

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

# The Line

Olympia, Wash., March - April, 2019 | Volume 1 | Issue 6

FREE

## Education Workers are Fighting Around the World!

Teachers continue to organize and struggle. In the United States in the past two months we have seen headlines for teachers striking from Los Angeles and Denver to West Virginia and Virginia.

Teachers in West Virginia seem to have shaken something loose with their state wide strike this past year.

In the face of legal obstacles and the general repression of labor in general teachers fought back and won. Public sector workers, in West Virginia, do not have the legal right to collectively bargain.

It is important to note that the places that have the least legal options for labor seem to have the most radical and invigorating movements.

This is not to say that places like West Virginia, Virginia, and North Carolina, simply need to change their laws and all will be well. It is rather that places that have more legal mechanism in place, such as Washington

state, labor is more easily subsumed into the formalist processes where we have a disadvantage.

ing fuel prices, just as we have seen in France. However, the situation is of course different in Zimbabwe as their economy is in tatters, inflation is high, and wages have stagnated. There were fierce confrontations between protesters and police.

The Zimbabwe Teachers Association (ZTA) and the Progressive Teachers' Union (PTU) called for a strike after getting nowhere in negotiations with the government. According to the MSN, there are more than 100,000 public-sector teachers in Zimbabwe and unions say 80 percent of them are on strike.

The strike lasted for 5 days from February 5th to the 10th. There are signs that the government

and military officials tried to intimidate the teachers. The teachers are primary demanding that their wages be paid in US dollars. ZTA and PTU have said they stand ready to go back on strike if their demands are not met in negotiations



What we have not seen in the news is the actions across the world that teachers are taking. Teachers in several countries, including Zimbabwe, Mexico, and Tunisia, have gone on strike in the past two months.

In Zimbabwe, this January protests broke out over the government ris-

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Soon it will be May 1st - International Workers Day and *The Line's* one year anniversary. It has been a crazy year and a lot has happened. Locally the City has gone back and forth between acting like they care about our houseless brothers and sisters only to settle on not caring. There was a prisoner strike all across the country. The IWW joined the International Confederation of Labor and so much more!

In the current issue you will find some good international news. Strikes in Bangladesh and Mexico to Zimbabwe. It is important to understand that we are all one working class. If we think of ourselves as divided by borders and nations then we are only further pitted against each other. Remember fellow workers - take it easy, but take it.

In Solidarity,  
Dylan B. - Editor

  
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Press Date: March 11th, 2019

Published Bi-Monthly.  
Articles not so designated  
do not reflect the Olympia  
IWW's official position.

# Workers Strike in Bangladesh

On January 6th, thousands of workers in Bangladesh went on strike against low wages in garment factories. The “ready-made” garment industry in Bangladesh supplies major retailers around the world, such as Walmart, H&M, and Tesco.

According to Aljazeera 52 factories were shut down due to the strike. Last year they made apparel worth about \$30 billion. Millions of Bangladeshi workers work in about 4,500 textile factories. The minimum monthly wage is around \$96 a month. This was increased in September of 2018 from around \$50 a month. The increase went in to effect in December. However, when workers were paid in January they found they had been paid less.

On January 13th the police attacked the workers. Firing water canons, tear gas, rubber bullets, and attacking them with batons. The workers barricaded the highway. At least one worker was killed and more than 50 were injured.

The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) threatened to lock the workers out if they did not return to work on the 14th.

Workers began returning to work towards the end of week after government assurances that the discrepancy in pay would be made up. However, hundreds of workers upon returning to work found they had been fired. Notices were hanging on factory gates informing them of their dismissal along with photos of their faces.

Kalpona Akter, executive director of the Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity, who worked as a child la-

borer in textile factories, said: “The workers that got fired know the law and their rights. In many cases they were union leaders in their respective factories. These workers are picked intentionally so there is no voice left in a factory to fight against retaliation and form a union.”

According to a report from Fair Wear Foundation, a worker was beaten up on orders of management and threatened with murder. The woman said she was also robbed of her severance pay. The factory initially denied the allegations but later fired the manager and paid the woman in compensation.

The garment industry in Bangladesh still lives under the shadow of the 2012 Dhaka fire. Where at least 117 people died in the factory fire and over 200 were injured. Workers were unable to escape because of inadequate fire escapes and exits which were locked in order to keep workers from leaving during the work day.

## Portland IWW hall attacked

On January 24th the Portland branch of the Industrial Workers of the World union hall was attacked during the night. Windows were smashed and the building was graffitied. It seems to be the work of the Proud Boys, considered a hate group by Southern Poverty Law Center, and Patriot Prayer, an “Alt-Right” group that works hand in glove with the Proud Boys. They deny these claims, of course.

On January 17th Patriot Prayer tried to disrupt a Democrat Socialists of America (DSA) meeting that was taking place at the IWW hall. They were turned away at the door.

DSA co-chairwoman Olivia Katbi Smith said in a statement: “While Patriot Prayer, the Proud Boys and their supporters have continued to show up to our meetings and outside our office to harass, threaten, and attempt to attack our members, our organization, and our allies, we have used deescalation tactics and otherwise been entirely non-responsive, which enrages these fascists who are very clearly seeking out a fight and media attention. We will not be deterred by violent misogynistic white supremacists who attempt to disrupt our efforts.”

About three weeks later on February 15th news broke that the Portland police and Joey Gibson had been communicating via text message during protests. In a statement Councilwoman Jo Ann Hardesty said “I am not shocked, and I am not surprised at today’s reporting of Lt. Jeff Niiya’s collaboration with Patriot Prayer leader Joey Gibson over text to provide aid and support for their hate marches.”

Among other things Lt. Jeff Niiya told Gibson that one of his friends, Tusitala Toese, had a warrant out for his arrest. However, he said “I don’t see a need to arrest on the warrant unless there is a reason.”

Portland police were accused at a protest last August of being heavy-handed against people, injuring some, who were protesting a rally of extreme-right demonstrators organized by Gibson. Hardesty said the “broken policing system in Portland” must be addressed.

“This story, like many that have come before it, simply confirms what many in the community have already known – there are members of the Portland police force who work in collusion with right-wing extremists,” she said.

## Displacement in the name of safety

Originally appearing in Tent Talk on Feb. 18th, Vol. 1 Issue 3

After a long pause in enforcement against camping, the City of Olympia is resuming the practice of sweeping encampments on public property, particularly those which are most visible and near downtown. The city originally halted its practice of sweeps in September, after the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals determined that it is unconstitutional to criminalize people for performing life sustaining activities, like sleeping and resting, on public property when they have no other legal alternatives (*Martin vs Boise*).

When enforcement against camping in public was first paused, homeless advocates had questioned whether the city was pausing the sweeps in order to genuinely pursue more just and compassionate alternatives or simply to use the time to find a way for the city to return to "business as usual," without exposing themselves to the same legal risk.

Actions like the creation of the first mitigation site and the finalizing of the tiny home village on Plum Street, provided some reassurance that the city was committed to pursuing the former. Further, the city council remained consistent in their public commitment to finding legal alternatives for encampment residents before carrying out sweeps, even in the midst of receiving enormous pressure from many in the community to clear the camps downtown.

However, recent events have again raised serious questions about the commitment to this more just and compassionate response to encampments.

On January 29th and 30th, the City of Olympia executed the sweeps of the B Avenue and 7th and Jefferson home-

less encampments. The city justified the removal of the B Avenue encampment by claiming that a nearby construction project would be endangering the safety of the residents.

The reason given for the removal of the 7th and Jefferson encampment was "to mitigate ongoing health and safety concerns."

Now, the city has announced its intention to sweep the remainder of the encampment in the Billy Frank Jr. Apartment parking lot after months of reassuring service providers and encampment residents that the camp would not be swept until after the creation of a second mitigation site. As with the removals of B Avenue and 7th & Jefferson encampments, the justification is based on mitigating public health and safety concerns.

Governments invoking various codes, ordinances, or laws pertaining to safety and public health to justify the removal of poor and marginalized residents from urban cores has been commonplace in history.

During the mid-twentieth century about 1 million city residents across the U.S were displaced in slum clearances and urban renewal schemes after working class neighborhoods and communities of color were labeled as "blighted."

Additionally, during the time of the great depression, here in Olympia, a large informal community of unemployed, poor, and elderly people was erected on the edge of what would later become Capitol Lake. Known as Little Hollywood, the community was part of the wider Hooverville encampment movement that erupted amidst the Great Depression, both protesting federal economic policies and directly housing those in need. In the late 1930s, the city government began condemning the dwellings, unit by unit, subsequently evicting residents and burning the structures, in the

name of public health and safety.

The striking similarities between the B Avenue and 7th/Jefferson evictions and evictions of the past is testament to how little progress has been made regarding the systemic treatment of poor people by governing bodies and institutions. That the highly vague rationale for camp removals could be applied so liberally to any other encampment in Olympia, is particularly concerning.

There is good cause to believe that the city carrying out sweeps in the name of public safety, is an attempt to resume "business-as-usual" sweeps, while skirting the implications of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals determination. In other words, to resume sweeps without being required to ensure that all encampment residents have legal and accessible alternative places to go to.

For, while the court's determination, made it clear that it is unconstitutional for people to be criminalized for sleeping in public spaces when they have no legal alternatives, the court's decision is not as clear if the pretext for a sweep is health and safety concerns, which could apply to virtually any camp.

This may be why recent notices of sweeps are titled as "Notice of Area Clean-up" instead of "Notice of Trespass" and why they avoid any language alluding to the threat of trespass, citation, or other forms of criminalization for those who do not leave the encampment by the given deadline.

At this point, the City of Olympia, has declined to explain or clarify their reasons for changing the language used to justify sweeps, why they are resuming sweeps after such a long pause, whether or not people can expect sweeps to continue without alternative places for people to go, or how they see their interpretation of *Martin vs Boise* justifying these actions and decisions.

## Workers shutdown the shutdown

As you probably know the United States government was “shutdown” from Dec. 22nd to Jan. 25th, which ended up being the longest government shutdown in history. We put shutdown in quotes because what we tend to typically think of as the government, i.e. the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary, they were still very much open. The parts of the government that actually acts as a government, in other words seeks to rule us, all those parts were still there getting paid.

Just as with everything else, the government also relies on workers to do the work. In the case of a government shut down the government can literally enslave their workers, and force them to work without pay.

What you might not be aware of is that it was workers who fought back and got the government reopened, or, got their pay reinstated with back-pay.

Air traffic controllers have a hard job and a lot is riding on their shoulders. So in this case it only took about 10 of them collectively calling in sick, or staging a sickout, to get the government reopened in a matter of hours. What all the other politicians couldn't do; and what all the media couldn't do, and other public pressure couldn't do. 10 workers did.

That is working class power.

The workers with their hands in their pockets have more power than the owners. And besides, the owners can't put their hands there.

## One Class, One Struggle

by Patrick O'Donoghue  
Originally appearing in *The Organizer*.  
Issue #29

Those of us born here in the US might hear from our coworkers, “Why should we care about the immigrants out protesting today? They're taking our jobs! They're taking our welfare! They're bad hombres!”. Sadly, this idea that immigrants are taking our jobs and tax dollars is common around America, fed by a media machine headed up by Fox News, Breitbart, and right-wing talk radio.

This media machine has built up as part of a long-term strategy for the Right and corporate America to drum up public support for rolling back social programs, public spending, and labor rights, as laid out in the famous Powell Memorandum that instructed industrial lobbyists on how to organize politically to push back against workers' movements.

The push against immigrants, as well as the Right's rhetoric about the “inner city” and those of us who live there, reflects the Southern Strategy, an intentional decision by the right in America to use racial anxiety against people of color to enlist white voters.

This is done by implying or repeating, over and over, that immigrants and people of color are criminals, do not work, and are taking public benefits without contributing. The fact is that undocumented workers not only contribute over \$10.6 billion in local and state taxes and \$15 billion in social security annually, but are also ineligible for public assistance including welfare, SNAP, and Medicaid. On the whole, undocumented workers are not among the most exploited at work, but also subsidize a tax pool for benefits that they are not able to apply for.

Still, US-born workers are expected to believe that undocumented workers are the cause of low wages and high unemployment- not decades of attacks on worker power and unions through mechanization and outsourcing. This narrative is pushed for one reason- to get workers with citizenship to act as attack dogs against workers without citizenship.

Buying into it gets workers nowhere. *Race to the Bottom*, or *Struggle From Below?* When Trump says, “Make America Great Again”, he is calling voters to remember a time when America was different in two very different ways.

First, at the peak of what many conservative Americans remember as the time the country was “great” in the 1950s and 1960s, segregation was still law in most of the South and unofficially practiced, like it is today, in most of the country.

Women's liberation had not yet picked up steam, and LGBTQ+ rights were considered a fringe issue at best. Without a doubt, anxiety over the changing status of people of color, women, and queer people is one of the emotions driving Trump's presidency, especially in the wealthier voting bloc that gave him the bulk of his support.

Still, among working class Americans, especially white workers in the Rust Belt and Appalachia, the phrase also brings to mind the higher standard of living working class people enjoyed at the high water mark of unionization and social democracy in the US. Unionization has fallen from almost a third of American workers to just over a tenth, not only from direct union busting, but also from the loss of jobs in former union strongholds like mining and manufacturing. With these blue collar union jobs gone, wages have stagnated since the 1970s. Meanwhile, productivity has steadily climbed.

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## RADICAL MOVIE NIGHT

March 15th ~ Let the Fire Burn

April 19th ~ A Forest for the Trees

Location ~ Mixx 96 On the corner of  
State and Washington

Time ~ 6pm

## IWW ORIENTATION

May 4th & July 6th

3 - 5

Olympia Center

Open to all workers!

## INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY

May 1st

Slyvester Park

3pm to 8pm

*Be There!*

Check out the website for  
more info and other events!

[OlympiaIWW.org](http://OlympiaIWW.org)

## Struggle

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Profits have skyrocketed as more of that productivity goes to our bosses instead of to our paychecks. As a result, inequality in the US has reached levels not seen since the Great Depression. Infant mortality, substance abuse, and depression are all increasing, and life expectancy is falling.

Workers are expected to either accept our place in low wage service work, or to "increase our human capital" by taking on enormous student debt for a chance at a career.

Still, it's not blue collar jobs like auto manufacturing, mining, and long-shore workers we really miss; it's the workers' power we built on those jobs. These were only good jobs because they were unionized. Before the unions, these jobs were considered

low skill, and were almost always low wage. They were usually held by workers with the minimum education, or by recent immigrants.

In fact, a lot of the arguments used against unionizing fast food, service, or janitorial workers today would have sounded familiar to factory workers before the unions! The loss of these jobs has nothing to do with immigrants, and everything to do with a corporate strategy to bust the power of unions. In the US and in Europe, since crisis of the 1970s when manufacturing and mining workers pushed against the stagnation of wages and inflation, business looking to keep profitability have adopted a dual strategy for gutting the power of labor-replacing high waged workers with machines, and moving production to places where labor is kept cheap by poverty and repression.

The mechanization of jobs has been most stark to workers like coal min-

ers, who Trump promises to "put back to work" even as experts say it is impossible.

Even before the rise of cheaper natural gas, solar, and wind put the final nail into coal's coffin, the bulk of coal jobs were lost decades earlier as the industry switched from large shifts of underground miners, to environmentally devastating mountaintop removal mining with bulldozers, back hoes, and drag lines.

Since 1983, West Virginia and Kentucky alone have lost around half of their former 79,000 coal jobs, despite production holding almost steady at 245 million short tons in 1983 and 250 million in 2011. The same trend has happened in granite quarrying here in Minnesota.

Quarrying jobs in the area around Saint Cloud have declined by about a third since 1990 even as production

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## Education

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with the government. However, now the government is attempting to say the strike was illegal, which the unions refute. Because of this the government is saying they will dock the pay of the teachers for the days they were on strike. This is an attempt to scare teachers into not going on strike again.

Meanwhile, in Mexico teachers continue a struggle that has been going on for several years now. In 2013

are large populations of native peoples in Mexico who do not speak English or Spanish. This would lead to not only decreasing levels of education among these populations but also suppress their culture since they would be incentivized to move away from their own culture by suppressing their own language.

There had been hope that the new president, Andres Obrador would appeal the law, and there has been new legislation, however, the Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educacion (CNTE) says that the

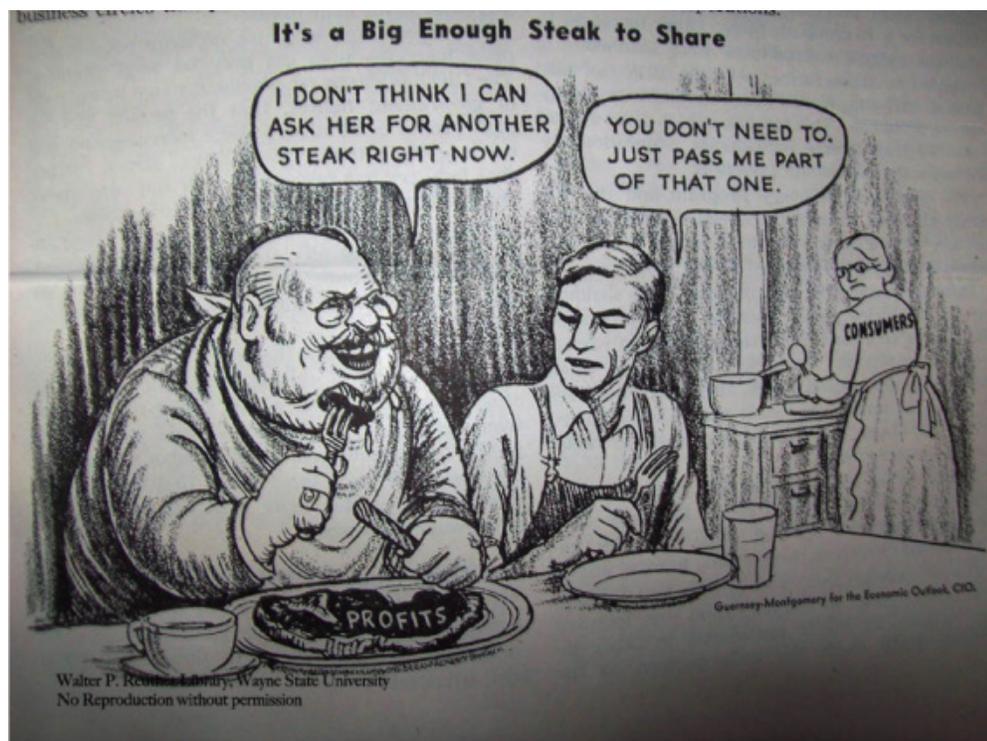
expanded, while in the Iron Range what mining is left after the closure of pits for cheaper ore elsewhere, is done with more heavy equipment and fewer workers.

The second method for breaking American unions has been outsourcing unionized jobs to countries where wages are lower and unions are more easily repressed. For example, the Ford Plant in Saint Paul shut down in 2011, resulting in over 2,000 layoffs, even though it was one of Ford's most productive and efficient plants. Its closure was part of Ford's strategy, called "The Way Forward", which outlines how Ford will weaken the United Auto Workers by moving production to Spain, Mexico, China, and other countries where labor is cheaper, and attacking the unions there to keep that labor cheap.

Between 1979 and today, manufacturing employment nationwide fell from around 19.6 million jobs to 12.6 million, with 5 million jobs lost since the signing of NAFTA. Trade deals like NAFTA allow companies to move to where low wages are enforced by violence against union organizers.

Some companies don't even need to move operations overseas—they can "outsource" jobs to prison labor where prisoners can be made to work for pennies an hour, and the prison system ramps up harsher penalties and more prison time to keep cheap prison labor available. The violence of mass incarceration here and union busting overseas busts unions here and leaves everyone working more for less.\*

\*Read this article in full at:  
<https://tinyurl.com/ycqkj8u8>



the Mexican government under then president Enrique Pena Nieto, passed the so called "Education Reform Bill." Just as in the US this bill put in place tools the government could use to try and break the unions. Such as evaluations that could result in a teacher being terminated for not maintaining grade levels among their students, which are largely based on tests rather than actual learning.

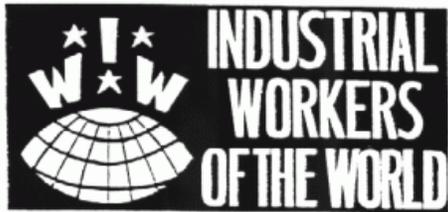
Also, the reform bill put bilingual education in place. English and Spanish. This is a problem because there

new law is not much different than the last one.

On February 11th, according to Mexico News Daily, the CNTE in Oaxaca, Section 22, announced it would suspend classes in the state for 3 days, closing schools in 800 locations. Then again on February 22nd in Mexico City teachers from Oaxaca protested against the Education Reform Law. They demand that the General Professional Teaching Service Law be canceled so that positions can be allocated to grad-

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# A UNION FOR ALL WORKERS



## *Why Join the I.W.W.?*

It does not take long to figure out that workers and their employers do not have the same interests. Workers want shorter hours, higher pay, and better benefits.

We want our work to be less boring, less dangerous, and less destructive to the environment. We want more control over how we produce goods and provide services. We want meaningful work that contributes to our communities and world.

Our employers, in contrast, want us to work longer, harder, faster, and cheaper. They want fewer safety and environmental regulations and they demand absolute control over all decisions, work schedules, speech, and actions in the workplace.

The easiest way to stand up for each other in our workplaces and communities and the easiest way to improve our working conditions is to join a union.

That is why employers fight so hard, and spend so much money, to keep unions out of their workplaces. Workers with unions generally have higher pay and job security, better benefits, and fewer scheduling problems. More pay equals fewer hours at work and more hours for enjoying the good things in life.

Nothing will change until we organize. Joining the IWW is easy. Just give us a call. The sooner you do, the sooner things will improve and the sooner we, and not the bosses, will enjoy the good things in life.

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## Education

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uates of Oaxaca's teacher training colleges in accordance with bilateral agreements between teachers and the Secretariat of Public Education.

Also, in Michoacan the CNTE Section 18, in addition to being on strike, began blockading railways towards the end of January. The blockade lasted for 24 days. The strike continues after the blockade was lifted until the back pay that the teachers are demanding is paid.

According to Mexico News Daily, supplies destined for factories in Michoacan and other parts of the country have been stranded in the ports of Lazaro Cardenas and Manzanillo, while auto makers and other manufacturers have been prevented from getting their products to the ports for export. Trains transporting gasoline have also been unable to supply parts of the country, such as Jalisco, which are still experiencing fuel shortages.

Back in the US, teachers have also been taking action in Kentucky, organized in a group called KY 120 United, in reference to the state's 120 counties, and also the teachers in WV, and their 55 strong. On the West Coast teachers in Oakland have gone on strike for a raise, smaller class sizes, more counselors and nurses for students.

All across the world teachers are standing up for themselves and showing all of the working class how it's done. It is important to have an international perspective on the class struggle because that is what the capitalists have. Workers will never be able to beat back the capitalist onslaught without challenging them internationally. Teachers all over the world need to stand together and there is hope that they will.

## *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 evergrowing 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 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.