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Industrial Worker

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

FALL 2018 #1784 VOLUME 115 NO. 4 \$4 (U.S. IWW members) / \$6 (U.S. non-members) / \$7 (International)

Antoinette Brown
 Lucy Parsons
 Emma Goldman
 Stephen Leavitt
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 Thomas Joseph Eganery
 "Big" Bill Haywood
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 Woody Guthrie
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 I.F. Stone
 Florence Kelley
 Carol Chayer
 Harvey Milk
 Eugene W. Debs
 Remember...
 Thurgood Marshall
 "Mother" Jones
 Louis Brandeis
 Saul Alinsky
 Eleanor Roosevelt
 Paul Robeson
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 Malcolm X
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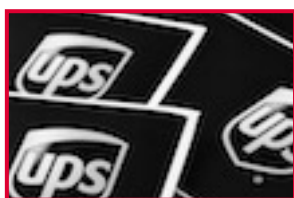
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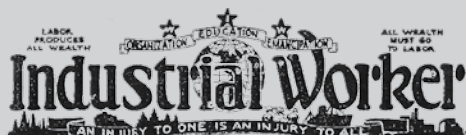
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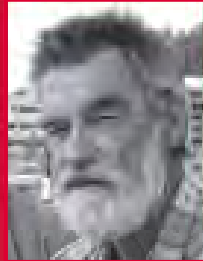
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I remember these dear friends and Fellow Workers, from the resurgent IWW in Bellingham, Washington.



Mary Charlotte Thurtle
1961-2012
Musician, film-maker,
trouble-maker,
Branch Secretary and Delegate.

Doug Smith
1958-2015
Musician, printer,
thrifless anti-capitalist activist,
IWW Delegate.



Bill Gagne
1947-2017
Secretary, President of IWW,
Seattle area
Anarchist
IWW West Coast Federation
Co-op Flour Mill.

Bill Gagne
1947-2017
Secretary, President of IWW,
Seattle area
Anarchist
IWW West Coast Federation
Co-op Flour Mill.



REST IN POWER, FELLOW WORKERS

D. Tucker

Life Through My Eyes

by Tupac Shakur

Life through my bloodshot eyes
would scare a square 2 death
poverty, murder, violence
and never a moment 2 rest
Fun and games are few
but treasured like gold 2 me
cuz I realize that I must return
2 my spot in poverty
But mock my words when I say
my heart will not exist
unless my destiny comes through
and puts an end 2 all of this

A short history of anarchist exclusion in the U.S.

March 3, 1903: Anarchist Exclusion Act enacted; exclusion of immigrants based on political ideology begins

“[F]oreign-born political radicals stirred public concern. Beyond urban machine politics that relied on alien grist and rising religious differences between largely Protestant natives and Catholic immigrants, alien troublemakers—anarchists—were afoot on American soil . . . President William McKinley, who had campaigned on a platform of tariffs and ‘big tent’ themes directed at immigrants (‘America for Americans, native and naturalized’), fell to an assassin’s bullet in 1901. Leon Czolgosz, called ‘an anarchist of American birth but obviously foreign extraction,’ sparked congressional action to add anarchists to the exclusion list. The 1903 law provided for exclusion and deportation of alien anarchists—those foreigners who believe in or ‘advocate the overthrow by force of violence of the Government of the United States or of all governments or of all forms of law, or the assassination of public officials.’ The 1903 Act also both bolstered public health exclusions and provided for limited exceptions for certain diseased aliens.”

—James R. Edwards Jr., PhD, “Keeping Extremists Out: The History of Ideological

Exclusion and the Need for Its Revival,” *Center for Immigration Studies*, Sep. 2005.

October 16, 1918: Immigration Act bars entry of anarchists to the U.S.

The 1918 Immigration Act, passed on this day in the middle of anti-radical hysteria during World War I, amended the restrictive 1903 Immigration Act (passed on March 3, 1903) to expand the definition of, and restrictions on, anarchists.

The new law barred the entry of anarchists into the U.S., and also allowed their deportation. Anarchists were defined as anyone teaching opposition to organized government, teaching the violent overthrow of government, or were members of organizations that advocated those ideas. It also repealed the provision in the 1903 law that had exempted from deportation immigrants who had lived in the U.S. for five years or longer.

In the years ahead, additional restrictive immigration laws were passed. The 1924 Immigration Act, passed on May 26, 1924, imposed a national origins quota system that discriminated against people from Southern and Eastern Europe seeking to come to the

U.S. The 1952 McCarran-Walter Act, effective June 27, 1952, was a Cold War measure that excluded alleged “subversives” from the U.S. and allowed the government to deport alleged “subversive” immigrants already in the U.S. The 1965 Immigration Act, which President Lyndon Johnson signed into law on October 3, 1965, abolished the 1924 national origins quota system in favor of a non-discriminatory policy.



Artist's depiction of the assassination of Pres. McKinley

Learn more: Roger Daniels: *Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants Since 1882* (2004).

Learn more at a timeline on U.S. immigration laws: http://immigration.procon.org/view_timeline.php?timelineID=000023#1900-1949

Read: Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism in America* (1996). **IW**

Ralph Chaplin—A tough act to follow

By Roberta McNair

October 12, 2018

It's almost sixty years since his third act ended. In his final careers, he was the editor of a labor publication and the curator of manuscripts for the Washington State Historical Society.

But there isn't a Wobbly anywhere who doesn't know Fellow Worker Ralph Hosea Chaplin as a writer of poetry and the artist who created the IWW's most enduring and recognizable symbol: the black cat, whose stance and demeanor let everyone know this ain't no capitalist's lap cat.



He came to the IWW with Mother Jones, with whom he had worked on the Kanawha County coal miners strike committee in 1912 and 1913. It was while in West Virginia that Chaplin was inspired to write the words to "Solidarity Forever."

Once in Chicago, immersed in his first act, Chaplin edited IWW's publication *Solidarity* and continued to create artwork to inspire the rank and file to action. And it was there that he completed writing "Solidarity Forever."

When the union's inspiration through the workers' blood shall run
There can be no power greater anywhere
beneath the sun
Yet what force on earth is weaker than the
feeble strength of one
For the Union makes us strong

Solidarity forever, solidarity forever
Solidarity forever
For the Union makes us strong

Is there aught we hold in common with the
greedy parasite
Who would lash us into serfdom and would
crush us with his might?

In 1917, the U.S. government—motivated by its need to realize political and economic rewards by protecting its power structure—rounded up every Wobbly it could find and convicted them under the Espionage Act for conspiring to undermine the draft for the Great War and encourage desertion by the troops. (Among the "documents" it presented as evidence at the trial were Ralph Chaplin's love letters.)

It was a fair cop, when you come down to it, but the punishment was severe. While incarcerated in federal prison, Chaplin wrote *Bars and Shadows: The Prison Poems*. He and most other Wobblies were released four hard years into a 20-year sentence, and thus he embarked upon his second life.

I picture his second act as somber and disheartened. He went back to working for labor rights, but on one hand, the Soviet State that developed out of the Russian Revolution didn't fulfill its promises, and on the other, the New Deal also wasn't providing substantive, long-lasting solutions.

Back in Chicago with the IWW, Chaplin worked as the editor of *Industrial Worker* from 1932 to 1936, and he actively worked to keep Communists out of American labor unions. But things were different, as they always are when you try to resume a previous life.

In 1941, was recruited to edit the *Tacoma Labor Advocate*. Ralph Chaplin

settled in Tacoma, Washington, for his third act—just across the bridge from my current home in Gig Harbor.

I lived in Tacoma for a couple of years after I came here from California in 2004,



and here is where I, too, have chosen to spend my third act. Chaplin is best known around here as a manuscript curator. The Washington State Historical Society rightly prizes its manuscripts and

artifacts, which include a fine collection of labor documents.

Unions seem to have remained stronger in the Northwest than in other places. By the time Chaplin died in 1961 (my favorite year, because it read the same way upside down as right side up, which kept this six-year-old amused for the entire year), I believe he had left his mark on Tacoma history and labor. Upwards of fifty people gather every year at his Tacoma gravesite on Labor Day.

I am proud to share Chaplin's second and third acts in my third act, as editor of *Industrial Worker*. I think of him with every issue I work on, and I strive to uphold his legacy. He is someone I am still getting to know. **IW**



Is there anything left to us but to organize and fight?
For the union makes us strong

Solidarity forever, solidarity forever
Solidarity forever
For the Union makes us strong

It is we who ploughed the prairies, built the cities
where they trade
Dug the mines and built the workshops, endless
miles of railroad laid
Now we stand outcast and starving 'midst the
wonders we have made
But the union makes us strong

Sixteen Mississippi inmates died in August 2018

Editorial, by Roberta McNair

August 2018 was a worse month than usual to be incarcerated in Mississippi. Sixteen inmates between 24 and 75 years of age at several prisons—South Mississippi Correctional Institution, Mississippi State Penitentiary, Central Mississippi Correctional Facility, and Wilkinson County Correctional Facility—died, some in the prisons themselves and some after having been transported to hospitals or medical facilities.

Mississippi Department of Corrections Commissioner Pelicia Hall has told state legislators and the press that it is not unusual for this many inmates to die in one month and has left the impression that the deaths are due to natural causes. However, the average number of inmates to die per year between 2001 and 2014 was 51, making 16 deaths in one month highly unusual and improbable, when based on accurate information.

Unfortunately, definitive answers about the causes of death were long in coming, because Mississippi's state crime lab conducts all autopsies for in-custody deaths. The lab has had a "years-long" backlog of cases, including autopsies. When autopsies were finally performed, the results were reported only to DOC officials and the deceased inmates' families. The details released did not provide complete pictures.

However, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency reports steady and significant temperature increases in the Southeast. Prison overcrowding and antiquated ventilation systems—seldom with air conditioning—contribute to an equation that could result in numerous deaths from natural causes.

According to Jody Owens, the managing attorney for the Southern Poverty Law Center (SLPC) in Mississippi, the state's prisons have experienced years of neglect, resulting in understaffing and delayed medical care, in addition to poor conditions. Under special scrutiny is the privately operated East Mississippi Correctional Facility, due to prisoner complaints of unconstitutionally harsh conditions.

The SLPC and the American Civil Liberties Union are plaintiffs in a case against East Mississippi for Eighth Amendment violations of sanitation, health, and safety, which amount to cruel and unusual punishment.

One of the state's attorneys in the East Mississippi Correctional case claims that the ACLU and SPLC "want to [put] private prisons out of business."



I would like to see all prisons put "out of business," with a societal shift toward rehabilitation, in cases of actual criminality, that includes mental and physical health care, as well as education, training in fields of choice, and access to meaningful employment in those fields. Low- or no-cost housing, medical care, and childcare need to become available, not only to help those who otherwise would end up in the criminal justice system (disproportionately Black and brown men and women) but for others marginalized by an increasingly homogeneous society, divided by levels of prosperity. By allowing alleged and actual lawbreakers to stay in their communities, they can receive emotional support in addition to stability.

Until that happens, we should mourn the loss of life, even if that life was spent under harsh and cruel conditions before and during imprisonment. Here are the incarcerated people who died in Mississippi in August of 2018:

- Aug. 2: Albert McGee, 57, serving a life sentence for murder; South Mississippi Correctional Institution
- Aug. 4: Charles R. McCullough, 66,

serving 10 years for burglary-larceny and assault; Mississippi State Penitentiary

- Aug. 4: Willie Hollinghead, 36, serving 10 years for selling cocaine; South Mississippi Correctional Institution
- Aug. 5: Robert Joseph, 38, serving three years for drug possession; Central Mississippi Correctional Facility
- Aug. 5: Jack Glisson, 70, serving a life sentence for murder; South Mississippi Correctional Institution
- Aug. 11: Ricky Martin, 58, serving 60 years for selling cocaine; Central Mississippi Correctional Facility
- Aug. 15: Lucious Bolton, 29, serving 14 years for burglary and gun possession; Mississippi State Penitentiary
- Aug. 18: James D. Myrick, 63, serving two years for fondling; Mississippi State Penitentiary
- Aug. 20: Nija Syvallus Bonhomme, 24, killed during a fight with an inmate while serving 20 years for armed robbery and burglary; Wilkinson County Correctional Facility
- Aug. 20: John Richard Luttrell, 67, serving 70 years for seven convictions, including two counts of attempted murder/homicide; Central Mississippi Correctional Facility
- Aug. 23: Nicole Marie Rathmann, 33, serving 10 years for selling meth; Central Mississippi Correctional Facility
- Aug. 27: Troy M. Pittman, 59, serving 30 years for sexual battery and sexual assault; Central Mississippi Correctional Facility
- Aug. 27: Tony Springer Sr., 75, serving six years for unlawful touching of a child; South Mississippi Correctional Institution
- Aug. 28: Curtis Hughes, 45, serving 25 years for meth sales and gun possession; Mississippi State Penitentiary
- Aug. 30: Earl King Davis, 55, serving 20 years for manslaughter and aggravated assault; South Mississippi Correctional Institution
- Aug. 31: Richard Beasley, 55, serving 28 years for burglary-larceny; Mississippi State Penitentiary **IW**

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/15-prisoners-died-one-month-mississippi-their-families-want-know-n905611>

Inmate's cries for help went ignored, prisoners say

By Sara Fowler

Mississippi Clarion Ledger

Aug. 14, 2018

Around 2:30 a.m. Saturday, Ricky Martin began complaining that he couldn't breathe. Less than four hours later, he was dead.

Martin, 58, was an inmate at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility. His cause of death is pending autopsy results, according to Rankin County Corner David Ruth.

But fellow inmates say Martin didn't have to die. Martin and his fellow inmates called for help for hours, they said, with one performing CPR as Martin lay on the floor, foaming at the mouth. The guard on duty allegedly pulled a hat down over his eyes and went to sleep.

When help finally came, the defibrillator didn't work.

The *Clarion Ledger* spoke by phone with three inmates who said they were with Martin as he lay dying. All three requested their names not be used out of fear of retribution from Corrections officials.

MDOC spokesperson Chris Baker confirmed Martin's death but said he did not have information regarding the inmates'

allegations.

Martin had been serving a 60-year sentence for one count of selling cocaine. Sentenced out of Lowndes County in 2010, Martin was mistakenly released on July 31. He went home to his family in Columbus. Six days later, his probation officer picked him up and said MDOC had made a mistake. Martin was going back to jail.

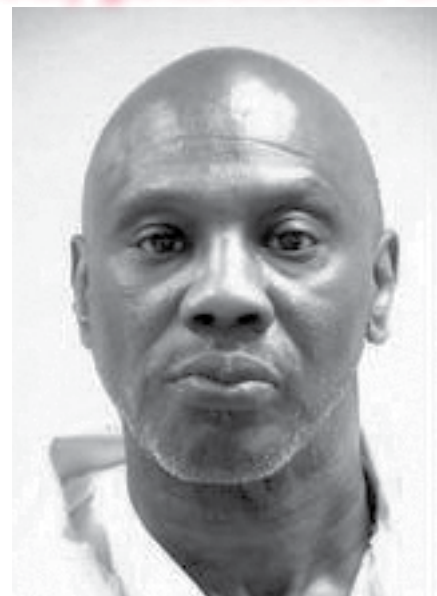
Martin's sister, Mattie Wilkins, said the probation officer told the family Martin would be eligible to get back out in 2020.

Martin was booked at CMCF, but it's unknown when he arrived. On MDOC's website, any information on Martin is described in two words: "report closed."

According to the men who spoke with the *Clarion Ledger*, it's not uncommon for "seven to eight" inmates to wake up around 2:30 or 3 o'clock every morning so they can take time to themselves to walk around or read. Approximately 140 inmates are in the same unit Martin was, B zone, quick bed.

Clocks are not visible to inmates in that part of the prison. They acknowledge their recollection of the time frame of the events is an estimate.

These are their accounts of what un-



Ricky Martin, Mississippi DOC

folded:

Around 2:30 a.m., Martin walked out to the table where several men were gathered. He was having a hard time breathing. When they asked if he was OK, "He kind of looked at us like we were crazy."

He couldn't sit down. "I think he thought if he sat down he couldn't get back up."

Fifteen minutes later, Martin was at the guard tower, asking if he could "get some help down here." He was told to get away from the tower. He asked for help for "like 20 minutes" as he screamed, "Get me somebody down here to get me some help. I can't breathe."

He was told by the guard to "get his ass away from the tower."

He told a fellow inmate, "Man, they're going to let me die."

An hour passed.

Martin fell over a trashcan. In an

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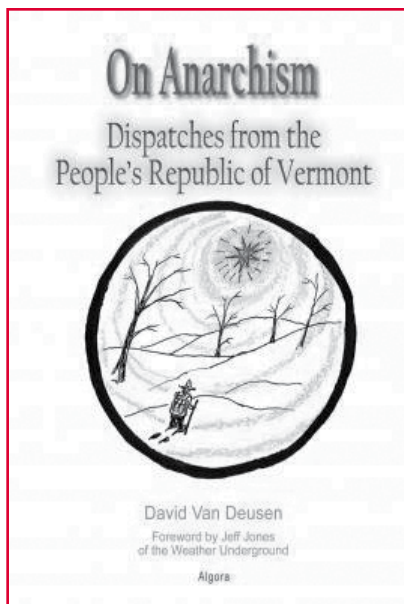


Central Mississippi Correctional Facility

Book Review: **On Anarchism** by David Van Deusen

By Sean Morrison

Let's establish my perspective immediately. I am seventy-two years old, born on the farthest edge of the baby boom and radicalized in the Sixties. My consciousness was raised by the likes of Martin Luther King, the Kennedys, I.F. Stone, Bobby Seale, and the shame of Richard Nixon. I would have liked to have broken the windows of a few Banks of America. I was jailed twice for blocking entrance to an Air Force base.



As a bearded hippie I forcefully debated the Vietnam War and vocational education with “hard hats” over beers. Inspired by the American Friends Service Committee’s counseling draft evaders during the Vietnam fiasco, I became a Buddhist at seventeen. Because I couldn’t financially aid Central American attempts at democracy, instead I ran successfully for a City Council and spent eight years trying to change my own city’s politics. As a father at 20, my wife and I raised our children without a religion and with a dislike of the clergy, but with a strong sense of moral responsibility (and they have rewarded us through their exemplary lives).

So I approached David Van Deusen’s *On Anarchism: Dispatches from the People’s Republic of Vermont* with a willing suspension of disbelief. Van Deusen was a cofounder of the Green Mountain Anar-

chist Collective (GMAC) and took part in his first Black Bloc at the 1996 Democratic Convention that nominated Bill Clinton.

His book is a mixed bag. Its strong points are concrete examples of building various sorts of collectives, based on his experiences in Vermont unions, local politics, and serving on antiracist commissions. He talks about Annual Town Meetings, the Vermont Worker’s Center, the Dairy Farmers of Vermont, and the Vermont State Employees Association as initiatives that GMAC supported. His present affiliation is with the Liberty Union Party in Vermont, while he still drives a Harley and presumably still dresses in black for demonstrations.

The book’s weak points are the word salads Van Deusen dishes out when he gets into theory. Here’s an example as he talks about the establishment of the Green Mountain Anarchist Collective: “However, the contemporary nature of ‘capital’ for the most part, no longer being linked to a universally recognized (tangible) signifier (be it gold, silver, or even paper money), makes ‘capital’ into a kind of ‘Holy Ghost’ of the current Western World.”

These recurrent mini-rants limit the book’s readership only to the converted or the politically obtuse. The good news is you can skip these chapters and paragraphs and not lose the sense of Van Deusen’s narrative.

The 40-page chapter on Black Bloc called “Insurrection” is the most interesting, given Van Deusen’s rich history with Black Bloc. It’s an in-depth view of the guiding principles of the tactics as well as giving those of us who follow the recent debates on “civility” a touchstone and perhaps, for some, a caveat.

Is Black Bloc, as some claim, the only defense for nonviolent activists against the militarization of police, or are they spoilers who only give police an excuse to bash heads? That debate runs rich within the American left and always has, from the Anarchist bombers of the early twentieth century through the Weathermen of the 1970s. The “7th Point of the Black Bloc

Tactics Communiqué” recognizes that they are the ones who have received the baton from their “mothers and fathers.”

There is a fair amount of misunderstanding about Black Bloc, some of it from ignorance and some from propaganda by the purveyors of the status quo. What becomes clear from *On Anarchism* is that Van Deusen’s—and Black Bloc’s—collective brand of anarchism can make a lot of sense. He points out that Gandhi’s India is in a shambles and the plight of America’s Blacks after Martin Luther King Jr. is little advanced and losing ground under both Democrats and Republicans. It’s a hard pill to swallow but very hard to disagree with if you are honest with yourself.

What we think of Black Bloc comes mainly from their Street Fighting Force. That force seems on its face to be loosely organized without much of any central command—democratic or not. Van Deusen somewhat addresses this failure by a desire to have more of a collective will. Since the book ends the Black Bloc discussion in 2001 with the Battle of Quebec City and then the trauma of 9/11 we have to go elsewhere for more contemporary tactics. But “Insurrection” gives a solid (and thankfully more clearly written) background. The book ends with a brief discussion of the political and social travesty of Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans.

I came off liking Van Deusen, and he softened my opinion of Black Bloc, as did the “Foreword” by Jeff Jones, formerly of Weather Underground. I’ve heard critics from the left brand Black Bloc as males working off their hormones. That may be true for a minority (but also ignores the increasing numbers of women in Black Bloc) but I don’t get that vibe from *On Anarchism*.



The book also now better informs my lowering opinion of “civility” in dissent. After the primary election of straight speaker and Democratic Socialist Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, will other candidates echo her directness? Will the call for push-back against the Trumpists by California Representative Maxine Waters after Sarah Huckabee Sanders was refused service at a Virginia restaurant at least result in more restaurant shamings? Will well-intentioned mass demonstrations against the Trump agenda and the lawlessness of the Department of Justice become less for privileged white folks and more for angry activists? And will labor finally wake up after the *Janus* decision and start listening to its constituents rather than dictating to them?

On Anarchism gives us some tools to analyze these questions. They’re not sharp tools, but they are very, very useful ones.

IW

On Anarchism: Dispatches from the People’s Republic of Vermont, by David Van Deusen, released 2017, Algora Publishing, 234 pages.

Continued from page 7

effort to help, a man went to the tower, asking the guard to call someone. The guard ignored him.

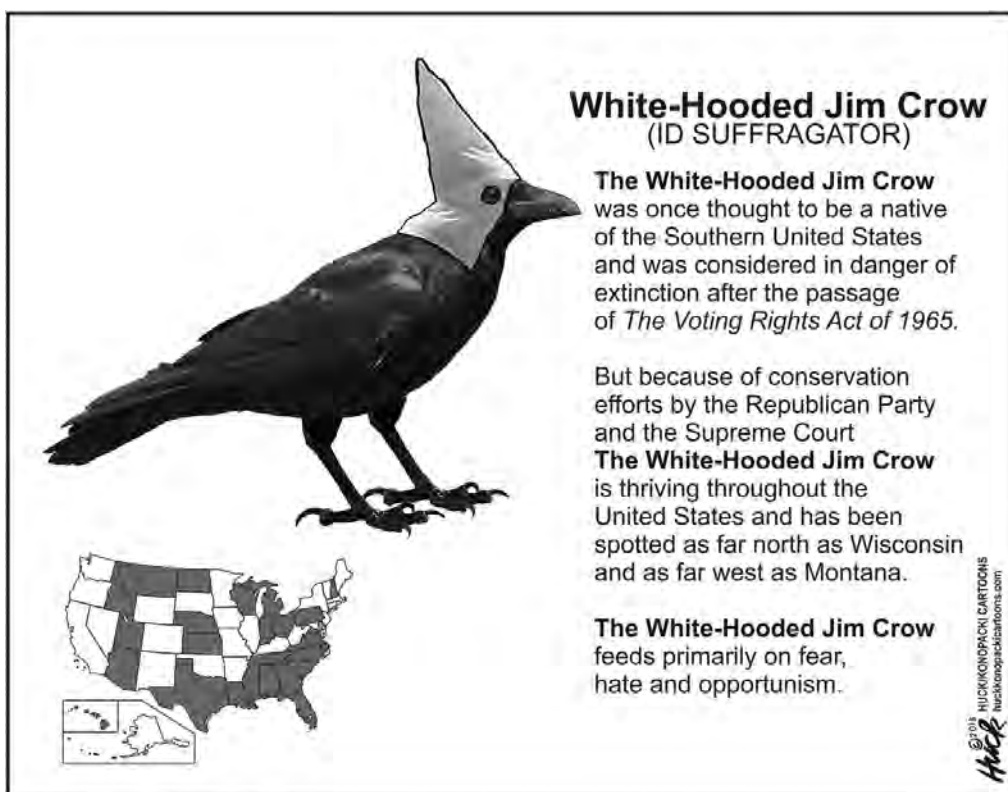
A second man approached the tower, again asking the guard to call for help, saying, “this man can’t breathe.”

“He just looked at me so before I got in any trouble I went and got somebody else.”

The guard pulled the cap down over his face and went to sleep.

“Mr. Ricky was doing real bad then, he was thinking he was going to die. (The guard) was not being professional at all. I understand there are probably people in here who try to fake that a lot . . . you could see something was wrong with the man.”

A third man approached the tower and a crowd began to gather, yelling at the guard. He reportedly told the men he had called for help and couldn’t do anything else. Martin then went to the restroom and leaned over the sink. He splashed cold



White-Hooded Jim Crow (ID SUFFRAGATOR)

The White-Hooded Jim Crow was once thought to be a native of the Southern United States and was considered in danger of extinction after the passage of *The Voting Rights Act of 1965*.

But because of conservation efforts by the Republican Party and the Supreme Court **The White-Hooded Jim Crow** is thriving throughout the United States and has been spotted as far north as Wisconsin and as far west as Montana.

The White-Hooded Jim Crow feeds primarily on fear, hate and opportunism.

©2018 HUCKABEEPACK CARTOONS
huckabee@huckabee.com
Huck

water on his face.

He was too weak to stand and asked the men to lay him down on the floor. They got a sheet from the “dayroom” and laid Martin down. As soon as they did, he began “foaming” at the mouth.

Every time inmates asked for help, the guard would “get pissed off, kick the door, curse somebody and commence to doing nothing.”

They rolled him on his side. He was sweating. An inmate held his hand.

“I sat and held him,” one man said. “His eyes weren’t blinking and he was gasping for breath.”

A fellow inmate began performing CPR. They estimate hours had passed.

A lieutenant came in the room and saw Martin laid out on the floor.

“She got here and moseyed on in. I don’t think she thought it was as bad, (but) you could see it on her face: ‘Oh, s---, this is really bad.’”

The lieutenant radioed for “code.”

Emergency personnel responded, but the defibrillator didn’t work.

Martin was put on a stretcher and taken from the unit. That’s the last time his fellow inmates saw him alive.

“Two forty five to 5:20, he did not get no aid and assistance from anyone, and the guard just totally ignored him. They just neglected him and let him die.”

Martin died at a Rankin County hospital at 6:03 that morning, Ruth said.

“They haven’t told my mother anything, they just called and told her he had died, they didn’t tell her anything,” Wilkins said.

Martin is the sixth person to die in MDOC custody since August. He’s the second to die at CMCF this month.

Wilkins said her family just wants to know what happened to Martin.

“My mother is 86 years old and she needs some closure,” Wilkins said. “All of us need some.” **IW**

<https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/2018/08/14/inmates-die-prison-mdoc-custody-deaths/981142002/>

In November, We Remember

Paul Booth (1943–2018)

Paul Booth was an activist, antiwar protestor, and lifelong labor organizer. He was a student organizer at Swarthmore College, forming a chapter of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and was one of the drafters of the SDS Port Huron Statement in 1962. He became the SDS national secretary for a year, moving to Chicago in 1965. He was one of the chief organizers of the April 1965 March on Washington to End the War in Vietnam as part of SDS's Peace Research and Education Project.

Booth began his work in labor movement in 1966 as research director for the United Packinghouse Workers of America. Moving on to AFSCME, he became organizing director, working there for over four decades. Booth spent every day fighting for the right of public service workers to have dignity, security, and a better life.



In April, Booth's colleagues and friends celebrated his life. President of AFSCME Lee Saunders said, "[N]o one was more generous with his time and his knowledge. He relished his role as a teacher and trainer. You could probably fill this synagogue two or three times with all the people who were mentored by Paul. At his retirement party last year, Paul talked about how lucky he felt—lucky to be a part of AFSCME . . . lucky to do such meaningful work

for so long in the labor movement and the progressive movement, lucky to have such a loving family. The thing is, Paul: For everything you brought to our lives, our union, and our movement, I think we were the lucky ones."

Augusta Thomas, 1929–2018



Until August 2018, Augusta Y. Thomas, served nine years as national vice president for women and fair practices at American Federation of Government Employees. She was a civil rights activist before she was a labor activist. In 1960, she journeyed to Greensboro, N.C., to join the historic lunch counter sit-ins. Angry whites spat on her and shoved her off a stool. Police twice arrested her.

Born in 1929, Thomas spent her teen years in Atlanta, where she went to school with Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. She signed up with AFGE on Nov. 12, 1966, her first day on the job at Louisville's VA hospital.

Thomas entered the federal government in 1966 as a nursing assistant at the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Louisville, Ky. She joined AFGE on her first day on the job. Thomas served more than 42 years in positions of local and

regional union leadership prior to attaining national office.

She went to Memphis in 1968 in support of 1,300 African American sanitation workers who went on strike after two members of a garbage truck crew were killed. The truck had malfunctioned and crushed them to death. Thomas blamed the men's deaths on "the racism and negativism of the city officials who treated them as less than human, who ignored the workers' call for safety and who paid them poverty wages." The workers also wanted a union. The last time Thomas saw her friend Martin was when he also was in Memphis for the same reason.

AFGE National President J. David Cox Sr. stated, "Augusta Thomas was an inspiration to everyone who knew her and will be greatly missed by all of her AFGE brothers and sisters. She was a tireless advocate for civil and human rights, and we will make sure that her legacy continues for generations."

Joaquin Avila, 1948–2018



Born in Compton, California, Joaquin Avila was an American voting rights attorney and activist. He earned his bachelor's degree at Yale and his law degree at Harvard Law School. Avila spent more than two decades using the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 to increase election fairness for minority voters. Because several court precedents weakened the federal Voting Rights Act, Avila conceived of state voting rights acts as a way to again strengthen minority-voting rights. To that end, Avila crafted the California Voting

Continued on next page

Achieving decent work through unions

By Tula Connell
Solidarity Center
October 4, 2018

When Joe Montisetse came to South Africa from Botswana to work in gold mines in the early 1980s, he saw a black pool of water deep in a mine that signified deadly methane. Yet after he brought up the issue to supervisors, they insisted he continue working. Montisetse refused.

Two co-workers were killed a few hours later when the methane exploded.

Millions of jobs around the world do not offer safe and healthy workplaces—nor do they provide wages that enable workers to support themselves and their families or social protections and the sense of dignity that allow workers to enjoy the benefits of their own hard work.

To highlight the lack of decent work, each year on October 7, unions and their al-

Continued from previous page
Rights Act that was enacted in 2001.

Avila brought lawsuits that set important voting rights precedents. He also served as president and general counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and directed the National Voting Rights Advocacy Initiative at Seattle University School of Law. Among the many honors he received recognizing his work, he was awarded a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship—known informally as the genius grant—in 1996.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, Avila traveled to Salinas, Calif., one of the places in California that benefited from his fights against at-large elections, which disadvantaged the Latinx people. Avila said this about the voting rights movement: “California is becoming a people-of-color state. Whereas before they saw it as something in the distant future, now it’s a reality. . . . Voting rights discrimination is very much alive. I have a passion that runs deep and wide. I’m sure I’ll carry it till the day I die. I hope that by that time there’ll be more people devoted to enforcement of voting rights.” **IW**

lies mark World Day for Decent Work. This year, they are calling for minimum wage-floors sufficient to ensure a decent standard of living and the right of all workers to join a union and bargain collectively.

Today, Montisetse is newly elected president of the National Union of Mineworkers, a position he achieved after helping form a local union at the gold mine soon after his co-workers’ deaths. After they formed the union, workers were safer, he says.

“We formed a union as mine workers to defend against oppression and exploitation.” (Montisetse discusses the struggle for rights on the job in the Workers Equality Forum video

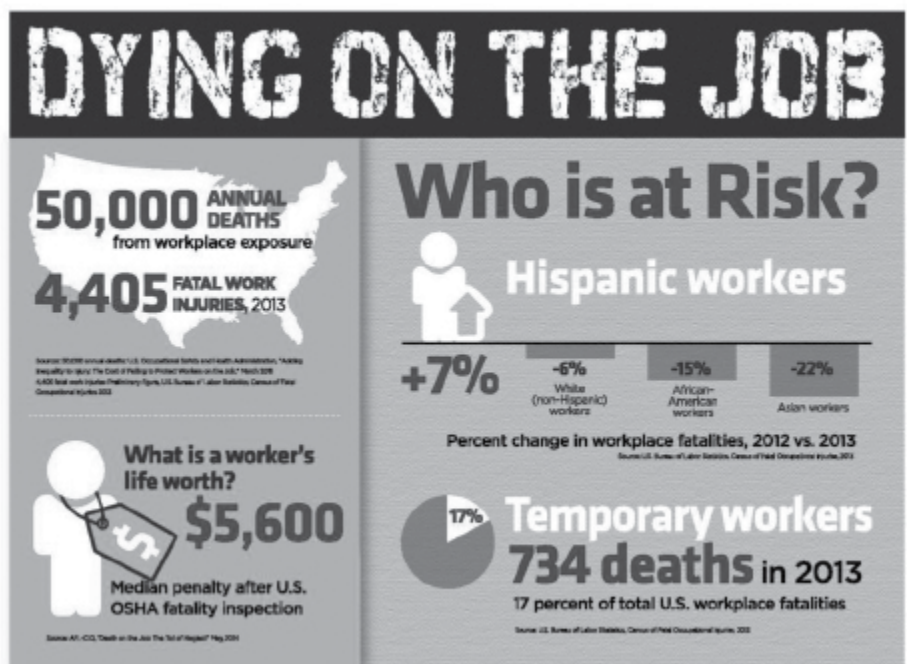


NUM's Joe Montisetse

at <https://www.solidaritycenter.org/equalityforum/?p=7941>.)

This year, the 10th anniversary of the World Day for Decent Work, workers like Montisetse highlight the importance of the freedom to form unions and bargain collectively—fundamental human rights that enable workers to achieve decent work by joining together and successfully challenging global corporate practices that too often risk lives and livelihoods. **IW**

<https://www.solidaritycenter.org/achieving-decent-work-through-unions/>



More than 50 arrested at McDonald's HQ in Chicago as week of protests continues

Abigail Hess

CNBC, October 5, 2018

On Thursday, more than 50 protesters were arrested at McDonald's corporate headquarters in Chicago.

The event was the latest in a recent wave of protests held by workers in the fast-food industry. Since February, tens of thousands of low-wage and fast-food workers have gone on strike in hundreds of cities across the country, calling for a \$15 minimum wage. In September, McDonald's workers from 10 cities walked out of work to bring attention to alleged sexual harassment at the chain.

Now, fast-food workers are protesting for the right to unionize. For decades, the fast-food industry has resisted unionizing efforts. Research suggests that a majority of fast-food workers are on some form of public assistance. Protesters calling for a \$15 minimum wage and the right to unionize have demonstrated throughout the week at McDonald's locations in cities including Milwaukee; Detroit; and San Jose, California.

Among those arrested on Thursday in Chicago were striking fast-food workers, Illinois Rep. Jan Schakowsky and Service Employees International Union (SEIU) President Mary Kay Henry. The Chicago Police told the Chicago Sun-Times that 52 people were arrested for trespassing on pri-

vate property, while the organizing group coordinating the event, Fight for \$15, says that 54 were arrested.

Fight for \$15 estimates that roughly 1,000 protesters were present, though these numbers are unconfirmed.

"Some politicians will do whatever it takes to block workers from coming together in a union. That's unacceptable, and it's a big reason why paychecks across the country are flat while corporate profits are fatter than ever," said Schakowsky, in a statement shared with CNBC Make It. "I'm proud to support workers in the fight for \$15 who are striking and protesting all across the country today for union rights. Unions are the solution to un-rigging the economy and strengthening communities here in Illinois and nationwide."

Adriana Alvarez, a McDonald's employee from Cicero, Illinois, walked out of work in order to attend the protest.

"We're on strike today to demand the union that fast-food workers need. We need unions for all low wage and service sector workers," she said in a statement shared with CNBC by the Fight for \$15. "And I have a message for any politicians listening: Stand with us in our fight for union rights, don't back these corporations. Because on election day, we're showing up to the polls and casting our votes for elect leaders who support working

people in Illinois."

In response to the protest, a McDonald's spokesperson sent the following statement, adding that roughly 95 percent of McDonald's locations are franchises. (Many states have laws protecting parent companies from grievances aimed at franchises.)

"Our commitment to the communities we serve includes providing opportunities for restaurant employees to succeed at McDonald's and beyond with world-class training and education programs to help them build the skills needed for today's workforce. This year alone, we have tripled tuition assistance for restaurant employees by allocating \$150 million over five years to our Archways to Opportunity education program to provide upfront college tuition assistance, earn a high school diploma, and access free education advising services. These benefits show McDonald's and its independent franchisees' commitment to providing jobs that fit around the lives of restaurant employees so they may pursue their education and career ambitions."

The events follow Tuesday's news that Amazon will be raising its minimum wage to \$15 an hour. "We listened to our critics, thought hard about what we wanted to do, and decided we want to lead," said Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos said in a statement. "We're excited about this change and encourage our competitors and other large employers to join us."

The news garnered an enthusiastic response from Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, who introduced the BEZOS Act in September, a bill to tax corporations for the funds their low-wage workers receive in government assistance. In response to Amazon's announced wage hike, Sanders said, "What Mr. Bezos has done today is not only enormously important for Amazon's hundreds of thousands of employees, it could well be, and I think it will be, a shot heard around the world."

Sanders sent a similar message of encouragement to McDonald's and other

Continued on next page



Courtesy of Fight for 15

The food industry has been notoriously hard to organize. **Could these tactics bring it new life?**

These organizing tactics aren't traditional, but they are helping unions make some headway in the food and drink industry

By Teke Wiggin @tkwiggin
Huffington Post Business
October 8, 2018

When Amanda Cestare started working at New York City's famous Ellen's Stardust Diner in 2008, she didn't know much about leftist politics or the labor movement.

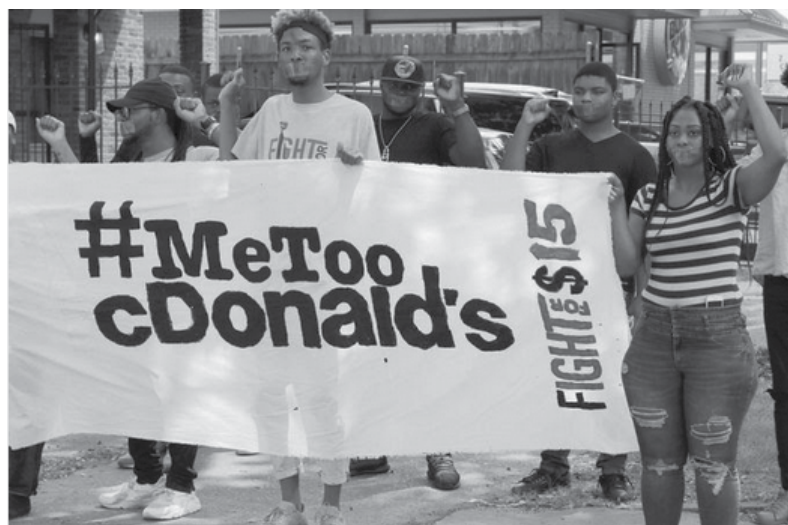
Ten years later, she's helping to build a local chapter of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), one of the most radical

unions in history. The group of 50 restaurant workers has found success through direct action, rather than taking the conventional route of trying to negotiate a contract with management.

Though small, the Stardust effort is one of several recent campaigns bringing fresh energy and ideas to the beleaguered labor movement as it tries to stage a comeback in the food and drink industry. . . . **IW**

Due to restrictions on reprints, this story continues at https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/iww-labor-organizing-food-drink-industry_us_5bbb823de4b028e1fe3fea42

Right, Wobbly Amanda Cestare



Courtesy of Fight for 15

Continued from previous page

fast-food corporations.

"McDonald's is not a poor company. Last year, it made over \$5.1 billion in profits and rewarded wealthy shareholders with over \$7.7 billion in dividends and stock buybacks," Sanders wrote in the letter, which was directed to McDonald's CEO Steve Easterbrook and shared on social media. "If McDonald's can afford to give its shareholders \$7.7 billion, it can afford to pay all of its workers \$15 an hour." **IW**
<https://www.cnn.com/2018/10/05/more-than-50-protesters-arrested-at-mcdonalds-headquarters-in-chicago.html>

Tell McDonald's, end their **sexual harassment culture**

Brandi Collins-Dexter

Color of Change, October 1, 2018

McDonald's has a culture of workplace sexual harassment and employees across the country have had enough of their inadequate response. Instead of McDonald's doing the right thing and properly addressing the toxic culture that led to 10 McDonald's employees filing sexual harassment complaints with the US Equal Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in May, workers, mostly women, courageously organized a strike this week to demand the corporation take real action to change.

Low wage and restaurant workers are especially at risk of sexual harassment on the job. Forty percent of fast food workers report being sexually harassed on the job, and 42 percent of those who experienced harassment felt keeping their jobs required they accept the behavior; of those who did report it, more than one in five said they were retaliated against for doing speaking up. Many of those who work in fast food are women and young people, an already marginalized group; the low pay and lack of job security makes these workers even more vulnerable to harassment and lack of accountability from employers. Many workers have families to feed and complaints jeopardize the lifeline needed at home. Being poor should not compromise worker safety, and it's time for McDonald's to set a precedent that protects their employees from predators in their ranks.

People deserve dignity. People deserve to be safe at work. McDonald's has allowed for a culture where neither of these things is true. McDonald's has the responsibility to join their workers in this historic moment, and together we can fight to make that happen.

IW

http://act.colorofchange.org/sign/mcdonalds_end_harassment_now/?t=4&akid=18716%2E2572671%2ENuyN8s

Updated: UPS workers reject contract, Teamsters brass declare it ratified anyway

By Alexandra Bradbury

Labor Notes

October 8, 2018

This article, originally published October 5, was updated October 8 to reflect the results of the vote count and subsequent developments. —Labor Notes Editors.

Apparently trying to have their cake and eat it too, Teamsters brass have announced that they consider the UPS contract ratified, despite members voting it down by 54 percent—but don't worry, they're going to keep negotiating to improve it.

When the votes were counted October 5, members had solidly rejected the controversial tentative agreements covering 243,000 workers at the package giant UPS and 12,000 at UPS Freight.

Concessions in the deals had sparked widespread anger and a vote-no movement. However, the company and union officials were both campaigning hard for a yes.

The contract rejection was a big victory for the "vote no" movement, which is backed by the rank-and-file network Teamsters for a Democratic Union

(TDU) and activists from the Teamsters United coalition that nearly unseated President James Hoffa in 2016.

In a confusing statement October 6, the union announced that it considers the package deal ratified based on a constitutional loophole—yet also that it "fully intends to demand that UPS return to the bargaining table to address a number of member concerns."

Days before the vote count, Teamsters Package Division Director Denis Taylor had threatened to impose the contract even if members voted it down, unless voter turnout topped 50 percent or "no" votes topped two-thirds.

Out of 92,604 eligible votes cast at UPS, the final tally was 46 percent yes, 54 percent no. That's 44 percent turnout, and a big jump up from the 64,000 who voted on the 2013 UPS contract . . .

THREAT TO IGNORE VOTES

Taylor's threat hinged on language in the Teamsters constitution (Article XII, Section 2(d)(2)) that allows negotiators to accept a contract if fewer than half the members vote, unless at least two-thirds vote no.

According to UPS Teamsters United,

Taylor claimed in a meeting of local UPS leaders last week that the union would be required to accept the deal. In reality, the language says the negotiating committee would be required to accept the company's final offer "or such additional provisions as can be negotiated by it."

Though awkwardly written, the provision clearly says that bargainers have the option to negotiate better terms.

Federal law does not guarantee members the right to vote on their own union contracts. However, the Teamsters like many other unions have enshrined that right in their constitution, along with rules governing such votes.

Labor Notes called the union's package division last week seeking comment on the threat. We received no reply.

DOUBLE STANDARD

Representatives of the company and some local unions have been pushing a yes vote in the workplace, while discouraging vote-no activity.

The Hoffa administration and UPS have barraged members with multiple national mailings urging a yes vote on the deal—in all, at least a million pieces of mail.

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Cut on the dotted line.

“It was like getting hit with a baseball bat every time I opened up my mailbox,” said Turns. “I can’t believe how much money we wasted on that campaign. If the contract they want us to vote yes on is so great, then why are they having to sell it that hard?”

Among the mailings were postcards warning that a no vote would mean “the risk of a work stoppage without further review by the members.” The possibility that a no vote would be overridden, however, was never mentioned.



In Pennsylvania, supervisors were reportedly leading workers individually to computers, logging them in to vote, and directing them to UPS’s statement in favor of the contract. Others were pushing employees to download the company’s app on their cell phones and vote that way.

In Los Angeles, Teamsters were thrown out of UPS parking lots for handing out vote-no leaflets. In New York they were told they couldn’t park their cars in company lots if they had vote-no signs in the windows.

In Dallas, at least two employees received disciplinary letters warning them that the “no solicitation at work” policy barred verbal conversations about the contract. Meanwhile supervisors on the clock cornered individual employees with vote-yes talking points.

BARELY PASSED LAST TIME

The previous UPS national agreement in 2013 barely passed, with 47 percent voting no. Member rejections of several of its regional supplements held up the whole thing for almost a year.

The Teamster constitution had been overhauled in 1991 to give members more democratic rights, as part of a consent decree that rank-and-file reformers pushed for to remedy the union’s ties organized crime.

Members won the right to vote on local supplements and riders to national contracts. The constitution stipulates that the national agreement doesn’t go into effect until all supplements are ratified.

Teamsters in 2013 were angry about concessions on health care, among other

issues. After some supplements were voted down, bargainers went

back to the table and negotiated improved benefits and lower out-of-pocket costs. Still, members in a few areas held out until Hoffa and Secretary-Treasurer Ken Hall imposed the supplements unilaterally.

To do that, Hall was apparently relying on language that allows the national executive board to amend the ratification article of the constitution “if at any time it believes such action will be in the interests of the International Union or its subordinate bodies,” though they did not formally amend the constitution.

A number of local leaders recommended voting no, including in strongholds of opposition to the 2013 contract and support for the 2016 opposition ticket.

WAVE OF FURY

If union tops impose the rejected contract without substantial improvements, we would expect a wave of fury from Teamsters against their national leaders—and against the local leaders who have been carrying water for Hoffa.

The Teamsters United coalition in 2016

did especially well among UPS Teamsters, 70 percent of whom voted against Hoffa.

The next national election is in 2021. Some locals, though, have elections as soon as this fall.

Slates fueled by the vote-no movement are running for office in the biggest UPS locals in the Northeast (Local 804, New York City) and the South (Local 767, Dallas). On the local level, often members are as frustrated with poor contract enforcement as they are with givebacks.

The incumbents in New York are scrambling to get in touch with members’ mood. The local’s current president announced at a rally that Local 804 would take the concept of the second-tier hybrid driver “and run with it,” but he took heat from members and soon backpedaled, saying his comments had been misunderstood.

In the final week of contract voting, Local 804 even started sending vote-no leafleters out to job sites—“a little late to the game,” said 21-year delivery driver Mark Cohen.

Cohen and the others putting together a slate in Local 804 had already spent weeks of their own vacation time building momentum for a no vote and a more militant approach to defending the contract.

“If there’s a violation the company fails to fix, it’s about getting a lot of people involved, not just one particular business agent,” Cohen said. “It’s about doing things that put a fear into the company.”

Five years ago, the contract vote in Dallas was an overwhelming yes. But times have changed.

Local 767 members backed the Teamsters United ticket against Hoffa in 2016, and Turns was confident that a majority were voting no on the current contract offer. She’s co-coordinating the campaign for the 767 Teamsters United for Change slate, with a vote count next month.

“We have always been a big Hoffa hall,” she said. “If you weren’t on the side of Hoffa you would never say anything out loud—and that’s changed. You can say it out loud, you can say it over the P.A. system.” **IW**

UN Human Rights Council adopts landmark declaration of peasants' rights

If approved by UN member states next month, the declaration will help farmers legally challenge agricultural policies, as well as the broader policy directions such as austerity and “free-trade”

By Pavan Kulkarni

Peoples Dispatch, October 2, 2018

After almost two decades of ceaseless peasant struggles across the world, coordinated by global movements such as the *Via Campesina* (the peasant way), the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) finally adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas on September 28.

If adopted by a final vote by UN member states next month, this will be an unprecedented recognition of peasant rights in international law, using which organized farmers, agricultural laborers, cattle rearers, and even hunter gatherers can legally challenge agricultural policies, as well as the broader policy directions such as austerity and “free-trade.”

For decades now, states across the world have been pursuing neoliberal economic policies, as a result of which the peasantry has been suffering a continuous squeeze on their real incomes. They have been dispossessed of their land and access to natural resources, disenfranchised from the seed breeding and food production processes, and targeted with violence when they resist in an organized manner.

“The violations of peasants’ rights are on the rise because of the implementation of neoliberal policies promoted by the World Trade Organization, free trade agreements (FTAs), other institutions and many governments in the North as well as in the South. The WTO and FTAs force the opening of markets and prevent countries from protecting and supporting their domestic agriculture. They push . . . the deregulation in the agriculture sector,” the *Via Campesina* stated in its 2008 “Declaration of Rights of Peasants—Women and



Photo: © Renee Leahy 2010 • renee.leahy@gmail.com

Men,” which was placed before the Human Rights Council the same year.

Without naming policies or institutions, the UNHRC’s declaration nevertheless acknowledges this attrition suffered by the class which comprises almost half the world’s population, and concedes to them all the rights demanded by the *Via Campesina* in its declaration.

Some of these include the right to organize and freedom from violent suppression, the right to breed and exchange seeds, the right to influence national policies that affect peasants, as well as the right to choose what is to be grown and by what methods. The declaration, once in force as a law, will strengthen the peasantry’s ability to resist such policies by leveraging international law in appropriate courts.

This declaration, after being placed before the 3rd Committee session at the UN General Assembly this month, will be voted on in November. “Once adopted, the UN Declaration will become a powerful tool for peasants and other people working in rural areas to seek justice and favorable national policies around food, agriculture,

seeds, and land—keeping in mind the interests of millions of rural food producers comprising all genders and youth,” the *Via Campesina* said in a statement.

Incidentally, many developed countries, including Germany, Belgium, Iceland, Japan, South Korea, and Spain abstained from voting while the UK, Hungary, and Australia voted against adopting the declaration at the UNHRC session. Brazil, too, abstained from voting.

However, the support of the developing countries helped carry the motion with 33 votes in favor, 11 abstentions and three against.

The resistance to the adoption of this declaration by most developed countries is understandable, as the rights stipulated in it will directly affect the profits of transnational corporations, most of which are based in these countries.

The declaration states peasants shall have the “Right to save, use, exchange, and sell their farm-saved seed or propagating material,” adding, “States shall recognize the rights of peasants to rely either on their own seeds or on other locally available

seeds of their choice, and to decide on the crops and species that they wish to grow.”

Further, the declaration also makes it an obligation on the state to actively “support peasant seed systems, and promote the use of peasant seeds and agrobiodiversity.” This will directly affect the profits of many giants like Germany-based Bayer, which has now acquired Monsanto. The profit strategy of companies like these includes lobbying states, especially in Africa and South Asia, to confer intellectual property rights on its genetically modified seeds. This enables these corporates to criminalize breeding and exchange of seeds by farmers, leaving them dependent on the firms for the most basic necessity for farming.

A major source of accumulation of wealth for numerous large manufacturing industries, predominantly based in developed countries, has been the grabbing of land, water, and other resources from the peasants in developing countries, using state sanction.

The declaration seeks to protect peasants from what academics call accumulation by dispossession. It states, “Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to be protected against arbitrary and unlawful displacement from their land or place of habitual residence, or from other natural resources used in their activities and necessary for the enjoyment of adequate living conditions.”

In order safeguard this right, “States

Remember those who died at work

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), more than 2.3 million workers die every year as a result of occupational accidents or work-related diseases. To put this number in perspective, across the world 167,000 people died in armed conflicts in 2015, according to the latest edition of the IISS Armed Conflict Survey. In addition to this astounding number, each year 313 million accidents occur on the job resulting in extended absences from work.

The ILO estimates that the annual cost to the global economy from accidents and

shall incorporate protections against displacement into domestic legislation. . . . States shall prohibit arbitrary and unlawful forced eviction, the destruction of agricultural areas and the confiscation or expropriation of land and other natural resources.”



By asserting that “Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies,” the declaration seeks to limit the influence that Western states, armed with IMF and World Bank policies, have had in shaping the national development policies.

By deeming “adequate standard of living” basic income security, access to health and to “means of production . . . including production tools, technical assistance, credit, insurance and other financial services” as a “right” of the peasantry, the declaration obliges states to undertake large-scale public expenditure, directly contradicting the IMF’s neoliberal diktat of austerity.

work-related diseases alone is a staggering \$3 trillion. Moreover, a recent report suggests the world’s 3.2 billion workers are increasingly unwell, with the vast majority facing significant economic insecurity: 77% work in part-time, temporary, “vulnerable,” or unpaid jobs.

What’s more, the labor force is growing older and less healthy: 52% is overweight or obese and 38% suffer from excessive pressure on the job.

In addition to the social and human costs of health problems and fatalities, the cumulative economic burden caused by a lack

The declaration mandates that, “before adopting and implementing legislation and policies, international agreements and other decision-making processes that may affect the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas, States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with peasants . . . through their own representative institutions . . . and [respond] to their contributions.” This can prove key in the resistance to free trade agreements.

Further, by stipulating agrarian reforms to reduce land concentration, the declaration has adopted a radical language, a victory for those who have been campaigning for such a measure for years. “This has been a long tough path, but as peasants, as people who have seen the worst of poverty and neglect, we are tough too and we never give up,” Elizabeth Mpofu, the General Coordinator of *La Via Campesina* said.

“Once the resolution is adopted at the UN General Assembly in New York, we will take the message of the Declaration to our people back home, and elaborate its significance and how it could strengthen our struggles against privatization, criminalization and more. It will enable us to demand better policies and laws that will take into account the rural realities of the developing world,” said Henry Saragih, the chairperson of the Indonesian Peasant Union. **IW**

<https://peoplesdispatch.org/2018/10/02/un-human-rights-council-adopts-landmark-declaration-of-peasants-rights/>

of wellness at work is enormous for both businesses and the global economy. This is especially true when productivity losses are added to direct medical expenses.

A lack of wellness in the labor force is estimated to cost the global economy between 10 to 15% of global GDP. In the US alone, work-related injuries, illnesses and stress, and workers’ disengagement are estimated to cost the economy more than \$2.2 trillion a year.

Learn more at the World Economic Forum: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/03/workplace-death-health-safety-ilo-fluor/> **IW**

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The Rana Plaza disaster —and its aftermath

The Rana Plaza disaster, Savar, Bangladesh

On 24 April 2013, the collapse of the Rana Plaza building in Dhaka, Bangladesh, which housed five garment factories, killed at least 1,132 people and injured more than 2,500. Only five months earlier, at least 112 workers had lost their lives in another tragic accident, trapped inside the burning Tazreen Fashions factory on the outskirts of Dhaka.

These disasters, among the worst industrial accidents on record, awoke the world to the poor labor conditions faced by workers in the ready-made garment sector in Bangladesh.

For some of the lowest wages of the world, millions of people, most of them girls and women, are exposed every day to an unsafe work environment with a high incidence of work-related accidents and deaths, as well as occupational diseases. Most of the factories do not meet standards required by building and construction legislation. As a result, deaths from fire incidents and building collapses are frequent.

Since the Rana Plaza disaster, no fewer than 109 accidents have occurred. Among these, at least 35 were textile factory incidents in which 491 workers were injured and 27 lost their lives. In the absence of a well-functioning labor inspection system and of appropriate enforcement mechanisms, decent work and life in dignity are still far from reality for the vast majority of workers in the garment industry and their families.

Given the hazardous working conditions and the high risk of exposure to employment injury in this sector, the provision of adequate benefits is of critical importance in compensating injured workers for the loss of earnings they are likely to suffer, and to ensure that they have access to the medical and associated care required by their condition.

Access to some form of financial compensation or support for dependent family members who lose their breadwinner can also make the difference between life in dire poverty, where children and older people are forced to work to survive, and life at or just above subsistence level. At present, the only form of financial protection available to workers and their dependents is set out in the labor code, which requires employers, when liable, to provide specified payments to injured workers or survivors.

A recent amendment to the labor code requires employers to insure themselves against liability, but no such obligation was in force at the time Tazreen caught fire, or when Rana Plaza collapsed. The amounts of compensation envisaged are also very low and take the form of lump sums, offering inadequate protection to beneficiaries against ill health and poverty in the medium and long term. The system is also plagued by major practical application issues (e.g., evasion, lack of proper enforcement, absence of effective recourse), with the result that legal entitlements very rarely materialize.

Despite the magnitude of the losses suffered by the victims of the

Tazreen and Rana Plaza accidents and their survivors, no compensation was paid in application of the labor code provisions on employer liability. A small number of global buyers and local players made some payments to victims in the months following the disasters, albeit on a voluntary basis.

To redress the situation more substantively and ensure that injured workers and dependants of the deceased were effectively compensated, both financially and in respect of medical and other relevant care, global and local stakeholders got together and agreed to an unprecedented coordinated framework. With the International Labour Organization (ILO) acting as a neutral chair, an arrangement was adopted, providing a single approach to compensation consistent with ILO standards, and more specifically with the Employment Injury Benefits Convention, 1964.



The Rana Plaza building in Bangladesh

The bridging solution for social security in case of employment injury

Following a number of recent tragedies such as the Tampoco and MultiFabs factory fires in 2016 and 2017, as well as earlier accidents such as the Tazreen fire and the Rana Plaza disaster, local authorities and stakeholders at the national and international levels, with the involvement of organizations such as the IndustriAll Global Union and Clean Clothes Campaign, took bold steps to strengthen occupational safety and health, labor inspection services, skills training and rehabilitation services in the long term, notably with the support of the ILO and of global buyers.

Action has also been taken to implement a national employment injury scheme in Bangladesh based on the principles of Convention No. 121 and a mutual consensus on the core elements of the scheme.

Implementing an operational Employment Injury Insurance (EII) scheme will inevitably take time, possibly two to three years at best. Until an EII scheme becomes operational and capable of

collecting contributions and paying benefits, it is crucial that in case of another large-scale industrial accident such as the Rana Plaza collapse or the Tazreen building fire, a proper bridging solution be in place to provide for appropriate health care and compensation to the victims in an efficient and diligent manner and on a temporary basis.

Employment Injury Insurance committee in Bangladesh

Following series of consultations and groundwork on legal framework, costing and bridging solution, a consultation meeting was conducted in Geneva in November 2017. The State Minister, Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) was the Chief Guest, and the Secretary in Charge, MoLE was the Chair.

In that meeting, the forum came up with a suggestion that a tripartite policy level committee on EII may further analyse the ground works done by the ILO and decide future steps for introducing an Employment Injury Insurance in Bangladesh.

In late November 2017, in the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting, this proposal was endorsed and a notice issued to established a tripartite committee on EII. The committee is chaired by the Additional Secretary, MoLE, and represented by Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF), Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), National Coordination Committee for Workers' Education (NCCWE) and IndustriALL Bangladesh Council (IBC).

The participants met in June of 2018 and began working on a plan towards a Comprehensive Employment Injury and Rehabilitation

Scheme. Concurrently, the Government of Bangladesh Ministry of Labour and Employment is working with the government to set up a long-term, rights-based, and sustainable protection mechanism that provides protection as well as prevention and rehabilitation measures in a systematic way, in line with the ILO Employment Injury Benefits Convention of 1964.

Following the key principles highlighted in the Convention, the national Employment Injury Protection & Rehabilitation Scheme (EIP&R) aims at providing protection in the forms of:

- 1) Long-term periodical payments instead of lump sum payment.
- 2) Compensation for the loss of income over the lifetime of injured workers and dependents of deceased workers.
- 3) Medical and associated care provided over the lifetime of severely injured workers.
- 4) Vocational rehabilitation programs for reintegration of injured workers in their previous or alternative suitable occupation. **IW**



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Application for Membership Aplicación para Membresía

- I affirm that I am a worker and that I am not an employer. [Afirmó que soy trabajador/a y no soy empleador.]
- I agree to abide by the constitution and regulations of this organization, and will study its principles and acquaint myself with its purposes. [Pacto de obedecer a la constitución y las reglas de esta organización, y estudiaré sus principios, y me informaré de sus objetivos.]

Name/Nombre: _____

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- I would prefer to receive copies of the IWW's General Organization Bulletin in paper form, by mail (Default is electronic, by email). [Prefiero recibir copias del Boletín General por correo. (No sobre e-mail)]

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Over \$3,500 = \$33 per month	Mas que \$3,500 = \$33 por mes
Initiation fee is equal to one month's dues.	Iniciación = cuota de un mes

For more information, please go to
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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.