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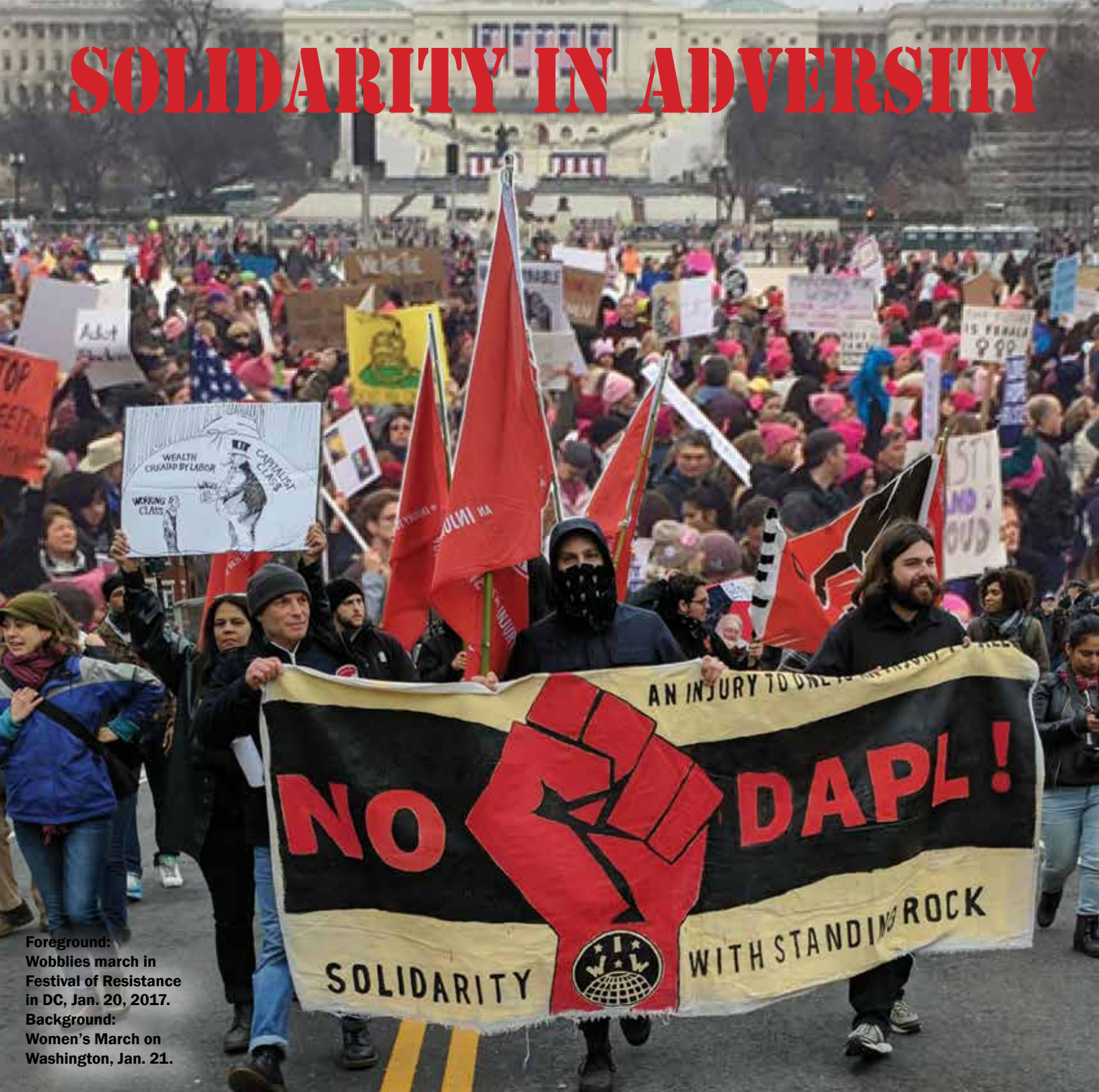
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Industrial Worker

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SOLIDARITY IN ADVERSITY



Foreground:
Wobblies march in
Festival of Resistance
in DC, Jan. 20, 2017.
Background:
Women's March on
Washington, Jan. 21.

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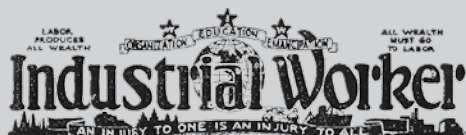
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The Voice of Revolutionary Industrial Unionism

Official newspaper of the
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OF THE WORLD

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JEWISH FACES IN THE

By Bennett Muraskin

The most radical and militant union in American history is the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), colloquially known as the Wobblies. Its most active years were from 1905 to 1919, or at best until the mid-1920 when it led its last major struggles of that era—a maritime workers' strike in California and a miners' strike in Colorado. Fierce government repression during and after World War I, along with vigilante violence and internal divisions, dealt the IWW blows from which it has never completely recovered. The mass industrial union movement during the New Deal passed it by. Yet, the IWW still exists and is experiencing resurgence today.

Its philosophy can be described as anarcho-syndicalist. Workers, organized into one big industrial union, would seize the means of production through a general strike and run the economy on a cooperative basis. No government would be necessary.

The IWW made absolutely no distinctions among workers on racial, ethnic, or religious lines, welcoming whites, blacks, Mexicans, native-born, and immigrants, including the Chinese, who were shunned, if not despised, by the mainstream American Federation of Labor and even mistrusted by the Socialist Party. The IWW published its literature in a multitude of foreign languages, including Yiddish.

A remarkable IWW poster, evidently from 1921, warns workers against the Ku Klux Klan on the grounds that it is “anti-Jew, anti-Negro, anti-Catholic, anti-foreigner, and anti-labor,” leaving no doubt where the IWW stood on the plagues of anti-Semitism, racism, religious bigotry, and xenophobia.

The IWW did not have many Jewish members because it did most of its organizing among workers in heavy industry or out West, among miners, agricultural workers, maritime workers, longshoreman, and lumberjacks. Many of these were itinerant laborers. These were not occupations that attracted Jews. Of the few Jews living out West, most tended to be peddlers, merchants, and shopkeepers. The

workers among them were employed mainly in the garment industry or in other skilled trades. These were sedentary occupations.

Yet one of the known twelve victims of the 1916 Everett Massacre in Everett, Washington, was a Jew. Nineteen-year-old Abraham Rabinowitz joined hundreds of Wobblies who hired a boat in Seattle to transport them to Everett, where they planned to launch a “free speech fight” demanding the right to speak on street corners in support of labor organizing. They were met with police gunfire as the boat attempted to dock. Some were shot, others drowned. The IWW press eulogized Rabinowitz as one who was “born of a race without a flag, a race oppressed by the intolerance and superstition of the ages, and died fighting for the brotherhood of man.”

The IWW's headquarters was in Chicago. Although it did not represent many workers there, it had a considerable presence among hoboes, who were essentially migrant laborers. During the warmer weather, they would hop freight trains to take them to jobs further West, returning to Chicago over the winter, where there were many flop houses and soup kitchens.

Beginning in 1908, it was there that Dr. Ben Reitman found housing for hoboes and organized a Hobo College, featuring lectures and other educational programs, in which hoboes themselves participated. Reitman had hoboed around as a teenager and was so enamored of their way of life that in his later years he wrote a work of fiction that purported to be the memoirs of a female hobo, *Sister of the Road: The Autobiography of Boxcar Bertha as told to Dr. Ben Reitman* (1937). In it, the fictional Bertha describes her encounters with a variety of types, including Wobbly organizers.

Reitman was best known as the manager and lover of anarchist Emma Goldman. His brief, but intense involvement with the IWW occurred in San Diego in 1912, when he and Goldman arrived to lend their support to an earlier “free speech fight.” A mob of vigilantes dragged him from his hotel



Ben Reitman

room and forced him into a car. He was brutally tortured and dumped 20 miles out of town in his underwear. None of his attackers was charged with a crime.

Reitman also lectured on sexual health and was a strong advocate of birth control. He went into Chicago's brothels to treat prostitutes for venereal disease and perform abortions. His advocacy of birth control landed him in jail.

Only in the IWW's forays into the East, most notably the famous 1912 Lawrence, Mass., textile workers' strike and the 1913 Paterson, NJ, silk workers' strikes, was there significant Jewish participation. Hannah Silverman, a 17-year-old Paterson mill worker, became an important strike leader in the Paterson struggle.

Mathilda Robbins, born Tatiana Rabinowitz, led a strike of textile workers in Little Falls, NY, in 1912. She was one of two paid IWW female organizers. During the 1920s, she was active in the IWW Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee. She wrote a column and contributed poetry to the IWW press

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 **Thursday, Mar. 30, 2017**. This is the place to share your May Day greetings with the rest of the world!

Send all your questions and 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)



Graphic: wikimedia.org

Industrial Workers of the World

and, in later years, became a social worker in Los Angeles. ...

Perhaps the best-known Jewish Wobbly was Frank Tannenbaum. He organized unemployed workers in New York City to demand food and shelter from churches during the bitter cold winter of 1913–14. He was falsely accused of incitement to riot and served a year in a notorious city prison, where he organized a strike of inmates against harsh conditions. After World War I, Tannenbaum dropped out of the labor movement to pursue a higher education. He earned a PhD from Columbia University and became a scholar specializing in race relations, criminology, and Latin American history.

Irving Abrams joined the IWW in Rochester NY as a teenager, where he met Emma Gold-



Mathilda Robbins, as she was being arrested in 1910.

man. Moving to Chicago, he found work in the garment industry, where he participated in a general strike led by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers in 1915, in which he was arrested 39 times. In 1920, he became an attorney specializing in civil liberties cases. He is best known for his role in the association that preserved the monument in a Chicago cemetery honoring the Haymarket martyrs and provided support to their families, duties he diligently carried out until 1971. His Jewish affiliations included the Workmen's Circle, the Jewish Labor Committee, and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS). Abrams wrote a memoir, *Haymarket*

Heritage (1989).

Abrams was the product of an improbable marriage—both his parents were converts to Judaism who met in Europe, before immigrating to the US. Ironically he may have been the most Jewish of Jewish Wobblies.

Meyer Friedkin was one of the few Wobblies said to have known songwriter/poet Joe Hill, who was executed for murder in Utah in 1915 on false charges. Friedkin was convicted of conspiracy in 1918 in the mass trials targeting the IWW and sentenced to 10 years in prison. There was even a half-Jewish, half-Indian Wobbly organizer known only as “Lone Wolf” who was involved in the Wheatland farm workers strike in California in 1913, in which three people were shot dead, and was active in Chicago during the 1920s.

The best-known Wobbly of all (except for Joe Hill), William D. (Big Bill) Haywood, had a Jewish lover known as B. Shotac. The daughter of Russian immigrants, she was employed as a public school teacher. He stayed in her apartment when he visited New York City and it was there that the pageant to publicize the Paterson silk strike of 1913 was conceived by Mabel Dodge and John Reed. Haywood died in the Soviet Union in 1928, where he had fled to escape government prosecution. ...

If the quintessential Wobbly was the hobo—the wandering male manual worker—then it is hardly surprising that in the big picture, there were relatively few Jews among them. Historically, Jews are an urban people. Culturally, Jewish tradition stresses the importance of family life. Occupationally, Jewish workers gravitated to skilled trades. Yet American xenophobes and anti-Semites did not see it this way. Because Jewish immigrants to the US were prominent in the labor movement and the left, their Christian detractors, influenced by the negative stereotype of the “wandering Jews” conflated them with the most hated and dangerous radical organizations—the IWW. As Philip Webb wrote in his book *Homeless Lives in American Cities; Interrogating Myth and Locating Community* (2014), “... the image of the immigrant Jewish radical is superimposed onto that of the native migratory hobo to combine threats to economic life and the bourgeois family in an anti-Semitic representation. ... The Russian Jew thus becomes an easy symbol for the radical threat of homelessness.” To the WASP elite and a portion of the American middle class, “Russian Jews became the poster child for all radicals.” If evidence was required, the links between Emma Goldman and Ben Reitman—two demonized Jewish radicals—and IWW was more than enough.

After the IWW's decline as a labor union, it evolved into advocacy for revolutionary change. Sam Dolgoff embodied this evolution. Born in 1902, he was a painter by trade, but spend part of his youth as a hobo. During the Depression, he served the Wobbly cause as a soapbox orator and organizer in NYC. He was a dissident in the AFL Painters Union. During the Spanish Civil War, he raised money for the Spanish anarchists. In 1954, he and his wife Esther formed the Libertarian League, an organization that attracted a Wobbly following. During the 1960s he spoke up for Cuban labor activists imprisoned by Castro. He also wrote books on anarchism. In the last decades of his life, Dolgoff became a living link between the old libertarian left and the New Left, sharing his memories and opinions with SDSers and other young radicals, as a speaker at college campuses. He died a rebel in 1990.

The influence of the IWW on the counter culture of the 1960s and '70s was felt in The Living Theater, an avant-garde troupe of actors led by two Jewish anarchists and Wobblies, Julian Beck and Judith Malina. The Living Theater itself became an IWW affiliate and raised money for the organization by holding a benefit performance.

Anarchist, internationalist, and pacifist Fredy Perlman was among a group of left libertarians who established a printing cooperative in Detroit in 1970 that published *Black and Red* magazine and other like-minded literature. The co-op became an IWW local. Perlman designed its union label, which called for the abolition of the wage system and the state and “all power to the workers.”

Over 2004–2005, the IWW made history by organizing baristas at the Starbucks retail chain across the US. The campaign's co-founder was Daniel Gross, an attorney who co-authored with Staughton Lynd *Labor Law For The Rank & Filer* (2008) and was a member of the National Lawyers Guild Labor and Employment Committee. He is currently working with Brandworkers, organizing retail and food service employees in New York.

Based on primary research, Franklin Rosemont reports that “in recent years an impressive number of labor activists, radical environmentalists, socialists, anarchists, feminists, pacifists, poets, puppeteers, novelists, artists, musicians, cartoonists, and historians have concluded ... that of all revolutionary and labor organizations in US history, the IWW is the single most important inspiration and model—or at least one of the top two or three—for a new revolutionary movement in our time.” **IW**

Solidarity outlasts 'right to work' in Indiana shipyard

By Alexandra Bradbury
Labor Notes, Feb. 02, 2017

Plenty of union officers are justifiably worried about how many members will quit their unions if Congress or the Supreme Court imposes "right to work" conditions on the whole country.

But when right to work hit Indiana in 2012, it didn't have much impact at the Jeffboat shipyard in Jeffersonville. "I believe we only have one person that's dropped out," said Teamsters Local 89 Business Agent Jeff Cooper. That's one out of 700.

The Jeffboat story might reassure you—because their secrets to maintaining membership aren't expensive or complicated. The union has a deep bench of stewards who seek out and address workplace problems. Because members strike when necessary, they've won good wages and health insurance that make the value of the union contract self-evident. And they're systematic about asking new hires to join.

The shipyard stretches a mile and a half along a riverfront. It's a tough place to work—hot in the summer, cold in the winter, wet when it rains. Much of the work is done in confined spaces.

And it's dangerous. Chief Steward Ronnie Waiz, nearing retirement after 48 years on the job, can rattle off the exact date and time of each workplace fatality. Two men fell to their deaths in 2010; one was crushed in 2011.

"They're very painful even to talk about," he said. "I feel responsible for every employee in this yard."

Especially since those tragedies, safety is a main union focus. Local 89's 33 stewards join area safety meetings and walk around to "talk it up," Waiz says: "They ask people if they have problems, and try to solve their problems. If they can't get them fixed with their supervisor, it moves to the next level. If they can't work it out, it goes to me."

SIGN THEM UP

Local 89 has negotiated the right to spend 30-45 minutes orienting all new hires—with the boss out of the room. It's usually Waiz who makes the presentation.

"Ninety percent of them are first-time union people," he says. So he starts from square one, explaining how the contract works, how much dues are, who will be your steward, and what you get out of union membership. He asks each one to sign a card and authorize dues checkoff.

"If you don't join the union, I still have to represent you," he tells new hires, "but it would be to your benefit to join, because [otherwise] you don't get to vote on contracts, you don't get to enter the union hall. I think it's the best thing for you and your family."

During strikes, Jeffboat's attorneys have encouraged a handful of members to drop out and cross the picket lines. But Waiz, who never gives up on his co-workers, has won them back afterwards.

One who crossed in 2010 did it because his wife was pregnant and needed the insurance. "I said, 'You should have come to me. I could have helped you get insurance,'" Waiz said. "He said, 'I didn't think of that.' But he has since come in, and he is a strong union member."

YOU'VE GOT TO FIGHT

Several strikes, including a wild-cat, have forced Jeffboat to respect workers' power. In 2006 the company tried to decertify the union.

But after that failed, Jeffboat "decided they wanted to get along," Cooper said. The parties negotiated a contract in 2007 with a big pay increase. On day-to-day matters, management got easier to deal with.

Still, workers went on strike again in 2010. Jeffboat wanted to raise their share of health care costs from 10 percent to 20. After a five-week strike, "they ended up coming to us and saying, 'Okay, fine, you're right.



Photo courtesy of Teamsters Local 89

"We'll give it to you," Waiz said. Members still pay 10 percent. "We've got the best insurance in southern Indiana for a company our size," Waiz said. "At Ford Motor and GE, they wish they had ours." "Sometimes you've got to stand up and fight for what you think's best." That's what makes workers loyal to their union.

For more on building a strong union in a right-to-work environment, see *Five Steps to Maintain Unity and Membership Under Right to Work* at <http://www.labornotes.org/2017/02/five-steps-maintain-unity-and-membership-under-right-work>. For help getting your union prepared, email training@labor-notes.org or call 718-284-4144. **IW**



Hello, Fellow Workers,

I'm the recently elected editor of the *Industrial Worker*, Roberta McNair, stepping into the well-worn but elegant slippers of our long-time editor, Diane Krauthamer, who now serves on the GEB.

When I heard that the *IW* editor's job was opening up, I was interested in applying. I didn't know and was pretty surprised to learn that the *IW* Editor's job is an office in the IWW, and I had to run for it. In an election.

That was a new one for me. I'd never run for an office of any kind before. I like committees more than leaders. But as I learned about the office, I realized that being editor of the *IW* is a responsibility to everyone in the union. And so I ran. And here I am.

In spite of some tech difficulties I've encountered while putting my maiden issue together (yes, it's late), it's been a wonderful learning process. No longer must I feel guilty about wandering through the Internet following links when I ought to be doing something "constructive." This is constructive.

I'm tasked with bringing you opinions, information, and (I hope) inspiration through this venerable publication. We have a struggle ahead with what can only be increasing adversity. Let's hold onto what's right in solidarity.

So, send in comments, short essays, or whathaveyou to *Readers' Soapbox* at [iw \[at\] iww.org](mailto:iw[at]iww.org).

Solidly,
X362775

TOP N.C. STATE SENATOR SETTLES WAGE THEFT CLAIMS WITH GUEST WORKERS



Tobacco crop “guest workers” at Jackson Farming Company in Autryville, N.C.

By Paul Blest

Payday Report, Jan. 30, 2017

North Carolina State Senator Brent Jackson (R-Sampson), the powerful co-chairman of the state Senate Appropriations Committee, has settled out of court with seven former guestworkers at his farm in Autryville, N.C. to the tune of just under \$100,000.

The settlement, which was approved by U.S. District Court Judge James Dever on January 20, allocates \$50,000 to the seven named plaintiffs, \$40,000 to cover legal expenses, and another \$6,950 to be paid into a class action fund for former farmworkers who “file a valid claim” against the farm. Those non-named workers have four months to file such a claim.

As part of the settlement, the seven workers named acknowledged they are “ineligible for hire” at the farm due to “irreconcilable differences” with the Jacksons.

The workers, all of whom came to North Carolina from Mexico through the H-2A guest worker visa program, alleged wage theft by the Jackson Farming Company,

of which Jackson is the president and his son Rodney is a senior vice president. “We began to notice that [Rodney Jackson] and the supervisor would steal our wages by punching us out for anything they could—changing fields, waiting for equipment to come, or our water breaks,” Valentin Alvarado-Hernandez, one of the plaintiffs, wrote in a letter last year. “Little by little, this added up, and over the season, he stole thousands of dollars from our wages.”

After the initial lawsuit was filed in 2015, the workers said, an employee of the farm called them and threatened to blacklist them. None of the seven were brought back the next year, and the lawsuit was amended to include claims of retaliation.

“The allegations made against Sen. Brent Jackson are a reminder that farmworkers remain among the most exploited and vulnerable workers in our state,” North Carolina AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer MaryBe McMillan said in a statement. “Let the settlement of those claims also serve as a reminder that working in unions gives people the strength to challenge injustice in the workplace and to show that no boss, not even a powerful state senator, is above the law.”

Jackson’s Senate office hadn’t responded to a request for comment by press time.

This wasn’t the first time the

Jackson Farming Company had legal action brought against it. In 1998, a guestworker named J. Carmen Fuentes suffered a heatstroke, but never received medical attention and fell into a permanent vegetative state; the Jacksons were later ordered to pay for Fuentes’ care for the rest of his life. And in 2004, another former worker named Julio Cesar Guerrero said that after he filed an OSHA complaint against the farm for forcing workers to run after water on a moving truck with their mouths under a spigot, he was written up and then fired.

In November, a U.S. Department of Labor official said that after an eight-month investigation in 2015, the Jackson Farming Company was “found in violation of recordkeeping, disclosure, and wage statement provisions, as well as violations resulting from failure to pay the minimum prevailing wage under the H-2A regulations,” and the farm was ordered to pay a total of \$2,180 in back wages to twenty-one workers.

Jackson also recently came under fire after it was discovered that he applied for a \$925,000 grant to build a natural gas pipeline at his farm—through a program that he started as the primary sponsor of the bill that created it. Jackson claims that he was only trying to make sure the program worked.

“Because of my diligence in trying to figure out how the program worked, the program is working now the way it was intended to,” he told the *Raleigh News & Observer* earlier this month. The *N&O* estimated that the grant would have saved his farm \$70,000 a year.

Paul Blest is a journalist living in



North Carolina State Senator Brent Jackson, R, Duplin, Johnston, Sampson

Raleigh, North Carolina. He is a former staff writer at INDY Week and has written for New Republic, The Week, VICE, Jacobin, and Salon, among others.

Senior Labor Reporter’s Note: *Paul Blest is a terrific North Carolina-based labor reporter, who was recently let go by INDY Week. For the past several months, he has been covering the story of a group of guest workers taking on North Carolina State Senator Brent Jackson on charges of wage theft. However, he had to give up the story when he got let go.*

Payday was able to secure a small grant to pay him \$20 an hour to continue covering the story here. Unlike other publications on the left, which use the 19th-century system of piece rates to pay labor reporters below the minimum wage, Payday always insists on paying all non-owners \$20 an hour. IW



Stardust Family United: Ellen's Stardust Diner union campaign

By Marianne LeNabat

The IWW campaign at Ellen's Stardust Diner in New York City continues strong. Calling themselves Stardust Family United (SFU), workers went public with the IWW in August of last year. The union is composed of singing wait staff at the restaurant, although the goal is for all workers in the restaurant—cooks, hosts, and all support staff—to be included and protected.

The campaign has had several important successes. When management took away the “tip bucket” circulated among dinner patrons between songs, workers marched on the boss and got it back within hours. Workers also forced management to fix a broken and unstable piece of furniture, called a banquette, which staff have to stand on when performing (previously, a worker had fallen off, injuring an ankle). Servers also made management stop understaffing the restaurant.

Workers were dealt a massive initial blow when 16 union members were fired shortly after they went public. However, this in no way undermined support for the union, or the determination of union members. They simply started organizing new staff, while fighting for reinstatement of terminated staff with the National Labor Relations Board. That case, which was initiated in September, is still before the Board.

Workers who have been fired for organizing remain very active: organizing demos outside of the restaurant, leafleting the owner's other businesses, writing press releases, continuing to come to meetings, and so on. Meanwhile, the committee inside the restaurant continues to expand and take action.

One of the most promising aspects of the campaign is that it is constantly recruiting new members. This means befriending new hires, rather than seeing them as the enemy, even though they were hired to replace workers who were fired for organizing. Expanding the union in this way



Stardust Family United members of the wait staff perform inside Ellen's Stardust Diner

is especially impressive, because the boss tries to turn the new hires against the union, and against veteran staff, with a mixture of misinformation and special favors.

In December, Stardust Family United had two important wins. Winter is cough and cold season, and this is especially hard on servers who have to sing for eight or more hours at a time. The union put throat lozenges at server stations in the restaurant—plastered with union stickers. When the lozenges ran out, management started refilling them.

The second win happened on New Year's Eve. Servers had been told to learn two new songs, to perform that night. This would have involved taking several hours out of their own busy schedules—unpaid—during the holiday season. The staff scheduled to work that night discussed amongst themselves how to respond. They took a vote and decided not to learn the new material. They informed management of this decision 24 hours prior to their shift. Within just two hours, management conceded that they did not have to learn the new material and that no one would be disciplined for not performing it. Servers are no longer being asked to learn new material on their own time.

A few weeks later, however, the campaign suffered a shock when fourteen more members were fired in a single day, many by text message. Owner Ken Sturm again tried to defeat the union through illegal terminations.

He did not succeed. The following Friday, workers organized a ULP strike and walked

out of the restaurant en masse right before the dinner rush. Their fired coworkers joined them outside, where they celebrated with glitter and song. Management refused to close the restaurant that evening, trying to keep operating with a few supervisors. It didn't matter: Staff succeeded in talking nearly every customer out of going inside. The action was a resounding success and empowered both former and current workers.

With the help of a lawyer, Stardust Family United has also now filed a wage theft lawsuit against the employer. Because wage theft practices were so rampant in the restaurant, the lawsuit could be worth a significant amount of money.

Despite all of the challenges it has faced, the Stardust campaign continues to win, especially when action is taken in the restaurant. It's worth noting that the owner hired a powerful, expensive, and high-profile law firm, and he broke the law multiple times to get rid of the union. But SFU continues to make gains and expand the committee, and they do so by using Wobbly principles and tactics: having one-on-ones with coworkers, choosing grievances and coordinating actions democratically, asking coworkers to take on tasks, asking workers to join the IWW, and turning every worker into a leader.

Stardust Family United has shown that Wobbly tactics really do work. While legal cases pend or media coverage fizzles, their direct actions have been immediately successful. It's a campaign that has involved very hard and dedicated work on the part of these members, and it's one that we can all be proud of. **IWW**



Why this ‘inconvenienced’ SEPTA rider totally supports the strike

By Will Bunch, *Philadelphia Daily News*, Nov. 3, 2016

Nobody has to tell me that the SEPTA [Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority] strike, now nearing the end of its second day, is a pain. Like a lot of folks reading this, I’m living it. And it’s definitely a pain in my wallet, especially after—for no other reason than my brain being on autopilot—I bought my usual weekly pass on a trip to the supermarket this weekend, a week of rides that I only used for one day. Add that wasted \$20 or so to the extra \$15 or more I’m shelling out every day now for gas and Center City parking. My new strikebound car commute is somewhat longer, a lot more annoying, and (to the extent my readers care about this) is even adding to global warming.

But I can’t complain. Unlike a lot of middle-class folks struggling to get to work through hastily arranged car pools, church vans, or old-fashioned shoe leather, I have a car. OK, it’s a 2005 Toyota Corolla with more than 198,000 miles and a gigantic dent that ought to have a sign, “College Tuition Payer on Board.” But like its driver, it does have barely functional forward mobility. And I’m also “lucky” to work the night shift—so I’m missing the massive hellscape of the SEPTA-strike morning rush.

But here’s the bigger issue. I don’t consider myself “inconvenienced.” That’s because despite losing some money and some time, I support the Transport Workers Union Local 234 and its strike, 100 percent. That doesn’t mean I don’t want the walk-out to end ASAP; everybody—especially the strikers walking the picket line—wants that. I just want to see that end come by largely meeting the demands of nearly 5,000 hard-working Philadelphians—in the form of a fair pension deal and humanizing working conditions. That’s because 35 years of setbacks for working people in this country—in the form of stagnant pay, stolen pensions and ever eroding health coverage—is a much greater “inconvenience” for me, and likely for you, than sitting at a traffic light on Market Street for 5

or 15 extra minutes.

I’ve been brooding on this for several weeks, even before TWU members walked off the job at midnight on Monday. It started on the day when the union members first voted to authorize the walkout and the report I heard on KYW made no mention of the workers’ grievances; instead, it switched immediately to a SEPTA terminal where commuters did nothing but vent their frustration at how inconvenienced—that word again!—they would be. That’s pretty much how our increasingly infrequent labor walkouts have been treated over the last three decades, as mysterious and frustrating “acts of nature” that wreak havoc, just like a tornado or a tropical storm or tornado. Rarely is there much mention of the actual labor issues, let alone the bigger picture of an American economy where a weakened working class has continually lost ground to overpaid corporate executives and other elites.

Around this time, professors at Pennsylvania’s 14 state universities went on strike. Again, there was lot of shock and dismay. “Why would they do that?” asked one political pundit that I follow—someone who’s based in Pittsburgh, a city that saw blue-collar misery rise as its union clout declined. In that case, the faculty union “did that” because—while willing to make significant concessions on pay and some benefits because of shrinking state aid—they were determined to block changes that would have eroded academic quality and the value of what they do in the classroom. And by taking the bold move of striking for three days, those professors got the concessions they wanted.

It didn’t hurt, in that case, that students and other unions backed the faculty demands. Indeed, worker (and student solidarity) can make a huge difference. Look at what just happened up at Harvard, where cafeteria workers struck for three weeks until a wealthy university in the heart of one of America’s most expensive cities finally acknowledged the pay and health care demands of



Transit workers wear strike signs as they picket on a cold night.

its lowest-wage workers. There, too, solidarity—big rallies by students, faculty and alumni—tipped the scale.

Such stories are rare, though. Since the 1980s, business owners and their popular mouthpieces in talk radio and other conservative media have sought to make pariahs out of the dwindling labor movement, ginning up anger against working folks who for the most part are just fighting to hang onto a standard of living and some respect in the workplace.

Their efforts have successfully blinded people to one of the most important facts of the last quarter-century: the direct link between the declining power of organized labor and the slow destruction of the middle class in America. Several studies have shown there’s a powerful correlation between the steep decline in union membership in America since the late 1970s—especially among men without a college degree—and the surge in income inequality. Simply put, reduced union clout makes it easier for companies to award a bigger share of the pie to top executives and shareholders, and a smaller slice to the workers.

SEPTA may be a public agency, but the issues faced by workers there are familiar to all. There is the matter of pension fairness, with rank-and-file workers seeing a cap on their benefits that managers don’t have. Then there are basic issues of dignity in the workplace. SEPTA drivers want work rules that would make it easier to go to the bathroom between runs (crazy, I know) and

would lead to less over-fatigued workers driving trains. This SEPTA passenger prefers one week of strike “inconvenience” to 52 weeks of worrying that my driver will plow into 69th Street sound asleep at the wheel.

But what matters the most (OK, not more than avoiding a fiery death caused by a sleeping driver, but a lot ...) is the bigger picture. Pension benefits have been eroding, or disappearing, across the board—for union workers, for government workers, for all sorts of workers. The American middle class just endured a remarkable 15 years without a pay raise. When a big employer like SEPTA gets away with pension unfairness or inadequate work rules, that makes it so much easier for my employer to come along and demand the same concession. Or your employer—regardless of whether or not you even belong to a union. So this isn’t just the TWU’s struggle. It’s our struggle.

That’s why I don’t consider the hassle of my trainless commute an inconvenience at all. I consider it a slog of solidarity—something I can gladly put up with for the right result. True, I’m really looking forward to the day when I can again park my car, put on my headphones, punch in “1969 Hits” on Pandora, and read my angry Twitter mentions from right-wing “eggs” while I whip high above West Philly. But it will be even better when my driver has a clear head and an empty bladder.

[Editor’s note: The TWU strike ended in time to take riders to the polls on Nov. 8, 2016.] **IW**

Unions facing the Trump era

By Jonathan Rosenblum
Jan. 3, 2017, *Tikkun*

Beginning in 1979 in Seattle, WA, Jim Levitt expertly fabricated custom aircraft parts and tools, helping make the Boeing Company one of the most successful businesses in the world. But in 2013, corporate executives issued a threat: They demanded that Levitt and his fellow machinists surrender their pensions, and that Washington State political leaders hand over a record \$8.7 billion in tax benefits. In exchange the company promised to keep production jobs in state. The Democratic governor of Washington, along with virtually the entire political establishment, caved in to the blackmail. So did Levitt's international union leadership—they had bargained the deal secretly with the company. The capitulation cost 32,000 Boeing workers their pensions.

"We've lost collective bargaining, for all intents and purposes," Levitt observed in the wake of the corporate blackmail. ...

What's barely given any attention in the mainstream media is the role that decades of destruction of union power played in the 2016 election debacle. But it's no mystery to Levitt, his fellow Boeing workers, and millions of other workers from all walks of life who've justifiably grown cynical about a political establishment that repeatedly has failed them over the years.

Today, overall union membership is at its lowest point in more than 70 years. In the private sector, a paltry 1 in 15 workers holds a union card.

Now it will get worse: Public sector unions are bracing for the inevitable Supreme Court decision allowing "freeloading"—requiring unions to let workers avoid paying any dues while still receiving full union representation and protection. The incoming Congress promises to be hostile to worker organizations, eager to do on a national scale what Gov. Scott Walker has done to Wisconsin unions.

... [P]ast and present union leaders—like the top Machinist Union leadership in 2013—contributed to our current circumstances. The unraveling didn't just happen suddenly. Over the last several decades, most leaders failed to lead in a bold, visionary direction to inspire millions to build power through collective organizing and action. Instead they clung to outdated assumptions about labor-management relations and remained stubbornly tethered to a political duopoly that has bestowed on us outsourced and exported jobs, stagnant wages, precarious employment schemes, terminated pension plans, rising health care costs, and an eviscerated social safety net. Most unions focused inward, instead of reaching out. Leaders thought their compromises were protecting good jobs, when in fact they were emboldening hostile corporate adversaries.

Today, as union members and leaders, we find ourselves in a dead-end alley, surrounded by thugs brandishing crowbars and long knives. But we didn't just get chased into the corner; too many



Post-election protest at Union Square, NYC

unions went here willingly.

To the extent that we recognize how we got here, we can begin to fight our way out of this corner. But it will be a tough fight. It will require us to reimagine the nature and role of unions, to discard failed strategies and assumptions, and to embrace new, deep labor-community-faith alliances.

Go back to the end of World War II: Union membership soared during the war, reaching a third of all workers. In the core of the nation's economy, the manufacturing sector, fully 69 percent of production workers were covered by union agreements. Militant strikes during and right after the war pushed demands for a greater share of the economic pie along with social demands. In 1946 alone, 4.6 million workers went on strike—about one in every 20 in the paid US workforce.

But rather than build on that nascent power, most union leaders determined to make peace with political and business elites, believing—in correctly—that the tripartite domestic détente of World War II was still alive. Even before Senator Joe McCarthy's witch-hunts, unions started purging communists and other suspected radicals from their ranks, seeking to demonstrate their loyalty to government and business.

The leadership of the labor federation that emerged in the 1950s, the AFL-CIO, steered away from organizing more workers. Federation president George Meany famously declared, "I used to worry about the size of the membership. I stopped worrying because to me it doesn't make any difference. The organized fellow is the only fellow that counts." Most union leaders focused on securing economic gains for their members, tamping down militant insurgency in the ranks and pledging allegiance to the capitalist economic system in exchange for collective bargaining agreements.

The bargaining system has worked splen-

didly—at least for those fortunate to be covered by a union contract. By the new millennium, the average union member could expect to make 25 percent more than a worker not covered by a union contract.

But flip side of the "union difference" touted proudly by so many was that it presented a huge incentive for corporate and political elites to attack union power, motivating them to accelerate union-busting, outsourcing, contracting out, and passing laws to hamstring unions.

Most unions, in turn, focused defensively on protecting what they had, failing to appreciate that the antidote to the business offensive required organizing more workers into union ranks and fighting to raise benefits for all, not just some. Despite organizing initiatives by a few unions in recent years, the overall percentage of union members in the workforce has plunged from a post WWII high of 33 percent to barely 11 percent today.

Worse, as union power ebbed and the American Dream of upward mobility slipped away, most union leaders clung reflexively to the Democratic Party for salvation. In 1976 they backed Jimmy Carter for president, expecting to win labor laws that would make organizing easier. Instead, Carter and an overwhelmingly Democratic Congress handed corporate America the tools to dismantle worker power: Trucking, railroad, and airline deregulation, along with new bankruptcy laws that authorized businesses to break union contracts and eliminate pensions. In 1992, unions counted on Bill Clinton to deliver jobs, but instead he pushed the job-killing North American Free Trade Agreement [NAFTA] and eviscerated the nation's welfare system. Even as workers became more productive, real wages stagnated. In 2008 labor had high hopes that Barack Obama would save workers but instead Wall Street got bailed out while nearly 9 million workers were fired, 14 million families lost

their homes, and the president invested more political capital in promoting another horrible trade agreement—the Trans Pacific Partnership—than in backing modest labor law reform or a raise in the national minimum wage.

Under Obama, union ranks have declined by another half a million workers, and US inequality has reached epic levels. In just the 24 months following the official end of the Great Recession in 2009, the gap in wealth between the richest 7 percent of households and the rest of us grew by \$6.6 trillion. Even an immediate national minimum wage hike to \$15—obviously fantastical in today's political reality—would offset just a tiny fraction of that recent growth in wealth disparity.

Given all of that, the 2016 surprise isn't that workers abandoned Democrats at the ballot box. Rather, the shocker is this: Why the heck didn't they ditch them a lot sooner?

For the last several decades we've had labor leaders who counseled union members to make pragmatic political choices, warning that the alternative to mediocre candidates was a lot worse. That was certainly true this past fall. But if there's any single takeaway about working class voters in the 2016 campaign—from Bernie Sanders's remarkable insurgency to Donald Trump's brutal and ugly win—it's a rejection of the establishment of both major political parties and the narrow mindset of lesser-evilism.

Workers deserve better.

The salvation of unions, and more generally, of the US working class, resides not in struggling to fix a broken national Democratic Party that repeatedly has betrayed workers, but in joining with allies to fight the coming Trump onslaught—and then to go beyond that to define a bold, unapologetic vision of society and economy, one that inspires millions of workers to engage and take action. This fight isn't about blue states vs. red states, urban vs. rural, immigrant vs. native-born—all false frames that are intentionally deployed to divide and weaken working people—but about the 99 percent against the billionaire class and their political allies. It's a fight about power and our societal values.

For those of us in unions, it means we have to use all of the tools at our disposal to defend what we still have—at the bargaining table, on the shop floor, and in legislative halls—but then go beyond to forge new powerful community alliances to demand health care, quality education, civil rights, food and shelter, and fair wages for all. Indeed, the pinnacle achievements of US unions—think Social Security, minimum wages, safety laws—took place when labor acted not out of narrow self-interest, but as part of a broad social movement; not as a co-dependent of a political party, but as an independent force in politics.

In other parts of the world, particularly among societies in the global south, such formations are called social movement unions: bold movements that recognize the singular nature of a justice fight spanning workplace and community, and the inseparability of the fights for economic, racial, and social justice.

Here's some good news: The elements of social movement unionism already are among us, embedded in the leading justice struggles today. Chicago teachers have struck to defend the bedrock principle of quality public education for all, and in doing so have united with parents to push back against the corporatization of our schools. Uber and other rideshare drivers have organized strikes to demand new laws protecting their right to organize. Several unions, including the Service Employees International Union, the Communications Workers of America, and National Nurses United, built important new alliances when they stood with the Standing Rock Sioux's efforts to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline. In the city of SeaTac, just south of Seattle, low-wage immigrant airport workers, Muslim and Christian faith activists, and community members took on an improbable battle against corporate and political giants to organize a breakthrough \$15 ballot initiative, helping to spark a national movement. (I was privileged to have been the campaign director.) In North Carolina and beyond, the Rev. William J. Barber II has united faith leaders, union members, and immigration-rights activists in a powerful Moral Mondays movement to reclaim democracy

and raise the call for a moral economy.

What connects these varied efforts is the common awareness that the fight is not just about workplace issues but is about societal values, and that through unity and struggle a better world is possible. Also common to these fights is the recognition that a potent, sustained movement must rest on more than economic and political principles. It also must draw upon the values that emanate from our deepest human emotions and desires for justice and community. The call for spiritual morality, whether advanced by organized religion or secular humanist yearnings, has played a decisive role in leading struggles throughout history. The civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s and the abolitionist movement of a century earlier are but two examples of struggles that were propelled forward by powerful calls for spiritual morality. Today, the embryonic movements that fuse direct action with a spiritually based call for justice offer similar promise.

None of these examples, of course, represents a full-fledged social movement union. But each contains at least a rudimentary recognition that the fight is about power, each recognizes the need to build broad alliances of the 99 percent, to disrupt convention and circumvent broken law, and each contains bold strategies that we can employ in building a formidable new labor movement. And, importantly, each of these campaigns challenges unions to think differently about their role in the world—to act expansively, to link arms with new friends, and to articulate a bold vision of justice.

Back at Boeing, Levitt retired right after the 2013 pension debacle but his union colleagues went on to take steps to reclaim power and voice: They forced the retirement of their international union president, who had promoted the pension giveaway; secured a new membership bill of rights within their union; and stepped up at organizing Boeing contractors.

Our job in 2017 and beyond is to nurture and build on these promising movements, challenging ourselves and others to think bigger and bolder, to focus not just on winning discrete campaigns, but on building a movement that has a moral foundation and vision.

Indeed, the gift that Trump's ascension gives us—perverse as that may sound—is that his victory strips away any illusions about the depth of organized labor's existential crisis. Now there is no question that our collective backs are against the wall, and the only way forward is to fight back by uniting broadly and reclaiming the movement's larger social purpose to lift up the dignity and value of all working people.

Jonathan Rosenblum is a union and community organizer living in Seattle, WA. He is the author of Beyond \$15: Immigrant Workers, Faith Activists, and the Revival of the Labor Movement, to be published by Beacon Press in March 2017. He can be reached at jonathanr4212@gmail.com. IW



Culinary workers protest Trump's policies at Atlantic City Casino

Trade unionists: BEWARE OF THE FASCIST THREAT!

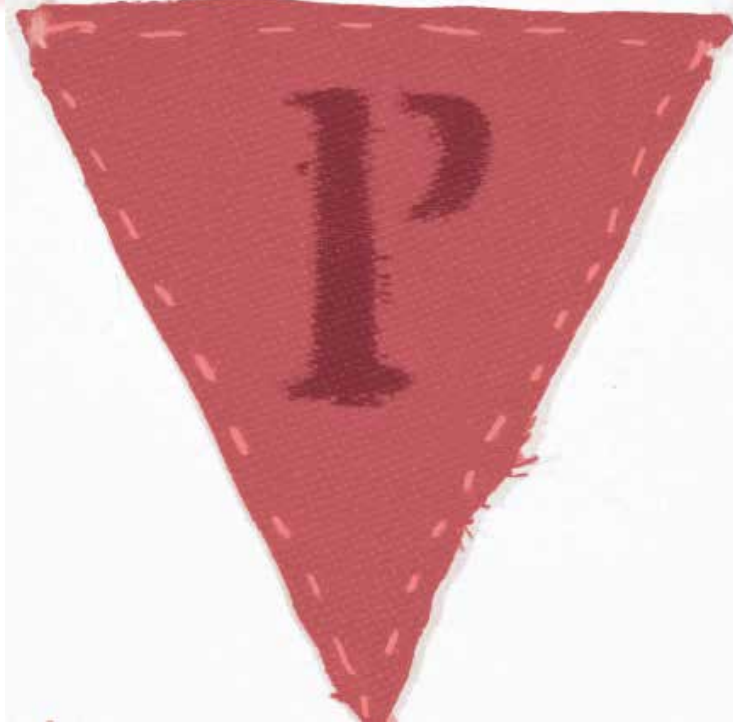
By Charles W. Martin III

Everyone knows the horrors Jews faced under the Nazis and the badge they had to wear. However, not many people are aware of the badge that political prisoners were forced to wear in the concentration camps—the upside down red triangle. This badge was meant for liberals, communists, social democrats, and trade unionists.

When people think of fascism, they normally think about its irrational appeals and that Hitler was crazy. But behind all of that is a rational function—fascism provides a false revolution in service of the wealthy.

In both Germany and Italy before fascism, corporate profits were low, due to industrial stagnation. To raise their profits, they needed to implement policies. First, they needed to lower wages and increase prices for their goods. Second, they needed to have the state provide them with massive subsidies and tax exemptions. In order to pay for that corporate cash giveaway, the state needed to increase the taxes on the working populace and drastically cut public services. Finally, the state needed to privatize perfectly solvent state-owned enterprises. Doesn't this sound familiar?

However, the business class of both Germany and Italy had one major obstacle in their way—the workers and peasants were well organized. Their other big problem was that all the traditional political parties that did the bidding for big business had lost their legitimacy. To ram the austerity measures down the throats of the people, they needed to create a mass base to overcome the obstacle of organized people. So they turned to fascists, who used racism and anti-Semitism to deflect working people's legitimate anger away from big business onto helpless and inoffensive enemies.



Mussolini's Blackshirts and Hitler's Sturmabteilung (Storm Troopers) were originally used as company goons to break up strikes. But business leaders wanted more—they wanted the fascists to break the people's resistance to the austerity measures. They poured vast sums of money and resources into the fascists. In one case, the Italian industrial, banking, and agribusiness associations provided 20 million lire (equivalent to \$1.3 million in 2016) to Mussolini's "Fascist March on Rome."

Once in power, they smashed trade unions, opposition newspapers and parties, and peasant organizations. The leaders and activists of those organizations were arrested, beaten up, and murdered. In Nazi Germany, the German Labor Front was created to replace the trade unions—essentially a company union on a national scale. The Nazis provided the German business class with slave labor from concentration camps. To top it all off, in both Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, the gov-

ernment guaranteed that business would make a profit and to assume all losses. Sound like a corporate bailout? The result of all these measures was profits skyrocketed and the workers were put down. Unions and strikes were outlawed. Minimum wage, overtime, and workplace safety laws were abolished. Working hours were increased and wages were cut, by 25%–40% in Germany and 50% in Italy. Child labor, previously abolished, was reintroduced in Italy. Any worker who complained about work conditions could easily be terminated or arrested—if they were not shot.

All this led wealthy businessmen all over the world to adore both Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. One of the most prominent Hitler admirers was Henry Ford, and the feeling was mutual. Henry Ford accepted the highest decoration the Nazis could give a foreigner, the Grand Cross of the German Eagle. And Hitler had a life-size portrait of Ford in his office.

Not only did the wealthy in

America admire Hitler, many American corporations produced weapons for Hitler's war machine—even after the US entered the war. These companies included Ford, General Motors, ITT, and IBM. Fred Koch (father of the Koch Brothers) built an oil refinery to supply the Luftwaffe. Worse, the US 8th Army Air Force was prohibited from bombing US corporations' weapons plants in Nazi Germany, and many of these companies sued the US government over instances that they were bombed. General Motors received \$32 million in damages from Allied bombing.

When fascism came to America it used the symbols of America as well as Nazi Germany. When the German-American Bund held a fascist rally in Madison Square Garden in 1939, they had swastika flags, American flags, and a giant statue of George Washington. In 1933, the National Association of Manufacturers conspired to lead an American "Fascist March on Washington" in opposition to the New Deal, in what came to be known as the "Business Plot." Luckily, the man asked to lead the march, Major General Smedley Butler, went straight to Congress and revealed the plan.

Big business resorted to fascism because they were afraid of the people, but the people fought back. Workers staged wildcat strikes and industrial sabotage in both Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. A public outcry at the discovery that Hitler was killing 70,000 mentally ill people in concentration camps caused him to publicly disown the policy. (It still occurred, but quietly.) After World War II, Spain and Chile eventually moved away from fascism because of the activism of the people. Ultimately, Capitalists resort to fascism because they are afraid of the people, and they back away from it for the very same reason. **IW**

In November we remembered the **Everett Massacre**

By Gordon Glick, X364388

On Nov. 5, 1916, Wobblies from around the Salish Sea (Puget Sound) decided to travel to the industrial city of Everett to join the picket called for by the Shingle Weavers Union. Some opposition was expected, but not the level of violent repression they would soon experience at the hands of the Snohomish County Sheriff and a small army of deputized gun thugs.

The main means of transportation to the numerous small ports and large industrial docks around the Sound was the famed “Mosquito Fleet” of steam-powered and motorized passenger and cargo craft plying the inland waters of western Washington State. A large contingent of IWWs chartered the ship *Verona* and set out from Seattle to the Everett dock. Upon arrival, a line was tossed to the pier, and the Sheriff shouted to the vessel, “You can’t land, here!” It is said that an unknown Wobbly replied, “The hell we can’t!” The historical record is unclear as to who fired the first shot, but a fusillade of gunfire ensued, killing several Fellow Workers outright, with several more falling or jumping into the frigid water to drown.

After a hundred years, the City of Everett acknowledges that twelve Wobblies lost their lives that day: FWs Hugo Gerlot, Abraham Rabinowitz, Gustav Johnson, Felix Baran, John Looney, Fred Berger, William Colman, Peter Viberts, Tom Ellis, Charles Taylor, Edward Raymond, and an unidentified man pulled from the water. The *Industrial Worker* from Nov. 25, 1916, described the Jewish Wobbly, A. Rabinowitz, as “born of a race without a flag, a race oppressed by the intolerance and superstition of the ages, and died fighting for the brotherhood of man.”

One hundred years later to the

day, members of the IWW from as far away as Vancouver Island, B.C., Salt Lake City, Utah, and Washington cities Bellingham, Seattle, Olympia, Bremerton, Tacoma, and Gig Harbor journeyed to Everett to hold a celebration of the bravery our comrades displayed and sacrifices they made a century ago in the name of Solidarity. Brothers and Sisters of Labor also attended the event, with representatives from Familias Unidas por la Justicia (FUJ), the ILWU, IBEW, IAM&AW, and other unions showing respect and remembrance for the murders of our Fellow Workers so long ago.

A commemorative plaque was installed that had been crafted by IWWs and set in cement in the ground near the disembarkation

point, where state-sanctioned violence had halted the march to Speaker’s Corner. Fellow Workers placed wreaths bearing the names of the fallen on the fence closest to the dock. (Before a week passed, the plaque had been removed by persons or officials unknown.)

A week later, on Nov. 12, 2016,



a voyage chartered by the Northwest Labor History Association aboard one of the last remaining Mosquito Fleet vessels, the *Virginia V*, left from Ballard near Seattle and experienced a storm-tossed voyage to the Everett pier, where singing and sign-waving supporters greeted it. Many IWWs and numerous other Union workers, notably the singing longshoremen of ILWU out of Tacoma, participated in this historic journey aboard a reciprocating steam engine-driven, one-screw passenger ship, carefully maintained by a volunteer captain and crew, many of whom were members of the SPEEA Engineers Union from Boeing, with IAM Machinists and other volunteers.

Before the journey back to Ballard was complete, on much calmer seas, the Red & Black banner was hoisted from the forepeak with the Captain’s assistance, and enthusiastic Wobblies sang the old IWW tune “Hold the Fort,” just as it had been sung on that grim day in 1916.

With renewed spirit, we continue the work of Wobblies past. **IW**



Fellow Workers aboard the *Virginia V*.

My favorite animal rights books of all time

By Jon Hochschartner

With the upcoming release of my first book—*The Animals' Freedom Fighter: A Biography of Ronnie Lee, Founder of the Animal Liberation Front*—I wanted to highlight the five works that most inspired me on my journey to a more animal-friendly perspective. I hope my book might serve the same purpose for some readers, not because of my writing skill, but because of the power of my subject's story.

Of course, any list like this is entirely subjective. Different works speak to different people for different reasons. Hell, my list of the greatest movies probably fluctuates by the day! All that said, I'd like to count down my favorite animal rights books, as they currently stand. If you haven't read these, consider picking them up online or from your local library. And if they're only distantly familiar, maybe you're due for some rereads. I know I am.

5. *Animal Oppression and Human Violence: Domesecration, Capitalism, and Global Conflict* by David Nibert. In this powerful history, the author demonstrates how war has often been linked to humans' need to seize land to accommodate their livestock populations. This is just one social ill, among a number of others, which Nibert traces to animal agriculture, exacerbated by the development

of capitalism. He's a socialist, and to the benefit of his text, it shows. Nibert reminds me of a sort of vegan Howard Zinn, who, of course, was the author of *A People's History of the United States*. That's high praise, in case it wasn't clear.

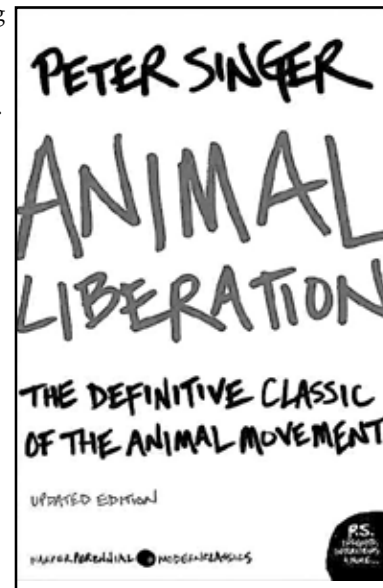
4. *Fear of the Animal Planet: The Hidden History of Animal Resistance* by Jason Hribal. Some might believe this book, which documents instances of animals attacking their human masters, is merely an exercise in misanthropy. Such an exercise would be understandable, given the depth and scale of human violence against our fellow earthlings. But this book is more than that. It showcases the agency of animals, which is often missing from accounts of their exploitation. In his accounts of tigers and orcas killing their tormentors, Hribal reminds us nonhumans don't passively accept their fate.

3. *An Unnatural Order: Roots of Our Destruction of Nature* by Jim Mason. This is the book on this list I'm most eager to revisit. In it, the author takes us back approximately 10,000 years, to the beginnings of animal agriculture. Prior to this, in Mason's view, humans saw themselves as part of the natural world. But afterwards, humans saw nature as something to be dominated and controlled. Nothing would ever be the same, as this "dominionist" mindset infected all as-

pects of human civilization, including our relationships with each other. As an author myself, this is one of those works I wish I was capable of writing.

2. *The Politics of Total Liberation: Revolution for the 21st Century* by Steven Best. While this book was released in 2014, it amounts to a greatest-hits collection from the author, whose work I've been reading since 2005. Much of his output serves as an ideological defense of underground groups like the Animal Liberation Front. In recent years, I've increasingly come to see individualist actions as ineffective when compared to collective struggle for political change. I believe this, perhaps naively, even as we enter the era of Donald Trump. Still, I remain deeply inspired by Best's uncompromising adoption of what he calls "the animal standpoint." He's been a profound influence on me, as I suspect he's been for many animal activists my age.

1. *Animal Liberation: The Definitive Classic of the Animal Movement* by Peter Singer. Admittedly, the book's subtitle is irritating. I often find myself rolling my eyes when someone traces the origins of the animal movement to 1975, when this text was published. And yet, it was this book, as it's been for so many others, that first opened my eyes to the moral seriousness of the problem of human exploitation of



animals. I agree with critics who say Singer's utilitarianism is far too open to interpretation, and could be used to justify horrible abuses of animals and humans. But really, it was his clear introduction to the concept of speciesism, a term coined by Richard Ryder, which has had the longest-lasting impact on me.

Jon Hochschartner is author of *The Animals' Freedom Fighter: A Biography of Ronnie Lee, Founder of the Animal Liberation Front*, which is slated to be published by McFarland & Company. Visit his website: www.Hochschartner.com. Follow him on Twitter: @JonHoch3. **IW**

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George Orwell's Revolutionary Legacy

By Raymond S. Solomon

Author and editor Peter Davison compiled and edited *George Orwell: A Life in Letters* and the *George Orwell Diaries*. Davison's comments and annotations about George Orwell are excellent and informative. Davison's annotations constitute mini-encyclopedias of historical information. Whether it was among the unemployed Wigan coal miners, working miners, POUM members in Catalonia, poor Arabs and Jews in Morocco, or Indian coolies, Orwell's empathy was with the exploited, those unjustly accused, and economically marginalized people.

George Orwell (1903–1950) was, for a brief period, a member of the British Independent Labour Party (ILP). In 1938, he gave his reasons for joining the Independent Labour Party as, “The tempo of events is quickening; the dangers which once seemed a generation distant are staring us in the face. One has got to be actively a socialist, not merely sympathetic to socialism.” The ILP was the only group close enough to what he believed, and although relatively small, was the only party “big enough to matter.” They were less likely to blindly lead him into a war. At that time he was planning to resist the upcoming war. But as war approached, he knew that Hitler had to be stopped. Although the ILP was anti-Nazi, it did not support Britain's efforts in World War II and continued to believe that revolutionary resistance in occupied countries would defeat the German and Italian fascists. Before World War II, the ILP had fought fascism in the streets of Whitechapel and in the trenches of Spain.

In an entry in his diary on August 8th, 1939, Orwell wrote, “Again [*Daily Telegraph*] reported that large numbers of Asturian soldiers are still holding out in the mountains.” Davison comments:

Miners in Asturia, in the North of Spain had [a] revolution in 1934. ... A feature there during the

Spanish civil war, in September and October 1937, was Germany's practice of “carpet bombing,” regardless of civilians below. Although Franco's forces were successful in obtaining for the Nationalists the coal resources of the region, guerrilleros continued to fight until 1948.

The Asturia miners' revolution of 1934 was crushed by troops led by General Francisco Franco, during the reactionary period of the Spanish Republic (1933–1936).

In his August 11, 1939, diary entry, Orwell wrote about attending a “House of C. [Commons] reception for Menna Schocat, representing the League for Jewish-Arab Unity.” In his commentary, Peter Davison writes:

Menna Schoct was a pioneer revolutionary in tsarist Russia who suffered imprisonment and exile. She escaped and went to Palestine, where she was active in various workers' movements. She insisted on Jewish-Arab workers' unity and championed the cause of Arab peasants. The ILP proposed to work for the unity of Jewish and Arab masses against British imperialism, in the hope of setting up a workers' state federated with neighboring states. It also championed the right of persecuted Jewish workers in Europe to enter not only Palestine, but all countries, including Britain and the Dominions.

In *The Road to Wigan Pier*, Orwell asserted, “All people with small insecure incomes are in the same boat, and should be fighting on the same side.” In Part Five of *Looking Back on the Spanish War*, Orwell writes about the defeat of the workers in the labor struggles after the Russian Revolution through illegal violence, “in country after country.” For example, during the 1926 British General Strike, London was turned into an armed camp by the government. Tanks patrolled the streets of London. Orwell blamed this defeat, in part, on a lack of solidarity among

workers, underlining that solidarity's importance.

Was Orwell's radical-labor heritage to continue? One of the most personal letters in *Letters* is from Arthur Koestler. Koestler advised him to marry Sonia Brownell, without delay. Sonia Brownell Orwell (1918–1980) was of great comfort to George Orwell in the last months of his life. She was primarily responsible for the publication of the various collections of Orwell's writings that were published after his death, and therefore for Orwell becoming more famous than he was after the publication of *Nineteen eighty-four*, and for his left-wing views being much more widely read. In promoting Orwell's heritage, Sonia Orwell worked with David Astor, Richard Ress, and Ian Angus. Ian Angus edited with her the four volumes *Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters of George Orwell*, which was published by Seeker and Warburg in 1968.

During Orwell's lifetime, *Homage to Catalonia* sold under a thousand copies. Under Sonia Orwell's influence, it was not only republished but various collections containing such essays as “Looking Back on the Spanish War,” “Reflections on Gandhi,” “England, Your England,” and “The Prevention of Literature” were widely read throughout most of the non-totalitarian world.

After World War II, many Russian soldiers were forcibly repatriated to the Soviet Union, where many of them were executed. In a letter to Koestler, Orwell reported that American repatriation authorities had seized the Ukrainian language edition of *Animal Farm* from the displaced persons camp in Belgium, which was populated by Ukrainians. The copies were handed over to the Russian authorities. In his essay “The Prevention of Literature,” Orwell deals with the historical cover-up of the forced repatriation of people to the Soviet Union. In endorsing *Nineteen eighty-four*, Bertrand Russell



George Orwell

said that it warns against totalitarianism and not just in the narrow sense of fear of Soviet Russia.

George Orwell: A Life in Letters and *George Orwell Diaries* are valuable sources of information for scholarly researchers on Orwell and on twentieth-century history. These books open new vistas, even for seasoned Orwell readers and students.

George Orwell told a story about how the Queen of England obtained her copy of *Animal Farm*. In a letter to Dwight Macdonald, and reprinted in *George Orwell: A Life in Letters*, Orwell explained that the first printing of *Animal Farm* was sold out. Even Orwell did not have a copy of *Animal Farm* left to give the Queen. So the Queen sent a messenger to George Woodcock's anarchist bookstore, and that is how Her Majesty, the Queen of England acquired her copy of *Animal Farm*.

Davison, Peter (ed.) (2013) *George Orwell: A Life in Letters, Selected and Annotated*. New York, London: Liveright Publishing Corporation.

Davison, Peter (ed.) (2009) *George Orwell Diaries*. New York, London: Liveright Publishing Corporation. **IW**

Indianapolis IWW members need support in face of charges: Defense Fund for Fellow Workers in Indianapolis

Organized by Central Secretary-Treasurer



Three members of the Industrial Workers of the World and the IWW General Defense Committee were arrested after police aggression during an anti-Trump demonstration in Indianapolis. They are facing charges ranging from misdemeanors to felonies, and legal costs are rapidly increasing. They are asking for help to cover attorney costs.

A total of seven people were arrested at the anti-Trump demonstration after police overreacted to civil disobedience. Police charged on

horseback through the crowd of people in the street and into the crowds on the sidewalk before deploying pepper balls, rubber bullets, and pepper spray. The demonstrators who were arrested now face misdemeanor and felony charges, and the media and police are trying to cast the Wobblies as agitators and provocateurs.

Our three members are all very involved in left organizing to support LGBT+ rights, Black Lives Matter, and the IWW Incarcerated Workers' Organizing Committees (IWOC).

One fellow worker, a transgender person, in addition to being detained in the men's processing center, was repeatedly deadnamed and dehumanized by local media and employees of the state. We are asking for help with their legal expenses, because their community needs them actively engaged in our causes instead of in prison.

Donate at <https://www.crowdrise.com/defense-fund-for-the-fellow-workers-in-indianapolis>. **IW**

Gwen Snyder: Solidarity with Gwen

IWW members in Philadelphia solidarity statement on the sexual harassment of former Fellow Worker and Philadelphia Jobs with Justice Head

By John Kalwaic

Trigger warning: Sexual assault

We the members of the Industrial Workers of the World in Philadelphia are in solidarity with Gwen Snyder, a former member of the Industrial Workers of the World Philadelphia General Membership Branch, which collapsed in 2012. Snyder helped organize an informal shop of IWW canvassers at Grassroots Campaigns until she was chosen to lead the Philadelphia chapter of Jobs with Justice. With both the IWW and JwJ, Snyder has proven to be a dedicated and capable organizer. As a JwJ organizer, Snyder was involved with many labor campaigns, such as the International Longshoreman Association's anti-Del Monte union busting campaign, the Communication Workers of America's Verizon strike, and community and social justice movements such as Occupy Philly. Snyder has always been a friend and ally of the IWW.

In July of 2016, Snyder and others were chosen as delegates

both officially and unofficially to represent Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders on the floor of the 2016 Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia. On Jul. 27, Snyder was sexually assaulted by fellow Saunders delegate Walter Weeks at the Doubletree Hotel's bar at around 2:30 a.m. Snyder reported the incident to the DNC and attempted to have Weeks prosecuted. District Attorney Seth Williams at first decided not to prosecute Weeks, later reversing his decision. Defense lawyer Michael J. Engle stated that the DA's decision to prosecute Weeks was due to "political correctness and pressure." Weeks and his legal team rejected an offer of a plea agreement from Snyder's prosecution team, and the trial went forward on Oct. 27.

The trial under Judge Hayes went badly for Snyder. Witnesses who were former Saunders delegates and present at the Doubletree when Snyder was harassed testified on behalf of Weeks. The witnesses saw Snyder push Weeks away, but they were too far away to see what had happened between them. The Defense argued that Weeks was too intoxicated to be responsible and that it would have been impossible for Weeks to do what he was accused of doing, based on what Snyder was wearing,



Engle questioned why Snyder went first to seek accountability within the DNC rather than going directly to the police.

The Defense also presented "character witnesses," who testified on behalf of Weeks that he was an "upstanding guy." DA Williams questioned why Snyder would lie about the incident, giving her lack of motivation against Weeks to "make up a story." Defense lawyer Engle's closing statement questioned Snyder's integrity and engaged in victim

blaming, even stating that Snyder "had her 15 minutes of fame." Unfortunately Judge Hayes ruled in Weeks's favor, and justice was not served.

We of the IWW feel that Weeks should have been found guilty and barred from activist and labor circles. We stand behind our former member and Fellow Worker Gwen Snyder. The IWW does not support candidates in elections, but we will weigh in to defend our members and others against sexual harassment. **IW**

IWW Resolution against DAPL and KXL

Submitted by x344543 on Jan. 28, 2017

Resolution passed by the IWW General Executive Board, January 28, 2017

Whereas: Neither the Dakota Access Pipeline nor the Keystone XL Pipeline will provide anywhere near the number of permanent union jobs the promoters of these projects promise they will, and

Whereas: Far more permanent union jobs can be created at comparable wages by repairing existing pipeline infrastructure, such as water mains in Flint, Michigan, or repairing leaks in existing pipelines (which, if unfixed, release harmful amounts of methane, a known greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming); and

Whereas: Far more jobs currently exist in the growing renewable energy sector than in the declining fossil fuel sector; and

Whereas: Though these renewable energy jobs are currently, typically nonunion, unions if so determined, could easily develop a successful organizing program, using solidarity unionism, that could revitalize the currently struggling labor movement; and

Whereas: Neither pipeline project will deliver the promised “energy security” or “energy independence” promised by their promoters, including the Building Trades and AFL-CIO Union officials among them; and

Whereas: Oil pipelines, such as the aforementioned pipelines, tend to leak and create unnecessary risk to the surrounding environment both through methane gas leaks and crude oil spills; and

Whereas: Such pipelines endanger the communities along their routes, including many indigenous communities whose tribal sovereignty has been often ignored or violated during the permitting process by agencies subject to regulatory capture by the capitalist interests that promote them; and

Whereas: The construction of these pipelines will contribute to the acceleration of already dangerous levels of currently existing greenhouse gas emissions which are contributing to the already dangerous levels of climate change, which could lead to a dead planet with no jobs of any kind; and

Whereas: Many unions, including the IWW, have already publically stated opposition to one or both the Dakota Access Pipeline and Keystone XL Pipeline; and

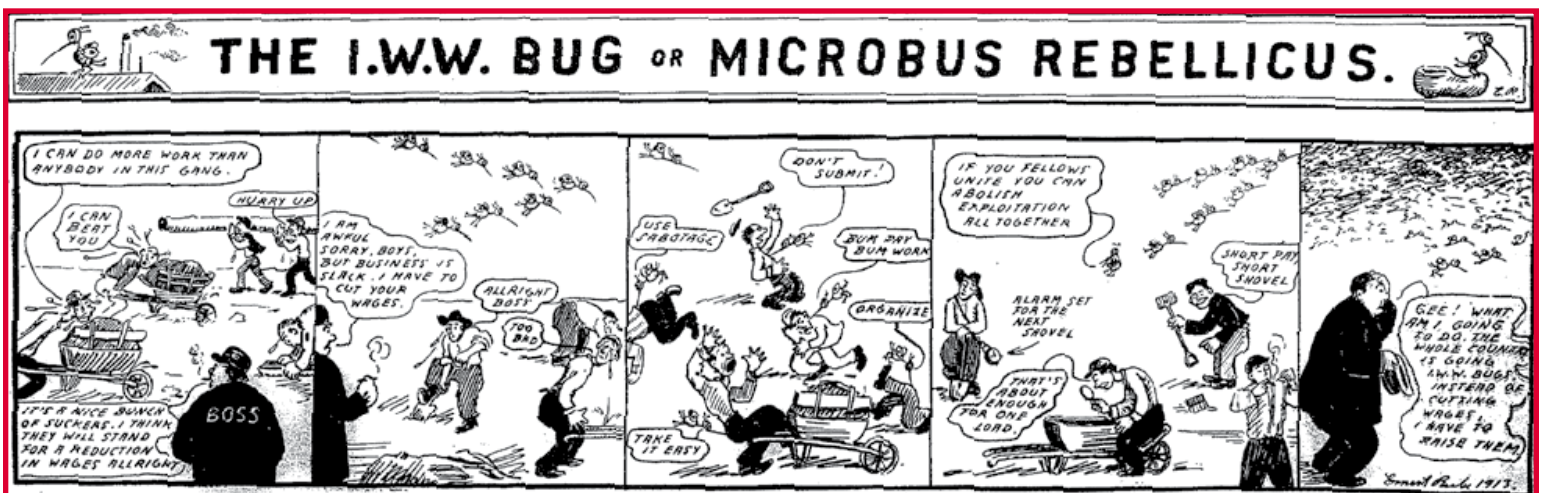
Whereas: President Donald Trump’s “executive orders” that ostensibly “clear a path” for the completion of the aforementioned pipelines and mandate that they be constructed using US manufactured steel are contradictory in nature and are designed primarily to divide workers and environmentalists over the false dichotomy of “jobs versus the environment,” which is utterly false as previously described;

Be It Resolved That: The IWW reaffirms its opposition to the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline and officially declares its opposition to the construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline; and

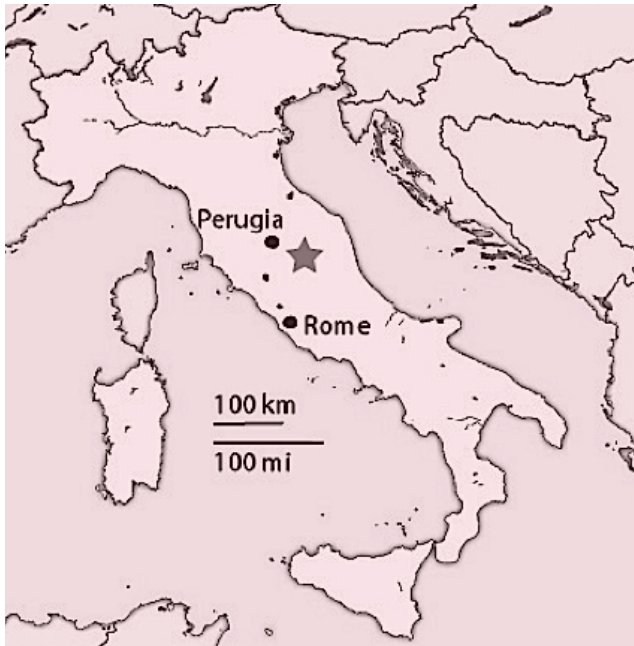
Be It Further Resolved That: The IWW stands in solidarity with the First Nations, union members, environmental activists, and community members who oppose both; and

Be It Further Resolved That: The IWW urges rank and file members of the Building Trades, Teamsters, and other unions who have declared support for these pipelines to call upon their elected officials to reverse their support; and

Be It Finally Resolved That: The IWW demands that the promoters of these pipelines develop a “just transition” plan for the pipeline workers that would be affected by the cancellation of these pipeline projects.



Italian revolutionary union USI aids 2016 earthquake victims



Star indicates the area affected by the earthquakes.

By x331980

The IWW's sister union in Italy, USI (Unione Sindacale Italiana), has been assisting with relief projects following destructive earthquakes in August and again in October of last year. Four earthquakes struck the mountainous spine of Italy northeast of Rome with magnitudes 5.5 to 6.6. Over 300 were killed, many more were injured, and villages and small towns were devastated. Many refugees are still living in tent cities; some of the ancient towns may never be rebuilt, according to the government.

USI locals in Modena, Parma, Rome, and Macerata immediately began to collect money and loaded vans with food and clothing to take into Arquata



Devastation in Amatrice. Reuters/Stefano Rellandini

del Tronto and the mountain hamlet of Illica, medieval towns largely reduced to rubble by August's magnitude 6.2 temblor. Over time, the entire union participated. After the first earthquake, building materials were collected to construct a self-managed refugee village, but this project had to be halted following the three quakes in October.

USI sources told the Industrial Worker that some union members lost their homes in the earthquakes, and others have lost theirs following the regional economic collapse, due to destruction and depopulation. The present phase of relief focuses on building shelters for residents who have farm animals and are unwilling to leave the area. Food, gas, and phone cards are still being brought in by our USI comrades, but with the onset of winter more people have left the devastated area. The union is collaborating with Genuino Clandestino, an association of farmers and self-sufficiency activists.



USI members load relief supplies. Photo courtesy USI.

USI is building on experience gained in 2009 and again in 2012, when they assisted with relief following earthquakes that did horrible damage in L'Aquila and Emilia.

USI is the Italian affiliate of the anarcho-syndicalist AIT, a revolutionary union confederation with members around the world. USI reports it has around 800 members. It is chiefly organized in the health, education, and civil service industries, as well as some cooperatives. There are a number of active sections in Emilia Romagna (north-central Italy) and the adjacent regions of Lombardy and Tuscany. Smaller groups are scattered around the country.

USI locals are equipping to help themselves and others when disasters strike. They are collecting tents, supplies for field kitchens, and a van to deliver material aid. They have used concerts and other events to raise emergency funds. At their last business meeting, the San Francisco Bay Area GMB voted to approve sending USI \$500 as a sign of solidarity and for USI's earthquake war chest. Send email to guardachesole@inwind.it for how to provide assistance to USI. **IW**

SOLIDARITY ACROSS THE GLOBE

By John Kalwaic Teacher strike and student support in Nova Scotia

In the province of Nova Scotia, Canada, thousands of students walked out of classes to support their teachers on Dec. 2, 2016, who embarked on work-to-rule the following Monday.

Work-to-rule has affected the students' extracurricular activities, including Christmas concerts and sports. However, the approximately 9,000 teachers who embarked on work-to-rule have been without a contract for more than a year. Negotiations between the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union (NSTU) and the Nova Scotia provincial government have fallen apart. Teachers want better working conditions, but the provincial government says it does not have the money.

Hundreds of students walked to Province House in the capital of Halifax to make their voices heard. They protested and chanted loudly at several locations for government to go back to the bargaining table. Nick Plasse, a Grade 11 student at École du Carrefour in Dartmouth, said, "They really need to go back to the bargaining table and negotiate with the NSTU fairly." He continued, "They need to realize that we are the future and there's no price on that."

Many students had mixed feelings about the strike, but those who walked out on Dec. 2 were in full support of their teachers. Madeline Saulnier-Gallant, who attends Citadel High, stated, "Some students are mad at the teachers, and they don't really understand that the teachers are trying to fight for our education." Maya Taraschi stated, "This work to rule will affect us, but we support it because our teachers need better treatment."

cato de Estudiantes holds that LOCME discriminates against working class students and students from poorer backgrounds. There were related protests by parents against excessive amounts of homework assigned to their children in elementary school.

The demonstrations against the mandatory Revalidas were successful, but the students still face the battle against LOCME's austerity.



Polish women strike and defeat draconian anti-abortion bill

Women in Poland went on strike on Oct. 3, 2016 ... and won. Instead of going to school or work, thousands of Polish women and many male allies took to the streets to protest anti-abortion legislation. The strike protested stringent anti-abortion laws being proposed by Poland's governing Law and Justice, or PiS, Party, which had been elected in Oct. 2015, with its leader Jarosław Kaczyński becoming prime minister of Poland.

Abortion is illegal in Poland except for cases of rape, incest, when the fetus is damaged during pregnancy, or when the mother's life is in jeopardy. The bill proposed by the PiS Party would have outlawed even those exceptions. Poland is primarily a Catholic country, and the Catholic Church has played a role in the country's politics since the 1970s and 1980s. The Catholic Church played a key role in the downfall of Poland's Soviet-installed government. In 2016, the strongly Catholic and nationalist PiS government sought to expand existing abortion laws, outlawing abortions even in extreme cases. The law's changes would have required imprisoning women who miscarried, if they could not prove the miscarriage was not induced.

While the PiS worked toward passing this legislation, outraged women's rights activists organized "Black Monday" for Oct. 3, 2016. Women who opposed the bill would not work or attend school, would wear black, and would carry black flags. Activists took inspiration from the women's strike in Iceland on Oct. 24, 1975, when 90 percent of the women in Iceland participated in a strike during which they did not work, cook, or take care of children to protest the gender pay gap. The Polish strike came together on Oct. 3 as thousands of women and numerous male allies boycotted school and work, taking to the streets on a gray, rainy day. Protestors wore black, held black flags, and carried black umbrellas. In some cities' demonstrations the protestors held up coat hangers, signifying the dangers of illegal abortions.

The Black Monday demonstrations disrupted businesses and government, filling the streets with protestors in most major cities in Poland. On Oct. 5, the PiS party backed off from the proposed draconian abortion ban. Abortion is still for the most part illegal in Poland, but thanks to the women's direct action, the proposed changes by the PiS did not go forward. The PiS assault on freedoms included an attempt to place severe limitations on the press, but due to the street protests this also was not implemented. **IW**



Student strike in Spain defeats repressive exams

A student strike has defeated an attempt by the ruling conservative Popular Party, or PP, in Spain to implement exams from the era of the Franco dictatorship. The exams, called "Revalidas Fanquistas" (Revalidation Exams), were to be introduced in Spanish high schools and middle schools. The Sindicato de Estudiantes (Students' Union) heavily opposed this move by the PP government, because of its link with Spain's past under Franco.

The Sindicato de Estudiantes launched student strikes on both Oct. 24 and Nov. 25, 2016. Classrooms were empty on those days as tens of thousands of students took to the streets and carried Spanish Republican and other leftist flags. The demonstrations also took on other issues, such as austerity and cuts to education made by the government, especially the Ley Orgánica para la mejora de la calidad educativa (LOCME), the Organic Law for Improving Education Quality, which is set to increase tuition by up to 66 percent and cut resources for scholarships by 50 million euros. The Sindi-



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