

# INDUSTRIAL WORKER



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## Baltimore Jimmy John's Workers Announce IWW Membership

By the IWW Jimmy John's  
Workers Union

On Saturday, Aug. 9, workers at the Jimmy John's franchise sandwich shop in Baltimore announced their membership in the IWW Jimmy John's Workers Union (JJWU) and asked management to recognize their union and negotiate. This decision, prompted by the actions of Mike Gillett and Danny Dolch, owners of the Jimmy John's franchise, targeted workers for their desire to have a fairer workplace.

Workers and supporters leafleted the Pratt Street location and presented their demands, declaring their membership in the JJWU.

The demands of the JJWU include union recognition as well as achieving and maintaining wage parity with their landlord hotel, the Hilton. Wage parity would bring drivers' wages to \$10.75 per hour, in-shop wages to \$11.34 per hour, and wages of workers in charge to \$12.34 per hour.

"We're not people to this company," said Jimmy John's worker and IWW member Isaac Dalto. "We're labor costs.

We need a union to secure fair pay, guaranteed hours, and paid sick days, because those things are basic human rights. We will not be taken advantage of, and we'll keep fighting for [it] as long as it takes."

"The owners think of us as machines. And that's exactly how they treat us—as machines that turn bread and lettuce into money for them," said Pratt Street driver and IWW member Brendan Camiel. "So it shouldn't surprise us that they don't think we need wages we can live on, or even basic respect. Why should they care about the money and time we spend maintaining our bikes and our bodies for them, or the emotional and physical toll our working conditions take on us? We, the Jimmy John's Workers Union, will force them to care."

The Baltimore fast-food workers' move to unionize is emblematic of mounting insurgency among fast-food and other low-wage workers in the United States. In the city of Baltimore, where longtime large employers have closed up shop or have moved shop for cheaper labor, the food service industry is becoming a larger



**IWW Jimmy John's workers go public in Baltimore on Aug. 9.** Photo: Baltimore IWW and larger share of total employment. Employment in the food service industry is expected to grow.

The campaign in Baltimore is the second franchise in the company where

workers have gone public as the IWW Jimmy John's Workers Union—the first being in Minneapolis in 2010.

For more information, visit <http://www.jimmyjohnsworkers.org>.

## Portland Canvass Workers Walk Off The Job, Demand Unpaid Wages



**Striking CRRH workers take to the streets in Portland, June 13.** Photo: Dennis Gravey

By Shane Burley

When a progressive campaign cannot take care of its workforce according to the principles it claims, they are in a great deal of trouble.

On June 5, a crew of nine campaign canvass workers walked off their jobs at the Oregon Campaign for the Restoration and Regulation of Hemp (CRRH) and into the office of the Portland IWW, looking to form a union. The workers had been refused the paychecks they were owed for their time, which only built on the several bounced paychecks in the past. After their checks did not arrive, and management refused to discuss what had just happened, the canvassers walked out collectively as a unit. This action had been a long time coming for a group of workers who had seen a "culture of secrecy and information repression that make incidents like this an ongoing problem," said a statement they released.

Together they formed the United Campaign Workers (UCW) with IWW support and began a campaign to come back to work with a written agreement from management offering them the \$15-per-hour pay rate and correct overtime they had been promised. After initially marching on the boss with their demands and being ignored, they started what has become a nationwide effort of supporters and union partners phoning the UCW headquarters to show their support for the union.

On Friday, June 13, the workers staged a second march on the boss, this time with dozens of supporters from the Portland IWW, Portland Solidarity Network, Jobs With Justice, Rose City Resistance, and other organizations and union members, and took to the streets to approach the CRRH office.

Upon entering the office, a spokesperson from the UCW tried to present their

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## Work People's College Europe: A Huge Success

By Michael White

From July 24 to 27, fellow workers in the German Language Area Membership Regional Organizing Committee (GLAMROC) of the IWW hosted Work People's College Europe (WPC-Europe) in Berlin. The first WPC hosted in Europe lived up to all the hype and radicalism with which a mass IWW gathering



**The gates of WPC-Europe.**

Photo: Michael White

comes. Fellow workers hailed from all over—Germany, Hong Kong, Romania, Iceland, France, Greece, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Comrades from other organizations, including the Freie Arbeiterinnen- und Arbeiter-Union (FAU), also came to

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### Letters Welcome!

Send your letters to: iw@iww.org with "Letter" in the subject.

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### In November We Remember

Send in your announcements for the annual "In November We Remember" issue of the *Industrial Worker* by Friday, October 3, 2014. Celebrate the lives of those who have struggled for the working class with your message of solidarity. Send announcements to iw@iww.org. Much appreciated donations for the following sizes should be sent to:

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- \$12 for 1" tall, 1 column wide
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## Worker Cooperatives Do Undermine Capitalism

I was dismayed to read Fellow Worker (FW) Ogier's article, which appeared on page 4 of the June 2014 *Industrial Worker*, titled "Worker Cooperatives: Crashing in the Same Car." While FW Ogier raises a valid point that worker cooperatives, if operating in competition with one another, do not represent a complete end to capitalism, it disappoints me to read such continual underestimation (and to a certain extent, misunderstanding) by Wobblies of radical tendencies in the worker cooperative movement.

The IWW's stated short-term goal is to improve day-to-day conditions on the job for workers under capitalism. These would include higher pay, better hours, safer conditions, and the like, and these goals are clearly embraced by the international worker cooperative movement in general, as exemplified in FW Ogier's experience with the Rainbow Grocery. I, myself, am also a worker-owner in a collectively-managed cooperative. Indeed, the pay is higher than it was prior to 2011, when my co-workers and I organized to buy out the business and turned it into a worker cooperative. Now we have as much control over our jobs as the nature of the

work allows us. Not all cooperatives are collectives, and there is room in many of them for Wobbly organizing. However, such an institution absolutely does tend to embody our short-term goals as Wobblies.

Additionally, the IWW's stated long-term goal is to organize all workers into industry-wide unions for the purpose of seizing the means of production from the capitalist class and ending the wage system outright. It seems that a coordinated network of collectively/horizontally-managed worker cooperatives across a wide variety of industries is a step precisely in that direction, so why would we ever turn our backs on this idea? Of course, there need to be confrontations with and subversion of capitalism wherever it is found, but to decide at the drop of a hat that cooperatives are worthless because they aren't yet all synchronized, or because capitalist businesses still also exist, doesn't seem sound to me at all.

All in all, it sounds to me like FW Ogier needs to stop and take a deep breath before making any more hasty career moves. Maybe this FW can work at Rainbow part time and salt on the side? Best of luck.

- x365097

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Post Office Box 180195  
Chicago, IL 60618 USA  
773-728.0996 • ghq@iww.org  
[www.iww.org](http://www.iww.org)

GENERAL SECRETARY-TREASURER:  
Monika Vykoukal

GENERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD:  
Ryan G., DJ Alperovitz,  
Brian Latour, Michael White,  
Jim Del Duca, Kate D.,  
Montigue Magruder

EDITOR & GRAPHIC DESIGNER:  
Diane Krauthamer  
iw@iww.org

PROOFREADERS:  
Maria Rodriguez Gil,  
Anthony Cage, Joel Gosse,  
Jonathan D. Beasley, Jacob Brent,  
Don Sawyer, Nicki Meier  
Neil Parthun, Skylaar Amann,  
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## IWW directory

### Asia

#### Taiwan

Taiwan IWW: c/o David Temple, 4 Floor, No. 3, Ln. 67, Shujing St., Beitun Dist., Taichung City 40641 Taiwan. 098-937-7029. taiwanw@iww.org

#### Australia

##### New South Wales

Sydney GMB: sydneywobs@gmail.com. Laura, del., lalalaura@gmail.com.

Newcastle: newcastlewobs@gmail.com

Woolongong: gongwobs@gmail.com

Lismore: northernriverswobblies@gmail.com

##### Queensland

Brisbane: P.O. Box 5842, West End, Qld 4101. iww-brisbane@riseup.net. Asger, del., happyanarchy@riseup.net

##### South Australia

Adelaide: wobblesSA@gmail.com, www.wobblesSA.org. Jesse, del., 0432 130 082

##### Victoria

Melbourne: P.O. Box 145, Moreland, VIC 3058. melbournewobblies@gmail.com, www.iwwmelbourne.wordpress.com. Luki, del., lachlan.campbell.type@gmail.com

Geelong: tropicaljimbo@gmail.com

##### Western Australia

Perth GMB: P.O. Box 1, Cannington WA 6987. perthwobblies@gmail.com. Bruce, del., coronation78@hotmail.com

##### Canada

IWW Canadian Regional Organizing Committee (CAN-ROC): c/o Toronto GMB, P.O. Box 45 Toronto P, Toronto ON, M55 2S6. iww@iww.ca

##### Alberta

Edmonton GMB: P.O. Box 4197, T6E 4T2. edmontongmb@iww.org, edmonton.iww.ca.

##### British Columbia

Red Lion Press: redlionpress@hotmail.com  
Vancouver GMB: 204-2274 York Ave., V6K 1C6. 604-732-9613. contact@vancouveriww.com. www.vancouveriww.com

Vancouver Island GMB: Box 297 St. A, Nanaimo BC, V9R 5K9. iwwvi@telus.net. http://vanislewobs.wordpress.com

##### Manitoba

Winnipeg GMB: IWW, c/o WORC, P.O. Box 1, R3C 2G1. 204-299-5042. winnipeg@iww.org

##### New Brunswick

Fredericton: fredericton@riseup.net, frederictoniww.wordpress.com

##### Ontario

Ottawa-Outaouais GMB & GDC Local 6: 1106 Wellington St., P.O. Box 36042, Ottawa, K1Y 4V3. ott-out@iww.org, gdc@ottawaiww.org

Ottawa Panhandlers Union: Raymond Loomer, interim delegate, raymond747@hotmail.com

Peterborough: c/o PCAP, 393 Water St. #17, K9H 3L7. 705-749-9694. Sean Carleton, del., 705-775-0663, seancarleton@iww.org

Toronto GMB: P.O. Box 45, Toronto P, M55 2S6. 647-741-4998. toronto@iww.org. www.toronto@iww.org  
Windsor GMB: c/o WWAC, 328 Pelissier St., N9A 4K7. 519-564-8036. windsor@iww.org. http://windsor.ww.org

##### Québec

Montreal GMB: cp 60124, Montréal, QC, H2J 4E1. 514-268-3394. iww\_quebec@riseup.net

##### Europe

European Regional Administration (ERA): P.O. Box 7593 Glasgow, G42 2EX. www.iww.org.uk

##### ERA Organisation Contacts

Central England Organiser: Russ Spring, central@iww.org.uk

Communications Department: communications@iww.org.uk

Cymru/Wales Organiser: Danny Bowles, cymruwales@iww.org.uk

East of Scotland Organiser: Dek Keenan, eastscotland@iww.org.uk

Membership Administrator: Rob Stirling, membership@iww.org.uk

Merchandise Committee: merchandise@iww.org.uk

Organising and Bargaining Support Department: organising@iww.org.uk

Research and Survey Department: research@iww.org.uk

Secretary: Frank Syrratt, secretary@iww.org.uk

Southern England Organiser: Nick Ballard, south@iww.org.uk

Tech Committee: tech@iww.org.uk

Training Department: training@iww.org.uk

Treasurer: Matt Tucker, treasurer@iww.org.uk

West of Scotland Organiser: Keith Millar, westscotland@iww.org.uk

Women's Officer: Marion Hersh, women@iww.org.uk

##### ERA Branches

Clydeside GMB: clydeside@iww.org.uk

Cymru/Wales Caerdydd/Cardiff GMB: wales@iww.org.uk

Edinburgh GMB: edinburgh@iww.org.uk

Tyne & Wear GMB: tyneandwear@iww.org.uk

Bradford GMB: bradford@iww.org.uk

Leeds GMB: leeds@iww.org.uk

Manchester GMB: manchester@iww.org.uk

Sheffield GMB: sheffield@iww.org.uk

Nottingham GMB: notts@iww.org.uk

West Midlands GMB: westmids@iww.org.uk

Bristol GMB: bristol@iww.org.uk

Reading GMB: reading@iww.org.uk

London GMB: london@iww.org.uk

##### Belgium

Floris De Rycker, Sint-Bavoplein 7, 2530 Boechout, Belgium. belgium@iww.org

##### German Language Area

IWW German Language Area Regional Organizing Committee (GLAMROC): IWW, Haberweg 19, 61352 Bad Homburg, Germany. iww-germany@gmx.net. www.wobbles.de

Austria: iwwaustria@gmail.com, wien@wobbles.at. www.iwwaustria.wordpress.com

Berlin: Offenes Treffen jeden 2. Montag im Monat im Cafe Commune, Reichenberger Str.157, 10999 Berlin, 18 Uhr. (U-Bahnhof Kottbusser Tor). Postadresse: IWW Berlin, c/o Rotes Antiquariat, Rungestr. 20, 10179 Berlin, Germany. berlin@wobbles.de

Bremen: iww-bremen@freenet.de. iwwbremen.blogspot.de

Cologne/Koeln GMB: c/o Allerweltshaus, Koernerstr. 77-79, 50823 Koeln, Germany. cologne1@wobbles.de. www.iwwcologne.wordpress.com

Frankfurt - Eures: IWW Betriebsgruppe Eures Haberweg 19 D- 61352 Bad Homburg. harald.stubbe@yahoo.de

Hamburg-Waterkant: hamburg@wobbles.de

Kassel: kontakt@wobbles-kassel.de. www.wobbles-kassel.de

Munich: iww.muenchen@gmx.de

Rostock: rostock@wobbles.de. iww-rostock.net

Switzerland: wobbly@gmx.net

Greece: contact@iww.org.gr, iwwgreece@yahoo.gr

Iceland: Heimsamband Verkalþs / IWW Iceland, Reykjavík, Akureyri, Hringbraut 121, 107 Reykjavík

Lithuania: iww@iww.lt

Netherlands: iww.ned@gmail.com

Norway IWW: 004793656014. post@iwwnorge.org. http://www.iwwnorge.org, www.facebook.com/iwwnorge. Twitter: @IWWnorge

##### United States

###### Alabama

Mobile: Jimmy Broadhead, del., P.O. Box 160073, 36616. tr@iww.org

###### Alaska

Fairbanks GMB: P.O. Box 80101, 99708. Chris White, del., 907-457-2543, ccwhite@alaska.com. Facebook: IWW Fairbanks

###### Arizona

Phoenix GMB: P.O. Box 7126, 85011-7126. 623-336-1062. phoenix@iww.org

Flagstaff IWW: 206-327-4158, justiciamo@gmail.com

Four Corners (AZ, CO, NM, UT): 970-903-8721, 4corners@iww.org

###### Arkansas

Fayetteville: P.O. Box 283, 72702. 479-200-1859. nwar\_iww@hotmail.com

###### California

Los Angeles GMB: (323) 374-3499. iwwgmba@gmail.com

Sacramento IWW: 916-825-0873, iwwsacramento@gmail.com

San Diego IWW: 619-630-5537, sdiww@iww.org

San Francisco Bay Area GMB: (Curbside and Buyback IU 670 Recycling Shops; Stonemountain Fabrics Job Shop and IU 410 Garment and Textile Worker's Industrial Organizing Committee; Shattuck Cinemas; Embarcadero Cinemas) P.O. Box 11412, Berkeley, 94712. 510-845-0540. bayarea@iww.org

IU 520 Marine Transport Workers: Steve Ongert, del., intextile@iww.org

Evergreen Printing: 2412 Palmetto Street, Oakland 94602. 510-482-4547. evergreen@igc.org

San Jose: SouthBayIWW@gmail.com, www.facebook.com/SJSVIWW

###### Colorado

Denver GMB: c/o Hughes, 7700 E. 29th Avenue, Unit 107, 80238. 303-355-2032. denver@iww.org

###### Connecticut

Connecticut: John W., del., 914-258-0941. Johnw7813@yahoo.com

###### DC

Washington DC GMB: P.O. Box 1303, 20013. 202-630-9620. dc.iww.gmb@gmail.com. www.dciww.org. www.facebook.com/dciww

##### Florida

Gainesville GMB: c/o Civic Media Center, 433 S. Main St., 32601. Robbie Czopek, del., 904-315-5292, gainesvilleiww@riseup.net, www.gainesvilleiww.org

South Florida GMB: P.O. Box 370457, 33137. 305-894-6515. miami@iww.org. http://wwwmiami.wordpress.com. Facebook: Miami IWW

Hobe Sound: P. Shultz, 8274 SE Pine Circle, 33455-6608. 772-545-9591, okiedogg2002@yahoo.com

##### Georgia

Atlanta GMB: P.O. Box 5390, 31107. 678-964-5169, contact@atiww.org, www.atiww.org

##### Idaho

Boise: Ritchie Eppink, del., P.O. Box 453, 83701. 208-371-9752, eppink@gmail.com

##### Illinois

Chicago GMB: P.O. Box 15384, 60615. 312-638-9155, chicago@iww.org

##### Indiana

Indiana GMB: iwwindiana@gmail.com. Facebook: Indiana IWW

##### Iowa

Eastern Iowa IWW: 319-333-2476. EasternIowaIWW@gmail.com

##### Kansas

Lawrence GMB: P.O. Box 1462, 66044. 816-875-6060

Wichita: Naythan Smith, del., 316-633-0591.nrsmith85@gmail.com

##### Kentucky

Kentucky GMB: Mick Parsons, Secretary Treasurer, papamick.iww@gmail.com. 502-658-0299

##### Louisiana

Louisiana IWW: John Mark Crowder, del., 126 Kelly Lane, Homer, 71040. 318-224-1472. wogodm@iww.org

##### Maine

Maine IWW: 207-619-0842. maine@iww.org, www.southernmaineiww.org

##### Maryland

Baltimore GMB: P.O. Box 33350, 21218. baltimoreiww@gmail.com

##### Massachusetts

Boston Area GMB: P.O. Box 391724, Cambridge, 02139. 617-863-7920, iww.boston@riseup.net, www.IWVBoston.org

Cape Cod/SE Massachusetts: thematch@riseup.net

Western Mass. Public Service IU 650 Branch: IWW, P.O. Box 1581, Northampton, 01061

##### Michigan

Detroit GMB: 4210 Trumbull Blvd., 48208. detroit@iww.org

Grand Rapids GMB: P.O. Box 6629, 49516. 616-881-5263. griww@iww.org

Grand Rapids Bartertown Diner and Roc's Cakes: 6 Jefferson St., 49503. onya@bartertowngr.com, www.bartertowngr.com

Central Michigan: 5007 W. Columbia Rd., Mason 48854. 517-676-9446, happyhippie66@hotmail.com

##### Minnesota

Duluth IWW: P.O. Box 3232, 55803. iwwduluth@riseup.net

Pedal Power Press: P.O. Box 3232 Duluth 55803. www.pedalpowerpress.com

Phoenix Mental Health, P.L.C.: FW Jeffrey Shea Jones, 3137 Hennepin Ave. S., #102, Minneapolis 55408. 612-501-6807

Red River GMB: redriver@iww.org, redriveriww@gmail.com

Twin Cities GMB: 3019 Minnehaha Ave. South, Suite 50, Minneapolis 55406. twincities@iww.org

## Anti-Sexism

## Fighting Patriarchy In The One Big Union

Events of harassment, sexual violence, abuse and misogyny have transpired in many branches and projects of the IWW. However grassroots and radical our union's purpose is, as a union made up entirely of peers, without bosses, we are not exempt from societal norms—such as the subjugation of people based on sex, gender identity, race, disability, sexual orientation and class. Women and gendered minorities within this union are intensely and disproportionately affected and victimized by these incidents which are without a doubt the rotten fruit of patriarchy.

The result is often the resignation and continued disenfranchisement of valuable and capable fellow workers. These fellow workers are lost to our cause because of our union's frequent inability to enact compassionate healing and judicial processes.

The IWW Gender Equity Committee (GEC) strongly recommends that EVERY branch of the IWW make the active resistance of patriarchy, sexual violence and other forms of oppression a priority. We encourage our fellow workers to diligently develop and effectively implement official practices and policies that address incidents of injury where terms of immediate relief, punitive action, and transformative justice prioritize the needs of the survivor(s). We also encourage branches and members to thoroughly familiarize themselves with the existing complaints procedure and conflict resolution policies outlined in Article III of the IWW Constitution's General Bylaws, as well as any additional relevant policies that may already exist within your branch.

If we are really going to work in solidarity with each other then we cannot stand idly by while the safety and well-being of gendered minorities and female members are cast aside. Patriarchy, misogyny, sexual violence, harassment, gaslighting, domination, condescension and privilege are tools of our oppressors and they have

no place in this union. And while we have all internalized aspects of systemic oppression, to spur true revolution we need to address these internalizations in ourselves and enter into a dialogue with each other.

In order to do this we must be present and mindful of our thoughts and actions that perpetuate and enable systems of oppression into the new world we wish to create. If we do not learn to effectively confront patriarchy we are merely perpetuating the agenda of the capitalist class and furthering a divided working class. When we are unable to successfully address these injuries it becomes fodder for our critics and oppressors to use against us.

It is a historic motto of our union that "an injury to one is an injury to all." This is never truer than when we are confronted with patriarchal abuse. When our branches have to redirect time, energy, and resources to rectify abuse, this is time, energy, and resources taken away from organizing campaigns, projects, direct actions, and the morale of this organization. It is important to recognize that when an issue arises it deserves a branch's full attention and needs to be taken seriously.

Let us agree here and now that the safety, well-being, respect, and trust of our fellow workers needs to always be paramount in our organizing and that the tools of our oppressors are NOT welcome in our organizing.

Let us vow to be careful with each other so that we can be strong together. Let us work diligently to respect and support survivors and encourage their participation within our union, to support and encourage women and gender noncon-



Graphic: IWW Gender Equity Committee

forming individuals in our organization, and to prevent incidents of abuse.

Let us always work in true solidarity with all of our fellow workers.

Some things that branches can do to combat patriarchy are:

1. Take all concerns about and instances of patriarchy seriously and start addressing

them immediately with care and respect for survivors. This will help deter similar behavior. It sets a precedent and can prevent the patriarchal behavior from escalating.

2. Respect the privacy and vulnerability of survivors and do not share their name(s) or details about their situation(s) without their permission.

3. Form an anti-patriarchy/anti-oppression committee run by women and gender nonconforming fellow workers. Consult "A brief guide to creating a group that can work to dismantle patriarchy in your branch," written by the Portland Patriarchy Resistance Committee which can be obtained through the GEC listserv (<http://lists.iww.org/listinfo/genderequity>). Report on the work of your committee to the GEC listserv and share what you learn with fellow workers in other branches.

4. Create a "Safer Spaces Policy" for your branch.

5. Host workshops, discussions and events that allow members time to grapple with and learn about patriarchy and the way it intersects with capitalism and other forms of oppression.

6. Learn to embrace conflict, think towards solutions and develop processes for dealing with problems before matters escalate. Having a process, a procedure,

or an outline previously agreed-upon for approaching these conflicts and seeking solid, fellow worker-affirming solutions can fast track our branches/organizing committees towards resolutions. These resolutions, when found with the survivor(s) wishes being of highest priority, may lead to gender nonconforming and women fellow workers staying participatory members of our union. How these conflicts are handled won't solely affect whether a member stays an active member, or a member at all, but will and does affect how the survivor(s) remain engaged in any social justice movements, or society in general. A spurned survivor often goes into complete isolation when not heard or supported. This is clearly furthering patriarchy's agenda.

7. Learn to be "called out." In other words, resist the urge to become angry or defensive and instead learn to listen to our fellow workers when they have the courage to tell us that we or others have violated their boundaries or contributed to their oppression, especially when we do not understand.

8. Do not leave the vigilance, surveillance or correction of patriarchal behavior to those most often victimized by it. If we see something bogus happening, we need to say something or check in with our fellow worker(s).

9. Be mindful of the subtle manifestations of patriarchy in language. Remember that we live in a society that has created norms and preconceived notions within us. We must be mindful to the language we use that acts to advance capitalism, patriarchy and other forms of oppression. Slurs, jokes, condescending tones, "trolling," and rationalizations are all a part of an agenda to divide. We must work to wipe these elements of communication from our organizational efforts in order to create stronger solidarity between all members.

10. Be mindful of our immediate biased relationships with the accused (family, romantic or sexual partners, friendships, etc.) and recuse ourselves from participation in rectification processes when necessary or requested by a survivor/complainant.

11. Hire trained conflict resolution facilitators (from outside the branch) with expertise in patriarchal oppression / sexual violence / transformative justice to assist with restoration. Utilize what we learn to continue this work, when possible, within the union. We may also call on another branch for assistance with conflict resolution

12. Be honest and transparent while working through problematic situations within our branches. Communicate processes and results clearly to the union at large whenever possible to avoid misunderstanding and gossip. This may mean electing a point of contact or preparing a statement for other curious fellow workers outside of your branch.

13. Try to assume that our fellow workers are working towards the same goal of anti-oppression. Note that not all survivors will agree about strategy. Survivors and allies can and should work together by listening to and respecting each other in order to help create a safer union.

14. Reach out to the members of the Gender Equity Committee for resources, guidance, support or help with anything on this list. Join our listserv by emailing [Genderequity@lists.iww.org](mailto:Genderequity@lists.iww.org), or visit: <http://lists.iww.org/listinfo/genderequity>.

**Always in Solidarity,  
The Industrial Workers of the  
World Gender Equity Committee  
and Contributors**

Voting members: Nicki M., Dakota D., Sarah M., Lauren V., Ryan G.

Additional Contributors: Amity D., Kaleigh H., Liberte L., Monika V.

## IWW Constitution Preamble

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 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 which 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 have 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 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 the 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.

## Join the IWW Today

The IWW is a union for all workers, a union dedicated to organizing on the job, in our industries and in our communities both to win better conditions today and to build a world without bosses, a world in which production and distribution are organized by workers ourselves to meet the needs of the entire population, not merely a handful of exploiters.

We are the Industrial Workers of the World because we organize industrially – that is to say, we organize all workers on the job into one union, rather than dividing workers by trade, so that we can pool our strength to fight the bosses together.

Since the IWW was founded in 1905, we have recognized the need to build a truly international union movement in order to confront the global power of the bosses and in order to strengthen workers' ability to stand in solidarity with our fellow workers no matter what part of the globe they happen to live on.

We are a union open to all workers, whether or not the IWW happens to have representation rights in your workplace. We organize the worker, not the job, recognizing that unionism is not about government certification or employer recognition but about workers coming together to address our common concerns. Sometimes this means striking or signing a contract. Sometimes it means refusing to work with an unsafe machine or following the bosses' orders so literally that nothing gets done. Sometimes it means agitating around particular issues or grievances in a specific workplace, or across an industry.

Because the IWW is a democratic, member-run union, decisions about what issues to address and what tactics to pursue are made by the workers directly involved.

**TO JOIN:** Mail this form with a check or money order for initiation and your first month's dues to: IWW, Post Office Box 180195, Chicago, IL 60618, USA.

Initiation is the same as one month's dues. Our dues are calculated according to your income. If your monthly income is under \$2000, dues are \$9 a month. If your monthly income is between \$2000 and \$3500, dues are \$18 a month. If your monthly income is over \$3500 a month, dues are \$27 a month. Dues may vary outside of North America and in Regional Organizing Committees (Australia, British Isles, German Language Area).

I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer.

I agree to abide by the IWW constitution.

I will study its principles and acquaint myself with its purposes.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

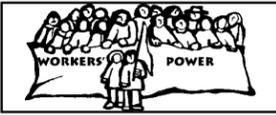
City, State, Post Code, Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership includes a subscription to the **Industrial Worker**.



## Working For A Hypocritical Business Union

By X359437

Recently, I worked for a business union. I knew this was going to be a lousy job before I even started; it was slated to be a part-time temp job in the AFL-CIO's headquarters in Washington, D.C. Before I started working there, two of my future bosses gave me three different answers on what my start time would be on my first day of work. I arbitrarily came up with a time that would work best for me. When I walked into work on my first day, my primary



Photo: X359437

boss, Bonnie (one of five bosses), told me that we would use the "honor's system" to keep track of my hours, which were not to exceed 20 per week. That was the moment I decided to start a workplace journal and to keep track of the hours myself, because this was not the first business union I had worked for, and it wasn't the first time I've heard the "honor's system" line.

Hours and scheduling were ongoing issues throughout my time working there. I spoke with a fellow worker from my local branch about these problems and she helped me determine that a large part of the problem at my job came from a lack of paper trail.

When I started this job, Bonnie told me to work nearly full-time hours during what was a particularly busy time in my life. Bonnie didn't confirm the hours I worked, she did not even write them down, so as far as I knew I would only be paid for a 20-hour work-week even when I was working 30-plus hours. When I sent Bonnie emails about this to either confirm in writing that I would be paid for the overtime, or confirm in writing that I could work only the 20 hours she allotted, she responded by calling me. In fact, she called my personal cell phone when I was off the clock, and I knew I had to put a stop to this. I blocked her number, and she eventually stopped trying to call my cell phone.

The following week, again when Bonnie asked me to work nearly 30 hours, I again sent her an email telling her I could not work more than 20 hours that week and every week from that point forward. Through inside sources I saw that Bonnie immediately forwarded my message to her colleague and close friend, Julie (who also was another one of my bosses), with snarky commentary, as though I was not entitled to ask that I be able to work the hours I was slated to work.

Following this, Julie called me into her office for a closed-door meeting. She told me that Bonnie was taken "aback" by my email—not because of my scheduling request, that was fine, but she didn't like

the "tone" of my email. Julie then suggested that I send Bonnie a new email to apologize and ask for her permission to work these hours. Julie proceeded to give me a lecture on the difference in how old and "younger" people communicate—as though the problem was because of generational differences.

I did a little research and found that there was a union representing union staff members. I did not know if the workers in my workplace were covered by a contract. If we were then this union was the union to which we would belong. After frantic phone calls, I found the person who would have been my shop steward if we had a contract. She told me that the workplace was not represented. The last time they had a contract was 20 years ago, before the organization "let go" of everyone working there who was on the bargaining committee. I was not surprised to learn that another business union could not help resolve the problems with the business union that I worked for.

After persistently sending emails to Bonnie demanding part-time hours, I was able to secure a 20-hour work week. I secured this over email so that I had this agreement from my boss in writing. A few weeks later, after additional verbal abuse and other workplace issues which are too numerous to discuss here, I quit that terrible job.

Quitting that job was important for my sanity, but the underlying problems were not resolved. There remained the issue of the hypocrisy of working for a place which claims to fight for the things that they don't provide for their own employees. Still, it is possible to gain a certain sense of victory for fighting for something that you deserve. We cannot solve the problems of business unions overnight. If we are union staff members or business union members it is important that we learn how to deal with business unions. Through organizing on the job for ourselves and our fellow workers, we can set powerful examples for the struggles ahead.

# WOMEN WORKERS' HISTORY

## Chapter 75 MURDER OF A SONG WRITER

The 1,700 women and men on strike in Gastonia, N.C. in the spring of 1929 already faced National Guardsmen, court injunctions and vigilante terror. Then in May, the company forcibly evicted the strikers from their homes in company-owned housing.

Workers' International Relief set up tents for the strikers. Fearing further attacks, union members kept guard. On the night of June 7, the drunken police chief and a carload of his drunken deputies pulled up to the tent colony. A deputy opened fire. Union guards fired back. In the ensuing gun battle, Chief O.F. Aderholt was killed.

Sixteen strikers were indicted for murder, three of them women: Vera Buch Weissbord, a NTWU organizer; Sophie Melvin, who worked with the tent colony's children; and Amy Schecter of the Workers' International Relief. A mistrial was declared on Sept. 7; in response, anti-union thugs kidnapped and beat three union supporters. With the strike at a critical point, the NTWU called a rally for Sept. 14.

### Toiling On Life's Pilgrim Pathway E.M. WIGGINS

Verse: Toil - ing on life's pil - grim path - way —

Where - so - ev - er you may be, It — will help you fel-low

work-ers — if you — will join the I. L. D.

Chorus: Come and join the I. L. D. Come and join the I. L. D. It will help to win the victory If you will join the I. L. D. (Repeat chorus after each verse)

When the bosses cut your wages And you toil the labor free Come and join the textile union Also join the I. L. D.

Now our leaders are in prison But I hope they will soon be free Come and join the textile union Also join the I. L. D.

Now the South is hedged in darkness Although they begin to see Come and join the textile union, Also join the I. L. D.

Ella May Wiggins was among those going to the meeting. A skilled weaver and mother of five, the 29-year-old striker was a rank-and-file leader who wrote songs about the strike set to old mountain tunes. Her songs, said a reporter, told "better than speeches or leaflets of the people's faith in the union to give them a better life."

Ella May never made it to the rally. The labor singer was killed when vigilantes opened fire on the truck carrying her and other strikers to the meeting. No one was ever convicted, despite the evidence of more than 50 witnesses. Ella May's murder marked the end of the strike. Terror — legal and illegal — forced the union underground.

Graphic: Mike Konopacki

## Reclaiming Time On The Clock

Musings from a library worker about the burdens of wage labor, dreams of liberation and reclaiming your time on the clock.

By Chuck Allen

I wrote this on the clock. I've never been much for writing, but Nelson Mandela once said, "A good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination. But when you add to that a literate tongue or pen, then you have something very special."

I'm not so certain I have any of the ingredients that make up Mandel's formidable combination, but I thought that in his honor, I'd give it my absolute best.

I work with two other employees in a corporate library, one of whom is my boss and the other my co-worker. I think that we, the two subordinates, are quite efficient workers. Sometimes I think we might even be good friends if we met somewhere else. The boss really isn't half bad either, except for finding some enjoyment in being a boss and unleash-

ing their whimsical frustrations on us the minions—occasionally showing up to bark at us about being on task or getting our work done (which of course we always do).

But how can I blame the boss? I know deep down under all that boss, there is a middle manager who has their own boss to deal with and would rather be somewhere enjoying life off the clock.

This is precisely why I decided to write this at work: as an act of defiance. An attempt to reclaim the hours lost each day to wage slavery.

I try to spend as much time as I can here living the rest of my life, whether that is planning my next adventure or trying to figure out how I'm going to pay for the dental treatment that my insurance won't



Graphic: iwwmiami.wordpress.com

cover. Mostly though I spend my reclaimed time social networking or thinking about how much I miss kissing my partner.

Occasionally, I glance over at my co-worker trying to find a way to get their daughter into a good school or an apartment in a better neighborhood. Sometimes we talk about the things we have seen in life or the

places we have been. I usually don't bother.

I know we're both dreaming about a life off the clock; grasping for it through the monitors that we can sometimes feel shackled in front of. There are moments that you have almost forgotten where you are when the boss shows up to bark more orders and we find ourselves suddenly pulled back into the reality of working life. Often we end up on each other's nerves

because of the stress our condition places on us. Working does horrible things to the soul of a human.

I take solace in the fact that I know freedom is out there and that it can be achieved for all of us. We can get to that place where we can be with our mothers and partners, where we can philosophize and garden, and where we no longer have to bear the burdensome identity of "worker." I hope that writing this on the clock can be a small beacon to all of you other toilers out there. Take back your time when you can! Maybe it can be used to hatch a plot to smash the last clock and we can reminisce about what life was like under capitalism.

For now I've got to get back to "work" before my boss discovers this subversive activity, but I know that days like this are numbered. We might be workers today, but soon we'll be free people, left to choose to do with our time what we desire.

I'll see you all there on the other side. It's going to be wonderful.

## Wobbly &amp; North American News

## Starbucks: Making Profits Off Workers' Backs

By the IWW Starbucks Workers Union

The IWW Starbucks Workers Union (SWU) released a report on Aug. 12, titled "Low Wages and Grande Profit at Starbucks" (<http://www.starbucksunion.org/new-report-low-wages-and-grande-profits-starbucks>), with an analysis of company performance over the last decade. The report describes how Starbucks has dramatically improved profitability at the company since the Great Recession of 2008-2009, and that the company has enriched shareholders at the expense of its nearly 200,000 workers.

The report finds that "an analysis of company performance and staffing before and after the Great Recession of 2008-2009 shows that the stores are now staffed at a lower level, workers are working harder, and they are bringing in much more profit for the company. Instead of funding a living wage for workers, the company has transferred almost \$4 billion to shareholders in the past few years, equivalent to over \$3 per hour for every worker at the company."

At a time when retail and fast-food workers are organizing for higher wages and the right to organize a union, the working conditions at Starbucks remain inadequate for its "partners" to support a family. Despite the company's reputation

for social responsibility, barista wages are often below the \$9 per hour national median wage. Many workers also lack access to affordable health care, with less than half of the workers participating in the company health plan. There is also erratic scheduling and inadequate hours, with many workers assigned only 20 to 30 hours per week.

The report calls on the company to compensate its workers with a living wage, ensure better store staffing and scheduling, and respect the workers' rights to organize a union.

The week this report came out, the *New York Times* published an article on the effects of the company's terrible scheduling system on workers, and Starbucks responded fairly quickly with a revised scheduling policy that will supposedly curb the practice of "clopening" (when workers close the store late at night and return just a few hours later to reopen), require that all work hours be posted at least one week in advance, and allow baristas with more than an hour's commute to be given the option to transfer to more convenient locations. While these are steps in the right direction, more progress is needed on improving the company's working conditions. For more information, contact the SWU at [iwwstarbucksunion@gmail.com](mailto:iwwstarbucksunion@gmail.com).



Photo: iwwmiami.wordpress.com

Photo: iwwmiami.wordpress.com

## Against The Felony Question On Job Applications

By the IWW Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee

The IWW Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee (IWOC) opposes all forms and methods of exploitation that the ruling class uses to disempower and disenfranchise working people. The IWOC stands in solidarity with those individuals who are released from prison only to find that they are effectively barred from obtaining employment due to the question "Have you ever been convicted of a felony?" which is found on most job applications.

The IWOC recognizes that the felony question does not serve the interests of working people, nor does the question improve or fix the work, social, and economic conditions that plague our society. Therefore, the IWOC opposes the employers' practice of using the generalized felony question on job applications.

We believe that as presently practiced, mass incarceration under the guise of a war on crime or a war on drugs is actually a war on the working class. Through such a guise, an important fact is often forgotten and hidden in plain sight; the overwhelming majority of individuals who are sent to prison are members of the working class. These individuals will one day be released from prison only to

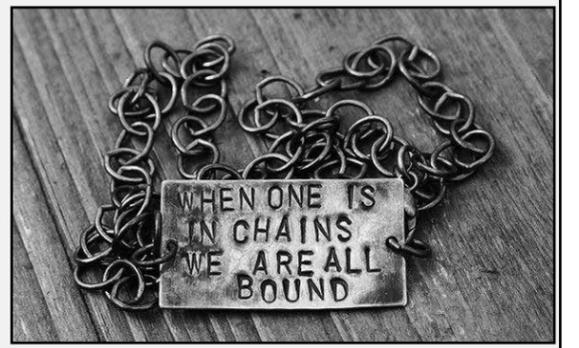


Photo: IWOC

find that society's perception of them has changed. People who are released from prison are then shunned and looked at solely as "ex-cons." In a sense, people are not being completely released from prison as the stigma of "ex-con" bars one from employment.

The IWOC interprets the use of the felony question as a form of perpetual criminalization and disenfranchisement of the working class while its use furthers the mechanisms of mass incarceration and serves the interests of the employing class. The IWOC is firmly rooted in the practice of "An Injury To One Is An Injury To All!" Therefore, we stand in solidarity with people released from prison that are striving to reintegrate back into society and attempting to obtain employment while trying to break through the felony question barrier. We denounce such weapons against working people.

## Longshore Workers Protest In Washington

By John Kalwaic

On July 21, longshore workers from the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 4 raised a banner in remembrance of the Lac-Mégantic oil train crash that killed 47 people one



Banner remembering 47 people killed.

Photo: ecology.iww.org

year ago. The ILWU banner was raised above the Port of Vancouver, Wash., calling out unsafe conditions and unfair labor practices.

The Port of Vancouver has been under intense criticism from union supporters since port authorities refused to help union workers locked out by the corporate multinational United Grain Corporation, which uses the port for shipments. In addition, there has been a recent proposal by Tesoro for the Port of Vancouver to transport 360,000 barrels of crude oil

per day for the proposed Keystone XL Pipeline. This crude oil would provide for 32 percent of the oil in the Keystone Pipeline and will be loaded on the port and then transported by train. ILWU Local 4 has taken a strong stance against this proposal, citing the

unsafe conditions that crude oil, and particularly crude oil trains, would pose on workers. Crude oil trains have had many notorious crashes in the last few years, which caused human and environmental damage. "Longshoreman would be the guys tying up and letting the ships go, but our local said, 'no, the risk isn't worth the reward,'" said Cager Clabaugh, president of ILWU Local 4. "We don't believe in jobs at any cost."

With files from <http://ecology.iww.org>.

## Philadelphia Area Rail Workers Strike

By John Kalwaic

On June 14, regional rail workers of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transport Authority (SEPTA) went on a two-day strike. The strike was shortened because Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett asked for President Obama's help in ending the strike, as it affected thousands of commuters. The collective bargaining conflict between the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, one of the unions representing these workers, and SEPTA, centered on wages and pensions continued for over a year, but the unions were reluctant to strike. SEPTA has had many strikes in the past years, but they usually revolved around the trolley, bus and subway drivers and not the regional rail workers. The state and federal government rarely intervenes directly against the strikes of



Photo: wikimedia.org

these SEPTA workers. When the strike threatened to interrupt suburban commuters, the government pulled out the big guns. The union claims this as a victory, and it was their plan all along to bring in the federal government to bring SEPTA to the bargaining table. Although doubts remain, that was indeed the case.

With files from Business Insider and the Associated Press.

## High Steaks: Tom Cat Bakery Workers Hold Solidarity Barbecue

By Lawrence Goun and Biko Koenig

Workers at Tom Cat Bakery sharpened their resistance against company attacks this summer with a solidarity barbecue held in front of the Queens-based factory in New York. Tom Cat's private equity owners, Ancor and Merit Capital, are seeking devastating health care cuts and other takeaways from workers in contract negotiations with the bakery union representing these worker. Dual-card IWW members are leading a struggle to build long-term power and secure a good contract, after beating back a decertification attempt from a mob-dominated union earlier this year.

"These out-of-town investors already have their mansions, while we barely can support our families. The cuts they're demanding are impossible and we're united against them," said Marino Aquino, a night-shift packer at Tom Cat and a member of the IWW. "Our unity is our strength and we will keep the pressure on until justice prevails."

What's a solidarity barbecue? Think of a street protest except with *pollo guisado* instead of picket signs. Workers, along with a diverse set of allies from worker centers, food justice groups, and immigrant rights' organizations, grilled

Dominican specialties just opposite the factory entrance. After plenty of eating, people gathered in a large circle for an assembly-style speakout calling on the company to accept a just contract.

"With the company's proposal to gut our health care, cut sick days and vacation time, and get rid of our paid lunch breaks, we'd be out hundreds of dollars a month in money we don't have," remarked Fellow Worker Aquino. "But we make the bread, not the investors in Texas and Illinois, and with the IWW we have a global community of allies to help us win."

The investors' contract demands would force these low-wage workers to pay \$300 per month for health care; an expense that most workers simply cannot afford. The loss of affordable health insurance would devastate families who depend just as much on the care as they depend on the wages themselves.

Workers with years of experience expressed their frustration over potential cuts to their pay and benefits. One worker discussed how important his time off has become for his life, but with the company's proposal his vacation time would be drastically reduced. Speaking on behalf of the majority of workers who are immigrants and use the time to visit family and friends

in their home countries, he pointed out that his hard-earned vacation provides just enough time to travel internationally. Under the proposed vacation limits, important trips to visit family will have to be canceled.

Workers were pleased with their tactical choice at this stage in the campaign because more rich conversations and relationship-building took place than at a traditional picket or rally. Workers at the barbecue and those who saw it while they were on the clock were emboldened by the sight of an action with a large group of allies right in front of the facility. One worker who was scared to attend took a flyer and was subsequently moved to take out a red card and join the One Big Union.

The IWW job shop at Tom Cat has a two-and-a-half year track record of direct action wins, including the firing of a 13-year executive who took pleasure in bul-



Tom Cat workers in Queens.

Photo: Ana Castro

lying workers. Coming out of the solidarity barbecue, the workers—with support from the nonprofit Brandworkers—are energized to defeat the cuts and build on that winning foundation. The struggle at Tom Cat is part of a larger rising of immigrant Wobblies of color in New York City who are building an industrial union inspired by the example of Local 8 of the Maritime Transport Workers (the Philadelphia IWW dock workers who led a powerful strike in 1913).

## Special

# A Misstep On The Floor: Lessons From A Certified Nursing Assistant

By Luz Sierra

Six weeks ago I resigned from my job. I worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) in a residential home for the elderly for about four years. I decided to resign once my boss removed me from the schedule. Her reasoning was that my availability was suddenly unacceptable for her and she did not approve of my performance any longer. This strangely occurred two weeks after I attempted to organize an action at my workplace, so the rationale behind my indirect firing seems obvious. I believe that in my organizing I made some mistakes that I hope to illustrate and analyze in this piece.

The setting is a recognized and prestigious retirement facility in Florida. It is known for its luxurious physical appearance and top health care service. Yet, underneath that ostentatious layer was repression for its employees. As a young employee, I was appalled by what I saw in the facility. There was surveillance almost everywhere. We were under constant supervision and pressure to work despite frequent threats of pay cuts, repudiated bonuses and being suspended from work. Unsafe working conditions where CNAs were encouraged to lift heavy residents without proper equipment or assistance was something we had to do every day. Furthermore, the low staffing ratios made our work nearly unbearable since we usually worked with only two CNAs per shift and no medical supervisor while having at least 24 residents to take care of.

Even though I was sometimes treated better than others, it was not pleasant to see my co-workers disrespected by insults, foul language and unfair accusations from my boss. I have witnessed co-workers in tears after being scolded, in pain from unsafe lifting, under stress after their raises were taken away or their bonuses denied and depressed after being fired for dubious reasons. I did not have it easy either; I suffered as well. I would come home with intolerable back pain and extreme anxiety as I feared that I had not performed my job well enough. I also became insecure as my boss was not fond of the sound of my voice and did not shy away from brutal criticism about it.

Yet, above all the issues in my workplace, my co-workers and I managed to build strong relationships. Whenever someone needed to be replaced, or to be lent a helping hand writing a report, or even just someone to talk to, we were there for each other. Even though there were certain CNAs who preferred to work with specific co-workers and a few had conflicts with one another, we were able to form a solid nursing team and find ways to help each other. I felt that, after four years, I had gotten to know every CNA well, but that wasn't quite true when I attempted to create my first and last action in that facility.

Four months before I was laid off, I joined the IWW without any knowledge of workplace organizing. Through weekly workshop meetings where members mapped their workplace, read pieces re-

lated to organizing, and shared advice with one another, I was able to obtain some knowledge and learn some strategies on how to organize at my workplace. From such great collective work in the IWW, I was inspired to develop some organizing experience and witness how my politics could be applied to my life and that of my co-workers. Therefore, I began to practice many strategies. I tried to structure my conversations with co-workers in ways that would agitate them about recent abuse from our employer. I also shared insights and examples of how employees worked together to fight against bad working conditions and unfair

wages. And lastly, I provided emotional support and solidarity whenever my boss insulted one of us. Of course, I was aiming to go through the organizing process slowly and wisely. I was constantly revising my workplace map, making small talk whenever it was safe to do so, and also patiently waiting for good opportunities to set one-on-one meetings with co-workers.

A new issue stopped me in my tracks. One day, as I entered my workplace, I was informed that one of the residents was not doing well. She was refusing to eat, had a fever, and was basically unresponsive. Like any medical worker, I asked my fellow workers for any updates and read all the shift reports available, yet no one notified me she was in our facility in order to decrease. Being unaware of such information, I was petrified and concerned about the resident's condition. This facility did not have any proper care for her. My co-worker was an inexperienced registered nurse and was afraid to communicate with my boss. I was the only CNA who was able to check her vitals every hour and supervise her conditions whenever I had some time available while simultaneously taking care of more than 20 residents. I suggested to my boss that we send her to the hospital because she was in serious condition, but she refused to allow me to send the patient to the emergency room.

Inevitably, I was forced to see this resident die under my watch. She did not eat all day and had not stopped sleeping. It was a really horrible situation to witness since this was a human being purposefully being neglected of medical attention. Personally, it was horrendous and emotionally draining. I became furious and nervous and as a result, I made a decision to send a text message, that same day, to a few co-workers stating that we should take direct action soon by confronting my boss in her office. Soon after, one of my co-workers called me and spent a whole hour sharing her frustration of what was happening and agreeing to take action. I was very glad to hear that she was eager to fight and was hoping others would agree as well.

The next day, I returned to work, and saw that my co-workers were stressed out. The resident had not died yet, but my boss demanded that we feed her when the resident clearly did not open her mouth and was refusing to eat. When we placed her on a wheelchair, her head was completely down and we had to lift it and force food in her mouth. My co-workers were not comfortable with such orders and the situation in general and shared sentiments of raising this issue with my boss.

I had three co-workers willing to fight and we were enthusiastic to discuss how to take this further as a group, but the next day the resident was placed under hospice care and after one dose of morphine she passed away. I was very sad to hear such unfortunate news, as that was truly one of the worst deaths I had witnessed as a medical worker. However, the co-workers that I contacted to take action viewed her death in a different manner. They saw it as a relief and lost interest in taking action. They shared concerns of being fired and did not feel that action was necessary anymore. This was shocking to hear, and I decided to slow down and continue with the previous organizing process that I had left behind.

The following week, I began to witness a change in my boss's behavior toward me. She seemed to be very hostile by rarely communicating with me and not trusting me anymore. For instance, when a resident appeared injured after the shift after mine, she asked me how that occurred. I responded that I was not aware she was injured and that under my shift she was perfectly fine. She was not satisfied with my answer and even threatened to make me take a polygraph test. The week after that, she asked me for the first time how many residents I had showered, and I told her three. She became very upset and stated that I was supposed to shower eight. I had to pressure residents to allow me to shower them so that I could appease her. Finally, after a couple days from the previous situation, my manager informed me that my boss removed me from the schedule. That was a very painful day.

I wasn't prepared to be laid off. As someone who is part of a working-class family and is one of its main financial providers, I felt like I had lost a leg. A couple of comrades were glad that I was no longer working in that facility since it was a horrible workplace and urged me to view this turning point as an opportunity to get a better job and take advantage of the free time that I now had. Yet I felt like I was in a nightmare. I'm now forced to use my savings and ask for loans from school which my parents don't react kindly to. They ask me every day if I have applied to any jobs and question my calmness toward the situation.

During the first three weeks after I was laid off, I slowly became emotionally unstable and depressed once again. I eventually had an emotional breakdown for an hour after reading an article titled "The Monster of Unemployment," which talks about the psychological torture of not having a job. I began to view myself as useless since I was no longer working and my ability to help my family had decreased. I truly felt like shit and wanted to end that feeling somehow. Luckily I was able to talk to my therapist and began to view this moment in life differently. She made me realize calling myself "unemployed" and desiring to return to my former job was ridiculous because I really hated that job; I was always complaining to her how overworked and mentally abused I was.

Therefore, she enlightened me about being capable of moving on and finding more decent employment. Not only that, she told me that I am not simply unemployed. I am a hardworking, full-time student and a job-seeker instead of an unemployed individual. She convinced me to call myself a "job-seeker" rather than "unemployed," which changed my mood. I know a word cannot really change my current circumstances, but it motivated me to stay positive and help rebuild my composure. I am now looking for jobs with ease and taking advantage of the time I have on my hands now.

In the end, I have learned valuable lessons and gained insights by the mistakes I made from my recent organizing experience. For starters, I admit that I organized the previous action the wrong way. I should not have texted my co-workers and instead should have contacted only a few of them. I needed to inform every CNA about forming an action and should have done it by phone or face to face. It should have been planned and led by everyone as a collective and with more ease. Second, I did not think before I acted. I allowed my frustration and anxiety to push me into making irrational decisions. I should have controlled my emotions and handled the situation more cleverly. Lastly, I assumed my co-workers' position before ever having in-depth conversations about organizing and analyzing their views of direct action. Even though I have known almost everyone for four solid years, I should have spent more time scrutinizing their willingness to fight, discovering how they view such oppression at work and providing at least some form of political program or dialogue. It takes more than four years to build strong relationships with your co-workers, especially when they are accustomed to harsh treatment in the workplace and when there is little hope for change as many cannot find better jobs and are dependent on their employment for economic stability for their families.

Overall, even though I did lose my job and am currently in shaky economic circumstances, I have learned valuable lessons about organizing and about life in general. I have recognized the struggles faced by low-paid health care workers in retirement facilities. I've become aware of how the elderly are mistreated by administrators, medical insurers, and families, and I've also come to find out how difficult it is to organize within the health care system. Besides the previous, I realize now, in light of it all, that I am more than just a labor entity. As many may have experienced, we tend to think that our lives revolve around our employment. We see it as something inevitable and representative of who we are, but that is not true. We are more than just the value of our labor power. As a result, I had unconsciously forgotten that I was more than just a CNA. I am also a full-time student, a daughter, a sister, an aunt, a friend, and a devoted militant. I see now that this is a form of violence that surrounds our daily lives under capitalism and the power of the state. We lose touch with ourselves, our lives, and our world, and instead are more connected with our wages. So for those who are unemployed or not able to work, do not allow this toxic idea of worth linked with labor to destroy you. We are more than just robotic machines that produce value. We are social beings whose presence, wisdom, and aid are important to the people in our lives.

With these new realizations, I hope to move forward in life and obtain another CNA position, where I will make sure to organize more intelligently and use my experience as a tool to face difficult cases and repression. I hope to have provided useful advice about organizing from the perspective of my mistakes and hope I have helped provide a sense of optimism to fellow workers who currently face unemployment.



Photo: iwwmiami.wordpress.com

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## Front Page News

# Portland Canvass Workers Walk Off The Job, Demand Unpaid Wages

Continued from 1

demands to the canvas director at the location, Kyle Purdy, who repeatedly screamed and swore at the protesters. Claiming that he represented a “real grassroots” campaign, he decried the workers’ attempt to unionize as being insane and marginal. “Grassroots doesn’t mean you’re held to a different standard than everyone else,” said UCW member Micha. “It means you should hold yourself to a higher standard. It means you are trying to effect positive social change.”

The campaign has been working on Oregon Cannabis Amendment (OCA), Initiative Petition #21 (I-21), which would end all legal penalties around marijuana products and would even extend growing permissions to Oregonians. It has been paired with the Oregon Cannabis Tax Act, Initiative Petition #22 (I-22), that would override existing laws to create a new regulatory framework and funnel money from marijuana sales into state programs. This is a campaign that has large support amongst the institutional left in the state—a campaign that the workers say they are adamantly in support of and would like to see succeed. The crew repeatedly asked to go back to work, and noted that their crew alone pulls in over 600 signatures a day. That would mean that as of that moment, the CRRH had lost an estimated 3,000 signatures due to the strike. Though this campaign has had large nonprofit and union support, active labor organizations came out to support the workers. The local Jobs With Justice chapter presented the campaign with a community petition of supporters demanding that the CRRH

negotiate with the newly-formed union.

This has come directly on the heels of several other attempts at unionization for canvass and campaign workers, most notably the recent labor disputes at Sisters’ Camelot in the Twin Cities, where board members have used connections in the local progressive culture to create divisions among the striking workers. Canvassing jobs, whether fundraising for nonprofit organizations or promoting specific legislation or candidates, have been increasingly common in recent years, whereby precarious work has become the standard. Many of these projects are underfunded and bounced paychecks have become a common complaint, not to mention the more standard issues that come with unstable employment like a lack of say in decision making and scheduling. The Working Families Party, which is often considered the “political wing” of big labor, has had similar issues with canvassers. During a 2012 campaign in support of Democrat Ted Obrien’s run for New York State Senate, many canvassers raised accusations of missed paychecks. With double and triple shifts coming up closer to election time, a group within the canvassers arranged a march on the boss demanding back pay and a bonus for working on Election Day. Though the financial backing and goals may be different, it shares the foundational issues with the canvassers from CRRH. In the case of CRRH, management hired scabs, many of whom were completely confounded by the action, as those who were newly hired were not aware they were replacing striking workers. The “replacement workers” were

being offered the wage that the UCW workers were originally offered, but these wages were never actually received. The workers even made several concessions, including health care benefits, just to get management to the bargaining table. One of these was a call for a bonus for workers with dependent children who were not able to purchase groceries after paychecks bounced. According to the workers, a manager made the argument that it was “heteronormative” to provide the bonus for people caring for small children. “As a member of the LGBT community, I find that highly offensive,” said fellow UCW worker Ken Kautz. “It is not ‘heteronormative’ to have dependents, to have children.”

After management threatened to call in the police at the demonstration on June 13, the workers and community supporters took the demonstration outside.

As promised, UCW and supporters came back together the morning of June 16 with a surprise in tow. They brought together a large community contingent to escort them as they tried to return to work. Management at CRRH found this out and decided to move all meetings to a park several blocks away, so the group of supporters and unionists shifted locations and marched on the management that was present. They were publicly orienting new hires that were there to replace the striking workers, but after seeing the protesters coming they sent the scabs scattering. UCW workers confronted the manager who was there, attempting to give him a letter that stated their intention to return



UCW members confront boss. Photo: Shane Burley

to work. He refused to take it, prompting the group to return to the campaign headquarters. Inside, management was conducting a training for another group of new canvassers and had the door locked, refusing to let the unionized campaign workers in to deliver their letter and return to work. Instead, they chose to continue an illegal lockout while scab workers inside laughed and made obscene gestures to those rallying in the front.

This was an unfortunate turn since at the end of that day the new hires were told that the campaign was ending and that they no longer had a job. Due to many internal funding and management issues, the campaign was closing its doors and the entire canvassing workforce was being laid off.

For the United Campaign Workers, this is just the beginning of what will become a much longer fight. The workers are now organizing new canvassers on different campaigns, building numbers, and making their fighting union ready for the next campaign workplace struggle to come.

## Work People’s College Europe: A Huge Success

Continued from 1

partake, help out, and enjoy the event. For four days and three nights between 50 and 60 fellow workers and comrades lived at the Kinderwald Tegeler Forst campsite. We ate together, shared cooking and clean-up duties, maintained our living quarters, worked together, and self-organized the day-to-day functioning of our little IWW commune. The entire event was simply wonderful and will forever be remembered as a catalyst in building the IWW in Europe.

The campsite was simple yet well-equipped for our gathering. The site included three houses—the Big Bill house, the Joe Hill house, and the Emma Goldman house (for women and trans fellow workers only)—sectioned off into rooms with bunk beds, bathrooms, showers, small/basic kitchens and meeting areas. A large tent sat in between two of the houses where we ate, hosted plenums, and enjoyed live music. The site included plenty of areas for fellow workers to walk around, sit, and converse. Though the weather for the event could have been a little more cooperative—it ended up raining Thursday and most of Friday, but Saturday and Sunday were warm and sunny for the most part.

The entire event was very well-planned. For months in advance, the organizers from GLAMROC worked together and coordinated plans. The organizers put together “survival kits” (guide books) for the basic need-to-know details about WPC-Europe. These included directions, contact information, a “safe space” policy, agreements for the space, and tips for things to bring/do there to increase your enjoyment of the event. The “survival kit” also included maps of the forest, the outlying area, and nearby streets. The kit listed each day’s activities, planned workshops and presentations, and information on after-hours fun and entertainment. Organizers maintained the schedule quite well and almost every scheduled workshop or presentation happened.

On Thursday, the day people began to arrive, attendees registered, found their bunk beds, helped set up, cooked food for

the night, and socialized. The next three days began at 9 a.m. with breakfast and a general plenum (which discussed the general set-up for the day and organizing issues) and included several breaks between workshops throughout the day, an extended lunch break, and dinner at the end of each day’s workshops. On Friday fellow workers facilitated nine workshops and one plenum entitled “Patriarchy in the Union,” led by fellow workers from Portland which enlightened and

empowered everyone in attendance. Friday ended with socializing, food and a screening of the film “Matewan” by a large group of fellow workers. Saturday consisted of 12 workshops throughout the day and one plenum titled “Cooperation with Syndicalists throughout Europe” in the evening. On Saturday night The Overall Brigade performed in the tent while fellow workers danced, socialized, and enjoyed each other’s company. At the end of the night we lit a huge bonfire and sang many renditions of “Solidarity Forever” and other union songs. Sunday, the final day, was sobering, as we all knew we would have to say goodbye soon. Fellow workers from Hong Kong facilitated one last extended presentation, and we concluded WPC-Europe with one final grand plenum titled “Next Steps of the IWW in Europe.” Then the clean-up began. Surprisingly, we cleaned up the entire camp in about two hours. People trickled out, and by the end a group of only four or five people remained. The organizers gave each other a huge, exhausted, collapsing hug of relief, and then we left together, closing the gate and walking down the path out of the park.

By the end of WPC-Europe, fellow workers connected, hashed out ideas, and came to some very clear next steps. The many plenums produced great results—people shared ideas, experiences,

connections, and other information, and these meeting bodies decided on some non-binding general policies and ideas that fellow workers and branches can institute to progress their growth, struggles, and organization throughout Europe.

The last plenum, “Next Steps of the IWW in Europe,” was important because attendees decided on practical things fellow workers set out to accomplish or work toward. It included discussion of the event, some constructive criticism, and suggested improvements, as well as discussion on the next WPC-Europe. This was followed by real, concrete discussions about building European solidarity, solidarity between GLAMROC branches, and building educational programs within the European IWW groups. The plenum ended with several fellow workers taking on tasks of connecting everyone, writing articles, putting together information, and starting to talk about future gatherings and events.

I do have to say, there were things that the organizers didn’t think about or things that didn’t turn out perfectly, but nothing went totally wrong. The food came out on time and was served well; we never ran out of anything, people were accommodated to the fullest ability of the organizers, all fellow workers helped in all instances of cooking and cleaning, and unlike some events in North America, attendees did not divide work based on gender identity or burden one group of people more than others—everyone did their fair share and no one seemed burdened with too many tasks or with continuously doing the same tasks. Accommodations requested by fellow workers were considered, looked after, and made a high priority. From my perspective, only one instance of a real and serious patriarchal outbreak occurred (during the “Patriarchy in the Union” plenum). Attendees had to ask the unruly



WPC-Europe workshop.

Photo: Michael White

and disruptive fellow worker to leave the meeting; he complied and the plenum went on without a hitch. Besides that situation, which WPC-Europe attendees talked about and worked out later, people got along, laughed, socialized, and made lasting connections and bonds. I neither witnessed nor heard about any serious disagreements or situations, and, as far as I know, no one left hurt (physically, mentally or emotionally).

All in all, WPC-Europe in Berlin was amazing. I attended representing my branch (the Indiana General Membership Branch) just to take part, learn some new things, and build connections with other fellow workers from different branches across the union. I think as the first big IWW gathering outside of the United States or Canada in a long time, a better one could not have been organized. From being there, I really think this will make the IWW European branches and Regional Organizing Committees closer; I think people will work together to support each other more now; and I think all of the branches who participated will enjoy growth and publicity from this. Situations throughout the union differ because of the scope of our union. Fellow workers from the United States often forget that an entire world exists outside of North America; rarely do we know much about branches and struggles in Europe or elsewhere. Events like this tie members in the union closer together—people see that they are not the only ones pushing for a certain goal, people learn that others are struggling in their industry too, and people hear and relate individual stories that connect their struggles. Events like this help grow the international structure of our union and movement, expand our struggles, and make us one step closer to truly combating globalized capital. The greatest practical lesson I learned at WPC-Europe (one which I’m sure we all feel is already instilled in us as Wobblies, but we don’t realize until we attend an event like this)—if we connect and work together we can surely win our struggles: if we continue to work apart we will surely just continue to struggle.

## Reviews

# Beyond The Shop Floor: Case Studies Of Worker Self-Organization

*Immanuel Ness, ed.* New Forms of Worker Organization: The Syndicalist and Autonomist Restoration of Class Struggle Unionism. Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2014. Paperback, 320 pages, \$24.95.

By Steve Thornton

I was discussing the recent wave of fast-food worker strikes with two friends. We had all witnessed the walkouts and joined the picket lines sparked by the one-day actions. Each of us came away with different takes on the viability of this campaign. I said it reminded me of the Justice for Janitors movement in the 1980s: a lot of flash, powerful, courageous actions by the mostly immigrant workers—actions that weren't exactly strikes—and a strategy focused on the big money that hired the cleaning companies.

One friend had been reading recent critiques of the fast food organizing efforts. He dismissed the “paid staff” and “bureaucratic, big, centralized unions” that have run the project. My other friend replied: “Paid staff? Centralized? You could be talking about Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and the early IWW!” That’s about how far the conversation got.

In fact, Gurley Flynn was a paid organizer and the IWW did change its structure in the face of criticism over top-down control. It wasn't until 1915 and the creation of the Agricultural Workers Organization (AWO) in Kansas City that the IWW really built its power among farm workers in the western part of the country. The AWO also fostered the system of “roving delegates” who could sign up workers on the spot and collect dues, another change from the old practice of centering everything in Chicago.

Like my friends and I, it seems that most who complain about the current Fight for Fifteen campaign are acting like (as we used to say) armchair revolutionaries. That’s why “New Forms of Worker Organization: The Syndicalist and Autonomist Restoration of Class Struggle Unionism” is such a valuable addition to the debate. Published this year by PM Press and edited by Immanuel Ness, “New Forms” provides a worldwide perspective on bottom-up organizing efforts from the past and present.

Ness argues that it won't work to “reinvigorate” conventional unions or to reach “density” in particular industries. I was fortunate to hear him speak recently at “How Class Works,” a biennial conference held at Stony Brook University and sponsored by the school’s Center for Study of Working Class Life. At his workshop, Ness posed the question that is at the core of this book: Can we create solidarity unions within (or in spite of) current labor organizations?

“New Forms of Worker Organization” is a book of essays divided geographically between Europe and Asia, the Global South and the Global North. With contributions from 16 writers, Ness describes the struggles of autonomous workers’ organizations and their efforts to take hold. From worker-peasant coalitions in Madagascar to the IWW Jimmy John’s



Graphic: workerorganization.org

campaign in Minnesota, these writers provide detailed accounts of struggle by workers to build powerful, democratic and independent movements.

We learn, for example, from Steven Manicaster about the history of Italian *operaismo*, also known as autonomous Marxism, based on “the thinking and practice of politics” in the workplace. Independent operaist groups organized strikes and slow-downs in the 1960s, initially to force their official unions to act on workplace safety or wage issues. Such decentralized activity spilled into the community, where mass squatting, rent strikes, and refusal to pay the full price of utility bills became the practice of thousands. *Operaismo* has since evolved into the creation of Confederazione dei Comitati di Base (COBAS, or base committees)—independent worker groups that may include migrant workers, students, retirees and the unemployed. They have resisted education cuts, austerity and the power of banks. In a sense they are the “dual unions” that the American Left has alternately loved and hated. Described as the “Zen Buddhists of politics,” COBAS have been operating without official leaders or formal rules of discipline for over 20 years.

How did Exxon and Witness for Peace (WFP) facilitate revolutionary unionism in Colombia? Now there’s a story, and Aviva Chomsky explains it all in this book. In

brief, Exxon built a giant coal mine in the 1980s that displaced indigenous communities, mostly small farmers and livestock herders. The National Union of Workers in the Coal Industry (Sintracarbón) learned about the mine’s poisoning of water and land from a WFP fact-finding delegation. The union asked WFP to bring all the parties together and the result was a negotiating demand by the mine workers that would require the coal company (now an international consortium) to recognize, negotiate with, and compensate the affected communities. In 2006 Chomsky and others formed an international solidarity group to support that process. She lets the parties speak for themselves in a series of reprinted letters from Sintracarbón. It is clear that the union’s commitment to the indigenous people grew deeper as the negotiations progressed. In the end, in the face of a possible strike, the union won a small victory by forcing the boss to discuss the community issue and agreeing to participate in “social programs” offered by the company. Today Sintracarbón continues to fight alongside the community, most recently against the diversion of a major river.

A book on horizontal organizing would not be complete without Staughton Lynd. In his brief introduction, Lynd tells us of a dream he had 50 years ago. In this dream he and his wife Alice are helping neighbors put out a forest fire. He describes the frantic work to douse the blaze, “incessant activity” as he calls it. “Then something else had taken over,” Lynd writes. “Slowly it came to me. It had begun to rain.” What is more effective than the toil of small efforts? A storm that brings a new world from the ashes of the old.

## The S.O.B.'s Of Wichita: The Koch Brothers

*Schulman, Daniel.* Sons of Wichita: How the Koch Brothers Became America’s Most Powerful and Private Dynasty. New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2014. Hardcover, 432 pages, \$30.00.

By Jane LaTour

Growing up in the 1950s, children made scrapbooks as school assignments about elections and the democratic process of voting—the process of citizens going to the polls to cast a secret ballot. Back when “I Like Ike” buttons were all the rage, the electoral process seemed almost sacred—streamlined, straight forward, and open to possibilities—a choice determined by citizens taking part in their civic duty.

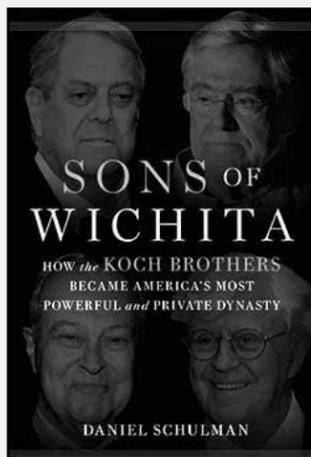
Things have changed considerably since that time. One significant source of the change that is perverting the democratic process is the Citizens United decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, which opened the floodgates to unlimited, unregulated campaign spending by corporations and wealthy individuals. But the seeds of our current impasse, The Great Divide (of income inequality) that pervades the country, were sowed long ago. Daniel Schulman’s book, “Sons of Wichita: How the Koch Brothers Became America’s Most Powerful and Private Dynasty,” lays out the long journey of these Kansas-bred brothers to their current perch atop both the second largest privately-held company—Koch Industries, Inc.—and the crackpot, ultra-far-right conservative movement.

Schulman’s book starts off dramatically, like a movie. The author vividly paints a picture of the family: four sons of a powerful dynamo—a self-made man of engineering and entrepreneurial talents, with his fortune deriving from a process called “cracking”—an essential part of delivering petroleum to the market. This man, Fred, the father of the four brothers, lent his engineering skills to help develop the petroleum resources in the remote

regions of the former Soviet Union, a contribution he lived to regret. The story quickly moves into strange terrain—taking on the deep paranoia that pervades the TV series, “The Americans.” Everything in Fred Koch’s world is colored with the fear of the Soviet Union as a bogeyman hidden behind every fence post. Thus, Fred is present at the first meeting of the John Birch Society and takes on the role of its Mr. Big, an architect of its development and playbook. This is the worldview he shared with his offspring; the vision they imbibed, the atmosphere they breathed. This, along with a fiercely competitive ethos, laid the groundwork for the subsequent developments amongst his four sons.

Based on copious archival research, interviews, secondary sources, and the reporting skills of a veteran journalist, Schulman weaves them all together to chronicle the lives and times of his subjects. The prose is accessible and filled with eminently delectable quotes. It’s an introduction to an Alice-through-the-looking-glass/upside-down universe; except that instead of falling down a rabbit hole, we are inside the wonderful worlds of billionaires. Schulman delivers a fair and balanced account, letting the facts speak for themselves, which makes this account all the more powerful, damning, and credible.

For decades, Charles and David (the Koch Brothers at the helm of their family business) shrouded themselves in anonymity, which changed as their creations, including the Tea Party (an outgrowth of their conservative, “libertarian” philosophy) took on greater resonance. In time, their role became widely known. For decades, they and their acolytes have been behind a toxic drumbeat. They bought the



Graphic: ga-ga.com

drums, wrote the chants, hired the drummers, and brought it all into the public arena for consumption by the citizenry. Today, the Koch brothers are anonymous no more. Thanks to a brilliant bit of street theater by Greenpeace, the brothers were exposed for the first—and certainly not the last—time. Even as their tentacles sink ever deeper into the fabric of our republic, they seek to re-cast their image. Witness the TV ads “We are Koch,” which laud their role as job creators, and David Koch endowing his billions on the arts, medical facilities, and, most recently, the United Negro College Fund (UNCF). To its credit, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) pulled its partnership from the UNCF after it accepted a gift of \$25 million from David and Charles. Not only did the UNCF take the money, Dr. Michael Lomax, the president of the UNCF, spoke at the Koch brothers’ annual summit, along with Charles Murray, author of “The Bell Curve.”

AFSCME President Lee Saunders, in a letter to Dr. Lomax, described Murray as a scholar who has “dedicated himself to promoting the notion that the over-representation of African-Americans among America’s poor and in American prisons is the consequence not of our history or of the types of policies the Koch brothers promote, but rather is a consequence of genetic inferiority.” Saunders noted that these actions are “a profound betrayal of the ideals of the civil rights movement.” The helmeted/welding African-American woman and the diapered baby in the Koch Industries TV ad can’t erase the nefarious anti-union, anti-tax, anti-regulation, climate-change-denial role that the Koch brothers are playing in the body politic.

“Citizen Koch,” a new documentary

film by Tia Lessin and Carl Deal, highlights their influence, as well as the limits of individuals acting in opposition to these moneyed interests. On July 14, the *New York Times* lead editorial denounced the “ruinous tax cuts imposed in Kansas.” There, Governor Sam Brownback, one of the Koch brothers’ acolytes, has imposed “spectacularly ill-advised tax cuts in 2012 and 2013...which largely benefited the wealthy, [and] cost the state 8 percent of the revenue it needs for schools and other government services... Moody’s cut the state’s debt rating in April for the first time in at least 13 years, citing the cuts and a lack of confidence in the state’s fiscal management.”

While over in Wisconsin, Governor Scott Walker is one of the more infamous manifestations of the Koch brothers and their brand of politics. A recorded conversation between the governor and a prank caller posing as David Koch revealed their attack strategy on public sector unions, among other targets.

What can we learn from all of this? The message is clear as a bell. We gain an understanding of how conservatives—a fringe minority back when Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater was the standard-bearer for the Republican Party—became a movement, building a strong base for their vision of a union-free, tax-free, regulation-free America. The think tanks, publications, annual convocations, funding of academics, and their research, along with the right to approve their hiring, and so much more, are at the root of their success.

It is up to all of us to educate ourselves—read the book and watch the movie—and then, don’t mourn, organize! The right is certainly organizing. It has been for decades. But it is important to remember these words: “If the workers took a notion, they could stop all speeding trains.” Or, in more contemporary terms: “We are the 99 percent.” Yes. “We are many, they are few.”

## Reviews

## Novella Tells A Story Of Alienation In A Tough Economy

McDonough, Nate and Jarrod Shanahan. *It's A Tough Economy*. Pittsburgh, PA: Grixly Press, 2014. Paperback, 90 pages, \$9.99.

By Jerome Baxter

Rule number one when writing book reviews is never to compare the book you're reviewing to two old classics. No one really believes it when you say a new book is a combination of a "Pride and Prejudice" and "Das Kapital." Well, today I'm disregarding that advice.

Jarrold Shanahan and Nate McDonough's novella, "It's a Tough Economy!" is part auto-biography, part gritty surrealism—imagine Franz Kafka writing "Down and Out in Paris and London."

As the story opens up, we meet the protagonist, Jarrod, who's currently out of work and living in squalor in a small, dank Brooklyn apartment. He's a man whose resume "has evolved from a factual representation of [his] employment history to a visionary piece of science fiction." And the stress of no work, inadequate food, and tortured sleep has

taken its toll.

So when the phone rings in the middle of the night—at least we're led to believe it's the middle of the night, time is a character in its own right in this tale—Jarrod jumps at the chance to secure some gainful employment.

And so begins his descent into a surrealist nightmare where the reader is never really sure what's real and what's imagined—where the waking nightmare begins and daytime drudgery invades the sleeping psyche.

Along the way we meet a seemingly never-ending cast of psychopaths. There's a supervisor with a questionable grip on reality, the homicidal boss, and a group of "renegade workers" trying to bring down the company which has offered Jarrod employment. We never discover what has aggrieved these work-



Graphic: cominsitu.wordpress.com

ers or what they want. We do know, however, that Jarrod is caught in the middle with both sides viewing him as little more than a pawn in a struggle in which neither Jarrod nor the reader is ever allowed to fully grasp.

The book is not without its dark humor. Indeed, moments of it verge on the slapstick. However, the dark undercurrent, the psychological-made-surreal, is never far behind.

"It's a Tough Economy" is an entertaining read, no doubt, but its beauty lies in the fact that Jarrod's sordid tale mirrors the way many of us experience the job market: a lone individual against faceless, unforgiving forces outside our control. The work we do controls us not only when we're on the clock but seeps into that most private sphere of human

existence: our very dreams.

The politics of the text vary from the overt to the opaque. At one point during his job interview Jarrod is told, "Ownership is such a shallow concept compared to the love we have for our work," to which he responds, "But who collects the profits?" At another point we are presented with the image of a maniacal boss shouting encouragement from the back of his limousine as his driver mows down our homeless fellow workers. An allegory for our very own tough economy? I think so.

Are there faults to be found in "It's a Tough Economy?" It can feel a bit disjointed and the description can be a bit flowery at times. But as a piece of writing—creating mood and affect and doing so in a way that provides a literary take on our position in the labor market—it certainly deserves kudos as a commendable contribution towards what working-class literature could and should aspire.

"It's a Tough Economy" was published by Grixly Press, the illustrator's DIY imprint.

## A Constructively Sweeping Blow

Philippe Kellermann, ed. *Anarchismus, Marxismus, Emanzipation. Gespräche über die Geschichte und Gegenwart der sozialistischen Bewegungen*. Berlin: Die Buchmacherei, 2012. € 10,00, 166 pages.

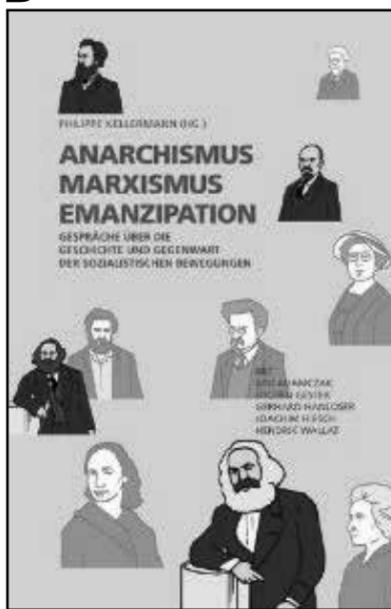
By Andreas Förster

Philippe Kellermann's conversation volume on Marxism and anarchism gives insights into today's left-think workshops and in the dungeon of history.

Everybody's getting their comeuppance: the Marxists, with the point made by constitutional theorist Joachim Hirsch "that it is impossible to fundamentally change the social relations by means of the State." The anarchists, to which political scientist Hendrik Wallat attests a "critique of the State and of power insufficient in multiple respects." The radical Left, which trade unionist Jochen Gester admonishes: "The utility of theories is proportionate to whether they do foster this process [of social change by collective action] or they do not." And even the editor himself: Bini Adamczak attests to his publications an unbalanced "gender ratio."

Kellerman is refreshingly eager to argue and open, but not at all in an aggressive or self-opinionated manner. That's the way, Bini Adamczak, Jochen Gester, Gerhard Hanloser, Joachim Hirsch and Hendrik Wallat—all having a university education—give themselves in the conversations with Philippe Kellermann. The latter's declared aim is to locate and develop contemporary thought and action with regard to the past.

The chosen form, not that of a game of question and answer, but of a conversation, is just so. In particular, it gives all people involved the opportunity to sweepingly deploy the most different cross-references.



Graphic: ecx.images-amazon.com

In a tenacious, almost penetrant manner, Kellermann uses the non-consideration of anarchist thought in Left discourse as an opportunity to sincerely enlarge this very tradition of thought and to put it on the same level as Marxist thought. This is absolutely fruitful. In that way, the conversations continuously revolve around the contemporary interaction of theory and reality. This is most important with regard to a widespread "fetish of the revolution," that is to say the "turning of revolution from a means...into an end in itself," writes Adamczak. For in the end, here all involved agree, it's about to "change the social balances of power... (that is) a process accompanied by consid-

erable conflicts with the State apparatus, the parties, and the existing organisations of civil society," writes Hirsch.

This contemporary pressure for change does indeed concern anarchist ideas too; for example the historical "paradigm of productivism," or the contemporary "legal nihilism." The overcoming of capitalism, as Gester among others, states, requires a movement "that not only ignores or merely fights the State, but that comprehends it as a political space."

This booklet offers a weighty, but not all too heavy reading—although in some places less academic jargon would have been appreciable.

Even if the confrontation of Marxism and anarchism might appear old hat to some people, these conversations possibly contribute to eventually overcoming the radical Left's "identity building along historical breaking lines," as Ralf Hoffrogge put it in a public debate in November 2011.

In the end, one thing is clear: "Unfortunately it is impossible to ever again dream that innocently of a better world as in the 19th century," writes Adamczak.

### Wobbly Arts

## I've Been Workin' On The Railroad

By FW JP, Kentucky GMB, Railroad Workers United

I've been workin' on the railroad  
All the live long day!  
I've been workin on the railroad...  
And I don't want to work alone!  
Can't you hear railroaders shoutin'  
One man trains ain't safe!  
If they sign on the dotted line, there'll be  
derailments all over the place!

5,3,2 then 1  
5,3,2 then 1  
2-1 don't sound SMART to me..  
Vote no, and let's make history!

I've been workin on the railroad..  
All the live long day.  
I've been workin on the railroad.  
And I don't want to work alone.  
Can't you see the writing on the wall,  
Don't be tricked with cash!  
The minute you sign on the dotted line,  
They're gonna re-write the agreement fast!

I'm tellin ya it's a trap!  
I'm tellin ya it's a trap!  
Have they ever kept they're word before?  
I'm tellin ya it's a trap,  
I'm tellin' ya it's a trap  
Don't kick the conductor out the door!

## Wobbly Graphics



Graphic: Ryan Kowalchik



Graphic: Gadflye



## Wobbly History

## John Reed's First Labor Love: The IWW

By Raymond S. Solomon

Towards the beginning of the film "Reds," John Reed (1887 to 1920), played by Warren Beatty, is asked at a meeting of The Liberal Club in Portland, Ore. what the war in Europe (World War I, then known as "The Great War") is about. Reed answered, "Profits." As a journalist, he had just returned from covering that war.

"Reds," as a movie, is as close to the facts as a non-documentary movie can be—considering the movie conventions of hints of the ending, metaphors, dramatization and sub-plots. Reed had been covering the mass slaughter in Europe. In articles included in the book "The Education of John Reed," he reports piles of bodies, priests dropping dead (from the diseases which are a concomitant of war) when bending over to give last rites to dying soldiers, an Armenian man reporting that the Turks murdered his entire family, and the severe persecution of Jews in Czarist Russia.

Other articles in "The Education of John Reed" include his coverage of the IWW-led Paterson Silk Strike of 1913. He was also a participant in the strike activities. Reed helped to organize a New York City pageant supporting that strike, which included actual strikers.

In "Romantic Revolutionary: A Biography of John Reed," author Robert A. Rosenstone tells us that Reed spent four days in jail during the Paterson strike. It was there that he met Carlo Tresca, an IWW, anarchist leader. This Italian immigrant was originally stand-offish towards Reed. Reed did not fit the "profile" of a striker. But they became friendly when Tresca realized that Reed was a friend and not a company fink or government informer. Reed was quite taken with Tresca and other workers with whom he was in jail for those four days.

There was an enthusiasm among the people surrounding Vladimir Lenin as if he were on the verge of remaking the world. This is what I could feel when I read this book. It was like reading about the sensations that George Orwell had in Loyalist Spain in 1936. Reed's "Ten Days That Shook the World," in this sense, is like Orwell's "Homage to Catalonia."

"Ten Days That Shook the World" is and was a classic, especially among radicals. Written in the early years of the Russian Revolution, it was read by and greatly impressed Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, and Lenin himself. In fact, Lenin wrote an introduction to a subsequent printing of "Ten Days That Shook the World." Reed describes the labyrinth of political parties in Russia after the February 1917 Revolution (March Revolution on the old calendar). Reed records the planning for the Bolshevik takeover, the takeover, and the first declaration of the new government.

This was what is known as the October Revolution—on the pre-revolutionary calendar—Nov. 6 and 7, 1917, on the Gregorian calendar.

According to Reed, on Nov. 8, Lenin decided to put into effect "the new socialist order." First, Lenin called for a three-month ceasefire in the bloody World War I. Lenin appealed to the governments and the people, though mainly to the governments since an appeal just to the peoples of the combatant nations would have delayed the ceasefire. Then, Lenin declared all land ownerless, asking the Soviets, already in existence, to take possession of the land that they had not already collectivized. Then, Leo Kaminev issued a strong attack on criminal disorder and anti-Semitism, and any anti-Semitic violence. The very honor of the revolution demanded that his declaration against criminal disorder and anti-Semitism be followed. He demanded "immediate energetic action" against any anti-Semitic actions.

In "Ten Days That Shook the World," we learn such facts, as Lenin originally wanted Leon Trotsky to be the leader of the new revolutionary Russia. Reed went into the background of Russian radicalism and why the Russian radical masses were not fighting for a bourgeois democracy, but for a workers' revolutionary society. They were not suffering for a parliamentary democracy, although they would have preferred that to Czarist rule. Reed wrote about the history of the radical movements in Russia and pointed out that there was a big co-op movement in Russia.

Reed reported on the heroic defense of the new Bolshevik revolution against the re-grouped forces of Alexander Kerensky (who had been head of the provisional government) and on the mass funeral for the many who died defending that revolution during the 10 days that shook the world. In viewing the mass funeral of those who died defending the revolution against regrouped forces, Reed said, "I suddenly realized that the devout Russian people no longer needed priests to pray them into heaven. On earth they were building a kingdom more bright than any heaven had to offer, and for which it would be a glory to die."

After John Reed's return to the United States, he again went to revolutionary Russia in order to get support for his faction of the new communist movement in the United States—the Communist Labor Party as opposed to the Communist Party. This is shown in "Reds."

John Reed defended the new Bolshevik government in almost all areas, except for their disregard for the Industrial Workers of the World. In "Reds" and confirmed in "Romantic Revolutionary: A Biography of John Reed," we see that he, and other Americans and Englishmen, greatly re-

sisted the desire of Gregory Zinoviev for the Wobblies to join the American Federation of Labor (as opposed to their separate existence as a genuine revolutionary movement) at the First Congress of the Communist International (Comintern). In the movie "Reds," Reed talked about the 101 Wobbly leaders who were imprisoned in America.

Regarding the above, Rosenstone, the author of "Romantic Revolutionary," wrote:

"The battle began early and lasted all through the Congress. Prior to the first working session Jack had gathered support not only from other Americans—the two CP [Communist Party] delegates and two fellow CLP [Communist Labor Party] representatives—but also from some English industrial unionists, IWW adherents and various continental Syndicalists."

In "Reds," Reed, in complaining to Emma Goldman (who had been deported to Soviet Russia in 1919, and who became disenchanted with the Bolsheviks, about whom she was originally enthusiastic) about Zinoviev, says that he can't deal with a "bureaucrat," to which Goldman, played by Maureen Stapleton, replies, "You think Zinoviev's nothing worse than a bureaucrat?"

She went on to explain that anyone could be taken out and shot as a counter-revolutionary on mere suspicion. She complained about things not working. An argument ensued. Reed said that the problems in Russia are the fault of the American-British-French blockade, and the common people running things before they are ready to. He asserted the need to defend the revolution by a war, including firing squads, to fight the foreign interventionists and the White Armies.

Reed's defense of the IWW in Soviet Russia did not lead him to be disillusioned with the Bolsheviks. But, in both Soviet Russia and America, he defended the Wobblies.

Reed was an IWW loyalist. In addition to his experience in Paterson, N.J., Reed had, in fact, covered parts of the trial that resulted in the imprisonment of the 101 IWW leaders, which he referred to in the Comintern Congress. A report of his about that trial (before the Bolshevik Revolution), titled "The I.W.W. in Court," is reprinted in "The Education of John Reed: Selected Writings." The Wobblies were tried under the Espionage Act, which was passed during the United States participation in World War I. The irony is that the IWW was not especially anti-war. Some Wobblies served in that war. So, I don't think their prosecution had to do with national security but with suppression of radicalism in America. The IWW was growing. The Socialist Party was growing. The Socialist Party had been winning elections for mayors and other positions. Howard Zinn made the point that there was a growing socialist movement, not just among German, Russian, Polish, Jewish, and Italian immigrants, but also in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Alabama.

In describing his reaction to the trial of the 101 Wobblies, Reed wrote:

"One Big Union—that is their crime. That is why the I.W.W. is on trial. If there was a way to kill these men, capitalist society would cheerfully do it; as it killed Frank Little, for example—and before him Joe Hill."

This is in contrast to his opinion of the men who were standing trial:

"The humility of the workers is beautiful, the patience of the workers is almost infinite, and their gentleness miraculous. They still believe in constitutions and phases of governments—yet in spite of their preamble, the I.W.W. still have faith in the goodness of mankind, and the possibility of justice for the righteous."



John Reed.

Photo: areadingnook.com

Reed took the opportunity of his reporting on the IWW trial to write that the IWW centers in the western United States were intellectual centers where books were read in the IWW center libraries, where world events were discussed, and where plays were performed. He also took the opportunity to say that the IWW was his first love among the labor unions in America.

The IWW had, and has, a cross section of the ethnic, occupational, and regional groups making up America—western miners, western agricultural workers, Minnesota farm workers, Louisiana logging workers, Chinese, Japanese, African Americans, Mexicans, Native Americans, Jews, Italians, Irish, WASPS, Finns, Swedes, and others. There was equality between women and men. The IWW had far more members and supporters than you would know from standard history.

One of the unusual features of "Reds" is that many people who were around at that time, and who were witnesses to the events of the days, were witnesses in the movie. This gives the movie a semi-documentary character. The witnesses included:

Henry Miller—author; Hamilton Fish—member of U.S. Congress who wrote the law authorizing a monument and grave for the unknown soldier who was a strong isolationist before the United States was attacked at Pearl Harbor; Bertram Wolfe—historian, author of "Three Who Made a Revolution;" Rebecca West—author who wrote an introduction to Emma Goldman's "My Disillusionment in Russia;" Roger Baldwin—one of the main founders of the American Civil Liberties Union and accepted as an IWW member; Scott Nearing—naturalist, author, and communist who lived to 100 years of age.

Who are John Reed's heirs? The communists claim him. Over the years they have established John Reed Clubs and John Reed Schools. The best evidence for this argument is that John Reed defended the Bolshevik dispersion of the Constituent Assembly, established by popular elections in early 1918, where the Socialist Revolutionaries had won a clear majority. According to Bertram Wolf it was an anarchist Kronstadt sailor who gave the order to disperse. Reed was planning to write a book defending the dispersion of the Constituent Assembly and other controversial things the Bolsheviks had done but he died before he could do that.

However, since Reed reported the important role that Leon Trotsky played in the Bolshevik Revolution, Trotskyites also claim him. In fact, communists claim that Reed was mistaken in his facts, reporting on the major role of Trotsky and that Trotsky did not play the role Reed recalled.

But there is no question about John Reed's love of the IWW and its members—his "first love" in the American labor movement. I suggest reading the above cited books and seeing the movie "Reds." This article tells a little. Please buy the books mentioned and see the movie.

I thank my fellow worker wife, Judy Solomon, for her editorial skills applied to this article.

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# World Labor Solidarity

A COLUMN BY THE  
INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY COMMISSION

## IWW International Solidarity On The Rise

By Florian H., William B., J. Pierce and Anders M.

Lately the IWW International Solidarity Commission (ISC) has been on the move—making contacts, collecting stories, and building relationships.

In between trips to the Deep South, Fellow Worker (FW) Florian aggregated a massive volume of world labor news for the ISC newsletter and has been sending this to our members and contacts. The ISC newsletter is a 44-page summary of the global class struggle touching all continents and dozens of countries. ISC highlights include our solidarity statements with Ukraine's Autonomous Workers Union and a strike of cleaners in Athens; the many ISC working groups we're trying to build, such as for Latin America and East Asia; and a small calendar of events concerning the IWW and our sister unions.

This past summer, FW Bill and his wife made their way through Germany, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Austria and Poland. In a pub in Krakow, Poland, Bill sat down with two organizers, Paulina and Krzysztof, from Workers' Initiative (Inicjatywa Pracownicza or IP). They discussed the development of IP and how we might work together (see "IWW Meets With Workers' Initiative In Krakow" on the right).

FW Pierce has been building support for re-launching the IWW's Spanish language publication, *Solidaridad*, and has been collecting contacts around Mexico who have agreed to write for it. Pierce visited IWW supporters Macario and Leon in Mexicali, Baja California, and discussed their campaign to preserve and improve a popular lagoon used by several working-class communities. Their Asamblea por el rescate Socioambiental y Autonomía Alimentaria Mexicali (Mexicali Assembly for Socio-environmental rescue and Food Autonomy) is the hub of many environmental and class-oriented campaigns. It was agreed that building a strong connection between the Asamblea and the IWW could benefit both groups.

FW Brandon of the 2013 ISC has been working with the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) in Spain to bring over a representative to make contacts and build our mutual relationship. Given that the CNT in Spain is one of the largest, most powerful, and most respected anarcho-syndicalist unions in our time, we are very

excited about this opportunity. The CNT has much to teach us and, if everything goes as planned, their representative, Ellison, will be at the 2014 IWW General Convention to meet Wobblies in person.

IWW members in Turkey have been in contact with the ISC as the struggles have been heating up in their region. FWs Ayca and Yusuf are following the fights in the manufacturing, glass, and coal industries, among others. The neoliberal regime of capital accumulation and its state are becoming more oppressive and authoritarian day-by-day to force workers to work under modern slavery. The FWs told the ISC that they are building slowly and deliberately in order to put the One Big Union in Turkey on a solid industrial basis, rather than trying to create another "left-wing group that has no real plan, no real strategy, no real weight." Let's keep our eyes on Turkey and support them in their campaigns.

FW Argyris, on behalf of the IWW branch in Greece, has been sending statements to the ISC to help publicize their fights. The Greek IWW supports the struggles by the Viomichaniki Metaleftiki (BIOME) workers (see "IWW Supports The Struggle Of BIOME Workers In Greece" on right) and a hunger strike by 4,200 prisoners. Things are urgent and serious in Greece given the fight against austerity and the growth of the fascist right. We send our solidarity to their efforts.

Australian IWW member FW Tristan and his partner have kept up their travels in Uruguay, Argentina and Chile. Tristan reports that he has met with many workers' organizations and has made the best connection with the Confederación de Trabajadores de la Economía Popular (CTEP) in Argentina. While in Chile, Tristan met with IWW supporters who are friends and contacts made by FW Romina from Los Angeles. Chilean supporters of the One Big Union have confirmed that they intend to revive the IWW in Chile, given the colorful history there from the 1910s to 1920s.

The IWW European Regional Administration elected FW Anders as their International Solidarity Officer for 2014. This is a great addition to the ISC's circle and we intend to bring FW Anders into our work as much as possible. As the capitalists are transnational, so must be the IWW. Therefore, the ISC is looking forward to seeing each regional section add someone to a new ISC formation in the near future.

## Not Quite A Truce: La Poste Concedes To Demands, Fires Organizers

By Monika Vykoukal

Having struck against precarious contracts and other efforts of "restructuring" at France's postal service, La Poste, since the start of the year, many of the post offices on strike have since gone back to work but are determined to continue to organize and fight back (for background information, see "New Management Versus Old-School Organizing: The Long Strike Against Restructuring And Precarity At La Poste," July/August 2014 IW, page 11).

In terms of their demands, the strikers won significant concessions: workers at the Rueil-Malmaison location, which went on strike first, and had the longest strike in the history of La Poste with a record 173 days, won the hiring of three co-workers previously on temp contracts. At La Garenne-Colombes/Bois-Colombes, which joined the strike later on, the number of planned job cuts were reduced by



Graphic: SUD POSTE 91

more than half, and some restructuring measures have been prevented.

And in Epinay, after 59 days of strike in mid-July, management agreed not to apply their restructuring plan in exchange for an agreement on the part of the strikers to transfer to another location. Improvements in working

conditions and pay rises were also won at several locations, as well as postponements of restructuring plans by eight to 12 months. Meanwhile strikes continue at multiple locations, and further post office locations are going on strike.

Management's efforts to get rid of the union organizers and those identified as leaders of the strike continue, with over a dozen facing ongoing disciplinary measures. On July 31, one of the union officers, Olivier Rosay, the department of Paris secretary of the union Solidaires Unitaires Démocratiques (SUD), was called

## The IWW Supports BIOME Workers In Greece

Workers at Viomichaniki Metaleftiki (BIOME), a building materials factory in Thessaloniki, Greece, are fighting a recent court action that is attempting to expel them and return their worker-run factory back to its former employer-bosses who had vanished two-and-a-half years ago.

The former employers were given a total of 126 months of imprisonment for debts to workers. Now, however, in collaboration with the appointed trustee, they are asking that BIOME be given a bankruptcy status to avoid paying what they owe to the employees. They are also requesting that the plant be evacuated of all workers.

This is an outrage to the workers of Greece!

The Industrial Workers of the World



Graphic: ISC

declare our support for the workers of BIOME. Their militant struggle and their effort to continue production under workers' control have prevented employer firings and have opened the way to put resources and life into the hands of our class.

The employer's demands will not stand! You will find us beside the BIOME workers every step of the way. All of us together, we will defend the right of workers to live with dignity.

The Greek section of the Industrial Workers of the World supports the self-organized workers of BIOME Thessaloniki in winning their fight!

**Solidarity Forever,**  
**Industrial Workers of the World,**  
**Greece**  
[iwwgreece@yahoo.gr](mailto:iwwgreece@yahoo.gr)

## Precarious Workers Struggle In Poland

By Bill B. of the ISC

Krysztof, Paulina and I met over beers at a local pub in Krakow. Both had attended an IWW meeting in Poznań this year. Krysztof works in a window factory, while Paulina works in a supermarket through a temp agency. Krysztof said they had established a 10-person commission in January, but there were no strong ideas about what to do. Only 10 percent of Poland's workers have remained in labor unions after the famous Solidarity union collapsed. So they focused on one group of people in a company who seemed to want to change things, in order to see if people really wanted change after all.

Temp agency workers seem to be the norm rather than the exception in Poland. There are several small food co-ops. Some large chains claim to be co-ops, but they aren't. Some of their workers became stock holders, or capitalists. The word "co-op" carries links to "communist" and has a negative connotation in the minds of many Polish workers. On a side note, the homeless in Poland have food, a place to wash and a place to stay out of the cold. The services are provided by both public and private entities. This might be eye-opening to workers in North America.

Krysztof and Paulina's union, Workers' Initiative (Inicjatywa Pracownicza or IP), was established in the 1990s and 2000s in Poznań. There was a big machinery factory where many workers were fired. Some anarchists obtained work there and established a union. However, strikes are only legal in Poland after a union is established, negotiations with management fail, and the strike is voted upon. The other side can render the strike illegal by court action. For example, Krzysztof Gazda, a union leader at Chung Kong (a Chinese-owned company in Poland that assembles TV sets) was fired. After a three-year trial, he won the case. After the victory he found himself threatened by company thugs to the point where he committed suicide.

Some companies in Poland are huge. Foxconn, another Chinese-owned company, employs over one million workers

in one factory making hardware for the Apple brand.

Krysztof and Paulina and their union have leafleted stores, but no one has responded. Many employees are now "contract employees." Such employees are not allowed to join unions in Poland. So at the moment, the feeling among the Polish workforce is that unions don't make you more secure. In general, people want capitalism. They want to be like western Europe and they want to abolish the workers' state. However, sometimes workers don't get paid, especially subcontractors. Wildcat strikes have resulted on at least one occasion due to non-payment of wages. The local workers have picketed shopping malls and have engaged in wildcat strikes.

A day after our meeting in the pub, a worker/organizer was laid off by Aelia, a conglomerate that owns duty-free shops around the world, usually situated in airports. This comrade, Anna, worked at Chopin International Airport in Warsaw where she had been organizing. The local workers have been picketing, so far to no avail.

Our fellow workers in Poland need the support and thoughts of workers around the world. Please contact Krysztof Spiewla at [spiewla@gmail.com](mailto:spiewla@gmail.com).

*Update: The following comes from Krysztof in Krakow, Poland after this article was written:*

"In July, thanks to actions conducted by Workers' Initiative, one of the most influential newspapers in Poland published a feature describing not only Anna's firing, but also some of the most immoral forms of exploitation and abuse of workers at Aelia. Afterwards the State Labor Inspection said it would conduct an inspection at Aelia, regarding damaging workers' laws. As you may know, the Labor Inspection in Poland has very few instruments to punish unlawful employers (they can charge a fee up to few hundred dollars), so international pressure towards Aelia is still much needed."

*Krysztof Spiewla from Krakow contributed to this piece.*

before management for a disciplinary meeting, which voted for his dismissal. If confirmed by the head office, this will be the first dismissal of a union representative in this manner for their activities in 60 years. While a group of several hundred supporters rallied outside the offices, an impressive number of riot police vans surrounded the gathering.

Workers at the post office and their union delegates emphasize the importance of organizing beyond individual locations and on a rank-and-file basis. These postal workers further emphasize the importance of working with post office users, who had created a solidarity collective informing

other users and expressing their dissatisfaction with the worsening service and work conditions to management.

Coordination beyond La Poste with workers in other industries, who face similar conditions of increasingly precarious contracts and an intensification of work, and with the movement against benefit cuts, has added a crucial element to this struggle against the ongoing destruction of workers' rights and worsening of conditions. Post office workers are currently on a mission to analyze the struggle so far and to continue to reach out to workers in other sectors so as to be prepared for further, ongoing activity in the coming months.