

# INDUSTRIAL WORKER



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## Dispatch From The Front Lines Of Occupy Wall Street



Wobblies march with Occupy Wall Street on Oct. 5.

Photo: Thomas Good, *Next Left Notes*

## What Is Occupy Wall Street All About? One Wobbly's Perspective

By Diane Krauthamer

When a friend of mine invited me to Occupy Wall Street on the morning of Sept. 17, I thought nothing of it. Actually, that's not true; I honestly thought it was a waste of time. This was an occupation of a public space, which, as far as I could tell, had no clear purpose, no articulated demands, and no seemingly developed strategy. It was to begin on a Saturday morning—a day when Wall Street is typically filled with tourists, not bankers. It was to last "for a few months" and was organized in response to a call put out by Adbusters, a publication/group based out of Canada which is vaguely anti-corporate and seems to run the spectrum from liberal to social-democratic. In a piece published on July 13, Adbusters wrote:

"On September 17, we want to see 20,000 people flood into lower Manhattan, set up tents, kitchens, peaceful barricades and occupy Wall Street for a few months. Once there, we shall incessantly repeat one simple demand in a plural-

ity of voices: It's time for DEMOCRACY NOT CORPORATOCRACY."

There didn't seem to be much more to it than that, and, while I didn't necessarily oppose the occupation, I didn't think it was worth my time either. A few days later, I'd heard that the occupation was continuing, and while I thought such persistence was impressive, I maintained my doubts. Most people could not even attend due to work, school or family, and if they did attend, it was only for a short period of time to show their support. Occupy Wall Street seemed like a place for over-privileged youth who did not have many, if any, responsibilities. These were my initial impressions, and cynical as I was, part of me hoped that I would be proven wrong.

One week after it began, on Sept. 24, the occupiers staged a march to Union Square as part of a "Day of Outrage" over the execution of Troy Davis, approximately 35 city blocks north of the encampment

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By FW Arthur Smilios, X362847

NEW YORK — As the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement is now in its third week (at press time), I can truly report that it is, in fact, a movement. Having been away from my beloved hometown, I began attending OWS on Oct. 3, returning every day since. My experiences have borne out that this is, indeed, a legitimate people's uprising. This is not the "astroturf networking," with its empty platitudes and glossy placards, paid for by the banking cartels, that the Obama campaign so successfully sold to the working class three years ago; this is a demand from below. It seems that the working class has finally grown weary of waiting for the elusive and illusory *noblesse oblige*. Good!

We have all attended numerous anti-Wall Street rallies over the years and, while buoyed by the camaraderie of our

community, have all been left wondering, "When will the working class finally awaken, en masse?" We have our answer. Autumn 2011 is proving to be the moment. Despite the misinformation (or complete ignorance) purveyed by the capitalist press, OWS has caught the imagination and tapped into the indignation of working people nationwide. The network fossils, in their comfortable torpor of past relevance, believe that they can kill a movement by disregarding or misrepresenting it. They prove their irrelevance. We have democratized communication and, as a result, OWS has become an unstoppable conflagration.

Fighting the urge simply to revel in the joy of community, I have walked around, engaged all manner of people in conversation and interviews. While the backgrounds of those with whom I've interacted differ, there is a commonality: we are the working class. We've been abused.

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## Starbucks, Wisconsin, Occupy X & Economic Crisis: Building An IWW For The Present Moment

By db

Starbucks, Wisconsin, Occupy X: these all name organizing initiatives that the IWW has been intimately connected with, though, obviously, with different levels of responsibility and impact.

The Starbucks Workers Union is an IWW campaign initiated by "salts"—or workplace organizing—in New York City, and has grown to be a large-scale campaign organizing Starbucks workers across the United States and internationally. The growth of this campaign has required the creation of national infrastructure to sign up, train, and support workers organizing; coordinating media messaging and solidarity actions across the country; and fighting to put pressure on the company to make gains, prevent illegal union busting, and change the message around Starbucks and the culture of its workers.

The Wisconsin uprising was a mass upsurge of rank-and-file action in response to a budget bill designed to crush the working class, including ending collective bargaining for state workers. The IWW was the key actor in getting the idea of a general strike on the table and pushed for an independent worker-based response rather than the suicide of recall. Unfortunately the unions and the Democratic Party won out on pursuing a recall, and in doing so the workers lost. Reflecting on Wisconsin necessitates creating independent rank-and-file power to expand the struggle and take action when the leadership won't, which means having organized and organizing IWW tendencies within other unions and across class, from farm laborers to the urban and rural poor.

The Occupy X movement, though only beginning, is an open-source protest that anyone can take up and that is rapidly spreading to hundreds of cities around the United States. A mini-mass movement, it is hitting a whole new section of the class structure. Many of the people involved have no formal organizing experience, and there is a complicated mess of posi-



Photo: Diane Krauthamer  
The Occupy Wall Street encampment.

tions and ideas. As such, if we are going to meaningfully support and grow this movement we need to have coherence on our role—to grow, expand, increase nonviolent disruption and analysis—as well as coordinate our efforts, share our propaganda, and fight against cooptation from liberal or right wing forces, while representing ourselves well and being an organization people can commit to if they want to deepen their involvement.

These types of struggles will continue and likely grow. If we as the IWW are going to meaningfully add our experience, analysis and energy to these struggles we need to learn from them, reflect on how we could be more effective, and push ourselves to meet the formal, organizational challenges they represent.

The forms of actions mentioned here include one or more of the following:

1. Workplace organizing
2. Coordinated outside pressure
3. Coordinated networks of militants
4. Independent dual-card formations
5. Mass-based organizational solidarity

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Post Office Box 180195  
Chicago, IL 60618 USA  
773.857.1090 • ghq@iww.org  
www.iww.org

GENERAL SECRETARY-TREASURER:  
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GENERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD:  
Koala Largess, Ildiko Sipos,  
Ryan G., John Slavin, Jason Krpan  
John Reimann, Greg Giorgio

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

PROOFREADERS :  
Maria Rodriguez Gil, Tom Levy,  
Nick Jusino, FW D. Keenan,  
J.R. Boyd, Neil Parthun,  
Michael Capobianco,  
Skylaar Amann, Chris Heffner,  
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# Addendum On Joe Hill's Ashes

Fellow Workers,

Richard Myers's review of William Adler's book, "The Man Who Never Died," ("On Centennial Of Joe Hill's Death, New Details Uncovered: A Review Of 'The Man Who Never Died,'" pg. 8-9, September IW) and Adler himself briefly allude to the union's recovery of Joe Hill's ashes from the U.S. National Archives. Both note the spreading of the ashes a year later over the graves of fellow workers killed at the Columbine Mine. However, there is more to the story of retrieving Hill's ashes from the National Archives.

The April 1988 issue of the United Auto Workers' publication, *Solidarity*, reported the existence of Joe Hill's ashes at the National Archives. Shortly thereafter a Wobbly wrote a letter to the General Administration who in turn got in touch with the Chair of the General Executive Board (me) about it. I then called the National Archives and asked how I could get Hill's ashes returned to the IWW; it was suggested that I write a formal letter requesting the ashes.

On June 1, 1988, I sent a letter to the head of the National Archives stating that I was only interested in having the ashes

returned and that the envelope containing the ashes should remain part of the Archives. Later in July, I talked with them about the request and was told that they were still looking into the matter.

After another two months of silence, I received a letter from the National Archives on Sept. 28, 1988, stating that the IWW could have the ashes but not the envelope. I contacted them to arrange the transfer and chose Nov. 18 to pick up the ashes. I subsequently found out that Utah Phillips was interested in taking part in the transfer, so I contacted him about participating in it. We showed up on the appointed day and the ashes were transferred, with Utah Phillips receiving the ashes and me signing the paperwork.

After the transfer, Utah Phillips and I answered questions from reporters from the *Boston Globe*, the *Washington Post*, *The New Yorker*, and National Public Radio. The report of the transfer



Graphic: recollectionbooks.com

of the ashes appeared in a variety of outlets, such as the *Chicago Tribune*, the *New York Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. This generated a great deal of publicity for the IWW.

Upon arriving back in Chicago, I turned the ashes over to the union. As to what happened with them, my understanding is that part of the ashes were spread at Columbine, but the rest of them were mixed with grey sand, put in plastic envelopes and distributed to various General Membership Branches to carry out and appropriate. Whatever was done with the ashes is not so very important as long as it helped Wobblies remember and gain inspiration from those who have given and were currently giving their lives to bettering the lives of workers and paving the way for a new society. This is why it is important to remember Joe Hill and his ashes in November.

Fred Lee, X332955  
September 19, 2011

## IWW directory



### Australia

Regional Organising Committee: P.O. Box 1866, Albany, WA  
Albany: 0423473807, entropy4@gmail.com  
Melbourne: P.O. Box 145, Moreland, VIC 3058. 0448 712 420  
Perth: Mike Ballard, swillsqueal@yahoo.com.au

### British Isles

British Isles Regional Organising Committee (BLOC): P.O. Box 7593 Glasgow, G42 2EX. Secretariat: rocsec@iww.org.uk, Organising Department Chair: south@iww.org.uk, www.iww.org.uk  
IWW UK Web Site administrators and Tech Department Coordinators: admin@iww.org.uk, www.tech.iww.org.uk

NBS Job Branch National Blood Service: iww.nbs@gmail.com

Mission Print Job Branch: tomjoad3@hotmail.co.uk

Building Construction Workers IU 330: constructionbranch@iww.org.uk

Health Workers IU 610: healthworkers@iww.org.uk, www.iww-healthworkers.org.uk

Education Workers IU 620: education@iww.org.uk, www.geocities.com/iwveducation

Recreational Workers (Musicians) IU 630: peltonc@gmail.com, longadan@gmail.com

General, Legal, Public Interest & Financial Office Workers IU 650: rocsec@iww.org.uk

Bradford: bradford@iww.org.uk

Bristol GMB: P.O. Box 4, 82 Colston street, BS1 5BB. Tel. 07506592180, bristol@iww.org.uk, bristol@iww.org.uk

Cambridge GMB: IWW Cambridge, 12 Mill Road, Cambridge CB1 2AD cambridge@iww.org.uk

Dorset: dorset@iww.org.uk

Hull: hull@iww.org.uk

Leeds: leedsiww@hotmail.co.uk, leeds@iww.org.uk

Leicester GMB: Unit 107, 40 Halford St., Leicester LE1 1TQ, England. Tel. 07981 433 637, leics@iww.org.uk, www.leicestershire-iww.org.uk

London GMB: c/o Freedom Bookshop, Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High Street, E1 7QX. +44 (0) 20 3393 1295, londoniww@gmail.com www.iww.org/en/branches/UK/Tyne

Nottingham: notts@iww.org.uk

Reading GMB: reading@iww.org.uk

Sheffield: sheffield@iww.org.uk

Tyne and Wear GMB (Newcastle +): tyneandwear@iww.org.uk www.iww.org/en/branches/UK/Tyne

West Midlands GMB: The Warehouse, 54-57 Allison Street, Digbeth, Birmingham B5 5TH westmids@iww.org.uk www.wmiww.org

York GMB: york@iww.org.uk www.woworky.org

Scotland

Clydeside GMB: hereandnowscot@gmail.com

Dumfries and Galloway GMB: dumfries@iww.org.uk, iwwdumfries.wordpress.com

Edinburgh GMB: c/o 17 W. Montgomery Place, EH5 5HA. 0131-557-6242, edinburgh@iww.org.uk

Canada

Alberta

Edmonton GMB: P.O. Box 75175, T6E 6K1. edmontongmb@iww.org, edmonton.iww.ca

British Columbia

Vancouver GMB: 204-2274 York Ave., Vancouver, BC, V6K 1C6. Phone/fax 604-732-9613. gmb-van@iww.ca, vancouver.iww.ca, vancouverweb.blogspot.com

Manitoba

Winnipeg GMB: IWW, c/o WORC, P.O. Box 1, R3C 2G1. winnipeg@iww.org, garthhardy@gmail.com

Ontario

Ottawa-Outaouais GMB & GDC Local 6: 1106 Wellington St., PO Box 36042, Ottawa, ON K1Y 4V3

Ottawa Panhandlers Union: Andrew Nellis, spokesperson, 613-748-0460. ottawanpanhandler-sunion@sympatico.ca

Peterborough: c/o PCAP, 393 Water St. #17, K9H 3L7, 705-749-9694

Toronto GMB: c/o Libra Knowledge & Information Svcs Co-op, P.O. Box 353 Stn. A, M5W 1C2. 416-919-7392. iwwtoronto@gmail.com

### Québec

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

### Europe

#### Finland

Helsinki: Reko Ravela, Otto Brandtintie 11 B 25, 00650. iwwsuomi@helsinkinet.fi

Mission Print Job Branch: tomjoad3@hotmail.co.uk

Building Construction Workers IU 330: constructionbranch@iww.org.uk

Health Workers IU 610: healthworkers@iww.org.uk, www.iww-healthworkers.org.uk

Education Workers IU 620: education@iww.org.uk, www.geocities.com/iwveducation

Recreational Workers (Musicians) IU 630: peltonc@gmail.com, longadan@gmail.com

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Bradford: bradford@iww.org.uk

Bristol GMB: P.O. Box 4, 82 Colston street, BS1 5BB. Tel. 07506592180, bristol@iww.org.uk, bristol@iww.org.uk

Cambridge GMB: IWW Cambridge, 12 Mill Road, Cambridge CB1 2AD cambridge@iww.org.uk

Dorset: dorset@iww.org.uk

Hull: hull@iww.org.uk

Leeds: leedsiww@hotmail.co.uk, leeds@iww.org.uk

Leicester GMB: Unit 107, 40 Halford St., Leicester LE1 1TQ, England. Tel. 07981 433 637, leics@iww.org.uk, www.leicestershire-iww.org.uk

London GMB: c/o Freedom Bookshop, Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High Street, E1 7QX. +44 (0) 20 3393 1295, londoniww@gmail.com www.iww.org/en/branches/UK/Tyne

Nottingham: notts@iww.org.uk

Reading GMB: reading@iww.org.uk

Sheffield: sheffield@iww.org.uk

Tyne and Wear GMB (Newcastle +): tyneandwear@iww.org.uk www.iww.org/en/branches/UK/Tyne

West Midlands GMB: The Warehouse, 54-57 Allison Street, Digbeth, Birmingham B5 5TH westmids@iww.org.uk www.wmiww.org

York GMB: york@iww.org.uk www.woworky.org

United States

Arizona

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

Flagstaff: 928-600-7556, chuy@iww.org

Arkansas

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

DC

DC GMB (Washington): 741 Morton St NW, Washington DC, 20010. 571-276-1935

California

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

North Coast GMB: P.O. Box 844, Eureka 95502-0844. 707-725-8090, angstink@gmail.com

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 Ongerth, del., intextile@iww.org

IU 540 Couriers Organizing Committee: 415-789-MESS, messengersunion@yahoo.com

Evergreen Printing: 2335 Valley Street, Oakland, 94612. 510-835-0254. dkaroly@igc.org

San Jose: sjiiww@yahoo.com

Colorado

Denver GMB: 2727 W. 27th Ave., 80211. Lowell May, del., 303-433-1852. breadandroses@msn.com

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# Greed And The Worker: The Financial Crisis In America

By Michael Capobianco

Exiting the bus, Dan's appearance bore the marks of an economy in crisis. His hair was wild and out of control, clearly showing the long absence of a haircut. He noticed that my eyes were fixed on it, and he instantly commented:

"You know, I've actually taken some flack about not getting a haircut recently. A couple of people have told me that it is not possible for me to be doing my part in helping the economy if I'm not even supporting my local barbershop."

My first thought was, "Who on earth would have the gall to say something like that to someone in Dan's position?"

As if he could read my thoughts, Dan immediately spoke up:

"My boss said that to me. One morning after my shift ended, my boss showed up in his newly leased crossover SUV and commented on my hair. As we stood in his office, he pointed out the window at the sleek-looking vehicle and actually told me that he was taking an active role in supporting the economy by purchasing the car. He told me this one day after he cut my weekly hours from 40 to 25. He told me this as he pointed outside to his foreign-made Honda. Ironic, isn't it?"

Dan is a 50-year-old man who worked for 25 years as a driver for a local laboratory—a non-union job, but still one in which he was treated well and had steady work. Once the economic crisis hit the United States, jobs like Dan's were among the first to go. Instead of continuing to pay multiple drivers very competitive wages to run down long routes and deliver hazardous materials, his company decided to let most of the drivers go, starting with the oldest and highest-paid. This not only put these laid-off drivers in the terrible position of having to find new work in a poor economic climate, but it also meant that the workers who were kept on would have to work longer and harder for the same rate they were making before.

At least those workers still had a job, though.

## 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.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, around 7.9 million jobs were lost due to the recession as of late 2010. To make matters worse, most of those jobs will never return.

Among the different industries, there have varying levels of loss. For example, retail companies have cut around 1.2 million jobs, most of which existed before the recession started. Of course, the fact that many retail companies went out of business also played a large role in this.

In the manufacturing industry, there were 2.1 million jobs lost throughout the course of the recession. According to experts at Moody's Analytics, an economic analysis firm, roughly 1 million of the 2.1 million jobs lost will never come back. Experts also believe that of the few jobs that do come back, most will be sent to other countries.

As a result of being laid off, Dan was unemployed for several months. The combined income from his small unemployment check and his wife's measly salary working as a school aide was not enough for them to keep their home. As Dan described, the house was modest to begin with and barely had enough room for him, his wife, and their three children. In a desperate attempt to save the house, he sold the family car and found a job working as an independent contractor in a security company. This of course meant that there were no health benefits and higher taxes, as independent contractors in the United States must cover taxes that regular employees normally have paid for them by their employers. Of

course, in the United States where health care is considered a privilege and not a right, the injury of paying more in taxes was enhanced by the insult of having to beg the family doctor to keep seeing his children.

However, Dan's efforts were not enough and the family lost their house soon thereafter:

"I really don't know what was worse. Was it losing the house, or having to explain to my children that we would have to move into a one bedroom basement apartment, which we could still only barely afford? All this while I knew that the big fat cats were now lining their pockets with our hard earned tax money as well as the fortunes they amassed prior to the financial crisis."

Dan was not alone in losing his home.

According to foreclosure experts at the organization RealtyTrac, foreclosures went up an astonishing 81 percent in 2008, which was a 225 percent increase from 2006. The most shocking finding was that in 2008 a staggering 1 in 54 families had foreclosures filed on them, with a total of 861,664 actually being forced from their homes.

While I felt bad telling him, I felt it was my duty to inform Dan that the rich have actually become richer since the crisis. Internal Revenue Service data shows that between 2007 and 2009, the richest one percent of America actually obtained more money and new wealth while, as usual, the workers suffered. This also brings about one of the most important questions of the financial crisis: who was responsible?

The answer to this question changes



Graphic: J. Pierce

# America

depending on who you ask. If you ask the rich boss class, the answer is that people took on too much credit, and therefore too much debt. When they could not pay their bills, the financial crisis ensued. However, if you ask the working class, you get the more accurate answer. This answer is predatory lending and the inevitable child of capitalism: greed.

The most famous example of predatory lending which led to the financial crisis was the case of Countrywide Financial Corporation. In a 2007 article, the *New York Times* described the methods of the company:

"Potential borrowers were often led to high-cost and sometimes unfavorable loans that resulted in richer commissions for Countrywide's smooth-talking sales force, outsize fees to company affiliates providing services on the loans, and a soaring stock price that made Countrywide executives among the highest paid in America."

To make matters worse, there was a suspected association between this company and a U.S. politician named Christopher Dodd. Dodd, who was the chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, fought in 2008 for bailout money to be given to mortgage companies which included Countrywide Financial. It was later revealed by the website, Portfolio.com, that Dodd had been given better terms when he remortgaged his homes in Connecticut and Washington, D.C. What company did he use to remortgage his homes? Countrywide Financial. Although he denied knowledge of receiving any special treatment, it was revealed that his remortgage rates were below market value. These special rates came as a benefit of being a "friend of Angelo." These "friends" of Angelo Mozilo, the founder and CEO of Countrywide Financial, received benefits as Mozilo tried to gain the favor of politicians, lawmakers, and virtually anyone who could help to advance the financial interests of his company.

What does all of this mean for Dan and the rest of the working class in the United States?

For one thing, it shows that capitalism does not work. Almost every time a person is given the opportunity to increase their profits, they take it—usually at the cost of harming other people. The recent financial crisis, as well as the greed of certain employers, such as Dan's, has shown that the so-called "American Dream" is dying. If you are not born into money, or to put it crudely, if you do not win the sperm lottery, you spend most of your life in this country struggling to survive and spending a fortune on things like health care. The financial crisis has hopefully woken up the working class in the United States to the greed and unfairness of the capitalist system. If we are to succeed in bringing an end to capitalism and becoming totally free, we must oppose the system's philosophy of greed. We must remain in solidarity and support each other whenever possible. After all, an injury to one is an injury to all.

## Join the IWW Today

**T**he 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: \_\_\_\_\_

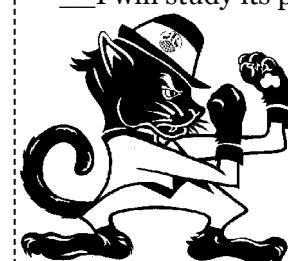
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## How's The Campaign Going?

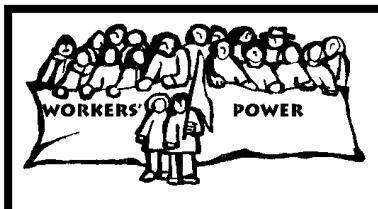
By MK, X353650

Have you ever woken up and the first thing that happens determines your mood for the entire day?

There's a phenomenon among IWW organizers that some of my friends call the "How's The Campaign Going" syndrome. When a fellow worker calls and asks about the campaign you are organizing you take stock of the situation and give a report. Sometimes you can't wait for this kind of phone call, since it's an excuse to impress other organizers with the great work going on in your branch or in your industry. Other times you use the opportunity to discuss ways the union has failed your expectations.

My theory is that the margin between a "good" organizing situation and a "bad" organizing situation is smaller than we often think. We must recognize our answer to the question "How's the campaign going?" is always subjective. We usually subconsciously answer a different question: "What are you doing right now?" To put this another way, when an organizer tries to see what the class war looks like, it's like a soldier looking over a trench. You might see your company charging forward or you might see them gunned down and retreating, but neither image tells the whole story of the state of the battle.

In real world terms, I believe the less active I am in the union, the less active I perceive the IWW to be. The more I wade into factional email battles, the more I imagine the IWW to be plunging to its death under factional wars. If I feel demoralized—an emotion that could be affected



by any number of things in my life—the more likely I will characterize the state of the IWW as grim. Conversely, if I'm excited for my own organizing, the workers' revolution seems inevitable. When are my evaluations of our efforts truly "correct"?

I think every organizer should try to be conscious of the risk of burn out. Some confuse personal burnout with lack of organizational progress. So stay in touch with someone who is excited, someone who's on a peak while you're in a valley. If you don't know someone excited about their own organizing, take a moment

to seek someone out. Keep negative thoughts to yourself—a bad mood can be contagious. Everyone needs to vent, but persistent negativity does the organization a disservice. If you're causing people to reassess their own level of activity for the worse, who are you helping? If you buy my "How's The Campaign Going?" theory, then be aware when it hits someone else close to you. If it feels frustrating to hear about how bummed out someone else is about the campaign, remember the two of you are looking at the same thing, just interpreting it differently. Don't argue; help them work through it.

The path to cooperative commonwealth isn't a straight line and it isn't free of debris. In the work we do here in the IWW, instead of two steps forward and one step back, it usually feels like ten steps forward and nine steps back. Don't forget that the math gives the same result though, and don't scare yourself away from the union. We'll get there.

## A Review Of "Weakening The Dam"

By FW Edward

What is one way to gain insight and clarity when organizing your workplace as a seasoned Wobbly? How does a total newbie find helpful stories, strategies, hints, and warnings about diving into organizing? What is the logical next step in learning what the union has to offer after you have "Thought It Over"? Many a worker in the Twin Cities have found a pamphlet put together by some Wobblies, "Weakening the Dam," to be the answer to all three of these questions.

The introduction to this collection of organizing tales, resources, and introspection rightly points out that, besides the IWW's organizer trainings, there are many, "resources that are not written down, but are in people's heads." This pamphlet is a step down the path to rectifying this mistake. Passing knowledge on to current and would-be organizers should take as many forms as possible, and writings should be updated frequently. Most of "Weakening the Dam" consists of material originally published in the "Workers' Power" column that runs each month in the *Industrial Worker*.

The pamphlet serves many purposes and many audiences. It covers topics such as goals, strategy, and tactics for organizing while also going into a sample organizing campaign from day 1 to day 195. The sample campaign plays out a little like a diary and a little like one of those "Choose Your Own Adventure" books I read when I was young.

The accessibility of "Weakening the Dam" also appeals to me. I have long been a fan of writers such as the late Howard Zinn, who wrote for the layperson. I do not mean that the text is written at an eighth-grade level, but that the ideas are simple and straightforward. People may debate certain aspects of the IWW through the years, but one thing most can agree on is that organizing has been, and must be done, by regular workers with regular

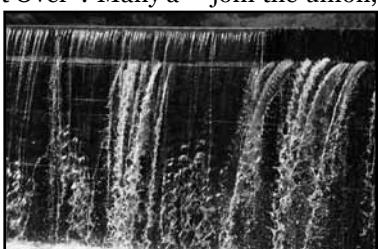


Photo: libcom.org

vocabularies. This pamphlet keeps us on the shop floor with organizers.

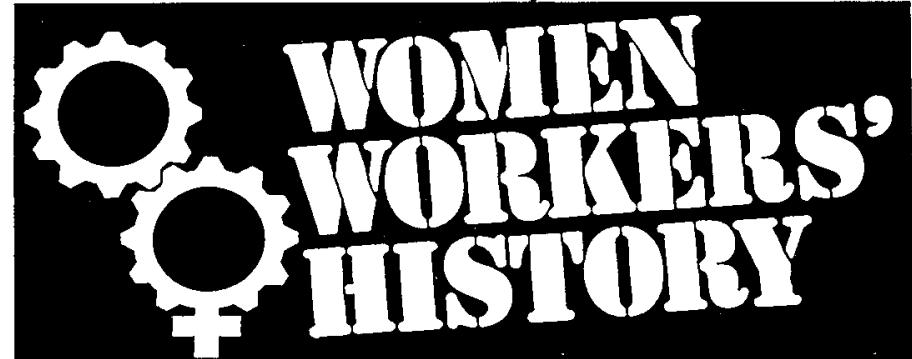
Would I use it as a direct reference tool for organizing? Probably not. It plays more as a generator of ideas, a labor meditation guide of sorts. A fellow worker I know is currently organizing at her workplace. She was getting down because no one would join the union, and she saw this as a failure.

Reading through the essay "Lasting Lessons from the Class Struggle" gave her a new perspective on her work. She may have failed to get workers to join the IWW, but as the essay says, "through struggle we produce more than better or worse working conditions, resolved or unresolved grievances, and union or no union. We produce new kinds of people." She reflected that her coworkers were changed people, sticking up for each other at work and seeing work in a different light. Maybe they will make the leap someday.

While generating ideas makes "Weakening the Dam" valuable, it could go deeper into organizing issues that happen further into a campaign. A broader spectrum of dilemmas that happen during a campaign would make the pamphlet more relevant to all organizers. Also, while problems are usually more fun to read about, successes and proven techniques could be woven into more of the sections. The advantageous aspect of this pamphlet is that sections can be easily revised, culled, and added as needed.

Hopefully, "Weakening the Dam" will connect with new members by giving them a jargon-free, accessible path to organizing. It will recharge and redirect members currently battling in the trenches against that scourge of the boss. I hope many more publications like "Weakening the Dam" will be written, revised, and entered into the consciousness of our organization.

If you would like a copy of the pamphlet, contact the Twin Cities GMB via: <http://www.iww.org/en/branches/US/MN/twincities>



## Chapter 48 Rising of the 20,000 (Part II)

ILGWU officials expected that maybe 3,000 shirtwaist workers would join the general strike. The morning after the Nov. 22, 1909 meeting in Cooper Union, 15,000 workers, many teenage girls, walked off the job. Only a few had been union members. By day's end more than 20,000 workers from 500 garment shops were on strike for union recognition, a union shop and higher wages.

Strike meetings were conducted in three languages -- English, Yiddish and Italian. The (all-male) union staff was too small to cope, so rank-and-file strikers, allies from the Women's Trade Union League and socialist women took over the day-to-day operation of the strike, run out of 20 halls spread over New York's garment district.



Picketing continued through the winter. Strikers braved harsh winds and snow, brutal police, and thugs hired to break up the picket lines. By standing up to the "gorillas" hired by the boss, the Switski sisters were credited with finally forcing their employer to settle. In 13 weeks more than 600 young women were arrested. Judges were viciously anti-union; one told a young woman: "You are on strike against God." Many young women showed great bravery; one 16-year-old was badly beaten by her father and brothers but still refused to scab.

The strikers rejected an offer in December because it did not include the union shop. But as the strike dragged on through January, the ILGWU settled with some large shops without the union shop or union recognition. The strike was declared over on Feb. 15, 1910 with many issues unresolved. Nevertheless, the more than 20,000 women workers had shown remarkable solidarity and courage. That proved to be their greatest achievement.

Graphic: Mike Konopacki



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## U.S. & Wobbly News Shorts

### Wobblies Gather For Bi-Annual IWW Assembly In Scotland

By X349317

The Edinburgh General Membership Branch (GMB) hosted the Scottish IWW Assembly on Saturday, Oct. 8th—a twice yearly meeting of Wobs from across the country.

Fellow Workers from the Edinburgh, Clydeside and Dumfries GMBs were in attendance. The day-long event featured a fascinating talk from James McBaron of the Independent Workers Union (IWU) of Ireland, who gave an overview of the work of the IWU, the challenges of building an independent and militant labor movement in a hostile environment, and the strategy and tactics they have found useful. Following a short report on the activities of our own Pizza Hut Workers Union organizing efforts in Sheffield, we had an organizer training session delivered by Phillip LeMarquand, Tyne and Wear GMB Branch Secretary, which all



Assembly participants pose. Photo: X349317

the Fellow Workers attended.

Finally, the assembled Wobs had a discussion about the state of the IWW in Scotland today and how we can build again through local organising initiatives and involving members in their Industrial Union networks.

The next Assembly will be held in the Spring of 2012.

### Exploited Student Guest Workers Fight Back Against Hershey

By John Kalwaic

Around 400 student guest workers from the J-1 visa exchange program went on a wildcat strike on Aug. 17 to protest low wages and sweatshop-like conditions in Hershey, Pa. Students on the program are from around the world, including the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe. They expected to work shorter hours and to have a cultural exchange experience in the United States, learning about American culture and improving their English skills. Instead, they ended up working in Hershey's chocolate plants, lifting boxes all day for very low wages—less than \$200 a week—with virtually no time or energy for anything else, least of all for the cultural exchange experience they had thought they signed up for. Many of the students were threatened if they complained, and often they were blocked from contacting the embassies of their home countries. Hershey has a company town system, which forced the student workers to acquire debt for rent and board. They could not return home without paying the debt, and they were often threatened with deportation if they



SEIU protests Hershey. Photo: SEIU

complained.

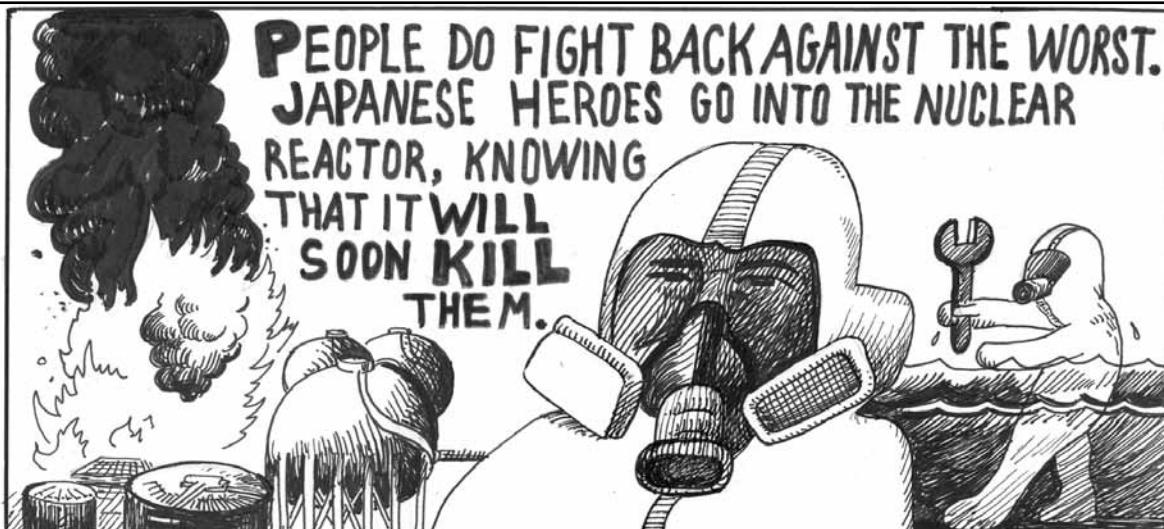
On Aug. 17 the Hershey's J-1 student workers walked out with no union and no support. At that time, very few people had knowledge of the students' situation. However, as more people learned about the incident, support has grown for the students, and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and other unions have

begun to support their cause. The workers that originally worked in Hershey's chocolate plants were union workers who had benefits and higher pay, but Hershey outsourced the jobs to guestworker and visa programs, much to the despair of the union workers. There is now much more public attention on the plight of the J-1 students. Rallies were held in both Hershey and Philadelphia, and the students have been featured on Amy Goodman's show, "Democracy Now." Public pressure has been put on the U.S. State Department, which monitors the affairs of immigrants and guest-workers. The Department stated they were looking into the matter. The students came to learn about American culture, but they have ended up teaching more than they have learned.

### Libertalia Needs Your Help!

From the Providence IWW

Libertalia—a social center in Providence, R.I. and houses meetings and office space for many local groups—needs a little help with making the rent. The space is home to the office of the Providence IWW as well as a solidarity network project called Rhode Island Solidarity and Equality that helps precarious workers when they have problems with their bosses or their landlords. The space has been crucial in building a vibrant anti-authoritarian movement for social transformation in our little city. If there is anything you can do to help there are ways to donate at the following link: <http://www.libertaliapvd.org/p/donate.html>



In November We Remember

### Union Leaders Squander Potential Of Verizon Strike

By Megan Cornish

Labor's showdown at Verizon started like so many in the last few years, with the company taking for granted that it could walk on unions.

In contract negotiations, the employer demanded concessions of \$1 billion a year from its unionized workers. These included freezing pensions of current employees and eliminating them for new hires, making workers pay a quarter of health care premiums, slashing wages in half for new workers, and cutting sick leave and other benefits. Verizon also insisted on removing all job security provisions—a green light to outsourcing.

This at a company that in the last four years made profits of \$22.5 billion and paid its top five executives \$258 million. This was a classic opportunity for workers to draw a line in the sand. Yet only two weeks into the strike, union officials sent everyone back to work. What happened?

#### Enough is too much, already!

Union members had had it. After a strike authorization vote of 91 percent, 35,000 Communications Workers of America (CWA) went on strike on August 7, joined by 10,000 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). The massive walkout covered the Northeast and mid-Atlantic states. Militancy was high, even including the use of roving pickets to confront supervisor-scabs on job sites.

Supporters across the United States flocked to picket Verizon Wireless stores. The outpour showed how ready U.S. workers are to resist the relentless attacks on labor.

And Verizon felt the heat. The huge concessions being demanded by a company so profitable sparked public outrage. High-profile outages and significant delays in new installations threatened the company's business in an industry with stiff competition.

Yet union officials were conciliatory from the start. The stated goal of the strike was to get Verizon back to the table to bargain "seriously"—a concept the two sides are bound to view totally differently.

CWA leaders compared the fight to the heroic revolts in Tunisia and Egypt and the fight of Wisconsin public workers that electrified the nation last winter. Supporters and union ranks clearly agreed with this comparison. But union officials

killed any potential for the realization of this lofty vision.

#### With friends like these ...

On August 22, the leaders of the two unions cut the strike short just as it was gaining steam. They claimed that management was now willing to talk. But Verizon made no indication it was backing down. And commentators started predicting that the company would win many of its demands.

Unfortunately, the pundits may be right. Strikes cannot be turned on and off like a faucet. Even though leafleting of wireless stores continues, calling union members back to work ruined the strike's momentum. Now bosses can prepare for any future walkout. Verizon took none of their demanded concessions off the table, and extracted a promise for unions not to strike for 30 days. The CWA and IBEW

must also give a week's notice of any strike after that. This agreement disarms the union membership!

The two unions certainly had different attitudes toward the strike. While CWA had a strike fund of \$400 million, IBEW had none at all. Yet many supporters would have generously donated to a strike fund had they been asked.

Continuing the walkout and building on community support could have stopped the take-backs cold. It could also have given a huge shot in the arm to organizing the 80,000 non-union wireless workers, and strengthened labor's position considerably.

Union leaders not only betrayed the power of the Verizon strike, but also the energy created by the Wisconsin fight-back movement. In selling the strike short, officials undermined the growing sense that working-class people can win!

How long will it be before labor finds its feet again and we have another watershed moment like the Republic Windows and Doors sit-down strike or the Wisconsin public worker upsurge?

Workers will never get anywhere with a labor leadership like this. More than ever, it's urgent for union militants to speak out and tell it like it is.

*This story originally appeared in Freedom Socialist newspaper, Vol. 32, No. 5, October-November 2011, and was reprinted with permission. It does not represent the views of the Industrial Worker or the IWW.*

### Wobblies Demand Money Back From Chase Bank



Photo: Neil Parthun

On Oct. 8, Wobblies in Champaign, Ill. joined in a Unity March for Jobs with about 100 local activists. We marched to Chase Bank and a group went in and filled out withdrawal slips asking for our \$94 billion in taxpayer money back. :)

Graphic: Tom Keough

**Special**

# Politics Averted: Thoughts On The “Occupy X” Movement

**By Aidan Rowe**

What are we to make of the global Occupy X movement which has exploded onto the streets of cities across the world, turning public spaces into campsites of opposition? Certain things are obvious: First, the fact that there are thousands of people across the world taking over public spaces to express their anger at the financial system is undeniably a good thing. Having camped out outside the Central Bank on Dame Street (in Dublin, Ireland), I can also say that these protests exude a positivity and hopefulness that is so often lacking from the ritualistic parades of anger that make up most protest marches. But there are also, in my view, serious political problems that prevent the movement from moving beyond a “radical sleepover” and becoming a genuine anti-austerity grassroots resistance movement.

The analysis below is based on my own particular experience of the Dame Street protest on the ground and of the U.S. protests as a media event. Obviously any attempt to discuss a diverse and fluid movement like this as a whole can only ever be approximate and reductive. This account is not intended to be comprehensive, but rather to sketch what I see as the major trends and tendencies emerging within the movement, and should be read with that in mind.

**Non-politics, incoherence, (neo) liberalism**

The Occupy X movement has since its inception shown an extreme aversion to being seen as political. Some aspects of this, such as banning political party banners, are an understandable pragmatic reaction to the tendency of various Leninist parties to hijack these kinds of events by swamping them with flags, banners and paper-sellers. But the anti-politics of the movement, at least on the part of the organizing core and the Adbusters collective who issued the call for the original Wall Street protest, is also ideological: an odd synthesis of post-leftist anti-organizationalism (which sees formal political organizations, trade unions, etc. as being necessarily oppressive) and neo-

liberal post-politicism (which sees a Left vs. Right contest of ideas as being largely irrelevant after the fall of the Berlin Wall). After decades of neoliberal governance and media spin attempting to drive ideology and politics out of public discourse in order to enshrine the liberal-capitalist consensus as being “above politics” and to reduce political questions to technical ones best dealt with by “experts,” it is perhaps unsurprising, but nonetheless disheartening, to see this de-politicization reflected in contemporary forms of resistance.

Most obviously, this has been expressed in the movement’s unwillingness to attempt to agree on a coherent set of positions beyond some very basic points of unity with no underlying analysis of society. Instead, the occupied space is used by individuals to express a range of incoherent and often mutually contradictory ideas which are related only by being in some sense opposed to the status quo and the political and financial elites. At Dame Street, I spoke to individuals who believe in everything from Rawlsian social democracy, to anarchism, to paranoid crypto-anti-Semitic conspiracy theories (the New World Order, etc.), to Stalinism. Of course, the advantage of this is that it’s extremely inclusive—the only requirement to participate is a sense that things are not as they should be and that the financial sector and the state are in some way to blame—but this also means that reactionary ideas are treated the same as progressive ones rather than being robustly challenged. In practice, this means that the ideas that come to the fore tend to be those that are already dominant in society: the ideas of the ruling class. In the U.S. context, the dominant messages from Occupy Wall Street have been liberal, reformist and nationalistic: those that posed the least threat to the establishment. For example, a call to “make Wall Street work for America” amounts to little more than a call for increased exploitation of the

Third World as an alternative to imposing austerity. A call to reform banking practice to constrain “corporate greed” is merely a call to stabilize capitalism so that the course of exploitation runs more smoothly. The problem is capitalism, not regulatory failure, or corporate greed or a lack of economic patriotism, and the inadequacies of these analyses need to be exposed rather than uncritically welcomed. The Irish protest seems to be following a similar pattern, with a particular anti-IMF/EU flavor.

The theory underlying these anti-politics, so far as I can gather, is this: No two people experience oppression in the same way, and thus any attempt to unite people under a political program inevitably ends up erasing some people’s perspectives. This is superficially quite a pleasing analysis since it creates a framework under which all ideas can be understood as equally valid, and they all derive from real-life experience, but it’s extremely problematic. Implicitly, it denies the possibility of coming

to an inter-subjective understanding (i.e. one based on mutual recognition of shared experiences and understanding of differing ones) of oppression through collective discussion and compromise, and instead collapses into a naive relativism that produces a vague and weak politics, which plays into the hands of those who wish to dismiss the protesters as “hippies” who don’t understand the complexities of capitalism. In any case, it’s easy to overstate the case for subjective perspectives and ignore the objective factors that shape experiences: the processes and structures of capitalist domination.

**Bring back the working class!**

One of the major victories of neoliberalism is the eradication of the working class from the popular consciousness. One of the results of this is the prevalence of the idea among certain sections of the left that the working class is no longer

relevant to understanding power in the modern world—an outdated idea clung to by old-left dinosaurs. This is reflected in the idea of “the 99 percent” which has become the slogan of the Occupy X movement, which expresses a very crude understanding of class, where the ruling class is an arbitrarily defined proportion of the wealthiest people in society. This makes for some great chanting—“we are the 99 percent!”—but is a poor criterion for membership of an anti-capitalist or anti-austerity movement. Put bluntly: There are an awful lot of capitalists, bosses, managers, bankers, CEOs, politicians, police, prison wardens, pimps, heroin dealers, etc. in the 99 percent.

Properly understood, class is not a classification system of individuals based on how much money they have; it’s a social relation between people that derives from the organization of labor under capitalism. In other words, it’s the way people are forced to relate to one another in order to participate in capitalist society. Class oppression is not a small cabal of the ultra-rich on Wall Street or Washington or Leinster House. It’s in every workplace, every police station, every dole queue, every courtroom, every prison and every territory occupied by Western militaries, and can only be sensibly understood as such.

**Conclusion**

The radically democratic nature of the occupations creates the potential for the movement to evolve in any number of possible directions. Whether or not they become genuine resistance movements depends largely on how much the radical left are willing to engage with them and re-assert the importance of class politics in understanding and countering oppression, by participating in the actions, discussions, and assemblies. A key hurdle has already been overcome: People are on the streets, expressing their dissent, reclaiming public spaces; it remains to be seen what comes of it.

*This piece originally appeared on the Workers Solidarity Movement (WSM) website on Oct. 12, 2011. It was reprinted with permission from the WSM.*

## Dispatch From The Front Lines Of Occupy Wall Street

**Continued from 1**

We are weary of it and we are fighting back.

I spoke with an electrical worker from Boston who felt a compulsion to come down to his rival city and stand at the nexus of avarice, exploitation and corruption. This was on Monday, Oct. 3. I have seen him every day since. I expect to see him again tomorrow, the next day and the day after that.

There was the group of Teamsters, locked out by that bastion of the bourgeoisie—Sotheby’s—inviting all to a workshop scheduled for Monday, Oct. 10 at 2:00 p.m. One of them took a moment to pull me aside and thank me (although I, personally, had nothing to do with the action) for the disruption caused at one of Sotheby’s exercises in gross and vulgar materialism.

The coppers, as usual, strutted around, fondling their truncheons and believing that they mattered. On the night of a massive community/labor march on Oct. 5, after most of the union folk had left, the cops decided to compensate for their shortcomings and bludgeon and pepper-spray unarmed people (mostly young, passive students), as they are wont to do. The conviction amongst everyone I spoke to was that the New York Police Department is simply the private security firm of the bankers. The \$4.6 million donation they accepted from J.P. Morgan recently is just confirmation of these suspicions.

Another thing that struck me was how many children were present. The feeling is that, while we demand a better world now, we are also doing this for the benefit

of the next generation; that they may know a kinder world than the hell that the rapacious have dealt us.

We, being an “illegal” occupation, do not enjoy the amenities of electricity, hence we have no PA system. Because of some Byzantine and asinine law, we are also not allowed bullhorns, which the Filth employ with comedic frequency. The solution has been the über-democratic and cooperative “people’s mic”—in which everything that is spoken is repeated by the entire crowd. Participation in this has been among the most fulfilling aspects of the experience.

The major slogan—which has caught the imagination of the masses and facilitated the movement’s rapid-fire growth—is, “We are the 99 percent!” The standard chants are indelibly emblazoned in all of our memories, but this is something new. Those of us on the so-called fringes have often spoken of the class distinction in fractional terms, but to hear the mainstream scream this sentiment signals a seismic shift in the present order.

As I constantly carry my sign, reading, “The Working Class is Awake! IWW.ORG” with a QR Code to send the tech-savvy directly to our website, I cannot recall how many times I have heard supporters shout things such as, “The Wobblies are here!” or “The OBU!” Being a romantic, such things give me goose bumps. Yes, it seems that the working class finally is awake.

These are just a few of my experiences. I will humbly share more soon. See you at Liberty Plaza.

**Continued from 1**

All of these, in my mind, are part of the IWW building towards being a respected and effective current within the labor movement and within class, as well as a core supporter of the popular anti-capitalist counter-power that can grow into a working-class revolution.

This is a far cry from where we are, at but every next day makes it seem more realistic and more necessary. The future must be considered in the context of a double dip recession, peak oil prices, climate change and global war. That said, if the IWW is going to have the type of impact we want it to, we need to organize ourselves to make it possible.

**How might this look?**

First, we would continue our workplace organizing, getting as many members through our organizer training program and building solid, drama-free, organizing-focused branches.

Second, we need to have a way of easily and effectively tapping our branches to do solidarity work with our (or allied) campaigns, including local salting and direct action.

Third, we need to identify and connect experienced organizers and militants (which are two different things) across our union and create a culture of coordinated, disciplined action that addresses local differences and larger contexts, scales and impacts.

Fourth, we need to expand this coordination and workplace organizing



Photo: Diane Krauthamer

## Starbucks, Wisconsin, Occupy X & Economic Crisis: Building An IWW For The Present Moment

**Continued from 1**

to dual-card settings, bringing our experience, ideas, trainings, solidarity and analysis to the labor movement as a whole, industry by industry.

Fifth, we need to build powerful enough branches to meaningfully move or create mass action in localities around the country, and also to concentrate people in core upsurges, be they scattered around the country like the Occupy X movement or in a single state, like the struggle in Wisconsin.

There is, of course, much more to discuss and much more to learn from our past and ongoing efforts. How do we effectively organize workplaces? How can we maximize the impact of our existing solidarity and organization? What are best practices for relating to dual-card organizing, mass movements and so on?

I can only relish the possibility of figuring out these things, but I hope we can all agree that they are essential if the IWW is going to be relevant in the present. From here on, the work is ahead of us.

*Please send your thoughts/feedback to the author at db@riseup.net.*

**Special**

# What Is Occupy Wall Street All About? One Wobbly's Perspective

**Continued from 1**

located in Zuccotti Park (or "Liberty Square"), which is just one block north of Wall Street. I did not attend this march and didn't even know it was happening until I received a text message that some Fellow Workers from the New York City General Membership Branch, along with around 70 other people, were arrested. Upon further investigation, I found out that the cops used their full array of brutality tools to repress the march—everything from pepper spray to baton beatings to mass arrests. I'd heard rumors that one Wobbly even received a concussion. Concerned for their safety, I spent the rest of the evening doing jail support from home while others spent the night outside the precincts. We relayed all of the information we received about the arrestees to supporters swiftly through email, social media and phone. Word spread quickly about these violent police tactics, and by 10:00 p.m. that night, the local evening news was broadcasting Youtube videos of peaceful women protesters being trapped inside orange mesh netting and pepper sprayed at point-blank range by burly cops from Staten Island. It had been a while since the cops used such violent tactics against large groups of demonstrators, and, combined with the mass arrests, this certainly sparked the media's attention.

It was around this point that Occupy Wall Street gained a wider audience outside of New York, both within the IWW and amongst the international radical and progressive community. Maybe it was the violent police repression that caught people's attention—it certainly caught my attention, and compelled me to be involved with Occupy Wall Street to some extent, even if it was just for legal support. While I would always defend those who are victims of police brutality, I continued to disagree with the overall (lack of) strategy of Occupy Wall Street. My cynicism was questioned by those who were both involved in the protests and those who understood the disillusionment and frustration with the overall inactivity of the "left." Being in this "left" for more than 10 years, I felt myself grow defensive. Some of us have been working really hard to build sustainable movements for a long, long time, and to have what some people were claiming to be a "revolutionary movement," sparked by a few hundred angry kids, made me feel that those of us who had been working day and night at destroying capitalism were getting short-changed. Suddenly I felt like our day-to-day movement building on the shop floor just wasn't enough to spark a popular uprising, but that taking over a public park and posting Youtube videos of cops pepper spraying innocent people was going to do the trick. I certainly agreed with Occupy Wall Street's simple demand of "democracy not corporatocracy," but I

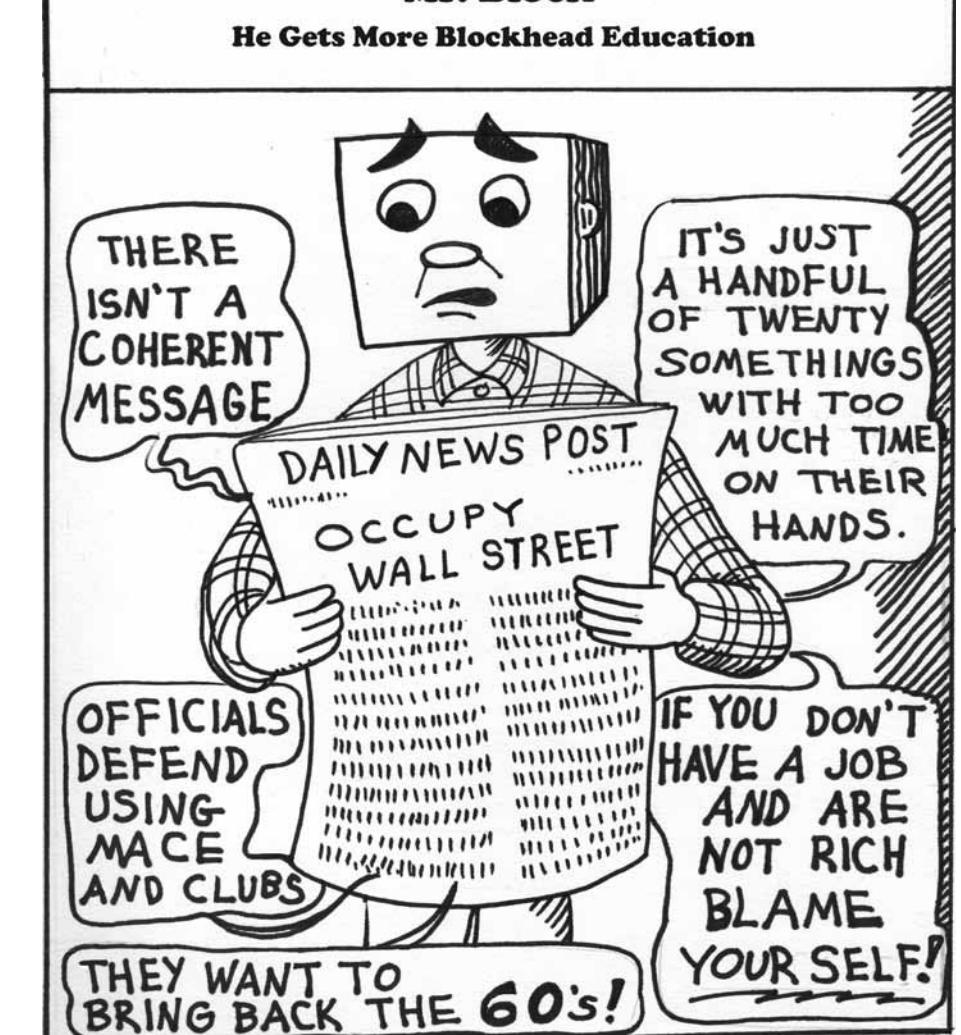
did not think occupying a public park a block away from Wall Street was an effective means of building a more democratic society.

My perceptions of Occupy Wall Street started to change around the beginning of the third week of the occupation. I was out of town on Saturday, Oct. 1, and as I was sitting down to dinner with my family, I learned that over 700 people were arrested during a march on the Brooklyn Bridge. Suddenly, I realized that it was time to swallow my pride and let go of my doubts and criticism for at least one night just to process how many people that was, and how I probably would have been one of them had I been in town that day. I felt helpless and humbled. I still didn't agree with how the occupiers were fighting and wasn't even sure what they were fighting for, but I knew that whatever it was they were doing was more than what I was doing, and it was enough to attract the world's attention.

That weekend, the Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 voiced support for the occupation, and on Monday, Oct. 3, they announced plans to try to stop the city from forcing bus drivers to transport arrested protesters.

"TWU Local 100 supports the protesters on Wall Street and takes great offense that the mayor and NYPD have ordered operators to transport citizens who were exercising their constitutional right to protest—and shouldn't have been arrested in the first place," TWU Local 100 President John Samuels told the *New York Daily News*. This was a pivotal moment—a point when labor began to play a major role in Occupy Wall Street by refusing to cooperate with the state, and a point in which Occupy Wall Street became a threat to the city's abuse of power. Throughout that week, many influential unions and labor groups in New York followed suit. It was great to hear that labor finally supported a movement that was putting into action what they had previously put into words and into symbolic rallies.

In the past, the labor movement has staged countless rallies with names such as "Showdown on Wall Street" and had been voicing the exact same messages that Occupy Wall Street has been voicing, so why did it take the labor movement more than two weeks to publicly endorse Occupy Wall Street? They certainly knew it was happening—news of the protests and the mass arrests were making the front page of every major paper in New York City on nearly a daily basis and being broadcast throughout other cities as well. There were also certainly committed labor activists already involved in the ground work and they were committed to Occupy Wall Street from the beginning. Did the labor bureaucrats not see any strong political motive to endorse a movement that would likely give them



Graphic: Tom Keough

nothing back in return? Did they have the same criticisms and doubts that I had? Or did it just take some extra time for everyone to get on the same page? Who knows. This delayed endorsement from a bulk of the labor movement apparently wasn't that noticeable. When the support came through it was appreciated, and it brought about a massive 20,000-plus person community/labor march on Oct. 5, which received widespread international media coverage. A friend of mine who had been involved in setting up and maintaining the encampment at Zuccotti Park since the beginning of the occupation told me that the march brought a tremendous growth in participation. The occupiers were very enthused about this, even though this meant that the park was now completely packed from one end to the next.

In fact, it was sometime between the second and third week of Occupy Wall Street that this movement really started spreading like wildfire, with autonomous actions and encampments in 1,582 cities (as of Oct. 19) throughout every continent in the entire planet, including Antarctica. Millions of people who identified with the simple message expressed by Occupy Wall Street—that it is time to stand together and fight back against the top tiers of society who own a majority of the wealth—were inspired by what started as a few hundred protestors camping out in a small park in lower Manhattan. Now the message, encapsulated in what has become the unofficial slogan of "we are the 99 percent," has finally captured the world's attention and invigorated a sense of plurality that effectively includes just about everyone who is not a multimillionaire—an indirect strength.

Such messaging, which arose spontaneously out of the Occupy Wall Street movement, proved indirectly effective in amassing the movement's strength and popular appeal. A friend of mine recently pointed out that almost everyone is being screwed by the recent, radical concentration of wealth and power—the middle class, students, those whose pensions are invested in the stock market (as most teachers' and civil servants' are), the unemployed, the rabble, the youth, those affected by cultural anomie—and they are all part of this 99 percent. This, she said, "encapsulates the dramatic wealth transfer that has been happening since the 1970s,

but also the diversity of struggles at hand... all of which point to the fact that people are disgusted with the fact that they cannot get any of their projects realized, because they cannot meaningfully participate in economic and political institutions."

The problem with defining class as an economic body of people who are not the 1 percent of Americans who own 40 percent of the nation's wealth is that it detracts from an understanding of the power relationships that define the difference between the working class and the employing class. Class is not determined by economic level; if it were, then upper-level management, police officers and business owners are in the same class of "99 percenters" as Starbucks baristas and public school teachers.

In other words, the strength of Occupy Wall Street's plurality may also be its weakness. Still, because this movement is an evolving organism that seems to morph into whatever those involved make it to be means that building it into a movement with firm class consciousness is a strong possibility. Maybe this is already happening insofar as action precedes consciousness and the occupiers are already acting in their class interests as an organized grouping within the working class.

Maybe the occupiers' collective experience of protest, of being beaten and arrested by the police on a seemingly regular basis can firm up their perspective and give them a more solid understanding that, yes, the police are also in the 99 percent, but, no, as police officers they don't share our class interest.

As the movement continues to spread globally, there is no telling what will happen next. Maybe this will just be a passing trend that loses momentum as the cold winter months hit, or as soon as the movement is co-opted by the Democrats, or maybe this is the popular uprising that we have all been waiting for. Hopefully if it's the latter, this will be a powerful lesson which millions of people bring back to the workplace and larger society—one which teaches the world the strength and beauty of plurality and direct democracy, but also the necessity of class consciousness.

- Tom Levy and Marianne LeNabat contributed to this piece.

(Note: The opinions expressed in this piece are solely those of the author, and not of the Industrial Worker or the IWW.)

## IWW Endorses Occupy Wall Street

**On behalf of our union, the General Executive Board of the Industrial Workers of the World sends our support and solidarity to the occupation of Wall Street, those determined to hold accountable our oppressors.**

**This occupation on Wall Street calls into question the very foundation in which the capitalist system is based, and its relentless desire to place profit over and above all else.**

**When 1 percent of the ruling class holds the wealth created by the other 99 percent, it is clear that the watchwords found in our union's Preamble, "the working class and the employing class have nothing in common," ring true more than ever. The IWW does not follow a business union model. We believe that the working class and the employing class have nothing in common and we don't foster illusions to the contrary.**

**Throughout the world, from Egypt to Greece, from China to Wisconsin, working class people are starting to rise up. The IWW welcomes this. We see the occupation of Wall Street as another step—no matter how large or small—in this process.**



Photo: Arthur Smilos



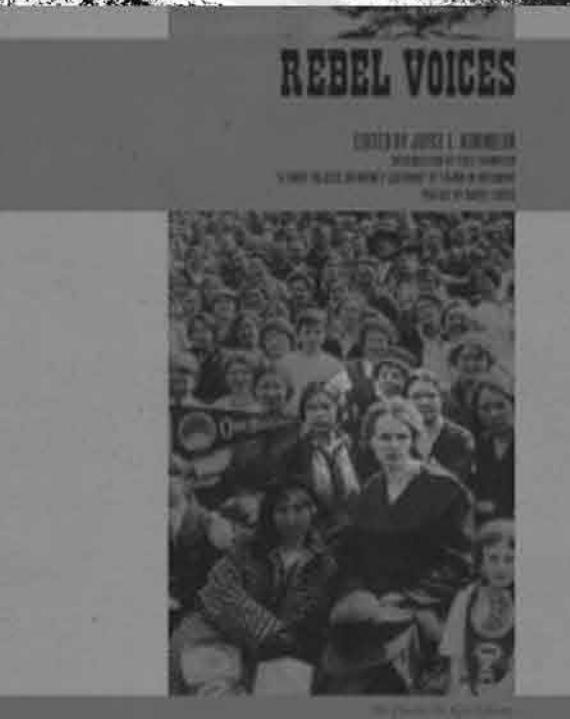
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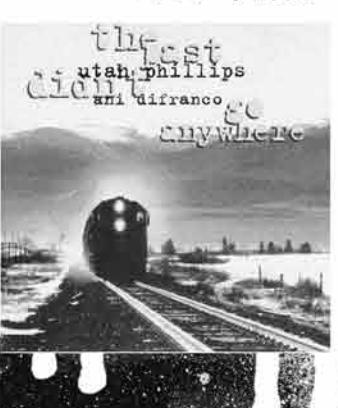
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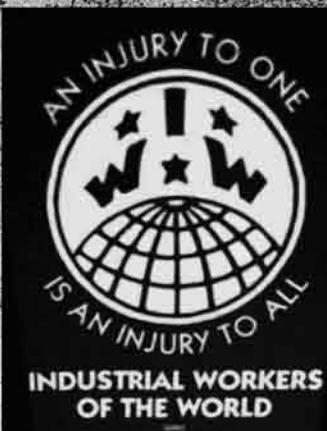


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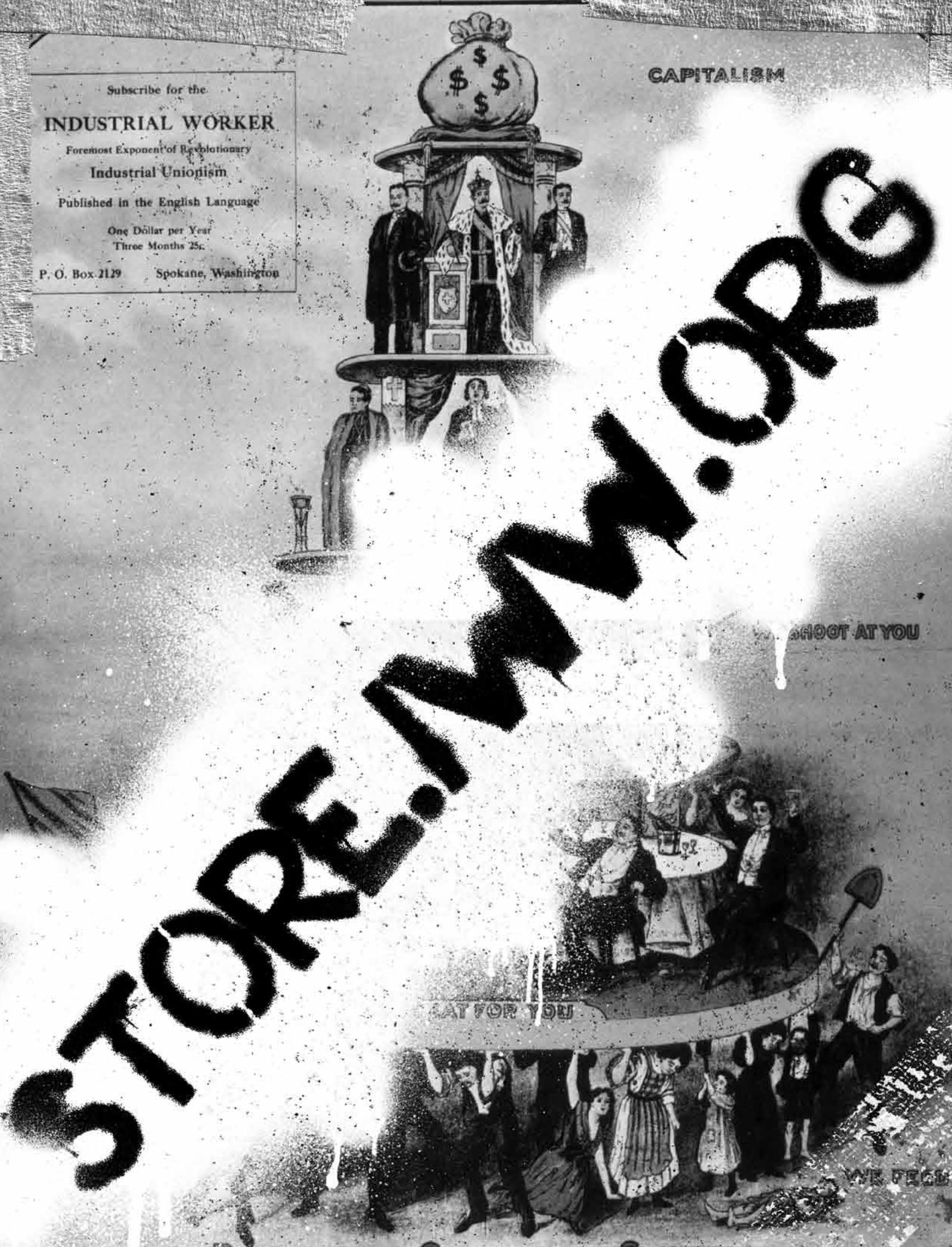
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**Industrial Worker Book Review****The Annual IW Year In [Book] Review****By William Hastings**

Schools aren't going to do it for us. Newspaper book reviews slip a little more everyday. Unless we begin to educate ourselves, actively seeking out alternatives to the mainstream, our ability to sustain a revolutionary dialogue is threatened. Wait. Let me correct that: to hell with dialogue. Let's try a howl instead.

However, howling is only effective if it is deep, resonant and able to affect all people. Wide reading in multiple genres builds active, broad minds. Reading only within one genre puts blinders on, stifling the howl. We need to challenge ourselves to read as widely and as deeply as possible, otherwise the plutocrats will do the thinking for us. Remember, it wasn't until Frederick Douglass learned to read that he encountered the word "freedom." The slave masters didn't teach the slaves how to read, so they never heard or saw "freedom." The slave masters owned the language, they controlled thought. If we are not reading widely, we must ask ourselves what words don't we know and what words are being kept from us?

Reading is a revolutionary act.

What follows are some of the books that challenged me the most this past year. Some are current releases, some not. Reading them was an act of remembrance: we still have far to go.

**Non-Fiction**

**Brown, Chester. Paying For It. Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly, 2011. Hardcover, 292 pages, \$24.95.**

Brown's graphic novel was one of the best, and most under-reported, releases this past year. Ostensibly it is about his time as a john in Canada, but the book goes far beyond that. Brown's book is no less a forceful inquiry into prostitution, our concepts of romantic love, civil rights and human relationships. With a philosophical eye, Brown looks at as many sides of these issues as possible, coming out to plea for a re-imagining of moral concepts. The book challenges common ideas on prostitution, monogamy and love and we are better for it. It is high time we had a writer as fearless as Brown force us to re-imagine these basic assumptions.

**McKay, Iain, ed. Property is Theft! A Pierre-Joseph Proudhon Anthology. Oakland: AK Press, 2011. Paperback, 670 pages, \$26.95.**

Put out by the always phenomenal AK Press, this roughly 700-page anthology is the end-all summary of Proudhon's thinking and writing. Regardless of whether you are an anarchist or not, any one of the essays, lectures, or letters in this volume will prove to be indispensable reading. Proudhon was a man of remarkable variety of thought and talent, and this anthology gives the widest possible picture of the man. In a time when we should be questioning and challenging plutocratic control over world politics and finances, and cheering empire's collapse, Proudhon's writings provide both guidance and challenge—the marks of our finest thinkers.

**Rosemont, Franklin, ed. Haymarket Scrapbook: 25th Anniversary Edition. Oakland: AK Press, 2011. Paperback, 272 pages, \$20.00.**

To celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Haymarket bombing, AK Press, in conjunction with the Charles H. Kerr Company, has released an updated version of the seminal scrapbook. A wealth of primary source material plus essays by modern historians and writers, no other book will do justice to the Haymarket events like this one. This is a monumental piece of history too long out of print, given back to us as a reminder of what it means to put it all on the line.

**AlAswany, Alaa. On the State of Egypt. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2011. Hardcover, 202 pages, \$15.00.**

Al Aswany is Egypt's finest novelist and one of the great writers of the world. This book is a collection of his columns and reporting for Egyptian papers in the years and months leading up to the remarkable Egyptian revolution this past spring. The columns are a passionate plea for true democracy, as well as a clear window into what events made the revolution possible. As always, Al Aswany is a passionate writer and an utterly fearless individual. There is much to be learned from this excellent book, one released very much under the radar here in the United States this year.

**Kornbluth, Joyce, ed. Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology. Oakland: PM Press, 2011. Paperback, 464 pages, \$27.95.**

The third edition of the classic, put out in a superb printing by PM Press. With a new preface by Fellow Worker Daniel Gross and an additional 40 pages of material, this edition of the book is the most complete, and best, work on the union available. At a time when the IWW's voice needs to be heard as loud as ever, here is the book to get people reacquainted with the union.

**Liebler, M.L., ed. Working Words: Punching the Clock and Kicking Out the Jams. Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 2010. Paperback, 470 pages, \$22.00.**

One of the best anthologies of the year, this book is a compendium of poetry, fiction, song lyrics and nonfiction about work, the grind. In this work, laborers, miners, assembly-line workers, Woody Guthrie, Walt Whitman, Tony Medina, Marc Kelly Smith, Bob Dylan, Eminem, strikers, farmers and roustabouts are all meeting side by side in one place.

**Fiction**

**Woodrell, Daniel. The Outlaw Album. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2011. Hardcover, 176 pages, \$24.99.**

One of the most important collections of short fiction in this country in a very long time—this is superb writing with piercing insight. Woodrell never fails to excite, challenge, and move. While the collection is a look into the disenfranchised

portions of America, it is also a hard look into the human heart. The stories centering on returned veterans ring as warnings of things to come. This book is not to be missed.

**Watson, Sterling. Fighting in the Shade. New York: Akashic Books, 2011. Paperback, 330 pages, \$15.95.**

Watson is one of the few novelists in America today who consistently asks tough moral questions. Never afraid to put incredible demands on his characters, he tests them repeatedly, always attempting to peer a little further into the human mystery. This novel challenges our concepts of masculinity while at the same time re-envisioning the Faustus story. At a time

when we keep seeing people selling their souls, Watson's novel couldn't be more appropriate or thought provoking—not to mention he is one of our finest prose stylists.

**Williamson, Eric Miles. Welcome to Oakland. Hyattsville, MD: Raw Dog Screaming Press, 2009. Paperback, 236 pages, \$15.95.**

Yes, Williamson now writes for the *Industrial Worker*. But even if he didn't, and was content to toil away in the depths of Texas, this novel would still stand as perhaps the finest book I read last year. It is definitely one of the classics of working-class fiction. A book born of the gutter and an intense study of a man trying to escape it, the novel is utterly fearless. At times it blows like immortal jazz, at others it howls against a system designed to break the laboring man. The novel is proof of the essentialness of fiction: we can read all the journalism we want, but it can never capture the horror and triumph of a man's heart in the way our best fiction can. This is indispensable reading.

**Hannah, Barry. Long, Lost, Happy. New York: Grove Press, 2010. Hardcover, 464 pages, \$27.50.**

Losing Barry Hannah was losing a piece of the Great American Soul—that blasting Whitman/Henry Miller soul we need once again. Hannah was one of our finest writers, one who never failed to make a reader wonder, smile, cheer at the possibility of great writing. This book is a collection of his best short fiction, each story a gem. Han-



## In November We Remember Free the Angola 2 and all political prisoners!

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Graphic: akpress.org

nah is a difficult writer to make comparisons to, his style was that unique. This is a collection to savor. Its rewards are nearly endless.

**Poetry**

**Harrison, Jim. Songs of Unreason. Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press, 2011. Hardcover, 120 pages, \$22.00.**

Walt Whitman once wrote, "I believe in the flesh and the appetites, / Seeing hearing and feeling are miracles, and each part and / tag of me is a miracle." No better set of lines could be written to summarize the heart of Harrison's latest collection. Besieged by crushing debt, endless hysteria and celebrity diversion, we finally have a collection of poetry to shake us out of our misery, to put fire in our blood, and lightning in our eyes.

**Char, Rene. Furor and Mystery & Other Writings. Boston: Black Widow Press, 2011. Paperback, 558 pages, \$24.00.**

Char was one of the founders of Surrealism and a central figure of the French Resistance during World War II. Albert Camus called this book the most important piece of French poetry since Rimbaud, but I will say that it is one of the most important books of poetry ever. When resistance breeds poets and poets breed resistance, you know something is being done right. Char's writing is full of wisdom, struggle, clarity and vitality. Every bookshelf should have a copy.

**In November,  
We Remember...**

**Some Wobbly Women pioneers:**

**Lucy Parsons**

**Mother (Mary Harris) Jones**

**Helen Keller**

-- By Harry Siitonen, SF Bay Area GMB

# Industrial Strength In The Red Zone

By Eric Miles Williamson

I just got back from France where I participated in a literary festival called *En Première Ligne* (which translates into "On the Front Lines"—I think it's a military metaphor) held in Ivry-Sur-Seine, a suburb of Paris just minutes from Paris proper. Ivry-Sur-Seine is called by the locals "The Red Zone": it's the area of Paris where socialists and communists gather and live, scheme and plot. The streets are named after French revolutionaries such as Marat and Robespierre. People walk the avenues wearing red bandannas tied to their biceps to signify their support for socialism. The festival was held in a building named *Espace Robespierre*.

I was brought over to the festival and named a *Parrain*, a Patron of the festival, because I write novels about blue-collar workers, which, in the eyes of the French, makes me a socialist sympathizer, an overtly political writer, a literary muckraker who puts a political agenda before his artistic agenda when writing his books.

The truth is I write about blue-collar workers because I come from a blue-collar family and the world of labor is the world I know best. My dad drove a tow truck and repaired truck tires for a living, and when I graduated from high school he got me a Laborers Union card and I went to work. I saved my money from construction work and put myself through college on it, and now I write books about what I know—blue-collar work and workers.

This narrative is almost unthinkable in most countries of the world, and certainly in France—where the children of

blue-collar workers rarely go to college, write books, and become professors. Social mobility of this variety is a thing nearly unique to the United States. And so each time I get invited to Europe, I'm seen as a revolutionary of sorts, an author writing to lead the common man in America out of his capitalist bondage and servitude to the bourgeoisie. In Europe, from my experience, American authors who write about the workers, the poor, immigrants and so forth are expected to be wholly political animals steeped in current events and Marxist rhetoric, when in fact, more often than not, these authors are just people telling the stories of their people, of their families and their neighborhoods. I'm not likely to write a romantic parlor room intrigue, because, what the hell, I've never even been in a parlor room.

So I get put on panels, *les débats* as they call them in France, a few writers in front of an audience fielding questions like, "What is the nature of the novel as a vehicle of social critique?" and "What is the social responsibility of an author?" The European authors on the panel at this point become animated, delivering brilliant lectures on how literature can alter the minds and hearts of mankind, how authors have a moral obligation to lead the way toward liberating the masses from the chains of oppression. Meanwhile we American authors start looking a little mousey, noticeably pale, especially when the European authors begin referring to

political upheavals and countries we've never heard of and can't pronounce.

A decade ago, when I was on a book tour in England and Scotland, hoping to promote my book, my publicist got me a spot on a BBC talk show. It was a political show, everyone else around the table in the studio was a political analyst of some variety or other. After about a half an hour of them talking about revolutions, uprisings, monetary issues in Africa, Asia, and the South Pacific, the host finally asked me what I thought about all this stuff. I said, "I'm just a dumb American novelist. I don't know what the hell y'all are talking about. I've never even heard of most of the countries you're referring to. Sorry. But I can talk about art and fiction if you want."

That was the last question they asked me.

Unlike American authors, European authors are public intellectuals, respected—rightly so—for their opinions about things philosophical and political. The political opinion of an American author, however, is generally worth less than that of a comedian. Comedians at least read the news.

Every time I get invited to Europe I come back to the States feeling not only like an idiot but guilty for being just another ill-informed politically apathetic drain on the possibilities of a better, more humane world. I decide I'm going to work on fiction that betters the plight of the common man, that affects change,

and that topples the towering edifices and fortresses of the mighty capitalist pigs who alone are responsible for the horrors and brutality that characterizes humanity. I get to work, writing with indignation and rage, calculating just how my words, characters, stories will spark thoughts of revolution in the minds of my people, how my book will be the flame that sets ablaze the purifying fire that leads to a new and better nation.

Then I remember the problem, at least here in the United States: the disconnect. These days in America if an author writes books championing the common man, the worker, the farmer (as once upon a time did John Dos Passos, Upton Sinclair, John Steinbeck, Erskine Caldwell, Jack London, Frank Norris), just who is he writing these books for? Socialists and progressives already agree with socialist and progressive stances, and so when they read such a book they just nod their heads in agreement. Conservatives won't read liberal whining, and the workers—the ideal target audience, the ones who need to organize, unionize, strike, stand up for their rights—well, for the most part, at least in America, they're in front of their television sets with bags of Cheetos and six-packs of Budweiser.

I no longer know if there's a social purpose at all for American writers. It was nice when I was a young man deluded into thinking he could change the world. Now, though, I'm thinking the guy who flips my burgers or the one who fixes my plumbing contributes more to the human condition than any American poet, playwright, or fiction writer. Please convince me otherwise.



## Wobbly Poetry Corner

### Red November, Black November

By Ralph Chaplin

*Red November, black November, bleak November, black & red;  
Hallowed month of labor's martyrs, labor's heroes, labor's dead.  
Labor's hope and wrath and sorrow, red the promise, black the threat.  
Who are we to not remember? Who are we to dare forget?*

*Red & black the colors blended, black & red the promise made,  
Red until the fight is ended, black until the debt is paid.  
August Spies and Albert Parsons, with Joe Hill and all the rest.  
Who are we to not remember? Who are we to dare forget?*

## IN HONOR OF THE IWW MARTYRS WHO INSPIRE US EVERY DAY



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**EN HONOR DE LOS MÁRTIRES  
DE LA IWW QUIENES NOS  
INSPIRAN CADA DÍA**

## Died In The Mills

*Then, fifty dollars for a Hungarian  
say a black dress to go to the funeral  
and shoes with soles for the three oldest, that leaves  
a dollar fifty for the feast but I'd say  
what a dollar was worth then you could have  
a necktie if you wanted and paprikash  
for twenty or thirty and strudel with apples and nuts  
and violins—he favored the violin—  
and it is not just poets that love meadows  
and take their sneakers off and their socks to walk  
on the warm rocks and dip their tender white feet  
in the burning freezing water and then bend down  
precariously to pick up a froglet and sight  
the farthest lonely tree and note the wind  
moving quickly through the grasses their last summer.*

**Gerald Stern** is a poet residing in Lambertville, New Jersey. The winner of the National Book Award for Poetry in 1998, Stern is also the recipient of the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize and the Wallace Stevens Award from the Academy of American Poets. He is the author of seventeen poetry collections, three volumes of non-fiction and a chapbook. Stern is currently the poet-in-residence at Drew University's low-residency MFA program in creative writing.

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**In November We Remember****Rest In Peace Troy Davis**

The following statement was written prior to the Sept. 21, 2011 execution of Troy Davis as a show of solidarity with Troy Davis and his family. Rest in peace, brother.

Troy Anthony Davis is obviously the most innocent man on the face of this earth. Yet he continues to face down his executioner. There is no physical evidence against him. No court testimony which is not tainted by obvious bias. No doubt that Sylvester Coles, one of those to testify in court and one of the few who did not recant his testimony, identified that he himself was the shooter.

In our world innocence is a thing which must be proven, like in the old days of the Napoleonic Code of Law, as during the days of kings and queens and dungeon-and-cudgel justice. Until then, we are guilty.

The Atlanta Branch of the Industrial Workers of the World stands in solidarity with Troy Davis and his family. We call for the indefinite stay of his death sentence, and the death sentences of all those imprisoned by the laws of a country which prosecutes innocence by the testimony of the guilty. We call for his immediate release, without exception, without hesitation, and without doubt.

The IWW demands that the State of Georgia will recognize the impermissible and unacceptable nature of the "evidence" and testimony submitted in court against him. We stand not just for the very serious and well-documented questions that



Graphic: ellabakercenter.org

exist about Troy Davis' guilt; we stand for common decency, common justice, and common sense.

There are some things that the state of Georgia is guilty of itself: The worst history in the nation of executing and lynching innocent black people is one. It is a very old, hallowed tradition and we should like to see its continuance brought to an end. The State, too, is guilty of having the seventh highest rate of capital punishment convictions in the country. We call for an immediate end to this. We call for an end to all this vulgarity that is advanced as justice in this country. We call for all such

**Michael Evers, A Friend & Comrade**

Michael Evers, legal representative and great friend of the IWW, passed away on Sept. 11, 2011, following a tragic motorcycle accident on August 4.

Michael was once a member of the IWW and was a current member of the General Defense Committee. He was always eager to offer valuable legal advice on issues surrounding organizing campaigns such as the Chicago Couriers Union. He also spoke at a number of seminars on workers' rights for the Chicago General Membership Branch.

For the past two years, he proudly worked pro bono for the IWW and helped us sort through a number of urgent legal matters facing the union. He attended the last two winter meetings of the General Executive Board and spoke with me on a regular basis to help flesh out legal solutions or to just offer some words of wisdom. His rugged and straightforward approach guided the General Administration and organizers in Chicago through many complex issues.

In one meeting, Michael said to me, "I probably won't live to see the Revolution, but your generation most certainly will and I wish you the best of luck. You're gonna need it."

Michael Evers was a dedicated union man, a working class hero, and a true comrade. His service to working people will not be forgotten.

Solidarity Forever,  
Joe Tessone  
General Secretary Treasurer



Photo: IWW

who are innocent are not guilty, too.

We stand definitively and decidedly against those, like U.S. District Judge William T. Moore Jr., who will condemn Mr. Troy Anthony Davis to his death by the statement: "Troy Davis is not innocent."

If this is not innocence, indeed, and if this is what not-innocence deserves, perhaps we are all guilty. The IWW is Troy Davis, too.

In Solidarity,  
The Atlanta General Membership  
Branch of the IWW

**Remembering SDS Activist Carl Oglesby****By James W. Russell**

Carl Oglesby, one of the most eloquent leaders in the movement against the war in Vietnam, died of cancer on Sept. 13, 2011. He was 76 years old.

As a Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) member in Oklahoma, I first heard of him in early 1965 through a long mimeographed article about the war that he wrote that was sent out to chapter leaders. Along with Robert Scheer's pamphlet, "How the U.S. Got Involved in Vietnam," it convinced civil rights and anti-poverty activists that they had to take action against the war. Its prose sizzled with persuasiveness and urgency.

My first physical view of Carl was at that year's SDS convention. I was curious to see the man behind the article and he was every bit as impressive in person as he had been on paper. He was tall, thin, and bearded with the intensiveness of an engaged scholar—more than a little like the character played by Marcello Mastroianni in the 1963 movie "The Organizer."

SDS was running on a high. Two months earlier it had organized the first march on Washington, D.C. against the war, the success of which had exceeded everyone's expectations and the organization was in the national spotlight. At the march, SDS President Paul Potter had delivered a searing indictment of the war that went straight to the moral and historical responsibility to stop it.

For reasons that I don't know, the organization was locked into changing presidents every year. Al Haber, Tom Hayden, and Todd Gitlin had been the first three before Potter. Now the organization would have to choose another president who would instantly become the focus of intense national and international scrutiny. It was a key decision for the 200 or so people at the convention.

Potter and the previous presidents had all been long-time members active in national meetings. Oglesby was not. He had been living in Ann Arbor while working for a defense contractor, a job he had taken after not being able to earn enough as a writer. He had a wife and three children, a suburban house, and was a good ten years older than the average late teen—an early

twenties SDS member. As the United States was beginning to escalate the war, he became increasingly aghast and joined forces with SDS members at the University of Michigan.

There were a number of strong candidates for president, but the convention was smitten with Oglesby, and a few months after joining the organization he was its new president.

A month after the convention I went to work in the national office in Chicago. Oglesby came through on his way to Japan, where he had been invited to represent the U.S. anti-war movement. On his way back we learned that he had caused a near scandal by challenging well-known Japanese intellectuals on television to take a position on the war. The Japanese press buzzed with coverage of this audacious American.

That November there was a second, even larger, march on Washington, and he was the star speaker. He began: "Seven months ago at the April March on Washington, Paul Potter, then President of Students for a Democratic Society, stood in approximately this spot and said that we must name the system that creates and sustains the war in Vietnam. Name it, describe it, analyze it, understand it, and change it."

Oglesby went on to identify the system as corporate liberalism, showing how obedience to corporate interests, domestic liberalism, and imperialist aggression could all be wrapped up into one unitary dominant politic. He exposed cold war liberals for what they were and set SDS to their left.

It was a speech that articulated and oriented the sentiments of the movement.

The response was overwhelming. News organizations identified SDS as the epicenter of the movement against the war and flooded the national office with interview requests. Each day's mail brought scores of letters from students inquiring about how to organize new chapters. There was excitement in the air.

Oglesby toured campuses and spoke widely elsewhere in and out of the coun-

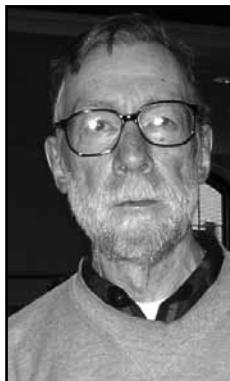


Photo: Next Left Notes

try, on his way to becoming an international celebrity, a status he would occupy for the rest of the 1960s.

In Chicago at the 1968 Democratic Party Convention demonstrations, I remember him speaking to a large crowd as the police began moving in and clubbing. As I was running to escape, I heard his surreal indignant words over the loudspeaker: "Are you surprised?"

What those of us who were 10 years younger were not sensitive to at the time was that it was not so easy to suddenly assume the role of full-time activist when you already had a family that included three children, to move from a middle class income and stability to a hand-to-mouth economic existence. He had made an existential decision to give his life to the movement, come what may, and it took a toll that eventually led to the family breakup.

He also became involved in wrenching disputes with the Weather faction and feminists.

By the 1970s as the crowds werewaning and the movement was losing steam and breaking up, Oglesby became like everyone else, a veteran. Five or six years earlier we had all believed that the movement would keep growing until the whole society was transformed and then we would be involved in its reconstruction. But that was not to be.

People adapted in different ways. The Weather people went underground. Some went into Marxist-Leninist party-building as a kind of organizational tightening to compensate for the increasing loss of public resonance. Some went into the Democratic Party and tried to move it to the left. Later, others got involved in solidarity for Third World revolutionary organizations. Still others went into what later became known as identity politics. Many dropped out of activism altogether. A very few went to the right.

Oglesby struck out on an eclectic path. He recorded two music albums. He delved into conspiracies around the Kennedy assassination. He invented and explored in

writing the useful Yankee-Cowboy thesis as a way to analyze divisions in the American ruling class. He ended up flirting with right-wing libertarians.

His trajectory was consistent with a kind of radical eclecticism that existed in some quarters of SDS—an umbrella organization that had contained disparate and sometimes contradictory tendencies. (It was in SDS that I met an ideological species that identified itself as anarcho-Maoist.)

I saw him in 1974 in San Francisco. A neighbor of mine, the creator of Young Lust comics (don't ask), was having a wedding reception at the warehouse of The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers—another underground comic. I spotted Oglesby and we chatted for a while. He was excited about libertarians he had met. He said that they had the same interests we had. I expressed my doubts and we let it go at that.

He struggled to remain relevant in a historical period marked by the end of the movement and the decades-long ascendancy of the new right. In retrospect, it can be said that he had already made his mark on a particular historical period that was intense but short.

But he made quite a mark. Bob Ross, a former SDS vice president, wrote, "Edward R. Murrow said of Winston Churchill in 1940: 'Now the hour had come for him to mobilize the English language, and send it into battle, a spearhead of hope for Britain and the world...It sustained. It lifted the hearts of an island of people when they stood alone.' John F. Kennedy glossed this when, presenting Churchill with honorary citizenship he said: 'He mobilized the English language and sent it into battle.' Well, Carl Oglesby was our Churchill. In the year he was the president of SDS, and after that, Carl was our tribune. With infinite eloquence he mobilized our forces against an unjust war. His passion in words led our passion in the streets."

I will always remember Carl Oglesby for having shown those of us in the movement at our best by articulating most eloquently our highest ideals and intelligence. In his historical moment, he made you proud to be a part of the same common movement.

## International Solidarity

# A Wobbly Perspective From Egypt

By John Reimann

I spent five days in Cairo in July, partly as a representative of the International Solidarity Commission (ISC) of the IWW. Most of that time was spent in Tahrir Square. The second day I went to the square, as soon as I entered the occupation area, a guy came up to me and said, "You are American? Welcome!" We started to talk. Within five minutes, there was a crowd of some 20 people, mostly young, standing around, peppering me with comments and questions.

One of the first things they wanted to know was about Israel. They were not against the Jewish people, but Zionism was a different matter. There was one guy who was a strict Muslim—maybe a fundamentalist to an extent. This guy and a friend of his gave me a long lecture about how Zionists control Wall Street and control the U.S. government, how the U.N. Security Council veto rule was set up for Israel. My position was that there is nothing that the U.S. government has done in the Middle East that it hasn't done elsewhere. I pointed to the series of coups it helped organize in Latin America. Look at its history: from defending the enslavement of Africans, the slaughter of the Indians, the machine gunning of striking U.S. workers. In the end, he told me that I had "entered into his mind" and that he hoped one day I would read the Koran. I thanked him and also told him that I hoped one day he would read the "Communist Manifesto." We took a picture together.

Even with their great friendliness, many people wondered whether I was some sort of agent of the United States and/or Israel. This came out in various ways. Sometimes they came right out and ask. One guy quizzed me on what different languages I speak: German? French? Italian? Then he asked, with a slightly cynical smile on his face, "Hebrew?" They are cautious for good reason. For instance, one guy came into the square posing as an American reporter. He caused some sort of

problems. Then it turned out that he was, in fact, an Israeli. Then there was the attack some weeks earlier against the Coptic community. Several people I asked about it said that they think Mossad was behind that attack. I think they're probably right. (I met quite a few Christians in Tahrir Square and one of the tents there was a Coptic Christian group. It's also interesting to note that I was told that many Christians celebrate Ramadan with their Muslim friends). Unfortunately, I did not get to meet with the new, independent unions. I went one day to the office of their new federation, but there was nobody there who spoke English and in the short time I was there I didn't have a chance to return with a translator.

People asked me about Obama. I think when he came here and said "Salaam Aleikum," that made a big impression and people liked him a lot. But my position is that the difference between him and Bush is like that between a pickpocket and a mugger. In this connection, we talked a lot about conditions in the United States—the unemployment, the homelessness, the health care situation. Now, with Obama's obvious support for Israel, there are far fewer illusions about him.

I also met some slightly older workers and they were telling me about the strikes against privatization, beginning in 2004. These strikes were really the spark of the present revolution, and it was a general strike on Feb. 9, 2011 that brought down former President Hosni Mubarak. However, that wasn't all. I was told that there had been no original plan to occupy Tahrir Square, but the different neighborhood protests in Cairo just somehow—as if called together by an unconscious force—all ended up there. The U.S. media showed the thugs who attacked the protesters in Tahrir Square on camels on Feb. 4. What they didn't show was that this attack—known as the "Battle of the Camels"—was combined with a general sniper assault that lasted through the night. The snipers

were holed up on rooftops of buildings surrounding the square, armed with rifles equipped with laser sights. The protesters would see somebody next to them suddenly have a laser spot on them and then, boom!, they would be shot. Most of the buildings housing the snipers were guarded by the police so the protesters could not get to them, but they did manage to get to one sniper. He will not be killing anybody else. I was told that up to 500 people were killed that night. Several days later, there was a general strike in Cairo and within a week, Mubarak was gone.

The snipers must have been from a select group in the Egyptian military since I personally met two young men amongst the protesters who were also soldiers. In other words, the general rank and file of the military was not to be relied upon by the military brass.

At one point, a general who evidently is pretty popular—a member of the ruling military council—tried to speak from one of the stages. It seems opinions were divided, with the most vocal elements shouting him down. He went from stage to stage, trying to speak.

Egypt is so crucial to the politics of the entire region. That's why it's impossible to resolve the crisis in Egypt purely on a national basis. But it's impossible to really unite the region on the basis of capitalism. Nasser tried to do this and he was unable. Therefore, I believe that to resolve the crisis, the overthrow of capitalism and the



Photo: unknown

**John Reimann (right) and an Egyptian worker in Tahrir Square.**

coming to power of the working class in Egypt and regionally is necessary.

This makes the role of the council that organized the community in Tahrir Square all the more important. Unfortunately (in my opinion), it was agreed that this council would not take up political tasks in order to cut down on conflict between the different groups of protesters. However, the working class's coming to power cannot take place without internal debate and conflict as workers test out different ideas and the organizations that represent those ideas.

Since I was in Egypt, I saw reports of a huge rally in Tahrir Square in which the Islamic fundamentalists (or semi-fundamentalists) dominated. I think this shows that if the different views aren't clearly brought forward, and if the working class is not able through this process to find the road to power, then the danger of reactionary ideas, such as religious fundamentalism, taking root is real.

Also, since then, the military cleared Tahrir Square. This is a temporary setback, but overall the revolution there will take many twists and turns.

## In November We Remember

### Comrades of the International Solidarity Movement and 2010 Freedom Flotilla to Gaza

*Remembering our downed comrades of the International Solidarity Movement and 2010 Freedom Flotilla to Gaza—victims of Israeli bullets and bulldozers while standing with our mutual Palestinian comrades under brutal occupation.*

*We recognize and honor them all by our international union's stand as the first U.S., and third Canadian union to support the international Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Campaign To End the Israeli Occupation and Apartheid.*

**Brave International Freedom Riders fallen in our common struggle:**

#### Rachel Corrie

- Deliberately crushed to death by a U.S.-made Caterpillar bulldozer demolishing homes in Rafah, occupied Gaza - March 16th, 2003

#### Emily Henochowicz

- Lost her left eye when hit in the face with a tear gas projectile fired directly at her by an Israeli soldier - May 31, 2010 Qalandiya checkpoint.

#### Tristan Anderson

- Skull penetrated when shot by high velocity U.S. made tear gas canister shot directly at his head at close range - quasi-paralyzed from brain injury.  
- March 13, 2009, Ni'lin village.

#### Bassem Abu Rahmah

- Killed by U.S. made 40 mm Tear Gas grenade to chest - Bi'lin village, April, 2009

#### Jawaher Abu Rahmah (Bassem's sister)

- Suffocated by CS tear gas - Bi'lin village, January 1, 2011 [<http://www.alternativenews.org/english/index.php/topics/news/3150-is-israel-using-lethal-tear-gas-to-disperse-demonstrations>]

#### Tom Hurndall

- Shot in the head by an Israeli sniper, while trying to escort children to safety in Rafah, Gaza - April 11, 2003

#### Brian Avery

- Shot in face by heavy machine gun fire, cheek torn, eye socket and jaw bones smashed - April 5, 2003, Jenin

#### Furkan Dogan, Ibrahim Bilgen, Ali Haydar Bengi, Cevdet Kılıçlar,

Çetin Topçuoğlu, Necdet Yıldırım, Fahri Yaldız, Cengiz Songür, Cengiz Akyüz

- Shot to death on Mavi Marmara, May 31, 2010 [<http://lawrenceofcyberia.blogs.com/news/2010/06/putting-names-to-faces.html>]

**We remember also the millions of Palestinians who have suffered and continue to suffer at the hands of the Israeli occupiers.**

# World Labor Solidarity

A COLUMN BY THE  
INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY COMMISSION

The IWW formed the International Solidarity Commission to help the union build the worker-to-worker solidarity that can lead to effective action against the bosses of the world. To contact the ISC, email [solidarity@iww.org](mailto:solidarity@iww.org).

## In November We Remember: Wobblies Who Fought For International Solidarity

By Matt Antosh

In November, Wobblies around the world take a moment to remember those brothers and sisters killed in the struggle for workers' power, international solidarity and industrial democracy. IWW members have always held themselves as "citizens of the world," and have spread out across the world to bring the fight to the bosses in every nation. This article recognizes five Fellow Workers who left their homes and gave their lives in Spain and Chile.

**Henrich Bortz:** Fellow Worker Bortz was a German-born member of the IWW branch in Seattle. Bortz was thrown into a concentration camp by the Nazis, but was able to escape to Denmark and then to Sweden. After getting involved in Swedish labor struggles, he was again captured in Sweden by Nazis, but the Swedish government refused to deport him. He made his way to Spain during the Spanish Civil War and joined the Durruti International Shock Battalion. Bortz was killed in Spain, and his obituary appeared in the *Industrial Worker* on Oct. 23, 1937.

**Lou Walsh:** Possibly a *nom de guerre* of Louis Rosenberg or vice-versa, Lou Walsh, at the age of 24, joined the IWW IU 120 - Timber Workers Industrial Union, at Port Arthur, Ontario. He took part in the Thunder Bay strike of 1934 and the Algoma district strike of 1935. Walsh joined the Durruti International Shock Battalion in Spain and was killed in action on June 16, 1937.

**Ted Dickerson:** An Australian by birth, Dickerson was active in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide. He joined the IWW in 1923 and edited the Australian IWW paper, *Direct Action*. In Spain, Dickerson was captured and executed by the fascists.

**Raymond Albert Steele:** An IWW seaman, Steele was considered one of the best soldiers of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion and one of the best machine gunners of the Tom Mooney Machine Gun Company. He was killed on July 15, 1937, during the Battle of Brunete.



Photo: AP Photo/Courtesy of Dave Smith, from sfgate.com  
This 1937 photo shows members of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Jarama, Spain.

**Frank Terrugi:** Terrugi was a journalist and Chicago IWW member killed by a U.S.-backed military during a coup d'état in Santiago, Chile. In September 1973, days after the coup d'état, Terrugi was seized by the Chilean military and taken to the National Stadium in Santiago, which had been turned into an ad hoc concentration camp where prisoners were interrogated, tortured and executed. For many years thereafter, the U.S. government steadfastly maintained its ignorance of the killing and torture of Americans in Chile. It was only in October 1999 that a document was released which admitted that U.S. intelligence agents played a role in the deaths of these Americans.

This is only a partial list. As many of the names we know—the Joe Hills, The Saccos and the Vanzettis—there are thousands of unionists killed whose names will never be recorded. But as the Woody Guthrie song goes:

"Every new grave brings  
a thousand new ones  
Every new grave brings  
a thousand members  
Way over in that  
union burying ground  
Every new grave brings  
a thousand brothers  
Every new grave brings  
a thousand sisters  
To the union in that  
union burying ground."

Note: Information on those killed in the Spanish Civil War comes from the Anarcho-Syndicalist Review, Issues #42/43.

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PO Box 180195 Chicago, IL 60618 USA.  
ISC \$6.00



## Community Blockades Proposed Gas Hub, Protects Indigenous Land In Australia

By Ema Corro

For over 100 days local residents, environmentalists, and Indigenous owners have been blockading a site for a proposed gas hub at James Price Point in North-Western Australia.

The \$30 billion hub is being built by a consortium lead by Woodside Petroleum along with shareholders Chevron, Shell, BP and BHP Billiton.

The site where the gas hub is to be built—the Kimberley—is untouched wilderness on indigenous land. It has many endangered species, including a population of bilbies living in one of the areas scheduled for clearing. It is a breeding ground for humpback whales and there are dugongs, sharks and sea turtles, which will all be endangered from underwater blasting and dredging as well as potential oil spills. Dinosaur prints 130 million years old have been found near the site. The hub will be a major greenhouse polluter with conservative estimates suggesting it would emit 15 million tons of greenhouse gases per year. It is also feared that the development will open up the rest of the Kimberley to industrialization, as has already happened in the nearby Pibara region.

The area is of great importance to local indigenous people who have lived in the region for at least 28,000 years. There are numerous sacred sites in the area, including some which are closed sites—meaning they are so sacred that even their exact GPS position is not available. The hub will destroy the Lurujarri Songline—a trail which follows the paths taken by Dreamtime beings as they created the land. By singing the song cycles, people navigate across the land, sacred places, laws, ceremonies, places to find food and water—everything needed for life are encoded into them.

The blockade began on June 7 to stop the clearing of the area, which illegally began without permission from the Environment Protection Agency. Protestors formed a human chain across the road to stop bulldozers getting through while others locked onto bulldozers, and a car with no wheels appeared further down the road.

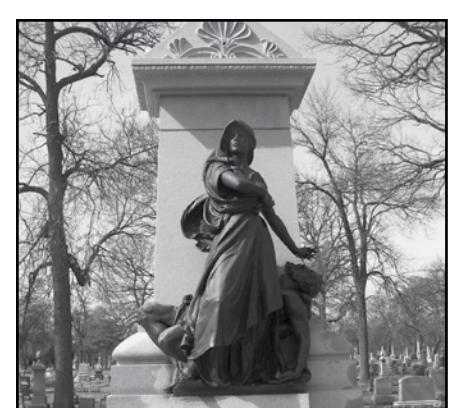


Photo: Lorna Kelly

The blockade managed to hold off all work on the site for 30 days, until at least 70 police officers attacked the blockade and arrested 25 people, including indigenous owners, in an attempt to get a large convoy of Woodside vehicles through. There have also been protests in the nearby town of Broome, with 5,000 residents (out of the town's 18,000) attending a rally against the hub. Protests and other solidarity events are happening in other parts of the country.

Woodside and the Western Australian government have used numerous illegal tactics and dirty tricks to try to push the hub through. Indigenous owners were bullied and tricked into signing off on the deal. A Kimberley Land Council meeting voted in favor of the proposal 164 to 108 in a deal which promised \$1 billion in compensation. However, the notice calling the meeting gave no indication that a decision was to be made to sign off on the deal, and many traditional owners were not present for the vote. Worst of all, the decision was made under threat by the government that if the deal was refused it would compulsorily acquire the land, leaving the indigenous owners with nothing.

Bushfires have been used as a cover for land clearing and to get rid of bilbies—whose existence may have resulted in a halt to land clearing—and suspicious fires have been lit in the area. A police boat was spotted running over a whale in what appeared to be an attempt to drive it away from the area; witnesses to the bizarre incident were later targeted and arrested at the blockade. Protestors have been subjected to all kinds of intimidation, including arrests and surveillance. Teachers who attended the blockade had their jobs threatened. The deep divisions created in the indigenous and Broome communities have also been played upon with the government spreading false rumors of racism by protestors.



In November  
The IW Remembers  
The Haymarket Martyrs

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