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TO LABOR

Industrial Worker

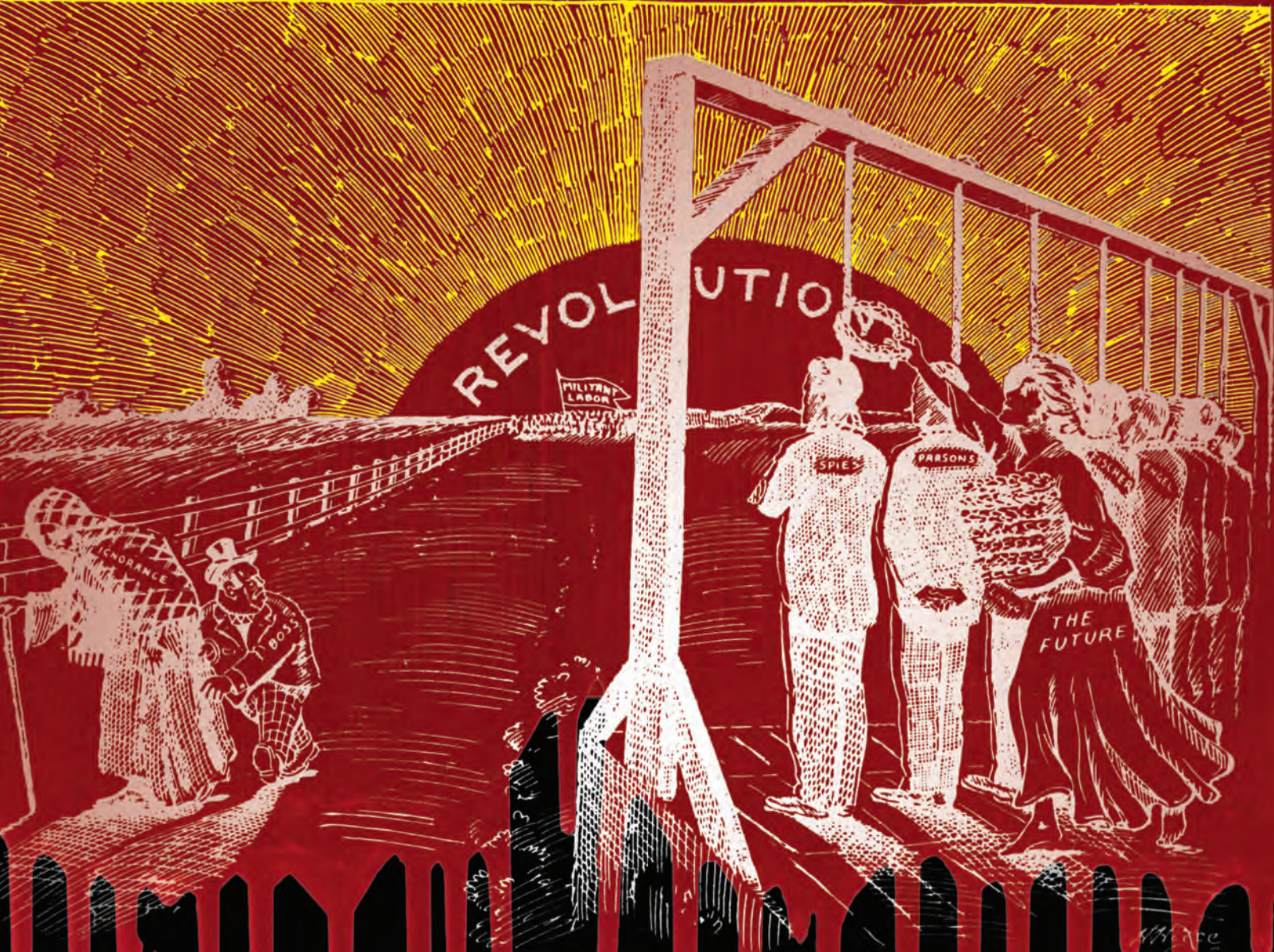
AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

FALL 2015

#1775

VOLUME 112

NO 7



WE NEVER FORGET IWW AND LABOR'S MARTYRS

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The Voice of Revolutionary Industrial Unionism

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Twin Cities IWW wins unpaid wages from daycare

By the Twin Cities IWW

This past summer, IWW member Anja was fired from her job at Crocus Hill Academy, a daycare center in St. Paul, Minn. She was told that she was fired for talking to current and former co-workers about issues with their boss, Imran Khan. Two weeks later, Anja had yet to receive her final paycheck, her personal belongings, or a copy of her personnel file, which she had requested. Three union members from the Twin Cities IWW branch accompanied Anja to the daycare to deliver a demands letter. Khan reacted aggressively, shouting at and threatening the union delegation, accusing Anja of mistreating children, and calling St. Paul police. He refused to accept the letter, and police asked IWW members to vacate the property.

The following day, a larger group of IWW members leafleted the daycare. As Khan yelled from the door, union members talked to parents about Anja's firing and other grievances. Upon Khan's continued refusal to receive the letter, branch members conducted a call-in and social media campaign against Crocus Hill Academy. Within a few days, Anja received a call from the school's new director, begging her to give him a copy of the demands which Khan refused to accept. She has since received her final paycheck and an additional check for \$120 to compensate for her personal belongings and personnel file, both of which Khan "misplaced."

Manipulative, lying bosses like Imram Khan are a danger to all working people, especially when they punish workers for protected activity like talking about work



Photo: Twin Cities IWW

Members of the Twin Cities IWW celebrate Anja's victory.

conditions and steal wages. But when we stand alone, or when we look to the government for help, we give up our power to fight. When we come together with other working people, we can get what we deserve.

Direct action works and solidarity wins.

— This story originally appeared in *The Organizer*, blog of the Twin Cities IWW. For more information, email twincities@iww.org.

Liverpool IWW: Claimant advocacy is not a crime

By the Liverpool IWW

On Oct. 12, members and supporters of Liverpool IWW held an information picket outside Williamson Square Job Centre in the town centre. We were one of several IWW groups and other activist organizations holding demonstrations at job centres throughout the second week of October. Scottish Unemployed Workers Network (SUWN) called for solidarity with claimant advocate Tony Cox, who faced court in Forfar on the ludicrous charges of threatening behavior, refusing to give his name and address and resisting arrest. He was arrested at an Arbroath Job Centre in January 2015, whilst representing a highly vulnerable unemployed woman.

The SUWN assert that:

"We believe that this case highlights the climate of fear that is evident within many job centres, but that it is not only benefit claimants that are treated with contempt. Welfare advisors are also being subjected to bullying and intimidation, as in the recent case of Mike Vallance at High

Riggs Job Centre, when they attempt to represent, often highly vulnerable, benefit claimants. The SUWN will resist any and all attempts to curb the rights of welfare and citizen advocates to represent the unemployed, and we ask you to join us in our fight to ensure that **ADVOCACY IS NOT A CRIME.**"

At the picket on Oct. 12, we distributed information provided by Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty, to publicize the fact that advocacy is not a crime. Claimants visiting the job centre took our advice enthusiastically, and were generally pleased that someone was taking a stand against the U.K. Department for Work and Pensions, and the bullying regime inside the job centre. Our social networking sites also got a number of "likes" and follows during the picket.

In fact, the response was so positive that we will soon begin a regular series of job centre information distribution pickets, offering advice, encouragement and solidarity to claimants—who represent some of the most vulnerable elements of the working class.

Got something to say?

Send your *Industrial Worker* letters, stories, reviews, and other items of interest to iw@iww.org.

Fellow Workers!

Please join us in Chicago for

Joe Hill's Funeral

Sunday, November 22, 2015 at 7PM
The Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia, Chicago, IL, 60642

A re-enactment of the 1915 funeral for IWW singer Joe Hill, executed in Utah and mourned in Chicago.

MUSIC BY:

BUCKY HALKER
LEROY BACH / KHARI LEMUEL
L. WYATT
JOHN NORDWALL, of Merula
PSALM ONE and FLUFFY
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TICKETS AT:

<https://tinyurl.com/joehillfuneral>

ALL PROCEEDS GO TO THE ARTISTS

Don't Mourn. Organize!

ACQUITTED ON ALL CHARGES!

Legal victory over police repression of union activity and free speech in Boston

By GDC Local 13, Boston

Resolution of Boston-based Fellow Worker (FW) Jason's long legal entanglement arrived on July 21, 2015, 20 months after a violent November 2013 arrest by Cambridge, Mass. police on a picket line at Insomnia Cookies near Harvard University. The case spent 605 days in court.

The Boston IWW General Membership Branch (GMB) has reported on worker campaign initiatives—including grievances related to sub-minimum wage pay and independent contractor status (employer exploitation strategy du jour) at a hostile, unsafe working environment—since Insomnia Cookies workers went on strike in August 2013. A shop committee coordinated a multi-faceted campaign, which included Harvard Student Labor Action Movement (SLAM) and Boston University Student Labor Action Project (SLAP) activists demonstrating in the fall of 2013. The Cambridge Police Department's (CPD) response was often disproportionate, despite their already low public opinion after arresting Henry Louis Gates, a prominent black Harvard professor, sparked a coast-to-coast conversation on police racism.

On Nov. 14, 2013, 12 to 15 people picketed for approximately an hour. CPD officer Ed Burke set off a cop riot wherein officers tackled FW Jason, who was battered and arrested. GMB members bailed him out for \$100. He was charged with misdemeanor assault and battery on a police officer, resisting arrest and disorderly conduct.

Thanks to the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) referral service, FW Jason was represented by Myoung J. Joun, then Jeffrey Wiesner of Shapiro, Weissberg & Garin, LLP and Alexandra H. Deal, an associate solo practitioner, as the district attorney (DA). The CPD procrastinated and did not show to hearings for more than year. The court insisted that FW Jason take an anger management program and admit his supposed guilt, but compulsory anger management after being attacked by volatile cops was never considered a serious option by FW Jason or his supporters.

The Boston GMB raised approximately \$5,000 between strike and legal support, with \$2,800 offered to the lawyers, approximately \$200 going to FW Jason and the rest to strikers. Funds came from Wobblies all over the world thanks in part to publicity from IWW Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee (IWOC) activist FW Brianna.

Four Boston Wobblies served as witnesses. I also took pictures during the melee. Photo evidence showed a vicious assault, with a smiling cop, Burke, presiding. Attorneys Wiesner and Deal exposed cop lies and the CPD had no pictures, video or civilian witnesses of their own.

Wobblies witnessed officers pushing and shoving. When 140-pound FW Jason stopped to protest the aggression, Burke grabbed FW Jason's



Boston Wobs stand proud with FW Jason (center).

Photo: GDC Local 13, Boston

flag and hit himself with it. Another cop used a chokehold and the sum of their excessive force left FW Jason bloodied, without his eyeglasses and in significant pain.

Defense witnesses comported themselves better and were more credible about the lead up to the violence. After Wobblies testified and Wiesner delivered closing arguments dramatically more logical than the prosecutor, whose style mixed palpable inexperience and vague McCarthyism, jurors deliberated for just 10 minutes before delivering a verdict of "not guilty" on all three charges.

The prosecutor was obviously hoping that union activity and picketing would be perceived as inherently disorderly.

Wobblies facing charges or who are witnesses should be prepared to answer questions designed to alienate jurors. A fellow worker on cross examination was asked to explain the meaning of the black-and-red union flag that the DA admitted into evidence as a weapon. Although objection to blatant red-baiting was sustained, a question on the meaning of direct action was allowed. Nonetheless this was an opportunity to remind jurors that we were not preventing anyone from entering the store! Obviously this tactic—underestimating growing public awareness of police and state oppression—was another miscalculation by the prosecution.

Legal defense exposed an important need in our work: organizing and economic justice intersect with resistance against police oppression and the prison industrial complex. At pretrial dates fellow workers watched the DA recommend jail time and steep restitution for petty transgressions by various defendants, all people of color. A 61-year-old black immigrant woman accused of stealing three pieces of thrift store clothing—suspiciously valued by the state at over \$500—was facing jail time and deportation if terms of release were violated. This was just one example. FW Jonathan, one of the Insomnia strikers and a young man of color, was arrested around the same time in a drug war raid targeting housemates. Unlike FW Jason, he spent three months in jail, with an initial bail

of \$100,000 (though it was reduced by half, then ultimately to \$10,000). A comparison of these defendant experiences dissolves the border between class struggle and criminalization, although it does highlight the obvious class and racial inequality in our society.

Although the DA pressed us to say that the arrest was a successful publicity stunt for an obscure group of hotheads, a premise we refused to accept, the Insomnia campaign did not survive the pressure and diversion of resources from shop-floor organizing to legal support. Until recently FW Jason has also struggled to stay afloat and find work. Meanwhile, FW Jonathan's incarceration cost him his job and a semester of community college.

The justice system is at war against the poor, and the Boston GMB is at work developing a more comprehensive strategic analysis rooted in collaboration with the prison abolition and anti-oppression movements. The General Defense Committee (GDC) Local 13 in Boston has begun meeting regularly again and plans to report more on activity that has become a major part of GMB member effort: court support, including the Boston GMB's substantial contribution toward FW Jonathan's bail. Boston Wobblies plan to increase participation in the IWOC; we have been working with NLG activists and plan to establish a bail fund. Boston GMB members organized an NLG Legal Observer Training in May as the presence of legal observers at the arrest would have been another advantage. Local FWs have observed at a variety of actions in recent months. Area Cop Watch and American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) trainings have also been informative about filming the police.

The outcome of FW Jason's case could not have been better: he had representation not only capable of winning but also familiar with our politics and respectful of our work. FW Jason walked away inconvenienced but acquitted and we all enjoyed the humiliation of the cops' defeat. Our community is stronger and our organizing more representative of working-class composition going forward.

FW Jason thanks all his supporters, especially his partner FW Sarah, his attorneys, and Wobs near and far. To be blunt, however, he now thinks "purposefully getting arrested is stupid," although that was no one's intention and picketers were compliant. He values economic disruption, but is critical of civil disobedience as employed by the mainstream unions, compromising already marginalized workers' lives without material benefit. "It's playing into the state's hands by sucking money and energy out of organizing work, but I'm determined as ever to support workers. I'm not going to be deterred from supporting workers' rights," he said.

THE REBEL SPIRIT RESOUNDS

Wobblies in Colorado to commemorate the life & legacy of Joe Hill

By x333295

The rebel spirit of Joe Hill will resound in greater Denver and Boulder, Colo., this November with two major programs that express Joe's legacy as a proud immigrant worker.

First, the Bread and Roses Worker's Cultural Center in Denver will join with the syndicated Boulder-based radio program/organization, eTown, to present a memorial concert at Macky Auditorium on the University of Colorado campus in Boulder. This show, which will subsequently be nationally radiocast, was originally scheduled for September but was postponed until a still-to-be-announced November date. Specifics about the concert will be announced soon, but the production staff at eTown and Bread and Roses say it will feature top-line performers and will emphasize the extraordinary contributions immigrant workers have made and are making in the process of developing a workers' world.

The second program will be on Nov. 20: straight from Salt Lake City's hallmark Joe Hill commemoration on Nov. 19, Grammy Award nominated musician John McCutcheon will perform the musical play "Joe Hill's Last Will" in Denver. In keeping with the immigrant theme, this show will be at the Civic Theater, home to the area's oldest and most renowned immigrant-worker based theater group, Su Teatro. Su Teatro grew out of the farmworker struggles and has since developed a highly successful and internationally respected playwriting, musical and performing troupe based in Denver.

Further details and ticket information are available at <http://www.workersbreadandroses.org>. If possible, some proceeds from the events will be used to re-establish a space for the Bread and Roses Center, which has a large lending library as well as exhibits and displays on the Ludlow Massacre of 1914, the Columbine mine strikes and massacres

of 1927, the P-9 strike (on August 17, 1985 when 1,500 members of Local P-9, United Food and Commercial Workers Union [UFCW], struck the Hormel meatpacking plant in Austin, Minn.); IWW western history; and the life and legacy of Joe Hill. The center has been closed since losing its home in April 2014.

In November We Remember The Coal Miners' Strike & Columbine Mine Massacre of 1927

In November, Colorado remembers that the IWW coal miners' strike of 1927 on the heels of the Columbine coal mine massacre, in the fields between Denver and Boulder, succeeded in bringing unions to Colorado coal miners. In 1989, the Denver IWW and Fellow Worker and artist Carlos Cortez spread a portion of Joe Hill's ashes on the previously unmarked graves of six of the Columbine martyrs in the Lafayette, Colo., cemetery.

For information that finally dissects how Joe was framed, see William Adler's book, "The Man Who Never Died: the Life, Times and Legacy of a Labor Icon" (Bloomsbury USA, 2012). Also check out "Slaughter in Serene, the Columbine Coal Strike Reader," published in 2005 by the Bread and Roses Workers' Cultural Center & the Industrial Workers of the World, available from both <http://store.iww.org> and <http://www.workersbreadandroses.org>.



Photo: reuther.wayne.edu

A view of the bullet-ridden exterior of the Walsenburg IWW Hall after violence broke out between strikers and the State Police during the Colorado Coal Strike.

Joe Hill concert in Berlin to benefit prisoners' union

By Elmore Y.

There will be a concert on the 100th anniversary of Joe Hill's execution in Berlin on Nov. 19. You will be able to see acts such as the Overall Brigade from Cologne, who play Wobbly songs and other American working-class classics in a hobo skiffle style. The band performs with a banjolele, tea-chest base and accordion. The German-French duo Bernd Köhler & Blandine Bonjour will play—besides some tunes like "Bread and Roses"—mostly European workers songs in a fine and dignified folk style. Wobbly G-town Johnny—an American who is somehow stranded in Göttingen—will contribute a classic American folk set. Atze Wellblech is a duo from Berlin which includes violinist Paul Geigerzähler who has gained some fame in Eastern Europe folk music with his Sorbian music group Berlinska Droha. Atze Wellblech is worth seeing only for the weird looking DIY double bass that musician Hans built with his own hands. It sounds quite powerful.

The Joe Hill Organizing Committee is very proud to announce an act from the United States.

Donald L. Dalton will perform songs from his band Sons of Hanzo, from Salt Lake City and San Pedro. The band's musicians are linked to the IWW and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU). We told each group this rule for the event: every band shall play a song written by or about Joe Hill at the beginning and the end of their set.

The venue where the concert is being held seems to fit perfectly with the theme: Supamolly has a long tradition in the once famous Berlin squatters' movement. It is run by a collective that still claims a political mission as well as fair conditions both for musicians and the staff. The name Supamolly stems from a hoax story in the Berlin yellow press around a "super molotov cocktail" that squatters reportedly had constructed during the wild years around 1990. This became a joke amongst squatters because it was just a two-gallon bottle of Lambrusco wine that was found by the police in a roof garden.

The proceeds from the concert will benefit the recently-founded Gefangenengewerkschaft/ Bundesweite Organisation (GG/BO), a prisoners'

union. GG/BO was founded by Olli Rast, a militant left-winger and bookstore worker, who was convicted of arson of German military equipment and alleged conspiracy. Inside Berlin-Tegel prison, he became a Wobbly and started organizing, which he continues as the union's spokesman after being set free. The prisoners' union grew enormously during the last two years. It now has around 700 members in 50 German prisons, although prison management denies fundamental rights to unionize and uses union-busting measures against members and their representatives.

But isn't it a great story? You put a Wobbly to jail and what you get is a prisoners' union! Olli Rast will present his union and host the concert in Berlin. If you have money and some time, come over and join us!

Joe-Hill-aint-dead.org
 Berlin, Nov. 19th 2015, Supamolly
 Sons of Hanzo | Bernd Köhler & Blandine Bonjour |
 The Overall Brigade | G-town Johnny | Atze Wellblech
 Fundraiser for the Prisoners Union / Federal Organisation
 (Gefangenengewerkschaft / Bundesweite Organisation)

Boycotts, pickets in support of Familias Unidas farm worker union intensify

By x331980

Bellingham, Wash. – The boycott of Sakuma Bros. Farms Inc., Driscoll's, and Häagen-Dazs berry ice creams continues to spread. At their 36th convention, held in Hawaii in May 2015, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) passed a supporting resolution, stating

“RESOLVED: that the ILWU calls upon other labor organizations, and legislators and congressional delegations to support a boycott of Sakuma Brothers Farms, Häagen-Dazs, and Driscoll's berries until the demands of Familias Unidas por La Justicia are met.”

In September 2015, the IWW General Convention passed a resolution in support of Familias Unidas. The resolution calls on all Wobblies and IWW branches to support the boycott, adopt the resolution, and send a letter to Familias Unidas, Driscoll's, and Sakuma Bros. Farms.

Familias Unidas por la Justicia (FUJ) is the independent farm workers union formed by more than 400 migrant workers employed by the 2,000-acre Sakuma Bros. Farms Inc., located in Skagit County near the town of Burlington, Wash. The union grew out of a series of strikes beginning in the summer of 2013 in response to low piece rate wages and deplorable living and working conditions on the corporate farm. During the 2015 berry harvest, Familias Unidas members struck several times over piece rates, working hours, and other field conditions. Sakuma Bros., now headed by new President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Danny Weeden, has refused to negotiate in good faith. A large picket on Labor Day by FUJ members and supporters (including the Whatcom-Skagit IWW) succeeded in blocking trucks loaded with fresh-picked berries from entering the processing shed.

To pressure the corporation to negotiate, recognize the union, and introduce a \$15-per-hour



Photo: Familias Unidas por la Justicia

Familias Unidas members and supporters block the entrance to the Sakuma processing plant on Labor Day 2015. IWW legal advisors informed security that picket blockades are protected activity under labor law, and were allowed to proceed by county police.

minimum wage, FUJ has called for a boycott of Sakuma berries and the principal distributor, Driscoll's of Watsonville, Calif. Driscoll's distributes Sakuma and other berries internationally. Häagen-Dazs is a major purchaser.

Wobblies, members of other unions, Jobs with Justice, students, various political groups, and environmental organizations have joined pickets at grocery stores. These are aimed at educating shoppers about the farm workers' fight with Sakuma, and promote the boycott of Driscoll's and Häagen-Dazs. Pickets began at stores in Bellingham last fall, spurred by Western Washington University's Students for Farmworker Justice, and joined early on by Whatcom-Skagit IWW, Jobs with Justice and individual labor activists. Initial picket targets

included Fred Meyer and Hagen Foods, and have now spread to Costco stores in Seattle, Bellingham, and Burlington, Wash., and San Jose, Calif. Whole Foods in Portland, Ore., Detroit, Mich., San Francisco and Oakland, Cal., and Puget Consumers Co-op in Seattle. Some boycott pickets have been noisy affairs inside stores.

The Whatcom-Skagit IWW in northwest Washington calls on all IWW branches and groups to organize boycott pickets at any stores that sell Driscoll's and Häagen-Dazs ice creams with berries if management refuses initial polite requests to support the boycott. The pickets are intended to spread the boycott of those two primary Sakuma customers by informing shoppers not to purchase those products. The boycott does not target the stores themselves, only those products.

So, fellow workers, get started now. First ask store management to stop selling Driscoll's berries and Häagen-Dazs berry ice creams. If they continue to carry those products, then proceed with informational pickets. Full information is available online at <http://boycottsakumaberries.com>. Unions and other organizations passing resolutions in support of Familias Unidas and the boycott are requested to send a written copy to Danny Weeden, Sakuma Bros. Farms, 17790 Cook Road, Burlington, WA 98223 USA, and also Familias Unidas, P.O. Box 1206, Burlington, WA 98233. Additional information is available from the Whatcom-Skagit IWW (see the IWW Directory on page 4), and the Familias Unidas por la Justicia Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/FamiliasUnidas>.

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Youth shelter workers confront boss

By Shane Burley

The chants barely subsided as they pushed their way into the main office. Negotiations at the Janus Youth Shelter in Portland, Ore., were almost entirely halted as the workers saw the prospect of miniscule raises, layoffs, and cuts in services for the homeless at-risk youth they serve. Armed with a group of almost 30 supporters, the workers moved into the Janus Youth Shelter's main office on Aug. 28, to confront Executive Director Dennis Morrow, who was sitting there seemingly waiting for the protesters to show. Morrow demanded that workers leave as he headed to a back office. Determined, the group of workers refused to let him escape into a nondescript room and demanded that he hear their demands.

This is just the most recent escalation in a growing conflict between management of the Portland nonprofit and the union, which is one of the few IWW “contract shops.” The workers at Janus perform all of the union functions, from the original organizing drive to the negotiations over new contracts. Their shop is one of several Janus shops, with some also organized with the IWW and then some with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AF-SCME), all of which are seeing wage stagnation and possible staffing cuts. This is not a new story for care workers of most stripes, where shelters, group homes, and skilled care facilities under the nonprofit or semi-public sector banner are seeing the institutionalization of poverty wages.

“My co-workers and I deal with a lot of challenging, sometimes traumatizing, work,” said one worker, Tyler Razz, as he addressed Morrow. “On top of the vicarious trauma that we experience, and the specialized set of skills we develop to deal with the escalating conflict, and providing emotional support and stability for these homeless youth, we have to worry about keeping ourselves out of poverty with these \$10.25-an-hour wages.”

Cuts have been a consistent feature of Janus negotiations through the last several years, particularly in 2011 after workers at both Harry's Mother and the Street Light Youth Shelter—two other local nonprofits—were denied promised raises. This came directly after Janus attempted to force any fired worker who is seeking to appeal into formal arbitration, which is financially impossible for a volunteer-run union like the IWW because the workers would have to pay for this type of arbitration.

Many of the cuts came as Janus claimed that they were failing to get the funding they needed from the state to meet wage needs.

“Where was the union when Multnomah County increased [the] minimum wage for its employees to \$15 an hour, and I was at the table asking what are they going to do for contract workers?” said Morrow when challenged on the low wages. “I didn't see the union there.” In



Janus Youth Shelter workers picket on Aug. 28, 2015 in Portland, Ore.

response to this several organizers pointed out that Morrow currently receives a six-figure salary for his position as executive director, a wage that workers claim is far beyond the norm for positions such as his.

“Dennis, how much will you sacrifice to pull your workers out of poverty?” asked Jonathan Steiner, an organizer with the IWW. “You have made over \$100,000 for over a decade. How do you justify that? How do you look people in the eye when they are nearly homeless working for you?”

This was the first major action in support of the Janus workers, organized jointly by groups such as the Portland Solidarity Network, Portland Jobs with Justice, \$15Now, and the Black Rose Anarchist Federation. As negotiations move forward the workers are committing to rely on open organizing, both inside and outside of the workplace, as a way to put pressure on Janus to raise the wages to a standard that can better meet with Portland's rising living costs.

The coalition organized a second picket to coincide with negotiations on Sept. 29, 2015, with almost 30 supporters. It was at this stage that the negotiations hit a dead end, with some work-

ers reporting that they had filed National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) charges over “bad faith” bargaining. During negotiations, there had been a threat made about layoffs due to a drop in funding. Management had promised to return to this negotiation with two proposals: one including using smaller staffs and maintaining raises, and a second proposal with small raises and keeping the staffing levels on shift. Instead, they returned with a new raise structure that only brought a \$0.25 raise above the two-year wage cap.

Workers were originally set to vote on Oct. 10-11, but they got an extension to the following weekend to make a decision. If the offer is rejected then the negotiations head into mediations that, while non-binding, bring in government-funded oversight in an attempt to bring resolution. This is not the first time that Janus has stalled in negotiations with the IWW, but with the shrinking wage offers from management and the declining conditions of the shelter this could be the fight that determines what the shelters will look like both for the staff and the clients it serves.

Photo: Daniel Vincent

ADDING SALT TO THE BERN

Kentucky IWW spreads the message of the One Big Union at Bernie Sanders rally

By FW Patrick

Early in July 2015, the Kentucky IWW took to the west end of Louisville to spread the message of the One Big Union (OBU) at a local rally for presidential candidate Bernie Sanders. Our branch action, far from endorsing a candidate, was about messaging, about “salting.” It was about recognizing that Sanders supporters—who could remain supporters themselves even if they joined the union—are likely to sympathize with our cause. We spoke with union workers, activists, emergency medical technicians, environmentalists, artists, educators, and students. We signed up nearly 100 people to receive our newsletter. We found like-minded folk to collaborate with down the line. Our online readership and membership immediately grew.

To “salt” an event doesn’t mean to endorse an event. It means to recognize an opportunity—an opportunity where working people are present en masse and looking to band together—to most effectively spread the message and cause of the IWW. And, in my mind, the Sanders candidacy speaks to a political consciousness that is learning to value unionization and worker solidarity in a way those things haven’t been valued in quite some time. I, for one, will not pass up a chance to soap box to a primed audience.

After we salted portions of the crowd with our message of the importance of organizing and promoting workers’ rights and solidarity, it was brought to my attention that something needs to be made clear: the IWW endorses no candidate

and distances itself from all electoral politics. We are not a political group, but a workers’ union. We organize for workers, not for politicians! Historically, this is an important point of the IWW, and that history need not be reshaped here.

And so, without endorsing Sanders, Wobblies should pay attention to the climate that surrounds his candidacy—if for no other reason than because working folk should be reminded, again and again, that the IWW has fought throughout its proud history for the rights of working people.

Rather than harping on electoral politics, Wobblies might listen to some of what Fellow Worker (FW) Mick Parsons from our Kentucky IWW branch says:

“Whether it’s in your workplace, your local bar, the gym, or a political rally, to be a Wob means not keeping it under wraps. It doesn’t always mean being obnoxious, either. But if, in the process of discussing recent world and political happenings, you happen to introduce someone to the OBU, then there’s nothing wrong with that. If you are a musician, poet, or other artist, and your Wobbliness comes out in your art—so be it. Be aware and be a good messenger. In order to build a new world out of the ashes of the old—we need everyone. That’s solidarity.”

Our branch, and I imagine all IWW branches, contain socialists, Marxists, Maoists, Roosevelt-style democrats, anarchists, and the like. All branches represent teachers, miners, writers, electricians, pipe fitters, dock builders, musicians, and so on. There are Wobs who are political junk-



Photo: Amanda L. Hay

FW Kate Lafferty (right) speaks to a rally attendee, Donna Wright, outside the rally venue in Louisville.

ies and Wobs who’d rather not see what CNN has to say about this election cycle. The IWW is the umbrella organization for all these people, and this is why the primary concern needs to be, as FW Mick says, being a good—which means an effective—messenger.

So to borrow from FW Mick once more (and this time to paraphrase), whether you’re at a festival, in a meeting, or just engaged in some idle talk, be a Wob wherever you go.

**In November
I remember /
my uncle
Antti Saikkonen
(1891-1917) /
early IWW
member
from 1908**

— Harry Siitonen,
Bay Area GMB



Photo: provided by Harry Siitonen

FORMER STARBUCKS WORKER WINS SETTLEMENT, RECEIVES BACK PAY



Photo: Nicholas Patti

By FW Nicholas Patti

It was 10 years in the making, but the payout for workers organizing with the IWW Starbucks Workers Union (SWU) in New York City was sweet: \$50,745, before taxes. That figure was the amount Starbucks paid to Joe Agins, Jr. in 2015 after illegally firing him in 2005 for union organizing, according to Stuart Lichten, attorney for the IWW, and according to the 2015 settlement agreement.

Fellow Worker (FW) Joe Agins, Jr. was employed at the 2nd Ave. & 9th Street store in the East Village of Manhattan when Starbucks fired him in 2005. He was an active union organizer with the SWU at that time.

"Agins is very courageous," said Lichten. "He was fired and gave up his job for this, and it took 10 years, which is a travesty."

"It's important because if workers do not protect their rights, the rights disappear," Lichten continued.

In addition to the back pay, included in the 2015 settlement agreement between Starbucks and the IWW are the following terms, according to Lichten:

- Workers may discuss union business on-the-job.
- Terms and conditions of employment may be discussed.
- Union business may be posted on store bulletin boards.
- Discrimination against Starbucks employees for union organizing regarding work opportunities is prohibited.
- Off-duty employees may enter the back area of the store.

—FW Randall Jamrok, IWW General Secretary-Treasurer, contributed reporting

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# THE TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP:

## A Crowning Achievement for Global Capitalists, Deadly Storm for Workers & the Environment

By **FW Mike Stout**

With U.S. President Barack Obama's fast track authorization in place, global capitalism is poised to unleash its full fury on workers and the environment with passage of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Yet most working people either in the United States or elsewhere are scarcely aware of the deadly impact that the TPP will have on the rights, health and the quality of life for millions of people. Even members of the U.S. Congress and their staff are only allowed to see the text of the agreement if they agree not to take notes or discuss the details in public. In fact, the measure isn't really much about trade at all, and more about attacks on internet freedom, environmental protections, and affordable medication. However, thanks to WikiLeaks, we know many of the gory details.

If passed, the TPP would join the United States along with 11 other countries along the Pacific Rim, including Canada, Mexico, Vietnam, Japan and Australia in a "free trade zone" covering nearly 40 percent of the world's economy. All of Europe would be tacked on at a later date. The real thrust of the TPP is about strengthening and guaranteeing corporations' ability to protect and extend their intellectual property rights (drug patents, copyrights, etc.), and to guarantee they will be compensated by governments for any profits they might lose from having to meet decent public labor and environmental standards. What's left of any semblance of democracy will be thrown out the window. Decisions formerly made by local, state or federal governments will now be made by a secret tribunal appointed by the corpo-

rations called the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS)—an instrument of public international law that grants an investor the right to use dispute settlement proceedings against a foreign government. As the progressive economist Dean Baker recently explained in *Common Dreams*, "[the] TPP... is about getting special deals for businesses that they would have difficulty getting through the normal political process."

For example, oil and gas companies who think they should be able to drill everywhere will be able to get state and local laws restricting fracking overturned. Similarly, the big banks and finance industry will be able to roll back any sort of regulations put in place through the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act in the United States, or similar legislation in other countries. Also, "the food and pesticide industries will be able to limit the ability of governments to impose environmental and safety regulations," according to Baker. The TPP will potentially dismantle labeling requirements on clothes, toys, electronics, tools, etc. Geared to protect the "intellectual property" of multinationals, it will undermine generic drug production and governmental controls on quality and pricing.

As Baker so aptly put, "...these trade deals will set up a new legal structure that goes outside existing systems in the U.S. and elsewhere...these secret tribunals will effectively make their own law. The trade deals allow no appeal back to U.S. courts or the courts of any other country." The U.S. Congress, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), even the Supreme Court, will

become meaningless, impotent shells. The TPP will nullify any ability by government at any level to regulate trade, or raise labor and environmental standards. Decisions affecting our daily lives will rest in the hands of secret tribunals staffed by corporate lawyers. Aldous Huxley and George Orwell couldn't have thought this stuff up in their wildest dreams. Welcome one-world capitalist government!

With the details of this clandestine nightmare laid bare, it should become apparent to labor unions, environmental groups, food safety advocates, civil rights activists, community groups and small businesses that it's high time for united and concerted action—in the streets, in the work places, in our cities and towns to stop this disaster in its tracks. Obama is in favor of the TPP, Hillary Clinton is for it, the Republicans are for it—only the people will stop it. IWW branches nationwide should play a major role in educating and organizing the resistance. While many are criticizing the TPP in their own cubbyholes and within their own organizations, no one else is calling for organizing joint resistance. We should organize a mass meeting and invite all those who are concerned and affected to plan coordinated opposition. This is the modern mantle of "one big union." And this is what the IWW should be all about. What other issue out there adversely affects so many workers worldwide? According to a recent *New York Times*/CBS New York poll, nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of Americans are skeptical of these agreements, and are in favor of trade protection and stronger environmental regulations. Someone needs to tap this keg, and let it flow. Let it be us.

**In November  
We Remember**  
our dear friend  
**Carlos Cortez:**  
Wobbly poet, artist,  
and lifelong  
advocate of the  
idea of industrial  
democracy.

- Carol and Gary Cox



Photo: provided by IWW General Headquarters

### *Free Voices Remembers* **Mania Schocat**

Russian revolutionary jailed and escaped to Turkish-occupied Palestine in early part of the 20th century, campaigned for Arab and Jewish workers' unity. Organized Arab peasants associated with British Independent Labour Party.

*Announcement placed by  
Raymond S. Solomon*



Photo: Wikimedia Commons



# IN NOVEMBER WE REMEMBER STEELWORKER, WOBBLY ED MANN

By Staughton Lynd

As far as I know, Ed Mann was the only member of the IWW in Youngstown, Ohio in the years after World War II. He was an ex-Marine who publicly opposed U.S. wars in Korea and Vietnam, an ardent member of the American Civil Liberties Union, and a socialist with a small "s." He was president of Local 1462, United Steelworkers of America (USW) for three terms ending with the closing of the Youngstown mill in 1978-1979, and thereafter the animating spirit of the Workers' Solidarity Club of Youngstown.

Extracts from Ed Mann's autobiography appear as an appendix to my book "Solidarity Unionism." I remember Ed especially in connection with three things.

## You've Got To Be There

Born in Toledo, Ohio, Ed Mann settled in Youngstown when he got out of the Marines, went to work at the Brier Hill steel mill, and stayed there until the mill shut down. While at Brier Hill he took part in a number of successful job actions and wildcat strikes. One of them is remembered as "The Wildcat Over Tony's Death," described below:

Tony, a well-liked older employee, was on the verge of retirement. About a week before his scheduled last day of work, he was run over by a big heavy truck and died.

The truck that killed Tony had no warning horn alerting nearby workers when the truck was going to back up. The local union had grieved the absence of any warning device on the trucks. The company rejected the grievance out of hand.

Ed heard about Tony's death after he clocked in for the afternoon shift.

Getting up on a bench in the washroom he asked: "Who's next? Who's going to get killed next? Don't we give a damn about Tony?" The guys agreed to walk out.

The men gathered at the nearby union hall. Phone calls were made to friends on the midnight and morning shifts and a list of safety demands compiled. Production stopped. The mill was down. The company consented to negotiate and then, in Ed's words, "agreed to everything."

Ed's reflection included the observation: "We made the steel... That's a feeling of power. And it isn't something you're doing as an individual. You're doing it as a group." He also observed:

"I had credibility... It wasn't prepared timing. It fell into place. You've got to recognize those situations. Be there when there are credible steps to take. Some people, it never happens in their lives. I was lucky."

My wife Alice and I have borrowed the term "accompaniment" from Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador. People on the Left tend to think of themselves as "organizers." Too often this means coming into a workplace or a community,



Occupation of the U.S. Steel administrative headquarters in Youngstown in January 1980.

bringing people together, planning joint activities, and then—win or lose—leaving town.

In contrast, Ed believed in "being there."

## I'm Going Down That Hill

After the Brier Hill mill shut down, Ed felt able to say and do things that would have gotten him fired had he still been an employee.

Shortly before Christmas 1979, U.S. Steel announced that it was closing all its Youngstown facilities. Feeling ran high because the company had clearly stated, on TV and over the mill public address system, that it had no plans of closing. In January 1980 a mass meeting convened at the USW Local 1330 union hall, just up a hill from U.S. Steel's Youngstown headquarters.

Area politicians went to the mike but had nothing to suggest. Then Ed spoke. His own mill was down, his local union all but disbanded. The gist of his remarks can be found on pages 153-154 of my book "The Fight Against Shutdowns." A white steel worker speaking to a predominantly white crowd of fellow workers, Ed read a long quotation from Frederick Douglass. It included the famous words: "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out what people will submit to and you will find out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them." Then Ed said:

"Now, I'm going down that hill and I'm going into that building. And any one that doesn't want to go along doesn't have to but I'm sure there are those who'll want to. And...we're going to stay there until they meet with Bob Vasquez [president of the U.S. Steel local]."

When Ed finished, Vasquez said: "Like Ed told you, there's no free lunch." The crowd



Ed Mann in agitational mode.

seemed to spring to its feet as one, and streamed down the hill toward the company administration building. The next thing that I heard was tinkling glass as the front door was incapacitated.

## I Think There's A Better Way

Ed explained very simply the different state of affairs that he hoped would one day come into existence:

"The Wobblies say, 'Do away with the wage system.' For a lot of people that's pretty hard to take. What the Wobblies mean is, you'll have what you need. The wage system has destroyed us. If I work hard I'll get ahead, but if I'm stronger than Jim over here, maybe I'll get the better job and Jim will be sweeping floors. But maybe Jim has four kids. The wage system is a very divisive thing. It's the only thing we have now, but it's very divisive.

"Maybe I'm dreaming but I think there's a better way..."



# Let's not forget fellow workers organizing in prison

## By the IWW Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee

While we know capitalism exploits every member of the working class, an often forgotten group is prisoners of the state. In the United States, these workers are legally enslaved under the 13th Amendment, which prohibits slavery "except as punishment for a crime." More than 3 million souls are abused through destructive incarceration, with millions more on probation, parole, and legal discrimination after release. Exploited for pennies or dollars a day, there are few sections of the working class with more revolutionary potential and more reason to overthrow capitalism than those abandoned into the largest prison system in world history.

Increasingly, people in prison are putting their very lives on the line to end state torture and exploitation. From labor strikes in Georgia and Alabama, to hunger strikes in California, to mass actions across the country, prisoners and IWW members are demanding change. We started the IWW's Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee (IWOC) in response to prisoners reaching out for support. Now, 21 months later, there are nearly 600 IWW members in prison. (Find our newsletter and more at <http://www.iwoc.noblogs.org>).

As a revolutionary union our role is clear: work in solidarity with those incarcerated to organize,

improve conditions, and shut down this oppressive system. We have members who participated in prison shut-downs, strikes, and collective actions. Together we have combatted torture, retaliation, and false medical diagnoses. It is with a call from our members for a multi-state prison action in 2016 for federal minimum wage in prisons that we send you this letter to ask for your support.

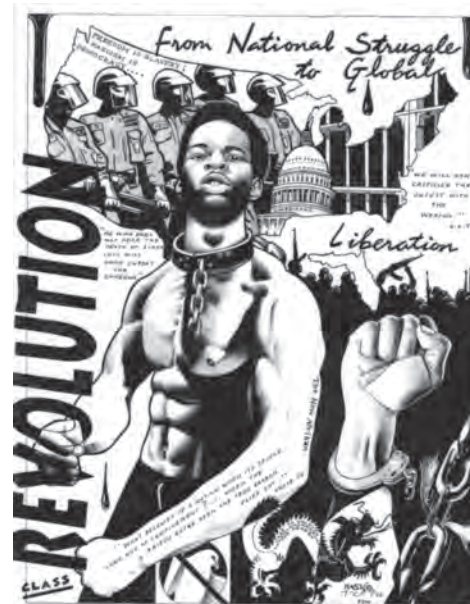
IWW members in prison are on the cusp of starting their own branches. We need your help to honor the sacrifices they are making by donating money for resources they need to stay in contact and hire two organizers to organize a key state's entire prisons system, including nurturing an outside support network. This is so that they will not be able to transfer our prison organizers out of their state system.

In the spirit of Red November/Black November we ask that you or your IWW branch:

**1. Join the Committee of 100:** Pledge \$300 this November to be paid by May 1, 2016. We need 100 such donations to meet our budget.

**2. Donate what you can.** If you can't give \$300, donate what you can. For every \$1 you donate, a fellow worker will add their own \$1 up to \$10,000. Help us raise that \$10,000!

**3. Start a prison organizing letter-writing group in your city or region.** Or join our Media, Newsletter, Legal, Outreach, or Research Commit-



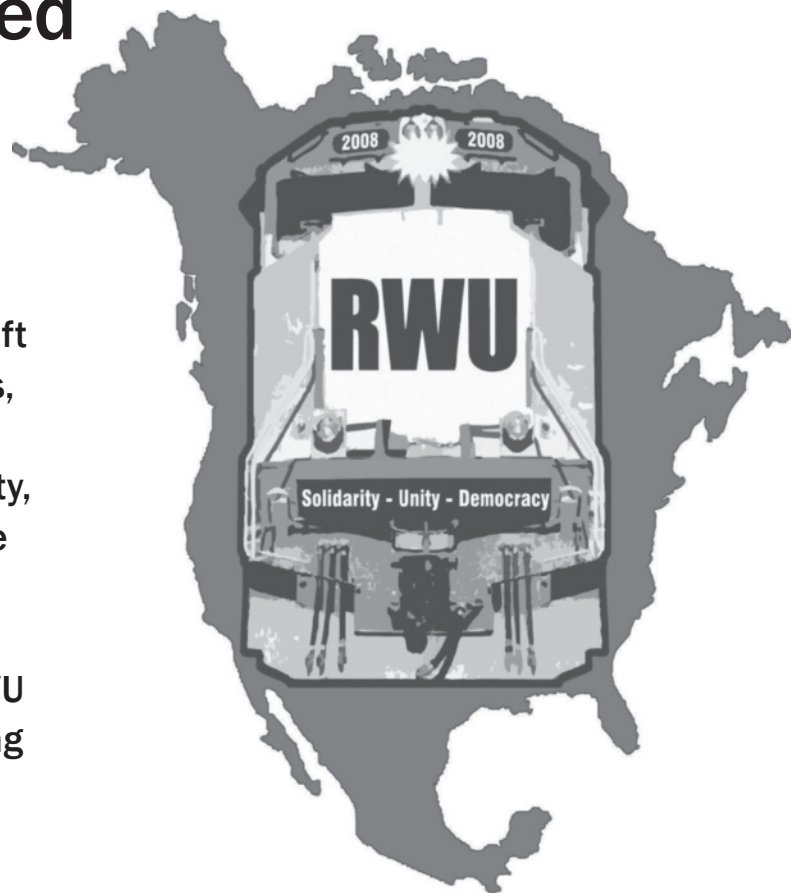
tees. Contact [iwoc@riseup.net](mailto:iwoc@riseup.net) and we will send you an introduction packet and connect you to a regional organizing call.

Checks can be written to the "Kansas City IWW" and send to P.O. Box 414304, Kansas City, MO 64141-4304, or find an online option at <http://www.iwoc.noblogs.org>.

## Railroad Workers United Salutes Our Fallen Fellow Workers

Railroad Workers United (RWU) is a cross-craft caucus of all railroad workers from all unions, departments and crafts in North America. To learn more about our efforts to build solidarity, unity and democracy on the railroad, see the website at [www.railroadworkersunited.org](http://www.railroadworkersunited.org).

If you would like more information about RWU and/or if you are interested in hiring out on the railroad, contact us at: [info@railroadworkersunited.org](mailto:info@railroadworkersunited.org)  
206-984-3051





# Federico Arcos, anarchist militant & archivist, dies at 94

By Colin Bossen

Federico Arcos' house sat on a quiet Windsor, Ontario, backstreet near the auto plant where he had worked. The house was as unassuming as he was, with a neatly trimmed lawn in front, and a garden around back that neighbors and friends planted when he grew too feeble to till it himself. He was particularly proud of his anarchist tomatoes; small yellow and pear-shaped, he bred them himself. He bragged that someone from a nursery cooperative in the Pacific Northwest had collected the seeds from him and distributed them because the tomatoes were just that good. Mostly, though, his visitors weren't interested in his garden. Instead they came for his remarkable library and his extraordinary stories. He was one of the last survivors of the anarchist militias who had fought in the Spanish Civil War against the fascist forces of Francisco Franco, and for an anarchist revolution. He was adamant on that last point. His years as a militiaman and later in the underground were not to preserve or resurrect the Spanish Republic. They were in the service of a democratic workers' revolution that would abolish capitalism.

The revolution in Spain began the same day as the civil war. Fascist military leaders tried to stage a coup and were beaten back as much by anarchist and socialist workers who stormed the armories as they were by soldiers loyal to the Republic. In Federico's native city of Barcelona, anarchist workers belonging to the anarcho-sindicalist Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) quickly

took control of the city. Already a member of the CNT—he joined the union when he was 14—in the fall of 1936 Federico joined the Juventudes Libertarias of Catalonia (the anarchist youth of Catalonia). Alongside other members of the group he went to the Comité de Defensa where they were given inadequate weapons—an old rifle and six bullets. Indignant, they told the older men, “We want to fight for the revolution as much as you do!” to which the older men responded, “There are people here much older than you who need the newer rifles. When they die you will take their place. That is your responsibility and our trust in you.” Federico spent the long balance of his life proving that he was worthy of that trust.

When the Spanish Republic finally fell in 1939, Federico fled to France, along with hundreds of others. He stayed there first in a refugee camp and then working in a tool and dye shop until 1943. Then he returned to Spain where he joined the military and began organizing with the anarchist underground. The movement was riddled with informants and, despite the heroic efforts of Federico, and his comrades, was largely ineffective. Federico finally decided to immigrate to Canada, where he again found work as a machinist, this time at a Ford factory in Windsor.

Once in Canada, he reunited with his partner Pura—who had been a militant in the famous women's collective Mujeres Libres—and his daughter. He became active in the Canadian and American anarchist movements, serving as a men-



Federico Arcos.

Photo: David Watson

tor to several generations of activists and working with Black & Red Books and *Fifth Estate Magazine*, two anarchist publishing projects based in Detroit. He also began collecting anarchist materials from Spain and around the world, in an effort to ensure that the memories of his dead comrades and the ideals of anarchism would endure. In time the library he collected proved to be one of the largest in the world—containing everything from periodicals, posters and books, so many books, to Emma Goldman's suitcase.

Federico's library and life story attracted scholars and militants from throughout Europe and North America. He was delighted to share what he knew and show the thousands of items that he had saved. He was even happier if his visitors brought children. He always had sweets for them: a bar of chocolate, not to be eaten after 4:00 p.m. so that it wouldn't spoil dinner, and a box of biscuits.

## So long, Krazy Bill

Fellow Worker Bill Krist, from Phoenix, passed away this summer. An obituary for him, written on behalf of the Phoenix IWW, can be found on <http://www.iww.org> or various social media sites under the title above.

Here's an excerpt:

In June 2015, the Phoenix IWW and many others mourned the loss and celebrated the life of William Krist (or Krazy Bill, KB). He was a friend, mentor, and grand-fatherly figure to many of us.

KB was the old man of the IWW in Arizona. Having been signed up by Aaron R., former General Executive Board (GEB) member in 2000, KB was the only continuous, paid-up IWW member in Phoenix from 2000 until his death in 2015. He would pay his dues in January for the whole year, every year.

For 15 years, KB would come to branch meetings and offer what he could to the projects the IWW was working on. From organizing grocery workers at Gentle Strength Co-op, to supporting the Roofers Union's organizing efforts in the exclusive suburbs; from distributing workers' rights cards, to supporting immigrant workers against racist attacks by the terrorist leaders of “Dumb-fuckistan,” (his name for the United States), KB was there.

We'll miss you, KB!

On behalf of all of us in and out of the Phoenix IWW through the years — JP

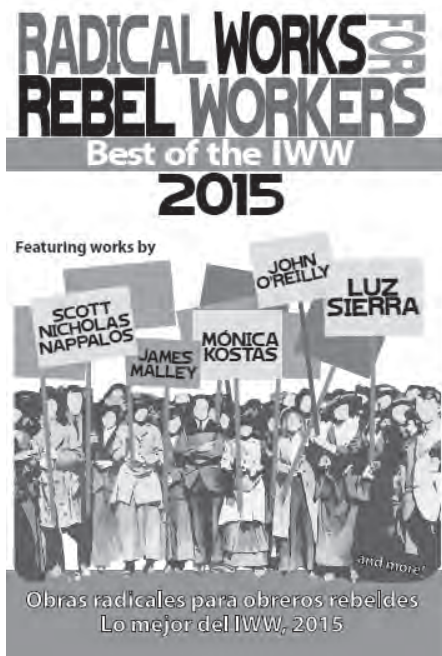


Photo: J. Pierce

## In November, We Remember: the best IWW writing from the past year!

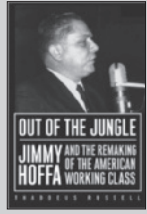
"Radical Works for Rebel Workers" collects the best writing from the *Industrial Worker*, *Solidaridad*, and other sources.

This bilingual booklet features 10 contemporary works dealing with sexism, organizing, labor history, and how to be a lifelong Wobbly. Contact the IWW Literature Department to order a bundle for your branch at [store@iww.org!](mailto:store@iww.org)





# IS ANYTHING TOO GOOD FOR THE WORKING CLASS?



*Russell, Thaddeus. Out Of The Jungle: Jimmy Hoffa And The Remaking Of (Labor In Crisis). Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003. Paperback, 288 pages, \$25.95.*

## By Brandon Sowers

How much is too much for workers to earn? What standard of living should they expect?

Since the 1960s “New Left” era, there has been a dominant mood among parts of the U.S. Left that, perhaps, some workers have it too good and are part of the problem.

Instead of blaming workers for having too much, revolutionary unionists should agitate for more. To paraphrase the American socialist Hal Draper, we are opposed to business unionism because in fact it doesn't get enough for the workers—not because it gets too much! If we're going to help revive a militant workers' movement in the United States, we have to take a few things seriously. First, it's almost impossible to exist in this country as a worker without being mired in debt; and second, people will mobilize themselves in huge numbers if they see a possibility for improving their lives. Radicals who promise a worse life for the majority of people deserve the scorn they'll get.

Drop the word “union” to an average worker, and they'll think of Jimmy Hoffa—as corrupt, but also a tough guy. There's a reason people know about Hoffa: at one point, he led the largest union in the country—the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (the Teamsters)—a union which led large and militant strikes. In the 1950s and 1960s, Hoffa and his union were the U.S. government's biggest target in the labor movement, and yet left-wing labor historians almost completely overlook them.

Thaddeus Russell makes up for this lack of discussion on Hoffa with “Out of the Jungle: Jimmy Hoffa and the remaking of the American Working Class.” The coverage of Hoffa's career is really just a prop to re-examine the American working class.

Russell uses the book as an extended argument for an idea that we could call “jungle unionism.” Basically, jungle unionism is extreme free-market libertarianism, applied to unions. According to Russell, the best situation for workers is when unions and union leaders are in a perfect free market (without laws or any government) and have to compete heavily against each other for the loyalty of workers. In this theory, the actual ideas and positions that a union or union leader represents are irrelevant, at least as far as the workers are concerned.

The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) have been united since 1955, but during the 1930s, the AFL and CIO were competing to organize millions of workers. The United Auto Workers (UAW), who were affiliated with the CIO, and the Teamsters, who were affiliated with the AFL, each

led city-wide general strikes in 1934. Before the National Labor Relations Act, passed in 1935, had stabilized and sterilized the labor movement, there was an opening for labor leaders who could organize strikes that won. Workers would join unions in droves if they saw that those unions could deliver better lives. The leaders of those unions would go from being outcast workers to powerful citizens, with large dues bases.

As with any emerging market, there was stiff competition. Russell focuses on Detroit, where the UAW and Teamsters both grew very quickly. As cars became more important, so did the workers who produced and transported them. Russell shows how Hoffa constantly had to fight tooth and nail against employers to prove to workers that the Teamsters could get them a fatter paycheck and more stability than anyone else. With the AFL and the CIO both competing to attract workers by the thousands, neither side could afford to pull any punches during labor struggles. Everything was fair game, from mass strikes and pickets, to blowing up trucks that belonged to stubborn employers. Oftentimes, unions would fight the boss hardest when they were trying to keep another union out. Since workers were still free to leave or switch unions, the only guarantee came from showing that your union could fight the boss better than another union could.

This dynamic held true for competition inside the union as well. Hoffa learned how to organize from Farrell Dobbs, who had led and organized the 1934 strikes in Minneapolis. Dobbs and Hoffa worked together in the “Over The Road” campaign, which was a bitter struggle to organize interstate trucking in the Midwest. It was successful and brought tens of thousands of new members into the Teamsters. Dobbs and the other Minneapolis Teamster leaders were also members of a socialist organization that was critical of Stalinism. In 1941, when the United States and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics were becoming allies in World War II, and the Communist Party became enthusiastic supporters of a nationwide no-strike pledge, Dobbs' organization still supported labor militancy. Thus, the Minneapolis local was expelled from the Teamsters at the same time that the U.S. government arrested all of its leaders for subversion. Hoffa and his goons rolled into town with baseball bats, guns, and other tools of recruitment, but workers were still loyal to the local that had gotten them a better life. Russell shows how the gangster tactics alone weren't enough. In order to crush the old local, Hoffa had to call militant strikes against employers that won significant gains. This was the only way that the workers would actually accept his leadership. According to Russell, this also shows that the anti-war, class-struggle socialist ideology of Dobbs and his comrades was unimportant—for workers, everything came down to the paycheck. Russell implies that even here, the competition brought gains to the workers.

Of course, all of this militancy was expensive for the bosses, it was disruptive for the war-time

government, and it was dangerous and embarrassing for the union leaders. All three groups had a big interest in reducing the competition. Labor law after 1935 provided a perfect mix of ingredients to remove competition from the field: exclusive representation, dues check-off, and mandatory membership. The Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 and Landrum-Griffin Act in 1959 restricted competition even more. As Russell shows, every time the competition was reduced between unions and union leaders, the result was fewer gains for workers and more power for the bureaucrats.

But is competition between unions as important as Russell claims for labor organizing, or is it just one dynamic among many? Russell oddly has not one word to say about another inter-union struggle involving the Teamsters. The “Salad Bowl Strike” was a series of militant labor struggles in California agriculture during the early 1970s, which the United Farm Workers (UFW) initiated when the Teamsters attempted to start organizing on their “turf.” In many ways, this struggle could confirm the idea of “jungle unionism”—competing with the Teamsters forced the UFW to become more militant. However, by the end, neither union could claim victory. Furthermore, the Teamsters had the support of the white power structure in California; the UFW was targeted by that same power structure. The agricultural workers paid attention to this, and didn't act as the purely economic beings that an extreme jungle unionist might imagine.

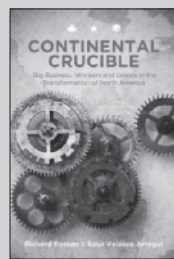
I encourage IWW members and revolutionary unionists to read this book, but keep a critical eye, and read it alongside Charles Morris' “The Blue Eagle at Work: Reclaiming Democratic Rights in the American Workplace” (Cornell University Press, 2005) and Joe Burns' “Reviving the Strike: How Working People Can Regain Power and Transform America” (Ig Publishing, 2011). There are two lessons we can learn. The first, which Russell suggests, is that revolutionaries would get more accomplished by being a permanent, organized, militant opposition within unions rather than trying to take them over. I would add that this kind of opposition needs to promote a vision of a labor movement which is democratic as well as militant, and able to completely smash U.S. labor law. The labor movement needs to do these things in order to be able to fight with both hands free.

This gets into the next point: the importance of winning. Many of us Wobblies come from an activist background in which strategy is not considered, and there are no decisive struggles which involve winning or losing. This is also a material thing—our class has been losing for 30 years, and most of us have never even seen a real working-class victory. But a movement which had the tactics to fight bosses and win economic gains would be able to quickly inspire many workers to organize themselves under its banners, and carry out more fights.

Let's make sure that the IWW is the spear point of that revived labor movement.



# THE NECESSITY OF CROSS-BORDER SOLIDARITY



Roman, Richard and Edur Velasco Arregui. **Continental Crucible: Big Business, Workers and Unions in the Transformation of North America.** Second Edition. Halifax and Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing; Oakland, California: PM Press, 2015. Paperback, 170 pages, \$19.95.

By FW Tony Bifulco

“Class war is unceasing in a capitalist society.” This assertion, so boldly and similarly expressed in the Preamble of the IWW Constitution, is the thread that runs through the book, “Continental Crucible: Big Business, Workers and Unions in the Transformation of North America,” by Richard Roman and Edur Velasco Arregui. The authors cogently claim that a capitalist offensive was convened in all three countries in North America by the early 1970s and continued through the 1980s in response to the post-war social democratic gains made by working people—the worker militancy that gripped workplaces across the continent, and the corresponding threat to profits. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was a crowning achievement in this class project, bringing with it throughout the last 20 years a relentless downward pressure on wages and benefits, massive job losses, a marked upsurge in the immigration of desperate people, growth in the reserve army of labor, and the weakening of labor and environmental standards, resulting in the restoration of corporate power and increased profitability. This is common knowledge for many of us. What is also readily apparent to us is that the capitalist offensive is unrelenting, as manifested most recently in the attacks on public sector unions and the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). What is not common knowledge is what Roman and Arregui so adeptly document: the development of embryonic resistance to corporate hegemony, a resistance that has a potential to take shape across national boundaries. The authors uncover the sporadic forms that this resistance has taken, and offer a necessary vision for a transformed class-struggle labor movement capable of challenging the continental power of big business.

## Free Trade and the Neoliberal Project

The neoliberal corporate project of the last 40 years was spearheaded by capitalist interests who came together to form corporate lobbying groups such as the Business Roundtable. These lobbying groups eventually spurred the creation of conservative think tanks to shape the ideological landscape and prepare the American public and elected officials for the rationale for free trade and the roll back of the social welfare state. Far-sighted capitalists, along with their conservative intellectual allies,

proved extraordinarily effective in uniting their class around neoliberal responses to the gains made by workers and their unions over the stretch of the postwar decades. These efforts eventually gained success with the creation of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the World Trade Organization (WTO), Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement (CUSFTA), and finally NAFTA. The same can be said for the capitalist elite in Canada and Mexico, despite the social, political, and economic conditions unique to those countries. Business groups formed, forged a united outlook and strategy, and eventually coordinated their lobbying efforts with their counterparts in the United States to get the free trade agreements enacted. Though it is commonly assumed that the integration of the North American economy was imposed by the American capitalist class on Canada and Mexico, Roman and Velasco argue that free trade was embraced by those countries’ elites as a means of tamping down on labor militancy and “excessive” social democratic reforms and opening up the U.S. market. The larger point is that the North American corporate class gained success by forging a tri-national united front. The extension of continental production systems has had the intended effect of forcing competition between workers in the three countries. The threat of relocation of production along with a state that is willing to suppress labor rights in the interest of attracting capital has transformed the conditions of work and has therefore increased managerial power. Therefore, effective resistance, according to Roman and Arregui, can only come if the working classes of each nation can build transnational solidarity.

## Unions and Continental Solidarity

In the second half of “Continental Crucible,” the authors outline both the obstacles to transnational solidarity and the reasons why we can remain hopeful that a favorable shift in the balance of power can be achieved. The main impediment to cross-border solidarity is rooted in the segmentation of union organization and the lack of consciousness of each other’s struggles against the united corporate strategies. In other words, the strategy that advanced working-class interests in capitalism’s “golden age” of the postwar era (1945-1973) is no longer viable in this age of neoliberal capitalism. It is no longer possible for unions to focus on short-term gains, or to make strategic alliances with business and reformist capitalist governments that undermine the political independence of the labor movement. The authors describe that these “strategies often flowed out of a pragmatism of the possible, the notion that you have to constrain your demands to what seems possible within the existing framework, rather than seeking to challenge the limits of that framework.” Within the old framework, “large sections of the working class were able to make real material gains in all three countries.” This old framework, however, has been shattered in recent decades by the new business freedom protected by pro-business governments

that give workers very little leverage.

The answer, therefore, lay in a vision for building and sustaining a class-wide workers’ movement. This entails a significant change in the way unions have historically operated; always treating class-wide concerns as secondary to the more immediate concerns of their own union and their own members. The challenge is to free ourselves from the ineptitude of fragmentation and segmentation by engaging in class-wide struggles across borders. In the last sections of the book, the authors explore the embryonic beginnings of this kind of class-based, continental labor movement. The authors argue at quite some length that “an organized core” for a radicalized and reborn workers’ movement that unites the working classes across the North American national boundaries will more than likely develop first in Mexico. The comparatively greater degree of repression and poverty, the brutal drug wars, and corruption in Mexico makes that country ripe for a movement for fundamental change. Recent, massive immigration of a displaced Mexican working class into the United States makes more possible than ever before the development of a cross-border movement. We saw glimpses back in 2006 with three large and simultaneous revolts—one in the United States and two in Mexico. The first was the immigrant rights movement, which generated over 250 mass marches throughout the United States in the spring of 2006, involving approximately 3.5 to 5 million people. The Oaxaca rebellion, sparked by a government attack on striking teachers, led to a community uprising of workers and poor people who took over and ran the city of Oaxaca for more than five months. The third movement took place in the fall of 2006, when hundreds of thousands of people across Mexico protested the fraud that transpired in that year’s national elections. Although these movements flashed and burned out, the sheer number of people involved, and the fact that these movements took place across borders, demonstrates the potential for class struggle to ignite in Mexico and spread to the other NAFTA countries.

Roman and Arregui point out that the true challenge of labor and the left more widely is to find ways to foster the convergence of these kinds of struggles. The weakness and fragmentation of a radical, working-class left in all three NAFTA countries impedes the possibility of challenging the tri-national corporate hegemony. Hence, the goal is for us to transform our existing unions from business unions into class-struggle unions, contribute to building a non-sectarian left movement, and to reach across the North American borders to our fellow, besieged workers. A class war is on, and the other side is waging that war on a continental basis. It is therefore necessary to unite in solidarity on a continental scale. Roman and Arregui fall short in prescribing just how to do this, but succeed in compelling readers to imagine the necessity and the possibility for building cross-border, transnational cooperation between unions, the dream of all Wobblies the world over.



# LESSONS FROM THE FORA

Deepening our relationships and exchanges with comrades in Argentina

By Scott Nikolas Nappalos & Monica Kostas

In the past 10 years the Federación Obrera Regional Argentina (FORA, or Argentine Regional Workers' Federation) has experienced growth and an uptick in activity as a new generation of organizers has claimed the organization's heritage and methods, and has tried to organize in a new situation. Argentina has undergone deep changes in the years following the economic and political collapse of 2001 that rocked the country. As the economy came unhinged, unemployment surged, a popular revolt overturned a series of governments, new forms of collective resistance and organization emerged, and a neo-Peronist populist response strengthened nationalist politics in the country.

Today FORA has four locals called Sociedades de Resistencia (Resistance Societies) in the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires. Historically, Resistance Societies came out of First International syndicalist thought in Spain and Latin American countries. This tradition remained strongest in Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay. Resistance Societies were locals based in an area and often combined workers of different crafts. Today they function somewhat like IWW general membership branches (GMBs) with committees of workers within. FORA workers have been organizing in restaurants, bars, schools, and in printing. Organizers have taken on grievances and used direct action across Buenos Aires. The union has a constant presence of propaganda in various neighborhoods and workplaces, holds regular assemblies for workers in different workplaces, and organizes committees when possible. Nationally, the union has been active in publicizing and fighting for the release of oil workers sentenced to life in prison after a protest led to the death of a policeman and the workers were rounded up and locked up in 2014.

Similar to our own experiences in the IWW during the early 2000s, this push towards direct organizing of workers meant coming up against activist and political cultures largely insulated from workers' struggles. Wobblies at the time experienced hostility from activists inside the organization and from outside groups. Organizing began to disrupt activists' ability to use the union as their social space and clashed with the uniformity of those scenes. FORA distinguishes itself from political organizations and activist subcultures through its activity centered on workplaces and the needs of workers in their daily lives. Historically, unions modeled after FORA in Latin America called themselves "finalist," meaning that they were built to meet final goals, the establishment of anarchist society freed from the state and capitalism. Today FORA is clear on these goals and stays focused in their day-to-day work. If people want to try and reform the existing bureaucratic unions, do activist work under the FORA banner, or agitate against



FORA agitating through a large restaurant and bar district in Buenos Aires, March 2015.

the union's goals, the membership has a culture of staying on target and keeping those activities outside the union. Meetings are set to discuss union-related activities of members and give organizing advice, and that is moderated and enforced.

In March 2015 I accompanied FORA members who were agitating workers across a large restaurant and bar district in Buenos Aires. The union played a message over a loudspeaker from their van, marched with flags with the image of rats (a symbol for the bosses), and distributed information about the union and how workers can improve their conditions.

I also was able to attend a meeting that aimed to organize teachers and was well-attended by teachers from the community. This consisted of a thorough discussion not only of conditions and unionizing, but also problems with pedagogical content taught in the schools, the social situation of students and families, and the intervention of the bureaucratic unions and state to perpetuate it. On March 24, FORA celebrated the day of memory and resistance commemorated nationally for the victory over the dictatorship in Argentina that lasted from 1976 to 1983. FORA participated in the march, distributing flyers about repression against the working class and the need for organization, playing drums and singing songs based on traditions from soccer and the working-class struggle in Argentina, and holding banners of the different resistance societies.

FORA has a long and rich history in being the largest and most active organization of its kind; perhaps only behind the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) in Spain. At its peak it was the dominant force in Argentina's labor movement for decades. FORA was formed in the late 1800s

out of anarchist organizing of the first unions of the country. The unions united in 1901 and founded a federation, which later grew to a height of hundreds of thousands of members. FORA set a model which spread across Latin America to Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, Mexico and other countries. Throughout its history it took revolution seriously, leading revolutionary strikes that seized areas and began constructing a liberatory society in key insurrectionary moments. Also, it faced unparalleled repression with thousands murdered, deported, and arrested in the Semana Trágica (Tragic Week—a series of riots, led by anarchists and communists, and massacres that took place in Buenos Aires during the week of Jan. 7, 1919), the Patagonia rebelde (the name given to the violent suppression of a rural workers' strike in the Argentine province of Santa Cruz in Patagonia between 1920 and 1922), the general strike of yerba mate workers, and throughout a series of dictatorships. The FORA was attacked repeatedly by the Radicales (social democratic party), the dictatorships of Hipólito Yrigoyen and later Juan Perón, but maintained active unions until its last congress of 1978 during the brutal dictatorship that took FORA decades to recover from. At its height it had multiple daily papers, countless locals and unions, and was unparalleled in the depth of its activity and thinking. This history is little known or discussed but continues today with the actions of young FORA members who maintain the same space occupied by the FORA for nearly a century in the working-class neighborhood of La Boca. The IWW would benefit from deepening our relationships and exchanges with our comrades in Argentina who share our same fight with their own contributions to give.



# Labor Struggles Across The Globe

Compiled by John Kalwaic

## Tokyo high school students form union

On Aug. 27, five high school students living in Tokyo and Chiba Prefecture set up a union called Syutoken Kokosei Union (Union of high school students in the Tokyo metropolitan area). The students created the union to help organize their “black arbeit” (part-time) jobs. The students are often forced to work long hours and under harsh conditions—sometimes being made to work even when school examinations are approaching, or they have to buy merchandise with their own money to reach unreasonable sales quotas. This often interferes with their education.

The Tokyo-based union was formed to give advice to fellow students on work-related problems, as well as coordinate public campaigns on the streets. The Syutoken Kokosei Union will be supported by the Syutoken Seinen Union (Tokyo metropolitan youth union), which is a labor group comprised of young workers.

— With files from <http://ajw.asahi.com>.

## Massive general strike in Finland

On Sept. 18, a general strike occurred in Helsinki against government cuts and curbs’ to workers rights. All railroads and bus lines as well as aircrafts at the airport were shut down as government personnel, transport workers, industrial workers at metal and wood-processing industries, even post offices and a portion of police officers have walked out for one day. Approximately 30,000 people gathered in the Central Railway Station for a massive demonstration to protest the government proposals—the largest strike that Finland has seen since 1917.



Photo: revolution-news.com

General strike of 30,000 workers shuts down Helsinki, Finland on Sept. 18, 2015.

The demonstrations were arranged in defense of collective bargaining rights and against the government’s unilateral decision to weaken employees’ terms of employment.

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

## Oaxacan teachers strike against privatization

Thousands of teachers in Oaxaca went on strike on Aug. 24, to protest the Mexican government’s efforts to privatize education. The Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (CNTE)—the national teachers’ union—also burned ballot boxes in June

2015 to protest the futility of the election, as they consider all parties to be corrupt. Representatives of the union, all of whom are teachers, have gone town-to-town discuss Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto’s reforms and what they mean for education. The CNTE teachers have also brought attention to the missing 43 student-teachers from Ayotzinapa. In several cases, troops have been deployed against the teachers. The CNTE in Oaxaca have always been one of the most militant teachers unions in the world.

— With files from <http://newpol.org> and <http://www.teachersolidarity.com>.

## SOLIDARITY WITH THE WORKERS OF VIO.ME.

### By IWW International Solidarity Commission (ISC)

*The ISC of the IWW helps to build solidarity with revolutionary unions and organizations worldwide. We support struggles around the globe, help to spread the word among our membership and communicate frequently with our sister organizations. On our brand new website, <http://iww.international>, we present the current struggles and calls for solidarity.*

*Together with our fellow workers from IWW Greece we are currently supporting workers of an occupied factory in Greece. The solidarity statement below gives a bit background to the situation and highlights our donation campaign:*

The ISC and the Regional Organizing Committee of IWW Greece (GreROC) are supporting the workers of Viomichaniki Metaleftiki (Vio.Me.), who occupied their factory and have maintained worker-controlled production for more than two years.

### VIO.ME. - Occupy, Resist, Produce!



Since May 2011 the workers of Vio.Me, an abandoned building materials factory in Thessaloniki, Greece, haven’t been paid. Consequently they decided to take over and democratically run the production on their own—a successful manufacturing model for a free society. As a matter of fact, the surrounding society is anything but free, and capitalist “free market” rules make it hard to adapt to the alternative concept of industrial solidarity.

To protect Vio.Me. and the struggle of the workers in Greece and worldwide YOU can help:

- Spread the Message!
- Contribute Economically: Donate!  
<http://iww.international/soli-vio-me-greece/>
- Organize in your workplace, your neighborhood, your town!
- Send solidarity statements to:  
<http://www.viome.org>

The IWW is committed to a grassroots, global resistance against the employing class. We aim to work with others to build a movement that can defeat the capitalists and construct a new world based on workers’ control of the means of production and economic democracy. We salute the fellow workers of Vio.Me. factory as a step in the right direction, and pledge our solidarity and our commitment to stand at the side of all workers in the struggle for the emancipation of the working class, for the creation of a world without bosses!

Solidarity with Greece’s working class, solidarity forever!

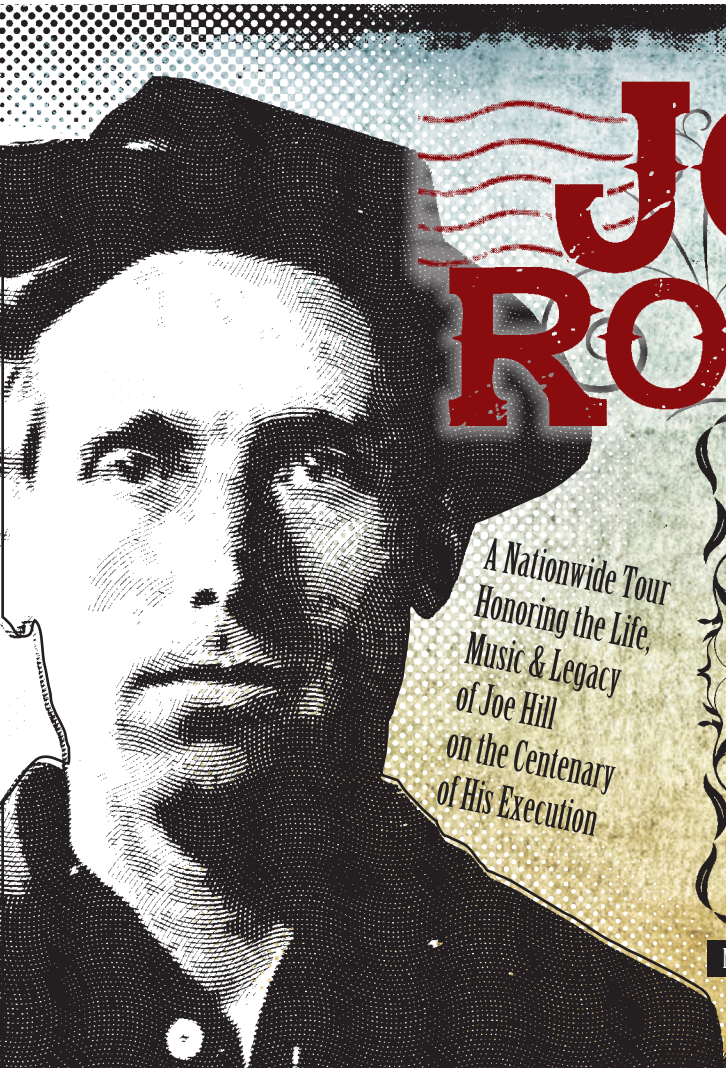


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