

INDUSTRIAL WORKER



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**London IWW
Cleaners Occupy
Guildhall**

5

**Special:
Whose Ports?
Our Ports!**

6-7

**FW Staughton Lynd
Reviews "Rebel
Voices"**

8

**Mr. Block: He Joins
the NYPD**

11

IWW Fights Wage Theft At Ottawa Hair Salon

By Fellow Worker Hertani

When Fellow Worker Brandon Wallans quit his job along with Fellow Worker Stephen Toth at Hype Unisex Salon and Spa in Ottawa, Ontario, because he realized he wouldn't get paid for several weeks' worth of work, and started picketing the business alone, his ex-boss told him she would bring a friend of hers to put an end to his one-man picket.

Brandon did not have to wait much longer before an aggressive police officer showed up and started harassing him, writing him tickets for breaking a city by-law before crumpling them up and stuffing them into the fellow worker's jacket. When from across the street, an ally from the Canadian Union of Postal Workers National building approached Brandon to offer him coffee, he was charged with obstruction of justice. This was the beginning of the wage theft case that the Ottawa-Outaouais General

Membership Branch is now fighting on the picket line.

Fellow workers and community allies held numerous pickets outside Hype on Bank Street throughout December 2011, highlighting the business' labor practices and the rising incidences of wage theft across Ontario and throughout the neighborhood. They have put up with several incidences of police intimidation designed to disrupt their legal and constitutionally-protected picket line.

Hype has been investigated and fined by the city health inspectors for not following proper code, and more recently has been put under an investigation by the Ontario Ministry of Labour in response to complaints and the union pickets. The Ottawa-Outaouais IWW will continue to press for the wages owed to Brandon and Stephen through direct action.



Wobblies picket Hype Unisex Salon and Spa on Dec. 7, 2011. Photo: Ottawa-Outaouais IWW

German Wobblies Call For International Day Of Action Against Eurest



Photo: wobblies.de

Harald Stubbe protests Eurest in Eschborn.

**By H. Stuhlfauth
IWW Cologne, Germany**

German Wobblies are preparing for an international day of action against Commerzbank and their subcontractor catering and canteen giant Eurest. They

ask Wobblies around the world to join their protest at the end of January and get in contact.

Eurest informed Fellow Worker Harald Stubbe that he will be suspended on March 31, 2012 because of what they call "operational reasons." That of course is a bad joke. FW Harald is going to be sacked because he is a unionist, a delegate of an IWW shop branch and an inconvenient shop steward who put an end to harrasement and arbitrary power. Moreover he has been elected to the national shop steward body of Eurest—as the only independent candidate. (German labor law has a proportional representation so that a minority candidate has chances to be elected).

It is true that Commerzbank is in deep economic trouble after the financial crash of 2008 and after it swallowed its competitor Dresdner Bank in 2009. Commerzbank had to be bailed out by the German Gov-

ernment for €18.2 billion. Now they ask for €5 billion more in 2012 to survive. As a consequence of their merger, Commerzbank is now cutting jobs and facilities. Therefore it was not surprising when they announced the closing of a small location in Frankfurt where Harald and his fellow workers prepared daily meals for the staff. Surprisingly FW Stubbe shall be the only one that is not being offered a new job. Eurest is running an estimated 100 canteens in the Frankfurt region.

German Wobblies are not ignoring the fact that a profit-driven and ruthless company like Eurest wants to get rid of our fellow worker. They are taking it as a challenge to intensify their organizing drive towards Eurest and the canteen business. It would be a big step forward if England, North America and other countries would target Eurest as well.

Eurest belongs to the British contract food service and support services company Compass Group PLC, which is specialized in manufactured meals and facility management. Compass Group is an aggressive

player in the global market. The corporation makes its profits by taking over other companies and putting pressure on unions, wages and working conditions. As their figures seem to stagnate in Europe, Compass Group is growing in the U.S. market. Their subsidiaries are:

- Chartwells Higher Education Dining Services, calling itself "the leading U.S. college and university foodservice provider."
- Levy Restaurants, the market leader in sports and entertainment foodservice.
- Bon Appétit Management Company, providing foodservice for higher education and corporate dining.
- Crothall Services Group, healthcare facilities management.

There are many other subsidiaries listed here: <http://compass-usa.com/Pages/Fact-Sheet.aspx>.

Both unionists and anti-war activists should be interested in Compass. Compass Group's Eurest Support Services (ESS) is feeding the U.S. troops in Iraq and other military personnel. For more information, contact stuhlfauth@wobblies.de.

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IWW In Brisbane Is Making A Comeback!

By IWW Brisbane

Fellow Workers,

The IWW in Brisbane, Western Australia, is reemerging after a couple of years in slumber. Occupy Brisbane has increased local interest in the IWW and brought people together.

IWW members have recently been active within the Brisbane Solidarity Network to help start the Occupy Housing campaign. This campaign began because ANZ Bank has attempted to illegally foreclose and take possession of a number of houses in Brisbane.

In a house in the suburb of Clayfield, ANZ lawyers issued illegal notices to leave the property and have broken into the house twice to change the locks, physically preventing a tenant from moving in. Brisbane Solidarity Network and IWW members occupied the house

for a week to prevent ANZ agents from breaking in a third time to change the locks.

At the time of this writing, the tenant has taken possession of the house and has had her lease legally lodged with the registrar. The owner is considering legal options to deal with ANZ.

We believe this was not an isolated event. Rather, it is a standard business tactic that ANZ uses in its attempts to intimidate mortgage holders out of their homes. Often it is isolated workers, lacking the capacity to understand or challenge the process, who lose their homes—not to mention the portion of their lives they gave in wages to pay their mortgages.

For more information on the Brisbane Solidarity Network, visit <http://www.solnet.co.nr>.





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Send your letters to: iw@iww.org with "Letter" in the subject.

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Anniversary Of Marx's "Capital"

To the Editor,

This year marks the 145th anniversary of the publication of the first volume of Karl Marx's monumental work "Capital."

When I first took an interest in socialist politics, I came from an anarchist perspective, determined not to repeat the totalitarian mistakes of the Left's past. I saw engaging with Marx as a very slippery slope. Merely reading him would result in a Bolshevized version of "The Santa Clause" effect, turning me into a Stalinist overnight, developing a penchant for military regalia and unfortunate facial hair.

Noam Chomsky—who would be my socialist Father, Son and Holy Ghost—was dismissive of the man, saying: "If the field of social and historical and economic analysis was so trivial that what somebody wrote a hundred years ago could still be authoritative, you might as well talk about some other topic. But as I understand Marx, he constructed a somewhat interesting theory of a rather abstract model of 19th century capitalism."

For too long, I took his word for it. Chomsky, I think, grew up in an era when coherent structural critiques of capitalism were common. So it was easy to think of Marx as superfluous. I was not so lucky.

The anarchist writers I drifted toward were so anti-ideological as to provide little help. And my thinking, which could have been so much clearer, suffered from putting off Marx.

For instance, most people know intuitively that capitalists, those upstanding members of society we call "business leaders," are parasites. Marx's theory of surplus value explains exactly how this is so.

His biographer Francis Wheen wrote, "Not since Jesus Christ has an obscure pauper inspired such global devotion—or been so calamitously misinterpreted."

The more I read Marx, the more I believe this. That foreboding I had regarding certain elements of his thought was unfounded.

For instance, as I understand it, Marx's infamous phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat" was an unfortunate rhetorical choice. It carries a sense of totalitarianism that it did not have in the 19th century. After all, Marx referred to the capitalist republics of his time as "dictatorships of the bourgeoisie," and, perhaps most tellingly, his close collaborator Frederick Engels referred to the Paris Commune of 1871, which enjoyed universal suffrage, as a model of the "dictatorship of the

proletariat."

I think it's high time we reappraise the legacy of Karl Marx to reflect, not simply the "poet of commodities" that writer Slavoj Žižek says Wall Street would reduce him to, but the revolutionary thinker he was. I think it's time we realize that we have not reached, as Francis Fukuyama has said, "the end of history." One day we will live in a more equitable and democratic society and have Marx partly to thank.

Jon Hochschartner, Lake Placid

More On Joe Hill's Ashes

Dear Fellow Workers,

To add to FW Lee's article "Addendum On Joe Hill's Ashes" (November *IW*, page 2): though I wasn't part of the union when this all took place, I had the distinct honor of meeting FW Utah Phillips several times and he confirmed that a pinch of Joe Hill's ashes were taped to the inside of his guitar. His dear friend and musical co-conspirator FW Mark Ross also has a pinch taped to the inside of his guitar. Father FW Bill Bixel of the Catholic Workers told me that some of Joe Hill's ashes were spread over a Catholic Worker farm in Centralia, Wash.

FW Eric Chase



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Obama's Raw Deal For Workers

By Linda Averill

The American Jobs Act contains just enough window dressing about “creating jobs” to mask its real goal: making workers think it’s about creating jobs. The \$447 billion Obama proposal is only 60 percent the size of the 2009 stimulus, which wasn’t enough. More than half the package—\$245 billion—is tax cuts, primarily from Social Security. Supposedly, businesses will hire and consumers will buy if tax refunds abound. But this strategy, used repeatedly in previous stimulus measures, has failed miserably—creating today’s epidemic of around 35 million under- or unemployed people.

From Egypt to Britain, unemployment and austerity is fueling mass strikes and revolts. This is what the United States needs. The uprising in Madison, Wis., and Occupy Wall Street are a good start, but transforming anger into effectiveness requires developing concrete demands. A serious jobs program to create full employment needs to top the agenda.

Enriching the Contractors

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka and other top labor officials are promoting the jobs bill as though it can “put America back to work.” This is delusional—or deceptive. The act dispenses \$30 billion to save 280,000 teaching jobs over ten years—a fraction of the federal aid that states will lose at year’s end.

The plan doesn’t restore the 580,000 state and local jobs lost since 2008. Nor does it offer continued emergency aid to states, except for a measly \$5 billion for firefighters and police. The upshot? With most states swimming in red ink, the public sector will continue to shrink. Meanwhile, Obama’s federal deficit reduction blueprint eliminates 120,000 union jobs at the U.S. Post Office.

Unfortunately, this attack on a vital public service is not getting the protest it deserves. Instead, there’s hoopla over the job plan putting \$70 billion into construction and repair of infrastructure. This will

create relatively few, temporary, private-sector construction jobs—and handsomely enrich for-profit contractors.

By contrast, during the Great Depression, a powerful, independent labor movement compelled President Roosevelt to fund a mass public works program. The plan put millions of unemployed to work, on government payrolls at prevailing wages. A modern-day plan, on a much larger scale, could easily be funded by taxing corporate profits.

Cutting Unemployment Aid

Another feature of the American Jobs Act is “the most sweeping reforms to the Unemployment Insurance system in 40 years.” Republicans love this. States will be encouraged to “experiment” with their unemployment programs. As models, Obama points to Georgia and North Carolina, two “right to work for less” states.

The Georgia Works program is designed along principles used by former President Bill Clinton to gut welfare. The unemployed are sent to work for companies, but rather than getting a paycheck, they get their aid and supposed on-the-job training.

Clinton’s program was disastrous for poor families when the economy tanked and good jobs dried up. Similarly, Georgia Works is failing today. Only 16 percent of participants are hired by the company they train with, and Georgia suffers the eighth highest unemployment rate in the United States.

Obama’s package includes some money to extend unemployment insurance to the long-term jobless, but the primary goal is to shrink the rolls—whether or not people find work. Measures include stepped-up job search requirements and reviews to assess eligibility. This translates into pressuring workers to take starvation employment.

Obama proposes insurance to aid workers who take pay cuts with new employers. Who pays for the insurance? Good question.

Another gimmick is “work share,” where employees share jobs—and pay. The loss in earning power will be partially covered by unemployment benefits. This is a far cry from the socialist demand to shorten the standard workweek to 30 hours with no cut in pay to create jobs. Unlike “work share,” this demand gives the rewards of labor’s rising productivity to workers rather than bosses. Added up, Obama’s vision is a recipe for creating a permanent underclass of impoverished workers who will be used to drag down living standards.

It’s incumbent upon organized labor not to cover for, but to counter Obama’s plans with a program to really help the unemployed. This includes calling for a raise in the minimum wage to union scale, with automatic cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) increases. Restoring affirmative action, with the teeth of quotas, is also needed to address far higher unemployment rates among African Americans, Latinos, women, and other demographics that suffer discrimination. These measures, in combination with an ambitious public works program, would transform millions of low-wage jobs into living wage employment and put upward pressure on wages.

More Tax Cuts at the Top

The centerpiece of the act—more tax cuts for big business—further undermines government’s ability to provide services and public-sector jobs. Businesses get the first \$5 million of their Social Security payroll taxes cut in half, at a cost of \$60 billion.

A total payroll tax holiday is further awarded to companies that hire new workers or provide raises. To soothe concerns about Social Security being bankrupted, Obama claims he will offset the cost with



Graphic: consideronline.org

money from the government’s general fund, but that is not dedicated funding for the retirement safety net. So how does this plan jive with the congressional mandate to slice \$3 trillion from government spending? Good question.

Rather than drain Social Security, the Federal Strategic Plan’s ten-point program calls for strengthening retirement security by raising Social Security benefits to cover actual living costs. Imagine the millions of jobs that would open if older workers could retire with a guaranteed income. This could be funded in whole or in part by lifting the cap on payroll taxes for income over \$106,800—a giveaway to the rich.

Obama’s bill contains a candy shop of other goodies for businesses—to the tune of some \$28 billion. The net effect is to take government in the opposite direction from what is needed, and what the majority of people want: to tax the 1 percent. Restoring tax rates to pre-Reagan era numbers, along with ending business subsidies and loopholes and lowering rates for investment income, would raise hundreds of billions of dollars for public-sector jobs and human services. So would redirecting military spending—now at 66 percent of discretionary federal spending.

There’s no lack of work that needs to be done, and which could provide jobs. What is lacking, so far, is a sustained mass mobilization centered on working-class interests. It’s up to the people, especially organized labor, to occupy the streets and capitals, raising hell for a full employment program. Let’s get to work!

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IWW Constitution Preamble

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life. Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, “A fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work,” we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, “Abolition of the wage system.”

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for the everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

Join the IWW Today

The IWW is a union for all workers, a union dedicated to organizing on the job, in our industries and in our communities both to win better conditions today and to build a world without bosses, a world in which production and distribution are organized by workers ourselves to meet the needs of the entire population, not merely a handful of exploiters.

We are the Industrial Workers of the World because we organize industrially—that is to say, we organize all workers on the job into one union, rather than dividing workers by trade, so that we can pool our strength to fight the bosses together.

Since the IWW was founded in 1905, we have recognized the need to build a truly international union movement in order to confront the global power of the bosses and in order to strengthen workers’ ability to stand in solidarity with our fellow workers no matter what part of the globe they happen to live on.

We are a union open to all workers, whether or not the IWW happens to have representation rights in your workplace. We organize the worker, not the job, recognizing that unionism is not about government certification or employer recognition but about workers coming together to address our common concerns. Sometimes this means striking or signing a contract. Sometimes it means refusing to work with an unsafe machine or following the bosses’ orders so literally that nothing gets done. Sometimes it means agitating around particular issues or grievances in a specific workplace, or across an industry.

Because the IWW is a democratic, member-run union, decisions about what issues to address and what tactics to pursue are made by the workers directly involved.

TO JOIN: Mail this form with a check or money order for initiation and your first month’s dues to: IWW, Post Office Box 180195, Chicago, IL 60618, USA.

Initiation is the same as one month’s dues. Our dues are calculated according to your income. If your monthly income is under \$2000, dues are \$9 a month. If your monthly income is between \$2000 and \$3500, dues are \$18 a month. If your monthly income is over \$3500 a month, dues are \$27 a month. Dues may vary outside of North America and in Regional Organizing Committees (Australia, British Isles, German Language Area).

- I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer.
- I agree to abide by the IWW constitution.
- I will study its principles and acquaint myself with its purposes.



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Building The IWW's Program: From Workplace Grievances To Worker Control

By Joel Schwartz

There are two general categories of activity for our union. One is organizational activity and the other is programmatic activity. These two exist in a closely interwoven, and one could say dialectical, relationship.

By organizational activity I mean creating organizational structures, recruiting members, holding meetings, dealing with finances and the like. I include both organizational activities as a branch and organizational activities on the job.

By programmatic activities I mean those things that we use our organization for: winning demands from the boss; supporting the strikes and struggles of other workers; and abolishing the wage system.

Each type of activity is dependent on the other. Without an organization, no programmatic activity can be carried out. The larger, stronger, more cohesive the organization, the more it can potentially accomplish. On the other hand, maintaining an organization is impossible without programmatic purpose. If an organization doesn't accomplish anything members will eventually fall away and the organization will dissipate. Growth in each area of activity needs growth in the other.

I think that we need to "grow" our programmatic activities. I think that we need to go beyond addressing workplace issues like arbitrary firings, sexual harassment and low wages. These issues can serve to motivate initial organizing drives, but I believe we need something more in order to sustain contract-less organizing over the longer term. After all, those are the types of issues that the business unions address through contract-based organizing. If we want to sustain a more radical vision, it has to be reflected in our program as well as our organization.

We should explicitly start to analyze how to build the bridge between addressing workplace grievances and the actual abolition of the wage system. Then we need to figure out how start walking across that bridge. In general, that bridge will be built from things that increase our power and control as a collective expression of

the working class.

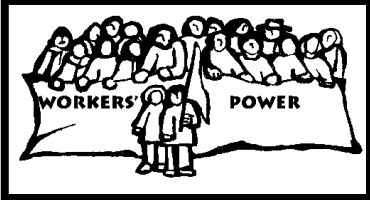
A few examples occur to me, but it will take a collective and concerted effort to figure this out. One idea is to make your local area a scab-free zone. Approach this with the use of propaganda, such as postering, flyering and posting videos on Youtube; declaring a scab-free zone; and educating about the evils of scabbing. Then, back it up—organize a disciplined force to keep scabs out of a struck workplace, with or without the consent of the striking union.

Another idea is to try to gain control over hiring at our workplaces. This is not such a far-fetched idea when you think about the practice in some trades of hiring out of the union hall. We may want to switch that up and take control of hiring from the shop floor rather than the union hall. We could think about ways to make this happen.

A third possibility is to increase the links between the work we do and those affected by our work, and look to control our work's outcomes and purpose. For example, in my job in the welfare system, I have sometimes connected with the Welfare Rights Committee to try to affect welfare legislation. I could try to broaden that and organize coworkers into the effort. In education, connections could be made between educators and parents to start to redesign the education we deliver. A plan already under way in the Twin Cities, Minn.—to provide support to substitute teachers—is a step in this direction.

These specific ideas may or may not have merit in themselves, but they start to give the idea. If we aim to abolish the wage system, we have to start to figure out the steps to get there. We have ideas about a general strike, but there's a gulf between where we are and a general strike, and a gulf again between a general strike and actually abolishing the wage system.

One never knows for sure what is possible or what might be effective in the current moment. History will tell, but we can't wait for the backward vision of history. We need to develop a plan to move forward programmatically, as well as organizationally.



So You Get 50 Wobblies In A Room: A Call To Use General Conventions More Wisely

By db

I'm damn proud to be part of the IWW and to see and hear how we have transformed our organization from one that is mostly about remembering the past to one about taking those ideas into our workplaces and communities.

While we still have a long way to go in lots of areas, I wanted to take this month to highlight an area that I think we need to do more than better: we need a new approach. This area is our General Conventions, the annual meetings where we gather as a body to make decisions about the future of our union. Fatefully, in this effort I will be aided by history even older than



the IWW itself, taken from the first of a ten-volume history on U.S. labor by Eric Foner, "History of the Labor Movement in the United States."

One thing that struck me in reading this volume that covers colonial beginnings to the late 1800s was how national labor conventions operated. Delegates assemble with an agenda made up of the core issues facing their organization(s). Committees and chairs would be elected who would create work plans or proposals on those issues. These plans or proposals would be brought back to the body for ap-

proval, rejection, or amendments. If the proposals passed they would then be taken on as work by those committees, elected officers or unions represented.

I'm sitting here saying "damn." Why don't we do things that way and why do current IWW conventions seem like such a waste of time? Why are all of us amazing people from all over spending our time talking about the same constitutional minutia instead of doing work, talking about the most pressing issues at hand and meeting each other and enjoying that company?

Dare me to name some more pressing issues than the ones covered at convention. Dare yourself. I mean do it, stop and think, what are the most pressing issues for the IWW to figure out in the present?

My similarly worrisome, if slightly better, experiences at the recent founding convention for the IWW Food and Retail Workers makes me think it is important that this issue be raised now, before more time is wasted, more new members become disillusioned, and the most pressing topics not talked about when the right people are in the room.

Seriously, if you wanted to get together with your 25 favorite Wobblies, or the idea

WOMEN WORKERS' HISTORY

Chapter 50

Pressed Steel Car

The 5,000 workers employed by the Pressed Steel Car Co. in McKees Rocks, Pa. had grievances against the U.S. Steel subsidiary as long as the nearby Ohio River. These Eastern European immigrants -- "Hunkies" to the bosses -- were overworked, underpaid, and abused. What's more, company agents often made sexual relations with wives and daughters a condition of employment.

One of their priests investigated the Pressed Steel Car workers' grievances, and angrily came to this conclusion: "Men are persecuted, robbed and slaughtered, and their wives are abused worse than death -- all to obtain or retain positions that barely keep starvation from the door."

When the men struck on July 14, 1909, the women took the opportunity to get their revenge. "Wives fought alongside their husbands to prevent scabs from entering the factory. Armed with household utensils -- poker, brooms and rolling pins -- the women were an awesome force."*



Women won the battle over housing. The company sent 50 mounted constables to evict strikers from company-owned dwellings. Women blocked their path, threatening to burn the houses themselves rather than be evicted. They shouted to their husbands, "If you are afraid, go home to the children!" The constables charged. The women threw rocks. The constables opened fire, first with blank cartridges, then with live bullets. Nearly 100 were wounded, 25 were arrested, but the evictions were stopped.

The strikers returned to work in September with a wage increase, a union (the IWW), time off -- and a company pledge that any Pressed Steel Car official who demanded sexual favors from workers' wives or daughters as a condition of employment would be immediately discharged.

*Women and the American Labor Movement, Philip S. Foner. Page 423

Graphic: Mike Konopacki

of them (we do exist! we are everywhere!), would you really spend your time combing over the constitution or debating minor changes to it? I mean, fine, a few of these Wobs would debate all night, but then why can't we call it a committee and actually get a lot of work done rather than doing things piecemeal, via email, sort of? And yes, we will have a kickass party.

That said, what we really need to talk about is how to organize more effectively, how to coordinate our efforts, our social media, how to get our stuff out there and look appealing to the public. We need to talk about how to understand and act in this fast-changing, exciting political cli-

mate. We need to discuss what our strategy is, how to break it down into work areas, how to hold each other accountable, how to win campaigns outside the National Labor Relations Board, and what resources we need to make it possible. We need a theory of building fighting branches and getting people the support they need to do so, and we need to learn how to build a mass base. We need direct action and solidarity, education, organization and emancipation.

We can do better. We can do better at future conventions. Let's do it for 2012 even if it is the end of the world.

db would be excited to be contacted with feedback at db@riseup.net.

Wobbly News Shorts

London IWW Cleaners Occupy Guildhall

On Dec. 23, 2011, cleaners began staging a sit-in at the Corporation of London's Guildhall to protest the inadequate response of their employer—the contractor Sodexo—over the abusive treatment of women employees.

The cleaners, organized by the IWW, say their action comes after a growing frustration with Sodexo (and their predecessor Ocean) following persistent complaints regarding the conduct of certain members of the management team at Guildhall.

Repeatedly complaints have been raised with respect to varying degrees of the mistreatment especially towards women, including extremely abusive acts such as bullying, confinement of individuals, intimidation and assault.

The cleaners say the last straw was an incident involving a manager and one of the union representatives on Nov. 21, 2011. The rep Isabel Martin was followed to a room in the basement of Guildhall, where she was blocked from leaving with the door closed. Then it is alleged that a male supervisor subjected her to an outburst of aggression and intimidating behavior. The



Photo: tmponline.org

terrified woman was under threat of real physical violence.

The union has raised concerns and complaints of the treatment of employees on enough previous occasions with the employers to warrant sufficient preventative measures to safeguard the safety of employees and to ensure no further mistreatment occurs. "In the summer, a mass meeting of cleaners had called for the removal of those managers responsible for mistreatment of workers," said London IWW Regional Secretary Chris Ford. The IWW insists that the incident on Nov. 21 could have been avoided if the concerns of workers were respected and acted upon beforehand. One cleaner stated: "These big companies need to put the safety of the workers before the reputation of the City of London Corporation."

The union feels Sodexo has dragged their feet over this incident—they sent two letters of complaint, but it took 20 days before Isabel Martin was formally interviewed. Her complaint of such a serious matter has been treated as a mere grievance.

In response, a number of workers refused to undertake their cleaning duties and are staging a sit in at the reception of the Guildhall. They are demanding robust action that can protect women workers from such mistreatment occurring again.

Corrections

Everybody makes mistakes, and unfortunately the *IW* made more mistakes than usual in the December 2011 issue. We apologize for the following:

- The title of "Strike At World's Biggest Hotel" (pg. 1) was inaccurate. Accor is the biggest hotel *operator*, not the biggest hotel.

- The title "A Visit With FW Joe Monson" (pg. 4) accidentally mis-named the interviewee. The interview was with *Jeff* Monson, not Joe Monson.

- The *IW*'s holiday greeting on page 12 read: "For a season without without exploitation." This was not intended as a double negative, and we hope everyone had a season *without* exploitation.

I Was Arrested In The Zuccotti Park Raid

By Jon Hochschartner

Reportedly over 200 people were arrested when the New York Police Department (NYPD) evicted Occupy Wall Street from Zuccotti Park on Nov. 15, 2011. I was one of them.

At around 1:00 a.m. hundreds of police dressed in riot gear surrounded the area. One officer said through a bullhorn: "If you refuse to immediately remove your property from the park or refuse to leave the park, you will be subject to arrest."

Later in a press conference, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the 12th richest person in the country, said he ordered the eviction because the park represented a "health and fire-safety hazard to the protestors and the surrounding community."

Bloomberg's concern over the health implications caused by a lack of cleanliness in the park was laughable in that Zuccotti was no dirtier than the average New York City street. Crowding may have been dangerous in an emergency situation, but this problem could have been easily remedied by opening up a dialogue with the protestors. The truth was that the eviction was politically motivated—a transparent attempt to repress a growing movement for change.

Threats of arrest caused some panic. Everyone expected the police to use the kind of overwhelming, violent force recently used against Occupy Oakland. In his haste, one man accidentally triggered a camp fire extinguisher, causing those around him to believe the NYPD had deployed tear gas. Protestors overturned tables and tents to form barricades. They ripped apart clothes, making bandanas to protect against chemical agents. They stuffed their ears with shredded napkins

in anticipation of the police using the sound cannon parked across the street. Others packed up their gear and left. Those who stayed gathered at the center of the camp, in the kitchen. Approximately six people locked themselves together with heavy bike locks around their necks. Perhaps 100 people surrounded them, sitting down and locking arms. They shared cigarettes and gallows humor as the police dismantled the surrounding structures, slowly making their way toward the kitchen.

Eventually the NYPD began pulling people away from the sitting crowd one by one. At the last moment, when they came to me, I unlocked arms with the man beside me, and instead gripped his leg, believing it would provide a stronger hold. The police grabbed my feet and pulled me away from the kitchen, dragging the man I was holding along with them. They were unsuccessful in disconnecting us, so they began to slap my wrists and legs with batons. I was struck in the groin with what felt like a kick. I quickly lost my hold and an officer pinned my hand to the ground with his boot.

My backpack was cut from my body. My hands were bound behind me with plastic cuffs before I was pulled to my feet. An officer picked up my glasses, which had been broken during the skirmish, and put them on my face. I was led to the back of a police van.

It was around 3:30 a.m. and I would be in custody for approximately the next 40 hours. Though 1 Police Plaza, the NYPD headquarters where many protestors were taken, is only a short distance away from the park, it seemed we were inside the van for close to an hour. This was due to the large number of protestors being processed outside.

Organizing Grows In Madison, Wisconsin

By 359762

The IWW in Madison, Wis. responded to Governor Walker's union-busting legislation in true Wobbly fashion: they started organizing. Members of the Madison General Membership Branch began organizing in a large call center in March 2011. This particular shop is one of two call centers owned by a large telecommunications company. The company has a location in Madison and another in nearby Milwaukee. Both shops have a total of approximately 1,500 employees. The campaign, while still underground, has made steady progress and has spawned the creation of Industrial Union Branch (IUB) 560.

With success comes new challenges and IUB 560's next challenge was revealed a few days after it was chartered. A representative from the Communication Workers of America (CWA) contacted one of the branch members in mid-October to ask for a meeting concerning the IWW's organizing at this shop. After an initial investigation it was discovered that a co-worker had been contacted by the CWA representative and subsequently helped to set up interest meetings between other coworkers and the representative. To complicate matters, this particular coworker is a member of the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and had been made aware of the IWW's organizing in May 2011. This coworker showed no interest in helping the IWW to organize the shop; however, when the CWA began showing interest, the coworker found time to help schedule meetings for the CWA. After several weeks of talks and meetings between the two unions, the CWA decided to back out, for the time being.

IUB 560 was fortunate to be able to call on the help and influence of Wobblies and folks from the broader labor movement. General Secretary-Treasurer Joe Tessone called and spoke with the CWA representative, informing him that the IWW already had organizers in the shop



Graphic: madisoniub560.iww.org

and any attempt to move in by the CWA would be seen as raiding. A mutual meeting between the IWW and the CWA was held and IUB 560 members stood their ground, refusing to take a "deal" offered by the CWA in exchange for helping them organize. Due to efforts by certain members of the ISO, it is unsure how long the CWA will remain off-stage.

In the wake of the CWA's influence there are now two organizing groups in the workplace. The largest one is made up of Wobblies that are organizing and planning job actions and petitions. The smaller one is heavily influenced by two or three ISO members and it's uncertain if they are going to be able to do any organizing outside of trying to create a front "workers committee" in an attempt to bring in CWA organizers.

In order to speed up organizing and to build a solid core of resistance to the CWA or any other business union's attempt to co-opt our organizing, IUB 560 has written and mailed out letters to each branch asking for assistance of any kind for this current campaign. We have the potential to revitalize the labor movement in Wisconsin and the nation. Success at such a large shop would reaffirm that the IWW is capable of organizing any workplace and reposition the union from the fringes to the center of the labor movement. For a union of 10,000 Wobblies!



Screenshot: globalpost.com

the cell could be mopped.

The next day, Nov. 16, dragged on slowly. One by one, we met with representatives from the National Lawyers Guild. As I understand it, I accepted a plea bargain that knocked my charges down simply to disorderly conduct. Other protestors decided to fight their charges, but I was unsure if I'd have money or time to return to the city for a number of court dates. I was ordered to pay a \$120 fine and was released at approximately 8:00 p.m.

Ultimately, I think Bloomberg will regret ordering the eviction from Zuccotti Park. When one looks back on the Occupy movement nationally, police repression has only provided more fuel for the cause. Supporters multiplied in the aftermath of Deputy Inspector Anthony Bologna's pepper spraying of activists, the arrest of more than 700 marchers on the Brooklyn Bridge, and the hospitalization of protesting Iraq War veteran Scott Olsen. The eviction from Zuccotti Park will only help grow this movement.

When the van was not being driven, which was most of the time we were inside the vehicle, there was no air conditioning.

Tightly packed with ten men dressed for winter, the van quickly became unbearably hot. It felt like the kind of heat that kills pets left in unattended cars in the summer. Sweating profusely, we yelled at the police outside to open the window to allow for ventilation, but they ignored us. One of the more flexible protestors managed to step over his cuffed hands, bringing them to his front. After having done so, he did the best he could to unzip our jackets and untie the bandanas from our necks.

Eventually we were brought into the station and processed. Charged with trespassing, obstructing governmental administration and disorderly conduct, I was put in a cell with approximately 40 other protestors. By chanting and pounding on the walls we acquired food and medical attention.

Later that day, we were transferred to Central Booking. It's the kind of place that makes one interested in prison reform. Graffiti painted with what appeared to be fecal matter stained the walls. The lights were on all night. Besides a limited number of benches, there was no place to sleep but the floor. Breakfast was served at 1:00 a.m. and we were woken an hour later so

Special

Whose Ports? Our Ports!

Solidarity Unionism, Occupy, & The Moral Right Of The Working Class To Control The Workplace



Thousands of workers march on the Port of Oakland on Nov. 2, 2011.

Photo: nebraskaworker.wordpress.com

By Don M. and Brendan Carrell

On Nov. 2, 2011, Occupy Oakland successfully shut down the ports in Oakland along with the approval and aid of International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10, which has a contract with the port's legal owners. This event was a tremendous leap in consciousness and something the U.S. working class has not done nor attempted to do in decades. Shortly after this action, Occupy Oakland passed another resolution for a West Coast port shutdown. Occupy movements in Portland, Long Beach, Seattle, Vancouver, Anchorage, Honolulu and Tokyo responded. On Dec. 12, 2011, the Occupy movements succeeded in shutting down the ports completely or partially in most of those cities. However, this time around Occupy did not have the full support of the unions involved.

This action has sparked debate between Occupy and the traditional labor movement encompassed in the AFL-CIO. The unions' argument is that Occupy did not have the right to shut down the workplaces (ports) where they did not work, and that this needed to be decided democratically within the bureaucracy of the ILWU.

We don't buy this argument. The Occupy movement is a reaction to the ruling class monopolizing the distribution of profits that are produced socially and collectively by the world's working class. They use these profits to buy the government and re-install this class monopoly; therefore, we must find strategic ways to disrupt the creation and movement of these profits as a class. We propose that the Occupy movement adopt a strategy of class struggle known as "solidarity unionism," and apply it to strategic points in the economic system that we are all protesting against.

In this article we are going to define what solidarity unionism is, as practiced by the IWW; make the argument that the entire working class has a moral right to every workplace, especially those of strategic importance in the world economy; discuss the 1934 Toledo Electric Auto-Lite strike as a historical example of solidarity unionism; and finally discuss how this type of strategy could further the goals of the Occupy movement.

What is Solidarity Unionism?

Solidarity unionism is simply the strategy of unionism where two or more workers at one workplace come together and act in concert and fight together for better wages, benefits, and more control on the work process itself. It does not require a union contract or even majority support to act together when using the solidarity unionism model at the workplace. We simply act together because we work together, we care about each other, and we all belong to the same class. We do this because we have a moral right and obligation to stand up with and for our fellow workers regardless of if others choose to do so.

This strategy of unionism was practiced by most working-class organizations in the United States up until the 1940s, and it got the goods. That is why we in the IWW hold dear this philosophy of unionism. Our working-class ancestors successfully practiced this model. However, today the traditional labor movement has lost its strength and vitality ever since they stopped abiding by this principle.

In the past, the 1 percent legally hired our children in sweatshops, legally hired us for wages below what we could use to feed ourselves and our families, legally required that we work any amount of hours they decided upon, and legally got away with all kinds of workplace abuses. Even

though all of this was legally protected, it was never morally right.

Our ancestors understood this and acted with a determination and discipline that was rooted in an understanding that we have a moral right to control our workplaces. It was labor that provided the moral arguments for child labor laws, minimum wage laws, the 40-hour work week, and other important material gains for working people. By developing strategies and tactics that were rooted in an understanding of their moral right to the workplace, regardless of what the law or officials in their unions said, they won tremendous victories.

This strategy worked and it is to the detriment of our entire society that the traditional labor movement no longer believes that the working class has a moral right to the workplace. But Occupy Oakland has led the way in reimagining what a labor movement might look like. Occupy Oakland acted with an understanding that they all have a moral right to those ports, even if this was an unconscious understanding. When they decided to shut down the port, they essentially transformed the strategy of solidarity unionism from an individual workplace to their entire community, and acted as a class—demonstrating a glimpse of what working-class power looks like.

If the Occupy movement is going to succeed in making real material gains, it will have to develop a strategy to win that is rooted in an understanding that we have a moral right to all workplaces and a moral responsibility to implement that strategy.

The Working Class has a Moral Right to Every Workplace

If we look at the divisions set up by the Occupy movement between the 99 percent and the 1 percent, we are essentially talk-

ing about class, even if the terminology of class is not used. This movement is a response to a small minority of people having a monopoly on the distribution of what the working class has produced, and that minority using their monopoly to unfairly influence our political and judicial system for their personal gains, to the detriment of everybody else.

This immoral possession of society's collective production of value is the root of why the 99 percent are in the streets protesting. In order to put pressure on the ruling class we will need to be able to directly challenge their monopoly on the value creating and distribution process.

Where is this done? Simply, it's done in the workplaces. Value is created when those of us in the working class come together and perform work. This process starts with the extraction of raw materials by workers, moves to a production or processing facility where workers create a commodity, then workers transport these commodities to the market, and finally, workers stock the shelves and sell the final product.

During this entire process, from extraction to the store, value is created by the working class and distributed by the ruling class. A very small part of this value is distributed in wages and benefits to the workers who performed the labor for this entire value creating process. A larger part of this value is distributed into the buying of more machinery, replacement parts, and other operating costs. But the largest part of this value is distributed into the bank accounts of the rich. This value-creating process has been going on for generations, and the rich keep accumulating more and more value while those of us who actually work for a living only receive a small amount of that value.

Continued on next page

Special



1934 Electric Auto-Lite Strike.

Photo: nebraskaworker.wordpress.com

Continued from previous page

This immoral process is how we've come to where we are now. Now, there is a 1 percent who probably never worked a real job in their lives, have all the value distributed into their checking accounts, yachts, multiple homes, and other material possessions that showcase their immoral greed. The rest of us who actually work (if we are lucky enough to have a job) are struggling to pay our bills and find the time to spend with our family and friends.

Within the current legal framework, all of this is legally protected, but there is nothing morally right about this entire value-making and distribution process. This entire legal framework is supported and strengthened by the politicians, judges, lobbyists and the media that the 1 percent buy with the profits from the value that we, the workers, have created with our hard work. This entire process is definitively immoral and it is the root cause of the economic mess we find ourselves in.

If the working class has a moral right to every workplace, and a moral right to the value created by our collective labor, then what does that mean when it comes to who has a right to engage in direct actions at strategic workplaces like a shutdown of a port? Do only the workers at a certain workplace have the moral right to decide what happens at a particular workplace? Or do any and all workers have that moral right?

We would argue that since ports like the ones in Oakland are the entry and exit points for capital in this country and hold a privileged and strategic position within the economy, then we all have a moral right to that workplace. Since we all have a moral right to that workplace, then it is absolutely morally right for the working class to decide and apply force to shut down the port. That port in Oakland legally belongs to a private company, but it morally and functionally belongs to us all.

The ILWU and its rank and file have a legal contract and a legal right to work there; they also have a moral right to that workplace. But the ILWU and its rank and file aren't the only members of the working class who have a moral right to those ports. All workers have a moral right to decide what happens at that port. The importance of the ports to the circulation of capital in our economy is undeniable. The actions taken there affect not simply the workers at each specific port, but also concretely impact the material conditions of the working class in this country as a whole. Given this fact, all workers not only have the moral right to control their operation, but a moral obligation to do so.

Regardless of what the ILWU leadership and other critics within the traditional labor movement may say about Occupy

Oakland not having the right to call for a shutdown of the port, they are wrong and Occupy Oakland had every moral right to make and implement that decision. In fact, the failure of the union bureaucracy to support such an action is not exemplary of a high-minded concern for the individual longshoremen, but rather cowardice in the face of ruling class intimidation. By criticizing the Occupy movement for facilitating direct action against the ruling class, the ILWU leadership is shirking its own moral duty to act as the representatives of the working class.

Shutting down the ports caused damage to the port's legal owners, and this kind of strategy carried out on a larger scale at strategic workplaces throughout the country and the world would cause damage to the entire 1 percent—the "legal" owners of all the value we have created. We have a moral right to those workplaces and the value created by our labor. We need to challenge the legality of this value creating and distribution process and assert our moral rights, as a class, to these workplaces.

The 1934 Toledo Electric Auto-Lite Strike

Applying the model of solidarity unionism at a single workplace with the aid of a community and members of the working class who don't actually work there has historical precedence. Our working-class ancestors used solidarity unionism frequently in the past when the labor movement had strength, vitality, and power. One of the most famous examples of solidarity unionism used in the framework that we are arguing for is the Toledo Electric Auto-Lite Strike of 1934.

Electric Auto-Lite was one of the largest makers of automobile parts in a city that was home to many independent parts suppliers. When the depression hit Toledo, there were many layoffs and a cutback in hours and wages for those who still had their jobs. When an AFL union struck Electric Auto-Lite in April 1934 over union recognition and unsatisfactory wages, no more than half the plant's workers stopped work, allowing the company to continue operation with its loyal employees and some replacement workers. In sympathy, employees at two neighboring factories—the Logan Gear Company and the Bingham Stamping Company—had joined the strike, but the real boost along the picket line came from the Lucas County Unemployed League.

The ruling class' courts

ordered an injunction to restrict picketing, but with the help of the Unemployed League the strike was able to put as many as 6,000 protestors before the plant's gates, shutting down the plant and rendering impossible any attempt to actually enforce the courts' injunction order.

After two days of fierce fighting, the operators made the judicious decision to shutter the plant. When the plant reopened, management had agreed to recognize the AFL as the employees' collective bargaining agent, introduced a slight wage hike, and rehired most of those who had gone out with the strikers. Solidarity unionism

got the goods.

As Philip Dray puts it in his book on the history of American labor, "There is Power in a Union":

"Local employers and authorities were stunned by what had taken place: here was a fighting spirit and determination among the working class—striking workers allied with militant unemployed—winning with strategy, bravado, and sheer strength of numbers. They had defied the entire arsenal of weapons that had historically ensured employer domination in such disputes—the courts, police, hired thugs, the militia, even the use of tear gas and bayonets."

They won because they started with the premise that they all had a moral right to that workplace and a moral obligation to shut down the factory, even with a minority of workers at the plant, until management ceded to their demands. Solidarity unionism got the goods.

Why Solidarity Unionism and Occupy?

On the face of it, the philosophy of solidarity unionism, with its focus on the unity of the working class, seems incompatible with the broader ethic of unity advocated by the Occupy movement. Yet this incompatibility is based only on appearance. The Occupy movement, consciously or unconsciously, has begun a dialogue about class power within global society—and inevitably, given the material facts of class struggle, this dialogue will develop naturally toward the expression of class contradictions in our economy. At the heart of the Occupy movement is an ethical and moral argument—that the ruling

class has a monopoly over the distribution of value created by the working class, and that this is contradictory to democracy.

What began as a movement centered on income inequality has expanded to include housing inequality, student debt and cultural alienation. Now the movement is growing further to include labor struggle and class power. This development is not, as some have argued, an example of Occupy straying from its original message—it is progressing logically from its original issue of income inequality. Oakland, by acting on the premise that they have a moral right to strategic workplaces in the economy, has emerged as a leader in the Occupy movement. Their strategy, which we argue is an extension of solidarity unionism from one workplace to the entire economy, will challenge the ruling class' monopoly on the distribution of value.

The model of organization adopted and developed by the Occupy movement complements the idea of solidarity unionism. The next challenge of the Occupy movement is to put into action the nice-sounding slogans about equality and solidarity. We have already seen a promising beginning in the occupations of foreclosed homes and port shutdowns. But the movement cannot stop there: if it seriously wants to change the inequalities that it protests, Occupy must understand that we have a moral right to the workplace, engage directly in struggle with the ruling class, and challenge their legal claim to distribute the value that we created.

A popular assembly like Occupy cannot do this alone. It can engage in this type of struggle by drawing attention to labor and working class issues as a whole, as well as play an important part as protestors and picketers as evidenced by the Auto-Lite Strike of 1934. If the Occupy movement can learn from examples like this and transition from symbolic demonstrations into substantive, collective direct actions as witnessed in Oakland, and the premise we have a moral right to these workplaces, then Occupy will be able to develop the power to challenge the ruling class.

We argue that when viewed in this lens, the philosophy of solidarity unionism is not a distraction from the issues raised by the Occupy movement. It is rather a strategy that lends both clarity of analysis and a plan of action to the feeling of class antagonism voiced by the movement.

If the Occupy movement is to succeed in any degree, it must develop not only a model for democratic decision-making, but also a means for democratic struggle—struggle that can transform slogans of social equality into a platform for achieving real change by, and for, the working class as a whole.

The new slogan, with the premise that we have a moral right to control all workplaces, will be "Whose streets? Our streets! Whose schools? Our schools! Whose trucks? Our trucks! Whose trains? Our trains! Whose ports? Our ports!"



Ruling class morality.

Photo: nebraskaworker.wordpress.com

Industrial Worker Book Review

IWW Anthology Teaches Valuable Lessons For Wobblies

Kornbluh, Joyce L., ed. **Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology**. Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2011. Paperback, 397 pages, \$27.95.

By Staughton Lynd

The first words the reader of this book will see are by IWW member and Starbucks organizer Daniel Gross. At the beginning of his preface to this new edition of Joyce Kornbluh's classic collection, first published in 1964, FW Daniel writes: "You hold in your hands the most important book ever written about the Industrial Workers of the World."

It's true. Whatever you thought you knew about the founding convention of the IWW in 1905, the massacre of Wobblies on the Verona at Everett, Wash., or Joe Hill's thoughts while awaiting execution, you will know more after encountering "Rebel Voices." This is the most important book on the subject because in it, countless rank-and-file Wobblies speak for themselves through the pamphlets, excerpts from IWW newspapers, cartoons, song sheets and other written sources brought together at the Labadie collection in Ann Arbor, Mich. This is history from below, created by the working men and women who made that history.

I
Apart from the sheer delight of immersing oneself in the irreverent Wobbly sub-culture, Kornbluh's compilation requires revision of several misconceptions as to what the IWW was all about. First and most important, it is commonly said that members of the IWW were opposed to written collective bargaining agreements. This perception mistakes means for ends. The Wobblies were opposed to contractual agreements that limited direct action and solidarity. At the time the organization came into being, most unions were craft or trade unions. That is, they did not include all workers at a given workplace, but only those workers who practiced a specific skill. Each craft bargained for a separate contract with the employer, covering only its own members. Thus in a steel mill, for example, there was not a single contract for "steelworkers" employed there. Rather, there were separate contracts for each of the skills involved in making steel.

The very existence of such contracts tended to turn a workplace into a mosaic of different kinds of workers, each kind bound by a specific written agreement. The termination dates of the contracts were likely to differ. Even in the absence of express language limiting the right to strike, a work stoppage initiated by one group of workers was unlikely to be honored by members of different crafts.

Overcoming the division between members of different craft unions belonging to what the Wobblies called "The American Separation of Labor" was the main reason the IWW was created. This is made crystal clear by the letter of invi-

tation to the founding convention, dated Jan. 2-4, 1905, signed by Bill Haywood, Mother Jones and Eugene Debs, among others. The worker, so the letter declared, "sees his power of resistance broken by craft divisions." These "outgrown" and "long-gone" divisions had been made obsolete by modern machinery, the authors continue. "Separation of craft from craft renders industrial and financial security impossible. Union men scab upon union men."

Debs, whom we don't ordinarily think of as a spokesperson for the IWW, gave a speech in Chicago in November 1905 in which he offered precisely the same rationale for the creation of the organization and illustrated that truth from his own experience. "We insist that all the workers in the whole of any given plant shall belong to one and the same union," Debs declared. "I belonged to a craft union from the time I was 19 years of age," he went on. He remembered the evening that he had joined the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, and the zeal with which he had labored "to build it up." But he had come to see that a single craft union, even a federation of craft unions, was not enough, and so had undertaken to organize the American Railway Union. The employers, in response, showered favors on the several craft brotherhoods in the knowledge that these craft unions protected them from the power that "we Industrial Unionists" could exert. Referring to a specific lost strike in 1888, Debs concluded: "A manager of a railroad who can keep control of 15 percent of the old men can allow 85 per[cent] to go out on strike and defeat them every time." (This speech appears in "American Labor Struggles and Law Histories," ed. Kenneth M. Casebeer, pg. 91-99).

As it happened, of course, the creation of CIO industrial unions in the 1930s did not offer workers the freedom to undertake direct action whenever they wished. The very first collective bargaining agreements between the United Automobile Workers and General Motors, and between the Steel Workers Organizing Committee and U.S. Steel, in the early months of 1937, gave away the right to strike for the duration of the contract. No law required this. The officers of the new unions as well as the giant corporations with which they negotiated feared the unrestricted direct action of the rank and file.

Readers who are "dual carders"—that is, Wobblies who belong both to the IWW and to a conventional trade union—should find this clarification helpful. Fellow workers may find it difficult to understand why one should oppose written contracts as a matter of principle. They will find it easier

to grasp the idea that workers should never give up the opportunity to engage in direct action when, where, and how they perceive it to be appropriate.

A second misconception has to do with the idea of sabotage and the black Sabby cat that became its logo. What the word "sabotage" meant to Wobblies, Kornbluh makes clear, was "striking on the job" or "striking and staying in the shop." Striking on the job could take a variety of forms. When workers mysteriously produce only half of what they ordinarily produce during a given shift, such a slowdown is a form of what the Wobblies meant by sabotage. When workers meticulously obey all the safety rules—rules ordinarily disregarded in the interest of getting product out the door—that, too, is sabotage as originally understood. When protesting bus drivers provided the usual service but declined to collect fares it was still another instance of the black cat at work. When lumber workers walked off the job together after the number of hours of work they considered appropriate, it was sabotage without the use of imagined wooden shoes. The same was true in 1935-1937, when Akron rubber workers and automobile workers in Flint, Mich., occupied the places where they worked rather than walking out of the plant. Such sabotage had nothing to do with violence or destruction of tools.

Indeed, a major surprise in the pages of "Rebel Voices" is to find some of the most radical IWW organizers using the term "passive resistance." Joseph Ettore, addressing textile strikers in Lawrence, Mass., said:

"As long as the workers keep their hands in their pockets, the capitalists cannot put theirs there. With passive resistance, with the workers absolutely refusing to move, lying absolutely silent, they are more powerful than all the weapons and instruments that the other side has for attack."

Wobbly organizer William Trautmann advised striking workers to go back to work and use "passive resistance."

Finally, it seems clear from these pages that the original Wobbly understanding of the "general strike" meant more than folding arms. It meant taking over the means of production and beginning production for use. In a speech in New York later summarized in an IWW pamphlet, Bill Haywood called the Paris Commune of 1871 "the greatest general strike known in modern history."

II

Because the IWW itself was in a state of chaos and decline from the 1920s until recent times, the book's account of the years 1924-1964 is fragmentary. This makes it all the more impressive that during those years the memory and mystique of the IWW continued powerfully to affect some of the most imaginative labor organizers in the country.

As I wrote in the introduction to a book called "We Are All Leaders," in the early 1930s the formation of local industrial unions was often spearheaded by individual Wobblies or former Wobblies. Len DeCaux wrote that when his fellow CIO militants let down their hair, "it seemed that only the youngest had no background of Wobbly associations."

Stan Weir, a lifelong rank-and-file radical whose writings have been collected in a book called "Singlejack Solidarity," learned his unionism from Wobblies. Blackie and Chips were the "1934 men" who taught him the lessons of the San Francisco general strike in classes on shipboard. Likewise, John W. Anderson jumped up on a car fender to become the chairperson of the 1933 Briggs strike in

Detroit, worked as a volunteer IWW organizer for three years, and later became a dissident local union president in the United Auto Workers (UAW).

Another gifted leader from below was steelworker Ed Mann, whom my wife and I came to know intimately after we moved to Youngstown, Ohio. After years of nurturing a rank-and-file caucus called the Rank and File Team (RAFT), Ed became president of Local 1462 at the Brier Hill mill of Youngstown Sheet & Tube. He retired when the mill was shut down and became a leading spirit of the Workers Solidarity Club of Youngstown. When we identified ourselves at the beginning of each meeting, Ed would say: "Ed Mann, member of the IWW." Shortly before his death he explained:

"I like the Wobblies' history: the Bill Haywood stuff, the Ludlow mine, the Sacco-Vanzetti thing. I like their music. I like the things they were active in.

"These folks believed that workers should exercise power, instead of handing it over to bureaucrats they elect, and letting the bureaucrats make the decisions. The people have to live with the decisions."

Thus Ed Mann kept the faith with the Wobbly idea that what is needed is, in Kornbluh's words, "not piecemeal reform but revolutionary change." To be a Wobbly, this book affirms on every page, is to entertain a profound vision and strategy of emancipation. Like participants in Occupy Wall Street, these out-of-pocket rebels refused to be content with demanding this or that specific change. They demanded a new world.

III

Finally, Kornbluh tells us that only a year after the magnificent founding convention of 1905, "quarrels erupted in a chaotic 1906 convention" leading to the withdrawal from the IWW of its strongest constituent union, the Western Federation of Miners. Following the repression of radicals during World War I there was, she also reports, "a serious schism in the IWW organization in 1924."

Sadly, problems associated with national conventions and similar gatherings of delegates seem to persist. IWW members are at home with local, improvised direct actions with longtime fellow workers. They are not in their element at representative assemblies encased in a myriad of procedural rules.

National organizations are difficult to live in without drifting toward scheming and manipulation destructive of comradeship. I experienced my own version of political post traumatic stress disorder in reaction to the disintegration of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) at the end of the 1960s. Pre-convention caucusing, challenging of credentials, hidden agendas, pressing for repeated votes or votes at unexpected times, interminable proposing of resolutions, nit-picking each and every suggested wording of anything, verbally abusing comrades who espouse a position different from one's own, all express an absence of faith that we can make the road as we walk it together.

These practices must stop. The students and workers who look to our activity as possible paradigms of a longed-for better way of doing things are often horrified by what they see us actually do. We must exemplify what we say we believe. A set of words beloved by my wife and myself, initially formulated by a committee supportive of Polish Solidarity, read:

"Start doing the things you think should be done. Start being what you think society should become. Do you believe in freedom of speech? Then speak freely. Do you love the truth? Then tell it. Do you believe in an open society? Then act in the open. Do you believe in a decent and humane society? Then behave decently and humanely."



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Industrial Worker Book Review

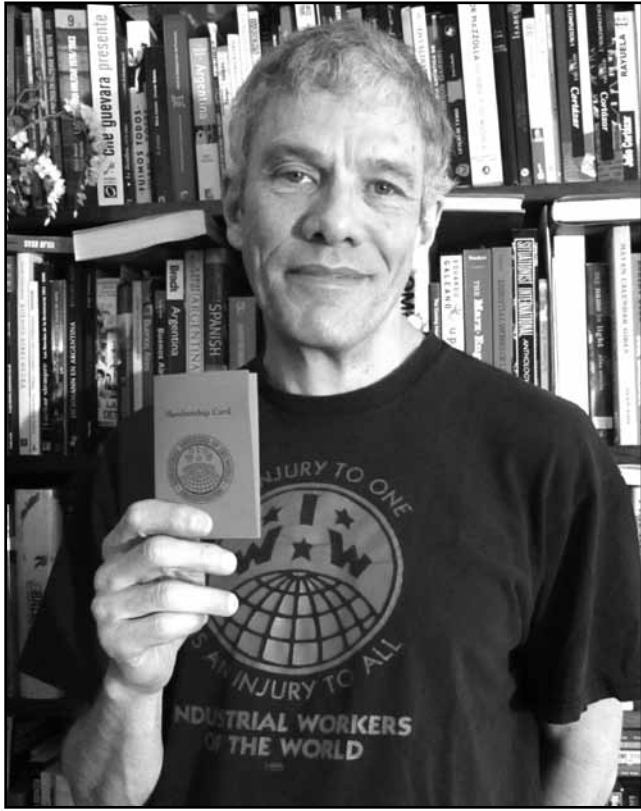
IW Interviews Wobbly Fiction Writer Lewis Shiner

Photo: Orla Swift

FW Lewis Shiner proudly shows his red card.

By David Feldmann

Lewis Shiner is a writer's writer. His novels and short fiction have received critical acclaim and glowing approval from fans for nearly three decades, during which time he's made a name for himself in both the science fiction and mainstream literary worlds. Increasingly, his work has exhibited a strong sense of socially conscious and politically motivated themes.

In the early 1980s, Shiner played a small but significant part in popularizing science fiction during the "cyberpunk" era (along with William Gibson and Bruce Sterling). Following his well-received debut novel, "Frontera" (1984), the tale of an abandoned Mars colony, Shiner continued to release a great deal of short stories to the reading masses. His follow-up novel, "Deserted Cities of the Heart" (1988), came at the end of a decade that saw a quick rise-and-fall popularity in sophisticated science and speculative fiction. Since then, Shiner has gradually gravitated away from the ghetto of science fiction (SF) with "Slam" (1990), the story of an ex-con living amongst social outcasts, and "Black & White" (2008), a crime novel of sorts which touches upon America's longstanding racial tensions, along with several other novels and many other short stories (all of which are available for free on his website <http://www.fictionliberationfront.net>).

His most recent novel, "Dark Tangos," is the redemptive story of a computer programmer, Rob Cavanaugh, who falls in with militant leftists in Buenos Aires while working for a multinational software conglomerate. Cavanaugh is, within a short period, dumped by his wife and informed by the company he works for that he must take a substantial cut in pay and transfer to Argentina if he wants to keep his job. Somewhat reluctantly, he

jumps at the opportunity to distance himself from his estranged wife and takes the position. Not long after arriving in Buenos Aires, Rob's interest in tango dancing leads to his falling in love with a younger student dancer, a mysterious woman. Soon, the woman's past comes back to haunt her, drawing Rob and their circle of friends into a violent confrontation between leftist urban guerillas and the anti-communist thugs of the old military junta.

"Dark Tangos" handles the history of Latin American political strife in a mature and intelligent way. By virtue of the protagonist (who is far from the stereotypical "ugly American" often found in popular fiction), the reader gets a glimpse of what so many citizens of the so-called "third world" have had to

endure at the hands of U.S.-supported dictators and tyrants. Lewis Shiner has given us another perceptive and sophisticated piece of fiction which deserves the appreciation and popularity that independently published books rarely receive.

David Feldman: Subterranean Press recently reissued your novels and short story collections in a uniform set of very handsome trade paperback editions. Do you prefer working with independent publishers like Subterranean over publishing giants like Doubleday and St. Martin's Press? More generally, how has the proliferation of the internet affected the marketing of your own work and the ability of small publishers to survive or even thrive?

Lewis Shiner: With the big New York houses there was always the dream that the book would take off—if not to the bestseller list, at least get national media coverage and prominent reviews. The odds of that happening go way, way down with a small press. Other than that, I would have to say things are better in every way. Bill Schafer, the publisher at Subterranean, cares about books as works of art, not as commodities. He treats me like family (in the best possible interpretation of the word), not like somebody he's reluctantly doing this huge favor for. I get complete control over my covers and typeset, and I don't have to worry about the political content of what I write. Just the fact that my entire backlist is in print—that's something you don't get from the big houses unless you're Don DeLillo.

DF: "Dark Tangos," your latest novel, deals with the ongoing conflict between the Latin American left and the supporters of the military juntas and dictatorships. Did

you set your story in Argentina because you think this country has the richest (non-totalitarian) socialist tradition, or is there a more prosaic explanation?

LS: There were a number of reasons for setting it in Argentina. The most immediate is that my girlfriend and I had traveled there several times because of our interest in tango, so I felt like I knew my way around. Also, Argentina's so-called Dirty War of the 1970s was about as ugly as it gets in terms of right-wing police-state repression. Thirty-thousand people "disappeared," the vast majority of them for no reason other than that they were academics or intellectuals or unionists or knew somebody who was suspected of leaning to the left. Plus there was the angle of U.S. support for the dictatorship—Henry Kissinger was a big fan, for example. One of the goals of the book was to help people in this country understand why the United States is so hated and feared throughout Latin America. Finally, there was a news hook—trials of some of the henchmen from the junta were just starting during the period when the book is set, 2006-2007.

I don't know that socialism is stronger in Argentina than in, say, Chile, where Allende was actually elected as a socialist, but certainly there's a strong, proud leftist tradition throughout Latin America. I have a short story called "The Death of Che Guevara"—an alternate history where the entirety of Latin America votes in socialist governments in the early 1970s. It all starts with Che bringing the revolution to Argentina, where he was born.

DF: How much of yourself is in the protagonist of "Dark Tangos," Rob Cavanaugh?

LS: A lot of the details are different—he's younger than me, has a kid, is not an artistic or particularly political person. He's a better tango dancer than I am. But I think he reacts to the events of the novel the way I would, so I would say our personalities are similar.

DF: To many people, the 1960s and 1970s were the golden age of science/speculative fiction (exemplified by "New Wave" writers like Harlan Ellison, Philip K. Dick, Ursula K. LeGuin, Samuel Delany, etc.). Do you think that the cyberpunk trend was the last great literary movement within SF or are you more hopeful about the future of imaginative fiction?

LS: I can't really speak to that. I haven't kept up with SF since the 1980s and I don't really know what's happening there. I think it's always dangerous to say that X, whatever X is, will never happen again. Conventional publishing is dying fast, and conventional notions of literacy are also changing. The next great SF literary movement may happen in comics or homemade Youtube videos or iPad apps.

DF: In the early 1990s, you worked on a comic book series for DC Comics called "The Hacker Files." To my knowledge, this has never been collected as a trade paperback. Is there any likelihood of this happening in the future? For those of us who have never been able to read this (due to lack of availability) will you explain what is was about and how you came to work with DC?

LS: "The Hacker Files" is not likely to be reprinted, as it wasn't a big financial success. But you never know. The lead character made it into the recent "DC Comics Encyclopedia," so he's a part of the continuity now. At least he was, until they rebooted everything again a couple of months ago.

I've always been a comics fan. I got involved in writing them when a fellow fan, a friend of mine since my early 20s named Bob Wayne, went to work for DC in the 1980s. He pitched them a revival of

the old "Rip Hunter, Time Master" series, which they went for and he and I co-wrote. Our editor then asked me to pitch a series that would bring computers into the DC universe. This was the late 1980s, when the internet was still DARPANET and the IBM PC was still the state of the art.

I was working as a programmer at the time, so with the help of some SF fans who were on the bleeding edge of technology, we came up with a fantasy computer that of course is now overshadowed by any average laptop. Actually we got a lot of things right in terms of watching TV and movies on computers, HD TV aspect ratios, spyware, etc.

The basic storyline involved a giant multinational corporation called Digitronics World Industries. They had subverted the work of their lead programmer, a guy named Jack Marshall, who was usually portrayed wearing a circle-A t-shirt under his sport coat. They'd pushed Marshall out of the company, but because he was the only one who really understood the operating system, he would get called in by customers with unusual problems. In the course of the mini-series, he uncovers the insidious data-mining scheme that Digitronics is up to and confronts the executives in virtual reality. So it's your basic anarchist vs. big business plot, with some skate-punk edge—he has a bunch of young hackers who function as his Baker Street Irregulars.

DF: Over the years, you've come to be identified as a radical fiction writer. Indeed, quite a few of your characters are, to varying degrees, left-wing individuals. Please explain your own relationship with radical politics and how this has affected your writings. Do you feel compelled to raise class consciousness through your work?

LS: I think this has become more and more of a goal for me over the years. Especially since I first began working on "Black & White" in the late 1990s, I've felt strongly that I want to deal with social issues in my fiction. I don't think we'll get real political change in this country until we get cultural change—we have to move away from the current culture of greed and narcissism. There is no virtue in selfishness—the virtue is in helping others, especially those who can't help themselves. So yes, raising class consciousness and dealing with issues of violence and greed are all part of my mission. At the same time, it's important to me not to oversimplify, and to get these ideas across in terms of complex stories and not sermons.

DF: In the book, "Mythmakers and Lawbreakers: Anarchist Writers on Fiction" (AK Press, 2009) you state that after reading the 2005 graphic history, "Wobblies!" (Verso Press) you joined the IWW. Are you still a Wobbly?

LS: I've been a member in good standing for six years now. I've been reading a lot of the classic early 20th century social novels lately—stuff like Frank Norris's "The Octopus" and Upton Sinclair's "The Jungle," which I'd never [previously] read. I recently read John Dos Passos' "USA trilogy," where all through the book the heroes are called upon to show their IWW red cards as proof that they're on the right side. That made me really proud.

DF: Thanks so much for your time. Any final remarks or plugs for our readers?

LS: Sure. Support the IWW! It's a simple fact that in order for the much-touted 99 percent to accomplish anything against the rich and powerful 1 percent, we have to organize. What better way to do that than to have one big union?

This interview originally appeared in the Winter 2012 issue of Autonomy and Solidarity Quarterly. It was reprinted with permission from the author.

RECOMPOSITION BLOG

NOTES FOR A NEW WORKERISM

An informal blog of new and reposted material by IWW members. Recomposition includes Worker's Power columns, reflections and discussions related to our organizing and solidarity unionism as well as classics by Martin Glaberman, Stan Weir and others."

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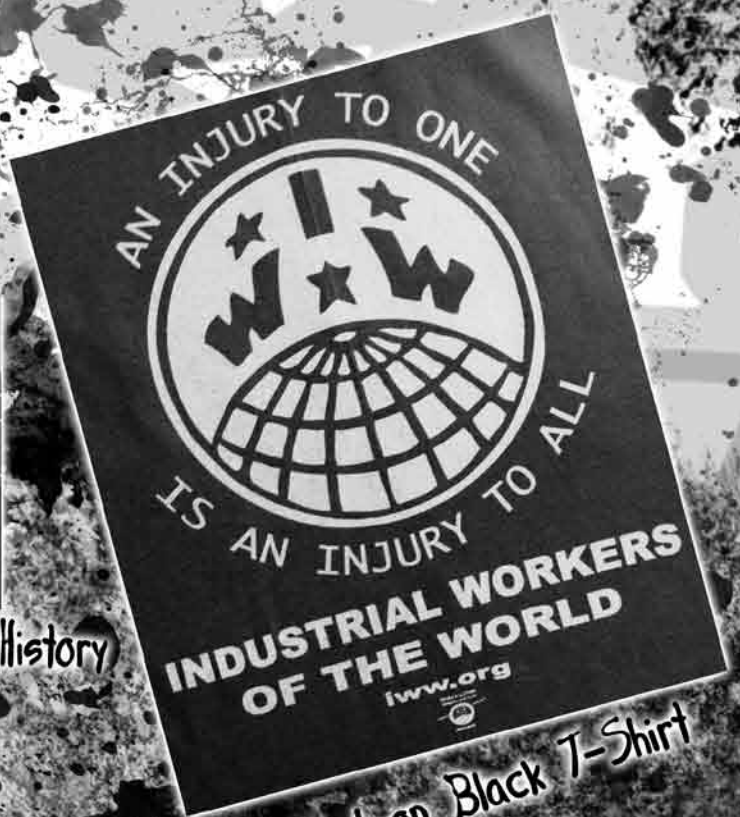
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Wobbly Arts

Agitate, Educate, Organize

By Sean Carleton, X364847

This song is both a T-Bone Slim inspired tongue-in-cheek parody of Lady Gaga's "Born this Way" anthem and a serious call for everyone dedicated to revolutionary organizing to keep on struggling, no matter what! Fighting to create a new world in the shell of the old everyday certainly isn't easy, but it's what we do in the IWW. So puts your fists up—and "Agitate, Educate, and Organize." Check it out on the IWW Youtube channel and the new Little Red Song Book Blog: <http://www.youtube.com/user/Wobblysongs> and <http://littleredsongbook.blogspot.com/>.

Tune: "Born This Way" by Lady Gaga

Verse 1

Everyone wants the revolution, but no one wants to do the dishes.
Everyone talks of changing the world, but sometimes it feels like no one listens.
Organizing is thankless work and the horizon is hard to see.
But in the end just hold your head up high and fight so one day we'll all be free.

Chorus:

Keep your eyes on the prize, ignore the boss's lies, and agitate, educate, and organize.
Through thick and thin you've gotta have tough skin to agitate, educate, and organize.
Ohhh there ain't no other way, raise hell without delay, and agitate, educate, and organize.
It's class struggle to the end, it's up to me and you friends to agitate, educate, and organize!

Gaga-Wobbly Rap

Well, in 100 years there's been some tears.
With Hill, Little, and raiding fears.
But with love and solidarity – we will win!

Verse 2

So Fellow Workers, prepare yourselves, pay your dues, and wear your pins proud.
Call a meeting, form a committee, and sing our songs out loud.
And get ready because it's time for us to make a stand.
To fight together for the one big industrial union grand.

End.

We've got to agitate. We've got to educate. We've got to organize – to emancipate! x2

VERSES & CHORUS*

G|: |111111|444444
D|:444444 222222| 444444
A|:444444 222222| 222222|
E|:222222| |

Verses – first two lines are palm muted and the others are played open. The Chorus is played

MR. BLOCK

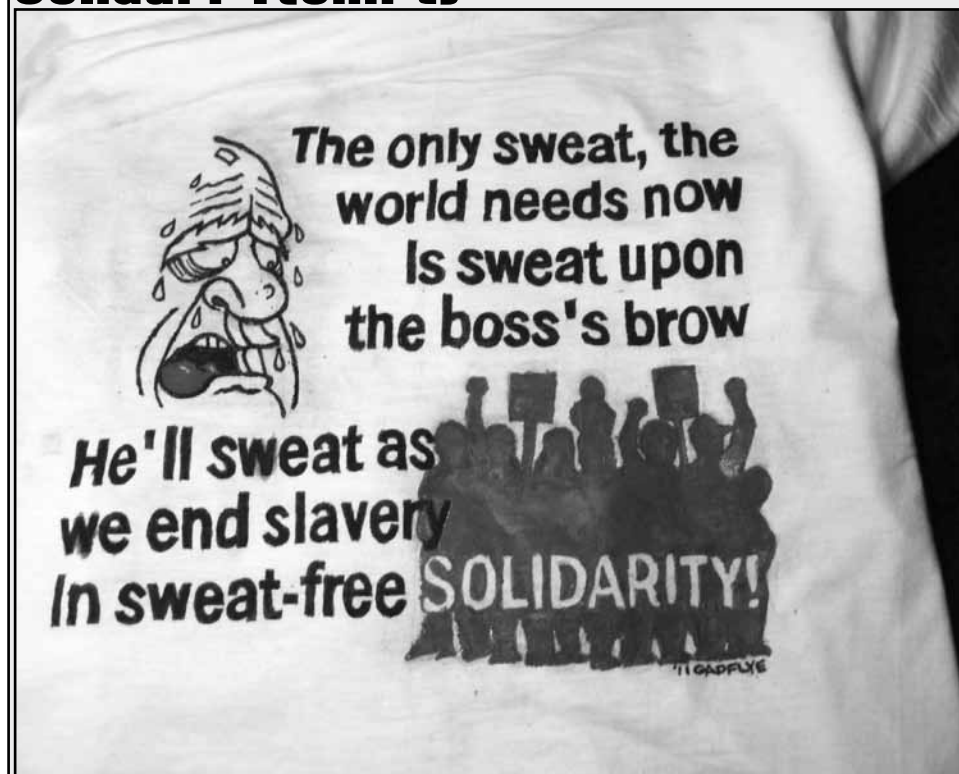
He Joins the NYPD



* Recently J.P.Morgan Chase bank donated \$ 4.6 MILLION to the NYPD, after the news media was full of police brutality videos showing attacks on peaceful OWS protesters.

Concept & graphic: Committee for Industrial Laughification (CIL)

Solidari-T(shirt)



Concept & graphic: Gadflye

The 99's

FW P Ruiz

As the 99's Occupy Wall Street
Can you feel the spark within our heart
Do you hear it drawing near
The rhythm of rebel drums beat
Resonating beneath every city's feet
Like low subterranean tremors
Sending unpredictable quakes to the surface
Bursting through volatile faults
And shattering the corporate built tectonic plate
The 99's will no longer perpetually wait
For illusory trickle downs to determine our fate
Disgusted at the wickedly destructive weed
Making us profusely bleed
With stresses of our futures need
It is corporate greed...
That we will uproot
And plant a new hybrid equality seed
The politicians will soon believe
It won't stop until we achieve.

Hanging At Haymarket

By John Kaniecki

The gallows presently empty
Feverish chatter in the crowd
Begins to rise
Four men to meet their destiny
Their faces tense and proud
Their guilt came from lies
Suspend for now the thought
It matters not
Death is soon to come
It true the fought
For those many wish to forget
What's done is done

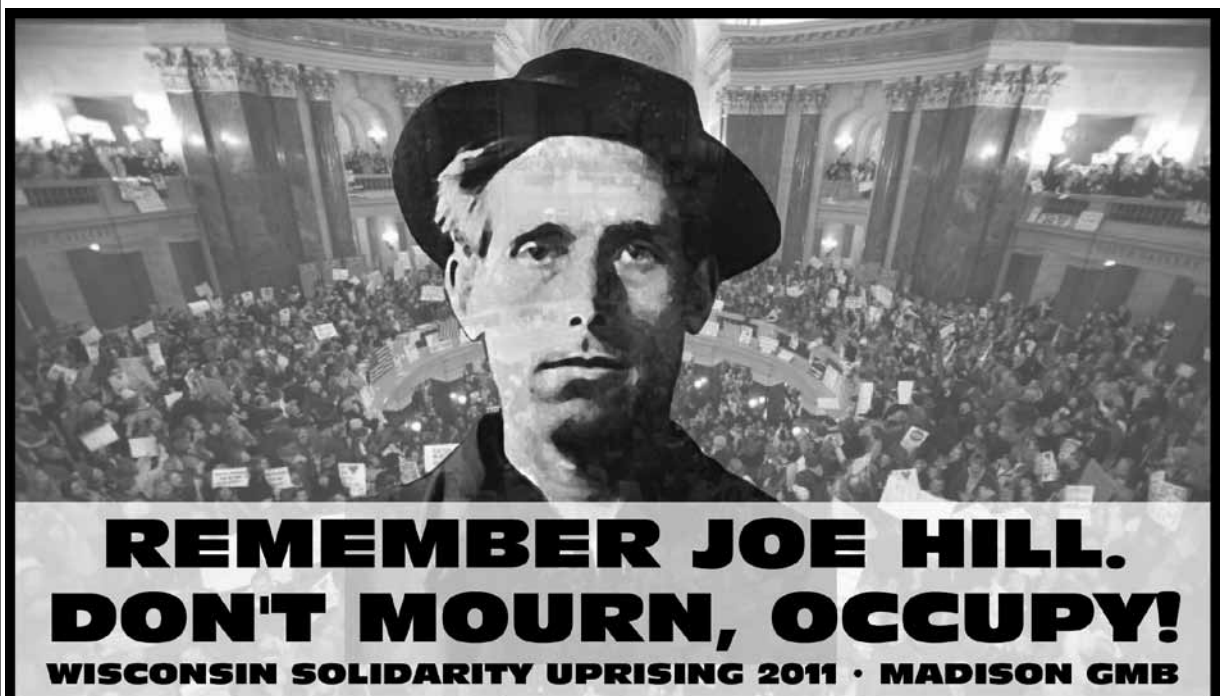
The ropes are slipped around the throats
Soon their necks will break
The rich men they brag and gloat
That is hard to take
For those with silk and silver spoon
Who do not give and only consume
Stand on the Earth above the law
That sir is America's tragic flaw

One day they will come for me
For telling the truth poetically
I spit in your face and do not deny
The truth is that your justice is a lie

The Wobbly Way Back Machine



Cartoon from May 1988 issue of the IW. Graphic: C.E. Setzer



World Labor Solidarity

A COLUMN BY THE INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY COMMISSION

The IWW formed the International Solidarity Commission to help the union build the worker-to-worker solidarity that can lead to effective action against the bosses of the world. To contact the ISC, email solidarity@iww.org.

2012: A New Year For International Solidarity

By Alex Erikson

2011 was the year that the global working class struck back. Rebellions across the Middle East, massive strikes in China, militant movements against austerity in Europe, and the stirrings of the North American workers movement in the Wisconsin uprising and in the Occupy movement are just a few inspiring examples of the new fighting spirit of the international proletariat.

As the newly-elected IWW International Solidarity Commission, we are looking forward to deepening the union's involvement in the growing global insurgency against the employing class. Building on the strong foundation built by the outgoing ISC, we want to further integrate the IWW's commitment to internationalism into the everyday functioning of all the union's branches.

As a first step, we are looking for volunteers for two positions: Branch ISC Liaisons and Regional Specialists.

Branch liaisons connect each branch



Graphic: ISC

with the work of the ISC, facilitating the branch's involvement in international solidarity actions, fundraising, and arranging speaking tours for international IWW allies. Each branch should elect an ISC liaison in January.

In a new ISC program, we are also building teams of Regional Specialists to strengthen our union's ties and deepen our understanding of labor movements across the world. If you have cultural knowledge, language/translation abilities, or contacts with workers' organizations anywhere in the world, please get in touch! We need your help to be able to maintain contact with all the exciting movements that are kicking off across the globe.

We look forward to serving the OBU in the coming year. Please do not hesitate to contact us at solidarity@iww.org if you have a proposal, criticisms, or questions.

2011 was a big year, let's make 2012 even bigger.

Picket Against Whole Foods Victimizations

From solfed.org

On Dec. 22, 2011, the London Solidarity Federation (SF) held a picket in support of a victimized Whole Foods worker. The action was held in conjunction with protests in Boston, New York, Minneapolis, Seattle, Portland, Reno and San Francisco.

The demonstration had been called in defense of Natalia, a San Francisco Whole Foods worker who was sacked for speaking up in support of herself and her workmates. It took place outside the Soho branch of Whole Foods in London.

The picket was a resounding success. SF members turned up from both the North and South London locals (including a visitor from Hull SF) and were supported by Anarchist Federation members and trade unionists. Public reaction was overwhelmingly positive, with numerous customers not only vocalizing support, but



Photo: solfed.org

refusing to go into the shop. Some of the most vociferous supporters even went into the store to speak to management about the abuses taking place in San Francisco. This activity was bolstered even further as SolFedders entered the store to speak to and flier customers directly.

Our message to Whole Foods is simple: international solidarity will continue until Natalia is reinstated with back pay.

Come To The Work People's College!

From June 30 - July 5, 2012, over 100 IWW militants from across North America will come together at the historic Mesaba Co-op



Park in Northern Minnesota for the 2012 Work People's College: a six-day intensive training on all the skills workers need to know to build a fighting union branch. We will cover everything from public speaking to maintaining an inclusive union culture, graphic

design and strike support. Our goal is to strengthen IWW branches by giving a new, diverse generation of leaders the tools they need to fight and win the next battles in the class struggle. Learn more, pre-register your branch, or apply at <http://www.workpeoplescollege.org>.

Support international solidarity!



Assessments for \$3 and \$6 are available from your delegate or IWW headquarters
PO Box 180195,
Chicago, IL 60618,
USA.



Workers Strike At EULEN-ABB In Spain

From libcom.org

Workers at the EULEN-ABB factory in Cordoba, Spain, started an indefinite strike on Nov. 28, 2011. Since then, the strikers have been camped out all day and night in front of the company. The strike was called by the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) and Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT) unions in the company



Photo: libcom.org

in response to the illegal assignment of workers from EULEN who were contracted to work in ABB. EULEN provides services such as cleaning and maintenance to other companies and public administration.

ABB announced that as of Jan. 1, 2012, it will not renew its contract with EULEN and instead will use the services of Eurocen, which is part of the Adecco multinational.

It is assumed that the new company will be used to get rid of all the workers currently striking.

The CNT points out that the problems related to the work in ABB are also related to outsourcing in general. The workers employed through EULEN in fact work for ABB and take orders from them, but they

have a much lower salary than regular ABB workers and ABB takes no responsibility for them as an employer. There is also the fact that the relevant collective agreements for the work they actually perform are not applied. The CNT came into conflict with EULEN-ABB in 2010 over this issue.

Prior to the strike, the bosses created a few other conflicts and there were instances of union repression against activists of the CNT. These incidences were against CNT unionists in EULEN working not only in ABB, but also in the University of Cordoba and Cosmos, where EULEN also has a contract.

In December 2011, various sections of the CNT held solidarity actions with the strikers, and a demonstration with over 300 supporters was held in Cordoba.

Chinese Police Arrest Strikers



Photo: libcom.org

From libcom.org

Police in Shanghai arrested around a dozen workers following ongoing strike action at an electronics factory at the beginning of December 2011.

The arrests resulted from workers blockading heavy equipment which was being removed from the Singapore-owned Hi-P International plant. The factory is being closed down, and according to the strikers, relocated to the Shanghai suburb of Nanhui, where new staff will be hired.

The strikers said they were laid off il-

legally and without compensation, and began picketing the plant. In response, the police cordoned off nearby roads.

"This hurts me so much. I have worked hard for them. They are contravening labor law by asking us to leave but not pay us any compensation. Why are the authorities siding with them? Who can help us weak workers?" a female factory worker, who only gave her surname as Wang, told Reuters.

Hi-P manufacture parts for Apple, Blackberry and Hewlett-Packard. Reports on the number of strikers have varied from 200 to 1,000.

The strike follows similar action at a garment factory in Guangdong, which manufactures New Balance, Adidas and Nike shoes, as well as a strike at a bra factory in Shenzhen over pay and overtime respectively. China's top security chief warned provincial officials over the risk of unrest as turmoil in the world economy continues.

Western Australia Poultry Workers Win

By [Workers Solidarity Melbourne](http://WorkersSolidarityMelbourne.org)

After two weeks on strike from Nov. 9-22, 2011, poultry workers at the Baiada poultry factory in Laverton, Western Australia, won a 4 percent annual pay increase and a reduction in the exploitation of casual and contract labor.

The union agreement signed between members of the National Union of Workers (NUW) and Baiada includes:

- An 8 percent pay rise over two years (4 percent a year).
- Conversion of casual employees to permanent after six months.
- Standardized pay rates for contractors and casuals (who, to date, have been paid as little as \$10 an hour).
- Increased redundancy compensation, from 20 weeks to 42 weeks.
- Increased paid time allowances for union delegates to train and support their co-workers.



Photo: workersolidaritymelbourne.org

NUW delegate Gabriel told *Green Left Weekly*: "We went on strike because of job security and cash-in-hand [workers]. Baiada sacks permanent people and replaces them with contractors. Health and safety is bad for everybody but it is worst for casuals and cash-in-hand workers. The worker who was decapitated [last year] was a subcontractor so he wasn't covered by Baiada for WorkCover. We are trying to win a clause in our agreement that if the company uses contractors, they have to be

paid more than permanents."

Gabriel also described how the company retaliated against him after he became a delegate: "When I became a delegate, they demoted me, changed my shift and took away my overtime," he said.

Another important win was that poultry workers in Adelaide who were suspended for taking industrial action in solidarity with the strikers in Laverton have been reinstated!

Baiada is Australia's largest supplier of poultry. The Baiada family that owns the company has estimated wealth of \$495 million.

Thank you to all community supporters who came down to the picket, and who donated to the Baiada workers. Collections were also taken up at many worksites, including other poultry manufacturers Inghams and Steggle's.