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Striking Workers At Boston Insomnia Cookies Win Settlement

By Jake Carman

On March 3, Insomnia Cookies and four striking workers agreed to a settlement of National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) charges, officially ending a six-month strike. The four workers, Chris Helali, Jonathan Peña, Niko Stapczynski, and Luke Robinson, struck on Aug. 18, 2013, demanding changes at work, including higher pay, benefits, and unionization, and were fired immediately. According to the terms of the settlement, they will all receive back pay totaling close to \$4,000, and have their terminations rescinded from their records. Insomnia Cookies will post a notice in their Harvard Square store promising not to fire or otherwise retaliate against workers for union activity, including going on strike.

Additionally, Insomnia revised a confidentiality agreement which improperly restricted workers' rights to discuss their conditions of employment with one an-

other and third parties (including union organizers and the media).

According to organizers for the IWW, the union representing the strikers, "This settlement is another small victory in a long struggle to bring justice and a union to Insomnia Cookies."

When the four workers, comprising the entire night shift at the Harvard Square Insomnia Cookies, voted unanimously to close the store after midnight on Aug. 18, 2013, they served cookies to the customers already in line, and then locked the doors. The workers put protest signs in the windows, wrote up a strike agreement and informed their boss they were striking for a raise, health care and other benefits, and a union.

Jonathan Peña, one of the strikers, said he remembers "feeling real conservative that August night, but something told me to stand up for what I believe in. I had

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Striking workers picket at Insomnia Cookies on March 14.

Photo: Fellow Worker D.

New Evidence Shows U.S. Government Spied On Wobblies, Activists



Photo: Elliot Stoller, Works in Progress

PMR protest at Port of Olympia in November 2007.

By Brendan Maslauskas Dunn

Ian Minjiras walked out of the anarchist community space Pitch Pipe Infoshop in Tacoma, Wash., and ventured to an anti-war demonstration at a weapons convention where military personnel and law enforcement were in attendance. It was not his first protest, but it was the first protest where many activists met "John Jacob," who would later be uncovered as a spy for the U.S. Army.

As the demonstration wound to a close, Ian left and walked a distance to catch a bus to the other side of town. Police were later heard saying they sent

undercover officers to follow Ian. He was arrested and accused of scrawling graffiti on a wall. While he was being booked, the police confiscated all of the anarchist literature in his backpack that he had just picked up at Pitch Pipe. He spent the night in jail but was eventually let out.

This is a common story at demonstrations—the rally, the arrest, the time in jail.

What is not so common is what happened to Ian in the aftermath. In 2007, his name, along with the names of at least three other activists, was entered into a Domestic Terrorism Index. His crimes were that he attended an anti-war rally and had some anarchist literature.

Ian is not alone. He is one of many activists who have been targeted and spied on by the U.S. military in what is perhaps the most expansive surveillance network targeting radicals in the United States since the tumultuous days of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) COunter INTELligence PROgram (COINTELPRO).

That secret FBI program was created to destroy the Civil Rights and New Left movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Since it was uncovered, it has only evolved in more secret ways. Currently, a team of lawyers is taking on the U.S. military with the landmark civil liberties case *Panagacos v. Towery*. This story, however, starts well before the U.S. government labeled Ian as a terrorist. It starts in the streets of the small port city of Olympia, Wash., in 2006.

I remember the feelings of excitement, anxiety and uncertainty that surrounded the Stryker Brigade military shipments that came through the Port of Olympia in May 2006. What started off as just several protesters getting arrested for standing in the road and blocking Stryker military vehicles rapidly grew into hundreds of people, day and night, descending on the port, attempting in vain to stop or slow down the war machine.

Activists came up with the name Port Militarization Resistance (PMR) to describe the network of people who started to take decisive action against these shipments. Dozens were arrested and many more were attacked by the police. PMR

was one of many organizations that took part in the port protests—the IWW was another.

Although we were not successful in stopping the shipments, there was no turning back. We had ignited a spark in the anti-war movement, one that suggested that civil resistance and directly confronting military shipments was a more logical approach to ending the wars. To this day, activists reminisce about the time 200 of us marched to the port entrance chanting, "War machine! Tear it down! War Machine! Tear it down!" It was an electric feeling, one the military did not want to spread.

Deployment after deployment, the military changed its tactics to avoid us. Instead of shipping convoys in broad daylight, they used the cover of night for future shipments through the more desolate Port of Tacoma. The Port of Grays Harbor was also used before the military, again, came back through the Port of Olympia in November 2007 with returning shipments. Perhaps military officials thought that there would be no resistance as these

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Portland IWW Fights Wage Theft

By Shane Burley

Rush hour is being colored with the fury of workers scorned. The Portland Solidarity Network (PDX-Sol) and the Portland IWW have announced the Fridays of Fury at Fubonn—a weekly picket and rally to target the abuses and repressions taking place at the Fubonn Shopping Center. This is the most recent stage in an escalation campaign that has evolved over several months, and has intensified in response to the repression from the business's ownership.

The campaign began in the spring of 2013 when two former workers of the Fubonn Asian Market, Marisol and Norma,



Photo: Shane Burley

contacted PDXSol to speak out about the abuses that had become institutionalized in their former workplace. While employed at Fubonn for many years they were regularly forced to work off the clock, denied comprehensive breaks, overlooked for raises that their male counterparts received, and had racist abuses hurled at them and their co-workers. When

Norma was in the later stages of her pregnancy she was forced to lift heavy boxes that were unusual for her position, which many assumed was part of a trend at Fubonn—forcing pregnant women to quit so they were able to bypass

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May Day! May Day!

The deadline for announcements for the annual "May Day" *Industrial Worker* is **April 4, 2014**. Celebrate the real labor day with a message of solidarity! Send announcements to iw@iww.org. Much appreciated donations for the following sizes should be sent to:

IWW GHQ, P.O. Box 180195, Chicago, IL 60618, United States.

- \$12 for 1" tall, 1 column wide
- \$40 for 4" by 2 columns
- \$90 for a quarter page

This Summer: Come To Work People's College Europe

Fellow Workers, It took us some time, but we're finally ready to announce that the first European Work People's College will be taking place in Berlin this summer on July 24 - 27, 2014. A glorious venue has been booked, neatly located close to a lake on the outskirts of Berlin, workshops are being planned and put together, and almost two-thirds of the money needed has been raised.

For all you Wobblies in Europe who have been wondering what other Wobs in your neighboring countries or cities have been up to the past years, what their experiences have been with organizing their workplace or building job and general membership branches, this summer will be a splendid opportunity to finally meet some of those fellow workers face-to-face (as opposed to Facebook, or listserves). We'll be having heaps of good workshops



Graphic: IWW Work People's College

where we can learn with and from each other.

For all you Wobs from other continents: Feel warmly invited to join as well!

We will try to meet the requirements and needs of as many people as possible, but be sure to mention your needs in the registration. We will be providing translation and food for the various preferences and allergies. There will be a bungalow for women only, a program for Junior Wobblies, and the chance to visit Berlin together.

So talk it over with your branches, see who is able to come and register online at: <http://workpeoplescollege.org/europe/>

Also, if you have any questions or want to contribute with workshops, translation, layout, or money, please write us.

Looking forward to seeing you all.

Solidarity!

WPC Europe Planning committee

Wonderful IWD Issue!



To the editor,

Just wanted to congratulate you on a wonderful International Women's Day issue! It's fantastic. There is so much good stuff in it (covering some pretty bad problems). But you really feel that you get a sense of the struggle against patriarchy as it relates to the fights of our union and its women members.

My three favorite pieces (so far) are the front cover narrative by FW Luz, the thoughts of FW Madaline on sexual violence, and the gem from FW Jane Street on organizing domestic workers. I laughed and cried and got angry all in the same letter from her! How inspiring!

Mazel tov! And thanks!

Solidaridad,

J. Pierce

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The Voice of Revolutionary Industrial Unionism

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Hobe Sound

Organizing Fighting Back In High-End Hotels: An Interview With A Miami Wobbly

By the Miami IWW

In November 2013, the Miami IWW interviewed one of its members, Eduardo Segundo, about his organizing and experiences in a high-end hotel in Miami.

Miami IWW (M): Describe your workplace. Who were the clients, workers, and how was the environment when you got there?

Eduardo Segundo (E): It was a very draconian-style workplace, so for example, if the boss didn't like the stubble under your chin, or didn't like the dirt on your socks, that was considered a heavy burden. They would call you out on it—it was that kind of workplace. It was so trivial at the time; I didn't really know what to make of it, but I knew what I was getting into (i.e. high-end hotels have an orthodox view of how particular employees should look).

I mean, right from the very start, I saw all kinds of things: degradation of female workers, atrocious treatment of immigrants, management being unorganized in every aspect (from the kitchen to the pool). During that time, I didn't really know anyone, and even when I did, which was only a few people, they didn't have much of a reaction to the abuse (most of the workers had years of experience under these conditions and were already ingrained into the system).

As for patrons, they were mostly CEOs, and their families, celebrities, all those sort of people. In fact, whenever a big-shot venture capitalist showed up, they'd make a big fuss out of it by printing a shot of his face, his biography, the kind of foods they liked, what time they wanted their alarm to be rung, all kinds of interesting things.

M: What about the workers like you? Mostly young? Immigrants? Low wage? Or more of a spread?

E: Yeah, it was mixed—old, young, immigrants, gays, etc. I can't say it was low

wage, because in my opinion, all wage is intolerable, but I guess there's a so-called thing as humane wages. I think the wages were fair, to some extent, but no one's ever content with any kind of wage. Look, whatever the wage was at the time, it didn't matter, we wanted more. I mean, why should the manager be paid more when all he ever did was stop by the kitchen and pick out fries?

M: In that situation, were workers talking about the problems or was it just something you noticed?

E: They were, but the guys who were talking about it were ones who came from a union background; in fact, there were two brothers who spark my memory, both from Chicago, and they were the ones who had some idea of how helpful a union would be. Again, most of the workers—I know from experience—are already ingrained into the system: they speak when only they're spoken to. That kind of militarized-style of hospitality only leads to the worst kind of conformity. So there was a ton of isolation, mainly because of the competitiveness, but there were sectors of the pool and beach who spoke out against it, but it was nothing too noticeable. If you were lucky, like these two brothers, then you already knew the situations at hand.

M: What got you to start organizing there? Was there some spark or cause that made you think it was time to start doing something?

E: It's the service sector, why waste a second not to organize? This is an industry that takes you nowhere, unless you want to reach the level of management, but even there, you're someone else's boss.

But to more accurately answer your question, the spark comes at the very second you walk into work and punch in:

you're working for someone else at that point.

M: When did you start to think you could fight back though? From the beginning?

E: My gut feeling was that there was something I could do, it's just that I didn't know how to, hence I joined the IWW. And the IWW was helpful. For instance, the IWW provided workshops that were tremendously helpful in assisting me in ways to work and combat these systems of power. And I used them, to the best extent I could, but if it weren't for the IWW, I would have had zero knowledge about the interventions of a business union (and I was approached by them, too). So from

a revolutionary perspective, it gave me an open eye—fighting back, that is. Fighting back doesn't mean throwing yourself into the pit; it means getting along with others and doing things collectively.

In fact, another worker and I fought for better pay and we managed to get \$10.50 an hour for food running, up from \$10. But if it weren't for my co-worker, that wouldn't have happened. I had to convince him to fight for better pay. He was fine with \$10 an hour until the workload picked up. It took him a while but I got him to fight with me.

M: How did you convince him to fight? And how did you all win that raise?

E: He was the food-running veteran. He was hired as a barback but eventually they forced him out and into food running. When I got there, it was just him doing the work by himself, but at the beginning, it was slow.

I maintained loyalty with him, but I was always persistent and I wanted him to know that he was worth more than what he was bargaining for. Every worker is worth more than what they're paid. That's not

even an argument; you have to be a fascist to argue otherwise.

But anyway, when we were hired, they were paying him \$9 an hour as a food runner; another runner and I were getting paid \$10. It wasn't until he found out about the pay disparity that he really became angry. We didn't know it at the time, but they eventually back-paid him all the dollars for that month.

M: How did that happen? Just by confronting management individually?

E: No, collectively. He was getting paid the wages he worked as a barback. When they transferred him as a runner, they just kept him at \$9 (the wage actual wage for a runner is \$10).

M: Did that include the raise to 10.50? Or did that come later?

E: That came later.

M: How'd you get that?

E: Same, we went to the manager. The managers promised us a raise, but it wasn't easy. We had to ask every week, reminding them...The managers had so much to do, because of the busy season, and just to find time for us...I thought we got lucky. I mean, managers were clocking in at 7 a.m. to help whatever way they could (of course, all the real physical labor was on the workers), but they were stressed out.

M: And eventually they gave in?

E: They did, but only with that issue. We had other issues, all completely ignored, as usual.

M: Were there ever times when your co-workers confronted management together?

E: Oh, yeah, of course. I remember one time, a female pool server was demanding promised pay or something, but it was only involving the servers (the majority of whom were females). I was at my lunch break, and I saw this pool server confront the boss, I had never seen anything like it. But she was demanding better pay or something like that.

M: Anything come of it?

E: No, nothing. Just promises.

M: Anything you would do differently a second time around?

E: Doing things a second time around means learning from your mistakes—and there were mistakes, without a doubt. Personally, I'm someone who goes through SAD [social anxiety disorder] so just talking in groups or whatever is a tough task in and of itself. Having joined a syndicalist union has helped me to break these fears, it's helped me to jump into situations which I would have never dared to do. Furthermore, just having a base of solidarity has played a critical role in my politics, which is why I joined the IWW in the first place (I've been anti-authoritarian since I was a kid).



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.



Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, Post Code, Country: _____
 Occupation: _____
 Phone: _____ Email: _____
 Amount Enclosed: _____
 Membership includes a subscription to the **Industrial Worker**.

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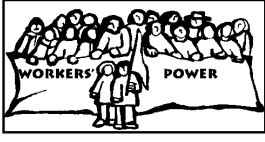
For The Long Haul

By Colin Bossen

About 10 years ago, when I was a member of the Chicago General Membership Branch, I got to know a Wobbly who had been a member of the union since the 1960s. In his decades as a Wob he had seen many people come and go. He had a term of scorn for people who took out a red card briefly for reasons of ideology or nostalgia. He called them “thirty-day wonders.” Thirty-day wonders join the union, pay their initiation fees and a month’s dues and then disappear.

I have been a member of the IWW long enough now that I have seen my share of “thirty-day wonders” come and go. I have also watched multiple cohorts of Wobs develop who are committed to the union for the long haul. I expect Fellow Workers like Liberte Locke, Nate Hawthorne, Adam Weaver, Erik Forman, and the *Industrial Worker’s* editor, Diane Krauthamer, to be part of the union for decades to come. Watching them, and the development of my own life, I have started to think about what it means to be a Wobbly, not for 30 days, but for a lifetime. When I joined the IWW I was 22, filled with youthful militancy, just entering the workforce and totally naïve about workplace organizing. Today I am 37; I have a family, a career and have had the privilege of being involved in four significant organizing campaigns. I also chaired the committee that reformed the union’s Organizing Department in 2006 and have been editing this column for close to eight years.

My experience has helped me reach a few conclusions about what long-term commitment to the IWW requires. First, and perhaps most importantly, it requires the ability to take care of yourself. The better world that Wobblies seek isn’t going to come anytime soon. Committing to the IWW for the long haul means making time for family and friends, for exercise and whatever else you need to maintain your health. There will always be another meeting, another organizing campaign, and another picket line. It is alright to miss something or step back for a while



from organizing. If you don’t take care of yourself chances are you will burn out pretty quickly.

Second, be kind and compassionate towards other workers. We have a range of ideologies and experiences in our organization. It is easy to “be a jerk about bad ideas.” Resist the temptation. If you are

kind towards others chances are they will be more willing to listen to you. Also, if the IWW is about “building the new society within the shell of the old,” then one of the things we need to do is learn to treat each other as if the new society has already come.

Third, organize the worker, not the job. Jobs come and go. One of the big advantages the IWW has over the large business unions is that when Wobblies leave a job we take our union membership with us. If we are going to continue to build the union we need to exploit this advantage. We can help each other develop skills and networks of solidarity that we can carry with us no matter where we end up. We can do this by continuing to improve our organizer training programs and building a strong culture that people want to be part of.

Finally, commit to building the organization. Workplace struggle comes and goes. Most workers don’t want to be in a constant state of conflict with their employers. Many people think this desire for stability can be solved by contractualism. I have my doubts about that. Instead, I think building the kind of organization that we activate to defend past gains and win new ones is the solution. Such an organization almost certainly transcends specific workplaces.

I suspect that other longtime members of the IWW have their own lists of things that they believe are necessary for a long-term commitment to the union. I would be interested in seeing those lists and starting some collective reflection on what it means to be a Wobbly for the long haul. If you have thoughts please send them my way. I would be delighted to put them in a future “Workers’ Power” column.

The IWW’s Break With Political Socialism

By FW Klas Batalo

“It is impossible for anyone to be a part of the capitalist state and to use the machinery of the state in the interest of the workers. All they can do is to make the attempt, and be impeached—as they will be—and furnish object lessons to the workers, of the class character of the state.” - Vincent St. John, The IWW and Political Parties

In this article I look at the early fights over the Preamble and the role of political socialism. I focus in particular on the ideas of one of the IWW’s founders, Thomas Hagerty, in order to open up a discussion on the relationship between the historical IWW and electoral politics. My real interests here are not in historical IWW but in what lessons the IWW can learn for relating to statist politics today. While the organization currently includes many self-described anarcho-syndicalists, anti-state Marxists, and others who oppose the state, there hasn’t been much written on the IWW’s relationship to the state, nor has the organization done enough analysis of the role of the state.

According to Luther M. Gaylord’s “Politics vs. Syndicalism: a Case Study of the IWW,” anti-statist politics did not come from the influence of the European syndicalists, but arose “from actual concrete experiences of the lower grades of workers in the Western states.” That is, anti-state perspectives arose organically or indigenously from the U.S. working class, rather than being an intellectual import from theorists abroad.

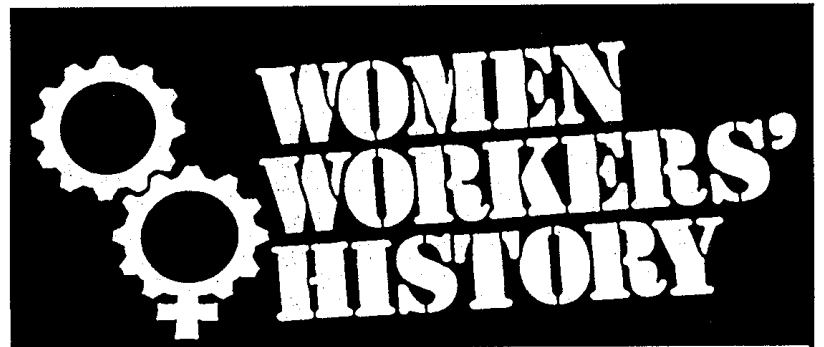
The Western IWW members looked upon the whole modern system of government with considerable disdain. They saw

parliaments as little more than clearing-houses for the exchange of “vague and sterile platitudes.” They saw the modern state only as an instrument capable of servicing the interests of the capitalist class.

While IWW members in the Western United States were an important part of the organization, there is a myth in the IWW that these anti-statist politics came almost entirely from the West. If we look at the founding convention in 1905 almost all of the delegates who came together could be described either as socialists, militant trade unionists or anarcho-syndicalists. Sal Salerno’s “Red November, Black November” discusses the influence of anarchists at the founding convention, including famous Wobblies like Thomas J. Hagerty and Lucy Parsons.

Hagerty is of particular interest, in part because he composed the first draft of the IWW Preamble. He had been a member of the Socialist Party until he became disgusted with what he called the “slowcialists,” and turned to revolutionary unionism. In a speech to miners at Telluride, Colo., in 1902, Hagerty alluded to arguments he would later make for economic direct action and organization in the first draft of the Preamble. He advised the miners: “That railroad is yours; those large business blocks and office buildings downtown that bring in big rent are yours; if you want them, go and take them.” He agitated for direct action, in the form of the confiscation of capitalists’ property, not the ballot box.

Hagerty’s disdain for political socialism was made clear in his speech at the founding convention, when he declared that “The ballot box is simply a capitalist concession. Dropping pieces of paper into

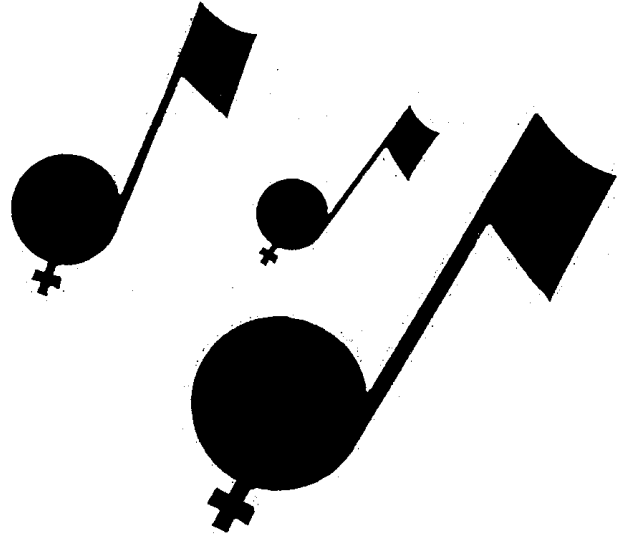


Chapter 71

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.

Graphic: Mike Konopacki

a hole in a box never did achieve emancipation for the working class, and to my thinking it never will.” Given his views, it is understandable then that Hagerty’s draft of the IWW Preamble did not include a role for state-oriented politics. Rather, it emphasized the importance of the union as the center of revolutionary struggle, contending that the proletariat should “take and hold that which they produce through an economic organization of the working class,” the classic goal of anti-statist revolutionary unionists.

This wording, however, did not make it into the final draft of the Preamble because of the efforts of electorally-oriented socialists like Daniel DeLeon. Between 1905 and 1908 there were continual arguments over these conceptions of struggle and the unions’ ultimate goals, leading up to split between the electoral socialists and the rest of the IWW in 1908. In that year the version of the controversial clause in the Preamble was completely re-written to

reflect Hagerty’s original intent for an economic organization of the working class: “Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the earth and the machinery of production and abolish the wage system.”

Later commenting on the IWW’s 1908 Preamble, Samuel Yellen was struck by its similarity to the original Pittsburgh Manifesto of the Chicago anarchists. “In principle,” he wrote, “the IWW resembled the ‘Chicago idea’ anarchists of 1886, but advanced beyond them to syndicalism.” It was the conscious efforts of anarchists like Hagerty who continued to affirm in the face of great adversity the principles for which the Chicago anarchists gave their lives defending. Hagerty’s contribution to the revolutionary union movement lies in the endurance of the original intent of the Preamble he authored and the courage of the IWW’s rank and file to affirm this core principle.

Wobbly & North American News Around The Union

Compiled by FNB

The Boston IWW is in a celebratory mood because Insomnia Cookies has agreed to pay four Wobbly strikers back pay after they were illegally terminated for union activity. The Boston General Membership Branch (GMB) has been busy signing up new members, especially in the many fast food joints in and around Harvard Square in Cambridge, Mass. Conditions in the area are ripe for organizing, with rampant



Graphic: Midwest Dumpster Press

injustices such as the routine denial of premium overtime pay, refusal to pay workers their compensation, and managers' insistence that employees should work off the clock. Harvard Square could emerge as the site of a new "corridor campaign" for our branch, with the goal of making this trendy neighborhood a hotbed of unionization. We've produced a new flyer for outreach to retail and service workers that is targeted at employees of Insomnia, where the campaign to unionize local stores continues. Our Insomnia Cookies IWW Organizing Committee has been holding productive and well-attended meetings. We are also making store visits (when managers are elsewhere) to introduce workers to the One Big Union. All fellow workers are invited to please come to Boston and visit our vibrant and growing branch! And what better place to come "salt" than our city by the sea, plagued by gentrification but also simmering with barely contained class rage?

The Denver GMB will be hosting commemorations of the 100th anniversary of the Ludlow Massacre in both Boulder and Denver, Colo. There is renewed inter-

est in the IWW along the Front Range of the Rockies with members in Boulder, Colorado Springs, Denver, Ft. Collins and Pueblo. The Denver GMB is investigating holding an organizing training in the next couple of months.

- Lithuanian IWWs are forming a Regional Organizing Committee.

- Belgium IWWs will be attending Work People's College in Berlin this summer.

- The Portland IWW and Portland Solidarity Network activists won several wage theft cases in February. They are still working on the campaign for back wages against a large Asian grocery store. An IWW-led campaign to raise the minimum wage by \$5 per hour is going into neighborhoods with IWW and supporters canvassing. IWWs also helped blockade scabs at the Port of Vancouver, Wash., and again against a Guatemalan vessel.

- An organizer from West Scotland reports that Wobblies in the United Kingdom are sending £1,200 for the European Work People's College in Berlin. The Clydeside GMB is also subsidizing travel for two delegates to Berlin in July. The Sussex branch was unfortunately de-chartered. There are 802 members in all of the United Kingdom (with the 90 members in Scotland included in that number). The IWW National Conference will be held in London late May, but the exact date is not yet finalized. A workshop for trainers will be held in Birmingham in April.

Victory For Portland Teachers, Students

By John Kalwaic

In Portland, Ore., there has been a small victory by the Portland Association of Teachers (PAT) for more hired teachers and less of a workload. Students from local high schools came out to support their teachers as part of the Portland Student Union (PSU). Teachers were up for a new contract, which may affect issues like health care and workload. The PAT was also pressing for a cap on class sizes. There were walkouts at Wilson High School on Dec. 13, 2013, and at Garfield High School on Jan. 10, 2014, both in support of the Portland area teachers in their ongoing negotiations with the Portland Public School (PPS) Board. The PPS was firmly on the side of the Portland Business Alliance, which proposes that PAT advocates for "school reform."

The PSU, afraid that the PPS would force the PAT to strike if they gave them an unacceptable contract, launched the Portland Teacher Solidarity "pack the school board night." On Jan. 13, PSU members, parents and teachers packed the school board meeting with song and chants. Students chanted: "Stay at the table, don't impose" and "If you do we'll strike too." The crowd was numbered at around 400.

School board members who were against the teachers left the building, leaving only one board member to listen to the protest. The struggle has not been just against a bad contract, but the overall cuts to education, union busting against teachers, and more mandated standardized tests for students.

The PPS claimed they support the students, but students are striking for themselves. There were seven walkouts



Students protest on Jan. 13. Photo: Bette Lee, Labor Notes

by students in favor of the PAT. On Feb. 5, the teachers voted unanimously to strike. That same day a large student walkout occurred, in which 600 students from Cleveland High School walked out in support of their teachers. The high school picketers went by a middle school and an elementary school, where the principal put his elementary school on lockdown while they were marching past the school. The strike was set for Feb. 20 as the PAT and the PPS continued bargaining; however the PAT never backed down from the threat of a strike. Community members, students, teachers and parents planned to picket every major school in the area. The PPS finally caved in and the teacher and student strike was narrowly averted. The PPS agreed to some of the demands of the teachers, such as hiring 150 new teachers, which would reduce the class size by 5 percent. The teachers also won more planning time for elementary school and special education teachers, but agreed to phase out early retirement benefits. The intense solidarity of the students and parents as well as the resolve of the teachers is what led to the victory.

With files from Labor Notes, Oregon Live, and Oregon Public Radio.

University Of Pittsburgh Medical Center Workers Organize

By Kenneth Miller

On March 3, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) hosted the biggest labor rally in Pittsburgh since the occupation of People's Park more than two years ago. Workers from Pittsburgh's largest employer, the "non-profit" University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, are organizing a union with the SEIU. Members of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) have had a union contract for 40 or 50 years, are making poverty wages, and are mobilizing for a new contract as the current one expires at the end of June



Wobblies, workers protest in Pittsburgh. this year. Maybe the health care workers and retail workers can stick together and



Photos: Kenneth Miller (left), Eric Bergerud (right) both bargain a whopping \$15 an hour starting rate.

Remember The Miners' Strike



Photo: Keith Millar
This display commemorating the start of Miners' Strike 30 years ago appears in a pub window in Glasgow.

Indiana Wobblies Celebrate One Year As A Chartered Branch

By Michael White

On Saturday, Feb. 15, the Indiana General Membership Branch (GMB) celebrated our first year as a chartered branch of the IWW. We held our monthly GMB meeting that Saturday in the afternoon from 3 - 5 p.m. in Indianapolis at the Workers Justice Center. We had a fairly typical meeting; we attended to business as usual and had a turnout of about 27 members and non-members. After adjourning our meeting, we began to prepare for festivities.

From about 6 - 11 p.m., we had our Red and Black one-year anniversary celebration. The entire space was decorated with red-and-black streamers, red balloons, and IWW posters. We had a raffle sign-up area set up, displaying prizes. There was a huge table of all kinds of union-made merchandise. We had the Indiana GMB charter and several other framed documents and posters belonging to the branch displayed. There was a delegate table set up in order to assist any persons interested in knowing more about or joining the IWW. We had a potluck style buffet, including a huge variety of delicious foods, along with a variety of beverages including juice, pop, and plenty of coffee. And there were branch members at posts throughout

the evening to help guests in need.

The entire evening went off without a hitch. It began as I, the host, introduced the event, describing what we were celebrating and introducing the night's entertainment. First up, we had a great original set of music by comrade Jared Gills. Then we had really wonderful and powerful collective statement by our fellow workers (FWs) in the Indiana GMB's Patriarchy Resistance Committee, identifying their mission, articulating how and why patriarchy negatively affects our efforts in organizing, and how and why we all must work together against patriarchal behavior. They introduced our evening's next entertainer, FW Matt Church, who gave an insightful and riveting 20-minute poetry reading of several different authors that captivated the entire audience. Then I did my duties as host, reminded everyone of the food and refreshments, the mer-



Indiana GMB's Patriarchy Resistance Committee. Photo: Michael White

chandise table, and the delegate table at the back. Then I had the great honor of introducing our headlining entertainment for the evening, FW J.P. Wright of Louisville, Ky. FW Wright was kind and generous enough to devote the evening to come out with his family, hang out for the evening, and give us a really great show. JP played labor and folk songs, told stories, and passed on his sage-like wisdom for an hour-and-a-half—breaking only for hilarious interjections by his son Jonah. We rounded out the evening by raffling donated items for FWs and the branch. The raffle included donated handmade red-and-black scarves, pins and buttons, posters, a few Uganda IWW t-shirts, and some labor history calendars.

All in all, the event was a success. Highest count puts the total just shy of 50 people in attendance, with many new and

friendly faces. We had lots of really creative and productive conversations about plans for moving forward, funny conversations about past events, and got to relax with friends and fellow workers. When you're organizing it's hard to step back and really enjoy the accomplishments that you and/or your branch achieve; things always seem to be going on, and people always seem to be busy. But, after having done so much, you really have to appreciate and enjoy what you have achieved thus far. Or else what's the point? Having organized for a little more than a year with the Indiana branch, after having started from nothing, and no one really knowing what was going to happen in a year, it's great to stop and see that we have built a strong and well-connected group of members, supporters, and sympathizers, and that everyone involved is dedicated and invested in. Building social relationships is a very difficult task, there are plenty of obstacles and events that can discourage people, but we must continue to build bonds and connections, educate more people, and get more people involved and active. The labor movement, and specifically the flavor that the IWW espouses, needs to expand, involve more people, and have fun; people like fun.

Front Page News

Striking Workers At Boston Insomnia Cookies Win Settlement

Continued from 1

nothing to lose but I had much to gain.”

The following morning they returned to set up a picket line, and reached out to the IWW, which sent union organizers to help. Within the first few days, all four were fired, and all four signed union cards. For the next six months, strikers, IWW members, allies, and student organizations at both Harvard and Boston University held pickets, marches, rallies, forums, phone blitzes, and a boycott, while workers continued organizing at both the Cambridge and Boston locations. The union also pursued legal charges through the NLRB. The settlement reached on March 3 came two days before a scheduled NLRB hearing on the charges.

“Since the first utterance of the word ‘strike’ that late August night, it has been an uphill battle for all of us,” said striker

Chris Helali. “The Industrial Workers of the World answered the call when no other mainstream union was interested in organizing a small cookie store in Harvard Square. We picketed, we chanted, we sang. I thank my fellow workers, the IWW and all of our supporters for their continued work and solidarity through this campaign. I am proud to be a Wobbly!”

Other outstanding issues remain unresolved between workers and the company. Wages, benefits, break time, scheduling, safety, “independent contractor” status of delivery workers, the November 2013 firing of IWW member and Insomnia baker Tommy Mendez, and police violence against a picket line and resultant charges against IWW member Jason Freedman, top the list of grievances.

The union vows to continue organizing efforts at Insomnia Cookies. Helali said, “I

am extremely pleased with the settlement, however, it does not end here. This is only the beginning. The IWW, along with our supporters, will continue to struggle until every Insomnia Cookies worker is treated with respect and given their full due for their labor. There is true power in a union; when workers come together and make their demands with unified voices and actions.”

But for now, union members are celebrating. “Being a part of the IWW means something to me,” said Peña.

“I will never forget the four amigos, Niko, Chris, Luke, and I. We actually made a difference. Being a Wobbly can change your life! I just want to really thank everyone for their solidarity and commitment to crumbling down on this burnt Cookie,” Peña added.

UPDATE: Six days after the settle-

ment, on Sunday, March 9, Insomnia Cookies suspended bicycle delivery driver and IWW organizer Tasia Edmonds. Edmonds was disciplined for speaking out against workplace injustices, which the boss called “insubordination.” According to Edmonds “I was suspended for my union involvement. I have never been disciplined before. I was not served any paper work detailing why I was suspended. I want to get back to work, and I want back pay for the days I missed.” Two dozen IWW members and allies picketed the Boston Insomnia Cookies location, where Edmonds is employed, on Friday, March 14. Organizers planned another rally for Saturday, March 22, after student allies from the abutting Boston University return from spring break. The IWW demands that the company follow through on its promise to cease targeting union organizers.

New Evidence Shows U.S. Government Spied On Wobblies, Activists

Continued from 1

were not outbound shipments. They were wrong. Activists saw the ports as revolving doors. We knew that these Stryker vehicles would be repaired and shipped right back out again to continue in the senseless slaughter.

The model that PMR created was contagious. Activists in New York City shut down a military recruitment center in solidarity with one of our actions. There was a short-lived attempt to start a New York-based PMR. Unionists in the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) in the Port of Oakland made connections with us to organize their own actions while Hawaiian activists were in regular discussion with us as well. Olympia and Tacoma became the epicenter of the anti-war movement. All eyes in the movement were on the Pacific Northwest.

In addition to the resistance in the ports and streets, there was a parallel resistance evolving in the ranks of the military. Lt. Ehren Watada refused to serve in what he saw as an illegal war in Iraq. Suzanne Swift went AWOL (absent without leave) when she was asked to ship back out and remain under the command of a superior who had raped her and put her on suicide missions whenever she refused his advances. PMR activists helped build political movements supporting Watada and Swift and made their stories national news.

Many other soldiers refused to fight in Iraq and Afghanistan. Some did it publicly, asking for our support and going to the media with their stories. Most did it quietly. At least one soldier who went AWOL joined PMR. For the first time, these soldiers realized who their true enemy was. Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) became very active in the Northwest. The group established an anti-war G.I. coffeehouse called Coffee Strong just across the street from the massive military base Fort Lewis (now called Joint Base Lewis-McChord). It was not uncommon for soldiers to show us peace signs and clench their fists in the air as they drove by during military shipments. Off duty, soldiers approached us in tears, telling us they were preparing for their third or fourth tour of duty and thanking us for taking action. One soldier, in what might be called an act of mutiny by his commanding officers, refused his orders to ship more vehicles and marched out of the Port of Olympia to a jubilant crowd of protesters.

The situation was becoming a threat to the war efforts. Militant, raucous demonstrations followed the Army wherever they went. Soldiers and workers at Fort Lewis joined PMR. More and more soldiers refused to fight. Public opinion was not only turning against the wars but was turning into direct action to end the wars. The Army had to do something to put an end to this so their mission could continue unabated. This is where John Jacob entered the scene.

John said he worked as an information technology (IT) specialist at Fort Lewis and was an Army veteran. He was around 40, donned a beret and wore IWW and anarchist buttons. He was welcomed with open arms into the anti-war and anarchist movements. He became very active with PMR and spent much of his time hanging out at the Pitch Pipe Infoshop in Tacoma. I considered him not only a fellow activist but a friend. We gave a workshop together on community organizing at the Tacoma Anarchist Book Fair in 2007.

Suspicious individuals came onto the scene. Many of us were routinely harassed. My house in Olympia, where I lived with several other activists, was under almost constant surveillance by police. They regularly parked their cars across the street, facing our house, and often came onto our property to harass us. I also discovered that the police at the college I attended kept a picture of me on their wall alongside that of another PMR activist for reasons I am still unaware of. In Tacoma, a surveillance camera was secretly installed on a utility pole across the street from Pitch Pipe. In September 2007, and again in the same month in 2009, I was detained and interrogated by Canadian border officials on trips to British Columbia. The first time, they threatened to put me in a Canadian jail without charge, temporarily confiscated my passport and deported me. The second time, I was informed I had an FBI number. A criminal trial called the Olympia 22 that stemmed out of the 2006 port protests was also sabotaged by law enforcement (and later, we learned Towery was in on this) when they hacked into our attorney-client listserv. Former IWW General Secretary-Treasurer (GST) Sam Green and I were both in this case. But there was one thing that tipped us off and made the Olympia IWW branch decide to file a public records request.

In April 2008, the Olympia Police Department stole the IWW newspaper box located downtown. The box was given back only after a lawsuit was threatened. In response, I filed a public records request for any information on the IWW, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and anarchists. The hundreds of documents that were released included one that was an email sent by a John J. Towery II. It did not take long for a small group of activists to research and discover that John Jacob was in all actuality John Towery, Army informant. The jig was up for John but this revelation was only the tip of the iceberg.

Other activists filed more public records requests and over the next few years we would receive hundreds upon hundreds of documents that provided fragments of information detailing a vast surveillance network. Not only was the Army spying on us, but the Navy, Coast Guard and Air Force were as well. We also learned that countless federal agencies, including the FBI, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Department of Home-

land Security were spying on us. Even Air Force personnel from as far away as New Jersey and the U.S. Capitol Police in Washington, D.C. were part of the network. Not to mention the seemingly endless list of local and state police departments that were involved.

We discovered that at the core of this network was a fusion center that Towery worked for. Fusion centers are a shadowy post-9/11 development created to monitor “terrorist” activities and “threats to national security.” They blur the lines between local and federal law enforcement agencies and the military. There have been congressional hearings on fusion centers in the past for overstepping their boundaries and trampling civil liberties. Fusion centers have gone so far as targeting Planned Parenthood and peace groups. Occupy Austin was also infiltrated by a fusion center informant. The danger of course is that fusion centers do intelligence gathering on “threats” to U.S. national interests and in doing so see peace groups, Occupy and Al-Qaeda as all part of the same monolith bent on destroying the government. The only thing fusion centers have been successful at is helping prop up a national security state. Civil liberties and constitutional law are simply viewed as annoying inconveniences to fusion centers. There are currently almost 80 such centers in the United States.

Towery’s exact role within the fusion center is still unclear but he did prepare threat assessments on local activists. He was not alone in his work. Clint Colvin was outed as a spy for the Coast Guard. Sandy Kortjohn, whose husband, Mike Kortjohn, worked in the same circles as Towery and spent his time gathering intelligence on SDS and PMR, infiltrated an anti-imperialist group in Olympia and was outed by another activist. Towery’s superiors not only knew what he was doing, they encouraged it and gave him orders. To this day, however, Joint Base Lewis McChord maintains that he was a rogue individual and did not have clearance from his superiors to spy. Documentary evidence that has come in the form of public records requests states otherwise and turns their lies into a thin veil they are finding harder to hide under.

Knowledge of this surveillance went way up the chain of command, all the way up to the Secretary of Defense. It started under the Bush administration and continues, to this day, under Obama’s presidency. Towery’s role as a spy gives us a glimpse into the dynamics of this vast surveillance network. Although I cannot speak about the details yet as I signed onto a protective order, the Army recently gave my attorneys nearly 10,000 pages of discovery documents. Hopefully, the day will come when we can share these and other documents. I’m really curious about the details of this program and am confident that we will get a better picture during trial this June.

The parameters of this surveillance network could fill the pages of a book. This should of course concern everyone in the union. Not just for the obvious reasons that Wobblies were spied on, including former GST Sam Green, or that our union was targeted by an institution which has the main goal of neutralizing and killing threats to U.S. governmental interests. I plan on writing more on this, on who John Towery was, and on what practical things we can take from this experience. There are some new revelations I am still wrapping my head around. I recently learned that while Towery was spying on us, he carried a concealed gun with a bullet in the chamber. I also learned that he tried to convince a friend that anarchists and fascists had much in common, that we should work together. It also seems likely that the U.S. Army was planning an entrapment case on my friends, on fellow anarchists in Tacoma. These are stories for another day.

What we need to do is turn our rage over these revelations into love, into action. To take the words of one Wobbly that was murdered by the state of Utah years ago, “Don’t mourn, organize!” That’s precisely what we need to do in moments like this. Yes, repression is real. But we need to use the story of Army spy John Towery to agitate and organize other workers. We need to educate workers that this government will take excessive measures to ensure that big business accumulates as much profit as possible through perpetual warfare and propping up a national security state.

You can help with this case by giving a donation to our legal defense fund. We need it. Thankfully, we have a brilliant team of lawyers representing us, including Larry Hildes, who joined the IWW during our union’s Redwood Summer campaign with Earth First! Dennis Cunningham is also helping us. He represented radicals the FBI targeted for neutralization, like Black Panther Fred Hampton and Wobbly Judi Bari. It is however a grassroots legal defense on a shoestring budget.

Like Ian Minjiras, I am considered a domestic terrorist by the U.S. government. Not a day goes by that I am not reminded of this fact. The bigger question is: Does the government consider the IWW a terrorist organization? This would not be the first time that the government labels those fighting for freedom and liberation as terrorists. And it won’t be the last, unless of course we continue in our struggle to create a society rooted in true freedom, in mutual aid, cooperation, and dignity and abolish the system that shackles the poor of the world. That’s a system the military, law enforcement, both the Republicans and Democrats, the rich, and the national security state that protects all of them are deathly afraid of. We have a world to win! Let’s keep on fighting for it.

Donate to the legal defense fund by visiting <http://www.peopletowery.org>.

Organizing

Why The Boeing Deal Is A Defeat For Us All

By Andy Piascik

In a move that strikes yet another blow to democracy and to the living standards of working Americans, Boeing forced major givebacks on its 30,000 union employees in the state of Washington while simultaneously pulling off what may be the biggest welfare rip-off in the nation's history. Confronted with company threats to move production of a huge new project out of state, workers reluctantly voted by an extremely narrow margin to give up defined pensions in exchange for risky 401(k) retirement plans. Thus, Boeing, which made \$3.9 billion in profits in 2012, joins the long and growing list of major corporations around the country that have successfully eliminated defined pensions in order to dramatically increase profits.

In addition to the pension takeaways, the agreement includes a new stipulation that allows the company to contract work out of the union. The national office of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) joined the company in a classic case of "vote and vote again until you get it right" by forcing the second vote, even though the local union and 67 percent of those who voted in November opposed the deal. Moreover, the IAM national office scheduled the second vote on Jan. 2-3 when many workers were using vacation days to tack extra time off onto the end of the annual Christmas/New Year's shutdown. Predictably, turnout dropped precipitously as there was no possibility for in-plant discussion of the company's demands and possible strategies for resistance because of the shutdown.

The aerospace industry is one of the last in the United States where workers are able to make wages to enter the much-trumpeted, rapidly disappearing "middle" class. With this move, however, Boeing has announced that it is determined to see that aerospace workers knuckle under to its every demand or see their jobs moved elsewhere. It is the same strategy corporate elites used against steel, rubber and auto-workers, with disastrous consequences. In many instances, employers forced one concession after another while dangling the threat of job flight, then closed up shop

anyway. With the added clause in the revised contract about non-union outsourcing, it's perfectly reasonable to conclude that Boeing also has a not-so-long-term plan to bust the union.

What makes this case all the more galling is that the take-backs worth billions to Boeing came at the same time the company was extorting \$8.7 billion in handouts from Washington's governor and state legislature. This, too, was accomplished with threats of relocation and follows a long tradition of corporate welfare to Boeing worth tens of billions of dollars. It is one more of the countless examples that underscore how the philosophy the Super Rich and their government and media flacks espouse of "free markets" and "market discipline" is a colossal sham. The Super Rich love welfare as long as it's exclusively for them and they abhor markets except when applied to the 99.9 percent.

The disgraceful conduct of the IAM national office cries out for Boeing workers and the working class as a whole to confront serious questions regarding collective bargaining and the union bureaucracy. Bureaucrats like IAM president Tom Buffenbarger, who earns in excess of \$300,000 per year have, interests that conflict with those of the workers they purport to represent and often mesh nicely with those of corporate elites. In addition, the fulcrum of the union bureaucracy's political strategy remains, even after so many beat-downs, supporting the Democrats—Democrats like Washington Governor Jay Inslee and the majority of the legislature that approved the \$8.7 billion Boeing handout and pushed hard for the take-backs.

Perhaps of greater significance for building the kind of militant movement we need, workers have for decades been saddled with no-strike clauses in their contracts, no-strike clauses that union bureaucrats who wholeheartedly share the business class's desire for a tame workforce happily agree to. The no-strike clause in the Boeing/IAM contract came into play because the company's demands for pension surrender came in the middle of a contract, thus depriving the work-

ers of their most potent weapon. In a society with a long history of violent repression of workers by the business class, strikes and other forms of labor militancy are most responsible for the advances made. Surrendering the right to strike has dramatically hastened the decline in the reversal of many of those advances.

There is nothing immutable about no-strike clauses; they can be bargained out of collective bargaining agreements as surely as they were inserted. That will take some doing but one certainty is that it will never happen until we begin to push the question. It's also time to revive sit-down strikes, plant occupations such as the one that five years ago successfully kept Republic Windows and Doors in Chicago open, as well as the issue of plant closure legislation to protect both workforce and community, an issue that arose in many places in the late 1970s and quickly died. Given the burgeoning worker-owned coop movement, such legislation could be linked to promoting the idea that it's both reasonable and beneficial to push for the right of communities and workers to assume control of plants that employers deem not sufficiently profitable. Among other examples from history, we can take inspiration from how little national discussion there was about wealth inequality prior to Occupy.

Green, socialist and other radical parties and candidates can make plant closure legislation part of their campaigns while within unions, rank-and-file activists can challenge continued inclusion of no-strike clauses. In many ways, history is on our side, not against us. We can, for example, draw inspiration from the heyday of the



Machinists vote "no" to Boeing at a rally in January 2014. Photo: Jim Levitt, Labor Notes

IWW when the Wobs recognized that almost every sentence that is added to a collective bargaining agreement is meant to restrict worker self-activity. Militant workers of the 1930s who lay the foundation for the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), such as those whose stories appear in Alice and Staughton Lynd's great book "Rank and File," likewise bitterly opposed restrictions on strikes that John L. Lewis and the Roosevelt Administration forced upon them.

If the people of the United States are going to turn back the relentless class warfare the Super Rich are waging against us, we are going to have to organize on many fronts. Within unions, rank and filers are going to have to go beyond workplace contractualism and add eliminating no-strike clauses, management prerogative clauses and perhaps even exclusive representation to the agenda or union reform will continue to end up looking like Arnold Miller and Ron Carey. Such demands are a perfect complement to direct action, where we again have a wealth of history on our side, what with the Freedom Riders of 1961, the sit-down strikers of 1936-37 and so many more. The Occupy movement that so electrified the country and brought awareness about corporate class warfare to millions of people was a start; we must now find ways to bring that approach and spirit to higher levels and into workplaces and communities everywhere.

Freedom School Along The Mohawk

By Brendan Maslauskas Dunn

"We make the road by walking." The statement was scrawled on the chalkboard in a small classroom in an old church's school building. The students discussed the meaning of the quote attributed to Paulo Freire, the visionary educator and radical who promoted the concept of popular education. It was the very first class of the Mohawk Valley Freedom School, a new initiative in Utica, N.Y. that puts Freire's ideas into practice.

The idea of the school came out of discussions from Occupy Utica but also comes out of a tradition that goes back years. The original Freedom Schools were launched as part of the Freedom Summer campaign in 1964 which sought to propel the Black Freedom struggle to a new level through grassroots organizing, voter registration, education, and independent politics to challenge the Dixiecrats. Staughton Lynd was the director of the original schools and commented on its legacy in the book "Wobblies and Zapatistas: Conversations on Anarchism, Marxism and Radical History." Although the schools only lasted the summer, the idea far outlived the institution. Today there is a new wave of Freedom Schools and the one in Utica is just the most recent one to form.

There are of course other schools that have inspired the formation of the Mohawk Valley Freedom School. Los Angeles, Chicago and Brooklyn have all become recent homes to Freedom Schools which have connections to the Oc-

cupy movement. Another school in New Haven, Conn., which has been part of the public school system for decades, is another such example. There is no principal. Instead it is run on concepts of democratic self-management and students have a very direct role to play in this.

Yet another school is the Akwesasne Freedom School located in Mohawk Nation, just a few hours' drive north of Utica. The curriculum of the school is directly rooted in the culture, tradition, history, and language of the Mohawk people. It was founded in 1979 and has resisted immersion and any funding from both the U.S. and Canadian governments. In essence, the Mohawk are making their own road by walking by providing a liberatory education.

An enthusiastic student, IWW member and co-founder of the Mohawk Valley Freedom School, 17-year-old Marquis Palmer, thinks the school has much to offer a city that has been pushed to the brink of disaster by de-industrialization and urban decay. Marquis helps to break down the student-teacher division by teaching his own classes, one on the history of the Black Panther Party. The initial program



Photo: mvfreedomsschool.wordpress.com
FW Brendan at the Freedom School.

of the school, "Social Movements, Social Change," surveys many social movements and makes connections with the daily lives of students. Whether the discussion is on the Arab Spring, Haymarket, or the Zapatistas, the question constantly asked

is, "How are these movements relevant to us?"

Marquis hopes that the school will have an impact on the students, many of whom are young workers, in becoming more socially active or event labor activists. "The idea of a Freedom School is a process of learning without the student-teacher dynamic. Workplaces need that too—the idea that you don't need a boss but you're working collectively to reach a goal," said Marquis.

The emphasis of the school of course is praxis—the idea that reflection and action are intricately connected and in constant dialogue with each other. Marquis emphasized that the school "is rooted in social change" and that the discussions in class can directly benefit the union and building workers' power. A large component of the program will be labor history and labor organizing. An IWW workplace organizer training was also held at the Freedom

School where students met with workers from across Upstate New York. This is exactly the spirit of what praxis should be.

Although Wobblies have had a significant part to play in launching the program, the idea is that the community will lead it. Mohawk Valley Community College professors, educators, students, and workers from all walks of life have gotten involved in different ways and are excited that working-class and social issues are at the core of this education. More importantly, this education is tied to social action and places power directly in the hands of the students.

A summer school is being planned with a possible trip to Akwesasne to learn how to eventually make the Mohawk Valley Freedom School a lasting institution. While the IWW has its own history of liberatory education, especially in the Work People's College which will also launch in Europe this summer, the Freedom School may be a good model for the IWW to build working-class power wherever the union has a presence.

For Marquis Palmer, the Mohawk Valley Freedom School has breathed life into a city that once boasted an active and militant union movement. He thinks the school will be a "benefit for the union" because discussion can "lead to workplace issues. Once you tackle those you can tackle bigger things." For this little Freedom School along the Mohawk River, praxis paves the way forward.

For more information, visit: <http://mvfreedomsschool.wordpress.com>.

Organizing

What Went Wrong With The Organizing: The Elephant In The Room Of Political Will

By Scott Nikolas Nappalos

Organizing has taken a new direction in our current society where we have to build movements rather than join. A new level of commitment is needed. Miami IWW member Scott Nikolas Nappalos provides a great analysis and critique of organizing today in the piece below.

When people hit a brick wall organizing today they are very quick to look at big picture aspects to explain their failures. For many of the tiniest fights we see calls for large revisions of structure of social organizations, committees, and demographics in countless versions. Ideology is also popular with a deep drive towards critique and adopting new ideologies as technical fixes for hurdles in organizing; forms of born-again ideology. The worst of this is relying on large-scale analyses of the economic environment to explain away concrete daily problems that seek to persuade people not to fight in vast sections of society and the globe because of often amateurish crystal gazing and do-it-yourself political economy. The focus is generally on us, likely because of how demobilized society is, which shifts the view away from the people struggling.

There is a basic element of organizing people to fight around their daily interests that rarely is discussed and yet is a fundamental aspect of nearly everything political happening today. A question we should ask ourselves perpetually is: do these people want to organize? As revolutionaries we ask people not only to engage in their immediate problems, but also to take on the system itself; to abolish the wage system and hierarchical exploitation and oppression. Even people's immediate issues, say low wages, take a significant commitment of time and emotional energy to deal with. People have to be willing to plan, meet, and exert their resources towards something they may already hate (their job, their conditions). There are lots of detours that allow people to avoid this stuff. We move jobs, we change buildings, move to different cities and neighborhoods; try to avoid the police, take matters into our own hands, etc.

The forces against sustained action are powerful, especially today when there is no liberatory social force that intervenes consistently within society. People are working in isolation with bad odds when there are more pleasant things they could probably be doing. Simply put, it's often better for people not to fight than to fight in the immediate. Organizing involves sinking more of one's life into something that

makes you miserable with little prospect for big successes, and more than likely you may end up worse off. Organizing goes against the current both of overt oppression and coercion, and tactics that allow people to delay, defer, or avoid the nasty stuff in society. This is something that should be recognized, understood, and inspires us to put minds together to deal with it.

In the film "The Wobblies," an old IWW member retells the story of a recruit who asked "What does this membership card entitle me to?" to which the IWW delegate said "Fifteen years in the penitentiary." The recruit signed up. That example provides good contrast to common thinking about how this all works. Today people often fixate on victories, material gains, and winning something for people. The problem is that fighting often involves losing more on a social level than any immediate gains we might achieve. Even when we have all-out wins, it's not clear that it is actually a win for those people. This Wobbly who signed up did so not because of concrete gains they might have gotten, but in spite of the misfortune that would ensue. Put politics aside and think of all the meaningful, pleasant, and important social things someone has to sacrifice in order to do the tedious, tense, and often hostile work of organizing. Attempts to understand commitment to political projects in terms of a cost-benefit analysis will trip up here consistently.

To build movement we need sustained long-term action on a consistent basis—something that is not likely to be enjoyable, filled with victories, or motivating by itself. What allows people to maintain this action is bigger. A will to struggle in spite of everything comes from deeper inspiration; ideas and ethics that carry people through misery. Union contracts and campaigns usually focus on bread-and-butter issues like wages, healthcare, retirement, etc. Yet when attending union meetings where grievances are aired and you talk to workers organizing, you hear distinctly different discussions. Workers persistently raise issues of respect, dignity, and injustice as their primary motivating force. The union often channels that anger into those wage fights, but the issue is different. To carry things out, people need to be inspired to work towards a better world. In doing so, they become willing to do things that do not make sense on a strict dollars and sense basis, and even can make them happy having contributed to something bigger in life.

Just do the math. I once participated in a four-month strike allegedly for a \$1.50 per hour raise. At the workplace, turnover was high with most workers lasting less than a year and nearly all less than three years. The costs of being on strike immediately went beyond anything the workers would ever see. Likewise the workers were willing to occupy board members' businesses and be arrested to help win the strike, incurring more personal harm, both financial and otherwise. When the union pressed to settle the strike it was for 25 cents per hour, and after the negotiating of the contract nearly everyone quit. A few likely were disillusioned, but for many it was an eye-opening experience. Some co-workers went on to become active in unions and more committed to working in their industry. The logic of this scenario makes no sense unless we look to the motivations of the workers that go beyond their immediate demands. In fact the demands seem to matter very little beyond the will to address injustice, work against management that is perceived to be tyrannical and wrong, and a willingness to work for something better.

I call this the "collective mood" or "political will." Rather than an appendage to our work, it should take a center role in our thinking about how things play out. Today there are countless opportunities to organize and potentially motivating issues, and yet given the circumstances people often choose not to. That is a reality we have to deal with, and that should be pointed out in our work. When you pull that element out, it becomes apparent why people are not ready at any moment to dedicate the bulk of their life to politics. Without the collective mood to fight, the best organizing will ebb and flow with the amount we are asking from people and their level of frustration with short-term issues. This is in keeping with most recent fights. Places heat up, people mobilize, and then life goes back to normal with the exception of a few individuals who become more active for years, and a smaller minority for their lives.

Coming to act can change people even when they lose. Some come to see the possibility of a better life through experiences with organizing, and this can open space for revolutionaries. Our job is not just to help open that mental space, but also to offer our analysis, ideas, and values that can carry people from immediacy to the bigger picture. For those who are interested, we need to work hard to both prepare them for future fights and inspire them to carry



Graphic: iwwmiami.wordpress.com

on and go deeper. With others who don't want to continue, our focus should be on planting seeds and understanding that there has been an increase in the social experience of struggle; things which may ripen at other times. If we can sustain individual militants and work towards networks of organizers who come out of struggle, those linkages and experiences can form a backbone of social organization that isn't identical with our projects or groups, but that can in crucial moments bear fruit.

This is part of why it is so demobilizing when people try to hide, remove, or actively prevent revolutionary politics from the day-to-day work of organizing. Without engaging people politically we are abdicating our ability to provide tools that can motivate potential militants. It also gives us clarity as to why apolitical and neutral organizing is such an idealistic approach; the very basis for action comes out of how people think about the world and their actions. All action is inherently political, and our response can contribute to or stunt its trajectory.

In the present environment we have to take into account that likely only a few will want to commit themselves to sticking it out for the long haul. That doesn't mean necessarily we change what we do, but it should change our expectations and how we respond to difficulties. When we can contribute to making organizing happen, it does have an impact on people's lives and thinking even when they return.

This situation could change. There are times when broad swaths of society catch a wind and hunker down for social change. By recognizing the role of political ideas and ethics in motivating and the force of political will within social action, we arm ourselves to understand and act on different situations that may come at us. Today this means finding ways to plant seeds, spread collective activity that can help transform people, and investing in people who rise above and become willing to commit to something bigger.

Portland IWW Fights Wage Theft



Photo: Shane Burley

Continued from 1

maternity leave. Once she had given birth to her child, the only place she was provided with for breast-pumping breaks was a closet filled with caustic chemicals.

Together, PDXSol and the two women put together a demand of just over \$4,000 in compensation, as well as for Fubonn to bring their workplace up to current labor standards. A demand delivery took place, and the campaign began with regular picketing, leafletting, and the placement of posters in the owner's neighborhood that indicated the kind of wage theft and worker abuse that was taking place. Fubonn responded by filing a lawsuit for defamation against the two women and two of PDXSol's organizers, one of whom is also an IWW member.

To settle the lawsuit, Fubonn's attorney demanded a list of all members, all supporters, all funding sources, and all supporting organizations, as well as a public apology. Because of the loose nature of the network, they found it difficult to actually target PDXSol as an organization itself. If they were to comply with Fubonn's demands and release the expected information into the public record, it would have given the effect of incorporating the group into a legal entity. This would have allowed Michael Liu, the chief owner of Fubonn, to have the legal ability to broaden the targets of his legal repression.

After looking over these demands, PDXSol decided to arrange a delivery of a counter-offer. A group of approximately 50 members and supporters entered Fubonn's attorney's office with a letter of counter-demands. While the lobby was occupied, their attorney refused to leave his office and accept the letter, and the irate office manager called the police. The demands were spoken aloud through an echoing "mic check," and the letter was left for later review. In addition to the financial remuneration for the two women, the lawsuit also needed to be dropped if PDXSol was to stop the campaign.

The pickets resumed shortly thereafter,

with a large rally in front of Fubonn to publicly indicate that the campaign would continue despite the lawsuit. With the support of organizers and members from the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), UNITE HERE, the painter's union, and the Portland IWW, several new stages of the campaign were announced. First, the Portland IWW and PDXSol would start regular Friday pickets called the Fridays of Fury at Fubonn, which would target one of their busiest customer rush periods. Second, an alternative labor coalition would be created to intensify the Fubonn campaign and to create a permanent working relationship between alternative labor organizations. As Brandon Feld, the PDXSol and IWW member who is facing the lawsuit, mentioned, "The coalition is right now focused around the Fubonn case, but eventually we would like to see it turn into a broader alternative labor coalition. Different groups would be able to bring their projects there, and tap into support."

The final announcement would be the creation of a website, <http://www.dontshopfubonn.com>, that would target the business directly and act as a hub for the ensuing boycott and escalation campaign.

PDXSol follows a "direct action case-

work" model that targets worker and tenant issues without having to appeal to representative institutions to see results. Instead, a target is set and winnable goals are identified so that members can collectively see what success would look like. "I think it's important because it works," said Feld, "We've seen it over and over again, with different organizations, that these campaigns work. That escalation tactics and direct action applies more pressure to bosses and gets the goods faster than a lawsuit does. Building power around people taking direct action against oppressors is important. When we hand it off to lawyers we are giving away our agency and power."

The goal then is to see that this campaign not only achieves material wins for those involved, but also ignites a sense of power in those participating and builds the organization so that larger and more permanent struggles can take place. This boils solidarity down to its most core elements and attempts to solidify these bonds between workers into an organization that has the ability to respond when those in power move towards exploitation. The coalition is now moving forward with several partner organizations, including the Portland IWW.

Organizing

The Adjunctification Of Higher Education: Its Dirty Little Secret Exposed

By Ana M. Fores Tamayo

I was an adjunct but no longer call myself such. I have not taught since last summer. I hope that for education, for us—the precariat, the adjunct, the contingent, the casual, the occasional worker, whatever we want to call ourselves—we have a new year filled with promise, hope, action, change. I am hoping against hope that our tenuous existence will no longer be that invisible barrier that blocks us from the great light against darkness this year, 2014.

Tarrant County College District in Fort Worth, Texas—like all schools—essentially dismissed me, although they said they were “rearranging my classes.” They saw the petition for adjunct justice I had begun as a threat. With a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), all but dissertation (ABD) in Comparative Literature from New York University, they paid me only \$1,800 per semester course, no healthcare. When I looked at my education, then I checked out my income tax return, I realized I did not even make \$15,000 per year. This was a sad state of affairs. But the sadder truth is that I am not unique. There are 1.5 million faculty members in higher education today. Only 25 percent of this number is tenured. Thus, I am a one in 1 million, and of this number, over 50 percent average \$2,700 per semester, no healthcare, and another 25 percent have no tenure and are hired on limited contracts. This means that their job security is just as precarious as ours, and though some instructors may have healthcare, their pay is still not much better, and their insecurity is such that they struggle everyday with the conditions of their palpable precarity. Over 75 percent of professors today are in this predicament. We ask ourselves daily: Should we really stick it out in education?

The fact too that I went about my days for four years and knew not one other faculty member well speaks volumes; the administration tried to keep us separate, isolated and distinct. Administrators knew they could easily replace me with others who were more complacent or fearful; they did not care with whom, as long as they were not questioned. “Silence and obedience” was the golden rule. And that’s what colleges and universities count on. They want us to be afraid. The year before, the college took two of my classes away each semester, hoping that would quiet me into submission. The following calendar year, they gave me my full course load back, thinking I had learned my lesson. But they were wrong. Fear and intimidation cannot quiet truth. Thus, when they realized that had not worked, they threw me out completely, without notice.

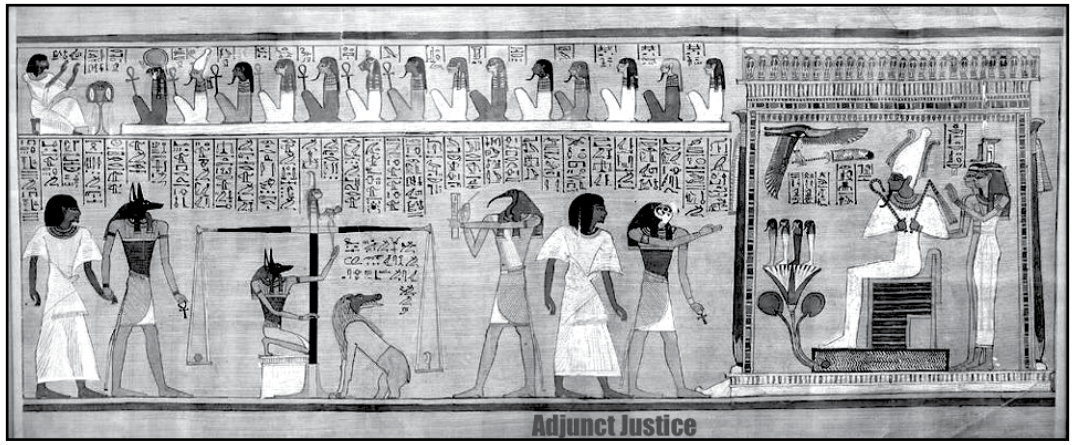
What happened to me happens time and time again to those who dare question the status quo. This is why the adjunctification of higher education has been a secret for so long; colleges rid themselves of

rabble-rousers like me. While two of my Writing Composition classes had 35 students each, how many students did full-time instructors teach? Adjuncts do not have the wherewithal to give individualized care. Why is it that both adjuncts and their students suffer? Yet how could the full-time instructor who taught the same exact class—at the same exact time—have so many less students and be paid three times as much? Students did not register individually, so they were not choosing me. How many full-time faculty members who say they feel badly for adjuncts turn a blind eye when they realize such disparities exist? Moreover, I had to sign a draconian contract every semester, checking registration to see if classes would make. So many faceless adjuncts suffer this indignity every semester.

How many of us find ourselves—before the start of a semester—desperately trying to figure out how to make ends meet because our classes have just been cancelled? And how many of us work on our syllabi weeks before only to find we have no classes to teach? Or how many of us are hired two weeks, one week, or even two days before the start of class? I am sure the adjunct who was hired to replace me found himself in just such a quandary. How many administrators do you think care what adjuncts know or even how we teach? We are just bodies to them, filling up their desired quotas—cheap labor to meet their needs.

A while back, I watched the 1960 documentary, “Harvest of Shame” (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJTVF_dya7E), which introduced migrant workers who were dirt poor; poverty was a sad but immediate presence. What is not so obvious—but because this is so, it is much more insidious—is the plight of adjuncts. We are these same poor depicted in the film. We might wear different clothes, hide our destitution a bit more in the urban or suburban dwellings of today’s modern universities, but otherwise, there is not much difference between us. How can we survive on the compensation we are paid? Yet many of us need to. Worse, as professionals, how can we show or talk to our students about our abject poverty? How can we tell them truthfully it is worthwhile to learn, when we cannot even make ends meet at the end of the day, with our great education?

More so, for many of us today—unlike years ago—what we teach is our sole source of income. And now, with the ambiguity of the Affordable Care Act, higher education is limiting courses in fear it will have to pay healthcare. Thus, schools are doubly crippling us. The Affordable Care Act, which was intended to help us, and which



Adjunct Justice’s logo.

Graphic: facebook.com/AdjunctJustice

we originally championed, is now being used against us.

Many universities have been placing adjunct course limits starting in 2014. College systems, such as my own Tarrant County College District, and all over Texas, have been notorious in cutting adjunct hours. This does not even factor in private or public four-year institutions, such as St. Edwards University; they are limiting contingent faculty to six credit hours in 2014 while saying changes have nothing to do with the Affordable Care Act. If I could not survive before on \$14,400, how will I ever survive on less? How can any adjunct survive? Texas is not alone. Many private, public, online, for-profit and not-for-profit institutions all over the United States are playing this cruel game.

So what happens to students as education deteriorates? If we do not teach, who will? If universities are not willing to pay healthcare to adjuncts who average \$2,700 per semester course, do you think they will shell out more money for full faculty hires to replace the adjuncts who are already quitting in droves?

I have heard it mentioned that adjuncts are worth a dime a dozen. Where there is one, there are 1,000. How many of these so-called 1,000 newfound last-minute hires, these superfluous adjuncts, will be ready to teach at a last minute’s notice? Worse yet: How many will be able to teach effectively? Think about this logically. The adjunctification of higher education affects all society, whatever role we might play in it: teacher, student, parent, administrator. Teacher working conditions are student learning conditions. Do we really want to be on the losing side? On the side that is morally, ethically wrong?

What is being done to education today is a complete travesty. It is unethical and immoral what my college—and with it, the world of higher education—is doing. Not only do they exploit contingent faculty by denying us living wages and healthcare, but they also deny us any sustainable livelihood. If we do not fight them, we are complicit. Yet how can we fight them when we have no sustenance? The contingent labor force—or what most call us, adjuncts, “add-ons”—is now at least 75 percent and growing. Yet we are not in the news. We are not talked about. We are not anyone’s concern. The classrooms keep filling up with students, their test grades keep faltering, and we keep teaching out of car trunks, managing two, three, sometimes four jobs to eke out a living.

When good educators are dismissed from work without reason, when we are paid substandard wages, when we are left dangling until the last minute semester after semester, when we are given no healthcare—or have classes cut because they do not want to give us healthcare—when no one, including the media, is willing to do anything to help, what can we do? Higher education as we know it seems doomed. Although now mainstream media seems to be awakening, it is still a far cry to public knowledge. Why is that? It cannot be because people are not interested. People seem not interested because they do not know. If people actually knew, they would be devastated. Students are faltering because their teachers cannot survive. And if people really knew all this, do you think

they would sit silently by? How can we teach the students of tomorrow if teachers cannot survive today?

I am not giving up on higher education or on my petition, which now has over 7,200 signatures (please sign and share!: <http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/better-pay-for-adjuncts>). I have begun a page for Adjunct Justice too (<https://www.facebook.com/AdjunctJustice>), with 600 followers, though there is always room for more. I know the power of words, of solidarity, of our 1 million strong. I have given up my individual fight, but I have not given up our fight for justice. We teach today’s students, tomorrow’s world. How can we give up on that?

This is why I am writing now. Let’s raise our voices. Take our cry to our senators and representatives, to our state officials, to our relatives, friends and enemies alike. To our churches and schools, our media. Let’s shout out. We need to unite with students, parents, educators—both tenured and contingent workers alike—because we are all one; we cannot let higher education get away with this blatant act against what is good and noble in our profession. Indeed, we have been shunned, turned down, forsaken. We have been abandoned. We are invisible. But we can say, “See who we are. We will not give up. Come fight with us: join us. Be our David against Goliath. Support us against those who want to crumble our Ivory Walls of true learning.”

A friend and colleague—an academic from Texas whom I call Professor Tenacious Texan (TT)—read this with tears coming to her eyes. She cried because it was her story. She worked hard for that dream, yet she saw that dream destroyed as she slaved away for meager pay, hours and hours spent without gratitude or pay. She could not live on students’ praise alone. She could not live without security. So she became angry. But she looked around and instead of saying, “I am leaving this crazy profession,” she said, “I am going to fight. This is worth the struggle.” And she is fighting now.

TT joined the team of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). She is beginning her struggle with Adjunct Justice in New York, but this struggle is a national struggle. What is happening now in New York is also happening in Boston, Los Angeles, D.C. and Seattle. And it can happen anywhere, if we decide to form a real “union”—a state of harmony or agreement. After all, what is a union, but an association formed by people with a common interest or purpose? So if I believe that people have a right for better compensation, benefits, support for research and scholarship, academic freedom, and so on, and Professor TT believes that as well, and she can persuade others to join her, and we can keep doing this in pockets everywhere nationally, won’t we have a movement?

And thus, won’t we make change happen?

There are public campaigns on the east coast, in the northwest, the west, and now New York. It’s the domino effect: it becomes infectious in its beautiful cascade across America. It may begin slowly, tortuously, but it can build up, especially if we nurture it. And we can all be a part of this beautiful initiative. Let’s make it so.

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Wobbly Arts

Caring For the Aged

By Luz Sierra

The following piece is a poem by Miami IWW member Luz Sierra. She expresses the hardships of being a certified nursing assistant who has witnessed her patients falling victim to a profit-based healthcare system. After having cared for the elderly for over four years, she now recognizes how they are neglected the care needed and deprived of their wealth. It is a great sentimental anecdote that many healthcare workers could relate to.

Walking beneath brown tile floors
I pass several rooms besides me
An aged soul resting in each
Waiting for a promise given by birth
To cover their eyes with darkness

As each day gets dimmer
Angels covered in white from head to toe
Manage to keep their eyes open
As we surrender our arms and legs
Replacing theirs until the final grain of sand drops

I am a chattered angel
Watching wrinkle children stepping into a cold
building,
A cage controlled by men who lust for capital,
Grabbing all they need until each child disperse

No matter how much,
I hold those cold and pale hands,
I tend their open wounds,
I lend my ears for understanding,
I share a loving smile,
They cannot look into the
light for too long,
As one's fortune is running with time,
And it's getting harder to gulp air each day.

I sometimes wonder,
How long can I practice this art of care?
How many images of final breaths can I collect?
How can I allow such wicked institution to persist?
Haven't my wings suffered enough pain?
Haven't I shed enough tears?

I cannot remorse anymore,
For there's other moaning angels searching for hands,
To unite against this lethal toxic system.

I cease the day tyrants will no longer suck innocent lives away,
When a wall of militants will protect all his prey,
Shattering teeth,
Draining their power,
Ending promises.

The world's bosses are in cahoots. Isn't it time the workers were too?

Graphic: Gadflye



Graphic: X374242

Review

The Best Brick You'll Ever Read: Why Wobblies Should Read "Capital"

Marx, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Volumes 1, 2 & 3. *Penguin Classics (Reprint edition)*, 1992. *Paperback*, 1,152, 624 & 1,152 pages pages.

By Lou Rinaldi

Karl Marx's "Capital" looks like a brick and weighs about the same. And it's an old brick, from 1867. Seeing it, you might think, "I can't do this, it's too long, too boring. Plus, it's so old, this cannot possibly be relevant." You'd be wrong. And you'd be wrong to think that "Capital" is too hard for you to comprehend. I think a big problem is that, as working-class people, we doubt ourselves and our ability to be intelligent. After all, we're told we're stupid nearly every day by our bosses! You should be assured that although a work like "Capital" may seem like a wall that cannot be scaled, it is possible to get through it. There are even various guides out there to help you along the way that might be worth looking into!

Another reservation you might have is thinking of it as something only for academics. If Marx had intended for his work to be relegated to the universities, he would never have done the work he did. Instead he presents us with a tool: an in-depth study of capitalism, a critique of capitalist ideology, and strategy and vision for a new society. Although parts are undoubtedly difficult to read, there are others that are extremely readable. Don't let a few tough pages hold you back, read at a pace that is comfortable. Skip parts you have trouble with and come back to them later. But don't give up on it, it's a book you're supposed to read—it's not just for European professors.

We should give "Capital" a chance, especially as members of a revolutionary union like the IWW. In the past, Wobblies have taken "Capital" and Marx's writing seriously. So seriously that our Preamble nearly quotes Marx verbatim when it proclaims we ought to replace the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," with the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system." The founding convention of the IWW in 1905 included discussion of Marx and his ideas and after the union was formed, some IWW branches formed reading groups to study "Capital." The IWW's political education pamphlet "An Economic Interpretation of the Job" from 1922 was essentially a short synopsis of Marx's ideas in "Capital."

And from the 1910s to the 1930s the IWW Work People's College repeatedly offered courses on Marx's critical understanding of capitalist economics. There is a history within our own organization of taking this book seriously, of studying, and using it as a tool in our work. However, there are many ways to read "Capital." The way we should think about it is reading it politically, that is, reading it as a weapon in our hands. If we can think of it this way, then it becomes an invaluable tool, a practical book that is important for all revolutionary, class-conscious workers to read.

A Description of Capitalism Like No Other

The breadth of "Capital, Volume 1" is simply unmatched by other works on the economy. Marx was relentless in his research on how the system of capitalism functions. He researched history, economic figures, and philosophic works in order to complete the book. Each chapter in "Capital" is another piece of the puzzle for understanding how the capitalist economy functions.

"Capital" touches on everything that has become part of our everyday lives, things which every working person experiences. Why we work, how we work, how we are exploited: Marx takes these subjective experiences and puts them into a larger view of things, in the perspective of a class and class struggle. An important component of the book is a history of working-class struggle against capital and the system it tries to implement. This makes the book an important weapon for revolutionaries. It helps to know this history, and to know how the capitalist system works overall.

Take chapter 25, for instance, which is about "The General Law of Capitalist Accumulation." This chapter describes the effect that creating profit has on working people in terms of wages and employment, but also the lengths that businesses must go in terms of monopolizing an industry. This describes an important element of capitalism: its flexibility and its ability to be dynamic. It has the ability to make wages and standards of living rise, to make them endurable. At the same time, it can increase the levels of exploitation and increase the amount of misery we experience. These fluctuations can create space for militant reform movements, movements like Fight For 15 that seek only to

win reforms and keep capital intact while using some radical forms or strategies, to make their demands and even win them as long as the value-form is not challenged, or in other words, so long as the circulation of commodities does not stop.

A Critique of Capitalist Ideology

"Capital" becomes a weapon for revolutionaries in two ways: as a lesson on struggle and on ideology. The subheading of "Capital" is "A Critique of Political Economy." What does Marx mean by this? His work not only shows us the technical processes that are performed in capitalism, but also the ideological war on the working-class consciousness. Namely, Marx looks to famous early economists, names that many of us will recognize: Adam Smith, Thomas Malthus and David Ricardo.

Marx contends that while these thinkers seem to "get" capitalism, they have absolutely no understanding of the real, social processes that occur in the system. Their analysis of capitalism is only a crude interpretation of what is happening in the daily lives of workers. The result is gross dismissals of the horrors of the system, and their so-called "science" thinly veils a true disdain of the poor and exploited. In particularly damning phrases, Marx summarizes and condemns all that capitalism truly stands for, from degrading a worker "to the level of an appendage of a machine" to dragging our partners and children "beneath the wheel of the juggernaut of capital."

A Strategy and Vision for a New Society

"Capital" is a weapon for workers, not merely a trophy on your bookshelf or an academic thought experiment. Because it chronicles the history of the implementation of capitalism and workers' resistance to it, we learn something about ourselves when we read it. We can see ourselves in the processes and struggles that Marx describes. This is class consciousness.

The description of the working day, in chapter 10, shows how the day was lengthened and shortened through struggle. This chapter is of enormous relevance to us today as the gains of the old labor movement are torn apart and today, like then, "Capital [is] celebrating its orgies." Recently in Poland, the eight-hour workday was taken away from the workers, and in



Graphic: libcom.org

the global South the working day remains similar to Marx's time: 12 or more hours a day. If Poland, whose loss of privileges won through struggle, is an indicator of anything, it may be that this is the direction the West is going. Without a combative movement to fight for something better we will see more places go in the direction that Poland has gone in.

In identifying the features of capitalism, "Capital" gives us some heading. It shows us that our workplaces are battlegrounds of conflict. It shows us that our lived experiences are important and worth fighting for, to improve them, to live in a truly human community. It shows us, conscious revolutionaries, how to examine the economy to choose the best places to strike and advance the struggle, to make gains for our class.

In reading "Capital" it's important to remember that in the struggles of workers we can see the beginning of the creation of a new society, a classless society. "The only way to understand the system is through conceiving of its destruction," as the Italian radical publication *Quaderni Rossi* put it in 1962 (as quoted in Steve Wright's "Storming Heaven: Class Composition and Struggle in Italian Autonomist Marxism"). Or, as Marx once put it, we need to "imagine, for a change, an association of free men (sic), working with the means of production held in common." As IWW members and members of the working class, this is our struggle. "Capital" describes in detail what we're fighting against and enriches our fight to achieve a new society.

Readers' Soapbox

The IWW Should Fight To Win – By Any Means Necessary

By Matt Muchowski

I wrote a piece in the December 2013 *Industrial Worker* (*IW*), “The Contract As A Tactic,” which appeared on page 4, discussing the IWW’s relationship with contracts, and I encouraged the union to see them as a tactic that can be used when it makes sense.

I’m glad to see that it has sparked some conversation, with separate response pieces printed in the January/February and March 2014 issues of the *IW*.

I wanted to write another piece to keep this conversation going, and perhaps clarify my views on the topic.

Overall, the decision about which tactics and strategies to use is up to each workplace, and I’m glad that our union is big enough to support workers with different views on strategy and tactics

I agree with Fellow Worker (FW) Juan Conatz, who wrote in “Contractualism Should Be Avoided” (January/February *IW*, page 4), that organization is the base of the IWW’s strength, but at times a contract can be used to organize—whether it be offensively to mobilize workers around their demands, or defensively as a shield to keep union supporters employed when the boss tries to fire them.

We should not make our strategies or goals revolve around a tactic—whether it be contracts, strikes, or picketing. Using any given tactic does not prevent us from using other tactics either at the same time, or at a different time.

“Contractualism” is something that should be avoided just as much as “strike-ism,” “electoral politics-ism,” “OSHA-ism,” or “picket-ism.” Turning any tactic or tool into an ideology or strategy leads us to build towards an action or event, with no follow-through. Our goal is have workers democratically control the means of production, and it’s not my intent to compare “contractualism” to “all-out-revolution;” rather it is my intent to encourage any and all tactics necessary to build our union so that we have the strength to follow through on our “unfinished business” as former IWW General Secretary-Treasurer (GST) Fred Thompson put it.

FW Conatz makes the point that if a shop were strongly organized enough to get a contract without certain pro-management clauses, we could be strong enough to simply impose the will of the

workers without a contract. I feel like this is a slippery slope argument—if we are strong enough to do X, we are strong enough to do Y and Z. The fact is that workers’ organization isn’t always strong enough to get X, Y and Z, but if they can get X and Y, why shouldn’t they take it, and use those extra resources to fight for Z as well? The reality is that workers in each shop and throughout the IWW and the labor movement have to assess their strengths at the moment and make decisions that will allow them to build off of that strength. Having an “all or nothing” approach will hurt our ability to get it all.

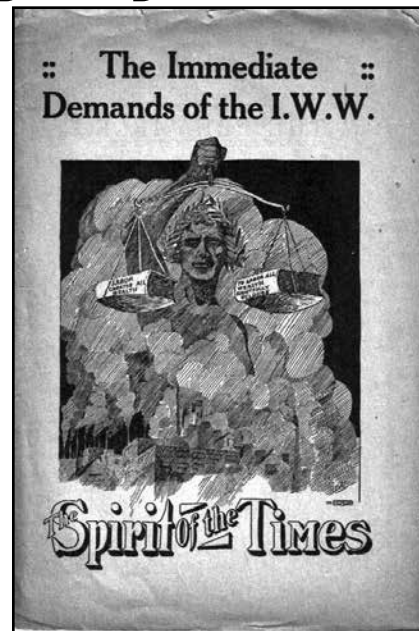
In his article “Contracts Are Not A Tool, They’re A Trap,” which appeared on page 11 of the March *IW*, FW Scott Nappalos described a bad experience with contracts at his branch’s shop—where workers became apathetic because, despite having a contract, there was a lack of organizing. Unfortunately, sometimes the union loses battles.

Workers are fired and unable to get their jobs back, strikes end with the workers returning to work to keep their jobs without obtaining the goals they set out on strike for, and occupied factories can be evicted by force. In FW Nappalos’s example, a contract was an end in itself and wasn’t used to organize and mobilize workers.

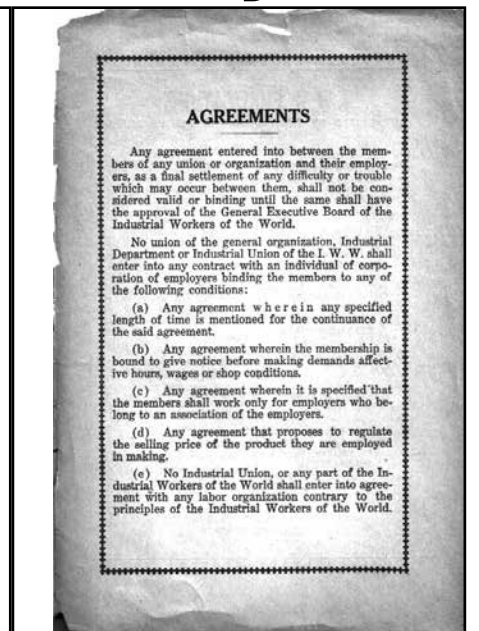
The fact that these tactics sometimes fail to achieve the union’s goals is not a reason for us to swear to never use them under any circumstance. Rather, it’s a reason for us to examine the particulars of why that tactic in that circumstance didn’t lead us to our goal of better and stronger organization of the working class, and what we can change about it in the future.

In some ways, FW Nappalos’s article actually supports my point. The contracts gave the union a foothold in the shops, and when effort was applied, the union was able to organize in these shops. No matter what tactic is used in organizing, effort is necessary to make it successful.

Some “tactics” are always bad, as they do not even try to lead us to our goal—any tactic that undermines union democracy or pits workers against each other for example. However, tactics that are used to advance us towards our goal, even if they might not succeed, are up to workers to decide on a shop-by-shop and in-



1920s pamphlet, “The Immediate Demands of the IWW.” Graphics: workerseducation.org



dustry-by-industry basis, and eventually as a whole social class.

Granted we need some standards to make sure that a particular shop doesn’t do something which is inconsistent with the values and goal of our union. Some of these are hard-line standards, some are “best practice” standards, and some will be left up to shops to decide on a case-by-case basis.

Historically our union set standards for contracts by requiring that they be approved by the General Executive Board, and that they be consistent with the values of the union. The IWW has also rejected contracts that had “specified lengths of time” or required workers to state their demands before taking action on them. You can read more about these standards in a pamphlet that the union put out in the 1920s that examined how the union can organize around bread and butter issues’ in a revolutionary way called “The Immediate Demands of the IWW,” at: <http://www.workerseducation.org/crutch/pamphlets/immediate.html>.

FW Nappalos said that we shouldn’t expect our opponents to play fair, and that they often use legalistic framework to keep us from organizing. Our opponents won’t play fair, and they will use any means and any tactic to keep us from organizing—not just legalistic ones.

With that said, we don’t have to “play fair” either.

We’re not required to tell the boss our strategy, tactics or intentions—in fact sometimes it may be useful to mislead the boss. We can talk to them about contracts while we are organizing direct actions. We can make the boss think that we are conceding something big, when we didn’t have it to concede in the first place.

The boss can feel free to mistake our tactics as reformist, and give in to some immediate demands of ours. However as a democratic union we are required to be honest with each other—that we will fight to end against the system of wage slavery, no matter what we take from the boss, or what they give to us in the meantime.

I think it is important that the IWW fights to win in a big picture way. We need to win against capitalism. There will be ups and downs in that fight, day-to-day battles, as well as struggles that last months, years and decades. But just as the boss leaves every tactic on the table—including contracts that they don’t like, including legalizing strikes, including force, etc., we too need to leave every tactic on the table.

Contracts, like any tactic—including strikes, if done in a reformist way—can be a trap for workers, but if done in a smart, revolutionary way, it can help set traps for the boss.

I’ve commented on some of the related posts on Libcom, and fellow workers interested in the conversation can follow or contribute there in addition to the *IW*.

Criticisms Of “The Anti-Democratic Of Big Unions”

By Tom Jayman

This is a response to the piece, “The Anti-Democratic Nature Of Big Unions,” which appeared on page 15 of the November 2013 *IW*. The article starts off talking about the “big unions,” such as the AFL-CIO and Change To Win Federation. However these are union federations, and unions collectively determine the course and platform of the federations. They are then considered labor aristocracy. This is not even an applicable description at this point. As a former member of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), as a grocery cashier, I made between \$6.25 and \$8.85 per hour—a far cry from being a member of the labor aristocracy. Additionally, the Service Employees Industrial Union (SEIU) has done much organizing in janitorial work and some in food service. Their contracts aren’t great and people are often still making less than a living wage, but once again, this is not labor aristocracy.

“Big business Democrats” is just rhetorical flare, and after some analysis you will see that larger businesses have higher rates of union density, higher wages, and higher rates of benefits compared to small businesses. To chastise the Democrats as being pro-big business is only an insult if you think that small business is in some way preferable, which it is not.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is then referred to

as a protectionist piece of legislation, but it is quite the opposite. Protectionism is implemented through tariffs (taxes on imports) and quotas on imports. NAFTA was a treaty that decreased these things. Free trade and protectionism are opposite approaches to trade policy, with Democrats since Bill Clinton endorsing these policies; however, the AFL-CIO and member unions have been consistently protectionist. I support the AFL-CIO’s position, as did the majority of the left back in the 1990s. NAFTA has been devastating to the industrial north, now known as the Rust Belt. Many of these workers were unionized and there has been a direct correlation between a decline of union industrial manufacturing jobs and expansion of free trade policies. It is not as though this has had a positive effect in Mexico. Agricultural imports to Mexico have flooded the market, causing worse conditions for agricultural workers while small factories/sweatshops dot the United States/Mexico border.

So this supposed “labor aristocracy,” a complete fabrication, is somehow having a negative effect on middle-class and working-class Americans. Well, “middle class” is a meaningless term. It is rightist rhetoric, used to make the rich seem poor or to ignore class relations. “Owning class,” “working class,” the “haves” and “have

nots”—these tell you something. “Middle class” takes that hostility of opposing interests out of the equation and I’d suggest leftists avoid using the obscure term.

This supposed unionist then quotes a judge “...J. Lindley in 1896, ‘the moment that trade unions become tyrants in their turn, they are engines for evil.’” This was said in a case against striking workers to justify an injunction against a picket!

So, at the top of unions, some officials are paid large salaries. I agree, but the majority of employees of unions are working class, with no substantial variance in pay between members of and employees of any given union. As an intern for the AFL-CIO, I received \$15 per hour—hardly the wage of a member of the “labor aristocracy.”

The article goes on to support various “alt-labor” organizations and tactics, mentioning that these organizations were popping up independent from the mainstream unions, with OUR Walmart mentioned as an example. However, OUR Walmart was started by the UFCW, and years back, the UFCW had an organizing campaign at Target. Currently, the SEIU is focusing heavily on low-paid fast-food workers through Good Jobs Nation. The article called the Democrats the second-most pro-capitalist party in the United States. The United States has a Constitu-

tion Party and a Libertarian Party, both of which are much more right-wing than the Democrats. There is then a criticism that more unions have not endorsed a cohesive “labor party,” but that critique is neither here nor there. Would this strategically be more viable than donating money to the Democrats? Would this new labor party end up being as moderate as the Democratic Party has become if it ever controlled a majority of the U.S. Congress? Quite possibly. I do not necessarily support the Democratic Party, but much of the American working class does, and many of them are more left-wing than the Democrats who get elected. Certainly preferring Democrats over Republicans, even to the point of campaign donations, is in no way supportive of an entire platform. To act as though the employees and members of a given union are as moderate as the Democrats they give money to just ignores the dynamics of the U.S. electoral system.

We must drop this attitude of hostility towards other unions and their members and employees. We must support our union sisters and brothers in their struggles, and then they will support us in ours. Every union is different and many Wobblies could learn from the successes of other unions, and not write off their members and employees as pro-capitalist labor aristocrats. Being too quick to alienate potential supporters is too common on the left. Let’s take some steps to remedy this.



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.

Solidarity With Workers In The Philippines, Greece

By the IWW International Solidarity Commission (ISC)

The International Solidarity Commission recently published a solidarity statement and a protest letter. We support the Greek health care workers in their current struggle. The shutdown of the call center Leadamorphosis in the Philippines which left the workers behind with unpaid wages caused us to send a protest letter to the General Electric (GE) management, their biggest customer. Please find the statements as follows:

Protest Letter to GE

Dear Mr. Jeffery Immelt,

We have heard about the unacceptable treatment of employees of the call center company Leadamorphosis in Cebo, Philippines. The workers first suffered from a period of unpaid salaries before the company illegally shut down without warning.

As GE is one of the major clients for Leadamorphosis you should be aware and worried about the illegal and inhumane actions within your supply chain. We strongly disapprove of Leadamorphosis's actions against the workers and encourage you to intervene in this affair.

Your mission statement says, "We make things that matter, things that make life better." We want to ask you, Mr. Immelt, will you help "make life better" for your clients' employees in the Philippines?

We hope that you will act responsibly and show how you live your culture.

The IWW will continue to inform workers around the world about the Leadamorphosis actions and their connections to GE.

Respectfully, ISC IWW

Solidarity Statement with Greek Health Care Workers

Solidarity with Health Care Workers in Greece: Neo-liberal "Adjustments" Destroy the Healthcare System

The International Solidarity Commission of the Industrial Workers of the World stands in solidarity with the struggle of all health care workers, doctors, and nurses in Greece against the regime of "availability" imposed on the public sector, supposedly to reduce debt. This availability regime, or mobility reserve system, entails the collective redundancy of 4,000 public sector workers and the transfer of 25,000 workers to part-time pay for eight months with subsequent dismissal or relocation.

While these changes aim to spread fear and reduce the workers' collective agency, these public sector workers won't let the government intimidate them while they stick together to fight against this clear injustice.

Certainly, the first that will be hit by redundancies among those employees are the most active unionists. Especially hospitals, but also the general health care system will be seriously damaged by this measure. On the one hand, the quality of public health will suffer and deteriorate enormously by this neoliberal restructuring. On the other hand, the economization of the health sector will proceed, making these vitally important services unaffordable to an increasing number of people, as the logic of profit in privatized health establishments gains ascendancy.

Therefore the struggle of public health care workers is one of crucial importance for the whole of Greek society. It should also be a warning sign for the working population of other European countries, as these processes reflect what happens, and will increasingly happen, everywhere under capitalism.

Solidarity with all Health Care Workers in Greece!

No to the Neo-Liberal Adjustments!

An injury to one is an injury to all! Solidarity is our weapon!



Health workers in Greece occupy a hospital in February 2012. Photo: libcom.org

Cleaners In Brazil Go On Wildcat Strike

By Tristan Bunner

Against the direction of their union, city cleaners in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, illegally walked off the job for the Carnival holidays, demanding better pay and conditions. Though they still cleaned the tourist neighborhoods of Copacabana and Ipanema, the workers refused to clean the central neighborhoods of the city. In the face of physical attacks from the Policia Militar (military police), including being forced to work at gunpoint, and verbal attacks in the capitalist press, even from their own union, the cleaners stood strong and won their demands.

On Saturday, March 1, the first full day of our visit, we crossed paths with a small march of the cleaners, which may have even been the beginning of their strike. Running towards a bus carrying more of their workmates, the cleaners intercepted and surrounded the bus, forcing the workers and driver to abandon the bus in traffic and join their march. I tried to speak with some of the workers to learn why they were striking, but none of them spoke English or Spanish, so the most I was able to understand was that they were fighting for better pay.

They could not have picked a more effective time to stop work; during the five days of Carnival most of Rio goes on holiday and daily street parties, called *bloco*s, pack the neighborhoods of the city. By



Work stoppage in Rio de Janeiro on March 1. Photo: Tristan Bunner

Monday when we returned to the city center it was piled with trash. Residents did their best to sweep the rubbish into piles, but no one was coming to gather it from there. Despite the mess, the two locals we were able to talk to about the strike, our tour guide and a post office worker, were staunchly in support of the workers.

In the end the cleaners' courage paid off. By the end of the week, the city had agreed to a pay increase to 1100 Reals from 802 Reals per month, and a food stamp increase to 20 Reals from 12 Reals. The city also agreed to enact overtime pay and a health hazard allowance and guaranteed that there would be no retaliation for the cleaners' action. This goes to show that when workers are committed and united they can win not only against their employers, but against entrenched bureaucrats within their own unions as well.

With files from <http://revolution-news.com>.

Iceland: When Solidarity Happens

By Paul Fontaine

Right now, it's pretty safe to say there is a kind of class war taking place in Iceland—one which management is waging against the working class.

At the time of this writing, Iceland's unions got the opportunity to vote on a collective bargaining agreement worked out between the Confederation of Icelandic Labour Unions (ASÍ) and the Confederation of Icelandic Employers (SA). At the heart of the issue were wage increases for the lowest paid workers. SA maintained—and still stands by the position—that wage increases beyond 5 percent for the lowest paid, and 2.8 percent for everyone else, would unleash inflation across the country. They even bought a TV spot to repeat this point. Many companies pre-emptively raised their prices; some of them still haven't lowered them.

The ploy is not only transparently false—profits in the billions of krónur (ISK) at some fishing companies, for example, could put to rest any fear that new money would have to be printed to fund a pay rise—it is also a very, very tired refrain that management has been singing for generations.

In fact, studies conducted at the Economics Department at the University of Leicester from 2004, 2006 and 2008, show that an increase in minimum wage does not significantly increase inflation. But that's a lesson we've already learned, and will apparently have to keep learning.

SA added insult to injury by proposing a tax plan that actually benefited higher income-earners more than those making the lowest wage. By their offer, a person making 246,000 ISK per month will see 8,000 ISK more per month, before taxes, and no rebates on their taxes. At the same time, another person making 1 million ISK per month will get an extra 28,000 ISK per month, plus 3,500 ISK taken off their monthly taxes.

Amazingly, ASÍ President Gylfi Arnbjörnsson argued in defense of this agreement. Maybe a 1.2 million ISK monthly salary has a way of distancing you from the experience of making ends meet on a salary of about 190,000 ISK. Part of the apologist rhetoric that has been used about



May Day in Reykjavík. Photo: Maria Alva Roff

this agreement, from editors of daily newspapers, amongst others, is that it is meant to be temporary, to last only a year, so why fight over the terms now? To go by the daily chatter, it seemed almost a foregone conclusion that the contract would sail through.

When voting was done, however, over half the labor unions in the country—17 against and 14 in favor—rejected the agreement. Why? I would speculate it's because, to anyone who's been paying attention, there is no such thing as "temporary" when it comes to this lie about wage increases. Even after this result, SA is still repeating it.

Another thing that tends to happen when management digs in its heels at times like this is that workers organize. Most of the unions that voted against the agreement turned out in larger numbers than those who voted for it, which would only make sense when the best enthusiasm anyone could work up in support for such an offer is resignation.

When faced with such a situation, workers can, and quite often have, walked. Let us not forget that SA did more than refuse the reasonable demands of working people. It engaged in a concerted PR campaign to sell its inhumanity as common sense, while heads of business blatantly extorted people with price scares. SA might soon find itself learning a lesson of its own when it comes to the historic response this elicits in people who need to earn a living wage.

The result of this collective bargaining vote may indicate a new wave of solidarity unionism in Iceland's labor movement. There is clearly a core of workers motivated to push back, and if ASÍ leadership can't represent them, they don't seem to have a problem representing themselves. Past precedent can attest to numerous instances of even larger numbers organizing effectively. In order for Iceland to awaken from its inequality nightmare, such a new wave will most certainly have a part to play. Management is, ironically, helping ensure that it happens.

This piece originally appeared in the Reykjavík Grapevine. It was reprinted with permission from the author.

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