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Striking Security

Is the security guard the representative worker of neoliberalism? Over the last fifty years, private security workers have come to outnumber public security workers, as the multinational private security industry has grown rapidly, the product both of the privatization of policing, the marketing of “security” as a commodity, and the global expansion of firms like Securitas and Securicor. Yet though security service workers constitute one of main divisions of SEIU, the largest US union, they remain a relatively invisible part of the service sector workforce. This part of our presentation explores the labor power and labor process of “security” in the private security industry, through a reflection on several security guard strikes of the last decade, from France in May 2000 and South Africa in March 2006 to California in the spring of 2008 and Hong Kong in early 2009.