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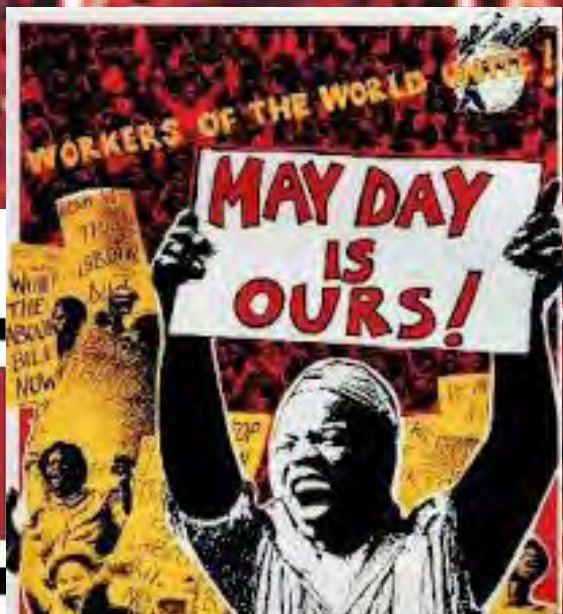
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Industrial Worker

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Organize and Mobilize!



May Day mass action: 'Strike from Below'

Service workers in the U.S. South unite in a general strike for the rights of workers, immigrants, Black Lives, Muslims, and all the other targets of the Trump Administration.

7



Look to the past to escape Trump's present

1946 was the last year of the great general strikes. Trump plans to undo every workers' gain since the 19th century. We need to look back to the lessons from Oakland.

10



Coat-hanger direct action

The best action is direct action. Sometimes keeping things simple works best in a complicated society.

12



Momentum builds for May Day strikes

All around the U.S., workers are responding to assaults on rights—not from the bosses but from the government.

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The Winter IW had an article about “Jewish faces in the IWW.” It profiled a number of historical members. In what sense can the people profiled be labeled “Jewish”? I suspect the author does so on the basis of their last names. A last name cannot be used to determine a person’s religion, or lack of one. Do we know whether Sam Dolgoff, Ben Reitman, Judith Malina, or any of the others were actually Jewish in that they accepted a god named Jehovah? Professed atheists like Dolgoff, Goldman, or Reitman cannot also be Jewish. I speak from experience, having been raised in the faith until I was old enough to know that I did not believe in any god.

—D. Tucker, Bellingham, Washington

Dear Fellow Workers:

“Jewish faces in the Industrial Workers of the World” by Bennett Muraskin is a

most superlative article. It said many things that needed saying and it goes a long way to fighting anti-Semitism, which has yet to be eradicated in the left. Jews have played a big role in the labor movement and among American radicals. The Jewish radio station WEVD, was named after Eugene Victor Debs. Upton Sinclair said that after he became a socialist, half of his readers, and half of his friends were Jewish. In his excellent article, Fellow Worker Muraskin has referred to HIAS, the Workmen’s Circle, and the Jewish Labor Committee. These groups have played a major role in Jewish radicalism and mutual aid. I congratulate him for that.

Muraskin has done much to rehabilitate the reputation of Dr. Ben Reitman, who medically and humanely treated the forsaken. Manifestation of this included Reitman’s school for hobos, and his free medical treatment of hobos and prostitutes.

However there is one sentence that feeds into a misconception. He says, “Historically, Jews are an urban people.” This is not true. Stalin used this prejudice in his campaign against “rootless cosmopolitans” when he was planning a genocide against the Jews of Soviet Russia. In 1953, several Russian Jewish doctors had been accused

of plotting to poison Soviet officials. Mercifully Stalin died and the doctors were cleared. Incidentally, we are approaching the 65th anniversary of the Night of the Murdered Poets. On August 12, 1952, Stalin had 13 Jewish poets shot. This was part of Stalin’s anti-cosmopolitan campaign.

Jewish agriculture outside of Israel has continued in modern times. There has been Jewish farming in both Czarist Russia and the Soviet Union. There were many Jewish farms in New Jersey. In that regard see the book *The Land Was Theirs: Jewish Farmers in the Garden State*, by Gertrude Wishnick Dubovsky (University of Alabama Press).

In Europe during the Middle Ages, in most countries, Jews were barred from farming and were not permitted to own land. They were often expelled from country after country, and Jews were barred from the guilds.

I reassert that Bennett Muraskin has written a most excellent article that should be read by all Wobblies. It goes a long way to combatting bigotry and gives use useful, interesting, and important history.

In solidarity,

Raymond S. Solomon **IW**



Honoring Joe Hill, 100 years later

Fellow Workers,

Joe Hill was murdered by the State of Utah, November 19, 1915. Two years later, his ashes were distributed and spread across the world by Wobblies [<http://local.sltrib.com/charts/joehill/ashes.html>].

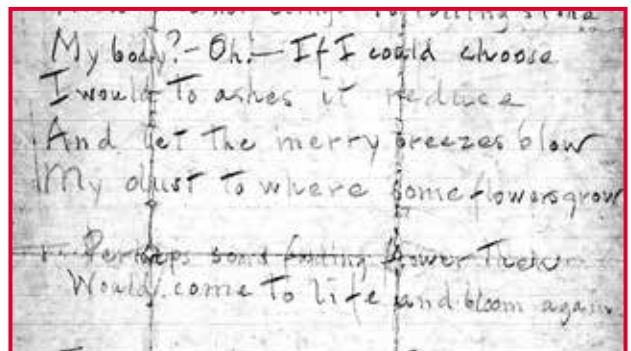
A memorial and gathering to honor Joe Hill, and his contribution to the Workers of the World, will be held on the 100th anniversary of the spreading of his ashes May 1st at 7:00 p.m.

Mt. Pleasant Cemetery

700 W Raye St., Seattle, WA 98119

-North end of Queen Anne Hill-

Please join us Monday, May 1st at 7:00 p.m.—in song and solidarity.



Joe Hill’s “will,” written while in the Utah State Prison



Shut it down! MAY DAY general strike

Monty Kroopkin, IWW San Diego Branch,
April 4, 2017

Fellow Workers, Friends,

Representing more than 100 local unions in our region, the San Diego–Imperial Counties Labor Council has endorsed the calls for a General Strike on May 1, 2017. This is truly an historic moment! The same migrant and immigrant constituency that struck 11 years ago on May 1, 2006, will mobilize this year, joined by Black Lives Matter, native sovereignty rights groups, and organizations Voces de La Frontera and Movimiento Cosecha.

Shut It Down! No work, no school, and don't buy anything!

Caboose to house Bruce "UTAH" Phillips library

By Ron Kaminkow

In the 1970s, Bruce "Utah" Phillips signed a deal with Philo Records and bought an 1890s-era flanger rail car from the Central Vermont Railway for \$500. Utah had the car moved to the property of Philo Records in Wolcott, VT, in order to live in it while he made a series of recordings there. Nearly a half century later, Utah's son Duncan has been able to acquire the car and plans to relocate the car to the grounds of the Black Butte Center for Railroad Culture in Weed, CA, where his Dad would have wanted it.

We are raising the funds to load the caboose onto a couple of flat-bed trucks, ship it across the country, unload it onto the soon-to-be-built track pad, and restore it to the way it looked when Utah lived in it. We are doing an online fundraiser and also accepting cash, checks, money orders, spare change, you name it, to reach our goal of \$25,000.

Please donate what you can today. See the website at www.thelongmemory.com and find the online fundraiser button/link to donate. Or if you prefer, write a check or money order payable to **The Long Memory**. Mail it to: **The Long Memory, P.O. Box 711694, Salt Lake City, UT 84171**. When complete, the rail car will house a complete collection of Utah Phillips' work and become a gathering spot for musicians and friends to sing, play music, tell stories, and carry on in the tradition of Fellow Worker Bruce "Utah" Phillips.

Please Donate Today and Help to Make This Happen!



Utah Phillips' "flanger" caboose, in Wolcott Vermont

Industrial Workers of the World returns to San Diego

By Marie Ida Johnson and Preston Chipps

For the first time in several decades, the IWW, also known as “the Wobblies,” is organizing workers again in San Diego. The IWW’s General Executive Board has issued a new charter for a San Diego General Membership Branch (GMB).

A proud history in San Diego

By 1907, just two years after our union’s founding, Wobblies were organizing in San Diego. By 1910, IWW Mixed Local 13, a predecessor of today’s General Membership Branch, was chartered. That August, Mexican immigrant IWWs struck at San Diego Consolidated Gas and Electric (now SDG&E) and won higher wages and a union shop. The union shop at the utility didn’t survive long as, unfortunately, many of the members soon returned to Mexico to participate in the Revolution. Also in August 1910, sewer diggers went on strike. They were composed of Mexican, Greek, and Italian immigrants, and American workers. The American workers were getting paid 25 cents per day more. The Mexicans were all IWW members and called the strike, and they were supported by most of the other workers. They won the strike, got their 25-cent-a-day raise—and a closed union shop at the sewer company. That same month, IWW members won a strike against the Barber Asphalt Company.

In 1911, Wobblies were instrumental in the Magonist Revolution in Mexicali and Tijuana. Many Wobblies participated in the Tijuana Commune, in which ordinary working people democratically ran the city. When another faction of the Mexican Revolution gained control of Baja California, Wobblies who were not citizens of Mexico were deported. Most of those deported were Americans, who were promptly imprisoned for violation of the Neutrality Act.

The IWW is best known in San Diego for one of its boldest moments. From 1912–1913, Local 13 fought the bloody San Diego Free Speech Fight right on the streets of downtown. After the San Diego Common Council passed an ordinance restricting gatherings within 49 blocks of the center of San Diego, Local 13 sent out a call for IWW members everywhere to come to San Diego to engage in civil disobedience to fight for repeal of the ordinance, and the San Diego Free Speech Fight was born. Under the ordinance, any group of three or more people was subject to arrest. The ordinance was aimed at union organizers who stood up on soapboxes on sidewalks and talked about

why people should join the union. (Religious speakers similarly standing on soapboxes had never “earned” an ordinance to stop them.)

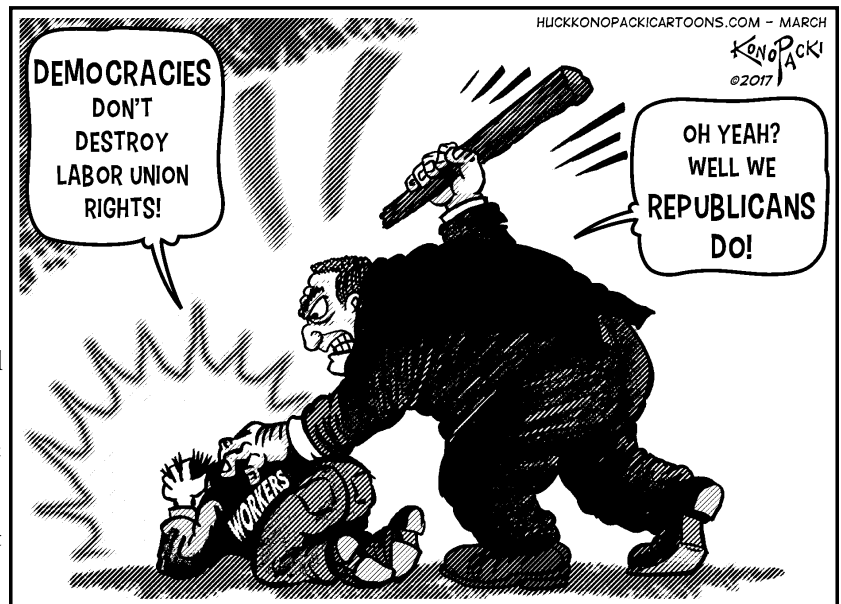
As many as 5,000 Wobblies, along with many others, answered the call from Local 13 to come to San Diego, stand up on a soapbox, violate the ordinance, get arrested, and refuse bail to force the city treasury to pay for their “room and board” in jail until the ordinance was repealed. The fire department turned fire hoses on the crowds, and one free-speech demonstrator died due to injuries inflicted upon him by police officers in San Diego. The jail was filled to over-capacity. This new tactic of filling the jails, pioneered by IWW, was often used later and by other movements, including the Civil Rights Movement’s Freedom Riders during the 1960s. We won the San Diego Free Speech Fight. This, along with similar Free Speech Fights in other cities, was a major victory for the First Amendment right of all people to freely and peacefully assemble in public.

As America recovered from the long nightmare of the 1950s’ McCarthyism, Wobblies supported the birth of the “New Left” and participated in building national organizations, such as Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Here in San Diego in 1970, first the street sellers and then the rest of the staff of the San Diego Street Journal newspaper organized as an IWW shop. With over 100 members, the branch was the largest in the US at the time, until the paper closed in 1972. From 1976 to 1979, the student-owned-and-operated Print Co-op at the University of California San Diego carried the IWW union “bug.” During this time a group of local musicians, the “Squalling Panther Fiddle Band,” were IWW members and used the IWW Recreational Workers Industrial Union (IU) 630 contract.

In 2012, the San Diego–Imperial Counties Labor Council organized a commemoration program for the centennial of the IWW’s San Diego Free Speech Fight. Following the

commemoration, a few local IWW members called a meeting, and over a score of local union activists began holding monthly meetings and building a new San Diego branch.

During these past five years, IWW members presented a 2012 teach-in (for Occupy San Diego) on the Haymarket Incident of 1886. We initiated a weekend-long training conference, open to all workers and conducted by the IWW’s Organizing Department, at the offices of American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Local 1931. We sponsored a “stop” at the union hall of the San Diego Education Association (SDEA) for the “Joe Hill Roadshow,” a national concert tour observing the centennial of the murder of Joe Hill by the State of Utah. We participated in the planning of annual May Day rallies and concerts. We joined picket lines put up by other unions, every chance we got. We are in the early stages of organizing workers at the County of San Diego, and we have filed em-



ployee organization registration papers with the County’s Labor Relations Office.

In 2017, once again, a San Diego IWW Branch has been chartered. Once again, that old Local 13 spirit lives. Labor historian Staughton Lynd has observed that, “The IWW has always had an influence out of proportion to the size of its membership.” Today, with almost 90 percent of the workforce in this country not unionized, the IWW is again growing, promoting the solidarity of working people everywhere, and living our motto that “An Injury to One, Is an Injury to All!” **IW**

May Day mass action will be historic 'Strike from Below'

By Sue Sturgis, www.facingsouth.org
March 30th, 2017

Hundreds of thousands of service workers across the South and the rest of the nation are planning to take part in a general strike for human rights and equality on May Day, which marks International Workers' Day. Organizers say the May 1 Strike, which aims to express the collective power of the country's most marginalized workers and to stop attacks by the Trump administration and its corporate allies, is the biggest general-strike organizing effort in the U.S. in over 70 years.

"The Trump administration's dangerous attacks against food worker families and all marginalized people continue a centuries-long history of oppression," the organizers said in a statement. "We will not sit by as families are shattered by immigration raids, Native sovereignty is violated, Muslims are banned, and Black and Brown communities face even more criminalization, trans people [are] excluded and while corporate interest[s] drive down wages, safety protections, organizing rights, and rapidly destroy the environment."

The strike is being organized by the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA) and the Service Employees International Union United Service Workers West (SEIU USWW). The FCWA is a national coalition of worker-based organizations including the Farmworker Association of Florida, the Mississippi Workers Center for Human Rights, Northwest Arkansas Workers Justice Center, OUR Walmart, and the Restaurant Opportunities Center United (ROCU), while the SEIU USWW represents more than 40,000 janitors, security officers, airport service workers, and other property service workers in California.

The strike also involves the Movement for Black Lives, National Domestic Workers Alliance, Alliance for Fair Food, and other groups that advocate for embattled workers and communities.

So far, 350,000 service workers have pledged to strike, BuzzFeed reports. That includes about 300,000 food chain workers and 40,000 unionized service workers.

The action is set to take place 11 years to the day after the Great American Boycott, also known as A Day Without Immigrants, a general strike of undocumented immigrant workers and their supporters called to protest the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005 (H.R. 4437), draconian immigration reform legislation that passed the U.S. House of



Atlanta welcomes immigrants and refugees

Representatives but failed in the Senate.

Immigrants and immigrants rights advocates are also playing key roles in organizing this year's May Day strike, which is being discussed on social media using the hashtags #May1Strike and #ShutItDownMay1.

'More powerful than hate and greed'

The last time a general strike of comparable magnitude took place in the U.S. was in Oakland, California, in 1946—a year that saw numerous labor actions nationwide by workers whose demands for higher wages had been repressed during World War II.

The Oakland General Strike was called in December of that year to support the city's striking department store workers, who were mostly women and poorly paid as a consequence. Over 100,000 workers participated in the general strike and effectively shut down the city, as *In These Times* reported.

But the Oakland General Strike fell apart after a day, and it and the many other labor actions that year led to passage of the anti-union Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, which limited strikes and allowed states to pass so-called "right-to-work" laws that weaken unions by barring employees in unionized workplaces from being compelled to join the union or pay dues. Today a total of 28 states have right-to-work laws on the books, including all 13 Southern states—one of the reasons why the traditional union movement is so weak in the region.

However, polls show growing sup-

port for unions, especially among young and low-wage workers. For example, three-quarters of people ages 18 to 29 say they have a favorable opinion of labor unions compared to only about half of those 50 and older. And unions are viewed favorably by 61 percent of people who earn less than \$30,000.

A number of traditional union locals are involved in the May 1 Strike through their membership in the FCWA, including the Teamsters Joint Council 7, UFCW Local 770 and UNITE HERE's Food Service Division. But also represented in the alliance behind the strike are nonprofit workers' centers that organize and provide support to low-wage workers who aren't represented by traditional unions or are legally excluded from union coverage by labor laws. Some of the first workers centers were established by African-American activists in the Carolinas in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

In advance of the May 1 action, organizers have set up a GoFundMe page to raise money for the general strike fund with a \$100,000 goal. They are also inviting people to volunteer for a rapid-response network to challenge any retaliation taken against striking workers using protest, online advocacy, and pro-bono legal representation.

"We need to show this administration, Congress, and large corporate interests that our human and economic worth is more powerful than their agenda of hate and greed," the organizers said. **IW**

LUCI: LA Union Cooperative Initiative



The 13 workers who decided to join and form a cooperative celebrate the anniversary of their business (Photo: Aurelia Ventura / La Opinión) <http://www.luci.coop/>

By Jacqueline García, February 22, 2017

Car washers celebrate their car wash business in South Los Angeles. After the owner closed the company overnight, 13 workers organized and re-registered the service as a cooperative.

After a battle to get unionized, the Vermont Gage Car Wash was one of 16 businesses that did it in 2014. But before enjoying the benefits of the union, the workers had to face a crisis.

Miguel Cruz was one of the 13 unionized workers of the car wash who already enjoyed worker protections. In 2015, the 31-year-old Mexican, who lived near work, saw one night that they were taking things out of the business.

“The owner closed the business without telling us anything,” recalls Cruz.

The next day the employees came to work and the car wash service did not open, nor did the owner appear.

“We were waiting three days for answers and for our check, and she told us that she had already given it to the union,” said Cruz, saying it was a lie.

They form a cooperative

The disappointment of losing their job, instead of cowering them, strengthened the 13 workers, who decided to take over the business

themselves. With the help of their union, United Steelworkers Local 675, and the Los Angeles Union Cooperative (LUCI) they began to raise funds.

The group registered the business again but this time as a workers’ cooperative. In this case the business is controlled by the workers, who have invested money. The profits of the business are equitable and the board of directors of the cooperative is in charge of voting in the decisions. Workers continue to benefit from their union, and LUCI advises them on business development.

Union representative Manuel Ramirez said United Steelworkers Local 675 represents about 30 car wash businesses ranging from San Diego to Pasadena.

“We strive for workers to have safe

drinking water, on-time breaks, overtime paid, contracts with a percentage above the minimum wage, and we also negotiate holidays and get paid for sick days that they do not use,” Ramirez said.

Most important, in this case, is that workers now feel they have a voice and feel they are being heard, the representative added.

Happy employees

José Manuel Zúñiga, 56, and part of the group of 13 car washers that make up the cooperative, said that when he saw the strength of his colleagues to fight for the business he decided to join. Zúñiga had some fear of losing his job, but he did not lose faith.

“I am happy to be part of this group, because now I know it is a very strong obligation,” he added.

Rusty Hicks, executive director of the Los Angeles County Labor Federation (AFL-CIO), who was present at the car wash celebration, said that this group of employees is a role model.

“The fight for workers to have a better life began in this same place four or five years ago and now we are back where the employees have advanced and they have shown us that if you want something done right you have to do it yourself,” Hicks said congratulating them on having the courage to continue the business under his command. **IW**

This article originally appeared in Spanish at <http://laopinion.com/2017/02/22/carwasheros-celebran-su-negocio-de-lavado-de-autos-en-el-sur-de-los-angeles/>.

You're Lucky That You Have a Job

Lyrics by S. Harvey, June 2016
(To the tune of “The Soup Song/My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean”)

D G D
You're lucky that you have a job, kid
D G A
You're lucky that you're getting paid
D G D
You'd better just keep your mouth shut, kid
G A D
You'd better just stay well afraid

CHORUS:
D G
Lucky, Lucky A D
You're lucky that you have a job
D G
Lucky, Lucky A D
You're lucky that you have a job

There's plenty of desperate people
Who'll work for the money I pay
There's thousands more out there just like you
So you'd better just do things my way

CHORUS

As long as you keep your head down, kid
And think that you're all on your own
Well, I can just do what I like, kid
As long as you think you're alone

CHORUS

I don't want to hear One Big Union
Or the rest of that old lefty crap
'Cause I do live in fear of the prospect
That you'll organize out of my trap

CHORUS

So let's sing the song that I love most:
Of course, it's “You Did It My Way”
You know you're a valued team member
As long as you do what I say.

CHORUS

Unions & cooperatives: Allies in the struggle to build **democratic workplaces**

By Lisabeth L. Ryder, **Grassroots Economic Organizing**

<http://www.geo.coop/node/199>

As labor organizers, we struggle in the field every day to improve the lives of workers; we are in search of tools and alternatives for working people that will meet the needs of today's casualized and insecure workforce, with shrinking or negligible benefits. It is in the spirit of innovative leadership that we propose that the labor movement use worker cooperatives, an alternative organizing strategy added to more traditional labor organizing methods, as a means of returning control of their lives to the American working people.

The work of unions is to create workplace democracy, and in the larger picture, economic democracy. Currently, we do this in the context of an adversarial relationship between employer and employee. A worker cooperative is an alternative that reaches outside of the limitations of this model, converting workplaces into democratically run institutions owned by the workers. Worker cooperatives are not a panacea for the woes of today's labor movement. Yet worker cooperatives have a long history in the American workers' struggle for economic democracy and hold potential for expanding the labor movement into unexpected workforces, as well as providing alternatives for better serving the workers we already represent.

Our objective is to bring about an institutional change that allows members of worker cooperatives to become full dues-paying members of labor unions and to make the formation of new worker cooperatives one of our organizing strategies. Unions could assist in the formation of worker cooperatives by forming an organizing committee in the workplace, researching a business plan, finding funding sources, preparing the legal structure, preparing the documents of incorporation, offering training in leadership development and conflict resolution, acquiring health-care coverage, and structuring a pension plan and 401(k). Incorporating worker cooperatives into union membership would broaden our political power and dues base, as well as expand our organizing potential.

As the labor movement moves into organizing non-traditional workforces, such as child and home care providers, we have already started moving away from the realm of traditional employer-employee relation-

ships. In these campaigns around the country, organizers have seen worker cooperatives as providing means for improving the lives of these workforces. ... As members of organized labor, they would be in a better position to speak truth to power.

Worker cooperatives are usually restricted to the private sector, but subcontracting of public sector jobs creates an opportunity for organizing worker cooperatives in the public sector. The conservative program of cutting taxes and shrinking government has led to a public sector workforce under attack. The rising tide of contracting out public sector jobs is shrinking the core workforce for traditional organizing of public sector unions. Yet the large national and international corporations that contract with public agencies have proven difficult targets for traditional labor organizing.

When traditional organizing methods have failed against a subcontractor, unions could assist the workers in forming their unit into a worker cooperative that could bid for the local contract. Since they would not be supporting large management salaries, they could under-bid the large corporate subcontractor.

The labor movement could then use their lobbying strength to create legislation and budgetary policy favoring local worker cooperatives. Awarding a contract locally keeps the monies in the local community, within the local tax base. Much like the Living Wage campaigns, this strategy would help stem the tide of outsourcing of public sector jobs, while safeguarding of public monies and ensuring the greatest community benefit from the expenditure of public funds.

Yet there are obstacles to this marriage. The labor movement is in a life and death struggle in an economic war. Representing only eleven percent of the American workforce, the labor movement seeks to organize in larger and larger bites with fewer and less experienced staff (for those in the field, this sometimes seems uncomfortably close to the logic of the desperate gambler who places larger

and more reckless bets to recoup devastating losses). Worker cooperatives tend to be small business endeavors, ideologically attractive but strategically unattractive.

To win the numbers game, labor must do a better job of agitating, educating, and mobilizing its members to become volunteer member organizers actively involved in small scale organizing campaigns in their local communities on an ongoing basis. As it stands, most locals lack an organizing program and lack organizing targets. Empowering locals to help organize worker cooperatives in their community would benefit all working people.

Therefore we appeal to the worker cooperative community to join with us in developing the labor-coop paradigm by helping us to find organizing targets in the worker cooperative model. As we all know, the labor movement is built on small incremental gains of brave committed people standing up for their ideals. Healthcare and other benefits, worker's compensation, the forty-hour work week, eight-hour overtime, vacations and sick days, pay increases, health and safety regulations, and the ever-popular weekend add up to a lifestyle we now take for granted. Many smaller bites may prove a more easily digestible staple diet for union organizing without precluding the periodic feast. **IW**

Lisabeth Ryder is the Western regional field administrator for the American Federation of State County & Municipal Employees in Oakland, California. lryder@afscme.org



To escape Trump's America, we need to bring the militant labor tactics of 1946



By Brandon S.

Back to the Future, Part 1:

It seems that since the day after the 2016 US election, the Internet has been ablaze with calls for “general strikes.” January 20th, March 8th, May 1st ... there have been more Internet calls for general strikes than we’ve ever seen before, though what people mean by “general strike” seems to be vaguer than ever. But can these calls for general strikes go from word to deed, or are they just a new version of “Occupy Nothing, Demand Everything”? Working class people in the US have forgotten how to wage successful strikes on even a small scale—or rather we’ve been made to forget. If we want to start winning, we have to re-learn what it takes.

This article was originally written in the aftermath of the election, as a response to the original calls for a “general strike” to prevent Trump’s inauguration. The original article has been split into two parts for publication. The first part examines the last official general strike in the US, just over 70 years ago in Oakland, CA, and asks what we can learn for today. The second part will look closer at the current possibilities we have for building a fighting working-class movement from the bottom-up, one that knows how to strike and win.

The last general strike in the US was in Oakland in 1946. That year there were six citywide general strikes, plus nationwide strikes in steel, coal, and rail transport. More than five million workers struck in the biggest strike wave of US history. So what happened? Why haven’t we ever gone out like that again? Congress amended US labor law in 1947, adding massive penalties for the very tactics that had allowed strikes to spread and be suc-

cessful—and the business unions accepted the new laws. In fact, they even went beyond them by voluntarily adding “no-strike clauses” to every union contract for the last 70 years, and agreeing that when they do strike in between contracts it will only be for their own wages and working conditions, not to support anybody else or to apply pressure about things happening in the broader society. When we allowed ourselves to lose our most important weapons 70 years ago, we took the first step towards Trump’s America. We’re stuck in the wrong timeline—if we want to get out, we have to bring the militant labor

tactics of 1946 back to the future!

The Oakland General Strike began early in the morning of December 3, 1946, when police were trying to break up a picket line of mostly female department store clerks who had been on strike since October 21 (“Back to the Future Day”). A streetcar driver saw it happening and stopped his car. This stopped all the cars behind him. All of the passengers who were no longer going to work began immediately picketing at other businesses in Oakland, calling out those workers, and shutting down the businesses. The strike spread from there. There are some impor-



The retail workers who began the general strike. Oakland, 1946.



Pickers crowd Broadway in Oakland, backing traffic up for blocks

tant points that we should draw from this:

1. The heroes of this story are the department store clerks who maintained an effective picket for six weeks, shutting down the operations of the business, refusing limitations on their ability to picket, and defending their picket when the cops were trying to break it. We need to re-learn how to organize “hard” pickets, which actually disrupt commerce, and how to defend those pickets from our enemies. We also need to reject all of the limitations that courts, and the unions, will tell us we have to impose on our pickets.

2. The streetcar driver who stopped his car when he saw the cops breaking the picket deserves an honorable mention, like Peter Norman (“the white dude” at the Mexico City Olympics). He knew which side he was on, and he didn’t just keep moving. He saw fellow workers under attack and he used his power as a worker to support the right side—despite the fact that the retail workers strike had no immediate tie to his own wages and working conditions. He didn’t ask his union if it was OK. He didn’t wait to go back to his union meeting and ask them to pass a resolution supporting the retail workers. Basically, it doesn’t even matter whether he was a union member. It doesn’t even matter if he abstractly thought that women should be quitting their jobs now that World War II was over, or if he abstractly supported Jim Crow—in practice, he supported

fellow workers against the cops. Since 1947, “secondary strikes” like that have been illegal, and his union could have been attacked by the court—but the union probably would have been training him all along that he can only strike in between contracts, and definitely not for anyone else’s cause. We need to reject any limitation on our ability to strike in support of fellow workers, or to strike about things beyond our own specific workplaces.

3. The passengers on his streetcar and the ones behind it also deserve credit for immediately forming mass pickets, reinforcing the retail workers’ picket, and also spreading throughout the city and pulling other workers out on strike. They didn’t come up with this all in the moment; they learned how to do this over years of tough strikes, including the 1934 general strike in San Francisco that also shut down Oakland. Mass pickets have also been illegal since 1947, and we’ve lost those traditions. We urgently need to relearn them.

4. The unions didn’t call the Oakland General Strike—but they sure as hell called it off, and left the retail workers alone in the cold. The general strikes that have happened in the US have almost never been called ahead of time by union. They’ve almost always happened by workers’ semi-spontaneously going on strike

in solidarity with other workers, supporting the demands of the first group, and adding their own. (I say “semi”-spontaneously because the working class had years of practice and preparation leading into each strike—something that’s been forcibly removed from our culture over the past 70 years.) Yet by the third day of the Oakland General Strike, the local union leadership was already declaring that the strike was over and everyone except the retail workers should go back to work. As the streetcar drivers were told by their union president, “The International Brotherhood of Teamsters is bitterly opposed to any general strike for any cause. I am therefore ordering you and all those associated with you who are members of our International Union to return to work as soon as possible ... No general strike has ever yet brought success to the labor movement.” Once the retail workers were left to keep striking alone, it was only a matter of time before they were beaten and had to give up. If we’re serious about reviving strikes, we need to prepare people as much as we can for how quickly the union leadership and the Democratic Party will do everything they can to prevent strikes from the start, and to get workers back to work.

The 1946 Oakland General Strike represents the last gasp of the militant labor movement that “the greatest generation” built. They were standing on the shoulders of giants, but by trusting politicians, bureaucrats, and “the rule of law” they also allowed their movement to be shackled, hobbled, and eventually drawn and quartered. We can learn from their movement, but we can only take it as a starting point. Ours will have to be even bolder. We’ll look next time at some of the seeds in our present movements that can blossom into mighty oaks. **IW**



Workers from blue-, white-, and pink-collar jobs joined the strike

Coat-hanger direct action

By Andrew Miller

At the end of the 2016 session of the Ohio house and senate, the politicians passed several pet-project bills, including two bills that unconstitutionally restrict a woman's access to abortions. One of these was entitled the "Heartbeat Bill" which would make abortion illegal after as early as six weeks, something already declared unconstitutional by the federal Supreme Court. The other bill would prevent abortion after 20 weeks, which is also currently unconstitutional under the Roe v Wade decision, which allows an abortion up to 24 weeks.

Earlier in 2016, the Obama administration was forced to take action to block states from defunding Planned Parenthood, which had been attempted here in Ohio as well. If you're unaware, Planned Parenthood is a primary source of healthcare and pregnancy prevention for women, particularly working class women.

A broad cross-section of my comrades and I made calls, repeatedly, to Ohio Gov. Kasich asking him to veto the bills. With each passing day that Kasich was unresponsive we were losing hope. This wasn't just a matter of whether he vetoed the bills or signed them into law; it was also a matter that if he took no action in two weeks, the bills would become law automatically.

After a week of silence from the Kasich camp, I had a random idea to place wire hangers along the fencing that separates the Ohio Statehouse from the Rife Tower, where Kasich's office is.

One post to Facebook about the idea grew into hundreds of wire hangers. People had adorned them with messages and red ribbons lining the fence along three of the four city blocks that surround the Statehouse.

Hours later local media was covering the action, which led to national coverage in *The New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, *The Huffington Post*, and *Think Progress*.

As a State employee, I technically work under Kasich—but as I see it I work for the people of Ohio. I take this very seriously, often to my own detriment, such as losing out on various opportunities that more compliant employees receive. And as a human being I think it is an equally serious endeavor to work for equality and liberty—which is why, even as a card-carrying AFSCME–OCSEA unionist, I'm a Wobbly first. The One Big

Union is the only one I count on to work for equal rights and the defeat of patriarchal capitalism, corporatism, and fascism.

For most people, though, they shy away from taking to the streets, because the risk feels too big: The cost of taking time to make picket signs or even to just show up feels too high, and the ease of push-button-protest feels like enough of an effort. Unfortunately, it is only through direct action that we can get the goods.

So why'd the coat hanger protest bring out so much support? Certainly women's rights are a hot issue, particularly now that we have a "pussy-grabber-in-chief," but Trump's fascist rhetoric—including more-aggressive policing of protestors—has people scared.



The fence around Ohio's Statehouse is festooned with coat hangers

I think the key to this action was that it was easy: People were invited to come down and put up their hangers at their own time and pace. It was easy, because most people have a few wire hangers in their closet already.

It had a social aspect to it for the people who wanted to participate en masse, as well, with other people attaching a march and a meet-up to the action. Even people not able to come down to the Statehouse managed to join in by purchasing large quantities of wire hangers online and having them shipped directly to the Governor's office.

In an interview with *The Sun* magazine titled "It's Easier Than We Think," retired politician and social activist Ralph Nader gave a critique of American activism. He explained why serious social issues often failed to overcome special-interest corporate lobbyists. The answer seems so obvious, but is rarely put into action.

"It all comes down to us. One percent

or less of the population in Congressional districts around the country could reverse Congress's position on most of these issues, as long as that one percent represents majority public opinion." Nader said. "Activists usually hold mass rallies against war or climate change in Washington, D.C., on a weekend, when members of Congress aren't there. All this energy that it takes to put together a rally sort of goes up into the ether. The event doesn't get that much coverage either, because there are not as many reporters working on the weekend. The activists don't take up a collection at the rally and raise money to open an office with four full-time employees. With two hundred thousand people, you can quickly raise enough to pay four people's salaries for a year. Then, when the members of Congress came back on a weekday, they would find more than just a bunch of crushed cups and soda cans on the Mall. They would find four full-time advocates who are connected with a lot more people.

"We have to be smarter," Nader continued. "Don't just hope that the government will hear you. Summon the senators and representatives to your town meetings. We are the sovereign people, and we have to make our hired hands in Congress come to our events and do their homework on the issues."

Political rapper P.O.S often speaks about increasing the tension. Tension is key. This isn't the difference between peaceful protest and violent protest; this is about making it clear that there is something to be lost and something to be gained. This is about making people feel like the only way to shake the tension is to do something about it.

Peace or violence will occur as deemed necessary, and we must be accomplices in this with our fellow workers, not simply allies to them.

The Indigenous Action organization expressed this best in their manifesto on the topic by stating that, "As accomplices we are compelled to become accountable and responsible to each other. That is the nature of trust."

This coat-hanger direct action resulted in a veto of the Heartbeat Bill, but Kasich signed the 20-week ban, so now the courts will decide, at the cost of women's rights and taxpayer dollars.

Solidarity forever. **IW**

Momentum builds for MAY DAY strikes

By Jonathan Rosenblum,
LaborNotes, March 23, 2017

Shop steward Tomas Mejia sensed something was different when 600 janitors streamed into the Los Angeles union hall February 16—far more than for a regular membership meeting. Chanting “Huelga! Huelga!” (“Strike! Strike!”), they voted unanimously to strike on May Day.

This won't be a strike against their employers. The janitors of SEIU United Service Workers West felt driven, Mejia says, “to strike with the community” against the raids, threats, and immigrant-bashing hate speech that the Trump administration has unleashed.

“The president is attacking our community,” said Mejia, a member of his union's executive board. “Immigrants have helped form this country, we've contributed to its beauty, but the president is attacking us as criminal.”

Following the Los Angeles vote, union janitors elsewhere in California have also voted to “strike with the community” on May 1. As the meetings gathered steam, Mejia reports, workers in schools, grocery stores, restaurants, and farms started talking about joining the walkout too.

And the strike is going on the road: SEIU-USWW is partnering with the human rights group Global Exchange, worker centers, the Southern Border Communities Coalition, and faith groups to organize a “Caravan against Fear” that will tour California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas in April, staging rallies, cultural events, direct-action trainings, and community strike votes leading up to May Day.

The biggest yet

In recent years, May Day has seen demonstrations to support immigrant rights. This year's mobilizations will center on defending immigrants but weave in other issues as well, such as climate justice and the de-funding of public education.

Up and down the West Coast, we are likely to see the largest May Day strikes since hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers walked off the job in 2006.

A thousand miles to the north of Mejia's home city, leaders of the unions representing Seattle public school teachers, graduate employees at the University of Washington, and staff at Seattle's community colleges have called for a strike to protest the Trump administration's attacks on immigrants, Muslims, workers, women, and members of the LGBT community. The public school teachers and UW graduate

employees are scheduling strike votes in the coming weeks.

“We're horrified about what Trump has done,” said Alex Bacon, a community college administrative assistant and member of AFSCME Local 304. And given the Trump administration's support for “right-to-work” legislation and slashing healthcare and retirement programs, he said, “even if we're not in the crosshairs this second, we're next.”

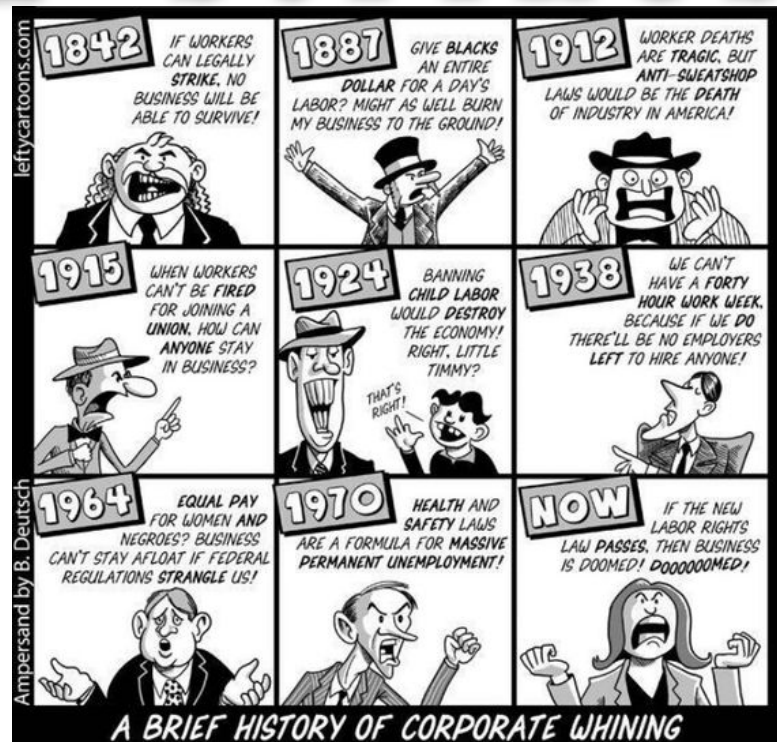
'Summer of resistance'

A March meeting organized by the county labor council and Seattle City Councilmember Kshama Sawant brought together immigrant community leaders and representatives from two dozen Seattle-area unions—including laborers, Teamsters, Boeing machinists, stagehands, hotel workers, and city and county workers—to plan a May Day of mass resistance. Participants acknowledged the need for creativity rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

A week later, the Labor Council committed its support for an immigrant-led May Day march, in a resolution urging unions “to consider all forms of action on May 1, 2017, whether striking, walking out, taking sick days, extended lunch hours, exercising rights of conscience, organizing demonstrations or teach-ins, or any other acts of collective expression that builds solidarity across communities.”

Labor Council head Nicole Grant described May Day as just the beginning of a “summer of resistance,” showing that working people can and will respond to Trump's attacks with disruptive action. “We won't take down this president in one day,” added Sawant. “But on May Day we are taking our resistance to another level.”

Climate justice activists are also folding into the May Day movement. In Washington state, the Sierra Club and other environmental organizations are calling for an “Earth Day to May Day Action Week,” blending Earth Day April 22 and a “March for Science” into a full



week of workshops and protests culminating in a big May 1 mobilization.

Local connections

Nationally, many union leaders haven't weighed in on the May Day strike movement, in part because their contracts with employers include no-strike clauses.

Mejia acknowledges the risk of striking, but says, “The government is criminalizing us.” The bigger risk, he says, would be to not fight back, because inaction will only embolden Trump and his billionaire backers.

Key to successful May Day strikes, many activists point out, is connecting local fights to anti-Trump resistance activities. At the University of Washington, for instance, where one-third of the graduate employees are international students, union members are demanding that university administrators bargain with them over the impact of Trump's Muslim ban and other executive orders. And they are pressing the university to declare itself a “sanctuary campus” and to waive a discriminatory fee it now imposes on international students. **IW**

Jonathan Rosenblum is the author of Beyond \$15: Immigrant Workers, Faith Activists, and the Revival of the Labor Movement (Beacon Press). A member of UAW Local 1981 (National Writers Union), he also works as a community organizer for the office of Seattle City Councilmember Kshama Sawant.

The Cooperative Manifesto I

By John Paul Wright

Me, my, mine—
violence erupts
a chain link fence
a freedom of speech
zone.
Those people!
That man!
That woman!
Not!
No!
Ready, Aim ... Fire.
“Just Sayin’ !!!”
A troll speaks—
A news speak—
ROTFL
LOL
SMH
forgive them “Father” they know
not—
and on and on we go.

In 1948 a man thought
backwards and came up
with 1984. Screens would
be placed in party homes.
Big Brother, was born.
The thought police!
“that’s not politically correct!”
“racist”
“scab”
“sissy”
Just tell it LIKE it is ...
& IT IS WHAT IT IS!
A fear based pathology.
Meanwhile ...

In a galaxy, far, far away—

(The little farm boy, after his uncle
and aunt, were killed by the empire,
is pulled into a fight—against good
and evil. He is good at deer hunting
and loves to fish. He is afraid of
becoming his father, and falls into
the old-time religion. One day,
after hand to hand combat, he wakes
up, under the care of the rebellion,
and
finds his body, becoming more and
more
like the machine he is fighting.)

So, what was his fear?
What are you afraid of?
That is how Big Brother will get you!
He already owns your farm.
He is making your music
& branding your culture—
his industry, his vision
and mission ...
Mom and Pop are dead!
The little town square?
The family values and LOVE
THY NEIGHBOR?
So,
Will you join his team?

It’s a labor of LOVE!
is HATE ...
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY!
WAR, IS PEACE!

not to mention ...

(He has a 401k for you ...
A 40-hour work week.

Forced overtime, and interns
to exploit! You won’t need
a union, because, He, will
listen to all your wants.
He shares a vision and to be
employed? those who
suffer, just didn’t
make the grade!

Innovations of profit!
A little competition,
won’t hurt you,
come to the dark side—
“use your anger!”

Or, just sit down
shut up and listen ...

Get on board,
little children,

(Once there were two young men,
who just liked to party—
and were drug into middle earth,
their best buddy, lost. So naturally,
they went to find him. They found
a forest, for the trees. An old man
in the woods, who had become set
in his ways, but, had the power!
He had many friends, who, could
help
but, they were so slow at acting.
The youth, tricking the elder,
took him to the point of production.
& on a side note, He, and his friends,
the old man, the big trees, had lost
their
femininity, their wives had left them
because they were? but, when HE
was taken to the river, led like a horse
to water ... found his friends,

cut down by an industrial wizard.
He calls out! They wake up, and he
and his friends, the little people—
free a deluge that puts out the fires
of dark creation!

&
the wheel
of history—
keeps turning—
the markets are free!

“Would you LIKE
to play a game?”

“Wouldn’t you prefer a good game of
chess?”

“NO! Joshua!”

“let’s play GLOBAL TRADE
AND SUPPLY CHAIN”

10 print “two plus two equals five”
20 print “four legs good, two legs
bad”
30 Goto 10

(Unless they are “green”
have wings—are “sustainable”
and have branded “care”
as a product.)

The Farmer, wakes from his sleeping
and finds his farm, town and way
of life, in the hands of a few.
Wal-Mart, and the Empire—
dressed in clothing made from
a silk road of rubber, diesel
and

“Would you like to play
an underground spiritual game?”

How about ...

COLONIAL MENTALITY?

40 End!

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Marx on the silver screen

Bruno Leipold, March 2, 2017, *Jacobin*

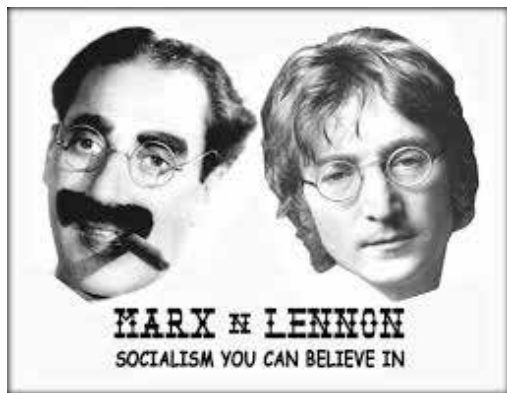
A small group of peasants warily collect wood in the forest. The poverty and desperation is clear in their faces. A voiceover alerts us that the law has turned this simple act of survival into an illegal act of wood theft. The peasants, sensing a disturbance, look around nervously. Riders ominously appear in the distance.

The voiceover, quoting Montesquieu, tells us that there are two types of corruption: one where the people do not follow the law and the other where the law corrupts the people. The riders charge at the peasants and brutally cut them down.

We might expect a film about Karl Marx to open with exploited factory workers toiling in nineteenth century industrial misery. That Raoul Peck's new feature film, *The Young Karl Marx*, instead decides to lead with a more bucolic scene is a fitting biographical touch. One of Marx's first forays into journalism (from which the voiceover is taken) was an investigation into wood theft in the Rhineland, an experience that put the philosophy graduate in the "embarrassing position"—he later recalled—"of having to discuss what is known as material interests."

That attention to historical detail characterizes the film as a whole, and testifies to the clearly loving amount of research that went into making it. The result is an entertaining and surprisingly funny portrait of the young Marx. A friend, who had read Marx but knew little of his life and character, described watching the film as a similar experience to seeing your favorite band perform live for the first time.

The film charts Marx's life from 1843 to 1848, as a young man in his mid to late twenties. After the Prussian censors shut down his Cologne newspaper, Marx eagerly embraces the opportunity to move to Paris to start a new journalistic venture. There, with his new wife Jenny von West-



August Diehl (right) as Karl Marx meets Friedrich Engels, played by Stefan Konarske, in Raoul Peck's *The Young Karl Marx*

phalen, he throws himself into the city's socialist milieu.

He soon encounters Friedrich Engels, and in one of the film's strongest sequences, we see how the two men overcome their initial hostility and set out onto the streets of Paris to celebrate their newfound comradeship. The film then follows their joint struggle against various other contemporary socialist leaders, culminating in their collaboration on the *Communist Manifesto*.

The Young Karl Marx is one of less than a handful of screen adaptations about Marx (as opposed to the vast and ever-increasing supply of documentaries and written biographies about the Old Man). This is surprising because, in comparison to some great historical thinkers, Marx actually lived a pretty interesting life. He participated in a revolution, had three of his newspapers shut down, and was forcibly exiled four times. His relationship with Jenny, while marred by the premature death of four of their seven children and Marx's (possible) unfaithfulness, was also a genuine love story. Any screenwriter would seem to have plenty of material. Yet there are, to my knowledge, just three feature-length film adaptations of Marx's life. ...

One of the more surprising elements of *The Young Karl Marx* is the extent to which it dives into the complicated world of early communist politics. Marx and En-

gels's battles with Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Wilhelm Weitling, and Karl Grün are all given extensive screen time.

On my first viewing of the film, the focus on these disputes seemed esoteric, and the characters' portrayal a little cartoonish. But this impression softened the second time I watched the movie, as both audiences seemed to have followed the political disagreements without much confusion and appreciated the humorous interactions. ...

The Young Karl Marx is likely to entertain left-wing moviegoers across the globe. It was enthusiastically received by the audience at its premiere last month at the Berlin International Film Festival (which included most of the leadership of Die Linke, the German Left Party). Less politicized audiences are likely to be impressed by Marx's humor, which might help dispel the image of a dour old man with a beard. The film will also, I imagine, play a useful educational role in the future as a lively accompaniment to courses on Marx.

In short, committed socialists and average moviegoers alike have reason to look forward to the film's worldwide release. Peck clearly wanted to bring Marx's story to a wider audience, and with *The Young Karl Marx*, he's succeeded. **IW**

Bruno Leipold is writing a PhD in political theory on Karl Marx and republicanism.

The big difference between organizing and mobilizing: How unions can win in the future

A discussion on what ails the labor movement and why we need to stop ignoring the rank-and-file follows.



Read the entire discussion at <http://www.alternet.org/labor/how-unions-can-win-future>.

Michal Rozworski: You've argued that organized labor today doesn't face an external crisis of circumstances, but a crisis of strategy. If we have a crisis of strategy, what are we missing? What strategies will work today?

Jane McAlevey: It's an important question, and I should clarify a little bit. There are external factors; I don't want to dismiss that. The changing nature of capitalism has made things very difficult, so have trade agreements and globalization.

There has been this recognition in the last twenty years or so, in the USA in particular, that we have a crisis. The conditions are very difficult; the employer offensive is very difficult. The problem is that the way the US labor movement took the decision to look for additional leverage was to walk away from workers in the workplace and hire people to think strategically in the labor movement. To me, this summed it all up. The question wasn't: Do you know how to talk to a worker?

The development of the corporate cam-

paign has been a colossal disaster. It's an evolution in some ways of taking agency away from workers at every level inside the labor movement. The key strategic pivot we have to make is having a ton of faith in the capacities of ordinary rank-and-file workers and in the ordinary intelligence of workers. We have to prioritize our strategy on teaching, skilling up, and training tens of thousands of workers how to fight.

Organizing isn't rocket science, but it is a serious skill and a craft. We have to build an army of people in the field who can actually contend with capital on the local level. Not talking to workers and having a strategy that fundamentally avoided workers for several decades is what we need to change and what we can change.

MR: How do we, as a labor movement and a Left, find a language that really speaks to people again and relates to them?

JM: First, we need to worry less about how we talk and worry more about listening. We stopped listening to workers and that's part of disregarding the intelligence of ordinary people.

We had this arrogant leadership team that came into the US labor movement after 1995. They just thought, "We're smarter than workers, smarter than everyone."

The steps to a good organizing conversation, to a one-on-one, are a framework to how we can be talking collectively, as well. There, it's 70–30: 70 percent listening and 30 percent talking. Even the 30 percent talking is really agitational; it's a series of specific questions that allow people to begin to self-analyze the crisis in their life.

The framework of the conversation is so important. People have to engage in self-discovery through face-to-face conversation. Organizing tools and an organizing conversation are literally about a process of self-discovery. People begin to systematize and analyze what's going wrong in their life.

MR: So it is people's own experience, moving toward something broader, that can then bring them out together.

JM: Absolutely. People have to come to their own conclusion that there is something deeply wrong with the political economy system that we have.

Our assumptions about who's going to think what are so often wrong. That's why

it's so fun to do an organizing conversation with just a worker on the door. You can pull up to a door, see a conservative bumper sticker or something else, and start making assumptions. But then you go in there, and through the process of a good, long, face-to-face conversation, almost every time, the individual comes out pissed off at their boss, understands that their boss is connected to a bigger system, and starts for the first time to think, "I can do something about this if we act collectively."

The main thing is that we have to get people to understand collective action. That's the biggest challenge.

MR: This makes me think of Fight for 15, which is doing this in some ways, taking people and connecting them to something broader. In other ways, however, it seems to fall more on the side of what you call mobilizing. We're seeing pushing of the core issue of minimum-wage increases but less actual organizing or larger collective structures coming out of it. Is there tension between these goals? How do these new movements relate to what you consider organizing?

JM: The entire focus of my next book is an analysis, using what I'm calling mobilizing models versus organizing models. The Fight for 15 stuff is very much a mobilizing model.

The very first real \$15 campaign, was the one at Sea-Tac Airport. It was worker-led, there's unionization coming out of it, and they won \$15 now.

They didn't get a phased-in model that's very complicated, where the minimum wage becomes \$15 in 2022, when it's no longer \$15 because it isn't indexed. We should be looking more closely at that original campaign rather than the mostly publicity, social media campaign we have now.

MR: In order to build community solidarity, we need to take on the resentment—cynically manufactured, but still very real—between private- and public-sector workers. How do we fight this?

JM: My line is: there's just the economy. Organizing is about having hard conversations. It is fundamentally about having hard conversations with people and not running away from hard issues. You can't win a union campaign in the US environment if you don't do that. **IW**

What about **unwaged** labor?

By **Kristin K. and Jessica Smith**

We met each other before either one of us had kids and recently reconnected. It turns out we're both employed but unwaged: "stay-at-home" parents. And we both had a period of absence from the IWW after we had kids—Kristin because the branch abruptly changed meeting spaces from a child-friendly community center to a cramped space, and Jessica partly because arranging childcare was a struggle.

So Kristin asked Jessica to share her thoughts as an unwaged household laborer:

"Does the IWW feel relevant to the kind of work you do?"

Jessica's answer:

"Honestly, the short answer is it doesn't. I rejoined because I want to help with others' efforts, and because I believe the IWW does good work, but if I didn't already have a history with the union, I am not sure I would see a place for myself in it."

Kristin's answer was similar:

"I've been to a lot of Organizer Training 101s and felt alienated when all the roleplays and situations apply only in workplaces with more than one worker. So I feel like I'm supporting other people but ignoring all my own issues."

But we felt there was room for relevance, remembering that there was an Industrial Union for domestic workers, which could include stay-at-home parents/partners. The work of unpaid caregivers falls roughly under Department 600, Public Service, and more specifically, Industrial Union 680: "All workers engaged in performing services in the home." That would be us. Stay-at-home parents, parents who work for a wage and then come home to care for the kids, and people who care for aging parents or disabled loved ones.

It turns out that this issue has been alive in the IWW since the very beginning, decades before the 1970s feminist movement. Lucia Eldine González Parsons, one of the founding members of the IWW, organized women around issues like shorter hours, equal pay for equal work, and wages for housework.

And there are parts of the Organizer Training that really do apply to us. The general idea is that in order to get any real power, workers have to go through **AEIOU: Agitate, Educate, Inoculate, Organize, and Unionize.**

Agitate means to talk with each other

and figure out what the issues are. They're not hard to find! Lack of guaranteed pay makes us vulnerable. And cuts to Welfare, Social Security, maternity care, and health care sometimes take away our only source of income. Lack of respect. Lack of recognition that what we do is work.

Educate means to find out more about struggles that other people have won.

Inoculate means to warn each other ahead of time about ways the boss might retaliate. Well, that points to one of the biggest problems we have with making the IWW organizing model work for us. Who is our boss, anyway? Is it everybody who gives us money—our partners, or the government? Or is there no boss? But if there's no boss, how'd we end up getting so overworked?

Organize means to bring in and train up other people in our industry.

And finally, **Unionize** means bringing people into a union where we back each other up, show solidarity, and build power.

We don't have all the answers, or even most of them, but we both think this discussion is worth having. Where to go from here?

Kristin has been thinking about the "Wages for Housework" concept but realizes the downside would be ending up with a boss—someone with the power to take away our income, who thought they could tell us how to do our job. So maybe it would be better to follow the guidance of the Preamble to the IWW Constitution and abolish the whole damn wage system altogether. She's encouraged by early efforts of people to set up "gift economies."

Jessica is thinking about organizing stay-at-home parents, and non-parents who take on other caregiving roles, in a way that can also be relevant within the IWW. One of the things she's thought about is a more practical applica-

tion of craftivism—for example, to create scarves and hats for homeless or in-need individuals, and to make sleeping mats out of plastic grocery bags. She also sees a lot of potential within the GDC to find room for other traditional women's work.

May Day is a good a day as any for the IWW as a whole to start thinking seriously about unpaid laborers and how we fit in with the union. Groups like Moms Rising and Global Women's Strike are already calling for action, so the energy is there—and the IWW should be at the forefront. **IW**

More to Explore:

The IWW Industrial Union 600: <http://iww.org/unions/dept600>

The IWW Preamble: <https://iww.org/culture/official/preamble.shtml>

Lucy Parsons: Freedom, Equality & Solidarity Writings & Speeches 1878–1937, ed. Abrens, Gale, available from A.K. Press

Global Women's Strike: <http://www.globalwomensstrike.net/>

Moms Rising: <https://www.momsrising.org/>



Early A-E-I-O-U indoctrination for Wobbly baby

Berta Cáceres, Elvia Alvarado, and the Honduran struggle

By Raymond S. Solomon

Unknown to most Yankees, for much of our history, the United States has had an imperial relationship, to varying degrees, with many Latin American countries. This has been manifested in different ways, including numerous direct military interventions in Latin American countries. The U.S. operates the School of the Americas, which trains Latin American militaries, which then keep dictatorships in power.

American manipulation of Latin American governments includes maneuvering the overthrow of the Guatemalan moderately leftist government in 1954, in order to protect the holdings of the United Fruit Company; the Platt Amendment to the treaty ending the Spanish-American War of 1898, allowing the United States to intervene in Cuba's internal affairs; U.S. military support for Cuban military dictator Fulgencio Batista; and surreptitious assassination attempts on Fidel Castro.

The U.S. has exerted control over Central and South American countries, placing or supporting "friendly" governments. The attitude towards Rafael Trujillo, dictator of the Dominican Republic, was expressed by an American Congressman who said, "He may be a son-of-a-bitch, but he's our son-of-a-bitch." In 1965, American intervention in the Dominican Republic's mini civil war saw U.S. Marines fighting on the side of the coup government, which was fighting against the people loyal to Juan Bash, the Dominican Republic's mildly leftist, democratically elected reformer. Most blatant was the American role in the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende, with the resulting murders of thousands of people in 1973.

In the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan conducted a policy in Central America aimed at overthrowing a moderate leftist government in Nicaragua and keeping a military dictatorship in power in El Salvador, which was resisting a rebellion. One of the key bases of operation for the U.S. was Honduras, on which the United States has a network of military bases. In the course of these wars the United States supported Latin American death squads. Often Catholic Clergy, who were on the

side of the people, were killed. In the words of Howard Zinn, four nations were left devastated: Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua.

A number of years ago I read *Don't Be Afraid Gringo: A Honduran Woman Speaks Her Mind: The Story of Elvia Alvarado*, by Elvia

Alvarado. As an impoverished Honduran peasant herself, organizer Alvarado had to make changes in her own life, including stopping the use of foul language. She had justifiable complaints against men who would leave their families and start up another family somewhere else. She came to realize that the "average gringo," including those on the military bases in Honduras, does not understand the exploitive relationship of the United States to Central American countries. She gained hope by learning there were a significant number of North Americans on the peasants' side, and many Catholic priests supported the peasants' struggle. It was through the Catholic Church that Alvarado became a human rights activist. And, explaining the title of Alvarado's book, she told North Americans not to be afraid of conducting our own struggle, saying, "Don't be afraid Gringo," because they in Honduras were right behind us.

The current Honduran situation and the life work and murder of Berta Cáceres (March 4, 1972–March 3, 2016) are not well known in the U.S. Applying Alvarado's story as background, we can understand why the Honduran coup spurred Cáceres' activism, what led to her murder, and why the spirit of Berta Cáceres lives on.

Berta Isabel Cáceres was a Honduran dissident. She was active on environmental issues and for indigenous people, especially her own Lenca Indian people. Cáceres won the Goldman Environmental Award. Cáceres attacked the role U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton played in preventing the restoration of meaningful democracy in



A memorial mural dedicated to Berta Cáceres

Honduras.

The duly elected President of Honduras, Manuel Zelaya, assumed office on January 27, 2006. According to a report by *Democracy Now*, on June 28, 2009, Zelaya was taken by armed and masked military men from his house, and after a stopover at a U.S. military base in Honduras, they took him to Costa Rica. One of the leading Hondurans to consistently protest the ensuing coup government was environmental and Central American Indian activist Berta Cáceres.

On March 3, 2016, Berta Cáceres was assassinated. In the year since her murder, there have been popular demonstrations, with demonstrators saying in Spanish, Berta Cáceres was not destroyed but has multiplied. In the United States, during the recent election campaign, there were demonstrations aimed at events where President Bill Clinton was campaigning, blaming Hillary Clinton for the Honduran situation.

New evidence has come to light indicating that those who assassinated Berta Cáceres may have had U.S. connections. If this were true, it would be reminiscent of what happened in the coup in Chile where Charles Horman, Wobbly Frank Teruggi, and two others were murdered with the complicity of United States officials. This was dramatized in the movie *Missing*, which considered the murder of Charles Horman. These murders stain the soul of the American people.

Manuel Zelaya returned to Honduras on May 30, 2011, but he told CNN that he doesn't intend to run for office again. **IW**

International news roundup

By John Kalwaic

Women in Ireland strike against abortion ban for International Women's Day

As people all over the world, from Mexico to Poland to the United States, celebrated International Women's Day on March 8, Irish activists held a nationwide strike.

For women in Ireland, the day took on a special meaning, as they came out in force to strike against that country's near-total ban on abortion. The abortion ban has been in effect since the founding of the Irish Republic, which is strongly influenced by Roman Catholicism. Divorce and same-sex marriage, however, have been legal since a popular vote in 2015. Currently, women must travel to Northern Ireland for an abortion. The cost of traveling to another country is prohibitive for many women.

Around 4,500 women and supporters marched against the abortion ban in the capital Dublin. Other marches took place around Ireland. Pro-choice strikers in Poland in 2016 inspired the Irish women's one-day strike for abortion choice, shutting down work and school. Poland's strike against stricter anti-abortion measures being enacted successfully defeated them.

Construction workers riot in Vietnam

On February 28, hundreds of construction workers rioted at the Yen Phong Viglacera industrial park. Korean Samsung Display Company owns the park in the Bắc Ninh Province of Vietnam, not far from the capital of Hanoi.

The construction workers reacted after a South Korean security guard at the Samsung plant slammed a Vietnamese construction worker to the ground. Other Vietnamese construction workers defended their fellow worker, and a fight and riot broke out. Vietnamese government police arrived, and the crowd dispersed.

Samsung is one of the largest foreign employers in Vietnam. Many foreign companies set up their production lines in Vietnam because of the availability of cheap labor.

Workers strike in Burma/Myanmar after damaging Chinese factory

In the country known as Burma but officially called Myanmar, garment workers

sabotaged and destroyed a production line in a Chinese-owned Hennes & Mauritz (H&M) garment factory in late February, as part of a strike for safer working conditions, a better system for reviewing performance, healthcare coverage, and reinstatement of their union's leader. The workers won their dispute, which dates back to late February, on March 11.

The factory, owned by Hangzhou Hundred-Tex Garment (Myanmar) Company, supplies clothes for H&M, a Swedish clothing and fashion company that sell clothes to stores all over the world. The factory in Yangon's commercial hub is one of H&M's 40 suppliers in Myanmar. The workers targeted the factory in the commercial hub of Yangon, damaging equipment, buildings, and vehicles to highlight the lack of safety measures and protection for workers in the textile



Striking Burmese workers meet in their factory industry.

The dispute dates back to a strike in late January when union leader That Paing Oo was fired for taking leave without permission. He had led a protest in December 2016, to force Hangzhou Hundred-Tex to pay \$52,536 in overtime owed to 570 workers, which the company paid at the end of December. On February 9, female garment workers at the Hangzhou Hundred-Tex Garment Company attacked a Chinese manager, who struggled to escape.

In late February hundreds of workers stormed the factory and damaged facilities causing an estimated \$75,000 to repair, including textile machinery, computers, and security cameras. In addition, Chinese managers were beaten, robbed, and trapped in the building by the angry workers. The Chinese embassy in Myanmar labeled the actions by workers as "an attack" and asked that those responsible be held accountable. Representatives from H&M stated, "H&M group is deeply concerned about the recent

conflict and our business relationship with this factory is on hold at the moment," though they did not elaborate.

Myanmar has opened up to foreign business after decades of isolation, but there is now demand on the government for labor reform. In March, workers won their strike; Paing Oo was reinstated and the workers won their demand to be paid the monthly minimum wage of \$63.

Wildcat strike and protest in Bulgaria

In March, retail workers across Bulgaria went on wildcat strikes against Piccadilly, one of Bulgaria's largest supermarket chains, supported by the anarcho-syndicalist Autonomous Workers Union, or ARS. The workers struck because they have not been paid for months, and efforts to speak to management have been thwarted by private security

at the company's Sofia headquarters. Piccadilly, owned by Nikolay Lazarov, is registered in Luxembourg.

The workers went to Piccadilly's headquarters in the capital city of Sofia, where they attempted to occupy the headquarters but were blocked by private security. In Varna, strikers first blocked access to the supermarket

and then went to Investbank, which holds Piccadilly's assets. The unpaid workers demanded that Investbank unlock the payments to the workers. Some of the workers rushed the bank while others stayed outside and picketed.

Also in March, ARS assisted former employees of Max Telecom, Bulgaria's fourth-biggest mobile operator, with issues of unpaid wages. Max Telecom owes salary payments to 150 people. Workers gathered in the company headquarters and chanted "Salaries, now!" Protestors read out their demands, and then stormed the building after learning that management had left. One of the angry workers who participated in the protest commented, "Dickheads from management had to flee and leave the offices empty, so we put our messages on them and on the locked doors of the premises." The protesters moved on to block vehicle access to Sofia Airport, promising that unless outstanding wages were paid, their next action would not be "as 'symbolic.'" **IW**



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Application for IWW Membership

*Answers to questions with asterisks * are required.*

I affirm that I am a worker and not an employer:* Yes

I agree to abide by the IWW Constitution and regulations of this organization:* Yes

I agree to study the IWW's principles and make myself acquainted with its purpose:* Yes

First Name:* _____

Last Name:* _____

Current Mailing Address:* _____

City or Town:* _____

State or Province:* _____

Postal Code:* _____ Country:* _____

Phone Number:* _____

Can you receive text messages at this number?* Yes No

Email Address:* _____

Employer: _____

Job Description:* _____

Industrial Union:* _____

I have been an IWW member in the past:* Yes No

Would you like information about the IWW's General Defense Committee?* Yes No

Would you like to subscribe to the IWW's members-only email list members-news@lists.iww.org?* Yes No

Would you like to subscribe to the IWW's public alerts email list alerts@lists.iww.org?* Yes No

Please cut out and mail this form to:

Industrial Workers of the World General Headquarters
 PO Box 180195, Chicago, IL 60618, USA

Preamble to the IWW Constitution

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people, and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth.

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

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

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

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