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Singing Solidarity: Class Consciousness, Emotional Pedagogy, And The Songs Of The Industrial Workers Of The World

Tara Forbes
Wayne State University

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**SINGING SOLIDARITY: CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS, EMOTIONAL PEDAGOGY, AND
THE SONGS OF THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD**

by

TARA FORBES

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan,

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Advisor

Date

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2021

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DEDICATION

For Tommie

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INTRODUCTION

“We struggled as best we could and we always sang those wonderful songs”
– IWW member Sophie Cohen in *Solidarity Forever*.

Only great movements marking turning points in the history of humanity have produced great songs, appealing to the masses because they voice the inarticulate feelings and aspirations of the masses.
– Anonymous, “Our Songs.” *Industrial Worker*, 27 May 1916.

Songs and singing are fundamental components of group identity, expression, and cohesion. We encounter group singing in many contexts and sing songs - national anthems, rallying songs of sports teams, and hymns, among others – together. As John Steinbeck claims, protest songs, the songs “wrung from unhappy people,” are among the “greatest and most enduring” songs (np). Struggling and oppressed people have created a rich collection of songs that contain and reveal “all the hopes and hurts, the anger, fears, the wants and aspirations” of their groups (np). As products of struggle, these songs are the “statements of a people,” statements that “cannot be destroyed. You can burn books, buy newspapers, you can guard against handbills and pamphlets, but you cannot prevent singing” (np). Workers have contributed significantly to that robust and diverse singing tradition, and according to David Carter, of the labor organizations during the twentieth century, “none aroused more passions, stirred more controversy, nor sang more loudly than the Industrial Workers of the World” (365).

The Industrial Workers of the World,¹ or IWW, was founded at “The Continental Congress of the Working Class” on June 27, 1905, in “a stuffy, over-crowded, smoke-filled, boisterous auditorium in Brand’s Hall on Chicago’s near north side” (Dubofsky 81). Those in attendance at the IWW’s founding convention broke into song, and IWW members continued to sing for the decade to come and beyond. The IWW became “a singing movement without peer in American

¹ A thorough history of the IWW to 1924 can be found in *We Shall Be All* by Melvyn Dubofsky.

labor history” (Bird et al 21). The IWW was created largely out of frustration with dominant modes of union organizing in the United States. In *Red November, Black November: Culture and Community in the Industrial Workers of the World*, Salvatore Salerno argues that the IWW bristled against the “institutional basis of unionism,” replacing it with “a conception of culture and community that was primary and constitutive” (149). Though formed as a labor union with a particular set of goals, it was formed from the frustration, anger, and hope of workers looking for something different. The IWW’s “philosophy,” anchored in working-class feeling, was a “sensibility more than a doctrine or formal ideology” (147).

This sensibility informed the propaganda that would come to define the IWW. Sociologist Howard Kimeldorf notes that from a “more distant vantage point, the Wobblies² have been seen by many scholars as less of a union than as an organ of ‘propaganda’” (“Joe Hill” 546). The IWW and its members “created and used cultural expressions” – such as “songs, cartoons, and poetry” – to unite workers and “move against the repressive social conditions of industrial development that extended beyond the point of production” (Salerno 149). This expanding collection of literature and art “became a critical form and means of communication between the I.W.W. and its members” (149). IWW propaganda formed the collective atmosphere in which members lived, and much of it was designed to be “recited aloud, not read silently,” therefore allowing it to “enter public consciousness as mass entertainment” (Bird et al 23).

Songs in the IWW repertoire, most written by IWW members themselves, were not merely entertainment. It is challenging, however, to pinpoint precisely how these songs affected IWW and

² A “Wobbly” is an IWW member. I do not often use “Wobbly” in this project, as the term was not yet in use in the IWW’s early years. The etymology of the term is unclear, and many IWW members believe the problematic story of the Chinese cook who struggled to say the letters “IWW.” However, “wobbly” likely stems from “wabble” or “wobble” which was to “play fast and loose” or to “make free use of one’s tongue,” defined in *Slang and its Analogues* from 1904 (“Wabble”). In a letter to Peter Tamony, Green notes the term referred to “political instability” and argues is it likely that someone criticized the IWW or its members as “wobbly” and in typical IWW fashion, members “turned the pejorative usage into a nickname” (“Letter to Peter Tamony” 1).

worker communities. Folklorist Archie Green argues that in order to “understand the IWW’s contagious musical blend, we must hear in mind’s ear rebel unionists who knew [the labor classics] ‘L’Internationale’ and ‘La Marseillaise,’ as well as they knew homespun shanties and ballads indigenous to forest bunkhouse, hobo jungle, or mountain-mine camp” (“Wobbly Songs” 1). IWW songs were largely created by workers for workers, and they articulated and shaped workers’ feelings. In 1909, the IWW would publish its first songbook. The description of the songs appearing on the songbook’s front cover - “songs to fan the flames of discontent” – highlighted the way in which the songs could impact workers’ emotions. The complex and numerous feelings workers felt at this moment – sadness, guilt, shame, anger, despair, hopelessness, among others – could aptly be summarized as “discontent.” The songbook needed to selectively fan the flames of some of that discontent to stir workers to action against their employers and against capitalism more broadly.

Critics of the songs also recognized their emotional impacts. Concerned about this emotional – and therefore irrational – IWW movement, Harry Ward disparages IWW songs in *The Methodist Review* in 1913, noting that “these ‘Songs of Discontent’ swing no gripping conceptions. They move around in the circle of the trite and commonplace they handle the same type of thin, stale platitudes that are found within the covers of the song books that one picks up on the chairs of most of the prayer meeting and Sunday school rooms” (725). Despite their “trite” contents, he argues “in the realm of emotions [the songs] deal with bigger things” (725). The songs could stir workers to action, overcoming rationality through emotion. He asks, “Homeless, propertyless, how shall they know any of the restraints of the settled citizen? These men are now being aroused to think, and to think largely in terms of feeling” (728). Arousing workers through their anger,

sadness, fear, and discontent was precisely what made songs in the IWW repertoire effective. The IWW needed to cast aside “restraint” if it was to inspire a working-class revolution.

In this project, I engage with the songs of the early Industrial Workers of the World, from its founding in 1905 to its major decline around the start of World War One. Specifically, I examine the emotion work of songs, or how songs impacted individual and collective feelings. Up until the late 1990s, scholars underscored the rationality of social movements and their participants in order to legitimize those movements (Jasper 398). Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison, in *Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach*, make use of the idea of a “cognitive praxis” to explain how it transforms individuals into groups, arguing the rationality of participants, as distinct from emotion, guides social movements (3). In such an understanding, movement participation was more the result of a cost benefit analysis and less of an emotional attachment to the group (Simon et al 656). In the late 1990s, James Jasper shifts the focus to emotion. In “The Emotions of Protest: Affective and Reactive Emotions In and Around Social Movements,” Jasper argues that “not only are emotions part of our responses to events, but they also – in the form of deep affective attachments – shape the goals of our actions” (398). His mission was to “establish the importance of emotions to social movements” (399) and how those emotions helped movement participants define themselves “through the help of a collective label” (415). Jasper, Jeff Goodwin, and Francesca Polletta, in *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, argue that the study of social movements, having “concentrated on shared rhetoric and beliefs rather than on the emotions that accompany them,” has overlooked emotion’s importance as a “solidarity-building function” (18). The turn to emotion brought with it a focus on social movements’ cultural production. Even among the large collection of literature and art, Jasper argues that “it is hard to imagine more powerful emotional materials” than songs (“Emotions” 419).

Scholarship on IWW songs and other propaganda has largely focused on anthologizing those materials or on IWW songwriter Joe Hill and his execution by the state of Utah. In *Joe Hill: The IWW and the Making of a Revolutionary Workingclass Counterculture*, Franklin Rosemont laments how understudied IWW songs are even though “Hill’s ‘Preacher and the Slave’ and Chaplin’s ‘Solidarity Forever’ are well known to many *millions* of people” (70). Because they “are known as *songs*” and not as poems, they are “therefore regarded by the nation’s self-appointed intellectual power-brokers as ‘not very important.’ In academia today, and throughout the entire U.S. intelligentsia, the devaluation of song is a hard, cold, anti-workingclass fact” (70). In IWW songs’ limited entry into academic study, anthologizing has been the primary and ongoing concern for scholars because of the large number of materials lost to state repression of the IWW, especially during WWI. Edited by Archie Green, David Roediger, Franklin Rosemont, and Salvatore Salerno, *The Big Red Songbook* is the most comprehensive IWW song anthology compiled. The collection contains lyrics and notes for almost every song appearing in IWW songbooks from 1909 to 1973. Joyce Kornbluh’s *Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology* places IWW songs and poetry in context with oral histories, manifestos, IWW philosophy, and other print culture including art and comics. Kornbluh’s work provides a historical narrative that pulls the assortment of IWW print culture together and weaves a detailed depiction of IWW print material’s reflection of working-class conditions.

In *Red November, Black November*, Salvatore Salerno argues that in order to understand the IWW, we must examine its art and literature. He outlines the two conflicting perspectives on how the IWW came to be: Dubofsky’s focus on the Western Federation of Miners and Brissenden’s assertion that the IWW emerged as a product of economic conditions more generally. Both perspectives, according to Salerno, fail to have a complete understanding of IWW culture

because they do not engage with IWW art forms. He argues that IWW culture and philosophy is “expressed through the movement’s art forms rather than through official policy or literature” (6). This is because art forms are more fluid and responsive to the community and that official policy provides too static of a picture of what the IWW was doing. Archie Green’s *Wobblies, Pile Butts, and Other Heroes: Laborlore Explorations*, published in 1993, continues Salerno’s work and looks at a variety of working class and IWW folk culture. Green argues for the serious academic study of “laborlore” – a term he coined in the 1950s (5) – and examines poetry, songs, terms, nicknames, and stories. Green’s work remains unmatched in underscoring the importance of IWW cultural production for movement building. Green’s push for serious scholarship on “laborlore” and the painstaking work of scholars such as Kornbluh and Salerno have made my project possible by encouraging me to examine how IWW songs “demystify and articulate” work and workers’ experiences (33).

Looking at songs in the IWW repertoire from its inception to its decline around the start of WWI, I argue that IWW songs and song culture are an integral part of creating and perpetuating what Salerno calls the IWW’s “sensibility” (147). I frame IWW “sensibility” as what Deborah Gould, in *Moving Politics*, terms “emotional habitus,” borrowing from Pierre Bourdieu’s “habitus.” A habitus, for Bourdieu, is a collection of “socially constituted, commonsensical, taken-for-granted understandings or schemas in any social grouping” (qtd in Gould 33). A group’s habitus is more than a system of beliefs that group members share. It “operat[es] beneath conscious awareness, on the level of bodily understanding, provid[ing] members with a disposition or orientation to action” (qtd in Gould 33). What Gould terms “emotional habitus” is a “social grouping’s collective and only partly conscious emotional dispositions” or the group’s “inclinations toward certain feelings and way of emoting” (32). An emotional habitus provides

group members with a sense of “what [their] feelings are and what they mean” and a way of “figuring out and understanding what they are feeling” (34).

Group members may have a range of affects, or what are pre-conscious feelings that are not yet formed or articulated as specific emotions. These affects overlap and conflict, and we need labels, like “happy” or “sad,” to make sense of them. An emotional habitus untangles those affects and provides “labels” for them that work in the context of the group (Gould 34). In doing so, group members gain an understanding of their feelings and a way to articulate them that is inherently collective. In having a common emotional framework, group members feel part of the group, making the “social in [them] *feel* like ‘second nature’” (33). If the emotional habitus works well, it incorporates and adjusts for changes in group members’ feelings. It is fluid and responsive, keeping individuals affects oriented in terms of the collective and its projects. In providing group members “with a sense of what and how to feel” and about what, an emotional habitus employs “emotional pedagogy” (34). This emotional education is how an individual’s affects become recognizable in an emotional habitus (34). Through emotional pedagogy, some feelings are given language and meaning in the habitus while others are not, which emphasizes particular ways of feeling.

Using Gould’s framework, I argue that IWW songs helped to create and perpetuate an IWW emotional habitus that responded to members’ feelings and provided a sense of how and what to feel. The songs offered an “emotional pedagogy” that I argue enabled individual workers to recognize their feelings as collective feelings. IWW member Richard Brazier, one of the creators of the *Little Red Songbook*, describes how songs could function as emotional pedagogy, explaining,

We will have songs of anger and protest, songs which shall call to judgment our oppressors and the Profit System they have devised. Songs of battles won (but never any songs of

despair), songs that hold up flaunted wealth and thread-bare morality to scorn, songs that lampoon our masters and the parasitic vermin, such as the employment-sharks and their kind, who bedevil workers. These songs will deal with every aspect of the workers' lives. They will bring hope to them, and courage to wage the good fight. They will be songs to stir the workers into action, to awaken them from an apathy and complacency that has made them accept their servitude. ("Story" 97)

IWW songwriters such as Brazier wanted their songs to emphasize anger and direct that anger toward "parasitic vermin" and their capitalist system. Effective songs would reflect workers' experiences and "deal with every aspect of [their] lives." IWW songs were expressions of the experiences and feelings of the workers writing and singing them, created out of "anger and protest." They could bring workers "hope" and "courage" and "awaken" and "stir" them into action. The songs could deemphasize feelings that would limit workers' action, like despair and hopelessness, by focusing on "battles won" and by lampooning their "masters." The songs could provide workers with a structure of how and what to feel and enable them to see their feelings and struggles as the feelings and struggles of a collective.

The IWW's emotional habitus, through the process of emotional pedagogy, necessarily emphasized some feelings (such as anger) and deemphasized others (like hopelessness) to motivate members to fight back against their bosses and the oppressive capitalist system. I examine how IWW songs engaged with, transformed, and directed workers' feelings to "spur [them] to action" (Gould 47). I consider how songs in the IWW repertoire created a sense of group identity and cohesion, supporting the IWW's project of class consciousness and working-class solidarity. This solidarity, I argue, was not only theorized but also *felt*. The felt solidarity of the IWW collective was intensified through the act of singing as a group, which was simultaneously an instantiation of as well as a catalyst or "spur" for solidarity.

Chapter one, "The Emotional Projects of the IWW," provides the early IWW's historical and emotional contexts. I observe how the IWW presented its theoretical projects of working-class

education and organization, designed to create a class-conscious group of workers who would unite to abolish the wage system. To see how the IWW articulated these projects, I look at the *Industrial Worker*, the *Bulletin*, and the *Industrial Union Bulletin* newspapers. According to Gould's, newspapers can "illuminate the texture" of social movements and show the "shifting contours" of the group's emotional framework (52). By examining how it presented its projects in its propaganda, I identify the IWW's *emotional* projects, or how the IWW responded to and directed group feelings and provided a sense of how and what to feel. These emotional projects, or the emotion work of a movement, are necessary for the success of its theoretical projects. I argue that the early IWW had four main emotional projects: to respond to feelings that were not conducive to action (like hopelessness or fear) and suppress or redirect them, to emphasize feelings that were (such as anger or power), to direct anger towards its enemies, and to create class consciousness and solidarity among members and workers. These projects were necessarily connected, and group cohesion relied on as well as reinforced the other three projects.

Chapter two, "Singing Together, Feeling Together," examines how songs in the IWW repertoire responded to workers' feelings and gave IWW members a sense of what to feel. In this chapter, I look at early IWW song cards and the first edition of the *Little Red Songbook*, and I examine songs as education. The IWW saw songs as a better way to educate workers on the problems of capitalism and the IWW's mission. Songs were memorable and simple and provided members with a framework in which to understand the world. The songs, I argue, provided more than a memorable lesson in economics. They provided an emotional education, or emotional pedagogy, aligned with the IWW's emotional projects. The songs not only taught singers/listeners about the world and the struggles of workers. The songs also oriented singers/listeners toward a specific emotional schema. Singers/listeners could recognize their experiences and feelings in the

songs through the way in which workers' struggles were framed. This recognition identified the cause of those feelings (capitalism/bosses) and directed the singer/listener's anger to that cause. Importantly, the songs also provided a solution to workers' struggles: solidarity. The songs depict workers uniting as the obvious, straight-forward, simple, and accessible action, inspiring hope and confidence.

The songs' emotional education, I argue, pushed singers/listeners toward collectivity. This collectivity is a radical collectivity premised on fellowship and empathy that acknowledges power is collective and not merely an "adding up" of individuals. In a word, that collectivity is "solidarity." As singers/listeners recognized their experiences and feelings – such as fear, powerlessness, despair, and anger – they understood their experiences and feelings as collective and as shared by other singers/listeners. The solution the songs posed – a united working class that has the collective power to fight back – was a collective solution, requiring group cohesion. Crucially, the songs were an embodiment of solidarity in the act of group singing. In singing as a group, the interplay between the singer and listener highlighted and reinforced the group's boundaries. At the same time, the songs provided opportunities for the listener to become a singer, allowing them to join the singing IWW group. Singing collectively taught singers that they could act collectively and that they already knew how. As the group sang, singers were brought together emotionally and physically through components such as rhythm and breathing. Collective singing was an instantiation of the solidarity and collective power the lyrics taught.

The music to which the songs were set also influenced the singers/listeners emotionally. A number of studies have examined the effects of music on a listener's mood,³ observing that

³ See "Emotional Responses to Music: The Need to Consider Underlying Mechanisms" by Patrick N. Juslin and Daniel Västfjäll. For more on neurobiological responses to music, see "Brain Correlates of Music-Evoked Emotions" (2014) by Stefan Koelsch, "Music, Feelings, and the Human Brain" (2014) by Assal Habibi and Antonio Damasio, "Emotional Responses to Music: Experience, Expression, and Physiology" (2009) by Lars-Olov Lundqvist et al, and "Being

emotional expression in music can be mirrored in listeners. The feelings of listeners/singers begin to mimic the feeling of the music, articulated via components such as key and tempo. In chapter two, I examine the emotions represented in the songs' music and how those emotions impacted singers/listeners' interaction with the songs. Some of the songs, specifically non-IWW songs that the IWW sang, had their own music that was composed specifically for those songs. That was not typically the case, however, for songs composed by IWW members. Almost all early IWW songs were written to the tune of another song, usually a popular song or a religious song. I call this fitting of new lyrics to an existing tune "recomposition." The source music and the original's lyrics and messages impacted how singers/listeners experienced the IWW version and understood its messages.

Because IWW songwriters were "[o]ften musically illiterate," they "usually obtained their melodies orally," learning Salvation Army hymns on the street or popular music in venues (Foner *History* 153). IWW songwriter Richard Brazier, in an interview by Archie Green, identifies how he composed songs. Brazier recalls that he started with the tune: "Well, first of all I would--at that time there was a lot of popular songs on the market. This was the era of the sentimental ballad, mostly, and a few humorous songs" (10). To access and learn popular music, Brazier attended vaudeville shows at saloons, which had the "latest stuff from whatever it come from, Broadway, or any other part of the country. They were all up to date on their songs" (Green Interview 10). Brazier recalls how he would find the "all-important" tune: "And id's go down there and listen to a lot of singing, and if I heard a song that had a tune that I liked, I could, I'd memorize the tune. . . . Yes, it would run in my mind until it became fixed, or I had it down pat" (10). Then he would "work on picking words to fit the tune" (10). Brazier chose this method for two reasons: it was

Together in Time: Musical Experience and the Mirror Neuron System" (2009) by Katie Overy and Istvan Molnar-Szakacs, among many others.

“much easier to fit the words generally to a tune than the tune to the words” and choosing a well-known song meant “you could hear it being sung all around the street, you know, or in the saloons, or wherever these working men congregated” (10). This practice of recomposition was practical because of the inability of many members to read sheet music or compose music and because workers would likely know the tune and could easily catch on and sing along. It made composing and singing IWW songs accessible.

While the practicality of choosing a well-known tune is clear, the source tune can impact the effect of the new versions in a variety of ways outside of accessibility. Using the tunes of well-known songs as the base for new lyrics provides singers/listeners with something in common – knowledge of the tune – that serves as a foundation for a shared group experience. In writing new lyrics to the music of existing songs, the new versions also provide a callback to the musical expression, messages, and/or context of the originals. This process of recomposition brings the source songs’ “baggage” into the singer/listener/reader’s experience of the new version. Importantly, this baggage is *emotional* baggage, and these new versions are emotional recompositions as much as they are practical recompositions. On a foundational level, then, the recompositions bring with them the music’s moods and messages. The new versions then act as a recall cue for the feelings and experiences the listener/singer had in encounters with the source tune. In the interaction between the source tune and the new version, recomposition creates a range of effects, some complimentary and some discordant, some intentional and some unintentional.

I examine some of the effects of recomposition in chapter three, “Humor and Parody in IWW Song.” I categorize some IWW songs as parodies using Linda Hutcheon’s definition of parody as “repetition with a critical distance” (*Parody* 6). When singers/listeners recognize the original tune, like in other recompositions, they bring with them the feelings and experiences

associated with that tune. The recognized tune and its messages can be in conflict or tension with the new version, and the new version can provide a criticism of the original. When singers/listeners are aware of those tensions and critiques, the new version can operate as a parody. I argue that the critical distance and tension between the source song and the new version is not a “bonus” but is instead fundamental to IWW comic parodies’ emotional effects. In this chapter, I examine hymn parodies, specifically “Hallelujah, I’m a Bum,” and how they were employed against the Salvation Army’s band as it tried to drown out IWW soapbox speakers. I also look at parodies of popular songs that offered a satiric criticism of employment offices, called employment sharks, and their practices. Here, I unpack the effects of “Good-Bye Dollars, I Must Leave You,” an IWW parody of the popular song “Goodbye Dolly Gray.” Comic parody in IWW songs created and reinforced group identity and cohesion by positioning IWW members and their interests in opposition to the ideologies in the parodied song. IWW comic parodies also functioned as a tool of emotional pedagogy, suppressing workers’ anxiety and despair using humor and satire. They use intertextual conflict to critique the normative structures inherent in the original form, bolster ideology, and shift feeling while creating and reinforcing group boundaries.

In chapter four, “Slavery Rhetoric, Radical Abolitionism, and IWW Recomposition,” I look at non-humorous IWW recompositions and comparisons between slavery and wage labor. Many songs in the early IWW’s repertoire used the rhetoric of slavery, with the IWW frequently using the term “wage slavery” to refer to workers’ position in capitalism. Approximately two-thirds of the songs appearing in the first edition of the IWW’s *Little Red Songbook* employ references to chattel slavery. I look specifically at “Solidarity Forever,” which was written to the tune of “John Brown Song” and “Wage Workers, Come Join the Union,” which was written to the same tune but identifies “Battle Hymn of the Republic” as its source song. In using slavery rhetoric

and songs such as “John Brown Song,” I argue that IWW songs evoked a radical, anti-racist, and anti-capitalist history that enabled workers to recognize and articulate their experiences. Further, in linking the oppression of the wage system to the oppression of slavery, the IWW’s anti-capitalism vision and fight is linked to abolitionists’ visions and fights.

Through these connections, listeners/singers could access an already-existing set of feelings and experiences in a different context, drawing on historical emotional habitus. Emotional habitus do not arise in singularity, and they necessarily build off and reference emotional habitus of other groups. These recompositions use the emotional habitus of abolitionism to provide IWW members with a sense of how and what to feel about their own experiences and oppression. Bringing abolitionist history into IWW songs enabled those songs to challenge conceptions about early twentieth century industrial capitalism and underscore the need for radical change. These recompositions can function as parodies, though not as humorous parodies such as those in chapter three. Rather, these parodies are serious parodies that used intimacy, rather than opposition, between the parodied text and the parody to critique something outside the parodied text. “Solidarity Forever” and “Wage Workers” used their source songs as vehicles for critiquing capitalism. In experiencing the source song and the recomposition together through parody, the singer/listener was offered an understanding of wage work that was not “free” labor and was not quite slavery. It was something different but also not different, and the comparison undermined conceptions of wage labor as the opposition of slavery, or as freedom. In calling back to abolition movements, the songs created a critical distance by presenting the distance and difference between wage work and slavery as not as large as it seemed.

When a conflict exists between the songs, or when the past and current messages and feelings are not aligned, it can result in mixed feelings in singers/listeners. This can be an

intentional or unintentional effect. In some instances, the conflict between the source tune and the new version can undermine the effect of the new version. I engage with the problematic effects of this incongruence in chapter four, examining IWW songs that are recompositions of racist source songs. These recompositions do not function as parodies. They do not criticize the source song or use the source song to criticize capitalism. Rather, they undermine the IWW's vision of a united working class. The songs serve as an example of how the IWW, like most labor organizations, ultimately viewed white workers' experiences as universal, despite its relatively progressive views on race and its desire to organize Black workers and other workers of color. These songs "embody contradiction" and contain "exclusions embedded within their composition—whether textual or musical—that limit their effectiveness and reach" (Redmond 6).

Though depending somewhat on the songwriters' skill in writing a singable song, the paths IWW songs would take were largely out of the IWW's hands. As Green acknowledges, IWW members "were powerless to control the trajectory of 'their' songs, or to determine life or death for given pieces" ("Wobbly Songs" 3). He observes that "[i]n everyday practice as Wobblies sang at migrant campfires, in meeting halls, and during free-speech rallies, much of their song repertoire melted away. Some texts proved too taxing to sing; others had been set to tunes which lost out in style wars; still others became irrelevant as the IWW declined" (3). Despite the many songs that were not written in a singable manner, and the others containing contradictions that undermined the IWW's message, IWW songs became synonymous with the IWW. The IWW's collection of songs helped define the organization as "a radical movement with both a sense of humor and a singing voice" (Renshaw 4).

In *Solidarity Forever: An Oral History of the IWW*, Stewart Bird, Dan Georgakas, and Deborah Shaffer collected reflections from past IWW members. In his interview, IWW member

Fred Thompson recalls that many of the IWW's songs "gained circulation far beyond [its] ranks" (qtd in Bird et al 217). Brazier similarly notes some of the songs "are known by many who are scarcely acquainted with the IWW itself" (Brazier "Story" 91). The songs transcended the IWW and reached workers in ways other union materials could not. In an edition of *One Big Union Monthly*, Con Dogan⁴ notes "[o]ne of the things the working class movement is indebted to the I.W.W. for is the teaching of the value of songs to the struggle for emancipation" (21). IWW members' songs and their singing created a legacy that persists even now with songs such as "Solidarity Forever" still sung in the labor movement today. Just as the IWW coopted and borrowed songs from other groups, IWW songs would also be borrowed and riffed on, sometimes to the displeasure of IWW members. Ralph Chaplin, in "I Wrote Solidarity Forever," expresses IWW members' feelings about other labor organizations singing "Solidarity Forever:" "All of us deeply resent the use of a song that was uniquely our own as a 'singing commercial' for the soft-boiled type of post-Wagner Act industrial unionism that uses million dollar slush funds to persuade their Congressional office boys to do chores for them" (10). Green confirms that "[n]ot all Wobblies have enjoyed sharing songs across institutional lines, nor upon hearing treasures performed by pragmatic craft unionists and reformist allies" ("Wobbly Songs" 3). I cannot help but wonder if using the tune of "John Brown Song" for "Solidarity Forever" had a similar effect.

Using popular music or the tunes of hymns allowed the songs to permeate working-class communities, and the source songs often helped the songs have an impact that furthered the IWW's (emotional) projects. Green compares the lifespan of songs written to popular music to songs written to hymns, noting "when the popular tunes were forgotten, then it was hard for anyone to

⁴ A handwritten note of unknown origin on the article clipping indicates "Con Dogan" may be a pseudonym of Patrick J. Read, a former editor of the *Industrial Worker* newspaper.

sing the songs. But the songs that were set to the religious songs, the well-known hymns, they seem to live longer” (Green Interview 34). Brazier explains that

hymns, of course, have a longer life. They are traditional, and they’ve been in existence for much much longer than any popular song, or popular tune. . . . Even the migrating worker, in his early days, he had to go to church and Sunday school, he had to learn hymns. Even if he went to school at all, they sometimes sang hymns in school. So he would come in contact more with the music and the tunes of the hymns. And therefore it was far easier for him to sing a song to a tune he knew, than to learn the tune before he could sing the song. (34)

In using popular music, however, Brazier notes the IWW versions’ “popularity dwindled with the tunes they were written to” (Brazier Letter #2 7). The lack of longevity is apparent in the case of Brazier’s “We Will Unite” as Archie Green, David Roediger, Franklin Rosemont, and Salvatore Salerno, despite their collective knowledge of IWW and popular songs, could not locate the popular tune to which it was written. Though songs set to hymn tunes appeared to have more longevity, knowledge of those too depended on workers having a specific set of knowledge and experiences.

Songs in the IWW repertoire were created from struggle, and struggling IWW members saw themselves, their feelings and experiences, in the songs. IWW member Joe Glazer, reflecting on why workers sing, notes, “Workers have always dreamed of a better life and they have always made up songs about their dreams” (1). The songs were “an accurate reflex of the struggle at any given moment” (Dogan 21), forged by workers wanting – needing – their lives to be different, to exist in a world where they had enough food to eat, had time to rest and to spend with their families, and did not risk their lives at work for the profit of the few. Indeed, the best songs “come from places where there has been the greatest tyranny. The best union songs come out of the great labor struggles and the hard fought strikes, out of triumphs won against overwhelming odds. Peaceful, prosperous times on the labor front--something we all want--rarely bring forth a song worth singing or saving” (Glazer 3). Despite the songs’ origins, they were still reflections of feelings at

a specific time of a specific group in a specific context. The songs spoke “to and for *most* of the people *most* of the time,” but “more likely, they managed speech for *some*” (Redmond 6). The songs gave workers a sense of how to feel and about what by reflecting and responding to workers’ struggles and discontents. They were only effective insofar as singers/listeners could see themselves in the songs and the songs dealt with “every aspect of the workers’ lives” (Brazier “Story” 97).

The *Little Red Songbook* emerged in the fervor of the free speech fights and struggles of migrant, seasonal workers in Spokane, Washington, as a response to the growing fondness for song and the need for new and updated songs that reflected current IWW and worker struggles. In providing a regularly updated collection of songs written by IWW members, the songbook could respond to the ever-adjusting emotional habitus of the radical labor movement and specifically of the IWW. Although published with less frequency than the newspaper, the songbook was still an accurate reflection of the IWW at the time. With each new edition, the songs contained would vary “on the basis of an individual song’s popularity and the availability of new material” (Bird et al 22). It was the *Little Red Songbook* that helped workers sing the same songs regardless of the time or distance separating them. Putting lyrics into print allowed workers to sing along with the group without needing to have memorized the words.

The songbook proved to have longevity, and many IWW members fondly recall the songbook and its contents. In the “seven decades” after its debut in 1909, the songbook would have “thirty-five separate editions featuring almost 200 different songs, with numerous printings per edition and uncounted translations” (Bird et al 22). Even over one hundred years later, the IWW and its members are publishing new editions of the songbook, collecting songs, and composing new songs to popular music. I recall singing a song written by a IWW member and

friend of mine, titled “Union Boys” and set to the tune of “Will the Circle Be Unbroken” by Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, while standing on tables in a hotel lobby in Chicago at LaborNotes in 2013. As I write, the 38th edition of the songbook (from 2010) is available in the IWW’s online store as the *Little Red Songbook*, though the cover reads *Songs of the IWW*. This most recent official edition contains fifty-seven songs (including versions in different languages) over seventy-two pages, in English, Spanish, French, and German. Like other songbooks, the preamble to the IWW’s Constitution makes up the inside front cover. Many of the songs are “classics:” “The Red Flag,” “The Marseillaise,” “The Internationale,” “Hallelujah, I’m a Bum,” and “Solidarity Forever” grace the pages of the 38th edition alongside a number of songs by Joe Hill. The songbook contains updated versions of older songs, with lyrics changed to reflect changing views on race and gender like the change of E. S. Nelson’s “Working Men, Unite!” to “Working Folk Unite” (72). Much of the older phrasing and songs persist, with an abridged version of Chaplin’s “That Sabo-Tabby Kitten,” written to the tune of “Dixie,” making an appearance (55). There is also a new (2009) song, written by an IWW member to the tune of Bob Marley’s “Redemption Song,” titled “Wage Slave Redemption” (63). These songs show how the IWW has not, in over 100 years, stepped away from some of its rhetoric and traditions.

Over a century after the publication of the first IWW songbook, the form has become inadequate for creating and perpetuating revolutionary emotional habitus. More recent songbooks have removed the songs from their contexts and anthologized them in a rigid genre that cannot adapt to changing affective needs. With more and more years falling between songbook editions, current IWW songbooks are lacking the same fluidity and adaptability of early versions. Singers/listeners may also be unable to recognize or contextualize many of the source tunes, limiting their effect as recompositions. While the songs and the *Little Red Songbook* continue to

provide IWW members with a sense of collective identity through shared history and song culture, they no longer evoke the same revolutionary fervor as they once did. They have been transformed from sites of radical collective power and solidarity to sites of nostalgia where IWW members lament the “heyday” of the movement. They might sing old IWW songs and talk about the good old days in what some IWW members today call “The Joe Hill Historical Appreciation Society” (or a version thereof).

In 1960, Archie Green asked if the labor movement could “use folksong in a conscious and sophisticated manner to bring old values to new members” (“Excerpts” 1). Though he said it “remain[ed] to be seen” (1), it is possible. The emotional habitus of the present-day IWW necessarily builds off that of the early IWW, and the continued use songs affirms that connection. The songs only work, however, when they respond to workers’ feelings and struggles. While the songs do not have to be “new,” they do need to be responsive and reflective. Further, group singing only functions as a site and instantiation of collective power when we feel we have power or there is *potential* for power. When group singing and songs function as sites of nostalgia, the group does not feel their revolutionary collective power compelling them to fight for a new world in the ashes of the old. Rather, they long for a world that once was and the “fervor” of that world. When union members are asked to sing a pre-scheduled song at the end of a challenging three-day meeting, the song and singing it are not responses to members’ feelings. When those union members’ collective power has been suppressed in favor of the grievance process and “good working relationships” with their employers, do they feel their collective potential when they sing? When my coworkers and I sang “Solidarity Forever” outside the mail sorting facility as the first shift of postal workers went to work following government legislation ending our strike/lockout, the song and the workers

singing it were not revolutionary but mournful. But when we sang that same song, emerging spontaneously as we blockaded scab mail trucks only a week before, it was revolutionary.

CHAPTER ONE – THE EMOTIONAL PROJECTS OF THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD

As part of its projects of working-class education and organization, the IWW utilized a plethora of propaganda, including pamphlets, speeches, and comics. Two of its most prolific and widely circulated forms of propaganda were songs and newspapers. While this dissertation focuses on IWW songs and song culture, it is important that we gain an understanding of how the IWW presented its projects in its propaganda. A number of scholars – notably Archie Green, David Roediger, Franklin Rosemont, Salvatore Salerno, and Joyce Kornbluh – have engaged deeply with IWW propaganda and have compiled large archives of IWW materials from its founding onward, arguing that the way to understand the organization and the movement it built is largely through a study of its propaganda. To understand how the IWW sought to affect workers, we must understand the affective nature of its propaganda.

In this chapter, I will set the stage for the emotional role that songs play in the IWW by outlining how the IWW represented its projects of education and organization in its propaganda, specifically its newspapers. In doing so, I will establish an understanding of the IWW's emotional projects. Examining IWW newspapers in particular provides a foundation for understanding the IWW's emotional projects for two reasons: the newspaper was one of its first propaganda forms – before songs became the IWW's signature form – and because of the newspaper's ability to weave the multitude of articles, advertisements, and images into a narrative. By looking at the content of early IWW newspapers, I argue the IWW had four main and interconnected emotional projects in its early years. The IWW first needed to respond to unmotivating feelings and suppress them. The IWW's newness and smallness (especially in relation to the American Federation of Labor) alongside workers' increasingly precarious position caused feelings of anxiety, fear, despair, and powerlessness. Then, the IWW needed to mobilize motivating feelings, notably anger and

confidence, that would compel IWW members and other workers to fight back. Third, the IWW needed to direct those feelings towards its enemies. Finally, the IWW needed to create class consciousness and a feeling of solidarity among its members. These projects worked in tandem, with the project of group cohesion both relying on and bolstering the other three projects.

IWW propaganda engaged in those four interconnected projects through its explicit project of educating workers via its newspapers. In providing education on the problems of capitalism and the suffering of workers, IWW propaganda provided an articulation of workers' feelings, allowing them to feel part of the group of workers in the IWW. By offering an explanation for those feelings and experiences, IWW propaganda enabled workers with those feelings and experiences to direct blame onto others, particularly the AFL and bosses. Those "educated" workers were then positioned as being more class conscious and knowledgeable than others, creating feelings of superiority and highlighting the boundaries between the IWW and other groups. IWW propaganda reinforced these divisions and therefore reinforced IWW collective identity by making other groups appear ridiculous and unintelligent, strengthening IWW members' feelings of superiority and power at the expense of others and creating an imagined community of laughing, class conscious readers.

Working Class Feeling

Between 1877 and 1905, the United States transformed into the "world's leading industrial nation" (Dubofsky 5). This transition resulted in an increase in the standard of living for many Americans, but much of the working class was left in poverty with a distinct gap between the lower and upper classes (7). As Dubofsky notes, even amid a booming economy, "always the story was the same: Poverty in the midst of plenty" (10). Employers sought to make more money a lot faster than before, and although wages were rising and laws were changing, the working class was still left in the dust (7). This period was plagued with a series of recessions and a quickly growing

income gap, catalysing a series of labor upheavals in the late 1800s and early 1900s, specifically in mining and the Western Federation of Miners. As the wealth gap and workers' struggles increased, boom and bust capitalism left many workers in the US feeling uncertainty, hopelessness, fear, and despair.

Theories of scientific management – or “Taylorism” – had begun to take hold across the industrialized world. “The founding father of industrial management,” Frederick W. Taylor, believed that “the conscious ‘restriction of output’ or ‘soldiering’ [had] always been the original sin of the working class” (Davis 69). It was this perceived natural laziness of the workforce and the job control they exerted based solely on their unique craft skills, “exercised by skilled workers through their mastery of the production process” that Taylor sought to disrupt with his new form of management (70). To pilfer workplace power from the workers, management had two intertwined processes: they had to both “break up group cohesion” (69) as well as complete the “appropriation from the skilled workers of the totality of their craft secrets and traditions” (70). Breaking up group cohesion was key to having a workplace free of labor unrest. According to Mike Davis in “The Stop Watch and the Wooden Shoe,” “the daily work group . . . is the atom of class organization and the seed from which great co-operative actions of the working class have always developed” (72). It seemed only appropriate for management to dismantle work groups as well as resituate ownership of craft skill to shift the balance of power in the workplace from worker to boss. Through the appropriation of craft knowledge, specialized skills were “decomposed into simpler, constituent activities,” allowing management to separate workers from their products, skills, and each other in one fell swoop (70). Under Taylor’s scientific management, skilled workers lost much of their power, but unskilled workers felt this change heavily. Taylorism “signaled a new slavery for unskilled workers” (71). Unskilled workers were everywhere. Their

ranks were growing due to deskilling, and they could be replaced easily if they became unruly or talked of organizing, exacerbating feelings of fear and hopelessness.

While skilled workers were able to have union representation through the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and its affiliates, the AFL “had no use for unskilled laborers” (Watson 57). The American Federation of Labor touted its motto “A Fair Day’s Wage for a Fair Day’s Work,” linking itself and its membership intrinsically to the wage system. Its membership was composed of skilled workers, largely non-immigrants, who saw themselves as being in a position of power in the workplace. The AFL aligned itself more closely with the employer than with other workers, and its membership saw themselves as distinct from the general working class. The façade of class division along lines of skill allowed AFL members to hold themselves above unskilled immigrant workers in the same workplaces. They kept wages for unskilled workers low while negotiating higher wages for themselves, agreeing to raises for only their own membership and leaving unskilled workers to fend for themselves without access to a union. The AFL pushed for labor peace, believing that what was good for industry would be good for workers as well. If the employer made more profit, that profit would trickle down to the workers. The AFL pushed worker struggle away from the shop floor, with its leadership meeting with politicians and encouraging strategic voting.

The trend toward craft unionism, or “pure and simple” unionism, alienated a large portion of unskilled workers because of the hierarchical nature of the shop floor. In the craft union model, workers are organized into discreet unions based on specific job or skill at the workplace, not simply by workplace. Skilled workers were more valuable and less replaceable, and being grouped in with unskilled workers meant introducing more precarity to skilled workers’ jobs, which is why skilled workers opted for a more divisive craft unionism. Racist, sexist, and nationalist sentiments

also worked against unskilled workers, who were often women, immigrants, and/or not white. Many workers saw the hierarchy of craft unionism as divisive and sought to organize workers into one larger union for strength and solidarity. The move to industrial unionism, arguably brought to the U.S. by more radical immigrant workers and championed by organizations such as the Knights of Labor in the late 1800s, organized workers based on industry rather than trade and led to a move to syndicalism, in which the IWW would take a leading role in the early twentieth century. In the industrial union model, workers are organized by workplace or industry rather than by skill. For example, all the workers at a school would be in one industrial union, including janitorial staff, maintenance staff, teachers, and administrative staff. In a craft model, the teachers would be in a different union than the maintenance staff as they would be organized along the lines of their trade or craft rather than their industry. The industrial model would greatly strengthen the power of workers and allow for shop floor solidarity rather than division.

The IWW predominantly came to be through a need for an alternative mode of organizing to that of the “pure and simple unionism” of the American Federation of Labor that left unskilled workers in the dust, feeling forgotten, disempowered, and hopeless. More than ten years of struggle, “a decade of class war,” helped workers make the “move from ‘pure and simple’ unionism to industrial unionism” (Dubofsky 56). In the early 1900s, the AFL was virtually unopposed as the broad labor organization in the United States. With the influx of unskilled workers and the deskilling of craft workers, however, the AFL, in their discrimination against unskilled workers, did not have the same power or the same depth of membership. According to Bruce Watson in *Bread and Roses*, the American Federation of Labor was “conservative and discriminatory” and their “‘pure and simple unionism’ was too pure and simple to organize women, blacks, or immigrants” (57). The AFL, through the deskilling of workers under scientific

management, was losing power and ranks. It was this shift that created the Industrial Workers of the World.

The wide variety of people who met in 1905 to form the IWW influenced the battles that the IWW would wage, advocating for workers of color, immigrant workers, women workers, the unemployed, transient workers, and free speech. These different backgrounds made it challenging for the founders to agree on many points, and attendees fervently debated how to structure the union and what it would look like it. Despite this debate, it was clear that the IWW needed to organize along industrial lines rather than by craft as the American Federation of Labor did, and those in attendance easily agreed upon the name (Dubofsky 86). Attendees similarly agreed on what would make up the first lines of the constitution: “the working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace as long as hunger and want are found amongst millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all of the good things in life” (Kornbluh 12-13). The IWW’s overarching goal was to organize workers into “One Big Union,”⁵ a global working-class movement that could abolish capitalism. One Big Union, or the OBU, is often used interchangeably with IWW.

The AFL was concerned about this new, radical labor organization and sought to limit the IWW’s influence. Samuel Gompers, the President of the AFL, first approached the IWW with “uneasy ridicule” (Dubofsky 93). He hired an informant to attend the 1905 convention and continue to observe IWW activities (93). Much to Gompers’ satisfaction, the IWW seemed to be “not even a house of cards, they have not even made the cards stand” (Gompers qtd in Dubofsky 93-94). While Gompers and his informant contended the IWW was nothing to fear, they were sure that the IWW would “concentrate their efforts in the trade unions, either to capture it or dominate

⁵ “One Big Union” or “OBU” is often used interchangeably with “IWW.” IWW members would sign correspondence with “For the OBU,” a tradition that continues in the present-day IWW.

it” (Gompers qtd in Dubofsky 94). While the IWW’s perceived lack of organization and competence reassured Gompers and the AFL, the AFL still took steps against the IWW. The AFL warned its affiliates to watch for IWW infiltration and told them to “refuse to cooperate” with IWW members (94). AFL members were “absolved from the sin of crossing IWW picket lines,” pulling any AFL affiliates’ support for IWW strikes (94). Locals affiliated with the IWW or supporting the IWW were punted from the AFL and state-level labor councils. The AFL and IWW appeared to be at war before the ink on the preamble had dried.

The IWW, in response to changing forms of management, the deskilling of workers, and the inability and disinterest of larger, more mainstream unions to organize the bottom rung of workers, set itself apart from the American Federation of Labor in ideology, organizing strategy, and tactics. Workers left out of the AFL’s craft model, feeling angry and used, needed something that would work for them. The IWW, who prided itself on organizing the otherwise unorganizable, was “happy to have anyone who labored and dreamt of laboring less” (Watson 57). In the words of Howard Kimeldorf, “where the AFL broke up the working class into a multitude of tiny craft unions, the IWW envisioned ‘One Big Union’ . . . Where the AFL’s membership consisted mostly of native-born, skilled, white craftsmen, the IWW was committed to organizing almost everyone else” (*Battling* 2). Whereas the membership within the AFL was organized by craft and was composed of skilled workers, the IWW’s membership was made up of immigrants, workers of color, unskilled workers, transient workers, women, and the unemployed. The AFL “monopolized employment opportunities for its current members by restricting access,” so in response, the IWW “offered a true ‘communism of opportunity’ based on mass recruiting, low initiation fees and work sharing” (2). The IWW rebelled against the divisive craft model and pushed for all workers to unite against capitalism. As William “Big Bill” Haywood, one of the founding members of the

IWW, told a group of striking textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts, “There is no foreigner here but the capitalists . . . do not let them divide you by sex, color, creed or nationality” (Dubofsky 140).

The IWW also offered an alternative to the AFL’s reformism. The IWW called for the “Abolition of the Wage System” in its entirety and saw trickle-down economics as a myth. To the IWW, there was no room for reformism in a quickly industrializing workforce. While the AFL advocated for “an industrial peace based on the sanctity of contracts, the IWW promised unrelenting class war, refusing as a matter of principle to sign labor agreements or any other such ‘armistice’ agreements until the working class had secured its final emancipation from capitalism” (Kimeldorf *Battling* 2). The IWW wanted to destroy capitalism from the bottom up unlike the AFL that wanted to reform capitalism from the top down. While the AFL believed in backing political candidates and strategic voting, the IWW thought that “dropping pieces of paper into a hole in a box never did achieve the emancipation of the working class” (*Proceedings* np).

Workers the IWW targeted in its organizing – those left behind by the AFL – felt varied and often contradictory sets of feelings, a “constellation of simultaneously felt positive and negative affective states” (Gould 12). Many workers were feeling despair and hopelessness as they were forgotten – or, even worse, used – by the AFL and had little recourse to advocate for better wages and working conditions. Combined with anger at capitalism and the AFL as well as shame and guilt from their inability to provide a good living for their families and their lack of a skilled craft, there was a growing discontent among the struggling working class. The IWW’s formation gave workers, feeling disenfranchised, angry, and forgotten, a sense of hope and vision and a way to address and channel their feelings. The AFL, however, representing the “aristocracy of labor,” did not want a “movement of the nation’s most dispossessed” (Buhle 635). Almost immediately,

the IWW received hostility from the very prominent AFL as well as “the business class, the press, [and the] antisocialist Catholic and Protestant churches” (635). The IWW “did not thrive in its first five years” as it struggled to find its footing and its voice, but it “attracted rebellious workers of all kinds, brilliant orators in several languages, and working people eager to experiment with new tactics at a time when strikes by AFL unions were regularly defeated” (636). Workers the IWW sought to organize and IWW members themselves had a complex mix of what Gould calls “political feelings,” including “not only expected and common feelings in the realm of activism, like rage, anger, indignation, hope, pride, and solidarity, but also those that might be less perceptible, like fear, shame, embarrassment, guilt, overwhelmedness, desperation, and despair” (Gould 3). The IWW needed to appeal to these workers, respond to their feelings, and mobilize those feelings in its struggles.

Propaganda and Emotion

To reach these workers and to build toward its goal of a united working class, the IWW produced a variety of media, including pamphlets, newspapers, poetry, and songs, which it viewed as key in the formation of a radical working-class culture and class consciousness. These texts educated workers about historical and current economic conditions under capitalism, outlined smaller and larger organizing projects, and presented theoretical and practical material. At its founding convention, the IWW devoted time to discussing propaganda and formed a newspaper that circulated beginning in its first year of existence, demonstrating the importance it placed on propaganda and specifically on the newspaper. It formed propaganda leagues to circulate

materials, and although the official newspaper had pauses in its circulation, it was usually distributed every week.



Figure 1. *Bulletin*. January 10, 1907.
Page 2.

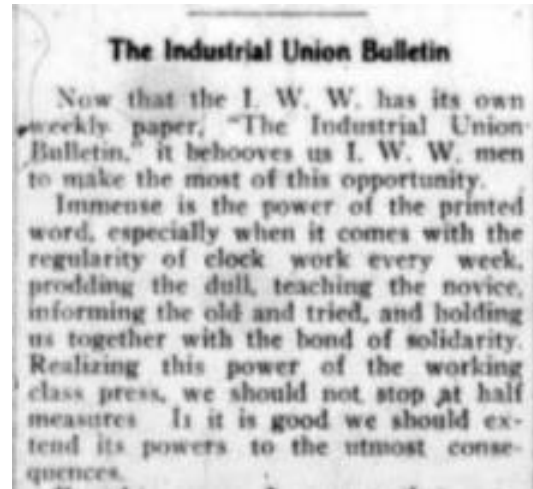


Figure 2. John Sandgren. *Industrial Union Bulletin*. March 9, 1907. Page 1.

In “Agitation, Propaganda, and the ‘Stalinization’ of the Soviet Press,” Matthew Lenoe distinguishes between propaganda and agitation. Propaganda is “a process of education or enlightenment” based in appeals to the audience’s reason that “aimed to cultivate in them a whole new worldview” (16). Propaganda provides “extended theoretical explanations of the socioeconomic processes which underlay ‘surface’ phenomena like unemployment” (15-16). Its role is not only to provide information but to teach people how to be “worthy citizens” of the world the organization wished to create (16). Conversely, agitation appeals to emotions “with short, stark stories” designed to move “the masses to action” (16). Agitational materials do not “enlighten” but rather “mobilize” by “riling up the populace . . . by presenting selected facts and simple slogans”

(16). While propaganda was for more elevated audiences, agitation “was the tool of choice for unsophisticated or even ignorant audiences” (16).

In “Built on a Lie,” John Mackay notes that the “early Soviets crucially distinguished the pedagogical labor of propaganda from more spectacular and temporally condensed interventions known as agitation” (219). Mackay argues that “[t]he difference between ‘agit’ and ‘prop’ has been slighted or ignored in some of the historical literature on ‘Soviet propaganda,’” with scholars using the combined term “agitprop” instead (219). While the hybrid “agitprop” obfuscates the distinctions between agitation and propaganda, it does highlight the ways in which the two can be in play simultaneously or borrow from one another. While agitation appeals to “unsophisticated” audiences through emotions, in order to be effective, propaganda must “harness a rich affective range beyond negative emotions such as hatred, fear, and envy to include more positive feelings such as pleasure, joy, belonging, and pride” (Auerbach et al 10). According to Jason Stanley in *How Propaganda Works*, propaganda can make people “move as one, stirred by emotions that far surpass the evidence for their intensity” (48). It is “the expression of truths and the communication of emotions” (43), a catalyst for what Stanley terms “cognitive empathy” (102).

In *What is to be Done?*, Lenin offers us a theory as to how propaganda functions: the audience can be brought into a group or become attached to that group “solely by systematically evaluating all the everyday aspects of . . . political life, all attempts at protest and struggle” (221). Straight-forward reporting of struggles and conditions of the working class (or groups therein) would offer workers “much greater scope, and the success of one locality [or struggle] would serve as a standing encouragement to further perfection; it would arouse the desire to utilize the experience gained by comrades working in other parts [of the world]” (227). Lenin proposes that the ideal propaganda form by which to report on these localized struggles is the organization’s

official newspaper. He claims that “the only way to begin ‘lively political work’ is with lively political agitation, which is impossible unless [the organization has a newspaper], frequently issued and regularly distributed” (221). Indeed, the newspaper could “become part of an enormous pair of blacksmith’s bellows which would fan every spark of the class struggle and of popular indignation into a general conflagration” (228-229). The newspaper attaches people to each other and to movements via its emotion work.

By examining propaganda, we can understand the emotion work of a movement, such as how propaganda framed its audience’s emotions and what feelings it privileged. According to Deborah Gould, “[t]he ephemera that materialize and instantiate a movement’s collective action frames – its leaflets, fact sheets, T-shirts, stickers, buttons, posters, banners, speeches, chants – are particularly rich sources for exploring a movement’s emotional work since framing entails mobilizing some feelings and suppressing others” (215). The mobilization and suppression of particular feelings is how movements can “attract and retain participants and . . . pursue a movement’s agenda” (213). Emotions, for Gould, are labels or systems of meaning through which we can categorize and make sense of our feelings or affects. Though the labels necessarily simplify and reduce the feelings, they offer a way to articulate one’s feelings and relate them to the feelings of others. Using the emotion label of “hopeful” or “sad” provides a means to categorize the plethora of complex feelings we might feel. In framing these feelings, by mobilizing some and suppressing others, organizations and movements can direct feelings toward a specific project. Newspapers are able to “show how feelings were articulated and evoked, often nonconsciously and unintentionally” (52).

IWW newspapers and other propaganda engaged with workers’ myriad feelings, emphasizing feelings that would lend themselves to action, such as anger. In doing so, IWW

newspapers provided an articulation of the organization's emotional habitus, or the group's "emotional dispositions" and how those emotions were directed (Gould 32). The IWW had significant anxiety about their position in the labor movement. They were a small organization with radical views and had difficulty defending themselves against other more powerful sects of the labor movement. This inferiority complex is especially apparent in their propaganda, where writers were almost constantly positioning themselves and the union in opposition to larger, more powerful enemies. In order to speak to and for workers, the IWW and its propaganda had to respond to this anxiety as well as the plethora of other feelings workers were feeling. It also needed to mobilize feelings conducive to action, such as anger and power, and suppress those that were not, such as weakness and inferiority.

The IWW, therefore, had four significant and related emotional projects: one, to create class consciousness and a feeling of solidarity and collectivity; second, to suppress feelings such as powerlessness, fear, and anxiety; third, to accentuate feelings that would mobilize workers, such as anger; and lastly, to direct those feelings against its enemies, such as the AFL or employers. IWW propaganda engaged in those projects by educating workers on capitalism and providing an articulation of and explanation for workers' experiences and feelings. Those "educated" workers were then positioned in opposition to other workers, factions, and organizations, such as the AFL, creating feelings of superiority while also bolstering IWW members' collective identity. The IWW's use of humor underscored the IWW's collective identity, defending the IWW against other groups while reinforcing members' feelings of superiority and power.

Early IWW newspapers reflected official IWW theory and ideology while establishing a base of knowledge and class consciousness. The Preamble and parts of the Constitution appear throughout early IWW newspapers. In the *Industrial Union Bulletin*, from 1907 and 1908, the

Preamble was printed with regularity. The *Industrial Union Bulletin* and the *Industrial Worker* newspapers also printed annotated and amplified preambles, giving varying perspectives on the overall thrust of the organization and defining its larger, longer-term goals (see fig. 3 and fig. 4). IWW newspapers throughout their early years published the Preamble in numerous languages, like the Japanese translation in the April 29, 1909, edition of the *Industrial Worker* newspaper, which appeared flanked by articles in German and Italian (4).

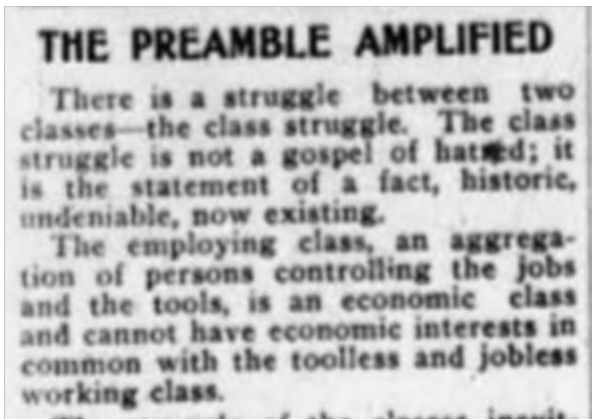


Figure 3. *Industrial Union Bulletin*. March 9, 1907. Page 2.

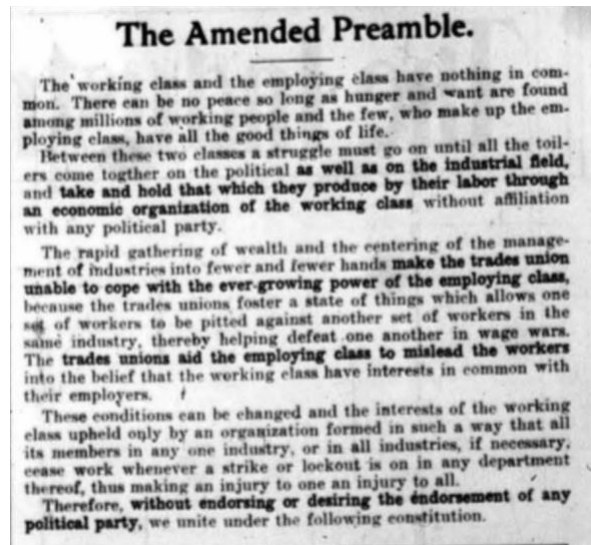


Figure 4. *Industrial Union Bulletin*. March 9, 1907. Page 2.

The preamble set the stage for the attitude of the organization: “the working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace as long as hunger and want are found amongst millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all of the good things in life” (Kornbluh 12-13). Publishing articles such as “The Final Aim of the IWW” (fig. 5), the IWW sought to bring workers into a discussion of larger, longer-term goals, and the rhetoric of “final aim” gave workers a sense of totality and power while also gesturing toward the end of capitalism. The IWW broke down its vision of the “One Big Union” in order to make it both accessible and to convince people of its validity, while using rhetoric that would

translate feelings of uncertainty about the future into hopeful group identity centered on the abolition of the wage system and class war. On the front page of the first issue of *The Industrial Union Bulletin*, from March 2, 1907, the IWW clearly articulated where workers' focus should be: "Momentary Phenomena Must Not Blind Us to Our Ultimate Aim" (1, fig. 6).

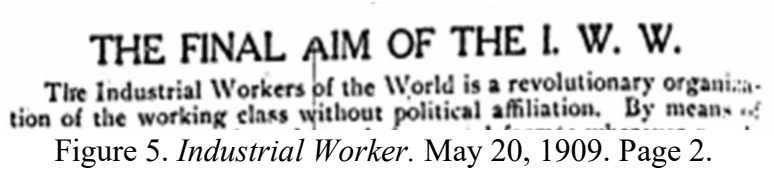


Figure 5. *Industrial Worker*. May 20, 1909. Page 2.



Figure 6. *Industrial Union Bulletin*. March 2, 1907. Page 1.

Not only did the IWW push its membership and newspaper readers to understand the IWW, but it also pushed them to understand capitalism from within its interpretational frame. With titles such as "Learn What It Is," education was an integrated and foundational part of being an IWW member. The IWW had recurring columns that educated workers on industrial organizing and "working class economics" (fig. 7) and that answered shorter, more practical questions that workers would ask the editor, called "Plain Answers to Pertinent Questions" (fig. 8). This "conversation" invited members into more theoretical or intellectual conversations about syndicalism and socialism, lending itself to the IWW's official project of working-class self-education. But equally as important, this push for education allowed IWW members to take feelings of confusion and powerlessness under capitalism and feel as though they had a deeper understanding of the wage system and how workers interacted and participated within it. They

could feel as though they understood how their experiences and feelings came to be. With this knowledge, workers might then feel as though they see through the wage system and can begin to dismantle it, transforming that powerlessness into power.

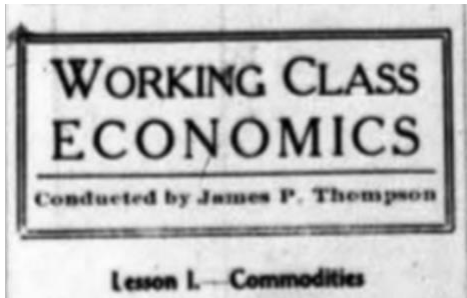


Figure 7. James P. Thompson.
Industrial Union Bulletin. March 9,
1907. Page 2.

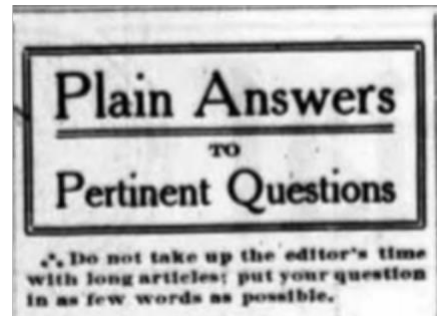


Figure 8. *Industrial Union Bulletin*.
March 9, 1907. Page 2.

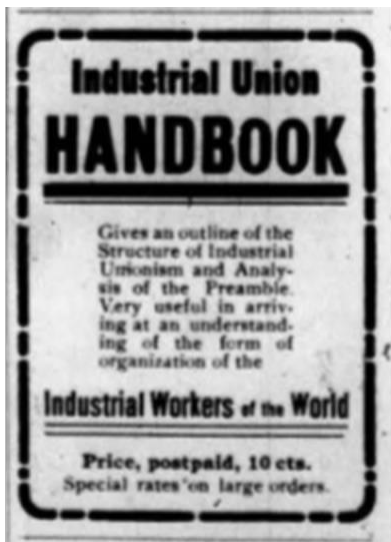


Figure 9. *Industrial Union Bulletin*. March 2, 1907. Page 2.

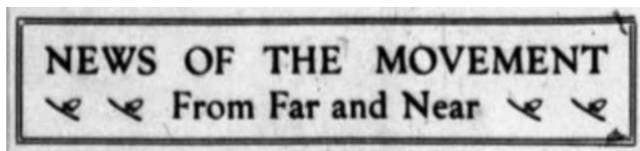


Figure 10. *Industrial Union Bulletin*. March 16,
1907. Page 1.

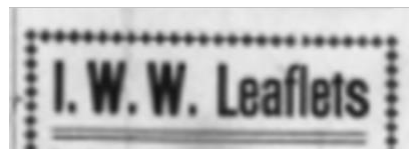


Figure 11. *Industrial Union Bulletin*. April 6, 1907. Page 4.

In providing education in the IWW's aims and theories as well as its understanding of capitalism, the IWW newspaper enabled IWW members to become part of an intellectual, class-conscious working class group. They could see the way capitalism worked and how the employing class kept workers in poverty to make more profit off their labor. They could begin to see how the

system was rigged against them. Importantly, they had this knowledge while others either did not have it or did not want them to have it. Those boundaries – between class-conscious workers and workers who were not yet class consciousness, and between workers and their bosses who did not want them to see the way the system functioned – created a sense of collective identity among newspaper readers, providing a defined group while also allowing readers to join that group by recognizing themselves in the pages of the newspaper and feeling like they had knowledge that others did not.

Despite the IWW's theoretical focus on the One Big Union and the general strike, and its anti-statist position in its preamble and constitution, none of these principles “had any direct bearing on its practice of unionism” (Kimeldorf “Joe Hill” 546). Instead, the IWW was “grounded in its rejection of the electoral arena as a terrain of struggle, [which led to] a consequent privileging of the ‘point of production’ as the site for class conflict, and a reliance on worker self-activity and direct action as the source of labor’s collective power” (546). “A conception of the ‘general strike’ was in theory part of the IWW arsenal, but [it] more frequently employed tactics included ‘soldiering’ or striking on the job, spontaneous work stoppages, sit downs, and other forms of industrial ‘sabotage’” (547). Indeed, IWW members invented the sit-down strike in 1910, which went on to be the tactic of choice in many famous 1930s strikes, like that in Flint, Michigan (Buhle 636). The mixture of theory and praxis allowed workers to understand the role of immediate, practical action in the IWW's larger project, feeling connected to immediate concerns and

struggles under capitalism, understanding the practicality of solidarity and industrial unionism, and connecting those immediate actions to larger utopian, anti-capitalist vision.

OUR BOOK LIST

BELOW we give a partial list of books which we are prepared to supply to readers of this paper. As will be seen the list contains many of the books with the contents of which Industrial Unionists should be familiar. They range from light, but instructive pamphlets, to the scientific and philosophical work of Labriola, Morgan and Marx. Any book in the list will be sent, postage paid, on receipt of price, and we ask all members of the organization and readers of this paper to order their books from us.

REMIT PRICE WITH YOUR ORDER

Capital, Volume I, Marx	.....	\$2.00
Capital, Volume II, Marx	.....	2.00
The Ancient Lovers, Volume I, Wood	.....	2.00
The Ancient Lovers, Volume II, Wood	.....	2.00
Ancient Society	.....	1.50
Essays on Materialism, Composing of History, Labriola	.....	1.00
Socialism and Philosophy, Labriola	.....	1.00
Landmarks of Scientific Socialism, Engels	.....	1.00
The Evolution of Progress, La Plante	.....	1.00
Historical and Geographical Foundations, Marx	.....	1.00
Economic Foundations of Society, Lenin	.....	1.25
Socialism, Uspensky and Stepanoff, Engels	.....	.50
The Social Revolution, Axtell	.....	.50
Collectivism and Industrial Evolution, Vandervort	.....	.50
The Origin of the Family, Engels	.....	.50
Edith and the Materialist Conception of History, Axtell	.....	.50
The Civil War in France, Marx	.....	.25
Common Handouts, Tracy and Engels	.....	.25
The Principles of the I. W. W., De Leon	.....	.25
Return to Revolution, De Leon	.....	.25
The Burning Question of Trade Unions, De Leon	.....	.25
What Shall We Strike? De Leon	.....	.25
Industrial Unionism, Clegg	.....	.85
American Industrial Evolution, Axtell	.....	.75
Positive School of Cosmology, Feltz	.....	.50
Women Under Socialism, Feltz	.....	1.00
The Iron Worker, Feltz	.....	.50
History of a Proletarian Family, Engerer Ste.	.....	.75
The Silver Coin, Ste.	.....	.50
The Golden Scale, Ste.	.....	.50
Amateur's Letters, Ste.	.....	.50
Quercy's Carol Book	.....	.50
Ben's Fibers of Society	.....	.50
Plato's Republic	.....	.50

ALL ORDERS FILLED PROMPTLY

WM. E. TRAUTMANN
310 Bush Temple : : CHICAGO, ILL.

Figure 12. *Industrial Union Bulletin*. April 6, 1907. Page 3.



NOTICE

Lumberjacks, River Drivers and Sawmill Workers

Those of you who are not organized now, do so before the 10th of April, as the following Wage Scale has been submitted to the Flathead Lumber Association by the Lumberjacks and River Drivers, and an answer is asked for by April 10th. If the answer is not satisfactory to the Workers in the Lumber Industry of Flathead Valley, you will be notified by more notices immediately after the 10th of April, and you are expected to act.

RIVER DRIVERS

All River Drivers, except Boatmen **\$2.50 for 10 Hours**
 50c an hour for overtime

Boatmen **\$4 for 10 Hours, 50c an hour overtime**

Cooks **\$5 per Day, no question as to hours**
 Contractors to pay the Scale for River Drivers while breaking roll-ways.

LOGGING CAMPS

The following Scale to be for a 10-Hour Work Day:

Per Month	Per Month
1-Horse Teamsters \$55.00	Wood-Butchers, Handy Men \$65.00
2-Horse Teamsters 45.00	Scaler 45.00
Loaders and Deckers 35.00	Camp Tender, Calendar Month 45.00
Sawyers and Chain Tender 30.00	Horn Boss, Calendar Month 50.00
Saw Filers in Woods 35.00	Landing Men 45.00
Blacksmith, Calendar Month 80.00	Common Labor 40.00
	Cooks 50.00

SAW MILLS

Common Labor **\$2.50 for 10 Hours**

FELLOW WORKERS:

Your interests are not the interests of those who live for profits alone. If you wish better conditions, you will have to assist in getting them. Don't be a traitor to your own class. Prices are going up every day and wages are going down. Organize right. Organize your might. Organize to win.

THIS IS THE UNION SCALE. Keep this for future reference.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, LOCAL 421, I. W. W.

Kalispell, April 3rd, 1909

Do not recognize any reports, unless signed by Executive Committee and bearing seal of Local 421.

Figure 13. *Industrial Worker*. April 8, 1909. Page 1.

IWW members produced a sense of emotional attachment to these visions and the collective, *not* through each of these component parts separately but as a constituted whole in the form of the newspaper. The newspaper, a fluid genre both in terms of its circulation frequency and in its fluctuating content, allowed the IWW to represent its ideology and tactics in ways that were in touch with members' changing desires and needs. The pairing of longer-term vision with shorter term tactics gave a sense of the building of a movement and allowed workers to see immediate and

inspirational products of action but also to map individual or localized struggles onto the larger class struggle. In this sense, the newspaper creates an imagined community of workers or of the working class. Readers see themselves and their struggles reflected in the stories of worker struggle. Through the inclusion of different languages, although infrequent, readers develop a sense of a universal working-class experience, or an emotional habitus. The “workers of the world” are all reading the newspaper, and the newspaper is simultaneously speaking to all of them and for all of them. In creating this imagined community, the newspaper can encourage feelings of being part of a group, or “solidarity,” while suppressing feelings of isolation and the accompanying powerlessness.

Humor and Collective Identity

Being educated, being knowledgeable, and understanding the capitalist system needed a counterpoint to solidify feelings of class consciousness and collective identity as well as superiority and strength. A significant part of building group identity is to differentiate the group from other groups, and a component of propaganda’s “communicative content [s] that a group in society is not worthy of [people’s] respect” (Stanley 127). Propaganda “involves both the articulation of truth claims—the demonstration of the rightness of one’s position, and the falsity of the opponent’s” (Mackay 221). This can cause the audience to “lose empathy” for the other group (Stanley 127), which in turn bolsters identification with the group in which they are participating or wish to participate. The IWW’s counterpoint was not just the abstraction of capitalism or of the employing class but also of specific organizations, like the American Federation of Labor, that were not ultimately opposed to capitalism or interested in workers’ autonomy or education. In differentiating IWW member from groups such as the AFL and positioning the IWW in opposition to those groups’ ideologies, IWW propaganda responded to members’ anxiety about their strength and position and underscored their superiority.

The IWW, in response to a powerful but highly divisive AFL, positioned its propaganda in a way that would enable workers to see the AFL as a bosses' organization with members who had their power stolen from them because of the AFL's bureaucratic, top-down structure and pro-capitalist views. The IWW was no stranger to negative stereotypes, and IWW members sought to fight off its stereotyping as an organization of lazy workers who would rather strike than work, wherein the acronym "IWW" stood for "I Won't Works," perpetuated by the AFL and bosses alike with IWW members. Because "stereotypes are the social scripts that guide us through the world, make sense of it, and legitimate our actions within it" (Stanley 195), the IWW deflected these stereotypes and responded with their own. The IWW catalyzed and mobilized feelings of intelligence and superiority to combat the feelings of weakness and anxiety stemming from attacks from opposing groups, making the ideology of craft unions seem unintelligent. That superiority then allowed IWW members to shake off those stereotypes or ridicule them.

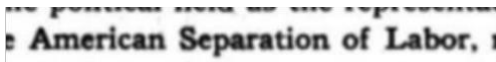


Figure 14. Covington Hall. *Industrial Union Bulletin*. June 6, 1908. Page 2.

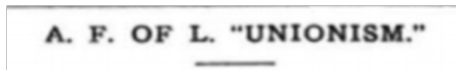


Figure 15. K. Rathje. *Industrial Union Bulletin*. July 4, 1908. Page 1.

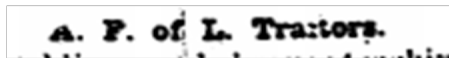


Figure 16. "Local History is Encouraging." *Industrial Worker*. March 25, 1909. Page 1.



Figure 17. D. T. Murphy. *Industrial Union Bulletin*. February 22, 1908. Page 1.

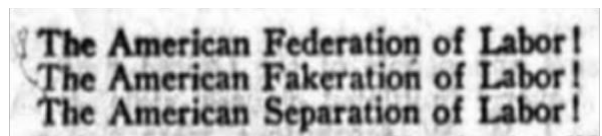


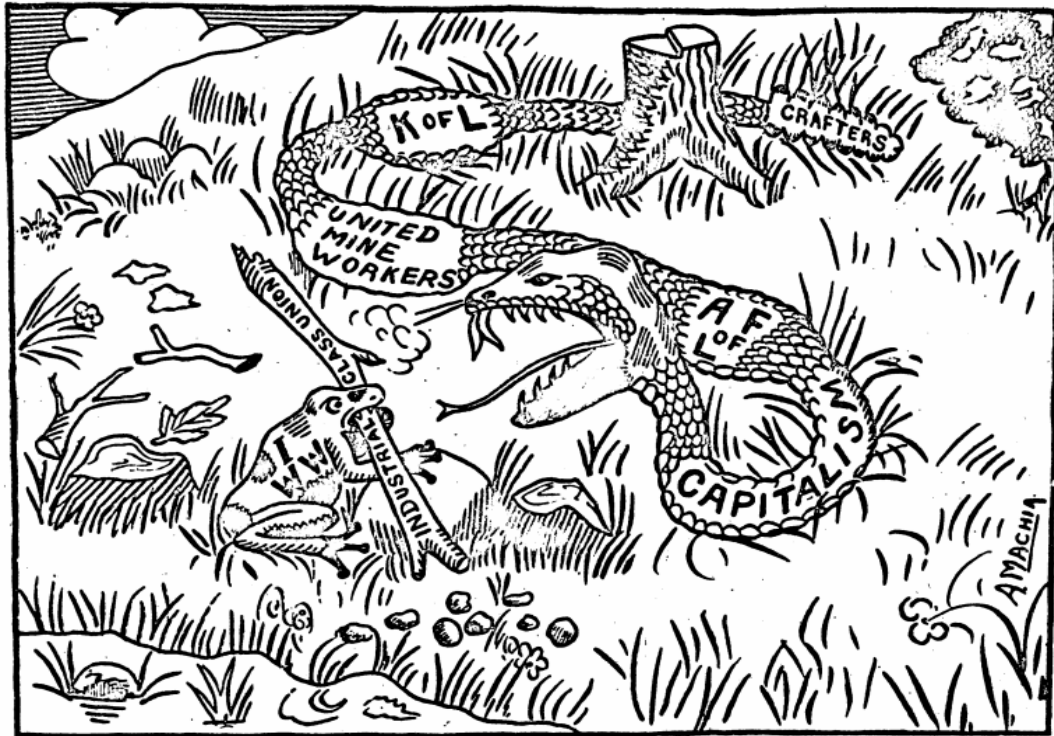
Figure 18. D. T. Murphy. *Industrial Union Bulletin*. February 22, 1908. Page 1.

The IWW's use of humor in its propaganda enabled IWW members to suppress inadequacy and anxiety and privilege self-righteousness and strength. The IWW almost exclusively presents the American Federation of Labor as farcical, calling them the "American Fakeration of Labor"

(fig. 18) or “American Separation of Labor” (fig. 14) at every opportunity. When the AFL or other craft unions appear in the pages of the newspaper, the word “union” is often seen in quotation marks (fig. 15). The August 12, 1909, edition of the *Industrial Worker’s* front-page comic by A. Machia (fig. 19) provides a visual depiction of how the IWW viewed the AFL and distinguished itself from the AFL. A snake, labelled “CAPITALISM,” has literally swallowed other unions, the AFL among them. The IWW, having not yet been eaten, is represented by an angry and defiant-looking frog. Gompers, at the time of the IWW’s creation, had “assured AFL members that the industrial-union convention has ‘labored and brought forth a mouse, and a very silly little mouse at that’” (Dubofsky 95). The IWW is a frog, however, and the viewer can infer that the other unions are also either frogs, mice, or similar snake prey, not only the IWW.

The snake – capitalism – is large and powerful compared to the smaller frog, which is only the size of the snake’s tongue. While the snake has overpowered and consumed its other prey, the small but savvy IWW frog has a weapon that prevents it from succumbing to the same fate: a big stick. And not just any stick; the stick of “industrial class unionism.” The caption reads, “Will he be able to swallow this one? No, not as long as he keeps that stick in his mouth!” While there are many sticks lying around, obvious weapons, it appears the IWW frog was the only prey to use a stick to fight back, presenting the IWW frog as the smartest and most resourceful frog. The AFL does not have the weapon of industrial unionism, but the IWW does. The small frog, representative of the small and not very powerful IWW and its members, can fight back against the mighty capitalist snake with its industrial union model and working-class solidarity. IWW members may feel like the AFL is much more powerful than they are, but capitalism has already defeated it and has not defeated the IWW. IWW members may also feel weak and powerless compared to capitalism, but the IWW, though small, is smart and will stave off the attacks of capitalism as long

as its members “stick” together. The comic presents IWW industrial unionism as the best weapon against capitalism.



WILL HE BE ABLE TO SWALLOW THIS ONE? NO, NOT AS LONG AS HE KEEPS THAT STICK IN HIS MOUTH!

Figure 19. A. Machia. *Industrial Worker*. August 12, 1909. Page 1.

The front-page comic in the June 17, 1909, edition of the *Industrial Worker* (fig. 20) also illustrates the IWW’s attitude towards less radical unionism and how the IWW positioned itself and its tactics in opposition to those of mainstream labor. The comic depicts three union leaders leading their shackled members toward the employer: Roach from the International Brotherhood of Woodsmen and Sawmill Workers; Gompers from the American Federation of Labor, who would continue to be a figure criticized in IWW propaganda and would make appearances in IWW songs; and Mitchell from the United Mine Workers. The employer is drawn in a caricature mode,

emphasizing “boss” stereotypes through a top hat, a coat covered in dollar signs, and a bag of money.

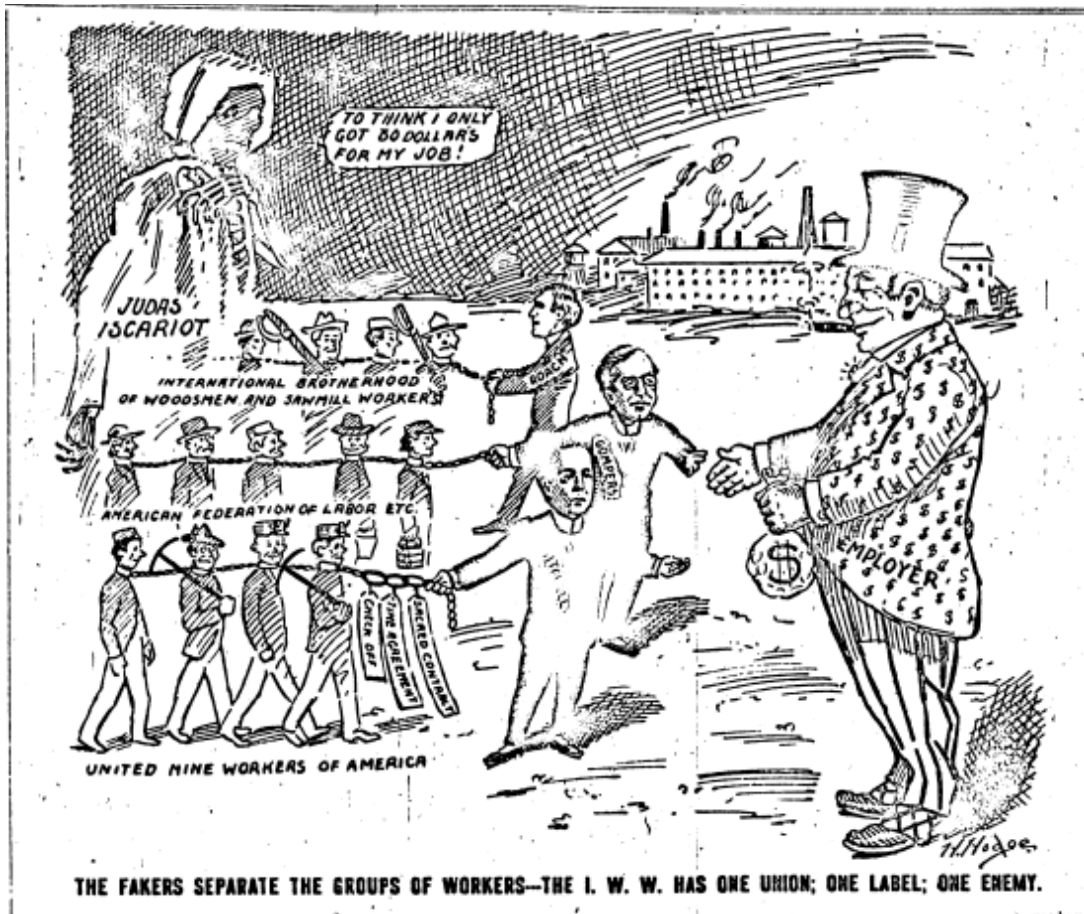


Figure 20. H. Hodge. *Industrial Worker*. June 17, 1909. Page 1.

It is so obvious to readers that he is a boss that it seems unnecessary and a bit ridiculous that the cartoonist also labelled him “EMPLOYER.” The union leaders are trading workers for money and the workers have little idea about what is happening: they appear to be calmly smiling. The spectre of Judas Iscariot in the background, a disciple of Jesus Christ known for his betrayal of Christ, solidifies these unions’ betrayal of workers for their own profit. Judas Iscariot exclaims: “TO THINK I ONLY GOT 30 DOLLARS FOR MY JOB!” as the union leaders reach for the employer’s bag of money. Depicting other unions’ members as prisoners who are unwittingly participating in their own exploitation allowed IWW members have their own anxiety reversed,

displayed as superiority in knowing that IWW members were aware of how bosses and union leaders collaborated in oppressing workers and in having a path towards the abolition of capitalism rather than the reform or acceptance of it.

Images, headlines, and wordplay such as these were commonplace in IWW propaganda, appearing in almost every newspaper issue in the IWW's early years and grappling with IWW members' anxieties about their new union. Though the early IWW stood sixty thousand members strong, "glaring weaknesses would soon be revealed" (Dubofsky 106). The IWW "was so poor at birth that it operated initially with books, furniture, and office methods inherited from the defunct ALU," and of its three departments, one would never have the membership numbers required to be recognized as a department, and the other two, having relied on other unions joining forces, would have most of their members secede within the first year (106). This left the IWW "close to death" despite just having been formed (106). The IWW's "aggressive" war with the AFL also resulted in numerous issues, such as "countless unnecessary strikes" in attempts to "capture AFL affiliates," causing some to fear "the imminent outbreak of civil war within the labor movement" (106). However, in directing its energies toward denigrating the AFL, the IWW was waging a war they did not have the resources to win; "War with the AFL was hardly the proper strategy for a weak new labor organization. Neither was recurrent industrial conflict" (106). Directing this amount of energy and resources to criticizing the AFL is indicative of the high level of anxiety among IWW members about the IWW's age, size, and strength and about the size and strength of other organizations. Though weak, unprepared, poor, and spreading itself thin, the IWW "did not shrink . . . from combatting either the AFL or the Socialist Party" (106).

While the IWW's founders expected a battle with the AFL, "less expected . . . was opposition from the Socialist party" (Dubofsky 95). Eugene Debs, the presidential candidate for

the Socialist Party, had attended the IWW's formative convention and there appeared to be a reconciling between his party and Daniel DeLeon's Socialist Labor Party in support of this new union (94). Their support further antagonized the AFL, and Samuel Gompers thought US socialists were "concentrating their efforts to disrupt the trade union movement" (Gompers qtd in Dubofsky 94). To Gompers, the IWW appeared to be "nothing less than a creation of American socialists intended to replace the AFL" (94). However, many socialists were skeptical of the IWW, suspecting that DeLeon would "once again split the socialist movement, as he had done in 1897" (95). Many socialists also felt that in aligning themselves with the IWW, the enemy of the AFL, they would not be able to reform the AFL from within and push "Federation members to endorse socialism" (95). The Socialist Party distanced itself from the IWW, and the AFL's IWW informant declared the Socialist Party's attitude "as anti-IWW as that of Gompers himself" (95). Divides among socialists and the unwillingness of the IWW to follow either party's lead would cause a significant rift in the IWW.

The IWW had a tumultuous first few years with significant divisions among its members and losses in its labor disputes, and "[m]uch, if not all, of the IWW's impotence and failure . . . resulted from incompetent leadership" (Dubofsky 106). At the founding 1905 convention, the IWW elected a General President, Charles O. Sherman, and a Secretary-Treasurer, William Trautmann, neither of whom were very fit for leading this new organization. Trautmann was an inadequate union administrator, "fail[ing] to maintain accurate membership records" and financial records, unable to even produce a financial report for the 1906 convention (108). On the other hand, Sherman, an ousted AFL organizer, was power-hungry and using his role in the IWW to gain notoriety (107). Unlike Trautmann, he was duplicitous rather than "neglectful or forgetful" (107). The IWW was committed to democratic, industrial unionism, calling itself a union for all

workers, where workers' main strategy was direct action, such as strikes, slowdowns, and sabotage. Sherman's view of unions, however, fell in line with the less radical views of the American Federation of Labor, which put its faith in voting and "professional" labor relations, abhorring the rabble of the IWW (107). Sherman "insisted that revolution and the cooperative commonwealth were for the future, if at all; that today the majority of workers wanted to hear only of bread and butter" (107). While he was likely correct, IWW members did not want to believe something in such stark opposition to the essence of the IWW (107).

Because of Sherman's less radical approach to organizing, he found himself at odds with a significant portion of the IWW's membership and leadership. The IWW split into two factions leading into its second convention in 1906: one on side, a socialist and industrialist faction rallied around Sherman with support from the Western Federation of Miners and Debs' Socialist Party; on the other, a DeLeonist and anarchist faction including prominent members of the WFM and DeLeon's Socialist Labor Party, which "schemed to remove Sherman, abolish his office, and purge the IWW of all 'anti-revolutionary' sentiments" (109). In what was likely a misuse of procedure during the 1906 convention, Trautmann's proposal to abolish the presidency passed, deposing Sherman and forming an Executive Board with Trautmann as leader of the IWW in the "General Organizer" position (112).

The pro-Sherman crowd was defeated at convention by dubious methods, and Sherman was deposed, but the factionalists did not concede. They took their loss back to the Western Federation of Miners and became embroiled in a legal battle with the IWW: Sherman called his pre-convention executive board into session, expelled Trautmann from office, ruled the 1906 convention's actions null and void, declared the unamended 1905 constitution still in force, and asked that all per capita payments be sent to his 'legal' IWW (Dubofsky 113). They held a

convention in 1907 but faced significant decline and ceased to exist in any significant capacity after about a year (119). During this battle, however, the faction won control of the IWW office, records, and newspaper, the *Industrial Worker*, which they continued to publish for about a year, continuing to use notable IWW names such as William D. Haywood without permission (Dubofsky 115). “In retaliation, Trautmann issued a series of special IWW bulletins” (115). Following the secession of the Sherman faction, the IWW and Sherman et al became embroiled in a legal battle, what Dubofsky called “an unusual bit of historical irony” as the factions, “both purportedly hating capitalism, resorted to capitalist courts” (114).

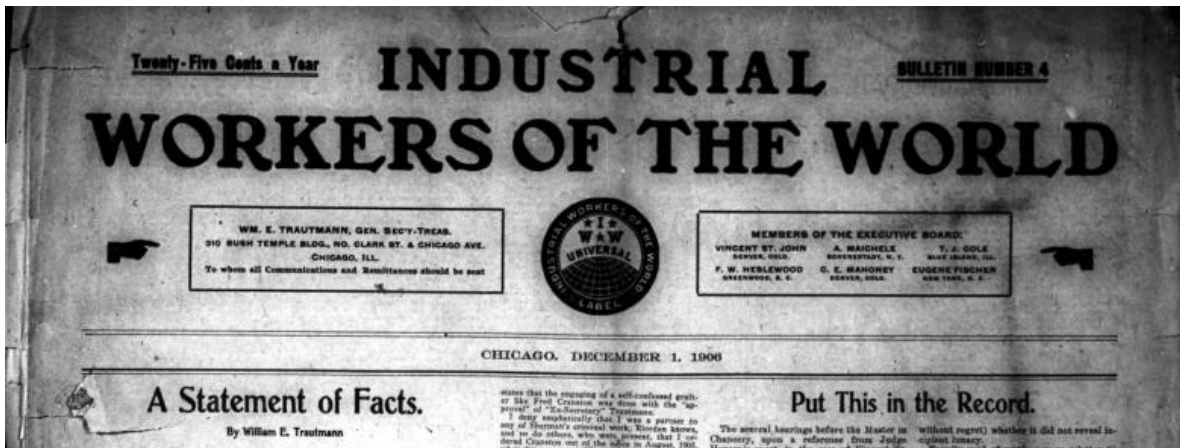


Figure 21. *Bulletin*. December 1, 1906. Page 1.

Following one news story from one of the newspapers of the IWW, the *Bulletin*, from December 1st, 1906, to an issue of the *Industrial Union Bulletin*, the later newspaper, on July 20th, 1907, we can illustrate the types of humor that the IWW employed in its newspaper while grappling with these divisions. The reporting of this legal battle made the front page of the December 1st issue of the *Bulletin* newspaper, where we find Trautmann’s “Statement of Facts” alongside an article titled “Put This in the Record” (1, fig. 21). The title alone is defensive and deflecting. It acknowledges the weakness that the IWW feels in the courtroom as they are trampled upon by the opposing side’s lawyer, who is dominating what the Master, or the judge, believes. This weakness, however, is flipped back onto the opposing lawyer, Stedman, through this assertion

that the IWW has the facts. In this article, the Sherman faction's lawyer, Stedman, is referred to as "Steddy," making him appear ridiculous, unprofessional, and diminutive. The write positions Stedman as a deceptive magician, writing, "Stedman came near convincing all who watched his tricks and contortions that he was dangerously near a condition bordering on dementia" ("Put This in the Record" 1, fig. 22). Here, not only is Stedman depicted as someone who cannot remember facts and who can only convince the audience of that inability and not of his argument, he is also reduced to a form of entertainment through reference to his "tricks and contortions," as he attempts to make an argument from what the IWW wants readers to think is the weaker side.

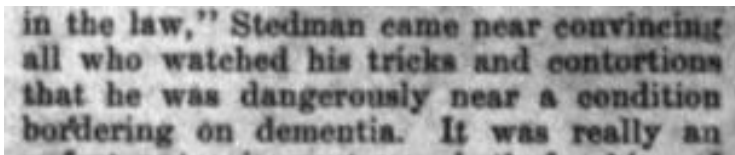


Figure 22. "Put This in the Record." *Bulletin*. December 1, 1906. Page 1.

An article on the third page of the same issue of the *Bulletin*, "O'Neill's Somersault," describes the Western Federation of Miners magazine editor, John M. O'Neill, similarly. O'Neill had previously been an outspoken supporter of Sherman and his faction but had recently begun aligning more with the IWW's position. The author calls O'Neill's initial denouncement of the IWW at convention as "breaking loose in a ridiculously hysterical fashion" (3) and refers to his shift in opinion as "O'Neill's Somersault" (3, fig 23), bringing the reader back to the image of the opposition as entertainment, much like the magician, reduced to circus acrobat. The author further draws this comparison, writing: "The editor of the Miner's Magazine, John M. O'Neill, has given us another exhibition of his skill as an intellectual acrobat. This time, however, his performance is one that must have caused him a pang or two, not altogether agreeable" (3). The article concludes with an excerpt from O'Neill's article.



Figure 23. *Bulletin*. December 1, 1906. Page 3.

The ridiculous and satirical images of the lawyer as a magician and contortionist and the editor as a circus acrobat somersaulting provide multiple layers for analysis. We often think of laughter as the desired outcome of a joke; the comic's role is to provide the means by which an audience is brought to laughter. Freud, in *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*, claims that a joke does not have to be "an aim in itself" (Freud 97). While a joke's primary function could merely be laughter, which Freud calls an "innocent" aim, a joke can also be "hostile," which "serv[es] the purpose of aggressiveness, satire, or defence" (Freud 97). Indeed, Freud avers "humour can be regarded as the highest of these defensive processes" (Freud 233). Defence, for Freud, is not entirely how we might interpret it. It also infers a type of deflection, where weaknesses are deflected onto objects or people other than us.

In these two articles, the authors are engaging with the anxiety of IWW members in their weakness in the courtroom. Although the IWW may look less than impressive to the judge and to their rivals, these articles deflect that weakness onto the IWW's opposition by mocking those in power. The IWW is insulted by the editor and the lawyer, and it avenges itself via satire. According to Freud, "[t]endentious jokes are especially favoured in order to make aggressiveness or criticism possible against persons in exalted positions who claim to exercise authority. The joke then

represents a rebellion against that authority, a liberation from its pressure” (105). Caricature functions similarly: “we laugh at them even if they are unsuccessful simply because we count rebellion against authority as a merit” (105). Poking fun at successful lawyers and powerful newspaper editors who seek to denigrate an organization and its members is one of the only ways to exert any kind of power against them.

The goal of the defensive humor that we see here, then, is not to change the minds of those in positions of power. Rather, satire instead functions as an internal tool. The defence and deflection exist to deal with the anxiety surrounding weakness. The *Bulletin* was a newspaper for subscribers, who were sometimes solicited but who were usually IWW members or sympathizers. Steddy would not be persuaded to switch sides by an article appearing in the *Bulletin*. According to Freud, “humour is a means of obtaining pleasure in spite of the distressing affects that interfere with it; it acts as a substitute for the generation of these affects, it puts itself in their place” (Freud 228). In that sense, humor is transformational for those doing the laughing. Rather than having anxiety amplified or becoming more distressed, humor replaces unpleasurable affects with pleasurable ones. Humor and jokes are “no more than ways of regaining this cheerful mood . . . when it is not present as a general disposition of the psyche” (Freud 219). Readers “submit . . . some hitherto unconquered emotions to the control of humour” (Freud 232). The cheerful mood that the readers have “regained” can make IWW members feel as though they are on the winning side and will prevail. Satire positioned against enemies gives the humor recipient, or the reader, a sense of optimism. Perhaps the prevention of negative affects allows the reader to continue doing other work, such as union organizing, and rids them of their preoccupation with the object of their anxiety. Perhaps the reader then goes out and speaks to other members regarding these concerns and continues the pattern of mockery, convincing others that the opposition is weak. We can

imagine many situations in which the introduction of pleasurable affects is productive and leads to action rather than anxiety.

However, humor “may stop this generating of an affect entirely or only partially” (Freud 232), which means that these unpleasurable affects are not entirely replaced or prevented. Indeed, these examples are not wholly humorous. Readers encountered them with more affects than merely the pleasurable ones represented in their laughter. Even though the ridiculous image of a lawyer as a contortionist is humorous, there is anxiety in their laughter if they laugh at all. Freud calls this instance of mixed feelings “broken humour – the humour that smiles through tears” (Freud 232). The unpleasurable affects are diminished, sure, but they do not entirely disappear, and more negative affects are not prevented from emerging. Humor is unable to entirely replace these unpleasurable affects; “the release of distressing affects is the greatest obstacle to the emergence of the comic” (228) and the “comic feeling comes easiest in more or less indifferent cases where the feelings and interests are not strongly involved” (220).

In these examples, though, feelings are strongly involved. The reader can mostly prevent the formation or amplification of unpleasurable affects, but they cannot fully escape the reality and gravity of the situation. The IWW is losing in court. The editor of a fairly powerful newspaper has publicly disparaged them and has only issued a partial correction to his initial “ex parte judgement” (“Somersault” 3) While the satirical component of this reporting gives the situation “a tinge of humour” (Freud 232), it cannot rid the reader of negative affects, in part because the author also has these anxieties and that “the aptitude for making jokes is present in only a few people independently of their mood” (178). Even with unpleasurable affects lingering, however, the presence of pleasurable affects may prevail.

Moreover, assuaging anxiety and fear is not the only goal of humor. Henri Bergson, in *Laughter: An essay on the meaning of the comic*, avers that “laughter aims at correcting” (170). He states that because laughter in this sense is “intended to humiliate,” it should make a “painful impression on the person against whom it is directed” (197). But in the case of these examples, it is unlikely that the objects of mockery will change their behaviour or minds. This “correcting” is not limited to the objects of mockery, however. Bergson notes when opponents are mocked, it typically makes one less likely to want to join them. He states: “it is the business of laughter to repress any separatist tendency. Its function is to convert rigidity into plasticity, to readapt the individual to the whole, in short, to round off the corners wherever they are met with” (177). Perhaps an IWW member is playing with the idea that the factionalists may be correct and that Sherman’s IWW should be taken seriously. When that member encounters these articles, where the Sherman side is ridiculed, they rethink their allegiance. Why would they want to be on the side of the mocked? The losing side? Instead, they want to remain where they are, committed to the IWW.

Creating and reinforcing feelings of group identity and solidarity is a key goal of this type of corrective, anti-factionalist humor, which is in play in an article on the front page of the *Industrial Union Bulletin* from July 20th, 1907. The factionalists had recently held their own convention, and readers would have had knowledge of these events. The *Industrial Union Bulletin* subsequently ran an article, alongside a straightforward, unrelated news article, of a satirical set of phone conversations between the Sherman faction Secretary, named Hannemann, and a series of callers inquiring about the faction’s convention. The article’s title reads, “That Fake Convention: Thrilling Story of the First, Last and Only Convention of the Rump Faction, Beginning and Going Through to the End” (1, fig. 24). The sarcasm in “thrilling” indicates the opposite, and the line

“beginning and going through to the end” foreshadows the article, where it becomes apparent that readers are to believe that the faction did not have a real convention with any important content.

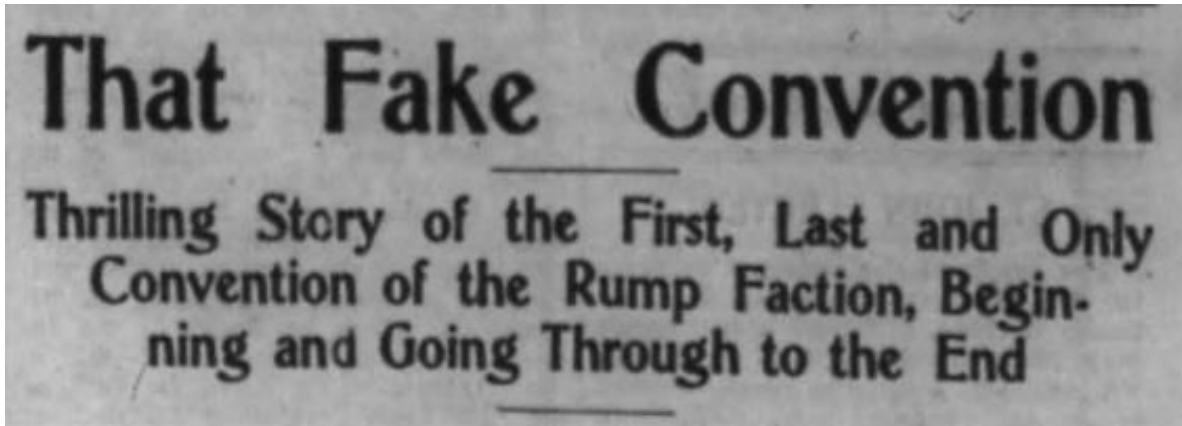


Figure 24. *Industrial Union Bulletin*. July 20, 1907. Page 1.

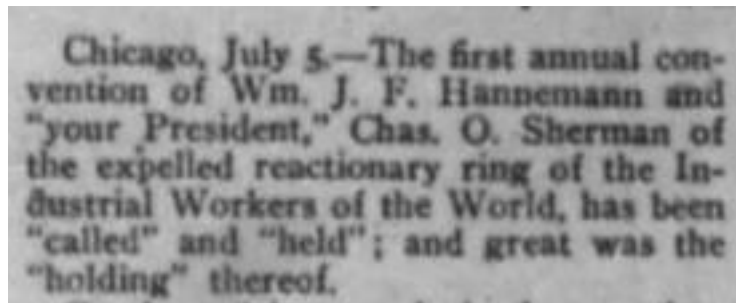


Figure 25. “That Fake Convention.” *Industrial Union Bulletin*. July 20, 1907. Page 1.

The opening lines use quotation marks, emphasizing the farcical nature of the Sherman faction and its activities: “Chicago, July 5. – The first annual convention of Wm. J. F. Hannemann and ‘your President,’ Chas. O. Sherman of the expelled reactionary ring of the Industrial Workers of the World, had been ‘called’ and ‘held’; and great was the ‘holding’ thereof” (1, fig. 25). The article then narrates a satirical dialogue, beginning when the phone rings in the Sherman faction’s office. Hannemann answers the phone and the caller, called “The Voice,” on the line begins to speak:

The Voice— Yes? Is it the Industrial Workers’ Headquarters?

H.—Yeas, Yeas, Yeas!

The Voice—well, say, you people are going to have a convention tomorrow?

H.—Yeas, Yeas, Yeas!

The Voice—When will it be held?

H.—Well—hm—Ye-as—Who is this talking?

The Voice—The City press. We wish to give you people public notice, all we can of it. Where is your convention to be held?

H.—Well—hm—er—You see, tomorrow being a national holiday—hm—we will—meet—er—only to adjourn, and to—er—meet again Friday. (1, fig. 26)

Hannemann—Hallo-o-o—
 Along the wire comes a rich masculine voice from the other end—H'llo, who is this?
 H.—Hannemann, Hannemann of New York.
 The Voice—Yes? Is it the Industrial Workers' Headquarters?
 H.—Yeas, Yeas, Yeas!
 The Voice—Well, say, you people are going to have a convention tomorrow?
 H.—Yeas, Yeas, Yeas!
 The Voice—When will it be held?
 H.—Well—hm—Ye-as—Who is this talking?
 The Voice—The City Press. We wish to give you people public notice, all we can of it. Where is your convention to be held?
 H.—Well—hm—er—You see, tomorrow being a national holiday—hm—we will—meet—er—only to adjourn, and to—er—meet again Friday.

Figure 26. "That Fake Convention." *Industrial Union Bulletin*. July 20, 1907. Page 1.

delegates arrived?
 H.—Hm, er, yeas.—Well, no, not yet.
 —Well, er, hm, yeas, not yet, but LOTS of them are on the way!
 The Voice—On the way, eh?!
 H.—Yeas, yeas, yeas, indeed!
 The Voice—Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha—
 You are a good one!

Figure 27. "That Fake Convention." *Industrial Union Bulletin*. July 20, 1907. Page 1.

The article goes back to “reporting” on the Sherman convention, stating that Hannemann and Sherman “stare at each other for five solid hours; and the morning and the evening were the first day [of the convention]” (1). The day after, when a second caller demands to know if they held a convention yesterday, Hannemann replies “Well—hm—er—yeas, we met, and adjourned” (1, fig. 28). The voice exclaims “Met and adjourned!” surprisingly and unimpressed, reinforcing the ridiculousness of the statement (1, fig. 28). By the time the reader makes it to the section with the third and last caller, Hannemann and Sherman are arguing over who has to answer the phone: “You answer! H.—No, you answer. S.—It is your duty as ‘our Secretary’ to answer!” (1, fig. 29). The article ends by stating that the three callers were IWW members (fig. 30), as though this were a real practical joke, giving readers the impression that these farcical exchanges may have actually happened, or were likely to happen, because the faction is so weak and disorganized.

2d Voice (irritably)—now listen,
MISTER Hannemann. DID YOU
HAVE YOUR CONVENTION YES-
TERDAY?
H.—Well—hm—er—yeas, we met,
and adjourned.
2d Voice—Met and adjourned!

Figure 28. “That Fake Convention.” *Industrial Union Bulletin*. July 20, 1907. Page 1.

Suddenly a third ring at the telephone.
Hannemann, (to Sherman)—I will
answer!
Hannemann (to Sherman)—You an-
swer!
H.—No, you answer.
S.—It is your duty as “our Secretary”
to answer!
Desperate ring at the ‘phone.
S.—Answer. Your office depends upon
your obedience.
Hannemann (at the ‘phone)—Hallo-
o-o!

Figure 29. “That Fake Convention.” *Industrial Union Bulletin*. July 20, 1907. Page 1.

But the best of it all is that the First
Voice was A. S. Edwards, Editor of the
Industrial Union Bulletin; the Second
Voice was Mrs. Olive M. Johnson; and
the Third Voice was Mrs. Oscar Neebe,
wife of the vindicated comrade of the
Chicago martyrs of 1887.

Figure 30. “That Fake Convention.” *Industrial Union Bulletin*. July 20, 1907. Page 1.

Readers are once again exposed to a type of humor that is both defensive and correcting; however, one needs at least somewhat of an understanding of the preceding events and the split of the faction to understand why an article would be so committed to a satire of a fake convention. This need for knowledge intrinsically limits the audience of the humor. Bergson notes that “because laughter aims at correcting, it is expedient that the correction should reach as great a number of persons as possible. This is the reason comic observation instinctively proceeds to what is general” (Bergson 170). If, as Bergson states, “our laughter is always the laughter of a group” (Bergson 6), then it follows that a reader could reasonably imagine being part of the group that is laughing at a specific joke. Indeed, “[h]owever spontaneous it seems, laughter always implies a kind of secret freemasonry, or even complicity, with other laughter, real or imaginary” (Bergson 6). The IWW’s specific brand of “inside” jokes helped readers to narrow down that broad imagined community of laughter into a more specific, identifiable community to which they belong. It honed identity down to IWW member or radical worker from general proletariat or popular newspaper reader. Satire in the IWW newspaper functioned partly as a form of agitation, pitting members against factionalists. This underscoring of division emboldened feelings of collective identity – us versus them – and provided IWW members with a sense of superiority and power. Satire and laughter helped members align with their identifiable IWW community.

The IWW’s explicit projects, to have members of the working class subscribe to grand visions of general strikes and a world without the wage system, to educate workers about political and revolutionary theory, and to take action against their enemies – are possible insofar as they are emotional projects as well. The IWW, through its propaganda, put these emotional projects into motion, reflecting, responding to, suppressing, and directing workers’ feelings. While articles educating workers on capitalism and describing labor disputes were to create a knowledge-based

class consciousness, those articles responded to readers' feelings of powerlessness, weakness, and despair by providing a cause – capitalism and the employing class – to blame for those feelings, moving them to anger. As the newspaper highlighted the superiority of the IWW through the denigration of AFL and the Sherman faction, it responded to IWW members' feelings of anxiety and weakness by positioning them as smarter and more likely to succeed. These representations created and reinforced IWW members' collective identity as more class conscious, as smarter, as not ridiculous or farcical, as *better than*.

The newspaper elucidates the IWW's projects, emotional and otherwise, because of its form as an "intellectual montage" (Mackay 220), where these representations and projects are working in tandem to create a collective identity and solidarity among IWW members/newspaper readers. The newspaper, in its fluidity of content and its placement of items in close proximity to one another, has the ability to bring together varying representations of struggle into a mosaic of feeling and perception, weaving in humorous or serious rhetoric as a significant catalyst in changing how one might feel about or approach the rapidly changing world of industrial capitalism in the early 1900s or the problems presented by division and animosity. "[U]nderlying effective propaganda are certain kinds of group identities" (Stanley 19), and group identities are not just identified or strengthened in propaganda but formed and altered also.

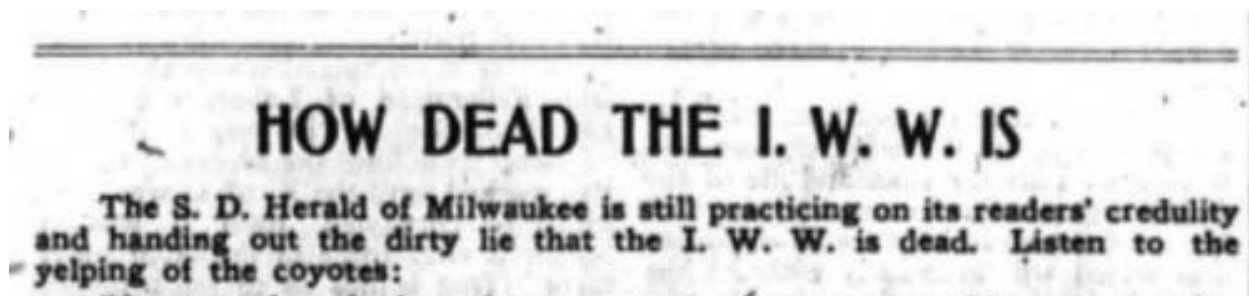


Figure 31. *Industrial Union Bulletin*. November 9, 1907. Page 2.

CHAPTER TWO – SINGING TOGETHER, FEELING TOGETHER

Within only a few years of its inception, the Industrial Workers of the World advanced pamphlets, poetry, comics, and songs as important elements in organizing and solidarity efforts. Members argued that these modes of literature made good propaganda, creating class consciousness and educating workers. Within these efforts, songs stood out as a means to create a united working-class movement. Despite debate within the IWW on the efficacy of song and the importance of “serious” literature, the IWW quickly established its reputation as a singing union. Some of those songs remain key components of labor meetings and celebrations both within and beyond the IWW community. IWW members sang the songs of movements before theirs alongside songs of their own creation, and those songs spoke to and for those workers. The democratic structure of IWW songwriting helped singers feel the songs were for them and by them. These songs, many reflecting workers’ feelings because they were produced by workers themselves, emerged from “concern, anger, doubt, and, in practically every case, sincere emotion. Some are spontaneous outpourings of feeling, others carefully composed tracts; some are crystalline in their clarity, others enthralling in their ambiguity; some are answers, some just necessary questions” (Lynskey xv). These emotionally based songs, songs of struggle and protest, are far reaching. To divorce IWW song from this democratic expression of working class feeling would be to remove the core of how songs speak to us and for us. We must instead consider how song, as a product of working class feeling, is a framework through which to comprehend and direct those feelings. Song is “more than sound; it is a complex system of mean(ing)s and ends that mediate our relationships to one another, to space, to our histories and historical moment” (Redmond 1).

In this chapter, I explore the significance of songs in the IWW. Specifically, I examine the role of songs in educating workers. In “Music, Culture, and Social Movements,” Vincent Roscigno, William Danaher, and Erika Summers-Effler argue that the “emotional and cognitive

impacts” of music “can be fundamental to the construction of social movement culture” (141). They posit that “identity, interpretational framing, and collective efficacy” are the components by which songs “function to provide the cultural tools necessary for movement formation and persistence” (163). Looking at these three components and how they are unfolding in IWW song provides us with an understanding of how song is working in collective movements. In asking how these songs work emotionally, however, we can see how IWW songs responded to working-class feeling and created and reinforced solidarity among IWW members.

I argue IWW songs provided workers with education in two important and connected ways. IWW members saw songs as good propaganda that provided a practical and ideological “interpretational framing,” giving workers a way to understand the world and their position in it. Songs described problems with capitalism and why capitalism persists then provided those impacted with a plan for what to do about it: unite and fight back. The songs also provided an *emotional* interpretational framing, or emotional pedagogy, however. Through songs’ articulations of worker struggle, workers were able to see their individual feelings – of anger, despair, hopelessness, powerlessness, and discontent – reflected in their lyrics. This helped workers with those experiences and feelings understand both the cause of those feelings and how their individual feelings were shared and collective. The songs taught workers a language for those feelings and a way to articulate them that could be universally understood. The songs also taught that the solution had to be collective, directing those feelings toward collective action against the employing class.

Second, I argue that these songs taught solidarity by creating, reinforcing, and demonstrating it. This emotional pedagogy allowed the “social in us [to] feel like ‘second nature’” (Gould 33). The solidarity taught was not only theoretical or ideological; more importantly, it was *felt* and *experienced*. Through language, and tempo, among other components, these songs brought

workers into a collective and reinforced that collective's boundaries. The group identity created and reinforced by IWW songs and group singing, while offering a sense of group boundaries, was permeable, inviting and allowing workers outside the class-conscious singing group to easily join the group by becoming a singer. The act of singing as a group was an instantiation of the solidarity the lyrics promoted. Singing taught workers to act in unison and welded them together. It also served as a reminder that they already knew how to be together and wield their collective power: singing was that solidarity embodied.

The Singing Union

It is difficult to map exactly what came together to make the IWW a singing union, and the IWW was not the first movement to use song. Research on IWW songs and song culture largely centers on Joe Hill, who was and is the IWW's most famous songwriter and the face of IWW song culture. Despite his notoriety, Hill "cannot, however, be credited with 'making the IWW a singing union,' as Ralph Chaplin believed, for it was already a singing union when Hill joined it" (F. Rosemont 53). Protest and labor songs were not started by the IWW, nor will they end with the IWW. Composing songs about and in response to struggle is a long, robust tradition that is not remotely confined to the labor movement, and group singing is a fundamental component of group cohesion and expression. Many people across many causes used songs to protest many different things, and the IWW is merely a niche within that expansive catalogue of songs.

In "The Older Songs of Labor," IWW member Fred Thompson asserts that "[t]he IWW didn't invent the labor song. It took an old practice, still used at the time in European countries but somewhat forgotten in America, gave it a timely twist, and revived it" (np). Archie Green notes in a letter to Paul Buhle that "IWW pioneers did not create a rich body of songlore either by decree or magic. Rather, founders came to Chicago well acquainted with two tested musical genres: formal radical fare (for example, Socialist Songs with Music issued by Charles Kerr, 1901 [see

fig. 32)]; [and] traditional occupational folksong (not yet gathered in books . . .)” (Green “Wobbly Songs” 1).

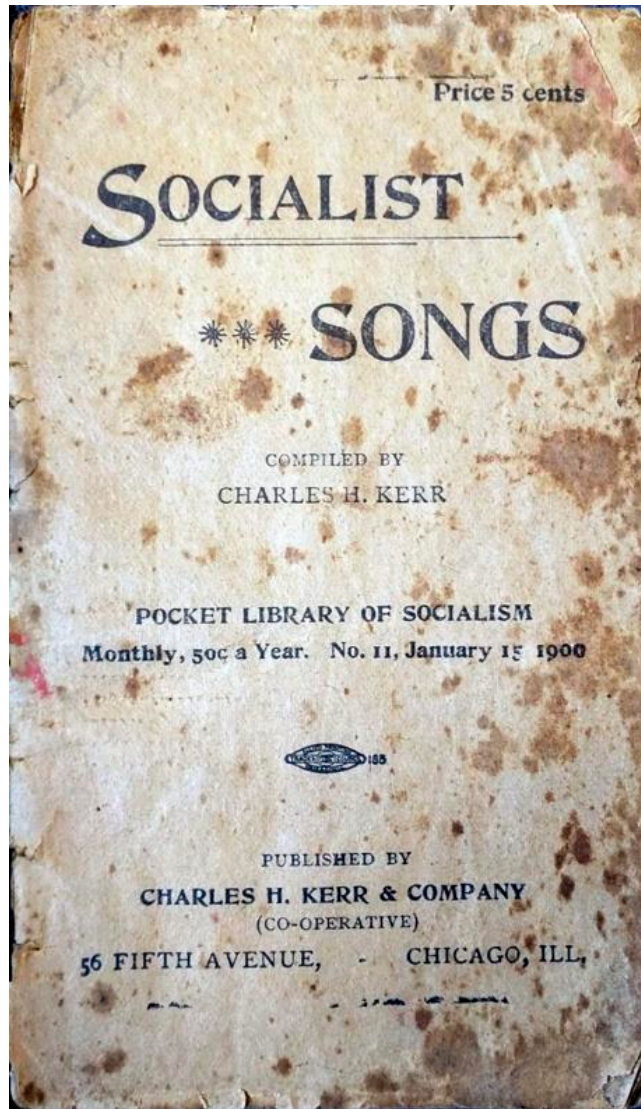


Figure 32. *Socialist Songs*. 1900.

Some songs sung by IWW members, and that are still sung at union events around the world, did not originate with the IWW and do not focus on IWW-specific struggles. Rather, the IWW borrowed established songs, singing classics such as “The Marseillaise” and “The Internationale.” Protest and labor songs have been and continue to be reused, modified, and riffed on. IWW songs

are no exception, with musicians such as Tom Morello bending IWW songs into modern rock tunes.

Though it did not invent the labor song genre, IWW members were constantly singing, and the IWW became known for its use of songs. “IWWs sang as they picketed and paraded. They sang in jails and in the freight cars they called ‘rattlers.’ They sang at picnics and rallies, in saloons and hobo jungles” (Bird et al 21). IWW members used songs and singing at every opportunity. “Songs to fan the flames of discontent were sung . . . wherever Wobbly rebels gathered to agitate for a new world build ‘from the ashes of the old’” (Kornbluh 65). Reporting on the living conditions of California migrants in 1914, sociologist Carleton Parker wrote: “Where a group of hoboes sit around a fire under a railroad bridge, many of them can sing I.W.W. songs without the book” (qtd in Kornbluh 65). Songs provided entertainment and marked transitions to new activities and spaces, and they began to find their way into the public sphere. Brazier recalls singing songs during public events: “after the street meetings were over, the Wobbly band would strike up a lively tune and lead the crowd into the hall. Here it would play a medley of Wobbly and rebel tunes to which the audience would sing the words (in those days almost everyone in Spokane knew one Wobbly song or another); then a short talk or some announcements would be made” (“Story” 95). Articles and advertisements in IWW newspapers touted the inclusion of song as well. An advertisement for a mass meeting appearing in the September 14, 1907, edition of the *Industrial Union Bulletin* claimed the event would be “enlivened with music by the Union Maenner Choir, who will sing the “Battle Hymn” and other inspiring selections” as well as “Miss Elizabeth Flynn, the young Industrial Union advocate of New York, and other speakers” (“The Mass Meeting” 4).

What set the IWW’s use of songs apart from other labor organizations in the United States was how much these songs became part of the union’s culture and propaganda. Though the

“general assembly of the Knights of Labor . . . ‘always ceased its labors’ at the close of each session by singing *If We Will, We Can Be Free*,” Elizabeth Balch, in researching the history of labor songs, “found no record of singing at public demonstrations” by the Knights “[d]uring the unrest and the strikes of the [eighteen] eighties” (Balch 411). Similarly, the American Federation of Labor did not seem to use songs frequently and “had shown little inclination to produce its own body of traditional lore, song, and aphorism” (Smith 19). Noting the difficulty in finding “words or music of special originality or permanence growing out of the second great movement in this country,” Balch speculated that perhaps the AFL was “too practical a work-a-day organization for song” (411). The AFL was a serious organization that required serious propaganda.

Similarly, some IWW members felt songs were impractical and prevented the union from being taken seriously. Members opposed to songs argued they were “irreverent, coarse and crude,” insisting the IWW “emphasize pamphlets and speeches, since serious social change requires a serious approach” (Marvin 248). Reporting on IWW singing in the media supported these arguments, with singing workers depicted as simple or crude. A journalist reporting on the 1913 Paterson strike admitted that “[t]o hear that immense throng of men and women sing their songs was indeed a thrilling moment” but then suggested that to sing as the Paterson strikers did indicated a lack of sophistication, asking “What cultured and educated audience ever entered so completely, body and soul, into an art work as did these simple workers into their music?” (qtd in Foner *History* 359). The IWW was created in large part to do something different than the AFL, and IWW members took every opportunity to emphasize those differences. Still a very new organization, the IWW had a sense of what it was but often defined itself by asserting what it was not. IWW members were both proud of their new organization but also felt anxiety and insecurity due to the threatening presence of the AFL, a bigger and more powerful, reputable, and established

organization. Songs and singing provided a tangible and heard boundary between the IWW and the AFL, and IWW members embraced “their music as one of the basic gestures distinguishing their organization from the A.F.L.” (Smith 19). “The A.F. of L., with its over two million members ha[d] no songs, no great poetry and prose. . . . The I.W.W. ha[d] a vast wealth of both” (Foner *History* 156).

While the embeddedness of group singing in IWW culture helped further define the IWW as something other than the AFL, the songs themselves grappled with IWW members’ anxiety and insecurity in relation to the AFL. IWW propaganda educated workers on the problems of the world, and the AFL was one of those problems; “Songs were used to teach basic IWW principles. They might express our position against craft unions” (Bruce “Utah” Phillips qtd in Bird et al 27). Appearing in the first songbook, Richard Brazier’s song “We Will Unite” is a call for workers to leave their craft unions and join the IWW. The song provides a warning to workers about the “labor fakirs” of craft unions, asking “ye proletaire” to “beware” and “take heed” (2). The song suggests the AFL and craft unionism act to divide workers rather than unite them. Workers have “fought, as toilers ought” (5), but because of how craft unions organized, they have “fought each other . . . [i]nstead of the boss” (8-9). The song then calls upon workers to “[r]enounce those labor leaders, leave the union of your craft;/ . . . join the Industrial Workers, which is not run for graft” (14, 16). The song then presents the IWW as the union that will unite workers “as one man” (13) and “uplift the proletaire” (15), unlike craft unions.

While the song condemns craft unions’ separation of the working class, it also lyrically creates its own divide. The song is narrated using first person plural pronouns (we/us): “join with us” (10). These pronouns indicate that the IWW a united group rather than a singular person and further articulate the song’s message that the IWW is more democratic than craft unions and does

not have a singular leader. The use of we/us also positions those singing the song, or those identifying with the lyrics, as being in the IWW group. The warning and subsequent call to unite are directed at “you,” a second person pronoun that functions either as a singular or plural pronoun. This generic worker, or group of workers, is positioned outside the IWW group: “Are you led by labor fakirs . . . ?” (1). In presenting two different groups, “we” and “you,” the song creates a defined boundary for the IWW group. To have an “us” that is defined, it requires a “you” or “them.” We are the singers, we are the IWW, and we are not led by labor fakirs and have not let craft unionism divide us. Unlike you, we see the way that you have been divided and fight among yourselves. We have a better understanding of capitalism and greater class consciousness than you or craft unions. Despite the boundary being defined and reinforced, it is also necessarily permeable. The IWW needs to be able to bring other workers easily into its group to advance its mission. All “you” have to do is join “us.”

“We Will Unite,” like almost all IWW songs, is written to the tune of another song, and this source tune also impacts how singers/listeners/readers experience the song and understand its message. Many of the songs in print have their source tune indicated, and the first edition of the IWW songbook indicates that “We Will Unite” is set to the tune of “Commissionaire.” At the time of publication, the editors of the *Big Red Songbook* could not identify a source tune from this era called “Commissionaire.” However, I believe the source is a song by that title from the late 1800s, sung by Albert Christian, with music by Ernest W. Hastings and lyrics by Charles H. Taylor. The song praises “Commissionaire,” a “fighting man” (26) who is handy (21), useful (20), and has “pluck and nerve” (47). He has fought for his country already and is “still as keen” to defend it (40). When played on piano, the music feels joyful and triumphant, something one could march to or whistle. If those encountering the “We Will Unite” know “Commissionaire” and its feelings

and message, those components can still be in play in the recomposition. Here, the feelings and messages of the original and the recomposition interact in a way that bolsters the message in the recomposition. “We Will Unite” presents the IWW as the original presented the “Commissionaire:” trustworthy and brave with a solid moral compass. The IWW is the Commissionaire for the working class and is just as “keen” to jump to its defense against its enemies (bosses, in this instance). Craft unions lack these noble qualities. If listeners of “Commissionaire” felt a sense of pride, respect, or satisfaction, those feelings can be re-felt and redirected to the IWW. In linking the IWW to the Commissionaire, the song is responding to IWW members’ anxieties and insecurities about the strength of workers and their union by associating feelings of strength, righteousness, and power with the IWW.

Songs in Print

Despite songs permeating IWW culture and offering an audible difference between the IWW and its contemporaries, the IWW “had no official songbook at that time. All they had was a song card – a small, four-page card brochure – which they sold for five cents a copy” (Brazier “Story” 92). Titled *Songs for the Discontented*, the song card consisted of one double-sided red card folded in half to form a booklet (fig. 33). The IWW’s General Headquarters published the song card shown here sometime between 1906 and 1909 based on the address listed on the front page. This song card contained five songs: “The Marseillaise,” “Hallelujah! I’m a Bum,” “Sunshine in My Soul,” “Out in the Bread-Line,” and “The Red Flag.” A different slogan appears on the bottom of each page: “The Working Class and the Employing Class have nothing in common” (1), “Labor Creates All Wealth” (2), “Join the Union of Your Class” (3), and “Labor is Entitled to All it Creates” (4). Measuring only 3 inches wide by 6 inches tall, the card could be easily mailed, transported, handed out, and tucked away.

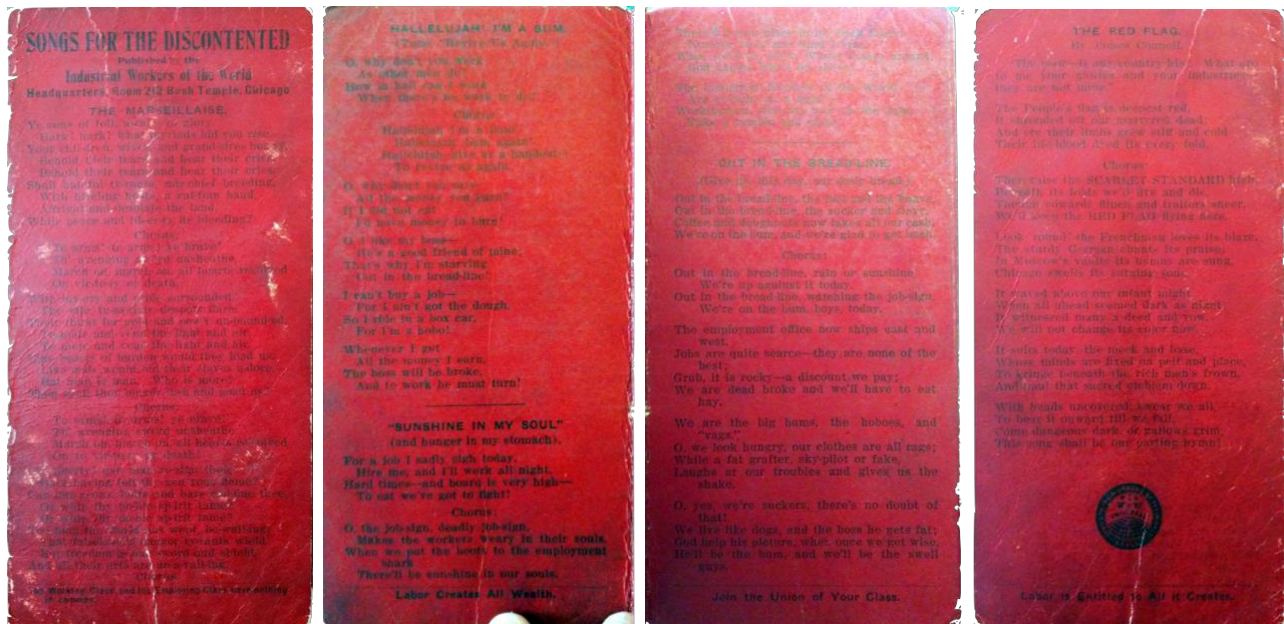


Figure 33. *Songs for the Discontented*, circa 1906-1909.

This small print collection of songs provides an accurate sampling of the two main types of songs the IWW wrote, borrowed, and sang: humorous, sarcastic parodies and serious working-class anthems. “Hallelujah! I’m a Bum,” “Sunshine in My Soul,” and “Out in the Bread-Line” are examples of the former. Unlike many of the more anthemic songs, these parodies offer insight into the specific problems facing workers at the time. For example, all three songs deal with employment sharks, or employment offices where workers would pay a fee to be sent to a job. Two of the songs – “Hallelujah” and “Bread-Line” – discuss bums or hoboos and how workers wait in bread lines for food. All three of the songs have a humor and sarcasm to them, and all three use hymns as their source tunes. As I discuss in chapter three, using hymns as a base tune proved useful. IWW members were often faced with opposition from the Salvation Army, which “delighted in trying to break up the IWW street meetings with blare of trumpet and banging of drum” but IWW members could use that music to their advantage (Brazier “Story” 94). Workers sang along with Salvation Army members who attempted to subvert their meetings, but they sang

with their own lyrics. Looking specifically at “Hallelujah,” I argue in chapter three that using hymns as a source tune is not only practical but is a main component of how the songs function.

The two remaining songs have a more serious tone, corresponding more closely to the phrases at the bottom of the pages of the song card. The front of the song card prominently displays an English version of “The Marseillaise,” the national anthem of France. The song functions as a call to arms directed at “Ye sons of toil” (1) in the fight for liberty against “vile, insatiate despots” (15). The gravity and importance of this struggle, which would result in either “victory or death” (13), is further emphasized through a slower tempo and a steady, driving beat, giving the song a rhythm conducive to marching in an army or on a picket line. “The Marseillaise” uses first person narration similarly to “We Will Unite,” with first person plural pronouns to indicate collective suffering: “shall they longer lash and goad us?” (22). Like “We Will Unite,” “The Marseillaise” directs its call to arms to “you,” a generic group of the “sons of toil” (1), indicating a group that is fighting and a group that is not yet fighting. Unlike “We Will Unite,” however, the song’s use of “us” reads as inclusive of the “you” to which the calls are directed. The suffering experienced by “you” is the same as the suffering experienced by the narrator/singer(s). Rather than reinforcing group boundaries, the song dismantles them by uniting singers and listeners through shared experience.

James Connell’s “The Red Flag” has a similar impact to that of “The Marseillaise.” The song portrays the power and unity symbolized by the red flag and emphasizes the importance of keeping it flying high. The flag is described as the “People’s flag” (1), a “SCARLET STANDARD” (5) that has been dyed that color by the blood of deceased workers, “our martyred dead” (2). The flag is depicted as a universal symbol of workers’ struggle and their power, beloved by workers in France (9), Germany (10), “Moscow” (11), and “Chicago” (12). The flag is a “sacred

emblem,” and workers must fight to keep it from being hauled down (20), “[c]ome dangerous dark or gallows grim” (23). Like the fight in “The Marseillaise,” this fight is a matter of life or death. Set to the tune of “O Tannenbaum,” the slower, steady tempo makes the song and its fight feel serious and important. This seriousness is paired with a feeling of hopefulness, especially as the chorus begins with a higher pitch. Like “We Will Unite” and “The Marseillaise,” the song is written from a first-person perspective. The uniting effect of “The Red Flag” is similar to that of “The Marseillaise,” with first person plural pronouns indicating a group that is inclusive of workers around the world and not only the singers/narrators. This group of workers is only defined in a few instances. Those not included in “our” group are “cowards” (7), “traitors” (7), and “the rich man” (19).

A steady beat can mimic the rhythms of work, allowing songs to travel with workers into their workplaces. IWW member Sophie Cohen, reflecting on singing, recalled:

The first time I walked out of the mill, I couldn't hear normally and although I knew my feet were touching the ground, it felt strange. After a time, I got used to the noise. There seemed to be a certain rhythm to the loom. It encouraged me to sing. The only way I could endure that work was to sing along to the rhythm of the loom. Most of the discomfort could be forgotten that way. Maybe that's why we used to sing so many Wobbly songs. (Bird et al 64)

Like many IWW songs and songs IWW members sang, songs such as “The Marseillaise” or “The Red Flag” have rhythms that pair well with workplace rhythms. As Steinbeck, in “Woody Guthrie,” observes, “working people sing of their hopes and of their troubles, but the rhythms have the beat of work . . . The work is the song and the song is the people” (np). These songs could move in and out of workplaces and permeate the shop floor. Singing or humming these songs while working not only makes the workday feel shorter but also can feel like a small act of protest. It can serve as a reminder of better times to come once workers unite and fight back. Moreover, it brings

the agitational impact of the songs, or fans the flames of discontent, directly to the source of that discontent and pushes workers to feel that discontent rather than repress it.

Though “Solidarity Forever” would soon usurp them as “labor’s anthem,” “The Marseillaise” and “The Red Flag” were two of the more popular songs in the IWW repertoire at the time. In IWW circles, “The Red Flag” was the anthem of the coming revolution, with the symbolism of the flag itself representing a “stabled form of cross-cultural solidarity” with the “invariant color of blood” (Kuzar 88). An article on page 4 of the May 25, 1911, *Industrial Worker*, titled “A Cheap Song for Fools,” identifies the song as such. The article details a national anthem contest: “Chicago patriots are planning a national anthem contest, with a prize of half a million hung up for the winner. Each school child in the country is to give a cent towards this prize. When it has been awarded congress is to be asked to make the winning song ‘official, instead of ‘the Star Spangled Banner’” (4). The writer(s) then sarcastically celebrate the contest as a “great thing” because as soon as “this half a million is invested in a song there should be no more bread-line, no more misery, no more child slavery, no more children will be rooting through the garbage barrels for a bite to eat. Gee, won’t it be a glorious thing this new song” (4). They are concerned, however, about the money being spent on a new anthem as the IWW would be “changing it soon and then it will be known as the ‘Red Flag.’ It’s easy to sing and it speaks for the workers of all nations at the same time. If any patriotic scissor-bill would like to adopt it as the National flag at present we would have to refuse it as we have no desire to have it dragged into the mire of disrepute” (4). “The Red Flag” was so popular that it would earn a prominent place in the first songbook: the first page.

In *Anthem*, Shana Redmond explores the efficacy of music in movements and how music “functions as a method of rebellion, revolution, and future visions” in the African diaspora (1).

She examines songs she calls “anthems,” which are songs that “symbolize and call into being a system of sociopolitical ideas or positions” and that “make the listening audience and political public merge” (2). Anthems communicate a structure of political beliefs and understandings to groups of people in a way that is accessible, understandable, and felt. Anthems also “demand something of their listeners” (2). While some anthems “occasion hands placed over hearts or standing at attention,” they also require “more than a physical gesture;” anthems “require subscription to a system of beliefs that stir and organize the receivers of the music” (2). Ideally, anthems inspire their subjects to believe they can change the world “for the better—that the vision of freedom represented in the song’s lyrics and/or history are worth fighting for in the contemporary moment” (2).

Songs such as “The Red Flag” and “The Marseillaise” are anthemic not only because of their steady beats and grand and inspirational musical feeling but also because they bring together workers with similar feelings, beliefs, and values and unite them intellectually, emotionally, and physically. They create a sense of group identity and cohesion by presenting individual struggles as collective struggles. The songs define the group’s boundaries by positioning the group against those in power who cause their suffering, and the group is broad enough to allow for singers/listeners/readers to easily identify with and become a part of it. These anthems inspire those singing or listening to them to fight for a better world. It is unsurprising that the IWW used anthemic songs, a symbol of nationalism, to unite the international working class, “since international proletarian solidarity, which had no forerunners, needed to compete with a rich tradition of national culture” (Kuzar 88). The IWW sang these anthemic labor songs, and members would write their own, to “stir and organize” and to unite workers around the world: “We do not know what songs our composers may write, but they will be working-class songs and perhaps one

among them will be worthy to be called ‘Labor’s Anthem.’ [IWW songwriters] will reach a world-wide audience. For their songs will be sung wherever there are Wobblies to sing them – *and that will be everywhere*” (Brazier “Story” 96).

As the songs in the song card grew in popularity, two members in particular sought to create a larger volume of songs: Richard Brazier, a Canadian IWW member transplanted to Spokane, and J. H. Walsh, a national organizer who came to Spokane from Alaska. Brazier described Walsh as “one of the go-getting type, full of pep and energy, and ingenuity, and full of ideas. He organized a band, he moved to--we had, the organization moved to a larger hall, the largest one they could find in Spokane” [1601 Front Avenue]” (Green Interview 7). Walsh, wanting to create a larger volume, “started these little broadsides, which were these little blue covered cardboard songbooks Song card would be a more apt expression” (Green interview 8). Titled *Songs to Fan the Flames of Discontent*, the song card published by the Spokane branch between 1905 and 1909 contained nine songs and a page listing the meeting times for IWW Locals in the area (fig. 34). Four of the five songs from the song card by IWW Headquarters appeared in Spokane’s song card – “The Marseillaise,” “Hallelujah,” “Out in the Bread Line,” and “The Red Flag” – but five others were included as well: “The Banner of Labor,” “The Roll Call,” “Working Men, Unite,” “Good-Bye Dollars, I Must Leave You,” and “Meet Me in the Jungles, Louie.”

The five additions can similarly be categorized into sarcastic, humorous parodies and serious working-class anthems. “The Roll Call,” “Good-Bye Dollars, I Must Leave You,” and “Meet me in the Jungles, Louie” comment on specific issues facing workers in the Western United States. “The Roll Call,” like “Hallelujah,” uses a hymn as its source tune and discusses employment sharks. “Good-Bye Dollars” also grapples with the issue of employment sharks while “Meet Me in the Jungles” tells the story of Louie being kicked out of his boarding house and

moving to a hobo jungle, a camp of seasonal and/or unemployed workers. Both use popular songs as their tunes. Chapter three offers a closer look at this type of song.

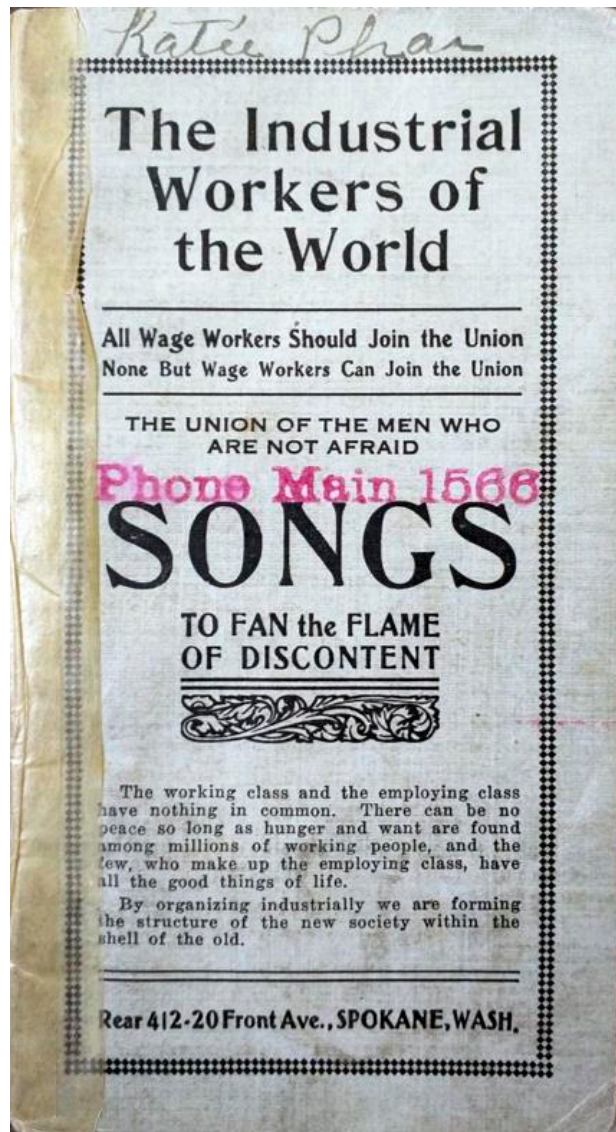


Figure 34. *Songs to Fan the Flame of Discontent*.
Spokane IWW, circa 1905-1909.

“The Banner of Labor” has a more anthemic presence, with a similar feeling and message to “The Marseillaise” and “The Red Flag.” It uses first-person narration to first describe the suffering of workers (called “slaves” [8]) and then to call workers to unite and fight against their “master[s]” (8). The use of slavery rhetoric provides an articulation of workers’ feelings of

powerlessness and their inability to escape capitalism, which I discuss further in chapter four. The lyrics use second-person pronouns to refer to workers to whom the call to action is directed, providing the singing/IWW group with a sense of identity in opposition to the workers who have not yet united, the divide of “us” and “you.” Despite that distinction, the song sets up the group’s boundaries as permeable. Workers hear the call, they unite, and they are now in the group of fighters/singers rather than the group that “idly sit[s] by” while workers and their families suffer (13). Set to the tune of the “Star Spangled Banner,” the song feels serious and triumphant with its large range of notes, especially in the last two lines of the verses and the chorus, with the highest note emphasizing the word “free”: “And the BANNER OF LABOR will surely soon wave/ O’er the land that is *free*, from the master and slave” (italics added; 7-8).

Grappling with feelings of anxiety, weakness, insecurity, and insignificance, it makes sense why IWW members were attached to “The Marseillaise,” “The Red Flag,” and “The Banner of Labor.” Workers are suffering and might feel powerless or weak compared to those who cause their suffering, and the songs present those feelings as widely felt. In contrast to feelings of powerlessness, the songs feel grand, imposing, and triumphant. Their musical expression can then evoke feelings of power and importance in the singer/listener. The songs’ musical expression also exudes confidence and righteousness, and those feelings could be evoked in singers/listeners as well. Power, confidence, and strength are useful and satisfying feelings to have when engaging in a seemingly impossible struggle with those in power. The anger produced by the descriptions of suffering, paired with the confidence to fight back and win, creates a motivating set of feelings. Those feelings are then directed towards the fight, moving workers to action.

Nelson’s “Working Men, Unite” has similar messaging in its lyrics, which describe workers’ suffering under capitalism and call on workers to unite to fight back against the “master

class” (13). The first-person narrator tells workers, framed as “you” (2), that they are suffering, though they “cannot see [their] enemy” (3). The song links their experience to the narrator’s using first person plural pronouns that are inclusive of the “you,” asking, “Shall we be slaves and work for wages?” (9) Once again, the singing/IWW group is positioned as more class conscious or more aware of workers’ conditions under capitalism. Despite this divide, “you” (or the amorphous group of workers to which the song is directed) can easily join this group by uniting (15) and fighting “for liberty” (19).

The tune of “Red Wing” is not the driving, grand, anthemic tune that one hears in “The Marseillaise” or “The Banner of Labor,” however. Like Guthrie’s “Union Maid,” “Working Men, Unite” is set to the tune of “Red Wing,” a popular song telling the story of an Indigenous woman whose love dies in battle. While the song’s story is sad, much like the suffering depicted in “Working Men, Unite,” there is tension in the music between a sadness and a lightness, with a tempo and rhythm that seems almost jaunty. The jauntiness and lightness of the tune is clear in “Union Maid,” but in “Working Men, Unite” it is an odd pairing. Like other songs that borrow music, these songs are also emotional recompositions, marrying or creating tension between feelings in the lyrics and music of the original and those in the recomposition. This relationship between the two songs is complex and dependent upon the experiences and feelings of those singing or hearing it. Here, the simultaneous tension and cooperation of the two songs allows the sympathy and sadness of the original lyrics to influence the sadness depicted in the new lyrics. Despite the original song not having a hopeful narrative, the emotional expression of the tune allows singers/listeners to feel hopefulness or joy as the new lyrics offer a way to escape that sadness.

These expanded song cards and the songs they contained resonated with IWW members. They were so popular that members quickly began to push for a larger, more encompassing volume of new songs written by their fellow workers. The song cards “[s]old very well, but [Walsh] said, no, they sell well, but it’s the same thing over and over, and we have to get new songs” (Green interview 8). Though they were not expansive, these song cards made a larger songbook seem possible. “Despite its size, [this song card] blazed the trail for the larger songbook to come, a songbook of lasting fame – and one that would make the IWW known in all corners of the earth” (Brazier “Story” 92). By mid-1908, the Spokane IWW Branch began to toy with the idea of creating a songbook (Green Interview 8). Brazier knew the IWW had “our own songwriters; and others, when we get a new and larger songbook, will also send in their poems and songs” (93-94).

Some members “argued that people would soon tire of singing or of hearing the same songs, and also saw little propaganda value in songs or songbooks” (96) while others argued that the songbook would “serve to make the IWW known and to propagate its ideas and principles,” initiating debate within the Branch (97). In addition to assessing the value of a songbook in terms of education, entertainment, and propaganda, the Branch was also facing financial hardships that impeded its ability to print new materials. Brazier notes, “nothing could be done owing to the poor financial condition of the Spokane Branch of the IWW, which had been hit hard by the 1907 panic.⁶ So an enlarged songbook had to wait for a better time” (92). Despite the setback, Walsh continued to push for a songbook and convinced the branch to “form a song committee, let the membership get together and elect their representatives to a song committee. Decide whether they want a different format, and have a real songbook out of this or go along on these cardboard song cards

⁶ The 1907 panic was largely caused by Eastern U.S. bankers withdrawing financial backing from railroad construction. Many workers were suddenly out of a job, causing a financial panic, which in turn caused a lack of funds coming into the Spokane Branch. A brief summary of this phenomenon is located on page 92 of Brazier’s “The Story of the I.W.W.’s ‘Little Red Songbook.’”

business” (Green Interview 8). The committee, with its rotating cast of migrant workers and a few “Home Guards,” got to work (Brazier “Story” 97-98). They “call[ed] on the members to submit poems, songs that they thought ought to be in, and anything that pertained to the question of organization of the workers--whether it was a quotation from somebody, or a poem from Shelley, Keats, or someone else--anything that would be apt. And a lot of material came in,” enough to create a songbook (Green Interview 9).

In catalyzing and collecting IWW songs, the songbook highlighted the uniqueness of IWW song culture. Unlike other movements, “rather than trying to win the allegiance of artists already recognized by the dominant culture, the IWW had the audacity to believe workers could create their own art” (Bird et al 23). According to Timothy Lynch in *Strike Songs of the Depression*, “while striking workers sometimes sang such standard labor songs . . . more often they wrote their own songs” (3). IWW members sang “The Marseillaise” and “The Red Flag” but they also wrote songs about their specific struggles, experiences, and beliefs. These songs were from the heart of the struggle and “were not written by ‘sideline’ poets. They were written by men and women who understood the problems and hardships of the workers because they themselves were workers. They gave poetic and musical voice to thousands of other workers, and left behind one of the great heritages of the American labor movement” (Foner *History* 157).

When asked what led him to become a “composer of Wobbly songs,” Brazier was unable to pin down exactly what compelled him to write songs, replying “It’s hard to say, it may be the impulse must have been” (6). That “impulse” formed a rich collection of songs specific to IWW struggles by the people engaged in those struggles, songs that helped articulate workers’ feelings because they were the feelings of the workers who wrote them. Fania Steelink, who came to the United States from Russia in 1907 and worked in the garment industry, identified this grassroots

development of IWW songs as a reason the songs resonated with workers: “One thing that struck me about the IWW was the beautiful songs. It wasn’t only Joe Hill. Plain ordinary people produced those songs. That should be a hope, because they came from the heart of the people” (Bird et al 170).

It is this democratic and decentralized approach to songs and singing that helped IWW songs accurately reflect the experiences and feelings of the workers singing them, enabling the IWW’s emotional habitus to respond to workers’ feelings and be adaptive. Just as readers of the newspaper could recognize themselves in the pages, singers of IWW songs felt as though the songs were written for them and about their struggle, or that they could also have written the songs. They were able to imagine workers just like them writing the songs and singing the songs. And IWW songwriters *were* just like them: they “did their writing on their own time, during lunch hours, at night and often in jails. They paid for their own paper, ink and music sheets. They earned no royalties. Their sole reward was to help to struggle and the knowledge that their songs were being sung to advance it. And they were sung!” (Foner *History* 155-156). Although that was often the case, it was not always the case. Brazier admitted to receiving a royalty of “a cent a copy [of the ten cents per copy price]” around the time the first songbook was released (Green Interview 6). He recalled only accepting it “for a short time,” however: “and then I told them, now, I don’t want it, and so I made a motion myself to rescind the motion to give me--at a meeting I made a motion myself to rescind the motion that gave me the royalty. I’d never asked for it mind you” (7).

The first songbook, published in 1909, was the hard work of both Brazier and Walsh, though Brazier argues that “no one man can claim to be the originator of the song book. It was a cooperative undertaking by the membership through their duly elected Song-Committee” (Brazier Letter #1 4-5). If he had to identify who was responsible, Brazier submitted Walsh “might well be

called the ‘Father of the *Little Red Songbook*’” (Brazier “Story” 95). Brazier was being modest, however, since he submitted “about 20 different songs” in response to the initial call for material (Green Interview 9). Even with his significant contribution, Brazier still downplayed his songwriting: “While it is true that I came before Joe [Hill] and my songs were the greater part of the first edition of the song-book, I was only a forerunner, a sort-of a John the Baptist who came before the Master” (Brazier Letter #2 8) Brazier and Walsh’s push to create a volume of IWW and labor songs spawned the long list of volumes that IWW members fondly described as “songs to fan the flames of discontent.” The *Little Red Songbook* was born.

Walsh had “visualized [the songbook] as a real Wobbly creation done up in a distinctive red cover with the IWW label emblazoned upon it, so that it could be recognized at a glance” (93). And indeed, the first songbook was IWW through and through (fig. 35). The distinctive red cover with the IWW label front and center has been and continues to be the standard edition after edition, and the size of the songbook has not deviated much either, measuring just under 4 inches by 6 inches. The small red book could (and can) be easily recognized by IWW members, as they spot it across the room on someone’s bookshelf or across a crowd in someone’s hand or shirt pocket. Making the songbook a pocket-sized reference text allowed these songs to be easily accessed, carried, and inserted into whatever struggle was at hand. Carrying the songbook to a picket line allowed the carrier to bring an object that embodied a culture of struggle, solidarity, and class consciousness and that would likely be recognized as such.

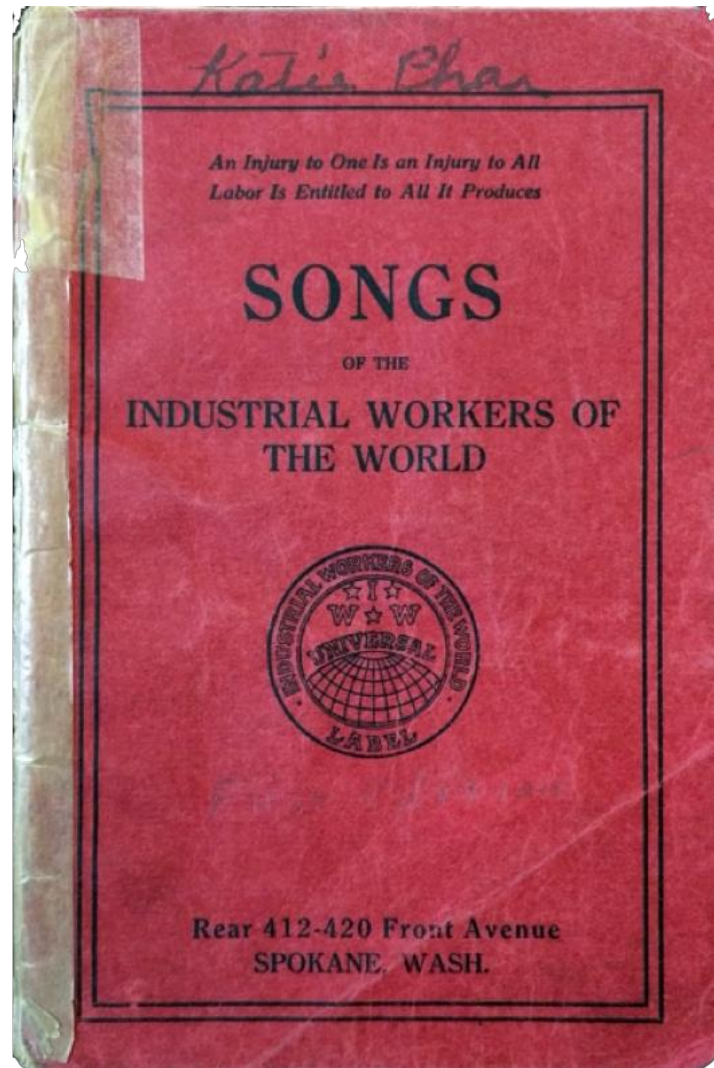


Figure 35. *Songs of the Industrial Workers of the World*.
1st edition. 1909.

The IWW’s little book of songs developed a following. The songbook “brought the IWW’s songs to an ever-increasing audience. Many unions had songbooks, but they were nothing like the little red one” (54). It reached a wide audience, and “in the mid-1910s, the usual print-run was 50,000 copies; by 1917 it was up to 100,000. And most editions went through several printings” (481). Readers of the newspaper saw advertisements for new songbook editions and were provided instruction on how to sell and use the songbook: “In selling the song books at street and hall meetings it is well to announce the number of songs contained in the book, sing one of them if

possible, read a portion of another and announce that the audience should join in the chorus. Then start the sales. Every local should have a bunch of these crowd gathering and interest holding song books on hand” (“Selling” 4). In an update on the IWW’s status in Chicago and Minneapolis, “Heini, the Jungle Cook” notes that they “sold 25 songbooks in one meeting” and the Minneapolis union hall acquired a piano for the purpose of “giving our singing society the right tune and the right spirit in the songs” (3). The songbook was gaining popularity edition after edition.

Good Propaganda

The songbook’s creation was fraught with debate on the usefulness of songs as propaganda, and this debate continued despite the songbook’s growing popularity. One side of the debate was “convinced that the workers should be educated to the class struggle and its social and economic consequences through the written and spoken word” and “thought songs [were] irrelevant to the work on education” (Smith 18-19). The other side of the debate “felt the use of songs an important part of the educational effort” (19). Songs could bring the message of the IWW to the masses: “We must not hide from the ‘stiffs’ on some obscure side street; we are missionaries in the class-war and we have a message for them; we want to deliver it” (Brazier “Story” 93). “Such singing,” Brazier thought, “was good propaganda, since it had originally attracted [him] and many others as well; and also useful, since it held the crowd for Wobbly speakers who followed” (91). Members felt that songs could be just as useful or more so than newspapers, pamphlets, and other propaganda: “Songs are easily remembered but dull prose is soon forgotten . . . and our aims and principles can be recorded in songs as well as in leaflets and pamphlets – in some cases even better. For songs for workers will be more apt to reach the workers than any dry-as-dust polemic” (96). Not only were songs able to entertain, but they could also further the message of the IWW and of radical proletarian struggle. The IWW had often used music before speakers to keep the interest

of the crowd and to serve as an introduction to issues, so it seemed reasonable to expect as much from songs as other forms of propaganda, if not more.

Members engaged in back-and-forth debates on the use of songs, spanning issues of IWW newspapers. Joe Hill, in a letter to the Editor of *Solidarity* on November 29, 1914, articulated his understanding of why song was key to the IWW's educational mission:

A pamphlet, no matter how good, is never read more than once, but a song is learned by heart and repeated over and over; and I maintain that if a person can put a few cold, common sense facts into a song, and dress them up in a cloak of humor to take the dryness off of them, he will succeed in reaching a great number of workers who are too unintelligent or too indifferent to read a pamphlet or an editorial on economic science. (Hill qtd in Smith 19)

The pro-song side was vindicated as the songbook became “the One Big Union’s single most effective piece of propaganda, and by far its most popular publication” (F. Rosemont 53). The songbook was, as Folklorist John Greenway called it, “the first great collection of labor songs ever assembled for utilitarian purposes” (qtd in Kornbluh 65). Despite opposition, “as the tunes gained popularity with the workers nearly all Wobblies became proud of them” (Smith 19), and members such as Fred Thompson, in oral histories or archival materials, express pride in “belong[ing] to a tradition of singing” (Thompson qtd in Bird et al 217).

Indeed, IWW songwriters used songs as a didactic tool, offering a framework in which to understand worker struggle under capitalism and “strove to nurture revolutionary consciousness. Each piece--whether elegaic [sic], sardonic, or comedic--served to educate/agitate. Songs were intended as building blocks in altering bourgeois mentality, and in anticipating a new social order--the commonwealth of toil” (Green “Wobbly Songs” 3). In singing, listening to, or reading these songs, workers would be “learning history and economics translated into the terms of their own lives” (Vorse 15). Brazier acknowledged that this was the motivation to write particular songs. Reflecting specifically on his song “The Suckers Sadly Gather,” Brazier stated:

Well, you see, you have to remember the motive behind that song was to bring to public attention the abuses of the employment offices, that they heaped upon the migratory worker. And I wrote that song with the object of bringing it to the attention of the working people, by my song. I made that based on a very popular song at the time that I wrote it, the Silvery Colorado Wends Its Way. And it took on immediately, and became very popular. (Green Interview 31)

Many IWW members strongly felt that “the best educational material published by the I.W.W. was *The Little Red Songbook*. ‘There are 38 songs in the I.W.W. song book,’ a Wobbly organizer wrote in 1912, ‘and out of that number 24 are educational, and I can truthfully say that every one of them is almost a lecture in itself’” (Foner *History* 151). Not only was the songbook “the vehicle for conveying the basic sentiments and program” of the IWW, but some also argue that its educational component was its “greatest importance” (155). The songbook offered a collection of the IWW’s lessons.

While Hill and Brazier were able to identify some of the ways that a song is a more than adequate mode of education – humor, catchiness, simplicity, and repetition – IWW song was not purely intellectual education accessible to workers who found “editorials on economic science” too challenging or too uninteresting, and humor was not merely a disguise to make the lessons more palatable. Songs did not require access to a newspaper or pamphlet, and they could be easily taught to others. Their music, its emotional expression in beat and rhythm and tempo, could transcend linguistic divides. Songs entertained, helped time pass, and did not require focus after a long day at work. Songs could be sung while working or while not working. Songs were easily transported from place to place as migrant workers travelled from job to job or found themselves in camps, extending the IWW’s “critique of capitalism beyond the point of production, enabling the I.W.W. to carry its message of industrial solidarity beyond the confines of the factory gate” (Salerno 151).

Most of all, songs were felt. They were not merely bringing issues “to public attention” or exposing workers to information, they were helping workers recognize and articulate their experiences as workers and the feelings they had as a result of their position. They were translating those individual feelings into widely felt and collective feelings, uniting workers together on an emotional level. This emotional habitus was necessarily grounded in working class experience and feeling rather than only knowledge of the IWW’s critique of the wage system. Workers, through these songs, received “education” in two ways. The education provided by IWW songs is both “interpretational framing,” offering a way to understand the world and the singers’ relationship to it, as well as “emotional pedagogy,” enabling workers to recognize and articulate their feelings within the IWW’s emotional habitus. These two forms of education are intrinsically linked, articulating and directing workers’ feelings in support of the IWW’s goals.

All 24 of the songs in the first edition of the songbook provided an interpretational framework for how capitalism impacts workers, why the problem exists or persists, and/or how to end workers’ suffering. They also provide an emotional education, offering an articulation of workers’ experiences, a reason for why they have those experiences, an enemy that deserves their anger, and a plan to end their suffering. Most of the songs in the first edition contain general depictions of worker struggle, while only a third of the songs deal with a specific issue, such as employment sharks or being on the bum. For example, “If You Workers Would Only Unite” provides a three-step plan: recognize the injustices, unite with your class, and abolish this system of suffering. In the song, Brazier provides a simple depiction of worker suffering, writing, “They do intend your power to bend/ And work you till you’re nearly dead” (5-6). Brazier offers the same three-step plan in “The Master Class are Feeling Fine,” providing a more specific example of capitalism’s injustices:

So many men are looking for a job.
 They work you all the hours of the day
 And give you as low as possible pay,
 While you look on and not a word to say. (14-17)

The song articulates the powerlessness workers felt as they looked on without a word to say (17). “The master class are feeling fine” (1), and their happiness is not separate from or in spite of workers’ suffering. They “gloat with joy o’er the long bread line,/ For they like to see the workers starve” (2-3). Some of the songs provide very blunt and literal framing for workers’ struggles under capitalism, like E. S. Nelson’s “Working Men, Unite!” Nelson writes, “Conditions they are bad,/ And some of you are sad” (1-2), which, while a significant understatement, provides a simple, short, and accessible articulation of the frustration, powerlessness, anxiety, and hopelessness that these workers. The song gives voice and form to those feelings.

In attempting to explain and articulate the suffering of workers, writers of these songs provided a general sense of how this suffering feels. Bruce “Utah” Phillips reflected on the simplicity of IWW songs:

Their songs are very, very simple. I’ve often been criticized for singing them by left-wing people who say they are too simplistic. Well, the songs were to help people define their problems and to suggest what the solutions might be. A lot of working folks came from other countries and couldn’t speak very much English and didn’t have a chance to go to school here. If the songs were going to communicate, they had to be simple. Our protest music of today tends to be a little more abstract. It’s harder to understand. There’s a lot of difference between, ‘How many miles must a white dove sail before it can rest in the sand?’ and ‘Dump the bosses off your back.’ (Bird et al 25)

It is this simplicity that enabled IWW songwriters to deliver an accessible reflection and articulation of their singers’/listeners’/readers’ feelings and experiences. Combined with the general nature of the songs’ critiques, the songs could speak to workers in a variety of contexts and thus “transcend the particular locale in which they emerged and thus be applied across a spectrum of specific situations and singular struggles” (Nilsen 127). Renshaw, in *The Wobblies*, comments that “these songs mirrored the struggle of a whole generation of wage workers: they

were songs for the inarticulate” (144). “Even the least articulate of workers could join in these group songs and respond to them fully” (Foner *History* 155-156). Because of this accessibility, the songs enabled workers to feel like a part of a group despite divides in knowledge or language. It offered an ease of entry into the collective. The songs only work if they accurately describe workers’ experiences and feelings, however. While simplicity and generality can allow “inarticulate” workers to be able to recognize and articulate their experiences and feelings, the songs must be descriptive or specific enough for workers to recognize the experiences and feelings as their own.

Though Utah Phillips correctly asserts that the songs were not “abstract,” IWW songs were not entirely literal either. Imagery and metaphor helped IWW songs “transcend the literalism which constrained the language of formal ideology, thereby bringing new symbols and meanings to political activity” (Salerno 39). Discussing songs, comics, and other art, Salerno argues that “while I.W.W. worker intellectuals had a major role in disseminating knowledge of the activities, principles, and tactics of industrial unionism, worker artists went beyond formal political expressions to create a language and symbolism that made the I.W.W.’s principles meaningful within the context of the workers’ cultural and social alienation” (Salerno 149). The songs’ descriptions conjure images of suffering and inequity, buildings built upon enslaved and dead workers. This imagery and metaphor enabled the songs to be simple enough for widespread understanding as well as descriptive enough for the songs to still connect with individual experiences.

These songs simultaneously reflect workers’ complex and intangible affects while providing the singer/listener/reader a way to articulate those feelings. In *Joe Hill*, Franklin Rosemont avers IWW songs are “unashamedly and indeed proudly meant to be *songs for workers*”

(477). This does not mean they are “the silly and sentimental sort of songs that intellectuals commonly and condescendingly expect working people to like” or that they are designed to “soothe or divert, or to provoke nostalgic tears” (477). The goal of these songs is, “as the *Song Book*’s front cover states boldly: *To Fan the Flames of Discontent*” (477). Despite working long hours, workers are starving. The songs do not offer sympathy but instead offer a biting criticism.

Although often framed as good propaganda because of its ability to teach complex ideas in a simple, memorable way, song’s emotional work was at the core of how the songs functioned. Advertisements for new editions of the songbook appearing in the newspaper acknowledged and advertised the emotion in songs, calling them “The Classic Songs of Revolution and the Songs of the Modern Blanket Stiff” in the June 11, 1910, edition of the *Industrial Worker* (“I.W.W. Song Books” 3). Later that year, an advertisement for the third edition categorized the contents into “classic songs of the workers’ hopes and aspirations” and songs “especially adapted to arouse the prowling terrier of the northwest” (“Extra!” 4). An advertisement in 1912 further described the contents as songs that “strip capitalism bare:”

Songs! Songs!
 To Fan the Flames of Discontent.
 SONGS OF JOY!
 SONGS OF SORROW!
 SONGS OF SARCASM!
 Songs of the Miseries That Are.
 Songs of the Happiness To Be.
 Songs that strip capitalism bare; show the shams of civilization; mock at the masters' morals; scorn the smug respectability of the satisfied class; and drown in one glad burst of passion the profit patriotism of the Plunderbund. (4, fig. 36)

Songs! Songs!

To Fan the Flames of Discontent.

SONGS OF JOY!
SONGS OF SORROW!
SONGS OF SARCASM!

Songs of the Miseries That Are.
 Songs of the Happiness To Be.

Songs that strip capitalism bare; show the shams of civilization; mock at the masters' morals; scorn the smug respectability of the satisfied class; and drown in one glad burst of passion the profit patriotism of the Plunderbund.

SONGS! SONGS!
L. W. W. SONG BOOKS.

10c each, \$5.00 per hundred, \$35.00 per thousand. cash in advance. Order of the "Industrial Worker," Box 2129, Spokane, Wash.

Figure 36. "Songs! Songs!" *Industrial Worker*.
 April 18, 1912. Page 4.

These advertisements emphasized the relevance and impact of the songbook's contents. These songs were meant to reveal the problems of capitalism and provide a taste of the world to come once workers united and fought back. But they were not just providing information or exposing workers to tales of suffering. They arose from and gave voice to feelings of "sorrow" from "the Miseries That Are" and brought "joy" from "the Happiness To Be." These songs were able to "Fan the Flames of Discontent."

The songs are not creating discontent where there was none before. Instead, the songs are fanning the flames of a discontent that is already present. The songs give voice to workers' experience and feelings and, in doing so, bring workers' discontentedness to the surface where it can be recognized. Rather than allowing workers to repress these feelings, a coping mechanism to get through a workday and not feel perpetual anger, the songs promote them. As the songs bring

these feelings to the surface and articulate and collectivize them – feelings of disempowerment, weakness, and hopelessness alongside frustration and disrespect – the songs identify where to direct those feelings: to bosses. For example, in “They Are All Fighters,” Brazier describes the suffering of “honest workingmen” (1) in contrast to bosses. The lyrics reinforce the worker/boss divide, positioning the boss as the enemy:

You live on coffee and on doughnuts;
 The Boss lives on porterhouse steak.
 You work ten hours a day and live in huts;
 The Boss lives in the palace you make.
 You face starvation, hunger, privation,/ But the Boss is always well fed.
 Though of low station you’ve built this nation-
 Built it up upon your dead. (26-33)

Similarly, “The Banner of Labor” directs blame to “parasites” for workers’ suffering: “The blood and the lives of children and wives/ Are ground into dollars for parasites’ pleasure” (9-10). Workers are suffering, and their bosses are benefiting from their suffering. In describing that suffering and the resulting luxury for bosses, the songs center what workers are experiencing rather than obscuring it.

While the songs point to bosses as proponents and benefactors of capitalism, they offer an additional reason why this system of suffering and oppression persists. Almost half of the songs in the first edition also place blame on workers themselves. In “Working Men Unite,” Nelson’s lyrics suggest workers have given the capitalist class implicit *permission* to maintain the class divide by not uniting and fighting back:

You workingmen are poor,-
 Will be for evermore,-
 As long as your permit the few
 To guide your destiny. (Nelson 5-8)

The lyrics of Brazier’s “The Master Class Are Feeling Fine” do not hesitate to direct blame either: “Oh workingmen, it is a shame,/ But for these conditions you are to blame” (23-24). Though not

framed as “permission,” Brazier’s songs also posit workers’ inaction and lack of solidarity as the main reasons why their suffering persists. In “Master Class,” lack of worker organization is the culprit: “we’re not organized you see;/ That’s why we live in slavery. (18-20). In “If You Workers Would Only Unite,” Brazier opens the song opens with a plea to workers in the form of a question:

Oh workingmen, say when, Oh when
Will you wake up from your dreams
And unite, so that you can fight
Your masters’ crafty schemes? (1-4)

The first line of the song’s chorus, “If you workers would only unite, unite” (9), reaffirms that workers could overthrow capitalism if only they banded together.

Many of these songs suggest that the fundamental cause of workers’ inaction and suffering is a lack of knowledge or compassion. Lyrics asks workers to “wake up from [their] dreams” (Brazier “If You Workers” 2) and “get wise, come now and organize” (7). Workers who do not see the problems with capitalism are “sucker[s]”⁷ (Brazier “Good-Bye Dollars” 24). A worker who does not take action against capitalism is called “a fool, a capitalist tool . . . who serve[s] [their] enemy” (Nelson 27-28). These songs blame workers for their conditions through their inaction, passivity, and inability to see what is really going on. A handful of songs position workers’ inaction as an affront to masculinity or as a lack of sympathy or compassion. “The Banner of Labor” asks if workers will “idly sit by, unheeding [the] cry” (13) of their wives and children as they are “ground into dollars for parasites’ pleasure” (10). “The Marseillaise” instructs “sons of toil” (1), their “children, wives and grandsires hoary” (3) to “[b]ehold their tears and hear their cries!” (4). Workers’ inaction is a lack of manliness: in not uniting and fighting back, men have failed to

⁷ IWW members had a few names for workers who would not organize, who stayed loyal to their craft unions, or who felt their economic interests were more closely aligned with their bosses’, including “sucker,” “scissorsbill,” and “Mr. Block,” which has a cartoon series of the same name about those workers.

protect women and children, an assumed and expected responsibility of their gender. Women and children - the helpless who depend on you, worker - are suffering.

The pronoun choice in the lyrics of songs such as “Working Men, Unite” and “If You Workers Would Only Unite” enables collective identity to be reflected and forged in the interplay between the singer and listener or the singer and the “other.” Songs directing blame to workers or highlighting a lack of knowledge or class consciousness in workers are examples of this effect. The lyrics of the songs direct the blame outwards, not inwards, by using “you” instead of “we.” When one sings these songs, they are not being explicitly instructed to “get wise.” Despite the singer still learning the lessons in the lyrics in singing the songs, the singer becomes the teacher rather than the student. Singers deliver the lessons in the songs to their listeners and to each other but the lessons they deliver to themselves are more subtle. In directing the blame to “you” rather than “us,” the songs exonerate the singer from the complacency and inaction of other workers/listeners. The singer may then feel a superiority or self-righteousness as they are not the ones to blame and are fighting on behalf of people who have not yet “wised up.” The singer is now positioned to redirect blame to others who have not joined them/their group.

The songs also offered a solution: working class unity. IWW songs took complex ideas and feelings and presented them with simplicity and generality, making them feel accessible and achievable. “Even more so than the printed word,” the IWW’s “litany of choruses distilled revolutionary ideas down to their basic application and united them in an emotive mode” (Dochuk np). The IWW’s goal of “One Big Union” or an international union of all the working class, was complex and required organization on a global level. IWW songs distilled this larger vision of global class consciousness down to a simple and clear action, however:

Be game, stick together, organize, get wise-
Do the same as your master do-

Organize in a union true. (“Master Class” 25-27)

Like “Master Class,” around half of the songs in the first songbook offer joining “a” or “the” union as the practical way to “stick together.” However, two-thirds of the songs posit a less specific plan: uniting. Thomas Borland’s “Unite! Unite!,” for example, asks workers to organize and join the fight “[f]or freedom and for liberty” (2). The refrain tells workers to “[u]nite, unite, to win [their] fight” (5) and then go “[o]nward, onward, to liberty” (6). “Uniting,” though amorphous and vague, is a simplified articulation of the IWW’s plan to abolish the wage system through international worker solidarity. Because of the songs’ simple explanation, a complex and unfathomably large undertaking feels understandable and possible: workers merely have to join together or join a union and their suffering will end.

IWW member Irving Hanson recalls learning about socialism in the songbook and encountering a song that resonated with his experience and desire for a different world. The song, “Paint ‘Er Red” by Ralph Chaplin, describes how “we” are gathering to fight back, creating “ONE BIG INDUSTRIAL UNION” (4). The line “ONE BIG INDUSTRIAL UNION” is repeated at the end of each verse and chorus, and the capitalization directs the singer or reader to emphasize the line. Hanson recalled the last verse and chorus:

*We hate this rotten system more than any mortal do;
Our aim is not to patch it up, but build it all anew.
And what we’ll have for government when we are through
Is one big industrial union.*

*Hurrah! Hurrah! We’re going to paint it red.
Hurrah! Hurrah! The way is clear ahead.
We’re going to have shop democracy and liberty and bread.
In one big industrial union.*

A lot of the other tunes have had more impact, but for some reason that one got to me. (Bird et al 107)

This simplicity is effective, not because workers were not smart enough to see that the plan required a bit more planning. Rather, it is effective because “uniting” becomes the most accessible and obvious course of action, one that is achievable. Member Jack Miller reflected on how the IWW made worker unity feel possible:

I could see a future that I could be part of creating. I began to see how you contribute to my well-being and I to yours. I saw what love was in the finest sense. If it were not for the IWW I would not use the language I am now using. I would still speak in the workingman’s lingo as an uneducated person. The IWW sparked the imagination. We said, ‘What force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one?’” (Bird et al 40)

Workers banding together and fighting back is not presented as aspirational or optimistic but rather as the only thing that can be done and the thing that workers can start doing immediately. This framing “[a]ppeals to class feeling rather than formal ideology” (Salerno 15). These songs tell workers that they are not powerless; there is an accessible power they have yet to wield: solidarity. When they wield it in their fight, they will win.

Most IWW songs provide a hint as to what the world will look like once workers unite: workers’ suffering will end. A third of the songs in the first songbook also suggest workers can have revenge by making bosses suffer like workers did. Once workers unite and end their suffering,

Yes the boss will work, and he’ll work hard, too; he will, you bet,
For he worked us hard and we can’t forget,
So we’ll make him dig till his brow does sweat.” (Brazier “Master Class” 29-31)

Even after overthrowing capitalism, workers “can’t forget” their suffering and can now take out their anger on those who caused their suffering. Brazier’s “A Dream,” set to the tune of “The Holy City,” also describes this revenge fantasy. The narrator describes a dream they had where workers claimed victory against capitalism. In the dream, the bosses nervously watch as the workers triumphantly march down the street, calling out “Work or starve . . . for you must earn your bread” (17). This role reversal is echoed in Brazier’s “If You Workers,” as

masters will have to hit the pike, pike, pike-

And count the ties-
 All over the country they will hike, hike, hike,
 To their surprise. (24-27)

This switch in the power dynamic becomes more perverse when revenge causes joy. When roles are reversed and bosses “have to work or starve,/ . . . the workers then will have the laugh” (28-29). In this inversion of capitalism, not only are workers no longer powerless, but they can also now make their bosses feel the pain and powerlessness they once felt. Workers can feel the joy and power that their bosses once felt. Together, they have flipped capitalism on its head.

If “uniting” is the solution to suffering, it follows that workers having not united is why suffering persists. They are two sides of the same coin. The songs either say, “you can change this but you haven’t” or simply “you can change this,” which begs the question “why haven’t you yet?” By highlighting suffering and then blaming - in part - the workers themselves, the songs also bring to light workers’ feelings of powerlessness or shame and transform them into guilt and anger. Workers and their loved ones are suffering. There is a way to stop this suffering, and it seems obvious and simple. Capitalism is not something that is happening *to* them with no path to address it; they just have not yet addressed it. This revelation may cause feelings of guilt due to their inaction or because they were unable to see such a simple solution. They may be motivated to take action to move those feelings toward power or pride in fighting back. Guilt may transform into anger as they see that the employing class relies on their passivity to make money or that they have been made to feel that there was no way to fight back to *keep* them from fighting back. That anger, a basic and key political emotion, may drive them to act.

Through the depictions of struggle and by offering a solution, the songs push workers to imagine that life could be something other than either being poor, starving, and unemployed or poor, starving, and worked to death. The feelings of powerlessness to which a broad working-class base can relate quickly switch to feelings of hope and desire for action. In this future, the

powerlessness felt now will be replaced with strength and joy. While the possibility of this future could itself be enough to inspire action, it moves from possible to realistic when it is the result of uniting, an action presented as simple, obvious, and immediate. It is no longer an imagined future but is the realistic outcome of class solidarity.

These songs do not merely provoke anger in workers who have had these experiences; they deemphasize some feelings and emphasize others to motivate workers to unite and fight back. The plethora of affects that a worker may have at any given moment are not all emphasized in the songs. The songs privilege the expression of particular feelings and transform unmotivating feelings into motivating ones. A worker who feels disempowered, weak, alone, depressed, or hopeless is unlikely to find the courage and drive to change their situation. Perhaps they see their situation as unchangeable despite their desire for change. The songs respond to those feelings by positioning a united working class or the union as powerful and strong. United, workers can change their situations. The songs inspire confidence and future vision. While providing an interpretational framing for understanding capitalism, songs in the IWW repertoire also provided an emotional education, enabling workers to recognize their feelings in the IWW's emotional framework. The songs enabled workers to understand what to feel, what they were feeling, and what to do with those feelings.

Singing Solidarity

Whether the theoretical and ideological lessons in the songs were understood to the depth the IWW desired, singers demonstrated their commitment to the IWW's ideology by engaging in collective singing. In becoming a member of the singing group, workers aligned themselves with the IWW's interpretation of the wage system and its project of a united working class. In this sense, "singing is a form of role playing, requiring one to take the identity articulated in the song, at least momentarily" (Roscigno et al 143). Becoming part of the singing group allows workers to play the

role of class-conscious worker intellectual. In the moment of group singing, this role becomes ingrained in the singers' identity. Singing, like other ritual practices, "highlights boundaries; those who participate in the ritual are identified as part of the community, while those who do not are outsiders" (Roscigno142). The boundary between non-singers and singers is felt and heard and observed. It is a physical difference that brings with it an implied ideological difference.

Unlike merely listening to music (either individually or as a group), group singing has been linked not only to improved mental health and increased positive affect but also to group bonding and identity.⁸ This singing-based group cohesion can arise from the act of group singing itself, with or without listeners, and without needing to understand the words being sung (Unwin et al 178). While lyrics can override or influence the emotional expression in the music, in many IWW songs, the lyrics of the songs compound group cohesion and identity through the interplay between singers and listeners as well as through collectivizing working class experience and feelings and through presenting a collective solution to the problems workers face. Group singing itself creates and reinforces group cohesion, collective identity, and solidarity.

As I argued in chapter one, IWW newspaper content responded to workers' feelings of powerlessness by making readers feel as though they could see the capitalist system in a way other workers could not. In providing an interpretational frame and assigning blame to others (workers who have not united, craft unions, or the employing class), the newspaper simultaneously folded workers into this class-conscious group and reinforced the group's boundaries. These songs are responding to and reflecting workers' feelings in a similar manner, also creating and reinforcing

⁸ See "The Effects of Group Singing on Mood" by Margaret M. Unwin et al, "Singing Together or Apart: The Effects of Competitive and Cooperative Singing on Social Bonding within and Between Sub-Groups of a University Fraternity" by Eiluned Pearce et al, "Effects of Choir Singing or Listening on Secretary Immunoglobulin A, Cortisol, and Emotional State" by Gunter Kreutz et al, "Effectiveness and Cost-Effectiveness of Community Singing on Mental Health-Related Quality of Life of Older People" (2015) by Simon Coulton et al, and "Psychological and physiological effects of singing in a choir" (2013) by Ahmet Muhip Sanal et al.

that division by positioning the singers as the more class-conscious group. Workers who sing are workers who know something that others do not or who see things about the world others cannot yet see. The singing group is singing to people who are outside their group, further reinforcing the group's boundaries. Listeners are not in the singing group and are therefore often the explicit targets of the songs' blame or lessons. The singing group does not necessarily need listeners present for the songs to both reinforce and perform their group identity. Even if no listeners are present and therefore singers are not singing to provide education to said listeners, there is a group of workers who lack class-consciousness, somewhere in the world, that their singing is targeting. While singing with no listeners removes the explicit (but not implicit) educational component from play, the group's collective identity is still reflected and reinforced through an imagined outside group. Singing these songs provides group cohesion and identity through the interplay between singer and listener, whether the listener is real or imagined.

IWW songs work to create collective identity emotionally and physically, but the boundaries of the group, though defined, are also permeable. To feel like a part of this group, all one must do is sing along with them. Songs that are recompositions, with a source tune that singers and listeners would recognize and know, help ease the transition from listener to singer. Listeners can expect what the song will do, anticipating and then participating in the song. Having repeated exposure to a often-used song – “The Marseillaise,” for example – can make participating in singing more accessible, and printed lyrics, like those in song cards and songbooks, allow listeners to become singers quickly and easily. They do not need to know or memorize the words: the words have been provided to them. The moment one changes from listener to singer, they become part of the “in” group. They then reinforce their membership in this new group by singing the blame or lessons back onto the listeners, the group they just left.

Despite abolishing the wage system being not only a long-term project but also a complicated theoretical undertaking, the collective identity created through songs and singing “provide[d] movement participants with a structure of nonmaterial rewards, not necessarily tied to movement success” (Roscigno et al 141). The songs used these collective experiences, feelings, and solutions – embodied in collective singing – to orient workers toward a felt class consciousness that was as much a goal and reward as it was a means: solidarity. The act of singing in a group is the embodiment of the solidarity the songs seek to inspire and helps “uniting” become a realistic goal because workers are already united: they are united in singing. In this sense, song provides the means by which singers can “do and imagine things that may otherwise be unimaginable or seem impossible” (Redmond 1). The act of singing is an instantiation of solidarity, and the feelings arising from that collective experience are at the core of solidarity. It can at once create and reinforce a sense of collectivity. Singing IWW songs as a group was an immediate demonstration of what solidarity felt like and could do.

Singing in unison *is* collective action, emotionally and physically. It simultaneously teaches how to act as a collective while demonstrating that we already know how. It creates feelings of solidarity as the songs’ rhythms unite movement and voice and keep them united, working in unison. Roscigno et al argue the “preexisting rhythm of music can thus speed up or enhance the solidarity potential of interactions” through music’s ability to keep singers and listeners in unison (146). Singers breathe together, keep a consistent rhythm with their words, and feel the tension or excitement in the music together. They march to the beat together. They emphasize musical moments through collective changes in pitch or volume. These components are what made IWW members consider the “language of music and song” to be “universal” (De Caux 96). While the simplicity of the lyrics and messages work to make these songs accessible, the

lessons the songs teach are felt and heard. The idea of working-class unity is no longer theoretical, it is happening in moment of collective singing. This group cohesion and identity is felt and not just ideological.

The group cohesion and feeling of solidarity created through group singing compound because the feelings can be re-felt when encountering that song or situation again. As a singer feels group cohesion when singing in a group, that experience can condition them to associate the song with those feelings in the future. Conditioning is at play in reward and punishment. An action is paired with a reward (or a punishment) repeatedly, which in turn creates a continued association between the action and the good (or bad) thing. If collective singing made someone feel power, courage, or solidarity, those feelings may reappear when the person engages in group singing again or encounters the song again. If a person usually sang “Hallelujah” when being drowned out by the Salvation Army, for example, they may become conditioned to associate “Hallelujah” with that experience and its associated feelings. Then, when encountering “Hallelujah” in a different (or similar) context, the person may experience the same feelings they experienced in that previous context. They may feel combatant, powerful, or even joyous. If that previous singing experience produced feelings of solidarity and connection, those feelings can also be re-felt. The singer can bring those feelings to new contexts.

Although the song is evoking these feelings because of past experiences, the singer does not need to remember these feelings and experiences. Because the responses have been taught and reinforced through multiple interactions with the action, this re-feeling does not require conscious recollection. *Conscious* recollection of memories associated with songs can also catalyze a resurfacing of past feelings. Interaction with IWW songs was often in a group setting where songs were being sung aloud in a group. These songs were sung at meetings, picket lines, and

celebrations, and re-encountering a song one sang or heard there could lead to a re-encountering of feelings that a person had at those events, such as anger, solidarity, or power. Even reading a song's lyrics can evoke memories and feelings of group singing and its contexts. In a labor group or among workers, when achieving their vision requires not only feelings of collectivity but also organizing and planning, willingness to collaborate is key. Collective singing creates group identity and a felt and experienced solidarity. Re-feeling those feelings into other interactions with the group or other contexts allows the group to continue its work. Because collective singing builds feelings of connectedness to the group as a whole, it allows that connectedness to exist even as individuals in the group may join or leave.

The 1912 textile strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts, illustrated how song could create feelings of group cohesion and solidarity among diverse singers. The strike was a singing strike from its beginning. Ray Stannard Baker, a young progressive journalist, notes that "with marching and singing through the main streets of the town the strike began" (Baker 20). It was as though the "tired, gray crowds ebbing and flowing perpetually into the mills has waked and opened their mouths to sing" (Mary Heaton Vorse qtd in De Caux 69). Baker describes the feeling of this "singing strike:" "This movement in Lawrence was strongly a singing movement. It is the first strike I ever saw which sang! I shall not soon forget the curious lift, the strange sudden fire, of the mingled nationalities at the strike meetings when they broke into the universal language of song" (Baker 30A). The strikers sang a plethora of songs, many from the songbook, "a whole book of songs fitted to familiar tunes--the 'Eight-hour Song,' the 'Banner of Labor,' 'Workers, Shall the Masters Rule us?' and so on" (Baker 30A). They wrote new words to popular songs, such as a parody of "In the Good Old Summertime" called "In the Good Old

Picket Line,” which featured specific characters from the strike, such as “Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and a certain Mr. Lowe, a mill manager:”

In the good old picket line, in the good old picket line
 We’ll put Mr. Lowe in overalls and swear off drinking wine,
 Then Gurley Flynn will be the boss,
 Oh gee, won’t that be fine,
 The strikers will wear diamonds in the good old picket line. (qtd in Watson 207)

Strikers sang at every opportunity. They broke into song “on the picket line, on the march, during meetings (Watson 88) and “at the soup-houses and in the streets” (Baker 30A). Vorse observed that the strikers were “always marching and singing” (qtd in De Caux 69). According to Bruce Watson, in *Bread and Roses*, “[t]hey sang as if they never wanted to stop” (Watson 208).

The strikers sang song after song, “but the favorite of all was the Socialist song called ‘The Internationale’” (Baker 30A). Strikers sang “The Internationale” in what seemed like all strike contexts, such as when “a group of women strikers, who were peeling potatoes at a relief station suddenly [broke] into the swing of ‘The Internationale’” (30A). The strike involved “23,000 workers of at least 25 different nationalities and languages” and needed a to transcend language and cultural barriers to unite workers. It would be “The Internationale” that would serve as a “unifying anthem” (De Caux 70). The lyrics of “The Internationale” were written in 1871 by Eugene Pottier, “a French public transportation worker, member of the International Workingmen’s Association (The First International), and activist of the Paris Commune. He wrote it to pay tribute to the commune.” (Kuzar 89). The music was later composed by Pierre Degeyter in 1888, “a Belgian industrial worker” (89). Appearing in *Socialist Songs* and later the IWW’s songbooks, “The Internationale” was widely adopted by syndicalist, socialist, and communist groups throughout the twentieth century (89).

As Ron Kuzar notes in “Translating the *Internationale*,” the song’s ability “to express transnational solidarity has always depended on the unity of the tune” (89). Despite some

translations of the song altering lyrics beyond what was required to meet the “technical constraints of prosody, meter, and rhyme in the target language” (89), the song’s beat and tempo remained the same. This continuation allowed numerous translations to unite in their fidelity to the original music, even as the song was modified to suit specific struggles or new contexts. Often performed as a “military march” (89), “The Internationale,” like “The Marseillaise” or “The Red Flag,” had a driving, triumphant, anthemic sound, uniting singers in breathing and movement as well as singing. Overcoming linguistic and racial divides, strikers sang the same song in dozens of languages simultaneously. “Each group sang it in its own language - the words different, but the music, the theme, the beat the same” (De Caux 70). Despite their difference in language, they sang the song together, in time with one another, and in tune with one another. As one of the immigrant strikers said, “You never saw so beautiful a noise in all your life” (qtd in Balch 409).

Mill owners thought and hoped the strike would fail because of racial divisions among workers, but they were mistaken (Watson 2). As the large and diverse group at Lawrence sang “the worldwide hymn of workers’ revolution . . . each in his native language” (78), reporter Al Priddy called it a “Pentecostal merging of languages and dialects” (qtd in Moran 193). Their singing was at once a demonstration of their unity and a component of it. In *The Man Who Never Died*, William Adler argues that “[t]he very act of mass singing seemed to embolden and inspire people of varied backgrounds--emigrants from different part of the world, who spoke different languages, whose skins were of different color--to unite under the IWW flag for the common goal of social and economic justice” (3). Another verse of “In the Good Old Picket Line” reflects the strikers’ unity while also identifying where there was more work to do:

In the good old picket line, in the good old picket line
 The workers are from every place, from nearly every clime
 The Greeks and Poles are out so strong, and the Germans all the time,
 But we want to see more Irish in the good old picket line. (Watson 88)

Novelist B. Traven articulated the importance of singing in bringing workers from various backgrounds and experiences together, writing that “[t]hey didn’t know what the IWW was, what a labor organization meant, what class distinctions were. But the singing went straight to their hearts” (qtd in Adler 3). “The Internationale” was the song of the strikers and, and they felt “that it was closely allied to their strike, the first strike of their experience, as a hymn is allied to religion” (qtd in Adler 3).

As part of IWW practices, songs “generated a fervor that was almost religious in its intensity” not only because many songs parodied hymns but also because of their “steady surging rhythms, their lifting melodies . . . , and their inspiring words,” which were memorized and engrained as they were “repeated over and over again” (Foner *History* 156). In “Through the Church the Song Goes On: Ecumenical Implications of Singing Together,” Karen Westerfield Tucker noted that singing together in a Christian context “allow[ed] those gathered to identify themselves as believers and disciples in a common assembly with a common purpose” and did “not eliminate distinct theological interpretations of that text related to ecclesiastical tradition (258). In other words, through singing, individuals were able to identify as part of a community through group singing and the teachings in the lyrics of the songs remained present while singing. In this sense, singing is a key component of group cohesion and ideology, and “should never be considered an “add on” or an ornament” (260). The songs teach a system of beliefs and values and singing those songs is “embodied proclamation and prayer—singing is the liturgy” (260). “It is the voice of the church that is heard in singing together,” not any individual’s voice (Dietrich Bonhoeffer qtd. in Westerfield Tucker 260). It is the voice of workers – of their hope and suffering and joy and solidarity – that is heard in IWW songs.

As strikers sang together in Lawrence, Baker felt “a peculiar intense, vital spirit--a religious spirit, if you will--that [he] never felt before in any strike,” and he was not alone in making that comparison (Baker 30A). Harry Ward, in *The Methodist Review*, recalls one of the “striking incidents” (pun intended, I would hope) he observed when women began singing “The Internationale:”

as they sat peeling the potatoes for the common meal of the strikers: ‘The Industrial Union shall be the human race.’ And straightaway their constricted life was enlarged into a world significance, they moved upon a world plane, were parts of a world struggle, members of a world fellowship, at present undeveloped, but some day to be made a mighty fact. Compare the religious value of such a conception, its appeal for sacrifice, for the life that finds itself in loss and comes to its God by way of the cross, with the religious values in such a chorus as ‘O that will be glory for me!’” (Ward 724)

The IWW’s ritual of singing rivaled that of religion. Ward’s observations were both an admiration and a warning, relaying concern that “[t]he discontent that is being developed at the bottom of our industrial group by the American Syndicalists is terribly dangerous because it is so purely emotional, so blindly passionate” (Ward 729). It was as though “the union was a ‘secular church’ with the songs becoming a part of the sermon” (Redmond 147), and the songbook was “the closest thing the IWW had to a catechism” (Bird et al 22).

Mary Heaton Vorse, observing the striking workers in Lawrence, wrote, “It was as though a spur of flame had gone through this audience, something stirring and powerful, a feeling which has made the liberation of people possible; something beautiful and strong had swept through the people and welded them together, singing” (qtd in F. Rosemont 480). Song has the ability to “weld together” workers, and it is this connection to the collective that is key for social movement formation and longevity. Movements do not only require “individuals understanding that they share a common social position, interpretative understanding, or political bent” (Roscigno et al 146). They also require “an emotional connection” (146). Solidarity creates these positive changes insofar as it is a feeling oriented toward the collective and not just to people *in* the collective.

Singing provides a source for that connection and is an “expression of a class consciousness that lies outside of formal political ideology” (Salerno 15). Songs were the “glue that bound the picket line, union hall, and church together” (Redmond 164), and singing together “gave the workers on the picket lines or at the corner meetings the collective courage to withstand the inevitable abuses heaped upon them” (Foner *History* 156).

While group singing *creates* and *reinforces* a sense of solidarity, it is also simultaneously a demonstration of solidarity and collective power. Although not a “performance” in the sense of entertainment, IWW group singing was a “musical performance of solidarity” (Redmond 164). There are dozens of examples of where and when IWW members sang, and these examples illustrate how IWW members used songs and singing as a demonstration of their collective power as much as a way to create, uphold, and experience it. Though they were singing at almost every turn, Lawrence strikers also used songs to express solidarity to those who had been arrested during the strike. In an address to “Fellow Workers and Comrades” in the May 16, 1912, edition of the *Industrial Worker*, arrested Lawrence strike leaders A. Giovannitti and J. J. Ettor relay that “twenty-five thousand and more, men, women and children, members of our class, cheered and sang the songs of their love and feeling of solidarity for us” as they gathered outside the jail (1). Stories of other struggles, found in newspapers or via oral histories, provide further evidence. IWW member Art Shields recalls a longshore workers’ strike in 1923 where “[e]very longshoreman and seaman was out, thirty-five hundred workers. The local press said ninety-nine ships were tied up in the harbor. The IWW held meetings on a hill overlooking the harbor. We named it Liberty Hill, and you could look down on the ships and get a sense of the power of the workers. Oh, those were singing meetings. There was more singing than speaking” (Bird et al 152). Singing expressed and reflected strikers’ joy and collective power while reinforcing group cohesion and positive feelings.

IWW members used songs to celebrate successes, to express joy, and to demonstrate their collective power. IWW member Joseph Murphy tells of a strike in 1924 over unsafe conditions while building a dam for the city of Seattle (Bird et al 46-47). The strike went on, and Murphy remembers:

After a while, they started shipping in scabs. We found out that the scabs were being hired in Minneapolis, so a bunch of us beat our way back to the employment agency that was shipping them and signed on. . . . As we came up on the site, we started to sing:

Hold the fort for we are coming;

Union men be strong.

Side by side, we battle onward;

Victory will come.

That really pissed them off. They had fed us, wined and dined us, all the way from Minnesota, thinking we were scabs, and all the time we were a bunch of Wobblies. (Bird et al 47)

Even when arrested, IWW members would sing. In the July 3, 1913, edition of the *Industrial Worker*, jailed free speech soapboxers I. D. Ramsley and Tom Burns recall singing: “In jail we had one lively time. . . . Rebel Red songs from the “I.W.W.” and Socialist song books were sung almost continuously [for nineteen hours]. . . . We spoke for the benefit of the police, loud enough for them to hear. They got some scared. They sent for Governor West. They also called out the militia. . . . We burned the stuff called food. Then we sang some more” (Ramsey et al 4). Singing was entertainment and helped pass the time, but it also signaled to police that the arrests had not impacted their commitment or spirits. Group singing was the embodiment of solidarity and a concrete display of collective efficacy.

These songs became synonymous with the IWW, and singing was an open display of working-class power and solidarity. Because of this association, songs and singing provoked police retaliation. IWW member Sophie Cohen used to teach “children on the block some IWW songs” (Bird et al 68). One day while she was home for lunch, a “gigantic” police officer banged on her door (68). He wanted to see Cohen, so her “very short” mother led the officer to the table

where Cohen was eating. Cohen recalls the interaction: “He looked down at me, and he must have realized how ridiculous the situation was. He had been sent to find a dangerous rebel, and there was a fifteen year old girl eating lunch. He left. But imagine! A little girl sang a song in school and the teacher reported it and the principal called the police and the police came to my door. For a song” (68).

The Constitution Guarantees Freedom of Speech. RATS!

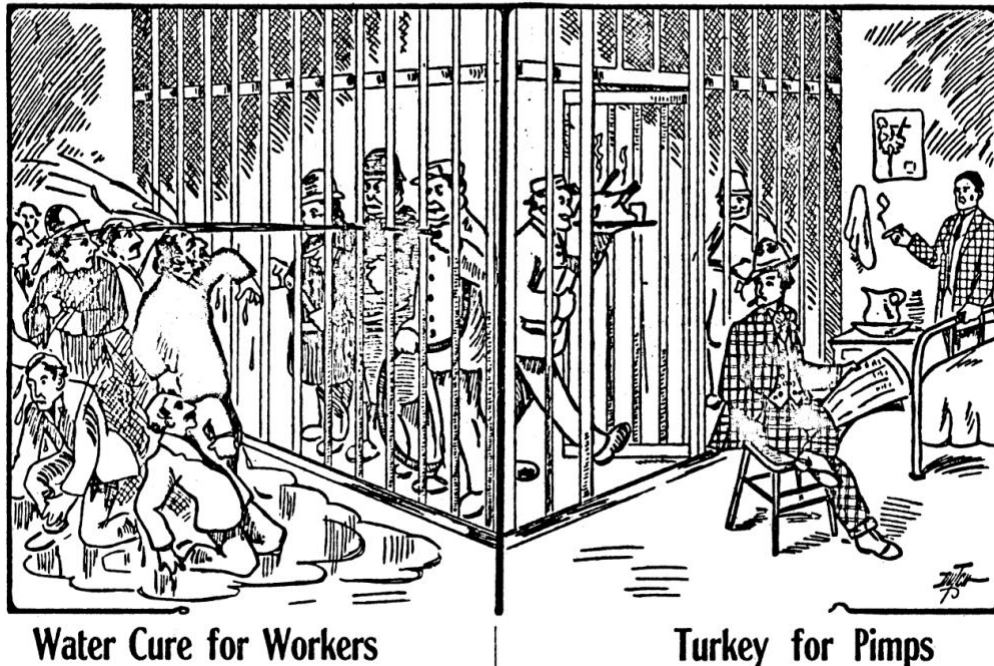


Figure 37. “The Constitution Guarantees Freedom of Speech.”
Industrial Worker. December 8, 1910. Page 1.

A comic and article on the front page of the December 8, 1910, *Industrial Worker* tells of how “I.W.W. men in jail have had the hose turned on them by the POLICE for singing the Marseillaise. The capitalist press of Fresno is a unit in endorsing the actions of the police in this matter. One daily paper of Fresno gleefully tells how the prisoners were floating around in the water, but yet they sang the Marseillaise” (“Constitution” 1, fig. 37). This retaliation provided proof of the efficacy of the songs, and songbook advertisements made good use of these events. A

songbook advertisement in the June 11, 1910, edition notes: “Fellow Worker Richard Brazier, the gifted prowling-terrier author of *Spokane*, was sentenced during the Free Speech Fight to serve five months in the county jail for writing these songs. In addition he was told that steps will be taken for his deportation to ‘Merry England.’ This is a guaranty [sic] that the songs are hitting the bullseye. See for yourself” (“I.W.W. Song Books” 3). The IWW would increasingly see its songs used to incriminate its members – via both group singing and the songs’ lyrics – at protests, in jails, and in court battles. Workers would continue singing them.

A story from the 1916 Everett Massacre illustrates how singing and song were inseparable from IWW members and their struggles. According to Len De Caux in *The Living Spirit of the Wobblies*, IWW members were being beaten up and run out of Everett as a result of their “free speech fights” (De Caux 114). In response to growing police terrorism whereby the deputies would force IWW members arriving at Everett to “run the gauntlet between two long lines of club-swinging deputies, with a cattle guard at the end,” a committee of “clergymen, labor leaders and other citizens” planned a large protest for Sunday, November 5 (114). “That Sunday morning, 250 Wobblies embarked from Seattle on the passenger steamer *Verona*, and another 38 followed on the *Calista*. It was a beautiful sunny day, and the Wobblies were in high spirits as the *Verona* sailed up to the Everett docks. They were singing [a] song British dock strikers made famous around 1890” (115).

As they arrived, however, they saw that the dock was “ominously silent and deserted;” the deputies had “warned away hundreds of Everett citizens who had come to welcome the Wobblies - and who now had to watch from the hill behind the dock” (115). As the *Verona* docked against instruction from a sheriff, “a young Wobbly, Hugo Gerlot, climbed the mast to wave at the crowd on the hill. They cheered when they saw him and heard the strains of ‘Hold the Fort’” (115). The

hiding deputies opened fire, however, and “[d]ozens of unarmed passengers fell to the deck, dead, wounded, or dropping for cover. The rest raced to the other side of the ship, so many and so suddenly that the *Verona* lurched and nearly capsized. Some lost their balance on the slippery, bloody deck and slithered into the water, where the deputies turned their guns on them” (116). Allegedly, the attack did not deter the singing of IWW members such as “Gustav Johnson who, after being shot to the deck, called out, ‘Hold me up, fellow workers! I want to finish the song!’” (118).

The IWW created a plethora of print material, and IWW members “were prolific writers, churning out dozens of periodicals and propaganda pamphlets. But it was their songs--songs of hope and unity and humor spun out of anger and frustration at life’s injustices--that resonated with the masses” (Adler 11). The IWW quickly recognized the value of song as a form of education that was more accessible and easily understood than pamphlets or newspapers. IWW songs provided an education to their singers, listeners, and readers and offered workers a framework for understanding capitalism and how it impacted them. The songs “ground[ed] and invent[ed] [workers’] relationship to their sociopolitical present” (Redmond 3). Songs’ lessons were moral, intellectual, and political (F. Rosemont 481), and songs were a simple and accessible way to begin to grapple with bigger concepts. Singing these songs “was often the first big step in the learning process by which deceived and disheartened wage-slaves, who had long cowered in ignorance, fear, and silence, became clear-thinking, brave and outspoken fighters for workingclass freedom” (481). The songs created a sense of collective identity by reinforcing group boundaries through components such as phrasing, pronoun choices, and ideology.

The songs provided not only an education in the problems of capitalism and what to do about them, but they also provided an emotional education. Songs offered an articulation of

workers' experiences and feelings, allowing those feelings to be recognizable and understood as collective feelings. Singers/listeners, workers with those feelings and experiences, could recognize those feelings and experiences as their own. This recognition brought those workers into the collective and gave them a sense of group identity. As a product of working class feeling – of anger, anxiety, frustration, despair, shame, hopelessness, and discontent – these songs “gave form to the lived experience and felt meaning” of workers (Salerno 151). In articulating workers' feelings within the IWW's specific interpretational framework, the songs helped distill the plethora of feelings down into anger and direct that anger toward the employing class, those who uphold the capitalist system for their own benefit at the expense of workers and their families. Just as the feelings were collectively felt and workers shared a collective experience within capitalism, the songs taught that victory was collectively won.

While IWW songs created a sense of collective experiences, feelings, and power through their lyrics, they also created a felt sense of solidarity through singing. Singing as a group “welded individuals - some with doubts and terrors and weaknesses - into a dynamic and inexorable striking force” (Foner *History* 156). The act of collective singing brought workers' voices and movements into unison, overcame differences such as language, and taught them that they *could* act in unison and already knew how. While lyrics inspired class consciousness and taught that they had power when they united and acted in unison, the act of singing itself was an embodied lesson and instantiation of the power of that solidarity. Singing together identified group boundaries that were heard as well as felt but made those boundaries permeable as well, allowing workers to easily join the IWW group. Simply by recognizing their feelings and experiences in the songs, or by participating in the singing group, workers could become part of the class-conscious group of workers identified in IWW songs, growing the power of the group. Songs in the IWW repertoire

provided an inspiration for solidarity and collective power and a taste of what that solidarity could do, offering workers an education in collectivity and uniting singers “physically and emotionally” (Lynch 3). IWW songs were more than entertainment or economic education; they were examples of how solidarity looks and sounds and feels.

CHAPTER THREE – HUMOR AND PARODY IN IWW SONG

Most songs in the Industrial Workers of the World's repertoire were written to the music of other songs. IWW members produced – and continue to produce – songs that riffed on popular music and religious songs. Recomposition is at the center of much IWW songwriting, with twenty-one of the twenty-four songs in the first edition of the IWW's songbook indicating a source tune. Scholars and IWW enthusiasts have posited that the IWW's use of a borrowed tune was a practical choice. Using a well-known song was a mnemonic device (Harmon np, TB 7). It was a way to drown out the opposition, such as the Salvation Army's band (Blanchard 14, Wyman 240). It was also a means by which to overcome the lack of musical education in the working class (TB 7, Blanchard 29, Foner "History" 153). Further, Rudolph TB,⁹ in "Music and the IWW: The Creation of a Working Class Counterculture," notices that "as a bonus, [these songs] could criticize the original lyrics and the function of the song" (7). This chapter elucidates how this supposed "bonus" was at the heart of IWW songs' emotional effects.

Parodying songs is not merely a way of writing a song so that one is more easily able to remember the lyrics. Instead, parody is "repetition with a critical distance" that allows for "ironic inversion" (Hutcheon *Parody* 6). The objects being parodied – in these instances, songs – reflect a set of beliefs, ideologies, and structures of power, and they bring with them listeners'/singers' associated feelings and experiences. Parody can critique the structures inherent in the original form. Through this critique, the parody creates group cohesion and identity that is based on difference, distinction, or opposition to the ideology represented in the parodied text. Parody can critique not just the parodied text but can use the parodied text as a vehicle for critique. In IWW comic parodies, the parodied text also acts as a means to direct critique outside of the text itself,

⁹ Full name of author is not provided.

such as to employment office practices. Moreover, parodying popular songs allows the parody to displace or haunt the original. If the parody becomes popular in a particular group, group members then are brought back to the parody anytime they encounter the original. In this encounter, however, the parody can still retain the context of the original and thus retain the critique. Comic parody in IWW songwriting provided a critical distance between the IWW's ideology and dominant ideologies under capitalism. IWW comic parodies functioned as a mechanism of distinction, positioning IWW members and their interests as distinct from those in the parodied song. They also functioned as a tool of emotional pedagogy, redirecting anxieties about early twentieth century capitalism through humor and satire and offering singers/listeners a sense of power, confidence, and self-righteousness that combatted attacks against them.

The IWW in the Pacific Northwest

Archie Green identifies that “[m]ost of the IWW songs, most of the picturesque language, and many of the anecdotes and mannerisms, seem to come from the West” (Interview 41). Richard Brazier offers a theory as to why, but perhaps, he admits, not “a scientific one” (41): “at that time, the West wasn’t a--it was a wide open country then, the wide open spaces really existed. There was plenty of room to move around, and there was scenes of great grandeur, and beauty, and there were journeys to be made that took you to all kinds of interesting sections of the country. And there was an atmosphere that seemed to be creative in its effect” (41). While the openness and scenery likely inspired IWW artists, the openness of the Western United States created a number of issues for workers.

In *Hoboes*, Mark Wyman describes the transition taking place in the Western United States at the time, which “began in the latter nineteenth century and ran fully two decades into the twentieth” (4). The railroad began the transition, “opening vast stretches to farming” (4). Combined with advancements in irrigation leading to more “intensive agriculture,” this “new

West” was booming (4). What it lacked, though, was workers. The area required seasonal, transient workers due to the “large scale of this new agriculture and the lack of nearby cities” (4). Farms needed a large number of workers, all at the same time, who would then need to leave the area once harvesting was complete. They then needed to return for the next season (5). This cycle brought thousands and thousands of workers – largely men though also women and children who worked on the farms – from all over to the area, including African Americans and Indigenous peoples as well as immigrants from China, Mexico, Japan, India, and the Philippines, among others (6). These transient, seasonal workers were called a multitude of names, including “hoboes,” “bums,” “tramps,” and “bindlestiffs,” after the rolled-up blanket they would often carry (6).¹⁰

Spokane at this time was the “Hub of the Inland Empire,” a city intersected by numerous railroads. It functioned as a distribution center not only for “the natural resources wrested from the fertile hinterland” but also for “those who did the wresting—the harvest stiffes, pick-and-shovel artists, and lumberjacks” (Adler 124). Workers responded to job advertisements in newspapers across the United States, which promised thousands of jobs. These migrant workers flocked to employment agencies in the West where they would pay a fee to an “employment shark” to get placed in a job. Workers were required to pay this fee and sometimes employers would also pay a fee to the employment office for getting them workers, thus double-dipping. In *Indispensable Outcasts*, Frank Tobias Higbie explains how “[e]mployers and their allies tried to flood the market with surplus workers to keep wages low,” noting that “without an out-right ban on private agencies, the ‘job sharks’ . . . retained access to the best jobs” (57).

Employment sharks and their dubious practices were widespread. In many instances, workers had to go through a shark to get work. J. C. Conahan, an IWW organizer, noted that “the

¹⁰ For more on migrant workers, see Mark Wyman’s *Hoboes* and Frank Tobias Higbie’s *Indispensable Outcasts*.

employment sharks in this vicinity are the main objects of attack by the workingmen, as the sharks make them pay for every job they get and also for many jobs that they don't get. A worker cannot secure employment at any of the camps unless he has a ticket from the sharks" (qtd in May 28). One round of workers would ship off to a job. If the job existed, which was not always the case, the workers would often work until they received one paycheck and would then be laid off or fired. Another set of workers would already be on their way to the jobsite, in a revolving pattern. "The dark joke among the hobos was that the employment agent . . . had finally discovered perpetual motion: round and round 'the pot' of capital" (29). Each time a worker was discharged from a job, they would "go back to the . . . shark . . . to see if his teeth are as sharp as before" (Conahan qtd in May 30).

The sharks' fees were not the only upfront cost to workers. Workers had to pay their own way to the jobsite. Both the job fee and the travel costs were immediately lost if there was not a job waiting at the end of the road, which happened frequently. The *Industrial Worker* noted "not one in fifty who ships out from an employment office ever gets the job he paid for" (qtd in Adler 125). If one was lucky enough to find a job at the other end, they fell victim to an even bigger portion of the "thousand robberies" in the employment shark system, including "rental boots, company stores, boarding or rent, tool fees, medical expenses, miscellaneous fees, and so on" (May 30).

In October of 1907, "the New York stock market crashed, and several banks closed," causing bankruptcies and sweeping the United States into a depression (Foner "History" 100). The Panic and the subsequent depression that extended through 1908 was a period of exacerbated financial hardship for the general working class, but the year was particularly difficult for semi-skilled and unskilled workers, those who predominantly made up the ranks of the IWW. The May

15, 1908, issue of the newspaper *Solidarity* estimated that there were “184,000 men out of work in New York City” and “more than 500,000 unemployed in the whole country on the most conservative estimate” (qtd in Foner “History” 100n564). For those who remained employed, wages decreased from “15 to 50 per cent” (100). These high unemployment rates lead to an increase in the number of migrant and migrating workers, exacerbating the employment shark problem. Because of the high unemployment rates, droves of migrant workers were subjected to falsified job postings and perpetual firing and rehiring at the hands of sharks. Migrant workers were harassed and arrested under vagrancy laws.

Although there had been a Spokane city ordinance in place to prevent employment offices from making fraudulent claims about work availability, this ordinance was abolished in March 1908 by a “superior court judge”:

The judge held that the city had no regulatory authority over employment agencies because the industry did not “affect the public health” or “disturb the good order” of Spokane. Furthermore and to the contrary, the court embraced the industry as “beneficial and necessary.” “By finding work for the unemployed,” the judge opined, “it aids in removing idleness, which is productive of disease and disorder.” (Adler 126)

Fraudulent claims about job availability and the employment “revolving door” – where hiring new workers made more money from fees and incentivized employers to hire, then fire, then re-hire again and again – ran rampant after the court discarded the ordinance. These issues became the key struggles for the IWW in Spokane.

In early 1908, an IWW organizer by the name of John “Jack” H. Walsh arrived in Spokane, Washington, travelling south from Alaska (Adler 127). Examining the current economic conditions in Spokane, Walsh “recognized the problems with the employment agencies as a vector

for class struggle agitation among the hobos¹¹” (May 28). Employment offices were hoboes’ main enemy in 1908, and they became the main enemy of the IWW. In 1908, Walsh wrote,

“We are confronting a new condition in the labor movement in the northwest. . . . Every train in this country is loaded with dozens of ‘hoboes,’ . . . and in some instances there are hundreds in place of dozens. . . . The men coming to the headquarters report the same news day after day, and that is that this unemployed army is getting larger and larger.” (qtd in May 103)

This “new condition” began to shape the IWW, specifically in the Pacific Northwest. These “new type[s] of worker[s]” would “play an important role in the organization” (103).

The IWW appealed to migrant and seasonal workers because it was premised on standing up for workers like them, ones left behind by other organizations. These workers had been “ignored by AFL trade unions” and were left out of electoral politics as they were largely unable to vote (Wyman 238). As seasonal workers who were expected to leave the area at the end of the growing season, they were not only unsupported but also attacked by local, state, and federal governments (238). The IWW appealed to these workers, “the most degraded and unnaturally living of America’s labor groups,” who were “hunted and scored by society” (Carleton Parker qtd in Wyman 238-239). The IWW offered them support, a voice, and “a way out” (239). To reach more migrant workers, IWW members began using “soapbox oratory” or speaking loudly to workers from the streets about the problems of employment sharks (240). Their actions led to soapboxing being banned in Spokane, spawning the IWW’s “Free Speech Fights” that would run from 1908 to 1910 in Spokane and continue in a number of other cities to varying degrees of success and arrest numbers (240-241).

The IWW began signing hoboes up in droves. “I.W.W. organizers at Spokane, Seattle, and Portland met the trains as they came into the city, handed out leaflets to the ‘hoboes’ inviting them

¹¹ May has an excellent “Glossary of Hobo Terms Used” on pages 157 and 158 of *Soapbox Rebellion*.

to the I.W.W. halls, signed them up into the union, and led them in demonstrations for relief and work” (Foner “History” 103). Jailed under anti-vagrant laws, hoboes were approached by organizers as they were released (103). In 1908, the IWW’s national image in the United States was less of a collective of syndicalists and intellectual radicals and more of a union for hoboes. As Joyce Kornbluh notes in *Rebel Voices*, “although the I.W.W. was as active in other parts of the country as it was in the West, the image of the ‘typical’ Wobbly became that of a migratory or seasonal worker without close family ties” (66). These workers, singing in their camps as they settled in for the night after a day picking fruit (Wyman 6), had a union that wanted them and would fight for them.

Popular Music Parody

By 1908, the IWW already had a rich song culture. IWW members had taken up writing songs, with numerous poems and song lyrics appearing in IWW newspapers. Richard Brazier recalls his move to Spokane in 1907: “I first came to Spokane, from the Cobalt section of Northern Ontario, in 1907. Even before arriving there, I had learned of the I.W.W. and its songs from the Ontario miners The I.W.W. was active in Spokane and my curiosity was aroused” (“Story” 91). As migrant workers joined the IWW, they brought a diverse collection of songs with them and would write and inspire new songs that articulated their experiences.

Many of the IWW’s early songs grappled with the specific issue of employment sharks and high unemployment rates in the Pacific Northwest, writing about hoboes and their camps, or “jungles.” These songs were often set to the tune of hymns or popular songs. Songwriters would typically choose songs whose tune would be familiar to workers or IWW members. Many of these songs functioned as parodies. In “Parody: Affective Registers, Amateur Aesthetics and Intellectual Property,” Esther Milne links parody’s origins to song. The word ‘parody’ is from “the ancient Greek *parodia* which is a combination of ‘para’ meaning ‘beside’, ‘near’ or ‘imitation’ and ‘ode’

meaning song, hence: ‘a song sung besides’ or ‘singing in imitation’” (196). Accounting for historical definitions of parody, Linda Hutcheon argues that parody is, at its core, “repetition with a critical distance, which marks difference rather than similarity” (*Parody* 6). This “critical distance” inherent in parody allows for “ironic inversion,” which Hutcheon avers is a “characteristic of all parody” (6). According to Hutcheon, “[a] critical distance is implied between the background text being parodied and the new incorporating work, a distance usually signaled by irony. Parody can be playful as well as belittling; it can be critically constructive as well as destructive” (32). Irony must be present for parody to be present, and it is “ironic ‘trans-contextualization’” that “distinguishes parody from pastiche or imitation” (12).

Of the eight songs in the Spokane song card, five are parodies of hymns or popular songs: “Hallelujah, I’m a Bum,” “Out in the Bread Line,” “The Roll Call,” “Good-Bye Dollars, I Must Leave You,” and “Meet Me in the Jungles, Louie.” Some of the songs in the IWW repertoire did not originate in the IWW, and it is difficult to trace the origin of many of these songs, especially if they were unattributed in the song cards and songbooks. Though unattributed in the Spokane song card, two of these songs – “Good-Bye Dollars, I Must Leave You” and “Meet Me in the Jungles, Louie” – would later have Richard Brazier listed as their author in the first edition of the songbook.

Immersed in the Spokane branch, Brazier centered the issues of migrant workers in his songs. Using a singular first-person narrator, “Meet Me in the Jungles, Louie” tells the tale of Louie being kicked out of his home because he had no job and no money. In the chorus, the narrator invites Louie to move to the hobo jungles, camps of seasonal and unemployed workers: “Meet me in the jungles, Louie,/ Meet me over there” (10-11). Though the song card does not indicate source tune, the songbook would identify the melody as “Meet Me in St. Louis.” “Good-Bye Dollars” is

about paying an employment shark for a job. The song card identified the tune as “Dolly Gray,” which was shorthand for the song “Good-Bye Dolly Gray,” a “marching song of 1900 which told of an unidentified soldier leaving his lady love” (Green et al *BRS* 55). Will D. Cobb (words) and Paul Barnes (music) wrote this “tear jerker” (55) in the United States, but it grew in popularity beginning in Britain during the Second Boer War (Blackwell et al).

“Good-Bye Dolly Gray” is the first-person narrative of a soldier who must go off to war to “fight the foe” (12) and therefore must say goodbye to his love, Dolly. The soldier must leave his love, “though it breaks [his] heart to go” (10). Despite his sadness in leaving Dolly, the soldier lets Dolly know that “it’s no use to ask [him] why” he is going (2). It suggests that the soldier feels that going off to war is the obvious choice given the circumstances: “There’s a murmur in the air, you can hear it everywhere, / It’s the time to do and dare” (3-4). The draw for the soldier is so strong that even though his presence in the war seems not to have been explicitly requested, “something tells [him he is] needed” (11). In fact, the soldier “can no longer stay” (14) and the chorus ends with an abrupt farewell: “Hark – I hear the bugle calling, / Goodbye Dolly Gray” (15-16). The marching beat of the song is reminiscent of the marching of soldiers, and the music and lyrics suggest the soldier leaving Dolly to go to war is matter of fact rather than devastating. It is an act of patriotic duty, articulated as an inevitability rather than something to resist.

Brazier’s new lyrics in “Good-Bye Dollars, I Must Leave You” is a humorous juxtaposition to the sincere, lamenting yet dutiful narrative of “Good-Bye Dolly Gray.” Brazier’s lyrics tell the tale of a “sucker,” or a worker who buys a job from the sharks. As the editors of the *Big Red Songbook* argue, “Good-Bye Dollars” is “a vignette of actual employment practices [Brazier] faced” (Green et al *BRS* 55). Because of the nature of the United States’ economy in 1908, “sucker,” though insulting, was often used to reveal the exploitative practices of sharks rather than

merely emphasize the willingness of the worker to be exploited. The narrator of “Good-Bye Dollars” observes a “working stiff” (2) buying a job from an employment shark. The worker notes that he is “fairly on the hog” (3), a hobo phrase used to indicate that one was wealthy. It quickly becomes apparent in the subsequent line that the worker’s wealth consists of a mere two dollars (4), which he must use to “buy a job” (3). The chorus, narrated by the worker, outlines the absurdity of using one’s money to pay for a job, instead of the job providing the worker with money for necessities:

Good-bye, dollars; I must leave you
For a job with you I've got to buy.
Something tells me I will need you
When I'm hungry and get dry. (9-12)

The worker foresees that he will be without food and drink and recognizes that his last two dollars could remedy that, but instead he must buy a job, continuing the cycle.

Brazier adds an additional layer of humor, depicting the employment shark as similarly desperate for money, “bawling” to make more money from selling jobs to the unemployed (13). The employment shark recognizes the precarious nature of the positions he sells, replying with ambivalence and uncertainty, “Yes, I’ve got a job, I guess” (19). The shark goes on to outline the appalling conditions of the job:

The job I'll send you to is far away;
The board is high and wages low, they say;
The camp is full of bums, and the bunks are full of crumbs.” (21-23)

The poor “sucker” likely understands the system of graft implemented by the shark but participates anyway, as the song dives back into the chorus, with the worker once again bidding farewell to his two dollars.

Despite the humorous qualities of Brazier’s depiction of a whiny employment shark and a hobo “on the hog,” what solidifies the comic effect of Brazier’s song is its juxtaposition to the

original. Milne emphasizes that the parody form is critical of its original form in some manner (196), but Hutcheon departs from Milne's assertion. The intimate nature of parody is especially pertinent when one considers its target. Because "the 'target' of parody is not always the parodied text at all" (*Parody* 50), the parodic form allows for commentary outside the parodied text. Parody "can be a serious criticism, not necessarily of the parodied text" (15) and is instead "imitation characterized by ironic inversion, not always at the expense of the parodied text" (6). There are "parodies that use the parodied text as a target and those that use it as a weapon" (52).

"Good-Bye Dollars" uses the parody form as both a target and a weapon. In the parodical intersection of "Good-Bye Dolly Gray" and "Good-Bye Dollars," Brazier's song becomes more humorous. Now, not only does the listener/singer interact with the baseline of humor in the depictions of the shark and stiff and in the irony of "buying a job," but also the listener/singer has a point of comparison. In the juxtaposition between the parody and the parodied, the feeling of being compelled to go to war is directly compared with the compulsion of having to buy a job from a shark. The "something" that tells the soldier to go to war is similar to the "something" that obliges the stiff to buy a job. The perpetual movement of working stiffs through the employment office becomes a farcical war. The weight of war seems almost equivalent to the weight of unemployment and exploitative hiring practices. Through parody, their combined heaviness transforms that heaviness into sardonic wit, simultaneously critiquing the system of graft of the employment sharks while also illustrating the absurdity of the choice the worker must make. Being forced to spend your last two dollars on work is like leaving your love, home, and safety to fight in a war, but ridiculous: two dollars is Dolly. Compounding the parody is the elegiac yet determined tune of "Good-Bye Dolly Gray," which works in contrast to the ludicrousness of the worker's experiences.

“Good-Bye Dolly Gray” is not merely a song about leaving one’s beloved to go to war; rather, the song is reflective of the dominant ideology, which is in turn reinforced through the song as well. “Good-Bye Dolly Gray” upholds a patriotic ideology while speaking to concerns that are not in line with those of migrant workers in the Pacific Northwest in the early 1900s. The song’s concerns are of love and fighting for one’s country. The romanticization of patriotism and war in “Good-Bye Dolly Gray” is in opposition to the anti-romanticism of hobo life in “Good-Bye Dollars.” The concerns expressed in “Good-Bye Dollars” are those of working people: they are immediate, tangible, visceral. The migrant worker may not be able to eat by buying a job in the oppressive job shark system. The anxieties of the singer/listener of “Good-Bye Dolly Gray” are not only different from those of “Good-Bye Dollars,” but they are in direct competition, especially with the anti-statist sentiment of the IWW, where IWW members averred the class war was the only war where their interests were at stake. Rather than fighting on behalf of authority, they fight against it.

For “Good-Bye Dollars” to function as a parody, singers/listeners must have some recognition of “Good-Bye Dolly Gray.” Parody, as “repetition with a critical distance,” does not put emphasis solely on itself. It is necessarily a back and forth, a dual engagement, between the parody and the object/text being parodied. Robert Hariman, in “Political Parody and Public Culture,” argues that “parodic imitation works, appropriately, at more than one level. The parody replicates some prior form and thereby makes that form an object of one’s attention rather than a transparent vehicle for some other message” (253). Milne agrees that “parody, unlike forms of satire or burlesque which do not make their target a significant part of themselves, is ambivalently dependent upon the object of its criticism for its own reception” (196). The dependence of the

parody on its original is inherent in the parody form, since in order to recognize a parody as such, one must be able to identify at least some parodic traits, such as an image, a tune, or a phrase.

The parodied text plays a key role in meaning-making. Parody does not work as parody unless those interacting with the parody are familiar with what is being parodied. The “parody depends on the recognition by the audience of both the ‘foreground’ ([or] parody) and ‘background’ ([or] target text) and the dynamics between these levels” (Milne 197), and “the effect of parody is possible only when the parodied original itself is topical” (Denisov 67). Similarly, Andrey Denisov, in “The Parody Principle in Musical Art,” emphasizes the importance of knowledge of the original: “to make parody be perceived as inversion, the original phenomenon must be alive in memory, acting as an object of comparison with its parodic reflection” (67). Hutcheon agrees, noting that “parody prospers in periods of cultural sophistication that enable parodists to rely on the competence of the reader (viewer, listener) of the parody” (*Parody* 19), and that “if readers miss a parodic allusion, they will merely read the text like any other” (94). In short, to interact fully with a parody, and to understand the connotations and denotations and how they intertwine and synthesize, one must know the original and recognize the original in the parody. Though the music likely stayed relatively static if it was sung to the correct tune, the music allowed the lyrics to take on parodical meaning. Recognizing the tune of “Good-Bye Dolly Gray” is central to the parody as a method by which one can recall the song and its content. When one recognizes the tune of the song, with that recognition may come a memory of the themes of the original song.

Parody draws the connecting line between the two songs and their disparate concerns. It is parody’s ironic distancing that allows the singer/listener to distinguish these two sets of concerns, these two reflections of power, and to reject dominant ideology in favor of a more radical one.

Because they know the original song, the listener/singer expects similar anxieties to be in play or, at the very least, a familiar romanticization of those anxieties. Instead, what the singer/listener receives is something in opposition to that dominant culture and the community surrounding it. Parody also breaks down assumptions of the dominant culture: “before being parodied, any discourse could potentially become all-encompassing (such is the dream of totalitarianism). Once set beside itself, not only that discourse but the entire system is destabilized” (Hariman 254). Through parody, IWW songwriters were able to “deflate, demolish, and replace the existing order’s reactionary lyrics with their own new and explicitly anti-capitalist models” (F. Rosemont 173).

The ability of parody to be a comic critique is particularly important when we consider it in terms of emotion. Hariman argues that parody can function as a “rhetorical education for spectators” because of the way that parody plays with the familiar and recognizable while pulling in a new element (264). It also can function as a tool of emotional pedagogy, however. The humor of “Good-Bye Dollars” does not solely function at the level of critiquing employment offices and pointing out their irrationality. According to Freud, “humour is a means of obtaining pleasure in spite of the distressing affects that interfere with it; it acts as a substitute for the generation of these affects, it puts itself in their place” (228). Humor is transformational for those doing the laughing, or perhaps those singing amusedly. Rather than having anxiety or despair amplified or becoming more distressed by exploitative practices under capitalism, humor and mockery transform those affects to ones more conducive to action. The cheerful mood that is regained could make IWW members feel as though they have seen through the covert employment sharks. Not only do they understand the system, but they find it ridiculous! Humor positioned against enemies, such as employment sharks, gives the generally powerless singers/listeners/workers a sense of power.

The singer/listener is not, however, now overcome with happiness and delight. Humor “may stop this generating of an affect entirely or only partially” (Freud 232), which means that these unpleasurable affects may not be entirely suppressed. Freud calls this instance of mixed feelings “broken humour – the humour that smiles through tears” (232). Freud asserts that “jokes, the comic and all similar methods of getting pleasure from mental activity are no more than ways of regaining this cheerful mood [. . .] when it is not present as a general disposition of the psyche” (219). Further, any pursuit of “serious aims interferes with the capacity of the cathexis for discharge” (219). Humor, then, is more likely to come about “in more or less indifferent cases where the feelings and interests are not strongly involved” (220). Then how could IWW songs be simultaneously humorous and ideological, responding to and generating emotions?

IWW humor generally, and the humor in IWW comic parodies specifically, was broken humor. The goal of IWW humor was not to replace anxieties of early twentieth century capitalism with happy jokes, devoid of critical thought or serious analysis. As Foner notes,

[L]ike many I.W.W. speakers and writers, Wobbly songwriters had a great gift for humor. They could even poke fun at themselves and their movement. Using bitter satire, ridicule and exaggeration, humorous and ribald parodies, they exposed the exploitation of the workers, the evils of the loan sharks, the hypocrisy of many clergymen, the smugness of charity societies, and the viciousness of the police, jailers, deputy sheriffs, and vigilantes. (“History” 156)

IWW humor, in its ability to empower and defend IWW members, needed to be paired with disdain or anger to stir workers to action. IWW critiques embraced the irony of creating value through labor while being devalued for the very act of creating it. Frederick Douglass, in his 1852 Fourth of July speech, claims “[a]t a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. . . . For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder” (Douglass 10). Irony, satire, parody, and mockery made conditions under which workers lived more apparent,

more understandable and identifiable while offering a biting and humorous criticism of those conditions.

By poking fun at the authority outlined in “Good-Bye Dolly Gray” and of employment sharks in “Good-Bye Dollars,” the singers/listeners were also protecting themselves from criticism and embarrassment. By poking fun at themselves through the comparison inherent in the parody, they further that protection. Humor in this sense has the ability to, with the least possible effort, pull the keystone out of any argument, leaving the opponent standing stunned amid a pile of bricks” (P. Rosemont 198). It is “through the adoption of humor as a conscious attitude [that] we can assert ourselves over the confines of our environment (“reality”) and in effect topple the whole structure and reassemble it as we wish, thus revealing a glimpse of the pride which the Revolution will restore to us” (199). Humor does not have to be free of “feelings and interests;” in fact, parody encompasses “serious statement[s] of feelings about real problems or situations” (qtd in Hutcheon *Parody* 28). IWW parody, rather than relieving singers/listeners of their anxieties through humor, instead directs those anxieties to specific projects, goals, and struggles. The singer/listener engages with a critique of dominant culture and ideology in a form that is both accessible as well as illustrative. The laughter that accompanies the comic parody is not laughter of relief but laughter of power.

The parody form solidifies this emotional redirection. In considering IWW songwriting’s implication in commercial use of songs, Franklin Rosemont argues that when an IWW songwriter “decommercialized a pop song by rewriting it and making it revolutionary, he in effect made it impossible for the song to be used for any publicitary purposes other than advancing the cause of abolishing of wage-slavery in general, and building up the IWW in particular” (504). Parody’s power to enact longstanding emotional and ideological shifts relies on the pervasiveness of the

parodied object. In choosing a popular song such as “Good-Bye Dolly Gray” to parody, the parody can replace the original, perhaps not in popular culture broadly but certainly in communities using the parody. As Brazier’s new lyrics overshadow those of the original song in IWW culture, and as they are repeated, the parody overtakes the parodied. “Good-Bye Dolly Gray” is now always “Good-Bye Dollars” to an IWW member who knows the song. The parodied song remains in the background, as the counterpoint for the criticism, but the IWW parody becomes the dominant form of the song in IWW culture.

Hymn Parody and the Salvation Army

As the IWW’s struggle against employment sharks escalated, it became intertwined with the “free speech fights” in Spokane and elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest. Jack Walsh, in favor of using IWW songs as propaganda, had set up shop as a soapboxer in Spokane. Walsh took up employment offices as a main theme in his soapboxing and spoke “with a fervor and at a volume unheard on the streets of Spokane since the Panic had paralyzed all Wobbly movement” (Adler 124). He was often met with heckling, sometimes from employment sharks themselves. Yet Walsh had a knack for “dispens[ing] his hecklers” with an “ease and flair” (126), sometimes in the form of inviting them to come speak to the crowd “in defense of [their] evil practices,” which they usually declined (Walsh qtd in Adler 126).

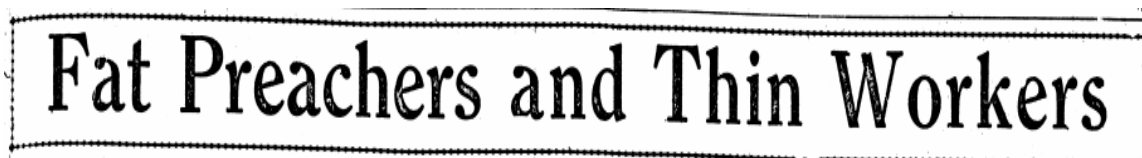
The IWW’s use of humor extended to its soapboxing. Brazier recalls an IWW member by the name of George Swayzee, who “had one of the most peculiar approaches to getting a crowd’s attention:”

[George] had a pet duck. That he used to take to the soap box, under his arm. . . . And when George wanted to emphasize a point that he was making, like it’s time you ought to organize, you fellow workers here, standing there just gaping, get down there and join the union! He’d squeeze the duck, you know, and the duck would go “quack, quack, quack!” George would say, even the duck knows enough to say yes to that. And he’d every time he would continue his speech, and every time he wanted to emphasize a particular point, he’d

squeeze the duck, and the duck would quack, quack, quack, you know, and the crowd--an enormous crowd, he was a fairly good speaker, too, you know. (Green Interview 36)

Brazier also remembers a “Southern gentleman” in Spokane “by the name of Louis Gateswood,” a fisherman who would don a “formal long coat, and the swatch stretched across here, his breast, and a southern collar with a thin kind of black tie” (37). Gateswood had previously been a “circuit preacher . . . [and] all his speeches were fiery, Biblical in nature.” He would get up on the soapbox, with his “soft southern hat” and his “nice southern mustache” and “start off as though he was starting to deliver a sermon:” he would say, “this is my text tonight, fellow workers. . . . education, organization, emancipation. These are not the stars of Behtlehem [sic], they’re better than the stars of Bethlehem. These don’t lead you--the stars of Bethlehem only leads to heaven, which nobody knows anything about, but these stars lead you to the pork chops, and so on and so on, that kind of thing” (37).

Despite the soapboxers’ success in shutting down hecklers, they were met with an opponent far more difficult to defeat. The Salvation Army already had an enemy in the IWW. Acting not unlike the employment sharks, the Salvation Army took money from desperate workers in exchange for eternal life in heaven. The Salvation Army also refused to give food out to starving workers in its breadlines if they were socialists, anarchists, or involved in the IWW. In response, the IWW awarded them a nickname in its circles: the Starvation Army. Using this new nickname almost exclusively, IWW members wrote articles for their newspaper mocking and criticizing the Salvation Army, with headlines such as “Fat Preachers and Thin Workers” (fig. 38).



Fat Preachers and Thin Workers

Figure 38. Fred W. Hexlewood. *Industrial Worker*. April 1, 1909. Page 3.

The Salvation Army spent much time on the streets of Spokane preaching and trying to save the souls of the unemployed workers lining up employment offices. These workers would listen to IWW soapboxers, and the Salvation Army would try to drown out speakers. The Salvation Army had legal advantages over the IWW soapboxers, however: “Municipal officials drafted local ordinances that prohibited public-street speaking but exempted such religious organizations as the Salvation Army from the regulations” (Arnesen 655). The Salvation Army was more than willing to capitalize on that advantage. In working against the IWW, the Salvation Army allied itself with employment offices and law enforcement (Adler 126).

Lynne Marks notes that this phenomenon was not confined to Spokane. In 1909, IWW members and socialists in Vancouver, BC, soapboxed opposite from Salvation Army preachers (156). She states,

The Vancouver city police ordered the IWW and socialist speakers to disperse, declaring they were disrupting traffic, but they ignored the Salvation Army preachers, who were doing the same thing. Six IWW members and socialists were arrested for refusing to comply. In court, they “held that it was clearly discriminatory for a constable to arrest leftists and ignore equally disruptive religionists because they preached a creed more acceptable to the police.” The polarized religious perspectives of the two sides were highlighted by one of the IWW defendants, who objected to swearing on the Bible, “complaining that it could harbour germs.” (156)

Despite many IWW members not being opposed to Christianity per say, the animosity between the IWW and the Salvation Army was solidified through practice as well as law and ideology.

The Salvation Army also had “an attention-commanding advantage over the IWW and the many other groups [. . .] that would claim the open air to propagandize. The army had its loud and smartly uniformed brass band” (Adler 126), which played loudly atop the voices of the soapboxers. In “Athens or Anarchy? Soapbox Oratory and the Early Twentieth-Century American City,” Mary Anne Trasciatti illustrates the Salvation Army’s use of music during soapboxing:

Speakers engaged with audience members and with one another. It was not unusual for an orator to mount a soapbox, cart-tail, or ladder within hearing distance of a rival and engage

in verbal sparring and counterargument in order to discredit the other and curry favor with a larger audience. Music was a very effective tool for this kind of contest. In Spokane, soapboxers for the IWW belted out biting humorous tunes from the Little Red Songbook to harass Salvation Army speakers who taunted them with “blare of trumpet and banging of drum.” Preachers were known to draw audiences with trumpet blasts or other musical invitations. (51)

Because of their musical and legal advantages, the Salvation Army was the main competitor of IWW soapboxers. The IWW needed to find a way to combat the commanding sound of the preachers while also drawing attention to the issues about which IWW members soapboxed. It is not surprising, then, that the IWW relied on stock religious tunes in creating its own songbook.

Perhaps others would give up and go home, or yell louder than before, but for Walsh, the Salvation Army’s band was “a call to arms—and a revelation” (Adler 127). IWW members set to work crafting new lyrics for the hymns that the Salvation Army Band played. Pointed parodies of popular music became even more weaponized as the IWW combatted the Salvation Army and its band. As Richard Brazier recalls, Walsh was determined to drown out the Salvation Army band: “We have as many tunes and songs as they have hymns; and while we may borrow a hymn tune from them, we will use our own words. If they do not quiet down a little we will add some bagpipes to the band, and that will quiet them. We do not object to religious bodies, as such, but when they try to hog the streets for their own use we do object—and most vigorously so” (Brazier qtd in Adler 127). A collection of satirical and parodic songs set to the tune of hymns arose from Spokane, and migrant workers and employment sharks took center-stage in the lyrics.

Many hymn parodies emerged from or were used in the IWW’s battle with the Salvation Army, such as “Hallelujah, I’m a Bum,” “The Roll Call,” “Out in the Bread Line,” and “Sunshine in My Soul,” all of which appeared in early IWW song cards. “Out in the Bread Line” is set to the tune of Stephen Collins Foster’s hymn “Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread,” which asks God to “Make us content/With what is sent” (18-19). “Out in the Bread Line” describes being poor and

hungry due to scarce jobs and employment offices using first-person plural narration. Using the tune of “Give Us This Day,” “Bread Line” suggests that being content with what workers are provided is unreasonable: “We are dead broke and we’ll have to eat hay” (12). “Sunshine in My Soul” uses the hymn “Sunshine in the Soul” as its source tune. The original hymn, written by E. E. Hewitt, describes the “peaceful [and] happy” feeling that one gets “[w]hen Jesus shows His smiling face,” which creates “sunshine in the soul” (6-8). The IWW version’s subtitle, “(and hunger in my stomach)” highlights the struggles of workers. It is not Jesus smiling upon us that will give us sunshine in our souls, however; it is getting rid of employment sharks. According to the song’s chorus, “When we put the boots to the employment shark/ There’ll be sunshine in our souls” (7-8). Similarly, “The Roll Call” tells of how employment sharks are robbing workers, again using first-person narration. “The Roll Call” uses second-person pronouns, “you,” for the “suckers” who buy jobs from the sharks (5). It is set to the tune of the hymn “When the Roll is Called Up Yonder” by James Black that describes how the narrator will “be there” when God calls the roll of “the saved of earth” (8, 3). In “The Roll Call,” however, the narrators will be there “[w]hen the grafters have to travel” once workers win their fight against their oppressors (21).

“Hallelujah” is set to the tune of the hymn “Revive Us Again.” Like “Sunshine,” “Hallelujah” uses a singular first-person narrator. “Hallelujah,” like all of these songs, calls attention to employment sharks and being a “bum.” The origin of “Hallelujah, I’m a Bum” is unclear, and the song had multiple versions of its title, including “Hellelujah,” which appears in the first edition of the songbook. This name appears to be a spelling error from that edition (Green et al *BRS* 52) but is quite a fitting and humorous mistake. In the notes on the song in *The Big Red Songbook*, the lyrics are credited jointly to Harry Kirby McClintock, or “Haywire Mac” (52) and Walsh, although

William Adler avers that the authorship of the song is widely disputed.¹² He acknowledges that James Carmody, James Wilson, and Joe Hill were likely collaborators (Adler 130n380). Brazier identified the way in which “Hallelujah” was collectively composed: “And the way it was, the fellows would sing, and then somebody would think about it, a better line than that, and _____, try this line in it. And they’d change a line here, knock a line out there and put one in, and so on, by a process of acresion and deletion, the ‘Hallelujah, I’m a Bum’ song became the song it is today. But no one man could claim authorship of it. It was a collective effort” (Green Interview 18).

“The Roll Call” and “Hallelujah” highlight how these songs can work to create group identity and cohesion through musical expectation even if the singer does not know the source tune and lacks familiarity. “The Roll Call” uses an ABAB rhyme scheme for its verses and the chorus is even more repetitive with an AAAB rhyme scheme. Although each chorus has different words, the structure is the same. All four lines of each chorus are a repetition of the last line of the verse. The first three lines of the chorus repeat the first part of the verse line, and the last line of the chorus repeats the full verse line. The first verse reads,

Up and down the streets we walk around until our feet are sore,
For a job, a job, a job most anywhere.
The employment shark will gather easy suckers by the score,
When you buy a job out yonder in despair. (1-4)

Then the chorus repeats the last line of the verse:

When you buy a job out yon-der,
When you buy a job out yon-der,
When you buy a job out yon-der,
When you buy a job out yon-der in despair. (5-8)

This structure continues through the song with each chorus being a repetition of the last line of the preceding verse.

¹² More about the disputed authorship of “Hallelujah” can be found in Green et al *BRS* 53 and in Adler 129-130.

“Hallelujah” is a parody of a hymn from 1860, with words by William P. MacKay and music by John J. Husband, entitled “Revive Us Again.” In the early 1900s, this would have been a well-known hymn. According to *Hymnary*, “Revive Us Again” appeared in approximately forty percent of hymnals on average in the years between 1900 and 1910. “Revive Us Again” offers a serious, hopeful message of praise and of the glory of God. The hymn’s verses use an ABCB rhyme scheme, and the hymn begins with

We praise Thee, O God!
 For the Son of Thy love,
 For Jesus Who died
 And is now gone above (1-4).

The chorus uses repetition in an ABAB rhyme scheme:

Hallelujah! Thine the glory.
 Hallelujah! Amen.
 Hallelujah! Thine the glory.
 Revive us again. (5-8)

“Hallelujah” adopts the structure of “Revive Us Again.” The chorus, repeated after each four-line verse, is also simple, short, and follows the same rhyme scheme:

Hallelujah, I’m a bum!
 Hallelujah, bum again!
 Hallelujah, give us a handout-
 To revive us again. (5-8)

This repetition allows the singer/listener to anticipate the next lines, making it easier for them to participate in singing or become part of the singing group.

The form of songs acts to create a sense of solidarity through fulfilled musical expectations, such as rhyme scheme and repetition. Because a component of the song is expected, the songs create opportunity for participation and therefore entrance into the group. Most IWW songs have a chorus, which functions as a grounding point for the song. The singers know to come back to a repetition of the chorus, and songs often end with another refrain or a repeat of the refrain. Simple or repetitive

choruses made the singer role accessible. In “The Blues: A Discourse of Resistance,” Ray Pratt argues that the Blues form, with its AAB rhyme scheme, “allow[s] the singer to set out a line, repeat it while thinking of a rhyming line (and, it would appear) incite[s] the expectations of listeners, who are in effect ‘invited’ to ‘receive’ the succeeding line. [This constitutes a] ‘call’ and ‘response’ pattern” (125). The repetition of the first line allows the audience or participants to expect the second line. The repetition allows listeners to become singers since they know what to expect and what to sing. All one has to do is say the first line, and the audience can repeat it together. The repetition in these songs allows listeners to engage with the work on the level of form, repetition, and rhyme, and predict or even sing along. A listener can more easily become a singer as the songs bring them into the work through form. The structure and rhyme scheme of the songs give the singer/listener/reader a narrative with which to anticipate, and then participate in, the work.

Although positioned merely as a tool to drown out the Salvation Army, songs such as “Hallelujah” were much more than that:

The first IWW songbook held two dozen items. Most were somber commentaries on wage slavery; some, visionary calls for a new society. By contrast, ‘Hallelujah’ was totally irreverent. It anticipated the ability by Wobblies to poke fun at their collective lot. Working stiff when banded together under the industrial union banner, more than any other radicals, could subject their cherished movement’s philosophy to satiric art or sardonic wit. (Green et al *BRS* 52)

Freud, in his discussion about humor, notes that “humour can be regarded as the highest of [. . .] defensive processes” (233). However, how can we defend ourselves by mocking or parodying something or someone else if we do not have an idea of what it is we are mocking? Knowledge of the parodied object and the body through which it is delivered is key to defensive forms of parody. Looking specifically at “Hallelujah,” there are two layers of knowledge that aid in defense. First, common knowledge of the actions of the Salvation Army – on breadlines, on picket lines and at protests – set up the Salvation Army as an enemy of the IWW. Experiencing the Salvation Army’s

anti-IWW and anti-radical behavior first-hand would arguably set up a stronger disdain for the Salvation Army, but the availability of other anti-Salvation Army propaganda, like that in the newspaper, would assist in knowledge transfer. Singing the hymn over the Salvation Army with new words, then, becomes more humorous the more those interacting with the parody dislike the parodied object or group.

The IWW is not only parodying the Salvation Army's performance, although that is certainly a key part of the parody. They also parody aesthetic and rhetorical features of the hymn. The lyrics to "Revive Us Again" maintain that God has brought salvation and that he can bring it again if one devotes their life to him and lets him guide them. Combined with the context of the Salvation Army's dislike of radical working-class movements, it follows that picketing is not the way to salvation and that disgruntled workers should instead spend their time working hard, being humble, and praying to God so that they may have a good life after death. The worldly suffering of the working class can end through death if one accepts God as their savior and lets him "revive [them] again" (8). He will only show workers mercy if they devote themselves to him. The chorus solidifies the praise of God as savior, through the repetition of "Hallelujah! Thine the glory!" and the request to "revive [them] again" (5, 8).

The IWW's parody is a criticism of the reliance on God for a good life as well as of the idea that worldly suffering, through the acceptance of God as savior, leads to paradise after death. The lyrics speak to bosses and those who denigrate working class movements, much like the original speaks to God. The first verse of the original thanks God for sending Jesus to forgive mankind's sins: "We praise Thee, O God! / For the Son of Thy love, / For Jesus Who died, / And is now gone above" (1-4). The IWW's parody, in contrast, is a dialogue between a worker and what could be interpreted as a boss or anti-worker individual: "O, why don't you work / As other

men do? / How the hell can I work / When there's no work to do?" (1-4). The critique of religion, specifically the Salvation Army's brand of religion, continues in the third verse, where putting faith in God is equated with putting faith in one's boss: "O, I like my boss-- / He's a good friend of mine; / That's why I'm starving / Out in the bread-line!" (13-16). This comparison peaks each time the chorus is repeated over top of the chorus from the original, where the two songs match and the parody is intensified. The repetition of "hallelujah" at the same time as the singers of the hymn gives the parodists a sense of familiarity and common ground, but that ground is quickly destabilized by the remainder of the lines, which are in stark contrast.

All the singers start in the same place musically and start and end in the same place during the chorus, but the parody singer, contrary to the hymn singer, has chosen criticism rather than acceptance of capitalism. Rather than "Thine the glory," we hear "I'm a bum!" with different meanings regarding revival. The line is emphasized with the abruptness of the IWW version because it is one syllable shorter than the original line. The word "bum!" is accentuated, and the exclamation point here is merely a reflection of the inherent syllabic emphasis rather than a suggested emphasis. The "salvation" that the parodists seek is not other-worldly but rather material and immediate: things necessary for survival. The tangible nature of the change is also apparent in the shift from "thine" in the original to "I" in the parody. The ridiculousness of waiting for salvation through God is emphasized through lines such as "if I did not eat / I'd have money to burn" (11-12) and "I'm starving / out in the bread-line" (15-16). The equating of God with bosses – and the underscoring of the absurd nature of not being able to eat but needing to be patient and wait for salvation through God – sets up the Salvation Army and its religious ideology as laughable. The criticisms placed on the IWW, which perhaps make IWW members question their own tactics and beliefs, are thrust back upon the Salvation Army and its ideology.

IWW members' ability to poke fun at themselves, as they embrace humor and sarcasm as defenses to criticism, furthers this defense. In IWW and hobo circles, terminology was key, and terminology furthers the comic and critical rhetoric in "Hallelujah." "Hobo" was the preferred terminology for these types of migrant workers, and it indicated "a non-sedentary (migratory), often temporary worker" (May 157). Conversely, a bum was "someone who is non-working and sedentary. [It was] a term often used by hobos to characterize town drunks" (157). The term "bum" or phrase "on the bum" may even derive from being sedentary, literally sitting on one's bum. Being called a bum was insulting, but IWW members flipped the insult on its head, instead using it as a self-identifier in the song. Because of this differentiation, the lines "How the hell can I work / When there's no work to do?" (3-4) become especially illustrative and defensive. The singer/listener takes ownership over the term while also lessening its effectiveness as an insult.

IWW members may be mocking the Salvation Army and how its faith in God causes inaction. At the same time, the parody's lyrics position workers' anxieties as a main theme. In singing these lyrics while the Salvation Army band plays, IWW members felt that they were not to be outsmarted and that they were doing something meaningful. Simultaneously, they felt the capitalist world had not treated them well and that they were literally starving. These mixed feelings are another instance of "broken humour" (Freud 232). Feelings that are not conducive to action (despair, sadness, anxiety) are not entirely suppressed. The parody recognizes them and, rather than dismissing them, articulates them in a humorous way that allows for a deflection of anxiety and a turn to feelings of self-righteousness and power. The last verse of "Hallelujah" is slightly more hopeful but in an anxious and comical way: "Whenever I get / All the money I earn, / The boss will be broke, / And to work he must turn." (21-24). The word "whenever" contains both possibility and impossibility, but there is hope and cruel joy in reversing the roles of worker

and boss. In this sense, these songs offer an emotional pedagogy where singers/listeners see their fears and anxieties reflected in the parody, have some feelings suppressed or deflected and others emphasized, and direct those feelings toward its enemies. Rather than allowing members to feel defeated or hopeless in the face of narratives of salvation through God, by the nature of employment sharks, or by the sheer act of being overpowered by the Salvation Army band, which could lead to inaction, the mocking form of parody instead helps produce feelings of power and superiority where IWW members laugh at their enemies, much like in “Good-Bye Dollars.”

As Hariman notes, “When the weight of authority is converted into an image” through parody, “resistance and other kinds of response become more available to more people” (254). This is because “laughter depends on prior conversion of some part of the world into an image. One does not laugh so easily and fearlessly at the thing itself. By remaking the direct discourse into an image of itself, parody creates a virtual world in which one may play with what has been said” (255). Parody gives the powerless a space in which they can conceive of power and can impede the power of others over them. It transforms authority into an image that can be manipulated, ridiculed, and laughed at: “parody makes the original lose in power, appear less commanding” (Hutcheon *Parody* 76). Parody does not let us forget the anxieties from which the parody sprang, however. In that sense, parody is at once familiar and unfamiliar, and that tension is key to its effect.

The original song speaks to a subset of people and attempts to instill a particular ideology, while the parody directly combats that ideology. Parody connects these two disparate ideologies together in a way which allows for the mimicking of a cultural product in a way that appropriates yet distances and distinguishes, further defining the IWW’s beliefs and sense of community. Like “Good-Bye Dollars,” “Hallelujah” allows the singer/listener to identify the structures of power

inherent in religious hymns and in the Salvation Army's preaching, where workers should forget their immediate concerns and instead work toward a good life later in Heaven. The identification is immediately paired with an alternative, where workers can understand and address their immediate concerns and have a good life here on Earth. Once again, the ingraining of the parody in popular culture through the parodying of a well-known hymn gives way for the new ideology, the critique, to surpass the original. Hearing "Revive Us Again" brings to the surface "Hallelujah" and the criticisms it exemplifies. One is unable to separate the parodied from the parody, and the songs become one, retaining the criticism of the parody alongside the context of the original.

The use of comic parody permeates much of IWW songwriting from its inception to now. It is not just the comic or the parodic that work to undermine the structures of power that exist under capitalism; it is both working together. The IWW's brand of satiric wit was paired with the contexts and feelings associated with popular and religious cultural products, in the form of comic parody. This pairing allowed for an ironic distancing, where the expected gives way to the unexpected. In turn, the unexpected then becomes the expected once again, through repetition and through the connectedness of the parody to the immediate struggles of migrant workers in Spokane and elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest. The parodied objects carry with them dominant ideologies and understandings of power and authority that are in direct opposition to those put forward by the IWW and its members. IWW members, already feeling disbelief due to their material conditions, see their feelings reflected in the parody, as a collective, with the ridiculousness of what the parody critiques becoming even clearer.

The parody must continue to draw upon the original, and not erase it, as a perpetual point of comparison. This comparison allows the parody to remain critical and humorous. It is this critical yet humorous edge that allows IWW singers/listeners to position themselves in opposition

to dominant capitalist culture and instead view themselves as being in a position of power. Distinguishing the IWW community from other groups through critique while bolstering the class struggle redirects feelings such as anxiety, transforming them into fuel for action and struggle, for community building among workers, and for reinforcing IWW ideology. In this way, comic parody engages in emotional pedagogy, responding to and articulating the feelings and experiences of singers/listeners, like anxiety and despair, and offering them a sense of power, joy, and confidence that will allow them to take action.

CHAPTER FOUR – SLAVERY RHETORIC, RADICAL ABOLITIONISM, AND IWW RECOMPOSITION

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, labor organizations, notably the Knights of Labor, the American Federation of Labor, and the Industrial Workers of the World, coopted rhetoric surrounding chattel slavery to discuss issues of waged work in the United States. The language of slavery found its way into union propaganda, and images of bondage appeared in songs, cartoons, newspapers, and everyday communication. Specifically, the term “wage slavery” became prominent in labor circles. While the reasons for connecting chattel slavery and waged work differed between various unions and communities, the references to slavery were apparent. IWW rhetoric called upon images of slavery and abolitionism, and of John Brown in particular, to inform and inspire a culture of resistance to the oppression of capitalism. The use of slavery rhetoric in the labor movement has been and continues to be controversial and problematic, discounting or not engaging with the experiences and feelings of Black workers and other racialized workers. Though indicative of a class universalism that permeated IWW ideology, the IWW used references to slavery in part to draw upon the anti-capitalist history of the abolition movement, to call attention to continuing oppression, and to inspire resistance against oppressive systems.

The term “wage slavery,” and other rhetoric alluding to slavery, is prominent in IWW newspapers, pamphlets, and other propaganda. In this chapter, I focus on how it is used in combination with music from the abolition movement. Writing new words to existing songs, IWW songwriters, whether consciously or not, called upon the listener/singer’s understanding of slavery and the abolition movement and associated feelings. Evoking this history challenged conceptions about early twentieth century industrial capitalism and underscored the need for radical change. Using the language of slavery to emphasize the coercion and oppression of wage work provided

workers an articulation of their experiences that they could understand and feel. This framing provided workers with language that reflected the powerlessness they felt. In comparing slavery and wage work, the language in songs like “Solidarity Forever” and “Wage Workers, Come Join the Union” emphasized workers’ anger from their oppression and from the façade of workers’ freedom. In linking the wage system to slavery, this rhetoric also linked the fight against capitalism to the abolition of slavery. I argue that this amalgamation of both musical and rhetorical references strengthened IWW critiques of capitalism and reoriented workers toward militant, revolutionary anti-capitalism. If the listeners/singers knew the source tunes, this form of recomposition enabled the IWW to call upon and borrow from radical anti-capitalist feelings of slavery abolition movements. “Solidarity Forever,” using the tune of “John Brown Song,” was able to call upon a tradition of revolutionary feelings and struggles in radical abolitionism. Although “Wage Workers” is once removed from John Brown in its use of “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” both songs could use their musical links to the Civil War and the religious virtue tied to abolitionism to embolden the IWW’s class war.

“Solidarity Forever” and “Wage Workers, Come Join the Union,” in using “John Brown Song” and “Battle Hymn of the Republic” respectively, were also open to a parodic reading using Hutcheon’s definition of parody as “repetition with a critical distance” (*Parody* 6). If listeners/singers recognized the source tunes, the references to John Brown and the Civil War became more apparent. If experienced as parodies, the irony of “wage slavery” and other slavery rhetoric in the context of “free labor” allowed the parodied songs to become vehicles for criticism of the slavery-freedom binary and enabled workers to understand their relationship to capitalism and the feelings associated with that relationship. The critical distance of these parodies was not at the expense of the parodied text but instead was at the expense of capitalism and dominant

understandings of “freedom” and “slavery.” However, some of IWW songwriters’ choices, like selecting racist source tunes, undermined the IWW’s project of working-class solidarity. I posit that using popular or well-known music as a basis for recomposition allows for a recognition and familiarity that assists with emotional pedagogy, especially if songs are experienced as parodies. Because of this familiarity, however, recomposition also brings along the sometimes-undesired meaning and cultural significance of the source song.

White Slavery, Wage Slavery, and the Labor Movement

In *The Wages of Whiteness*, David R. Roediger examines the history of the comparison between chattel slavery and wage work and problematizes the term “wage slavery,” noting the “new ease and the continuing hesitancy with which white workers . . . began to describe themselves as slaves” (65).¹³ In the antebellum United States, comparisons between chattel slavery and wage work were “both insistent and embarrassed” (66). As Roediger writes, “Chattel slavery provided white workers with a touchstone against which to weigh their fears and a yardstick to measure their reassurance” (66). He further notes that the “line between slavery and freedom” was reexamined with the “rise . . . of a highly visible movement to abolish slavery” (67) and through comparisons with British workers (68). With the competition between Northern and Southern states’ production and labor costs, “the extent of the freedom of the white worker was still more sharply called into question” (68). White workers began recognizing their perceived “freedom” under capitalism as not being freedom at all, and the link between chattel slavery and wage work became increasingly employed to underscore the lack of freedom within wage labor.

The comparison between slavery and wage labor bolstered arguments in favor of slavery. George Fitzhugh, in his pro-slavery pamphlet *Sociology for the South*, argues “the slavery of the

¹³ For a thorough and provocative examination of the history of the term “wage slavery,” see Roediger’s *The Wages of Whiteness* and Lawrence Glickman’s *A Living Wage*.

working classes to the rich, which grows out of liberty and equality, or free competition, is ten times more onerous and exacting than domestic slavery” (293). This, he believes, is because the “free laborer rarely has a house and home of his own; he is insecure of employment; sickness may overtake him at any time and deprive him of the means of support” (38). The slave, on the other hand, has a “consciousness of security, a full comprehension of his position, and a confidence in that position, and the absence of all corroding cares and anxieties” (37). Unlike wage labor, “[s]lavery identifies the interests of rich and poor, master and slave, and begets domestic affection on the one side, and loyalty and respect on the other” (43). In *Black Reconstruction in America*, W. E. B. Du Bois agrees that “[f]ree laborers today are compelled to wander in search for work and food [and] their families are deserted for want of wages” (11). Du Bois asserts, however, that there is a significant difference between slavery and wage work. In wage work, “there is no such direct barter in human flesh” (11). Even when comparisons between “white slavery” and chattel slavery determined that they were “roughly equal,” they contained a proslavery tone, arguing “the life of a free laborer, full of the threat of starvation, over-exertion, deprived children and uncomforted sickness” was better than the life of a slave, who had “a ‘master interested in prolonging his life’” (Roediger 77).

Despite their own comparison between Black slaves and white “freemen” workers, white workers had a “continuing desire *not* to be considered anything like an African American” (Roediger 68). Pejorative and racist phrases such as “white slavery,” “white nigger,” and “work like a nigger” began to appear in the 1830s, before the term “wage slavery” was prominent. In the antebellum period, “for all but a handful of committed abolitionists/labor reformers, use of a term like *white slavery* was not an act of solidarity with the slave but rather a call to arms to end the inappropriate oppression of whites” (68). It is important to remember that “critiques of white

slavery took form, after all, alongside race riots, racially exclusive trade unions, . . . the rise of minstrel shows, and popular campaigns to attack further the meager civil rights of free Blacks” (68-69). The term “white slavery” could unite white “wage workers, debtors, small employers and even slaveholders” due to its “vagueness” and its “whiteness,” while casting aside Black slaves and workers (73). Indeed, the term positioned abolitionists and free Black workers as the enemy, working to further “enslave” white workers (73).

Importantly, the term “white slavery” lacked a radical edge. “White slavery” did not predicate the abolition of slavery and instead directed focus to reform of the wage system to improve the lives of white workers (Roediger 73). The issues of chattel slavery and of abolition divided the labor movement. “White slavery” allowed a distancing of white workers from Black slaves and “did not call into question chattel slavery” (73). Further, labor discourse “at times strongly supported the slavery of blacks” (74). As Du Bois notes, at first, unions and labor organizations “blurted out their disapprobation of slavery on principle. It was a phase of all wage slavery” (*BR* 19). They began to see abolition as increasing competition, however, and argued that Black slaves were better off than “white slaves” (20-21). Though the labor movement had many anti-slavery advocates, some labor organizations espoused these views in their attempts to demonstrate the inhumanity of the wage system (Roediger 76), demonstrating the complex and conflicted race and class politics of workers and the labor movement.

After the Civil War, the term “white slavery,” shrouded both in a connectedness to and an aversion from chattel slavery and free Black workers, fell out of favor. It was a “badge of degradation” and therefore no longer useful (Roediger 85). In “Seeking Ecstasy on the Battlefield,” Linda Gordon and Ellen DuBois note that “white slavery” began to denote prostitution, and this “interpretation of prostitution . . . allowed feminists to see themselves as rescuers of slaves” in a

new kind of moral abolitionist battle (47). Indeed, “to ask workers to *sustain* comparisons of themselves and Black slaves violated . . . their sense of whiteness” (Roediger 86): “If the rhetorical framework of white slavery was limited because it asked white workers to liken themselves to Black slaves, working class abolitionism was limited because it asked white workers to organize energetically on the Black slave’s behalf” (87). As Roediger asserts, “it makes considerable difference whether workers experimented with metaphors regarding *wage slavery* or *white slavery*” (72).

Rinsing history of the problematic “white slavery,” “wage slavery” was the term that “survived the Civil War” and was “read back into antebellum history as the most common way for white workers to press comparisons with slavery” (Roediger 72). While “white slavery” stops short of abolition of slavery or of the wage system and instead continues to prop up white workers over Black workers and slaves, Eric Foner argues that “wage slavery” does something quite different: “the idea of wage slavery contained condemnation of slavery itself. The central values of the early labor movement – liberty, democracy, personal independence, the right of the worker to the fruits of his or her labor – were obviously incompatible with the institution of slavery” (Foner qtd in Roediger 73). The term “wage slavery,” distinct from “white slavery,” still carried with it comparisons of wage work to chattel slavery. With the abolition of chattel slavery in the United States, “a more straightforward critique of wage slavery, and a fierce battle over the meaning of *free labor*, develop[ed]” (87).

Despite the incompatibility of slavery with its values, the white labor movement retained its conflicting views on Black workers. Labor leaders recognized that “Negroes were soon to be admitted to citizenship and the ballot” (Du Bois *BR* 354). Their voting power “would be of great value to union labor” (354). They also recognized that Black workers would “act as scabs” unless

unions secured “[c]ooperation of the African race in systemic organization” (354). At the founding convention of the National Labor Union in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1866, Black workers were “welcomed to the labor movement” (354). This welcome, however, was “not because they were laborers but because they might be competitors in the market” (354). By 1869, the National Labor Union would “divide labor by racial and social lines,” which Du Bois highlights was “[c]ontrary to all labor philosophy” (356). In creating separate unions for Black workers, they would be “restrained from competition and yet kept out of the white race unions where power and discussion lay” (356). The “color caste” resulting from slavery, “founded and retained by capitalism,” was “adopted, forwarded and approved by white labor, and resulted in subordination of colored labor to white profits the world over” (30).

During its existence from 1878 to 1893 (van Elteren 188), the Knights of Labor was nearly alone in its inclusivity of most of the working class. Workers could join “regardless of gender, ‘race,’ or ethnicity,” with only a few professional categories as exceptions (188). The Knights’ model of solidarity unionism sought to include every kind of worker from the whole of the working class, though it did not allow Black workers into its membership until 1883 (Faue 22). The Knights “maintained that working people could advance only by uniting across the ‘color line’” and “it did more to organize black workers than any organization before it and more than many that came after” (Gerteis 582). In “The Possession of Civic Virtue: Movement Narratives of Race and Class in the Knights of Labor,” Joseph Gerteis emphasizes, however, that the “organization was equally vocal in its exclusion of other nonwhite workers,” particularly Chinese workers (582). Despite their pragmatic goal to unite Black and white workers, “the color line was never really breached and the Order never succeeded in eliminating the barriers between white and black” (Foner “IWW” 50): “Even the Knights of Labor which brought large numbers of skilled and unskilled Negro

workers into the predominantly white labor movement of the 1880's – it is estimated that in 1886, when the membership of the Knights exceeded 700,000, there were no less than 60,000 Negro members – segregated its Negro membership” (50).

The Knights of Labor “strenuously opposed ‘wage slavery’” or workers’ coercion and working conditions under capitalism (van Elteren 188). As Helga Kristin Hallgrimsdottir and Cecilia Benoit note in “From Wage Slaves to Wage Workers,” “producerism was premised on the belief that any kind of wage work under capitalism was akin to slavery. This comparison emphasized how capitalist production did not allow workers to be their ‘own agents in employing [their] labor and selling the fruits of that labor’” (1397). “Wage slavery,” as used by the Knights of Labor, did not attempt to portray chattel slaves’ experiences as being better than those of white northern workers like some users of the term “white slavery” purported. Proponents of the concept, the Knights instead argued that while chattel slaves and waged laborers lived and were treated differently, the end result – the exploitation of labor for the gain of the rich few – was the same (1397). The Knights of Labor’s use of “wage slavery,” though now seen as pejorative, was not intended to belittle experiences outside of waged labor but rather to find common ground among the working class to aid workers’ struggles. The use of the term “slavery” was meant to evoke thoughts of “dependence and exploitation,” seen ideally as the catalyst for class-consciousness and the widespread understanding that capitalism had to be abolished (1398). This “inclusionary meaning of wage slavery,” however, became lost as more reformist and less revolutionary labor movements took shape.

Unfortunately, the American Federation of Labor gave “wage slavery” a similar degrading meaning to that of “white slavery.” While the use of “wage slavery” still had its roots in exploitation, the AFL was careful not to apply the term to its own membership. For the AFL,

“wage slavery describe[d] only a portion of the working class, usually that portion which is otherwise disadvantaged along racial, ethnic and/or immigrant lines” (Hallgrimsdottir 1400). The AFL’s “emphasis on the special needs and rights of native-born, skilled workers” and their association of unskilled and manual wage labor with slavery negated the vision of inclusivity and solidarity that the Knights of Labor previously championed (1400). The AFL’s use of the term is reminiscent of George Henry Evans’s use, who was a printer, labor leader, and land reformer who popularized the terms “white slavery” and “slavery of wages.” Evans concentrated on the labor of “tenant farmers, the unskilled, women workers and child laborers” (Roediger 71), workers typically viewed as more vulnerable, less desirable, easily replaceable, and dependent, leaving skilled white workers able to disassociate from slavery and from free Black workers. The AFL had a strict vision of what workers were worthy of craft unionism, and “unskilled and semi-skilled workers – whether the new immigrants, African American migrants, or women of any group – did not meet these standards” (Faue 29).

The divisive use of “wage slavery” caused the term to develop exclusionary meanings. The American Federation of Labor stressed that white skilled workers were not subject to this kind of slavery, and that “the benefits of whiteness should extend to privileges in wages and work” (Hallgrimsdottir 1402). In *Racism: From Slavery to Advanced Capitalism*, Carter Wilson notes “this exclusion guarded white craft workers from competition with black craft workers and reserved preferred jobs for privileged whites” (139). Using “wage slavery” was not to draw attention to racialized workers or racialized work but rather to hold skilled white workers up higher than their unskilled and minority counterparts. Unfortunately, this shift in usage made it so that “wage slavery no longer referred to a real alternative of wage freedom” like it did for the Knights of Labor (Hallgrimsdottir 1404). “No matter how low the status or wage of the white worker, he

had the advantage of being above the black worker in status and wages” (Wilson 139). Disappointingly, the AFL and the Knights “became more tolerant of segregation in the social context of antiblack violence,” especially in the face of violence against union leaders for organizing workers of color (140).

In the early twentieth century, surrounded by segregated organizations or organizations that outright barred Black workers from their ranks, the Industrial Workers of the World sang a different tune.¹⁴ At its founding convention, Big Bill Haywood made clear that the IWW would organize all workers, regardless of race:

In his indictment of the A.F. of L., which he declared contemptuously “does not represent the working class,” he cited specifically the well-known fact that “there are organizations that are affiliated with the A.F. of L., which in their constitution and by-laws prohibit the initiation of or conferring the obligation on a colored man.” Haywood pledged that such anti-working class, racist practices, along with other restrictions on the right of black workers to join the labor movement, would be swept into oblivion by the newly-organized industrial union. (Foner “IWW” 45)

The IWW formalized this commitment in its Bylaws, which stated “no working man or woman shall be excluded from membership because of creed or color” (qtd in Foner “IWW” 45-46). The IWW opposed dividing the labor movement on race or gender lines. Although in its first few years the IWW struggled with membership because of factionalism and infighting within its ranks and had a negligible number of Black members, the IWW in 1910 “made a determined effort to recruit Negro membership” (46). Its effort was recognized. By 1913, Mary White Ovington, a founder of the NAACP, wrote “There are two organizations in this country that have shown they do care about full rights for the Negro. The first is the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People . . . The second organization that attacks Negro segregation is the Industrial Workers of the World . . . The I.W.W. has stood with the Negro” (qtd in Foner “IWW” 45).

¹⁴ For an overview of the IWW’s organizing of Black workers in the early 1900s, see Philip S. Foner’s article, “The IWW and the Black Worker,” in *The Journal of Negro History* 55.1.

The IWW faced anger, assaults, and other violence for racially integrating their organizing. As Wilson notes, the organization “endured police repression, race baiting, and violent assaults in its efforts to organize across racial lines” (137). IWW members saw organizing Black workers and other workers of color as not only the *right* thing to do, but also as a strategic thing to do if their vision of abolishing the wage system was to come to fruition, pairing anti-racism with a similar pragmatism of early labor organizations. It “was not simply a moral issue, but a practical and economic one as well; [recruiting workers of color] circumvented capital’s ability to use black labor to break strikes and to undersell white labor” (137). The IWW’s dislike of the AFL was apparent. The IWW continued its opposition of the AFL’s “style” of labor organizing by criticizing the AFL – in IWW newspapers – for depicting Black workers as “natural scabs:” The IWW “accused the AFL of forcing blacks to become strikebreakers by excluding skilled blacks from AFL locals. This exclusion gave skilled black workers the choice of either working in a lower paying, unskilled position or working as a scab. Not only did IWW leaders campaign to recruit blacks, they fought to eliminate race prejudice as well” (137). The IWW took supporting and organizing workers of color seriously. The IWW “the only federation of unions in the history of the labor movement in the U.S. never to have chartered a single segregated local,” and it had integrated union meetings, “even in southern states that prohibited blacks and whites from meeting in the same hall” (137).

Like the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor, the Industrial Workers of the World used “wage slavery,” but the link between the IWW and the struggle for the abolition of slavery extended beyond “wage slavery” as a mechanism for solidarity. The IWW used a variety of references to slave labor as a connection between two struggles for the overthrow of an oppressive, hierarchical system, as did the Declaration of Independence, to which the IWW’s

founding manifesto referred. The IWW also used a broad definition of labor as everyone who produced and was exploited at the point of production, excluding those who did the exploiting, which would place slave labor under the “labor” umbrella.

The IWW’s use of “wage slavery” and broader use of slavery rhetoric, then, took on the perhaps less-pejorative yet ironic use of the Knights of Labor. In the lyrics of many IWW songs, IWW songwriters used the rhetoric of enslavement and abolition for several reasons. Using slavery rhetoric demonstrated the oppression of workers under a capitalist system in heavy handed terms that did not mask the revolutionary, anti-capitalist ideology of the IWW. That rhetoric also called upon abolitionism to create a sense of solidarity and shared goals. Using slavery rhetoric allowed the songs to evoke the anti-capitalist, emancipatory ideology of militant abolitionists such as John Brown. Rather than using the term divisively like the AFL, IWW members instead used the analogy of slavery to refer to their own and other workers’ conditions under capitalism.

Freedom, like the “free market” and “free labor,” is intrinsic to capitalism. Workers are able to sell their labor in the free market. They have the ability to engage in contracts selling their labor on their own terms and have upward mobility under capitalism. Using the word “slavery” assumes “freedom” as its antithesis, and the concept of freedom relies on a counterpoint of “unfreedom.” The IWW’s use of “wage slavery,” however, blurred this boundary: first, it acknowledged that freedom of contract, or market freedom, means nothing if one has no material ability to choose to withdraw a contract or to sell one’s labor elsewhere under better conditions, or to not sell one’s labor at all. One is only “free” to sell their labor because there is no other way to stay alive other than to sell it. Second, it prodded those who saw the abolition of slavery as a pinnacle of freedom to cast a critical eye toward capitalism or to start to see slavery and wage labor as two components of a single oppressive capitalist system.

For the IWW, “wage slavery” functioned as an ironic inversion of the concept of slavery. When it is used in a manner like the American Federation of Labor used it, it is meant to signify and support the continuation of the racism and lack of freedom that Black workers and other racialized workers experienced. Chattel slaves became wage slaves, not because capitalism holds the working class in a kind of “bondage,” but because Black workers and other workers of color were not worthy of the “freedom” of skilled white labor. The IWW’s use of “wage slavery” instead uncovered the tension in the concept of freedom itself, where freedom necessitates “unfreedom” as a comparator and where wage laborer does not fit neatly into either category. The term is oxymoronic, with “wage labor” and “slavery” as opposites. Combining two words with contradictory meanings under free market capitalism undermines those individual meanings and creates a space in-between, where workers can question what freedom really feels like or is.

In *Irony’s Edge*, Linda Hutcheon argues that ironic meaning “possesses three major semantic characteristics: it is relational, inclusive and differential” (56). In regard to irony’s relational strategy, she states “[i]ronic meaning comes into being as the consequence of a relationship, a dynamic, performative bringing together of different meaning-makers, but also of different meanings, first, in order to create something new and, then [...] to endow it with the critical edge of judgment” (56). She compares this creation of “something new” to “what in music is called triple-voicing: ‘two notes played together produce a third note which is at once both notes and neither’” (58).

What occurs with the term “wage slavery” is this triple-voicing, or the “bringing—even the rubbing—together of the said and the unsaid, each of which takes on meaning only in relation to the other” (Hutcheon *Irony* 56). The notes of “wage,” as the signifier of freedom, and “slavery,” as the signifier of bondage, are played together to create a third note, which is simultaneously both

notes and neither and somewhere in-between. The third note breaks down the illusion of freedom, and it unmask capitalism. It recognizes the disguise that makes labor under capitalism appear to be the opposite of chattel slavery and makes workers think they are free. It is not freedom, and it is not chattel slavery. It is something different but also similar, inclusive yet differential. It is unexpected, contradictory, and “endow[ed] with the critical edge of judgement” (56).

In stark contrast to “white slavery” and the AFL’s use of the term “wage slavery,” the IWW’s use of “wage slavery” welcomed the associated “degradation” and the connectedness of white and Black workers. Rather than the discomfort and tension of white workers being compared to Black workers and slaves, which distanced and alienated white workers from their Black counterparts, the term in IWW circles instead created a productive discomfort by recognizing similarities between chattel slavery and the wage system. This is, I argue, in large part due to the integrated labor vision of the IWW. The use of this term in a manner that unites workers regardless of race gives way for it to turn a discomfort with the “other” or with the “enemy” – which is how many skilled white workers saw Black workers – into a discomfort with workers’ existence under capitalism, in all forms. The IWW redirected white workers’ anger at Black workers and other workers of color to the root of all workers’ struggles: capitalism.

Looking for a John Brown of Wage Slavery

It was not a secret that the IWW called upon radical slavery abolition movements and associated rhetoric in order to inspire anti-capitalism sentiment and an angry, revolutionary working class. Eugene Debs, the noted socialist and IWW member, “looked to the abolitionists [and] asked for a ‘John Brown of Wage-Slavery’” (Trodd 19). Debs went as far as to call Brown the ‘spirit incarnate of the Revolution’” (19). The Industrial Workers of the World’s link to John Brown extends beyond Debs’ call. It is not limited to a shared want of emancipation from the bondage of an oppressive system. Rather, in having several songs set to the tune of “John Brown

Song,” a song that memorializes his martyrdom, the IWW forges a distinct bond between itself and the revolutionary actions and ideology of John Brown to create a world free of the oppression under slavery and the struggle and solidarity needed to have a revolution to create a world free of capitalist oppression. “John Brown Song” commemorates John Brown, a white, radical slavery abolitionist.

Abolitionist John Brown was born on May 9, 1800, in Connecticut (Du Bois *JB* 34). During the war of 1812, Brown’s father worked as a “beef contractor” (37). Brown “drove his herds of cattle and hung about the camp,” and was invited into the home of a landlord after a long ride with the cattle (37). While there, Brown “discovered something far more interesting than praise and good food:” “another boy” his age, a Black boy, in the yard (37). The “kind voices of the master and his folk turned to harsh abuse,” however, and the landlord beat the Black boy, a slave, before John’s eyes” (37). This incident “unconsciously foretold to the boy the life deed of the man” and stood out as “prophecy” in the life of John Brown (37). The incident would stay with Brown as he solidified his anti-slavery beliefs.

In 1847, Brown and his family moved to Springfield, Massachusetts, where he attended a Black church and met Black anti-slavery activists, approaching them “on a plane of perfect equality” (76). Brown met Frederick Douglass in Springfield and invited Douglass over to his home. Douglass observed that Brown “denounced slavery in look and language fierce and bitter” (Douglass qtd in Du Bois *JB* 79). Brown advocated for a violent anti-slavery movement. He did not believe that “moral suasion would ever liberate the slave, or that political action would abolish the system” (Douglass qtd in Du Bois *JB* 79). If the violent overthrow of slavery required it, Brown saw “no better use for his life than to lay it down in the cause of the slave” (Douglass qtd in Du Bois *JB* 80). Finally, on October 16, 1859, Brown and his group began their attack Harpers Ferry

(184). While the attack was initially successful, Brown was soon captured and sentenced to death (214). Brown used the spotlight of the trial to call attention to the horrors of slavery: “the nation had long been thinking over the problem of the Black man, but never before had its attention been held by such deep dramatic and personal interest” (212). John Brown’s prophecy that slavery could only end through violence came true with the start of the Civil War. Soon Northern soldiers were singing “John Brown Song” as they marched to war.

The tune of “John Brown Song” originated from a hymn called “Say, Brothers, Will You Meet Us?” or “O, Brothers,” which is a revival spiritual. These spirituals “were characterized by short, repetitive lines that were easy to memorize and sing without a hymnbook” (Stauffer et al 19). The songs often originated in evangelical camp meetings, religious gatherings that “attracted young and old, rich and poor. These revivals brought together men and women and blacks and whites, though the meetings were physically segregated along racial and gender lines,” with white men and women segregated in the front rows by a center divide, and Black men and women in the rear rows during formal worship (Stauffer et al 19). The music they used drew from the diverse but shared traditions of religious music.

It is difficult to pinpoint the origin of “Say, Brothers.” When Stith Mead published it in an 1807 hymnbook, it had already been popular in a variety of places (Stauffer et al 19). As John Stauffer and Benjamin Soskis note in *The Battle Hymn of the Republic: A Biography of the Song that Marches On*, “many scholars have argued a white-to-Black influence, but “based on the call-and-response structure of the hymn, coupled with the interracial makeup of camp meetings and the fact that Mead preached to blacks, it seems possible that the origins of ‘Say Brothers’ were as much African as white American” (24). The rhyme scheme of “Say, Brothers” enabled the song to become “‘quite popular’ in the 1840s and 1850s” and the “tune was simply ‘in the air’” (27).

The song has an AAAB rhyme scheme with the “A” lines all being the same line or a very similar line. The first verse is a repetition of “Say brothers will you meet us:”:

Say brothers will you meet us,
 Say brothers will you meet us,
 Say brothers will you meet us,
 On Canaan’s happy shore? (1-4)

The chorus follows the same rhyme scheme and repetition:

Glory, glory hallelujah!
 Glory, glory hallelujah!
 Glory, glory hallelujah!
 For ever, evermore! (5-8)

The subsequent verses also follow this structure. The second verse repeats “By the grace of God we’ll meet you” and ends with “Where parting is no more” (9-12). The final (third) verse repeats “Jesus lives and reigns forever” and ends with “On Canaan’s happy shore” (13, 16).

The song’s popularity made way for John Brown, who is purported to have sung “Say, Brothers” in Kansas, to be memorialized to the same tune posthumously (Stauffer et al 27). “John Brown Song” allowed his memory and mission to live on after his execution:

Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr., the eminent Bostonian physician and man of letters, argued that given the wartime popularity of the song, Brown’s raid should no longer be considered his failed attempt to take over the federal armory at Harpers Ferry, but should be heralded as his more successful posthumous campaign, when “his soul marched at the head of half a million men, shaking the continent and the world with the chorus of Glory Hallelujah.” (44)

“John Brown Song,” sometimes called “John Brown’s Body,” shares the structure of “Say, Brothers” with its AAAB rhyme scheme. The verses repeat the lines “John Brown's body lies a-mould’ring in the grave” (1), “He's gone to be a soldier in the army of the Lord” (9), “John Brown's knapsack is strapped upon his back” (13), “His pet lambs will meet him on the way” (17), “They will hang Jeff Davis to a tree!” (21), and “Now, three rousing cheers for the Union!” (25). Unlike “Say, Brothers,” “John Brown Song” ends each verse with either “His soul's marching on!” (4) or

a variation that still includes marching. The chorus ends with the same line, and repeats “Glory, Glory Hallelujah!” in its first three lines with the same structure and tune as the verses but with fewer syllables (5). Save for the last line, the chorus is a replica of the chorus of “Say Brothers.” The image of Brown’s soul marching on after his death enabled the song’s “insistence that the South would not be able to exterminate the principles for which [John Brown] martyred himself,” and this “proved the most prominent trope in the posthumous celebrations of Brown” (Stauffer et al 65). White and Black Union soldiers alike sang “John Brown Song.” Even after the end of the war, the song remained popular: “The song was a favorite among veterans’ groups and a staple at regimental reunions” (71).

“John Brown Song” laid the foundations for one of the most popular labor songs to exist in the twentieth century, “Solidarity Forever,” penned by IWW member Ralph Chaplin. Each edition of the songbook containing “Solidarity Forever” noted that its tune was “John Brown’s Body.” Just as “John Brown Song” had increased the number of syllables per line from “Say, Brothers,” “Solidarity Forever” increased the number again. In “Solidarity Forever,” Chaplin kept the AAAB rhyme scheme but abandoned the repetition of the lines in the verses:

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. (1-4)

The chorus, however, retains the repetition of “John Brown Song:”

Solidarity forever!
Solidarity forever!
Solidarity forever!
For the Union makes us strong. (5-8)

The last line of the chorus, “For the Union makes us strong” (8), is either an exact or very close copy of the verses’ final lines. The verses end with “the Union makes us strong,” but the first word of the line may be “but” (4), “for” (12), “while” (20), or “that” (24).

The simplicity of the song's structure invites singing because singers can anticipate the next lines. When groups of people sing "Solidarity Forever" without access to the lyrics, the people who know the words to the verses will start out. The crowd then participates for the last line of each verse. Some participants sing "for the union makes us strong" whether "for" is the first word or not. Others will simply skip the first word and join in for the remainder of the line and the chorus. Singers will usually repeat the chorus twice at the end, and verses are regularly omitted or changed in groups without lyrics. The simplicity of the song also allows new verses to be added, such as Faith Petric, Marcia Taylor, and Sally Rogers' verse appearing in the 38th edition¹⁵ of the songbook:

It is we who wash the dishes, scrub the floors and chase the dirt
 Feed the kids and send them off to school, and then we go to work,
 Where we work for half the wages for a boss who likes to flirt.
 But the Union makes us strong. (15-18)

This new verse is one of many new verses that have been added to "Solidarity Forever," some attributed and many more anonymous.

As Zoe Trodd notes in "Writ in Blood: John Brown's Charter of Humanity, The Tribunal of History, and the Thick Link of American Political Protest," "[John] Brown's soul marched on to different words when the John Brown Song was rewritten by Ralph Chaplin as 'Solidarity Forever'" (Trodd 20). One of the verses of "Solidarity Forever" embodies and intertwines labor and abolition struggles:

All the world that's owned by idle drones, is our 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. ("SF" 17-20)

¹⁵ The verse first appeared in the 36th edition of the songbook but was unattributed.

The idleness of the “drones” refers to the idleness of both bosses and of slave owners, not partaking in laboring themselves and relying on workers to labor for them. The labor indicated in line 18 could be work performed by either slaves or workers. The inclusive “we” used throughout the verse indicates solidarity among the working class and a common struggle. Espousing IWW ideas of class inclusivity, the lyrics represent the whole of the working class rather than only white men workers. Moreover, the use of the word “slave” provokes a history of and comparison to chattel slavery. Nobody should be a slave of any kind; all those who toil should be masters because they create the world around them with their labor, suggesting the producerist utopia imagined by both the Knights of Labor and the Industrial Workers of the World.

“Solidarity Forever” couples the use of rhetoric evoking slavery with the tune of “John Brown Song.” John Brown had advocated for “violent resistance” as part of his abolitionist campaign, in response to the violence of slavery (Trodd 2). He thought that slavery and capitalism generally were violent processes in and of themselves that needed to be overthrown with violence. Abolitionism needed “resistance to the violence that was the essence of the slave relationship” (Aptheker 15). The delegates of the Radical Political Abolitionists’ convention in 1855 “declared slavery ‘a state of war’” (Trodd 4). Slavery, to John Brown, needed to be fought with violence.

The violent resistance of John Brown was translated into the violent rhetoric of the IWW in “Solidarity Forever.” This violence, however, was usually on the part of the ruling class and was to be fought against with solidarity. IWW rhetoric highlighted the violence of the police, of workplaces, of poverty, of capitalism, and of capitalists. The ruling class is seen as a “greedy parasite / Who would lash [the workers] into serfdom and would crush [them] with his might” (“SF” 9-10). Violent imagery surrounds the process of laboring, waged or slave: the workers respond by rallying to “organize and fight” together to end the violence and suffering (“SF” 11).

Their class solidarity can “break [the ruling class’s] haughty power” (“SF” 23). This solidarity is “[g]reater than the might of armies, magnified a thousand fold” (“SF” 26). John Brown’s resistance to the violence of slavery with radical violence was reflected in “Solidarity Forever” with the violence from the ruling class and a violent rhetoric on the part of the working class. The working classes “wag[e] rhetorical – and sometimes actual – war on what they term . . . the ‘non-producing classes’” (Lott 50). The war waged by John Brown, and the Civil War, were partially embodied within the IWW rhetoric of “class war” as well.

John Brown’s violent struggle was not a singular phenomenon. Trodd notes “the centrality of violence to American history” (17), and “John Brown’s soon-to-be infamous strategies of violent resistance had a bloodline, traceable through the history of black abolitionism” (2). Not only are John Brown and his choice to address problems and pursue social change through violence the result of conditions of existence within the United States at the time, but also “class and classification are dynamic processes, more the result than the cause of historical events” (Lott 50). Both of these instances of violence, Brown’s and the IWW’s, have a lineage that came before them, a past that they draw upon. On the morning of his execution in 1859, Brown wrote a charter. It read, “I John Brown am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land: will never be purged away; but with Blood. I had as I now think; vainly flattered myself that without verry much bloodshed; it might be done” (qtd in Trodd 5 [sic]). His violent resistance against slavery was central to his idea of a purging of the land. Brown saw a purging of the land through blood as a renewal and a cleansing of the United States of slavery and capitalism. The injustices of slavery, he believed, could only be washed away with blood.

Similarly, the final two lines of “Solidarity Forever” call for a purging. The lines have been controversial and seen as dystopic and destructive by parts of the labor movement in North

America. Bringing “to birth the new world from the ashes of the old,” however, is reminiscent of John Brown’s need for the purging of the land (“SF” 27). Both slavery and capitalism are so engrained and institutionalized that the world must be purged of them in order to be just. Reform is not enough to erase the injustices under such oppressive systems. John Brown’s charter, one of purging and renewal, stands firm as thematic in the radical labor movement. The IWW believes that through solidarity and an organized working class, “We can bring to birth the new world from the ashes of the old, / For the Union makes us strong” (“SF” 27-28). While “John Brown Song” has “three rousing cheers for the Union!” (31), “Solidarity Forever” praises a different kind of union with a similar sound and a similar struggle for freedom and equality.

Ultimately, the thread of anti-capitalism ties John Brown and the IWW together. As historian Herbert Aptheker notes in *John Brown: American Martyr*, “the Abolitionist assault upon the institution of slavery carried with it – especially amongst the most militant wing of that assault – a questioning of the entire institution of the private ownership of the means of production” (8). The IWW and the radical abolitionist movement, then, meet at the point of the abolition of the capitalist system in its entirety. The promotion of violence for the radical abolition movement, though opposed by much of the broader abolition movement, was not only to cease slavery but also to abolish capitalism, where wage workers and slaves alike were exploited at the point of production. Movements to abolish capitalism and to abolish chattel slavery were met with similar opposition. Bosses and business owners united against unionization and the overthrow of capitalism just as property owners were urged to unite against abolitionism and the “elimination of the right of ownership” (8). John Brown, discussing his dedication to abolitionism, wrote, “I have only a short time to live – only one death to die . . . I will die fighting for this cause” (qtd. in

Aptheker 7). Brown's dedication to the struggle was similar to the dedication of many IWW members who died fighting to abolish capitalism.

IWW used slavery imagery and references to provide an articulation of workers' feelings, a reference to radical abolitionism, and a lens through which to view capitalism. The IWW's use of slavery rhetoric and imagery was widespread. Employment offices were called "slave markets" (Brazier "Story" 93), and bosses were "masters." Approximately two-thirds of the songs in the first edition of the *Songbook* compared workers to slaves or capitalism to slavery, with references to slaves, masters, and bondage. Lyrics claim that workers "live in slavery" (Brazier "Master Class" 18-20), and songwriters use "bosses," "parasites," "masters," and "master class" interchangeably. No one from the working class is immune to enslavement, and the "Banner of Labor" indicates that "children now slave, till they sink in their grave-/ That robbers may fatten and add to their treasure" (11-12). Nelson's "Working Men Unite" uses slavery rhetoric but in the song's more simplistic language. Upon reaching the chorus, workers sing, "Shall we still be slaves and work for wages?/ It is outrageous- has been for ages" (Nelson 9-12). These songs continue a tradition of slavery references in songs that pre-date the IWW but that IWW members sang, such as "The Marseillaise:"

Like beasts of burden, would they load us,
Like gods would bid their slaves adore,
But Man to Man, and who is more?
Then shall they longer lash and goad us? (19-22)

We find similar language in the Charles Kerr translation of "The Internationale" in *Socialist Songs* titled "The International Party." The lyrics reference "prisoners" (1) and "chains" (5), and the singers/listeners/readers are called upon to "Arise, ye slaves!" (6).

Fred Thompson notes that for educational purposes, "[w]hat [the IWW] used most of all was song. If you will analyze the words of 'Solidarity Forever,' you will see it is practically a

restatement of the IWW preamble” (qtd in Bird et al 217). Foner agrees that “nothing . . . expressed the I.W.W. principle of solidarity better” (Foner *History* 155). Ralph Chaplin, the writer of “Solidarity Forever,” seems to confirm their feelings, claiming the song “was written on the assumption that we knew where we were going and knew how to get there” (Chaplin “I Wrote SF” 6). Songs’ comparisons of wage work to slavery accomplished three main things in terms of education. First, presenting wage work as a form of slavery provided workers with an understandable and accessible narrative of their working lives. This framing provided workers with language that reflected their feelings of powerlessness and lack of control. It acknowledged how impossible it seemed to escape the work cycle they were in. Second, it brought with it a hope that this unfair and coercive system too can be overthrown, like slavery in the United States had (officially) been. That hope, though, is premised on workers fighting back. Finally, in reflecting and acknowledging these feelings and in creating a visual image of bondage, this framing also emphasized the anger associated with suffering, unfair treatment, and powerlessness. The songs then directed that anger toward the “masters” who keep the system running: bosses.

In comparing wage work to slavery, the lyrics of “Solidarity Forever” offered workers a way to understand and articulate their position in capitalism in an accessible, recognizable manner. To fully understand the song’s link to radical abolitionism, however, the song must be recognized and experienced as a parody of “John Brown Song.” Comic parody in the IWW, as I examine in the previous chapter, releases anxieties, operates as a defense mechanism, and refocuses the singer/listener. In contrast, the IWW’s serious parody can operate by calling upon historical struggle and creating past/present tension to refocus the singer/listener. We can once again turn to Linda Hutcheon’s defines parody as ironic “repetition with a critical distance” (*Parody* 6). That repetition, though, is “not always at the expense of the parodied text” (6). While some parodical

forms do in fact critique their ‘target’ text, such as IWW parodies of hymns, where religious ideology and religious groups are targets of criticism, parody can use irony and repetition to critique something *other* than the parodied text by *using* the parodied text. Parody can be a “serious criticism” of something other than the text in play (15), and “criticism need not be present in the form of ridiculing laughter for this to be called parody” (6).

The evocation of chattel slavery via language in “Solidarity Forever” shares a similar irony with the term “wage slavery.” We once again have a tension between freedom and bondage, “free labor” and slavery. Just like the term “wage slavery,” the allusions to slavery in these two songs are critiquing the idea of free labor and of freedom under capitalism. It is not freedom, and it is not chattel slavery; it is something different but also similar, inclusive yet differential. It begs the question, “If we’re not slaves, but we’re not free, what are we?” The combination of ironic use of slavery rhetoric, unions’ use of the term “wage slavery,” and the use of the tune of “John Brown’s Body” creates a parody critical of capitalism and of how we view our labor, not of “John Brown’s Body” or even chattel slavery. The parody is at once a catalyst for self-reflexivity and for outward criticism, or criticism not of the parodied text itself.

Hutcheon argues that “[p]arody operat[es] as a method of inscribing continuity while permitting critical distance” (*Parody* 20). Milne noted parody’s Greek etymological roots and identifies “para” as meaning “beside,” “near,” or “imitation” (196). Hutcheon expands this definition to note that “para” is often translated as “counter” and not as “beside” and missing the translation of “beside” loses the “suggestion of an accord or intimacy instead of a contrast” (*Parody* 32). According to Hutcheon, parody is “not just that ridiculing imitation mentioned in the standard dictionary definitions,” clarifying that parody does not necessitate ridicule or satire (5). Instead, Hutcheon applauds parody for “its range of intent” (6). “Solidarity Forever,” as a parody

of “John Brown Song,” emphasizes how parody can use intimacy to create a critical distance. The critical distance is both great and minute. There is simultaneously a clear distance in time (antebellum versus early 1900s), a distance in the form of oppression (chattel slavery versus “wage slavery”), and a distance in how that oppression is perceived (free labor versus “wage slavery”).

The language of slavery and bondage inspired anger as workers recognized that freedom and slavery are not a binary and that wage labor exists in-between, but also that wage labor has been presented as freedom. In the comparison between wage work and slavery, singers/listeners positioned slavery and wage work as beside one another rather as across from one another. When experienced as a parody, “Solidarity Forever” placed the IWW’s radical, anti-capitalist struggle *beside* that of John Brown and radical slavery abolition, not *against*. In suggesting the distance between the IWW and John Brown, and between wage labor and slavery, is not a large distance, “Solidarity Forever” directed anger to capitalism and provided a path forward: workers should fight back against oppression just as John Brown did. The song, and the IWW’s use of slavery rhetoric, also creates a critical distance between wage work and “freedom.” Because “Solidarity Forever” narrows the distance between slavery and wage work and between the IWW and radical abolitionism, while increasing the distance between wage work and freedom, the song is “endow[ed] with the critical edge of judgement” (Hutcheon *Irony* 56).

Parody does not work as intended unless those interacting with the parody are familiar with what is being parodied, however. In the interaction of the listener/singer with the tune of “John Brown’s Body” and the concept of “wage slavery,” the “double-voiced parodic forms play on the tensions created by this historical awareness” (Hutcheon *Parody* 4). Hutcheon claims that “what is needed is the dual consciousness of the listener of the double-voiced music,” which moves the listener to recognize the tension between the two texts and gain critical distance (22). Without an

understanding of the history the parody is referencing, the song does not function as parody. The singer/listener would lose the important reference to radical, anti-capitalist slavery abolitionism. As Hutcheon writes, “parody prospers in periods of cultural sophistication that enable parodists to rely on the competence of the reader (viewer, listener) of the parody” (19). That is not to say that singers/listeners of this type of parody need lived experience or a deep understanding of chattel slavery in the United States. Rather, they need a surface understanding of slavery. That these songs are from the Civil War seems enough to have this parody be successful.

When experienced as a parody, “Solidarity Forever” enabled the IWW to call upon already-existing ways of understanding the world and ways of feeling about the world. “Solidarity Forever” therefore acted as a method of emotional pedagogy, linking workers’ feelings about the suffering of slaves to their own suffering and directing those feelings to capitalism. “John Brown Song” provides a reference to a tradition of revolutionary collectivity that IWW members can then draw upon and continue. That is, the links created in this parody inspire workers to rally against capitalism and help transform feelings of isolation into feelings of continuation: their struggle is part of a longer struggle. Because the abolition of chattel slavery in the United States did not end oppression of all forms, seeing waged labor as a contemporary iteration of slavery elucidated the futile nature of reform, bringing IWW members further into the IWW’s project of abolishing the wage system rather than reforming it.

In his article “On Creating a Usable Past,” Van Wyck Brooks notes that there exists in society “no sort of desire to fertilize the present, but rather [a desire] to shame the present with the example of the past” (337). Appropriating the rich history of radical abolitionism and anti-capitalism to inspire working class revolution toward a better world for those at the bottom serves as what Brooks terms “a usable past.” With the ironic nature of serious parody and its critical

distance, we are able to understand how a parody like “Solidarity Forever” can critique “wage slavery” alongside chattel slavery, can harken back to radical abolition movements to create a robust and historical understanding of the oppression of capitalism, and can use both those criticisms to inspire contemporary anti-capitalist movements. Historical serious parody insists upon a usable past.

Through the use of the tune of “John Brown Song” and the shared rhetoric between the abolitionist movement and the radical labor movement, it is clear that the struggle continues and that workers’ struggles are not isolated. The rich history of struggle against injustice and oppression informs each and every new struggle against oppression under capitalism. Just as the IWW was able to draw upon abolitionism to create a sense of solidarity and to create a body of songs that envelops a rich history of struggle and solidarity, those currently struggling against racial and class oppression under capitalism, as we see in widespread protests regarding police violence against Black people and other forms of systemic and institutionalized racism, can similarly draw upon the history of violence and oppression and how battles against oppression were waged. “Knowing that others have desired the things we desire and have encountered the same obstacles” could help the “creative forces of this country lose a little of the hectic individualism that keeps them from uniting against their common enemies” (Brooks 341). We can read the history of radical struggle and understand that the oppression faced currently is rooted in history and that we are not alone in facing it. Indeed, as Brooks notes, if contemporary minds “cannot grow and ripen [through access to a usable past], where are we going to get the new ideals, the finer attitudes, that we must get if we are ever to emerge from our existing travesty of a civilization?” (339).

Virtue and Violence

“John Brown Song” was “ultimately pushed aside” by “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” which was “one of its musical offspring” (Stauffer et al 72). This new song was “freed from a direct association with the martyred abolitionist, [and] offered an even greater range of interpretations for a nation” (72). The author of “Battle Hymn,” Julia Ward Howe, grew up in New York and developed a “deeply personal relationship with Christ” through her mother and, after her mother’s death, her father, and was planted firmly within “liberal Protestantism” (75). Her husband had staunchly abolitionist views and funded the “Secret Six” as well as the raid on Harpers Ferry (80). Howe met Brown when he attended a meeting of the Secret Six held in her home in Boston and consoled his wife as she went through Boston after Brown’s execution (80). Despite these affiliations, Ward Howe’s travel writing from her trip to Cuba depicted Black Cubans as needing the “moral and intellectual tutelage of whites” to which Black Americans had access (81). The raid on Harpers Ferry, however, further inspired Howe’s anti-slavery views and “by the beginning of the war itself, any doubts regarding the absolute evil of slavery or warmth toward her Southern countrymen seemed to have melted away” (81).

A writer and intellectual against her husband’s wishes, of often controversial works, Howe justified her writing by claiming she was divinely inspired: “Not a word I breathe is mine My master calls at noon or night” (qtd in Stauffer et al 79). She would often jot down her poems and prose during the night, with a sleeping baby beside her, in an inspired frenzy, hoping her writing would be legible the next morning (83). One night, as with many nights, her dimly-lit scrawl would become the song that would draw upon but usurp “John Brown Song” and become the most popular song associated with the Union army during the Civil War (83-84). The structure keeps the AAAB rhyme scheme but, like “Solidarity Forever,” abandons the repetition in the verses. “Battle Hymn” presents the Union side of the Civil War as ordained by God. Just as Christ “died

to make men holy,” soldiers will “die to make men free” (23). The chorus replicates the repetition of “Glory, glory, hallelujah!” from its sources, but ends with “His truth is marching on” or a variation thereof (5-8).

The anonymously penned IWW song “Wage Workers, Come Join the Union,” appears in the first edition of the IWW songbook, which identifies its source tune as “Battle Hymn of the Republic.” While “Battle Hymn” removed references to John Brown and radical slavery abolition movements, “Wage Workers” contains rhetoric of slavery and violence much like “Solidarity Forever.” Like “Battle Hymn” and “Solidarity Forever,” the song uses a non-repetitive AAAB rhyme scheme in its verses and repetition in its chorus:

Wage workers, come join the union!
 Wage workers, come join the union!
 Wage workers, come join the union!
 Industrial Workers of the World. (5-8)

The last line of each verse is a variation of “While ____ is/goes marching on,” mimicking the verses of “Battle Hymn.” “Wage Workers” also uses the rhetoric of slavery in order to draw a connection between slavery and wage work. The third verse reads,

Our slavers’ marts are empty, human flesh no more is sold,
 Where the dealer’s fatal hammer wakes the clink of leaping gold,
 But the slavers of the present more relentless powers hold,
 Though the world goes marching on. (“WW” 13-16)

The lyrics of this song allude to slavery as a past practice in the United States. The first two lines acknowledge the abolition of slavery: The “slavers’ marts are empty,” indicating that the struggle against slavery has been won, slavery has been abolished, and “human flesh [can] no more [be] sold” (“WW” 13). The second two lines turn abolition on its head, however, since a different kind of slavery, “wage slavery,” still exists. There are “slavers of the present” (“WW” 15) who enslave women in “bondage under steel” (“WW” 18) and children over “the whizzing wheel” (“WW” 17).

Rather than limiting the degradation of slavery to women and children, the lyrics are instead using those two categories to make an emotional plea for sympathy of those “dependent” groups.

While this work is waged and is thus not what one might think of as slavery, the song notes that the bosses, or the current “slavers,” hold “more relentless powers” (“WW” 15). The phrase may suggest, like other labor organization had previously, that wage work is somehow worse than slavery. The connection made in this line, though, could be a comment on the longevity of capitalism’s oppression and the ways in which capitalism has adapted and changed over time. Slavery has been abolished, but slavers found a different way to oppress those who labored for them. Much like slavery, their oppression is engrained and institutionalized. The line suggests that despite abolishing slavery, capitalism’s exploitation seems to have grown hardier and “more relentless” and responds to changes, like abolition, with new ways to oppress those without power (“WW” 15).

In “Wage Workers,” the reaper is “toiling in the heat of summer sun,” an image of suffering and pain (1). The reaper’s children are “needy” even after the harvest, another image of suffering and pain, because the reaper is unable to keep what he reaps under capitalism (2). Armies are “dying, helpless, one by one” (3), and the workers are “helpless” against this oppression (19). Violent images of suffering and death underpin the struggle of workers and of the IWW. The workers, as an army against oppression, are “marching on” (16) to “free the weary women from their bondage under steel” and to liberate the working class from the chains of capitalism (18).

In being set to the tune of “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” “Wage Workers, Come Join the Union” does not have a direct reference to John Brown or to radical slavery abolition movements. “Wage Workers” does, however, create a link between IWW anti-capitalist struggle and the Civil War. This connection underscores the need to fight back against capitalism in an army of the

working class. Using “Battle Hymn” as the source tune also allows singers/listeners to consider class war to be ordained by God, to be righteous and virtuous, just as Howe presented the Union side of the Civil War. “Battle Hymn” erases from its lyrics (though not from its tune) John Brown as a martyr and replaces him with Christ as a martyr, and in fighting, soldiers took on a similar selflessness. Union members fighting against capitalism are as virtuous and Christ-like as Union soldiers fighting against slavery.

John Brown espoused a platform of virtuous violent resistance like that of the “Radical Political Abolitionists, who advocated violence as part of their divinely inspired role in ending slavery” (Trodd 3). The delegates of the Radical Political Abolitionists’ convention in Syracuse in 1855, John Brown among them, “defined themselves as God’s disciples” (“JBS” 3-4). Moreover, prior to John Brown’s execution, a church congregation proclaimed that Brown “only acted upon the maxim that ‘resistance to tyrants is obedience to God’” (“JBS” 8). This idea of a divine purpose carried through to the lyrics of “John Brown Song.” Although “John Brown’s body lies a mould’ring in the grave . . . / His soul’s marching on” (3-4), and “He’s gone to be a soldier in the army of our Lord” (7). The Godly virtue of John Brown is emphasized in the chorus of the song, which consists of a repetition of “Glory, glory Hallelujah!” (5). Though anti-slavery advocates without Brown’s radical edge disagreed with his assessment of anti-slavery violence as virtuous, “Battle Hymn of the Republic” would lean on the virtuousness of fighting against slavery as its main theme.

Some of those who opposed slavery thought that its demise would come about through divine intervention, and “for its elimination one had to wait upon the will of God” (Aptheker 6). Those who held that notion, however, “could easily wait while *others* endured two thousand years of slavery” (6). They were not slaves themselves and had no direct connection to or need for the

abolitionist struggle. John Brown saw virtue in the act of interfering and creating a better society rather than waiting. He “thought society ought to be reorganized on a less selfish basis” and that “all great reforms, like the Christian religion, were based on broad, generous, self-sacrificing principles” (10). As Eric Lott notes, “class resonates with implications of value, quality, respectability, and religious virtue” (49). The idea of the “lower” classes being less virtuous than the “upper” classes is juxtaposed with John Brown’s fight against slavery – slaves being a “lower” class of people – being the *real* virtuous act.

The idea of struggle as religious virtue was firmly planted within the Christian bent of the Knights of Labor and the labor movement generally. For the Knights of Labor, the desired end-result of labor’s emancipation was embedded within the rhetoric and ideology of Christianity. Those struggling for working class freedom from wage slavery “hoped to build a millennial kingdom on earth to hasten Christ’s return” (van Elteren 191). Alongside control over the means of production, radical movements such as the Knights of Labor sought the ability for workers to have enough leisure time to improve their “moral . . . faculties,” among other things (191). Indeed, members and representatives of the Knights of Labor “called corporate wealth the ‘Antichrist’ that only a ‘new Pentecost’ could destroy” (191). Even those few distinctions of workers that were denied membership were associated with an immoral, sinful life: speculators and bankers with idleness; lawyers, gamblers, and liquor salesmen with corruption; and all of those professions with “social parasitism” (191). The utopian vision engrained in the Knights of Labor was pronounced but also centered on ideas of virtue and Christianity.

The vision of the Industrial Workers of the World, unlike the vision of the Knights of Labor or that of some abolitionists, did not build itself consciously upon Christian ideology. Although it sometimes employed Christian imagery, the IWW did not expect the revolution to come overnight

or to “occur by divine intervention” (van Elteren 196). Rather, the utopian concept of the One Big Union was to be fought for and won on earth, not awarded in heaven. The IWW emphasized two main aims. It wanted to both improve the working conditions for the laboring classes and to create an organization that could “run the industries in the best interests of the workers after capitalism had been overthrown” (196). However, embedded within the latter goal, and thinly veiled at best, were “notions of utopia” reminiscent of heaven (196). The IWW’s utopia is put to music in the last verse of “Wage Workers, Come Join the Union”:

Then lift your eyes, ye toilers, in the desert hot and drear,
Catch the cool winds from the mountains. Hark! the river's voice is near;
Soon we'll rest beside the fountain and the dreamland will be here
As we go marching on. (“WW” 21-24)

This divine, heavenly utopia is an anti-capitalist worker-made utopia, the product of workers coming together to fight oppression. “Solidarity Forever” illustrates the IWW’s utopian vision in one of its closing lines: “We can bring to birth the new world from the ashes of the old” (“SF” 27).

The IWW did not oppose ideas of virtue but instead reworked virtue into an accessible, material concept, allotting the working-class access to virtue through struggle. In “Solidarity Forever” and “Wage Workers,” virtuousness comes not from God but from class solidarity. It is not God’s inspiration, like in “John Brown Song,” but “the Union’s inspiration” that runs through the working class and aids workers in their struggle (“SF” 1). No man can be as powerful as God on his own, and the song asks, “what force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one?” (3). There is “no power greater anywhere beneath the sun” than the power of working-class solidarity, not even the power of God. A similar repetition to “John Brown Song” occurs in the chorus of “Solidarity Forever,” a repetition of the title’s phrase, alluding to a similar immortality of solidarity to that of John Brown’s soul, and comparing immortal and heavenly souls with the immortal and equally beautiful union.

Racist Recompositions

Despite the IWW's generally progressive views on race in the early twentieth century, especially in comparison to its labor counterparts, and its use of the abolition movement in its song culture, the IWW was not immune from the racism of the contemporary white American working class. It was undoubtedly attempting to include workers of all races and origins and promote inclusivity in their mission. The IWW, however, had a simplistic, generalized view of Black workers' experiences, and it saw inclusivity largely as a means to its goal, a pragmatic anti-racism not that distant from that of the labor organizations before it. While the IWW used "wage slavery" in good faith to bring together what its members saw as similar types of oppression in the capitalist system with a similar need for militant struggle across racial lines, today the term is viewed among labor circles as inappropriate, insensitive, or racist. In the term's highlighting of similarities between waged work and chattel slavery and its uncovering of the space in between freedom and slavery, the term "wage slavery" can minimize the important distinctions between chattel slavery and wage work as well as the experiences of racialized workers.

In "The IWW and the Black Worker," Philip Foner recognizes that the IWW thought there was only a class problem, not a race problem (49). According to an article in the *Industrial Worker*, "the economic interests of all workers, be they white, black, brown or yellow, are identical, and all are included in the program of the I.W.W. It has one program for the entire working class – the abolition of the wage system" (qtd Foner 49). Black workers faced discrimination at every turn, and the IWW's vision of a united working class "was weakened by a failure to understand that for [Black workers] there was a 'race problem,' and it was no answer to tell [Black workers] that in 'the abolition of the wage system' lay their salvation" (49). The IWW had some success in organizing Black workers, particularly among lumber workers in the South and longshoremen. In *Wobblies on the Waterfront*, Peter Cole claims IWW Local 8, comprised of Philadelphia

longshoremen, was “the strongest interracial union of its time” and its members “shockingly broke the racist traditions firmly in place” (2).¹⁶ It is likely, however, that the IWW never attracted a large black membership at this time (Foner “IWW” 50-51). Unfortunately, this “was quite in keeping with the trend in radical circles of this period” (49).

IWW’s songs were not exempt from the predominant view – limited and simplistic – of the intersections of race and class. At moments, IWW language seemed to contradict the IWW’s vision of a united working class. Although reflecting on the abolition movement and using slavery rhetoric, a stark absence in both “Solidarity Forever” and “Wage Workers, Come Join the Union” are Black workers or any racialized workers, and the songs instead rely on a call for *all* workers to unite as being inclusive of all workers regardless of race. Paired with IWW imagery of the muscular white man breaking through chains, the amorphous “worker” becomes that white man and workers’ diverse experiences become his experience.¹⁷ Further, a handful of IWW songs in its first few decades recomposed songs associated with the Confederate states and blackface minstrelsy. Although many IWW songs use recomposition purposefully and towards a specific goal, song’s reinforcement of the IWW’s emotional project of class solidarity is undermined through some IWW songwriters’ lyrical and musical choices. While using popular music as a basis for new lyrics allows for a recognition and familiarity that assists with emotional pedagogy, the approach, through this familiarity, also brings along the *undesired* and even undermining meaning and cultural significance of the original song.

Richard Brazier’s “If You Workers Would Only Unite” is an example of a choice of recomposition that undermines the IWW’s message, set to the tune of “If the Man in the Moon

¹⁶ See Peter Cole’s *Wobblies on the Waterfront* for a history of IWW Local 8.

¹⁷ See Francis Shor’s “Virile Syndicalism in Comparative Perspective: A Gender Analysis of the IWW in the United States and Australia” in *International Labor and Working-Class History*.

Were a Coon,” part of a “now-embarrassing genre, Coon Songs” (Green et al *BRS* 39). Brazier’s typical method of composition was to “listen . . . to popular vaudeville/saloon hits of the day . . . [and then] memorize tunes before creating new texts” (39). While this allowed singers/listeners to easily pick up the tune, and allowed songwriters to craft new lyrics, this method of composing new lyrics meant that the context of the original songs haunted the new version. Brazier selected a song from a genre that was popular at the time: “In the decades 1880-1900, thousands of pieces circulated that built upon previous minstrel-stage images – comic, crude, suggestive, demeaning – of African-American life” (39). The sheet music for the original song “reached home parlor and entertainment palace alike” (40). While some IWW songwriters’ choices for source tunes were purposeful in terms of content, like the parodied hymns of the Salvation Army, many were chosen only because of their mnemonic function and popularity. Regardless of whether the choice was a thoughtful one or not, and regardless of the songwriters’ views on race, the context of the source song remains as the new version’s cultural baggage. Brazier, “like others of his youth, . . . had accepted racial stereotypes without much thought” (40), and this thoughtlessness ultimately undermined the inclusive vision of the IWW. Thankfully, “If You Workers Would Only Unite” “was not cast in a memorable or singable mode” (39).

Despite some of its songwriters’ use of problematic songs, scholars claim the IWW “united black and white workers as never before in our history, and consistently maintained a tradition of solidarity and equality in the labor movement regardless of race or color that is yet to be equalled by most labor organizations today” (Foner “IWW” 60). In songs like “Wage Workers” and “Solidarity Forever,” the IWW appropriates the rich history of radical abolitionism and anti-capitalism to inspire working class revolution toward a better world for those at the bottom. Using the tune of “John Brown Song” and the shared rhetoric between the abolitionist movement and the

radical labor movement, it is clear that the rich history of struggle against injustice and oppression informs each and every new struggle against oppression under capitalism. In using both “John Brown Song” and slavery rhetoric as a base, the IWW was able to call upon a history of anti-capitalist struggle that informed its own struggles against capitalism. These songs use the radical and influential history of John Brown and abolitionism to inspire not only IWW struggles but also the plethora of struggles to come.

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ABSTRACT**SINGING SOLIDARITY: CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS, EMOTIONAL PEDAGOGY, AND THE SONGS OF THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD**

by

TARA FORBES**December 2021****Advisor:** Dr. Jonathan Flatley**Major:** English (Literary and Cultural Studies)**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy

Singing Solidarity looks at songs and song culture in the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) from its inception to its decline near the start of WWI and examines how IWW songs engaged with, transformed, and directed workers' feelings to "spur [them] to action" (Gould 47). Songs in the IWW repertoire created a sense of group identity and cohesion, supporting the IWW's project of class consciousness and working-class solidarity. This solidarity, I argue, was *felt* rather than theorized. The felt solidarity of the IWW collective was intensified through the act of singing as a group, which was simultaneously an instantiation of as well as a catalyst or "spur" for solidarity. This dissertation argues that IWW songs were an integral part of providing IWW members with a sense of "what [their] feelings are and what they mean" and a way of "figuring out and understanding what they are feeling" (Gould 34). In this sense, IWW songs created and perpetuated what Deborah Gould, in *Moving Politics*, terms "emotional habitus," or a group's "inclinations toward certain feelings and way of emoting" (32).

Group members may have a range of affects, or what are pre-conscious feelings that are not yet formed or articulated as specific emotions. An emotional habitus untangles those affects and provides group members with a collective framework for articulating their feelings. In having

a common emotional framework, group members feel part of the group. Through “emotional pedagogy,” or emotional education, some feelings are given language and meaning in the habitus while others are not, which emphasizes particular ways of feeling (34). IWW songs helped to create and perpetuate an emotional habitus that responded to members’ feelings of weakness, fear, and discontent and enabled individual workers to recognize those feelings as collective feelings. The songs then provided a sense of how and what to feel, emphasizing feelings of collective power and anger, and mobilized those feelings against employers and the wage system.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

For as long as I can remember, I have been singing. I sing songs from children's movies, songs by bands I like, and catchy songs on the radio. Thanks to my dad, I sing impromptu song snippets about onions or washing dishes or the squirrel living in my neighbor's shed. And I have sung many of the songs in this dissertation. In between songs, I received my B.A. (Honors) from MacEwan University in Edmonton, Alberta, in 2012 and my M.A. from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, in 2013. I then pursued my Ph.D. at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. I have been an IWW member for over 15 years. I have the common misfortune of working for a living, and I have been a custom t-shirt salesperson, a person who calls you at inconvenient times to conduct lengthy phone surveys, a mail clerk at a Canada Post sorting facility, a receptionist, and an educator. In my spare time, I enjoy laying in hammocks, playing cribbage, and snuggling dogs.