of their chips on the NLRB.

Meanwhile, the local leadership is more focused on fighting each other rather than fighting the boss. The American union ship is sinking, and the leadership is fighting over who gets to be the captain instead of trying to fight back. In the meantime, the Yuengling workers continue to wait for the NLRB to rule on the future of their union while kept in the dark by both their boss and Teamsters 830.

Regardless of the outcome of the NLRB ruling, if the workers wish to continue to have a union on their job, it appears they will have to do it themselves and that they will have to rely on organizing and solidarity instead of the union leadership and the NLRB.

Boston unionist charged with unleashing rats on bosses

Boston police have brought criminal charges against an IBEW Local 103 business agent, claiming he released three white rats in the midst of the dinner rush at The Capital Grille steakhouse August 3. The restaurant's manager claimed to recognize the unionist from protests over the past four months.



On July 11th, Pittsburgh was home to the 2006 Major League Baseball All Star game. The city prepared for the influx of tourists and its place in the national spotlight by installing a \$1 million video surveillance network, purchasing new K-9 units, patrol cars, and crowd control equipment. The city's Redd up Campaign involved boarding up abandoned buildings, removing graffiti, towing cars, cleaning up abandoned lots, and displacing

homeless people from their normal gathering places on the North Side and Downtown.

Despite the increased security and police hostility towards demonstrations near the stadium, members of the Pittsburgh Anti-Sweatshop Community Alliance held a march and carnival to support the National Garment Workers Federation of Bangladesh and to demand that Major League Baseball eliminate the use of sweatshop labor in the production of its apparel and merchandise.

mately create a better world for ourselves.

Corporate outsourcing and anglocentrism has agitated anti-foreign sentiment in recent years, but as jobs get pushed past American borders to places around the world where labor is often unorganized and exploitable, the battleground of class war is not moved, but rather expanded. Steps to promote not only American job security, but a culture of internationalism, must be made.

By joining the Other Campaign, we align ourselves with all the workers who, as Subcomandante Marcos said, "[are] of those who don't build ladders to climb above others, but who look beside them to find another and make him or her their *compañero* or *compañera* ... or whatever word is used to describe that long, treacherous, collective path that is the struggle of: everything for everyone."

We must offer union support and membership to workers who are a part of the Other Campaign, just as the Other Campaign would provide us the heart of international struggle and resistance of movements from around the world. Simply put, the Other Campaign is a step in the direction of furthering our collaboration with immigrants from here and across the world, while expanding the IWW army of production. Too many people who would agree with our Preamble do not know who we are or how to organize. Through this friendship, many workers of many different languages can be introduced to the IWW, a harbinger of the realization of the absolute power each worker has.

East End Co-op bosses refuse to recognize IWW

Workers at Pittsburgh's East End Food Co-op will vote on union representation in an August 30 NLRB election. The IWW petitioned for the election July 29, after management refused to honor the result of an independent union card check conducted by the Thomas Merton Center, a well-known peace and social justice organization.

Instead, managers hired the Seattle-based Braun Consulting Group to run its union-busting campaign and launched a company union. Braun is also employed by Seattle's Madison Market, where the IWW represents administrative and maintenance staff.

East End worker Stacey Clampitt said workers needed more power on the job, more protection against arbitrary management decisions, better health care benefits, and a living wage. East End workers have been organizing off and on for over a decade.

A store manager "stepped down" from his position to launch the "United Co-operative Workers," which he said would offer workers a voice without charging union dues.

Few workers have fallen for this scam, and under public scrutiny managers seem to have abandoned their support for this fake union under the guise of providing it "equal treatment." Co-op members have been campaigning to get East End to dump Braun and disclose how much money has been spent on union-busters and legal advisors.

Work more, live less

U.S. workers need to work just 11 hours a week to produce as much as those working 40 hours per week in 1950. (Productivity increases in Europe and Japan have been similar.)

If productivity means anything at all, a worker should be able to earn the same standard of living as a 1975 worker (when median inflation-adjusted wages were as high as they are today) in only 23 hours per week. Any hours worked beyond that point are simply a gift to the bosses.

But of course, rather than working less, the average worker finds themselves putting in ever longer hours, even as millions of our fellow workers are stuck in ill-paid part-time jobs or unable to find work at all. And, given that only about one in 12 of us is unionized, if we raise a squawk we're told to hit the road.

Even some bosses are learning that this slave-driving approach is counter-productive. Computer workers in software publishing once routinely put in 50 or more hours a week (much more during crunch time as product was nearing its inevitably buggy release), in 2005 their average reported work week dropped to 36.4 hours a week according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

Why? The trade press suggests that software houses have learned to manage projects better, but concedes that long hours often



produced substandard work. More importantly, growing numbers of workers simply refuse to work those hours any longer.

Shorter hours are available for those who are prepared to take them. And for those who prefer to trust to the generosity of the employing class, every year finds more U.S. workers putting in 60-hour weeks.

It's all a matter of personal choice. Trust to the market and be driven from dawn til dusk, or organize with your fellow workers to gain your share of this wealth we have created. The choice is yours...

Australian academic calls for six-hour work day

Sydney University professor Caroline West says working more than four to six hours a day causes anxiety, exhaustion and a poor quality of life. "We've structured our lives so the majority of our waking life is devoted to work, which might bring us more money but doesn't make us more fulfilled," Dr West said.

Almost a third of Australian full-time workers work more than 48 hours a week and 30 percent work 50 hours or more.

GENERAL STRIKE

CLIFF HARPER

continued from page 1

Greg Shotwell, a spokesperson for Solidiers of Solidarity, said the following in his remarks at the *Labor Notes* convention on May 8: "We commonly hear rank-and-file members say, 'A general strike is needed.' ... The biggest obstacle to the general strike is not worker apathy, it's union bureaucracy. ... We can't begin to organize a general strike or even an industry-wide strike until workers actually experience first hand the power of concerted activity on the shop floor. ... [A] general strike will not be organized from the top down. A general strike can only be organized from the ground up. Work to rule is the building block."

All over the world, the past year has been a workshop in the general strike. In France, manifestations of the young caused the repeal of a law designed to make it easier for employers to fire young workers, disguised as a law that would make it easier for them to be hired. Protesters in places as various as Nepal, Lebanon and Indonesia went into the streets to protest proposed enactment of similar laws that would have allowed employers to fire workers without explanation. In the United States, Hispanic fellow workers reclaimed May Day for all of us when they poured out of the shadows and onto the streets two and a half months ago. In Bolivia, miners, coca growers and others who had filled the streets to protest the proposed privatization of water elected a president who asserted public ownership of oil and gas as well.

What general principles can we draw from this welter of activity, past and present? If general strikes are as important as we say they are, what can we do to prepare the ground for their happening, to help them succeed, to make sure that when the ocean waves of struggle have subsided something is left behind?

I want to focus on two experiences. The first is the series of general strikes for the eight hour day which gave rise to May Day in the late 1800s. The second concerns the revolution in Bolivia and the Zapatistas' so-called "Other Campaign" during the recent Mexican national election.

The 8-hour struggle

A second reading I would suggest for Wobbly study circles – if such there be – is a new book by historian Jim Green entitled, *Death in the Haymarket* (Pantheon, 2006). In it he describes what he calls "the mammoth general strike for the eight-hour day" which led to the hanging of four working-class agitators and the creation of May Day.

The national general strike of May 1886 was the product of many local general strikes, first for the ten-hour and then for the eight-hour day, beginning at the end of the Civil War. Organizers found that shortening the workday was "the one cause that brought diverse groups of workers together." William Sylvius, an iron moulder, and Ira Seward, a machinist, were its first evangelists. In its support, new organizations multiplied and isolated organizations amalgamated, in Chicago forming a new Trades Assembly.

The governor of Illinois signed the nation's first eight-hour law, to take effect on May 1, 1867. Labor leaders threatened a general strike if employers defied the law when it came into effect. Ten of thousands of Chicago workers marched from the Union Stock Yards on May 1, 1867, to celebrate the inauguration of the eight-hour day.

The largest Chicago employers refused to obey the new law. In response, workers shut down railroad car shops, shipping depots, lumber yards and wood-planing mills. At the McCormick Works, where agricultural machinery was made, workers took their own direct action. They left work at the end

of eight hours. But in the end, workers' direct action failed to salvage the new law.

The depression of 1873 caused the demand for a shorter workday to be renewed in Chicago. Unemployed workers asked that "the city find work for those who were willing and able to labor." 20,000 marchers accompanied their spokesmen to City Hall, some carrying banners that read "Bread Or Work." Typographer Albert Parsons and his wife Lucy Parsons arrived in Chicago the following year.

Another Chicago general strike erupted in response to the railroad workers' uprising of 1877. Police attacked a cabinetmakers' meeting at Turner Hall. There and in ensuing assaults 30 men and boys were killed, causing another recent arrival, upholsterer August Spies, to join the Lehr und Wehr Verein. Summoned to a secret meeting with Chicago businessmen, Parsons was told to leave town.

This abbreviated history helps to explain what Professor Green calls the "strange enthusiasm [that] took hold of working-class people in industrial centers" early in 1886. By the end of April more than 47,000 Chicago workers had gained a shorter workday, many of them without a corresponding cut in pay. On May 1, 350,000 laborers nationwide struck for the eight-hour day.

Familiar events followed. On May 3, an exhausted Spies was persuaded to address striking lumber workers at a location close to the perennially embattled McCormick Works, operating with scab labor. As he spoke a bell tolled indicating an end to the workday at the McCormick Works. Gunfire broke out among scabs, strikers, and police. Six striking workers were killed.

Returning to his newspaper office, Spies and colleagues put together a leaflet calling for a meeting the next night, May 4, at the Haymarket. The leaflet cried out, "to Arms!" An individual typesetter added a word at the top of the leaflet, "Revenge!"

We gather nowadays to recognize May 4 as the date on which National Guardsmen opened fire at Kent State University in 1970, killing four students. How is it that we so often fail to remember that on that same date, eighty-four years earlier in Chicago, a bomb was thrown leading to the deaths of seven policemen and the subsequent hanging of four radical working-class intellectuals?

I pass over the details of what Parsons accurately called the "judicial murder" of the spokesmen for the Chicago movement. What did these men believe?

In 1883, "weary of compromise and desirous of accomplishing the social revolution by means other than political action," Spies and Parsons attended the founding meeting of the United States branch of the International Working People's Association. This entity produced the Pittsburgh Manifesto, written in part by Spies, and widely distributed thereafter in Chicago. The Manifesto as quoted by Green stated that all attempts to change the system "by peaceable means" were futile.

What came to be known as the "Chicago idea" had a different emphasis. The memory of the Paris Commune of 1871, celebrated by Marx but in fact created by anarchist opponents of Marx, was still alive. While repudiating elections as a means of fundamental social change, Parsons and Spies were eclectic and experimental when it came to workers' self-organization for economic ends. They championed the demand for the eight-hour day. They helped to organize the first Chicago assembly of the Knights of Labor. Later, they helped nine local unions in Chicago that had broken away from national trade unions to create a new Central Labor Union.

It seems relatively clear that what mattered most to the two visionary agitators

was, in the first place, direct action, but only direct action devoted to more than narrow, self-interested goals.

The first sign of change came in March 1882, when a group of German tanners struck and demanded a wage equal to that of the more skilled English-speaking carriers. When employers refused the demand and the carriers struck in sympathy with the immigrant tanners, the carriers acted not on the basis of "any grievance of their own, but because of a sentimental and sympathetic feeling for another class of workmen." The 72-day exercise in solidarity was, according to the Illinois Bureau of Labor Statistics, an action "conducted on the principle of the Knights of Labor which proclaims that 'an injury to one is the concern of all.'" (Green, p 98)

Unlike the trade unions of skilled craftsmen, the Knights created "mixed assemblies" that reached out to unskilled workers of all kinds, such as female bookbinders, shoe stitchers, carpet weavers and the "sewing girls" in clothing factories.

A similar choice presented itself to workers at the McCormick Works in April 1885.

Cyrus McCormick, Jr. sought to impose a wage cut but, under pressure from the business community, withdrew the wage cut imposed on unionized molders. The molders "refused to accept the offer, however, unless it was extended to the less skilled piece-rate men."

On March 6, 1886, the Knights announced "the ultimate solidarity strike, calling out all men on the Texas & Pacific line as a protest" against the discharge of one man for attending a union meeting. One of the reasons the May Day general strike failed to achieve its objective was that on May 3, Grand Master Workman Terence Powderly of the Knights of Labor undercut the national upheaval by decreeing an end to this great southwestern strike against Jay Gould's rail system.

It was their particular vision of unionism that comes closest to defining what Parson and Spies were about. Green calls it "revolutionary unionism." I have used the term "solidarity unionism." Such unions might indeed be understood as the new world within the shell or womb of the old.

The anarchists imagined militant workers' organizations as more than movement building blocks; these unions could be "the living germs of a new social order which would replace the bourgeois world," or, as Parsons put it, the "embryonic" groups of a future "free society."

Another way to describe the Chicago idea might be: anarchist means for socialist ends. But Green makes clear that Parsons rejected what he called "state socialism." Parsons' socialist objective was that of the Marx who, in his *Critique of the Gotha Program*, envisioned a withering away of the state in a communist society.

It will be apparent that the organization that can most credibly claim to have inherited and carried on the Chicago idea is the Industrial Workers of the World. Lucy Parsons was among those who attended the founding convention of the IWW, in Chicago, in 1905. But it is critical that Wobs and their fellow travelers summon the imagination to disentangle the substance of these ideas from the particular words in which they are expressed in the IWW Preamble.

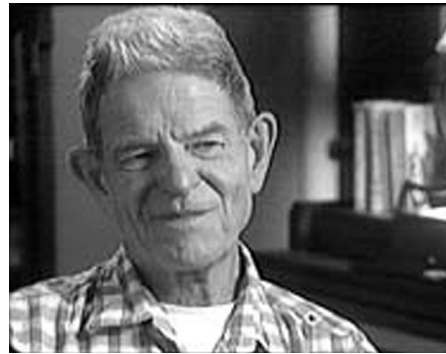
Likewise it is critical to grasp that, marginalized and, in the end, murdered by the powers that be, Parsons nonetheless understood himself as a radical in the American radical tradition. His speeches invoked Thomas Paine and John Brown. Addressing the court on the occasion of his sentencing, Parsons spread his arms wide and declared in

the words of Paine and William Lloyd Garrison, "The world is my country, all mankind my countrymen."

From Chicago to Bolivia

Fast forward from the half-forgotten past to the palpitating present, from Chicago to Bolivia and Mexico.

During the past two or three years I have had the privilege of getting to know Mumia Abu Jamal. When the Abu Ghraib news broke, he pointed out to me that Charles Graner had been a correctional officer at S.C.I. Greene before he became a thug in Iraq. And Mumia was the first to draw my attention to what was happening in Bolivia.



When the boss tries to disappear a colleague ... don't let it happen. Refuse to leave. From such small beginnings the occupation of whole factories may grow...

There has been an interesting transition in Bolivia from power in the streets to something different. Over a period of years there developed a popular protest movement against the privatization of natural resources, especially water. According to sympathetic scholars, what expressed itself in Indian communities in Bolivia was an attitude very similar to the Zapatista idea of "mandar obedeciendo," to govern in obedience. Authorities

are meant to be humble and governed by the popular will, as determined in popular assemblies. Authorities serve in their posts on a temporary, rotating, and dispersed basis, to prevent the accumulation of a power that could otherwise become despotic. At one great demonstration in the capital city, protesters said: "we won't even go down to the seat of government lest we seem to be provoking violence, especially since we already have all the power anyhow."

But then, an indigenous leader Evo Morales was elected president of Bolivia. On the occasion of his inauguration he borrowed Zapatista rhetoric, proclaiming: "vamos a mandar obedeciendo." He told a gathering of Latin American intellectuals: "We have no other choice, compañeros and compañeras. If we want to defend humanity ... this means overthrowing U.S. imperialism." Morales moved aggressively to reverse the privatization of Bolivia's oil and gas resources, posting the army at strategic locations before he announced his program of nationalization. A Quechua Indian who had worked as a maid was appointed justice minister. Morales proposes a People's Trade Agreement as an alternative to the free trade agreements sponsored by the United States. He explained to one interviewer that he promoted a socialism based on the indigenous community.

"Fundamentally, in the Indian communities they have socialism," Morales said. "For example, if we speak of land. ... [W]here I live at this moment ... [i]t is individual parceling, and there arise very serious problems, because it leads to small holdings, which you don't see in a peasant community where the land is communal. ..."

"It is an economic model based on solidarity, reciprocity, community and consensus. Because, for us, democracy is a consensus. In the community there is consensus, in the trade union there are majorities and minorities."

In the Bolivia subject to neoliberalism, he added, it was "better to be a vaccinated cow than a human being. For a vaccinated cow there are 25 hectares and for a human being there is nothing."

Morales wants to take land away from the largest landowners and distribute it. As of early June he had distributed 30,000 square kilometers, more than 18,000 square miles. But apparently, to carry out this program comprehensively and permanently, a constitutional amendment is required. And in a recent election Morales supporters won less than the necessary two-thirds of the seats to

bring about this reform in the forthcoming Constituent Assembly.

Meantime, in Mexico, when President Morales invited Subcomandante Marcos to attend his inauguration, Marcos declined. What is going on?

At the end of June 2005, the Zapatistas released their Sixth Declaration from the Lacandón jungle. They declared their intention to make Zapatismo a movement that would no longer be for or with indigenous peoples alone. They proposed to build consensus with people and organizations on the Left, but to do so from below. On July 13, the Zapatistas officially announced the National Campaign with Another Kind of Politics, for a National Program of Leftist Struggle and a New Constitution." Public opinion coined the abbreviation, "The Other Campaign." The Zapatistas declared that they would leave Chiapas to tour the country, after first convening a series of "encuentros" to clarify the goals of the Other Campaign. (This description is based on reports in the periodical *Envío*.)

The Other Campaign began its tour in January 2006. In his first appearance, Marcos rode in on a motorcycle with the chicken he has named "Penguin." The Penguin, as explained at the end of the Sixth Declaration, was a chicken who tried to walk upright.

"You know what?," Marcos commented. "It occurs to me now that we're like Penguin, trying very hard to stand erect and make ourselves a place in Mexico, in Latin America, in the World. Just as the trip we're about to take isn't in our anatomy, we shall certainly go about swaying, unsteady and stupidly, provoking laughter and jokes, although just perhaps, also like Penguin, we might provoke some sympathy and someone might generously protect us, by walking with us, and help us do what every man, woman or penguin should do, that is, always try to be better in the only way possible, by struggling."

The Other Campaign began as a series of meetings. Every one spoke freely at these meetings, and participants were invited to take the floor. The Zapatistas made clear that their intent was to listen. The Other Campaign is like a large table set up to give an opportunity to speak to people who haven't had a chance. Marcos explained that it's different from events in which a few outsiders climb up on a stand to speak to people whose history and struggles they know nothing

Midwest Wobfest

FROM THE CHICAGO IDEA

There was a good turn-out at the Midwest Wobfest held in Minneapolis over the weekend of July 14-16. Wobs from Chicago, Milwaukee, Racine, Eau-Claire, Madison, Duluth and Minneapolis-St. Paul attended.

Festivities kicked off Friday night with a Bonfire of Discontent where Wobs from around the Midwest renewed old acquaintances and made new ones, and, of course, there was singing.

Saturday was devoted to workshops on regional organizing, member retention, building an organizing campaign, and dual card direct action.

That afternoon, FW Staughton Lynd from Youngstown gave a keynote speech discussing past and present upsurges in the working class rebellion. In the discussion that followed, participants talked about their experiences and connections with the recent movement of immigrant workers.

Following the speech was another set of workshops on collectives and co-ops and solidarity brigades. That night there was a variety show at the Crescent Moon Ballroom that included a punk band, a comedian, a folk act, and a couple of kegs.

We finished off Sunday with a barbecue and more socializing.

All in all it was an enjoyable and I think productive weekend. The Minneapolis FWs did an excellent job of organizing the event. We perhaps began a process for greater cooperation on a regional basis. I look forward to next year's Midwest gathering.



RINI TEMPLETON

about. According to one account, memories and histories emerged that were unknown to most people at the meetings. The Zapatistas' analysis at these meetings led to the conclusion that the capitalist system is at the root of all the evils.

On March 21 a different kind of meeting, of sympathetic intellectuals, took place at the Salvadore Allende auditorium of the University of Guadalajara. Some participants insisted that one can't be anti-capitalist without a socialist program, invoking Rosa Luxemburg, who opposed state ownership of the means of production without workers' control. Marcos had been expected to speak at the close of the event. However, some 30 sexual workers broke in, many with their faces covered. Marcos invited them to speak in his place. At a more informal occasion later that day, Marcos said that socialism was not the only alternative to capitalism. "He believes that the Other Campaign is demonstrating other anti-capitalist proposals that aren't socialist, including anarchist and libertarian ones."

Soon enough, no doubt inevitably, meetings gave way to accompaniment at direct actions. During the week of April 10, the Other Campaign came to Morelos, birthplace of Emiliano Zapata. Marcos was scheduled to speak at Zapata's grave site. But the Zapatistas were drawn away by a confrontation in nearby Cuernavaca. A small group of environmentalists had chained themselves to trees in one of the city's few remaining natural areas, which was scheduled for destruction. A restraining order was to expire at 11 a.m. But at 10:30 a.m. the police suddenly disappeared, in anticipation of the arrival of Marcos with supporters who included machete-wielding campesinos from Atenco. The natural area was declared "liberated territory."

The campesinos of Atenco, a small town near Mexico City, soon had a larger confrontation on their hands. They were famous for blocking the construction of an airport on community lands in Atenco in 2001. In May 2006, violence started when local police in nearby Texcoco tried to evict flower vendors from their traditional spot in a market. Farmers organized in the Peoples Front for the Defense of the Land came to their support and battled the police for 24 hours with machetes, homemade firebombs, and a highway blockade of burning tires. A 14 year old boy was killed by police gunfire and more than 200 persons arrested. Thousands of persons, including Marcos, marched in protest and the Other Campaign organized a mass mobilization against the arrests in Mexico City on May 28.

On the eve of the July 2 national elections there was a local general strike in Oaxaca. Teachers from a radical local union of the national teachers' union set up a tent city in the public square. The occupation, known in Spanish as a "planton," was an annual event but was apparently larger this year than ever

before, with significant numbers joining the demonstration from

I quote *The New York Times*: "Dozens of community groups, Indian rights organizations, farmers' cooperatives and revolutionary parties." On June 14, the state police, supported by helicopters that sprayed tear gas, attacked the tent city and destroyed the equipment of the teachers' public voice, Radio Planton. ... The raid failed miserably, as the teachers armed themselves with sticks and stones" and by the next morning had re-established themselves in the town center. The university radio station became the new voice of the protest.

Of course the outcome of the national elections has caused criticism of the Other Campaign, which is said to have cost López Obrador the presidency. We lived through something similar in the 2000 election in the United States when Nader was criticized as Marcos is in Mexico at the moment. The difference, in my opinion, is that while Nader talked of building a movement from below after the election, he did little to bring this about. Marcos, in contrast, said before July 2: "The alternative isn't to vote for one or the other or to not vote at all; the alternative is to organize or not, below and to the left. That is to say, we are not within the electoral logic, but instead we are in the logic of constructing a movement that truly opposes the capitalist system." I think he means it, but as they say in Latin America, "vamos a ver" (we shall see).

A process, not a thing

To conclude: A general strike is a process, not a thing. A general strike begins in any direct action, however few the number of those involved, in which protesters act in a manner consistent with the welfare of working and oppressed people everywhere.

Understand that the governing class will forever seek to destroy an emerging spirit of solidarity by appealing to the short run, individual self-interests of the oppressed. In the aftermath of the American Revolution, city artisans were drawn away from protesting farmers by the lure of a national tariff that would protect their livelihoods from British imports. Down to the present day, those who already have jobs will be encouraged to fear those coming into the country in search of work: thus the so-called reform candidate in the International Brotherhood of Teamsters criticizes IBT president James Hoffa for not doing enough to keep Mexican truck drivers on the other side of the Rio Grande. Always and everywhere the program of employers is to divide us. The new employee may be the son or nephew of a high-seniority union member; no matter, give him half the hourly pay of the man doing the same work at the next bench. Do Soldiers of Solidarity threaten work to rule, factory occupations, and a general strike? Offer them individual buyouts so as to divide and conquer.

Against the forces of disintegration, against the centrifugal current, do not be afraid to start small. Let me give two final examples.

I have been trying to follow the activities of Fellow Worker Daniel Gross and his colleagues in the New York City network of Starbucks stores. Recently there was an interesting incident, reported in *The Industrial Worker* and elsewhere. Relying on a hard-won directive from the regional NLRB office, workers at a Starbucks establishment showed up for work wearing IWW buttons. Two of these workers were ordered to count their registers and clock out. *They refused to leave.* They were taken to a back room. Managers screamed at them but they held their ground. "After 10 minutes they were allowed to go back to work."

A small event? Right. An insignificant happening? No. The late Stan Weir used to say that there was a workplace equivalent of the writ of habeas corpus. The writ says of an imprisoned comrade, "Bring him or her into court. Show us the body." Similarly, Stan advised, when the boss tries to disappear a col-

league before fellow workers become aware of it, don't let it happen. Call the union steward. If there is no union steward, refuse to leave. From such small beginnings the occupation of whole factories may grow. Indeed, in the history of local general strikes, the typical sequence of events begins with a confrontation in a single workplace. Then, especially if the authorities turn to violence, especially if as at Atenco an unarmed participant is killed, the whole working community puts down its tools.

A second example. Just as the Haymarket martyrs and the first Wobblies looked back admiringly to the antislavery movement, so we can learn from the civil rights struggles of the 1960s. It is true that in Montgomery, Alabama in the mid-1950s there existed an NAACP chapter headed by E.D. Nixon, a railroad worker, as well as a certain readiness to call a bus boycott when the right defendant presented herself. But it is also true that Rosa Parks acted completely alone and without knowing what her action would mean for her own life or whether any mass support would materialize.

It was the same with the four students who sat-in at a Greensboro, North Carolina lunch counter in 1960. This time, a small action triggered more than a citywide general strike of bus riders. Student sit-ins erupted across the South.

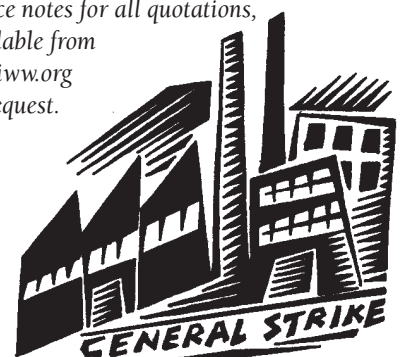
I recall a meeting of Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee staff in Atlanta just before the 1964 Summer Project. It was a somber meeting. Speakers predicted, correctly, that there would be deaths that summer. At the end of the meeting we formed a circle and sang "We Shall Overcome," verse after verse. When no one could think of another verse, we hummed, and John Lewis, then chairperson of SNCC, spoke over the humming. He told of the time in 1961 when the buses carrying Freedom Riders reached Alabama, and there was terrible violence in Anniston and Birmingham. Sponsoring national organizations said the point had been made and called off the Freedom Rides. John and other students in Nashville decided that the rides should continue into Mississippi. Several of them took a bus to Birmingham. As they got off the bus they were arrested by Police Chief Bull Connor. In the middle of the night they were released from jail. Instead of being ambushed and killed as in Philadelphia, Mississippi, in 1964, they were hustled into cars and driven to the Alabama-Tennessee border, where they were dropped off at the side of the road. It was dark. It was Klan country. Their strategy was in ruins. They had no transportation or money.

John Lewis spoke over the humming. "We knew one thing," he said, "We had to start back to Birmingham."

This is a perspective different from that of traditional Marxists, for whom the objective is to take state power. We don't want to take state power. We want to build horizontal networks beneath all structures of power, political and economic, through which working people and their communities can engage in self-activity. We know that there will be persons who exercise state power, and that it makes a difference who those persons are, but whoever they are, we will seek to make them accountable to what SubComandante Marcos calls "the below." Along the way, through our comradeship, our collective creativity, our honesty, our trust in one another, we will prefigure a better world.

Se puede: we can do it. We shall overcome.

The text of this speech was submitted with source notes for all quotations, available from iw@iww.org on request.



The Coors strike looked like a class act

The Coors strike of 1977 was not supposed to happen. January 1977 was just a mid-contract re-opener to adjust wages. Mid-contract negotiations usually went smoothly, and all the brewery workers' union leadership was going to ask for was a cost-of-living adjustment. But these negotiations were explosive and anything but normal.

William and Joseph Coors, grandsons of Adolph Coors, founder of the Coors Brewery, had rid their factories in Golden, Colorado, of 18 smaller craft unions and the union at their adjoining porcelain plant in the eight years preceding these negotiations. Bill Coors was determined to rid the family of the last union in their facilities, brewery workers Local 366, as well.

Bill and Joe had hired a little weasel of a lawyer from Beverly Hills, California, who always dressed in silk suits, to supervise negotiations for them. Erwin Lerten was his name. When Dave Sickler, business agent for Local 366, opened the negotiations with, "Let's discuss wages," Lerten slid a package of peanuts across the table. "Here. I brought you these from the airplane." When Dave tried to proceed, Lerten slapped the table, leaned across the table and with his arrogant smirk said, "You want an open shop? That's what you'll get if you're not careful."

"All I'm trying to say," Dave responded, "is that the membership will not accept what amounts to a pay cut." Lerten leaned back. "Go ahead and strike. We don't give a shit."

The brewery workers had suffered uncounted humiliations from the Coorsie twins and their arrogant supervisors. Lie detector tests required for all new employees demanded answers to questions like: Are you gay?, How often do you have sex with your wife?, Do you have friends who are radicals? Visits to a company psychologist were required of all employees to "help with any personal problems." All information given to the company psychologist was to be kept confidential, but in fact wound up on Bill Coors' desk. Supervisors could force overtime or cancel vacations at their whim.

Why do grown workers accept such humiliation? Dave Sickler asked himself this question during his first few years as a Coors employee. He came to the same conclusion that many before him had discovered. Coors paid very good wages for the Denver area and the other benefits were good also. Slaves with nothing to lose will revolt, but workers often become disgustingly subservient in direct relation to the privileges they feel they enjoy. For an example of disgusting subservience, watch "news" anchors with six figure incomes on prime time television perform on their knees. Monica Lewinski, move over.

However, when battle lines have been drawn, the humiliation that workers have endured in order to feed their families begins to sour in their stomachs and they crave revenge. In my 70 years, I have witnessed and participated in many strikes. Few of them are really called for the reasons given at the bargaining table, in my opinion, but instead are a way of getting some revenge for the humiliation capitalism subjects workers to daily. Sometimes, even when most workers feel they can't win, they will take advantage of the opportunity negotiations present to raise a working class finger and go fishing for a while. I thought that the Coors strike in 1977 raised a giant working class finger in the air. Dave Sickler did not talk the brewery workers into a strike vote. He merely expressed the pent-up anger that years of humiliation had created and brought it to the surface. He was able to do that because he felt their

humiliation deeply.

That kind of empathy is what separates effective union leaders from pork choppers. Once Dave gave his impassioned speech, no one could have talked the brewery workers out of their day of defiance. In fact, all three union leaders tried to convince the workers not to strike because they knew the union position was very weak. They had only wanted a strong strike vote in order to get a decent wage offer. But workers threatened to sue the union for not representing their interests. Ken DeBey, vice president of Local 366, hit the nail on the head when he said, "Hell, they are all adults. If they want this strike, let's strike. We may lose our union but if we keep giving in, we don't have a union anyway."

Ken could have been speaking for the entire labor movement. Since the 1960s, many union people, because of the material gains that they had achieved during the World War II years when labor was scarce, were beginning to see themselves as a privileged "middle class." Since the 1950s, we had been weaned from union meetings and books by a new mesmerizing medium: television.

When I left for Korea in September 1952 at the ripe old age of 17, I had never seen a television set. In my neighborhood, people sat out on the front porches of their homes in the evenings to escape the Illinois summer heat and talk with neighbors. When I came home in the fall of 1953, about half of the homes had television sets. Our neighbors were buying big fans, leaving their front porches and quietly gathering around this flickering box, allowing the corporations to fill their heads with corporate values. Front porches disappeared from homes and our working class community began to atrophy as more and more people became addicted to this new mind-altering drug.

The Coors strike happened right in the middle of this gradual change in the thinking of union people: from identifying themselves proudly as working class to seeing themselves as part of a new "middle class"; from generally identifying as Democrats to voting even more conservatively than their bosses. Union members in my neighborhood left the Democratic Party in droves because too many Democrats defended the rights of blacks, gays, Mexicans, hippies and women in the '60s.

Most union workers at that time were male, white and privileged. For the first time, privileged workers could dream of sending their children to college in order to leave behind dirty and often dangerous jobs. Many of us were taught to be ashamed of working with our hands. We were told by our parents and our teachers that we must try to go to college in order to "be somebody." During the '70s, union membership was declining.

We were not taught about Eugene V. Debs, one of the founders of the IWW, or why he said, "I will not rise from my class but with my class." Debs understood that when we desert members of our class we defeat ourselves because the only strength we have against the enormous power of wealth is solidarity. When we divide ourselves, the bosses' television and the bosses' schools have done their jobs.

Did we really believe that corporations would be loyal to U.S. workers if they could get labor in Communist China for practically nothing? Does anyone really believe Bush wants to seal the Mexican border and deprive corporations of all that cheap labor? Do we still believe that there is a Santa Claus?

The picket lines formed in blustery April 1977. The Coors brothers were ready. They offered an immediate 7 percent raise to any-



one who crossed the picket line. They knew the NLRB was a paper tiger. They immediately cut all medical benefits for workers who wouldn't cross. Coors was self-insured and could do that. The brewery advertised immediately in Denver newspapers for permanent replacement workers. The AFL-CIO, on the other hand, was not ready. It took them two weeks to let other unions know that there was an official boycott against Coors beer. It took them three weeks to get strike checks to workers on the picket lines.

What would you do if you had three children? Some workers began crossing the first day. Medical insurance is no minor thing.

A local boycott of Coors beer had already been started by Corky Gonzales 10 years earlier to protest Coors' racist hiring policies: nine employees with Spanish surnames out of 4,500 employees. The boycott spread rapidly because there was not a minority the Coors family had not offended. Bill Coors once told a conference of black businesspeople that they were very fortunate that slave traders had dragged them over here in chains and that the reason they did not succeed as well as whites had to do with a lack of mental capacity. Everyone knew that the Coors family screened out gays with their lie detector tests. Bill Coors told a *Life* magazine reporter, "a woman's place is in the beauty parlor."

The Coors family saw any group that tried to level the power structure in some way – the NAACP, La Raza, NOW, organized labor, etc. – as subversive and attacked them as such. They fully agreed with the class structure that some "men" are born to rule others and anyone that tries to change that structure subverts the laws of nature and the U.S.

When you examine the ideas that the Coors family is still promoting, I'm sure you will agree. They are brilliant people and have every right to control not only the factories we work in, but our political system as well. If you don't agree, the IWW might be willing to sign you up.

The boycott spread rapidly as soon as the AFL-CIO endorsed it. Dave Sickler was put in charge of the boycott and Ken DeBey was hired as business agent of Local 366. Dave had been studying the United Farm Workers' boycott by spending his vacations in Delano with Cesar Chavez and Dorothy Huerta and getting Local 366 on picket lines in Denver.

I have never seen such a broad spectrum of the working class cooperate so energetically against one corporation as Dave put together for the Coors boycott: the AFL-CIO, the National Organization for Women, La Raza, the G. I. Forum, the NAACP, gay groups, the Teamsters, the National Education Association, the Farm Workers, and even many farmers. When groups this diverse work together to defeat one corporation, someone has made it very clear that that corporation is a threat to their interests. Dave gave the credit to Bill and Joe Coors. He was probably correct, but Dave's tireless efforts to advance the boycott all over the U.S. helped, especially at those critical times when Coors was trying to move into strong union states like Michigan.

The strike was doomed from the start, but officially it lasted until December 1978 due to the unbelievable determination, courage and anger of the workers and officers of Local 366 who refused to give up.

Ken DeBey reminded me of an offensive lineman the Denver Broncos used to have who would try to loosen up the team when they were behind by a few points and the clock was down to the two-minute warning. "We've got 'em where we want 'em now," he would say, and sometimes it worked after the team had had a good laugh. When the

AFL-CIO came to Golden with the news that they were pulling the plug after 20 months, and after 75 percent of the workers had gone back to work, Ken objected: "But we're winning. They're really hurting. Just yesterday we stopped a trainload of beer. Crawled up on an overpass and unrolled a STRIKE banner right in front of the train. Should have heard the brakes squealing."

With more workers like Ken, the corporations would be in deep trouble. Coors called for a union decertification election and won. Amazingly, even though only scabs and replacement workers could vote, the union got 30 percent of the vote.

The boycott, however, wouldn't die. Seven years later, Bill and Joe finally had to admit that the boycott might bring the Coors Brewery to its knees. Sales were dropping seriously and Coors wanted to expand. They authorized Joe's son Peter to negotiate with the NAACP. (Neither Bill nor Joe could bring themselves to compromise.) The NAACP accepted \$325,000 to call off their boycott. The AFL-CIO begged them not to settle on their own. The NAACP response was, when has the AFL-CIO made black workers their priority? Fred Rasheed, national director of economic development for the NAACP, a Muslim opposed to drinking alcohol, allowed himself to be photographed shaking Peter Coors' hand with one hand while holding a bottle of Coors in the other when they signed the deal. La Raza accepted an equal amount shortly after. The gay community settled for an end to the lie detector test and some jobs. It took three more years for the AFL-CIO to settle for an agreement to remain neutral if an organizing drive ever took place at their plant. Coors remains non-union to this day.

Was it something in our memories of the past, or something instinctual in our DNA as workers? Even though these organizations agreed to end the boycott, few ordinary people did. Most continued to avoid a beer that tasted like fascist swill to them. My good friend Carlos Cortez died a short while ago with a big "Boycott Coors" sticker on his refrigerator. There is something working class still alive in most of us that smells injustice and what breeds it.

La Raza, the gay community, the NAACP and the AFL-CIO did not factor into this deal the millions of dollars Coors gives to neo-conservative organizations dedicated to destroying each of their movements. Go to castlerockfoundation.org or mediatransparency.org and type in Castle Rock Foundation to see the fascist, anti-union, anti-everything that is not white, straight, Christian (their brand), and rich, organizations to which you are donating money every time you purchase a bottle of Coors beer. Have they been successful? The George W. Bush regime is the direct result of these donations. The organizing of the Christian right to come down out of the hills and take control of the government began during this strike when Joe Coors donated millions to finance the Heritage Foundation "think" tank. Go to the above web site and see what donations continue to follow that initial investment.

What began in the Coors strike in 1977 as an angry, broadly organized working class opposing a well-defined ruling-class-owned corporation was settled for very "middle class" goals. The notion that the working class cannot settle for just a piece of the capitalist pie and continue to allow these "superior" folks full control to chew up ordinary peoples' lives in their factories (please read *Citizen Coors* by Dan Baum); to nonchalantly take the means of production any place on this earth that benefits their interests; to destroy the earth we live on; to grind our fellow workers in the Middle East and their babies to bits and pieces with their wars of conquest all for their profit and power, has not yet dawned on our well-educated working class.

How long will this continue, fellow workers? How much more can this earth endure? We may not know it all, but we can run our own lives better than these clowns have done. Give it some thought...



Photos from the Starbucks Workers Picket, 14th and 6th, New York City; July 16, 2006



Demand Justice from Bean to Cup!

The refounding convention of Students for a Democratic Society has endorsed the IWW Starbucks Workers Union's Justice from Bean to Cup campaign:

This is a call for activists towards a campus campaign to achieve dignity on the job for Starbucks baristas and coffee farmers.

Despite its attempt to create a socially responsible image, Starbucks' failure to meaningfully embrace Fair Trade coffee has left coffee farmers and their children teetering on the brink of starvation in the Global South.

In Starbucks cafes, baristas are paid a poverty wage and the company insures a lower percentage of employees than Walmart. Starbucks baristas are organizing a union (www.starbucksunion.org) with the Industrial Workers of the World for a better life on and off the job.

In response, the company has waged a fierce and relentless anti-union campaign that tramples on workers' rights. In this union-busting operation unburdened by the law, Starbucks routinely retaliates against baristas for supporting the union. In addition, Starbucks Chairman Howard Schultz recently broke the union of roasting plant employees.

Coffee farmers and baristas need solidarity from students and workers to rein in Starbucks. Starbucks does not deserve

to operate on campuses until it respects the rights of workers.

To that end, the IWW Starbucks Workers Union is forming a coalition of individuals and groups to launch a campaign in the fall to remove Starbucks products and non-union Starbucks-licensed cafes from campus unless Starbucks makes a non-token commitment to Fair Trade and respects the right of baristas to organize a union. Campus communities will also support workers in their local area organizing for justice at Starbucks.

If you or your group is interested in getting involved with the campaign on the ground floor please contact IWW organizer and Starbucks barista Daniel Gross at dgross@iww.org or 917-577-1110. Together we will show that global solidarity is stronger than the greed of the multinational corporations.

Immigrant rights movement

The July 28-30 National Grassroots Immigrant Strategy Conference in Washington, D.C., saw delegations from 80 organizations meet to lay plans for building a new broad-based, immigrant rights movement. Delegates agreed the movement should be grassroots, volunteer-based and direct-action oriented. (www.immigrantsolidarity.org)

The May 1st strikes will continue, alongside national marches over Labor Day weekend and a Spring break "gran marcha fronteriza flor y canto" border walk from San Diego to Brownsville, Texas.

Immokalee Encuentro

From Sept. 21-24, young organizers and activists from across the country will gather in Immokalee, Florida, for strategizing, skill-sharing and focused discussion about the struggle for fair food and building a more just world, working in solidarity with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and its campaign against McDonald's.

Online registration is now open. To register or for more information, please visit <http://www.sfalliance.org/>

Call for international support against Starbucks' union-busting

The following resolution was unanimously approved by the IWW General Executive Board in early August, days before Starbucks carried through on its threat to fire IWW organizer Daniel Gross (see article, page 1). Regular updates on efforts around the world to demand FW Gross's reinstatement and an end to the company's union-busting are posted to www.iww.org.

Whereas Industrial Workers of the World member and Starbucks barista Daniel Gross took part in a protest to defend the job of a fellow worker in the spirit of mutual aid and solidarity; and

Whereas Starbucks is currently engaging in a sham investigation of FW Gross because of his participation in said protest and engagement in concerted activity; and

Whereas Starbucks will decide whether or not to fire FW Gross at the conclusion of the "investigation"; and

Whereas the IWW Starbucks Workers Union has made important improvements in wages and working conditions at the world's largest coffee chain through direct action on and at the job and involving workers throughout the community in the process; and

Whereas Starbucks continues to wage a relentless anti-union campaign to break the IWW presence at the company; and

Whereas despite the disgraceful union-busting from Starbucks including the retaliatory terminations of IWW members Joe Agins Jr., Charles Fostrom, and Evan Winterscheidt, the Wobbly campaign continues to grow; and

Whereas the IWW refuses to be silenced or intimidated by Starbucks, and has always stood by its motto: "An Injury to One is An Injury to All";

Now, therefore, be it RESOLVED,

That the General Executive Board of the Industrial Workers of the World will, in the event that Starbucks terminates FW Gross, encourage international labor organizations and supporters to publicly condemn Starbucks' behavior and be prepared to take further action until such time that he is reinstated.

Bosses gorge selves while gutting workers' pensions

General Motors frequently points to its "legacy costs," including pensions for its U.S. work force, to explain why it has trouble making money. But in fact, that plan has enough money to meet its obligations for several years (if the bosses' hands can be kept off it); GM's more lucrative plan for its executives is \$1.4 billion in the hole.

Even as many companies reduce, freeze or eliminate workers' pensions, saying they can not afford them, their executives are giving themselves ever-bigger pensions. A *Wall Street Journal* analysis of corporate filings found that several companies had underfunded their executive pension plans by a billion or more dollars, including General Electric, AT&T, Exxon Mobil, IBM, and the Bank of America. A few fat cats are set to receive nearly \$100 million in pension payments.

Government fires on workers in Iraqi Kurdistan

Government forces fired on 700 striking workers from the Tasloja Cement Factory near the city of Suleimanya July 27 in Iraqi Kurdistan, killing three. The militia that fired on them was that of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the ruling party in that area. Workers were demanding a pay increase and reinstatement of some of their sacked fellow workers. The PUK is also the party of Jala Talibani, the current president of occupied Iraq. Political parties in occupied Iraq often have their own paramilitary organizations, some of which are hostile to union organizers, especially ones that oppose the occupation.

The workers' demonstration was peaceful, but the ruling party took the strike as a threat because the union they were affiliated with, the Federation of Workers Councils and Unions of Iraq, is associated with the Worker-Communist Party of Iraq, a somewhat Council Communist-oriented party. The WCPI and the Federation oppose the occupation as they opposed the regime of Saddam Hussein. The PUK supports the ongoing occupation of Iraq by U.S. and allied forces and is part of the ruling coalition in occupied Iraq in spite of its belief in an independent Kurdistan.

FWCUI and WCPI supporters have been demonstrating at the PUK consulate in London to protest the brutal repression in Suleimanya. The FWCUI demands prosecution of the managers and gunmen responsible for this atrocity and compensation to the families of the murdered workers.

In occupied Iraq it is difficult for unions to organize because of the repression of the occupied forces, fighting between armed political factions both for and opposed to the occupation, and corporate efforts to privatize everything. Even in places with a little bit

more autonomy and wealth like Iraqi Kurdistan the difficulties are incredible. In spite of all of the difficulties and repression of the workers' movement in Iraq, the determination of the workers is still strong.

CUPE Ontario blasts invasion

In a letter to Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, CUPE Ontario President Sid Ryan has urged Harper "to immediately denounce the state of Israel with the same voice with which you denounce Hezbollah and Hamas... I ask that you stop supporting the heinous war crimes that Israel is committing against the people of Lebanon and Gaza."

The Ontario branch of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, which comprises almost half of the 210,000-member union, voted unanimously at its annual convention May 27 for an economic boycott of Israel and divestment of its pension fund investments.

Ryan told Harper, "The intentional bombing of infrastructure and civilian targets... is criminal, violates all codes of international conflict and international law.

Referring to the Israeli bombing of a UN observer post, he continued, "Your blaming of the victims when Israel bombed a UN station is unconscionable. Canada lost a brave peacekeeper, ... your silence in the face of his death is unacceptable." Ryan concluded by urging "an immediate ceasefire and a stop to the bombings by all parties."

Swedish strikers attacked

Police in Malmö brutally attacked a picket line against the local board in Fosie, July 21. The SAC's social and healthcare syndicate organized the action to protest the dismissal of union members, and were blocking the doors to prevent officials from entering. Police used pepperspray, dogs and clubs to break the picket line. This is the first such attack on a Swedish picket line in many decades.

Police spies lead war protest

The American Civil Liberties Union has released documents showing that two undercover Oakland police officers working undercover in May 2003 got themselves elected to leadership positions in a coalition organizing against the war and a brutal police attack on an earlier protest. The cops helped plan the route of the march, and apparently kept the California Anti-Terrorism Information Center informed of organizers' plans.

Meanwhile, Department of Homeland Security officials questioned an SEIU attorney over a planned action at a Miami shopping mall June 15. A union delegation was to deliver a letter to Simon Malls asking it to pay decent wages and provide health insurance to its janitors. It's not clear how the anti-terror agency learned of the union plans.

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The most dangerous song in the world – A rewrite

BY LEN WALLACE

The International (originally L'Internationale) is perhaps the most dangerous song in the world and just may be the most well known. Whistle or hum the tune in any country around the globe and eventually someone will recognize it.

It has become the anthem of all those seeking a fundamental change in society. Many have been jailed, even executed, for the mere singing of it. During the filming of the movie "Dr. Zhivago," cast members sang it on the movie site in Spain. The song had been banned by the fascist Franco regime. When the police heard the song in the distance they thought a rebellion was at hand, thinking it signalled the death of the fascist Generalissimo.

Debout! les damnés de la terre! Debout! les forçat de la faim!

With those forceful first words, Eugene Pottier, an elected member of the Paris Commune of 1870-71, member of the Federation of Artists and of the International Workingmen's Association wrote the poem that would soon become the international battle cry of the world's working class. They are words of condemnation against every injustice and the exploitation of capitalism.

The literal translation of those first two lines: Arise, you condemned of the earth! Arise, you imprisoned in hunger!

England's socialists translated these words as: Arise! ye starvelings from your slumbers; Arise! ye criminals of want.

In the United States the radical publishing company Charles Kerr Publishers gave us the following translation: Arise, ye prisoners of starvation! Arise, ye wretched of the earth!

For over one hundred years The International has been our song of continuing struggle, the call to the final battle, of radically remaking the world, and a song of hope. Workers have sung it at rallies, on picket lines, on the streets and barricades in times of revolution.

Interestingly, various competing factions of those considered "the Left" (anarchists, IWWs, Trotskyists, social democrats, Leninists) have endorsed their own versions, made

known in the chorus.

The Charles Kerr version of the chorus read: 'Tis the final conflict; Let each stand in his place. The International Shall be the human race.

Note that at the time of the translation in the late 19th century, it calls for each to stand in "his" place, denoting the worker as male.

The "International" in the original song refers to the International Workingmen's Association (the so-called First International), which ended in bitter internal disputes. The Second International, dominated by the orthodox Marxism of the German Social Democratic Party was fractured by the First World War and disputed positions toward the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The Third International was dominated by the official Leninism of the USSR until it was officially dissolved. A Fourth International was proclaimed by the competing adherents of the Trotskyite movement and a current Socialist International exists as successor to the Second representing social democratic parties.

You can sometimes identify the various movements and factions competing for the allegiance of the working class by the words they sing to the last two lines of the chorus.

The Industrial Workers of the World handed down two versions. In the 1923 edition of its *Little Red Songbook*, "Songs of the workers to fan the flames of discontent," the last lines read: "The International Union Shall be the human race"

Later editions of the songbook noted a clearer reference to the concept of organising all workers in one monumental industrial union for industrial democracy: "The Industrial Union Shall be the human race."

I came across an old version sung by workers influenced by the Communist Party of Canada circa 1934: "The International soviets Shall be the human race."

Trotskyites often sang the following words, denoting their acceptance of the supposedly vanguard role of a Leninist political party: "The International Party Shall be the human race."

In a version learned from the former Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (now Democratic Socialists of America), I was



RINI TEMPLETON

given this version: "The international working class Shall free the human race."

It's a rather good version, at least noting that a true International organization does not exist with the astute recognition that only the actions of the world's working class can indeed free the human race.

But even here there are slight differences. Some would sing, "The international working class shall free the human race" while others sang "The international working class shall be the human race." By merely changing "be" to "free" the entire meaning of the chorus is changed. It is one thing that workers worldwide fight for human emancipation, it is another thing to say that the working class will become the people. The latter denotes that everyone will, after the revolution, become working class – anathema to those who wish to abolish the working class and all classes.

Yet The International has remained a part of the history of the world's working class for over 130 years. Millions of workers have rallied to it and its singing has given them courage and hope. Ruling powers fear it, prohibit it and discourage it.

Sadly, just as those who consider themselves part of anti-capitalist Left have eschewed any notion of fundamentally breaking with capitalism through the "abolition of wage labour," they have forgotten the words to this song. Occasionally it is sung at May Day rallies (hummed by those who do not know its words, tangentially knowing that the song is somehow "revolutionary" and

"important").

Many have criticised the lyrics of the song as outdated and stilted, reflecting a language of a past century.

England's Billy Bragg rewrote a new version for that very reason. His chorus reads: So come brothers and sisters, For the struggle carries on, The internationale Unites the world in song, So comrades come rally, For this is the time and place, The international ideal, Unites the human race.

For many years I remained faithful to the original (with small changes) simply because it is a part of working-class fighting history. And I say shame to those who consider themselves revolutionaries who do not know the words. Songs and poetry are action. You cannot change the world if you are afraid to sing.

So, to this end, I offer a new version of the first verse that hopefully remains faithful to the message of Pottier's original (utilising in part the work of others). It is not there to replace the original, but to make all consider what we are fighting for:

"Arise you workers from all nations, For history has but one demand, The world you've built by your own labour, Can be yours at your command.

"The old ways now must be abandoned, So let us rise to Freedom's call, To raise this earth on new foundations, And fight to build a world for all.

"It's the final battle, Let each stand in place. The international working class, Shall free the human race."

Book Review: Solidarity for sale

BOOK REVIEW BY LOUIS PRISCO

Robert Fitch, *Solidarity for Sale: How corruption destroyed the labor movement and undermined America's promise*. BBS Public Affairs, 2006, \$28.50.

Robert Fitch is a journalist and professor whose first job, at age 15 in Chicago Heights, was as a ditch digger. Within days of his hiring, two men in suits drove up in a Buick and told him, "You gotta pay your initiation fee." They were business agents for Local 5 of the Laborers' Union. Years later, in 1986, Fitch read in the newspapers that two Mafia thugs had been murdered, their bodies found in an Indiana cornfield. "Federal authorities" said that the gangster who "supervised" the killing was "assisted" by officers of Local 5.

"It still gives me a shiver," Fitch said of the crime. In this book he argues that corruption is rampant in the AFL-CIO and CTW (22 of the 56 mafiosi arrested at Apalchin in 1957, he tells us, were labor officials). He says that corruption – the use of public or union funds for private advantage – is the reason why big American unions are less effective than their counterparts in Europe. Most workers there have universal health coverage, for instance, while we don't.

His analysis and the remedies he suggests bring Fitch close to the IWW on some points, but not close enough. Three external challenges have been made to the AFL: by the 19th century Knights of Labor, and in the 20th century by the IWW and the early

CIO. Contrary to all reason, Fitch seems to hold that the IWW was the least admirable of the three. While conceding our victories and quoting from Big Bill Haywood's critique of the AFL, he also implies that the IWW used "guns, explosives [and] sabotage" – charges so baseless that the government did not even try to prove them in the espionage and criminal syndicalism prosecutions.

Wobblies might sympathize, though, with the book's conclusion that the problem of American labor goes beyond the dishonesty of certain officials. It is structural. The AFL began in the 1880s as "a weak association of local craft unions ... [each] based on loyalty to an authoritarian leader with ties to local urban [political] machines."

Capitalists liked the AFL from the start because it had no national policy and no revolutionary aspirations. Its leaders were "czars" who by the 1890s had "already established their fiefdoms," in which workers were divided by race, gender and trade – and nowadays by industry as well. Where there are hiring halls with unelected dispatchers, labor bosses may also control access to jobs. Since workers in most unions don't elect the top officials, the latter can enjoy what amounts to life tenure.

Fitch contrasts this with Europe, where, he says, workers formed national federations "with no rigid jurisdiction lines" and, like the IWW, have no dues check-off that unscrupulous leaders could draw from. Often

affiliated with leftist political parties, these unions "could be bureaucratic and reformist, but not corrupt – not even in Sicily."

To support his conclusion Fitch cites not only the American unions you would expect, Mafia-tainted ones like the Teamsters and Laborers. He also gives examples of hanky-panky with dues money within unions such as AFSCME, ILGWU, UFCW, UNITE and SEIU.

What's wrong, as Fitch sees it, is that American unions fight each other for jurisdiction, don't unite over common demands, and allow their leaders carte blanche with funds. He allows that there are honest leaders, but they are "silent." Many of the changes he proposes are in fact IWW policy, although he does not say so: reduce the number of paid officers, limit their terms, and make them subject to recall.

Fitch is skeptical that these changes can be made by "boring from within." He says that most internal reform efforts have failed. Even when they've been successful, as Teamsters for a Democratic Union was for a time, he claims that they eventually begin to compromise too much with the prevailing AFL culture.

The logic of Fitch's position might seem to bring him to the IWW, a different union with a better program, but he's not interested. While his book offers some ideas for union improvement, it is vague on how to implement them. For suggestions, I'd recommend reading Alexis Buss on minority unionism, in the October 2002 *Industrial Worker*.

Northwest strike may spread

Northwest Airlines flight attendants are holding informational pickets after twice voting to reject deep concessions, and have announced plans for intermittent work stoppages beginning August 15. Northwest is demanding 27 percent pay cuts, reduced benefits, and longer work hours.

The Association of Flight Attendants (CWA) says it will implement its trademarked Create Havoc Around Our System strategy of random, unannounced strikes. Management is seeking an injunction against the strike.

"I'm living on poverty wages now; my insurance has been cut," Jeff Gardner told reporters while picketing Detroit Metro airport. "At this point I could do better working at a fast food restaurant."

Northwest says a work stoppage would cause "irreparable damage," possibly sinking the airline which is operating under bankruptcy court protection after spending hundreds of millions of dollars to provoke and then break a strike by mechanics and cleaning crews. Those workers remain on strike, as members of other unions cross picket lines to keep Northwest flying.

Rail unionists to elect officers

Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (Teamsters) members voted 2-to-1 to amend their constitution to elect union officers. Railroad Operating Crafts United sees this as a step in building a democratic, merged BLET-UTU union for train workers. Their suggested merger terms are at www.rocutoday.com.

1,400 Mexican strikers fired

BY DAVID BACON

Days after conservative candidate Felipe Calderon declared himself the winner of Mexico's July 2 presidential election, the Mexican federal labor board lowered the boom on striking miners. At Nacozari, one of the world's largest copper mines, just a few miles south of Arizona, 1,400 miners have been on strike since March 24. On July 12 the board said they'd abandoned their jobs, and gave the mine's owner, Grupo Mexico, permission to close down operations.

Under Mexican labor law, the use of strikebreakers is illegal and no enterprise can close while workers are on strike. By ruling that there was no legal stoppage, and that Grupo Mexico could therefore close the mine, the board gave the company a legal pretext to fire every miner.

In the days that followed, mine managers began soliciting applications from workers for jobs when the mine reopens. Some of the very miners who were terminated may be accepted back as new employees, but with no seniority and no union contract. And not everyone will be going back. Those most active in the strike are on a blacklist.

Last April steel workers stopped work at the huge Sicartsa steel mill in Lazaro Cardenas, Michoacan, and have occupied it since then. Local police tried unsuccessfully to stop their strike on April 20, shooting and killing two union workers. Miners at Mexico's other huge copper mine at Cananea went on strike in June.

Napoleon Gomez Urrutia, head of the Mexican Union of Mine, Metal and Allied Workers, says, "They think we're like a cancer, and should be exterminated. This is no longer a country that can be called a democracy." The effort by Fox to remove him from his union's leadership was the flashpoint that set off the last few months of conflict.

Two days after 65 miners died last February in a huge coal mine explosion, Gomez Urrutia accused the Secretary of Labor and Grupo Mexico, the mine's owner, of "industrial homicide." Corruption charges most unions view as bogus were filed against him less than a week later. Meanwhile, workers at Nacozari, Cananea and Lazaro Cardenas struck, demanding his reinstatement.

In a July report, the National Human Rights Commission found that the local office of the federal labor ministry had "clear knowledge" before the accident of the conditions that would set off the explosion. Since the accident, eight miners in other mines have died in accidents.

The same day Fox's labor board announced it would allow Grupo Mexico to fire the Nacozari miners, his administration also issued arrest warrants against six other mine union leaders and raided the union's national office in Mexico City. Facing the threat of closure at their own mine, the union local at Cananea then voted to end their strike, while at Sicartsa the strike goes on.

NLRB... *continued from page 1*

(*Sacred Heart*); overturning a union representation election because union members took photographs of organizers distributing leaflets outside the plant; and allowing an employer to withhold "confidential" notes of interviews it conducting in investigating a workers' grievance, thus denying the worker access to the information needed for any possible appeal. Each case overturned long-standing NLRB precedent, and each was taken on party-line votes.

Before unions became enmeshed in the NLRB process, they routinely defied laws and injunctions intended to hold workers down. This was how the right to organize was won. Decades of reliance on government boards, "friendly" politicians, and legal protections have already brought us to a position where the U.S. working class is as disorganized as it was a hundred years ago.

In much of the world workers respond to such attacks with general strikes; perhaps it's time to follow their example.

1,000 workers revolt in China toy factory

BY JOHN KALWAIC

According to China Labor Watch, on July 22 a thousand workers began a riot over low pay and bad conditions in the dormitory of the Hengli factory in Dongguan City, China. According to the report, the revolt stretched into the next day and took 100 security guards and policemen to quell. The major issues of the revolt were the low pay, between 600 and 800 Yuan a month, equivalent to \$75 - \$100 and just barely minimum wage in China. Workers told CLW that they also got 250 Yuan a month for factory meals, which they complained were poor. Workers at the factory were expected to work 11 hours a day six days a week.

The Hengli factory has around 11,000 workers who produce toys for McDonalds' happy meals in Hong Kong as well as other countries. Hengli also produces toys for Walt Disney, Mattel and Hasbro, which use sweatshop labor to reduce the cost of production.

Chinese workers under these sweatshop conditions have no way of voicing their workplace concerns. The ruling Communist Party and the government control the only legal labor union in China, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions. Even the ACFTU is often not present at sweatshop factories like Hengli.

The company that owns the factory, Merton, claims that the incident was over a disgruntled sacked co-worker who, they said, got his friends to vandalize the factory in a criminal manner that required the intervention of the police and security guards and that it was not a "riot or revolt."

The Hengli factory is located in China's southeastern Guangdong Province, which has seen rapid industrialization as well as labor

unrest. This comes as a fresh challenge to the ruling Communist Party and many of their market reforms.

Ever since the death of Mao, the Chinese CP has tried to create a virtual Banana Republic in their country for corporations hungry for land, wage slaves, political payoffs, and places to pollute. The idea was to make China an economic and political powerhouse at the expense of its citizens. The result has been sweatshop labor conditions as well as an incredible amount of corruption, environmental pollution and land seizures from Chinese peasants.

In the year 2005 alone there were as many as 87,000 riots due to these issues. The mainstream media often ignores these revolts and the issues that created them. Even the radical left in the United States talks much more about Latin America and the Middle East than China. However, it is important to think of China not just as a player on the world stage of imperialism and hegemony, but to remember the Chinese people as our fellow workers and to report the exploitation they experience and the way they fight back.

Official union vows to organize Chinese Wal-Marts

The All-China Federation of Trade Unions has announced that it has organized branches in four Wal-Mart stores and intends to establish branches in all of the retail giant's outlets. Wal-Mart has been resisting efforts to introduce the ACFTU, apparently objecting to the fact that it refers to itself as a union. Although Chinese law requires employers to set up branches of the state-controlled union in their local operations, only about a quarter have done so.

S. Korean unionist killed in steelmaker HQ occupation

Although a union workers' occupation of POSCO headquarters in Pohang, Korea, has come to an end, the crisis at the world's fifth largest steel manufacturer continues. Police and unionists clashed at a rally on August 4 organized by the construction labor union and Korean Confederation of Trade Unions. About 100 were injured.

More than a 1,500 construction workers had occupied the 12-story headquarters building 230 miles southeast of Seoul when contract negotiations broke down, and resisted repeated police attacks. Workers were demanding the steelmaker participate in negotiations with the subcontractors who employ them. One worker, Ha Jung-geun, died after being hit on the head by shields wielded by riot police.



Australian construction workers face fines

The Australian Building and Construction Commission issued subpoenas July 5 against 107 rank-and-file Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union members. They and another 323 workers could face individual fines of as much as AUS\$28,600 for a 12-day strike on the Perth to Mandurah rail project that began Feb. 24.

Building contractor Leighton Kumagai provoked the strike by sacking shop steward Peter Ballard, who later donated a substantial settlement for unlawful dismissal to charity.

Ballard noted that workers had been fighting deteriorating job conditions for 18 months before his sacking precipitated strike action: "Leighton has been falling behind since day one, despite the fact that we agreed upfront to work 56 hours a week to help them deliver this railway. Working hours have blown out, in some cases to 84 hours a week. Job safety's gone backwards. ...

"As a worker, how do you cooperate with a global company when it uses Howard's new laws against you, doesn't honour its obligations to consult, gives you no choices and then blames all of its problems on you?"

The Commission has ordered workers to appear to "explain your absence on the project," and threatened to seize homes and other assets if they do not provide "acceptable responses." A court hearing has been set for August 29, and unionists are planning to march with them to the Perth court house.

Several Australian contractors are strip-

ping union signs from building sites and barring workers from wearing union stickers on their hard hats, claiming that they violate safety standards.

Indian execs in hunger strike

Some 20,000 managers and engineers at state-owned companies organized in the Steel Executives Federation of India have announced their decision to launch an indefinite hunger strike at the corporate headquarters of Steel Authority of India beginning August 11. The action is in support of their demand for a 4 percent annual pay hike.

The government-owned steel firm stopped the raises some years ago, pleading poverty, and did not restore them when the company became profitable.

Algerian workers go unpaid for more than four years

The General Union of Algerian Workers at Oran reports that some 1,816 workers have gone as long as 52 months without receiving pay checks from 11 public companies in the region. The government-linked union criticizes local labor ministry officials for letting the crisis drag on so long, asking workers to survive on "repeated promises" that are never carried out.

The government concedes some 23,000 workers are owed back wages across Algeria, and pledges to address the problem "as soon as possible."



IWW delegation to Mexico

The International Solidarity Commission is working with the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras to organize an eight-day delegation in which participants will see first hand the social, economic and environmental effects of globalization. The delegation will begin Sept. 30 and has room for 10 Wobblies.

Participants will meet with the Unique Front of United Workers for Labor Vindication (FUTURO) in Valle Hermoso; an organic farmer struggling to maintain land that once was owned communally; maquiladoras workers from Custom Trim (auto trim), Sony, Delphi (auto electronics, threatening to close plants in the U.S.), Teleflex, Springfield Wire (auto electronics), TRW and Jabil Global; visit the clinic of the Derechos Humanos Colonia; tour outside the maquiladoras as security goons watch suspiciously; meet with Ninfa Deandar of the independent newspaper *El Mañana*; and of course, the Lajat workers who

are currently on the front lines of the global battle against sweatshops. They are the first independent workers in Northern Mexico to win with the help of U.S. activists putting pressure on Levis, (Lajat's main contracts), proving global solidarity is the response to corporate globalization.

The cost of the delegation is US\$950, which includes travel from McAllen, Texas, to Mexico and all hotels, meals and transportation inside Mexico. Fellow Workers are responsible for transportation to McAllen and their own health/travel insurance.

We are also requesting funds to help FWs who cannot afford the trip. Priority will be given to members who speak Spanish (and are willing to translate) and union seniority.

Those interested in participating should write Paul Bocking care-of the Peterborough branch, with a letter discussing their reasons for participating, their Spanish proficiency, and the length of time they have been in the IWW.

Jugoremedija pharmaceutical workers overturn eviction from occupied Serbian factory

FROM LABOUR NEWS NETWORK

Serbian pharmaceutical factory Jugoremedija, in the town of Zrenjanin, was privatized in 2000, with 58 percent of the shares given to the workers, and 42 percent to the state. In 2002, the state sold its shares to Jovica Stefanovic, an infamous local capitalist who made his fortune smuggling cigarettes, and who was wanted by Interpol at the time he bought the shares. As with all the other buyers in Serbian privatization, Stefanovic was not even investigated in money laundering, because the government's position was, and still is, that it's better to have dirty money in privatization than to let workers manage the company, because that will "bring us back to the dark days of self-management."

In the transition to capitalism and parliamentary democracy, everything became allowed in the fight against what the new neoliberal government saw as the "ideological monster of self management" – even if it meant breaking laws.

So the state illegally allowed the new co-owner of Jugoremedija, Stefanovic, to become the dominant owner – seizing another 16 percent to claim 68 percent of the shares.

In December 2003 the workers began a strike and factory occupation, as well as a lawsuit against the recapitalization. This was the first work place occupation in the post-socialist Yugoslavia. Under pressure from the workers, in May 2004 a state investigation found that the transfer was in violation of the contract, but took no action to restore the workers' majority stake.

So the mainly women workers came to the capital, Belgrade, and occupied the state's Privatization Agency for a day, while continuing their occupation of the factory. Stefanovic's private army tried several times to take over the factory, but the workers kicked them out, sometimes using their bodies to block the military vehicles.

But in September 2004, the private army was joined by the Serbian police. Police and the private army forced their way into the factory, resulting in the hospitalization of many workers and the arrest of four strike leaders on charges of disturbing the peace. Having emptied the factory of workers, Stefanovic illegally fired the 200 workers.

In August 2004, Jugoremedija workers helped form the Union of Workers and Shareholders of Serbia. At first the Union's mission was limited to fighting against corruption in privatization, but it soon added another



demand – a call for a constituent assembly. They believe that the people should make the decisions that affect their lives and work places, and a new constitution can help make this happen. Graffiti appeared on the walls of Belgrade asking, "Who owns our factories?"

In response to a series of direct and legal actions, in May 2006 the Serbian Supreme Court reached the decision that recapitalization was in violation of the contract. Now the Zrenjanin Economic Court has restored the ownership structure back to 58-42 percent. Workers now have three weeks to select new management, and must keep Stefanovic from looting the assets in the interim.

Japanese KFC workers form underground union

Fed up with being forced to work unpaid overtime off the clock, workers at a KFC in Kanagawa Prefecture have formed a union. But only one worker has agreed to go public. Union membership is down to 18.7 percent of Japanese workers. While joining a union is theoretically protected, many workers say they fear retaliation. The KFC union was set up about a month after the first union at McDonald's (Japan) was established. That union is affiliated with the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (Rengo).

Domestic workers abused

A new report finds that domestic workers around the world face abuses ranging from physical and sexual abuse to denial of food and health care and nonpayment of wages.

"Instead of guaranteeing domestic workers' ability to work with dignity and freedom from violence, governments have systematically denied them key labor protections," said Nisha Varia of the Women's Rights Division of Human Rights Watch. "Migrants and children are especially at risk of abuse."

In Saudi Arabia, embassies handle thousands of complaints each year. In Singapore, at least 147 domestics have plunged to their death from tall buildings since 1998 due to hazardous work conditions or suicide. Recruiters often impose heavy debt burdens on domestic workers or misinform them about the nature of their jobs.