



The INDUSTRIAL UNIONIST

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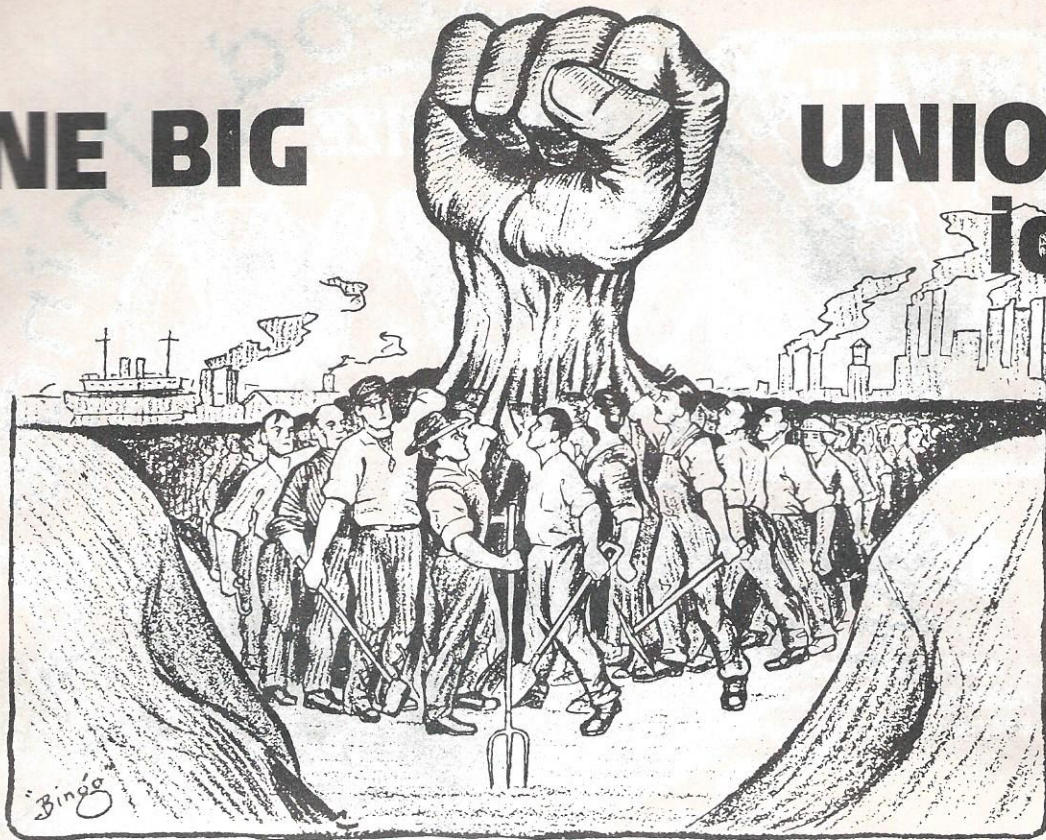
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the

ONE BIG

UNION

idea



1: Our Place in Human Progress

1. What is Industry, and How Did it Get That Way.

INDUSTRY — the conversion of the raw stuff of nature into the things mankind wants — is the centre and foundation of our social life. Those who own and control the natural resources of the earth, and the industrial equipment necessary to transform these raw materials into finished products, form the much smaller of the two great classes in modern society.

The workers, who supply the labour which gathers these raw materials, and transforms them into usable goods, are the other, and much larger class. The interest of these two classes are opposed.

The entire social life of modern times is shaped by these facts.

The business, or capitalist class which controls industry is anxious to keep that control, and the privileges that go with it. To make that control secure, it seeks to gain or keep control of all social institutions. It wants to write and administer the laws. It wants the schools to teach respect and obedience to the privileged few. It wants the press, television and films to shape our thoughts and feelings to serve its interests. And where it cannot get rid of the organizations labour has built, it wants to control them too.

These top businessmen are threatened with the loss of their control by two outstanding facts:

- 1). Modern industrial development has made their activity unnecessary;
- 2). The working class is able, once it so desires, to take control of industry and thus establish a much more efficient and satisfactory society.

The original job of the capitalist was to furnish funds and management. Today management is the job of a specially trained section of the class of hired hands, and funds are amply provided out of the various reserves taken from profits. The system of corporate administration that the capitalists have built up has made them superfluous.

The business class became dominant in society as the result of long struggles against the kings and feudal land-owners who ran the world before them. They won — with the help of the common folk who did the fighting — because new inventions, procedures and discoveries had put the feudal regime out of date. The parliamentary bodies that had been created to raise funds for the old order had also established a more efficient system of government and had made kings and lords as obsolete as capitalists are today. The great voyages and discoveries, the improvements in navigation, and the new factory system had all made the ownership of warehouses, ships, and equipment more important than the ownership of land. The basis of society had shifted from the farm to the factory, and the control of society had shifted to those who control industry.

2. Revolutionary Progress

For all that the conservatives of those days warned that this would be the end of civilisation, it was a great step forward. Whatever of the old order was serviceable to the new was kept and cultivated. What was destroyed was the feudal grab and rule that obstructed progress. Invention and industry flourished as never before. Our ways of producing and living have changed faster in the last two hundred years than in the previous two thousand. Each workers capacity to produce is at least a hundred times what it was when business first took over. Because our standard of living has not kept pace with invention, and cannot keep pace with it as long as business controls industry, the possibilities of abundance and leisure are wasted in depressions and wars, sold to the few who profit most.

Not only has modern development made the activities of the few who control industry unnecessary, it has reduced the number of that class. The growth of any large corporation requires the closing of a large number of little businesses. Today it is estimated that only 7% of the population actually control 85% of the economic life of Britain. Through cartel arrangements with a handful of people elsewhere they plan and control the economic life of the world. They have many servants and toadies, but few friends. Only these few would have their privileges decreased if the control of industry were taken out of their hands. The rest of us would be much better off.

3. Who Should Control?

Meanwhile the working class has grown — and it has grown in many ways. It has grown in numbers until it includes almost everybody. It has grown in knowledge and ability so that the worker of today has to understand and be able to do things that would have baffled the engineer and scientist of a century ago. In place of a class of illiterate serfs we are a working class able to read and write, with an extensive literature of our own, that can daily discuss over lunch the affairs of mankind the world over. And this class has grown in organized power. Every step it has taken in the building of unions has been a trespass on what was previously the complete jurisdiction of the owners of industry, whether it set the hours it would work, and that consequently the machines would run, or the pay it would take, or the safety and sanitary regulations for the job. It has been fought by the business class as its mortal enemy, for, by the logic of events that is precisely what organised labour should be. Every step forward that we take strengthens our position as the logical successor of the business class to exercise control of industry; and, because there is no class beneath us, our triumph means the first classless society since civilisation began, and the end of all the horror, cruelty, stupidity and injustice that necessarily go with class society.

The big question for today and tomorrow is this: How is industry to be controlled?

It is not so much a question of who is to own industry. Modern corporate intricacy has already made ownership almost a myth. Managerial control is what counts, and it has largely become independent of the actual investors. Those who control industry need not worry about who owns it. Who is to say whether industry is to run or stand idle? Who is to decide what is to be produced and

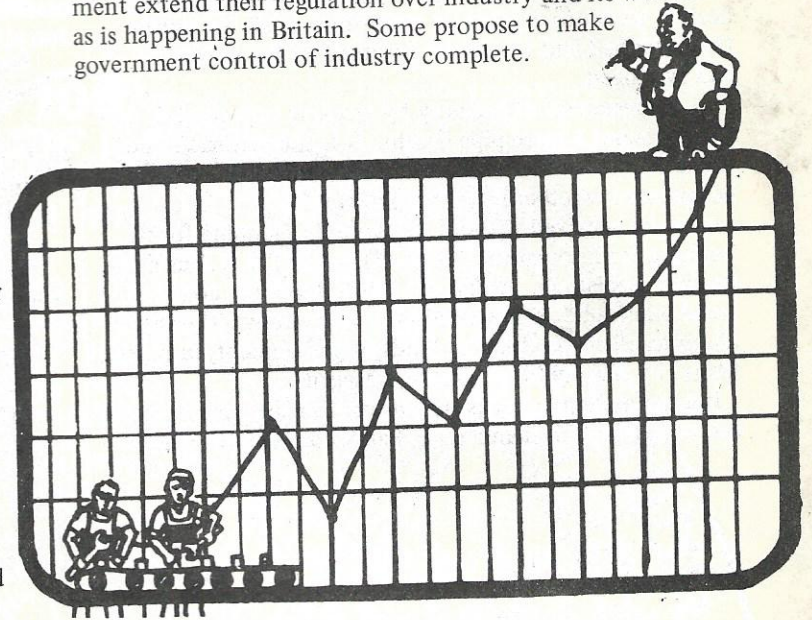
where that product is to go? These are the important questions.

Should modern industry be controlled by a handful of financiers?

Should it be administered by a host of politicians?

Or should it be run by those who do the work?

It must be one of the three. The financiers through their holding companies, their merchant banks, their control over directorships and credit, seek to complete their control over the economic life of the world. But their control, by its very nature, strangles that economic life, for it does not pay to let the working class produce all that it is capable of producing. So either those in control of industry ally themselves with those in control of government, as in Spain, Chile or Hitler's Germany, to save themselves from democracy, or those in control of government extend their regulation over industry and its workers as is happening in Britain. Some propose to make government control of industry complete.



4. Industrial Democracy Wanted.

The Industrial Workers of the World, and thinking union members generally, see nothing good in this choice whether the back seat driving is to be done by financiers or by politicians. Instead they want Industrial Democracy — industry run by its workers. They ask such questions as these:

If a representative government takes control of everyones bread and butter, how can it be kept representative?

If the already vast body of rules and regulations over labour are added to, do we not become the puppets of appointed administrators?

How are we to have such a totalitarian economy and yet avoid totalitarian politics?

And what becomes of initiative and freedom?

After all, the greatest problem facing mankind is not the much discussed question of production and distribution; it is the problem of power. It never has been safe to let a few control the affairs of the many; it never will be safe. The depressions, the wars, the sundry other ills of the modern world, have been possible only because there was already an unsafe concentration of power in the hands of a few. What happened did happen as the result of the will of these few, not the will of the many. Every invention that has increased our power to produce or destroy

has increased the power of the few and decreased the power of the rest of us. Every improvement in communication has extended the empire of this minority. And every time we give more power to some one to try and remedy the resulting evils, we increase the problem that much further. And this holds true whether we allow that power to fall to the present managers of industry, their friends in parliament or their friends in the Trade Unions. Consequently the only safe choice is industrial democracy — industry run by those who do the work.

5. It's Up To Us.

We can run industry and thereby solve the problem of power, for all power that runs this dynamic world comes from our efforts. Our class has only to stop doing what it is told to do and start doing what it collectively decides to do, to deprive its opposition of all the power they ever had and to acquire for itself all the power it will ever need.

Management of industry by workers organised to do the job is not a mere pipe dream. It is the historic trend. It is the pole toward which every forward move of labour has pointed whether intended that way or not. But it cannot be achieved without deliberately planning for it, working for it, organising for it. This, the I.W.W. has made its own special job. If that job is not done, the counter trend wins out — regimentation of everything either by all kinds of business, by all kinds of government, or most likely, by their unholy alliance, Fascism

Industrial democracy is the answer to many problems. It can keep alive this democracy that cannot survive when

practiced only on election day. It can free us from want and fear, waste and war. With modern production methods it enables ordinary people to get all the material goods they can use by working about as much as they want to. It can give us security and freedom, those two most desirable ends, neither of which is possible without the other, for a person driven by want cannot be free, and the puppet is never secure. It can make organised society a harmonious whole, intelligently working for the good of all — for it is only when the general run of mankind can decide what is to be produced and what is to become of the product that it can know what it is doing.

Industrial democracy can be built only by an organised working class that is aware as a class of what it wants and how to get it, rather than giving decision making power to 'friends of labour'. Working class organisation must serve two purposes;

1) It must provide the most efficient structure for carrying on our daily struggle for better conditions and better pay;

2) It must provide a complete solution of the industrial problem by making possible the efficient management of modern industry by organised labour.

Fortunately, but not by a coincidence, the same type of organisation best serves both purposes; for by organising the way we work, so that we have the same relations in our union as we have in the process of production, we are lined up so as to have the most strategic advantage in our everyday struggle, and the necessary co-ordination for assuming the responsibility for industrialised production.

How to organise right is thus the immediate question. It is with that question that we are concerned.

2: The Organization of Industry

1. Who makes what?

All industry is inter-related, so much so that it could be said that there is really only one industry — the production of goods and services.

Consider your coat and the processes necessary to its production. It required not only the labour and materials used directly in making it, but also the buildings and machinery where it was made. It required the production of the material and the dyes. It required the transportation and the planning for all the trips for all the materials in it, and for the machinery and buildings used in making them. The workers involved in all these processes could not have specialised in making cloth and dyes, in building factories and textile machinery, in operating this equipment, in transporting goods, and the like, if other workers had not specialised in building houses for them, providing food for them, and offering the sundry other services they needed. In fact it is difficult to think of anything that workers do anywhere that does not have some connection with the production of a simple coat.

But this work is not one vast hodge-podge. It is subdivided and organised much as your own body is subdivided and organized. It is divided first of all into six major departments;

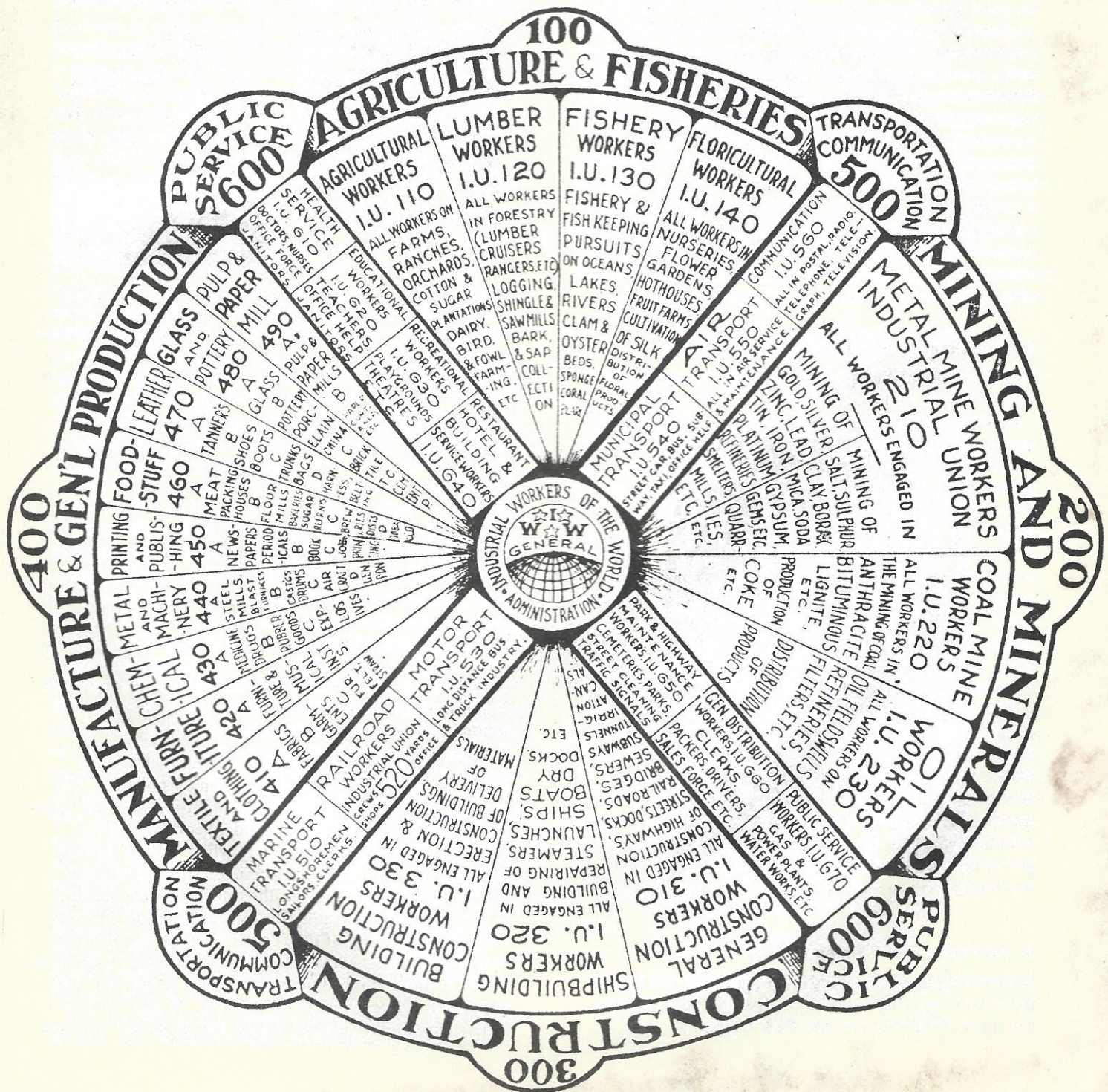
1. The raw materials that can be grown or raised;
2. The raw materials of the mine, quarry and the like;
3. Construction of roads and building, ships, docks canals, etc;
4. Manufacture of the materials into food, clothing, tools, machinery etc;
5. Transportation and communication.
6. The various services offered by schools, hospitals, theatres, shops and public utilities.

Corresponding to these major divisions are the six departments in which the industrial unions are grouped in the chart. The advantages in practical union matters in providing these departments will be pointed out later on.

Within the departments are the industries and their industrial unions. Because of the inter-relations that bind all productive efforts together, it is impossible to mark off the disputed territory of each industry with indisputable precision. An industry, after all, is a social aggregate of workers, equipment, and processes only somewhat set apart from other workers by their closer inter-relations. The lines separating the industrial unions accordingly, should not be thought of as a means for keeping workers apart but as a means for keeping them better together.

The Wheel of Industrial Unionism

On the chart is depicted in general outline the arrangement of industrial unions used by the I.W.W. In all instances all workers on the same job are to be members of the same union, and by all workers is meant all wage and salary earners (except those who have the effective ability to hire and fire), each industrial union deciding for itself who is eligible and who is not.



To organise the working class in structures corresponding to the facts of industry is the aim of the I.W.W. As a system of classification for this scientific industrial unionism it uses the decimal method, as that provides ample opportunity for any changes or additions that new inventions and industrial processes may make advisable. It is much like the system used by libraries to number their books, so that no matter what book may ever be written about any subject, there is a logical number to assign it so that it will stand in its proper relation with all other books ever written or to be written on the same subject. Similarly there is a logical grouping for every worker in the One Big Union plan of the I.W.W.

Without the co-ordination furnished by One Big Union, it would be impossible to provide a scheme of organisation that would unite workers so that they could take whatever joint action various occasions might require. The interweaving of industrial relations makes that so. For instance, the steel industry requires iron miners, workers in lime quarries, in coal mines and coke ovens and the fuel oil industry, railway, road and marine transport workers, as well as the workers at the furnaces and rolling mills. Often these workers furnishing materials are employees of the steel company. But for other relations it is most convenient to have these coal miners organised with other coal miners, these transportation workers organised with other transport workers. For effective working class solidarity it is necessary that they be able to plan jointly and to act jointly with either their fellow workers in their own industries or with their fellow workers to whom they furnish materials. Only with the sort of industrial unionism that adds up to One Big Union is this flexibility possible.

3. How Employers Organise.

Workers cannot blindly imitate employers organization, but we should find it instructive.

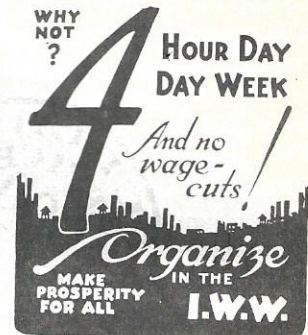
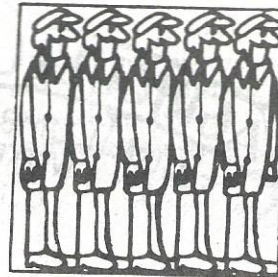
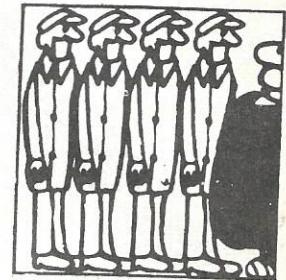
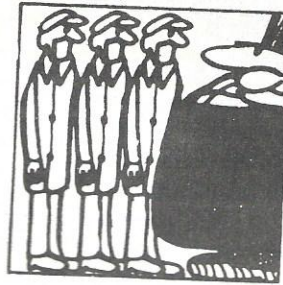
Employers organise primarily as partnerships, corporations, etc., on an industrial basis to take direct action on the job, to run it so as to get the most out of it, which means running us so that they get the most out of us. They even set up special departments to make sure they do run us that way.

While we workers have little or no reason to compete or quarrel with each other, and employers have many reasons to do so, yet they manage to co-operate while we don't. The chief secret for that is that they organise special bodies for special purposes, and don't mix these purposes up. One result is that they don't split up their trade association or federation over their political differences.

They have built many intricate financial structures, including worldwide companies, and through these the capitalists of even supposedly hostile nations work together. Many of their most critical undertakings depend upon an unwritten mutual understanding of their collective interest. They concertedly make it hard for any employer who does not play along with them. And they have managed to keep on running the world although they have repeatedly made a mess of it.

4. All Trades — One Union.

Somewhere in the One Big Union plan there is a logical place for every wage worker, so that all fellow workers can most effectively exercise their solidarity.



A few notes should be added about the structure of the One Big Union. Some of the Industrial Unions may appear to have too wide a scope for convenience; rolling mills, building textile machinery and watch-making may seem to be more than one union should include. But the system of classification used permits any subdivisions within the union for the formation of any section for which there may be actual practical reasons. Further it should be remembered that all the workers on one job form their own job or shop branch and in it decide all matters that relate exclusively to that particular job.

Since some jobs include a considerable number of subordinate activities, the rule that all on that job belong in the same union often requires that workers be in different industrial unions than their occupation might lead one to expect. For instance, in a hospital besides nurses, doctors, technicians, midwives, etc., there are laundry workers, cooks, electricians and many other hands, all of whom are in the same industry and therefore in the same industrial union of Health Service Workers (I.U. 610).

And if it were not for the One Big Union idea, such industrial organisation might build some handicaps. The laundry workers in hospitals might want to meet with other laundry workers to establish standard conditions in all laundries. With One Big Union to which they all belong they have all the facilities for doing so, and for electing any committees to carry out their decisions. Or drivers, if they work for a shop or factory, belong in the job unit and industrial union of their fellow employees. Yet they may want to meet with other drivers to agree on a common policy in regard to loading, using helpers or the like. One Big Union enables them to do that too. In any job situation, apprentices, trainees, skilled and un-skilled workers

all have more in common with each other than with the boss. One Big Union welds them all together to fight the bosses with the combined strength of the workforce.

5. Other Practical Advantages.

Industrial Union structure is designed to unite workers in the way that will be most convenient for us. With whom can we best bargain collectively? With whom are we most likely to go out on strike? Such questions as these are the practical ones that decide in what industrial union any group of workers should be placed. The kitchen crew on an oil rig, the mess department aboard ship, the staff of a factory canteen, all do the same sort of work as that done by the employees of a restaurant, but they can bargain more effectively if they are organised respectively with other oil workers, seamen and factory workers.

In distribution these commonsense rules must be applied. Where the workers involved distribute only one company's products, as with many petrol stations, it will be best to organise with the workers supplying the product. The workers in the oilfields and refineries will be in a better bargaining position if they can cut off the distribution of their product. Similarly the bargaining position of the petrol station attendants is better with the backing of these other workers employed by the same company. Crews on oil tankers however may find it more convenient to organise with other seamen, but they will not touch "hot oil" in oil workers strikes.

But where there is no such close relations with production, distribution workers will be better off organised together whether they work in department stores, clothing shops, or whatever. In all these instances it should be plain that unless industrial unionism adds up to One Big Union the labour movement will be handicapped in providing the different types of co-ordination that varying circumstances require.

One Big Union is the hoop that holds the industrial union staves together. Without it they tend to fall into a useless, disorganised confusion.

6. One Class — One Union.

The divisions between industrial unions are not considered as walls keeping the workers apart but as devices to unite them more effectively. In the I.W.W. all members are directly members of the I.W.W. itself, with voice and vote directly on its general policies and officers, with voice and vote directly on their own industrial union affairs, with a free universal transfer from the industrial union covering their last job to the industrial union covering the job to which they move, but with no voice or vote on the affairs of other industrial unions. Our immediate organisation is the job or shop branch organising the place where we work, and only those working on that job have any voice or vote on purely job issues. Each part is responsible for itself except that industrial unions must not adopt rules conflicting with the general constitution, and central and job branches must not adopt rules conflicting either with these or with the by-laws of their industrial union. The I.W.W. is not a federation or congress of industrial unions; it is One Big Union of the working class. The inter-relationships of modern industry make any other structure inadequate for the needs of labour.

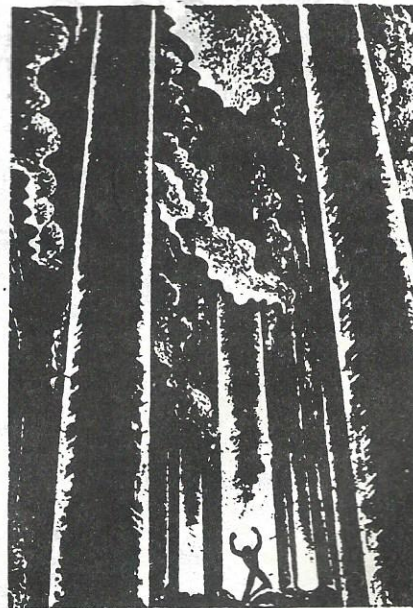
The One Big Union structure avoids disputes about jurisdiction over workers whose classification is made doubt-

ful by the complexities of modern production processes. For instance, it is desirable that all in the metal mining industry be in one union. But we find for example, that magnesium is obtained by chemical processes from sea water, first making milk of magnesia, then magnesium: that aluminium is obtained by electrolysis from the clay bauxite. In a federation of industrial unions there would be grounds for argument in which union to put them. In One Big Union this is of no great consequence, and they can be organised in whatever way they find most convenient. Or again, if a concern making a general line of electrical equipment turns out radios as a side-line all employees will be metal and machinery workers, while if another concern, specialising in cabinet work of different types, also makes radios, these radio workers will be organised as furniture workers.

7. Industrial Departments.

Unions in allied industries constitute industrial departments. The advantages of such organisation are especially obvious in the instance of transportation. Railways, bus companies, truck companies, air lines, all provide substitute methods of transportation. If workers in these various industries are organized to act together when occasion arises for them to do so, they will have all the advantages in the struggle. So great is their united power that it might almost be said that the destiny of the world is in their hands. Think how much suffering mankind might have been saved if organised transport workers had refused to load or carry goods to any warring nation or to any nations

*Only workers can
stop pollution*



*Add clean air to
immediate
union demands*

whose transport workers would not follow the same policy. It would have been a good investment had the rest of organised labour assessed itself the few pence each it would have taken to repay these transport workers for any wages they lost in consequence of such a policy, and thus a great good could be accomplished with hardship to none. Or consider how similar arrangements could make it foolish to hire scabs by making it impossible for scab made goods to be carried. If we workers stick together right, we cannot be beaten down.

What is proposed here is the organisation of the working class so that it can stick together in effective solidarity. Every union member who has talked about unionism to other workers is all too familiar with the complaint "A union is all right, but the trouble is that the workers won't stick together". We don't believe that complaint.

We don't believe it because we have seen so often the efforts of workers to stick together, and seen those efforts shattered by faulty organisation that stopped them from practising solidarity. Things do substantially what they are built to do; the same stuff can go into making a typewriter or a sewing machine, and behaves differently because it is put together differently. The same workers can be in a loose federation of organisations formed to serve some special sets of interests, or they can be in One Big Union. If a union is designed to keep us separated, then

it will not be a surprise to find that "Workers won't stick together". But if we are organised to stick, then stick we will and be strong in the fact that we can.

Scientific industrial unionism designed by the I.W.W. to meet the conditions of modern industry emphasises these basic rules:

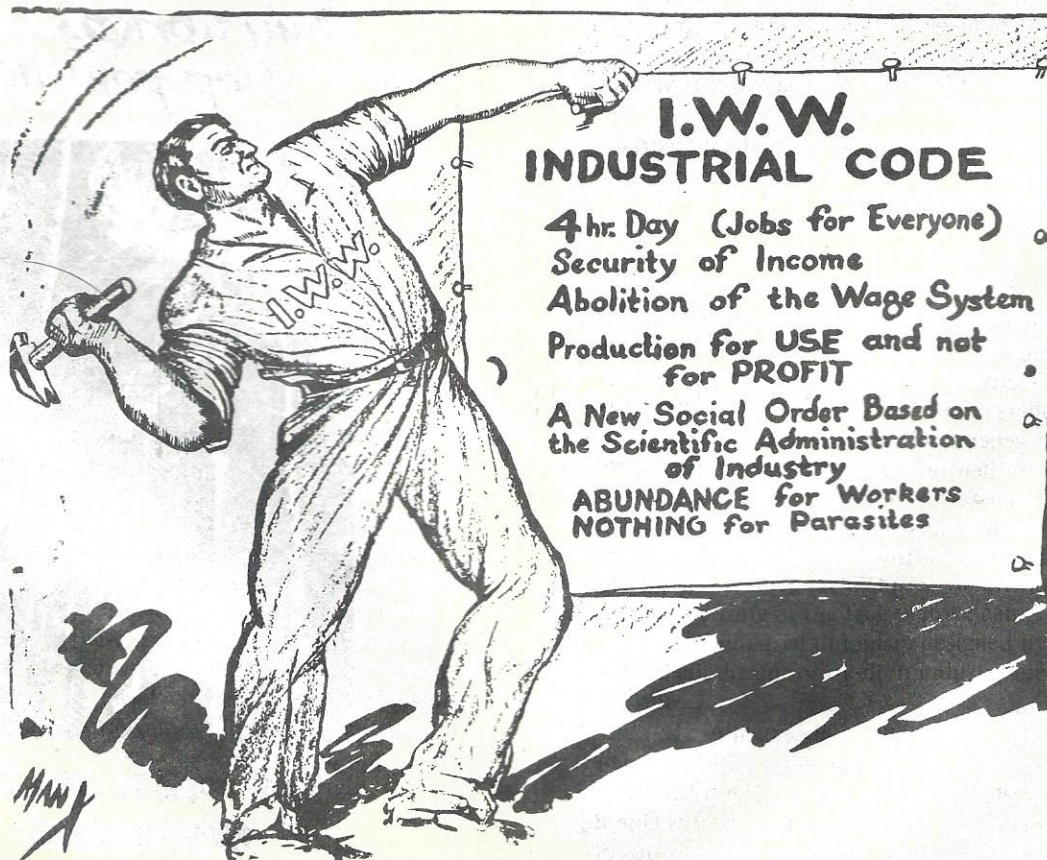
1. All workers on the same job, regardless of trade, belong in the same job organisation;
2. All workers in the same industry belong in the same industrial union;
3. All members of these industrial unions belong directly as members of the One Big Union of the working class;
4. Any worker changing his job is entitled to transfer free of any charge to the industrial union covering the new employment — "once a union member, always a union member";
5. No part of the labour movement should accept any obligation to work on materials furnished by strike-breakers, or to furnish material for them, or to fill the orders that strikers were supposed to fill; or cross any picket line or aid in any way to break the strike of any group of workers.

Such is the form of organisation the I.W.W. offers to make the working class invincible. Are you with us?

★ EDUCATION

★ ORGANIZATION

★ EMANCIPATION



3: Practical Policies of the I.W.W.

1. Union Democracy.

The purpose of the I.W.W. is to establish democracy in our everyday life on the job. Its practical policies are directed towards that end and are essential to its achievement. They are determined by two basic principles: Solidarity and democracy within the union. It is necessary to avoid any practice that will interfere with the unity of our class, and it is even more necessary to make sure that the union, instead of running its members, is run by them. To leave democracy out of such an organisation as the I.W.W. is building would leave it a device for fascism and a tremendous handicap to labour. Hitler, Mussolini, Franco, Trotsky, Lenin and their heirs and cohorts found it necessary to herd labour into an organisation very much of that sort. The mighty weapon of One Big Union must be wielded by us, not over us.

As protection against any clique running this union to suit themselves, the following safeguards have been devised:

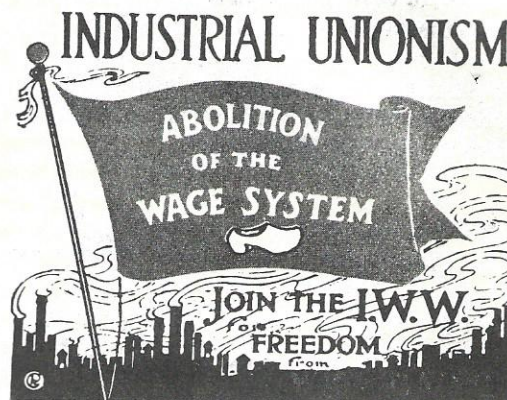
1. No officer is elected for more than one year.
2. No officer may be elected for more than three successive terms.
3. All officers are elected by referendum ballot on which all members they represent may vote — all members on the job for a job branch officer; all members in job branches for the officers of the industrial union branches that unite them; all members in the industry for industrial union officers; and all members of the I.W.W. for officers of the general organisation.
4. All officers are subject to recall by majority vote.
5. Election, not appointment, is the uniform policy.

2. No "Check-off"

The business methods within the union are further assurance of democracy. "The power of the purse" must be kept in the hands of the members both in the collection of dues and in the control of expenditure. For that reason the I.W.W. does not accept the "check-off", where the bosses act as bankers for the union by taking union dues out of our wages and hand them over for us. Instead the I.W.W. has devised a simple and convenient system for the collection of dues by delegates on the job — a system which is proof against dishonesty in handling funds and which permits shop committees and job branches to know the union standing of every member on the job. All delegates and officers must make a report to the branch meeting, and have their accounts audited by a committee elected at each meeting. With this practice it is necessary to handle union business to the satisfaction of the members. If the union treasurers received a cheque from the company for dues collected by check-off, they might be more concerned with the goodwill of the company than with the goodwill of the members; with that revenue they could hire their friends to control the union meetings, and keep themselves in power running the union as a mere dues collecting agency in the interests of company and union officials. Beside provoking rank and file control over

the power of the purse, the direct collection of dues establishes that much more contact between members and officers. That is why companies and unions have been found to prefer the check-off.

No assessments can be levied except when approved by a referendum of those who are to pay them. The funds are decentralised in treasuries for each branch and each industrial union.



3. No Clique Control.

These constitutional provisions and business methods to guard union democracy are re-inforced by the removal of all motives that could lead any clique to seek control of the union. This is done by these additional safeguards;

1. There can be no financial gain in clique rule because the pay for officers must not exceed the average pay of the workers they represent, and efficient record keeping and rigidly honest accounting are enforced with monthly as well as annual financial statements, all audited. "General Expense" accounts are forbidden.
2. No powers are given officers except those needed to carry out the instructions of the members. Strikes cannot be called or called off by officers; this can only be done by the members concerned; settlements can be negotiated only by committees of the workers concerned; committee members and union officials are not allowed to confer with employers except in the presence of the committee.
3. Political or similar cliques seeking control of the union to subvert its facilities, resources, or reputation to their own ends are thwarted by the non-political policies that have been adopted by our ranks to ensure our own unity.

4. No Politics In This Union.

It is sound unionism not to express a preference for one religion or one political party or candidate over another. These are not union questions, and must be settled by each member according to personal conscience. The union if formed to reach and enforce decisions about industrial questions; its power to do this can be destroyed by the

division of its members over political issues and the diversion of its resources to political campaigns. So that all workers regardless of their religions or political preference may be united to get every possible benefit out of their job, the I.W.W. must be non-political and non-religious, letting its members attend to these matters as they personally see fit — and with the additional social consciousness, regard for their fellows, and general enlightenment that they derive from their union activity.

This does not mean that the I.W.W. is indifferent to the great social and economic questions of the day. Quite the contrary! We believe it provides the practical solution to these questions. When the industry of the world is run by the workers for their own good, we see no chance for the stigma of unemployment, war, racial conflict, or large scale crime, or any of our serious social problems, to continue. With the sort of organisation the I.W.W. is building, labour can exert any pressure required to restrain the antics of politicians and even more constructively accomplish through direct action what we have often failed to accomplish through political lobbying.



5. How To Get Good Laws.

For instance, as workers and as members of communities, we want oil storage and chemical plants kept to safe places, away from where we, and our fellow workers, live. One method is to try and get laws passed, and then try to have them enforced. Much simpler, more reliable, and certainly much more helpful in developing our capacity to solve our own problems, would be for us to refuse to build in what we consider unsafe places; for us to refuse to work in plants that endanger any community. Right now, traveling time to and from work should be paid as part of the 8-hour day. Laws are usually based on actual practice. It is best for labour to concern itself with controlling the actual practice; that makes good law making easy and bad law making hard. The law makers are mindful of the powerful ones in society; One Big Union makes labour all powerful. Once labour is properly organised, the law makers will be duly mindful of it; and if they aren't, it will not matter, for what happens from then on is what the organised working class decide to make happen.

To unite the working class industrially, it is of course necessary to avoid such practices as high union dues, closed books, racial, religious or political discrimination. What is needed is One Big Union of all workers no matter what their language, what their beliefs, or what the colour

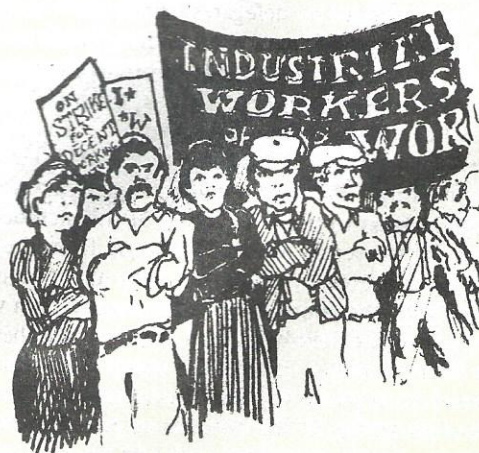
of their skin may be. In the union all are equal because we are equally used by the same system. What the majority decides about any industrial question is the decision by which all must abide. For that reason it is not necessary to attempt to reach decisions about questions not related to industry.

6. Efficient Unionism.

The principles underlying these policies are those of solidarity and democracy within the union. Another aspect of these same two principles is effectiveness and efficiency. Our effectiveness is achieved by our united strength; it is measured solely by what we can do. Our efficiency is measured by the relation of our gains to the cost of those gains, whether in time, trouble or other sacrifices that labour must often make. To smash a fly with a sledge-hammer is no doubt effective, but it is hardly efficient. We want maximum gains at minimum cost.

That the I.W.W. is efficient is well attested by the fact that despite its relatively small numbers it has made disproportionate gains for labour. Its efficiency is achieved by its democracy, its rank and file control. There is a myth that such democracy makes for inefficiency; union experience disproves that myth. In the first place, to get the results we want, we have to aim at those results. To let the direction of the union be in other hands than those of the members would be like trying to chop wood with someone else holding the axe-handle.

In the second place, the more the union members have to say about union matters, and the more directly we attend to union business ourselves, the greater is the unions source of strength. We do not win our fights just by paying dues into a union treasury; money can only pay for the facilities of the union; what makes the union go is the effort and enthusiasm of its members — something that cannot be bought. It is this direct participation in the union business, and the system of managing that business by elected union delegates on the job and job committees rather than by full time officials or business agents, that develops the abilities of the members and makes the I.W.W. a force with which we can organise our own future. And thirdly, it is the organised self-reliance or autonomy of the component parts of the I.W.W. that goes with this control, that enables us to handle problems in the most convenient and least costly way. The union is built like the hand, each joint of which can move separately, but all parts of which can be brought instantly into an effective clenched fist.



7. Direct Action.

This direct control of our union business is reflected in the direct action on the job for which the I.W.W. is famous. Some years ago the I.W.W. modernised the west coast lumber industry in the United States and Canada. Our members established the 8-hour day by blowing their own whistle at the end of 8 hours and finished working then instead of carrying on for the next 2 or 4 hours that they had been hired for. Some crews were fired, but the next crew hired blew its own whistle too, until the 8-hour day became established practice. (Later a law was passed). The old practice had been to sleep in double-deck, muzzle-loading banks and to carry your own blankets when looking for work. I.W.W. organised lumberjacks made bonfires of the bunks and the bedding, and told the companies that thereafter if they wanted men they would have to provide decent cots, mattresses and clean sheets and blankets.

Likewise at an I.W.W. organised textile strike in New Jersey, the mainly women strikers picketed with banners saying "We want bread, and we want roses too." When the I.W.W. says it wants more of the good things of life, we're not only talking about getting the bosses to come over with a bit more cash, but we want to build a better life here and now, the new society in the shell of the old.

Long strikes may, at times, be unavoidable; but as far as it can the I.W.W. avoids them. We prefer a series of short strikes timed to do the most good; to get the same results or better at less cost to us members. We prefer even more the direct removal of grievances. Why walk out because the company refuses to get rid of an unsafe foreman? Why not have the workers under him elect one of themselves whose judgement they trust best to direct the work, thus carrying out the instructions of our own delegate rather than the instructions of the company-appointed foreman? With the backing of the workers on the job this can usually be done. Why walk out because a fellow worker is fired? It costs us little and costs the company a lot if we go to work expressing our sorrow for such treatment in the way we work.

The secret of direct action is simple enough: If we stop doing what we are told to do and start doing what we collectively decide to do instead, there isn't anything much that can stop us. The I.W.W. expects to build a decent world in that simple way.

Briefly these are some of the policies that the I.W.W. has found best in the wide and varied experience it has had in the struggles of industry since it was started in 1905. Out of the experience of the many good union members who have built and maintained the I.W.W. it is able to offer the working class a scientific plan of industrial organisation,

a set of trustworthy union principles, a body of policy and method, of strategy and tactics that assure success not only in the ordinary struggle for better wages and working conditions, but in the struggle to establish a sane social order.

8. What To Do.

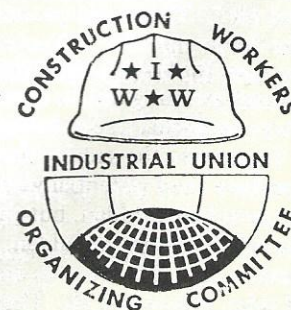
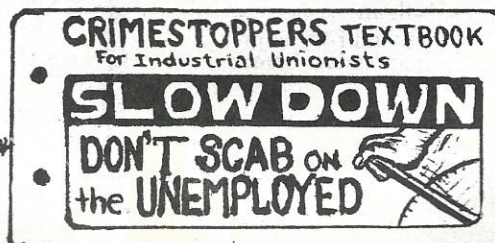
If a job is not organised, you should get in touch with the I.W.W. and it will organise the job with your help. You will find the I.W.W. the most practical union for protecting yourself and your fellow workers and you will have the additional satisfaction of helping build the good world that has been the hope of poet and prophet through all the horrors of history.

A sane world run by producers for the common good is an aim that should be achieved and can be achieved. The sort of labour movement that can achieve it is being built by the I.W.W. It is up to you to ask yourself whether you are doing your bit to help build it. Our immediate problem as workers is that we are too misorganised and disorganised to act for our own good. The One Big Union is the answer to that problem.

Those who because of their job or for any other reason are already members of other unions can still take their place in the One Big Union movement. Many of the members of the I.W.W. belong to other unions also. They belong to the I.W.W. because otherwise they would add to the problems of the working class and not to the answer and they know that only by making the answer bigger than the problem can the problem be solved. And they are good members of their other unions. The I.W.W.'s concern for solidarity and union democracy is satisfactory guarantee against any fear that their preference for the I.W.W. would lead them to seek control of other unions or otherwise seek to disrupt them.

Of its members the I.W.W. asks that they continue their membership no matter to what job they may go; that they make themselves fully acquainted with its ideas and policies so that they can be even more useful union members; that they be able and willing to explain these ideas to other workers; and that they watch for every possible opportunity for this union to grow and to be of more service to their fellow workers on their own or other jobs.

We expect our members to understand why they should stay with the One Big Union, not only when things go well, but also when they don't go well. In fact it is precisely because things are not going well that we need the Industrial Workers of the World, the One Big Union of the working class.



Rank & File Rule

What It Is & What It Is Not

We working people want to raise our wages, cut our hours, make our jobs safer and less injurious to our health and less unpleasant places in which to get our living. If we realise what an injury the capitalist system does to us, we want also to get rid of that. We can not do these things by ourselves. We can do them together. That's why we form unions. Our unions are *our* unions only when they do what we want them to do. A body of workers is hardly their union unless it is controlled by its members. That is reason number one why the I.W.W. insists upon "rank and file" organization.

WHAT IT IS NOT

The phrase "rank and file" has come to be used in such strange ways of late that it has picked up some strange meanings. For that reason it is time that the I.W.W., as the foremost exponent and practitioner of rank and file unionism, explained just what rank and file means, and what it doesn't mean.

The strange uses of the expression "rank and file" to which we refer are made most often by various types of Socialists and Communists and other addicts of the "leadership principle". Now the "leadership principle" — the idea that we should *pick and follow* leaders, and seek a cure for our troubles by changing them every so often — is the direct opposite of the rank and file idea. It is indeed curious that those who advocate this leadership plan of organization should ever demand "rank and file control". So how does it happen?

The object of these various political cults of "follow the leader" is to obtain more followers for their various leaders. And since every time there is a new leader there are new cults, this results in a rather bewildering situation. Since their purpose is not to organize the working class to do something for itself, but to make sure that one set of leaders are followed rather than another set, they seek their following chiefly in already organized groups of workers. Sometimes they try to secure such a following by currying favour with the officials of these unions. That was and is the policy of various Socialist organizations. The Communist sects vary this policy with that of "boring from within" to grab the official positions.

When a group of self-appointed saviours try to grab the official positions in a union, they must resort to the favourite tricks of the unsuccessful politician, that is, the one who is out of office. They must charge the elected officials with "betraying their mandates", "not living up to their promises", "ignoring the wishes of the rank and file". They must promise that if they are elected the "rank and file" will rule through them. As a result we have the strange spectacle of "rank and file" committees awaiting instructions from their leaders before they can decide upon their next step!

To get into the saddle, these would-be leaders must convince their potential victims, and that's us, that we are now being ridden, but that with them in the saddle, we will no longer be ridden. It will not serve their purpose to urge that we who are being ridden should get rid of rider, saddle and all. They must urge only that the riders be changed. Their consequent political manipulations in the unions leave the impression that "rank and

file" means disruption, misrepresentation, henpecking of the officialdom — anything and everything except the use of a union by its own members to give effect to their own wishes.

AND WHAT IT IS

In the I.W.W. control by the rank and file is implicit in our constitution, our structure, our financial arrangements and our traditional procedures. Yet we have no "rank and file committees", and rarely do we see any member in our ranks appealing to, or even mentioning, the rank and file. Just as the best evidence of a healthy body is the lack of any occasion to take note of it, so is the best evidence of rank and file control the absence of any need to invoke mention of it. We find use for the term chiefly in describing the inadequacies of other unions.

How is such complete rank and file control accomplished?

In the first place there is no division of our ranks into the officials and the rank and file. There is no officialdom. That might be hard to see, knowing how most of the Trade Unions operate. We have officers, some voluntary, some on the payroll, some devoting full time to the work of the I.W.W., some devoting their spare time after regular working hours. None of them are officers for very long. The various terms of office vary from six months to a year, and in no case can a member serve more than three successive terms. Thus our members are elected into and out of office. If they stayed in office for life, as they do in so many unions, they would no doubt be "sobered by the responsibilities of office", and subordinate their revolutionary understandings to the necessity of balancing the budget. This we don't want. What we do want is a union composed of members capable and willing to take on any responsibilities, and this is what we have. We don't want to become a bureaucratic elite when we are officers. So we don't stay, and during any term of office we look at the problems of organization in the same way as all the members do. Conversely, so many of our members who are not holding an official position at any one time, have held such positions, that the viewpoint of these members is based largely upon the realization of the problems that confront the officers of the union. Thus there can be a natural harmony and understanding throughout the I.W.W.

The powers of officers.

The powers of these I.W.W. officers are very limited. They can not call strikes, nor can they stop them. Only

the members affected can do this. Consequently they can not "sell out". If they are on the payroll, they have no votes in any membership meeting; and no official, whether paid or not, has a vote in the Industrial Union or General Conventions. This is in marked contrast to the practice of most other unions. Their work is set out for them by the various Conventions or other deliberative bodies of the membership; and should any unforeseen circumstance develop requiring any abrupt change of plan or policy, a referendum must be taken on it. At any time any officer can be recalled by referendum of the members of the body that elected them.

Neither Congress nor Federation

The structure of the I.W.W. provides for the utmost cohesiveness with the utmost freedom or autonomy of its component parts to attend to local or specific problems as the definite circumstances may require. It is not a federation of Industrial Unions or a congress of Trade Unions, but One Big Union of the working class. All its members are directly members of the I.W.W. We meet as members of Industrial Unions, according to the product of the sort of work we do; and there is a free automatic transfer from one Industrial Union to another. A good portion of the work of the I.W.W. is accomplished by general membership meetings, District Conferences of all members in a district, Industrial District Councils, and other structures that bring members of various industries together. All this results in cohesiveness and solidarity without the imposition of a powerful central authority.

Consequently there is no sacrifice of cohesiveness in preserving autonomy for the component parts of the I.W.W. Job branches decide their own policies for organizing the job, for keeping it organized, or for improving it. Union branches decide their local organization policies, elect their own officers, decide upon their own ways and means. These bodies are limited only by this: all must act in conformity with the General Constitution and Bylaws, and the decisions of their Conventions. A copy of the Constitution comes free with membership, or can be bought for 10p, post paid.

The financial arrangements of the I.W.W. are a further guarantee of rank and file control. Control over a unions treasury often means control over the union. So union dues cannot be raised, or lowered, without a referendum of the members. Assessments for specific things, such as to start a new Industrial Union newsletter or furnish a new Branch Hall, cannot be made compulsory without all members who will have to pay voting on whether or not they want to! Of the dues collected each month, half stay in the Branch treasury, and half go to the General Administration office. It pays for the facilities and equipment with which the union works; but the money will not do the work. The union is not a device to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves; it is a device to enable us to do together the things that we cannot do alone. Our dues pay for the upkeep of this device; they do not, and they never can, pay for the things that we must and can do ourselves.

If strikes or organizing campaigns break a local treasury, the General Office and the other Branches can be called upon for assistance, but although they cannot be compelled to contribute their funds, the understanding of solidarity that we have has meant that no appeal has ever fallen upon deaf ears. This is unionism, after all. Always the I.W.W. acts on the belief that the best place for the treasury of the union is in the pockets of the

members; As we are called upon, so we can give. This is how the monthly dues are kept universally low. In Britain they are at present 50p a month, with an additional *voluntary* assessment of 25p, which can be used solely for publications. (Leaflets, pamphlets, magazines, posters).

Our Understandings

But the most effective guarantee of rank and file rule in the I.W.W. is not just in its Constitution, structure, or financial arrangements, but also in the viewpoints that have become traditional in our ranks. We I.W.W. members look upon rank and file not merely as a means for making sure that the union is run according to our wishes, but even more as a means of getting things done. The diffusion of responsibility in a rank and file organization gives birth to initiative and releases energy. Even more important in getting results, it has things done by those who know what they want done, what obstacles are in the way of doing them, and consequently how they must be done. It may be possible to steer a boat on the open sea by remote control, but it won't work for riding a log downstream.

It is rank and file control that has kept the I.W.W. from being steered up blind alleys by the various fads and foibles that have beset the alleged intelligentia of the labour movement. It is rank and file control that has developed organizational capacity throughout this union, and it is the development of individual capacity that grows from it, and the organized self-reliance that is behind it, that we look to for assurance, no matter what illusory gains may seem to be made by those who use the leadership principle at the expense of the working class.

It is little wonder that the I.W.W. places great emphasis on this idea of rank and file control, looks for it in the unions that lack it, completely rejects the leader principle that would leave no room for it, and wishes the genuine article of rank and file rule not to be confused with the ludicrous imitations that have been offered by the much-to-be-watched, self appointed saviours of the worlds working class.

from the Songbook

*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

Workers' Control - - - Now?

Self-appointed "Marxist" intellectuals tend to think in abstract terms and one of the dottiest of these gentry was the eccentric Cambridge intellectual, G.D.H. Cole, a man who combined the writing of mystery fiction with writing on industrial affairs — although he had never done a day's manual work in his life. Looking back on his varied career, he once lamented that "we" had given little thoughts to "the higher ranges of control, and especially to the control over investment, of which we were hardly conscious of as a problem." He was not, of course, speaking on behalf of the industrial unionists, but of the Fabians and Guild Socialists. His ideas have gained new currency today, particularly among some top brass of the Labour party and TUC, and one would almost think that Tom Mann or Jim Connolly had risen from the dead when we hear people like Tony Wedgewood Benn or Jack Jones rhapsodise about "industrial democracy" or "workers' control." But, if we read much of the literature published by the bodies they represent, we find — either explicitly or implicitly — the following suggestion: the syndicalists had some pretty good ideas, but as ordinary working class chaps, they couldn't have been expected to understand anything about the "higher ranges" of control. For the moment, we will merely reply that the IWW not only understands all of the problems connected with workers' control of industry, but provides the only logical solution to them. Let us try to discover the reason for this recent upsurge of interest in workers' control. Why are Tony and Jack suddenly beginning to talk like Tom and Jim?

The increasing internationalisation of capital has resulted in American firms owning an estimated one-tenth of all plants and equipment in Britain today and it is expected that by 1980 they will own nearly 25 per cent of British industry. In common with other large international companies they have consistently refused to participate in industry-wide negotiating machinery and instead negotiate with the unions on a company basis, and as a result, the old system of collective bargaining, which functioned through National Joint Industrial Councils, is being superseded by company and plant bargaining. This, in turn, has meant that shop stewards will be playing a large role in negotiations and many of the latter are now being urged to study subjects like company finance, particularly company accounts and balance sheets. The reason why management has decided to open the books (or at least one set of books) is that most of these firms use modern and expensive machinery and employ a very high proportion of semi-skilled labour; round the clock operation of plant with as few stoppages as possible requires new management techniques and improved labour-management relations, so the carrot is being used instead of the stick. Under these circumstances, management will not hesitate to show a balance sheet to union representatives and invite ideas that might lead to higher efficiency and profitability. We have seen this sort of thing happen before, in the motor industry, for example, and we all know that when a slump in sales occurs, there will be no

more talk about inviting the workers to "control investment" or anything else.

The demand to open the books has always been a weapon in the syndicalist armoury, but we would only be helping the union bureaucrats to delude the working classes if we were to join them in pretending that the economic laws governing the capitalist system are about to reverse themselves and that "the higher ranges of control" are within our grasp. To this sort of talk add an occasional plea on behalf of low-paid workers, a demand for old-age pension increases and a good deal of rhetoric about "class bargaining" and you have a package that can easily be sold with the label of "Workers' control — now!" How easy it is to fool some left-wingers!

The aim of industrial unionism is to achieve total workers' control of industry and to see it controlled from the bottom upwards, beginning on the shop floor with control of decision-making over all activities and extending into the factory offices to include the workers who do the actual bookmaking. It makes more sense and the job of achieving our aims much easier — to have clerical workers enrolled as members of the same industrial union as the manual workers.

"The chief administrative body of the nation will be a collection of representatives from the various industries and professions. From the industries they represent these administrators will learn of the demand for the articles they manufacture; the industries will learn from the storekeepers of the national stores and warehouses what articles are demanded by the general public who purchase at these stores, and the cumulative total of the reports given by storekeepers and industries will tell the chief administrative body (Congress if you will) how much to produce, and where to place it to meet the demand. Likewise, the reports brought to the representatives from their Industrial Union as to the relative equipment and power of their factories in each district will enable them to place their orders in the places most suited to fill them, and to supervise and push forward the building and development of new factories and machinery."

G.D.H. Cole, the chap from Cambridge, may have given little thought to problems concerning "the higher ranges of control", but quite obviously Jim Connolly, reared and educated in the Edinburgh slums, had done so. The above was written when Connolly was working as an organiser for the IWW in New York. The paragraph from which it is taken is worth reading in full, since it shows how the sort of union — a union of a new kind — that we advocate is, in fact, creating the working forms, the structure of the new society within the shell of the old. Workers' control of industry will have to wait until the historic mission of the working class has been accomplished and we would be foolish indeed to depend upon people like Jack Jones and Tony Wedgewood-Benn to accomplish it for us.

Henry Bell.

from the Songbook

Solidarity Forever

(Tune: John Brown's Body)

(by Ralph Chaplin, January 1915) (9th edition, 1916)

Solidarity Forever, sung to the tune of John Brown's Body, is reputed to be the best known workers song in North America, and is hardly unknown throughout the rest of the world. It was written by Ralph Chaplin, who wrote many other songs and poems while a member of the I.W.W., as well as being the editor of newspapers and magazines, and a cartoonist for the labour movement generally. He wrote *Solidarity Forever* just after he went to Chicago following a stint as editor of the West Virginia Labor Star during the Kanawha Valley coal miners strike.

It's been recorded several times by Pete Seegar, but he always seems to manage to leave a few verses out. Tony Lane's new paperback, *The Union Makes Us Strong*, which will be reviewed in a future issue of the *Industrial Unionist*, quotes the first verse and chorus. Below is printed the full version, as it appears in the I.W.W. songbook.

In his autobiography, *Wobbly*, Chaplin writes about the song; "I wanted a song to be full of revolutionary fervour and to have a chorus that was ringing and defiant."

When the Union's inspiration through the workers' blood shall
run,
There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun.
Yet what force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of
one?
But the Union makes us strong.

REFRAIN March time



Solidarity forever!
Solidarity forever!
Solidarity forever!
For the Union makes us strong.

Is there aught we hold in common with the greedy parasite
Who would lash us into serfdom and would crush us with his
might?

Is there anything left to us but to organize and fight?
For the Union makes us strong. [chorus]

It is we who plowed the prairies; built the cities where they
trade;

Dug the mines and built the workshops; endless miles of
railroad laid.

Now we stand outcast and starving, 'midst the wonders we
have made;

But the Union makes us strong. [chorus]

All the world that's owned by idle drones is ours and ours
alone.

We have laid the wide foundations; built it skyward stone by
stone

It is ours, not to slave in, but to master and to own,
While the Union makes us strong. [chorus]

They have taken untold millions that they never toiled to earn,
But without our brain and muscle not a single wheel can turn.
We can break their haughty power; gain our freedom when we
learn

That the Union makes us strong. [chorus]

In our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold;
Greater than the might of armies, magnified a thousand-fold.
We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old.
For the Union makes us strong. [chorus]

Bookshelf



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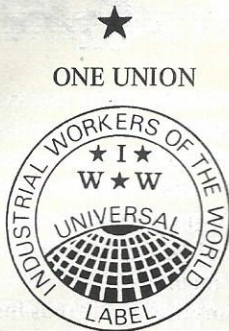
I.W.W.'s Little Red Songbook. 64 pages of "songs to fan the flames of discontent", as the cover says. Amongst them "Solidarity Forever", "The International", "Hold the Fort", "We Have Fed You All For A Thousand Years", and 50 more. 34th Edition. 25p

World Labour Needs a Union. Taking his facts from the workplaces of the world, Fred Thompson takes out the dryness and makes them into an informative explanation of why it is only a truly international union that can solve the problems we face as the wage-slaves of international capital. Have you been harmed by the low wage to which some distant worker has been driven? Or was it your higher productivity that compelled that worker to accept so low a wage so that they too could have a job? 14p

The General Strike for Industrial Freedom. "The argument for the General Strike based on the persistent and very logical working class conviction that the ruling class will refuse to permit itself to be dispossessed by any power weaker than its own and that public opinion, political action and insurrection therefore will not be permitted to be developed or used to any appreciable extent. As long as the production of goods under any system depends upon the disciplined solidarity of the producing class it is evident that this solidarity alone is capable of stopping the operations of the old order or of starting and continuing those of the new." First written in 1933, not a word of this pamphlet has lost its significance. 25p

The History of the San Diego Free Speech Fight. Since the early history of the town there had been street meetings for purposes of agitation, reform and revival. In December 1911, a petition was filed with the town Council asking for the banning of speaking in the heart of the city. This petition was signed by 85 persons, mostly merchants. They signed this as "citizens and property owners". This booklet tells the story of the bloody fight for free speech from the first arrests to the last trial. 45p

★
ONE LABEL



★
ONE ENEMY

LABOUR
PRODUCES
ALL WEALTH

ALL WEALTH
MUST GO
TO LABOUR



The Industrial Unionist

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