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Workers without bosses under attack

BY MARIE TRIGONA, GRUPO ALAVÍO, ARGENTINA

In the years leading up to Argentina's 2001 financial crisis, thousands of factories closed and millions of jobs were lost. Many workers rejected unemployment, taking over their workplace and recuperating their dignity as workers. More than 180 recuperated enterprises are now running, employing more than 10,000 Argentine workers at cooperative-run businesses, which were closed down by bosses and reopened by employees.

Many worker-controlled factories today face hostility and frequently violence from the state. Workers have had to organize against eviction attempts and other acts of state violence. This impacts the workers and enterprises, as it means that employees have to leave the work place and invest energy in a legal battle.

Many recuperated enterprises are pressing for the government to resolve their cooperative's legal status. On October 27, workers from Renacer domestic appliance cooperative, CUC worker-run shoe company, BAUEN hotel, City Hotel, Bahía Blanca ex-Paloni slaughter house, La Foresta meat packing cooperative and Zanon-FaSinPat worker-run ceramics plant rallied outside a federal court to push for a national expropriation law.

Many of the recuperated enterprises have functioned and competed in a capitalist market for years with no legal standing. As a result, many have fallen behind, unable to catch an edge on the market and get rid of middlemen.

Since 2003, workers have operated the BAUEN cooperative hotel with no legal standing or government subsidies. Since taking over the hotel on March 21, 2003, the workers have slowly begun to clean up the ransacked hotel and restore service. The hotel re-opened with 40 employees and now employs some 150 workers.

Employees rallied throughout December last year to pressure the Buenos Aires city government to veto a law putting the hotel back into the hands of the former owner. The B.A. government refused, and the BAUEN cooperative risks losing their hotel.

A dozen workers from Renacer traveled over 5,000 kilometers for the rally in Buenos Aires, to press for permanent expropriation of their plant. The Renacer appliance producer cooperative formed in 2000 after the former owner decided to shut down operations, owing workers thousands of dollars in unpaid salaries. The plant formerly known as Aurora produced washing machines in Ushuaia, known as "the end of the world," with a harsh climate less than 500 kilometers from the Southern Arctic.

"The auctioning off of our plant is a constant threat; we are looking for a permanent solution so we can produce our own products independently of the state," explains Renacer president Monica Acosta. Over 100 workers and their families rely on the cooperative, which hasn't been able to put out full production. "Most of the expropriation laws that recuperated enterprises have won last two years. After two years, the cooperative has to go through the process once again." Without subsidies, much less a permanent solution, the cooperative has had to work for companies like Sanyo, piece milling parts.

"There are months when we take home \$300, but there are other months when we don't have enough resources to take home a pay check. After paying taxes and our costs we end up failing to meet our basic necessities," says Acosta. She says that workers not only have to figure out how to successfully run their busi-

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Starbucks CEO hides from Wobbly protesters

New York barista Isis Saenz has been fired by Starbucks for participating in an Oct. 27 protest against the company's union-busting, demanding that four IWW members fired for union activity be reinstated.

Saenz was part of a group of New York Wobblies who picketed Starbucks' Park Avenue outlet during a scheduled promotional event to launch its new bookselling sideline. The union baristas and supporters handed out Howard Schultz "Most Wanted" flyers, and two briefly unfurled a "Stop Union-Busting" banner inside the venue before they were forcibly removed by a Starbucks regional director. The baristas were demanding an end to the relentless anti-union campaign overseen by Starbucks Chairman Howard Schultz, who was a no-show at his own event.

A growing number of unions and other organizations have called for a boycott of the coffee giant. On Oct. 30, American Federation of Teachers Local 3220 (representing teaching assistants at the University of Wisconsin) adopted a resolution condemning Starbucks' illegal union-busting and demanding reinstatement of fired union activists.

In Massachusetts, Boston Wobblies are holding a second "Solidarity Night" for Starbucks workers Nov. 17, following on the heels of a Cambridge City Council resolution condemning Starbucks' union-busting.

Although Starbucks agreed to refrain from spying on, bribing, threatening and fir-

ing union supporters in a March settlement of unfair labor practice charges, Starbucks has continued its union-busting with impunity.

Despite the anti-union campaign, baristas in New York City have won wage increases, more secure scheduling and safety improvements through direct action on the job and in the community. The IWW currently has an organized presence at seven Starbucks locations in New York and Chicago.

Workers have also sought assistance from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to address rat infestation and other unsafe conditions. New York City health inspectors have cited 43 Starbucks outlets for unsanitary conditions.

In London, Starbucks has been fined £12,000 after its Charing Cross outlet was found to be infested with mice. Mouse droppings were found next to spoons, knives and cups and an environmental health officer was hit by a "strong smell of mice" and recurring scenes of filth, mice droppings and stainings as he entered the store.

Westminster City Council decided to prosecute after inspecting two storerooms and a serving area at the cafe in Villiers Street. The same store failed an inspection the previous November, and over several follow-up visits had been given advice on how to tackle the problem. However, corrective action was not taken, prompting the prosecution on four counts of food safety and hygiene breaches.

Media workers face bosses' insatiable greed

Although U.S. media industries still report some of the highest profit rates to be found anywhere, employers insist they aren't nearly high enough—and have been cannibalizing their operations with massive lay-offs, pay freezes, increased reliance on part-time and freelance staff, and mergers and other financial transactions funneling hundreds of millions of dollars to the owners.

NBC Universal announced plans Oct. 19 to slash expenses by \$750 million and cut 700 jobs, mostly in its news rooms, but also by replacing comedy and dramatic programs with cheaper reality shows.

In the wake of one such transaction, the new owners of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Daily News* are pleading poverty months after buying the two papers for \$562 million, most of it borrowed. In May, the new owners (a consortium of developers, PR agents, insurance brokers and the local Carpenters Union pension fund, which chipped in \$20 million) announced there would be no job cuts. Instead, they promised to invest in rebuilding the newspapers. In October, the new owners announced that advertising revenue was millions less than projected, and said they needed deep benefit concessions and lay-offs in order to meet their interest payments.

The Philadelphia papers were among several Knight-Ridder newspapers sold off after Wall Street investors complained that the chain's profit margins weren't high enough. Although the Newspaper Guild union worked with a venture capital firm to put together a multi-billion dollar offer to buy the newspapers, Knight-Ridder was instead sold off to the much smaller McClatchy chain, which in turn spun off several of the larger papers to companies including Dean Singleton's Media-News Group.

A similar saga is now playing out at Tribune (which owns the *Baltimore Sun*, *Hoy*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Daily News*, *Newsday*, as well as the *Chicago Tribune* and several other papers), which has put itself up for sale in response to complaints that the stock price is too low. To bolster the price, Tribune is imposing deep cuts across its newspapers, including in Los Angeles where two succes-

sive publishers and the top editor have been removed for resisting lay-offs they said would devastate the newsroom and undermine the *Times'* long-term viability.

The country's largest newspaper chain, Gannett, has been refusing to negotiate a new contract with reporters at its former flagship *Rochester Democrat & Chronicle* for the past 14 years, issuing a "final offer" in November that the Guild rejected as insulting. (Gannett owns dozens of daily papers including the *Detroit Free Press*, which it bought after running the *Detroit News* into the ground, and *USA Today*.) In another long-running dispute, the Guild has been seeking a new contract for 20 years at the Cox-owned *Dayton Daily News*.

MediaNews is demanding a two-tier wage scale, elimination of vacations, complete control over the health plan and its costs, and other concessions at the *San Jose Mercury News*, and has already consolidated its news rooms ringing San Francisco, using reporters from lower-paid papers to provide much of its regional coverage. Its East Bay newspaper group has slashed dozens of jobs in recent months, including outsourcing several advertising production and proofreading jobs to a contractor with operations in India.

At the York (Pennsylvania) *Daily Record*, the Newspaper Guild settled unfair labor practice charges against MediaNews for bad-faith bargaining and union-busting, including refusal to arbitrate grievances and refusing to allow leave to union members so they can participate in contract talks which have dragged on for more than a year. In the settlement, reached on the verge of a NLRB trial, MediaNews agreed to restore reporters' bylines, to grant time off for negotiations, and to allow workers to wear union insignia.

The Guild is also fighting for its survival at the Block Communications-owned *Toledo Blade* and *Pittsburgh Press*. In Toledo, Block has locked out some 200 workers represented by three unions, while members of the Newspaper Guild and the pressmen (affiliated to the CWA and Teamsters, respectively, both of which represent locked-out workers) have continued to produce the paper, which is

continued on page 6

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In November we remember, In December we move on

Don't get me wrong. I have nothing against celebrating the history of the IWW. It is the least we can do to show some appreciation for the sacrifices of those who have gone before us. At the same time though, it is easy to end up being held back by the weight of the past. Stories of the "glory days" of the IWW are meant to inspire, but often lead us to become depressed and frustrated at the tragic fates that usually await our heroes. It is tempting to ask ourselves, "If even such exceptional people as these failed in the end to bring about the fundamental changes they were fighting for, what hope is there for ordinary schmucks like ourselves?"

In fact, there is no hope. That is, there is no hope if we are looking for some charismatic figure to lead us to victory. The streets of history are littered with the corpses of martyrs. We don't need any more.

If we really want to honor our predecessors we will take heed of Joe Hill's last words: "Don't mourn. Organize." We quote those words so often but do we really follow them? We don't need another Joe Hill, Bill Haywood or Elizabeth Gurley-Flynn. What we need is a living union culture that encourages every single member to step up and become a leader.

The "history club" aspect of the IWW will always have its place, but as we move forward into a new century the message we should take from our history is that there is a potential for heroism inside all of us. Now is the time to release that potential.

In Solidarity,
Mike Pesa, X355494

Where's the solidarity?

October 27th was the North Puget Sound Jobs With Justice Honorees annual dinner. As they're a good crew to work with, I went down to the Aeronautic Machinists' hall to help start preparation. As Local 751 is readying for a rummage sale, there was much to carry to storage, tables to erect and set place for, sign posting, whatever.

Early on, one helper from that union mounted a sign on the front face of the podium that commented on the shop workers' union struggle at Macy's. Later on, someone from JWJ objected to it. My depth of understanding of labor politics is saucer-shaped, but the issue was that while JWJ was supporting the workers in Seattle, in Tacoma, for some reason, they were not. The placard was removed, so as to not cause strife between locals.

I was there with my IWW 100th anniversary pin on my hat, thinking An Injury to One is an Injury to All. As customer service workers, these locals have an opportunity to disturb holiday shoppers – industrially. But despite their power, they intentionally avoid direct action. Playing ball?

Still, I have to believe that whatever union a worker has is a lot better than being completely unorganized under some boss. A person will associate with more knowledgeable and progressive people, perhaps become more active, involved, even radicalized. Better than TV...

Just keep plowing, fellow workers,
Red, X337975, Seattle



Company union politics

As a long time reader of the IW, I assume that the other readers would be opposed to company unions – fake unions, which are sometimes created by a business to prevent the employees from having a real union. In the October IW there was an article about the Working Family Party.

The Working Family Party was created by the New York Democratic Party when Peter Vallone Sr. was running for governor eight years ago. Vallone announced the creation of the WFP and the first head of the WFP was the man who was the head of Vallone's campaign for governor. At that time they said that they needed a new party "because some working class families are voting for a party other than the Democrats." One of the goals that they repeated in their WFP mailings is that they wanted to get rid of the NY State Liberal Party and other third parties.

Vallone had a long career as the head of the NY City Council. He had been a machine politician that showed no interest in helping the schools, the hospitals, the homeless or any issues that really could have helped New York working families.

The WFP has rarely supported a candidate other than the official Democrat. This has been done only when the official Democratic nominee has been an embarrassment to the Democrats. One example was when a man with a record as a wife beater won the Democratic primary in a Brooklyn city council race. The Democrats then put Democrat Leticia James on the WFP ballot line and gave her their support and she was elected. In times like that the WFP is a way to get a

better Democrat elected, but those choices are made by the big shots.

There are union leaders in top positions in the WFP, just like there are in the Democratic Party all across the U.S. If anyone thinks this means that the unions – especially the union rank and file – have any control or leverage in the WFP you have been hoodwinked. Jimmy Hoffa had a prominent seat at the G.W. Bush inauguration ceremony and the N.E.A. donated money to help pay for that ceremony. This doesn't mean that Bush is going to be listening to the problems of any of the Teamsters driving trucks.

Tom Keough, Brooklyn NY
Editor's Note: FW Keough has misread our article, which was not at all meant to be complimentary to the WFP. We noted the role of the union-busting outfit ACORN in setting the Party up and that it endorsed Hillary Clinton, and quoted activists criticizing its strategy of endorsing Democrats, trading union votes for whatever crumbs the politicians might be willing to hand out.

The IWW is firmly committed to political independence. Our union does not endorse parties or candidates, and while individual members are free to do as they please, we believe that workers are in a far better position to wield political power on the job than in the polling booth. So we would not support the WFP even if it wasn't a shill for the Democrats. The point of the article, perhaps clearer before it was edited for length, was to expose the WFP and suggest alternative approaches for any readers who might be tempted by its pretense of opening a space for independent labor politics.



IWW directory

Australia

IWW Regional Organising Committee
M. Payne, Secretary, PO Box 1866, Albany WA.
roc@iww.org.au, www.iww.org.au
Sydney: PO Box 241, Surry Hills. sydney@iww.org.au
Melbourne: PO Box 145, Moreland 3058. melb@iww.org.au

British Isles

IWW Regional Organising Committee:
PO Box 1158, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE99 4XL UK, rocsec@iww.org.uk, www.iww.org.uk
IWW London: c/o Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. londoniww@iww.org
Leicestershire: PO Box 7903, LE3 0WT. klasbatalo@aol.com www.leicestershire-iww.org.uk
Manchester: www.iww-manchester.org.uk

Scotland

Clydeside GMB: iwwclydeside.mahost.org.
Edinburgh IWW: c/o 17 W. Montgomery Place, EH7 SHA.

Canada

Alberta
Edmonton GMB: PO Box 75175, T6E 6K1. edmonton@lists.iww.org, http://edmonton.iww.ca.
British Columbia
Vancouver IWW: PO Box 4755, Stn. Terminal, V6B 4A4. 604-682-3269 x8493. gmb-van@iww.ca http://vancouver.iww.ca.

Manitoba

Winnipeg GMB: IWW, c/o WORC, PO Box 1, R3C 2G1. winnipeg@iww.org. Garth Hardy, del., garth.hardy@union.org.za.
Ontario
Ottawa-Outaouais GMB: PO Box 52003, 298 Dalhousie St. K1N 1S0, (613) 241-0382. ott-out@iww.org French-language del: Mathieu Brûlé parti_hardcore@yahoo.com.
Peterborough: c/o PCAP, 393 Water St. #17, K9H 3L7, 705-749-9694, ptboiww@riseup.net

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

Finland

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

Germany

IWW Kontaks: Lutz Getzschmann, IWW c/o RMB-Infoladen, Hamburger Allee 35, 60486 Frankfurt am Main. iww-germany@gmx.net
Frankfurt: iww-frankfurt@gmx.de.
Koeln: iwwcologne@yahoo.de.

United States

Arizona

Phoenix GMB: 1205 E. Hubbell St., 85006-1758. 602-254-4057. Aaron Rothenburger, del., 480-303-9580.

Arkansas

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

California

Los Angeles GMB: PO Box 65822, 90065.
North Coast GMB: PO Box 844, Eureka 95502-0844. 707-725-8090. BST Angie Hart: angstink@gmail.com
San Francisco Bay Area GMB: (Curbside and Buyback IU 670 Recycling Shops; Stonemountain IU 660 Job Shop) PO Box 11412, Berkeley 94712. 510-845-0540. Meetings first Thursdays at 7 p.m. (2022 Blake St., Berkeley)
San Jose: Adam Welch, del. 408-795-9672. email: adam_freedom@yahoo.com
Santa Barbara GMB: PO Box 23008, 93121. 805-689-3086, sbgmb@iww.org

Colorado

Denver GMB: c/o P&L Printing Job Shop: 2298 Clay, Denver 80211. 303-433-1852.
Four Corners (AZ, CO, NM, UT): delegate: 970-903-8721. 4corners@iww.org

Florida

Gainesville GMB: 1021 W. University, 32601. 352-246-2240, gainesvilleiww@riseup.net
Pensacola GMB: 610 E Wright St., 32501. 850-429-0336. www.angelfire.com/fl5/iww iwwpensacola@yahoo.com

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

Georgia

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

Hawaii

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

Illinois

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

Carbondale: Jason Leonard, Southern Illinois delegate. chachieldiablo@hotmail.com.

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

Champaign: David Johnson, 217-356-8247.

Waukegan IWW: PO Box 274, 60079. waukegan-iww@iww.org

Iowa

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

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

Maine

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

Maryland

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

Massachusetts

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

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

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

Michigan

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

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

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

Minnesota

Duluth: Laverne Capan, 1522 N 8th Ave E, 55805-1115. 218-724-2647.

Twin Cities GMB: PO Box 14111, Minneapolis 55414. 612-339-4418. jpila@iww.org

Missouri

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

Montana

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

New Jersey

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

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

New Mexico

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

New York

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

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

New York

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

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

New York

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

Ohio

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Industrial Workers of the World
P. O. Box 23085
Cincinnati, OH 45223
USA, 513-591-1905
email: ghq@iww.org
http://www.iww.org

General Secretary-Treasurer:
Mark Damron

General Executive Board:
E. Wolfson (chair), Patrick Brenner, Jeannette Gysbers, Adam Lincoln, Ted Nebus, Scott Satterwhite and Richard Seymour

Editor: Jon Bekken
4530 Baltimore Avenue
Philadelphia PA 19143
email: iw@iww.org

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UK Wobs organizing education workers

Over forty people squeezed into a tiny room at London Anarchist Bookfair to launch a network of education workers, building on IWW organizing in the industry. The Education Workers Industrial Union constitutes the largest IWW industrial union in Britain, and more education workers signed up after the meeting from all over the UK.

The meeting discussed pressing issues in the sector, including privatisation, job cuts, pay cuts and casualisation, and a productive debate ensued over how we can form a strong network to combat these problems in our individual workplaces and on regional and national levels. The answers were encouraging, alluding to practices of democracy, industrial organising, direct action, militancy and disrespect for the business unions that the IWW has used for the last 101 years.

Plans are in the works for a conference in 2007 that will strengthen ties between workers in the education sector, and involve both practical workplace organising strategies as well as models of libertarian education for those interested in such debates.

Scottish IWW Assembly

Scottish IWW members met Nov. 5 to discuss the union's activities and plans for the future. Two organisers were appointed, plans were laid to resurrect an IWW news sheet, organising prospects were reviewed, and a report on the continuing dispute with Scottish Parliament (which unlawfully docked IWW members' pay last year) was reviewed.

Ottawa IWW in solidarity with Starbucks union

BY MATT MCLENNAN

Members of the Ottawa-Outaouais IWW picketed the Starbucks at 129 Bank Street on the afternoon of November 4.

The picket was in support of the IWW Starbucks union in New York City and Chicago. Two hundred leaflets were handed out during the hour-long picket, and signs demanding the re-instatement of wrongfully terminated Starbucks union organizers were displayed at the highly visible corner.

Baristas at the location were spoken to and leafleted before the action, and were assured that it was their employers, and not they, who were the targets of the picket. Managers sent out a barista with samples of coffee to attract customers and to undercut the picket. Nonetheless, the picket cost the location some business and raised awareness among baristas and passers-by about the illegal union-busting tactics which the Starbucks Corporation has been employing to dissuade its employees from organizing with the IWW. Many passers-by stopped to speak to the picketing Wobblies, and of these a good many expressed sympathy for the cause of the Starbucks Workers Union.

A similar picket was undertaken by the Ottawa IWW August 31 at the Starbucks on 326 Elgin. Both actions are part of an ongoing solidarity campaign which the branch has launched in support of the Starbucks union. The actions take place every second week, each at a different Starbucks location.

Leonard Peltier march Feb. 10

The 14th International Day in Solidarity with Leonard Peltier will be marked with a regional march and rally in Tacoma Feb. 10.

"The shadow of totalitarianism is slowly creeping across the land. Our civil liberties are under attack. Our government has our country fighting a war of aggression... If you take a close look at all that is taking place you will be able to see direct parallels to the case of Leonard Peltier and thus understand why all people who believe in peace, justice and freedom should actively support Leonard."

The day begins with a march starting at noon in Tacoma's Portland Avenue Park, and proceeding to the federal court house where there will be a rally with music and speakers. Contact bayou@blarg.net to lend support.

Berkeley Curbside Recyclers contract includes modest gains

Last month, one dozen recycling drivers and loaders at the Ecology Center approved their latest IWW union contract. The recyclers are part of Municipal and Utility Service Workers Industrial Union 670, and the shop has been organized in the IWW since 1989. Next door, the Berkeley Community Conservation Center's Buyback Recycling Shop has been with the union since 2000.

The new contract includes several modest gains, including: a 3 percent wage increase, retroactive to January 1, and an additional 3 percent effective January 1, 2007. All recyclers, including loaders, receive a

guaranteed eight-hours pay for each shift worked. (Previously only drivers received that benefit.) Confusing language regarding employee status with numerous conflicting categories such as "probationary," "temporary," "full time," "part time," and "short hour" has been replaced with clear, solid language with three well-defined categories.

New probationary employees receive "peer review" from their fellow workers, diluting management's hiring power. Recyclers receive a modest increase in periodic work boot allowances. All regular employees who work a minimum number of shifts receive full

health care and dental coverage.

The contract has no significant concessions. Management had demanded an increase in individual health care co-payments from \$5 to \$35 per visit and/or prescription. The union refused.

However, the contract does not include many issues workers had sought, including pension benefits, bringing wages on par with city sanitation workers, and adjusting working conditions to new automated equipment that will replace lifting bins by hand with lifting bins with a lever truck so that there is no loss in employment or pay.

International general strike the answer to neoliberalism

Melbourne Wobs participated in the Second Latin American and Asia Pacific Solidarity Gathering Oct. 21-22 at Trades Hall. The conference sought to widen the cracks in neoliberalism by building bridges between grassroots organisations around the world, which are fighting back in new and ever more inventive ways.

IWW delegate Margaret Creagh spoke on the opening day, beginning her talk with the Wobbly Doxology. Excerpts follow:

"When the IWW was founded in Chicago 101 years ago, they said: 'There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people.'

"We were made criminals then and the capitalists have plundered ever since.

"Ten years ago 176 bullshit world leaders at the World Food Summit pledged to halve the number of undernourished people by 2015. Yet 850 million are still hungry – some 18 million more than in 1996. ... Six million children die from hunger each year, yet we ... have enough food to provide everyone in the rest of the world with at least 2,720 kilocalories per person per day.

"Naming The Bastards: Monsanto's empire includes Dow Chemicals, infamous for giving us the Vietnam War chemical Agent Orange. ... Monsanto are now patenting indigenous foods as privatised corporate

property; and genetically engineered soya beans grown in Argentina are shipped here to Melbourne for feeding chooks.

"Every year more of our class die due to work-related illnesses and accidents. Yet asbestos is still exported from Canada and 'Australian' company James Hardie has moved offshore to avoid liabilities here.

"Corporate crooks run amok. Climate changed governments and capitalists are re-branded, green-washed sustainable exploiters of the planet. There is no right to food and no right to water. In South Africa's economic apartheid slums you must get a pre-paid card to get water from a tap in the street. That's profiteering in the 21st century. ...

"Military spending has gone ballistic which means there is no more pretence at getting rid of poverty in this world. When there are 'natural disasters' ... the poor suffer the most. ... Poor people who start climbing the ladder to better conditions are outnumbered by people who are facing worse conditions, because of unemployment or more informal employment. The abyss between rich and poor increases daily in all countries.

"Where could be global justice?"

"What if we join our community and union forces to meet all the challenges of today – we are millions, billions in fact. Health and safety are the priority at work – we

cannot improve conditions and wages if we get maimed and die. Here in Australia, April 28th is industrial work deaths and injuries day. In the lead-up to May Day, May 1st, it is a time to remember the dead and fight like hell for the living.

"The International General Strike is coming – Latin America can do it and Central American can do it. In the USA, on May Day of this year, millions of migrant workers went on strike.

"Here in Australia the General Strike defends and extends hard-won conditions now under siege by the corporations and their puppet governments.

"Before the invasion of Iraq began, several unions, most notably in Italy and the UK, made efforts to use their power as workers to stop the transport of war materials. As an IWW poet said years ago, 'Without our brain and muscle not a single wheel can turn.' The ruling class – international capitalism – needs us to do its bidding. When we organize and refuse its orders, we can start to define an alternative to the 'New World Order.'

"We can take over and lock out the employing class and transform production to be in harmony with Mother Earth, so six million children do not starve to death again next year and 850 million others are no longer hungry and the bloody plunder wars cease."

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.

Immokalee workers tell Chipotle to walk its talk

BY KARI LYDERSEN, NEW STANDARD

"Honest Ingredients" read the spare white Chipotle Mexican Grill billboards sprouting up in the franchise's home base of Denver and other cities. They are part of Chipotle's "Food with Integrity" marketing campaign designed to paint the company as hip, healthy, ethical and gourmet, despite being a major fast-food chain with over 500 stores once majority-owned by McDonald's.

Chipotle claims all its pork and a healthy percentage of its chicken and beef come from "free-range" farms rather than factory farms, where animals are jammed into spaces so small they can barely move. It also boasts of using a high percentage of organic and sustainably grown produce.

But one element of Chipotle's food production calls its "Food with Integrity" slogan into question: the workers who harvest the tomatoes and other vegetables for Chipotle's burritos make less than \$10,000 a year.

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers, a South Florida farm workers organization, is demanding that Chipotle and McDonald's sign a workers' rights agreement similar to one the CIW negotiated with Yum Brands, Taco Bell's parent company, last spring after a four-year-long campaign.

The new web and the unions

BY ERIC LEE

There's been a lot of talk lately about something called "Web 2.0". The term is pure buzz; the web is the same web it has always been. But certain features of the web, some of them available from the beginning, are becoming more pronounced. And some of this is relevant to the work of trade unions.

Though no one has come up with a precise definition of what "Web 2.0" means, one feature that nearly everyone agrees on is that the new web is largely driven by the readers. Readers of web sites are creating the content on those sites. The line that separated producers of content from consumers is evaporating.

Some of the best known and most successful of the new sites are examples of this.

Take YouTube, the video sharing site recently purchased by Google for \$1.6 billion. The site defines itself as being "a place for people to engage in new ways with video by sharing, commenting on, and viewing videos" and notes that YouTube "started as a personal video sharing service, and has grown into an entertainment destination with people watching more than 70 million videos on the site daily."

YouTube is not producing the videos. It's simply created a space on the web where people can share their videos. And it's a runaway success story.

MySpace is another huge commercial success. It defines itself as "an online community that lets you meet your friends' friends" and invites people to "create a private community on MySpace and you can share photos, journals and interests" with those friends.

Like YouTube, MySpace shares an aversion to blank spaces between words, and has also been snapped up by a mega-corporation – in this case, ultra-reactionary Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, which snapped up MySpace in 2005 for a mere \$580 million.

What MySpace and YouTube have in common is that they are enormously popular venues particularly for young people, who not only consume the content there (watch the videos, read the journals) but produce it as well.

Flickr, now owned by Yahoo, has done the same thing with people's digital photos. Digg is providing a way for people to indicate their interest in articles they read online (a kind of popularity contest). The awkwardly named Deli.cio.us is a "social bookmarking" site, allowing people to share their favorites and bookmarks with the world. (It was purchased last year by Yahoo.)

All of these have been touted as examples

The agreement would ensure workers are paid one penny more per pound of tomatoes picked. A cent is a pittance for the company, but a significant difference to immigrant laborers struggling to survive and send remittances to families in their home countries.

The Chipotle and McDonald's initiatives are the CIW's latest attempt to target highly visible corporations to leverage change in the entire industry. These companies, say the farm workers, could use their buying power to demand changes from their suppliers as a prerequisite for doing business.

Workers in the Immokalee fields make 40 to 50 cents for each bushel of tomatoes picked. With 32 pounds to the bushel, it takes picking about 4,000 pounds of tomatoes to make just \$56 a day. If workers' pay were increased by one penny per pound – as it was for those harvesting tomatoes for Taco Bell – laborers working for Chipotle contractors would make about \$96 for the same weight.

Chipotle's web site says: "We want to know where all of our ingredients come from, so that we can be sure they are as flavorful as possible while understanding the environmental and societal impact of our business. We call this idea 'food with integrity,' and it guides how we run our business."



of hugely successful web sites that actually start as a kind of blank page. The content for all of them is being produced not by professional journalists but by ordinary people.

None of these ideas are entirely new.

A decade ago, one of the most popular sites was Geocities, (now owned by Yahoo). It was just a collection of people's personal home pages. Bookmark sharing and photo sharing have also been around since the web was young. And many of the most popular web sites from the era of "Web 1.0" such as Amazon, eBay, the Internet Movie Database, Craig's List and Slashdot, became as popular as they did in part because much of their content was user-generated, including book and movie reviews, items for sale, and comments on news stories.

Part of the success of the phenomenon of blogging is surely due not only to the ease of creation, but also the fact that you can comment, and read other people's comments.

In other words, people seem to love web sites that allow ordinary people to express themselves – to write what they think, to show off their ideas with words, pictures, movies and sound.

While most electronic media (think radio and television) are a form of one-to-many communication, where you tune in to listen or watch, the web is increasingly a form of many-to-many communication.

You'd think that the union movement would be falling over itself with enthusiasm over this possibility. After all, unions are not only organizations of vast numbers of people, but are mostly committed to democracy. Union web sites should be leading the way with reader-generated content.

In a sense, the union movement as it emerged in the last 150 years has been an outstanding example of a mass conversation in which millions of ordinary people have been engaged. The great militant social unions – including the IWW – all arose out of the kinds of discussions and sharing of views that are now common on the web.

But unions are not rushing forward to create web sites that are full of content produced by their own members. The vast majority of union web sites are traditional, one-to-many forms of broadcasting just like television and radio.

There are some notable exceptions. In

"Chipotle, of all companies, can't try to escape accountability for those conditions by pretending that moving from one state to another will solve the problem when they well know – or simply can't claim they don't know by now – that the same or worse conditions prevail throughout the agricultural industry," said CIW organizer Greg Asbed.

In response to the Immokalee workers' campaign, Chipotle executives have said that Florida tomatoes accounted for about 20 percent of their supply, purchased only during a 12-week season. And "in light of CIW's claims," Chipotle spokesperson Chris Arnold told TNS, the company has suspended purchases of Florida tomatoes "entirely."

Coalition members say that by avoiding Immokalee tomatoes, Chipotle is passing up an opportunity to help force change in an exploitative industry. Though the Immokalee workers' campaigns have succeeded in bringing the plight of southern Florida's farm laborers to a national audience, conditions and pay for farm workers remain horrendous throughout the country.

Farm workers are among the nation's lowest-paid workers, on average making less than \$10,000 a year with no health benefits, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

Britain, the Trades Union Congress launched a web site some time ago called UnionReps.org.uk. At its core, the site is a giant discussion forum in which union reps (shop stewards) get to talk about whatever matters to them. It has been a phenomenal success story, studied by academics and the subject of a lot of attention. But it has not been emulated.

The typical union web site – even in unions that ordinarily would see themselves as encouraging member participation – is written by officials, designed to be read by members. There is very little that members can do on these sites other than read what their leaders have to say.

It is quite ironic that web sites owned by the likes of Murdoch are wide open, examples of free-ranging discussion and debate, while the web sites of the trade union movement are closed, tightly regulated, censored and controlled.

There are lots of ways we can fix this. Some examples of ways to involve members more would include:

- Allow members to decide which news articles are most important (Digg shows ways to do this); show lists of the most popular items on the site.
- Give members the chance to comment on items posted to the web site (as most blogs do).
- The old fashioned discussion forum is still a powerful tool, as UnionReps.org.uk demonstrates and should be widely used.
- Let members vote on things – the popularity of LabourStart's labour web site of the year competition shows us every year how much people want to have a say
- Conduct opinion polls online – again, LabourStart's recent experience is that if you ask unionists the right questions you will get thousands of very interesting answers

We don't need buzzwords like "Web 2.0" because we know that the strength of our movement lies in the collective intelligence and experience of our members. And yet we create web sites in which a handful of staffers or elected officials write texts which members can read. We are simply reproducing the old broadcasting model of one-to-many communication. We are not taking advantage of the tools we have at our disposal, nor are we taking advantage of what our members know and think.

We in the union movement should be at least as open and democratic as the web sites now being bought up by the transnational corporations. If the likes of the billionaire owners of News Corporation, Google and Yahoo are not afraid of web sites created by ordinary people, what are we waiting for?

Farm workers do not have the legal right to overtime pay or collective bargaining guaranteed under federal law to other workers.

Workers in Immokalee and other agricultural areas wake at dawn to wait for work. They are selectively hired each day at the growers' will. They spend unpaid hours waiting and in transit, often working 12- to 14-hour days.

Lorenzo Uriostegui Jimenez has been working in Immokalee for four years after moving from Guerrero in southern Mexico. He works long days to save \$200 to send to his wife and six kids each month. He earns about \$40 a day, if he's lucky.

"I wish I could send more [to my family], but that's all I can earn," he said during a protest outside a McDonald's in Chicago. Jimenez lives with four or five other men crammed in a small, run-down trailer, for which he pays \$300 to \$400 a month in rent.

"The trailers are broken with rats and cockroaches in them," he said. "There's no air conditioning, TV or hot water. The windows don't work. But the rent is very expensive."

This description mirrors the conditions found in an ongoing North Carolina Department of Labor investigation into the housing situations of workers for Ag-Mart, a McDonald's supplier of tomatoes which also has farms in Florida and New Jersey. State labor officials described crowded, filthy conditions with no hot water or showers, a shortage of beds and houses with roaches.

Jimenez notes that if workers do not pick the required 125 bushels of tomatoes – two tons – a day, they aren't hired the next day.

But Jimenez thinks the workers will succeed in convincing Chipotle – and eventually McDonald's – to agree to their demands. "We have a lot of support from students and religious people," he said. Gesturing at a plastic bushel basket on the ground during the protest in Chicago, he adds, "All we want is one more cent."

The New Standard is an independent non-profit service: <http://newstandardnews.net/>

Solidarity wins FinnAir strike

Finnair flight attendants quickly won their strike Oct. 20, blocking the national carriers' proposal to recruit new staff through its Estonian subsidiary, Aero, and pay them wages 30 percent less than what Finnair cabin crew earn. Instead, all new Finnair employees will receive the same pay stipulated in the existing contract.

In support of the strike, the Finnish Transport Workers' Union (AKT) asked its members not to fuel Finnair planes. Although managers filled in for striking flight attendants, Finnair only got 25 percent of its planes in the air.

Northwest strike ends

Northwest Airlines mechanics and cleaning crews have approved a settlement ending AMFA's 15-month strike. Fewer than half of the strikers voted on the surrender pact, under which no airplane cleaners will get their jobs back. Mechanics will have a choice of accepting severance pay or being placed on a recall list that could ultimately return a few hundred to their jobs over the next two years.

The deal, approved by 72 percent of voting strikers, was similar to a settlement rejected last December, though it includes somewhat less stingy severance payments.

Most of the Northwest's maintenance work will continue to be done by outside contractors, hired as part of the airline's plans to smash the strike.

Flight attendants continue seeking judicial permission to take intermittent strike action against pay cuts and other concessions Northwest management unilaterally imposed in the midst of their contract. A bankruptcy court judge blocked industrial action, claiming the airline was not strong enough to survive it.

Adjunct professors work long hours for short pay

BY MARK R. WOLFF

Wobs would probably be suspicious upon hearing of a job that pays \$50 an hour, for only three hours work a week for sixteen weeks. People in the education industry who are hired to fill positions as adjunct professors in United States colleges are increasingly questioning compensation, the actual hours and the hidden workload, and the lack of compensation for those hours.

Part-time, or adjunct, faculty teach more than half of all classes at many colleges, hired by the course or by the semester to teach at rates set so low that a single student's tuition payment often covers their entire salary.

Besides classroom teaching time, one needs to calculate the hidden additional required time, such as for preparation, test and paper grading, and office hours.

For new hires, the workload includes the time required to set up and implement a lesson plan for each course from scratch, writing a syllabus, ordering textbooks, and making classroom arrangements. Not to mention orientation, trainings, department gatherings, and those special time-consuming duties, such as make-up testing, workers are required to fulfill. Add to this calculation travel time that accumulates for part-timers who need to travel to lecture halls and labs across the region for other teaching appointments.

If the total time worked is equal to two hours per one hour in the classroom, then the 16 week stint adds up to, let's say, three times a week times 16 weeks of semester doubled, or about 144 hours for which the pay could be \$2400 bucks per course. At this rate adjunct lecturers are actually receiving about \$17 an hour. And this is a conservative estimate, as many adjunct teachers work labor-intensive courses such as freshman composition which require long hours of grading and meeting with students.

High school teachers earn a base rate of \$33 an hour from Boston Public Schools. Education workers could, of course, immediately ask the obvious: whether adjuncts

AFL-CIO's Working America works against workers

The AFL-CIO and the Change to Win unions spend hundreds of millions of dollars each election cycle trying to elect "pro-labor" politicians. Among the dubious specimens the AFL's Working America supported this year was one John Perzel, the Republican speaker of the Pennsylvania House who has used his position to privatize dozens of Philadelphia public schools, block adequate funding to mass transit, and prevent a vote on raising the state's minimum wage. When teachers working AFT phone banks were asked to campaign for Perzel they refused, working the phones only after the union bosses agreed they would not have to shill for him.

Meanwhile, in New York, the Transit Workers Union endorsed state attorney general Eliot Spitzer in his successful campaign for governor, less than a year after he threw TWU President Roger Toussaint in jail and pressed for millions of dollars in fines against the union and its 34,000 members when they struck against the New York City transit system last December.

If the business unions are willing to campaign for the politicians who throw them in jail, can there be any limit to the abuse they are willing to subject their members to?

Mass. Working Families Party wins ballot line with 19%

More than 369,500 Massachusetts voters chose Rand Wilson for state auditor, achieving ballot status for the Working Families Party – far exceeding the required 3 percent of the vote. However, a WFP-sponsored ballot question to allow fusion voting failed. The WFP had hoped to use its new state ballot line to cross-endorse selected Democrats, increasing their influence in the nominating process, not to run independent candidates.

are getting any benefits, and the conditions of the workplace – does the teacher have an office, a phone, and a computer with access to the college database? They might ask also what kind of job security adjuncts have, and how they are treated by administrators and their full-time colleagues. The answer would be, in a word, no.

A quick look at organizing drives for adjuncts at colleges and universities across the U.S. and Canada shows workers struggling not only for bargaining rights and reasonable compensation, but also the right to be rehired after a length of service, and access to health care, and pension benefits that full-timers enjoy.

A fellow worker who researched this situation in higher ed may wonder why human resource management at colleges hiring adjuncts don't want workers to know how much they actually compensate contingent faculty for these jobs. Rates are rarely included in job listings or on human resource pages. A search for salary schedules might reveal only percentages of full time professors, as the idiosyncrasies of policy per contractual arrangement become apparent.

Although salary schedules, once located, may show pay rates by adjunct hires' educational background and experience, one would be hard pressed to find the details of length of service necessary to be considered for re-hire, and the intricacies of step increases and benefit eligibility without consulting a union contract (which cover a minority of part-time faculty, most in public colleges).

Also, adjunct job seekers get little information on the ways colleges differ in the information that is actually included on the paper contract that new hires are required

to sign. There may be no indication prior to looking at the contract, or even then, how many students one is being asked to teach, or the details of what might happen should the enrollment be too low. Many colleges reserve the right to terminate the contract even after the course has begun meeting if enrollment falls below a certain target, without any compensation or notice.

Given these questions regarding actual workload hours and the details of some of these temporary contracts, one can perhaps look with skepticism at the meaning of published pay rates for part-time adjunct professors in the U.S.

Based on a 2001 survey, the range of per course compensation in the SUNY system is between \$1,800 per course to teach undergraduates at Buffalo State to \$3,033 at Potsdam. [www.brockport.edu/~shra/adjunct_pay_survey.doc] The American Psychological Association reports U.S. psychology departments paid in 2003-2004 on average \$3,500 a course in departments where a Ph.D. is offered and \$2,400 in departments where a Master's is offered.

A search through college web pages indicated that a new hire with a Master's degree would get paid without benefits \$1981 per course at Pasadena City College, \$1410 at Illinois Central College, \$1890 at Paradise Valley Community College, \$2500 at Stephen F. Austin Univ., \$1623 at St. Petersburg College, \$1875 at Ocean County College in New Jersey, \$1800 at Andrews Univ., \$2464 at San Mateo CC, \$1500 at Sheridan Coll., \$1800 at Texas Women's Univ., and at Santa Barbara CC \$2860 per course.

The American Association of University Professors reports, in its most recent annual

survey of the economic status of the profession, pay rates ranging from \$1,385 to \$5,500 per course, noting that at those rates many faculty would live in poverty even if teaching a full-time load. "Without doubt, part-time professors who expected that their advanced educations would permit them to earn at least what they might have earned working in occupations requiring four years or less of college have been bitterly disappointed."

At some campuses, adjunct faculty have organized to win job security, health benefits and other rights. At the University of Quebec Trois-Rivières, for example, adjuncts are on annual appointments; salaries begin at CAN\$5,600 per course, rising based on credentials and seniority. Under their contract they receive vacation and other benefits, and have voting rights with the full-time faculty.

But even at many unionized colleges, adjunct pay remains well below the poverty line, and thousands of faculty probably do not make even the minimum wage, when all hours worked are taken into consideration.

3% raise ends Hartnell strike

Faculty at Hartnell College in California near Salinas agreed to a contract after five days on the picket line, ending their strike on October 25. A majority of the 115 professors voted to support the agreement negotiated by the Hartnell Faculty Association.

Although faculty had asked for 4.6 percent salary increases for the past two academic periods and 7.19 percent for this year, they accepted 3 percent for 2005 and 2006, and 5 percent for 2007 including a cost-of-living increase beginning 2007. Adjuncts will receive raises in steps determined by the number of semesters worked – from about \$51 an hour in the classroom. Full-timers without a Master's will now receive \$38,998 with an increasing benefits cap of \$100 a year.

Canadian postal workers refuse to deliver homophobic hate mail

It is often said that neither rain nor hail nor the gloom of night will prevent mail carriers from their appointed route, but in the case of Canadian Union of Postal Workers in Vancouver, homophobic hate mail just might. It began in the city's east side in station F when postal workers refused to deliver a piece called "The Prophetic Word" mailed out by the Fundamental Baptist Church in Waterford, Ontario. An article inside called "Plague of the 21st century the consequence of homosexuality" blamed homosexuality for the spread of AIDS. This caused many postal workers in station F to refuse to deliver the mail. One refused even to touch it.

The postal workers' refusal to deliver this piece of mail triggered a brief walk out. The union and its workers categorized this article as hate mail. The workers were defended by the president of their local, Ken Mooney, who argued that postal workers do not have to be exposed to hate mail. Canada Post sent a spokesperson, Colleen Frick, who said the workers do not have a right to determine what is and isn't hate mail. Frick said that whatever the post office deemed appropriate the postal workers had to deliver. She claimed that the union's contract required workers to deliver the mail without regard to content.

Mooney acknowledged that some workers would be disciplined for their refusal to deliver the 200 pamphlets. It is an ongoing struggle, reminding us that workers sometimes refuse to work for reasons that go beyond wages and benefits. The incident is similar to one where postal workers in Britain refused to deliver the mail of the British National Party a few years ago.

Canadian Parliament votes for anti-scab legislation

The House of Commons voted Oct. 25 167 to 101 in favour of Bill C-257, which would make it illegal for employers covered by the Canada Labour Code to hire scabs.

The bill was supported by union activists

across the country including CUPE members who sent in hundreds of emails to their MPs. According to the 2.2 million-member Canadian Labour Congress, the bill will help create more tranquil labour relations in the federal jurisdiction, including a significant drop in work days lost due to strike or lockout.

Nurses win quickie strike

Although they had reached a tentative agreement October 25, Massachusetts Nurses Association officers who represent 830 nurses at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center maintained their vigilance as the deadline to strike approached the next morning. At 6 a.m., when copies of the proposed agreement were seen on paper, the decision was made to go on strike.

After just five hours, University hospital management yielded with a new three-year agreement that got the nurses cost-of-living adjustments and saved their pensions.

Canadian unions join peace rallies to bring troops home

Thousands of union members across Canada joined rallies on October 28 calling on Prime Minister Stephen Harper to bring Canadian troops home from Afghanistan.

The rallies, held in 37 communities across Canada, were sponsored by the Canadian Peace Alliance, the Canadian Labour Congress, and the Canadian Islamic Congress, marking the fifth anniversary of the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan.

Unfair to admit members?

American Girl has filed an unfair labor practice charge against Actors' Equity Assn., saying the union has been allowing actors and assistant stage managers who are part of its New York doll store's productions to join the union. Management says this is an attempt to bribe workers into supporting the union. Actors struck for two days in August, protesting retaliation against union supporters.

Immigrant bashing in Congress fails to win votes

President George W. Bush signed a bill Oct. 26 authorizing 700 miles of new fencing along the 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexico border, in an effort to boost anti-immigrant Republican candidates just before the Nov. 7 elections.

The law calls for construction of two layers of reinforced fencing around the border town of Tecate, Calif., and across nearly the entire length of Arizona's border with Mexico. The law also orders the Department of Homeland Security to install surveillance cameras along the Arizona border; it includes no money for the fence which is expected to cost some \$6 billion.

Three Native American nations and 23 tribes live in the borderlands between the United States and Mexico. Construction of the border separation fence will divide in two the ancient history of these peoples. "The land is the place God put us from time immemorial. I can't imagine that now it will be difficult to visit my family" because of the fence, said Louisa Gussac, chief of the Koumeyaay nation located on both sides of the California border.

"The building of the fence is an insult, a slap on migrant people who historically have contributed to the social, economic and cultural development of the U.S.," said Salvador Reza, leader of the Tonatierra organization. "That will be an enemy wall because that's the way northerners treat us."

The fence bill and other anti-immigrant legislation was passed on the eve of the elections with support from both Democrats and Republicans. Anti-immigrant forces are expected to press for funding the fence and border surveillance (including spy drones proposed to monitor the Canadian border) as Congress takes up proposals to legalize at least some of the immigrant workers now in the United States.

The National Immigration Rights Network has called for a new round of protests on May Day 2007 (www.mayday2007.org).

Wide Wide World of Sweatshops: Pirates drop the ball

BY KENNETH MILLER, PASCA

The National Garment Workers Federation of Bangladesh struck multiple times during August and October.

In spite of the best efforts of the Pittsburgh Anti-Sweatshop Community Alliance, the Pittsburgh Pirates, our baseball team, failed to request payroll records from Haddad Apparel and ask Major League Baseball to freeze the current volume of apparel sourced from Bangladesh. Worse, the Pirates continue to hide behind Ethan G. Orlinsky of Major League Baseball, who is now threatening to "correct the public record" and highlight the reports and monitoring from sweatshop bosses like Nike, Reebok and Rawlings.

We will focus on making our team accountable and making the MLBs and the Orlinskys of the world, people who are paid not to know about sweatshop conditions, persona non grata. It's the home team that is responsible for the working conditions where our team apparel is sewn.

The Major League Sweatshop Education Campaign continues full force with a half dozen presentations before the end of the year. In January, PASCA plans to help launch Pitt Alumni Against Sweatshops and join with United Students Against Sweatshops in spring campaigns to strengthen university anti-sweatshop policies. While CMU and Duquesne University have taken some action, the University of Pittsburgh is a gaping hole in

our regional anti-sweatshop commitment.

Alumni groups and community participation have the potential to transform student turnover from the movement's perceived weakness into its greatest strength. UCLA's Alumni Association's support of the LA Garment Workers Center was the first such initiative.

PASCA continues its participation in two critical coalitions. I represented PASCA at a weekend meeting in Connecticut with SweatFree Communities. In February SFC is planning to announce the formation of a consortium designed to use taxpayer dollars to implement codes of conduct at supplier factories. The state of Pennsylvania has already joined on, and PASCA hopes to help deliver Pittsburgh and Allegheny County.

We also hope to play a role in convincing Kansas to announce its participation. It is possible that the governor will make this announcement on Nov. 16 at the dedication of Lucinda Todd School in Topeka.

SweatFree Communities has aligned itself with the Designated Supplier Plan championed by United Students Against Sweatshops. The DSP is designed to consolidate university apparel manufacture in fewer factories, to require union neutrality agreements in them, and to press apparel firms for longer production agreements, strengthening workers' leverage when they organize. The DSP appears to respond to two specific issues:

1) there is no coherent plan from workers to organize the global apparel industry and 2) attempts to implement codes of conduct have led to plant closings. However, PASCA has concerns that DSP implementation might disproportionately funnel work to unionized factories in the United States.

This is why PASCA is committed to the regional organizing initiatives we see developing in Bangladesh and to being a part of a regional organizing campaign in Central America. This will only happen with a concerted effort, not only to develop codes and policies, but to involve ourselves in the details on the ground and build a Civil Rights Bridge from our communities to the factories where our clothing is sewn. We also should focus on how workers in factories that benefit from the DSP are involved and working towards a global organizing strategy.

HumanRightsBaseball.Org is the other key coalition we are continuing to develop in advance of the 2007 baseball season.

This is a rough time for the anti-sweatshop movement. We are struggling not to have our hopes and expectations adjusted to the Designated Supplier Program and to stay focused on the possibility of increasing our power through targets like our baseball teams and taking strategic decision-making away from those that have "professionalized" international solidarity.

It is time to dig in and look harder at the

resources that are available to us and details of the organizations that are on the ground. Our assessment is hopeful because workers in all of these countries are producing for the same consumer market... ours! The expiration of the Multi Fiber Arrangement has lined up the ducks in a way that they have never been lined up before. It's gonna take Wobbly organizing, where workers have a reason to believe that international solidarity is real and we organize workers, not the job.

The Saturday night home opener at PNC Park is April 14 – Pirates vs. San Francisco. PASCA is looking for a labor union to sponsor a Union Night at PNC Park. It's time to deal with those Wobbly Free Speech issues on every square inch of this green earth and inside the ballparks. More than this, we have to think beyond our local anti-sweatshop organizing and move an agenda that does much more to link our communities to those sewing our clothes.

If these anti-sweatshop codes and policies are going to mean anything, it is time to radically spread out the nuts and bolts of international solidarity. If anti-sweatshop activists believe in what they are doing, and in apparel industry workers, then we've got to own a plan, identify the some of the critical obstacles and move this Pirate Armada.

Media workers under attack

continued from page 1

being assembled and delivered by temporary replacements. (The IBEW broke with the Toledo Council of Newspaper Unions, reaching a separate agreement slashing wages by 7 percent, among other concessions.)

In Pittsburgh, Block has threatened to sell its paper if it doesn't win major concessions by the end of the year. Pittsburgh Newspaper Guild President Mike Buckso was not impressed, saying that workers might be better off if the paper was sold given the Block family's unique talent for losing money in cities where its newspapers have a monopoly.

Media workers are increasingly coming to recognize that their ability to do quality work is fatally compromised by their employers' relentless quest for ever-greater profits. The Newspaper Guild, in particular, has offered to buy several newspapers amidst the growing turmoil, but has been uniformly rebuffed. The Guild has also been participating in the growing media reform movement.

The National Conference for Media Reform holds its third conference January 12-14 in Memphis, bringing together activists, journalists and others concerned with media issues. Its 2005 conference brought together thousands of unionists, independent media makers, and regulators. The 2007 conference (www.freepress.net) features Ben Bagdikian, Phil Donahue, Jane Fonda, Amy Goodman, Bill Moyers and Robert McChesney.

As long as journalism serves the rich and powerful, those who own the media and control the ad dollars on which it depends, media workers will face ceaseless attacks upon their livelihoods and on their ability to do their jobs honestly. While consoling their consciences with mirages of objectivity and professionalism, media workers have become ever more enmeshed in a corporate system that values short-term profits first and foremost, and the rights of workers not at all.

Oaxaca protesters under siege

INTERVIEW BY AMANDA AQUINO, INDYMEDIA

Oaxaca is living a brutal government repression of the social movement, with disappearances, torture, detentions, killings and many injured. Given the situation, it is difficult to know exactly how many people have been affected, but there is no doubt that there are severe violations of human rights.

According to the Oaxaca Network for Human Rights (Red Oaxaqueña de Derechos Humanos), from June 14 through Nov. 5, there were 145 detained, 34 of whom have been freed, 17 dead and 33 seriously injured, including five journalists injured and one killed. Some sources speak of 65 disappeared. Below is an interview with a member of the Human Rights Collective.

From the "planton" of Santo Domingo, Oaxaca: *What is the human rights situation here in Oaxaca?*

Human rights basically do not exist here any more. All human rights are out of order. You can be at any moment kidnapped by people who call themselves police. They can be mercenaries. They can put you in jail. They can make you disappear. And you don't have any human rights. This is ironic because Mexico, this year, is in the human rights leadership in the United Nations. They should watch and guard human rights, but they are the first to do away with them.

What violations of human rights have there been?

The violations include killings, torture, beatings. We have now reports of people who were in jail. They were kept for two, three days without any food, nothing to drink. They wanted to go to the toilet but they didn't give them a toilet, just made them urinate in their pants, this kind of abuse. They are threatening their families.

We are talking about at least 45 disappeared people. We have the first report of people who saw with their own eyes a teacher thrown out of a flying helicopter. Also we have a report, not verified yet, of a doctor who works in a hospital, who saw twenty dead people the 2nd of November (the day of a major confrontation). This was in a hospital of Oaxaca.

We are still in the process of verifying all this. There is a danger that days go by and that a lot of these crimes can not be proved

any more. Therefore, it is very important that everybody join us, gives us a hand to document this.

Is it known how these people were disappeared?

Some were kidnapped from their houses. The police entered in the middle of the night, at one, two in the morning, without arrest warrants, and took our compañeros away. Others disappeared from the barricades. Others we know were walking on the street and they took them away also. Others disappeared last Sunday, when there was a march here in Oaxaca and there was great national support. People came from Mexico City, Chiapas, and there were military checkpoints. There they also disappeared various compañeros.

Do you have documented cases of people who have been killed or detained?

We know that from the 14 of June (when the government repression began) until today, November 9, there have been 17 dead people. We have the names of all of them, their age. Two were children, one a 14-year-old and one a 12-year-old. Detained, from the 29th of October (when the federal police force came in) until the 5th of November, we have 87 people who were detained. But one should say they were kidnapped because there were no arrest warrants. 34 of them have been freed.

What information is there in terms of who is responsible for these killings?

We know that the responsible is the government of the state of Oaxaca, Ulises Ruiz (the "governor"), and some of his police force dressed in civilian clothes killed some of the 17 people. Some of the six people who have been killed in the last few days were killed by the PFP, the federal police force, which was sent in on the 29th of October. Besides this, we are getting every day reports of shootings at the university campus, where Radio Universidad is. It's almost a daily affair. People come and take out their guns and shoot at the students.

What are the efforts that are being done to protect human rights?

Here, we are working hard with volunteers and lawyers. We have a collective. First we try to locate the prisoners in the jails, and to liberate them. But the work has to go much further. We have to find the disappeared! The liberated come back and can report on the abuses, the violence, the beatings. But we are

very very worried about the disappeared.

What would you ask of people listening to you from other parts of the world?

We ask for solidarity. You can create committees in solidarity and put pressure on your local politicians where you live and also demand from the Mexican embassies and consulates wherever you are that human rights be respected here and to call an end to this violence. Aside from the detained, the disappeared, I already have seen with my own eyes, people who are obviously traumatized, and who have psychosis due to the violence they have witnessed. ...

There are many abuses. And we cannot expect anything from the government, from the judicial branch, because they are the same people who are committing these crimes.

Anything else you would like to share?

I would like to call on all the compañeros and compañeras of the world, who hear this: international solidarity live on! The struggle of the people of Oaxaca is for a better world, and this is the same struggle that people in the United States, in Europe, wherever they are, carry on.

The rich get richer faster

A new study by University of California-Berkeley economist Emmanuel Saez finds that over the past 25 years, America's very rich have grown much richer. By 2004, the richest 1 percent of households had 19.8 percent of the entire nation's pretax income.

Between 2000 and 2005, workers with four-year college degrees saw their wages fall 3.1 percent, adjusted for inflation.

While top income shares remained fairly stable in Continental Europe and Japan over the last thirty years, they increased substantially in English-speaking countries, driven by a surge in top wage incomes that began in the 1970s and accelerated in the 1990s.

Meanwhile, in Houston, Texas, as Chevron profits shatter a 127-year record, 5,300 janitors who earn as little as \$20 a night with no health benefits are on strike against the contractors who service the oil giant and other Houston building owners. Janitors are seeking \$8.50 per hour, employer-paid health insurance, and more hours. Instead of bargaining, the national cleaning companies they work for set out to fire and intimidate workers, leading to the strike Oct. 23.

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Real democracy

The word "democracy" has been given a bad smell lately. That term is misused by every dictatorship on the planet. Just last week, as I write this, the new "democratic" regime in Iraq announced that they had found Saddam Hussein guilty of mass murder and that he had been given the death sentence. This decision was announced just two days before the "democratic" elections in the USA.

There are skeptics who think the Bush regime controlled the decision and the timing of that decision with an iron fist. The United States wouldn't interfere in the courts of another "democratic" nation, would we? We might, especially when the people have no real voice in that "democracy." And I am too old to believe that exchanging wealthy Democratic lawyers who are bought and paid for by the corporations for wealthy Republican lawyers who are bought and paid for by the corporations is anything more than the dog and pony show that has been playing here for decades. Nothing will change. 1984 double speak is rampant in the second millennium, fellow workers. Democracy, in my Oxford dictionary, is defined as "government by the whole population."

How can a real democracy be trusted to misinformed and racist working people, as the Industrial Workers of the World suggests? We workers are mere human beings living in a highly competitive culture. Racism, sexism, one-up-man-ship of all kinds, is the

natural result of dog-eat-dog cultures. Do you really believe you are immune from this need to feel better than others when you are as deeply immersed as I am in a culture that makes large profits from our low self-esteem? I don't. That need and other weaknesses will hopefully atrophy as we gain control of our lives and no longer fear one another for economic reasons.

Misinformed? Know anyone who isn't? I observe the "leaders" of our so-called nation states today, the "leaders" of industry, the professors in the universities, the preachers in their pulpits, almost all of them products of the most expensive universities on this planet: Harvard, Yale, Princeton. I look at the results of this "education" – global warming, starving populations, entire continents infected with AIDS, insanity expressed through wars – and I am left wondering, if we were to hold a stupid contest tomorrow, who would get the blue ribbon? Am I saying that formal education is a waste? Not at all. We have the Howard Zinns and Noam Chomskys. I am only saying that sheepskins on walls prove nothing to me. I want to see some intelligent behavior produced by what has been taught.

I am not easily impressed with formal "education" when, by comparison, I look at the foresight of loggers, miners, migrant-workers, laborers who 101 years ago understood that we must address human weaknesses and problems globally and democratically and founded the IWW. They were 101 years



ahead of their time, in my opinion, and few of these workers had finished high school. We have been hoodwinked by "wizard of oz" fakers into believing they are better educated than we are; that we are too under-educated to know what is best for us, that we should leave the thinking to them. We did. What a monstrous, possibly fatal, mistake. I define "intellect" as you using *your* brain and me using mine. I have come to believe that "advanced education" can be just four or eight more years you pay professors to fill your mind with more nonsense and half-truths. I am generalizing. Many students remain skeptical and think for themselves and many professors help them do that; but, judging by the decisions most make after leaving the universities, I am convinced that the majority do not think much on their own after "graduating." What the hell does "graduate" mean anyway? The word itself can create the comfortable illusion that we have finished our education at age 20.

Due to the excesses of capitalism, the smoke and mirrors of religion, and the lack of faith of "socialist" bureaucrats in working people, this earth is very near a critical condition. Even if it were possible to get everyone on this deteriorating earth to agree on one political party or one religion, there may not be time left to come to such an agreement.

In my experience, fundamentalists, the type that insist that "my god, my 'ism,' my view, is the one and *only* true god or 'ism,'" have divided progressives into such small, competing factions as to render the progressive movement here a very sick joke. Even if your "ism" or your god is the one and only, the goal of converting everyone on the globe is just not possible anytime soon. The serious problems facing the human race – global warming, the finite quantities of fuel and water, unequal distribution of food and material goods – must be solved soon, if it isn't already too late. The only solution to global problems is global cooperation; and competing parties, religions and egos have proven to be incapable of even local cooperation.

Immediate objectives, in my opinion, should be first, to find ways for humanity to live within its means. For example, how much plant life can we harvest each year without destroying the balance of life on the planet? How much of our energy resources can be consumed and replaced each year? How many fish taken from the water and replaced? Second, how can we produce and distribute fairly to all working people that sustainable amount of food and goods? Many complex questions must be dealt with and mature answers found if our grandchildren are going to have any future. Politics, religions, savings accounts for their education – none of these will matter to them if there is no air to breathe. Capitalism, like mold or cancer, can't deal with questions like limiting growth because capitalism needs constant growth to survive. Authoritarian socialism has not limited growth, with the exception of population growth in China, because the bureaucrats feel that socialism must compete

with capitalism in material comforts or face a revolt of the people. Watch what China is doing. The "democratic republics" rarely bother to ask the people's opinions or give them options. The people are thought to be too misinformed for complex questions like, "Do you want this planet to survive or would you rather own a Hummer?"

What might be possible, if we want global cooperation, is a structure based on the model created for the IWW in 1905 by Father Thomas Hagerty, a priest who was forged in the crucible of the Colorado hard rock mines during the labor wars between wealthy mine owners and the Western Federation of Miners in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. That model allows each union of workers in each particular area of the world to remain autonomous and run its own affairs democratically, while belonging to and cooperating with many other workers who may believe in different gods or politics, as long as those religious beliefs and politics are left out of IWW proceedings. Politics and religion are your personal business and are better debated at coffee houses in your area. Both are divisive and disruptive to the union's primary objectives: the production and distribution of necessary and sustainable goods equably to the workers of the world.

The founders of the IWW viewed revolution as evolving gradually, systematically "building the new world within the shell of the old," so that as the unions grew in power, workers would gain the experience to control the means of production through their experience with democratic control in their unions. The knowledge and cooperation necessary to make a comparatively smooth, non-violent transfer of power from the wealthy class to the people who do the work of the world would evolve into One Big Union. If the ruling class resisted this nonviolent transfer of power, then a general strike might become necessary in order that the capitalist, socialist and religious bosses of the world understand that their way of dominating working people is going the way of kings, queens and dictators; via the trash heap.

Democracy must be the essential foundation of this One Big Union if the very diverse workers of the world are to have any faith in it. How could such a large union remain democratic? Let's discuss the genius of Tom Hagerty's wheel in the next issue of the *Industrial Worker*. However, no structure guarantees democracy. That responsibility always

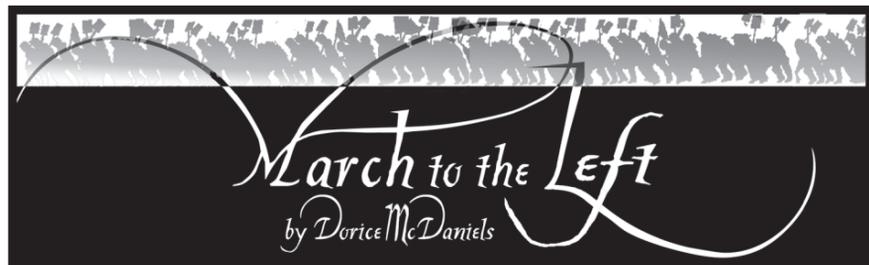
Machinists strike Raytheon

Some 1,900 IAM machinists are on strike against Raytheon Missile Systems in Tucson. In addition, IAM Local 933 has filed unfair labor practice charges against the war profiteer with the NLRB.

Raytheon management is alleged to have conducted surveillance operations against the union negotiating committee and also threatened to fire employees on probation if they supported the union.

At issue in the complaints filed with the NLRB are protections against replacement workers hired to break the strike. Raytheon management has offered union workers a 3 percent raise for each of the next three years, along with a one-time \$500 bonus, but the union says the increases are not sufficient to offset increased health care premiums.

Workers voted overwhelmingly to strike the defense contractor. The Tucson plant constructs Javelin anti-tank missiles, the Tamahawk missile, and air-to-air missiles.



Sometimes semantics can be a study in egocentricity. Neighbor, a word reminding us of friendly relations, stems from the term "neigh-boor," that irascible boor who lives on the next plot of land.

"The natives," a neutral term innocent of prejudice, has been transposed by careless use into one of pejorative overtones, but I wonder if the folks living on the South Sea islands feel more comfortable with the more civil "indigenous peoples."

We garb ourselves with implied superiority even as we mark our geographical boundaries. Through our slogans we elevate rank.

Language is rife with self-congratulatory terms, shunting aside all those others:

Deutschland uber allus; God's chosen people; The sun never sets on Great Britain (huh?); Forty million Frenchmen can't be wrong... Rom (Gypsy for man). Eskimos have a similarly exclusive term (Inuit) for the people. And, a while back, all roads lead to Rome.

When you hear the term American, it never occurs to you to include your friendly

neighbor to the north, and certainly not Mexico and all those other countries in the southern hemisphere of America. No! American immediately translates into the cranky Yankee sitting on top of his world.

But the group most ingenious in its bid for superiority has to be Afro-American. A man of impeccable veracity told me this tale, so there can be no question of the Gospel truth of the matter.

Once upon a time, all the people on the earth lived in happy fraternity with black skins. Them, one day, God came to the people and spoke to them most earnestly, calling upon them to undertake a very important and very dangerous task.

Well, some folks were so terrified they turned pale with fright and ran away. So scared, in fact, were they that they remained forever pale. And all their progeny were born pale and scared.

But some people just went right ahead and did God's work without turning a hair. And they stayed black.

— Dorice McDaniels

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This Statement of Ownership will be printed in the December 2006 issue.

I certify that all information on this form is true and complete. Jon Bekken, editor



IN NOVEMBER WE REMEMBER:

Nat Solomon

(1910 – 1995)

Union Organizer, Peace Activist, Communist

from *Free Voices*,

Raymond Solomon, editor

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General strike against Swedish "job creation" scheme

BY KLAS RONNBACK & IRENE ELMEROT, GOTHENBURG SAC

In the recent Swedish election, a right-wing government was elected on a "jobs-creation" platform. To do this, they want, among other things, to cut unemployment security insurance for all workers at the same time as they increase the cost of participating in this scheme.

These schemes are formally run by the unions, but are mainly financed through resources transferred from the employers by the state. Our new government thinks that they can take some of the money transferred through this system to prop up the government budget in order to be able to lower taxes for rich people.

Our new government in this way also has found a way to attack the unions without it being totally obvious. Estimates are that union membership will decrease, since the proposals will make it much more expensive to be part of a union. Time is running short: the government will present the proposal to parliament Nov. 15, and a decision will be taken in December.

The business unions are so far just talking, but not taking any concrete actions. At the recent congress of SAC (the Swedish Workers Central Organization, a syndicalist union with historic ties to the IWW), we decided to call for a national strike against the government proposals.

Our strike is planned for Nov. 15, the day before the proposal to the parliament. In Sweden, unions have to "inform" the authorities about any industrial actions. We have done so in this case, but not only have we informed that members of the SAC

are going out on a strike, but through some legal wrangling we have made it possible for virtually anybody in Sweden to join in the strike. We of course are under no illusion that the national business unions will strike. We are, however, hoping that some local unions will join, as well as individuals and formally unorganized workers.

Many people are really angry about these proposals, and frustrated about the business unions not doing anything to try to stop them. In a poll (conducted by a "social democratic" mainstream tabloid) recently a stunning 75 percent of the 100,000 people that answered stated that they support our strike! (Mind you, SAC only has 7,000 members in a country of 9 million people, so it's a really massive level of support.)

This is the biggest union struggle we have taken on, probably for decades! For once, it seems like SAC actually is coming together in a joint struggle, instead of the all-too-common infighting.

Sweden: Free bus travel after horrific attack on driver

Members of Sweden's Kommunal union stopped collecting fares to protest violence against bus drivers in Stockholm. Passengers who do not have a pre-purchased ticket or travel card were allowed onto buses free of charge as drivers refuse to handle cash.

The action started last week after a brutal assault on a bus driver during a robbery. Three men who had been at a beer festival assaulted the driver when the bus reached the terminus, smashing his head on the floor, and then stole the cash box. It was the third incident in recent weeks.

Argentina: worker-run enterprises fight for future...

continued from page 1

ness but also worry whether authorities will pass a law to evict the business. "We have to do two things simultaneously: produce and struggle. We can't stop either, because the day we stop fighting or producing the recuperated enterprises are fried. We know that no politician in this oligarchic and imperialist state is going to permit workers to own the means of production."

Hundreds of workers from other worker-run factories joined the Renacer cooperative in their demands for a national expropriation law. Workers from the ceramics plant Zanon celebrated a victory Oct. 20, when they won a long battle for a federal court to recognize the FaSinPat cooperative for three years.

The long-term demand at Zanon is for national expropriation under worker control. However, Zanon workers have fought a parallel battle in federal court to legally recognize FaSinPat (Factory without a boss), their worker cooperative. In October 2005 FaSinPat won a legal dispute, pressuring federal courts to recognize it as a legal entity with the right to run the cooperative for one year. Earlier this year, with the October expiration date nearing, the worker assembly voted to step up actions and community efforts.

According to Omar Villablanca, a Zanon worker who has worked at the ceramics plant for nine years, FaSinPat will never drop the fight for a national expropriation law. "We didn't win a three year legal status for FaSinPat because the judges are understanding people. We won legal recognition because we fought for the courts to see what we've accomplished. The workers are the only ones willing and restore a factory that was in ruins that had a million dollar debt that the former owner Luis Zanon left behind. We [the workers] were the only ones capable of creating jobs."

With legal status, the FaSinPat can concentrate on production planning, improve working conditions and community projects. As part of their celebration, the FaSinPat cooperative has invited workers to visit Zanon

to learn that workers can function without a boss or owner. The workers' assembly has resolved that the body of workers is now in the position to teach other workers from the four and a half years of learning from worker self-management.

Though, Villablanca made it clear that even with temporary legal status, the FaSinPat collective will not abandon their roots. "The first thing that we did after receiving the news that the judge approved our three-year legal status was to vote in a our workers' assembly that we have to continue to march in the streets and to support other workers' and grassroots struggles."

During the October 27 rally, workers from Renacer, BAUEN and Zanon expressed their solidarity with workers who days before faced a violent eviction. Over 50 police officers violently attacked 14 workers who were occupying a gas station in a Buenos Aires neighborhood. Two years after the owners claimed bankruptcy, the workers formed the Punta Arenas cooperative. They are demanding that the gas station be handed over to the workers in compensation for back salaries that the owner never paid. Despite differences with the pro-capitalist lawyer Luis Caro who represents the Punta Arenas cooperative, worker-run businesses from diverse groupings said: if they mess with one of us, they mess with all of us.

"Factories that close down are factories of death that kill entire families," said Fernando Velazquez from City Hotel, a worker-run and recovered hotel in the coastal city of Mar del Plata. The occupied enterprises are organizing to develop strategies in defense of Latin American workers susceptible to factory closures and poor working conditions. While these experiences are forced to co-exist within the capitalist market, they are forming new visions for a new working culture.

"Factories that close down should be recovered by the workers and the courts must recognize the right to work," said Velazquez. "We all deserve definitive expropriation because we are recuperating jobs and dignity."



Attack on Oaxaca City

The International Solidarity Commission sent an urgent letter to the Mexican government Nov. 8 protesting the federal police attack on Oaxaca City, and the threatened attack on the Popular Indigenous Council of Oaxaca's (CIPO-RFM) centre, where IWW member Eric Larson is working.

The ISC called on the government to remove the Ulises Ruiz Ortiz state government, demobilize the paramilitary forces allied to his regime, and withdraw federal police.

"The continued presence of Ortiz in government and the federal police and military in the city, maintain an environment where the truly violent groups tied to Ortiz are able to act with impunity. They have killed and injured members and supporters of civil society groups like the CIPO, the teachers' union (SNTE Section 22) and the Popular Assemblies of the People of Oaxaca (APPO).

"The Federal government of Mexico is becoming known around the world for its support of the authoritarian reign of Ulises Ruiz Ortiz. ... Members of the IWW will

continue to protest in Canada, the United States, Australia, the British Isles and Europe, against the repressive acts of the Oaxacan and Federal governments, and the paramilitaries who operate with their support. We demand that the Federal government comply with the wishes of the overwhelming majority of Oaxacans and remove Ortiz."

The ISC also participated in the annual meeting of the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras in Tijuana in early November.

Bangladeshi strike fund

The ISC continues to support the National Garment Workers Federation of Bangladesh. The NGWF is on the front lines of the global garment labour movement, organizing industry-wide strikes to force the national government and employers to raise the industry's minimum wage and ensure health and safety standards. We are working to form a coalition in support of the NGWF. The ISC has issued a \$5 "Solidarity baseball" assessment stamp for IWW members, to help raise money for the NGWF's strike funds.

Airport union to strike over anti-Muslim discrimination

Talk of a strike is brewing at Charles de Gaulle-Roissy International Airport after more than 70 airport workers were accused of having links to fundamentalist organizations and "terrorist groups." The workers who were removed had their badges taken away in May 2005. The authorities claim it was an "Obligation of Precaution."

The workers are affiliated with the CGT labor union in France, which is planning a total work stoppage if the workers and their badges are not restored. Seven workers have filed a discrimination suit against the company, which they say singled them out because of their race and religion. Airport authorities responded by saying the workers who filed the suit had connections to the American shoe-bomber Richard Reid.

The union claims that this is just a gimmick to fire non-white Muslim workers. Two of the workers who sued were awarded their clearances and jobs back by the court Nov. 8, but the other 66 remain barred from security areas and face dismissal. If the court rules against the employees there could be a massive work stoppage.

Vietnam strike tally hits 100

Official reports say Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City saw 100 strikes in the first ten months of the year, the highest rate on record. While the government-dominated official union does not engage in strikes, it has intervened to negotiate settlements and said many walkouts were prompted by grievances such as unpaid wages, social insurance and excessive overtime.

New intl. labor fed forming

Delegates from 360 trade unions in 150 countries met in Vienna to create the International Trade Union Confederation, intended to unite the World Confederation of Labor and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. Two other international federations, the World Federation of Trade Unions and the International Workers Association, are not involved in the new venture.

The WCL was founded as a federation of Catholic unions, the ICFTU as a coalition of conservative and social democratic unions that withdrew from the WFTU during the Cold War. Together, the WCL and ICFTU grouped more than 180 million workers.

ITUC officials say the new federation will be able to better support embattled unions around the world. The Confederation hopes to build closer ties with groups outside the

labor movement, including charitable organizations, and to play a more active part in anti-globalization forums.

Oddly, for a labor organization, the founding congress opened with a speech by Austria's president. Also speaking were the directors of the World Trade Organization and the International Labour Organization.

UAE: Immigrant workers abused in construction boom

As the United Arab Emirates experiences one of the world's largest construction booms, its government has failed to stop employers from abusing the rights of the country's half million migrant construction workers, according to Human Rights Watch.

After a string of strikes and labor protests earlier this year, the government promised to legalize unions and vigorously enforce the country's labor laws, which are relatively good on paper. But it has failed to do so.

Human Rights Watch's report, "Building Towers, Cheating Workers," documents serious abuses including unpaid wages, several years of indebtedness to recruiters for fees UAE law says only employers should pay, withholding of employees' passports, and hazardous working conditions that result in high rates of death and injury.

The UAE is undergoing a dramatic construction boom, and nearly all its construction workers are migrants, mostly from countries such as India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The Emirates' 2,738,000 migrant workers make up 95 percent of the country's workforce.

Workers are desperate for their wages, but are trapped due to their debts. UAE law prohibits a worker from obtaining a new job without their old employer's consent. While the government in many cases has forced companies to pay back wages, there is no record of a single case where it has penalized an employer with fines or imprisonment for failing to pay wages, or any other breaches of the labor law.

Construction workers' wages range from \$106 to \$250 per month, contrasting starkly with the national average of \$2,106.

Hundreds of migrant workers die each year in the UAE under unexplained circumstances. The government can account only for a few of these deaths, primarily because it does not enforce laws requiring employers to report work site deaths and injuries. In 2004 alone, the embassies of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh returned the bodies of 880 construction workers to their home countries.