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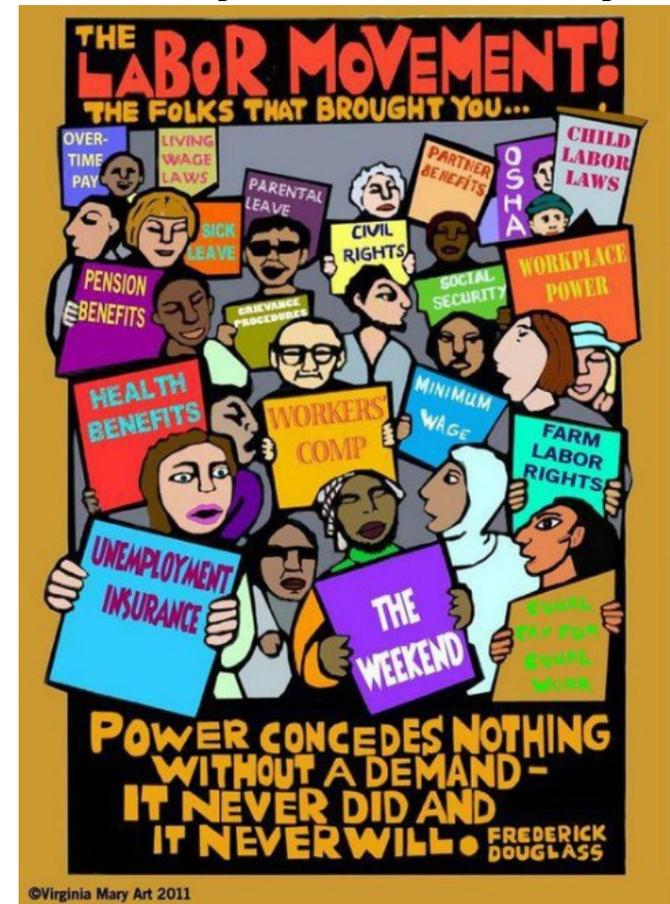
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We walk, We hold,
 for our
 Fellow Workers,
 we do not cross

The Line

May 1st, 2018

*Special Inaugural Issue
 with a history of International Workers Day!*



Published by the
 Literature and Media Committee of the
 Olympia Industrial Workers of the World

Welcome to the very first issue of *The Line!*

The Olympia I.W.W.'s bi-monthly newsletter. The IWW is a democratic, member-run union. That means members decide what issues to address, which tactics to use, and we directly vote on office holders, from stewards to national offices. Together we fight and organize for a better future!

In these pages you will find submissions from workers like yourself, working class history, news and events related to the I.W.W. and other labor news from around the region and the world.

If you would like to submit something please send it to Organize@OlympialWW.com.

In this issue you will find The History of International Workers Day aka May Day (Page 1). You will also find basic info on organizing your workplace (A.E.I.O.U.) (Page 5). Lastly there are some thoughts on the wave of teacher strikes, the Janus case, and the path forward for labor (Page 8).



The Line is published by the Literature and Media Committee of the Olympia General Membership Branch of the Industrial Workers of the World.

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Please check out our website www.OlympialWW.org

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Workers in these states, West Virginia, Oklahoma, Kentucky, and Arizona are, and have been worse off than workers will be in states such as Washington after Janus. But there is a bright side. For these workers in West Virginia and other states show us the way. As it was before even the National Labor Relations Act was passed. Before there was any legal help for workers. When in fact the laws were all against us. Courts would file injunctions against our pickets and bosses would make us sign “Yellow Dog” contracts. Forcing us to swear not to join a union.

But all these things, then and now, do not matter when we stand together. As the teachers did in West Virginia and are doing in other states. It is important to remember that the teachers in West Virginia were offered a raise and they turned it down demanding that all public sector workers in West Virginia get the raise. Because this is not just about teachers – this is about workers!

We must learn that an injury to one is an injury to all! If other workers are on strike we do not cross their picket lines. We must not be divided by what kind of work we do, whether it pays little or a lot.

Remember it is the bosses that decide how much our wages are. Unless we stand together – then we, as workers united, can dictate wages and conditions. We must not be divided by race, gender, age, or anything else that they tell us makes us different from each other.

The most important thing about the teacher strike in West Virginia is not that they got a raise or slightly improved their conditions. It is that in fighting for these things they are learning from each other that there is power in their union.

And that power is the power to change the world.

“The Union is like a shark. If it’s not moving, it’s dying.”
– a fellow worker.



The Teacher Strikes, the Janus case, and the path forward for labor.

On February 22nd the teachers of West Virginia went on strike. One of their motto's was 55 strong. Meaning that all the teachers in all 55 counties in West Virginia are united in their struggle. The teachers in West Virginia are among the lowest paid in the country. Also, the teachers, being public sector workers, in West Virginia do not have the legal right to strike or bargain collectively. And yet they did anyway, and they won!

There is a case currently before the U.S. Supreme Court. It is called Janus Vs. AFSCME. This case has been shaking everything up. Basically it would make the public sector in all the states "Right-to-Work." Meaning that workers in a union shop would not be required to pay dues or fees but the union is still legally required to cover them. Right-to-work laws and the Janus case are tools of anti-labor used to break unions.

Unions have helped to back themselves into this corner, however. By compromising with capital, i.e. Big Business, and relying so much on the law and government so as to become dependent on it. Unions have contributed to this decline.

Is it merely coincidental that at the same time as the Janus case going before the supreme court this wave of teacher strikes is sweeping the country?

History of International Workers' Day

On May 4th, 1886, one hundred and thirty two years ago, the event took place in Haymarket Square in Chicago that started what is sometimes called the Haymarket affair and ultimately lead to the creation of International Workers Day. The event itself was a rally, or what at the time was called a meeting or open air meeting, that was in support of the eight hour day. This struggle had been going on for years before this and was reaching a fevered pitch with a general strike which had been called to start on May 1st, in which hundreds of thousands of workers across the United States went out on strike. After the events of May 4th, where towards the end of the rally a bomb exploded causing the police to fire into the crowd. Several people on both sides were killed. In the coming days seven people, all avowed anarchists, were arrested. Some of them were not at the rally at all and most of them were not there when the bomb exploded. However, after the trial two were given life in prison, one had committed suicide while in jail, and four of them were executed. The trial and execution shocked the world.

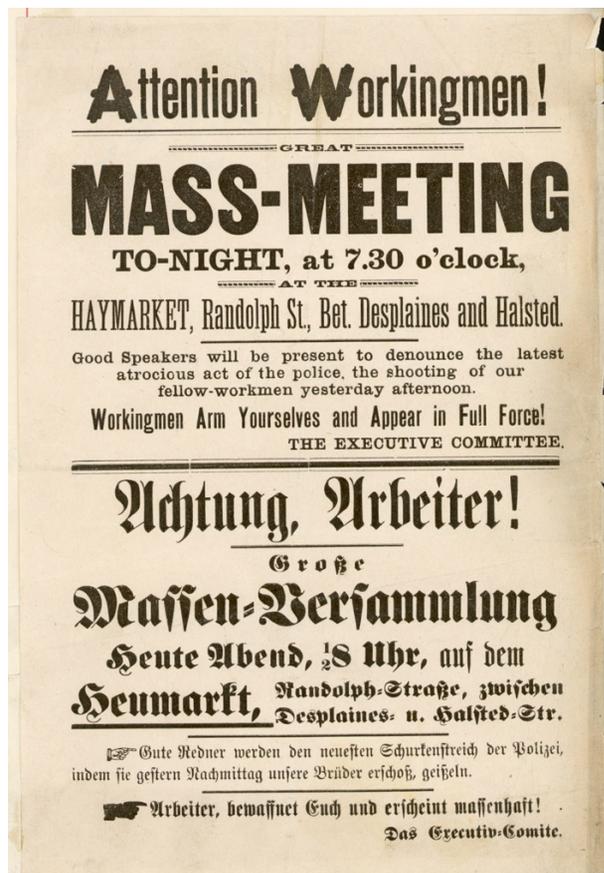
**"The time will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today."
– August Spies just before he was hanged**

For two years leading up to May 4th, 1886, workers had been struggling for the eight hour day. In October of 1884 the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions had set May 1st, 1886, as the date by which the eight-hour work day would become standard. Even before 1884 Chicago had been one of the most militant labor cities. All of labor, as well as the socialists and anarchists, had come to support and be involved in the struggle for the eight hour day.

To be clear, the call for the eight hour day was also a call for no wage cuts. Today we tend to think of a reduction in hours as a reduction of pay. However, this is not the case. The call was for an eight hour day with no wage cuts. Which would not only mean less work for over worked people but a wage increase and more jobs.

Anarchists and other radicals, through their own press, as well as actions, had been organizing in the city for years. The capitalist press made much of their propaganda and had most of the city scared. Of course the capitalists themselves, organized in different clubs and organizations, used this fear and the police to suppress the radicals.

During this struggle for the eight hour day, there was a lockout at the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company plant in Chicago. During a picket on May 3rd, 1886, outside of the factory gates there was a fight between the strikers and the police who were helping to break the strike by guarding scabs while they were crossing the line coming out of the gates at the end of the day. Two to six strikers were killed by the police. This was the cause of the rally the next day on May 4th.



Fliers were printed to turn workers out to the meeting on May 4th. The meeting was to be centered around the killing of the workers in front of the McCormick plant and to speak about the eight hour day movement. By all accounts the meeting was peaceful. So much so that the mayor of the city was there and even left early because he felt sure that nothing was going to happen. The city and the police were of course thinking that there would be a riot. The police were on hand from the beginning of the meeting.

the ball on things and not letting anyone know that we need help. We need to be there for each other to make this eaizer.

As we build our organizing capacity and thus build the union we will also need to push each other to follow through and to go further. Remember we are all leaders here! It is important to understand that this does not mean that we have no leaders, but rather, that it means that each one of us needs to take the initiative



Of course this is all easier said then done and it can be intimidating. That's way we here in the IWW are here to help. Together we can fight not just for better pay but for a better world!

We believe that together workers have the power to change the world!

For more information get in touch.

Organize@OlympiaIWW.com

360-362-0112

In future issues we will be publishing interviews with workers like you! What is their day-to-day life like, what kind of work do they do, what can of jobs have they had. If you are interested in being interviewed please contact us for more information.

The interview can be published anonymously if you wish and will be cleared with you before it is printed. From such interviews we hope to show what we all have in common as people and workers, how our struggles are united. We also hope to give voice to the "little people" who so often in life go unheard.

Call or email us at

360-362-0112 or Organize@OlympiaIWW.com.

As workers who have to deal with these problems, the problems of capitalism, day in and day out, we build up mechanisms to keep from going crazy. One of these defense mechanisms is to individualize our problems at work. We say things like “that’s life,” “that’s just the way it is,” etc.

Well it is by agitating that we work with our fellow workers to overcome these feelings. We want our fellow workers and ourselves to recognize the problems and get angry about it! It shouldn’t have to be that way! It doesn’t have to be that way! One of the biggest issues for people to overcome is that life can be different. Life is not the way it is because of nature or some supernatural force, or because of human nature. Life is the way it is because humans, somewhere and at some time decided for it to be this way. We all decide, or concede, that it is the way it is everyday. The good news is – that this means we can change it! We can make the world a better place!

Once we are all agitated and worked up we have to figure out what we are going to do about it. This is where the education part comes in. We all get together, as fellow workers, to educate ourselves, and act collectively. This can take many forms, depending on the situation. Everything from a group of workers confronting a mean boss to tell him to cool it, to, a massive strike! What ever it is the important thing is that it is done collectively and in a series of progressive actions.

Now that we know what we are going to do about it, we need to prepare for retaliation from the bosses. We inoculate each other against this retaliation. We do this by talking with our fellow workers about how the boss might respond. I bet you all ready know some of the ways. They might talk about how we are all one big family and we just need to stick together. Well we know what a joke that is! But do all our fellow workers know?

It’s time to build organizing capacity. We will all have to take on different tasks and we will all need to follow through on the those tasks. So we have to help each other be accountable and work with each other so that we don’t get to the point where we are dropping

There were three speakers, August Spies, Albert Parsons, and Samuel Fielden. Who spoke in that order. As Fielden was wrapping up his speech, which only last around ten minutes, more police showed up and, in formation marched up to the wagon that the speakers were using. They ordered the crowd to disperse. It was at this point that a bomb was thrown into the front ranks of the police. Killing one right away and fatally wounding six others. There are conflicting accounts as to what happen next. Either the crowd and police exchanged gun fire, we don’t know who fired first, or the police fired into the crowd as they were fleeing. Either way all of this only lasted for less then ten minutes. It is also possible that in the chaos the police were firing at each other by mistake. We do not know how many workers died, at least four. There were many injuries, over a hundred.

There was a massive red scare following these events. For weeks afterwards homes and offices were raided without warrants. The community largely sided with the police, with no small help from the capitalist press. News of the events was international.

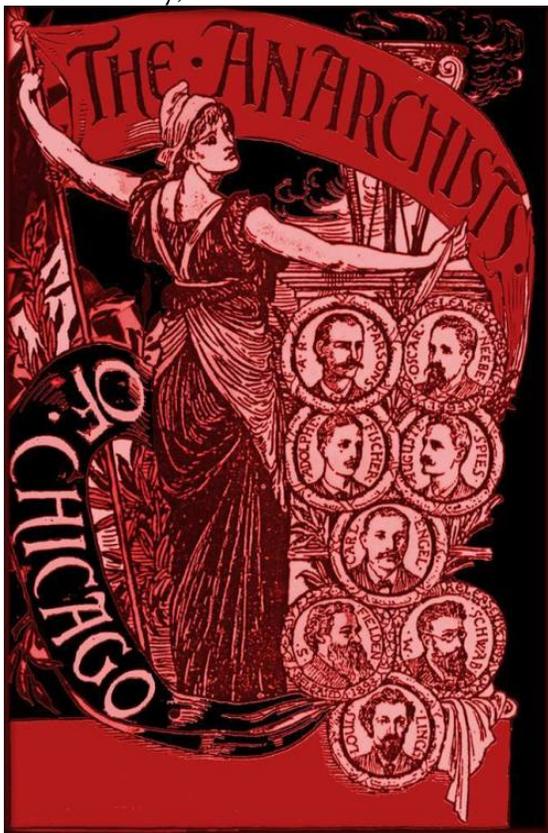
Seven people were later arrested, only four of them had been at the meeting, and only two of those had been there when the bomb exploded.

The trial was a pig service. The Judge Joseph Gary, was openly hostile towards anarchists and made no attempt to hide it. All but one of the defendants were sentenced to death. The other to 15 years. After many appeals, the Governor commuted two of the sentences to life in prison. Louis Lingg committed suicide in his cell by eating a blasting cap. It blew off half his face and he survived in agony for several hours.

On Nov. 11th, 1887, Engel, Fischer, Parsons, and Spies were taken to the gallows in white robes and hoods. They sang the Marseillaise. Family members including Lucy Parsons were arrested and searched for bombs. It was at this point that Spies said his now famous line. Witnesses reported that the condemned men did not die immediately, but strangled to death, a sight which left the spectators visibly shaken.

The legacy of the Haymarket Affair is buried in the everyday lives of workers. The most obvious being the eight hour day. This is something that a lot of people take for granted, even with it being eroded in the U.S. In Europe there is even a shorter working day, which is being pushed back on by the capitalists. The legacy is also International Workers Day and Labor Day, too.

Not long after the Haymarket Affair May 1st, the day of the general strike for the eight hour day, was celebrated around the world as the working people's holiday and in memory of the Haymarket Martyrs. In the U.S. where all of this started the government was too afraid of the labor movement to let the holiday stand, but they knew they had to do something. So with the help of the conservative unions (AFL) they created Labor Day on the first weekend of September. The U.S. government did more than this. May 1st in the U.S. is BOTH Law Day and Loyalty Day! Loyalty Day was created during the first red scare and Law Day was added in the early 1960s.



But there are other aspects to the legacy of the Haymarket Affair. That when workers the world over stand together they can change the world. That the state will always use its power to oppress the working class. We might think that we are far removed from the days of the late 1800s. However, in a lot of ways we are not. The government has proved itself to not be a friend to the working class, no matter what they say about bringing back jobs. We have to stand and fight together! It is only in organization and direct action that better conditions and a better world will come!



A . E . I . O . U .

What follows is a very basic primer for organizing your fellow workers on the job. This is just to get you thinking. We encourage you to take the Organizers Training 101 that the IWW offers. It is open to all workers whether they are a member or not. In the Olympia Branch we try to have at least two OT101s a year. So if you are interested then contact us for when the next one is happening. There also may be one happening sooner in another city in the region.

So what does AEIOU mean? It is simple really. Agitate, Educate, Inoculate, Organize, Unionize (or pUsh). In organizing our jobs it is important to talk to our fellow workers. We want to build relationships with them. Because how else could we work together, right?

To do this we have 1 on 1 conversations with them. We talk with them and learn about the issues at work and thus in life that we each care about. Whether it is pay, or conditions. Such as due to cut backs at work they are not hiring enough people which means you all have to work more and your fellow worker who has kids hardly gets to see them!