



SOLIDARITY

A UNION FOR ALL WORKERS



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A Quarterly Newsletter

WE CAN'T BREATHE!

BLACK LIVES MATTER

October 22, workers rallied in Pittsburgh to say STOP Police Brutality with thousands across the nation. 50 people joined with a nation-wide effort to actively oppose militarization of police departments and assaults on minority peoples and defend their struggles for justice against killer cops. Listed on the banner were the names of Pittsburgh people killed by the Pittsburgh Police Department. Standing up to an officially sanctioned killing in Ferguson, people gather again against the refusal of the Grand Jury to indict Officer Darren Wilson. Instead, the Governor declared a state of emergency and mobilized the National Guard and deployed them to Ferguson. Now we see the Grand Jury sanction the murder of Eric Garner in New York. This will not stand.

At the City-County Building, Wobblies joined 50 other workers to demand an end to police brutality as part of a national action in cities throughout the country. Names of our neighbors listed under **STOLEN LIVES** on a banner brought out the reality of Pittsburgh's Iron Heel. Damian Jordan, Charles Dixon, Kenneth Walker, Dion Hall, Michael Ellerbee, Bernard Rogers- Stolen Lives.



Every day there are casualties of the class war around the world. People are shot by cops, imprisoned for small crimes, beaten and tear gassed at demonstrations and subjected to street violence in their neighborhoods. The names of Oscar Grant, James Boyd and Mike Brown become a part of weekly lists of victimized brothers and sisters around the nation. Suppressed news coverage avoids the mention of imprisoned children from Central America imprisoned in Artesia, New Mexico and 43 student teachers are burned alive in Ayotzinapa, in the state of Guerrero, Mexico by narco-traffickers with collaboration from police and public officials. Elections come and go but police repression remains and wars wage against workers.



Dignity Across Difference

The disciplines of Psychology and Psychiatry have a legacy of systematic violence and repression that has served as social control just as much as it has served the targeted individuals' own interests. This ugly history of relating to mental difference, or 'neurodiversity,' did not just end at some point a few decades ago when most of the traditional state mental institutions began closing. We are all still living through the consequences of those oppressive foundations. Our current methods of managing these populations still include involuntary institutionalization, over-medication, direct abuse, restraint, objectifying labels and other culture, and the many other arts of coercion. The backdrop to all of these methods is a context where people are labeled and considered "Other" and thus inevitably treated as inferior to the idealized norm. Disturbing numbers of individuals in residential care settings are abused verbally, sexually, physically, and medically. These awful dynamics exist within the main established mental health institutional settings and happen in addition to the violence against countless individuals with pathologized minds without homes and in prison, who suffer exclusion from a society that settles on policing them.

Organizing against systems that treat people as expendable cogs in its machines can lead us to escape violent patterns, break down walls and unite mental health workers with our clients.

The plight of workers in the residential mental health field I work in, and these clients who we serve are intrinsically tied together. Mental health workers who perform direct care like myself suffer from many common working class issues that lead to "mental illness," such as lack of control over company policies, over-work, low pay, emotionally taxing and sometimes dangerous work, abuse from employers, rising costs of living, their own experiences of violence in their homes and communities and so on. While many of us are solid caregivers with good intentions, we must face the widespread abuse that occurs with honesty and try to understand its sources. more disempowering their condition is, the more they suffer and use violence against workers, turning potential allies against each other.

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#HANDSUPDONTSHIP: IWW UPS Workers Organize Against Police Brutality

Starting on Friday, August 22nd, IWW workers at a UPS sorting facility in Minneapolis began organizing against their and their coworkers' labor supporting the ongoing police violence against the population of Ferguson, Missouri in the aftermath of the murder of Michael Brown, an unarmed 18-year-old black man. In a series of actions aimed at a local company shipping questionable shooting-range targets to law enforcement agencies nationwide, workers stood up to the idea that they should have to support racism, brutality, or murder in order to make ends meet. This action was organized in conjunction with, and under the banner of Screw Ups, a rank-and-file newsletter published by IWW workers at the facility for the past year.

Shortly after the murder of Michael Brown and the deployment of militarized police and national guardsmen to Ferguson, IWW workers and in-shop allies began researching Law Enforcement Targets, Inc, a company based in Blaine, Minnesota, which produces shooting range targets and holds hundreds of contracts with police departments, federal agencies, and military branches across the country. The company has held at least 10 contracts with federal agencies in Missouri, and far more with county and local police departments and other agencies. They sell product lines like "Urban Street Violence," featuring photos of stereotypical "thugs," and previously were forced to withdraw a line of targets called "No More Hesitation," featuring pictures of gun-wielding children, pregnant women, mothers, and elderly people, all as if to say that you should consider everyone you see as a threat to be gunned down. Their products are shipped through the UPS sorting facility in Minneapolis every day.

After discovering what products L.E.T. shipped, and who to, a group of workers decided they would not be silent about the connection between their work and murders such as Mike Brown's. Some removed targets from trailers that would deliver them to law enforcement agencies, while others stood in solidarity and decided not to ferry these packages to their intended trailers. Those who were uncomfortable or unable to directly engage in these actions posed with a sign reading "#handsupdontship" in order to speak out. Actions like this took place in various work areas across the building, and were taken by people with a variety of job positions. The following Monday, several workers continued the action, setting more targets aside for the second consecutive shift. This small group included both workers of color and white workers, both IWW members and not. It was agreed that this protest would be publicized online through the Screw Ups newsletter.

However, the newsletter has only been one part of the IWW activity at the hub. IWW Workers and others have frequently confronted management on issues of safety, harassment, and more through collective actions. CB, an IWW organizer, noted, "We all know that conditions at our work are unsafe. We all know that we work too hard for too little pay. We know that the Teamsters either can't or won't do anything to fix these issues. And we know that we're going to have to fight to change things."

The IWW has always refused to restrict itself to issues of wages and conditions, and has encouraged workers to fight against exploitation and oppression both on the shop floor and off it. Unlike other unions and workers' organizations which see things such as police brutality as "outside issues," the IWW has a long history of fighting against the ways that workers are forced to uphold systems of oppression. "The rules say you have to do what you're told at work. Doesn't matter what you're shipping, what horrible things are being done with them, UPS doesn't care, so you don't care," said J.B., another IWW worker, "luckily, breaking the rules is what the IWW does best."

Lawrence F. Evans

July 13, 1947 - Nov. 15, 2014

We mourn the loss of a contributor to those seeking to raise the voice of workers in American society. He was the founder and editor of THE MILL HUNK HERALD. He was also known for his enthusiasm for sports and his support of young peoples' involvement in sports. But, as they say in baseball, WE WAS ROBBED of Larry's life in a car accident and his voice, when the Mill Hunk Herald stopped publishing. He stood with us when we needed people to stand. He gave a voice when people were robbed of their livelihoods and their futures. He stood willing to allow people to speak of reality while others just gamed the system and postured. WE WAS ROBBED: the umpires of Empire continue to make the calls. Play Ball. The Fat Lady has not sung yet. "*Vaya con Dios*", *compañero*. Don't Mourn, Organize.

CHILD OF STEEL From *The Mill Hunk Herald*, Spring 1983

Children of Steel, laborers, inheritors,
watch tower figures
Father, Brother, Sister, Mother
Low tides surround the child of steel
Polish, Italian, Hunky man, black, oh
woe!

Too small are we, what to do
What to do, rotten world
Cheap clothes, cheap thrills
No food no more, no money
No smiles, no steel no more, no life
No god that sees us, no love.

Can't do nothin, no work
Can't do nothin, but make steel
Can't do nothin, nobody cares
Too small to fight, too big to cry.

The fires are out, the mills breathe clean
The child is sick, the steel sits cold
The child lay dying, the steel decays
No time for us, no need for us, no promise
for us
It is done, they took our bodies, they stole
our minds
They took our bodies, they stole our minds.

Anthony Massaro



Braddock, Pa., Mayor John Fetterman stands in an abandoned steel mill in a photo that was part of the Environmental Defense Fund's ad campaign.

"After several months of thinking about what is happening to the working class, particularly the steel industry and the whole system of labor, this poem came to me. I drive by Homestead Mill every morning to get to my job and to get home I drive past the J&L Steel Mill. Occasionally, I drive through Braddock to the house and street where most of my life was spent. These are a few of the contributing factors which also helped to crystallize this poem." A.M.

Application for Membership

Aplicación para Membresía

☐ I affirm that I am a worker and that I am not an employer.
[*Afirmo que soy trabajador/a y no soy empleador.*]

☐ I agree to abide by the constitution and regulations of this organization, and will study its principles and acquaint myself with its purposes.
[*Pacto de obedecer a la constitución y las reglas de esta organización, y estudiaré sus principios, y me informaré de sus objetivos.*]

Name/Nombre: _____

Address/Dirección: _____

City/Ciudad: _____ State/Estado: _____

ZIP: _____ Country/ País : _____

Email: _____

Telephone/Teléfono: _____

Employer/Empleador: _____

Occupation/Ocupación: _____

☐ General Organization Bulletin in paper form, by mail (Default is electronic, by email). [*Prefiero recibir copias del Boletín General por correo. (No sobre e-mail)*]

☐ I would like information about the IWW's General Defense Committee. [*Me gustaría recibir más información sobre el Comité de Defensa General.*]

Dues Rate Based on Monthly Income

Under \$2,000 = \$9 per month

\$2,000 – 3,500 = \$18 per month

Over \$3,500 = \$27 per month

Initiation fee is equal to onemonth's dues.

Cuota Dependiente de Paga Mensual

Menos que \$2,000 = \$9 por mes

\$2,000 a 3,500 = \$18 por mes

Mas que \$3,500 = \$27 por mes

Iniciación = cuota de un mes



Out of the smoke and ashes of the steel mills of Pittsburgh have risen the call centers of the 21st century. No one knows each other's names. No one meets together. Everyone works 2 and 3 jobs just to afford a place to stay. Part-time jobs without benefits fill the city once the furnace of the American industrial economy. Pensions have been turned into roulette wheels where peoples' savings can disappear in one day of a bad stock market.

Callers R 'US. Meanwhile our lives get worse. Let's look at the national average for call center employees. Those working for large employers earn an average of \$45,075 /year. Are these getting anywhere near what we are earning yet?

We were sold a bill of goods; they told us good wages mean plant closures. Good benefits mean lay-offs. And of course, job security means unemployment. So auto workers were to blame for the desertification of Detroit. Steelworkers closed Home- stead and led to the blight of Braddock. And now we are all contented in the "New Economy" of low wages.

So we meet and talk about what we deal with every day on the job. We talk about OUR concerns, OUR Issues, and what WE can do about things. People working together. No one with all the answers. But together we see OUR common problems that come from the same source. When we listen to each other we learn how long it's been going on. We hear what doesn't work and what we can do to change things.

We form an organizing committee on the job. BEFORE anything else happens. A company union won't help when they tie our hands. There will be other things to do. Looking at how the center is organized. Looking at who we can ally with both in the city and within the company within the U.S. and internationally.

The IWW is stepping forward to build an organizing committee in telecommunications. We have experience to know where we are weak and how we can become strong. It's not tough talk, it's smart organizing. One thing for sure, things won't get better by themselves. We either do it now or leave this mess for our children to deal with. Pass SOLIDARITY around at work. Meet after work. Let's find NEW solutions.

SOLIDARITY

NEWSLETTER OF THE PITTSBURGH GENERAL
MEMBERSHIP BRANCH OF THE INDUSTRIAL
WORKERS OF THE WORLD

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An Injury to One is an Injury to All



Dignity Across Difference

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How do we escape this spiraling objectification and violence? For starters, we can organize as workers to build solidarity together and as allies to those we care for. In our mostly non-union field with high turnover and a ladder of professional authority above the direct care worker, there are many obstacles to coming together, but democratic structures could offer us and our clients a great deal. We can work to build more intimate, small-scale communities with people with special needs that foster their independence and collective autonomy. Workers face challenges to facilitating closer community and self-organization by their clients, and we must see our disempowerment as tied up with theirs. Our commodified culture that is so destructive to communities afflicts us all. One powerful set of models are called Consumer/Survivor Initiatives, which are run by patients and ideally allow difference to exist without unnecessary interference. They use mutual support and self-organization to break down the server/served roles and have been used with great success. Those of us who are paid caregivers can work to help facilitate communities that recognize each person as unique and value all based on our differences instead of stigmatizing us for our limitations. Organizing against systems that treat people as expendable cogs in its machines can lead us to escape violent patterns, break down walls and unite mental health workers with our clients.

There are no excuses:

1. Police are not given a license to kill.
2. All people have a right to due process.
3. Officially sanctioned crimes are human rights violations.
4. The punishment must fit the crime.
5. No people should comply with illegal orders.
6. Resistance is the product of injustice.
7. What people accept, people will have to live with.
8. No one is above the law.
9. Indict the real criminals.
10. In the Spirit of Fred Hampton (Murdered by Chicago police, December 4, 1968)
You can kill a revolutionary but you can't kill a revolution.

