

# INDUSTRIAL WORKER

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**Counterpoint:**  
**Contractualism Should**  
**Be Avoided** 4

**Special: Miners'**  
**Struggles & British**  
**Syndicalism** 6-7

**Organizing: Life And**  
**Labor In The Day**  
**Labor Industry** 8

**Obituaries: Farewell**  
**FWs Justin Vitiello &**  
**Mick Renwick** 11

## Bakers Rising: NYC IWW Bakery Workers Fight For Better Jobs

By Rebecca Hayes

On a blustery November morning before Thanksgiving 2013, new IWW members—a diverse group of bakers at Amy's Bread—kicked off an organizing campaign by marching to the site of the prominent food factory in Queens, N.Y., to voice their demands. Amy's Bread supplies many of the city's most exclusive markets, restaurants and grocery stores. The company is enjoying enormous success with an image of responsibility, sustainability, and community orientation. Now, after many long months of organizing in secret, the workers and their allies are joining together to ask Amy's Bread to live up to their promises.

In contrast to the company's line, these workers need to work two or even three jobs to survive. Even under the company's Affordable Care Act-compliant plan, workers can't begin to afford health benefits for their families. Bakery worker Ana Rico said the company's insurance plan would cost "about half of [her] check," given her

wage of \$10.50 an hour. Advancement decisions are completely arbitrary and favoritism is rampant. The workers face degrading treatment from managers, with immigrants and people of color bearing the brunt of it. Workers are pushed to work at unsafe speeds and threatened with the loss of work days if they resist. Broken machines go unfixed. Rico reported workers are "washing hundreds of baking trays by hand each shift because the company refuses to make basic equipment repairs." In her own words, she is "organizing for common-sense respect."

The workers' campaign seeks regular raises so they can live on the pay they earn, afford health care and get respect from management every day. At the kickoff in November, in spite of freezing temperatures, a large group of supporters, including many IWW members, turned out to rally around the workers and accompany them as they delivered a petition to the company with their demands. Activists

Continued on 6



Amy's Bread workers march in Queens on Nov. 25.

Photo: brandworkers.org

## Police Brutality At IWW Picket In Boston

By Geoff Carens

The *Insomnia Cookies* campaign rages on. Workers went on strike in August 2013 and joined the IWW, protesting sub-minimum wages and lousy working conditions. They demanded \$15 per hour, health care, and that management not interfere with union organizing. All four strikers were summarily fired. Ever since then, the Boston



Cops attack *Insomnia* picket on Nov. 14. Photo: FW Le Le Lechat

IWW has waged a relentless campaign of pickets, legal charges and publicity. We've picketed stores at least 10 times, made a point of visiting them regularly and talking to workers about the union, and worked with student allies at Harvard and Boston University to depress cookie sales, with significant success! Sales are down, but the company has been using the forces

of the state to try to crush our campaign. There has been a largely disproportionate cop presence at our pickets in Cambridge for months as well as efforts to intimidate picketers.

On Nov. 14, 2013, the cops showed up in force. A Harvard University police van waited across the street from the store.

Continued on 7

## Starbucks Workers Take Global Action

From the IWW Starbucks Workers Union

Workers and their allies at Starbucks and its suppliers hit the streets on the week of Nov. 24, 2013, to demand that company CEO Howard Schultz practice what he preaches: respect workers at his company and at suppliers. In the wake of a report by "24/7 Wall Street," naming Starbucks as one of the top 10 American poverty-wage employers, a global day of action on Nov.



Starbucks action in Kassel, Germany.

Photo: Kassel IWW

25 united factory workers who make Starbucks' trademark cups with baristas across the world who fill the cups with caffeine and sugar concoctions. Actions in 15 to 20 cities highlighted the hypocrisy of Schultz, who has drawn criticism for repeatedly forcing workers to advance his political agenda under the "come together" slogan, while busting unions when his own employees "came together" for a voice on the job, and sourcing from companies that do the same.

"Pactiv in Stockton, Calif., makes cups and packaging for Starbucks and fast food companies. Starbucks has the power to stop Pactiv from cutting our wages and benefits and threatening our middle class way of life. They need to ensure that all workers at its stores and suppliers are paid a living wage and treated fairly. We are 'coming together' to ask Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz for help. And we will keep doing what it takes to defend workers' rights at Starbucks and its suppliers," said Casey Freeman, President of the Pactiv Union in Stockton.

"Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz is part of the problem in America. He gobbled up \$28.9 million in pay last year alone while we baristas made less than \$9 an hour on average, even though we

produced over \$1.4 billion in profit for the company. So we're 'coming together' on our own to ask him to spread the wealth—create good jobs at Starbucks and insist on fairness at its suppliers," said Samantha Cole, a barista and member of the IWW Starbucks Workers Union.

The coalition unites the manufacturing workers at Pactiv who make Starbucks cups in Stockton and are fighting cuts to pay and benefits along with Chilean baristas who recently struck to bring Starbucks into compliance with collective bargaining law, and U.S. baristas who are demanding fair pay, consistent scheduling, and an end to understaffing at the chain. The workers are members of four different independent unions and a workers' center—the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers (AWPPW), Sindicato de Starbucks Chile and the IWW Starbucks Workers Union.

"We have a message for the American people. The corporate elites who led us into the economic crisis of the past six years will not be the people who will lead us back out. We need to come together as workers, for workers, to fight for a better life for everyone," said Greg Jones of the AWPPW. "Our movement is growing. This is just the beginning."

Read more on page 5

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# AmeriCorps Workers Should Be Employees, Not "Volunteers"

By Alex Lotorto

*We've heard the working conditions at Walmart and fast-food jobs were bad, but have you heard about AmeriCorps? Check out this email that IWW delegate Alex Lotorto sent to a Public Allies' fundraiser (Public Allies is an AmeriCorps program).*

Hello,

As an alumni of Public Allies and during my time in the program, I became very aware of the ambiguous employment status of Public Allies and AmeriCorps members at large. I've concluded AmeriCorps workers need to be classified as employees and given the rights of employees for me to support the program vocally or financially.

Currently, the only rights under labor law afforded to AmeriCorps workers are the Family Medical Leave Act and Workers' Compensation. Rights that are denied include harassment and discrimination protection by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) protection, the right to form a union, the right to unemployment compensation, and the right to access state labor departments to resolve wage

disputes and harassment at the state level.

This problem stems from a single clause in the National and Community Service Act, which states that AmeriCorps members will not be considered federal employees [SEC 199M (b)(1)]. In addition, courts hearing cases about worker misclassification in regard to AmeriCorps have stated, in the instance of unemployment compensation, that states can afford members their rights, but AmeriCorps members are not protected federally [US DOL 1995].

A simple re-writing of that clause would provide AmeriCorps workers with hard-fought-for workplace rights. With 75,000 AmeriCorps members participating every year, surely there are instances of harassment or workplace hazards that should be reported to the EEOC or OSHA. Surely workers should enjoy the basic protections of the National Labor Relations Act and Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which allow unionization. AmeriCorps workers should be able to access unemployment compensation at the end of their terms when they are laid off due to lack of work, just like any construction trades worker or temp worker can.

I have witnessed and experienced instances of injustice due to this misclassification. It's something high on my list of concerns for my generation. The scenario contributes to the larger narrative regarding "millennials" being subject to job insecurity through a terrible job market and common labor practices like unpaid internships, canvassing for a commission, independent contractor status, and working on political campaigns. A simple classification as "employee" may only provide marginal improvement in the working conditions of AmeriCorps, but it would transform the narrative and trajectory of injustice for young people.

We live in an age in which we condemn Walmart and fast-food companies for their working conditions, yet many people who consider themselves leftists turn a blind eye to what's going on in one of their most beloved programs: AmeriCorps. In fact, a worker at Walmart or McDonald's enjoys more workplace protections and job security than a 20-something AmeriCorps worker.

Please consider making this employee misclassification issue a priority before seeking my support again. Thank you.

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# Rank & File Organizing Independent Truckers Make Their Voices Heard At Port Of Oakland

By Jonathan Nack, *Indybay*

Independent truckers staged a job action that slowed work at the Port of Oakland on Wednesday, Nov. 27, 2013. It was the truckers' third job action since August.

The Port of Oakland Truckers Association (POTA) called for a strike at Stevedoring Services of America's (SSA) terminal, one of the largest and busiest at the Port. In a press release, POTA said the strike was called, "in protest of unsafe working conditions and unfair labor practices by terminal owners and Port of Oakland management."

Picketers began gathering in the darkness before 5 a.m. Approximately 100 independent truckers, many sporting their POTA shirts, were joined by at least that many community and labor supporters at the entrances of the SSA terminal.

One picket sign read, "Don't make Truckers Pay the Bill," another said, "CARB Extend the Deadline." These signs are references to the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) regulation that requires all truck engines manufactured before 2007 to be upgraded to meet air quality standards.

One trucker estimated the cost of the required upgrades at between \$60,000 and \$80,000 per truck and said many truck drivers can't afford it.

Profit margins for independent truckers are notoriously small. Many independents are struggling. Many others go under.

It's such a difficult way to make a living that companies are constantly looking for more independents, as evidenced by the many signs hanging from fences of the Port advertising for them by companies such as P&R Trucking, Lengner & Sons and Mutual Express Company.

Other picket signs on Wednesday read, "Long lines = Bad air," and "Community and Truckers United." These referred to the huge problem of bad air quality at the Port. Air pollution affects not only everyone who works at the Port, but surrounding communities in West Oakland, which

have high rates of cancer and asthma. Picketers from the community supported POTA's demands because they agreed it was unfair to put the burden on independent truckers.

It was the bad air at the Port that caused the CARB to set more stringent regulations on diesel engines. POTA says many independent truckers can't afford the upgrades. With trucking dispatch companies and the Port making huge profits, truckers say these wealthy institutions should pay for the upgrades, not them.

Most of the corporate media's coverage of the Nov. 27 action at the Port emphasized the fact that POTA is protesting the CARB's regulation and is demanding at least a one-year delay in the deadline. The mainstream media coverage all but implied that truckers don't care about the air quality. This is obviously untrue. The truckers are among those most affected by the bad air at the Port. The issue is not about upgrading diesel engines, it's about who should pay for it.

POTA is also pressing for additional pay—a congestion fee—when they are forced to wait at the Port for a load for reasons beyond the truckers' control. Idling and waiting due to inefficiency at the Port is another major cause of air pollution.

Accounts of the impact of the job action varied sharply. The *San Francisco Business Times* reported that the Port management said that demonstrators were cleared from SSA Terminals by 9 a.m. and that no other port terminals were affected. POTA claimed truck traffic was down by 90 percent.

POTA issued a press release mid-day on Nov. 27 providing a detailed description of the morning's action (see <http://oaklandporttruckers.wordpress.com/2013/11/27/mid-day-press-release-from-port-truckers/>).

POTA reported, "Primary pickets were set up at the four SSA terminal gates beginning at 5 a.m., but due to violent police action, lines began migrating between gates to prevent arrest and detainment

of picketers. At least one person picketing was struck by the vehicle of a terminal employee crossing the picket line, and as of 10:30 a.m., there were five arrests. Those arrested were cited and released. One police officer was injured when a car crossing the truckers' picket line ran over his foot."

There was no violence by picketers. *Indybay.org* reported that there were 50 Oakland police officers on the scene.

"The police were pushing us off the picket lines even though the judge said it's illegal. After last time, when they hit people with batons, people were afraid, but they kept moving to hold the lines," said local trucker Jose Gomez.

POTA's press release said, "Some truckers who crossed picket lines today claimed they faced retaliation from their companies. During the last work stoppage, notoriously bad trucking dispatch company GSC charged their drivers illegal demurrage fees for honoring picket lines. When drivers refused to pay, they found deductions in their pay checks. While some long-distance truckers and employee drivers crossed picket lines, the vast majority of independent contractor truckers picketed or refused to take loads today."

"At 10 a.m. most of the supporters, media and police trickled out, while more truckers gathered at the primary SSA trucker entrance and resumed pickets on their own. Without the heavy police presence that accompanied activists and supporters, they were able to hold the picket lines at SSA," according to POTA's press release.

"When the local drivers won't work, the Port won't work. Even if we are not the majority group of truckers servicing the port, we do the majority of the work," said Roberto Ruiz, another local driver.

Part of the independent truckers' action was not as effective as planned. Members of the International Longshore



Picketers block terminal entrance. Photo: *indybay.org*

and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 crossed the picket line at the SSA terminal. POTA was disappointed that Local 10 didn't honor the picket lines.

It was a surprising response from Local 10, which has historically honored picket lines in support of progressive struggles. It was particularly surprising, since Local 10's membership meeting had voted to honor all POTA picket lines.

According to Stan Woods, a member of ILWU Local 6 who attended Local 10's membership meeting as an observer, the membership had voted 73-to-39 to honor POTA picket lines. It was hotly debated. There were strong feelings on both sides. A contingent from POTA attended the union's meeting and Frank Adams of POTA spoke at the meeting. In the end, the union's membership voted to act in solidarity with POTA by honoring their picket lines, according to Woods.

Members of Local 10 said they called a union telephone recording daily and that, on Nov. 27, this recording told them to go to work. One member claimed that the membership's vote to honor the picket line was not followed because, "the membership was misled. These guys are not union, they [POTA] said they'll never go union."

There were some of the independent truckers who did work the Port on Nov. 27 who were nevertheless supportive of POTA's protest.

Baijer Singh told KTVU News that he didn't join the job action because he couldn't afford to. "I need to pay my bills," Singh told KTVU. Singh said he believes the work action is important because the Port of Oakland "is not listening" to the truckers' concerns. Singh said he and other truckers often have to wait up to five hours to pick up loads at the Port and they aren't compensated for the time they spend waiting.

For more information on POTA, visit: <http://www.oaklandporttruckers.wordpress.com>. For more information on Port Truckers Solidarity, visit: <http://www.solidarityinmotion.org>, <http://facebook.com/pages/Port-Truckers-Solidarity> and <http://facebook.com/Transportation-WorkersSolidarityCommittee>.

*This piece originally appeared on [Indybay.org](http://Indybay.org) and was reprinted with permission via the San Francisco Bay Area Independent Media Center copyright policy.*

## IWW Constitution Preamble

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

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

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

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

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

## Join the IWW Today

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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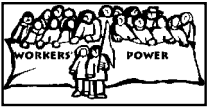
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## When Organizing Your Workplace Feels Utterly Impossible

By **Liberte Locke**

You've gotten your red card, attended several organizer trainings, countless branch meetings and union socials. You've gone to events where you have heard organizers tell their stories and have subscribed to their blogs, Facebook pages and Twitter feeds. You've read all the labor books you can find. You've signed every petition and attended every picket. All this and you still feel like everything is two steps forward and six steps back in your workplace organizing. You want to proudly work wearing that union label. You want success for the big reasons: capitalism keeps us enslaved. And for the smaller reasons that nag you in your sleep: people who matter to you think you're ridiculous for doing any of this. Sharing victories adds legitimacy.

We have to believe that we can do this work. We have to know that as fact. We all have our feelings of isolation in this world: feeling not good enough, that our bodies or minds aren't right, and that we made the wrong choices. We have lifelong battles to accept ourselves or to ignore how much we don't accept ourselves. Confidence is not something focused on in U.S. culture. This society relies on making you not feel good enough in order to push you into spending your last dime on something that you believe can make you stronger, prettier, smarter or sexier.

Then there's the very nature of subservient work: you're placed into a job with "superiors" that are younger than you (I'm 31 and have a 19-year-old supervisor) or have less experience than you. We're told that these people are inherently worth more than we are to the job and the world in general. We're supposed to follow work orders without question, often to the point of injury or death. You have been told that you are worth little but actually believe in your bones that you are worth something. You have contributions to make to the world through your community, your family, and your job(s). You can act against capitalism. It serves the bosses to hate ourselves.

In order to get our co-workers to fight together, we have to believe we can. The majority of your co-workers, like you, have had a lifetime of having their self-esteem chipped away at. We have been broken down by authority figures our whole lives, be they police, classmates, housemates, intimate partners, parents, teachers, social workers and our bosses. We're broken and molded into participating in this system that we never chose. We work ourselves to death in order to buy goods and services

that we then use to keep ourselves functioning enough to keep working. Working students are working their way through school in order to get that next job, if careers even exist anymore. They are often disheartened to learn that all the crap that they went through at their old job exists at their new one. For folks that grew up poor, confidence is much harder to come by. We grew up watching our parents struggle. We promised ourselves and them that we would find a path out of this poverty and that we would take them with us. We feel guilty for not doing better by ourselves and by our families. We swear to everyone that we'll work hard and it will "pay off." We pull hard at our bootstraps to watch the system snip the line time and again and we keep pulling.

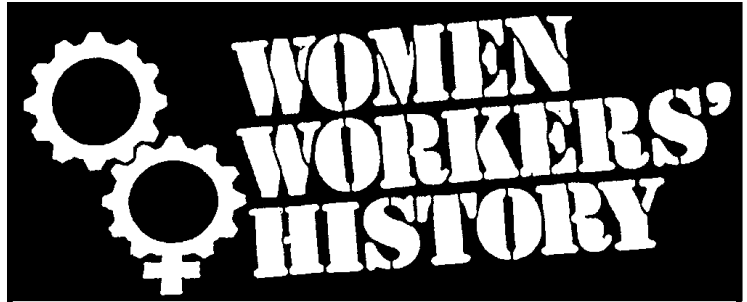
This cycle can end with us. We have to believe. We keep looking up for instruction when we should be looking to those at our side: our neighbors, our friends, and our co-workers. Their ideas, like ours, are worthwhile. If you don't believe you are capable of organizing then your co-workers won't believe it either.

When I came into the IWW Starbucks Workers Union I had some large shoes to fill. I was afraid. I felt alone and ill-prepared. For the first couple of years of organizing most of my actions were decided by asking myself what I felt could turn into a "badass story." Will I be the mouse or the lion? I don't care about how arrogant that sounds. I needed some arrogance to counter my low self-esteem.

I also don't care because it worked. I found myself shaking when talking to the boss. I was saying things I knew we weren't "allowed" to say and refusing to be mistreated. These showdowns with bosses led to getting what I wanted on the job. Once a busser overheard a district manager say that they needed to make sure the union knew "whose house this is." The shop committee then started declaring at work, "Whose house is this? This is our house." We made constant references to the bosses being "guests in our home." It was a huge confidence-builder.

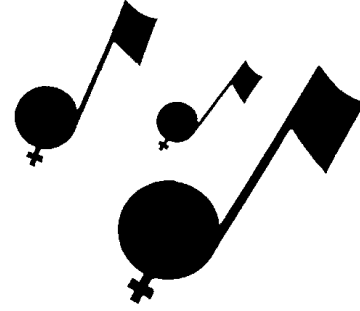
Walk into your job like you own it. It can't operate without you. It's important to exude confidence, even if you don't feel confident. Try, even if it feels hopeless, because without the effort you've accepted defeat. And if you feel unable, then what hope do you have to offer your co-workers?

Workers have been organizing in various forms for hundreds of years. Many of them haven't had the resources and support you can have access to in the IWW. If they could, and can, do it, then so can you.



### Chapter 69: Strike Victory in Passaic

In early March 1926 the vast majority of the 17,000 workers employed in the woolen mills of Passaic, Garfield and Lodi, N.J. were on strike. Under the leadership of their United Front Committee, they demanded a wage increase, return of the money taken in the wage cut, a 40-hour week and time and one-half for overtime, decent sanitary conditions, no discrimination against union members and recognition of the union.



The mass meetings and huge daily, singing picket lines were new to the labor movement. "The long, singing line became a regular feature of the strike, creating an atmosphere and a feeling of unity and power," wrote historian Philip Foner. "The strikers' families were drawn into all of the activity. Many of the women, of course, worked in the mills, but even those who did not joined their husbands on the picket line. Women served on all committees and a number of them were picket captains."

Strikers faced police brutality—including use of tear-gas bombs and firehoses—as well as the anti-union terrorism of a so-called "Citizens' Committee." The women held their ground and during the long strike developed strong leadership. And they had the help of experienced organizers like Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and "Mother" Ella Reeve Bloor.

The owners refused to deal with the United Front Committee. Then in August strike leader Alex Weisbord, a Communist, withdrew and by agreement leadership passed to the United Textile Workers. The owners who wouldn't negotiate with radicals decided they couldn't bargain with a moderate union either. But in December, 321 days after the strike began, Botany Worsted Mills agreed to restoration of the wages cut and recognition of the union. Other mills followed suit. The workers had won.

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Graphic: Mike Konopacki

## Contractualism Should Be Avoided

By **Juan Conatz**

This is in response to FW Matt Muchowski's article titled "The Contract As A Tactic," which appeared on page 4 of the December 2013 *Industrial Worker*. While I disagree with most of it, this piece is the most coherent justification of contractualism for the IWW I've seen. The reasons behind going for a contract are very rarely talked about in this way, so the article is worth taking seriously and considering the author's points.

FW Muchowski correctly asserts that the IWW has a legacy of no contracts; however, he attributes this to the lack of "legal structure(s) for unions to win legal recognition. On IWW.org, a similar explanation is given. This explanation is wrong, though. The IWW's views on contracts have always been more sophisticated than what the labor law of the day has been. Overall, contracts have been regarded with great suspicion. This has had little to do with the existence of "legal structures" (most of which we were against or critical of) and more to do with an analysis of what contractualism would lead to.

The author then goes on to blame the disintegrating presence of the IWW in Lawrence after the 1912 "Bread and Roses" strike on not having a contract.

This is usually what anti-Wobbly liberal and Communist Party-sympathetic labor historians say, so it's a little surprising to see this opinion expressed in the *IW*. It's also an absolutely inadequate explanation of what happened. If the ongoing presence of the IWW so relied on having a formal, legal contract with the employers, then how could Local 8—the IWW dockworkers of Philadelphia who went on strike in May 1913—exist? Local 8, for most of its era, operated without a contract. The difference between Local 8 and the textile strikers in Lawrence, however, was one of organization. The Lawrence model was to throw a supporting cast of organizers into a situation that was already on the verge of blowing up; it was a "hot shop," in other words. Local 8, on the other hand, built an organization with a purpose and from the ground up.

Local 8, along with many other non-contractual models, offers an antidote to the false and seemingly dishonest dichotomy that is often set up when talking about this issue, which is contractualism versus all-out revolution. No one who argues against or is suspicious of formal, legal agreements with employers is necessarily drawing up blueprints for the barricades.

Similarly, Muchowski frames anti-

contractualism as "ideological" while what he advocates is not. Suggesting that a position is "ideological" and therefore extreme or irrational is a common rhetorical trick in politics, and it works well as it appeals to what is assumed to be "common sense." But just because it's a neat and effective trick does not mean that what it is expressing is true. The use of ideology, or examples of it, as a swear word, means that it is something that is based on beliefs rather than reality or experience. But being against or suspicious of contractualism is not merely "ideological." It has a long history in the radical labor movement, full of examples and historical lineage. Contractualism, on the other hand, has only hypothetical scenarios and "what if" possibilities, divorced from any concrete reality.

Solidarity unionism, for example, can be traced all the way back to the old IWW, through the rank-and-file members of militant Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) locals, to labor radicals like Martin Glaberman and Stan Weir (who saw clearly the downside of contractualism), on through the New Left labor history revisionists who rejected the institutional and top-down accounts of labor movements, and finally to the numerous conversations that resulted in the modern-day IWW creating our own

model of what solidarity unionism could be. Arguments for contractualism have no similar basis rooted in actual experiences of radical labor.

Many of the activities and tasks the article lists as being possible with a contract are not inherent to that model. Spreading our views, finding out our co-workers' issues and building for demands are just a part of organizing and happens in every IWW campaign worth its salt.

Lastly, FW Muchowski addresses the problematic issue of limitations placed on the union in contracts. His solution to this is "we don't have to agree to anything we don't want to." But a century of contractualism has established no-strike clauses, management rights clauses and disempowering grievance procedures as the norms. I would argue that after the point in which it is obvious the union has won or is going to win, these are the most important issues for the employer, exceeding wages and benefits. To exclude these things in a contract would take serious organization within the workplace. If you do have the capacity to impose these sorts of demands, which are expected minimum norms for contracts, then why have a contract at all? With that type of power we can have the ability to impose a lot without getting caught up in state-enforced limitations.

**Wobbly & North American News**

**Upstate N.Y. Wobs Show Solidarity On Black Friday**

By Sourdough Slim

The Upstate New York General Membership Branch (GMB) of the IWW supported and participated in one of the 1,500 Black Friday protests on Nov. 29, 2013 outside Albany, N.Y. About 80 local activists were stationed on the sidewalk at the entrance to the Glenmont Walmart, voicing support for the OUR Walmart campaign to get the world's largest retailer to raise wages to a target of \$15 per hour. They also had messages of solidarity for the garment workers who toil at starvation wages in Bangladesh and other countries to supply the big box store with cheap clothes.

On a clear cold day after Thanksgiving, the Capital District Area Labor Federation (AFL-CIO), Capital District Labor-Religion Coalition, Solidarity Committee of the Capital District and supporters from about two dozen local unions, including the IWW, spent 90 minutes shouting "Walmart, you can't hide," and "Treat your workers like you should." Picket captains Doug Bullock of the Solidarity Committee and Greg Giorgio of the Upstate N.Y. GMB prompted the crowd with a twin bullhorn attack that also drew a great deal of honking support from passing motorists on busy Route 9W.

Giorgio's placard featured a poster with "Living Wage Now" written across the top. This came from Bangladesh's militant National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF)—a union with first-hand knowledge of Walmart's complicity in factory safety and labor violations like the Tazreen and Rana Plaza disasters of the past year responsible for 1,500 deaths. "NGWF - IWW" was written at the bottom of the poster in black and red.

The Capital District Area Labor Federation's Dan Curtis told WNYT News-Channel 13's cameras that this action was coupled with the move to give Walmart a clear message at 1,500 of their stores that,



**Upstate N.Y. Wobs.** Photo: K. Provencher paying low wages, providing lousy benefits and firing union supporters is not acceptable. "How many more workers have to die in Bangladesh in factories where the contractors like Walmart cut and run over any grievances?" he asked reporters.

At the picket, the IWW passed out our *Black Cat Moan* anti-sweatshop newsletter, coordinated and produced through efforts of the union's Bangladesh working group.

A series of actions had taken place this past year in Boston, Pittsburgh, Albany, and other locations to support the NGWF and the garment workers of Bangladesh.

And while a new accord to raise the minimum textile sector wage to the equivalent of \$68 per month was passed in the days leading up to Black Friday, it still does not provide a real living wage. Mainstream press accounts of the pact made it seem like a simplistic issue of a pay raise being a win; leave it at that. The *Black Cat Moan* editorial cover story said, "Not that fast. There is more to this story than a small pay increase."

**Support For Political Prisoner Jeremy Hammond**

By Ashley Jackson

On the morning of Nov. 15, 2013 in New York City, 28-year-old hacktivist Jeremy Hammond was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison for violation of the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act. He used his computer skills to hack into and release over 5 million files of the private security firm Strategic Forecasting, Inc., or "Stratfor," exposing corporate and government spying on activists domestically and abroad, amongst other discoveries.

Existing prisoner support groups Portland Anarchist Black Cross, Oregon Jericho, Radical Prisoner Support Portland and the newly-formed Portland IWW General Defense Committee Local 1 had already planned a benefit for him the next evening at The Red and Black Cafe. There was music by Irie Idea, Intentional Overtones and Years of Lead, as well as a raffle and readings of Jeremy's own words in his plea and sentencing statements.

"The government celebrates my conviction and imprisonment, hoping that it will close the door on the full story. I took responsibility for my actions, by pleading guilty, but when will the government be made to answer for its crimes?" — quoted from Jeremy's sentencing statement.

What happened to Jeremy comes as no shock to those organizing in their communities; it's a risk that is always there. Government repression comes in many forms including surveillance/monitoring and incarceration. Jeremy uncovered the truth, revealing the relationship between the government and private intelligence. Inspired by the actions of Chelsea Manning, he felt that he had the skills and obligation to do something. This is not just inspiring but courageous. Like the old saying "They're in there for us, we're out here for them," let's also find inspiration in the



**Jeremy Hammond.** Graphic: Molly Crabapple

actions of those who are locked away and hope that one day we can free them from their cages into a better world.

Thanks to all the amazing people in our community who donated; we raised \$350, which went directly into Jeremy's commissary account! It was an event we wish we didn't have to hold. But a night we know Jeremy would have liked.

Ten years is a long time, and Jeremy is going to need our support, so here's what YOU can do: write him a letter, share his story and donate to his defense fund. Most importantly: DON'T FORGET ABOUT JEREMY HAMMOND!

For information on where to send your letter, please visit: <http://www.freejeremy.net>.

Donations can be made online at <http://www.wepay.com/donations/jeremy-hammond-defense>, or make checks payable to: "National Lawyers Guild Foundation, Memo: JHDC" and send them to: JHDC % NLG, 132 Nassau St., RM 922, New York, NY 10038.

**Miami IWW Solidarity With Starbucks Workers**

By the Miami IWW

Recently, workers employed by the Pactiv Corporation and members of the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers Local 83, reached out to the IWW and the affiliated Starbucks Workers Union for solidarity. Pactiv is one of the primary suppliers of cups and paper products for Starbucks and the new management is planning on significantly cutting the wages and benefits of its employees. So on Sunday, Nov. 24, 2013, a few of members of the Miami IWW and the IWW Starbucks Workers Union handed out flyers in front of a downtown Starbucks and at the Miami Book Fair International located at the Wolfson Campus of Miami Dade College Wolfson Campus. We also had the opportunity to educate people about the shady stuff surrounding Starbucks and to show our support for our fellow workers on the west coast.

It is important to be creating and to



Photo: [iwwmiami.wordpress.com](http://iwwmiami.wordpress.com)

be involved in these actions, no matter how big or small, because it is the IWW's motto, "An injury to one is an injury to all," that guides us. If workers anywhere are having an issue, then it becomes an issue to all of us.

**Report From Starbucks Action In Vancouver**

By D.J. Alperovitz

On Nov. 25, 2013, members of the Vancouver Island General Membership Branch (GMB), after making a contribution to the baristas' tip jar, established an information picket at a high visibility and popular Starbucks in Victoria, British Columbia. During our time there we passed out 200-plus handbills, in addition to copies of the *Industrial Worker*. We effectively shut down this location with less than 15 people opting to cross our line and enter during the lunch hour. The store manager attempted to have us leave by



**Wobs picket Starbucks in Victoria.** Photo: D.J. Alperovitz

implying that we could not be there. After being made aware of the fact that not only could we be there, but that we had no intention of leaving, he questioned why we would picket the "best company in the world." Manager re-education followed.

**Railroad Workers Respond To Metro-North Derailment: "It's Time To Implement Safety Measures"**

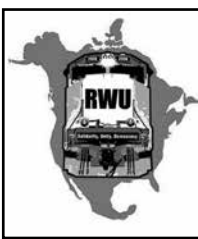
From Railroad Workers United

As the recent Metro-North passenger train wreck in New York illustrates, fatigue kills. From preliminary reports, it appears that the engineer had nodded off. This of course would not be the first time that a train crew member fell asleep. As we know, it happens all the time. In this case however, the result was catastrophic.

Sleepiness, spacing out, nodding off, zoning out, drowsiness—it is a way of life for railroad train crews. Considering the lack of scheduling in the freight industry, the 24/7 nature of the job, the lack of time off work (and harsh availability policies that keep us "in line" if and when we choose to mark off), the inability to predict the time when one will be called to work or when one will be relieved of duty, it is a wonder that there are not more tragic wrecks as a result of fatigue.

When there is a spectacular wreck like the Metro-North derailment, the immediate temptation is to blame the train's crew. But those of us in train and engine service know that there is always more to it than that. In the days and weeks to come, railroad train crews across the nation will be bombarded with "advisories," "alerts" and bulletins that beseech us to stay alert, to remain focused, and maintain our "situational awareness." Yet ironically, not a single railroad will do anything to improve train lineup predictability, grant the needed time off work to those who request it, schedule their railroad's trains, or beef up the extra boards and/or pools to ensure adequate staffing which would result in adequate rest for train crews.

The fact remains: train crews are hu-



Graphic: RWU

man beings. And as such, we make mistakes, cut corners, nod off, get distracted, zone out, forget things, get irritable, become sleepy, and fail to properly perform the task at hand, like every other human being. Even under ideal conditions we remain human and imperfect, prone to error. Therefore, we need to stop pointing fingers and laying blame each and every time there is a train wreck. Rather, we must begin to organize the workplace around human beings, taking into account all of our fallibilities.

And this means granting adequate rest between tours-of-duty, granting reasonable time off away from the workplace, and ending the practice of "subject to call" 24/7. In addition, it means implementing the technology that has been available for many years now so that if and when a train

crew does zone out, nod off, or make a mistake, it does not become a fatal mistake. But the rail carriers have historically resisted any attempt to reduce crew fatigue, and are in fact lobbying vigorously to stave off the mandated implementation of Positive Train Control (a system of functional requirements for monitoring and controlling train movements to provide increased safety). Meanwhile, trains continue to go in the ditch and lives continue to be lost. And the rail carriers simply blame the workers. And if that isn't bad enough, the rail carriers are pushing for single employee train operations to become the universal standard for the industry. While the Metro-North engineer did have additional crew members behind him, he was alone in the cab. Would this wreck have even happened if he had a partner in the cab to assist in preventing this tragedy?

## Special

# Beyond Thatcher: Militant Testimonies On Miners' Struggles And British Syndicalism From Yesterday And Today

By Fabien Delmotte

Last year, Margaret Thatcher's death reminded us of the economic policies she initiated in Britain and of her anti-union fights. In the last months of 2013, "Autre Futur" (a French syndicalist website and association) wished to go further and to conduct a series of interviews with different British unionists and syndicalists in order to get a better grasp of issues that have emerged in recent decades.

This is an abridged version of the original article. The complete version is online: <http://www.autrefutur.net/Beyond-Thatcher-militant>.

**"Today, Left is anti-working class" – Dave Douglass, former unionist miner**

**Autre Futur (AF):** My first question is a little bit ironic. This year Margaret Thatcher died. Were you sad? How did you react?

**David John Douglass (DJD):** (laughs) I wasn't sober for a whole week. The day it was announced we had parties in the street. Then, we took the Durham Area Miners' Banner down to Trafalgar Square [London], which was an anarchist-arranged thing. There were about 5,000 people at it and when the Miners' Banner arrived, the crowd went mad, so... I spoke to the crowd. Then we came back up north and we had a big socialist party and all the press was there from all of the world. So, it was very good.

**AF:** Can you introduce yourself briefly?

**DJD:** I've been a member of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) since 1963 and an official of the Miner's Union for about 24 years. I'm a retired member now. In my time, I edited the revolutionary miner's paper called *The Mineworker* in the 1970s and also a local newspaper called *Hot Gossips* which lampooned the officials of the mine, the government, etc.

I've been in all of the fights. In 1969, there was a national unofficial miners' strike in which our tendency was very active. In 1972, I was a picket organizer in the Midlands and then again in 1974. In 1984, I was the picket coordinator for Doncaster. We were involved in [the] 1992-1993 [demonstrations/movements].

**AF:** What was the link between Margaret Thatcher and miners' strikes?

**DJD:** Margaret Thatcher had adopted the monetarist policy of the free-market neocons in America. She fought for the sovereignty of the market and the logic of that was she had to smash the unions, de-nationalize and de-socialize all of the gains that have been made by the class over centuries. She knew that attacking the National Union of Mineworkers was central to this war. Sooner or later, she was going to have to take us on and we knew that too.

Thatcher said she would honor previous agreements which said that coal will still be the central energy supply. In 1980, she broke that agreement and launched an assault to close 25 mines. Most of

the mines in England were on strike and we defeated that action. They came back again in 1983, but this time, they attacked South Wales. The Welsh miners went on strike and picketing started in the rest of the country. But the executive of their union decided to call a national ballot. And we lost the national ballot. So, they allowed the mine closures. We started an overtime ban in 1983. Then, they came and took on a pit in the Yorkshire, Cortonwood Colliery. They closed the pit. So the miners went on strike, and they picketed out the other pits. We made the decision

in Yorkshire that we would strike and spread the action to the rest of the country. And everybody else joined this...except scabs in Nottingham.

And then we fought for 12 months! We didn't get the mass support that we needed. And we had to go back. But we still hadn't lost in 1984, even though they closed about 60 mines and about 70,000 jobs. We were still there. So they had to come back again in 1992 with another plan that would close almost every pit in Britain. So then we had a series of actions, mass demonstrations, mass publicity. But we still lost.

Thatcher set a propaganda committee in place which comprised all the national newspapers and news channels. She met with police, the Electricity Engineering Board, the National Coal Board and ran an entirely partisan fight using the full weight of the state and its media against the miners.

**AF:** Can you tell us more about the National Union of Mineworkers?

**DJD:** It was founded on the tradition of "One Industry, One Union." By 1984, we had about 230,000 members. But, you know, now we only have 2,000 members. The National Union of Mineworkers hasn't always been in a revolutionary tradition, it founded the Labour Party. In fact, you had a mixed tradition: social democracy, anarcho-syndicalism and Marxism-Leninism. The ballot box and the bullet.

**AF:** On a more personal level, what is your political itinerary?

**DJD:** People change definitions all the time but I have traditionally called myself an anarchist communist, in the anarcho-syndicalist tradition. I started off as an anarcho-syndicalist and an anarchist when I was 15. But I had a brief detour to Trotskyism in the 1970s. By 1984, I had come back to anarchism. I was also a founding member of Class War.

**AF:** Are there others things you would like to say about these strikes?



National Union of Mineworkers, 1984. Photo: autrefutur.net

**DJD:** That fight in 1984/1985 involved the whole community. It was partly about unions but it was about an industry, it was about a way of life. The miners were almost an ethnicity, the trade being passed down from father to son for hundreds and hundreds of years. And we had a very strong revolutionary and radical tradition. So, all of the politics of power, fuel power was about political power and not just about energy. It was about "Who rules?," since nuclear workers will not challenge governments and can't just walk off the job as we did.

**AF:** And so, now... Unfortunately, they have won that battle. What becomes of the region, the communities?

**DJD:** The communities are very, very much on their knees and in desperate social conditions. This, today, (the Durham Miners' Gala with half a million people) is an act of defiance. This gala is a traditional parade that has been going on for 167 years of miners' banners with all of the slogans and principles of trade unionism and class struggle, led by brass bands and by the women and children and people of the community. It should have died. And today is the biggest demonstration since, I think, 1945. It's an act of class defiance.

They wanted us to shuffle off our mortal coil and die quietly but we will not. The only industry that we have today is the bank industry and speculation. They destroyed manufacturing in Britain, they destroyed our ability as workers to take control back off them and run society ourselves. So now, we don't actually produce anything. People are unemployed, people are desperately poor, we have a lot of drug addiction, anti-social crimes, we have ill health, high infant mortality, low life expectancy, low education achievement, all of these things. It's similar to what they tried to do to Native Americans. They not only defeated American Indians, but they wanted to take away their identity and wipe out even the memory of who they were. You know, my father and my grandfather were in the 1926 strike, my grandfather was in the 1890 strike (laughs)! That's why this is very, very important for us. We are not prepared to forget the past, we are not prepared to give up hope in the future. We have to fight to retake control of our communities, reconnect with our real history, not the captains and the kings, not the Union Jack, that bollocks... But the people who fought for our own class interests. This is not just about nostalgia, this is about tomorrow, not about yesterday.

**AF:** In this situation, it seems there is

much to do. But what do you think about militant movements today concerning this issue?

**DJD:** I think the left, in general, is totally irrelevant. I think it's anti-working class, they hate the working class. They think we're homophobic, they think we're racists, they think we're sexists; they think we're everything that's wrong. There's no dialogue with us at all. They don't understand working-class aspirations. The left is strongly dominated by petit bourgeois liberalism, they don't understand class struggle. They're interested in liberal posturing. There's a huge gulf between us. Do you see, here, the left? They're not talking to working people here, they're just talking to each other. They don't want anybody from the outside in, because they might ask them some good questions. You know...I'm specifically talking about the so-called "far left," the Marxist-Leninist left and even most of the anarchist left. You have our tendency here: the IWW and the North-East Anarchist Federation are here...but you won't find anybody else.

**Scotland: Glasgow and "Red Clydeside"'s memory**

**AF:** I know that Glasgow's urban district is one of the most populated districts in the United Kingdom (and the biggest one in Scotland). It used to be called "Red Clydeside." What can you tell about the history of working-class and radical struggles here?

**John Couzin:** The Clydeside area, in my opinion, because of the mass of people who were living in dreadful conditions in this dense area, was home to a lot of radical movements. You've got the 1915 rent strike, which was totally spontaneous, grassroots, and not affiliated with any political parties. Mainly it was the women organizers of the rent strike who took action. It was the women who brought people onto the street. Then, Parliament introduced the Rent Restriction Act which froze the rents in the United Kingdom until six months after World War I (WWI).

You have also the Labour Withholding Committee which was during the WWI, when strikes were banned. From that was developed the Clyde Workers' Committee, which was more or less IWW-like, syndicalist. In fact, there were more strikes during the war than before and after. It was seen by militants as an opportunity!

**AF:** What were the main industries in the Glasgow Region? What is the situation now and how do unions deal with it?

**JC:** The main industry was obviously shipbuilding. Now that's gone. I don't think you can refer to Clydeside anymore as an entity. You could say it was an entity.

**Keith Millar:** In terms of employment, the public sector, clothing centres and supermarket chains are now the biggest employers. For unions, there's potential but it's very early. The trouble is that often people get sacked or move on voluntarily. Concerning protests in more recent history, we could also mention the large opposition to the Poll Tax (1990)

## Bakers Rising: NYC IWW Bakery Workers Fight For Better Jobs

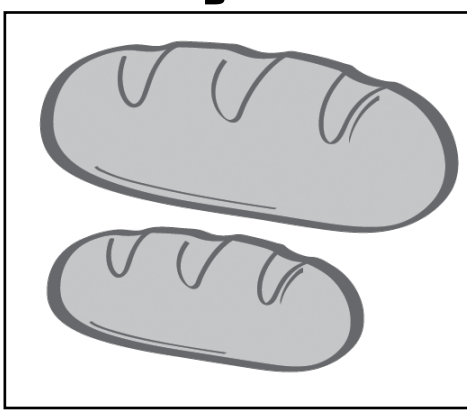
Continued from 1

touted signs with messages of unity with the workers and joined in chants outside the Queens factory. The bakers spoke to the crowd about their experiences at the factory and the necessary changes they are seeking.

The New York City IWW is partnering with workers' rights group Brandworkers in this historic operation. Brandworkers is a membership organization of workers in the local food production industry with an operating model focused on pursuing direct improvements at work and an enduring organized voice on the shop floor without recourse to recognition or formal collective bargaining.

This is the beginning of what is sure to be an exciting, but hard-fought, direct action campaign. Amy's Bread workers continue to need the involvement of passionate supporters. IWW members are encouraged to promote the link to the Amy's Bread workers' website, <http://amysbread.brandworkers.org>, via

email and social networks, and by follow-



Graphic: amysbread.brandworkers.org

ing hashtag #WhoMakesAmysBread on Twitter. Local members are encouraged to show solidarity at public demonstrations at pivotal points in the campaign. Join Amy's Bread workers in demanding that the bakery provide dignified jobs and help create a more just food system. Please visit the web-

site to learn more about the workers, this movement and ways to help.

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Special

# Beyond Thatcher: Militant Testimonies On Miners' Struggles And British Syndicalism From Yesterday And Today

and the support to miners' strikes. But I think also that, here in Scotland, there's a big distraction in the left with the Scottish independence issue.

## Unionism, unemployment and job insecurity: the example of Newcastle

**AF:** I know you are active in organizing unemployed workers. Can you tell us more about that?

**John Kelly:** Recently, Britain's largest union, Unite, established a new initiative to open our membership to unemployed people. In Newcastle, we have a good solid branch. Consequently, we believe we can promote trade union values and regain some of the influence in a community in which unions once had influence when those communities were built around industry. These people are not normally organized. So the union gives them a structure, a voice to campaign for the change they want. And they don't feel abandoned or left to their own device.

Recently, we held protests against a 1 percent increase in unemployment benefits, such as Jobseekers Allowance. We put forward slogans like, "One percent won't pay the rent," and "The banks caused the crisis, the unemployed will pay." We are really concerned about the welfare benefits issue and the benefit changes imposed on the unemployed. We have concrete activity concerning immediate problems.

**AF:** Simon, you were a unionist in education but have more recently joined Unite Community. Can you tell us why?

**Simon Galliers:** Recently, I have been protesting against the school academies program that this current government is putting in place. It makes schools independent and this has consequences on salaries, conditions, employment and special educational needs. I vigorously campaigned against that. I lost my job... But I'm engaged in everything in relation with education program that Unite Community does now.

## From London to Edinburgh: Trade unions, the IWW and current social situation in the United Kingdom

**AF:** For people who don't know your country very well, can you explain the current social situation in the United Kingdom? Can you give us, as British Wobblies, an overview of the main social issues, especially for syndicalism?

**John S.:** We can trace our situation today back to the 1970s and the birth of neoliberalism. In the 1970s union density and militancy was high. During Thatcher's years, unions were smashed or co-opted. The subsequent governments continued with the neo-liberal agenda of privatization of public services/assets, subsidies to big private interests at public expense, casualization of labor, etc. And now the coalition government sees a massive opportunity in the "financial crisis" to really remodel society once and for all.

So, we're told this is a time for austerity and to accept cuts to public spending. Actually, in education, welfare, and health,

we're just seeing the welfare state being dismantled. Official unemployment is up around 2.5 million. Meanwhile, across the board, prices have risen around 15 to 20 percent. There is a massive increase in casualization: zero-hours contracts are arguably worse than agency work, because while you are tied to an employer and must be available when they want you, you have no guaranteed hours.

More than 5 million workers do not earn a "living wage." The majority of people now considered to be living in poverty are working; they're not unemployed. The "bedroom tax" (where councils are being forced to collect council tax from families in social/council housing previously exempt because they have a spare bedroom) is hitting people really hard. Disabled people are also badly hit, being ruled "fit for work" and having benefits taken away. All this has led to suicides already.

The working class is in a chronic state of disorganization and low-confidence. The biggest movement has been the student protests in 2010. In 2011, working-class youth rioted and looted shops after police shot a black man in Tottenham. There have also been big local protest movements against hospital closures, the "bedroom tax" and other cuts, some successful (Lewisham Hospital being the most notable). Strikes have been few and far between.

**AF:** Can you introduce who the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) are in the United Kingdom, and, more generally, what trade unionism is in the British context?

**Dek Keenan (DK):** The Industrial Workers of the World are, in Great Britain, a small revolutionary industrial union. It's essentially a union with a revolutionary class-struggle approach to unionism which breaks with class collaboration, which is the dominant trade union approach. It's also against the idea of trade unions and rather emphasizes an industrial approach of all workers in one big union.

All we have in the United Kingdom is a small number of craft unions, another group of larger trade unions and then enormous unions of hundred of thousands of members. There are more than one million members in UNISON and Unite. They're all basically social democrats. Historically, the Labour Party was established by trade unions in the first part of 20th century. But obviously, the Labour Party is now a neo-liberal party. Usually, these unions are in favor of building a new Labour Party.

The IWW in the United Kingdom first existed in the 1910s. All of that didn't survive very far into the 1920s. The IWW then re-emerged in 1946, in the 1950s, briefly in late 1970s, early 1980s and then disappeared again (laughs)! But in 1990, a comrade from North America came to live here and started to promote the IWW and it very slowly took off.

Basically, in the United Kingdom, there are two different approaches. People established in mainstream unions work

at a rank-and-file level, create networks in those unions of people who want to fight back. At the same time, we have another approach where we are establishing IWW unions of people who are unorganized, the "abandoned and betrayed," people who are let down by the mainstream unions and/or who are uninterested in them.

**AF:** Dave, you're one of the founders of the Pizza Hut Workers' Union of the IWW, which was formed in Sheffield [North England] quite recently, in 2011. Can you tell us more about that?

**Dave Pike:** We formed around a collective grievance over pay. Since its creation we have grown steadily in membership and have won pay increases for delivery drivers, as well as improvements in health and safety standards.

Fast food has become a breeding ground for IWW organizers. The average age of members has helped us to appear more relevant, mid-20s being the usual age for our activists. It is hard to organize young workers, as many either have never engaged with unions, and don't even know what they are, or think unions are old-fashioned and irrelevant. What really makes unions relevant is they fight for changes that matter to young people, like improving working conditions in their workplaces, and talking in a way that doesn't try to live on the union's history, but on its relevance today.

**AF:** John, as an IWW regional organizer for the southeast of England and London, can you tell us more about the Wobblies' activities there in recent years?

**John S.:** IWW activities for several years have included supporting individual members in retail, fast food, education, healthcare and other industries, and have involved some small, limited organizing campaigns. However, in 2011, a large group of cleaners in London left their union for various reasons and formed an IWW branch. Throughout 2011 and 2012, the Cleaners Branch held wildcat strikes, noisy and militant protests and occupations and finally official strike actions, fighting for the living wage, sick pay, more hours and an end to bullying and intimidation. Others are now joining, and there are ongoing organizing drives at several sites in London, including major tourist attractions.

**AF:** Are there others unions Wobblies can feel close to in the British context today? Are there organized militant tendencies in mainstream unions?

**DK:** I suppose the only union that perhaps the IWW can have some identification with is possibly the Rail Maritime and Transport (RMT) union. It's a union independent of the Labour Party, which is militant, with syndicalists active in it. There are left networks within many of the main trade unions, which tend to be dominated by Trotskyist and left-wing



Pizza Hut picket in Sheffield, 2012. Photo: Tristan Metcalfe

groups. But we've been involved in the Civil Service Rank and File Network, an alternative, purely rank-and-file, autonomous tendency into the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS).

## University: the struggle against Dumfries Campus's closure and "social and class struggle anarchism"

**AF:** You're IWW members and were involved a few years ago in a (victorious) struggle against the closure of Dumfries campus. Can you talk to us about that?

**Marion Hersh:** Glasgow University has a campus at Dumfries and Galloway. It is very important to the local community, which is rural, and it had a lot of working-class and disabled students. A few years ago, the management proposed closing it. There was a campaign of opposition. I joined the IWW at this point, as it seemed that IWW was taking more action than the University and College Union. Eventually, management backed down. This was an important victory. However, management has continued to target the campus.

**AF:** Ben, you teach political and social philosophy in this university. I know you teach about anarchism and feel the necessity to talk about social, class-struggle anarchism. Are there kinds of anarchism which are not social?

**Benjamin Franks:** Traditionally you get so-called "anarcho-capitalists" and anarchist-communists, both being called "anarchists." Social anarchists are concerned with hierarchy, the inequalities in economic power and their social structures which anarcho-capitalists are perfectly happy with. There are different constellations of anarchism, some of which are more individualist, some of which tend towards socialism. One of the principles of social anarchism is that the individual is in part socially constructed. So, to be only concerned with our own liberation, our own happiness, our own living as pure lifestyle is insufficient for social anarchists. It's missing our necessary, dependent connectedness to others. The laws of capital is a form of exploitation and oppression. If we want to live a more fulfilled, satisfying life, we have to oppose these forms of oppression, in mutual solidarity. And this is class struggle.

All interviews conducted by Fabien Delmotte.

## Police Brutality At IWW Picket In Boston

Continued from 1

After 15 of us picketed for about 20 minutes at least 30 Cambridge cops showed up with a profusion of police vehicles including several wagons. Insomnia's manager told them we were blocking the sidewalk, which was completely untrue. The cops demanded we shut down our public address (PA) system, which we did, then tried to force us off the sidewalk in front of the store, to an area farther away which would neutralize our protest. When the police began shoving us, FW Jason Freedman objected. At least four cops jumped on him, hitting him in the face and throwing him on the trunk of a car and then on the ground. They pinned

him partially under a car, injuring his arm; Jason's face was covered with blood. When they finally dragged him away to a wagon, many of us went to bail him out. The cops shut down our legal picket, protecting and serving private property as usual. FW Jason was charged with several offenses including assaulting a cop, although the only blows were struck by the cops against Jason.

The Boston IWW refuses to be intimidated and we have since picketed a local store once again, with legal observers in attendance and no harassment or arrests. Meanwhile the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) issued a complaint against the company on Nov. 29 for illegally termi-

nating workers after they engaged in concerted activity for the purpose of collective bargaining. The NLRB has instructed the company to reinstate workers and provide back pay. So far Insomnia has refused, and the labor board has set a hearing date, which may lead to a trial of the company. After images of the police assault on Jason went up on our Boston IWW blog, we got thousands of hits over the next few days. We spread the story widely among students at Harvard and Boston University. The Boston IWW believes Insomnia's apparent marketing strategy of allowing the "student-friendly" company to be linked to police brutality is not so well-advised. We will continue to expose their union

busting and their ongoing failure to do so much as pay workers the minimum wage. Our strike/organizing campaign fund has raised over \$3,000 which has been a huge help to our struggle. Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 509 recently decided to add another \$1,000 to our organizing fund in a magnificent display of solidarity. Meanwhile, members of our branch have developed new organizing skills that will assist us in this organizing drive and future drives to follow. We've raised the IWW banner higher than it's been in Boston in a long time, and service sector employees at Insomnia and elsewhere are being attracted to the union. The struggle continues!

## Organizing

## All In A Day's Work: Life And Labor In The Day Labor Industry



Graphic: Monica Kostas

By Everett Martinez

Whether it means the arduous toil of building a house or the technical know-how required to unclog a home septic system, “day labor” is the catch-all term for an industry defined by its instability, unreliability and illegality for those who work in it. A thick veil of myths, misinformation and racism distorts the public’s understanding of day labor and inhibit the ability of labor organizers to extend solidarity to this alarmingly vulnerable segment of the working class.

I work for a small construction company in northern New Jersey. Both the company I work for and the companies we find ourselves partnering with—whose areas of work cover everything from construction to logging, landscaping, plumbing, etc.—use day labor as their main, if not only, source of labor. This article is intended to share my observations on the nature of work in the day labor industry, the relationship between laborers and their employers, and the possibilities for helping laborers to organize themselves. Hopefully this information will enable us as comrades of day laborers to provide them with the solidarity and working-class unity they deserve.

## The Working Day

Perhaps the most pervasive myth about day labor is that a laborer works for different employers every day. We tend to imagine day laborers as waiting outside of Home Depot for an employer who picks up whoever happens to be standing outside at the time. In my experience, nothing has been further from the truth: most laborers are employed by the same employer consistently, often working for the same one for years at a time.

Employment occurs on a job-by-job basis. A laborer and an employer will be in contact with each other, and the employer will contact the laborer whenever work is needed. As the term suggests, the worker is employed by day; at the end of one working day, the employer will tell the worker to be at the employer’s shop, or the employer will arrange a certain meeting place at a certain time the next day. Laborers are paid in cash at the end of each day—in my experience, laborers are paid around \$10 to \$12 per hour.

John Smith Plumbing Company, for instance—our obviously fictitious company—will get a call to unclog a family’s drain. In turn, the owner of John Smith Plumbing will call the laborer(s) he employs and arrange a time and place to pick them up. The employer drives the laborers to the job and work begins.

The main buyers of day labor are small businesses, which are most of the time owned and operated by a single person. John Smith Plumbing is owned by John Smith, who is the company’s only permanent member. He is the president, treasurer, advertiser and hiring department. He owns all of the plumbing equipment as his personal property, handles all of the advertising and networking, and in general undertakes all the administrative functions of the company.

From the standpoint of the law, John Smith is self-employed. He does not report his day laborers as employees. Thus, even though they’re employed by the same employer every day, just as someone who works at Dunkin’ Donuts is employed by Dunkin’ Donuts every day, laborers employed by John Smith enjoy no long-term benefits. There is no paid time off available to accrue after a certain period of employment, no health care coverage, and no chance for more stable employment. Moreover, if a laborer calls in sick, it is very likely that the laborer will not be called back by that employer in the future. Ironically, employers view these workers as “unreliable.”

Since the construction industries, unlike the food industry, have not been centralized into the hands of multinational corporations, any number of these neighborhood companies will be operating in the same general area. In the age of globalization and the movement of manufacturing and manual labor out of the West, this local, decentralized and labor-intensive industry is an interesting divergence from the industries Western labor organizers are used to organizing.

## Laborers &amp; Employers

One of the strangest dynamics of day labor is the incredibly casual nature of the relationship between day laborers and employers. This is not to say that day labor is not hard work or that day laborers are “friends” with their employers. Rather, the relationship between a laborer and his employer is marked by the employer undertaking tasks formal employers never do.

I have personally never witnessed an employer hire more than four laborers in one job, meaning that employers don’t communicate with their laborers as “line bosses” charged with measuring the productivity and discipline of a large workforce. On the other hand, the dynamic is much more personal: on the way from one job to the next there are personal conversations, the car radio will be on, etc. The employer and the laborer(s) usually eat meals together—the length of the workday usually includes both breakfast and lunch—and the employer will usually buy one of the meals for his laborer. Additionally, the employer often charges himself with buying personal equipment for his laborers: work gloves, boots and the like.

These seemingly benevolent gestures, taken in the context of a seemingly personal employer-employee relationship, may hinder organizing. During unionization campaigns, we often see employers try to manipulate these sorts of things: “we’re a mom-and-pop company,” “employees are part of the company,” etc.

## Day Labor: No Place in the Business Union?

The common portrayal of the day laborer is that of an undocumented Latino man, usually speaking little English, who often has a family to support. In my experience, this is by no means inaccurate; all day laborers I’ve worked with are indeed Latino men who speak little English. I can’t comment on their citizenship status but I would be inclined to assume most are not documented due to the under-the-table, undocumented nature of day labor, including the fact that employers do not report them as employees. Obviously, it is safe to assume that if day laborers had the opportunity to move to more formal, regulated employment, employers would report them as employees. One can only assume, then, that they do not have this opportunity, presumably due to their citizenship status.

The extreme vulnerability of being an undocumented worker is heightened by the mainstream labor movement’s disinterest (or inability) in helping them organize themselves. Despite the necessity of day labor to keeping our society’s infrastructure intact, a variety of factors have caused the modern labor movement to pass over the day labor industry as a potential for organizing efforts.

Day laborers have no avenue of recourse if they are victimized by their employer. Imagine that you were in this country illegally. Would you trust a government institution like the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to properly defend you against wage theft? In fact, would you even know of the NLRB, of labor laws in this country, and of how to exercise these rights? Would you trust that, upon reporting your employer to the NLRB, the NLRB wouldn’t just have you and your family deported?

When day laborers do not organize themselves, employers have total power over the conditions of laborers’ work. There is no record that a day laborer ever worked for an employer, and the employer knows a laborer will not report illegal practices. What, then, does an individual laborer do if the employer simply decides not to pay him at the end of the day? What does a laborer do if the employer pays him below minimum wage? Do laborers new to the country even know minimum wage laws for their state? What does a laborer do if the employer forces laborers to use dangerous machinery without properly instructing them how to use it or without providing them with necessary safety equipment?

## Conclusion: Potentials for Solidarity Unionism

Day labor is not conventional labor, but the IWW is certainly not a conventional union. If we are interested in helping day laborers to organize themselves, we must adopt innovative and creative tactics to respond to the unique challenges of the industry.

The first key problem is the lack of a definable workforce. As previously stated, most companies employ no more than four laborers at a time, and these laborers are not even officially employed with the company. If an individual laborer, or even a small group of them, were to refuse unsafe or unfair working conditions, the employer can easily replace them. There is no shortage of day labor, and there is no process the employer must initiate to fire a day laborer beyond not calling them back. Thus, day labor must be organized geographically, not by employer. If all the day laborers in a given area refused to work for, say, under \$10 per hour, an employer would have virtually no choice but to concede. This, I believe, is where the General Membership Branch and industrial structure of the IWW would be most effectively instituted.

Secondly, due to the state’s open hos-

tility to undocumented peoples, attempts to force concessions from employers cannot rely on state mechanisms like the NLRB. This is perhaps where the nature of day labor can be used to the laborers’ advantage: most day labor jobs are based in the construction and infrastructure industries, and these jobs have tight deadlines. You have to dig a foundation in 10 days, you have to unclog a person’s drain in an hour, etc. The employer has no time to deal with laborers refusing work. If they refuse work, the job doesn’t get done. If the job doesn’t get done, the company gets taken off the job, and the employer doesn’t get paid.

The urgency of the work can be used as a weapon against the employer. Imagine this scenario: John Smith of John Smith Plumbing gets a call to unclog a family’s drain. He drives himself and one laborer to the house to begin fixing the drain. In the past, John Smith has underpaid his laborers, making excuses like, “You didn’t work hard enough today so I’m only going to give you \$80 instead of our agreed-upon \$120.” The laborer John Smith brought along has been the victim of this but has stayed with Smith due to the lack of work. When John Smith and his laborer get to the drain call, the laborer refuses to leave the truck until Smith pays him \$200 he owes in stolen wages. Every minute wasted by this work refusal is a minute the customer has to pay for, and if the customer sees no work is being done, the customer will easily just take John Smith Plumbing off the job and call another company. Moreover, Smith and his laborer are already at the job site; Smith doesn’t have time to find another laborer—that may take hours, and by that time the customer will have definitely found another drain-cleaning service.

If a geographical network of day laborers was established, there would be little need for contracts or legal interventions—workers’ power could be expressed on the job through economic actions.

All in all, the day labor industry is an industry which would be a unique challenge to organize, but it is an industry in which the IWW’s model of organizing would thrive. As a worker employed alongside day laborers, it would seem to me as though day laborers’ only hope for winning better working conditions is through the solidarity-based approach to unionism and work-place justice provided by the IWW. It would be a serious betrayal to our undocumented, hyper-exploited, and hyper-vulnerable comrades in the day labor industry if we did not offer them our full support and solidarity. I offer these observations in hopes that they will persuade my fellow workers to take an interest in the struggles of day laborers in their areas.

Everett Martinez is a Wobbly employed in the lumber and construction industries, and is part of the current initiative to build a strong IWW presence in New Jersey. She can be contacted at [iww.nnj@gmail.com](mailto:iww.nnj@gmail.com).

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# Organizing Sick To Myself

By Scott Nappolos

1 a.m... 3:50... 3:55... 4 a.m. I rise from bed bleary-eyed. Standing makes me cough. “Great a new symptom,” I think to myself. Walking to the bathroom, the day before me goes through my head. Pacing down the halls, lifting patients, comforting families, dealing with managers; the flood of images makes me weary. I remember days I worked while sick, greeting a patient while gently trying to hold the snot from running down my face, ducking out of a room to sneeze, sitting heavy on the toilet to let my body rest. You read lab values through a tired haze and hide hot tea with honey on the computer carts to make your voice less monstrous. Working sick assails you. I can imagine my day, and it isn’t pretty.

Clear mucous runs across my lip. “What about my co-workers? Will enough people be there? Will they have miserable days because I’m awake at 4

a.m. with a cold?”

The night before I had waffled about whether to call in or not. The consequences of calling out stick with you.

“What happened? You been out drinking?”

“Remember call out three times in six months and it’s a write-up.”

At other hospitals I worked in you would be yelled at, disciplined, suspended, or even fired for calling in sick. The bosses made it very clear that being sick was a transgression. When you worked short-staffed from others calling in, you felt it too.

Working short-staffed with no sympathy from anyone, we were alone with our curses too often.

“I bet he called out because he’s drunk.”

“She’s always calling out, especially on the weekends.”

Nurses frequently would blame each other for our misery, short-staffed from someone falling ill. The worse it got at work, the more call-outs there are. Even an anarchist like myself internalized this. I felt guilty for being sick, and it seemed like I was imposing the extra work on my tired co-workers.

The problem is that illness is part of the game. Health care workers are exposed to more illness, and experience extreme working conditions and the long-term stress that wears down the immune system. The results are predict-

able. People will get sick. In many hospitals, however, sick time was eliminated and replaced with general comp time, a.k.a. rolling sick days and vacation into one category that constantly pushes people to work while sick. The real issue is that management can see the numbers and knows how many people will be sick yearly, and yet refuses to hire enough people to take that pressure off us to work with a bug.

This is in spite of the fact that countless studies show health care workers spreading potentially fatal illnesses to patients in hospitals. It’s not complicated if you think about it. Many viruses are spread by droplets in our breath or our body secretions. Well-meaning health care workers have a hard time avoiding coughing, sneezing, blowing their noses, or rubbing something they shouldn’t rub when under the gun. You wash your hands constantly, but all it takes is one little slip to spread things to patients. Illnesses spread by health care workers remains a significant cause of serious illness and death in hospitals and care facilities.

The problem runs deeper than just money or punishments. Working at a place with paid sick days and lacking a culture of punishing those who call in sick, many of us still blame ourselves for the situation at



Graphic: iwwmiami.wordpress.com



Photo: iwwmiami.wordpress.com

work. Today we are repressed more by our own internalization of power than by force. That is what we have to fight against. The problem isn’t in us as individuals, or the fact that life makes us sick sometimes. The problem is a system constantly pressuring all hospitals to meet its challenges with our bodies and those of our patients. Work runs like clockwork, but it is a machine built out of human bodies; bodies that are vulnerable. An answer isn’t completely obvious, but any solution we will find will be collective; working together to use our power for something more human.

At 4:05 a.m., I called in sick.

## Focusing Our Energy, Clarifying Our Goals

By FW db

A few years ago I wrote an article called “Towards a Union of Organizers,” (July/August 2012 *IW*, page 3) which emphasized the importance of every fellow worker doing the basics of organizing at their job—relationship building, gathering contacts, social mapping, having one-on-one conversations. I showed how in many real life instances—from a liquor store, to a hospital, to a government workplace—performing these basics was important for recruiting members, responding to crises and grievances, and establishing the union as a force within our class. Organizing on the job is still the staple for all IWW members, and it is an important part of the IWW becoming a union and community of workers who become radicalized, rather than radicals who seek to become workers. If you are in the IWW we need you to do the basics of organizing at your work.

However, in the Twin Cities IWW and elsewhere, I have also seen a tendency that exaggerates this approach to a point where we are creating so many small “organizer vs. the world” campaigns that we are setting ourselves up to fail, in individual campaigns and in the branch as a whole. By failing to prioritize achievable goals we are in grave danger of burning out members who feel like the IWW is setting them up for an impossible task.

Part of this problem is also due to a sort of “only workers in a campaign” purism that is a useful baseline but gets in the way of us having the capacity to do the work that needs doing. It is one thing to have only the workers in a campaign



Graphic: gadflye

make the decisions, but it is quite another to have a branch put time behind the workers in the key campaigns of that branch so the campaigns can actually succeed. Moreover, while organizing at your workplace is invaluable, participating in a viable campaign, even from the outside, is also an essential IWW experience.

One thing that successful unions have always done is to focus their energy on places where there is potential—from industries screaming out to be organized, to industries essential to capitalism, to industries that define the local or regional landscape and identity, or simply where we have the ability to make a change. If the IWW is going to become the type of organization we want it to be, we need to focus on creating a smaller number of realistic or visionary campaigns—depending on our capacity—rather than having a union of do-it-alone organizers trying to do the impossible, often blaming their co-workers’ inadequacies in the process.

Having conversations about how to focus is difficult, but failing to do so is similar to failing to ask people to join. If we can’t push ourselves to focus our energy we can’t grow into the union we want to become. Conflict shows us what we need to be learning, coming to consensus on the different ways to focus our energy shows us the power in a union.

Again, this isn’t to say “stop organizing at your workplace.” It is saying “clarify your workplace goals and focus your branches on the highest possible impact campaigns—realistically.” How do we do this? To end this article I’ve made a list of activities that a member might choose to implement in their workplace and can

serve as a scale from small to large for our members and branches considering their priorities.

**1. Recruit in the class.** Even if we are not working, we need to stay connected to our neighbors, the local struggles that are happening, particularly those in people of color, immigrant, and poor white communities. Show up, learn, meet others interested in revolutionary unions. Also, Facebook is an easy and useful way to build local awareness.

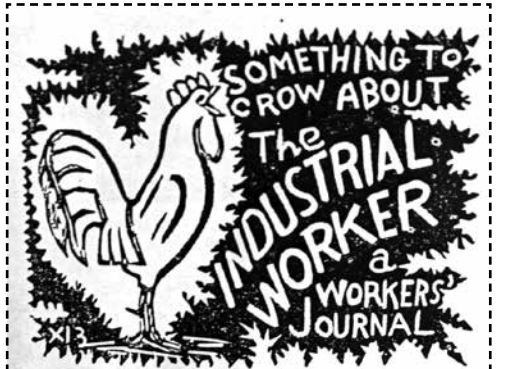
**2. Recruit at your workplace.** Identify people who would be good revolutionary union organizers, learn from them, enjoy their company, connect them to other Wobblies, our ideas, and into our work, be it doing the basics of organizing at your workplace, organizing a social, a May Day event, a study group, and so on.

**3. Organize informal work groups.** Organize a social group of militant workers in your shop, with strength in at least one department or unit. Condition the job to make it better, take action, have a blast, and be a pole that can pull other people to it and into the IWW

**4. Organize your workplace.** Are you in a place where organizing the place seems achievable? Go for it! Though definitely be in touch with the Organizing Department and your branch to get the support you need. For many branches having real organizing campaigns in good targets for their capacity is THE way forward.

**5. Organize visionary campaigns.** By visionary I mean “connect it to a dream!” Give your fellow workers and people in the community something inspiring and a way to create working-class power. Whether it is organizing major distribution centers, an industrial campaign in fast food, or at the staple local industries, we need to be struggling to make the IWW a pole within our regions that stands for freedom, power, and revolution. This is our time.

Thoughts? Appreciate your feedback at [db@riseup.net](mailto:db@riseup.net).



Graphic: Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State U.

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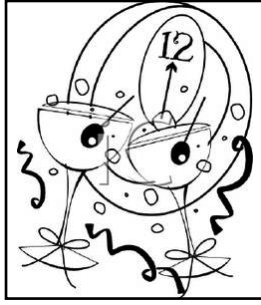
This ad was not paid for with any money collected for the NGWF. This was paid for by individual IWW members.

**Wobbly Arts**

**My Ten Wobbly New Year's Resolutions**

By Agoge

1. Be relevant.
2. Be an organizer. Never stop trying to learn what that truly means.
3. Be active in a serious campaign. Always.
4. Be social: Get off Facebook.
5. Be a trainer, writer, "GRIL"er, coordinator, protestor... less. Communicate and interact with, and be accountable to, an actual shop floor... more.
6. Be a mentor embedded in active trenches, not a teacher with a red card and red cred.
7. Be a mentee that is goal-oriented. Connect with a mentor and start small and smart.
8. Be more efficient and selective with priorities and resources. Evaluate, reflect, and reassess methods with an organizing partner and/or committee.
9. Be a higher bar and expect it from everyone going forward.
10. Be a fighter not a member.



Graphic: besthomever.com

**Justice For The Janitors**

By Ken Lawless

*I performed this at St. Michael's College at the third enthusiastic rally for the janitors' union.*

The janitors at St. Michael's College have a legal right to bargain collectively but a faction of the highest-paid paper-shuffling administrators is attacking subsistence-wage janitors in blatant class war, waged by attrition, their established power pitted against our ideals.

We need a general strike with teach-in and sit-ins like we had during the Vietnam War.

Which side are you on? Which side are you on?

Will you let them destroy the janitors' union or

will you shut this college down?

Solidarity Forever is our clarion call, an injury to one is an injury to all.

Justice for the janitors!

We'll sing it, we'll say it, we'll work it, we'll play it until we win justice for the janitors.



Graphic: freewebs.com

**John Henry 2006**

By FW JP x378252, I.U. 520

*I am submitting this tune for Wobbly Arts section, which I rewrote back in 2006. I wrote it in response to a new technology we were and are dealing with on the railroad. It's called Remote Control Operation (RCO). When the United Transportation Union (UTU) switchmen "won" this new technology it decimated the ranks of engineers in many terminals. My terminal alone lost over 20 engineer spots. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLE) union felt like they had been slapped in the face. The jurisdiction fight over the new technology was intense.*

*There are some terms in the tune that might need to be explained:*

*Hogger – Engineer*

*Groundhogger – Remote Operator*

*Switchman – Worker who does everything except run the engine.*

*Big E – Engineer*

*The Bowl – A place where the rail cars are classified for departing freight.*

*The East – One of two tracks that long cuts of cars are pulled on to.*

*Shanty – The place where the workers report to and get paper work. And yes, we still call them that.*

Well John Henry he was a locomotive engineer

Workin' down in the Osborn bowl.

And he looked at his switchman said you Better git to work.

We're gonna beat that RCO.

Gonna beat that RCO!

**Labor Cartoons By Fellow Worker Tom Keough**



**I did this for an IWW publication, a Starbucks Workers Union newsletter, being done by Wobs in Hartford, Conn. They never actually produced the first issue. I did this in 2012.**



**Bosses tell workers that they should not have unions because it's an "outside organization" but they hire expensive law firms specializing in union busting.**

Yankin' and a Pullin' on them cars with his Switchman working as fast as he can. Ol' John is a thinkin the whole time, A machine aint gonna beat a man. A machine aint gonna beat this man.

Well the groundhoggers came out of the shanty And they looked at the 6022. Said to each other as they switched on their boxes, Ya know we got a lotta work to do Ya know we got a lotta work to do.

The groundhoggers were havin a little problem They couldn't get their boxes to link up.

Between a poll off-line and a comm loss, They wer'nt having a very good time. Seems like it happens everytime.

Well the groundhoggers hollerd at the bowl. BOWL TOWR We're havin a problem linkin' up. We've tried everything we know how to do. I guess we're shit outta luck I guess we're shit outta luck.

The tower hollers to John Henry. Come and get this engine outta the way It's blockin' the East and we gotta pull some cars, I guess we'll convert one today,

It seems like it's better that way.

The groundhoggers sat in the shanty, Waitin' for a Big E to come and git 'er done. John Henry and his switchman already pulled 300 cars That RCO job pulled none. But it's safer when you sit on your bum.

There is a reason for this story, Corporate greed is killin' this land. If we don't do something and ORGANIZE. Say hello to the ONE MAN PLAN. That's talkin' Union! They wanna run trains with one man.

Roll the Union on!!

**Review**

**A Look At Late 19th Century French Socialist Thought**

*Patsouras, Louis. The Anarchism of Jean Grave: Editor, Journalist, and Militant. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2003. Paperback, 207 pages, \$24.99.*

By Heath Row

Louis Patsouras, formerly a history professor at Kent State University and the author of two previous books about the French anarchist and socialist, is perhaps the primary booster of Jean Grave, an otherwise unsung compatriot of Mikhail Bakunin, Peter Kropotkin, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Elisee Reclus. Having penned several relatively slim volumes about the editor of *La Revolte* and *Les Temps Nouveaux*; including the 1978 "Jean Grave and French Anarchism," the 1995 "Jean Grave and the Anarchist Tradition in France," and this now decade-old largely biographical book; Patsouras has done much to keep the memory of Grave's life and work alive—even if very little of Grave's writing is available in English translation.

One of few prominent socialist thinkers born into a working-class family, Grave was the son of a miller who later turned shoemaker. Moving to Paris in 1860, Grave went to Catholic school and apprenticed with master workmen before getting involved with the professionally-oriented revolutionary Blanquists and

the Paris Commune. After the fall of the Commune, Grave became involved in an anarchist group, helped form the Social Study Group, and became more involved in anarcho-communist journalism and propaganda, as well as propaganda by deed.

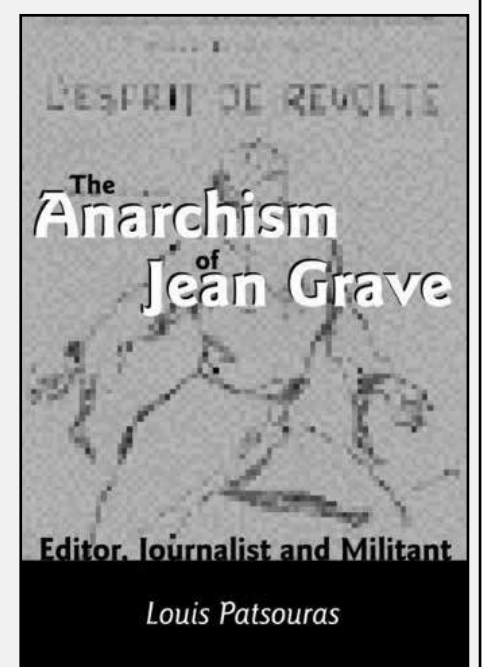
In 1883, Grave became the editor of *La Revolte*, which had been founded by Kropotkin in 1879. Grave saw the widely influential paper through the introduction of a literary supplement that became embroiled in an intellectual property dispute as the result of republishing writers' works without paying them and a name change to *La Revolte* before he was imprisoned for inciting mutiny and violence through his writings. The editor was also a principal in the Trial of the Thirty, which targeted criminals and terrorists as well as political activists, conflating propaganda by deed with the political philosophies that inspired it.

Upon his release from jail, Grave founded a new weekly, *Les Temps Nouveaux*. With the help of contributors such as Kropotkin and Reclus, Grave's journalism and pamphleteering continued to advocate for anarcho-syndicalism and mutual aid in opposition to individualism until World War I, during which he emerged to the surprise of many as pro-war. The prolific but heavily censored

scribe contended that the primary issue was not war per se, but foreign domination, which should be fought. Grave was also anti-communist.

In addition to offering a laudable biographical sketch of Grave, Patsouras considers the French anarchist's support of progressive art and literature as well as politics; the utopian underpinnings of his work; parallels to bourgeois contemporaries, as well as later writers such as Simone Weil, Albert Camus, and Jean-Paul Sartre; and his ongoing relevance in the current day. The last six chapters of the text, which largely provide contextualization rather than biographical detail, feel a little disjointed and ill-fitting. Regardless, it is incontestable that the work of Grave still has value, and the book is worth reading for the first 10 chapters alone.

This book, along with Patsouras's preceding efforts, is important, but inadequate to fully shed light on Grave's thoughts, ideals, and contributions to later anarcho-syndicalist discourse. What's sorely needed are English translations of Grave's writings as primary source: the memoir "Quarante ans de propagande anarchiste," the novel "La Grande famille," the propaganda by deed primer "Organisation de la propagande revolutionnaire," and the theoretical text "La Societe mourante et l'anarchie." Shawn P.



Graphic: blackrosebooks.net

Wilbur's recently inactive blog "Working Translations" offers a partial translation of Grave's fiction for children "The Adventures of Nono," and Robert Graham's "Anarchism Weblog" provides excerpts from "La Societe mourante et l'anarchie," but full-text translations appear to be unavailable.

Fellow Wobblies: Who's up to the task of translating these materials?

## Obituaries

# Farewell Fellow Worker Justin Vitiello—Teacher, Poet, & Class Warrior

By Nathaniel Miller, X343337

Justin Vitiello grew up in New York City and lived for many years in Philadelphia, where he taught Italian at Temple University, involving himself with various local anarchist activities. He was a published poet and spoke at least three languages fluently. Justin traveled extensively and lived in Italy, Spain and Algeria. He attended the Port Huron conference, organized with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the Poor People's Campaign, established anti-mafia collectives with Sicilian anarchists, and devoted his life to working-class struggle. Justin was an IWW member for years, always made sure to pay his dues well in advance, and served on the IWW's International Solidarity Commission (ISC) with whom he traveled to Mexico, Haiti and Palestine. It was during the later two ISC delegations that I came to love and respect him.

While Justin was around the Philadelphia IWW General Membership Branch long before me, I didn't get to know him until 2008 when we traveled as part of the IWW delegation to visit with workers in Haiti. I vividly remember drinking rum with him one night on the roof of the guesthouse we were staying in, a building

leveled less than two years later in the earthquake, looking across Port Au Prince to the ocean, the city mostly dark without electricity in the vast shanty towns below, the mountains behind us lit with the villas of that incredible nation's tiny elite. Justin was instinctively on the side of those the world over who stand outcast and starving amidst the wonders they've made.

Justin was 40 years older than the rest of us on that trip to Haiti, and the delegation to Palestine two years later, yet despite his age and a bad hip he was able to keep pace as we shuttled from one meeting with workers to the next. Memories of Justin stream back. May Day 2008 walking around Port Au Prince trying to keep up with the fluid demonstrations taking place; the day we were caught in a flash flood coming back from a meeting with a worker/peasant cooperative in the mountains where we ate fresh mangos while we listened to workers' stories. Occupied Palestine—Ramallah, Hebron, Jerusalem, Nazareth...

He had a sharp wit and sense of humor too. Our Palestinian hosts invited us to visit with a group of political prisoners in the Golan Heights who had just been released. We were stopped at an Israeli checkpoint.

Justin was taken off the bus for further questioning. The Israeli soldiers asked him what he was doing on a charter bus full of known Palestinian activists, whereupon he pretended to be a confused old man, telling his interrogator he'd always wanted to see the Golan, as he's heard it was beautiful, so he boarded this bus in Jerusalem and didn't know who any of these people were. Somehow that worked. I've too many of those small memories to write here. Mostly I remember Justin as a man who lived his life in solidarity with his fellow workers.

Justin self-identified as an anarchist, a teacher, and a poet. Until the last he was a fighter, and like all great working-class soldiers understood that we must fight



Justin (center) with families of Palestinian political prisoners in December 2009.

Photo: Rob Mulford

for bread and roses too. Justin organized poetry readings against the mafia in Sicily, telling me that the best way to fight hate and ignorance was simply take a public space as collective triumph over fear, and in Philadelphia he always stood on the picket lines. That fearless determination is his legacy.

Farewell Fellow Worker.

# Mick Renwick: Trade Union Activist, Wobbly, Anarcho-Syndicalist, Anti-Fascist, Internationalist, Geordie Working-Class Hero



Mick at the Durham Miners' Gala, 2013. Photo: Louise van der Hoeven

By David Douglass,  
National Union of Mineworkers

I met Mick first when I just turned 14—we were in the first flush of that revolutionary generation that Bob Dylan had promised would soon shake your windows and rattle your doors. We wanted change, and we were part of that huge current for radical social reform, revolution, and peace, which began to subvert our whole generation. Mick was in its vanguard

It was he who, sitting in the wee hours of the morning in his living room after an underage drinking session round the town, had revealed the sacred words of Bob Dylan's "The Times They Are a-Changin'" LP. I had heard nothing like it in my life. I thought those words, those concepts, were addressed to me. It was, in the words of the Christian revivalists, a revelation, the hour I first really understood the way the world worked. We became aware of ourselves as a worldwide wave of youth rebellion intent on shaking the system 'til it changed its ways or died. We pushed at all walls, broke them down, and defied the rules of morality and patriotism. Everything the older generation took as gospels of truth we doubted and challenged.

We helped found the Heaton Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the most radical Tyneside anti-bomb group, going on to form the faction that became the Tyneside Direct Action Committee and later the Committee of 100. We demonstrated at Holy Lock on the Clyde and on numerous Aldermaston marches against

the H-bomb and atom bomb, which had brought us to the very wire of nuclear war and convinced us of our possible premature departure from life before we had the chance to live it.

Mick was a key character in the city "movement"—the Tyne beat scene. He was always on the scene. Sex, drugs, rock and roll, and revolution: that was us. Mick was "a lad" right enough. As

our beatnik and mod strange new wave confronted the old culture, the teds, biker gangs still in their white socks and greased back hair, we were often attacked. We represented something strange and scary—politics, beat poetry, and peace campaigns. We listened to the beat poets in Newcastle Bigg Market, shouting the poems of Allen Ginsberg and local Geordie young beat generation poets, reveling in their defiant use of words, which everyone knew were banned and which you couldn't write down let alone speak as poetry. To the old ted generation, we were surely all "commies" and "freaks," but those became titles we took as our own.

Mick was no mean street fighter, and, although we aspired at first to pacifism, he was a handy lad to have around because he wouldn't easily see his friends attacked without wading in.

Mick had been born into a unique and dying community, for his dad wasn't simply a Northumbrian pitman, he was a Geordie pitman. He worked at the Rising Sun, Wallsend. Mick grew up the terraces of Heaton, amongst miners, railway men, shipyard workers and their families. He was raised in the strongly militant trade union tradition of the miners' union and communities. As many of those in the restless, long-haired beat generation entered the mines themselves, the old lads shook their heads in disbelief. "Pitmen?" they queried, but it was not long before that generation had started to add its own coloration to the industry and the min-

ers' union.

My life has been marked by Mick's presence and Mick's comradeship; we were together at Grosvenor Square as we tried to storm the U.S. embassy in solidarity with the Vietnamese people, as we went on anti-fascist mobilizations and punch-ups with the National Front. He was for a time the Secretary of the Gateshead Trade Union Council and organized some of the best of the Tyneside May Day rallies. Through raising funds and joining pickets, he was shoulder-to-shoulder with every battle the miners had from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

He developed a deep and lasting love of Bulgarian and Greek culture and spent every spare holiday in Bulgaria and Greece, becoming a self-taught expert on all aspects of these two cultures and their history.

Mick and I started our political careers as anarchists, and then took brief detours through the woody glades of Trotskyism in the 1970s. Mick went to the Socialist Workers Party, and I went to the Revolutionary Workers Party. By the time of the miners' great strike, we were both headed back to anarchism. We both became enthusiastic in the re-formation of the Industrial Workers of the World in Britain, and it was this organization that Mick,

heart and soul, has worked for in the last 15 years. He has also been an enthusiastic member of the Follonsby Miners Lodge Banner Community Heritage.

Mick's last fight with cancer was his hardest, and he wouldn't yield. He smoked and drank until the end; he paraded and demonstrated when he could hardly stand. Indeed, he very nearly died at last year's Durham Miners' Gala, but, clinging onto the railings to hold himself up, he refused to take a taxi to the hospital, demanding that the Cole Pits Pub was the only destination he was heading for. He went through hell this last year. He refused to give up, always believing he'd beat cancer and come back.

Mick was my friend and comrade for over a half a century. We shared so much. We had the privilege to have been teenagers in the 1960s and to set ourselves a benchmark for freedom, for justice whatever the law said, until in our own 60s we still aspired to those same values because we couldn't live any other way. Mick was a character round the towns. Gateshead and Newcastle were his stomping grounds, where he met tens of thousands of people, debated with whole cities over the bar table. People all over Tyneside knew Mick; he will be a huge loss. You were a diamond marra! I will miss you in 10,000 ways.

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# World Labor Solidarity

A COLUMN BY THE INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY COMMISSION

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

## 2014: A New Year For International Solidarity

By the IWW International Solidarity Commission (ISC)

The time is ripe for international solidarity with inspiring movements taking shape around the world. The incoming ISC intends to build on the work of previous Commissions, while finding new campaigns and projects that are of interest to us.

The 2013 ISC is wrapping up an action-packed year with campaigns and activities reaching many parts of the world. The ISC focused on supporting the struggle of our Greek fellow workers to rebuild the radical workers movement; connecting with workers' struggles in East Asia, including raising funds for the Hong Kong dockworkers strike and organizing a speaking tour about the Foxconn workers; as well as building our bonds with unions affiliated to the International Workers Association (IWA-AIT) and the Red & Black Coordination. The 2013 ISC also did much to further the growth of the IWW as a global union by supporting our branches and groups in Europe and Uganda.

The incoming 2014 ISC features J. Pierce, Bill B., and Florian H., from Phoenix, Ariz.; Portland, Ore.; and Toronto, Ontario, respectively.

FW J. Pierce returns this year, having been on the ISC back in 2004, with new interest in the world of miners' struggles. Based on the experiences of the Phoenix IWW in supporting miners in West Papua and his current relationship with the Cananean miners, J. hopes to both connect miners' struggles globally as well as assist branches in targeting a local corporate headquarters and communicating with that company's overseas employees. "The ISC has come a long ways in the last decade," remarks J. "We've had delega-

tions to Haiti, Palestine, and Northern Mexico. We've hosted tours and led campaigns and assisted in the growth of the global IWW. We've built up so many strong relationships that our incoming ISC has a lot of great material to work with."

FW Bill B. comes to the ISC with decades of international experience having lived in Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and Europe and having visited over 50 countries.

"Just because I have a lot of experience," explains Bill, "that doesn't mean I don't have a lot to learn. I appreciate the guidance and advice of all hands, old and new, and look forward to working together."

FW Florian H. was a successful, if spontaneous, write-in candidate to this year's ISC. Florian brings to the Commission his work with the Freie Arbeiterinnen-und Arbeiter-Union (FAU-IWA) in Germany and his international experiences in the auto industry overseas, having traveled to many different countries and taken part in the workers' movements there. "As solidarity is our weapon, international solidarity is our silver bullet in our struggles and campaigns. Within the new ISC I am happy to provide my international experience to improve our worldwide relationship to revolutionary unions as well as continue and start international campaigns."

On the agenda for 2014 is continuing and expanding the ISC's "Working Groups" based on region or interests. We want to create strong working groups to support our allies, such as the National Garment Workers Federation in Bangladesh or the Independent Workers Federation of Palestine, and multiply the IWW's efforts to build an invincible working-class movement the world over.



## IWW Lithuania Stands In Solidarity With Victims Of Latvia Supermarket Collapse

By IWW Lithuania

The roof of Maxima supermarket collapsed in Riga, Latvia on Nov. 22, 2013, leaving 52 dead and 30 injured.

Due to grievous breaches of work and construction safety, the roof of a supermarket collapsed on itself in Riga, the capital of Latvia, killing and burying workers

and shoppers beneath the rubble. In addition to that three rescue workers were killed when the building collapsed for the second time.

Construction work had been occurring on the roof of the supermarket. Large bags of construction materials and soil were left on a weak spot of the roof and could have caused the collapse. Several reinforced steel beams fell over at once, which might indicate that engineers failed to properly calculate load pressure on the roof. Rescue workers also noticed that concrete constructions were suspiciously fragile.

The administration of the supermarket ordered the workers to stay in their workplaces and did not proceed with the evacuation of shoppers despite the fact



Two days after the supermarket collapse. Photo: wikimedia.org

that alarm sirens were going on and off for one hour before the collapse. Eyewitnesses said that security guards ordered the shoppers to pay for their purchases before leaving the building.

Maxima is a retail chain operating in the Baltic states and Bulgaria. It is the largest Lithuanian capital company and the largest employer in the Baltic states. It is well-known for poor working conditions and for abusing workers' rights, which was recently documented in an investigative report by Re:Baltica (a non-profit organization for investigative journalism).

The capitalist class once again proved that profit is the only sacred thing for them. IWW Lithuania stands in solidarity with the victims of this tragedy.

## Greece: Five-Month TV Studio Occupation Ended

From Libcom.org

On Nov. 7, 2013, riot police in Greece broke up a five-month occupation of the ERT studio in Athens. ERT was the Greek state television station equivalent to the BBC in the United Kingdom or RT in Russia. Police took the ERT off the air due to austerity measures by the Greek



Police evict journalists from TV studio.

Photo: libcom.org

government. The journalists from ERT decided to occupy their workplace rather than be laid off. These fellow workers declared that the ERT would still be on the air and continued to broadcast the station via the internet. However, riot police finally evicted the journalists from the occupied studio. The government defended the raid, saying the occupation was "illegal."

The police combed the studio to see if the occupiers had damaged equipment. The government is now giving the studio to a new state TV station. The reason for the closing of ERT had to do with its criticism of austerity measures, and many think that this is an effort to produce a new state TV station that will be less critical of the government's policies.

## Workers In India Shut Down Mines

From Libcom.org

Workers in the Odisha state of India are revolting over the employer's attempt to replace them with scabs. Around 1,000 workers shut down coal mines and ransacked railway stations. Many of the workers fought pitch battle with those who remained loyal to the bosses. Many of the workers also burned down management offices. The rioting workers damaged train tracks



Photo: libcom.org

and destroyed 40 mine transportation vehicles. The trouble began when the police tried to arrest 49 workers for protesting the company's decision to replace 100 of the union workers with scab labor. The police in Odisha are usually in the pocket of the company so it should come as no surprise that the workers rioted in an attempt to inspire the workers who were picketing.

## IWW Solidarity With Workers In Iran

By the ISC

Whereas workers of the International Alliance in Support of Workers in Iran (IASWI) have asked us to issue a statement in solidarity with imprisoned union activist Reza Shahabi,

Be it resolved that the International Solidarity Commission send the following statement of solidarity to IASWI and publish it in IWW media:

The Industrial Workers of the World protests the continued incarceration of Reza Shahabi, the Treasurer and Executive Board member of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company, and join his family's demand for his immediate release. Reza was charged with "gathering and colluding against national security" and "spreading propaganda against the system." These are all sham charges. Reza Shahabi is a worker and labor activist.

We condemn the imprisonment and persecution of Reza Shahabi, and that of all other workers who organize and fight for better conditions in Iran, including Shahrokh Zamani, Mohammad Jarahi, Behnam Ebrahimzadeh and Pedram Nasrolaahi.

We demand the immediate release of Reza Shahabi!

### Background information received from the IASWI

Workers, labor organizations and all people of conscious! As you are all aware, Reza Shahabi, a transit worker and a member of the board of directors of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company, has been incarcerated in Tehran's Evin Prison since June 12, 2010, only because of his advocacy for workers' rights and supporting the demands of his fellow workers.

During these years of unjust imprisonment, Reza has suffered from an array of health problems, including but not limited to: decaying of a few lower vertebrae, problems with back and neck disks, liver and kidney complications, numbness of feet and hands, heart issues



Photo: arshama3.wordpress.com

and dental problems.

Because of such amalgamation of health issues, a cervical spine operation was performed on Reza in July 2012, but despite his physicians' recommendations for further hospital care and physiotherapy, he was returned to his cell, which has further caused many problems.

After close to three-and-a-half years of incarceration, the coroner has examined Reza's conditions inside Evin prison, and based on an MRI scan has determined that three lower vertebrae have been damaged and are in need of immediate surgery in a hospital. It should be noted that Reza has been suffering from lower back pain for months, his left foot becoming almost paralyzed as a result, with very little mobility left in it.

Due to numbness of left foot and severe back pain, on Oct. 19, 2013, Reza was transferred to "Imam Khomeini Hospital." After all examinations, physicians have once again recommended that Reza is in no condition to be returned to a prison environment and is in need of hydrotherapy and physiotherapy in a stress-free environment outside of prison. They have also warned that unless such treatments are provided there is a very high possibility that his entire left side could be paralyzed.

We, the family of Reza Shahabi, his wife and two children, declare that based on doctors' recommendations, Reza cannot endure prison conditions at all and must be released immediately. We hold security and judiciary officials responsible for Reza's severe condition. We ask all labor organizations and activists in Iran and around the world to continue protesting against Reza's prolonged incarceration.

- Robabeh Rezaie (spouse), Mohammad Amin Shahabi (son) and Shirin Shahabi (daughter).

This statement was published by the Reza Shahabi Defence Committee on Oct. 23, 2013, and was translated by the IASWI.