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English translation of Spanish CNT text now available to all Wobblies

"If our syndical action is weak, this is, in short, on the account of intellectual laziness."
- Syndicalist Atheneum in Spain to the Second Catalan Workers' Congress, 1910

Due to the fact that I still haven't come across an English translation of the Spanish Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT)'s resolution "Confederal Concept of Libertarian Communism," I have translated it and made it accessible to IWW members. You can access it from Scribd by visiting <http://bit.ly/1KdMzA7>, or emailing me for the translation at X363823@gmail.com.

I regard the confederal concept as an instructive document of relevance to all syndicalists, anarchists, and ecologists today that should inspire us in the IWW to create our own similar sketches of revolution and of how society will probably look when we put our ideas into practice.

I recommend attempting to illustrate the significance of our ideas from confederal, eco-regional, local, and workplace perspectives in the spirit of the example laid forth in the confederal concept.

Special emphasis should be laid on establishing our own theories of revolution; precisely, what social forces and institutions should be in place when we instigate revolution or take advantage of a situation to dissolve the state, the police, the capitalists, and the other exploiters' and dominators' who rule over us in our localities.

With articulated finalities and goals, I think we can better explain the potential significance of the IWW and illustrate the beautiful and harmonious possibilities of syndicalism, anarchism, and ecology in the world we inhabit today.

Furthermore, with more clarity, we can be on better guard to prevent the IWW from swimming in circles and from partaking in activities that do not contribute to creating the cultural, moral, and organizational conditions necessary for an instigated revolution.

X363823

San Antonio, Texas

Upstate NY IWW holds Black Friday action at Walmart

By Gregory Giorgio

On Nov. 27, 2015, members of the Upstate New York IWW participated in a Black Friday action at a Walmart store in Rotterdam, NY. This was in solidarity with a national day of action at Walmart.

We passed out copies of our *Black Cat Moan* newsletter and even delivered one to store management. We stood with a banner until we were thrown off the property, wherein we stood on the public sidewalk on the adjacent street. A news photographer from *The Daily Gazette* took some pictures of us, too.



Wobblies protest Walmart on Black Friday.

Photo: Gregory Giorgio

Check out the wonderfully-disobedient Bryan McPherson

By X331980

If you have not yet heard of Bryan McPherson, you may want to listen to his wonderfully disobedient music, as I did this past fall at a very special concert.

Bryan McPherson played his gritty, incendiary songs at the Joe Hill centennial concert in Salt Lake City, Utah, in November 2015. He rocked the house. That was the first time I heard McPherson, and he blew me away with his intensity and, well, with his "Wobbliness." McPherson might be called a bit folksy, but he ain't no Judy Collins, Bob Dylan or Phil Ochs; and yet his early exposure to punk rock is really obvious. A self-described "troubadour," he plays music dealing with the dark side and hardships of life on the streets and in the workplaces of America. He is enraged with the ugliness of capitalism. In his song "I See a Flag," he extols rebellion by singing "let's start a fucking riot on the White House Lawn." Not surprisingly, the Disney Company banned him from the stage in Anaheim, Calif. in 2014 for his "anti-police views and drugs insinuation."

Often with mouth harp ready to go, he plays an energetic yet beautiful acoustic guitar. His voice is clear and lyrics are sharp. His stage presence is dynamic, walking around and engaging with the audience, as anyone can see from his latest album "Wedgewood."

McPherson grew up in Dorchester, a working class neighborhood in Boston. He now lives in Los Angeles when not on the road playing at small venues all over North America. Before engaging in the life of a musician, which for him entailed living life on the road and in his van, McPherson had "tons of shitty jobs: dishwasher, musical instrument cleaner, carpet cleaner, construction, car sales, bartender, waiter, etc."

In 2015, McPherson toured Europe twice, first opening for the Boston-based Celtic punk band Dropkick Murphys and then touring with London



Bryan McPherson performing.

Photo: Jason Stone, bryanmcpherson.com

punk rocker Louise Distras. In an interview, he told me he grew up listening to The Clash (and that really shows in his music), and to an eclectic mix of Guns and Roses, Patsy Cline, Sex Pistols and Celtic tunes. Although his music is also clearly influenced by Bob Dylan, Phil Ochs, and Woody Guthrie, it is (as far as I can tell) more explicitly revolutionary than theirs is. On "Days of Rage" he sings:
"... There's no freedom of speech in the land of the sheep
And if you really want the news then look to the streets
In the sidewalk and the sand, the cracks and disasters

Pawns in the hand of the propaganda of the masters

And we bleed the blood of the workers of the world

We toil and labor and hand over the pearls
In a broken system the snake will eat itself
How can I go to heaven if I'm living in hell."

"I'm a sponge," he told me. "I just go out and live in the world and soak things up and spit things out...the revolutionary thing, it's what draws my attention. I got into thinking about revolution and change and the revolving nature of nature. America is a country founded on revolution and now it is not portrayed that way at all. The country has evolved into a place that needs another revolution."

Though not a member of IWW, McPherson first heard of our union while playing in Gainesville, Fla. a couple years ago and again on the same tour when he met Duncan Phillips (son of the late Wobbly Utah Phillips) in Denver, Colo. IWWs and fans of rockin' protest music should take in his show when he comes around. Sample his tunes and support this guy. He's about as good as they come. You can hear Bryan' McPherson's music and find out when he is playing near you on his website: <http://bryanmcpherson.com>.

To the juveniles confined throughout amerika

By Hybachi LeMar

To the cast-awayed youth locked down in juvenile placements across amerika. To you who, like me, wasn't born with a silver spoon in your mouth and who are ordered to make your own cuts and stand in front of your doors at court-time. Yes, you, the generation of amerika's rejected youth—you are the future and you're very much LOVED.

It doesn't take a genius to see that the so-called "juvenile justice system" doesn't work. In fact, if you ask any counselor where you're confined at what the odds are of you yourself become a prisoner after your juvenile bid, they'll most likely admit to you that your chances of becoming one are extremely high.

And they're right!

According to statistics, between 80-90 percent of youth confined in juvenile facilities in amerika end up in an adult prison. Even the least honest among the staff at your facility can admit to that much.

What they may not tell you, however, is that the system raises many of us (especially Black, Latino & poor whites) as surrogate (fake) parents to become "institutionalized slaves" of an economic system that imprisons millions of unpaid and under-paid prison workers for profit. In other words, they're rearing you for the Big House. It's big business for Wall Street hustlers with dollar signs in their eyes and it's costing many children (especially if you're Black or Latino) our childhood. We grew up fast in amerika at an early age!

I, too, spent most of my younger years as a misfit in various juvenile placements. I was a loner who couldn't seem to quite fit in any institution that the system locked me inside of. There were many nights when I'd, in private, cry myself to sleep. Yes, I know too, dear young comrade, what it feels like to suffer the feeling of loneliness, to be restrained by grown-ups and to be jumped on and "jumped in." To not be understood by others and far, far away from family, friends and from the joys that others of the same age have fun enjoying.

There are a few things that we of the revolutionary movement would like you to know. Things that those in authority won't dare to teach you. Knowledge that's important for you to hold close to your heart and that you can surely find strength in. One thing for sure is that to live without a cause is to live without an effect. It's highly important and healthy to have a positive purpose in life. A purpose to help others and to unify with those like you and I, who the government has rejected, so that we may band together for freedom within ourselves individually and as an outcasted society that we're fighting to free!

Never let those who have legal authority over you try to brainwash your precious mind into believing that freedom isn't a human right and that it's a "privilege" for you. In fact, it is the opposite which is true—freedom should never be a "privi-

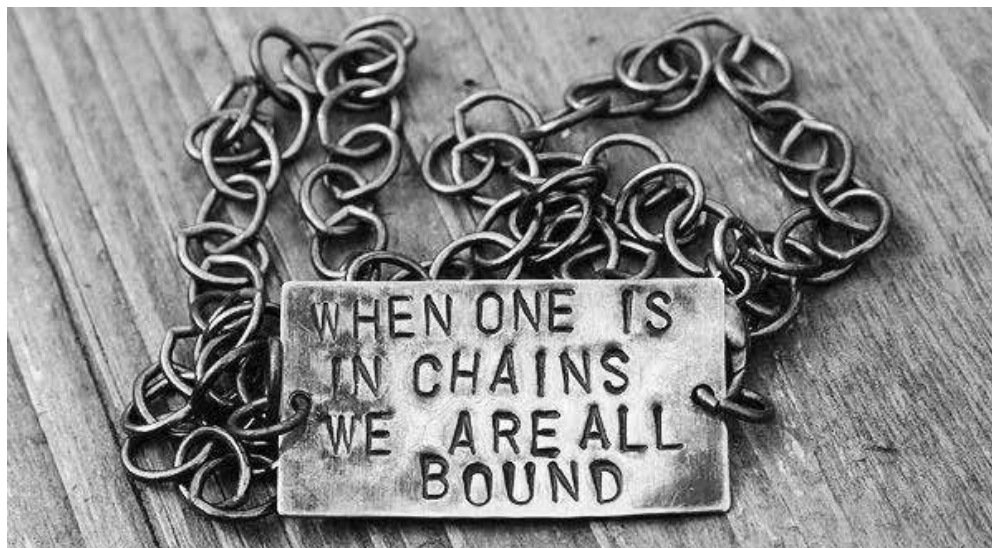


Photo: IWOC

lege" in a free society. On the contrary, in a free society, freedom is a human right!

We would also like you to know that whatever your situation may be—that though your parents may have beaten you and although society has ignored you and the judges have rejected you—you're not alone! There's a revolutionary movement larger than the boot camps and juvenile prisons they've sentenced you to, a worldwide movement of caring people who'll never turn a deaf ear to your voice and who are ever-ready to embrace you into our worldwide struggle with open arms!

It's important that you understand, young soldier, every one of us has made choices we wish we could take back but obviously cannot—every one of us, from every age, race and religious (or lack of religious) belief. Such are lessons of life. We live and we learn. If conditions were different for you growing up, and if you were listened-to more and if society called on the community instead of the cops, we know how freer we'd be as a people at large!

Where there is not master, there is no slave, and where there's no slave there can be no master. We believe that slavery in any form is wrong and is frankly a violent and played-out idea. In our rejecting others to rule over and master us—and in our refusing to rule over and master others—we collectively and individually become our own overseers. A lighthouse of our own!

Naturally, this doesn't come overnight. We've been slaves (in one way or another) without even realizing it for most of our lives. We were slowly conditioned to submit to the law, to obey our parents, teachers and even priests, with unquestioned obedience and to basically follow every one of their rules in blind faith.

We see how far that's gotten us, however: agitated, mis-educated and incarcerated. Think for yourself how many times those who have power over you have lied to you and how behind lock-

key they drive you to "fake it to make it" in order for them just to release you unto probation! We can't, however, fake it to make it forever.

SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER!

The right to free speech is as much as a human right as it is a civil one, and no one has the right to deny you of this right simply because of your age, just because you're a pre-teen or a teenager.

Just as important as it is for us to think before we open our mouths to speak, it's also healthy for our minds and our spirit to question authority.

Question authority and unlock the cuffs the system tries to slap on the wrists of your mind. Talk back to your parents and if they tell you not to talk back to them, let them know that it's, in fact, important for you to do so. Just as a closed mouth cannot be fed, it also holds true that the ones who ask specific questions receive specific answers. Exercise your right to speak and ask questions and watch how rapidly you develop into the free-thinking person you can grow and mature to become.

WRITE US & JOIN THE MOVEMENT, WE ACCEPT YOU.

Does the staff at the juvenile facility you're in make you spend hours trimming their bushes? Do they make you vacuum their officers and mow their lawns with no pay, like field slaves? Do they slam you when they restrain you? Then join us, young rebel, in IWOC—the Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee—for we accept you, are here to support and protect you and uphold the belief that an injury to one is an injury to all.

We accept all artwork and writings from juveniles (as well as adults) to be considered into our newsletter, *The Incarcerated Worker*.

All letters and artwork can be sent to us at:
Greater Kansas City IWW
Attn: IWOC
P.O. Box 414304
Kansas City, MO 64141
United States

Twin Cities IWW's Sisters Camelot Canvass Union stays strong in a three-year struggle

By shugE Mississippi

2013 was an exciting and rocky year for the Twin Cities General Membership Branch of the IWW. The fundraising canvass workers at the Minnesota-based non-profit Sisters' Camelot publicly announced their affiliation with the IWW. These workers, calling ourselves the Sisters Camelot Canvass Union (SCCU), went on strike less than one week after going public.

This was the first actual strike campaign by Wobblies in Minnesota since the chartering of the current membership branch, and it caused quite a stir in the local leftist scenery. That strike put into motion a series of events that are still making waves today—the most recent being a 2015 ruling by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) which may end up being the precedent that extends certain labor rights to workers being exploited in the United States as independent contractors—from Uber drivers to construction laborers.

This campaign is now almost three years old and remains ongoing, with workers still on strike, an IWW worker-run organization being created, an ongoing public boycott, and bosses losing legal battles with the NLRB.

Here's a recap and an update of the campaign to refresh memories and tell the story to those of you who are just reading about it for the first time:

After months of consensus-based organizing, the canvass workers at Sisters' Camelot went public on Monday, Feb. 25, 2013. On Friday, March 1, the union met with the managing collective to begin negotiations—only to be forced to go on strike when management flatly refused to negotiate with the union.

On Monday, March 4, the union workers attended the managing collective's weekly meeting, hoping to restart negotiations. At this meeting the managing collective publicly fired one of the striking union members (myself) in retaliation for union organizing and offered some concessions to the other workers if they would abandon their union.

The workers stayed strong in their solidarity and refused the management's union-busting offer, setting into motion a campaign that would end up crippling the organization—even forcing the bosses to stop paying themselves and get jobs elsewhere.

This strike also set into motion what would eventually be the birth of the North Country Food Alliance, a food justice non-profit corporation that now provides livable-wage jobs to many of the striking workers from that struggle. The



IWW Sisters Camelot Canvass Union in 2013.

Photo: SCCU

North Country Food Alliance is also an officially-recognized IWW shop that is democratically run by its workers who are all IWW members.

When the strike began, the managing collective engaged in an aggressive union-busting campaign—including character assassination of myself, and many public statements full of lies about the facts of our unionization and management's refusal to negotiate. One source of controversy surrounding this campaign was the fact that a group of class traitors (who called themselves “anarchists”) acted as a free union-busting firm and coordinated the aggressive campaign on behalf of the bosses at Sisters' Camelot.

A small group of self-proclaimed green anarchists and insurrectionists in Minnesota accused the IWW members of creating a rift in the local radical community—when in fact a rift that was already there was simply exposed publicly. This rift existed because a small number of self-proclaimed radicals had no meaningful class analysis or sense of working-class solidarity. This was exposed publicly when the self-proclaimed “radicals” chose to side with bosses over workers fighting for dignity.

As happens too often in the non-profit sector, the bosses collected salaries while hard-working fundraisers were often paid less than minimum wage as independent contractors. These bosses claimed to be pro-union, but proved otherwise when their own employees tried to exercise the basic right to collective bargaining.

After several weeks of being on strike, the

union made an offer of a package deal to the management. This deal took all demands regarding pay and benefits off the table, leaving only eight terms of unionization. These eight terms would have simply given the workers more workplace democracy and more control over their immediate work environment. The management refused this offer to end the strike, publicly exposing their bitterly anti-union stance which would ultimately ruin them.

Soon after management refused the package deal, the NLRB made a decision that the firing of a striking union member was illegal. The NLRB offered the management a settlement to end legal proceedings, which would include rehiring me and paying back-pay.

Instead of accepting the settlement offer from the NLRB, the Sisters' Camelot managing collective began working with a known right-wing union-busting lawyer named John C. Hauge to fight the decision in court.

The case was taken before an administrative law judge on June 6 and 7, 2013, who decided that Sisters' Camelot canvassers were correctly classified as independent contractors and therefore are not protected by the National Labor Relations Act. Thus, although Sisters' Camelot clearly engaged in union-busting behavior, technically their actions were not illegal, according to this verdict.

The Minneapolis NLRB disagreed, believing that Sisters' Camelot canvassers were misclassified as independent contractors and should be treated

as employees under the eyes of the law. The case was appealed to the Washington D.C. board, who (after a long wait) ruled in 2015 in favor of the SCCU, ordering Sisters' Camelot to issue a formal apology, pay back wages, and remove all language in their records and workplace trying to justify the illegal firing.

Meanwhile, the striking canvassers of Sisters' Camelot formed our own food justice non-profit in 2013, the North Country Food Alliance. In the first few years of North Country Food Alliance we worked hard to build something that we all proudly controlled as Wobblies through a fully-democratic workplace.

We're proud to brag that in our second fiscal year we managed to provide livable-wage jobs to over a dozen Wobblies while redistributing over \$250,000 worth of mostly organic surplus produce to needy people in the Twin Cities. Our programs have also built multiple community garden projects, taught monthly classes on foraging healthy wild foods (during the summer months), and we're moving ahead with the longer-term plan of building a mobile commercial grade kitchen for community use. In our second year as an organization we managed to do all of this on a budget of less than \$200,000.

Also during the long wait for our eventual NLRB victory, there was an event that caused the Twin Cities IWW to call for a full social and economic boycott of Sisters' Camelot. This event,

the 2014 May Day Festival, was endorsed by local bodies of the Teamsters, the Communication Workers of America (CWA), and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). The annual theme for May Day parade honored the 80th anniversary of the historic 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strike.



Graphic: FW Desmond MacDougal

For obvious reasons Sisters' Camelot was asked by festival organizers for the first time ever to not be a part of the festival. The bosses at Sisters' Camelot decided to defy that request by parking their kitchen bus on the street next to the park where the festival was held and serve free meals to attendees. This angered Wobblies and other labor supporters at the festival and an ad hoc picket was quickly organized next to the Sisters' Camelot bus.

After the picket successfully ruined Sisters' Camelot's attempts to crash the May Day Festival

for 30 minutes or so, the bosses' union-busting friends were visibly on their cell phones working to get people there to try to break the picket. Soon a small crowd of what appeared to be train-hopping crust punks and hippies gathered, many of them intoxicated and taunting the picketers with sexist and homophobic insults. Finally, one of the anti-union people got up the courage to physically tackle and land punches on a picketing Wobbly before other IWW members broke up the scuffle with the union busters, watching and doing nothing.

This incident was the breaking point, leading to a call for a full economic and social boycott that has since been the galvanizing motivation for disruption of and picketing by the Twin Cities IWW of several attempts by Sisters' Camelot to have public fundraising events in the Twin Cities.

Next time someone asks you if the IWW is still relevant in class struggle you can recount to them a modern story of IWW workers who stood up to corrupt bosses and actually won—a story in which the workers end up with their own amazing democratic union workplace while the union-busting organization became financially crippled. A story in which union-busting bosses had to give up their salaries and get jobs at a local cafe because the workers who raised the money were on strike...and scabs were unable to successfully replace them because of the public support for the union.

Support the Southern IWW Speaking Tour

Fellow Workers,

The entire U.S. South is ripe for IWW expansion and organizing! There are many major cities where we could build strong IWW branches, and the widespread right-to-work laws give us a perfect environment to prove the strengths of organizing which go beyond the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

However, we have historically had little presence in the South, and in many cities people who would make great Wobblies have not heard of us. We have struggled to build new branches, or sustain the ones we have built.

We are a caucus of Southern IWW members who are organizing a "Southern IWW Speaking Tour" for the spring of 2016. The idea is to package an "event-in-a-box" which can be easily duplicated across multiple southern cities where we may only have a handful of members, or perhaps no members at all. We will organize the speakers and the promotional strategy, while the local members will only have

to organize a space, promote locally, and host the traveling speakers.

We also intend to coordinate resources so that we can follow up with contacts who came to the event, and in the more promising cities host follow up meetings, with the goal of forming branches that are engaged in workplace organizing.

We are asking non-Southern branches to discuss how they can support this. To start, financial commitments would be welcome: \$100, \$200, or even more if you feel your branch is in a position to do so.

Southern branches or members who are interested in hosting a stop of the tour should get in touch with us.

You can send messages to atlantaiww@gmail.com with the subject "Southern Speaking Tour."

In Solidarity,
Brandon S., for the Southern IWW Speaking Tour group



Graphic: IWW

Remembering the **women** who perished in the **Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire**

By Raymond S. Solomon

News of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, that occurred at 23-29 Washington Place on March 25, 1911, spread fast throughout lower Manhattan. Crowds gathered. The fire, on an otherwise uneventful Saturday afternoon, started on the 8th floor and quickly spread to the 9th and 10th floors. What started out as a normal pay day turned into desperate efforts to escape. Fire escapes collapsed under the weight of too many people. Women and girls jumped to their deaths as fire nets could not hold them. Insecure elevators became overcrowded. Some people acted courageously. Some women let teenage girls go ahead of them. New York University students in a building adjacent to the factory helped people on the 10th floor escape. One worker, Rose Freedman, survived the Triangle fire by following the managers to the roof. Obviously managers were not trying to get their employees out through an escape route they knew about. While the fire was still raging dead victims were put in coffins by policemen. Many bodies were burnt beyond recognition. It was only after more than 100 years that the identification of victims completed.

Descriptions of the fire by eyewitnesses were vivid. Louis Waldman, who was to later become a Socialist New York State Assembly member, witnessed the fire. He described women onlookers fainting and men onlookers crying. He described that women from the factory were consumed by fire while they were contemplating whether or not to jump, and firemen were desperately trying to pump water up to the floors that were on fire. Radical historian Howard Zinn, in "A People's History Of The United States," cited the *New York World*:

"Screaming men and women and boys and girls crowded out on the many window ledges and threw themselves into the streets far below. They jumped with their clothing ablaze...on both the Green Street and Washington Place sides of the building there grew mounds of the dead and dying..."

"From opposite windows spectators saw again and again...companionships formed in the instant of death—girls who placed their arms around each other as they leaped."

The *New York World* also described women and girls with their hair on fire. Zinn wrote that there were other industrial fires at the time in New York and throughout the country.

What were the immediate conditions that



Cover of *The New York Herald* the day after the fire, March 26, 1911.

made escape and rescue almost impossible? Why did these conditions exist? What are the long-term lessons?

Among the fire hazards at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory and other factors impeding rescue were, according to the website of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), "Locked doors to the stairwell; Rusty fire escapes that collapsed; Cluttered work spaces; Short [fire truck] ladders only reached the 6th floor; Not enough water pressure in the fire hydrants; Long wooden tables became obstacles; Wicker baskets full of scraps; Oily floors spread the fire quickly; Weak fire nets that jumpers fell through; No sprinkler system, only pails of water; Flammable barrels of oil; Boxes crowding the exit; Lack of a required third staircase" and weak fire escapes which collapsed from the weight of women trying to escape. Subsequent reforms included new fire codes in the city—something Fire Commissioner Rhinelander Waldo had been advocating. His suggestions had been ignored until after that fire. He had given factories an order to put in sprinkler systems. The owners of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory refused, saying it was like "confiscation of private property." Also, the owners of the factory had refused to sign the citywide garment union agreement providing for safety factors.

Manifestations of sadness and protests were



Fire fighters struggled to extinguish the burning Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. Fire-quenching sprinkler systems, though proven effective, were considered too costly by many factory owners and were not installed in the building.

abundant. After the fire there was a collective memorial procession consisting of approximately 400,000 people—which was roughly 10 percent of the population of the New York City at the time.

In her eulogy at the memorial, Rose Schneiderman said:

“I would be a traitor to these poor burned bodies if I came here to talk good fellowship. We have tried you good people of the public and we have found you wanting.

“The old Inquisition had its rack and its thumb-screws and its instruments of torture with iron teeth. We know what these things are today; the iron teeth are our necessities, the thumb-screws are the high-powered and swift machinery close to which we must work, and the rack is here in the firetrap structures that will destroy us the minute they catch on fire.

“This is not the first time girls have been burned alive in the city. Every week I must learn of the untimely death of one of my sister workers. Every year thousands of us are maimed. The life of men and women is so cheap and property is so sacred. There are so many of us for one job it matters little if 146 of us are burned to death.”

Morris Rosenfeld’s poem in the Yiddish-language *Jewish Daily Forward* included:

“Only hell’s fire engulfs these slave stalls
And Mammon devours our sons and daughters.
Wrapt in scarlet flames, they drop to death
from his maw
And death receives them all.
Sisters mine, oh my sisters; brethren
Hear my sorrow:

See where the dead are hidden in dark corners,
Where life is choked from those who labor.”

After the memorial there were protest marches about the Triangle fire held by the ILGWU.

According to Wikipedia, 23 of the people killed in that fire were men. Most of the victims were Jewish, but others were Italian and German immigrants. Most of them were new immigrants.

The aftermath of the Triangle fire was a starting point for limitations of what employers could do. The two owners of the factory, Isaac Harris and Max Blanck, were put on trial for manslaughter, but amazingly and disgustingly were acquitted.

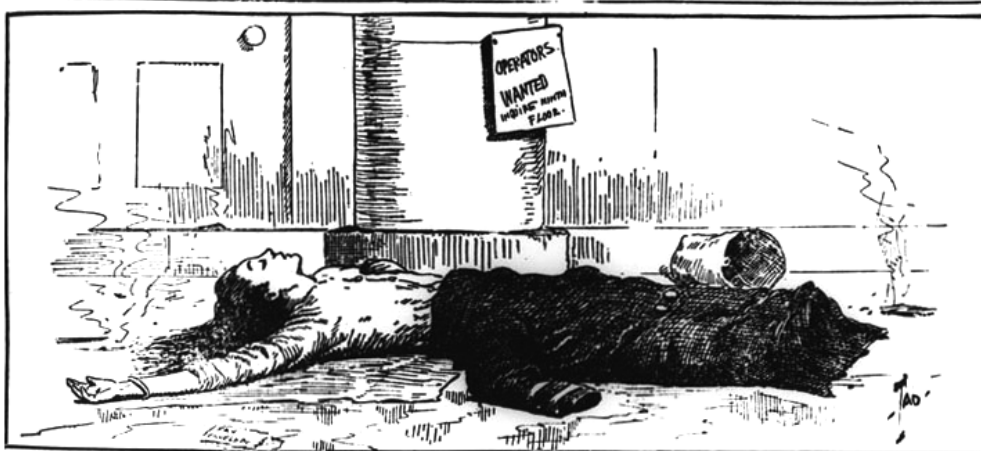
This event was crucial in American labor history, in Jewish-American labor history, in Italian-American labor history, in German-American labor history, and in women’s labor history.

In 2011, it was reported in *The New York Times* and other media sources that genealogist and historian Michael Hirsch had done research for four years trying to identify the names of unidentified victims. He was successful, and now all the victims have been identified. Now at the annual commemoration of the Triangle Shirtwaist



Gravestone (left) and photo (right) of Tillie Kupferschmidt, who was only a teenager when she was killed.

This Is One of a Hundred Murdered
Is any one to be punished for this?



fire, all of the people killed have their names read and remembered.

One of the victims, Tillie Kupferschmidt, was finally identified after her body was unclaimed. She was described, in research uncovered by Hirsch, as a “friendless immigrant” who was from a “small town in Poland.” She was only 16 or 17 years old when she was killed. Recently a tomb has been erected for her. Following tradition, the tomb, in Hebrew, gives her name as Tova, daughter of Rabbi Aaron.

Today, coal miners work in unsafe mines. There has been a lessening of the standards of protection of workers’ safety in mines, offices, and factories. Many existing laws are disregarded. A most fitting memorial to the women who died in the Triangle fire would be fighting for workers’ and consumers’

safety and health. Fire drills and fire inspections are vitally important. Recently the people of Flint, Mich. have been suffering lead poisoning as a result of their governor’s decision to change the source of their water supply. Children are especially at life-long risk. Actions and risks resulting from capitalist ideology in both business and government, that puts money, power, and pseudo-efficiency over people’s life and health, may continue to cause death, injury, and illness.

I acknowledge the help of Industrial Worker editor Diane Krauthamer on this article. Fellow Worker Diane is working to change the dominant capitalist socioeconomic ethic to a workers’ oriented ethic and society, and beyond.

Photos: findagrave.com

Graphic: trianglefire.ill.cornell.edu

BLACK HISTORY MONTH: Remembering a long history of U.S.-led racist oppression

"You can kill the revolutionary, but you can't kill the revolution." - Fred Hampton

By Nolan Grunski

At 4:45 a.m. on Dec. 4, 1969, 14 heavily armed police officers raided Fred Hampton's Chicago apartment housing nine members of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, including Hampton's pregnant fiancé, Deborah Johnson. Between 91 and 101 shots were fired. One shot was fired by Black Panther Mark Clark, who was killed instantly from a shot to the heart, and fired his shotgun as a result of a death convulsion. The remaining shots were fired by the police. Hampton was the only other person to be killed during the raid. The autopsy revealed that he was unable to wake up throughout the assault due to secobarbital—a barbiturate which slows the activity of the brain and nervous system. This substance is now known to have been put into his drink by Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agent William O'Neal at a dinner at a local church where Hampton taught a political science class. His death occurred in the midst of the following exchange by officers according to Black Panther Harold Bell (as quoted in "The Bridge: The Life and Rise of Barack Obama" [Vintage Books, 2010]):

"That's Fred Hampton."

'Is he dead?... Bring him out.'

'He's barely alive.'

'He'll make it.'

(Two shots).

'He's good and dead now.'

After they killed Hampton, the police officers directed fire toward the remaining seven Panthers, severely wounding Verlina Brewer, Doc Satchel, Blair Anderson, and Brenda Harris. After being beaten and dragged outside, they were all charged with attempted murder and aggravated assault of the officers, as well as multiple weapons charges.

The aftermath of the assassination was perhaps the most complete representation of how all people of color, especially African-Americans, are oppressed in the United States. According to "The Assassination of Fred Hampton: How the FBI and the Chicago Police Murdered a Black Panther" by Jeffery Haas, (Chicago Review Press, 2009), the day after Fred Hampton was shot, the police formally stated they were attacked by



Black Panther Party founders Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton.

the "violent" and "extremely vicious" Panthers and had only been defending themselves. At a second press conference they were commended for their "remarkable restraint," "bravery," and "professional discipline" for not killing everyone present. A later inquest, in which only police and an "expert witness" testified, ruled the deaths of Clark and Hampton to be justifiable homicide. Cook County, Illinois State's Attorney Edward Hanrahan supported the ruling as a reinforcement of the "truthfulness of our police officers' account of the events," as quoted in the *Chicago Sun-Times* in 1970.

Evidence presented in defense of the officers included "bullet holes" allegedly created by Black Panther gunfire, but these have been actually demonstrated to be nailheads. Similarly, in 2011 after the fatal shooting of Mark Duggan in London, it was claimed that Duggan shot a police officer first, but the bullet that evidenced this was actually proven to be fired by another police officer, and hit the other officer after passing through Duggan's arm.

What is likely most frustrating is the corruption the incident exposed and the lack of any mean-

ingful justice despite an overwhelming supply of evidence. Chicago, of course, is the very same city famous for the power of its political machine, and the very same where Mayor Rahm Emanuel has been shown to have conspired with police surrounding the shooting death of Laquan McDonald.

In regards to the Hampton case, the COINTELPRO (a portmanteau derived from COunter INTELLIGENCE PROgram) scandal revealed outrageously illegal operations by the FBI all over the country, concretely tethering the involvement of multiple FBI officers and government officials in the intentional murder of Fred Hampton. In M. Wesley Swearingen's book, "FBI Secrets: An Agent's Expose," FBI agent Gregg York is quoted saying:

"We expected about twenty Panthers to be in the apartment when the police raided the place. Only two of those black niggers were killed, Fred Hampton and Mark Clark."

Despite all the evidence, regardless of how absolutely sure the community was that any country that stood for principles like liberty, justice, and democracy would punish those involved, the guilty

parties ultimately got the same punishment as the killers of Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, Rodney King, Eric Garner, Arthur McDuffie, Emmett Till, Trayvon Martin, and an unacceptable amount of others: a free-walk with a slap on the wrist, if anything at all. When the killers weren't white, as with Tyrone Robinson and Thomas Hagan, who killed Huey Newton and Malcolm X, there was no hesitation at all to throw them in prison for murder.

If the United States, perhaps the most brutally imperialistic nation that has ever existed, would oppress its own Black citizens to this extent, it may be sickening to imagine what they've done to blacks outside their borders.

"Duvalier has performed an economic miracle, he has taught us to live without money, to eat without food, to live without life..." - Haitian citizen under the regime of Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier

It's almost incomprehensible for a movement for socialism or freedom to come to fruition under the thumb of someone as brutally oppressive as Francois Duvalier. It is thought that his secret police were greater in numbers than the Haitian military. Yet, in 1959, a resistance movement had sprung up with the support of exiled Haitians from Cuba and Venezuela, and it seems as though U.S. Marines landed in Haiti to crush the rebels before Duvalier even knew they were there. They never stood a chance. When Papa Doc died in 1971, after enjoying full diplomatic and economic support from the United States throughout his reign, Clinton Knox from the United States was the only diplomat present to swear in Haiti's new leader, Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, who would enjoy the same support from the United States that his father had. Baby Doc was 19 years old when he was sworn in.

Trained and armed by the United States, Haitian military forces enjoyed more than 20 uninterrupted years of freedom to rape, torture, and murder the people of Haiti, until the United States decided they didn't like Duvalier anymore, and supported the counterinsurgency against him. In the following 11-person candidate election, the honesty of which was assured by the Organization of American States (OAS), Jean-Bertrand Aristide won 67.5 percent of the vote. He was known as a "leftist." In less than eight months, he was deposed by military forces found to have been economically supported by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and everything that could have been done to keep Aristide from coming back to power, short of killing him, was indeed done by the United States. They were unable to keep Aristide from being elected two more times, but the United States made sure he was paralyzed politically. In 2004, when a coup d'état removed Aristide from power for the last time, he



Patrice Lumumba raises his arms, injured by shackles, after his release from prison in January 1960.

Photo: wikimedia.org

said that the United States had abducted him and held him hostage until he vowed to resign. When he did, he was exiled to South Africa. The United States threatened South Africa to prevent them from getting a spot on the United Nations Security Council were they to refuse to hold Aristide. Aristide returned to Haiti in 2011, and has since abstained from politics.

On April 22, 1961, four French generals orchestrated a *putsch* (violent attempt to overthrow a government) in Algeria in an attempt to maintain a union with France. According to Italian newspaper *Il Paese*, "It is not by chance some people in Paris are accusing the American secret service headed by Allen Dulles of having participated in the plot of the four 'ultra' generals." The CIA-backed the *putsch* because they opposed an independent Algeria, and they opposed Charles de Gaulle who supported Algeria's independence. They opposed an independent Algeria because of concerns over "communists" taking power, as de Gaulle was negotiating independence with the National Liberation Front, Algeria's popular party. Charles de Gaulle was also a major obstacle in the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the CIA is known to have conspired on at least a couple attempts on his life.

In the same period, the United States violently opposed plurality-elected Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. A communist and sharp opponent of western imperialism, Lumumba was forced to endure a CIA backed secession conflict in Congo's richest province, Katanga, as well as ongoing aggression from Belgium and the United Nations, and perpetual conspiracy between the CIA and local groups interested in assassinating him. After being illegally removed as prime minister by the president of Congo, who was paid directly by the CIA to do so, Lumumba fell into custody of opposition forces, who tortured and murdered him.

In an attempt to re-establish Lumumba-esque leadership, Pierre Mulele formulated the 1964 Simba Rebellion. When it was crushed, Mulele took refuge in Congo-Brazzaville. The man whose forces

murdered Lumumba, Joseph-Desiré Mobutu, was the same man who later took power in the Congo until his death in 1997. In 1968, Mobutu offered amnesty to Pierre Mulele. When Mulele returned, he was publicly executed; his eyes were pulled from their sockets, his genitals torn off, and his limbs amputated one by one, before he died. What remained of his body was dumped in the Congo River. Under Mobutu, terror and oppression were facts of life, which itself was marked by an absence of civil liberty. As far as the United States was concerned, it was a job well done.

The list goes on, with each transgression against leftists in Africa and elsewhere seemingly more egregious than the last. Some of the many victims of underhanded aggression by the United States include: Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, Agostinho Neto and the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola, or MPLA) in Angola; the Lunda people in and around Zaire; Maurice Bishop in Grenada; Michael Manley in Jamaica; and Dési Bouterse in Suriname. It is reasonable to assume that many more will eventually feel the wrath of America's racist, anti-leftist agenda. What the United States has done by way of imperialism thus far, merely since World War II, is briefly but beautifully explained in William Blum's "Killing Hope," in which Blum suggested that America's public mindset was the intent to save democracy from communism, by getting rid of democracy.

In February 1976, the United States officially recognized Black History Month for the first time. In some ways, it may seem like a pathetic way of trying to apologize for hundreds of years of oppression, though it's certainly less pathetic than Australia's "Sorry Day." In other ways, it's a product of all the thoroughly great things the Black community worldwide has done to benefit mankind. Black History Month was, after all, formulated by the leaders of Black Students United at Kent State University in 1969.

History isn't always something to be celebrated; looking back on what America has done to Blacks over the years is something that the nation, as a whole, needs to feel deeply ashamed of. The worst insult, however, that could possibly be tossed at the Black community, and those who gave their lives for its sake and the sake of humanity, would be to forget what these heroes all stood for before they were silenced.

It seems today it takes a special person just to care. To care about their community, to care about freedom, to care about making a better world for everyone: that's what makes a lot of these people special. They stood up and fought for what most were afraid to stand up for, and many of them paid the ultimate price.



Photo: Twin Cities IWW General Defense Committee Local 14

On Jan. 9, 2016, the Twin Cities IWW General Defense Committee Local 14 joined with the Quinn family, Native Lives Matter, Idle No More, AIM, Black Lives Matter and many others in the freezing cold to continue the fight for Justice For Phil Quinn (who was shot by St. Paul, Minn. police in December 2015). Protesters shut down University Ave., the Green Line, and disrupted business at Target, Walmart, and Cub Foods.

WORKERS' POWER **AGAINST** POLICE BRUTALITY **AND** RACIST TERROR

By **Brandon Sowers**

The decision of the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) to participate in the Black Friday protests against police brutality in November 2015 is an important step forward, advancing both the struggle against the Chicago Police Department (CPD), and allowing the CTU to flex its muscles before the end of its contract. Chicago teachers voted overwhelmingly to support a strike in their recent strike authorization vote, and if they can win another strike as they did in 2012, it would be an incredibly important victory for the working class around the country. It would show that education workers can fight and win, especially if they have united with the broader working class around issues such as institutional racism.

The simmering rage against Chicago's blatantly racist, terrorist, secret prison-operating police department provides an important backdrop. U.S. anti-labor law illegitimately limits what workers can strike over; if the teachers go on strike

and demand the removal of police from school campuses, or defunding of the police force, that would make their strike illegal in the eyes of the state. Chicago teachers have an important choice. Even if the teachers go on strike and don't say a word about the police, the CPD is intimately tied to Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel's austerity regime, and a teachers' strike could strengthen and build on the movement against police brutality and terror. However, if the teachers do explicitly include anti-police demands in their strike, and stick by them even when threatened with injunction, they could really inspire the rest of the working class in Chicago to mobilize and support them. A victory in that case would also show that workers can successfully take on the system of anti-labor laws in this country, particularly those which declare certain kinds of strikes illegal.

Could teachers and other education workers strike to remove police from schools? Nothing could stop them from putting this into their

demands. If a teachers union prioritized "cops off campus," and waged a strike on the level of Chicago in 2012 or Seattle earlier this year, this would be a massive step forward. This would be particularly powerful to the degree that it spread beyond the teachers to include other education workers. Of course, any industrial action for "cops off campus" would meet bitter resistance from the city administration, at the same time that the national media, the Democratic Party, and—most importantly—the national unions would stop at nothing to sabotage this action, and force or cajole the workers into moderating their demands.

This is why militant education workers would have to prepare for this struggle, beginning by consciously identifying with the victims of police brutality, against the police rather than with them. An initiative to strike for "cops off campus" might need years before education workers actually have the strength and organization to pull it off—but the situation in the United States over

the last several years has also been very fluid, and things could develop much quicker than we might expect.

“Cops off campus,” a slogan which came out of the struggles at the University of California around 2009, is just one example of an achievable revolutionary demand. The left wing of capitalism can articulate very specific and imaginable goals, such as body cameras or community policing—but these “demands,” even if granted, would only reinforce the legitimacy of the police. Revolutionaries should be putting forward winnable demands which do the opposite.

Education workers have a very specific ability to use their power as workers to reduce the power of police in our society, both by removing their ability to assault students, and by reducing their social legitimacy. But they aren't the only ones.

The blog “Red Atlanta” has done a good job finding actions that fast food workers have taken against police. Most importantly, many of the people on the ground in the Ferguson rebellion were fast food workers, many of whom had previously been involved in Fight For 15 (FF15), where they had gotten experience organizing. Also notable is that when FF15 leadership called “strikes” around the country, they deliberately avoided strikes in St. Louis or Ferguson in the name of “peace” and “calm,” instead bussing protestors from Ferguson/St. Louis to other cities. Beyond this, there have been low-level actions, such as workers writing “pig” on burrito wrappers or otherwise making police know they are unwelcome.

There was also the infamous “Hands Up, Don't Ship” action which was organized by IWW members working at the United Parcel Service (UPS) in the fall of 2014. In this case, workers in the sorting facility researched one of the businesses that shipped through their facility to police departments around the country, and found that a lot of the material being shipped was racist training material. The workers temporarily asserted their power on the shop floor by refusing to ship packages coming from this company.

This shows a path that workers could take even if they don't directly interact with police at work on a daily basis, as teachers or fast food workers do. Workers know a lot about the commodities they create or handle, and can find creative ways to register their opposition to police through job action.

What We're Fighting

Part of the enduring strength of the police in our society comes from the legitimacy they are given as “regular joes,” “part of the 99 percent,” or most dangerously, “union brothers and sisters.”

This is something that revolutionaries have to struggle against, especially within the labor movement.

The inclusion of police as “union brothers and sisters” blurs the lines by simultaneously legitimizing cops, and delegitimizing any industrial action against them. To stick with the example of education workers who might strike for “cops off campus,” there would be very loud voices in the labor bureaucracy arguing that they can't strike against their “brothers and sisters” in the Fraternal Order of Police. The degree of legitimacy that police unions have directly affects the morale of workers who might try to take industrial action against police—attacking that legitimacy creates more space for industrial action. Of course, our priority in the labor movement should be on building workers' power, not on radical sounding resolutions—there is a larger question of whether and how we should do things like bring resolutions to union locals, which is beyond the scope of this article.



The Twin Cities IWW branch was able to have a huge impact when the fight against police brutality became critical in November 2015. I can't speak for that branch, and encourage local members to write their own analysis. However, two broad trends seem to stand out: they have consistently engaged in anti-racist and anti-police brutality work alongside their workplace organizing in recent years; and they are ambitious. As a group, they have the confidence to believe that they can have a big impact.

These are two factors that we, as an organization, struggle with beyond the level of individual branches. Although a lot of our members are generally anti-cop, very few of our branches have much experience engaging in anti-racist or anti-police brutality work. More critically, we have a crisis of ambition and confidence beyond the branch level—we have a hard time imagining that we, as an organization, can actually have a deci-

sive influence on the course of the class struggle in the United States (or internationally).

However, it's been clear since the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson in 2014 (maybe even since Oscar Grant was shot in 2009) that movements against police brutality are taking on a mass character, and will have a growing impact on the class struggle in the United States. Eventually, the working class will be ready to really move, and any organization which has ignored the importance of struggles to reduce the power, presence, or legitimacy of police in our society will be left standing in the dust—and rightly so.

Our union recently committed to having deeper discussions of our strategic outlook during future IWW General Conventions—specifically mentioning movements against police brutality as an area where we could have a bigger impact. Our convention is an important part of our member-driven democracy, but it will only bear fruit if we have serious discussion in our branches during the year. The most important step we can take as a union to meaningfully engage with anti-police struggles is for branches to engage, discuss the results, and bring their ideas to the convention.

The rage at police violence against people of color is constantly simmering, sometimes boiling over. This, in itself, is an important marker of a new confrontational attitude in the working class. In limited ways, this confrontational attitude is even expressing itself in the workplace. At the same time, there were more strikes and threats of strikes in 2015 than any year in recent U.S. history. The labor bureaucracy will do everything they can to keep these two trends from merging, as will the official civil rights leaders. Yet workers—fast food workers, education workers, transportation workers, auto workers—will quickly find that any effective strike must break the law and therefore invite police repression, and they might also learn, as Chicago teachers have, that mobilizing against police brutality will inspire members and build important alliances with other parts of the working class.

The IWW is uniquely positioned to agitate and organize for workplace action against police brutality, and to agitate and organize for mass industrial action that rips U.S. anti-labor law completely apart. Serious discussion and ambitious engagement in the class movements around us will bring major results. By acting as a united organization, we can achieve the position that the Twin Cities IWW has—one that opposes racial profiling and police brutality—on a national scale. And then we can really start to shake things up!

A longer version of this will appear on <http://www.lifelongwobbly.com>.

Keep on rockin' GLAMROC!

2016 is the 10th anniversary of the IWW in the German language area. One of a million good reasons to take a small look back.

By Mark Richter (GMB Frankfurt) and Jonathan Szejder (GMB Cologne)

As Wobblies we always say that our history is important to us and that we'd like to learn from it. But what if there is no such history—or very little—in an IWW region? As the German Language Area Membership Regional Organizing Committee (GLAMROC) we now can look back on the history of our first 10 years in existence since before World War II. There had been Wobblly branches in several German cities before the war, but that would make an interesting subject for a different article.

Since it all started in 2004 with four white men in Frankfurt, lots of changes have happened in our region. In these first years we started as a small group with some experience in workplace organizing, but, to be honest we were mostly trying to give our bad copy of the Confederation of German Trade Unions (Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, or DGB) a little radical glitter. After World War II, grassroots workplace organizing outside the DGB had hardly taken place. The few efforts either happened on a very small scale or as campaigns within the DGB, initiated by leftists. Thus, we had too few stories and experiences to gather resources from.

So in the early years we tried to organize a more militant union—just with the same methods, strategies and tactics as the DGB. We still lacked an idea what an alternative union—left from the mainstream unions—may look like (apart from having less money, different logos and lofty goals such as the abolition of the wage system, that is). We had some campaigns but they were often short-lived or very dependent on that one charismatic colleague who signed up all his co-workers and also happened to be a Wobblly.

Thanks to the experiences made in both the United Kingdom and in North America we were able to talk to fellow workers from and read about the Starbucks Workers Union, the Cleaners Branch, the Jimmy Johns Workers Union, Brandworkers, “Recomposition” blog, and several others that we cannot mention here. Our discussions about how we want to organize and what our union should look like intensified with our growing imagination kick-started by that influence. Slowly a clearer profile of the IWW in the German language area emerged.



Photo: Familias Unidas por la Justicia

GLAMROC was host to many organizing events, such as the Training For Trainers (pictured above), which took place in Frankfurt, Germany, in 2015.

“Life has just begun”

One of the biggest changes in our regional organizing committee was the visit of two fellow workers from the Jimmy Johns Workers Union in 2012. They did a tour speaking about the successes and failures in their organizing efforts, leading several Organizer Trainings (OT 101) along the road, and had a grand finale Training For Trainers at the end of their trip. The fabulous spirit of the IWW, that ol’ rank-and-file union, thus bestowed upon us a very crucial tool: the OT 101. We translated the training manual and delivered our first trainings in Lithuania, Germany, Austria and Switzerland, organized by our own Organizer Training Committee (the so-called OrganizerInnen Training Komitee, or OTK). By now we have also held a training in Turkey, amounting to 14 trainings in five countries with over 120 participants in the past four years.

One of our problems, until June 2015, was that we didn’t systematically analyze our efforts, losses and gains. When we started doing that, we realized that we had 12 ongoing committees in eight cities in our ROC. As of now, we have campaigns in several call centers, within the chemical industry, with cab drivers and care workers, in food production, and the education industry. Yet none of them have gone public as the IWW. In short: our efforts are successful in some ways,

but we don’t talk about them in public. It is still pretty invisible that we have some very committed organizers and a membership that works really hard on building the union. Even within our ROC we still don’t have a solid practice of discussing and sharing our experiences.

“Changing the face of the union”

When we started analyzing our efforts last year, we recognized that we got a lot of new members and that the number of active organizers has increased massively. In numbers: we currently have about 200 members in good-standing, 10 branches and 12 committees (data from June 2015). We organized our first own Training For Trainers in November 2015 which boosted the numbers of trainers in GLAMROC to 20 people. Almost every branch has at least one trainer. Another interesting development is that the age structure within our ROC has changed massively. The average age has dropped down to somewhere between 29 and 35 years. Looking at the membership of most mainstream unions we gather that that’s a good thing.

In fact, the changing of our age structure also brought a lot of active organizers who are female, non-white, bi- or multilingual and with various migrational backgrounds. Even among the current trainers we almost have a 50/50 composi-

tion of women and men—which is really unusual for a union in the German language area. In addition, we can say that we also increased our abilities to address workers in several languages. Since our last Training For Trainers we now have trainers who speak 11 different languages: German, English, French, Finnish, Danish, Dutch, Greek, Catalan, Spanish, Polish and Russian. Even if we don't feel confident to deliver trainings in all of those languages we feel that we are enlarging our skillset to break down those language barriers that help divide our class.

We got to confess that we are not quite sure why all these changes happened. It is probably due to a combination of circumstances, both outside and within the union. Firstly, the financial crisis hit Germany with delay. For some years a successful German government and capital, playing a leading role in enforcing austerity measures in Europe, was able to make Germany the European winner of the crisis. Perhaps, while the German hegemony started to crumble and with working conditions already deteriorated, young people tended to start organizing again. The lack of hope for the future is widespread as it seems more and more conceivable that the crisis will attack the still relatively high standard of living.

Secondly, the atmosphere within the union has

changed into a culture of solidarity and support for different perspectives, clearly due to the efforts of active female Wobblies who were able to both challenge previous atmosphere and to be role models for a different type of membership. Thirdly, we reckon that luck was a decisive factor as well. We had some great people joining us who had a really good influence on the union.

Most of our branches are located in Germany, there is one in Vienna, Austria, and none in Switzerland, even if we have members there. We are trying to actively change that by both training Austrian trainers and supplementing our training material with the labor laws of Austria and Switzerland. Our branches have between five to 30 members—a pretty large number is actively organizing while others are aiming to. We are on a good path. There are many steps still to be taken, mistakes to be made, lessons to be learned and fights to be fought, but we're definitely sizzling with a new generation of Glamroc(k)ers willing to create a new tradition.

“I want to break free”

This upcoming year we plan continue on the road of change. With the help of the Organizing Departments in North America and the United Kingdom we are trying to form our own Organiz-

ing Department Board (ODB). With the Tech Committee from the United Kingdom we hope to build our new helpful technical infrastructure. We changed our website domain from wobblies.de to wobblies.org because we want to include all people from the German language area who don't live in Germany. We will have our first Organizing Summit in May and are also working on a new look for GLAMROC with the help of professional public relations workers to see what an impression we make—and which impression we want to make.

Last but not least: we will have our glorious 10th anniversary celebration on Aug. 26 to 28, 2016 in Koennern near Leipzig, Germany. We would be very happy to see fellow workers from around the globe come and join us. Also, birthday presents will be warmly appreciated ;-)

Finally, we would like to thank all you fellow workers around the world who actively supported GLAMROC in its development and helped us learn more about successful, militant unionism.

Thank you so much, Fellow Workers! For at least another 10 years!

The authors are currently members of the Organizer Training Committee Coordination of GLAMROC. If you'd like to contact us, write to training@wobblies.org.

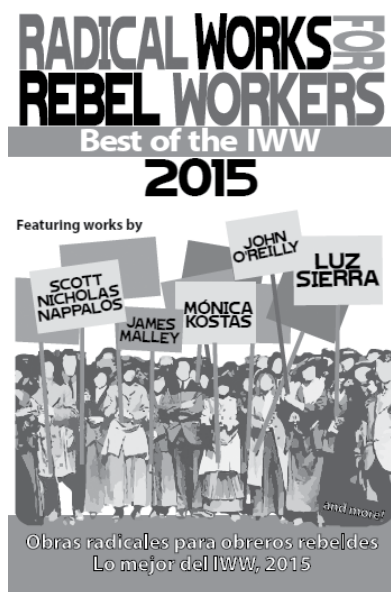
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Fellow Workers!

Now is the time to start thinking about what work you're going to nominate for the 2016 Working Writers Contest!

Anything published in the *Industrial Worker* or *Solidaridad* is eligible, as are other works written by fellow workers. You can nominate any piece which inspired you, even if it's yours. If you know a fellow worker who has a good idea for an article, now is the time to encourage them to get to it! The winning pieces will be published in the 2016 “Radical Works for Rebel Workers.” The 2015 edition is still available from IWW General Headquarters (GHQ) for \$7, so get a few for your branch!

Send nominations to :
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Photo: Brendan Maslauskas Dunn

A mural of Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata in the Zapatista village of Oventic. The sign on the building reads “snail” in the Mayan language Tzotzil (also known as Bats’i k’op).

A JOURNEY TO THE HEART OF ZAPATISTA TERRITORY

By Brendan Maslauskas Dunn

The taxi rolled to a sudden and unexpected stop. The driver turned to us and said, “Estamos aqui. Oventic.” For the last hour, the vehicle had driven the winding roads from the city of San Cristobal de las Casas to our destination—a small village called Oventic under revolutionary Zapatista control in the highlands of Chiapas in southern Mexico.

My partner Michelle and I stepped out of the taxi, and noticed an older Mayan woman who wore a black ski mask and stood guard at the gated entrance.

She walked up to us and patiently listened as we tried to explain why we were there. The very first line she spoke was profound and piercing. “What do you hope to change?” Her question weighed heavily on me for the rest of the week we spent in the Zapatista village. This question still

keeps me up at night, followed by an endless rain of other questions: What do we hope to change? How do we make change? And most importantly, what does that change look like?

In the United States, I think about these questions and fight for the better world I envision, one born of a process of collective struggle. In Mexico, however, I saw a new world being born in a different light, one that breathed through mass movements. I saw it in Oaxaca during the protracted occupation of the Zócalo (the main square in central Mexico City) by thousands of teachers fighting education reform. I saw it in the tears of the parents that were shed for their disappeared sons and daughters—just some of the 43 students from Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers’ College who were kidnapped and tortured by the combined forces of the Mexican state and drug cartels. I heard it in the shouts of the striking

workers we ran into on a side street in Mexico City. And I tasted it in a profound way in that damp Zapatista village hugged by mountains and yet pervaded by dense fog.

The Zapatistas are an indigenous Mayan revolutionary movement in Mexico that launched a major rebellion on January 1, 1994, the same day that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came into effect. It was called a “war against oblivion,” triggered only in part by NAFTA, a trade agreement which captured the violent and chaotic nature of the global capitalist economy. The Zapatistas called it a death sentence for indigenous people.

The Zapatista rebellion surprised many around the world. Rather than seizing state power, as many revolutionary and guerrilla movements aim to do, they put down their arms just as quickly as they had risen up and instead focused on build-

ing power from below, carving out autonomy and practicing mutual aid. Over 1,000 Zapatista communities have sprung up in Chiapas since 1994. Zapatismo is a bit anarchist and a bit socialist, but it claims to be neither. It is fiercely indigenous and specifically Mayan but it also has an international appeal. One could argue that in 1994 the Zapatistas ushered in a new era of revolutionary struggle for the world.

We were let into Oventic, one of the five Zapatista enclaves called *carocales* (which translates directly into “snail shells”) and a beating heart of Zapatista territory. These caracoles are centers of political organizing, education and ideas. During the week I spent in Oventic, for the very first time in my life, I experienced freedom. There were schools that taught Spanish and the Mayan language of Bats’ik’op. There was a school for Zapatista children called the Escuelita Zapatista. The main road was dotted with various cooperatives and collectives. A leather goods and boot factory that is self managed by workers stood atop a hill overlooking the rest of Oventic. Every building and every surface, it seems, had been painted with vivid murals that evoked the beliefs, history and

aspirations, of Zapatismo. Murals of corn, masked Zapatistas, Che Guevera and Emiliano Zapata covered the fronts of buildings. Much to our delight, there was even one classroom with a large mural of Mexican revolutionary, anarchist and Wobbly Ricardo Flores Magón.

My partner and I spent the whole week with another student from Germany learning Spanish and a little Bats’ik’op. Life in Oventic was at a different pace. Every day we had language classes, discussions, watched Zapatista films, read, sang revolutionary songs in Spanish and Italian, and dreamed of the worlds we all wished to create. We even hiked up a mountain and got our hands dirty tilling some land. For the Zapatistas, land is intrinsically tied to liberty.

I also gained a much deeper understanding of Zapatismo, one that cannot be fully grasped from the written word. In short, the Zapatista core beliefs are as follows: “Lead by obeying; propose, don’t impose; represent, don’t replace; anti-power against power; convince, don’t defeat; everything for everyone, nothing for ourselves; construct, don’t destroy; and we want a world where many worlds fit.”

But the revolution is hardly over. I learned that week that Zapatismo has a place in the hearts, the organizing and the forging of new a society in every corner of the world. The inspiration my partner and I have gained from our Zapatismo experience is that it has propelled us to emphasize life-affirming possibilities and alternatives for social justice and peace through the social will to create.

We may not have all the answers, nor should we. Answers, the Zapatistas say, are born through struggle. It should be no surprise, then, that a saying of both the Zapatistas and the Spanish anarchists of the 1930s is, “We make the road by walking. We walk by asking questions.” It is through this process that we will find our way forward in creating a new world. The creation of this new world is a story forged by the Zapatistas and all others struggling for freedom.

And that story, as they say, will continue—little by little!

To read more stories about Brendan’s travels through Mexico and Cuba, please visit the Utica, N.Y.-based blog <http://www.loveandragemedia.wordpress.com>.

BEWARE OF COMPANY CONSCIOUSNESS

By x372712

We are constantly told by our employers that they appreciate all the hard work we do and sometimes they go out of their way to show us their appreciation. During one week, my bosses had many events in which they showed their appreciation of our services. I attended a breakfast with my division and food was served by the executive staff in my building. Are these tokens of appreciation sincere or are they just a facade? Looking back into the past will help remove the veil.

After World War II, unions had gained much strength and the federal government had imposed many regulations on big business. Much of this was due to the long and bloody struggle of the labor movement culminating in the reforms of former President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal. One indicator of union strength was when the president of the United Auto Workers, Walter P. Reuther, attempted to pry open the books of General Motors (GM) to tie wages and prices to profits, which cut into management’s control.

So what is a poor, little multinational corporation to do if they are losing absolute control? Spend vast amounts of money to win over the people’s hearts and minds, of course! In the

1950s, the corporate class launched an ideological re-conquest of the United States with the tentacles of their propaganda reaching into every facet of American life. Their goal was to erase from the minds of people the thought of bettering yourself from collective action and instead relying solely on your own gumption to “lift yourself up by your boot straps.”

Some of the many techniques used within the plant to woo workers over were: economic education about the glories of the free market, letters sent home from the CEO, softball leagues, birthday cards, foremen being instructed to have sympathetic ears, reading racks, employee magazines, suggestion boxes, aesthetic improvements in factories, profit-sharing plans and company picnics.

Some might suggest that these are a sincere showings of appreciation, but they would be mistaken. Consider the case of the 1952 elections. Before the election, the number of firms involved in economic education jumped from 20 percent to 44 percent, only to fall back to 20 percent after a Republican victory. Why did this occur? As an Opinion Research Corporation vice president said, “The Republican victory in the national elections has removed the need for explaining so thoroughly the basis of the enterprise system and

the threats to its continuation.”

These techniques were as successful as they were hypocritical. A more conservative business-friendly climate was created that undermined the labor movement. During one strike, the personnel director found that over 60 percent of the strikebreakers were involved in company activities.

Now let me ask you this: Does your employer REALLY appreciate you when they outsource your jobs? Does the little bit of ice cream or pizza make up for the fact that positions are not being filled and the slack is being taken up by the remaining employees? My educated guess is that management wants you to be starry-eyed, thinking that they love you, as they violate your contract. They want you to feel that you no longer need the union, as management will take care of you. Maybe even one day they can smash your union so they can get away with anything they want.

Don’t let them, brothers and sisters! Educate your co-workers! Don’t forget that everything we won was not given to us on a silver platter. It was won by us joining together with our brothers and sisters in a union and demanding that we are compensated properly for our worth.

“Patriot” Militias **Exploit** Rural Communities’ Crises

By x372712

Rural America was thrown into the spotlight this January, when an armed militia group occupied the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge near Burns, Ore. This group, led by militant anti-government protestor Ammon Bundy, claimed they were going to “get the logger back to logging, to get the rancher back to ranching, to get the miner back to mining, the farmer back to farming” in Harney County, where 21.1 percent of residents live in poverty. The militia tried to present itself as a friend of hardworking, rural people. We aren’t fooled. This militia movement is the latest wave of a far-right, anti-labor movement that’s been building itself by exploiting crises and hardship in our communities for decades.

These “patriot” militias first came into the spotlight during the Farm Crisis in the 1980s. Overproduction—supply outstripping demand, leading to low prices and profit—had been a problem in American agriculture for decades. Since the Great Depression, a system of price insurance, government purchase of surplus, and paying farmers to leave some land fallow had kept prices stable despite growing yields. That changed in the 1970s, when the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) cut those programs, switched to direct subsidies, and told farmers to “Get Big, or Get Out!” The USDA assured farmers that overseas demand would keep prices high. It did for a while, and farmers bought more tractors and took more loans to “get big.” Then in the 1980s, overseas demand dropped, prices fell, and interest rates rose. Tens of thousands of farms went out of business or onto life support with off-the-farm jobs. When the crisis hit, Posse Comitatus, a militia founded in 1969 by white supremacist preachers and former “Silver Shirt” fascists, capitalized on it. The group subscribed to a combination of anti-tax and small-government, county-sovereignty ideas, and “Christian identity” theology which stated that white people were the true Israelite of the Bible. They spread

throughout rural towns by claiming that the crisis was a Jewish, socialist conspiracy to control global food supplies. They continued growing until groups like the National Farmers Union and the American Agriculture Movement gained support by focusing on the actual causes of the crisis, stopping the right from monopolizing the conversation.

The militias might have faded into obscurity if not for the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), anxiety over the Rodney King riots, and the standoffs at Ruby Ridge, Idaho and Waco, Texas. Once again, the militias capitalized on frustration and fear in rural communities, spreading a narrative of a socialist, globalist “New World Order” in the making. No longer as openly white supremacist as Posse Comitatus, the new wave hid its racial politics with dog whistle phrases and a focus on fighting “socialism.” Recruitment soared, and by 1996 there was a militia group in every state. The Waco and Ruby Ridge standoffs also sparked retaliatory attacks, including the Oklahoma City bombing. In response, the federal government adopted a policy of de-escalation. This has allowed militias to successfully get the federal government to stand down in confrontations, rather than risk another Waco. Using this tactic, the movement reached a high point in the late 1990s before slowly declining through the 2000s.

Since the Great Recession, a new wave of “patriot” militias has grown. This third wave is centered around the Three Percenters and the Oath Keepers, both founded in 2008. The two groups work closely, though the Three Percenters are more loosely organized and have a more open recruitment policy. The Oath Keepers accept only veterans and former law enforcement. Even more than the 1990s wave, they move away from open white supremacy and wrap themselves in the language of “patriotism.” Their actions, however, have included intimidating Muslims and immigrants, and confronting Black Lives Matter protesters.

They seem to have, since the standoff in 2014 at Cliven Bundy’s ranch over grazing rights, found their economic angle—blaming rural problems on land policy and regulation. In 2015, the movement had two separate standoffs in the Northwest to “defend” mines from regulators. Harney County must have seemed like a good target. In addition to the Hammond arson case, the county has been economically hard-hit by the mechanization and deforestation of the timber industry, which once provided 31 percent of the county’s jobs and now provides just six jobs total. Ammon Bundy likely expected, too optimistically on his part, that the people of Harney County would rally to his side. So, in early January, the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon found itself the latest site of an occupation aimed at opening more federal land to extractive industry.

For Wobblies, the answer to the Bundy standoff isn’t to cheer a crackdown against the militias. Those crackdowns have only driven recruitment and violence from the right in the past. We also know that repressive powers given to the state for any reason frequently are turned against working-class movements. Instead, the IWW response to the militia movement should be to understand the problems facing rural communities, and organize our class around real solutions. Most “progressive” politicians and large parts of the left have written off the countryside as a poor source of votes or easy recruits. Wobblies know that the bonds of industry connect us across racial, religious and county lines. We know that solidarity unionism and direct action can be just as effective in Snohomish as in Seattle, and that realizing our power as workers standing together is our strongest antidote to racial hatred and bigots. We know that the rural working class has a long and radical history of labor struggle that can be renewed and strengthened. We need to take rural organizing seriously, because if we don’t, then the Bundys of the world are more than willing to.

Spread your message of solidarity this May Day

The deadline for ads and announcements to be featured in the annual “May Day” issue of the *Industrial Worker* is **Friday, April 1, 2016**. This is the place to share your May Day greetings with the rest of the world!

Send all questions & submissions to iw@iww.org.

Donations for the following ad sizes will be requested:

- 1/8 page: \$20 (full color); \$12 (red &/or black & white)
- 1/4 page: \$45 (full color); \$25 (red &/or black & white)
- 1/2 page: \$90 (full color); \$60 (red &/or black & white)
- full page: \$180 (full color); \$120 (red &/or black & white)



In China, labor unrest and crackdowns on the rise

By John Kalwaic

Labor unrest and crackdowns in China have hit a peak. Strikes were at an all-time high, reaching a whopping 301 protests in November 2015. According to the China Labour Bulletin, “a major focus of worker unrest was in the traditional manufacturing centre of Guangdong, which saw a record 56 strikes last month, more than double the number in any other province.”

In late 2015, labor right activists were detained in China’s southern city of Guangzhou as part of a larger crackdown on organized labor in China. According to *The Nation*, the detainees include Panyu Dagongzu Service Center staffers Zeng Feiyang and Zhu Xiaomei; former Dagongzu staffers Tang Jian and Meng Han; Peng Jiayong of the Panyu-based Laborer Mutual Aid Group; He Xiaobo, director of Foshan Nanfeiyan Social Work Services Organization; and Deng Xiaoming of the Haige Workers Center. “The activists are reportedly being detained on grounds of ‘endangering national security,’ according to Amnesty International,” wrote *The Nation*. The arrest of these activists has brought an international campaign to support them.

Additionally, police opened fire on taxi drivers on Dec. 10, 2015. The drivers were protesting unlicensed cabs being used in the province of Shangdong. One taxi driver, a 43-year-old woman



Workers strike at a paper products factory in Shenzhen—just one of hundreds of protests in November 2015.

Photo: clb.org.hk

surnamed Yang, was shot three times in her leg. According to “Radio Free Asia,” “unconfirmed reports said the police had explained the gunshots as a ‘misfire.’”

Walmart sites experienced labor unrest as well. A small group of Walmart workers have taken issue with the fact that the company has hijacked the state-run labor union, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU). The Walmart workers want to be able to elect their own delegates rather than the company board selecting the delegates.

On Dec. 24, 2015, a man claiming he was owed 20 days’ worth of pay working as a plumber staged a protest by climbing to the top of a crane at the Ho Man Tin construction site in Hong Kong; police and firefighters were called to the scene. Firefighters gave the man some water and eventually convinced him to come down. The man has reportedly reached a settlement with the company.

With files from “China Labour Bulletin,” Financial Post, The Nation, <http://hongkong.coconuts.co>, and <http://www.rfa.org>.

2016 ushers in a new era of INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY



By the IWW International Solidarity Commission (ISC)

The incoming IWW International Solidarity Commission (ISC) would like to thank Florian H., Yusuf C. and Jefferson P. for the great work in 2015. The new ISC website is up and running at <http://iww.international>.

We have nominated Fellow Worker Anders M. as our new chair and we plan to continue the work begun by our predecessors. We plan to continue to maintain newsletters with our sister organizations, prioritize direct contact with international organizations by facilitating

direct contact through branch liaisons to the ISC, continue translating IWW literature into many other language groupings of workers and to develop assessment stamps to aid other labor organizations. We are also looking to translate IWW materials that may be of future use to organizing Middle Eastern refugees in their own languages.

International solidarity is part of the fabric of our union and there are numerous ways to get involved. For example, members of the Iranian Teachers’ Trade Association have been suffering from extreme repression in recent months and

years, with members imprisoned for union activity. Call or mail your local Iranian Embassy with letters of support from educational and labor organizations, demanding an end to suppression of workers’ rights: Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran: 1250 23rd Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, United States. You may also write to: 16 Princes Gate, London, SW7 1PT, United Kingdom.

For the One Big Union!
Abraham C., Joey N., Anders M.
International Solidarity Commission
Industrial Workers of the World



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