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Fellow Workers!

In the past two months there have been strikes all over the United States and all over the world! You will hear about some of them in this issue. This November 11th is also the 100th anniversary of the Centralia Tragedy - when the American Legion attack one of our union's labor halls in Centralia, Washington and lynched one of our fellow workers. It is our history that makes us who we are but it is what we do now that defines us. There is a better world coming if we just continue to fight for it. There are not many monuments around marking the struggles of our class, but what is not written in stone is written blood.

In Solidarity,
Dylan B. - Editor


The Line

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CHICAGO TEACHERS STRIKE

After a 14 day strike, the Chicago Teacher’s Union (CTU) has won a historic victory. The teachers went on strike on October 17th after months of negotiations with the city.

In addition to pay increases and decreased class sizes, the tentative agreement also includes, but is not limited to, a social worker in every school, every day; a nurse in every school, every day; more case managers; a full-time homeless student coordinator in all schools with 75 or more homeless students and two full-time positions with 140 or more homeless students.

In contrast to what the CTU demanded and despite the city having for years the ways and means to provide these concessions without a strike or loss in student learning, the City of Chicago has been erecting skyscrapers and has allowed for contractors to build expensive and impractical housing that most people in the city find incredibly unattainable.

You can read a summary of the tentative agreement at ww.ctulocal1.org.

Teachers in Chicago still need to ratify the contract before it would go into effect.

The CTU ran a very open and transparent strike and negotiation. The union gave frequent updates to its members on what was going on at the table and convened its House of Delegates several times. The House

of Delegates is made up of 700 members, all elected from the different schools within the city.

Teachers around the country have been on strike and taking action more and more in recent years. A lot of people point to the West Virginia teacher’s strike as the initial spark for this ongoing movement.

While the West Virginia state-wide

“ **This city has subsidized the construction of skyscrapers. Taxpayers in the city of Chicago have paid for skyscrapers that the 99 percent of them have never been in. The City of Chicago is literally building a playground for wealthy people in Lincoln Park to have a good time, and students do not have homes. This is a question of morality.**
 -Stacy Davis Gates, vice president of the Chicago Teachers Union

teacher’s strike was certainly historic, teachers in Chicago have been putting in a lot of work over the years to push for the kind of gains they have made. The CTU also had a strike in 2012 after outing their leadership and reconstructing their union.

UNITED AUTO WORKERS STRIKE

The United Auto Workers went on strike against the Detroit automaker General Motors on September 16th after talks which started back in July broke down. On October 16th, a tentative agreement was reached and later ratified, ending a 40 day strike.

This was the first strike for UAW in 12 years and the longest in nearly 50 years. Many issues had led up to the strike. During the recession, which began in 2007, the workers reluctantly agreed to a tiered wage system because the company said they were nearing bankruptcy.

Fast forward to 2018 and the compa-

ny is very profitable again, however the workers are still stuck with the two tier wage system and the use of temporary workers. On top of all this, GM announced in the later half of 2018 that they would be cutting jobs and closing several plants. With their contract coming up for renegotiation the workers were frustrated and upset by all of these issues.

During most of the strike it seemed that the company and the union were far apart in what they wanted. However, there was not much that was said about the bargaining during the strike. The union was tight lipped, but the company did attempt to shape the media narrative.

In leaking information, the company appeared more generous than they really were, misleading the workers to believe that their demands were being fairly met and negotiated.

The deal has been hailed by the union and the press as largely a win for the workers. However, while there are some positive aspects to the new contract there are also several concessions.

The agreement was narrowly passed by the workers and in some locals, failed altogether. While the strike was very long, it seems that UAW actually gave in early when they had the company somewhat over a barrel, there is not a clear reason why.

The workers did get a signing bonus that will make up for some of the money they lost during the strike.

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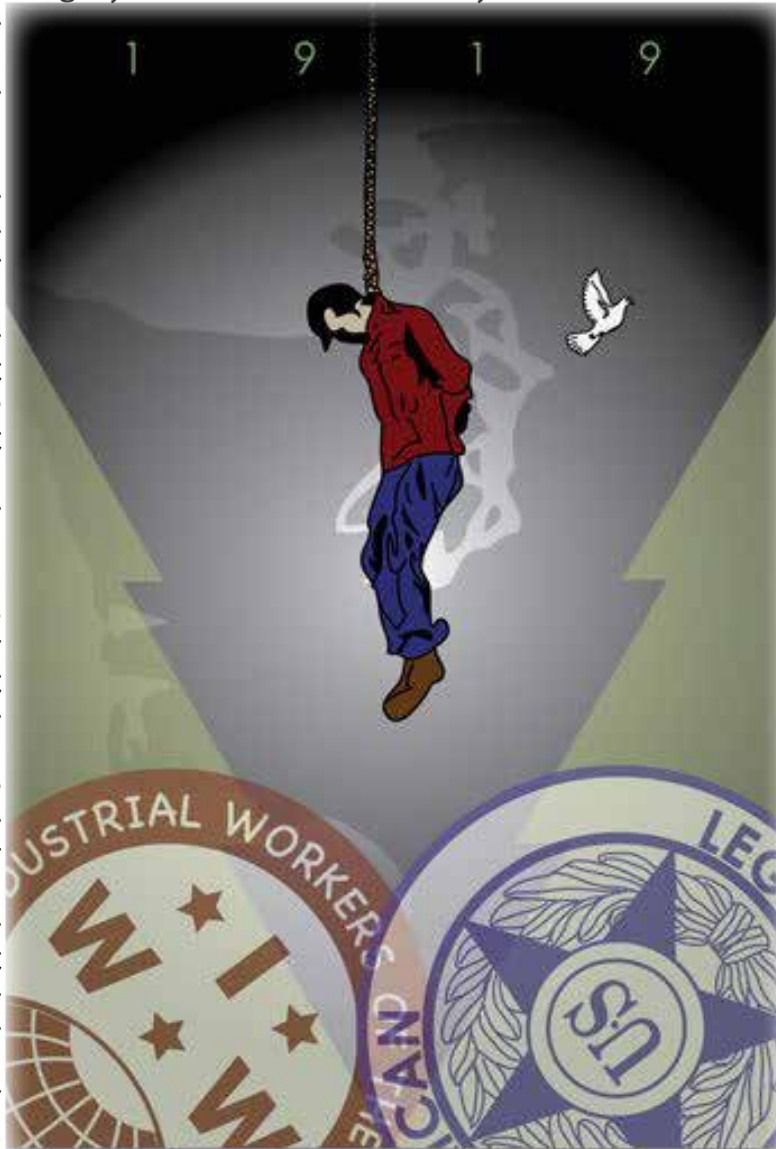
What the hell happened in Centralia? AKA The Centralia Tragedy.

The history of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) is filled with tragedy, as well as victory. For some reason a lot of these events took place in the month of November and several of them took place here in the Northwest. One of these such events is known as the Centralia Tragedy. What follows is a brief history of that event which will have its 100th anniversary this year.

Even to this day some people still have strong feelings about the Tragedy. For a longtime there has been a monument to the American Legion. The side that attacked and lynched the wobblies. While only about ten years ago was a mural created in Centralia recognizing the tragedy as such.

The American Legion in its early years was little better than a collection of fascist sympathizers and organized vigilantes. In 1923, a just a few years after the Centralia Tragedy, American Legion Commander Alvin Owsley cited Italian Fascism as a model for defending the nation against the forces of the left. Owsley said: "If ever needed, The American Legion stands ready to protect our country's institutions and ideals as the Fascisti dealt with the deconstructionists who menaced Italy!... The American Legion is fighting every element that threatens our democratic government – Soviets, anarchists, IWW, revolutionary socialists and every other red... Do not forget that the Fascisti are to Italy what The American Legion is to the United States."

So this gives you an idea of what kind of people the Legion was made up of. November 11th 1919 was the 1st anniversary of the end of World War I. Then it was known as Armistice day. Today it is known as Veterans Day. That war was also called the war to end all wars. That clearly wasn't the



case so they later had to celebrate the end of other wars. Or just celebrate war, who can tell.

Anyway, in Centralia that day the Legion, as well as some other groups, had planned a parade. There had been talk that they would try and attack the IWW union hall. So the wob-

blies were somewhat prepared. We should note that there were veterans of WWI on the union side as well. Particularly Wesley Everest. As the parade went down the street where the union hall was. It stopped in front. Legion members stormed the hall. As I said the wobblies were not entirely caught by surprise. They opened fire at the invaders. Also, across the street on a hill union members had been stationed with guns to set up a cross fire, if the Legion attacked.

A mob further attacked and burned out the union hall. Everest was one who fled the hall as it was being attacked. He was eventually caught and was dragged back to town to be lynched, however, the police intervened and put him in jail. Later that night vigilantes/legion members went into the jail, without resistance, and took Everest to a railroad bridge that crosses the Chehalis River.

Everest was hung twice from the bridge because the first time his neck didn't break. After that the mob used their cars to spotlight him and they took turns shooting at him. Some time in the night the body was cut down and taken back to the jail where it was put back in the cell with his friends for the rest of the night.

Of course since the wobblies were the ones that were attacked 12 of them were indicted for murder and six of them were later convicted.

This is what happen in Centralia.

UAW

Cont. from Page 2

However, this is less of a gain than is just a maintaining of the status quo. Several plants are still closing, including the Lordstown plant – which was one of the main issues in the strike.

There was lots of talk in the media about how much GM was losing during the strike with some talk about how much the workers were losing

since the state wide strike in West Virginia in early 2018.

That same year nearly 500,000 workers walked off their jobs, the highest number since 1986, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. While we would argue that the union could have gotten more in the outcome of the strike – the strike itself is important. It shows that these workers were and are willing to stand up for themselves and that others will support them. It

ensures that the companies are not setting the tone of the public outlook and do not have the opportunity to mislead union members and the public.

Many of the concessions made by the union leaders were coupled by the fact that many were ousted for corrupt dealings.

“There’s a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious—makes you so sick at heart—that you can’t take part. You can’t even passively take part. And you’ve got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you’ve got to make it stop. And you’ve got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people who own it that unless you’re free, the machine will be prevented from working at all.”

— Mario Savio

in pay. This interesting dichotomy shows how much a company like GM makes off of its workers.

GM lost somewhere between 3 to 4 billion during the strike, while workers lost roughly 276 million. This strike was across all GM plants in the United States. The workers do all of the work. Every single GM plant was idled.

We can see that during these 40 days the company would have made 3 to 4 billion while only paying its workers 276 million. All those billions of dollars going to company simply for being owners and doing no work. Despite costing the company nearly 4 billion, GM is reporting that they will still turn a profit in the 3rd quarter.

UAW workers largely had a lot of support during the strike with the prospective being one of sympathy towards the workers. This seems to owe a lot to the on going teacher strikes that have been happening

also proves how the model of organizing and bargaining that the UAW uses is more than outdated.

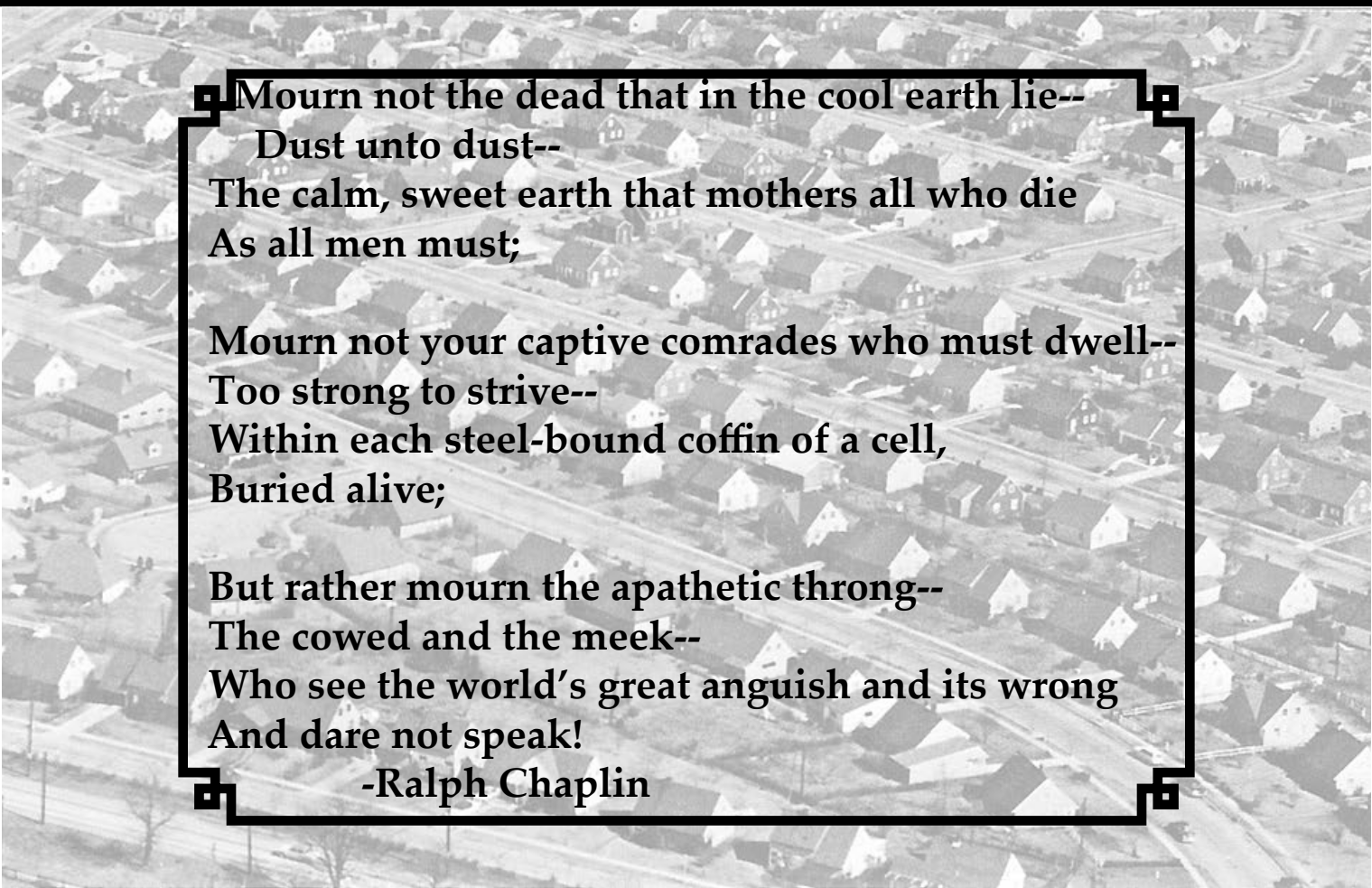
There are important lessons to be learned from both the UAW strike and the Teachers Union Strike: an open and communicative flow of information from those that are bargaining with the companies to those that put their trust and livelihoods into the unions hands should know where the union is standing at all times.

Having current and accurate information allows for the workers and their sympathizers to rally and make decisions in real time on what concessions should and should not be made.

In having open communication with all union workers, the union itself will know what the workers need and in turn the workers will know that their backs are being watched while standing together against the machine. The union should also be openly communicating with union friendly jour-

A major and effective lesson that the UAW could take from the Chicago Teacher’s Union strike is in 2012 the CTU ousted their leaders and reconstructed the union, paving the way for transparent and communicative leadership. Despite the losses made by the closed-door bargaining, the strike was an incredible demonstration of the power of the worker. In solidarity, the workers of the GM plants were able to completely stall production and stand together with the support of their neighbors.

We ourselves have to remember the awesome power of the worker and how we are the blood that keeps the machine pumping. Without us it all comes to a stop.



**Mourn not the dead that in the cool earth lie--
Dust unto dust--
The calm, sweet earth that mothers all who die
As all men must;**

**Mourn not your captive comrades who must dwell--
Too strong to strive--
Within each steel-bound coffin of a cell,
Buried alive;**

**But rather mourn the apathetic throng--
The cowed and the meek--
Who see the world's great anguish and its wrong
And dare not speak!**

-Ralph Chaplin

UPDATE ON THE MINERS IN HARLAN COUNTY

In our last issue we reported on miners in Harlan County Kentucky, historically known as Bloody Harlan for labor wars in the 1970s and 30s, who blocked a train load of coal that they had mined from leaving because the company they worked for, Blackjewel, had declared bankruptcy.

Workers learned in the middle of a shift that Blackjewel was shutting down and putting everyone out of work. The workers did not receive their last paycheck and the two previous paychecks bounced.

The miners blocked the tracks for about two months. Now their blockade is over, with most of the miners having to find other jobs and some of them being forced to move to find work. However, Blackjewel has now been forced by federal courts to pay about 1,100 workers around \$5.1 million in unpaid wages.

Other workers are not so fortunate in cases like these. Companies often use bankruptcy to shed union contracts or debt. The court will prioritize the debts that the company owes

and workers are normally on the bottom. This is not dissimilar to the share cropping days of the South.

After Reconstructions the laws in the South were written to benefit the land owners (who had been the plantation owners) so that they got their part of the crop first and their debts were paid first during the harvest. The share cropper who worked the land had their part last if their was any left.

The more things change the more they stay the same.

UNION-MADE PIZZA? IN PORTLAND, WOBBLIES SERVE A FAIR SLICE

Originally appearing on nwlaborpress.org
by Don McIntosh

In September, all 13 workers at Scottie's Pizza at 2128 SE Division Street in Portland signed a petition announcing their decision to unionize with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), the storied union whose members are known as Wobblies.

On Sept. 22, half of them delivered the petition to owner Scottie Rivera ... and found him happy to recognize the union. It wasn't a big surprise: When Rivera opened the parlor in 2015, he won acclaim for paying employees at least \$15 an hour. The business also provides health benefits, free shift meals and beverages, and an annual stipend for safe work footwear. Walls in the restaurant's tiny dining area are covered with political posters and framed photos of lefty luminaries.

"The general attitude among workers in the restaurant industry is that it's impossible to have a union," says Scottie's employee David Adams. "But we think workers need to be represented and have a voice in decisions that are made in the restaurants where they're living their lives."

Rivera and the workers expect to negotiate a first collective bargaining agreement in the coming months. Adams says workers hope it will serve as an example to other pizza enterprises.

"We want to show that you don't have to exploit and manipulate," Adams said. "You can have a relationship with your workers that will make your business stronger."

BURGERVILLE WORKER'S UNION STRIKE

On October 23rd workers with the Burgerville Workers Union (BVWU) walked off the job for the start of a 4 day 4 store strike.

Workers have won National Labor Relations Board elections at several stores and have been bargaining with the company. However, Burgerville has been bargaining in bad faith for months. Workers are now fed up more then ever. In a statement released on Facebook the union said:

"Today, Burgerville workers across Portland walked off the job and launched the largest strike in the history of the BVWU. We're striking to end poverty wages at Burgerville, and to win the first ever fast food union contract in the U.S.

Workers went on strike--many of us for the first time--because we're at a breaking point. For workers who make minimum wage or close to it, Burgerville's "across-the-board" \$1 raise amounts to just \$0.25, come next July. For workers who make just a couple dollars above minimum wage, Burgerville's raise might mean nothing at all. One worker was told that they already made "too much" money to receive the \$1 that Burgerville claimed everyone would get.

And workers at both ends of that pay scale continue to struggle to afford their bills, have to scrape together time to spend with their families, and live without savings."

During the 4 day strike workers were able to keep the dinning rooms closed almost the entire time. Burgerville was attempting to keep the restaurants running with just managers running the drive thrus, however that

was not really working either, since most of the customers respected the picket line.

In another statement released after the strike the union said:

"We shut Burgerville down this week, over and over and over. We made sure they had barely any customers on Blazers opening night. Dining rooms at striking shops were closed almost the entire length of the strike. We faced down intimidation from Joey Gibson and Patriot Prayer, and just kept rolling with our week of action. This is what worker power and solidarity looks like."

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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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.