

# In Critical Solidarity

Newsletter of the American Sociological Association's Section on Labor &  
Labor Movements  
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## In This Issue

|                            |    |
|----------------------------|----|
| Section website            | 2  |
| Moody, Wisconsin & Beyond  | 2  |
| Schwartz, Why Mubarak Fell | 9  |
| Call for Papers            | 13 |
| Book Announcements         | 14 |

## *Message from the Chair*

Dear Section Members,

The last few months have proven to be a simultaneously exciting and worrisome time for labor, nationally and internationally. The uprising in Egypt, particularly the role that workers and unions played in dismantling the Mubarak dictatorship provided much-needed inspiration. On the other hand, attempts to dismantle public-sector unions in the U.S. have been alarming. I think it's fair to say that the inspiration from Egypt, along with outrageous legislation in Wisconsin, propelled the movement for justice in the public sector forward. Needless to say, there is much work to be done in the coming years, since the attacks on public-sector workers are sure to continue well into the future. Our spring newsletter has two exciting articles, one on Wisconsin and the public sector by Kim Moody and another on Egypt by Michael Schwartz.

On another note, our website committee has been hard at work, I'd like to take the opportunity to remind everyone to please join our Facebook page and send labor/work syllabi, articles, books and other labor related material to Clare Hammond and Paul Morgan (see announcement in this newsletter).

Over the summer we will be publishing another newsletter with a listing of all of our activities at the ASA meeting in Las Vegas. Most of our events will fall on Tuesday, August 23, but we will have regular and thematic sessions on other days as well.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all very soon.

Carolina

*From the website committee . . .*

Dear Labor and Labor Movement Section members,

We are currently in the process of updating the section's web presence. Over the next four months we will be working on improving opportunities for member communication and on creating a public face that reflects members' current scholarship and research interests. In order to do this we are asking for help on a number of items:

1. Please join the ASA Labor and Labor Movements Facebook page. This will be a place where we can share information about relevant funding opportunities, awards, publications and news stories.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/ASA-Section-on-Labor-and-Labor-Movements/194892527208743>

2. Please help to provide additional content for the website. At the moment, the website doesn't reflect the most recent work by our membership.

We would like to update this and are asking that people email

[\(ASALaborMovements@gmail.com\)](mailto:ASALaborMovements@gmail.com) the following information:

- a) Citation information on any new books or articles published in the last five years
- b) Sample syllabi
- c) Any photos taken at the ASA meetings over the last five years

Thanks so much for your help with this! We hope to have some exciting updates in place for the ASA meetings in August.

Sincerely,  
The Website Committee  
Clare Hammonds  
Paul Morgan

☐☐☐☐☐

*Wisconsin and Beyond*

By Kim Moody

“I believe leaders of the business community, with few exceptions, have chosen to wage a one-sided class war in this country...” —Doug Fraser, UAW President, 1978

“20 years or so down the road we’ll be talking about the ‘before Wisconsin’ and ‘after Wisconsin’ movements.”—Tom Juravich, labor organizer and researcher 2011

“The organization does not supply the troops for the struggle, but the struggle, in an ever growing degree, supplies recruits for the organization.” — Rosa Luxemburg, *The Mass Strike*, 1906

AS THE LAST decade or more have demonstrated, unions don’t grow incrementally as a result of their patient, even persistence efforts to recruit. Rather, unions grow more or less rapidly in periods of intense conflict and labor upheaval. Such was the clear experience of the 1930s. In a somewhat more uneven fashion, the period from the mid-1960s through the 1970s saw rising numbers of strikes, increased rank and file rebellion, and the addition of four million members to the ranks of organized labor.

While some level of organization is required to spark a rise in labor’s side of the class struggle, Rosa Luxemburg was essentially right that it is “the struggle, in an ever growing degree, (that) supplies recruits.” The February-March events in Wisconsin, across the Midwest, and indeed around the country, have already ignited a spark that has drawn tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands into action.

It’s not just that the demonstrations have been big and bold, which they certainly have been. Nor is it that fairly high placed union leaders called for actions, refreshing as that is. Rather it is that these events, the occupations, the growing numbers, the rallying of non-union supporters, the national outpouring, are the consequence of countless

grassroots initiatives — of worker self-activity — that carried these events beyond what those who might have initiated them had ever imagined possible, or perhaps desirable.

Like the beginnings of upsurge in earlier times, the rebellion that began with Wisconsin's public workers — against one of the most far-reaching attacks on worker rights in some time — came as a result of anger building after years of pressure on public employees all across the nation.

Real wages of Wisconsin public employees, for example, grew by less than one percent from 1999 through 2009. Municipal employees in Madison hadn't had a wage increase for three years. But we are to imagine that they are to blame for the state's newly manufactured deficit, even though the research arm of the National Nurses United found that two-thirds of Wisconsin corporations paid no taxes. So, to injury was added insult.

### **Crisis and Pressure**

These kinds of pressures, of course, are not unique to public sector workers. Enormous pressures of work intensification have joined slumping income and attacks on benefits of all kinds. The Great Recession brought still more pressure on those with jobs, while continuing the shift of the workforce as a whole to lower paid work. I'm suggesting here that these same attacks and erosions of power, which have brought about labor's retreats and stalemates, may also be what impels people to rebellion.

Not surprisingly, the recent Great Recession dealt another blow to a very weakened labor movement. In 2009 and 2010, after a couple of years of moderate growth, the unions lost 1.4 million members, with all the net loss in the private sector. Collective bargaining outcomes followed suit. In 2008, according to Bureau of National Affairs reports, the average negotiated first year wage increase was 3.6%. By 2009 it had sunk to 2.3%, and by the first nine months of 2010 to 1.7%. State and local public workers did even worse as first year increases dropped from

3.2% in 2008 to 2.0% in 2009 and 1.3% in the first nine months of 2010. In this latter year 35% of all agreements contained no first year wage increase.

Benefits had been eroding for some time, and by 2009 only 20% of all workers still had a defined benefit pension. The percentage of workers with employer-provided health insurance fell from over 68% in 2000 to just under 62% in 2008. Of course, union workers are more likely to have such coverage, but here too erosion has been at work as more workers pay more in deductibles, co-pays, or even premiums. The results among different groups of workers varied, of course, but what seemed to be the object of capital was a gradual redefinition of what "subsistence" would amount to in the Marxist sense, i.e. the historically and culturally acceptable living standard for the "average" worker.

Ongoing increases in the intensity of work had become a regular feature of the 2000s, after the recession of 2000-01. From 2002-2007 productivity grew by 2.2% a year, much higher than even the rate of the 1983-89 recovery. The Great Recession provided still another opportunity to increase this rate even more, as production grew faster than hiring. Not surprisingly, corporate profits hit an all time high at \$1.7 trillion in the third quarter of 2010, an increase of 28% over the year before. And it was not the financial sector that brought these new profits, but the domestic profits of the non-financial sector where profits soared 40% in that period.

With strikes at an all-time low, a little over 100 in 2009 according to the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, it might be concluded that Doug Fraser's "one-sided class war" was still the reality. But prolonged periods of massive pressure on work, particularly when joined by falling incomes, tend to build resentment and anger.

This may be expressed in both negative and positive ways. Disgusted union voters stay home or even vote for Republicans, as in 2010. A few may join the largely middle class Tea Party

movement. But sooner or later the anger is likely to find the real culprits and explode. This is what happened in the 1930s after five years of speed-up and wage cuts, and in the mid-1960s as the impact of what Mike Davis calls “the management offensive of 1958-63” took its toll. This may well be what has happened in Wisconsin and around the country in early 2011.

### **Create Crisis, Blame the Workers**

The fiscal crisis that the states find themselves in today has to be understood in the context of the massive shift of income that occurred in the last 30 years or so, as labor income shrank from 73.9% in 1979 to 70.4% in 2006. Much of this was simply the huge rise in the rate of surplus value extracted from the working class over this period (see “Crisis and Potential in Labor’s Wars,” *Against the Current* 145, March/April 2010), but some of this shift unquestionably derives from the reduction of taxes on corporate America.

Thus the annual share of after-tax profit as a proportion of total profits rose from 54-55% in the 1960s and 1970s to two-thirds in the 1990s and 2000s. At the state level corporate taxes fell from 9.7% of total (non-federal) receipts in 1970s to 6.7% in 2006. This underlying source of state fiscal problems would be enhanced in Wisconsin by the actions of Governor Scott Walker.

As noted above, Wisconsin public workers have not seen any real increase in weekly wages for a decade. Indeed, as one study by the Economic Policy Institute shows, Wisconsin public employees make 14.2% less than comparable private sector workers in annual wages and 10.7% less in hourly terms. They have better benefits, but they pay more for them: 26.7% of total public sector compensation goes to non-wage benefits, compared to 19.4 to 22.8% in the private sector.

Health insurance accounts for 12.9% of compensation for public employees, compared to 7% to 9.7% for those in the private sector. The comparable figures for retirement benefits are 8%

to between 2.5% and 4.9%. Yet Governor Scott Walker and his big business allies, including the billionaire Tea Party backers David and Charles Koch and the far-right business group Club for Growth Wisconsin, are saying in ads and elsewhere that public sector workers aren’t sacrificing like everyone else (everyone?)

Demonizing public employees has been a nationwide campaign for some time, and recently no group of public workers has been more systematically targeted than teachers. Campaign after campaign has claimed that “bad teachers” are to blame for America’s slumping test results, as though these were the measure of everything. *Newsweek* ran a 2010 cover suggesting the solution to poor education was to fire poor teachers. Last August the *Los Angeles Times* rated thousands of teachers as bad, based on leaked test scores.

President Obama’s “Race to the Top” has also demonized teachers. The drive to deprive teachers of seniority and collective bargaining has gained momentum, despite the fact that states with strong teachers’ unions and collective bargaining are among the highest scoring. Furthermore, nationally between 2000 and 2006 teacher’s salaries have fallen behind inflation by 3%. Wisconsin teachers actually make \$2,600 a year less than the national average. Teachers, of course, played a big role in the Wisconsin rebellion.

Nevertheless, Walker’s entire case for his draconian anti-union legislation rests on the assertion that public workers are to blame for the state’s deficits, their wages and benefits said to be “unsustainable.” So it is necessary not only that these should be cut, but that the workers’ ability to resist such cuts be removed entirely.

On top of anger about their own economic reality is the fact that Wisconsin’s public sector workers know they are not the source of the deficits. It was known that Walker has ballooned the deficit for the next fiscal year, mainly by handing out \$140 million to various business and special interest

groups. Had he not done this, there would be no crisis with which to beat-up the state's public employees.

Indeed the problem in Wisconsin, as in many states and the federal government, goes back even farther. A study done by the research arm of the National Nurses United showed that two-thirds of Wisconsin corporations had paid no taxes for years. Public worker anger not only had more fuel, it also had a culprit — in fact, a cluster of very well-off culprits.

Walker, along with other newly elected Republican governors and state lawmakers, are on a rampage to destroy public sector unions and collective bargaining. As any number of commentators have argued, this is about power, class power, not budgets. His legislation not only limits collective bargaining to wages, which he has vowed to cut, but eliminates dues checkoff and requires an annual decertification vote, a combination that would certainly destabilize most unions. This is, in short, an attack on the unions as institutions, a fact that in itself explains much about the origins of the fight in Wisconsin, above all the unusually militant response of the state's top level union officials.

### **Dynamics of the Struggle**

The call for escalating demonstrations beginning on Tuesday, February 15 from the state American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC) and American Federation of Teachers (AFT), was meant specifically to protest the bill that was to be introduced on that Thursday. The threat to the very institution of unionism was enough to stir the top leaders to action. AFSCME President Gerald McEntee came to Madison on the first day, John Nichols tells us in *The Nation* (February 15, 2001), “not merely to protest but to lobby.”

In other words, militant tactics were tied to conventional strategies — lobbying to stop the bill. As the crisis deepened, WEAC took a step

further and urged its members to call in sick and rally in Madison. After two days they would call off the “sick-in.” Furthermore, with the institutional defense foremost in mind, these leaders agreed in advance to grant Walker the cuts he was asking, including an 8% wage cut.

Whatever the narrow, if understandable, objectives and means the top officials had in mind, they had set something in motion that would go far beyond conventional lobbying or protest and even, for some, beyond the official union goals. The escalating numbers, rising to 30,000 on Friday the 18th and then 70,000 on Saturday, the occupation of the Capitol's Rotunda night after night by workers and students, the growing out-of-state contingents, reaching a peak of perhaps 100,000 on Saturday the 26th, all spoke of grassroots initiatives.

Observers called the growing demonstrations and occupations “spontaneous,” and pointed to the roles of volunteers in organizing the overnight occupations of the Capitol. Local unions took turns volunteering for “sleepover” duty on different nights. Car pools from around the state and then from out-of-state were organized by local unions, groups of activists, and even individuals.

In short, the union officialdom had called into being a movement that exceeded its expectation or intentions. A lobby and demonstration became a major disruption that drew thousands from their jobs into the streets of Madison, the halls of the statehouse, and, then cities around the country. The dynamics of class conflict had revealed themselves for all to see.

This truly mass movement has had unexpected and unconventional results. The 14 Democrats who left the Capitol for Illinois on the 17th certainly did something out of character. The fact that they remained out-of-state for as long as they did was also a consequence of the mass movement — they had looked their electoral base in the eye and saw it demanding action. Indiana's Democratic legislators took the cue and did the

same. If in the end, the movement could not stop the Republicans from ramming through their bill, it did disrupt politics as usual to an extent rarely seen in the United States.

The dynamics of the struggle also pushed past the expectations and intentions of most top union officials in at least three other ways. For one thing, the mass movement galvanized public opinion. “Which side are you on?” goes the old song and by almost 2-1 the public, both in Wisconsin and nationally, sided with the movement against the Governor.

Perhaps less desired by some union officials was the anti-concessions wing of the movement that developed around the National Nurses United (NNU). This led to a demonstration explicitly opposing the state labor leaders’ agreement to accept Walker’s cuts, including the 8% wage reduction and the cut which would cost 70,000 people Medicaid coverage. On March 3 a no-concessions “funeral” march, led off by a New Orleans-style brass band, drew 7,000 people. The march was addressed by Jim Cavanaugh, president of the South Central Federation of Labor (SCFL), which played a central role throughout the movement.

Then there was the resolution passed by SCFL calling for education and preparation for a general strike if the legislation passed. The resolution passed with the votes of all but one of its 97 affiliates in both the public and private sectors. A committee was set up to consult with European union about how they organize such strikes. General strike or not, the idea came from an on-the-ground central labor council composed of local union delegates caught up in the spirit of rebellion.

The fight against the anti-union laws proposed in several states didn’t actually begin in Wisconsin. To the 400 or so Minnesotans who stormed their state legislature the week before belongs that honor. And of course workers and their unions in Ohio, Indiana and elsewhere launched their own demonstrations and occupations of resistance. But

it was the massive nature of events in Wisconsin that brought union members into the streets across the entire nation on February 26 in support of their struggle.

The speculation on the impact of all of this ranges from “D-day” to “Dunkirk,” as labor analyst Harley Shaiken put it. Some union leaders seem genuinely inspired. The CWA, for example, intends to recruit veterans of the struggles in Wisconsin, Ohio and Indiana to help them organize 20,000 T-Mobile workers. Certainly the thousands who participated in one way or another have not only been inspired, but have learned much about the reality of class politics in America. There is an enormous opportunity here.

### **Labor Recovering in Hospital**

If the story of the American working class and its organization were simply one of disappearing rust belt industries, shrinking unions and faltering collective bargaining, even Wisconsin’s public workers might not be enough to turn the tide in the private sector. But industry is not vanishing. There are still tens of thousands of auto workers to be organized in the South. In meatpacking, union membership and density have risen in the recent years. The victory of UNITE-HERE at Hilton International in three cities this year points to possibilities in America’s growing “leisure” industry. Transportation, so key to modern “logistics,” begs to be reorganized.

Labor’s ills, however, may find their next biggest cure in America’s hospitals — not as a basket case, but as organizer of their workforce. The hospital workforce has grown more or less steadily through 2010 with only a slight drop in 2009. More importantly, union membership has grown even faster, by almost 200,000 members from 2000 to 2010, reaching nearly 900,000 with density rising slightly from 13.8% to 14.3% in those years, and this may be a low estimate.\* This is more than twice the overall union density of the private sector.

Today’s hospital industry is big business. Despite

the “non-profit” tax status of three-fifths of U.S. hospitals, these are profit-seeking institutions engaged in serious, often cut-throat competition. Competition was largely the result of the rise of employer-based insurance after World War II, the expansion of the healthcare market with Medicaid and Medicare in the 1960s, and the cost-cutting efforts of “managed care.” This competition has had the same effect it would have in any private industry, consolidation. Between 2000 through 2009 there were 597 mergers and acquisitions, leading to the formation of hospital systems. Today 75% of private (non-profit and for-profit) hospitals are in corporate systems.

Competition has also meant that hospitals fail. Between 2000 and 2006, 42 hospitals filed for bankruptcy. To meet the competition, hospital managements had turned to investment in technology and expansion. Accumulated investment in the nation’s hospitals now stands at more than \$500 billion, more than any manufacturing industry. As competition intensified in the 1990s real assets per production worker in hospitals, which had grown a modest 1.6% annually in the 1980s, soared to 5% per year throughout the 1990s and 2000s.

With competition and growing capital intensity came increased work intensity through lean production methods borrowed from manufacturing. Some hospitals such as Seattle’s Children’s Hospital are explicit in calling it the Toyota Production System. By 2010, it was possible for one study to state of American hospital managements, “Over the years, they have adapted Lean Manufacturing, Sigma Six and supply chain strategies in order to become more efficient...”

Aiding this process have been a number of technological innovations designed to standardize healthcare delivery. GPS systems for tracking employees are one blatant form of surveillance. Seemingly more neutral, even sensible, are Electronic Medical Records. But as one academic study points out, “the standardization required by computer technology deprives caregivers of the

opportunity to tailor treatment to the needs of the patient.”

Another computer-based technology is Clinical Decision Support Systems (CDSS), which is derived from critical path analysis in manufacturing and recommends treatments based on clinical studies that “systematically exclude women and minorities,” according to a 2009 study by the NNU-backed Institute for Health & Socio-Economic Policy. Standardization is key to lean production, TQM (Total Quality Management) and other methods of work intensification and the resulting staff reductions.

Not surprisingly, hospitals have seen a significant number of strikes in recent years, at least when compared to the private sector as a whole. Indeed, at least three strikes involving nurses took place from December through early March. In Pennsylvania the union that led last year’s strike at Temple University Hospital struck in Wilkes-Barre; in Washington, DC an NNU affiliate took one-day strike action; and in Los Angeles 1,000 nurses, members of the new National Union of Healthcare Workers struck Kaiser. The key issue in all three was staffing, a major problem in the face of lean production staff cuts. Altogether, in 2009 and 2010 through November in the 91 hospital contract negotiations reported by the BNA, there were 30 strike threats and eight actual strikes.

Assuming they see the light of day, the reforms in Obama’s Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) will bring the nation’s hospitals millions of new paying patients. Billions will go to the insurance industry, but much of it will flow to hospitals. Because Medicare payments will be reduced and productivity increases are mandatory, the government’s monitor predicts that 15% of hospitals taking Medicare will “become unprofitable within the 10-year projection period as a result of the productivity adjustments.” The pressure on the workforce will intensify as hospitals struggle to survive at the expense of the workforce.

There is clearly an opportunity here for extending unionism. The 14%-plus density is heavily concentrated on the two coasts, where SEIU (450,000 members) and AFT (50,000 members) have most of their hospital members. Several other unions represent hospital workers in much smaller numbers and little geographic concentration. The new NNU (160,000 members) is somewhat better located in the Midwest. NNU activists were involved in the Wisconsin events, both through their state affiliate and those members and leaders who came from around the country, even helping to organize the “no concessions” march. While they only organize nurses, it has been nurses in many cases who are taking the lead in strikes and recruitment.

### **An “After Wisconsin” Movement?**

If there is to be the sort of growth organized labor desperately needs, it will not be just a matter of more and better organizing tactics and strategies. It will have to come through an intensification of the level of struggle that, as Luxemburg put it, “supplies the recruits to the organization.”

There are at least two ways in which the recent events, including the passage of the anti-union legislation in Wisconsin and soon across the Midwest, can aid this process. The first is the obvious possibility that thousands of people who participated and/or were inspired by the Wisconsin upsurge will become the volunteer army that U.S. labor has long needed to grow. The second flows from the fact that the Republicans have made labor rights a political issue in a way they have not been for a long time.

Like the “black box” of work itself, labor rights are seldom considered media-worthy despite the alarming state into which they have fallen or been pushed. The relative invisibility of labor rights in mainstream political discourse was one reason why it was so easy for Obama and the Congressional Democrats to bury the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA). No one outside the unions themselves and a handful of academics saw this as a make or break political issue.

With public opinion now running 2-1 in favor of labor rights as a basic cornerstone of democracy, it is possible that this could become the national debate it needs to be — perhaps even to the point of reviving the EFCA as an issue in the 2012 elections. This must not, however, be just another election techno-mobilization a la 2008, but a grassroots movement in the streets, schools, and workplaces (union or not) of the nation. As with the labor movement of the 1930s and the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, it is mass action that alters the political agenda in U.S. politics.

Both these possibilities depend to a dangerous degree on the ability of the labor officialdom to provide leadership, resources, and support to such a movement. I say “dangerous” because the track record is not good. The almost congenital proclivity of America’s top labor leaders to turn progressive mood swings into a conventional, though no doubt well-funded and staffed, Democratic Party election campaign may well prove irresistible. If this is all that happens, a great opportunity will have been lost.

Among the many lessons of the Wisconsin events is that politicians develop backbone to the degree their base is in the streets and “out of control.” Should the Democrats take back various statehouses, perhaps even Congress, and the mass movement subsides, they will fall back into their pattern of compromise and retreat. Post-Wisconsin politics need to be a politics of mobilization and direct action if the debate on worker rights is to replace that of austerity and increasing impoverishment.

For the past two years, the right and their Tea Party shock troops dominated political discourse in the style of a semi-mass movement, sometimes attracting the angry and frustrated with their sharp rhetoric. This year in Wisconsin and across the Midwest, the Tea Party efforts to support these Republican governors were pathetic and that movement was reduced to its true proportion as a middle class minority. This year, the working class majority spoke in the loudest voice and

clearest terms it has for decades, and attracted broad support in the process.

A growing labor movement can drown the sound of the right, but growth will not be orderly or commanded from some center. The events in Wisconsin did not reach the point of a mass strike movement. Nevertheless, once again the words of Rosa Luxemburg concerning the fears of union officials that their organizations will “fall in pieces in a revolutionary whirlwind like rare porcelain” remind us that, on the contrary, “from the whirlwind and the storm, out of the fire and glow of the mass strike and the street fighting rise again, like Venus from the foam, fresh, young, powerful, buoyant trade unions.”

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### ***Why Mubarak Fell: The (Sometimes) Incredible Power of Nonviolent Protest***

By Michael Schwartz

Memo to President Obama: Given the absence of intelligent intelligence and the inadequacy of your advisers’ advice, it’s not surprising that your handling of the Egyptian uprising has set new standards for foreign policy incoherence and incompetence. Perhaps a primer on how to judge the power that can be wielded by mass protest will prepare you better for the next round of political upheavals.

Remember the uprising in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square in 1989? That was also a huge, peaceful protest for democracy, but it was crushed with savage violence. Maybe the memory of that event convinced you and your team that, as Secretary of State Clinton announced when the protests began, the Mubarak regime was “stable” and in “no danger of falling.” Or maybe your confidence rested on the fact that it featured a disciplined modern army trained and supplied by the USA.

But it fell, and you should have known that it was in grave danger. You should have known that the prognosis for this uprising was far better than the one that ended in a massacre in Tiananmen

Square; that it was more likely to follow the pattern of people power in Tunisia, where only weeks before another autocrat had been driven from power, or Iran in 1979 and Poland in 1989.

Since your intelligence people, including the CIA, obviously didn't tell you, let me offer you an explanation for why the Egyptian protesters proved so much more successful in fighting off the threat and reality of violence than their Chinese compatriots, and why they were so much better equipped to deter an attack by a standing army. Most importantly, let me fill you in on why, by simply staying in the streets and adhering to their commitment to nonviolence, they were able to topple a tyrant with 30 years seniority and the backing of the United States from the pinnacle of power, sweeping him into the dustbin of history.

### **When Does an Army Choose to Be Nonviolent?**

One possible answer -- a subtext of mainstream media coverage -- is that the Egyptian military, unlike its Chinese counterpart, decided not to crush the rebellion, and that this forbearance enabled the protest to succeed. However, this apparently reasonable argument actually explains nothing unless we can answer two intertwined questions that flow from it.

The first is: Why was the military so restrained this time around, when for 50 years, "it has stood at the core of a repressive police state"? The second is: Why couldn't the government, even without a military ready to turn its guns on the demonstrators, endure a few more days, weeks, or months of protest, while waiting for the uprising to exhaust itself, and -- as the BBC put it -- "have the whole thing fizzle out"?

The answer to both questions lies in the remarkable impact that the protest had on the Egyptian economy. Mubarak and his cohort (as well as the military, which is the country's economic powerhouse) were alarmed that the business "paralysis induced by the protests" was "having a huge impact on the creaking economy"

of Egypt. As Finance Minister Samir Radwin said two weeks into the uprising, the economic situation was "very serious" and that "the longer the stalemate continues, the more damaging it is."

From their inception, the huge protests threatened the billions of dollars that the leaders and chief beneficiaries of the Mubarak regime had acquired during their 30 year reign of terror, corruption, and accumulation. To the generals in particular, it was surely apparent that the massive acts of brutality necessary to suppress the uprising would have caused perhaps irreparable harm, threatening its vast economic interests. In other words, either trying to outwait the revolutionaries or imposing the Tiananmen solution risked the downfall of the economic empires of Egypt's ruling groups.

But why would either of those responses destroy the economy?

### **Squeezing the Life Out of the Mubarak Regime**

Put simply, from the beginning, the Egyptian uprising had the effect of a general strike. Starting on January 25th, the first day of the protest, tourism -- the largest industry in the country, which had just begun its high season -- went into free fall. After two weeks, the industry had simply "ground to a halt," leaving a significant portion of the two million workers it supported with reduced wages or none at all, and the few remaining tourists rattling around empty hotels, catching the pyramids, if at all, on television.

Since pyramids and other Egyptian sites attract more than a million visitors a month and account for at least 5% of the Egyptian economy, tourism alone (given the standard multiplier effect) may account for over 15% of the country's cash flow. Not surprisingly, then, news reports soon began mentioning revenue losses of up to \$310 million per day. In an economy with an annual gross domestic product (GDP) of well over \$200 billion, each day that Mubarak clung to office produced a tangible and growing decline in it. After two weeks of this ticking time bomb, Crédit

Agricole, the largest banking group in France, lowered its growth estimate for the country's economy by 32%.

The initial devastating losses in the tourist, hotel, and travel sectors of the Egyptian economy hit industries dominated by huge multinational corporations and major Egyptian business groups dependent on a constant flow of revenues. When cash flow dries, loan payments must still be made, hotels heated, airline schedules kept, and many employees, especially executives, paid. In such a situation, losses start mounting fast, and even the largest companies can face a crisis quickly. The situation was especially ominous because it was known that skittish travelers would be unlikely to return until they were confident that no further disruptions would occur.

The largest of businesses, local and multinational, are not normally prone to inactivity. They are the ones likely to move most quickly to stem a tide of red ink by agitating the government to suppress such a protest, hopefully yesterday. But the staggering size of even the early demonstrations, the face of a mobilizing civil society visibly shedding 30 years of passivity, proved stunning. The fiercely brave response to police attacks, in which repression was met by masses of new demonstrators pouring into the streets, made it clear that brutal suppression would not quickly silence these protests. Such acts were more likely to prolong the disruptions and possibly amplify the uprising.

Even if Washington was slow on the uptake, it didn't take long for the relentlessly repressive Egyptian ruling clique to grasp the fact that large-scale, violent suppression was an impossible-to-implement strategy. Once the demonstrations involved hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Egyptians, a huge and bloody suppression guaranteed long-term economic paralysis and ensured that the tourist trade wasn't going to rebound for months or longer.

The paralysis of the tourism industry was, in itself, an economic time bomb that threatened the

viability of the core of the Egyptian capitalist class, as long as the demonstrations continued. Recovery could only *begin* after a "return to normal life," a phrase that became synonymous with the end of the protests in the rhetoric of the government, the military, and the mainstream media. With so many fortunes at stake, the business classes, foreign and domestic, soon enough began entertaining the most obvious and least disruptive solution: Mubarak's departure.

### **Strangling the Mubarak Regime**

The attack on tourism, however, was just the first blow in what rapidly became the protestors' true weapon of mass disruption, its increasing stranglehold on the economy. The crucial communications and transportation industries were quickly engulfed in chaos and disrupted by the demonstrations. The government at first shut down the Internet and mobile phone service in an effort to deny the protestors their means of communication and organization, including Facebook and Twitter. When they were reopened, these services operated imperfectly, in part because of the increasingly rebellious behavior of their own employees.

Similar effects were seen in transportation, which became unreliable and sporadic, either because of government shutdowns aimed at crippling the protests or because the protests interfered with normal operations. And such disruptions quickly rippled outward to the many sectors of the economy, from banking to foreign trade, for which communication and/or transportation was crucial.

As the demonstrations grew, employees, customers, and suppliers of various businesses were ever more consumed with preparations for, participation in, or recovery from the latest protest, or protecting homes from looters and criminals after the government called the police force off the streets. On Fridays especially, many people left work to join the protest during noon prayers, abandoning their offices as the country

immersed itself in the next big demonstration -- and then the one after.

As long as the protests were sustained, as long as each new crescendo matched or exceeded the last, the economy continued to die while business and political elites became ever more desperate for a solution to the crisis.

### **The Rats Leave the Sinking Ship of State**

After each upsurge in protest, Mubarak and his cronies offered new concessions aimed at quieting the crowds. These, in turn, were taken as signs of weakness by the protestors, only convincing them of their strength, amplifying the movement, and driving it into the heart of the Egyptian working class and the various professional guilds. By the start of the third week of demonstrations, protests began to hit critical institutions directly.

On February 9th, reports of a widening wave of strikes in major industries around the country began pouring in, as lawyers, medical workers, and other professionals also took to the streets with their grievances. In a single day, tens of thousands of employees in textile factories, newspapers and other media companies, government agencies (including the post office), sanitation workers and bus drivers, and -- most significant of all -- workers at the Suez Canal began demanding economic concessions as well as the departure of Mubarak.

Since the Suez Canal is second only to tourism as a source of income for the country, a sit-in there, involving up to 6,000 workers, was particularly ominous. Though the protestors made no effort to close the canal, the threat to its operation was self-evident.

A shutdown of the canal would have been not just an Egyptian but a world calamity: a significant proportion of the globe's oil flows through that canal, especially critical for energy-starved Europe. A substantial shipping slowdown, no less a shutdown, threatened a possible renewal of the worldwide recession of 2008-2009, even as it

would choke off the Egyptian government's major source of steady income.

As if this weren't enough, the demonstrators turned their attention to various government institutions, attempting to render them "nonfunctional." The day after the president's third refusal to step down, protestors claimed that many regional capitals, including Suez, Mahalla, Mansoura, Ismailia, Port Said, and even Alexandria (the country's major Mediterranean port), were "free of the regime" -- purged of Mubarak officials, state-controlled communications, and the hated police and security forces. In Cairo, the national capital, demonstrators began to surround the parliament, the state TV building, and other centers critical to the national government. Alaa Abd El Fattah, an activist and well known political blogger in Cairo, told *Democracy Now* that the crowd "could continue to escalate, either by claiming more places or by actually moving inside these buildings, if the need comes." With the economy choking to death, the demonstrators were now moving to put a hammerlock on the government apparatus itself.

At that point, a rats-leaving-a-sinking-ship-of-state phenomenon burst into public visibility as "several large companies took out adverts in local newspapers putting distance between themselves and the regime." *Guardian* reporter Jack Shenker affirmed this public display by quoting informed sources describing widespread "nervousness among the business community" about the viability of the regime, and that "a lot of people you might think are in bed with Mubarak have privately lost patience."

It was this tightening noose around the neck of the Mubarak regime that made the remarkable protests of these last weeks so different from those in Tiananmen Square. In China, the demonstrators had negligible economic and political leverage. In Egypt, the option of a brutal military attack, even if "successful" in driving them off the streets, seemed to all but guarantee the deepening of an already dire economic crisis,

subjecting ever widening realms of the economy - and so the wealth of the military -- to the risk of irreparable calamity.

Perhaps Mubarak would have been willing to sacrifice all this to stay in power. As it happened, a growing crew of movers and shakers, including the military leadership, major businessmen, foreign investors, and interested foreign governments saw a far more appealing alternative solution.

Weil Ziada, head of research for a major Egyptian financial firm, spoke for the business and political class when he told *Guardian* reporter Jack Shenker on February 11th:

*"Anti-government sentiment is not calming down, it is gaining momentum... This latest wave is putting a lot more pressure on not just the government but the entire regime; protesters have made their demands clear and there's no rowing back now. Everything is going down one route. There are two or three scenarios, but all involve the same thing: Mubarak stepping down -- and the business community is adjusting its expectations accordingly."*

The next day, President Hosni Mubarak resigned and left Cairo.

President Obama, remember this lesson: If you want to avoid future foreign policy Obaminations, be aware that nonviolent protest has the potential to strangle even the most brutal regime, if it can definitively threaten the viability of its core industries. In these circumstances, a mass movement equipped with fearsome weapons of mass disruption can topple a tyrant equipped with fearsome weapons of mass destruction.

*A professor of sociology at Stony Brook University, Michael Schwartz is the author of War Without End: The Iraq War in Context (Haymarket Press). He is a former chair of the Labor and Labor Movements section. Reprinted from TomDispatch.com, Feb. 15, 2011. Copyright 2011 Michael Schwartz.*

## ***Call for Papers***

The *ILR Review* is excited to announce a call for papers for a special issue of the *Review*, to be guest edited by Paul Osterman (MIT). The issue will focus on trends in the quality of jobs and employment. Preceding the special issue will be a conference, hosted by the ILR School on November 3-4, 2011, and organized by Rose Batt and Alex Colvin. The *Review* requests that detailed abstracts of papers be submitted by August 1. Those accepted for the conference will be asked to submit full papers to the journal via our usual (electronic) system.

### **TRENDS IN JOB QUALITY: A SPECIAL ISSUE CALL FOR PAPERS**

*The Industrial and Labor Relations Review* is calling for papers for a conference and subsequent special issue devoted to understanding trends in job quality. Paul Osterman (MIT) will be the guest editor of the issue. Scholars interested in participating should submit an abstract to the Journal by August 1, 2011. The abstract should be about two pages long and contain a description of the problem addressed as well as sources of data and methodology to be used. If possible, the nature of the arguments and findings should be previewed.

Authors whose abstracts are accepted will be invited to a conference to be held at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY on November 3 and 4, 2011. Conference expenses will be partially subsidized. Papers presented at this conference should be suitable for immediate submission to external reviewers. Based on the reviewers' recommendations, discussions at the conference, and fit with the issue, a subset of authors will be asked to undertake revisions with the expectation that their papers will be published in the special issue. Papers that reviewers deem of good quality but are not selected for the special issue will be considered for publication in a regular issue of the journal.

It is well known that the shape of organizations

and the configuration of employment have changed substantially in recent years. Trends in organizational design include the flattening of some firms, the proliferation of network forms, and the increased use of outsourcing and sub-contracting. Just as non-standard work arrangements have proliferated, so has the spread of high performance or high commitment systems involving teams and job rotation. Technical change has increased the demand for skills in many occupations whereas in others older deskilling processes may be at play. Wage inequality has increased dramatically at the same time that new forms of compensation have multiplied.

The shifts described above represent only a partial list of changes during what has been a dynamic period of shifting employment arrangements. Although there has been a great deal of work documenting many of the shifts, the impact of these developments on the nature of work and employee welfare has not been fully understood, nor has it been examined in a coherent manner.

This, then, is the goal of the special issue. The perspective taken here is that in some respects these developments have boded ill for at least some employees whereas for others they have meant opportunities for growth. The point, in other words, is not that overall developments add up to “good” or “bad” news; rather, it is about understanding what has actually happened, where it has happened, and why.

Papers responding to this call may represent a range of methodologies including survey research, fieldwork in the form of qualitative or quantitative case studies, and the use of archival data. Both domestic (U.S.) and international research is encouraged. Potential topic areas include the following: changing skill; intensification and new pressures at work; voice and control both in formal ways (e.g., union representation) and less formal ways (individual autonomy or self-managed teams); changes in job security patterns and the consequences thereof for employees’ economic welfare as well as organizational

loyalty and citizenship; the diffusion of “non-standard” employment arrangements such as contingent work and independent contracting and the consequences for employee well-being, autonomy, and creativity; new compensation patterns and the consequence for effort and morale; new patterns of upward mobility or lack thereof; equity along dimensions such as gender, race, and sexual orientation; trends in particular sectors such as the low-wage job market; work/family developments. Other topics in the area of job quality are also welcome. What submissions should have in common is that they be empirically based and that they address the questions of what has happened and the consequences for employee welfare.

To submit your abstract for consideration, please visit: <http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/ilrreview/>. Click on the “submissions” link and follow the on-screen instructions.

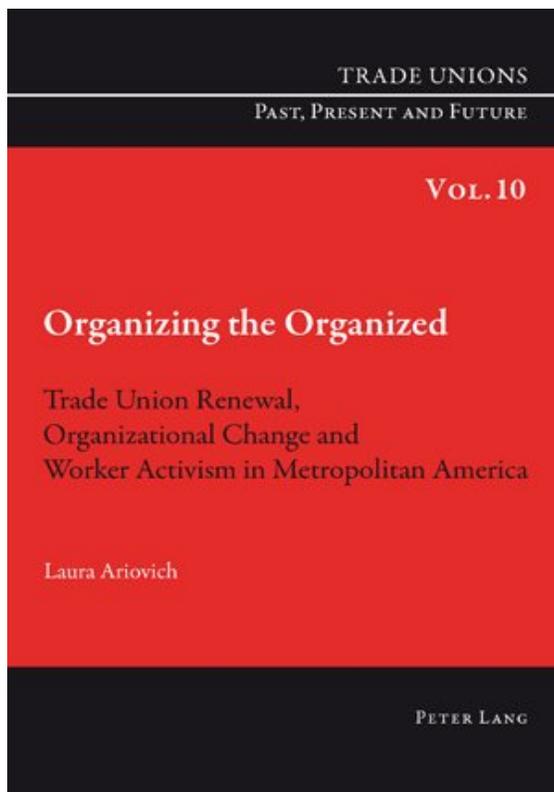
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## ***Book Announcements***

**Laura Ariovich, *Organizing the Organized: Trade Union Renewal, Organizational Change and Worker Activism in Metropolitan America* (Peter Lang AG, 2010), Trade Unions Past, Present and Future, Vol. 10.**

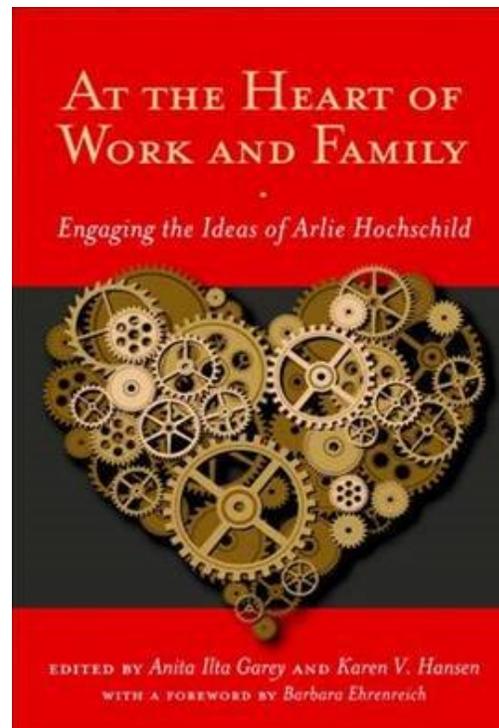
Why do unionized workers participate in organizing campaigns? How do active union members convince hesitant coworkers of marching in union rallies or going on strike? When are union leaders’ calls for member participation heeded and when are they ignored? Ariovich delves into these questions in an ethnographic study of a large union local in the United States with a significant proportion of low-wage immigrant members. Top officers in the local were committed to the ideal of an organizing union and introduced reforms to transfer resources and personnel from member representation to external organizing. But top officers’ organizing

ambitions clashed with active members' expectations of a stronger union presence in the workplace. Active members used their leverage as participants in organizing campaigns and mobilizing agents in the workplace to challenge the reform project. In doing so, they brought to the fore the importance of trust, reciprocity, and long-term relationships with union leaders and other members as the micro foundations of organizing success.



**Anita Ilta Garey and Karen V. Hansen,** editors, *AT THE HEART OF WORK AND FAMILY: Engaging the Ideas of Arlie Hochschild*

“Garey and Hansen have assembled a stunning collection of studies on the emotional and logistical dynamics of coordinating paid and unpaid work. A must read.” — Stephanie Coontz, author, *A Strange Stirring: The Feminine Mystique and American Women at the Dawn of the 1960s*



“*At the Heart of Work and Family* deftly illustrates Hochschild’s path-breaking perspectives, advancing understandings of job/career designs, gendered expectations, and family lives as they intertwine in the new economy.” — Stephen Sweet, author of *Changing Contours of Work*

*At the Heart of Work and Family* presents original research on work and family by scholars who engage and build on the conceptual framework developed by well-known sociologist Arlie Hochschild. These concepts, such as “the second shift,” “the economy of gratitude,” “emotion work,” “feeling rules,” “gender strategies,” and “the time bind,” are basic to sociology and have shaped both popular discussions and academic study. The common thread in these essays covering the gender division of housework, childcare networks, families in the global economy, and children of consumers is the incorporation of emotion, feelings, and meaning into the study of working families. These examinations like Hochschild’s own work, connect micro-level interaction to larger social and economic forces and illustrate the continued relevance of linking economic

relations to emotional ones for understanding contemporary work-family life.

ANITA ILTA GAREY is an associate professor of human development and family studies and of sociology at the University of Connecticut. Her book, *Weaving Work and Motherhood*, received the 2000 William J. Goode Book Award. KAREN V. HANSEN is a professor of sociology and women's and gender studies at Brandeis University. Her books include *Not-So-Nuclear Families: Class, Gender, and Networks of Care* (Rutgers University Press), which received the William J. Goode Book Award, Honorable Mention.

ORDER ONLINE (paperback price \$27.95) at [http://rutgerspress.rutgers.edu/acatalog/at\\_the\\_heart\\_of\\_work\\_and\\_family.html](http://rutgerspress.rutgers.edu/acatalog/at_the_heart_of_work_and_family.html)

**Joshua Page, *The Toughest Beat: Politics, Punishment, and the Prison Officers Union in California* (Oxford University Press, March 2011; 312 pp., \$35.00, Cloth: ISBN: 9780195384055)**



"A brilliant and readable critique.... Anyone interested in the relationship between politics, special interests, and the build-up of America's prisons must start their analysis with this

book."—Joan Petersilia, Adelbert H. Sweet Professor of Law, Stanford Law School

"A breakthrough in the sociology of punishment."—Jonathan Simon, Adrian A. Kragen Professor of Law, University of California

*The Toughest Beat* uses sociological theory and extensive fieldwork to demonstrate how the California Correctional Peace Officers Association (CCPOA), the labor union representing prison officers and other correctional workers, has transformed from a loose, fraternal organization into one of the most politically potent and feared interest groups in the nation. As its leaders made strides for its members, the union also influenced the nature, purpose, and scope of imprisonment. To understand California's deep and durable penal crisis, we cannot neglect the story of this group so often known simply as "the powerful prison guards' union."

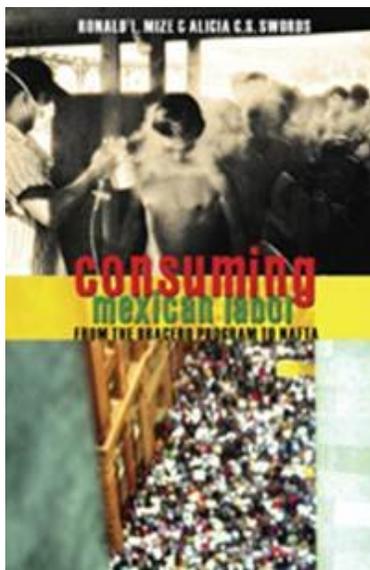
Joshua Page is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Minnesota.

Order online at <http://www.oup.com/us/catalog/general/subject/Sociology/CriminalJustice/Criminology/?view=usa&ci=9780195384055>

**Ronald L. Mize and Alicia C.S. Swords, *Consuming Mexican Labor: From the Bracero Program to NAFTA* (University of Toronto Press, Higher Education Division, 2010)**

Mexican migration to the United States and Canada is a highly contentious issue in the eyes of many North Americans, and every generation seems to construct the northward flow of labor as a brand new social problem. The history of Mexican labor migration to the United States, from the Bracero Program (1942-1964) to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), suggests that Mexicans have been actively encouraged to migrate northward when labor markets are in short supply, only to be

turned back during economic downturns. In this timely book, Mize and Swords dissect the social relations that define how corporations, consumers, and states involve Mexican immigrant laborers in the politics of production and consumption. The result is a comprehensive and contemporary look at the increasingly important role that Mexican immigrants play in the North American economy.



“In the dismal shadow of Arizona and idiot nativism, this wonderful book reminds us of who turns the wheels of the North American economy and how their empowerment might save us all.”—Mike Davis, author of *No One Is Illegal* and *In Praise of Barbarians*

“Consuming Mexican Labor ranges across regions and decades to reveal patterns that do not emerge from more narrow temporal and spatial approaches. By exposing the previously occluded connection between increasing consumer demand for goods and services and the exploitation of immigrant labor, Mize and Swords help us see how racist beliefs and actions concern interests, attitudes, and property as well as pigment, power, and prejudice.”—George Lipsitz, University of California, Santa Barbara, author of *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*

“In this stunning, authoritatively researched book, Mize and Swords move beyond the typical

binaries and inspire readers' heads and hearts with a persuasive vision of transformational politics that empowers people. Reaching deep into the history of how we got into such perilous trouble and going far beyond throwing more money at the border, temporary worker programs, and increased criminalization strategies, Mize and Swords offer a brilliant, practical, and wholly attainable way forward. This book is a must-read for anyone serious about fixing the immigration crisis.”—Ashley Judd, actor, advocate, Harvard MPA, '10

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## WORLD WIDE WORK

ICS is pleased to reprint the latest edition of *World Wide Work*, a free bulletin published by the American Labor Education Center, an independent nonprofit founded in 1979. You may subscribe to the bulletin for free at [TheWorkSite.org](http://TheWorkSite.org), a site that provides free, adaptable tools for grassroots education and organizing.

*New and worth noting...*

## FILMS

**Hot Coffee.** Americans are losing the right to get justice in the courts as a result of a coordinated campaign by corporate interests and their political allies. This exceptional film tells four stories about individuals who exemplify these attacks on our legal rights. One is the woman who sued McDonald's after being severely burned by coffee heated to an unsafe temperature – a case many Americans have heard of and few understand. Another is a female employee of Halliburton in Iraq who was raped by fellow employees in a male barracks where she was required to live. She was blocked from suing until recently because of a requirement in her employment contract requiring her to abide by mandatory arbitration (by an arbitrator chosen by the company). Such requirements have become standard not only in

many employment contracts but in the fine print most Americans sign when they acquire consumer products such as phones and credit cards. The film is scheduled to be broadcast on HBO around June 27.

**Benavides Born.** In a Mexican-American community in Texas, a student on the girls' high school powerlifting team desperately tries to earn an athletic scholarship so she can afford to go to the university in Austin. This feature film that feels like a documentary shows how poverty and racism limit the options she and her friends and family members have in life despite all their best efforts.

**Araya** is a stunningly visual, prize-winning, black-and-white documentary from 1959 that has recently been restored. It shows the daily lives of families on a remote peninsula in Venezuela where for 450 years the only way to make a living besides catching fish was to collect, stack, and ship salt from the sea.

**How to Die in Oregon.** Under Oregon's Death with Dignity law, terminally ill people can get prescriptions for lethal medications so they control the timing and circumstances of their death. This documentary tells the intimate stories of several people who have used this law, including a 54-year-old woman with incurable liver cancer. The film raises the question of why most states do not allow individuals to decide how much pain and indignity they choose to endure.

**SoLa** is an hour-long documentary about massive destruction of wetlands along the Gulf Coast to serve the interests of the oil and gas industry, and how that greatly increased the damage from Hurricane Katrina and the BP oil spill.

**The Big Uneasy** makes a good companion film to SoLa, as it documents the failures of the Army Corps of Engineers that turned Katrina from a big storm into the destruction of major parts of New Orleans.

**Inuk** is a beautiful feature film that takes place at a home in northernmost Greenland for Inuit students whose urbanized families can't take care of them. The children bond with the few remaining Inuit men who make their living by hunting and, in the process, all concerned learn more about who they are.

## BOOKS

***Green is the New Red*** by Will Potter (City Lights). Since 9/11, corporate interests have intensified a drive to have civil disobedience and other methods of protest labeled as "domestic terrorism" under state and federal laws. Much of this coordinated effort has initially been focused on those who have engaged in direct action against environmental and animal abuse issues. The author does not approve of all tactics these activists have used, but he makes a strong case that new restrictions, drastic penalties, and selective prosecution represent a revival of the McCarthyism of the 1950s. Once new precedents are established, he argues, other types of protesters against corporate abuses will be targeted as well.

***When Johnny and Jane Come Marching Home*** by Paula J. Caplan (MIT Press). When veterans who make it home from Afghanistan or Iraq have psychological issues, the assumption often is that they need therapy and psychiatric drugs. A Harvard-based psychologist argues that in many cases what they are experiencing is a healthy reaction to an inhumane experience, and that therapy and drugs isolate them at a time when they most need honest communication with loved ones, neighbors, and co-workers. She gives detailed, practical advice for non-veterans about how to ask the right questions and how to listen, both so veterans will be able to share what they've been through and so the society that sent them will have a better understanding of the wars' realities.

***Civil Rights History from the Ground Up*** edited by Emilye Crosby (University of Georgia). This

powerful anthology challenges established myths about the civil rights movement – that it started with an unplanned impulse by Rosa Parks to sit in the front of a bus, that it was the product of Martin Luther King’s vision, that it took place only in the South, and so on. Contributors also examine debates within the movement over sexism, nonviolence, and other issues.

***Valentine’s Café*** by Anthony Schmitz. Cultural collisions in a diverse neighborhood provide the background theme in this fanciful, not always politically correct e-book novel. The higher powers send the God of Love, Victor Valentine, to St. Paul, Minnesota where, along with a beautiful Mob-connected chef, he opens a restaurant designed to spark love and/or sex among the customers. Before long, a local minister wants the site for a mega-church, picketers are outside, and politicians are out to get him.

***Fields of Resistance*** by Silvia Giagnoni (Haymarket). A writer provides an engaging personal account of seven months spent in Immokalee, Florida, “tomato capital of the world,” during a campaign to pressure Burger King to increase migrant farmworkers’ pay. Through the stories of people she met, Giagnoni explores the human reality behind issues such as immigration, workers’ rights, corporate accountability, the real cost of our food, and more.

***Understanding Green Building Materials*** by Traci Rose Rider, Stacy Glass, and Jessica McNaughton (W.W. Norton). One promising source for green jobs is the production and use of more sustainable building materials that reduce waste, health hazards, and energy inefficiency.

***The Civil Wars in U.S. Labor*** by Steve Early (Haymarket) and ***Stronger Together*** by Don Stillman (Chelsea Green). These two books, aimed at a narrow audience of labor insiders, present dueling portraits of SEIU, the nation’s fastest growing and most politically active union during the 14 years it was led by former president Andy Stern. *Stronger Together* is the union’s

official account that portrays Stern as a bold visionary who was unwilling to stand by as the labor movement continued to shrink, fighting for universal health care and labor law reform and launching innovative organizing and political strategies to help low-wage workers form unions in sectors such as health care, home care, child care, and office building cleaning and security. *The Civil Wars* takes the opposite view. According to Early, who retired after 27 years as a staffer for the Communications Workers, Stern wielded Stalinist, one-man power that allowed him to treat the union treasury as a piggy bank, make backroom deals with corporate employers, promote his own self-interest in politics, and engage in costly power struggles with former allies within labor’s leadership.

***Restoring the Power of Unions*** by Julius G. Getman (Yale University). A law professor praises the leadership of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees union (HERE), criticizes union leaders who have focused on trying to pass the Employee Free Choice Act, and gives his proposals for reform of the nation’s labor laws.

## MUSIC

***New Deal*** by Tim Larson and the Owner Operators. An asphalt worker and member of the Operating Engineers union sings in gritty alt-rock style about blue-collar workers whose lives have been turned upside down by what Wall Street has done to the economy.

***Paper Airplane*** by Alison Krauss, ***Kicking the Beehive*** by Susan Werner, ***Roses at the End of Time*** by Eliza Gilkyson, ***Ranky Tanky*** by Rani Arbo, and ***Blossoms*** by Laurie Lewis are all new albums that because of unexceptional song selection don’t live up to past releases by these exceptional singers.

## POETRY

***Blue Collar Review*** is a journal of progressive working class literature. The Winter 2010-2011 edition features high-quality poems about the human impact of the Wall Street-induced Great Recession and about work life in America today.