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The New Rank And File, And The Walmart Moment

By Staughton Lynd

From the beginning, the Occupy movement has been asked: What are your demands? A more important question is: Is there a way that the dynamism of Occupy and the residual energy of the rank-and-file labor movement might coalesce? Most intriguing of all is the query: In that other world which we say is possible, could it come to pass that Occupiers, and the practitioners of working-class self-activity who make up the Industrial Workers of the World, could come to be a single force of radicalism from below?

What Is A "Rank-And-File" Movement?

To begin with, we need to define what we mean by the words "rank and file." For half a century, the term "rank and file" has most often been used to describe a movement to elect new union officers.

Think of Miners for Democracy and its candidate for president of the United Mine Workers (UMW), Arnold Miller; Ed Sadlowski's campaign for president of the United Steelworkers; Jerry Tucker's run for top office in the United Auto Workers (UAW); or Ron Carey's successful candidacy for president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

The term "rank and file" was even used to characterize the elevation of John Sweeney and, later, Richard Trumka, to the presidency of the AFL-CIO. And countless campaigns for local union office borrowed the words "rank and file" to describe their own election efforts. In Youngstown, Ohio, insurgent steelworkers like Ed Mann and John Barbero called themselves the "Rank And File Team," or RAFT.

The problem with this understanding of a rank-and-file movement is that John

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Walmart workers strike in southern California on Oct. 4. Photo: nationofchange.org

IWW Report From The Norwegian Social Forum

By X369425

The Norwegian Social Forum (NSF) conference, which took place Nov. 1-4 this year, is one of the biggest political events in Norway. It takes place every other year and draws somewhere between 1,000-2,000 visitors. The conference is organized by



IWW at the NSF. Photo: X369425

the NSF, which has over 50 member organizations, including the Norway General Membership Branch (GMB). This year, the Norway GMB attended the conference, both with our bookstand and a workshop on direct action, setting the Wobbly mark on the conference for the first time.

The conference is known as a meeting place for radicals and progressives from the whole country, and the organization's span is wide, from the Communist Party to Amnesty International, and even to the libertarian socialists.

We had a bookstand on Saturday, selling almost all of our books and giving out lots of fliers. The IWW seems to be unknown to most, but we are steadily spreading the word. It was also great to meet

members who attended the conference individually, or as delegates for other organizations.

Together with two other organizations, we organized a meeting on direct action on the last day of the conference. The other organizations were the libertarian socialist groups

Motmakt and Planka, which is a direct action for more affordable public transport. The meeting had about 30-40 attendees, which was more than expected and a good experience. We had one speaker from the IWW, one from Motmakt, and a moderator from Planka. Kim from Motmakt talked about the history of direct action and particular strategies. Jan-Robert from the IWW spoke about how to actually plan a direct action and Petter, from Planka, moderated the meeting. The meeting ended with about 45 minutes of discussion about concrete direct actions, tips, tricks and critical approaches. Even more importantly, we got to tell more people who we are and what we do, and we got a new member to join the branch!

The Wobbly Tour Of Indiana

By Michael White, X374679 and Hope Asya, X374671

From Oct. 1-8, the two of us traversed the vast state that is Indiana. Starting from northwestern Indiana in Lake County, we drove down Interstate 65 through central Indiana and Indianapolis to southeastern Indiana, and returned via U.S. Route 41 on the far eastern border of Indiana with Illinois. We had spent the three to four weeks prior to the trip planning, preparing the supplies, contacting other Indiana comrades and setting up meetings with them. The two of us shared responsibilities and managed to overcome what would have otherwise been a daunting task. The huge amount of help that we received from fellow Wobblies and from General Headquarters in Chicago on our frequent visits there was indispensable. Through our outreach efforts, the meetings we organized, and the material conditions we observed throughout Indiana, the great need for a radical union and the immense potential to create a strong Indiana IWW branch became apparent.

Organizing the Wobbly tour began weeks in advance of our Oct. 1 departure. Outreach was our priority on the trip, so we began by putting together fliers that we could pass out as we went. Through a variety of designs we appealed to students, workers and even those who are actively against unions (a significant population in Indiana). We then worked on planning meetings in the cities and towns we were to pass through. We used social media, particularly Facebook, to find existing IWW members and activist, labor and radical groups in northwestern Indiana, West Lafayette, Indianapolis and Bloomington. By contacting Occupy groups, anarchist and socialist groups and on-campus activist groups and referring them to event pages we made for each meeting, we were able to drum up a decent attendance in each location.

In northwestern Indiana, we met a Wobbly who had been a diligently dues-paying member for years, despite being alone in the region. We discussed his work



New Wobs show off their red cards in Bloomington. Photo: Indiana IWW

experiences, his interest in permaculture and bringing together environmental and labor struggles and things we could do as an active-member branch.

In West Lafayette our meeting started with only five people, but ended with 13, as people who overheard our conversation joined in. The group in West Lafayette was mostly composed of students, so we spent some time talking about student struggles in the United States and abroad, and about the IWW's unique position on student organizing. Students there were very interested in starting a student union on their campus, and that is a campaign we hope to begin in earnest in the coming months.

In Indianapolis, our meeting was smaller than we had expected, but was attended by a long-time Wobbly, a fellow worker who is running for local office as a Socialist Party candidate, and a couple of students. Though turnout was low, we were able to forge some connections with other local labor groups represented by those in attendance.

We had our most successful meeting in Bloomington. Fifteen people showed up, including two IWW members, and we were able to sign up many of them on the spot. Bloomington being another college town, there was particular interest in student organizing, and the possibility of a Québec-style "One Big Student Union" was discussed at length.

At final count we met five existing Indiana IWW members, signed up nine

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IW Tells Importance Of Rank And File Power

Fellow Workers,

I am a new fellow worker from Louisville, Ky. I enjoyed the article about the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) which appeared on page 1 & 6 of the November *IW*, but I think the story about how they did it is more important than what they did. For education, yes it is important to defend our children from corporate interests, but the story of the rank-and-file takeover of the CTU is very important. I would love to read an article about the Caucus of Rank and File Educators (CORE). I met CORE President Karen Lewis in Chicago at our Teamsters for a Democratic Union conference.

I made a short video of her talk, which you can view here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJG03LJSQv4>.

For us, this story about a rank-and-file takeover is very important.

I read my first *Industrial Worker* today on

my train. I like it. I like that there are articles from *Labor Notes*. Good work. I look forward to educating myself about what it means to be a fellow worker!

Solidarity! Roll the union on...

JP Wright

Railroad Workers United Organizer
Teamsters for a Democratic Union ISC
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers
and Trainmen Div 78



Chicago teachers strike.

Photo: bluecheddar.net

Climate Change Action Needed

As "Frankenstorm" Sandy makes clear, climate chaos/climate change is a huge factor in our lives. It is interwoven with the radical labor movement. If there is no planet, there will be no labor. We in the IWW need to be on the forefront of building resilience and resistance in the face of climate change. Our Preamble is a good place to start: the class struggle will only be resolved when workers organize as a class (join the IWW and other radical unions), take possession of the means of production (control our work through nested workers' councils), abolish the wage system (produce for use, not for profit), and live in harmony with the earth (study and practice permaculture).

Permaculture is a design system based on using nature's principles to create sustainable human-made systems (gardens, tools, communities, economies, decision-making bodies, etc...). I believe that the intersection of permaculture and the radical labor movement is an extraordinarily rich platform and I urge other fellow workers to explore this. Does the IWW have a climate change action plan?

Solidarity!
X364060

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Post Office Box 180195
Chicago, IL 60618 USA
773-728.0996 • ghq@iww.org
www.iww.org

GENERAL SECRETARY-TREASURER:
Sam Green

GENERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD:
Monika Vykoukal, Don M.
Ryan G., A. Vargas, Jason Krpan
Mark Damron, Adam W.

EDITOR & GRAPHIC DESIGNER :
Diane Krauthamer
iw@iww.org

PROOFREADERS :
MRG, Tom Levy, Nick Jusino,
D. Keenan, Neil Parthun,
Michael Capobianco,
Estelle Clark, Rebekah David
Skylaar Amann, Chris Heffner,
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IWW directory

Africa

South Africa

Cape Town: 7a Rosebridge, Linray Road, Rosebank, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa 7700. iw-w-ct@live.co.za

Uganda

IWW Kabale Uganda: Justus Tukwasibwe Wej-
agye, P.O. Box 217, Kabale, Uganda, East Africa.
jkweijagye@yaho.com

Australia

New South Wales

Sydney GMB: sydneywobs@gmail.com. Laura, del.,
lalalaura@gmail.com.

Newcastle: newcastlewobs@gmail.com

Woolongong: gongwobs@gmail.com

Lismore: northernriverswobblies@gmail.com

Queensland

Brisbane: P.O. Box 5842, West End, Qld 4101. iw-
brisbane@riseup.net. Asger, del., happyanarchy@riseup.
net

South Australia

Adelaide: wobbliesSA@gmail.com, www.wobbliesSA.
org. Jesse, del., 0432 130 082

Victoria

Melbourne: P.O. Box 145, Moreland, VIC 3058. mel-
bournwobblies@gmail.com, www.iwwmelbourne.
wordpress.com. Luki, del., lachlan.campbell.type@
gmail.com

Geelong: tropicaljimbo@gmail.com

Western Australia

Perth GMB: P.O. Box 1, Cannington WA 6987. perthwob-
blies@gmail.com. Bruce, del., coronation78@hotmail.
com

British Isles

British Isles Regional Organising Committee (BIROC): PO
Box 7593 Glasgow, G42 2EX. Secretariat: rosec@iww.
org.uk, Organising Department Chair: south@iww.org.
uk. www.iww.org.uk

IWW UK Web Site administrators and Tech Department
Coordinators: admin@iww.org.uk, www.tech.iww.org.uk

NBS Job Branch National Blood Service: iwv.nbs@
gmail.com

Mission Print Job Branch: tomjoad3@hotmail.co.uk

Building Construction Workers IU 330: construction-
branch@iww.org.uk

Health Workers IU 610: healthworkers@iww.org.uk,
www.iww-healthworkers.org.uk

Education Workers IU 620: education@iww.org.uk, www.
geocities.com/iwweducation

Recreational Workers (Musicians) IU 630: peltonc@gmail.
com, longadan@gmail.com

General, Legal, Public Interest & Financial Office Workers
IU 650: rosec@iww.org.uk

Bradford: bradford@iww.org.uk

Bristol GMB: Hydra Books, 34 Old Market, BS2 0EZ.
bristol@iww.org.uk, www.bristol.iww.org.uk/

Cambridge GMB: IWWCambridge, 12 Mill Road, Cam-
bridge CB1 2AD cambridge@iww.org.uk

Dorset: 0044(0)7570891030. thehipleft@yahoo.co.uk
Hull: hull@iww.org.uk

Leeds: leeds@iww.org.uk, leeds@iww.org.uk

Leicester GMB: Unit 107, 40 Halford St., Leicester LE1
1TQ, England. 07981 433 637. leics@iww.org.uk www.
leicestershire-iww.org.uk

London GMB: c/o Freedom Bookshop, Angel Alley, 84b
Whitechapel High Street, E1 7QX. +44 (0) 20 3393 1295,
londoniww@gmail.com www.iww.org/en/branches/
UK/London

Nottingham: notts@iww.org.uk

Reading GMB: reading@iww.org.uk

Sheffield: sheffield@iww.org.uk

Tyne and Wear GMB (Newcastle +): tyneandwear@iww.
org.uk. www.iww.org/en/branches/UK/Tyne

West Midlands GMB: The Warehouse, 54-57 Allison
Street, Digbeth, Birmingham B5 5TH westmids@iww.
org.uk www.wmiwv.org

York GMB: york@iww.org.uk www.wowYork.org

Scotland

Clydeside GMB: hereandnowscot@gmail.com

Dumfries and Galloway GMB: dumfries@iww.org.uk,
iwwdumfries.wordpress.com

Edinburgh GMB: c/o 17 W. Montgomery Place, EH7 5HA.
0131-557-6242. edinburgh@iww.org.uk

Canada

IWW Canadian Regional Organizing Committee (CAN-
ROC): iw@iww.ca

Alberta

Edmonton GMB: P.O. Box 75175, T6E 6K1. edmon-
tongmb@iww.org, edmonton.iww.ca. Gabriel Cardenas,
del., 780-990-9081, x349429@gmail.com

British Columbia

Vancouver GMB: 204-2274 York Ave., V6K 1C6.
604-732-9613. contact@vancouveriww.com. www.
vancouveriww.com

Vancouver Island GMB: Box 297 St. A, Nanaimo BC, V9R
5K9. iwvvi@telus.net. http://vanisweblogs.wordpress.
com

Manitoba

Winnipeg GMB: IWW, c/o WORC, P.O. Box 1, R3C 2G1.
winnipeg@iww.com

New Brunswick

Fredericton: jono_29@riseup.net

Ontario

Ottawa-Outaouais GMB & GDC Local 6: 1106 Wellington
St., P.O. Box 36042, Ottawa, K1Y 4V3. ott-out@iww.org,
gdc6@ottawaiww.org

Ottawa Panhandlers Union: Karen Crossman, spokesper-
son, 613-282-7968, karencrossman17@yahoo.com

Peterborough: c/o PCAP, 393 Water St. #17, K9H 3L7,
705-749-9694. Sean Carleton, del., 705-775-0663,
seancarleton@iww.org

Toronto GMB: c/o Libra Knowledge & Information Svcs
Co-op, P.O. Box 353 Stn. A, M5W 1C2. 416-919-7392. iw-
wtoronto@gmail.com. Max Bang, del., nowitstime610@
gmail.com

Windsor GMB: c/o WWAC, 328 Pelissier St., N9A 4K7.
(519) 564-8036. windsoriww@gmail.com. http://
windsoriww.wordpress.com

Québec

Montreal GMB: cp 60124, Montréal, QC, H2J 4E1. 514-
268-3394. iww_quebec@riseup.net

Europe

Finland

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

German Language Area

IWW German Language Area Regional Organizing
Committee (GLAMROC): IWW, Haberweg 19, 61352 Bad
Homburg, Germany. iwv-germany@gmx.net. www.
wobblies.de

Austria: iwvaustria@gmail.com. www.iwvaustria.
wordpress.com

Berlin: Offenes Treffen jeden 2.Montag im Monat im Cafe
Commune, Reichenberger Str.157, 10999 Berlin, 18 Uhr.
(U-Bahnhof Kottbusser Tor). Postadresse: IWW Berlin, c/o
Rotes Antiquariat, Rungest. 20, 10179 Berlin, Germany.
berlin@wobblies.de

Frankfurt am Main: iwv-frankfurt@gmx.net

Cologne/Koeln GMB: c/o Allerwelthaus, Koernerstr.
77-79, 50823 Koeln, Germany. cologne1@wobblies.de.
www.iwwcologne.wordpress.com

Munich: iwv.muenchen@gmx.de

Switzerland: IWW-Zurich@gmx.ch

Netherlands: iwv.ned@gmail.com

Norway IWW: 004793656014. post@iwwnorge.org.
http://www.iwwnorge.org, http://www.facebook.com/
iwwnorge. Twitter: @IWWnorge

United States

Alaska

Fairbanks: P.O. Box 72938, 99707. Chris White, del.,
907-457-2543

Arizona

Phoenix GMB: P.O. Box 7126, 85011-7126. 623-336-
1062. phoenix@iww.org

Flagstaff: 928-600-7556, chuy@iww.org

Arkansas

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

California

Los Angeles GMB: (323) 374-3499. iwvgmba@gmail.
com

North Coast GMB: P.O. Box 844, Eureka 95502-0844.
707-725-8090, angstink@gmail.com

Sacramento: 916-825-0873, iwvsacramento@gmail.
com

San Francisco Bay Area GMB: (Curbside and Buyback IU
670 Recycling Shops; Stonemountain Fabrics Job Shop
and IU 410 Garment and Textile Worker's Industrial
Organizing Committee; Shattuck Cinemas; Embarcadero
Cinemas) P.O. Box 11412, Berkeley, 94712. 510-845-
0540. bayarea@iww.org

IU 520 Marine Transport Workers: Steve Ongerth, del.,
intextile@iww.org

Evergreen Printing: 2412 Palmetto Street, Oakland
94602. 510-482-4547. evergreen@igc.org

San Jose: sjwv@yahoo.com

Colorado

Denver GMB: 2727 W. 27th Ave., 80211. Lowell May, del.,
303-433-1852. breadandroses@msn.com

Four Corners (AZ, CO, NM, UT): 970-903-8721, 4corners@
iww.org

DC

DC GMB (Washington): 741 Morton St. NW, Washington
DC, 20010. 571-276-1935

Florida

Gainesville GMB: c/o Civic Media Center, 433 S. Main St.,
32601. Robbie Czopek, del., 904-315-5292, gainesvil-
leiww@riseup.net, www.gainesvilleiww.org

Miami IWW: miami@iww.org

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

Pensacola GMB: P.O. Box 2662, Pensacola 32513-2662.
840-437-1323. iwvpensacola@yahoo.com, www.
angelfire.com/fl5/iww

Georgia

Atlanta GMB: 542 Moreland Avenue, Southeast Atlanta,
30316. 404-693-4728

Hawaii

Honolulu: Tony Donnes, del., donnes@hawaii.edu

Idaho

Boise: Ritchie Eppink, del., P.O. Box 453, 83701. 208-371-
9752, eppink@gmail.com

Illinois

Chicago GMB: P.O. Box 57114, 60657. 312-638-9155.
chicago@iww.org

Central III GMB: 903 S. Elm, Champaign, IL, 61820. 217-
356-8247. David Johnson, del., unionyes@ameritech.net

Freight Truckers Hotline: mtw530@iww.org

Iowa

Eastern Iowa GMB: 563-265-5330. William R.Juhl@
gmail.com

Kansas

Greater Kansas City/Lawrence GMB: P.O. Box 1462,
Lawrence, 66044. 816-875-6060. x358465@iww.org

Wichita: Naythan Smith, del., 316-633-0591.
nsmith85@gmail.com

Louisiana

Louisiana IWW: John Mark Crowder, del., 126 Kelly Lane,
Homer 71040. 318-224-1472. wogodm@iww.org

Maine

Maine IWW: 206-350-9130. maine@iww.org, www.
southernmaine.iww.org

Maryland

Baltimore GMB: P.O. Box 33350, 21218. baltimoreiww@
gmail.com

Massachusetts

Boston Area GMB: PO Box 391724, Cambridge 02139.
617-863-7920, boston.iww@gmail.com, http://iw-
wboston.org

Cape Cod/SE Massachusetts: thematch@riseup.net

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

Michigan

Detroit GMB: 4210 Trumbull Blvd., 48208. detroit@
iww.org

Grand Rapids GMB: P.O. Box 6629, 49516. 616-881-5263.
griww@iww.org

Grand Rapids Bartertown Diner and Roc's Cakes: 6
Jefferson St., 49503. onya@bartertowngr.com, www.
bartertowngr.com

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

Minnesota

Duluth IWW: Brad Barrows, del., 1 N. 28th Ave E.,
55812. scratchbrad@riseup.net

Red River GMB: redriver@iww.org, redriveriww@gmail.
com

Twin Cities GMB: 3019 Minnehaha Ave. South, Suite 50,
Minneapolis 55406. twincities@iww.org

Missouri

Greater Kansas City IWW: P.O. Box 414304, Kansas City
64141-4304. 816.875.6060. greaterkcww@gmail.com

St. Louis IWW: P.O. Box 63142, 63163. stlwobblly@gmail.
com

Montana

Construction Workers IU 330: Dennis Georg, del., 406-
490-3869, tramp233@hotmail.com

Billings: Jim Del Duca,



Building Blocks

Persistence & Perseverance: Two Essential Parts In Organizing A Branch

By Matt Meister

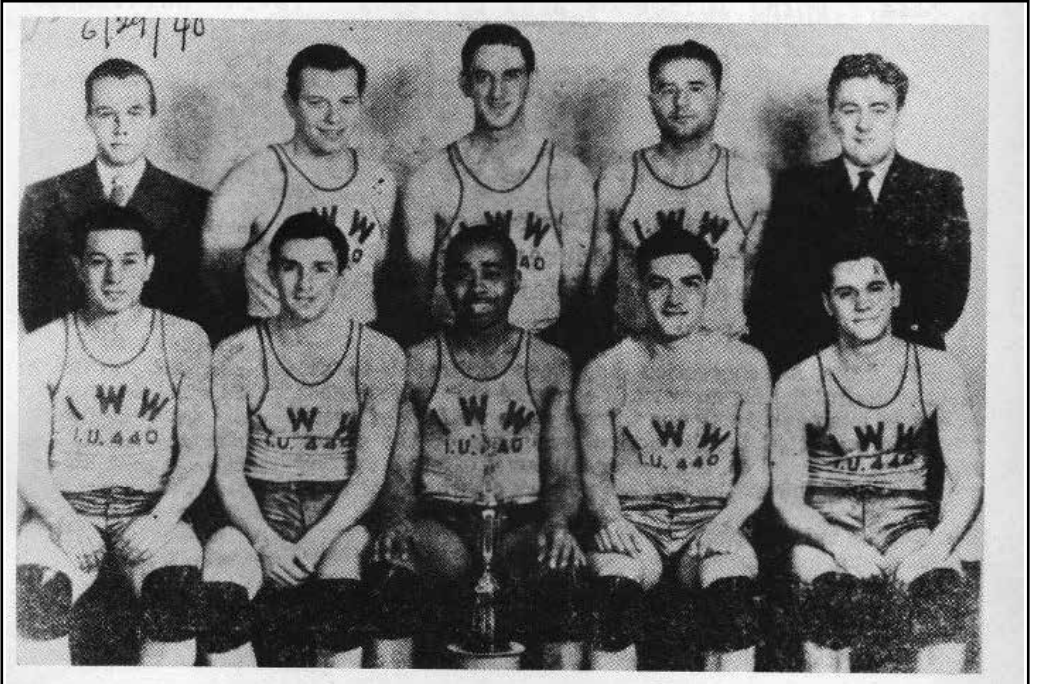
Organizing a general membership branch of the IWW is an interesting undertaking. I'm assuming no two branch formation experiences are alike, simply because no two organizers are alike. That said, this account is of my own experiences. I want to include the pitfalls and successes, because getting a branch charter can be as frustrating as it can be rewarding. Sometimes branches can do all the right things and hit snags, and other times things work smoothly despite mistakes. None of this is meant to impugn any person, but to illustrate the need for persistence. This is from my recollection, so it is not a complete story. The main reason I am submitting this to the *Industrial Worker* is to remind my fellow workers who are organizing branches that the important thing is to not lose sight of the goal, and to keep pushing to help the work along.

Ohio workers faced an existential threat in March 2011 through Senate Bill 5. This bill was a direct attack on public service workers and an indirect attack on all workers. As the bill began its trek through the legislature, I became increasingly frustrated at my AFL-CIO union for taking a wait-and-see approach, as did many other rank-and-file union members. It was through repeated trips to the state capital (two hours from my Akron home) that I kept bumping into the same active rank-and-file members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), American Federation of Teachers (AFT), National Education Association (NEA), the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), and other trade unions. We all agreed that something had to be done, but the static leadership structures seemed to have become too complacent to fight hard for us. The actions of the state government radicalized Ohio workers in ways the business unions failed to grasp. Fortunately, on one trip to Columbus in late June, I also

encountered half a dozen Wobblies who were organizing a Columbus branch. I went home and joined the One Big Union through the website. Then came the work.

Through Facebook, I found a community of Wobblies who directed me to three fellow workers an hour north in Cleveland. They had been active on the Jimmy Johns campaign, among others. We met and began strategizing on how to grow to an official branch. I was fortunate to be working with these Wobblies, as they were experienced organizers. They reached out to people from earlier campaigns while I spread the word to public sector workers who were also frustrated with their unions. We had our first organizing committee meeting in August 2011. Getting the 10 members in good standing threshold was fairly easy. We met that level in less than three months.

The application process for forming a branch is fairly straightforward. We applied in November. Some of the harder parts of the process included drafting bylaws. We borrowed heavily from the Twin Cities branch and made a few minor tweaks. We discussed the direction of the branch and decided to clearly state that we would be active organizers and not simply a protest group. As such, we took the Nebraska branch's bylaw addendum that all members must complete the Organizer Training 101 (OT101) program within 12 months. This passed with some discussion. Some of our dual-card members did not see the point since they could not actively organize their worksites. On later reflection, those dual carders decided that the OT101 was very useful in mobilizing people within their other unions. One confusing part of the application asked for our bank account number. Misunderstanding this as a requirement, we secured a credit union account without authorization. This was our mistake, made in good faith, and is



Wobbly basketball team which participated in Cleveland's Industrial League, 1940.

Photo: "Syndicalism to Trade Unionism: The IWW in Ohio, 1905-1950"

something new branches should avoid doing. It raised some flags later with the General Executive Board (GEB) as un-chartered branches should not have bank accounts in the IWW's name. Then the waiting began.

In December, we were notified that some of the members on our charter application were no longer in good standing. We corrected that oversight by having our only delegate drive around and collect dues from members who missed the last meeting. We resubmitted and waited some more. We also found out that there was a territory conflict with our designated region. The Youngstown, Ohio area is on the periphery of both our branch and the Pittsburgh branch. Realistically, Youngstown is pretty far from either city, and when the need comes, they should have their own branch. We sent the Pittsburgh branch a note that we would prefer they coordinate Youngstown efforts until such time as they can be their own branch. This was an un-

expected wrinkle, but knowing we all have the same goals, it was easy to smooth out.

In January, some of our members lost interest and faded away. New members joined to take their places. This required signing a new petition to charter with the new members and sending it along. We were sure this time we would be chartered. However, in early February, a fire struck at the General Headquarters and slowed all processes to a crawl. Once recovered, some of our members were out of good standing again, and our contact on the GEB resigned. By March, some of our members were once again out of good standing because they missed the February meeting. It was really frustrating, but we persevered.

At this point, a member of the GEB covering another region stepped in to help our branch overcome the obstacles. It had been six months since our initial petition to charter. We had met all the criteria multiple times, but through bad timing we were not able to get approval. That fellow worker shepherded us through the process and made a good argument that we should be awarded a charter. The GEB had some reservations about some of the language in our bylaws (specifically, undefined language about branch autonomy that seemed like it was leftover from the 1990s). It surprised us because it was from sections directly stolen from another branch. We agreed to revisit the bylaws and possibly revise the areas of concern. With that last remaining obstacle removed, the GEB voted to charter the Northeast Ohio General Membership Branch, effective April 2012. As such, we planned on celebrating by announcing the reconstitution of a Cleveland area IWW branch on May Day. Unfortunately, The FBI's terror plot involving five members of Occupy scuttled that celebration.

Reaching a goal is important, but resting on achievements is dangerous. Getting chartered was an uphill climb, and our experience seems unusual. We were so focused on establishing a branch that once we had it, we had a brief "Now what?" moment. Since being chartered, we have taken on new members, hosted an OT101, sent a member to the Work People's College and we are currently beginning two industrial union organizing campaigns. On the anniversary of our initial organizing meeting, we stand at approximately 15 members and several people who are thinking it over but have not yet joined. We are moving forward and growing. Our belated May Day plans instead were celebrated at the largest Labor Day parade in Northeast Ohio. We may be cursed with terrible timing, but we have the persistence necessary to keep fighting.

Editor's note: Part 3 of the Building Blocks series on building the Richmond General Membership Branch (GMB) will run in a future issue of the Industrial Worker.

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.

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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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Don't Be A Jerk About Bad Ideas

By John O'Reilly

It would be great if we lived in a world where all ideas about organizing were right, but the blunt fact is that sometimes people with good intentions do things that waste their time or, worse yet, actually hurt the organization that they are trying to build. We have all at some point looked back and said, "Wow, I cannot believe I put so much time into that project that was so clearly going to fail." Granted, hindsight is 20/20 but often when we say this about failed projects, we also say, "Wow, Fellow Worker X is smart and experienced and should have told me that was going to fail." Unfortunately, there are two common and dysfunctional ways that experienced Wobblies allow this kind of situation to happen. Being a jerk and being hesitant are two mistakes in dealing with these problems that we often do by mistake.

Often, experienced Wobbly organizers do not want to crowd newer, inexperienced but excited members by telling them how to spend their time. As a result, Wobblies often stand by and watch other people go off in a direction that does not make any sense and is from the outset doomed to fail. When individuals or groups hesitate to step in, they may spend hours working on a project when they clearly had other options that were more useful. This hesitation is a natural response for those of us who would rather allow someone to step off in a direction that is ineffective or negative than do the harder work of mentoring a fellow worker. Stepping beyond that hesitation is an important task for organizers to train ourselves to do.

Sometimes we find ourselves indulging in the opposite impulse: organizers can criticize bad ideas by acting like a jerk. Sometimes, someone may have already gone off with a bad idea and started pushing it around the union. As experienced organizers, we can see down the road how the bad idea will lead to disaster. That knowledge can make it tempting to act like a jerk. But acting like a jerk is a failing strategy to deal with bad ideas. It might embolden a member's dedication to the project ("FW X said this is a crappy idea and that we're stupid. Screw them, let's do it!") or disempower and discourage the member ("FW X said this is a crappy idea; I guess I'm a crappy unionist.") While it might be easy to act like a jerk and dismiss people's ideas out of hand, we can also easily see how this response is negative and does nothing to build the union. We need to imagine alternative ways of dealing with bad ideas.

In some instances, we just have to let people try something and have it fail so

that they learn it is not a great idea. We can be there in a critical but supportive way. If the member wants to have the IWW host a debate about Daniel DeLeon's ideas as a way of bringing in more workers, we could offer to help flier for it. Although that wastes some of our time, in the long run it could be a gain. It allows us to build a relationship with the member in question and then after the event fails we can have a conversation with that member about more useful projects. Other times, we may have to find ways of redirecting the worker's attention towards better projects. Perhaps a crew of members is pushing the branch to spend an hour at next month's business meeting discussing how the class struggle can be pushed forward via do-it-yourself clothing and dumpster diving (which can be cool if people are into them, but don't implicitly have much to do with the class struggle). We could intervene there by asking the members why they want to discuss it at the meeting and suggest that we have a separate discussion outside of the meeting. Then we can participate in that discussion and use it as a space to talk about good ideas instead. When folks with bad ideas start pushing them, it's often better to step closer to them than it is to step back and criticize.

Imagine an alternate scenario. When organizers are jerks about bad ideas, they turn people off of the important participatory aspect of our union. By telling an excited member that their idea is bad you do nothing more than turn people off from the IWW. It makes it easier for the member to ignore good advice because of the way in which that advice is raised. Bad ideas will never simply disappear from the organization; we constantly try new things and attempt to build a culture of organizers who can recognize past bad ideas when they see them. Acting like a jerk about them is often more damaging to the organization than doing the bad ideas in question.

Our approach with bad ideas has got to be one that builds from our role as organizers. As organizers, we are used to identifying leaders in campaigns and trying to use that leadership to develop the worker and workers who look up to them. Inside the union, we need to apply the same skills. Figuring out who a member respects and using that relationship to provide good ideas builds stronger relationships between members. At its heart this is a call for organizers to be aware of how they voice criticisms. If they do it in a way that those criticisms cannot be taken seriously, then organizers are not doing an effective job. It's not enough to be right. People have to be right in the right way.

Imagine: Sit-Down Strikes In Fast Food

By FW db

Imagine this: You wake up. The TV is on. There are sit-down strikes and workplace occupations going on at the local Wendy's. Again. The cops are tear-gassing the restaurants, shattering the windows and furthering the media frenzy. The headlines read: "Radical Workers Riot at Wendy's." But workers refuse to leave.

Civil rights activist Jesse Jackson is ranting about the right of all workers, black and brown workers in particular, to have jobs worth having—jobs where food workers can feed their families. The media is spreading vague rumors of strikes being spread back and forth between fast food and prisons. Maybe they are true.

The mayor's yard is covered in fries-with-that for his liberal use of police force. McDonald's billboards across the country are being vandalized, with new and better uses for their "I'm Loving It" or "Me Encanta" slogans. Most of them don't include swear words.

First it seemed like an Austin, Texas thing. Keep Austin weird. Get worker power with your late night burrito or Coke Zero. Then it seemed like just a Portland and Pacific Northwest fad. Hippies are willing to do anything: eco-terrorism,

grand juries, occupying fast food restaurants, you name it. Glenn Beck got back on the big Fox with a rant about some "IWW union."

But now, it's front page local news. In the business section, right? "Anarchist-communists out to destroy the U.S. government one Wendy's at a time." The bastards. It's not hard to get soft serve ice cream somewhere else, but frankly you can't wait until those workers win decent pay and paid sick days.

Heck maybe you'll buy a bunch of popsicles and distribute them on the picket line. It has been unusually hot this summer. Or maybe you'll buy them pizza online like you heard about in that whole Madison thing. Or was that Egypt?

Pizza sounds good, when are those workers going to "occupy their jobs"?

You sip coffee, put on your shoes. If fast food workers can do it, can you? A haunting question. You almost hope your boss will get on your case today so you can walk out yourself, or better yet, sit down on the job. What was that website again? It's time for work.

You leave with the TV on. At least there's good news happening somewhere, somewhere close to home.

WOMEN WORKERS' HISTORY

Chapter 59

Summer Strike Wave, 1915

In 1915, war blazed in Europe. Munitions factories boomed in the United States. Women entered the weapons industry by the thousands. Women were needed, employers said, because the operations "involve(d) delicate work, requiring deftness and dexterity in the use of fingers." But the lower wages received by women for long hours worked had much to do with employer interest in their female hires.

Among the biggest munitions centers was Bridgeport, Conn., where only a handful of male workers were organized. That didn't prevent thousands of munitions workers from walking off their jobs at Remington Arms and Lake Torpedo Boat, then busy filling orders for war-torn Europe. Like a summer heat wave, the strikes swept on, next shutting down machine shops, then rubber, textile and garment plants.



Many of the strikers were women production workers, who courageously struck for better conditions despite their lack of union protection. Among the women deciding to take a stand were 500 assemblers employed by the Bryant Electric division of Westinghouse. The company was shocked when the women walked off -- and even more dismayed when the remaining two-thirds of the workforce opted to join the strike.

Newspapers sowed rumors, warning that "scores of orders" in Bridgeport factories were being cancelled, and insinuating that the strikes were the work of "German agents" bent on disrupting the city's war production. But strikers held firm. Many employers gave in. Bryant Electric and other workers won reduction of working hours from 10 to eight a day; others got the work week reduced from 60 hours to 54 and 50 hours at 60 hours pay. (Bryant Electric and other Bridgeport factory workers would not enjoy union protection until UE and the CIO came on the scene some 25 years later.)

Graphic: Mike Konopacki

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Wobbly & North American News

Wobblies Celebrate Day Of The Dead

By the Albuquerque IWW

The daily grind of capitalism has a lot of working people feeling like the walking dead. The Albuquerque General Membership Branch (GMB) took this literally when we participated in Albuquerque's recent Day of the Dead celebration, Muertos y Marigolds (Marigold Parade). The Muertos y Marigolds event is a local tradition with roots in the Mexican holiday, and it consists of a parade culminating in a big party at a park and community center in Albuquerque's South Valley.

Our float for the parade was small but colorful. We had a get-together the night before to make tissue paper flowers: yellow and orange marigolds and black and red ones. We had bilingual banners with the message: "Organizing for Workplace Democracy/Organizando por la democracia en el trabajo." We had a Junior Wobbly with a red and black flag, and we all painted our faces with *calavera* (sugar



Photo: Albuquerque IWW
Wobblies participate in the Albuquerque Day of the Dead celebration.

paste used to make mask molds). We heard people mention "the Wobblies" as we tossed out *dulces* (sweets) to the crowd.

The original Mexican Día de los Muertos was meant to honor the dead. Likewise, Wobblies honor those workers who have struggled before us, while also infusing their spirit of struggle in our fight to reclaim our lives. Dressing up like a skeleton and tossing out candy is an added benefit.

Join Us For The IWW Organizing Summit

By FW DJ Alperovitz

Hi Fellow Workers, FW DJ Alperovitz here from the Vancouver Island General Membership Branch (GMB), and I'm helping with outreach for the 2013 Organizing Summit this February.

As most of you know the Organizing Summit is a biennial union-wide gathering of active and experienced organizers to share lessons, get support, and help shape the trajectory of the IWW moving forward.

It will take place this Feb. 8-10, 2013, in Boston, and we

wanted to make sure that all members of the IWW are made aware of this summit.

In terms of FWs, attending members should have attended Organizer Training 101 and be actively organizing, or be experienced IWW organizers. They should also be enthusiastic about participating in conversations about building a stronger IWW and committed to organizing with the IWW for years to come. We are hoping to foster an environment that is proactive to the continuance of the union and building off the forward direction of the IWW. We don't want to stop our progress as the importance of the IWW in the world today is as meaningful as ever. We are ready to start pre-registration.

We have an online registration form

for people who want to attend at: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/viewform?formkey=dDzOEVCVjdXboRfbEdpQjdwUlwQmc6MQ#gid=0>.

There will be a \$25 registration fee to help cover food expenses and we are asking branches to cover the registration fees. Travel expenses should be discussed within your branch/group in order to guarantee attendance by members.

As for fundraising we have set up a WePay, <https://www.wepay.com/donations/organizing-summit-2013>, and are

asking for 200 individual, groups, and branches to donate \$25 dollars. We will be holding a raffle for items signed by FW Noam Chomsky. Every \$25 donation will be eligible for the draw. We are hoping to raise at least \$5,000 to help offset costs of travel expenses for smaller or newer branches or groups that aren't financially stable but have members that would be good candidates for attendance. The programming committee will be finalizing the schedule soon and we will be passing that along as soon as it is finalized and approved.

If you have any questions please contact FW David Boehnke at dboehnke@gmail.com or FW DJ Alperovitz at coxswain@telus.net.



Graphic: iww.org

A Victory For Immigrant Justice: Dominic Ricardo Morgan Reunited With His Family

By Brendan Maslauskas Dunn

After nearly half a year locked up in a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) immigrant prison, Dominic Ricardo "Ricky" Morgan was finally released and is reunited with his family in Utica, N.Y. Occupy Utica helped Ricky and his family while he was incarcerated. The group, which includes a few Wobblies, learned about Ricky's situation while doing outreach for May Day this past spring from a local high school student, Ricky's step-son Marquis, who was interested in learning about immigrant rights.

Ricky immigrated to the United States in the late 1990s to find work. He married Melissa Palmer, a U.S. citizen, but nobody at Utica City Hall informed them of all the paperwork they had to fill out in order for Ricky to become a citizen. Ricky raised Melissa's children as his own and the two gave birth to two other children. Ricky had a child from another relationship with a woman who, unfortunately, was not willing to raise the child, so Ricky, being the caring father that he is, decided to file for custody so he and Melissa could raise the child in a loving environment.

The police and ICE agents decided to incarcerate Ricky around Easter after they

noticed his name came up in the system. He has no criminal record and no convictions and is the primary caregiver of his children, including Dominic Jr. who has battled leukemia and struggles with cerebral palsy. The punishment for a man trying to be a responsible father and partly created by the ignorance of a city bureaucrat was six months of incarceration in an ICE prison in Batavia, N.Y.

While he was locked up, the Morgan family struggled with a slumlord, a rental agency where they rented their furniture, hunger from empty cupboards and empty stomachs, and the stress of living in a home without a father and a husband. On top of taking care of five children by herself and working the graveyard shift at a bank, Melissa was in search of a part-time job to supplement the lost income. Occupy Utica and Wobblies stepped in to help out. Free childcare was provided every morning to see the kids off

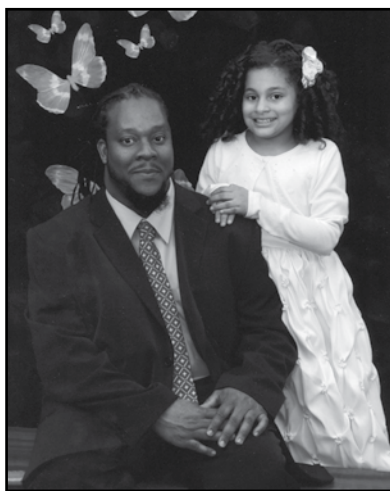


Photo: unknown
Ricky and his daughter Shi-Anne.

Union Leadership Sells Out Verizon Workers

By John Kalwaic

After more than a year of contract negotiations, the rank-and-file Communication Workers of America (CWA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) reached a tentative agreement with Verizon. The strike held impressive rallies in many cities

beginning in August 2011, including a two-week strike at the company's headquarters in New York City. However, in less than a few weeks after the strike began, the union leadership demobilized the movement they had started when Verizon agreed to talks with the CWA and IBEW. Although by the winter of 2011 talks had stalled as Verizon met the CWA at the bargaining table, the Verizon dispute with the CWA remained in a state of limbo for several months.

In September 2012, the CWA and IBEW signed a tentative agreement with Verizon which on one side secures some rights for workers, but on the other hand is terrible as it prevents new employees from receiving pensions when they retire. This new contract is a slap in the face to union



Verizon workers strike in August 2011.

Photo: labornotes.org

members. Many rank-and-file members were upset with the so-called "compromise," which totally alienated younger workers from joining the union. This kind of selling out is to be expected from AFL-CIO unions, but it is the rank-and-file mobilization within a union that can win a strike. The recent Chicago teachers strike was won due to a core group of radicals mobilizing within the union, who threw out the old leadership and created a more confrontational leadership within the Chicago Teachers Union that got at least some of the goods. The Verizon workers did not have this kind of mobilization and the CWA and IBEW leadership seemed to be more afraid of the rank and file than Verizon.

With files from Labor Notes.

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Special

The New Rank And File, And The Walmart Moment

Continued from 1

L. Lewis imposed on the incipient CIO a template or paradigm of successful union organizing that has rarely been challenged by subsequent, purportedly “rank-and-file,” candidates for union office.

Lewis ruled the UMW autocratically throughout the 1920s. Opposition movements led by socialists were outlawed and crushed. Since then, successful union organizing has been understood to have the following invariable components: (1) The union is recognized by the employer as the exclusive representative of workers in an appropriate bargaining unit; (2) New employees automatically become union members after a relatively short probation period; (3) The employer deducts dues from the worker’s paycheck and forwards the money to the union; (4) The contract forbids strikes and slowdowns for the duration of the collective bargaining agreement and (5) also includes a clause giving management the right to make unilateral investment decisions.

There is a widespread belief among labor historians that Lewis led the way to recognition of the CIO in steel, rubber and auto by a masterful organizing strategy among soft coal miners. Jim Pope, in a series of densely documented articles, has shown this story to be myth. Self-organization and the formation of new union locals among miners in western Pennsylvania were initially opposed by UMW staff. When 100,000 miners went on strike in the summer of 1933, Lewis and his lieutenant Phil Murray (later president of the Steelworkers and the CIO) made deals with the government to end the strikes without seeking rank-and-file authorization. In response, militant miners used their elected pit committees to form a network of resistance.

Roger Baldwin of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) actually opposed the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA, or the “Wagner Act”) of 1935, fearing that it would institutionalize and legitimate the Lewis paradigm and thus make impossible a breakaway movement like the Progressive Miners in southern Illinois.

CIO unions in basic industry, despite their insurgent rhetoric, became mechanisms for winning material benefits while simultaneously surrendering workers’ hopes for workplace democracy.

A Different Meaning For “Rank And File”

My wife Alice and I used the term “rank and file” as the title of our first collection of interviews, published in 1973. We defined it in a way that did not mention elections or running for union office. We said:

“Rank and file, in a general way, refers to workers on the job, not paid union leadership. Rank-and-file activity usually means people on the job taking whatever action they think is necessary, doing something for themselves rather than waiting for someone else to do it for them. It means people acting on their own, based on their own common experiences.”

In 2000 we published a second collection of interviews, and then in 2011 an expanded edition of “Rank and File” (Haymarket Books) containing all the interviews in the first book plus eight interviews from the second.

Over time, an oral history in the original “Rank and File” to which we often found ourselves referring was that with John Sargent. Sargent had been the first president of the Steelworkers Organizing Committee at Inland Steel in East Chicago, Ind. After the Steelworkers was recognized by management as the exclusive representative of the 18,000 workers at Inland, Sargent was elected for several terms as local union president.

Sargent’s heretical thesis was that steelworkers at Inland accomplished more *before* the Steelworkers was recognized as their exclusive representative than they

did afterward. The reason, he asserted, was that, as exclusive representative, the Steelworkers, like other CIO unions, gave up the right to strike for the duration of the collective bargaining agreement. Before then, management was obligated to bargain with the local CIO union, but also bargained with the so-called company union sponsored by the employer, “and any other organization that wanted to represent the people in the steel industry.” There was no comprehensive contract covering all those who worked at Inland. As a result, there was no clause giving up the right to strike and the workers progressed by small victories won by direct action.

In putting together our second collection of rank and file interviews, my wife and I became aware that different groups of workers were feeling their way toward re-creating the working-class self-activity, the unionism from the bottom up, that John Sargent experienced in the late 1930s at Inland Steel.

Here are thumbnail summaries of some of the new interviews we added to the original “Rank and File” in the expanded edition.

Vicky Starr, who, in the original “Rank and File,” described how she helped to organize packinghouse workers in the 1930s, told about forming a union of clerical workers at the University of Chicago in the 1970s and 1980s. She said that **before** the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) election and **before** they got a contract, she and fellow workers raised and resolved specific grievances.

Marshall Ganz had been a volunteer for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in one of the most dangerous parts of Mississippi. From 1965 to 1981 he worked with César Chávez and the new United Farm Workers (UFW) union in California. Farm workers were not covered by the NLRA, and that left them free to pursue the tactic of boycotting stores in which an employer’s product was sold. It worked. The Schenley Liquor Company, who owned the vast majority of the vineyards, signed a contract with the UFW.

Mia Giunta came from a working-class family in eastern Pennsylvania. She got a job as an organizer for the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE). At F-Dyne Electronic in Connecticut she and other UE members rejected the practice of laying off workers in order of seniority. Strict seniority in layoffs meant that the newest hires might be put on the street with nothing, while others—typically white males—continued to work full time and even to work overtime. Mia and her colleagues searched for, and found, ways in which all employees agreed to receive a little less so that everyone could stay on the job.

Bill DiPietro, president of a small International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) local at an automobile sales and repair shop, had a different gripe. He tried to explain to his national union that organizing didn’t work unless the organizer was prepared to stay for a time. “If you aren’t there every day, you can’t do it,” he said. “People will tell them, ‘I don’t want to talk to you. I want to see what you can do.’”

Members of the Chinese Staff and Workers’ Association told how new workers’ organizations can reach out horizontally to the community, rather than vertically to regional or national union offices. Students took part in a hunger strike in front of a restaurant, the practices of which they protested.

Youngstown’s Ed Mann became president of a Steelworkers local union. He had to live through the shutdown of the mill without being able to stop it. In retirement, Ed became a member of the IWW. He felt that the union was the people who composed it, and that the unions of the future maybe “won’t be structured as we see them today.”



Miners conduct sit-down strike in Wilsonville, Ill., in 1937.

Photo: niu.edu

The IWW And The New Rank And File

The IWW is a natural place to look for the alternative structure that Ed Mann imagined. The Wobblies stand in the imagination of labor people as the embodiment of rank-and-file self-activity. They are understood to orient themselves to folks at the bottom rather than to union leaders and their election contests.

But here we need to be good historians and to recognize an important fallacy in the original Wobbly perspective.

The IWW was formed in 1905 at a conference with one major emphasis, which was expressed in the call to the conference issued in January 1905 by three dozen individuals including Bill Haywood, Mother Jones, and Eugene Debs (see the new edition of “Rebel Voices,” ed. Joyce Kornbluh, page 7-9). Their manifesto deplored trade and craft divisions that broke the workers’ collective “power of resistance.” The separation of crafts and trades was said to be “outgrown” and “long-gone.” It was assumed that the formation of industrial unions would increase class consciousness.

The same theme was emphasized by Debs in a speech he gave in Chicago the next November, after the founding conference. Drawing on his own experience among railroad workers, Debs declared: “We insist that all the workers in the whole of any given plant shall belong to one and the same union.” (The speech is conveniently available in “American Labor Struggles and Law Histories,” ed. Kenneth Casebeer, page 91-99).

The implicit perspective, embodied as well in the IWW Constitution, is that the industrial union form of organization in itself fosters class consciousness, solidarity, and labor radicalism.

But we know now that this is not the case. The United Mine Workers (UMW) was an industrial union, albeit within the old American Federation of Labor. Under Lewis’s leadership the UMW proved once and for all that an industrial union could be just as conservative and undemocratic as the craft unions it replaced.

Only in the past few years have IWW organizers seriously begun a search for new organizational forms and a qualitatively new and more radical kind of labor union.

The examples with which I am most familiar are the Workers Solidarity Club of Youngstown, a “parallel central labor union” that offered significant strike support in the 1980s, and the more recent “solidarity union” at Starbucks establishments in New York City and elsewhere.

Daniel Gross is the principal IWW organizer at Starbucks, and he and I have written a pamphlet called “Solidarity Unionism at Starbucks” available from PM Press in Oakland, Calif.

The main idea is that the NLRA has two parts, and you can use one while avoiding the other.

The part to be avoided, according to Fellow Worker Daniel and myself, is Section 9. This is the section that provides for—guess what?—election of an exclusive collective bargaining union representative, the very practice John L. Lewis wished to make universal.

A recent book by a labor law professor, Charles J. Morris, argues that this practice was **not** universal when the NLRA was enacted. Morris contends that the initial conception was that an employer had a duty to bargain with any organization of its employees that requested negotiation, **whether or not the organization claimed to represent a majority of the employees.** This was the practice John Sargent reported to exist at Inland Steel for several years after the Little Steel Strike of 1937. Obviously such a “minority union” could not, practically speaking, bargain away the right to strike embodied in Section 13 of the NLRA for all the workers at a particular worksite.

On the other hand, Daniel and I argue that Section 7 of the NLRA, which protects the right to engage in “concerted activity for mutual aid or protection,” should be embraced and fully used. Section 7 is the basis for unfair labor practice (ULP) charges by employees who are fired or discriminated against when trying to act together in the workplace.

It seems to us that in this way rank-and-file workers can safeguard the self-activity by means of which they seek to address specific problems as they arise, while at the same time avoiding the part of the NLRA that empowers majority unions to bargain away the right to strike.

What Is Happening At Walmart?

The recent upsurge of rank-and-file activity at Walmart stores and warehouses in the United States has not, so far as I know, been led or inspired either by participants in Occupy or by members of the IWW. What it represents is **the spread of characteristic Wobbly forms of self-activity to workplaces where those practices arise spontaneously because they speak to the needs and opportunities actually experienced by Walmart workers.**

Recent Walmart strikes began among warehouse workers in California, spread to warehouse workers in Elwood, Ill., and finally have begun to appear at Walmart retail stores all over the United States. (The following compilation of facts is derived from a variety of websites and published articles.)

Walmart is the country’s largest private employer, reporting 1.4 million employees in the United States at 4,300

Continued on next page

Special

The New Rank And File, And The Walmart Moment



Graphic: classbrain.com

Continued from previous page

stores. The company claims that full-time employees make more than \$13 an hour. Workers say that most of them work part-time for less than \$10 an hour. Colby Harris in Dallas makes \$8.90 an hour and says that workers need a “buddy system” to make it through “non-paycheck weeks.” Also according to Walmart workers, health care benefits are theoretically available, but they are too expensive and too many hours are required before a worker qualifies to receive them. Sixty percent of Walmart’s hourly employees are women, who brought a nationwide lawsuit against the company that the United States Supreme Court held could not be pursued as a class action.

Meanwhile, Walmart made a profit of \$15.4 billion in 2011, and \$4 billion in the first quarter of 2012.

In the words of an article by Matthew Cunningham-Cook, Walmart workers “are harkening back to an earlier form of union organization...far more common prior to the passage of the Wagner Act in 1935.”

In mid-September, warehouse workers for Walmart in southern California went on strike to protest unsafe working conditions: broken equipment, dangerously high temperatures, inadequate access to ventilation and clean drinking water. These are temporary employees, hired by a Walmart contractor and paid minimum wage.

Strikers marched on a 50-mile “Wal-

march” from their worksite to Los Angeles to raise public awareness. Old-timers may have been reminded of the farmworker pilgrimage from Delano to Sacramento in the 1960s. Over 120,000 persons signed a petition supporting the Walmarchers. They went back to work Oct. 5 with a promise of improved conditions. It is reported that workers from different countries marched into the workplace carrying their countries’ flags.

Elwood, Ill., on the outskirts of Chicago, is a strategic link in the Walmart supply chain.

Walmart’s warehouse there is said to process 70 percent of the company’s domestic goods. This was what made it possible for a strike by just two dozen workers to be so successful.

Some of the grievances of the Elwood strikers had to do with wage theft resulting from forced overtime and the lack of set working schedules, as well as inadequate safety equipment. These temporary workers have had a hard time finding housing. Mike Compton told a reporter that he sleeps in foreclosed homes. Another worker set up a tent in the woods.

The first step at Elwood was to circulate and present a petition on Sept. 15. Four workers were immediately fired. Other workers walked out in protest.

On Oct. 1, the striking workers were joined by more than 650 community supporters, including members of the clergy, many of them bused in from Joliet and Chicago. Seventeen more persons were arrested in a civil disobedience action planned in advance. The arrestees included national UE Director of Organization, Bob Kingsley.

On Oct. 5, strikers delivered a petition to Walmart management with more than 100,000 signatures. The next day, after three weeks “on the bricks,” the Elwood workers went back to work. The company actually paid them full back pay for the time they were on strike.

One result of this ferment was a meeting of Walmart executives on Oct. 17 with delegations of workers from warehouses in

California and Illinois. This was in striking contrast to the past practice of meeting with individual workers pursuant to the company’s “Open Door” policy. Workers also want the Open Door process itself revised so that: (1) Confidentiality is respected; (2) Resolution of issues is put in writing; and (3) “Associates” (as Walmart calls its employees) are permitted to bring a co-worker to meetings as a witness.

Rather than presenting themselves as new members of existing unions, these wildcat strikers have formed new organizations with names like Warehouse Workers for Justice and OUR Walmart (OUR standing for “Organization United for Respect”). It is important to recognize that existing unions, especially the United Food and Commercial Workers, support these new entities in many ways, including financial support, and no doubt hope that Walmart workers will ultimately join the union. But it is equally important to recognize that nothing obliges Walmart workers to join a traditional union, if they prefer to continue their less traditional practices of horizontal mutual aid.

Emboldened by the actions of their fellow workers in company warehouses, Walmart “associates” at company retail stores staged a one-day strike on Oct. 4. More than 70 workers from at least nine southern California Walmart retail stores took part. Using social media, strikers spread the word and a nationwide walk-out followed on Oct. 9. More than 200 Walmart workers also showed up at a national meeting of company executives on Oct. 10. “Democracy Now!” reported that they came from 28 Walmart stores in 12 different states.

As I complete this essay in early November 2012, there is talk that if Walmart continues to ignore these bottom-up demands for change, Walmart workers

will call for a nationwide boycott of their stores on the Friday following Thanksgiving (otherwise known as “Black Friday”).

Toward Another World

The dramatic saga just narrated should remind us that fundamental social change is unlikely to happen without the working class, and that workers remain capable of acting in the imaginative and irrepressible spirit of their theme song, “Solidarity Forever.”

The Occupy movement is a potential actor in the play. Events at the grain terminal in Longview, Wash., one year ago remain controversial. I think the evidence suggests that Occupy volunteers strengthened the struggle, and that the

International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) settled for too little, indeed that Pacific Northwest grain exporters wish to copy the Longview contract in their bargaining elsewhere.

The main point is simply that change is possible because workers, like others, treasure the moments when they experience the possibility of another world. Archbishop Óscar Romero said shortly before his assassination:

“The so-called Left is the people...We can’t say that there is a formula for moving from capitalism to socialism. If you want to call it socialism, well, it’s just a name. What we’re looking for is justice, a kinder society, a sharing of resources. That’s what people are looking for.”

Trinh Duong described as follows why she became an activist in Chinese Staff and Workers’ Association: “There was something that drew me. It was as if you got a glimpse of something that you’re not allowed to see. I don’t know how to describe it, but I came back.”

Alice Lynd contributed to this piece.

The Wobbly Tour Of Indiana

Continued from 1

new Wobblies on the spot, and had many people commit to signing up online (so that they could pay their dues via PayPal). Not including other Wobblies whom we have contacted but have so far been unable to meet and fellow workers whom we cannot locate or contact, our soon-to-be General Membership Branch (GMB) is 16 members strong and growing.

Along the trip, we observed the range of Indiana’s social and geographic features and witnessed the different material conditions that Hoosier (Indiana native) workers’ experience in their respective areas. Indiana has a broad spectrum of industries including agriculture, manufacturing, raw material extraction and processing (mining, logging, and oil production), a large service sector, educational workers and students and many other smaller industries. As we traveled, we heard workers lamenting the unhealthy conditions they were expected to operate under, the lack of living wages and having to endure attacks on labor by conservative groups. Students also complained of difficulty even entering the labor force, of crippling debt and of the corporatization of universities. And throughout our journey and ever-present in our conversations was the shared understanding that Indiana was being destroyed as the capitalist mode of production drove its largest industries to deplete Indiana’s natural resources



and pollute its environment. Of course, this is the quick summation of our observations traveling, but all these problems enforce the idea that Indiana and its people need an active IWW branch to help them stand up and better their lives.

The Indiana GMB has the potential to be a strong, cohesive and active part of the IWW. If the energy of the Hoosier Wobblies we’ve seen at these preliminary meetings is any indication, the group should grow quickly and prosper. But for that to happen, we will all have to continue meeting face-to-face, communicating regularly and reaching out to friends, fellow workers and beyond. The conditions that make Indiana seem so difficult to organize also make the need for organization that much greater. Right-to-work legislation, reactionary anti-unionism and the generally conservative nature of the state might seem overwhelming, but the fact that there’s so much anti-union activism by national and international conservative groups shows how afraid they are of the workers of Indiana and of organized radical labor. We have already met many fellow and future Wobblies, and they have all been so supportive of the fight to better organize, but we need to meet more of you! If there are any members in Indiana whom we have not spoken to who may read this, please contact us via email at iwwindiana@gmail.com, or on Facebook at “Indiana IWW.”



2013 Labor History Calendar

A revolutionary labor history calendar, published annually by the Hungarian Literature Fund in cooperation with IWW branches since 1985. This year’s calendar benefits the Greater Kansas City General Membership Branch of the IWW, and features 14 striking photos — from Spanish workers protesting austerity and demanding a future worth living to Pittsburgh steelworkers demanding their mills be reopened under workers control to 1930s occupations across the U.S. and Puerto Rico — and hundreds of notes marking important dates in the global struggle for industrial freedom. It concludes with reflections on three centuries of workers’ occupations.

Ideal for tabling, workplace walls, and gifts. *Every wage slave needs one!*

“Especially inspiring before going to work ... not bounded by borders and petty ideologies...” — J. Russell, Victoria BC

\$12.00 each, post-paid; \$6.50 each for 5 or more copies to same address (please add \$2 for overseas postage) Checks made payable to IWW Kansas City GMB
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or email greaterkciww@gmail.com

Wobbly Arts

Hot & Crusty Workers Win!

By Sean Carleton, X364847

Bakery workers in New York City battled the boss and won! This is a victorious song of solidarity for the workers of Hot & Crusty Bakery who fought hard for 55 days for their union and workplace justice on 63rd Street and Second Avenue in Manhattan. After walking the picket line and talking with these workers, it is clear that they are on the frontlines of immigrant organizing in the service industry. Their victory over employer union-busting is inspiring for all workers around the world. SOLIDARIDAD!

Tune: "Hot Cross Buns"

Verse 1

C G7 C
Hot & Crusty workers
C G7 C
Hot & Crusty workers.
C C C C G7 G7 G7 G7
They earn a dollar, earn two dollars,
C G7 C
Hot & Crusty workers.
C G7
They give them to their daughters
C F
They give them to their sons.
C C C C G7 G7 G7 G7
They earn a dollar, earn two dollars,
C G7 C
They work in unison.

Verse 2

Hot & Crusty bosses
Hot & Crusty bosses.
They steal a dollar, steal two dollars,
Hot & Crusty bosses.
They give them to their lawyers
Invest them in their funds.
They steal a dollar, steal two dollars,
And try to break the union.

Verse 3

Hot & Crusty workers
Hot & Crusty workers.
They fight for a dollar, fight for two dollars,
Hot & Crusty workers.
Now they can feed their families
Provide for their daughters and sons.
They fight for a dollar, fight for two dollars,
They picketed till they won.



Photo: nycga.net



Photo: Sean Carleton, X364847

Alienated

By Vance Osterhout

Alienated
from our work
from each other
from ourselves
in custom made worlds
with individual lettering
and unique paint
lost in drowsy fantasies
you're living a dream
but the world is still burning
Wake Up!

Revolution of the Heart

By Vance Osterhout

There must be a revolution
In the streets
where the people walk to dreary jobs
and the wealthy are carried on their shoulders
In the buildings
Where justice is housed
where laws are kept and Prisoners held
In the halls of the fathers
Where the bickering echoes
for all to slumber to
in the heads of the common man
addled by advertisements
and long abandoned to thought
but before all of that
there must be a revolution
of the heart
where men have grown tired
of striving for each other
and hardened toward
selling women into slavery
dooming children to the same
without the revolution of the heart,
all others are failures



Graphic: Vance Osterhout

Obituaries

Remembering FW Adam Briesemeister

By Erik Forman

On March 21 of this year, members of the IWW and the broader community in the Twin Cities were shattered by the tragic news that our Fellow Worker Adam Briesemeister perished in a house fire early that morning. It has been very hard to believe that Adam is no longer here. As I write this it is November, a time to reflect and remember those we have lost. So I would like to take a moment to remember Adam.



Photo: minnesota.cbslocal.com

He was the first in the house to wake up during the early morning fire. Rather than save himself, he woke up his roommates so that they could escape safely. He died of smoke inhalation while attempting to rescue the last person in the house, who fortunately survived.

Adam's death is a terrible tragedy. It is hard to believe that this great comrade is no longer among us. But in so many ways, Adam is still here. Adam's purpose in life was to inspire and encourage others—to "make revolution irresistible," in his own words. For many of us who knew him, it would be no overstatement to say that Adam accomplished his goal. He showed us how to live.

I think about Adam almost every day. Whenever I am afraid, or whenever I can't decide if a risk is worth taking, I ask myself: What would Adam do in this situation? Would he worry about ruffling feathers by confronting racism and sexism? No way. Would he hold back in order to protect his job or career possibilities? Absolutely not. Would he keep a distance while others put their bodies on the line? Hell no. He would do the right thing, without even stopping to think twice.

He is missed very much by very many. But in many ways, Adam is still among us. Every time we put others before ourselves, every time we do what is right instead of what is convenient, Adam is there. Just as he died so that others could live, it's up to us to make sure Adam lives on in our hearts, minds, and above all in our actions, for as long as we live.

A few days after the tragedy, friends, family members, fellow workers, and comrades gathered in a park in Minneapolis to celebrate Adam's life and mourn his departure. As people shared pictures and stories, a portrait emerged of a man who was many things to many people—an actor, a friend, an anarchist, a Wobbly, a worker. To me, Adam was a comrade in the IWW, and an actor. He leaped at the opportunity to play multiple roles in "The Silent Room," a play one of our branch's members wrote about his experiences of wage slavery and rebellion at Starbucks and IKEA. He had happily played the parts of both a union-busting lawyer and a rebel café worker, squeezing rehearsals into a schedule already jam-packed with radical projects. Adam never said "no" to an invitation to participate in a campaign, and never backed down in a struggle.

As people shared how they had known Adam, we saw that even as he was many things to many different people, he also touched all of our lives in the same way. It is almost impossible to find a photo of Adam where he is not smiling. He was human like all of us, and I'm sure he had his bad days, but I haven't met anyone who can remember a single day that Adam was cranky, discouraged, or outwardly pessimistic. Whether he was your friend, co-worker, fellow actor, fellow anarchist, or fellow worker, his love of freedom and humanity was infectious. He was a revolutionary to the core. Adam lived without compromise.

We found out that in fact, Adam gave up his life rather than give up his values.

Rest In Peace: Vincent (Ted) Lee

By Harry Siitonen, X324965

Old-time Wobbly Vincent (Ted) Lee, 85, passed away in Berkeley, Calif., on Oct. 28, after a long illness. Born in New York state, Fellow Worker Lee joined the United States Merchant Marine during World War II at age 15, falsifying his age. He served upon the ships of the perilous Murmansk Run, in which the United States shipped



Ted Lee (left, with a big beard) at a rally against Domino's Pizza in Berkeley on Sept. 15.

Photo: Bruce Valde

strategic goods to support its wartime ally, the Soviet Union, which was being besieged by Nazi Germany's 1941 invasion. He saw many merchant ships sunk by German submarines in the icy Arctic Ocean or by Luftwaffe aircraft. Fortunately, he survived.

Ted was later drafted into the U.S. Army. Upon his return to civilian life he worked for years as a merchant seaman, and among other jobs, operated an organic produce farm and worked as a long haul truck driver.

He was radicalized early on, living in New York City where he joined the IWW and was an activist in the labor and Black liberation movements. He was a close friend of the late Sam and Esther Dolgoff, well-known in the Wobblies and in anarcho-syndicalist circles. He was president of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee in the early 1960s and a member of the Veterans for Peace since 1985. Ted was a fearless activist's activist, never hesitant to put his body on the line in a struggle. He was particularly proud of being an anarchist and an atheist.

In later years, he lived in Tampa, Fla., where he continued to be organizationally active—at one time saying he served as a bodyguard for radical singer Pete Seeger

The Factory

By John Kaniecki

Mass production that's our game
Tiny fascists all the same
Suit and tie arrogant pride
Greedy hearts lurk inside
Business theory fills the brain
Philosophies of inflicting pain
Making money the only goal
No care for the human soul
Like a coward wearing a disguise
Like the devil telling lies
We train the elite who will rule
Our name Harvard Business School
Like Auschwitz we make history
Jut call us The Factory

on a performance tour in the South. Then various serious physical afflictions began to plague him which forced him to rely on an electrically-powered wheelchair to get around.

About five years ago Ted moved to Strawberry Creek Lodge senior housing in Berkeley with his health needs tended to by a health care program in northern California. Yet he could be seen at many a rally and picket line, wheelchair-bound and spiritedly waving a picket sign. He lived for the struggle against capitalist oppression, despite his considerable health problems.

FW Ted's last rally was this past Sept. 15 when he joined a demonstration of our Bay Area IWW branch in downtown Berkeley in front of Domino's Pizza to alert the public to the firing of our Australian fellow workers who had been dumped for organizing at a Domino's store in that country. He thoroughly enjoyed being out there with us as he saw the mostly young Wobblies chanting and parading in a lively show of international worker solidarity.

Fellow Worker Lee is survived by his long-time companion and caregiver Ena Vizcaino, three daughters from earlier marriage, seven grandchildren and several great-grandchildren.

Wobbly Organizing Not Just “A Dues Collector”



Graphic: Leslie Fish, IWW IU630

By FW DJ Alperovitz

Over the last few months there have been several Facebook discussions about IWW delegates who have made arbitrary decisions outside of their job description (e.g. not allowing students to join and stalling an organizing campaign). Several times there have been statements made that delegates are just “volunteers to accept dues.” As a delegate who has tried to live up to high standards, I find both these assertions troubling. On the one hand, some delegates are obviously not receiving

any training or even reading their “Delegate’s Manual,” and on the other hand, there appears to be a misunderstanding of the position by fellow IWW members.

Delegates have both an honorable, colorful history and an important place in their branch and the IWW itself.

In earlier days when our union was organizing mostly “home guards” (sedentary workers attached to home and a single job often with family responsibilities), prospective new members would make their way to an IWW hall and be lined up by either the branch secretary-treasurer or stationary delegate. This system worked well when building membership in cities, or mill and mine towns; however, it showed its limitations out west with its far-flung railroad and logging camps and especially with migratory harvest workers.

Almost simultaneously in both western Canada and the United States, branch secretaries in towns with IWW halls began delegating members to represent them in the camps and harvest fields. Call them what you will—camp delegates, roving delegates, or job delegates—these dedicated workers would travel, work, eat, and live with the fellow workers. In camps and harvest fields, these representative delegates

were agitating, educating, and organizing not only to build the One Big Union of the industrial commonwealth, but for the day-to-day improvement of wages, working, and living conditions, too.

In her speech “Memories of the Industrial Workers of the World” from Nov. 8, 1962, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn described these footloose delegates as equipped with “...a little black case in which they had membership books and buttons and literature and dues stamps and all the paraphernalia of organization and the most remarkable thing was that there was practically no defections. Maybe one or two. One man actually stole money and then afterwards hung himself, I understand. You see there was great devotion and loyalty to this mobile organization of migratory workers.”

In another example, FW Sam Green recently came across a General Organization Bulletin (GOB) from the 1920s. In it a letter mentioned that a named fellow worker was a delegate that had run off with some union funds and if you happen to see him “you know what to do.”

Often these delegates would be holding relatively large amounts of cash, and the stories of their not having the price of a cup of coffee while having union money in their care are legendary. After the harvest when workers’ identities changed from necessary harvest worker to unwanted vagrant, “town clowns” (small town police officers) and the local (in)justice system would “harvest hobos” (a term used for arresting hobos, sometimes at the end of harvest so that the town could collect the fines and court costs, or when a town had a civic improvement project that needed to be done such as road work, sewer line,

etc...). As a way of ensuring that fellow workers did not lose their funds, delegates would be entrusted with a worker’s earnings to be wired to an IWW hall where the worker planned to winter. And how did delegates avoid the perils of vagrancy laws and being harvested themselves? Some of them became travelling insurance or farm tool salesmen allowing them to travel relatively unmolested. In the case of Agricultural Workers Industrial Union delegates, they were allowed to keep the 50-cent initiation fee to help cover expenses; expenses being the cost of wiring funds back to headquarters, stamps and envelopes, sometimes renting a hotel room to hold meetings, buying a cup of coffee and a doughnut for the boys during hard times, and sometimes when necessary to protect union and workers funds by having to “ride the cushions” (pay for and ride as a train passenger). These were dedicated Wobs of the first water—class conscious, willing and able to tough out lousy camp and working conditions, and fight to help better the lives of their fellow workers.

Fast forward to today and while most delegates are not hopping freight trains or living in lousy bunk houses, they are still more than just “a volunteer to collect dues.” A good delegate is part organizer, part bookkeeper, part Literature Department, part fundraiser, and all IWW. They are entrusted not only with union funds but also with signing up and ensuring that new members understand our principles and structure. They keep up with union news through reading the *IW* and the GOB, and work towards connecting fellow workers in their branch to the larger union. Certainly they do much more than just collect dues.

Is Revolutionary Unionism Undemocratic And Insincere?

By Nate Hawthorne

“Instead of the conservative motto, ‘A fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work,’” says the Preamble to our Constitution, “we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, ‘Abolition of the wage system.’” Some anti-capitalists reject the idea that unions can or should truly believe in ending capitalism. For them, the IWW can either reject the Preamble in order to grow, keep the Preamble but not sincerely believe in it, or keep the Preamble in a sincere way at the cost of being nothing but a small marginal group. These people implicitly reverse the Preamble to say “instead of the revolutionary watchword, ‘Abolition of the wage system,’ our banners should only pose the common sense motto ‘a fair day’s wages for a fair day’s work.’” These critics sometimes use a hypothetical scenario such as: “If you call for ending capitalism, most workers won’t join because most workers don’t want to end capitalism. If a lot of workers did, the IWW would not have a real collective commitment to ending capitalism because all those new workers would not believe in ending capitalism. Your Preamble will be just empty words. Or the few members who want to end capitalism will control things while the majority who don’t care about that anti-capitalism stuff will have no real input. Revolutionary unionism can be marginal, insincere, or undemocratic, and that’s all.”

This can sound compelling, but let’s look closely. If most of the working class today do not want to end capitalism and are not willing to join an anti-capitalist union then we don’t need to worry about how to keep the organization democratic if large numbers of workers join, because it simply won’t happen. The problem dissolves. Something will have to change before lots of workers start wanting to join a revolutionary union. One possible change is that more workers will decide they want to end capitalism. The problem dissolves again. Another possibility is

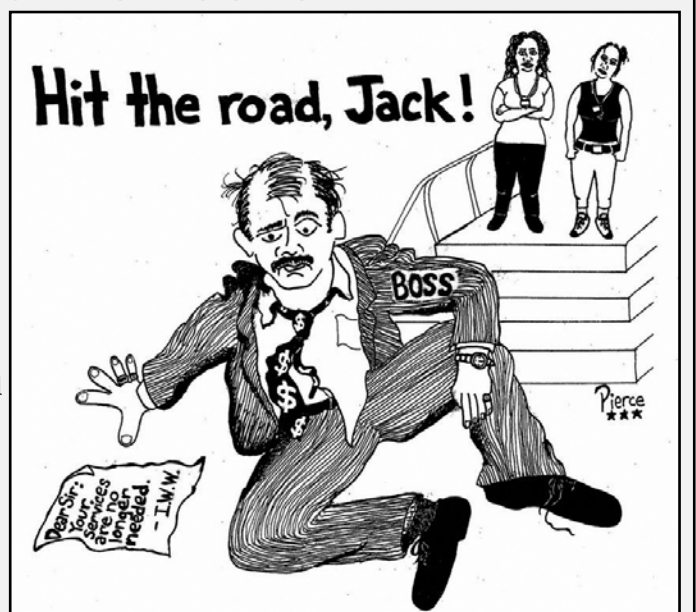
that many workers will begin to see some benefit in IWW membership, and they pretend to agree with the Preamble in order to get those benefits. That’s possible. Sincerity is hard to test. People might lie. The same kind of problem occurs in any organization. Currently unions often face the problem of having members who aren’t active participants and who lack a culture of solidarity, so that members crossing picket lines and don’t stand with their fellow workers. There’s no easy solution to any of this, it requires ongoing effort. We should also organize ourselves so that the benefits of IWW membership are linked to activities that deepen people’s commitment to revolutionary unionism, and to an important extent we simply have to trust each other. Part of the problem with the hypothetical scenario, “What if lots of workers join, when they don’t actually agree with the Preamble?” is that it treats people as fixed. Many workers today don’t want to end capitalism. If it’s believable that people would want to join the IWW in large numbers, then we should not assume that their beliefs will stay the same.

At the same time, we shouldn’t assume that people’s commitment to the values expressed in the IWW Preamble will stay the same. People are dynamic, which means that we face a more serious problem than “What if workers only pretend to want to abolish the wage system?!” Namely, people might sincerely agree with the Preamble but change their minds later, or they might agree but decide that they don’t want to act on that agreement. They might think one thing in a moment of anger or desperation, but then cool off and change their minds. Many people who have had radical beliefs for many years have thought a bit about what their lives would be like if they had different beliefs and commitments and have seen fellow radicals waver more strongly, and sometimes fall away. Life under capitalism is hard to endure and radical views sometimes make it harder. This problem

appears in non-radical unions as well: people get tired of the work, or stop agreeing with the union. Here too there is no simple solution. The IWW will continue to face real problems with recruitment, retention, and member education for the foreseeable future. We can respond to these problems in better and worse ways, and radical critics who reject revolutionary unionism don’t help us to respond better. If anything, they encourage worse responses.

Some people will cool off and move away from the organization sometimes. We should prepare for the consequences this will have. Among other problems, we want to avoid a situation where people become only paper members. One thing the IWW does to prevent this is heavily encouraging face-to-face interaction with delegates in order to join and to stay members. This encourages the organization to be financially dependent on having real members, rather than paper members.

We should have longer conversations about how to reduce the frequency and consequences of people cooling off. Many people who have held radical beliefs for a long time have managed to take the heat of their outrage at the world, their passionate relationships with other radicals and experiences of collective struggles and combine it with ideas, values, and stories in order to create their own internal heat source, so they are less likely to cool off. We need to figure out how to make this happen as often as possible for IWW members, so that as many members as possible will own internal revolutionary unionist heat. One important aspect of



Graphic: J. Pierce

this is that joining our organization is or should be an interactive activity. Joining a union can and should involve a frank discussion with a member about why the organization exists, about the organization’s core values, why the person is joining and why the current member is involved. This is a conversation between two people about their understanding of the world now and of the world they would like to see. This way, joining the IWW is a dynamic activity that shapes the direction people move in after joining. After joining, there can and should be educational components of membership in an organization, including written materials, discussions, various parts of the life and culture of the organization, and, above all, relationships with other members. All of this helps prevent the situation described in the hypothetical scenario above, where workers join the IWW but don’t believe in the Preamble. Through these kinds of activities, we practice revolutionary unionism in a way that is sincere, democratic, and continues to become a more powerful presence within the working class.

Towards A Wobbly Methodology

Establishing Yourself As An Organizer In A New Workplace

By X370559

This piece is the second in a series articulating a methodological framework for developing Wobbly organizers and identifying key features of workplace committee building at the micro-level.

Much of the content of the *Industrial Worker*, as well as the Organizer Training 101, discusses the nuts and bolts of workplace struggle including how to conduct a successful one-on-one discussion and forming a workplace committee. What is often left unspoken is the path by which Wobblies go from the unemployment line to worker-organizers who are fully engaged in the social fabric of their job site.

As Wobblies, like the rest of the working class, we must sell our labor power in order to survive. Depending on the period and place, and the nature of the work and culture of the firm, obtaining certain jobs will require more research, training, skills, and overall effort. Taking the time to reflect on these challenges is important, and as Wobblies we should think strategically when considering where to seek employment. In the meantime, we can identify some basic components that will place us in a better position to establish ourselves as organizers in a new workplace.

Every Wob a Salt

“Every worker is an organizer” is useful shorthand for some of the principles the IWW holds close to its heart. It is both a phrase and philosophy that resides in the back of every Wobbly’s mind as they survey the shop floor or run their thumb down a list of co-workers—scanning for potential allies and bookmarking future one-on-ones. Stripped bare, it’s a Wobbly maxim that recognizes the necessity for workers to organize for a truly new society.

Consequently, as the IWW seeks to maximize its strength with still limited numbers, we encourage every red card holder to recognize themselves as a salt. Salting is the proven, time-tested tactic of obtaining a job at a certain workplace with the specific aim of building the union. Understanding the keys to securing a specific job in a particular workplace and learning how to establish oneself as a social leader are fundamental skills every Wobbly should have in their class struggle arsenal. After all, workplace organizers are most effective when they are exactly that—organizers at their place of work.

Getting the Job

Offering our labor power for sale is always a stomach churning process. Once we accept the fact that this needs to happen in order to put food on the table, applying for a job with the specific aim of building class power makes the whole charade slightly more palatable. Deciding on the specifics of which industry, firm, and occupation would be most strategic for any given Wob is a topic best reserved for another time. Assuming you have already selected your best possible targets, taking the steps to research the application and hiring process should follow. Discussing your immediate aim with fellow workers in the industry or contacts inside the shop can give you insights into what your potential boss is looking for in an ideal employee.

Devising ways to appear as the exemplary worker can range from simply creating a fool-proof narrative about why this position is everything you’ve ever wanted in life, to the complexities of working an initial job that would give you a better chance of later getting hired at the original target. When building your resumé around the explanation that you and the occupation were meant for each other, stretching the truth as little as necessary about previous employers typically makes interviews less harrowing. Nonetheless, wiping away all clues pointing toward political activity or proclivity for leadership reassure an employer that hiring you will keep things running smoothly.

As in most aspects of organizing, having a partner helps tremendously; so collaborating with another Wobbly when building the narrative, constructing a resumé, and practicing interview scenarios can build confidence and expose any initial oversights. Throughout the application and interview processes, being over-the-top with thoroughness and giddy with enthusiasm (i.e. following up each step of the way with a thankful phone call or describing in detail your passion for customer service) will usually raise your chances of landing the job. Bosses are always ecstatic to hear wage slaves consistently recounting anecdotes of servility and acquiescence, and most interviewers will never pass up an opportunity to delightfully imbibe their company’s own flavor of Kool-Aid.

Becoming a Social Leader

Once you’ve landed the job, it’s tempting to jump right into agitating and educating co-workers. This approach is problematic for several reasons. Experience has shown that workers who do not first build relationships and establish themselves as social leaders within the shop are apt to be quickly labeled as an arrogant and disgruntled employee by management and gain a reputation among co-workers as a “complainer” and/or just another naïve “crazy radical.”

Depending on the workplace it’s generally a good rule of thumb to allow yourself three to six months to get acquainted with the social landscape at your new job. During this time, organizing consists of getting to know as many names and faces as possible, social mapping, building positive relationships with everybody, including management and co-workers that you may find personally repulsive and lacking in class consciousness. While organizing under the radar, having enemies only makes things harder—whether those enemies are worthy of ire or not.

Becoming a social leader requires putting yourself out there, going out of your way to introduce yourself to people and making it a point to say hello to folks both inside and out of your immediate work group. The first few weeks give you a unique opportunity to get acquainted with nearly every worker that passes you by. In many workplaces, especially at the point of exchange in sectors like food and retail, departments and jobs are segregated in numerous ways. Intentionally pursuing

relationships that force you to move beyond your comfort zone requires seeking out co-workers who aren’t like you. Doing so will introduce you to a wider, more diverse social milieu, and give you a more informed understanding of the composition of your workplace. This puts you at a tremendous advantage to become a social leader and teaches you a lot about what the organizing committee should look like in order to build substantial workers’ power in your shop or campaign. At the same time, keeping all this information locked up in your head is nearly impossible. Taking daily notes on the interactions you have with co-workers will prove indispensable when you want to pass on that information to another Wobbly or simply organize your own thoughts into a clearer social map. Check with fellow organizers as to how they keep their notes in order so that you can devise a system that best fits your own situation.

Building a reputation as a worker who carries their load, helps others, covers shifts, arrives on time and doesn’t call out sick frequently is another critical element of becoming a social leader. It’s a cliché, but the best workers usually make the best organizers. Working hard and doing a “good job” may increase the rate at which you’re exploited, but it also makes the labor process easier for other workers, and they will take notice. Being known as someone who everyone likes and respects is invaluable in establishing credibility, which is a vital prerequisite for assuming social leadership in the workplace.

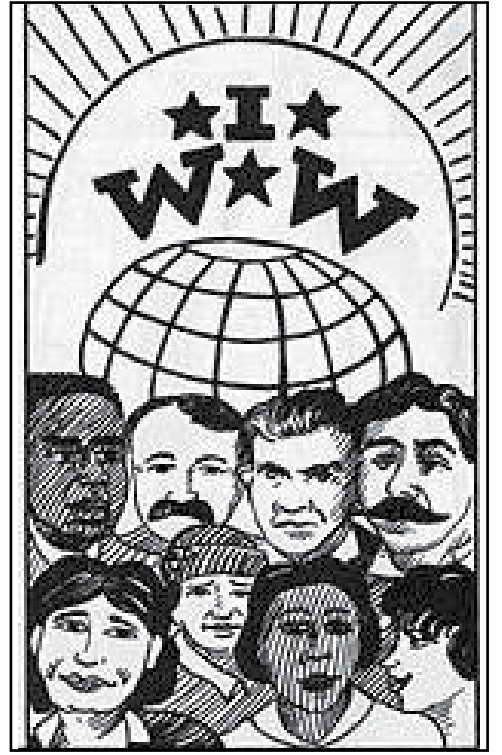
Creating a Wobbly Workplace Culture

Many of our co-workers possess the qualities and characteristics of social leadership just described. But becoming a social leader is only part of the process. While some social leaders aim to rise “from the ranks,” Wobblies aim to rise “with the ranks.” Thus, while working to establish oneself in the workplace and beginning to build a clandestine committee, Wobbly social leaders should aim to influence the culture on the job.

Building class solidarity is a dialectical process. Within the workforce, a Wobbly should seek to eliminate divisions that hinder class solidarity like racism, patriarchy, and heteronormativity by engaging across barriers delineated by those dynamics. This takes the form of easing into informal cliques that form during breaks, attending and arranging social functions that include diverse groups of workers, and generally refusing to accept to conform to constructs that hinder solidarity. We must facilitate the seamless weaving together of the disparate social groupings that make up our work site.

Creating a class-conscious culture at work also means that Wobblies learn to see organizing at home and in the community, with co-workers, as a natural and necessary part of organizing on the job. The working class holds its power at the point of production, but our organizing (i.e. our relationships to our co-workers) can’t be limited to the confined issues and dynamics of the job site. Ruling-class exploitation extends far beyond the walls of the factory, the coffee bar, and the waterfront. The more we can show solidarity on a level that illustrates our relationship to one another as members of the working class (e.g. visiting co-workers on disability, helping them raise money to replace a stolen bike or to purchase a plane ticket to visit a deceased relative, offering to help out with childcare, etc...), drawing a connection between the reality of the wage system and the myriad effects which contribute to our collective misery, the more embedded we’ll be as class struggle social leaders.

At the same time we must seek to exacerbate antagonism between workers and bosses by illustrating the class conflict inherent in the capitalist mode of production. Everyone might have good reason to



Graphic: nycal.mayfirst.org

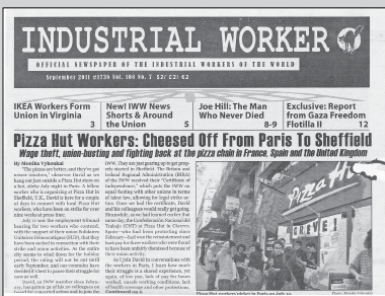
love the department manager who drinks with them after work, but it is our job to remind our co-workers that irrespective of personal relationships a boss might hold, they are still in the employing class. We should make it clear that we have no quarrel with bosses as individuals, but at the end of the day they are on the other side of the fence and are our opponents in the class war. Through agitation and education that demonstrates the character of our class, a Wobbly seeks to reform the culture of any workplace they might enter to one that is conducive to struggle.

Part of that culture already exists in some form, and solidarity will always be present in any workplace, but for those jobs in which division seems rife, organizing demands that we do more than just integrate ourselves into existing social dynamics, and take the initiative to create our own. Sometimes this means as little as engaging with groups of workers where there would normally be no interaction, even at the risk of seeming awkward. Other times it might involve ruining the credibility of bosses with a high degree of social power amongst the workers. We must be prepared to work with the terrain that we are given, but also be willing to shape that terrain to make it more accommodating.

Ultimately, salting into a campaign asks a lot from the individual Wobbly. We are forced to put away our moral qualms about groveling in front our potential employers so that we can get the job with the most strategic significance. We shun some of our innate impulses to cut every corner when our bosses aren’t looking so that the co-workers who are watching will build faith in us. We hold in our delight when our co-worker begins to connect the dots of their exploitation, because we know our response will be much more enlightening when it is part of a conversation outside of work. And we turn our frustrations into the fire that motivates us when we see our supervisors make illogical and disgusting decisions, because we know the logic of capital cannot be argued away. All of this makes our day-to-day work tiring and often lacking in short-term gratification. But we fully understand that our individual protests, our firing because of a refusal to comply, or our ostracism for our constant complaints will lead us nowhere. Yet by going in through the back door, demonstrating our reliability, and developing strong relationships we lay the foundation for a struggle in which the ranks shall finally rise.

Recomposition

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by and for wobblies.
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IWW Report From The 30th SAC Congress



International delegates at the 30th congress of SAC. Photo: libcom.org

By X369425

The IWW Norway General Membership Branch (GMB) was invited to send a delegation to the 30th congress of the Sveriges Arbetares Centralorganisation (SAC, or the Central Organization of the Workers of Sweden), in Gävle, Sweden, on Sept. 27-30. International guests were invited to attend the first two days.

Other than the IWW, members from the Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT) of Spain and Die Freie Arbeiterinnen- und Arbeiter Union (FAU-IAA) of Germany also attended. The International Workers Association (IAA/IWA) banished the SAC several years ago and has since not maintained much contact. The FAU-IAA and SAC are seemingly maintaining a friendly relationship, which is promising for the future of syndicalism in Europe.

The town of Gävle is the birthplace of our very own Joe Hill (born Joel Emmanuel Hägglund), and much of the social part of the congress took place in the Joe Hill Museum, which is the house where Joe Hill grew up. The house is now a museum maintained by the SAC. The house is full of IWW items and books, and definitely sets the mood for a syndicalist union congress. The museum gracefully decided to donate a large bag of books on Joe Hill to the IWW in Norway, and we now have a mobile library for members! The fellow workers at the museum also made it clear that the IWW would always be welcome to use the house, and that members of the SAC would be happy to help with planning and accommodation should we decide to have a convention or

meeting there.

Amalia Alvarez, from the SAC international committee, introduced the IWW delegates to some of the SAC delegates and the international guests and made sure the stay was great. The SAC provided excellent food and housing.

The congress itself dealt not so much with international issues, but mostly with internal and structural affairs. One of the cases was a discussion on the definition of syndicalism in the SAC declaration of principles. In 2009, the congress decided that syndicalism be defined as a fighting tradition of the working class, removing part of the definition that identified it as an ideology. The proposition was to take back the word "ideology" in the definition. The proposition failed. Never the less, the SAC still defines itself clearly in the syndicalist tradition, and has a structural likeness to the IWW. Other than that, there were some cases pertaining to internal democracy, and propositions intended to increase membership influence.

For those of you that are not familiar with the SAC: it was founded in 1910 based on the Confédération générale du travail (CGT) in France and the IWW. Their structure is similar to the IWW's industrial unionism, except that members are not direct members of the SAC, but direct members of an industrial union branch or general membership branch that is connected to the SAC. There are approximately 7,000 members in good standing, and the 2012 congress devoted itself to increasing membership radically in the next 10-20 years.

Uganda IWW Launches Project Thunder

From the Uganda IWW

Project Thunder is as the name implies. In this project we, the Uganda IWW, intend to expose the rot, the brutal and cruel conditions under which most Ugandan workers operate.

The project will involve making a film documenting workers at their places of work. Where this is not possible, workers will be invited to the office of the Regional Organizing Committee of the Ugandan IWW so they can tell their story. Photographs will also be gathered when workers fill out questionnaires.

During the process, union members on bicycles will distribute IWW materials, in both print and electronic form, to the institutes of higher learning and the secondary school libraries in and around the municipality of Kabale.

Additionally, we plan to hold seminar and discussions and there will be radio announcements on two major stations, Freedom Radio and Voice of Kigezi, to promote the project.

Project Thunder will be looking into private and state employers who: torture and beat workers; rape women and girls; don't pay workers their salaries, wages, allowances and or who do so late; segregate and mistreat workers based on grounds



Photo: Uganda IWW
FWs Martin and Justus.

of sex, sexual orientation, tribal, racial, religious or political ties; don't provide facilities for the disabled; discriminate against workers because of their health status, in particular those with AIDS; use paid or unpaid child labor; don't give sick and maternity leave to workers or when they do so,

cut their salaries; blackmail or defame employees so as to deny them their rights, especially demanding sexual favors to receive a job or salary; don't provide adequate safety gear or who do ignore health and safety requirements; and deny workers the freedom of speech, association and expression.

The Uganda IWW is currently accepting donations to complete this important task. Please email uganda@iww.org to make a donation to make Project Thunder a reality, or visit our website: <http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/269610>.

You can also help us by telling your friends, co-workers, about our campaign as well as using social networks to promote our work.

Special thanks go to Fellow Worker Martin of Portland, Ore., for granting permission to use the above photo where he appears with Fellow Worker Justus from the Uganda IWW in Kabale.

Revolt Of The iPhone Wage Slaves In China

By John Kalwaic

There have been two major incidents of unrest at the Apple Inc.'s outsourced sweatshops in China. Apple was under fire from humanitarian organizations for the use of child labor and bad working conditions for its thousand of employees who work in plants such as Foxconn. In many cases, employees work nearly all day and sleep in communal bunk beds. On Sept. 23, a riot broke out at one of the Foxconn factories in Taiyuan, Shanxi, that manufactures prod-



Police car overturned by workers. Photo: libcom.org

ucts for Apple and Sony. Around 2,000 workers took part in the riot as thousands of others looked on. Rioters smashed store windows, set fires on the street, overturned police cars and demolished company fences. Around 5,000 police were sent to quell the riot but did not manage to until the next day. Foxconn stated that the riot started as a dispute between workers from different provinces. But workers paint a different picture. Many state that it started when the security guards intervened between two fighting workers and then ruthlessly beat them; other workers joined against the security guards and the revolt grew from there. Many underlying causes for the riot include long hours, bad conditions and the company making workers go further inland where wages are even lower than in the coastal boomtowns. Later, on Oct. 5, workers in the Foxconn

factory in Zhengzhou, Henan, went on strike. The conditions at the Zhengzhou plant prompted the strike, as did the lack of training, which many have sighted for the lack of quality and durability in the new iPhone 5 the workers were assembling. The only Chinese union, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), is a government controlled union and cannot go on strike. The ACFTU always sides with the government and the employers, so many strikes are spontaneous and illegal. The new generation of migrant workers in China often dislikes the low wages and repetitive work.

For more information on other incidents of unrest at Foxconn and other companies earlier this year, visit: <http://chinalaborwatch.org>.

With files from Libcom.org and the New York Times.

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