

INDUSTRIAL WORKER



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Harvard Workers Got The Cold Shoulder This Winter



Wobblies protest discriminatory layoffs at Harvard University in January 2013.

Photo: Geoffrey P. Carens

By Geoffrey P. Carens

During what the *New York Times* called a "Winter from Hell," four blizzards dumped record amounts of snow on the Harvard University campus in the three weeks between Jan. 27 and Feb. 15. True to form, Harvard closed due to the inclement weather fewer times than other local universities. Harvard remained open on a number of days when it was unsafe or impossible for many employees to get to work. For example, the university was open on Jan. 28, when Boston had a parking ban that wasn't lifted until 5 p.m., Boston's public schools were closed, and plow drivers were reporting close calls with residents who were walking in the streets (due to sidewalks not being shoveled, etc.). Television station WCVB reported that Governor Charlie Baker stated on Jan. 27: "Unless you have a reason to be out tonight or tomorrow after midnight, we

would encourage you not to be."

Members of the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers (HUCTW) were required to use vacation or personal days at times when they feared their commute to work, such as was the case on Jan. 28. Parents faced particularly troubling choices when their children's schools closed, yet they were expected to work their regular hours. One union member commented, "I've lost all my personal and vacation time. Now I have no extra time...I don't think I should lose my earned time because I have to make a decision about my safety and health." Last year, a group of HUCTW members filed a grievance because they did not receive paid time off during a severe storm in February, but were made to report to work or use vacation or other benefit time, despite what the HUCTW contract says, that "When a

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May Day: Remembering Our Past, Looking Toward The Future

By Staughton Lynd

Somehow the IWW has done well in its ceremonial calendar. On May 1 it offers its own version of the universal spring festival. The typically gloomy weather in November is the occasion for "In November We Remember." The mood resembles that of the Latin American "Day Of The Dead," held in the same season.

There are two May Day happenings that I have written about and ask the indulgence of readers to recall with me.

When Alice and I interviewed older workers for our first book of oral history, "Rank and File" (Haymarket Books has published an expanded fourth edition), Mario Manzardo was a favorite of mine. His family came from Italy. His grandfather was one of Garibaldi's "thousand." Mario remembered that, "As an old man he'd sit in front of his door, in his chair, wearing his red Garibaldi shirt." The old man "wouldn't take his shirt off—he was so proud of it."

Mario told us that like all Left movements the Italian immigrants in South Chicago were divided into a variety of

radical grouplets. But they celebrated May Day together: "In the spring of 1936, my father joined the Italian chorus on the stage of the Venetian Hall in Kensington." They sang, in Italian:

*"Come, oh May Day;
the people await you,
The liberated hearts salute you,
Sweet Easter of the working class."*

That same day in 1936, I was part of a gigantic May Day parade in New York City. One of my mother's students had a brother named Sam Levinger who carried me on his shoulders. Soon after, Sam joined the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and went to Spain to fight in the Spanish Civil War. In September 1937 Sam Levinger was mortally wounded at the Battle of Belchite.

Many years later Sam's niece, Laurie Levinger, discovered letters from her uncle to his parents and to Sam's sweetheart. On the basis of the letters and the memories of veterans of the Spanish Civil War she has written a biography, "Love and Revolutionary Greetings: An Ohio Boy in the Spanish Civil War" (Resource Publications, Eugene, Ore.).



Graphic: pkro.org

When Sam Levinger had twice been wounded, the rules of the Brigade required that he return to the United States and do support work. Instead he slipped out of the hospital and went back to the front.

As Stephen Spender says in his poem about those like Sam Levinger, he "left the vivid air signed with his honor." The heart-breaking picture of Sam on the cover is worth the price of the book.

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NYC IWW: Beverage Plus, Pay Up!

From Wobbly City

Several former workers at Beverage Plus and their supporters visited the company in Maspeth, Queens in early April to demand that the owner Yun Cho pay the more than \$1.2 million owed to the workers from a wage theft lawsuit. Cho was present but did not come out to talk to the workers who then left a letter demanding payment. The company, which has also operated under the names YS Beverage and Grand Beverage, is a distributor in New York City (handling products such as Coca Cola and Poland Spring beverages. In 2012, the company was found liable for multiple violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act for unpaid minimum wage and overtime for dozens of workers.



Photo: wobblcity.org

The workers are still seeking the payments in court but have also called upon supporters to join their campaign to get the money owed to them. The workers have been long time members of the Brandworkers and the IWW campaign to organize and improve conditions in New York City's food production and distribution sector.

Stay tuned for more actions in support of the Beverage Plus workers!



Letters Welcome!

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

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IWW GHQ, Post Office 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

Fellow Workers: Boycott Xfinity

Greetings fellow workers,

I recently wrote a letter to the *Industrial Worker* calling for a boycott of Xfinity Comcast for their treatment of the network Estrella TV. In writing my original letter I mistakenly believed and claimed that Xfinity had completely shut down Estrella TV, and therefore left its employees jobless, which was not the case. What Xfinity Comcast did do, however, was eliminate Estrella TV as an available network on its service. In an attempt to stifle the immigration reform, Xfinity Comcast has extinguished the voice of Estrella TV on its service.

I still stand solidly against Xfinity Comcast and its anti-worker and racist actions and reaffirm my call for a boycott of the channel and its services.

In solidarity,
Edgar Arturo Sazo #1671069
Gib Lewis Unit
 777 fM 3497
 Woodville, TX 75990

Dear Editors, Readers and Fellow Workers:

The facts reported in "Fighting Patriarchy In The One Big Union" (September 2014 *Industrial Worker*, page 3) and "How We Struggle: A Response to Ongoing Patriarchal Violence In The IWW" (November 2013 *Industrial Worker*, page 3) are shocking, but not totally surprising. It seems that those sexually predatory men, including "serial rapists," deliberately chose political and religious groups to infiltrate, where the members are very unlikely to use the prevailing legal system to redress these outrages—although the legal system (and other establishment powers such as college administrators), including police, courts and social services, often re-victimize the victims. There has also been predator infiltration in anarchist and other Leftist groups.

It is not only that these things, such as sexual abuse, should not happen in the IWW—it should not be possible in the IWW! This is the type of thing that I know is done on college campuses by rich white college boys, to both female and male victims, who are perceived as vulnerable

(the same type of college boys who were strike-breakers in the Bread and Roses strike, as is seen in that famous picture of them on horseback confronting strikers). Women must be trained in self-defense. And able-bodied men who are not predatory should be chivalrous. I say this without intending to fall into gender stereotyping.

I stress again that I believe that these predators are *not* indigenous to the IWW and anarchist movements, but rather that predators choose political and religious groups where they believe they will have immunity. Some may also be hoping to destroy the IWW. Don't let them. Some may be provocateurs or creative agent provocateurs.



Graphic: wikimedia.org

Yours for the One Big Union,
Saul B.

Industrial Worker

The Voice of Revolutionary Industrial Unionism

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Organizing

Camp Counselors Of The World Unite!

By Walter Beck

I was one of the most dedicated staff members to ever walk through the gates of Ransburg Scout Reservation. I worked there for four summers and gave them my heart and soul. That ground was special to me; not only did I work there on staff, but it is also where I attended camp as a kid. That place was paradise to me.

Until late in the summer of 2007.

That year I was what they called the Quartermaster. I was the guy managing most of the equipment in the campsites: tents, cots, lanterns, propane grills, etc. If you needed to borrow something for your campsite, you came to me. I had my store in the same building as the Trading Post, where the kids went to get candy, soda, merit badge books, and t-shirts. It was my assistant and I in the store.

Despite having what many would consider a “boring” job, my store was a pretty popular hangout for both the kids and the adults. I had a big stereo in the store and a road case full of CDs. I kept the place rocking pretty hard from open to close and if I had something in my road case that the kids or the adults wanted to hear all they had to do was ask me. The only rule about the music was that it had to be clean, you know, this being a Boy Scout camp and all. I still had plenty of good tunes for everybody; I got a lot of requests for Black Sabbath, Ozzy, Jimi Hendrix, the Doors, and I kept them all spinning.

I was also pretty popular among the staff, and not just for my good tastes in music. I was a free-wheeling young artist type with long hair and an earring. I always had a good joke on hand and a spare cigarette. I was also pretty fearless; I wasn't afraid to speak my mind when I thought management was trying to do us dirty, and I wasn't afraid to remind everybody that we should stick together and watch out for each other.

Then on Aug. 1, my boss Ben strode

into the store and told me, “Walter, your music has to go. [Camp Director] Jeff said we've gotten too many complaints about it, so it's gone. And this goes for next year, too.” I told him I was going for a smoke break, and he said that was fine. As I walked out of the store, he told me, “I don't want this to affect your attitude.”

I walked back to the parking lot and lit a smoke, fuming about the whole mess. I hadn't been informed of any complaints about my music that week, or that whole summer as a matter of fact. In three years of working in the Quartermaster and always having music, I had a total of four complaints. That was it; and those had been handled.

After my smoke, I walked back to the store. My assistant asked me what we were going to do about this. I told him I didn't know; that we would just have to talk to Jeff later about it. Meanwhile, a flood of kids and adults kept coming up and asking us where our music went. Being the honest guy I am, I just told them the office told me I could not have it, and if they had any questions to take it up with them.

At the suggestion of one of the other staffers, I drafted a petition; it seemed like a reasonable thing to do. After all, I didn't want to go in to see the camp director unarmed, so to speak. I wanted to show him it wasn't just me he was affecting; it was a lot of people.

We broke for lunch and then I went back to open the store at 2 p.m. About an hour later, I went next door to the Trading Post to get a couple of Cokes for my assistant and I. I overheard Matt, assistant camp director that week, talking to some of the kids. I didn't catch the whole bit, but I did hear him say it was “inappropriate” that I told them I had my music taken away. I suppose he felt I should have lied to the kids and made up something about

my stereo being broken.

My assistant and I tried to go normally about the rest of the day, filling out inventory sheets, starting closing equipment checks, but, admittedly, it was very difficult under the circumstances. We were a few days away from the end of the season and management was trying to put the screws to us.

That night I went out for dinner with my troop and my old man, who knew about the situation, and kept telling me “Son, if you wanna quit, there's plenty of people here who will take you back home to Avon.” But I didn't want to quit, not then. It would have been cowardly.

The next day, Aug. 2, I woke up in my bunk to what turned out to be my last day as an employee at Ransburg Scout Reservation.

After my morning rounds of ice and water deliveries, I went back to the store to continue my work when I saw that Matt was there, and he wanted to talk to me. He didn't try to play nice; instead, he started accusing me of trying to pull a stunt behind his back and then said, “Your petition isn't going to accomplish anything except maybe make you feel better because you have 100 staff members on your side. You think something like that is going to impress Jeff?” I didn't say anything; I kept a level stare at him. I knew he was trying to sound tough, but I could hear the fear behind his voice.

He blew off after trying to shake me down and went about his business. I was reaching a boiling point, but I still tried to keep cool. I wasn't ready to quit; I had my assistant to think about. I knew if I quit, they would try to bring the hammer down on him.

I opened the store back up after dinner for the hour evening shift. I was working it solo since my assistant had the night

off. As I was wrapping up business for the night, two more members of management—assistant camp commissioner Sally and assistant camp director Luke—walked in and they had me in their sights.

Like Matt, those two were not there to play nice with me. Sally opened it up by telling me, “If we get any more kids coming into the office and asking about your music, you're gonna be fired. If anybody else asks you about it, you tell them exactly that your superiors decided you couldn't have it and then leave it at that.” Luke chimed in by saying, “Walter, every decision we make as a management team is carefully considered and well-thought out and we expect the staff to back us up.” They muttered a few more threats and then left.

Well fellow workers, that was it for me. I had enough, I had been bullied and threatened for the past 24 hours, and I wasn't going to take it anymore. I told my old man I was leaving, stopped by the office to drop off my keys and my walkie-talkie, and left the place I called my summer home for four years. In the end, it wasn't about the radio, it was about the way they treated me.

After I left, the rest of the staff and the kids made sure management knew where they stood. My name was chanted loudly at the Friday night campfire, and a song was dedicated to me in the dining hall by one of the handicraft counselors. On Saturday night at the end-of-the-year staff banquet, when management was patting themselves on the back, one of the dining hall staffers raised her glass and said, “Here's to Walter!” The other staffers around her raised their glasses and said, “Hear, hear!”

It was one of my first real fights as part of the working class and you know, maybe it looks like I lost—I did leave my job, after all—but looking back eight years later, I don't think I did. I faced down management at one of the biggest Scout camps in the Midwest and they didn't get the best of me. I walked out on my own terms; not one of them can say they fired me. And through the bloody end and even afterwards, the staff stuck by me. It was a battle in that Indiana Scout camp between us and them and we won.



Graphic: iww.org

IWW Constitution Preamble

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

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

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

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

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

Join the IWW Today

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

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

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

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

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

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

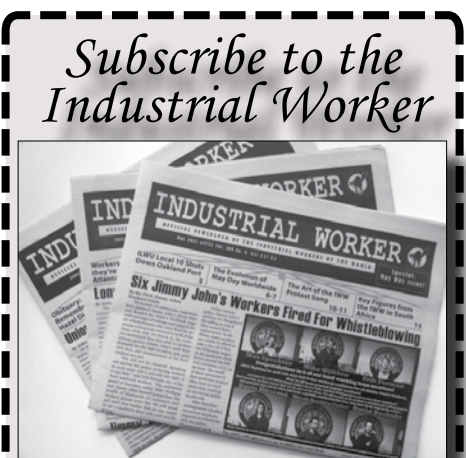
Initiation is the same as one month's dues. Our dues are calculated according to your income. If your monthly income is under \$2000, dues are \$9 a month. If your monthly income is between \$2000 and \$3500, dues are \$18 a month. If your monthly income is over \$3500 a month, dues are \$27 a month.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

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



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My First OT101

By FW Josh Fleck

It's the Monday following the weekend of the IWW Organizer Training 101 (OT101), and my soul and limbs are refilled with a fire that I cherish. Before I was filled with weakness and despair regarding my situation, and now I have a newfound confidence in myself and my fellow workers. I, a lone individual, can only accomplish so much, but with the aid of my fellow workers we have the power of all the individuals that comprise our collective ideals and actions.

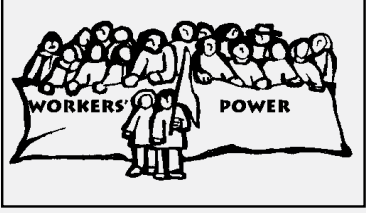
It was only a short drive up, yet the hour of our departure was far earlier than my normal rising time. I rode up with a fellow worker, inexpressive outwardly of their elation to drive, seeing as they do not have ownership of a car and I, slow to wake and not often a passenger in my vehicle, was able to provide. And little was the conversation up, but great was the conversation nevertheless. In our passing we mocked sardonically the suburbanite housing divisions in the fields, spit fire about our situations, and shared ideas and dreams of our little Indiana town.

Upon arriving at the place of our meeting, a strange structure—half-house above and union hall below—we were greeted by 15 or so Wobblies and the aroma of coffee, that nectar of the work-

ing class pressed from the labor of Earth and workers' blood. The silent grogginess of the morning hours slowed our speech, yet we would come around to introducing ourselves by circling the room stating our names, gender pronouns, department within the union, and what we would change about our workplaces.

Now, much was spoken and disseminated at the meeting, and I would strongly recommend you get in touch with a Wobbly about attending one some-day; however, we'll spare what was spoken lest some boss-heads snitch to the masters. Besides, while extremely interesting to share stories of our workplaces and how we might help our co-workers in organizing them to our ends, it is the evening following the workshop that was magical.

A fellow worker opened their house for room and board and grub, the alcohol flowed freely and the mist was wafting. Choruses of solidarity were sung, refrains of love and struggle were shouted, gospel readings of IWWism were had in that garage before the hour of compline and matins. I will not be able to forget that night, it gave me a renewed sense of life and the knowledge that through all my struggles, I struggle not alone and there is a community and oasis for me to travel to.



"Workers Power" is seeking submissions! The longest running regular feature in the Industrial Worker, the Industrial Workers of the World's monthly newspaper, "Workers Power" is a curated monthly column that features reflections on workplace organizing and the strategies and tactics necessary to build a democratic, radical, and anti-capitalist labor movement. Contributors have included many unsung heroes and well-known Wobblies and militants like Liberte Locke, Staughton Lynd, and Daniel Gross. Submissions should be around 800 words and sent to Colin Bossen at cbossen@gmail.com. The column is archived online at <http://libcom.org/library/workers-power>.

Don't Mourn, Organize!

Fellow workers,

As we all know, Fellow Worker (FW) Joe Hill was executed by the state of Utah on Nov. 19, 1915. He was executed on trumped-up murder charges in a fraudulent trial, which has long been called one of the biggest injustices in U.S. judicial process of the 20th century. His life, actions, death, and legacy are all well known to fellow workers in the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

This November marks the 100th anniversary of the execution of the Laureate of Labor and in the spirit of FW Joe Hill, and his reassuring last communiqué, we ask Wobblies around the world not to mourn his passing and legacy, **WE ASK YOU TO ORGANIZE!**

On Nov. 19, 2015, the General Executive Board (GEB) is calling on IWW members to go out and soapbox in their towns and cities (a soapbox is a raised platform on which one stands to make an impromptu speech, often about a political subject). Plan the action with your fellow workers and branches and take organizing back to the streets. Speak to the legacy of Joe Hill and the anniversary of his execution; extol the merits and ideas of organizing workers; windmill (to use an old soapbox term) to people on the streets about rank-and-file organizations, unions, etc. We call on branches and members throughout the union to plan this coordinated action independently, with full discretion being left up to branches and members as how to plan their own action; you can focus on an area, an industry, a cause, etc.—design it to your branch's current campaigns and strengths. This union-wide action is to remember Joe Hill and organize in his spirit, using the tactics, creativity, and defiance that he wielded in the fight against oppression, inequality and injustice.

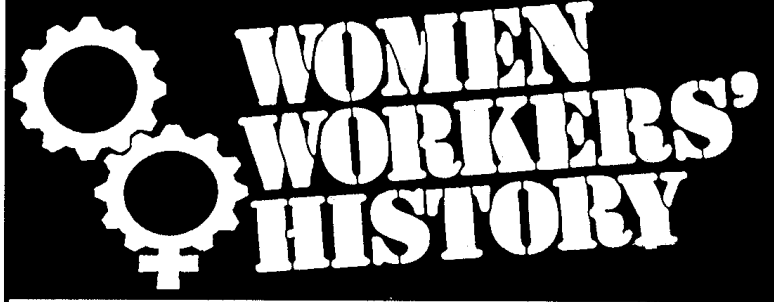
The requirements to accomplish this action are minimal. All you need are a



Graphic: joehill2015.org

soapbox, crate, or box of some kind that fellow workers can stand on safely; a short memorized or improvised speech; and possibly pamphlets or leaflets to pass out to interested passers-by. The GEB is working on toolkit pamphlets and a short pamphlet on FW Joe Hill and will distribute them later in the year. Anything else is up to the discretion of members and branches. By taking this action, coordinating it union-wide, and keeping our action relatively inexpensive, we can best remember Joe Hill while staying true to his legacy and the ideas of our union.

**Solidarity forever,
2015 General Executive Board
Michael Garcia, GEB Chair
K. Maria Parrotta
DJ Alperovitz
Drake Hoffmaster
Jimi Del Duca
Elliot Hughes
Michael White**



Chapter 82

Frances Perkins

When women workers leaped to their death from the windows of the burning Triangle Shirtwaist Co. on March 25, 1911, a horrified Frances Perkins watched below. "I felt I must sear it not only on my mind but on my heart as a never-to-be-forgotten reminder of why I had to spend my life fighting conditions that would permit such a tragedy," Perkins later wrote. She was nearly 32 at the time of the disaster, which claimed 143 lives.

Perkins, who had been secretary of the New York Consumers' League, in 1912 became chief investigator for the New York State Factory Commission. She made a point of educating politicians on the conditions that workers faced on the job.

"We used to make it our business to take Al Smith (governor of New York and Democratic nominee for president) to see women, thousands of them, coming off the ten-hour night-shift on the rope walks in Auburn. We made sure that Robert Wagner personally crawled through the tiny hole in the wall that gave egress to a steep iron ladder covered with ice and ending twelve feet from the ground, which was euphemistically labeled 'Fire Escape' in many factories."

Perkins successfully campaigned for factory safety legislation and reduction in working hours. She became the first woman to hold a major political office in New York when Gov. Smith appointed her to the State Industrial Commission in 1919. Ten years later, Governor Roosevelt appointed her State Industrial Commissioner, with responsibility for administering the state's labor and workers compensation laws.



In 1933, Perkins became the first women ever to serve in a presidential cabinet when newly-elected President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed her U.S. Secretary of Labor. Industrialists and labor officials alike grumbled about Roosevelt's choice. Said AFL Pres. William Green, "Labor can never be reconciled to the selection." Perkins wasn't "one of the boys."

Graphic: Mike Konopacki



Reading
Writing &
Revolution

Happy
May Day!

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Wobbly & North American News

California Students Stage Walkout



Pittsburg High School students walk out of class. Photo: contracostatimes.com

By John Kalwaic

Hundreds of high school students walked out of Pittsburg High School in Pittsburg, Ca., on March 18 to support their teachers who were in contract negotiations with the administration. Both administrators and Dawn Cova of the Pittsburg teachers' union denied knowing in advance about the student protest, although Cova has been involved in public pressure on the administration. "It's really impressive that students were able to organize themselves and demonstrate something that they felt was important to them," Cova told the *Contra Costa Times*. "There's such a sense of apathy among adults in our society, so to see the kids organizing themselves and taking action that they believe will make a difference is really promising." High school officials were overwhelmed by the protest but

did not bar the students from leaving. A number of staff and officials, such as Principal Todd Whitmire, actually escorted students to nearby district offices and helped facilitate a meeting between them and Superintendent Janet Schulze. "We wanted to do something for them because they do so much for us all the time," said Mayra Denisse Lopez, a Pittsburg High senior who helped organize the protest. "I thought that no one was going to do it, to be honest. But when I actually left my class and walked outside, there were a couple hundred kids in the middle of the school." Schulze said that she "applauded" the students for their interest and said the administration was "doing what it could" but made it clear to the students that the protest would only be tolerated once.

With files from the *Contra Costa Times*.

Portland Students Stage Sit-In

By John Kalwaic

Students from Boothbay Region High School (BRHS) in Portland, Ore., staged a sit-in inside the school's gymnasium on Feb. 27, in support of their teachers. The teachers at BRHS have been without a contract since Sept. 1, 2014, and the teachers' union wanted better healthcare benefits and the right to earn pay raises. Not all BRHS students were in favor of the sit-in and thought the students who participated were "misinformed." The students



Student sit-in. Photo: boothbayregister.com

who participated received detention on March 6 from the school's principal, Dane

Welch, for skipping class.

With files from the *Boothbay Register*.

Toronto OT101: Build The Committee Training



Graphic: Toronto IWW

The Toronto IWW is pleased to announce opening of registration for the Spring 2015 edition of Organizing 101: Build the Committee Training, our crash course on grassroots, direct action-driven solidarity unionism.

Dates: May 16-17, 2015

Location: Downtown Toronto in an accessible (physically and by transit) location

Registration deadline: May 2, 2015 **registration is mandatory, see below**

Website: <http://torontoiww.org/2015/04/09/101spring2015/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/439816622850020/>

This is a two-day course on building power in your workplace from the bottom up. It focuses on techniques for building a committee of workers who are confident and capable of addressing issues in the workplace, and for overcoming obstacles like worker apathy, anxiety, and the bosses' counter-organizing efforts. The course is free/donation, and is open to everyone!

Do I have to be a member of the IWW to attend? Absolutely not! The skills built in this workshop are useful to anyone interested in building power on their job whether it is in the context of an IWW campaign, an independent union, the mainstream labor movement or another formation. Learn more about the IWW.

We will get started on Day 1 of the course (Saturday, May 16) at 9 a.m. and end at 5 p.m. Day 2 of the course (Sunday, May 17) will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. There will be a social event Saturday night. *Attendance for the full two days of the workshop is mandatory* in order to get the full picture of the methods.

Food will be provided, and childcare will be provided as required (please indicate on registration).

Register here: <http://goo.gl/forms/J8Am64oJ1w>, or email toronto@iww.org.

Correction

The URL posted for donations to Fellow Worker Brandon's fund in the story "Welsh Wobbly Facing Deportation," which appeared on page 7 of the April *Industrial Worker (IW)*, was incorrect. The correct URL is: <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/help-brandon-get-his-visa-his-wife-needs-him-here/x/9812440>. We apologize for this error. Please donate to his fund today! - the *IW* editors

The AFL-CIO Organizing Workshop: A New Mask On An Old Face

By FW Martin

The National Organizers Workshop of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) presented a distinct menu of strategy and tactics in Washington, D.C. on March 6 and 7. Union organizers joined with community organizers in workshops to share experiences and develop a mutuality that has clearly been missing over the past decades. Issues such as mass incarceration and immigration were put on the table. There was an overarching theme of unity. This collection of AFL-CIO unions has clearly paid the cost for the focus on government employees. The reputation of unions collaborating with the National Security Agency (NSA), promoting super-maximum security (supermax) prisons, covering up militarization of police and facilitating repression has cost the AFL-CIO.

Several Wobblies attended the workshop, including myself. The weak spot in the weekend was that it was conducted in an atmosphere where one could almost believe that there was no presence of the AFL-CIO in the implementation of the Surveillance State. When panelists were challenged for facilitating the growth of supermax prisons, the panelists simply shrugged and weakly asserted that there was little they could do with such unions. This comes from the same AFL-CIO that found ways to purge unions and leaders in the 1950s for being too radical.

At one workshop, one of the panelists brought up the efforts of steelworkers in Pittsburgh to buy out a local mill that was shutting down: "The only thing we lacked was capital." Indeed. Funny how that works. The panelist was reminded

of how other locals stayed out of the project and failed to demonstrate a mutual defense of steel jobs through a concerted regional job action against the closings. Instead, now we find United Steelworkers locals promoting steel jobs by promoting government contracts for Keystone XL and fracking at the expense of the same communities their left-hand is supposedly promoting at the workshop.

Labor Day in Pittsburgh last year showed a massive display of thousands of union workers. Much like the workshop, this demonstration is expressive of the current discontent in the marginalization of workers and the simmering anger of our communities. The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) organizing drive and the Labor Day demonstration present the face of the AFL-CIO as engaged in organizing the unorganized and uniting a broad spectrum into a social movement opposed to capitalism. But, the fundamentals remain unaddressed. Teachers continue to be harassed by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. Killer cops continue to demonstrate their immunity from accountability. Even among government workers, there continues to be a downslide in union representation, from 36.4 percent in 2004 down to 35.7 percent in 2014. Meanwhile, telecommunication workers in unions have gone from 22.4 percent of the workforce in 2004 down to 14.8 percent in 2014, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The question becomes: What is the road forward? Craft unions of the AF of L have been here a long time, working to minimize the influence of unskilled workers. The CIO developed a core of industrial unions but turned right around and kicked out militant unions to maintain



Discussion at the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute. Photo: AFL-CIO Organizing Institute

their positions. We've seen rank-and-file organizations subjected to repression and a rank-and-file leader, like Jock Yablonski, murdered by United Mineworkers President Tony Boyle. Today we see union leaders, like the United Automobile Workers, negotiating away their contracts in the hope of keeping plants open. We see the Steelworkers working as salesmen for U.S. Steel. We see the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) promote the prison-industrial complex.

What's a Wobbly to do? We are a lone voice right now. We want no collaboration with the state. The state that "disappeared" 43 student teachers in Mexico. The state that locks up over 2 million because they can't give them jobs. The state that raided the IWW for opposing World War I. We cannot negotiate with our own unions if they are to defend our

living standards and our vision for a better life. They must be with us and show it.

The National Organizers Workshop was a good idea. It is a recognition that things cannot go on as before. But it denies what is obvious, that what we lack are leaders more willing to fight than they are to compromise away our rights. Students have joined with teachers in opposing standardized testing. Prison employees have opposed the brainwashing techniques of "cognitive restructuring," where access to basic life necessities are subjected to meeting required obedience standards and super-max prisons isolate prisoners from the world. And many have refused to be complicit in violations of fundamental human rights. The militarization of AFL-CIO unions needs to be confronted. Workers have no stake in a police state. There are no jobs worth the crimes. Therein lies the new strategy.

Special

Getting Your Second Five-Year Card:

By Brandon Oliver

So, you've just paid your 13th month of dues, and your delegate filled out a crisp new five-year red card to add to your flimsy one-year card? First of all, congratulations, and don't try to keep it in your wallet—that will tear it up right away.

Second, let's talk about what you can do to make sure that this five-year card is just the first among many. I have a 10-year goal of 10,000 members in North America. If we are going to do that, and maintain ourselves as a member-run, member-led, and member-financed organization, we need to address our high turnover. Not only for the obvious reason that it affects our membership numbers, but because the kind of organization we want to be can only work if there are significant numbers of members who are experienced and able to engage critically with the organization, promoting new ideas and developing strategies through constructive discussion.

The fact that we even have the concept of "One Month Wonder" is a tragedy, and I think we should be urgently discussing why people join up for just a month and how we can completely eliminate that problem. However, at least as big of a problem is the attrition of "medium-term" members, which we can hastily define as members who have completed their initial one-year dues card but have not yet completed their first five-year card. These are people who have already made a significant financial, emotional, and time investment into the union, and yet somehow they end up dropping out. This can take the form of dropping out of any labor activism, or becoming a union staffer; it can be silent, or it can be contentious. No matter what, when it continues to happen, it cripples our ability to have a pluralistic and democratic organization, and it is something we need to address. Below I have some tips for medium-term members to help them find a long-term home.

1) Get a hobby, or two, or three (be friendly with people in the union, but have friends outside as well).

I'm always skeptical of anyone whose entire mental life is devoted to leftist politics and theory. Some will cynically claim that these are the kind of people who end up becoming mini Stalins—I don't know if that's true or not, but it isn't my complaint. The issue we have is that since there is no radical labor movement to speak of, anyone who tries to engage 100 percent with radical politics is slaying giants in their mind. This mentality and lifestyle actually contributes towards the proliferation of unapproachable sects, rather than a multi-faceted movement that can appeal to all sorts of working people.

To draw a crude analogy, I occasionally enjoy nerdy things like tabletop role-playing games (RPGs) and board games. Some of the people you meet in that scene seem to have nothing else happening in their life, and they have devoted all of their intellectual and social energy to becoming masters of the games that they play. (If you haven't met them, just think of the Comic Book Guy from "The Simpsons"). I believe at a certain point it reaches a vicious spiral, where these masters compensate for underdeveloped social skills through their game mastery, and their social skills deteriorate even further, so that gaming becomes the only social outlet left to them. If I'm going to bring a friend to a board gaming event, these are the absolute last people I'd want them to play with—chances are my friend would never want to come back. No doubt the same kind of people are found hanging around dance clubs and bike shops, who know (or seem to know) loads about their specialty but consciously or not act in a way that creates a huge barrier to "normal" people getting involved.

We've all seen, or heard about, the



Pay your damn dues!

Photo: teorganizer.com

same type of people becoming activists. Unfortunately, unlike gaming conventions or bike forums, we are in a democratic organization that has to make decisions about important things. These people know exactly what the organization should do (or think they do), and when it doesn't, they get very loud. When there is more than one game master they tend to get very loud and aggressive towards each other, as well as anyone else who has an opinion. In the long run, this leads to them burning out, because they can't deal with the frustration of the organization always doing the wrong thing; or else they become so poisonous to a functioning, democratic and supportive internal culture that the rest of the membership has little choice but to have them leave. This would be tragic even if it was just destructive to them, but generally by the time they leave they have already contributed towards multiple other people leaving or never joining in the first place.

You'll know the warning signs—the worst is when your closest comrades have to start saying "True, they are acting like a jerk, but they've contributed a lot to the union in the past," or any variation on this. Don't let this happen to you; by this point it might be too late. Find things to do outside of the union, which stimulate you mentally and put you in contact with people outside of your branch. When someone at work asks you what your hobbies are, and you're not ready to tell them about your union membership, you should have something better to say than "Ummm.... well..."

2) Get a job that doesn't drive you crazy, and that you could imagine having medium-to-long term.

I'm convinced that part of the reason for our high turnover is that there is an informal, but real, encouragement to live like Che Guevara. New members, especially in their early 20s and in school or just graduated, are encouraged to "salt" into retail chains making around minimum wage, in horrible conditions. They are expected to "put their lives on hold" while working these jobs, in order to organize at them.

There is a problem here: anything, when it is encouraged as an individual lifestyle choice separate from strategy, is just another form of activism (i.e., activity for the sake of activity). The summit hoper lifestyle and the retail salt lifestyle have a lot in common, and it shouldn't be any surprise that both seem to appeal mainly to people in their early 20s. When this is

the focus of the union, older workers in other industries see less relevance for the problems they are facing, and silently drift away. This cements us as an organization oriented towards people in their 20s, with less relevance for older workers. Meanwhile, at some point nearly everyone in retail (at least in my experience) is looking for better jobs, especially without organizing campaigns, and with life and social pressure working on them, our retail salts will also inevitably start to look for something that can pay the bills, earn respect, give something approaching a work/life balance, etc. At this point a significant number drop out of the union, especially those who take staff organizing positions at business unions. At Starbucks, for example, although there is no hard data, I believe a fair estimate would say that for every five red card holders who decided to get jobs there to organize, at least three are no longer in the union, with at least one taking a staff position at a business union.

Now, I want to be clear about two things. First, I absolutely think that workers in retail and other low-wage sectors can and should form militant class unions. I don't think I could have ever understood

the phrase "Break their haughty power" on as raw a level I do without working my own share of crappy retail jobs and experiencing the petty psychological domineering and manipulation that adds insult to the injury of being underpaid and overworked. I understand that structurally an ever-increasing number of workers are stuck in these jobs, including older workers, workers with kids, etc., and I think that we should orient towards organizing within them. However I would like to see us put more effort into finding already existing organizers within the industry, especially who are established with industry history, rather than focusing almost solely on sending in organizers to generate an organizing campaign, cadre-style. One or two years is a long time in an individual's life, but a very short time in many workplaces/industries.

Second, I'm not against trying to get a particular job for political or organizing reasons, just as I'm not against going to or organizing protests when they make sense. What I'm opposed to is an elevation of strategy into ideology. The question of whether to organize or attend a protest, or whether to get a job in a specific company or industry, should be made based on the expected and potential outcomes and weighed against what you're giving up to do it, all of which should be informed by our previous attempts and experiences. If there is already an established shop or industrial committee with momentum behind it, it might encourage unemployed members to seek work in its shop or industry in order to have more reach, but this is a far cry from saying "Get a job you don't like or plan to stay at, where you'll be the only organizer, and let us know how it goes."

However this tactical use of salting is quite different from the "salt everywhere" attitude that I believe we've inherited from the anti-globalization movement's "protest everywhere" ideology. Our turnover is the price we pay for it. Imagine if everyone we'd encouraged to go into retail until they burned out had instead been encouraged to become a teacher, or nurse, or work in rail transport (just to take a few examples) according to what they were interested in? These are the sorts of careers that can provide at least a modicum of financial stability, which in turn leads to people staying in them long enough to build roots and become organic leaders. I wouldn't say that we should all get these specific jobs, but if we encouraged younger, new

Continued on next page

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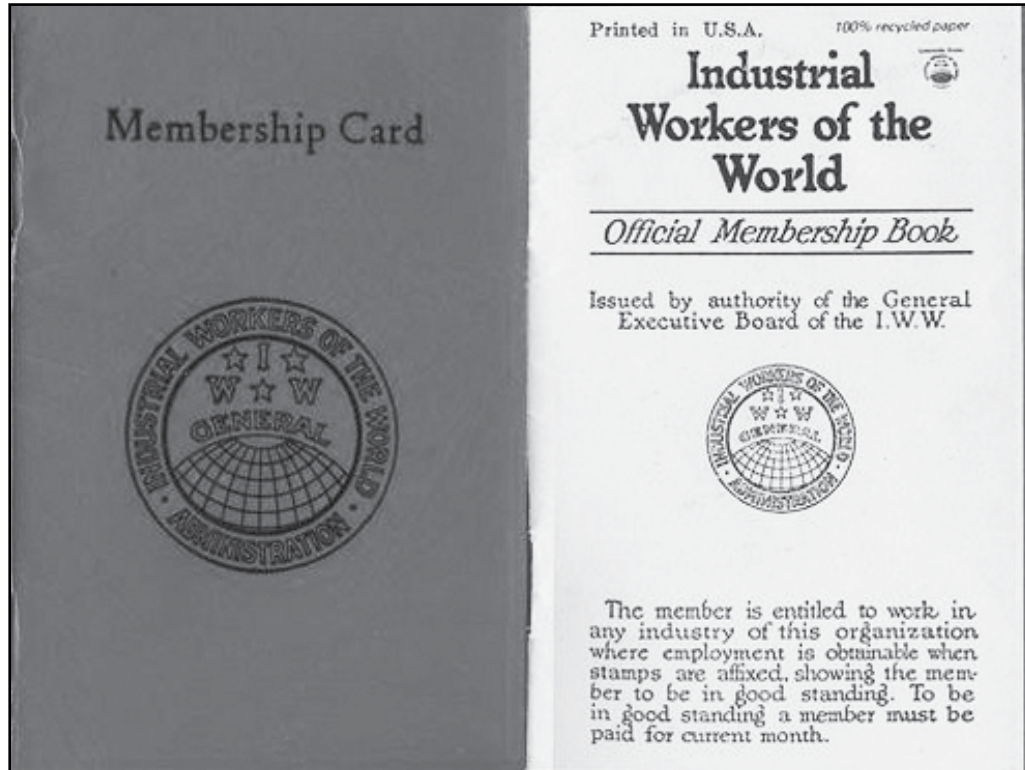
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For only \$18 you can buy one full year's worth of working-class news from around the world for a fellow worker in prison. Just email iw@iww.org to order the subscription TODAY!



Special

Six Tips For Life-Long Wobblies



An IWW member's red card.

Photo: flickr.com/photos/bataillesocialiste

Continued from previous page

members to think along these lines, we'd be a much healthier organization with less attrition and more industrial organizing potential, as well as more serious and better funded. We'd certainly have more members in their 30s and with children, both because people who joined in their 20s would continue to see us as relevant, and because they could organize and attract their peers.

So for my part I don't encourage new members to salt into whichever multinational retail chain is currently the most attractive. In fact I'd actively discourage it, unless they've been asked to do so by an active organizing committee, and it is being considered as a strategic choice. To the young new member having an existential crisis and thinking that maybe they can solve it by working retail for a few years, I'd say: think about an industry that you could be in for 5 or 10 years without going crazy, that matches up with what you like, and come up with a plan to get into it. Then, once you're in it, spend a year learning and taking direction from your fellow workers, while doing what you can to build and spread solidarity, before you start actively organizing (unless there's already organizing going on or the situation is particularly ripe). This, I think, would put us on a path of long-term stability and influence in various industries.

3) Remember that we are the union.

In other words, there is nothing sacred about this union. It's all been thought up by members before us—all of whom are human beings. In particular there seems to be some kind of sanctity about the IWW Constitution, which is important for making sure people don't break it, but which hurts us when it reduces our ability to imagine changing it. There are a lot of other things we do just because they've always been done that way. Why do we tier our dues, or have a complicated delegate-branch-General Headquarters (GHQ) reporting process? Why do we talk about phantom industrial unions which don't actually exist? I don't think we need to change everything just for the sake of change, but I do think we need to be able to think about changing anything. (The other problem is how to change it meaningfully—'we are the union' means that change must come from the membership, not just the officers—more on that later).

4) Learn to say "No"—Democracy means being empowered to vote against things you disagree with (and learning to be voted against).

Many of us are friends with each other, or at least friendly. This is good when it

helps keep cordial relations and prevent strain. However most of us have little experience being in a democratic organization where some decisions are tough to make, or where most members already have an opinion. It's important to be able to say "no" and to feel comfortable doing it. Maybe another fellow worker's proposal is bad. If you don't say so, who will? Maybe there are others who agree but don't know how to articulate it or don't feel empowered. By voicing disagreement, you help make sure that the organization keeps its feet planted and that its decisions actually reflect its membership. Sadly, I've seen many occasions when a small number vote in favor, while an even smaller number vote opposed, and the large majority abstain. Call it a "Minnesota No" if you like, but this culture allows bad ideas to win and represent the union even though they don't represent the will of the membership.

5) Start thinking 10 years ahead.

I'm not one of those people who say "The revolution will never come in our lifetime." Who knows, global ecological collapse could come in our lifetime with everything that would entail. The IWW of the 1920s talked about organizing to take over production after capitalism collapsed more than about taking up arms against it—and maybe there's something to learn there.

That being said, we'll also get nowhere (at least not anywhere good) if we permanently imagine ourselves on the edge of the cataclysm and make all of our personal and political decisions on that basis.

Maybe it's part of the definition of our generation that people worry about home property values at the same time as every third movie predicts the end of the world, but if so, it's a contradiction we currently live in.

To actively take part in an organization that promotes global worker unity and takeover of industry already sets you apart from the vast majority of people's experience in North America (though after Occupy I wonder if this gulf has lessened). Especially if you join in your youth, it can seem like the natural attitude to adopt is that everything has to be accomplished right now. Waiting sucks. And so we get crappy jobs that we don't plan to keep (see above), we expect the organization to immediately change to match what we think it should be, or to sink major resources into whatever the project of the month is, and we fight with anyone who disagrees (because obviously they're wrong). When things don't turn out like we want, and we have no long-term plans for the organization, then of course we can just leave and move on to something else—whether

another activist outfit, a paid union staffing position, or just a "normal" life. This makes it hard for us to keep experienced members.

A lot of good things can come from impatience and impulse. I might be arguing myself into a contradiction since I also encourage newer members to expect and promote change in the organization. Obviously a balance is needed here.

Many organizations, not to mention a lot of people, try to make plans for several years down the road, to strategize possible, expected, and desired outcomes. For example a company might have a strategy for a certain level of vertical integration and market share, or a person might plan to start a family, purchase a house, advance their career; all of these require making realistic goals and thinking backwards. If we all imagined the IWW we'd like to see in 10 years, and based our every day activity on this, that would be a big step for our organization.

For example, my 10-year plan for the IWW, in brief, is that we should be a known, substantial force in the North American political/industrial climate, with a developed, diverse, and active membership, some industrial strength, and a presence outside of major cities. We should also be able to react relatively quickly as an organization when necessary, whether because of a pressure being brought on us or because the working class is moving in response to police brutality or austerity measures.

Put in concrete terms, I think an achievable membership figure for 2024 would be 10,000 in North America. (Though I worry this is too modest, considering how much has changed in the last 10 years). This is 10 times our current membership, but the organization would look far different. Right now in North America we have 51 branches with a median size of around 11 members. Only five branches have around 50 or more members and are constantly involved in actual workplace struggles, becoming a pole of attraction in their city, such as the Twin Cities, Bay Area, or Portland (I used the information from General Organization Bulletin [GOB] #7 2014, and assumed 10 members for each of the 10 branches whose information was not reported).

For a union of 10,000 members, let's assume we would need 100 branches with a median size of 100: some larger, some smaller, some cities with multiple

branches. That means we'd be present in a lot more cities; it also means that in a lot of the cities that we're present in, we'd be well established, rooted in local labor struggles, and attracting workers who are interested in building a radical labor movement. If you start to imagine what this would look like, it becomes clear that our current structure cannot scale, and would collapse under all the weight. We'd have to move to something where responsibilities are both more collective and devolved. The main point I'm trying to make here is that I'm personally never satisfied with where we're at, but I also don't expect the organization to immediately follow every suggestion that I make. For me, the guiding question for everything I do in the union is this: "Does it help set the path for us to be the kind of organization that is capable of becoming what we need to be?" (Or, putting it in the gamer terms of my youth, "Will this bring us closer to leveling up?").

6) Know how to step back.

This might be one of the most important things for anyone who wants to be a long-term member. No one can or should be all-on, all the time. Nor should someone feel like becoming less active means they might as well give up membership. Stepping back can take many forms. I've done it a few times in different ways. Sometimes, especially when I'm somewhere without a branch, I'll disconnect from all of the email lists, Facebook, etc., but still maintain dues payment and occasionally converse with friends in the organization. Other times, I'll put a fair amount of activity into a branch, but still stay disconnected from the email lists and the international as a whole. Probably one of the biggest causes of burnout comes when someone is totally disconnected from any tangible activity and only plugs in to the "Second Life IWW" (as a friend calls it)—the IWW of mailing lists and Facebook posts. This kind of disconnect from tangible activity causes arguments about ideas to become much more heated and blown out of proportion, and it becomes harder to remember why any of us are involved in this.

I'd love to hear reactions to these suggestions. Other long-term members, what has been your strategy for success? What do you wish someone had told you seven years ago? Newer members, what are your goals for the organization, and what will help you achieve them?

Send your feedback to:
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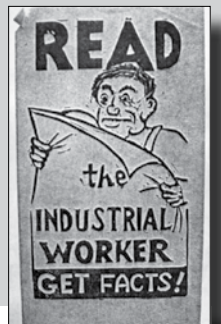
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Special

Remaking The IWW: Broadening Our

By Martin Zehr

As the Wobblies in the northeast United States plan their organizing conference, the task rests to determine where we have come from and where we are going. The focus of the article is intended to address issues within the IWW and not to condemn individuals within it. This article is intended to evaluate our situation today and determine how to move forward.

The first thing to make clear is that the issue with “dual cards” is not about two cards in one shop. It is about two unions in one shop. This takes us back to the time before industrial unions when unions filled the shop based on crafts and negotiated agreements between the workers and the employers. We are the One Big Union, not two, three, or many shop unions. Today, we don’t have the muscle to influence struggles within the company unions, either for democracy or worker rights. We also lack a generation of fighters within the class who are still organized. So, we are it when it comes to building a political force in the shops. The leadership of company unions understands the history of the Left and the concepts such as “salting” and the role of rank-and-file caucuses and revolutionary organizations. The fact is they have worked with U.S. intelligence agencies around the world to undermine popular struggles and usurp leadership in unions, and workers’ and peasant organizations.

At the least, the IWW is here to expose the labor traitors. It’s time for us to establish a strategy of our own to return the favor of their collaboration with the ruling class. Public exposure is important in this process. The presumption that we demonstrate “solidarity” with the company unions while working within them appears on its surface to be exactly what the hacks and bureaucrats like. We should be there to challenge every step they make, develop a core and find the best path to bringing in an industrial union to lead the struggle. The more we compromise with the company unions, the less credibility we will have with militant workers who grasp the need for real change.

There is a core of basic industry that still exists in the United States, and we can address the issues that unite all workers in revolutionary struggle. To move forward today means to move from where we are to where we want to go. We need not give up our organizing drives that are ongoing or propose everyone jump into manufacturing jobs. The base of IWW membership is seen in the character of the shops we are organizing. Bicycle couriers, hoagie shops, coffee shops and other small commercial businesses form the focus of many efforts at this stage. Part of this lies in certain presumptions that characterize our current

membership. Many folks have no experience in industrial work at large manufacturing plants. Many come from a context of activists engaged in the Black Bloc and anti-globalization actions. Many have assimilated a counter-culture that defines their personal identities. Most have no stable work experiences in manufacturing. They have grown up without an awareness of the militant history of the 1980s and the fights against plant closings and for union democracy. They have also grown up in a period where the social movements have not been rooted in the industrial working class for the most part.

In the city where I am working, we have a combination of members from retail, telecommunications, and various trades, and this has raised new questions. Telecommunication workers have an enormous workforce in a diverse set of workplaces in the city and throughout the United States. They are largely small shops, where 300 workers seem to be a large workforce. Larger employers of related occupations are financial services, health care providers, and telephone services. The largest call center is the United States is American Express in Phoenix, employing 5,200 workers. The city of Phoenix has a large number of call centers and stands out as a focal point of potential organizing in IWW telecommunications industrial union (IU) 650. “White collar” used to be the preferred term used for this workforce. But that was in a day when temps, part-timers and outsourced jobs were not the foundation of the American economy. Today, these same “white collar workers” are earning \$8 per hour with no benefits.

The generation of workers that went to the mines and mills have reached our golden years with little remaining of an industrial Left. The percentage of the workforce in any union continues to decline. The company unions have opted out of private employers for the fertile harvest from government employees. This has established a peculiar record of its own where the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) endorses super maximum security (supermax) prisons as a way of promoting jobs and membership. Industrial unions of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) have opted out to a similar strategy. The United Steelworkers recently held rallies for its declining membership along with U.S. Steel in promoting fracking and the Keystone XL pipeline. The United Mine Workers of America have been active in opposing the transition away from coal powered electrical generation and have organized against new, stricter pollution guidelines for power plants.

Is it any wonder that today’s radicals



Call center workers.

Photo: loweringthebarforus.org

make presumptions regarding the character of the industrial workforce in this day and age? Workers’ current choices amount to joining the company unions, joining the Democratic Party, or joining the culture radicals. However, when we “work within,” we negate independent radicalism by fighting for the leadership of the very organizations that we seek to wage the resistance against instead of fighting to lead the mass struggle of poor and oppressed people. What is important is not just what we are doing but why we are doing it.

Wobblies should know that past attempts to democratize the company unions were not defeated because workers did not fight hard enough. They were crushed by the police, the hacks, and the State. On Sept. 18, 1981, an estimated 500,000 unionists converged on Washington, D.C. for a march and rally protesting the mass firings of air traffic controllers. The AFL-CIO even sponsored the march after numerous unions within it pushed for the Solidarity Day action. Miners for Democracy grew from the murder of Jock Yablonski and his family, the opposition candidate for president of the United Mine Workers. Steelworkers had various leaders, such as Ron Weisen of 1397 Rank-and-File, promoting insurgent tactics against the steel bosses and labor traitors. Teamsters for a Democratic Union raised the head of active truck drivers against the corrupt union bosses. The United Auto Workers withdrew from the AFL-CIO. The ranks of labor in the struggle for the eight-hour day and the fight for representation goes back a century further.

What has changed since then is not the nature of capitalism or the servility of workers. What has changed are the scripts from the media where all controversy becomes reduced to Democrat or Republican. What has changed is the structure of economy in the United States—with the commercial economy dominating over the industrial economy. What has changed is the militarization of the company unions undermining and crushing rank-and-file discontent. What has changed is the rush towards world war. What has changed are the economic strategies of austerity as the overriding agenda of the political elite. What has changed is the reduction of workers in the workforce in any union. What has changed is the pacification of the Left and the desertion of the progressives from any revolutionary vision or working-class perspective.

Anarchists have filled that vacuum. But it is an anarchism that is not rooted in the mass social movements of the working class, such as it was in Republican Spain. It is an anarchism contemptuous of the very concept of work or the process of production. In the past, some, like Judi Bari, recognized this and worked to address it. Others accepted a second-tier seat in non-governmental organizations

(NGOs) and advocacy groups that gamed the political elites for their most favored status and not for change. The Black Bloc has an established record in demonstrations and is visible as a social force on given occasions, such as the Group of 8 (G8) meeting. But, it lacks organizational cohesion and a functional expression outside of demonstrations. The critique of work as alienating only has so much traction in any civilization. It does not rise to the level of creativity or redistribution or emancipation.

There is also a new factor in the revived IWW of today. That is the promotion of the “alienation of labor” as a guiding principle. A young Karl Marx has been resurrected and given priority as an ideological cornerstone of the IWW. The source of collaboration with capitalism is now defined as our activity as social beings in the work that we do. This is deserving as an article in itself, and the April issue of the *Industrial Worker* was certainly filled with articles pronouncing this. I look forward to seeing these fellow workers on my own travels, but I suspect this is more wringing of hands than resisting capitalism. To put it into a personal context, I ran to Mexico City from Philadelphia with a Native American spiritual run called Peace and Dignity Journey in 1992. I still remember the people who said they “wish” they could continue with the run after it left their particular hometown. They didn’t, I did. On the other hand, I also know that there is a resistance of non-compliance that extends into the personal lives that is consistent and based on principles. But in the age of austerity, one can all too easily fall into the socialization process of the ruling class and say “least is best” and end up just where the capitalists want them to be.

The recent re-emergence of the IWW as an organizing force has set a new stage for a new drama in the struggle for a new and better future. The American political system, being repressive and reactionary, has left little room in the workforce of today for independent radicalism. As a result, “Café Anarchism” (like “coffee house” radicals of the 1960s or armchair revolutionaries) has become rooted in those commercial establishments that cater to the avant-garde. Anarchism is projected as an alternative lifestyle instead of a political ideology, and the “syndicalism” of anarcho-syndicalism has been disposed of.

Admittedly, this provides a modicum of support from within the ranks at any given Starbucks. What it has missed, until recently, is the connection to the mass struggles against militarization of the police, mass incarcerations, and killer cops—the enforcers of the police state. Because the first steps have been taken by IWW organizing, we have bases to unite with these struggles as demonstrated in the fight of the United Parcel Service (UPS) workers. The Pittsburgh General

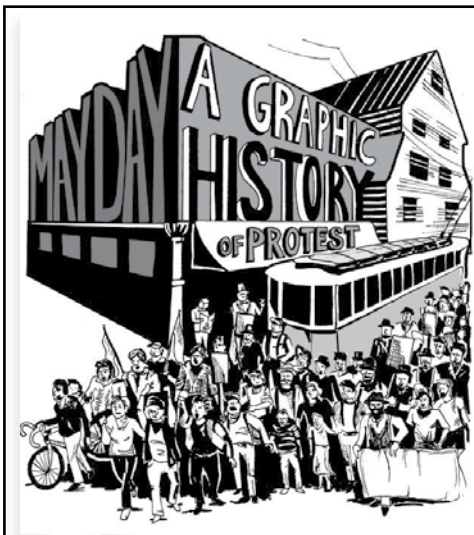
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MAY DAY: A GRAPHIC HISTORY OF PROTEST

Wobs in Canada have created a comic book, “May Day: A Graphic History of Protest,” about the history of May Day internationally, and with a special focus on Canada. Please consider buying some copies for your fellow workers and for your branch to sell. More info about the comic, as well as ordering details, can be found here:

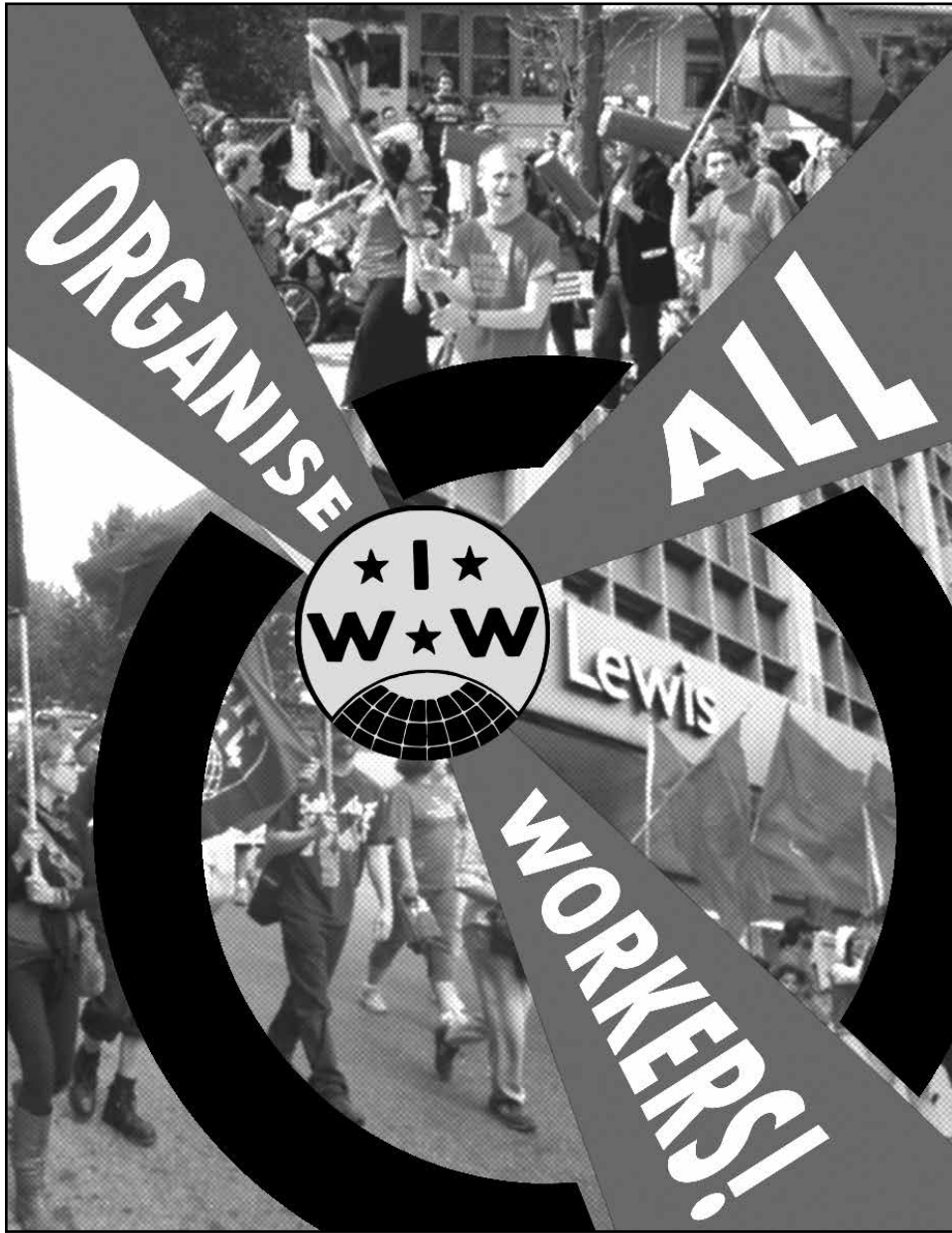
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Graphic: deviantart.net

Continued from previous page
Membership Branch (GMB) has used the local newsletter, *Solidarity*, to project the IWW's active engagement in the fight against the police state. It has presented the public face of the IWW in a recent Martin Luther King, Jr. Day march and a Summit Against Racism.

There is always a certain risk in the structure of GMBs—that they can decline into sects that fail to be inclusive in membership engagement or fail to grasp their role as a union. Infighting becomes a characteristic and personality disputes assume greater significance than their actual importance would otherwise indicate. Once the focus of organizational work becomes internal rather than outreach, this becomes almost inevitable. The organizational culture of Café Anarchism is dominated by white males and those who are aggressively ego-driven. Isolated by themselves, this will not lead to resistance but to control and domination. Being an anarchist is no protection against racism. The International Workingman's Association in San Francisco were the initiators of the Chinese Exclusion Act. The lack of common workplaces is just another factor that pulls people apart rather than bringing them together and creates a culture that presumes that simply the name IWW is sufficient to establish our credentials. The individualized perspective of Café Anarchism supports a view of the world that does not see the social aspect of human life.

It is worth noting that even the AFL-CIO has established its own form of GMBs: regional-based unions with membership not related to particular industries, companies or shops. They have a much greater draw, but their weakness is their lack of substantive analysis and their agenda's attachment to the Democratic Party. Promoting raising the minimum wage and addressing the wage disparity are recipes for continued attachment at every level of government to the Democratic Party. Demanding the right to strike and using it in the struggle will give people

the tools they need to win victories while raising new demands that address the system's racism and male supremacy to grow a militant labor movement. But, the AFL-CIO has given up the strike for the most part. In 1974, there were 424 strikes involving 1,796,000 workers, and in 2014, there were 11 strikes involving 34,000, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. By focusing on the joint labor/community unions, the AFL-CIO is negating the very lever of power that gives labor its ultimate power in the class struggle: the general strike.

The problem of a community/workplace coalition within a union is that street militancy is facilitated without risk and presumes a greater political significance than it, in fact, is able to demonstrate. It empowers individuals who prefer rhetoric and posturing, taking the place of organization and real confrontation. It also reduces the focus on building industrial unionism. The same things that attract the Black Bloc to the IWW attract other radicals to the company unions. We see a situation where the "union" that is radical in the streets still continues to enforce mass incarcerations and protect killer cops. The recent AFL-CIO Organizers Workshop on March 6 and 7 in Washington, D.C. is an indicator that this is exactly their intention. There was not one member of a corrections union (AFSCME) or border patrol union (Amercian Federation of Government Employees, or AFGE) in the workshops on mass incarcerations or immigration. While union representation at the workshop was limited (at an AFL-CIO workshop?!), community organizers were actively engaged as workshop facilitators and participants. There are no secrets when it comes to organizing. Every aspect of organizing projects its goals and objectives. The results reflect the efforts, the tactics, the vision and the plan. In this case, it is clear that the target was to recruit community organizers and not to develop an inclusive strategy for government workers to unite with oppressed peoples in direct action.

If we establish dual cards as a singular emphasis in our organizing work: 1) We need to recognize that when we are not building the workers' struggles in the shops, we are not developing the IWW as a union in its own right; 2) We promote the police state when we collaborate with government employee unions and the state in crimes against humanity; 3) We risk enhancing and strengthening the company unions at the very same time as we are saying to abandon them for One Big Union; 4) We misrepresent the actual character of the leadership and intentions that are projected by the company unions and so weaken the people's real leadership when confronted with the inevitable repression against the revolutionary movement; and 5) We add to the financial resources of these same company unions that maintain their hegemony and who use them against the popular struggles. As a small group, we can still shake things up through concerted action. Can we say the same thing working within company unions?

The original impulse of the IWW was to create the seed of worker power in the shell of capitalism. In this context, worker councils can be developed in our work. It has risen on the agenda in the mass struggles of the day. In Albuquerque, the issue of state power was raised, and families of police shootings seized control of the city council, issued an arrest warrant for the sheriff, and began extra-legal proceedings. Likewise, the General Assemblies of Occupy Wall Street began to establish a political character to them. In my city, a new Action Council has arisen to unify various social forces in the city. Dual power establishes the battleground for the eventual confrontation between the people and the ruling elites. The soviets in czarist Russia were conscious of it but were undermined by parties with their own discipline.

It really is too much to expect the company unions to change their roles. They have practiced those roles in post-war Europe and exported their experiences to the struggles of Latin and South America. They used them to overthrow the Soviet Union and its allied states in Central Europe. Collaboration remains their primary function. They are the extension of the Empire.

The experience of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) on campuses in the 1960s and 1970s demonstrated the real potential of independent organization that developed its radicalism removed from the control mechanisms. Starting off small, they did not grow to dominate student organizations or government. They were able to focus militant actions in solidarity with the Vietnamese liberation struggle by kicking the Dow Chemical Company (manufacturers of napalm) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) off campus or away from high traffic zones, unifying with the struggles of African-Americans for increased enrollment of minorities, and introducing ethnic studies and women's studies. Radicals were not tied to either political party. They were able to project their own agenda and develop their own tactics.

We are a minority, but we are not an insignificant or compliant minority. We can let the cat (Sabot) out of the bag. We can refuse to comply with the repression and denial of rights as Wobblies did in the free speech fights from 1906 to 1917 in 26 communities—presenting to workers the uncompromising character of the IWW. We need to: 1) Utilize and concentrate our resources from around the country to have an impact; 2) Establish target cities, focus on the key battles that the IWW brings forward and maintain

these struggles; 3) Popularize the role of the IWW in these struggles; and 4) Not retreat until the battle is won. These are not new tactics. They are the tactics that opened up the working class to acceptance of the IWW as a fighting union. Our Organizer Training 101 (OT101) needs to begin to address this. We cannot simply try to replace the company unions with the IWW. They have resources that we cannot even begin to match. We need to show the difference by our actions. When we earn the trust of workers, recruitment will increase and become a more natural decision for fighters of the working class.

The idea is for the workers in the company unions to desert these unions and come over to the IWW. For that to happen we need to show people what we stand for. To establish a momentum for the struggle means we provide leadership, develop leadership skills, empower individuals, and win victories that improve their lives and the world. If we disregard the character of the company unions, we do so at our own risk. If we fail to present a real alternative, we will slip into the historical background once again. This discussion here can take place both in the *Industrial Worker* and within GMBs. There have been debates about this before. The issue is how we can be effective and not who can be the "purist." People will do what they will do, but it is better that we all have clarity about what we are doing and summarize what the results have been as we go forward.

This is not simply an issue of choosing dual card or choosing industrial union strategy. It is about broadening our scope and deepening our roots. Dismissing work as a social activity precludes any purpose in organizing. The IWW is about re-establishing our presence in the mass struggles and learning from our experiences. This article itself does not presume to present one generalized solution. It is my hope to simply present some very real concerns regarding how to move forward.

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Reviews

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn: Modern American Revolutionary

Vapnek, Lara. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn: Modern American Revolutionary. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2015. Paperback, 240 pages, \$20.

Reviewed by Staughton Lynd

A number of radical women who espoused anarchism or anarcho-syndicalism when they were young were drawn in later life to uncritical support of international Communism. Alexandra Kollontai, Lucy Parsons, and Dolores Ibarruri ("La Pasionaria") come to mind.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn can be described in the same way. The "rebel girl" celebrated by Joe Hill's song, who was the most conspicuous woman among the prominent personalities of the IWW, became a member of the United States Communist Party in 1937 and supported it publicly until her death.

Of course, there were men whose trajectory was similar. William Z. Foster, the syndicalist who became a dogmatic Communist leader, is an example. But there is something particularly poignant about Flynn, the fiery daughter of radical immigrants from Ireland, a young woman unafraid to stand up to IWW spokesman Bill Haywood or anarchist Carlos Tresca, consenting to be guided by the uninspired patriarchs who led American Communists into oblivion (with some vigorous help from J. Edgar Hoover, et al.) after World War II.

And there were women, above all Rosa Luxemburg, who successfully resisted re-definition as adjuncts to male leaders. Before World War I and while in prison for opposing it, Luxemburg was comradely but incisive in expressing concern about Lenin's political mindset, which she described as "pitiless centralism." Luxemburg rejected a "discipline" that was "the regulated docility of an oppressed class." After her release from prison, she worked closely with Karl Liebknecht. When he consented in her absence to a premature insurrection, however, she rebuked him; but was unable to reverse the strategy that led soon after to her own brutal and untimely death.

Lara Vapnek untangles the historical threads that made up the tapestry of Flynn's remarkable life. She helps us to perceive the integrity and dedication that characterized Flynn's journey until the very end.

Vapnek highlights the following aspects of Flynn's advocacy.

Flynn had no interest in organizations made up only of women. She insisted that workingmen and women organize together, but that special attention be given to the needs of different groups within the class. Women, as one such group, needed access to birth control. They must be able to **choose** motherhood.

Flynn, who was born in 1890, gave her

first public speech in 1906. In September 1909, at the age of 19, she became involved in a fight for the right to free speech in Missoula, Mont. The issue was the conduct of labor contractors who charged a fee to arrange jobs for itinerant wage workers but often failed to provide the promised work. Flynn and other Wobbly speakers drew crowds of miners and lumberjacks to improvised street meetings. Contractors and local shopkeepers complained to the public authorities. The city invoked an ordinance forbidding the disturbance of the "peace and quiet of any street."

As one speaker after another was arrested, others took their place. A call for reinforcements went out to Spokane and other Western cities. Soon something like 100 workers were behind bars in Missoula. The arrestees, like subsequent civil rights practitioners of "jail, no bail," used their time together to sing protest songs. Guests at the city's main hotel across the street protested in their turn, and, again as in the 1960s, police sprayed the crowd from water hoses. According to Lara Vapnek, Flynn timed the speech-making so that those arrested had to be fed, at taxpayers' expense. The arrestees demanded individual jury trials, prolonging the proceedings and adding to the city's costs. After several weeks the "powers that be" released those arrested, including Flynn, and dropped all charges.

Flynn was again at the heart of non-violent tactical creativity in the famous "Bread and Roses" strike in Lawrence, Mass. three years later. She "became instrumental," as this account puts it, in the "brilliant strategy of sending strikers' children out of Lawrence to be cared for by sympathetic families in other cities." She was assisted in this project by Margaret Sanger, "the socialist nurse-practitioner who became a leader of the birth-control movement."

Two years later, Flynn was obliged to confront the terrible violence of the Ludlow, Colo. miners' strike, where three strike leaders were killed in cold blood, and two women and 11 children burned to death in tents where they had sought refuge. Anarchists planned to retaliate by killing John D. Rockefeller, Jr., owner of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company. In another uncanny parallel with the 1960s, three men preparing a bomb for this purpose blew themselves up.

Flynn was asked to speak at a memorial service for the three. As Vapnek sensitively describes the scene, Flynn had to "tread a fine line between honoring the dead and disavowing violence." She did so by describing one of the three dead men, Arthur Caron. Caron was a weaver of French and Native American ancestry from Falls River, Mass. He had come on hard times when he lost his job. His

wife and baby died. He had moved to New York City only to find himself one of hundreds of thousands of unemployed there, tramping the streets, hungry and cold. He had fallen in with an "army" of homeless men. On the occasion of a second arrest, the New York police took him into an automobile and beat him brutally. Splattered with blood, with one side of his nose crushed, he managed to stagger to the home of Flynn's friend, Mary Heaton Vorse.

Flynn asked the audience at the memorial meeting to try to imagine Caton's state of mind. "He asked for bread. He received the blackjack." She went on to say that he had made a fatal mistake when he attempted to solve his problems by violence. But she asked: "Who is responsible? Who taught it to him?"

In this experience one can glimpse a reason for Flynn's subsequent



The rebel girl.

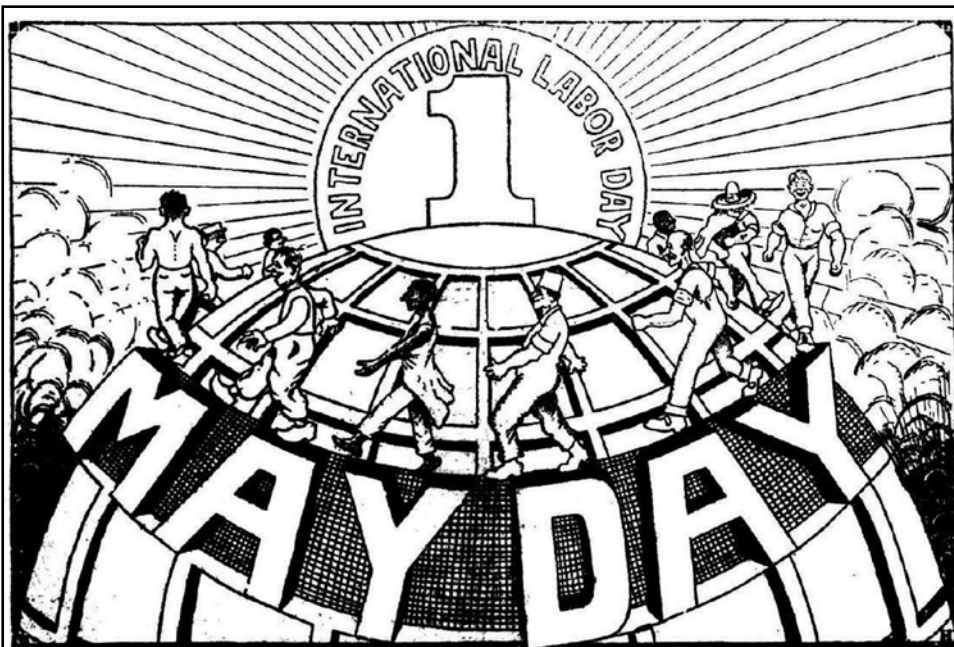
Photo: Tamiment Library, New York University

great success as an organizer for victims of the Red Scare after World War I and of McCarthyism after World War II. Each of these crises stretched over many years during which Flynn asked her national audience to step for a moment into the shoes of the individual men, women, and children who were imprisoned, deported, executed (Sacco and Vanzetti), in a few dreadful instances (like that of Wobbly Frank Little) murdered by vigilante violence, all with minimal pretense at any kind of due process. Instead of lamenting the fate of a nameless and impersonal collectivity, such as "immigrants," or a particular category of workers, like "the miners," Flynn focused, just as she did on her endless speaking trips, on individual human beings, with names and faces. In a similar spirit, within the Communist Party, Flynn opposed the decision of the Party's leadership in the 1950s to go underground.

This same approach to social reality by way of individual lives led to a profound difference with Bill Haywood over judicial strategy. Flynn had witnessed in Missoula and in other free speech struggles elsewhere how it had tied the system in knots to insist on a distinct judicial process, a separate trial, for each member of a group of defendants. Repression of radicals in the courts depended on the notion of a vast

and nebulous "conspiracy" of faceless but evil-minded subversives. If the accused consented to a group process it inevitably tended to validate this concept. In addition, it was far easier to engage a jury's sympathy in the suffering of particular persons than in the abstract image of an oppressive system. Accordingly Flynn resisted Haywood's imperious decision to ask indicted Wobblies all over the United States to surrender themselves and take part as passive spectators in the group witch-hunt administered by federal judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis in Chicago. She would have preferred an effort to make each Wobbly's indictment the occasion for a separate guerrilla skirmish. And viewed from the standpoint of the survival of the IWW as a community, it did not help matters when Haywood himself later jumped bail and fled to the Soviet Union.

For Flynn herself, of course, what history and the hope of ongoing human life required was a profound structural change, from capitalism to socialism. Vapnek stresses that even if Flynn's political energies were devoted to two very different organizations, the IWW (1906-1916) and the Communist Party (1937-1964), "Flynn's socialist vision stayed steady."



May Day Greetings from the Vancouver Island GMB
"Without Our Brain and Muscle Not a Single Wheel Would Turn"

GREETINGS, FELLOW WORKERS!

This
May
Day we
remember
Fellow
Worker
Joe
Hill.
Struck
down
in the
fight



for the
rights
of the
working
class.
100
years
later
his
songs
call us
on.

Agitate! Educate! Organize!

Reviews

Bridging Cognitive Psychology With Labor Studies

Worthen, Helena. *What Did You Learn At Work Today? The Forbidden Lessons of Labor Education.* Brooklyn, NY: Hard Ball Press, 2014. Paperback, 278 pages, \$15.

By Matt Meister

Helena Worthen's "What Did You Learn at Work Today?" is an important book that brings together the disparate fields of cognitive psychology and labor studies. While this might seem like an odd combination, it is anything but. As a union of organizers, we learn how to teach our fellow workers about empowering themselves and one another. We do not learn and no one really teaches us how it is that people construct knowledge. Worthen offers a practical application through case studies of how workers come together to learn, to understand their workplaces and ultimately to help one another overcome.

"What Did You Learn at Work Today?" is an accessible work with a format not too far removed from the model that *Labor Notes* has utilized with similar effect. Worthen is taking on heady concepts like Lev Vygotsky's "constructivist model" and Paolo Friere's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," while making them relevant for workers in the context of the workplace. Far from dumbing down these concepts,

Worthen addresses these ideas fully, directly and with an urgency of showing how they function in real-life organizing campaigns. Far too often employers abuse workers and workers are left asking, "How can they get away with that?" This seemingly simple question threads the narrative of the work as Worthen unpacks abstracts such as "oppositional knowledge," "resistance" and "consciousness." By showing us how workers learn together, these concepts become very concrete and usable. In understanding how workers are made compliant, workers can guard against it more effectively. As workers begin to understand how ideas form, they become more effective organizers, teachers and fellow workers. In short, this is an exciting book.

What might be Worthen's strongest chapter for organizers in workplaces might be what she terms the "Tarzan Theory" of how we learn. In the racist and imperialist Tarzan novels, an infant of "good breeding" discovers books and then language completely on his own, simply through hard work, innate potential and self-discipline. As organizers, especially those of us forming a committee at an early stage, this model might feel familiar. When we fail, it is because we have not worked hard

enough, been disciplined enough, or perhaps we just are not good enough on some level. This disempowering theory of how we learn is pushed onto us, reinforced in our workplace training, and over time we internalize it. Worthen's deconstruction of this bad, ineffective and wrong theory of learning is both refreshing and reassuring. Knowledge is not only collective and shared by its nature; it is varied and abundant. Workers are smart. We know our jobs better than just about anyone, yet we are made to feel less than intelligent. Even good organizers can fall into this trap. Worthen provides a solid inoculation against it.

In applying this idea, Worthen points out that asking "How did you learn to do your job?" is really asking "How did you learn to survive your job?" The not-so-subtle difference between these two nearly-identical inquiries is in the former the worker as a passive recipient while the latter is one of an active construction of worker knowledge. In considering that better question, workers realize they regularly create better ways to do work, both formally and informally. When workers come to understand the ways in which they modify their tasks, they become



Helena Worthen. Photo: moderntimesbookstore.com

empowered. In workplaces, there is a regular back-and-forth where employers want high productivity and low worker empowerment. This paradoxical arrangement leads to the bosses organizing against workers constantly. Workers need to understand that there is no such thing as an unorganized workplace, but there are disempowered and unorganized workers. Worthen explores what that looks like and encourages workers to think about how they survive their jobs. It is difficult to read this book and not consider one's own workplace and experience. That alone makes the book worth the time.

Dos Passos Writes Of Early Socialists, Wobblies

Dos Passos, John. *U.S.A.: The 42nd Parallel / 1919 / The Big Money.* New York: The Library of America, 1996. Hardcover, 1312 pages, \$40.

By Roger Karny

Ordinary men and women, workers oppressed by the capitalist society around them, form the focus of John Dos Passos' "U.S.A." trilogy published in the early 1930s. One of America's "Lost Generation" post-World War I (WWI) writers and a Leftist, the Harvard University graduate Dos Passos esteemed everyday laborers from rail-riding Wobblies to firebrand socialists. But while Dos Passos had a Jeffersonian belief in the common worker, he ultimately trusted educated, intellectual elites to bring needed political change. They are both essential to reform and remake the worker's world.

"The 42nd Parallel," "Nineteen Nineteen," and "The Big Money" are the three books of his trilogy. In "The 42nd Parallel," a foot-loose Wobbly heads south of the border and becomes embroiled in the 1910 Mexican Revolution. Numerous IWW members at this time did the same, seeking solidarity with fellow insurgents. Aroused by the writings and example of Mexican revolutionary Ricardo Flores Magón, many joined the fight, including legendary Joe Hill who fought in Juarez. "The Big Money," on the other hand, pictures the post-war "Roaring Twenties" as the time when money and the lust for it ruled all.

I want to choose some people and events from the middle book "Nineteen Nineteen" in order to draw parallels and conclusions for the United States today. The year 1919 marked the signing of the armistice to end the butchery of WWI, giving a reprieve to war-weary Europe. When will we Americans of 2015 also get such a reprieve? That same year witnessed President Woodrow Wilson's futile struggle to bring the United States into his nascent dream-child, the League of Nations—fore-runner to the United Nations.

Fictional characters—sailors, loggers, U.S. and foreign soldiers, and Red Cross workers—bounce in and out of the novel. But the author also brings in sketches of significant, real-life individuals of the time, from Wilson and Teddy Roosevelt to Hill and Randolph Bourne. Of course, the war is on everyone's mind. But which war this time? Why the "War to End All Wars," the "War to Make the World Safe for

Democracy"—World War I. Sound familiar? Seems we've had quite a few of those since then.

Wobblies, socialists, and pacifists roam in and out of "Nineteen Nineteen." "Little Red Songbook" songwriter Joe Hill enters briefly, touted for his IWW union efforts and his controversial execution by the Mormon state of Utah in November 1915. Dos Passos writes satirically, "The angel Moroni didn't like labor organizers any better than the Southern Pacific [Railroad] did. The angel Moroni moved the hearts of the Mormons to decide it was Joe Hill [who] shot a grocer named Morrison." Many still believe Joe was framed; his only "crime" being that he had "read Marx and the IWW Preamble and dreamed about forming the structure of a new society within the shell of the old," says the author. To many, rocking the established order is the worst crime imaginable and an unpardonable sin. Witness the murder of four unarmed Kent State University students by the Ohio National Guard in the late 1960s. They were protesting the Vietnam War. Joe's spirit lives on.

Then as now, law enforcement authorities could act with prejudice, violent and unjust, if the occasion warranted. Who killed the miners, women and children during the 1914 Ludlow strike if not the Colorado National Guard? Who busted heads in Michigan during the desperate automobile workers strikes of the 1930s if not the police? So in "Nineteen Nineteen," fictional radical Jewish intellectual and socialist agitator Ben Compton, attending an IWW meeting in Everett, Wash. along with other Wobblies, pays the price. The local sheriff and deputies beat them pitifully. While this account is not historical in itself, it represents numerous similar incidents of union busting by "legal" authorities. Unions were not officially recognized and given the right to strike and bargain until



Artist David Crunelle's Graphic: doedemee.be interpretation of the "U.S.A." trilogy.

the 1935 Wagner Act. "All we want [is] our constitutional rights of free speech," one of the Wobblies shrieks. But the agents close in with guns and clubs. This is free speech?

Compton is against war-killing as well. "The capitalist governments are digging their own graves by driving their people to slaughter in a crazy unnecessary war that nobody can benefit from except bankers and munition makers," he says. Compton is tried under the WWI Espionage

Act. Dos Passos has him declare the final words of "The Communist Manifesto": "In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." Compton, age 23, is sentenced to prison. "He had to keep telling himself: those are the people who sent [Socialist Eugene] Debs to jail, those are the people who shot Joe Hill, who murdered [IWW organizer] Frank Little, those are the people who beat us up in Everett, who want me to rot for ten years in jail," wrote Dos Passos.

Dos Passos introduces Wesley Everest as another agitator, a historical IWW figure who logged the northwest during early 1900s. Everest, the author writes, believed the IWW was right when they said the forests belonged to everyone. He believed he should be paid cash rather than script. Script could only be used in the logging company's store at inflated prices. He believed that he worked hard and deserved an eight-hour day and decent food. But some considered this "Communism." Commie-hunters after WWI viewed Wobblies as "Reds." These "patriots" raided IWW halls, beat and lynched Wobblies and did away with their "subversive" literature. According to Dos Passos, a mob castrated Wesley Everest (although this is not certain) and lynched him. Lynching has always been a favorite

deterrent for people who "get out of line."

"Nineteen Nineteen" focuses a lot on the senselessness of World War I. Dos Passos reports on anti-war intellectual Randolph Bourne (1886-1918). Bourne famously declared, "War is the health of the state"—ironical unless you consider health to be accumulated corporate wealth. The government jailed many pacifists during this time.

One person who went to war, though, was the "Unknown Soldier." They buried his remaining scraps in Arlington Cemetery. "Where his chest ought to have been," Dos Passos writes, "they pinned medals." The last words of "Nineteen Nineteen" are: "All the Washingtonians brought [the Unknown Soldier] flowers. Woodrow Wilson brought a bouquet of poppies." And this was the "War to End All Wars."

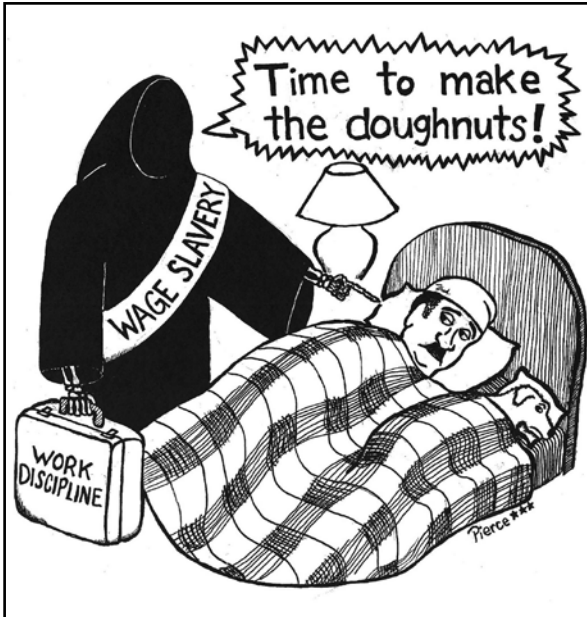
The author skillfully weaves fictitious and historic characters into the fabric of WWI and after. But where does that leave us for today? You know, times and people don't really change all that much. Free speech remains a myth for those who are not spouting the white, establishment, capitalist or corporate line. Radical ideas have always been suspect and their proponents persecuted. Wars continue to be started by the rich and fought by minorities and the working class. And guess who wins?

Increasing the minimum wage, some try to say, will only decrease workers' earnings, since prices will be forced upward. Corporations like Walmart and McDonald's are grudgingly lifting wages a little, enough to stifle the outcry for a higher minimum wage. But this will only be long enough to make it look capitalism is the worker's friend.

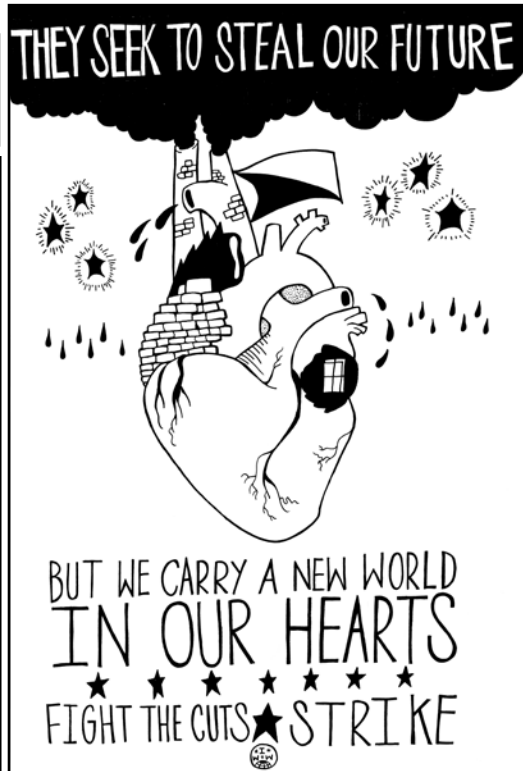
Those like Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker are hell-bent on breaking unions now that they have an opening. They invoke the Taft-Hartley Act, declaring all should have a "right to work," especially if that "right" involves lower pay and not having the benefits that union representation and bargaining bring. Granted, the major, established unions have brought some of this trouble on themselves. But what other recourse do workers have than to unionize, strike and boycott? Circumstances have changed. Will some other method arise for workers to protect themselves in lieu of these tried and proven ones? Or are grassroots, worker-organized, solidarity movements such as the IWW the only way?

Wobbly Arts

IWW Art Gallery



Graphic: J. Pierce



Graphic: John Fleissner



Photo: Ferydoun Mahinfarahmand

"Journalism"

Sculpture by Ferydoun Mahinfarahmand

I made this sculpture to represent journalists, writers and those who are in this field. Governments abuse them in the name of national security or other excuses, some kill them to prove some kind of stupid point or just to shut them off.

But these great and brave people, they have their lives in one hand and the pen in the other, they need to be appreciated and recognized.

Carl Sandburg, The Worker's Poet

By Steve Thornton

Salvadoran poet and revolutionary Roque Dalton once wrote, "poetry, like bread, is for everyone." Today, we need more people like Dalton, but you won't get rich being a worker-poet. More likely, you will drop out of middle school, hop boxcars, and work at any job where you can earn a buck: fruit picker, firefighter, dishwasher, house painter, milk wagon driver, block ice carrier and traveling salesperson. Those jobs helped define poet Carl Sandburg's early life. "I'm either going to be a writer or a bum," Sandburg wrote.

Carl Sandburg was first recognized as a poet of the working class in an IWW newspaper. A 1916 review of his poetry described him as "a people's poet; one who pictured with strokes of truth their existence."

Sandburg's focus on labor struggles spoke to the early IWW in a profound way. Ralph Chaplin, Wobbly organizer and writer, read Sandburg's collection "Chicago Poems" in the courtroom while he was on trial for espionage with 100 other revolutionary unionists in 1918.

Born in 1878 to Swedish immigrants, Carl Sandburg was a working-class boy who never forgot his roots. His father was a blacksmith for the Chicago railroad who took part in labor causes, including strikes. Sandburg recalled these formative events and considered himself a "partisan" who "took a kind of joy in the

complete justice of the strikers." He was 10 years old.

When he was 15, Sandburg read the proclamation of Illinois Governor John Altgeld pardoning three of the Haymarket anarchists who had been executed in 1887. The men were (and still are) considered innocent martyrs by the labor movement. Altgeld reviewed their cases and, despite the personal cost to his career, exonerated the men. Sandburg agreed, "The hanging of those men was a great injustice."

While still a young man he traveled to revolutionary Russia, interviewed Big Bill Haywood, rode the rails across the United States, and landed in jail with an assortment of workers who taught him a lot about the impact of capitalism on his class.

In his 20s, Sandburg was a regular contributor of news and poetry to the *International Socialist Review (ISR)* and other prominent liberal and radical magazines. Hired by the *Chicago Daily News*, he honed his skills as a reporter who wrote in the language of workers.

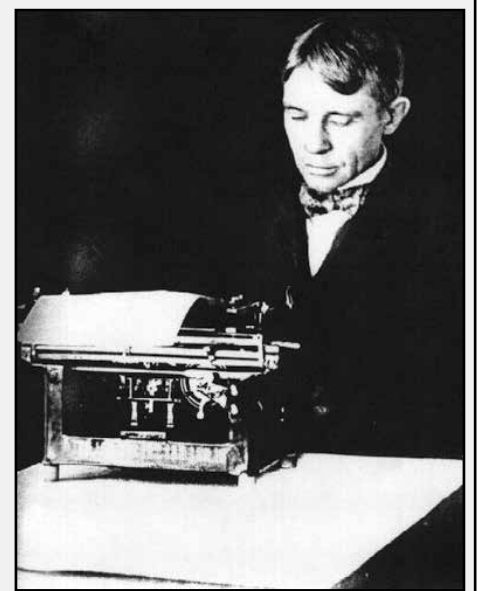
In true muckraking tradition, Sandburg exposed for the *ISR* the 1915 Eastland steamer ship tragedy in Lake Michigan. The ship capsized, killing 800 workers on their way to a company picnic. Sandburg discovered that the seamen's union had for years protested the lack of safety regulations and quality inspections. He further revealed that the "picnic" was a mandatory event: you bought a ticket or you might lose your job.

In Chicago, Sandburg frequented the Dill Pickle Club, a bohemian center for radical culture and politics founded by Jack Jones, ex-Wobbly and former husband of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. The club attracted avant-garde artists, anarchists and birth control advocates. It was there he met and learned from Emma Goldman, Margaret Sanger and many others. By the time he published his first poetry collection, Sandburg was performing and sponsoring events at the club.

As far as the poet was concerned, there was a straight line from the early populist builders of the American nation to the early 20th century revolutionaries with whom he identified. After winning acclaim for his six-volume study of Abraham Lincoln, Sandburg wrote, "For the writing of the Lincoln I knew the Abolitionists better; for having known the IWW I knew Garrison better for having known Debs." In Sandburg's view, rebels of his time would become tomorrow's heroes.

Sandburg's political views were not just quirks of youthful rebellion. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) investigated the poet for 40 years. A newspaper exposé in 1987 revealed how J. Edgar Hoover kept tabs on all of Sandburg's affiliations that could be considered "communist front" activities. Sandburg was in good company: the FBI also had files on Ernest Hemingway, Pearl Buck, William Faulkner and 130 other famous writers.

The files note that Sandburg attended



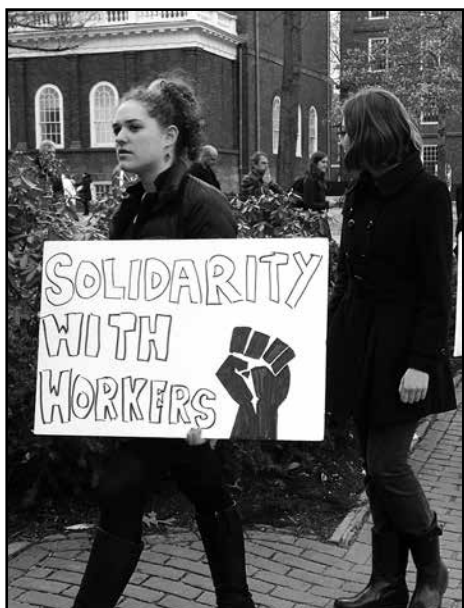
Carl Sandburg. Photo: english.illinois.edu

Communist Party dinners celebrating well-known authors and illustrators. He was listed in 1938 as a friend of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade (American volunteers who fought the fascists in Spain) and a supporter of the 1948 World Youth Festival in Prague.

"I am an I.W.W. but I don't carry a red card," Sandburg declared. "I am with all the rebels everywhere. Against all those who are satisfied."

Steve Thornton is a retired union organizer, a member of Education Workers IU 620, and writes for *ShoelatherHistoryProject.com*.

Harvard Workers Got The Cold Shoulder This Winter



Students protest. Photo: FW Le LeChat

HUCTW grievance process is not functioning effectively.

For security guards who work at Harvard, dual employees of the university and Securitas, and members of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the situation has been even worse. Recently, when the university closed due to severe weather, guards—who were scheduled to work—report having gone unpaid. The past practice has been that when the university is closed due to inclement weather, and security guards are told not to work their scheduled shifts, they have still received their regular pay. This year, when the university closed on Feb. 6, 9 and 10, at least some security guards went unpaid (the university also failed to pay security guards for work on Jan. 2, after the winter recess was expanded to include that date). Guards have filed a union grievance over management's failure to pay them what they're owed; to date management has reportedly made no offer to resolve the grievance. Similarly, many campus workers who do not belong to labor unions have gone without pay when the university

closed.

Harvard dining hall workers reported for duty even on days when the storms made it impossible to return to their homes for the night. Some dining hall workers ended up sleeping on couches or mattresses on the floor, some even six to a room. Workers who were assigned hotel rooms weren't always told they would be staying with another person, which made some uncomfortable. Workers report being issued taxi vouchers that were not always accepted (apparently one person walked to work in severe weather because of this). Some dining hall staff were told by managers to sign a list if they'd be willing to stay overnight in a hotel; but then after signing up were told there was no bed for them during one of the blizzards.

As the world's richest university with an endowment of roughly \$36 billion, Harvard can afford to give its workers some paid time off during extreme, dangerous weather conditions, rather than expecting them to use up their vacation time. Better accommodations for dining hall workers are certainly possible.

To tell security guards not to report for their regular shifts when the university is closed and then dock their pay seems miserly and unfair. President Drew Faust should use her considerable influence to award at least three additional personal days to members of HUCTW, to confer a similar benefit on non-salaried workers who are not members of labor unions, and to pay SEIU members for all their regularly scheduled shifts when Harvard has closed or will close due to inclement weather. Dining hall workers who weren't offered adequate accommodations during the blizzards should be compensated. Harvard can offer its employees who work hard to make the institution function more than a cold shoulder during emergency weather.

Geoffrey P. Carens is a representative of the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers and a delegate of the IWW.

This piece originally appeared in the March 31, 2015 issue of *The Harvard Crimson*. It was reprinted with permission from the author.

Continued from 1

concern for safety makes travel inadvisable, a paid absence may be appropriate"). Over a year later, that grievance remains largely unresolved, indicating that the

Anti-War

Looking Back At The Vietnam War:

By Andy Piascik

This spring marks 40 years since the end of the Vietnam War. At least that's what it's called in the United States: the Vietnam War. In Vietnam, it's called the American War to distinguish the phase involving the United States from those involving other aggressors and colonizers—China, France and Japan most notably.

The occasion has been marked by widespread commentary, reminisces and what passes for history in the corporate media. The U.S. Pentagon has chimed in with a fanciful account posted on its website that evokes the propaganda it spun during the actual fighting of the war: U.S. imperialism good, Vietnam bad. On a more positive note, peace and veterans groups around the country have held events and otherwise tried to put forward analysis of the horrific nature of U.S. aggression that haunts Vietnam to this day.

A more mixed aspect is the degree to which the war still hovers over our own country like a cloud. Several decades back, mainstream commentators regularly referred to the "Vietnam Syndrome," which until the 1991 Persian Gulf War served to keep U.S. imperialism in check to some extent. Media elites referred to the reluctance of our political class to go to war for fear of getting bogged down in "another Vietnam." What they were unwilling to say openly is that the Vietnam Syndrome is really the gulf in opinion between elites and the public on the matter of U.S. aggression.

In short, the United States has found it extremely difficult since Vietnam to count on significant public support for its wars. Throughout the 1980s, for example, the United States desperately sought to impose its will on Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala, to name just three, utilizing proxy armies to defend landed elites against the people of those countries. If not for ongoing public opposition, U.S. troops would likely have been fighting in Central

America as early as 1980. But because the United States was unable to send troops, the kind of bloodletting they inflicted on Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia did not occur in Central America. One result is that the popular movements and revolutionary forces were able to carry on the struggle, to a point where a one-time revolutionary guerrilla is today president of El Salvador, and longtime Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega is again president of Nicaragua.

This is not to say a horrible number of deaths and incalculable damage was not inflicted on those countries; the United States was especially determined to destroy the revolutionary experiment in Nicaragua—an effort that was largely successful. More ominously, though the hell of the military terror of the 1980s is in the past, Guatemala remains in the grips of wealthy elites tied to the United States and is one of the most class-stratified, repressive societies in the hemisphere.

But the damage inflicted on Central America does not compare to what was done in Indochina, which was due in no small part to the efforts of millions of everyday Americans. Unlike in Indochina, solidarity efforts with the people of Central America began early and in earnest. In Nicaragua, these efforts began soon after the United States moved against the popular revolt that overthrew the hated Somoza dictatorship in 1979. In El Salvador, solidarity work began in the wake of the murder by paramilitary terrorists of Archbishop Oscar Romero in 1980 and grew ever larger over the next 10 years. That work included demonstrations, sit-ins, teach-ins, medical aid, Sister City projects, accompaniment by doctors, electricians and others with skills to offer, as well as making available sanctuary, usually in churches, to people fleeing the violence to the United States.



Graphic: James Mlaker, jmlakerartworks.com

Sporadic opposition within the United States to aggression in Indochina, by contrast, popped up in 1963 and 1964, but it was very small and isolated. What we know as the anti-war movement did not take shape until 1965, more than a decade after the United States unleashed its murderous puppet Ngo Dinh Diem on the southern part of Vietnam, and a full four years after President John F. Kennedy began major escalation.

More recently, the United States has invaded Iraq and Afghanistan and, at the time of this writing, is contemplating sending troops elsewhere in the Middle East. Just as in Indochina, the efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan have in important ways been failures. And because of the massive use of superior military force, the United States has become something of a pariah internationally—feared, but extremely isolated. Again, domestic organizing has contributed significantly to that isolation. This is no small feat, and one that is important to recognize both because of the suffering that would have resulted from the use of greater force, as well as for what it teaches about the impact the public can have on imperialist war. There's still much to do, and for ourselves and those who suffer bombardment done in our names, we need to get to it.

Combating the official, distorted history of Vietnam can assist us in those efforts, and this admittedly cursory background is offered in that spirit. One aspect of that distorted history spun in some recent commentaries is that the war began in February 1965 when North Vietnamese and U.S. troops clashed for the first time, the result of an unprovoked North Vietnamese attack (so it's claimed). One doesn't know whether to laugh or cry at the arrogance required to claim that point as the start of the war, when probably hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese were already dead by that time. Such is the level of dishonesty and subservience to power in American political culture.

Pinpointing where U.S. aggression in Vietnam began depends on how one determines how a war begins, but 1945 is a good place to start in order to best understand what transpired over the ensuing 30 years. It was in the summer of that year that Vietnamese revolutionary forces grouped around the Viet Minh defeated Japan, whose army had invaded their country four years before. Like so many around the world who suffered greatly under the forces of fascism and militarism during the World War II, the Vietnamese considered their victory the dawn of a new day. In that spirit, Viet Minh leader Ho Chi Minh read a proclamation inspired significantly by the U.S. Declaration of Independence

(large sections of which were included word for word) to a massive assembly in Vietnam that was also directed at Washington, and people around the world.

It was at this point that the United States made the crucial decision to reject Ho Chi Minh's overtures and throw in with Vietnam's long-time colonizers, France. Most of the French colonial administration and army had run away when Japan invaded Vietnam, ceding the country to the invaders. Those who remained collaborated with the Japanese. Yet in its imperial wisdom, France decided it was entirely within its rights to recolonize Vietnam, which it did, with crucial arms, money and diplomatic support from the United States. The Vietnamese, not surprisingly, were not so enthusiastic about being invaded yet again and resisted just as they had resisted colonization and occupation for centuries.

As the French inflicted horrific violence in a failed attempt at re-conquest that lasted nine years, the United States bore more and more of the war's burden. When the Vietnamese achieved final victory by annihilating the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, there was again the possibility that they had achieved independence. It was not to be, though. With Vietnam looking on skeptically, the United States, other Western powers, and the Soviet Union brokered the Geneva Accords that stipulated, among other things, that national elections unifying all of Vietnam be held within two years. The division of the country into North, where revolutionary forces had won complete victory, and South, which except for Saigon and the surrounding area was under Viet Minh control, was rightly seen by the Vietnamese as a ploy by U.S. imperialism to buy time, and as a sell-out by the Soviet Union.

Though they had no faith that the United States would live up to the agreement, the Vietnamese had little choice but to go along. Their fears were justified in no time, as the United States made clear that the Geneva Accords were nothing but paper that could be shredded into a million worthless pieces. As in dozens of other cases over the past 100-plus years, the United States opposed democracy in favor of aggression. Elections are all well and good but only if the right people win; if the wrong people win, then out come the machine guns.

So in 1954, the United States threw its considerable weight behind Ngo Dinh Diem, an expatriate living at the time in a New Jersey seminary run by the arch-reactionary Francis Cardinal Spellman, and installed him as dictator of what was now known as South Vietnam. During Diem's nine years in power, the United

Continued on next page

May Day Greetings

From

Railroad Workers United

To the

Workers of the World!



Railroad Workers United is a cross-craft caucus of all railroad workers from all unions, sectors and crafts in North America. We practice "Solidarity Unionism". To learn more about our efforts to build solidarity, unity and democracy on the railroad, see the website at www.railroadworkersunited.org.

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Anti-War

Building A New Anti-War Movement

Continued from previous page

States looked on approvingly as he waged a war of terror against the people of the South. Resistance continued and eventually grew, though for a time Washington shifted its regional attention to neighboring Laos, where there was also a strong insurgency fighting against a U.S.-backed dictatorship.

That changed under the Kennedy administration, however, as the United States expanded its aggression in Vietnam and the resistance rapidly grew. The resistance was led largely by the National Front for Liberation—successor group to the Viet Minh and known by its French acronym NLF—but it was made up of a broad cross section of Vietnamese society including, significantly, a large number of Buddhist monks.

Though Kennedy is often portrayed as desiring peace in Vietnam—something the Camelot mythmakers claim he supposedly would have accomplished had he not been assassinated—the sordid facts reveal the opposite. At every point where peace or even de-escalation could have been achieved, Kennedy opted instead for escalation: through saturation bombing, through the widespread use of napalm and other chemical weapons, through the organization of strategic hamlets (such a great phrase, strategic hamlets: kind of like calling Auschwitz a country getaway), and, finally, through the introduction of ground troops.

Though a despot, Diem revealed himself to be a despot with something of a conscience in 1963 when, weary of the fighting tearing apart his country, he independently made peace overtures to the NLF and unification overtures to the North. It was a fateful decision, as Washington soon ordered that he be taken out, and he was assassinated just three weeks before Kennedy himself was murdered. (It was this sequence of events that the great Malcolm X referred to as “chickens coming home to roost,” precipitating his break with the Nation of Islam).

Kennedy’s successor Lyndon Johnson was only in office nine months before he fabricated the Gulf of Tonkin incident in August 1964, another Vietnam turning point.

Simultaneously, Johnson—dubbed the “Peace Candidate” by some—was warning the nation that Barry Goldwater, his opponent in that year’s presidential election, was a dangerously unhinged war monger. That theme produced the most memorable moment of the campaign, a TV ad featuring a little girl counting the petals she picks off a flower that morphs into a countdown to Armageddon.

Once he secured re-election and with the Gulf of Tonkin incident as justification, Johnson, in early 1965, expanded aggression to all of Vietnam via a massive bombing campaign against the North (though the bulk of U.S. destruction was always directed at the South). Parenthetically, Johnson would later that year order an invasion of the Dominican Republic to keep from power moderate reformer Juan Bosch and provide the usual substantial arms, money and diplomatic support to a murderous coup in Indonesia that brought the butcher Suharto to power. At least 500,000 people were killed during the coup and its aftermath; Amnesty International, generally blind to crimes committed by the United States and its proxies, puts the figure at 1.5 million. The Peace Candidate, indeed.

So it remained in Vietnam for three years, a yin and yang of escalation and heightened resistance, until the Tet Offensive in January 1968. Before Tet, the United States had largely gotten away with lying about the progress of the war, the burgeoning anti-war movement notwithstanding. After Tet, it was clear that the promised victory at hand was delusional

and a fabrication. Still, Tet remains a bone of contention for the most extreme supporters of the war who claim the United States capably defeated the uprising only to be sabotaged by anti-war media and Democratic politicians.

In reality, the Tet Offensive followed the NLF strategy of never engaging the United States in a battle, as that word is traditionally understood. It was a hit-and-run operation with the purpose of inflicting great damage, yes, but designed primarily to display once and for all that its forces were formidable and the will of the people unconquerable. In short, the goal was not to win a battle of Tet; the goal was to show anyone who still doubted that the United States could not win. I recall reading years ago something said around the time of Tet by a Vietnamese elder who had probably seen as much death and destruction as anyone who ever lived (I’m paraphrasing): “We can settle this now or we can settle it a thousand years from now. It’s up to the Americans.”

One group who became convinced after Tet that the Vietnamese were right in their assessment was the U.S. business community. As always, their view, unlike generals, policy wonks and national politicians, was sober and geared to the long run. What they saw were war expenditures that were a huge economic drain, attention to Indochina that would have been better placed in outdoing global competitors in the expansion of markets, an army increasingly reluctant to fight, and the spread of domestic insurgencies from the isolation of college campuses to crucial points of production, most notably the Revolutionary Union Movement sweeping the auto industry.

One of the business elite’s first moves was to push Johnson aside in favor of Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy. Kennedy was a long-time Cold Warrior going back to his days working with Joe McCarthy and Roy Cohn whose plans for Vietnam, much like his brother’s, were predicated on victory first, and then peace. McCarthy, meanwhile, had no connection to the anti-war movement before or after his thoroughly opportunistic six-month effort to cash in as the new Peace Candidate. The 1968 election serves as well as any example of the disparity between rulers and ruled: a majority of the population in favor of immediate withdrawal having to choose between candidates who all favored continuing the war.

Richard Nixon’s Vietnamization—shifting the burden of the war to the South Vietnamese army—was Washington’s last failed act. The killing continued and the war was expanded to Laos and Cambodia, but still the United States could not win. Before the end, in 1973, the United States perpetrated another fraud, the Paris Peace Accords, every tenet of which Nixon violated before the ink on the document was dry. By the time the revolutionary forces took Saigon on April 30, 1975, the United States had been involved in Vietnam for 30 years.

The list of outstanding books about Vietnam is a long one and mention will be made only of recent scholarship by Christian Appy, who, among other contributions, has meticulously documented the working-class nature of the war and the domestic opposition to it. That flies in the face of the official history, as elites prefer to foster the notion that the movement consisted exclusively of privileged white college students. In reality, workers and the poor opposed U.S. aggression in higher numbers from start to finish, and not only because sons of the working class were far more likely to do the fighting. Ineluctably, it was overwhelmingly working-class active duty resisters and recently returned veterans whose opposition to the war ultimately proved decisive on the home front. Virtually every American who knows

even a little about the war knows that 58,000 U.S. soldiers died in Vietnam. Only a tiny percentage, however, come anywhere near the correct number of Indochinese killed when polled. Noam Chomsky has written of one poll where the average number of deaths given by respondents was 200,000 and likens this to people believing that 300,000 Jews were murdered in the Holocaust, as in both cases the count is off by a factor of 20. Such a gross misunderstanding underscores the effectiveness of the intellectual class in propagating a self-serving, highly distorted nature of the war—who suffered, who died, who the wronged are.

Even the largely accepted figure of 4 million Indochinese dead is probably low, possibly dramatically so, though the truth will most likely never be known. Those best equipped to make that determination are the very ones who either waged the war or have a vested interest in burying its truths. As a U.S. general speaking of a more recent conflagration put it: “We don’t do body counts.” Not, anyway, when the dead bodies are victims of American violence.

Also completely ignored here is the Vietnamese experience of Agent Orange and post-traumatic stress disorder. Take the terrible suffering of U.S. soldiers and multiply their numbers 10,000-fold or more and we get a sense of the damage to the Vietnamese. Additionally, Vietnam and the rest of Indochina (the official histories generally and conveniently leave out the wars waged against Laos and Cambodia) are full of un-exploded ordinances that regularly cause death and injuries, to this day. And though Vietnam and Laos were able to avoid catastrophic famine, Cambodia was not. This is not surprising given that it’s a small country whose countryside was bombed back to the Stone Age. Destruction on such a scale combined with an ironclad U.S.-imposed post-war

embargo essentially doomed hundreds of thousands to death by starvation. That’s an unpleasant truth, though, and it is so much easier to blame everything bad that happened in Cambodia after April 1975 on the despotic Khmer Rouge.

However, though neither Vietnam nor Laos experienced the post-war cataclysm of Cambodia, the war was so destructive that it could be argued that the United States won in the sense that an alternative mode of social organization was rendered impossible (much like 1980s Nicaragua). The United States views all societies that put people before profits as a threat, particularly if they’re in the global South. It is the only way to understand the 50-plus years war of terror against Cuba, today’s bellicosity directed at Venezuela and the continuation of the war in Indochina in the 1970s long after the United States knew it could not win. In large part because of the scale of destruction, Vietnam today is well integrated into the global economy with all the negatives that that entails, full of sweatshops, venture capitalists and major disparities in wealth and power.

Discussions of Vietnam are hardly academic exercises: the United States is currently on a global rampage and falsifying history is part and parcel of the effort to whip up support for the next war. Because of the domestic gulf between rulers and ruled on the question of U.S. aggression, we have the United States going ahead with a second invasion of Iraq in 2003, destroying Libya, supporting war-hungry neo-Nazis in Ukraine, threatening Venezuela and engaging in a proxy war designed to destroy Syria, all despite opposition from a majority of the public on every count. Put simply, that means we will have to more effectively do our work of building an anti-war, anti-imperialist movement toward a day when we may live with the people of the world in something approximating harmony.

MAY DAY GREETINGS 2015

To my fellow members of
The Friends of the Modern School.



The NYC Modern School, Photo: wikimedia.org
circa 1911–1912.

Keeping alive the memory of the Stelton Modern School, and dedicated to education for rational thinking, to end ethnic prejudices and ending war, atrocities, genocide, and worship of The State and State-ism.

Raymond S. Solomon

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.

A Salute To The Workers Of The World On May 1!



The International Solidarity Commission (ISC) sends revolutionary greetings to friends, comrades, and fellow workers around the globe for this year's May 1 celebration.

2015 is a special year for us as it marks the 110th anniversary of the Industrial Workers of the World's founding by delegates and leaders of radical North American unions in Chicago in the summer of 1905. We are proud of our 110 years of struggle for a better world, but we know that we still have a long way to go to realize our vision of the global workers' revolution.

Over the past decade we have seen struggles intensifying; so, too, is the brutality of the state and its capitalist masters in their response. All over the world, people are fighting to expand their labor rights and better their conditions.

From the platinum mines of South Africa where workers occupied and battled state violence to the factories of Saveh Steel Rolling in Iran, where workers struck and won improvements, the ISC salutes the bravery and sacrifice of those fellow workers who have given their all for humanity.

The ISC assists and supports these struggles as much as possible by building international solidarity all year round. Workers have chosen May 1 the world over as a symbol for international solidarity. So let's stand together as workers, celebrate the May Day inspired by international solidarity, and work to better our global movement.

Solidarity Forever,
J. Pierce, Yusuf C., Florian H. (ISC Chair), and Anders M. (European Regional Administration)

Polish Miners Strike, Clash With Police

By John Kalwaic

In January and February 2015 miners went on a volatile strike in Poland. The Polish miners went on strike because of "cost cutting measures" mining companies were demanding of their employees that would include layoffs. The Polish government voted in favor of the "Governmental Recovery Act," designed by the Boston Consulting Group, which provides services to such corporations as IBM, Google, Tata Group and the Russian Ministry of Energy. The "restructuring plan" included the privatization and closure of many state-owned mines. When the restructuring plan was announced, thousands of miners from across Poland went on strike. Many held demonstrations and blockaded railways. The two main labor federations that represent miners—Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy (NSZZ, also known as Solidarność) and the Ogólnopolskie Porozumienie Związków Zawodowych (OPZZ)—agreed to go on strike.

On Feb. 10 Polish miners clashed with police who shot rubber bullets at them. One of the main companies, Jastrzebska Spółka Węglowa (JSW), was financially hurt by the strike. The two sides finally came to halt on Feb. 16. The miners agreed to work Saturdays and to have their bonuses tied to the companies' earnings. This has



Photo: politicalcritique.org

been one of Poland's largest strikes since the 1980s when Lech Walesa was head of the NSZZ trade union movement, which brought down the government. Poland is also currently experiencing unrest and protests from farmers, who are objecting to the importation of genetically modified foods. Of course, unlike the 1980s protest against the "communist" government, much of the Western press has been silent about the protest in this Western allied nation. Although coal mining is incredibly destructive to the environment as an industry, we should support our fellow workers in the industry who are striking against the company. The bosses right now have no intention of abandoning fossil fuels and helping laid-off miners transfer to better safer jobs.

With files from Political Critique.

Guest Workers Protest In United Arab Emirates



By John Kalwaic

Photo: aljazeera.com

In Dubai, the capital city of United Arab Emirates (UAE), hundreds of South Asian construction guest workers gathered outside the Dubai Mall near the world's tallest building on March 10 to demand a pay bonus. Coming from

countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal, these workers are in the UAE temporarily on work visas. Riot police showed up and allegedly negotiated between the boss and the workers. The construction workers wore green uniforms with green hard hats as they cheered when the dispute was resolved. Guest workers in the Gulf region experience poor conditions and low pay. In some of the Gulf countries, including the UAE, strikes and unions are illegal. So it is up to the workers to have creative, spontaneous actions, and many times they face repression.

With files from Al Jazeera.

International News Briefs

Strikes, Worker Revolts Worldwide



Pou Yuen Vietnam shoe factory workers strike. Photo: rfa.org

Compiled by FW Bill B.

Vietnam: Shoe Factory Workers Strike For Six Days

Factory workers went on strike in Ho Chi Minh City at the end of March 2015. Workers gathered in and around the Pou Yuen Vietnam shoe factory to protest a change in social insurance coverage. Turnout was estimated in the hundreds, and no incidents of violence were reported. Hundreds of workers gathered both inside and outside the facility to carry out protests as part of the strike. The owner of the company, Taiwan's Pou Chen Corp., indicated that the company was working to resolve the issue but was limited by the fact the workers were protesting a national labor law. An estimated 80,000 people work at the factory. The workers concluded their strike on April 2, after six consecutive days. The strike ended after Vietnamese officials stated that no changes will take place until the end of 2015.

Moldova: Hundreds Of Farmers Protest Throughout Country

On March 27, hundreds of farmers gathered throughout the country to protest the government's decision to increase the goods and services (GST) tax on farm products from 8 to 20 percent. In addition, the farmers also demanded an increase in state subsidies, cheaper bank loans and compensation for increased gas prices. The farmers parked tractors on the sides of major roads during the protest.

Belgium: Protest Causes Transportation Delays In Brussels

On March 30, between 17,000 and 20,000 people gathered in central Brussels to protest the government's austerity measures, which include cuts in public funding. Public transportation staff participated in the protest, causing transportation delays in the city. Both metro and tram services were running at 50 percent capacity. Bus services were also affected, but to a lesser extent.

Algeria: Air Algeria Cabin Crew Stage Strike

At approximately 5 a.m. on March 30, cabin crew members of Air Algeria launched a strike over poor working conditions. However, the strike was called off at 3 p.m. following negotiations with authorities. The strike was reportedly widely followed and caused the suspension of at least 15 international flights at Houari Boumediene Airport; however, normal operations resumed later in the day.

Argentina: Nationwide Transportation Strike

Argentina's transportation unions called a nationwide strike on March 31 to protest high inflation and income tax rates. Many businesses across the country closed as the small yet critical part of the Argentine workforce shut down trains, buses and subways. Because the transportation union represents many airport workers, airports canceled many domestic and international flights. Government of-

officials have pushed back against the demands of the powerful union.

That same day, the Chilean airline LATAM canceled flights within Argentina as well as international flights to and from Argentina. The ongoing transportation strike for higher wages and lower taxes affected both international and domestic flights across Argentina, as airport workers

joined the strike. LATAM flights into and from Buenos Aires' Jorge Newbery Airfield, as well as in Cordoba and Mendoza, were canceled. Some international LATAM flights to and from Ezeiza International Airport also faced cancellation or rescheduling.

Greece: Anarchists Occupy Public Buildings During Protests

On April 1, approximately 20 anarchists gained access to the parliament building's courtyard in central Syntagma Square in Athens while protesting high-security prisons as well as demanding the release of several Marxist prisoners. Meanwhile, other small groups of anarchists occupied multiple government offices in the southern town of Patras, the office of a government employee in Heraklion and the town hall of an Athens suburb. Furthermore, protesters began occupying parts of a Thessaloniki University; they also began occupying multiple offices of an Athens university.

Benin: Government Grants Concessions To Public Sector Workers

According to reports, the government recently granted a number of concessions to workers of the education, health and judicial sectors in an effort to end a series of strikes that have plagued the country since 2012. The government agreed to increase salaries of all teachers and to disburse subsidies for the schools' budgets. For the health sector workers who agreed to end a strike that began on March 27, the government agreed to hire an additional 7,000 personnel for the health centers that are short on staff. The government also agreed to hire more judges and to disburse a fuel allowance to the judicial workers.

Brazil: Small Protest Against Olympic Construction Causes Major Traffic Jam In Rio De Janeiro

On April 1, approximately 30 residents from the Vila Autodrom favela, located near the Olympic Park, blocked the main Abelardo Bueno Avenue that leads into Rio de Janeiro during morning rush hour. The roadblock occurred as the residents protested against the government's intention to raze the Vila Autodromo in order to build an access road to the Olympic Park. The residents are refusing to leave, even though the favela is not equipped with basic services such as water and electricity. The protest caused at least three miles of traffic in Rio de Janeiro's southern Barra de Tijuca neighborhood. While the protest was relatively small, it was the first one to be held directly against the Olympics.

Italy: Nationwide Public Transport Strike

On March 30, public transportation workers in major cities across Italy staged a four-hour strike. Buses, metro, trams and trains in Rome halted services at 8:30 a.m. Both Bologna and southern Naples held transport strikes from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The Unione Sindacale di Base cited cuts to local welfare and social services as the reason for the work stoppage.