

The Line

we are the birds of the
coming storm

educate agitate organize

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Welcome to *The Line's* one year anniversary double issue! One year ago on May 1st, 2018 we published our very 1st issue. Since then we have honed our layout and content to what you now hold in your hands. We hope you like it, and we hope that you will help the work along. Many hands make light work. If you are not a member of the IWW, we encourage you to think it over.

This International Workers' Day we hope that *The Line* has contributed in some small way to our knowledge of the past and to perhaps new ways of thinking about the strategies of today.

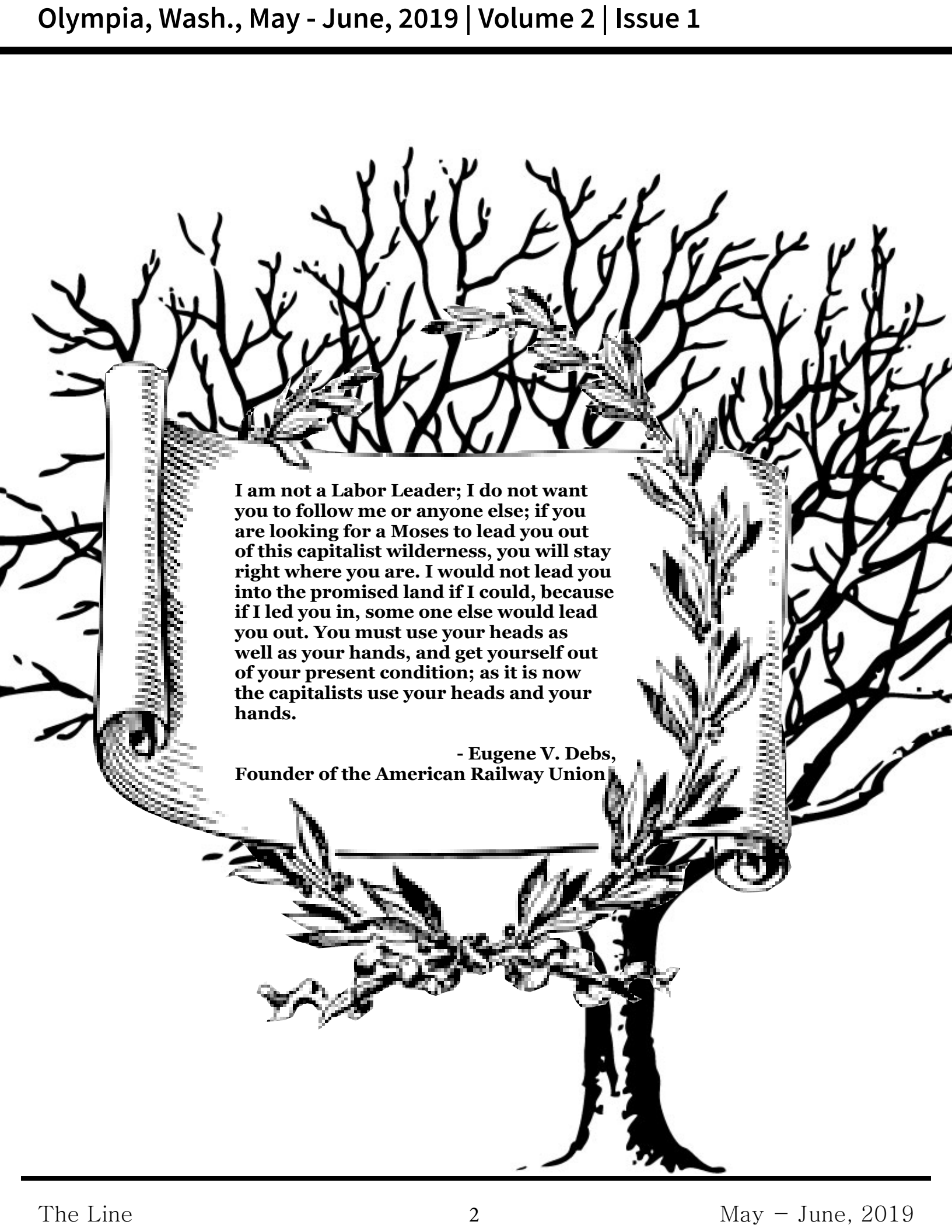
In Solidarity,
Dylan B. - Editor


The Line

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I am not a Labor Leader; I do not want you to follow me or anyone else; if you are looking for a Moses to lead you out of this capitalist wilderness, you will stay right where you are. I would not lead you into the promised land if I could, because if I led you in, some one else would lead you out. You must use your heads as well as your hands, and get yourself out of your present condition; as it is now the capitalists use your heads and your hands.

**- Eugene V. Debs,
Founder of the American Railway Union**

little big union

Workers at Little Big Burger in Portland, Oregon, are following in the footsteps of their fellow workers at Burgerville. On March 16th, at a public rally, the new union, which is called the Little Big Union, organized with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), demanded that the company recognize them by March 22nd.

If not the workers would file for a National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) election. As expected the company did not voluntarily recognize the union.

The IWW is a shop-floor union. That means that the main tactics used by the union involve workers taking action themselves on the floor to resolve their grievances. An example of this happened on the very day of the rally, the workers of Little Big Burger delivered a letter to the bosses laying out their demands.

One of the things that the workers told them is that they wanted heavy duty gloves for use when cleaning and removing the hood vents. The gloves were delivered the next day.

This may seem like a small thing, but it all fits into a bigger picture. Workers organizing and taking action themselves, as opposed to going through a binding arbitration process that waters down and delays any results.

Rather than being removed and sidelined from the process, workers are at the forefront, creating, and leading the process.

Here are the demands of the workers of the Little Big Union.

"We are the people of Little Big Burger. We are tired of poverty wages, a lack of benefits, and ongoing disrespect. We ask for you to support us in gaining basic improvements in our second home, Little Big Burger:

1. Wage Increases

With a transparent pay raise scale for workers who stay at LBB.

Tips are not wages.

2. Fair and consistent scheduling

Set schedules and two week advance notice when schedules are made and/or changed

3. Safe and Healthy workplaces

Fully stocked safety equipment, along with tools and machinery fixed or replaced in a timely manner.

4. Respectful and professional conduct from management

End to harassment, abuse and toxicity from management

5. Benefits:

Including child care, paid parental leave, quality healthcare

6. Paid sick leave and vacation time

7. Worker autonomy to refuse service to abusive/dangerous customers

Harassment based in racism, sexism, transphobia etc

8. Holiday pay

9. Transparent hiring and firing policies

An end to at-will employment and the establishment of formal process to all terminations

10. Sanctuary workplaces

A commitment from LBB to not collaborate with ICE and end the use of e-verify or other any form of checking workers' documentation status.

We work hard to maintain thriving restaurants throughout Oregon. We want Little Big Burger to give us the respect we deserve."

You can follow up on the Little Big Union on their website littlebigunion.org

And you can read more about the union, the IWW, and fast food organizing in this story from Teen Vogue

<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/fast-food-industry-workers-fight-for-their-right-to-unionize>

HAPPY THIRD BIRTHDAY BURGERSVILLE WORKERS UNION

The Burgerville Workers Union, a union of the Industrial Workers of the World, celebrated its third anniversary on April 26th. Just in the past year they have won five union elections! This has taken the hard work and effort of fellow workers on the shop floor to force Burgerville to bargaining table. The most recent of which was the Montavilla and Convention Center shops. The Montavilla shop voted 63% in favor of formally joining the union; and the Convention Center voted in favor by 67%.

BVWU, in a Facebook post, thanked all the unions that have shown their solidarity in this struggle. They said, "Time after time, every time we make the call, the Portland community answers. From rainy late-night pickets to sudden strikes, from call-ins protesting union busting to the generous donations to workers fired for organizing, the shows of solidarity from our community has been nothing short of staggering."

Also, in April the BVWU won tips for all Burgerville workers. In contract negotiations Burgerville corporate conceded to the workers demand for a tipping system at all locations. The union said of the win "though tips aren't the ideal model -- we believe corporate should pay a living wage and not rely on the goodwill of customers to sustain its workers -- tips will mean that life for Burgerville workers will be getting a little

easier." Burgerville promised they would unroll the new system in the next 1 to 2 months.

However, earlier in April a worker was fired for their union organizing activity. Fellow Worker Jairin, a union leader at the Gladstone store, was supposedly fired for "throwing out old fish." Burgerville continues its practice of union busting. But as the workers have shown again and again they are not going to just stand there and take it.

The Line stands in solidarity with our fellow workers of the Burgerville Workers Union!

WORKERS AT UBER & LYFT GO ON STRIKE

When thinking of the "Gig Economy" one often thinks of Uber and Lyft drivers. These jobs are often presented as side jobs, or hustles. Contrary to what the name, "gig," suggests these jobs are often grueling work, with long hours and low pay. Even the low level of protections that U.S. labor law normally offers do not apply to these workers because they are classified as independent contractors.

Similarly because of these things when one talks about the potential of organizing among these workers people are quick to say that it is really hard or impossible to do. It seems that this is often the sentiment when talking about work and workers who are low income in general. In other words, the workers who are the most in need of organizing are the

ones that are constantly presented with a narrative that it is impossible for them to do so.

This is nothing new. For close to 200 years poor workers have been mostly left out of the plans of mainstream or business unions. With the excuses ranging from the blunt – not wanting to organize woman and people of color – to more subtle – it is too hard to organize "unskilled workers."

Uber and Lyft workers have presented yet another opportunity for us to recognize what is right before us. That is, these workers, and others like them, are the leading force of the working class in the US.

In light of recent rate reductions (wage cuts) and the Lyft's public stock listing, Uber and Lyft drivers in southern California called for a 25 hour strike on April 1st. They also planned to picket outside of an investor meeting that was being held to talk about the stock listing.

Two groups helping to organize the strike, Rideshare Drivers United and Gig Workers Rising, said they expect upwards of 2,800 people to participate in the strike at the Uber driver hub in Los Angeles and a Lyft "road show" event for investors in San Francisco at the luxury Omni Hotel.

Gig Workers Rising, called for a higher wage and wage transparency for drivers, health care, unemployment and workers' compensation benefits, and voice at the negotiating table.

***Upcoming IWW, and other,
events in the area***

Radical Movie Night May 17th
Come and watch "Steal this Moive"
Free Snacks! Starts @ 6pm
Mixx96 corner of Washington & State



Olympia IWW Orientation
Learn about the Union!
May 4th & July 6th 3pm to 5pm
Olympia Center

Organizer's Training 101 (in Seattle)
Learn skills to organize your workplace
May 18th and 19th 8am to 5pm both days
See website for registration link

Mutual Aid Mondays
A project of Olympia Mutual Aid Partnership
Every Monday from 7pm to 8:30ish
Currently under the 4th ave bridge



See our website
for all events
and more!!
OlympiaIWW.org

STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY FOR THE STRIKES IN MEXICO

On January 25th, workers in the maquiladora plants in Matamoros, Mexico began a strike to demand a wage increase of 20% and an annual bonus of 32,000 pesos.

Since then, the movement has spread to various industries: self-service shops, mining, Coca Cola factories, metal factories, and others.

The workers' demands are just. We support the movement's demands and express our sympathy and support with the movement in its struggle to improve living conditions.

Recently, there have been strong confrontations between strikers and scabs at the Coca Cola and Mecalux factories, which unfortunately resulted in 9 injuries.

We stand against any type of harassment or a repressive end of the conflict, and send our widest support for the situation to be resolved without violence and in favor of the striking workers.

In addition, the IWW expresses complete solidarity with the strike of our fellow workers at the Independent Union of the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (SITUAM).

The 20% wage increase for all of the workers, academic as well as administrative, does not put the UAM's financial viability at risk, nor does it affect the university's substantive ac-

From the International Solidarity Commission of the IWW

activities", as the authorities are saying. On the other hand, the various bonuses and other discretionary funds that these authorities assign to themselves do put the university at risk.

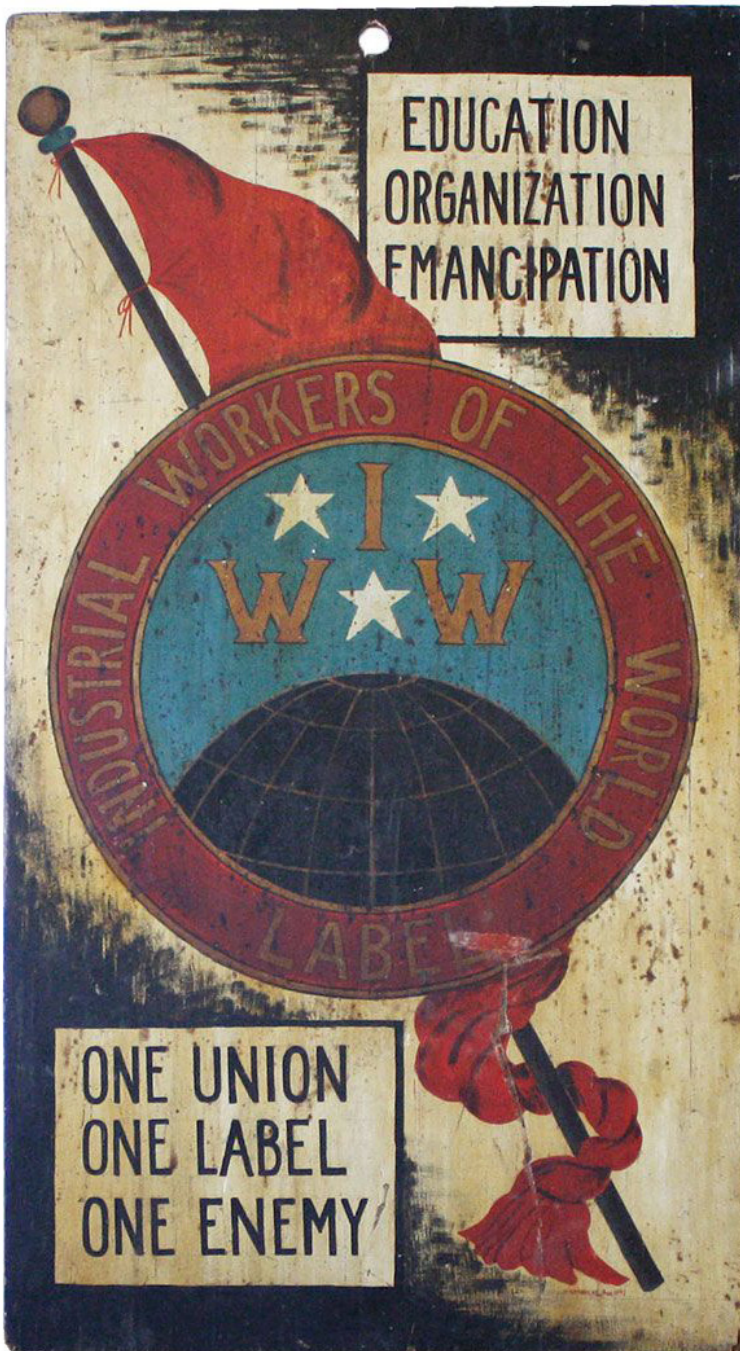
Two months have passed since the struggle for better conditions and labor rights at SITUAM began. The IWW reaffirms our support to improve these working conditions and to stick by the collective contract, as well as the wage increase. We also repudiate the short-sightedness of those who maintain control of the university and refuse to renounce their privileges.

996.ICU

Workers in China have been organizing online to fight against a terrible work schedule that has been gaining prominence in China for the past several years. It is called the 996. It refers to working from 9am to 9pm 6 days a week. The movement is called 996.ICU which comes from the idea that working this schedule will land you in the Intensive Care Unit or ICU.

The group says on its website (996.ICU), "In early 2019, Youzan (a Hangzhou-based E-commerce company) announced the company would adopt "996" work schedule in the annual convention. Bai Ya, the CEO of Youzan, responded: "This will definitely be a right decision

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Socialist Leaders Won't Save Unions

This article was originally published on organizing.work

Organizing Work is a platform for discussing workplace organizing.

In a recent piece for Jacobin, Barry Eidlin makes the case for socialist leadership of labor unions. Eidlin notes that when unions were run by socialists, they were more militant. Socialism was purged from the unions in the 1930s through 1950s, and they have become bureaucratized as a result.

Eidlin is interested in how to reignite union militancy. After all, he argues, the working class enjoys a strategic position within capitalism as “the only class that has the power to overthrow capitalism and transform society.” But making the working class into “a coherent actor capable of bringing about revolutionary change is not something that just happens.” This is why socialists have a key role to play. Without intervention from socialist forces, unions remain “reformist institutions, designed to mitigate and manage the employment relationship, not transform it.”

Ultimately, Eidlin calls for what he calls a “rank-and-file strategy,” which consists of “identifying and expanding a ‘militant minority,’” within unions. This militant minority consists of “respected, trusted shop-floor leaders” who are able to influence their coworkers. They may be socialists who strategically take jobs in key industries, or they may simply be rank-and-filers who are cultivated by socialists.

I asked Nick Driedger to respond to Eidlin’s arguments. Driedger is a former member, shop steward, Local Organizing Officer and National Organizing Coordinator for the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. He is currently the Executive Director of the Athabasca University Faculty Association and a member of the Industrial Workers of the World.

OW: Eidlin describes the decline of the labor movement and its militancy in terms of the expulsion of socialists and communists from unions during the McCarthy period. This is what caused unions to become bureaucratized and conservative. But you disagree. Why?

ND: There definitely was a decline, and the expulsions no doubt had a negative role, but there were a lot of factors, and I don’t think [McCarthyism and expulsion] was the largest one, let alone the single driving force.

There was a lot of stuff in the legislation that created the Wagner Act model [aka the National Labor Relations Board] in the U.S. and Canada that was really damaging.

If you look at the history, there were a number of socialist unions that were curtailed but not destroyed, and yet for the most part their trajectory and often their outcomes are very similar to their more conservative counterparts’.

United Electrical Workers (UEW) is still around, and they’re still ahead of the curve of the rest of the unions, but they have capitulated and made a lot of the same compromises the rest of the labor movement has.

The International Longshore Workers Union (ILWU) have definitely bureaucratized. They’re still a shining beacon compared to the rest of the labor movement, and they weathered the storm to a certain degree, but in all honesty they have been compromised pretty seriously, as far as the strategy and the notion of a social mission.

I also think that Canada is really useful to look at here, because Canada is under a very similar labor relations framework, and went through a similar era of McCarthyism, but it wasn’t nearly as harsh. So the socialist leadership in the trade unions was much stronger.

There were some unions that were wiped out, like the Canadian Merchant Seamen’s Union; the Mine,

Mill and Smelter Workers were almost obliterated; the One Big Union was almost completely wiped out. But some unions also managed to survive the McCarthyist era, and there were even some socialist unions that arose after this period, like the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), or SORWUC, which was a feminist, socialist union that organized bank tellers and restaurants and other largely women-dominated industries.

Ultimately, these unions fought back and in some cases even beat “McCarthyism” but still succumbed to the same pressures as in the U.S. Not from a populist, right-wing witch hunt, but from the slow and steady system of incentives by technocrats in the political center and sometimes even center-left.

SORWUC, for example, met initial support but was starved of solidarity under the guise of jurisdictional fights with other unions in the Canada Labour Congress (CLC), but really that was about politics and “respon-

sible" unionism.

So I don't think you can just say that it was the McCarthyism and the anti-communist affidavits, and the wiping out of, as he terms it, "the militant minority," that did it alone. That was certainly the more dramatic element, but there was a whole slew of things, and in a lot of ways I think it was the more mundane parts of the Wagner Act model that really disincentivized socialist or militant politics in unions.

OW: What were those more mundane parts of the Wagner Act model that disincentivized militancy?

ND: One of them is that unions are "single-party states" – this is a phrase that I am stealing from Martin Glaberman, who wrote about the decline of the United Auto Workers in this era, and their collapse into a more bureaucratic kind of unionism. Unions became a de facto winner-takes-all regime with no politically diverse perspectives. And sure, that means that socialists were wiped out.

But remember: a lot of the time, socialists were the ones wiping other socialists out! The communist party unions were slitting the throats of socialist party unions. The IWW was done in as much by other unions as it was by the employer. And many of the other, subsequent attempts at socialist unions were too. The CIO had ruthless politics between themselves and the AFL, and even between factions within the CIO.

So this winner-takes-all system where unions became less politically contested terrain, and where unions were forced into a situation of becoming politically unitary bodies, definitely played a negative role.

But the other things disincentivizing militancy were grievance proce-

dures that end in mandatory arbitration, NLRB-supervised strikes and lockouts, and the role all of that plays in policing the union. This incentivized a certain kind of trade union politics. When certification becomes the goal, instead of being an organic expression of working-class discontent, that allows the state to shape and mold union politics in the image it wants, to get the trade unions it desires. It's a much less heavy-handed labor regime than exists in other countries, but it's no less interventionist and it has very similar goals, namely: unions are supposed to be the loyal opposition to industry.

So it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when you say [paraphrasing Eidlín] "unions are limited in the horizon of consciousness that they can achieve," or "without socialist intervention, they'll never become part of a wider socialist mission."

OW: How does it become a self-fulfilling prophecy to say that "unions are limited"?

ND: There are two dominant views of unions on the socialist left, and both of them essentially stem from Lenin's idea of "trade union consciousness."

One of them is that only the political party is a vehicle for mass struggle. Unions are a good breeding ground for recruits for the party, but they are fundamentally compromised and limited.

And the other one is that unions are a vehicle for mass struggle, but can only become that under socialist leadership and through intervention from a socialist party.

Eidlín takes the second position. He acknowledges that there are limits to trade union consciousness – that unions are, as he puts it, an inherent part of the capitalist structure and

necessarily capitalistic in their own right – and socialists need to intervene.

But the problem here is that socialists have been as much a tool of completely gutting the unions as their bureaucratic rivals.

OW: Give me an example of socialists gutting unions.

ND: By "gutting unions" I don't mean getting rid of unions, but stripping them of their socialist political content – the political struggle, and political analysis of work.

Probably the best example comes from my own experience, CUPW. This union came out of the militancy of the 1960s and 1970s. It stood as a very radically democratic union, similar to UEW or ILWU. It had a rank-and-file insurgent component that was very strong, and a direct action emphasis on the floor that was pretty unique in the labor movement at the time, especially in Canada, but also for the U.S.

As CUPW developed, though, and as it became more rooted and stronger, there were political fights. The Canadian state became very concerned. They raided the union's offices at one point, hauling out boxes of documents.

The mainstream media would routinely denounce the union as communists, which wasn't entirely untrue – there were a lot of communists in the leadership. And that pressure eventually incentivized a certain kind of trade union leader.

There was a new wave of people, by the 1980s, who felt that CUPW had far too rough-and-tumble of an image, that postal workers were far too associated with violence and being insubordinate, and this insurgent group, which came frankly from the

rank and file – because every union officer usually starts in the rank and file – started to make CUPW more respectable. But also, on the other side of that, the Canada Labour Congress was saying – not openly in public, but openly enough in the halls of the house of labor – that if CUPW did not step in line, they would start starving them of support, or making moves to kick CUPW out of the CLC and raid them out of existence.

So, under that pressure, CUPW steadily started electing “more responsible leadership.” And this was all thoroughly “democratic” – all of these officers were elected, and even now CUPW only pays their officers the going rate for the work they would be performing as postal workers, and not the work they would be performing as “labor relations specialists.” But this [pressure towards electing “more responsible leadership”] has eroded CUPW. For example, it now has a tiered contract.

People get very upset when you point that out, but the simple fact is that people before a certain seniority date have a different wage grid and pension scheme than people after a certain seniority date. And this was a union that was born in militancy, developed in militancy. The leadership was openly, often stridently socialist. They had those politics.

We’re not talking about a militant minority or reform caucus. Leadership was rotated among a cluster of leftist factions. This was not right-wing bureaucrats holding the union back (although there was often plenty of that kind of rhetoric about political opponents).

The simple fact is that everybody on there were socialists. People who were part of communist parties or Trotskyist political groups, or refugees from other countries who came

out of revolutionary traditions there, like Chile and India and the Philippines. And they were subject to the same pressures. And the results have been not as bad [as elsewhere in the labor movement], but they are more or less the same.

OW: So the bottom line is that there are structural reasons why unions become bureaucratized. It’s not because the socialists lose positions of leadership.

ND: It can’t just be reduced to positions of leadership, and it can’t just be reduced to a political minority. CUPW did not have a socialist minority. There is a socialist hegemony in that union, even today. There is a general framework, in their constitution, in their bylaws, in the debates on the convention floor, of socialist politics of a mass character.

OW: And yet CUPW leadership will allow their workers to be legislated back to work, for example?

ND: Well exactly. And ultimately, if you look at the penalties for it – the officers are facing hundred-thousand-dollar-a-day fines and all that – this isn’t timidity or a lack of moral fiber. There is a necessity of breaking those laws and fighting back, but you can’t just simply write [the union officers’ reaction] off as bureaucratization.

OW: Explain to me how you and Eidlin differ. Because towards the very end of his article, he says elected

union officials have specific, material reasons why they can’t be militant: they need to “deliver” their side of the bargain with management, i.e. to talk workers down, and they can’t put the union’s long-term existence in jeopardy with things like injunctions and fines and jail time. But then he says “this does not mean that union staff and leaders have no role to play in a rank-and-file strategy.”

“So, go out, organize, fight against the boss, get concessions, watch how the legal system grinds you up and diverts you, and point it out. That should be the starting-point of your political analysis, and the most salient, relevant aspect of it.”

ND: What Eidlin is actually saying — and it’s hard for me not to engage in a strawman if I’m going to present his argument — but probably what he is saying is that there is a breeding ground for militancy and revolutionary consciousness in union struggles, but unions can’t actually solve this problem.

There’s this dichotomy in a lot of socialist politics that goes back to Lenin, where the union represents everything limited and particular, but, for some reason, political parties are imagined not to be subject to these limits, and instead represent a universal interest.

This just strikes me as absurd. First off, they’re not talking narrowly-defined electoral political parties; they’re talking about sophisticated groups with a political program. But even then, the simple fact is, if you’re leading the struggle, you’re going to be subject to the same pressures. And frankly, you’re going to make the same compromises. When these parties are in state power,

they make the same compromises. Labour Militant, in Liverpool, had to make compromises in order to maintain power on Liverpool City Council. This was a Trotskyist group that's considered one of the templates. Syriza in Greece had to capitulate to the Troika.

There isn't an ideological answer to pressures and to capitulation and struggle. These are strategic questions. And it doesn't actually help to say, "Well the unions are compromised, they're an inherent part of capitalism, they have a horizon of possibility and interest, but the party represents our ability to transcend and move past that."

OW: What's your answer to the alleged reformist nature of unions? I take it you disagree with him that unions are bounded, limited, reformist organizations.

ND: It's not so much that unions aren't bounded, limited, reformist organizations; it's that any organization under capitalism that fails to topple capitalism runs the risk of collapsing into a bounded, compromised, reformist project. That is no different for a tenant's union, a political party, a theory group, a left-wing think tank, or for anything else. This is just the nature of struggle and power.

We are all struggling and trying to find a way to push past the limits of what we have right now. But I think that there is far, far more potential in trade unions than what they are currently realizing, and I think far more potential than any of the political parties can actually deliver.

Because it's not actually a matter of thinking through the problem or having the correct analysis. It's about organizing the working class so that they can wield the power that they have, the power that's inherent in

their structural position within capitalism, to push for demands, build power, and put more of the wealth they produce – and more of society – under their own democratic control.

What limits unions, and what makes it difficult, is the legal framework that's imposed on them, because it incentivizes a certain kind of unionism that makes them narrow and sectionally focused. It rewards that behavior.

OW: Eidlin seems to be describing just that – building the power of the working class – when he talks about the "rank-and file strategy" and the "militant minority" and radical caucuses. He says that part of the idea of the rank-and file strategy is for socialists to get jobs in "core" industries, but then he also says there's a broader sense of rank-and file strategy, which is that you have an expanding militant layer in the working class and in workplaces, that has this ability to move their peers to action. So tell me where you disagree with that, or what you would take issue with there.

ND: I think first off the issue is: what do you do with that? You organize your coworkers, you kick the bureaucrats out, and you take over the union...

OW: Then what?

ND: Note that this is not something that hasn't been accomplished anywhere. It has. And it leads to the same dynamic that I described with the postal workers (CUPW). There may be some initial gains, there may be an improvement over the previous attempts, but because you're failing to break with that labor relations regime, ultimately, you get ground up, and to a certain degree, you're just waiting and occupying those officer positions until the next



upstart group of radicals comes along and displaces you.

Or the next upstart group of conservatives! Because the conservatives are just as happy to call an incumbent a "bureaucrat" as the radicals are. And a lot of workers will nod sagely and be like, "yeah, they're bureaucrats."

OW: Why can't militants stay militant once they get into power?

ND: I think part of it is, people have unrealistic expectations of what union office actually gives you. People think that leadership is a matter of having the sash and the tiara, that by virtue of getting elected to a position, you have all this credibility, and everybody's going to listen to you – and it's simply not true.

You need to actually, simply organize the floor. And it's not that you can't do it as a union officer, but it's also not the case that being a union officer contributes to it. So if you think that becoming a union officer is going to help you organize, when you are unable to organize prior to that, you're in for a hell of a shock.

Really, what needs to happen, is people need to organize the floor. And again, I don't think that they need to organize the floor as a socialist minority. I think the more socialists the better, fine. And socialists should be open and vocal about their politics, and that they're going to have re-

ception among the working class. The simple fact is, there's a lot of latent socialist sentiment in the working class by virtue of the way capitalism structures their work and their lives. This isn't a total spontaneity, obviously – political groups have a role in all of this – but I also think that it's a real danger to underestimate what's already going on in working people's day-to-day lives, and the dynamic that's going on.

So, go out, organize, fight against the boss, get concessions, watch how the legal system grinds you up and diverts you, and point it out. That should be the starting-point of your political analysis, and the most salient, relevant aspect of it. You need to actually get into the thick of it, and get ground up, and actually see the dynamic, the way the system hurts people, in order to illustrate it, because otherwise you're just stuck with vague Trotskyist terms like "bourgeois legality" and stuff like that. Instead of actually saying, "No, this is how the labor board actually intervenes, and takes us out at the knees."

OW: What is the difference between the "militant minority" strategy Eidlin talks about and your strategy of "organizing the floor"? What do you want to see happen?

ND: You need to organize people at work, with the goal of getting everybody in on job actions. Direct action that takes on the boss directly. And the union does not actually have that much to contribute to that. If you've got a union contract in place, by all means, rely on the discipline language to protect against retaliation, but the grievance procedure is going to do everything it can to hamstring your activity, because it exists to supplant that.

So, taking over the grievance machine – which is what most unions

are: the grievance and contract-negotiation machine – doesn't actually contribute to the direct action. You need to actually organize actions on the floor and build infrastructure around that.

I think that Eidlin has a very set strategy. Because almost every group that, again, comes from Lenin has a kind of pat strategy that's not that dissimilar to this: you run for union office, preferably on a slate, you and your comrades, you do the local right and run it in a socialist manner. And the workers come and they see that your party provides the proper leadership and backs your party, and your party grows and expands. And the more it grows and expands, the more you recruit, and the closer you are to revolution. I think that's the formula.

For me, it's: you get involved in struggles, you bring everybody in, and you build organizations through those struggles, and you draw out the revolutionary politics that are latent in those struggles themselves. You build those revolutionary politics and you develop them, you build alliances with other struggles in other workplaces and other social movements, and you push that agenda forward that way, while keeping the basis of the organization, the ideological development, and the political leadership grounded in the actions and struggles and setbacks themselves. And you don't offer easy answers or abstract "political" solutions to concrete, immediate problems.

MILITIA ILLEGALLY DETAIN PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM AT THE BORDER

A group calling themselves the "United Constitutional Patriots" stopped a group of people near the border on April 19th.

The American Civil Liberties Union described the "United Constitutional Patriots" as an "armed fascist military organization" in a letter to the governor and attorney general.

Militias have a long history in the United States. You could see them starting with the constitution itself. Or with the Militia Act of 1903 that created the National Guard. You could see them in vigilantes that would beat union workers and run them out of town.

People coming to the United States to seek asylum should not only be allowed to do so, but it is also legal. When the right wing says that people are "abusing" the system, what they mean is that they are using it and that they are not white. These so called militias patrolling the border have been doing it for a while. But they have been emboldened by Trump and his hateful rhetoric.

Heidi Beirich, director of the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Project told the BBC "Although these groups have always hated the federal government, they're pretty big fans of Donald Trump, so they're in an awkward position where they support Trump but believe there's a deep state conspiracy against him."

The members of these militias range from people who support the 2nd amendment and believe there is a conspiracy to take their guns to people who are white supremacist and marched with the Nazis in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2016.

996.ICU

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when we look back in a few years.”

“In mid-March 2019, it was reported that JD.com (a major E-commerce company) started adopting “996” or “995” work schedules in some departments. The PR posted that (Our culture is) to devote ourselves wholeheartedly (to achieve the business objectives) via Maimai (a Chinese real-name business social network platform).

“Gaining more publicity only recently, this work schedule, however, has long been a known “secret” practiced in a lot of companies in China.”

They go on to say,

“According to Chinese Labor Law, employees who follow the “996” work schedule deserve to be paid 2.275 times of their base salary. Unfortunately, people who work under “996” rarely receive overtime pay.”

Workers at GitHub have shown solidarity by circulating an internal letter, urging Microsoft to stand up to any potential pressure from the Chinese government.

Here is the letter, which is also available in Mandarin (<https://github.com/MSWorkers/support.996.ICU>)

>>>>>>>

”

Tech workers in China started a GitHub repository titled 996.ICU, a reference to the grueling and illegal working hours of many tech companies in China – from 9am to 9pm, 6 days a week. “By following the ‘996’ work schedule, you are risking yourself getting into the ICU (Intensive Care Unit),” says the 996.ICU GitHub project description. The project calls for Chinese tech companies to obey the labor laws in China and the international labor convention.

This initiative has garnered massive support within China. GitHub users have been starring the repository as a way of showing their support. In the span of a few weeks, the project has been starred over 200,000 times, making it one of the fastest growing GitHub repositories in the service’s history.

The code-sharing platform GitHub, owned by Microsoft, is a place for developers to save, share, and collaborate on software projects. Most important for the 996.ICU movement is that GitHub is accessible in China. It is the dominant platform for developers to collaborate and is a crucial part of Chinese tech companies’ daily operations. Since going viral, Chinese domestic browsers, such as those by Tencent and Alibaba, have restricted access to the 996.ICU repository on their web browsers, warning users that the repository contains illegal or malicious content. We must entertain the possibility that Microsoft and GitHub will be pressured to remove the repository as well.

In response to these events, we, the workers of Microsoft and GitHub, support the 996.ICU movement and stand in solidarity with tech workers in China. We know this is a problem that crosses national borders. These same issues permeate across full time and contingent jobs at Microsoft and the industry as a whole. Another reason we must take a stand in solidarity with Chinese workers is that history tells us that multinational companies will pit workers against each other in a race to the bottom as they outsource jobs and take advantage of weak labor standards in the pursuit of profit. We have to come together across national boundaries to ensure just working conditions for everyone around the globe.

We encourage Microsoft and GitHub to keep the 996.ICU GitHub repository uncensored and available to everyone.

Signed,
374 tech workers*

*All the names of the signers are listed on the website.

Throughout the spring of 1919, Winnipeg had been buzzing with the fervour of militant unionism among the working class. The city had witnessed a general strike the year previously, which had ended with partial gains for workers. Unemployment was high, wages were low and conditions poor. Soldiers returning from Europe after World War I were met with the fact that while they had been risking their lives in the trenches, companies at home had been making large profits from war contracts.

These conditions, coupled with the still fresh memories of the events of Russia in 1917, the successes of the One Big Union idea championed by the Industrial Workers of the World union in the United States (especially the general strike in Seattle that had occurred in the February of 1919) which acted as an example to many workers, created a confrontation between labour and capital that would come to a head with a general strike.

In March of 1919, labour leaders responded to the calls of workers with a meeting in Calgary, to discuss the formation of a One Big Union to win improvements in wages and conditions, as well as union recognition, which many workers didn't have.

Due to Canada's virtually non-existent labour laws of the time, union recognition could only be

officially recognized if an employer voluntarily decided to recognize the union, or through strike action by workers. The immediate catalyst to the general strike was a conflict between the unions of building and metal workers, who had grouped together respectively under the Building and Metals Trades Councils, and their employers at the Winnipeg Builder's Exchange.

The worker's representatives of the Building Trades Council demanded higher wages and improved conditions. However, their employers refused to recognize the union and would not enter negotiations, so a strike was launched on May 1.

With employers still refusing to enter negotiations with the union the next day, workers from the three leading metalworks factories in Winnipeg joined the builders on strike.

On May 6, the Building and Metal Trades Councils asked the much larger Winnipeg Trades and Labour Council (WTLC) for assistance with the strike and its members were balloted as to whether to strike in support of the striking builders and metalworkers.

The results of the ballot were released on May 13, with members of the WTLC voting overwhelm-

100 years ago Workers in Winnipeg went on strike

ingly for a general strike. The results surprised even the leaders of the WTLC, who expected solid support for the strike from the traditionally strong unions of railwaymen, foundry workers and factory workers, but found very strong support from other sectors, such as the fire fighters, cooks and waiters, tailors and even the police union.

The general strike was called on the 15th and a Central Strike Committee, comprised of elected members of unions affiliated to the WTLC, was set up to oversee the action and to make sure essential services still operated. Between 30-35,000 workers were on strike on the 15th, with union members being joined by thousands of non-union workers.

A counter-strike committee known as the Citizen's Committee of 1000 was almost immediately set up, which was essentially a group of Winnipeg's wealthiest industrialists, lawyers, bankers and politicians.

Rather unsurprisingly, the Citizen's Committee, together with local newspapers (most of whose employees were on strike) launched a campaign against the strike in an attempt to discredit the actions of the workers, blaming the strike on "Bolsheviks", "alien scum" and "bohunks". Papers ran cartoons showing bomb throwing hook-nosed Jews and the New York



Times ran a headline of “Bolshevism Invades Canada”. There was of course no evidence to suggest that European workers had been in any way involved in leading the Winnipeg strike. The Citizen’s Committee also dismissed most of the city’s police force and installed their own militia since the Committee could not rely on the police force as the majority of police officers were striking.

As word of the strike spread, workers in other towns and cities across Canada declared themselves in solidarity with the Winnipeg strike and many strikes were announced in Brandon, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Regina, Vancouver, New Westminster, Victoria and up to 20 other towns.

Fearing the growing number of strikes and unrest across the country, the Federal Government decided to intervene and on May 22 sent the Labour Minister, Gideon Decker Robertson, and the Interior Minister, Arthur Meighen to meet with the Citizen’s Committee and local government officials. An invitation to meet with the Strike Committee was declined. Upon the advice of the ministers, the government swiftly ordered all federal employees back to work or face dismissal, amended the Immigration Act so that British born workers could be deported and had the criminal code’s definition of sedition broadened.

On May 30, members of the police force were told to sign a contract to prevent them from joining unions, they refused, but said that they would still maintain law and order. A few days later the entire police force

was fired. June 1 saw the arrival of 100,000 soldiers home from Europe, who marched upon the mayor’s office to declare themselves in solidarity with the strikers. The broadening of the sedition act led to the arrest of 10 strike leaders on June 17, as well as numerous arrests under the changed immigration laws. Rioting occurred throughout cities where strikes were being held, and over half of those arrested were freed.

To protest the arrest of the strike leaders, thousands of workers converged on Market Square in downtown Winnipeg on June 21 whereupon they were read the Riot Act by the mayor, who then called on the North West Mounted Police to disperse the strikers. As the mounted police charged, the crowds scattered into alleyways and side streets off the square, where they were met by “special police” who had been deputized by the city during the strike. Armed with baseball bats and other weaponry provided by local retailers, the special police fought with strikers. During the ensuing chaos 30 strikers were injured, and two were killed, the day becoming known as Bloody Saturday.

With troops occupying the streets, the combined force of local government and the employers forced the strike to end on June 25, six of the arrested strike leaders were released soon after. The remaining arrested men were convicted of “conspiracy to overthrow the government” and faced jail terms of six months to two years.

Labour militancy continued to act as a strong force in Canada through-

out the early 1920s, especially in the coal mines of Alberta and Nova Scotia where a series of confrontations occurred into the mid-1920s. The labour movement eventually succumbed to the damage of anti-union campaigning, employers and government using the Red Scare to discredit the unions, and many factory employers setting up shop committees, from where they could monitor their employees activities carefully.

For six weeks during the summer of 1919, the working class of Winnipeg withdrew their labour from their employers and participated in the largest strike action in Canadian labour history, with support in the form of strikes and protests occurring across the whole of Canada, involving hundreds of thousands of workers. Although defeated and demoralized, the strikers of Winnipeg who, instead of asking of their employers what was rightfully theirs, took strike action and demanded it, were instrumental in laying the foundations for the improvements in conditions, wages and union recognition rights which occurred in Canada over the next 30 years.

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EMANCIPATION

LABOR IS ENTITLED TO ALL IT PRODUCES

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.

ORGANIZATION

EDUCATION

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