

The Industrial Workers of the World

Its History, Structure and Methods

Vincent St. John

1917

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In the fall of 1904 eight men began to secretly plan a radical new direction for the American Labor Movement.

These men were planning for a new era of solidarity and strength for the American workingmen. They felt that the only hope of the working class was a new labor organization, one not in awe of capitalism, or cowed by government regulations and interference. It was with the hope that they might succeed in forming such an organization that these first eight invited 36 of the leaders of radical labor to Chicago to attend a secret conference to lay the groundwork for a new union.

The invitations read:

Asserting our confidence in the ability of the working class, if correctly organized on both political and industrial lines, to take possession of and operate successfully the industries of the country...

We invite you to meet us at Chicago, Monday, January 2, 1905, in secret conference to discuss way and means of uniting the working people of America on correct revolutionary principles, regardless of any labor organization of the past or present, and only restricted by such basic principles as will insure its integrity as a real protector of the interests of the working class.

With these few actions the Industrial Workers of the World was born.

(1) The I.W.W. — A Brief History

In the fall of 1904 eight men active in the revolutionary labor movement held a conference. After exchanging views and discussing the conditions then confronting the workers of the United States, they decided to issue a call for a larger gathering.

These eight workers were Isaac Cowen, American representative of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers of Great Britain, Clarence Smith, general secretary-treasurer of the American Labor Union, Thomas J. Hagerty, editor of the "Voice of Labor," official organ of the A.L.U., George Estes, president of the United Brotherhood of Railway Employes, W.L. Hall, general secretary-treasurer U.B.R.E., Charles O. Sherman, secretary of the United Metal Workers, Wm. E. Trautmann, editor of the "Brauer Zeitung" the official organ of the United Brewery Workers of America, and Eugene V. Debs, founder of the American Railway Union, the Socialist Party of America, and staunch believer in the concept of industrial unionism.

Invitations were then sent out to thirty-six additional individuals who were active in radical labor organizations and the socialist political movement of the United States, inviting them to meet in secret conference in Chicago, Illinois on January 2, 1905.

Of the thirty-six who received invitations, but two declined to attend the proposed conference—Max S. Hayes and Victor Berger—both of whom were in editorial charge of socialist political party and trade union organs.

The conference met at the appointed time with thirty present, and drew up the Industrial Union Manifesto calling for a convention to be held in Chicago, June 27, 1905, for the purpose of launching an organization in accord with the principles set forth in the Manifesto. The work of circulating the Manifesto was handled by an executive committee of the conference, the American Labor Union and the Western Federation of Miners.

The Manifesto was widely circulated in several languages.

On the date set the convention assembled with 186 delegates present from 34 state, district, national and local organizations representing about 90,000 members. All who were present as delegates were not there in good faith. Knowledge of this fact caused the signers of the Manifesto to constitute themselves a temporary committee on credentials.

This temporary credentials committee ruled that representation for organizations would be based upon the number of members in their respective organizations only where such delegates were empowered by their organizations to install said organizations as integral parts of the Industrial Union when formed. Where not so empowered delegates would only be allowed one vote.

One of the delegations present was from the Illinois State District of the United Mine Workers of America. The membership of that district at that time was in the neighborhood of 50,000. Under the above rule these delegates were seated with one vote each. This brings the number of members represented down to 40,000. Several other organizations that had delegates present existed mainly on paper; so it is safe to say that 40,000 is a good estimate of the number of workers represented in the first convention.

The foregoing figures will show that the precautions adopted by the signers of the Manifesto were all that prevented the opponents of the industrial union from capturing the convention and blocking any effort to start the organization. It is a fact that many of those who were present as delegates on the floor of the first convention and the organizations that they represented have bitterly fought the I. W. W. from the close of the first convention up to the present day.

The organizations that installed as a part of the new organization were: Western Federation of Miners, 27,000 members; Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, 1,450 members; Punch Press Operators, 168 members; United Metal Workers, 3,000 members; Longshoremen's Union, 400 members; the American Labor Union, 16,500 members; United Brotherhood of Railway Employees, 2,087 members.¹

(2) The Original I. W. W. Preamble

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life. Between these two classes a struggle must go on until all the toilers come together on the political, as well as on the industrial field, and take and hold that which they produce by their labor through an economic organization of the working class, without affiliation with any political party.

The rapid gathering of wealth and the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands make the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class, because the trade unions foster a state of things which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars.

¹ Membership claims for the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, United Metal Workers, and the American Labor Union existed almost wholly on paper.

The trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers. These sad conditions can be changed and the interests of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in all industries, if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

All kinds and shades of theories and programs were represented among the delegates and individuals present at the first convention. The principal ones in evidence, however, were four: Parliamentary socialists—two types—impossibilist and opportunist, Marxian and reformist; anarchist; industrial unionist; and the labor union fakir.

The task of combining these conflicting elements was attempted by the convention. A knowledge of this task makes it easier to understand the seeming contradictions in the original Preamble.

The first year of the organization was one of internal struggle for control by these different elements. The two camps of socialist politicians looked upon the I.W.W. only as a battle ground upon which to settle their respective merits and demerits. The labor fakers strove to fasten themselves upon the organization that they might continue to exist if the new union was a success. The anarchist element did not interfere to any great extent in the internal affairs. Only one instance is known to the writer: that of New York City where they were in alliance with one set of politicians, for the purpose of controlling the district council.

In spite of these and other obstacles the new organization made some progress; fought a few successful battles with the employing class, and started publishing a monthly organ, "The Industrial Worker."

The I. W. W. also issued the first call for the defense of Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone under the title, *Shall Our Brothers Be Murdered?*, formed the defense league, and it is due to the interest awakened by the I.W.W. that other organizations were enlisted in the fight to save the lives of the officials of the W.F.M. which finally resulted in their liberation. Thus the efforts of the W.F.M. in starting the I.W.W. were repaid.²

(3) Second Convention

The Second convention met in September 1906, with 93 delegates representing about 60,000 members. This convention demonstrated that the administration of the I.W.W. was in the hands of men who were not in accord with the revolutionary program of the organization. Of the general officers only two were sincere—the General Secretary, W.E. Trautmann, and one member of the Executive Board, John Riordan.

The struggle for control of the organization formed the Second convention into two camps. The majority vote of the convention was in the revolutionary camp. The reactionary camp having the chairman used obstructive tactics in their effort to gain control of the convention. They hoped thereby to delay the convention until enough delegates would be forced to return home and thus change the control of the convention. The revolutionists cut this knot by abolishing the office of President and electing a chairman from among the revolutionists.

² Berger in the *Social Democratic Herald* of Milwaukee denied that the Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone case was a part of the class struggle. It was but a "border feud," said he.

In this struggle the two contending sets of socialist politicians lined up in opposite camps. The Second convention amended the Preamble by adding the following clause:

“Therefore without endorsing or desiring the endorsement of any political party.”

A new executive board was elected. On the adjournment of the convention the old officials seized the general headquarters, and with the aid of detectives and police held the same, compelling the revolutionists to open up new offices. This they were enabled to do in spite of the fact that they were without access to the funds of the organization, and had to depend on getting finances from the locals.

The W.F.M. officials supported the old officials of the I.W.W. for a time financially and with the influence of their official organ. The same is true of the Socialist Party press and administration. The radical element in the W.F.M. were finally able to force the officials to withdraw that support. The old officials of the I.W.W. then gave up all presence of having an organization.

The organization entered its second year facing a more severe struggle than in its first year. It succeeded, however, in establishing the general headquarters again, and in issuing a weekly publication in place of the monthly, seized by the old officials.

During the second year some hard struggles for better conditions were waged by the members. The Third convention of the I.W.W. was uneventful. But it was at this convention that it became evident that the socialist politicians who had remained with the organization were trying to bend the I. W. W. to their purpose; and a slight effort was made to relegate the politician to the rear.

But it was the Fourth convention that resulted in a rupture between the politicians and industrial unionists; determining once and for all that the former were not allowed to control the organization.

(4) I.W.W. Preamble

The Preamble was amended as follows:

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life. Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the earth and the machinery of production, and abolish the wage system.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same Industry, thereby helping to defeat one another in wage wars.

Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers. These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in

all industries, if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wages for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system." It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for the every-day struggle with the capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

The politicians attempted to set up another organization, claiming to be the real industrial movement. It is nothing but a duplicate of their political party and never functions as a labor organization. It is committed to a program of the "civilized plane," i. e., parliamentarianism. Its publications are the official organs of a political sect that never misses an opportunity to assail the revolutionary workers while they are engaged in combat with some division of the ruling-class. Their favorite method is to charge the revolutionists with all the crimes that a cowardly imagination can conjure into being. "Dynamiters, assassins, thugs, murderers, thieves," etc., are stock phrases.

Following the victory of the Lawrence Textile workers the S.L.P. politicians renewed their efforts to pose as the I.W.W. By representing that they were the I.W.W. and THE ONLY I.W.W. they were enabled to deceive several thousand textile workers in Patterson, Passaic, Hackensack, Stirling, Summit, Hoboken, Newark, New Jersey; and Astoria, Long Island, and collect from them initiation fees and dues.

In every instance these political fakers betrayed the workers into the hands of the mill owners, and the efforts of the workers to better their conditions resulted in defeat. At Paterson and Passaic the S.L.P. entered into an alliance with the police to prevent the organizers of the I.W.W. from exposing them to the workers.

Their own actions, however, resulted in exposing them to the workers in their true colors and today they are thoroughly discredited with the workers throughout that district.

For a time the other wing of the political movement contented itself with spreading its venom in secret. Since the conclusion of the Lawrence strike the publications of the Socialist Party (with a very few exceptions) have never failed to use their columns to misrepresent and slander the organization and its active membership. Their attacks have extended to members of their own party who happened to be active members or supporters of the I.W.W.

(5) Structure of the I.W.W.

Basing its conclusions upon the experience of the past the I. W. W. holds that it is essential to have the form and structure of the organization conform to the development of the machinery of production and the process of concentration going on in industry in order to facilitate the growth of solidarity on class lines among the workers. Unless the structure of the organization keeps step with the development of industry it will be impossible to secure the solidarity so necessary to success in the struggles with the employing class.

Out of date forms of organization with their corresponding obsolete methods and rules will have to be broken down. To do this in time of a struggle means confusion and chaos that result in defeat.

The I.W.W. holds, that, regardless of the bravery and spirit the workers may show, if they are compelled to fight with old methods and an out of date form of organization against the modern organization of the employing class, there can be but one outcome to any struggle waged under these conditions—defeat.

The I.W.W. recognizes the need of working class solidarity. To achieve this it proposes the recognition of the Class Struggle as the basic principle of the organization, and declares its purpose to be the fighting of that struggle until the working class is in control of the administration of industry.

In its basic principle the I.W.W. calls forth that spirit of revolt and resistance that is so necessary a part of the equipment of any organization of the workers in their struggle for economic independence. In a word, its basic principle makes the I.W.W. a fighting organization. It commits the union to an unceasing struggle against the private ownership and control of industry.

There is but one bargain that the I.W.W. will make with the employing class—COMPLETE SURRENDER OF ALL CONTROL OF INDUSTRY TO THE ORGANIZED WORKERS.

The experience of the past has proven the mass form of organization, such as that of the Knights of Labor, to be as powerless and unwieldy as a mob.

The craft form of union, with its principle of trade autonomy, and harmony of interest with the boss, has also been proven a failure. It has not furnished an effective weapon to the working class. True, it has been able to get for the skilled mechanics improved conditions, but due to the narrow structure of the craft organization, class interest has long since been lost sight of, and craft interest alone governs the actions of its membership. In the last analysis the craft union has only been able to get advantages for its membership at the expense of the great mass of the working class, by entering into a contract with the employing class to stand aloof from the balance of the working class in its struggles. They have become allies of the employers to keep in subjection the vast majority of the workers. The I.W.W. denies that the craft union movement is a labor movement. We deny that it can or will become a labor movement.

Today in the United States in all of the basic (large) industries, whenever any portion of the workers strive for better conditions, they enter into a conflict with the employing class as a whole. The expense of a strike is borne by the organized employers who have reached the point that, regardless of what competition may still remain, they unite to keep the workers in subjection, because of the common interest all have in securing cheap labor power.

(6) General Outline

To meet this condition the Industrial Workers of the World proposes:

- The unit of organization is the INDUSTRIAL UNION, “*branched*” according to the requirements of the particular industry. In some instances the Industrial Union may embrace all the workers of a given industry, while in other industries several Industrial Unions with distinct jurisdiction may be necessary to cover the situation; as, for instance, in the “Industry of Marine Transportation”—one union on the Great Lakes, one on the Atlantic and Gulf Seaboard, one on the Pacific Coast, one on the Mississippi River system—each

being branched to meet the special requirements of the particular situation.

- Industrial Unions of closely allied industries are combined into departmental organizations. For example, the Marine ‘Transport Workers’ Industrial Unions referred to above would be united with Railway or Steam Transportation Industrial Unions, Municipal Transportation Industrial Unions, Motor Truck Transporters, and Aviators’ Unions, into the “Department of Transportation and Communication.”
- The Industrial Departments are combined into the General Organization, which in turn is to be an integral part of a like International Organization; and through the international organization establish solidarity and co-operation between the workers of all countries.

Component Parts of the Organization

Taking into consideration the technical differences that exist within the different departments of the industries and conditions existing where large numbers of workers are employed, the Industrial Union is “branched” wherever necessary, If the union includes ALL the workers in a given industry or a distinct jurisdiction within an industry, “Industrial Branches” of the Union are established in the centers most convenient for the workers.

These Industrial Branches are further subdivided into:

- (1) Shop sections, so that the workers of each shop control the conditions that directly affect them.
- (2) Language sections, so that the workers can conduct the affairs of the organization in the language with which they are the most familiar.
- (3) In those large industries that are operated by departments, DEPARTMENT subdivisions are formed to systematize and simplify the business of the organization.
- (4) When an industry covers a large local area, or is the principal industry of a city, DISTRICT subdivisions are formed, to enable the workers to attend union meetings without traveling too great a distance.
- (5) In order that every given industrial district shall have complete industrial solidarity among the workers in all industries as well as among the workers of each industry, an INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT COUNCIL is formed by delegates elected from all the Industrial Unions and Industrial Branches operating in that district and, through this Council concerted action is maintained throughout the district.

Functions of the Local Sections and Subdivisions

Shop and language sections, and department and district subdivisions deal with the employer ONLY through the Industrial Branch or the Industrial Union. Thus, while the workers in each section determine the conditions that directly affect them, they act in concert with all the workers of the industry through the Industrial Branch and the Union.

As the knowledge of the English language becomes more general, the language branches will disappear. The development of machine production will also gradually eliminate the branches based on technical knowledge, or skill.

The constant development and concentration of the ownership and control of industry will be met by a like concentration of the number of Industrial Unions and Industrial Departments. It is meant that the organization at all times shall conform to the needs of the hour and eventually furnish the medium through which and by which the organized workers will be able to determine the amount of food, clothing, shelter, education and amusement necessary to satisfy the wants of the workers.

(7) Administration of the Organizations

Industrial Unions have full charge of all their own affairs; elect their own officers; determine their pay; and also the amount of dues collected by the union from the membership. The general organization, however, does not allow any union to charge over \$1.00 per month dues or \$5.00 initiation fee.

Each Industrial Branch of an Industrial Union elects a delegate or delegates to the Executive Committee of the Industrial Union. This Executive Committee is the administrative body of the Industrial Union. Officers of the Industrial Branches consist of secretary, treasurer, chairman and trustees.

Officers of the Industrial Union consist of secretary and treasurer, chairman, and executive committee. Each Industrial Union and Industrial Branch within a given district elects a delegate or delegates to the District Council. The District Council has as officers a secretary-treasurer and trustees. The officers of the district council are elected by the delegates thereof.

All officers in local bodies except those of district council are elected by ballot of all the membership involved. Proportional representation does not prevail in the delegations of the branches and to district councils. Each branch and local has the same number of delegates. Each delegate casts one vote.

Industrial Unions hold annual conventions. Delegates from each Branch of the Union cast a vote based upon the membership of the Industrial Branch that they represent.

The Industrial Union nominates the candidates for officers at the convention, and the three nominees receiving the highest votes at the convention are sent to all the membership to be voted upon in selecting the officers.

The officers of the Industrial Unions consist of secretary and treasurer, and executive committee. Each Industrial Union elects delegates to the Department to which it belongs. The same procedure is followed in electing delegates as in electing officers.

Industrial Departments hold conventions and nominate the delegates that are elected to the general convention. Delegates to the general convention nominate candidates for the officers of the general organization. These general officers are elected by the vote of the entire organization.

The General Executive Board is composed of one member from each Industrial Department and is selected by the membership of that department. General conventions are held annually at present.

The rule in determining the wages of the officers of all parts of the organization is, to pay the officers who are needed approximately the same wages they would receive when employed in the industry in which they work.

(8) I.W.W. Tactics or Methods

As a revolutionary the Industrial Workers of the World aims to use any and all tactics that will get the results sought with the least expenditure of time and energy. The tactics used are determined solely by the power of the organization to make good in their use. The question of “right” and “wrong” does not concern us.

No terms made with an employer are final. All peace so long as the wage system lasts, is but an armed truce. At any favorable opportunity the struggle for more control of industry is renewed.

As the organization gains control in the industries, and the knowledge among the workers of their power, when properly applied within the industries, becomes more general, the long drawn out strike will become a relic of the past. A long drawn out strike implies insufficient organization or that the strike has occurred at a time when the employer can best afford a shut down—or both. Under all ordinary circumstances a strike that is not won in four to six weeks cannot be won by remaining out longer. In trustified industry the employer can better afford to fight one strike that lasts six months than he can six strikes that take place in that period.

No part of the organization is allowed to enter into time contracts with the employers. Where strikes are used, it aims to paralyze all branches of the industry involved, when the employers can least afford a cessation of work—during the busy season and when there are rush orders to be filled.

The Industrial Workers of the World maintains that nothing will be conceded by the employers except that which we have the power to take and hold by the strength of our organization. Therefore we seek no agreements with the employers.

Failing to force concessions from the employers by the strike, work is resumed and “sabotage” is used to force the employers to concede the demands of the workers.

The great progress made in machine production results in an ever-increasing army of unemployed. To counteract this the Industrial Workers of the World aims to establish the shorter work day, and to slow up the working pace, thus compelling the employment of more and more workers.

To facilitate the work of organization, large initiation fees and dues are prohibited by the IWW.³

During strikes the works are closely picketed and every effort made to keep the employers from getting workers into the shops. All supplies are cut off from strike bound shops. All shipments are refused or missent, delayed and lost if possible. Strike-breakers are also isolated to the full extent of the power of the organization. Interference by the government is resented by open violation of the government’s orders, going to jail en masse, causing expense to the taxpayers—which is but another name for the employing class. In short, the I.W.W. advocates the use of militant “direct action” tactics to the full extent of our power to make good.

³ Some of the craft unions charge from \$25.00 to \$250.00. One, the Green Bottle Blowers’ Union, charges \$1,000.

(9) Education

At the present time the organization has fourteen publications of its own, twelve weekly and two biweekly, in the following languages: English, 3, and one each in French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Polish, Slavish, Lithuanian, Hungarian, Swedish and Jewish. A Spanish weekly and an Italian weekly are affiliated with the organization. One Russian weekly and an English monthly review are sympathetic, and a Finnish daily paper is consistently advocating the principles set forth in the preamble.

The general organization issues leaflets and pamphlets from time to time and aims to build up and extend educational literature in all languages as fast as the resources of the organization permit.

The Unions and their Industrial Branches hold educational meetings in halls and on the streets of the industrial centers. Reading rooms and halls are maintained by all the larger Branches. Revolutionary literature is kept on file. Special shop meetings are held in efforts to organize certain industries.

(10) Struggles of the I.W.W.

In 1906 the eight-hour day was established for hotel and restaurant workers in Goldfield, Nevada.

In the same year sheet metal workers lost a strike at Youngstown, Ohio, due to the American Federation of Labor's filling the places of the strikers.

In 1907 textile workers of Skowhegan, Maine, 3,000 strong, struck over the discharge of active workers in the organization. The strike lasted four weeks and resulted in a complete victory for the strikers with improved conditions. John Golden, president of the United Textile Workers, A. F. of L., attempted to break this strike by furnishing strike breakers.

In Portland, Oregon, 3,000 saw mill workers were involved in a strike for a nine-hour day and increase of wages from \$1.75 to \$2.50 per day. On account of the exceptional demand for labor of all kinds in that section at that time, most of the strikers secured employment elsewhere, and the strike played out at the end of about six weeks. The saw mill companies were seriously crippled for months, and were forced indirectly to raise wages and improve conditions of the employees. This strike gave much impetus to I.W.W. agitation in the western part of the United States.

In Bridgeport, Connecticut, 1,200 tube mill workers were involved. This strike was lost through the scabbing tactics of the A.F. of L.

In the same year 800 silk mill workers engaged in a strike at Lancaster, Pennsylvania. This strike was lost on account of a shutdown due to the panic of 1907 that occurred shortly after the strike started.

From March 10, 1907, until April 22, W.F.M. and the I.W.W. at Goldfield, Nevada, fought for their existence (and the conditions that they had established at that place) against the combined forces of the mine owners, businessmen and A.F. of L. This open fight was compromised as a result of the treachery of the W.F.M. general officers. The fight was waged intermittently from April 22 till September, 1907, and resulted in regaining all ground lost through the compromise, and in destroying the scab charter issued by the A.F. of L. during the fight. This fight cost the employers over \$100,000. The strike of the W.F.M. in October 1907 took place during a panic and destroyed the organization's control in that district.

Under the I.W.W. sway in Goldfield, the minimum wage for all kinds of labor was \$4.50 per day and the eight-hour day was universal. The highest point of efficiency for any labor organization was reached by the I.W.W. and W.F.M. in Goldfield Nevada. No committees were ever sent to any employers. The unions adopted wage scales and regulated hours. The secretary posted the same on a bulletin board outside of the union hall, and it was the LAW. The employers were forced to come and see the union's committees.

Beginning in July 1909, at McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania, 8,000 workers of the Pressed Steel Car Company, embracing sixteen different nationalities, waged the most important struggle that the I. W. W. took part in to that date. The strike lasted eleven weeks. As usual, the employers resorted to the use of the Pennsylvania State Constabulary, known as the American Cossacks, to intimidate the strikers and browbeat them back to work. This constabulary is a picked body of armed thugs recruited for their ability to handle firearms. Every strike in Pennsylvania since the institution of the constabulary has been broken or crippled by them. Men, women and children have been killed and brutally maimed by them with impunity.

Their advent upon the scene in McKees Rocks was marked by the usual campaign of brutality. Finally one of the cossacks killed a striker. The strike committee then served notice upon the commander of the cossacks that for every striker killed or injured by the cossacks the life of a cossack would be exacted in return. And that they were not at all concerned as to which cossack paid the penalty, but that a life for a life would be exacted. The strikers kept their word. On the next assault by the cossacks, several of the constabulary were killed and a number wounded. The cossacks were driven from the streets and into the plants of the company. An equal number of strikers were killed and about fifty wounded in the battle. This ended the killing on both sides during the remainder of the strike. For the first time in their existence the cossacks were "tamed." The McKees Rocks strike resulted in a complete victory for the strikers.

On November 2, 1909, the city government at Spokane, Washington started to arrest the speakers of the I.W.W. for holding street meetings. The locals at that point decided to fight the city and force it to allow the organization to hold street meetings. The fight lasted up to the first of March following, and resulted in compelling the city to pass a law allowing street speaking. Over 500 men and women went to jail during the free speech fight. Two hundred went on a hunger strike that lasted from 11 to 13 days, and then went from 30 to 45 days on bread and water; two ounces of bread per day. Four members lost their lives as a result of the treatment accorded them in this fight.

Many more free speech fights have occurred since the one in Spokane, the most notable being at Fresno, California. Here the authorities in cahoots with employers attempted to stop I.W.W. agitation, which was directed toward the organization of the thousands of unskilled workers in the San Joaquin Valley, the fruit belt of California. Street meetings were forbidden in Fresno. The I. W. W. again made use of "direct action" methods, and filled the jails of that city with arrested street speakers. The fight lasted for four months, and over 100 members were in jail for from two to three months. Arrested members refused to hire lawyers, and plead their own cases in court, or used some member of the organization as their "attorney." Finally, the organization outside of Fresno took an energetic hold of the fight, and organized a movement to "invade California." In accordance with this plan, detachments of free speech fighters started to "march on Fresno" from Spokane, Portland, Denver, St. Louis and other sections; whereupon the Fresno authorities decided that they had enough, and surrendered. Freedom of speech was completely re-established in Fresno, and the I.W.W. has never since been interfered with.

A four months' strike of shoe workers occurred in Brooklyn, New York, in the winter of 1911. This strike was most stubbornly contested on both sides, and resulted in improved conditions for the workers in some of the shops.

(11) Some of the Strikes of 1912

Editorial Note by William D Haywood: *“Under this heading all the references to Local Unions and National Industrial Unions are based upon the terms used and the structure provided by the constitution prior to the 10th convention in 1916. The Industrial Workers of the World being as broad as industry and dealing with the workers in the industries rather than along mere local lines, the inconsistency of the words Local and National was cured by striking them out and thus removing any restrictions that may have been imposed upon our ideals by the use of such terms.”*

Local Union No.10, Electrical Supply Workers, Fremont, Ohio. One strike; 30 men involved. Lost because of inability to extend the same and shut down the plant.

Local Unions 161 and 169, Textile and Shoe Workers, Haverhill, Mass. Two strikes involving 572 members. Lasted seven weeks altogether. Both strikes successful. Sixty members arrested and 15 of them convicted and sentenced to jail for one to four months.

Local Union 194, Clothing Workers, Seattle, Washington. Ten small strikes lasting from a few hours up to two months. All of the strikes successful except one. Fifteen arrested, one conviction, two members held in jail nine weeks for deportation finally released. Number of workers involved not specified.

Local Union 326, Railroad Construction Workers, Prince Rupert, B. C. Two strikes, both of which were successful; 2,350 workers involved; 12 members arrested, all of whom were convicted and sentenced from six months to three years. This local also assisted in winning a strike for unorganized workers at the Shenna Crossing.

Local Union 327, Railroad Construction Workers, Lytton, B. C. One strike lasting seven months; 5,000 involved; 300 members arrested; 200 convicted and sentenced to from one to six months. This strike was called off by the local union owing to the failure to keep the line tied up. The contractors were forced, however, to improve wages and conditions.

National Industrial Union of Forest and Lumber Workers. Two strikes, involving seven local unions and 7,000 workers. One strike lasted two months and the other three weeks. No record of the number of members arrested, but there were several hundred. Three members were convicted and sentenced to from one to three months in jail. The strikes were partially successful in raising wages in the industry.

Extending the organization of the lumber workers in the southern lumber districts involves a contest with the employing class in a section of the country where the employers have held undisputed sway since the American continent was first settled.

Organizers are assaulted and killed by the armed thugs of the industrial lords. The will of the employing class is the law of the land.

July 7, 1912, a meeting-held upon the public road at Grabow, Louisiana, was ambushed by the guards of the Galloway Lumber Company. Three men were killed and forty wounded. Following this attack, A. L. Emerson, the president of the southern district organization, and sixty-four members were arrested and held for trial upon charges of conspiracy to commit murder. Emerson and nine of the members were tried and acquitted in spite of the efforts of the mill owners and

lumber companies to railroad them to the penitentiary or gallows. All others were discharged from custody without trial.

Local Union 436, Lowell, Massachusetts, Textile Workers. Two strikes, one of which resulted in victory and the other was lost; 18,000 involved. Number arrested in strikes 26, all of whom were convicted and sentenced to from one to six weeks in jail.

Local Union 557, Piano Workers, Boston, Massachusetts. One strike; 200 members involved. Strike lasted five weeks and was lost.

Local Union 20, Textile Workers, Lawrence, Massachusetts. Five strikes involving 29,000 workers; 333 arrested, 320 of whom were convicted and fined from \$100 down, and to one year in jail. Most of these cases, however, were settled for a nominal fine on appeal to the higher court. (For an account of the great Lawrence strike and of the Ettor-Giovannitti trial growing out of it, see "Trial of a New Society," by Justus Ebert.)

Local Union 157, Textile Workers, New Bedford, Massachusetts. Lockout; 13,000 workers involved. Number of arrests not known.

In addition to the above there were other strikes of smaller size, but the locals and members involved in the same have not furnished the General Office with any information, so we cannot include data concerning them. An estimate of the amount of money expended for relief and other expenses incidental to handling strikes in the year (1912) shows that \$101,504.05 were expended in handling strikes involving a total of 75,152 strikers and their families, lasting over a period of 74 weeks in the aggregate. The number arrested during that period totaled 1,446; and there were 577 convictions.

(12) The I.W.W. at Present

The organization to date (Jan., 1917) consists of six Industrial Unions: Marine Transport Workers, Metal and Machinery Workers, Agricultural Workers, Iron Miners, Lumber Workers, and Railway Workers, having fifty branches and 200 unions in other industries, together with 100 recruiting unions directly united with the general organization.

The membership today consists very largely of unskilled workers. The bulk of the present membership is in the following industries: Textile, steel, lumber, mining, farming, railroad construction and marine transportation. The majority of the workers in these industries—except the textile—travel from place to place following the different seasons of work. They are therefore out of touch with the organization for months at a period. The paid-up membership of the organization at this time is 60,000. Due to the causes referred to above, this is all of the membership that keeps paid up on the books at all times. The general office, however, has issued 300,000 cards, which is about the number of workers that are in the organization in good and bad standing.

The general practice of exaggerating the membership of the organization is looked upon with disfavor in the I. W. W., as the organization aims to have the membership at all times look at all questions that affect their interests in their actual state. It is absolutely necessary that they do so if they are to be able to judge their strength and their ability to accomplish any proposed undertaking.

As will be seen, the organization in the past has had a continual struggle, not the least of which has been the internal strife engendered by conflicting elements whose activity sprang from many different motives. The future of the organization will be one of greater struggles. We

would not have it otherwise. The internal strife will no doubt be present in the future as in the past. The employing class are fully aware that the most effective way of lessening the power of the revolutionary labor organization is to keep it busy with internal wrangles.

As the membership gain experience from actual contact with the problems of their class they will learn to know each other and the internal wrangles will disappear. Then this weapon in the hands of the employers will become useless, because the membership will refuse to be divided where their class interests are involved.

The future belongs to the I.W.W. The day of the skilled worker is passed. Machine production has made the unskilled worker the main factor in industry. Under modern industrial conditions the workers can no longer act in small groups with any chance of success. They must organize and act as a class.

We are looking forward to the time when the organized proletariat will meet in their union the world over "and decide how long they will work and how much of the wealth they produce they will give to the boss."

(13) Manifesto On Organizing The Industrial Workers of the World

*Twenty-three persons, representing nine organizations attended the January, 1905 conference at Wostas Hall in Chicago. Among them were **William "Big Bill" Haywood** of the Western Federation of Miners, **Mary "Mother" Jones** of the United Mine Workers, **William Trautmann** of the Brewery Workmen, **Gene Debs** of the Socialist Party, and **Frank Bohn** of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance of the Socialist Labor Party. Also in attendance were representatives from the American Labor Union, the United Metal Workers, the International Musical Union, the Baker's Union, the Union of Railroad Switchmen Brotherhood of Railway Employees, and the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. Their statement to the world follows: Social Relations and groupings only reflect mechanical and industrial conditions. The great facts of present industry are the displacement of human skill by machines and the increase of capitalist power through the concentration in the possession of the tools with which wealth is produced and distributed.*

Because of these facts trade division among laborers and competition among capitalists are alike disappearing. Class divisions grow ever more fixed and class antagonisms more sharp. Trade lines have been swallowed up in a common servitude of all workers to the machines which they tend. New machines, ever replacing less productive ones, wipe out whole trades and plunge new bodies of workers into the ever-growing army of trade less, hopeless unemployed. As human beings and human skill are displaced by mechanical progress, the capitalists need use the workers only during the period when muscles and nerves respond most intensely. The moment the laborer no longer yields the maximum profits he is thrown upon the scrap pile, to starve alongside the discarded machine. A dead line has been drawn, and an age limit established, to cross which, in this world of monopolized opportunities, means condemnation to industrial death.

The worker, wholly separated from the land and the tools, with his skill of craftsmanship rendered useless, is sunk in the uniform mass of wage slaves. He sees his power of resistance broken by craft divisions, perpetuated from outgrown industrial stages. His wages constantly grow less as his hours grow longer and monopolized prices grow higher. Shifted hither and thither by the demands of profit-takers, the laborer's home no longer exists. In this hopeless condition he is

forced to accept whatever humiliating conditions his master may impose. He is subjected to a physical and intellectual examination more searching than was the chattel slave when sold upon the auction block. Laborers are no longer classified by differences in trade skill, but the employer assigns them according to the machines to which they are attached. These divisions, far from representing differences in skill or interests among the laborers, are imposed by the employers so that the workers may be pitted against one another and spurred to greater exertion in the shop, and that all resistance to capitalist tyranny may be weakened by artificial distinctions.

While encouraging these outgrown divisions among the workers the capitalists carefully adjust themselves to the new conditions. They wipe out all differences among themselves and present a united front in their war on labor. Through employers' associations, they seek to crush, with brutal force, by the injunctions of the judiciary, and the use of military power, all efforts at resistance. Or when the other policy seems more profitable, they conceal daggers beneath the Civic Federation and hoodwink and betray those whom they would rule and exploit.

Both methods depend for success upon the blindness and internal dissensions of the working class. The employers' line of battle and methods of warfare correspond to the solidarity of the mechanical and industrial concentration, while laborers still form their fighting organizations on lines of long-gone trade divisions. The battles of the past emphasize this lesson. The **textile workers** of Lowell, Philadelphia, and Fall river; the **butchers** of Chicago, weakened by the disintegrating effects of trade divisions; the **machinists** on the Sante Fe, unsupported by their fellow workers subject to the same masters; the long-struggling **miners** of Colorado, hampered by the lack of unity and solidarity upon the industrial battlefield; all bear witness to the helplessness and impotency of labor as it is presently organized.

This worn out and corrupt system offers no promise of improvement and adaptation. There is no silver lining to the clouds of darkness and despair settling down upon the world of labor.

This system offers only a perpetual struggle for slight relief within wage slavery. It is blind to the possibility of establishing an industrial democracy, wherein there shall be no wage slavery, but where the workers will own the tools which they operate, and the product which they alone will enjoy. It shatters the ranks of the workers into fragments, rendering them helpless and impotent on the industrial battlefield. Separation of craft from craft renders industrial and financial solidarity impossible. Union men scab upon union men; hatred of worker for worker is engendered, and the workers are delivered helpless and disintegrated into the hands of the capitalists.

Craft jealousy leads to the attempt to create trade monopolies. Prohibitive initiation fees are established that force men to become scabs against their will. Men whom manliness or circumstances have driven from one trade are thereby fined when they seek to transfer membership to the union of a new craft.

Craft divisions foster political ignorance among the workers, thus dividing their class at the ballot box, as well as in the shop, mine and factory.

Craft unions may be and have been used to assist employers in the establishment of monopolies and the raising of prices. One set of workers is thus used to make harder the conditions of life for another body of laborers.

Craft divisions hinder the growth of class-consciousness of the workers, foster the idea of harmony of interests between employing exploiter and employed slave. They permit the association of the misleaders of the workers with the capitalists in the Civic Federations, where plans are

made for the perpetuation of capitalism, and the permanent enslavement of the workers through the wage system.

Previous efforts for the betterment of the working class have proven abortive because of limited in scope and disconnected in action.

Universal economic evils afflicting the working class can be eradicated only by a universal working-class movement. Such a movement of the working class is impossible while separate craft and wage agreements are made favoring the employer against other crafts in the same industry, and while energies are wasted in fruitless jurisdiction struggles which serve only to further the personal aggrandizement of union officials.

A movement to fulfill these conditions must consist of one great industrial union embracing all industries — providing for craft autonomy locally, industrial autonomy internationally and working class unity generally.

It must be founded on the class struggle, and its general administration must be conducted in harmony with the recognition of the irrepressible conflict between the capitalist class and the working class. It should be established as the economic organization of the working class, without affiliation with any political party.

All power should rest in the collective membership.

Local, national and general administration, including union labels, buttons, badges, transfer cards, initiation fees, and per capita tax should be uniform throughout.

All members must hold membership in the local, national or international union covering the industry in which they are employed, but transfers of membership between unions, local, national, or international, should be universal.

Workingmen bringing union cards from industrial unions in foreign countries should be freely admitted into the organization.

The general administration should issue a publication representing the entire union and its principles which should reach all members in every industry at regular intervals.

A central defense fund, to which all members contribute equally, should be established and maintained.

All workers, therefore, who agree with the principles herein set forth, will meet in convention at Chicago the 27th day of June, 1905, for the purpose of forming an economic organization of the working class along the lines marked out in this manifesto.

Representation in the convention shall be based upon the number of workers whom a delegate represents. No delegate, however, shall be given representation in the convention on the numerical basis of an organization unless he has credentials — bearing the seal of his union, local, national, or international, and the signatures of the officers thereof — authorizing him to install his union as a working part of the proposed economic organization in the industrial department in which it logically belongs in the general plan of the organization. Lacking this authority, the delegate shall represent himself as an individual.

Adopted at Chicago, January 2, 3 and 4, 1905.

A.G. SWING
A.M. SIMONS
W. SHURTLEFF
FRANK M. MCCABE
JOHN M. O'NEIL
GEORGE ESTES
WILLIAM D. HAYWOOD
MOTHER JONES
ERNEST UNTERMANN
W. L. HALL
CHARLES H. MOYER
CLARENCE SMITH
WILLIAM ERNEST TRAUTMANN
JOSEPH SCHMIDT
JOHN GUILD
DANIEL MCDONALD
EUGENE V. DEBS
THOMAS J. HAGERTY
THOMAS J. DEYOUNG
FRED D. HENION
W. J. BRADLEY
CHARLES O. SHERMAN
M. E. WHITE
WILLIAM J. PINKERTON
FRANK KRAFFS
J. E. FITZGERALD
FRANK BOHN

(14) Epilogue, by Mark Damron, added 2001

Since its founding in 1905, the IWW continued to work and strive towards real, participatory democracy and the replacement of bosses and employees by worker ownership and control. It has survived attacks by the government, the press, and the bosses because the ideals that it stands for are universally acknowledged. Although nearly destroyed through government intervention or internal dissension on myriad occasions, the IWW rises each time from these setbacks to grow stronger and more alive with the revolutionary from which it was first conceived.

Today the IWW is still very much alive and growing. It continues to be dedicated to helping working people organize themselves into autonomous local affiliates of one big union with the purpose of eliminating employer/employee relationships and labor and consumer exploitation. We recognize that owner/employer classes and current systems of government steal the Earth's limited natural resources and the product of our labor.

The IWW is a different sort of labor union. Believing in the strengths and abilities of average working people, the IWW is controlled its members. By understanding how the work places are

run and where our power lies as workers, we can develop the tactics to get everything workers deserve.

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Vincent St. John
The Industrial Workers of the World
Its History, Structure and Methods
1917

<https://archive.iww.org/about/official/StJohn/>
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