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# Industrial Worker

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FALL 2017 #1781 VOLUME 114 NO. 4 \$4 (U.S. IWW members) / \$6 (U.S. non-members) / \$7 (International)



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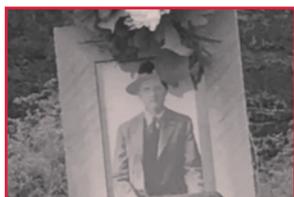
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# IN NOVEMBER WE REMEMBER



**IWW speech at San Diego Rally  
Against Hate, August 27, 2017**

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**Remembrances of those we have lost:  
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*The Voice of Revolutionary Industrial Unionism*

Official periodical of the  
INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD  
Post Office Box 180195  
Chicago, IL 60618 USA  
(773) 728-0996 • ghq@iww.org  
www.iww.org

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PRINTER:  
Sommers and Fahrenbach, Inc.  
Chicago, IL

NEXT SUBMISSION DEADLINE:  
January 2, 2018

U.S. IWW MAILING ADDRESS:  
Industrial Worker  
Post Office Box 180195,  
Chicago, IL 60618

ISSN 0019-8870

Periodicals postage paid Chicago, IL.  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to IW,  
P.O. Box 180195, Chicago, IL 60618 USA

SUBSCRIPTIONS  
Electronic subscription for IWW members: Free  
Annual print subscription rate:  
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• ALL International Subscriptions: \$28 USD

Annual bundle subscription of 5 copies (20 total):  
• U.S. Subscriptions: \$60 USD  
• International Subscriptions: \$80 USD

Published quarterly in the winter, spring,  
summer, and fall.

Articles not so designated do not reflect the IWW's  
official position.

PRESS DATE: October 20, 2017



Dear Fellow Workers:

There has been a struggle for freedom, equality, and workers' rights in Spain for over centuries.

Goya painted and sketched pictures about the Spanish resistance to Napoleon's

occupation. The Spanish Anarchist movement beginning in 1868 included both Individualist Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists. Francisco Ferrer established an educational movement that had influence in Spain and other countries—the Modern School movement. Rationalism, co-education, science, and non-indoctrination were its hallmarks. During the reactionary period of the Spanish Republic, there was a revolution in Asturia in 1934. Part of the resistance to Franco's coup attempt was a revolution in Loyalist Spain. It went furthest in Catalonia.

Revolutionary Loyalist Spain carried on a resistance to Franco and his Nazi German and Italian Fascist supporters in the years 1936 to 1939.

Now there are independence movements in the Basque Country and Catalonia.

A respectable number of I.W.W. members fought for Revolutionary Loyalist Spain in the years 1936–1939. Wobblies continue to be in solidarity with struggles for freedom and workers' rights in Spain. In solidarity,  
Raymond S. Solomon

## IWW speech at San Diego Rally Against Hate, August 27, 2017

By Brandon Edwards-Schuth, Monty Kroopkin, and Lydia Wood of the San Diego IWW GMB

My name is Lydia. I am an educator, fellow worker, and I speak today on behalf of the Industrial Workers of the World union, IWW ([iww.org](http://iww.org)). We're here today in solidarity against the rise of Nazis, KKK, and all the



neo-fascist and white supremacist groups. We're here today to talk about the solution.

Drawing from a century of combating fascism, we've learned quite a lot. For one thing, racism and fascism go hand in hand.

Early European fascists learned from the KKK. The Nazi race laws were inspired by the race laws in the South. In the 1920s in Italy and the 1930s in Germany, we learned that having parliamentary democracies was not enough to protect us from fascism. In 1930s Spain we saw that even military confrontation was not enough. Spanish dictator Franco and his thugs won the civil war and he remained in power until he died in 1975. Even the military defeats of fascism in Italy, Germany, and Japan in 1945 did not end the threat of fascism. Across Europe today we see a fascist resurgence, like the Golden Dawn in Greece, the National

Front in France, and Britain First. Trump is not only friendly to these groups. He and a core of his supporters are a part of this new far-right threat.

IWW member and intellectual Noam Chomsky, with Edward Herman, documented in their book, *The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism*, how the elites in the USA have sponsored fascist regimes widely as part of their tool kit of maintaining the "American Century." The result is an expansive U.S. empire with over 800 military bases in more than 100 countries.

For many this is the norm, a desensitization to the American empire, and an unquestionable part of our patriotic duty to protect democracy and market interests everywhere. But we are becoming "woke" to the horrors and apathy of this mindset and how this justifies massive actions of oppression and perpetuates inequity.

It has been said that liberal democracy is the face of the ruling "one percent" when they are not afraid, and fascism is their face when they are afraid. Capitalism is the root cause of fascism. Fascism functions to attack and destroy the unions and the resistance of all who oppose the dictates of Big Capital.

*We know that a better world is possible, and we are uniting here today to stand and take direct action for a better world, liberated from hate and oppression!*

We need to end capitalism. The IWW does not advocate a military method to do this or a coup. Instead, we see that when workers organize ourselves together as a class, into a single coordinated revolutionary union, we can use general strikes not only to shut down the economy, not only to deprive the vampire capitalists of their profits, but to "strike on the job" and to redirect the economy to serving the needs of

people, not profits! This revolutionary general strike can bring birth to a society free of the Bosses,

free from systemic oppression, free of the root causes of racism, hatred, and division.

Although we may be far from being ready for a general strike, we must start learning how. We must organize the nearly 90 percent of the workforce that is lacking any union, and we must learn by practice how to use strikes and boycotts to win demands—demands which must accelerate and become impossible for the capitalist system to meet. Demands that allow us to not merely exist, but to all live with dignity.

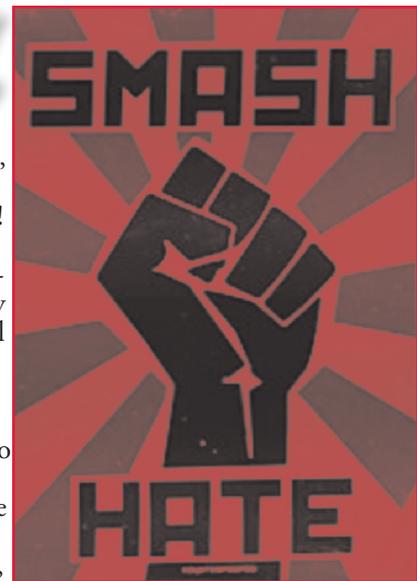
*Protests alone are not enough!*

*Symbolic resistance alone is not enough!*

*Street fighting alone is not enough!*

We must use these methods and others in combination with strikes and boycotts. We must all become revolutionary union organizers and unite the whole workforce. We must learn how to take the whole system away from the "one percent"! Not just here, but globally! We need to do it before the disease we call "capitalism" injures our planet to the point where OUR species becomes the next one to die off!

*Remember! An injury to one is an injury to all!* **IWW**

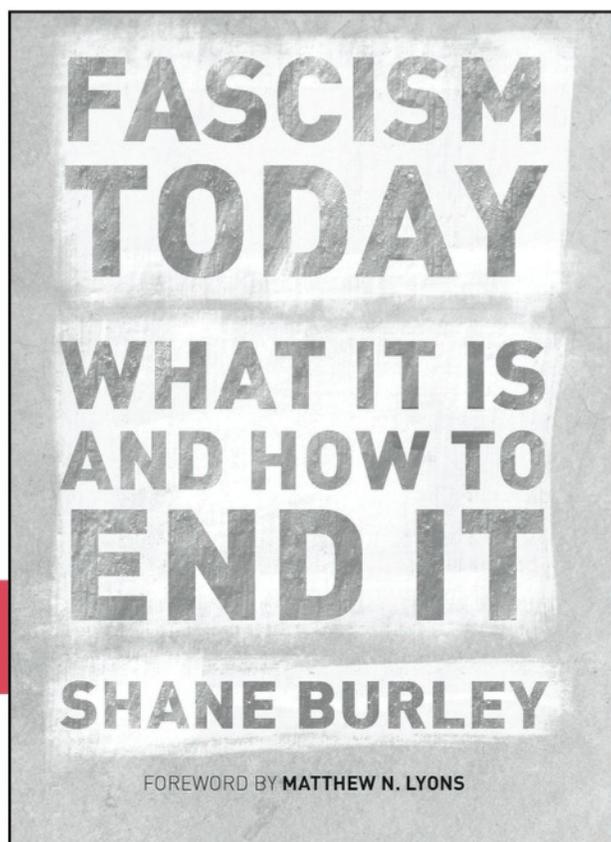


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**“No better volume exists to understand the nexus of alt-right bigotry and anti-fascist resistance in the United States than *Fascism Today*. Burley’s work is an essential ‘tool for opposition’ that brings to bear years of in-depth research and investigation into the resurgence of the far right. To destroy fascism, we must first understand it—that understanding starts here.”**

**Mark Bray**, author of *Antifa: The Anti-Fascist Handbook*

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# Rail workers' struggle has been long and difficult

**Ron Kaminkow**  
General Secretary, Railroad Workers  
United

The history of rail labor in North America is marked by intense class conflict between rank-and-file railroaders, their unions, and the rail carriers. First to organize were the operating craft in the 1860s and 1870s, followed soon thereafter by the shop craft and maintenance forces. In 1877, railroaders led what would be the first general strike in U.S. history, setting the tone for the open class warfare that would mark the decades to follow. But the mode of "craft unionism" that railroaders were organizing into was quickly becoming obsolete and ineffectual, as the various unions fractured the workforce, playing into the carriers' divide-and-conquer strategy. In 1893, after more than a decade of strikes lost due to union scabbery, Eugene V. Debs and other forward-thinking labor leaders formed the nation's first "industrial union," the American Railway Union

(ARU), designed to unite all rail workers from all crafts into one organization. The ARU was extremely popular with the ranks and proved its effectiveness as a powerful labor organization—so much so that it was crushed by the combined force of the rail carriers and the federal government.

The final decades of the 19th and the early 20th centuries were riddled with rail conflicts large and small. Strikes, work slowdowns, sabotage, and other forms of direct action, and lock-outs, blacklisting, and an array of other forms of industrial warfare were a hallmark of the rail industry, as railroad workers—sometimes in defiance of their own unions—went to war with their employers. A "truce" of sorts—on the heels of the National Shopmen's Strike of half a million—came with the Railway Labor Act in 1926, providing the craft unions with legal recognition and putting an end to some of the carriers' worst abuses and exploitation. But railroaders continued to struggle for better wages, benefits, and

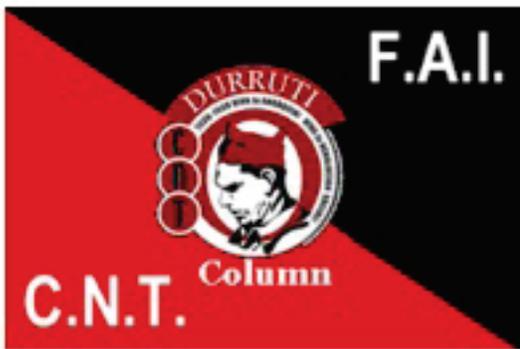
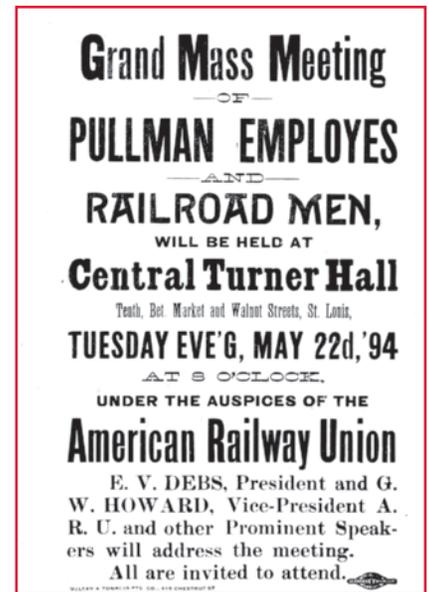
working conditions through the Depression of the 1930s, and in the great strike wave beginning in 1946, with notable actions by shopmen (1950), all crafts in Mexico (1958), train and engine service workers on Florida East Coast (1963), numerous U.S. railroaders (1980s), and Soo Line conductors (1994), together with a myriad of other smaller labor actions.

Throughout this history, railroad workers of all crafts have won significant victories over the years in terms of wages, benefits, and working conditions. Most benefits railroad workers take for granted—the "basic day" with overtime after

eight hours, good quality health care, Railroad Retirement, the ability to sue the employer when injured on the job, a union contract with provisions for penalty time "claims," adequate and proper lodging as well as "held time" at the away-from-home terminal, seniority provisions, and more—were won as a result of these collective struggles. Railroad workers can claim some of the best "blue collar" jobs in North America, largely due to this legacy of struggle and the fact that the rail industry is the most unionized sector of the workforce.

In recent years, rail labor—together with much of the labor movement of North America—has been relatively quiet. But recent stirrings by trainmen and engineers in Canada (CP and CN), contract rejections by machinists (IAM) at CSX and by trainmen (SMART) at BNSF, militant actions by both conductors and engineers at Wheeling & Lake Erie, together with organizing efforts by workers at various contractors such as Renzenberger and Mobile Rail Solutions, are emblematic of the discontent and stirrings of revolt in the workforce. In fact, the track workers' (BM-WED) "Day of Action" on May 3, 2017, is the latest manifestation of the rank and file's pent-up frustration with "business as usual." No doubt, railroaders can and will fight back to preserve, protect, and expand upon what we have fought so hard for in the years ahead. **IW**

*Ron Kaminkow is a locomotive engineer for a Class One railroad, currently based out of Reno, NV. He was a former delegate to the South Central Federation of Labor while President of AFSCME Local #634 in Madison before hiring with the railroad in 1996.*



**THIS NOVEMBER I Remember**

## Buenaventura Durruti and his Durruti Column

**The Durruti Column fought against fascism in Spain,  
and fought for the liberation of France from the Nazis  
during the Second World War.**

**—Raymond S. Solomon**

## 2017 Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

1. Publication Title: Industrial Worker
2. Publication Number: 263-680
3. Filing Date: 10/10/2017
4. Issue Frequency: Quarterly
5. Number Issues Published Annually: 4
6. Annual Subscription Price: \$20
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication: P.O. Box 180195, Chicago, IL 60618  
Contact Person: Arella Vargas  
Telephone: 773-728-0996
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters: P.O. Box 180195, Chicago, IL 60618
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor  
Publisher: Industrial Workers of the World, P.O. Box 180195, Chicago, IL 60618  
Editor: Roberta McNair, 3702 Hunt St. NW, Spc 17, Gig Harbor, WA 98335  
Managing Editor: Roberta McNair, 3702 Hunt St. NW, Spc 17, Gig Harbor, WA 98335
10. Owner: Industrial Workers of the World, P.O. Box 180195, Chicago, IL 60618
11. Known Bondholders: None
12. Tax Status: The purpose, function and nonprofit status of this organization and the tax exempt status for federal income tax purposes: Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months
13. Publication Title: Industrial Worker
14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: SUMMER 2017 #1780 VOLUME 114 NO. 3
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation
  - a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run): 1630  
Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: 358  
No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 325
  - b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail):
    - (1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions on PS Form 3541: 353/320
    - (2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions on PS Form 3541: 5/5
    - (3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mail, Including Sales Through Dealer and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS\*: —/—
    - (4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail®): —/—
  - c. Total Paid Distribution: 358/325
  - d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution
    - (1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies on PS Form 3541: —/—
    - (2) Free or Nominal Rate Inside-County Copies on PS Form 3541: —/—
    - (3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes: —/—
    - (4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail: —/—
  - e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution: —/—
  - f. Total Distribution: 358/325
  - g. Copies Not Distributed: 50/50
  - h. Total: 408/375
  - i. Percent Paid: 100/100
16. Electronic Copy Circulation: N/A
17. Publication of Statement of Ownership  
If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the FALL 2017 #1781 VOLUME 114 NO. 4 issue of this publication.
18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner: Arella Vargas, Business Manager, 10/10/2017

# Record win for the IWW at Stardust

By Kristin K.

## Stardust Family United members have much to celebrate

Wobblies organized under the name Stardust Family United at Ellen's Stardust Diner in New York City just won a major victory in their nearly two-year-old organizing campaign. Thirty-one workers who had been fired in retaliation for union activity have won immediate and full reinstatement and will receive back pay from the time they were fired. Of the terminated employees, 13 will immediately return to work at the popular Midtown diner. This victory is the largest reversal of a mass firing won by the IWW in decades.

Stardust Family United had filed complaints with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) over the firings a year ago. But workers didn't stop there. They signed up the new hires with the IWW and kept up the campaign's momentum, using direct action to fixing health and safety concerns and win on other demands [*Industrial Worker*, Winter 2017]. For example, when a film crew began recording the singing servers performing during their shift, without their

permission, they quickly signed a petition that forced management to put a stop to the practice.

The recent victory came as a result of a settlement agreement between the employer, the solidarity union, and the NLRB. By entering into the settlement agreement, the company will narrowly avoid a trial on some 19 violations of the National Labor Relations Act, including the 31 retaliatory firings.

As part of the settlement, the restaurant is required to mail official notices to all employees, informing them that the company will not violate federal law by engaging in certain unlawful practices such as surveilling and threatening workers, interfering with their use of social media, and discouraging them from taking action to improve working conditions.

For the singing servers, this has been a long road. "I'm thrilled and proud to know our struggle and vigilance over the last year has paid off," says returning employee Matthew Patterson. "I'm looking forward to returning and making a positive impact inside the diner." **IWW**



In November We Remember

# MIKE MAY

1964 - 2015



A tireless activist who truly understood “one struggle - many fronts”, Mike May called for social justice from the streets of NYC and from the stage as a singer. His whirlwind life had little time and less need for material comforts, and instead opted to throw himself into the revolution. Beer, musical performances, and creating a better world topped his agenda. By the time cancer took his life, he was the oldest

continual member of the NYC-GMB, and widely loved in the NYC activist community.

step on toes to get  
to the summit/you've  
been bred that way.  
can you get away  
from it?/ does it  
matter how far you go  
in life/when people  
are suffering from  
pointless strife?



thrashing to false answers/  
fortify their lies/  
how can you change the system/  
when you don't even try?

DEFEND ALL  
WHISTLE  
BLOWERS

NO BLUE  
WALL OF  
VIOLENCE

THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD  
WWW.WOBBLYCITY.ORG



# Magpie's "When We Stand Together" a noble effort in the Wobbly song tradition

By FW Greg Giorgio

Magpie, the folk duo Greg Artzner and Terry Leonino, wear their working class roots and union memberships proudly. The native Ohioans met at Kent State, where Terry dodged National Guard bullets in the infamous murders of four students in 1970. The social justice and environmental activists began performing together soon after and have never wavered from their strong messages for freedom.

*When We Stand Together*, subtitled *Songs of Joe Hill, the IWW, and Fellow Workers*, is a noble effort in the history of Wobbly songs. Its broad vision that includes songs penned by Ronnie Gilbert, Tish Hinojosa, and Si Kahn, Phil Ochs, and others closes a circle to incorporate the vision of a world where there is room for the justice around which we organize. Greg and Terry have added an important new take on the singing union tradition of the IWW.

Two years ago Magpie signed on to tour with FWs Charlie King and George Mann for the "Joe Hill Road Show," during the centenary of the Wobbly bard's execution in Utah. They had already fallen in love with many of Joe's songs. They were so thrilled, in fact, they took out red cards on the tour, adding to their credentials as stalwarts in AFM Local 1000, the traveling musicians' local. It's exciting to hear them lead off this CD with Hill's "Workers of the World Awaken." Joe's reboot to the "Internationale" riffs some of its lines but adapts it to a higher plane. One verse ("If the workers take a notion they can stop all speeding trains," etc.) outlines the mechanics of stopping exploitation in the workplace and ending war. Magpie's revelatory attempt here illustrates how their musicianship and sense of history are second to none in modern folk music.

Hill's best efforts expropriated the boss-class popular culture and accentuated

themes of "building a new society within the shell of the old," as stated in the IWW Preamble. Hear Greg and Terry's spirited offerings on Hill's "It's a Long Way Down to the Soup Line" or the anti-war anthem "Don't Take My Papa Away from Me." Terry's vocal on the latter is rich, emotional, and evokes the era in which it was penned. While many have recorded Joe's "The Rebel Girl," Magpie treats it with a reverence they share about Hill's compositional prowess.

Magpie's originals show their strengths as songwriters. "Poor Old Dobbin" is a tribute to the IWW that could have been written a century ago. And "Canton 1918" chronicles the famous speech by Gene Debs that resulted in his lockup in the federal pen for "sedition." You can hear the emotion coming through your speakers with Greg's lead vocal as he sings so rever-

ently about the time and the town as it was then.

The 19 cuts that grace the recording include songs by many non-IWW authors, but their inclusion enriches the mix. Like Flo Reece's "Which Side Are You On?" where Terry embodies Flo's unique vocal style, working-class imperatives in "Build High the Bridge," environmental justice in "Something in the Rain," solidarity in "Links on the Chain," and immigrants and labor in "Borderlines" are all powerful reminders of the work that still needs to be organized. Do you know "Paper Heart"? Si Khan and Charlotte Brody wrote this about Joe Hill, and Magpie's heart-tugging harmony is sad and beautiful. And now the circle is complete. **IW**

Please see [www.magpiemusic.com](http://www.magpiemusic.com) for information on this and other recordings by Magpie.



# In November We Remember

## The Workers' General: Buenaventura Durruti

Buenaventura Durruti (1896–1936) was a key organizer of the defense of Loyalist Spain immediately after the attempted fascist coup on July 17, 1936. His death while defending Madrid was mourned by almost the entire region of Catalonia.

Durruti and his column had been defending Madrid for two weeks when he was shot in battle on November 20, 1936. He had organized his column to defend Barcelona at the start of the Spanish Civil War. The Durruti column then went on to fight on the Saragossa front.

The Durruti column grew to 6,000 people and eventually had volunteers from all over the world. It became the symbol of the fight against the Fascists, and many Wobblies joined the column. In April of 1937, the column was militarized as part of the swing to the right-Communist orientation of Loyalist Spain. The Friends of Durruti, formed in 1937 with militant anarchist Spanish youth, was strongly opposed to CNT (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo, or National Confederation of Labor) collaboration with the Spanish Republican Government.

World-renowned Dutch-Canadian-American journalist Pierre

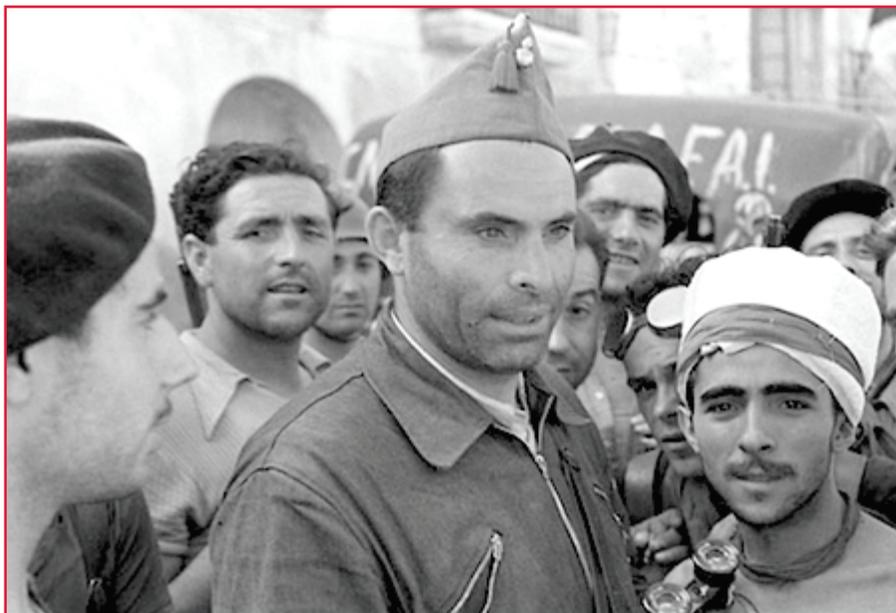


Photo: Libcom.org

Buenaventura Durruti among his followers.

Van Paassen was a correspondent in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. He was imbedded with Durruti and his column and interviewed Durruti in the CNT metalworkers' union headquarters in Barcelona. When Van Paassen suggested that even if they were victorious, they would be "sitting on top of a pile of ruins," Durruti replied, "We are not in the least afraid of ruins. We are going to inherit the earth earth."

—Raymond S. Solomon

## Scout Schultz—leader, comrade, friend

Scout Schultz, a dedicated non-binary activist and anarchist, was murdered by Georgia Tech police officer Tyler Beck on Saturday, September 16th. For many, Scout



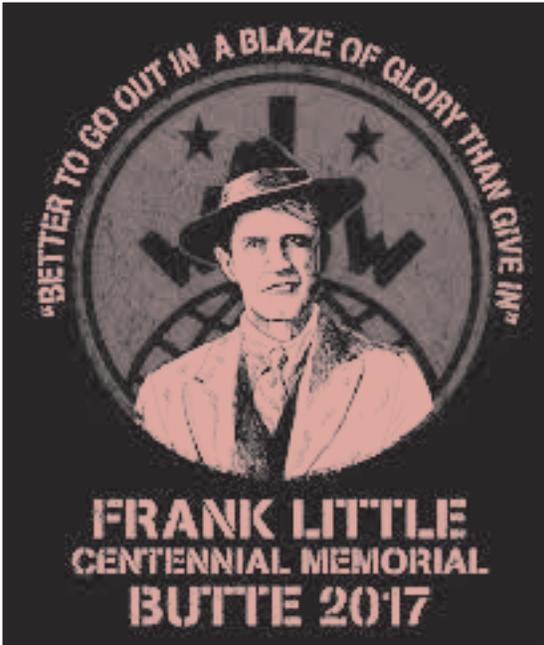
was known as a campus activist and president of the Georgia Tech Pride Alliance, but Scout was so much more than that. To me and my other com-

rades at GT, Scout was a friend. Scout was always there when we needed them, willing to go out of their way to make their friends happy. Scout was the first real comrade I made a connection with at GT in an otherwise apathetic student body, the first radical person I was able to form a real and interpersonal bond with who was always there to resist and throw down. Whether it was removing white power propaganda on campus, blocking the flow of capital in a train yard in support of the NODAPL, or marching against Trump, Scout was always there in full support, yelling loudly and proudly while waving their rainbow flag. Scout is now gone, their life torn violently from us by the state. While the media and school try to sanitize Scout's memory, I want them to be remembered for what they were—a radical antifascist and revolutionary. Those who came on campus Monday night and retaliated against the police did not do so as outside agitators, but as friends and comrades who felt deeply hurt and angry at the actions of the school and police. Rest in power Scout, you will be missed.

—Anonymous

# Remembering Frank Little

On August 1, 1917, Fellow Worker Frank Little was grabbed from his bed, rudely awakened by a gang of hired goons who had stormed his room in an uptown Butte boarding house. Nursing a broken leg, Frank had



just helped the miners of Butte charter an IWW branch, and that night he went to sleep expecting to take a train out of town in the morning. He was going to have corrective surgery on his leg and journey home to Oklahoma to see family. Instead, FW Frank was laid low by capitalist enforcers in masks: beaten, clubbed, and then dragged behind their car to a railroad trestle where he was hanged by the neck with a warning to other union organizers pinned to his chest. Days later, his funeral—the largest in the history of Butte—drew over ten thousand people as his casket was carried from a mortuary on the “richest hill on earth” to the edge of a pauper’s field in Mountain View Cemetery. On August 1, 2017, we remembered him.

The Missoula General Membership Branch coordinated with some Fellow Workers in Butte to plan the centennial memorial and contacted Jane Little Botkin, Frank’s great-grandniece and author of the wonderful book *Frank Little and the IWW: The Blood That Stained an American Family*. Jane had scheduled a reading and signing of her book at the Charles Clark Chateau in uptown Butte for the evening of July 31st, and this wound up being the first event of the memorial. Wobblies from Butte, Missoula, Vancouver, Eugene, Bellingham, and even Philadelphia were in attendance, talking shop and trading information before and after Jane’s well-delivered presentation. The beautiful irony of the location wasn’t lost on anyone: The mansion had once been the residence of the son of Butte copper king William A. Clark.

After the reading at the Clark Chateau, some Fellow Workers from the Missoula and Whatcom–Skagit Branches made our way south to Toll Mountain, where we camped for the night. As

the sun rose we drove from the campground to Mountain View Cemetery, where a group of over one hundred people had assembled at Fellow Worker Frank’s graveside. Speeches were given by various attending Wobblies and Frank’s family. Someone had printed out a few selections from *The Little Red Songbook* and we sang “Solidarity Forever,” as a crew from a local television station looked on. Their report on the evening news was a sympathetic and favorable piece. A couple of new red cards were issued as the graveside memorial dispersed, and a spry 92-year-old gentleman—the last surviving cage-hoist operator in Butte—came by to pay his respects.

The commemoration then moved to Clark Park, where area Wobblies hosted a barbecue and social attended by IWW members, the trade unions of Butte, and Jane Little Botkin and her family. We chatted about Frank’s legacy, his personal politics, and his orientation as an organizer. There was also an earnest discussion about the difficulties of organizing within the service and retail jobs that are replacing positions in manufacturing and extraction—industries that built and ultimately abandoned cities like Butte. Some local IWW members had produced t-shirts for the memorial, which were well received, and a good many of us had changed into them by the time we headed to the spot FW Frank Little was murdered on Centennial Avenue.

*The article continues on page 12*



# In November We Remember

## Albert Parsons, labor organizer and martyr

One Confederate soldier who should have a monument built to him is Albert Parsons. After fighting for the Confederacy, this Texan became a radical Republican and supported radical reconstruction—which included voting rights for freed slaves. He married Lucy Parsons, a freed enslaved person whose exact ancestry may have been African-American, Mexican, Native American, or some such combination. This type of marriage was not acceptable in Texas, at that time, so they moved to Chicago. A typesetter and a printer, Albert became a socialist and then an

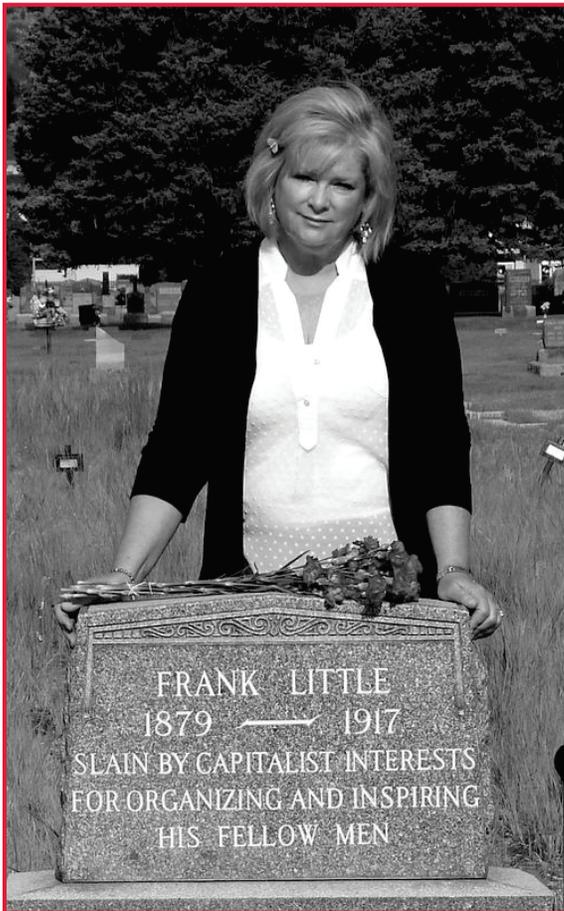
Anarchist. He was a labor activist and an advocate for American Indians. He published his own paper. He was one of the Anarchists executed in the Haymarket frame-up. His widow Lucy Parsons became one of the founders of the Industrial Workers of the World.

—Raymond S. Solomon



## Frank Little, Continued from p. 11

Sussing out the location of the trestle before the gathering had been a bigger chore than we'd expected. Research finally showed that the spot we were looking for was near a couple of inactive but standing trestles and a line of slag piles (charred waste from the smelting of copper) on the southwest edge of town. We made



Jane Little Botkin at Frank Little's Butte, MT, grave

our way there around 5 p.m., a group of about forty of us rallying at the approximate spot FW Frank was hanged. Members of the Missoula IWW General Membership Branch

had crafted a memorial marker—a post with a wreath and Frank's portrait on it crowned with "IWW" in large wooden letters. This tribute was set into the ground and several speeches were delivered before we made our way to the hill for food, drink, song, and solidarity at the Carpenter's Union Hall.

Butte Wobblies and other members of the area labor community had reserved the hall, and folk singer and Fellow Worker Mark Ross traveled out from Oregon to supply the music. We dined on spaghetti and fried chicken while enjoying FW Mark's songs and stage banter, drinking our fill of the complimentary beer and liquor. Some older Wobblies who were a few years behind in dues were reinstated and gave a younger delegate from Missoula some procedural pointers. We traded stories and made small talk as the sun set and the event wound down, eventually filtering out to head back to our camps or to Missoula.

The tone of the day had been by turns both reverent and easygoing. We were grateful for the company of Fellow Workers and friends and the contributions of FW Frank to the organization of the working class. The people of Butte remember him as a hero and a martyr on their behalf to this day, and Wobblies were warmly received everywhere we went. Frank's murder, his terrible sacrifice, leaves us with one hell of a legacy to live up to. A hundred years on and capitalist interests still take so much from our families and communities, leaving us with a pittance in wages for precious pieces of our lives we can never get back. The trappings of our exploitation may be cosmetically different than those of 1917, but its nature is fundamentally the same. Now as much as ever, we owe it not just to the memory of Fellow Worker Frank Little but also to ourselves and the coming generations to organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the earth.

—FW Charles Copeland

## David Jahn, Seattle IWW, #324599

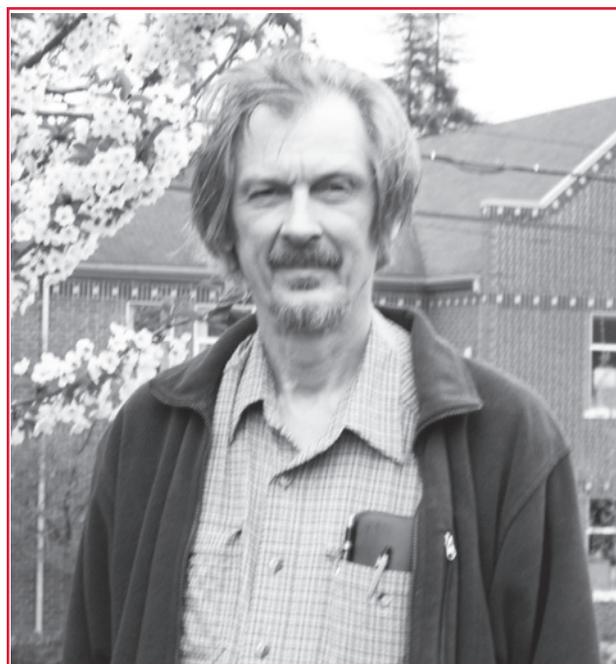
Mar. 17, 1945–Sep. 9, 2017

Nautically, a mainstay secures the main mast forward, serving as the chief support. David Jahn was the mainstay of the Seattle IWW. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s as delegate, branch secretary, and GEB member (1979 chair), he served his union and his class. In difficult, sometimes violent, times, he kept the branch afloat, moving forward, a compass in a storm. He could be counted on to guide us through troubled and lean years.

David retired from Todd Shipyard as a welder. But his main interest was clearly his family, and then his fellow workers. Dave and his wife Charlotte, who also served the IWW, hosted branch meetings in their home, organized support for local job actions, and provided moral support and guidance to members who were treated as good friends and family.

Dave had the honor of serving with early Wobbly pioneers Herb Edwards, Jack and Violet Miller, and Fred Thompson. They taught him the meaning of the term “fellow worker.” He learned labor history from these people who had lived it, heard their stories, shared in new struggles, and helped us all embody and carry on their heritage. David carried their baton, and passed it to us.

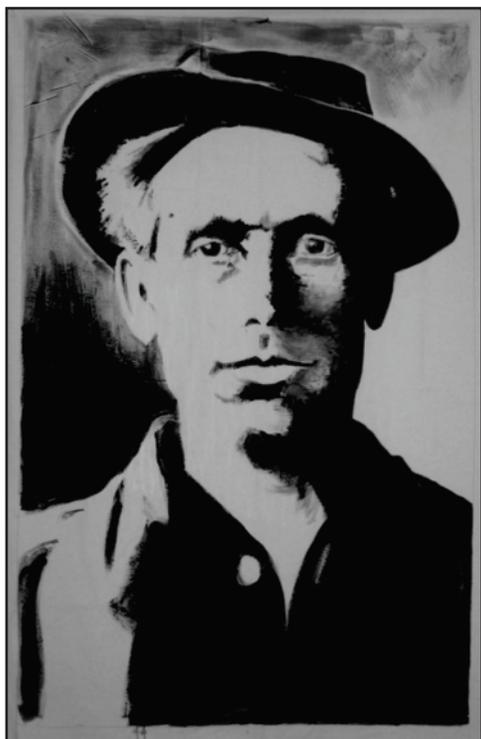
On September 9, 2017, David Jahn died at the age of 72. He



leaves behind his wife, Charlotte; children Jessica and Daniel; grandson Kimilo; and siblings, Edward, Margaret, Robert, and Carol. And he leaves us a resurgent industrial union. He has enriched us all.

## Joe Hill

Oct. 7, 1879–Nov. 19, 1915



Painting of Joe Hill by Scott Fife

Dear Joe,

This November, we’re remembering our fallen comrades. You’ll probably get a lot of thoughts and essays since you were so important to the early days of the IWW. But if I may, comrade, I’d like to add one more.

See, I’m a writer too. I write stuff to help people learn how to do things. I write other things too, but this is my trade; it’s why I’m part of the 560, as a Technical Writer. But Joe, you know something?

I found myself in the Wobs because of you. I grew up in a conservative area, even though my pop was a liberal. Unions were—and still are—pretty frowned upon. They call it “right-to-work,” but it isn’t much of a right since

they don’t pay beans. Eventually, I learned about Anarchism, and it stuck. Then I learned about you from a song that used the last poem you wrote. The song is “1915,” and the band is Anti-Flag. I don’t know if they have music where you are, but I sure hope so and I hope you can listen to that song.

Thanks, Mr. Hill, for giving us songs, poetry, and a little bit of hope in a Little Red Book. I hope maybe someday I can have just a little of the impact you had on me, on someone else.

—Jeremiah  
Technical Writer  
560, Transportation  
and Communication

# We're seeing **freedom of speech** on the gridiron so how about in **every other workplace?**

By Dave Lindorff  
September 24, 2017

*This Can't Be Happening*, [www.thiscantbehappening.net/node/3651](http://www.thiscantbehappening.net/node/3651)

Why don't Americans demand that the First Amendment apply on the job too?

Football players are a special class of workers. Even the lowliest of them make six-figure salaries, at least for the short time they stay healthy enough to play, but they are nonetheless workers, and unionized workers at that.

And what is happening right now—with NFL players, black and in some cases white, and now professional basketball and baseball players too, acting in solidarity to protest racist policing and other issues of equality denied in America by not standing for the traditional performance of the Star-Spangled Banner, and with the subsequent incendiary calls by President Trump for the firing of these protesters by team management—is shining a light not just on the racist politics of the president, but on the wholesale lack of First Amendment freedom on the job for most American workers.

The reality is that workers in the US, unless they are represented by a labor union—and even then only a powerful and assertive union—speak their minds at the risk of being fired, and have no recourse if they are fired for the opinions they express if those opinions aren't shared by the boss.

Freedom of speech, that hallowed and

much touted supposed birthright of all Americans, actually only applies during the hours that that we are sleeping, traveling to and from work, on our days off, or at home. And even then, as people are discovering with employers monitoring their personal blogs, Facebook pages and tweets, and firing them for things they may have said or written, we're not so free.

Hooray for the professional ball players who, following the lead of the heroic former San Francisco 49er Colin Kaepernick, are engaging their public protests before the fans and asserting their right to speak their minds about racism and the national epidemic of police brutality against and murders of African Americans.

Now this burgeoning struggle for the freedom to speak out has to move out of the sports stadiums and into the workplaces of America.

You can tell such a movement is badly needed when the self-styled “patriotic” yahoos in the stands boo and shout “stand up!” at kneeling athletes speaking their mind on the job and don't get upset when millionaire Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin scolds the protesters, telling them to do their free speech thing “on their own time” and not on the bosses'. These white “NASCAR dudes” don't even realize that everyone—including they themselves—should be demanding First Amendment rights on the job, and that the ball players they are condemning and jeering at are making that case for everyone's

benefit.

What this football protest has demonstrated is that when one person takes a stand on the job and makes a statement as Kaepernick did last year, it may cost that person her or his job. But when lots of people take the stand together, the boss can't retaliate so easily. In fact, the boss may even join them.

Blacklisting Kaepernick, as the NFL's teams appear to all have done, may cost a couple of teams a badly needed crack quarterback (and everyone agrees there are teams that could use him), but it isn't really costing any team any money or lost ticket revenue to let him stay unemployed. Now that whole teams are taking a knee, or refusing to enter the field for the opening patriotic display and the singing of the national anthem, though, there's no way to fire them without trashing the season and losing millions of dollars.

If workers want to finally do away with totalitarian policies in the workplace, they need to start taking a page from their sports heroes and begin speaking out collectively on the issues that matter to them. It has to be a collective effort though. Maybe it is the dirty washrooms. Maybe it's unfair pay for women or minorities. Maybe it's the endless war in Afghanistan. Maybe it's police brutality in the local metropolis, or toxic waste in the local water supply. Whatever the issue, like-minded workers need to start talking about it, wearing T-shirts declaring their views,

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*Cut on the dotted line.*





SF 49ers Colin Kaepernick (center), Eric Reid, and Eli Harold kneel during the national anthem

demanding that the company that employs them stop supporting policies they object to. Whatever the issue, if you can talk about it on the street or at home, you should be able to talk about it where you work and where you spend most of your waking hours each day!

The Constitution says it clearly in the First Amendment: “Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech.”

Note that it does not say anything about “except in the workplace.” And yet Congress has endorsed myriad laws and regulations that allow employers to fire workers “at will,” which includes for saying things that the boss doesn’t like (they call it insubordination, which is a term that has no place in a supposedly free society). We don’t allow people to be fired for being of the “wrong” religion, or for being of the wrong race, so it’s not like there’s no precedent for Congress to limit the power of corporate bosses over their workers. But when it comes to that free speech thing, our elected officials and our judges get cold feet.

It’s ironic that many of the yahoos in the stadiums who angrily shout “Stand up!” at some football player taking a knee during the national anthem probably forget that they can’t say anything political or make a political protest on their own job.

They have no rights. And for that matter, neither does the guy down on the field that they are heckling, and yet he is doing it.

And the truth is, any of those guys down there on the field in their uniforms making a public protest, is doing more than just protesting against some issue, like police abuse. They’re also protesting for the right of all workers to make their voices heard where they work.

The truth is, when the country was founded, there were no real factories in the new independent United States of America. It was a largely agrarian society of farmers and small businesspeople who might have a couple of employees at most. In that kind of environment, there was little difference between the home and the place of work. It’s likely that people in such settings had plenty to say on the issues of the day while they were working. It’s also likely that people who had a job and did it well were valuable enough to the employer that even if they said things that the boss didn’t agree with they wouldn’t be summarily fired for speaking up. That kind of thing is much more likely to happen in huge companies where individual workers are just replaceable cogs.

The founders who wrote the Constitution and its Bill of Rights wouldn’t have imagined that eventually there would be

huge workplaces with hundreds or even thousands of workers, gates and security guards and ID cards to control access to the site, and files kept of each employee’s behavior.

It is this new work environment, created during the 19th century, that led to a bifurcated world— one largely free and more or less unmonitored, where people could do and say pretty much what they pleased without fear of punishment or harassment, and another, set up much like an old feudal estate, where the “lord” or boss and his or her minions could order the peons around, punish them at will with no right of appeal for made-up infractions or “insubordination,” and control what they could say or even think, on pain of being tossed out the door.

Things have gotten worse with our new information age, so that once a worker is fired by one boss, it can be hard to get a job anywhere, since one’s employment record becomes available to all.

It’s time to grab this new opening made by professional athletes of conscience, and to start a national campaign to extend the First Amendment to the shop floor, not just the athletic field.

While we’re at it, let’s demand that Kaepernick get hired again as a QB. After all, he started this ball rolling. **IW**

# Unions and worker co-ops, old allies, are joining forces again

By Eric Dirnbach

*Labor Notes* <http://labornotes.org/blogs/2017/09/unions-and-worker-co-ops-old-allies-are-joining-forces-again>

In the 1800s, unions and cooperatives were part of the same movement. Today once again, unions are collaborating with cooperatives to save jobs, create new ones, and organize new members.

From the early days of the labor movement, as John Curl makes clear in his excellent book *For All the People: Uncovering the Hidden History of Cooperation, Cooperative Movements, and Communalism in America*, union members saw cooperatives as vital to their struggle. Unions and cooperatives were part of a growing labor movement that also included myriad political parties, mutual aid societies, fraternal organizations, and secret worker associations.

The 1800s were a period of tremendous change, as the economy shifted from agrarian and skilled artisan production to industrial capitalism relying on wage labor. Many workers who had direct experience or family history with pre-capitalist ways of work regarded working for wages as “wage slavery.” So cooperatives, with their democratic practices and ownership, offered an attractive alternative to the fast-growing sweatshop economy.

The Knights of Labor in the 1870s and 1880s made forming cooperatives a

central strategy. The labor movement of the time was guided by a long-term goal of forming a “cooperative commonwealth,” where workers would run the economy on principles of cooperation and solidarity. Union workers also organized co-ops out of necessity—to find alternative employment during labor disputes or after failed strikes, lockouts, or blacklisting.

But the Knights declined in the 1890s, supplanted by the more conservative American Federation of Labor, which accepted the capitalist wage system. The AFL focused on “bread-and-butter” contract unionism, and disdained cooperatives. Curl writes:

They were against worker cooperatives not only because of past failures, but also because cooperatives were associated with radicalism and radical movements, of which they wanted no part, and because cooperatives obscured the line between employee and employer. This confused the union’s role as bargaining agent, which they saw as the unions’ basic identity, with the contract the eternal goal.

With some exceptions, unions and cooperatives went their separate ways. The cooperative movement continued to grow and decline with the swings in the economy, eventually becoming identified more with the countercultural food scene of the 1960s and 1970s.

## An Alliance Revived

But today, the alliance between unions

and cooperatives is finding new life. A number of unions are exploring ways to ally with cooperatives and to form new ones as alternative strategies to save their members’ jobs and create new ones.

About 10 years ago, unions started to think again about the cooperative model. The Union Cooperative Council formed in 2007 and is part of the U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives. With representatives of a dozen unions, it holds monthly conference calls to coordinate and share information.

In 2009, the United Steelworkers announced a partnership with Mondragon, the famous cooperative network in the Basque region of Spain, which has more than 100 constituent co-ops and tens of thousands of members. The idea was to start manufacturing cooperatives. In 2012, USW, Mondragon, and the Ohio Employee Ownership Center published their Union Co-op Model, outlining how union cooperatives could be structured.

Manufacturing has proved challenging so far, though the Steelworkers do have several affiliated co-ops now, including a printing company and a carwash.

In other cases, unions have affiliated existing cooperatives, started new ones, or saved workplaces from closing through conversation to a cooperative:

Cooperative Home Care Associates, in the Bronx, is the largest worker co-op in the country with 860 worker-owners. It

started in 1985, and in 2003 affiliated with 1199SEIU to work together in the same industry.

The Cincinnati Union Co-op Initiative, launched in 2009 to explore the Steelworkers–Mondragon cooperative model, has incubated three cooperatives so far: an energy efficiency company affiliated with the Electrical Workers (IBEW) and the Pipefitters; an urban farm affiliated with the Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW); and



Photo: Vermont Gage Carwash

From L.A. car washers to Denver taxi drivers, unions are collaborating with cooperatives to save jobs, create new ones, and organize new members.

the soon-to-open Apple Street Market, also affiliated with UFCW, which will be a worker/community-controlled neighborhood food co-op.

When the Republic Windows and Doors factory in Chicago announced it would close in 2008, the workers sat in. They did it again in 2012 when new owners also announced a shutdown. With the help of their union, United Electrical Workers (UE), they bought the plant's equipment and formed the cooperative New Era Windows in 2013.

More than 1,000 Denver taxi drivers, considered independent contractors, are competing with Uber and traditional taxi companies through two cooperatives, one of which, Green Taxi, affiliated with the Communications Workers (CWA) in 2014. CWA has helped set up the cooperatives by lobbying for taxi licenses.

The Maine Lobstering Union, formed in 2013 with help from the Machinists union, is a fishing producer cooperative that's working on lobbying for better regulations, group purchasing, and marketing campaigns, to stabilize prices in a volatile market. The Machinists had a historical presence in Maine in other industries, such as shipbuilding and paper mills. The cooperative recently purchased a lobster wholesaler, with a \$1 million loan from the Machinists, which will help members get

a larger share of the profits in this billion-dollar industry.

### Turning Union Shops into Co-Ops

At the recent Eastern Conference for Workplace Democracy, one suggestion for unions wanting to explore co-ops was for a local to take an inventory of its shops—which ones could be most easily converted into co-ops?

For instance, owners of small, family-owned businesses may be planning to retire. Indeed, there is a wave of baby boomer business-owner retirements coming, which could provide many opportunities for conversions to co-ops. Stewards can evaluate these possibilities and also serve as an early-warning system if a business gets into trouble and may close.

Financing can be a challenge, especially for cooperatives in capital-intensive industries such as manufacturing, but unions could use their own money toward developing co-ops. A model of using union pension funds is the AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust, which has financed the renovation of several housing cooperatives.

### A Viable Strategy?

Forming a cooperative isn't easy, since it means running a business based on humane principles in a competitive, capitalist market.

For some, cooperatives prefigure the kind of alternative economy we want to see, where enterprises are run by the work-

ers themselves, without the bosses we don't need. As worker organizations, it would make sense for unions to experiment in this world, and it may be a step toward the old "cooperative commonwealth" idea.

Critics, however, contend that unions running businesses distracts from the difficult work of organizing workers and representing members. Moreover, without sufficient education, union members who are cooperative owners may over time come to think and act just like regular business owners.

If we want union cooperatives to fully engage with the broader solidarity economy, these co-ops will have to do more than just create better jobs for their own members. An example from Greece would be the Vio.me cooperative, which supports refugees and offers space for a health clinic.

It remains to be seen whether more unions will branch out into cooperatives and whether the labor and cooperative movements will work more closely together. But at a time when union density has been falling for decades and is now below 11 percent, it makes sense for unions to explore various strategies and develop new allies. **IW**

*Eric Dirnbach is a union researcher and labor activist in New York City and a member of ResearchAction, a collective of left researchers and campaigners.*

## Statement from the Missoula IWW GMB

*The idea behind this statement is to try to remind our union what we are about. It's a general push to avoid insular politics and to make every interaction and every conversation with every worker count.*

Fellow Workers,

We are a Union committed to organizing all workers regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, nationality, creed, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and criminal history.

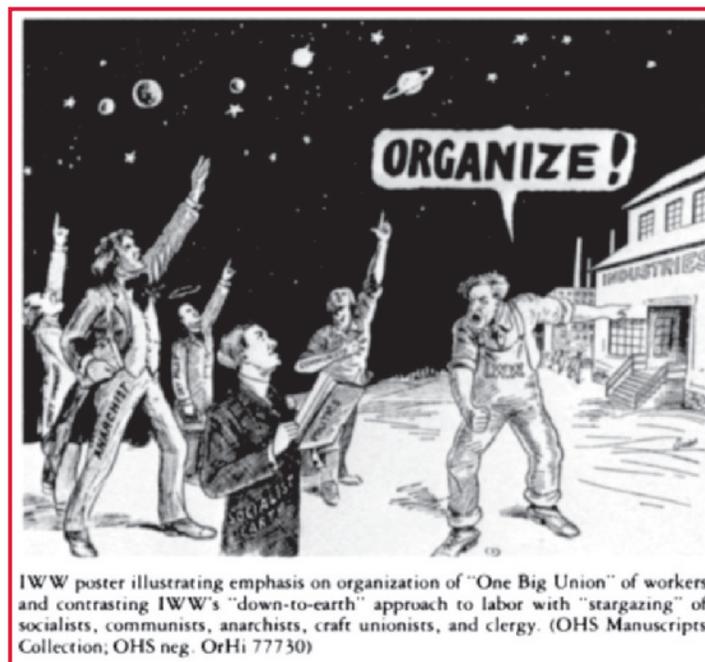
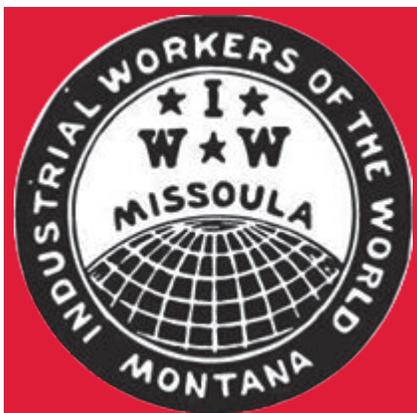
Therefore, we will continue to reach out to and organize all working class people by sowing seeds of trust rather than malice, seeds of camaraderie rather than contempt, and seeds of solidarity rather than exclusion.

And we will do this by any means necessary—not just the most radical and not just the least, but both and everything in between.

For where an individual falls in the spectrum of class consciousness and militancy is merely a mile marker. The direction in which they can be pushed to move is up to us and defines our work as organizers.

With every conscious pulse,

The Missoula IWW GMB



IWW poster illustrating emphasis on organization of "One Big Union" of workers and contrasting IWW's "down-to-earth" approach to labor with "stargazing" of socialists, communists, anarchists, craft unionists, and clergy. (OHS Manuscripts Collection; OHS neg. OrHi 77730)

# The general strike in Catalonia— Revolutionary unionism for the 21st century

By *From the Ashes: Wobblies for a Revolutionary Union Movement*

<https://revolutionary-iww.org/general-strike-catalonia-revolutionary-unionism>

By Monday night, the Guardia Civil [national police] had left Calella [small Catalan town near Barcelona], leading a spokesman for Spain's main police union, to complain that officers were "fleeing from hotel to hotel; they are like rats who have to hide."

—Via *The Guardian*

By now, the images of the brutality and ferocity with which Spanish and Catalan police were attacking people on October 1st, in order to prevent a referendum on Catalan independence, have circulated everywhere. So have the images of people in Catalonia pushing back lines of police. The government threw gasoline onto smoldering embers, and the general strike which occurred on October 1st is the result. The mix of empowering and disempowering images on Sunday has been replaced by a real sense of collective power and solidarity.

From North America, it seems hard to grasp what "general strike" actually means on the ground. In the US at least, we haven't had officially had one since 1946, in Oakland. For radicals in North America, we have a sense that "general strikes" are good things, but we're in the same position as Europeans first trying to understand the platypus: We've never seen it, we only know its characteristics from writings, and we have a sneaking suspicion that it's either fake or not as good as we want to believe. But there's nothing mystical nor exotic about general strikes. Our grandparents pulled off six citywide general strikes in 1946, plus nationwide strikes in coal and rail. Since then, "unionism" has been channeled into a very narrow workplace contractualism that makes solidarity impossible. They've happened here before, and they can happen again, when we build a new kind of unionism.

But let's return to Spain, which had a massive strike wave in the 1970s after the death of Franco, and where the state and capital still haven't been able to fully exorcise the memory of militant, class-wide solidarity. For 40 years, the independent, militant, and radical (often anarchist) unions, as well as regional unions in Catalonia, Andalucia, and the Basque Country, have always followed the general strikes called by the business unions, fighting to



The independent dockworkers union (Coordinadora) voting unanimously to participate in the general strike.

make them more militant. They've never been able to pull off their own general strikes—until now.

The strike had been called originally almost two weeks ago by a coalition of regional and radical unions, including several that refer to revolutionary and anarchist unionism, the most well known being the CNT and CGT. They attempted to articulate a fine line: They were not for the creation of a new Catalan state, but were against police repression and austerity, even when carried out by Catalan police and politicians. This coalition has been working together since the economic crisis erupted in 2010, with the goal of jointly organizing general strikes outside of the business unions' control. That theory had never been tested.

Then came the police attacks across all of Catalonia, and the people's response of anger and outrage. In several areas people forced police to retreat, including from the hotel where they have historically stayed when needed in Barcelona (see quote above).

On the night of October 1, the business unions in Catalonia signed on to the general strike for October 3. This was the first time that the radical unions had taken the initiative and been followed (rather than ignored) by the business unions, and nobody knew quite what it meant. The next morning, the business unions held embarrassing press conferences where they an-

nounced that they *actually* they were only calling for a "civic protest" together with the chamber of commerce. They weren't calling on workers to strike, but only to go to their bosses and politely ask them to close the business for the day. This is a new low for even reformist unions in Spain (although it's more than unions try to do in North America). It's not clear why the business unions changed their mind but one suspects they received panicked phone calls from their central offices in Madrid telling them not to stir the flames up too much.

Their waffling only cemented the moral and practical resolve of the radical unions. Nobody in Catalonia talked about a "civic protest"; everyone was talking about THE General Strike. In smaller towns or areas where the radical unions had a small presence, the "Referendum Defense Committees" that had formed over the last week became "Strike Committees" and engaged in flying pickets. Anywhere the radical unions had a presence (including several of the small towns), they were the clear leadership, organizing flying pickets as well as mass marches in order to both halt production and prevent police maneuvers.

Although the spectacular images of protest seem to have all been spontaneous, we know that there is a relationship between spontaneity and organization. The ability for the CNT and the other radical unions to take leadership of the situation

was based on their very patient day-to-day organizing in workplaces and communities—as revolutionaries.

This is an important point for us in North America, because when we say “revolutionary unionism,” we can’t just settle for building some general kind of unionism that will—hopefully later, someday, eventually, maybe—become revolutionary. As another IWW member put it recently:

*We are not trying to build a union and figure out how to make it revolutionary, but rather we are trying to support a liberatory revolution and figuring out what role workplace organizing today plays in that. Another way of saying this is that we’re trying to build an organized front within the workplace for a revolutionary movement. Specifically, we have some perspective and analysis of how working class revolution happens that implies “unionism” plays some important role in such a project at this historical moment.*

The CNT have a clear program for building revolutionary unions, and a clear articulation for how that now plays a role for a future liberatory revolution. Since the 2008 crisis began and the Spanish and Catalan governments have insisted on more austerity (backed every time by the business unions), the CNT has methodically inserted itself into both workplace and social struggles, and built a strong and well-rooted presence in many impor-

tant workplaces in Barcelona (the airport, the docks, the metro) as well as in many smaller towns in Catalonia, such as Olot. (The same pattern is true across most of Spain.) They have also engaged very deeply with independent workers groups such as Las Kelly’s (hotel cleaners) or Deliveroo riders—both of which groups were sold out by agreements made by the business unions but have continued their struggles just the same. (The CNT is the focus here because, of all of the radical unions, they are the most similar to the IWW, and we are coordinating together internationally. This actual coordination with other unions is an extremely positive and exciting development.)

These are important lessons for revolutionary unionists in North America (or almost anywhere outside of Spain) to learn, or re-learn. We need to combine a revolutionary vision with a coherent program for revolutionary organizing in every part of society, including by building strong organizations in the workplace, especially as business unionism in North America continues to collapse. We don’t have this program yet, and we won’t have it tomorrow. We can’t simply elaborate it in our heads, nor by importing a program from another context. The program we need will be built through engaging in mass struggles, as well as building clearly revolutionary unions at the point of production; it will be built

by thinking big about what’s possible, and what kinds of struggles will get us there. We don’t have this program yet, but we can begin putting it together, learning as we go. We should try to imagine revolutionary unionism being as relevant in St Louis as it is in Barcelona. If we can’t, we aren’t serious, and we’re just role-playing.

In Catalonia, and all of Spain, the tension continues to simmer. Nobody knows what will happen next. The King of Spain just gave a speech that calls for more repression. The struggle is unlikely to die down soon. It’s a complicated struggle, but the elements of class solidarity, rejection of the police, and distrust of politicians are clearly major positive factors to pay attention to. The business unions have embarrassed themselves thoroughly and will be completely marginalized in the coming struggles. The CNT and the other radical unions are clear players for hegemony in this struggle involving hundreds of thousands of people. None of their members have ever been in this situation before, and they might make mistakes, but any mistake they make will be worth more than 1,000 correct decisions made by internet commentators.

Let’s keep our eyes peeled. The lessons that our comrades in Catalonia and Spain learn in the coming days will be important for all of us.

No cops, no bosses, no borders! **IWW**



Aerial shot from downtown Barcelona: The city is packed ahead of general strike demonstration.

Photo Credit: #15M Barcelona International CNT @15MBcn\_int



**Industrial Worker**

PO Box 180195  
Chicago, IL 60618 USA  
ISSN 0019-8870

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

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

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## Preamble to the IWW Constitution

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

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

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

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

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

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