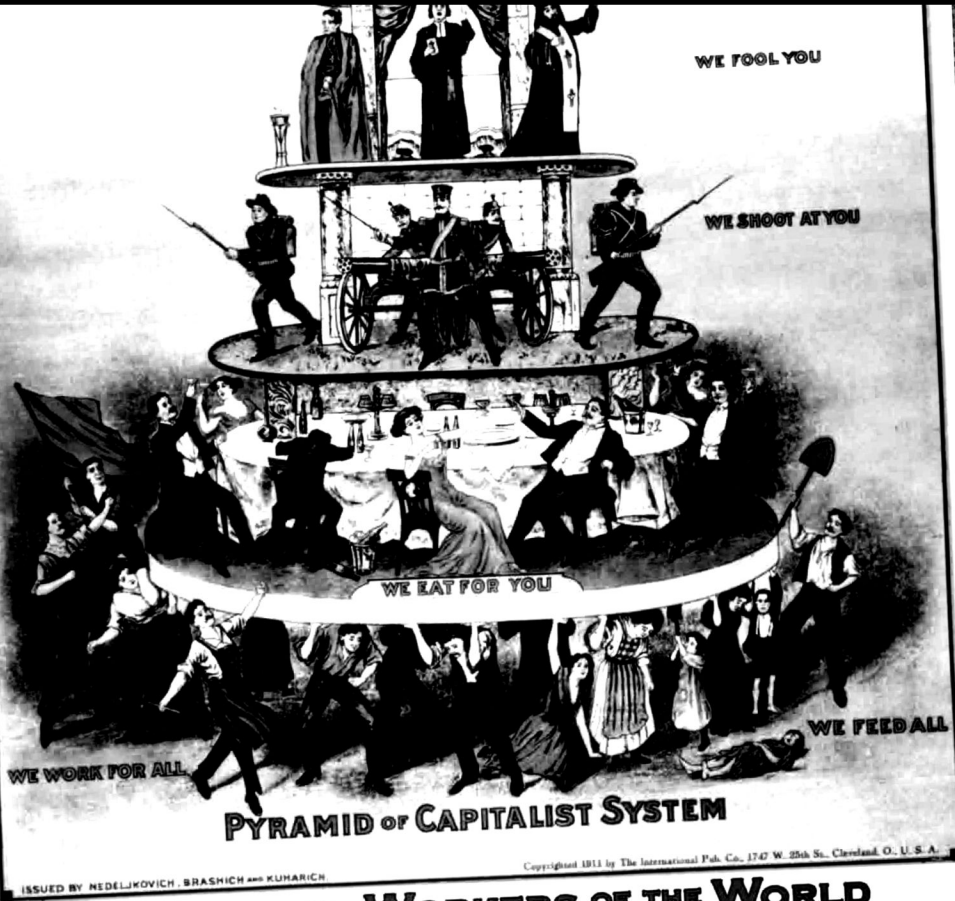


# Seattle Worker

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**BREAKING BARRIERS**  
**IDEOLOGICAL**  
**STRUCTURAL**  
**ECONOMIC**  
**ORGANIZATIONAL**  
**HIERARCHICAL**  
**EDUCATIONAL**



**WHEN THE RICH ROB THE POOR IT'S CALLED BUSINESS**  
**WHEN THE POOR FIGHT BACK IT'S CALLED VIOLENCE**



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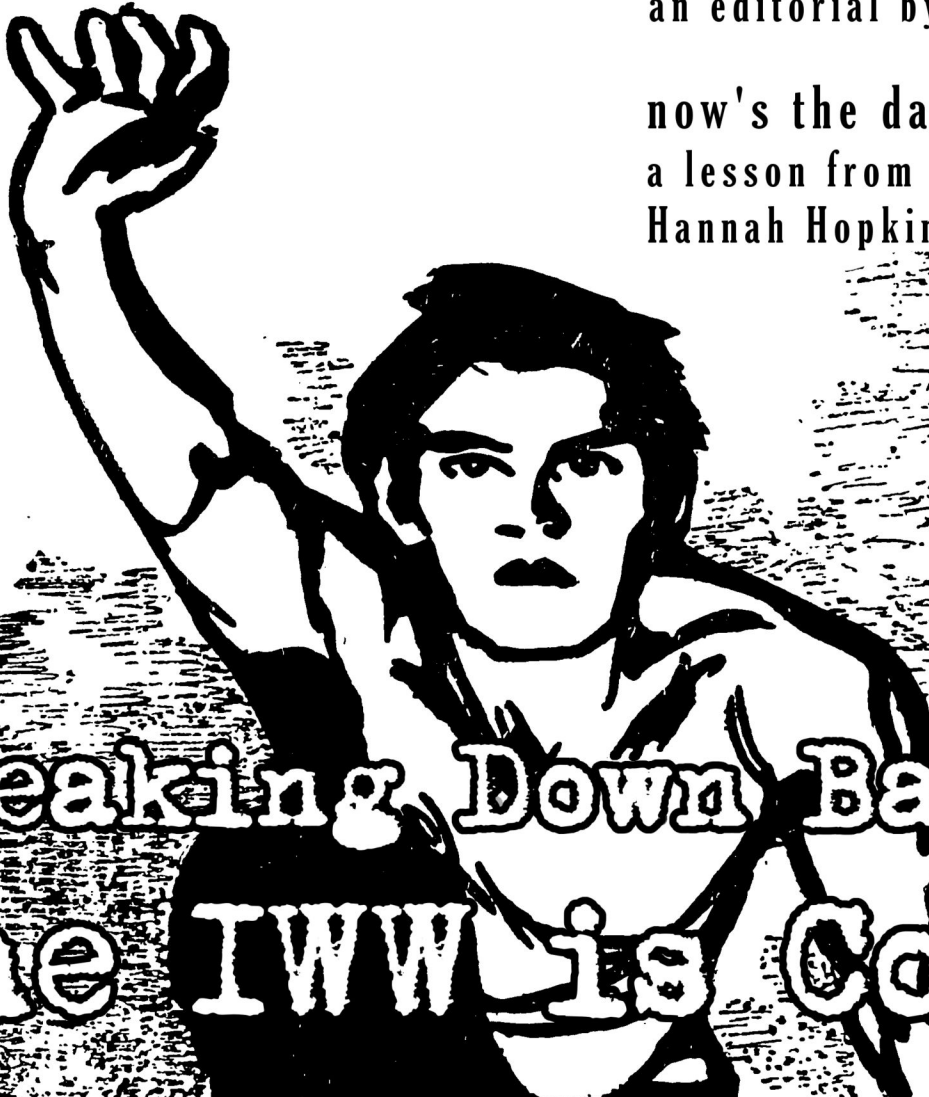
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# Breaking Down Barriers The IWW is Coming

  
**Seattle Worker**  
Official Publication of the Seattle IWW

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# WHAT PRIVILEGE IS THIS?

You can walk down any street in downtown Seattle and witness the divide between the gleaming high-rises built above the damp, cold bodies of twelve thousand houseless, and young men like me walk to office jobs wearing blue badges, headphones in, sunglasses on to deny witness. I work in a black glass tower that stands on a hill sluiced away by water cannons and excavators—the Denny Regrade—once an outlook of the Duwamish people, now a skid-row-turned-boomtown for anyone who's got the cash to live twenty stories high. I work at a computer made from rare earth minerals dug deep from the Congo, use a phone built in a Chinese factory where bosses string up nets outside of the windows to catch workers who quit—for good, forever, falling unto death, then caught and cycled back onto the line. What privilege is this—to grind your fingers into a keyboard, to strain your eyes at a screen, then to walk outside, past the men asleep on wet concrete, the women holding cardboard signs saying Premature birth, anything helps or laid off, hungry, God Bless. Younger than me, who grew up here and I'm just a transplant like so many white folks in this town. I met a carpenter, my age, who lives in his van, Seattle born and raised, and he can't afford the homes he builds, can't afford the planks of mahogany for a deck or the power tools it takes to sand them down smooth. Can't afford to live where he's from. I saw a woman at the pharmacy steps in a wheelchair, the elevator was broken, and she lunged at the staircase rail and hauled herself up, leaving her wheelchair behind to crawl down the aisles for medicine. I saw a man shivering outside the 7-11 singing a Christmas tune about Jack Frost and I gave him the cash I almost never carry. A man sat himself down on the bus floor one morning, right in front of the back doors where workers stream in and out and he laid down a saffron cloth and three marble figures and prayed, and when the tech guys in the back row with badges and glasses and matching polo shirts had to get off, they stood around him, unsure of what to say until he looked up, nodded, swept the fabric and stone into his arms and strode off the bus, down the block, past the big glass globes that a billionaire built for show, past the new condos and jackhammers and cranes and concrete dust, the piles of rebar, rows of tempered windows, and I knew that I was to blame in some way for his plight, that I was the reason for the cops to charge through the tent city that night with guns and armor, ready to murder and destroy what kept him warm.

by Chris Joseph



# In the News

## Notes from around the Northwest

By X390433

In 2017 alone 5,700 homes, 3.6 million square feet of office space, and more than 600 hotel rooms were constructed in Seattle, netting the construction industry billions. The Associated General Contractors of Washington, who are themselves taking in over \$5 million annually, claim there isn't enough money to provide a decent contract to the International Union of Operating Engineers (the men and women who are helping construct all those buildings). Unsurprisingly, IUOE Local 302 went on strike.

Grassroots Campaigns Incorporated is hiring, stating via their website, "Grassroots Campaigns is growing the resistance in campaign offices all over the country..." Except, of course, in Seattle where they have illegally closed their office in response to their workers forming a union.

After a self-described "employer" declared on Twitter that he found the IWW preamble "kind of scary," a representative from the Rain City Wobblers composed and posted the following erudite reply: "Good."

The State of Washington, which spends around \$80 million a year on youth incarceration, is so far unable to come up with the resources to adequately compensate the teachers of Washington State so that they may educate our children and help keep them out of prison. Two teachers' unions have already voted to authorize a strike in the coming weeks.

Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan has decided to outsource more of her critical thinking skills to wealthy capitalists by signing an executive order to form an "Innovation Advisory Council." The council will be staffed by representatives from Artefact, Expedia, Flying Fish Partners, Microsoft, Tableau, WTIA, Zillow, and of course Amazon. Mayor Durkan already has a Community Technology Advisory Board at her disposal, which is staffed by members of the local community, but who needs input from humans when Seattle has so many corporations in residence?

In a fit of unbridled democracy the good citizens of Missouri voted by a two to one margin to overturn the state's new right to work law. Missouri senator Bob Dixon, who helped push the law through last year, bemoaned the referendum even taking place saying, "We gave the opposition more time to collect signatures and put it on the ballot for a vote because we got in a hurry." No word yet on whether Missouri voters were surprised to find out that one of their elected representatives considers them "the opposition."

One of the largest prison strikes in history is officially underway and includes ICE's Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma. An NWDC spokesman, Pablo Paez, recently stated, "Members of our team strive to treat all of those entrusted to our care with compassion, dignity, and respect." GEO Group, the corporation that owns the NWDC, earned \$2.26 billion in revenue last year while forcing detainees at the NWDC to work for \$1 a day, which far less than the minimum wage... in Bangladesh.

Public sector unions are fighting the legality of three executive orders signed by President Trump that seek to strip the rights of public sector union members. The Democrats generally haven't bothered to put up much of a fight against the orders, but some of them have decided to express their disdain by drafting a polite letter to our practically illiterate president. In terms of fighting for workers, it's a big step forward for the Democrats who last year actively supported Republican legislation that stripped the rights of employees at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

IWW membership continues to grow, and Seattle is now home to the largest IWW General Membership Branch in the country. The Pacific Northwest's capitalist overlords haven't yet noticed, which is good: Black cats are ambush predators.

In early April of this year, Google workers went public with a petition against an artificial intelligence project they'd learned was slated to be used in military drones. Over 4,000 workers had already signed onto the letter that begins, "We believe that Google should not be in the business of war," and ends with the demand that the company cancel the contract with the Pentagon. Worker organizers reported to the media that at least 13 of their fellow employees had quit their jobs in protest. Google placated, justified, minimized — and eventually gave in, announcing two months later that they wouldn't renew the contract. Soon after, as ICE's policy of family separations became big news, workers at Microsoft published their own letter demanding that the company cancel its \$19 million contract with the agency:

"As the people who build the technologies that Microsoft profits from, we refuse to be complicit. We are part of a growing movement, comprised of many across the industry who recognize the grave responsibility that those creating powerful technology have to ensure what they build is used for good, and not for harm."

critical mass and is now primarily a protectionist advocacy organization that fights offshoring of tech work. Most recently, when software workers at startup Lanetix won a nearly unanimous card check to join CWA in January, the company suddenly "laid off" their entire 14-person department. The workers' NLRB complaint is still ongoing.

Software engineers who make six figures straight out of an undergraduate degree might seem too content to organize. But concerns about punishingly long work hours, the two-tiered system of salaried employees and contractors, surveillance and lack of autonomy in the workplace, identity-based harassment and discrimination, and capricious discipline are rampant. Many other tech workers I talk to want to work somewhere that prioritizes people over profits, where they can work for the social good rather than the bottom line. These new campaigns are the first stirrings of their realization that finding a "better" job at a "better" company can't bring them that. Only organizing with their coworkers can.

A persistent problem in organizing tech workplaces is the muddying of the line between the working class and the employing class. Line managers typically have authority over

# Organizing Tech

## Insights into the tech world's sudden rebellion

By X389552

Just days later, Amazon workers followed suit with their own petition against Palantir, a surveillance contractor that hosts ICE's database of immigrants on Amazon's servers, and Amazon's recently exposed practice of marketing and selling their facial recognition tool to police departments:

"Technology like ours is playing an increasingly critical role across many sectors of society. What is clear to us is that our development and sales practices have yet to acknowledge the obligation that comes with this. Focusing solely on shareholder value is a race to the bottom, and one that we will not participate in. "We refuse to build the platform that powers ICE, and we refuse to contribute to tools that violate human rights."

This movement has been reported by the mainstream media and tech press as worker "dissent," "activism," and "an uprising." It can and should also be understood as the the next wave of worker organizing in an industry where business unions have long failed to gain traction.

Tech workers have tried to join bureaucratic unions several times before. A minority branch of Communications Workers of America (CWA) at IBM at one time had 400 dues paying members in the US but shut down in 2016 after almost two decades. WashTech, which formed in 1998 to organize Microsoft contractors with CWA, never reached a

only 5 to 10 workers and most spend time as rank-and-file workers before graduating to management. The class background shared by CEOs and their workers makes it easier for workers to see themselves not as an oppressed proletariat but temporarily embarrassed founders (apologies to Steinbeck).

So why have police and military contracting agitated workers when so many other concerns have not? It is because those issues finally make clear the gulf between what corporations say and what they do, and seeing that gulf sets workers on the path to understanding that appealing to their management's personal ethics doesn't get results. Neither do external advocacy campaigns like the ACLU's petition against Amazon's facial recognition. Workers have power at the point of production, and some small groups of tech workers have extraordinary structural power in their workplaces. All we need is organization and the will to take militant action.

It's too early to know what the future holds for worker organizing in the tech industry. But workers fighting together to get a demand met is a potentially transformative experience for the workers involved. Technology doesn't spring like Athena fully formed from the head of capital into the workplaces where it surveils, intensifies, and automates work. It's built by people who are workers themselves. What could we win if Uber programmers stand with drivers, if Amazon programmers stand with warehouse workers?

# THERE ARE NO JUSTIFIED HIERARCHIES

BY LEXI OWENS

This essay was inspired by ongoing discussions in online and offline anarchist spaces where many self-styled anarchists have tied themselves in knots trying to justify certain hierarchies, especially those of the educated and benevolent expert who provides leadership during revolutionary projects. It is imperative that labor organizers, union members, and other revolutionaries reject this perspective because it reinforces and recreates the same oppressive structures which we are now trying to destroy.

## *Labor must resist internal challenges to liberatory praxis*

Some radical activists claim that some hierarchies are justified, beneficial, or necessary for the organization of a revolutionary society or movement. They believe experts deserve to lead because of their education, class, trade, or experience. This belief is dangerously shortsighted. If we

wish to break free from the oppression of our current society, then we must resist the temptation to support hierarchies that are vestiges of that society.

Numerous theorists have identified oppressive hierarchies in Western civilization that need to be destroyed: sexism, racism, colonialism, homophobia and queerphobia, ableism,

ageism, and classism, to name a few. Since the beginning of the American labor movement, another hierarchy has existed between the so-called skilled tradesmen and the so-called unskilled laborers—most unions never attempted to unionize the “unskilled” workers, with the IWW being the major exception. And in contemporary discourse about labor, some defend the hierarchy between the elite, educated worker and the unskilled or “uneducated” worker.

When activists talk about “justified hierarchy,” they are usually referring to education or experience. They contend that a revolutionary community will be successful because those with the most education will organize production, labor,

and resources, and they will be trusted by their communities. “Justified hierarchy” is an easy answer because it allows the speaker to reframe the pragmatic question in conformity with their own biases. Educated people—because they abstractly know things—are presumed to be more knowledgeable about this or that, and therefore should have authority over this or that project. An engineer who’s been through ten years of college should oversee bridge building, a chemist should oversee medicine production, or a teacher should have unquestioned authority over students.

The unconscious elitism of some revolutionaries comes from our current social organization, which is rooted in modern, capitalist, liberal traditions. It’s a dangerous kind of vanguardism which sees the expert revolutionary as being apart and better than the uneducated, unconscious, unaware masses, who need someone in authority to accomplish tasks.

## *Education does not create expertise*

Some hierarchies have been justified because they are “natural,” such as men are stronger than women, the parent should govern the child, the teacher should instruct the student. These claims are stated as if they are true by definition. “Of course, the teacher instructs the student, that is what a teacher does.”

In my time as an educator, I’ve tried to address the power imbalance of the classroom. A teacher is not an infinite source of perfect knowledge. Teachers are imperfect, they are often ignorant, they are often domineering and authoritarian. How can we say that teachers should have authority over all students when any body of students has knowledge the teacher doesn’t or has experiences the teacher has not had? For instance, how could a white teacher instruct a group of students of color about racial prejudice? The lived experiences of the students will grant far more insight about racism than a teacher from a relatively privileged background could ever impart. So they exchange knowledge in an egalitarian way rather than a structured, hierarchical, expert-to-student way. Here we address the justifications behind a “hierarchy of knowledge” to reimagine a classroom that facilitates dozens of dialogues (between teacher and student and between student and student).

If we wish to break free from the oppression of our current society, then we must resist the temptation to support hierarchies that are vestiges of that society.

Another example that has practically become a trope is the expert in a STEM field who is given a position of power over some project. An engineer with a doctorate in civil engineering, for instance, should be in charge of infrastructure building. We can think of dozens of counterexamples where the PhD-holding “leader” does not deserve leadership. They might be straight out of school and have never actually been on a jobsite. In that case, they should defer to the construction workers who have years of experience in the building trades. Or the same PhD holder might just be a bad leader with no organizational skills, so a committee of workers should run the project and leave only certain tasks to the engineer.

Or, and I think this is most important, each person should take on the tasks appropriate to their level of expertise and work cooperatively with everyone else. That’s a truly anarchic spirit applied to project management.

### **No one is entitled to leadership**

Having knowledge or skills does not logically mean any person should have authority. Let’s look at the civil engineer again. That person should only be in charge of designing a bridge if every person also involved in the process democratically says it should be so. Simply having a PhD does not confer unlimited authority, a mandate, or anything else. Colleges should not create hierarchies in any society, especially not in a society that espouses egalitarianism and solidarity between all working peoples.

We should resist believing that the institutions of higher education confer special abilities to a certain elite subset of workers.

Seniority also can’t justify hierarchical thinking. Deferring to someone with years of experience should be a conscious and democratic choice. I am not saying that these people should not be leaders, but they should be freely and


intentionally chosen, not appointed automatically. As we plan a revolutionary society, we must also evaluate the seemingly benign structures which undercut our libertarian goals.

Experts are not incorruptible. They have implicit biases too. Does having a doctorate make one cease being a racist or a sexist? Does being a teacher make one an expert on numerous school subjects?

Far be it from me to quote an expert, but I think Mikhail Bakunin states the solution elegantly in his essay “What is Authority?” published in 1882, with my own emphasis added.

*Does it follow that I reject all authority? Far from me such a thought. In the matter of boots, I refer to the authority of the bootmaker; concerning houses, canals, or railroads, I consult that of the architect or the engineer.... But I allow neither the bootmaker nor the architect nor the savant to impose his authority upon me. I listen to them freely and with all the respect merited by their intelligence, their character, their knowledge, reserving always my incontestable right of criticism and censure.... But I recognise no infallible authority, even in special questions; consequently, whatever respect I may have for the honesty and the sincerity of such or such an individual, I have no absolute faith in any person. Such a faith would be fatal to my reason, to my liberty, and even to the success of my undertakings; it would immediately transform me into a stupid slave, an instrument of the will and interests of others....*

*I bow before the authority of special men because it is imposed on me by my own reason.... I receive and I give - such is human life. Each directs and is directed in his turn. **Therefore there is no fixed and constant authority, but a continual exchange of mutual, temporary, and, above all, voluntary authority and subordination.***



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**May Day 2018**

**More inside**  
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Canvassers Choose IWW & Win Union Election  
Fascists Return to IWW  
One Worker's Journey to the IWW

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# The Myth of Precarity

There has recently been a lot of informal discussions in the IWW about the Organizer Training program. These discussions have touched on a number of assumptions about organizing and strategy that purport to be “at odds” with the OT. People on the left tend to rely on a number of truisms which I like to refer to as “leftist common sense.” These truisms are used to explain the operation of organizations and, in broader discussions, the world. Unfortunately, they often rely on tropes that are weirdly essentialist or simply at odds with the facts, and they often walk the line between leftist common sense and the real world.

One of the biggest myths that leftists buy into is the idea that precarity is a new phenomenon, and that it means the “old ways” of organizing simply cannot work. Precarity is the lack of stability or job security, and a lot of leftist theory explores the alienation and lack of psychological well being caused by a precarious existence. The story goes like this: “back when the labor movement was strong, we didn’t have precarity, but since the 1980s it has become the norm for more and more people.” Implicit in this is the idea that unions equal stability and the end of precarity, but in reality this is only half true.

In Kim Moody’s new book *On New Terrain*, he lays out some information about some old terrain: precarity. According to Moody’s research, there is essentially no difference in precarity, measured as jobs worked in a lifetime, from the height of organized labor in the early 1970s and today. With this in mind, it would be more apt to call our current time “normal” rather than “precarious.” The last time in history we had any sort of job stability, at least in the sense of a stable connection to the means of production, was during feudalism. It eroded with the rise of mercantile cities in Italy and the enclosing of communal lands throughout Europe. With the rise of capitalism, the new proletariat soon found themselves working in the mills where precarity was the norm. It has been the norm ever since.

So why do so many Wobblies buy into the myth that precarity is “the new thing?” There is a very short organizational memory in the union. This has affected everything from administrative practices to theoretical underpinnings. Furthermore, political education is generally a low priority because so much of the union is made up of committed leftists. This lack of education allows incorrect assumptions and wrong ideas to persist. We should all be concerned with this. If we have a faulty understanding of the basic makeup of society, it will lead to faulty practices and toxic discussions.

The flip side of the current precarity myth is that union jobs are never precarious. Undoubtedly, having “just cause” employment over at will employment is a good thing. However, in addition to the IWW, I work in a workplace covered under a Collective Bargaining Agreement (a contract). I’m a member of United Food

and Commercial Workers Local 21. Thanks to the union much of the grocery industry work in Seattle is carried out under “just cause” conditions. Even so, grocery industry turnover remains extremely high. The contracts are walked over by management all the time. As a shop steward at my store, I try to prevent this as much as possible. But since the UFCW is not a militant organization, and it does not put resources towards internal organization, the situation is similar to that of a nonunion workplace. UFCW is one of the largest labor unions in the country, but having a big well-funded union and a contract in place does not make a job less prone to precarity. Only militant union organization does that.

Organizing is difficult and it doesn’t come naturally to most people, but we need to be trained to organize, and we need to engage in real-world practice. We need to think strategically and put in the time and hard work necessary to proper organizing. That is the only way to build stability and power in a “precarious” society.

## ***IWW Strategy and Organizing***

I often describe the IWW in the ways I would like to see it. Typically, I say something to the effect of, “Our strategy is industrial unionism, our model is solidarity unionism.” I strongly believe the Organizer Training the IWW provides fits both of these and provides the basis to charter industrial unions under the IWW banner. However, I have heard it said recently that this is not the case, that we don’t teach how to organize industrially in the OT. This is somewhat true. We don’t specifically teach macro level strategy in the OT (perhaps this is a detriment, but we are lucky that the curriculum is revised every few years with input from our pool of trainers and the broader union!). Another criticism I’ve heard is that the OT does not deal with the fact that people are precarious, that they move from one job to another. The OT does provide the fundamentals for any organizing and the building blocks for strategy. So what does the OT teach?

## ***Building Relationships***

The basis of good organizing is building relationships with the people you want to organize with. Organizers often have to go out of their way to do this. If we just did this with the people we naturally spend time with, there would be all sorts of problems. We would be forming clubs, not an organization for all workers, and we wouldn’t overcome racial and gender divides (to name the most obvious). The OT stresses building relationships time and time again in its curriculum.

Since the Arab Spring and movements like Occupy, the press often points out the ways social media has been used to help mass movements. Indeed, social media plays a part. But these movements that toppled regimes did not exist in the cyberworld



# How to build stability and power in a “precarious” society. By X358109

exclusively. Tahrir Square in Cairo was a place a physical place--where people met and built relationships, trust, and, in short, organization. Our training in the IWW departs from the way the Left has organized for decades. The IWW does not call for action without a base and does not tail the actions of others (like the AFL-CIO or the Democratic Party). We are trained as militant organizers to always build a base through a democratic organization and lead with actionable demands.

## **Research**

How do we know where we have divides to overcome, leaders to bring on board, or issues to target? We do research. The OT states that all campaigns need to start with gathering information: about the workers, including their issues, their stories, and who they are. Information must also be gathered about the company--its policies, its bosses, etc. Information is key. When a suggested campaign comes up at organizing meetings in my local, the first question usually asked is, “Do we have a list?”--meaning a list of employees and contact information.

Understanding these fundamentals allows us to understand the bigger issues in play. If one firm--say a restaurant--has issues of low wages, non-existent healthcare, and sexual harassment, what does this say about the whole restaurant industry and our organizing in “640,” as we call it? If we do the research, we will find one of two things. Either these are collective issues and shared experiences that many workers in the industry are familiar with and agitated by, or they aren't. That understanding is the basis of research for an industrial organizing committee.

## **One-on-Ones**

One-on-ones are intentional conversations we have with the people we've built relationships with. They attack the issue of class society directly by bringing people over to the idea of collective action and organization. They are hard conversations, and they put organizers out of their comfort zone. They bring up stories of traumas, disrespect, and class hatred, but they are our fundamental tool as organizers in building an organization through relationships. And they are necessary.

Since these conversations are hard, most leftists I have met eschew them. Instead, many people on the Left are socialized to think that the proper way to talk to people outside their circles is to talk at people. However, we cannot convince someone to be class conscious through a series of Public Service Announcements. We can only do it through building relationships, exploring collective experiences, and struggling to change our conditions. You don't convince people to become revolutionaries. You make a revolution with them, and that makes them revolutionaries.

## **Strategic Thinking and Collective Action**

The OT teaches how to strategically plan an action, taking into account who to target, where, how, when, and with whom. This fundamental way of thinking is what allows us to think strategically in our organizing on every level. If we are able to pull off effective and strategic collective action in order to make gains, we can bring that to the next level, taking on bigger targets and eventually our true class enemies.

Training in the OT covers the smallest scale possible--typically a single worksite. But all of the skills that are taught are scalable. In other words, we can scale our organizing up to a more macro level--an industrial campaign for instance, or even a workplace with two or more worksites--and the fundamentals all remain the same. The strategic thinking and planning, collective actions, and relationship building are going to have to be done in any organizing campaign. There is some other information that might be needed. For instance, how to build profiles on firms using corporate research, but this is not what the OT is meant to teach and the IWW provides this from another committee, the Survey and Research Committee. Both the OTC and the SRC make up part of the union's Organizing Department.

## **Bringing It All Together**

All of these component parts come together giving us the tools to take militant action--to plan, understand the difference between tactics (such as a march on the boss or a picket), and a goal (higher wages, shorter hours). On the left, I see a lot of people who confuse goals and tactics. They celebrate having a rally as if that was the goal the whole time rather than winning the actual demands presented at that rally. This is what happens when we organize purely around slogans and not basic necessities that impact broad layers of working class people.

Many organizations have you learn the phraseology or the correct lines and motions. For instance, we often hear some variant of the phrase “Theory and Practice” from Lenin or other revolutionaries. One of the reasons I'm such a proponent of the IWW and its training is because it teaches a practical way to be a revolutionary organizer, which includes the tools for action, and the theory that informs the action. Worker intellectuals like Martin Glaberman or Stan Weir often embody this idea of a Wobbly theorist: they understand that action precedes consciousness and creating a theory of revolution that goes beyond “we convince everyone our ideas are Correct and then we can have a revolution.” Glaberman made the following observation about his time moving to Detroit to work in the auto plants: “We believed in the revolutionary capacity of the working class even though nothing was visible.” Nothing so succinctly represents the IWW's outlook and organizing model more than that sentence.

# DO UNIONS REALLY PROTECT BAD WORKERS FROM GETTING FIRED?

**REFUTING MYTHS ABOUT UNIONS TO ENCOURAGE SOLIDARITY IN THE WORKING CLASS.**

We've heard the old refrain: "We can't get rid of bad workers because they're union. Unions just protect bad workers from punishment and responsibility." It's time to stop attacking unions and start attacking the bosses. By Lindsay Mimir

**W**e should stop thinking about unions from the boss' perspective. The bosses love at-will employment, where they can fire anyone for any reason. Unions force bosses to establish just cause to fire someone, a very reasonable demand that unions make to employers. If the bosses can't even get enough evidence to establish just cause, then that's management's fault and those workers probably aren't that bad in the first place. At-will employment uses the threat of getting fired to keep us in line and keep us desperate. Don't take the boss' side against your fellow workers.

Unions protect all workers from getting fired. So many people are living paycheck-to-paycheck that having job protection can ensure that people don't become homeless, lose access to healthcare, or suffer food insecurity. Forcing the bosses to establish just cause can be life-saving protection when we are all one or two paychecks away from disaster. And no one deserves to be out on the street because they aren't perfect employees. Everyone makes mistakes, whether that's being late for the bus, taking a long lunch, or forgetting an important task in their department. No matter how frustrating a coworker might be to work with, they still deserve a living wage and meaningful employment.

And unions protect good workers from getting fired too. What about people who do great work by bending or even breaking company rules? Everyone knows that teacher who violated a policy to help a student in need; everyone knows that cashier who accepted an expired coupon to provide excellent customer service; everyone knows that food server who gave free food to hungry people who couldn't afford it. Getting caught doing something good for the community shouldn't mean people are automatically out of a job.

Unions also ensure that loyal and hardworking people have recourse when their employers get greedy. People who have earned raises through loyalty don't deserve to be fired because they "make too much money." Workers who are good union organizers are dangerous to management. Workers who are over-qualified, have a lot of experience, and who mentor younger people are dangerous too. They deserve to have their wages and jobs protected. Having a union--a body of fellow workers who can intervene before a worker gets fired or demand a worker get their job back--keeps the bosses in line.

## ARE YOU A WORKER INTERESTED IN SHARING YOUR WORKPLACE STORY?

**We want to hear from you. The Seattle Worker is gathering interviews with workers about your life and conditions on the job.**

**Contact us:**

**[seattleiww@gmail.com](mailto:seattleiww@gmail.com)**

**[facebook.com/seattleiww](https://facebook.com/seattleiww)**

**[twitter.com/seattleiww](https://twitter.com/seattleiww)**



## Seattle Worker



**SUBMISSIONS WELCOME!**

**EMAIL PHOTOS, ESSAYS, NEWS, AND LETTERS TO [SEATTLEIWW@GMAIL.COM](mailto:SEATTLEIWW@GMAIL.COM)**

On February 6, 1919, the first day of the Seattle General Strike, a local socialist newspaper International Weekly published a call to action titled "Now's the Day" February 6th marked the first day of a five-day work stoppage by over 65,000 workers of numerous industries in Seattle. Workers struck for higher wages in response to wage controls enacted by the federal government during World War I. Workers walked off their jobs and took to the streets of Seattle to voice their discontent with the bosses. This call to action is reprinted here and an updated version follows. Seattle workers of 2019: what do you choose?

By Hannah Hopkins

# NOW'S THE DAY

1919

2019

Strikers of Seattle: Labor in every section of the nation looks to you!

The masters have chosen Seattle as the field wherein their first problem in reconstruction will be worked out by the complete humiliation of Labor.

There can be no compromise. That is denied you.

You must either fight for victory or accept defeat.

Piez himself says that you must.

The time i[s] past for soft words; today Capital commands.

The honeyed accents are displaced by the shout to **GET BACK TO WORK.**

The velvet hand that patted your shoulder has doffed its glove and closes its fist of steel to strike you.

And a nation of workers looks to **YOU.**

Will you abjectly obey and return whipped to your kennels or take up challenge, fearlessly and determinedly to fight to the bitter end?

Choose you **Must.** Either be whipped slave and eat out of the master's hand or be men, free men among men?

That's your choice.

It's yours today; tomorrow -----?

People of Seattle, workers of the world look to you!

The bosses have chosen Seattle as the battleground where capitalism will be tried and tested by Labor.

There can be no compromise. That is denied to you.

You must fight for victory or accept defeat.

Bezos won't give, so we must take.

The time is past for soft words; today Labor demands.

The bosses say, "we're a family," but we know they just want us to work, not ask questions, especially not ask for **MORE.**

The hand that patted your shoulder has taken off its glove and closed its fist to strike you.

And a nation of workers looks to **YOU.**

Will you obey and return to your cubicle or take up the challenge, fearlessly and determinedly to fight to the bitter end?

Choose you **must.** Either be downtrodden, living off the scraps given to you by your boss, or be free, a free worker?

That's your choice.

It's yours today; tomorrow -----?

Want to become a member? Fill out this form and send it to us:  
1122 E. Pike St. #1142  
Seattle WA 98122

### Application for Membership Aplicación para Membresía

- I affirm that I am a worker and that I am not an employer. [Afirmo que soy trabajador/a y no soy empleador.]
- I agree to abide by the constitution and regulations of this organization, and will study its principles and acquaint myself with its purposes. [Pacto de obedecer a la constitución y las reglas de esta organización, y estudiaré sus principios, y me informaré de sus objetivos.]

Name/Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address/Dirección: \_\_\_\_\_  
City/Ciudad: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Estado: \_\_\_\_\_  
ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ Country/ País : \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone/Teléfono: \_\_\_\_\_  
Employer/Eempleador: \_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation/Ocupación: \_\_\_\_\_

- I would prefer to receive copies of the IWW's General Organization Bulletin in paper form, by mail (Default is electronic, by email). [Prefiero recibir copias del Boletín General por correo. (No sobre e-mail)]
- I would like information about the IWW's General Defense Committee. [Me gustaría recibir más información sobre el Comité de Defensa General.]

#### Dues Rate Based on Monthly Income

Under \$2,000 = \$11 per month  
\$2,000 – 3,500 = \$22 per month  
Over \$3,500 = \$33 per month  
Initiation fee is equal to one month's dues.

#### Cuota Dependiente de Pago Mensual

Menos que \$2,000 = \$11 por mes  
\$2,000 a 3,500 = \$22 por mes  
Mas que \$3,500 = \$33 por mes  
Iniciación = cuota de un mes

**TO BE FILLED IN BY DELEGATE [PARA LLENAR POR DELEGADOS]**  
Date/Fecha: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]  
month / mes day / día year / año  
Member No. / Número de Miembro/a: X [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]  
Industrial Union No. / Número de Sindicato Industrial: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]  
Delegate/ Delegado/a: \_\_\_\_\_  
Delegate No. / Número de Delegado/a: [ ] [ ] - [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]  
Initiation/Iniciación: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ + Dues/Cuota: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ + Ass'ts/Tasa: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please Return this Page to General Headquarters

### What is the I.W.W.?

The **Industrial Workers of the World** is a radical, democratic, member-run labor union. We are committed to the liberation of the working class from the tyranny of capitalism. We believe that in our current economic system, wages are determined by a small number of elites who belong to the ownership class and we can no longer allow these people to determine our standard of living.

The IWW began in 1905 in Chicago, making it one of the oldest unions in the US. Seattle has a long history with the IWW, going all the way back to 1905. Wobblies--as members of the IWW are known--helped organize the Seattle General Strike of 1919.

We must unite together as workers into a single movement. Only through unity can we hope to revolutionize the economic system which strips away our freedom, our wealth, and our lives. Together, we can fight for what we deserve. But only if we act as one.



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