



Countering the *Glenn Beck Effect*: Working America Reaches the Working Class at the Tipping Point

by Kim Fellner, *Working America*

Working class anger is in the news. With sky-high unemployment and an economy pulling too slowly out of recession, there's plenty to be angry about. But in the absence of organization and education, that rage will find the path of least resistance which is invariably to the right. This could prove a moment of great potential for progressive policy and politics — or it could fuel an epidemic of virulent rightwing populism such as we saw in the 1930s with the popularity of Father Coughlin in the US and the rise of the Nazism in Europe.

Working people get that the economy is slanted toward corporations and the very wealthy. But when *FoxNews* is the only one talking, it's easy to put the blame in all the wrong places unless we can get out there with a progressive vision and persuasive solutions.

That's why there's Working America

What is Working America? Working America is the fastest growing organization for working people in the country today. It reaches more than three million members to fight for good jobs and a just economy. Many of those constituents are suburban and exurban working people who are often outside the reach of progressive organizations. Three-quarters are moderates and conservatives. In 2008 *The Wall Street Journal* called **Working America** a *secret weapon* in the heartland. But word's getting out that it is a unique, effective force to reach working people who don't have a union on the job.

Working America talks to thousands of people every night at their homes about critical economic issues - building relationships, providing real information and avenues for working people to take action. Right now, it's reaching 25,000 working class moderates every week, more than 100,000 every month.

In 2010 Working America will have one-on-one contact with 1 million people and reach a universe of 4 million members through its communications program.

Mobilizing "Kansas (What's the Matter with)" and Ohio, Arkansas, Nevada.... In the face of hate-filled tea party hysteria, a progressive counterforce to the rightwing talking heads is vitally important. Working America operates on a mass scale to counter the *Glenn Beck effect* by engaging people in personal conversations about economic issues that matter to them.

Night after night, organizers have conversations that expose seemingly opposing impulses on issues like financial regulation, health care reform and immigration.

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Chip Berlet Political Research Associates Senior Analyst
Karen Nussbaum Working America Executive Director

**From Tea Party Anger to Economic Justice:
Reframing the Debate and Building Broad Coalitions**

Friday June 4, 2010 at 7 am

Marriott Wardman in Washington DC

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A test of progressive messaging around **immigration** found that people whose first instinct was to blame immigrants for high unemployment often end up supporting a path to citizenship when an organizer points out that corporations exploit undocumented workers in order to keep wages low for everyone.

In campaigning for **financial reform**, **Working America** found that people who are hostile to the idea of a Consumer Financial Protection Agency because they don't trust President Obama or *the people in charge*, will quickly agree that we need to rein in Wall Street and hold financiers accountable.

As Working America Regional Director David Wehde said at the conclusion of our immigration campaign, "People are at a tipping point right now: if we get to them first, we can influence their thinking. But if *Fox News* gets to them first — we shouldn't assume they won't buy into what Glenn Beck is saying."

Bridging the Divide. Working America constituents are among those hardest hit by the economic meltdown and the resulting unemployment. The sense of betrayal that many working class constituents feel is rooted in a harsh reality: Economic recovery has stabilized financial institutions but has failed to relieve the jobs crisis. These perceptions reveal a deep divide between the views of elite America that the economy is improving and the realities of working America. And often, working people perceive institutional progressives as part of the elite which fails to listen to or address their concerns.

Working America bridges the divide. As a staff member put it, "We not only bring progressive ideas to our members, but we bring our members to progressive ideas."

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Working America Reaches Working Class

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At the same time, Working America focuses allies in the progressive sector on the concerns of working people. For example, the environmental arena has been primarily the purview of middle class progressives, without a real base in working class communities. However, Working America has found that a message of good, green jobs has great resonance with working class moderates. As one Nevada contractor stated, "Bring 'em on. We're trained in weatherization and ready to go."

Bolstering Participation. The working class moderates and conservatives who form the base of Working America are swing voices in the debates around policy. Our program of engagement and education on the issues fosters a more enduring worker-friendly perspective on a range of economic policies. A randomized controlled experiment by the Analyst Institute in 2008 deemed our work *highly impactful* at affecting how members prioritize issues. Members were up to 37.9 percentage points more likely to say that health care was important to them and up to 24.6 percentage points more likely to prioritize the economy, than if they had not been recruited. That, in turn, affects their civic participation.

In 2006, among individuals with comparable voting history (Ohio drop-off voters who voted in 2004 but not 2002), Working America members voted at a rate of 60% compared to non-union drop-off voters who voted at 46%.

The Decision is Not Just Theirs, It's Ours! The progressive movement faces a stark choice: We can engage with working people, acknowledge the very real causes of their anger, and offer information and policies that mobilize them to take action for economic justice — or we can leave them to rightwing pundits like Glenn Beck and Rush Limbaugh who promote a rightwing politics of demonization. We've seen too many examples of the dangers of the latter option; Working America has clearly demonstrated the success of the former.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Working America needs our support

to fight the perpetual rightwing noise machine and personally reach tens of thousands of working people every week to build the personal connections that can overcome the mass reactionary blitz. Our contributions, in time and money, can make a huge difference. You can support **Working America** with a contribution to a 501 (c)(5) labor organization, not tax deductible. You can also contribute to the **Working America Education Fund**, a 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt organization educating and informing about economic democracy and policy issues affecting working families, which contributions may be tax-deductible. Send contributions to:

Working America or Working America Education Fund
815 Sixteenth Street NW, Washington, DC 20006

Need more information?
www.workingamerica.org

New Illinois Wage Theft Legislation Protects Workers

by Laurie Burgess

On any given day hundreds of day laborers in the Chicagoland area go to work for days if not weeks at a time on a project only finding at the end of the day, week or month, their employer is failing or refusing to pay them their earned wages - in part, or in some instances at all. This conduct — *wage theft* — is rampant.

A recent study conducted by the Center for Urban Development at the University of Illinois estimated that nearly half of the workers interviewed experienced as least one form of *wage theft* in the prior week reporting an average loss of \$50 a week from average weekly earning of \$322.

Not only does *wage theft* cause immeasurable personal hardship for workers and their families, but the aggregate effect of wage theft — estimated at a loss of \$7.3 million a week in the Chicago area — is staggering.

Some of the workers who are victims of wage theft turn to worker centers. These programs assist workers in filing wage claims with the Illinois Department of Labor. However, the process is slow; indeed, even when a favorable decision issues from the DOL, the agency cannot enforce its determinations. Instead, cases are sent to the Attorney General's office for enforcement where the investigation process starts anew.

The delay in obtaining restitution for stolen wages has devastating consequences on workers' lives. One such worker, who was found to be owed in excess of \$6,000 from one employer, lost his home to foreclosure while waiting for enforcement of his wage claim.

In response to the staggering need for reform so that low income workers would have viable relief from various forms of *wage theft*, a group of worker center leaders along with attorneys from the Chicago labor bar and **Working Hands Legal Clinic** spent approximately two years analyzing the flaws in the system and fashioning language that would provide meaningful relief. This culminated in the *Just Pay for All* bill.

Highlights of the legislation include added enforcement mechanisms within the Department of Labor for *final and binding* adjudication of claims in an amount of \$3,000 or less; damages of 2% of the amount found due and owing to be accrued monthly until paid; attorneys' fees; and criminal misdemeanor or felony charges for willful non-payment.

Workers' stories moved the legislation forward. Although it met with initial pushback from the business community, the legislation successfully moved forward. Worker center members who suffered losses from *wage theft* presented their stories in testimony in Springfield and won the day: on April 28, 2010, the Illinois House of Representatives passed the bill by a vote of 112 to 1. On May 3, 2010, the Illinois Senate approved the bill by a vote of 46 to 2

This is a resounding victory for workers in the State of Illinois!

Laurie Burgess is a Chicago labor attorney and member of the NLG L&EC Exec Committee. lburgess@burgess-laborlaw.com

Sugar Law Center Supports Restaurant Opportunities Center

The **Sugar Law Center** filed suit in January 2010 on behalf of eight restaurant workers at Andiamo Dearborn in Michigan. Andiamo has ignored minimum wage and overtime laws, and illegally retaliated against workers who spoke out against these abuses.

The **Andiamo workers** decided to pursue fair employment by joining the **Restaurant Opportunities Center** of Michigan, an organization working to raise industry standards for restaurant working conditions. In late autumn 2009, after years of being paid less than minimum wage and denied overtime pay, the **Andiamo workers** wrote a letter asking the restaurant owners to meet with them to resolve their concerns. Within days of delivering the letter, the workers had a clear answer: the restaurant owners refused to discuss the issues raised. Further, management retaliated against two of the workers who had dared to speak up: **Naome Debebe-Bogale** and **Bertha Pina**, a single mother of five children.

To defend the workers from the restaurant's retaliation, and pursue the claims the restaurant ignored, Sugar Law filed unfair labor practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board. An initial finding from the Board's General Counsel outlining roughly a dozen of Andiamo's violations of the National Labor Relations Act is expected shortly.

Sugar Law's lawsuit to hold the restaurant to the federal Fair Labor Standards Act and Michigan's Minimum Wage Law includes causes of action for the following illegal abuses workers experienced:

- * overtime not paid at time-and-a-half, as the law requires;
- * time not paid for required work meetings; and
- * time not paid and mileage expenses not reimbursed for required errands to pick up supplies before or after work shifts.

Other abuses reported by **Andiamo workers** included management requiring wait staff to sell or purchase themselves a certain number of **frequent customer** cards. Workers who did not meet the quota could face potential suspension. **Andiamo workers** also reported that promotions and raises were denied to workers of color.

In support of the **Andiamo workers**, 50 to 150 people have attended weekly protests outside this Dearborn, Michigan restaurant — even on frigid winter evenings. Members of ROC, area advocates for workers' rights, and others outraged by the abuses are showing up to ensure that restaurant customers have access to information about the establishment they are patronizing.

Sugar Law Center Assists the Unemployed

Over 189,000 workers in Michigan in 2008 who applied for unemployment insurance benefits had their claims denied. Utilizing a grant from the Michigan State Bar Foundation, the Sugar Law Center is able to work with the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency's Advocacy Program.

The Unemployment Insurance Agency Advocacy Program is an innovative public-private partnership. Created in 1989, it helps workers denied assistance at their most vulnerable moment. It provides advocates, free of charge, to help workers when employers contest their unemployment insurance claims.

But just when the number of workers needing advocacy has mushroomed, available assistance has been cut. Budget constraints have forced the program to eliminate services to workers in certain situations.

To address this significant need, the Michigan State Bar Foundation grant enables Sugar Law to work with the Advocacy Program to counsel and represent workers who otherwise would have to make their case without help. Workers have successfully obtained benefits in over 80% of the hearings where Sugar Law represented them, and all had been denied at least once before seeking help from the Sugar Law Center.

Beyond services to individuals, Sugar Law is also producing a step-by-step guide to help workers successfully navigate the system. The guide will be available and distributed in hard copy through social service agencies. If workers understand how to present the circumstances of their job loss more effectively, it may increase the likelihood that they will receive the benefits to which they are entitled. The guide will also help workers understand how to work successfully with a state-provided advocate, Sugar Law staff, or other pro bono attorneys.

Sugar Law is also helping Wal-Mart workers nationwide when the company contests their unemployment claims. This is an extension of a project advising Wal-Mart workers in every state when their workplace rights are violated.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The **Maurice and Jane Sugar Law Center for Economic and Social Justice** is a national non-profit, public-interest law center providing legal advocacy, representation, education and technical support to empower unions, workers' rights and community groups, and individuals seeking systemic change toward economic and social justice. Throughout its history Sugar Law has highlighted the interdependence of civil and economic rights, pursuing economic justice by supporting grassroots campaigns for a living wage, representing communities of color in challenging environmental racism, and pressing for corporate and government accountability. Sugar Law staff provides direct legal representation, legal support, expert advice to governmental bodies enacting protections for workers and the community, or referrals to private attorneys skilled in specific fields. It partners with union and other attorneys to provide effective representation in jurisdictions throughout the country.

Sugar Law Center

4605 Cass Avenue 2nd Floor, Detroit MI 48201
(313) 993-4505

Need more information?

www.sugarlaw.org

Whistleblower Laws Show U.S. Falls Short of International Human Rights Standards

by Richard R. Renner, Legal Director of National Whistleblowers Center

In April the National Whistleblowers Center [NWC] submitted a report asserting that US laws and policies fail to conform with international law. The report was prepared to assist the United Nations which is conducting its *universal periodic review* of the United States this year. The universal periodic review includes a public meeting in November or December 2010.

The US State Department will also be submitting a report for the UN to review. And NWC advocates will be urging the State Department to acknowledge that whistleblower protections are an area in which the US can improve. Having the administration answer for shortcomings in whistleblower laws will provide additional pressure to improve legal rights and remedies. The NWC will also continue to urge legislative, executive and judicial officials to be mindful of how our whistleblower policies will play internationally.

Established in 1988, the NWC is a non-profit public interest organization which regularly assists workers, whether employed privately or in government throughout the United States, who suffer from illegal retribution for lawfully disclosing violations of law. NWC maintains a national attorney referral service and provides publications and training for attorneys and other

NWC's full report and attachments is available on its blog: www.whistleblowersblog.org.

Several specific cases highlight the shortcomings of whistleblower laws. The **Birkenfeld** and **Grand** cases are illustrative.

Bradley Birkenfeld entered federal prison this January to begin a 40 month sentence. The most significant tax whistleblower in history, he helped the US government recover over \$20 billion in tax revenue. Information he provided broke the historic secrecy of Swiss banks, and revealed 14,700 taxpayers who evaded their obligations. His information caused Swiss bank UBS to be fined \$780 million for helping customers evade taxes.

US law provides for a reward for tax whistleblowers. But the policy of encouraging whistleblowers to come forward is undercut by prosecuting the world's most prominent tax whistleblower. **Birkenfeld** recently filed a petition for clemency. Until it is granted, it would be appropriate to consider him a political prisoner, imprisoned in violation of international rights.

Jon Grand served as a witness in the 2000 race and sex discrimination trial of Dr. Marsha Coleman-Adebayo. She prevailed in her trial, proving that the US Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] discriminated. The EPA then

subjected Grand's wage and expense payments to close scrutiny, and prosecuted him for negligent errors. He was served four months in prison.

The United States government has also failed to protect whistleblowers who are its own employees. In 2008 the Merit System Protection Board [MSPB] posted statistics for all its non-benefit cases. The results showed a strong bias against workers. The MSPB judges ruled in favor of federal employees only 1.7% of the time out of a total of 4,698 cases nationwide. On average, 16 whistleblowers a month lost initial MSPB decisions. Since 2000, only three out of 53 whistleblowers received final rulings in their favor from the full MSPB.

The Federal Circuit has consistently ruled against whistleblowers, with whistleblowers winning only three out of 209 cases since 1994.

As well, the Whistleblower Protection Act [WPA] was a huge backward step for whistleblower rights. It was a deliberately regressive measure against realizing economic, social and cultural progress. It is thus a violation of the obligation of progressive realization under Article 2 of International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights. It also renders ineffective the remedies for whistleblowers, in violation of The United Nations Convention Against Corruption, Article 32(1).

NWC calls on the United States to fulfill its obligation to provide effective remedies for its federal employee whistleblowers. Bipartisan Congressional representatives proposed *HR 1507, a Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act (WPEA)*, to fully remedy the shortcomings of the current Whistleblower Protection Act. It would allow federal employee whistleblowers to bring their claims to US District Courts and receive jury trials. **S 372**, a counterproposal, would not use customary legal procedures, which would continue the denial of effective remedies.

Beyond the federal employee section, protection of whistleblowers is uneven. Congress was aware that private sector whistleblowers were vulnerable when it enacted the 2002 Sarbanes-Oxley Act. The Senate Judiciary Committee noted that whistleblower protections were dependent on a *patchwork and vagaries* of varying state statutes, even though most publicly traded companies do business internationally. It further found that *companies with a corporate culture that punishes whistleblowers for being 'disloyal' and 'litigation risk' often transcend state lines. As a result, most corporate employers, with help from their lawyers, know exactly what they can do to a whistleblowing employee under the law.* Thus Congress acted to protect workers who report securities violations that could harm investors.

Many categories of whistleblowers have no effective remedies for retaliation in the United States. The First Amendment

guarantees rights to speak, associate and petition for redress of grievances. Yet this guarantee has no force or effect on private sector employers. Only a few states have enacted legislation to protect all private sector workers when they blow the whistle on any type of corruption. Some states (Georgia and Texas) explicitly deny any protection for employees who suffer retaliation for raising concerns of public interest. Even state and local employees have no protection under the First Amendment for reporting corruption if making such reports is part of their regular job duties. It is ironic that the public employees whose job it is to detect and report corruption are the very ones denied protection when they suffer retaliation for doing their jobs too well.

Other entire industries have no laws protecting workers who raise public safety concerns. Employees in food or pharmaceutical industries have no legal protection for reporting violations of the Food & Drug Administration's health and safety rules.

Retaliation against workers who raise health and safety concerns in their own workplaces is rampant and few of those cases are upheld for the workers who put their lives on the line and hope to go home safely at the end of the work day or have their health at the end of their working lives. The 30-day statute of limitations for OSHA Section 11(c) cases is too short and the statute has no private right of action leaving workers at the mercy of an understaffed and ill-qualified agency. A January 2009 report noted the Department of Labor's whistleblower program needs more resources and better quality. Investigations do not have the equipment, training, legal counsel or oversight needed to assure quality investigations. [GAO-09-106]

Retaliation impacts immigrant workers disproportionately. The US imposes an arbitrary deadline for asylum applications and fails to provide adequate due process to asylum seekers.

The 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, Article 33-1, prohibits refoulement - the return of refugees to countries where their *life or freedom would be threatened*. In the landmark case on this issue, ***Grava v. INS, 205 F.3d 1177 (9th Cir. 2000)***, the court held that:

Whistleblowing against one's supervisors at work is not, as a matter of law, always an exercise of political opinion. However, where the whistle blows against corrupt government officials, it may constitute political activity sufficient to form the basis of persecution...

Under the Protocol, refugees can be returned only if they are a danger to security or if they have been convicted of a particularly serious crime.

The 1996 law requiring asylum seekers to apply within one year of arriving in the country is another regressive step. The particular hardships of escaping one's native country and resettling in a new land with a new language make the one-year time limit a significant impediment on immigrant whistleblowers. Failure to qualify for legal admission subjects millions of immigrants in the United States to a denial of permission to work. Immigrants, and the whistleblowers among them, are forced by economic necessity to work using another person's identity. If they make

claims for retaliation, they are denied the customary remedies of back pay and reinstatement. ***Hoffman Plastic Compounds, Inc. v. NLRB*** (2002) 535 US 137.

The US Department of Labor has refused to provide protection for international employees of companies trading their securities here and subject to US law. This holding is contrary to our customary law of applying our securities laws throughout the world for companies that choose to avail themselves of stock exchanges within our borders. It is ironic that Congress would enact the SOX Act because of the way Enron abused overseas subsidiaries, and then have our courts deny protections for the whistleblowers overseas who report US corporate corruption that could lead to the next fiscal disaster.

A 2008 University of Chicago study determined that whistleblowers are the best tool for fighting corporate fraud. One unfortunate but not surprising finding was that of whistleblowers whose identity was revealed, 82% were either forced from their position or quit under duress. In 2009 the accounting firm of Price Waterhouse Coopers issued its ***Global Economic Crime Survey*** confirming that the most effective way to detect corporate fraud is through whistleblowers. It concluded that fraud detection depends on protecting the whistleblowers and punishing those in the corporations who commit fraud *regardless of their position in the company*. Adoption of best practices in establishing and enforcing whistleblower protections is the most effective way to route out corruption and protect the public.

In conclusion, the US has failed to provide effective remedies for all whistleblowers. It has failed to enact necessary legislation and has taken regressive steps in violation of Article 2 of International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights. It has failed to provide effective protection of federal employee whistleblowers, private sector whistleblowers and whistleblowers from other countries.

The NWC seeks US compliance with obligations under pertinent international instruments and demands:

- (1) Clemency for **Bradley Birkenfeld** and an end to prosecution of whistleblowers.
- (2) Enactment of HR 1507 to ensure all federal employee whistleblowers have access to the customary legal procedures (jury trials) for retaliation claims.
- (3) Enactment of legislation that provides effective remedies against employer coercion and retaliation for private sector employees with a statute of limitations of at least 180 days.
- (4) Sufficient resources and training for the Department of Labor to properly investigate and adjudicate whistleblower cases, and a private right of action.
- (5) Reform of immigration laws to allow immigrants access to all labor laws and remedies and permit all immigrants to submit applications for political asylum at any time.
- (6) Enforcement of laws consistent with customary law and full *make whole* remedies and jury trials.

Farmworker Advocates Praise the Department of Labor's New H-2A Regulations

by Barb Howe, Communications Coordinator of Farmworker Justice

The H-2A Agricultural Guestworker Program has been the subject of much attention recently. In February, **Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis** announced new H-2A program regulations that took effect on March 15. The new rules mostly reversed the very harmful changes made by the Bush-Chao Administration to wage rates, benefits and other labor protections. **Farmworker Justice** praised the new regulations as a victory for our nation's farmworkers and thanked the **Secretary Solis** for her commitment to farmworkers. From the beginning of her term, **Secretary Solis** made farmworkers a priority and allocated the substantial resources needed to rewrite the H-2A program regulations.

Agricultural employers expressed dismay over the new regulations, even though the regulations largely restored the basic procedures and worker protections that had been in place since 1987. The American Farm Bureau Federation and the North Carolina Growers Association filed a lawsuit against the Department of Labor in federal court in North Carolina seeking to overturn the latest revisions. On April 9, the court rejected the growers' request for an emergency injunction to overturn the new regulations. At press time, the **Solis** regulations remained in place but it was unclear how the lawsuit would proceed. **Farmworker Justice** is one of several organizations providing legal representation to farmworker labor unions and individual farmworkers who intervened in the case.

Interestingly, while a broad range of grower groups filed the 2009 lawsuit to stop the H-2A regulations, only the North Carolina Growers Association and the American Farm Bureau Federation brought the 2010 lawsuit. Many of the agribusiness critics view the new regulations as another reason to support a compromise in Congress on immigration, the *AgJOBS* bill. *AgJOBS* would revise the H-2A program in balanced ways and offer hundreds of thousands of agricultural workers the opportunity to earn a legal immigration status. The pro-*AgJOBS* groups did not join the 2010 lawsuit.

Farmworker advocates have long criticized the H-2A guestworker program for its lax labor protections for both US farmworkers and guestworkers. Despite the program's history of abuses, the Bush Administration's changes reduced government oversight and diminished the program's protections for farmworkers, including by cutting farmworkers wages on average by \$1.00 but in many places by \$2.00 per hour. **Secretary Solis** restored the old formulas for the wage rates and transportation cost reimbursements, the job preference for US workers, the minimum work guarantee, and the oversight of employer applications. She also strengthened some of the

few positive changes made in the Bush regulations, such as the requirements that farm labor contractors provide a surety bond. **Solis** added several new protections, including a requirement that foreign workers be informed of the job terms by the time they apply for a visa and a requirement that H-2A applications be posted on an electronic job registry so that US workers can learn about the jobs.

In 2010, the tens of thousands of US workers and foreign workers employed at H-2A program employers will receive job opportunities with higher wages and benefits and government oversight as a result of **Secretary Solis's** action. **Farmworker Justice** also appreciates the coalition effort among farmworker organizations, advocates and allies to persuade the Administration to take such action, to submit the factual materials and comments that demonstrated the need for such action, and to intervene in the lawsuits to represent the interests of farmworkers.

History of the Fight over the H-2A Guestworker Program

January 2009 — The Bush rules go into effect 3 days before President Obama takes office. **Farmworker Justice** and others file a lawsuit to stop the regulations, but lose.

March - June 2009 — The new **Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis** announces plans to restore the former H-2A regulations, which had been in place since 1987, while re-examining the entire program. Several agribusiness organizations, including the North Carolina Growers Association, sue to challenge the proposed suspension of the Bush regulations. Just before the suspension is to take effect, the judge grants the growers' request for a preliminary injunction and orders that the Bush regulations continue.

September 2009 — **Secretary Solis** announces plans to revise the H-2A program and requests public comments on proposed changes, most of which are intended to restore labor protections and wage rates in the program. **Farmworker Justice**, the **United Farm Workers** and others coordinate analysis and comments on the proposed regulations.

February 2010 — After consideration of public comment, **Secretary Solis** announces the final changes to the H-2A program and sets March 15 as the date they would become effective.

Zenroren Honors Haymarket Martyrs on May Day

by Larry Spivack, International Labor Day Coordinator, Illinois Labor History Society, AFSCME DC 31

On May 4, 1886, workers rallied on the corner of DesPlaines and Randolph Avenues in Chicago, advocating for the 8-hour day, freedom of speech and assembly, and the right to organize. The peaceful demonstrations turned into the *Haymarket Tragedy* when a bomb was thrown by a person whose identity is, to this day, still unknown. The Chicago Police opened fire at the masses who had gathered there. And the ensuing chaos became the pretext for the corporate bosses to crush the growing and militant labor movement of the day. The subsequent trial and hanging of four martyrs gave rise to **International Labor Day** around the world and continues to be one of the most widely celebrated days in the world.

In 1889 trade union delegations throughout the world, including the American Federation of Labor, met in Paris France and declared May 1st as the day that workers would unite to celebrate the achievements of labor and to honor the martyrs involved in the *Haymarket tragedy*. To this day May 1st is celebrated internationally, but scarcely recognized in the United States.



In 2004 after more than 35 years of struggle, the **Illinois Labor History Society** [ILHS] succeeded in securing a monument to commemorate the site where this event occurred. The beautiful and engaging sculpture was created with a wide base so that labor organizations from around the world could come to Chicago on May Day each year to dedicate plaques in honor of international labor solidarity.

Beginning on May 1, 2005, the Chicago Federation of Labor and the ILHS began to reclaim May Day in Chicago by holding a rally at the sight. The first plaque was dedicated by the Colombian Trade Unionists [CUT] who continue to be killed for expressing their ideas. The UNI dedicated a plaque in 2006 and marched in the first immigrants' rights parade in Chicago. The Chicago Federation of Labor, Iraqi Trade Union Federation, and the AFL-CIO have all dedicated plaques.

This year a delegation of 75 Japanese members of **Zenroren**, a large Japanese trade union federation, dedicated their plaque and afterwards joined many immigrant rights groups and labor organizations in the Chicago May Day march.

In 2011, the ILHS is planning a major event to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the Haymarket tragedy. ILHS is inviting labor organizations from around the world to honor the Haymarket martyrs. **SAVE THE DATE!**

Editor's Note: The deed to the Haymarket memorial monument in Forest Home Cemetery in Forest Park, Illinois, was given to the Illinois Labor History Society in 1971. Just prior to receiving National Landmark Status in 1997, the monument was vandalized and lost its beautiful bronze garland wreath. ILHS is collecting donations to replace the wreath in May Day 2011.

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National Lawyers Guild Labor & Employment Committee

Breakfast at the AFL-CIO LCC

*From Tea Party Anger to Economic Justice:
Reframing the Debate and Building Broad Coalitions*

Friday June 4 at 7a.m.

Marriott Wardman Park Hotel - 2660 Woodley Road NW - Washington, DC

The problem isn't special interests in Washington, DC, it's narrow interests. For thirty years we have allowed the economic, political, and social systems in our country to retreat from Roosevelt's community-building Four Freedoms and return to the days when a tiny group of the very wealthy pushed the rest of us around and picked our pockets for their personal benefit. Roosevelt coupled freedom of speech and religion with freedom from fear and want. Many folks drawn into the Tea Party movement have good reasons to be angry; and they support the Four Freedoms, at least in their hearts. Let's talk to them about going after the real culprits and together building economic justice, social equality, and a political system that advances democracy.

**National Lawyers Guild L&EC MEETING
at the 2010 AFL-CIO LCC in Washington DC
Thursday - June 3, 2010 - 7 a.m.**

We will post a meeting notice with the location at our table near the LCC Registration.

**NLG Labor & Employment Committee BREAKFAST at the LCC
Friday - June 4, 2010 - 7 a.m.**

Chip Berlet, Senior Analyst at Political Research Associates
Karen Nussbaum, Executive Director of Working America

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